

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is critical for nation building. The government of Ghana has put in measures for promoting inclusion from basic through to tertiary level of education. Some of these measures include expansion of school facilities, implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE); the change of policy on girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy for them to return and the school feeding programme for promoting retention in school. These efforts have yielded some results such as increase in enrolment at all levels of education. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, this paper discusses the measures for promoting inclusive education in Ghana, issues emerging and strategies for improvement.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Learning Needs, Equitable Access, Special Needs, Special Needs Education, Quality Education, Exclusion Factors, Gross Enrollment Ratio.

INTRODUCTION

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledged the right to education and that the higher levels of education should be accessible to all on the basis of merit. The principles of inclusive education were thus adopted at the 1994 Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education which was restated at the Dakar World Education Forum (2000). The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) emphasizes early childhood care and education, learning programmes for all young people and adults, and improvements in the quality of education. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide time-bound targets for meeting the educational goals. In spite of the efforts, there has still been discrimination against the marginalized such as the poor, rural dwellers, women, girls and the disabled in most societies especially in relation to education which interestingly is the tool for development. The purpose of education is thus perceived as the development of one's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to the fullest potential. Millions of children, youth and adults still lack access to quality education and the benefits it brings. This inequality of opportunity is undermining progress towards achieving Education for All by 2015 (UNESCO 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008).

Recognizing the vitality of education for reducing world poverty and fostering a more equitable, peaceful and sustainable future, developed and developing countries such as Ghana, continue to persistently eliminate all forms of exclusion in education (UNESCO 2002; Govinda 2009). This paper therefore explores the measures that Ghana has taken to promote inclusive education and the issues emerging. Specifically, the paper looks at what inclusive education is, interventions for promoting inclusive education in Ghana and the issues emerging.

Exploring the Meaning of Inclusive Education

Following the international declarations which legitimated the idea of inclusion, inclusive education has become an international buzz word and has been adopted in the rhetoric of many countries across the globe. There are diverse views, interpretations and usages of inclusion globally. What it is, where it occurs, how it is implemented etc are all issues surrounding the explanation and usage of the term inclusive education. The discourse of inclusion and how it has developed including the different terminologies that are associated with the move towards the realization of an inclusive education system can itself be a challenge to policy makers. Inclusive education is thus a contestable term that has come to mean different

things to academics, policy makers and implementers.

Inclusion has been perceived and practiced as placement or the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular classrooms. In this sense it is seen as a practice whereby students with special educational needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students. This is a narrow sense of inclusive education. Inclusion education has a much broader meaning than this. Inclusive education is not merely about providing access into mainstream school for pupils who have previously been excluded. It is not about closing down an unacceptable system of segregated provision and dumping those pupils in an unchanged mainstream system. In its broadest and all encompassing sense, inclusive education, as an approach, seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It implies all learners - with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common pre-school provisions, schools and community educational setting with an appropriate network of support services. Inclusive education also means the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice. It could also be described as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It is a system that aims at all stakeholders in the educational system (learners, parents, community, teachers, administrators, and policy makers) to be comfortable with and accommodate all forms of diversity (NIC n.d.).

UNESCO (2003) defined inclusion as a developmental approach that '...seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion' (p 4). This means that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from

other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups. (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3 in UNESCO, 2003: p4)

Inclusion could thus refer to a set of principles, values and practices which involve the social transformation of education systems and communities. That is enabling all students to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream settings, whatever their needs. Inclusive education could also be seen as a continuing process of breaking down barriers to learning and participation for all children, young people and adults (Government of India 2005). It is a process of removing barriers and enabling all students, including previously excluded groups, to learn and participate effectively within general school systems.

Research has shown that inclusive education results in improved social development and academic outcomes for all learners. It leads to the development of social skills and better social interactions because learners are exposed to an educational environment in which they have to interact with other learners each one having unique characteristics, interests and abilities. The privileged peers adopt positive attitudes and actions towards disadvantage learners as they equally access available educational opportunities (Government of India 2005). Thus, inclusive education lays the foundation to an inclusive society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity. In the concept of inclusive education it is perceived that no single persons should be deprived of formal education for whatever reason. In an inclusive perspective, educational difficulties are not attributed mainly to the individual (his/her competencies, social background, the cultural capital of his/her family), but to the school and the education system. The students' progress does not depend only on his/her personal characteristics, but on the type of opportunities and support they are (or are not) given, so that the same student can experience learning and participation difficulties in one school or education programme and not in others (Govinda 2009).

Proponents of inclusive education want to maximize the participation of all learners in the schools of their choice, make learning more meaningful and relevant for all, particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary

pressures, and to rethink and restructure policies, curricula, cultures and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs. In inclusive education:

- All students can learn and benefit from education.
- Schools adapt to the needs of students, rather than students adapting to the needs of the school.
- Individual differences between students are a source of richness and diversity, and not a problem.
- The diversity of needs and pace of development of students are addressed through a wide and flexible range of responses (so long as those responses do not include depriving any disadvantaged student) (Wikipedia n.d.).

