STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GIRLS' EDUCATION IN GHANA:

A Look at their Impact and Effectiveness

A Joint Study by IBIS, UNICEF, SNV and WFP[1]

April 9th, 2009
Final

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Acronyms

AAIG	Action Aid International, Ghana
ADD	Action on Disability and Development
ADRA	Adventist Development
AES	Awutu-Effutu-Senya
AR	Ashanti Region
BA	Brong Ahafo Region
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CAMFED	Cambridge Female Education
CR	Central Region
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Education Access Transition & Equity
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DEFAT	District Education for All Team
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development
DGEO	District Girls' Education Officer
EFA	Education For All
ER	Eastern Region
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESR	Education Sector Review
FAWE	Foundation for African Women Educationalists
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GCO	Girl Child Officer
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GES	Ghana Education Service
GEU	Girls' Education Unit
GOG	Government of Ghana
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GPRS	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MOESS	Ministry of Education Science and Sports
MOEYS	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports
MURAG	Muslim Relief Association of Ghana
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NEA	National Education Assessment
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non Governmental Organization

NNED	Northern Network for Education Development
NR	Northern Region
PLA	Participatory Learning Approach
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RAINS	Regional Advisory Information Networks
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
REV	Rural Education Volunteers
SfL	School for Life
SMC	School Management Committee
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SSS	Senior Secondary School
STME	Science Teaching & Mathematics Education
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
TTC	Teacher Training Collage
TVET	Technical and Vocational Educational and Training
UE	Upper East Region
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nation International Children and Education Fund
USAID	United States of America International Development
UTDBE	Untrained Teacher Diplomat in Basic Education
UW	Upper West Region
VR	Volta Region
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WFP	World Food Programme
WR	Western Region
WUSC	World University of Service of Canada

1.0 Introduction

Education is fundamental to a nation's development. "All agree that the single most important key to development and poverty alleviation is education which must start with universal primary education for girls and boys equally (Wolfensohn, 1999)". In the 1990's, girls' education became recognized as the most effective development investment for reducing poverty by ensuring that women were able to improve the lives of their families and their children.

> "The more that girls participate in formal schooling, the greater the improvements in the nation's development indicators. The benefits increase with each level of education and this occurs independent of the quality and content of academic programmes. Moreover, many primary school programmes are of such uniformly poor quality that they do not compensate for such disadvantages in family background as poverty and illiteracy, leaving the next generation in roughly the same condition as its parents. Girls suffer greater educational disadvantage from these background characteristics than boys do and therefore they are doubly disadvantaged by poor school quality (Rugh, 2000).

Socio-economic research conducted by agencies including the World Bank, IMF, DFID and USAID provided concrete evidence that when you educate a girl child you not only educate a nation, you improve the developmental conditions for sustained "growth", and at the same time arrest the intergenerational poverty process (World Bank/ IMF, 2002). The evidence was and still is convincing as indicated in Box 1.

Box 1: The Evidence of Investing in Girls' Education

➢ Literate women are more productive, able to improve their opportunities and obtain higher status and better paid jobs than non-literate women (Lloyd and Gage-Brandon 1994; Prah, 2002)
➢ Literate women and girls follow advice which enhances the health of their children and promotes better environmental protection
➢ Educated females are more likely to marry older and have fewer children: fertility rates are therefore lower among literate women bringing about positive change for population growth in the country
➢ Investing in female education generates important benefits for society in the form of lower child mortality, higher educational attainment, better nutrition, and slower population growth (Prah, 2001)
➢ Investing in female education ensures quality and sustainability of economic growth (World Bank)

The education of women is thought to be one of the most "important elements in the development process" (Prah, 2002; UNICEF, 1993; Floro and Wolff, 1990). Despite the positive evidence concerning the private and social returns of female education, this strategic investment has not been enough to shift the development paradigm within donor circles. Gender equity and women's empowerment remains a process of adding a project, programme or at best attempting to "mainstream" in ongoing programmes, as opposed to being key policy thrusts within poverty reduction programming and educational policy formulation. Despite the empirical evidence suggesting that women's education is crucial

in order to ensure that a country's development aspirations are achieved, the goals of gender equity are often not achieved and sustained across the education system (UNESCO, 2002).

As predicted in donor studies conducted in the early 2000's and based on experience from countries around the world, Ghana was among the 88 countries unlikely to meet the MDG 3 in 2002 (IMF/World Bank, 2002). In 2004, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) provided an analysis on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and predicted that it was unlikely that Ghana would achieve the MDG 3 of eliminating gender disparity in primary and JSS by 2005 and would fail to achieve equal access for boys and girls in senior secondary by 2005 (GOG, 2006). By 2008, Ghana was still far from realizing this goal mainly due to the inability of research agencies to convince policy makers that the last 10 % of children out of school in deprived and remote rural areas of Ghana were unlikely to be reached through formal schools; alternative or complementary routes to providing basic education were and still are needed (Casely-Hayford, 2008; Casely-Hayford, 2002).

Ghana's education sector, once one of the most respected in Africa, has faced difficult challenges in the past two and a half decades; as a result quality as well as quantity has suffered (World Bank, 2004). Education in Northern Ghana is of an abysmal quality because schools do not have the full complement of classes, teachers, teaching learning materials and sanitation facilities (SfL, 2004). Poverty, parental irresponsibility and poor quality education are among the key factors that constrain girls' education across the country. Studies suggest that it is the poor quality of education in rural areas of Ghana, which provides the greatest challenge to girls. Girls will not stay in school if they are not receiving quality education, and even if they remain, their chances when competing for senior secondary, university entrance, or jobs on a national level are still very limited. Girls are particularly disadvantaged in the rural and highly traditional areas due to socio-cultural factors. One of the socio-cultural factors that work to the disadvantage of girls is the cultural perception concerning their role in the family and society, and the preference to invest in boys' education. Socio-cultural and poverty barriers include: child fosterage, early marriage, teenage pregnancy and parental neglect. These socio-cultural barriers to women and girls' education restrict girls' achievement and constrain their full potential (WUSC, 2007).

Government policies on girls' education in Ghana are largely informed by these constraints and barriers. Policies and programmes geared towards improving girls' education and closing the gap between female and male education are directed at eliminating some of the barriers to girls' education (direct costs to parents, provision of basic needs for girls and improving the school environment). This current study reveals that the approaches supported by some development partners take the responsibility of girl child education away from the parent, and limit the empowerment approach necessary to support the long-term development of the child. Some of the girls' education approaches ignore the deeper problems of household poverty and socio-cultural transformation which remain untouched, limiting the programme impact to the short-term and their transformative potential on the girl child and her family (NDPC, 2005:43 and GOG, 2006)[2].

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[2] The recommended programmes and activities in the GPRS II and the Government White Paper on Education Reform to address gender inequity education make reference to these barriers.

1.1 Ghana's Performance Record for Girls' Education (2006 to 2008)[3]

Participation and Access Trends

Despite the more optimistic predictions for Ghana in terms of attaining MDG 1 and 3, the evidence and trends in girls' education continue to suggest significant challenges with some limited breakthroughs. There is a continual expansion of access to basic education in Ghana. Between 2002/03 and 2007/08, gross primary enrolment increased from 86.5% to 95.2% and JSS enrolment increased from 70.2% to 78.8%. Female primary enrolment similarly increased from 83% to 93%, and JSS female enrolment from 65% to 75.3% in the same period. At the senior secondary school level, enrolment increased from 27.5% to 32.2%. The percentage of females accessing secondary education increased from 42% to 44% between 2002/03 and 2007/08 (MOESS, 2008). Primary net enrolment also increased over the period as indicated in Figure 1 below. Section 2 provides more data on access and participation trends.

Figure 1: National Primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER) by Gender

National Primary Net Enrolment Rate (6-11yrs)-2003/04-2007/08

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Boys	56.5	60	69.6	79.8	84.2
Girls	54.7	58.3	68.1	77.3	81.6
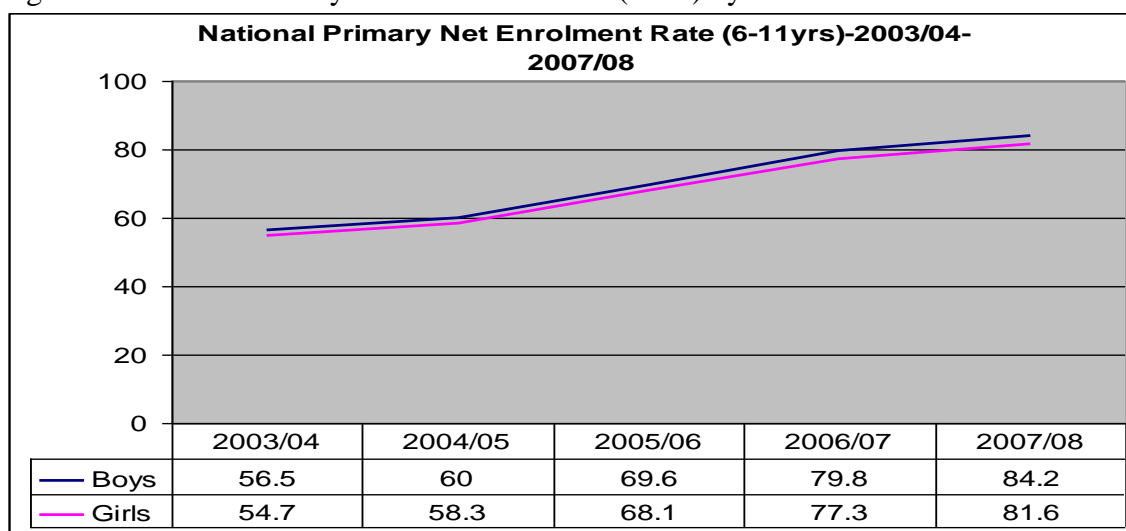
(*Source: MOESS 2004 to 2008 EMIS Data*)

Completion and Transition Trends

Education completion rate data demonstrates some significant gains, which were achieved between 2003/04 to 2007/08, although care must be taken with these data sets[4]. The primary completion rate increased from 77% to 88% and JSS completion rate data increased from 58% to 67.7% over the period. The female completion rate is lower than the national completion rate for primary and JSS levels of education. The primary completion rate for girls increased from 74% to 79.6% between 2003/04 to 2006/07 and the JSS female completion rate increased from 53.8% to 74.7% between 2003/04 to 2005/06. The completion for JSS is said to be low given that the sector needs to meet the

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[3] This section is mainly based on the Government's (MOESS) Education Sector Performance Reports from 2006 to 2008.

[4] Care must be taken with the completion and transition data set due to the challenges of incorporating drop in and drop out/ repetition rates and the rates used for population growth.

100% completion target by 2015. The MOESS acknowledged that to meet this target, completion rates would have to grow at 8% per year, which is not the case based on the MOESS last performance report in 2008.

Performance Trends

Achievement trends between girls and boys appear less positive. One of the MOESS key performance measurements is the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) pass rate. The BECE pass rate for the last four years has remained at 61.6% in 2002/03 and increased only slightly to 63% in 2006/07. Out of those who qualified for SSS, approximately 85% were placed in SSS level institutions. Very high proportions (39%) of those who sat for the BECE examination have aggregates between 31 and 60, which is below the pass aggregate[5]. The MOESS latest performance report (2008) suggests, "girls in some of the regions (of Ghana) are achieving significantly less than boys" (MOESS, 2008). Also, the National Education Assessment (NEA) results for 2007[6] indicate that only 26.1% of pupils achieve 'proficiency" in English and 10.8% of pupils in mathematics. If the school age population is considered, the MOESS report suggests that less than 25% of Ghana's youth reach "proficiency" (scoring 55% and above) levels for P6 English and only 10% attain "proficiency" in P6 mathematics[7].

The 2008 MOESS annual education performance report revealed that girls are performing much worse than boys in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions of Ghana. The report states, "It is clear that girls in the Northern Regions lag behind the boys in achievement, while the girls in Central and Eastern Region are close to parity…." While these patterns would most likely not surprise anyone familiar with the education system in Ghana, it raises issues about the targeting of policy and resource allocation across the regions. With respect to the goals of gender equity especially, the issue is not only attaining gender parity in the enrolment numbers but in the quality of education as well (MOESS, 2008, p 73).

1.2   Rationale for the study

Since the mid 1990's, concerted efforts have been made by the Government of Ghana, development partners and NGOs towards improving girls' participation and learning outcomes in school through the use of specific and targeted interventions and programmes on girls' education. More recently the Government of Ghana has been using larger scale generic strategies, such as the Capitation Grant and Ghana School Feeding, HIPC funding. These are embedded within general education policy framework and are increasingly being used by the Government of Ghana to tackle girls' education issues. Alongside these large-scale initiatives there are also more specific strategies such as sensitisation, awareness raising, and advocacy campaigns targeting different audiences on the benefits of and right to education for girls and direct bursary/scholarship schemes for girls which are being used mainly by NGOs (with the GEU).

Some of these interventions have yielded promising results and outcomes in Ghana. A lot of progress has been made in improving girls' enrolment in school, but the challenge remains in ensuring that girls stay in school for the length of the basic education cycle

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[5] These scores will not enable the student to gain admission to SSS.
[6] This is the last year that the test was conducted; it will be conducted in all primary schools again in 2009.
[7] Proficiency level is correctly answering 55% of the tests.

and that they learn enough to progress to higher levels of education in order to produce the social outcomes needed to improve their own quality of life, and the quality of life of their children and families. Dropout rates for girls continue to remain very high at the upper primary and junior secondary levels.[8] Also, a significantly high percentage of girls of school age are still not enrolled in school. The causes have been traced to lack of parental support, negative socio-cultural practices and the poor quality of education particularly in rural deprived areas of Ghana (Casely-Hayford, et al 2007; (WFP, 2004).

The situation is of concern particularly for the NGO and donor community who have been supporting efforts to improve the effectiveness of some girls' specific education strategies, which are now being challenged. Despite the varied strategies, the girls' education sub-sector is still being confronted with challenges of sustaining the gains made in girls' education in light of the major incentive programmes such as school feeding (CRS) and school incentive packages for girls being phased out (WFP). This triggered a joint study of the current strategies employed in Ghana to promote girls' education by Ibis, SNV, UNICEF, WFP and GES, with a view to finding more effective alternative approaches to address the challenges involved in education generally, and girls' education in particular. The study assessed the relevance and effectiveness of current girls' education strategies in country, and makes recommendations for strengthening education strategies for the achievement of MDG 3 targets.

1.3 Objectives and Major Research Questions

The main aim of the study was to examine current strategies on promoting girls' education, particularly based on donor and NGO experiences with the aim of assessing their relevance and effectiveness. Another major intention of the study was to provide policy recommendations on how specific advocacy approaches can complement current policy measures for achieving the MDG 3 targets. Some of the more specific objectives of the study were:

a) To describe the current situation of education in Ghana with particular reference to girls' education
b) To identify girls' education promotion strategies
c) To analyse the relevance and effectiveness of the strategies
d) To examine community participation in promoting girls' education
e) To examine pupils' assessment of the pull and push factors that affects their educational attainment and achievement

The study examined the role of multilateral and bilateral agencies, and international NGO's which are involved in promoting girls' education across Ghana. It investigated how these agencies work, select interventions, mainstream and strategically implement girls' education strategies in Ghana. The study also attempted to analyse the degree to which these interventions work on access, quality or capacity building elements of the system.

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[8] While 47% of primary school students are girls, less than 27% of university students are female. Drop out rates for girls continue to remain very high at the upper primary and junior secondary levels particularly in poverty zones of Ghana.

Box 2: Research Questions for the Study

The study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of girls' education in Ghana and policy level objectives related to girls' education at the macro level by considering two main questions:
- Have the objectives of girls' education policies been met and if so what impact have they had?
- What could be improved?

The study also investigated the "meso level" or implementation level of effectiveness by considering some of the following key research questions:
- Are girls' education interventions, strategies and actions by key agencies relevant to the Ghanaian context and the communities they are serving?
- Have these girls' education interventions contributed to the progress of achieving MOESS objectives?
- Has the intervention made a change in the situation of girls' education at the community/District levels?
- How could the situation could be improved?

Finally, the study investigated the "micro beneficiary level" by asking some of the same questions with a wide variety of beneficiaries including children:
- Are the girls' education interventions, actions and strategies relevant to the needs on the ground or the needs of the community?
- Have the interventions made a change in the situation of girls' education in your community?
- How do we think the situation could be improved…?

1.4   The Study Methodology

The study was conducted in two of the ten regions of Ghana: the Northern and the Central Regions. A total of eight districts were covered during the field study using peer-review mechanisms and qualitative methods. Teams, which conducted the study, comprised of two participants from the agencies supporting the study The study districts in the Northern Region were: Bole, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, East Gonja, Tamale Metropolis, Gushegu, and Savelugu-Nanton. The study districts in the Central Region were: Gomoa and Awutu-Effutu-Senya (See Annex 1 for details).   The selection of study districts was based mainly on the need to investigate areas where at least two interventions by study partners could be explored. The sample of districts consisted of high and medium levels of girls' education interventions[9], which were also areas where the problem of girls' education had been acute and attracted several donor and NGO programmes. The study was conducted over a one-year period from August 2007 to December 2008. A total of twenty-four communities (three from each district) were visited. The study team were drawn from UNICEF, WFP, SNV, Ibis, GES/WUSC and VSO. Simple random and purposive sampling were employed to select interviewees.

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[9] High intervention districts were areas where more than two large-scale interventions supporting girls' education were taking place.

The study design and later the analysis was carried out by dividing the education sector into three clusters, namely, the macro level (policy), meso level (implementation of policy) and micro (impact of policy) level. Development partners (UNICEF, DFID, USAID and WFP) and international NGOs (AAIG, Plan International, VSO, Oxfam and FAWE) were surveyed. UNICEF, IBIS, WFP and SNV in collaboration with GES, jointly developed a participatory research methodology and field guide to collect the data.

Data was collected using methods such as focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, desk studies, and observation. Desk studies involved the review of policies, programmes and project reports (reviews, assessment and evaluations). Interviews were conducted with Regional and District Directorate of Education, Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), District Assemblies (DAs) and local NGOs. Head teachers, teachers and pupils (in and out of school) were also interviewed. Focus group discussions were conducted through the use of a semi-structured questions guide. Group discussions were held with school and community members including: the School Management Committees (SMC), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), traditional authorities (chiefs, queen mothers, opinion leaders and religious leaders), CBOs, women's groups and pupils in and out of school. The analysis involved a review of related international and national literature. Many of the findings were validated at a one-day workshop held in Tamale, on March 5th 2008.

1.5   Limitations of the Study

Some of the key limitations of the study included the fact that the methodology employed a peer review process involving researchers who were directly involved in the implementation of girls' education activities across the country. WFP, UNICEF, SNV and Ibis all have girls' education programmes and were therefore seen as implementers of the programmes they were also attempting to research and investigate. This may have had an impact on the types of responses given by key informants during the study process and fieldwork across the districts and community levels. NGO officers represented on the Study Team may have unintentionally influenced the responses being provided by District Education Officers and Community members. Despite the drawbacks of using this participatory peer review approach to the study, the benefits may outweigh the disadvantages particularly when NGO's are fully engaged in learning from the outcomes of their own research to make a change in their own programmes. Participatory research conducted by development agencies also allows them to better lobby and advocate around certain issues that have emerged from the studies they carried out..

The other major limitation of the study is that the findings are mainly focused on girls' education interventions and schemes which are based in deprived poverty zones of Ghana. The Northern and Central Regions do not represent all the geographic poverty zones of the country although they do represent the Savannah and Coastal Zones, which are part of the poverty profile of Ghana. An extension of the study may be needed to compare findings from poverty pockets in the Forest and Transition Zones of Ghana such as Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions.

Future studies should attempt to evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of girls' education interventions at a district wide level and compare districts, which have

improved in the net enrolment rates, and Gender Parity Index (GPI), compared to those which have not. This would require that development agencies including NGO's and donors collectively establish monitoring and evaluation frameworks with selected DEO's. Studies should also attempt to investigate the interventions in a holistic manner in order to see what factors are contributing towards improving girls' education indicators and why. Future studies should investigate community perceptions of effectiveness of the interventions in more detail.

2.0   Situating Girls' Education within the Ghana's Education Policy Environment

2.1   Introduction

This section attempts to situate girls' education within the policy environment in Ghana. It focuses on answering the following questions:

- What has the government promised regarding girls' education (targets, objectives) and why?
- How is the Government of Ghana trying to achieve these targets?
- How are they monitoring their effectiveness of these interventions?
- How effective are these interventions based on Government perspective and secondary source literature?

2.2   Government Policies on Education

The Ghana government is constitutionally mandated to provide free basic education to all its citizenry and to gradually make secondary and tertiary education access to all. Recognizing this mandate and other international obligations such as the need to meet MDG targets in girl's education in Ghana, the government has continually implemented various policies and programmes to address gender disparities in education. The education sector in Ghana has witnessed several policy changes. The GOG has aimed to make education more relevant to the world of work, to rural development and modernization of the economy, as well as the need to promote national and cultural identity and citizenship (MOEYS, 2004). The major policy documents guiding education delivery in Ghana are the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2003-2015 and the Education White Paper. The Education Sector Plan (ESP) provides the overall policy directions and strategies which embrace targets linked to the Ghana Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), Education For All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Governments White paper on Educational Reforms (2006) (MOESS, 2006).

