

Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning (T-TEL)

# Ghana District Change Project: Communities of Excellence Programme Quarter 4 Progress Report

November 2022- January 2023

## Executive Summary (Q4 – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 -31<sup>st</sup> January 2023)

The Communities of Excellence Programme (CEP) is implemented by Ghana Education Service (GES) with technical support from T-TEL and funding from Jacobs Foundation. CEP is currently operating in 3 districts- Lambussie, Bosome Freho and Akuapem South. This Quarter 4 report covers the period from 1st November 2022 to 31st January 2023.

The focus during Quarter 4 was on ensuring that classroom level practices across basic schools were aligned with the National Teachers' Standards (NTS) to ensure effective implementation of the new pre-tertiary education curriculum. The first 3 quarters of CEP had focused on building trusting relationships between district, communities, teachers, parents and other key stakeholders. These were important preparatory activities for developing trusting learning ecosystems across districts and communities. Now that these relationships have been built the focus of implementation has shifted to a classroom level, ensuring that teachers have the skills and competencies required to improve holistic learning (including Social and Emotional Learning) and that they are working within schools which encourage a culture of learning.

Culture refers to the values, expectations and practices that guide and inform the actions of all participants within a particular institution or community.

Skills refers to the capabilities, knowledge and understanding of the individual participants within each institution or community as to whether they are able to deliver what is expected. In the case of CEP this is improved learning outcomes.

So, for CEP to lead to improved learning outcomes, the 'culture' of each school community needs to be focused on learning. Each member within these institutions needs to i.) know that improving learning (including SEL) is their main purpose; ii.) understand how their role relates to improving learning and how their responsibilities align with others in the institution and beyond; iii.) have a clear set of priority actions communicated from the institution's leadership; iv.) has access to, and regularly uses, data to inform them whether activities are on track and leading to improved learning; v.) has access to the tools required to deliver and vi.) feels motivated to deliver what is expected of them.<sup>1</sup>

But this culture by itself is not sufficient to deliver improved learning outcomes if the individuals within the institutions don't have the skills to deliver. Teachers may have a clear sense of purpose and the tools to deliver but if they don't understand effective learner-centred pedagogies or the concept of SEL then learning won't improve. Likewise if Headteachers and SISOs don't understand how to conduct effective lesson observation and provide feedback to teachers then learning won't improve.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a growing body of evidence, including from the work conducted by Sharath Jeevan of STIR Education, that effective teacher motivation is a product of a combination of three concepts: Purpose- about knowing how what you do helps and serves others; Autonomy- believing in your ability and agency to actually change things for the better; and Mastery- the sense of being on a continual journey of improvement towards being the best version of yourself you can be. 'Purpose' and 'Autonomy' derive from effective work culture whilst 'Mastery' relates to the skills which a teacher possesses.

### **Leadership training for Headteachers and School Management Committee (SMC) Members to enable them to develop learning-focused School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIPs)**

This quarter, CEP has focused on improving the culture of learning within basic schools by providing training to support Headteachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) to enhance their understanding and ability to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and oversee effective learning-focused schools. An initial Training of Trainers Workshop was organized for 51 participants (9 females and 42 males) selected from GES (Head Office, Regional and District), Colleges of Education, the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) and the University of Ghana from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The training enhanced team members' knowledge and built their capacity on instructional leadership to lead the training of headteachers and the SMCs from all basic schools in the 3 districts. At the end of this school-level training all basic schools were expected to complete learning-focused School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIPs). This district-level leadership training for Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers, ICT Teachers, SMC members, Change Leaders, SISOs and other DEO Schedule Officers took place in the last week of January and the first week of February across all 3 districts. Representatives from all 235 basic schools from across the 3 districts took part in the 3-day training sessions.

