

PAGE

Promoting
Accountable
Governance in
Education

A project Monograph



PAGE was implemented by Action for Rural Education with funding
from the Partnership for Transparency Fund, USA.
www.areghana.org

August, 2011

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ARE Action For Rural Education
- CG Capitation Grant
- DEO District Education Office
- GES Ghana Education Service
- MEO Municipal Education Office
- PAGE Promoting Accountable Governance in Education
- PTA Parent Teacher Association
- PTF Partnership for Transparency Fund
- SMC School Management Committee
- TLM Teaching and Learning Materials

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A.R.E acknowledges the support of the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) in funding the Promoting Accountable Governance in Education a.k.a. Adzesua Mu Nkontabuo project. The contributions of the following officials and institutions towards the success of PAGE are also duly acknowledged:

- Ghana Education Service, Mfantseman Municipality
- Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC)
- The Regional Coordinator, GNECC Central
- School Management Committees/Parent Teachers Associations in PAGE communities
- Traditional Authorities in PAGE communities
- The Municipal Director, Ghana Education Service, Cape coast
- The Municipal Director, Ghana Education Service, Mfantseman Municipal
- The Community Participation Coordinator, Ghana Education Service, Mfantseman Municipal
- Mr. Moses Awoonor Williams, Monitoring and Evaluation expert
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PAGE team:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Promoting Accountable Governance in Education (PAGE) project has in the past year taken accountability and transparency in the management of the education budgets and resources (Capitation Grant and textbooks) to the local level. The project was in response to a survey conducted by the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition on the management and utilization of the Capitation Grant and textbooks, which revealed some corrupt practices.

With funding from the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF), and the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition and the Mfantseman Municipal Education Office, Action for Rural Education implemented a series of interventions which enhanced the capacity of local communities via School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations (SMC/PTAs) to act as accountability agents, by participating in education resource governance, monitoring education expenditure, detecting corrupt practices and advocating remedial measures against teachers who mismanage the Capitation Grant and textbooks.

Apart from the projects envisioned outcome of reducing corruption in the management of education resources i.e. Capitation Grant and textbooks, the PAGE project succeeded in recording remarkable impacts within a ten month period, which includes the initiation of a local school feeding program in a project community (Abekah), as a result of renewed community confidence in the schools transparent and accountable resource management. This has led to increased enrolment and retention in school with an expected improvement in the quality of learning outcomes by the end of the 2010/11 academic year.

The project has generally deepened community stakeholder appreciation of their mandate to hold school managers accountable and demand transparency and inclusion in the governance of education resources in the interest of the wider community interest. It has established and institutionalized three key activities in the calendar of schools: A participatory school budget development session where SMC/PTAs and school authorities meet to develop the schools budget), a community wide budget hearing to unveil the schools budget to the wider community for finalization, and a bi-annual education resource tracking exercise that operationally audits the use of the Capitation Grant and other Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs).

Teachers in some project communities have expressed deep satisfaction on the project's approach, emphasising that it absolves them from unsubstantiated allegations of corrupt practices at the school. Through the tracking exercises, they now have an opportunity to prove their innocence from alleged corrupt practices or weed out corrupt counterparts whose actions may tarnish the image of the entire teaching staff in schools. This report presents a documentation of the project outcomes.

BACKGROUND

Textbooks and the Capitation Grant are two useful resources in a basic school. Textbooks are used to facilitate teaching and learning in school and are provided free of charge by the Government of Ghana. The Capitation Grant was introduced in 2005, after the Government of Ghana abolished all forms of school fees in public basic schools. The grant currently allocates 4.50 GHC per child in school, per year and is used to finance school development needs, including the procurement of Teaching and Learning Materials, sanitation and sports equipments and minor infrastructural repairs. In 2009, Government disbursed about USD 18 Million as Capitation Grant to public basic schools nationwide. The Grant is spent according to items in the local schools budget, otherwise called the School Performance Improvement Plan-SPIP (S-PIP). The development of the schools budget or S-PIP is normally by the head teacher without inputs from the School Management Committee and Parent Teacher Association executives, who are the representatives of the local community and owners of the school. The non- involvement of SMC/PTAs in this process has limited their ability to monitor education spending and led to corrupt practices in the management of the Capitation Grant and the use of textbooks in rural communities where literacy levels are low and poverty, high.

The project believed that the effective participation of SMC/PTA's in the development, implementation and monitoring of education budgets (S-PIP) and in the allocation and distribution of education resources especially textbooks was effective in promoting transparency and accountability in education resource allocation, distribution and utilization.

