School level initiatives to improve education quality for disadvantaged learners

George K.T. Oduro, University of Cape coast
Mike Fertig, University of Bath

Joint RPC Conference
Education Access, Quality and Outcomes in Low and Middle Income Countries
Institute of Education, 15 November 2010
Experiences of Being Disadvantaged at the School level

- Children not prepared for learning on daily basis
  - Hungry \((Tz)\)
  - Don’t have adequate stationery
  - Working children (some overage)
- Low motivated teachers etc
- Communities lack capacity to support school
  - Poverty
  - Absent parents
  - Poor community cohesion
What were the initiatives introduced by head teachers?

Case Studies

Disadvantaged School A, Ghana: teenage pregnancy

- involvement of parents and community
- INSET for teachers at the end of the day on improving reading skills
- monitoring by headteacher of skills developed by teachers during INSET
- pregnancies dropped from 5 in 2006-2007 to none in 2008-2009
School B
Tanzania

1. Identified vulnerable children & collect information

2. Started horticultural club – children grow food for their families and to sell

3. Use funds from school’s business to buy food and stationary
School C
Tanzania

**Challenges**
Repeated absenteeism interrupts teaching and learning

Unable to raise support from community.

**Context**
¾ of children do not live with their parents, who are migrant agricultural labourers.

Some children live on their own.
How did initiatives improve the conditions?

- Headteachers developed stronger links with parents/community in terms of reducing disadvantaged experiences, e.g. mobilising resources for improving learning.

- Headteachers saw themselves as ‘leading for learning’ through the use of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning practice.

- Headteachers came to believe that they were able to effect changes in pupil learning and were able to develop a clear vision of the improvements needed to bring these changes about.
Main Policy Message

• Basic entitlement for each and every school

• Extra funding and support targeted at schools serving the poorest communities and communities facing specific social challenges

• Promote parental awareness of their role in supporting schools and learning

• Capacity development plans originated at school level
FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

• Monitoring and evaluating impact of school improvement initiatives

• Design of mechanisms for identifying and targeting resources at schools serving disadvantaged pupils
  – Role of local supervision and management
  – Avoiding mismanagement of funds

• Impact of school funding policies on social equity in participation in good quality education
  – Effect of capitation grants on pupils’ learning
THANK YOU !!!