### **Professional Learning Community (PLC) Sessions held across basic schools in the 3 districts**

The main mechanism by which CEP aims to improve the skills of basic school teachers is through weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions held in all schools. PLC Handbooks, focused on the National Teacher Standards, were developed, printed and distributed for all teachers and training was provided to Coordinators to run these sessions in Quarter 3. We anticipate that these sessions should have a significant impact in enabling teachers to understand and teach the new standards-based curriculum which was introduced in 2019. We support the district to monitor teacher attendance at these weekly PLC sessions and of the end of December 2022 205 out of the 235 basic schools in the 3 districts had been conducting PLC sessions regularly. Overall an average of 1,732 teachers (1,005 male and 727 female) attended PLC sessions each week in December 2022, representing 67% of the total number of teachers across the 3 districts (2,588 of whom 1,488 are male and 1,100 are female). As of the end of December 2022 a total of 1,493 PLC sessions had been held since October 2022, an average of 7.3 sessions per school. As each session is an hour long this means that, between October and December, CEP's structured pedagogical PLC sessions have delivered an additional 12,644 CPD training hours for teachers. This has been achieved at a far lower cost than if teachers had been trained in the 'traditional' workshop-based model where they would have been called out of school, thus reducing learning contact hours. Structured pedagogical materials for PLC sessions therefore has enormous potential to be scaled-up nationally as a cost-effective means of CPD. CEP has also worked with the National Teaching Council (NTC) to ensure that teachers who attend these PLC sessions and successfully complete the training materials will be awarded CPD points which can be used for their career development and promotion.

### **Strengthening Lesson and PLC Session Observation**

Despite these positive developments regarding PLC sessions, monitoring visits during the quarter showed that there were issues with the way in which SISOs were monitoring and reporting on PLC sessions and classroom lesson observation. In an effort to address these issues GES and T-TEL decided to have an intensive focus during Q4 on improving the quality of PLC and lesson observation. Three workshops, one in each district, were held with expert facilitators to build the capacities of all SISOs and Schedule Officers to master the skills of observing classroom lessons and PLC session effectively. These workshops were undertaken from 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023 simultaneously across all three districts. The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

- Enhance the understanding on the use of the lesson observation and PLC survey tools.
- Enable them support teachers to identify the appropriate pedagogy for each lesson delivery and provide constructive feedback to support the teachers improve.
- Discuss how to ensure practical application of the PLC strategies in the classroom.
- Support the district to identify and institute strategies to ensure the submission of quality data and regular updates of data on the Mobile School Report Card (mSRC).

At the end of the training, the participants reviewed the existing PLC session and classroom lesson observation tools to develop their own lesson observation survey tool and piloted it to confirm its validity and reliability. It was also synchronized with an existing national lesson observation tool to ensure that the newly developed tool met all the standard requirements of a lesson observation tool. Currently, the tool is being used by the districts to observe lessons in schools and provide constructive feedback to teachers. It has been uploaded onto the KoboCollect for easy access by the district and records real-time data.

### **Supporting analysis and use of data to help improve teacher attendance**

Strengthening districts' ability to generate data on school-level indicators and learner progress to inform decision making has been an important part of CEP. School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) have been provided with GPS enabled tablets which makes reporting simpler and provides reassurance that schools are being visited as intended. They have also been provided with sufficient resources to enable them to make daily visits to schools. This is already having a measurable impact in schools as districts are noticing improvements in teacher attendance and time on task. In Bosome Freho overall teacher attendance as monitored by SISOs across 70 basic schools increased from 36,759 teacher days in Term One (before CEP) to 44,254 in Term Three (after CEP commenced). This means that learners across Bosome Freho's basic schools received 7,495 more 'teacher days' of instruction in Term Three than they did in Term One. In Akuapem South teacher attendance increased from 33,104 'teacher days' in Term One across all 44 basic schools to 37,047 in Term Three, meaning that learners received 3,943 more days of instruction in Term Three than in Term One. Unfortunately issues with data collection and analysis in Lambussie meant that a complete set of comparable teacher attendance data from their schools was not available at the time of writing. However, data from the other 2 districts demonstrates a clear and encouraging trend. If teachers are not present in class then effective learning cannot take place so this is an important first step in achieving CEP objectives.

### **Supported Teaching in Schools**

GES and T-TEL have facilitated a partnership between Bosome Freho District Education Office and two nearby Colleges of Education (CoEs)- Akrokerri and Agogo. Under the terms of this partnership both CoEs will send Level 300 and Level 400 B.Ed. student teachers to basic schools in Bosome Freho District for the Supported Teaching in School (STS) component of their studies.

Akrokerri CoE and Agogo PWCE have deployed 58 student teachers to 17 partner schools and 200 student teachers to 26 partner schools respectively for 16 weeks of extended teaching. The student teachers will plan, teach, and assess their learners independently and with increasing consistency; exhibit the ethical codes of conduct, values, and attitudes expected of a teacher; carry out extensive action research projects; and provide evidence of meeting the National Teachers' Standards in full.

