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**Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for
sustainable development in Africa: How to design and
implement an effective response by education and
training systems**

Sub-theme 1

**Common core skills for lifelong
learning and sustainable
development in Africa**

**Thematic Case-study on
SHAPING BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM TO RESPOND TO THE NATIONAL
VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA**

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Working Document

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

- BDG: Basic Design and Technology
CRDD Curriculum Research and Development Division
ESD: Education for Sustainable Development
FGD: Focus group discussion
GES: Ghana Education Service
GPRS: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSGDA: Ghana shared Growth and Development Agency
ICT: Information, Communication and Technology
JHS: Junior High school
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
MoE; Ministry of Education
MOESS: Ministry of Education, science and Sports
NDPC: National Development planning Commission
TLMs: Teaching and Learning Materials

1. Abstract

A major concern confronting the education system in Ghana is how to make education, especially at the basic education level, meaningful and useful to those basic school leavers who do not have the opportunity to benefit from further formal education. This concern is heightened by the desire to shape the national basic education and training systems to respond to the country's vision for sustainable development. To address the concern, a case study was conducted within three districts (in three schools) in the Greater Accra Region with the involvement of the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service and the National development Planning Commission of Ghana. Various relevant documents including the national school curriculum frame, the national curricula for basic education and some development plans for the country were reviewed.

Findings were made on the level of awareness and perceived importance of core skills, prioritisation of core skills, the core skills content in both the curriculum frame and the various subject syllabuses, implementation challenges in teaching for core skills development as well as the relationship between core skills requirements in the national development plans and provisions for core skills development at basic education level.

Appropriate recommendations were proffered bothering on the re-orientation of teachers regarding core skills, review of second cycle school curriculum to establish the quantum of core skills coverage, need to prepare packages of both core skills and occupational skills to guide the education system, and the creation of national human capital development information data base. There is also an advocacy for greater collaboration between the National development Planning Commission and the Ministry of education and the Ghana Education Service on the determination of priority core skills..

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A major concern confronting the education system in Ghana is how to make education, especially at the basic education level, meaningful and useful to those basic school leavers who do not have the opportunity to benefit from further formal education. This concern is heightened by the desire to shape the national basic education and training systems to respond to the country's vision for sustainable development. To address these concerns it was considered necessary to analyze the country's Basic Education Curriculum Frame, syllabuses and assessment tools to determine the extent to which Core Skills have been provided for or targeted in the system, hence the study. A case study approach was chosen for the study with the intent of delving deep into the issues under investigation. Interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect information from educational authorities, officials of the national development planning commission as well as headteachers, teachers and pupils of three basic education institutions in Ghana. Data collected, principally qualitative, was qualitatively analyzed. National Development Plans and the basic education curriculum were also analyzed.

Key Findings

1. The contents and goals of the basic education as reflected in the curricula pay sufficient attention to the development of academic skills, occupational skills and core skills. However, the programme implementation practices tended to emphasise academic skills acquisition at the expense of the occupational and core skills
2. It is useful for a country to identify and agree on what are considered core skills to enable citizens to participate in the discourse on core skills. It was apparent that all respondent categories did not have the same meaning or attach the same values to core skills though they all agree on their importance to learners.
3. While educational authorities believe core skills are means to employment, the NDPC held the view that some of the core skills in basic education are not necessarily for employment. Teachers were divided on core skills as a means of employment. Basic education pupils themselves indicated that besides the aim of accessing Second Cycle Education after the basic education, they had alternative plans regarding their career aspirations, should they fail to get the opportunity to further their education. They were also aware of the core skills and technical or occupational skills they would need for those career aspirations.
4. All the respondent categories agreed that core skills are important for national development. The responses of the pupils also point to the relevance of core skills to their development through education.
5. From the data collected in this study, it is clear that the process factors that link Core Skills education and training to appropriate human capital development for sustainable national development do not exist between Basic Education providers and the national development planning process. In the same vein, National Development Plans do not seem to allocate specific human capital production roles to Basic Schools. There appears to be no deliberate national development plan dissemination interactions between basic education authorities and NDPC..
6. National development plans are expected to bring in new ways of doing things for sustainable development. Traditional core skills demanded by society for basic education do exist in the national development plan for the country. However, there appears to be nothing new or novel as would be expected.
7. The major categories of core skills captured by the curriculum framework include: Fundamental skills, People-related skills, Conceptualizing / Thinking skills, Personal skills, Skills related to the business world, Skills related to the community, and ICT user skills. However, ICT practitioner skills received little coverage. Moreover, the definition of core skills in the curriculum framework is narrower in scope than most of those found in literature. The document did not cover the attributes of all the major core skill categories with the same detailed attention. The framework also did not align the core skills to all the specific carrier subjects, age cohorts nor grade levels which are targeted by the curricula. Similarly, no defined assessment and

certification systems have been set for the core skills education and training in the curriculum framework.

8. The analysis of the Primary school syllabuses shows that the subjects at both Lower and Upper Primary contain a great deal of core skills and other expressed forms or attributes. However there appeared to be a reduction in some of the core skills contents of the syllabuses at the JHS level. The Higher grade levels appear to contain more subject content and less core skills. The subjects differ considerably in carrying various attributes of the main core skills categories as was shown in the summary boxes.
9. The perspectives of the educational authorities and teachers, indicate that the provision made in the assessment scheme for assessing some of the core skills leaves much to be desired.
10. There was limited interactions (inter sector collaboration) between basic education and the national development planning processes. No defined human capital development roles were assigned to the basic education system but the pupils themselves identified the jobs they would take up after the JHS, should they fail to proceed with further education.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are being proffered :

1. Some form of re-orientation platform need be created for teachers for their attention to be drawn to the importance of the skills development needs of the country and the provisions made for them in the national school curriculum.
2. There is the urgent need to assess the core skills contents of Second Cycle Education subjects to ascertain the quantum of core skills they contain
3. There is the need for the appropriate national agency to develop a national human capital development plan to guide and assign roles to all sectors
4. The Ministry of education and the Ghana Education Service need direct attention to preparing packages of core skills which the formal system must provide for.
5. It might be useful for the MoE and the GES to also prepare packages of occupational skills to guide the school system
6. The NDPC may need to prepare human resource need plans for the formal, non formal and private sub- sectors and ensure that the preparation is sufficiently participatory and the plans so developed are adequately disseminated.
7. The NDPC may also consider creating a national human capital development Information Data Base with the information from 4 ,5 and 6 above
8. The NDPC should collaborate with other sectors as well as the education and training system in developing the national human capital development plan, preparation of core skills and occupational skills packs and the creation and use of the national human capital development Information Data Base for educational training standards, curricula, career pathways, career guidance programmes, qualification frameworks, etc
9. Sensitize and orient the basic education system to use the information in the data base for the development of appropriate educational programmes
10. Update the national human capital development Information Data Base every three years

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Background

Education and Economic development theory suggests that education and training equips people with knowledge, skills and attitudes or competences which are used for work resulting in economic development of the individual and his or her society. In the face of major challenges in poverty, inequality and mass youth unemployment and deviant behaviour, McGrath noted that ‘conventional education and training provision is not promoting sufficient development of skills necessary for economic and social success’. A. de Grauwe, (2008) observed that “the path from school to work has become much complex and difficult to control,” particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. He also observed that formal schooling in Africa does not provide enough room for teaching critical thinking skills which are needed for lifelong learning and sustainable development. The role of human capital in economic development indicates that “it is not that education does not contribute to development, but rather that it only does so under certain circumstances” including the content and context of education.

An ERNWACA study on graduate unemployment in Ghana emphasized that “the responsiveness of an education and training system to employment and sustainable development does not come by chance but through rigorous human capital research and its application. In addition, effective co-ordination and collaboration among and between the Education and Training System, National Development Planning, National Manpower Need identification, Labour Market Information and linkages between organizations which control these factors lead to a higher employability of university graduates” (Dai-Kosi et al 2008). Some of the weaknesses in the education and training system and national development planning in Ghana identified in that study included: lack of an inventory of national manpower needs, absence of labour market information to the education sector, low level of awareness of the national development plan among university deans and departmental heads, limited application of research results for developing products or services of economic value from universities and limited human capital research resulting in absence of good quality statistical information on the occupational structure of the labour market in Ghana, (Dai-Kosi et al 2008). Additional weaknesses contributing to graduate unemployment in Ghana included inadequate Inter and Intra sector Linkage – limited collaboration and co-ordination between Sector Ministries and Agencies responsible for education and training, national development planning and national manpower need identification and development, (Asiegbor 2009). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the national development agenda of various African countries, in the quest to remove or reduce poverty and ignorance select education and training as a tool to achieve Middle Income Status and beyond.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment is a serious social issue in Ghana. This led to the initiation of the National Youth Employment Project in 2006. One of the triggers of youth unemployment is the drop-out rates from basic education. In Ghana, majority of youth terminate their education at the end of basic education and begin to participate in socio-economic development. There is the need to pursue a holistic vision for basic education development embodying core skills in the curriculum and ensuring effective teaching and learning of the same. Core skills are those that apply across a variety of jobs, organisations and sectors. The problem is, how does Ghana shape the national basic education and training systems to respond to the country’s vision for sustainable development? There is the need to re-think sustainable development in the context and content of basic education in this era of youth unemployment in Ghana.

