

NET ORGANISATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT



REPORT ON OUR SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY SENSITISATION AND VISITATION IN THE MAMPURUGU MOADURI AND WEST MAMPRUSI DISTRICTS OF THE NORTHERN REGION UNDER THE VOLUNTEERING FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO-Ghana)

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1. Introduction:

Volunteering for Development (V4D) project is an initiative of the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO-Ghana). The Net Organisation for Youth Empowerment and Development (NOYED-Ghana) has been assigned to carry out specific assignments under the V4D in selected districts where the Tackling Education Needs Inclusively Project (TENI) was implemented over the last eight (8) years.

This project aims at supporting to sustain the community volunteering component of the Tackling Education Needs Inclusively Project (TENI II) under which volunteer teachers were recruited, placed and managed in the five TENI districts. Under this V4D project activity implementation, the focus was on Mamprugu Moaduri and West Mamprusi districts. This is due to the teacher shortage in these two districts especially Mamprugu Moaduri district.

Under this project, NOYED-Ghana was mandated to engage with the community members, GES and district assemblies to discuss possible ways of sustaining the already placed community volunteer teachers and also to identify ways of encouraging more community members to volunteer to fill vacant classrooms.



attendance, retention and performance of pupils.

NOYED-Ghana, based on observations and revelations from other districts and communities through engagements, was also to carryout community engagement and sensitisation around school visitations by parents and community members to boost

NOYED-Ghana was also to form a team to meet the national director of the Ghana National Service Scheme who happen to be the past MP of the Mamprugu Muaduri district to discuss the possibility of department absorbing the community volunteer teachers into the national service scheme and also the need to post more national service persons to these rural districts to augment the teacher capacity.

The above activities set forth the engagement of NOYED-Ghana with the Muaduri district and communities. Please see details below:

2. Preparation for Community Engagements:



Engagement with district assemblies and GES staff of West Mamprusi and Mamprugu districts

Before the engagements, preliminary visits were made to the various education directorate and district chief executive's office. This was to notify them of the intended activity and their involvement. Discussions were

held and officers from each unit were selected to participate in the exercise.

The GES Officer with the blessing of the education directorate then notified all project schools in the district of the intended exercise, the target participants, days and timing of the exercise.

3. Community Engagements:

The days for the engagements were communicated and all the communities mobilised the target participants. Each community visited, in attendance were the chief/chief representative, assembly member, unit committee members, School management committee chair persons, community members, district assembly representatives, district education service representatives, pupils and teachers.

Each community was sensitised on the need to regularly visit the school to check on the learning of their children and also to check on the welfare of the children and teachers in the schools. They were sensitised on the need to be partners with school authorities to ensure efficient teaching and learning.



NOYED-Ghana staff addressing community members in Loagri

Staff of NOYED-Ghana who facilitated the session deployed experiences from other communities where there are now increased attendance, retention and performance of pupils gained through the influence of parent school visitations. The staff from

GES also highlighted the value of parent's time to schools. Among others, it was noted that

their visitations help in monitoring the stay and work of teachers in the schools. He gave an example of how a teacher was transformed through the action of a parent.

He narrated;

This teacher was a perpetual late comer to school. Sometimes he could come to school as late as 10:00am but the headteacher was not taking any critical action against him. This parent visited the school to check on his child quite frequently. When his child graduated to the class of this late comer, the father of the boy visited the school for almost one month but never met this teacher but they always say he comes to school. One day he decided to stay and meet the teacher. The teacher came around 10:30am. He met the teacher and told him for his action alone, he was taking his child out of school. He added that he will keep the particulars of the teacher which he will give to the child at maturity and tell him that he (the teacher) is the reason for which he did not complete school. The teacher pleaded for him to allow the child in school and pledge to be of good behaviour and that really worked.

3.1. Disengagement of Community Volunteer Teachers (CVTs):

One other important issue that was discussed in all the schools was the ending of the volunteer teacher's tenure. Even though this has been mentioned to them in the past through the exit programme and other activities supported by VSO, it was still critical the communities were updated as well as find out from them what they are doing to bridge the teacher shortage gap after TENI.

The community members agreed throughout the communities that the support in terms of the community volunteering was a very big opportunity and relief to them. At the time of the project, they did not see the value so much as compared to this time. They mentioned that they have had series of meetings to look at how to put in place systems to support stay of volunteers in the communities and their motivations in the event some are placed again.

They indicated based that based on our discussions with them, they have identified rooms in the communities where CVTs could be accommodated. Some also mentioned that they have agreed to donate a bowl of rice each per term to the school in support of the motivation of the CVTs. They also mentioned that, they agreed to engage more community volunteer teachers to

occupy vacant classrooms and to augment the teacher strength in the district. However, the financial capacity is what they are still battling with.