The process of inclusion in this case, requires an overhaul of current exclusion cultures that are often driven by deeply embedded negative values and beliefs.

Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana

Like other developing countries and following international trends, Ghana has made efforts at promoting inclusive education in the country.

The mission of the Ministry of Education is “to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them to acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential, be productive, facilitate poverty reduction and promote socio-economic growth and national development” (MOESS 2007).

In fulfillment of their mission for providing equitable access to education for all, the Ministry of Education has set the goals to provide:

- facilities to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of age, gender, tribe, religion and political affiliation, are functionally literate and self-reliant
- basic education for all
- opportunities for open education for all
- education and training for skill development with emphasis on science, technology and creativity
- higher education for the development of middle and top-level manpower requirements.

- resources that will give girls equal opportunities to access the full cycle of education (Ministry of Education Science and Sports (MEOSS) 2007; Ghana n.d.; Ghana 2002; Ghana 2007; Ghanaweb n.d.).

These goals directed the drawing of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003 – 2015 which sought to assist in the poverty reduction process through the development of a learning society to enhance human resource in the country and promote meaningful and successful participation in the education process for both young people and adults, who have hitherto been excluded. In the process such people will be able to access new opportunities for educational development. The strategic plan is further designed to ensure that all learners gain the necessary knowledge, master the necessary skills and acquire the necessary attitudes for them to develop as individuals, improve their social well-being and the Ghanaian society as well.

The new ESP which has just been prepared for 2010 – 2020 is situated in the main thrusts of the previous Plan (2003 - 2015). The policy basis of the ESP 2010 – 2020 among other things is to put into effect the key provisions of the 2008 Education Act that relate to access, decentralization, inclusion, quality, and system monitoring.

Much as the mission and strategies of education in Ghana does not clearly pose any exclusion factors to children and youth in the country, exclusion factors in the country have comprised the following:

- Ignorance of the benefits of education as a solution to poverty.
- Long distance away from school and feeding problems.
- Children take part in economic activities when school is in session. e.g. market days.
- Teachers posted to the rural areas tend to prefer living in slightly larger villages and commute to their schools located ten to twenty kilometers away in the remote areas and as a result teachers of schools in some of the remote areas often tend to absent themselves from school.
- Both parents and children show disinterest in

learning vocations they already know or practice in the community.

- Teaching and learning is so academic that it does not satisfy students who have other potentials.
- Lack of adequate teaching and learning materials in the poverty endemic areas of the country.
- Lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas to act as a catalyst for children and youth to remain in school till completion.
- Lack of educated role models in the deprived areas of the country which act as catalyst for children and youth to remain in school till completion (Ghana 2007).

Measures for promoting Inclusive Education

Recognizing the exclusive factors, the country has adapted international models for promoting inclusive education. The inclusive education interventions initially focused on children with special needs but realizing that certain groups of learners including girls have been marginalized, measures have been put in place to include all categories of children who are excluded from the school system. The interventions have focused on four thematic areas comprising public policy, approaches, scope and content; systems, links and transition; and learners and teachers.

Public Policy

The following public policies have since been made for inclusive education:

- Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) to make sure that all children of school going age have full and free access to basic education.
- All primary schools to have kindergartens attached to them to make sure all children of school going age have access to education.
- Change of policy on girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy for them to return to school and complete their programmes of study.
- Policy on the use of Ghanaian Language from K.G to lower primary for the child to learn in mother tongue to facilitate learning.

- Policy on special education to create educational opportunities for children and youth with special needs.
- Measures to encourage community participation by providing schools with infrastructure.
- Districts Assemblies to give scholarships to teacher trainees for districts to get trained teachers.
- Provision of basic text books to each child by Government

Approaches, Scope and Content

- There have been gender parity interventions that have focused on getting all girls of school going age into school by providing bicycles, school uniforms and meals to girls.
- Capitation grant has been introduced to take the burden of school fees off parents and to allow more children to go to school.
- The school feeding programme promotes retention by making children stay in school and to motivate parents to send their children to school.
- In the area of pedagogy the curriculum provides varied participatory teaching and learning methods to take care of the different needs of the categories of children in the classroom. The practice encourage teachers to use a mixed of approaches in teaching.
- Curriculum is developed in such a way that it takes care of different cultures by giving examples of issues/cases from other regions.

Systems, Links and Transition

Interventions for the sub-theme on systems, links and transition have thus included the following measures:

- The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure linkages from K.G to Senior High School to ensure smooth transition from one level to the other.
- Knowledge, skills, competencies have been scoped and sequenced to ensure lifelong learning.
- Secondary schools have been expanded by having model secondary schools in every District to make quality secondary education more accessible to majority of Ghanaians.

