

Evaluation of the African Girls' Education Initiative Country Case Study: Ghana

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Executive Summary

The AGEI activities in Ghana provide a particularly interesting case study because the community and school level interventions supported in Ghana have been in operation longer than in other countries, maximizing the likelihood of effect. Moreover, remarkably good data were available with which to assess outcomes and impacts of these local interventions.

Agreement on problems and solutions: There is widespread agreement among major development partners about the main problems facing the education sector and about the type of interventions likely to help government strengthen the sector.

Major interventions at the national level included teacher training, revision of textbooks to increase their gender sensitivity, and school mapping.

At the community and school level, AGEI funds were used to continue funding of CHILDSCOPE, an integrated set of inputs and activities concentrated in seven districts. While centred on increasing community participation through community advocacy, interventions included school and district level teacher training, scholarships, provision of bicycles for girls living far away from the school, provision of materials to schools, construction of toilets and provision of water to some schools, among other things.

Outcomes and Impacts of CHILDSCOPE

- Measurable gains between 1999-2002 in girls' access, persistence, and achievement in CHILDSCOPE districts have been modest. From 1999-2002, girls' enrolment in CHILDSCOPE districts increased 0.6% over the national average. (CHILDSCOPE districts increased by 1.7% while girls' enrolment nationally increased by 1.1%).
- Gender disparities in CHILDSCOPE districts did not narrow over the course of the intervention.
- Retention of both boys and girls declined in the four CHILDSCOPE districts in which data were available, though girls dropped out of CHILDSCOPE schools at a lower rate than boys. The loss due to drop-out exceeded the gain in initial enrolment.
- The transition rates from P6 to JSS1 for all public schools in the districts in which CHILDSCOPE was operating declined.
- Achievement in mathematics, as measured by the Performance Monitoring Test (PMT), increased between 1998-2000 for both boys and girls in four of the five districts for which data were available. For the most part, girls outperformed boys. Girls' achievement in

English (1998-2000), as measured by the PMT, increased in three districts and declined in two; boys' achievement increased in four and declined in one.

Visibility of UNICEF's girls' education work: Major donors see UNICEF as an active proponent of girls' education in donor meetings with government and believe that UNICEF had considerable influence on the inclusion of girls' education as a priority within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP). At the same time, these donors were largely unaware of UNICEF's field activities in support of girls' education.

Changing unit of intervention: CHILDSCOPE was originally targeted at the school level. This approach led to problems, as schools within the same district received significantly different resource flows. This is leading UNICEF and government officials to move away from this approach and to define participation in CHILDSCOPE in terms of districts.

Changing mechanisms: The sudden availability of funds through AGEI may have inadvertently undercut the sustainability of an alliance of 25 NGOs that had organized to pick up some of the community based activities following the end of funding from an earlier girls' education project.

Clash of goals: In some cases, goals collided when the push to help girls conflicted with the need to honor community wishes that moved in a different direction. The scholarship program, intended as a means of reducing the direct cost to families of sending girls to school, was modified in the face of community backlash to benefit boys and girls equally.

Competing voices within communities: In some communities, conflict developed between Parent-Teacher Associations, responsible for raising local funds, and School Management Committees (SMC) which saw their role as determining how those funds should be spent. PTAs wanted more say in how the funds they generated would be used.

Timing of funding: One constraint on AGEI activities has been the irregular and inadequate timing of funding. AGEI funds allocated by UNICEF headquarters were nearly six months delayed in being sent to the UNICEF Ghana office. Further delays occurred in the process of the MOEY dispersing the funds to the CHILDSCOPE schools.

What achievements constitute success: The impact of CHILDSCOPE on girls' access, retention, and achievement is much more modest than was originally anticipated and those increases came at a high cost. This might suggest that, while CHILDSCOPE was effective, it was not a particularly efficient set of interventions.

Effective but not necessarily efficient: Some argue that even keeping up with national rates of access and retention represents a meaningful achievement. Others question why the expenditure of such significant funds over such a sustained period of time has not led to more notable changes in girls' access and retention. The degree to which CHILDSCOPE was an efficient intervention depends, in large part, on whether there are alternative strategies that could have achieved the same outcomes and impacts for a lower cost.

Establishing realistic goals: The stated objectives of both UNICEF/Ghana and the Girls' Education Unit of the MOEYS was that the combined national, district, and school level activities would increase girls' enrollment and retention by upwards of 10% over three years. Results suggest that achieving more than a 1% gain over ten years might be a more realistic goal. The

Ghana experience also points out that interventions that increase enrollment do not necessarily increase persistence or continuation to the next level of schooling.

The experience of UNICEF/Ghana with CHILDSCOPE may offer useful insights into the efficacy of community participation strategies as a means of promoting girls' access, retention and achievement. Results suggest that community participation strategies, pursued over a sustained amount of time, can raise girls' participation, but that gains are small. Moreover, the gains are more likely to be seen in initial enrolment, but less likely to be seen in retention in the primary grades, achievement, or continuation to junior secondary grades. Finally, these small gains come at a high cost, both in the intensity of interventions that were needed to achieve the gains and the length of time that was needed to achieve them.

Limited sustainability: Ministry officials indicate that while they are committed to sustainability, it will only occur to the extent that external or community generated funds are available. District and school level officials shared the view that sustainability depended on the continued flow of external funds, but did not believe communities would be able to be the source of those funds.

Efficacy of demonstration projects: The intention in concentrating CHILDSCOPE in seven districts was that these would serve as demonstration sites. No evidence was found to suggest that the interventions spread to other communities or districts without the specifically focused external funding.

