

On the Sustainability of Ghana's Capitation Grant in Northern Ghana

Seidu Al-hassan

Department of Economics & Entrepreneurship Development,
University for Development Studies, Tamale
0244 217888; Email: zodaseidu@yahoo.com

Ramatu Mahama Al-Hassan

Department of Agricultural Economics & Agribusiness,
University of Ghana, Legon
020 8154570; Email: aramatu@ug.edu.gh

ABSTRACT

Past and present governments in Ghana have introduced different policies to support pupils' education at the basic level. The Capitation Grant is one of such schemes. It has been introduced to promote free and quality basic education to all children of school going age. Although the scheme has been acclaimed to have had significant impact on enrollment, there has not been any study measuring this impact and the sustainability of the scheme. The objective of the study was therefore to investigate the effectiveness and sustainability of Ghana's Capitation Grant. Data were gathered from two districts in the Northern region of Ghana, where school enrollment has historically been low, by interviewing key stakeholders in education. A modified Likert scale was employed to assess the extent to which the capitation grant currently implemented in Ghana can be sustained in Northern Ghana. The findings are that though awareness of the existence of the Grant is high among all key education stakeholders its sustainability appears to be weak. NGOs play key role in sustaining the programme, particularly in terms of financial and logistical support. Key recommendations include increasing participation of civil society organizations, especially NGOs, building the capacity of school community representatives to enhance the quality of their participation in the management of the grant and simplifying procedures for accessing the grant.

Key words: Capitation Grant, Ghana, Sustainability, Likert scale and Education

Introduction

Education is key to a nation's development. Historically, the main purpose of education, whether formal or informal, has been to produce a person who will be a useful member of society. When Sir F. G. Guggisberg became Governor of the Gold Coast (present Ghana) in 1919, his main policy was the general progress of the people of the country and that the keystone of that advancement was education (Bening, 1990). When people are well educated they tend to be capable of managing their own problems. The single most important key to development and poverty alleviation is education which must start with universal primary education for girls and boys equally (Wolfensohn, 1999 cited in World Bank, 2004). In recognition of the role that education can play in turning around the economy of Ghana, Article (1) of the 1992 Constitution of the republic of Ghana states that, all persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities. With a view to achieving the full realization of that right, the Constitution proclaims that basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all. Following this, the educational sector of Ghana has periodically undergone a series of reforms by various review committees and commissions. Efforts to ensure quality education date back to colonial times. Ghana's education sector, once one of the most respected in Africa, has faced challenges in the past two and a half decades. Quality as well as quantity has suffered (World Bank, 2004). Education in Northern Ghana is of an abysmal quality because schools do not have the full complement of classes and lack most basic sanitation facilities (School for Life, 2004).

Problem Statement

When addressing the Gold Coast Teachers' Union in 1943, Governor Burns had re-affirmed 'the desired end is compulsory education for all children in the country'. He noted that school attendance by children of school going age was low. It was then the government's policy that progress towards this end would depend on the supply of trained teachers, which in turn would depend on money (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1962).

The implementation of Ghana's most recent education reforms (which began in 1987) brought to the fore many problems in the objectives, content, administration and the management of education. In 2001, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) under the leadership of Mr. J. A Kuffour had serious reservations concerning certain aspects of the reforms, doubts which were shared by a wide section of the public, especially parents (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2004). Despite the numerous review committees, commissions, etc on education dating back to the colonial times, the results have been mixed. There has been almost unanimous agreement that under the 1987 reforms, public education on reforms in the country for example failed to meet expectations in terms of its coverage, quality, equitability and economic utility.