1.2 Research Questions

1. Which Core Skills are provided for in the Basic Education System?

2. What are the implementation challenges in imparting these core skills to pupils?
3. To what extent do the Core Skills in Basic Education System match the Generic Employability skills required for sustainable national development?
4. What process factors impact on the extent to which the Core Skills in Basic Education match the required Generic Employment skills?
5. How can the Basic Education Training System be shaped to capture Core Skills for sustainable

1.3 Study Objectives

1. Analyse Basic Education Curriculum Frame, syllabuses and assessment tools to determine Core Skills in the system.
2. Determine the processes of identifying and mapping out the Core Skills for Basic Education.
3. Analyse the national development plan and Implementation Strategies to identify Core skills and occupational skill packs in the policies.
4. Assess roles allocated to the Basic Education System in the implementation of National Development Plans.
5. Share best practices in the involvement of the ETS in the development and implementation of national development plans.
6. Suggest ways of shaping, harmonizing and linking the Basic Education System for Core Skills development for sustainable national development.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In the quest to reduce unemployment and poverty, this study will provide insight into how the basic education and training system should be shaped to adequately integrate core skills and some occupational skills to enable basic school leavers readiness to participate more effectively in some of the economic activities to develop themselves for sustainable national development in Ghana.

1.5 Organisation of the Report

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides the background of the study, while chapter two deals with the concept of core skills education and training. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study while chapter four presents the results and discussion as well as the recommendations and conclusion. Chapter Five deals with summary, recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAME

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the theories and concepts underlying the study have been identified, operationalized and modeled to guide the study.

2.2 The Structure, Aims and Contents of Basic Education in Ghana

The shape of basic education connotes the structure, aims and contents of education and training at the basic education level. In Ghana, Basic Education comprises 2–years Kindergarten, 6-years of primary schooling and 3-years of Junior High School.

2.2.1 *Summary of Goals of the Pre-Tertiary Education*

The Goals of the Pre-Tertiary Education has been described as the ‘visions and aspirations of the nation in terms of the learning experiences that the younger generation, who will shape the country’s destiny in the future, should undergo in preparation for the world of work and in preparation for living useful and fruitful lives’, (MOESS, 2008).

2.2.2 *Kindergarten Curriculum*

The Learning areas at the kindergarten stage include Literacy, Numeracy, Languages, Environmental Studies, Creative activities and Movement. The curriculum framework indicated that ‘these subjects should be taught through play and activities’.

2.2.3 *Primary School Curriculum*

Primary schooling is divided into two segments; Lower Primary and Upper Primary. The subjects comprising the Lower Primary school curriculum include Ghanaian Languages and Culture, Religious and Moral Education (RME), English Language, Mathematics, Physical Education, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Natural Science and Creative Arts. The same subjects are studied in Upper Primary in addition to Citizenship Education and Integrated Science. According to MOESS, (2008), “Creative Arts comprising Art and Craft, Music and Dance, Physical Education and ICT should be taught as practical and creative activities”.

2.2.4 *Junior High School Curriculum*

The subjects offered by the Junior High School (JHS) curriculum include Ghanaian Languages and Culture, English Language, Mathematics, Physical Education, Social Studies, French, Basic Design and Technology (BDT) and Integrated Science. According to MOESS, (2008) “The curriculum at JHS will comprise numeracy, literacy and problem solving skills for a long time to come. The teaching of English, Mathematics, Science and Creative Arts should be strengthened. The teaching of Basic Design and Technology, which comprise Creative Arts (Music, Performing Arts, Visual Arts), Pre-Technical and Pre-Vocational subjects should be supported with workshops, equipment and facilities. The development of minimum standards of performance at all levels of JHS is required to guide teaching and learning of the various subjects”. In addition to all the above subjects is the integration of core skills into the subjects at the pre-tertiary levels of education as contained in the curriculum framework document.

2.2.5 *Summary on the Shape of the Basic Education System for Sustainable development*

It can be concluded that the basic education system has been shaped for academic education as well as for technical/occupational skills and core skills acquisition. Unfortunately the provision of workshops, equipment and facilities and the development of minimum standards of performance at all levels of JHS which underpin the acquisition of the occupational skills as specified in the intended curriculum to guide teaching and learning of the various subjects is grossly inadequate.

2.3 Operational Definitions

Basic Education for Sustainable National Development

This refers to those learning experiences offered through basic education which enhance the chances of the graduates to meet their personal, collective and national developmental aspirations for further education and training, for work and for living useful and fruitful lives .

2.3.1 Definition of Skills

In the discourse on Education for Skills Development (ESD), the word “skills” in education and training is a mixed bag. Many authors use different names or phraseologies for the word connoting different meanings and contexts such as skills for life and work (McGrath, 2003), competencies, (Rychen, 2003), core work skills (Trevor and Gianni, 2003), life skills, (Wataru and Hoffman, 2003), core and entrepreneurial skills (Tasbulatova, 2003), generic employability skills, key skills, essential skills, key competencies, transferable skills and employability skills (Greatbatch and Lewis, 2007).

The examples of life skills and work skills by McGrath are shown in the boxes 1 and 2 below.

BOX 1: Examples of life skills

Literacy, Numeracy, Entrepreneurial, HIV/AIDS awareness / prevention, Gender sensitivity / assertiveness, Food security, Self-confidence, Socialisation, Coping with disability, Learning to learn, Autonomy, Hygiene, Nutrition, Health, Family planning, Critical thinking, Self-evaluation, Peace skills, Citizenship, Personal financial management, Environmental awareness, Assertiveness, Job acquisition skills

BOX 2: Examples of work skills

Team work, Communication, ICT skills, Technical Skills, Resource management, Occupational health, Design, Management, Decision-making, Time management, Stress management, Negotiation, Information processing, Foreign language skills

A close examination of the life skills and work skills shows overlaps as noted by McGrath (2003). A more comprehensive classification of skills and their attributes suggested by Greatbatch and Lewis, (2007) is shown in the table below. It must be pointed out however, that ICT Skills were teased out and added from other sources –i.e. <http://www.insead.edu/elab/eskills> and <http://www.e-skills-ilb.org>

Table I: Core Skills and their Expressed Forms.

Core Skill Category	Expressed Forms/Attributes
Fundamental skills	Literacy skills, (Reading, Speaking, Listening, Decoding), Numeracy Skills, using numbers, Technology Skills.
People-related skills	Communication Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Influencing Skills team leadership skills
Conceptualising /	Inquiry Skills, Skills for Managing Information, Problem Solving Skills, Planning Skills. Organising Skills, Learning Skills, Thinking Innovatively

Thinking skills	and Creatively, Reflective Skills
Skills related to the business world	Career Planning, Innovation Skills, Enterprise Skills, Commercial Awareness, Business Awareness, Project Planning, Codes Of Conduct For Work, Managing Situations
Skills related to the community	Citizenship Skills, Relating To People, Voluntarism, Social Skills
Personal skills	Being Enthusiastic, Adaptable, Motivated, Reliable, Responsible, Honest, Resourceful, Attitudes Towards Others, Self-Esteem, Self-Respect, Confidence, Personal Organisation, Committed, Loyal, Flexible, Well Presented, Sensible, Able To Manage Own Time, Deal With Pressure, Punctuality, Working To Deadlines, Working With Others, Giving And Receiving Feedback, Learning To Learn, Time Management, Independent Learning Skills, Improving Own Learning And Performance
ICT user skills	The capabilities required for effective application of ICT systems and devices by the individual. ICT users apply systems as tools in support of their own work. User skills cover the utilisation of common generic software tools and the use of specialised tools supporting business functions within industries other than the ICT industry.
ICT practitioner skills	The capabilities required for researching, developing and designing, managing, the producing, consulting, marketing and selling, the integrating, installing and administrating, the maintaining, supporting and service of ICT systems.
e-Business skills	The capabilities needed to exploit opportunities provided by ICT, notably the Internet, to ensure more efficient and effective performance of different types of organizations to explore possibilities for new ways of conducting business and organisational processes, and to establish new businesses

Again, overlaps are noted between the skills list suggested by McGrath (2003) and Greatbatch and Lewis, (2007).

2.3.2 Characteristics of skills

Universality of skills

On the question of possible universality of life skills, McGrath noted that “There is no single universal list of such skills but that they find their meaning in specific contexts (McGrath, 2003) and this view was corroborated by Greatbatch and Lewis, (2007). McGrath explained that some of the elements of life skills emerged from psycho-social understandings that are culturally relevant in Western cultures.

Context sensitivity

Greatbatch and Lewis, (2007) noted that skills and attributes are context sensitive; they may vary in detail between different work contexts. The demands for what might at first be assumed to be a generic skill (can) differ between sectors to an extent that matters. McGrath (2003) indicated that skills that are deemed locally relevant reflect a range of socio-cultural contextual factors. Thus, Life skills for: the informal sector; rural development; transition economies; post-conflict situations, high levels of internal or international migration and different levels of economic and technological development are likely to be different”.

Another complicating factor is that individuals and organisations not only use different terms to refer to core skills/attributes, but also give different meanings to seemingly identical terms, especially when referring to personal attributes (Greatbatch and Lewis, 2007).

Greatbatch and Lewis, (2007) noted that “agreement on language and definitions is crucial to the development and implementation of Core skills programmes. However, it is also important to recognise that there will probably never be one definitive list of Core skills because they need to be open to review and re-interpretation over time as working practices change”. These factors should be considered in setting the Education for Skills Development (ESD) agenda.

2.3.3 Relationships Between Skills and Employability

Rapid technological changes make traditional, static models of knowledge and skills acquisition inadequate. Instead, skills that facilitate lifelong learning and competency upgrading are increasingly important, McGrath (2003). Core skills contribute to an individual’s overall employability by enhancing their capacity to adapt, learn and work independently, (Greatbatch and Lewis, 2007). As stressed by Greatbatch and Lewis,(2007), Core skills are important because jobs today require flexibility, initiative and the ability to undertake many different tasks. For example, jobs in business, finance and retail sectors requires staff with interpersonal skills; – ability to explain things and solve problems related to client needs; manufacturing workers work in teams and require more internal communication. Some of the valued attributes identified by Greatbatch and Lewis (2007) include being able to work under pressure, commitment, dependability, imagination, creativity, getting on with people and willingness to learn.