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Context

UNICEF and the Government of Ghana initiated efforts to promote girls' education during 1994-1996 with funds provided by CIDA within a project that was the predecessor of the AGEI. The centrepiece of this initial work was the development of CHILDSCOPE, a programme targeted in selected districts with an integrated set of inputs aimed at increasing girls' access and school quality, but which centred on promoting community participation in school management.

Work started under this project was continued in 1997-2002 by UNICEF with funding provided by CIDA through the Ghana Girl-Child Education Project. As part of this continuation funding from CIDA, many of the CHILDSCOPE activities were continued through the Alliance for Community Action on Female Education (ACAFE). Supported by UNICEF, the Alliance coordinated the efforts of about 25 NGOs that, together, kept CHILDSCOPE alive and operational. When this project ended, UNICEF/Ghana applied for AGEI funding and was accepted as one of the 16 countries added to the Initiative at the beginning of Phase 2.

Approximately half of the AGEI funding was allocated to support national level interventions aimed at helping all schools, e.g., teacher training, textbook revision. The remaining half was used to continue support and expand CHILDSCOPE, since it was an initiative consistent with AGEI goals that was already underway. In 2001, as part of the transition to AGEI, the coordination of the 25 NGOs activities, previously handled by ACALE, was taken over by the Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE).

The education system of Ghana is organized into 10 regions and 110 districts. The community level activities under AGEI are concentrated in seven districts. While some activities are district wide, such as training programmes, most of the activities within these districts are further concentrated in selected communities and specially designated as CHILDSCOPE. CHILDSCOPE has also attracted support from other donors. Various aspects of the CHILDSCOPE programme receive funding from USAID and the Dutch government as well as UNICEF.

Funding Flows: AGEI funds flow from UNICEF to the MOEY in three primary ways: (a) Some are allocated directly to the central ministry for such things as textbook development and teacher training. (b) Some funds are given to the central ministry with the understanding that those funds will be used to support district level activities. (c) Some funds are allocated directly to District Assembly Common Funds, based on a formal plan developed by each District

Assembly and agreed to by UNICEF for how those funds will be used. The central ministry sets up and coordinates those planning meetings.

National Level Activities

At the national level, AGEI strategies have concentrated on planning, advocacy, curriculum and textbooks revision to be more gender sensitive, teacher training in gender sensitivity, and support of the Girls Education Unit of the MOEYS. The MOEYS received funds to support these activities from a broad array of international development organizations, as illustrated in Figure 1. It is not possible within the scope of this study to assess the separate contributions of these training, materials redesign, and Ministry support activities to changes in students' access or achievement nationally. Neither is it possible to disaggregate the impact due to the particular contribution of UNICEF from that of other development partners and the Ministry itself.

Increasing the Gender Sensitivity of the Curriculum and School. Three main interventions have taken place to create a more gender sensitive curriculum: (a) review, updating, and creation of curriculum/textbooks to reflect a gender sensitive approach; (b) training of teachers in gender sensitive approaches; and (c) the building or updating of sanitation facilities to be separated by gender.

→ The activity to increase the gender sensitivity of the curriculum have centred on the training of curriculum developers, a review of the general curriculum and of accompanying syllabi, and distribution of the new curriculum to the schools. The new curriculum has been widely distributed nationally. During the 2000/20001 school year, 13,947 of 13,965 primary schools received the new materials (Osei, J. & UNICEF/Ghana, July 2002).

→ The training of teachers in gender sensitive methods and classroom management has occurred through both pre- and in-service workshops. As of June 2003, most head teachers and primary 1-6 teachers have taken part in content area training in English, mathematics, and science in all districts. Additionally, over 600 teachers from the seven districts have been trained in gender sensitive methodologies and issues of classroom management (UNICEF/Ghana, January 2002).

School Mapping. School mapping is a technique in which data is collected from targeted schools or districts in order to assess and improve the planning for and utilization of resources. In 2002, four programme districts in Ghana took part in school mapping exercises. In the Afram Plains school district, school mapping was used as the basis for the decision to merge 12 schools (UNICEF/Ghana, January 2002). By 2003, four of the seven CHILDSCOPE districts had completed the School Mapping exercise while three others had completed the data collection phase (UNICEF/Ghana, January 2003).

Figure 1

Taxonomy of Programmes of Civil Society Organizations Aimed at Promoting Retention of the Girls at the Primary and JSS Levels

Program/Intervention	Responsible Agent
Advocacy on the importance of girls' education	Action Aid Ghana, Afram Plains Development Organization, Girls' Education Unit of Ghana Education Service, Forum for African Women Educationalists, All- Age Development Centre, Association of People for Practical Life, Better Life Organization, Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education, Centre for the Empowerment of the Vulnerable, Children's Rights International, Community Action for Development, Community Development and Environmental Protection Association, Community Development and Human Resource Enhancement Group, Community Development and Youth Advisory Centre, Community Radio Network, Friends of the Nation, Future Generation International, Gub-Katimali Society, Harvesters for Christ Mission, Integrated Social Development Centre, Link Social Youth Club, Organization of Rural Primary Education Developers, Philip Foundation Programme, Rural Initiative and Development Centre.
Capacity building of partners (MOE/GES officials, PTA/SMC etc)	Afram Plains Development Organization, Canadian Feed the Children, Catholic Relief Services, CARE Community School Alliance, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education, World University Services of Canada.
Provision of structures: classrooms, toilets/ urinals	Muslim Relief Association of Ghana, World University Services of Canada.
Provision of school facilities (logistics, furniture, textbooks stationery, bicycles for pupils and teachers)	Action Aid Ghana, Afram Plains Development Organization, Girls' Education Unit of GES, Canadian Feed the Children, Catholic Relief Services through collaboration with Japan International Development Agency, Muslim Relief Association of Ghana, Assist Mankind Ghana.
Gender sensitivity training (for MOE/GES officials, teachers, curriculum developers.	Action Aid Ghana, Curriculum, Research Development Division of GES, Afram Plains Development Organization, Girls' Education Unit of GES, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Canadian Feed the Children
Libraries	Action Aid Ghana, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Canadian Feed the Children
Scholarship for needy girls.	Ghana Education Service, District Assemblies, Centre for Sustainable Development Initiatives, Forum for African Women Educationalists,
Food Programmes (food rations and school lunch)	World Food Programme, Catholic Relief Service, Canadian Feed the Children.
Rural Education Volunteers	Action Aid, District Assemblies
Research	Action Aid Ghana, Curriculum, Research Development Division of GES, Girls' Education Unit of GES, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Young Reader's Network, Canadian Feed the Children, Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education, Centre for Domestic Development Services, Centre for the Empowerment of the Vulnerable, Family Care Foundation, Future Generation International, Integrated Social Development Centre, Primary Health Care 2000, Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems.
Enrolment drive	Action Aid Ghana, Afram Plains Development Organisation, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Centre for Sustainable Development Initiatives.

