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& Equity Research

Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an Equity Scorecard

An ESRC/DFID Poverty Reduction Programme Research Project

Research Report

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Professor Louise Morley, Professor Fiona Leach, Dr Kattie Lussier,
University of Sussex, UK

Professor Amandina Lihamba and Dr Rosemarie Mwaipopo,
University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Dr Linda Dzama Forde and Godwin Egbenya, University of Cape
Coast, Ghana



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Note

We have decided not to edit the grammatical errors in the interview data in order to retain authenticity.

Abbreviations

AA	Affirmative Action
EFA	Education for All
ESC	Equity Scorecard
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GER	Gross enrolment rate
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
IOM	International Organisation on Migration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PHE	Private higher education
SES	Socio-economic status
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UKFIET	United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training
WP	Widening participation

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This three and a half year ESRC-DFID funded project (RES-167-25-0078) ‘Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an Equity Scorecard’ is a new evidence base contributing to making higher education more socially inclusive in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wphegt>). It is a mixed methods study of one public and one private case study university in each country, combining:

- ✚ 200 student life history interviews, comprising interviews with 119 students from public universities and 81 from private universities, registered on different programmes and with a diversity of backgrounds including under-represented groups such as women, mature, low socio-economic status and disabled students. Students were asked about their experiences of primary, secondary and higher education, with questions about their motivations, transitions, support, decision-making and first impressions of higher education, its impact on them and their future plans.
- ✚ 200 key staff and policymakers interviews, comprising 172 semi-structured interviews with senior academics, lecturers and staff working closely with students in the four case study institutions and 28 interviews with policymakers. Academic staff and policymakers were asked about policies, interventions, strategies and challenges for widening participation, and the part that their universities had played in working towards the Millennium Development Goals.
- ✚ 100 Equity Scorecards compiled largely from raw data on admission/access, retention, completion and achievement, for four programmes of study in relation to three structures of inequality: gender, socio-economic status (SES) and age.

The research questions included: investigating which social groups are currently and traditionally under-represented as students in the case study institutions and whether these correlate with wider national and international patterns of social exclusion; how the case study institutions are interpreting and responding to the Millennium Development Goals; and if there is a relationship between learners’ prior experiences of education, their socioeconomic backgrounds and their experiences and achievement in education. Questions have also been posed about what mechanisms for support have been put in place for ‘nontraditional’ students to facilitate retention and achievement and how ‘non-traditional’ students might experience these interventions (see Appendix 1). Diverse stakeholders have been asked about their perceptions of the main barriers to participation for under-represented groups and what strategies the case study institutions can develop to improve the recruitment, retention and achievement of students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Via the field work and its analysis, the project has produced statistical data on patterns of participation, retention and achievement and has aimed to build theory about socio-cultural aspects of higher education in Ghana and Tanzania.

Summary of Research Findings

1. Policy: Widening Participation, the Millennium Development Goals, and Monitoring and Evaluation

1. **Widening participation (WP)** was seen as desirable by staff and policymakers in both countries. They were keen to include more women and low socio-economic, mature and disabled students. However, they also expressed considerable concerns about the unfunded expansion of African higher education and its consequences *e.g.* lack of resources, overcrowding, staff overwork, and the threat to quality and standards.
2. **Admissions procedures** were the most common cause of concern in both countries *e.g.* staff argued that more flexibility in relation to cut off points was needed, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects, if participation was to be widened.
3. Some programmes only monitored gender in their admission procedures, and not socio-economic status, age or disability. Even when gender was monitored, there were still some disturbing patterns left unchecked. Our Equity Scorecards on applications and admissions suggest that, in some programmes *e.g.* the B.Sc. Agribusiness Management at the Ghanaian private university, the percentage of women applicants accepted was significantly lower than men's, even when a high proportion of women reached the minimum standards to enter university (See Equity Scorecards 10 and 11).

Other programmes *e.g.* the B.Sc. Optometry at the Ghanaian public university and the B.Sc Engineering at the Tanzanian public university had reasonable participation rates for women, but very low participation rates for students from low socio-economic backgrounds and mature students. Our Equity Scorecards suggest that the major route into higher education for many such students is via Education programmes. In Africa, Education has a low exchange rate in the labour market.

