

# **The National Youth Employment Program as a Source of Labour to the Education Sector: A Case Study of Bolgatanga**

ADOMBILLA BABA BLONCH

Bolgatanga Polytechnic, Department of Secretaryship and Management Studies, Box 767, Bolgatanga, Ghana

## **ABSTRACT**

The study was concerned with the NYEP as a way of providing labour to the education sector in Bolgatanga Municipality. Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data from 150 respondents from primary and JHS. Training programmes are organized by GES to equip the pupil teacher with the requisite skills for teaching. Training content includes many topics but emphasis is put on lesson notes preparation, methods of teaching and the use of teaching learning aids. The training given the pupil teachers is adequate and effective. However, the time for training is not enough to cover many relevant areas. The study recommends, among others, that the ministry of education should establish a link between the NYEP and GES so that there can be a regular supply of teachers to fill rural schools. The education sector should also focus on the NYEP as a new source of labour apart from the formal ones. The training programmes organized by GES in equipping the pupil teachers for effective teaching should include lesson notes preparation, time management, motivation and identification of problem children. Training duration is an invaluable aspect of the training programme and should be made relatively long for many areas to be covered.

## **Background to the study**

The greatest resources of any society or nation are its human resources. The extent to which institution enable each individual to become all that is capable of being, determines whether society will be rich or poor (Harbison Myers, 1994, Todaro, 1992). The success of a nation's economic and social development depends on its human resource. The success of any society or nation therefore depends greatly on its human resource development. Countries such as Japan, Germany and a number of countries in South Asia have succeeded in industrial growth largely because of their human resource system. Such system is a unique combination of efficient school system, relevant academic education, vocational and technical training, teaching effective learning habits and maintaining a conducive learning environment. These examples of industrial success indicates that people should be considered as a resource that should be valued, developed and managed (Prokopenko, 1995). There is a positive correlation between human capital and national productivity Schulz, 1961; Harbison and Myers, 1964; Gillis, Perkins, poemer and Snograss, (1987). Human Resource Development is concerned with the introduction of organized skills and activities aimed at fostering increased knowledge, skills and competencies, these activities include learning, education, training and development (Gilley and Egglund, 1989). Education is considered as an institution whose main function is to transmit skills, knowledge and attitudes that society needs to make it productive. It is also the process that enables the world to harness their human resource potentials. Considering the youth as human resource is an old idea which has gained much attention over the past decades.

Once the youth are seen as assets having the ability to contribute, the development is of growing concern to many countries. The Beijing Statement on Human Resource Development for youth in Asia and Pacific (1996) considered four areas of concern for human Resource Development in Asia and Pacific context. The four areas were: education, health, employment and participation. In its third international conference in June, 2004 the Africa Youth Foundation (AYD) noted that, although considerable progress has been made over the past decades, the education and development of human resources remain major problems in Africa. The conference identified five areas likely to be relevant globally and for most Africa countries: investment in human resources improving access to human development, and remunerative employment, expanding appropriate knowledge technology, improving education system and infrastructure and good governance. Schools should therefore provide the kind of education that will enable each individual in the society to realize his fullest capabilities for development as human beings. The conference stressed that the youth should be helped to learn about the education opportunities and choices that are opened to them. It was for the issue of youth contribution to national

growth that the government of Ghana under President John Agyekum Kuffuor introduced the National Youth Employment Program as a way of getting the youth to contribute to the growth and development of the society. This program is still in operation presently.

Unemployment is one of the major problems facing less developed countries today. In a study of seven countries, four of which were less developed, Little (1978) concluded that the proportion of males and females who aspired to non-manual jobs far exceeded the proportion economically active population actually engaged in those jobs. Thus unless the economic structure themselves were to expand, there will be little likelihood that these aspirations could be fulfilled. Consistent with Little's observation, it has been estimated that from the year 1970 to about the year 2000 the rate of unemployment will increase 2.7 percent a year (World Bank, 1980).