Program/Intervention	Responsible Agent
Support for STME Clinics	Ghana Education Service, Action Aid Ghana, District Assemblies, Integrated Social Development Centre.
Community mobilization and awareness creation through IEC campaigns.	CARE Community School Alliance, Forum for African Women Educationalists Association of People for Practical Life.
Micro-credit scheme for women/Income Generation	World University Services of Canada, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Amasachina Self-Help Association, Centre for Economic and Social Initiatives, Christian Children's Fund of Canada, Gub-Katimali Society, Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems.
In-service training of teachers in new methodology.	Action Aid Ghana, Curriculum, Research Development Division of GES, Afram Plains Development Organization, Canadian Feed the Children, CARE Community School Alliance Project, World University Services of Canada.
Health promotion (reproductive health, sex education, counselling etc.)	Action Aid Ghana, Afram Plains Development Organization, Girls' Education Unit of GES, Forum for African Women Educationalists, CARE Community School Alliance Project, World University Services of Canada, Association of People for Practical Life, Centre for Integrated Rural Environment Development, Christian Missions Resource Foundation, Christian Rural Aid Network, Community Radio Network, Grass Root Action Network, Primary Health Care 2000.
Girls' Clubs	Girls' Education Unit of GES, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Young Reader's Network, Association of People for Practical Life, Better Life Organization, Centre for the Empowerment of the Vulnerable,
Promotion of girls' self esteem.	Girls' Education Unit of GES, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Canadian Feed the Children, Young Reader's Network, Olinga Foundation for Human Development.
Role model visits	Girls' Education Unit of GES, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Canadian Feed the Children, Young Reader's Network, Muslim Relief Association.

Source: *Compiled from Approaches for Advancing Girls' Education in Ghana: A Symposium to Examine Current Practices and Identify Future Directions and Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child – Membership Directory.*

Continued support to the Girls Education Unit of the MOEYS: Using AGEI funds, UNICEF has continued its support for the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) within the central MOEYS. The GEU implements its programmes through Girls' Education staff located in every region and district education office. The task of these officers is to promote awareness of gender issues and work with District Assemblies, SMCs, and PTAs to improve the conditions of girls in schools. While many of the messages highlighting the importance of sending girls to school are designed at a central level, these advocacy activities are actually delivered by district staff. To support and strengthen this network, the GEU has developed a manual that specifies how regional and district staff might do their work. It also promotes continuity of effort in the face of frequent staff turnover, as the manual helps new staff operate in a manner consistent with previous efforts. Among other things, this manual encouraged baseline (and subsequent) data collection on girls' access, retention, and achievement.

District/Community Activities

At the district and community levels, AGEI supported the continuation and expansion of CHILDSCOPE (Child, School, Community Process in Education). Seven districts currently take part in the CHILDSCOPE program; entry dates into the programme vary: Afram Plains (1996), Builsa (1997), Bawku-East (1998), Tolon-Kumbungu (1998), Yendi (1998), Zabuzugu-Tatale

(1999), and Savelugu-Nanton (2000). The common characteristic is that these districts were among the most educationally under-served and disadvantaged areas, characterized by low levels of access and high drop-out rates of girls.

At present, a total of 280 schools take part in CHILDSCOPE. Though all CHILDSCOPE schools use PLA techniques, not all of those schools then receive the same set of interventions.

Beyond PLA, the schools might receive some combination of:

- incentives aimed at lowering costs to parents such as scholarships and bicycles
- strengthening of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)
- teacher training at the school or district level in gender sensitive approaches and methods,
- provision of water and separate toilet facilities
- (e.g., build gender segregated sanitation facilities), and
- sensitization workshops with parents and community leaders that stress issues of gender equity
- provision of furniture
- provision of school supplies, such as writing booklet for children

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). The centrepiece of CHILDSCOPE was the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) technique, aimed at community capacity building and participation. Specifically, PLA workshops were aimed at helping School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) aware of the role they could play in school management, e.g., monitoring of student progress, teacher attendance, and school policy making, alongside community members.

Scholarships: UNICEF and the GoG funded scholarships that were initially earmarked for girls. The intention was to increase access by reducing the cost of education. Bowing to community pressure, the scholarship programme was modified to allow awards to both girls and boys. As of this year, half of the scholarships must go to girls, half to boys.

Bicycles: One strategy for promoting girls' school access and retention was the provision of bicycles for those who live far away from a school. They bicycles lowered opportunity cost in four ways: (1) By reducing travel time to and from school, girls had more time to do their household chores, reducing a source of parental resistance to sending girls to school. (2) Girls were less tired and more able to focus on schoolwork. (3) Riding a bicycle provided an increased level of security for girls, both because they often rode two-to-a-bicycle and because they moved faster through potentially risky areas. (4) The bicycles increased the feasibility of girls who completed primary school being able to enrol in a junior secondary school if it were beyond walking but within bicycle range. Moreover, girls who completed primary and enrolled in secondary school were allowed to keep their bicycle. A total of 2,500 bicycles have been distributed to girls in the seven districts through CHILDSCOPE (UNICEF/Ghana, 2002). Primary school teachers report that the attendance of many girls who received bicycles has improved markedly.

