

GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN
INTERNATIONAL GOALS AND NATIONAL REALITIES

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Abstract

KEREN DALYOT: Gender Equality in Education: Bridging the Gap between International Goals and National Realities
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Gender equality in education is a principle acknowledged by the international community, however for a long time it was promoted as a legal obligation or political commitment. Progresses in the international arena have been achieved, but are international rights and goals sufficient? Post conflict situations require a broader perception of gender equality and inequality because of the interplay between gender and violent conflict. This is often a neglected context in international goal setting. Gender equality is fundamental but we need to think strategically and contextually about aid programs and policy development in order to affect long term social change. Nussbaum's capabilities approach offers a unique approach that can help bridge the gap between universal goals and values and local contexts and experiences of girls. There needs to be a moral commitment to gender equality in education, in addition to the political or legal commitment.

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I. Introduction

Doing research from an international comparative perspective has been a passion of mine for several years now. This fascination with an international comparative perspective, along with human rights and a social justice approach brought me two years ago to the School of Education at the University of North Carolina as part of my Rotary World Peace Fellowship. The decision to focus my thesis on gender equality in education comes from my perception that girls' educational experiences, especially in K-12 education, can determine their path for life. Being a rotary peace fellow I believe it is important to focus our attention on countries that are emerging from conflict as they present a challenge but also an opportunity for promoting institutional change and world stability.

My aim in this thesis is to identify the gap between the international discourse on policy and rights and the realities girls face in schools around the world, especially in post conflict countries. However, identifying the gap is not enough and at the end of this thesis I would like to propose a framework for developing a methodology that can be used to bridge this gap. This framework can be used by national and international policy makers truly invested in the promotion of gender equality in education. I believe "[w]e need theories and methods that integrate gender issues with the realities of power and politics" (Marshall, 1997: 2), but these theories and method should also be relevant, valid and implementable. Marshall describes how often there is a clear inconsistency between policy level rhetoric and the actual policy outcomes, especially in the American context. This thesis will reframe this debate and

demonstrate the discrepancies between international discourse and action on the national level, in regards to gender equality in education.

My thesis uses a mixed methods approach to answer my research questions. The decision to use mixed methods comes from an understanding that there is much to learn from both approaches and being trained in both I felt that I should find a way to mix methods in a way that will benefit both my research agenda and future endeavors. “Mixed methods research is formally defined here as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004:17). The reason I felt that this approach is appropriate here relates to my varied training as well as the fact that my research interests cross cut disciplines such as political science, public policy, international education, gender studies and more. Each discipline has preferred methods and thus combining methods would be suitable and productive here.

This thesis is comprised of four main parts; the first one describes the international discourse and documents pertaining to gender equality and education rights and traces their inception and application. The second part lays out how the achievement of the goals and rights detailed in the first section, have been measured and presented, while trying to analyze whether their achievement has had any influence on national education policy agendas. This analysis will be done using the tools of policy makers and economists – statistics. After mapping a disconnect between discourse and data a section detailing the context of education in post conflict countries follows. I then go on to introduces the capabilities approach and how it can contribute a different approach to data collection and policy formulation. Traditional policy analysis tries to identify and calculate effects of policies with apolitical,

objective, neutral methods, but building on Critical Feminist Policy Analysis I propose developing new qualitative questions. By using the capabilities approach as a basis for this methodology I intend to elicit in my future research relevant data for developing national policies on gender equality.

Martha Nussbaum writes: “Education is a key to all the human capabilities” (Nussbaum, 2004: 17), and when looking at the task of developing human capabilities after the destruction of an armed conflict, the important role the development of the education sector plays in the reconstruction of a country is clear. Mendenhall contends that education policy in many post conflict settings can be termed “*policy bricolage*” (Mendenhall, 2009: p. 182). The policy bricolage – an assortment or patchwork of policies - is comprised of pre-war policies, emergency time programs, aid projects and national reconstruction efforts. This reality makes a coherent education policy a true challenge, especially for promoting gender equality in places where historically there has not been any. This thesis proposes how we can learn more about local circumstances in a way that can promote more effective and just national gender equality policies.

II. The Right to Gender Equality and Education

“To render mankind more virtuous and happier of course... To render also the social compact truly equitable, and in order to spread those enlightening principles, which alone can ameliorate the fate of man, women must be allowed to found their virtue on knowledge, which is scarcely possible unless they be educated by the same pursuits as men”

(Wollstonecraft, 2004: 105).

The Development of the Rights Approach

The call for gender equality in education is not new; women have been fighting for their right to be educated even in the 18th century. However, codifying a moral understanding into a legal right is a development of the 20th century. The following section sets the background and history of the development of the “rights language” on gender equality and education in international discourse. At the end it will also present how in recent decades the language of rights has become less influential and how goals and strategies have gained their prominence.

The basic equality right (general and between men and women) within the International Human Rights structure, can be traced back to 1948 and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the newly established United Nations¹. Equality of rights for men and women is spelled out in the preamble:

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the

¹ The UDHR is based on the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. The Charter is not considered as a human rights treaty.

equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom².

The preamble is the first of 2 specific mentions of the word “women” in the UDHR, the other one is in article 16 - regarding marriage rights. Although the declaration itself uses a more gender neutral language, article 1 reads: *“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are 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 destruction of the Second World War was fresh in everyone’s minds - was at the time a fairly progressive document. It is still considered as a founding document and moment of the International human rights movement³. In addition to a long list of rights, the declaration also acknowledged the right to education in the lengthy article 26:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(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, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

² Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/> on January 29th, 2012.

³ See for example Amnesty International website: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/united-nations/background> , or UN website: <http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/udhr60/index.shtml>

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

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 educating their children. At this point in time, there is no connection made between the right to equality and the right to education.

Since 1948 the understanding of what constitutes both the right to education and the right to equality has been expanding and evolving, widening and at times and places even narrowing. During the next decades several human rights treaties (legal documents in international law) were written, many of them emphasize a specific body of rights mentioning either equality or education as it relates to that body. In the 60s it was the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) that mentions the right to education in three different articles; interestingly, the first one being article 10: *“The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children”*⁴, and the main one being Article 13⁵. Article 13 is much more elaborated than the one in the declaration mentioned

⁴ Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm>

⁵ ICESCR, Article 13:” 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. 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. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

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;

(c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

above, but many of the principles mentioned had already been introduced in the UDHR – and especially those in paragraph 1 and 3 of this article, the parents’ rights are invoked again. However, the new parts include a very detailed path on how to realize the right to education nationally. It is very interesting to see also the addition of article 14 which describes the actions a state needs to take (progressively but within a specific time frame) if free compulsory education is not yet available in a country. The right to equality appears in a separate article 3⁶, but it is not connected or linked to education specifically.

Moving a decade forward to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979) and the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985), the linkages between the right to gender equality and the right to education starts to become more explicit. The UN website provides an historical background to the adoption of the convention⁷, including many international documents leading to the convention, but also mentioned is the existing protection for women set forth in the previous treaties and declarations.

(d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;

(e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph I of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

⁶ ICESCR, Article 3: “The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant.”

⁷ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm>

The Economic, Social and Cultural council of the UN established the Commission on Status of Women (CSW) as early as 1946. However, at that time, it was acknowledged that “Although these instruments reflected the growing sophistication of the UN system with regard to the protection and promotion of women's human rights, the approach they reflected was fragmentary, as they failed to deal with discrimination against women in a comprehensive way”(“Short History,” n.d.). As a consequence the Commission on the Status of Women was commissioned to draft a declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In 1974 the CSW began deliberating the possibility of enhancing the declaration by drafting an international legally binding treaty. And so, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979 by votes of 130 to none, with 10 abstentions.