The need to close the gender gap has been stressed in several government policy and programme documents including the GPRS II and the Government White Paper on Educational Reform, see box 3 below. The Government of Ghana has also signed several international agreements including the UN Right of the Child to Basic Education and the Education for All Action plans.

Box 3: Government Policy and Programme Documents:

The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II- 2003 to 2009) states the need to expand access and remove barriers to access and retention in the education sector. It specifically states the need to "bridge gender gaps in access to education in all districts" in the country. It further states that government will strategize "towards attaining gender parity in access to education and meeting the objectives of MDG 3… it will include provision of incentives/scholarship schemes to increase girls' enrolment, retention and completion, particularly in the deprived areas; and sensitise parents and communities on the importance of girls' education" (NDPC, 2005:43)

The Government of Ghana's White Paper on Educational Reform (2006) also emphasises the need to bridge the gender gap in education. "Government will take steps to enhance gender equity at all levels and programmes of education". With the planned attainment of universal basic education for ages 4 to 15 by 2015 and universal second cycle education by 2020, the present round of educational reform will have brought the idea of gender equality to fruition… At the basic level, however, Government will strictly adhere to the policy of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) as provided in the Constitution. This means not only paying teachers, but making sure that all the essential requirements for quality teaching for eleven years from ages 4 to 15 are adequately provided" (GOG, 2006).

The Government under its Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2003-2015 has set targets to achieve the MDG and Education for ALL (EFA) targets. These targets include gender parity goals in education (MDG3). The government policies on education are informed by the need to meet these targets. The progress made towards these targets are assessed each year through the Education Sector Reviews (ESR) involving government, donor and civil society peer review mechanisms. The gender parity index is mostly used to assess the access and participation rates of girls' compared to boys at different levels of education. It is interesting to note that Ghana failed to meet the MDG 3 of attaining gender parity (1) for primary and Junior Secondary education and equal access for boys and girls in senior secondary education in 2005 (MOESS, 2006, 2007, 2008). Table 1 shows some of the targets and progress as of 2008.

Table 1: Key Targets for Achieving MDG 2 and MDG 3 within the Education Sector

Indicators	Targets	Achievement in 2007/08
KG GER	100% by 2015	89.9%
Primary GER	100% by 2012	95.2%
JSS GER	100% by 2015	78.8%
Primary completion rate	100% by 2012	88.0%
JSS completion rate	100% by 2015	67.7%
% Female in Universities	50% by 2015	34.0%
% Female in Polytechnics	50% by 2015	30.0%
% Female Enrolment in Tertiary	50 % by 2015	34.0%
% Female enrolment in TVET	50% by 2015	16.7%

Source: MOESS, 2008

The government is well on its way to closing the gross enrolment gaps but studies in Ghana suggest that more innovative complementary education systems which are flexible to the needs of working children will be required in order to finally attain 100% GER and 100% completion rates. Studies also suggest that much more emphasis on providing quality education (e.g. teachers and books) will be needed to improve the retention, transition and completion of children, particularly girls, once they access the system. The following section will explain how the Government of Ghana has been attempting to achieve and monitor these education targets.

The ESP strategic plan and policy objectives are composed of four broad areas:
- Equitable access to education
- Quality of education
- Education management
- Science, technology and TVET

The ESP has some goals targeted at girl's education and provides an overall framework for expanding access and participation for all children in education and training. The government policies and programmes are directed at enhancing these four broad ESP focus areas. In the first broad area of access and participation in education, the government has implemented several programmes over the last five years including the capitation grant, school feeding, and expansion of classroom infrastructure to realise the policy of free (and compulsory) basic education. In the arena of quality education (second area), the government has upgraded the Teacher Training Colleges to diploma awarding institutions; increased the number of trained teachers, increased the deployment of pupil teachers; and increased supply of teaching and learning materials[10]. Throughout the four sub-policy areas of the Education Sector Plan, gender has been factored into the access and participation pillar of the ESP but gender targets are much weaker in the quality and management components. Ghana will have to better mainstream gender issues within the ESP and Education White Paper to ensure these goals are attained.

2.3 Government Programmes to Promote Girls' Education

The Ghana Government through MOESS pursues some programmes designed to promote girls' education in order to meet its broad policy objectives outlined in the ESP and other relevant policy goals. These programmes are often pursued by government in collaboration with development partners and international NGOs amongst others.. The programmes can be classified as generic and specific. The generic programmes are programmes pursued to increase enrolment, retention, education quality in deprived areas or nationally but do not specifically target girls. The specific programmes are programmes that target only female education.

Generic Policies

The Government introduced the capitation grant in 2004 in 53 districts classified as deprived and in 2005 extended the programme nationwide. The capitation grant provides GH¢3 per child to cover some of the public primary school operating costs and thereby abolish fees at the primary school level (CREATE 2007). Given that poverty and the costs of education affect girls disproportionately (GEU, 2002), it is expected that the capitation grant programme will enhance girls' education. An analysis of this programme is contained later in this chapter.

The Ghana School Feeding Programme commenced in 2005 with one of its main objectives being to increase enrolment, attendance and retention of children in school. The programme provides one hot meal to pupils in selected primary schools (approx. 900) in each district and is expected to be extended to all public schools nationwide. The programme is an attempt to also increase educational access at the primary level and to accelerate the achievement of MDG goals of achieving universal basic education.

Specific Programmes

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[10] In areas of education management, the government embarked on educational decentralization, which aimed at involving district and communities in the management of schools. In the area of science, technical and TVET it has also addressed the issue of lack of trained teachers serving in deprived areas by carefully selecting and restricting the number of trained teachers for study leave with pay.

The Girls' Education Unit (GEU) was established in 1995 with the objective of increasing enrolment, retention, and achievement of girls in school. The GEU has officers in all regions and districts pursuing programmes and activities aimed at meeting this objective (GEU, 2002). The Girls Education Unit works in collaboration with development partners such as the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and other international and local NGO's (FAWE, World Vision, Action Aid Ghana, and Plan Ghana). According to the Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report (2008), the following activities were pursued by the GEU in order to increase the enrolment and retention of girls in school:

- "Community mobilization and sensitisation programmes to create awareness on the importance of education
- Developing and disseminating communication materials to educate people about the importance of girls' education
- Organization of radio/television programmes
- Vacation camps for girls from rural and deprived districts
- Girls' Education Week celebrations at the district and national levels
- Take home food ration for girls
- Provision of scholarships in the form of educational materials
- Provision of bicycles for girls commuting long distances
- Introduction of complementary education in districts with low enrolment rates;
- Formation of girls clubs" (MOESS, 2008)
- Science Teaching and Mathematics Education Clinics for Girls (STMEs)

Under the Science Technical and TVET component of the Education Sector Plan, one of the major initiatives is the Science Teaching and Mathematics Education Clinics for Girls (STME). This demonstrates an attempt at mainstreaming gender in some thematic areas of the ESP.

Documented evidence on the barriers to girls' education shows that socio-cultural factors immensely impede girls' educational development in Ghana. These barriers as noted earlier require cultural, behavioural and attitudinal transformation /strategies. As a result the Girls Education Unit (GEU) is embarking on community education and sensitisation through community mobilisation, the Girls' Education Week Celebration at the district and national levels, and radio and television programmes with the view of effecting change and improving girls' education (see annex 2: Developing Girls' Specific Advocacy/Communication/Training Materials).

Annual Vacation Camps for Girls (AVCG) target those from rural and deprived districts. The camps organised by Action Aid Ghana (AAG) in collaboration with GEU are designed to "encourage girls' to develop a greater interest in schooling, develop their self-esteem and have high aspirations for life that will motivate them to stay in school and continue their education to the highest level possible" (Action Aid 2007).[11] Another important programme is the WFP, UNICEF and GEU food ration and bicycles programme for girls. These programmes are attempting to attract and retain girls in schools in the three northern regions where girls' education is particularly low.

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[11] In the 2007 Girls Camp, 144 girls from Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Greater Accra, Ashanti and Central Regions participated (Girls Camp, 2007).

In addition to the specific programmes mentioned above, many studies suggest that the presence of female teachers in school could have a positive impact on girls' retention rates (Mulkeen, 2006; Boakye, 2004). According to Mulkeen (2006) the presence of female teachers in school can help make the school environment safer for girls. He argues that many girls in Africa drop out because the school administrators are not sensitive to gender issues such as sexual abuse and intimidation by teachers. Female teachers in responsible positions of leadership serve as role models for girls (Mulkeen, 2006). The national vision for girls' education also affirms as a major strategy for girls' retention the deployment of female teachers to serve as role models (GEU, 2001). In view of the above, the Government has also set a target of ensuring a 40% female intake at the Teacher Training College level (TTCs). However, given the low educational attainment of girls in particularly deprived rural areas, it has been difficult to meet this target. A strategy was adopted to provide access courses annually to female students to enable them to meet the entry requirements of TTCs and attain the 40% quota allotted to females. This policy is to ensure that there are enough female teachers to serve as role models to girls particularly in rural deprived areas (Baiden-Amissah, 2006). Unfortunately the female access programme has not been sustained by the MOESS and should be reinstated.

2.4   Impact and Effectiveness of <u>Gender Policies in Education</u>

Participation and Enrolment

These policies and programmes by government and other organizations have led to a tremendous increase in female enrolment at the primary level in most districts. The three northern regions however have experienced less than proportionate increases in enrolment and participation despite the numerous and large-scale girls' education programmes conducted within these regions. Ghana has made remarkable progress in closing the access gap at the primary and JSS between girls and boys and has made strides towards achieving the MDG goal of gender parity at primary education level. The data presented in the 2008 Annual Education Performance report suggests that there is no significant difference in national enrolment figures between boys and girls at the basic level. Total Primary GER increased from 86.5% in 2003/04 to 95.2% in 2007/08 while female gross enrolment increased from 83.1% to 93.0% in the same period. The gender parity index increased from 0.93 to 0.96 between 2003/04 and 2007/08. At the JSS level, GER soared from 70.2% in 2003/04 to 78.8% in 2007/08, JSS GER increased from 65.8% to 75.3% and gender parity for JSS also increased from 0.88 to 0.92 in the same period (MOESS, 2008).

However, there are still significant variances in male and female enrolment. The variations include spatial, poverty, rural-urban and levels of education differences. The gender difference widens at higher educational levels such as post basic (vocational and technical), secondary, and tertiary levels of education. Evidence from the Education Sector Review (ESR) corroborated this assertion. At the kindergarten level, gender parity was close to 1 (0.99), at primary level it was 0.96 and at JSS GPI was 0.92 in 2007/2008 (MOESS, 2008).

There are also poverty and spatial variations seen at the regional and district levels when considering girls' education attainment compared to boys.[12] The regions with a higher poverty incidence tend to have lower educational attainment and lower female enrolment. In 2004/05 when the national primary gender parity index was 0.93, the Northern Region had a GPI of 0.84. The gap is greater at JSS and SSS. This region also had the lowest number of female teachers (22.5%) as against the national female teacher participation rates of about 47% in 2007/08 (MOESS, 2006 and MOESS, 2008).

Although there have been great strides made in relation to girls' access and participation rates in education, less progress has been made on issues of educational retention, completion and achievement rates for girls in comparison to boys. National primary 6 completion rates for 2004/05 showed a gap of 7.17% between boys and girls and national JSS completion rates for 2005/06 showed a gap of 6.5% between girls and boys.

The BECE results for 2005/06 reveal that 62.08% of boys compared to 37.92% of girls (a gap of 24.16%) attained aggregate 6-30. The gap in achievement follows the similar pattern as access with spatial and poverty variations. The Northern Region has a gender achievement gap of about 40% (69.86% boys and 30.14% girls), while Central and Eastern Regions have about 15% achievement gap between girls and boys (MOESS, 2006 and MOESS, 2008). See annex 3 for BECE results for boys and girls with aggregate 6-30 by region.

Transition Trends

Recent studies show that transition from primary to Junior Secondary School (JSS) and the completion of JSS is improving for boys and girls. CREATE's Analytical Report (2006) revealed that the national transition rates from P6 to JSS 1 are usually about 92.9% but this is far lower for those living in rural and northern deprived areas. However, transition from JSS to Senior Secondary School (SSS) is below 50%.

The report of the President's Committee for Education Reforms revealed that only 40.0% of JSS graduates proceed to SSS, with only 10.0% of SSS students proceeding to tertiary institutions (GOG, 2002 in Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008). There are also significant differences between the population of boys and girls out of school at primary and JSS levels. At national level in 2007/08 15.8% (303,505) of boys between age 6-11 were out of school, compared to 18.4% (347,319) of girls of the same age group. In the Northern Region 23.7% (48,393) of boys against 32.8% (65,538) of girls of the same age group were out of school (MOESS, 2006b; MOESS 2007b &MOESS 2008b).

The gap between girls and boys widens at the JSS level indicating that more boys transition from primary to JSS. There are also more boys than girls at JSS schooling age (12-14 years) out of school. In 2007/08, at national level, the out of school population was 35.9 % (364,525) of boys against 49.1% (366,479) of girls aged between 12 and 14 years. In the same year, the out of school population in the Central Region was 29.2% (21,156) of boys and 32.2% (21,160) of girls. The out of school population for the Northern Region was 57.2% (40,160) of boys and 63.4% (38,335) of girls. (owever, it is worth noting that the number of out of school pupils include over-aged pupils) Ghana's

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[12] The Upper East Region may seem exceptional because of the problem of low access and participation of boys.

education system has a lot of over aged pupils both in primary and JSS. This is evident in the wide difference between Net Enrolment Rates (NER) and Gross Enrolment Rates (GER). While the gap between GER and NER is about 10% in primary it is more than double that at the JSS level. This has negatively impacted on retention, achievement and transition rates (CREATE, 2007). See annex 4 for NER and Out of School Population Gender Disaggregated for Primary and JSS, and annex 5 for a bar graph of Out of School Population for National, Northern and Central Regions. f.

When considering the trends on a regional level where girls' education interventions have been mainly targeted (northern Ghana), there has been gradual improvement in access and participation rates among girls as compared to other areas of the country. Nonetheless, the learning outcomes of girls continue to remain low, resulting in poor transition and retention rates particularly at upper primary, JSS and SSS. For instance, in the Northern Region, female primary net enrolment was 63.6% in 2006/07 and 67.2% in 2007/08 compared to 95.4% in 2006/07 and 98.4% in 2007/08 in the Central Region (MOESS 2007b & MOESS 2008b). The question remains as to whether the positive gains in net enrolment will be sustained once major food aid programmes targeted at girls (CRS and WFP) pulls out of the north (MOESS 2007b &MOESS 2008b).

Figure 2: Primary NER for Greater Accra, Central and Northern Regions
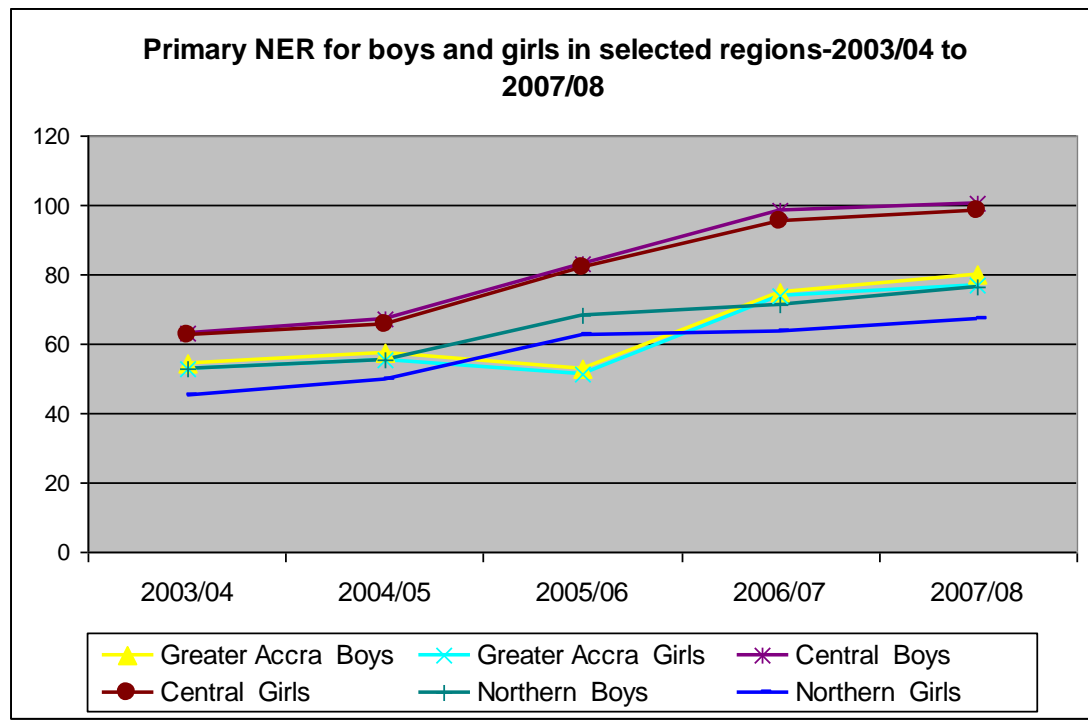
(Source: MOESS 2004 to 2008 EMIS Data)

Data from UNICEF's Multi Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2006 is less optimistic with regard to net attendance rates with a primary net attendance ratio of 54.6% for the Northern Region, 70.2% for the Upper East and 60.4% for the Upper West Regions of Ghana (UNICEF/MICS, 2006, p.81). The MICS study also found that attendance at primary and secondary level schooling increases by wealth. Figure 3: JSS NER for Greater Accra, Central and Northern Regions

JSS NER for boys and girls in selected regions -2003/04 to 2007/08
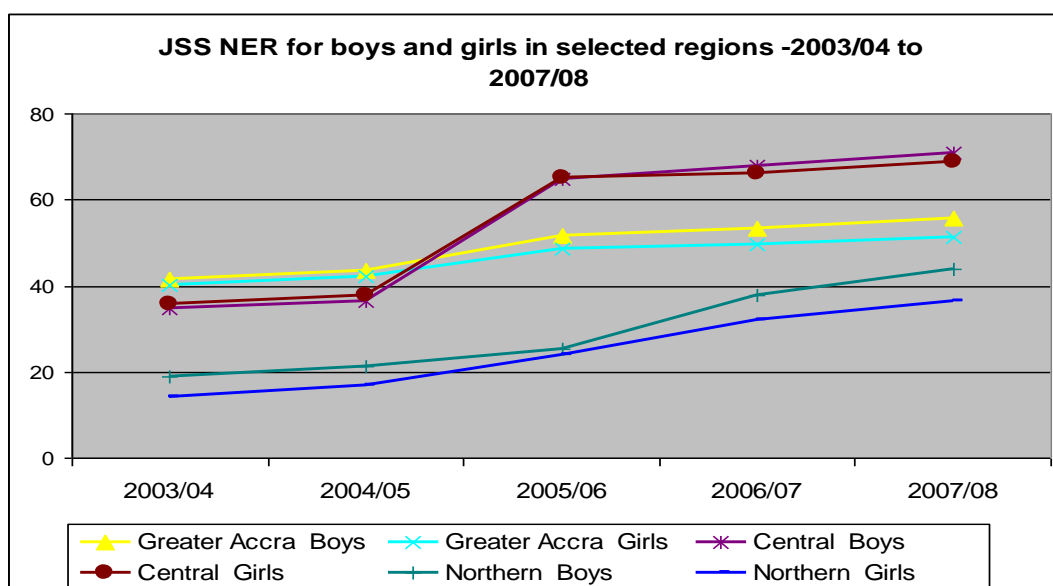
(Source: MOESS 2004 to 2008 EMIS Data)

With regard to NER at JSS level, there has been a tremendous improvement in the NER rates across the three northern regions over the last six years but the gap between the national NER (50.7%) and the NER's across the three northern regions remains quite wide (Northern: 35.1%, Upper East: 36.6% and Upper West: 41.4%). The gap is also visible for the NER for girls and boys across the same three regions compared to the national NER. In addition the NER is lower in northern Ghana than in southern Ghana and the gender gap is wider in the north than in the south (see Figure 3).

2.5   Impact and Effectiveness of Specific Programmes

The following section reviews the strengths and weaknesses of some of the government's flagship programmes which have attempted to address gender inequities in the education sector. Although targeting is not always carried out in the Government's Education Plans and Programmes, the monitoring of the education sector through the Annual Education Sector Performance Review does provide some evidence related to gender-disaggregated outcomes.

Capitation Grant

There have been several assessments of the capitation grant programme over the last few years, which indicate that the programme is making a positive impact on enrolment in schools across the country. CREATE (2007) estimated that the capitation grant alone led to a 17% increase in basic education. An assessment of the programme in ten schools in five selected districts in Northern and Upper East Regions by NNED (2004) showed that the introduction of the capitation grant increased enrolment and retention in most of the basic schools. NNED recommended that public education programmes should be organized in the communities to sensitise parents and guardians on the existence of the capitation grant and its objectives in order to lessen the financial burden of parents in relation to educating their children with particular reference to their girl-child.