Provision of water and separate toilets for boys and girls: The provision of separate urinal facilities for girls and boys is widely regarded a major factor in the retention of female students. New policy requires that all newly constructed schools have water and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. At the same time, efforts are underway to provide these facilities in existing schools. In 2002, 70 schools in 7 districts were provided with urinals. In 2003, urinals were

constructed in another 70 schools in those same 7 districts and the original 70 schools will receive water and separate toilets.

School mapping: School mapping, properly done, provides a basis for allocating (or reallocating) education resources. It provides data that can be useful in locating new schools relative to population centres, identifying the over- or under-allocation of staff relative to school size, and in designing textbook distribution systems. School mapping has been supported by UNESCO (1 district), JICA (1 district) and by UNICEF (13 districts) as part of its AGEI activities. The intention is that the mapping exercise will provide information that will support the development of cooperative district-level action plans. A collaborative effort of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and the University of Cape Coast, researchers adapted the IIEP school mapping questionnaire for use in Ghana. Now completed in 13 districts, the MOEY expects that all districts eventually will undertake a school mapping exercise.

Provision of teaching and learning materials

AGEI funds were used to support the development and dissemination of teaching materials that were thought to be relevant to girls' education. Materials included the development of teacher manuals for orientation human rights issues, life skills promotion, parenting, and the development of content area handbooks on the teaching of English, Mathematics, and Science (UNICEF/Ghana, January 2003). These materials were also included as components of teacher training sessions. Constraints in the actual use of the materials were encountered due to a lack of wide availability.

Provision of school furniture

As part of CHILDSCOPE, school furniture was provided to primary and JSS schools in the seven target districts as part of making schools child friendly. Not all schools designated as CHILDSCOPE schools received furniture.

Outputs

At the National level

- **Teacher training:** UNICEF funds were combined with funds from other sources. Specific information on amount of training supported by AGEI funds was not available.
- **Revision of textbooks:** UNICEF funds were combined with funds from other sources. Specific data on extent of revisions were not available.
- **School mapping:** AGEI funds have been used to support school mapping in 13 districts. The MOEY expects that all districts eventually will undertake a school mapping exercise.

At the District/School Level (CHILDSCOPE)

At present, a total of 280 schools take part in CHILDSCOPE, though the specific interventions in which each school participates differs.

- **Participatory Learning and Action (PLA).** Conducted in all CHILDSCOPE communities

- **Scholarships:** To date, about 2500 scholarships have been awarded. Current practice is to allocate half to girls, half to boys.
- **Bicycles:** A total of 2,500 bicycles have been distributed to girls in the seven districts
- **Provision of water and separate toilets for boys and girls:** In 2002, 70 CHILDSCOPE schools were provided with urinals; another 70 are being constructed in 2003. Seventy schools will receive water and separate toilets in 2003. New policy requires that all newly constructed schools have water and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls.
- **Teaching and learning materials**
- **School furniture:** Total furniture supplies included 6,030 dual desks (to serve 12,060 students), 3,050 cupboards (across 3,050 classrooms), and 1,034 paired teacher desks and chairs (UNICEF/Ghana 2002).

Outcomes

UNICEF and government officials involved with AGEI activities believe strongly that the activities underway through AGEI are making a positive impact on girls' school access, persistence and achievement. Though UNICEF/Ghana only joined AGEI in Phase 2, the activities being funded through AGEI have been underway since 1994. This provides an opportunity to examine the long-term outcomes and impacts of these interventions within those districts. Four possible outcomes are examined: (a) change in girls' enrolment, (b) change in the gender disparities in enrolment rates between boys and girls, (c) retention in primary grades, and (d) transition from Primary 6 (P6) to Junior Secondary School 1 (JSS1).

Enrolment: Table 1 shows change in enrolment only in the CHILDSCOPE schools in the seven target districts, reported separately for schools that started CHILDSCOPE in the first year and those that were included later. All CHILDSCOPE schools showed small increases in girls' enrolment. In general, schools that had participated in CHILDSCOPE longer showed larger increases. From 1999-2002, overall girls' enrolment in the seven CHILDSCOPE districts increased by 1.7% while girls' enrolment nationally increased by 1.1%. While this gain in girls' enrolment of only 0.6% over the national average is modest, it should be remembered that CHILDSCOPE districts are among the poorest in the country and, without CHILDSCOPE, access would be expected to be below the national average.

Table 1: Percentage Change in Girls' Enrolment in CHILDSCOPE Schools From Initial Year to 2001/02

District	# of Sch	% Average Enrolment for Initial Schools		% Inc	# of Sch	% Average Enrolment for Later Schools		% Inc	# of Sch	% Average Enrolment for All Schools		% Inc
		Initial	2001/02			Initial	2001/02			Initial	2001/02	
Afram Plains	6	45.6	49.7	2.3	50	44.8	46.7	1.9	56	46.5	48.0	1.5
Builsa	7	54.0	59.9	5.9	16	54.2	55.5	1.3	23	54.4	53.3	-1.1
Yendi	6	34.4	38.1	3.7	34	34.9	38.2	3.3	40	34.3	38.2	3.9
Tolon K'bgbu	30	31.6	34.6	3.0	-	-	-	-	30	31.6	34.6	3.0
Zabzugu Tat.	20	37.6	42.8	5.2	10	37.6	43.7	6.1	30	37.6	46.4	8.8
Savelugu N.	31	33.4	36.6	4.2	-	-	-	-	31	33.4	37.6	4.2
Bawku East	19	41.1	42.4	1.3	25	39.9	41.2	1.3	44	38.6	39.8	1.2

Source: Osei, Juliana (July 2002). *Evaluation report of the Ghana Girl-Child Education Project supported by the Government of Canada, SC/97/250-1*, Accra, Ghana: UNICEF. Original Source: Field Data (Calculated from figures given by CHILDSCOPE Liaison Officers in the Districts, 2002).