Learners and Teachers

- For the learning process to be activated with children of very different abilities there should be small class sizes of thirty-five (35) pupils to a class.
- Continuous assessment which requires remediation is part of the teaching and learning process in schools.

The process of inclusion education is however still presenting challenges for learners and teachers in the following areas:

- Curriculum change has not adequately provided learning environment that can facilitate inclusion at the school and classroom levels in most rural schools.
- Teachers have not been adequately equipped with the required competencies to attend to the growing diversity of learners' expectations and needs (Ghana 2007).

Other measures have included the following:

- Teacher Training Colleges has been upgraded and conditions of service of teachers improved, with special incentives for teachers in rural areas.
- Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) has been made responsible for the infrastructure, supervision and monitoring of Basic and Senior High Schools.
- A new National Inspectorate Board (NIB) outside the Ghana Education Service (GES) but under the MOESS is responsible for periodic inspection of Basic and Secondary Schools to ensure quality education.
- Educational services are being widened to include library and information, guidance and counseling and distance education.
- The private sector is being encouraged to increase its participation in the provision of educational services.
- Special needs education is being improved at all levels (Kwapong 2010).

These multi-dimensional and multi-focused interventions have yielded some results which are reflected in the

expansion of educational facilities and growing rates of enrolment at all levels of education. A critical study of the current situation will however show that much as there have been great accomplishments, much still leave to be desired at the international, national and regional levels.

Impact of Inclusive Education Interventions

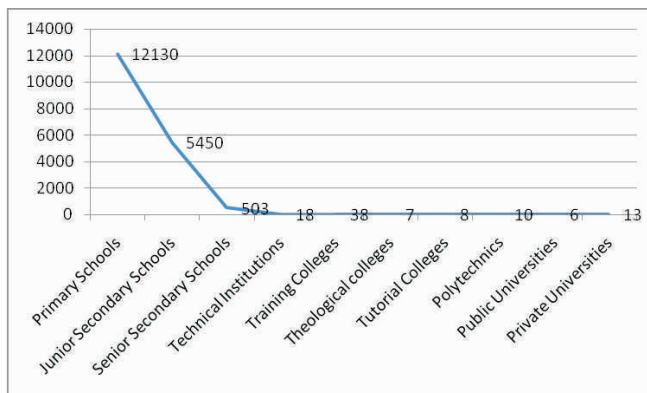
Just as some gains have been made in the promotion of inclusive education worldwide, Ghana has made some accomplishments as well. On the international settings, reports indicate that in 2006, of the 176 countries with data, 59 had achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education which is 20 countries more than in 1999. At the primary level, about two-thirds of countries had achieved parity though more than half the countries in sub-Saharan Africa and some other continents had not reached the target. At global level, the average GER in 2006 was much higher in lower secondary education (78%) than in upper (53%). At the tertiary level, more women than men are enrolled in tertiary education worldwide. The global GPI rose from 0.96 in 1999 to 1.06 in 2006. Large differences among regions however exist. The situation of developing regions varies, with higher rates of women's participation in the Caribbean (1.69) and the Pacific (1.31), and far fewer females in tertiary education in South and West Asia (0.76), and sub-Saharan Africa (0.67). In some countries, fewer than 30 women were enrolled for every 100 men in 2006 (UNESCO 2008).

The situation is not much different on the Ghanaian scene. The reforms that the country has undergone for promoting inclusive education have contributed to the expansion of its facilities to make education more accessible and equitable. Available data shows that there are 12, 130 primary schools, 5,450 junior high schools, 503 senior high schools, 18 technical institutions, 38 training colleges, seven theological colleges, eight tutorial colleges, 10 polytechnics, six public and 13 private universities that serves a population of over 20 million. Figure 1 provides the details. Total school enrolment is estimated at almost 2 million with a breakdown of 1.3 million primary; 107,600 secondary; 489, 000 middle; 21,280 technical; 11,300 teacher training; and 5,600 university students (Ghana 2007; MOESS 2009). Compared to the number of schools

that the country had as at the time of independence (one university and a handful of secondary and primary schools) one will observe from the current developments that there have been expansion of educational facilities. Considering the rate of expansion one will expect a high level of inclusion. But it can be clearly seen from Figure 1 that the increment does not match the growing population and their demand for education at all levels. Having 12,130 primary schools, 10 polytechnics and 19 public and private universities does not give a good proportion. Hence the curve in Figure 1 drops flat from secondary level. There is therefore bound to be exclusion as we get to higher levels of education. A critical study of the enrolment rates at all the levels of education will give a better picture of the situation.