The Ministry of Education and Sports introduced the Capitation Grant Scheme in 2003/2004 academic year whereby every Primary School receives a specified amount of money per pupil enrolled. The amount is GH C3.5 per student but has recently been

increased to GH ₵4.5. The main objective of the Capitation Grant is to encourage economically disadvantaged parents to send their children to school thereby improving the coverage of education in Ghana. The amount of the grant disbursed to schools depends on the numerical strength of the school. There is a positive relationship between enrolment and the amount of the grant received. The higher the enrolment figure of the school the larger the amount of the grant allotted to that school. The grant has a number of uses and these include the provision of stationery, minor repairs of fixtures and fittings, drums, washing basins and buckets, first-aid box, support for needy but brilliant students, printing of exam questions and cost of documentation, TLMs, support to girl child, in-service training, payment of circuit sporting and culture levy of GH ₵0.55 per child deducted from source. The grant constitutes about 80% of the total finances managed by schools and thus represents the most important source of finance to schools.

The Capitation Grant has been designed to empower schools to effectively use financial resources to plan and carryout school quality improvement activities (Ghana Education Service (GES), 2006). The process of planning the activities is supposed to be participatory in nature and transparent. The Grant is therefore expected to serve as an opportunity to help build school level capacity to effectively implement fiscal decentralization which is the long term goal of the Government of Ghana (GES, 2006). The Capitation Grant scheme also forms part of the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to accomplish the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) to facilitate among other things, the attainment of universal primary education completion targets¹.

¹ Other programmes that are expected to augment the positive outcome of the capitation grant scheme include the Ghana School Feeding Program and HIPC Funds.

Research has revealed that the Capitation Grant has increased enrolment by about 40% across Ghana and partly accounts for the sustained rise in enrolment across the country (Stevens, 2005)². Gross enrolment ratios in primary schools for the academic year 2004/2005 were 88% at the national level and 71/5% in the Northern Region. National enrolment rate for J.S.S. was estimated at 70% for this same academic year, whereas the Northern Region recorded 51% (ISSER, 2005). Recent evidence also shows that the main reason for parents enrolling their children in school is the introduction of the Grant (Table 1). Optimists like Seidu et al (2007) conclude that the Capitation Grant should be increased from its present rate of Gh ¢3 per pupil per annum to about Gh ¢5³ per pupil per annum.

Table 1: Factors that motivate Parents to send their children to School: 2005-2007

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Introduction of Capitation Grant	16	32
Introduction of Ghana School Feeding Programme	14	28
Availability of schools	8	16
The child has the right to go to school	6	12
Other children are being sent to school	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Seidu et al (2007).

Despite the good reasons for introducing the Capitation Grant and its short term effect of increasing enrollment (40%) at basic school level there is no empirical evidence to suggest its sustainability. Previous researches (Stevens, 2006; NNED, 2005 and 2008; ISODEC 2007 and Seidu et al, 2007) have mainly focused on the effectiveness of the Grant, particularly on enrolment, retention and attendance. Others (ESAR, 2008, SNV,

² The Mirror in October 2008 reported a 17.5% and 19.3% increase in enrolment and attendance, respectively, in the public schools with 477,714 pupils benefiting from the Programme.

³ Current exchange rate is GhC1.15/US\$

2008 and WUSC, 2007 and IBIS, 2007) have examined the challenges facing the disbursement process and adequacy of the Grant. It is unlikely that the government's aim of providing education for all by the year 2015 can be achieved without looking at the extent to which generic educational strategies such as the Capitation Grant can be sustained. Also, the attainment of the broader aim of the government concerning how to make education more relevant to the world of work after school, to rural development and modernization of the predominantly agriculture-based economy is doubtful without the sustainability of key educational programmes such as the Capitation Grant. The critical research question is, *to what extent can the Capitation Grant be sustained in Northern Ghana in order to enhance the education decentralization programme?* This paper examines the economics of Ghana's Capitation Grant as one of the instruments for promoting basic education development. The overall objective of the paper is to assess the effectiveness of the Capitation Grant with the view of determining whether or not it is sustainable. The specific objectives are to:

- Ascertain the effectiveness of the Capitation Grant in promoting basic education through efficient utilization of funds.
- Determine the extent to which the Capitation Grant can be sustained.

