



Prof. Ernest Aryeetey (right) speaking at the programme. Photo: Victor A. Buxton

Financing Free SHS: Rich parents must pay — Prof. Aryeetey

BY KINGSLEY ASARE &
ALLIA NOSHIE

PARTICIPANTS at a forum on the financing of free Senior High School (SHS) in the country have suggested that parents and people who can afford tuition for their wards should be allowed to pay in order to make the policy sustainable.

They also suggested that the private sector and corporate bodies should be involved in the financing of the SHS to provide financial relief to government in funding the policy.

The participants gave the advice at the annual Graphic Business/Stanbic Bank Breakfast Meeting in Accra yesterday on the theme "Financing Free Quality Education

in Ghana – Sustainable Funding Options."

Professor Ernest Aryeetey, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana, in his submission said parents and those in the upper class of society must be allowed to support the financing of education.

"Government funding should complement the financing of SHS education and should not be a substitute for what parents were contributing," he added.

He said even though government had done well over the years in financing education delivery in the country, funding to the education sector had not been enough.

"What the schools are getting is only about a third of what they need to run them," he emphasized.

Prof. Aryeetey entreated the government to partner with the private sector to provide ultra modern

laboratories and modernised classrooms to enable students study in a more conducive environment so they can compete with others favorably.

He noted that though estimates from the schools put the figure required for the implementation of the FSHS for this year alone at GH¢3.3 billion only GH¢1.3 billion was provided for in the budget, stressing that "Allowing those in the upper class to pay for their education was not discriminatory."

The Director General of the Ghana Education Service, Prof. Opoku Amankwah on his part dismissed claims that government absorbing the fees of students and asking parents not to pay compromised the quality of teaching.

He said the content of the syllabus for teaching the children had not been affected by any means

simply because secondary education was now free.

Prof. Amankwah said plans were far advanced to review the curricula for teaching to further enhance teaching and learning at the school, adding that, "there would be an assessment on the policy."

Israel Titi Ofei, the Principal of SOS Hermann Gmeiner International in his remarks said schools should be autonomous when it comes to decision making, adding that "Authorities of the schools must be involved in the process as every school had its own needs."

He said funding of the SHS must be subjected to review to enhance its efficiency as government could not solely fund the policy.

Mr Ofei further suggested that the National Identification Card must include the data of every citizen in order to determine their

financial status as well.

The Acting Managing Director of the Graphic Communications Group Limited, Mr Ransford Tetteh said the SHS was worthwhile stressing that, education was core in developing the human resource base of any country.

Mr Tetteh explained that the meeting was to focus national discussion on the alternative means of funding for the sustenance of the policy.

The Head of Corporate and Investment Banking at Stanbic Bank Ghana, Mr Kwamina Asomaning said the bank would always support discussions which would impact the lives of people.

Mr Asomaning said the meeting was to explore ideas from eminent people on how best the government could sustain the policy.