Gender disparities in enrolment: One goal of AGEI activities was to narrow disparities in enrolment between boys and girls. To this end, Table 2 compares enrolment rates by gender in AGEI districts and nationally at both primary and junior secondary levels over the two years (1999/00 - 2001/02) that CHILDSCOPE has been supported through the AGEI. These data include enrolments in both public and private schools.

At the primary level, nationally, there was little change in enrolment rates for either girls or boys during this period. In AGEI districts there was a small increase in girls' enrolment (2.1%) and a small decrease in boys' enrolment (2.1%). This represents a narrowing of the gender gap by 4.2%; an 18.4% difference in enrolment rates narrowed to 14.2%). The same pattern was seen at the JSS level, though initial disparities were greater and the reduction in the disparity was smaller. Overall, the difference in enrolment rates for boys and girls decreased by 2.2%. From a 1999/00 gap of 31.6%, it dropped to a 29.4% gap in 2001/02.

Table 2: Gender Disparities in Enrolment, Primary and JSS Levels, Nationally and for AGEI Districts, by Gender, 1999/00 – 2001/02

Year	Primary				JSS			
	National		AGEI Area		National		AGEI Areas	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1999/00	52.8	47.2	59.2	40.8	54.6	45.4	65.8	34.2
2000/01	52.6	47.4	57.8	42.2	54.3	45.7	64.2	35.8
2001/02	52.5	47.5	57.1	42.9	54.1	45.9	64.7	35.3

Source: Osei, Juliana (August, 2003), *Ghana Country Level Education Report for the 2003 Evaluation of the UNICEF Supported African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI)*, UNICEF Accra, Ghana. Data originally from MOE, EMIS

Retention: Table 3 reports retention rates between Primary 1 and Primary 4 in the four districts that had participated in CHILDSCOPE for four years or more. Retention of both boys and girls declined; however, the dropout rate was higher for boys than girls. It appears that the loss due to drop-out exceeded the gain in initial enrolment, though it suggests that CHILDSCOPE was able to slow the attrition of girls.

Table 3: Change in Retention from P1 to P4 by Gender in Four CHILDSCOPE Districts (Four years before CHILDSCOPE and four years after)

District	PERIOD: Before/After CHDSCOPE	Enrolment				Retention		Growth	
		Primary One		Primary Four		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls				
Afram Plains	Before	1903	1667	1273	1022	66.9	61.3	-8.4	-7.5
	After	1757	1699	1027	914	58.5	53.8		
Yendi	Before	1341	833	832	402	62.0	48.3	-24.3	-14.5
	After	2701	1574	1018	530	37.7	33.8		
Builsa	Before	978	975	543	557	55.5	57.1	-18.1	-10.2
	After	1982	1926	741	904	37.4	46.9		
Tolon K'bungu	Before	2085	1103	1164	439	55.8	39.8	-1.7	+2.3
	After	2282	1322	1234	557	54.1	42.1		

Source: Osei. Juliana (July 2002). *Evaluation report of the Ghana Girl-Child Education Project supported by the Government of Canada, SC/97/250-1*, Accra, Ghana: UNICEF. Original data from MOE, SRIMPR Division, 2001.

Transition from Primary 6 to Junior Secondary School: Table 4 reports the change in the rate of transition from Primary 6 to Junior Secondary school (JSS 1), by gender, during participation in CHILDSCOPE. Overall the percent of students continuing in junior secondary school after completing primary 6 declined. Transition rates increased slightly for both boys and girls in three districts and decreased for both boys and girls in three districts. In the remaining district, it decreased for boys and increased for girls.

Table 4: Percentage Growth in Rate of Transition from P6 to JSS1 in CHILDSCOPE Districts, by Gender

District	PERIOD: Before/After CHILD- SCOPE	Enrolment				Transition		Change in transition rate	
		Primary Six		S One		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls				
Afram Plains	Before	1067	849	698	577	65.4	68.0	3.0	0.6
	After	1001	810	685	556	68.4	68.6		
Yendi	Before	841	370	670	286	79.2	77.3	-17.5	-11.5
	After	1027	459	639	302	62.2	65.8		
Builsa	Before	380	491	358	385	94.2	78.4	-31.0	+3.7
	After	468	420	296	345	63.2	82.1		
Tolon Kumbungu	Before	993	318	581	166	58.5	52.2	+2.8	+17.0
	After	901	403	552	278	61.3	69.2		
Savelugu Nanton	Before	740	230	577	158	78.0	68.7	-14.8	-11.8
	After	772	267	488	152	63.2	56.9		
Zabzugu Tatala	Before	389	177	315	141	81.0	79.7	+7.9	+6.5
	After	343	159	305	137	88.9	86.2		
Bawku East	Before	1687	1046	1407	856	83.4	81.8	-7.7	-4.3
	After	1732	1100	1311	852	75.7	77.5		

Source: Osei. Juliana (July 2002). *Evaluation report of the Ghana Girl-Child Education Project supported by the Government of Canada, SC/97/250-1*, Accra, Ghana: UNICEF. Original data from MOE, SRIMPR Division, 2001.