The increasing number of educated unemployed youth in less developed countries calls into question the contribution that the youth can make to economic growth at the societal level and to the development of the country as a whole. In line with this, the government of Ghana under President J.A. Kuffuor thought fit to introduce the National Youth Employment Program as a way of getting the youth to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Some of these are to help deliver pre- and basic level education services in rural areas where there are no sufficient teachers.

These youth who are non-professionals need some amount of preparations to enable them handle the classroom situations. Preparation can take any form depending on the job the person is to perform. For many occupations this preparation normally takes the form of training. Formerly, untrained teachers used to pass through modular courses to enable them teach. These days, modular courses do not exist. Though the NYEP has relevance in education because it helps solve the problem of teacher shortage, the question now is how are the youth engaged by the NYEP to teach going to do their job without facing difficulties? There is the real need for these youth to be trained to suit into the classroom. The problem of this study is therefore to ascertain how the youth employed through the NYEP are prepared for the classroom work or teaching in the education sector. The need to examine the types of training given and evaluate the effectiveness of the training becomes imperative.

Korth (1995) acknowledges the gap between current performance and desired or predetermined performance. This gap can be narrowed or bridged when linkages are between educational institutions, charged with the development of human resources and employers. There is the need for an integrated system of education and resource development of the individual, the organization and the educational system. Collaboration between education and organizations can provide a variety of relevant learning opportunities for students.

Most developing countries have committed themselves to the goal of "Universal" primary education with the view that rapid expansion of educational opportunities is the key to national development. Harbison and Myers (1964) support the fact that there is a relation between educational attainment and national productivities. Todaro (1992) also argues that there has been much improvement in the plight of the average person of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the view of Todaro (1992), a primary and secondary education, which does not address the needs of its society, is seriously wrong. Education should therefore cater for the needs of the society it serves.

Apart from those contributions of education as enumerated above, the contribution of education to economic development have been widely studied and documented. In one of the most comprehensive studies, Psacharopoulos (1988) analyzed a list of potential benefits inherent in mass education that include many traditional claims: that it will raise living standards and offer equal opportunities to all and thus serve as a means to achieve a more egalitarian society and that will bridge the gap between ethnic and social groups in the society.

Education can only support or contribute to economic growth and development when it is considered in its broadest sense: an educated population is more productive than an uneducated one, irrespective of type of society. It appears that universal primary education of at least 4-6 years can be regarded as minimum requirement to sustain any kind of economic growth. For poor societies like that of ours (Ghana) this means universal literacy and numeracy through primary schooling should be given high priority in education policy decisions. In individualized societies this concern is less salient, as most countries virtually have full educational participation. For the poor countries virtually have full educational participation. For the poor countries, however, this target enrolled in primary schools in 1975 to 1977 ranged from a low of 17.4 percent in Ethiopia to 100 percent in Republic of Congo. The figures for all less developed countries are 64 and 94 percent respectively. The total for net enrollment ratios during this period and for this age group was 70.9 percent. Clearly much effort remains to be made before primary education can be said to be universal (World Bank, 1980).

The national youth employment programme (NYEP) was promulgated under former president John Agyekum Kufuor's regime to harness the talents and energies of the youth in promoting the developmental agenda, priority on human resource development as key support in the growth and development agenda has never changed. In Ghana, about 26 percent of the population constitute the youth, falling within the age brackets of 15-35 years, and made up of both unemployed and underemployed men and women.

Since 2001, the then Government made a number of interventions to address the problem of unemployment and underemployment. This intervention began with registration of about 95000 people mainly the youth from educational, trade and professional backgrounds. The Government preceded by undertaking skill training and employment placement (STEP) programmes to give readily employable skills to the youth and provide them with employment opportunities.

This was followed immediately by the introduction of technical and vocational skills to the youth in order to make them more competitive to the support the human resource development base. The National Youth fund (NYF) and the Presidential Special Initiative (PSI) and the various micro-credits

By way of scope, NYEP is intended to cover a wide range spectrum of economic activities and social service activities to the youth in their respective communities, with each District choosing a combination of such activities or modules, based on the relative comparative advantage present in that locality. Schemes to support the small-scale enterprises and other programmes that the government initiated have also yielded some success in the area of providing self-employment opportunities to the youth.

