

The introduction of ICT into the Ghanaian Educational Curriculum; successes, failures and the way forward

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Alhaji Mohammed Haroon, a director at the Tamale Metropolitan Education office has identified the lack of ICT trained teachers, cost of broadband internet connection, inadequate computers and electricity as some of the challenges facing the implementation of the introduction of ICT into the Ghanaian school curriculum. Alhaji Haroon said this at the July session of the Northern ICT4D Series held at the Institute for Local Government Studies in Tamale.

Speaking on the theme "The introduction of ICT into the Ghanaian Educational Curriculum; successes, failures and the way forward", Alhaji Haroon mentioned that this is the first time government policy is including ICT in the content of education as a matter of national priority. He further explained that due to the importance of ICT in Education, the Ministry of Education has been facilitating the process of integrating ICT in the educational system because this will facilitate Teaching and learning at all levels of education.

On the successes chalked so far, Mr. Haroon said children hitherto who were ignorant on ICT tools have now been introduced to ICT tools hence their enthusiasm has been whipped up since they are now aware of its usefulness. He mentioned that students now access educational websites for text books and other educational information. He further said an ICT policy has been developed by the Ministry of Education with the support of the Global e-schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI), coupled with the setting up of the National ICT in Education coordinating Committee.

In his concluding words, Mr. Haroon said “Even though ICT is going to play a major role in this current educational system, a lot more things are yet to be put in place. The planning should have been done years ago before the policy pronouncement and implementation”

When he took his turn to speak, the Assistant Headmaster of St. Charles Minor Seminary in Tamale, Mr. George Nego Fugluu gave a background of educational reforms since the colonial days and educational reforms since independence. He said on January 7, 2002 a committee composed of 29 knowledgeable Ghanaians drawn from across a section of stakeholders in the education sector chaired by Prof. Jophus Anamuah-Mensah then Vice Chancellor of University of Education Winneba were to address deficiencies of the 1987 Reforms in the area of Objectives, Content, Administration and Management, quality, equitableness and economic utility, to discuss among other issues the structure of education and issues affecting the development and delivery of education, constrained access to different levels of the educational ladder, Information and Communication Technology, and distance education, Professional development, Management and financing of education.

Mr. Nego said while at the basic level the introduction of ICT sought to introduce pupils to Computer hardware and other peripherals (Touching, feeling and manipulation of the hardware components) and having fun, games, and creative works (drawing etc) using the computer, the inclusion of ICT at Secondary Education Level aimed at the acquisition of basic ICT literacy, developing interest and use ICT for learning in other subjects, acquisition of knowledge for application of ICT in education and business, the use of the Internet to communicate effectively and the ability to follow basic ethics in the use of ICT.

He mentioned that it is expected that the knowledge and skills gained will help students to use ICT in almost all their courses at school and to access information for further learning.

Speaking on the achievements of the introduction of ICT into the school curriculum, he mentioned the following:

- Increasing computer awareness among students.
- Teaching and Learning has been made much easier with the use of ICT in schools.
- Students with high IQ can now find something to engage them meaningfully instead of indulging themselves in some social vices.
- Educational institutions have economic network with other organizations
- There is keen and healthy competition among schools in ICT knowledge sharing
- ICT at the school level sets the basis for further training in the Universities and Post Sec. Institutions
- A wide area network known as research and Educational Network (REN) has been established in Ghana with the support of World Bank to serve as nodes for the broad network for the Ghanaian Universities, Research institutions (CSIR) and Ghana Atomic Energy Commission

On the challenges, Mr. George Nego stated the following:

- Inadequate Trained Personnel to handle the Facilitation of the subject.
- Inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials
- Lack of Infrastructure
- Lack of Administrative support
- Lack of power supply in the Rural Areas.
- The lack of internet connectivity in most schools to broaden access to information

- High cost of ICT services and components.
- The brain drain syndrome in the area of ICT professional

On the way forward, the Assistant headmaster disclosed that ICT should be seen as an enabler, as a tool to benefit the whole of society and not only the elite and the urban areas. He also said the less privileged should be encouraged to use ICT tools to trade and to create wealth for the country, others must be proactively helped to use and benefit from ICT. He further stated that the quality of education should be continuously improved and this is aided by intensive and extensive use of ICT.