Education Reforms in Ghana

The educational reforms have always aimed at making education more relevant to the world of work after school, to rural development and modernization of the predominantly agriculture-based economy, as well as promoting national and cultural identity and

citizenship (MOEYS, 2004). At independence in 1957, Ghana's education system consisted of six years of primary education, followed by five years in secondary school, leading to 'Ordinary Level Certificate ('O'-level), and a further two years (sixth form) leading to the Advanced Level Certificate ('A'-level) which was the requirement for admission into university. Nkrumah's Accelerated Development Plan of Education of 1951 rapidly expanded recruitment into elementary and secondary education. Between independence in 1957 and the mid-1980s there were nine attempts at educational reform, starting with the Botsio Commission in 1960 which influenced the passing of the 1961 Education Act⁴. The Kwabong Review Committee in 1966 addressed the issue of the majority of pupils from elementary schools who could not gain entry to the restricted number of places in secondary 'grammar' schools by introducing the concept of Continuation Schools. The Dsobo Review Committee of 1974 introduced the concept of comprehensive Junior Secondary Schools to teach academic and practical skills to all pupils whereas the 1987 education reforms brought a nation-wide implementation of the Junior Secondary School concept. Critics of the 1987 reforms, however, argue that it brought about failure in public education in Ghana in terms of coverage, quality, equity and utility to the economy.

A free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy and a Basic Education Sector Improvement Project (BESIP) were implemented in the mid to late 1990s. A Girls' Education Unit was created in the Ministry of Education, District Girls'

⁴ Kojo Botsio became the country's first Minister of education. Soon after assuming office the Minister declared that 'education is the keystone of a people's life and happiness (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1962). The Minister had sweeping powers involving the ability to inspect, close down a school and to prosecute parents who failed to enrol their children in school.

Education Officers were employed and a Director of Basic, Secondary and Girl Child Education appointed. The most recent effort at improving education delivery prompted the work of the Education Reform Review Committee of 2002 with a 29-member Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah. This Committee was tasked to examine the structure of education and to discuss issues affecting the development and delivery of education. MOEYS (2004) documents that based on the 2002 education reform, government was to take steps to enhance gender equity at all levels and programmes of education. The goal is for the country to attain universal basic education for ages 4 to 15 by 2015, and universal second cycle education by 2020. The public Universities have on their own volition introduced affirmative action plans into their admissions policies for gender balance.

Even though the role of the public sector in promoting education is important, the experience of most developing countries shows the government alone cannot do it. According to the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, the functions, powers, responsibilities and resources should be transferred from the Central government to local government units:- the District Assemblies (DAs). Indeed, the Constitution identifies the DA as the highest political authority in the District and enjoins people as far as practicable to participate effectively in their governance. Additionally, it requires the state to make democracy a reality by decentralizing the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions and districts by affording opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making.

The need to decentralize the education sector started in the 1950s⁵. For instance, the Erzuah Commission in 1951 recommended the separation of education policy-making from its implementation in order to free the main Ministry of some of its straight line responsibilities, hence the establishment of the Ghana Teaching Service. Other recommendations have been made over time to devolve the management of education in the country leading to the review of the Ghana Education Service (GES) structure in 1995 which gave a lot of room for communities to be involved in school management. This brought the introduction of School Management Committees (SMC) to help stir the interest of the community in education in their locality taking into account their peculiar challenges. Again, to be able to strategise for improvement in education at the district level and to heighten local involvement, District Education Oversight Committees, made up of major stakeholders of education in the districts were also formed. All these are forms of decentralisation because they widen stakeholder participation in the management and supervision in schools. The 2002 reforms also called for effective decentralisation of executive responsibility for the provision and management of primary and second cycle schools to the districts. Thus, since 1997 education services have been decentralized, including the introduction of School Management Committees and School Performance Assessment Meetings for increased community management and accountability (World Bank, 2004).

