

GROUND ZERO

Ameliorating Strategies for
KG Education in Ghana

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

DACF – District Assembly Common Fund
 DDE – District Director of Education
 DEO – District Education Office
 DfID – Department of International Development (a.k.a. UKAID)
 EDC – Education Development Center
 EFA – Education For All
 EQUALL – The Education Quality for All Project
 EU – European Union
 FHI 360 – Family Health International
 (Note: a disused full name)
 GES – Ghana Education Service
 GGA – Good Governance Africa
 GPRS – Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
 GPRTU – Ghana Private Road Transport Union
 IFC – International Finance Corporation
 INSET – In-service Training
 KEYY – Kindergarten Education Yardsticks & Yields
 KG – Kindergarten
 L1 – Local/Indigenous Language, e.g. Twi
 L2 – Foreign/Official, e.g. English
 L.I. – Legislative Instrument
 MDA – Ministries, Departments & Agencies
 MOE – Ministry of Education
 NALAP – National Literacy Acceleration Program
 NDAP – National Decentralization Action Plan
 NDPC – National Development Planning Commission
 NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
 NNTTC – National Nursery Teachers Training Center
 PNDC – Provisional National Defense Council
 PSA – Public Service Announcements
 PTA – Parent Teacher Association
 PTTR – Pupil to Trained Teacher Ratio
 RC – Roman Catholic
 RTI – Research Triangle Institute
 (Note: a disused full name)
 SMC – School Management Committee
 SRIMPR – SRIMPR/Statistics, Research, Information, Management and Public Relations
 TLMs – Teaching & Learning Materials
 UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
 USAID – United States Agency for International Development

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Good Governance Africa/GGA would like to thank the following:

Stephen Adu is the Acting Deputy Director General of the Ghana Education Service (GES). His assistance in GGA gaining access to GES functionaries in the field was invaluable.

Margaret Okai is the Deputy Divisional Director for the Basic Education at GES. Mrs. Okai was a champion of GGA's efforts to procure information and gain access to stakeholders sector-wide.

Henry Hevi is the District Director of Education at the District Education Office of Central Tongu in the Volta Region. We found Mr. Hevi to be a consummate professional in the conduct his work in general and the most gracious host. His keen interest in our work is also highly appreciated.

Other education sector stakeholder and functionaries who assisted GGA, either in the way of information or consultative interviews, include **Cynthia Bosumtwi-Sam**, Director of Curriculum Research and Development at GES, **Evelyn Quartey-Papafio**, Director of National Nursery Teachers Training Centre, **Herbert Gorman Jr.**, Computer Programmer Analyst at the Ministry of Education and **Divine Y. Ayidzoe**, Director of SRIMPR/Research, Information, Management and Public relations Division at the Ministry of Education.

GGA will also like to thank the personnel of the schools that willingly availed information about their educational establishments for the purposes of this policy paper. We owe them all immense gratitude.

Ekem Reginald Amonoo-Lartson, the author of this publication, has provided us with and addressed for us all a worthy subject matter to investigate and explore for Ghana's development. Ekem is an experienced international development executive/consultant and social entrepreneur. He is a specialist in the fields of education, the built environment, media and communications production as well as programme evaluation and project management. Ekem would like to personally thank **Kingsley Arkorful** and **Chris Dowuona-Hammond**.

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FOREWORD

freshly interpret existing government policy intentions and engages it with the sort of enterprising and entrepreneurial thinking that we espouse. GGA humbly and yet also very confidently offers up our unique solutions for the needed upscaling of KG education services as well as the widespread support needed for the continuing actualization of local language instruction in Ghana's classrooms.

“Herein lies an effort of ours to re-build education from the ground up.”

Tina Serwaa Asante-Apeatu
Chief Executive Officer

Nana Osei-Bonsu
Board Chairman

Ground Zero:

Ameliorating Strategies for KG Education in Ghana is an astute imagining of Ghana's intention to devolve governance, in this case education.

Good Governance Africa (GGA) envisions that this policy paper, along with its associated programming, may serve as a to-scale and sustainable blueprint for governance devolution – devolution whereby private sector involvement is encouraged and facilitated; whereby cross-sectorial civil and civic participation is assuredly effectual, as opposed to it being hoped for or wished upon; and whereby citizens in

their roles as customer, consumer, and custodian are encouraged to fully participate. GGA believes that diligent and effectual governance will require all the aforementioned.

Our interest is not in grand-scale programming, such that national government, and more particularly local governments, are unable to take up the mantle of their own matters and steer the course of their own destinies. Our goal is to imagine journeys that governance efforts may undertake, to delineate workloads that are able to carry their own weight, and to point to destinations that are navigable. The contents of our publication, Ground Zero...,

A BRIEFING NOTE



SUBJECT/TITLE:

Kindergarten Education – Ground Zero: Ameliorating Strategies for KG Education in Ghana.

ISSUE:

Is the provision of KG/pre-primary school education in Ghana optimally serving as a means to bolster the learning building blocks expected of its pupils; and, going forward, how is wider government policy and private sector capacity poised to mark up this potential and promise sought of the sector's pupils and its purveyors?

BACKGROUND:

The Government of Ghana, over several years, has correctly had the idea that the beginnings of

a child's life are formative, both prior to and after she/he has enrolled in school, e.g. kindergarten. Amongst the set of keys that a child brings to kindergarten in order to open themselves to learning achievement is the 'key' known as language. Language is the key that enables a pupil to process information, grasp knowledge, and articulate learning. More specifically, the 'key' one ultimately needs to retain and demonstrate facility with regarding literacy and numeracy, including a host of other

“

Language is fundamental and Language is the Key to Bolstering Learning Building Blocks in Pupils.

”

academic subjects, is language. Language also facilitates a child's understanding and appreciation of the inner-workings of his/her

community's social life as well as natural environment, e.g. communication and nomenclature. Ghana has sought to realize each and every child's solid footing in foundational learning through the initial employment of local language instruction. The key instructional principle that Government has been working with over the past several years may be stated as follows: children learn from the known (*i.e. their local/home language*) to the unknown (*i.e. English*). This means that when a socialized child is enrolled as an academic pupil in kindergarten they possess greater facility in their local language than in the English language. If at “ground zero” of their educational career this is the fact at hand for the vast majority of newly-enrolled pupils, public policymakers have reasoned that it ought to be prudent to instruct a child through the use of his/her local language, at least up until they have the toolkit to become familiar with English. One-and-all are most articulate in the language they are most familiar with, so goes the rationale. Therefore, to learn and perform in another language requires a transition.

The government has sought and continues to realize this idea and ideal via various methods and means.

These includes the use of [1] local language instruction and ➤

[2] child-centered interactive learning as methods and [3] **NAL-AP**, the National Literacy Acceleration Program, and [4] **The Learning Project** as means.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Good Governance Africa (**GGA**) is seeking to provide a fresh and practical interpretation to the methods as well as a fresh and enterprising implementation of the means to foundational learning at the kindergarten level. However, rather than macro-sized programming that requires gargantuan charitable financial outlays from others and out-of-proportion logistical muscle from government, GGA proposes a step-wise, scale-appropriate, district-level and sustainable regime and protocol, which is more in tune with the scale of a district's capacities. This interest and initiative of ours is in no way meant to suggest other efforts have not been in any way effective. GGA is simply prodding Ghana to reconsider how the efficacy of learning at the kindergarten level is achieved, delivered, and managed by applying renewed thinking to the strategizing for it. Kindergarten practically functions as ground zero in a child's life; and GGA believes that the non-public sector—and the private sector most especially—may be well placed and poised to undertake part of this charge to realize optimal kindergarten education service delivery. The country has seen this happen at the tertiary level; and that level is so much

more start-up capital intensive relative to the KG education sector/level.

GGA is encouraging a regime whereby [1] SME-level education service operations may [2] meet optimal pupil/teacher ratios, whilst also being [3] economically sustainable and, at the same time, [4] operationally and physically accessible to parents. All the while, these KG operations will also be [5] under the supervision of a District Education Office and a Local Assembly as well as be [6] in keeping with Government of Ghana's decentralization policies as they would also be [7] availing themselves of the services of civil society and civic institutions.

Operational, technical and financial capacities, per the model that GGA is suggesting, may be serviced in the following ways:

- Each local stakeholder will have a part to play in the delivery of KG education services – e.g. from a Local Assembly coordinating the periodic evaluation of pupils to a local financial institution administering financing support as well as from proprietors operating kindergartens to PTAs closely monitoring their children's progress, the latter probably being possible all because of the shift in parents' roles from being 'beneficiaries' to that of 'consumers'
- Experienced educators can serve as master Trainers to their colleagues, the latter comprising inexperienced public teachers, untrained private school teachers and KG proprietors

- NGOs may then fund and operate kindergarten resource centers under which the aforementioned capacitation regimes are operationalized

CONCLUSIONS:

Given the above considerations as well as prevailing observations of many others, the following conclusions are offered by GGA:

- Misconceptions about local language instruction amongst parents and the general public practically function as the venom inhibiting its use in classrooms as well as its widespread acceptance and appreciation across the country.
- 'Messaging' parents about local language instruction via public service announcements (PSAs) and advertisements is, over the long term, ineffectual. What is needed is a conversational process that gets parents to convince themselves that educational matters such as language instruction policy are germane to their children's academic prognosis
- Grandiose programming that stretches government's muscle and seductively retains their attention is myopic in this contemporary era of "decentralization." Capacity building solutions, for example, should be scale-appropriate, recurring, and dynamically remedial.
- The efficacy of foundational learning, from Kindergarten through to the lower ends of primary education (if not the entire stretch), is inextricably tied to local language instruction.

- Much as the role of the private sector has been pivotal to the upscaling of tertiary education so should a space be found for the private sector at the kindergarten level

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A pilot initiative, *Kindergarten Education Yardsticks and Yields (KEYY)*, is announced. GGA proposes KEYY as a demonstration on how the governance of kindergarten-education may be optimally

executed at a scale-appropriate level whilst also managing to involve all sectors of civic society as well as being in keeping with what government intends for governance devolution.

- The suggested regime and protocol for KEYY is summarized in the table below.

