

GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION: EXAMINING THE DIALOGUE
BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICIES IN GHANA
“IT'S LIKE POURING WATER ON RUBBER - IT DOESN'T
REALLY SINK”

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ABSTRACT

Keren Dalyot: Gender Equality In Education: Examining The Dialogue Between International
And National Policies In Ghana
(Under the direction of Catherine Marshall)

Gender equality in education is not a novel concept. What is newly important, however, is the way states define and approach it. This is reflected most clearly in the education services states provide to their citizens and residents. This is especially crucial in developing countries where public services are generally weaker and less developed. In the 21st century, gender quality in education is a principle acknowledged by the international community both as a basic right and as a goal which governments need to actively commit to. Even though this is a well-acknowledged principle, progress on the ground is uneven and often slow.

My dissertation is focused on several guiding questions that are all centered on a qualitative investigation of policy processes and implementation. The questions that have guided my research are: How are international policies on gender equality in education being translated and interpreted by national policymakers in developing countries? How do local leaders define and make sense of international policies in their daily work? What are the challenges they identify in their daily work? What can we learn from the way they work with development partners and international actors? These questions are then answered in a particular setting of a developing West African country – Ghana.

Ghana provides a great context for studying the interplay between international policy, national policy and the relevant actors and stakeholders, especially because according to various

indicators the situation in Ghana is very promising in terms of parity. My research opens a small window to the reality of policymaking and project development in Ghana, using qualitative methods that are focused on exposing policy disconnects and deeper meanings of equality and education. The qualitative methods used in my dissertation include documents analysis and interviews with local Ghanaian elites.

The findings of my research include developing an understanding that the common perspective on gender equality in education in Ghana tends to ignore the complex set of obstacles girls in Ghana face. The policy texts written by international organizations or DPs often ignore the implications of being educated for women and girls by overlooking the wider social context of life in Ghana (or other developing countries) (Sutton, 2001). One of the major themes that emerges from my analysis resonates with Sutton's (2001) findings from over a decade ago, albeit in a different continent: "Any large-scale change in patterns of educational attainment by girls becomes a matter of altering gender relations – and thus the dynamics of power between genders" (p. 79). The centrality of this to policymaking cannot be overstated, because if gender equality in education is the aim (as opposed to just getting more girls into school), then policy needs to address the larger patriarchal relationships in society.

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I would like to start by dedicating this dissertation to my children and to my grandparents and especially to my last remaining grandfather Katri. My grandfather predicted many years ago that I would do something in the field of education, although at the time I went to study communications and media. He was a true educator and a high school principle and I am honored to walk in his footsteps in more ways than both of us imagined. For the past 5 years, my children have experienced the ups and downs of academic life and especially the long hours spent reading, writing and just thinking. I think that watching their mother go through this has showed them that elementary school is actually fun.

As with any big adventure, one rarely does it alone. I would have never even begun if it wasn't for my partner in life's journey that has always encouraged me to grab any opportunity that comes my way. However, if it wasn't for meeting the right academic mentor at the right time, this journey would have probably ended years ago. Dr. Catherine Marshall has been much more than an academic advisor. When I first met her it was clear to me that when I grow up I want to be like her, so it was just a matter of let her know. Dr. Marshall has guided me in many academic endeavors over the past 5 years and I am forever in her debt for opening doors but also holding those wide open so that I could easily walk in. A special thanks is also due to Brooke Midkiff, my friend and colleague who has helped me through some tough times in the last years and whose insights were invaluable.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
COTVET	Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
CRDD	Curriculum Research and Development Division
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DFID	Department of Foreign and International Development (UK)
DP	Development Partner
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GEU	Girl Education Unit
GLSS	Ghana Living Standards Survey
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPEF	Global Partnership for Education Fund
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSET	In-Service Education and Training

JHS	Junior High School
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEO	Ministry of Education
NCTE	The National Council for Tertiary Education
SSS	Senior Secondary School
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UEW	University of Education Winneba
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program
REC	Regional Economic Community

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time education was thought to be a unique opportunity afforded only to the richest people in society. However, in a striking and rather rapid development, education for the masses became a service provided mostly by the modern state (Samoff, 2007). Nowadays, as Stromquist (1995) reminds us, states have a “monopoly of formal education, it shapes the supply of schooling: the quantity and content of schooling, types of personnel, and overall learning experience” (p. 439). Thus, how states define and approach gender equality in education is important, and it is reflected most clearly in the education services it provides to its citizens and residents. This is especially crucial in developing countries where public services are generally weaker and less developed.

The call for gender equality in education is not new; women in Europe were fighting for their right to be educated from as early as the 18th century. However, codifying a moral understanding into a legal right is a development of the 20th century. In the 21st century, gender quality in education is a principle acknowledged by the international community both as a basic right and as a goal which governments need to actively commit to. Even though this is a well-acknowledged principle, progress on the ground is uneven and often slow. In Martha Nussbaum’s (2004) words:

Despite a constant focus on women’s education as a priority in global discussions of human rights and quality of life, and in the efforts of activists of all sorts and many

governments, women still lag well behind men in many countries of the world, even at the level of basic literacy. (p. 330)

Nussbaum wrote these words in 2004, but they still ring true more than a decade later..

“In qualitative studies... the ongoing process of questioning is an integral part of understanding the unfolding lives and perspectives of others” (Agee, 2009, p. 432)

This dissertation is focused on several guiding questions that are all centered on a qualitative investigation of policy processes and implementation, focusing on the following questions: How are international policies on gender equality in education being translated and interpreted by national policymakers in developing countries? How do local leaders define and make sense of international policies in their daily work? What are the challenges they identify in their daily work? What can we learn from the way they work with development partners and international actors? Agee (2009) reminds us that the importance of questions in qualitative research is also in moving “the researcher toward discovering what is happening in a *particular* situation with a *particular* person or group” (p. 434). In this dissertation the *particular* situation is Ghana and the *particular* group is people engaged in Ghana in educational policies and programs; more specifically, programs pertaining to gender equality in education.

The decision to use qualitative methods in the field of policy analysis was a self-conscience one; the questions I was interested in (and which are described above) led me to the realization that quantitative methods do not answer my questions. As Piotrkowski (1979) says:

Social Science research involves the self-conscious and publicly articulated investigation of human life in its social form. How we proceed is determined by the questions at hand

and the type of knowledge we desire, and what we learn is shaped, in turn, by our procedure – our methodology (p. 288).

The knowledge I am seeking—namely, learning about policy processes and strategies, and about policymakers’ sense-making and attitudes—calls, I believe, for qualitative methodology.

There are, nonetheless, a few distinct characteristics of qualitative research that also guided the way I shaped this research and the decisions I made along the way. In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument of research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), and so my prior knowledge and language proficiency were crucial in all phases of the research. Another issue that guided me in choosing a particular location was the fact that I was interested in policy processes and interpretations that happen in the routine course of policymaking and not in conflict or fragile countries. Therefore, I needed to choose an English-speaking, stable West African country. As it turned out, the Ebola virus disease outbreak in 2014 narrowed the pool of potential countries. Liberia, a potentially good case country, was severely hit by the outbreak which prevented conducting field research there. Ultimately, Ghana made for a good case study country, and I was able to reach out to key people who helped me in accessing potential interviewees.

Given this context the overarching questions are: How are international policies on gender equality in education being translated and interpreted by national policymakers in developing countries? How do local leaders define and make sense of international policies in their daily work? What are the challenges they identify in their daily work? What can we learn from the way they work with development partners and international actors? These questions are going to be explored specifically about policies and programs in Ghana. When I started this

project I was envisioning my findings as gap identification, but from my current perspective I can see that this vision was somewhat skewed. The emphasis is not on identifying gaps, these have been long identified, but on understanding the intricate policy processes in a country where national policies are strongly connected to international policies and international organizations initiate, design, implement and evaluate them. In figure 17 (p.195) at the end of this dissertation I develop these understandings into a visual model that emphasizes the dynamic nature of policy processes and pressures in Ghana.

Structure of Dissertation

The development of gender equality in education as a legal and moral right has spanned documents, continents and decades throughout the 20th century. Later in this chapter, I will present a short history of this development that will help set the stage for my research. Chapter 2 will focus on questions of definitions. It will weave the literature on definitions of gender equality in education with the ways in which my interviewees made sense of these definitions, adding their own understandings and interpretations. Chapter 3 will look more carefully at the Ghanaian context. Historical background and some key country data will be included in this chapter, as well as comparative regional data (West Africa). It will also contain methodological details about my research. Chapter 4 will scrutinize policies and programs in Ghana and provide some critique on policy formulation and instigation. Chapter 5 will concentrate on the words of my research participants and their perception of the policies discussed in the preceding chapter. Chapter 6 will be devoted to identifying the challenges Ghana (and similar countries) face, especially regarding the implementation and interconnectedness of education to other societal

issues. Finally, I will end with cautious optimism, developing a model for better understanding the intricate network of policymaking, policy implementation and the various stakeholders as well as make some specific and careful policy recommendations.

Gender Equality in Education in the ‘Global Space’¹

Unterhalter (2008) articulates how gender equality in education is approached in the ‘global space’ and sees two distinct historical eras: 1970-1992, and 1993 until today. She names them *inter-national* and *in/ternational* respectively (p. 19). I add a third era, or a first era to be precise. It is an era of concentrated codification of human rights principles in the international arena; an era which started with the establishment of the UN in 1947. Unterhalter’s first era saw an intensification of the codification process. It was an era of intense state-to-state negotiation and deliberation – the emphasis was on agreement between governments and the prominence of UN mechanism. The second is an era of multinational networks that Unterhalter (2008) identifies as “hybrid affiliations across diverse sectors concerned with political economy, social and cultural processes” (p. 21). In other words, an era of intense globalization.

The codification era. The basic principle of **equality** within the International Human Rights framework can be traced back to 1948 and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the newly established United Nations. The first article of the declaration is [my emphasis]: “**All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.** They are

¹ Unterhalter (2008) does not provide a clear definition of ‘global space,’ but it seems she is using the term to delineate “configurations of global interactions between governments, multilateral institutions and civil society” (p.19).

endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

The declaration, which reflects its time in history – the ruins of the two World Wars were fresh in everyone’s minds – “is the closest document in our world to international public law”(Benhabib, 2008, p. 95). Much criticism has been leveled at the Western bias of this document, especially by philosophers from Africa, Asia and Latin America. “Efforts to impose the Declaration as it currently stands not only reflect a moral chauvinism and ethnocentric bias, but are also bound to fail” (Pollis & Schwab as quoted in Morsink, 1999, p. x). However, Morsink (1999) makes the point that “because it floats above all local and regional contingencies and is a statement of more or less abstract moral rights and principles, the Declaration served as a midwife in the birth of all these other more concrete and detailed international instruments” (p. xi). Hence, the UDHR set the stage for much of the ensuing human rights discourse.

As seen in the previous quote, the first article in the declaration affirms the right to equality, and in addition to a long list of rights, it also acknowledged the right to education in the lengthy article 26 [my emphasis]:

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. **Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.** Elementary education shall be compulsory...
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall **promote** understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups...

(3) **Parents have a prior right** to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Morsink (1999) quotes a Brazilian delegate to one of the drafting committees: “the right of all to education was indisputable. The right to share in the heritage of mankind formed the basis of our civilization, and could not be denied to anyone....” (p. 212). Education was seen by the drafters as a basic right that should be made available to everyone. However, there was no further elaboration on the definition of “everyone” or on the direct link between the right to equality and the right to education. The main paragraph of this article invokes the basic right to have an education and even a free one. The second paragraph describes the kind of education we have a right to, and the third one invokes the rights of parents in the process of education for their children. There is, however, no direct linking between the right to equality between men and women and the right to education.

In the years following the declaration, there was a sense in the international community that this codification work was for the benefit of “humanity at large” (Benhabib, 2008, p. 96). At the UN, work commenced on writing a comprehensive document protecting international human rights to accompany and complement the UDHR. Two documents came out of that process in the mid-1960s: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The decision to write two separate documents arose from Cold War rivalry and the debate on issues such as civil rights among others. Since then, the three leading documents—the UDHR, the ICCPR and

ICESCR— are commonly referred to as the International Bill of Human Rights. I will briefly discuss the ICESCR since that is the document more relevant to this discussion.

The first article in the ICESCR does not invoke the right to equality but the right to self-determination. Equality is mentioned in the preamble [my emphasis]:“Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of **the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family** is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” Article 3 affirms the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all the rights protected by the covenant. Interestingly, the first mention of education in the document is in Article 10 when the rights of the family as a fundamental unit of society are implemented; the family is considered to be responsible for the care and education of dependent children. But the main education article is Article 13 as in the following excerpts [my emphasis]:²

1. ... They agree that education shall be directed to the **full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms...**

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right:

(a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;

(b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, **shall be made generally available and accessible** to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by **the progressive** introduction of free education...

² For complete text of article and convention see: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake **to have respect for the liberty of parents...**

This is a very detailed article, and many of the principles mentioned, especially those in paragraph 1 and 3, have already been introduced in the UDHR. However, the new details include a comprehensive path on how to realize the right to education nationally. It is very interesting to see the addition of Article 14 which describes the actions a state needs to take (progressively but within a specific time frame) in cases where free compulsory education is not yet available. Relevant to my analysis is the fact that education and equality are linked only indirectly in Article 3 which mentions the equality of men and women to achieve all rights in the covenant. This issue needs to be highlighted since it is one of the characteristics of the rights discourse: there is a right to equality and there is a right to education, but their linkages are not always mapped out. However, 30 years later, gender, equality and education will seem almost inalienable in so many international policy instruments.

Inter-national ‘Global Space’

These linkages will start to become clearer as we move a decade forward to the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the UN established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as early as 1946. However, it took over 20 years until the CSW was commissioned to draft the declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1967. It then took just over a decade for this declaration to evolve into a more binding and committing

instrument: CEDAW. Subrahmanian (2007) describes how the UN Decade for Women let loose an “explosion of women’s organizational activity and political agenda” (p. 112), with the adoption of the new international treaty CEDAW at the center of the decade. The convention contains a long list of rights to be protected, including women’s rights to health, women’s rights within marriage, the rights of prostitutes and the rights of rural women. The relevant articles are Article 1, which is a general discrimination clause, and Article 10(c) [my emphasis]:

The elimination of **any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education** by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

CEDAW laid down the main framework for gender equality in education. The different paragraphs of Article 10 deal with issues ranging from adult education and literacy to health education, and gender stereotypes in education and textbooks. Even though CEDAW has been signed by many countries and has a higher obligatory status in international relations than many other declarations and documents, it is not often invoked by feminist and activists in the developing world. Perhaps this is an indication of the unusefulness of human rights discourse in development work.

Even though there is such a rich history of global discussion and understanding about the importance of gender equality and the right to education, “most donor attention to gender equity, however, only dates back to the Nairobi conference which closed the UN decade for women in

1985 and in education it only become a priority for many after the launch of the Education For All (EFA) initiative in 1990” (Leach, 2000, p. 334).

Each document discussed so far added a layer to the existing framework and awareness without always changing the reality for women across the globe. The question remains: What was the cumulative contribution of these documents on international relations and the grassroots situations? The answer depends, I believe, on your context: your geography and your race. The next section will introduce the evolution of the international regime on gender equality and education over the past 15 years and how it contributes to our current state of affairs.

In/ternational ‘Global Space’: The Adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the Dakar EFA Framework and the MDGs (2000)

International standards play a pivotal role in the discourse regarding education and the allocation of aid. As we have seen from the above section, since 1948 and the UDHR, education has been recognized as a human right, however the understanding of what constitutes this right has evolved immensely over the passing decades.

In 1990, UNICEF, UNESCO and The World Bank Education Sector co-hosted the World Conference on Education For All, held in Jomtien, Thailand (K. Mundy & Verger, 2014), where the Education For All (EFA) initiative was announced. The background to the conference is often described as pervasive concern over the dismal state of education and literacy all around the world (Leach, 2000). The conference brought together 155 national governments and the leading development agencies all alarmed at what they termed the decline of educational

systems, especially those in developing countries. Out of this conference came a declaration that included a pledge by the signatory countries (all 155 of them) to “[pursue] the goal of basic education in its various forms.” Governments finally acknowledged important issues surrounding the right to education: “The fact that two-thirds of children not in school were girls was noted, and the importance of increasing access for girls strongly supported. The gender, education and development discourse was thus prominently established” (Heward, 1999, p. 5). Vavrus (2002) claims that “it is only since the early 1990s that education for women has become perhaps the cause célèbre of education and development...” (p. 51) The Jomtien conference, as well as the Beijing Conference in 1995, played a major part in this global interest.

Five years after Jomtien, in 1995, The Beijing Platform for Action was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. In Beijing, the rights-based approach was reiterated and women’s enduring disadvantage in access to health and education was highlighted. (Heward, 1999). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action underlined 12 critical areas of action to be achieved within a period of five years, namely by 2000. The acknowledgement of gender mainstreaming as an important tool in promoting women’s rights and equality was a major achievement of the conference (Madsen, 2012). Cornwall, Harrison, and Whitehead (2007) claim that “gender mainstreaming was seen by many feminists as a response to the need to more fully ‘integrate women’ in development policy and practice” (p. 3). There are two Articles relevant to issues of education and development:

27. Promote people-centered sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through the provision of basic education, life-long education, literacy and training, and primary health care for girls and women;

30. Ensure equal access to and equal treatment of women and men in education and health care and enhance women's sexual and reproductive health as well as education.

We find here the same buzz words that appeared in several earlier documents, as well as the beginning of the discourse clearly linking development with education for women and girls.

It might be observed that:

The Beijing process unleashed remarkable political will and worldwide visibility. It connected and reinforced the activism of women's movements on a global scale.

Conference participants went home with great hope and clear agreement on how to achieve equality and empowerment.³

This optimistic assessment appears on the UN Women Beijing+20 website. Twenty years after the adoption of the platform for action, there should probably be more careful assessment of the progress on the ground for women and girls. The following statement, admitting that there is still work to be done, can be found further down the web page: “the Platform for Action envisioned gender equality in all dimensions of life—and no country has yet finished this agenda.”

It was a decade after Jomtien, in April 2000 (in Dakar, Senegal) that a clear and comprehensive framework for implementing the Education For All initiative was established. The forum at Dakar looked at assessments of the progress since the 1990 Jomtien conference and adopted 6 goals and 12 strategies⁴—185 governments pledged to help achieve them. Many writers agree that “the Dakar Framework for Action represents to-date the most important

³ <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about#sthash.O4zkQM2k.dpuf>

⁴ See website <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf> for complete document.

international political commitment towards promoting education for all.” (Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 396). This is because the Dakar Framework not only sets goals for individual countries but also presents a set of strategies countries can utilize to achieve them. The Dakar framework is a comprehensive document, dealing with issues ranging from teacher training to linkages with poverty elimination, including gender disparity.

Only a few months after the Dakar conference, the international community came together for another global conference, the Millennium Summit. At this meeting, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were announced. The overall aim of the MDGs was “meeting the needs of the world’s poorest.”⁵ The MDGs deal with several development issues, and only two are focused on education: MDG 2 Universal Primary Education, and MDG 3 Gender Parity in education. These two MDGs include very specific benchmarks and focus mainly on primary education.

Although there are many who criticize these documents, and the subsequent programs and policies they espouse, still others point to a few benefits or potential benefits. Dr. Peggy Antrobus (2006), a feminist activist from the Caribbean, acknowledges:

We can decide to sit on the side-lines and criticize the MDGs; or we can engage in the policy debates on MDGs critiquing them, showing the links to women’s equality and empowerment and in the process capture some resources that would enable us to implement element of the BPA [Beijing Platform for Action] (p. 52).

⁵ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

Following the same logic, Subrahmanian (2007) makes an excellent argument about expectations: “those who expect bureaucracies to effect miraculous impact on women’s gender identities and their relationships with men are inevitably confronted with the disappointing realization that this is not what bureaucracies can do” (p.119). According to Subrahmanian, the expectation that international organizations and governments will affect true change in societies is somewhat farfetched, but Antrobus claims that the MDGs give us an opening through which we can promote the things that are really important to women worldwide. My research is located within this discourse that criticizes the MDGs but at the same time engages with them to learn more about how the accompanying resources influence the lives of girls and women in the developing world.

CHAPTER 2: GLOBAL DEFINITION, LOCAL PERSPECTIVE - DEFINING “GENDER” AND “GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION”

All the consequences and implications hold more for women and children than for men because women and children are more or less the underdog here in the country when it comes to politics, economics, and land distribution and all that. It is women who suffer more”

(Shani, Registrar at a public university)

Gender equality is a universal value and in Ghana, like other places, women (and some men) demand, ask and advocate for more of it. The above quote could have been said by activist women the world over. However, it was said in Ghana in 2014, almost 15 years after the MDGs and the EFA were adopted. Why is a discussion on the definition of gender equality in education important? It is because the way in which the term is operationalized locally by policymakers and implementers has a direct effect on the lives of girls and boys. In other words, the way in which gender, equality, and education are defined is directly linked to the kinds of policies and programs that are advocated, developed, and funded. In this and subsequent chapters, I embed quotes from participants in my study in order to illustrate and expand upon my statements.

The common liberal feminist assumption is that equality means ‘the same.’ “The measure, or the normative standard, of that equality has been men’s lives” (Hughes, 2002, p. 33). In my interviews this sentiment was articulated clearly, for example: *Gender equality is about having both sexes, male and females, getting equal opportunity in education at all levels* (Mudiwa, senior lecturer at a public university)

Hughes (2002) describes how this approach has been critiqued and attacked globally by feminist movements whose “political goal is to have an equal value placed on women’s difference” (p. 34). Thus, these two opposing approaches – equality as sameness and equality as difference – both appear and influence global and national policymaking. In my interviews, gender equality was defined and described in various different ways and words, some clearly reflecting international debates. On the one hand there were definitions that embraced a broad vision of gender, as one participant said:

In my working definition, gender equity is such a way that both women and men can work along the line of what is due to the woman is based on her quality and ability and fits into the community of gender. Because when we talk about gender, we don't talk only of women but also of men (Masika, dean at a university of education).

Likewise, for another participant gender equality is:

Fairness in terms of access to education, fairness in terms of opportunities within the academic institution, and fairness in terms of resources made available and recognition and respect (Ogechi, head of Gender Mainstreaming Directorate, at a university of education).

On the other hand, I also heard words which placed a strong emphasis on parity:

It is one of our objectives to ensure that girls and boys are on par in education (Comfort, director at Ghana Education Service, GES).

Phillips’ (2002) discussion on the multiple meanings of equality is relevant to our specific focus on education. She advocates for “strict equality” as opposed to the more common gender-neutrality. Like Hughes’ (2002) equal as sameness, gender-neutrality is based on

“indifference to difference” (p. 222), an approach to equality that fails to acknowledge that there are differences between men and women. The critique of this approach “does not, however, imply that any difference is compatible with equality” (p. 224). She defines “strict equality... [as] a notion that what we are aiming for is a world in which there would be no differentiation between the sexes in the kinds of jobs they do, the kinds of caring responsibilities they assume, or the nature and extent of their political engagement...” (p. 223).

What Phillips would like us to do is move beyond the “different but equal” approach and “towards convergence in the life experiences of women and men...” (p. 224). This approach resonates in Narayan’s (2003) call to focus “on parallels, not identities, between different sorts of oppressions” (p. 314). Both argue that parallels or convergence between different groups – be it women and men, western and non-western, colonized and colonizers – is the epistemological way to move forward.

Due to my interest in how my interviewees (who were mostly non-western) perceive gender equality and where they stand in these debates, one of the first questions I asked was: “How would you define gender equality in education?” This chapter is centered on the dialogue between my participants’ definitions and the global, academic, and “official” definitions found in the literature.

Historic Evolution of Defining Gender Equality in Education: Different Perspectives

Using an historical perspective, Unterhalter (2006) identifies four different approaches to defining gender equality in education in the developing world that have influenced policymaking in the last 40 years (see table 1 below for a summary). The first approach can be traced to the 1970s. The Women in Development (WID) approach was introduced to emphasize the demand

for widespread schooling for girls. “Here gender is understood descriptively in terms of biological categories” (Unterhalter, 2006, p. 96). Most accounts trace the use of WID to women-targeted development projects which aimed at producing sources of livelihood (Heward, 1999). Vavrus (2002) adds: “In the 1970s, the Women in Development (WID) movement drew attention to women’s critical yet neglected role in public (state orchestrated) economic development initiatives...” (p. 51).

The precise point in time when the term WID left the international stage and the second approach, Gender and Development (GAD), appeared is not so clear. The concepts and underlying assumptions of WID are with us to this day, however, as will be described later in this chapter. Broadly speaking, Heward (1999) and Unterhalter (2006) claim that GAD language has been gaining momentum since the 1980s, especially using ‘gender analysis’ as an analytical framework. Another buzz word in the GAD world, ‘gender mainstreaming,’ has been identified by Subrahmanian (2007). She explains the term as “the label associated with strategies adopted by feminists to make the state an agent of transformative change for women” (p. 112). It seems that gender mainstreaming was, however, only adopted globally and widely in 1995 as a consequence of the Beijing Women’s Conference (see introduction to this dissertation). Unterhalter (2006) claims that GAD approaches had some limited influence on education policies. Equity was also a concept identified with this movement.

There are several scholars who call our attention to the intricate differences between the concepts of equality and equity. Whereas the liberal discourse of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international instruments usually suggests that equality is our ultimate goal, interpreting equality with parity (Chisamya et al., 2012), others focus our attention on the

problematic nature of defining equality in a political context (Phillips, 2002). Chisamya et al. (2012) advocate the use of the term equity because, “as a concept, equity is less unified in its units of measurement and therefore may have multiple, sometimes conflicting, and often less easily counted measures of success” (p. 744). This openness of meaning is what makes it attractive. However, it is important to note that this approach has not been widely adopted by the international organizations working in the field or by governments.

The third approach identified by Unterhalter is the Post-structuralist approach which questions “the stability of definitions of gender, paying particular attention to the fluidity of gendered identification and shifting forms of action” (p. 96). This approach has been gaining momentum since the 1990s and is closely identified with post-colonial theory. Lastly, Unterhalter acknowledges the Human Development approach, also on the international stage since the 1990s: “In some ways, this is a metatheory, working at a higher level of abstraction, and suggesting not concrete policies or forms of practice, but a framework in which these can be developed ethically” (p. 98). In a succinct table (Unterhalter 2006, p. 97-98) she illustrates how each approach frames the way gender, development, education, and equality were and are still defined.

Table 1

Framing Gender, Development and Education Definitions

Framework	Understandings of gender	Understandings of development	Understandings of education	Understandings of equality
Women in Development WID	Gender = women, girls	Growth, efficiency, good	Schooling	Equality of resources; sometimes

		governance, social cohesion		termed parity
Gender and Development GAD	Constructed social relations,	Power challenging inequity and oppression	Conscientization	Redistribution of power; sometimes termed equity
Post- structuralist	Shifting and performed identities	Struggling with the past in the present to shape multifaceted identities and new narratives	Deconstructive	Stress on difference
Human Development	Inequality and capability denial	Development as freedom	A basic capability	Equality of rights and capabilities

This table helps to demonstrate how definitions do influence policymaking. For example, if we define gender as girls and education as schooling and equality as parity, then direct policy linkage will be policies promoting girls in schools, also known as MDG 2+3. Similarly, by defining just one concept more broadly, we can imagine much more comprehensive policies. If, therefore, we define equality as redistribution of power, then we can envisage policies that might promote the shift of gender power relations in schools. Especially interesting is the prospect of defining equality as the equality of rights and capabilities (the Human Development framework): What are girls and boys able to do when they graduate from school? Do they have the same rights in the school? Do they have equal rights when graduating? These are also questions which

can help in analyzing the implementation of relevant policies and which will be further explored in Chapter 6.

Fennell (2012) and Unterhalter (2008) claim that the theoretical lens that has been adopted for thinking about gender equality in education is inadequate and thus leads to an “inability to address the structural asymmetries and to only focus on the symptoms, such as the low number of girls in education“ (Fennell, 2012, p. 261-261). In light of this, it is not surprising that in Ghana the unit dealing with equality in the MOE is named the “Girls’ Education Unit” (not unlike the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative, the UN agency dealing with gender equality in education). This conflation of gender and girls that is the hallmark of the WID framework since the 1970s needs further elaboration and investigation.

Stromquist & Fischman (2009) discuss the current usage of the term “gender,” stating that “gender is frequently used in place of ‘sex,’ or as an indication of an interest in ‘women’s’ issues, or of concerns with sexualities, femininities and masculinities” (p. 463). There is a difference between how the term gender is used in feminist and critical theory and how it is being used in development discourse (Stromquist & Fischman, 2009, Unterhalter, 2012). Feminists believe that “gender is always in the process of being done, performed and acted, and is thus present in the relationships between individuals of the same or different sexes, between individuals and society, and between individuals and institutionalised structures of power” (Stromquist & Fischman, 2009, p. 466). If we approach gender equality in education with this understanding of gender, our recommendations and suggestions will follow the same logic. However, in the international development arena, the discourse of aid agencies and states often equates gender with women/girls. For the majority of my participants, gender equality means

that boys and girls are equal in what they can access and in what they can do. An excellent example is:

Girls should have the same opportunities as boys. In the form of admission, scholarships and space [like in dormitories]. What is given to boys in the form of facilities [refers specifically to SSS—secondary boarding schools] is equal to what is given to girls. (Eshe, regional director at GES⁶).

Unterhalter (2012) cautions that the different ways in which gender is defined and performed is instrumental in the outcome for women in society – both the definition and the outcome can be beneficial but also disastrous: “Gender forms and is formed by different processes where poverty presents lines of income or consumption, nets of difficult or rewarding relationships and fuels to drive or undermine change” (p. 258).

Gender as a broad concept is defined neatly by Stromquist (2012), and her definition reminds us to always look at the broader implications for society: “As is amply recognized, gender refers not only to the conditions of women and men but to a structural relationship between the sexes which is linked to the state, the economy, and other macro- and micro-processes and institutions” (p. 160). One participant talked exactly about how gender equality policy is linked with definitions and policy:

When it comes to the policy it is very difficult because our culture is male domineering and they don't see the reason why we should be coming with all these demands...although some men do advocate for us.... We are not saying we want to overtake the men but that we should move on par and be on the same level (Comfort).

⁶ See Table in Appendix A for a complete list of interviewee pseudonyms and positions.

Comfort is very realistic in her assessment of the situation, and she clearly mirrors men's fear of women's domination in her society when she says they "only" want to be at the same level and not overtake them. This structured relationship is also echoed in the quote opening this chapter: *women and children are the underdog here in the country.*

It is very important to discuss gender equality within a concrete context. Many feminist scholars, and especially those from the developing world, acknowledge that "gender is first and foremost a socio-cultural construct" (Oyěwùmí, 2002, p. 2), and thus, any analysis of gender equality should be firmly situated within this construct. My interviewees acknowledge this by talking about the unique characteristics of their society and also by asking me about my own country and culture. Comfort, an educated professional woman, laments that:

In Ghana, from time immemorial women are relegated to the background. You are to be there and take care of the house and the children. But now we are changing; that what women can do men can also do it.

Although she recognizes a cultural history of consigning women to the background, she explains that things are now changing. She continues by saying,:

If men are in leadership positions, women also need to be in leadership position.

Moreover, as the head of the GEU, she also emphasizes that this is what "we" (the unit) work for.

Definitions Promoted by Development Partners

Phillips' (2002) discussion points to the challenges of defining gender equality in a political context where liberal discourse dominates. The liberal feminist underpinning of some supporters of the MDGs and other international instruments usually suggests equality as the

ultimate goal and interprets equality as parity (Chisamya, DeJaeghere, Kendall, & Khan, 2012). However, Subrahmanian (2005) notes that “the lack of a universally accepted definition of gender equality in relation to education goals makes measuring progress towards its achievement hard if not impossible to achieve” (p. 397). The resulting reality is that international actors, as well as countries, do not deal with the more complex questions of definition and go straight to measurements and the language of indicators. Here, for example, are two definitions used by the World Bank and UNICEF, organizations which are prominent in Ghana and work closely with the MOE (my emphasis).

UNICEF⁷ - United National Children’s Fund

Girls’ education is both an intrinsic right and a *critical lever to reaching other development objectives*. Providing girls with an education helps break the cycle of poverty: educated women are less likely to marry early and against their will; less likely to die in childbirth; more likely to have healthy babies; and are more likely to send their children to school. When all children have access to a quality education rooted in human rights and gender equality, it creates a ripple effect of opportunity that influences generations to come.

The World Bank⁸

Why is it crucial to ensure that nearly 4 billion girls and women around the world have the same chances to receive an education as boys and men? First, education is a human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations

⁷ http://www.unicef.org/education/bege_70640.html

⁸ <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:20298916~menuPK:617572~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386,00.html>

Convention on the Rights of the Child. Second, *girls' education is a strategic development investment – evidence shows that countries with greater gender equality are more likely to have higher economic growth.*

As can be seen from these excerpts, the fact that gender equality is more than just access and parity is acknowledged by all three organizations. For the World Bank and UNICEF, however, education as a moral right is only one part of the picture. The other part is still a narrow focus on parity, as well as viewing girls' education as a solution to all of developments problems.

The language of the international organizations is echoed in the language used by my participants. It was particularly striking to hear the head of the GEU declaring that:

Next year, 2015, we need to achieve gender parity of 1, and we are at enrollment ratio of 0.98. So we need to work towards those international goals. Because Ghana signed all these documents and we need to ensure we work towards the goals.

Juxtaposing this quote with her earlier one reflects the duality in her approach – perhaps the duality of personal feeling and understandings versus institutional (MOE) norms and expectations.

The following quote can be found on the MDG's website:

The ratio between the enrolment rate of girls and that of boys grew from 91 in 1999 to 97 in 2010 for all developing regions. The gender parity index value of 97 falls within the plus-or-minus 3-point margin of 100 per cent, the accepted measure for parity.⁹

⁹ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml>

For me, talking about a parity of 1 or 0.99 or 0.98 obscures the situation of girls in the most deprived regions as well as whether the schooling experience of the girls is meaningful and beneficial for their wellbeing.

Can Gender Equality be Measured?