However, it can be said that the capitation grant does not have any specific gender targets. It uses a single allocation formula, and does not have provisions for districts with endemic poverty and entrenched socio-cultural issues that affect girls' education, or districts with low girls' enrolment and retention.

School Feeding Programme

A study of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in 36 districts in 7 regions by the SEND Foundation, and another study by SNV and partners in all districts in the 10 regions revealed that there were increases in school enrolment as a result of the programme (SEND, 2008, SNV 2008). The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) undertook an assessment of the Pilot and First Implementation phases of the Ghana School Feeding Programme aimed at examining the impact of the pilot phase and the entire programme in relation to the EFA goals. The study concluded that in spite of the challenges of the food supply, the Ghana School Feeding Programme contributed to increased enrolment and retention in the schools being served by the programme[13] (ISODEC, 2007).

The School Feeding Programme, unlike the capitation grant, does not cover all schools. Even though the programme was first piloted in 10 schools drawn from each of the 10 regions of the country, it was expanded to cover almost 1,000 public primary schools by the close of 2008. The selection of the schools and geographical coverage of the programme however is not based entirely on poverty or gender disparities as would have been expected. Therefore the programme may not be effective in holistically addressing poverty and gender (access and retention) disparities in the educational sector. Its sustainability, due to the high costs incurred by government in its implementation, is a source of concern for development partners.

Girls' Education Unit and Other Organisations

The activities of the GEU and other organisations both international and local have helped to improve girls' access to education especially at the basic school level. However girls' education in some regions has not yielded the desired results when considering the amount of donor financing that has been invested, particularly to the north. Strategies for increasing the enrolment rates of girls appear to have been achieved but smaller programmes such as the multi-varied approaches by the GEU have not been fully funded or scaled up to have district level impact. MOESS is still not sure how to address the problems of low retention and high drop out. In its recent Education Sector Performance Report (2008), the following questions were raised, "why are pupils are dropping out? Is it that quality of teaching and learning is low or is it that there are low returns to education? Or something else?" (MOESS, 2008). In a similar vein, questions should also be asked in relation to the effectiveness of varied interventions in improving girls' education particularly in deprived areas where negative socio-cultural practices prevail.

There appears to be a weakness within Government and the development partners' commitment to consistently learn from the piloting of interventions in girls' education and to scale up to produce results. Systematic research, evidence and advocacy are

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[13] The numbers of schools being served by the Ghana School Feeding Programme were approximately 900 at this time. The programme is in less than 10% of the primary school across Ghana and still in its early stages of development.

needed within the sector to help policy makers sustain and advance the approaches to girls' education in Ghana.

2.6   The situation of Girls' Education in Ghana: Barriers and Constraints

The barriers to girls' education in Ghana are multifaceted and interrelated. Some of these barriers may also affect boys but they affect girls disproportionately (Boakye, 1997 in GEU, 2002). According to the GEU's National Vision for Girls' Education these barriers can be grouped into: "*barriers to access* which encompass traditional beliefs and practice, perception of the role of girls in the families and communities, cost to families, including the opportunity cost of sending the girls to school, and travelling long distance to school; second are the *barriers to retention* which include inadequate numbers of female teachers and role models, rigid adherence to school time and calendar, child labour requirements, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and inadequate sanitary facilities; and thirdly *barriers to achievement* which involve low self esteem, gender biases in classroom practices, minimal guidance and counselling services, teasing and sexual harassment".

Poverty is seen by the GEU as a crosscutting problem (GEU, 2002). NNED (2005) conducted a study on the extent to which northern Ghana is meeting the global targets of eliminating gender disparity in basic education. It found that poverty undoubtedly influences a family's investment decisions on the education of their wards and that girls have a higher chance of dropping out of school than boys due to a number of socio-cultural beliefs and practices that put little or no value on the education of girls. Consequently, children engage in risky and sometimes-promiscuous behaviour, which may lead to teenage pregnancies and abandonment of school by girls and engagement in work such as ('*kayaye'*).

According to WUSC Ghana (2007), girls' education in East Gonja, Northern Region is constrained by religious, cultural and socio-economic barriers. It is a commonly held belief in traditional Muslim homes in this district that higher education for female could lead to religious abandonment. Girls are therefore allowed to attend school up to a predetermined level and are then withdrawn. This practice is found in many districts across the north. The issue of higher education in relation to the abandonment of religious values is intertwined with the importance of successful marriage. Socio-economic and cultural practices such as the exchange in marriage, family betrothal, low value placed on girls' education, the absence of female role models for girls in the communities are among the main barriers for girls' education in the West Gonja district (WUSC/Ibis, 2007).

Similarly in West Mamprusi District, WUSC (2007) found that the factors that restrict girls' education include ignorance, too many household chores for girls, cultural priorities, lack of guidance and counselling services and lack of female role models. The study discovered that parents in the district are reluctant to financially support their children's basic education because the short-term costs of education (e.g. uniform costs, school book costs, not having the child to help on the farm) are perceived to be higher than the benefits. Also, cattle and marriage may be treated as more important than sending their children (girls) to school. Eventually, children in this situation are likely to drop out of school because of a lack of sufficient resources.

These constraints and barriers largely inform government policies on girls' education in Ghana. Policies and programmes geared towards improving girls education and closing the gap between female and male education are directed at alleviating or eliminating some of the barriers to girls' education (direct costs to parents, provision of basic needs for girls and improving the school environment). The deeper problems of poverty and socio-cultural transformation remain untouched in many cases by programmes which are designed to make short-term impact but fail to transform the educational outcomes for a generation of girls (NDPC, 2005:43 and GOG, 2006)[14].

2.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The evidence suggests that factors affecting girls' education, which are more socio-cultural in nature and related to traditional practices and entrenched beliefs, still persist and are inhibiting the effectiveness and sustained impact of efforts employed to enhance girls' education. The sensitisation and involvement of communities in the management of schools is an essential step towards creating awareness of the problems of girls' education. However a critical assessment of their effectiveness across different socio-cultural settings is necessary. The lack of change in northern Ghana's status in relation to girls' education attests to the dilemma of societies maintaining a pattern of life where the people are unable, and in some cases unwilling, to fully adjust their way of life to accommodate formal education as a means to human development.

The main finding from the Girls' Education Strategy study suggests that Ghana has continued to engage in a high level of piloting and experimentation with various approaches to improving girls' education. The problem remains in sustaining and scaling up these approaches in light of the fact that most donors are only able to commit to a three-to-five year time horizon. Well-tested sustained approaches, such as the female access courses to increase the level of female enrolment, are needed. Evidence and research based policy making within the girls education sub sector should help Ghana's girls' education sub sector move forward.

The issues of education quality, achievement and transition to higher education for girls needs more informed strategies within the ESP and serious consideration by Government if the gains in girls' education are to be maintained. The continual poor performance of girls in deprived communities and eventual dropout could further confirm the perception among some parents and community members that there is little return to girl's education.

A holistic approach to promoting gender equity and gender parity in education is needed. More importantly, a considerable investment is required to dismantle the socio-cultural barriers emanating from negative perceptions of the utility of girls' education by parents. This will require the use of behaviour change communication strategies that deploy culturally appropriate media to reach out to the ordinary people in all communities. Also strategies tied to poverty reduction and agricultural enhancement, which empower parents to take responsibility for their girl child education, will also go a long way in sustaining programme outcomes.

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[14] The recommended programmes and activities in the GPRS II and the Government's White Paper on Education Reform addressing gender inequity education make reference to these barriers.

Finally, the Government of Ghana through the MOESS has set several gender targets to be attained in the education sector but have not followed through with adequate strategies and programming to ensure that the barriers faced by girls in attaining entry and retention particularly at the post basic level of education are addressed. Much more work is needed to develop strategies for ensuring that a critical mass of girls become role models and teachers for the next generation.

3.0   Development Partner Interventions in Girls' Education

This section reviews the findings from the meso-level of the investigation that relate to the type of girls' education interventions and programmes which bilateral and multi lateral agencies are carrying out in the country. The chapter contains the following information:

- The main activities of multilateral and bilateral agencies working on girls' education;
- The approach these agencies take in relation to working with local partners;
- The scale and scope of their programmes;
- The monitoring and evaluation approaches;
- The effectiveness of these strategies; and
- The challenges which remain.

The multi-lateral and bilateral development partners working on girls' education issues and included in the review of strategies are: UNICEF, WFP, DFID and USAID. The role of these development partners is to promote a wide range of interventions and programmes including direct and indirect interventions to support girls across targeted districts. Some of these include: school feeding, scholarship schemes, water and sanitation, and school health education.

3.1 Interventions and Strategies

This section provides a quick overview of the key interventions of the multi-lateral and bilateral agencies working in girls' education. The World Food Programme (WFP) utilises food rations as its main strategy for promoting girls' education in Ghana. WFP provides over 30,000 girls' families with a take home ration at the end of the month if the girl has attended more than 80% of the school month. WFP works closely with the District Education offices and District Assemblies to implement their programmes and provides capacity building training of food storage.

UNICEF supports a number of capacity building programmes, which includes working directly with the DAs and GES. UNICEF has also co-operated with UDS to carry out capacity building programmes with the Ghana Education Services (GES) and DAs in their focal districts. Apart from direct supply of equipment to the departments in the various districts, they support officials and staff in education management including supervision, methodology, data collection and baseline studies. UNICEF also helps to upgrade the District Education advocacy skills to take ownership of education programmes. UNICEF is very active in girls' education programmes in terms of providing bicycles, uniforms and basic school needs to selected girls in target districts.

The following table outlines the main interventions being supported by each development partner included in this study:

Table 2: Interventions by Development Partners

Partner	Intervention	Policy Area /target	Scale
UNICEF	• Developing gender sensitive district education plans • Provision of bicycles for girls • Sanitation facilities (toilets, urinals, etc) • Making schools more child friendly • Community based monitoring system (CBMS) • Advocacy through radio and consultative fora • Supporting monitoring activities on girls education through FAWE	Access and retention Quality Access and retention	• Interventions in all 138 districts of Ghana. • Concentrated on the 15 low gender parity districts in Ghana.
WFP	• Onsite School Feeding - wet feeding for primary school children • Dry ration for primary school children in flood-drought and high food prices affected communities in Upper East and Upper West regions • Take Home Ration for girls who attend school on a regular basis	Improve access and retention of both boys and girls in primary schools Improve access and retention of girls in Upper primary and JHS	• 304 schools across the three northern regions with a total beneficiary figure of 100,000 school children • 20,000 school children in 99 schools receiving dry ration for 5 family members total beneficiary figure of 100,000 • 802 schools across the three northern regions with over 45,000 girls benefiting from the programme.
DFID	• School infrastructure and sanitation facilities for girls and boys	Access	• Almost all the districts in the north
USAID	• Scholarship Scheme Support (Girls Ambassadorial Programme) • Girls Mentorship Programme for 2800 girls since 2005.	Access and Retention Provides funding for partners such as ISODEC and Ark Foundation.	• 52 most deprived districts and communities with low GPI.

Apart from these interventions, the Girls' Education Strategy study revealed that all the four development partners work closely with the Ministry of Education/GES with the aim of providing improved leadership and capacity to promote girls' education at various levels including school community, district, regional and national. UNICEF supports GES at all levels to train its staff and develop plans whereas the emphasis of USAID and WFP are at the regional, district and school community levels.

UNICEF and DFID have also supported local organizations like FAWE, MURAG, GNECC and NNED to develop advocacy, communication and training materials with a focus on girls' education. These specific activities have jointly influenced policy. For

instance, all the partners indicated that their efforts have led to the abolishment of school fees, which has in turn brought about increased enrolment.

The nature of development partners' support has largely been in the form of funding, technical, logistic and capacity building. For example:

- UNICEF assists district education offices in the preparation of development plans. The capacity building support programmes of partners are geared towards gender capacity building initiatives.
- WFP builds the capacity of gender desk officers at both regional and district levels. In addition, WFP extends its capacity building programme to women at the community level in order to equip them with skills about promoting education at the grassroots level.
- DFID helps the Ministry of Education to analyse their strategic plans by using gender analysis.
- USAID builds the capacity of teachers and mentors for girls by working through other local partners such as ISODEC and ARK Foundation.

3.2 Approaches with Local Partners

Most of the bilateral and multi-lateral agencies who are involved in girls' education work through local NGO and civil society partners. WFP, USAID and UNICEF work through local partners (government and NGOs). This strategy has its inherent challenges and advantages in ensuring the programme goals are effectively pursued and achieved. For instance it is sometimes difficult at the district level to secure broad ownership by key stakeholders, such as GES, the DA and beneficiaries when local partners are used to implement intervention strategies. District Education Officers prefer to be the main agencies implementing education programming in the district and sometimes resist local NGO's working on these issues.

One of the main challenges faced by development partners in working with local partners is their capacity to implement. UNICEF and WFP have very few staff available to support local government and NGO partners in planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of girls' education interventions. One of the main findings from the study revealed that lack of co-ordination and baseline work results in the duplication of girls' education packages at the community and district level.[15] The WFP, UNICEF and USAID have contractual agreements with their partners and collaborators. Examples of local partners who are supported by bilateral and multilateral agencies are including in the following table.

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[15] The UN agencies working in Ghana have recognized the problem and have tried to limit their work to United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) – they are in all the districts across the three Northern Regions. However, UN agencies are still challenged by limited capacity and time to fully coordinate efforts working in these same districts.

Table 3: Local Partners Supported by Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies

Development Agency	Local Partners
UNICEF	• The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) • Muslim Relief Association of Ghana (MURAG)
DFID	• Ghana National Education Coalition Campaign (GNECC) • Northern Network for Education and Development (NNED)
USAID	• Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) • Ark Foundation of Ghana

The Girls' Education Study also revealed that the capacity building programmes of multi lateral and bilateral partners are mostly implemented through district and community level institutions. Some development partners create their own committees or local institutions to support girls' education initiatives at these levels and some use the existing local institutions. For instance, USAID and WFP have established local institutions (education development committees, women groups, etc) to ensure effective participation of community and parental participation in the education delivery process.

3.3 Development Partner Policy Dialogue on Girls' Education

All development partners interviewed in the study said they have worked towards the removal of school levies and other financial and non-financial barriers to educational access at the national level. This is aimed at improving life opportunities for girls (and boys). To achieve this, development partners engage in sector support and financing (UNICEF and WFP) through the ESP framework as well as multi-donor funding (DFID). USAID is still supporting government through project funding mode through the Education Quality for All (EQUALL) project.

Other major policy goals of donors who were interviewed include the reduction of violence against girls and removal of corporal punishment from the school system. WFP sensitises women groups in the communities as part of measures to reduce abuse and violence against girls in school; UNICEF, DFID and USAID also mentioned that they support their local partners to take up issues of violence and abuse against girls in school.

3.4 Scale and Scope of Programmes

The scale and scope of development partner and NGO programmes continues to remain small with very few programmes covering the entire district or region in the country. Most interventions remain piloted in a few communities and NGO's are unable to determine whether their interventions are having an impact on a sub-district or district wide basis. Much more work is needed to ensure that NGO programmes are not scattered across a number of districts but are instead more integrated within the regional and national strategic planning of the Government.

3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation Activities

The development partners also strengthen mechanisms and support to monitor the implementation of girls' education initiatives. UNICEF, WFP and DFID do this at the organizational level and through GES girl child officers. The monitoring activities of

USAID involve quarterly field visits to project sites and the inspection of monthly reports from local partners in relationship to performance indicators. UNICEF has supported FAWE to conduct an extensive monitoring process in the 15 districts with the lowest GPI.

Some development partners are involved in conducting their own research and evaluation activities to assess the effectiveness of their interventions in girls' education on a national and international level (e.g. WFP and UNICEF). UNICEF has conducted numerous and very comprehensive studies on the impact of girls' education activities in Ghana (Sutherland-Addy, 2002). They have also conducted more specific studies to investigate the impact of potential interventions on girls' reproductive health and its impact on attendance, and the evaluation of the girls' bicycle programme (J.K.A Boakye and J. Osei, 2004).

The challenge has been to link the varied research being conducted by a wide variety of agencies to the policy development and implementation processes. Most of the studies are presented at high level fora but do not translate into change at the national girls' education unit level. More dialogue and discussion is needed to translate the findings into action at the regional and district levels. One approach to improve the situation of linking applied research to policy making may be to have girl's education sub regional coalitions as a part of ongoing efforts of NNED and GNECC and to ensure that the GEU is given adequate financing to bring together partners on a regular basis to review the latest research results.

3.6 Levels of Effectiveness of Girls' Education Strategies

The Girls Education Strategy study asked the four development partners to reflect on the level of effectiveness of current girls' education strategies being used in Ghana and what they would like to see changed. All four development partners believe that the abolition of school fees was one of the most effective strategies for the promotion of girls' education since it helps to reduce the barriers to girls' access to education. DFID also mentioned the need to improve the quality of education as one of the most important strategies in order to reduce the number of dropouts and ensure retention of the girl child, particularly in the Northern Region. USAID and WFP both acknowledged the powerful cultural influence on the attitudes and behaviours of parents towards their girl children and felt that much more work is needed in order to see real change in northern Ghana. All development partners agreed that although school feeding was a very effective approach for attracting and retaining girls in school in poverty zones in Ghana, sustainability of the strategy would be a challenge to the government, and more cost effective solutions were needed.

Two of the development partners (UNICEF and WFP) have conducted studies to review the effectiveness of their strategies. The WFP conducted an impact assessment in 2004 to assess the effectiveness of their Girls' Education Programme and found that:
- The take home ration programme has made a major impact on the enrolment rates of girls across the three northern regions; annual growth in enrolment in these regions increased on average by 8.4% per year from 1998 to 2002.
- Girls' enrolment increased from 44.3% in 1998 to 78% in 2002 in the WFP schools.

- Attendance rates of girls also increased during this period to over 85% attendance rates for girls in grades 1 to 5.
- Overall the gender gap narrowed with the take home ration helping to improve the gender parity index particularly in the Upper West Region where it reached parity.
- The evaluation also suggests that take home rations are a good strategy to help retain girls and assist them complete primary education.

UNICEF also conducted a study on the effectiveness of their bicycle programme for girls. The study found that:
- Bicycles help to improve enrolment, retention and performance;
- Bicycles led parents to understanding the importance of girls' education.
- Improve social relationships and amenities;
- Reduce migration among girls to the south of Ghana.

The study also highlighted the practice that existed before bicycles were given to girls: This was where girls would have to "pay" the boys back with sexual favours if the boys drove the girls to school on their bicycles. The study found that giving the bicycles to girls has reduced sexual activity among the girls and boys,thereby reducing teenage pregnancy.

The development partners agreed that their strategies and programmes had overall been quite effective in supporting the Government to implement policy. They mentioned that it was through the monthly education strategic sector meetings and reviewing of the education sector plans on a yearly basis that had enabled the government to move towards major policy shifts such as school fees being abolished. Some of their suggestions for improving the situation of girls' education in Ghana included the need to help government focus more on "gender budgeting" as a method to track expenditures and support to girls' education. All the donors mentioned that the under-funding of girls education was the major challenge in relation to its promotion and attainment of MDG 3 in Ghana.

3.7 Challenges in Girls' Education: Development Partner Perspectives

Development partners observed that the challenges facing educational development at all levels include:

- A gap in terms of human and financial resources at all levels of education.
- Conflict between government's commitment to MDGs and the recent new education reform which emphasises post-basic education.
- School feeding programmes are seen as a stopgap measure and not sustainable due to the high costs. The programme is also small in size and the coverage is very limited. In addition, there are politics involved in the implementation of the school feeding programme in the districts leading to discrimination against certain communities.
- Some development partners believe that current educational strategies "over emphasis girls to the neglect of boys". This is likely to cause imbalance because more boys from the north are dropping out of school.

- Under funding facing UNICEF, DFID and USAID which also has an affect on their partners.

Surprisingly, despite the scientific evidence in relation to why girls' education is important for Africa, interviews with senior governmental officials in Ghana and development partner agencies reveal that the key decision makers are not fundamentally convinced that girls' education is worth a full and concerted effort. They continue to hold on to the need for the boy child by asking, "but what about the boy child?" The fact of resource scarcity within the education and social sectors of Ghana demands that the government make hard and strategic choices. However policy makers continue to shy away from targeting on a gender basis, and efforts to ensure that girls are retained and transitioning to higher levels of education are not realised. When difficult policy decisions are being made to target girls in order to ensure that they can meet the international targets and national goals, resources and programmes remain untargeted (i.e. capitation grant and school feeding).