4. **Monitoring and Evaluation** was uneven and unsystematic. Widening participation is a policy goal in both countries, but it was not being monitored in terms of student retention and completion, or in relation to a range of social indicators. Monitoring tended to concentrate narrowly on gender and access. Most of the comments about policy successes in widening participation were drawn from academic staff's professional experiences, rather than from systematic monitoring procedures of strategic interventions such as pre-entry courses in science, lower cut-off points for women, mature entry routes and quotas for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.
5. **Support** varied from the provision of counselling services to a national loan scheme. While many students – especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds – provided evidence that their participation had been dependent on loans and bursaries, other structured interventions for support had not been evaluated in relation to their success in facilitating retention and completion.

While some students appreciated the support that they had received *e.g.* from lecturers and the loans board, a significant number complained of unsupportive lecturers and a lack of learning resources and facilities, including libraries and IT. Many had experienced problems with assessment, fees and poor, or lack of, residential accommodation.

6. **Private Higher Education (PHE)** was seen by staff and policymakers as a mechanism for increasing participation. However, there was much concern among public university staff and policymakers about quality, standards, staffing and the relationship with the public universities, *i.e.* poaching or sharing staff, and equivalent degree standards. Discourses of loss were present in many student narratives in PHE in both countries, *e.g.* loss of opportunity to enter higher status public university universities, loss of status, with PHE seen by some as second choice.
7. **The Millennium Development Goals** were not widely related to higher education by academic staff. Policymakers who were more immersed in policy discourses had a clearer understanding of this process. However, when asked why participation should be widened in higher education, many academic staff cited poverty alleviation, national development and social inclusion.

Recommendations

1. Management information - the need for systematic collection and analysis of data on retention and achievement as well as access, disaggregated by gender, age, socio-economic status (SES) and disability, for monitoring purposes and strategic planning.
2. Monitoring and evaluation - of admissions procedures, including for the purpose of facilitating the admission of students from under-represented groups who meet the minimum entry requirement. This should also be applied to retention, completion and achievement.
3. Quality assurance - enhanced monitoring, accountability and quality assurance of public and private higher education institutions is needed. This needs to include student centred-services and structured systems for student feedback.
4. Capacity and resourcing issues - policy and management action to be taken to ensure that human and learning resources are allocated commensurately with student numbers in order to ensure quality of the learning environment.

2. Growing Up

Schooling

1. **Lack of teachers** in state primary and secondary schools led to early years' educational under-achievement, especially for students from deprived/ disadvantaged areas.
2. **Lack of STEM teachers**, particularly in state and girls' schools, leading to a small pool of students qualified to enter STEM subjects in university.
3. **Violence** was widely reported *i.e.* abuse, bullying and corporal punishment in primary and secondary schools in both countries, but particularly in Ghana. This was reported

as physically and mentally damaging, and produced lifelong negative associations between education, violence and humiliation.

4. **Lack of teacher professionalism** was widely reported in both countries and in both primary and secondary schools *e.g.* absenteeism, constructing students as unpaid domestic and agricultural labour; not teaching classes and then charging for tuition; inappropriate relationships with students.
5. **Rural areas** often had poor quality and inaccessible state schools. Class sizes were large, often multigrade, and facilities and pedagogy were often poor.
6. **Children from low socio-economic groups** were disadvantaged in myriad ways *e.g.* lack of family capital to pay school fees, books, uniforms and transport to schools. In the rural areas they frequently had to contribute to the family economy via agricultural and domestic responsibilities. This often excluded them from education.

Family

1. **Support from mothers at the primary school** stage was commonly reported. This took the form of encouragement, rewards for educational successes with food *e.g.* cakes, biscuits and sweets, and emotional support. However, as most family budgets were controlled by fathers, **paternal support** was usually what determined educational participation at every stage from basic to higher education.
2. **Socio-cultural factors** including polygamy, extended families, divorce, bereavement and violence were reported in both countries by all categories of students. Sometimes the extended family worked against educational participation as financial resources were spread thinly. On other occasions, they provided wider reference groups and role models, with aunts, uncles and cousins who had experienced HE acting as multipliers.
3. **Families' social and material capital** were major determinants in the construction of educational aspirations. Some of the students interviewed from non-deprived backgrounds had been encouraged and supported from an early age to aspire and prioritise education. This took the form of school choice *e.g.* private sector, advice and encouragement from a wide network of professional relatives and friends, and financial and moral support. Many of the students from deprived schools/regions had entered higher education as a result of their own efforts and determination *e.g.* they entered as mature students after periods of employment, or with bursaries and loans. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds were frequently educationally motivated in order to escape poverty and 'become a somebody' (Wexler, 1992).