Subrahmanian describes how the UN Decade for Women⁸ let loose an “explosion of women’s organizational activity and political agendas” (Subrahmanian, 2007: p. 112). At the center of the decade was the new international treaty – the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. The convention is an elaborate document with a long list of rights protected, these include; health, marriage life, rural women and prostitution. For the purpose of this paper there are two relevant articles: **article 1** which is a general discrimination clause and **article 10**: “*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women*”⁹ (text continued in footnote). CEDAW laid down the main rights based

⁸ 1975-1985

⁹ Article 10 continued: (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall

framework for issues of 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. Interestingly, even though CEDAW has been signed by so many countries (186) and has a higher obligatory status in international relations¹⁰ than many other declarations and documents, it is not often invoked nowadays by feminist activists doing development work and research. So if CEDAW and other treaties are not invoked, this leads to a question about the current framework of reference invoked today when discussing gender equality and education.

There are several answers to the question posed above. The limits of a rights approach to education have been surfacing due to the confinement of the right to primary education and the assumptions made within the human rights treaties about the supreme role of schools and nuclear families in fulfilling this right (McCowan, 2011). All the treaties mentioned above encompass a long list of rights, education being just one. Developments towards the end of the 20th century brought about a new focus on education, especially in developing countries, that is still prominent in the international area. In many ways a

be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) 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;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

¹⁰ When countries sign international treaties they are legally obliged to enact national legislation to implement the treaty locally.

breakthrough moment for gender equality in education came 40 years after the UDHR, in Jomtien, Thailand.

In 1990 the world came together for a World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, where the Education For All (EFA) initiative was announced. The background to the conference is often described as a pervasive concern over the bad 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 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 “pursuing the goal of basic education in its various forms”. This has been said about the Jomtien conference: “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: 5). Thus a discursive link between gender equality and education was reinforced (Leach, 2000).

It was only in April 2000 in Dakar that a clear and comprehensive framework for this initiative was established. Many writers agree that “the Dakar Framework for Action represents to-date the most important international political commitment towards promoting education for all.” (Subrahmanian, 2005: 396). The forum at Dakar looked at assessments of the progress since the 1990 Jomtien conference and adopted six goals. The six goals are presented below and 185 governments pledged to help achieve them.

<u>The Dakar Framework for Action</u>
6 Major Goals
1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult situations and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality
3. Ensuring that learning needs of all young adults are met through equitable access to appropriate life skills programs
4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially in women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
6. Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

The relevant goals are 2 and 5 and they include very specific bench marks, one that has already passed (2005) and one that is approaching soon (2015). In the context of the latter, goal 5 merits special attention since it touches upon gender equality in education specifically. The words “education of good quality” emphasize a concern not only about girls accessing educational institutions (as in goal 2) but also what the type of education received in these institutions is to be. The expanded commentary to the Dakar framework reads: “The education of girls remains a major challenge: despite the international attention that it has received, 60 percent of all children without access to primary education are girls” (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000:13).

These six goals are augmented by twelve strategies¹¹ that are seen as critical to achieving the goals. Strategy 6 stresses the importance of a holistic approach to gender equality:

¹¹ A list of the strategies can be found in Appendix B.

“Implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education that recognize the need for change in attitudes, values and practices” (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000:19). The language used in the formation of the strategies promotes a very broad understanding of gender equality, they include phrases such as “specific actions to address discrimination resulting from social attitudes and practices, economic status and culture” and “there must be a commitment to the development of attitudes and behaviors that incorporate gender awareness and analysis.”

Returning to 2000, a few months after the Dakar conference, the international community came together for the Millennium Summit where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were announced and in a way have since then overshadowed the implementation and financing of the DAKAR framework, although they exist peacefully alongside.

The overall aim of the MDGs was “meeting the needs of the world’s poorest”¹². For the purpose of this thesis, the relevant MDGs are MDG 2: Universal Education and MDG 3: Gender Equality¹³. Concrete targets of a very specific nature were set as well as mechanisms to monitor progress of these goals.

MDG 2: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

MDG 3: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Overall The MDGs garnered a long list of supporters as well as adamant critics. However these two goals mentioned above were the only ones that directly referenced

¹² <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

¹³ For a complete list of the MDGs see: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

education and equality. Some critics have since argued that “[t]he reductionism behind the MDGs almost inherently undermines their prospects of success.” (Archer, 2005: 21). This is especially striking when comparing the MDGs and the goals in the Dakar framework. Unterhalter identifies internal problems and external problems to the MDGs. She highlights the problems of “target-setting in social development in general and education in particular” (Unterhalter, 2005: 113). Heward touches upon the underlying assumption on gender, education and development that pervades the MDGs and other development agencies and policies - education is seen as return on investment and as an indirect contraception policy. Heward asserts “Girls education was a policy that all could support as a means of reducing population” (Heward, 1999: 5).

There has been a lively discussion among feminist economists and others interested in development, education and gender equality on the importance and contributions of the MDGs to the discourse and advancement of women and girls worldwide. Moletsane writes about the importance of contextual factors such as poverty and HIV/AIDS to achieving gender equality in education, factors that are absent from the MDG targets and programs (Moletsane, 2005). She points to the minimalist approach of the MDGs – that they are so narrowly defined that they leave out the important contextual factors that inhibit the fulfillment of them. MDG 3 on gender equality and empowerment has one target – reaching gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all systems by 2015. Without acknowledging the context of lives of girls and especially gender based violence in conflict areas, a realization of this target is still far off.

These issues become a matter of context. Context has a twofold implication in policy analysis; it is important to look at both the context and hidden assumptions of the policy

making process and the context of the lives of the people and especially women and girls affected by the policy. Moletsane stresses that despite the shortcomings of the MDGs, the process that led to their adoption is significant for the international community. For even though the goals are minimalistic, and the targets are not realistic in today's world, the fact that there is an international discussion on issues of gender equality education and development is good progress (Moletsane, 2005).

To summarize this section, there is no doubt that progress has been made on the topic of gender equality in education. This progress owes much to the development of the International Human Rights discourse as well as the Education For All initiative. The difference between the human rights approach and documents and the EFA and MDG approach is that under international relations states that sign on to human rights treaties are under a legal obligation to implement them. To the Education For All and Millennium Goals states only have a rhetorical commitment, although in terms of financial commitment international aid agencies turn to them and not to human rights when making project decisions. This will be discussed further in the next section. Some questions remain; are rights and goals sufficient to bring about gender equality in national societies and not just discourse? Is the way they are being measured appropriate? Are politicians /policy makers taking into consideration these goals and rights when they formulate policy and allocate budgets?

III. Quantitative Education Policy Analysis

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, 2008:26). The following section uses statistical data to look for an answer to some of the questions posed at the end of the previous section. The questions that are the focus of this section are: Do the gender equality goals have any influence on education policy? Are there differences in post conflict countries where the opportunities for redesigning of policies are much more apparent and momentous?

Countries emerging from conflict face many challenges in reconstruction and rebuilding of infrastructure and governance. Education systems pose a composite problem that requires multiple considerations to governance, administration, human capital development and infrastructure. This complex situation is often exacerbated by the involvement of multiple stakeholders at the international, national or even regional level. In the international arena, issues of education and conflict have been gaining more and more attention among aid and development agencies, international organizations and several UN agencies. This is manifested in a long list of publications. Among them the World Bank Report from 2005 named “Reshaping the Future: Education and Post Conflict Reconstruction”¹⁴, and more

¹⁴ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099508849130/Reshaping_the_Future.pdf

importantly the theme of the 2011 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on the Education for All (EFA) Initiative “The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education”¹⁵.