Overall transition rates from P6 to JSS1 for all public schools in the districts in which CHILDSCOPE was operating declined. AGEI interventions do not appear to have improved retention at either primary or junior secondary levels. Drop-out is higher in AGEI districts than it

is nationally at both primary and junior secondary levels. In all cases, drop-out during primary grades is higher for girls than boys.

Another way to assess the impact of AGEI on retention is through an examination of cohort survival rates of boys and girls. Tables 5 and 6 use grade progression data from the MOEY to calculate cohort survival. Based on an assumption that 1000 boys and 1000 girls were to start P1, it reports how many would be expected to complete P6 six years later. Results indicate that, at the primary level, survival rates have improved for girls in AGEI districts at the same time they have declined for boys (Table 5). The same pattern occurs at the junior secondary level, but to a smaller extent (Table 6).

Table 5
Cohort Survival Rates, P1 to P6, for Three Cohorts that Entered P1
Between 1993/94 and 1995/96 and Entered P6
Between 1998/99 and 2000/01 Respectively,
National and AGEI Area, by Gender

Year	P1 Enrolment	Retention at P.6			
		National		AGEI Areas	
		Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
1993/94-1998/99	1000	728	781	429	540
1994/95-1999/00	1000	794	853	504	609
1995/96-2000/01	1000	756	779	445	511

Source: Osei, Juliana (August, 2003), *Ghana Country Level Education Report for the 2003 Evaluation of the UNICEF Supported African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI)*, UNICEF Accra, Ghana. Data originally from MOE, EMIS

Table 6
Cohort Survival Rates, P1 to P6, for Two Cohorts that Entered JSS1
Between 1997/98 and 1998/99 and Entered JSS3
Between 1999/00 and 2000/01 Respectively,
National and AGEI Area, by Gender

Year	JSS 1 Enrolment	Retention at JSS 3			
		National		AGEI Areas	
		Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
1997/98-1999/00	1000	821	859	668	722
1998/99-2000/01	1000	762	780	680	695

Source: Osei, Juliana (August, 2003), *Ghana Country Level Education Report for the 2003 Evaluation of the UNICEF Supported African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI)*, UNICEF Accra, Ghana. Data originally from MOE, EMIS

Impacts

Achievement: Student achievement nationally and in AGEI districts was compared using the Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) results. The PMT is an annual examination in English and

Mathematics instituted in 1998 by the Inspectorate Division of the Ghana Education Service for all Primary Two to Primary Six pupils in the country.

Table 7 reports student achievement in AGEI districts (for which data were available) for the three years that the PMT has been conducted. While achievement scores in all AGEI districts are below the national averages for both math and English, achievement scores in most AGEI districts improved between 1998 and 2001. Nonetheless, achievement gains in AGEI districts did not keep up with achievement gains nationally. Nationally, the mean score in English at P6 rose from 34.18% in 1998 to 44.97% in 2001, an increase of about 10.8%. Gains in AGEI districts were substantially lower, with two districts showing a decline in English achievement scores. Nationally, the mean score for mathematics rose from 13.94% in 1998 to 44.25% in 2001, an increase of 30.3%. Gains in AGEI districts were much smaller, ranging from 17.6% to -1.7% over the same time period.

While the PMT is not standardized across years and national achievement data were not available by gender, these results suggest that students in AGEI districts were not able to keep up to national achievement gains in English and mathematics. If anything, disparities in achievement between these districts and others appear to have increased.

Table 7: Percentage Growth in Student Achievement in Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) Results by Gender in CHILDSCOPE Districts, 1998 and 2000

District	Mathematics						English					
	Boys			Girls			Boys			Girls		
	1998	2000	Growth	1998	2000	Growth	1998	2000	Growth	1998	2000	Growth
Afram P.	14.5	26.4	11.9	1.1	23.5	22.4	14.8	18.2	3.4	11.0	16.4	5.4
Yendi	n.a.	30.0	n.a.	n.a.	26.4	n.a.	n.a.	26.9	n.a.	n.a.	22.7	n.a.
Builsa	n.a.	25.1	n.a.	n.a.	24.7	n.a.	n.a.	21.6	n.a.	n.a.	26.6	n.a.
Tolon Kbungu	10.0	26.6	16.6	9.4	27.0	17.6	12.2	16.9	4.7	10.6	18.0	7.4
Savelugu.N	14.4	26.0	11.6	13.5	26.1	12.6	7.3	18.1	10.8	12.8	19.7	6.9
Zabzugu T.	29.2	27.5	-1.7	23.4	23.0	-0.4	35.4	18.6	-16.8	27.5	14.7	-12.8
Bawku East	21.0	29.3	8.3	20.0	25.9	5.9	21.0	23.0	2.0	25.0	20.2	-4.8

Source: Osei, Juliana (July 2002). *Evaluation report of the Ghana Girl-Child Education Project supported by the Government of Canada, SC/97/250-1*, Accra, Ghana: UNICEF. Original data from Basic Education Division, GES, 2000.

Schools or Roads?

We crowded into the relatively small office of the District Director of Education (DDE), three evaluators, a UNICEF representative, and two of his district staff. We settled in around the three file cabinets, fax, photocopier, and a single bookcase. Afram Plains is the oldest CHILDSCOPE site, having started with six schools back in 1994. With UNICEF funding, 80 schools are now in CHILDSCOPE. More really. ALL 136 schools in the district are now described as CHILDSCOPE schools to avoid the stigma of a school being left out. All do receive some UNICEF funded benefits—sports equipment, furniture. However, the special 80 get a bigger set of interventions, including bicycles for some girls, teacher training. One consequence is that being a CHILDSCOPE school no longer denotes a particular set of treatments — here are tiers. Moreover, some schools in this district also receive inputs from USAID, DFID, Irish Aid, and others.