Recommendations

Ministries of Education in both countries to initiate and monitor:

1. A code of professional ethics for teachers in primary and secondary schools;
2. Professional development for teachers, especially on social inclusion issues;
3. More robust quality assurance of primary and secondary education, inspection and audit arrangements;

4. Adequate supply of trained teachers and facilities particularly for schools in rural and deprived regions and improved access to good quality science teaching, especially for girls.

3. Higher Education

1. **Positive and enabling experiences** were reported by students in both countries and in all case study universities *e.g.* supportive and accessible lecturers, enjoyable and well-taught programmes of study, good relations with students, independent learning, and the development of social capital in the form of networks, self-confidence and self-efficacy.
2. **Negative experiences** were also widely reported *e.g.* lack of, or poor quality, facilities and resources, large classes, poor pedagogy, lecturers' lack of professionalism, problems with assessment, favouritism and corruption also lack of transparency in admissions procedures and student loan entitlements. The aspect of higher education that created the strongest positive and negative feelings was assessment. For many, it was experienced as unstable and unreliable, incorporating few quality assurance service-level agreements. However, failure and success were important indicators of academic and learner identities in both countries.
3. **The symbolic power of being a student** was noticeable in both countries. In spite of many negative and unsatisfactory experiences, the motivation for social mobility, status and employability drove students to enter, stay in and value higher education. The majority wanted to continue into postgraduate study and/or pursue a profession. Many students perceived graduate status as an important distinction that would bring them social and material rewards.
4. **Higher education was perceived as both a public and a private good** (Singh, 2001). Some students were motivated by a commitment to social responsibility *e.g.* using their skills to help deprived communities. Others were driven by a desire for national development and using their skills and competencies to contribute to the knowledge society and bring both countries out of low-income status. Many conceptualised HE as instrumental in helping them to achieve a comfortable lifestyle for themselves and their extended families.

Recommendations

Quality assurance procedures to be introduced and audited to:

1. Ensure consistent educational experiences and standards for students via service-level agreements and student-centred services;
2. Monitor staffing and resourcing issues;
3. Review admissions procedures;
4. Review assessment procedures *e.g.* double marking, external examiners' system, grade criteria;
5. Provide professional development of lecturers *e.g.* academic practice, working with diverse learning groups, ethical and professional conduct;

6. Apply stronger codes of professional conduct, especially in cases of sexual harassment, with sanctions for offenders and support mechanisms for victims, including protection against possible ensuing victimisation;
7. Provide more structured support for 'non-traditional' students needs to be available *e.g.* academic literacy programmes, access courses, buildings to be made accessible for students with disabilities, peer mentoring and buddy arrangements. These need to be evaluated.

4. Structures of Inequality

Gender

1. **The transformative and instrumental potential of higher education** was noted by many female students *e.g.* securing financial independence, professional identity and status.
2. **Sexual harassment in higher education** was reported by staff and students, particularly in relation to male tutors pressurising female students for sex in return for grades. This led to extreme difficulties for female students' physical and mental well-being and had an impact on their learner identities. It also deterred them from seeking tutorial support from male tutors or making themselves visible in class. Many male students - especially in Ghana - lacked awareness of gender and power. Some accused female students of complicity *e.g.* using their sexuality to obtain higher grades. This undermined women's learner identities as their achievements were attributed to a form of prostitution, rather than to academic ability.
3. **Harassment from male students was reported by female students in both countries.** Some male students pressured female students sexually and also appropriated female students' domestic labour and expected a range of services *e.g.* cooking, laundry. This disturbed and distracted women from their studies, and left them with limited lifestyle choices *e.g.* having a boyfriend was the norm, and those women who did not succumb to this pressure were stigmatised/ marginalised.
4. **Facilitating women's entry to STEM subjects** was often seen by academic staff and policymakers in both countries as a goal for widening participation. However, women's representation in the STEM programmes was still low – for instance, the average female enrolment across the levels was 20.23 percent on the B.Ed. Maths programme and 24.88 percent on the B.Sc. Engineering programme in Tanzania, and, in Ghana, 26.18 percent on the B.Sc. Optometry programme and 11.38 percent on the B.Sc. Agri-Business Management programme. Entry rates of mature and low socio-economic female students were particularly low.
5. **Affirmative action programmes** such as the scheme to promote women's entry to the B.Sc. in Engineering in the Tanzania public university had been successful in increasing the number of women in the programme. However, when gender was intersected with age and socio-economic background, participation rates of low socio-economic status and older women were shown to be extremely low (See ESC 1). Affirmative action was perceived as a form of reverse discrimination and favouritism by many male students, particularly in Ghana, where it was not as formally executed as in Tanzania.