⁵ The decentralization implies a well-planned refocusing of the Ministry and Ghana Education Service away from the executive management of a country-wide network of schools, their staff, supplies and finances; and now towards the setting and enforcement of educational standards, the development of books and other educational materials, and the promotion of quality teacher training (MOEYS, 2004).

Available literature on education and economic development in general, and, education and employment in particular, revolve around two fundamental economically motivated demands. The first is, politically, determining how many schools are provided, who gets access to these places, and what kind of instruction they receive; the important distinction between social and private benefits, the cost of different levels of education and the implication of these differentials for educational investment strategy on the educational policies of the government (Todaro, 1995 and Todaro and Smith, 2004). The other point is the demand-side constraints on school participation which includes household-level factors such as affordability of schooling relative to household incomes, the opportunity cost of children's time, and the value of schooling perceived by parents; there are also individual-level factors such as the child's personal characteristics (for example, gender and orphan hood status) and community level variables such as language. Whereas many of these variables are important for policy interventions, particularly in the short run, documenting their impact helps planners understand the relationship between educational progress and success in solving problems in other sectors and identifying possible interventions and target groups for special attention (The World Bank, 1998/1999).

Operation of the Capitation Grant Scheme

As part of the efforts to expand access and improve quality of education, the Capitation Grant Scheme (CGS) was introduced in the 2003/2004 academic year to provide funds to cater for school levies covering school repairs, cultural and sports activities⁶. The grant aims at enhancing the decentralization process through the involvement of community

⁶ A similar programme, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), was launched in 2005 earmarked to feed pupils attending public schools and kindergartens in the poorest areas of the country. Under the Programme, one hot nutritious meal is provided to every pupil daily using locally grown foodstuffs.

level actors in order to improve efficiency leading to quality education. The education decentralization policy also aims at ensuring sustainability.

All public schools under the Ghana Education Service in the selected districts are qualified for the Grant scheme. Each pupil is entitled to an amount of Gh¢3 paid at a rate of Gh¢1 per term for three terms. Out of the Gh¢1 paid per term, about Gh¢0.18 is deducted to cater for cultural and sports levies at source leaving Gh¢0.82 for other forms of levies and minor school repairs. Every school must have a School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP). The plan is prepared for the whole academic year but phased out into the three terms of the year. The SPIP is prepared by the Head with the approval of the SMC, which also has oversight responsibility over its implementation. The SPIP is then forwarded to the District Director of Education (DDE) for review and approval. The review is to ensure that the activities to be undertaken are in line with the Education Strategic Plan and other priority areas of education.

The District Education Office opens a special account into which funds for the capitation grant would be lodged. The signatories to this account are the District Director of Education and the District Accountant. To ensure smooth implementation of the school programmes, separate bank accounts are opened by the District for each school. In the case of Tamale Metropolitan Area, grants are paid into the Agricultural Development Bank where each school within the Metropolis is supposed to open a Capitation Grant Account. In the Tolon/Kumbungu District, each school has Capitation Grant account with

Bonzali Rural Bank. The signatories to the schools' accounts are head teachers and their assistants (GES, 2006).

Projected enrollment levels in each school are made at the beginning of each academic year. This estimate is the basis for the transfer of 50% of funds to the school at the beginning of the first term. Subsequent transfers for the first term are dependent on the submission of adequate returns on the actual enrollment figures. The second and third term tranches are sent to schools based on the enrollment levels. With regard to the disbursement process, the executor of an activity within the SPIP applies to the head teacher for funds with a request form (Form B). Cash equivalent to that activity is withdrawn from the bank account; an advance form (Form C) is then completed and cash is paid to the executor to be used for the purpose as indicated on the request form. After the completion of the activity, the executor submits the relevant documentation (receipts, honour certificates, and activity reports) to the headteacher and completes an Accounting Advance Form (Form D) to end the process.