A central tenet of CHILDSCOPE is community participation. One of the DDE's concerns is that the District Assembly in his district does not yet assign the same value to supporting education that he does. They support it, but they don't favour it. The District Assembly gives highest priority to improving feeder roads that will make it easier for farmers in this predominately agricultural district to get their produce to their markets. Assembly members argue that building roads is supporting the schools. Better roads will increase the income of farmers who can then pay school fees for their children. After highways, the Assembly sees the construction of health clinics as the next highest priority. Education comes somewhere after that on the list.

The DDE is a member of the District Assembly, but not a member of the Management Committee that makes the real budget decisions on how money is spent. While frustrated that education does not get a higher priority, he believes his role as a member of the District Assembly should be that of a technical expert. He is reluctant to get too deeply into the political fray.

He was positive about CHILDSCOPE and UNICEF's work in the district, and he thinks educational quality has slowly improved over his five years as DDE. Still, he has some concerns about what would happen in the future if external funding of CHILDSCOPE were to decline.

He fears that the District Assembly will not be in a position to step in and fill the gap. School management committees and PTAs are functioning and have made important contributions to the support of their local schools. Nonetheless, the district is poor. Many people own and farm land in this district, but live somewhere else. Their support to the local schools is weak. Without continued external funding, he thinks some of the progress of the last few years would erode.

Key Observations

- ***Agreement on problems and solutions***

There is widespread agreement among major development partners about the main problems facing the education sector and about the type of interventions likely to help government strengthen the sector.

- ***Visibility of UNICEF's girls' education work***

Overall, UNICEF work in girls' education has a relatively low profile with other major donors in the education sector. Major donors see UNICEF as an active proponent of girls' education in donor meetings with government and believe that UNICEF had considerable influence on the inclusion of girls' education as a priority within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP). At the same time, these donors were largely unaware of UNICEF's field activities in support of girls' education.

One donor knew of CHILDSCOPE but viewed it as a community development project rather than as a girls' education project *per se*. Another major donor was unaware that UNICEF had field activities underway in girls' education and was critical of UNICEF's general project-approach to supporting education. This donor argued that, at a time that development assistance is moving toward multi-donor budget support and sector-wide planning, continued long-term, project-oriented support is a disservice. Distributing bicycles or building latrines in a relatively small number of schools will not solve the larger system problem of helping Government establish priorities and implement national systems that ensure a quality education for all children.

This same donor sees UNICEF's comparative advantage as being a leader in experimenting with a variety of interventions, widely disseminating information about effective practices, and moving on to further experimentation. UNICEF loses its way, in this donor's view, when it provides long-term sustained support for a particular set of interventions.

- ***Changing the unit of intervention***

CHILDSCOPE was originally targeted at the school level. Specific schools within selected districts, once designated as CHILDSCOPE schools, benefited from a convergence of interventions. Over time, this approach led to problems, as schools within the same district received significantly different resource flows. District education staff were in the awkward position of explaining why some schools within their jurisdiction received fewer benefits than others. This is leading UNICEF and government officials to move away from this approach and to define participation in CHILDSCOPE in terms of districts. All schools within a CHILDSCOPE district would then be eligible for special programmes funded under the CHILDSCOPE umbrella.

- ***Changing mechanisms***

Some ministry officials were concerned that when AGEI funding was channelled to CHILDSCOPE schools, it reduced the need for the work of the alliance of 25 NGOs that had stepped in after the earlier CIDA funding ended. A broad-based coalition, developed over several years was essentially terminated by the sudden infusion of external funds. It was unclear to these officials that FAWE would be able to sustain the collaborative efforts of these

NGOs when AGEI funding ended. Long-term sustainability may have been inadvertently undercut by the desire of UNICEF and the Ministry to provide more support to CHILDSCOPE.

- ***Clash of goals***

In some cases, goals collided, as when the push to help girls conflicted with the need to honour community wishes that moved in a different direction. Specifically, the scholarship programme was intended as a means of reducing the direct cost to families of sending girls to school. The funds were channelled through the District Assembly Common Fund and the District Assembly actually selected the female recipients. Since the scholarship programme was launched, over 2,500 pupils received scholarships. Over time, however, a significant community backlash developed: Community members wanted boys to benefit as well as girls in the allocation of scholarships. Under community pressure, District Assemblies agreed to distribute scholarships more equitably between boys and girls. To do otherwise would have challenged the legitimacy of meaningful community participation.

- ***Competing voices within communities***

Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) have had a long history in Ghana as voluntary efforts of parents to support their local schools. In 19__ national legislation required all schools to establish a School Management Committee (SMC) as a way for the wider community to be involved in the activities of their school. (SMC members did not necessarily have children enrolled in school.) SMCs were given authority to make decisions about how local schools would spend locally generated funds. In some communities, this led to conflict between the PTA, largely responsible for generating local funds, and the SMC, which saw its role as determining how those funds should be spent. PTA members wanted more say in how the funds they generated would be used; SMC members pointed out their stronger legal status, that is, SMCs were established by legislation while PTAs were only informal structures. In some communities, tension between these groups resulted in the delay of CHILDSCOPE activities. Other communities found ways to bridge the tension, often by ensuring some amount of overlapping membership between the two groups.

- ***Timing of funding***

One constraint on AGEI activities has been the irregular and inadequate timing of funding, at two levels. AGEI funds allocated by UNICEF headquarters were nearly six months delayed in being sent to the UNICEF Ghana office. Further delays occurred in the process of the MOEY dispersing the funds to the CHILDSCOPE schools.

- ***What level of improvement constitutes success?***

The impact of CHILDSCOPE on girls' access, retention, and achievement is much more modest than was originally anticipated and those increases came at a high cost. To the extent that these gains were achieved due to CHILDSCOPE, they were accomplished with the expenditure of several million dollars concentrated on just a few districts. This might suggest that, while CHILDSCOPE was effective, it was not a particularly efficient set of interventions.