6. **Social difficulties** were reported by some women who did succeed in entering STEM programmes *e.g.* their minority status in class, and also in wider society, where STEM subjects were seen as incompatible with socially constructed feminine identities.

Poverty

1. **Students from low socio-economic backgrounds** were severely under-represented on all the programmes in the universities studied. The subject area of Education attracted the most students from deprived backgrounds in both countries. While this is an important pathway, it is also a profession in Africa with a low exchange rate in the labour market, thus reinforcing economic hierarchies.
2. **The completion and achievement of students** from low socio-economic backgrounds was similar to that of more privileged students once entered in HE. The issue was mainly access - getting them into HE in the first place. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds related a range of barriers to education in general, and to higher education in particular. These included lack of parental social and material capital, lack of schools, especially in rural areas, and limited opportunities to develop the capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004) *e.g.* lack of role models, the pressing labour needs of rural economies.
3. **Formal financial support** including government loans and bursaries from the state and from the international donor community were of major importance in facilitating entry of this social group.
4. **Management information systems** did not include data on the socio-economic backgrounds of students in any of the case study universities in relation to access, retention and achievement. Only gender was routinely recorded, and age erratically recorded. This study had to rely on the collection of raw data on students' socio-economic status for the Equity Scorecards

Age

1. **Interrupted or truncated educational histories** were reported by many mature students. Many had entered HE to improve their life chances and fulfil ambitions that their families were unable to fund at earlier stages.
2. **Age and education** are not usually aggregated in basic education in Africa, with multigrade classes a common occurrence. However, many mature students experienced the learner identity of 'other', with higher education experienced as an off-time event. Some mature students felt that the ideal student was perceived to be the younger student without family responsibilities and with normative educational trajectories.
3. **Different modes of delivery** *e.g.* part-time, evening and weekend programmes, particularly in the private universities, facilitated participation of mature students. However, many experienced the strain of learning while earning.

4. **Mature students were severely under-represented in most programmes in both countries** except for the B. Education (Primary) at the public university in Ghana, the B. Ed. Maths at the private university in Tanzania and, to a lesser extent, the B. Business Administration in the private university in Tanzania. Age was not monitored in any of the case study universities in relation to either retention or achievement. This study had to collect raw data on the age of students for the Equity Scorecards.

Disability

1. **Physical and cultural challenges** were revealed in the life history interviews with students with disabilities. There were the problems of access to the built environment and learning resources and also of attitudes, ignorance and prejudice; but also great pride in what they had achieved against the odds.
2. **Educational success** was perceived as a way of mitigating some of the problems associated with disability *e.g.* financial independence, negative social status. Many students had had a lifetime of struggle to enter educational provision, and had to demonstrate their learning capacity in the face of marginalisation and prejudice.
3. **Lack of structured support for students with disabilities** was widely reported by students and by academic staff *e.g.* resources in Braille, loop systems. Disability was discussed more widely by academic staff in Tanzania than in Ghana. In both countries they used medical models, *e.g.* physical access in environments designed for the able-bodied, and social models, *e.g.* prejudices and cultural mythologies, to describe many of the challenges.

Recommendations

1. Robust management information systems need to be set up and maintained in all the case study universities to monitor structures of inequality in relation to educational outcomes. The Equity Scorecards could be used to inform this process. The uneven participation rates of female, older and low socio-economic status students in different programmes of study need investigating and monitoring.
2. Stricter codes of professional conduct need to be applied, especially in cases of sexual harassment, with sanctions for offenders and support mechanisms for victims, including protection against possible ensuing victimisation.
3. Introduction of training programmes for staff, to develop awareness and skills relating to WP, and to ethical and professional conduct.
4. More structured support for 'non-traditional' students needs to be available *e.g.* academic literacy programmes, access courses, buildings to be made accessible for students with disabilities, peer mentoring and buddy arrangements.

5. Equity Scorecards: Summary of Findings

Access

1. The admissions process on some programmes such as the B.Sc. Agri-Business Management in Ghana appears to be penalising women who are disproportionately rejected compared to men. This offers scope for affirmative action, *e.g.* assisting women who meet the minimum entry criteria to enrol.