Internal auditors of the Ghana Education Service monitor school accounts, conduct at least one audit of the utilization of the capitation grants half yearly and submit copies of the audit report to the School Management Committee (SMC), District Director of Education (DDE), and the Regional Director of Education (RDE). Monthly and quarterly reports describing activities completed and underway during the period, together with a statement of expenditures for these activities for the period should be submitted to the District Education Office by the head teacher and the SMC chairman. The District

Education Office is also to report on quarterly basis to the Director General on the operations of the capitation grant. These reports include Monthly Capitation Grant Expenditure Returns-Form G, Monthly Capitation Grant Activity Completion Report-Form H and Term Capitation Grant Status Report-Form 1 (GES, 2006).

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the circuit supervisor, who visits each school twice a term and reports to the District Education Office on the abolition of all forms of levies in the school, implementation status of the SPIP, and the timely submission of reports (GES 2006). The District Director as well as the District Teacher Support Team (DTST) are expected to pay regular visits to each school to review progress on implementation of activities at the school. Progress Reports (Forms G, H and 1) are to be submitted by the head teacher through the SMC to the District Director of Education. Finally, the Regional Monitoring Teams are to monitor and report on the disbursement and utilization of funds at the Districts and Schools respectively on term basis (GES, 2006).

Methodology

Analytical framework

Sustainable development encompasses three different policy dimensions and their interactions, therefore there is a vast range of relevant indicators in need of an organizing principle (OECD, 2006). Frameworks are important to structure work on indicators and on underlying statistics. Such frameworks should be simple and understandable so as to link the indicators to policy questions and make them useful to decision-makers and the

public. Defining, measuring and implementing sustainable development has proven to be a tough task (OECD, 2006). Sustainable development implies a better balance between economic, environmental and social goals, and great fairness in distributing the gains from growth among people and countries (OECD, 2006). It is simply the act of making policies which are in the interest of future generations. The sustainable development agenda is a broad one, covering virtually all aspects of life at national and international levels and of government policies.

Translating the concept of sustainable development into practice is not a simple affair. Since the concept of sustainable development includes a time element, any measure of progress towards it must also include evaluating the longer-term implications of current decisions and behavior. There is lack of agreement among countries on which indicators are relevant to sustainable development. The OECD is advancing on several measurement fronts. In the environmental sphere, decoupling indicators show how economic growth can be accomplished without environmental damage. Materials flow indicators track the production, use and reuse of materials in an economy and the implications for resource productivity. In the social sphere, indicators of social capital are being developed to couple with measures of economic and environmental capital. Alternative measures of well-being are being formulated to accompany purely economic concepts of development.

The World Bank has approached the assessment of sustainability in two steps. First, an immediate approach that enables researchers to set in place a systematic way of testing

the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of a specific proposal, and second, a more ambitious effort at tackling the concept of sustainability. The first approach is often referred to as the *triangle*. This approach is well in place at the World Bank and is increasingly recognized as valuable within and outside the Bank. The second approach to assessing sustainability sees sustainability as an “opportunity”. In a more conventional language of the economics profession it can be termed as ‘expanding the capital stock’ (Serageldin, 1996). The emphasis is leaving for future generations many opportunities equal or more than what the present generation is enjoying.

In economics, an opportunity can be measured by the concept of capital because capital and the growth of capital are the means to provide future generations with as many opportunities as, if not more than, past and present generations have had. Serageldin (1996) argues that there are four kinds of capital. These are man-made, natural, human and social capital. Human capital involves investments in education, health, and nutrition of individuals. Ghana’s Capitation Grant is an opportunity that can help to build school level capacity to effectively implement fiscal decentralization which is the long term goal of the government of Ghana (GES, 2006). Economic growth and development imply, among other things, rising output over time which in turn depends crucially, though not exclusively, on the rate of capital accumulation and the level of technology employed. Thus, to ensure an increasing future capacity of the economy to produce adequately for a growing population, investment must be made both for replacement and expansion of the stock of productive capital.

