

FINANCING SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

84TH ACHIMOTA SCHOOL SPEECH AND PRIZE GIVING DAY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Board of Governors, Headmistress Akora Beatrice Adom, Guest of Honour Akora Prof. Ernest Aryeetey – Vice Chancellor for the University of Ghana, Distinguished Guests, Parents, Teachers, Friends, Students, the special Class of 86, Ladies and Gentlemen.

“Ultimately it is the Human Capital or Resources of a nation and not its physical or natural resources that will determine the character and pace of its development”. Human Resource is key not oil, not gold, not cocoa, not timber nor anything else because it is people who will determine how efficiently all these resources will be utilized for the public good.

When we talk about Human Capital/Resource we are talking about knowledge and skills that enhance productive capacity and the platform to achieve this is education. Human capital refers to the ability and efficiency of people to transform raw materials and capital into goods and services, and the consensus is that these skills can be learned through the educational system. As in the words of the late Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, when talking about the greatest need of his people it is clearly “Education, Education and Education”.

2.0 THE IMPORTANCE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The World Bank reported in 2005 that the provision and expansion of good quality secondary education is a critical tool towards generating opportunities and benefits of social and economic development. Educating people provides

opportunities, and is one of the best anti-poverty strategies. It is also one of the best ways of ensuring a country's economic prosperity and competitiveness. It is estimated that average earnings increase by 11 percent with each additional year of education. Each additional year of maternal education also reduces childhood mortality by about 8 percent (World Bank, 2005). And so we say that "female education is the single most important factor in breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty".

Mingat and Tan (1996) estimated the full social returns to education in various economies between 1960 and 1985 in work that concurred with a study by Bray in 2002 and concluded that education of the workforce expands productivity by facilitating the discovery, adaptation and use of more economically rewarding processes.

The generalised recommendation from the two studies is that low-income countries tend to benefit more from primary education investment, while middle income countries, including those about to achieve universal primary education, tend to gain highest social returns from expansion of secondary education. On the other hand, high-income countries derive highest returns from tertiary education.

Bray (2002) as do many contemporary educationists also advances the argument that financing of education requires public spending on the levels of education for which social returns exceed private returns (e.g. basic education) and increased private spending is required on investments that yields higher private returns (higher and continuing education).

To make the distinction between basic, secondary and tertiary education let me state that Ghana presently has a 9-3-4 education system. The first nine years that make up basic education consists of primary education of 6 years and 3

years of junior secondary school. Then you move on to Senior High which is being described as secondary or pre-tertiary.

Ultimately the benefits of education have been shown as going directly to an individual and the society. Individuals with more education tend to have better employment opportunities, greater earnings, and produce more output than those who are less educated. This includes such benefits as increased participation in the political process, greater charity donations, reduced dependency on social support programmes, reduced criminal activity, increased savings, better health, lower mortality rates, and increased life expectancy

These research results provide a strong rationale for governments, families and individuals to invest substantial portions of their resources in education, with the expectation that higher benefits will accrue over time. The findings also clearly show that not only is expanding and providing quality secondary education key to making substantive progress and tangible returns from our newly found “middle income status” in Ghana but that while increased Government spending is required at the basic level, increased private spending should be seriously considered as we move beyond the basic level to higher education and this our context includes Senior High or Senior Secondary School.

For clarity let me state that these findings do not suggest that the state has no role in funding higher education or guaranteeing that citizens with the necessary talents can benefit from higher education. These findings highlight the fact that Governments should consider focusing their meager resources on expanding and ensuring quality basic education whilst engaging private sector and civil society to develop models and mechanisms that guarantee adequate funding for secondary and higher education.

The state therefore remains ultimately responsible for providing the leadership required to develop sustainable education financing models at all levels and must

be seen to be proactively taking steps in this direction. The state will always be responsible for providing skills and opportunities that guarantee the survival and development of its citizens. However just like our traditional societies and our own families, we must make greater investments in our children who have and show more talent with the expectations that these will move on and bring greater returns to our families and society at large. Evidently in this context needy or disadvantaged but brilliant individuals will need more attention. It is also important that educational institutions continue to emphasize that the individual is supported to learn ultimately to give back to society.

