



PRESS STATEMENT

RESPONSE TO EMERGING ISSUES FROM THE GALOP DIGITAL LEARNING INTERVENTIONS

In November 2021, Eduwatch published the Ghana COVID-19 Education Sector Response Review Report after reviewing the implementation of the \$15 million Additional Financing to GALOP, otherwise known as GALOP Component 5, under which Digital Learning Platforms interventions were to be delivered.

The report, which has since been published, acknowledged progress in the delivery of virtual learning interventions in Colleges of Education, but raised the following issues with the delivery of Digital Learning Interventions in the pre-tertiary sector.

1. Why about US\$1 million was spent on a Learning Management Platform (Edmodo), which is a well-known Free and Open-Source System.
2. Why one year after launching Edmodo, less than 1% of teachers and students were even aware of its existence, let alone enrol or utilize same.
3. Why one year after its launch, Edmodo had no content, thereby raising serious issues of VFM.
4. Why teachers had not been provided with gadgets and Digital Learning Skills to enable them to utilize Edmodo LMS.
5. The lack of any report on implementation progress on such an important project.

While our letters to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ghana Library Authority and Ghana Education Service (GES) to seek answers and further information on implementation progress did not receive any response, the issues emerging today are directly related to the issues raised in last year's review, necessitating this response.

After reviewing the GES' letter of 30th March 2022 and the 26th May 2022 Press Statement/Conference of the MoE in response to issues raised by the GES and the media related to the US\$ 1.2 million Digital Literacy Training, Eduwatch wishes to make the following observations, queries and recommendations within the context of accountable governance of Education Sector Projects in the public's interest.

1. The lack of awareness on the part of the GES Director-General, real or self-induced, on the conduct of Digital Literacy Training for as many as 40,000 of its own employees raises serious concerns about the lack of collaboration between the MoE and GES in the implementation a project costing the tax payer over GHC 1 billion cedis. For the avoidance of doubt, two key beneficiaries of GALOP are teachers and learners, all directly under the GES, making their full participation and cooperation non-negotiable.

Africa Education Watch.

25 Nii Torgbor Avenue, ARS, East Legon. Ghana-West Africa.

Tel. 0303975001 | Email: info@africaeducationwatch.org | Twitter & Facebook: @AfricaEduWatch

www.africaeducationwatch.org



2. The lack of awareness by the GES Director-General on a report submitted by MoE on the conduct of Digital Literacy Training for as many as 40,000 of its own employees also raises serious concerns about data credibility, an issue that must be addressed by the World Bank, since both the MoE and GES have conflicting positions on the matter. A simple random verification of beneficiaries should settle matters.
3. A critical analysis of the power dynamics at the MoE points to the existence of factions with allegiance to either the current or the former Minister of Education. One of the outcomes of this factionalism is the poor working relationship between the leadership of the two institutions, leading to the exclusion of the GES in some activities deemed to be part of its core mandate, leakage of confidential information between the two institutions and the seeming undermining of the authority of both leadership by same. While the education sector stakeholder community is fully aware of this conflict, our continued silence is affecting education policy implementation and coordination.
4. According to MoE, the Digital Literacy Training in dispute was delivered to 40,000 teachers by KA Technologies under the 1 Teacher, 1 Laptop initiative. We learn that this arrangement, which represented a change from a previous plan to engage a consultant to build a platform and deliver the training, was informed by spending efficiency considerations. However, answers to the following questions will bring much clarity to spending efficiency case:
 - a. How much was supposed to be spent in training the 40,000 teachers under the previous arrangement?
 - b. How much was spent (if any) in training the 40,000 teachers under the current KA Technologies arrangement?
 - c. What specific expenditure lines will the US\$ 1.2 million be spent on?
5. As earlier mentioned, a Free and Open-Source Software, Edmodo Ghana was operationalized at the cost of about US\$ 1 million. What was the justification for spending about US\$1 million on a Free and Open-Source Software? The MoE must clarify.
6. The unfortunate happenings of today are symptoms of an opaquely managed GALOP project, making it difficult for critical CSOs to demand accountability in its implementation. Apart from there being no published report on implementation progress, procurement etc, deliberate requests for information on GALOP has been denied Eduwatch by the MoE. For the avoidance of doubt, the US\$218 million GALOP is by far the single largest in the history of the education sector. Its successful

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implementation with requisite outcomes depends to a large extent on the quality of accountability, which cannot be possible without a commitment to full disclosure and transparency by the MoE.

Recommendations

1. To put to rest the contention surrounding the Digital Learning training disclaimer by the GES and affirm the institutional credibility of MoE, **the World Bank should conduct an independent audit of the training by KA Technologies** to establish its scope, relevance, quality, and reach, and make public its findings.
2. To promote transparency and accountability in the management and implementation of GALOP, **the MoE must publish all Project Based Condition Reports, Annual Implementation Progress Reports and Implementation Completion Reports of GALOP on its website.**
3. The World Bank, GALOP funding partners, and the MoE should take advantage of GALOP's next Implementation Support Mission/Mid Term Review to revise existing Non-Disclosure Agreements on GALOP and commit the MoE to a more transparent management of GALOP while clarifying institutional roles to avoid conflicts.
4. The MoE must focus on its core function of policy implementation and coordination, and continue to provide support to the GES in policy implementation when required.
5. As reiterated over the years by corporate governance advocates, the current legal arrangement where the President appoints both Minister of Education, Boards and the Heads of Education Sector Institutions is not consistent with international best practice in public sector governance, as it has the potential of breeding impunity and blurring accountability. Parliament must amend our education laws to enable the Minister of Education appoint the leadership of Education Sector Institutions with approval of the President. The Minister is then held directly responsible for their performance.
6. In the immediate term, the Presidency must intervene to resolve the perceived factionalism at the MoE and GES, as it has a strong potential to negatively affect the implementation of education policies and programmes of the government.

Accra, 27/05/2022