The main problem is that the Government has not put in any major policy thrust for girls' education strategies. There are several small specific initiatives financed through the girls' education unit in collaboration with other major donors, but these do not appear to be on a wide scale. The government did consider during it's deliberations on the capitation grant whether girls should receive more financing than boys at school but this was not implemented. There are no large scale and sustained interventions on a national level which are strategically focused on girls' education. The WFP sponsored programme, which was the only large-scale girls' education program, is on the verge of completion and will be phased out in 2010. Other major strategic interventions such as the girls' scholarship schemes by USAID and the bicycle programme by UNICEF are also on a very small scale.

3.8 Conclusions: Girls' Education Interventions and Strategies by Bilateral and Multi Lateral Donors

The study reveals that development partners in Ghana are not following any coordinated or overarching pattern to guide their efforts on girls' education particularly at a district and regional level. Despite the fact that the Girls' Education Unit and Basic Education Division have hosted several meetings to help coordinate development efforts in the girls' education sector and developed a strategic plan in 2002, there continues to be a high amount of individual agency initiatives in girls' education which remain uncoordinated. More work is needed by the Ministry of Education to guide bilateral and multi lateral agencies in their support to girls' education in order to attain a comprehensive regional or sector specific strategy.
The Girls' Education Strategic Vision Document (1995-2005) is not widely known as a comprehensive policy document or fully integrated as a part of the ESP process and therefore has not been given much attention. Other priorities by donors may also have been a reason that some of the girls' education local partners' believe that donors are more interested in other priority areas (HIV /AIDS) and have lost interest in girls' education or are not placing the same emphasis on this sub-sector as they did in the mid to late 1990's.

Another major finding of the study is that most of the donor interventions and government policy thrusts are in the direction of improving access and participation at the basic education level. There are not enough donor interventions focusing on quality improvement that would help girls' retention, transition, completion and achievement trends across the country.[16] The low achievement levels of girls directly impacts on their ability to transition to higher levels of education and become role models in their community. The work done by WUSC in the late 1990's confirmed that quality of education was critical for sustaining access gains for girls and ensuring that they reach at least secondary school levels of education. Unfortunately, the WUSC comprehensive approach to girls' education tested and piloted in several districts over a five-year period by the WUSC programme (1997 to 2002) was not sustained by the government. The study reveals that donors and other supporting agencies are developing new girls' education strategies when old strategies for addressing girls' education which have been well tested, could be built upon.

Three major lessons appear to evolve from the study, which are:
- The need for more emphasis on improving retention and completion rates among girls;
- The need for more emphasis on improving quality and achievement rates in order for girls to transition to higher levels of education; and
- The need for donors to agree on mainstreaming interventions related to improving quality in order to ensure that girls' education is properly mainstreamed within the ESP framework.

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[16] The VSO programme for TENI promises to do this in six districts across the three northern regions of Ghana.

Chapter 4: International NGO's and their Interventions in Girls' Education

4.1   International NGOs: Their Intervention Strategies and Scale

In this section we will be discussing the findings related to the International NGO interventions in Ghana. We begin by looking at the main International NGO approaches, and profiling selected NGOs which were interviewed in the Northern and Southern Zones. The section also reviews some of the main challenges NGOs are facing in the Northern and Southern Zone in their delivery of girls' education programming. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the impact and effectiveness of INGO strategies in girls' education across both study regions.

Representatives from five INGOs were interviewed in the study from the Central and Northern Regions of the country. These included: Action Aid International (Ghana), Plan International, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), OXFAM and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). These INGOs were selected because they work directly with key stakeholders in education, particularly with the GES, and have a gender /girls education dimension to their programming. Table 4 below provides an overview of the INGO activities and interventions, their scale and regions of focus:

Table 4: Development Partners and Specific Girls' Education Activities

NGO	Specific Girls' Education Promotion Activities	Access, Retention or Quality Strategies	Scale and Scope of Interventions	Region of Focus
AAIG	- Provision of school infrastructure and TLMs - Building of sanitary facilities - Annual girls education camp, recruitment of female REV teachers as role models	Access and Retention	Several communities across 3 northern regions of Ghana	Northern Ghana
Plan Int.	- Provision of school uniforms and school buildings (147) - TLMs - Scholarships for 806 girls in SSS, 25 in university and 100 in vocational training - Instituted school performance test for pupils	Quality and Performance	5 districts and over 64 communities in the Central and 2 districts in the Upper West	Central Region and Upper West Region
VSO	- Girls' Ambassador (at both school and community levels) - Organise visits to role models for pupils - Training of teachers to become mentors	Quality and Performance	3 Northern Regions	Six Districts in Upper East, 3 districts in the Northern Region

NGO	Specific Girls' Education Promotion Activities	Access, Retention or Quality Strategies	Scale and Scope of Interventions	Region of Focus
	• Organizes study tours for education directors and their assistance			and 4 districts in the Upper West
OXFAM	• Community sensitisation programmes using radio programmes, and drama • Annual community durbars • Child forums[17] • Formation of girls clubsexcursion to town and surrounding villages conducting special examination for girls	Access and Participation	17 communities in the Upper East and Upper West	UE and UW
FAWE	• Organises boarding facility for SSS girls • Use of girls clubs • Role models, mentorship sensitisation and scholarships • Regular forum for girls and invitation for drop-out girls to tell their own stories	Access, retention and Quality interventions	27 focal districts	All the regions including VR, AR, WR, BA, NR UE, UW, CR and ER

Source: Field survey, 2007.

Studies on the impact of girls education in Ghana (Sutherland Addy, 2002) suggest that girls' education activities in Ghana range from:
- Research, Advocacy and Community Sensitisation
- Scholarship Schemes
- Formation of Girls Clubs
- Micro Credit Schemes for Parents
- Community Mobilisation using PLA

4.2   Profile of Some Selected INGOs in Northern and Central Regions

The findings from the study indicate that there are districts in the Northern and Central Regions with several interventions in girls' education (high intervention districts) and also districts where there are very few interventions. The study revealed some important insights into the outcomes in relation to girls' education between these two types of districts. Before moving into this analysis we will profile a few of the INGOs which are operational in the high and low intervention districts.

Table 5: Classification of Interventions in Districts According to Level of Intensity

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[17] The child forum is a platform created to allow children to narrate their own thinking and observations about community life in relationship to barriers to education.

Intensity Level of the Interventions	Districts in the Study	Names of some of the INGO's and Bilateral Programming Operating with Girls' Education Programmes
High Intervention Districts	Savelugu Nanton Gusheigu Karaga	WFP Girls Take-home ration UNICEF USAID Camfed World Vision Tuma Kavi
Low Intervention Districts in Central Region	Ewutu Efutu Senya Gomoa East Gonja	Plan International World Vision Challenging Heights UNICEF
Low Intervention Districts in Northern Region	Bole Sawla Tuna Kalba East Gonja	Camfed Ibis EQUALL

There are several NGO's operating in the Northern Region of Ghana. Two of the most well-known sponsorship programmes are the RAINS/Camfed Girls' Education Programme and the World Vision International Programmes. Both programmes are fundamentally sponsorship programmes but use different approaches and packages to meet the needs of girls in their intervention districts.

Box 4: Case Study on Rains and CAMFED

The RAINS and CAMFED Girls' Education Programme has been working in the Savelugu-Nanton District since 1996 and in Bole and Gushiegu Districts since 2001. The organisation's principal focus is to promote access to education for the girl child. The strategies used by RAINS/CAMFED to promote girls' education are comprehensive and involve interventions at the child, school and parental community levels. At the school level CAMFED provides:

- Infrastructure to construct classroom blocks, renovate school buildings and construct football fields
- Recruitment of female voluntary teachers to serve as role models, counsellors/advisors for the girls in the school and to sensitise community members about the need to send their girls to school
- Supporting GES in developing the capacity of their teachers on general issues of child education
- Targeting schools with high dropouts of girls and providing them with basic needs such as uniforms, sandals and books

- RAINS also establishes Community Development Associations (CDA) at the district level. The CDA is made up of GES Girl-Child Officers, a chief, and representatives from District Assembly, Dept of Social Welfare, CHRAJ and the Police. These people are involved in educating parents to send their girls to school, assist in identifying children not in school and sending them back to classrooms. While at the school, teachers are given some stipends to give counselling and advice to girls.

The impact of their approach has been widely felt. Ithas led to increased enrolment for girls and turned some schools into girls' schools. In 2003 CAMFED supported several hundred individual vulnerable girls across the district. Collaborating with other development partners RAINS works in partnership with the District Assembly and GES. It also cooperates with IBIS, UNICEF and Youth for Life but on a limited level. On the other hand, it has some joint programmes with ADD and GIGDEV. Though RAINS operates in the same district as World Vision International and Tuma Kavi, no working relationship exists between them.

4.3 Profiles of INGO's Working in Girls' Education Interventions in the <u>Central Region</u>

There were five international NGO's involved in the study in the Central Region. These included: Plan Ghana, Challenging Heights, International Needs, Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) and World Vision (WVI). The International NGOs implement numerous educational programmes. Their main strategy in tackling girls' education is the provision of child sponsorship. Through the child sponsorship approach, organisations are able to implement the following interventions:

- The provision of school infrastructure (all schools built have library and toilet facilities);
- Organisation of in-service training for teachers at childhood centres;
- The provision of teaching and learning materials (textbooks, teaching aids, etc;)
- Offering of scholarships for needy but brilliant girls; and
- Mentorship and education sensitisation outreach programmes.

Child sponsorship is also complemented with micro-credit support schemes. The rest of the NGO's implement anti-child labour education programmes, guidance and counselling services to children, school feeding programmes with education on food nutrition habits and environmental protection (tree planting). See annexes 6 and 7 for profiles of World Vision International and Plan Ghana.

Table 6: Other NGO's operating in the Central Region

Name of NGO	Activities
Challenging Heights	Challenging Heights is another NGO engaged in promoting quality teaching & learning. Awareness and community sensitisation on girls' education is the organisation's main programme. The organisation works in partnership with the District Assembly and receives financial assistance from the World Bank and The British Council.
Ibis	Ibis is engaged in providing access and quality education for out of school children in focal districts encompassing refugee camps. The Ibis Education for Change programme is focused on girls and works in partnership with the District Education Officers to promote quality teaching and learning, child centred methods and improved supervision. Ibis also builds capacity of SMC's and PTAs.
International Needs	In dealing with girls' education, International Needs grants sponsorship to children, the majority of whom are girls. The organisation works in partnership with GES as it's major role involves capacity building for GCOs, SHEP, Early Childhood Officers and Community Participation officers on child labour issues.

The sampled NGOs in the Central Region are engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities. Specific monitoring activities included the organisation of programme assessments and reviews, stakeholder reviews and impact assessment, review of the Community School Improvement Plan, pupil performance reviews and tracking academic

progress of those receiving scholarships. Others are follow-up visits/projects and informal feedback from beneficiaries.

4.4   INGO Approaches, Partnership and Community Involvement

The study found that the main approach of INGOs was to work with local NGOs, communities and districts stakeholders in trying to improve and promote girls' education. The international NGOs regard the community and parental participation in the educational delivery process as key to achieving quality education. As such Ibis and Action Aid (AAIG) provide support to local NGOs like NNED and GNECC to set up District Education for All Teams (DEFATs). The DEFATs are involved in monitoring district activities in relation to achieving the national and international targets for education such as Education for All and MDGs on education and gender parity. DEFATs have played a significant role (tracking of resources) in ensuring efficient allocation of resources such as the capitation grant. The community members' capacity building process is centred on local structures such as SMCs and PTAs.

VSO and Oxfam build the capacity of community members to engage effectively with the District Assemblies. Oxfam works through partners and communities. The advantage with working with local partners and communities is that they have understood the need to promote girls' education. They also work to sensitise communities on the issues of girls education; together with the positive signs of government commitment it is seen as a great opportunity by the international NGOs for promoting girls education.

FAWE Ghana works with focal point persons who are the staff of the GES and DA's. FAWE also works with policy makers, donors, traditional authorities as well as the youth who are mostly girls in and outside of the school. FAWE Ghana with the support of UNICEF has trained 2,616 community members in 436 communities in community based monitoring systems (CBMs) and 6 people who constitute the community based monitoring team are in each community. These community based teams monitor schooling in their community in order to ensure that all the children of school going age are enrolled and that dropouts go back to school and complete the basic cycle of education.

The committee approach in building capacity at the local levels is also used by the international NGOs. For instance, Plan International sets up local committees at the community level that are involved in head counting of children of school going age with the aim of ensuring that they are enrolled. Another committee, namely the Enrolment and Retention Committee, was set up by VSO to promote quality education. Teachers and chiefs constitute the focal persons for effective working of the Enrolment and Retention Committees. The committees are easy to form and manage.

4.5   Overall Findings from the INGO Meso Level Analysis: Nature and Scale of Activities

There was general agreement among NGO's as to the main problems facing girls' education in their districts. Most of the INGO's interviewed in the Northern and Southern Zones (Central Region) agreed that the main problem was the transition of girls from upper primary level to JSS due to:

- Teenage pregnancy;
- Economic constraints (poverty);
- Absence of role models; and
- High interest of girls in income generating activities.

Enrolment rates for girls were also described as poor resulting from the low appreciation of girls' education among parents, peers and community members. Child labour was also a reason sited, particularly girls spending their time selling on market days. Stakeholders interviewed in the study reported that when girls engage in petty trades it "kills their interest to stay and learn in school".

The study found that the INGOs were engaged in specific girls' education promotion activities which improve the school and classroom environment such as:
- The provision of school infrastructure;
- Providing Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs); and
- Building of sanitary facilities.

The INGOs also lent support to efforts aimed at building the confidence and self esteem of the girls through the following activities:
- Annual girls' education camps;
- recruitment of female REV teachers as role models; and
- Scholarship schemes.

The INGOs focused their programmes on improving the quality of classroom teaching and performance of girls by:
- Instituting school performance testing; and
- Conducting special examinations for girls.

The analysis of the findings from the Central Region suggests that despite the efforts being made to attract and retain girls in school through the sponsorship strategies, girls need much more counselling and mentoring in order to ensure they transition to the JSS level of education. The pressure of peers and engagement in petty trading activities can lead to early pregnancy and withdrawal from school if parents or older women in the community do not properly mentor them[18].

The Sutherland Addy (2002) study found that most NGOs' engage in advocacy and sensitisation of communities and as a consequence this is one of the strongest areas of activity. Scholarship schemes were also a highly pervasive intervention, and the formation of girls clubs was having a transformative impact on girls by increasing their levels of confidence and studiousness. The study also found that micro credit schemes for parents have been working alongside as a key component of some girls' education programming. More collaboration is needed with implementers with expertise in the area,

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[18] Studies on Egypt's models for promoting girls education suggest the need for community based mentors to ensure that the investment being made in girls education through scholarship schemes are realised and the transition is made to higher levels of education. Girls clubs are also proving to be a viable alternative to strengthen individual self-esteem and provide girls with guidance and counselling (Casely-Hayford et al, 2002).

and it was observed that some NGOs are stretching their capacities to implement programmes.

Scale of Activities

Overall the Ghana Girls' Education Strategy Study revealed that the scale of INGO interventions is relatively small in comparison to the donor/government interventions being implemented. Usually INGOs' programmes were targeting 1 to 3 districts reaching a maximum of 1,000 girls. The Ghana Education Service was mainstreaming only a few of the INGO programme strategies and approaches.

Unlike the bilateral and multilateral development partners who have large-scale interventions, which focus on access and participation of girls in school, International NGOs were making attempts to improve the quality of education for girls and expand their knowledge in specific areas such as reproductive health and HIV/AIDs but on a much smaller scale. The International NGOs are also aware of the need to transform the communities' attitudes and behaviours in relation to girls' education and are engaged in conducting sensitisation programmes for parents and community members. VSO, Oxfam and FAWE are all involved in strengthening training in life skills development and training teachers on child rights issues. For instance, in addition to teacher training, FAWE, Oxfam and VSO sensitise community members on child right issues, youth reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. This is mostly accomplished through the organisation of workshops. FAWE has also established a leadership-training centre for girls who could not continue on in JSS/SSS.

4.6   Implementation Challenges for INGO's in Northern and Central Regions of Ghana

There were four main weaknesses identified with the strategies of INGO's across the Central and Northern Regions. These included:

- Inadequate financial resources to implement programmes;
- Lack of information sharing, lesson learning and collaboration among INGO's;
- The large diversity of interventions which limits the focus of programming; and
- Not enough emphasis on behaviour change.

Financial Constraints

The key challenges for most INGOs were the dwindling financial resources, and the movement/change in organization policy from service delivery to advocacy. The lack of sustained commitment to girls' education programming was seen as the great challenge to promoting girls education in the country. Two of the five international NGO's were facing severe financing problems in either delays or overall lack of core funding.International and local NGOs across the northern and southern zones complained of limited financial support because of growing demand for their services as well as increased outreach programmes. Interviews with key stakeholders suggested that "projects are donor driven which serve as a threat to NGO programme sustainability".

Collaboration between NGOs

The main findings from the Girls' Education Strategy Study was that collaboration among international NGOs was found to be very limited and in most cases non-existent. This had a serious effect on the INGO's ability to demonstrate results/impact on a district or regional level and thereby promote scale up/take up of approaches by government and donor agencies. This is similar to the pattern found among bilateral and multilateral agencies, where each agency recognised the importance of girls' education but found their own ways to implement a girls' education component without having to collaborate with others. The study revealed that INGOs did not see any enhanced value in collaboration and no real reason for collaboration. This resulted in several high intervention districts (e.g. Savelugu and Gusheigu) experiencing duplication in interventions with support often reaching the same girls and families. Apart from duplication of sponsorships programming there is also a lack of strategic approach to support where each NGO could be offering their expertise in a particular area.

Box 5: Case Study of Gusheigu Karaga District

In some of the high intervention districts where girls were interviewed by the study teams it was revealed that they were receiving more than three packages from three different donors/INGO's. For instance, some girls interviewed in Gusheigu Karaga District were receiving WFP take-home rations, bicycles from UNICEF and a sponsorship package from World Vision. However they were not attending school regularly or had dropped out. The study team met a girl wearing a school uniform she had received from the World Vision sponsorship package, riding a UNICEF support bicycle and was on her way to the farm with her parents. The team found that many of the girls receiving these incentive packages were over aged and had been enticed by peer pressure to drop out, were pregnant or not interested in continuing onwards in school. These findings indicatede that material support alone was not enough to sustain and retain girls in school. More psychosocial counselling and mentoring was needed to encourage them to stay in school.

The lack of collaboration among INGOs working on girls' education issues was an important finding of the study and one that the Girls' Education Unit has recognised for the last ten years. Unfortunately, this finding from the study demonstrates that there is still a great need for District Assemblies and Regional NGO umbrellas such as GNECC and NNED to insist that more INGOs and NGOs work together within the district.

The study found that the lack of information sharing among NGOs posed a great challenge to the effectiveness of NGO strategies and the promotion of girls' education particularly on a district and regional level. Limited resources and small scale interventions by a variety of INGOs were not only badly coordinated, but there was also a lack of a common platform to discuss educational achievements and progress in order to learn and plan for scaled up interventions. Finally, the collaborative efforts of NGOs lack contractual agreements leading to weak commitment by collaborators such as district assemblies and district education offices.

Large Diversity of Interventions and Lack of Focus

The main pattern of activity revealed in the study was that INGOs were attempting to do many different things at the same time and sometimes interventions were not well planned or executed (e.g. micro finance). A diversity of approaches is needed to tackle the problems of girls' education in the Northern and Central Regions but it is unlikely that one NGO is able to execute all these interventions at the same time. The study found that this was a weakness in most of the INGO programme strategies. For instance two INGO's may be providing sponsorship support for girls (basic needs sandals and note books at schools) meanwhile there may be more of a need for these girls to have counselling to ensure that their psycho social issues are addressed to prevent drop out. The study found only one collaboration attempt between INGOs – In 2006 AAIG and Plan International worked together to support a girls' education camp.

4.7 Impact and Effectiveness of INGO Girls' Education Strategies and Interventions in the Northern and Central Region

Very few of the NGOs had evaluated their work over the last few years in terms of impact and effectiveness in relation to girls' education in Ghana on a district and regional basis. Sutherland Addy's work for UNICEF (2002) on the "Impact Assessment Studies of Girls Education Programming in Ghana" which covered a wide range of girls' education interventions across the country found that:

- The key to deepening the impact of girls' education interventions should be placing more emphasis on economic empowerment of parents, particularly mothers, in order to become independent of sponsorship and food incentives in the long run;
- Sustained sensitisation of education of parents and communities was needed and a move towards assessing the degree to which attitudinal change was achieved by these programmes; and
- More support to girls who qualify to make the transition to post basic education was needed as well as additional support/training to officers of agencies working to achieve improvement of girls' education in the field.

The Sutherland Addy study (2002) found that "interventions in girls' education were very small scale and too dispersed to act as a critical force." (pg xix). She noted that although there is a large number of actors in girls' education in some districts, this does not imply that the situation of girls' education is significantly improved." The study discovered:

- That the rate of improvement in the situation of girls was very slow. She noted that over the five year period (1995 to 2000) there was no change in drop out rates among girls, and there were transition problems.
- The take home rations were having a positive effect on girls' enrolment; the problem was that neither WFP nor CRS were always able to target the girls most in need in the schools and districts since there were so few girls in school to begin with.
- Parents interviewed had noticed a change of attitude among the girls who were receiving the sponsorship support: they were better behaved, greeted and helped

willingly with work in the house. They also said there were fewer of them moving south to become street porters in the markets.