Questions of definition and measurement are thus intertwined and interrelated. Defining gender equality becomes laden with political implications, but measuring is more easily politically accessible as a myriad of development indicators. And so “the international debate about how to ‘measure’ gender equality across nations tends to be associated with indicators which relate more to the presence of female students and teachers in schools rather than to their gendered experiences within national educational institutions” (Arnot & Fennell, 2008, p. 515). The MDGs are then criticized for allowing a very narrow measurement strategy for gender equality in education that “almost inherently undermines their prospects of success.” (Archer, 2005, p. 21). Fennell (2012) is even harsher, asserting that “gender equality will not be achieved if we continue to follow narrow statistical measures” (p. 261).

What is missing from this “counting” are relevant issues such as “patriarchy, gender bias in teacher attitudes, cultural practices and beliefs that privilege boys (or girls in some areas), or other more complex issues that are not easily measurable” (Monkman & Hoffman, 2012, p. 78). Only the introduction of profound measures within national education systems, for both boys and girls, can “bring about social transformations” (Fennell, 2012, p. 261).

One of the reasons for the narrow statistical approach is that while the Education For All initiative “tried to associate basic learning needs with a broad range of ideas about how such needs would be satisfied, *the forms of policy monitoring* used by the governments and UNESCO

tracked whether five years of schooling had been achieved for girls and boys” (Unterhalter, 2008, p.26, my emphasis). Despite an initial policy that might have been broad and encompassed relevant obstacles, implementation (and monitoring) lacks nuance.

Robertson (2012) criticizes these monitoring systems – indices and indicators – and notes that:

scopic systems in global education policy take *fragments* (partial understandings) of knowledge about complex education processes, yet present them as *fractal* (a smaller version of a whole). In doing so, the complexity and diversity of education systems, and their need for diverse policies for diverse issues, also disappears (Robertson, 2012, pp. 40-41).

As mentioned above, although the intention in developing the EFA framework was to create a comprehensive definition, the practicality of development work, coupled with the adoption of the MDGs, has proved otherwise.

To end this chapter I would like to quote one of my interviewees:

We are fighting to be like the developed countries, so if elsewhere this is working, than it should be working in Ghana as well. We should all have this opportunity (Mudiwa).

This chapter opened declaring that gender equality is a universal value and is closing similarly by stating that gender equality in education in Ghana is well acknowledged as a global value. However, it is defined, measured and advocated on different levels and understandings that require further investigation.

CHAPTER 3: GENDER, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

Brief Historical Background

An historical review of Ghana necessitates looking at the history of West Africa as a region, since in precolonial Africa, Ghana did not exist. The country borders in West Africa were mostly drawn by the colonial powers during the 19th and early 20th century. In precolonial West Africa cultural similarities followed (and often continue to follow) ecological divisions. These ecological divisions are horizontal and were formed in relation to distance from the coast on the one hand and the deserts of North Africa on the other hand (Webb, 2006). However, there were mechanisms, including trade routes and connection, which created unity, linking the north and south.

Different cultural ideas, as well as new religious movements like Islam, moved through the different trade networks. By the eighth century, an intricate web of commercial routes linking western and northern African communities, known as the trans-Saharan trade, had emerged (Rashid, 2006, p. 122).

Trade routes going north and south, east and west, engendered a diverse society in West Africa, and a society susceptible to new ideas such as Islam. Islam was introduced in West Africa prior to Christianity,¹⁰ and while Christianity was “mostly confined to the coastal regions – indeed to forts and castles and communities with resident European soldiers and traders” (Obeng, 2006, p.

¹⁰ Islam arrived in West Africa between 1100 and 1600, and Christianity arrived in the 15th century (Obeng, 2006).

143) Islam was more common inland and started to spread more widely after being adopted by African rulers. However, Islam and Christianity were not simply copied from the Arabs and Europeans, but rather ‘hybridized’ religions were established showing “the critical role of African agency in pre-colonial times” (Obeng, 2006, p. 158).

This is an important point because “post-colonial literature often gives the impression that Africans began to assert their agency after the 1960s when nations south of the Sahara gained their independence” (Obeng, 2006, p. 148). In other words, the perception that prior to colonialism and post colonialism Africa was a deserted continent is currently acknowledged as mostly wrong. In what is now known as Ghana, named under colonial rule the Gold Coast, a flourishing native African kingdom – the Ashanti kingdom— thrived between 400-1200 and partly managed to survive even colonialism.

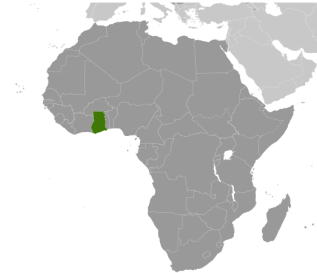


Figure 1. Map of Ghana and neighboring countries¹¹

¹¹ Retrieved from CIA World Factbook - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>

The Ashanti was a matrilineal kingdom where women played an important role. It was one of the most prominent kingdoms in West Africa (Oduyoye, 1979). The British Empire used confrontations between the two kingdoms – the Ashanti and Fante —to usurp judicial powers in the area known as the Gold Coast. On July 24, 1874, the British proclaimed the Gold Coast an official colony. The British (and other European) colonizers brought with them, amongst other things, an oppression of women previously unknown in Africa, as well as a sense of social relations between the genders that was not historically present in Africa (Mama, 1997; Oyěwùmí, 1997). Oyěwùmí goes further and claims that gender as known and defined in the West was a totally foreign concept in Africa (she refers specifically to the Yoruba in Nigeria). “This is a result of the fact that the architecture and furnishings of gender research have been by and large distilled from Europe and American experiences” (Oyěwùmí, 2002, p. 2). Not only was the definition imported by European colonizers but also by western researchers.

Mama (1997) also notes: “that the legal status of African women was steadily degraded as imperialism advanced, consolidating patriarchal and racist gender values.... these trends were continued by colonial states” (p. 50). And we see traces of them in modern day statehood as well. African women’s history with education is also fraught with colonialism’s patriarchal fingerprints.

In a 1922 report by the Phelps Stokes Fund about education in Africa¹² the Gold Coast is described as:

¹² A study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African education commission, under the auspices of the Phelps Stokes Fund and foreign mission societies of North America and Europe. Prepared by: Thomas Jesse Jones, Chairman of the Commission.

The native population is over two million and the European population is about 3,000, negligible in proportion but all-powerful in direction and control. Numerous coast fortresses of large dimensions and romantic architecture record the dramatic struggles of various European nations to possess the mineral and human resources of the country from the fifteenth century to our time. It is generally agreed that European colonization has had a beneficent influence and a greater degree of success in the Gold Coast than in any other African colony. (Jones, 1922, p. 121)

However, this beneficial colonial rule does not seem to have such a great influence on modern day Ghana or other African countries. In the powerful words of Kalu (2006):

Colonialism was a system consisting of administrative machinery, a judiciary and an economic order, all sanctified by a monotheistic religion imbued with ‘civilized’ values. The colonial project sought to entrench a new moral economy in other cultures in order to remodel them into reflections of its own image.... Suffice it to say that development failures in contemporary West Africa could be traced to many of the unresolved aspects of colonial hegemony and the clash of worldviews; the failure of poverty alleviation strategies emanates more from privileging the neocolonial models than from a congenital African pathology (p. 178)

In the Gold Coast colony, as in other West African colonies, schools were initially set up by the church to serve the elites, and the main purpose of education for Africans was to train them to serve the colonial powers in administration and other areas (Carnoy & Samoff, 1990). Until the First World War about 98% of schools were run by churches using a model transported from England. It was only in the 1920s that government schools became more widespread, and

colonial bureaus of education were established (Scanlon, 1963). Although the financing and management of the schools became the responsibility of these bureaus, the churches and missions were still responsible for the daily operations of the schools. The missions' educational task became much more important than their evangelical work (Scanlon, 1963). This dual system of church/mission schools funded by the government alongside official government schools continued in West Africa until well after independence (Scanlon, 1963).

In 1957, Ghana was the first African country to gain independence from British colonial rule. Dr. Kwameh Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, had also headed the regional decolonization struggle (Daddieh, 2006). It is important to note that the liberation movements in West Africa were based on the successful mobilization of "masses of people into peaceful but formidable national coalitions that cut cross ethnic, religious, regional and class cleavages (Daddieh, 2006, p. 265). Thus these new states, including Ghana, were built upon a vision of a pluralistic society. The African leaders in the region managed to successfully move their people through the process of decolonization without any major violent incidents. However, President Nkrumah's (and the rest of these leaders) legitimacy was based on the premise that "material progress and social welfare" would be the result of independence and decolonization (Daddieh, 2006).

In the years following Ghana's independence a comprehensive education policy was announced. Efforts included primary and secondary education access, technical and science education, as well as teacher training and their status recognition. As President Nkrumah articulated:

We must seek an African view to the problems of Africa. This does not mean that western techniques and methods are not applicable to Africa. It does mean, however, that

in Ghana we must look at every problem from the African point of view. (Akyeampong, 2010, p. 1)

Nkrumah was determined “that education would be used to unblock the restrictions that the environment and other humanly induced conditions placed on economic growth” (Akyeampong 2010, p. 2).

At the time of independence there was only one university in Ghana. There were very few elementary and even fewer secondary schools. Secondary schools were, for the most part, boarding schools that catered to the rich. The new post-independence government “had a carefully articulated plan of how education was going to support the efforts to become a prosperous economy“ (Akyeampong, 2010, p. 1). Many postcolonial governments worked diligently on establishing education systems for the masses. This was a direct reaction against the limitations posed by the colonial powers on schooling that mainly served the elites (Carnoy & Samoff, 1990). But expansion of access to education was not uniform and in fact “regional and social inequalities, magnified by gender, were reflected in who did and did not enroll in school” (Unterhalter, 2006, p. 93).

The colonial legacy in Ghana as in other African countries is deep and varied and extends to many aspects of life. The legacy in the education sector has proved to be inadequate, and new postcolonial policies were developed without any relevant context (Dei, 2005). Because the governance model inherited from England was the Westminster Parliamentary model, “central government powers were considerably enhanced at the expense of community self-government” (Daddieh, 2006, p. 269). Due to this legacy, any attempts to include community level governance structures in education policy and planning was lacking.

Between 1957 (when Ghana gained independence) and the first major reform program in 1986, there were nine different endeavors aimed at educational reform (White, 2004). Appendix C demonstrates the different reform attempts in the first years of Ghana. This instability in policymaking is due in part to one of the biggest weakness of the postcolonial state: “they [the West African postcolonial states] were poorly endowed with woefully inadequate administrative capacity for policy formulation and implementation, due in large part to the scarcity of trained and skilled manpower” (Daddieh, 2006, p. 270). Moreover, “while external interests have intruded in educational reforms in Ghana, it is evident much of this involvement is driven by the needs to serve the interests of international capital” (Dei, 2004, p. 6). Thus a mixture of bureaucratic and financial interests and causes interacted to create a situation in Ghana in which seven reform reports were produced in the decade following independence (Dei, 2004).

The recommendations of these reports ranged widely “from complete state financing of education to complete divestiture of the state in the provision of services for university education” (Dei, 2004, p. 32). But most were tabled, out of fear from political retributions. According to the World Bank, the only important policy reform effort before the major 1986 reform program was a 1972 commission report (The Dzobo Commission) which formed the basis of the 1986 reform (White, 2004). Dei (2004), on the other hand, says that these recommendations “were nothing more than an exercise on paper” (p. 33). The reasons for this characterize the state of administration and governance in Ghana at the time and include “political instability, lack of political will.... high cost of providing infrastructure and skilled personnel...” (p. 33) among others.

By the mid-1980s it was obvious that the education system in Ghana was in crisis: “prolonged economic decline prior to the introduction of reforms had led to a compression of educational expenditure from 6.4 percent of GDP in 1976 to just 1.5 percent by 1983” (White, 2004, p. 7). In the '70s and '80s, and almost to the end of the '90s, primary completion rates fluctuated between 54% and 66%.¹³ The solution (to Ghana’s economic situation as a whole and the African continent in general) offered by the World Bank and IMF was the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Dei (2004) notes that the “SAPs were about the promotion of a market driven economic system alongside the retrenchment of the state and the curtailment of state intervention in national economies” (p. 25). In the area of education the SAPs pushed towards privatization and cost-effectiveness. The thrust of the educational SAPs in Ghana “appeared to be in the direction of devolving national public responsibility for the financing of education by downloading this responsibility onto local communities” (Dei, 2004, p.35).

The educational SAPs were not responsible for the bad state of the education system in Ghana, but they contributed to and intensified a declining system (Dei, 2004). Furthermore, Dei (2004) reiterates who were the biggest beneficiaries of the SAPs and who were the biggest losers. The SAPs mainly benefitted strong groups such as entrepreneurs and exporters while really damaging the situation of teachers and the rural poor – especially women and children, groups that were struggling even before. Educational inequalities were aggravated, and in the rural areas the conditions were even worse (Dei, 2004).

¹³ Primary completion rate, total (% of relevant age group) – World Bank Data.

Educational reforms in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁴ The first major educational reform took place in 1987 and was called The New Educational Reform Programme (NERP). There were four major components to this program, the most significant being a total restructuring of the education system. Prior to this reform, children's career in the education system spanned 17 years: six years in primary school, four years in middle school and seven years in senior secondary school (SSS). The reform shortened this to 12 years: primary school stayed the same length, but middle school turned into junior secondary school (JSS) and was now only three years, as was the new SSS. This restructuring was phased in over almost a decade (until the last cohort of the old SSS graduated in 1994) (White, 2004). Primary and junior secondary schools were now termed "basic education," a semantic issue that became important for later policies and programs (Akyeampong, 2010).

The three other components of this reform included streamlining educational planning and management, increasing cost recovery, and improving the teaching/learning process (White, 2004). Dei's research in rural Ghana a decade after these reforms were implemented discovered that, amongst other things, "the imposition of SAPs led to both the questioning and a hardening of locally held views about the relevance and irrelevance of formal education" (p. 41). In rural communities, the benefits of getting an education, even pre-tertiary, was not evident at all. Dei also notes that these reforms were carried out at a time of great economic hardship in Ghana, and one of the groups adversely affected by this combination of economic crisis and educational reform were girls and young women. Behind the innocent term "cost recovery" hide school fees and other payments parents need to make. When faced with the decision about which children to

¹⁴ See Appendix C for a table detailing political regimes and education policy text between 1951 and 2008.

invest their money in, girls were never at the top of the list (Dei, 2004, Dunne, 2007, Stephens, 2000).

Dei (2004) summarizes that “there was a perception that the government did not do its homework properly in terms of trying to understand the long term impact of its policies on the poor before it imposed educational reform measures that called for further sacrifices” (p. 44).

Akyeampong (2010) also points out that despite an effort to expand the education curriculum to include technical and vocational elements, in 2000 only 5% of the active labor force engaged in production had a secondary or higher qualification. It can thus be said that “the 1987 education reforms had been far from making an impact on skills and qualification profile of the labour market” (p. 6).

Dei’s research in Ghana was conducted before the influence of the second major policy reform could be felt. He does however make several comments that are important to note before discussing this reform. “Since the 1980s, both the World Bank and the IMF have been deciding the fate of millions of African peoples through the imposition of SAPs”(p. 47-48), and despite a rhetoric that emphasized the importance of “country-specific policies,” their policies are mainly driven by the imperative of making the Ghanaian economy more competitive in the global market. In reality and in the actual implementation processes, meeting the needs of local people does not seem to be the top priority (Dei, 2004).

In 1996 the Ministry of Education came with up the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) as a direct response to 1992 constitution. What was new was the earnest intent the government placed on implementation, an intent that had not been there in

earlier reforms (Kadingdi, 2006). The four objectives of the reform, as articulated by the MOE, were:

- (i) to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- (ii) to improve management efficiency and sustainability;
- (iii) to increase access and partnership; and
- (iv) to decentralize the management of the education sector

(Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE), 1996, p. 15)

Support for this program came and still comes mainly from international donors (Dei, 2004). The problem with this is that with the financing comes subordination to international economic interests. This issue will be further elaborated on in Chapters 5 and 6 since it is still a critical matter in Ghana's education system.

One of the immediate results of the FCUBE reform was that it opened the door to investment in primary education programs in Ghana by many international donor agencies who subsequently developed, financed, and implemented various projects within Ghana's education system. These include the United Nation's Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank, the European Union, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Akyeampong (2010) observes:

The lessons of both 1987 and 1995 education reforms in Ghana are particularly important at a time when the international community is pressing and supporting African states to improve access to basic education as a strategy for poverty alleviation. Education developments in the 1980s and 90s have shown that good access to poor quality basic

education will not yield the private and social returns of investments to promote economic growth. (p.6)

Administration and implementation challenges. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the lack of administrative capacity in Ghana's government prior to independence. This lack was manifest along the road of educational reform in both the articulation and the implementation of policies. "Educational reforms need effective planning and execution," (Dei, 2004, p. 64), and this requires knowledge and training. They also need stakeholder input and an understanding of the challenges facing beneficiaries of the policy.

On examining these reforms, the question that keeps recurring is: if the SAPs were inappropriate in Ghana's context, can the MDGs have a different effect? After all, they were conceived in a very similar incubator, if not practically the same one. In Chapter 4 I will deal with this question in more detail and discuss also current policies and reforms.

Key Economic and Social Indicators

There are no data independent of theory, no observations not made from a perspective.

Data alone do not tell us anything; they do not speak, but are interpreted by people
(Gilligan, 1986, p. 328)

This section will deal with "raw data" and numbers. It is designed to provide a snapshot of Ghana today as well as delineating some changes over the past decade (since the declaration of the MDGs). There is also some current comparison data from the group of countries termed "Sub-Saharan Africa" and to which Ghana belongs (as classified by the World Bank). However, in line with Gilligan, a word of caution about this data: just as important as examining the data is

looking at who collects and publishes it. Most of the data in this section come from the World Bank website which is undoubtedly the most comprehensive database available. The Ghana data file contains a list of over 1000 indicators. These data sets are not, however, devoid of theory and interpretation. The World Bank states that “Ghana is a strong performer among the Sub-Saharan African economies” and is making “steady progress” towards achieving the MDGs (World Bank, 2012, p. 5). Within this statement is an example of the World Bank’s perspective and agenda which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Ghana today. Today, Ghana is a one of the more stable countries in the region and is classified by the World Bank as a lower middle income country. The last national elections were held in 2012; all data regarding those elections and district-level elections can be accessed online on the Electoral Commission website.¹⁵ This indicates a certain level of transparency and technological progress in Ghana, two important issues for research on government documents.

Table 2

Select Demographic and Contextual Indicators

	2000	2005	Most current	Sub-Saharan Africa (most current) ¹⁶
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	57	59	61	56
Fertility rate (births per woman)	4.7	4.4	3.9	5.1
Urban population (% of total)	44	48	53	37

¹⁵ <http://www.ec.gov.gh/>

¹⁶ Following World Bank classification. List of countries included (Ghana is included) can be found at <http://data.worldbank.org/region/SSA?display=map>

Health expenditure, total (% of GDP)	4.8	7	5.2	6.5
Human Development Index (HDI) ¹⁷	0.461	0.491	0.558	N/A
Motor vehicles (per 1,000 people)	18	17	30	29
Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)	1	13	101	66
Internet users (per 100 people)	0.2	1.8	17.1	16.9
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	N/A	9.0	8.3	19.4

One of the greatest changes in the past decade in Ghana can be understood by looking at vehicle numbers and particularly at cell phone proliferation and internet usage. In 2000 there were hardly any cell phones in Ghana; in just over a decade it has mushroomed such that almost everyone owns one. From my personal experience in Ghana, it is easy and relatively cheap – 2 GCD—to purchase a SIM card or basic mobile phone. Most are not on contract but rather can be refilled according to need with people selling refill cards on every street corner and major junction.

Internet usage has also increased but is still relatively low, and computers are not very widespread. On visiting a public university campus, I did not observe any students using laptops nor did I see computers in all of the offices.

Despite the obvious progress made in Ghana, the Human Development Index has remained pretty stable. Clearly there are large sections of society who have not benefitted from

¹⁷ Taken from: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/GHA.pdf>

this progress. Compared to Sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana is doing better or the same and is, in addition, more urbanized.

Language and religion.¹⁸ Although English is the official language in Ghana (also used in educational institutions), there are nine additional local languages, the most prevalent being Ga, Dagomba, Akan and Ewe. Figure 2 present the prevalence of the African languages in Ghana. In terms of religion (see figure 3), Ghana is relatively homogenous with 71.2% of the population belonging to the Christian faith. Churches are abundant in cities and villages and are not only places of worship but also of social gathering. Sermons and other social activities can be seen and heard almost every day of the week. Many churches have speaker systems, and singing is a major part of worship (Sabar, 2008).

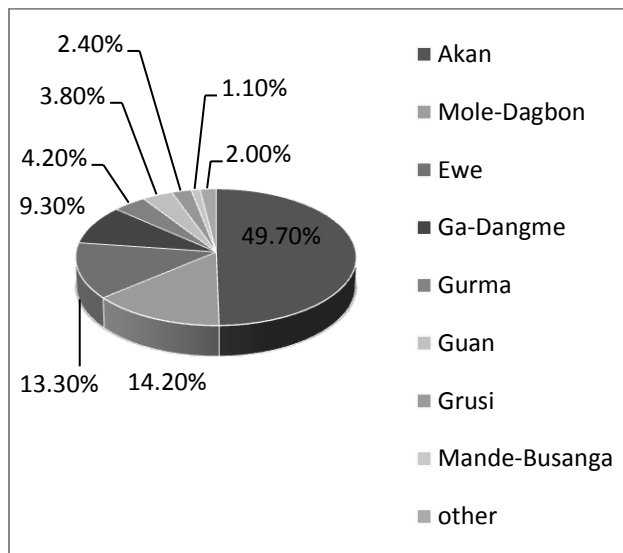


Figure 2. Languages (%)

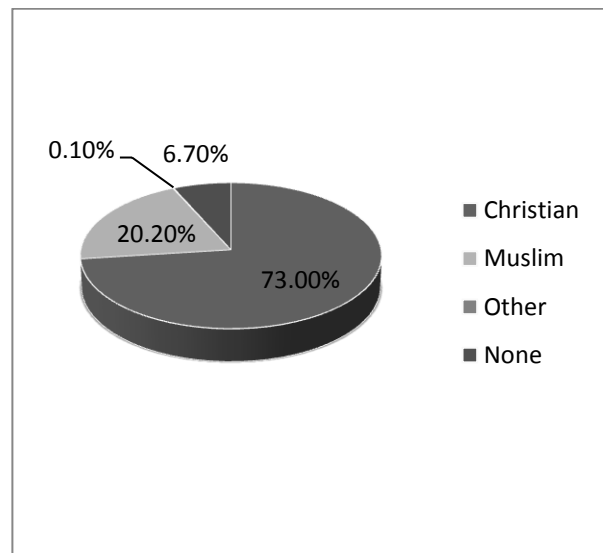


Figure 3. Religions (%)

¹⁸ <http://www.ghanaembassy.org/index.php?page=language-and-religion>

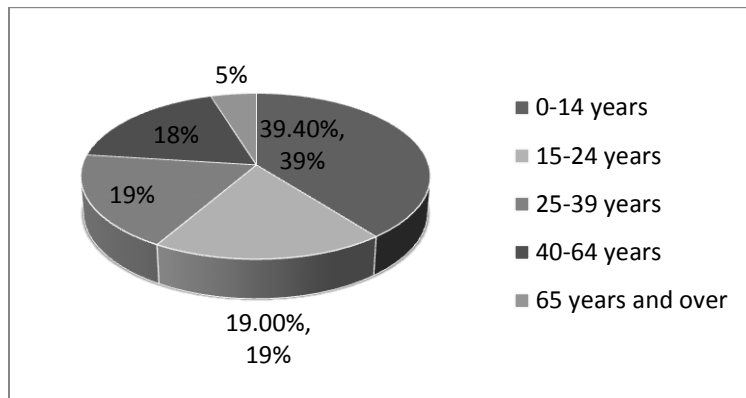


Figure 4. Age Structure (%)

Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 are all based on data from the latest Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS6) report, published in August 2014. Figure 4 demonstrates the current age structure of Ghanaian society. The biggest section of society is the 0-14 age group (39.4%), and this is a crucial factor in the problems faced by the education system which aims to provide education for all. Also of note is that the three following age groups, 15-24, 25-39, and 40-64, are almost equal (19%, 18.60% and 18.4% respectively). Overall, the young populations (0-24) are a very significant portion of society.

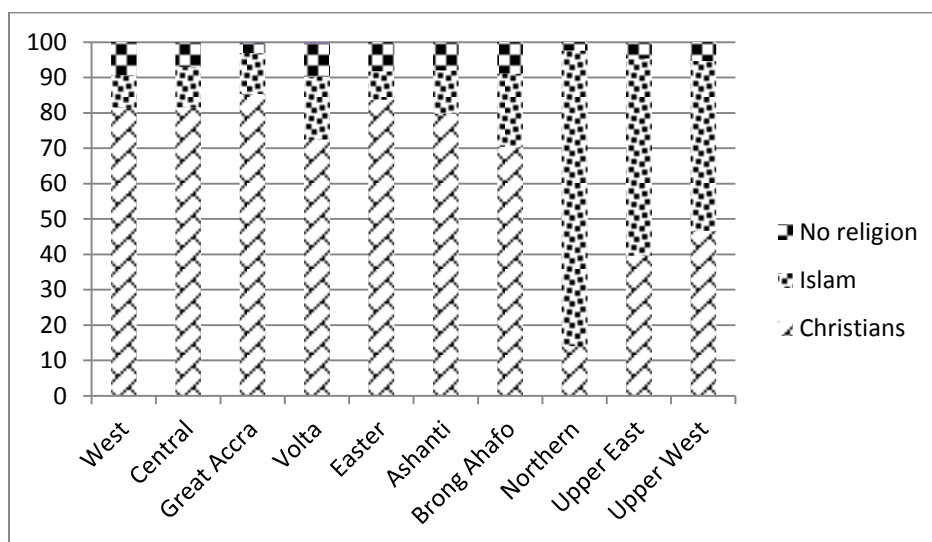


Figure 5. Religious Affiliation by Region

This figure is very interesting, because although the Christians are a notable majority in Ghana, the three most deprived regions—Northern, Upper East and Upper West— are also the ones with a majority Muslim population.

Table 3

Select Economic Indicators

	2000	2005	Most current	Sub-Saharan Africa (most current)
GDP per capita (current US\$)	265	502	1,605	1,723
Net ODA received per capita ¹⁹ (current US\$)	31.77	53.81	71.27	51
Unemployment, total (% of labor force)	10.4	3.5	3.6	N/A
Vulnerable employment, total (% of total employment)	N/A	75	77	N/A
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24)	16.2	5.9	7.4	12.9
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24)	16.5	7.9	10	15

¹⁹ ODA - official development assistance

A look at the economic indicators gives us a shallow snapshot in numbers of life in Ghana. One of the most interesting numbers here is the Net ODA received per capita. The Net ODA has increased along with a substantial increase in the GDP per capita over the past decades. The development assistance currently entering Ghana is double that of 15 years ago, while the GDP has increased six-fold. This begs the question of what would happen to the GDP and other economic indicators if some of this assistance was withdrawn. During my interviews at the Ministry of Education, it was made clear to me (especially by Sam, a director at the MOE) that the government can afford only teachers' salaries; any other funding of programs, project and, buildings, comes from aid partners:

If you look at our finances right now the government mostly uses its resources for salaries so a lot of these activities are funded directly from development partners and civil society and some individuals. And we do depend on them.... (Sam)

And even these salaries are not paid regularly. A teacher I met when visiting the Ghana Education Service office in Accra explained that he had come all the way from the countryside to find out when he will receive payment, having not received his salary for the past seven months. His situation is not, it transpires, unique.

Education in Ghana is free and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 17 (primary and secondary). Below is a summary of select indicators for Ghana's education system.

Table 4

Select Educational Indicators

	2000	2005	Most current	Sub-Saharan Africa (most
--	------	------	--------------	-----------------------------

	current)			
Public spending on education, total (% of GDP)	5.35	7.42	8.14	4.3
Primary completion rate (% of relevant age group)	71.77	74.49	98.49	70
Adult literacy rates M/F (%)	66.35/49.79	N/A	N/A	68/51
Youth (15-24) literacy rates M/F (%)	N/A	N/A	88/83	75/64
School enrollment, primary (% gross) ²⁰	86	90	109	100
Pupil-teacher ratio, primary	33.78	32.81	31.68	41
Pupil-teacher ratio, secondary	19.1	18.89	17.52	25

It can be observed that the percentage of GDP spent on education has increased since 2000 (and the declaration of the MDGs) and is double the Sub-Saharan average. Since the GDP has also gone up in the last decade and a half (see table 2), the absolute spending on education has been climbing steadily. School enrollment and completion rates have also increased. Unfortunately some data— mainly literacy data— is unavailable. It is evident that the pupil-teacher ratio (in both primary and secondary) has also gone down but only incrementally. Regarding the pupil-teacher ratio, it should be noted, from my encounters in Ghana, that these numbers are very problematic and do not reflect the reality of most children and teachers. Because this number is a national average, it is skewed by the fact that many rural classes might be much smaller because

²⁰ Gross enrolment ratio. Primary. Total is the total enrollment in primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population of official primary education age. GER can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged students because of early or late school entrance and grade repetition.

of the geographical spread between villages and schools with Classrooms in urban and semi-urban districts being much bigger. Therefore, most children in Ghana study in very big classrooms; one teacher even told me she had 70 children in her kindergarten class.

The figures below show the trend in primary and secondary completion rates in Ghana in the past decades.

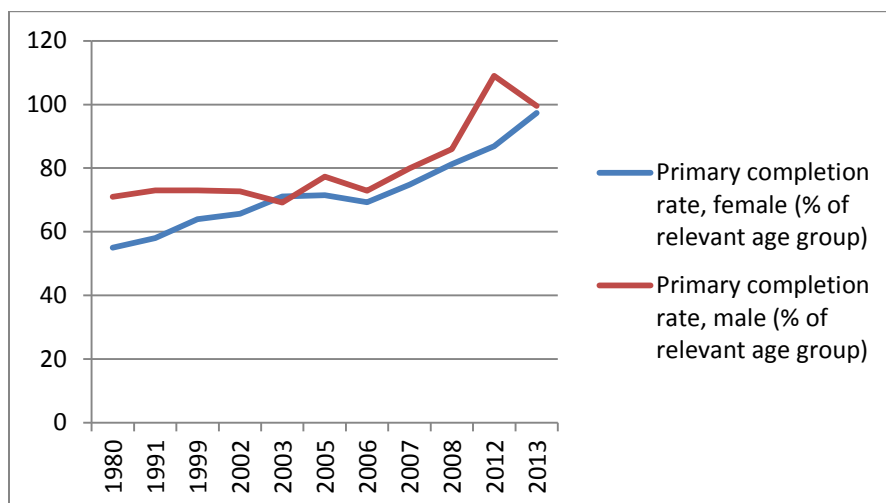


Figure 6. Primary completion rates by gender²¹

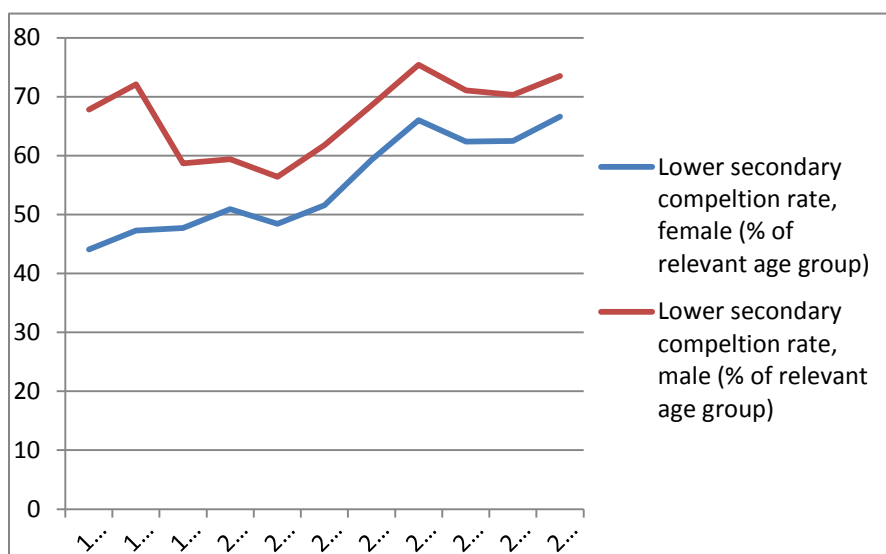


Figure 7. Lower secondary completion rates by gender²²

²¹ Data retrieved from World Bank Data Bank - <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.CMPT.FE.ZS>

²² Data retrieved from World Bank Data Bank - <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.CMPT.LO.FE.ZS>

Of note in this data is that, especially in secondary completion, female and male completion rates adhere to a similar pattern. However, female completion rates are consistently lower than male, and although the gap seemed to be closing in the 1990s, it has remained consistent ever since. When looking at the primary completion data, the picture is somewhat more complex, and the gaps are much smaller and are almost nonexistent today. This data represents the massive investment made in the last decade towards achieving MDG 2 – Universal Primary Education.

