

A REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT OF GHANA'S BUDGET SUPPORT FOR GIRLS' RE-ENTRY AT THE PRE-TERTIARY LEVEL

The Securing Educational Rights of Vulnerable Students in COVID-19 Era [SERVE II] Project is a partnership between Eduwatch and STAR Ghana Foundation with funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

About Africa Education Watch

Africa Education Watch (Eduwatch) is an Education Policy Research and Advocacy Organization working with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Governments and the Private Sector to promote an equitable, accountable and responsive education system that assures of quality and equal opportunities for all. Working with partners in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya and Nigeria, we envision a continent with globally competitive human capital that drives economic and social development.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABFA	Annual Budget Funding Amount
BECE	Basic Education Certification Examination
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Assembly
DHIMS	Demographic and Health Information Management System
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
DP	Development Partner
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESPIG	Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant
GALOP	Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project
G&C	Guidance and Counseling
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHC	Ghanaian Cedi
GETFund	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GEU	Girls' Education Unit
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
JHS	Junior High School
MDA	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDA	Metropolitan Municipal District Assembly
MoGSP	Ministry of Gender and Social Protection
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MTDF	Medium Term Development Framework
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTNDPF	Medium Term National Development Policy Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PBB	Program Based Budget
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHEP	School Health Education Programme
SHS	Senior High School
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation, Hygiene
WVI	World Vision International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Second Phase of the Securing Educational Rights of Vulnerable Students in COVID-19 Era [SERVE II] Project is a partnership between Africa Education Watch (Eduwatch) and STAR Ghana Foundation with funding from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). As part of the SERVE II project, this budget review report assessed the effectiveness of the Government of Ghana (GoG)'s support to girls' re-entry into pre-tertiary schools in the wake of the increased rates of teenage pregnancies, especially in the COVID-19 era in Ghana, while proffering recommendations to strengthen girls' re-entry resource allocation.

An analysis of child protection projections from Program Based Budget (PBB) estimates of the Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF) of the relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs); fiscal space analysis of the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD); review of literature and policy/strategy documents and fiscal projections for the relevant MDAs and Donors was undertaken, in addition to Key Informant Interviews with key stakeholders.

The report provides a brief overview of pregnancy trends in adolescents; examines the financing framework, including existing financing gaps for girls' education generally, and more specifically, the re-entry of teenage mothers and pregnant girls. While it reveals the lack of a specific budget allocation for implementing the Girls' Re-entry Policy, it identifies that,

apart from a paltry budgetary allocation, the budgetary framework for Girls' Re-entry is scattered across several government agencies, making it difficult to harmonize resources and strategy.

It observes that the Ghana Education Service (GES)'s Back To School (BTS) Campaign which addresses re-enrolment into schools has been impactful, but heavily dependent on donor support, a situation that does not assure suitability and ownership.

In order to address the challenges identified, the report recommends an increase in the government's child protection and advocacy budgetary allocation to the MoGCSP and the Girls Education Unit, while instituting systems to harmonize and coordinate the re-entry activities and spendings of various agencies at the local level to achieve efficiency, effectiveness, and ownership.

INTRODUCTION

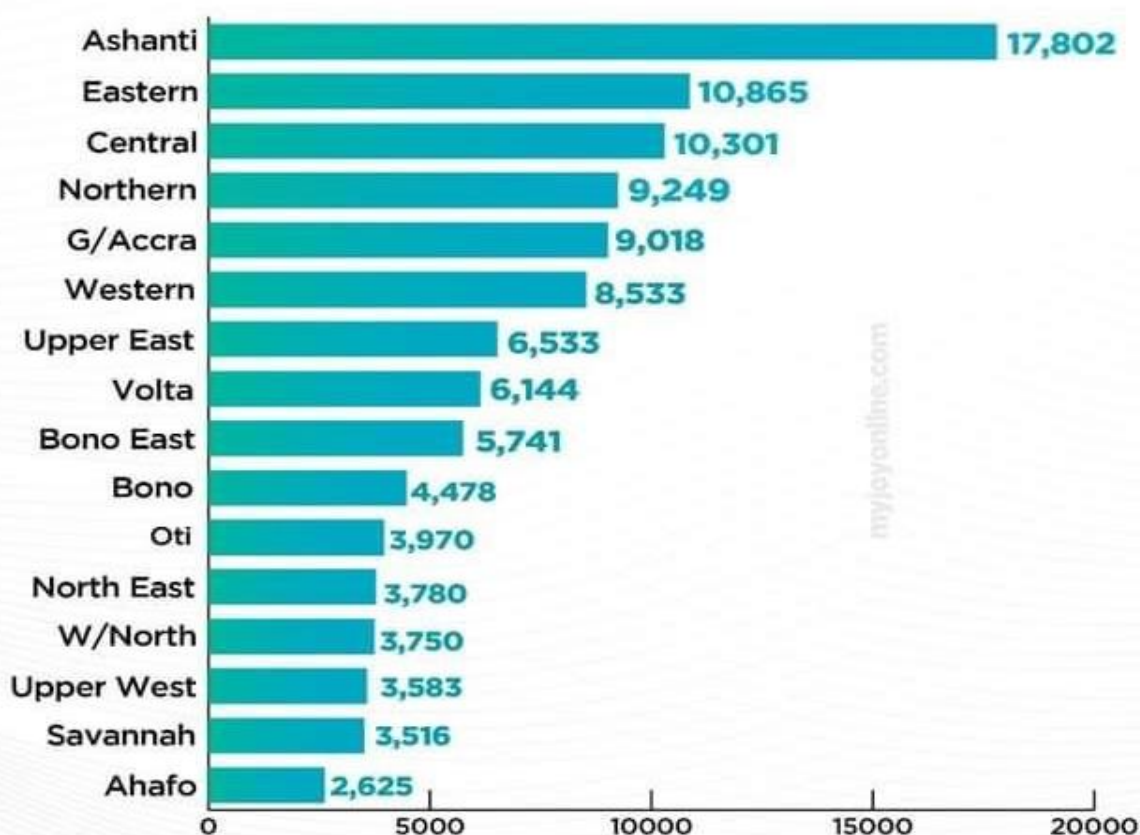
Pregnancy, especially among girls of school-going-age has become a global alarm and is seen as a major barrier limiting young girls from completing their education. It is estimated that about one (1) million girls are likely to drop out of school due to the 10-month closure of schools in Sub-Saharan Africa¹. The short-to-long-term effects go beyond health implications to include economic, social, cultural, and psychological among others, while the gender parity effects are more skewed against young girls, as boys normally return to the classroom, but girls would have to stay away from school to their detriment.

