

Spotlight on Education Delivery in Yendi Municipality and Mion District in Northern Ghana

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INTRODUCTION

On March 25, 2015, a leading private FM station in Accra Ghana, Joy FM, published a documentary titled, ‘Schools Under Trees’ and a follow up news article on its online news page titled, “The 6-year-old pupil of ‘school under tree’ is a nanny.”¹ The Joy FM documentary focuses on Tuya, a town in the Mion District. Mion District in the Northern Region of Ghana was carved out of the Yendi Municipality in 2012. Both the documentary and online article are a reflection of, and highlight the need to improve education policy and infrastructure delivery at the public primary school level in Ghana. Although Yendi Municipal seems to be better performing at the regional level, Mion in particular is one of the average performing districts in the North. To be sure, Mion is ranked 12th out of a total of 26 districts on a regional level and 146th out of a total of 216 districts in the first ever District League Table (DLT) developed by CDD-Ghana and UNICEF, Ghana office.²

Following the Joy FM story, I AM AWARE takes a critical look at education delivery in public primary schools in Yendi, and Mion. The analysis below, shows the trends in four key areas of education delivery in Yendi Municipality and Mion district spanning the 2010 to 2014 academic years.³

DECLINING ENROLLMENT RATES IN YENDI AND MION

At the beginning of the 2010/2011 academic year, Yendi Municipal had high enrollments rates. In the 2010/11 academic year, for instance, net enrollment at the primary level was 9 in every 10 pupils (90%); just 10 percentage points short of the base point of 100%. In the 2011/12 academic year, enrollment improved by 7 percentage points (97%), again very close to a 100%. However, enrollment dropped in the 2012/13 academic year to 85%; 5 percentage points, less than enrollment rates in the 2010/2011 academic year. The picture is not different in Mion even after it was carved out of Yendi. In the 2013/14 academic year, enrollment was 60%, just a little above half the base point percentage of 100%. This means that only 6 out of 10 schoolchildren were enrolled in public primary schools in the district. Table 1 below, provides the details of enrollment rates in Yendi Municipality and Mion District.

Table 1: Enrollment rates in Public Primary Schools in Yendi / Mion

Academic Years	Enrollment (Boys & Girls)	Net Enrollment (%)
2010/2011	30250	90
2011/2012	32782	97
2012/2013	33930	85
2013/2014 -Mion	10924	60

Data source: EMIS, 2014

Between 2010 – 2012, Mion was part of Yendi Municipality and was carved out of Yendi in 2012

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¹See: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/March-26th/the-6-year-old-pupil-of-school-under-tree-is-nanny.php>

² The District League Table is the first of its kind in Ghana. It was constructed with data covering 2012/13 and published in 2014, for details on the DLT, see, http://www.unicef.org/ghana/HLT_FACT_SHEET_FINAL_High_Res.pdf

³ The data analysis and interpretation presented in this document is a combination of data on Yendi Municipality and Mion District from the years 2010-2012. However, for the academic year 2013/14, we make a distinction between Mion and Yendi because Mion district is no longer apart of Yendi Municipality.

ENROLLMENT: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

'Some parents prefer to send their boys, instead of their girls, to school. Many of the girls in the community would have to do house chores or assist their parents on the farm. The few who are allowed to go to school are sometimes made to carry their younger siblings to school.' Joy Online (2015)

Gender parity in education is inherent in the second goal of the MDGs. It seeks to ensure education free of discrimination, and equal learning opportunities for boys and girls to realize their potential. Ghana's education policy also specifically seeks to ensure that the girl-child benefits from public primary education. For instance, in the President's State of the Nation Address in February 2015, mention is made of an attainment of a gender parity ratio of 1:1 at the basic level. This means that for each boy enrolled at the basic level, the same number of girls are enrolled⁴.

