



POLICY BRIEF

GENDER, SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) AND EDUCATION IN GHANA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Policy Brief on Gender and Education was commissioned by STAR Ghana for their Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) programming. The brief is to support STAR-Ghana to address GP GESI constraints and serve as reference material for GPs and other stakeholders seeking to strengthen their GESI engagement through targeted advocacy. The document provides a brief on key gender and social inclusion issues and priorities that STAR Ghana programmes may consider targeting.

STAR's working definition of gender is: *the absence of discrimination on the basis of gender in opportunities, in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services. It is the full and equal exercise by men and women of their human rights.* **Gender mainstreaming** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experience an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated.

By **social inclusion STAR Ghana means** two things. First, the making 'rules of the game' more fair. Put more precisely: *the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities.* These barriers may be formal (written laws on spousal property, for instance), or they may be informal (e.g. the practice of 'wife inheritance' in Southern Africa). We will be asking our grant partners to reflect on the following questions: In the issue area your organisation is focussing on, do formal and informal rules affect different populations differently? If certain rules or practices discriminate against vulnerable people, how might the rules be changed?

1.1 Prioritizing Gender Equality and Promoting of Girls' Education

The formulation of the policy of Education For All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, and the Educational Reforms in Ghana in 1987, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in 1997, made the concern to promote gender and social inclusion, particularly the education for girls more pressing. First the education reforms initiated in 1987 raised the issue of gender equity by removing gender streaming in subjects in upper primary and junior secondary school. It also set norms for attaining equal participation of males and females throughout the educational system up to tertiary level. Despite the genuine political commitment to close the gender gap in enrolment rates, recent enrolment gains have been accompanied by a decline in educational standards. Successive governments have struggled to address this decline, despite the relatively large and increasing overall spend on education. The government is currently investing a significant proportion of its resources into education – more than any other sub-Saharan African country. However, very little has been allocated to non-salary expenditure.

Although Ghana has made impressive progress over the last two decades in promoting equality between girls and boys in their access to basic (primary) education, there are still persistent gender disparities in school enrolment and retention. The retention rates at the high level remains a challenge. Starting from adolescence, girls begin to leave school early so that boys outnumber girls in secondary school, with the disparity increasing as the children grow older through to tertiary education. The disparity between the choice of science and technology among boys and girls also continue to widen. There are also stark differences across the country: girls are least likely to go to school, learn well and move on to secondary school in particularly Ghana's poorer northern regions and the other three poorest regions – Upper East, Upper West and Central Regions. Poverty has been identified as the most significant factor for gender disparities in completion of education. Additionally, the school environment has a major impact on whether girls and or boys stay in school. This includes the quality of education that they receive. Currently, at the end of primary school, only 36% of pupils are literate, 14% are numerate and less than half of Ghanaian students passed the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in 2011.

1.2. Gender Equality in Education and the Attainment of MDG Targets

In recent years, governments have focused on a drive towards gender parity in school enrolment, an agenda driven largely by the goal of meeting MDGs 2 and 3. Two of the 18 targets for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are focused on eliminating gender discrimination and inequalities in educational access and achievements at all levels by 2015 (See box 1).

Box 1. MDG targets related to the elimination of gender discrimination and inequalities in Education

MDG target 3:

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

MDG target 4:

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

Overall the survival rate at the primary level declined marginally from 88.7% in 2008/09 to 87.1% in 2009/2010 slowing it from reaching the 100% target by 2015. At the Junior High School (JHS) level, survival rate worsened drastically following a sharp decline from 75.0% in 2008/09 to 66% in 2009/10.

Ghana's Poverty and Social Inclusion Assessment (PSIA) identifies different segments of the population that suffer differential vulnerabilities depending on their Security. According to the study, the most vulnerable and excluded citizens are characterised by severe livelihood insecurity and are unable to cope with multiple life-cycle risks and shocks. The Strategy is founded on the philosophy that all Ghanaians if afforded the opportunity, can contribute towards the process of transforming Ghana fully into a middle income country by the year 2015. Vulnerable and excluded segments of the population potentially reverse the gains of overall developmental efforts because of their tendency to take away rather than contribute to national economic activity.

2.0 LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR GESI

The provision of holistic education is premised on the implementation of policies, plans and programmes to ensure gender equality and social inclusion in the education. The sector has relevant institutional and legal frameworks some of which follows after international and regional conventions and laws as well as national commitments. The Ghana Government recognizing that children are vulnerable and require special protection, appropriate to the age, level of maturity and individual needs, ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and was the first country to do so in February 1990 after the Convention came into force in September 1989. Ghana also ratified the Convention on the Elimination and discrimination of Women (CEDAW (1979). Other related conventions ratified by Ghana are the following:- ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (NO. 182); African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; The Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (NO. 5) ; Forced Labour Conventions (NOs. 29 and 105); Labour Inspection and Convention NO. 81 ; Equal remuneration (NO.100).