- These programmes also helped raise parents' awareness and generated demand for economic empowerment by parents in order to cater for their children's needs through the provision of credit. Unfortunately the economic empowerment of parents was a missing dimension of most girls' education programming.

Studies by WUSC suggest that the education of the girl child is intimately linked to the empowerment of parents which will allow them to provide the basic needs for their children in the long term and when programmes begin to phase out. The two most widespread girls education programmes – WFP and CRS dry food ration for girls - have already phased out (CRS in Sept 2008) or are in the process of phasing out (WFP by 2010). The issues of sustainability and parental empowerment through livelihood programmes should be built into the initial designs of such strategies and build partnerships with NGO's who have expertise in these areas.

The WUSC study also found that outside the data banks and records of development partners, "documentation on girls' education has not been systematically consolidated." . The research noted that there were quite a few studies commissioned by a variety of institutions but the lessons learned from these studies were not consolidated. It recommended that the Girls Education Unit, "should have a regular review and impact studies to guide the implementation of national policy on girls' education and to enhance its coordination activities." The Girls' Education Unit also recognised that it should take a stronger role in trying to coordinate donor and NGO activities over the coming years but budgetary constraints have limited this role in the sector[19].

Findings from the Girls Education Strategy Study Related to Effectiveness

Most of the findings of earlier research suggest that there was very limited uptake of girls' education programmes by the government (Sutherland Addy, 2002; Casely-Hayford, 2002). The government's current school-feeding programme is very small in scale compared to the WFP programme, which was reaching over 400,000 children[20]. Currently, the Ghana school-feeding programme benefits a limited number of schools (approx. 990) across the entire country and do not target the poverty zones or communities.

INGO's operating across the Northern and Central Region pointed to the socio-cultural and poverty barriers continuing to limit their effectiveness in retaining girls in schools in the districts. International NGO's interviewed spoke of how the awareness of parents and communities had increased during their intervention phase and that "most people now see the improvement of girls' education … the problem is to do with some of the cultural practices and irresponsibility on the part of some parents." INGO's also pointed out that more work was needed in changing people's traditional and cultural attitudes towards their girl child. They also reiterated the need to move beyond strategies which focus simply on the enrolment drives and move towards more of a change in educational quality improvement in order to keep parents supporting their wards at the school. Box 6

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[19] The GEU and Girls Education Activities have no budget line in the Ghana Education Service Budget.
[20] The WFP school feeding and take-home rations for girls is currently being phased out and will pull out completely by 2010.

below outlines the dilemma in providing only material support to girls and not the psycho social counselling needed to ensure they are able to stay in school.

Box 6: Out-of-School Girls in Gushegu

One major problem confronting girl's education is teenage pregnancy as a result of peer pressure. Within the academic year that the Girls Education Strategy Study was carried out ten girls had dropped out of the LA Junior Secondary School in Gushegu due to pregnancy. Parents were upset about these happenings during the interviews with the field team. One parent said "it is painful to put in all efforts for girls to go to school then they (the girls) become pregnant …we hope there will be by-laws to punish the boys in and out of school who inpregnant the girls". The same incidence of early pregnancy among the girls and parental regret were echoed at Wantugu also in Gushegu District.

Although most people including school children appreciated the interventions to promote girls education, the field research team wondered if the interventions were enough to prevent teenage pregnancy and ensure girls to stay in school. A group of four girls who had dropped out of school were interviewed, (four other girls joined in the conversation later all carrying their babies, however could not be interviewed as they turned up at the end of the interaction). All the girls in Gushegu JSS were benefiting from various types of interventions and dropped out either in transition from P 6 to JSS1 or during JSS 1. They were all between the ages of 14-16.

Alimatu left school because she was inpregnanted by an SSS1 boy. She also explained she could not read although she was in JSS1. In school she was benefiting from the Camfed girl child programme and was receiving uniforms, sandals, books and food rations. Abibatu also benefited from the same Camfed interventions and said she left because of financial problems and also not having a uniform. Further probing revealed otherwise… that she did not have any good reason for leaving school and had bowed to peer pressure. Ajara and Weijela were also beneficiaries of the Camfed programme. Ajara said she was taking care of her nursing mother and the baby while Weijela blamed the father for being irresponsible. Apart from Alimatu who expressed an interest in going back to school if given the chance, the others were not so keen.

The Girls' Education Strategy Study revealed that there was a need for INGO's to focus not only on the provision of material support but also on ensuring counselling, mentorship and support services are being provided to the sponsored girls. NGO's and the GEU were well aware of the need to provide activities and approaches to introduce role models to the girls. One approach that was yielding some positive results was the usage of a girl's camp run by Action Aid and GEU. Studies in Egypt also suggest that the role models and girls' mentors should be identified within the locality for easy access by the girls particularly in times of need.

Most of the NGOs indicated they had influenced policy, the provision of capacity, and implementation by Government in various ways. Table 7 contains information regarding the effectiveness of programmes in influencing policy. The findings suggest that:

- Capacity building of community and district stakeholders in education is key to enhanced quality and performance of girls in schools;
- Flexible school systems can enhance the access and retention of girls in school; and

- Community ownership of programming can be a major reason for shifts in attitude and behaviour change among parents towards their wards.

Table 7: Effectiveness of INGO Girls' Education Programmes at Various Levels (Self Evaluation)

NGO	Effectiveness of Programmes Based on Self-Evaluation.
AAIG	Recruited and trained female volunteer teachers for deprived schools (Shepherd Schools) where there were no teachers; had increased access for out of school children by providing more flexible programmes such as the Shepherd School Programme; the programme has increased parents' willingness to enrol their children.
Plan Int.	Improved teaching and supervision as a result of motivating teachers and circuit supervisors (capacity building, teacher awards). This brought about improved teacher attendance and child educational performance. Increased enrolment due to financial and TLMs support. Increased retention of children because of the introduction of community register and increased involvement of the community members in the school has increased attendance of children of school going age. Offering support of teaching learning materials and support for needy children in the school has also helped.
VSO	Building the capacity of GES not only the teachers but also the entire educational team at the district levels. Improved school management due to building the capacity and supervision of teachers, circuit supervisors, head teachers, Directors and assistant Directors of education.
OXFAM	Enhanced community ownership of education projects and effective consultation between community education committee and school authorities. Increased community ownership of the programme. Where parents do not sanction it they fail to send their children to school.
FAWE	DAs and community members willing to support educational programmes and girls are now assertive and know their rights (e.g., the right to be educated); Increased community ownership of the programme in the 15 districts with the least GPI. Enhanced collaboration with stakeholders and policy makers.

Source: Field survey, 2007.

Other studies in Ghana point to the need to capture and sustain the out of school girl population through complementary systems of education. The School for Life Impact Assessment (2007) showed that girls' education in northern Ghana can be tackled when more flexible school systems are presented as an option for parents and implemented through community support. The School for Life programme was able to attract and support over 90,000 children in northern Ghana to attain a basic level of literacy and numeracy over a nine-month period. Half of these children were girls and many of them later opted to enter the upper primary systems of education. The study revealed that SfL girls often are the main participants in higher levels of education (JSS and SSS) since they become literate in the programme and are then determined to make it through the higher levels of education (Casely-Hayford et al, 2007).

4.8   Conclusions

The main findings from the meso level of analysis of the Girls' Education Strategy Study data suggest that:

- There is a need for more education and awareness raising which moves towards attitudinal transformation within families and communities;
- That government programmes such as the Ghana School Feeding Programmes should be targeted to the poverty zones and prioritised;
- More cooperation is needed between international NGO's and government in order to scale up specific girls' education strategies, which address girls' education; and
- More capacity building at community levels is needed to empower parents and communities to take responsibility for girls' education similar to the community based monitoring system set up by FAWE.

One of the major findings from the Girls' Education Strategy Study suggests that donors, NGO's and government are not building or sharing lessons learned after and during their interventions on girls' education. The girls' education programmes like the World University Service of Canada Programme (WUSC) which demonstrated the elements and levels of effort needed to build a comprehensive approach to girls' education in the most deprived districts of the country was not sustained by government and no other INGO's attempted to replicate the approach.

INGOs along with other development agencies in Ghana are continuing to implement measures which may have limited short-term outputs and some medium term outcomes. The study revealed that short-term responses such as school feeding and sponsorship are focused on the child's welfare and ensuring that the basic needs of girls are met. Long term transformation in relation to poverty reduction and socio-cultural transformation will be limited when reviewing the current strategies for girls' education in Ghana. More work is needed to trace the girls and families involved in these programmes to see the long-term impact in relation to dependency and empowerment issues of families.

The findings from impact and evaluation studies on Girls' Education (Casely-Hayford, 2007; Casely-Hayford, 2004, Sutherland Addy, 2002) suggest that short term girls' education interventions will not succeed in transforming the status of a generation of girls (15 year cycle) and the developmental results which are needed, due to the following reasons:

- They are focused on the access and participation of girls at the primary level but the girl child must reach post basic levels (SSS or technical) of education in order to have developmental impact on the social and economic status of her future family.
- The short term interventions may succeed in assisting them through primary and in some cases JSS. However the transition to higher levels of education requires more than material support; psycho-social counselling and mentoring are needed to ensure that the girl child reaches post basic levels of education and the social outcomes to education are realised by the family, community and nation.

- The study also found that material support alone was not enough to ensure that the girl child did not drop out at upper primary or JSS despite support from numerous incentive packages.
- Interventions related to improving the quality of education have not been brought to scale nor are they the main focus of most programmes. Therefore although the girl child may attend primary level of education her learning outcomes remain limited in achieving literacy and numeracy.
- The interventions also do not view the child in the context of the family where social and economic interventions to support the mother or family could help to sustain the gains made by empowering the family to take responsibility for the girl child's education and that of her siblings.

The inability of some parents to see the benefits of education served as challenges to some NGOs. This also resulted in the slow involvement of community members in issues affecting girls' education. Finally, the poor quality of teaching, learning, supervision and monitoring by GES were identified as great threats to sustaining the gains made in the promotion of girls' education.

Much more work is needed to convince International NGO's that working together on a district basis could yield greater impacts in their programming. Currently most of the INGOs interviewed are conducting small-scale programmes in isolation and have a diversity of goals and objectives on a community level but have limited impact on a district or regional level. More leadership is needed at the district, regional and national level to encourage INGOs to work together to reach broader education sector specific goals on girls' education including improved enrolment, retention and performance changes among girls and retention at higher levels of primary education.

Another major finding from the meso level of analysis of INGO programming suggests that agencies have to move beyond the sponsorship approach and food incentive programmes to aiding families to help their girl child through deeper approaches to economic empowerment of families. These livelihood programmes should principally help parents and female-headed households find income generating activities, which can empower them and sustain their families in the long run. The programmes can be tied to ensuring girls attend and stay in school.

5.0 Strategies for Girls' Education from District and Government Perspectives

The Ghana Education Service plays a major role in promoting education and supporting girls' education initiatives in the districts. The GES is in charge of designing the curricula and provides teaching and learning materials (TLMs). Other roles include the recruitment of staff, supervision of staff and networking (with other stakeholders in education). This chapter presents the findings from the research conducted at the district education and district assembly level across the eight study districts.

5.1 The Context and Constraints for Girls' Education from the Government Perspective

The Girls' Education Strategy Study revealed a number of constraints to girls' education. Various districts reflected on the problems and barriers to girls' education in their districts; this section reviews the findings. Particular issues identified by the Gushegu District Education office, Northern Region which related to the barriers to girls' education include: teenage pregnancy, Kayaye (porters), irresponsible parenting, farming and shea nut picking (a seasonal activity for young girls) as well as poor performance leading to drop out.

The interviews with key stakeholders in Savelugu-Nanton District, Northern Region revealed that the reasons for low enrolment, difficulty with retention and completion for girls were mainly socio-cultural. Child fostering was identified as the most important factor affecting the education of girls in the district. The explanation was that the fostered girls become very helpful to their aunties in terms of house and economic chores.

The Gushegu District Education Office also lacks specific or clearly defined objectives for girls' education because all district education offices depend on national policy. The dependency on national policy has several limitations. Examples of such limitations are delays in policy implementation due to bureaucracy and limited funding. In Bole and Sawla-Tuna-Kalba Districts, the authorities stressed that educational standards were very poor for both boys and girls. Therefore, while agreeing that girls' education needed attention, most of the DEO interventions across the northern districts interviewed targeted both boys and girls and used a "holistic" approach.

The experience of the GES in the Central Region reveals a disparity in the performance of boys and girls. Whereas most girls exhibit excellence in sports, the academic performance of boys appears to be better than that of girls[21]. Several reasons account for this. Firstly, parents/guardians have low appreciation for girls' education, which naturally discourages them from investing in girls' education. Secondly, most girls leave school to engage in income generating activities to earn income for themselves and their family. Lastly, girl children are prone to sexual harassment. Some male teachers have sexual relationships with girls, which invariably lead to teenage pregnancy, and dropout. The analysis shows that poverty, teenage pregnancy and child labour appeared as major factors affecting girls' education in the Central Region. The GES in Central Region also argued that it is not the priority of some parents to support their girl children even though they can afford to.

Community and social factors described by GES officials as major constraints to girls' education across the eight study districts are: poverty, teenage pregnancy, child labour and child abuse, less importance attached to girls' education, absence of female role models and sexual abuse by male teachers. Other school related factors are teacher absenteeism, long distances from communities to schools, and the unfriendly school environment. Finally cultural factors described by GES officials related to: domestic workload and cultural practices e.g. early marriage. The socio-cultural and poverty barriers to girls of school going age have resulted in large numbers of girls in the Northern Region not attending (over 40%)[22] and many more not transitioning to JSS

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[21] Teachers in the Central region argue that there exists an equal performance for boys and girls in all streams.

[22] Education Sector Plan (ESP), 2008.

levels of education. The constraints include poverty, child fostering, and irresponsible parenting and manifest themselves in the high rate of dropout among girls and health hazards resulting from early pregnancy and child labour.

5.2   GES Strategies to Address Educational Problems for Girls

The MOESS and GES have developed several strategies and initiatives for addressing educational constraints for girls. The main thrust of the GES District level strategies fall into the access and participation category of the ESP. There is much less emphasis on strategies for addressing the gap in girls performance and achievement rates or the transition and completion rates among girls. Box 7 below contains information regarding GES strategies in addressing girls' education.

Box 7: GES Strategies for Addressing Constraints of Girls' Education

- Appointment of girl child officers in the Districts
- Awareness creation and sensitisation of communities on girls' education
- Collaboration with professional women to serve as role models for girls
- Guidance & counselling for girls
- Formation of educative girls' clubs in schools
- Provision of school materials for needy girls
- Advocacy for girl friendly learning environment
- Lobbying for policy, which allows pregnant girls to sit for BECE exams, & reintegration of teenage mothers into schools;
- Partnerships with actors in girls' education (DFID, UNICEF, Plan Ghana, WUSC, Kakum Rural Bank, UNESCO, FAWE and MORAG (Muslim society).
- Monitoring and follow-up

Source: Field survey, Central Region, 2007.

Despite the overall strategies designed to address the constraints to girls' education, each district has designed specific strategies, which address their individual problems. For instance, in Gushegu District GES, where there is still a problem of out of school girls, they have embarked on:

- Counselling of school children, especially female children to stay in school
- Sensitisation of parents, guardians and traditional authorities on the importance of education
- Advocacy, which involves lobbying policy makers and key decision makers in the district,
- The District Education Offices collaborates with NGOs and development partners like WVI, WEP, UNICEF, RAINS/CAMFED to implement sponsorship/incentive packages such as take home ration, recruitment of teachers, supply of bicycles, uniforms, and sandals for girls

These strategies have resulted in increased enrolment in the lower primary levels but retention is still a problem in many districts in northern Ghana. For instance, the District Education Office in Savelugu-Nanton District organizes sensitisation and advocacy

activities on the rights of foster children to education. NGOs like WVI, UNICEF and WFP provide incentive packages, which include providing girls with uniforms, bicycles and food rations. There is a five year development programme focusing more on communities and competitiveness among girls in school, which requires constant monitoring by the office. GES has also instituted sanctions for boys who impregnate schoolgirls. This is aimed at reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancy that is mostly caused by peer influence. The District Education Office also organizes workshops to educate the community on the consequences of rape, defilement and other issues.

Capacity, Resources and Challenges

The study team found that in terms of resources, the Gushegu District Education Office has qualified personnel to handle girls' education issues but lacks financial resources. The personnel complained of not having received any capacity building training particularly in relation to gender awareness training for key staff of the DEO. Thus, the District Education Office that is responsible for ensuring capacity building of its staff had very few training programmes for its officers. Other agencies such as UNICEF, WUSC and USAID have all supported DGEO training in order to build their capacity and skills. Further, the Gushegu District Education Office has no specific targets against which progress on girls' education is measured. Again, the UNICEF programme has also a component for assisting districts to ensure that girls' education targets are mainstreamed into their district education plans.

Monitoring is done by the DGEO and reported to the Girls Education Unit and the Gender officer at the district assembly. The report is collected through visits to schools by the DGEO. The DGEO collects data, analyses and prepares reports highlighting enrolment and gender performance based on BECE terminal reports. According to the staff of GES, a continuous training of more teachers and the DGEO will be useful for improving the situation. The District Education Office lauded the contribution of their development partners in education. The explanation was that the strength of their partners lies in their ability to build capacities, provide resources and their ability to use strategies that yield maximum results.

5.3 Partnership Arrangements to Promote Girls' Education

The District Education Offices also partner with local and international NGOs to promote girls' education. The GETFUND serves as a major source of funding for school infrastructure projects across the districts. Table 8 contains information regarding the type of partners and nature of support available in the eight study districts.

Table 8: Type of Partner Organizations and Nature of Support

Name of Partner	Nature of Support
DFID	Provides funding for the activities of the Girl Child Officers
UNICEF	Provides modular training for GCO, bicycles for girls who travel a long distance to school, provision of office equipment for the office, wheel chairs for the disabled pupils
WUSC	Trains resource persons in M&E and forms education clubs in schools
Plan Ghana	Provides school infrastructure, vacation camps for girls, scholarships
Kakum Rural Bank	Provides school materials for needy girls

Name of Partner	Nature of Support
UNESCO	Provides micro-credit/finance for parents
MORAG (Muslim Society)	Assists needy pupils with funds.

Source: Field survey, 2007.

The Education Officer in <u>Savelugu-Nanton District</u> explained that the strength of their partners lies in their ability to encourage enrolment for kindergarten and lower primary. The DEO agreed that the sensitisation programme is making an impact in the district. The DEO is competent in terms of gender issues because it has well-qualified and experienced staff especially at the management level. Most of the staff have knowledge of gender issues, however there is a need to sensitise more teachers and circuit supervisors (CS) on girl child education issues. Follow-ups are done after each sensitisation programme in the communities to find out whether people understand the concepts. Regular reporting and briefing by GCO and CS are done during Monday staff meetings. The Director also follows up on girl child issues on her visits. The case study in box 8 below describes the impact of sensitisation initiatives in a rural farming Community in the Central Region

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Box 8: Girls' Education in Gyahadze Community, Central Region

Gyahadze is a rural farming community located around the fishing coast of the Central region 18km from Winneba. The situation of girls' education in Gyahadze is significantly better than most rural communities, where people are reluctant to invest in the education of their female children. In Gyahadze there is one JSS which admits pupils from the surrounding communities. From kindergarten to Junior Secondary School there is a higher number of girls than boys attending school, and there is equal performance of boys and girls in all subjects. The community members have said that in the past girls' education was not a priority; however this belief has changed because they have been exposed to the importance and outcomes of girls' education. They attributed this to the sensitisation and awareness creation activities on girls' child education, which has been taking place in their community. The mentorship programme implemented by a local NGO has also contributed to the increase in girls' enrolment and retention.

This programme trains up female members in the community to act as role models for girls assigned to them to ensure that they are attending school. The mentors will talk with parents of children who are not in school and encourage them to take responsibility for their children's education and to ensure that they attend.

One major constraint to girls' education in the community is the late attendance of teachers who have to travel long distances from outside of Gyahadze. Home factors include parents keeping girls at home to help with domestic duties; the long distances for pupils to travel from other communities without transport and teenage pregnancy which prevents girls from continuing their education. Interestingly, initiatives have come from within the community to address these problems. Community members are providing accommodation at a lower cost for teachers to live therefore reducing teachers coming to school late. To combat teenage pregnancy the elders have introduced rules to regulate the behaviour of young adults in the community. There is a curfew of 6pm for young adults to be outside of their home and sanctioning of parents and young adults if the curfew is broken.

A significant weakness in the operations of partners working in the Savelugu District is that some NGOs are unable to share information with other organizations for effective collaboration and to ensure coordination between different roles in order to avoid overlapping, and as a consequence, resource duplication.