Employers seek to recruit and retain employees with these skills; thus, education programs that emphasise such skills offer learners a comparative advantage in the labour market. Education providers are also interested in core skills because they encourage learners to be more reflective and self-directed (Greatbatch and Lewis (2007).

2.3.4 The Nature of Core Skills Education and Training

As teased out of the report of Greatbatch and Lewis (2007), the process of developing core skills education and training programme commences with research which identifies reasons why school and college leavers become unemployed. The process of evolving generic employability or core skills education and training programme involves the following:

- i. Identification of core skill deficiencies of young people and their age groups
 - ii. Mapping out core skills in the social contexts
 - iii. Aligning core skills to age-groups and employment opportunities or sectors
 - iv. Aligning core skills to carrier subjects and grade levels in an education system
 - v. Developing modules of Core Skills Education programmes for in-school and out-of school youth
 - vi. Identification of educational and training institutions to undertake core skills education and training
 - vii. Targeting education and training systems for participating in core skills education such as formal schools, voluntary training organizations, Armed Forces Training institutions, work-based training institutions, apprenticeship training organisations, private training institutions
 - viii. Developing approaches or methodologies for specific core skill education and training.
- According to Greatbatch and Lewis (2007), some of the teaching or instructional approaches in core skill education and training include: Case studies, discussions, role-plays, workplace simulations, project method and practical exercises designed to challenge and develop student’s attitudes and behaviours, Individual Learning Plan, work placement, showing learners’ the ‘correct’ ways to behave, team-building activities, use of visiting speakers to talk to the learners as a group, promoting of self-awareness on the part of learners of the skills and attributes they are developing by continually reinforcing the importance of the skills throughout the course, learners reflect on their skills and to be realistic about them, accompanying learners to job interviews, organising an event,

- giving the learners as much responsibility as possible, give and receive criticism in a positive way.
etc.
- viii. Establishing Assessment, measurement and certification systems for learners of core skills behaviours.
For example, one of the certificates offered in Core Skill Education in the UK is Certificate of Personal Effectiveness.

2.3.5 Relevance of Core Skills Education and Training In Ghana

The phenomenon of youth unemployment in Ghana led to the establishment of the Youth Employment Programme in 2006. If youth employment is to be stepped up, then generic employability skills should become part of a national agenda in education and training for primary, secondary, higher education and out-of-school training. The acquisition of core skills need to become a priority development issue for Ghana. As the literature show, core skills are relevant for everyone - from pupils in schools to Chief Executives in large companies. For instance in 2006, Ghana Employers Association identified the following as skills required by workforce in Ghana: High analytical skills, Creativity, Resourcefulness, Quick learning skills, Excellent verbal and written communication skills, Interest in new and emerging technology, the ability to work under pressure and maintain calmness in emergency, (GEA,2006). It may be observed that some of the skills identified by the Ghana Employers Association included mostly core skills.

The literature seems to suggest that the key skill ingredients in the content of basic education in Ghana relating to a sustainable development agenda as identified include academic skills, occupational skills and core skills. Conspicuously missing in the synthesis on the shape of the basic education system for sustainable development was the labour market information/human resource needs or the types of job compatible with the maturity, skills and competencies of the graduates of the basic education, a policy that identifies and recognizes the roles of basic education in the development of human capital.

It is argued however in this study that since some of the basic education graduates terminate schooling and enter the job market, a policy allocating human capital development roles to the basic education and training system will be appropriate for guiding the curriculum development, implementation and assessment processes at this level of education. The absence of a policy in that direction may result in pursuit of mainly the academic aspect of the skills, neglecting core skills and occupational skills component as observed in the non provision of workshops, equipment and facilities and development of minimum standards of performance in the teaching/learning and assessment of vocational/technical subjects in the implementation of the existing contents of basic education in Ghana. Again, the emphasis on academic education made the Computer Selection and Placement System use good grades from English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies as the major selection criteria for placing students in second cycle education in Ghana. Thus, excellent passes in the technical/vocational subjects have little influence in accessing second cycle education by JHS leavers.

The factors underpinning the study are conceptualized and modeled as shown in figure 1 below:

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

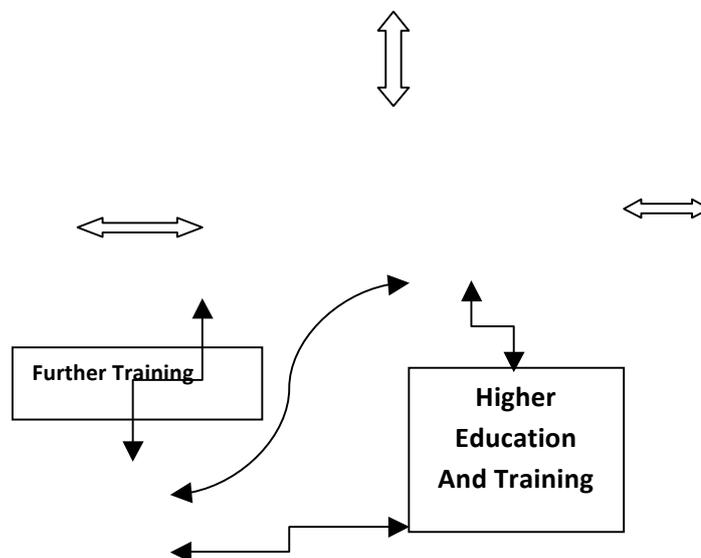


Figure 1: A Model of Shaping the Basic Education System for Sustainable National Development

Figure 1: A Model of Shaping the Basic Education System for Sustainable National Development (Adopted from Asiegbor, 2009)

Figure 1: A Model of Shaping the Basic Education System for Sustainable National Development (Adopted from Asiegbor, 2009)

The model suggests that the national vision of development on all fronts is embedded in a national development plan. The plan, ideally, should have a human resource strategy which should spell out the core skills, occupational skills and national manpower needs required for driving the national development agenda. The skill packages and national manpower needs have to be identified, documented and organized into a data base to be shared by the Education and Training System. The education and training system is shaped in such a way as to use the inputs from the national development human resource strategy to develop education and training standards, qualification frameworks, curriculum framework, curricula and syllabuses, assessment frames, guidance and counseling information and career pathways to guide learners in the selection of educational and training programmes. Some of the students

who exit Basic Education do go to the job market. Others go for further skill enhancement and higher education and training but ultimately, all of them end in the employment sector.

Owing to the creation of new jobs and the changing nature of job knowledge and skills, studies need to be conducted regularly to update the information in the data base. The overall impact is the educated youth with generic employability skills for further refinement on the job for sustainable national development. In a context of the existence of employment and job creation avenues, the citizens may create and obtain jobs to enable them participate actively in the national development efforts.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As Silverman (2000) has commented, the reliability and validity of a research depend largely on the use of an appropriate method to collect data. It is for this reason that this chapter is devoted to explaining the methods used and the reasons for using them. This chapter therefore elaborates on the following issues : the research type and methods for data collection, and their justification, the sampling frame and the sample, the actual data collection process and the methods used to analyse data.

3.2 Rationale for the Methods

The study was basically a survey with the infusion of document analyses. It relied mainly on structured interviews with key respondents - education authorities, national policy planning officers and teachers - and also on focus group discussions with pupils in the junior high schools. The approach was used mainly because it was found to be appropriate in exploring the views of the different respondent categories and relevant in addressing the research questions. The interviews provided opportunities for indepth probing into the research questions. Cohen et al (2007) points out that in making sense of particular events and situations, researchers can draw on interviews because they offer the opportunity to delve deeper into people's thoughts. There were other equally important reasons why interviews appear to be attractive for this research. Firstly, we wanted to interact with the respondents in their natural work environment and discuss the topic directly so that our data will be close to reality as much as possible. Thus, interviews were used to gain in-depth insight into what teachers, head teachers, directors of education and, national planning officers thought and felt about the issues under investigation.

Descombe (2007) supports the use of two or more different data collecting methods (triangulation) as important for establishing the validity of the research. It is often argued that when focus group discussion is used in combination with interviews, it offers the researcher better understanding of issues and is also valuable in addressing the research problem. The focus group discussion approach was therefore used for JSH pupils for ease of communication and time efficiency as well as to satisfy the need to validate pupils claims on the spot. In both the interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher used video cameras to record the discourse and to enhance the accuracy of data capture.

The document analyses provided opportunity for verifying some targeted responses from respondents. Documents purposively selected and analysed this research were the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, Pre- tertiary curriculum framework; Basic education syllabuses and National Development Planning and Implementation Strategy documents. Krippendorf (2004) and Denscombe (2007) support the use of document analysis such as written text, as an additional research method. The selected documents for the research are all certified official written documents with authentic authors and dates. Taking a cue from Denscombe (2007), the documents have been selected above all other documents because the contents are authoritative, factual, and objectively presented. Furthermore, they are documents currently in use in the system and they have been written by experts and professionals in the field of curriculum development and national development planning.

The decision to apply document analysis was well considered and arrived at. It was considered the best approach to specifically address the third research question;; and also to generate further evidence to test the interview data (Yin, 2003) and also as a source of data by itself (Scott and Morrison, 2006).

3.3 Sampling

The population from which a sample was drawn comprised directors of nine divisions of the Ghana Education Service, three directors of the ministry of Education, all teachers to be met in three selected schools, all pupils in the three schools, staff of the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) and management staff of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC).

In determining the sample, the following considerations were made: the objectives of the study, available funding, the time available for the study, the availability of the schools and accessibility of the documents.