However, the evidence from data collected for the 4-year academic period, 2010-2014, does not show any achievement in increasing enrollment of girls in Yendi and Mion. Over the years, the numbers of male pupils in public primary schools in Yendi/Mion have exceeded those for female pupils. More than half the number of students enrolled in public primary schools in Yendi/Mion since the 2010/11 academic year are male (see table 2 below).

Table 2: Enrollment in Public Primary Schools in Yendi/Mion: Boys vs. Girls

Academic Year	Total Number of Pupils	Boys	Boys (%)	Girls	Girls (%)	Boys vs. Girls (%)
2010/2011	30250	16628	55	13622	45	22
2011/2012	32782	17831	54	14951	46	19
2012/2013	33930	18502	55	15428	45	20
2013/2014 -Mion	10924	6262	57	4662	43	34

Data source: EMIS, 2014

Between 2010 – 2012, Mion was part of Yendi Municipality and was carved out of Yendi in 2012

For Yendi Municipal, the number of female students in public primary schools increased marginally from 13,622 girls in the 2010/11 academic year to 15,428 in the 2012/13 academic year, representing an increase in female enrollment of about 13%. Similarly, the number of male students in public primary schools also rose from 16,628 boys in the 2010/11 academic year to 18,502 boys in the 2012/13 academic year, representing an increase in male enrollment by about 11%. Although the numbers showed an overall increase in enrollment of both genders, the increase in total male enrollment exceeded total female enrollment from the 2010/11 academic year to the 2013/14 academic year by 95%⁵ (see highlighted portion of table 2 above).

The trend of low female enrollment remains the same even after Mion was carved out of Yendi. The number of boys in public primary schools in Mion in the 2013/14 academic year was 6,262 as against 4,662 girls in public primary schools for that year. This means that for that academic year, there were approximately 34% more boys in public primary schools than girls. The story published by Joy FM highlighted the low education levels of girls in Mion district. The data presented in Table 2 confirms this.

⁴ The President indicated that gender parity at the basic level was of major concern in education policy formulation at the basic level. For that matter, over 92,000 girls had benefitted from the take-home ration program in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. See, <http://www.presidency.gov.gh/2015sona.pdf>

⁵ This figure was obtained by summing each of the percentages showed in the column Boys vs Girls (%) in Table 2. Each figure defines in percentage terms, the extent to which male enrollment exceeds female enrollment in Yendi/Mion.

ENCOURAGING TRENDS IN QUALITY OF TEACHERS

'[...] there's no school here. So due to these circumstances we found it necessary that there are more children in these communities so we should find them out and teach them small, small'- Joy FM, 2015

Quality of teaching is intrinsic to learning. Teachers must be trained so they can deliver quality education to children. Evidence from the data shows that the number of trained teachers posted to Yendi has been on a steady increase over time. Evidence from the data shows that there has been a steady increase in the quality of teachers posted to Yendi district. In the 2010/11 academic year, there were 771 teachers in public primary schools in the Municipality and only 294 (38%) were trained. However, in 2011/12 academic year, although the number of teachers dropped to 609, 371 (61%) were trained --- an improvement of 23 percentage points from the previous academic year. The 2012/13 academic year, also saw an increase in the number of trained teachers posted to Yendi from the previous academic year. Out of the 656 teachers in public primary schools in Yendi, 419 (64%) of them were trained, indicating a marked improvement of 26 percentage points from the 2010/2011 academic year. Table 3 below shows the details.

Table 3: Number of Teachers in Public Primary Schools in Yendi/Mion

Academic Year	Number of Teachers	Number of Trained Teachers	Trained Teachers (%)
2010-2011	771	294	38
2011/2012	609	371	61
2012/2013	656	419	64
2013/2014 -Mion	557	391	84

Data source: EMIS, 2014

Between 2010 – 2012, Mion was part of Yendi Municipality and was carved out of Yendi in 2012

For Mion, in the 2013/2014 academic year, out of 557 teachers, an impressive 391 (84%) of them were trained (see table 3 above). It is puzzling that although the data suggests that the number of trained teachers has increased, the Joy FM story contradicts the data. According to the story, the school in Tuya, which is a town in Mion, had only two untrained teachers. The so-called teachers happened to have secondary school leaver's certification, meaning they did not have the requisite training for teachers. This is interesting because the data on trained teachers in Yendi Municipal and Mion, shown above in Table 3, show a steady increase in the number of trained teachers and therefore raises questions on the whereabouts of the assigned trained teachers.