Table Two (see Section 2 of main report)

Proposed District Decentralization Framework for KG Education Programming

Program Area #1	Program Area #2	Program Area #3	Program Area #4
Policy & institutional Arrangement for Decentralization, Implementation.	District Development Funding facility	Capacity Building & Human Resources Development for Decentralization	Partnership & Participation for Accountable Local Governance
A three-tier protocol that involves District Education Office (DEO) supervision and technical resourcing, civil society technical and financial resourcing as well as secondary service provision and private sector service provision.	District Assembly contributions for learning outcomes testing. Development Partners' finance facility for KG proprietors. Civic organizations (NGOs, churches & mosques) underwrite education service provision and vet learning outcomes testing.	Select DEO teaching personnel do peer training for all KG teaching personnel and operators/proprietors. Civic organizations operate KG resource centers.	PTAs of private KGs oversee the management of KGs. Civic organizations' KG resource centers coordinate technical capacitation of KG teaching personnel as well as the continual testing of pupils. Assemblies & the DEO retain and/or entertain the services of the civic organizations.

GROUND ZERO

Ameliorating Strategies for KG Education in Ghana

MAIN REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The study, *Ground Zero: Ameliorating Strategies for KG Education in Ghana*, may be summarized as an exercise designed to address the following:

“Is the provision of KG/pre-primary school education in Ghana optimally serving as a means to bolster the learning building blocks expected of its pupils; and, going forward, how is wider government policy and private sector capacity poised to mark up this potential and promise sought of the sector’s pupils and its purveyors?”

Kindergarten education made a latent entry into the formal academic stream relative to the ‘traditional’ years of Primary One on through to Senior High School Twelve. Before this, the main providers of KG education were private proprietors, and they, at that, were largely providing “nursery,” “crèche,” and/or “daycare” ‘education.’ KG education was not seen as an academic first step, at least in the formal sense whereby it fed into any pre-existing academic content at the Primary One level and beyond. Arguably, parents perceived KG education to be a head-start they were affording their children or as a method of daycare. Those who saw neither the need nor had the financial means chose not to enroll their kids in KG; especially the sort of KG that was a formal and initial first step into their child’s educational career.

Spurred by the Millenium Development Goals for education

as well as other conventions/ fora^[1], the Government of Ghana decided to mainstream KG education. Towards this end they encouraged communities to

It appears back then that the private sector did not take up that mantle as they may not have been strongly encouraged to do so. For unspecified reasons community KGs floundered managerially. Suffice it to say, the foray into non-public provision of educational services at that academic level came out less than stellar.

Further to this ‘false’ start of sorts, disjunctions pervade[d] this universe of foundational education. Arguably these disjunctions include the following: [1] the habit of parents of pupils not appreciating the full utility of KG



start up their own KGs. Some of the operators of these KGs did come up against challenges that spurred them to relent the management of them to the GES, as the latter had suggested.

education in-and- of-its-self. Consequently, [2] parents habitually do not respect the optimal means^[2] needed to realize the full potential of these ‘seed-planting’ years for their children. ➤

¹ For example, the Dakar World Forum for Education

² This includes the use of L1/local language for general instructional purposes, across all subjects and topics

Parents, it may be argued, rely on KG schooling to meet their daycare needs as much as they hope their kids will benefit from the head start that KG education is expected to provide their children. Given these opposing rules-of-thumbs, parents, on one hand, remain oblivious to the tried & true means—and one may well see them all as the ‘medicine’—needed to efficiently effectuate learning. They often see some of these means as needless instructional detours, as is the case with L1/L2 instruction; and yet, on the other hand, they also view these very means as the preferred way to manufacture L1^[3] lingual proficiency in their children for socio-cultural reasons. The aesthetic sought after with this latter scenario is one—where an L2^[4]/ English-language-spouting child is on showcase whilst the artifice achieved is an English-language-miming ‘sprout’ who knows not much of which he or she speaks. Parents are nary savvy to the full facility and utility of language as a tool for learning. The ways & means of how language ‘allows’ a child to grasp lessons and articulate learning is lost on most parents. Indeed the general public, who all may be viewed as education sector consumers alongside parents, stew themselves in clishmaclaver that



has within its boundaries a low tolerance for the academic use of L1 and high preference for the fast-tracking of L2 in lower primary education, KG included. In fact, many appear to view KG as the launch pad to force feed the ‘raw & rough’ rudiments of L2 to their children such that the formal argument that pupils come equipped with relatively better proficiency in L1 as compared to L2 when they reach Primary One^[5] can be countenanced by their closed & comforted minds. This falsely-grounded satisfaction attained, many parents and a significant number of members of the general public present a pupil’s cosmetic use of L2 as artifact that a ‘smart’ and ‘articulate’

child has been produced. Parents and the general public, all at once, do and may steer the path of KG education in unintended^[6], inconsequential^[7] as well as consequential^[8] paths, especially as regards the policy under study in this paper. It is hoped that one position should reign supreme in this ‘steering’ committee and the stirring debate between and amongst citizens of Ghana:

local language instruction is inextricably tied to foundational learning’s means & ends, most especially given the mere, yet undeniable, fact that most children walk into a classroom for the first time with an appreciably better facility with L1 as compared to L2.

3 L1 refers to the indigenous and local language of a child and/or his/her school-community

4 L2 refers to the ‘foreign’ & official language of a nation state; in Ghana’s case it is English

5 This report argues that nursery-KG education is seen as ‘pre-education’ (a.k.a. “pre-school”), and not education per se

6 Inadvertently arresting learning outcomes, due to the less than optimal utilization of L1 instruction

7 Gaining status and stasis with the cosmetic use as well as fractured facility with L2

8 Colloquial command of both L1 and L2 reigns supreme nationwide, whereby, for example, reading & writing for academic and professional use is sorely wanting

This policy paper conveys the argument that L1, relative to L2, fast-tracks the grasping of new knowledge and the import of lessons, as it also facilitates a fuller conceptualization of a child's existing knowledge that was initially acquired in his/her L1.

This above-characterized educational universe is in 'orbit' with yet another educational universe. This other universe comprises **education sector practitioners and purveyors**, the ones of whom much is expected by the universe of parents. There is a fundamental chasm between those who 'consume' education and those who provide educational service at the basic level of the education, e.g. the decision-maker at this level of education turns out not to be the primary consumer of the service provided – i.e. they are the bearer of the costs whilst also being the mal-informed secondary consumer of the service, a service about which emotional considerations often times outweigh and override intellectual and logical ones^[9]. However, one must, at times, appreciate the logic of parents' decisions, especially when insufficiently-educated graduates, i.e. their children, serve as specimens gone awry of someone else's experimenting with their children's education. The crux of this surmising by parents is that it soils the best intentions of the ideal and idea that local language instruction tied to foundational

learning's means & ends. Government at-large rides high on this programming ideal yet it does not optimally practice or realize the promise of this ideal, at least to the requisite cognition and satisfaction of parents. Furthermore, optimal execution of this idea is in evidence in relatively few instances and apparent in scattered cases^[10]

In re-visiting the main point of this KG education inquiry^[11]

2. The solution to significantly increasing the number of KG educational facilities may largely, though not totally, lie with the private sector, much like it has been the case with the tertiary education sector.
3. Instructional methods for KG education should be designed for use adaptation rather than for rigid prescriptive application (quality withstanding^[12]), especially given acknowledgment that the strict application of the NALAP method



and given the above characterizations and summations, the following may be surmised and advocated for:

1. The harbinger to quality KG education delivery, especially as regards instruction and its learning outcomes, are the attitudes parents and the public hold about language instruction.

10 Adidome Roman Catholic Kindergarten in Central Tongu District may be presented as one such case. Seemingly the schools that educators' children attend may be thought of as the best practice schools, as they are in-the-know crowd when it comes to appreciating the savviness of the L1/L2 method of instruction. Adidome RC hosts the bulk of the DEO's staff's children. Another, perhaps, being University of Cape Coast Primary (as the NALAP Implementation Study discloses)

is not being adhered to. Furthermore, the continuing tardy supply chain of trained teachers and the participation of private sector proprietors will require this educational programming adaptation^[13].

⁹ The example about parents cavorting their L2-mimicking children is but one example of this malaise

Is the provision of KG/pre-primary school education in Ghana optimally serving as a means to bolster the learning building blocks expected of its pupils; and, going forward, how is wider government policy and private sector capacity poised to mark up this potential and promise sought of the sector's pupils and its purveyors?

Furthermore, the continuing tardy supply chain of trained teachers and the participation of private sector proprietors will require this educational programming adaptation^[13].

This study will detail how the aforementioned three summations may be actualized, and at minimum further contextualized. Ultimately, there certainly exists discord and variance between the thought and behavior of education consumers as well as the practice and policy of education – e.g. a parent thinks that when their child is voluble in L2 that makes for a stellar pupil whilst education sector functionaries propound the utility of L1 instruction. The latter then also turn a ‘blind eye’ to L1 modes of formal testing (i.e. teach in L1 but test in L2), at least to

the extent that it must be seen and appreciated by parents.

Further to that, and in turn, parents would indeed concur with this lack of, though needed, type of testing practice; and ironically, educators not sufficiently savvy to the utility of L1 instruction—and there are many out there—would, in turn and ‘out-of- turn,’ concur, whether out of habit or otherwise. Resultantly, a circularly ruinous relationship festers, whereby the dreams which parents have for their children and the ones that are dreamt up by educators and those they also have of them function as inadvertent adversaries of one another in an ‘internally-combustible’ orbit that ends up hardly anywhere for one & all – i.e. it is as if an unstoppable force meets an immovable object.

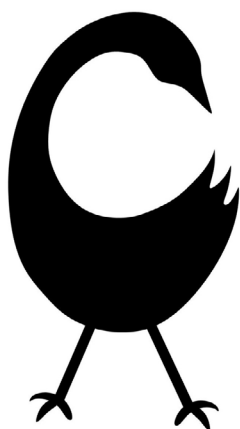
Policy and practice remediation exercised at the KG level alongside behavioral re-tuning could allow for renewed and improved education delivery and management for this sub-sector of education – e.g [1] formal oral testing as practice as well as [2] discourse^[14] (rather than ‘messaging’) as method are but two strategies that could be adopted.

Before delving further into the national discourse that this study hopes to start, the orbit of education needs to be further contextualized and re-conceptualized. This will be done through the surveying and processing of relevant data and information that characterizes the sector as per the purposes of this study.



¹³ Untrained teachers will remain non-the-wiser when it comes to ‘method’ and education entrepreneurs will need agile resourcing—not to be solely sourced out of a teacher’s guide—that backs up parental satisfaction of their services

¹⁴ An L.One Talk Series for radio broadcast that engages parents in dialog about local language instruction and the foundations of learning etc. is under production



The following ideas and issues that will permeate this section, and indeed this entire policy paper, may be summarized as follows:

- Governance Devolution
- Upscaling KG Education Nationwide
- Language Instruction Policy & Practice for Foundational Learning
- Stakeholder Dialog
- Sectoral Capacity Building

Over forty documents were identified for examination as part of the literature search and information procurement efforts associated with the development of this policy paper. They include the below-listed. A cull of these documents' contents inform the ensuing in-depth discussion of the above listed ideas and issues.