Three schools were purposively selected from three districts after appropriate consultation with their district directors. This number was considered appropriate to make room for the generation of a reasonable amount of data within the time frame and available financial resources. The choice of the schools was largely made for practical reasons – those from which the researchers were most likely to get maximum co-operative.

In each school (which has both the primary and JHS stages) the headteacher together with seven (7) teachers were selected to participate in the study. Additionally, 20 pupils at the JHS level (form 2) were selected. The JHS 2 pupils were presumed to be more matured than the primary pupils and they could express themselves better

Outside the schools, six (6) officers of the Ministry of Education, ten senior officers of the Ghana Education Service, including directors Basic Education, CRDD and Ga East as well as four curriculum developers, and four management staff of the National Development Planning Commission.

In summary, we were able to gather interview data from four officials of the National Development Planning Commission, six officers of the Ministry of Education, ten officials of the Ghana Education Service, 25 teachers including the head teachers and 60 pupils. Data collection was completed within a period of three weeks.

The principal data from the pupils came from videotaped focus group discussions which were recorded and transcribed on the very day of each FGD. It should be noted here that the researchers had to take time to explain the core skills concept to the pupils. They appeared to have had little idea about the concepts and their expressed forms until it was explained to them in very practical terms.

There was no support intervention on the part of the teachers to aid the FGDs because the researchers wanted to capture as much as possible data from the pupils' own learning experiences. There was only one area of teacher intervention – the identification of pupils for the FGD. These were pupils of mixed gender and of medium or high attainment. The criteria for attainment level was set because of ease of communication and anticipated participation of the pupils. The choice appeared to be unbiased however, since the identification of the pupils was done right before the researchers.

3.4 Process of Gathering and Analyzing the Data

The researchers visited respondents at the work environments to administer the instruments. In the case of the directors of education and officials of the National Development planning Commission, there were lots of repetitive visits as these category of respondents appeared, most of the time, too busy to grant audience, even with an advance appointment. The concept of core skills appears confusing to many people. In order to make it easy for respondents to understand and get along easily in responding to the questions in the various instruments, a paper of cores kills was prepared by the researchers and given out to the various respondents to read or refer to during the period of interviews or the focus group discussions. This approach enabled the various respondents to become aware of the operational definition and examples of core skills as used in the study. With the school pupils, a discussion of the core skills paper for familiarization preceded the focus group discussions.

The information that was gathered from interviews and focus group discussions were qualitatively analyzed and they constitute the core aspects of this report. It was realised that the focus group discussions might not be fully adequate in taking from pupils all that they may wish to give out. Therefore, copies of the questioning guide used for the focus group interactions were given to some of the pupils who did not take part in the focus group discussions to respond to either individually or in their

own formed small groups. The additional information from pupils, recorded in the pupils own writing, turned out to be a very valuable source of information, as it allowed us to compare interactions of different groups during the same time and task. In addition, since they were away from the video recorder, they were more relaxed and less influenced by the idea that they were being investigated. Some field notes on personal reflections from interaction with some other individual pupils were also very useful.

3.5 Ethical Issues

The interviews and focus group discussions were video recorded to guarantee accuracy of recordings. In each case however, the consent of the respondents were sought before the appliances were used. There was no instance when any respondent or respondent group turned down our request to video tape the discussion or interview.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction – Core Skills

The results of the study have been organized based on the objectives of the study. The research questions have been accordingly used as sub-headings with the information collected and analysed on the questions presented and discussed. The documents analysed in the study included the Curriculum Framework for Pre-Tertiary Education in Ghana and the resultant, syllabuses of Basic Education as well as the National development Plans. The analysed information from the documents are presented and discussed in the report.

4.1.1 Awareness, Meaning and Scope of Core Skills

Observations made during data collection and interactions with the various respondent groups showed that except for fundamental skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, many of them had some level of difficulty in understanding the term core skills. Most of the respondents were also not very familiar or clear with the scope of the other core skills categories and attributes. After prompting the respondents by giving them the Core Skill appendix list to read and discuss, respondents' interactions improved. Similarly, pupils became active discussants after the core skills concept was explained to them with examples listed as appendix.

These observations appeared to corroborate the characteristics of core skills in the literature that “core skills and attributes are also known by several other names. They are also context sensitive and may vary in detail between different work contexts. The demands for what might at first be assumed to be a core skill can differ between sectors to an extent that matters” (Greatbatch and Lewis, 2007). This suggests that each society needs to identify and agree on the definition of what it considers to be core skills to enable the citizens to participate meaningfully on any discourse on core skills.

4.1.2 Importance of Core Skills

Respondents in the study were asked various questions regarding the importance they attached to core skills. The responses given by the various categories of respondents are presented below.

When educational authorities, National Development Planning Officials and teachers were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements: “core skills are needed by everyone irrespective of career interests”, and that “core skills are critical for an individuals' personal development”, they all strongly agreed to the statements. Similarly, when pupils were asked to provide justifications for the core skills they learn in school, they mentioned a number of core skills (which are classified into six categories) and stated their importance to them as presented in table II:

Table II: Categorisation of Core skills identified by Pupils

Core Skill Category	Importance of Core Skills
Fundamental skills	Help us to understand things better, it helps us in our work, without fundamental skills, one would find it difficult to express him or herself in some important occasions. When one has fundamental skills, one is able to understand and cope with whatever is taught and learned, it also enables pupils to have literacy skills and be able to learn how to read and write
Personal skills	will enable pupils to be responsible citizen and <i>able to approach teachers</i> . It helps us to achieve life goals, to be a good person, to plan ahead, to be self-reliant, to be sociable, to excel in every aspect of life, to be sociable, to become a successful politician, to co-operate with other people, to be hardworking, to cultivate the habit of working with other people, to learn to be presentable in public, to acquire the skill of learning ahead, to become creative, to acquire personal satisfaction

People related skills	help one to control shyness and mix with others
ICT User skills	relevant for our age and it will help us in working. ICT User skills will also help us to do research for our home work and do social networking
Conceptualising /thinking skills	will also give way to fast answers to questions asked in school or class, enables us to identify and solve problem and plan for our lives, thinking skills will help us to understand issues and help one to make better decisions
Skills related to the community	make one able to relate to others, makes one selfless and kind to others

The foregoing showed that both the adult respondents and pupils agreed that core skills are important learning targets to achieve in school. The pupils, in particular showed adequate awareness of the benefits they would derive from acquiring reasonably adequate and diversified core skills in school and the emptiness they would feel without them..

4.1.3 Perspectives on Core Skills in Basic Education for Employability

The study assessed the perspectives of the respondents on the link between core skills acquisition and employment potentialities after basic education for those unable to progress in further education, especially in relation to sustainable development of the individual..

4.1.3.1 Perspectives of Educational Authorities

The educational authorities were asked to indicate their views on the issue of relationship between core skills development at basic education and the development of employability skills. They contended that there ought to be no difference between the two because essentially core skills which are sustainable development oriented are means to employment. They emphasized that the earlier the development of these skills start the better. It is inferred that this category of respondents on this issue are seeing sustainable development from the lences/angle of production.

4.1.3.2 Perspectives of officials of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)

When the officials of the NDPC were asked to express their opinion on the same issue they also generally responded in the same direction. They strongly disagreed with a suggestion that “Junior High School leavers are too young to be expected to acquire core skills”. This stance might appear contradictory to their response to the next question asked them. In that question, when they were required to agree or disagree with the statement that “the focus of basic education is not employability”, they unanimously and strongly agreed.

What it all means is that some core skills need be developed at the basic education level but such developments should not necessarily be employment targeted. This explanation might however appears to contradict the stance of literature which is clear on the importance of core skills as means of employment. Interestingly however, the literature in reference is not educational level specific. So here again any question of contradiction can be considered debatable.

4.1.3.3 Perspectives of Teachers

The views of teachers was also sought the same statement: ‘core skills in basic education should correspond to employability skills’. Here the response was not unanimous. While some teachers gave the impression that they agreed to the statement others gave a contrary view. This will seem to suggest that teachers who are the front-runners and ground-operatives in the education delivery process, are uncertain about the exact nature and target usability of their products from basic education. The question that readily comes to mind is whether or not we are running the risk of our teachers being uncertain about the exact purpose of basic education.

4.1.3.4 Perspectives of Pupils

The question seeking pupils' views on the issue was differently posed. They were asked to state the kind of work they thought they could do if they were not able to continue their education beyond the basic education level. They were also requested to state the kind of skills their chosen careers would require. Pupils responses are presented in table III below:

Table III: Pupils career choices and corresponding core skill requirements

Type of work	Skills is required for this work?
Florist	Communication and creative skills
Mason	Time management, creative skills, fundamental skills
Sewing /seamstress/tailor	Being able to talk to customers, creative skills. personal skills: reliability, Addition and subtraction
Carpenter	Planning skills, thinking skills, Addition and subtraction
Caterer	People related skills , planning, time management
Salesmans	People related skills, Customer care, fundamental skills
Hawker ,Trader	People related skills, influencing skills, Numeracy skills,, personal skills, time management, reading skills
Barber	Personal skills, creative skills
Hair dresser	People related skills, personal skills, Art skills
Internet cafe operator	ICT User skills, fundamental skills
Shoe maker	Creative skills
Pure water vendor	Influencing skills, people related skills
Writer	Fundamental skills, imaginative and creative skills
Driver's mate	People related skills, tolerance, numeracy skills, Adding and subtraction
Driver	Personal skills, people related skills,
Waitress	Influencing skills, people related skills
Designer	Creative skills
Electrician	Numeracy skills, Thinking skills, personal skills and planning skills.
Kente weaving, basket weaving,	Drawing skills. Creative skills, Communication skills,
Seamstress	Ability to sew, Fundamental skills, people related skills, creative skills
House help	Cooking skills
Food vendor	Cooking skills –how to make the food attractive, customer care, influencing skills , people related skills addition and subtraction
Singer	Numeracy skills – addition and subtraction, how to relate to listeners, personal skills including hygiene.
Security	Communication skills, skills related to work,
Cleaner	Listening skills to be able to listen to instructions from the boss, communicating skills, career planning, creative skills
Typist	ICT user skills, fundamental skills
Bus Conductor	Fundamental skills
Driver's mate/tro tro mate	Numeracy, Adding and subtraction
Taxi driver	Personal skills, fundamental skills, numeracy skills
Artist	Creative skills, fundamental skills, people related skill, people related skills
Caregiver	People related skills, caring skills: Love and care for others, social skills, literacy skills, communicating skills,
Caregiver	People related skills, caring skills: Love and care for others, social skills,

literacy skills, communicating skills,
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The responses of the pupils indicate that besides the aim of accessing Second Cycle Education after basic education, pupils have alternative plans regarding the careers they would pursue should they fail to further their education. They were very much aware of the core skills and technical or occupational skills they needed to acquire for the jobs they desired as alternatives to further education.

