

CHANGES IN THE GHANA NATIONAL FUNCTIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME SINCE 1997

The National Functional Literacy Programme (NFLP II) was couched from successful experiences, strategies and lessons learned from NFLP I which ended in December 1997. It is targeted at specific groups particularly the rural population and female illiterates and gives special attention to the three northern regions of Ghana which have over 1,423,133 (15 years and above) of the total illiteracy figure of 5,094,808 (15 years and above) i.e., 45.9% of total population in the country (source 2000 Census Report).

The NFLP II is built on good institutional foundation of the previous phase. The basic system is in place and managers have developed skills. These include improved teaching methods, revised instructional materials, expanding income generating activities and radio programme by the involvement of other stakeholders and collaborators in the communities.

Having successfully established a large scale adult learning (literacy) project, the Government of Ghana is concentrating on improving the quality of services in the second phase. More emphasis are being placed on improving quality of classes, monitoring and evaluation of outcomes, post literacy activities, building a sustainable literate environment and improving co-ordination of programme activities with development agencies and literacy providers.

A consultative meeting was held after the successful completion of Phase I with Donors, Government and beneficiaries to identify loopholes in the implementation of Phase I, which recruited a total of 1.3 million learners details are in Annex 1. This resulted in the commissioning of ten research studies in the various components of the programme and the results were used as reference points to plan the current programme.

Based on these experiences the organization was tasked to implement a 5 year programme from 2000 to 2004 with the recruitment of one million learners taking cognisance of the innovations arising from the past. These related changes in programme delivery could be seen in the following areas:

1. Revision of Primer in the 15 Ghanaian Languages.
2. Infusion of PRA into the current Paulo-Friarian methodology.
3. Revision of MIS and design of annual workplans.
4. Monitoring and supervision plans.
5. Organizational Restructuring
6. Computerization of accounting systems to enhance operational releases and accountability.
7. Awareness creation and community ownership interventions.
8. New direction to intensity and expand occupational skills activities.
9. English Expanded Programme as a post literacy activity.
10. Linking young graduants with the formal education system.
11. Increase in Government commitment and Expenditure.
12. Gender And Age Distribution

13. Partnership with NGOs and GOs

1. **REVISION OF PRIMER**

Minor mistakes found in the previous Primer have been corrected and a major shift was done from black and white to colour to depict the ideas put across in the pictures. The picture code has been eliminated and the content of the composite picture enriched to give relevance to traditional and cultural differences in the language areas. The Primer has now been localized to show the setting of the areas that the language will be used.

2. **INFUSION OF PRA**

There is an enormous infusion of the Participatory Rural Approach (PRA) technique into the use of the Primer in terms of methodology. This is to ensure that the action point of the discussion comes out clearly and is practically carried out by the learners through the development activities and reinforcement techniques.

This is one of the areas where the functionality of the literacy programme can be clearly illustrated to effect changes in the learners, their households and their communities at large.

3. **REVISION OF MIS FORMS AND DESIGN OF ANNUAL WORK PLAN**

The Management Information System (MIS) which had about twelve (12) forms in phase I and was heavily dependent on the volunteer facilitator has been reduced to four (4) forms with the facilitator filling only two forms. The rest of the forms, one of which is aggregated every five months is handled by the supervisor.

The content of these forms have also been simplified and the users trained on how to handle these forms. Annual work plans and Procurement plans derived from the Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) are prepared to make it easy for programme evaluation in implementation.

4. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

A quarterly monitoring system has been put in place to help assess the rate of implementation at all the levels, that is at the regional, district, zonal and community levels. This is a form of triangulation on data sent to headquarters and regions for analysis to allow early and easy feedback into the system (implementation). As a first step the regions have been computerized and secretaries trained to do simple data management.

The number of times supervision and supervised supervision is to be done has also been regularized and is monitored at all the levels.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING

As one of the outcomes of Project Preparatory Facility (PPF) studies, the organization is being restructured to put the right skills at the right places for effectiveness and efficiency. This, it is hoped, will maximize output and, enhance service delivery in the organization with more attention to the district level.

6. COMPUTERIZATION OF THE ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

Efficiency goes with correct accounting practices. With this in view, the accounting systems have been computerized with the provision of the Sun

Accounting Software which helps to easily generate accounting reports and analysis. Since expenditure levels are also indicative of the rate of implementation, this will help the organization continuously assess itself in terms of periodic implementation progress.

7. AWARENESS CREATION AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Awareness creation and community ownership drive have been seriously pursued to make it necessary for communities to see the programme as theirs. Themes of the Primer are enacted and displayed at the various communities and resident drama groups formed at the end of each theatrical display. These skills will help the communities become aware of issues not only by reading but by plays enacted by themselves. "Awareness Creation" committees are being formed in all the districts to see to the functioning of these groups. These committees involve other agencies in development.

8. OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Occupational Skills Development programme has been expanded since 1997 by adding other credit financiers and entrepreneurial development organizations to the drive-net. A serious collaboration is being sought with various organizations and literacy groups engaged in income generating activities are trained to access financial support from these organizations. This is in addition to the already existing credit facility in the regions with 80% loan recovery rate on the average. It is important to mention that the loan recovery rate for the 3 northern regions is about 95%.

In addition others skills like tie and dye, agricultural techniques, mushroom and snail farming are being added to the training programmes for learner groups.

9. EXPANDED ENGLISH PROGRAMME

English language is being taught in some selected communities as a post-literacy activity in order not to allow learners after going through the local language programme relapse into illiteracy. This links them up with a wider market of communicants for effective functioning in their various communities. To enhance this, community libraries are being opened with the provision of both follow-up books and solar panels for night studies in the communities.

10. LINKING YOUNG GRADUANTS

Young literacy graduants are now been monitored and encouraged to join the formal education system. This is very evident in the rural communities where the quest for financial gains is less. It is however envisaged that this programme will be expanded into the cities to allow for the life long education provision of the constitution of Ghana.

11. INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT AND EXPENDITURE

The Government of Ghana, in line with her commitment towards poverty reduction, has increased her annual budgetary allocation to education from the previous 28% to 48% currently. Specifically the over a decade 0.6% budgetary allocation of Ministry of Education (MOE) to the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) has been increased to 1.4%. This is indicative of Government's understanding of the linkage between poverty and illiteracy. This commitment is strongly exhibited with the numerous project linkages with literacy e.g. Presidential Initiatives currently being pursued.

12. GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

In Phase I of the Programme, 60% of the total recruitment were females in the rural communities. Phase II has intensified this gender drive to recruit more female learners in addition to efforts to recruit more female facilitators.

The age distribution in Phase I has been as follows: Less than 15 years:8%; 15-24 years:28%; 25–44 years: 46%; 45 years and above:18%. This picture, which shows that the productive age group of our learners (15-44 years) form 74% of the total is the same for Phase II

13. PARTNERSHIP WITH NGOs AND GOs

Currently, there is a strong collaboration between the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education as the Apex literacy body with Non Governmental Organizations as well as Community Based Organizations. Such collaboration can be seen in the development of the English Literacy Programme with World Vision Ghana to enhance their Rural Community Water and Sanitation Project (WATSAN). ActionAid Ghana and Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) are also involved with NFED in the fight to reduce illiteracy for greater and holistic development of the communities in particular and the country as a whole.

There is also a strong drive to link graduants from the literacy programme into the Integrated Community Centres for Employable Skills (ICCES). All these, are targeted towards increased development and the move from a low income earning country to a middle level status by the year 2010 A.D.