



PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE'S PARTY

Awake!

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR EVERY GHANAIAN CHILD

On Thursday, 22nd March 2012, the Progressive People's Party (PPP) offered a comprehensive education policy in our bid to transform Ghanaian society within one generation. New policy ideas require dynamic leaders who are capable of managing the challenges this transformational policy change will present. Ghanaians must reject those who mindlessly copy ideas and recite them without deep belief and the competence required for successful implementation.

The PPP's policy on education as we have put out in our **Political Platform** (Manifesto) is as follows:

"Provide Quality Education for Every Ghanaian Child: Standardize school facilities from kindergarten to Senior High School with libraries, toilets, classrooms, kitchen, housing for teachers, playground, etc: and Ensure free and compulsory education in public schools from kindergarten to Senior High School (including computer training). We will deploy an "Education Police" to enforce the compulsory aspect of our policy. An integral part of this objective will be an objective to significantly increase vocational/technical training so that all school leavers gain employable skills. This will include a comprehensive sports programme to instill discipline and promote better health."

Our policy moves the minimum standard from “basic” meaning Junior High School to the Senior High School level. Currently, the terminal point for most children in Ghana is Junior High School and that happens usually after taking the Basic Education Competency Examination (BECE) administered by the West Africa Examination Council. To ensure success, we will invest in the building of complete school compounds across the country including housing for teachers and the upgrading of teacher training institutions. Science, Technology, Education and Math (STEM) will be at the heart of our efforts.

Our education policy is different from the “expanding access” one outlined by the NDC Administration’s President John D. Mahama and the “free Senior High School education” one proposed by the NPP Presidential aspirant Nana Akufo-Addo. The PPP policy recognizes the need to expand educational facilities and to enable every child’s demand for access to be met. The PPP policy will ensure that a “free Senior High School education” is

a right to all children and does not perpetuate the privilege reality of today where only those who “manage” to pass BECE examination and secure a place advance to the High School level. Ours is the policy that is comprehensive and consistent with standards set by countries that have overcome underdevelopment and poverty in the world.

It is said that “If you think education is expensive, try ignorance”. Education is a better driver of a nation’s economy than gold, oil, gas and such other natural resources. Without it our natural resources become huge burdens on all citizens. The PPP is determined to give priority to the implementation of our policy in national budgets. We will fund the free, compulsory, continuous education vision through government revenue primarily by reducing waste, competent administration and checking corruption. The initial estimated total incremental budget allocation for 5 years is GHC 5.5 billion.

We believe that the framers of our 1992 Constitution shared our belief that the goal of ensuring **an educated and knowledgeable people is not negotiable**. It is for this reason that Chapter Six of the Constitution - **Directive Principles of State Policy** makes clear the policy to be implemented by government in the area of education. Section 38 of this Chapter in the Constitution reads as follows:

“38. (1) The State shall provide educational facilities at all levels and in all the Regions of Ghana, and shall, to the greatest extent feasible make those facilities available to all citizens.

(2) The 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.

(3) The State shall, subject to availability of resources, provide –

(a) equal and balanced access to secondary and other appropriate pre-university education, equal access to university or equivalent education, with emphasis on science and technology;

(b) a free adult literacy programme, and a free vocational training, rehabilitation and resettlement of persons; and

(c) life-long education.”

We live in a competitive global village. We must not and cannot expect to wallow in ignorance and believe that somehow we will be able to attract the capital and industry that Ghana needs and gain the benefits that can be shared broadly in this country if our people do not have the needed skills and knowledge to offer high end local content.

Bolivia, a developing country offers free education up to high school. This underscores the importance she attaches to education. Malaysia, a country who got its independence same year as Ghana, and reported to have solely palm oil as its largest export commodity offers free primary and secondary education for all children with six years of primary education being compulsory. Taiwan has mined its 23 million people, their talent, energy and intelligence, both men and women through quality free and compulsory pre-tertiary education. Singapore, China, South Korea, Hong Kong and Japan stand out as having promising/robust economies because of their investment in the human capital. The Republic of Korea for instance offers free, mandatory education for all children and maintains an autonomous educational administration system established in each of 16 municipal or provincial with 230 county offices to guarantee independence and individuality in regional education. Japan offers free, compulsory public

education and all children are required to attend a six-year elementary school and a three-year lower secondary school.

For 2012, 21.22% of the total budget was allocated to education. The total 2012 budget was GHC13, 529, 706,950 out of which GHC 2,871,680,218 was budgeted for education. Total allocation from general education budget for basic education was GHC1, 784,540,000. Despite the investment, the sector still faces some challenges. Prominent among them is the poor performance of BECE students over the past decade. A total of 1,562, 270 students have failed the B.ECE exams over the past decade. The question we ask ourselves is; where are the 1,562270 children who dropped out over the decade? What is their fate? How can hope be restored to these people? How do we curb the situation? We cannot benefit from a petrochemicals industry and technology based industries with such an educational profile.

It is evident that the Ghanaian educational system among other things lacks the needed quality, and monitoring. This can be linked to type of training we give at our teacher training colleges, availability of facilities and instructional materials and the poor performance of our Monitoring and Supervision teams at the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service both at the national and district levels.

Finally, there is perhaps a reason why the requirement of the 1992 constitution for free and compulsory education has been ignored by those who have had the opportunity to lead this nation. There is a reason why great ideas have escaped us. Transformation needs great minds and insightful leadership. The Progressive People's Party is demonstrating today that new policy ideas require dynamic leaders who are capable of managing the challenges this transformational policy change will present. Ghanaians must reject those who mindlessly copy ideas and recite them without deep belief and the competence required for successful implementation.

Awake, Ghana!