The Central Region has not been focusing enough attention on girls' education due to a lack of financing and appreciation of the need to target girls. Interviews with the DEO in Apam revealed that there was a need for more appreciation of the type of interventions that would be effective in improving the status of girls in the district. An interesting intervention in the Gomoa district was a micro credit scheme for women linked to the enrolment of girls in school. This scheme was being operated by the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs. None of the Districts brought together NGO's on a regular basis to consult on girls' education issues and interventions. The study team also found it difficult to assess the effectiveness of girls' education strategies in these districts since no overall indicators and knowledge of interventions were being assessed. The challenge remains that there is a lack of technical expertise at the district level regarding girls' education interventions, a lack of financing, and any intervention being made is small-scale. There were also signs that the communities were becoming dependent on the interventions due to the welfare approach being used.

5.4 Effectiveness of the Girls' Education Strategies

Although the net enrolment rates for girls in the Central and Northern Regions appear quite different with the Northern Region having less than 67% of girls of school age in school at primary level compared to almost 98.4% in the Central Region, the strategies remain quite similar. Strategies in both the Northern and Central Regions continue to emphasis awareness creation on the need to send girls to school but the underlying factors of poverty, the need for child labour to increase the family income and the individual drive to work remains a problem. Interrelated to the need to work, particularly in the Central Region, is the exposure to early sexual activity by girls which results from peer pressure, violence or abuse in school or on the streets where girls sell goods.

Table 9: Effectiveness of GES Strategies in Promoting Girls' Education

Strategy	Effect	Need for change?
Sensitisation of parents and girls	Increased number of girls going to school	No
Food rations	Higher attendance	Yes (because it is not sustainable)
School material quality improvement and availability	Reduces burden on parents	No
Girls' education camps	Confidence-building	No
Transport for distant dwellers	They can commute easily	No
Sex education	Curbs teenage pregnancy	No
Use of role models	Young girls well informed of the need to be educated	Yes (role models need to stay in communities or visit regularly)

Source: Based on Interviews with GES staff across the eight study districts, Field survey, 2007.

Increased Enrolment rates

The findings from the study reveal that some girls' education strategies have had a positive impact on enrolment in the sampled districts. The number of girls going to school has increased across all eight districts but particularly in those districts with school feedings and take-home rations with CRS and WFP due partly to the scale of the interventions. Enrolment rates also increased in other districts but a district wide increase in enrolment requires a district level scale in interventions. NGO's need to support districts to better monitor their interventions. Most of the other interventions are not reaching the scale required to affect a district level increase in enrolment, retention or performance of girls.

Retention and Drop Out

The analysis indicates that the provision of uniforms and other basic needs of girls has increased the interest among girls to go to school but in some cases has not ensured that they remain in school at the upper primary levels. Interviews with girls that were receiving more than two or three incentive packages in the northern study districts of the country (Gusheigu and Savelugu) suggests that the age of the girl child and peer pressure were reasons for their drop out despite the material incentive programmes. Interviews with the children suggest that the school feeding programmes helped them stay longer in school and have minimized absenteeism.

Performance related interventions are also key to improving the retention and transition of girls from the upper primary level to the JSS. Performance related incentives were also needed to encourage the girls in moving to higher levels of education.

Self-esteem and Confidence Building

The study team found that girls in the para urban and urban areas were much more self-assertive compared with their rural counterparts. Several NGO's had focused on improving the self-esteem of girls through the usage of special vacation camps, but there continued to be insufficient usage of ongoing counselling as a means to assisting girls to stay in school. Very little training was going on for teachers in the classroom to ensure that they were able to conduct more gender sensitive approaches to girls' education. The World University Service of Canada was using a resource manual in some districts across the Northern Region to train teachers in gender sensitive approaches in the classroom but more work was needed to strengthen this initiative.

Another promising approach being scaled up by the Girls Education Unit were girls clubs in most of the schools. Interviews with Girls Education officers indicated that this was an effective approach to building their self-esteem and confidence, as topics such as reproductive health and child rights were being discussed in the clubs. Teachers were volunteer coordinators of the clubs run by the GEU. Some NGOs were also promoting girls clubs as a way of improving performance and retention of girls in school.

5.5   Capacity (resources) and Challenges

Interviews with District Education Officials suggested that the District Education Offices across the eight study districts face a lot of challenges. The major problem is limited numbers of officers in charge of girls' education. The findings show that the organogram of the Education Office makes provision for only one Girls Education officer to serve as the Girl Child Officer (GCO) for the district. This has burdened the few Girls' Education Officers and limited their effectiveness in supervising and supporting large number of schools and children across their districts. On average, the ratio of girls' education officers to schools in each district is 1:40. Consequently, monitoring and follow-up visits are poorly carried out in the districts resulting in poor monitoring and reporting. Follow-up activities are constrained by lack of finances.   DFID and UNICEF are among the few organisations that provide funds for the activities of the Girls Education Unit. The limited nature of funds compels the staff of the District Education Offices in the various districts to reduce the number and frequency of community visits. The availability of a single Girl Child Officer (GCO) per district suggests inadequacy in counselling focal persons for girls in schools.

5.6   District Assemblies Strategies and Perspectives on Girls' Education

Officers at the District Assemblies (DAs) were asked to describe the situation of girls' education in their respective districts. The findings show that the challenges as well as the strategies explained by the District Education Offices are similar to that of the DAs. For example, the Deputy Coordinating Director (DCD) in Savelugu-Nanton District stated that the Assembly is confronted with many social barriers including the withdrawal of children from school for poverty reasons[23]. Some of the worrying issues the District Assembly is faced with are that parents withdraw wards for various reasons. Other challenges are child labour, early marriage and child fostering. The Gushegu District Assembly revealed that over a thousand girls of school going age are still not in school due to the high value placed on boys' education relative to girls' education. Teenage pregnancy was also identified as a major cause of girls dropping out of school in the sampled districts. An unfriendly school environment also serves as a constraint to girls' education in the Central Region of Ghana.

The results from the Girls Education Strategy Study show that the DAs do not have specific girls' education policies or projects. The argument is that girls' education and its related problems are handled as and when they emerge from the communities. This is summarised in the statement of the DCD in Savelugu-Nanton District that "*when heads of schools bring up the issues of girl-child, it is given attention*". The DCD in Awutu Effutu Senya (AES) district in Winneba put it differently. That, "*due to tight budgets, we address education generally. Indeed, we do not have anything in place for girls' education*". A possible explanation for this stance is that the District Assemblies have no budget allocation for girls' education except the 2% of the District Assemblies Common

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[23] The DCD, however, admitted that there are genuine cases of poverty confronting some parents despite the introduction of the capitation grant. He explained that the issue of poverty is clearly manifested in communities with school feeding programmes because some parents send out of school children to eat in the schools.

Fund (DACF) which is allocated by each district to promote all educational programmes in the district and not for girls' education specifically.

The Assemblies have gender desk officers (GDOs) who monitor girls' progress. The Gushegu District Assembly has also put various measures in place to cater for girls' education. These interventions are mainly sponsorship packages and advocacy activities; the DA sponsors female students who are able to meet the criteria for tertiary (Training collages and Medical school) level, it has also established annual awards for best female students, but have indicated that those awarded individuals do not come back to help develop the area. In terms of advocacy, the DA interacts with opinion leaders to educate them. In response to how much money the DA allocates to girls' education, it was discovered that even though a projected GHC120m was budgeted for education, it was difficult to state the specific percentage for girls' education. However, part of this amount was used to cater for the WFP transport of food from the District Offices to the beneficiaries (girls).

Collaboration with Civil Society

An important strategy used by the District Assemblies to promote education is to collaborate with other stakeholders. For instance, the Savelugu/Nanton District Assembly (DA) collaborates with UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP) and World Vision International (WVI). UNICEF works with GES through the DA, while WVI works directly with the GCO. Gushegu District Assembly is in partnership with UNCEF, WEP, SFL, WVI, CRS, and IBIS – alliance for change. These partners mainly supply educational needs like bicycles (UNICEF), food (WEF), and others items that enhance girl's education to an extent. However the issue of teenage pregnancy still remains as well as other factors adversely affecting girls' education in the district. The DCE said when activities of partners are well co-ordinated, then the complementary strategy will help because the Gushegu DA does not get adequate funding for girls education.

In the Central Region, the DA's have a girls' in need sponsorship scheme, which provides eligible girls with school materials. The District Assemblies in the Central Region collaborate with Plan International Ghana (provideing school infrastructure and scholarships for students), ADRA (tree planting in schools), the Social Welfare Department (take care of child abuse cases in education) and Challenging Heights (programmes on enrolment of pupils in schools). Others are the Ministry of Local Government (partnership project in education, water & sanitation), Churches (provide school infrastructure) and GNECC (conducting of surveys in educational development).

The other district assembly strategies relate to monitoring which is carried out at the district assembly level with emphasis on tracking girls' performance. The District Directors of Education are supposed to visit schools in the communities weekly. Monitoring of girls progress is done by the DGEO at the district level on quarterly bases whereas the District Gender Officer (DGO) monitors gender specific projects. The District Planning and Budgeting Unit (DPBU) does the monitoring of all development projects in the district; monitoring is also done by circuit supervisors. In terms of reporting, the DGEO sends quarterly reports to the DA through the District Director of Education. However, monitoring in all districts is irregular because of limited funding.

At the district education directorate level, the findings from the study show that there is no specific target for girls' education against which progress is measured. DAs have no overview of all gender related activities by actors in the districts. Again, there is little or no collaboration between DAs and NGOs operating in education. The absence of such collaboration leads to duplication of efforts and wasted resources.

Results of discussions with DCEs indicated that a major difficulty faced by the District Assemblies in promoting girls education is inadequate resources. The DA is also faced with the challenge of overseeing some activities by some organisations, which are not in line with the district plans. There is little or no collaboration between some NGOs in the districts leading to duplication of efforts and resources. For instance, several gender training programmes have taken place targeting DCE, DCD, DDCD, PBU and other frontline staff without involving Social Welfare, Community Development and Cooperative Officers who actually do most of the ground work on girls' education issues.

5.7   Conclusions

The results of the interviews at the District Education Directorate and District Assembly levels across the eight study districts suggest that there needs to be more dialogue and consultation with the DA's and DEO's regarding strategic approaches for supporting girls' education and the rationale behind these strategies in order to improve poverty reduction efforts in the districts.

Findings from the study across the Northern and Central Regions of Ghana suggest that there have been ad hoc measures to build the capacities of DGEO's and mainstream planning efforts across the Districts. A comprehensive approach to this type of capacity building should be carried out by the MOESS and supported by other donors. Conclusions from the Government and District Education Office interviews suggests that Donor and INGO programmes could attempt more scale if their capacity building programmes and gender planning programmes with district stakeholders were regional or national in scale..

Donors and GES should be careful to develop programming that reaches a scale which is easy for government to track and for other agencies to implement in collaboration in order to build comprehensive and large scale capacity building programming. For instance the training of girls' education officers should be on a national or regional scale involving all the DGEO's of that particular region and allowing other donors to support them.

There should also be a nation wide education planning programme to mainstream gender issues across all the districts that are responsible for District Education sector plans. This is long overdue and was initially taken up on a very small scale by one donor (UNICEF) but should be scaled up by the MOESS through sector wide support.

Another important finding of the study was that there were no district targets for girls' education against which progress is measured. This is surprising given the emphasis by government on reaching MDG goals by 2015 for girls' education in Ghana. It is also surprising given the support and emphasis placed by UNICEF and DFID on girls' education across the country and the capacity building programmes to train DEO and

DA's on planning for educational development and decentralisation. The study reveals a weak focus by districts on girls' education and gender issues by both the DEO's and the DA's despite much sensitisation at the national levels.

6.0 Improving Girls' Education Strategies in Ghana: Views from Below: Community, Teachers and Child perspectives

The study aimed at collecting the views of parents, teachers and children in relation to the effectiveness of girls' education strategies, which were operational in their districts. The study investigated the following questions at the community, family and child level.

- The reasons why some girls do not attend school despite being provided with support or packages.
- What are the most effective strategies for attracting and keeping girls in school?
- The challenges and weaknesses in the strategies.
- What could be done to improve the strategies?

6.1 Constraints to Girls Education across the Study Districts: Community and Teacher views.

> **Box 9: The Situation of Education in Kakpayili, (Tamale District), Northern Region**
>
> ❖ Out of 8 teachers at the JSS, only one (female) lives in the community;
> ❖ There is a high dropout rate among girls since they prefer to go down south as porters (Kayayo). Also as the girls get older they are enticed into trading and farming (**ayogba** - a seasonal communal practice of assisting farmers for reward during planting, harvest as well as sheanut collection periods).
> ❖ The phenomenon of **simpa** dance dubbed 'wait-and-see' absorbs the attention and energy of children (practice and performance) who frequent this all-night activity.
> ❖ Teenage pregnancy is also common. The community appears helpless in curbing teenage pregnancy even though some male perpetrators are community members. The community condones the practice by asking the males to take care of the girls untill delivery.
> ❖ There is the need to sensitise communities concerning the barriers to girls' transition and retention at JSS, which would require sustaining more girls in school and ensure quality teaching.
> ❖ The school appealed for light for the pupils to read at night.

Community Perceptions of Constraints of Girls' Education

Generally, community members labelled the current situation of education in Ghana as poor because, firstly, there are no role models in the community. Secondly, child indiscipline is high as a result of parental irresponsibility. As key stakeholders some community members complained about the fact that many teachers are not punctual in arriving at school and the work output of some teachers is low. Community members in Zagyuri, Tamale District, lamented that since 1961 no females from the community have successfully qualified to gain admission to a tertiary school. More so, men from the community and its vicinity, especially from the military barracks, distract the girls in the community. Community members explained that they have seen the need to send their children to school but poverty remains a major barrier.

Likewise participants in Savelugu District made similar statements. According to them, poverty is the root cause for some parents' inability to send their wards to school. The chiefs representative from Zagyuri explained that parents cannot even secure an amount of ¢ 400,000 (GH¢ 40) to pay children's school fees particularly at the post basic level. The chief's representative said '*I have never handled ¢ 400,000 (GH¢ 40) in my life and to us this amount is a lot of money and can result in a girl's withdrawal from school to go for kayaye*'.

Expressing their views on reasons for dropout among girls, the women interviewed in Pigu, Savelugu District indicated that women are responsible for girls dropping out because they withdraw these girls for household work, picking of sheanuts, and kayayo. Poor parental supervision was also identified as a determinant for girls' dropout. The explanation is that sometimes children need to be compelled to go to school, which many parents fail to do. The issue of poverty, they agreed, was also a factor but then most of the girls who embark on kayayo activities receive the blessings of their mothers. Poor academic performance also de-motivates girls to stay in school. Even though the women in Pigu are aware of interventions like the capitation grant (no more school fees) they have difficulty buying school uniforms and sandals for their children. Nevertheless, women in this community buy dresses for children on festive occasions. This finding indicates the importance of priority setting by parents.

In the Dikpingli community of Savelugu District, the women identified reasons for girls dropping out or not being sent to school as being poverty, kayayo, foster parenting and large family size. The experience of Gushegu shows that most girls dropout from school as a result of poverty, early pregnancy and household chores. Information pertaining to education in Kakpagyili and Zogbele communities is contained in Boxes 10 & 11 respectively.

Box 10: Situation of Education in Zogbele, (Tamale District), Northern Region

❖ The school environment is quite unconducive as there is a poorly kept public toilet near by
❖ The children laud the efforts of teachers
❖ PTA built a toilet, a urinal and renovated a staff common room.
❖ The GES girl child officers are not visible – means of mobility lacking
❖ There was a suggestion to train community facilitators to mobilize more interest in girl education in the community
❖ There is also a call for school counsellors, health co-coordinators and school level girl child co-coordinators.
❖ Youth Alive/AAIG sponsored some street children to the school but these children are difficult to maintain

Source: Field survey, 2007.

PTA /SMC Views of Girls' Education Constraints

The following table represents how members of the <u>PTAs/SMCs</u>[24] describe the situation of girls' education and constraints across the eight study districts. The analysis suggests that the home based factors far outweigh the school based factors when considering the reasons for drop out, poor retention and transition of girls across the 22 communities studied.

Table 10: Description of the Situation of Girls' Education by PTAs/SMCs

School based Factors	Home Based Factors
- Teachers attendance at school is poor (they come late) - Attitudes and behaviours of teachers towards children (sexual assault, corporal punishment) - Male attitudes and pressure towards female students	- Some girls miss classes to baby-sit for their mothers - Girls easily fall in to peer pressure - Girls have more potential if they are given a little support - Some sleep when they come to school - Girls will eventually get married off, so boys are preferred in times of financial crisis - Domestic workload interferes with girls' schooling (some miss school) - Parents' involvement in their girls' education is poor -Poverty (because parents cannot afford their children' needs, the girls get lured by the very little she can get from elsewhere)

As a result of school and home-based factors most of the girls are not able to transition to JSS and SSS levels of education. Some girls drop out as a result of pregnancy. Most of them do not continue after they deliver the child.

Teachers View of the Constraints to Girls

The constraints to girls' education varied according to the region and area of the country. In the Central Region, the main constraints to girls' education from a socio-economic perspective and which led girls into teenage pregnancy were lack of support by parents and peer pressure. Whereas in the Northern Region, the socio-cultural practices of early marriage and child fosterage were structurally embedded and prevented most girls from remaining in school despite the girls' education packages. The summary of teachers'

Box 11: Summary of Teachers' Views on the Constraints to Girls' Education
School Based:
❖ Lack of teaching and learning materials
❖ Poor school environment (lack of toilet and water facilities)
❖ Lack of role models

Home Based (parents and community members)
❖ Many girls not living with biological parents (fosterage)
❖ Girls engagement in household chores
❖ Community not being keen on education because of negative perception (i.e., girls are unintelligent, boys will help in old age especially if educated)
❖ Irresponsible parenting
❖ Teenage pregnancy
❖ Poverty
❖ Ignorance
❖ Peer pressure (engaging in sexual relationships)
❖ Lack of motivation for the girls

Source: Field survey, 2007.

The findings reveal that there are very few and in some districts, no professional counsellors to give support to youth, especially girls. However, the findings reveal that there is a serious absence of female role models in the teaching profession, particularly across the Northern districts (See Annex 8 for more teacher views of the constraints to girls' education).

Indiscipline is another factor affecting educational development in the sampled communities. For example, school children attend community night dances and video shows to the detriment of their learning. Parents' irresponsibility also has an impact on children. The study findings reveal that the school location determines school attendance. For example, a JSS in Salaga is located about 7km away from the community compelling children to commute long distances daily to and from school. Children who do not commute daily choose to stay with their relatives who reside closer to the schools or rent accommodation. The analysis shows that when children stay in rented houses they are confronted with problems like the difficulty of feeding themselves and teenage pregnancy.

Teachers in the Central Region viewed enrolment, retention and transition for girls as higher than boys but on deeper analysis the reverse was true. Girls who have to repeat classes for poor performance leave the community for another school, and many drop out before JSS. Community support towards girls' education is poor and transition from primary to JSS is poor for girls. Many pupils travel over 2kms to school and as such the safety of girls on the road is not guaranteed.

Overall the key findings related to the constraints of girls' education across the Northern and Central Regions, are:
- Lack of parental support which could stem from poverty, and the poor attitudes towards girls and education;
- Poor learning capacity of girls due to work at the home and lack of time to study.
- Teenage Pregnancy: which could also stem from lack of parental support, peer pressure and sexual abuse by teachers.
- Logistical problems: long distances to travel to school
- Cultural practices: early marriage and child fostering, which also results in poor parenting and ignorance.

6.2   The Pull and Push factors for Children's Attendance in School: From a Child Perspective

To identify the pull and push factors to attending school and their knowledge about educational policies, the study teams asked children to reflect on the reasons for not being in school and what could help change this situation.

Pull Factors

The children interviewed in the study explained that several activities contribute to attracting them to school; the major ones being sports, food rations, and engagement in

specific activities at school such as quizzes, competitions, drama/debating, excursions and the capitation grant.

Push Factors

The study findings show that the factors that can cause children to drop out of school are many. Examples include peer group pressure (joining those who are not in school and roaming about, engaging in social vices and getting pregnant), financial problems, watching pornographic films, lack of uniforms and/or examination fees and broken homes. Many children dropped out of school because of poor academic performance, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, lack of basic school needs, and child labour. The story of Maimouna Haruna in Zogbele Primary, Tamale District illustrates parental irresponsibility in contributing to dropout rate in the country (Box 12).

Box 12: A Pupil's Experience

Maimouna, about 13 years old, was found selling ice water on the school premises. Her mother is divorced with 4 children. She attended school up to primary 3. Asked why she dropped out, she said she was brought from the village to stay with her aunt (mother's senior sister). When she insisted that she wanted to go back to school the aunt returned her to the mother in the village with the explanation that she could not support Maimouna's upkeep in school. She found herself in the custody of Madam Mariam, another aunt and owner of the sales business. She is a teacher in the school where Maimouna sells. She likes to go to school like her friends on the school compound. She is aware of the fee-free education from the capitation grant. When she heard of it and told her guardian, the latter said she (Maimouna) was too old to go to school.

