The Role Of Non-governmental Organisations (ngos) In Expanding Access To And Participation In Basic Education In The Bongo District

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The study explores the role of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in expanding access to and participation in basic education in the Bongo District of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The research design used for the study is based on descriptive survey. Basic school teachers, officials of NGOs and District Education Office Staff constituted the population for the study. The final sample size stood at one hundred and fifty nine (159). Data was gathered using a questionnaire in the form of a likert scale and interview guides. Major findings of the study among others are that NGOs in their quest to promote access and participation provide means of transport to pupils, school uniform and footwear to pupils. They also engage in monitoring and supervision of instructions in schools. They are also beset with some challenges in terms of funding and other related matters.

KEYWORDS: Access and Participation, Basic Education, Non Governmental Organization (NGOs)

INTRODUCTION

Education is the key to development and for that matter; the success of every nation on the globe highly depends on it. Education therefore, is a major instrument in the development of the human resources of a country. Education brings about economic, political, social, as well as cultural development in the world. A nation full of an illiterate folk is seen as an underdeveloped or

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developing country. In this regard therefore, politicians are pressed to promise more of it; parents look upon it as the principal "avenue" of their children; international agencies sanctify it as human requirement and economists look upon it as the process of human capital formation (Harbison, 1973).

In the 1987/88 academic years, a New Education Reform came into being by the then Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government. The reform had in its package, Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) to be accessed by all Ghanaian children of school going age, to buttress this fact therefore, "government shall within two years after parliament first meets after the coming into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education" (Chapter 6, article 38, clause 2 of 1992 Constitution).

Again, Article 25 clause (i) of the same constitution states that 'All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realization of that among other things, basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all' (Article 25, clause (i)). To this end, one of the major objectives of FCUBE is to increase Access to and Participation in basic education.

Mention must also be made of some other stakeholders in education who have over the years contributed to the development of education in the country in terms of expanding access and participation. For instance, "non-governmental organizations, donors and the private sector are involved in the development of education. Notable among these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) includes the religious organizations and World Vision International" (Atakpa, 1995 p45).

Baseline information provided by the coordinator of NGOs at the District Education Office revealed that there are currently seven (7) NGOs operating in the Bongo District of the Upper East Region of Ghana. They are the Catholic Relief Services which was the first to come to the district in the 1980's, World Vision Ghana which came to the district in 1996 (WVG), Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Education Quality For All (EQUALL), Government Accountability Improves Trust (GAIT), and Regional Advisory Information Network System (RAINS) which were the last batch to have come to the district in 2001.

Though the NGOs in the area differ in terms of their nature and organization, it is important to state that, their operations and activities are geared towards the development of education at the basic level and this is one of their priority areas. Information given by the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the District Education Office indicated that with their interventions, more children of school going age have been enrolled into schools over the years. This notwithstanding, access and participation at the basic level still leaves

much to be desired and it is a worry for stakeholders as far as the FCUBE policy is concerned.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Find out the role NGOs play in expanding access and participation of basic education in the area.

2. Find out challenges that face these NGOs in the area with regard to expanding access and participation of basic education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions did direct the focus of the study:

1. What contributions have NGOs in the area made towards the expansion of access and participation in education at the basic level?

2. What challenges face these NGOs in the area as regards expanding access to and participation in basic education?

MEANING OF ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

Access refers to the number of places available in the school system for pupils or students to be admitted. Access is essentially the measure of a result (Carron & Chau, 1981). Participation on the other hand refers to the number of pupils or students who gain admission (Education Review Committee, 2002). The concern of stakeholders in education is about the availability of educational facilities in the system, and what proportion of children takes part in education. In this regard, access and participation is crucial in the educational enterprise. The indicators that depict access and participation include the following:

1. Admission Rate: This refers to the proportion of new entries at a level expressed as a percentage of the population of official admission age group.

2. Enrolment Rate: This is the measurement to estimate the quantitative level of development of an educational system. Types of enrolment rate include gross enrolment, net enrolment and age specific enrolment rate.

3. Gross Enrolment: It is the measure of total enrolment in a given educational level regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding official age for that level.