1. National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAP): Towards a Sector-wide Approach for Decentralization Implementation in Ghana [Sept. 2003]
2. NALAP Social Marketing Campaign: Formative Research Report [July 2008]
3. Meeting Challenges of Education in the Twenty-First Century: Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana [October 2002]
4. Curriculum for Kindergarten (Kindergarten 1-2) [August 2006]
5. Ghana 2013 Early Grade Reading Assessment and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment report of Findings [January 2014]
6. The 'Working-Draft' of the NNTTC/National Nursery Teachers Training Center of the Ghana Education Service Curriculum
7. National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP) Implementation Study [August 2010]
8. Chicago State University Ghana Teaching and Learning Materials Program: Training of Trainers Workshop [May 2011]
9. Programme to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana (Final Version) [November 2012]
10. Scaling Up KG: Briefing Note
11. Stakeholder Analysis of Kindergarten Education in Ghana [February 2012]
12. Teacher Preparation and Continuing Professional Development in Africa (TPA): Learning to Teach Reading and Mathematics and its Influence on Practice in Ghana (Draft Country Report)
13. Task Order 7: NALAP Formative Evaluation Report, Ghana [April 2011]
14. National EFA 2015 Review Report: Ghana Country Report [November 2014]

LOOKING BACK TOWARDS THE WAY FORWARD

15. Educational Reforms in Ghana, 1947-2007
16. The 2007 Educational Reforms and its Challenges

THE LITERATURE ABSTRACT & DERIVATIONS THEREOF

One of Ghana's attempts to make manifest the decentralization of governance has been the establishment of local government Assemblies; the 1992 constitution even addresses the issue^[15]. The Ghana government has decided that the practice and attainment of governance devolution, as a policy ideal and towards the best practice of it as an end, should be extended to the private sector and civil society. Ghana's National Decentralization Action Plan lists one of its eight strategic objectives as follows: **"Promote popular participation and deepen association and partnership between District Assemblies, civil society, [the] private sector, and Traditional Authorities."**^[16] Further-to- that, the Government's, self-titled, "step-wise" approach to decentralization implementation includes "building partnerships **for responsive and accountable local governance** with civil society, the private sector and traditional institutions."^[17]

¹⁵ Article 35 (6) (d) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana

Most specifically, one of the four operational programming pillars has been stated to be the following: extending an “invitation to civil society organizations, NGOs, the private sector and traditional authorities to collaborate in the development of partnership[s] and participation in **decentralization efforts**”^[18] ”

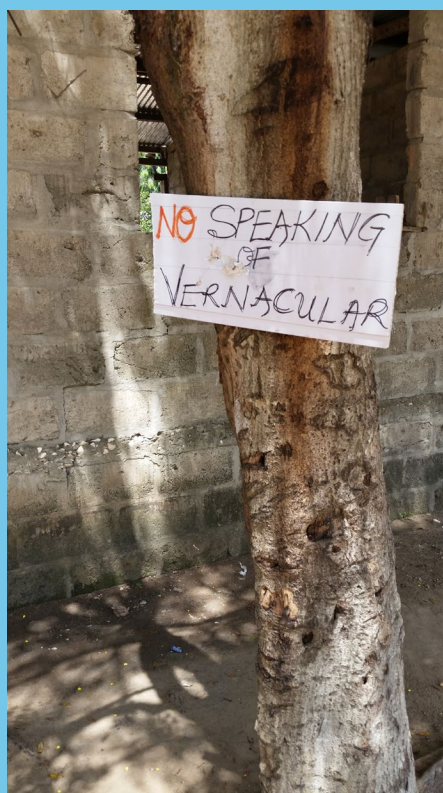
This invitation is accepted by Good Governance Ghana’s/GGA’s “Ground Zero...” policy study. As such GGA takes up the mantle to embark on the “development and testing of key entry strategies [and] specific actions to strengthen the institutional arrangements for decentralization implementation, [as these concern kindergarten/KG education].” This study will thereupon suggest how “under [Ghana’s] decentralization policy [KG education] development becomes a shared responsibility of the Government, District [Assemblies], Civil Society Organization[s], [the] private sector and communities [of a district].”^[19] ”

“The [suggested adoption of such a strategic] policy [plan ought to be] designed in order to make the [nation’s] District Assemblies more autonomous, more responsive to local needs and technically and financially capable of expanding and improving service delivery.”^[20] ”

16 National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAP): Towards a Sector-wide Approach for Decentralization Implementation in Ghana (2003-2005). Decentralization Secretariat, Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development (September 2003), page iii

17 *ibid*

18 *ibid*



Lastly, Ghana’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) 2002-2004 lists as one of its goals the active involvement of the private sector and its vision includes the effective delivery of services by this sector. “Ground Zero...” as a document, will explore how to marry these two variables of the GPRS.

Ghana decentralization efforts date back to 1988, the NDAP reports. The NDAP further discloses that inadequate resources, ineffective collaboration, and unfocused programming have constrained the Government’s implementation efforts.

17 *ibid*

18 *ibid*

The NDAP, serving as a renewed effort at decentralization, further recognizes the role the Districts are to play – i.e. “become the focal point of all development activities at the local level.” The NDAP goes on to clarify that it is not just the Assemblies that are to be at play, but rather that there is to be a “shared responsibility [between] the Government [of Ghana], [the] District Assemblies, Civil Society Organization[s], [the] private sector, and communities.”^[21] The NDAP even goes on to list the governance instruments that may facilitate this perennial decentralization drive of Ghana’s^[22]

The author(s) of the NDAP wisely make a distinction between the concepts of devolution and de-concentration, where then a preference is made for devolution. This study further advances that argument as follows: devolution of governance implementation, though not the supervision of it, should now extend to the private sector. Additionally, towards measured restraint, and not constriction (mind you), >

21 *ibid*

22 Fourth Republican Constitution of 1992, the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462), The Local Government Service Act of 2003, The Civil Service Law of 1983 (PNDC Law 327), the National Development Planning Commission Act of 1994 (Act 479) The National Development Planning Systems Act of 1994 (Act 480), the Local Government [Urban Zonal Area & Town Councils, and Unit Committees] Establishment Instrument of 1994 (L.I.1589), the District Assemblies’ Common Fund Act of 1993 (Act 455), and The Legislative Instruments/Lis establishing the various Assemblies

a hybrid protocol that also invites social purpose entities (e.g. NGOs) to participate should be fashioned. The argument of some that some infusion of added 'quality' to the 'quantities' may then be realized for the sub-sector by this fashioning.

This study will outline an optimal programming protocol for KG education. Implicitly, this study has fashioned an ameliorating strategy for the de facto reality that the NDAP cites – that there has rather been a growing concentration of power and resources at the MDA/ Ministries, Departments and Agencies level when it comes to the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation functions sought of decentralization; whereas the opposite was intended. The NDAP provides the following example on District Assemblies: The NDAP lists some challenges that the Government is facing in its effort towards realizing optimal decentralization; they are – [1] the lack of clarity which retards the pace of implementation, [2] weak collaboration, [3] inadequate budgetary allocations, and [4] weak economic bases in districts. This study will delineate



**Table One: Policy & Practice
Incongruity in Decentralization**

Policy Design Consideration	Reality
District Assemblies are to be primarily responsible for the development of local level policy based on/and informed by national policies/programs and local circumstances; preparation of district development plans based on/informed by national and regional development policies; and the implementation of such development plans and programs coordinated by NDPC.	Reality Substantial progress has been made in this direction, aided by the availability of the DCAF to support District development policy, planning and program implementation. This is however occurring in tandem with equally strong "district-level" policy, planning and program implementation by competing and MDAs (health, education, agriculture) who continue to receive funding and priority-setting directives from their national and regional offices

a clear administrative apparatus that encourages non-public sector participation and that will quicken the pace of implementation.

Decentralization for lower primary education is likely not to be a simple task given that citizens will have to be turned into 'consumers' as much as they have been traditionally accorded the status of being 'beneficiaries.' The feat will be to make the foundational level of education, this as against the basic level (i.e. Primary One through to Junior High School), fee paying to some extent, much as secondary and tertiary levels of education are. So, for example, where there are "inadequate budget allocations," parents and community members will be encouraged to bring up the rear financially, and, ultimately, they ought to be willingly to do so at that^[23]. Seemingly this latter feat and caveat may be at odds with the stress on poverty-targeted programming, as the NDAP's contents so state. It will be shown that it will not necessarily be so.

Rather it will serve as an enterprising way to increase KG education production, if not also promote sustainable livelihoods, at least for the KG proprietors, who would be providing a key social service. "The active involvement of the private sector as [one] of the main engines of growth and partners in nation building" will hopefully be realized. The policy of the government's "... to strengthen and deepen the decentralization process and to make sub-district structures as conduits for service delivery" will be put in the hands of non-public actors, e.g. the private sector and civil society. ➤

²³ The assumption belying the transition from being beneficiaries to consumers is that private purveyors shall be able to infuse enough quality, perceived or actual, as per the expectations of parents, thereby predisposing them to pay for service and an obligation. A good start ensure a good finish, i.e. the willingness of a respectable majority of parents to pay for tertiary education may apply to kindergarten education

In the process the public sector, as this study will demonstrate, may assume and have strengthened their planning and monitoring acumen. The following table retooled from the NDAP may lend some specificity to the programming that will be suggested in this study for adoption nationwide.



Table Two: Proposed District Decentralization Framework for KG Education Programming

Proposed District Decentralization Framework for KG Education Programming

Program Area #1	Program Area #2	Program Area #3	Program Area #4
Policy & institutional Arrangement for Decentralization, Implementation.	District Development Funding facility	Capacity Building & Human Resources Development for Decentralization	Partnership & Participation for Accountable Local Governance
A three-tier protocol that involves District Education Office (DEO) supervision and technical resourcing, civil society technical and financial resourcing as well as secondary service provision and private sector service provision.	District Assembly contributions for learning outcomes testing. Development Partners' finance facility for KG proprietors. Civic organizations (NGOs, churches & mosques) underwrite education service provision and vet learning outcomes testing.	Select DEO teaching personnel do peer training for all KG teaching personnel and operators/proprietors. Civic organizations operate KG resource centers.	PTAs of private KGs oversee the management of KGs. Civic organizations' KG resource centers coordinate technical capacitation of KG teaching personnel as well as the continual testing of pupils. Assemblies & the DEO retain and/or entertain the services of the civic organizations.