2. Variations between programmes in the numbers of women, students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds and mature students highlight the need to examine admissions criteria and procedures, the design of programmes, *e.g.* mode of delivery, and how they are promoted to under-represented groups.
3. For example, the private university in Tanzania enrolled many more mature students than the private university in Ghana. The public university in Tanzania enrolled very few mature students, whereas the public university in Ghana had large numbers only on certain programmes (especially Education). This offers scope for a review of institutional policies and procedures.
4. Students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds were under-represented on all programmes, and were nearly, or totally, absent from some programmes. This suggests that schemes to assist young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter higher education (such as quotas) are not working and that WP efforts need to target this group more effectively.
5. Across all four universities, mature students were predominantly male (with the exception of B. Management Studies at the public Ghanaian university and B.Sc. Human Resources Management at the private Ghanaian university). Mature students from low SES backgrounds were almost totally absent except on the B. Education (Primary) in Ghana. This suggests the need for WP initiatives to target mature women and men and women from disadvantaged backgrounds more effectively.

Retention

1. In both countries, the rate of withdrawal of mature students was much higher than that of the cohort as a whole on all the programmes for which data were available¹. This suggests that, even when mature students gain access to higher education, they still face problems in completing their degree. Their retention needs to be monitored carefully and support provided where appropriate.
2. In Ghana, fewer low SES students withdrew than other categories of students on all but one programme (B. Management Studies). In Tanzania, slightly more withdrew on the B.Sc. Engineering than other categories. Elsewhere, retention was as good as, or better than, that of other categories. Overall, therefore, we can conclude that once low SES students gain access to higher education, they do well.
3. Women's retention compared to men varied across programmes; on some it was higher, on others lower. On the B.Sc. Engineering in Tanzania, nearly four times as many men as women withdrew and more men withdrew on the B. Science with Education. Women, therefore, appear overall to do as well as men, including in traditional male subject areas.

Achievement

1. Students from low SES backgrounds performed overall as well as, and in a few cases significantly better than, others in their respective cohorts. In Ghana, on the six programmes where they were enrolled, a significantly higher number achieved 2nd

¹ Data were not available on retention from the private university in Tanzania and data on the withdrawal of mature students on the B. Commerce in the public university were incomplete.

class degrees, and in the public university many more were awarded first class degrees. In Tanzania, the numbers who achieved both 1st and 2nd class degrees varied compared to the cohort but was broadly similar.

2. The percentage of mature students achieving second class degrees was lower than for their respective cohorts on all five programmes in Ghana where they were enrolled. In Tanzania, they did better on two out of the seven programmes where they were enrolled, and the same as other groups in one (B.Ed. Maths).
3. A higher percentage of women gained 2nd class degrees than men on ten out of the 15 programmes for which degree results are available, including the B.Sc. Optometry and B.Sc. Accountancy, traditional male areas of study. However, slightly more men achieved 1st class degrees on the six programmes where they were awarded, except on the B. Business Administration, where more women did.

Recommendations

The above findings, especially as they relate to mature and low SES students, highlight the need for more systematic management information data to be collected in relation to under-represented groups. Data on access, retention and completion, disaggregated by gender, SES and age, need to be routinely collected and scrutinised. WP policies and initiatives intended to address the under-representation of certain groups need to be closely monitored and evaluated.

Conclusion to Executive Summary

This mixed methods study sought to investigate the nature, scale and effectiveness of widening participation initiatives in two universities, one public and one private, in Ghana and two in Tanzania. Life history interviews with 200 students from diverse backgrounds explored the influence of early schooling and family life on their aspirations for higher education, their experiences to date of higher education, and perceived barriers to the participation of ‘non-traditional’ students. A further 200 semi-structured interviews with national policymakers and staff of the four universities gathered information on widening participation policies, interventions, strategies and challenges, and the part that the universities had played in working towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Alongside the qualitative data, the project gathered raw data on admission/access, retention, completion and achievement in each institution, for four programmes of study in relation to three structures of inequality: gender, socio-economic status (SES) and age. From the data, the project has produced a series of Equity Scorecards which illustrate patterns of participation by three under-represented groups: female students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and mature students, on the selected programmes. The main findings include:

- despite increasing numbers entering HE, women were still in the minority and numbers were low on certain programmes;
- numbers of mature students were very low except on certain programmes and they tended to be male;

- ✚ most programmes enrolled extremely small numbers of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and some had none at all;
- ✚ mature students from low socio-economic backgrounds, mature women, and low SES women were particularly under-represented;
- ✚ a higher number of mature students withdrew from their programmes relative to the cohort as a whole and they tended to achieve lower degree classifications?
- ✚ fewer low SES students withdrew and they performed as well as, and sometimes better than, other groups;
- ✚ in Tanzania, in the programmes we studied, the private university admitted more mature students than the public university. In Ghana, it was the opposite;
- ✚ in both countries, private universities tended to admit a higher proportion of women than public universities but there were significant variations of participation rate between programmes.