Trends in Adolescent Pregnancy

In Ghana, pregnancy cases have been recorded both at the Primary, JHS and the SHS levels. The Ministry of Health (MoH) reports 555,575 teenage pregnancies between 2016 and 2020, with 109,865 teenage pregnancies in 2020 alone with the Ashanti Region topping the regional distribution with 17,802 followed by the Eastern Region with 10,865 pregnancies². Refer to Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Regional distribution of teenage pregnancies in 2020

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES IN 2020



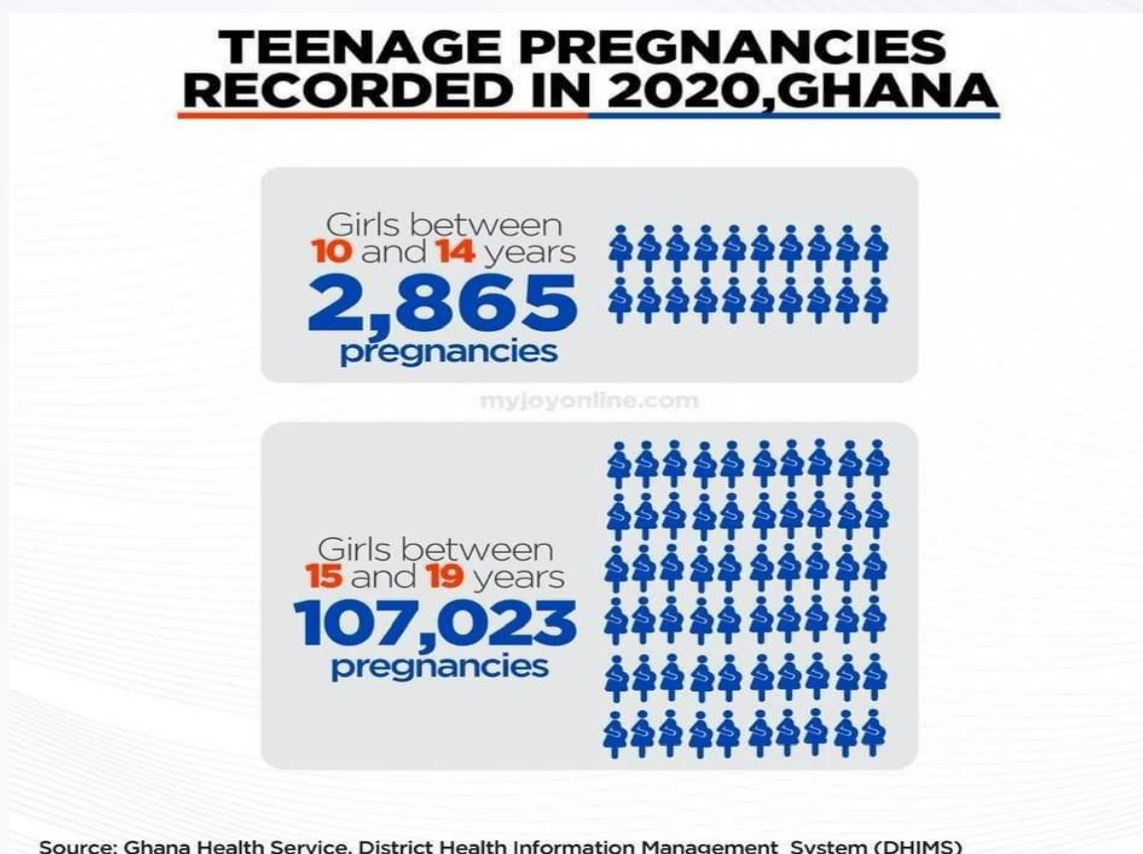
Source: Ghana Health Service. District Health Information Management System (DHIMS)

¹ World Vision International 2020, COVID-19 After Shocks

² GHS District Health Information Management System (DHIMS) April 2021

About 2.69% of the total pregnancies recorded occurred among girls between ten (10) and fourteen (14) years while a whopping 97.31% occurred between girls aged fifteen (15) and nineteen (19) years. This is presented in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Teenage pregnancies recorded in 2020



Consequently, the above figures sparked public interest and discussions on the need to break the barriers to the successful implementation of GES' Re-entry Policy which is to ensure that all pregnant girls have an opportunity to re-enroll and complete basic and secondary education. It has therefore become imperative that the necessary resources required to tackle this concern are mobilized as a matter of priority and urgency, in order to mitigate its repercussions.

Deliberations and programmes around adolescent pregnancy and the retention of pregnant girls and adolescent mothers in schools are captured under child protection in relation to the prevention and response to child marriage, sexual violence, neglect of children, adolescent and reproductive health, teenage pregnancy and sex education among others. The Re-entry Policy is also captured under gender parity where female educational attainment is given prominence.

Multi-Sectoral Efforts at Curbing the Menace of Post-COVID-19 School Closure

As earlier indicated, both budget and expenditure as well as activities towards the implementation of Girls' Re-entry initiatives are scattered across sectors. This section focuses on efforts made by the respective sectors with responsibilities in the development and protection of children, to address the barriers mitigating against girls' educational attainment and the retention/re-enrolment of pregnant girls and young mothers back to school.

Ghana Education Service

GES' response to pregnancy and schooling was in two parts – prevention of teenage pregnancy and the re-entry of young mothers to school. The Girls Education Unit (GEU) has the responsibility of facilitating and supervising the successful implementation of the policy while the Guidance and Counseling Unit (G&C) also plays a supporting role. The BTS Campaign came in handy in the post-COVID-19 school closure era with emphasis on safe schools, re-entry of pregnant girls and teenage mothers into school and psychosocial support to students. In all, 18 regional teams, comprising 194 district teams of 30 members each, and 50 communities in each district received orientation about the policy. Of the 194 districts, 176 were trained with funding from UNICEF³. Other donors such as FCDO and Plan International Ghana together trained 18 district teams. About 64 districts currently have not received any orientation.

