

Spotlight Series on the State of Education, Health, Rural Water and Security Service Delivery in Kwaebibirem District

By Gildfred Boateng Asiamah, Mohammed Awal and Newton Norviewu

INTRODUCTION

Improvement in public service delivery outcomes tend to benefit poor people more and is considered the responsibility of governments (World Development Report, 2004)¹. In Ghana, like most developing countries, government continues to be a major service provider of education, health, security, water, sanitation, among others. The major responsibility of government in providing public goods is to ensure quality, equity and efficiency. A decentralized service delivery bolsters efficiency and responsiveness in the delivery of social services or public goods (Robinson, 2007)².

Ghana's decentralization policy allows the transfer of a great deal of responsibility and resources for the delivery of social services to District Assemblies. Under the decentralized system of local government, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are largely responsible for improving the quality of life of their citizens through the effective delivery of public services such as education, health, water and security. The scope of functions performed by the MMDAs make them very relevant for promoting human development as well as contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³ at the district level.

This edition of *I Am Aware Spotlight Series* provides a snapshot of the progress and setbacks in the provision of health, education, rural water and security services in the Kwaebibirem district between 2014-2016. In this issue, we use evidence from the I Am Aware data to assess the extent of service delivery in the district in order to measure how it performed, particularly within the District's Medium Term Development Plan (DMTDP) (2014 – 2017).

DISTRICT PROFILE

Kwaebibirem is a district in the Eastern Region of Ghana with the administrative district capital as Kade. It has a population of 113, 721 with 42.7% being rural inhabitants and 57.3% urban residents⁴. The mission of the district is to mobilize and utilize resources to ensure the total development of its citizens⁵. Through its 2014 – 2017 Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), the district sought to address identified gaps in access and quality provision of basic social services such as education, health and safe water for its citizens.

¹ World Development Report (2004). Making services work for the poor. Washington DC, USA: World Bank & Oxford Press.

² Robinson, M. (2007). Introduction: decentralising service delivery? Evidence and policy implication, *IDS Bulletins* 38(1), 1-28.

³ The Sustainable Development Goals represent a new global agenda (2015-2030) that seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and promote total inclusiveness in the course of promoting sustainable development along economic, social and environment means.

⁴ Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 National Population and Housing Census

⁵ See the composite budget of the Kwaebibirem district assembly for the 2016 fiscal year

Kwaebibirem district is one of the project districts under the Ghana Center for Democratic Development's (CDD-Ghana) flagship social accountability project dubbed: I Am Aware (IAA). The IAA project provides information on the state of social service delivery across all districts in Ghana to enable citizens hold duty bearers accountable. Additionally, it seeks to highlight gaps and progress in service delivery with the aim of promoting responsiveness, and evidence-driven policy making.

FINDINGS IN BRIEF

- The quality of life of the people in Kwaebibirem district improved significantly (using the District League Table (DLT)⁶ scores as a measure of wellbeing).
The DLT scores for the district improved from 43 in 2014 to 62 in 2017. The improvement in the scores was mainly due to:
 - Improvement in pupils/trained teacher ratio over the period,
 - Overall performance in three Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) core subjects that is, English, Science and Mathematics were significantly above the regional and national averages.
- However, several challenges in the delivery of some social services persist:
 - For education, there was a consistent decline in the supply of Mathematics, English and Science textbooks,
 - In the health sector, the supply of skilled delivery attendants declined while maternal mortality increased at the same time,
 - Majority of the rural population in the district do not have access to safe water,
 - The police to population ratio in the district is very low.

FOCUS ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN FOUR KEY SECTORS

The following sections discuss identified gaps and progress made in service delivery in four sectors – education, health, rural water and security. In the education sector, we examine the provision of school furniture and textbooks, pupils per trained teacher ratio and Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) pass rate in Mathematics, English and Science for Junior High Schools (JHS). Health service delivery focuses on the rate of skilled delivery in the district as compared to regional and national averages over time. The section on rural water coverage provides an overview of the percentage of rural population who have access to safe water. Finally, for the security sector, we examine the police to population ratio in the district in comparison to regional and national averages.

EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY

The broad objective for the education sector in the Kwaebibirem district is to ensure equitable and inclusive education through efficient and effective allocation of resources to all public schools⁷. This objective is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 and the Education For All (EFA) Goal 6 (2000 – 2015) – global education policies aimed at promoting quality and inclusive education especially. Improving all aspects of quality education requires multifarious investment in education inputs such as

⁶ The District League Table (DLT) is a simple ranking tool of the level of development in each of Ghana's 216 Districts. Read more about DLT from <http://iamawareghana.com/index.php?id=71>

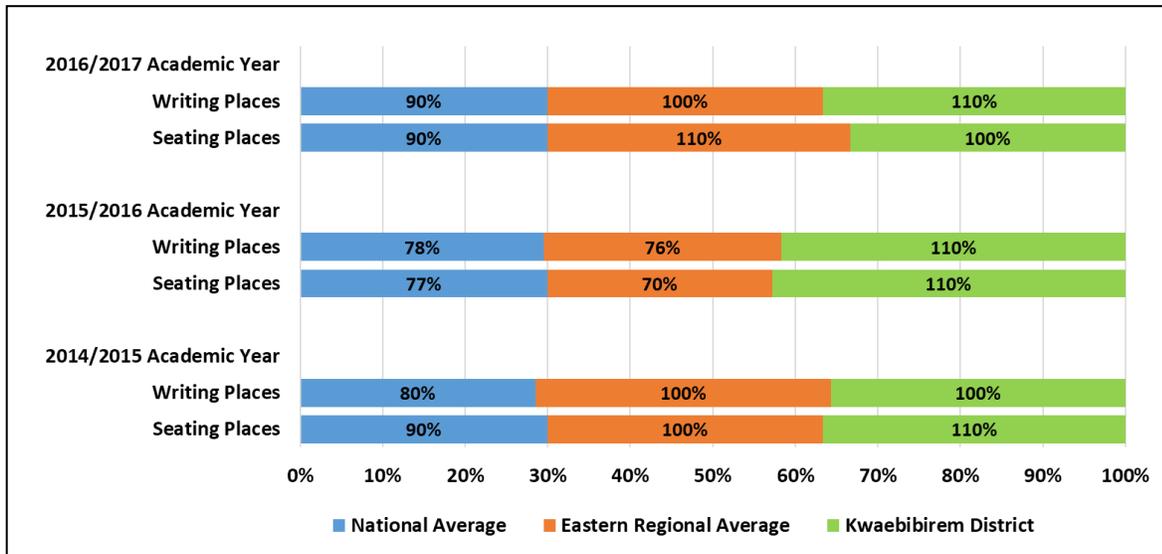
⁷ See the composite budget of the Kwaebibirem district assembly for the 2016 fiscal year

adequate provision of reading materials, furniture, quality instruction, quality/ trained teachers, among others.

Provision of School Furniture and Supply of Core Textbooks

The provision of seating and writing places for JHS pupils over two (2) academic years (2014 – 2016) remained fairly stable between 100% and 110% (See Figure 1), an indication that every JHS pupil in public schools in the Kwaebibirem district could have access to a seating and a writing place. As shown in Figure 1, provision of seating and writing places in Kwaebibirem district was relatively better than the regional and national averages.