Basic Education

Basic education provision in Ghana is to ensure quality basic education for all children of school-going age irrespective of gender and geographical location. In the FCUBE policy the basic education system is supposed to provide access to and participation in basic education for



Source: Kwapong (2010)

Figure 1. Current Status of Education in Ghana

| Enrolment | 2001/2002 | 2002/2003 | 2003/2004 | 2004/2005 | 2005/2006 | 2006/2007 | 2007/2008 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Girls | 1,227,284 | 1,201,067 | 1,282,220 | 1,403,988 | 1,516,725 | 1,633,600 | 1,755,734 |
| Boys | 1,359,150 | 1,323,518 | 1,403,913 | 1,525,548 | 1,606,178 | 1,732,162 | 1,860,289 |
| Total | 2,586,434 | 2,524,585 | 2,686,133 | 2,929,536 | 3,122,903 | 3,365,762 | 3,616,023 |
| % Girls | 47.5 | 47.6 | 47.7 | 47.9 | 48.6 | 48.5 | 48.6 |

Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 1. Enrolment in Primary Schools

| Enrolment | 2001/2002 | 2002/2003 | 2003/2004 | 2004/2005 | 2005/2006 | 2006/2007 | 2007/2008 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Girls | 397,122 | 396,299 | 420,548 | 462,090 | 483,741 | 527,232 | 571,864 |
| Boys | 468,514 | 468,934 | 498,786 | 548,156 | 557,261 | 605,086 | 652,146 |
| Total | 865,636 | 865,233 | 919,334 | 1,010,246 | 1,041,002 | 1,132,318 | 1,224,010 |
| % Girls | 45.9 | 45.8 | 45.7 | 45.7 | 46.5 | 46.6 | 46.7 |

Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 2. Enrolments in Junior High Schools (JHS)

all children of school-going age. Tables 1, 2 and 3 indicate growth in enrolment for both males and females at the primary and Junior High School (JHS) levels over the seven-year period. This could imply that the country has been doing well in promoting inclusion. A closer look at the data in Table 3 will however reveal that Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for both males and females at primary and JHS levels have not reached 100%. That of the girls has been consistently lower than that of the boys. GER for boys in primary school in 2007/2008 school year was 97.1% while that of girls was 92.8%. At the JHS level for the same year, GER for boys was at 82.2% and that of girls was 75.2%. A similar trend emerges in the GER of deprived districts in the country. However, comparing the percentage from 2003 to 2008 one will see an appreciable increase from 70.1% to 91.2%.

Overall progress in GER at the primary level is more encouraging than at the JHS level for both sexes. The drop at the JHS level is not appreciable. It is just too early in the educational ladder for pupils to be dropping out of school at that quantum. This is more critical when one looks at statistics on completion rate at the primary and JHS levels in Table 4. With a current (2007/2008) male percentage of 88 and female percentage of 82.3 at the primary level, the rate drops to 72.3% for males and 62.8% for females at the JHS level. Completion rate for boys has also been consistently higher than that of the girls at both the primary and JHS levels. Measures for inclusion will thus have to be intensified at the basic level as well.

Secondary Education

Secondary education is set up to provide Ghanaian children access to quality secondary education which will

| GER | 2002/03 | | 2003/04 | | 2004/05 | | 2005/06 | | 2006/07 | | 2007/08 | |
|--------------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| PRIM - Total | 75.7 | | 78.4 | | 83.3 | | 86.4 | | 90.8 | | 95.0 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| PRIM - M/F | 78.8 | 72.5 | 81.4 | 75.3 | 86.2 | 80.3 | 88.3 | 84.4 | 92.8 | 88.7 | 97.1 | 92.8 |
| JHS | 63.4 | | 65.6 | | 70.2 | | 70.4 | | 74.8 | | 78.8 | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| JHS - M/F | 67.3 | 59.3 | 69.7 | 61.3 | 74.6 | 65.6 | 73.8 | 66.9 | 78.3 | 71.2 | 82.2 | 75.2 |

Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 3. Gross Enrolment Ratio for Primary and JHS

| | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| PRIM | 77.9 | 78.72 | 75.6 | 85.39 | 85.5 M:88.7/F:82.3 |
| JHS | 58 | 60 | 77.9 | 64.95 | 67.7 M:72.3/F:62.8 |

Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 4. Completion Rate for Primary and JHS

equip them with diverse skills, qualities and attitudes that together form a sound basis for national socio-economic development. Specifically, the system seeks to reinforce and build on knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired at the JHS level, and to diversify the curriculum to cater for different talents and abilities.

Several interventions have been made by Government to improve the quality of secondary education and eliminate all factors of exclusion all over the country. One such intervention is the model school project to respond to the increase in population coupled with the desire of parents to enrol their wards in well established schools. The project is also to promote inclusion for quality secondary education across the country. The project is to upgrade one school in each district to a model status. Since 2003, when the first phase of the model schools started, 31 schools have benefited from the project. The African Development Bank (ADB) is also funding the refurbishment of the upgrading of twenty-five (25) senior secondary schools throughout the country.