The study concludes that universities and policymakers need to commit themselves to rigorous monitoring and evaluation of WP initiatives and to the collection and scrutiny of data disaggregated by gender, SES and age, so that they can more effectively monitor participation by under-represented groups and develop strategies to improve their recruitment, retention and achievement. Quality and equality need to be intersected.

Research Report

Section 1: Introduction

Focus on Higher Education in Africa

The ESRC-DFID funded project (RES-167-25-0078) ‘Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an Equity Scorecard’ is a new evidence base contributing to making higher education more socially inclusive in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wphegt>). Via the field work and its analysis, the project has produced statistical data on patterns of participation, retention and achievement and has collected evidence to build theory about socio-cultural aspects of higher education in Ghana and Tanzania. The study’s research questions relate directly to current policy concerns for making African higher education more inclusive. They included investigating: which social groups are currently and traditionally under-represented as students in the case study institutions and whether these correlate with wider national and international patterns of social exclusion; how the case study institutions are interpreting and responding to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and whether a relationship exists between learners’ prior experiences of education, their socio-economic backgrounds, and their experiences and achievement in higher education. Questions have also been posed about what mechanisms for support have been put in place for ‘non-traditional’ students to facilitate retention and achievement and how ‘non-traditional’ students might experience these interventions. Diverse stakeholders have been asked about their perceptions of the main barriers to participation for under-represented groups and what strategies the case study institutions can develop to improve the recruitment, retention and achievement of students from non-traditional backgrounds. Attention has also been paid to interventions used in other national locations to promote widening participation of groups traditionally excluded from higher education.

In a globalised knowledge economy, there are questions about who participates, where, what they study and how raising enrolment rates in higher education can contribute to societies’ economic and social development and reduce poverty (World Bank, 2002, 2009a; Commission for Africa, 2005). Widening participation in higher education can be a force for democratisation and economic growth. However, it can also map on to elite practices and contribute to further differentiation of social groups. It is often claimed that those with social capital are able to decode and access new educational opportunities, and that those without it can remain untouched by initiatives to facilitate their entry into the privileges that higher education can offer (Crozier *et al.*, 2008; Heath *et al.*, 2008; Reay *et al.*, 2005). It has been repeatedly argued that poverty and the uneven distribution of material, social and cultural capital influences who has the capacity to aspire to higher education (Appadurai, 2004; David, 2009).

Global massification of higher education can mask unequal and uneven participation rates. Student enrolment worldwide rose from 13 million in 1960 to 137.8 million in 2005. Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced the highest average regional growth rate in higher education. For more than three decades, enrolments have expanded by 8.7 percent annually, compared to 5.1 percent for the world as a whole, and have tripled since 1990, to almost 4 million students. Women’s access has improved markedly in the region, from one out of six students in 1990 to approximately one out of three today (World Bank, 2009a). However, the gross

enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education – the main indicator of participation rates – was 5 for Ghana compared to 24 for the world and 71 for North America and Western Europe in 2005 (UIS, 2009). Tanzania’s GER was 1 in 2005 (UNESCO, Global Education Digest, 2009b). Both secondary and tertiary enrolment ratios for sub-Saharan Africa are the lowest among the eight major geographical regions of the world.

Whereas previously, higher education was positioned as a luxury product in low-income countries by the World Bank (Robertson, 2009), from 1994, higher education became a development priority and part of the new global economic imaginary (World Bank 1994). The 2009 World Bank Report discussed higher education as a public and private good. It expressed the desirability of accelerating quality-assured growth in sub-Saharan higher education and working towards a more knowledge-intensive approach to development. It also claimed that private returns to tertiary education² in low-income countries are now frequently on a par with the returns from primary education *e.g.* each additional year of education can yield 10 percent to 15 percent returns in the form of higher wages (World Bank, 2009a). The 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris also gave special focus to the challenges and opportunities for the revitalisation of higher education in Africa, now considered an important tool for the development of the continent (UNESCO, 2009a). This momentum articulates with global discourses that stress the importance of higher education to sustained economic and human development. Yet it seems that there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that widening participation is not just a question of ‘*a flood of students into increasingly dysfunctional institutions*’ (World Bank, 2009a: 110).