3.0 WHY IS FINANCING IS AN ISSUE?

The previous arguments highlight the fact that secondary education is an important link between basic education and the working world, on one hand, and additional training or educational opportunities on the other. However, in spite of how important this is for developing countries, the costs of provision and expansion of quality secondary education have been escalating while resources for secondary education have been dwindling.

The Government of Ghana itself came out with a white paper on tertiary education in 1992 which stated that government alone cannot continue to bear the increasing cost of higher education and therefore, there was the need for cost sharing by all stakeholders.

While Senior Secondary is not in the strict sense higher education it is higher than basic and indeed many schools like Achimota have been starved of both adequate development and recurrent expenditure making it impossible for them to operate effectively and efficiently. It is a huge concern to the Achimotan Class of 86 and many, many other concerned stakeholders that if the challenges of adequate funding for education and

in this context Achimota are not addressed quickly, it would lead to the demise of this important national heritage.

Specific concerns include inadequate government support, irregular disbursement of the support and the disproportionate contribution by direct beneficiaries and their parents. These have all contributed to make the funding of secondary education very challenging. This also invariably is the root of the frustrations of heads of educational institutions all over the country.

It is important to note that globally financing of education is a challenge. Consequently it is the ingenuity of each government to meet the needs of its citizens that matters most and we require our policy analysts to re-think the policy/financing models and provide more sustainable approaches.

3.0 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Government support for the educational sector has been increasing since 2006. Prior to the re-basing of the economy and GDP national statistics show that Education expenditure as a share of GDP has ranged as high as 8.2% minimum and 10.1% maximum over the last past 5 years. This is in contrast with UNESCO and the African Union's suggestions that actual expenditure should be approximately 6% of GDP. Likewise, education expenditure as a percentage of total government spending has been on the average about 20% over the period . In 2010, educations share a total government spending and as a percentage of GDP was 23.2 % and 9.8% respectively.

However taking the rebasing into account will make the current level of education expenditure as a share of GDP is 5.8% which would put Ghana below the UNESCO target at least 6% of public expenditure.

Table: Trends in Education Expenditure by levels

Sources	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Expenditure		Expenditure		Expenditure		Expenditure		Expenditure	
	GH¢	%	GH¢	%	GH¢	%	GH¢	%	GH¢	%
Pre-school	37,144,800	3.9	42,797,283	3.4	65,901,027	3.8	60,272,779	3.1	72,036,051	2.8
Primary	262,627,200	27.6	445,933,605	35.0	613,661,054	35.2	594,950,694	30.5	715,160,506	27.9
JHS	159,921,600	16.8	206,990,933	16.3	292,419,320	16.8	297,665,072	15.3	370,235,825	14.4
SHS	150,382,800	15.8	160,788,917	12.6	171,058,251	9.8	337,369,027	17.3	400,030,646	15.6
TVET	8,599,900	0.9	8,236,942	0.6	18,311,207	1.1	35,038,819	1.8	38,436,313	1.5
SPED	3,835,600	0.4	3,894,322	0.3	10,662,566	0.6	7,493,238	0.4	17,214,633	0.7
NFED	6,736,900	0.7	5,709,015	0.4	6,327,284	0.4	3,715,031	0.2	13,357,023	0.5
Teacher Education	33,119,000	3.5	33,132,980	2.6	55,274,368	3.2	50,377,753	2.6	62,056,093	2.4
Tertiary Mgt. & Subvtd	214,564,500	22.5	292,931,474	23.0	378,615,134	21.7	401,191,936	20.6	511,806,744	20.
HIV-AIDS	73,438,400	7.7	70,339,643	5.5	130,011,299	7.5	160,837,566	8.2	362,459,208	14.1
HIV-AIDS	2,474,300	0.3	2,784,370	0.2	1330209	0.1	856,499	0.0	1,570,316	0.1
Total	952,845,000	100	1,273,539,485	100	1,743,571,719	100	1,949,768,414	100.00	2,564,363,357	100

The current Government in line with the 2008 Education Act, the GSGDA, the Sector Medium Term Development Plan 2010 – 2013 and Millenium Development Goals has and continues to pursue key policies which include to