Unequal access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools is one of the ways by which people become excluded from education. NEPAD e-Schools is therefore being undertaken to ensure that the youth of Africa will graduate from primary and secondary schools with skills that will enable them to participate effectively in the information society and knowledge economy. Specifically, the e-school project aims at:

- Providing ICT skills and knowledge to primary and secondary school students.

- Providing teachers with ICT skills to enable them use ICT as tools to enhance teaching and learning.

In Ghana, six schools, (two urban, four rural) were selected for the demonstration project.

These efforts to provide inclusive education at the secondary level have shown some improvement in the enrolment of students. Statistics from 1989 to date (Table 5) show that the number of secondary schools and enrolment have more than doubled from 250 to 646 schools and a total enrolment of 168,000 in 1989 to 437,771 in 2008. Meanwhile over the years, the female enrolment percentage has never reached the projected 50% target. Statistics for 2007/2008 shows that the percentage share of girls' enrolment is 42.5% in public Senior High Schools (SHS) and in private schools, the figure is 54.4%. The share of girls'

| Year | No. of Schools | Enrolment | | | |
|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | Boys | Girls | Total | % Girls |
| 1989/90 | 250 | 112,542 | 55,458 | 168,000 | 33 |
| 1990/91 | 404 | 133,581 | 65,679 | 199,000 | 33 |
| 1991/92 | 413 | 150,740 | 74,537 | 225,277 | 33.1 |
| 1992/93 | 438 | 164,623 | 82,873 | 247,496 | 33.5 |
| 1993/94 | 452 | 154,927 | 81,603 | 253,530 | 32.2 |
| 1994/95 | 452 | 130,446 | 71,367 | 201,813 | 35.4 |
| 1995/96 | 453 | 122,070 | 72,015 | 194,085 | 37.1 |
| 1996/97 | 455 | 115,881 | 73,027 | 188,908 | 38.7 |
| 1997/98 | 464 | 118,033 | 74,383 | 192,416 | 38.7 |
| 1998/99 | 464 | 121,588 | 76,624 | 198,212 | 38.7 |
| 1999/00 | 464 | 117,275 | 87,351 | 204,626 | 42.7 |
| 2000/01 | 474 | 132,786 | 99,309 | 232,095 | 42.8 |
| 2001/02 | 474 | 143,245 | 106,747 | 249,992 | 42.7 |
| 2002/03 | 476 | 172,536 | 128,770 | 301,306 | 42.7 |
| 2003/04 | 476 | 189,479 | 143,642 | 333,121 | 43.1 |
| 2004/05 | 485 | 201,717 | 159,783 | 361,500 | 44.2 |
| 2005/06 | 485 | 236,409 | 187,263 | 423,672 | 44.2 |
| 2006/07 | 539 | - | - | 414,491 | - |
| 2007/08 | 646 | 246,646 | 191,125 | 437,771 | 43.7 |

Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 5. Enrolment Statistics (1990 – 2008)

enrolment in both public and private Senior High Schools (SHS) is 43.7% in 2007/2008, an increase of 15.2% as compared to the figure for 2006/2007. The situation in the SHS is not good enough for inclusive education indicators. A regional and district disaggregation of the data could even give a worse scenario.

Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)

TVET is provided in the country to offer relevant quality technical and vocational education and training skills delivery to meet Ghana's technical human resource requirements. In meeting this goal a Division has been set up at the MOESS to:

- Assist in exposing students at the basic and SHS levels to a range of practical activities to make them familiar with and stimulate their interest in TVET programmes so as to give them the opportunity to choose their future careers in either the technical, vocational or general education field.
- Promote increased participation of women in education, training and employment in the TVET sector.
- Provide sound academic foundation for TVET delivery and for further education for those students who may wish to continue their education during their working life in the context of lifelong education.

Generally, TVET has been an area with low patronage in the country. Table 6 shows the trend of enrolment from 2002 to 2007. There has not been stable increase in enrolment in TVET. The most current available figure, 18,005 for 2006/2007 school year is below the figure of 19,777 for 2002/2003 school year. These statistics have reflected mostly in the enrolment for males while that of females has steadily increased over the period. Meanwhile, the total enrolment for females is less a quarter that of men. What could be the reason for inconsistent enrolment in TVET programmes? Why do females form that low percentage? What teaching-learning media could be responsive to the learning styles of both sexes in TVET programmes? What

| Enrolment | 2002/2003 | 2003/2004 | 2004/2005 | 2005/2006 | 2006/2007 |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Male | 17,060 | 15,889 | 18,440 | 16,933 | 14,622 |
| Female | 2,717 (13.7%) | 2,783 (14.9%) | 2,984 (13.9%) | 3,370 (16.6%) | 3,383 (18.8%) |
| Total | 19,777 | 18,672 | 21,424 | 20,303 | 18,005 |

Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 6. Enrolment in TVET Institutions

factors should be put in place to make technical and vocational education more inclusive? These are some of the questions that come to mind for re-thinking the TVET programmes in the country.