The analysis below is based on a dataset of 61¹⁶ post conflict countries. The definition of conflict termination or post conflict in this thesis is based on the definition provided along with the dataset in the Uppsala Conflict Termination Dataset¹⁷, a well-known source on conflict and conflict analysis. The Uppsala dataset definition focuses on at least one year of non-activity, or more specifically, when the conflict ceases to be registered in their Armed Conflict Dataset. Non-activity in this sense means that the criteria with regards to incompatibility, level of organization, and 25 battle-related deaths are not met. The dataset covers conflicts until 2008, therefore recent developments in Africa or Middle East are not included. The reality of international research is that there is variance in access and reporting of data in many countries, especially in the developing world. From a 2012 perspective a note of caution is needed, since some of the countries on the list are not clear-cut examples of conflict termination. In actuality, conflict is cyclical, and peace is not a stable phenomenon in the short run.

¹⁵ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2011-conflict/> (last visited on December 5th, 2011)

¹⁶ For the complete list of countries included in my analysis – see Appendix C. the countries in the dataset have had a conflict end in the past 2 decades since 1990. Originally I had 64 countries in my sample, however among them were the USA, Afghanistan and Somalia. I omitted Afghanistan and Somalia from my analysis because of a consistent lack of data and reliable statistics, and the USA because in many senses it does not represent a country in post-conflict.

¹⁷ This UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset, a project within the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University. The dataset include information on the termination of armed activity as defined and identified by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, and the UCDP Dyadic Dataset. For more information on these datasets, see <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/>

For the purpose of this analysis education policy is defined as the public spending on education (as percentage of national GDP)¹⁸ this is colloquially referred to as the response or dependent variable¹⁹. The decision to use this variable as an indicator of education policy was mainly due to the understanding that national priorities are often translated to financial allocation, and also because it is the only relevant indicator of data that is collected by the major international data collectors (such as the World Bank and UN entities).

As for the gender equality in education indicators, they are colloquially referred to as the explanatory/independent variables. These are derived from the documents and discourse described in the previous section²⁰.

List of gender equality and education variables:

Female net enrollment ratio in primary education (%) for school year ending in 2008

Female share in total secondary education (%) for school year ending in 2008

Female share in total tertiary enrollment (%) for school year ending in 2008

Female adult literacy rates – most current found

Female youth (15-24) literacy rate – most current found

¹⁸ See Appendix D for statistical information and analysis. Because there are missing data on all countries and all variables, I used imputation to complete the dataset. All statistical analysis was done using STATA software. For running the regression models I used a natural log of the independent variable since the distribution of this variable was too skewed. The data for this variable were taken from the World Bank indicators website: <http://data.worldbank.org/>.

¹⁹ A variable is any characteristic of an individual/observation. A variable can take different values for different individuals/observations. (Taken from Moore, D. S & McCabe, G. P (2006) *Introduction to the practice of statistics* (fifth edition). New York: W.H Freeman and Company.)

²⁰ The EFA monitoring report gathers the information pertaining to the achievement of the DAKAR Education For All framework goals and I used their database as a basis for my data collection. Another source I used was the World Bank where complete data sets for most countries for several years back can be found.

Gender inequality index – from the Human Development reports.

In addition to these variables and for the purpose of running a regression model with as many different variables as possible, three aggregated variables of gender in education were created. One variable collapses all indicators on female enrollment and literacy, and another one collapses the literacy variables and the last one collapses the enrollment ratio variables.

The underlying hypothesis that guides this thesis is based on the assumption that countries that score low on gender equality in education would want to devote more resources to education and so spend a higher percentage of their GDP on education. The three figures below are a graphical presentation of the relationship between the education policy (education expenditure) variable and the aggregated gender equality variables. Following the basic assumption from above, a negative correlation was expected between the examined variables, but looking at the figures (or the regression models themselves) no correlation is observed. If anything at all, figure 1 shows a very slight positive correlation. The plots are visual manifestations of the underlying results – education policy in post conflict countries is not correlated with any of the gender equality in education variables.

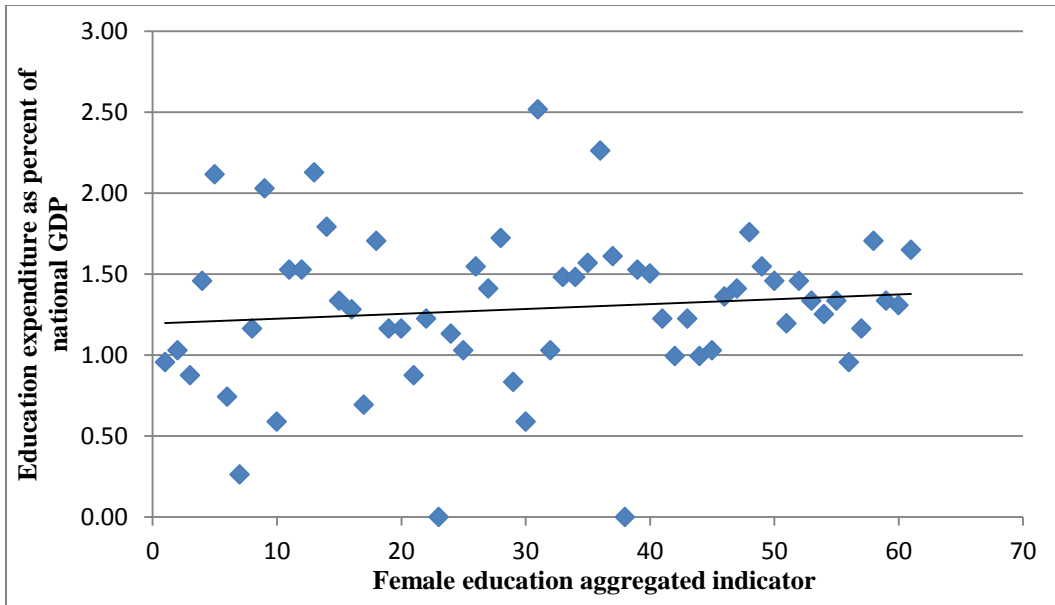


Figure 1 Scatter plot of the relationship between education expenditure and the aggregated gender indicator

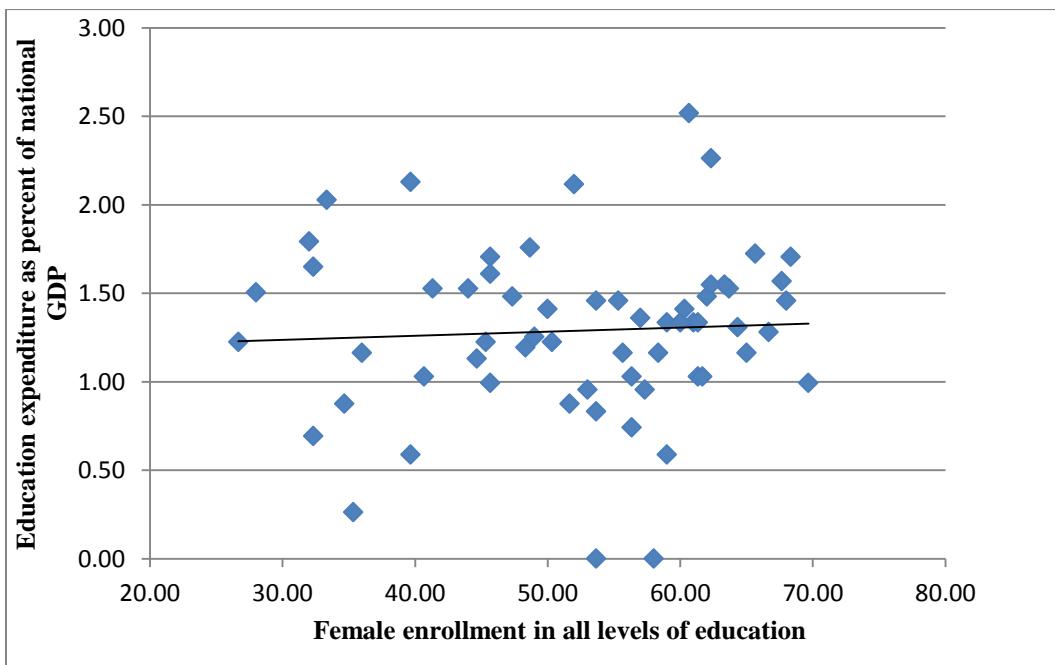


Figure 2 Scatter plot of relationship between education expenditure and female enrolment ratios in all levels of education

