

**EFA FTI**  
**Global and Regional Activities (GRA) Programme**  
**Stakeholder Consultations on the Out-of-School Issue Paper**  
**Comments by Zakaria Sulemana – Education Programme Director of IBIS Ghana**

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the GRA Out-of-School Issue paper. The areas of focus (i.e. data, policy and management) are essential to addressing the issue of out-of-school. The paper has also dealt with the issues quite comprehensively. I have the following few observations and suggestions for your consideration:

**a. Data Gaps**

*How countries use data at the local level to actively manage enrolment and attendance - I wish to add (if that is not already known to you) that in Ghana, School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) is held as a strategy to promote the use of data to manage enrolment and attendance, as well as accountability for learning outcomes, among others. The SPAM is a multi-stakeholder forum that involves parents, teachers, community leaders and managers of education. Issues of enrolment of pupils, attendance of pupils and teachers, the availability and utilisation of school resources, learning outcomes and all other issues that affect access and quality are analysed at the SPAM and strategies agreed to overcome identified challenges, usually including strategies for the re-entry of drop outs and the enrolment of out-of-school children in general. It is worth noting however, that inadequate and unreliable data on school age population, enrolment and results of formative assessments of learning outcomes hinder the effectiveness of SPAM, especially in deprived rural settings.*

**b. Policy Gaps**

*Challenges to Mainstreaming Workable Models of Educating Out-of-School and Out-of-Reach Children into Policy - Civil Society Organisations have piloted and found complementary Education Models (e.g. the School for Life and Wing School Models) that have proven effective in addressing the cultural, poverty and distance barriers to enrolling and retaining out-of-school and out-of-reach children in school. These models, which target both children at the right ages of entry into schools and those above, are consistent with the strategy of complementary education as contained in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP 1 and 2). The knowledge of reaching many out-of-school children exists in Ghana. The results of these pilots have indeed inspired the writing of the draft complementary basic education policy by the Ministry of Education. However, approving the policy and giving effect to its implementation is challenged by a number of factors:*

- Structure of the education budget – Annually, about 90% of the education budget is spent on personnel emoluments, leaving very little for investments into education. Establishing state supported complementary education classes/schools imply higher expenditure on personnel emoluments. Thus, consideration of higher expenditures on personnel emolument (in this case on teachers of complementary education classes) appears to be a deterrent to incorporating complementary education into the public school system.
- Cost Efficiency Standards - Ghana has an estimated 860,000 children out of school. It is estimated that over 60 % of these children live in hard-to-reach areas. Most of these are concentrated in the three Northern regions, and the

western and central regions. They live in communities with small populations that are far away from existing public schools. Some of these are as far as 5-10 kilometres away. Owing to the relatively small child populations, the pupil-teacher ratios obtainable in these communities will normally fall below the teacher efficiency standards of the Ghana Education Service – another barrier to mainstreaming complementary education models into education policy. However, the fact remains that thousands of hitherto excluded children have enrolled and completed quality basic education through the complementary education models. These scenarios bring to the fore the dilemma of meeting cost efficiency standards vis a vis attaining EFA and fulfilling the right of every child to good quality education for that matter. Enrolling and retaining out-of-school and out-of-reach children, particularly through complementary education evoke the need for a discriminatory application of cost efficiency standards in favour of the education of children living deprived circumstances.

- Funding is generally a constraint.

### **c. Management or Implementation Gaps**

State-Civil Society Joint Implementation: The experiences of implementing complementary education models in Ghana show that state agencies and civil society organisations involved in education have comparative advantages in implementing different components of the complementary education models. While civil society has demonstrated experience and skill in community animation and learner centred mother-tongue pedagogy, the Ghana Education Service has comparative advantage in curriculum development and managing transition of children into the public school system. A partnership between the state and civil society in the management or implementation of complementary education is therefore essential. Though this is provided for in the draft Complementary Basic Education Policy, and practiced informally in a few districts, a formal arrangement of state-civil society partnership, and its implementation and learning thereof remains a gap.

Funding Modalities: Given the recognition that state-civil society partnership is required for the effective implementation of complementary education for out-of-school and out-of-reach children, there is need to fashion out modalities of donor funding, that keep the state agency responsible for delivering (complementary) education, while making funding available to civil society with the right competencies and experience to support the state agency in delivering its mandate.

### **Suggested Organisation Suited to Carry Out/Coordinate Programme Activities**

**Proposed Activity 1 – Data:** MOE, Ghana Education and the Statistical Service with the participation of NGOs and civil society organisations.

**Proposed Activity 2 – Policy:** MOE and the Basic Education Division of the Ghana Education Service with the support of the Education Sector Working Group and the participation of civil society.

**Proposed Activity 3 – Management:** MOE and the Basic Education Division of the Ghana Education Service in partnership with NGOs and civil society organisations.

Suggestion - The proposed approach of literature review and key informant interviews to share good practices in addressing key out-of-school limitations should include *Public-civil society partnership in managing the implementation of (complementary) models of education for out-of-school and out-of-reach.*