Source: Field survey, 2007.

Reasons for Being in School

The analysis of the study found that children attend school because they want to acquire knowledge. The implication is that most of the children know that knowledge is power. When children acquire knowledge they stand the chance of becoming good leaders, responsible citizens and successful entrepreneurs (Box 13 highlights the main reasons children gave in responding to the reasons for being in school).

Box 13: Reasons for Being in School

- Acquire knowledge and to transfer knowledge to others
- Become a good leader
- Take care of myself in future
- Become a doctor or a nurse
- Continue until university
- Because I am interested in education
- Want to become successful person in future
- To earn money to look after my parents in future
- To build a better Ghana
- I do not want to be like my parents, they did not have the opportunity to go to school and so they cannot read or write
- To acquire modern skills like computer skills
- To get a very good job in future

The interviews with the children clearly indicated that they do have dreams and aspirations for their future. They see that schooling offers them the opportunity to achieve their life goals. This implies that if the school system fails them through the poor quality of education it offers, they become de-motivated and will drop out.

What Children Like about their Schools

Children interviewed across the study zones spoke of what they like about their schools. The study found that the main things children like about school are <u>related to teacher attitudes and behaviours.</u> The children also mentioned that the way the teacher teaches is a major factor for them liking school. The following listing is based on data from across the eight study districts.

Table 11: What Children Like about their Schools

Attitudes and Behaviour "likes" of Children	School Environment Related	Child Centred and Performance Related Teaching Approach
• Teachers are hard working • Teacher make time to listen to their concerns • Teacher advice them • Attitude of teachers – nice pupils • Advice or counselling by teachers • Protection by teachers • Understanding nature of teachers • Seeing women role model	• They want to get good grades in their BECE • Computerized systems is helping them to study hard • Non payment of school fees • Neat environment with trees, flowers and arranged furniture (they provide air) • Sports facilities • Computer room and library • Toilet and urinal facilities • New school building for the kindergarten (KG) with a playground and teachers quarters • Availability of pipe water and discipline in school	• Practicals in the science subject • Class test everyday • Quizzes • Silence hour • Speaking only English • Teachers taught well • Extra classes

Children also spoke of a few parental related factors which they like about school:
• Parents taking care and showing interest in their education
• Reduced poverty levels of parents
• Desire to fulfil promises made to parents – to become responsible persons in future

What Children did not like about School

School pupils from the Winneba District said that they did not like the condition of the classroom, which had cracks in the building. They further explained that they did not have a chalkboard, and a lot of the chairs and desks in the classroom were broken. Above

all the roof of the classrooms leaks. In the Apam District, a pupil also said that lack of discipline in the school was what he did not like and cited an example of juniors not respecting seniors. They further indicated that the school lacks a science laboratory and science teachers and that the few teachers available do not motivate pupils.

The results show that children are aware of the ways in which their performances are monitored by their parents. They explained that their parents check their academic progress by observing the frequency of school attendance. Parents also attend PTA/SMC meetings where issues of school management including school performance are discussed. Parents also participate in school activities like sports and communal labour activities thereby bringing them closer to the school authority.

6.3 Teachers Views of Girls' Education Strategies and their Effectiveness

Teachers' Activities to Promote Girls' Education

The findings from the study indicate that teachers embark on several activities to promote girls' education across the country. These include:

a) Guidance, counselling and mentorship
b) Use of role modelling (though few)
c) Formation of Girls' Clubs for maintaining peace and promoting learning
d) Awareness creation and sensitisation of community members and the general public on the importance of girls' education
e) Creation of an enabling environment for girls to stay in school (toilet, urinal, changing rooms)
f) Organisation of extra classes for girls (for those whose performance is poor)
g) Maintenance of a good pupil-teacher relationship
h) Serving as intermediaries to NGOs and other development partners for the implementation of education related projects and programmes

Most of the schools reported that teachers are appointed to give assistance to girls. Upon the introduction of the capitation grant most schools organized PTA meetings to sensitise community members on fee-free education. For instance, teachers in Zogbele, Tamale District, through PTA interactions encouraged parents to send children, especially girls to school. Teachers counsel girls during their leisure time. In Grunshie-Zongo, East Gonja, the teachers explained that they sometimes assist girls with books, uniforms and school bags as a way of motivating them. Teachers also engage in sex education, moral talks as well as educating PTA on the importance of girls' education.

Teachers serve as intermediaries through which daily meals and food rations are provided to communities. In Zagyuri, Tamale District, quiz competitions are held on Fridays and games such as football, volleyball also attract children. In Zagyuri the PTA plans to reward girls' achievement (based on subjects) in the terms examinations. The teachers in Zagyuri Anglican School accepted a girl who was pregnant back to school until she delivered the baby.

Teachers also help in the development of peace and reading clubs to ensure that children stay in school. Again, effective teaching and discipline serve as important retention

factors in many schools across the districts. The availability of school infrastructure (classroom, toilet facilities, teachers' quarters, furniture, drinking water and library facilities) also act as major pull factors for children to demand for education. Other pull factors relate to the availability of teaching and learning materials (textbooks, teaching aids, etc) and school materials (uniform, sandals, etc). The recent introduction of the capitation grant and the school-feeding programme has jointly facilitated increased enrolment at the basic school level. The programmes have also contributed to improved retention in schools. Finally, teachers in some schools provide girls with handouts on female role models (women in professions who telltheir stories on how they made it to the girls). The reason is that mere talks can easily be forgotten but the ideas that are written down can always be referred to.

Other Approaches

There were six main approaches to improving girls' education cited by teachers in the study that are being used across the 22 community schools involved the study. These approaches included:

- Sports and cultural activities
- Excursions
- Supply of soap and footwear to girls
- Supply of books and basic school needs to girls
- Food rations
- Bicycles for girls
- The development of gender sensitive schooling improvement plans

The teachers in LA and E/A J.S.S in Gushegu District explained that schools have School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIP) in which special provision was made to enhance girls' education. These provisions were in the form of supplying soap and footwear for girls. The teachers identified activities such as sports, competition, drama, and excursions as drawing more children to school. Organisation of these activities had increased attendance however the impact in terms of performance was yet to be assessed. Teachers indicated that debates, incentives package and awards would help improve the performance of children.

At the institutional level, teachers mentioned that many organisations devote resources to promoting girls' education. For example, Plan Ghana in the Central Region and the European Union give support to the construction of school infrastructure (classroom blocks, toilets, KG playground) whereas Rescue Foundation provides computers, books, and school uniforms for pupils in need. A mentorship programme aimed at motivating girls to become responsible citizens has been launched by Challenging Heights. In addition officials from GES hold interaction meetings with girls in the schools and provide school materials for some needy pupils. International Needs tackles girls' education by dealing with child labour issues and enrolment of pupils in schools via community sensitisation. The teachers described the various interventions by other stakeholders as very useful. The reasons are that such interventions have contributed to increased numbers of girls staying in school. Girls' attendance is regular and punctual largely due to bicycles provided to them.

Box 14: The Quality of Education Dilemma and Opportunity

In the Masaka community, East Gonja, teachers attribute improved enrolment partially to quality teaching. Educational actors in the districts can attribute this positive move on the part of parents to the impact of the sensitisation programmes. Nevertheless, the districts still experience high dropout rates, especially among girls. For instance, the Grunshie-Zongo, East Gonja suffers from 80% dropout rate at both primary and JSS levels. The possible reason for this high dropout rate is that the JSS in the community is new and according to the community members the teaching is poor. The community members interviewed revealed that they see quality teaching as an important way of attaining quality education. The school community members also argued that poor quality teaching leads to poor learning, which in turn contributes to the high dropout of children. To the school community teenage pregnancy is a major problem facing girls' education. They explained that teenage pregnancy is the result of peer influence, that is, boys who dropped out from school befriend girl children in school leading to pre-marital sex, hence unwanted pregnancy.

Teachers' Views of Effectiveness of Strategies

The teachers expressed the need for collective efforts of the chief, parent and NGO's operating in the communities to promote girls' education. Chiefs should make and enforce byelaws in support of girl' education. It is also important to sensitise parents to ensure that girls transition to higher levels in education in order to serve as role models. More female teachers could be posted to rural areas to encourage girls as well as encouraging the institution of scholarship scheme for girls. Even though teachers were not specifically trained in handling girls they take the initiative and engage in activities that will promote girls' education e.g. talking to parents to send and support their wards to school.

Teachers also recognised that although many of the strategies would attract the girls to school they were not sufficient to retain them. They spoke of the need to have deeper interventions at the home and community level to ensure that girls' education was improved. The teachers explained that if development partners are to modify, improve or change their strategies or inventions to promote girls' education, then it should include the following:

- Frequent and continuous sensitisation, especially for mothers since they have a lot of influence on the girls
- Encourage the posting of female teachers to the school to improve the situation
- Educate parents on the law regarding forced marriage, defilement and encourage them to report cases for appropriate action

Despite the role played by teachers, the findings suggest that they do not participate in the planning of the interventions by development partners. The study revealed that teachers across the 22 community/schools are not consulted during project design and implementation phases of NGO, development partner or government interventions. Schools are mostly contacted through the Ghana Education Service. The non-involvement of teachers in the planning processes of projects has an impact on the

effectiveness of the programme. The advantages for teacher participation in project design are two: Firstly, it will reduce the chances of mis-targeting and inefficiency in resource use, and secondly, teacher participation enhances effective project monitoring and evaluation. The evidence also suggests that there is a growing concern among teachers and parents regarding the quality of education negatively impacting on girls' education.

6.4 Community Members' Views of Strategies on Girls' Education and Reflections on their Effectiveness.

Community Involvement in Girls Education Activities

This section assesses the community involvement in education and, particularly girls' education initiatives across the study districts. The section also reviews the community awareness of interventions in girls' education and the strengths and weaknesses of the interventions. The results from the study show that community members are aware of interventions but are not involved in the planning or identification of which girls' education interventions would be most appropriate in their specific community contexts.

Results of discussions with community stakeholders reveal that community members often are involved in the physical construction of school infrastructure but less involved in consultation on the strategies for promoting girls' education. The community members in Masaka, East Gonja make weekly contributions of c500.00 (5GH pesewas) per child for ingredients towards school feeding. The people of Gomoa have established the Gomoa Education Fund to promote educational development. In terms of consultation, the evidence provided by the study indicates that communities in most districts are consulted on some interventions but only if their contributions (financial and labour) are needed. Information flow is from development partners through head teachers to the community members. Thus, the relationship between community members and development partners can be described as top-down or non-participatory in nature.[25]

Women's Involvement in Girls' Education Efforts

Women's contribution to girls' education activities varied across the communities:
The women in Gushegu community said their contribution to girls' education has been to discourage early marriage and to compliment the effort of the NGO's in terms of support (money) for their wards (girls) in order to retain them in school. According to the women, their source of awareness of the importance of girls education has been from seeing women driving cars, riding motorbikes and in good position (well dressed) in the big towns. One woman commented as follows: "I have five daughters who have all been given out for marriage. I regret it. It pains me now because none of them are educated. Now all my grand daughters are in school and they will not dropout because I have seen the need for educating children".

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[25] The real experts in understanding why children do not go to school or drop out of school are parents and community members themselves. Therefore, their involvement in the planning, provision, maintenance and overall management of teaching and learning facilities within their communities is critical.

According to the women in Dipingli community in Savelugu District, their contribution in promoting girls education has been in the form of feeding, clothing their wards, visits to the school to interact with wards and encourage them, as well as their active participation in programmes on sensitisation. They observed that interventions like food rations and the capitation grant had attracted children to school.

Responding to whether these women in Gushegu were aware of any interventions taking place in the school in their community to promote girls education, they indicated that their children (girls) have been benefiting from packages like bicycles, uniforms, sandals, school bags, books, and take home food ration from NGO's. However, out of the numerous NGOs granting this support the women could only mention the name of School for Life as an agency active in their community.

Effective Girls' Education Programmes Strategies from a Community Perspective

Interviews with community members, women and children revealed that there were several interventions taking place across the 22 communities visited which could be very effective in supporting girls' education at the community level. Key areas identified for improving girls' education at a community level included:

- The flexible school hours of programmes;
- Continued sensitisation programmes to assist children; and
- Improvement of livelihoods for parents.

The School for Life programme appeared to be one of the most effective strategies in attracting and retaining girls in both complementary education and then transitioning them to formal schools. For example, the community members in Grunshie-Zongo, East Gonja District, noted that since 2004 the School for Life has been assisting children from 8-14 years to go to school. About 25 children are supported each year, half of which are girls. The impact of School for Life support is that 14 girls and 11 boys went to formal school in 2005 followed by 19 children in 2006. Results from the School for Life Impact Assessment (2007) reveal that the complementary approaches to education improve the enrolment, retention and transition of girls in upper primary and JSS levels of education. The study also revealed that girls and boys who complete SfL before entering the formal education system are better able to cope with under resourced and often poor quality schooling as they have already achieved literacy in their mother tongue. This achievement of literacy enhances their self-esteem and confidence to remain in school and face the challenges of moving to higher levels of education.[26]

Responding to what can further be done to promote girls education, the women from some communities said there is the need for continuous sensitisation of mothers and other parents/guardians, and more importantly, to encourage men to assist their wives in educating the children.

6.5 Conclusions

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[26] The School for Life Impact assessment is available on the web site: www.associatesforchange.org

The findings at the community level indicate that there exists a wide range of girls' education interventions which can have impact on a short, medium or long-term basis. The findings from this study suggest that more and deeper levels of interventions are needed in the systemic, long term impact. This is in order to transform socio-cultural beliefs and livelihood levels in order to make lasting change related to access, retention, completion and performance of girls in Ghanaian public schools. This would demand that girls' education strategies consider the problems of the home/family and community cultural related factors. This means that NGOs need to work more collectively to bring about systemic change on a district level and not consider their interventions in isolation. Girls Education programming would also require more strategic linkages with economic and social practitioners/organizations who have expertise in the areas of livelihoods and the behavioural change process.

Another key finding is that flexible school systems particularly in high incidence poverty zones of Ghana may be the most effective and efficient way to attract and retain girls in school. The findings from both the impact study of SfL and the interview with parents across the 22 communities suggest that overcoming the poverty and socio-cultural barriers to girls can be tackled through more flexible schooling systems. The complementary schooling approach relieves girls to work in the mornings with the families or in the market, and at the same time ensures that they are given basic literacy skills in the afternoons. Many of these girls become more assertive and more determined to face the challenges of under-resourced formal schools and in most cases poor quality schooling.

Finally, the study also suggests the need to conduct tracer studies on the medium and long-term impacts of food incentive programmes. These studies should consider the ability of parents and communities to continue assisting their girl children in school when such programmes are phased out. They also suggest the need to study what alternative strategies can be used to empower the parent in supporting the girl child.

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1   Conclusions

The status of girls' education challenges the core values of any society particularly those who are still in transition to believing in gender equity and equality for all. The current social context of Ghana suggests that in traditional rural communities more transitional approaches to girls' education are needed which do not directly threaten the social values, norms and patriarchal systems but instead compromise with parents and children on the approaches which can be used. Direct assistance such as food aid and sponsorship support for girls in the short term may improve the immediate situation for girls at primary level, but where these interventions are not sustained girls will drop out without the necessary support of their families in the long run. More in-depth research is needed to find lasting solutions to improve girls' education in Ghana. This study suggests that effective strategies have been found in the past but are rarely scaled up by the government or other donor agencies, forcing a continued "piloting" and experimentation of interventions which characterises the girls' education sub-sector. Lack of collaborative learning among development partners, INGOs and government in order to share lessons learned, and reflect on international and national research, has limited the effectiveness of girls' education strategies in Ghana.

This study also reveals that Ghana is faced with significant structural challenges against girl child education at all levels of the education system. Despite the scientific evidence, the policy makers and implementers including development partners continue to question the reasons for initiatives emphasising girls' education. Policies for improving the access and participation of girls will not be enough to ensure that MDG's are reached unless these are backed by targeted strategies and adequate budget support. Food incentive packages and capitation grants may attract girls initially to enter school, however these will not be enough to retain them at the JSS level. Much more emphasis is needed on improving quality education across the Ghanaian public system in order to retain girls particularly at the higher levels of education and ensures that they can compete with their urban counterparts.

The Girls' Education Strategy Study found that there were several NGOs and donors working to support girls' education across Ghana. Stakeholders' strategies focused on short-term access targets and long-term performance outcomes utilising a multiple of strategies. The assumption is that each strategy has its own advantages and a combination leads to a ripple effect in a particular area. The main strategies are sensitisation programmes, girl child sponsorship packages and food ration and micro-credit. Today we are left with a number of isolated approaches working to improve the situation of girls in a family, community or part of district. Sadly their impact is not being felt on a regional or national level. Advocacy and sensitisation are being used by almost all development agencies working on girls' education. Bilateral and Multi lateral programmes have contributed millions of dollars towards the financing of girls' education initiatives over the last 10 years. For example WFP and UNICEF's girls' education incentive programme and CRS school feeding programme.   International NGOs were making some contributions towards girls' education but mainly through the strategy of sponsoring girls by providing for their basic needs.

Welfare or Empowerment Approaches to Girls' Education

Both Multi lateral and International NGO programming, whether it be for girls' food incentive programmes or International NGO programmes which sponsor girls at school, were found to encourage a dependency relationship between the family and the programme. These approaches reinforce a "welfare" approach to development within the communities they serve. The impact of these programme approaches will be better understood in the coming years when girls' education incentive programmes (food assistance and scholarships) begin to phase out, or when the girls' graduate from the programmes. For instance, in 2010 the WFP will withdraw their current support to over 30,000 girls in northern Ghana where they have provided incentive packages. The question that most districts and communities raised during the study is whether girls' participation in schools will be sustained after these programmes phase out. Parents in the study also questioned the impact these programmes had on economically empowering them to provide for their children. More research is needed to understand the outcomes and impact that these programmes have once they are phased out.

Apart from the major strategies that development agencies use across the districts, the majority of large-scale programmes are focused on improving access and participation, not improving the performance and quality of education for the girl and boy child. The focus on improving quality programmes will increase the chances of the girls and boys reaching higher levels of education and enhancing their life outcomes. Several girls' education programmes include incentive packages to help girls participate in schools but leave the quality inputs for the government to provide. This limits the impact of their programming since all 22 communities suggested that the poor quality of education was one of the reasons for girls dropping out and the lack of retention at upper primary and JSS. Girls continue to under-perform relative to boys in the Northern and Central Regions of the country. Quality of education is also a major factor underlining parents' willingness to sustain their children in school particularly if incentive packages no longer exist.

Scaling Up and Deepening the Impact of Strategies

Overall the girls' education strategy study found that although development partners, civil society and government have introduced some interventions to assist girls participate and achieve in school, the root causes preventing the vast majority of girls from attaining higher levels of education remain unsolved (socio-cultural beliefs and patterns and unsustainable livelihoods/poverty). The study found that factors such as traditional and cultural attitudes towards girls and the preference for boys' education persist in the Northern Region. The study revealed that families are not yet empowered economically or socially to continue financing their girls in school and to higher levels of education. Very few NGO programmes had integrated a livelihood component in their programmes in order to ensure that parents finance their girl child in the long run. Programmes were therefore taking over the responsibility of financially supporting the girl child at school from the families. In the short run this was making a difference in the lives of a few girls but not on a community or district level.

Unfortunately, there was no evidence that the strategies being used by the INGO's was being used and mainstreamed by DA's or government. Several girls' education strategies have been well tested and were effective in increasing and enhancing enrolment and

retention but very few have been scaled up by Government mainly due to the lack of funds and lack of support for direct budget assistance for girls' education at the national level.

Building Strategies Based on Lessons Learned from Development Partners

Most importantly the study highlighted the lack of development learning taking place within the donor community and government regarding comprehensive approaches to address issues of girls' education. This is not surprising based on the findings of the study which revealed that agencies were using isolated approaches to deliver girls' education programming. The same problems related to girls' education implementation documented in studies on the impact of girls' education in the early 2000's, are resurfacing. This would suggest that agencies are not building on knowledge to improve the approaches taken in girls' education. The most visible example of the lack of development learning are highlighted when programmes phase out and are not supported or scaled up by government. For example, the WUSC girls' education programme which piloted a comprehensive approach to improving girls' education and demonstrated significant change was not sustained by government.

The lesson learning among development agencies has been very limited since the Girls' Education Unit launched its first vision strategy document in 2002. There have been very few think tank conferences to ensure a collective vision and analysis of workable strategies within the sector. The problems of socio cultural bias towards boys have deepened while programmes for girls' education remain under funded by donors and government (e.g. FAWE Ghana's work). The study found that there is no budget line for girls' education and very limited tracking by government on girls' education expenditure. Until more resources to the Girls' Education Unit are provided to increase their coordination and leadership role in helping agencies focus on well tested strategies, and to facilitate unified working relations among agencies to create the change needed in regions across the country activities and interventions related to girls' education will remain ad hoc and isolated with very limited outcomes and impact.