4.2 Linkage Between Core Skills and Sustainable national development

The study sought the perceptions of the different categories of the adult respondents on how core skills are linked to basic education for sustainable national development. The adult categories included educational authorities and NDPC officials and teachers.

4.2.1 Adult Perceptions on Core Skills and Sustainable national development

4.2.1.1 Views of Educational Authorities

When educational authorities were asked to indicate the core skills that are related to sustainable development, they responded that ‘All the core skills listed in the appendix are needed for sustainable development’. Some of the respondents added that “even if you are in informal employment such as trading, you require almost all those skills”. As a follow up, they were asked whether they felt that the Core Skills provided for at the Basic Education level were still relevant for the development needs of the country. The educational authorities answered in the affirmative and went on to emphasize as follows: “Fundamental skills, skills for managing information, personal skills and inquiry skills are needed for functional education”.

4.2.1.2 Views of the Officials of the NDPC

NDPC officials were asked to indicate the importance of Core Skills for national development. They were quite elaborate in their response. They indicated that core skills were “very essential in policy planning and implementation”. According to them each policy development process is preceded by a conceptualisation exercise to visualize what is required for the country. The process requires conceptualisation, communication and a host of personal skills in dealing with all the cross sectorial groups. Without these skills it would be difficult to facilitate lot of planning programmes”.

4.2.1.3 Views of Teachers

Teachers ironically were very emphatic on this particular item of establishing the need to help pupils develop core skills at the basic education level. The justifications given for their stance included the fact that core skills:

- Are useful in communication and problem solving
- lay foundation for total development
- help pupils to fit into society and be functional
- help pupils to acquire other skills needed for life
- make pupils responsible and independent
- help pupils to acquire analytical thinking skills
- elevate pupils’ social, moral and physical values

Teachers were again asked to indicate the core skills which should be developed at the Basic Education level. Their impression created by their responses was that all core skills should start their development from the basic education level. In particular, they mentioned the following categories of skills: fundamental skills, personal skills, ICT skills, people related skills, skills related to the community and business related skills.

It can be deduced from the responses of all the adult categories that they were all agreed that core skills are important for national development and their development should start right from the basic education level.

4.2.1.4 Views of Pupils

Pupils were asked to list core skills they consider to be key to their education and give reasons. It was interesting taking account of the ideas pupils expressed. Their ideas are summarised and categorised in the table IV .

Table IV: Pupils' Perception of Key Core Skills

Key skills for education	Reasons
Personal skills	We get confidence. Helps you to know your strength and weaknesses; makes you more confident in whatever decision you will make and how to go about it.
People related skills	Make us to relate well with everybody in school and at work place, Needed to help one to relate to people.
Social skills	To be able to work well with others and to behave well in public
Thinking or conceptualising skills	We can use it to solve problems in life – you do not get lost when faced with problems; gives you the skill for managing information. It also makes you think innovatively and creatively
Learning skills	It helps you to learn more about yourself and how you can improve yourself; makes you ready for higher education.
Fundamental skills	They are needed in our day to day living and for work - without knowing how to read and write, and use numbers, you cannot continue your education. Literacy skills and communication skills are needed for job; Can help me to do other things in life. To help me learn other things in life if my knowledge in literacy and numeracy is good
Planning skills	They direct us to prepare to achieve higher goals
ICT skills	It is good for work and education. Everything we do in the world in business and commerce now depends on knowledge in ICT; without skills in ICT you can hardly get employment. It prepares you to learn by yourself
Moral skills	To help us to show good behaviour. To fit into society
Business skills	Guides us to be more effective and to achieve higher goals

The responses of the pupils as presented in the table point to the perceived relevance of core skills to their development through education. The responses is a soothing reassurance to the public that pupils are very much aware that schooling goes beyond the narrow objective of passing examinations. Schooling aims to develop the totality of the child in preparation for a successful and fulfilling adult life.

4.3 Core Skills Provision in the Basic Education Curriculum

Core skills provision will be enhanced if the national development planning process identify them and allocate roles and responsibilities to implementing sectors and agencies. The study sought to find out how the national development plans identify and allocate core skills for policy formulation by sector ministries and agencies. These results are presented in the sub-sections that follow.

4.3.1 National Development Planning and Core Skills

The NDPC officials were asked “how do Core Skills feature in national development planning in Ghana? A unique response given by two respondents separately may be summarized thus: “In fact, a development planner needs to be aware of all these skills for articulation in development planning”. To another question: “Which of the Core Skills do you expect to be developed at the Basic Education level?” the answer was “No, in my view the key skills that should be concentrated on at this stage are four, namely, fundamental skills, personal skills, conceptualisation skills and ICT related skills. People related skills could be developed over time.” The reasons given for the above statement included, “The

development of personal skills for example will help them to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, ... become influential and enthusiastic in all endeavours. To be able to read and understand and separate facts from opinion is very essential. comprehend a lot of issues, make informed judgments about what they read; numeracy skill is required and in this era every child must know ICT.

In response to another question the National Development Planning Commission respondents explained that at the NDPC, they concentrate more on occupational skills in policy planning. They are conscious of the fact that the development of core skills should be done through the educational institutions. With this expectation in mind, the NDPC concentrates on vocational and technical skills which are usually developed at the post basic education stage and which results in functionalism among the working young and adult population”.

4.3.2 Interactions between the NDPC and Education System

The principles of inter and intra sector collaboration require that interactions must exist between NDPC and other sectors which seek to implement or prepare the stage for the implementation of their development plans. When asked whether there are constant interactions in the form of collaboration between the NDPC and Educational Authorities on Core Skills, the answer of one respondent specifically was: “well, it is yes and it is no”. The reasons given was that “What we do at our level is to interact with the education ministry which oversees basic education at the policy planning level. One of such interactions is through Education Sector Annual Review (EDSAR) meetings where all sub-sectors of the education sectors are represented”. To another question on constant interaction between the NDPC and MoE/GES authorities a similar response of yes and no was again given. The explanation provided was that “we expect that under the Science and TVET educational sub groupings for example, they will deal with the development of core skills at that level” In response to a question on the responsibility to initiate such interactions they NDPC officials explained thus; “Normally, it is the education ministry which should initiate the interaction and NDPC will concentrate on the interaction with stakeholders concerned”.

To another question on the roles Basic Education graduates are expected to play in implementing national development agenda in Ghana, the response was “We could involve schools and youth groups in our policy validation fora. For example, in the interaction where we have to focus on the validation of core and ICT skills, we could interview representatives from basic school graduates to find out from them what their aspirations, roles and skill requirements are to inform development planning.”

From the responses given, it can be deduced that the process factors that link Core Skills education and training process to the production of appropriate human capital for sustainable national development do not exist between Basic Education and the national development planning process. Perhaps better put, it may be said that the level of interaction that goes on between the national planning authorities and the education authorities to ensure that national plans are properly integrated into educational policies and viceversa are grossly inadequate. Team work that should ensure proper integration and blending of plans, policies and implementations appear to be at a very low level. National development plans do not seem to allocate specific human capital production roles to Basic Schools. This is in spite of the fact that the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) 2010 – 2013 contained a statement on national human resource development as one of the focus areas in the plan. The same document indicated that to achieve MDGs “accelerated growth, poverty reduction and attain middle income status” requires the linking of “education and training to labour market information” (GSGDA 2010). Despite these, there appears to be no deliberate national development plan dissemination interactions between basic education authorities and the NDPC. Many collaborating agencies in implementing the human resource development strategy did not include basic education but mostly TVET and Tertiary education . But it is a common knowledge that JHS graduates do serve as farm hands, sellers, artisans, cleaners, etc at work places.

4.3.3 Targetted Core Skills in National Development Plan Documents for Basic Education

The analysis of National development plans namely, Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) 2006–2009 and the Medium –Term National Development Policy Framework: Ghana Shared Growth

and Development Agenda (GSGDA, 2010 – 2013) Vol.1, showed that Fundamental skills are the main core skills category mentioned in the documents and this was in regard to the poor quality of basic education in general. Specific attributes of the fundamental core skills category mentioned include, reading, writing, comprehension and ICT skills (GSGDA, 2010 – 2013) Vol.1, p. 185).