- a) Improve equitable access to and participation in quality education at all levels
- b) Improve quality of teaching and learning
- c) Bridge gender gap in access to education
- d) Improve access to quality education for people with disability
- e) Promote science and technical education at all levels
- f) Strengthen links between tertiary education and industry
- g) Mainstream issues of population, family life, gender, health, HIV/AIDS/STI, conflicts, fire & road safety, civic responsibility, human rights, and environment in the curricula at all levels

h) Improve management of education service delivery

Other Government Policy Commitments are

- a) Motivation of parents and learners through fee abolition, feeding programmes, school uniform provision, reducing distance between home and school
- b) Provision of incentives through salary increments for licensed teachers (+15%), mathematics and science teachers (+~9%), technical and vocational teachers (+10%), and teachers in deprived areas (+20%)
- c) Abolition of shift systems at JHS and the retention of three years of SHS
- d) Provision of at least one SHS and two 2 technical schools per district
- e) The establishment of two new public universities at Ho and Sunyani
- f) Allocation of 2% of the GETFund for bursaries and/or scholarships for needy tertiary students in pure and applied mathematics, science and technology; also the construction of a modern office complex for NUGS and affiliated and similar student bodies.

There is also an Education Strategic Plan which covers education sector development for the 10-year period 2010 to 2020.

There are some interesting strategies Government has stated in the ESP (2010 – 2020) which I would like to refer to. Regarding the second cycle strategic goal of increasing “*equitable access to high quality second cycle education that prepares young adults for the various options available within tertiary education and the workplace*” one of the strategies highlighted to achieve this is to “*remove the ‘subsidy culture’ from the second cycle education subsector*”. The question is how will this be achieved?

Again under Strategies for making Efficiency Gains the ESP states that “*to be effective and affordable there should be efficiency savings throughout the education system. In the interests of efficiency and equity, and in order to be able to afford the innovations within the ESP, it will be necessary to reduce recurrent expenditures, especially those that appear to reward a relative few at the expense of a relatively deprived majority.*”

Most of the students attending public senior secondary actually come from private schools, so they are not poor, and should not receive boarding subsidies. However it is important to subsidise needy students, especially those from northern and other hard-to-reach areas. The scope of boarding and hostels provision at SH level will be reviewed in 2010”.

Clearly government itself recognizes that it can make greater savings and redirect its current expenditure on senior secondary by revising the model. What seems to be lacking is a more thorough analysis of the situation and a model that adequately addresses existing needs and challenges.

The Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME) directorate of the Ministry of Education uses an Education Financial Simulation Model to provide vary detailed financial projections in the ESP covering the period 2010 - 2020. Unfortunately the domestic resource base for funding as captured in the strategic plan is entirely from the public sector looking at GoG, the GET fund and IGF. Even though PPPs are mentioned and indirect references to parents paying exist. There appears to be no proactive effort ensure that private investments can be obtained to help cut subsidies and to adequately cater for development and recurrent expenditure.

4.0 THE ACHIMOTAN SITUATION

Let me remind us just a little about how unique Achimota is and its current challenge.

Achimota covers a land area of about 950 acres and is traversed by about 7 kilometres of roads. Its facilities include 2 gyms, 2 dining halls, 1 assembly hall, 1 chapel, 14 houses, 8 vehicles, 6 classroom blocks with 53 class rooms, A Science block with labs, and Home Economics Block, playing fields, a post office,

a police station, 1 swimming pool which has collapsed, 2 tennis courts that have been abandoned and a hospital which caters for both staff and students as well as residents in the neighbourhood

As a state – owned institution, Achimota School receives grants from the Central Government just like other Secondary Schools in the public system. The Old Achimotan Association (O.A.A.) and the Parents and Teachers Association (P.T.A.) also provide funds when they can to support specific projects in the school.

Currently the funds received by the school comes from the GETFUND and from parents. Apart from first year SHS students for whom the Government has released new figures being GHC160.7 for day students and GHC328.70 per term for borders. Continuing students figures are lower than these.