The issues of [1] tardy DACF transfers from central government to local government, [2] the inordinate amounts of effort that government functionaries often have to exert for 'outsiders' project's demands, and [3] where investment funding is made dependent on an Assembly's functional and governance performance will all be abated, and perhaps even reversed, in the following ways:

1. Local government, via the DEO and the Assembly, will take the front seat in KG education delivery oversight, such that, and in addition, their local priorities may reign supreme
2. DEO personnel will staff the training regime intended for all KG education service providers
3. Serving as the frontline infantry, parents of pupils will be making financial contributions to their children's education, as they ought to; and this mechanism will ensure parental probity over the private KG schools and propriety over their children's learning outcomes. (NOTE: the latter will be partly contingent on the success of adjusting their perceptions and attitudes to language instruction)
4. The KG education intervention suggested here is not to serve as a "project" that – as is often the case – falls victim to the inattentiveness, vicissitudes, and vagaries of most post-project timelines. The programming espoused here is scale-appropriate through & through
5. The capacity building needs of the district will be tackled or realized via participatory, peer-led, and experiential

learning methods, means, and intentions

The above tenets that are espoused for one-and-all in the KG sector can be said to be "an effective arrangement that seeks to promote 'partnership and participation' of both the public and non-public sector..." This study thereupon asserts that the suggestions in this report are in keeping with most of the rationales for partnership and participation, as outlined in Section 4.1.4. of the NDAP, and as listed below:

1. The creation of space for the voices of the non-governmental sector (civil society, Think Tanks, Traditional Authorities 24, Private Sector) legitimizes and adds credibility to the whole process of decentralization
2. It promotes transparency, accountability, and ensures efficient use of resources
3. The whole discourse of decentralization is enriched by the value of inputs and contributions by these other actors – i.e. "Think Tanks^[25]," academia, [the] media, and traditional leaders etc.
4. The fundamental rights of the people are respected when their "agents" participate in the process. Their inputs usually reflect the views of the socially excluded and marginalized
5. Partnership with the private sector has the potential of releasing benefits[,], especially

²⁴ Traditional rulers, for example, should be in the forefront of securing lands for the construction of KG resource centers (an amenity that this report espouses)

for the local economy

6. Partnerships with the NGOs ensure consistency between district level development priorities and service delivery

A detailing of how this advocated-for programming may actually get actualized on the ground as disclosed and discussed above is to follow in due course. Suffice it to say for now, Central Tongu District can serve as a unique and promising route to have all the above realized, such that it may serve as a model demonstration site for the entire country.

Besides the suggested devolution of KG education to the private sector, as well as the community at-large (by way of civic organizations), another issue that demands attention is how to upscale KG education from its current level of availability. The Ghana Education Service/GES has been deliberating on this issue over the past few years and these efforts have resulted in the development of an extensive document-set which involved the participation of many stakeholders and functionaries in the education sector.

The Government of Ghana has compartmentalized the needed growth of the KG sector into three priority areas, comprising twelve aims and objectives. Table Three below summarizes them.

²⁵ As GGA is so doing by virtue of this report

Table Three: Scaling-up Quality KG Education – Strategic Goals & Priority Components^[26]

	ACCESS: To Provide Access to KG For All 4 & 5 Year Olds	QUALITY: To Transform Teaching Practice & Learning Environments To Deliver Activity-based Learning	OUTCOMES: To Define and Measure A Set of Outcomes
	A	B	C
1	Teachers in every KG classroom	Teacher training & development delivered using model KGs	Teachers observe and record child development and share with parents
2	Infrastructure upgraded to minimum standards	Learning materials & resources provided	Child development milestones developed & guiding curriculum, training & assessment
3	Parents and public awareness campaign to promote KGs	National standards established with strong sector leadership	Monitoring & evaluation to measure impact of operational plan
4	Inclusion of special needs	[Periodic] Review of KG curriculum	Quality assurance inspection

Some of the above variables in Table Three fit well with the intervention scheme sketched out in Table Two. Those under the Outcomes column/C in Table Three suit the roles for which each actor is assigned in Program Area #4 of Table Two – i.e. each assigned actor's role does fit well with the roles that they would assume, e.g. the relationship between the PTA in Program Area #4 in Table Two and that of top-most cell in the Outcomes column (cell C1) is obvious, as is the civic organizations' role in Table Two to the

third-from-the-top cell in the Outcomes column (cell C3) of Table Three. However, the fortitude needed to achieve results will be tested in the relationship between the nominated actors of Program Area #2 of Table Two and that of the second-from-the-top cell in Access column (cell A2) of Table Three.

It will be inarguable to assert that private KGs in municipal- to metro-sized districts are generally less equipped and less financially

resourced than public ones; however, the reserve might be true in rural districts, at least cosmetically, if not also, in terms of the respective KG's teaching staff's capacities^[27] (as Table Four below both reveals, as much as it also conceals these immediately preceding points).

²⁶ Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Executive Summary of the Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana (November 2012)

In Central Tongu, for example, the public KG's facilities are far superior to that of the private KG and one of the community KGs in Tema Metro fared worse facilities-wise to the public KG.

It is timely to now have it be noted that private KG facilities will be start-ups with debt burdens. The creative option to have them be registered as non-profit entities with management fee entitlements ought to be entertained as an alternative to them being profit-making ventures. Optimally, a KG entrepreneurs' fund ought to be developed for those who want to become KG proprietors. For a variety of reasons, the most preferred cohort of KG educator proprietor will be retiring or retired KG teacher,^[28] though other types of educators and enterprising social entrepreneurs ought to be welcomed.

The public awareness campaign to promote KGs will be another feat. The inextricable link between KG education and language pedagogy, given parents' misconceptions and misunderstandings of its use and its utility as well as the less than optimal and, at times, impractical ways through which Government seeks to effectuate this key component of education, will have to be skillfully navigated. A tolerance for the adroit application of educational principles rather than the rigid adherence to education prescripts, as each cohort of stakeholder prejudicially sees one another's opinions, will have to be engendered – e.g. parents, often enough, see L1 instruction as a needless detour; and if-as-and-when they favor its adoption, they favor its 'practical' use as opposed to its rigid application. On the other hand, Government's adoption of selected

L1 languages for use in school-communities, at times, seems demographically incongruous or linguistically illogical – Consider the scenario where [1] a child's "first-home" language is Ewe, let's say; but [2] their school-community's de facto lingua franca is Twi, and yet still [3] the indigenous language of the larger geographical area is Ga, this in contrast to the case where [4] the demographic profile of the classroom under discussion is populated with Fanti, Ga, and Ewe, among other, speakers, and whereupon [5] the teacher employs Twi as the L1 language of instruction, often times interchangeably with L2, this all in the effort to effectuate lesson delivery, if not also learning *Given these facts on the ground in some school-communities, may one then assert that this use of L1 (combined with L2) constitutes as a linguistic detour or a utilitarian pathway?*

Table Four: Comparing & Contrasting Public and Private Kindergartens in Ghana^[29]

Indicator	Public	Private
Number of kindergarten schools	13,263	5,538
Percentage of schools with toilets	49%	72%
Percentages of schools with drinking water	81%	83%
Percentage of classroom in need of major repairs	28%	7%
Teacher population	31,595	9889
Percentage of trained teachers	38.8%	6.7%
Pupil to trained teacher ratio (PTTR)	96:1	471:1

²⁷ The report "Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana [Final Version] (November 2012)" wholly postulates

²⁸ The report "Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana [Final Version] (November 2012)" wholly postulates the following about private KGs (whereas the contrary may be more accurate on a point or two): "The combination of fewer pupils per class and the better standard of infrastructure, facilities and resources, are likely to be factors that sway parents towards the private sector, regardless of the quality of teaching from a predominantly untrained cohort of teachers."

*primary source is EMIS of 2011

A future public awareness campaign should not shirk this caveat of an issue as contextualized above. A number of epiphanies will also have to be experienced by just about every single cohort of stakeholder: [1] The number of formally trained educators will be scant going into the medium term (though one & all must ensure that this will not extend into the long term); [2] Private education proprietors who often times creatively tackle and surmount this commonly-perceived ‘deficit,’^[30] coming out aplomb most times, must be given the opportunity, perhaps even the mantle, if Ghana is to realize its KG sector up-scaling goals^[31] and [3] the utility of local language instruction has everything to do with the rules of how to employ language and the near-universal constructs that comprise any one of them, give or take exceptions.

1. The logical implications embedded in these above points include the following: The Country will have to be flexible and enterprising in its delivery of KG education. Inviting private sector

participation is but one avenue through which to adapt to this challenge.

2. The training of private KG proprietors/educators should promote a “realistic, step-wise approach”^[32] to education. After all, widely-held opinions assert that teachers in private schools, and even untrained ones at that, do out-perform their trained peers. Furthermore, parents have an unfounded belief and an outright preference for this sort of teacher. This bias has even attained the status of conventional wisdom. Given these preceding points, plus the dearth of teachers, the efficient means through which to train new entrants (i.e. private KG proprietors), and the tolerance that education consumers have for this cohort of purveyor, in addition to how close to the ground this study suggests that they operate at, the opportunity for a breath of fresh interpretation and practice of foundational learning is possible^[33]

At once there will be **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats** to this route to supply & demand “road-mapping” for KG education:

- a. *Two STRENGTHS* – [1] private purveyors are naturally nimble, logistically and [2] parents seem to have an innate ‘respect’ and tolerance for private-service educators
- b. *Two WEAKNESSES* – [1] Parents possess profound misconceptions about language instruction for the purposes of foundational learning and [2] amongst the ranks of private teachers many are untrained, they who then also have a colloquial command^[34] of their L1 language
- c. *Two OPPORTUNITIES* – [1] an enterprising fresh start for KG growth is possible owing to the fact that grass-roots level proprietors may be best placed to ‘reach’ parents, especially if they are religious institutions providing a “private” education service and [2] a financially sustainable mechanism by way of a revolving fund for KG proprietors^[35] will grease the implementation of this enterprising approach to KG education delivery
- d. *Two THREATS* – [1] Government might balk at the perceived loss of autonomy to the non-public sector and [2] errant-minded or behaviorally-apathetic parents might not fulfill their involvement obligations in their role as wards of pupils, e.g. their misguided extolment of cosmetic L2 usage and their addiction to the somewhat vacuous promise of absolutely ‘free’ education are omnipresent

29 Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana [Final Version] (November 2012)

30 Commonly-perceived deficit as in teachers who are untrained (but yet still outperform trained teachers at just about every other turn)

31 For one thing, the 2012 Ministry of Education’s Program to Upscale Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana discloses that it will need Ghc. 823 million over five years in order to effectuate its operational plan

32 NDAP

33 Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana (November 2012) partially provides a compelling argument in this regard: “The combination of fewer pupils per class and the better standard of infrastructure, facilities and resources are likely to be factors that sway parents towards the private sector, regardless of the quality of teaching from a predominantly untrained cohort of teachers”

34 i.e. they possess an casual/informal command of the spoken language and they lack formal facility with the writing and reading of the language[s]

3. Intermittent in-field INSET/in-service training for KG proprietors/educators will be to-scale, i.e. to be largely sourced and provided for at the district level. Given the nation's shallow pockets, in-house peer training between public and private sector KG education operatives should function as a sustainable way, both financially and programmatically, this towards the optimal capacitation of the KG sector in terms of talent.