Implicit in the legal frameworks and resources for child protection in Ghana are elements for the protection for the rights of girls as well as boys of school going age are the following legal instruments:

- Constitution of 1992 (Specifically, Articles 28) on the rights of Children.
- The Children's Act (Act 560) of 1998 and its legislative instrument,
- Juvenile Justice Act (Act 653) enacted in 2003.
- The Human Trafficking Act (Act 694), 2005;
- Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) enacted in 2006;
- Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) of 2007;
- National Health Insurance Act (Act 484) of 2003
- Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2004 (GPRS I, February 2002)
- Education Sector Policy Review Report (ESPRR, August 2002)
- Education Sector Review (ESR, October 2002) and the Government's White Paper on the Report (2004).
- Meeting the Challenges of Education in the 21st Century. (The report of the President's Commission on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, ERRC, October 2002).
- Education for All (EFA, UNESCO, Dakar, 2000) – international paper
- The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) covering 2003-2015

Article 38 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana requires Government to provide access to Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education, and depending on resource availability, to Senior Secondary, Technical and Tertiary education and life-long learning. Ghana further protects her children against harmful traditional practices having included a whole chapter on the rights of a child in the 1992 Constitution. In recent times, the government's commitment towards achieving her educational goals has been expressed in the following policy frameworks and reports:

2.1 Poverty Reduction Strategies for Ghana

In 2006 Ghana started the implementation of its second Growth Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II). The GPRS II is very much focused on developing Ghana to the status of a middleincome country by 2015. Developing its human resources is one of the three main thematic areas of the GPRS II, emphasizing the creation of competent manpower for development of the country whereby education obviously plays an important role. It represented an update of Ghana's Development Agenda, with a new emphasis on growth and wealth creation as a means of reducing poverty over the period 2006-2008. The following were the prioritized policy objectives for the education sector under the GPRS II.

- Increase access to and participation in education and training;
- Bridge gender gap in access to education;
- Improve quality of teaching and learning;
- Improve quality and efficiency in delivery of education service;
- Promote and extend the provision of science, mathematics, technology and ICT education and training;
- Enhance and strengthen the linkages between academic research and all sectors of the economy;
- Mainstream issues of population, gender, health, HIV/AIDS/STI, fire safety, road safety and environment in the curricula of schools and institutions of higher learning.

The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) 2010 – 2013 as the current national document prioritizes five key areas which are: Agriculture, Infrastructure (including energy, oil and gas) Water and sanitation, Health and Education (including ICT, Science, Technology and Innovation). For Education one of the main strategies to be adopted is to bridge the gender gap in access to education including: creating girl friendly schools by ensuring the provision of adequate toilet facilities and onsite water sources. The GSGDA in this direction positions Education and particularly girls education in the forefront of Ghana's development priority for the four-year period.

2.2 Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)

Based on the Education Act 1961, and through the Educational Reforms in Ghana in 1987, the Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education was launched. FCUBE is a comprehensive sector wide programme designed to provide good quality basic education for all children of school-going age in Ghana by the year 2005. The term free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) is derived from the wording of the 1992 Constitution, which gave rise to the establishment of the FCUBE programme. Chapter 6 Article 38 Section 2 of 1992 constitution:

“ The government shall, within two years after Parliament first meets after the coming into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education.”

The FCUBE was pivoted on three important dimensions: to improve the quality of teaching and learning; to improve efficiency in management and to increase access and participation. The three (3) components are 1. improving Quality of Teaching and Learning; 2. improving efficiency in management and 3. increasing Access and Participation. The FCUBE has been touted to have brought many

management reforms in the education sector with the focus having been shifted to the district and community levels instead of the national and regional levels. The FCUBE also led to the introduction of the school monitoring and improvement plans (SPIPS).

2.3 Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732)

The domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732) provides the legal framework for addressing gender based violence in Ghana. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) formerly MoWAC and the Domestic Violence Secretariat (MOWAC/ DVSEC 2010) have simplified the Domestic Violence Act 2007, (Act 732). The Abridged version has useful notes and 44 Illustrations and is very user-friendly. The document also presents contact details and response lines for legal and resource organizations including International Federation for Women Lawyers (FIDA), Ark Foundation, Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE) and Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVSSU).