Following the presidential directive and within the context of the Ghana poverty reduction strategy (GPRS), the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMY) had to establish a national secretarial and other sector ministries, departments programmes to facilitate job creation and placement for the various economic ventures as well as social services. The National Youth Employment Programme has injected a good number of pupil teacher into all nook and cranny of the country especially in rural areas where there are no teachers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive sample survey was used for the study. Since this study basically aimed at identifying how the youth that employed to teach in the rural areas through the National Youth Employment Program are prepared for the job or classroom work and to make generalizations to Primary Schools and Junior High Schools in the Bolgatanga Municipality, it lends itself to the descriptive survey and draw meaningful conclusions for the study. Stratified and simple random procedures were used to select the schools and the pupil teachers engaged by the NYEP in them in the Bolgatanga Municipality. The schools were stratified into circuits. This was done to get a representation to various schools and the pupil teachers in them in since the problem may be peculiar to due to their characteristics and locations. The schools were stratified into: North circuit, South circuit, East circuit West circuit and Central circuit. After the stratified sampling procedure, specifically the lottery method was used to select the schools and the pupil teachers in them. The names of the schools were written in slips of paper and put into a container. One slip was removed at a time from the container for each group of schools. The questionnaires were distributed and collected after one week. In all one hundred and fifty (150) pupil teachers engaged by the NYEP were selected from the five (5) circuits. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. All the 150 questionnaires which were distributed or given out were returned, representing a return rate of 100%. The data collected was examined for consistency of responses.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **Biographical statistics of respondents**

This part of the study was to establish the number of respondents and their sex, age, marital status, number of years in teaching, salary taken, religion and academic qualification.

The study involved 150 pupil teachers employed through the National Youth Employment Programme in primary and Junior High School in the Bolgatanga Municipality. Of 150 respondents 55.7% were male and 44.3% were female. Eighty-one percent (81.9%) of the respondents had attained education up to Senior High

School and Technical School. Thirty-eight point nine (38.9) were between the ages of 20-24, 6% were between the ages of 25-29. Only 2.7% are below 20 years of age and only 18.8% are above 30 years of age. Sixty-nine point two percent (69.2%) spent more than one year on the job, 18.9% spent 6-11 months and only 11.9% have been teaching for less than 6 months. Also, 79.5% of the respondents were Christians, 18.2% were Muslims and 2.3% were traditional believers. Finally, the majority of the respondents (51.2%) were not married with 48.8% being married.

### Type(s) of training provided to untrained teachers

The study sought to find out the type of training given to the youth engaged in teaching through the National Youth Employment Program. An examination of the respondents' responses is summarized in figure 1 below