Figure 1: Access to Seating and Writing Places for JHS Pupils

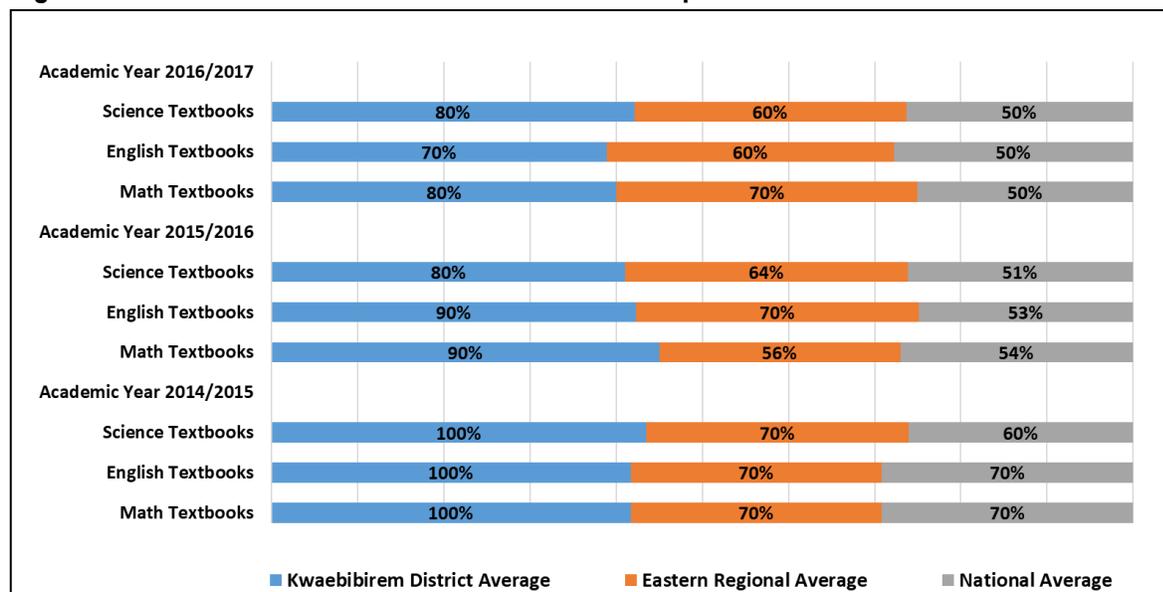


Source: Authors' construction from EMIS (Ministry of Education 2014-2016). Retrieved from www.iamawareghana.com

While there was enough sitting and writing places for JHS pupils in Kwaebibirem district, the availability of textbooks for core subjects (Mathematics, Science and English) declined consistently from 2014/2015 academic year to 2016/17 academic year. More specifically, the availability of Mathematics textbooks for JHS pupils declined consistently 20% between 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 academic year. English textbooks declined by 30% between the same period; and Science textbooks decline by 20% (See Figure 2). This is an indication that in Kwaebibirem, access to textbooks by JHS pupils for class and home assignments has reduced.

Despite the declining number of available core textbooks for JHS pupils, the situation in Kwaebibirem district is much better than the Eastern regional and national averages (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Access to Core Textbooks for Public JHS Pupils



Source: Authors' construction from EMIS (Ministry of Education 2014-2016). Retrieved from www.iamawareghana.com

Pupils to Trained Teacher Ratio

Pupils to teacher ratio measures the number of pupils in relation to every single teacher (EFA, 2015). Availability of trained teachers/teaching force is a necessary for promoting quality education. A lower ratio of pupils to trained teacher is preferable since it gives pupils relatively easier access to their teachers and, effective supervision of pupils by teachers.

Kwaebibirem district has a low ratio of pupils per trained teacher in public JHS' in the district. The pupils per trained teacher ratio reduced from 19:1 in 2014/15 academic year to 17:1 in 2016/17 academic year. This means that there could be one trained teacher for every JHS pupils in the public schools in the district as of 2016 (See Table 1). Notwithstanding, the pupils per trained teacher ratio is higher than the regional and national averages.

Table 1: Pupils to Trained Teacher Ratio for Public JHS from 2014-2016

Academic Year	Kwaebibirem	Regional	National
	Pupils per trained teacher	Pupils per trained teacher	Pupils per trained teacher
2014/2015	19	16	18
2015/2016	19	14	19
2016/2017	17	13	16

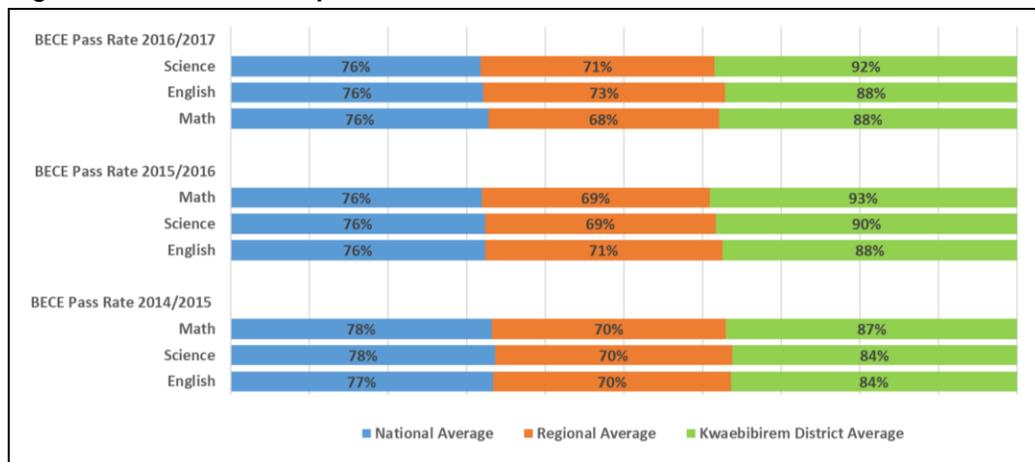
Source: Authors' construction from EMIS (Ministry of Education 2014-2016). Retrieved from www.iamawareghana.com

