Ministry of Education
REPUBLIC OF GHANA

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Ghana Education Evidence Summit 2017

TOWARDS QUALITY EDUCATION IN GHANA: USING EVIDENCE TO ACHIEVE BETTER LEARNING OUTCOMES

28th March 2017

INTRODUCTION

BETTER UTILIZATION OF EVIDENCE IN POLICY AND PRACTICE CAN IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES.

In the last decade, rigorous field research has yielded a number of important lessons on how to improve learning outcomes. However, existing evidence and its implications for policy decisions are not always readily known among policymakers and practitioners. ***Meaningful engagement between researchers and policymakers remains limited****. As Ghana strives to improve efficiency and enhance quality education delivery, fostering dialogue between researchers and policymakers is critical.*

The Ghana Education Evidence Summit *will bring together policymakers, researchers and practitioners to: a) share evidence that has been collected about education in Ghana; b) identify ways in which evidence can be used for better decision-making; and c) develop a research agenda to fill the gaps in the existing evidence.*

BACKGROUND

Given the present fiscal environment, in which policymakers face tough budgetary and policy choices that affect what they can deliver to citizens, using evidence to inform decisions is not a choice, but a necessity. To attain maximum return on investment, policies must be based on rigorous research.

Ghana, like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, has made significant progress in terms of access to schooling over the last decades. However, systemic concerns such as low learning levels, teacher absenteeism, low time on task, and inadequate resources remain. The Ministry of Education and Ghanaian Education Services (MoE/GES) remains committed to dealing with these challenges, particularly to increasing teacher motivation and improving learning outcomes in Ghanaian schools. The MoE/GES formulates policies and liaises with a broad range of actors including donors and civil society organisations to design and implement interventions that support these goals.

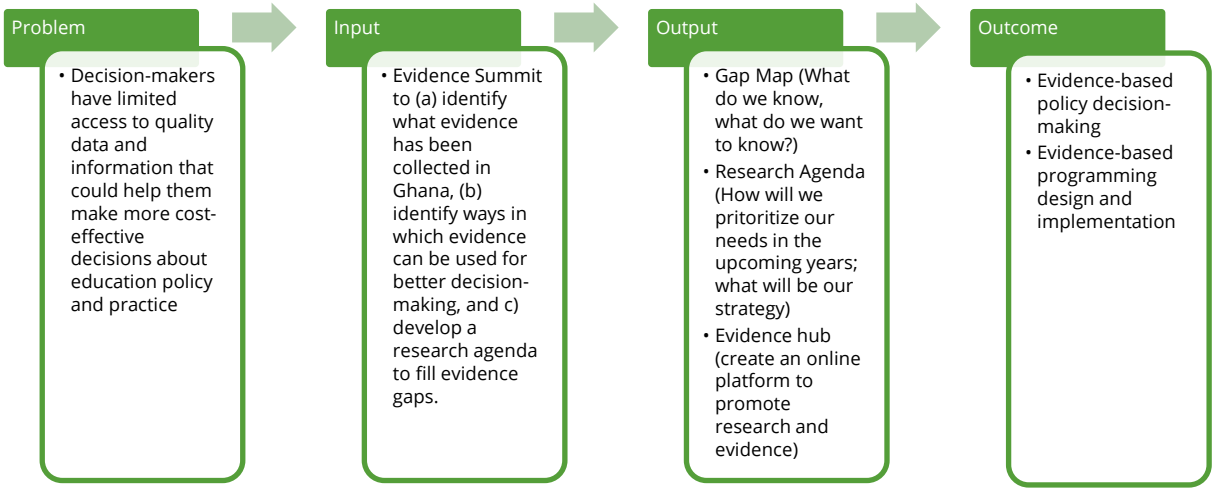
The United Nations' declaration *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* includes education as one of its key priorities and stresses the need to ensure an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for all. To this end, the MoE/GES, in collaboration with various partners, has been working on several major programs. These interventions demonstrate the Government of Ghana's steadfast commitment to: enhancing teacher education and learning; improving access to

and quality of senior high schools; improving early grade reading; mainstreaming out-of-school children; and implementing more efficient management systems in schools.

To attain optimal return on such major investments, it is critical to create a platform where policy decision-makers, practitioners and program implementing organizations interact with researchers to drive evidence-based policy decisions and program designs for better outcomes.

GHANA EDUCATION EVIDENCE SUMMIT

The Ghana Education Evidence Summit seeks to bring research to the fore to address knowledge gaps in existing evidence and its policy implications, according to the theory of change depicted in the following figure.



SUMMIT STRUCTURE AND GOALS

The summit will include plenary and panel presentations, roundtable discussions, and workshops to share knowledge on existing evidence, develop skills for identifying quality research, promote evidence-based policy decisions, and develop a research agenda for the education system in Ghana.