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

MoGCSP plays a major role in collaborating with the MDAs, MMDAs, the Private Sector and DPs to ensure the welfare of among others, women, girls and the vulnerable. In the wake of the increasing number of adolescent pregnancies, and the negative impact on the health and socio-economic wellbeing of the youth, especially adolescent girls, the MoGCSP developed a five-year Strategic Plan to address the high rate of adolescent pregnancies and other reproductive health challenges. The five-year Strategic Plan spans the period 2017 – 2022. This Strategic Plan seeks to offer a clear vision and direction for all stakeholders and promote the full integration of adolescent issues into the overall national development agenda⁴.

Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

At the local level, the existing local structures of the MMDAs are used to operationalize social and child protection. The DSW and Community Development formed the Social Welfare Workforce. The MMDAs are responsible for the design of programmes and activities in accordance with their respective plans, and the budgeting of these activities thereof. However, MMDAs lack the necessary revenue base to fund child protection services which has diluted the funding of child protection.

Limitations

1. Data limitations include the absence of up-to-date costed expenditure and plans for the sectors involved.
2. The effect of COVID-19 on the BTS Campaign brought some reforms in operationalizing the guidelines, and may have thus altered the needs and resource requirements as these modifications remain under dialogue.
3. Analysis is based on three relevant Ministries and excludes data from other ministries such as the MoH who are minimally involved in some aspects of the campaign.

³ UNICEF Fact Sheet on Back to School Campaign (2021)

⁴ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection – 5-year Strategic Plan to address Adolescent Pregnancy in Ghana.

BUDGET ANALYSIS

This section provides an overview of government's budget system and reviews government's budgetary and non-budgetary allocations by sector, towards the implementation of girls' Re-entry Policy and related activities. It then looks at donor support to the education sector amidst COVID-19, zeroing in on the Re-entry Policy.

The Government Budgeting System

The budgeting procedure in Ghana is guided by the MTEF. The MTEF is a multi-year framework that allows annual budgets to be tied into longer-term budgets and planning and must be consistent with the Fiscal Strategy Document. Each year, The MoF sets priority areas after soliciting opinions from the public/civil society groups/public interest groups on pertinent issues and include them in the budget. With these in mind, the MoF updates the macroeconomic framework taking into account recent global and domestic economic developments⁵.

Resource Mobilization for Girls' Re-entry in the post-COVID-19 School Closure Era

Budgetary Allocation

1. Until now (post-COVID-19 school closure), the Girls' Re-entry Policy was not prioritized in previous government budgets. The discussions/opinions of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on removing barriers to girls' retention in school was centered on WASH, menstrual hygiene, sex education, safe environment, gender-based violence with little attention to pregnant girls/mothers being re-enrolled into school.
2. Given the nature and range of issues surrounding adolescent pregnancy and girls' retention in schools, different MDAs are responsible for different services towards the implementation of the agenda. Prominent among these MDAs are the GES, MOGCSP, MLGRD. Indeed, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, and the MoH are to varying extents, actors in the implementation process and thus commit resources to the Girls' Re-entry Policy. However, it is difficult to allocate and spend on the programmes since the Girls' Re-entry implementation are subsumed in various programmes, sub-programmes and activities across different MDAs providing the services.

Non-Budgetary Allocation

1. Non-budgetary efforts toward the Re-entry Policy have mainly been in the form of technical assistance offered by staff of the District Assemblies at the local level. For instance, Agricultural Extension Officers are used as advocacy mediums to sensitize and educate the community members on the importance of supporting adolescent mothers to return to school, and changing negative perceptions about the Girls' Re-entry Policy as they go about their usual agriculture work.
2. Technical assistance has largely been from the DPs, CSOs, NGOs and even individuals.
3. Existing local social structures such as traditional rulers, opinion leaders, women's groups and religious leaders are involved in educating their members about the Girls' Re-entry Policy and BTS Campaign. Their level of effort is seen as their contribution towards the society in which they live.

4. Local level facilities such as space (community centers, durbar grounds), logistics (canopies, chairs), media (P.A. systems, community radio) are sometimes offered to be used by the local NGOs who work closely with the indigenes at no cost to the funding agency.
5. In the year under review, the outlined local structures played very critical roles in getting the BTS Campaign messages to the indigenes.

However, it is worth noting that these non-budgetary expenditures are mostly neither costed nor documented. It is therefore difficult to appreciate the amount spent on the non-budgetary allocation in monetary values.

Government Budgetary Allocation/Expenditure for Girls' Re-entry

The following were highlights revealed after desk review of relevant documents and corroborated by information obtained from Key Informant Interviews:

1. There is no direct budgetary allocation for the Re-entry Policy in the PBB/MTEF in all the relevant Ministries.

A major challenge in analyzing the budgetary allocation and expenditure on the Re-entry Policy is the scattered nature of the budgets and disjointed activities of its implementation across MDAs. The Girls' Re-entry activities form part of broader programmes of MDAs, and as a result, reliable data on specific government budget allocation and expenditure for re-entry is not clear. Budgets and expenditures within the MoE, MoGCSP and MoLGRD (including Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) and MMDAs) which are directly involved in the delivery of social/child protection services including the re-entry and BTS Campaign and their level of participation are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Ministries' participation in the delivery of the Re-entry Policy

PROGRAMMES FOR RE-ENTRY DELIVERY	MINISTRIES PARTICIPATION		
	MoE (GES)	MoGCSP	MoLGRD
Overall Policy implementation and Coordination	✓		
Institutional Capacity Building	✓		✓
Awareness Creation and Sensitization	✓	✓	
Educational Campaign and Advocacy	✓	✓	✓

Source: Deductions from Medium Term Development Frameworks for MoE, MoGCSP and MoLGRD (2018-2022)

As highlighted above, even though the PBB for 2019 and 2020 provides information on budgets for all three Ministries, the information provided does not fully align with programme-level information as re-entry is subsumed into broader programmes and sub-programmes. For instance, it will be difficult to determine how much the DSW and Community Development (under MoLGRD) spent on re-entry in their mass education campaign since it formed part of a broader social/child protection agenda to change social norms related to child protection which also included child labour, violence, sexual exploitation, child trafficking etc. Also, the G&C and GEU (under MoE) have initiatives directly related to the re-entry but for which no budget allocations are publicly available, and the situation is same with the MoGCSP.