2.4 Educational Reforms Whitepaper

The White Paper on the Education Reforms outlines a portfolio of reforms and objectives spanning the entire education sector, which, according to the recommendations, are to be implemented from 2007 at the latest, and have major targets identified for 2015 and 2020. Basic education will be expanded to include 2 years of Kindergarten as well as the existing 6 years of primary and 3 years of Junior High Schools. The overarching target is 100% completion rates for male and female students at all basic levels by 2015. There will be a radical reform of second cycle education, which, with effect from 2007, will last for 4 years, serve as a terminal point of entry into work or tertiary education and will be universal by 2020. A 10-year work plan for Education in Ghana was developed. The major initiatives and sector policies proposed in the reforms include a senior high school system, which will consist of technical, vocational, agricultural or grammar streams and a structured apprenticeship system. This was further reviewed under a stakeholder consultative process and the Senior High School has been reverted back to three years since 2010.

2.5 Education Strategic Plan (ESP)

The Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2003-2015), developed in 2003, guides education sector development. As a long-term plan it is consistent with and in support of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy. The ESP serves as the framework by which Ghana meets its commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals – namely Gender Parity in primary schooling by 2005 and Universal Primary Completion by 2015 - and other international development goals on education. In order to facilitate the achievement of these targets, primary education has been designated a sector priority within the ESP. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) that came out in 2003 and is focusing on the period 2003- 2015, is based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy and operationalises within the framework of a sector wide approach (SWAp) for education, which in Ghana is partly situated within the Multi- Donor Budget Support (MDBS) framework. The ESP provides the framework and roadmap for achieving the education related MDG's. The strategic framework of the Education Strategic Plan 2003-2015 is based around four focus areas: Equitable Access to Education, Quality of Education, Educational Management and Science, Technology and Technical and Vocational education (TVET). The ESP has ten policy goals like increasing access to and participation in education and training, improving the quality of teaching and learning for enhanced pupil/student achievement, promoting good health and environmental sanitation in schools and institutions and others. The reviewed strategic plan from 2010-2020 has six main focal areas which are as depicted in the box below.

Box 2: Focal Areas of ESP 2010 – 2020: The education ACTION PLAN

1 Basic Education (BE)	<i>1st cycle: kindergarten, primary, junior high</i>
2 Second Cycle Education (SC)	<i>senior high (general and technical), technical and vocational institutes, apprenticeship, agriculture</i>
3 Non-Formal Education (NF)	<i>complementary education, training, skills, literacy, adult education; informal apprenticeship</i>
4 Inclusive and Special Education (IS)	<i>Inclusion of excluded children within mainstream schools, special needs, special schools and units</i>
5 Tertiary Education (TE)	<i>3rd cycle: colleges of education, professional institutes, polytechnics, universities, open learning</i>
6 Education Management (EM)	<i>planning, decision-making, accountability, finance, decentralisation, capacity building</i>

2.6 The Gender and Education Policy Draft

The Gender Education Policy is drafted by GNECC, ACTIONAID and MoE with funding from the Big Lottery Fund, UK. The Policy proposes improvement of quality education in Ghana with a strong gender equality consideration. It is envisaged that the policy shall support attempts “*at addressing the issues that are acting as barriers to the achievement of equality between boys and girls / men and women at all levels of education and establishing strategies for their removal*” as cited in the executive summary. The policy was driven by the Education Sector Policy (ESP 2003 – 2015) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its priority focus includes access, quality, educational management and governance, socio-economic, cultural and special needs in education. The main objective of the Policy is to bridge the gender gap in access to and participation in education at all levels. The proposed strategies in the policy to achieve the stated objective include provision of infrastructure, sensitization of communities on education, admission quotas to ensure balanced access and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure the protection of boys/men and girls/women at all levels of education. The policy is also intended to ensure that issues on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and life skills education are integrated as crosscutting issues. The Draft Policy identifies the Ministry of Education as the main leader in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation with support from other government agencies, Civil Society Organisations and Development Partners. The Draft Gender Education Policy is yet to be reviewed, adopted by the MoE and, or finalized and has been cited in this paper merely for discussions.