The Promoting Accountable Governance in Education, locally called "Adezesua Mu Nkontabuo" was a one year project implemented by Action for Rural Education in the Mfantseman Municipality with funding from the Partnership for Transparency Fund (USA). The project envisioned the effective participation of SMC/PTA's in the development, implementation and monitoring of education budgets (S-PIP) and in the allocation and distribution of education resources especially textbooks was a pre requisite for achieving reduced corruption in their utilization and engagement.

Objectives

- Reduced corruption in Capitation Grant management
- Reduced corruption in Exercise and Textbook allocation and distribution

Strategies:

The project adopted a mix of community mobilization and advocacy strategies targeting community and municipal level education duty bearers and stakeholders, in pursuit of its objectives:

Policy Advocacy:

PAGE advocated the institution of a participatory textbook and exercise book allocation and distribution system, to create more transparency and accountability in the allocation and distribution of textbooks and exercise books. It will advocate the enforcement of record keeping guidelines at the DEO and school.

Capacity building:

With the recognition that reducing corruption involved the establishment of strong foundations at the community level, PAGE emphasised on capacity considerations as a crucial ingredient for mobilizing communities to act in favour of reducing corruption and promoting accountability. PAGE's capacity building interventions targeted SMC/PTA executives, community leaders and key education officials involved in resource allocation and distribution to communities. Stakeholder capacities were enhanced through training workshops and community level animations and facilitations by the PAGE team.

Education Resource Tracking:

One of the key strategic approaches to PAGE was the adoption of Education Resource Tracking as a tool for social accountability. Education resource monitoring is a Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation Tool used in monitoring the use of public resources. This approach was used to monitor the development and implementation of school budget and the allocation, distribution and use of textbooks from the Municipal Education Office (MEO) to the school.

Learning and sharing:

One of the strategies for scaling up or replicating the PAGE's lessons was the creation of platforms for learning and sharing project outcomes with Civil Society and Government stakeholders in education and anti corruption. The best practices of the project were shared on such platforms for the purpose of learning and possible replication and adoption. Key among the platforms is the media.

Replication and scale up:

The adoption of an education resource distribution policy that utilizes participatory allocation and distribution processes has been advocated by PAGE and its partners to facilitate the replication of the best practices of the project.

Project communities:

PAGE was implemented in the following communities in the Mfantsiman Municipality:

- Saltpond Catholic Girls Basic School
- Mankessim Methodist “b” Basic school
- Akwakrom Municipal Authority Basic School
- Edumafa Methodist Basic School
- Abekah Methodist Basic School
- Waakrom Catholic Basic School
- Engow Methodist Basic School
- Asaafa Methodist Basic School
- Edumadze Catholic Basic School
- Biriwa Methodist Basic School

Project partners:

The PAGE project was implemented by Action for Rural Education (ARE) and funded by Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF). The following institutions were instrumental in the delivery of the project's objectives:

- Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, Central Region (GNECC central)
- Ghana Education Service, Mfantiman Municipality
- School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations

Project Duration:

PAGE was implemented from August 2010 to July 2011.

REDUCING CORRUPTION IN CAPITATION GRANT MANAGEMENT

The Problem:
Corruption in the management of the Capitation Grant

OUR ACTIONS

Reconstitution and formalization of School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations: Baseline data collected by the PAGE team indicated that only four communities had functional SMC/PTAs. SMC/PTAs are community level governing bodies that are responsible for providing oversight in the management of basic education. Most SMC/PTAs were redundant, ill constituted or totally non-existing. Reducing corruption in Capitation Grant management requires the existence of a vibrant and dedicated SMC/PTA that has capacity to monitor school expenditure. The PAGE team constituted and formalized all SMC/PTAs in collaboration with the Chief and Elders and the Ghana Education Service.

Capacity building interventions in participatory budgeting, budget monitoring, resource tracking and advocacy:

- A four-day training workshop on budgeting, budget monitoring, resource tracking and advocacy for 40 SMC/PTA members in all project communities.
- An extensive community level facilitation by project facilitators to support SMC/PTA executives to plan, organize, follow-up and take ownership of participatory budgeting, Capitation Grant and textbook tracking processes.