Pass Rate in Three Core Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) Subjects

The BECE performance of the district in Mathematics, English and Science remained above the regional and national averages. The pass rates in the three subjects improved marginally between 2014/15 and

2016/17 academic years. Science saw the overall highest improvement from 84% in 2014/15 academic year to 92% in 2016/17 academic year. The pass rate in English also increased from 84% in 2014/15 academic year to 88% in 2016/17 academic year. Again, the pass rate in Mathematics increased marginally from 87% to 88% between 2014/15 and 2016/17 academic years. The district consistently outperformed the Regional and the National BECE pass rates over the period (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Trend in BECE pass rates: Kwaebibirem district



Source: Authors' construction from EMIS (Ministry of Education 2014-2016). Retrieved from www.iamawareghana.com

HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY

The provision of quality health service has major impact on livelihoods especially the poor. Among the consistent global health strategies is the commitment to ensure improvement in the percentage of skilled delivery/ care and reduction in maternal mortality ratio. The SDG target is to reduce maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100, 000 live births. One of the critical indicators for reducing maternal mortality is the availability of skilled care during childbirth⁸. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), skilled care has huge impact in saving the lives of women and their unborn babies⁹.

Skilled Delivery in Kwaebibirem

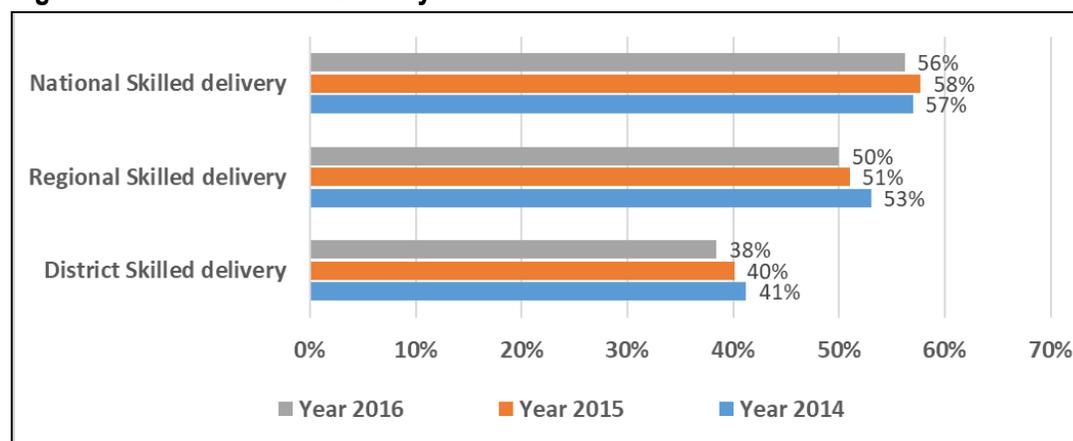
The percentage of skilled delivery in Kwaebibirem district declined from an already low level of 41.2% in 2014 to 38.4% in 2016 (See Figure 4). This means that less than two (2) out of every five (5) pregnant women who were delivered of babies were not attended to by skilled health personnel. Notably, the percentage of skilled delivery in the district is significantly below the global target for skilled delivery, which currently stands at 80% (World Health Organisation 2015, cited in Apanga & Awoonor-Williams 2017, p.1057)¹⁰. Further, the district skilled delivery remains low by comparison to regional and national averages (See Figure 4).