4. Net Enrolment: It refers to the enrolment of pupils of the official age for the level of education out of the official age group of the corresponding level of the official age or those about it.

5. Age-specific rate measures enrolment for a specific age group.

MEANING OF BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education, as used in UNICEF (1992) publications and conferences as well as national policy documents and statements, include both out of school literacy and skill training programme. It also includes primary education. Basic education is defined as 'the first nine years of formal education made up of a six-year primary education and a three year junior secondary school' (The New Educational Reform 1997 cited in Education Review Committee, 2002 p.22). The Committee further indicated that the Evans-Anform Commission of 1986 explains basic education as the minimum amount of education that every Ghanaian child has the right to access in order to make him or her functional in society.

Additionally, basic education is defined as "the minimum period of schooling needed to ensure that children acquire basic literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills as well as skills for creativity and healthy living"(Education Review Committee,2002, p.22). Accordingly, basic education should consist of two years kindergarten, six years primary and three years junior secondary school thereby making a total of eleven years.

Regarding the objectives of basic education at the kindergarten level, the intent is to: pre-dispose children to conditions of formal education. Nurture children in safe environments with the right infrastructure that will enable them to become healthy and strong. Strengthen primary education through the provision of quality pre-school education, let children cultivate the habit of learning and finally minimize gender barriers, which seem to affect girls even before they enrol into the primary school. The objectives of primary education include aiming at consolidating the knowledge and skills acquired at the kindergarten level, laying foundation of inquiry, creativity and innovation, developing sound moral attitudes and appreciation of one's cultural heritage and identity and inculcating good citizenship in children to enable them to participate in national development. In the case of the objectives of junior secondary education, they include among other things, to consolidate knowledge and skills acquired at the primary level, to discover aptitudes and potentials in children, to induce in children the desire for self-improvement, to let children appreciate the use of the hand as well as the mind, and the ability to understand the environment and the need to sustain it in order to prevent it

from depletion (Education Review Committee, 2002). All in all, basic education is expected to provide or equip the child of about six years at primary 1 to 14 years at junior secondary, the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will serve as the basis for further learning in future.

MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NGOS

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are described as private, self-governing, formal and non-profit (Gordenkor & Weiss, 1995). This definition has however brought about two debates. The first being the extent to which NGOs act on behalf of or represent civil society and the second being the relationship between the NGO sector and the state. According to Martens (2002), NGO is an expression, which was first coined by the United Nation (UN) after the Second World War. A more operational definition of NGOs might thus be, self-governing, private, not-for profit organizations that are geared towards improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people. For an organization to be an NGO in the true sense of the word, it should fulfil the following criteria:

Firstly, it should be autonomous, neither depending substantially on the state for its funds though it may-and often does-receive a proportion of its funds from public sources. Secondly, it should be non-profit-making, the funds it acquires being destined exclusively for the projects it undertakes.

As a broad generalization, NGOs work to promote the economic and social development of the poorer nations of the world, almost all of them in the planet are development oriented. It must be made categorically clear that even in developed countries, NGOs, of course, assist the most underprivileged sections of the populations.

Traditionally, education and health issues have been the principal foci of NGOs though NGOs have now diversified their activities worldwide into other areas of interest such as agriculture, environment protection, minority rights, and appropriate technology. NGOs are highly diverse groups of all shapes and sizes ranging from the worldwide specialized bodies such as the Red Cross or the international Planned Parenthood federations, which may employ a lot of helpers up to thousands, while others are made up of tiny single office bodies run by a handful of dedicated volunteers in their spare time. Also, the vision and mission statements of NGOs differ remarkably worldwide though they may sometimes have some commonalities in their development agenda.

NGOs have played not only an increasingly significant part in development cooperation in the past decades, but also an increasingly public one. NGOs held centre stage in the media during the worst of the African

famine of 1984/1985 years. As organizations dedicated to the pursuit of development, they are not, of course, without their critics. There are those who claim that too great a proportion of their funds they raise go to cover their administrative costs; some also say that their field workers are too young, too inexperienced; others too believe that the structures the NGOs work to build are doomed to crumble like sand castles with incoming tide, once they pack their bags and leave.