In Lambussie, McCoy CoE deployed 44 Level 300 student teachers to basic schools in the district for 6 weeks in November 2022. The district organized an orientation for the student teachers before

they reported to their assigned schools. These students who moved to Level 400 this academic year have been deployed for 13 weeks since January 12 for extended teaching. The district has assigned SISOs to monitor and provide needed support to student teachers to address their challenges. Tutors from McCoy college also embarked on similar monitoring visits to technically support the student teachers in their respective schools.

### **Procurement and distribution of Classroom Furniture to support teaching and learning**

Bosome Freho produced and embossed 1750 Kindergarten (KG) Chairs, 350 KG tables, and 196 dual desks. Out of these, 425 KG Chairs, 85 KG tables, and 156 dual desks have so far been distributed to seven primary schools and twenty KG schools. It is anticipated that the improvement in the supply of furniture to the schools will support increase contact hours between the learners and teachers and make the classroom environment conducive to active engagement between teachers and learners. Availability of furniture in the schools will also mean more children can be admitted, increasing enrolment and providing opportunities for more children to receive quality teaching and learning. In Lambussie, 301 dual desks and 111 hexagonal tables with six chairs per table were distributed to 44 primary schools and 46 KG schools respectively.

### **Change Leaders Training**

During the quarter under review, the final two training summits (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>) were completed for all 45 change leaders (Males 35, Females 10) in the three districts. The trainings were organised on 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November and 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> December respectively.

### **Community Evolution Scale Instrument**

The CES instrument was administered to all 45 change leaders in August 2022 and final results of the survey were presented to all the change leaders in October 2022. The results showed the network maps of each change leader, revealing how they are connected with fellow change leaders within their districts and change leaders from other districts. It gave the Change Leaders the opportunity to compare their individual responses to the cumulative response and how they can tap into the strengths of each other in creating an effective Change Community. VNL shared the final copy of the report with T-TEL on 13<sup>th</sup> October with recommendations and next steps for T-TEL. November 18<sup>th</sup> November and 16<sup>th</sup> December was scheduled for Timepoint two(T2) and Timepoint three(T3) data collection respectively, however T-TEL raised concerns about the timing of the data collection for T2 and T3- just two-three months interval between T1,T2 and T3 would not allow for the data to capture any significant change in the community. It was agreed during a meeting that a more comprehensive approach to measuring change within the programmes for both T-TEL and UNICEF should be adopted. T2 and T3 data collection has been paused until an appropriate consensus is reached by all partners and stakeholders.

### **Lesson Observation and PLC Visits to Lambussie District as part of T-TEL's Annual Planning Meeting**

T-TEL held its Annual Planning Meeting in Jirapa, Upper West Region from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023. This presented an excellent opportunity for staff and partners, including Avril Kudzi from the Jacobs Foundation, to visit Lambussie District to observe CEP activities.

On 19<sup>th</sup> January staff from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana Education Service (GES), Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), National Service Scheme (NSS), the National Schools Inspectorate Authority (NaSIA) and Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning (T-TEL) spent the day visiting 16 basic schools in the district. These visitors included such distinguished educationists as Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah (Board Chair of T-TEL), Patty Assan (GES's Director of Schools

and Instructions), Professor Mohammed Salifu (Director-General of GTEC), Nana Baffour Awuah (MoE's Director of Pre-Tertiary Education) and Michael Yaw Acheampong (NaSIA's Deputy Inspector General).

The 64 participants were split into teams of four with each team visiting one of 16 basic schools. Each group was accompanied by a School Improvement Support Officer (SISO) or Schedule Officer from the DEO.

The teams observed a number of good practices in the basic schools. Ms. Grace Ceaser Agbasi, the Headteacher at Kanguol RC Primary, said she brings all her learners together by finding a common activity they can enjoy. After that, she divides them into groups based on their learning abilities and provides individual assistance. This approach helps them to express themselves and improve their communication and collaboration skills.

The teams were also impressed with the pedagogy and techniques used by those teachers who have graduated from Colleges of Education in recent years. These teachers generally demonstrated high levels of adherence to the National Teachers' Standards (NTS).

Despite these good practices, teams also observed several challenges including the lack of facilities and resources in some schools and the fact that a number of teachers did not have a strong knowledge of either Sisaala or Dagaare, the two most common languages in Lambussie District. Whilst it is clear that the district, supported by the Communities of Excellence Programme, has gone some way to address their resourcing challenges, more support is still required from partners, communities and philanthropists to ensure that all children have an equitable opportunity to learn.