THE OUTCOMES

Enhanced Capacity Of SMC/PTAs To Participate In Education Budgeting Education Resource Tracking And Anti-Corruption Advocacy:

- **A participatory and transparent budgeting process that discourages corruption:** As a result of our capacity building interventions in budget advocacy, participatory budgeting sessions were organized by SMC/PTAs to review and produce the school budget for the 2010/2011 academic year. It was the first time SMC/PTAs ever participated in the development of the schools budget, which is financed by the Capitation Grant. The participatory school budget development sessions held in PAGE communities were significant for two reasons; first, it allowed SMC/PTA members to make inputs into the schools budget and afforded them an opportunity to have an insight into how much was received from the Municipal Education as Capitation Grant, how it was to be allocated. The school budget was for the first time, a transparent one that was pasted on the notice board for all community members to witness.

The Akwakrom School has no window nets. Insects, including mosquitoes and black flies affected learning. The schools head teacher and his assistants, failed to include a school window nets in the S-PIP for the 2010/11 academic year which was done in September 2010 (before PAGE's community level interventions commenced), without the involvement of the SMC/PTA. The budget hearing session in Akwakrom afforded SMC/PTAs an opportunity to insist on and input school window nets, as an item in the school budget

■ Strengthened SMC/PTA capacity to track Capitation Grant

During the participatory budgeting, budget monitoring and advocacy workshop, a mock session on how to organize Capitation Grant tracking session was organized. Further, SMC/PTAs with the support of PAGE community facilitators had a series of meetings with school heads to agree on the organization, context, processes and procedures and other essential pre requisites for the scheduled tracking sessions. Tracking sessions had the following objectives:

- To rationalize expenditures to approved budget estimates
- To ascertain the availability of proper records of receipts on expenditures
- To verify the physical availability of items purchased
- To verify expenditures were approved by SMC chairman
- To advocate remedial measures, including punitive measures against established corrupt practices.



SMC/PTA executives in Edumadze develop their plan education accountability action plan

Armed with information on the school budget, through the budget hearing sessions and the participatory budget development sessions, Capitation Grant tracking sessions were held twice in project communities. The reports of the CG exercises were shared with the wider community leadership for consensus on actions to be taken on findings. The Capitation Grant tracking exercises affirmed the mandate of SMC/PTAs to scrutinize school expenditures without necessarily assuming the position of account auditors while providing a consciousness of 'checks and balances' among school heads.



Head teacher explains to SMC executives during Capitation Grant tracking

Tracking in Waakrom revealed that the school had over 400 GHC in its accounts, as a result of previous accumulations in underutilized C.G. The subsequently used part of the 400 GHC to settle its water and electricity bills which has been in arrears for six months due to inadequate CG disbursements

■ **SMC/PTA's engage education authorities on corrupt issues.**

As a result of enhanced capacity to appreciate budgeting issues and track the CG, SMC/PTAs identified several policy issues that facilitated corruption and created an accountability gap in the management of the CG.

During the CG tracking exercises, it came to the fore that the head teacher for Edumafa Primary had no record of accounts for the 2009/10 academic years Capitation Grant. After the tracking, the SMC/PTA made a report to the Municipal Education Office. The Municipal Education Office has placed an embargo on the teacher's salary, which will ultimately be used to pay for the unaccounted C.G, should he fail to render accounts by the end of May 2011.

■ **Policy issues:**

Capitation Grant tracking at Mankessim Methodist A&B revealed that most items purchased could not be identified. This was due to the fact that the head teacher was new, and was not responsible for the spending of his predecessor, who had just been transferred. This brought into question the handing over policy of the Ghana Education Service which mandates the Circuit Supervisor to administer the handing over of head teachers and not necessarily in the presence of the SMC/PTA Chairman. The following issues arose from the Mankessim tracking:

- The Circuit Supervisor is not a community member and may not know about key accountability issues relating to school assets that are largely undocumented and intangible. Since, the SMC/PTA approves spending on the CG, it is only appropriate for the SMC/PTA to be present and participate in the clearing process to make head teachers handing over complete.
- The omission of SMC/PTA executives during handover sessions for head teachers calls into question the GES' understanding of the accountability mandate of SMC/PTAs in the management of school funds.



Waakrom SMC/PTA chair articulates the outcomes of PAGE

SMC/PTAs in Mankessim engaged the Municipal Education Office on the issue and made a case for the lack of accountability due to the absence of SMC/PTA executives during the transition and handover from the past head teacher who had just been transferred, for which items procured from the CG were not found in the school. The MEO has agreed to include SMC/PTA chairmen in the handing over process of head teachers to ensure a transparent and accountable transition.