As to whether this is a truism, what does seem certain is that, for all their merits, NGOs are not the answer to everything in development. They cannot, for instance fill the role played by official donors in the funding of some major infrastructural projects and official donors and governments abdicate their responsibilities in favour of the NGOs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research design, profile of the study area, population, sample size and sampling techniques as well as the research instrument.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher employed the descriptive survey methodology for the study. This design involves the collection of data in order to test hypothesis or research questions on the subject of the study. In descriptive survey design, the researcher draws a sample from the population of interests and generalizations are made taking into consideration their responses. Descriptive surveys are practical to the researcher and identify present conditions and at the same time point to the present needs. The descriptive survey is regarded by social scientist as a very important method, especially where large populations are involved, and it is widely used in educational research since data gathered through descriptive survey represent field conditions. Therefore, descriptive survey describes and interprets what it is. It is concerned with conditions that exist; practices that prevail, beliefs and attitudes that are held, processes that are on-going and trends that are developing (Osuala, 1993).Additionally, this type of design seeks to test research questions and therefore, based on the research questions that were raised in the study to direct its focus, the study easily lends itself to the descriptive sample survey.

THE PROFILE OF BONGO DISTRICT

The Bongo District of the Upper East Region of Ghana has its administrative capital called Bongo. The District occupies a landmass of 459.5sq. Km. The

vegetation is the guinea savannah type with large expanse of rocks covering two thirds of the total land. Rainfall is very low and this affects crop production and animal rearing.Geographically, the district is located on latitude 10o, 55"N. In terms of its travel directions, it is 850km north east of Accra, 175km north of Tamale and 15km north of Bolgatanga. According to the Population Census (2000), there are 77,885 people in the district. The male population is 31,880 and the female population is 46,005. Information provided by the PRO of GES in the district in a preliminary visit, revealed that the district has five (5) circuits, four hundred and sixty five (465) teachers and seventy three (73) basic schools according to statistics for the 2012/2013 academic year. The breakdown is as follows:

Table 1
2012-2013 Statistics on Basic Education in Bongo.

Name of Circuit	No. of Primary School	No. of J.S.S	No. of Teachers
Central	9	4	101
East	11	3	80
West	10	6	121
North-East	12	3	81
North-West	11	4	82
Grand Total	53	20	465

SAMPLE

The researcher's intention was to use the entire population identified for the study. This will make the findings of the study command a lot of respect and generalizability (Nwana, 1981). However, perfect conditions are usually difficult to meet. Sampling involves the use of part of a larger population in a study. In the case of this study, which dealt with a large population size, a multi-stage sampling approach was used. Accordingly, multi-stage sampling involves selecting a sample from a sample. In this respect, the universe is taken as consisting of the first stage units, each of which may in turn consists of second stage sample units (Kumekpor, 2002). The advantages of multi-stage sampling include the fact that at each stage, more and more units are excluded, thus, making the final sample more concise. Multi-stage sampling technique involves using more than one sampling technique to select the respondents (Sarantakos, 1998). The researcher used the simple random sampling technique to select some teachers from the basic schools to be part of the study. But before this, the researcher did stratify the basic schools into Primary and Junior Secondary School. The schools were then sampled using the simple random sampling technique after which teachers were also sampled using the same technique. Simple random sampling is described as the assignment of

objects of a population in such a way that for any given assignment, every member of the population has an equal probability of being chosen, (Kerhinger, 1986). In this regard, the researcher first of all, made a simple random selection of five (5) schools in each circuit. The schools selected were made up of three (3) primary schools and two (2) junior secondary schools. Secondly, the researcher obtained a sample frame of teachers from the schools that were selected and selected six (6) teachers from each school to be part of the respondents for the study. The selection of the teachers was done using the lottery method. In all, 30 teachers were selected from each circuit and one hundred and fifty teachers (150) for the whole district however, 1 teacher fell out from the study. Besides the teachers, the researcher also included in the study, seven (7) officials from the seven (7) NGOs operating in the area as well as three (3) officials at the district education office. To do this, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique in the selection.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Instruments used in collecting data for the study were self-developed questionnaires and interview guides as no standardized instruments were available for the study. This brought about variety regarding the means of data collection. The questionnaires were used to gather information from teachers. This is because they give quick responses and will not take much of the respondents' time. Questionnaire is widely used for data collection especially in educational research because it is very effective for securing information about peoples practices and conditions as well as for inquiring into the opinions and attitudes of the subjects (Kerlinger,1986).