The analysis for the present study is done within the context of sustainable economic development. Specifically, the paper utilizes the participation of various education stakeholders -school community (PTAs and SMCs), NGOs, District Oversight Committees (DEOCs) and teachers- as key sustainable indicators of the grant. Each category was assessed based on six issues (awareness of the grant, knowledge about the quantum of grant to schools, knowledge of grant disbursement channels, financial contribution, capacity building and participation in monitoring of grant use. The absence of earlier empirical work on the economics of the Capitation Grant in Ghana presents a challenge to this study, as there are no existing results against which comparisons could be made.

Sampling procedure

The study was conducted in the three Northern Regions of Ghana (Northern, Upper East and Upper West). Four districts, Tamale Metropolitan Assembly and Tolon-Kumbungu Districts from the Northern region, Kassena-Nankana District from the Upper East region and Nadowli District from the Upper West Region were sampled for the study using purposive sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain data from sixteen public basic schools (pre-school, primary and JSS) drawn from the sampled districts⁷. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 72 teachers (including 26 head teachers), 12 District Education Directors, 13 Budget Officers, 106

⁷ The sampled schools are Bagabaga Demonstration Annex Primary School, Ridge Nursery School, S.D.A. Primary School, Dabokpa Junior Secondary School, Bethany Primary School, Wataniya Junior Secondary School, Presby Junior Secondary School, Dakpema Primary School, St. Joseph Junior Secondary School, Zion Nursery School, Tolon L/A Block B Primary School, Kumbungu Watania E/A Primary School, Kumbungu D/A Primary School, KUmbungu D/A/ Junior Secondary School, Nyankpala L/A Primary School and Nibrasiat E/A Primary School.

members of SMCs and PTAs, 20 members of Education Oversight Committees, 8 NGOs operating in education and 4 District Chief Executives.

Major indicators that were employed for the study are school community participation, District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs) participation, NGO participation, and teacher participation. School community involvement was measured in terms of the participation of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) in the programme. As part of the educational reforms School Management Committees (SMC) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) were introduced since the mid 1990s to help stir the interest of the community in education in their locality taking into account their peculiar challenges.

Data and data analysis

A data collection guide containing semi-structured questionnaires was used. Data were gathered on the effects of the Grant and key determinants of sustaining the Grant. Specifically, data were collected on the degree of awareness of the existence of the Grant. Respondents' knowledge about the quantum of Grant to various schools was assessed with emphasis on amount of Grant received by schools and its utilization. In addition, data on activities related to building the capacity of SMCs, PTAs and teachers were considered. Respondents were asked to describe the situation, highlighting the strengths or otherwise of these indicators based on their experience. The data collection also covered the methods used to disburse the Grant to schools. The intention was to highlight the channels and procedures used to disburse money to schools. The monitoring and

reporting mechanisms put in place to ensure the effective management of the Grant are other forms of information that were gathered.

Finally, both major and sub-major sustainability indicators were developed for the analysis. This approach agrees with OECD (2006) that a popular measurement approach to sustainable development is to select and enumerate a number of indicators once the approach to sustainable development has been defined (OECD, 2006). There are two advantages of using indicators to measure the sustainability of the Grant. Firstly, indicators are needed to illustrate to policy makers and the public the linkages and trade-offs between economic, environmental and social values; to evaluate the longer-term implications of current decisions and behaviours; and to monitor progress towards sustainable development goals by establishing baseline conditions and trends. Secondly, developing reduced sets of sustainable development indicators also allows key aspects of sustainable development to be communicated in a simple way.