REDUCING CORRUPTION IN EXERCISE AND TEXTBOOK ALLOCATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The Problem

A textbook tracking survey conducted in April 2010 revealed that up to 17% of textbooks allocated to schools were unaccounted for in the Mfantseman Municipality. Anecdotal information suggested that textbooks were diverted for use in private schools or sold out in the open market.

Our Action

PAGE engaged the MEO on the need to adopt participatory methods of distributing textbooks and other Teaching and Learning Materials to schools, in a bid to create transparency in the distribution, receipt and management of textbooks and C.G. The Municipal Director scheduled SMC/PTA meetings in all PAGE schools and accompanied by her team, delivered textbooks and other TLMs to the SMC/PTA executives (which includes the head teacher) for onward presentation to the head teacher. Through this approach, textbooks were delivered in the presence of the entire executive body of the SMC/PTA and received by the Chairman, who after taking stock, handed over to the head teacher for stock taking and safekeeping. Through this approach, both the SMC/PTA and the head teacher kept separate inventory of school textbooks and other TLMs received. In November 2011, a participatory textbook distribution exercise was conducted by the MEO with the support of the PAGE project.



PAGE review meeting at Manna Heights Hotel, Mankessim

Outcomes

- Parity in text book allocation, distribution and receipt: The PAGE supported participatory distribution of textbooks in project communities afforded SMC/PTAs a rare opportunity of having an insight into the quantities and description of books and other Teaching and Learning Materials that were received by the school from the Metro Education Office. Armed with enough information on book receipts in 2010, SMC/PTAs were able to successfully undertake the tracking of textbooks in 2011 without any instances of corrupt practices, especially diversion. All textbooks received were in place and kept under lock and key.
- Increased record keeping of textbooks in schools: The transparent atmosphere surrounding the distribution, receipt and management of textbooks and TLMS has necessitated the proper inventory of textbooks especially in schools. This practice, which is a positive outcome of the participatory textbook distribution and receipt processes instituted by PAGE, has been deepened by the textbook tracking exercises.

| ISSUES/TARGETS | ACTIVITIES | TIME FRAME | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE | INDICATORS |
|--|--|------------|---|------------------------|
| PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION BUDGETING | School authority will involve SMC in the development of SPIP. | 15-10-10 | SOPHIA ABANG, NANA ABASSO, ACQUAH ANNE, DANIEL ABASSO, SMC CHAIRMAN | PICTURE |
| | SMC to participate in developing SPIP. | 20-10-10 | JOSEPH BUDU, PTA CHAIRMAN | SPIP DRAFT |
| TRANSPARENT MANAGEMENT IN CAP EXPENDITURE | School authorities and SMC/PTA will hold budget hearing session in the community. | 5-11-10 | NANA ABASSO, CHIEF OF WAAKROM, SMC/PTA CHAIRMAN | REPORT, BUDGET HEARING |
| | SMC/PTA and School Authority will hold book and exercise books tracking exercises. | 12-11-10 | ALL TEACHERS, SMC/PTA | PICTURE |
| QUALITY IN SUPPLY AND USE OF TLMS | SMC/PTA and School Authority will hold book and exercise books tracking exercises. | 19-11-10 | ALL TEACHERS, SMC/PTA, CHAIRMAN | TEXT BOOKS |
| | SMC/PTA and School Authority will hold book and exercise books tracking exercises. | 26-11-10 | SOPHIA ABANG, ACQUAH ANNE | RECEIPT BOOKS |
| COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION BUDGETING | SMC/PTA and School Authority will hold book and exercise books tracking exercises. | 3-12-10 | NANA ABASSO, JOSEPH BUDU, GEORGE BUDU | LOG BOOK, CASH BOOK |
| | Capitation grant | 10-12-10 | EFUA BERTINA, ACQUAH ANNE | PICTURE |

Community-School Accountability Action Plan for Waakrom on display in the school

OUTCOME CASE 1

Reaping the benefits of a transparent and accountable education management regime-Abekah shows the way...

Located 10 Kilometers of the Atlantic Ocean, along the saltpond coast, the Abekah community had little confidence in the school. There was weak community participation and support for school development and general apathy towards school and education issues. The community perceived the school to be corrupt and non-transparent and this affected enrolment, retention and community confidence in the school system. The school had no vibrant School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Due to the lack of committed, informed and well constituted SMC/PTAs, the head teacher took advantage to mismanage the schools resources, including the Capitation Grant. The commencement of PAGE led to the formalization and reconstitution of the SMC/PTA. PAGE schooled the SMC/PTA executives on their mandate, and how to monitor the use of school resources, especially the Capitation Grant and school textbooks.