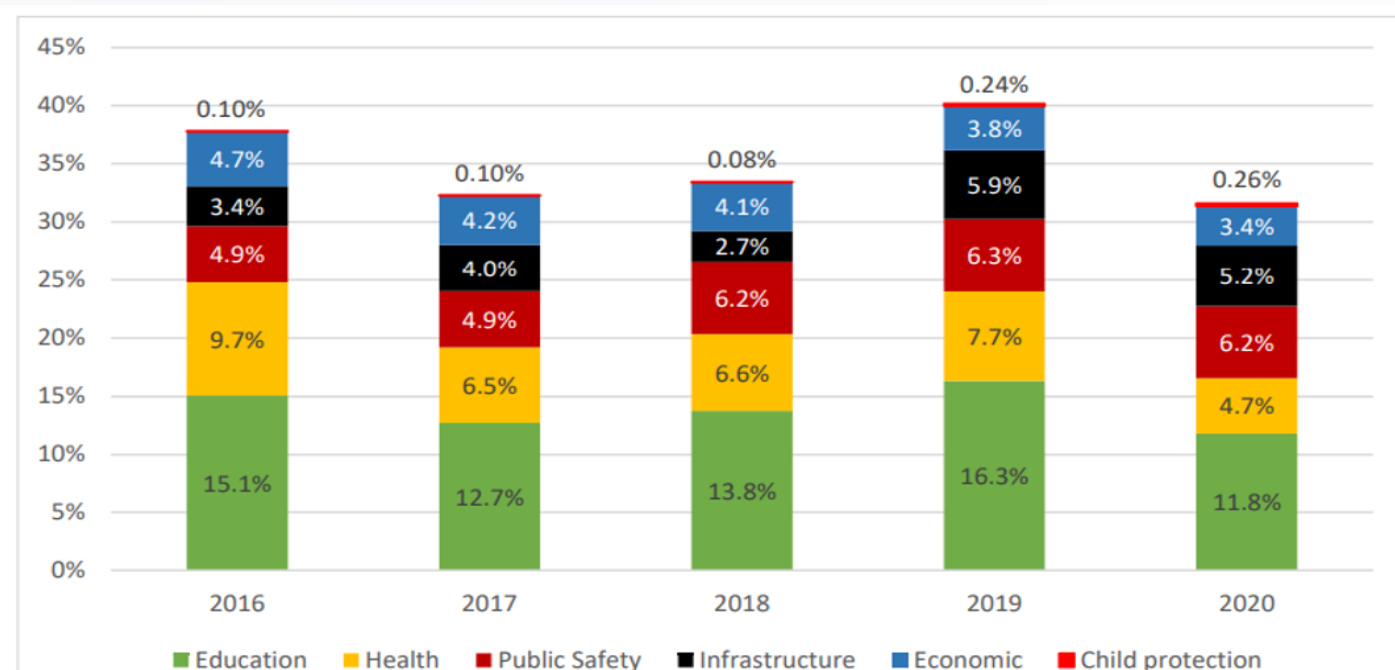
Indeed, other MDAs such as the Family Health Division of GHS (under MoH) and DOWVSU (under Ministry of Interior) are involved in child protection and re-entry. It is however very difficult to capture their spending since their services are incorporated in their broader programmes

2. Low Priority given to the Re-entry Policy by GoG

In this section of the analysis, MLGRD and MoGCSP are considered since these are the sectors with the mandate for social welfare and child protection which includes the Girls' Re-entry programme. Analysis of budget allocation and actual spending from GoG and Annual Budget Funding Amount (ABFA) indicate that child protection in general is given low priority as compared to other sectors.

At the national level, the allocation given to child protection is less than 1% of the national budget. This is evident in the trends in budget allocations across the sectors of government spending. Child protection's share of the total national budget (under both MLGRD and MoGCSP) increased from just 0.10% to 0.26% over the period 2016-2020 while sectors like public safety and infrastructure saw their share of the total national budget grow more rapidly than the share allocated to child protection over the same period as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Proportional Breakdown of Budgets by Key Sectors, 2016-2020



Source: PBBs of MoGCSP and MoLGRD and Budget Statements and Economic Policies, 2016–2020 cited in UNICEF CPBA, 2020

It is worth mentioning that the slight growth in child protection allocation is not a reflection of the budget for child protection but rather a result of the inclusion of MMDAs and free School Feeding Programme in the MoLGRD and MoGCSP respectively.

Additionally, there is low prioritization of Girls' Re-entry at the Ministerial/Programme level as described in Figure 4 below. Apportionment of the already meagre child protection budgetary allocation highlights child trafficking, child labour, violence, central administration, birth registration etc. as priorities. Child promotion and protection, which deals with adolescent pregnancy and re-enrolment has 90% spent on prevention while 10% is for response. This means that more is spent on sex education campaigns with very little on returning mothers to school.

Figure 4: Allocating Budgets between Prevention and Response Interventions

Allocation to Prevention and Response Interventions			
	% Prevention	% Response	Reasoning
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection			
CP share of Management and Administration	21%	79%	Divided proportionally based on value of services
Child Rights Promotion; Protection and Development	90%	10%	Primarily focused on promotion
Social Services	10%	90%	Assumption based on programme descriptions
Domestic Violence	40%	60%	Assumption based on programme descriptions
Human Trafficking	0%	100%	Nature of the service is response
Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development			
CP share of Management and Administration	37%	63%	Divided proportionally based on value of services
Decentralisation			Same ratio as for local government services
Community Development	100%	0%	Mass education focussed on prevention
Births and Deaths Data Management	100%	0%	Nature of the service is prevention
Local Government Services			
LGS Secretariate			Divided proportionally based on value of services
Central Administration			Divided proportionally based on value of services
Social Welfare and Community Development	40%	60%	Assumed nature of service
Region Coordinating Councils			
General Administration			Divided proportionally based on value of services
Budget Division			Divided proportionally based on value of services
Social Welfare	10%	90%	Assumed nature of service
Community Development	100%	0%	Service focussed on prevention