The fact is all these payments do not provide even 30% of the actual costs for running this school and you can be sure that many other similar schools are struggling.

Utilities cover, water, electricity and telephone calls but the total current utility subsidy of GHC3.55/per student per term is insufficient to cater even just for electricity let alone water and telephone calls and as some of you are aware the school administration block as well as some classroom blocks have been without power this week because the pre-paid meter system could not work.

Do parents or guardians actually feed their wards of secondary school age on the recently adjusted GHC1.80 a day (Daily Graphic of Monday October 31, 2011) which translates to 60 pesewas a meal? And by the way the GHC1.80 per day I gather includes all the kitchen expenses such as fuel to go and purchase the food items, gas to cook, repair and replacement of kitchen pots, pans and other utensils as well as VAT payments to companies. Some of you may have heard

that prison inmates who were given the same amount of GHC1.80 early this month were not too impressed.

The administrative grant of GHC778 per month which together with the GETFUND subsidy should cover all administrative and maintenance expenses is clearly inadequate to cater for fuelling and maintaining eight (8) vehicles, including a water tanker and a refuse collection vehicle, patching and maintaining 7km of roadnetwork, keeping the playing fields including the cricket and track fields trim, maintaining 2 gyms, 2 dining halls, 6 classroom blocks, replacing bulbs, fixing and repairing tables, chairs and beds for about 2500 students. The fact is the maintenance department has all but collapsed, it has no carpenter, and as and when staff in the unit retire it has been impossible to replace them because there are no funds. This is the current state of affairs.

What kind of motivation is the Headmistress and Housemasters receiving to deal with all these issues and guarantee quality education to our kids? GHC5 per term for the Headmistress and GHC1 per term for the Housemasters and Housemistresses. That is if it is paid on time and they are taking care of about 2500 students who cannot fit into the assembly hall nor the chapel and the numbers are expanding.

What all of this means is we are not maintaining let alone doing any tangible new investments to cater for the expanded number of students.

4.0 THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

GOVERNMENT

We all know that the central government does not have enough funds to adequately support all the secondary schools under its fold, let alone develop new ones. We expect Government and the policy analysts of Ministry of Education to act quickly to review the current model of financing

higher education in order to improve access and the provision of quality education. This in the case of a school like Achimota can be achieved simply through reverting to autonomy.

Achimota will then have a more effective board which can raise funds through:

1. Tuition payment from those who can afford to pay, and
2. Global fund raising from old boys, girls and institutions towards merit scholarships, bursaries for the needy, improved infrastructure, equipment and services.

PARENTS

Please, please, please recognize that teachers and school administrators are under a lot of undue pressure and stress. Government officials do not expect the heads of institutions to tell the truth and say that we have not received enough to run the school.

It is crucial for all of us as Ghanaians to recognize that our values and standards as a society are corrupted when we compel heads or leaders at whatever levels to pretend that all is well. Scholarships to cater for students have not come for more than a term and yet heads are instructed do not send the students home, keep them and feed them. How do they do this when the budget is already woefully insufficient?

The current financing model is also causing a lot of confusion at the PTA level. Parents who have struggled to get their wards through the public schools at the basic level are thrown in with parents who have educated their wards through private schools in the same PTA. Parents come thinking that Government is taking care of most costs, particularly guardians of wards from the public schools. Then you are told pay for this and for that by school administrators...Obviously

that can produce chaos at meetings. Especially where we have parent who are absolutely unprepared and totally overwhelmed by these extra costs. An appropriate financing model would ensure that those who can pay do so and the needy ones can be cross-subsidized or access funds to cater for extra costs.

Our appeal is that PTA meetings do not have to become war zones. As many of us parents who can agree at the school or house PTA levels to support activities and needs of the house and school kindly do so. Crucially make your voice heard and your concerns known in order that we can get Government to address this financing issue.

ADMINISTRATORS

We want to highly commend the administration of Mrs. Beatrice Adom and staff for the significant recent academic achievements related to having 100% WASSCE passes and quality passes at that. Particularly in the context of new measures including additional prep, monthly tests, re-instating the famous ATICO and

Having said that, we also encourage the board and management that the School's needs are so many that, a conscious effort should be made to cut down expenditure on things like refreshment for events like these. I am sure discussion with our students can ensure that some sacrifices can be made to improve the school coffers.