The sustainability of the Grant is assumed to be dependent on the achievement of the above mentioned major sustainable indicators which in turn depends upon the attainment of sub-indicators. Four different sub-indicators were used. These are awareness of the Grant, knowledge of quantum of Grant, knowledge of Grant disbursement and financial contribution (by school community and NGOs). The rest are respondents' ability to participate in capacity building workshops for Grant management and monitoring of Grant use. A four level scale (1 = Poor; 2 = Fair; 3 = Good; 4 = Very good) was designed to enable the scoring of sub-indicators and another four point scale (1 = not sustainable; 2

= weakly sustainable; 3 = sustainable; 4 = highly sustainable) was designed for major indicators. The use of a three point scale for major indicators is influenced by the approach used by Serageldin (1996). The author explained that sustainability has several levels –weak, sensible, and strong- depending on how strictly we elect the concept of maintenance or non-declining capital. Average scores were then computed for each major and sub-indicator based on the number of responses.

Sustainability of the Capitation Grant

Tables 2 to 6 contain information regarding sustainability indicators of the Capitation Grant. The average scores are 1.8, 1.7, 3.0 and 2.5 for school community participation, District Oversight Committee participation, NGOs participation and teachers’ participation, respectively. The results show that the school community participation is weak. The school community also does little in terms of financial contribution towards sustaining the grant and yet with the exception of the executive members of PTAs and SMCs majority of school community members do not actively take part in Grant management. Members of the SMCs complained of never participating in any Grant related capacity building training. This finding is similar to the conclusion reached by Seidu et al (2007) that after the institution of the capitation grant scheme most parents and individuals now feel reluctant to pay any other form of fees or lend a helping hand to the basic schools.

Table 2: School Community (PTAs and SMCs) Participation

Sub-indicator	Score
Awareness of the Grant	4
Knowledge of quantum of Grant	1
Knowledge of Grant disbursement	1

Financial contribution	1
Participation in capacity building exercise for Grant management	2
Participation in the monitoring of Grant use	2
Average	1.8

Source: Field survey, 2007.

District Education Oversight Committee recorded an average of 1.7 (Table 3) suggesting a fair contribution to sustaining the Grant. Although, members of these committees have adequate knowledge about the existence of the Grant, the quantum and mode of disbursement of the Grant appeared somewhat strange to them. They have not had the chance to participate in training workshops regarding Grant management and their participation in monitoring the Grant is poor. Members also have poor financial contribution towards the grant. The results show that DEOCs face a peculiar problem because the chairmen of such committees who are mostly the District Chief Executives rarely organize meetings to discuss educational development at the district level including the Grant. Another explanation is that the key players in the management of the Capitation Grant are the District Director of Education, Assistant Director of Education, Circuit Supervisors, District Accountants, SMC, and the head teacher. They provide overall oversight and support towards the implementation of the SPIP and maintain proper books of accounts and other records of all transactions. They also provide the day to day supervision on the implementation of the SPIP to ensure the effective utilization of the capitation grants (GES, 2006).

Table 3: District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) Participation

Sub-indicator	Score
Awareness of the Grant	4
Knowledge of quantum of Grant	1
Knowledge of Grant disbursement	2
Financial contribution	1

Participation in capacity building exercise for Grant management	1
Participation in the monitoring of Grant use	1
Average	1.7

Source: Field survey, 2007.

The average value of the score for NGO contribution is 3 indicating high sustainability (Table 4). Apart from being highly aware of the existence of the Grant, the NGOs embark on advocacy and lobbying to track the Grant. Examples of such organizations include ISODEC, RAINS, Catholic Relief Service, Ibis and Action Aid Ghana. UNICEF, World Food Programme, Catholic Relief Services and Action Aid Ghana provide school facilities such as textbooks, uniform, bicycles, furniture and food ration to most basic schools within the Tamale Metropolis and Tolon/Kumbungu District. The planning of the scheme did not, however, incorporate the already existing experience of these NGOs. Majority of the staff of these organizations described this shortcoming as a blow to the success of the programme.