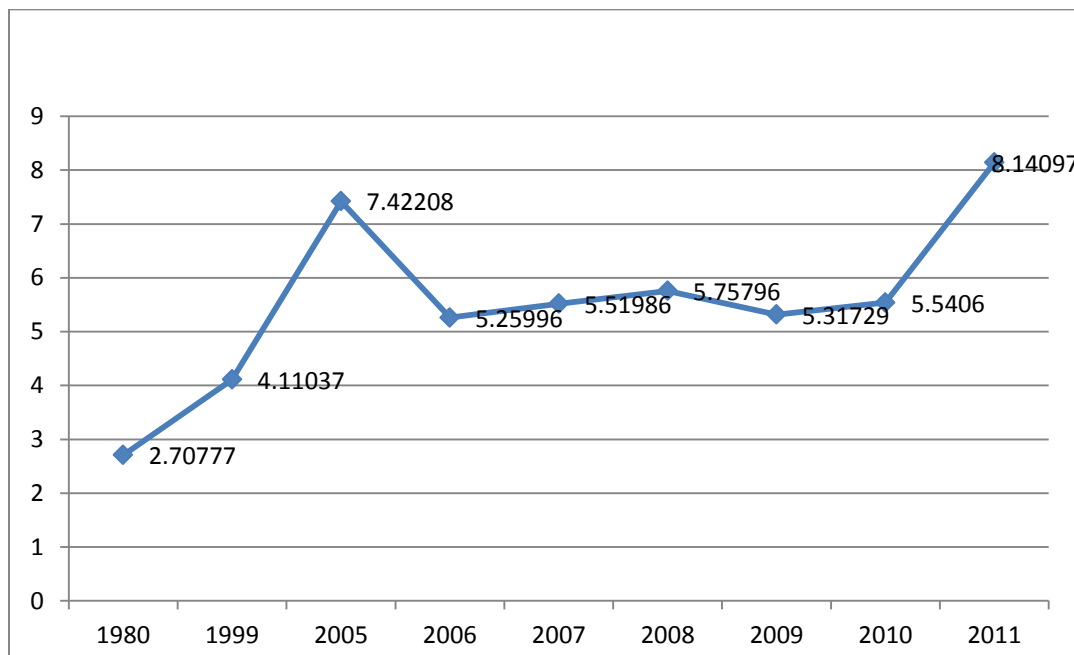


Figure 8. Public spending on education, total (% of GDP)

Since 1980, public spending on education has gone up considerably, from 2.7% in 1980 to 8.14% in 2011. The two major increases in the past decades might be related to elections; the increase in 2005 came right after an election year (2004), the same year that the Ministry of Education published a comprehensive white paper that will be discussed in Chapter 4, and the increase in 2011 came a year before the elections (2012). Also worth noting is that although

there were many reform efforts, the two major reform efforts in 1987 and 1996 (the FCUBE discussed above) do not seem to have been accompanied by a substantial increase in spending. This increase was evident only in 2005, almost ten years later.

Why Ghana?: “The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular”

(Haraway, 1988, p. 590)

As Haraway’s quote implies, it is important to acknowledge the significance of looking at and from a particular place – in this case the context of a specific developing country, Ghana—as well as by a particular person. She claims that all knowledge is shaped by this partial perspective and encourages feminists to shake off a pretense of “objectivity” (namely, positivist approaches to research – collecting statistics as seemingly objective knowledge) and use situated knowledge – a relational approach to our knowledge. Although Haraway wrote this without the World Bank in mind, there is little doubt that their research would benefit from some of the humility which derives from understanding that knowledge is only situated and not at all universal. This dissertation aims to look at Ghana as a particular place and to be clear about the fact that this is very situated, for various reasons. In the next section of this chapter I will elaborate more about my own positionality in this research.

In the introduction I discussed the main reasons for choosing Ghana as my research location. I now want to elaborate on what makes Ghana a particularly interesting place to study. The World Bank clearly states that “educational performance has improved” in Ghana (it is even the name of one of their book chapters, White, 2004). Ghana is often held up as an exemplar nation, and one of the reasons for choosing it as a case study was the motivation to look beyond the numbers and World Bank data to truly examine perceptions and policies on equality.

Ghana has a rich history as a prominent region within West Africa, and despite several military coups over the decades since independence, President Nkrumah succeeded in creating a

coherent sense of identity for the Ghanaian people (Akyeampong, 2010). This characteristic appealed to my purpose of examining policy processes.

As demonstrated by the data in the tables above, compared with the Sub-Saharan aggregate data Ghana is faring better, although not by much.

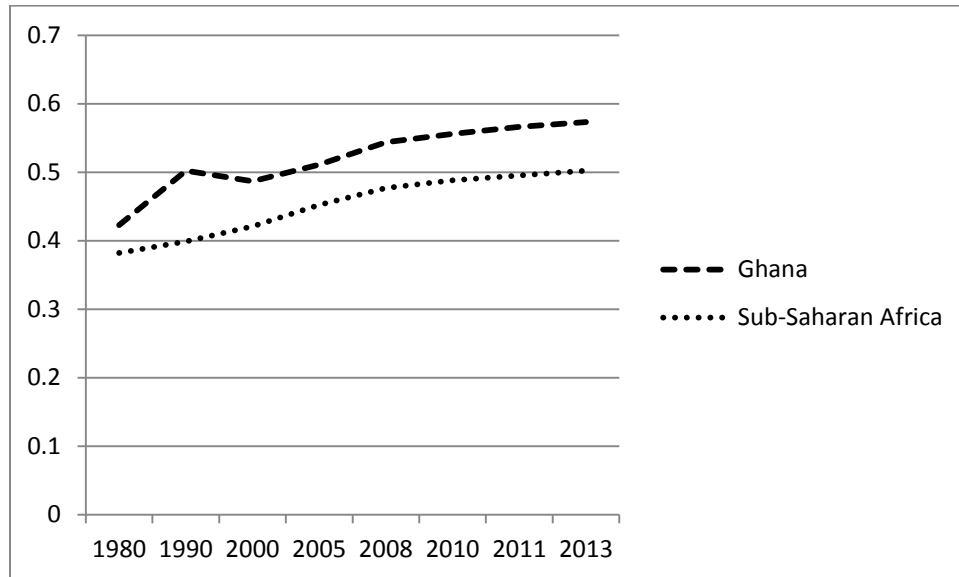


Figure 9. Human Development Index (over time)²³

The Human Development trends in Ghana are very similar to those in Sub-Saharan Africa, with Ghana, again, doing slightly better overall. There is not much data beyond core economic indicators that can help to compare Ghana with either Sub-Saharan Africa or its neighboring countries. One of the issues I was hoping to compare was the average duration in hours of power outages with data existing only for Ghana and only for one year (2007, 12.6). This is a major issue in Ghana where power outages are extremely common and most establishments catering to

²³ Data retrieved from UNDP website - <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-2-human-development-index-trends-1980-2013>

Westerners have a generator. In my first three days in Ghana I experienced two 12-hour power breaks. Some of the outages are published in the local papers ahead of time.

Because this research looks at gender equality, I wanted to look at important health data as well, including antenatal care and other indicators that appear in Table 2. It was also important and interesting to look at how Ghana is doing compared to her neighboring countries. Data on female related health issues, however, was very sporadic. I did come across some data about antenatal care and this patchy data appears in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Regional data on antenatal care provided by a skilled health provider, at least one visit (%).²⁴

	1993	1994	1998	1999	2000	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010
Ghana	85.7		87.5			91.9		92.1	96.1	86.7	
Cote D'Ivoire		83.2		84.3	87.6		87.3	84.8			
Togo			82		72.9	84.8		84.1			50.7
Burkina Faso	58.6			60.7		73.4		85			94.9

It is hard to conclude anything of note from this table. The striking data is for Togo which showed a marked decrease in antenatal care in 2010, but the rest of the countries all show similar patterns of increases, (where there is data reported).

²⁴ Data retrieved from World Bank Data Bank through the Africa Development Indicator Portal - <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/africa-development-indicators>

An *Obroni*²⁵ Doing Research in Ghana. “I was defined as white before I was defined as female” (Rich, 2008, P. 450)

It is particularly necessary in comparative studies to be aware of ourselves looking at an educational phenomenon in another country and to neutralize as far as possible the preconceptions our individual backgrounds have formed in us (D. Phillips, 2006, p. 312).

Before traveling to Ghana to conduct research for this dissertation, I had never been to Africa. I have traveled extensively in other parts of the world (North America, Europe and Asia), not to mention the fact that I am from the Middle East. However, I came to Africa with a clean slate. I studied its history and society, read books, saw movies, and talked with people from various African countries, but little prepared me for being an *Obroni* in Ghana. Landing at the airport in Accra, there was only one other white women in the arrivals lounge. In many of the activities in which I participated I was the only non-African women. On my second day in Ghana, my local host (a university professor) took me to her university graduation ceremony (see figure 10 below).

²⁵ White woman in the local language



Figure 10. Commencement Ceremony at the University of Education, Winneba. 11.29.2014

Besides being seated by the marching band, and not knowing exactly what was about to happen, this was an extremely interesting experience which helped me to gain some insights that accompanied me throughout my visit. The commencement was an interesting mix of western academic traditions and local Ghanaian music and customs. This mix between Western practices or norms and local customs and traditions is, in my opinion, a major characteristic of life in Ghana.

Despite lacking well-defined pre-conceptions of what I would see, learn and experience, I cannot honestly say I am or was objective. Rather, I adopted Way's approach: "An ideal to be

engaged in one's research rather than objective" (Way, 2005, p. 532). In my first week I drifted and observed as much as possible from my surroundings. Staying with a local host helped me to engage with life in Ghana; when the electricity was out, I too used a flashlight or candle to use the toilets or take a shower. I took pictures from within cars and restaurants, from fear of "exposing myself" as foreigner or a tourist (not that my complexion left this issue questionable).



Figure 11. "Oxford" (Osu) St., the heart of the commercial area in Accra

"Methodology is inevitably interwoven with and emerges from the nature of particular disciplines... and particular perspectives" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 164). In this dissertation, my methodology derives from my initial interest in international education policy, and gender

equality, as well as a brief foray into statistical analysis. My particular perspective is feminist, and this influences my initial questions as well as every step of the data collection process. More technical details about the methodology I used in my research can be found in Appendix A (Methodological Appendix). For now, I will make some more general comments about qualitative research and the specific methods I employed.

Crossley (2010), a prominent researcher in the field of international education, articulates that “international agencies and agendas have dominated national educational policy formation and implementation – at the expense of local input and appropriate sensitivity to contextual factors in play at the national, provincial and school levels” (p. 423). Consequently he calls for “critical in-country assessments of the relevance of international research and policy advice” especially in developing countries (p. 423). This was the starting point for my methodology. For me, learning about the context of a country means going beyond looking at World Bank data on enrollment and teacher-student ratio (presented in this chapter only as background information). Only qualitative research methods can help get a real sense of the unique context of developing countries.

Crossley is not alone in stressing the importance of context:

To have a good chance of success, educational policies or innovations, whether initiated by national policy makers or by international organizations, need to be in tune with the everyday realities of the classroom and the motivations and capabilities of ordinary teachers (Vulliamy & Webb, 2009, p. 400).

Qualitative research can contribute immensely to learning about these everyday realities. When I visited schools and universities and met with officials in their offices, I was able to learn far more than what I recorded in my interviews.



Figure 12. Visiting a kindergarten class in Kumasi

Crossley and Vulliamy (1997) dealt with this important issue nearly 20 years ago. “Qualitative research in education has a special potential in developing countries because, for various historical and cultural reasons, educational research in such countries has, to date, been dominated by positivist strategies” (Crossley & Vulliamy, 1997, p. 13). It is still true that much research on international development and education is driven by positivist quantitative approaches, although the relevant literature provides ample examples of potentially beneficial

qualitative methods. In my research I chose to focus on two of them: analysis of policy texts and elite interviewing. These are not the only methods, but I find that these have great potential for eliciting very useful information to present both on the international level and on the national level to policymakers within the country.

Marshall (1997) points to the important place of culture in the policymaking process. She believes that policies must be examined by looking at the culture where they are made as well as at the people who they serve. These kinds of questions are hard to answer using regular policy analysis tools (mainly statistics and development indicators) and it is thus necessary look to new and alternative methods. Critical feminist policy analysis also emphasizes the importance of looking at micropolitics and policy implementation when formulating analysis or new policies. It is within the arenas of micropolitics – schools and districts—that a fertile ground for understanding and exposing the influence of (gendered) policies can be seen. Using critical feminist analysis to look at international development (education) policy texts is central to the examination of “how policies and politics... continue to disadvantage girls and women in education systems.” It is also important to not only uncover biases and inequality but also to “conduct analysis with the purpose of upsetting such systems of dominance” (Marshall, 1997, p. 8). This “upsetting of systems” can only be done with qualitative methods that are committed to social justice and the voice of the marginalized.

Qualitative research recognizes that “policy texts “are...socially constructed realities that warrant studies in their own right” (Miller, 1997 as quoted in Monkman & Hoffman, 2013, p. 68). These policy texts construct reality in the international and national arena, but it is important to look at policy texts that are missing as well as themes that are missing from the texts

themselves (Reinharz, 1992 & Stromquist, 2012). For example, Stromquist (2012) found that the 2020 World Bank Education Strategy lacks any discussion on schools as gendered institutions, on the role of parents or on the role of women-led social movements (p. 163-164).

The second method I engaged with in my research is an examination of the perspectives of elites in Ghana on international development policy. These elites included university administrators, employees in the Ministry of Education, and local employees at large international organizations. The research of policy arenas can benefit greatly from interviews of the political elite. Marshall (1984) defines elites as “people in high positions [who] may keep control of information and access...” (p. 236). The viewpoints of these political and social elites in developing countries are especially important because they act as a mediating buffer between local and international policies. They are the “gatekeepers” of how international policy is implemented and interpreted. These local elites have a role in implementing projects and programs developed and imported by IGOs, and this role has not been explored in-depth.

In her research on implementing gender equality in the educational system in Niger, Greany (2008) discovered how local actors have very different interpretations of program goals than those of the initiators of the programs and policies. Learning about the perspectives of local elites can greatly benefit our understanding of the potential of a specific internationally developed policy.

Marshall (1984) acknowledges that “researchers must find ways to transform keepers-of-information into givers-of-information by increasing the advantages of giving, by increasing the disadvantages of withholding, and by short-circuiting the agency system for information giving” (p. 239). This is important in the context of research in development countries, because many

data sources provided by IGOs lack the crucial perspective of local “keepers-of-information.” In my selection of different interviewees, all in different professional positions and different geographical locations around the country, I aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the policies initiated in Accra and in the headquarters of international organizations.

Kezar (2003) advocates using elite interviews as part of a feminist research agenda to transform and change social relations. “Because feminist research exists to create new relationship, better laws, and improved institutions, the learning derived from the studies should be used to intervene and create change,” (p. 402) hence, she claims, the output from interviewing elites should support social change. This can be done by transforming the way the interviewees thinks about the theme under research. Similarly to Marshall, Kezar cautions that “transformation will be elusive if elites feel that they are being used, judged, attacked, or threatened” (p. 405). In my interviews, my first questions were designed to elicit cooperation by asking my participants questions about their histories, achievement and background (see Appendix B for interview protocol).

In Chapter 4, I will look at education policies and platforms from a critical qualitative and feminist approach. Subsequently, in Chapter 5, I will present the data from the interviews I conducted to show how they complement and add to the data analyzed from the policy documents.

CHAPTER 4: KEY POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Theoretical Framework

The following chapter is dedicated to looking at policies related to gender and education in Ghana. Before delving into the policies themselves, I start by introducing several theoretical frameworks that have guided me in my coding and analysis²⁶ of both the policies themselves and the interviews that will be analyzed in Chapter 5. In Chapter 3 I introduced some general information about critical feminist policy analysis (CFPA), and the first section below will elaborate on this theoretical framework and method.

Arnot and Fennell (2008) state that:

The privileging of international educational goals such as EFA therefore does not of itself encourage deeper analysis of gender power relations. And the use of Western European and North American led gender theory is also problematic if applied to this analytic project. (p. 517)

Thus, it is important for me as a white (albeit not European or North American) woman to expand my own positionality and theory in relation to conceptualizing gender equality in Ghana. As part of this process I discuss post-colonial feminism and the contribution of this theoretical

²⁶ For more details about the coding process see Methodological Appendix – Appendix C.

lens to my own analysis. I will end this section by discussing how working within the field of comparative and international education adds to the understanding of policy processes in Ghana.

Critical Feminist Policy Analysis (CFPA). At the most basic level, CFPA stands for the idea that “we need theories and methods that integrate gender issues with the realities of power and politics” (Marshall, 1997, p. 2), nonetheless these theories and methods should also be relevant, valid and implementable. Marshall describes how often there is an inconsistency between policy-level rhetoric and actual policy outcomes, especially in the North American context. Taking CFPA a step forward requires regarding it as both a theory and a methodology that guides us in identifying the gaps between policy, implementation and outcomes in international policy levels. Reinharz’s (1992) perceptive comment on feminist research methods— “feminism supplies the perspective and the disciplines supply the methods. The feminist researcher exists at their intersection” (p. 243) — resonates with me as I explore the process of coding and analysis. I do, however, feel that feminists need at times to engage more critically with the methods supplied by the discipline, such as the quantitative analysis dominant in policy analysis.

Marshall (1997) states that relevant research agendas can include “backward mapping, to identify the gaps and policy slippage due to symbolic and simplistic policy formulation” (p.23). For example, the gap between the symbolic international discourses on gender equality in education accompanied by simplistic and narrow goal setting agendas (as described in the introduction to this thesis).

Originally, CFPA aims at deconstructing the policy arena in order to expose white male domination of the policy process as well as the hidden gender impacts of policies. In my work, I apply CFPA to expose the patriarchal white western domination in international education policy, particularly in Ghana but also in other developing countries. In exposing supposedly ‘gender neutral’ policies and practices, CFPA reveals those environmental and contextual factors that control and manipulate how policy and policy implementation adversely affects the lives of women and girls. CFPA challenges policy analysts to think of policy issues in a broader framework, to consider looking beyond cost-benefit analysis and to acknowledge the context and culture of the policy arena, the community and society (Marshall, 1999). Marshall (1997) encourages us to use various research tools and methodologies, especially qualitative methods, in our policy analysis.. In my research and analysis, I find that this approach is insightful for analyzing international education policy instruments, documents and organizations.

Another important aspect of CFPA is the place of culture in the policymaking process. Vavrus (2002) takes a very similar approach when analyzing several documents on education and development produced by the UN and the World Bank. She uses Edward Said’s (1978) work for discourse analysis and focuses on three themes: culture, human capital and empowerment. Her approach to culture and human capital is particularly informative for this discussion. Vavrus (2002) uses two extremes of the use of culture in the policymaking arena: culture-as-cause and culture-as-cure. She writes: “in contemporary development discourse, one also observes this tension between embracing “indigenous knowledge” and local customs on the one hand, and blaming “traditional” attitudes and values on the other” (p. 55). Vavrus (2002) shows how

culture is often summoned as the cause of harmful practices against women but is, at the same time, often seen as the cure for society's illnesses.

The fact that international policy documents invoke one viewpoint or other, depending on their convenience for the international agenda, is problematic. My conversations in Ghana revealed, interestingly, women's perspectives on the cultural practices that disempower them (this will be elaborated on in the next chapter). This issue of culture will also be explained and demonstrated in the next sections of this chapter when I discuss the policy documents themselves.

Marshall (1997) believes that policies should be viewed within the culture of where they are made as well as who they serve. These kinds of questions are hard to answer using the regular policy analysis tools, and we must therefore look to new and different methods. CFPA "has the particular goal of identifying ways to make the policy system more inclusive and equitable" (Marshall, 1997, p.18). However, as opposed to liberal feminism where the emphasis is on equality of access, CFPA focuses on the "equality of outcomes" (Bensimon & Marshall, 1997, p. 4). In Ghana, education policy (like policy in many other fields) is directly influenced and linked to international policies and aid programs. This came up in my interviews as did the policy documents themselves. The MDGs were often cited as both the source and the goal of their policies.

While probing the development and gender policy discourse, Vavrus (2002) makes another salient point which can be traced to Edward Said's (1978) concept of "strategic formation, whereby a body of discourse becomes authoritative through intertextual references to the same phenomenon" (p. 58). She shows how the development of a common vocabulary in

policy texts, using the same buzz words and document references, stands to reinforce the validity of these texts. In the policy analysis in the following section, I will present an example of how some concepts and themes from international documents penetrated national text in Ghana as a way of validating the policies introduced.

As explained in the introduction to this dissertation, there needs to be an expansion of how gender equality in education is understood, approached and researched. The international and national commitment to achieving gender equality in education needs to stem from a moral and not just an economic obligation. This derives from a logic that in order for gender equality in the national context to be sustainable beyond a period of economic expansion, it needs to be tied to more than just good economics. Even if it is true that educating girls is good for the economic development of countries, “without institutional change gains made in one decade cannot be sustained into the next” (Unterhalter, 2005, p.117).

The importance of a qualitative critical approach is also reinforced by the fact that in the international development policy arena, statistic and quantitative data rule. This can be seen in the large numbers of websites and data banks devoted to statistics within the UN system.²⁷ However, statistics and numbers represent only one side of the issues at hand, as demonstrated in Chapter 3. Complementing statistics with qualitative data that gives voice to marginalized communities is important for making policies more sustainable and relevant. Especially from a feminist perspective, existing data sets should be approached with caution; since collecting statistical data requires time, money and expertise, often the data sets used are collected by

²⁷ To name just a couple of examples: The World Databank of the World Bank <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx> and UNESCO Institute for Statistics <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx>

others using “androcentric measures.... [that] may in fact inadvertently reinforce the very gender stereotypes they seek to upend” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 187). This can potentially introduce an inherent gender bias into the research project. This is a very important point since most statistical data on development policies is currently collected by the World Bank.

Stromquist (2012) cautions that the World Bank’s research is not as impartial as we might hope. For example, an efficiency argument pervades their internal discourse: “A persistent message in World Bank messages is the notion that the fundamental challenge facing education is not financial resources but efficiency” (p. 166). However, from my interviews with people in the Ministry of Education, I learned that it was almost impossible for them to discuss questions of efficiency in their work due to financial restraints. I will return to this issue in the subsequent discussion of policies in Ghana, as well as in Chapter 5 in the analysis of my interviews.

There are, of course, other feminist criticisms of World Bank policies and programs. For example: “the World Bank has not been able to engage with the actual realities of people’s lives, including gendered realities.... Economic agency of women is layered by a complex set of realities” (Bhavnani et al., 2003, p. 3). This complexity is often difficult to comprehend, especially if you are a white man in Washington, D.C. Nussbaum (2003) also adds a note of caution about development economic theory:

not because economists are by nature bad people, but because they see things through the lens of a bad theory (which, of course, might have insensitivity somewhere behind it, or maintaining it in place). This paradigm, and the practices it supports, should be contested (p. 330).

And this is where feminist theory can offer a crucial contribution to our discussion. My own analysis aims at contesting and context-ing the overt and often covert assumptions that underlie education policies and contribute to continued gender inequality.

As a transition to the next theoretical framework, I would like to add that the complexity of the lives of women in the developing world often goes missing even when the commentators are white western women. It should consequently be remembered that, “though similar in form to those faced by women in the First World, there are specificities of history, political economy and culture that make these realities differentially oppressive and exploitive for Third World Women” (Bhavnani et al., 2003, p. 2). These will be developed more fully in the next section.

Postcolonial feminist theory. I would like to introduce two quotes that, in tandem, lay out the foundations of my discussion of postcolonial feminist theory.

<p><i>As women we have been taught either to ignore our differences or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. Without community, there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, not the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.</i></p> <p>(Lorde, 1984, p. 112)</p>	<p><i>When African realities are interpreted based on these Western claims, what we find are distortions, obfuscations in language and often a total lack of comprehension due to the incommensurability of social categories and institutions.</i></p> <p>(Oyěwùmí, 2002, p. 7)</p>
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On the one hand, Lorde (1984) calls for a community of differences, promoting a sense of community between women that is based on embracing our differences. Oyěwùmí (2002), on the other hand, warns that even looking at the differences is a socially constructed endeavor. In my opinion, Oyěwùmí (2002) touches upon the fault of the MDGs, although she is not talking about them directly: they represent a western interpretation of African realities. As described earlier, development agencies tend to perceive gender equality in education “as a panacea for a wide range of development problems” (Vavrus, 2002, p. 53). Thus, the solutions they offer are tailored to their perception of what it means to be a girl in a developing country. Heward (1999) asserts that instead of promoting gender equality in education as a moral good, “girls’ education was a policy that all could support as a means of reducing population” (p. 5). Education of girls is often seen as return on investment and as an indirect contraception policy, and therefore interventions are not designed to change social realities for girls but rather just to get them to school.

Postcolonial feminism is comprised of two strands of thought: postcolonial theory and feminist theory. Shohat (1992) explains the origins of postcolonial as echoing “post-modernity.” However, while this latter use of “post” “refers largely to the supersession of outmoded philosophical, aesthetic and political theories, the “post-colonial” implies both going beyond anticolonial nationalist theory as well as a movement beyond a specific time in history...” (p. 101). Anderson (2002) uses the following quotation to define postcolonial scholarship: “a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects” (Quayson, 2000 as quoted on p. 8). Both quotes refer to colonial history as a major component of postcolonial theory, but whereas Shohat (1992) criticizes postcolonial as being detached

historically and geographically (can the colonial history of Australia and Ghana be equated or compared?), Anderson (2002) looks at the postcolonial as providing us with a prism through which we can look at race, culture and identity. Furthermore, she asserts that “post-colonial feminist perspective recognizes the need for knowledge construction from the perspective of the marginalized female subject whose voice has been muted in the knowledge production process” (Anderson, 2002, p. 10). It is, therefore, not adequate to learn about gender equality in education policies in the developing “post-colonial” world from policy documents and reports alone.

Going back to the questions of differences, Mohanty (2003) advises against “the assumption of women as a unified group on the basis of secondary sociological universals” (p. 463). In my research and travel to Ghana, I remained cautious about identifying or introducing myself to other women, even though technically I am from a country that gained independence from a colonial power.²⁸ Like Way’s (2005) approach to qualitative research, Mohanty (2003) too suggests that we approach feminist politics as “politics of engagement,” a common struggle for women globally not on a basis of “transcendence” but on the basis of a coalition of joint struggles. Narayan (2003) agrees with Mohanty (2003) that there are dangers in “approaching feminist theorizing and epistemological values in a non-contextual and non-pragmatic way...” (Narayan, 2003, p. 309). Hence, contextualizing my policy analysis in Ghana is essential.

Heward (1999) acknowledges that “gender relations in education are embedded in their changing political, economic and cultural contexts” (p. 13). There are many critiques of the MDGs claiming that they do not sufficiently address contexts. And when context is considered in international organizations, it is often the context of western educational traditions or of

²⁸ Israel gained independence from British colonial rule in 1948.

western interpretations of African educational history. Even if this is women's western education tradition, it is crucial to be mindful that "whatever we have found useful from the perspective of the social experience of western, bourgeois, heterosexual, white women is especially suspect when we begin our analysis with the social experiences of any other women" (Harding, 1986, p. 646).

Caution is likewise needed when looking at issues of globalization from a postcolonial feminist perspective. Alexander and Mohanty (1997) frame the current globalization trends as "recolonization" and state that often "international... has come to be collapsed into the culture and values of capitalism" (p. xix). Their understanding and definitions include issues of power, history, memory, relational analysis, as well as justice and ethics. "To talk about feminist praxis in global context would involve shifting the unit of analysis from local, regional, and national culture to relations and processes across cultures" (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, p. xix). It is important then to conceptualize any local experience in relation to larger cross-national processes. What Alexander and Mohanty (1997) call for is a comparative feminism "that is transitional in its response to and engagement with global processes of colonization" (p. xx). However, as with any comparative methodology, we must be wary of the transfer of theory and practice between cultures, in particular the transfer of western feminist modes of operation to the realities of developing countries. I have added to my policy analysis the African Union Gender Policy and their Mechanisms to Foster Gender Mainstreaming documents in order to further explore this approach. By being thus situated in the region, Ghana can be better contextualized, and relevant comparisons can be drawn.

Situating comparative and postcolonial feminism in the international arena is important because often: “feminism has been quantified for consumption within the global marketplace of ideas” (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, p. xv). Alexander & Mohanty (1997) aim to provide an avenue to women’s voices and experiences that is different from the liberal Euro-American quantified feminism. “Any understanding of women’s experiences based on a narrow conception of gender would simply be incapable of fully addressing the homogenizing and hierarchizing effects of economic and cultural processes which are the result of this consumer culture” (p. xvi).

One relevant example from Mohanty & Alexander’s edited volume is Mamas’ analysis of contemporary violence against women in Africa. Mama (1997) traces the current trends of gender violence back not only to African society in colonial and precolonial times but also to women’s status in colonial Europe and especially to the “misogynistic character of the nascent political culture” in Europe that was already in place in the Middle Ages (Mama, 1997, p. 48). Mama directly links the oppression of women in Europe to the oppression and treatment of women in colonial Africa. Looking at gender equality in Africa today without understanding this context and history is problematic. Moreover, Mama (1997) directs our attention to the fact that “the colonization process transformed African gender relations in complex, diverse, and contradictory ways that we have yet to fully understand” (p. 53).

Oyěwùmí (1997) reinforces Mama’s approach and articulates how “gender” was created by the European colonizers and historians in Africa. She also notes that for a long time oral African histories (specifically for the Yoruba in Nigeria) did not contain gender bias in the sense articulated by western feminist historians. In her research she found that “access to power, exercise of authorship, and membership in occupations all derived from the lineage, which was

regulated from within by age, not sex” (p. 83). This type of analysis reveals the inadequate western feminist frameworks of analysis when it comes to gender relations in Africa.

Indeed, male gender privilege as an essential part of European ethos is enshrined in the culture of modernity. This global context for knowledge production must be taken into account in our quest to comprehend African realities and indeed the human condition.” (Oyěwùmí, 2002, p. 1)

Mohanty (2003) claims that “one of the tasks of feminist analysis is uncovering alternative, non-identical histories which challenge and disrupt the spatial and temporal location of a hegemonic history” (p. 465). Accordingly, I would argue that one of the tasks of a feminist analysis and, ultimately, of feminist practice in the area of gender equality in education is “uncovering alternative, non-identical” policies, practices, programs, projects and grassroots organizations. These in turn need to “disrupt the spatial and temporal location” of the dominant discourse of MDGs, EFAs and other acronyms. In my analysis of policy documents and my interviews I will elaborate on how covert assumptions and norms infiltrate and influence policy and policy discourse.

Comparative and International Education. The field of comparative and international education (CIE) has a long history of studying and engaging with educational systems in the developing postcolonial world. Crossley and Vulliamy (1997) reprint a very relevant quote that was written in 1933 by a leading early researcher in the field of CIE:

In order to understand, appreciate and evaluate the real meaning of the education system of a nation, it is essential to know something of its history and traditions, of the forces and attitudes governing its social organizations, of the political and economic conditions that determine its development. (Kandel, 1933, XIX quoted in Crossley & Vulliamy, 1997, p. 8)

These types of knowledge are crucial to the development of successful educational policies and can be the unique contribution of local researchers, especially since researchers at the World Bank and similar organizations have a very superficial understanding of the context of countries about which they write their reports and analysis. Moreover, education policy research “remains both methodologically and theoretically conservative” and the “conservatism of [international] agency research is nowhere more evident than in the case of girls’ education” (Sutton, 2001, pp. 77-78). The only way to learn about the context is by in-depth gathering of qualitative data using methods that emphasize the cultural context and attempt to learn from within, preferably without institutional constraints.

Mundy (2007) provides a coherent explanation on the interconnectedness of education and international development that emphasizes the current trends in CIE – looking at the major international educational frameworks. These include, but are not limited to, the Education For All (EFA) initiative and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). “Education for all is also an expanding arena for international development cooperation, characterized by widespread experimentation with new modes of aid delivery, new kinds of donor-recipient relationships and relatively high volumes of aid spending” (Mundy, 2007, p.2).

M. Crossley and Tikly (2004) discuss the important potential of postcolonial perspectives in CIE. They advocate an approach that engages “critically with post-colonialism as a challenging approach for developing and extending comparative education theory and research – and for enhanced understanding of related implications for policy and practice” (p. 147).

Another theoretical concept that can be applied here is global education policy, thus introducing the processes of globalization into our discussion. “Global Education Policy is an emerging area of research that examines the different ways in which globalization processes, agents and events contribute to educational policy change on a range of scales, and with what consequences” (Verger, Novelli, & Altinyelken, 2012, p. 7). The potential of this concept is in its reference to educational policy change, and in particular the consequences of both the change and the global influence on local education systems (and policies). Tikly (2001) adds a postcolonial lens in the analysis of globalization processes and their influence on national policy frameworks, seeking also “to highlight forms of resistance to Western global hegemony as they have manifested themselves in education” (p. 152). In the subsequent document analysis I will also attempt to highlight globalization processes as well as visible forms of resistance.

Verger et al. (2012) discuss how policy (and education policy in particular) in developing countries is being influenced and even penetrated by global agendas. This is a result of the reliance of developing countries external aid support which exposes them to international trends and programs far more than developed countries. Aid invariably comes with strings attached, and usually these strings are dictated by the giving party – be it the World Bank or USAID. These organizations want their strings to be monitored and evaluated in a language that they speak,

namely, numbers and statistics. Often this is done with little respect to the local context and needs.

Bartlett & Vavrus (2009) also stress that those conducting research from a development agency perspective often lack the knowledge base and skills to provide in-depth, meaningful and relevant analysis. In my interviews in the MOE, I learned that due to capacity and budgetary reasons, most monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is done by the development partners themselves and not the MOE. Hence the focus of these monitoring systems is not always national sustainability but whether in fact the project was cost-effective.

In my research I attempted to follow the path of Crossley (2010) who states that “international agencies and agendas have dominated national educational policy formation and implementation – at the expense of local input and appropriate sensitivity to contextual factors in play at the national, provincial and school levels” (p. 423). He consequently calls for “critical in-country assessments of the relevance of international research and policy advice,” especially in developing countries (p. 423), in other words assessment of international policy agendas by local/national stakeholders. Learning about the context of a country means going beyond looking at World Bank statistical data on, for example, enrollment and teacher-student ratio. Learning about context calls for qualitative research methods that contribute to understanding and incorporating the unique context of developing countries in the policymaking process.

Background on Documents Analyzed

Table 6

Documents Analyzed

Origin of Document	Title	Publication Year
Government of Ghana	Education White Paper	2004
Government of Ghana/MOE	Education Strategic Plan 2010-2020	2012
Government of Ghana/ Ministry of Youth and Sport	Youth Policy	2010
African Union	African Union Gender Policy	2009
African Union	The African Women's Decade 2010-2020	2010
World Bank	Project Appraisal Document	2012
UNICEF	Achieving Universal Primary Education in Ghana by 2015: A reality of dream?	2007
UNICEF and GOG	Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: Ghana Country Study	2012
University of Education, Winneba	Gender Policy	2009

In this section follows an analysis of policy texts and documents about Ghana. Initially I analyzed them according to origin – or rather who wrote them which resulted in four distinct categories: (African) regional documents, ministry level documents, tertiary institutions

documents and international organizations documents. However, it soon became apparent that a better analysis would be achieved by looking at them horizontally, using broad themes and issues that were relevant in all documents. A new categorization thus emerged: documents on gender, documents on education, and documents on gender equality in education. My analysis was guided by the theoretical framework described above, in particular the work of Marshall (1997), Vavrus (2002), and Monkman & Hoffman (2013).