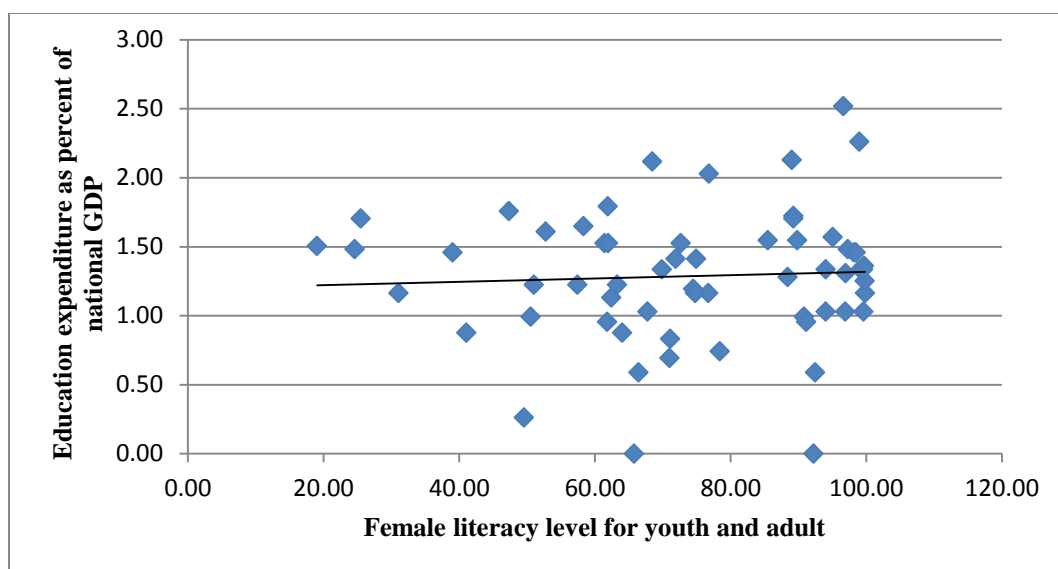


Figure 3 Scatter plot of relationship between education expenditure and aggregated female literacy variable

Below in Table 1 are the results of the various regression models that were run using the data described above. Interestingly, after running multiple regression models it is clear that other indicators – not related to gender equality, but related to the post-conflict of the countries – do not seem to influence the education expenditure either²¹.

Table 1 Regression results by explanatory variable

Explanatory variable	R Square	Probability
General Enrollment Rate (most recent since 2002) ²²	0.0012	0.7868
Gender Inequality index	0.0221	0.2528
Political stability ²³	0.0107	0.4267
GNI per capita02-04 ²⁴	0.0225	0.2485

²¹ These include GNI per capita, both current and from 2002, Primary enrollment ratio for both males and females, and political stability. See appendix E for results of these models.

²² Data taken from the World Bank indicators website: <http://data.worldbank.org/>

²³ Measures the perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism. Retrieved from http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp

Female adult literacy Rate ²⁵	0.0137	0.3694
Female youth literacy Rate	0.0023	0.7111
Aggregated literacy variable	0.019	0.7369
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments ²⁶	0.0301	0.1809
Primary enrollment ratio	0.000	0.9686
Secondary enrollment ratio	0.0005	0.8585
Tertiary enrollment ratio	0.0082	0.4868
Aggregated enrollment variable	0.0016	0.7614
Foreign aid (net ODA) per capita 2009 ²⁷	0.0021	0.7264
Complete aggregated gender equality in education variable	0.0021	0.7286

From the above table it can be seen that none of the mentioned variables – either the ones that are the focus of this thesis, or other possible explanatory variables seem to be correlated with education expenditure (independent variable). None of the probabilities are close to being significant (they are all much bigger than 0.05) and the R squares are quite low. Below the results of select regression models containing more than one variable are presented. The results are similar to the single variable regression results – non significant probability and R Square.

Table 2 Regression results of select models

Model	R Square	Probability
aggregated gender equality in education variable/political stability/GNI per capita	0.319	0.6014

²⁴ Same as note #22.

²⁵ Same as note #22.

²⁶ Same as note #22.

²⁷ Same as note #22.

Aggregated enrollment variable/political stability/gender inequality	0.031	0.6121
Aggregated literacy variable/GNI per capita/primary	0.0264	0.6737

To conclude, even though gender equality in education features prominently in the international discourse, this does not seem to be reflected in national policies and priorities. The amount of statistical data on the international domain is overwhelming. Many websites offer international data and different indices are created to measure almost everything. The EFA monitoring report has a very long statistical appendix, with many different indicators, and data on countries and regions, albeit at times quite incomplete. However, the last table in the report collapses the comprehensive Dakar goals into a list of single variables – one for each goal, reducing their broadness into single digits. The MDG monitoring report also presents single variables and improvement is shown on a time scale to show improvement over the past decade.

Anecdotal stories appear in both reports along the bar graphs, charts and tables telling some of the stories behind the numbers. What is missing from the reports and the data is a serious attempt at finding relationships and correlations between the indicators and national policies. These reports are designed to sustain a discourse on the international level, fueling aid agencies agendas but not priorities on national agendas. Rather they influence programs and projects funded and implemented by international organizations. Therefore the link between foreign aid and national education is an important issue often ignored when discussing the MDGs and EFA. The fact that this link is often loose or non-existent is frequently ignored as well.

Foreign Aid and Education- The Missing Link?

Foreign aid in general takes different avenues: multilateral, bilateral and private sector. It also takes different forms, such as “financial, technical assistance and policy oriented support” (Malik, 2007: 2). Education is just one sector among a long list of sectors that receives aid in post conflict countries, the avenue and shape it takes is dependent upon the particular phase the country is at. If it is in the early stages of post conflict then most aid is humanitarian; as the situation stabilizes, aid comes in the form of policy assistance to strengthen the reconstruction efforts. Heyneman describes how foreign aid has changed and shifted over the decades since World War II.

From a strong emphasis on infrastructure, such as in the Marshall Plan, to a more human capital oriented approach in the past decade. Aid to education represents an increasing understanding among aid agencies that placing priorities “on infrastructure in those areas of the world that had relatively low levels of human capital, weak public institutions, few democratic traditions, and high levels of inefficiency” does not produce the expected positive results (Heyneman, 2005: 111). It would have been interesting to find country aggregated data on aid for education to use in the analysis, but that information is currently not available.

Since 2000 there is a growing emphasis in the allocation of aid for education towards meeting the MDGs and to a much lesser extent the EFA goals. The World Bank affirm:

The Bank’s strategic thrust is to help countries integrate education into national economic strategies and policies and develop holistic and balanced education systems which are responsive to the socio-economic needs of countries. The World Bank is a major supporter of Education for All, an international effort to provide every boy and girl in the developing world with a full, good-quality, free and compulsory primary school education. Together with country and global partners, the World Bank has

vigorously worked to map out the path to reach the Millennium Development Goal for education by 2015. Through the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), the Bank along with all major donors for education—more than 30 bilateral, regional and international agencies and development banks—works to accelerate progress toward meeting the education development goals.... As with all World Bank assistance, lending is only one part of a broader package of services. Lending in the education sector is complemented with policy advice and analysis, sharing of global knowledge and good practices, technical assistance and capacity building, and support for consensus-building. These non-financial services are crucial to ensure that countries make effective use of aid (“Education and the World Bank,” n.d.).