In February 2011, five months after the workshop on education resource tracking and budgeting for SMC/PTAs, a Capitation Grant tracking was organized by the Abekah SMC/PTA led by Mr. Daniel Sagoe, the SMC Chair. The tracking detected some corrupt practices in the use of the Capitation Grant, which included the impersonation of his signature by the then head teacher, to fake his approval and withdraw funds from the schools Capitation Grant account and the absence of items of expenditure. The SMC/PTA made a report to the Municipal Education Director, who ordered an investigation into the allegations. It was established afterwards that the head teacher had been engaged in some financial mismanagement and procedural breaches in the management of the Capitation Grant. The head teacher's salary was frozen and used to re-pay for the unaccounted funds, demoted from the position of a head teacher to a class teacher and also posted to a deprived school as a punitive measure. With the appointment of a new head, and the experience of the past head teacher, there is increased transparency and accountability in budgeting and Capitation Grant spending.



Abekah SMC/PTA chair and executives

The community is now enthused and encouraged to support the school with added local resources, since they now have confidence in the schools accountability. During the budget development and hearing, the community proposed a locally funded school feeding program to provide a meal a day pupil in the community.

Led by the SMC/PTA, the community has initiated the policy and is currently funding the program. Parents are happy to pay 20 Pesewas a day (15 cents) in support of the program since accountability and transparency is guaranteed. This has boosted school enrolment and retention to about 98% , according to Mr. Eshun, the PTA chairman.

OUTCOME CASE 2

Transparency has another reward, apart from reduced corruption...A case of Engow

The Engow community is remotely located in the Mfantseman Municipality with a population of about 2,000 and lacks adequate education infrastructure. The community is a vibrant one, with demonstrated communal spirit in support of education. However, the community's participation in education development was restricted to only the provision of resource support, including communal labour, with no accountability and transparency actions.

Engow SMC/PTA embraced the [PAGE](#) project right from the inception stages, and indicated their willingness to participate in the schools budgetary processes as well as monitor it. They also expressed the need to monitor how their books were used, even though they had confidence in the head teacher and his administration.

In November 2010, the SMC/PTA of Engow led by Nana Kojo Mahama, who also doubles as the Chief of the community, for the first time had a joint meeting with the school authorities to develop the school budget. After reaching consensus on items of expenditure and budget allocations, the SMC/PTA led in organizing a community level budget hearing where community members made inputs towards the finalization of the budget.

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Nana Mahama, Chief of Engow

The community invited some key education stakeholders to witness the first ever public hearing on the schools budget, and these included officials from PLAN International, a child rights NGO. During the budget hearing, it came to light that one of the deficit budget lines was the cost of purchasing a computer for the school at the cost of 500 GHC. In fact the Capitation Grant was only able to fund 40% of the schools budget.

Inspired by the display of community level democratic tenants of transparency, inclusion and accountability, the delegation from PLAN International pledged to support the school with a computer to facilitate the teaching of computing in the school. The children of the Engow Community now have their first ever computer to aid teaching and learning in computing. A teacher who is a computer literate is already assisting in teaching computing with the PLAN International donated computer. The Engow case stands to reason that apart from reducing corruption, transparency and accountability also inspires stakeholder confidence and support towards education development and makes more resources available to promote enrolment, quality teaching, learning and completion.



PAGE support to Engow to pursue anti-corruption initiatives in the management of their Capitation Grant and textbooks has yielded an outcome (Strengthened SMC/PTA and community knowledge, input and monitoring of school budget) and an impact (enhanced resourced availability for quality education) within a year. In March 2011, the tracking of the Capitation Grant and textbooks at Engow went on with great success, with the head teacher (Mr. Isaac Nyarko) being commended for the quality of record keeping, inventory management, documentation and transparency in expenditure management.

LESSONS LEARNT

Participation and information discourages corruption.

PAGE has proved that where there is limited community stakeholder participation in the budgetary process, corrupt tendencies among school heads is high. The participation of community stakeholders in the process of distributing textbooks, determining budgetary priorities and allocating financial resources provide community stakeholders with budgetary information for the purpose of resource monitoring. This discourages corruption in education resource management at the school level.

Community members have some basic capacity to appreciate the relevance of accountability and transparency.

However, the lack of proper understanding of their legitimate mandate to monitor the use of public resources, as well as the lack of any strategy or methodology to demand accountability reduces their confidence level. Community confidence is boosted through an enhanced appreciation of their civic mandate and a coherent and simplified strategy or methodology to operationalize the mandate of accountability and transparency.