Monkman & Hoffman (2013) emphasize that the importance of the framing and discussion of education policy, because “policy discourse shapes our understanding, which defines what is within and outside the scope of possible action” (p. 64). I was thus examining not only the content of the policies but also at how gender and gender equality are framed and referenced within these texts. For example, in the AU Gender Policy, which is not specifically about education, I was looking for where education was nonetheless mentioned (my emphasis):

*Promote cultural development and identity and institutionalise best practices that strengthen women’s dignity and their human rights in all spheres of life **in compliance with national educational policies and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other United Nations actions*** (AU Gender Policy, p. 10-11).

The above text appears under the *Social Affairs* (social, cultural and human development) section, so while the terms education and education policy appear in numerous places, education is not an individual stand-alone section within the context of the document.

I will now present a short description of the documents, divided into the four categories mentioned above. This will be followed by an in-depth discussion of the themes that emerged from the analysis and end with a section about themes which were unique to only one or two categories of documents but most pertinent to my overall analysis.

The African Union Women's Decade and the AU Gender Policy. Towards the end of 2009, following a call made by the AU ministers of gender, the AU General Assembly declared 2010-2020 as the African Women's Decade (AWD). A comprehensive gender policy was in addition adopted during the same year. A review is supposed to take place halfway through the decade, in 2015. Information on this process and on any implementation of the Women's Decade is almost non-existent. Their website displays a Japanese fashion blog, and does not seem to be active.²⁹ In Ghana itself no one mentioned it, and I could not find any indication of its implementation. The aim of the decade is:

to advance gender equality by accelerating implementation of Dakar, Beijing and AU Assembly Decisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), through dual top down and bottom up approach which is inclusive of grassroots participation.

(African Women's Decade Flier, p. 2)

There are ten overarching objectives for the decade and *Education, Science and Technology* is one of them. Under this objective three sub-objectives are mentioned:

²⁹ <http://www.africanwomendecade.org/> accessed on 2.8.2015

- i. *Achieve Parity in Education at secondary and tertiary levels and achieve higher retention rates for girls*
- ii. *Increased literacy levels of women through adult education*
- iii. *Contribution of Women Scientists and Information, Communication and Technology*

The MDGs are only mentioned in this the document in reference to the mid-decade review to be held in tandem with the MDG review. As can be seen, primary education, the hallmark of the MDG discourse, is not mentioned in these objectives. There is not much to be gleaned from this policy text, but what is rather revealing is the fact that today, halfway through the decade, there is no information to be found regarding its implementation or adoption by member states. Even on the African Women's Development and Communication Network website, the hyperlinks labeled "Regional Updates on the AWD," and "National Updates on AWD" are not linked to any information.³⁰

³⁰ <http://femnet.co/index.php/en/african-womens-decade-2010-2020/decade-of-the-african-woman>. Accessed on 2.8.2015

Ministry documents: the MOE White Paper (2004), the Educational Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010-2020, and the Youth Policy (2010).³¹ Before delving into the Ghanaian policy texts, a few general comments about the education system in Ghana are in order. Tikly (2001) describes “globalization as an historically contingent process replete with contradictions,” (p. 154) and these contradictions are abundant in Ghana. He goes on to state that “although nation states have retained much power over what happens within their territories, their power is being transformed in relation to new institutions of international governance and international law.” (Tikly, 2001, p. 154) This was said even before the MDG became such a huge influence on national policies. The MOE in Ghana is controlled by the government who sets priorities and draws up strategic plans, but the ministry is totally reliant on aid partners in the implementation and financing of most projects.

Global flows and networks (Tikly, 2001, p. 157) throughout Ghana’s history have left their mark on the education system. Nowadays, the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial history of Ghana all play an important part in shaping educational traditions and institutions.

I was presented with a blatant example of this on attending a graduation ceremony at UEW. I entered a ceremony hall that was filled to capacity with graduating students all wearing western style graduation gowns. There was a marching band complete with instruments you would expect in a British or American university. Family members were seated outside under canopies with large screens broadcasting what was going on inside. The ceremony started with a parade. Until this point all looked familiar to me, but once the parade started, the band stopped playing and everyone’s attention was drawn to the outside. All faculty and staff, replete with

³¹ The Youth Policy was written by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Also, See Appendix D for a figure detailing the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education in Ghana

their academic hoods and gowns, were participating in the parade which was led by a troupe of traditional dancers who were playing on traditional drums and singing with the rhythm. They were dressed in traditional clothing, and the audience greeted them with enthusiastic clapping, singing and dancing. This went on for about 45 minutes until all faculty members were seated and dignitaries were on the stage. It was a fascinating example of the incorporation of local culture and tradition into a ceremony that was almost identical to a graduation ceremony in any western university.

Another example of a colonial tradition that remains an integral part of educational policy in Ghana is the structure of the senior secondary schools (SSS). As Tikly (2001) notes: “colonial forms of schooling and the pedagogies and forms of knowledge that they engendered have proved remarkably resistant to change” (p. 157). And since MDGs and EFA have focused primarily on primary education, SSS have been almost untouched and are, for the most part, boarding schools just as they were in colonial times. There has been a move to establishing “community” schools that are located within the pupils’ communities, but these are not yet widespread.

Monkman and Hoffman (2013) state that “despite decades of calls for moving beyond access and enrollment, much of the policy remains focused on these more easily measurable indicators of success.” It is therefore important “to explore how policy discourse conditions policy priorities” (p. 67). My analysis below examines the explicit and often latent messages in Ghana about gender equality in education.

Tertiary education: tertiary policies in general and the gender policy of UEW.³²

Any discussion of tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Ghana in particular is complex. In Ghana, it raises questions of equity and equality, because the 20% of education budget that is allocated for tertiary education benefits a very small segment of society. Moreover, this small segment comes from rich and already educated families, thus perpetuating patterns of unequal access (Hadrat, Ishak, & Zulkifly, 2013).

In the ESP a special section is devoted to tertiary education policy. The many challenges are listed, and national development is again cited as the overall goal of the policy. Of note is that women/gender/girls is not mentioned anywhere in the listed goals or strategies for tertiary education, although female participation in tertiary education is far lower than male.³³ However, in the second volume of the ESP which details the actual work program, the existence of gender inequality is acknowledged and some programs offered. Under the general policy objective termed “equity,” there is a focus on female students in tertiary education, for example (Vol. 2, p. 39):

At least 40% of cohort entering tertiary education (all kinds)

Conduct IEC programmes to raise awareness of the importance of tertiary education for females and those who are variously disadvantaged.

Encourage females into hitherto traditionally male dominated faculties/departments, and positively discriminate in the supply of tertiary grants to female applicants.

³² UEW – University of Education Winneba

³³ According to MOE statistics (published in the ESP, p. 8) in 2008 only 34% of those enrolled in university were female, and only 30% of those enrolled in polytechnics were female. The percentage is somewhat higher for professional institutes – 44%.

It should be noted that the proposed activities are fairly progressive (such as awareness-raising programs), however based on my visits to two campuses and conversations with several women in the academia, some of these have not yet been implemented. Bensimon and Marshall (1997) state that “when gender is acknowledged it is usually treated as a demographic characteristic.... in comparison to men” (p. 3), and thus it is with the above examples which mostly compare female participation in tertiary education to male participation.

Documents and studies of UNICEF and the World Bank. In this section three major documents will be discussed: two written by UNICEF, in 2007 and in 2012; and one written in 2012 by the World Bank which is a project appraisal document for official use only. The UNICEF 2007 document is a working paper written by the division of policy and planning and will be referred to as ‘Achieving UPE.’ It focuses on achieving universal primary education by 2015 (concerned especially with achieving the MDGs) and concludes with one policy suggestion. The UNICEF 2012 document is a country study written in collaboration with the UNESCO institute of statistics and the government of Ghana and will be referred to as ‘Country Study.’ It is a long and exhaustive document containing multiple regressions and other statistics about out-of-school children, as well as several recommendations for various stakeholders in Ghana. One of my interviewees contributed two chapters to this publication. The World Bank document evaluates a grant of US \$75.5 million as part of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Fund. It describes the objectives, and implementation of the GPE project and is closely linked and responds to the MOE ESP document analyzed above.

Thematic Analysis

Culture and policy. As discussed above, culture and policy are not divorced, and there are several ways in which they interact to create or change social realities for women and girls. In the foreword to the AU gender policy, culture is mentioned as the background to social economic development, both as a force for change and as a force of diversity (my emphasis):

The Africa Region is committed to social economic development which takes into account the diversity in social, cultural, and traditional setting and is making effort to address cultures and practices which militate against enjoyment of freedom and rights by women and girls. The AU Gender Policy Commitments will be used to provide the basis and to eliminate barriers to gender equality in the continent. (Foreword to AU gender policy, p. 7-8)

In addition, the AU organs, RECs and member states declare their commitment to:

Promote and support the development of culture as a vehicle to empower women's equal access to and decision-making on national heritage resources and other cultural industries. (p. 10)

Publicise the AU Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa highlighting that gender and culture is one of the seven areas of focus. (p. 11)

The duality of reference to culture and gender, as discussed by Vavrus (2002), is quite striking. The policy aims at using culture as an empowerment vehicle (culture-as-cure), but at the same time it is acknowledged that there are harmful cultural traditions for women and girls (culture-as-

cause). However, it is not clear which tradition and cultures are a positive force and which negative and how the distinction can be made.

An examination of this theme in Ghana's policy documents raises several more questions. In Ghana's Youth Policy there is a special section for arts and culture:

Arts and Culture depicts the life of a people. It is an important vehicle for appreciating and understanding the heritage of the people. It represents a sense of identity, self-respect, and the medium through which generations learn and transfer progressive skills, techniques of social relations, and survival. (Sports, 2010, p. 15)

This quotation represents the culture-as-cure approach that is likely to be adopted by the government, since looking at culture negatively requires critical thinking that can be problematic in national policy circles. In the UNICEF Country Study document, for example, there is a totally different approach to culture:

The negative sociocultural beliefs and values in relation to female education have a significant impact on intergenerational mechanisms towards educating the next generation of children. (Country Study, p. 65)

Although this document or report was drafted with cooperation from the government of Ghana, it was written by UNICEF staff. These negative sociocultural values were not mentioned anywhere in the Youth Policy. Nor were they mentioned in the education strategic plan where the only mention of culture is in the word agriculture.

In the MOE White Paper, which is focused on secondary education, culture is directly linked to the use of local languages.

Government is very much aware of its responsibility to promote Ghanaian culture, especially through the use of local languages. (p. 10)

Underlying this statement is the belief that Ghanaian culture is a positive force that the government needs to promote.

The two UNICEF documents refer to issues of culture in several places, whereas the World Bank document references cultural practices only once, and even this is in the annex on implementation arrangements (my emphasis):

*A social assessment was conducted to contribute to the understanding of the social feasibility of the project's interventions by focusing on how its design meets the interests, values and expectations of the groups that it intends to benefit. This includes an assessment of MOE policies and strategies which address: (a) distribution of wealth across the states and the impact of poverty on access to education; (b) households' conflicting demands on limited resources; (c) **social and cultural activities impacting on access to social services, and the strategies included to incorporate traditional rights and entitlements**; (d) levels and types of participation of women, economically marginalised and minority groups in and their roles in education; and (e) improving the equitable supply and demand for educational services. (p. 75-76)*

As in the AU gender policy, this reference to social and cultural activities does not seem to take either side in the debate between culture-as-cure and culture-as-cause; it merely presents both sides. On the one hand, there are cultural activities that affect access to social services, but, on the other hand, strategies to incorporate traditional rights are included. It is as if cultural issues are just there and need to be overcome or addressed.

In the Country Study there is a clear adoption of the culture-as-cause perspective with statements such as:

Early marriage and child fosterage are still significant sociocultural barriers to girls' education. (Country Study, p. 13)

Parental perceptions and attitudes towards education, as influenced by the sociocultural systems of inheritance, customary marriage and property ownership, place Ghanaian women and girls at a significant disadvantage in relation to family educational investment. (Country Study, p. 65)

In the second document, Achieving UPE, the term culture is only used in the context of socio-cultural barriers. Again the culture-as-cause approach seems to be the underlying assumption.

With the abolishment of school fees, Ghana successfully addressed the poverty barrier to education but addressing the remaining socio-cultural barriers and reaching the most difficult to reach will require additional measures. (Achieving UPE, p. 9)

And also:

In some parts of Ghana economic and socio-cultural factors contribute to low enrollment and attendance rates. For example as poor families struggle to make a living, often girls play a key role in the survival of the household by either contributing income or taking care of household chores like looking after younger siblings. In these situations girls are less likely to be sent to school. (Achieving UPE, p.10)

This last statement is also a concrete example of Vavrus' (2002) "gender equality in education as a panacea" metaphor mentioned in the beginning of this chapter and can be found in the Country Study as well:

Girls' education strategies are particularly important for reducing intergenerational education poverty and family size, and delaying first births (especially among teenagers.

(Country Study, p. 14)

And although the AU gender policy provides ample examples of promoting gender equality as an important moral good and does, as a whole, perceive gender equality holistically and widely, nonetheless there is a statement which ties Africa's economic growth to investments in women and girls (the emphasis is in the text itself):

Notwithstanding the evidence indicating that women have limited education and decent work to earn income and manage poverty, which has become feminised. The paradox is Africa's potential to achieve sustained high economic growth rates and reduce endemic poverty level depends on investment in women and girls. (p. 8)

And likewise in the section entitled 'Economic and Empowerment of Women':

education and meaningful participation in economic activities have been highlighted as some of the key elements necessary for poverty reduction. (p. 12)

Women's education is identified in the text as a key to poverty reduction in the African states. Specific references to education in the text can be found in the section titled 'Human Resources, Science and Technology' which contains references to a large number of issues surrounding gender equality in education. These include cultural challenges to girls' education,

illiteracy, gaps in primary and secondary schooling, and dropouts, as well the MDGs. Education is perceived as one of the issues surrounding developing human resources, again as part of an overall goal of economic development. The goal is not social equality or equality but rather the financial improvement of society.

The overall message of these texts is that if only we can reach all girls and put them in schools then everything will be fine (and we will achieve all these international targets).

Stromquist (2012) observes that the assumption that educating girls is the solution to economic and political development is very often simply not true:

Access to education at present does not produce assertive women who question the social relations of gender and who therefore seek changes in the way gender functions in society. In other words, the ideologies of femininity and masculinity are so deeply engrained that challenging them requires explicit targeting rather than assuming they will become part of people's reflection as their levels of education increase. (N. P Stromquist, 2012, p. 164).

Explaining and defining: gender gap, gender parity, and gender equality. The AU gender policy uses several terms discussed in Chapter 2, without really clarifying the differences. For example (my emphasis):

*Continue promotion of **girl child education**, address child labour and adolescent health.*
(p.10)

As opposed to:

*Ensure that **gender parity** is taken into account at all levels of the education system. (p. 12)*

In the conceptual framework section of this text, 11 key issues are cited. The fifth point reads: *Equal education, livelihood and decent work opportunities*. A definition of equal education is not provided nor is an explanation of why education, livelihood and decent work opportunities were grouped together in the same framework. It would seem that education is perceived as a tag along issue when discussing gender policy as a whole. Later in the text it states that:

Women's empowerment and gender equality should form the basis of Gender Mainstreaming in the AU, AU organs and Member States, while men and women should be the socio-economic-political glue for the integration of the African continent. (p. 9)

Here women's empowerment and gender equality are seen as the basis of gender mainstreaming without giving any indication of what this means. At times it seems that the "right" buzz words are used simply the sake of using them. This grouping of the terms "gender equality" and "women's empowerment" is prevalent throughout the policy text, and although my analysis does not include a word count, they easily appear more than 10 times.

At the end of the document there is, fortunately, a comprehensive glossary of terms which includes a long list of gender terms. These include *gender budget*, *gender analysis* and even *gender awareness*. *Gender equality* is defined as (my emphasis):

*The absence of discrimination on the basis of one's sex in the **allocation** of resources or benefits or in **access** to services.*

And *empowerment* is defined as (my emphasis):

*The **process** of generating and building capacities to exercise control over one's life through expanded choices. Empowerment is linked with inherent self-confidence, knowledge, skills, attitudes and voice. It is a function of the **individual's initiative** that is backed up by institutional change.*

Equality is defined as an absence of something, whereas empowerment is defined as a process. However, empowerment is seen as a “function of individual’s initiative” and this is “backed up by institutional change.” Empowerment is also linked with something that is “inherent” in the person. These are all important distinctions, used in the document without really explaining or distinguishing their applicability. Monkman & Hoffman (2013), in their in-depth analysis of international policy text and discourse on girls’ education, also discuss and criticize the use of the empowerment argument. “As there is little to no explanation about how empowerment is understood, and what the relationship is between education and empowerment, we argue that policy language perpetuates an imprecise and problematic notion of empowerment” (p. 75-76). This is apparent in this AU text as well.

The MOE strategic plan (ESP) contains several references to gender but mainly to *gender parity* and *gender gap*. Gender gap appears particularly in the section titled “bridging the gender gap in access to education.” Gender parity appears mainly in the context of enrollment parities. Both terms are used to discuss access and enrollment rather than graduation and transition into higher education.

Vavrus (2002) claims that in international policy text the “emphasis [is] on women as individual targets for intervention rather than on gender relations as the site for social reconstruction” (p. 60). Discussing access and enrollment resonates with her claim and is apparent in national texts as well. The emphasis in the ESP is on access to education and building support networks for girls. However, there is almost no reference to the kind of challenges girls and women face either when attempting to become more educated or while participating in the education system. In the foreword to the plan (written by the then minister of education) the aims of the plan are described as:

Ensuring that education makes a positive and permanent contribution to our national development plans and to achieving the international development goals.

Although it might seem that this is a more social rather than individual goal (national development), the underlying aim of development is completely in relation to the western perception of economic development that is portrayed in the MDGs (international development goals).

In the youth policy no gender gap is actually recognized. The word gender appears twice. One is in reference to gender mainstreaming:

The cardinal principle of this policy will be to mainstream gender in all youth development approaches and interventions. Mainstreaming gender will mean providing equitable conditions for both the male and female. It also means ensuring that all youth programmes are gender sensitive and that all gender - related discriminatory practices are discouraged. (p. 13)

And the other refers to special protection for female youth:

Advocate the elimination of all forms of discrimination and fortify protection from sexual harassment, physical violence and abuse, labour exploitation, as well as all other negative attitudes, and cultural practices. The policy will protect and advance the interests and aspirations of female youth so as to give them dignity and motivation as equal partners in the national development agenda. (p. 19)

Teenage pregnancy, for example, is not viewed as a gender issue but rather as an issue pertaining to a special population who need to be encouraged to complete secondary schools. The root causes of teenage pregnancy or any wider social implications are similarly overlooked.

Stromquist (2012) claims that “treating girls as a disadvantaged group in education—without further elaboration—transforms a phenomenon that involves the structure, content, and processes of schooling into technical task that can be addressed without reforming the educational system” (p. 161). Thus, the way in which gender is framed in the policies marginalizes the need for a broader social change in gender relations.

There is only one mention of the word gender (or girls) in the MOE White paper:

Gender equality is a problem across all levels of education. Particularly at the SSS level, only 42.7% of students are female. This level of attrition cannot be afforded by any nation. (p. 2)

Gender equality is mentioned here only in relation to existing challenges in the secondary education system. It is odd that a document written in 2004 so blatantly ignores issues of gender equality in the education system. The other document from the MOE and other sources have many references to gender equality, gender gap or gender parity as discussed in this section.

Gender equality is, of course, mentioned in the UEW gender policy numerous times and is defined in the glossary of terms (my emphasis):

*A situation where women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full **human rights** and potential; are able to contribute equally to **national political, economic, social and cultural development**; and benefit equally from the results. Gender Equality entails that the underlying causes of discrimination are systematically identified and removed in order to give women and men equal opportunities. The concept of Gender Equality, as used in this policy framework, takes into account **women's existing subordinate positions within social relations and aims at the restructuring of society so as to eradicate male domination**. Therefore, equality is understood to include both formal equality and substantive equality; not merely simple equality to men. (p. 13-14)*

This is one of the most comprehensive and well-formulated definitions of gender equality that I have encountered in policy texts. It reflects the importance of changing social relations and evokes women's human rights. Interestingly, even when national development is mentioned, it is seen as working both ways: women can contribute to national development and, at the same time, should also benefit from the results. Comparing this definition to the AU gender policy definition is revealing. The definition in the AU policy is very short and is focused on the absence of discrimination. This difference raises questions about the people drafting these documents and definitions. It is likely that the person drafting the UEW policy is well versed in feminist thinking around issues of equality, and the definition is therefore quite universal. Also of note is that the university conducted a baseline study in 2005 that was very broad and served

as the basis for developing this policy, showing their basic commitment to gender equality. Yet, in my interviews it becomes clear that the situation in UEW and other institutions is far more complex.

As seen in the ministry documents, “bridging the gender gap in access to education” is a popular catch phrase in the UNICEF and WB documents. It appears already on page 2 of Achieving UPE and appears in the Country Study using slightly different phrasing: “narrowing the gender gap and boosting school enrollment”(p. 18) or “addressing the gender gap” (p. 93). In the WB report, bridging the gender gap is attributed to the MOE ESP policy framework, and there is another reference concerning district grants. Of note is that under the subheading of *Bridge the gender gap in access to education*, it is made clear that this is about basic education and does not cover secondary education.

DFID is identified as the DP dealing with secondary education, USAID supports the capacity of the Girls’ Education Unit, WFP supports school meals, and UNICEF runs other programs. There are many different interventions listed and it is not very clear from the document how they are all coordinated. Although it is the responsibility of the GEU to coordinate and implement activities in the regions and districts, my conversations in the MOE left me thinking how difficult and challenging this must be for them and whether this coordination is done in a way that maximizes results for participants.

Finally, the WB report also mentions that:

The gender gap is much bigger at the country's Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions, which are increasingly seen as having a key role to play in preparing young people for a vast array of in-demand skilled jobs. (p. 90)

This is an issue barely touched on by the UNICEF documents which focus on basic education, although it is mentioned in relation to the MOE ESP.

Gender parity, an MDG-used term, also appears often in the UNICEF and WB documents. Gender parity is the title of a whole subsection in the Achieving UPE report which describes the establishment of the GEU (prior to the MDGs and EFA) and discusses DP initiatives in the area of girls attending primary schools. The section ends with a pessimistic note about the still large gender gap in the northern region. Despite great strides in the country overall, the situation in the Northern region as well as in the Upper West and Upper East remains bleak. It should also be noted that in Achieving UPE the increase in the Gender Parity Index (GPI³⁴) is seen as a sign that:

low enrollment of girls Might become a thing of the past in the near future. (p. 6)

A similar theme emerges in the Country Study, with gender gap and gender parity being used interchangeably.

Gender parity has achieved at the national aggregate level. However, there still exist significant gender gaps in some regions, particularly in Northern Region. (p. 12)

The improvement in GPI is quoted in this report as well (p. 29).

³⁴ A WB index which is a measure of the level of girls' participation in education

At the end of the Country Study there is a recommendations section with subsections for different audiences. In the recommendations list for national policymakers, item number three is to:

Increase funding to address the gender gap in education...This will require more political will to finance the gender gap in education through larger scale implementation of girls' education strategies within the sector. (p. 117)

Budget and finance is definitely a major part of any policy discussions, as, I believe, is the issue of political will, although, currently, it does not seem that political will goes much beyond rhetoric.

References to MDGs and EFA. Globalization processes in education policy, as described by Tikly (2001), are manifested overtly in the fact that the MDGs and the EFA are mentioned and referenced as influencing policymaking in the national policy texts. Forms of resistance are far harder to discern.

In the foreword to AU gender policy, commitment to gender equality is equated with the MDG targets:

It will also guide gender equality actions for the continent in implementing other global commitments on gender including MDG targets with a priority on goals set out in MDG3 (AU gender policy, p. 7-8).

It is conspicuous that only the MDGs are referenced here, particularly, of course, as MDG 3 which deals with gender equality and women's empowerment. Throughout the text, there is only

one reference to the EFA, and it is quite minor.³⁵ However, this is probably due to the fact that the policy is not an education policy specifically; the shortcomings of how education and gender equality in education is framed within the policy have been described elsewhere in this dissertation.

In the MOE (ESP) the Dakar goals are copied word for word, and the fact that Ghana is a signatory to the MDGs is also mentioned (p. 19, Vol. 1). The four relevant MDGs are also copied into the plan (MDGs 2,3,6,7 on p. 20). Finally, the plan lists the policy drivers ending with:

To continue to subscribe and commit to the principles that relate to Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals as outlined in Section 2.5 above (p. 20)

The Dakar goals and MDGs are seen as the drivers of policy in Ghana or at least that is how they are presented. In the White Paper and the Youth Policy, the MDGs and EFA are not mentioned at all. In the white paper the documents mentioned as background to the text are all internal: 1951 Accelerated Development Plan, 1966 Kwabong Review Committee, 1974 Dzobo Review Committee and the 1987 Reform. However, when the timetable for implementation is discussed, it appears that the government aims to achieve UPE:

well ahead of the target date set in United Nations Millennium Development Goals. (p. 12)

In the Youth Policy no other documents or policies are mentioned, except when discussing the definition of youth (informed by the UN and Commonwealth Secretariat).

³⁵ On page 2 of the policy, where the SDGREA targets are detailed the EFA is mentioned in regards to article 8 of the Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa.

As Unterhalter (2005) laments: “the language of rights to education used in policy documents may sometimes sound rhetorical and often emphasizes the existence of international agreements as the reasons individuals have rights rather than substantive notions concerned with human dignity and equality” (p. 30). Although the ESP mentions the EFA and MDGs in general, there is not mention of them in specific relation to tertiary education, precisely because they focus on primary education.³⁶ Where they are mentioned, however, is in the rationale for the UEW gender policy. There is a list of all relevant international documents (some of which are detailed in the introduction to this dissertation).

It reflects the Constitution of Ghana (The 1992 Constitution, Chap.5; Art. ii.) and supports the Convention of the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1998) and reflects the Millennium Development Goals in general and particular MDG 3 on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. It also reflects the African Union Gender Policy Commitments adopted in 2009 by all forum members as part of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa [SDGEA] i.e., African Women’s Decade 2010-2020 and as their specific undertaking in respect to the Global Platform for Action endorsed in Beijing (1995) and the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 2 (1948). (Winneba, 2009, p. 1)

Except for the constitution of Ghana, all other documents mentioned are international or regional. It is interesting that they take MDG 3 very broadly to include higher education as well. They even go back to 1948 and cite the UDHR. The purpose of this introduction is to put the

³⁶ Although the EFA references adult education and continuing education.

university on par with western institutions and their legacies. Another western influence is the move toward private tertiary institutions.

UNICEF and the World Bank are two of the leading organizations in promoting and implementing the MDGs and EFA, so it is no wonder that references to them appear everywhere in the documents. These documents are, in effect, the product of MDGs and EFA framework.

Achieving UPE is a document about attaining MDG 2, and the EFA is mentioned sporadically, mainly in relation to the governments' commitment to UPE and the way in which their policy framework is informed by the EFA, MDG and other national documents. They seem to covertly accept that the EFA are better suited to targeting underserved populations:

Complementary education can contribute to Education For All goals primarily by targeting underserved populations. (Achieving UPE, p.10)

However the approach that permeates the document is the importance of achieving MDG 2. The report identifies challenges and opportunities and is geared towards a solution: complementary education programs.

Analysis of the current trend of enrolment growth rate at the national level in primary schools, points to difficulties ahead in the attainment of Universal Primary Completion (UPC) by 2015, unless a special approach is adopted to reach the unreached. There is, therefore, the need to adopt a programme that is flexible and adaptive and can reach large numbers of children in 'hard to reach areas' including urban slum areas or children who have to perform other duties besides schooling as well as children living in under-served areas.

Complementary education programmes which are designed specifically to extend the reach of formal public schooling in developing countries to better serve the most disadvantaged and/or remote areas will best serve this need. (Achieving UPE, p. 14)

It thus seems that complementary education programs are the only solution for reaching children in underserved areas.. And although the subtitle of the section is ‘Alternative policy options’ there is actually only one alternative policy suggested. Not surprisingly this program³⁷ is supported by UNICEF (among other organizations) and in looking for ways to scale it up.

In the Country Study, which also focuses on out-of-school children, the connection to the MDGs is also clear.



Figure 13. Title of Ghana Country Study, April 2012

The above noted deadline of 2015 is not random; it is the target year of the MDGs.

Ghana has often been the first to ratify international conventions on rights to education, including the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Education for All, and the UNESCO statement on principles and practices of Special Needs Education. (Country Study, p. 91)

³⁷ School For Life - http://www.unicef.org/education/ghana_61250.html

The Country Study is almost like an emporium of international documents and commitments. Again, the EFA is mentioned in regards to the policy commitments and frameworks of the government but with very few concrete policies. It is, however, mentioned more concretely than in Achieving UPE .

This approach has accelerated the training of a better qualified teaching force to serve in rural and hard-to-reach areas and meet the goals of Education for All. (Country Study, p. 106)

The WB Document is actually a report of the Global Partnership for Education which evolved from the EFA Fast Track Initiative and thus has strong links with the EFA. However, the MDGs are still very prominent in this document. The second point made in the strategic country context that opens this report concerns reviewing the progress towards achieving the MDGs, complete with a table listing progress towards all seven MDGs. One of the interesting references to the MDG comes in the section called ‘Sectoral and Institutional Context’ where the links with the ESP (mentioned above) are spelled out clearly and the ESP is cited.

Under this overarching goal are four targeted pillars considered critical for Ghana to meet the education MDGs and to produce the well-educated population required to contribute to economic growth and development of the country. (p. 8)

The World Bank intends for Ghana to not only “meet” the education MDGs but also to “**produce**” a well-educated population.

Implementation, donor partners and budgets. Implementation, DPs and financial issues are mentioned in all the documents examined; in some documents the reference is broad

and general, and in some it is more prescriptive and particular. The decision to include them in one broad category/theme was a result of the coding process itself. In many places issues of implementation, DPs and how programs are financed were intertwined, as DPs become implementing partners as well as aid partners.

In the AU Gender Policy implementation is mostly relegated to the member state level as well as to RECs and should be guided by the AU Ten Year Action Plan.

The application of the principle of subsidiarity to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the policy at all levels. (AU gender policy, p. 9)

The general rule promoted by the AU is that decentralization should guide implementation. Most of the discussion on issues of implementation in this document centers on the commitment of AU member states and RECs to implement the policy as well as gender mainstreaming.

Mobilising and allocating financial and non-financial resources to implement this policy and the ten year Action Plan is critical and will among others include the establishment of the African Women Trust Fund as one mechanism to ensure the policy implementation as well as the effective mainstreaming of gender in policies, institutions and programmes at regional, national and local levels. (Au gender policy, p. 5)

In Ghana implementation is the responsibility of the GES and is usually relegated to the regional and district levels. When it comes to girls' education policies and programs, it takes place in many cases in collaboration with implementing/donor partners. In the MOE White Paper there is overt criticism of the how the GES handles implementation of the ministry's policies.

The Ghana Education Service which has the mandate to implement the Ministry's policies on education and manage the implementation process has not been able to correct these manifest defects, for a decade and a half. (p. 3)

The subsequent mention of implementation in this document is in reference to a timetable of implementation. To understand this issue, the source of the document needs to be examined. This White Paper is based on a review of a committee established by the president which reports to the government. The committee is consequently more concerned with articulating policies than with implementing them. The GES is responsible for implementing these policies, and they are not seen as doing a great job. One of the policy decisions of this committee was decentralization of the GES work and the transfer of more power to the regions and district assemblies (Ghanaian local governments).

This decentralization implies a well-planned refocusing of the Ministry and the Ghana Education Service away from the executive management of a country-wide network of schools, their staff, supplies and finances; and now towards the setting and enforcement of educational standards, the development of books and other educational materials, and the promotion of quality teacher training. (p. 13)

The government has recommended a decentralization process that completely transforms the work of the GES. The only implementing partner mentioned in the white paper is the Indian government which is helping the Ghanaian government to establish an ICT center.

In the ESP, development partners appear from the start. They even have an acronym – DPs.

The two volumes of the ESP are the outcome of year-long discussions and consultations between numerous stakeholders in the education sector, particularly those in District education offices, those in NGOs and our development partners. (Vol. 1 p. 5)

And another policy goal is:

To forge partnerships with industry, commerce and international institutions, to harness local and international support for tertiary education in Ghana. (Vol. 1 p. 17)

The idea of creating public-private partnerships between NGOs, DPs and private companies appears in many places in the ESP. For example:

Create two-way public-private partnerships at all levels of the education system. (Vol. 1 p. 27)

Implementation appears in the ESP in many places and forms, especially in relation to the processes of decentralization in the ministry. It is mentioned that although the GES used to be the direct implementing agency,

during the period of the ESP and for the foreseeable future, education decision making and implementation will increasingly become the responsibility of local government (District Assemblies) and to some extent the institutions themselves, especially schools, with local community oversight through School Management Committees (SMC) in basic education and Boards of Governors (BoG) in the second cycle. (p. 32)

The question of how this will affect issues of gender inequality and local adverse traditional practices is not addressed at all, and the ESP even lists numerous benefits for this shift in responsibility. Efficiency in financial budgeting is on their list.

The efficiency principle is one of the leading principles (alongside decentralization and privatization) advocated by the World Bank in their work on education and development (N. P Stromquist, 2012). In the ESP, the World Bank is mentioned several times, mostly in footnotes, for example:

A recent study on post-basic expansion by the World Bank notes that at the SHS level “substantial private financing is both more relevant as a mechanism for managing student flow and more justified by the usually high private returns to schooling. Public funding remains relevant, however, especially when targeted to support able students from modest backgrounds who might otherwise not be able to attend.” Mignat, Alain. Blandine Ledoux and Ramahatra Rakotomalala. Developing Post-Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Bank. 2010. (Vol. 1, p. 36, footnote14)

World Bank research is mostly used to justify privatization and other economic principles in education. Another example appears in footnote 16 where “cost-effective expansion of secondary education” is discussed and chapter 6 of the ESP is titled ‘Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Efficiency.’ An important issue, not often discussed in Ghana, is the apparent lack of efficiency and equality in the education system.