3.2.Preparation for Engagement with Director of Ghana National Service:

Representatives from the communities were selected to go with NOYED-Ghana staff to Accra to meet the director of Ghana National Service Scheme to discuss possible ways of retaining the CVTs and augmenting the teacher capacity in the district. The proposals to be put before him were:

- NSS should revisit its National Volunteering Programme that was ran alongside the normal national service programme and under this, existing community volunteer teachers should be absorbed to continue with the good work they are doing.

- NSS could also make a priority, in support of the good works done by VSO and partners and post more service personnel to the project districts to augment the teacher situation and to improve on their performance of pupils in the districts.

- NSS could collaborate with the National Youth Employment Authority to recruit existing volunteers into their Community Education Teaching Assistants module to enable the CVTs continue with their dedicated service.

A delegation was sent to Accra to meet with the director to arrange a meeting in respect of the above subject. This was a success since the team was able to secure the date and time.

4. Engagements with Director of National Service Scheme:

The delegation met with the director of Ghana National Service Scheme (Hon. Mustapha Ussif) in his office at the headquarters in Accra. Discussions were held and the issues captured above were presented to him. Even though he has followed through the cycle of the TENI Project, as a former member of parliament of the Mamprugu Muaduri District/Constituency, he was given



NSS Director, Hon. Mustapha Ussif, Former Member of Parliament for Mamprugu Muaduri Constituency.

another rundown to reacquaint him. The Education Programme's manager for VSO, Mr. Eric Duorinaah, was with NOYED-Ghana's delegation to provide support and credence to the team.

The director, Hon. Mustapha expressed his willingness to support this worthy course. He indicated, that when he took over and went through the records of NSS alongside the engagement with the board and staff of NSS, he realised that NSS and VSO have had a very long relation until some where 2014 they fell apart. He noted "VSO was very helpful to the agenda of NSS and for that matter he has sent a letter to the country director of VSO proposing to hold a meeting with her that will relook at the relationship going forward". He pleaded with Mr. Eric to convey the message to the country director that he is still on standby to have her response on the meeting he proposed.

In the engagement with the director, three key propositions were made as follows:

- NSS should revisit its National Volunteering Programme that was ran alongside the normal national service programme and under this, existing community volunteer teachers should be absorbed to continue with the good work they are doing.
- NSS could also make a priority, in support of the good works done by VSO and partners and post more service personnel to the project districts to augment the teacher situation and to improve on their performance of pupils in the districts.
- NSS could collaborate with the National Youth Employment Authority to recruit existing volunteers into their Community Education Teaching Assistants module to enable the CVTs continue with their dedicated service.

4.1.NSS Director's Responses:

The director responded to the proposals presented as follows:

- ☑ On the part of the National Volunteering Programme as proposed by NOYED-Ghana, he noted that it will be very difficult for NSS and government to reintroduce it without the support of donor community. He mentioned that per month, NSS spends over forty-two Million Ghana Cedis (42,000,000.00) on the allowances of service personnel alone and that they are struggling to meet this huge expenditure. “Government cannot simply meet the budget line this national volunteering programme could bring.”

- ☑ On the part of the posting of more service personnel to the TENI districts and communities to serve as teachers, He gave his blessing and said it will be done. He noted that he is in charge and where ever he desires to place people, he directs for it to be done with justifications. “Once this is a good course, why not? I will do it to maintain and build on the gains made through the TENI project.”

- ☑ On NSS collaborating with Youth Employment Agency to secure YEA teaching programme for CVTs, he said it can be done and he will look into it. He also added that he will try to secure space in the yet to be introduced Nation Builders Corps Programme of government that seeks to place 100,000 graduates in the sectors of education, health and revenue mobilisation in support of developing the nation.

- ☑ He also indicated that NOYED-Ghana should forward to his office applications our volunteers made to Ghana Education Service (GES) under the limited recruitment programme but were not successful. He mentioned that once his department is under the ministry, he can be sure to get a space for some of them who have the requisite qualification.

Conclusion:

All planned activities under this V4D project were executed successfully. The targeted message was delivered to the target audience. Some giant strides were made. Some of the strides made include the following;

1. Community members pledged to support community volunteer teachers to stay in the school to teach
2. Community members pledged their visitation and support to community schools
3. Parents also reiterated their support to their children learning.
4. NSS director to facilitate absorption of CVTs and secure them jobs.

5. Way forward

Based on the success of the above intervention, NOYED-Ghana was tasked to pull together applications with their attachments for onward submission to the director for consideration.

NOYED-Ghana also appeals to VSO-Ghana for consideration to extend the community level campaign on school visitations to the Upper East Region to engage and educate the communities over there.

6. Picture Gallery:



In a discussion with the NSS director in his office, Accra



A group Picture with the NSS director, Accra



Participant making contribution at the session in Kpatorigu



Yizesi chief at the community engagement session



Engagement at Prima community (SMC chairman making a contribution)



Parent making contribution at the engagement session at Prima community



Director of NOYED-Ghana with the Ag. Director of NSS, National



Director of NOYED-Ghana, NSS Director, Education Manager, VSO and a Community Imam.