Source: Assumptions developed in consultation with the UNICEF Child Protection Unit with reference to the PBBs of MoGCSP and MoLGRD, 2016–2020 cited in UNICEF CPBA 2020

4. Ad-hoc Prioritization/Spending of Re-entry Policy/BTS Campaign in 2020

Ad-hoc prioritization of the policy became obligatory when the public interest was ignited following the upsurge in the number of pregnant girls during the ten-month closure of schools. Thus, even though no financial provision had been made in the MTEF, the GES-GEU and other sectors responsible for child protection and promotion had to quickly respond to the issue. The BTS Campaign, which formed part of the Re-entry Policy, was designed to ensure the return of children to school in January 2021, after the ten-month school closure. The government had to heavily rely on donor support for the execution of the Campaign. The next section looks at the role of DPs towards the implementation of the Girls' Re-entry and the BTS Campaign.

Donor Funding Allocation and Expenditure on the Girls' Re-Entry and BTS Campaign for the Period 2019 – 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a partial lockdown and a ten-month school closure which affected an estimated 9.2 million students in public and private pre-tertiary schools⁶. The longer the children stayed out of school, the higher the risks of vulnerable children abandoning school entirely. Considering that schools are safe spaces for children, not discounting the fact that some children get abused by teachers in school, the fact remains that being out of school resulted in increased teenage pregnancies and other dangers.

To mitigate the impact of staying out of school for the long period, the MoE and GES launched the COVID-19 Coordinated Education Response Plan for Ghana in April 2020 to cover a period of 18 months ending in November 2021. The first part covered education response during the COVID-19 school closure including remote learning; psychosocial support and prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The second part was the BTS Campaign which were steps taken towards the successful re-opening of schools. The Campaign was to provide a safe environment for students through; the fumigation of schools; awareness on hygiene and safety protocols; provision of psychosocial support to deal with trauma that students might have suffered during the COVID-19 lockdown and ten-month closure, and also to ensure the re-enrolment of vulnerable students such as pregnant girls and young mothers, back to school. Amidst the pandemic and lack of funding/specific allocation to roll-out the plan for continued learning, Ghana had to rely heavily on DPs to implement the Campaign.

Ghana resorted to funding from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)'s Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant (ESPIG). This funding was to provide accelerated education, remedial and catch-up programmes, and build a resilient education system that is future ready. Among these was the Girls' Re-entry Policy implementation and the BTS Campaign.

Funding received from the GPE-ESPIG towards COVID-19 Education Response Plan is presented in Figure 5. Figure 5 shows the Grants received from the respective DPs and which part of the Education Response Plan that was prioritized for funding. In spite of the COVID-19 ramifications of increased teenage pregnancy rates and its consequent drop out of teenage mothers, Girls' Re-entry did not receive the needed attention relative to the enormity of the problem so far as funding was concerned.

Figure 5: Ghana Education Development Partner Support for COVID-19 Education Response

Programme	Implementer	Grant Agent	Donors	Amount	Focal Areas
GALOP Implementation Grant	MoE/GES	World Bank	World Bank IDA & GPE (UK, USA, Japan, France key donors)	\$36 million (available now)	Results based project – GoG has flexibility to use funds to support activities identified in the COVID-19 response plan. Specific activities supported by the project that can be adapted to COVID response include teacher training, targeted and remedial education when schools reopen, assessment of students, tracking of key indicators through the accountability dashboard, M&E and public awareness campaigns.
GPE COVID-19 Planning Grant	MoE/GES	UNICEF	GPE (UK, USA, Japan, France key donors)	\$70,000	Education rapid risk assessment to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the education system, and support finalizing MoE/GES COVID-19 response plan
GPE COVID-19 Response Grant	MoE/GES	World Bank	GPE grant (UK, USA, Japan, France key donors)	\$15 million	Strengthen remote education service delivery, support safe school reopening and re-entry, strengthen management for education sector resilience
GALOP Additional Financing – Education Outcomes Fund	MoE/GES	World Bank	World Bank GPRBA Trust Fund (financed by UK) and GOG	\$6 million for Year 1 tbc (to be available June 2020)	Support from non-state actors and social investors for vulnerable children previously out of school, children who struggle to participate in distance learning during school closure, additional vulnerable children who do not re-enter when schools reopen, distance teaching and learning, accelerated/remedial learning once schools reopen
UNICEF	MoE/GES, MoGCSP	UNICEF	UK, USA and other key donors	\$tbc	Child-friendly risk comms; alternative options for school feeding; cash transfers for poor households and children; Radio distance learning lesson broadcasts for KG-SHS for children in hard-to-reach communities, procurement of radios, use of mobile SMS; implementation of Safe Schools guidelines (re-entry, protection from violence during school closure, reopening); re-enrolment for all, data

Programme	Implementer	Grant Agent	Donors	Amount	Focal Areas
World Bank	MoE/GES	World Bank	UK, USA, Japan, France key donors	\$10 million	SEIP iCampus materials and platform being used for SHS students; Lesson-learning to support Edtech for primary-JHS; e-Transform project - Internet and ICT support for 150 SHSs; African Centres of Excellence – support to Noguchi on C-19
UNESCO	MoE/GES	UNESCO	UK, Japan, France, AfDB, Korea, UNICEF key donors	\$199,000	Capacity-building for teachers on how to plan and deliver distance learning lessons (via TV, radio, online), keep connected with students, and monitor student's learning; production of guidance for teachers on how to plan and conduct home-based teaching for distance learning; web portal for reaching all teachers; awareness-raising around GBV among learners; processes geared towards establishment of Open University Ghana
UNHCR	MoE/GES, MoGCSP, MMDAs	UNHCR	UK, USA, Japan, France key donors	\$10,000	Focus on refugee camps in Central, Western and Bono regions. Providing handwashing facilities; feeding vulnerable children linked to continuation of GoG school feeding programme; Procuring TVs for distance learning in camp schools (in line with GES activities). Potential support for community radio lessons
WFP	MoGCSP	WFP	USA, Japan, UK key donors	\$350,000	Technical support and digitization of monitoring tools for emergency school feeding in vulnerable areas post-closure; Handwashing equipment to schools in vulnerable areas; Support adolescent girls with incentives when schools reopen
DFID	MoE/GES, T-TEL, Plan Intl, ImpactEd, WEI (& NGOs)	DFID	DFID	£1.8 million reallocated	Technical support for MoE/GES COVID-19 response planning, coordination, M & E via Reform Secretariat, T-TEL, Education Workforce Initiative; Plan Intl studio space, master teachers, technicians and production expertise to enable <i>Ghana Learning TV</i> broadcasts; Risk comms, handwashing facilities, safeguarding, and access to distance learning (TV, radio, online, print) for 140,000 children (mainly girls and out of school children)