Privatization is also important when discussing tertiary education documents. In 2008, 14% of tertiary student were studying in private institutions (ESP, Vol. 1., p. 8). Hadrat et al. (2013) comment that private institutions “appear to be developing along denominational religious lines and each major religion, including Catholicism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, Baptism, Pentecostalism, Islam and others has at least one private university” (p. 12). Moreover, the courses they offer are highly specialized and “economically lucrative.” In the 2007/08

academic year there were 38 accredited private tertiary institutions with a total of 18,278 students enrolled. However, there were 19 public tertiary institutions with 132,604 students enrolled.

The MOE feels in general that the increase in private educational institutions represents “a considerable saving of public funds and makes positive contributions to admissions and enrolment ratios” (ESP, Vol. 1., p. 8). In tertiary education, private institutions fulfill the growing demand for university education which cannot be wholly satisfied by public institutions. The following are examples of privatization processes in tertiary education:

Government will encourage private industry, commerce and services to participate fully in the running of programmes in technical and vocational training at the tertiary level
(White Paper, 2004, p. 8)

Strategies to achieve Tertiary goals: Procure additional funding for tertiary education by increasing private sector involvement in the tertiary subsector. (Vol. 1 p. 18)

Tertiary Education Opportunities: Shift enrolments and costs to reduce public and increase private financing (ESP Vol.2, p. 12)

Despite the apparent equity and equality issues in the privatization of tertiary education, it should be noted that there is very little recognition on the policy level.

Reading over the UEW gender policy with a critical lens, I was thoroughly impressed by the policy principles, objectives and strategies. I had serious questions, however, about the implementation of the policy, five years after its publication. The university has a gender

mainstreaming directorate that was responsible for the development of this policy. The objectives of the directorate are listed on a pamphlet available on campus:³⁸

- *To promote gender equality and women's empowerment in UEW*
- *To enhance UEW's ability to respond to gender equity and equality issues*
- *To facilitate the integration of gender into UEW's curricular and activities*
- *To engender partnerships and make UEW visible*

Implementation of the gender policy is not mentioned even once in the pamphlet which raises questions about how the policy is being implemented and who oversees the process. On meeting with the director of the directorate I asked her about the implementation. She laughed nervously and answered like a politician:

There has been improvement. A lot of women have been able to put papers in for a promotion, and some have even been promoted.

It seems that the university's concern for international recognition has led to a concern about gender equality in theory rather than the actual implementation of gender equality policies. Most of the programs the director talked about were scholarships programs for women and faculty to pursue higher degrees. Even the vision on the directorate pamphlet reads:

The gender Mainstreaming Directorate shall be recognized internationally as an icon in gender mainstreaming in higher education.

Since the Achieving UPE report focuses on only one solution to be scaled up, there is no mention of any privatization processes. Although several donor partners are mentioned in

³⁸ see Appendix E for a copy of the UEW brochure

relation to gender parity and implementation, these include the WFP, CRS, and UNICEF amongst others. One of the key activities recommended for the intensification of the program is:

Identification and improvement in capacities of key partners such as NGOs, Faith Based organisations (FBOs), community based organizations, and employers involved in providing basic education, to plan and implement education for out-of-school children.

(p. 16)

In the policy framework for the Achieving UPE report mention is made of a multi-donor budget support (MDBS) framework (p. 2).³⁹ This donor framework is geared towards economic development and the achievement of the MDGs. This is of interest here because the policy framework provided in this document lists so many papers, programs and policies that it is extremely difficult to draw a mental map of what this framework actually comprises. I disregarded this acronym on first glance, but I then went back and started to investigate where this framework comes from since it was not mentioned in any of my conversations in the ministry or in any of the other documents analyzed in this section. Interestingly, in the World

³⁹ The Multi Donor Budget Support (MDBS) framework is a document that contains jointly agreed underlying principles, rules and responsibilities between the Government of Ghana and 11 donor partners. According to the GoG: “The MDBS arrangement has proven to be the most aligned, predictable and cost effective aid modality” (Ministry of Finance Website). Most members are Western Governments and UNDP and USAID are observers and not signatories. However, a report on the MDBS written by a British independent think tank (Overseas Development Institute, in collaboration with a Ghanaian NGO (Ghana Center for Democratic Development DCC) and submitted in 2007 to the GoG, acknowledges that “On the other hand, the use of the PAF [performance assessment framework] both as a monitoring framework and as a conditionality mechanism has created contradictory incentives in which GoG has sought to establish modest performance targets (so as to secure predictable levels of budget support) while MDBS partners have pushed for more ambitious targets. It has created a relatively confrontational structure of dialogue, in which there has been much attention to the detail of assessment processes, often at the expense of open discussion over strategic problems and their potential solutions” (p.8).

Bank report, the acronym MDBS appears at the beginning of the document but is then completely absent from the text.

With a little digging, I found more information on the website of the ministry of finance,⁴⁰ including a PowerPoint presentation titled “Underlying Principle: Commitment to Achieving GPRS II objectives and MDGs” and dated 2010. In the presentation, two slides are dedicated to a table about the progress towards achieving the MDGs. There is a column for APR analysis and then for DP observations. Although it seems that Ghana has been successful in cutting in half the extreme poverty and hunger (the label on the table reads “achieved”), the DP comments are:

(Poverty) Achieved, though wide disparities remain between regions

(Hunger) Achieved, though wide disparities remain between regions. Moreover, data are from GLSS 5 (2005/6), which was before the food price increases. GLSS 6 will be an important source of new data.

On the issue of gender equality in primary and secondary schools, the DPs are very optimistic:

The current trajectory places Ghana just below meeting the target – but with extra effort, the target could be achieved).

What this extra effort entails is not clear. Later on in the presentation, it is evident that meeting the goal of MDG 5 on maternal mortality is highly unlikely. The anticipated slide that would

⁴⁰ <http://www.mofep.gov.gh/?q=divisions/mdbs/reports>

synthesize all this information was not forthcoming, and the presentation moved away from goals onto the topic of good governance and civic responsibility. Nowhere is the connection made between health, education and gender equality. Since the MDBS seems to harmonize donor support for the GoG in general, I was looking for any indication that education or gender equality exists in this framework, and I managed to find another PowerPoint from 2010 (Group, 2010), this time an introduction to the MDBS in Ghana. Especially interesting were two groups of slides: the first was about the many perspectives of budget support, and the second was about policy dialogues. However, from the first slide it was already apparent that women would not be present here:

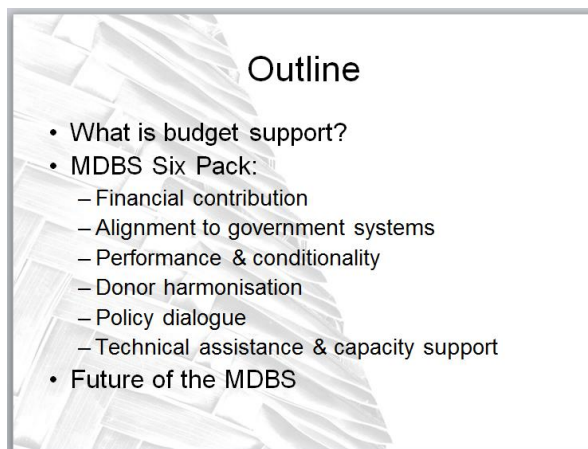


Figure 14. Slide 2 from presentation on the MDBS in Ghana

The six pack metaphor doesn't seem to be random. There is no mention of gender mainstreaming or equality anywhere in this fairly detailed presentation. However, a slide on the many perspectives on budget support including the critic's view allowed for some optimism (despite the first perspective being the economist's view).

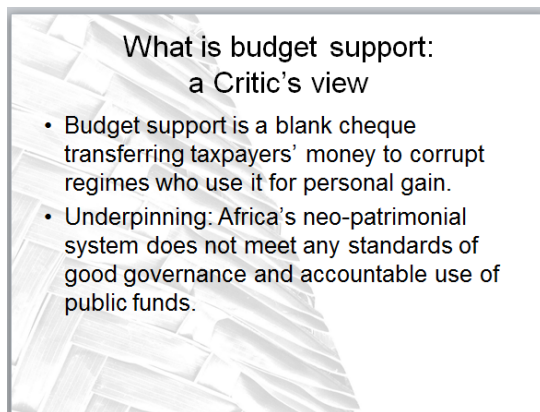


Figure 15. Slide 8 from presentation on the MDBS in Ghana

But it transpires that the critic's view is only from the point of view of the donor countries and not from Ghanaian perspectives. Also, the critic's view censures aid support in Africa in general and not something specific to Ghana. Gender budgeting, for example, is not mentioned not even noted as an aside. A later slide defines policy dialogue as:

Umbrella term for all coordinated interaction within the MDBS harmonised structures between (executive) government and development partners. (slide 26)

Although they do go on to state that:

Increasingly, this policy dialogue broadens to other actors, like CSO, media, Parliament, etc.

However, the next slides of the four on policy dialogue do not mention any other discussion with CSO, local communities or other stakeholders. It seems policy dialogue is limited to MDBS and high level GoG officials (especially in the MOF). Education is not an issue, and gender is not an issue. Inclusion of the broad range of stakeholders is, fortunately, in the slide on the future of the

MDBS (slide 31). In other more goal-oriented documents of the MDBS, I did find mentions of policy objectives that included education and gender, and particularly bridging the gender gap in access to education. While the relevance of the above analysis could be argued, in CFPA the absence of discussion on issues (especially gender issues) is also significant.

The World Bank is a member of the MDBS and one of the biggest financial contributors as well as a permanent co-chair. Hence, on examining the World Bank document, I was looking to see whether the MDBS is involved somehow. However, the MDBS is only mentioned in the index of acronyms.

Although the policy documents examined show a basic commitment to girls' education, there is an identifiable gap in Ghana between the rhetoric on gender equality in education and actual government financial commitment. 82% of recurrent expenditure of the MOE goes to salaries (ESP Vol. 1, p. 39). The GEU, the unit mostly responsible for gender equality in the ministry, is seriously understaffed and underfinanced. In the ESP it is mentioned that their economic and budget models are based on certain assumptions, but these are nowhere to be found:

Embedded in the model are a number of assumptions about population growth, economic growth and education policy. (ESP Vol. 2, p. 39)

Gender or girls' education is not mentioned in relation to budgets or allocation of funds, and the ruling principles are cost-effectiveness as well as efficiency.

Stromquist (2012) strongly criticizes the World Bank education and finance principles and specifically the ensuing consequences for gender equality. On the subject of privatization she

comments that it “does not unleash any dynamics that facilitate the enrollment and successful completion of female students” (p. 167). Furthermore, she cites research done in Ghana that:

shows an interesting connection between privatization and gender; it found that as privatization creates a dual school system, increases in girls’ access to schooling tend to be concentrated in low-quality private schools. Regarding costs, a common response of privatization regarding its negative impact on poor families is that private schools will be asked to offer scholarships to disadvantaged students. Such a strategy, by its very nature, covers a small number of beneficiaries; consequently, scholarships reduce the burden of privatization only on a few poor families. (p. 167)

None of the government policy documents have any references to the negative consequences of privatization especially on girls. The scholarship solution, primarily funded by international organizations, is fiercely implemented and advocated, but questions about sustainability and changes over time are still prominent. It would be interesting to examine how differently this subject would be approached in in the MOE, as opposed to my interviews with staff in international organizations and in the MOE.

Efficiency and Equity. The World Bank has found one of the key issues that inhibits the efficiency of the education system in Ghana (my emphasis):

*High **teacher absenteeism** is one of the key inefficiencies in the education sector* (World Bank, p. 5).

This is an interesting point. Teacher absenteeism was cited as a problem in many places throughout the World Bank document, as well as in the Country Study (my emphasis).

*Limited teacher time on task and high rates of **teacher absenteeism** is one of the main reasons for falling quality standards in Ghanaian schools, particularly in deprived rural communities Ghana needs to expand its public resource envelope and use its resources more equitably and more efficiently.* (Country Study, p. 13)

What the documents don't mention, however, is why teachers need to be absent and what the consequences are of placing demands on teachers without looking at the root causes of absenteeism. In my visit to one of the schools I saw an empty classroom with a couple of young girls looking at me from the window. I smiled and started talking to them. They were 5th and 6th grade students at the school who were taking care of their teachers' babies who were taking their morning nap in the classroom. They said they take turns during the school day to take care of these babies. Needless to say I was surprised to see that female student responsibility includes babysitting services for teachers. On reading the points about teacher absenteeism, I was able to make the connection: instead of being reprimanded by the principals or inspector for being absent, the teachers just bring the reasons why they are absent to school and find an ad hoc solution. This solution critically hampers the future of these young girls in the education system. The fixing of one problem leads to another, but one that is less visible in terms of numbers and statistics. There are undoubtedly more reasons for teacher absenteeism (perhaps low pay or no pay), but this is an example of a gendered consequence not anticipated by statistical analysis done in WB headquarters.

In the Country Study, efficiency is closely linked to the work of DPs, and there is an elaborate discussion of how GER trends (mainly less overaged children attending primary

schools) are connected to improvements in efficiency. The Achieving UPE document reinforces this point as well.

Development partners have provided harmonised support to these government strategies to improve access, efficiency and quality of basic education through a sector-wide approach. (Country Report, p. 21)

Efficiency has certainly increased in the Ghanaian system, and this trend seems likely to increase as more and more children get access to preschool and then enroll in primary school at the correct age. (Country Study, p. 41)

Early Childhood Education (ECD) has increasingly been recognized as the key to preparing children for a successful primary school experience, and will over time improve internal efficiency of the education system as a result of reduced repetitions and drop-out rates and an increase of the number of children starting primary education when they are six years old. (Achieving UPE, p. 4)

Discussions on the clash between efficiency, quality and equity are very mild, to say the least, and target the GoG and their implementation of the policies and programs (my emphasis):

*The draft ESP appraisal report prepared by the local education development partner (Ghana Local Education Donor Group, 2011) suggests the need to make hard decisions on strategies to improve **educational efficiency and reduce wastage, ensure the better targeting of resources and cost cutting measures to ensure equity across the county** (e.g. teacher study leave with salary). (Country Study, p. 82)*

The documents mainly criticize the GoG for insufficient efficiency in a number of areas such as teachers training and allocation, and even funding allocation to districts. However, nowhere is the efficiency of the DPs questioned regardless of whether they are operating with the GoG in the best way or offering maximum results for the people of the country. In the above quote they go one step further to assume that cost-cutting measures ensure equity. There is much criticism of this approach, and some has been discussed in previous chapters and sections.

In the MOE ESP efficiency is a key concept and is directly linked with M&E and accountability. It is striking that here too efficiency is linked with teachers, albeit with more effective teacher deployment (for example on p. 7). Another thread in this document is that carefully planned and effective management of the education system are a crucial part of the success of the ESP.

Improved use of public resources in education through efficiency savings and value for money (ESP, p. 27).

As well as:

Strengthen M&E, accountability and efficiency measures across the whole sector at all levels (ESP, p. 27)

In addition, the ESP contains a section titled ‘Strategies for making efficiency gains’ (my emphasis):

*If the ESP is to be effective and affordable there should be efficiency savings throughout the education system. **In the interests of efficiency and equity**, and in order to be able to*

afford the innovations within the ESP, it will be necessary to reduce recurrent expenditures, especially those that appear to reward a relative few at the expense of a relatively deprived majority (ESP, p. 28).

The reference to the interest of efficient and equity, which is disrobed generally as redistribution of funds from a minority to a deprived majority, should be noted. This paragraph is followed by a table listing 10 cost-cutting strategies (p. 28-31) to make the system more efficient. Teachers and staffing issues appear in several of these, with the word “over-staffing” in the first line of the table. Another issue is tertiary education and the cost-effectiveness of this entire sector. There are several provisions to be implemented for reasons of equity and value for money, as if they go hand in hand. Two interesting items are equity through redistribution and PPPs (in all levels of education: from kindergarten to tertiary). Equity through redistribution assumes that programs and activities can be made fairer by using various types of redistribution:

Redistribution within the education sector between sub-sectors: basic, second cycle, tertiary, etc.;

Redistribution between levels within sub-sector: e.g. KG-primary, SHS-TVI, etc.;

Redistribution between different types of institutions: day and boarding;

Redistribution between different types of expenditure - salary and non-salary, capital and recurrent. (p. 30).

The frequently used terms “redistributed” and “efficient” leave a great deal of leeway for implementers to define as they wish.

In conclusion to this chapter, it should be stressed that policy texts cannot be analyzed and viewed disconnectedly from their context. “Policy texts are on aspect of sense-making activities through which human beings construct, sustain, contest, and change our sense of social reality” (Monkman & Hoffman, 2013, p. 68). Where and when they were written, who was responsible for writing them, and why they were written are all questions that need to be asked. They should all be a part of our analysis. For me, it was also interesting to learn whether policymakers and implementers have any knowledge of these texts and whether these texts play any part in the policy processes currently in place in Ghana. The ESP did come up in several conversations, but my interviewees from the MOE knew of the existence of very few policy texts. Moreover, it didn’t seem that written documents played any major part in what programs and policies were implemented at regional or district level. The policy text might, in some way, be presenting an ideal policy arena in Ghana, but in the harsh reality of little resources and problematic capacity, daily life and the DPs set the tone for what is being implemented.

CHAPTER 5: TWO PARTS OF A WHOLE? VOICES FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND VOICES OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Qualitative coding is “a purposeful step to somewhere” (Bazeley, 2103, p. 125) and the coding of the interviews undeniably enabled me to take a step forward in my understanding of the data, allowing me to look beyond the small segments of text and on to deeper and broader themes. I started coding the interviews in the same way that I had coded the documents discussed in Chapter 4, with codes based on various literatures and especially on FCPA and other policy literature (such as Bardach, 2000). But it soon became apparent that there were some different codes emerging from the unique voices of my interviewees. For example, the interviewees brought up themes about policy initiation and the relationships between DPs and local entities, which I then coded⁴¹. Having returned home, with time to read and reflect on my interview transcripts, I was transported back to Ghana, to the smells and sights, and to the journeys I had made trying to reach my scheduled interviews in a city that doesn’t believe in putting up signs with street names.

My first interview was conducted in the home of my interviewee with her children having lunch and the electricity working only intermittently. One of my interviews was conducted in a very upscale hotel lobby, and while I was waiting (about an hour) for my interviewee, I was trying to calculate what I could possibly order that would not be too expensive. My last interview was scheduled for 8am the day before I was leaving. I arrived at the appointed coffee shop few minutes early, and after sitting there for over an hour and my interviewee not answering my calls, I decided, disappointedly, to go back to my guesthouse. Fortunately, she called and

⁴¹ Further discussion of these themes appears later in this chapter.

apologized – she had forgotten— and we agreed to conduct the interview over the phone. For me, these stories are a part of my interview; they are an example of the need for flexibility and adjustment in doing field work in general and in developing countries in particular. Most interviews were scheduled only after my arrival in Ghana because no one would agree to scheduling meetings so far in advance.

There was only a limited level of anonymity I could offer some of my participants since many of them are leaders in their field. I do not use their names or the names of their universities and organizations. However, the situation is a little more complex with my three interviewees from the MOE.

When I arrived in Ghana and started contacting relevant people and trying to arrange meetings and interviews, I was aware of several issues that echoed Marshall's (1984) work on research in policy settings:

Elites, people in high positions may keep tight control of information and access.

Bureaucrats, whose livelihood requires them to protect agency goals, may invoke rules that frustrate researchers. Researchers in policy settings may encounter “ostriches,” people who obfuscate or avoid them; they may also discover “pussycats” who are delighted to relate “secrets,” provide access, and generally be useful in the research.

(Marshall, 1984, p. 236)

Despite some similarities, research in policy settings in developing countries is very different. Most of the people I met within the MOE were “pussycats” on a very superficial level. They were friendly and forthcoming and attempted to answer my questions to the best of their ability. However, the fact that I was endorsed by a US university and by the Israeli ambassador played a

major part in their “pussycat”- like cooperativeness. I doubt that an African female researcher would be granted the same access. She is likely to have encountered many more “ostriches,” namely avoidance.

Another issue that is very different in developing countries policy setting is the fact that this setting is very complex and comprised of a whole sector of development partners and their intricate relations with government offices and ministries. These relationships feature in almost all of my interviews and, more covertly, in many of the documents. My interviewees came from several areas of the Ghanaian policy setting: inform institutions of higher education, from the GES and GUE, and from development organizations. I was thus able to get an interesting and complex picture of the education sector in Ghana and, in particular, policies and gender equality.

Establishing a rapport with my interviewees was one of my major concerns particularly as “confirmed rapport with a group of interviewees or with particular persons is a necessity to valid cultural understanding” (Holstein & Gubrium 2003, p. 431). Although I had had experience in conducting cross-cultural interviews, it was nothing compared to a white Israeli woman from an American university interviewing Ghanaian elites. However, my mature age and status as a mother helped me to develop rapport in a country where family ties are highly regarded (Sabar, 2008).

This chapter is devoted to the insights from my interviews. The quotes I use are all in the words of my interviewees and thus are, at times, grammatically awkward. Although English is an official language in Ghana, usage of the language is not like the usage in the US or other western countries. The chapter is arranged as a dialogue between the perspectives of DPs and those of the MOE. Sometimes they converge and sometimes they diverge. Chapter 6 comprises a

discussion which incorporates my analysis of both these interviews and the documents from Chapter 4.

Table 7

Formal Interviews by Pseudonym and Position

Name	Date of Interview	Location	Position
Shani	11.30.14	Private residence	Registrar at a public university
Mudiwa	11.30.14	Private residence	Senior lecturer at a public university
Masika	12.1.14	Office on campus	Dean at a university of education
Ogechi	12.1.14	Office on campus	Head of gender mainstreaming directorate at a university of education
Comfort	12.2.14	Office at ministry	Director at GES
Sam	12.11.14	Office at ministry	Director at GES
Makena	12.15.14	Lobby of hotel	Independent consultant on development
Eshe	12.16.14	Office at regional ministry	Regional director at GES
Ekua	12.18.14	Office at organization HQ	Senior education specialist in an international organization
Carol	12.19.14	Office at organization HQ	Director of education in an international organization
Loraine	12.20.14	Telephone interview from hostel	Independent consultant on development and education

MDG and EFA. The MDGs and EFA were at the base of my entire inquiry. The MDGs were present in almost all conversations, whether initiated by me or by my interviewee. While they were, on the whole, embraced as a legitimate policy instigator, one of the university interviewees expressed much criticism when asked about them:

If we always want to wait for people in NGOs or the UN, of course we have the MDG, if we always want to look up to that, it always looks too foreign I mean as if a different person is coming to tell me what I need to do. Do you know how I was brought up? It's like pouring water on rubber it doesn't really sink. So every day we have people coming to tell us what we have to do. (Mudiwa)

Mudiwa, a senior lecturer at a public university, talks eloquently about how she feels when international ideas aim to directly influence society in Ghana. At a different point in the interview, however, when talking about the definition of gender equality she comments that:

We are fighting to be like the developed countries, so if elsewhere this is working, than it should be working in Ghana as well.

Her ambivalence is quite logical in a place where there is so much international intervention in the highest levels of governance. It is evident that people are sometimes wary of expressing criticism due to the large sums of money that the DPs are investing in the country. Shani, an administrator at a public university, also displays some ambivalence towards the usefulness of the MDGs:

It hasn't drastically affected anything. They did try to address gender as well. ... These decisions were always necessitated by the MDGs. The government is always using the MDGs. It's a level of commitment that is not consistent but they always use it. (Shani)

Within the MOE and, specifically, the GES and GEU sentiments are more positive; the MDGs are accepted as a fact of life. When I asked Comfort, if the MDGs influence her work she answers:

Yes, we are working towards that goal. Next year 2015 we need to achieve gender parity of 1! and we are at 0.98. so we work towards those international goals. Because Ghana signed all these documents and we need to ensure we work towards the goals. (Comfort)

When asked about the relevance and importance of the MDGs, her superior, Sam, my only male interviewee, answers:

They play a major part. In all our discussions at stake holder level the MDG are one of the key areas we use to develop our educational sector plan so we do use a lot of them. Ghana is a charter of most of these international protocols and we make sure they guide us in planning our activities. (Sam)

Sam is more diplomatic in his response; he acknowledges that since Ghana has signed on to accomplish the MDGs, they should be implementing them. He also mentions the ESP, discussed in the previous chapter, as a document that confirms Ghana's commitment to the MDGs.

On the other hand, Ekua, a senior education specialist in an international organization, recognizes that although her organization is very committed to the MDGs, the Ghanaian government has been successful in advocating for a project that benefited junior and secondary schools, despite the fact that the MDGs mostly refer to primary education.

You know, the secondary education improvement program is an example of a project that was actually pushed by government... Even making junior education part of basic education was a big deal. We had a basic education⁴² project before called the education center project and that ended a couple of years ago but at the time we were supporting and were just interested in 6 years of education –because the MDG are just interested in

⁴² In Ghana the basic education level contains both primary (6 years) and junior (3 years)

primary education. And Ghana said no no no-we don't have primary education as you defined it. We have basic education that includes lower secondary and so they made a big case to actually have the program support nine years of education instead of six or seven years (Ekua)

Interestingly, Ekua is a local employee in a position usually held by an international employee. Carol, her non-Ghanaian counterpart in another international organization explains that the MDGs (and the EFA) are important and that Ghana is constantly measured by them:

We just had an annual review meeting and at the opening we discussed the MDGs, (it's very critical at the moment, we have one more year. In some areas Ghana is doing well in terms of poverty, but on the other hand there are other areas that are not doing so well. So, gender is critical in that context. [and I suggest: So Ghana is being measured by the goals.....] I think all governments are. And I think Ghana is just one of those. UNDP has that mandate to produce reports and the government does report to UNDP in terms of their mandate look at the MDGs and their last report was in 2010 from Ghana, and the gaps were highlighted. (Carol).

One of Carol's team members is also present at the interview, and she adds that the ESP is *geared towards achieving both the MDGs and the EFA.*

I also interviewed two women working as independent consultants; one, Loraine, was western and the other, Makena, was originally from Ghana but had lived for over 20 years in North America and recently returned to live in Ghana. Regarding the importance of MDGs, Loraine, who is white, says:

I think it is a mixture of things. They [Ghana] are not just focused on achieving the MDGs. They do monitor them but their motivations are starting to be wider and focused on poverty reduction. Their focus is beyond the MDGs, they see the evidence pointing to the lack of capacity to address inequality and poverty reduction. (Loraine)

Makena, on the other hand, is very pessimistic and does not trust any plans or programs initiated by the government:

There are lots of people around who have graduated from the education system but are still poorly educated and I do not know what the government is really doing to improve the situation... I don't think they are committed to providing quality education and as I said I have been here for five years and I do not know if there is enough allocation in the budget for quality education. (Makena)

The interview with Makena was focused entirely on the lack of quality education, technical training, and, above all, medical training in Ghana.

In the beginning of Chapter 4 I wrote that feminist analysis needs to “disrupt the spatial and temporal location” (Mohanty, 2003) of the dominant discourse of MDGs, EFA and other acronyms. Most of my interviewees seem to accept the dominant discourse, although Mudiwa and Shani do disrupt the western assumption that they are universal in nature; but the others seem to accept them as a force of nature.

Culture. As seen in the literature reviewed in Chapter 4, culture can be seen as both a cause and a cure. For most of my interviewees, cultural and traditional practices are often seen as

the cause of inequality, in general, and in education, in particular. However, the nuances in the ways these practices affect boys and girls differently are important. They expand the superficial understanding that culture prevents girls from going to school. In my interview with Mudiwa she talks about the many little practices which prevent girls and women from aspiring to higher educational accomplishments. She shows how cultural norms that place girls in a helping position at home can affect not just enrollment and access but also attainment, and she also questions whether girls have the same amount of time at home to do their homework as their male counterparts:

Even for today the perception is that females have to stay home and learn how to cook and help mom and dad to cook. So it means spending more time in the kitchen helping mom and dad or helping mom to make the home. So by the time you go back to sit by the table you might be too tired to study (Mudiwa).

She mentions another aspect which pertains to her own educational history. Her mother and aunts have always encouraged her to continue her studies and pursue higher degrees, even committing themselves to helping her financially. Her mother-in-law, on the other hand, sees things a little differently:

She always say “Mudiwa, don’t you think you need to have more kids, you only have one and I think you should have more,” and sometimes she would say, “are you sure this is the last one [degree] or there is another one you are attending?” (Mudiwa).

Her mother-in-law said this when Mudiwa was getting her PhD, and Mudiwa, not without humor, answered her that she could always do a post-doctorate.

Mudiwa, a senior lecturer who is married to another senior lecturer at the same university, describes her experiences of unequal cultural norms at home and at the university most vividly. As I listened to her talking about her experiences in the academic world, I found myself thinking that they are not so different from the experiences of women in American universities.

Everything you see in this room from kitchen to bedroom it is my duty. He just comes in and says "is dinner ready?" but you that's male chauvinism. He appreciates that. I still have to remember to bring bread home or to take care of the child's uniform. That's a lot of stress. He won't fry an egg. So I have to do everything. That is a toll on me. That is how he was raised and it is not now for me to change him.

Mudiwa is frustrated by her husband's behavior because they both have a full time positions at the university; however, she is not yet ready to make any changes at home. Challenging inequality at the work place seems a little bit easier for her:

Also the male colleagues. I have this one male colleague that we did the same program in [Europe] and then we had the same degree in the same department but he still thinks his PhD is higher than mine. I'll give you an example. There are times we do work together like work on budgets, so he says "what I have to say is what you should do." He won't even listen to my suggestions. Well I had a senior lecturer position and he wasn't really happy; he didn't celebrate with me (Mudiwa).

This could equally be a description of a senior male faculty member in a US university, although a less common phenomenon than perhaps it once was. It should be noted that she applied for and

received a promotion that her male colleague didn't get and that she did not take his attitudes quietly.

Sam at the ministry of education explains how questions of culture are linked directly to policy and programmatic solutions, mainly sensitization programs for raising awareness among families about the importance of education for girls and boys. The cultural practices he refers to are those which inhibit girls from attending schools and not those which influence how well they do in school or whether they progress to higher education.

Secondly, we have a lot of sensitization going on because we realize that some of the challenges are because cultural practices and traditional villages so we needed to do a lot sensitization. That is to let people know the important of education as far as gender is concerned for both girls and boys. So sensitization has been one of the key activities in addition to scholarship.(Sam)

At the end of the interview, when I asked Sam if he had anything to add, he makes a connection between these cultural practices and the ministry's emphasis on decentralization. He, thus, rationalizes a policy that was initiated from the efficiency argument and gives it a whole new reason. He perceives these cultural and tradition practices as a problem, not on a national level but rather on a local community level.

When it comes to gender I can say that we have to move into proper decentralizing of the gender issue. There are certain cultural and traditional practices that are really affecting the issue of gender at the district and community level. We really have to look at the district and community level to understand the issues. Although we have some data on

district levels we need to go into the community level to better address the unique challenges of educating girls in these communities.

Eshe, a regional ministry employee, reinforces Sam's approach but concentrates more on the solution of sensitization rather than the cultural practices. For her, sensitization means speaking directly to girls and women who are engaged in their traditional work at the market and convincing them of the importance of education.

We are also doing market advocacy. That is when we enter the market because many women and girls are engaged in the work of the market so it is more effective to go and talk to them there. So we go and speak to them there (Eshe).

Comfort, like Sam, also works at the national offices of the MOE, and her approach to culture is more explicit: she states plainly that culture in Ghana is governed by men [my emphasis]

*Even in the basic school we try to encourage girls to also compete with the boys for positions and in secondary schools we want the girls to be school prefects. We want them to play key roles. **When it comes to the policy it is very difficult because our culture is male domineering and they don't see the reason why we should be coming with all these things.** Some men are advocating for us and in education what we are preaching is parity. We are not saying we want to overtake the men but that we should move on par. to be on the same level (Comfort).*

I found her words were very powerful. Although she is a woman working in a high-powered position at the ministry, a woman who has worked up the ladder from district 1 to national level, she remains very pessimistic cynical about men's perception of gender equality. And even after

making this powerful claim, she is still very modest in the demands she makes of Ghanaian men – she wants parity, she wants *to be on the same level*.

When looking at the perspective of international organizations and development partners, some of my interviewees are more careful than others in their criticism of culture. On talking about child marriage, Loraine expresses her personal opinion:

Whether this is a cultural practice, I am not sure of that, but it is a negative practice and harmful, and we are trying to address that in several ways. Sometimes this issue is not the focus of the program but we do address it in order to ensure that the education program is meeting the criteria of the number of girls coming into that program... But then again we do get funding sometimes whereby we might focus on a particular area. For example we have something with our child protection section on child marriage because it is a reason why girls are not in schools, or why they drop out early when they reach puberty and they become marriageable. So this is one of those things. Whether it is a cultural practice, I'm not 100% sure, but it is a negative practice which we are trying to address. So one of the ways we are doing that is advocating for completing primary education and believing that they would change if they would get in school, stay in school, then they would not fall into child marriage (Loraine).

Loraine makes several statements questioning whether child marriage can be labeled a cultural practice; she does however believe that girls who have completed primary education are less susceptible to the practice of child marriage. This approach corresponds directly with Vavrus' "educating girls is the panacea of development" approach (2002). Although she mentions

sensitization briefly, Loraine strongly believes that it is enough to get girls to school and keep them there for six years. The reality of these girls, however, is much more complex.

Two examples of this complexity come from different perspectives: Mudiwa and Loraine. Loraine has been working in Ghana and West Africa as a consultant on education and development for about twenty years. She has worked with many of the leading international organizations in the field. Mudiwa talks about the challenges of being an educated woman in a society that doesn't look at women's education so favorably.

When you are a woman and you really want to champion this course, you know people have a certain perception about you.... as if to say, there are names that they give to such you know women. (Mudiwa)

Loraine talks about the clash of norms experience by girls in Ghana once they reach high school.

Gender inequality is embedded in a deeper socio-cultural economic perspective. Continually over the past 20 years. And we see the same patterns elsewhere in West Africa..... It is very clear in Africa and Ghana particularly, that the girls that make it to SSS are up against a lot of barriers and possible violence. There are a lot of risks involved in this. Because when a girl goes through SSS she begins to pull away from the values and norms of her family and those the society is embedded in and she shows a level of independence. (Loraine)

Furthermore, she emphasizes the difficulties of even getting to SSS and completing a full course of study.