Whereas one-third of African nations have now introduced quality assurance agencies for their higher education systems (World Bank, 2009a), there are numerous questions about quality, standards, accountability and governance. Key concerns include: capacity challenge (Van Der Wende, 2003), funding (Ajayi et al., 1996), the rise of private higher education (Altbach and Levy, 2005), management and governance (Fielden, 2001), brain drain, brain circulation and the flight of human capital (one third of the 1.07 million who left sub-Saharan Africa in 2005 were graduates; World Bank, 2009a), the development of research capacity (Teferra and Altbach, 2004), and Africa in the techno-knowledge society (IST-Africa, 2009). Underpinning many of these studies is the tacit question of access to what in terms of the quality of provision? Quality and equality need to be intersected. This project welcomes the development of the higher education area in Africa and the establishment of a quality assurance mechanism at the regional level (UNESCO, 2009a).

Structures of Inequality

Our first structure of inequality is poverty. This has been a major concern of the study - both in terms of how it intersects with gender, or is eclipsed by gender gains in widening participation (Morley *et al.*, 2006), and also in relation to the part that higher education can play in poverty alleviation. On average a student from the lowest socio-economic quintile in sub-Saharan Africa has fifteen times less chance of entering a university than one from the highest quintile (Brossard and Foko 2007). Bernstein’s famous caution that education cannot compensate for society (1970) has particular resonance in sub-Saharan Africa.

²According to the World Bank, tertiary education refers to all post-secondary education, including but not limited to universities (www.worldbank.org/education/tertiary). In this report, we refer to higher education as education that is provided at an institution that issues academic degrees *e.g.* universities.

Currently, a third of the world's poorest people live in sub-Saharan Africa (UN, 2008), meaning that it has the highest levels of absolute poverty of any region in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world that has experienced an increase in income poverty since 1990 - both in terms of the incidence of poverty and absolute numbers of poor people. The number of people living under the new poverty line of 2\$ a day has increased by 100 million between 1990 and 2005 (UN, 2008). People in sub-Saharan Africa suffer the lowest probability of living along, healthy life and of enjoying a decent standard of living (UNDP, 2006). Hence the significance of the MDGs to the region (see Appendix 2). The eight MDGs, which range from halving extreme poverty to stemming the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS by 2015, are globally accepted benchmarks for reform. The MDGs set out to halve world poverty by 2015. The goal remains remote. The progress made so far is overshadowed by the challenges brought by climate change related events, conflicts, poor or unstable political leadership, and the recent crisis in global capitalism. The United Nations predict that at the current rate there will still be one billion people in the world living in absolute poverty in 2015 (UN, 2008). In terms of education, the MDGs are invariably linked to basic, rather than to higher, education. There has been little consideration of the skills, competencies and academic capital that higher education can develop in professionals who are charged with meeting the MDGs.

Both Ghana and Tanzania have policy commitments for widening participation in higher education. Although both countries have introduced higher education loans policies to assist students from low socio-economic backgrounds, in practice widening participation has focused largely on addressing the gender gap in admissions. This study found that where disaggregated data did exist, it related to gender. This is understandable perhaps, given the history of participation in both countries. Nevertheless, in Tanzania, higher education post-independence in 1961 was perceived as a 'powerful strategic weapon in the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease' (Mkude and Cooksey, 2003: 583). Tanzania's new Constitution affirmed the rights of all citizens to education 'to the highest level' (URT, 1998: 19). However, in spite of these aspirations, by the beginning of the 1990s, participation rates were generally low, and men were in the majority.

In Ghana, a study of 1,500 students (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 82-3) found that the majority of students who gained places in the five publicly funded universities in 2002 came from the five more developed regions in the south and centre of the country (24.3 percent coming from the Ashanti region alone), while only between 4.2 and 6.2 percent of students came from each of the five less developed Northern and Western regions. Elite schools offer an advantageous entry route to higher education. Addae-Mensah's (2000) study revealed that at the University of Ghana, depending on the subject of study, between 60 and 92 percent of students came from the top 50 schools (less than 10 percent of the country's schools) and about 43 percent came from the top 18 schools (with 57 percent of students admitted to science degrees being from these schools). At the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) for 1998/99 and 1999/2000, 88 percent of students enrolled on Engineering degrees came from the same top 50 schools. Thus, students enrolled in Science, Medicine and Engineering degree programmes continue to be overwhelmingly drawn from the country's elite schools. In Tanzania, it is estimated that only about one percent of poor people as compared to 11 percent of the economically advantaged complete secondary school and thus are eligible for higher education (URT, 2004a:48).

