

4. Impact on parents and the community

- Greater involvement of parents and community
- School Management Committees more engaged
- Active Parent Teacher Associations
- Practical support from local chiefs and businesses

Repeated questionnaires completed by STLs, Circuit Supervisors and Directors on several occasions attest to improvements in LfL practice and the convergence of views from different groups over time.

The five Leadership for Learning principles have been found to be highly applicable to the Ghanaian context, and a powerful catalyst for change.

Challenges arise particularly from a traditional view of schooling with a restricted focus on learning, limited resources that impede favourable conditions for learning, and the traditionally hierarchical nature of society that constrains conceptions of shared leadership and accountability. Opportunities include dialogue as a powerful mechanism for change, participants' eagerness to learn, and their commitment and hard work.

Ongoing and future work

Whilst CCE support for the LfL Ghana programme ceases in April 2013, Leadership for Learning is established in many Basic schools, and knowledge and enthusiasm have taken root such that sustainability is possible. The integration of the LfL principles into the GES Headteachers' Handbook and the acceptance of Leadership for Learning as the basis for headteacher professional development throughout Ghana are hugely significant in this respect. The challenge for all involved is to maintain the quality and integrity of the work while taking complete local ownership and scaling to the whole country.

The research teams continue to gather evidence to address the research questions and to learn as much as possible from the extant data.

The CCE team considers requests to support similar LfL programmes in different countries.

References

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Participants and development and research teams

Pupils, teachers, headteachers, parents, community members of schools throughout Ghana.

GES Circuit Supervisors, District Directors, Regional Directors, National Directors.

School Transformational Leaders.

Professional Development Leaders: Peter Abomah, Kodwo Arko-Boham, Kwame Asare, Rosemary Bosu, Rose Buah-Bassuah, Albert Dare, Eric Dorvor, Agnes Gyimah, Denis Kanmiki, Peter Kwegyir-Aggrey, Asare Johnson, Juliana Ohene, Aaron Osafo-Acquah, Rose Tenkorang and Albert Xaxayi.

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CCE University of Cambridge, UK: John MacBeath, Sue Swaffield, Suseela Malakolunthu (visiting scholar 2011), Stephen Jull (from January 2012), and administrative support.

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PROJECT BRIEFING

The Leadership for Learning Ghana Programme

Developing leadership capacity in Ghana

July 2012

The Leadership for Learning Ghana programme is a collaborative development and research programme aimed at 'building headteachers' leadership capacity for enhancing quality teaching and learning in Ghanaian Basic schools'. The programme is based on the five Leadership for Learning principles that were introduced to headteachers (school principals) throughout the country by 15 Ghanaian 'Professional Development Leaders'. In the three years since the programme began, a leading-edge cohort of 120 headteachers have been transforming their schools in line with the LfL principles, and approximately 2,000 other headteachers have been introduced to the framework. Circuit Supervisors, District, Regional and National Directors of Education have also attended workshops. The LfL principles have been incorporated into the latest edition of the Ghana Education Service's Headteacher Handbook. Improvements in teaching and learning include greater engagement and enjoyment on the part of pupils, improvements in pupils' reading, improved pedagogy, and the increased involvement of parents.

Introduction

The West African country of Ghana has a population of approximately 23 million, the majority of whom live in the southern half of the country. Education is directed from the capital Accra, where both the political policy-making Ministry of Education (MoE), and the non-partisan policy implementing Ghana Education Service (GES) are located. The country has ten administrative regions, each divided into districts and then circuits. There are approximately 12,000 primary schools and 5,500 junior high schools in Ghana which together are termed 'Basic' schools – the focus for the LfL programme.

Headteachers are usually appointed on the basis of their teaching experience and seniority, and thereafter have very limited professional development. Any support to assist headteachers has typically been on an ad hoc basis associated with foreign aid initiatives. Headteachers tend to view their role as custodians, guarding resources such as text books, maintaining registers of teachers' attendance and punctuality, and checking lesson plans. Few regard themselves as leaders or have established the link between their headship role and pupil learning. The need to build leadership capacity among headteachers

and the lack of leadership preparation have been identified as key issues in improving education in Ghana (Oduro 2008; Zame, Hope and Repress, 2008).

The Leadership for Learning Ghana programme uses the LfL framework and principles developed in the course of a three-year project involving 24 schools in seven countries (five in Europe, the USA and Australia) (MacBeath and Dempster, 2009). The five principles for practice can be summarised as:

- A focus on learning
- Conditions for learning
- Dialogue
- Shared leadership
- A shared sense of accountability.

Programme Aims

The overall purpose of the LfL Ghana programme is to develop the capacity of basic school headteachers in Ghana in order to improve children's learning.

The programme aims were developed by the Director of the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) at the University of Cape Coast, in collaboration with the Centre for Commonwealth Education and through discussions with key stakeholders in Ghana including the University of Cape Coast's Academic Board, the Directors of the Ghana Educational Service, the Association of Basic School Headteachers, the Ghana National Association of Teachers, the Ministry of Education, and UNICEF.

Three key aims were identified:

- To strengthen the leadership capacity of Basic school headteachers in Ghana
- To improve the quality of learning through school/classroom leadership
- To influence policy makers to make leadership development a condition for appointing Basic school headteachers.