It is difficult to understand from this statement what the difference between the EFA and the Millennium Development Goals is since the World Bank is using them interchangeably. The Education For All, as seen in the second section of this thesis, is much more than just free and compulsory primary education. What is demonstrated is the importance the World Bank, as a financial institution, places on non-financial forms of aid to support or augment its financial investments. This is extremely critical when talking about aid to education in post conflict settings. However judging from the data, most aid and international attention is on specific programs in a way that bypasses the national system and policy making, leaving the World Bank statement on a purely discursive level.

Dreher et al. (2008) discuss the general benefits of aid to education, albeit not specifically for post-conflict countries. Their research reinforces the point just made on bypassing national policy and policy makers. They found that increased aid to education has increased general enrollment rates in primary education. Their explanation of this finding is thought

provoking. This is that since most government funds are spent on teachers' salaries, children do not directly benefit as opposed to aid which is usually directed towards "building schools, supplying teaching materials, improving school management, and reforming curricula, in the hope of improving the learning environment, the efficiency of schools, and the quality of education, [these] may provide stronger incentives to attend school." (Dreher et al. 2008: p. 295).

The table below provides a short and random selection of aid to education projects funded by international organizations. The goal of listing these projects is showing how projects tend to target very specific countries and targets without considering long term [policy change.

Table 3 Examples of gender equality in foreign funded education projects

Project Title	Organization/s	Target Region/Country	Goals/Objectives	Degree of Influence on Policy Change
The Power to Lead Alliance ²⁸	USAID/CARE International	Egypt, Honduras, India, Malawi, Tanzania, Yemen	Promoting girl leaders in vulnerable communities by: 1) cultivating opportunities for girls to practice their leadership skills; 2) creating public-private partnerships to promote girls' leadership; and 3) enhancing global knowledge to implement and promote girls' leadership programs.	None of the goals relate to government level decision making. Goal 3 even appeals to the international level – global knowledge.

²⁸ http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/ed/powertolead.html

Take Action for Girls! Make a World of Difference for All Children	Save the Children USA	International	Building global support to guarantee education for all the world's children.	The action called upon is pressuring US government to provide more aid to education; Influence world leaders to achieve a breakthrough in the MDGs for education
Bangladesh Female Secondary School Assistance Program²⁹	World Bank	Bangladesh	The program has provided tuition stipends, aiming to increase girls' access to secondary education. It improved the quality of schools through teacher training, by providing performance incentives to schools and students, and by improving water and sanitation facilities.	Working mainly on local levels in about a third of sub-districts in the country.

International NGOs in cooperation with local NGOs are often tasked with delivering educational services in fragile and developing countries. NGOs frequently deal not only with direct educational programming for girls but also with attempts to remove barriers to girls' enrollment such as family attitudes and safety concerns. But is this a task for international NGOs? Can aid projects, with their emphasis on evaluation, measurable results and funding cycles, be the instigators of long term social change bringing gender equality? The answers to these questions require more in-depth research that can be based on this thesis. From the table above it can be learned that engaging politicians for policy change is limited at best.

To summarize this section, the problem of emphasizing the MDGs and EFA when promoting gender equality in education needs to be crystalized. On the one hand the EFA and

²⁹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,.contentMDK:22702001~menuPK:141311~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

MDGs are not an adequate framework for advancing true gender equality on the international level, and on the other hand these are international tools and mechanisms that feed from international aid agencies and donors and most often than not create local interventions and programs that circumvent national policies and agenda setting. Even though it is acknowledged that policy implementation on the national level is important, no proper policy frameworks or recommendations are offered and measuring achievement is narrowly defined and narrowly implemented and funded. The obvious question that this raises has two faces: what does influence education policy if all these variables don't? How can an appropriate framework/discourse/agenda have the desired influence?

IV. Education in Post Conflict Context

The annual UNESCO EFA global monitoring report takes a systematic approach to the Dakar framework and monitors the implementation of the goals around the globe. In 2011 the report theme was armed conflict and education, and a whole section was devoted to research and writing on it. At the end of this long (over 200 pages) document 4 failures at the core of dealing with education and conflict are identified. These failures are

- Strengthening protection,
- Providing education to children caught up in conflict,
- Bridging the humanitarian development divide - early recovery and reconstruction, and
- Making education a force for peace.

In terms of policy making these failures are quite ambiguous and no emphasis is given to gender equality. In addition some of the failures are more relevant to education in conflict situations which should be distinguished from post conflict and the reconstruction responses.

Below is an attempt to integrate themes from the different reports, documents and international standards, some of which are described in earlier parts of this thesis. Integrating these themes along with the capabilities approach can provide a basis for developing more comprehensive and contextual yet clear and concise policy recommendations for education equality in post conflict countries.

1. Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Refugee and IDP female youth are an even more vulnerable population that has often suffered gender based violence during conflict and has to be taken into consideration when the education system is reconstructed or rebuilt. When formulating an educational policy, policy makers need to take into

consideration the specific situation they are dealing with; questions they should raise can be the following – are there regional refugees in the country? Are they in refugee camps or in urban areas? Are there any international organizations working with them in general and on educational issues in particular? Are there IDPs in the country? Do they need to be returned or are they to be resettled where they are? These are all general policy questions but they also influence educational policy making and planning.

2. **Youth and Young Adults.** The World Bank report stresses how youth in general are most adversely and profoundly affected by conflict, and so there must be adequate support for their rehabilitation. This is also interlinked with the importance of rehabilitating child soldiers who sometimes return to their families but often remain as IDPs fearing the return to their community. Young adult life skills are a key point when working with children affected by conflict. These are not children who are going back to complete primary or even secondary school, but neglecting this population can lead to cycles of violence and criminal behaviors. They should be included in the post conflict process so that they can be a positive force of change in the reconstruction era. More specifically female youth can play a crucial part in the post conflict process and again their unique perspective has to be given attention.

3. **Infrastructure.** Another important issue in post conflict is physically rebuilding educational institutions, and this is an issue that appears in all relevant documents. It is important to direct some of those resources to early childhood facilities and not only to primary and secondary institutions. Safe educational havens are crucial for young girls in the face of unstable governance conditions. Plans for new educational buildings should be scrutinized and questions should be asked by local politicians. Another issue to be considered is the maintenance of buildings after aid agencies and NGOs raise the initial funds.

4. **Gender Parity and Equality.** Post conflict situations require a much broader perception of gender inequalities and issues in society and particularly in the education system. In many recent conflicts gender based violence was an integral part of the conflict and women and girls need to heal before issues of parity and access to schools can be discussed. This also calls for a more critical look at institutional arrangements and curriculum development, and especially eliminating gender stereotyping. Can aid agencies deliver such a promise? Can they promote gender equality not only in their own projects but also in a way that will continue long after their funding cycle ends?

5. **Quality of Teaching Force.** The 2005 World Bank report points to a huge problem countries face when rebuilding an education system – although numerically there are plenty of teachers, the quality of them is usually not sufficient. In addition not only the teachers, but also the administration levels are depleted and qualified individuals are rare enough that they have various more lucrative opportunities. Training of new and existing teachers needs to emphasize gender sensitive issues and curriculum, especially given the gendered nature of violence in conflicts.

As seen from this analysis policy makers in post conflict countries face serious questions and decisions. It is important for policy makers to be aware of the full context of national education policy; it is caught between pressures and knowledge in the grassroots and community level and pressure and standards on the international level (such as MDGs, Dakar and other instruments as well international testing like PISA³⁰, etc.). Post conflict situations require a broad perception of gender inequalities and issues in society and particularly in the education system. Education policy also needs to be put in the context of political reform and

³⁰ Programme for International Student Assessment:
http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

other negotiated agreements that end violence and war. A combined use of the capabilities approach and this a particular education in post conflict framework present a comprehensive framework for developing relevant education policies in general and gender equality in particular.