Teams were pleased to see that PLC sessions, making good use of the Handbooks and NTS, were held in all 16 basic schools. After the field visits, a reflection session was held to discuss observations and their implications for GES, T-TEL and other partners. This feedback is summarized below.

**Strengths:**

Strengths identified during the lesson observations include well-prepared teachers who set clear objectives, demonstrated mastery of the subjects, use of ICT and interactive activities, and the blended use of English and the local language for ease of understanding by learners. Teachers also provided opportunities for learners to share knowledge and participate in group work. The observations also revealed the use of gender-responsive instructional methods and mixed-ability grouping in the classroom.

**Areas for improvement:**

Areas for improvement identified include the need for better questioning techniques, incorporating more ICT into teaching and learning, encouraging more parental involvement in education, and overcoming teacher shortages by deploying additional teachers to the schools. Teachers were also advised to use the differentiated learning technique to support learners at different grade levels especially in multiple grade classrooms.

During the PLC sessions, the observations were positive, with engaging and interactive sessions led confidently by the facilitators. Teachers were guided through relevant activities and encouraged to participate fully. However, there is room for improvement, such as emphasizing the need for practical application of techniques used in PLC sessions during lessons and ensuring that all facilitators are drawing upon the experience of teachers in their school rather than reading out examples from the Handbook.

These issues will be addressed by GES, NTC and T-TEL as amendments will be made to ensure that the PLC Handbooks are more practical and user-friendly.

The field visits and reflection sessions provided valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement in the teaching and learning process in basic schools in Lambussie district. The MoE, GES, T-TEL and partners are committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of education in Ghana through the implementation of practical PLC sessions and continued implementation of the Communities of Excellence Programme. T-TEL wrote an article about the visits which can be downloaded from our website here: [Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education and their agencies join T-TEL to visit schools in Lambussie District to observe progress made on the Communities of Excellence Programme - T-TEL](#)

## Finance and Operations

The latest expenditure data as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 is set out in the table below. This shows that, after 4 quarters of the programme, there is still a significant budget balance remaining. There are two main reasons for this lower than anticipated level of expenditure: i.) The rapid devaluation of the Ghana Cedi (GHS) against the Swiss Franc (CHF) which means that, while expenditure has remained high in GHS terms it has reduced in CHF terms. At the start of the project, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022, 1 CHF was worth GHS 6.7 whilst on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023 1 CHF is now worth GHS 13.2. ii.) Slower than anticipated expenditure by Districts on their Learning Transformation Agendas (LTAs) due to delays in procurement which have now been resolved.

<b>Budget Line</b>	<b>Total Budget (1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2022-30<sup>th</sup> April 2023)</b>	<b>Budget Spent (1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2022-31<sup>st</sup> January 2023)</b>	<b>Budget Remaining (1<sup>st</sup> February 2023-30<sup>th</sup> April 2023)</b>
Communications and stakeholder engagement	\$56,023	\$58,723	-\$2,700
Learning Transformation Agenda (LTA)- funds for 3 districts	\$287,407	\$91,554	\$195,853
PLC Materials Development and Training	\$191,605	\$153,248	\$38,357
School Management Committee (SMC) training and support activities	\$57,481	\$11,701	\$45,780
District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) training and support activities	\$28,741	-	\$28,741
College of Education (CoE) partner schools expansion and support	\$19,160	\$8,646	\$10,514

Baseline Survey	\$47,901	\$36,932	\$10,969
Activity funds- yet to be allocated	\$46,491	-	\$46,491
Vehicle running costs, per diem and accommodation	\$86,211	\$62,580	\$23,631
District Office running costs	\$9,580	\$3,379	\$6,201
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$830,600</b>	<b>\$426,763</b>	<b>\$403,837</b>

During Quarter 5 our main focus will be on ensuring approval and implementation of School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIPs) for all basic schools; continued monitoring of PLC sessions and lesson observation; provision of additional funds for districts' LTAs to offset the reduction in the CHF value of their plans due to GHS devaluation; and the participatory development of Handbook 2 for PLC sessions so that these can continue beyond April 2023. These activities are set out in the table below.