2.7 The Draft Gender Education Strategic Plan (GESP)

The GEU’s current progress towards developing a National Gender Action Plan in Education 2012 - 2017 has gone a long way towards this goal - drawing directly on ESP and AESOP commitments and background research - outlining a framework around which stakeholders outside of government can coordinate their plans and activities. The approach set out in the Action Plan advocates using the government’s existing child friendly school standards and building in girl-related and gender responsive elements. All DFID-funded activities should be supportive of and consistent with the GEU’s evolving Action Plan. The Gender Education Strategic Plan (GESP) 2012-2017 is currently a Draft document for Consultation prepared by the GEU of the Ghana Education Service (GES) with technical support from USAID. The USAID provided a consultant to work with the GEU to develop the document. The Draft Strategy identifies a vision and aim for addressing gender inequality in education in Ghana and proposes

strategies for addressing such inequality in basic education. The Strategy posits its existence within the framework of the MDG 3A and as a response to Ghana's call to respond to bridging the gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

The GESP seeks to mainstream gender issues across the entirety of the GES in line with the strategic framework of the Education Sector Policy 2010-2020 and the Annual Education Sector Operational Plan (AESOP) 2012-14. *Page 12 of the Draft GESP, in its analysis of the policy context, also links it with the Draft Gender Education Policy by stating its intent of operationalizing it at the basic level.* The Draft Gender Education Strategic Plan GESP considers the role of the GEU to implement its proposed activities on girls' education and gender related issues in education.

2.8 Persons with Disability Act (2006)

In 2006, after four years of habitual dithering, Ghana passed the Persons with Disability Act (PDA). Advocates like the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD), which is composed of six disability organisations, were optimistic, but, five years later, few of the bill's provisions have been enacted. Disabled people acknowledge incremental change but say their lives are mostly the same. The PDA builds on the country's 1992 constitution, which has eight provisions guaranteeing the rights of the disabled. A year after passing the act, Ghana signed but has not ratified the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which also supports the PDA. The PDA ostensibly delivers social, cultural and civil rights to the country's disabled. An umbrella provision guarantees dignity in social, political, cultural, recreational, and creative pursuits. Subsequent provisions promise job training, employment, an accessible built environment, accessible transportation, free healthcare, protection from discrimination, and a National Council on Persons with Disability (NCPD). A 10-year transition period was built into the law.

2.9 Policy Reform Debate

A policy reform debate regarding educational quality in Ghana is ongoing at all levels. This was particularly evident last year during the political season where various political parties in their manifestos presented their vision for education in Ghana. The government announced on 22nd February 2012 the establishment of three new autonomous boards mandated to support improvements in education quality - the National Inspectorate Board (NIB), the National Teaching Council (NTC) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The Government has high expectations that these boards will provide a fast solution to address weak accountability in the education system. This lack of accountability exists at all levels - from the school level (among students, parents and teachers), at district level (between schools and districts) and at national level (among Ministry of Education (MOE) officials, Ghana Education Service (GES) officials, and politicians).

2.10 Affirmative Action Policy

In compliance with Article 35 (6) (b) of the 1992 Constitution, which requires the state to take appropriate measures to achieve reasonable gender and regional balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices, the Government issued a policy guideline on Affirmative Action (AA) to encourage women's participation in decision-making. The formulation of the Affirmative Action (AA) policy by government after Beijing assured 40% representation of women at all levels of governance, on Public Boards, Commissions, Councils, Committees and Official Bodies including Cabinet and the Council

of State. In 2002, the government increased the quota of female appointed members at the District Assembly level from 30% to 50%. This resulted in women constituting 35.5% of appointed members for 97 out of the 110 districts (men constituting 1,188 and women - 655). This still falls short of the 40% target set by the National Plan of Action and the 50% that the government aspired to achieve.

2.11 Complementary Education Policy (DRAFT)

The Ministry of Education since 2008 has drafted a Complementary Education Policy. The GES policy on inclusive education states that schools should be within 5km of the child. Consequently the districts have a growing number of out of school children comprised of the marginalized (girls/orphans), the disadvantaged (children with various forms of physical disabilities) and the excluded (children without opportunity of educational access and with special educational needs).

2.12 Sector Institutional Framework

• Ghana Education Service - Girls Education Unit

The Government of Ghana has demonstrated its commitment to girls' education by creating in 1997 a special unit within the Basic Education Division devoted to girls' education, and most recently, by creating a high-level post, that of Minister of Primary, Secondary and Girl-Child Education. The Girls' Education Unit's (GEU's) objectives are to increase enrolment, retention, and achievement of girls, particularly in the sciences, technology, and mathematics. Under the FCUBE Programme, the GEU aims to meet the following targets by 2005 with 1997 as the base year:

- Increase national enrolment of girls in primary schools to equal that of boys and develop and maintain strategies aimed at ensuring the continuation of girls into junior secondary.
- Reduce the dropout rate for girls in primary school from 30 to 20 percent, and of girls in secondary school from 21 to 15 percent. (A dropout is someone who has left school and *not* returned.)
- Increase the transition rate of girls from junior secondary school to senior secondary school by 10 percent.
- Increase the participation of girls in science, technology and mathematics (STM) subjects by improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the perception of these subjects (GES 1999).