Special Education

Special Education is one of the areas of focus for inclusive education. It is provided in the country to create educational opportunities for children and youth with special needs at pre-tertiary levels. The purpose is to promote quality equality education, access and inclusion by:

- Developing training programmes to update the knowledge and competencies of teachers of students with special needs.
- Developing programmes for early identification and assessment of children with special needs.
- Procuring specialized equipment, gadgets/devices and materials.
- Cooperating with the universities for the training of teachers and education of persons with special needs.

Special education is thus a system that helps to overcome physical-related equity issues. From Table 7, enrolment has been increasing over the period though the female percentage stays below 40%. An objective way of assessing the enrolment patterns is checking it against statistics of the physically challenged in the country. However, the slow increment over the period and growing number of physically challenged persons who beg on the street shows that there could be more physically challenged persons, both males and females who may need to be directed to access the available inclusive programmes.

Non-Formal Education

For the provision of non-formal education, a Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) has been set up to improve the life of the illiterates especially the rural poor and women by

| Enrolment | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Male | 2,112 | 2,617 | 1,509 | 2,666 | 2,821 | 3,004 |
| Female | 1,249 | 1,497 | 1,694 | 1,769 | 1,901 | 2,088 |
| Total | 3,361 | 4,114 | 4,203 | 4,435 | 4,722 | 5,092 |
| % Female | 37.20% | 36.40% | 40.30% | 39.90% | 40.30% | 41.00% |

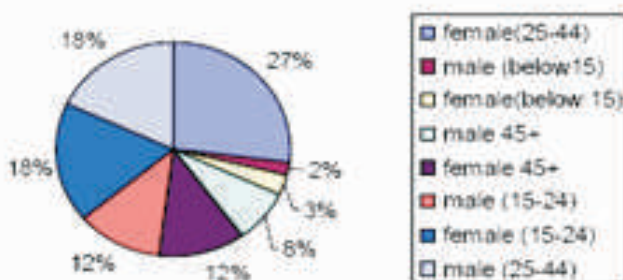
Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 7. Enrolments in Special Education Institutions

providing quality functional literacy. Derived from the definition of a literate person adopted by the UN General Assembly (in 1962) a person is literate when he/she has acquired knowledge and skills which enable him/her to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his/her group and community and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him/her to continue to use these skills towards his/her active participation in the life of his/her community. The essence of non-formal functional literacy programme is not to educate adult illiterates to compete with formal school children for white collar jobs but it is expected that through functional literacy, enrolment levels in basic schools will increase and thus promote inclusion since more people will put their children in school after realizing the benefits of education.

Some results have been yielded from the programme over the years. It is one programme that shows a higher rate of female enrolment than males in all its statistical analysis. Literacy rates showed an increasing trend from 53.4% in 2003 to 61.7% in 2007. This gives an indication that most of the females who drop out of the formal school system find their way in the functional literacy programmes. Much as the programme appears to be widening access to education for women (Figure 2), percentage of male enrolment and the female drop-out rate will have to be checked for improvement in the National Functional Literacy Programme (NFLP) and promotion of inclusive education.

National Functional Literacy Program (NFLP) II
Participation Distribution by Age and Gender;
Batches 9 and 10, 2003-2005



Source: Agyei-Mensah in MOESS (2008).

Figure 2. Participation of Males and Females in Non-Formal Literacy Program

Teacher Education

Teacher education prepares the grounds for quality teaching and learning outcomes at the basic education level and to develop school-based support for teachers. It has been one of the education avenues for promoting inclusive education. A comprehensive teacher education programme is provided in the country through pre-service and in-service training in order to produce competent, committed and dedicated teachers to provide inclusive education.

As a measure to widen access, improve quality and facilitate inclusion, there has been an in-out programme for all trainees. Under the programme trainees spend the first two years of their training in College and are taught using the conventional face to face method. In the third year, students spend the year 'out' on school attachment where they practice teaching and continue their studies using print-based distance learning materials.

Other inclusive measures include the sponsorship from districts for teacher trainees. The sponsorship scheme is to address the imbalances in the demand for teachers in the rural and other disadvantaged districts. Districts experiencing difficulties in meeting their demand for qualified teachers are allowed to sponsor candidates for training. Such candidates are contracted to teach in the districts that sponsor them for a period of at least three years. Out of the total number of trainees admitted over the period the following percentage were sponsored: 2000/01 – 76.7%; 2001/02 – 86%; 2002/03 – 91.2%; 2003/04 – 94.5%.