The specific goals of the summit are to:

- **Share results of high-quality research** from practitioners, researchers, and academics doing work in Ghana
- **Develop skills for assessing research quality** and understanding the implications of research on decision-making
- Provide **input for the creation of a research agenda** for basic and secondary education delivery in Ghana
- Lay the groundwork for **an evidence-sharing space** through an online platform on the MoE website

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CALL FOR PAPERS

A Call for Papers will provide an opportunity to review an array of research being carried out across the country and identify studies to present at the summit. A Censor Panel of three to five members from MoE/GES, academia, and IPA will convene to review submissions. This panel will select high-quality studies and evidence from implementation designs for dissemination during the summit. This summit is focused on Pre-tertiary education in Ghana, and submissions should be at the level of Basic Education (including early childhood education), secondary education, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

THE SUMMIT WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING **CROSS-CUTTING THEMES:**

- Targeting: scholarships, district grants, school feeding
- Efficiency: how to make gains with minimum resources
- Performance: improving educational outcomes with limited resources
- Skills development
- Private sector provision of basic education

RESEARCH AREAS

THE RESEARCH AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION INCLUDE:

- Early grade education
- Languages in education
- Science and mathematics education
- Technical and vocational education
- Teacher education and development
- Curriculum development and implementation (pedagogy)
- Leadership, supervision, accountability and community involvement

PARTICIPANTS

Proposed participants for the summit will be drawn from across the education sector as follows:

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PROGRAM

Through panel presentations and workshops, researchers, academics and practitioners from both local and international organizations will share existing research findings in education which were generated in Ghana or are directly relevant to the Ghanaian context.

Participants will be given the opportunity to ask questions relating to the presentation content, research quality, educational research types, approaches, processes and methods of generating credible and reliable evidence and translating evidence into action. The table below presents the program outline for the summit.

Time	Activity	Overview
8:30AM-9:00AM	Registration	Participants register for the event and receive summit materials Cultural display in the background
9:00AM-9:10AM	Welcoming Address by Chief Director, MoE	Set the tone for the event, provide purpose for the gathering and state goals of the summit
9:10AM-9:20AM	Introduction of Summit Chair (Prof. Jophus Anamuah-Mensah)	The Summit Chair speaks on "Establishing a Research Agenda for Evidence-Based Policy Decision Making: Experiences and Future Directions" and highlights the structure of the summit.
9:20AM-9:40AM	"The State of Evidence in Education Globally" (Prof. Esther Duflo, Director, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL))	Prof. Esther Duflo delivers an overview presentation on the state of evidence in education globally.
9:40AM-10:20AM	Keynote Address: "Towards Quality Education in Ghana: Using Evidence to Achieve Better Learning Outcomes" (Prof. Joseph Ghartey Ampiah, Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Coast)	Prof. Joseph Ghartey Ampiah presents on the value of research and evidence in improving education management for better learning outcomes.
10:20AM – 10:30AM	Interlude	
10:30AM-10:45AM	Declaration/Opening of Ghana Education Evidence Summit	Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, Honourable Minister of Education, declares the opening of the summit.
10:45AM-11:15AM	Group Photographs Snack Break	Take photographs and networking

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11:20AM - 12:05PM	Panel Presentations – Round 1 Research presentations in the following areas: secondary education, basic education	Participants will choose to attend two panel presentations, each spanning 45 minutes. *[Panel Presentations will be organized along research areas]*
12:10PM - 12:55PM	Panel Presentations – Round 2 Research presentations in the following areas: improving educational outcomes, social interventions	
1:00PM- 2:00PM	Lunch	
2:05PM- 2:50PM	Panel Presentations – Round 3 Research presentations in the following areas: maths education, private sector involvement in education	Participants will choose to attend two panel presentations, each spanning 45 minutes. *[Panel Presentations will be organized along research areas]*
3:00PM- 3:25PM	Evidence-Informed Policymaking: What Does It Entail?	Presentation and Q&A
3:30PM- 4:30PM	Panel Discussion Topic: From Evidence to Policy: What Experience Can We Draw On for Ghana?	Panel discussion on how to increase the use of evidence to shape policies, program designs, and funding decisions in Ghana. Panelists drawn from MoE/GES, IPA staff, USAID, and the University of Ghana.
4:30PM- 4:45PM	Closing Remarks	Summit Chair to wrap up lessons from the day's discussions and highlight the next steps towards developing a research agenda to promote evidence-based policy decision-making
4:45PM	Closing	
5:00PM- 7:00PM	Cocktail Reception and Networking	

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ABOUT IPA GHANA

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) exists to generate and bring relevant scientific evidence to policymakers around which interventions and policies are the most effective. In partnership with policymakers and top researchers worldwide, IPA designs and implements randomized evaluations to measure the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at helping the poor. By building an organizational and community culture that values and grows relationships with partners and decision-makers, IPA seeks to create a movement that promotes evidence-based policy decision-making and program design that can lead to better resource allocation, more efficacious programs and policies, and ultimately less poverty. Our approach to ensuring evidence is used to inform decision-making and includes three key components: a) creating high-quality, policy-relevant evidence together with decision-makers; b) proactive sharing of results; and c) technical assistance to apply solutions at scale.

From the impact of targeted instruction on basic skills acquisition in primary schools to the ten-year longitudinal study on returns to secondary education, IPA's work over the years in education in Ghana seeks to provide valuable insight into how decision-makers can make the best use of limited resources for better learning outcomes. IPA's footprint in educational research spans from preschool, primary, secondary, and technical and vocational education training.

IPA recognizes that the value of existing evidence on what works is limited if there is no knowledge translation or collaboration with key policymakers for take-up. IPA's mantra 'from evidence to policy' is to ensure a strong coordination between the various players in the education sector to understand what evidence exists and discover ways in which it can be translated to influence policy decisions and program design. **IPA is interested in building a community of practice** that supports and promotes the investigation of critical, policy-relevant questions.

IPA seeks to be a thought partner for MoE and GES by jointly developing rigorous evaluations of proposed education programs while providing credible empirical evidence from research to inform policy decisions. Leveraging its unique position in working with education stakeholders including government, donors, academia and practitioners, IPA seeks to promote evidence-informed policy decisions for better learning outcomes.