

How to present a policy alternative

This is an example of how a policy message could be presented relevant evidence and good communication skills. In this staged situation, the presenter has been given the opportunity to present a position paper to an audience of policymakers.

Position Paper on the Deployment of Teachers to Deprived Rural Areas by the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) on 20th July 2006

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Sports, Honourable Members of Parliament, Directors of Education, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Zakarias Sulemana, retired Vice Chancellor of the University College of Winneba. I am here to present the position of the GNECC on the deployment of teachers to deprived rural areas in Ghana.

On behalf of the Coalition I respectfully commend you for your untiring effort to achieve our national education goals; for your effort at teacher development to fill the teacher supply gap; and for the opportunity you have granted us to present our position on teacher deployment. We, as a Coalition, are concerned about the disparity in the deployment of teachers to urban and rural areas. Our concern is adequately captured in the education sector performance review report of 2006 which indicated that while the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) for urban areas is 32%, the PTR for rural deprived areas is 57%. In a follow-up survey by our coalition, it was found that at least 12 schools in each of the 53 deprived districts had on teacher handling/teaching 6 classes.

Mr Chairman, we are concerned about this teacher deployment situation because of the following effects:

- Low enrolment: in the survey referred to earlier we found out that 8 out of every 10 parents will not enrol their children if there are no teachers to teach them
- Denial of the right to deprived rural children to quality teaching and learning as guaranteed by our constitution: This category of children constitute over 50% of school-aged children
- Poor learning outcomes resulting in low quality of human resource with the consequent effect of low productivity. This is amply reported in the March 3rd Issue of the "Daily Graphic" in which the Ghana Employers Association (GEA) and the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) reported the huge cost of retraining fresh graduates to meet minimum standards.
- Unemployment resulting in increased crime rate: the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Ghana Police Service were also quoted in the Public Agenda of April 30th 2006, that over 90% of the armed robbers arrested in the country have either never enrolled in school or dropped out of school and that most of these came from rural areas.

Mr. Chairman, in a recent survey by the University college of Education Winneba it was revealed that there are about 9000 excess trained teachers in the 10 regional capitals. These were made of:

- One or more standby teachers for basic schools in the regional capitals

- Trained teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience turned into administrators in the district and regional offices of the Ghana Education Service with no schedules and even desks or office space to sit.

In our efforts as a nation to address the problem of unfair redistribution of teachers, we respectfully recommend the redeployment of the excess teachers from urban areas to the rural deprived areas. This may be done by the following measures:

- Deployment of the current crop of National Service Personnel to collect information on teachers in urban areas within 2 weeks
- The submission by District Directors of Education of excess numbers of teachers in the urban areas within one week after the data collection
- The redeployment of the excess teachers to the underserved rural schools

If this strategy is effectively implemented it will result in the following:

- Reduction in the PTR of rural areas to 45:1
- Supply of teachers to 800 basic school classes that previously did not have teachers

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Minister of Education, Honourable Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, we are confident that our proposal will be positively considered. We pledge our continued support to the resolution of this problem and to other government programmes that are aimed at achieving the goals of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the Education Strategic Plan (ESP).

Thank you very much for your audience