Table Five: Size and Market Share of Private Kindergartens in Ghana^[36]

	Region	No. of Private Schools (PSs)	PSs as % of all Schools	Enrollment in PSs	PS Enrollment as % of Total Enrollment	No. of Teachers in PSs	PSs Teachers as Ratio of Total	No. of Untrained Teachers in PSs
1.	Ashanti	1,195	36.6	76,527	28.5	2,277	27.1	2,114
2.	Brong Ahafo	444	22.4	29,981	16.4	883	16.3	847
3.	Central	877	39.4	45,522	28.6	1,595	34.6	1,493
4.	Eastern	664	28.1	32,284	19.7	1,034	19.6	951
5.	Greater Accra	1,100	64.0	50,431	42.3	1,943	45.8	1,756
6.	Northern	202	10.9	12,375	7.5	386	11.8	368
7.	Upper East	80	11.2	10,181	14.0	143	10.6	137
8.	Upper West	37	6.7	2,733	5.5	113	9.7	102
9.	Volta	383	18.8	16,750	12.8	576	16.3	552
10.	Western	556	26.5	33,906	18.4	939	22.2	909

It was mentioned earlier in this paper that local language instruction policy & practice is inextricably linked to foundational learning's means and ends. One may say that the absence of its use in instruction at the basic-of-basic levels of basic education will be the bane of effective learning amongst pupils, as it will certainly also constitute as the most inefficient way through which to effectuate instruction.

Furthermore, parents will remain none-the-wiser if they hold steadfastly on to this foolhardy position. A public message campaign alone will not solve this issue;

a participatory 'conversation' will. Attitudinal and behavioral change will come from the fashioning of an experiential marketing^[37] exercise, simulated as from the Danish Folk school^[38] model whereupon inflective reasoning^[39] should be par for the course as well as the cause at hand. This cause may be contextualized as follows:

The appreciation for the common design of language as it is to be grasped and used by pupils for academic purposes should initially be achieved via L1 instruction, especially given that

L1 usage functions as an evolutionary psychological and intellectual mechanism that efficiently and effectively instructs a pupil as to what lingual accidents to avoid when using language. The academic task of deconstructing language so that it may be reconstructed within

³⁵ A concessionary KG proprietors' fund plenished by Development Partners like The World Bank or IFC and managed by a finance agency or institution (e.g. Dal-ex Finance and/or Apex Bank and their affiliate rural banks)



a pupil is what L1 instruction aims to be all about.

The epiphanies, alongside the aforementioned others, that the uninitiated have to appreciate and grasp is that language and thinking are inseparable; that lingual concepts come laden with psychological impressions; that language structures thinking and facilitates its articulation (name it thought^[40] if you will); that languages may be ‘cross-structural,’ such that phonetics, as per example, can be cross-referencing amongst differing languages (e.g. L1 to L2) ; that, to this preceding extent, there is a universality to language acquisition such that a language driver and the passengers who he or she takes along will all need to be savvy to the lingual traffic lights, road demarcations, speed

limits, and road signs that one & all will need to comport with, all-together; most especially, when the former is the assessed and the latter is an assessor.

Language instruction policy when it comes to the tripartite issues of language facility (expected of a pupil), language pedagogy (executed by the educator), and language awareness (sought from a parent) has been laid at the mercy or grace of promise itself, without the wherewithal to really achieve results, be it because of systemic incapacities and technical deficiencies, among a host of other major and minor frailties.

37 To reconstitute marketing-made-simple.com’s definition: experiential civic marketing is a media activity that encourages two-way interaction and immersion regarding the branding of a to-be- shared social idea. Communication is to be made objectively personal so as to generate a deep level of logical/intellectual, if not also emotional, investment in the ideascapes under discussion and development.

38 A pedagogy through which ‘common’ knowledge, shared experiences, peer learning, and consensual decision-making, all towards grassroots empowerment, are processed

39 This study defines this as reorienting the curve of thinking, i.e. the direction of thinking, towards a preferred destination

The past NALAP initiative treaded choppy waters as regards the above and the present Learning Project is to serve as another attempt at actualizing the full promise of language instruction, ultimately within and by Ghanaians. Once again literacy and numeracy instruction is on the precipice of acceptability and validation. After all regarding the latter, this is not simply an exercise about L1 to L2 instruction being enacted within a homogeneous milieu; but rather, it is an experiment that seeks to approximate the right concoction for L1/L2 instruction for the purposes of learning across subjects, so executed amidst a population of hobbled learners (testing proves this) as well as a sizable corps of detractors who are unable to score at goal or who are ever willingly to keep score as to the unfulfilled promises of the past NALAP program or the forthcoming Learning Project.

Past and present as well as looking back and going forward, the following reality persists: “...much remains in the balance in terms of how the program is to be sustained and viewed as it further develops. There remains a strong undercurrent of those who remain believers in an ‘English only’ policy to early grade literacy; and then there are the urban areas of the country where implementation is challenged by linguistic diversity within communities, often with teachers who are not themselves literate in the dominant community language...”^[41]

40 Thought = thought + taught

41 National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP) Implementation Study (August 2010)

36 Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana [Final Version] (November 2012)

An antidote for the above venom, especially in light of the preceding cause and its associative epiphanies, could be a stakeholder dialog between and amongst purveyors and consumers of KG education services. This dialog can be implemented via an experiential marketing process as follows:

1. A series of focus groups initially conducted in the eleven official languages of Ghana should be staged. It is strongly recommended that these sessions eventually extend beyond the eleven languages.

2. These sessions should be facilitated by a smart person who is conversant with the niceties of foundational learning and local language instruction, at a minimum

a. The facilitator should be equipped with a facilitation script^[42] about which he/she should be carefully orientated regarding its content, use, and the cause it is aiming for

3. Parents of KG pupils should comprise the participants of the initial set of focus group sessions. Sessions with other KG sector stakeholders are advisable after the ones conducted with parents

a. NOTE: the sessions are to be tutorial in nature as much they may be otherwise. Certainly they ought not divulge into petty quarrels and incendiary rhetoric

4. Yet still, the cross-fertilization of different, and most likely differing, cohorts of stakeholders is also advisable

5. All these focus group sessions should be recorded for radio broadcast and distributed to community radio stations across the country for airing

6. Thereafter, the cross-fertilization sessions may be rolled out as community-specific live airings that are facilitated by a District Education Officer, for instance, rather than a salaciously-minded media personality^[43].

The import of NALAP's social marketing campaign on literacy and L1 language instruction among other educational issues has withered away with time. This above-detailed experiential marketing campaign may serve as a refresher to that effort and as a supplement to whatever the Learning Project has planned. It will pay for the nation to now re-visit the findings of the NALAP social marketing campaign by way of this report.

This 2008 report disclosed some, still familiar, dynamics as they concern literacy education and the concomitant issue of L1 language instruction. Some of these dynamics may be quoted and summarized as follows;

1. In general, parents expressed support for teaching to read and write in the local language, but only if it did not hinder their children's ability to read and write English, as English was clearly identified as an essential component of success for a child

2. At the same time, there is a great respect and importance placed on the local language as a means for anchoring the child in his or her own culture, providing them with that intangible connection to his or her roots.

3. 'Education' to many parents seemed to be equated with learning English [and] it almost seems as though there is distinct disassociation between school and the future and the local language and the past

4. Like teachers, the head teachers really saw the biggest obstacle to be programmatic in nature. Many expressed dismay that the GES would implement another program when they can't even fully support the current system. Some also indicated that the teacher's capacity would be an issue and some seemed to imply that it was merely a matter of teacher dedication, not actual capacity

5. Thus, while parents are not opposed to the local language literacy strategy now being promoted, they want reassurance that it will ultimately encourage English literacy.

The reassurance spoken of, immediately above, may be processed via an experiential marketing process, as it has already been suggested. Parents want to do the right thing.

⁴² The script is meant to facilitate a purposeful conversation. It ought to mitigate against an errant debate ensuing

⁴³ These sessions are not meant to sow discord within communities about language instruction, as well as education more generally

They simply do not know what that is. The problem, compounded, is that the Government has not provided the correct answer. The Government may know of the appropriate solution, but the correct answer still alludes them and the ones who seek answers of them. Tardy logistics,^[44] as well as intra-systemic incapacities and high-minded yet under-performing programming^[45] without the optimal desired effect being realized, and to the dissatisfaction of parents at that, suggests that there has been a total lack of progress, if not retrogression. The sectoral capacity building examples found in the NALAP Implementation Study of August 2010 and the NALAP Formative Evaluation Report of April 2011 seem to suggest that regimes are too rigid, and that they need to be flexible; that permanence is needed with educational staffing where now staff turnover remains a perennial problem within GES, this to cite but a few of the ailments afflicting foundational learning and its instruction.