An Interview Guide was also used to collect data from the NGOs liaison officers and officials at the District Education Office. The greatest advantage of the interview guide in the hands of a skilled interviewer is its flexibility. Also, the interviewer can make sure that the respondent has understood the question and the purpose of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section indicates clearly how the raw data collected from the field of study have been analysed, presented and discussions made of it to make it valuable and purposeful. The section addresses the research questions posed in the study.

Research Question 1. What contributions have NGOs made towards the expansion of access to and participation in education at the basic level?

Table 2

Contributions of NGOs to expand Access and Participation of Basic Education.

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
NGOs help parents financially to take care of their wards in school.	71	47.7	76	51	2	1.3	-	-	-	-
NGOs organise PLAs for pupils	74	49.7	71	47.7	4	2.7	-	-	-	-
NGOs construct classroom blocks	59	39.6	56	37.6	24	16.1	8	5.4	2	1.3
NGOs renovate classroom blocks	20	13.4	58	38.9	56	37.6	14	9.4	1	0.7
NGOs provide hot lunch for pupils	83	55.7	43	28.9	9	6	12	8.1	2	1.3
NGOs provide food rations to girls	95	63.8	41	27.5	8	5.4	4	2.7	1	0.7
NGOs assist needy but brilliant pupils financially	87	58.4	47	31.5	10	6.7	4	2.7	1	0.7
Educational materials are sometimes provided to the schools by NGOs	54	36.2	73	49	14	9.4	7	4.7	1	0.7
NGOs cater for the health needs of pupils	44	29.5	59	39.6	37	24.8	8	5.4	1	0.7
NGOs provide means of transport to pupils	53	35.6	60	40.3	18	21.1	13	8.7	5	3.4
NGOs provide school uniform and footwear to pupils	82	55	54	36.2	7	4.7	3	2	3	2
NGOs recruit volunteer teachers	105	70.5	38	25.5	2	1.3	2	1.3	2	1.3
NGOs organize workshops for teachers	59	39.6	71	47.7	10	6.7	6	4	3	2
NGOs engage in monitoring and supervision of schools	43	28.9	81	54.4	15	10.1	8	5.4	2	1.3
NGOs support PTAs, SMCs etc.	79	53	61	40.9	5	3.4	3	2	1	0.7

From Table 2, it can be seen that when teachers were asked whether NGOs assist parents to take care of their wards in school, 47.7% respondents indicated that they strongly agree and 51% indicated that they agree, 1.3% were uncertain. Looking at the figures on the table in detail, it can be asserted that NGOs massively contribute in improving access and participation. This is buttressed by the fact that, 98.7% of the respondents agreed with certainty that NGOs are very instrumental in this direction and only 1.3% were not of that

school of thought.

The teachers were asked to indicate whether NGOs organise participatory learning activities (PLAs). In response to this particular item, 49.7% of the respondents strongly agreed to the issue and 47.7% of the respondents agreed to the issue. 2.7% of the respondents, however, were not of that view. It can therefore be said that, the contributions of these NGOs are very much encouraging as it indicates that 97.4%, responded in the affirmative and only 2.7% of respondents were in a fix.