Now they don't always get to that phase because they need someone to help with their basic needs like their panties, sanitary pads, a little bit of extra money for food because they don't get fed very well at these senior high schools. And if they don't have these funds secured for senior high school, they can easily fall prey to the whole notion of "sugar daddy" as someone who is going to help them. And this has been a consistent pattern in all the research, all the studies.(Loraine)

Loraine was very explicit in her criticism of this phenomenon. None of my other interviewees discussed this issue, although several programs that fund girls' basic needs in high school were mentioned.

I personally encountered this issue during an interesting day spent in Kumasi in the Ashanti region. I was supposed to be meeting with several people from the regional office, but the meeting fell through and instead I took a local guide, Boipelo, and she took me to explore the local market Kumasi is famous for. Boipelo is a single mother raising a daughter. The father was a Scottish tourist who fled when the child was still an infant. I invited her to lunch so that we could have a conversation and I could learn more about her life. Her daughter was already in university, and when Boipelo heard that I was doing research on gender equality in education, she talked about the challenges both she and her daughter faced. One of these was the funding of her daughter's studies. She expressed how important it was to her that her daughter never takes help from the men who prey on young women when they need money for school. She works very hard so that her daughter will be well-educated and independent. In short, she is very careful to avoid her daughter ever getting what she calls a "sugar daddy." But she is aware that

there are many young women who do not have someone to protect and take care of them like that.

Challenges to implementation and girls' education. A major part of each interview was dedicated to explaining the different programs for girls' education in Ghana. However, I was interested to understand the kind of challenges my different interviewees identified and their reasons and reasoning. The different perspectives complement each other: it was obvious that the interviewees at the MOE identified different problems and challenges than those from DP organizations.

Sam, for example, raised several issues that related to cultural and traditional practices, thus somewhat "blaming" the communities for the lack of gender equality in education (as discussed in the section above). Comfort and Eshe, on the other hand, identified broader issues and did not blame the local communities.

I'm not saying it didn't work, only that there was a problem somewhere along the way. For example, we have this policy of pregnancy issues. We are saying that pregnancy is not a disease they are just not doing it at the right time. So pregnancy cannot make a girl drop out of school completely. So there is a policy that when a girl is pregnant she must go back to school. But there is a big challenge they are facing. Some of the heads of schools are saying, "no, they cannot come to school because when they come others will copy." So that policy we realized there was a big challenge. So the modification is that when the girls is pregnant we can change the school after the delivery. I don't want to say

it didn't work but that there were challenges. And this policy of the girls dropping out completely we are now advocating re-entry and continuing. (Comfort)

Comfort is careful about saying that policies or programs don't work. However, she describes that teenage girls who become pregnant, despite a clear policy to the contrary, end up dropping out of school. She does not explain how they came up with the alternative policy. This is an interesting point since it is a national policy, but it obviously failed at the community and school level. The solution, however, was not sensitization and promotion of more rights for girls; it wasn't even sex education or free contraception. Rather, it was removing the girls from their familiar community and transferring them into a community where their situation was not known. Below, Eshe talks about challenges in a more general sense.

A lot of challenges. We have 30 districts, with very little resource[s] in the form of transportation. I am the only one working in girls' education in this region. I used to have national service who came to assist me but for the past few years that has stopped.... I am all alone with this. (Eshe)

For Eshe, the major obstacle to implementing programs in her region is money. She does not have enough funding on a regional level to be out in the districts monitoring and supporting the work done locally. She is one person responsible for 30 districts. She has no car, and while public transportation in Ghana is not expensive, it is also not reliable. Sam also talks about the financial challenges to implementing girls' education programs and policies.

I can say that in recent time we have had a lot of challenges implementing and monitoring some of the changes needed to policies. Because the funding for these

activities has not been forthcoming so you realize that most of the activities are the ones being sponsored by the development partners so at least partners such as USAID and DFID have a midterm review. So I can say that at least with donor support intervention we do a lot of review to project into the future to see if there are challenges or not. But when it comes to GOG, in recent times funds have not been very successful in flowing. So we don't do a lot of review to project to the future. But what we normally do is at the end of the year we look back and see where we didn't succeed. (Sam)

In other words, according to Sam, the government cannot afford the monitoring of the programs which is needed if lessons for implementation are to be learned. The DPs, he explains, usually have a monitoring system designed to project problems and issues for the future as well as monitoring and evaluating what has been done thus far. However, the DPs are only focused on their own programs and projects, and thus it is difficult to evaluate the whole educational system.

From the DP perspective, the challenges are somewhat different. Loraine is particularly critical that the patterns have remained similar for over 20 years, despite the DPs continued work in the deprived regions and districts.

Look at completion rates! Look at the relation between poverty and gender equality especially in extreme circumstances that exist in the Northern region, Upper East and Upper West regions.... In addition, traditional practices make parents make choices about who will get educated and who won't. And this refers to not only girls. Inequality in education primarily from a socio-cultural economic perspective. Rural/urban dimensions. Gender inequality is embedded in a deeper socio-cultural economic

perspective. Continually over the past 20 years. And we see the same patterns elsewhere in West Africa. (Loraine)

As with the people from the ministry, Loraine also talks about budget challenges and claims that although the MOE has some policy initiatives, there is no money to back up these initiatives so they are slowly drying up.

It has become a situation that Ghana's education budget is so overwhelmed with salaries that no one is going anywhere with programs. There are not a lot of initiatives on the ministry level because they are at a budget dilemma. You do see some initiatives at the GEU level and then they look around for a little bit of funding for workshops here and there... Even though there is abundance of evidence in the past 25 years about the ripple effect of girl's education there is not much that they can actually do when the salary budgets are so demanding. (Loraine)

The bottom line for Loraine is that gender equality programs are often not implemented because there is no funding for their implementation. There are monies for some projects and programs, but these are DP monies and are therefore earmarked for specific DP programs and initiatives.

Carol identifies the lack of capacity of people in the MOE as a main challenge:

Not really, they are all in for it [the MOE] and they are heading the process. Sometimes there are problems with capacities so we are trying to build the system and the capacities so we have more effective implementation. (Carol)

Ekua agrees with Carol that the GOG and MOE are committed to improving gender equality and quality education. She talks specifically about a new program her organization is running:

I think that the approach is always that the government must be involved... Our perspective is that if you are going to do it than do it in a sustainable manner, that's why we are there for—we are not here to just throw money at you and five years down the line you cannot continue anything and you say 'oh but during the project everything went well.' No, it has to be that you can take up some of the things and actually do it—support it in your budget and so on. Everything has to be led by the government.

Although not said explicitly, Ekua and her organization understand that if the government doesn't take ownership of the project, especially financial and budgetary, it will not be sustainable. This is a crucial point, since in the past many programs have collapsed once the organization finished their funding cycle. This still happens today. (Comfort talks about this in the next sub-section). The project Ekua refers to was kick-started at the end of 2014, so it would be interesting to return to Ghana in four years' time to see whether or not it has been sustained by the GOG. Ekua also talks about the need to take implementation to the district level due to the decentralization of the MOE:

Our counterpart in education is the MOE. But the MOE does the policy part and then the GES is the implementation agent for pre tertiary education. And it is the GES that is decentralized to the regional, the districts and schools. So when we are talking to the MOE we are also talking concurrently to the GES because we need to bring the program to the implementers. (Ekua)

DPs and their relationships with GOG, MOE and universities. This theme is an overarching theme which is linked to many other, especially issues of implementation and funding. Loraine has several examples of how the GOG couldn't support great programs that were initially funded by DPs or bilateral partners. The relationship mostly follows a pattern of: the DP funds a project for an X amount of time, the GOG cooperates greatly, but once foreign funding is over, the project is also over.

That's a common trend in Ghana, we just don't have money to sustain any of this stuff. I have my own experience of working with the [western] government on a girls' education project. And the Ghana government just couldn't think outside the box and work to sustain this excellent program. It was a five-year program with a mothers' micro credit program linked to enable their girls to go to schools. But very small scale compared to take home rations. Government is mainly struggling along to maintain management capacity. (Loraine)

Not surprisingly, Makena thinks that the basic relationship of the GOG with the DPs is all about receiving money:

I am not absolutely sure of what's going on. But from hearsay and from my experience in the past, they are just here to get money and get things out... The money goes to a put, a hole. They are just there and any problem that comes up the first thing they do is looking what this can do for us. (Makena)

Elsewhere in the interview she talks about how one western government has been “pumping money” into deprived regions for four decades and yet they still don't have running water and

need to build wells. Makena is generally very pessimistic about the situation in Ghana. At some point she even compares how Israel has progressed since independence in contrast to Ghana . She is a very religious and spiritual woman and so the fact that I am from Israel, the holy land, was important for her and, I believe, helped me establish rapport in a relatively short amount of time.

The MOE interviewees also talked about the relationship with the DPs and international organizations, although their emphasis was on partnerships (my emphasis).

*Yes we work with most of them. UNICEF, DFID, CAMFED, USAID, and other NGOs - PLAN. Actually **they are our partners**, they support us a lot. **Most of our work is supported by these agencies, financially, materially and whatever.** For example: DFID is now supporting girls in the rural areas in a program that is called PASS in that they are supporting in the form of scholarships in 72 districts. They support needy girls with funding school fees, uniforms, shoes, and books, anything they need for school. When they do that they also go in and monitor, to ensure that “yes you are poor, somebody supports you” how you are performing. **So we coordinate with them** ... Some organizations **help** not only the girls themselves but the entire family with **teaching them skills** they can use to make money to support the girls in schools. (Comfort)*

Comfort uses an interesting choice of verbs to describe the relationships or work with DPs: support, coordinate, help, teach. It would almost seem that the DPs are doing most of the work, and Comfort and her team at the MOE are just there to coordinate and observe.

I worked hard on trying to establish a connection and elicit an honest perspective from people in the MOE regarding their work with DPs. At times nervous laughter was what I received. At first most of them just gave a description of joint projects with various DPs:

Yeh, we have been working with a lot of development partners some of them are: on regional level we work with care international, at the district level some of my district work with world vision, and then we have been working in the past with UNICEF. Recently our situation as a region has improved and because UNICEF has been working with us for a very long time, now they have finished. (Eshe)

When I tried to understand who decides which districts DPs work with and whether she thinks there is any logic to it, she simply responds:

They are working in very deprived districts where there is very low parity. We are also working with DFID. They used to support us at both regional and district level but now they have made some selections and in my region they are supporting four districts in girls' education.

The selection seems somewhat random, based only on numerical values of parity levels in primary education. Sam also gave me a list of different programs with DPs, and I tried to understand how these programs are all coordinated. It remains unclear to me, however. I specifically asked if they have different programs or projects for the different regions in an attempt to understand how these projects are developed, and Sam answers:

*Normally we have one program but the point is we also have support from different development partners and civil society organizations. So if you take for instance UNICEF - they are currently operating in 14 districts and gender is one of the key areas they support and these activities are always geared towards improving gender parity in these 14 districts. As we speak now we also have DFID support for the 75 most deprived districts. PASS program. This is scholarships for girls that their parents are finding it hard to send them to school. Apart from these **educational interventions** we also have the government intervention which takes care also of the poor families. We also have other civil societies that work in very specific areas, not in a national program but specifically in some areas and communities in the country. CAMFED also support specific districts, we also have another Canadian organization also supporting gender education we also have Plan Ghana also supporting girls' education. That has been the trend over the years. (Sam)*

So many programs and so many DPs, however the cumulative effect of all these intervention is questionable. Sam, interestingly, refers to all these programs as **educational interventions**, although most of them talk about scholarship or food ration support. When he finished with this list, I asked him how they decide on the options for a specific policy or program or whether it is the partners who come up with the program. His answer was very diplomatic:

We deal with our stake holders and we listen to them. The first stake holder is the annual event of the national educational sector review this review starts from the regions. (Sam)

He did not however elaborate on who the stakeholders were and just talked about the district and regional annual review.

My interviewees from higher education institutions talked of very little DP support for higher education in Ghana, and this is in line with the focus of the MDGs on primary and pre-tertiary education. Ogechi mentions several projects in her university that were funded by donors; some of them were taken on by the university, but many just dissipated. She concludes:

There is no external funding at the moment for any gender program. We have support from Vodaphone Ghana to our scholarship scheme. We are also in the process of getting some scholarships from CAMFED. (Ogechi)

The entire relationship with DPs is summed up by the words: “we have no external funding.” She doesn’t seem able to envision a different type of relationship. Shani mentions that universities *are required to do their own international linkages*. She talks more about bilateral support, for example mentioning that China is funding a whole section of the university she currently works for. She also talked about support from Japan in her previous university:

Japan also built something in [name of university] for a project that ended but we inherited the building. (Shani)

The only thing left from a multi-year project funded by Japan (probably JICA) is a building; nothing was actually sustained by the university or MOE. She also comments that the MOE is not really involved in university policies, especially those pertaining to gender equality. Masika

also confirms this when talking about gender equality policies and programs at her university (my emphasis):

*It was initiated by the university. Because we also studied the MDGs so **the government had nothing to do with this**. In the ministry they have their own programs. It was a big issue in the beginning and we needed to find external funding programs. We had a great proposal to the Carnegie Foundation. (Masika)*

Mudiwa raises another issue about working with DPs. She admits that she doesn't know much about the work of international organizations, but she still has a sense of what's going on:

I haven't followed this much. Because I feel a lot has been done by these international organizations just to help improve and encourage equality in education, but I think when they are not there, much is not done by the locals to encourage this equality. (Mudiwa)

When she first said these words, I was somewhat shocked. It was my third day in Ghana and only my second interview. I was wondering who she was referring to with the word "locals." Was she not a local? After some days had passed and I interviewed more people, I had a better grasp of what she might have been saying. She was talking about ownership or processes; about how international organizations come in with their projects and then they leave (because the funding cycle is over) and it is as if they were had never been there. There is no sustainability of change. This is, I believe, because the programs/policies/projects have not focused on social change but rather on enabling access to schools. It is not that people in Ghana don't want equality; they are, perhaps, just wary of equality as defined by international organizations and the MDGs.

Finance/budgets/cost of education. This theme was featured in the various ways in which my interviewees discussed budgetary issues, but mostly in conjunction with problems of implementation. One issue that came up in only my first interview was that tertiary education used to be free in Ghana in contrast to how expensive it is to attend university nowadays.

I learned from my interviews in the MOE that their budget situation is difficult and that they rely on external funding and DPs for programming. My interviewees in international organizations emphasized their desire for sustainable programming; they want the government to take financial ownership of a program after a certain amount of time, and they also believe it is mainly a question of training and of capacity within the MOE. For example, on talking about a recently initiated project, Ekua says:

It is a question of ability and capabilities-so leadership. We are doing some sort of leadership training and we are trying to get leadership from the top schools to actually lay with the leadership in those bottom schools and to converse about what they do, apart from the resources they get. (Ekua)

Carol discusses a situation in which they have a small budget for a pilot study and explains what they manage to accomplish with that:

Perhaps we get a donor who is interested in a particular thing, maybe girls' education for instance, but they are not giving us a lot of money, but then it would be more in line with what we call pilot, in testing a particular approach and then we would document that, and the documentation would be for two reasons: one would be, I would say, yes,

this is good approach, this is practice we now have it in as routine, and the other reason is to document as to take it for advocacy for more budget. Or to take it national go or influence the budget into each year. (Carol)

She talks as if there is a real option of taking it to the MOE and asking them to adopt it on a national level.

In contrast, Sam, Comfort and Eshe all talk about budgetary constraints and explain how all programming is thanks to partnerships with DPs.

Biggest challenge is funding. If I had a little support I could go out and monitor the sensitization program that is going on throughout my region. (Eshe)

Comfort is a little more cautious and emphasizes that they learn something from every DP:

That's where our partners come in. For example we have one NGO that they are in a few districts to work with drop out girls. They are into e-learning. So when school is over they bring the girls into "girls' clubs" and they teach them life skills. Out of this program some of them come back to formal schooling. But this is not widespread yet. In most of our schools we... you know some of the agencies when they come they have a time frame.... you know.... that is a problem for us but we still use their skills. After they are gone they have still taught us something that we can use. (Comfort)

Sam, who Comfort and Eshe's superior, clearly admits that:

If you look at our finances right now the government mostly uses its resources for salaries so a lot of these activities are funded directly from development partners and civil society and some individuals.. (Sam)

However, he offers a way to solve some of the problems that derive from a lack of funding:

The government does not have enough money to take care of all of these issues and if you have very good data you can do proper targeting to see where we need to focus our attention. To redirect our resources to where they are really needed. (Sam)

Sam is thus suggesting that money should be invested in a better data collection and analysis system, whereby he can collect reliable data from school, community and district levels, progressing to regional and national levels. For him, investing some money in such a system would enable the MOE to make better decisions about allocation of their limited funds.

Policy initiation. Initially I thought my interviews would be focused on implementation and who implements what and where. However, it was apparent from my very first interview, that a connected but more relevant issue is, namely, who initiates policies and programs and whether everything is initiated at the ministry DP, or district level?

In a discussion with Shani about the different gender programs on her campus and other campuses, I asked whether they were initiated by the government:

More like institutional initiatives and gender platform initiatives they stem from activism and activities that more or less kept prompting the institution to do something. It wasn't the government or anything like that. (Shani)

Another aspect of this came up in other conversations in tertiary institutions, namely, that universities are looking to the international higher education arena and launching policies that would put them on par. Although as Shani puts it, there may be a level of hypocrisy involved:

But in the academic center it's more or less internally motivated. Institutions that want to be gender friendly to be seen as gender friendly... All this gender programs are informed by the institution visibility and how gender sensitive it is and to be recognized as a world class university all these things must be in place. (Shani)

Masika reinforces this when she talks about how gender policy was initiated at her university:

It was initiated by the university. Because we also studied the MDGs so the government had nothing to do with this. In the ministry they have their own programs. It was a big issue in the beginning and we needed to find external funding programs. (Masika)

In the MOE processes are somewhat different. Due to the organizational structure, the ministry is where all policies are initiated, while the GES is where they are implemented.

The ministry comes up with the policies that we in the GES implement. That is how it works. All policy is done at ministry level and we try to achieve what is in the policy. We do annual review meeting—at the district, regional and national level.... and feedback is given to the ministry and they use this feedback to formulate policy and if it doesn't work they sometimes look for consultants to modify the policies. (Comfort)

On the face of it, this seems like a reasonable practice of policy formulation and implementation; the picture, however, is far more complex. On being asked whether she feels that the DPs bring their own policies and agendas, Comfort answers:

Normally when they come there is an MOU at the governmental level and that's how we work. And we also have objectives for our unit we make sure we work within it.

(Comfort)

Sam describes the relationship of his division with DPs :

I think their inputs are very relevant. Since we started to develop the educational sector plan it is up to each development partner to fit into this plan. But when we didn't have our plan they were able to do their things and way. We work with them to develop these plan and once that plan is establish they are welcome to work within this plan and their inputs are always welcome in particular discussions. Examples: when we started with the global partnership for education grant supporting the 75 deprived districts. They have been playing a key role and their inputs are welcome.

Sam repeats this last sentence several times but doesn't really give an example of how it actually works. He does refer to a time in the past (prior to the development of the ESP described in Chapter 4) when the relationship was different or rather the DPs were "doing their thing." Implicitly, though, the day-to-day meaning of this is that the MOE has a strategic plan and they wait for DPs to come and suggest projects and policies that will suit this plan. They do not, it seems, initiate any policies other than the plan. When I asked Sam about the policies the MOE initiates, he answers:

I can also say that there are a lot of the policy initiatives that we have worked on. (Sam)

He then listed programs mostly funded and executed by DPs, without differentiating between MOE policies and DP projects.

Comfort and Sam work at ministry offices in Accra. I was interested to know whether the situation is the same for Eshe who works in one of the regional offices. She described a training program for head teachers in her region and I asked if this program came from the national office:

No. this is something we initiated as a region. And it being implemented by my unit.

(Eshe)

Eshe was proud that this was a program she initiated from a need she saw in her region. She also mentions that:

Apart from all that I have said we also organize conferences for girls. The idea is to expose them to career opportunities and send them to visit some of the universities around. We are also training them for community work and then they go and volunteer in the community. That is something that is unique for our region and the other nine regions want to copy from us. (Eshe)

Not only was this a program initiated regionally, but it is now being replicated in other regions. I wondered whether Comfort knew about this. However, Eshe does say that when programs are initiated by DPs they usually come from the head office.

The head office wrote a proposal. When it was accepted DFID came down and were involved with the training and then once in a while they go around monitoring. (Eshe)

For conclusion, gender equality policies in Ghana's education system seem to be initiated at MOE level in collaboration with DPs. Any needs assessment activities are limited at best and new programs and policies are often the results of some number gathering and international priorities.

Anything Else? At the end of each interview I asked my interviewees if they had anything they would like to add to this discussion and whether they think there were any questions I should have asked but didn't. Some of the answers were enriching and insightful, their insights ranged from personal anecdotes on gender equality to general comments on the (lack of) equality in society.

So ... I'm thinking as a lecturer at the university I have students that I teach and I am into education and I interact a lot with people in educational institutions, so I'm thinking another way to spread the news is to touch on that. No matter the topic, we should plant this idea so it runs deep. When you are teaching people they have so much confidence in you. They know you have something good to offer, so if you are dropping certain things and if we are made mentors of up and coming students and lecturers we should be able to set these ideas and information and spread it around. Nonetheless people come in and say to me "you are a role model," and you have to tell them your life story and let them know it is not easy. So you encourage them and give them advice to become like you and even better. We still have lot of work to do. (Mudiwa)

In her own words, Mudiwa is describing a kind of grassroots gender mainstreaming and mentoring that she as a university professor can do. Our conversation inspired her to think of ways that she can personally contribute to promoting gender equality.

Masika, who is the only female dean on her campus, was somewhat less optimistic:

We try to do our best, but we are not perfect. There are still some committees that are male dominated. They sometimes forget themselves and then someone will raise his hand and say “oh gender balance,” then they ad hoc nominate a woman. (Masika)

Sam brought a ministry rather than a personal perspective:

I think that when it comes to gender we still have a long way to go, because we still have large numbers of children who are not in school and most of them are girls. So it's an issue we are looking at seriously. We also realize we need to look more at the scholarship package to review it to address the challenges, and we realized that the districts have different challenges so there is not one type of packet scholarship there is good for all districts. Currently we are also working towards a common data source both at the min of education and gender so that we can have common data that we can all feed data into it and we don't have data on poverty that we often need to make program choices.... Sometimes the problems we face are not just wholly educational and so we have to link up with other departments. (Sam)

This is his answer to the general question of whether there was anything he wanted to add, and it is very interesting that he mentions intersectionality at the end, admitting that the issues are not only within the domain of education.

Ekua used this opportunity to share some personal stories, beliefs and motives. I did not interrupt her throughout this monologue.

I think more women in key positions is the basis. I would like to see more women in key positions, more women as vice chancellors, more women as head of polytechnics, more women as scientists. That takes a lot more women to finish basic, and senior high school and then going into tertiary education and taking science courses. Women don't want favors, but we need to be aware of the things that mitigate against women. For example: What does a girl do at home after school and what would her twin boy brother do in the house? She will be so occupied with cleaning the dishes and cooking and the boy would be playing soccer or resting. In my own house—my son (I have three girls and one son) has to do everything the girls have to do—clean his dishes and make his bed (he is only nine). I also try to help my girls manage school work and house work. But how many houses and parents understand and support girls that are trying to get an education? When I was in university it wasn't fashionable for a girl to be smart. It's almost as if you are shunned if you are doing well. There are certain nuances that need to be removed. Because it's not enough to give opportunities when she has no friends? Who wants to go through life without friends?

The challenge in Ghana today is, from my experience, more than getting the girls into school, it's getting society to acknowledge the role of women. Marriage is really important in Ghana and Africa, but who wants to marry a smart girl? There are so many facts in life that militate against girls getting ahead and you have to be aware of all this and make all the sacrifices. (Ekua)

Ekua is very thoughtful and also sums up the issues very eloquently, understanding, as does Mudiwa, that change has to include the way in which boys too are educated.

Women leaders. Most of my interviewees were female, 10 out of 11, and this theme refers to their personal narratives. Many of them (the Ghanaians) were educated in western tertiary institutions, either for an entire degree (Makena, Madiwa, Masika and Shani) or just as an exchange student (Ekua). Many of them talked a lot about how their families have supported them in their professional and educational careers. Makena shared that:

My husband was pushing me to get a PhD, my son was three and I left for the USA and he was taking care of him. He has been very supportive throughout my promotions, asking if I submitted my papers. If he was traditional he would say “you have a young son stay at home.” (Masika)

At times I felt that these women are all paving the way for future women in Ghana, although they themselves were not always aware of that.

Shani comes from a well-educated family, and her father's presence as a role model was instrumental.

My father was a professor at the university here, so it was natural. I already was in the academic environment and then I followed him more or less. (Shani)

Comfort talked about her long career from teacher to administrator in the head office of the MOE.

I've been a teacher since 1997, then I was posted to a district girls' education unit after I completed my first degree. As a district director I was posted to a new and deprived district and I really promoted girls education. After a while I was promoted to the regional office, I was responsible for 26 districts. I was there for 2.5 years before I was promoted to the head office to my current position. (Comfort)

She had been at her job for only about four months when I interviewed her and was very eager to share her promotion and accomplishments.

Makena's interview was one of the hardest for me. She had very little positive to say about the way the GOG works and about policy implementation. She was also very critical of the quality of the education system as it was exemplified by graduates of the system. She shared a story of how she attempted to establish a consultancy in Ghana and employ local graduates of tertiary institutions so that she could mentor them.

What I do know is that the caliber of people who are supposedly educated coming out of schools and universities is mostly poor and the rote learning system was set years ago so you cannot blame it on them. But they are not able to think outside of the box, they are not able to articulate themselves well or write clearly in English which is the official

language in the country...I mean you have the exceptional ones and good ones, but generally speaking they are poor. This is impacting the work force and development and so even though you might say there are more educated people in the country and more people go to school, it is on the papers and I cannot see any quality...cause I employ people in a smaller organization and one of them had a first class in the University of Ghana. ... The one who had been to the university was never able to hand me an essay I needed, and I just asked for a few paragraphs. (Makena)

Listing to these women leaders or elite women it became clear to me that there is an added value of interviewing women in these positions. Harvey (2011) writes about strategies for conducting elite interviews. He emphasizes that elite status is not only conferred on high level leaders of organizations; “those who hold important social networks, social capital and strategic positions within social structures” can also be considered as elites “because they are better able to exert influence” (p. 433). Most of my interviewees can be similarly defined: their professional position allows them to “exert influence” within the education system in Ghana, in small yet meaningful ways. It is thus doubly important to listen to these women and learn about the way they exert their influences.

CHAPTER 6: FACING THE FUTURE: IS THERE A REASON FOR CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM?

Connecting the Interviews and Document Analysis—Emerging Themes

There is a quote from Coffey & Atkinson (1996) that has greatly influenced my approach to and understanding of the process of qualitative research:

Analysis is not simply a matter of classifying, categorizing, coding, or collating data. It is not simply a question of identifying forms of speech or regularities of action. Most fundamentally, analysis is about the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena. We do not simply collect data; we fashion them out of our transactions with other men and women. Likewise we do not merely report what we find; we create accounts of social life, and in doing so we construct versions of the social worlds and the social actors we observe. (p. 108)

The social phenomenon I aim to represent or reconstruct in this dissertation is multifaceted. As explained in Chapter 2, defining gender equality in education on a global level is a huge challenge, but even from a local point of view, it is still complex, and far wider than merely looking at definitions, categories and classifications.

A narrow and traditional quantitative policy analysis on gender equality in education in Ghana would focus on parity in schools, and the results would be encouraging. However, this perspective tends to ignore the complex set of obstacles girls in Ghana face. The policy text written by international organizations or DPs often ignores the implications of being educated for

women and girls by overlooking the wider social context of life in Ghana (or other developing countries) (Sutton, 2001). One of the major themes that emerges from my analysis resonates with Sutton's (2001) findings from over a decade ago, albeit in a different continent: "Any large-scale change in patterns of educational attainment by girls becomes a matter of altering gender relations – and thus the dynamics of power between genders" (p. 79). The centrality of this in policymaking cannot be overstated, because if it is gender equality in education that is the aim and not just more girls going to school, then policy needs to address the larger patriarchal relationships in society. My interviewees shared many personal stories that confirmed the challenges faced by educated women. My research answered some questions but at the same time raised several more that need further investigation. My overarching questions were: How are international policies on gender equality in education being translated and interpreted by national policymakers in developing countries? How do local leaders define and make sense of international policies in their daily work? What are the challenges they identify in their daily work? What can we learn from the way they work with development partners and international actors?

After collecting data in Ghana and attempting to answer these questions it seemed to me that my answers have brought about a set of additional questions: Can these policies alone change the patriarchal social fabric of society? Moreover, is international policy able to do that? I think that over time policy can help generate social change, when coupled with grassroots push towards this change, even when traditional practices are involved. However the combination of international policy and the work of DPs in the country have a very complex effect on both policy and social processes. On the one hand women in Ghana want equality similar to what

women in developed countries experience and they believe it is within their reach. On the other hand the fact that this equality is diligently advocated by, funded by and articulated by western aid agencies makes it difficult for them to take ownership.

Monkman & Hoffman's (2013) recent research on international policy texts has arrived at some very interesting conclusions about policy discourse on girls' education, in particular about how "policy discourse.... has situated girls' education as a high priority, yet continues to marginalize the importance of gender in understanding sufficiently the full range of issues related to educating all girls and boys" (p. 79). Their study focused on "how organizations discursively present their policies to the public" (p. 70) and not about specific policies and implementation. However, very similar conclusions can be drawn from my analysis as well. My interviewees concurred with Monkman & Hoffman (2013) that "in reality, educating girls is not a guarantee that these results will be reached, yet the policy language makes it sound simple, direct, and unchallengeable" (p. 73). In Ghana, as in other places in the developing and even the developed world, more girls than ever are attending primary school and educated women are rising to elite positions but patriarchy is still alive and kicking and is manifest in many intricate ways in the private and public lives of women and girls. A research approach that emphasizes quantitative head counting, such as traditional policy analysis, has a potential to miss the elaborate ways patriarchy works within societies. Hence, promoting research agendas such as Monkman & Hoffman's(2013) and my own can help in challenging international assumptions and definitions of gender equality in education.

One of the most interesting themes to emerge from the interviews and documents was the relationship between policy and culture. Almost all policy documents had both overt and covert

assumptions about culture and gender, but there are often “many levels of meanings left untouched by policy research practices in international agencies” (Sutton, 2001, p. 88). Vulliamy (2004) reminds us that qualitative research practices have an important role in “mediating global policies at different levels” and especially when it comes to culture (p. 263). By looking at the meaning making of my interviewees in tandem with the policy documents, I was able to disentangle some of this complex relationship.

My analysis of this followed Vavrus’ (2002) analysis of the double perspective on the relationship between culture and gender: “In both culture-as-cause and culture-as-cure perspectives, one finds a normative view of schools as sites where up-to-date knowledge is conveyed even though ethnographic research on reproductive health education shows that this is often far from the case” (p. 56). My interviewees listed many cultural practices that are invisible to outsiders, but they also talked about customs that are very familiar to western women, most specifically those inhibiting young women from reaching higher levels of education. For example, several participants shared that girls usually have much more chores in the house and less time for homework. And although all of my participants can be considered part of the elite – they are educated and influential women – they usually conform to traditional norms in their private lives. Mudiwa’s husband does nothing to help her with the housework, and Ekua’s husband believes it is a woman’s job to attend family funerals. However, in both cases they are educating their children differently. Ekua’s son, for example, is expected to do similar chores to his sisters.

The policy documents were less nuanced in their approach to culture and were, at times, oblivious to the daily reality of women in Ghana. The AU Gender Policy even states that culture

can be a vehicle to empower women, without really discussing how culture or empowerment are defined. The government documents were, in general, quieter on the culture-as-cause perspectives. Since Vavrus' (2002) own research included an analysis of international texts, it is not surprising that her findings are echoed in my own DP document analysis. The texts often recognize culture as being simultaneously a force for improvement and a cause for inhibiting equality.

It is abundantly evident to me that there was no substitute for meeting my interviewees in their own natural or professional settings; my research about policy in Ghana could not have been conducted in front of a laptop in North Carolina, Israel or in fact anywhere but Ghana. I met women and men who were committed to improving gender equality in education in Ghana, but I learned from them that commitment is not enough. They taught me that gender equality in education cannot be disconnected from the gender relations in their society and that international policy alone cannot change decades of traditions and norms, although it can be a good starting point.

I concur with Dei's (2004) claim that "in order to reach the desired goals of responsible and relevant education we must also understand what Ghanaians are doing to reclaim and revitalize their education through articulated responses to reforms emanating from the grassroots community level" (p. 279). This is especially true when discussing gender equality since it is the grassroots articulated responses that can make social change sustainable over time. Policies that originate at international and national level are valuable but only when implemented through dialogue with women and men in the communities served.

And still, a continuing question throughout my research is related to the goals of the policies. For example, Ekua assumes that her organization and the GOG want the same things from the policies and programs they have developed together. However, no other stakeholders are asked what they want the policies to accomplish, and therefore the only seemingly relevant goals are at the highest levels of governance – nationally and internationally. When I asked Eshe, who works at the regional level, whether her office conducts any needs assessment in the districts, she replied in the negative. Although Sam mentioned that some data is collected at the district level, he also acknowledged that they lacked the capacity and funding to do any real M&E that is reflected in new and updated policies. The MOE reliance on the DPs inputs and M&E was reminiscent of the quote from Gilligan (1986) in Chapter 3: “There are no data independent of theory, no observations not made from a perspective. Data alone do not tell us anything; they do not speak, but are interpreted by people” (p. 328). Thus, the data provided by DPs is also tainted by their theory and perspective, although it is often treated by the government (or the “client”) as completely independent. It is important to remember that their theory and perspective is that of the MDGs and EFA and tends to treat gender equality in education as isolated from the wider gender equality issues.