SCHOOL CHILDREN WITHOUT SEATING AND WRITING PLACES

Places where pupils would sit, write, and engage in learning activities are crucial to the role that schools play in the development of children. In order for them to learn, comprehend and practice, children need to feel comfortable at assigned places so that they can properly engage in learning activities. As such, seats and desks are important to basic education and contribute immensely to the development of motor skills such as writing and even drawing.

Evidence from the data presented below in table 4, shows that not all children in public primary schools in Yendi and Mion have seating and writing places. Although the data shows that seating places for children in public primary schools in Yendi improved over the academic years from 2010 to 2012, the Municipality has never met the 100% base point in the provision of seating and writing places for children. In the 2010/11

academic year, for instance, only 16,521 children had seating places out of 30,250 children in public primary schools in Yendi (see table 4 below).

Table 4: Percentage of Seating Places and Writing Places for Public Primary Schools in Yendi/Mion

Academic Year	Total Enrollment	Seating places	Seating Places (%)	Writing Places	Writing Places (%)
2010/2011	30250	16521	55	15641	52
2011/2012	32782	13122	40	12571	38
2012/2013	33930	19977	59	20254	60
2013/2014 - Mion	10924	5007	46	5109	47

Data source: EMIS, 2014

Between 2010 – 2012, Mion was part of Yendi Municipality and was carved out of Yendi in 2012

In the 2011/12 academic year, the number of students enrolled was 32,782 with the number of children who had seating places being 13,122, representing 40% of total enrollment in public primary schools in Yendi for that academic year. For the 2012/13 academic year, 19,977 children out of 33,930 had seating places. Comparatively the percentage of seating places for children dropped by 15 percentage points from 55% in the 2010/11 academic year to 40% in the 2011/12 academic years, and rose by 19 percentage points to 59% in the 2012/13 academic year (see table 4 above).

Similarly, in 2012/13, the data showed that 60%, that is, 20,254 children out of 33,930 children in Yendi had writing places - a vast improvement from the previous years. In 2010/2011, for instance, only a little above half (52%) that is, 15,641 out of 30,250 students had writing places. And, in the 2011/12 academic year, only 12,571 (38%) out of the 32,782 students had seating places. After the creation of Mion, less than half (46% and 47%) of the number of students, that is, 5,007 students and 5,109 students out of 10,924 students, had seating and writing places in the 2013/14 academic year respectively.

WHERE HOPE REMAINS

Joy FM reported that pupils in the school in Tuya come from four communities dotted around the district. Although the residents in these communities are familiar with challenges of the children and the ‘schools-under-trees,’ a lot needs to be done to deal with service delivery gaps such as the lack of school infrastructure, the absence of trained teachers and low enrollment of girls in primary schools.

The Joy FM article reports that the District Chief Executive for Mion, Daniel Makanda, has dreams to turn his district into an international-standard education hotspot. But that hope will remain a mirage because there’s no plan on paper to show what will be done to help the poor children of Tuya. This is where I AM AWARE comes in. I AM AWARE works to empower citizens everywhere in Ghana with information on the state of public goods and services delivery to enable them hold duty bearers to account. Parents whose children attend public primary schools need to ask more questions of their schools. It is their ‘right’ to know that their districts provide the education services they promise. If universal basic education has been attained⁶, the case of Mion district is one example of many districts with similar problems in education service delivery. I AM AWARE will be working to ensure that information on many others is duly provided.

⁶ In the 2015 State of the Nation’s Address, the President mentioned the attainment of Universal Basic Education. To that end, 24,117 schoolchildren were enrolled in schools under the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program, which commenced in 2014.

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