Programme	Implementer	Grant Agent	Donors	Amount	Focal Areas
					supported by GES and GEC partners; Risk comms, and continuity of virtual learning for 32,000 student teachers and 1,500 tutors in 46 colleges of education; Quality distance learning curriculum content for KG-JHS and teacher education B.ED
USAID	Non-state project partners	USAID	USAID	\$10 million reallocated	E-resources for early grade reading (KG-P4) local language and Transition to English lessons for P1-P3 sent to MoE/GES, for distance learning across platforms (TV, radio, online); Radio distance learning lessons in local language for KG-P4 for children in hard-to-reach communities; MoE/GES National Distance Learning project, to reach rural remote areas and promote equity
JICA		JICA	JICA	\$21 million	Construction of Advanced Research Centre for Infectious Diseases at Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR), supply of logistics and equipment; Training to enhance laboratory skills for infectious diseases; Technical advice on engage parents and SMCs in home learning
Mastercard Foundation	MoE/GES	UNICEF	Mastercard Foundation	\$tbc	Working on a concept note with UNICEF on how to support distance learning for hard-to-reach communities (e.g. via radio, print), and KG-JHS Learning Management System
Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC)	GNECC partners	GNECC	Osiwa	tbc	Translate information on COVID-19 and curriculum for distance learning programmes into accessible formats (braille, text-to-speech, large print, sign language videos) in English and 6 local languages for 200 children with visual and hearing disabilities

Source: Global Partnership for Education response to COVID-19 AF Plan

Among the DPs, it was UNICEF, UKaid and UNESCO that had allocations for broader programmes that included the Girls' Re-entry and BTS Campaign. It was difficult to clearly distinguish expenditures on child protection at large and by extension, the Girls' Re-entry Policy and BTS Campaign from broader programme spending, since their activities formed part of other broad programmes and sub-programmes across sectors.

BUDGETARY ALLOCATION AND SPENDING BY GOVERNMENT SECTORS ON THE GIRLS' RE-ENTRY POLICY AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

This section reviews PBBEs and MTEFs and considers data within the fiscal space to ascertain the budgetary allocation, spending and financing gaps of the GES, MoGCSP and MLGRD respectively. These MDAs were considered due to their direct involvement in activities towards the roll-out of the Policy at different levels. The allocation and adequacy of funding to these MDAs will have a positive impact on Child Protection in general, and by extension the Girls' Re-entry Policy. Information obtained from Key Informant Interviews also informed the findings.

Ghana Education Service

1. The Education sector has the highest budget allocation of the economy. The trend shows an average of 4% of the national GDP over the last 5 years⁷. However, the GoG budget allocation, which is discretionary, is spent largely on emoluments. Capital expenditure, goods and services are largely sourced from GETFund, Internally Generated Funds (IGF), ABFA and DPs. Data submitted to Parliament supporting the 2020 Budget suggested that over 98% of the 2019 GoG's education budget was for employee compensation, with goods and services funded primarily with IGF and DPs⁸. By July 2019, capital expenditure had already been overspent by 100%, IGF budget had been overspent by GHS 46 million, and 79% of DP funds had been used⁹. With this, the sector finds it challenging to allocate budget to social sector activities which are not highly prioritized by government. There is currently no direct allocation for the Girls' Re-entry Policy in the education sector plan.
2. Both the National Medium Term Development Policy Framework (NMTDPF) 2018–2021 and Education Sector MTDP do not prioritize girls' re-entry in their plans for the period 2018-2021. Under Section B.E 1.2 of the MTDF, the goal to achieve and sustain gender parity and access to quality basic education, with a focus on reducing regional disparities, has corresponding activities to increase demand for families to enroll and retain girls in schools scheduled for 2022-2025 under B.E 1.2.1.
3. The Post-COVID-19 school closure BTS Campaign which included the re-enrolment of pregnant girls and mothers, became an ad-hoc priority as a response to the upsurge in the number of pregnant girls in 2020. GES had to solicit funds from DPs since the programme had no specific allocation.
4. In 2020, the campaign, facilitated by the Girls Education Unit of the GES was mainly funded by UNICEF. A total of 194 districts have so far received training as part of capacity building for the roll-out of the re-entry policy. UNICEF funded 176 out of a total 194 districts which represents 90.2% with UNESCO/Plan (Ghana) International, FCDO-UK and other major CSOs funding the remaining 18 districts which forms 9.8% of the total 194 districts. The campaign is mainly sponsored by DPs and CSOs¹⁰. In all the documents reviewed and with confirmation from the Key Informant Interviews, allocations for the Girls' Re-entry Policy are not at all reflected under the GES-GEU budget. All activities under the implementation of the policy are incorporated in other programmes and sub-programmes, which are funded by DPs¹¹.