With regard to the construction of classroom blocks, 39.6% of respondents strongly agree that NGOs channel their energies in that direction, whiles 37.6% also agree that NGOs construct classroom blocks. 16.4% not certain and 5.4% disagree and 1.3% of the respondents strongly disagree to the fact that NGOs construct classroom blocks. Looking at the figures in the table, it is explicit that a total of 77.2% respondents are in the category of strongly agree and agree. What this means is that, to a greater extent, NGOs put up classroom blocks in the various communities to improve the situation of access and participation. In a related development, 13.4% of the total respondents strongly agree that NGOs also renovate existing classrooms in the various communities, 38.9% agree that NGOs engage in the renovation of classrooms. 37.6% are not certain about the activities of NGOs with respect to renovations. 9.4% disagree and 0.7% of respondents strongly disagree to the issue. On the whole, 52.3% of respondents are of the conviction that NGOs sort of renovate classroom blocks. Therefore, in terms of renovation works, NGOs are doing averagely good. 55.7% of teachers in response to the question of whether or not NGOs provide hot lunch for pupils in schools affirmed this by indicating strongly agree. 28.9% of respondents affirmed this by indicating agree in the questionnaire. 6.0% of the respondents indicated uncertain. On the contrary 8.1% indicated disagree and 1.3% indicated strongly disagree. Generally speaking it can be deduced from the table that 84.6% of the respondents revealed that NGOs provide hot lunch to pupils in the school. The positive effect of this is that more pupils are encouraged to attend school regularly.

Similarly, 91.3% of respondents confirmed that girls periodically enjoy take-home rations from NGOs. The table indicates that, 63.8% of the respondents strongly agree, 27.5% agree, 5.4% are uncertain, 2.7% disagree and 0.7% strongly disagree. In terms of assisting some category of pupils, the table indicates that 58.4% strongly agree, 31.5% agree, 6.7% uncertain, 2.7% dis agree and finally 1.3% strongly dis agree to the item. Therefore a total of 89.9% of respondents answered positively. In terms of educational materials such as textbooks, supplementary readers and teaching and learning materials, 36.2% of the respondents strongly agree to the question, 49.0% agree to the question. Therefore, 85.2% of respondents answered positively to the issue. However,

9.4% of teachers were not certain on the issue, 4.7% disagreed and 0.7% strongly disagreed. Studying the findings therefore, it is certain that NGOs are doing a marvellous work in the provision of educational materials. Again a question was posed to elicit the views of teachers in relation to the provision of health needs and taking care of the medical bills of pupils. The results show that 29.5% stated they strongly agree. 39.6% stated agree and 24.8% were in a fix. On the contrary, 5.4% said they disagree and 0.7% stated that they strongly disagree. From the responses displayed, it can be asserted that, 69.1% out of the total respondents confirmed that in fact, the NGOs help in that direction.

Additionally, teachers were asked to respond to the situation as to whether NGOs provide transport facilities to pupils especially those who commute long distances. The responses as shown in the table indicate that 35.6% stated strongly agree, 40.3% stated they agreed, 12.1% stated they were uncertain, 8.7% stated they disagreed and 3.4% indicated they strongly disagreed. In making an analogy of the situation, it is realized that 75.8% of respondents answered positively to the item posed. This means that NGOs are doing well as far as the provision of transport for pupils from far places is concerned. As a follow up question, NGOs are noted to provide school uniform and footwear to pupils. The table indicates the responses of teachers suggest that 55.0% teachers strongly agree, 36.2% agree, 4.7% are uncertain, 2.0% disagree and 2.0% strongly disagree. Juxtaposing the positive responses against the negative responses, the positive responses far exceed the negative responses as total percentage of the positive responses stand at 91.2%, an indication that this intervention of the NGOs is highly and widely recognized. In the area of recruiting volunteer teachers to augment the efforts of teaching staff in the district, NGOs again have done an excellent job. From the responses in the table, 70.5% of respondents indicated they strongly agree, 25.5% of respondents agree, 1.3% indicated uncertainty and 1.3% indicated disagree. A total of 96.0% of respondents therefore, answered in the affirmative. This means that the majority of schools, especially those in the hard to reach areas, now have some teachers in their schools to augment the limited number of teachers in the school. This effort by the NGOs is excellent. The results in Table 2 also show that NGOs do organise workshops for teachers to upgrade their skills and competencies. The responses are as follows: 39.6% strongly agree, 47.7% agree, 6.7% uncertain, 4.0% disagree and 2.0% strongly disagree. A sum total of the positive responses totalling 87.3% said NGOs organise workshops and refresher courses for teachers in the district to sharpen their skills and competencies and also for them to be abreast with modern trends of teaching.