V. The Capabilities Approach

“A set of basic human entitlements, similar to human rights, as a minimum of what justice requires for all” (Nussbaum, 2004: 4)

The Capabilities or Capability approach has been said to emerge in the 1980s with Amartya Sen’s monumental paper (Gasper, 2007). Sen developed the capabilities approach as an alternative to the economic focus in the measurement of development (Nussbaum, 2000; Tikly and Barrett, 2011). Later he was joined by Martha Nussbaum when she collaborated with him in the World Institute for Development Economics Research, but their understanding and development of the approach and accompanying concepts has diverged over the years. Sen went on to develop the Human Development Index³¹, a breakthrough in development indicators that were based until that time on economic growth. For the first time educational indicators, health and other social indicators were factored into a country’s comparative situation. For Sen the capabilities approach represents a space to debate, understand and compare standards of life. Nussbaum is more concerned with developing a universally applicable minimum standard. Sen provides a framework for reference and this framework helps answer the question “*who is doing better?*” while Nussbaum formulates her approach to capabilities using the phrase “*being able to...*” to articulate a list of central ten capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000).

All international documents and treaties mentioned in the first section of this thesis are based on the notions of “rights” or “human rights”, using a discourse of power and entitlement, whereas Nussbaum’s approach is that of expanding possibilities and abilities. The capabilities approach supposes that the search for human wellbeing and flourishing is a

³¹ See Appendix D for a scatter plot figure presenting the relationship between the Human Development Index and Education Expenditure. This plot is similar to the other plots in this thesis, in that it shows no relationship.

universal search that can take different shapes, as opposed to the human rights approach that supposes an equal human being in different locations. In some places Sen's approach is referred to as the Capability approach and Nussbaum's – the Capabilities approach. One of the definitions of the Capabilities approach is as conveying "a more concrete focus on specific attainable functioning in a life, and connects to ordinary language's reference to persons' skills and powers" (Gasper, 2007: 336)

Nussbaum positions herself within a Universalist approach and uncovers the inherent bias in many of the cultural relativism claims – such as their patriarchal assumptions and their static notion of culture. Culture is an ever evolving process and she shows how it is often used as an excuse to justify lack of equality and rights for women (Nussbaum, 2000). Nussbaum's list of ten capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000: 78-80) is framed in a philosophical language rather than the legalistic language of rights and entitlements.

1. Life. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length.
2. Bodily Health. Being able to have a good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. Bodily Integrity. Being able to move freely from place to place; having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign.
4. Senses, Imagination and Thought. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a truly human way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education.
5. Emotions. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves.
6. Practical Reason. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.

7. Affiliation. A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings. B. Having social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to being treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others.
8. Other Species. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
9. Play. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. Control over One's Environment. A. Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life. B. Material. Being able to hold property, not just formally but in terms of real opportunity.

Altogether Nussbaum's capabilities approach is in its base a philosophical one, however she emphasizes in her work that the philosophical is not divorced from the political. "The ultimate political goal is always the promotion of the capabilities of each person" (Nussbaum, 2000: 74). Nussbaum further goes on to explain that the capabilities approach provides the social basis of goods but not a list of the good themselves (Nussbaum 2000). She also stresses that the capabilities list is not hierarchal and that "[A]ll are of central importance and all are distinct in quality" (Nussbaum, 2000: 81). Nussbaum uses two examples in her seminal book *Women and Human Development* (Nussbaum, 2000) to unravel her approach. The first one she uses is religion, and more specifically she portrays how "claim[s] of religious free exercise" collide with "women's claims to fundamental rights" (Nussbaum, 2000: 174) and especially equality all around the world but more acutely in countries such as India where religions hold such strong political and legal power. Nussbaum proposes to solve this dilemma, which is philosophical and political in nature,

based on her capabilities approach: "... religious capabilities are capabilities of individual people, not, in the first instance of groups. It is the person whose freedoms of conscience and freedom of religious practice we should most fundamentally consider.... Thus any solution that appears good for a religious group will have to be tested to see whether it does indeed promote the religious capabilities (and other capabilities) of the group's members, taken one by one" (Nussbaum, 2000: 188). In addition Nussbaum also stresses the moral constraint embodied in her approach and claims this: "We should refuse to give deference to religion when its practices harm people in the areas covered by the major capabilities" (Nussbaum, 2000: 192).

In the example of religions, Nussbaum uses the list of capabilities as a minimum entitlement for every individual, even when discussing one of them. It is important that no capability is subordinated to a different one – as stated before they are not hierarchical. The problem is that "[r]eligions are intertwined in complex ways with politics and culture" (Nussbaum, 2000: 193). The capabilities approach offers a perspective that can help untwine religion from power, politics and the legal system.

Another relevant facet of the capabilities approach is found in McCowan who makes an important point: "it is this emphasis on establishing norms through public deliberation that characterizes the approach as a whole" (McCowan, 2011: 291). McCowan's point is that rights are usually formulated at top levels and then trickle down to grassroots. However the capabilities approach is more concerned with grassroots and local realities that then trickle up to both national and international policy levels (McCowan, 2011). In Nussbaum's words: "The best way to fix the boundaries more precisely is an incremental way, relying on cases to enlarge our understanding of what we want to say" (Nussbaum, 2000: 204). McCowan's

trickle up is especially relevant when looking at post conflict countries, as conflicts affect different parts of the same country differently and hence understanding local context to national policies is crucial.

The capabilities approach is not without criticism. One of the relevant ones is that this approach is “still in its infancy” (Tikly and Barrett, 2011: 8) and that currently its major uses are only within the academy. This thesis proposed a way to expand the use of the approach outside of the academia – it proposes to take the approach to the field and use qualitative research methodology such as action research and other participatory approaches to apply the capabilities to meaningful research. The next section will discuss this in more detail.

The international framework for gender equality described in the beginning of this thesis presents a rather rigid framework for defining and understanding gender equality and education internationally. The problem is that it tends to lead to a kind of assessment that fails to truly encompass the gender equality situation in any given context, especially post conflict. Even though “The mission of EFA, [and of inclusive education,] is to address issues of social justice, inequality and human rights” (Polat, 2011: 51) in the reality of post conflict countries these issues are not currently adequately monitored or addressed within the frameworks of the MDGs and Dakar. Because of the complexity and added considerations of education in post conflict there is a need to focus the use of the capabilities approach within a post conflict related framework.

VI. The Capabilities Approach Framework for Developing Gender Equality in Education Policy

In her work Nussbaum focuses on stories of real women's lives to formulate her approach and possible policy implications. The benefits of this approach are numerous and have been enumerated by authors such as Unterhalter, McCowan and others³². Unterhalter explains how "rights talk cannot address the complex settings of power imbalances in which the majority of women's lives are located". She encourages the use of the language of rights for rhetorical purposes, and sees the capabilities approach as an expanded notion of rights (Unterhalter, 2005: 115). Relevant to this thesis Unterhalter sees the importance of Nussbaum's approach "in the way she provides an account of how rights for gender equality are inextricably linked with rights for education" (Unterhalter, 2005: 117).