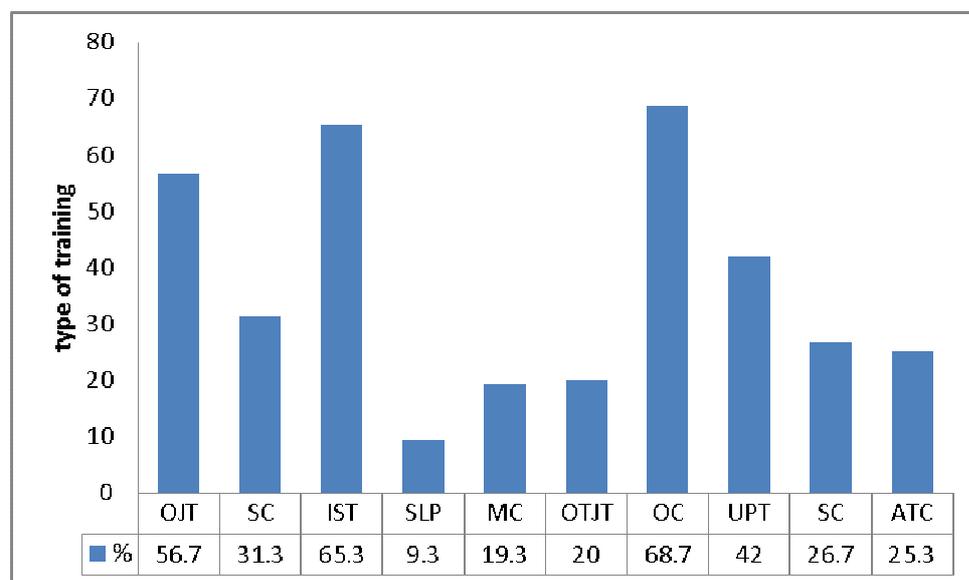


Figure 1: Type(s) of training provided to untrained teachers

In ascertaining the method of training given, 67.7%, 65.3% and 56.7% saw orientation course, in-service training, and on job training respectively as methods provided by Ghana Education Service as a means of equipping them with the necessary skills for effective teaching.

Further, 42%, 31.3% and 26.7% saw understudying the profession teachers, attending short courses and attending subject conferences and association respectively. Only 25.3%, 20%, 19.5% and 9.3% saw gaining access to teacher training colleges, off the job training, attending modular courses and study leave with pay as methods used. Therefore, orientation course, in-service training and on the job training are the methods of training most recognized by the Ghana Education Service. The importance of this training is in congruent with (Harbison, 1976.3), view that a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else. Majority of the respondents agreed that in-service training was the last or recent training they attended. This was followed by orientation course. The rest of the training programmes did not receive any responses.

### Content of training

The study sought to know the topic (content) of the training given to equip the youth in the classroom to be effective. The results of this investigation are summarized in figure 4.2.

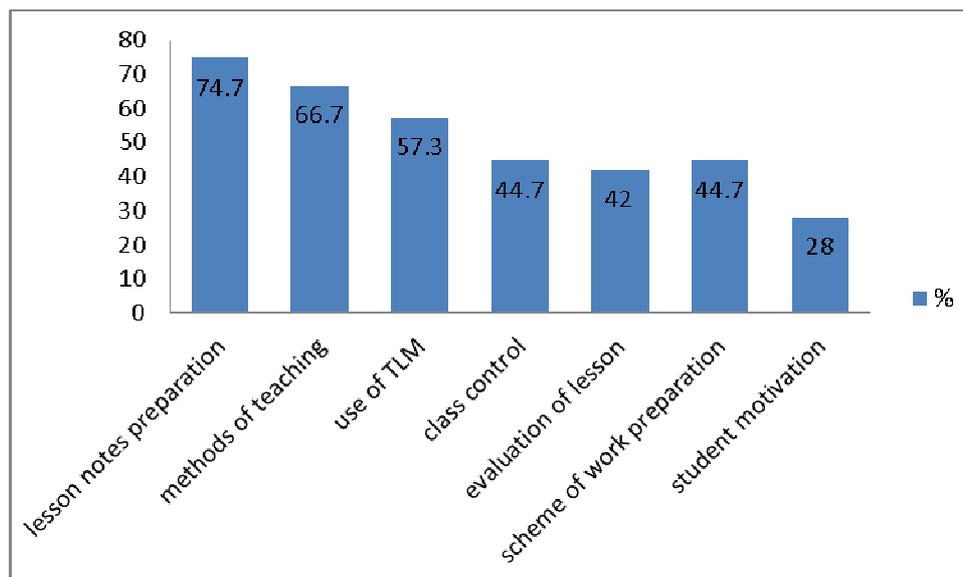


Figure 4.2: content training of teachers (Field work, 2018)

The topics treated during training programmes included lesson notes preparation (74.7%), methods of teaching (66.7%), use of teaching/learning aids (57.7%), class control (44.7%), lesson evaluation (42), scheme of work preparation (44.7%) and students motivation (28%). The majority of the respondents (74.7%) selected lesson notes preparation as the topic treated during training. This means that lesson notes preparation, use of teaching/learning aid and classroom control and scheme of work preparation are critical component in the training programme conducted by the Ghana Education Service to equip youth for effective teaching. It also implies that the training is comprehensive enough to prepare the youth for effective teaching.

### Adequacy of training programs

The study sought to ascertain the adequacy of training given to the youth by way of their age, level of understanding and TLM used. The results are presented in Table4.1.