44 The tardy delivery of NALAP teacher guides is but one instance that is cited by the NALAP Implementation Study of August 2010

45 The NALAP Implementation Study of August 2010 cites the following, and herein summarized: [A] Teachers do not observe the time frames for activities within the Teacher Guides, and there is not a clear connection made between the activities. For example, in the Conversation Posters are to support oral language development, which is essential to learning to read, by stimulating discussion. But the teachers tended to simply list words describing objects in the posters on the blackboard, detached from their contextual meanings, for repetition by pupils; [B] No recommended

Ghana's literacy and language instruction policy actualization efforts are in a post 'tripping point' phase – i.e. [1] practice has been way less than perfect; [2] planning and logistical efforts have retarded programming implementation rather than it facilitating it; [3] materials, in retrospect and quite inexplicably, begot arcane, and [4] the purveyors in the 'board room' and on the 'assembly floor,' and on to the 'consumer,' churned out and chewed on 'flimsy products' and 'faulty processes.' So rather than achieving a stelliferous academic environment as a result of NALAP, the country begot a hobbling program about which the following calls have been made:^[46]

1. If further generation, public marketing, monitoring and evaluation does not take place, especially over the next year, the program is likely to fade away. At this point, whatever is done should, ideally, be a collective effort – based on the evidence of this implementation study – of

changes to the school timetables were effectuated – e.g. only 30% of the schools visited during the Rapid Assessment survey had changed the school timetable; [C] in a school a large proportion of KG-P3 teachers were untrained National Youth Employment Program/NYEP temporary teachers who left the schools in April. Thus many classrooms have been combined and are being taught by the remaining head-teachers and teachers...One of the schools lost 5 NYEP teachers, so the head-teacher was managing a combined class of KG1, KGs, & P1 and the P3 teacher was a volunteer who had not attended the NALAP training; and [D] At another school, the School Feeding Program had caused a sharp increase in enrolments, and the school was running in two shifts with the same set of teachers, most of whom do not speak the L1. The Task Order 7 NALAP Formative Evaluation Report, Ghana of April 2011 disclosed the following,

MOE/GES, district education offices, teacher training colleges, and development partners including civil society [and not forgetting the private sector].

2. Initiate a program for the modification and further development of instructional materials (with a major replenishment taking place by 2013). Since the materials can be expected to deteriorate at a rate of 25% per year, it is essential that the preparation of replacements begin now.

3. An even greater strategic and programmatic issue is to revisit, based on NALAP's experience, the use of L1 and L2 as the medium of instruction for KG to P3 across subject areas

and herein summarized: [A] There are significant percentages of teachers assigned to schools and for which they do not have sufficient facility with the L1 language such that they may then teach reading in that language. However of greater importance is understanding how to teach reading in that L1 language; [B] As if this is not troubling enough, 60% of teachers were not completely comfortable in teaching in English, either; [C] teachers' behavioral changes require several step-wise progressions: First, teachers need professional development in new methods; second, teachers need to try out the new methods in their classrooms; third, teachers need to evaluate for themselves whether the change in methods improves outcomes; finally, if, as & when improvement is confirmed will teachers change their attitudes and beliefs. Arguably then, recurring and tangible training requiring coaching support and instructional mentoring comes recommended

46 NALAP Implementation Study of August 2010 (USAID & EQUALL/EDC)



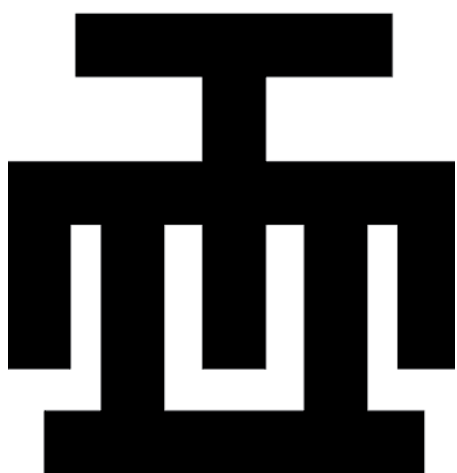
This paper serves as a microscopic lens through which to re-examine the above three points. Indeed a number of remedies have already been laid out, e.g. the experiential marketing to tackle point #3. Additionally, the forthcoming detailing of how collective efforts may transpire in Central Tongu District is immediately following. But for now, lest it gets forgotten, it will do well to recall the following ‘guiding light’ as the reader reflects on what has been written

so far, what is yet to come and what ought to be possible beyond this report, and indeed NALAP: “...pupils’ understanding of the local language is quite high [such that] most or all learners are engaged^[47].” “This is one of the hypothesized benefits of NALAP – i.e. children will be more heavily involved in the lesson because they are taught in a language

that they understand. This was clearly the case in the observed classrooms, and is a very positive finding for NALAP^[48].”

⁴⁷ NALAP Formative Evaluation Report of April 2011 (published by USAID & prepared by RTI International)

⁴⁸ Ibid



THE IDEASCAPE: CENTRAL TONGU AS GROUND ZERO

Central Tongu is being proposed as a demonstration and test site for how to re-strategize KG education from the ground up. Careful study of the proposed programming advocated herein fully demonstrates how a community-owned, to-scale, sustainable, enterprising, and flexible KG education service for communities may function. The grandiose programming for mass teacher trainings, rather convoluted teacher guides (especially as per the way teachers proved they were unable to use them), and somewhat rigid timetable scheduling (without the, seemingly requisite, Guskey-recommended behavioral change taken under advisement) should be contrasted against what School for Life was able to achieve with community facilitators and little much else. What is being proposed for Central Tongu and beyond is a scale-appropriate, district-level, and “step-wise” programming model for KG education provision.

A Bio-informational Brief About Central Tongu: Central Tongu District, and its capital Adidome, are located north of Sogakope in the Volta Region, and both of which are due northeastwards of Tema.

Central Tongu has a population of 59,411, 88% of whom are rurally-placed. Migrants account for 30% of the district’s population, the majority of them hailing from the Eastern, Greater Accra, and Northern Regions. Children comprise 38.2% of the district’s household population. The literacy rate of the district stands at 72%, and 68% report they can read and write in L1 and L2. 35% of the population own mobile phones and 1.6% own computers. The district hosts 68 public schools and 8 private schools that are distributed in 8 circuits. The teacher/pupil ratio stands at 1:45. Community radio station Dela FM, Amiga Rural Bank, and a Dalex Finance office are present in the district^[49] Central Tongu presents itself as a unique opportunity to showcase how the model development of KG sector growth can occur. These reasons may be summarized as follows:

1. Central Tongu, relative to a good majority of districts in Ghana, is linguistically homogeneous and also formally equipped – e.g. the Volta Region’s Ewe-speaking populace tends to have formal facility with the speaking as well as the reading and writing of their indigenous language – i.e. full-facility Ewe-speakers are resident in the district. This should facilitate the aims and objectives of this demonstration project in the following ways:

- Examination of how the use of an L1 as the language of instruction is tolerated and the degree to which it is adhered to by parents and teachers
- Facilitate the nation’s preferred method of having the language of instruction be in the L1 language, given the assumption that all the proprietors/teachers to be engaged will be full-facility Ewe-speakers

2. The District Education Office of the GES for the jurisdiction readily appreciates the importance of this study and the policy debate that it seeks to address in all its shades and colors, to the full extent that cooperation and partnership in making the district a demonstration site will not be wanting. The effort to operationalize this demonstration effort in Central Tongu is, therefore, expected to be relatively facile.

3. Based on prior in-field study, it may be adjudged that one of the government KGs visited is operating an exemplary operation. A number of best practices, at least optimal ones, appear to be in evidence at that particular KG.



4. Co-relationally, a private KG in the district may benefit from this model government-run KG. From the condition of its facilities and its teaching staff's training deficiency, though certainly not their will and zeal to excel, this KG may acquire increased capacity to augment the former and match the latter. This private KG could benefit from instructional, if not also organizational, tutelage from the public KG.

5. Based on an in-field study, a community KG or two exists in the district. This investigative effort revealed that these 'Community' KG purveyors fit the following profile: a civic organization or institution providing a service in client communities— in this district it is the local government and an NGO, the former being a once-before church operation (a "community KG"). It may be suggested that what qualifies as a 'community' KG is amorphous, such that what qualifies as solid parental control of them is open to interpretation and for argument. Central Tongu may serve as an open laboratory as to how whichever arrangement works optimally for one or all.

6. The average parent in the Central Tongu, it is presupposed, will be fluent with the speaking, reading and/or writing of Ewe, the predominant and indigenous L1 of the Central Tongu area. Given this, parents will be relatively well-equipped to participate in any L1 associated interventions attempted in the district, for eventual replication nationwide. One may say they'd be the perfect focus group going forward regarding perceptions as well as the



continuing debate regarding the utility of L1 instruction's operationalization, this in contrast to L1 policy as it may exist 'on paper' – i.e. the misapplication of NALAP, the less than optimal actualization of L1 policy, and the mal-interpretation of the efficacy of language-directed learning.

The Proposed Programing Scheme for KG Education in Central Tongu:

This is to be a unique, enterprising, and scale-appropriate programming protocol for KG education. At the district level a triumvirate KG operationalization scheme comprising a coalesced partnership between public, community, and private KGs is being suggested. It may be conceptualized in and instituted for Central Tongu in the following ways:

1. Adidome Roman Catholic KG (a public school) should serve as a technical advisor to Adidome Delali Preparatory KG (a private school) for the following reasons:

- The public school appears to be a "best-practice" KG in terms of instructional method and, perhaps, beyond – e.g. it is fully staffed as recommended, the potential for NALAPpedagogical efficacy is quite apparent, though not verified, and a dedicated, though perhaps minority, corps of parents appear keen to support the school
- In stark contrast, the private school is sparse with facilities, scant of teacher certifications, and spare in educational materials
- Public KG teaching personnel at Adidome RC KG may serve as technical resource consultants to private KG operators, ensuring in the process an optimal delivery of KG instruction districtwide

49 Ghana Statistical Service (October 2014)

http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/doc-files/2010_District_Report/Volta/Central%20Tongu.pdf

2. The operator of Kpogede Community KG (namely International Needs Ghana) and other civic organizations and institutions (e.g. churches and NGOs) should be recruited to open and operate KGs across the district, as should the District Assembly, these all under the instructional supervision of the District Education Office. The arrangement between these parties may work in the following ways:

- Community KGs operated by entities such as the above may best represent and cater to the needs of their client communities, assuming they would possess the managerial capacity, financial resources, and/or 'captive' audience on, or at, hand.
- Regarding the latter issue above, community-placed churches are geographically placed so as to allow for walking distances for kids traveling to and from home and school. These type conveniently-placed KGs, in their numbers, will be of complement and of supplement to the planned addition of home-based KGs across the district

3. Retired GES teaching personnel, most especially KG-level ones, residing in the district and surrounding area will be recruited to open up home-based KGs. The due diligence procedures and products to actualize this aim may be summarized as follows:

- An extensive operations & management manual should

be developed for their use, such that it functions as a handy reference toolkit for them

- Facility specifications required for the safe operation of a KG within a domestic premises will also be given to these proprietors
- A continuing education INSET regime will be afforded the KG proprietors, whereby the experienced and retired KG teachers could also serve as master trainers to their less-experienced peers.