⁷ Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP) - Ghana, Sub-Saharan Africa | Data (worldbank.org)

⁸ MoE Budget by Revenue and Source Allocation, 2019 cited in Education Budget Brief by UNICEF

⁹ MoE PBB 2019

¹⁰ UNICEF Back to School Campaign Factsheet 2021

¹¹ Education Sector MTDP 2018-2022

5. Until the recent repercussions of the COVID-19-induced-ten-months school closure with its consequent increase in the number of pregnant girls, and heightened public interest, there was low participation/involvement/allocation/attention given to the implementation of the policy especially in deprived communities compared with other activities that address gender parity such as STEM and free SHS which are the main initiatives for SHS enrollment for which budget allocations were made.
6. Activities surrounding teenage pregnancy centered more on preventive measures with little emphasis on responsiveness. Educational campaigns and sensitization were more focused on adolescent reproductive health and sex education with little attention to girls who were already pregnant and the opportunity to return to school. Evidence from UNESCO, for example, revealed that out of GHC 447,406 donated to the education sector by UNESCO in 2020, GHC 31,822 which is less than 10% was directly attributed to the Re-entry Policy even though teenage pregnancy and girls' dropout was a top issue in the year under review. The remaining amount was spent on HIV Education and Prevention, Menstrual Hygiene, Sex Education, etc¹².

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

Information from Key Informant Interviews indicated that:

1. About 98% of the Ministry's total budget is spent on the Ghana Free School Feeding Programme (GSFP) and Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) Programme, while the other 2% takes care of all other units under the Ministry¹³.
2. There is currently no particular budget allocation for the implementation of the BTS Programme under the Ministry. Child Protection activities under the Ministry are largely sponsored by UNICEF with support from other DPs and NGOs. As such, the Ministry's funding is just as susceptible to the availability of donor assistance.
3. Activities in the sector's five-year development plan to tackle adolescent pregnancy do not indicate the source of funding for the activities specified in the document. The Ministry solicits support from DPs to finance their child-protection activities during roll-out.
4. Non-budgetary allocations include the use of existing structures at the local level, such as local assembly staff, traditional authorities, religious organizations etc. whose level of efforts and technical assistance are not directly paid for by the Ministry. Other non-budgetary expenditure includes the use of public facilities in campaigns such as space for meetings, P.A, which are the local levels' contribution towards activities.
5. The Ministry relies heavily on UNICEF for financial assistance/sponsorship when there is a need to respond to a problem.
6. Apart from the International Day of the Girl Child where DSW and Community Development at the local level solicit funds from the local assemblies, most of the activities towards Girls' Re-entry are funded by the Donors and CSOs.

¹² UNESCO Educational Support Activity Sheet 2020

¹³ Information obtained from Key Informant Interview at Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

Ministry of Local Government

Information from interviews revealed that there has been no government allocation particularly for the re-entry programme under the Ministry in previous years.

1. There was no specific budget allocation for the Re-entry Policy to the Ministry. Even though the DSW and Community Development as well as the local assemblies provided support in the implementation of the programmes, at the local level, the Girls' Re-entry activities are mostly subsumed in other programmes.
2. During International Day of the Girl Child celebrations, the local assemblies provided support from their IGF to sponsor the event.

Figure 6 also further showed the low priority given to Girls' Re-entry using the budget allotted to the activities to be implemented and their respective timelines. Out of a total US\$15,000,000 grants, an amount of US\$500,000 which forms 3.3% was allocated for community engagements to facilitate both the return of school dropouts to school (US\$300,000) and the BTS Campaign (US\$200,000). With this, it is difficult to ascertain the spending on re-enrollment of pregnant girls and mothers, as these two sub-components, formed part of a broader programme to support the safe school re-opening and re-entry as captured in sub-component 5.1, B. 1&2 in the figure below.

Again, the timelines for community engagements to address re-entry barriers should have been extended beyond the fourth month to make an effective impact, since effective education to transform social norms, attitudes and behaviors, take time to achieve results. See Figure 6 below:

Figure 6: Implementation Budget and timelines

Activity	Budget	Timeline																	
		Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Quarter 5			Quarter 6		
		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18
Sub-component 5.1: Strengthening remote education service delivery	6,700,000																		
A. Content reform and delivery for KG to JHS3	5,100,000																		
1. Development and deployment of tutorials through television and radio	1,500,000	x	x	x	x	x	x												
2. Distribution of printed teaching and learning materials where appropriate	2,000,000	x	x	x	x	x	x												
3. Establishment of an online and offline (toll-free helpdesk) for teacher and student remote assistance	200,000	x	x																
4. Deployment of pre-loaded content devices (targeted at students with special needs)	1,200,000	x	x	x															
5. Uploading of all education content on enhanced Digital Library linked to the Learning Management System (LMS)	200,000			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
B. In-service teacher training for basic education teachers	1,600,000																		
1. Development and digitization of teacher training modules	400,000	x	x	x															
2. Teacher training on integrated digital literacy course	1,200,000				x	x	x												
Sub-component 5.2 Support to safe school re-opening and re-entry	4,100,000																		

Activity	Budget	Timeline																	
		Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Quarter 5			Quarter 6		
		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18
A. Support to WASH interventions	3,000,000																		
1. Conduct situational analysis of WASH facilities in school using EMIS and other data	50,000	x																	
2. Sanitization of schools once they reopen	500,000			x	x														
3. Minor rehabilitation of WASH facilities	700,000			x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
4. School grants to support the provision of hand washing facilities or latrines in all schools	1,250,000			x	x														
5. Provision of boreholes in schools without access to water	500,000			x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
B. Public awareness and communications campaign	600,000																		
1. Awareness campaign on public health and safety on COVID-19 pandemic	100,000			x	x														
2. Community engagement to prevent student drop-out once schools reopen	300,000			x	x														
3. Back to School Campaign	200,000			x	x														
C. Remedial and accelerated learning program targeting poor performing students	500,000																		
Sub-component 5.3: Strengthening management for education sector resilience	4,000,000																		
A. Development of a Learning Management System	2,500,000	x	x	x	x	x	x												

Activity	Budget	Timeline																	
		Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Quarter 5			Quarter 6		
		M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18
B. Establish a Ghana National Knowledge and Skills Bank	1,000,000				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
C. Align policy reforms to facilitate resilience in teaching and learning	300,000	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x									
Monitoring and learning through the Learning Management System	200,000				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Grant Agent Supervision Fees	200,000																		
TOTAL	15,000,000																		

Source: Global Partnership for Education, Ghana COVID-19 Accelerated Request for Funding, 2020.