To achieve the above, the GEU has been undertaking the following activities: Mobilizing all stakeholders, including the private sector, to improve the quality of teaching and learning for girls; Targeting assistance to all deprived areas in the country; Encouraging collaboration and communication among various stakeholders and Mainstreaming gender sensitivity throughout the programmes, particularly those of the GES. The GES has also ensured that Girls' Education Officers (GEOs) are placed in the GEU. These posts were established to raise awareness in communities about the importance of sending girls to school – and substantial progress towards achieving equity in enrolment indicates some level of success. This network of GEOs - present in all districts - provides a potential resource of dedicated staff to support and monitor gender sensitive planning at district levels

• The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

The MGCSP formerly MOWAC has the clear mandate to ensure the promotion of gender equality, children issues with a new increased mandate of ensuring social protection i.e. social inclusion in Ghana. The Ministry currently has three main divisions and focuses on gender, children and social protection / welfare. Under the ministry issues on early childhood development, addressing child labour, child trafficking and domestic, sexual and gender-based violence remains a priority. There is a growing interest of the ministry. The ministry currently has regional offices and is also to have gender desk

officers (GDOs) in all the sector ministries including the MoE and also the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. These are to collaborate with sector ministries in the promotion of gender equality and social inclusion in Ghana.

- **The Department of Social Welfare**

The DSW has the mandate and technical expertise in the integration of the vulnerable and excluded into mainstream society has been itself excluded as an institution with respect to implementation capacity. The LEAP is just one of the components of the NSPS. Beneficiaries of the LEAP Programme will be supported to access existing district-based poverty reduction initiatives to enhance their income generating capacity and self-empowerment including, the Agricultural Input Support Programme, different Microfinance Schemes and the Youth Employment Programme.

- **Civil Society Organisations**

There are numerous large and small CSO initiatives supporting girls' education in Ghana. The expertise on promoting gender and social inclusive education initiatives in Ghana lies largely with CSOs. There are a number of well-established CSO programmes providing holistic support to girls' education in targeted communities and schools, as well as other CSO interventions focused on particular aspects of GESI in education. The Ghana National Education Coalition Campaign (GNECC), a network of CSOs both local and international has been at the forefront of championing GESI and national accountability in the quality education. The GNECC supported the drafting of the Gender Policy to be adopted by the Ministry of Education and the GES. Some examples are: Child Rights International; CRESENT; and Voice Ghana. UNICEF, USAID, VSO, Sight Savers International (SSI) have been pivotal in supporting the complementary education programmes in the three Northern Regions. The inclusion of girl friendly facilities in school infrastructure continues to be championed by UNICEF and Plan International.

CAMFED for instance operates a holistic long-term programme of support to girls' education, including scholarships/bursaries, complementary measures to tackle obstacles to girls' enrolment, progression and achievement, and support to community engagement in planning and monitoring at district level. Action Aid also focuses on promoting a safe learning environment for girls, with activities at all levels from support to national policy development and advocacy, to community and school level interventions. Plan Ghana supports girls through a comprehensive Girls Unite and PASS programme, aimed at encouraging girls to successfully transition from primary education towards completing their secondary education. Overall, however, the CSO sector is characterised by a lack of coordination and quality control, and insufficient attention is given to monitoring and results. A critical challenge in Ghana is to maximise the impact of various CSO programmes in order to deliver comprehensive programmes from which larger numbers of girls could benefit.

3.0 PROGRAMMES AND PLANS

The Government of Ghana has implemented and will continue to implement a number of programmes in collaboration with stakeholders aimed at addressing the gender gaps and disparities as well as promote social inclusion in education. Prominent among these is the full implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy through free attendance at public basic schools to disengage children from child labour. There are ongoing programmes which directly or indirectly support GESI in the sector. the Street Children component of the Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project which was being implemented by the then Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE); The School Feeding Programme, Early Childhood Development Programmes of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection; Skills Training and Apprenticeship Programmes by Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. The rest include: institution of awards schemes for teachers; sponsorship of teacher trainees and needy children; construction of educational infrastructure and various poverty reduction programmes. The Municipal, Metropolitan and District Assemblies are involved in the implementation of these programmes.

3.1 Implementing the FCUBE

The FCUBE is being implemented by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service with some international funding agencies providing technical and financial support to the FCUBE programme. They include: International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank; Department of International Development (DFID); United States Agency for International Development (USAID); African Development Fund (ADF) through African Development Bank (ADB); European Union (EU); United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and others. Although the FCUBE itself is not considered to have directly promoted gender equality, it has direct implication on and social inclusion. The FCUBE provide open doors for children both girls and boys from rural, urban and peri-urban to enrol in schools is considered to have been the first step towards the promotion en mass of girls education having supported current record levels especially education for rural children.