These are the traditional core skills demanded by society for basic education. There appears to be nothing new or novel to indicate an anticipated progression in our use and reliance on education for sustainable development. It need to be emphasized however that sustainable development at both individual and national level will depend heavily on using improved methods of doing things, hence national development plans are expected to bring in new ways of doing things for sustainable development. For example, the discovery and exploration as oil well as the investments in the Oil and Gas Industry in Ghana require skills that the sector needs. This will require that human capital development should be directed to meeting these needs. If however, the national development plan does not identify such skills for the education and training system and the educational institutions do not identify them either, there will be no way in which the graduates of the education and training system will take maximum advantage of the job opportunities that will be continually created in the new industry .

4.3.4 Pre-Tertiary Curriculum Framework

The analysed information from the curriculum framework suggests that Ghana identified the importance of core skills and therefore captured various categories of core skills in the curriculum framework. The major categories of core skills captured by the curriculum framework include: Fundamental skills, People-related skills, Conceptualising / Thinking skills, Personal skills, Skills related to the business world, Skills related to the community, and ICT user skills. ICT practitioner skills attained little coverage.

Weaknesses of the Curriculum Framework

The scope of core skills as outlined in the document appears too narrow. The document did not seem to place equal value and emphasis on the attributes of all the major core skill categories. The attributes of core skill categories such as Fundamental skills, Conceptualising /Thinking skills and Skills related to the community were dealt with more intensely than the other core skills categories and their attributes. The framework also did not align the core skills to all the specific carrier subjects, age cohorts nor grade levels which are targeted by the curricula. Similarly, no defined assessment and certification systems have been set for the core skills education and training in the curriculum framework.

4.3.5 Core Skills Content of Primary and Junior High School Syllabuses

The analysis of the primary school syllabuses shows that the subjects at both the Lower and Upper Primary stages contain a great deal of core skills and other expressed forms or attributes. The Primary school subjects differ considerably in carrying various attributes of the main core skills categories. The subjects offered by the Junior High School curriculum include Ghanaian Language and Culture, English Language, Mathematics, Physical Education, Integrated Science and Basic Design and Technology (BDT).

On the other hand, the analysis of the syllabuses at the Junior High School level shows that the subjects do not contain a great deal of core skills nor their expressed forms or attributes. The Junior High School subjects also differ considerably in carrying various attributes of the main core skills categories. It is important for the reader to remember however that the various subjects in any school curriculum play complementary roles for the achievement of the overall goals and objectives. It is therefore the aggregate provision in all the syllabuses together that should be our concern and not necessarily how much coverage each subject has offered to the various categories of the core skills

The core skills content of the various subjects at Primary school are shown in the summary boxes.

Box 3

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN CREATIVE ARTS P4 – P6

The Creative Arts syllabus deals with a repertoire of core skills categories and their attributes indicated in the preamble and specifically in the general aims and general objectives of the various sections and the body of the syllabus: Conceptualising / Thinking Skills and Personal Skills mostly.

The syllabus does not deal much with core skills categories and attributes of the following: Fundamental Skills, People Related Skills, Skills Related To The Business World, Skills Related To The Community, ICT User Skills, ICT Practitioner Skills and e-Business skills.

Box 4

SUMMARY ON ICT SYLLABUS ANALYSIS FOR CORE SKILLS P1 –P6

The ICT syllabus treated mostly ICT User skills including ICT literacy and communication skills. Majority of the attributes or the expressed forms of Fundamental skills, People-related skills, Conceptualising / Thinking skills, Personal skills, Skills related to the business world and Skills related to the community have not been captured in the ICT syllabus from Primary one to Primary six.

Box 5

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN MATHS SYLLABUS P1-6

The P1-6 Mathematics syllabus deals extensively with the following core skill categories: Fundamental skills particularly the expressed forms or attributes such as Numeracy Skills, using numbers and aspects of Conceptualising / Thinking skills and their attributes. The core skills categories that have not been explicitly covered include People-related skills, particularly attributes such as Interpersonal Skills, Influencing Skills and team leadership skills; Personal skills, Skills related to the business world, Skills related to the community, ICT user skills, ICT Practitioner Skills and e-Business Skills. The major weaknesses deal with the methodology for teaching/learning and evaluation.

Box 6

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION P4 –6

The Citizenship Education Syllabus has a great deal of core skills and the attributes particularly in the following core skills categories: Conceptualising / Thinking skills, Skills related to the community, People-related skills, Personal skills and ICT user skills. Not much have been covered in respect of core skill categories such as Fundamental skills, Skills related to the business world, ICT practitioner skills and e-Business skills. The syllabus has additional attributes of Personal Sills Category in Citizenship Education such as Tolerance, Patriotism, Respect for evidence, Comportment, Responsibility, Respect for the Rule of Law and Environmental Awareness. The major weaknesses deal with the methodology for teaching/learning and evaluation.

BOX 7

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN THE INTEGRATED SCIENCE SYLLABUS P1 – JHS 3

The core skills which have been emphasised in the science syllabus are attributes of enquiry skills with the aim to develop a scientific literate population. They concern the development and use of planning skills, observation skills, manipulating skills, measuring skills, skill of designing experiments, skill for analyzing information, and manipulative skills.

Personal skills such as decision making skills have also been identified as part of building scientific enquiry skills. There are other personal skills but these appear to be mostly inclined towards scientific attitude building. These include curiosity, perseverance, flexibility in ideas, respect for evidence, and personal reflection.

BOX 8

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS P1 – JHS 3

The English syllabuses deal largely with fundamental skills, namely listening, reading, writing and comprehension. These could lead to the development of communicating skills. The other skill

categories have not been explicitly emphasised but teachers are expected to make connections with others topics through integration through songs, rhymes, directions, story telling, drama; and conversation to enable them to build skills such as pupil related skills, skills related to the community and personal skills.

The syllabus is also weak in not providing explicit instructions on developing reading, writing, listening and comprehension skills. For example in reading skill development the syllabus is not emphatic on skills for notes taking, marking, reviewing and to increase reading pace, etc.

BOX 9

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN THE GHANAIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE P1 – JHS 3

Like the English syllabus, the Ghanaian language and culture syllabus stresses on the attainment of competency in speaking, reading and writing their language, but, it is weak in not providing explicit instructions on developing reading, writing, listening and comprehension skills. The syllabus, however, makes connections with the attributes of other skills categories such as skills related to the community, personal Skills category in citizenship education such as -tolerance, patriotism, responsibility, respect for ones culture and environmental awareness – the teachers are expected to make the connections through traditional and foreign games, stories and folktales, listening and talking about things of interest, poems - play and work songs and rhymes.

BOX10

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION SYALLABUS P1 – JHS 3

The physical education syllabus dealt mostly with personal skills especially those relating to health, manipulative, locomotor and non-locomotor skills. The aim is to develop mental, moral and social capabilities of the individual and make him or her fit and confident. Skills related to the inquiry, ICT and skills related to the community and the business world have not much been emphasised. Even though one of the aims of the syllabus is to train pupils to acquire skills to appreciate healthy competition in sports, it is not explicit in the development of people related skills, the predominant activities are teacher demonstrations and explanations supported by few group interactions. Little opportunity is given to pupils to plan their own activities and not sufficient account is given to activities that would develop planning and conceptualizing skills and the rest of the other skill categories.

Box 11

SUMMARY OF CORE SKILLS ANALYSIS IN SOCIAL STUDIES JHS 1 - 3

The Social Studies syllabus at the JHS has limited number of core skills categories and their attributes. The subject has Personal Skills such as tolerance, forgiveness, love, honesty, trust and fairness. Skills related to the community such as - peaceful co-existence, respect for peoples of other nations, respect for one another, law enforcement, negotiation, reconciliation and arbitration. The third core skills category carried by the Social Studies include Skills related to the business world especially enterprise Skills and planning. The syllabus is limited in the other core skills categories such as Conceptualising / Thinking, Fundamental Skills, People Related Skills, ICT User Skills, ICT Practitioner Skills and e-Business skills.

4.3.6 Perceived Adequacy of Core Skills in Basic Education

The study sought to find out from educational authorities whether the quantum of core skills provided for in the basic education curricula are adequate. While majority of the authorities in the education sector said the core skills were not adequate officials from the NDPC indicated that they were not in a position to know because they did not work with schools. Thus, educational authorities as well as the NDPC officials appeared not sufficiently informed to determine the adequacy or otherwise of the core skills in the basic education curriculum. Based on the syllabs analysis, there appears to be a reduced attention to some of the core skills contents at the JHS level.

4.4 Implementational Challenges in Core Skills Education and Training

The processes involved in developing core skills education programmes as described by Greatbatch and Lewis, (2007) include the identification of the need for core skills education, core skills mapping, development of core skills curriculum modules for out-of school youth, age cohorts, employment opportunities, educational grade levels and the development of the approaches for teaching, assessment and certification.

4.4.1 The Need for Core skills Education in Ghana

From policy perspective, as assessed in the study, the NDPC indicated that fundamental skills, personal skills, conceptualisation skills and ICT related skills are the core skills recommended for basic education in Ghana. The NDPC asserted that “People related skills could be developed over time”. In contrast, the Curriculum Framework of the Ministry of Education identified the need for other core skills categories besides fundamental skills, personal skills, conceptualisation skills and ICT related skills and incorporated them in the curriculum for Pre-Tertiary educational institutions in Ghana (MOE, 2007). Thus, though the NDPC as the genesis of national development planning and policies did not see the need for the acquisition of other core skills categories and their attributes besides Fundamental, personal skills, conceptualisation skills and ICT skills at the basic school level, the Ministry of Education did recognize their importance.

4.4.2 Core skills Mapping process in Ghana

Another challenge has to do with the core skills mapping process. Educational authorities, NDPC officials and teachers were asked to agree or disagree to the statement “Identification of core skills is a participatory process involving all key stakeholders”. All categories of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. When educational authorities were further asked “How are core skills identified and mapped-out for the Basic Education Curriculum in Ghana?” the answers provided can be summarised thus: “One is not sure if core skills have been mapped out yet. Expect it to be identified in the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan”. This statement is against the backdrop that the 2010 -2020 Education Strategic Plan which included skills mapping has been completed.