Like Unterhalter (2005) the underlying assumption of my inquiry is that gender “shapes social structures and relations in education and many other spheres in ways that entail unequal access to resources and the undervaluing of the views of certain groups” (p. 112). During the course of my research, I learned that the views of DPs are highly valued by the GoG, mainly because their views are accompanied by money. There is very little critical thinking in the government about policy alternatives, although the ESP is in some ways an attempt to assert a

certain level of independent policymaking. Unterhalter (2005) warns that the ‘development industry,’ despite offering some beneficial policy guidance, is often disturbingly close to powerful interests that are unable to discuss poverty and gender equality appropriately.

It would therefore seem that further research into DPs’ decision making processes and informal (and formal) relationships with the GoG is needed in order to shed some light on the network of actors, budgets and definitions of gender equality in education in Ghana. Research that will qualitatively examine how covert definitions and assumptions within DPs and within the GoG influence policymaking as well as policy implementation.

Issues with Implementation

Intersectionality. Unterhalter (2012) emphasizes intersectionality when discussing gender, poverty and schooling. She also documents the gaps and issues of implementation when there is a disconnect between the policies and the practitioners who implement them. This leads to a reality in which “schooling is often not understood by practitioners in ways that open up a wider transformation of gender or social relations” (p. 257). Through her research, Unterhalter realized that the administrative structures in charge of implementing education policies are very limited in their ability to respond to crosscutting issues and intersectionality, such as gender and poverty. In Ghana, gender equality is, likewise, very isolated in the GEU, and the fact that this unit is located in the basic education section also inhibits the development of gender issues throughout the length and breadth of the education system, for example in secondary education or in the transitions between the different levels of education. Intersectionality, especially of gender and poverty pervaded many of my interviews. As mentioned in chapter 5, Sam talks

about the interconnectedness of issues that are outside the purview of the education system to gender equality within the education system.

In Ghana, as in Kenya and South Africa where Unterhalter (2012) conducted her study, “the classification of work was made somewhere else and their remit was to deliver on more narrowly conceived projects” (p. 262). Policies are developed in the capital Accra in collaboration with the DPs and are then expected to be implemented by regional and district staff, often without sufficient training or support. Expanding my research to investigate work on the district level could deepen understanding of implementation processes. In addition, although my interviewees hardly acknowledged issues of religion, region and equality, the intersection of religion, poverty and equality, especially in the Northern, Upper West and Upper East regions requires further research and attention. In the DP literature, these regions are described as impoverished and requiring special measures. However, it was Lorraine whose comments pointed out that millions of dollars have been poured into these regions in the past two decades and progress is just not happening. No one is taking any measures to rethink the develop strategies in these regions and whether the fact that they have a Muslim majority, (as opposed to a Christian majority in the country as a whole) plays any part in this.

Being a white academic conducting research in an African country also expanded my dialogue with feminist postcolonial theory. I needed to stay alert to my many biases when thinking about intersectionality. I made honest attempts to listen attentively and ask as many questions as possible, as well as just observe how people interact around me. Like Mohanty (2003) and Way (2005) I attempted “politics of engagement” and tried my best to engage with

my interviewees and every person I met in my travels, so that I could better understand the context of my research. Learning about this context helps also decipher the web of intersectionality, moving beyond the obvious interconnectedness of poverty and girls education. For example, intersectionality in Ghana is also how gender equality in education is intimately connected with geographical location as well as with the rural/urban division. Loraine, with evident pain, told of how much money DPs have been spending in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions in the last decade on gender equality issues in these regions without real progress. She talked about being frustrated with the fact that there doesn't seem to be any real attempt to understand why that is happening.

Links with development policy. The unique situation of many social policies in developing countries is that they originate in international development policies. Crosby (1996) writes about the organizational challenges specific to development policy implementation and points to one of the major conceptual challenges:

Implementation is often viewed as part of a linear process that proceeds directly from the predictions and prescriptions given by the economist to the policy maker, to policy selection by the appropriate decision maker(s), to implementation, and then to policy outcomes. (p. 1403)

Policy implementation however, is anything but linear and usually demands that widespread adjustments be made or new organizations established (Crosby, 1996). Indeed, my research has

demonstrated that despite an appearance of linearity – policy formulated at the MOE and then implemented through a streamlined process by the regional and districts offices of the GES – the reality is much more nuanced and complex and is greatly influenced by DP funding cycles.

Due to the complexity of policy implementation, there are different tasks associated with it. These include: “policy legitimization, constituency building, resource accumulation, organizational design and modification, mobilization of resources and actions, and monitoring impact” (Crosby, 1996, p. 1405). These are all crucial tasks, some of which have been accomplished in Ghana; there is, for example, widespread legitimization of gender equality in education policies. But, at the same time, there are many challenges regarding the mobilization of resources and monitoring of impact throughout the system. Moreover, in the discourse of international organizations, implementation is often conflated with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Snyder, Berry & Mavima, 1996). Snyder et al. provide a useful framework specifically for implementing gender policies; this framework appears in Figure 16 below.

Working with existing frameworks and principles. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) has developed a list of implementation principles that aim to provide some guidance in assessing policy and project implementation in developing countries (Moser, 2008, p. 54):

- A people-centered approach
- Responsive and participatory processes
- Sustainability
- Work at multiple levels
- Partnership

- Flexibility to respond to changes in people's situation.

Some of these are quite vague and do not answer questions like: does the flexibility to respond amount to a real ability to change and evolve the policy in response to the needs of local stakeholders? They also raise some questions about definitions: How is sustainability defined? Is it a contextual definition? How are multiple levels identified locally? Many more questions, in fact, than there are answers. Looking at these implementation principles advocated by DFID, a prominent aid agency, it is interesting to note that the vague principles do not answer any of the questions in Snyder et al.'s (1996) model regarding who decides what is to be done and who actually does it. Although DFID can be seen to emphasize the past on "how to improve capacity," their principles are so inexplicit that they fail to provide real guidelines for implementing agents. Furthermore, these principles seem very detached from the implementation agencies in Ghana – the district level MOE staff.

Figure 16 is a graphic representation of Snyder et al.'s (1996) implementation framework. In my research I interviewed people who correspond to various sections of this framework. Some of the questions at the top of the figure are questions I also asked in my interviews. Most striking with regards to implementation was the answer to the question: Who decides what is to be done? It seems that these decisions are made at the ministry level in collaboration with DPs but not with district level stakeholders or women's organizations (although some input is solicited from the districts for the annual review process). In addition, the types of policies and services provided are very narrow and focus on scholarships and feeding programs (although there are other types of programs, but these are few and in the periphery of the policymaking). The framework below proposes a list of characteristics of

implementing agencies. In Ghana, the implementing agency is the GES and implementation takes place at the district level where staff capacity for many of these characteristics is mixed at best, especially in the most deprived regions. In addition, the place of stakeholder participation is unclear, and there is no attempt to identify stakeholders who should be added to any policy implementations or formulation processes.

In the GES I found a culture of compliance – compliance with whatever the DPs propose and bring to the table. The sentiments I encountered were based on the financial need, and attitude of “*we need their money we will take whatever they can give us*”. My interviewees acknowledged that the policies were well-intentioned but still local bureaucrats are not always sure about the overall targets and the “big picture” sought by the DPs.

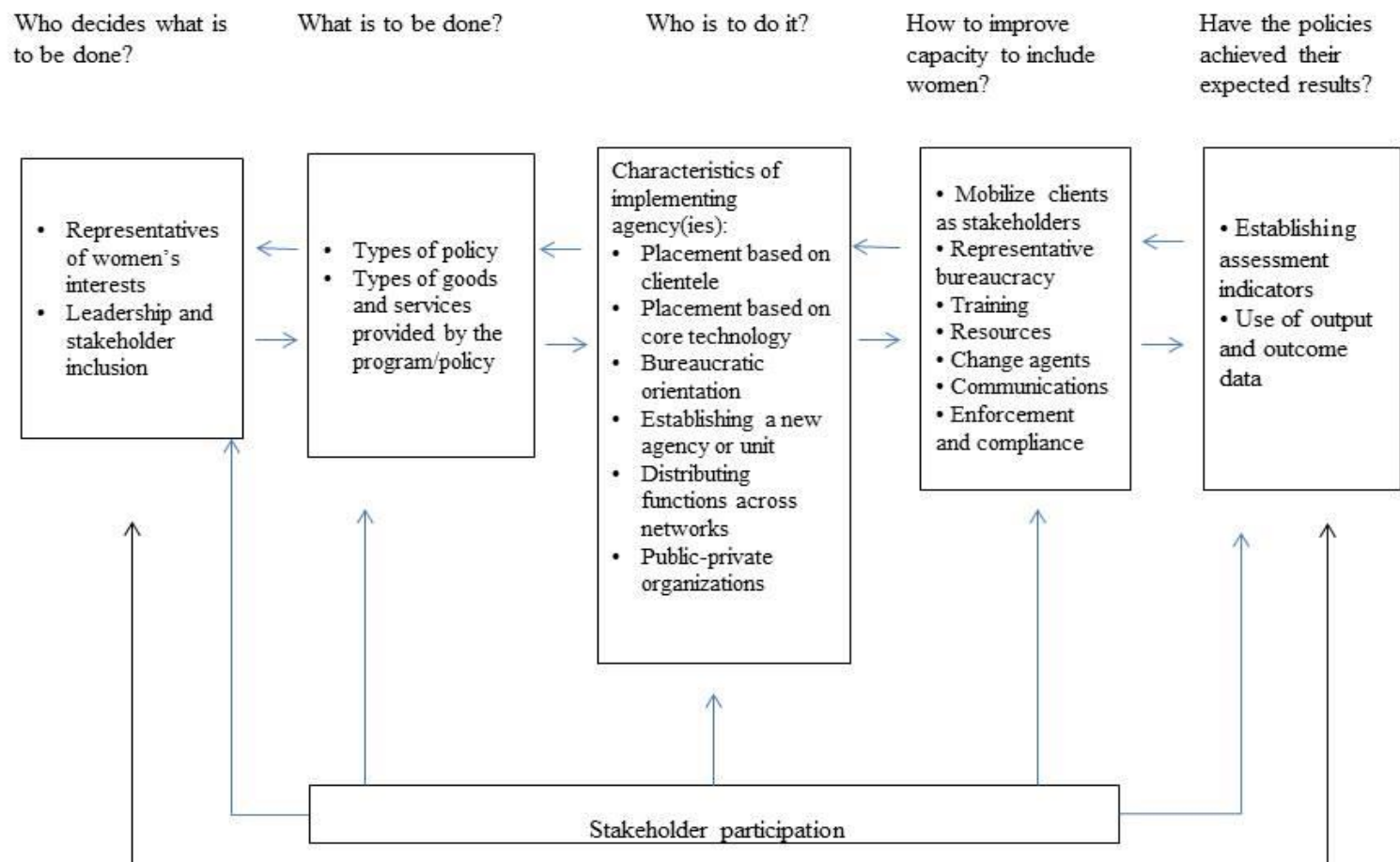


Figure 16. An implementation framework for gender policy adapted from Snyder, Berry & Mavima (1996) p. 1483

Policy results and implementation. I identified several threads from my data. The first is implementers' relationship with moral commitment. Most of the policies are implemented at regional and district level as part of a parcel of education policies and programs. Moral commitment can ensure sustainability of programs and policies once DPs are done with a specific program or policy. However, the local GES people are not always sure about the motives of the DPs and what the overall framework and targets of the policies are. Without moral commitment and grassroots participation in designing as well as implementing these policies and programs make be viewed as a form of neo colonialism.

So, have gender equality in education policies achieved their expected results? It depends who you ask. At the most basic level, Ghana has almost reached parity at the primary level and is expected to reach 100% parity by the end of 2015. However, problems with M&E were identified by all of my interviewees, although the documents say little about these challenges. DPs monitor and evaluate but only their own projects, and the MOE has inadequate resources or capacity to conduct in-depth horizontal and vertical M&E in the education system. Recall, for example, that Sam freely admitted that his unit needs better M&E mechanisms; and recall that Eshe acknowledged that she is alone in monitoring implementation for the entire region and that it is simply not feasible.

Snyder et al. (1996) offer their framework “as a reference point for improved policy formulation and implementation” (p. 1493), especially for international aid agencies and they emphasize the significance of several issues for the success of such a framework. In today's Ghana many of their recommendations have been implemented: streamlined relations with DPs, the setting of specific goals, and the strategies to be used. Of interest to this research is their emphasis on “improved organizational capacity through mobilization of stakeholders, training

agency staff, providing adequate levels of funding, developing communication linkages” (p. 1493). In Ghana’s ESP, training for MOE staff, to improve capacity as well policy implementation, is not mentioned at all. Training was barely mentioned in my interviews, and on the rare occasion it was, it was usually in reference to teacher training. It is, in addition, important to discuss the issue of developing communication linkages; since there are so many different DPs and programs currently being implemented within the education sector, communication linkages should have been a prerequisite. Sam did mention a monthly meeting with DPs, but since implementation takes place at the regional and district level, it was not clear how this communication filters down.

Although the above framework is quite comprehensive, it still doesn’t allude to the specific and unique barriers that women face in different stages of the policy implementation process. In education policy specifically, the implementing agencies are less varied than in other policies and especially in policy that originates internationally they tend to be international agencies and organizations.

Moving beyond issues of funding for gender equality in education to Ghana. Funding restrictions were cited by almost all of my interviewees as a real inhibitor for gender equality policies and programs. More problematic than lack of funding is the issue of DP funding cycles. Staff members from the MOE were very careful in answering my questions about funding from DPs, and I am assuming that open criticism is not a real option. There are several reasons why DPs need to constantly evaluate their work and conduct research; due to funding cycles there is a constant need to make decisions about the future of programs. The decision making processes in the ‘development industry’ usually require M&E driven research and hence the need of DPs to conduct research. However, this research focuses on M&E of their programs alone, and it is

therefore unclear who is able to evaluate the cumulative effect of all the programs currently running in Ghana.

From the data I collected it is clear that the MOE or GES are not capable of doing this, due to both a lack of relevant skills and budgetary restrictions. The ministry has, nonetheless, been making great strides toward improving capacity and developing a strategic plan. The MOE is currently working on an MS data system that will be linked with data from other ministries so that educational data is enhanced with socio-economic data for example.

Even today “policy-makers are often caught between dealing with the colonial legacy on the one hand whilst simultaneously engaging with the demands posed by rapid globalization on the other” (Crossley and Tikly, 2004, p. 151). The colonial legacy is often a regime of international aid agencies working alongside the government. Verger, Novelli, & Altinyelken (2012) discuss how policy (and education policy in particular) in developing countries is being influenced and even penetrated by global agendas. This is a result of these countries’ reliance on external aid which leaves them far more exposed to international trends and programs than developed countries. Aid always comes with strings attached to it and usually the strings are dictated by the giving party – be it the World Bank or USAID. These organizations want their strings to be monitored and evaluated in a language that they speak - numbers and statistics. And as I have previously stated, researchers in the field often mention, that those who conduct research for DPs often simply do not have the dearth of knowledge and relevant skills to provide in-depth meaningful and culturally sensitive qualitative analysis. (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2009). Another issue with DPs funding was raised by Loraine, who claims that many years many projects have been funded in the northern regions without any success in improving gender

equality and it seems that no one is asking the right questions or conducting the right assessment and evaluation.

In my interviews I encountered two seemingly different approaches to the issue of funding, or lack of. On the one hand I had Eshe who simply said the lack of funds is inhibiting her work in the region and districts tremendously. On the other hand when I asked Sam what he really needs from the DPs he said – improving his M&E systems, thus emphasizing the importance he places on his ability to monitor what is going on around the country. It is important to note that their difference of opinion might be a result of their different location and gender; Eshe being a regional representative and Sam working in the MOE headquarters.

Facing the Future with Cautious Optimism

My inherent sense of optimism guides me in writing about future prospects for gender equality in education, in Ghana and elsewhere. However, as a feminist academic conducting research on policy, the big challenge is working to bridge the gap between scholars and the policy world. According to Sutton (2001) there are “difference, at times a seeming chasm, between knowledge created as scholarship and the knowledge sought after by policy makers” (p. 88). It is vital to bridge this chasm, especially in the case of gender equality, since the knowledge created by feminist scholars and activists can inform policy in ways that enhance its sustainability and outcome. In addition, policies need to be augmented by family and societal support. From the anecdotal data from the elite women in this study, the clear emphasis was the individual family members, (husbands, mothers, aunties), who were so instrumental in their journey. Future research should look into questions of family background and family support as

being a major part in celebrating and promoting girl's education, moreover it is important to look at what kind of family support successful and educated women in developing countries receive.

In chapter 4 I introduced several feminist criticisms of World Bank policies and research (Stromquist, 2012, Bhavnani et al., 2003 and Nussbaum, 2003). These critics stand firmly in Ghana's reality. Especially important is Bhavnani's (2003) comment that the World Bank has neglected dealing with the actual gendered realities in developing countries. Indeed in Ghana, despite efforts to engage more fully with the MOE there is very little institutional understanding of what it actually takes to transform gender relations at community level. In addition, the issue of "strategic formation" (Said, 1978) or intertextuality is also very manifested in both all levels of policy texts and my interviews – the same words and phrases are used by DPs and the MOE alike. Thus development discourse and international policies on gender equality in education have penetrated Ghana.

Numerous international documents emerged dealing with indicators and goals for girls' education/gender equality after the 2015 MDG target. Thus, new questions should focus on how are these goals and targets different; Do they address the gaps and holes identified by feminist activists and scholars in the old agenda? This is yet to be determined. The Brookings Institution⁴³ calls for "second generation girls education priorities that include 5 priorities: access, safety, quality learning, transitions and local leadership" (p. 2). But in the "old" EFA Dakar framework, many of these priorities are present. . The Brookings document looks at Sub-Saharan Africa and a band of countries in Asia as "hot spots" of girls education, but after my analysis, I question

⁴³ A DC based think tank focusing on research about American Democracy and on Securing "a more open, safe, prosperous and cooperative international system" <http://www.brookings.edu/about#research-programs/>

how much attention is to being given to the huge differences of contexts and circumstances between these two continents.

Thinking back to Lorde (1984) and her immortal claims that “the master’s tool will never dismantle the master’s house” (p. 112), it is not entirely clear to me how to define the “master’s tools” in the context of international development. At times during my research and writing it seemed that I have more questions than the questions I already answered. Following Lorde (1984) I wanted to identify the “master’s tools” in my research and I asked myself whether they are the international documents (MDGs and EFA), or rather the government documents? I also questioned whether they should all be evaluated separately to examine their merit for a feminist agenda on gender equality in education or whether we should treat them all holistically. Within the cadre of feminist writers opinions vary. Antrobus (2005), Agostino (2005), and Kabeer (2005) agree that the MDGs have the potential to enable a conversation about women’s interests and agendas. This conversation can lead to resource allocation and the advancement of women’s interests, but it can also result in superficial attention to access without challenging wider social relations. In my research it was apparent that international policy and international actors play a huge part in the policymaking process in Ghana, in ways that do not exist in western countries. Their presence is a fact and is not optional, so applying Lorde’s claim to Ghana’s reality would require a complete revolution in how Ghana and other developing countries interact with DPs and western governments. Such a transformation is not, in my opinion, feasible, but that does not mean we cannot look critically at the current policy processes and attempt to improve outcomes for and participation of women.

As outlined in chapter 4, I believe that CFPA and its emphasis on the search for discrepancies between rhetoric, action and outcomes is exactly the kind of critical approach that

is needed. This is Agostino's (2005) challenge: to build a world where the values that guided the MDGs inform political and economic decisions, guide educators and development workers, and determine the type and quality of relationships that are established at the personal as well as the international level. There are women in Ghana who are working to bridge these discrepancies every day, in their personal lives and in their professional lives. The women (and man) in my research all talked about their efforts and, in particular, about the need for persistence.

The kind of agency and change that is thus required is "transformative forms of agency that do not simply address immediate inequalities but are used to initiate longer-term processes of change in the structures of patriarchy" (Kabeer, 2005, p. 16). Without deep and rooted social change, gender parity in primary schools can have no lasting effect on women and girls in society. Kabeer (2005) also offers a suggestion of what this requires: "movement along a number of fronts: from individual to collective agency, from private negotiations to public action, and from the informal sphere to the formal arenas of struggle" (p. 16). Accordingly, future programs should, I believe, focus more on the collective agency of young women and less on individual scholarships. Women's organizations in Ghana need to engage with formal arenas, and specifically with the MOE at the MOE headquarters in Accra. And because "policy makers often continue to see the benefits of educating girls and women in terms of improving family health and welfare, rather than preparing women for a more equal place in the economy and in society" (Kabeer, 2005, p. 18), DPs, women's organizations and researchers need to expose this destructive vision as well as help create a new vision.

Promising alternatives. Coincidentally, I came across the work of the Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) ⁴⁴ in Ghana. MASHAV is the Israeli equivalent of USAID, and during my first meeting with the Israeli ambassador she talked enthusiastically about an early childhood program that MASHAV has been facilitating in Ghana for over 4 years, sharing also her frustrations about working with the MOE. Due to the fact that Israel simply doesn't have the financial resources to fund projects like USAID or DFID, MASHAV concentrates on building capacity and training in developing countries: training for teachers, agriculture workers, health professionals and government administrators. In the early childhood program teacher trainers are sent from Israel to train Ghanaian kindergarten teachers in project-based learning and learning through music and math, focusing on methods and materials that local teachers use and have access to. Some of the teachers are chosen to visit Israel for further training, in the hope that they will train more teachers upon their return to Ghana.

The MOE is so used to receiving a project intact with the funding and support for its implementation that any other method of cooperation is extremely difficult. MASHAV, however, asks the MOE to fund the teachers' flights to Israel, while Israel covers the rest of the expenses. Teachers face tremendous obstacles in attending this training. After attending one of the 10 days of training and visiting two schools where teachers have been trained and are implementing many of the methods they learned, I have hope. I saw the fruits of a program that could offer better outcomes if aid agencies were to adopt this method of support; support that also needs to be coordinated so that the different agencies could offer various types of trainings. However, in

⁴⁴ <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/mashav/AboutMASHAV/Pages/default.aspx>

today's reality, the relationship between developing countries, development agencies and western governments is perhaps just too complex.

Perhaps a second glimmer of insight comes from a quantitative study conducted by Ham, Paine, and Cha (2011) that aimed at explaining the dialectic relationship between national policy on gender equity in education and international norms. They define and distinguish two different layers of policy (used as dependent variables), “national principle” and “state action”: “A national principle is different from a state action because a symbolic principle of a nation-state does not necessarily presuppose that the nation-state has actually recognized concrete social problems with which the official principle is concerned” (p. 107). Thus gender equity can appear on two policy levels – equity as a general principle and equity as an area of priority for policy. These two policy levels are applicable in my study as well. There is a great difference in whether gender equality is mentioned at the policy background text or as a specific policy target. However, this distinction does not provide any meaningful addition to our understanding of implementation processes and practices.

For example, while the Youth Policy is merely a list of principles and values, it does identify gender mainstreaming as a key principle and value. However there are no specific policy goals or provisions for how to achieve this mainstreaming. In the ESP eliminating gender disparities is both a guiding principle and a policy target. However, just how gender disparities or the gender gap are defined plays a critical role, and as identified in Chapter 4, the ESP is narrowly focused on access and enrollment. In my opinion, the issue of definition and the framing and implementation of the policies have a greater bearing on the lives of women and girls. Since the language of the MDGs and EFA frames so many of these documents, it is not

surprising that they all have a similar emphasis and a similar lack of attention to definitions and culturally sensitive implementation.

Alternative framing for the discourse. In addition, Ham et al. (2011) develop a theoretical framework that is geared toward reconciling two distinct theoretical approaches: one that treats national educational systems across the globe as being similar in form and structure, and one that emphasizes differences that stem from local cultures and context.

Educational gender equity has often been conceptualized within sociological frameworks that highlight governmental and non-governmental carriers of global epistemic models of education and their roles in institutionalizing policy agenda items. At the same time, many studies have postulated that educational gender equity as an abstract ideology attains local meanings only when it is understood within particular societal contexts. (p. 106)

There are several issues worth discussing in regards to this study and framework. For a start, considering that this research refers to gender equality and that it is from 2011 the total lack of reference to MDGs and EFA is astounding. In addition, despite the study's focus on gender equity, feminist theories are not discussed in their framework; perhaps the prominence of quantitative method dictates it. Moreover, Ham et al. (2011) understand state action in a very limited way which supposes that if a state adopts a certain policy priority in writing, it will also adopt that priority in action. Their research also assumes that the countries themselves have unlimited autonomy in determining policy priorities.

My research points to several issues with their work and underlying assumptions. First, Ghana's autonomy in policy making is quite limited and often constrained by financial support received from DPs, particularly in issues of gender equality and girls' education. Second, the ESP has a long list of priorities, but to critically analyze whether these priorities are all implemented requires research that requires perhaps both qualitative and quantitative tools. Third, although Ham et al. (2011) discuss two levels of policy making, my own research adds a third layer of policymaking, that of the implementing agency. The identity of policy implementers plays an important role, especially when implementing agencies are DPs. There is, however, some potential expanding their policy levels framework, and in figure 17 below I aim to do that.

Importance of education. Unterhalter (2005) states that “formal acknowledgment of rights, including the right to education, does not mean either a state obligation to provide education of a certain quality, or the ability of poor women and girls to make their right justiciable in court” (p. 115). Education is undeniably an important issue in Ghana, and the World Bank document cites the education sector as becoming:

one of the most frequently discussed topics of public concern in newspapers, radio and TV programs, next to politics, the economy and sports. (p. 87)

In fact I experienced this in Ghana myself. On several occasions I observed taxi drivers listening to talk shows on issues related to Ghana's education system. In addition, there were numerous street signs inviting students to improve on their high school examination results. However, it was also clear that education is seen as a tool to maintain rather than overhaul social structures.

Despite progress in international law and rhetoric, as well as the achievement of equal gender enrollment in both primary and secondary education in many countries around the world, like Ghana, many more countries are at risk of not even achieving the narrowly defined MDGs by 2015. These countries represent several continents, but Africa is disproportionately represented (Lewis & Lockheed, 2007). More qualitative research on contextual factors and local challenges in Africa is needed, especially research that looks at how to make education systems more relevant and responsive to the local lives of girls and boys. “A key role for a good quality education becomes one of supporting the development of autonomy and the ability to make choices in later life rather than simply providing individuals with the necessary resources to learn” (L. Tikly & Barrett, 2011, p. 7). There should be more emphasis on what children who graduate from national education systems are able to achieve and do.

Policy gaps. There is a substantial amount of literature on what countries should be doing, and what the international community is doing to promote gender equality in education. But there is less literature on government level strategies and policymaking and on how countries are bridging the gap between the international pressures to reach the MDGs by 2015 and local realities. When I started working on this dissertation, I predicted a gap between what happens on the international level and what actually happens inside countries. The reality, however, is much more complex, and the different negotiations about policies and definitions cut across the international/national divide and can be perceived slightly differently. Policy makers in Ghana tend to “parrot” what the national and international documents are saying and are happy for the money they bring with them; however they operate and implement them without fully understanding their framework.

In Figure 17, I attempt to map out the policy arena on gender equality in education in Ghana. The model may provide relevant insights for other developing countries.. Policy operates on both a formal and informal level, and the process is never linear. In addition, to a common policy models often provide no definitions. How key terms such as gender equality are defined and how key terms such as parity are used impacts on both policy formation and policy implementation. But since this is not a linear model, the policies themselves have an impact on definitions and on perceptions of people in the country. Formal definitions also have an impact on how men and women perceive and define gender equality issues and policies.

Among the many MDG skeptics, Todd Moss, wrote about the post-2015 agenda in his blog:

While there is a good case for abandoning illusory global goals, that seems unlikely this September, not least because the entire industry of MDG watchers/trackers/advocates have an interest in keeping it going. And, oh yeah, utopian goals seem to work as a fundraiser.

He also emphasizes that the new agenda should be “*Bottom up, not global down*. New global goals should be based on the aggregation of each country's targets rather than setting a world goal and then retrofitting targets to country plans.” The underlying approach to both the MDGs and the new post 2015 agenda is almost identical global down. Hence, I am skeptical about their ability to make a different difference in the lives of girls in Ghana.

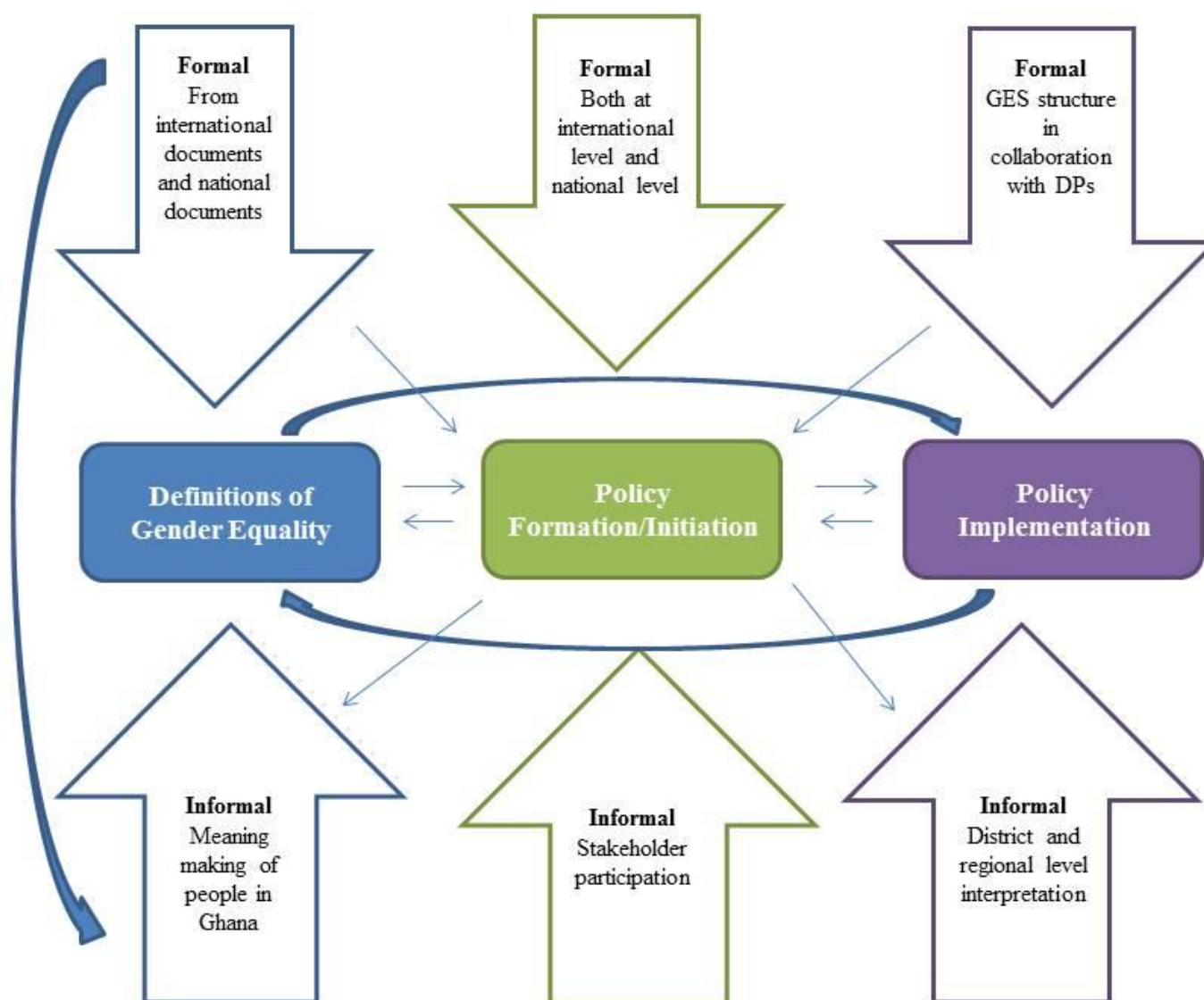


Figure 17. Pressures and Policies - understanding gender equality policies in Ghana

The weakest level in the above model is the informal policy formation. This refers to needs assessment and other stakeholder feedback that supports policy initiation. This is very rare in Ghana, although it does exist at the periphery, for example:

We realized that in a lot of school that have no play items and there is no equality in the school setting, we realized that girls are not given all the opportunity they need. For instance, when it is time for break and they go out to play the boys had the school football field and they would play soccer and take all the field and the girls are put at the corner trying to find something to engage with and we also realized even in school governance we have a lot of boys who take up leadership positions in school, more than girls (school prefects?) so all these things informed our idea to go out and train school heads so that there are equal opportunities for girls and boys. (Eshe)

Eshe talks about how she developed a training program based on an impromptu needs assessment she conducted in the districts. This is, however, the only example of policy initiative coming from the grassroots level and progressing through the administrative structure that I could see.

“ Kabeer (2005) eloquently describes what is needed to instigate institutional change: “Institutional transformation requires movement along a number of fronts: from individual to collective agency, from private negotiations to public action, and from the informal sphere to the formal arenas of struggle” (p. 16)

Conclusions: A more ideal policy model. In the above model, the direction of most arrows is from top (formal) to bottom (informal), but in an ideal model – or an ideal world – arrows should go both ways so that grassroots informal complexities are better represented at the formal arenas of policymaking. In the words of a Save The Children toolkit what is needed is a move from gender sensitive policies and programs to gender transformative policies and programs. This shift is not only semantic; it signifies a substantial shift in how gender quality is accepted in society. To bring about gender equality in education, “interventions [need to] utilize a gender sensitive approach and promote gender equality, while working with key stakeholders to identify, address, and positively transform the root causes of gender inequality for women and men, girls, and boys” (p. 15). My study indicates that, we can eliminate inequality in the education system only when root causes of gender inequality are addressed,. The problem is that although international organizations (such as Save The Children) speak this transformative language, the basic assumption is that these root causes are universal and not context specific. It is true that many gender inequalities are similar in different continents; it is equally true that they vary.

Save The Children (2014) propose envisioning the relationship between gender and policies as a continuum where gender transformative policies are at one end and gender exploitative policies are at the other. However, I have learned from my research in Ghana that the language that is being used by policy makers and in policy documents definitely belongs to the transformative side, but on when looking closely at implementation issues and grassroots level stakeholders the original transformative approach is somewhat diluted. I have learned that for women in Ghana, gender transformative policies need to be augmented by family and

community support so that they can be a critical force for promoting gender equality in education.