3.2 Addressing Child Labour

There are lot of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Non Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Religious Organizations and many others who are helping to address child labour and poverty in Ghana. The Government of Ghana has adopting multi-sectoral and stakeholders approaches to address its social problems including child labour and worst forms of child labour in the entire country. It will continue to use these approaches in a pragmatic manner to ensure full and effective implementation of the national intervention programmes to support children and the vulnerable including child labourers when identified. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), with Children's and women's Departments, to handle all issues affecting women and children Girl-Child Education and Basic Education Divisions in the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), a major stakeholder with a Child Labour Desk to handle child labour and related issues. The creation of child labour desks by other stakeholders, including the Ghana Employers Association (GEA) and the Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC) is to mainstream child labour issues into their regular programmes and activities.

3.3 GEU Operational Plan

The Girls' Education Unit has since 2011 developed their first operational plan. There is some evidence of willingness amongst donor partners and civil society to ensure that their work on girls' education is consistent with this plan. DFID is leading the sub-sector to co-ordinate Ghana's strategic response for girls and the time is right to galvanize transformational change for girls. Without this programme, the chances of Ghana missing the education and gender Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would be higher. In the medium-term, child health, maternal mortality and economic growth rates could all be negatively affected if girls continue dropping out of secondary school.

3.4 Capitation Grant Schemes

Despite the introduction of the FCUBE Ghanaian school children continued to pay towards their education until 2005, when the Ministry of Education abolished school fees nationwide in basic education and introduced a capitation grant for all basic schools after a successful pilot in 2004. The object of the policy was to effectively address poverty – one of the main barriers to access - and also to address gender inequality in the education sector. The grant is described to have demonstrated that eliminating school fees leads to narrowing gender gaps and has an immediate and substantial impact on education. This was particularly the case for kindergarten. Enrolment went up from about 500,000 students in 2004-2005 to more than 800,000 in 2005-2006, an increase of 67 per cent. During the same period, the primary net enrolment rate increased from 59.1 per cent to 68.8 per cent, while net enrolment at the junior secondary level increased from 31.6 per cent to 41.6 per cent in the same year. The increase in enrolment was reportedly higher for girls than for boys, thus further narrowing gender gaps.

3.5 Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP)

The pilot phase of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was launched in 2005 under the NEPAD "Home Grown" SFP concept, which aims to contribute to not only improvement of the education service delivery but also agricultural development. Locally produced food would be purchased to feed school children, school gardens would be established, and agriculture would be incorporated into school curricula. It is obvious that success of GSFP will depend on how partnership at the local level among different actors, such as DA, GES, SMC, PTA, private sector, farmers and communities, can be built and strengthened for the programme. A key challenge which has been coming up now is the sustainability of school feeding. The programme has strong government support but will require some political will on the longer term to continue and expand the school feeding. In the Northern Ghana it is reported that there has been some major achievements on the GSFP due to NGO and donor support, while mainstreaming its national policies.

3.6 Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP)

Under the LEAP, the Government of Ghana's vision of a National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) is the creation of a society in which the citizenry are duly empowered with the capacity to realize their rights and responsibilities to manage social, economic, political and cultural shocks. The LEAP Strategy reviews and improves existing coverage of Social Protection programmes, identifies additional schemes that take account of existing gaps in coverage and provides for the strengthening of institutional arrangements and capacities of government departments and agencies, civil society organisations and communities for

delivery of Social Protection interventions. The Strategy will be accompanied by a policy shift in the allocation of resources towards mechanisms for effective protection and promotion of livelihoods that address the root causes of poverty, vulnerability and exclusion.

3.7 Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

The MOE was one of the ministries designated to pilot GRB in Ghana in 2007. Generally GRB implementation according to the sector stakeholders' has had its own challenges and this has included the MoE. Gender Responsive Budgeting is a kind of budget that prioritizes income and expenditure such that specific needs of women, men, girls and boys are met equally. Its focus is to analyze any form of public expenditure, or method of raising revenue from the perspective of gender and identify the implications for women and girls as compared to men and boys. The MOE as part of its implementation of GRB is to collect reliable sex-disaggregated data for evidenced-based policy analysis and to proceed to cost data collection activities under Item 3 (Service) in their budget estimates. The use of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) is being further analyzed to reveal gender enrolment gaps for basic and secondary education. These include the statistics on teachers and available infrastructure.