Table 4: NGO participation

Sub-indicator	Score
Awareness of the Grant	4
Knowledge of quantum of Grant	3
Knowledge of Grant disbursement	3
Financial contribution	3
Participation/organization in capacity building exercise for Grant management	2
Participation in the monitoring of Grant use	3
Average	3

Source: Field survey, 2007.

With an average score of 2.5, teachers constitute the major group of players who can really ensure the sustainability of the programme (Table 5). Almost all the teachers interviewed explained that they have knowledge of the amount of the Grant disbursed to

their schools as well as how the moneys are disbursed. According to the teachers, the headteachers do involve other teachers in the preparation of the school project implementation programmes. The sampled teachers explained that the preparation of School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) which is an important requirement for grant disbursement is done in a participatory and transparent manner. The content of SPIP covers important areas such as components or targets, actions to be taken, who is responsible, resources needed, time frame and who monitors. This is to ensure that the key activities are undertaken effectively. The key activities include enrollment figures, provision of teaching and learning materials, school management (including T&T and Stationery), community and school relationship, support to needy pupils, school and cluster based in-service training, minor repairs and payment of sports and culture levies (to be approved nationally).

Nevertheless, the sampled teachers complained about bureaucracy in accessing the Grant. According to the sampled headteachers and teachers, the time spent in the preparation of the SPIP, sending it for printing and vetting, preparing detail costing sheet for each activity and filling of other forms in the offices and bank in order to access the grants are frustrating and tiresome. The teachers also explained that the bureaucracy involved in accessing the Grant inhibits their ability to carry out important school activities in order to meet the ever increasing enrollment figures. The bureaucracy comes with its concomitant delay in the release of Grants. School grants can delay for an average of 5 months (more than one school term). An overall average figure of 1.9 suggests that the Grant is not sustainable (Table 5). The reason is the poor school community and District

Education Oversight Committees' participation in planning, managing and monitoring of the Grant.

Table 5: Teacher participation

Sub-indicator	Score
Awareness of the Grant	4
Knowledge of quantum of Grant	3
Knowledge of Grant disbursement	3
Financial contribution	1
Participation in capacity building exercise for Grant management	2
Participation in the monitoring of Grant use	2
Average	2

Source: Field survey, 2007. *Note: 1 = not sustainable; 2 = weakly sustainable; 3 = sustainable; 4 = highly sustainable.*

Table 6: Overall Sustainability Assessment Scores

Major-indicator	Score
School community	1.8
District Education Oversight Committee	1.7
NGOs	3.0
Teachers	2.5
Average	2

Source: Field survey, 2007.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The overall objective of the study was to investigate the effectiveness and sustainability of Ghana's Capitation Grant. The results suggest that the awareness about the Capitation Grant is high in the country. However, an overall average of a score of 2 suggests a weak sustainability of the scheme. This may be attributed to the poor financial contribution by the school community, teachers and District Education Oversight Committees in support of the programme. Also, the procedure for Grant disbursement is cumbersome and this is

likely to frustrate school authorities applying for the Grant or make them use unacceptable means of accessing the Grant, the latter having a high chance of introducing corruption. The poor sustainability role of the school community, DEOCs and teachers suggests that the scheme is highly dependent on the government. NGOs play key role in sustaining the programme, particularly in terms of financial and logistical support.

It is recommended that the planning of similar programmes in the future should involve NGOs, especially those involved in educational development. This is useful for tapping their experiences in managing and tracking the use of similar funds. There is the need for the government to strengthen the capacities of DEOCs, headteachers and teachers, SMCs and PTAs in ways that will put them in a better position to actively and confidently take part in managing the Grant. This can be achieved by including the training of SMC and PTA members into the District Assembly capacity building programmes. The emphasis should be on strengthening the financial role of those education stakeholders.

The process involved in accessing the grant by the basic schools should be reviewed by the Ghana Education Service (GES). It should be made simple and easy for school authorities to access the grants, this is necessary for enhancing Grant use efficiency and for reducing frustrations that school authorities go through before accessing the Capitation Grant.

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