A transparent and accountable education resource governance regime promotes communal support to education development.

PAGE budget hearing sessions, apart from opening up school budgets for scrutiny and input, also promoted communal support to balance the deficits. The budget hearing sessions revealed that, the Capitation Grant could only fund between 40 to 60% of the schools budget. This made the support of the local community, a pre requisite for quality education management at the school level. This was affirmed by numerous community stakeholder financial and material pledges towards balancing the school budget during the budget hearings.

Projects community/school entry strategy is key to securing stakeholder commitment and support:

Several efforts to track the use of public resources at the community/school level have failed due misconceptions about the mandate of SMC/PTAs to audit school expenditure, and the extent to which it amounts to 'witch hunting' or assuming the powers of a statutory audit agency. In several communities in Ghana and Africa, community efforts to demand accountability and transparency in the management of financial resources has only generated conflict, in most cases leading to the temporal closure of schools. Lessons from PAGE indicate that, a project-community/school entry strategy that is based on information, participation and consensus, with the involvement and backing of the public institution (Ghana Education Service) and the leadership of the community is not likely to generate conflict. The inclusion of head teachers in the SMC/PTA training workshop on budgeting, resource monitoring and advocacy was strategic and beneficial to maintaining a healthy community-teacher relationship, after the conduct of tracking exercises. School heads gained a deeper appreciation of the mandate and scope of tracking exercises during the workshop.

SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICATION

Commitment of the Mfantseman Education Directorate: In his final remarks during the closing ceremony for PAGE, the Municipal Director, Mr. Simeon O. Larbi, indicated that his office will support any community that imbibes the budget preparation, budget hearing, Capitation Grant tracking and textbook tracking approaches introduced by PAGE in the Municipality. The display of political will by the Municipal Education Directorate, in support of reported corrupt practices is a strong indication that the objectives of PAGE will be pursued.

SMC/PTAs in PAGE communities had commenced discussions with their counterparts in other communities to organize capitation Grant tracking exercises even before the end of PAGE. With huge demands from communities to learn the Capitation Grant & textbook tracking and budget hearing, PAGE has experimented and the community next neighbor approach to replicate the successful strategies of the project.

According to the plan, each Project SMC/PTA will support two nearby communities to share the lessons of the Capitation Grant & textbook tracking and budget hearing sessions, and assist them to conduct Capitation Grant and textbook tracking as well as budget hearing sessions. The Community Participation Coordinator at the Municipal Education Office, Madam Rose Otoo has declared her support for the strategy, emphasizing the need to provide capacity support to new communities in order to prevent any conflict with school authorities. Taabosom, a non-PAGE project community has successfully organized a tracking exercise with the support of PAGE community SMC/PTAs and the Municipal Education Office.

GNECC and IDASA partnership:

It is also worthy of mention that project partners, GNECC, with funding from IDASA has commenced the replication of budget hearing exercises in 10 communities in Mfantseman and Assin North District. PAGE team member Madam Kate Harriet Warden, who also doubles as the Central Regional Coordinator of GNECC is leading the process. ARE is available to provide the necessary technical support.

Moving forward

ARE intends to build upon the success of PAGE and possibly replicate them directly or indirectly in other districts in Ghana. Pursuant to this, the following reviews in the project's methodology will be undertaken:

Capitation Grant Tracking Questionnaires:

The current Capitation Grant tracking checklist will be reviewed and redeveloped into a community level user friendly school budget and expenditure score card. The school budget and expenditure score cards will be used as instruments for the monitoring and ranking the management of school expenditure. With this approach, SMC/PTA executives will individually record issues and grade the school budgetary expenditure process and outcomes during tracking meetings with school heads, after which Focus Group Discussion comprising all 9 SMC/PTA executives will be held to produce a composite report for sharing with community stakeholders and later, action. The current practice whereby only 4 members of the SMC/PTA sit in the interface meeting to scrutinize school expenditure (based on receipts and items purchased) is quite constrictive. Even though SMC/PTAs raised questions related to expenditure procedures, there were not properly captured in the checklists. The score cards will expand the scope of tracking to include procedures and actual uses of items of expenditure.

Participatory Budgeting:

A citizen score card will also be developed for SMC/PTAs and community stakeholders to elicit responses on how democratic the process for school budget development and community level budget hearing are. This will form the basis of future improvements in the quality of PAGE methodologies.

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