4. A KG seed capital funding reservoir could also be developed with the aid of Development Partners (e.g. GGA, USAID, the World Bank and/or IFC etc.), the Government of Ghana and/or the District Assembly's funds. The administration & management of this funding reservoir may then be managed by financial institutions such as Dalex Finance, Amiga Rural Bank, and/or The Trust Bank/ttb.

- Dalex already has a presence in Adidome, the capital of Central Tongu District and it already has a long-standing relationship with GES personnel nationwide

• Dalex Finance has already been contacted and they have expressed an interest

• They assert that they have an ample nationwide network to cater to the above

- Many a rural bank has established a solid footing in their client community; it is expected that Central Tongu is no exception
- The Trust Bank already has had a working relationship with IFC in the area of private education funding in managing such a fund ends

5. Given the above specific programming architecture for Central Tongu, the following model for KG growth & demand is to be developed, and for adoption nationwide as well: ➤



The local District Education Office maintains instructional supervision throughout the district, i.e. serving as the regulator and as a technical resource provider

- The local District Assembly or an NGO develops and maintains KG Resource Centers that capacitate the district's entire KG sector in the following ways:
- The smaller private KGs rotate their pupils through it for recreational and
- KG operators and educators access training, technical assistance, and peer intellectual replenishment – e.g. the provision of bigger-sized playgrounds not possible in a home-based setting, an extensive supply of facilities (library etc.) and equipment (mercy-go-rounds or expansive sandboxes etc.), and environmental education amenities like an ant farm or vegetable garden, i.e. nature and social life tangibles education resources etc. from this 'hub'

- Civic institutions and groups (churches, mosques and NGOs) operate "Community" KGs
- Private KGs, home-based or otherwise, may operate small-medium scale KGs that are geographically scale-appropriate for commuting pupils who walk to school throughout the district, whereby, for example, a retired KG teacher may function as its proprietor and/or lead education specialist

6. The transporting of pupils between home-based KGs and KG Resource Community Centers may be attended to via an agreement between GPRTU and the District Education Office and/or the District Assembly.

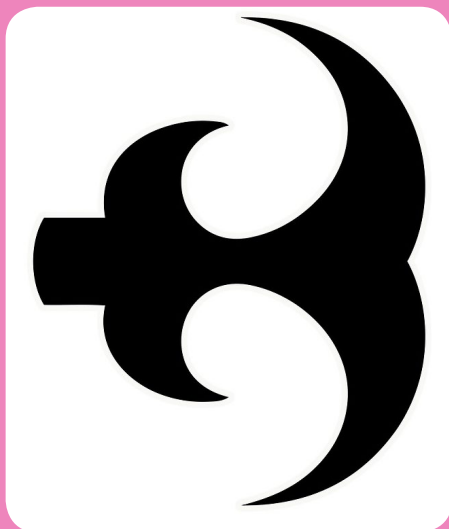
- The alternative will be for the district to maintain a fleet of buses or vans

Further, and alternatively, an NGO may be hired to maintain the fleet of buses or vans

7. An Operations & Management Manual replete with facilities design specifications for home-based KGs as well as all other types will be detailed. They may include the following issues and concerns:

- Recommended Teaching & Learning Materials (TLMs)
- Outdoor recreational space & equipment requirements, including issues such as Furniture & classroom configuration
- Shelter and structural integrity
- Water & Sanitation, including rainwater harvesting vegetative cover and the needed absence of impervious surfaces etc.





The GES discloses that there are six items that comprise its vision for KG education. They are ^[50]:

1. Role Play
2. Valued & Motivated Teachers
3. Small Working Groups in Classroom Between & Amongst Pupils
4. Outdoor Activities
5. Learning Centers
6. Parental Engagement & Interaction

The GES goes on to extend this list to twelve^[51] or whittle it down to the above six depending on which came first^[52]. The twelve are:

1. A high quality, happy, healthy, caring, and safe learning environment free of physical punishment

IN CONCLUSION:

2. A curriculum and environment that enables all four and five year olds to explore, discover, and to ask questions about the world around them whether it be in or outside the classroom

3. An outdoor learning environment/space which ensures learning is not constrained to the classroom

4. Easily accessible teaching and learning materials which make use of local craftsmen and women and encourage creative play

5. Specially trained teachers/educators skilled in early years education and adept at delivering a play and activity based learning curriculum, which is motivating, enjoyable and engaging

6. Teachers/educators who are able to assess all four and five year olds holistically, focusing on social/emotional, physical, communication/language, and cognitive development as a foundation for future academic achievement

7. Teachers/educators who challenge all four and five year olds to be the best that they can be and encourage successful and responsible citizens for the future

8. Parental participation is valued and encouraged through regular information sharing about activity-based learning and about each child's interests, development and progress

9. Continuous professional development for all teachers/educators and trained KG assistants supporting kindergarten education

10. A robust internal and external monitoring and evaluation system which encourages a process of continual improvement and recognizes the need for all stakeholders to learn from experience

11. Relationships with stakeholders and the wider community who are responsive and respectful of all children's and families' needs and who appreciate the value and importance of KG education

12. All kindergartens settings to install a sense of pride in the heritage and culture of the community through the use of the local language and appropriate resources and learning materials

⁵⁰ Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Executive Summary of the Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana (November 2012)

⁵¹ Program to Scale-up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana: Narrative Report to Support the Operational Plan to Scale-up Quality KG Education in Ghana [Final Version] (November 2012)

⁵² At the time of this paper's writing this fact is indeterminable

The model proposed for Central Tongu and beyond will certainly allow for most, if not all, of the above standards to be met. For example, they may be addressed and met in the following ways:

1. The resource centers that are run by NGOs may serve as learning centers for pupils and educators alike, e.g. teachers could undergo their INSET/ professional development training at these centers such that the Guskey Theory of Teacher Behavioral Change may be manifested
2. The resource centers may simultaneously serve as large-scale outdoor activity centers for recreation and nature experiential learning – e.g. sports and gardening, i.e. facilitating the sort of learning that is not confined to the classroom
3. Home-based KGs may serve as the optimal place, given enrolment numbers, for small group learning dynamics. They may also function as the optimal way through which to foster maximum parental engagement and interaction
4. A symbiotic relationship between the home-based KG and the resource center could exist whereby, between the two, “parental participation is valued and encouraged through regular information sharing about activity-based learning and about each child’s interests, development, and progress”
5. The furnishings, play equipment, and some TLMs to be used in the KGs could be

made by local craftsmen – e.g. number and letter puzzles, oware sets, see-saws, and mazes etc.

6. Engaging the expertise and services of the educators skilled in early years education, e.g. the Adidome R.C. KG teaching staff, in their role as Master Trainers for KG proprietors and private teachers

Since the launch of educational reforms in 2007, and the preceding five years of work needed to get there, and up to now when still challenges remain in the KG sector, entities such as the Ministry of Education, the Universities of Cape Coast and Winneba, USAID, Chicago State University, the EQUALL Project, UNICEF, May’s Day Care & Educational Center, Action Aid, DfID/UKAID, Plan, the EU, and The Sabre Trust, and FHI 360/The Learning Project have and/or are all, to one degree or another, tried/trying their hands at capacitating the KG sector. None appear to explore fully the role of the non-public sector (inclusive of the talent and dedication of retired educators at that); and none seems to have been able to fashion an operational plan that is grassroots and sustainable. The current operational plan’s budget for KG education, for example, stands at Ghc. 823,000,000^[53].

⁵³ *Scaling-up KGs: A Briefing Note*

The Kindergarten Education Yardsticks and Yields (KEYY)

Initiative that is being promoted by Good Governance Ghana purports to be a sustainable regime of ‘change management’ for KG education delivery in Ghana. The yardsticks and yields as they are being proposed in this paper emanate from the grassroots; they are continually renewing and to scale for teaching talent, as they will be for a district’s pupils. The regional resource KGs, for example, can do recurring testing such that remediation is proactive rather than otherwise. Teachers & KG proprietors tasked with realizing learning out of their pupils get their skills sets reinforced dynamically, as they may then extend that fortitude to their children. Neither set of individuals are left isolated and improperly equipped. There exists a pit-stop on the road to optimal or top performance.

Before closing out on this paper, though, a concise bird’s eye view of the in-the-field terrain ought to be done. Details of this set of efforts may be summarized as follows:

Sample: Initially, a small conglomeration of school-communities were to be studied – namely Tema Metro, Bole District, and South Tongu District. South Tongu was replaced by Central Tongu for expediency’s sake, especially seeing its DEO personnel immediately appreciated the import of the study. Additionally, this receptivity might be explained by the fact that the DDE had been a beneficiary of the EQUALL Project and

NALAP program. Tema Metro was chosen because of its lingual heterogeneity. A district in the Volta Region was selected for its lingual homogeneity. Bole was chosen because it hosts a sizeable settler community whose members, during the implementation of NALAP, calmly agitated for the adoption of their L1, where they were 'forced' to be instructed in the L1 indigenous to the area. For each area three sets and three types of KGs were to be studied – i.e. a three-schools set categorized into public KGs [3 in number], private KGs [3 in number], and community KGs [3 in number], for a total of 27 schools, were to be visited. Within each school, parents and teachers were to be interviewed.

However, bureaucratic inertia plagued the timely progression of this in-field study phase of this study, such that it became necessary to change some locations (e.g. South to Central Tongu) and dispense with some school-communities, all for the sake of expediency. It was hoped that in doing so the sampling of in-field observations and feedback would not be unduly myopic. Upon execution of the in-field inquiries, however, and in choosing to supplement these findings with that of the Manoff Group's NALAP Social Marketing Campaign Formative Research Report of 2008, it became apparent that the findings back then still resonate to this day, such that the in-field observations and findings of this study largely serve as a contemporary viewing on that which transpired and still transpires

to this day, especially when the formative evaluation of NALAP by RTI and the implementation study of NALAP by the EDC/The EQUALL Project were included as components for looking back towards the way forward. In the end parents from only 4 schools and teachers from only 6 schools were interviewed. Altogether, the quest for information from some sector functionaries was, at times, hesitantly provided and on an occasion one may say hostile, if not occasionally of suspicion as well. Additionally, repeated requests for information from or a meeting with others were ignored, forthrightly – examples are herein disclosed.^[54]

54 [1] A District Director of Education/ DDE insisted that GGA register as an NGO with the local jurisdiction before any reception would be afforded. Suffice it to say, eight 'desks' had to be navigated in order to get permission to operate in this jurisdiction over the course of about three weeks. [2] A DEO staff inquired of the GGA-retained Consultant whether the Bluetooth device in his possession was an "Anas" investigative recording device. A colleague of his retorted that if there was no malfeasance at hand why would one need worry. [3] A school official questioned whether her school's cooperation would result in GGA piggybacking off her organization, with the result that GGA would garner funds to its benefit, and thereupon, by implication, to her organization's detriment. It took immediate interceding by the DDE and her superior to ameliorate the impasse at-hand, such that a hortatory result could prevail. [4] Pre-trip planning for another district had to altogether be cancelled as confirmations were in a holding pattern for over 2 months. When dates for the trip had been confirmed and travel was imminent it also became apparent all the ground work had been done without full knowledge from the DDE and, therefore, the DDE's full consent and cooperation. Resultantly, 9 schools could, and were, not visited.