Access course for female students is also a system for inclusion. The access course is a special programme to increase female enrolment in teacher training colleges in order to meet the target of 50:50 ratio by 2015. Female candidates with deficiencies in the minimum requirements for admission are taken through six-week intensive access course to bring them up to a standard that will qualify them for admission. The first course organised in 2002/2003 enabled 1,500 additional females to be admitted which brought the total of first year female enrolment to 3,675. In 2004/2005 the program enabled 1,800 additional females to be admitted hence increasing the total enrolment of first

year female enrolment to 3,818 (Table 8).

Another measure for inclusive education is the Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) programme for untrained teachers. With an estimation of 24,000 untrained teachers, the Teacher Education Division has given the mandate to enrol all untrained teachers into a 4-Year School-Based In-Service Programme leading to the award of a Diploma in Education. The first induction course and face-to-face meeting for the untrained teachers programme took place in April, 2005 in the three (3) Northern Regions and Afram Plains District.

As a result of the various interventions, the enrolment statistics below show some progress in the male-female enrolment ratio over the period. It is anticipated that the inclusion programme for female students will help bridge the gender gap in trained teachers for basic education. Having a relatively large percentage of female teachers in the schools will increase the number of female role models and mentors in basic schools which will obviously help to improve the interest of girls in education right from the basic level. Thus the female teachers will serve as role models and mentors for the girls in all parts of the country.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary is education offered after secondary level at a university, polytechnic, specialized institutions, Open University etc to provide training that lead to the award of diploma and degree qualifications (Ghana, 2002). In the

current knowledge-based economy and the globalization phenomenon, tertiary education plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of the nation. It has a key role to play in the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge, production of human capital as well as the development of skills and adaptation of knowledge to meet developmental needs. It also has a role to play in the strengthening of the entire education system and fostering synergies in the entire economy. Considering the gap between enrolment at the basic and tertiary levels, interventions for inclusive education at the tertiary level is very critical.

A comparison of historical trend with current trends of enrolment in education will give some increase in enrolment, but a critical assessment of total enrolments against those who climb the educational ladder up to the tertiary level will indicate that there is limited inclusion at the tertiary level. On the issue of enrolment in the polytechnics and public universities, there has been some increment but the trend has not changed much over the period. Table 9 presents figures of enrolment on public universities and polytechnics from 1999 to 2008. The data on public universities show that the percentage gap between males and females within 2005/2006 academic year is the narrowest with 34.7% of the total enrolments into public universities being females. In 1999/2000 academic year, only 26.7% of the total enrolments into public universities were females with 2007/2008 academic year having 33.7% (NCTE 2009).

The issue is more critical at the polytechnics probably due to the science and technical nature of their courses. For the same period of 1999 - 2008 the percentage gap between males and females in polytechnics has been narrowing just slightly. Thus the male-female gap is wider. As shown in Table 9, in 1999/2000 academic year, only 20.8% of the

| Enrolment | | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Intake | Total | 8,980 | 8,989 | 8,538 | 9,401 |
| | % Female | 43.90% | 42% | 42.60% | 46.60% |
| Enrolment | Total | 23,999 | 25,116 | 25,534 | 26,265 |
| | % Female | 40.50% | 45% | 42.10% | 43.05% |
| Teachers Produced | | 7,115 | 7,532 | 8,300 | 8,321 |
| No. of Trained Teachers (Public) | | 86,450 | 89,669 | 94,980 | 52,342 |

Source: MOESS (2008)

Table 8. Trends of Percentage of Female Teachers Enrolled in Teacher Training Colleges

| Institution | Gender | Academic Year | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | 1999/2000 | 2000/2001 | 2001/2002 | 2002/2003 | 2003/2004 | 2004/2005 | 2005/2006 | 2006/2007 | 2007/2008 |
| Public Universities | Male | 26,558 | 28,545 | 32,693 | 36,935 | 42,942 | 48,055 | 54,929 | 58,098 | 62,267 |
| | Female | 9,663(26.7%) | 12,128(29.8%) | 13,491(29.2%) | 16,960(31.5%) | 20,634(32.5%) | 25,353(34.5%) | 29,149(34.7%) | 30,347(34.3%) | 31,706(33.7%) |
| | Total | 36,221 | 40,673 | 46,184 | 53,895 | 63,576 | 73,408 | 84,078 | 88,445 | 93,973 |
| Polytechnics | Male | 13,055 | 14,373 | 15,466 | 17,603 | 17,519 | 18,138 | 17,156 | 20,229 | 24,241 |
| | Female | 3,436(20.8%) | 4,086(22.1%) | 4,976(24.3%) | 5,514(23.9%) | 6,834(28.1%) | 6,845(27.4%) | 7,508(30.4%) | 8,466(29.4%) | 10,207(29.6%) |
| | Total | 16,491 | 18,459 | 20,442 | 23,117 | 24,353 | 24,983 | 24,664 | 28,695 | 34,448 |

Table 9. Total Student Enrolment for Public Universities and Polytechnics in Ghana

total enrolments into polytechnics were females. The percentage just increased to 29.6% females during the 2007/2008 academic year.

