

BLUE HORIZON AID

April 2023 Newsletter

Issue -4



About 2.3million children in Ghana have no desk – African Education Watch

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Bring Hope to the Hopeless – Two ladies from Kotobabi No 2 on their broken desk

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CONFRONTING THE DESK DEFICITS IN GHANA'S BASIC SCHOOLS

Introduction

There are about 5.8 million children in Ghana's public basic schools, comprising 1.2 million in Kindergarten (KG), 3.2 million in primary and 1.4 million in Junior High Schools (JHS). According to the Ministry of Education, by 2021, about 596,000 KG pupils, representing half of the national KG population and 1.28 million pupils in primary schools lacked desks in school. Another 425,000 pupils, representing 30 per cent of JHS students were without writing spaces. This brings the total number of public basic school pupils without desks to about 2.3 million.

The worsening desk situation in underserved regions

The desk situation is worse at the primary level in the most underserved regions in the education sector: Northern, North East, Savannah, Upper East, Upper West, Bono East and Oti, as depicted in Figure 1. Proportionally, while all the seven (7) regions have the percentage of public primary school pupils lacking desks higher than the national average (40%), the North East Region leads with a maximum of 80 per cent of primary school pupils lacking desks followed by the Northern Region (70%) with Upper East, Bono East and Savanna regions all recording 60 per cent.

Declining basic education financing driving the lack of desks

The lack of chairs and desks is caused by poor funding of basic education infrastructure, manifesting in the construction of schools without adequate supply of furniture or the absence of schools and furniture in some communities, in which case, teaching takes place under community erected sheds without desks. Between 2014 and 2020, the share of the education sector discretionary expenditure to basic education declined from 19.2 per cent to 10.9 per cent. The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) is Ghana's main funding engine for education infrastructure. In recent times, the quantum of GETFund expended on basic education has been on a steady decline, with only 16 per cent GETFund's infrastructure expenditure budget allocated to basic education in 2022, with secondary education receiving about 44 per cent. Since the introduction of the free SHS programme in 2017, GETFund's focus has been on secondary education with the decline in funding of basic education infrastructure continuing to worsen the desk situation in basic schools. The 2022 liquidity challenges bedevilling the Ghanaian economy and its impact on education infrastructure financing, especially on GETFund, meant very little or no significant progress in improving the desk situation.



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BHA to repair and provide New Desks for Kotobabi No 2 JHS



Three ladies sharing one broken desk

Blue Horizon Aid in partnership with GFK as part of its commitment to improve teaching and learning in Ghana has responded to an emergency assistance call from the management of Kotobabi No 2 Junior High School (JHS) to address the current difficulties the pupils are facing with desks when it comes to learning.

The headmistress (Mrs Agyeman Agyem) and her team contacted BHA to come to their aid by repairing some of the broken desks for them to enable the pupils get a place to sit and write during lessons.

Ensaam Woodworks who partnered BHA in July last year to assist in providing all furniture support for schools which BHA supports was tasked to assess the situation on the ground.



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...BHA to repair and provide of New Desks for Kotobabi No 2 JHS



Two boys managing one broken desk with a plastic chair



Two boys on a desk without a writing slab

Preliminary assessment revealed that about 90% of the furniture was weak and beyond repairs. The rest of the furniture (10%) the pupils were currently using were in a deplorable state and was not fit for studies.

The assistant headmistress of the school Mrs Adelaide Acheampong recounted that the situation is very bad and is counting on BHA to come to their rescue as teaching and learning has become very difficult due to the current state of the furniture.

Currently desks that should seat two pupils (when new) are now seating three pupils even in their damaged state and desks that should seat one pupil are seating two pupils. Some of the pupil also stand during lessons due to lack of desks

BHA has pledged its support for the school and has promised to get the desks fixed and provide additional new ones for the children.



Some of the pupils standing without desks to sit on



Some of the Broken Desks

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Ensaam Woodwork team trying to sort out Desks that can be repaired



These desks were broken beyond repairs



Pupils carrying some of the broken desk



A few desks collected hoping to be fixed



Emmanuel (Ensaam CEO) & Adelaide (Asst Headmistress)



Ensamm team member looking on to see if there is Hope

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Monthly Devotional Guide

Title: Why Reading the Bible is Important: An Indispensable

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

The Bible is the inspired word of God, and it is a vital part of our spiritual growth and development as Christians. Reading the Bible is not just a religious obligation, but it is an essential practice that helps us to deepen our relationship with God and grow in faith. In this devotional, we will explore three reasons why we must read the Bible, as well as some scripture passages that highlight the importance of this practice.

1. To know God's will

One of the primary reasons why we must read the Bible is to know God's will for our lives. The Bible contains God's instructions and guidance for every aspect of our lives, and it is through reading the Bible that we can understand what God wants us to do. In the book of Proverbs, we read, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). By reading the Bible, we can gain wisdom and insight into God's will for our lives, and we can trust in him to guide us in the right direction.





2. To grow in faith

Another reason why we must read the Bible is to grow in faith. Faith comes from hearing the word of God, and it is through reading the Bible that we can strengthen our faith and trust in God. In the book of Romans, we read, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). When we read the Bible, we are reminded of God's faithfulness and love for us, and we are encouraged to trust Him more fully. As we grow in faith, we become better equipped to face the challenges of life and to live in a way that honors God.

3. To renew our minds

Finally, we must read the Bible to renew our minds. The Bible is not just a book of rules and regulations, but it is a powerful tool that can transform our thinking and our hearts. In the book of Romans, we read, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2). When we read the Bible, we are challenged to think differently and to see the world through God's eyes. As we renew our minds through reading the Bible, we become more like Christ and are better able to live out our faith in the world.