THE IMPACT OF BUDGETARY AND DONOR FUNDING ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DELIVERY OF GIRLS' RE-ENTRY MANDATE

Impact of Government Budgetary Allocation on Implementation of Re-entry Policy

GoG working through MoE/GES has taken initiatives to ensure that pregnant girls and young mothers return to school to continue their education. The MLGRD and the MoGCSP with mandates to ensure the social welfare, promotion and protection of children and the vulnerable among others, also play roles in the implementation of the Girls' Re-entry Policy.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Re-entry Policy even though existed, did not receive adequate involvement and participation from MDAs in terms of budgetary allocation. Indeed, there were hardly allocations mentioned in the previous budgets for the operationalization of the policy. The focus of the government on girls' educational attainment was on STEM (Girls in ICT, Science and Mathematics); WASH (Menstrual Hygiene), and these were the programmes that received allocation. In instances where adolescent and reproductive health received attention, emphasis was on preventing the occurrence of teenage pregnancy and sexual abuse/violence with little being done to re-enroll the girls back into school.

However, MoE/GES made positive impacts especially at the national and regional levels. The GES spearheaded the policy formulation and coordination as well as the development of the guidelines. The MoGCSP and MLGRD made impacts at the district and community levels with respect to creating awareness, advocacy and educating the public about the need for the re-enrollment of the girls.

Impact of Donor Funding on the Implementation of Re-entry Policy

DPs have supported government to make massive positive impacts in the implementation of the policy. Before COVID-19, many of the programmes and activities at the grassroot level, where the issue is endemic, were implemented by NGOs with funding from DPs. NGOs collaborated with MMDAs (Social Welfare and Community Development) and GES at the local level (GEU and G&C Unit) to sensitize communities to change their perceptions against the policy, because some traditional authorities and religious leaders resisted the policy since they thought the policy was promoting promiscuity. These activities by the NGOs and CSOs are largely funded by donors.

Again, DPs intensified their commitments towards the policy and made positive impacts during the post-COVID-19 school closure era. The provision of grants to build the capacity of stakeholders and institutions at all levels in priority districts and also fund educational campaigns for the acceptance of the policy were very effective. There is evidence to show that there has been improvement in the number of girls who have returned to school as compared to previous years¹⁴, even though measurement of the impact and attribution to either donor or government is challenging due to the fragmented implementation by stakeholders.

Future Implications of Funding Girls' Re-entry Policy and BTS Campaign

In Table 2 below, the data presented indicated the continuous increase in government allocation to MoE and yet the challenges they face with funding their activities. The data also showed a consistent decline in budget allocation from DPs to the Education Sector over a period of 4 years. GES was considered because it is the implementing agent for the Girls' Re-entry and BTS Campaign.

Table 2: Education Sector MTDP Financial Strategy Summary of Funding Sources (in nominal terms, GHC millions)

Source of Funding	2018	2019	2020	2021	2018-2021
Central Government (excluding salary arrears)	7295.0	8125.0	9223.0	9500.2	34143.0
Donor Funding Budget Allocation	326	292	248	143.8	1009.8

Source: Perry et al., 2018/Ghana ESP Cost Projection Model, 2019

The GES spends over 90% of its GoG allocation on wage bill, leaving little or nothing to support child protection activities. The already high demand for the national cake in the education sector makes it difficult to demand more for social services under MoE. As depicted in Table 2 above, there has been a consistent decline in donor allocation. The story is not different from that of the MLGRD and MoGCSP. Social programmes such as Girls' Re-entry depend heavily on donor support channeled through NGOs to reach the grass roots. There have been increasing concerns about the current gaps and further widening of the gap if Donor funding continues to dwindle, and the sustainability of these programmes especially in countries including Ghana that have transitioned into Lower Middle-Income status. The effect has been Donor withdrawal and funding cuts for NGOs who work at the community level. This presents a regressive impact in the future if appropriate measures are not put in place and Ghana risks losing out on the gains already made.

CONCLUSION

Currently, the education sector (GEU) is the implementing body responsible for the Re-entry Policy. Despite the education sector accounting for about one-fifth of total government expenditure in the budget, the sector has its funding challenges. Execution rates are worryingly low for non-salary spending, leading to insufficient resources for running programmes such as the Re-entry Policy which is necessary for the achievement of SDG 4 and has serious ramifications in the future if not managed properly. Given that the sector already receives such a high portion of the total budget, it struggles to justify additional funds unless when a new priority is given political prominence, as seen by the introduction of free SHS from 2017. Meanwhile, the donor support which has been the backbone of child protection has been diminishing. This is why it is imperative to look within Ghana to mobilize the required resources to deal with the issue in a decentralized manner. Traditional and religious authority should be won over into partnership with the MDAs as part of the resource mobilization drive to ensure the successful implementation of the policy and related activities.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the wake of the dwindling support from donors, and the demand for more funds to manage social/child protection services, it is advised that a risk assessment be carried out by GoG through the MoF to determine the implication on future budgets.
2. To address the scattered budgetary regime for girls' education, GoG/MoF must institute national/inter-sectoral coordination systems on Girls' Re-entry across sectors and donors in order to monitor the expenditure and results/impact related to the Girls' Re-entry Programme.
3. At the local level, there should be decentralized, harmonized financing mechanisms for District Assembly coordinated re-entry campaigns involving multi-sectoral agencies such as Religious Bodies, Traditional Authorities, GHS, Gender Desk Officer, DSW, NCCE, Department of Community Development, etc.
4. CSOs must provide a concerted front and a strong voice in advocating for the prioritization of Girls' Re-entry. A multi-sector collaboration will provide a platform to make a strong case for Girls' Re-entry to attract the needed allocation in the budget. This can be achieved by creating the needed prominence to incite a public agenda/discourse around the policy, while leveraging on current worrying statistics.
5. Local mobilization of resources should be considered by local and international NGOs by maximizing the non-budgetary structures in implementing the Girls' Re-entry Policy. Communities should be educated on the need to raise funds locally and not overly depend on DPs and government to bring about the social change that they desire. This educational process must begin.
6. There should be a coordination of spending across sectors and donors in order to monitor the expenditure related to the re-entry policy and to make informed decisions going forward. This must be accompanied by guidelines for appropriation of the funds.

A REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT OF GHANA'S BUDGET SUPPORT FOR GIRLS' RE-ENTRY AT THE PRE-TERTIARY LEVEL

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