Structural Constraints in Promoting Girls Education

The study also highlighted the endemic attitudes and fear among some development agencies and policy makers that girls' education is at the cost of boys' education. International and African evidence illustrates that when resources are limited and choices have to be made, mothers of the next generation are the most efficient development investment possible - surprisingly, this principal has not been fully accepted. Information gained from interviews continues to suggest that there is a lack of understanding as to why educating girls is an important and strategic investment. Within the policy and development climate, which is socially proscribed, agencies will have to be more strategic in labelling and implementing their "girls' education" programmes. More work is required to convince development partners of the need to support and finance comprehensive girls' education strategies and take on the issue as a matter of priority.

There is evidence to show that NGOs operating in the education sub-sector collaborate to some degree with the District Assemblies, which are often seen as entry points to communities. There is also evidence to suggest that once the NGO's are operational in the districts there is very limited collaboration thereafter. Coordination between the

NGOs, GES and District Assemblies at the district level was found to be very weak across the 8 districts in the study. The possible explanations relate to poor project planning and analysis coupled with over politicisation of DA work and the allocation of educational resources to projects such as the construction of schools. Collaboration among international NGOs was at best very limited, but mainly non-existent.

7.2 Recommendations

For Ghana to reach the MDG 3 goal of gender parity within the education system it is necessary that the Girls' Education Unit's Vision be revisited. Key stakeholders and collaborators working on Girls Education issues in Ghana should also work with GEU at regional district and national levels in order to analyse key lessons learned and collectively agree on the key strategies and ensure these are integrated within the new Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2010 to 2020) framework. Much more work is needed to bring together the stakeholders involved in the education sector, deepen their analysis and facilitate interested agency working groups on gender equity and girls' education in order to reflect on well tested approaches and discuss the way forward for Girls' Education in Ghana.

Agencies will have to begin accepting that greater impact and outcomes can only be achieved by working collectively on the deeper structural challenges facing girls' education such as the socio-cultural and economic transformative needs of communities in order to empower parents to support their girl child in school. Incentive packages will not replace the parental support needed to ensure that in the long run girls participate, achieve and transition to higher levels of learning. Parental and community support both financial and psycho-social are needed to move ahead. Programmes that disempower parents and reduce parental responsibility could harm the delicate relationship between girls and their parents particularly in poverty zones of Ghana.

Further work is needed to convince government, development partners and NGO's that working together on a district wide basis could yield higher results in girls' education. The GEU should insist that at least the 15 districts where the GPI is lowest hold regular monthly meetings with all their development partners and NGO's in order to ensure a level of synergy is attained. NGO's should be encouraged to finance and support such regular collaborative efforts. Joint action planning, monitoring and strategic planning on a quarterly and yearly basis should be encouraged at the district, regional and national levels beginning with setting up coordination mechanisms and the GEU and/or NNED/GNECC network hosting regular meetings.

The MOE itself should better integrate the girls' education vision and strategy document targets within the ESP. The Girls' Education Unit should be provided with financial support to ensure the implementation of it's programming particularly with regard to coordination of its partners and monitoring roles at district and regional levels.

Improve the Social and Economic Empowerment of Parents

Attention should be paid to poverty reduction strategies. Improving the income levels of parents through improved agricultural production should be considered. Women's empowerment through support of income generating activities is crucial. Improved income for parents, especially mothers can enhance their ability to support their children's education as well as increase their ability to share costs of education with intervening organisations. Efforts should be made to ensure that the current micro-credit schemes being implemented by the DAs are carried out effectively and equitably. Most of the local NGOs have limited experience in micro-finance and as such there is the need to involve Rural Banks in its design and implementation of girls' education support. More coordination between the education focussed interventions and the DA's ongoing rural improvement programs is needed.

Improve Quality of Education

Emphasis should be placed on promoting quality education to improve girls' education. Four different types of inputs can measure school quality. These are material inputs such as chalk and textbooks, physical inputs such as classrooms and blackboards, teachers and school management. The focus needs to be on providing more software interventions rather than hardware, which means an increased focus on issues of school management, and more effort to enhance the quality of education is being delivered in Ghanaian public basic schools. Teachers must improve their work and teaching habits by demonstrating punctuality and effective teaching and supervision. This would help to ensure attendance and retention among all children especially girls.

GES should be actively involved in the supervision and monitoring of educational activities in the districts. More specifically, circuit supervisions should not be restricted to mere checking of staff numbers and enrolments. The supervision must include observing teachers in the classroom and other activities that might positively affect learning. Effectiveness of any strategy or intervention should be measured in terms of its capacity to contribute to girls' access and participation, girls' retention and transition, management of teaching and learning processes and cost effectiveness of strategies and actions. More strategic interventions in supporting quality should also be explored within the ESP framework to ensure increased performance and ultimately the retention of girls.

Promotion of Girls' Education Using an Empowerment Approach

NGO's should place greater emphasis on encouraging girls through community sensitisation, parental planning workshops and direct counselling of girls to stay in school. To increase access and participation of girls in education there is the need for the creation of a girl friendly school environment (e.g., toilet facilities), effective counselling (reproductive health, career development), effective monitoring by circuit supervisors, and follow-up visits on awareness programme. Planned guidance and counselling services are needed to ensure that any incentive programmes have lasting change. Visits by role models to the community will enhance enrolment, retention and completion of girls' education.

Frequent and continuous sensitisation, especially of mothers is paramount. Mothers have a great influence on their girl children when it comes to labour activities in the household and when giving the girls in marriage as well as pressuring sons to marry. Currently, there are a variety of sensitisation programmes operating throughout the country. However, the extent to which these activities are impacting on girl child education has not been systematically measured. Effective monitoring strategies to assess the degree to which sensitisation activities are making an impact are needed.

More efforts should be made to link material support packages such as sponsorship programmes for girls to the psycho-social counselling and mentorship needed to ensure they are able to fully benefit from the packages. Girls' clubs and mentorship at the community level should be supported and continually integrated into programming and as a critical component to any sponsorship and scholarship programmes for girls.

Increase NGO Collaborative Efforts and Joint Programming on Girls' Education

There is a tremendous need and opportunity for crosscutting collaboration between state and non-state actors working on girls' education on a district, and regional level. SNV, WFP, UNICEF and Ibis already collaborate with a number of different organisations on education programming in Ghana. There is room for a new initiative to address issues of girls' education on a regional or district basis in order to increase impact of programme interventions. A reflection workshop is imperative to assist the NGO's and District Assemblies become cognisance to:

o Documenting all previous and existing programmes, research and/or initiatives that have addressed the constraints in girls' education with the view to eliciting best practices to inform the design of future projects.

o Pooling of resources for projects with common themes or objectives. This should involve streamlining existing processes, preventing duplication and building cooperation in carrying out sensitisation activities or new initiatives.

o Assist the District Assembly profile all development actors and hold regular coordination meetings with agencies working on girls' education in the districts in order to collectively plan activities and avoid duplication.

Development partners need to intensify research and collaboration activities. This is important for deepening understanding of the problems confronting girls' education in the country. Staff development training programmes should be put in place to sufficiently build the capacities of education desk officers to improve their delivery of girls' education programming on a regional and country wide basis.

Build an Enabling Environment for Girls' Education Initiatives

Increasing the number of Girls Education Officers will be important if effective delivery of counselling services is to be realised. GES should pay attention to the formulation of policies that will instil discipline in children as well as improve teaching and learning. More emphasis should be placed on the recruiting and training pupil teachers because they are more likely to live in the remote areas. The training content must give attention to the use of gender equity in the classroom with emphasis on pupil/student centeredness.

Finally development partners including INGOs and donors should ensure that they improve their processes of learning from the past and previous programmes. More effort should be made to study and document lessons learned in development programmes focused on girls' education and share these results on a wider scale. There needs to be yearly conferences in order to help build the capacity of Girls' Education Officers and NGO's implementing girls' education programming in order to keep abreast of the latest findings on effective strategies. Agencies which start up girls' education programming should also be held accountable to ensure that procedures outlined in the Paris Declaration are adhered to in order to ensure a basic standard in development practice is reached. This is particularly important with regards to exit strategies and moving towards an empowerment approach to girls' education interventions. The MOE Girls' Education Unit should attempt to develop a standard procedure manual which outlines the required code of conduct for agencies working in the sub sector and highlights best practice models of girls' education interventions and programming. District assemblies and District Education offices should be provided with an orientation to these basic standards in girls' education intervention procedures and approaches.

Best practice research on girls' education from Ghana, around the African continent and the developing world in general should be used as the basis of girls' education strategising in Ghana (Casely-Hayford, 2002; Sutherland Addy, 2002; Rugh, 2000). Much has already been learned, and agencies within Ghana should be challenged to take a step forward in developing more sustainable, collaborative and relevant programming in the districts in order to attain scale, and produce impact and developmental results which outlive their project cycles. Agencies working in girls' education should continue to recognise the socio-cultural and poverty dimensions of their work and ensure that approaches which empower and engage girls, parents and teachers in finding their own solutions form the basis of their program direction.

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Annex 1: Research Study Communities

REGION	DISTRICT	COMMUNITIES (urban and rural)
Northern	Tamale	• Kakpayili • Zagyuri • Zogbeli
	Savelugu	• Boggu • Pigu • Dikpingni
	Gushegu	• Gushegu • Nawuhugu • Wantugu
	East Gonja	• Grunshie Zongo • Masaka
	Bole	• Bole • Mandari • Sonyo
	Sawla-Tuna-Kalba	• Sawla • Jelinkon • Konkoripe
Central	Gomoa	• Gyahadze • Chochoe
	Awutu-Effutu-Senya (AES)	• Simbrofo • Winneba • Apam

Annex 2: Developing Girls' Specific Advocacy/Communication/Training Materials

Developing girls specific advocacy/communication/training materials
Support GNECC and NNED in promoting education advocacy
Support GNECC and NNED in promoting education advocacy
Develop training models that deals with sexuality and HIV Provide support to NNED in media communication
Support Radio Progress in educating the public Carry out community sensitisation on gender issues using strategies like drama
Utilise the FM to focus on girls education and gender issues Has training materials (video tapes) on girls education and HIV/AIDS and a resource centre

Annex 3: BECE Results – Percentage of Boys and Girls with Aggregate 6-30 by Region

Region	Boys	Girls
Upper West	62.08	37.92
Greater Accra	49.91	50.09
Eastern	57.08	42.92
Central	57.94	42.06
Western	58.59	41.41
Ashanti	55.97	44.03
Brong Ahafo	61.59	38.41
Volta	60.35	39.65
Northern	69.86	30.14
Upper East	60.55	39.45
All	62.08	37.92

Source: Special Tabulation by WAEC for PBME Department, MOESS, 2008

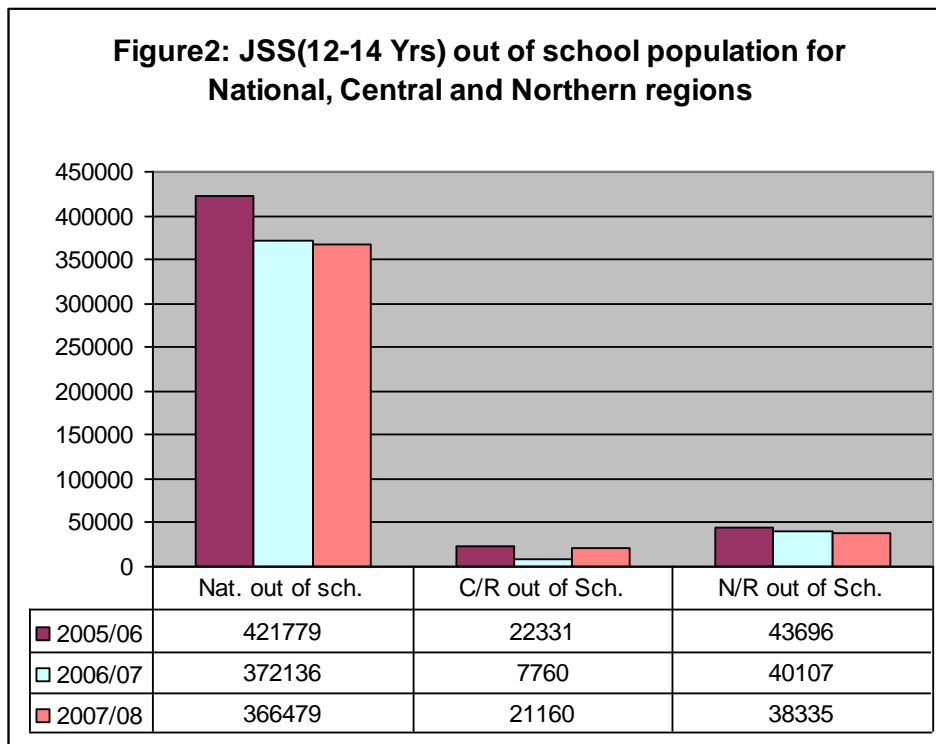**Annex 4: NER and Out of School Population Gender Disaggregated for Primary and JSS (05/06 to 07/08)**

Table 1: Primary

Primary		2005/06		2006/07		2007/08	
		Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl
National	Pop(6-11 Yrs)	1818239	1795115	1865674	1841773	1916053	1891502
	Enrol (6-11 Yrs)	1264762	1222206	1489080	1423147	1612548	1544183
	NER (%)	69.6	68.1	79.8	77.3	84.2	81.6
	Nat.out of Sch.	553477	572909	376594	418626	303505	347319
Central Region	Pop(6-11 Yrs)	160713	158560	165054	162855	169512	167252
	Enrol (6-11 Yrs)	133242	130438	162485	155375	170275	164531
	NER (%)	82.9	82.3	98.4	95.4	100.5	98.4
	C/R out of Sch.	27471	28122	2569	7480	-763	2721
Northern Region	Pop(6-11 Yrs)	193598	189431	198829	194551	204200	199803
	Enrol (6-11 Yrs)	131565	118786	142033	123653	155807	134265
	NER (%)	68	62.7	71.4	63.6	76.3	67.2
	N/R out of Sch.	62033	70645	56796	70898	48393	65538

Table 2: JSS

JSS		2005/06		2006/07		2007/08	
		Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl
National	Pop(12-14Yrs)	754995	723608	772807	740015	793670	759997
	Enrol (12-14Yrs)	313250	301829	399604	367879	429145	393518
	NER (%)	41.5	41.7	51.7	49.7	54.1	51.8
	Nat. out of sch.	441745	421779	373203	372136	364525	366479
Central Region	Pop(12-14Yrs)	68646	64355	70506	66094	72408	67882
	Enrol (12-14Yrs)	44388	42024	47751	58334	51252	46722
	NER(%)	64.7	65.3	67.7	66.3	70.8	68.8
	C/R out of Sch.	24258	22331	22755	7760	21156	21160
Northern Region	Pop(12-14Yrs)	67795	57309	69634	58868	71514	60459
	Enrol(12-14Yrs)	17088	13613	26291	18761	31354	22124
	NER(%)	25.2	23.8	37.8	31.9	43.8	36.6
	N/R out of Sch.	50707	43696	43343	40107	40160	38335

Annex 5: Out of School Population 2005/06 to 2007/08 (National, Central and Northern Regions).

Figure2: JSS(12-14 Yrs) out of school population for National, Central and Northern regions

	Nat. out of sch.	C/R out of Sch.	N/R out of Sch.
■ 2005/06	421779	22331	43696
□ 2006/07	372136	7760	40107
■ 2007/08	366479	21160	38335

Annex 6: Case Study of World Vision International (WVI)

The WVI programme in Ghana was originally focussed on promoting community water and sanitation but added an education component after the organization realized that enrolment and retention of pupils was a problem. The target beneficiaries of the WVI programme are boys (40%) and girls (60%). WVI started with nursery schools, which involved teaching and learning materials. The organization also supported the recruitment and training of teachers, 60% of which must be females. Furthermore, WVI provided school uniforms to girl children and sponsored the organization of six (6) weeks extra classes for final year students. This entailed the housing and feeding of candidates. WVI targets both boys and girls at the basic levels but liaises with the DGEO to support girls.

WVI is working in collaboration with other organizations like GES, SfL, and the District Assembly to promote girls' education. The collaboration has been in the form of transport and logistics. The District Assembly (DA) and WVI work specifically with GES, NCCE, CHRAJ and Dept. of Social Welfare. WVI has a MOU with the DA that spells out their relationship with the district and the communities. There is, however, no formal agreement between WVI and communities. WVI partnered with UNICEF to sink bore holes in some communities in order to reduce the distance for women and girls walking to fetch water and improve the health of the community.

Another strategy used by WVI is skill training of mothers to equip them to generate income to reduce poverty. The organisation operates a micro-credit scheme for mothers of registered children (those benefiting directly from WVI). The organization is in the process of launching a "Girl-Child Education Fund" to support girls from the basic level to university level. The process will ensure that the interest on loans to mothers is saved into the fund. The specific activities undertaken by WVI are summarized as follows:

Access and Retention
- Supply of footballs and jerseys to schools to attract and encourage the interests of children;
- Instituting quarterly sensitisation and animation meetings at the community level

Quality Education and Performance of Girls
- Donating funds to the District Assembly to support Science Technology and Mathematics Education (STME) for girls annually;
- Youth training programme for drop out girls –Enrols them in vocational school in Tamale
- Providing furniture and assisting in sinking bore holes in some schools
- Supporting GES in providing in-service training for 80 teachers, guidance and counselling for 100 children and monthly allowance for 50 voluntary teachers (REV)
- Instituting annual Best Basic Student Award
- Establishing Child Peace Clubs in schools and starting Child Rights Initiative sensitisation workshops for stakeholders at the district level

Social and Economic Support to Children and Families
- Providing uniforms, sandals, school bags, books and other learning materials to children. Some children also receive either animals to raise or grafted mangos to grow to support their education.

Girls sponsored by WVI are closely monitored but this is sometimes constrained by the limited number of monitoring and evaluation officers. WVI organizes stakeholders' meetings to explain its budgeting process. For instance, GES submits its annual plans for inclusion in WVI's annual plan/activities budget.

Annex 7: The Case of Plan Ghana

Plan Ghana, has been operational in the Central Region for over 20 years and aims at ensuring that mothers are empowered to engage in income generating activities (IGAs) (credit with education) and that children attain mastery in English, and Maths & Science via an enabling learning environment. Specifically, Plan Ghana has designed educational programmes for girls in order to boost their performance. Examples of the girls' programmes are: organization of extra classes for girls, vacation camps for girls, formation of children's clubs (informative and educative), enrolment drives for girl dropouts, and reintegration of teenage mothers into school. Plan Ghana works in partnership with the GES and the District Assembly. Plan Ghana described its relationship with GES as strong and at the same time unequal, because the GES expects so much from the organization but puts in less effort.

Plan Ghana's collaboration with the District Assembly is also strong. However, the staff of the organization complained that there are leadership problems associated with working with political officers in the Assemblies. Unlike other NGOs, Plan Ghana has contractual obligations - an MOU exists between Plan Ghana and GES at the national level. At the district level, yearly activity plans are agreed and signed by each party. The organization also takes time to network with other NGOs.

Annex 8: Teachers Views of Girls' Education Constraints in Northern Region

The findings show Nawuhugu basic school, Gusheigu, <u>Northern Region</u> faces problems like teenage pregnancy, betrothal system, early marriages, low performance, fewer numbers in upper primary, absence of role models, limited teaching and learning material and foster parenting. Others are that most parents are ignorant of the importance of education and so engage the girls on market days and other house chores.

Teachers at Piggu E/A Primary attribute difficulties in girl's education to Kayayo, peer influence, foster parenting, lack of teachers, the use of girls for farm work, and poor performance.

In Sonyo L/A Primary (Bole District) and Konkoripe Community Primary (Sawla-Tuna-Kalba District), the absence of a nearby JHS for pupils to transition from Primary six, was cited as a major disincentive to girls' education, resulting in drop-out at the upper primary level.

According to teachers in Boggu Primary School in <u>the Savelugu District</u> what adversely affect girls' education includes:

➢ Poverty: some parent cannot afford the initials requirement to enrol their wards.
➢ Ignorance: There are still instances where some parents do not yet understand the relevance of girls' education.
➢ Foster parenting: A cultural practices where girls are given to their aunties to stay with them, these children are mostly maltreated and some times withdrawn from school
➢ Pervasive ''Kayaye '': A practices of moving from the rural urban area to serve as head porters instead of attending school. These girls are usually influenced by stories of the city from city dwellers as well as possession those city returnees bring to the village.
➢ The few educated ones do not stay back to serve as roles models
➢ Low learning outcomes of wards as a result of low quality staffing have demoralized some parents who cease sending girls to school

Grunshie-Zongo community, in East Gonja District still practice exchange marriages. Inadequate parental care leads to immorality and pregnancy for girls. Girls are sent to markets to sell. Cultural practice of girls giving birth 'at home' before marriage as a test of fertility is common. Girls do not learn in school. They are timid and shy. They get pregnant and dropout form JSS and Primary schools. Though the community is aware of laws on girls' education etc, no one has attempted to enforce them.