

GES micromanaging educational institutions — Prof. Addae-Mensah

By Sebastian Syme, ACCRA

STAKEHOLDERS in the education sector have accused the Ghana Education Service (GES) of abdicating its regulatory responsibility and rather resorted to micromanaging educational institutions in the country and stifling their initiatives to develop.

A former Vice-chancellor of the University of Ghana, Professor Ivan Addae-Mensah, who conveyed the concerns of teacher associations, said he could not fathom why a local school should seek permission from the GES before repairing or replacing school desks.

Don't micromanage schools

Speaking at the national launch of the Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) 2018 in Accra on Monday, April 23, Prof. Addae-Mensah stated that such actions by the GES denied school heads the opportunity to use their own initiative to resolve problems of their respective schools.

Organised by the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC), the GAWE is one of the major focal points for the education movement created and led by the coalition, which provides everyone campaigning for the right to education with an opportunity to make targeted efforts to effect change.

The week-long celebration starts from

April 22-28, 2018.

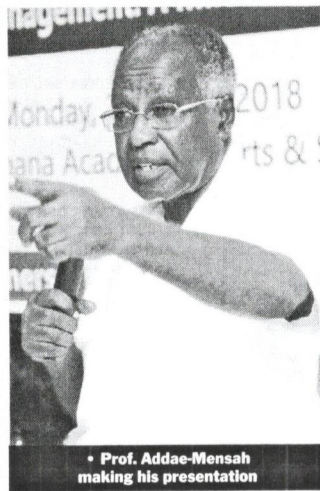
The launch was on the theme: "Strengthening Citizen Participation and Accountability in Education Management: A Milestone for Achieving SDG4." It brought together students, parents and other stakeholders in education to brainstorm the way forward to ensure quality and accessible education for all.

Prof. Addae-Mensah, who spoke on the topic, "Creating a more equitable pre-tertiary education system in Ghana – the way forward towards meeting commitments to SDG4," indicated that for the GES to micromanage the schools was unacceptable and added that the decision by a school to repair or provide classroom desks was supposed to be locally arranged and so it was not the business of the GES to issue directives to that effect.

Quality education compromised

Touching on a wide range of issues, including quality and access to education, the former vice chancellor pointed out that although the country over the years had tried to improve access to quality education, the school dropout rates were still alarming.

He indicated that quality had been compromised and argued that the vast majority of students came out from the primary school level deficient, adding that "sometimes measures put in place to improve access does not come with quality."



• Prof. Addae-Mensah making his presentation

He mentioned the free school uniform policy which did not impact on quality and the construction of the community day senior high schools whose citing was ill conceived and fuelled by political consideration.

Sustainability

On the free senior high school policy, Prof. Addae-Mensah said its sustainability was yet to be determined and expressed concern over its politicisation which could impact on its sustainability when a new government came into office.

He also spoke about the unfair system in which majority of students from only the

privileged schools got the opportunity to be enrolled in the universities to pursue prestigious courses while those from less-endowed schools were left to their fate.

Prof. Addae-Mensah called for a dispassionate debate on the free senior high school policy to ensure it was sustained irrespective of the government in place.

He further asked the government not to stop any parent who wanted to contribute towards the education of children through the parent-teacher association (PTA).

Quality education

The Director of Secondary Education Division of the GES, Dr Angela Tena Mensah, said the GES was doing its best to ensure access to quality education at all levels.

The Executive Council Chairman of the GNECC, Mr Bright Appiah, asked the government to produce a road map for the redefinition of basic education to include kindergarten, primary, junior and senior high schools.

While expressing concern over the absence of a comprehensive policy on the free senior high school policy, he called on the government to make provision for the approximately 100,000 basic education graduates who were placed but could not get admission to senior high schools.

The Chairperson for the event, Dr Esther Offei-Aboagye, expressed concern over the absence of boards in most of the tertiary institutions which was impacting negatively on the running of those institutions.

Writer's email:

sebastian.syme@graphic.com.gh