Research and Development



Research is an integral part of the development programme. Data collected throughout the programme through questionnaires, interviews, observations and documents generated by workshop participants have been fed back to participants and used to inform the continuing development of the programme, as well as providing evidence of its impact. The programme also provides an opportunity to understand how the LfL principles might apply and be adapted to the Ghanaian context. The research questions can be summarised as:

1. To what extent are the LfL principles and framework applicable to Basic schools in Ghana?
2. What are the opportunities and challenges for developing LfL in Basic schools in Ghana?
3. What is the impact of introducing LfL to Basic schools in Ghana?

Following discussions with policy makers, academics and practitioners at different levels within the system it was decided that the entry point for the research and development work in Ghana would be with a group of headteachers who would be the change agents in their schools, communities and networks.

Development programmes for heads could not be put in place, however, without a cadre of people with expertise in professional development, an understanding of leadership issues and well versed in pedagogy. It was also seen as crucial that these people would themselves be effective leaders of learning with an openness to challenge and a readiness to embrace new ways of learning. 15 Professional Development Leaders were recruited by the IEPA following discussion within the University and with the GES. In order to ensure a broad base of expertise and perspectives the 15 were selected from a variety of educational institutions - the GES Training Unit and District Offices, Colleges of Education, the University of Winneba, and the University of Cape Coast.

The preparation of the PDLs was structured as a Certificate of Further Professional Studies from the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and entailed an introductory three-day workshop held in Ghana, individual study and writing of assignments, and a ten-day summer school in Cambridge. The summer school included visits to local primary schools, detailed planning of sessions for the forthcoming headteachers' workshops, and practice in leading sessions followed by feedback.

The Professional Development Leaders, aided by the Cambridge team and with essential administrative support from the IEPA, planned and led three residential workshops for 120 headteachers: three weeks in August/September 2009; two weeks in April 2010; and three days in November 2011. A separate introductory workshop was provided for the headteachers' Circuit Supervisors, and the two groups joined together in workshops from April 2010 onwards. Additional workshops were also provided for Directors at all levels.

The headteachers invited to participate in these intensive workshops were identified by GES District Directors. As historically there has been a tendency for projects to privilege areas in the south of the country close to the capital Accra, it was decided that the first phase would involve headteachers from throughout the country, drawing heads equally from the ten regions. They were chosen in pairs, a man and a woman from the same circuit to create a gender balance and to provide each with a local colleague for support. Headteachers (who soon termed themselves 'School Transformational Leaders' or STLs) were identified for their leadership skills and commitment to school improvement. This created a cadre of 'early adopters' who would promote the programme and act as critical friends to following

generations of headteachers. Whilst the selected heads were un-representative in terms of all Basic school headteachers in Ghana, their schools do reflect the full geographical and social diversity of the country: urban and rural, coastal and inland, forest and savannah, predominantly Christian and predominantly Muslim, relatively well endowed and extremely poor in terms of resources.

The expectation that the initial tranche of headteachers (the STLs) would share their growing understanding of and enthusiasm for LfL with other headteachers was soon realised, as individuals and pairs created opportunities to introduce their colleagues to the LfL principles and ideas. Circuit Supervisors, District Directors, and PDLs are usually included in these events, and often initiate them too. It is through these means, as well as GES initiated workshops, that the programme has grown such that in three years it is estimated that 2,000 school leaders throughout Ghana have been introduced to Leadership for Learning.

As the programme has grown, the need for a full time locally based co-ordinator became imperative, and a Ghanaian who had recently completed a PhD in education from the UK was appointed in April 2010. As well as doing essential administration for the various workshops, the co-ordinator is a vital link with the STLs and PDLs, providing support and encouraging networking through newsletters and recently introduced weekly text messages, as well as visiting schools for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Outcomes and findings



Key outcomes of the programme to date include:

1. 15 dedicated Professional Development Leaders, accredited by the University of Cambridge
2. 120 headteachers thoroughly conversant with

Leadership for Learning principles, leading the transformation of their schools

3. Approx 2000 headteachers introduced to Leadership for Learning
4. Regular newsletters and text messages for programme participants and stakeholders
5. Awareness and support across all levels of the education system in Ghana, including Circuit Supervisors, District, Regional, and National Directors
6. Integration of Leadership for Learning within the latest edition of the GES Headteacher Handbook as national education policy and practice.

The findings summarised below are based on evidence relating to the 120 headteachers/STLs and their schools. The impact of the programme includes changes to these headteachers/STLs, the way they view and carry out their role, the transformations they have led in their schools and communities, and the consequent improvements in teachers' attitudes and pupils' learning. Specific individual school examples include reading test results increasing from 11% in 2008 to 38% in 2010, and national test results (BECE) increasing from 54% in 2009 to 81% in 2011.

1. Impact on headteachers

Headteachers changed from being office-based administrators to lead learners, influencing their schools, their local communities, and other schools. STLs led professional development on LfL for their teachers, shared responsibility with them and imbued a sense of moral purpose.

"There is a big difference between the LfL schools and others. It has impacted the life of pupils, teachers and headteachers. The headteachers are now open ... the atmosphere is conducive for learning" (Circuit Supervisor)

2. Impact on teachers

- Greater professionalism, improved morale and commitment
- Sharing of teaching strategies and expertise
- Better use of contact time
- More varied approaches to teaching and learning
- Greater use of teaching and learning materials
- Increased group work and pupils' active participation
- Improved relationships with pupils

3. Impact on pupils

- Positive attitude towards learning
- Reading ability and enjoyment increased
- Increased vocabulary
- Correction of work responding to teachers' guidance
- Asking of questions related to lesson content
- Improved test scores