It is also important that we help the OAA and its secretariat to survive. Motowners do not usually form strong year groups when compared to other schools particularly single sex institutions. It is likely that the presence of the opposite sex serves as some form of distraction, but no matter what the cause is it has been suggested that like other secondary schools do bonding can be improved if in the final year of stay, the headmistress provides many more

opportunities, events and platforms for the graduating class to bond with staff of the school and with each other. Helping them to put together a contact list or their year group before they leave and educating them about Achimota's high expectations for each final student as well as responsibilities in the future will set them on the right track. This will very likely produce stronger year groups, with a greater sense of commitment to the school who can then provide financial support in later years.

The class of 86 would also like to appeal to the board to work at resolving the current tension between the school management and the OAA secretariat. It does not inure to anyone's benefit.

When we do attain autonomy and we surely will, management can look at innovative ways of generating income from the assets of this great school and there are many good ideas we can exploit to this end.

OLD STUDENTS

We need to find effective ways of strengthening our year groups and to be more committed to supporting this dear school of ours. Regular meetings, dues collection and payments to the secretariat will ensure that more is achieved for Achimota.

I would want to recommend that year groups apart from taking up projects and completing them should consider established investment funds, particularly to cater for continued maintenance of the various facilities they develop, repair or refurbish. Interest income from these funds will help ensure sustainability of infrastructure.

CURRENT STUDENTS

We call on you students of Achimota, the rank and file from Gambaga to Accra, from G'burg to Mac'Carthy on the Eastern compound and from Frazer on the West, to Slessor on the East, you who in another twenty to thirty years will scale and take over the social, economic and political commanding heights of our dear nation Ghana... the issue of financial sustainability for Achimota is not too weighty for you to consider... because you are keenly aware of the extra burdens that your parents are contending with. As you have opportunity we challenge you to speak, act and write in support of a sustainable financial model for Achimota through autonomy.

5.0 CALL TO ACTION

The all round, balanced education of Achimota has provided this country with four of its six presidents, which is no mean achievement. The experience and ingredients of Achimota's time-tested and potent approach are valuable for educational research and the continued production of future leaders and to establish standards that similar institutions in this country can learn from. It is critical that this generation does not sit unconcerned for this heritage to be watered down or thrown away.

Let the records show and the annals of Achimotan history document, that on this 12th day of the eleventh month of the year two thousand and eleven, the Achimotan class of Nineteen Eighty Six (1986) brought to the attention of Government of Ghana, and to His Excellency Akora Professor John Evans Atta-Mills, class of 1961 President of our great nation Ghana and to Akora Betty Mould-Iddrissu, our current Minister for Education and more specifically the Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Ghana Education Service that:

1. Adopting an appropriate financing model for education in general and in particular pre-tertiary education is a policy level issue and requires strong and committed leadership.
2. That if our policy analysts and related officials continue to pretend that all is well, without reviewing, recognizing and addressing the gigantic challenges of the current model, then they bear full responsibility for the collapse of the various facilities and opportunities for quality education that Achimota and similar educational institutions were set up to provide and we will hold them duly responsible.
3. That quality education is necessary for quality leadership and that autonomy for schools like Achimota is crucial to raise the kind of funding required to maintain the school, support the needy but brilliant youth and continue to maintain the standards that make us all proud.

We acknowledge the presence of the media here today, and are grateful that the fourth estate of our society, who continue to capture and reflect the concerns of Ghanaians are here to support us. We call on you not just to report this issue, but as partners in building a better Ghana, to talk to the management of educational institutions across the length and breadth of this country, in order to obtain the facts and to champion and pursue this matter until we arrive at a definite and logical conclusion.

The Class of 86 also wishes to express its thanks to CAL Bank, Intercontinental Bank, Sunridge limited for their generous support to the year groups activities and to all who in diverse ways have made it possible for us to give something back to our school, Akpe!

God bless you, God Bless Ghana, God Bless us all and Thank you for your attention.