

# SPOTLIGHT REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL FOUR (SDG4) – GHANA



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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CESA – Continental Education Strategy for Africa

CSOs – Civil Society Organizations

CTAG – Concerned Teachers Association of Ghana

DEFAT – District Education for all Teams

ESP – Education Strategic Plan

FCUBE – Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GNAT – Ghana National Association of Teachers

GNECC – Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition

HLPF – High Level Political Forum

INGOs – International Non-Governmental Organizations

NAGRAT – National Association of Graduate Teachers

NEC – National Education Coalition

NNED – Northern Network for Education Development

PBME – Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation

PPP – Public Private Partnership

SDG-ICC – Implementation Coordination Committee

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SMC – School Management Committee

TLMs – Teacher and Learning Materials

TVET – Technical Vocational Education Training

VNR – Voluntary National Review

## *About GNECC*

GNECC is a network of over 200 civil society organizations working in the Education sector. It is headquartered in the capital of Ghana, Accra, with branches in all the ten (10) regions of the country. Northern Network for Educational Development (NNED) is the chapter that takes care of the three northern regions - Northern, Upper East and Upper West. GNECC's main goal is to promote quality basic and second cycle education for all in Ghana. It does this by working with national, regional, district and community based stakeholders.

Membership is represented by a wide spectrum of actors in the social and economic set-up of the country. The Coalition has, as key members, major teacher organizations, gender groups, child rights groups and organizations working with people with disability at national, regional and district levels. Major teacher unions namely Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), Ghana National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) and Concern Teachers Association of Ghana (CTAG) are all members of GNECC. The Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) represents the teacher Unions on the Executive Council of GNECC.

The regional branches responsible for research and advocacy at the sub-national level which inform advocacy engagements at the national level. Furthermore, there are District Education For All Teams (DEFATs) which bring together grassroots actors representing educationists, traditional leaders, assembly members, SMC members and other stakeholders in education at the district level to discuss issues affecting the development of education within their district. There also exists in some districts Community Dialogue Teams to lead advocacy at the community level.

## 1.0 Introduction

This report is compiled by the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) which is the leading voice of civil societies (CSOs) and individuals promoting quality and equitable pre-tertiary education delivery in Ghana. The report is an independent assessment by CSOs (GNECC members) on the extent of efforts being made by the Government of Ghana, Development Partners, Civil Society and the Ghanaian people towards achieving SDG4.

## 2.0 Methodology

The spotlight report was compiled from field experiences and information collected at grassroots levels by members of the Coalition on the status of implementation of various education policies across the country. The information gathered was validated through regional meetings and submitted to the national secretariat for harmonization. These issues have featured in various reports, policy briefs and position papers issued by the Coalition between 2016 and 2019. Key national policy documents and reports were also referenced.

## 3.0 Institutional Framework for the Implementation and Monitoring of the SDGs

### *3.1 Institutions in charge of SDGs planning and coordination in Ghana*

The National Development Planning Commission, under the Ministry of Planning is in charge of SDG planning and coordination.

The SDGs Implementation Coordination Committee (SDGs-ICC) was established in 2016 as the first move in the process towards localizing the SDGs in Ghana. A National Technical Committee was also established in 2017 to facilitate the localization and implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Ghana.

At the executive level, an Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on the SDGs was created in 2017 to ensure integration of the SDGs in sector programmes and budget. The Committee is chaired by the Minister for Planning and has the Ministers for Trade and Industry; Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration; Finance; Food and Agriculture; Attorney General; Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation; Monitoring and Evaluation; Education; Health; Sanitation and Water Resources; Local Government and Rural Development; Gender, Children and Social Protection; Employment and Labour Relations; and Fisheries and Aquaculture as members. The SDG Advisory Unit was established following the appointment of Ghana's President as Co-Chair of the United Nations Secretary General's Eminent Group of SDG Advocates to support his advocacy for the SDGs.

A civil society platform has also been established to coordinate CSOs activities across the 17 goals. Each platform has a convener and a co-convener who make up the steering committee and is led by 3 co-chairs selected from the membership. GNECC belongs to the SDG4 platform and serves as one of the co-conveners.