⁸ See <https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/delivery-care/e>

⁹ www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs348/en/

¹⁰ Apanga, P. A & Awoonor-Williams J. K (2017). Improving Skilled Birth Attendance in Ghana: An Evidence-Based Policy Brief, *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 28(3), p.1056-1065

Figure 4: Trend in Skilled Delivery



Source: Authors' construction from Ghana Health Service Annual Report 2016 for regional and national averages, for district level data from www.iamawareghana.com

RURAL WATER COVERAGE

Provision of safe water remains one of the essential services provided by governments. Accordingly, the government of Ghana outlined systematic steps to provide safe water to all Ghanaians by 2025. In the Water Sector Strategic Development Plan (WSSDP) (2012 – 2025), the state sought to increase rural and small towns water coverage from 59% in 2009 to 76% in 2015.¹¹ In Ghana, the MMDAs are directly responsible for the implementation of small town and rural water supply in their districts with the support of Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) (ibid). Therefore, in Kwaebibirem district, the primary responsibility of providing safe water rests with the District Assembly.

Access to safe water in Kwaebibirem

The rural population with access to safe water in the district decreased marginally from 59.6% in 2014 to 58.5% in 2016. As of 2016, about 42, 833 people living in rural areas in the district did not have access to safe water. By comparison, the district has lower rural water coverage than the national average though it remains a little above the regional average (See Table 2).

Table 2: Rural Water Coverage in Kwaebibirem district

YEAR	Kwaebibirem Rural Population	Kwaebibirem District coverage (%)	Regional Average (%)	National Average (%)
2014	59,058	59.6	57.6	64
2015	59,726	59.1	57.6	65
2016	60,409	58.5	57.3	62

Source: Authors construction CWSA (Community Water and Sanitation Agency 2014-2016). Retrieved from www.iamawareghana.com

¹¹ Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing (2014). Water Sector Strategic Development Plan (2012-2015): Sustainable Water and Basic Sanitation for All by 2015, Accra: Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing.

SECURITY

A low population to police ratio is necessary but not sufficient measure of safety or security within the state. The United Nations (UN), therefore, prescribes a minimum of 500:1 population to police ratio to ensure security or basic law and order within the state. Ghana, generally, has a high population to police ratio with very high inter-district variations. At the end of 2016, the average national population to police ratio was 1343:1 which doubles the UN minimum target.

Police to Population ratio

The district had a high population to police ratio of about 2837:1 as at 2016. Thus, for every single police personnel, there are about 2,837 citizens to protect which is more than twice the UN required ratio.

Notably, while the number of people in the district increased between 2014 and 2016, the number of police personnel in the district declined within the same period leading to a drastic increase in the police to population ratio (See Table 3). In comparison to the regional and national averages, the district has a high population to police ratio. The low level of police to population ratio coupled with the poorly resourced police administration in the country¹² suggests that there is a high risk of personal security in the district.

Table 3: Population per Police in Kwaebibirem District

Year	No. of police in Kwaebibirem District [A]	2016 GSS Population Figures [B]	Police per population in the district [=B/A]
2014	59	123,145	2087
2015	46	127487	2771
2016	46	130,481	2837
<i>Change Over time</i>	-13	+ 7, 336	-750

Source: Authors construction from Ghana Police Service, 2014-2016. Retrieved from www.iamawareghana.com

¹² The Inspector General of Police, Mr. David Asante-Apeatu admits that the police are poorly resourced to effectively carry out their duties of protecting lives and property. See <http://www.pulse.com.gh/news/lapaz-police-shooting-igp-admits-police-officers-are-poorly-equipped-id6996282.html>

GOING FORWARD

There are high prospects of improving the quality of service delivery under Ghana's current decentralized system of government. However, these can only be achieved through deliberate policies aimed at empowering citizens to hold duty bearers accountable while enhancing the capacity of civil servants and/or service providers to be more responsive to the demands of citizens. Thus, to ensure improved service delivery, we recommend the following institutional and policy measures:

- Enhance more transparency in service delivery data at the district level. Service delivery data (usually aggregated at district/regional/national level) should be disaggregated to community and or facility level to enhance citizen's understanding and facilitate community level mobilization or advocacy for improved service delivery. Disaggregated community level service delivery data is more likely to be relatable and understandable to community members. Hence, relatively easier to mobilize citizens to demand quality services.
- Deepen decentralization to improve accountability of the District Assembly in service provision. There should be more space for citizens to participate in the governance processes especially, in the development planning and budgeting processes of the district. Additionally, citizens should be educated on the accountability structures at the local level so that they can take advantage of them.
- Deepen inter-sectoral collaboration to improve service delivery accountability among civil servants at the local level. The District Planning and Coordinating Unit should be strengthened in the use of evidence-based planning and monitoring to identify and respond to gaps in service delivery.

Team
aware