Interview Protocols: Between 5 to 10 parents (or their representatives in the form of a grandmother, uncle or other type relative) were interviewed. The interviewer conducted the interviews in English and where translation was needed a translator was recruited from amongst the parents; and when there was no one willing to volunteer, due to their L2 language facility or otherwise, a school official was designated to fulfill that role. In the Volta Region Ewe was employed and in Tema Metro a combination of English and Twi were employed, despite the disparate languages present (all present had facility in either or both Twi and English). The interviewer took pains to ensure that the translations back and forth were not overly adulterated by the translator – e.g. probing inquiries were made of the translator to ascertain respondent's comments and, often times, questions were re-phrased in order to verify prior responses. Additionally, internal inconsistencies in prior and current responses was compared and contrasted against one another so as to ensure their accuracy and factuality. All the parents were interviewed simultaneously, in focus group mode. Each of the KG teachers present were interviewed in focus group mode as well, except for one school where there existed only two teachers. One of the teachers arrived to school later than the other, so for time's efficiency sake the interviews were done separately. All the teacher interviews were conducted in English. It was stressed to the teachers that the presence

of the interviewer was in no way tantamount to a monitoring & evaluation of their work. Teachers were given assurance that all inquiries of them were made for the sole purpose of gaining insight, this in service to the study's aims and objectives. The aims and objectives of the study were made known to them prior to commencing the interviews.

Classroom Observation Protocols:

Classroom observations were designed to ascertain the following: [1] the degree to which the classrooms are print-rich; [2] the configuration of the furniture within the classroom space; [3] the language(s) employed for classroom instruction; and [4] the structural condition of the classroom facility. No direct interaction with the pupils was entertained, even when the observer was invited to do so. The gist of these observations are that [1] most classrooms are sufficiently print rich especially in the government schools. Compared to others they appear exemplary; [2] most classrooms furniture set-ups are not in the NALAP recommended configurations; [3] all are using a combination of L1 and L2 in the classroom. The application of this language may be described as fluid and utilitarian; and [4] the government schools have relatively ornate facilities as compared to the private schools. The majority of classrooms and other associated facilities are quite laudable in their amenities, e.g. bathroom facilities and recreation areas

The responses and comments from the **parents** may be summarized as follows:

1. Each and every parent has all their children enrolled in school, i.e. pre-tertiary
2. The sceptics of L1 language instruction reveal that their fear is that their children will come out not being competitive. They argued convincingly that given that Ghanaians speak L2; given it is the official language of the country; and given that it is language their kids and others get tested in; and again, given that it is also the official language of international relations and commerce, one must never lose the appreciation for this fact, however politically it may sound in these contemporary times. One parent even extended the latter argument to the need for all children to learn French in school
3. The perception that L1 is the language for the home and L2 is for the language for school seems glued in parents' minds. Then also, L1 is cherished for cultural and familial reasons. The social importance of L1 is readily accessed and assessed within parents' minds, but its academic importance, however, hardly ever is
4. Interestingly enough, more respondents reported reading to their children at home than those who indicated that they do not. One parent even spoke of how she orally translates L2 literature into L1 so as to facilitate reading comprehension in her child.

An interesting reveal happened during the course of the interview session at one school – the interviewees were serving up stellar responses when they were asked about NALAP, so much so to the extent that one would think they would be perfect recruits to craft a social marketing campaign for the program. Upon further inquiry, however, it became apparent that the parents of the pupils in that school were GES/DEO staff members. Whereas the fine balance between L1 and L2 instruction was not delved into with detail at this school, the respondents at other schools, in contrast, stressed a 50/50 balance between the two, and a flexible application of this combination was reiterated by a majority. Much like the University of Cape Coast Primary School reveal, it appears that schools whose pupils are the children of educators may well be the de facto model schools to capitalize on – i.e. if one were to recruit district-level Master Trainers and technical resource personnel it might be wisest to draw upon the staff of these type schools, much like it is being suggested that Adidome R.C. KG teachers serve as the technically proficient practitioners from whom all other may learn.

Another interesting reveal that came about as the result of an interview session at another school was the idea that a deep dialog and conversation about foundational learning and language instruction policy is sorely needed in Ghana. An extended discussion covering child's 'home' **language acquisition** and **facility before KG** enrollment and onwards to the utility of L1 language for grasping and **articulating learning** and onwards to the '**science**' of **language deconstruction**, and then on to the **debunking of the myth that L1 instruction is a detour**, and thereafter to the addressing of **misguided prejudices that favor L2**, especially one's cosmetic facility with it, were discussed with relish. And though the intention of the conversation on hand was not to extract acquiescence out of the discussants, they came away from the conversation in total agreement amongst one another that a child typically has much better proficiency in the L1 of their household or school-community than they do have of English^[55].

Lastly, most of the participants spoke a combination of L1 and L2 in the home and an even larger majority were able to speak, read and write their L1. Even more interesting was the reveal that some of the respondents who could not read in their own L1, could at least read in Twi (arguably, the nation's at-large L1). The responses and comments from the teachers may be summarized as follows:

1. The classroom size between and amongst the public, community, and private KGs is appreciably different. The private KG's number are far less than half of the public's numbers. The community KGs' number hover around half of the public's

2. The pupils' ages are appropriate to/for the nation's KG enrolment criteria. Nothing appears out of order when it comes to GER and NER related issues and concerns

3. L1 facility does not appear to be a problem in the Volta or Metro Tema (and by extension many parts of Accra). In metro areas, one may even presuppose that Twi is the de facto L1 of Ghana and most school-communities across many parts of Ghana. It may come as no surprise that teachers often use Twi as the L1 of choice when teaching

4. Some teachers also admitted to using non-verbal & ; adaptive 'sign' language when there may be a lingual outlier or two in their classroom's pupil population. This in addition to the dual utilization and simultaneous translation of L1 and L2

5. Teachers also report that pupils tend to, at times, cling to their L1, they citing the problem as follows:

“ a. ...the disadvantage is that they shift to L1 automatically, and as they go further with school it makes it difficult for them to grasp L2...

b. Ask them in English: “do you understand?” They'll respond; “yes”. Seek confirmation of that in the L1 and they'd respond in L1 saying 'No'

”



6. Private KGs have a disproportionate number of untrained teachers as against public and community KGs

It appears the main issue with parents is sensitization and the main issue for teachers is capacity building. However, regarding teachers the twin issue (i.e. beyond equipping them) is how do they execute teaching, a question as much germane as how do pupils learn – i.e. the one-time ostentatious training, coming equipped with a latently-delivered teachers guide, as often is the case, is so-much- so ineffective as compared to a to-scale and recurrent training regime. It appears that though method is important, it is the flexible application of it that will prove to be the savvy; and therefore it stands as the optimal route to adopt. Teachers are learners too and educational bureaucracies have not figured the cost-efficient and bureaucratically-effective ways to tool and re-tool them. GGA's KEYY initiative is food for thought in this regard. Beyond that it is a roadmap made facile enough for implementation, for formative modelling; if it may also be so said. Having said this, the be-all- and-end- all regarding capacity building for teachers should occur at 'base' as it has been suggested, at base in more ways than one.

The implications—dually functioning as parting words—of the above may be stated and/or argued as follows:

1. The relatively grandiose teacher guide should not drown out the curriculum

2. The onerous should be on how to get a teacher to creatively 're-enact' the curriculum rather than 'goose-step' to prescriptions in a guide. Creative and critical thinking as to how one & all teacher[s] may operationalize the curriculum, and as per the learning styles of their pupils should be taken up for consideration. Simple solutions simply put, is the KEYY!

3. So as much as the teacher guide is THE option for detailing how to execute^[56] instruction so also must the latitude to construct its intent, given the learning terrain at hand. The dynamic and refreshing examination of the talent and effort etc. Needed to effectuate learning may be realized better with INSET as has been recommended in this paper. Peer learning amongst teachers, where the experienced, who are the sort gifted in facilitation, should serve as trainers for their own 'kind.' Implementation-wise, these seasoned minds employed in sustainable, scale-appropriate, and enterprising ways may be a better approach.

With parents, the lack of their internal empowerment to take up the driver's seat or at least the front passenger seat in the drive to get their children's education afoot and on a solid footing is sorely missing. When this dynamic is mixed with half-fulfilled promises of government, either one's resolve can be said to be tantamount to they both kicking a can down the road. The KG sector is still open for 'interpretation' on several fronts. GGA is simply asserting

that it has a fresh one to offer – one that is sustainable, scale appropriate, enterprising, and tangible. Teachers' capacities should approximate the aims that are expected of them. Parents may come to the conclusion that their children must not only sound and appear to be 'educated,' but indeed they ought to be knowledgeable and intelligent as well as be critical thinkers. Reaching our optimal collective intelligence for kindergarten education is what KEYY is all about, for both the teacher and the pupil as well as the public at-large, government included.

This report and the KEYY initiative, both herein detailed, are steps and the road taken in the right direction.

54 [1] A District Director of Education/ DDE insisted that GGA register as an NGO with the local jurisdiction before any reception would be afforded. Suffice it to say, eight 'desks' had to be navigated in order to get permission to operate in this jurisdiction over the course of about three weeks. [2] A DEO staff inquired of the GGA-retained Consultant whether the Bluetooth device in his possession was an "Anas" investigative recording device. A colleague of his retorted that if there was no malfeasance at hand why would one need worry. [3] A school official questioned whether her school's cooperation would result in GGA piggybacking off her organization, with the result that GGA would garner funds to its benefit, and thereupon, by implication, to her organization's detriment. it took immediate interceding by the DDE and her superior to ameliorate the impasse at-hand, such that a hortatory result could prevail. [4] Pre-trip planning for another district had to altogether be cancelled as confirmations were in a holding pattern for over 2 months. When dates for the trip had been confirmed and travel was imminent it also became apparent all the ground work had been done without full knowledge from the DDE and, therefore, the DDE's full consent and cooperation. Resultantly, 9 schools could, and were, not visited.

56 Irony and double entendre may be supposed