### *3.2 Government Policy Framework on SDG Implementation*

The SDGs are captured in Ghana's Co-ordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development which was launched in 2018. The SDGs have also been integrated into all sector programmes and budgets which reflects in the national budget.

### *3.3 Legislation (law, parliamentary resolutions, etc.) on SDG adoption and implementation*

The Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030 and the medium-term plan integrates the SDGs and Agenda 2063. This is also incorporated in the Appropriations Act (final budget approved by parliament).

### *3.4 Engagement of Local Government in the SDGs*

All Metropolitan, Municipal and District assemblies have incorporated the SDGs into their programmes and budgets. However, from observation there are implementation challenges as far as the SDG targets are concerned. The level of awareness of policies linked to the SDGs is very low. For example, assessments showed that about 75% District Assemblies officials did not know about the existence of the Inclusive Education Policy.

### *3.5 National SDG Indicators and Monitoring Framework*

The government through the National Development Planning Commission developed the national SDG indicators and monitoring framework in 2017.

### *3.6 Funding Commitment for the Delivery of the SDGs*

The SDGs are integrated into programmes and budgets from local and national levels across the various sectors. While government has shown considerable commitment by way of planning, this has often not translated to actual disbursements to enable implementation of programmes.

### *3.7 SDGs text in local/national languages*

The SDGs have been translated into some local languages, for example Twi, Ga and Dagbani.

## **4.0 Roll out & Implementation of the SDG4/Education 2030 and CESA 2016-2025**

### *4.1 Ministry/Office Leading SDG4 and CESA Planning and Implementation*

The Ministry of Education is the focal government institution responsible for planning and implementation of SDG4 and CESA.

### *4.2 Focal Person/Unit*

The focal point is the Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Education (PBME).

#### *4.3 Policy Framework on SDG4 and CESA Implementation*

The Ministry of Education has developed an Education Strategic Plan for the period 2018 to 2030 with a financing framework. The Government has also adopted an Inclusive Education Policy with minimum standards and rolled-out new curriculum for the basic level to ensure that the quality of education outcomes improve; government is also in the process of finalizing and approving the five-year TVET strategic plan. The government has also initiated reforms in the training and development of teachers to improve quality outcomes at the pre-tertiary level.

#### *4.4 Involvement of Local Units of the Ministry in SDG4 and CESA Implementation*

All agencies under the Ministry of Education are expected to implement the strategic plan and by extension the SDG4, Agenda 2063 and CESA. The Ghana Education Service is the main implementing body for pre-tertiary education delivery.

#### *4.5 Indicators on SDG4 and CESA Adopted by the Ministry*

All the indicators under SDG4 are captured in the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030 and Agenda 2063. However CESA indicators are not expressly captured in the policy documents of the Education Ministry.

#### *4.6 Budgetary Allocation to Meet SDG4 and CESA*

The education budget integrates all the SDG targets. The 2019 budget allocation of GH¢11,195,401,221 for the Ministry of Education is a 20.9% increase over the 2018 allocation of GH¢9,258,839,827.

### **5.0 Involvement of CSOs/NECs In SDG4 Implementation**

#### *5.1 Shareholder Consultation in SDG4 Planning and Implementation*

Stakeholder consultations on the ESP 2018 – 2030 which integrates SDG4 and Agenda 2063 were done by the Ministry of Education in 2017.

#### *5.2 CSOs Participation in Consultations/Meetings*

Civil society was invited by the Ministry of Education to participate in all the discussions on the ESP 2018 – 2030. GNECC has been part of all the processes in the development of the ESP 2018 – 2030 and endorsed the final document.

#### *5.3 CSOs National Platform or Network Focusing on the SDGs and GNECC's Role*

A Civil Society Platform on SDGs was formed in 2017 to coordinate their activities on the SDGs. There is a platform for each of the 17 goals as well as an additional platform for advocacy. The platforms

have been active in creating awareness on the SDGs. GNECC has been participating in all activities of the Civil Society SDG Platform.