McCowan establishes that "A capabilities framework is... well-equipped to address the factors which.... [p]revent individuals from fully exercising a right" (McCowan, 2011: 293) and in this thesis – the right to gender equality in education. Nussbaum herself, in an article on capabilities and social justice writes: "All institutions and individuals have a responsibility to support education, as key to the empowerment of currently disadvantaged people" (Nussbaum, 2004: 17). The international discourse presented in the first section shows on a declarative level that the importance of gender equality and education has been acknowledged. Furthermore "Capabilities understood in this way become a basis for assessing equality of opportunity, rather than simply access to resources or equality of outcomes. They constitute basic freedoms in themselves and can be seen as the ethical basis

³² It is enough to search in any prominent journal the words capabilities and Nussbaum and many articles come up in the search, such journals include but are not limited to: International Journal of Education, Theory and Research in Education, Journal of Socio-Economics and Journal of Human Development.

of rights in education, providing form and substance beyond what is written in international law” (Tikly and Barrett, 2011: 7). These authors emphasize how the capabilities approach can expand not only the notion of rights but also the goals and standards set out in documents such as the Dakar framework and the MDGs.

In summary, Nussbaum writes, “I have argued that a political approach based on ideas of human capability and functioning supplies a good basis for thinking about these problems, helping us to construct basic political principles that can serve as the foundation for constitutional guarantees to which nations should be held by their citizens” (Nussbaum, 2000: 298). However, constitutional guarantees are not enough, there also needs to be political and social guarantees.

Even though the international goals and standards try to promote a uniform understanding of gender equality in education, no “one shoe fits all” education policy solution can be found. It has also been shown that the international discourse leads mostly to a variety of programs and projects funded by international aid agencies. National policy responses to the challenges of gender equality are lacking and weakened by international intervention. Hence what is needed is an approach that can create a discursive bridge that does not bypass national policies and policy makers. The capabilities approach is uniquely appropriate for developing a methodology, based on the ideas of Critical Feminist Policy Analysis, that can turn personal stories into policy recommendations. Using the capabilities approach to enhance our understanding of how micro politics, often neglected in policy studies, generate obstacles to achieving gender equality in schools and communities.

Marshall states that relevant research agendas can include “backward mapping, to identify the gaps and policy slippage due to symbolic and simplistic policy formulation”

(Marshall, 1997:23). This is exactly what the first two section of this thesis present – the gap between the symbolic international discourse accompanied by simplistic and narrow goal setting policies. In essence what is proposed is a qualitative approach to policy design; taking the list of capabilities to the grassroots level, to the schools and communities and asking local women and girls if they are able to move freely and reach their schools, if they are able to have good health and be sheltered in their schools and communities, if they are able to use their senses to imagine or to think, if they are able to laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities.

Using the capabilities approach as a methodology has a promising effect on both policy formation and assessment of implementation and advancement. The importance of developing such an approach to research is that it bridges between a universal approach to basic human functioning and a cultural or relativist approach that emphasizes cultures and traditions. This brings us back to policy analysis and issues of feminist policy analysis. Marshall (1997) points to the important place culture has in the policy making process. She wants us to view policies within the culture of where they are made as well as who they serve. These kinds of questions are hard to answer using regular policy analysis tools (mainly statistics, as presented in second section of this thesis) and so it is necessary look to new and alternative methods. Critical Feminist Policy Analysis also emphasizes the importance of looking at micro politics and policy implementation when formulating analysis or new policies. It is within the micro politics arenas – schools and districts, that a fertile ground for understanding and exposing the influence of gendered policies can be seen.

The capabilities approach is based on principles of justice and a universal understanding of what it means to be a human. As Nussbaum writes “women, unlike rocks and trees and

horses, have the potential to become capable of these human functions, given sufficient nutrition, education, and other support. That is why their unequal failure in capability is a problem of justice. It is up to all human beings to solve this problem. I claim that a universal conception of human capabilities gives us an excellent guidance as we pursue this difficult task” (Nussbaum, 2000: 110). The women Nussbaum writes about have different lives within different contexts and thus applying a local lens to her universal capabilities is potentially a very promising solution.

VII. Conclusion and Themes for Further Research

Despite progress in international law and rhetoric and although in many countries around the world girls have reached equal enrollment with boys in both primary and secondary education, many more countries are at risk of not achieving this by 2015 (the Millennium Development Goal). These countries represent several continents but Africa is disproportionately represented and many of these countries appear in the post conflict data set used in this thesis; Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Lao PDR, Papua New Guinea and many more. (Lewis and Lockheed, 2007). The list Lewis and Lockheed use is comprised only of countries where data exist; there are still many countries, like Haiti and Afghanistan, where statistical data is extremely rare. It is important to point out that progress is only measured by achievement of goals on an international level.

The problem persists. It seems like progress is made towards achieving a narrowly defined gender equality but policy makers and international agencies do not know enough about the realities of girls within education systems to make contextually sensitive policy recommendations. The statistical analysis in this thesis shows that identifying what influences education policy in post conflict countries is very difficult, and it is probably not any of the gender equality variables. There needs to be an expansion of research methods and localized research in order for a relevant policy framework to be developed.

The statistical analysis in this thesis aims at finding a correlation between education policy (education expenditure) and the gender equality in education goals described in the first section. The tables and plots point to the conclusion that the correlation does not exist. This can be a result of multiple reasons, but the focus of this thesis is in feminist reasoning; “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” (Unterhalter, 2008: 30). Perhaps because gender equality in many countries is promoted as an international creation and for rhetorical reasons.

There is a substantial amount of literature on what countries should be doing, and what the international community is doing to promote it. But there is less literature on government level strategies and policy making, on how countries are bridging the gap between the international pressures on reaching the MDGs by 2015 and local realities. As opposed to many of the international goals and documents, the Capabilities approach values gender equality in education “because normatively gender equality and the value of education are part of the same conception of human flourishing” (Unterhalter, 2005: 117). The approach offers an opportunity to promote a gender equality in education framework within a broader conception of social justice and the promise of stimulating long lasting social change.

“Feminist interventions, as well as neoliberalism, have helped reshape international policy over the past decade to create a new visibility for women’s education in many different areas of development... there is a consensus among these different groups of actors regarding education as a panacea for a wide range of development problems.” (Vavrus, 2002: 53). 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 obligation and not just an economic one. 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: 117).

Progress can be reversed and if policy makers advance girls education because it’s good for development. The question arises about what will happen when sufficient development is reached? Another consequence of this approach can be “[that] the unproblematic use of economic and demographic terminology to justify schooling for females raises questions about the kind of education international institutions are likely to support” (Vavrus, 2002: 57). Nussbaum opens the preface to *Women and Human Development* with this: “This study of human capabilities as the basis for fundamental political principles focuses on the lives of women in developing countries” (Nussbaum, 2000: xiii). She then calls for broadening the scope of this analysis in further research, acknowledging that the account in the book is narrow and can be expanded, since her focus is on religion and family.

This thesis shows that there is a need for an alternative theory and methodology that will provide thick qualitative country level data. Similar to Nussbaum’s development of the capabilities approach as based on women’s life stories, policy instruments and recommendations on gender equality in education need to take into account girls’ experiences of the educational system as well as other contextual issues. Post conflict is a contextual issue that has specific characteristics that need to be considered.

Feminist Critical Policy Analysis has the particular goals of identifying ways to make our policy system more inclusive and equitable” (Marshall, 1997:18). For promoting the understanding of local contexts for gender equality – expanding the list of capabilities in

conjunction with the themes relevant to post conflict and using them to learn about educational lives of girls can promote a just and equitable education system.

This thesis is only a starting point. A starting point indicating the direction of how in depth qualitative research can lead to better policies on gender quality in education, and not just policies aimed at fulfilling this goal or another.

Future research will have two goals: on the one hand developing a qualitative tool (based in the capabilities approach and the background in this thesis) that can be used in different contexts, and on the other hand using this tool to do relevant research in Africa, in Latin America, or wherever it is needed. “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” (Tikly and Barrett, 2011:7).