The core skills mapping process in Ghana was most likely not sufficiently inclusive and participatory enough. Many stakeholders in education and national development planning did not seem to be aware of all the main core skills categories and their importance to the human capital development process. In the study, responses to questions on the importance of core skills registered mixed answers. For example, when educational authorities were asked whether Core skills are included in the Basic Education Curriculum in Ghana?, the responses were “Yes’ and ‘no’. These answers indicated that some of the officials were not abreast with what was contained in the curriculum.

Again, when the question “Which Core Skills are provided for in the Primary school curriculum” was posed, all of them mentioned basic Fundamental skills: Literacy and Numeracy but not the other core skills categories. An additional unfortunate comment made by an official was that “it is a waste of time and opportunity, especially from P1-6 to concentrate on other skills. Basic education should be used to deepen the fundamental skills achievements”. These responses suggest that, that official has limited awareness of the scope of core skills provided for in the basic education programme and their importance in the education and training processes in Ghana.

4.4.3 Alignment of core skills

An attempt was made to analyse for the alignment of core skills and attributes to age cohorts, carrier subjects, career opportunities, grade levels and the systems of education and training in Ghana. While core skill education and training principles observe the above alignment procedures, the situation observed in the study does not appear to adhere to the principles of alignment. Thus, core skills content and attributes decreased in categories from Primary level to JHS as observed in the analysis. Also core skills education and training in Ghana seems to deal solely with only the formal (in-school) system type young people and not out-of- school youth.

4.4.4 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Approaches

One other challenge that came out in the study has to do with the approaches to teaching, instruction, practice, assessment and certification. The responses from educational authorities to the question “Do the current teaching and learning approaches in Basic schools support the development of core skills by pupils?” suggests the existence of such a challenge. They responded in the negative. The reasons they gave showed that “teachers do not use a variety of methods including collaborative methods”. “There is not much commitment on the part of our teachers today. Teachers do not engage in research and other activities that would demand of pupils to use the core skills. The current predominant lecturing mode is not helping much”, they concluded.

Pupils were required in one item to indicate how they expected their teachers to teach them to develop desired core skills. They surprisingly gave a wide variety of expectations of/from teachers which included the following:

- *Teachers should give us chance to work on our own. They should use more teaching aids*
- *Teachers should stress on practical application of what they teach*
- *We should have laboratory to explore science, They should help us to learn through experiments especially in science*
- *More practice in ICT*
- *Teachers can create school clubs to teach us how to develop these skills. They can design exercises that fall under those skills?*
- *Teachers should be expected to organise a talk to pupils in the school, advise and counsel them about how they are to go about their personal life.*
- *Teachers can set good examples for us to follow: especially on moral skills, how to dress, walk, talk, and relating well with people. They can also teach us to our understanding*
- *To acquire people’s related skills, teachers have to teach to the level of the pupils, we should also be counselled and guided*
- *To acquire fundamental skills, teachers should give more exercises and practice in reading and writing exercises*
- *Teachers should know the learning ability of every pupils and try to assist*

In summary, educational authorities generally believed that teachers were not teaching some of the core skills because they were not using appropriate methods. Acquisition of the skills was therefore very slow. Teacher approaches to teaching, for instruction, practice and assessment and leave much to be desired.

The pupils were asked to indicate whether their teachers teach to meet these expectations, Majority of the pupils said ‘no’ with a few of them answering positively. Those who responded in the affirmative gave the following justifications:

- *Planning skills - directions are given as to what we should learn e.g. science teacher gives topics to be learnt in advance*
- *Vocational skills - I am interested in fashion design. My teacher helps us to identify appropriate colours to mix and match when we are doing sewing. I know this will help me to learn some skills.*
- *They give us a lot of practice to help us develop ICT skills,*
- *We work in groups so this will make us learn social skills*

- They teach us through example.
- We acquire learning skills when our teachers give us assignments to read in advance before the topics are taught in class.
- We develop communication skills if we are taught how to talk.
- Our mathematics teachers tell us stories and give everyday examples for us to understand the lesson.
- To acquire reading skills we are encouraged to read a lot and to note the names of the authors of the books we read.
- Some of the teachers use teaching aid and stories. The RME teacher makes the lesson interesting, using stories and songs.

On the other hand, the reasons offered by those who answered in the negative were as follows:

- Teachers are too strict, some of them get angry , others also expect too much from us, but because we are shy we are unable to tell them
- In social studies for example, we should have been going out to see some of the things we learn about but this is never done.
- When teaching, teachers do not take it upon themselves to divest the teaching slightly to these skills. They rather teach in abstract, making it impossible for them to teach to meet these expectations.
- Teachers do not make pupils practise what they have learnt. There are no activities under certain subjects we do. This makes the minds of the pupils dull and moody.

Pupils were also asked whether teachers give them exercises that help in core skill development. Many said, no and a few said yes. The few who said yes were asked further to give examples of core skills exercises given to them by teachers. They gave the following examples.

- In mathematics we are given more exercises, we have to think before we can answer the questions,
- In social studies and RME, topics such as puberty rites are interesting social topics.
- People related skills: we do group work in all the subjects
- Practical work, project work,
- We do class exercises
- Vocational skills teachers give us exercises and homework in advance to help us to learn in advance. This helps us to acquire learning skills
- Reading exercises in English promote our reading ability.

It may be observed however that the examples given represent normal classroom teaching approaches and had little effect on the learning effectiveness of some of the core skills.

The views of teachers on the approaches they adopt to promote the development of core skills by their pupils seem to confirm the contention of the majority of the pupils that teachers make no conscious effort

to promote core skills development in their teachings. However, there provided a defence for teachers' failure on this score in the following excuses:

- Lack of TLM's e.g. no computers in schools to teach ICT related skills; lab equipments and chemicals for science.
- Syllabus too involving e.g. integrated science
- The syllabuses and assessment system do not sufficiently and meaningfully encourage diversification of teaching approaches
- Lack of motivation for teachers to give of their best
- Final assessment provides for more cognitive than psychomotor or affective learning
- Not enough time given to practical demonstrations
- The quality of the teacher is judged mainly by extent to which his/her pupils are able to pass the WAEC exams
- Classroom teachers are usually not consulted to make inputs to curriculum development

In summary it is not far from right to infer that the from the perspective of the educational authorities, pupils and teachers the teaching approaches adopted in schools do non support effective learning and acquisition of some core skills.

“Do the current assessment schemes in Basic Education in Ghana support a valid assessment of Core skills?” This is a logically question to pose after picking those views from respondents. The education authorities were definite in their “no” answer. Their reasons for the no answer was “There is too much emphasis on the traditional methods of assessment which is characterised by assessment of only the cognitive domain of learning . Other assessment techniques such as the use of observational tools are not applied”. When teachers were asked to indicate the aspects of the syllabuses where core skills could be found, the dominant answers were the preamble, and teaching/learning activities' column. The evaluation column of the syllabus was never mentioned. Thus, from the perspectives of the educational authorities and teachers, evaluation of some of the core skills also leaves much to be desired.

4.4.5 Respondents' Suggestions for enhancing the redirection of basic education for sustainable development in Ghana

Suggestion were made by the various category of respondents involved in the study. These are presented as follows:

Educational Authorities

- There should be a national policy for the development of core skills. This policy should not be changed but sustained by successive governments
- Skills development should be on the national planning agenda and the agenda should stimulate demand for the skills , there should be a blue print to inform all sectors and subsectors, including the education sector, on the demand and supply situation (where we are going) of the skills needed for national development and the agenda should be time bound.
- Fundamental skills, thinking skills, personal skills, ICT skills should be emphasised at the basic education level; we should not cloud the curriculum with other skills.

- However, personal skills and the thinking skill development and most of the other skills (skills related to the community) should be integrated into lessons that develop the fundamental skills.
- People related skills development at the basic school level should be focused on developing peer to peer relations but not to those related to employability skills.
- In ICT skill development, we should be concerned about who is teaching what, i.e. teacher competency; parents should also be involved with procurement of equipment and resources for ICT education.
- For the sake of those who will terminate their formal education after the basic level, the other skills could be introduced into the curriculum from the last two years of basic education.
- In the design of the curriculum, clear directions should be provided the teacher for teaching and learning to enhance skills development and use,
- Curriculum officers should have the capacity or competence to develop a curriculum with clear directions for use; they should also have the tools and facilities to work with to. enhance their work

NDPC Officials

Serious attention should be paid to the development of core skills at the basic level; there is the need to continue to reinforce the development at the second and third cycles of education. (This specific suggestion from the NDPC appeared contradictory to their original stance though.) They went on to suggest that a specific core subject should be designed and skewed towards an integrated skill pack curriculum area. “We all need to look back at these fundamental things. We glossed over them but that can still be corrected. These are the basics of functionality in all life endeavors, education, work, family etc”.