#### *5.4 CSO Platform on SDG4*

Among the 17 platforms is a specific platform for SDG4 which brings together organisations working on education. GNECC is a member of the SDG4 platform.

GNECC has made conscious efforts to integrate awareness creation on SDG4 and Agenda 2063 in our activities and on various platforms especially at the community level. For instance in 2018, the theme for our Global Action Week celebration was “Strengthening Citizen Participation and Accountability in Education Management: a Milestone for Achievement of SDG4”. Community durbars, radio discussions and other mediums have been deployed to create awareness and sensitize citizens at grassroots level.

#### *5.5 Results in Engaging in SDG4 Dissemination*

There is increased awareness on SDG4 at the grassroots level. As a result there is increased interest among citizens on how the SDG4 can be achieved as well as their roles in realizing the goals.

### **6.0 CSO engagement in the VNR process**

#### *6.1 Report on SDGs Progress (Voluntary National Review) at the HLPF*

Ghana will be reporting on progress of implementation of the SDGs for the first time in 2019. The Voluntary National Review (VNR) presents an opportunity to reflect on the progress towards attainment of SDG targets and serves as another platform to discuss successes and challenges in relation to implementation of the SDG targets.

#### *6.2 Process for Developing Report*

Civil society was invited to make inputs to the report through the SDGs Platforms by the National Development Planning Commission. CSOs presented qualitative information based on their activities on the field to inform the final VNR. Nonetheless, civil society has also compiled a parallel VNR.

#### *6.3 Process of CSOs Consultation*

The consultation process for the VNR was participatory. It involved all CSOs working on the SDGs selected to be reviewed at the High Level Political Forum.

#### *6.4 Government Nomination of CSO Representative(s) as part of its Team in Regional/Global SDG Events*

Civil society was invited to nominate one representative for each of the selected SDGs being reviewed to join government delegation to the high level forum. Government has ceded part of the

time allocated for present Ghana's report on implemented of SDGs to civil society to share their perspective on the progress being made.

## 7.0 Review of Progress Achieved in Implementation of SDG4 and CESA

### *7.1 Free Education Provision at Primary and Secondary School Levels in Ghana*

Ghana's 1992 constitution guarantees free basic education for every child. Implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme commenced in 1995. The capitation grant was introduced in 2005 to provide schools with a consistent source of funding for management of schools. Another intervention is the School Feeding programmes which was introduced to provide children from deprived communities with a nutritious meal at school and contributed to increase in access at the basic level. In 2017, government commenced implementation of a free secondary education policy.

Funding of free basic and secondary education however remains a challenge. Capitation grants are often in arrears for several terms. Funding of free secondary education is also facing various challenges thereby raising concerns about its sustainability. Government is committing a greater proportion of education funds to the implementation of the free senior high education policy while basic education grapples with lack of funding. This has created room for charging of illegal levies by some district education directorates, district assemblies and schools in order to cater for administrative and other school-related expenses.

### *7.2 Duration of Public Funded Education*

The Education Act 778, 2008 provides for 11 years of publicly funded basic education: 2 years kindergarten; 6 years primary and 3 years lower secondary (junior high school) education. Implementation of 3 years Free Secondary Education was started in 2017.

### *7.3 Gender and Disability Friendliness of Public School System and Structures*

Ghana adopted an inclusive education policy in 2016 and is developing a gender in education policy. There is a Special Education Division under the Ministry of Education and a Girls Education Unit responsible for implementing the policies of the Ministry relating to disability and gender respectively. However, these institutions are highly underfunded and donor-dependent. This lack of resources limits effective implementation of the policies by these government institutions.

Most public schools have dilapidated infrastructure and generally poor school environment. Wide disparities can be observed between rural and urban areas in the provision of infrastructure, TLMs, trained teachers and other education resources. Government has commenced the review of the basic education curriculum to make the curriculum more child-centred. However, issues of inclusivity are not adequately catered for in the process. Non-governmental organisations complement government efforts by providing infrastructure and TLMs to schools.