How much gain is enough? Some argue that even keeping up with national rates of access and retention represents a meaningful achievement. Others question why the expenditure of such significant funds over such a sustained period of time has not led to more notable changes in

girl's access and retention. The degree to which CHILDSCOPE was an efficient intervention depends, in large part, on whether there are alternative strategies that could have achieved the same outcomes and impacts for a lower cost.

One possibility is that the Ghana experience with CHILDSCOPE yields a realistic estimate of what level of gain in enrolment, persistence and achievement can be anticipated in other projects utilizing a similar combination of interventions. To the extent this is the case, other UNICEF projects seeking to improve girls' education through community participation strategies may need to lower their performance targets or risk being judged unsuccessful.

The experience of UNICEF/Ghana with CHILDSCOPE may offer useful insights into the efficacy of community participation strategies as a means of promoting girls' access, retention and achievement. Results suggest that community participation strategies, pursued over a sustained amount of time, can raise girls' participation, but that gains are small. Moreover, the gains are more likely to be seen in initial enrollment, but less likely to be seen in retention in the primary grades, achievement, or continuation to junior secondary grades. Finally, these small gains come at a high cost, both in the intensity of interventions that were needed to achieve the gains and the length of time that was needed to achieve them.

While evidence from Ghana suggests that a comprehensive, intensive, and sustained community participation strategy can be effective in promoting girls' education, it also raises serious questions about the extent to which this approach represents an efficient strategy. Costs were high; outcomes were modest.

The extent the CHILDSCOPE approach is efficient depends, in part, on the degree to which other types of interventions can achieve similar outcomes at a lower cost. For example, the World Food Program, working in Northern Ghana, reports dramatic increases in girls' enrollment in school when school feeding programmes make girls' enrollment and sustained attendance criteria for a school's eligibility for the feeding program. Some observers point out that feeding programmes are emergency intervention and, as such, not sustainable. They fear that girls' enrollments will fall off as soon as the feeding programme ends. However, it is not clear that the CHILDSCOPE community participation strategy is any more sustainable. National, district, and school personnel all doubted that CHILDSCOPE interventions would be continued by government or by communities if external funding were to end. This is still an open question, however, since no systematic study has been conducted to determine the extent that some elements of community might persevere without outside funding.

Another interpretation of the CHILDSCOPE experience is that it offers a valuable insight into how much can reasonably be achieved through community participation strategies. This experience suggests that many plans that intend to raise girls' participation through increased community participation need to be more realistic in the outcomes they promise. The stated objectives of both UNICEF/Ghana and the Girls' Education Unit of the MOEYS was that the combined national, district, and school level activities would increase girls' enrollment and retention by upwards of 10% over three years. Results suggest that achieving more than a 2% gain over ten years might be a more realistic goal. Moreover, the Ghana experience also points out that interventions that increase enrollment do not necessarily increase persistence or continuation to the next level of schooling.

- ***Sustainability***

The sustainability of AGEI activities beyond the availability of external funding is a point of debate within the ministry and UNICEF. Optimists argue that:

- Legislation is in place;
- Public sensitization campaigns have occurred;
- Education data are now disaggregated by gender;
- Police are more proactive about enforcing laws against molesting girls; and,
- Several initiatives seem to be successful in encouraging girls' enrolment or persistence (e.g., bicycle scheme).

They point to national legislation now in effect promoting girls' access to schooling (e.g., laws barring marriage before the age of 18). They also point to the creation of posts for regional and district girls' education officers. Every regional and district now has a staff member responsible for promoting community awareness of the importance of girls' education.

Other observers doubt the sustainability of current efforts to promote girls' education, for three reasons:

- A lack of commitment among both government officials and community members. For example, the GEU does not yet have its own budget, drawing its funds from the general education budget. Most directors within the MOE do not see the need for a separate unit on girls' education.
- About 95% of the recurrent education budget of the MOEY is allocated to personnel expenditures. If external funds for girls' education were to end, the Ministry would not have the recurrent funds with which to pick up those costs.
- Benefits of girls' education are not necessarily seen at the household level.

Ministry officials indicate that while they are committed to sustainability, it will only occur to the extent that external or community generated funds are available. District and school level officials shared the view that sustainability depended on the continued flow of external funds, but did not believe communities would be able to be the source of those funds.

- ***Going to scale — The impact of demonstration projects***

The intention of focusing CHILDSCOPE in just seven districts was that these would serve as demonstration sites. The presumption was that, as government and educators from other districts saw the results, they would allocate local resources to bring the same package of interventions to other locations. However, the Ghana experience suggests that the issue of going to scale is complicated by differing views of key stakeholders about what should be adopted. Three views are sometimes expressed

- Meaningful scaling up depends on government and local communities introducing the full CHILDSCOPE package. The benefits to girls rest in the coordinated delivery of the multiple inputs.
- Success in scaling up is achieved if key components spread, even if the integrated cluster of activities that define CHILDSCOPE do not. So, for example, it is enough that other districts adopt key elements of CHILDSCOPE, such as the provision of bicycles or scholarships.

- The benefits of AGEI are sustained if educators come to recognize effective practices for promoting girls' education, even if financial constraints make it impossible for them to actually implement these practices. The spread of the ideas is treated as separate from their actual implementation.

- ***Community participation as a strategy***

The efficiency of community participation strategies needs to be understood in terms of the full range of valued outcomes that community participation fosters. Girls' education is not the only (or even the most) important outcome of interest. Many who believe that community participation is an essential element in social and economic development do so for reasons unconnected to girls' education. Consequently, while the CHILDSCOPE experience offers insight into how a community participation strategy affects girls', it does not necessarily address the larger value of community participation strategies in development.

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