The conclusions of this paper go beyond policy recommendation or implication. They require further research to bridge the multiple gaps. Between the international discourse and national policies, and between them and the realities of girls in the education system. A moral commitment to gender equality in education must be recognized so that gender equality can be understood as a fundamental issue. Implementing and developing adequate policies should take into consideration the context and reality faced by girls.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – International Documents and Historical Time Line

Appendix B –The DAKAR Framework for Action

Appendix C – List of Countries used for statistical analysis

Appendix D – Statistical Appendix

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Appendix A – International Documents and Historical Time Line

1948 - Universal Declaration on Human Rights - **UDHR**

1966 – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - **ICESCR**

1975-1985 – UN Decade for Women

1979 – Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women – **CEDAW**

1989 – Convention on the Rights of Child - **CRC**

1990 – World conference on Education for All – Jomtien Thailand

1993 – Vienna Conference on Human Rights - **VPDA**

1995 – Women’s Conference - Beijing Platform for Action - **BPA**

2000 – Dakar Framework for Action, Education for all, World Education Forum (April) - **EFA**

2000 – Millennium Development Declaration (and subsequent Goals) – **MDG**

Appendix B –The DAKAR Framework for Action

The Dakar Framework for Action

6 Major Goals

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive **early childhood education**, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult situations and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete **free and compulsory primary education** of good quality.
3. Ensuring that learning needs of all **young adults** are met through equitable access to appropriate **life skills** programs.
4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of **adult literacy** by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating **gender disparities** in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving **gender equality** in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving every aspect of **the quality of education**, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

12 Strategies

1. Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for EFA, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education
2. Promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies.
3. Ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development.
4. Develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management.
5. Meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict.
6. Implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education that recognize the need for change in attitudes, values and practices.
7. Implement education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a matter of urgency.
8. Create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all.
9. Enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers.
10. Harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals.
11. Systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels.
12. Build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards Education for All.

Appendix C –List of Countries Used for Statistical Analysis

Angola	Nepal
Azerbaijan	Niger
Bangladesh	Nigeria
Bosnia Herzegovina	Pakistan
Burundi	Papua New Guinea
Cambodia	Peru
Central African Republic	Philippines
Chad	Russia
Comoros	Rwanda
Congo	Senegal
Cote D'Ivoire	Serbia
Croatia	Sierra Leone
Djibouti	Solomon Islands
DRC	Spain
Egypt	Sri Lanka
El Salvador	Tajikistan
Eritrea	Trinidad and Tobago
Ethiopia	Turkey
Georgia	Uganda
Guatemala	United Kingdom
Guinea	Uzbekistan
Guinea Bissau	Venezuela
Haiti	Yemen
India	
Indonesia	
Iran	
Iraq	
Israel	
Laos	
Lebanon	
Lesotho	
Liberia	
Macedonia	
Mali	
Mexico	
Moldova	
Mozambique	
Myanmar	

Appendix D – Statistical Appendix

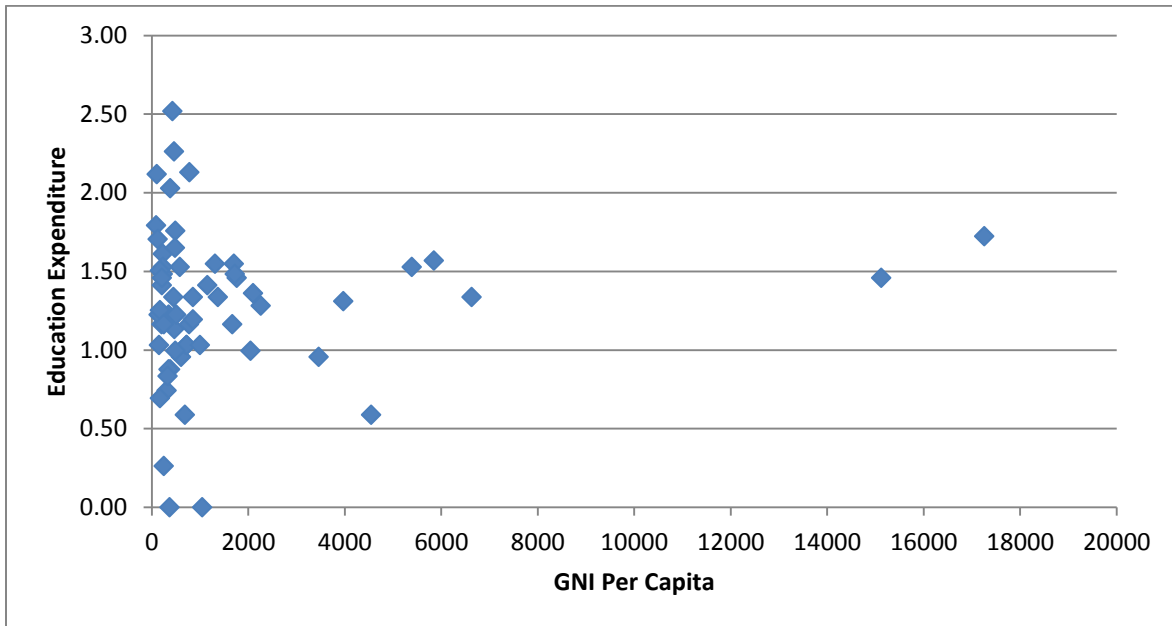


Figure 4 Scatter plot of the relationship between education expenditure and GNI per capita from 2002-2004 (the latest I could find for each country in this time frame).

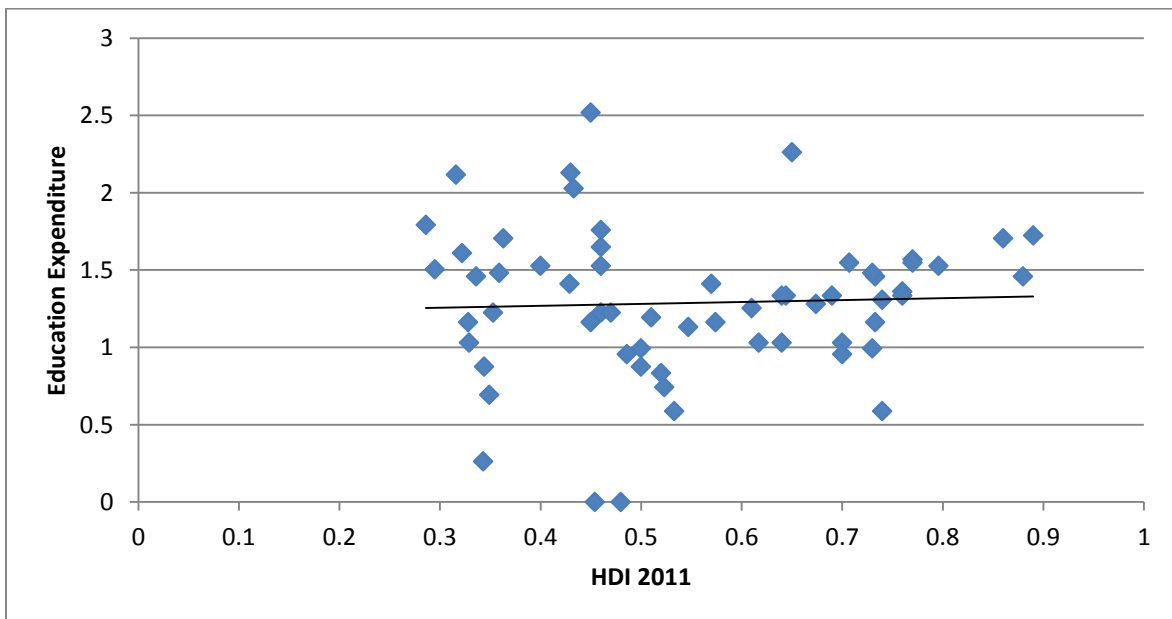


Figure 5 Scatter Plot of the relationship between education expenditure and Human Development Index