#### *7.4 Availability of Early Childhood Care and Education Services*

Two years kindergarten education was integrated into basic education in 2008 under Act 778. However, most public basic schools do not have kindergartens attached. Most of the early childhood centres are in urban areas and are privately owned. A significant number of kindergartens are housed in very poor structures. In 2017, six (6) children were killed when the dilapidated structure in which they were learning collapsed. Also, most of the teachers at the kindergarten level are not trained.

#### *7.5 Financing of Public Education in Ghana*

Ghana has consistently met or exceeded the agreed international benchmark of 6% of GDP and 20% of government budget to education over the years.

#### *7.6 Privatization of Education in Ghana*

Ghana considers the private sector as a key component of its strategic framework for the education sector from 2018-2030 by supporting private education under Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements. Private schools have grown very rapidly in Ghana in the last decade. About 30% of all primary schools are private. In recent times, Government has been considering handing over management of public basic schools to non-state actors with the aim of improving learning and accountability. Civil society has however expressed concerns based on negative experiences of other countries that have implemented a similar model.

#### *7.7 Provision of Qualified Teachers in Ghana*

The proportion of trained teachers in Ghana has improved considerably. About 70% of teachers at the basic level are trained. The government has introduced programmes to improve the quality of teachers supplied to schools. Notwithstanding, there are wide inequities in the supply of trained teachers to rural areas. Trained teachers refuse posting to rural areas due to the unfavourable conditions in such areas. Motivation packages are not being implemented.

### **8.0 Addressing the Imperative of Leaving No One Behind**

#### *8.1 National Policies/Strategies to Address Gender/Inclusion*

Government adopted an inclusive education policy in 2016. The gender in education policy is also in progress though at a slow pace. Guidelines for the re-entry of pregnant teenage girls in school is being finalized for implementation.

#### *8.2 Provision for the Marginalised Groups in Education Sector Plans, Programmes and Budgets*

Issues related to the marginalized and vulnerable groups are integrated into the ESP through the Inclusive Education, Complementary Basic Education, and Girls Education policies. The ESP 2018-

2030 takes into consideration the needs of children with disabilities and special educational needs through allocating resources for the provision of disability-friendly infrastructure and girls' education especially in rural areas. However, the 2019 national budget allocation for inclusive education declined from 0.3% in 2018 to 0.1%.

### *8.3 Activities Undertaken by Government to Ensure Inclusion and Equity*

Social Intervention Programs such as School Feeding, Free uniforms among others have been introduced. The Complementary Basic Education programme is being expanded to reach out to more children through informal schooling. Government has also introduced screening of children on their first day in school to enable early detection of any special need. This notwithstanding, assessment centres are poorly resourced, most school infrastructure and the school environment in general are not disability-friendly. Teaching and Learning materials also do not meet the requirements of children with special needs.

## **9.0 Review of the Partnership for the implementation of the SDGs ( Goal 17)**

### *9.1 Partnerships in the SDGs Implementation*

The partnership between CSOs, Government, donors and private sector has been strengthened as a result of pursuing a common agenda in achieving the SDGs. Even though donor funding has been dwindling because of Ghana's middle income status and the 'Ghana Beyond Aid' policy, there are still some collaborations for the achievement of the SDGs.

### *9.2 Inclusiveness of Partnership*

At the national level, the partnership consists of government, INGOs, private sector and CSOs. At the local level, the partnership is inclusive of youth, women, CSOs, grassroots level organisations, traditional authorities, religious organisations, among others defending the rights of the vulnerable and marginalized.

## **10 Conclusion**

Despite the successful efforts made by civil society and governments in achieving the Education 2030 agenda, which places the right to free, quality, public education and lifelong learning at the forefront, several alarming developments are threatening the realisation of this goal. Education underpins many of the SDGs, and it is fundamental to the realization of other rights. It is therefore important to galvanize citizens to keep the government on track in taking decisions, developing policies, implementing programmes and allocating resources to ensure delivery of high quality education to every child as a basic human right no matter their location, gender and disability.