Teachers

- Teachers require further in-service training or at least self-education to enable them acquire more information and skills in teaching the core skills as well as for the acquisition of the core skills.
- Syllabuses for the core subjects must be improved to enhanced the development of core skills and should be revised from time to time
- More classroom space to enhance interactive learning, teachers well motivated; TLMs available and teachers encouraged to be resourceful.
- Maintenance of appropriate class sizes so that teachers can easily handle classes and pay attention to individual needs.
- All stakeholders and classroom teachers should make a conscious effort to promote core skills development
- Syllabuses should emphasise types of core skills to be developed at each stage and how to develop them
- Teachers should be monitored to ensure that they teach with the right methods to develop the skills in the children

Pupils

- Our teachers should teach with patience so that we understand. Through that we can also learn people related skill
- They should be approachable,
- They should not teach only the subjects but they should try to teach us how to do things.
- They should extend the teaching to cover other core skills which are not examinable.
- They should not be too strict to frighten us off.
- They should sometimes organise learning and teaching outside the classroom.
- Adequate learning materials and facilities (Tools and equipment) to develop the core skills should be acquired in all basic schools. e.g. computer laboratory and ICT teachers
- Teachers should be told and taught to try to divest their teaching a little bit to other fields. They are too subject conscious.
- Fundamental skills would be developed when our teachers give us more work in reading, writing, and addition and subtraction
- Organising school social activities such as interschool competitions will help us to acquire socialising skills.
- To acquire creative skills our teachers should give us more activities on imaginative exercises
- More computer practice and use of the internet would give us ICT skills.
- Learning more about good leaders and how to talk to each other will give us moral skills
- Socialising skills: excursions, field trip, debate and quiz competition with other schools, emphasize social skills in their teaching, not academic only
- Personal skills: drama and role plays which emphasize not only academic skills
- Creative skills: organize exhibitions to bring out what we can do best
- Learning skills and learning to learn: forecasting, when we are given the scheme of work for the term in advance, we can learn ahead
- Influencing skills: more using scenarios and case studies, debate
- More practical lessons to develop practical skills
- People related skills: teachers should not be too strict on us; they should teach us how to communicate well.
- Fundamental skills are the basic skills for life, we should be given enough time with the core subjects,
- Planning skills: teachers should teach us how to plan ahead, they can involve us in planning for visits to places
- Teachers should work with pupils, they should help us to learn with others, more group work,
- Independent learning skills: pupils should be encouraged to do more research in the form of assignments.
- skills related to the business world: more exposure to community activities

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

5.1.1 The current Shape of basic education in Ghana

The structure, contents and goals of the basic education as designed pay sufficient attention to the development of academic skills, occupational skills and core skills. However, the programme implementation practices tended to emphasise the academic skills acquisition at the expense of the occupational and core skills

5.1.2 Awareness, scope and importance of core skills

1. It is necessary for any given society or a country to identify and agree on the definition of core skills to enable citizens to participate in the discourse on core skills. It was apparent that all respondent categories did not have the same meaning for core skills.
2. All respondent categories in the study agreed that core skills are important and beneficial for learning.
3. Literature is clear on the importance of core skills as means for employment. While educational authorities believe core skills are means to employment, the perspectives of the NDPC indicated that some of the core skills in basic education are not necessarily for employment. Teachers were divided on core skills as a means of employment. Basic education pupils themselves indicated that besides the aim of accessing Second Cycle Education after the basic education, they had alternative plans regarding their career aspirations, should they fail to get the opportunity to further their education. They were also aware of the core skills and technical or occupational skills they would need for those career aspirations.
4. All the respondent categories agreed that core skills are important for national development. The responses of the pupils also point to the relevance of core skills to their development through education.

5.1.3 National Development Planning and Core Skills

5. From the data collected in this study, it is clear that the process factors that link Core Skills education and training to appropriate human capital development for sustainable national development do not exist between Basic Education providers and the national development planning process. In the same vein, National Development Plans do not seem to allocate specific human capital production roles to Basic Schools. There appears to be no deliberate national development plan dissemination interactions between basic education authorities and NDPC.

5.1.4 Core Skills in National Development Plan Documents for Basic Education

6. National development plans do bring in new ways of doing things for sustainable development. Traditional core skills demanded by society for basic education do exist in the national development plan for the country. However, there appears to be nothing new or novel as would be expected.

5.1.5 Core skills contents of the Curriculum Framework

7. The major categories of core skills captured by the curriculum framework include: Fundamental skills, People-related skills, Conceptualising / Thinking skills, Personal skills, Skills related to the business world, Skills related to the community, and ICT user skills. However, ICT practitioner skills received little coverage.

5.1.6 The weaknesses of the Curriculum Framework

8. The definition of core skills in the curriculum framework is narrower in scope than most of those found in literature. The document did not cover the attributes of all the major core skill categories with the same detailed attention. Some attributes of core skill categories such as Fundamental skills, Conceptualising / Thinking skills and Skills related to the community were dealt with into more detail than the other core skills categories and their attributes. The framework also did not align the core skills

to all the specific carrier subjects, age cohorts nor grade levels which are targeted by the curricula. Similarly, no defined assessment and certification systems have been set for the core skills education and training in the curriculum framework.

5.1.7 Core skills contents of Basic school syllabuses

9. The analysis of the Primary school syllabuses shows that the subjects at both Lower and Upper Primary contain a great deal of core skills and other expressed forms or attributes. The Primary school subjects differ considerably in carrying various attributes of the main core skills categories as was shown in the summary boxes.

5.1.8 Adequacy of Core Skills in Basic Education

10. The education authorities as well as the NDPC did not feel sufficiently sure of the adequacy or otherwise of the core skills in the basic education curriculum. They did not feel sufficiently equipped at the time to make such a judgement. Based on the syllabus analysis however, there appeared to be a reduction in some of the core skills contents of the syllabuses at the JHS level.

5.1.9 Reduction in Core Skills content at higher Grade Levels

One of the findings of this study is the reduction in the core skills contents of subjects as one goes higher in the educational ladder. The Higher grade levels appear to contain more subject content and less core skills. For instance, it is noted that the Citizenship Education syllabus at the Upper Primary level is similar to Social Studies at the JHS level. Comparing the core skills contents of the two syllabuses, it is clear that the Citizenship Education syllabus carries far more core skills than the JHS Social Studies. At this stage however, one cannot state categorically whether the trend is the same at the Senior High School level. The finding appears to go contrary to the principles in core skills education which indicates that some core skills become more relevant to older age cohorts and are best learnt at the higher level of education.

5.1.10 Implementation Challenges in Core Skills Education and Training

11. While the NDPC, as the the genesis or source of national development planning and development policies did not see the need for the endowment of core skills and their attributes other than\Fundamental skills, personal skills, conceptualisation skills and ICT skills on basic school pupils, the Ministry of Education did recognize their importance.

12. The situation of core skills policy in basic education suggests that there is only a limited level of awareness and appreciation of the scope of core skills and their importance in the education and training processes in the country.

13. Education authorities and even pupils knew that teachers were not using appropriate methods to teach some of the core skills and thus renders the acquisition of such core skills ineffective.

14. The perspectives of the educational authorities and teachers, indicate that the the provision made in the assessment scheme for assessing some of the core skills leaves much to be desired.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1: Overview of Recommendations

The recommendations proffered in this report are based on the findings of the study. They are also compatible with some of the goals, intentions and strategies of the National Development Plan especially, GSGDA which specifies that “to achieve MDGs’ accelerated growth, poverty reduction and attain middle income status requires the linking of education and training to labour market information at all levels” (GSGDA, 2010) (p.76). On these premises, the strategies based on the focus area of human capital development are presented for all the sectors of national development. The study indicated that future national development plans should include a human capital development strategy with mapped core skills, occupational skills packs and manpower plans/labour market information. The plans need to identify and assign human capital development roles to various sectors of the economy, including the basic education sub-sector, to enable training programme development to adequately equip the basic education graduates to participate in employment and job creation, if they fail to advance into higher institutions.

5.2.2: Specific Recommendations

The following specific recommendations are therefore preferred:

3. Some form of re-orientation platform need be created for teachers to draw their attention to the importance of the skills development needs of the country and the provisions made for them in the national school curriculum.
4. There is the urgent need to assess the core skills contents of Second Cycle Education subjects to ascertain the quantum of core skills they contain
5. There is the need for the appropriate national agency to develop a national human capital development plan to guide and assign roles to all sectors
6. The Ministry of education and the Ghana Education Service need direct attention to preparing packages of core skills which the formal system must provide for.
7. It might be useful for the MoE and the GES to also prepare packages of occupational skills to guide the school system
8. The NDPC may need to prepare human resource need plans for the formal, non formal and private sub- sectors and ensure that the preparation is sufficiently participatory and the plans so developed are adequately disseminated.
9. The NDPC may also consider creating a national human capital development Information Data Base with the information from 4, 5 and 6 above
10. The NDPC should collaborate with other sectors as well as the education and training system in developing the national human capital development plan, preparation of core skills and occupational skills packs and the creation and use of the national human capital development Information Data Base for educational training standards, curricula, career pathways, career guidance programmes, qualification frameworks, etc
11. Sensitise and orient the basic education system to use the information in the data base for the development of appropriate educational programmes
12. Update the national human capital development Information Data Base every three years

The development of the national human capital development plan and the creation of a Data Base for National Human Capital Development Information System may be done through the following:

- i. Procurement or development of a Dictionary of Occupational Titles as a resource material for referencing
- ii. Mapping and preparation of core skills packages aligned to the various levels and types of education and training
- iii. Mapping and preparation of technical or occupational skills packages aligned to the various levels and types of education and training
- iv. Mapping and preparation of human resource needs/labour market information for the formal, non formal and private socio- economic sectors

Manage and update the national human capital development Information Data Base every three years

5.2.2 Further Research

Further wider scope studies are needed to assess the core skills contents of Second Cycle Education subjects to ascertain the quantum of core skills they contain.

5.3 Conclusion

The study provided a deeper insight on how to shape the basic education system to respond positively to sustainable national development in Ghana. The findings of the study underpin the need to research further on other policies in the education and training sector to ensure that national development aspirations are captured properly in the national development plans for sustainable development. The implementation of the recommendations of the study can help the restructuring of the basic education system to respond more purposively to the sustainable national development aspirations of the country.

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