

Call for Contributions: Edited Book, “Education in Ghana: History, Policy and the Future”

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We invite contributions from interested researchers and academics to an edited volume provisionally titled “**Education in Ghana: History, Policy and the Future**”, scheduled to be published in late 2020 or early 2021.

While education broadly defined, has been known in Ghana and other parts of Africa since pre-European times, the origin of formal education or western-style education in Ghana is linked to the presence and activities of Europeans the late fifteenth century. As a logical sequence, the Portuguese who were first to arrive on the shores of Ghana were also the first to start a school at Elmina in 1529 to teach writing, religion and reading to African children. Though, with limited degrees of success, the Dutch, Danes, and the English, also, established castle schools during the 17th century and beyond with a focus not different from the Portuguese. In subsequent decades, Christian Missionaries took up leading roles in implementing western-style education in Ghana. After the signing of the Bond of 1844 – which presaged the eventual colonisation of Ghana in 1874, education provision improved significantly. By 1881, seven years after Ghana was formally colonised by the British, about one hundred and thirty-nine schools scattered disproportionately across the country were providing some form of elementary learning to Ghanaian children. Yet, the systems of education varied widely. This prompted the colonial administration to intervene to streamline education delivery. Subsequently, the first education plan was formulated and implemented in 1882.¹ However, in these early stages, the education system targeted limited goals. The Missionaries – who owned many of the schools sought to use Christian education to pacify the African. Yet, some instructions were also geared towards preparing the young Africans for employment in European commercial enterprises and performing supportive roles in the colonial administration.² During the second decade of the 20th century the colonial administration responded to local demands for higher education and established the Achimota College, which

¹ C. K. Graham, *The History of Education in Ghana from the Earliest Times to the Declaration of Independence*. London: Routledge (1971).

² Ibid.

was officially opened in 1927. Subsequent agitation for university education led to the establishment of the University College of the Gold Coast in 1948.³ From this period, the education of the youth of Ghana was set on a somewhat sound footing.

Yet, from the second decade of the 20th century and beyond, reforms that targeted aligning education, especially at the primary and secondary school levels with the peculiar circumstances of Ghana, could not achieve the intended outcome. Thus, after independence in 1957, Ghana inherited an education structure modelled on the British system. As Foster succinctly put it “the post-independence period has not been characterised by any overwhelming divergence of the Ghanaian educational system from that of the former metropole. Sometimes the opposite has occurred in that some aspects of the system have continued to approximate more closely to the English prototype.”⁴ Several attempts to diffuse primary and secondary education more widely, and many efforts to reorient education delivery, and redirect the focus of education, to achieve outcomes that are contextually as well as globally relevant have either produced unanticipated consequences or failed dismally. For example, the 1987 education reform, perhaps, the most comprehensive since independence, which sought to redirect the highly academic focus of Ghana’s education to a practically and vocationally oriented system to provide for Ghana’s human resource needs have produced outcomes far from the intended goals. The much recent Anamuah-Mensah reform was premised on the need to reorient the content of the education curriculum to build human capital for industrial growth, preserve cultural identity and indigenous knowledge systems, and to promote creativity, innovation, science and technology in education. Indeed, the Anamuah-Mensah reform was meant to correct the shortfalls in educational outcomes since the 1987 reform. Yet, we are still to witness any palpable transformation since its implementation in 2007.

While there has been increasing discussions about educational issues in Ghana, there is relative lack of research on a comprehensive and critical history of education that considers the development, structure, nature and content of colonial education and its outcomes, policy formulation, policy implementation and outcomes, curriculum reforms and their actual impact on Ghanaian societies, and the role of teachers in policy formulation and implementation. Again, the politico-economic context that drives educational policy directives, the impact of teacher training on educational outcomes, the role of teacher union activism on student performance and educational outcomes and more importantly how past educational developments are shaping the present educational outcomes and directions have received but limited scholarly attention. Examining education-related issues from a historical perspective is important not only because it will illumine superior knowledge of more pressing issues in the education sector, but more so because it will teach us lessons that can inform future directions in education.

Our task, therefore, is a much ambitious one. We seek to bring together contributions that go beyond ordinary descriptive accounts of growth in education provision in Ghana. We are rather interested in research that investigates any aspect of educational development in Ghana from inter-

³ Francis Agbodeka, *A History of University of Ghana: Half a Century of Higher Education (1948-1998)*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services (1998).

⁴ Philip Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*. University of Chicago Press (1965). p...

and multi-disciplinary perspectives that is theoretically informed, empirically grounded, methodologically sound, and firmly rooted in the historical context of educational development in Ghana.

Suggested themes:

- a. Education in Ghana before European influence
- b. Mission education
- c. Educational developments and outcomes in the colonial period
- d. Curriculum Issues, past and present
- e. Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development
- f. Education policy-making and related issues
- g. The teaching profession and related issues
- h. Technical/Vocational/Industrial Education/Skills Development
- i. Gender issues in education
- j. Political issues in education
- k. Subject Associations in Education
- l. Educational infrastructure and access
- m. Issues in higher education
- n. Issues in legal education
- o. Indigenous knowledge in education
- p. Language policy and education
- q. Education, brain drain and the diaspora
- r. Student activism and its impact on education

These themes are suggestive and are by no means exhaustive. Potential contributors may propose topics related to any aspect of education in Ghana. Abstracts not exceeding 500 words and indicating key findings, methodological and theoretical approaches, and showing how the proposed topic is of historical relevance should be sent to Dr Amoako-Gyampah at akwasikwarteng_amoakogyampah@yahoo.com. Abstracts will be received until the 28th of February 2020 and they will be considered on a rolling basis.