3.8 Multilateral and Donor Programmes

There are few donors engaged in the education sector in Ghana. DFID is designated development partner lead for girls' education (and is the only donor government providing. Sector Budget Support to education in Ghana). DFID is now complementing its eight-year sector budget support programme, with specific interventions to accelerate the delivery of results - a £19 million programme to bring out-of-school children into mainstream education and this £39 million girls' education initiative. Substantial bilateral support for girls' education comes from USAID and JICA and multilateral support from UNICEF.

Recent efforts have resulted in the World Bank-managed Global Partnership for Education Fund (GPEF) making a commitment to provide a 3-year fund to improve education quality in Ghana. The GPEF is proposing to work through existing government institutions issuing a series of district grants and school grants. The GPEF provides an opportunity for donor coordination in the sector. The Fund was expected to begin disbursing in 57 districts last January 2013. Other direct support include the following:

- The Voluntary Services Organisation (VSO) in Ghana has committed to ensuring inclusive education across three districts in northern Ghana where it is currently implementing the —Tackling Education Needs Inclusively (TENI) project.
- USAID is supporting a scholarship programme targeting girls and a programme to support SMCs/PTAs.
- UNICEF supported model 'child friendly' school in the North, Upper East, Upper West, Central Regions of Ghana and is expected to develop a girls' scholarship programme for these four regions.
- CAMFED operates a holistic long-term programme, including scholarships and complementary measures to tackle obstacles to girls' enrolment, progression and achievement.
- Action Aid focuses on promoting a safe learning environment for girls, including national policy development and school level interventions.
- Plan runs a comprehensive girls' education programme, aimed at encouraging girls to successfully transition from primary education to complete secondary education.

4.0 CRITICAL GENDER ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN PROGRAMMING

In presenting a policy brief on gender and education it is important to outline some of the critical Gender and Social Issues in Education which may be considered for programming. Although these issues are multifaceted and diverse the following has been summarized for discussion:

1. **Implementation of legislation and policies of gender and education:** This has to be done in a comprehensive manner since current efforts seems to be affected by the prevailing view that gender issues in education in Ghana can and is being addressed only by the girls education unit. The need for more legal and institutional framework may be required to deal with the growing trends in education particularly in the management of senior high schools and also tertiary education where there is a growing plethora of gender equality and social inclusion issues that require urgent attention. These may include addressing the particular needs of male and female students and students with disabilities.
2. **Socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes leading to unbalanced gender** roles have implications on the learning outcomes of girls and boys. These beliefs and practices often compel women and girls to work much longer hours than their male counterparts, constraining their ability to respond to opportunities including learning opportunities. This sometimes includes **discriminatory practices against girls**. The gender sensitization effort that has been pursued over the years has clearly had a positive impact on parents' willingness to send girls to school. Nevertheless, there remains an abiding view that a girl's parents get little back from the investment in her education as she will eventually leave home when she marries, taking with her whatever 'value enhancement' she has acquired.
3. **Out-of-school drop-out both girls and boys** due to "loaded household chores all year round." Even where both girls and boys are in school, but with some boys tending to receive preferential treatment when conditions are rough in the household. The concepts of girls and boys servants (housegirls' and boys) typically suffer further discrimination and a range of abuses in their foster households. Foster girls and boys privileged to be kept in school often have to work after school, sometimes selling till eleven at night.
4. **Teenage Pregnancies:** Most girls in Ghana face this challenge of pregnancy and its attendant effect on their quest to have higher education due to a lack of sex education and also lack protection from some male students and teachers who sometimes rape them. Ghanaians still see sex education as a "no go" area because it remains a controversial issues in the home, community and both in formal and informal places of learning. Parents find it exceedingly difficult to discuss with the children about issue bordering on sex because of cultural norms and socialization practices.
5. **Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls' (VAWG):** in schools and educational institutions. VAWG is defined by the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private". **Violence against girls in school** is a major problem and pregnancy (often unintended) is a significant reason for school drop-out.