Precious one, reading the Bible is an essential practice for every Christian. Through reading the Bible, we can know God's will for our lives, grow in faith, and renew our minds. As we make reading the Bible a regular part of our lives, we will be transformed by its power and become more like Christ.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, as I study Your Word, give me insight and speak to me in a new way, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scriptural References

Psalm 119:97-104

Psalm 119:129-136

Psalm 19:7-14



DDEP: Banks in Ghana posted GH¢6.6bn in 2022- Bank of Ghana

Banks in Ghana recorded after-taxes losses amounting to GH 6.6 billion in 2022, according to Dr. Ernest Addison, Governor of the Bank of Ghana.

This was largely due to negative impact of the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP). 23 banks operating in the country participated in the exercise.

Addressing the 112th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) press conference in Accra on Monday, May 22, Dr. Addison said, “the 2022 audited financial statements of banks reflected the full impact of the DDEP and the challenging operating environment that prevailed in the year.”

Most banks reported significant losses on the back of the mark-to-market valuation losses on their respective holdings in Government of Ghana bonds following the implementation of the DDEP.

Other losses were due to higher impairments on loans and rising operating costs.

The industry posted before-tax losses of GH¢8.0 billion in 2022 compared with a profit of GH¢7.4 billion recorded in 2021. After-tax loss was GH¢6.6 billion in 2022 relative to profit after-tax of GH¢4.8 billion in 2021.

The main profitability indicators, namely, return-on assets and return-on-equity all turned negative in 2022 because of the industry’s loss position.

The 2022 audited financial statements of banks also pointed to some impairments in capital levels, although most banks posted Capital Adequacy Ratios (CAR) above the 10 percent regulatory minimum at end-December 2022.

This was attributed to the effect of the roll-out of the temporary regulatory reliefs extended to the banks to cushion them against the impact of the DDEP as was done at the onset of the pandemic.





Recovery

However, in the first four months of this year, prudential data show some turnaround in the banking sector's performance following the conclusion of the DDEP, and following consensus reached among stakeholders on the treatment of losses arising from same.

Banks continue to rebalance their portfolios in response to the impact of the DDEP on their balance sheet shifting away from medium-to-long term investments to short term investments and increases in new loans.

In general, the banks returned to making profits in the first four months of 2023, broadly reflecting higher operating income.

Loan loss provisions also increased relative to a year ago, due to the pickup in credit growth and elevated credit risks.

These developments culminated in a 47.0 percent increase in profit-before-tax in April 2023 compared with 26.3 percent growth recorded during the same period a year ago.

Similarly, the industry's net income or profit-after-tax increased to GH¢2.8 billion from GH¢1.9 billion, representing 45.8 percent increase in April 2023.

The industry's return-on-assets increased to 5.5 percent from 4.7 percent, while return-on-equity rose to 36.3 percent from 22.3 percent.

Key financial soundness indicators remained strong on the back of the impact of the regulatory reliefs.

The industry's Capital Adequacy Ratio, adjusted for the regulatory reliefs, was 14.8 percent in April 2023, higher than the revised prudential minimum of 10 percent, but lower than the 21.3 percent recorded in April 2022.

The decline in the ratio highlights the increase in risk-weighted assets of banks from the impact of exchange rate changes and some losses on mark-to-market investments.

The industry's Non-Performing Loans (NPL) ratio deteriorated to 18.0 percent in April 2023 from 14.3 percent in April 2022, reflecting higher loan impairments and elevated credit risks.

The industry's liquidity indicators have also improved following the implementation of the revised Cash Reserve Requirement. Performance of the banking sector broadly reflected the general macroeconomic operating environment as well as the impact of the DDEP as indicated in the 2022 audited financial statements.

However, prudential returns for the first four months of 2023 have shown signs of recovery in the profitability of banks and a gradual improvement in the solvency positions, supported by the regulatory reliefs issued to safeguard stability of the financial sector.



ECONOMIC INDICATORS- APRIL 2023



1. Inflation - 41.2% (April) 45.0% (March)

2. Interbank Exchange rate Monthly Average - **This Month of APRIL**
(GHC/US\$) - 10.9516
(GHC/GBP) - 13.7624
(GHC/EURO) - 12.3043

3. Interbank Exchange rate Monthly Average - **Last Month of March**
(GHC/US\$) - 11.0140
(GHC/GBP) - 13.3799
(GHC/EURO) - 11.8012

4. Average Commercial Bank Lending Rate - 29.5% (April 2023)

5. 91 Days Treasury Bill Rate : 19.8635%

Source: Bank of Ghana (bog.gov.gh), statsghana.gov.gh



CONTACT US



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Our Core Values

Blue Horizon Aid (BHA) is a rural, peri-urban development, advocacy and relief organization dedicated to working with poor women, children, families and their communities. Please join us meet the rural folks at their point of need.

Your donations can be sent to BHA's account no below

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BELIEF IN GOD WE

PROCLAIM THAT JESUS IS LORD AND THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD."

CREDIBILITY

"TRUSTWORTHINESS, TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY TOWARDS ALL OUR STAKEHOLDERS."

EXCELLNCE

"WE WILL STRIVE TO BE THE BEST OF THE BEST IN OUR SERVICE DELIVERY. EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS WILL BE OUR HALLMARK."

RESPECT

"EVERYONE HAS EQUAL VALUE. WE WILL TREAT EVERYONE WITH EQUAL RESPECT"