#### Proposed Quarter 5 Activities

<b>Task Description</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Implement LTAs at the District and School Level including provision of funding for all new activities as approved by GES	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Monitor Grant Activities/Verification	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Organise Quarterly District Review and Learning Forums	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
Leadership Training completed and each School Develops a Learning focused SPIP	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
<b>Strengthen Lesson Observation and PLC in schools</b>	
Undertake Weekly Lesson Observation and PLC sessions in schools	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Report on Lesson Observation and PLC sessions weekly.	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Revise PLC Handbook 1 to make it more accessible and user-friendly so that it can be used with the 3 new districts in CEP Phase 2.	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
Develop and complete PLC Handbook 2 for distribution to all schools in 3 districts.	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
<b>Communications</b>	
Finalizing and Publishing a Video on the National Teachers' Standards by NTC.	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Producing a Sampler Video on a PLC Session	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
Audit of Communication Products within the districts	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
Supporting implementation of Communication Workplans in each district:	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023

## **Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL)**

As part of efforts to monitor and validate results reported by the CEP districts and schools to improve programme implementation and learning outcomes, GES and T-TEL embarked on monitoring visits to 34 schools across the three CEP districts. This was to ensure that the LTA implementation teams within the districts are supported to deal with any programme reporting and documentation challenges, observe lesson and PLC sessions and validate the PLC and lesson observation data submitted.

The data on the baseline results for each district was disseminated during meeting was held with the DEOCs / MEOCs across the 3 districts. The objectives of the dissemination meeting were:

1. To disseminate the baseline survey findings among the key relevant stakeholders.
2. To identify key strategies and measures to improve learning outcomes among learners.
3. To set district targets against the baseline.

In collaboration with the DEOs/MEOs targets have been set for each district. These were presented to all stakeholders during the LTA review meetings.

## **Joint visit by T-TEL and Prevail Fund to Bosome Freho and visit of Jacobs Foundation to Akuapem South**

On 28<sup>th</sup> November a team from Jacobs Foundation, including Ross Hall, Zoe Bozzolan and Avril Kudzi visited Akuapem South. They were welcomed by the District Assembly and had the opportunity to interact with Change Leaders, DEO staff and also visit a basic school. The visit was quite well organized but, in future when we support the District to organize such events, we will recommend that fewer people go on the school visits or that more schools are visited by smaller groups to allow more time for learning and interaction.

On the 6th and 7th December 2023, Robin Todd and Patricia Adu-Twum accompanied David Hylden and Colm O'Flynn from the Prevail Fund on a visit to Akrokerry College of Education and Bosome Freho to understand more about T-TEL's work with GES on the Communities of Excellence Programme. At Asiwa, the district capital, the team met with CEP stakeholders at Bosome Freho District Assembly. After an initial meeting at the Assembly, the team continued to the community of Minti where they met with the traditional leaders and community members before observing a lesson and Professional Learning Community (PLC) session at Minti D/A Basic School. The team felt the CEP has done a really good job in supporting the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) to improve collaboration between the District Assembly, District Education Office and communities, assisted by a team of 15 Change Leaders.

Despite these positives however, it was clear that more attention needs to be paid to supporting the SISOs and other Education Office staff to conduct lesson observation and feedback sessions and ensure that the PLC sessions are working as planned. They visit concluded that if learning outcomes are to improve significantly in the CEP districts, then that will happen because of the quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms. It was agreed that, going forward, this needs to be our main focus, along with ensuring that the programme is supporting GES to gather and use accurate data on performance, including learning outcomes.

## **Proposed CEP Phase 2 Proposal**

GES, working closely with T-TEL, is proposing CEP Phase 2 as part of effort to consolidate the gains made so far in the building of a strong, resilient, and adaptive learning ecosystem in each of the three programme districts and scale up to additional three districts within the current operational regions. The CEP Phase 2 has been designed so that it aligns with the Ministry of Education's national Communities of Excellence Strategy. It is designed to address capacity concerns within DEOs and District Assemblies including issues with accountability, transparency, and use of data for decision-making. Again, the process of developing LTAs will be slightly revised so that, whilst they are still very much led by communities, districts and stakeholders, there will be a greater focus on addressing systemic issues which directly impact learning. Generally, CEP Phase 2 will have a very strong classroom-level focus. LTAs will prioritize support to classroom level activities. There will be an organisational self-assessment conducted for all DEOs and District Assemblies before they oversee development of Learning Transformation Agendas (LTAs). It is hoped that the CEP Phase 2 proposal, if approved, will enable the expansion of CEP to a further 3 neighbouring districts.