

EDS ANNUAL REPORT 2022

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF EDS

Education Development Support (EDS) project of Blue Horizon Aid Ghana, sponsored by Ghana Freundeskreis, can as at 30th May 2023, boast of 50 beneficiaries with 27 being females and 23 being males.

Senior High Schools in Ghana are categorized from A to D based on academic performance and quality of teaching and learning resources available in a school. Category A SHS' are normally the best performing with the best teaching and learning resources, followed by category B SHS' in descending order. A pupil's choice and quality of score after Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is used by the government to place pupils into these categories of schools using a computerized system called the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS). Based on the excellence of their raw grade scores in the BECE, the best pupils would be placed first in grade A SHS, followed by grade B SHS and the others.

EDS beneficiaries in junior high schools (JHS) are 28 whilst 8 are in primary schools. EDS can proudly boast that seven 7 out of its 14 beneficiaries in SHS are in grade 'A' SHS. Pupils with poor economic backgrounds normally find it difficult to make it to grade A schools due to all the economic challenges which affect their academic work. It can hence be inferred that the assistance being given to these beneficiaries under EDS is yielding good results.

EDS beneficiaries are spread across 14 different basic schools in the Central and Greater Accra Regions in Ghana. EDS sponsorship covers daily lunch subsidies of 5 Ghana cedis a day and an annual sponsorship of stationery ranging from exercise books, note books, pens, pencils, mathematical sets among others.



EDS Team distributing school materials to beneficiaries in their schools

GHANA AY3 DEN!

A popular phrase used in Ghanaian Akan dialect to represent increasing cost of living in the country is “Ghana ay3 den”! According to Ghana Statistical Service, in December 2022, inflation stood at 54.1%. The finance minister of Ghana, Mr. Ken Ofori Atta when presenting the 2023 national budget in November 2022 mentioned that, Ghana's economic challenges coupled with high levels of inflation is mainly due to rapid exchange rate depreciation; unsustainable debt burden as well as high energy and food prices on the global market. In trying to understand the impact of Ghana's high level of inflation on basic education, a school manager in one of the EDS schools (who chose to keep her identity anonymous) was interviewed.

Interviewer: Good morning Madam

Headmistress: Good morning and you are most welcome

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interviewer: Madam how is your school being affected by the current high levels of inflation?

Headmistress: The high levels of Inflation is making running of the school very difficult. Some of the major expenditures of this school is the constant rusting of our doors, padlocks, hinges and window frames due to our proximity to the sea. Currently, there are some major renovation works that are pending such as the refurbishment of the schools library and ICT laboratory because we just cannot afford it, the prices of goods and services are just too high.

Interviewer: Don't you get support from the government for these expenditures?

Headmistress: We get support from the government but it's mainly for the purchase of teaching and learning materials (TLMS). The Government's funds are over stretched with the needs of thousands of schools in the country. With our country's current economic challenges we may have to wait for years for our turn.

Interviewer: How do you get funding for your expenditures then?

Headmistress: The free education policy of the government forbids any school from charging any form of fees. This is to ensure access to basic education for all. However it makes it difficult to generate money internally to finance some of our expenditures.

Interviewer: Do you get support from Parents?

Headmistress: Yes parents support us from time to time through the Parents association (PA). However in the heat of the current economic crises most parents do not pay the PA levy which is purely voluntary. The PA is hence unable to mobilise substantial funds to support our expenditures.

Interviewer: How then do you cope?

Headmistress: I try to focus on the most essential expenditures with the limited resources available and leave the rest unfortunately, though equally essential. Example the price of 70mm padlocks which I change very often due to constant rusting as a result of our proximity to the sea used to be 10gh in 2021 but now it is 35gh. We record such high increase in prices for most of our expenditures but unfortunately the money we are able to generate over the same period to fund these expenditures remains the same.

Interviewer: Madam is the academic work of the pupils in your school being affected by the price hikes?

Headmistress: Well from my observation the pupils are often complaining these days that the quantity of food they get from the canteen is small. A year ago they could buy a portion of cooked rice and sauce for 2 or 3 Ghana cedis but at the moment the least they can buy is 5gh. Some parents cannot afford that much for their wards each day so their wards end up coming to school hungry.

I would commend your NGO for supporting some of the pupils in this regard. Pupils who come to school hungry are unable to pay attention to anything taught in class. You would find them looking sick and dull the whole day. The teachers sometimes buy lunch for such kids and often after eating you find them active and loud again!

I have two leaking classrooms, hence when it is raining lessons end for pupils to find shelter, disrupting academic work. Currently, the school's library is also not functional, all windows and doors are broken and there are no shelves to house the few books we have. A functional library would have really supported the pupils who do not have textbooks and encouraged wide reading amongst the pupils. Yet with the current level of inflation and economic challenges I am lost as to where I could possibly mobilize funds for all this renovation.

[Headmistress sighs "Ghana ay3 den!"]

Interviewer: Indeed Madam 'Ghana ay3 den!' thank you very much for making time for this interview.



Classroom doors and windows yet to be replaced



Development of School Library on hold



Development of ICT laboratory on hold



Leaking roof yet to be repaired

EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON ACADEMIC CALENDAR OF BASIC SCHOOLS

On the 16th of March 2020, the government of Ghana closed down all basic schools for nine months as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. This caused changes in the yearly academic calendar which used to run from September to August for basic, senior high and tertiary schools. When schools were reopened on 9th January 2021 for tertiary schools; 15th January 2021 for basic schools and 10th March 2021 for senior high schools, the duration for the academic calendar changed. Schools were now going to run their yearly academic calendar from January to December until the government was able to gradually transition schools to the old academic calendar in a period of four years.

In 2022, the then Director General of Ghana Education Service (GES) Prof. Kwesi Opoku-Amankwa mentioned in an interview with Citi News that the academic calendar for SHS is expected to return to normalcy in 2024 for final year students to sit for their West African Senior High School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in May 2024.

In the course of the 'transitional period', WASSCE which used to be written May-June pre-covid, is now written from August to September. Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which used to be written in April pre-Covid, is written in October within the transitional period.

Although the duration for the transitional academic calendar remains the same, the specific days for closure and reopening of schools are reviewed each year by a committee put together by the ministry education in order to ensure a more efficient transition into the pre-covid academic calendar in 2024. This normally leads to changes in dates for reopening and closure of schools each year. In 2022, the government of Ghana changed the academic calendar of basic schools to semester basis but after a public outcry reversed it to termly basis in 2023 (as seen in table below).

TRANSITIONAL ACADEMIC SCHEDULE OF BASIC SCHOOLS FROM 2021 TO 2023

YEAR	2021	2022	2023
1)	First Term January to March	First Semester January to June	First Term January to April
2)	Second Term May to July	Second Semester July to December	Second Term April to July
3)	Third Term September to November		Third Term July-October

Table1

**TRANSITIONAL ACADEMIC SCHEDULE OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS FROM
2021 TO 2023**

YEAR	2021	2022	2023
1)	First Semester January to May	First Semester February to May	First Semester January to May
2)	Second Semester July to October	Second Semester June to October	Second Semester June to September

Table 2