6. **Disability and Social Inclusion in Education:** Ghana is estimated to have 2.5 million disabled, themselves part of the world's one billion, 80% of whom are thought to live in developing countries. Most educational institutions still discriminate against persons with disability. Disabled people experience enormous challenges when it comes to accessing education, employment, and healthcare.
7. **Child labour** though not ideal, allows poor households to moderate the dips in household income streams especially during the hungry season. As children develop physically with each passing year, they become increasingly vulnerable to physical labour. As a result, many poor schoolchildren end up with fewer hours for study at the very time when they have additional subjects and need more time.
8. **Quality education:** Ghana has for some time now focused on improving access to education and this has not been at par with provision of quality education. For example, the current Capitation Grant Scheme aimed at increasing access to primary education has resulted in overcrowding of the classrooms at the lower primary level, with no attendant increase in the number of teachers, tables/chairs, teaching and learning materials etc.
9. **The challenges of weak human resource management** in terms of quantity, quality and equity of teacher deployment, weak supervision, poor pedagogic practices, questionable relevance of school content to the developmental needs of both pupils and the country, and low level of communities' engagement with the education system, are not adequately addressed. This situation can in part, be attributed to the heavy dependence on external funding for education financing in Ghana and the current focus of the donor community on quantity in education at the primary level (Gender Parity and Universal Primary Completion within a specific time frame) which tends to undermine other sub-sectors in education. More and more, it is being argued that an undue focus on universal
10. **Many children in poor households are obliged to do economic** - though not necessarily paid - work to help buffer their households from hunger. During the farming season, poor households with limited livelihood options must -- as a priority -- invest all available energies in improving their food security prospects for the next year. Boys and girls skip classes to assist with farm work if their parents lack the funds needed to employ alternative labour. Other children are compelled to combine school with work.
11. **Cost of education:** To help fund their schooling costs, girls as well as boys, migrate during the school vacations and the hungry season to find work in the markets and chop bars of Accra and Kumasi. Such work is particularly important around the transition from JHS to SHS. Not only does the rising complexity of their education require more resources; their maturing bodies also add to the range of personal needs -- e.g. sanitary towels and other personal hygiene supplies, and a heightened interest in dressing well. While older boys (being stronger) may find work on the farms and get interested in other activities like mining, cattle grazing, factory work etc. Other children skip classes or even terminate their school careers prematurely if there are opportunities to make 'quick money'. The kayayie and Goro boys phenomenon prevails in busy markets in Accra and Kumasi markets. Child migrants are particularly susceptible to being lured into all sorts of activities. Girls from some parts of the Northern Region withdraw voluntarily from school in order to participate in kayayie work in the streets and markets of Accra and Kumasi.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Increased educational access does not automatically translate into improved outcomes: with the increased participation of girls in primary school, capacities to manage the educational system in order to achieve sustainable and better outcomes are key to consolidating the gains made. The elimination of gender inequalities in all spheres of life including education, as both a human rights issue and as an impetus for poverty reduction and development generally, has gained centre stage in the global and national development agendas. Girls' education is particularly acknowledged as being a major catalyst in this endeavour, and has found explicit expression in most developing countries' national development policies, programmes and strategies.

There are still many challenges to the GESI and Education in Ghana. Many girls and persons with disability are not participating in education: a broad-based approach may not suffice to reach these vulnerable group, and a more targeted approach for their reach from marginalised communities may need to be considered. Furthermore, Social Protection is founded on the principles of human rights. Article 17 (4)(a) of the 1992 Constitution sets the stage for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalances in the Ghanaian society. By the same measure, the 'Directive Principles of State Policy' of the Constitution guarantees the protection and promotion of all basic human rights and freedoms, including the rights of the disabled, the aged, children and other vulnerable groups (Article 37-2b). Social Protection therefore is a right of every citizen.

5.2. General Recommendations

- Finalization of the gender policy by MOE/GES is crucial;
- Ensure provision of water and sanitation facilities in each rural school as emphasized by the current development agenda and also the GPRS and MOE policy recommendations) use district and GET Funding;
- Address the current rural / urban gap in the provision of quality education and reduce cost of education by increasing the number of scholarships for needy but brilliant boys and girls in all districts through the GET FUND and District Assembly Common Fund;
- Monitoring Sector Programming and Plans should be critical considered in the sector. The collection of sex-disaggregated data is mandatory under the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and should be accompanied with comprehensive gender analysis by sector players.

5.3 Key Policy Recommendations for STAR Ghana

- Support for the implementation of the GEU strategic plan by CSO organizations;
- Support Grant Partners in the Education sector to develop direct interventions to address gender equality and social inclusion issues at the Senior Secondary Schools and tertiary education levels;
- Support Grant Partners with projects aimed at the implementation of the Draft Complementary Education Policy (2008) which clearly supports social inclusion in education especially for the physically challenged;
- Focus on the provision of quality education and improvement of performance of boys and girls and the persons with disability through introduction of rural education clinics at district level

and ensuring schools are girl friendly (particularly by ensuring water and sanitation facilities, channels for complaints of child abuse are identified);

- Establish an effective system for the provision of guidance and counseling activities for girls and boys particularly at JSS / SSS levels which will address the negative effects of peer pressure at those levels;
- Reproductive health education programmes support for the youth in basic and tertiary education to reduce growing teenage pregnancies; and
- Targeting of programmes must ensure that gender and vulnerability assessments are included in education sector programme assessments.

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