The analysis of enrolment statistics from basic to tertiary level in education revealed some level of increase at all levels and in special programmes as well. This is obvious since population has also increased over the period. A more serious issue is the inconsistency in the enrolment in technical and vocational programmes and the level at which females drop as they climb the educational ladder as illustrated in Figure 3. The figure gives a good picture of how narrow the male-female gap in education is at the basic level and how it widens as they climb the educational ladder. There could be deep-seated exclusion factors which have to be seriously addressed to make tertiary education highly inclusive.

Factors contributing to the Persisting Exclusion in Education and Strategies

Several factors account for this slow rate of progress in the promotion of inclusive education. These could be socio-cultural, infrastructural, political or economical. The persisting exclusion factors include the following:

- Cultural inhibitions-The culture prefers boys to be in school than girls. In some cultures girls are married off at an early age while in some instances boys are used as shepherds.
- Large class size militates against the use of participatory teaching and learning.
- There is the problem of inadequate funding for education.

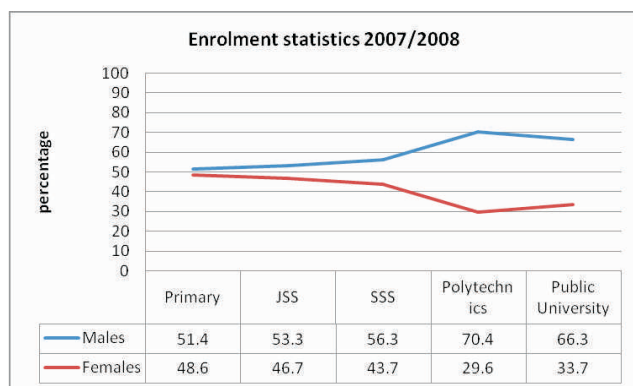


Figure 3. Enrolment Statistics from Basic to Tertiary Level for 2007/2008

- Provision of teachers, infrastructure, teaching learning materials especially for the deprived schools is not adequate.
- Trained teachers are not enough-sixty percent (60%) of teachers in the rural areas are untrained. This is partly due to trained teachers' refusal to accept postings to rural and deprived areas due to lack of social amenities (electricity, libraries, computer labs etc.) in the rural areas.
- High premium placed on Examination – Exams focuses on cognitive instead of attitude and practicals.
- Inflexible time table.

Progress towards inclusive education is thus being undermined by a failure of governments to tackle persistent inequalities based on income, gender, location, ethnicity, language, disability and other markers for disadvantage. Unless governments act to reduce disparities through effective policy reforms, total inclusive education will not be achieved. Good governance could help to strengthen accountability, enhance participation and break down inequalities in education. Meanwhile, current approaches to governance reform are failing to attach sufficient weight to total inclusiveness. Government is not giving enough priority to youth and adult learning needs in their education policies and implementation. Meeting the lifelong needs for all male and female youth and adults need stronger political commitment and more public funding. It will also require more clearly defined concepts and better data for effective monitoring among others.

In addition, school systems have to become more inclusive to ensure that children from marginalized categories are enrolled in schools and complete the primary school cycle. The pace, style, language and circumstances of learning will never be uniform for all; there should therefore be room for diverse approaches to pursue schooling in a contextualized fashion. Schools will also have to transform themselves into more inclusive institutions that welcome and promote participation of children – without any discrimination in terms of their background and personal conditions. In other words, the physical infrastructure, as well

as the contents and processes that constitute schools, have to be more inclusive to ensure that children belonging to marginalized groups and with special needs are fully integrated into the education system, and benefit equally from the programmes offered. Starting from early childhood and extending throughout life, learners will require access to high-quality educational opportunities that are responsive to their needs, equitable and gender-sensitive. These opportunities must neither be exclusionary nor discriminatory.

Conclusions

Promoting inclusive education is critical for meeting the education for all goals. The available data in Ghana showed that more children have been brought into school and the country is progressing well on the road to achieving near universal enrolment of children in schools. Yet the task of making schools truly inclusive is not complete. Children for whom schooling still remains elusive are the most marginalized and disadvantaged. These include those belonging to socially and economically marginalized categories. Overcoming this barrier is critical for reaching the unreached – whose number is not small, rather quite large.

One thing to take critical note of is that reaching total inclusion is not just a question of numbers. It implies the same chances of learning, benefiting from equitable treatment within the school and the same opportunities in terms of employment, wages and civic participation. The quest to ensure that students achieve decent learning outcomes and acquire values and skills that help them play a positive role in their societies is an issue on the policy agenda of the country. Quality is at the heart of education. It influences what students learn, how well they learn and what benefits they draw from their education. As efforts are made to improve enrolment, more attention also has to be paid to the quality of education and learning achievement. The country needs to adopt strategies that will enable all regions to hit the target for quality of education for all categories of people in school.

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