In terms of monitoring and supervision in order to ascertain   whether or not their work plans are being implemented to the letter, the responses on the

table indicate that 28.9% strongly agree, 54.4% indicated they agree, 10.1% of respondents were uncertain or undecided, 5.4% indicated they disagree and 1.3% stated they strongly disagree. On the whole, a total of 83.3% of the respondents stated categorically that NGOs do monitor schools in order that they get first hand information as regards the implementation of their work plans by school authorities. To crown it all, the last item that was asked sought find out whether NGOs support PTAs and SMCs to function effectively. The response as seen from the table indicates 53.0% of the respondents strongly agree, 40.9% of respondents agree, 3.4% of the respondents uncertain, 2.0% disagree and 0.7% strongly disagree.

Research Question 2. What challenges do NGOs face in expanding access to and participation in basic education in the area?

Table 3
Challenges that NGOs Face.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Lack of coordination of the various NGOs work plans or Activities	2	28.5
Problems regarding funding	1	14.3
Identification of needy brilliant children	1	14.3
Access of land for infrastructural development	2	28.5
Inadequate commitment of some staff and vol. teachers	1	14.3
Total	7	100

It can be inferred from Table 3 that when officials of NGOs where interviewed on the subject matter, 2 respondents representing 28.5% of the total respondents indicated that lack of coordination of the various NGOs with regard to their activities and work plans is a major challenge. They conceded that this phenomenon leads to the duplication of their efforts and resources. This is so because, they do not always have the benefit of knowing what counterpart NGOs have in their work plans and they may also go to the schools and communities implementing exactly the same thing.

With regard to funding, 1 respondent representing 14.3% of the total respondents stated that inadequate funding is a major challenge impeding their interventions. This implies that, though NGOs have lofty ideas and intervention packages, they are not able to sail through all the time because of some financial challenges. Again, 1 respondent also representing 14.3% highlighted the problem of properly identifying needy but brilliant children as a challenge. The respondent purported that in some instances, those that are really needy and brilliant are not captured by the selection committees that do the screening. Additionally, the table shows clearly that 2 respondents intimated that access to land for infrastructural development is a major

challenge facing NGOs.

Inferring from the table, this challenge attracts 28.5% of the total responses. This can be attributed perhaps to the land tenure system in the area where no single individual owns land. Finally, 1 respondent indicated that inadequate commitment to duty by some teachers in the basic schools, some staff of the District Education Office and the recruited volunteer teachers sometimes poses a challenge to the implementation of their work plans. This challenge, as can be seen in the table, attracts 14.3% of the total responses. Responses from DEO staff were sought further. Table 4 shows clearly, the responses gathered.

Table 4

Challenges of NGOs Expand Access and Participation.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Access to land for infrastructural development	1	33.3
Children of school going age are still out of school	1	33.3
Problems regarding funding	1	33.3
Total	3	100

From Table 4, the responses of District Education Officials can be seen. 1(33.3%) respondent out of three indicated that access to land for infrastructural development remains a major challenge. Also, 1(33.3%) respondent indicated that some children of school going age are still out of the school system. More especially in the farming seasons, they are normally seen following animals in the grazing fields and others are seen carrying their younger siblings so that their parents can work on their farms. Additionally, 1(33.3%) respondent pointed out funding as another challenge of NGOs in their interventions. In a nutshell, it can be asserted that the challenges facing NGOs in the area with regard to their interventions are major.

CONCLUSIONS

An attempt has been made to explore holistically, the role of NGOs in expanding access and participation in basic education in the district. Based on the data gathered from the respondents and the analysis and discussions made, it can be concluded that NGOs to a very large extent play a major role in the expansion of access and participation to basic education. This assertion is buttressed by the fact that they have made significant inroads regarding the provision of educational infrastructure among others to increase access and participation in the district.

It is therefore not surprising that key respondents of the study such as, teachers and the District Education Office staff stated categorically in their responses that the NGOs are really developmental partners and as such, they advocate their continuous existence in the district.

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