“Several feminist scholars have argued that mainstream policy studies fail to recognize gender bias in substantive policy because the models advanced to describe and explain the policy process are themselves gendered” (Hawkesworth, 1994, p. 107). Paraphrasing this statement I would like to claim that in international policy studies despite an attempt to recognize and respond to gender bias at a declarative level, in the case of Ghana at least the gendered realities of girls in the education system is still somewhat missed.

The conclusions of this research and dissertation go beyond a list of policy recommendations. They require further research into policy implementation processes, so that international definitions and policies are mediated through national policies to improve the lives and the realities of girls in the education system and in society as a whole. However, the international policy arena should be open to a constructive dialogue with multiple stakeholders on both a country-to-country as well as a regional basis. I do not have a list of well-defined policy recommendations for Ghana or for the international aid agencies. However, I have renewed faith in the power of women to push for change from within. The international documents and policies provide a backdrop for them; they provide a global context for a global era. As information technologies become increasingly widespread in Ghana so too will ideas.

Despite my reluctance to finish this project with a prescribed list of policy recommendations that offer solutions to the problems I have identified, I do have some suggestions or proposals.

1. My first suggestion is that that national policy makers as well as international policy makers need to expand their understanding of gender equality in education. A moral

- commitment to gender equality in education means understanding gender equality as a fundamental issue within the context of gender relations in society.
2. The only people who can and will make that happen are Ghanaians themselves – men and women.
 3. As outsiders – coming from outside of Ghana (as foreigners) and outside of society (as researchers with an academic shield) – we need to listen to local voices so that we better understand how international policies are interpreted and understood locally.
 4. We need to find ways of making connections between potential policies and the people and children who will benefit from them.
 5. We also need to identify the harmful influences international policies have locally, especially taking into consideration the modus operandi of DPs – “funding cycles”.
 6. Finally I would like to suggest that DPs recruit local education experts to work as education specialists, even at the cost of training them extensively. These specialists have a potential to affect social change in their society with the experience they gain.

This research cannot end with a list, regardless of the fact that this list is free flowing and non-prescriptive. I believe that what is needed in the near future is a policy model that encompasses grassroots and cultural insights, as well as a culturally constructed moral commitment to equality in general so that gender equality in education is a part of a larger social movement towards equality. In addition, the policy model should be based on transformative policies that center on stake holder dialogues, especially in rural communities that are usually cut from the center of decision making in the capital Accra.

To finish I would like to reiterate that it would seem that policies “developed largely by men to answer questions of interest to men about the political behavior of men” are a thing of the past. However, there are still,” many existing tools that contain an inherent male bias”. (Tamerius, 1995, p 144). These methodological and theoretical tools that privilege males need to be replaced with feminist methods and theories, such as CFPA, as well as by qualitative methods that emphasize the voices of women in Ghana and elsewhere in the developing world.

APPENDIX A - METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

Introduction

Ghana provides a great context for studying the interplay between international policy, national policy and the relevant actors and stakeholders, especially because according to various indicators the situation in Ghana is very promising in terms of parity. This research opens a small window on the reality of policymaking and project development in Ghana, using qualitative methods that are focused on exposing policy disconnects and deeper meanings of equality and education.

Social Science research involves the self-conscious and publicly articulated investigation of human life in its social form. How we proceed is determined by the questions at hand and the type of knowledge we desire, and what we learn is shaped, in turn, by our procedure – our methodology. (Piotrkowski, 1979, p. 288)

I have already used this quote in the introduction to my dissertation. I am using it again as the introduction to my methodological appendix in an attempt to emphasize that the choice of methodology was inherent in my research interests.

Qualitative methods allow for and even stress “getting close to the people and situations being studied,” an approach that is not “allowed” when using quantitative methods (Patton, 1990, p. 46). Crossley (2010) advocates not only using qualitative methods but also empowering local researchers to engage with international and western researchers and organizations.

Crossley is not alone in stressing the importance of context:

To have a good chance of success, educational policies or innovations, whether initiated by national policy makers or by international organizations, need to be in tune with the

everyday realities of the classroom and the motivations and capabilities of ordinary teachers. (Vulliamy & Webb, 2009, p. 400)

Marshall (1985) provides a list of situations that call for qualitative research methods: among them is “research that delves in-depth into complexities and processes” as well as “research that seeks to understand instances where policy, folk wisdom, and current practice do not work” (p. 356-7). Qualitative research can contribute to our understanding of the complexities of development policy and help in identifying the places where international policy fails on a national level. Similarly, Arnot and Fennell (2008) write specifically about gender equality and identify how research can support the goal of uncovering gaps in policy and implementation.

The value of empirical research into historically formed yet shifting gender relations in education is that it could identify important aspects of education that are neglected in international aid programmes, especially in countries which are assumed to be able to benefit from the Education For All approach. (p. 515)

“Qualitative research is defined by an effort to highlight the meanings people make and the actions they take, and to offer interpretations for how and why...” (Luttrell , 2010, p. 1)

Qualitative research allows for a reflexive and dialogic process, and it is about the lives of real people in real places. Quantitative research in development policy focuses on representing the lives of people in a small village in the middle of the African continent using numbers and figures that these same people cannot make any sense of. It looks at education systems as organizations to be accessed and not as places where children have unique experiences that shape the rest of their lives.

Hawkesworth (1994) claims that “Feminist scholarship reveals that androcentrism routinely undermines the claims of policy analysts to produce objective accounts” (P. 110). CFPA, as other feminist theories, offers researchers a theoretical and methodological approach that counteracts the problematic of quantitative analysis. It enables the researcher to “dig into” local meaning making of policies as well uncover unimagined policy consequences relevant to women and girls. It also holds a promise for exploring policy processes in the context of the society where it is being implemented.

Researcher’s Role, Reciprocity, and Ethics

Shulamit Reinharz ’s book “Observing the Observer” (2011) gives a detailed and in-depth analysis of the many selves that we as researchers bring to the field and how to make sense of all the different roles and positions we take.

It is important to recognize that the self is both brought to the field and created in the field. In each case this self is a complex constellation with historical, psychological, and sociological dimension... It is important to recognize that being a “researcher” is only one aspect of the researcher’s self while in the field. Although the researcher may consider this to be the most salient part, community members may not agree.” (p. 8).

In this quote Reinharz stresses the fact that our participants, the community members, or in my case the policymakers and others working in the field of education, can have a different perception on our various roles in the field and on which of them is more central. During my time in Ghana I tried to stay cognizant of this interplay between my “researcher from an American university” self, my “Israeli-Feminist” self and my “first time alone in the field” self. A field journal and regular communication with people at home and at UNC helped me work

through these multiple perspectives as well as reflect on my actions and responses while conducting my field research.

Reciprocity is also a major issue with any kind of field work and specifically with individual interviews. “I found that interviews were more fruitful when participants indicated some personal benefits from the research process” (Piotrkowski, 1979 p. 299). Following Piotrkowski’s advice, I had hoped to gain some insights into the lives of my participants prior to conducting the interviews, however this was not always possible as information on specific people in developing countries is not as accessible on the World Wide Web as we in the US might assume. I did contact a local researcher who helped me learn about ways to reciprocate (within ethical boundaries) with my participants. I thus brought with me a very small token of appreciation that I gave to my interviewees at the end of the interviews. On the whole, my participants seemed happy for the opportunity to sit down and reflect on issues of gender equality in their daily work and life.

Ethics. This brings me to the important discussion about ethics and IRB procedures. Generally speaking the American IRB process is designed to answer ethical dilemmas when conducting research with western participants. The issues of ethical research are viewed differently around the world, and despite attempts to learn about equivalent procedures in Ghana, I did not get any response. My study received IRB approval (Study # 14-1287), and as required by UNC IRB guidelines I gave each interviewee a copy of a study information sheet that is based on the informed consent form. The issue of informed consent is a little more complicated when interviewing elites. I thus applied for exemption from the consent process on the basis that although signed informed consent is the standard expectation in research with human participants, in this research, which involves interviewing public elites, it might be difficult to

obtain this consent. I planned on giving participants an information sheet but not collecting their signatures and relying on their oral consent to the interview. In the information sheet I detailed their rights within this process including the right to withdraw their participation at any time. Most of my participants were surprised to receive the information sheet which indicates a total lack of awareness of the ethics processes as known in the US.

Validity

When it comes to elite interviewing, member checks can often be problematic. Although their knowledge and perspective was and is the basis for my research, maintaining a long term relationship was almost impossible. Kezar (2003) believes that researchers can develop new techniques to maintain this relationship, namely phone calls and emails. However, the participants of my research are elites in a developing country and in my experience, communication technologies are still from being widespread. Even mobile phones, which are extremely common in Ghana, are not contract phones like in the west, and it is common for people to change their SIM cards (and hence their number) very often, opting for the cheapest and most affordable service. And with regards to emails, I tried to send follow-up emails to several of my interviewees, but none of them wrote back. Even the initial email connection to arrange for the meeting was fraught with challenges, and response time was an issue. Considering the problems Ghana faces with electricity supply and the fact that computers are not commonplace (even in government offices), the issues with phones and internet are understandable.

I therefore needed to take a different approach to validity. Cho & Trent (2006) identify five uses of validity in contemporary qualitative research which helped me think through my own validity processes. Table A1 portrays a summary of their purposes and categories of validity

and is reproduced from their work (p. 326). Initially, I attempted to locate my work in the thick description purpose. However, it was soon evident that my engagement in the field can hardly be classified as “prolonged engagement” (p. 329), and although I aimed at focusing “on explicating the unique, idiosyncratic meanings and perspectives constructed by individuals, groups, or both who live/act in a particular context” (p. 328), my analysis mainly engaged with self-assessment and personal interpretation. However, Cho & Trent do acknowledge that the key concern of validity in the personal essay purpose is similar to that in the thick description purpose and is “explicating the meanings that the researched construct” (p. 330).

Table A1

Use of validity in five overarching purposes undergirding reinforcing contemporary qualitative research

Purpose	Fundamental questions	Validity as a process	Major validity criteria
‘Truth’ seeking	What is the correct answer?	Progressive induction	Member check as technical causality-based triangulation
Thick descriptions	How do the people under study interpret phenomena?	Holistic, prolonged engagement	Triangulated, descriptive data Accurate knowledge of daily life Member check as recursive
Developmental	How does an organization change over time?	Categorical/back and forth	Rich archives reflecting history Triangulated, member check as ongoing
Personal Essay	What is the researcher’s personal interpretation?	Reflexive/aesthetic	Self-assessment of experience Public appeal of personal opinion of a situation
Praxis/Social	How can we learn and change educators, organizations or both?	Inquiry with participants	Member check as reflexive Critical reflexivity of self Redefinition of the status quo

The fundamental question for me was my personal interpretation, and this was manifested in much self-assessment and reflection throughout the data collection, analysis, and writing processes. My positionality and subjectivity are at the center of my analysis and enable the reader to closely examine my encounters and experiences in Ghana.

Into the Field: Collecting Data in Ghana

"Research, like diplomacy, is the art of the possible" (Patton, 1990, p. 13)

My trip to Ghana for data collection purposes was preceded by an intensive three months of preparations. This preparation included the obvious steps of applying for a visa, booking a flight ticket and making initial contact with relevant people. But it also included extensive research on dress code, accommodation options and medical consultations with a specialized doctor and nurse. It also involved getting five vaccines and acquiring decent medical insurance. Despite extensive world travel, this was my first time in Africa, and I was eager to come physically and emotionally prepared. I even bought boxes of crayons and pencils to give as presents in schools.

One of the most important contacts I made was with the Israeli ambassador to Ghana. Sharon Bar-Li established the Israeli embassy four years ago and has travelled Ghana extensively. She was a great source of knowledge, as well as a shoulder to cry on when at some point it seemed that I would be going home with only four interviews. I had never thought that my Israeli citizenship would come in handy, but it helped me, with the ambassador's assistance, to get through the doors of the GES, which was crucial for my research. A contact made through an international women's network of scholars (Women Leading Education – WLE) also helped me in gaining invaluable access to elite women in tertiary education.

Interviewing. During my three and a half weeks in Ghana I interviewed a total of 11 people: ten women and one man. They were located in four different cities. Three worked at the ministry of education, two as independent development consultants, four in tertiary education institutions and two in major international organizations. Two were white and nine were Ghanaian. Table A2 below contains details about their pseudonyms and positions. I followed, on the whole, a pattern of snowball sampling with help establishing initial contacts with more potential interviewees from my contacts. Thanks to the Israeli ambassador, I also had the opportunity to visit two basic schools (K-JHS) outside Accra and meet with teachers from three different cities.

Table A2

Formal Interviews by Pseudonym and Position

Name	Date of Interview	Location	Position
Shani	11.30.14	Private residence	Registrar at a public university
Mudiwa	11.30.14	Private residence	Senior lecturer at a public university
Masika	12.1.14	Office on campus	Dean at a university of education
Ogechi	12.1.14	Office on campus	Head of gender mainstreaming directorate at a university of education
Comfort	12.2.14	Office at ministry	Director at GES
Sam	12.11.14	Office at ministry	Director at GES
Makena	12.15.14	Lobby of hotel	Independent consultant on development
Eshe	12.16.14	Office at regional ministry	Regional director at GES
Ekua	12.18.14	Office at organization HQ	Senior education specialist in an international organization
Carol	12.19.14	Office at organization HQ	Director of education in an international organization
Lorain	12.20.14	Telephone interview from hostel	Independent consultant on development and education

To conduct these elite interviews I used Bardach's (2000) "Eight Fold Path" as a framework to my conversations with participants.⁴⁵ The Eight Fold Path is an approach to policy analysis that centers on creative problem solving. It is a conceptual framework designed to help the policy analyst with tackling policy problems. The eight steps in this approach include (p. xiv):

Defining the problem

Assembling some evidence

Constructing the alternatives

Selecting the criteria

Projecting outcomes

Confronting trade-offs

Deciding

Telling the story

I used these steps as a loose framework to investigate how and where international policies, goals, standards and money (in the form of aid) influence the policymaking process. It allowed for an iterative process in which participants could reflect on their practices and make sense of the different pressures and interventions they perceived in their work. However, I allowed for some flexibility in the protocol to let the interview flow more freely. In addition, I had to make

⁴⁵ See appendix B for interview protocols.

some adjustments to my initial protocol to allow for the diversity of interviewees that I encountered. The two major versions appear in Appendix B.

In preparation for the interviews I read several texts on interviewing, cross-cultural interviewing and elite interviewing. I took Seidman's (2013) personal advice with me as I was conducting the interviews in Ghana:

I try to strike a balance, saying enough about myself to be alive and responsive but little enough to preserve the autonomy of the participant's words and to keep the focus of attention on his or her experience rather than mine. (p. 98)

This was especially relevant for me as I have a basic tendency to share a lot of information about myself, a habit which can be intimidating for someone who has just met me. I also tried to remember Seidman's advice that "the interviewing relationship can be friendly but not a friendship" (p. 99). Seidman (2013) also offers some specific comments on interviewing elites. His examples are more relevant to western elites, but some of the issues, for example the question of time management, manifested in my experience as well. Although I had aimed at spending 45-60 minutes in each interview, my interviewees could often spare me only 30-40 minutes.

Other relevant methodological issues were related to the cultural and ethnical differences between me and my participants. As discussed earlier, although English is the formal language in Ghana, the dialect is different from American English and I found myself at times having to rephrase my questions and provide elaborate explanations. However, racial differences between "Whites" and "Blacks" that are accentuated in the US are almost irrelevant in Ghana. Nowhere did I feel any tension as a non-African; at times I even benefitted from not being local and therefore being able to ask follow-up questions that were "inspired by" my foreignness.

Moreover, due to the Christian beliefs of most Ghanaians I met, being a Jew from the Holy Land played to my advantage.

Collecting documents. For the document analysis I collected policy texts both prior to and during my trip as well as while actually doing the analysis. There are many intertextual references that advised me of more potential documents, but from a simple search in Google I also gleaned useful links. My document list is by no mean exhaustive but is representative of the types of discourses and documents available.

When conducting document analysis there are several issues that the researcher needs to consider: size and aspect of data collected, sampling approaches and whether the codes are generated from the data or imposed (Grbich, 2007). First, the policy texts I collected and analyzed include samples from three levels of policymaking – international, regional and national. Some relevant international level documents were discussed briefly in the historical background section but not included in the analysis section; there is vast literature examining these texts. My focus is on national level documents as well as international policy documents – those that refer specifically to Ghana but are written by international organizations. Some potentially relevant documents were excluded, in particular those that concentrated on the work of the DPs or on statistics: for example e UNICEF IN GHANA: Basic Education and Gender Equality document.⁴⁶

In addition, I used online databases to collect information about documents before traveling to Ghana. I was also able to access some country level policy documents on the MOE website, but their importance was acknowledged only when I was in the field. The search words

⁴⁶ http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro_GHA_MTSP2.pdf

I used were: gender, education, equality, women and girls, and Ghana, and I limited the search to documents published after the MDGs, i.e., 2001 and onwards, as well as documents that refer directly to either Ghana or Africa

Second, I took a thematic approach to the analysis of these documents, attempting to uncover the “structures and discourses of communications” (Grbich, 2007, p. 112) integral to policy texts on gender equality in education. My thematic analysis is based on a critical feminist approach following Bensimon & Marshall (1997), Marshall (1999) and Vavrus (2002). Some of the key questions that guided me were: How is policy being initiated and by who? Are definitions of key concepts overt or covert? Are local women a part of the policy processes? What are the relationships between western DPs, the men that lead them and gender policies in Ghana? The next section will detail the analysis processes and methods.

Table A3

Documents Analyzed

Origin of Document	Title	Publication Year
Government of Ghana	Education White Paper	2004
Government of Ghana/MOE	Education Strategic Plan 2010-2020	2012
Government of Ghana/ Ministry of Youth and Sport	Youth Policy	2010
African Union	African Union Gender Policy	2009
African Union	The African Women's Decade 2010-2020	2010
World Bank	Project Appraisal Document	2012

UNICEF	Achieving Universal Primary Education in Ghana by 2015: A reality of dream?	2007
UNICEF and GOG	Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: Ghana Country Study	2012
University of Education, Winneba	Gender Policy	2009

Data Analysis

The dialogue between data collection and data analysis is an important part of the iterative and reflexive nature of qualitative research. As Basit (2003) states: “Qualitative data analysis is not a discrete procedure carried out at the final stages of research. It is indeed, an all-encompassing activity that continues throughout the life of the project” (p. 145). Merrick (1999) goes further to stress that “the process of data collection and analysis happen concurrently and informed each other” (p. 49). In my research there was some overlap between the collection, coding and analysis of the policy texts, and the running of the interviews. The interview phase of data collection precipitated some reflection and a return to the policy texts as well as acquaintance with other potential policy texts.

My process for data analysis corresponded to the fact that “bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data is messy, ambiguous, time consuming, creative, and fascinating. It does not proceed in a linear fashion” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 207). My analysis process was anything but linear. I went back and forth between analysis of the interviews and the documents, and although these are represented in two separate chapters, they are complementary and informed by one another. Moreover, my analysis was informed by

extensive and mostly feminist theoretical frameworks. Prior to the analysis, I developed an initial code list which was later extended and developed while collecting data in Ghana and then again during the coding process itself.

I used Atlas.ti software (Version: 7.5.4) in my analysis to help with coding and managing the data from both interviews and policy documents. I uploaded the policy documents and interview transcripts to two separate files of the software, so that the coding process was separate but simultaneous. As mentioned before, I used my literature review to generate initial codes for analysis, but the data itself generated more codes and helped to differentiate some codes as well collapse others.

Table A4

Initial Codes

Code	Definition
Implementation	References to implementation processes in the policy text
Implementing Agent	References to who is responsible for implementation
Funding	References to who is responsible for funding or where the money is to come from.
Boys	Are boys included in the policy in some way?
Curriculum	How is curriculum referenced?
MDGs	Direct reference or quotes from
EFA	Direct reference or quotes from
Training	Is training part of the policy?

Bazeley (2013) writes that coding is used for managing data, building ideas from the data, and assisting in the formulation of questions from the data. During my coding process examining these three “uses” of data enabled me to look differently at both the texts and interviews that constituted my data. Bazeley (2013) quotes Morse & Richards (2002): “Coding ‘leads you from the data to the idea and from the idea to all data pertaining to that idea’” (p. 115 as quoted in Bazeley, 2013, p. 128). Initially I had different codes for the texts and the interviews, but as the coding process progressed, I was led me similar ideas in one file to similar ideas in the other.

Linking ideas from one data set to another, and going back and forth between the interviews, the policy text and my own field notes enabled me to think and rethink creatively about the codes and themes. Just as Coffey & Atkinson encourage us to “use our codings and categories to think with and not to remain anchored in the data” (p. 49), I aimed at using my codes as springboards into a more in-depth understanding of my initial research questions. I used the formal codes to shed light on various experiences I had while in the field. I also used my coding and analysis to tell a story of gender equality in education policies in Ghana- a story that provides a context-based policy model.

As a conclusion to this appendix I would like to quote a few words about truth and reality: “Whether or not the world has a ‘real’ existence outside of human experience of what the world is an open question” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000 p. 176). As each researcher formulates her own approach to questions of truth and reality, she will benefit from this quote, while analyzing her data and making interpretations of her participants’ experiences of the world. My analysis is a reflection of my encounters with both the theories and the realities reflected in the data.

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide - International Organizations

I am interested to learn how you make sense of gender equality in education policy implementation processes in Ghana and how your organization is involved in this process. I would also like to hear from you about any particular issue you identify in your daily work that you think is important. Please let me know whether you feel these are appropriate and reflect the reality of your work. I am very much interested to learn from your experience and expertise.

- Can you tell me a little bit about your professional history and what you did prior to working with this organization?
- How would you define in your words the term “gender equality in education”?
- Do you think that any attention is given to definition of this term when formulating policies and programs? Whose definition is usually discussed or acted upon?
- Are the Millennium Development Goals or EFA discussed directly? How do they influence policy making?
- Was there ever a time when alternative policies were discussed?
- I am interested to learn more about your experience with implementation. On what administrative level does implementation usually take place? Is it a regional task? Is anyone from your organization involved directly? Do people from your organization visit regions or districts?
- From your experience who makes final decisions about and takes ownership on gender equality in education policies? Ministry of Education? Ministry of Women? Others NGOs? Other international organizations? Who is consulted?

Interview Guide – MOE and others

I am interested to learn how you make sense of gender equality in education policy implementation processes in Ghana and how international organizations and individuals are involved in this process. I would also like to hear from you about any particular issue you identify in your daily work that you think is important. I am very much interested to learn from your experience and expertise.

- I want to start by asking you about your professional history and background?
- Can you define in your words the term “gender equality in education”? what do you associate with these words?
- Have you encountered in your work any discussion of policy makers or implementers of the definition? Is a definition assumed silently? Has it changed in the past decade?
- I am interested to learn how the Millennium Development Goals and the EFA are mentioned or discussed in relation to national policies? Are seen as relevant policy goals?
- Was there ever a time when alternative policies (to the MDGs) were discussed?
- I am interested to learn more about your experience with implementation. On what administrative level does implementation usually take place? Is it a regional task? Are policies usually implemented with a development partner or just the ministry?
- How involved are development partners in policy formulation? Are they just involved in implementation? Are there necessary steps to provide for the sustainability of policies?
- Who makes final decisions about gender equality in education policies? Ministry of Education? Ministry of Women? Others NGOs? Other international organizations?

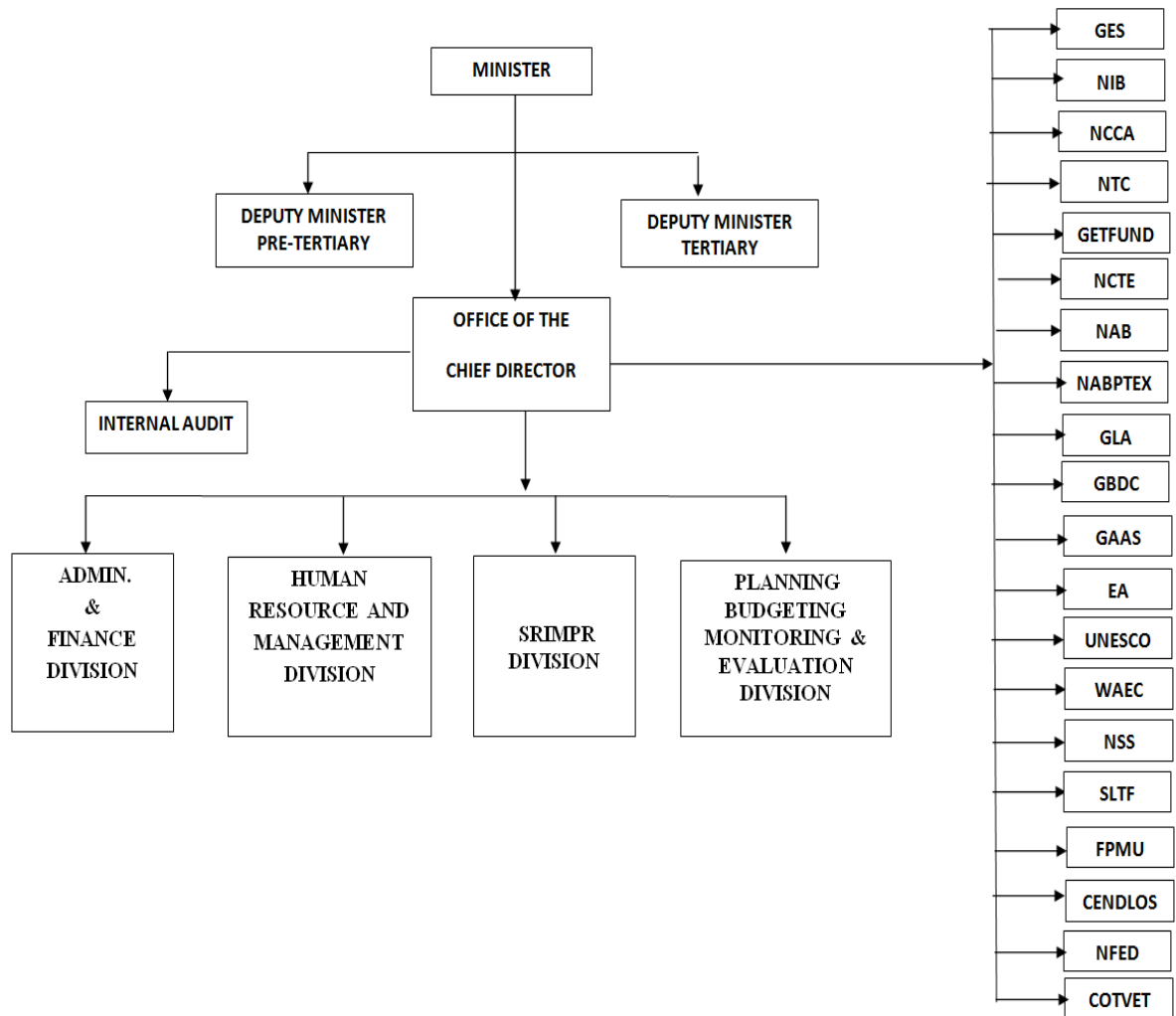
APPENDIX C
POLITICAL REGIMES AND EDUCATION POLICY TEXTS 1951-2008⁴⁷

Year	Political Regime	Political Head	Significant Education Policy Texts	Policy Themes
1957	Convention People's Party (CPP)	Nkrumah	1961 The Education Act (87)	Expansion of primary education
1966 Military Coup	National Liberation Council (NLC)	Ankrah	The Kwabong Committee Report	Contain expansion of primary education; focus on quality. Selection to academic and vocational streams after two years of middle school
1969 Elections	Progress Party (PP)	Busia	1971 committee on education reform	Common and extended basic education
1972 Military Coup	National Redemption Council	Acheampong	1974 The Dzobo Report: The new structure and content of education 1974 The Ghana Education Service Decree	Common and extended basic education. Cycle of 6 years primary and 3 years junior secondary. Removal of middle schools from the structure of education.
1981 Military Coup	Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)	Rawlings	1987 The Education Reform 1988 University Rationalisation Committee (URC) Report 1991 Government White Paper on the URC report	Increase access to common and extended basic education. Reduce pre-university span from 17 to 12 years in a 6+3+3 system. Literacy in the vernacular, a second Ghanaian language and English, technical and vocational education, restructured teacher education, introduction of continuous assessment
1992 Elections	National Democratic congress (NDC)	Rawlings	1992 , the Fourth Republic The NCTE Act (Act 454)	Continued implementation of the 1987 reforms

⁴⁷ Adapted from Little (2010)

			1994 Education Reforms Review Committee Report 1994 Programme for the Provision of Free, Compulsory and Universal Education (fCUBE) by the Year 2005 1995 the Ghana Education Service Act (Act 506) 1995 Programme for the Development of Basic Education within the Framework of Free Compulsory Universal Basic education (fCUBE) by the year 2005	
2000 Elections	National People's Party (NPP)	Kufor	2002 President's Education Review Committee (the Anamuah- Mensah Committee) 2003 Launch of the Education Strategic Plan 2003-2015 2004 Report of the President's Review Committee 2005 Review of fCUBE 2006 White paper on the Report of the President's Education Review Committee 2007 National Education Reform Implementation Committee 2008 Education Act	Continued implementation of the 1987/1992 reforms Pre-schools Diversification of senior secondary Capitation grants to schools

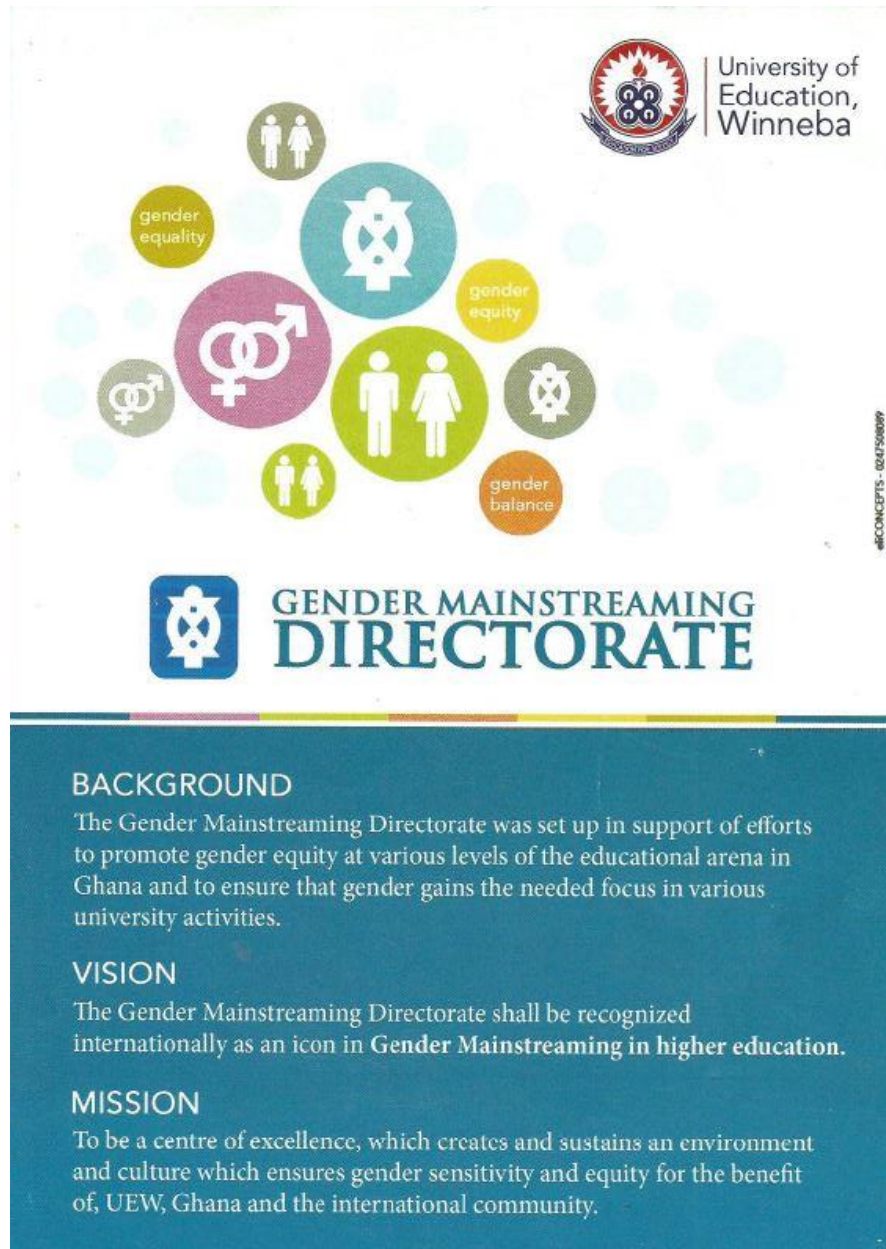
APPENDIX D ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF MOE⁴⁸



⁴⁸ Reproduced from the Education Sector Medium Term Plan 2014-2017, published by the MOE in August 2013.

APPENDIX E

UEW BROCHURE



GOAL

The ultimate goal of the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate is to promote and facilitate gender equity and equality and women's empowerment at the University of Education, Winneba.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote gender equality and women's empowerment in UEW
- To enhance UEW'S ability to respond to gender equity and equality issues
- To facilitate the integration of gender into UEW's curricular and activities
- To engender partnerships and make UEW Visible
- Mentoring Scheme for Female Senior Members
- Sponsorship for Female Senior Members to attend local and international conferences
- Short term appointment for experienced female professors from foreign universities
- Support for the professional development of women in UEW
- Educational campaigns on gender based violence
- Gender Club

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

- Gender Sensitisation and awareness
- Gender Capacity building
- Mentoring
- Women's professional development
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Gender and development
- Gender and HIV/AIDS

MAJOR SUPPORT SCHEMES

- Scholarships for Female Science Students
- Scholarships for Female Faculty to pursue PhD programmes

OUTREACH PROGRAMMES & NETWORKING

- Radio Talk Shows on gender issues on Radio Windy Bay
- Gender Newsletters, Flyers, Posters
- Website www.uew.edu.gh
- Partnership with NGOs to empower women in the deprived communities near Winneba
- Sensitization of school children and other youth groups
- Member of African Universities Gender Resource Network (AUGERN)

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