The majority of the respondents opined that in-service was most adequate in terms of their level of understanding (43.3%), TLM (43.3%) and duration (38.7%). This is following by on the job training and orientation course. They also agreed that short course was quite adequate. The rest of the training received relatively low percentages. Thus, in-service training is an integral part of the training programme given by GES. Orientation courses and on the job training can occasionally be organized to augment the in-service training.

Table 4.1: Adequacy of training

Type of training program	Level of understanding	Adequacy of TLM	Adequacy of training duration
On the job training	20.7	17.3	13.3
In-service	44.7	43.3	38.7
Short course	4.0	9.3	10.7
Study leave with pay	2.0	2.0	2.7
Modula courses	1.3	1.3	3.3
Of the job training	0.7	2.0	7.3
Orientation course	17.3	12.0	13.3
Understudying professional teacher	7.3	4.7	3.3
Access course into training colleges	0.7	2.7	1.3
Total responses	98.7	94.7	94.0
No response	1.3	5.3	6.0
Grand total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Field work, 2018

### Percentage distribution of pupil teachers' problem areas before and after training

The study sought to elicit responses regarding the effectiveness or training by comparing the challenges they faced before training and the challenges they faced after the training. This is presented in Table4.2.

Table 4.2: Pupil teachers' distribution before and after training

Problem Areas	Before training (%)	After Training (%)	% difference	Effect
Class control	86.7	72.0	- 14.7	Decrease
Lesson notes	66.7	66.7	0.0	Same
Appropriate method of teaching	53.3	34.7	-18.6	Decrease
Pupils behavior	62.0	33.3	-28.7	Decrease
Attitude of head	32.0	50.7	+ 18.7	Increase
Marking class exercise	38.0	31.3	-6.7	Decrease
Lesson preparation	38.0	30.0	-8.0	Decrease
Preparation of scheme of work	58.0	34.0	-24.0	Decrease
Completing scheme/lesson note	57.3	85.3	+28.0	Increase

Source: Field work 2018.

As can be seen on the table 4.2, the challenges of the youth/pupil teachers included class control (decreases from 86.7 to 72.0), lesson notes preparation (same from 66.7 to 66.7), using appropriate methods of teaching (decrease from 53.3 to 34.7), pupils' behavior (decrease from 62.0 to 33.3), attitude of heads (increase from 32.0 to 50.7) marking class exercise (decrease from 38.0 to 31.3), lesson presentation (decrease from 38.0 to 30.0), preparation of scheme of work (decrease from 58.0 to 34.0) and completing scheme of work (increase from 58.0 to 34.0) and completing scheme of work (increase from 57.3 to 85.0).

From the Table, out of the nine (9) challenges, six (6) of them had positive effects after training that is, there was a decrease in the challenges that they face after training was given to them. There was no improvement in lesson notes preparation after training was given to them, thus, (same). That of attitude of heads and completing scheme of work had rather negative to them, thus, from 32.0 to 50.7 and 57.3 to 85.3 respectively. It is surprising that lesson notes preparation which many of the respondents agreed was one of the content of the training received did not produce change in the pupil teachers. This may be attributable to short training duration. There is an indication from this analysis that the training given to youth engaged in teaching through the NYEP is effective.

## Conclusion

Training is invaluable in preparing for the teaching profession. The study was meant to determine how the youth engaged in teaching are prepared for the job. The GES does this by organizing orientation courses, in-service training and on the job training. Critical components of the training include lesson notes preparation, methods of teaching and the use of teaching/learning aids. The in-service training is the most adequate. Generally the training conducted by the GES is effective and comprehensive though the challenges of lesson note preparation persist. The GES would need to establish collaboration with the NYEP for regular supply of teachers to fill the rural schools. This will help deal with the problem of teacher shortage in the country. The education sector should focus on the NYEP as a new source of labour apart from the formal ones. The GES should do well to allocate adequate time and resources for the training of the engaged to teach through the NYEP. The training should be as comprehensive as possible encapsulating lesson notes preparation, pupil motivation, time management, identification of problem children among others.

## Acknowledgment

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