Both countries have introduced student loan schemes, directly aimed at helping those from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter HE. In Ghana, the Ghana Education Trust (GET) Fund, established in 2000 to generate funds for education through a levy on VAT, provides a

comprehensive scholarship and loan scheme for students. Since 2005, Tanzania has been offering a comprehensive loan scheme, open to students in both public and private HEIs (replacing an earlier more limited scheme). Other interventions such as pre-entry courses, acceptance of equivalent qualifications and special exams also aim to help students from under-represented groups. However, neither country has an effective policy or systematic practices to support students with disability in HE.

Gender is our second structural inequality. With the exception of initiatives such as gender mainstreaming in Tanzania, gender has been largely constructed as a noun and widening participation has concentrated on counting more women in to universities in general, and to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in particular. In Tanzania, in 1991 a total of 7,468 students were enrolled in universities, representing a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 0.3; only 15.9 percent of students were women (UNESCO, 1999a, 1999b). In Ghana, in 1990 a total of 9,609 students were enrolled in universities, representing a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 1.4; only 22.5 percent were women (UNESCO, 1999a, 1999b). During the 1990s, new policies for the reform of higher education emerged in both Ghana and Tanzania (GoG, 1991, 2004; URT, 1999). Similar in form to the international policies emerging from UNESCO (1998) and the World Bank (2000) at much the same time, the Ghanaian and Tanzanian policies expressed commitment to the expansion of higher education to larger numbers of students, and to a greater diversity of students, with a particular emphasis on attaining gender equity (GoG, 1991; URT, 1999). Female enrolments, as well as overall expansion, are noteworthy. In Ghana, the enrolment of women increased from 25 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2007. In Tanzania, women's enrolment grew from from 13 percent in 2000 to 32 percent in 2007 (UNESCO, 2009b). The distribution of students by type of institution (UNESCO, 2006) reveal that in 2005/6, in Ghana, women were making up 35 percent of students in public universities and 41 percent in private universities. In Tanzania, in 2005/2006, women made up 31.2 percent of students in public universities and 38 percent in private universities. Around ten percent of students were in private universities in both countries (UNESCO, 2006).

The third structure of inequality that we have chosen to examine is age. Lifecourse theory implies teleological notions of progression (Elder, 1998; Mortimer and Shanahan., 2003). Age, linearity and uninterrupted transitions through the educational system are not the norm in mainstream education in many low-income countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, many students enter school at an age older than the official age of entry. Rates of grade repetition can also be high. Multigrade and multi-age classrooms, and high rates of attrition all disrupt age-related norms in education (Little, 2001). Whereas mature students and off-time events have been theorised in higher education in the West (Bolam and Dodgson, 2003; Edwards, 1993; Reay, 2002; Reay, Ball and David, 2002; Richardson, 1995), temporal theory and information about participation rates and the cultural experiences of mature students are often invisible in higher education studies in low-income countries (Adam, 2004).

In practical terms, there have been some structured interventions to facilitate the entry of mature students into HE such as special entrance examinations, pre-entry programmes and recognition of equivalent qualifications and/or experience.

Methodology: Voices, Numbers and Capacity-Building

The project used a mixed methods approach, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The aim was to allow the qualitative data to illuminate the statistical data and provide textured information about enablers and barriers to participation and achievement for under-

represented groups in higher education. Life history interviews were conducted with 200 students across both countries including 119 students from public universities and 81 studying in private universities, from different programmes, and from a diversity of backgrounds including under-represented groups such as mature, poor and disabled students (see Appendix 3). Students were asked about their experiences of primary, secondary and higher education, with questions about their motivations, transitions, support, decision-making and first impressions relating to higher education, its impact on them and their future plans. The life history interviews captured experiences and aspirations of African undergraduate students - stakeholders' views that are often absent from research, particularly in low-income countries. Higher education policy and research tend to be dominated by the messaging systems of the North. De Sousa Santos (1995; 1999) argues that we need to start listening to the South, and that we need to develop a sociology of absences. This project has contributed to this by including a range of voices from the global South.

The semi-structured interviews with 200 academic staff and policymakers across both countries included 28 national policymakers as well as senior academics, lecturers and staff working closely with students in the four case study institutions. Academic staff and policymakers were asked about policies, interventions, strategies and challenges for widening participation, and the part that their universities had played in working towards the MDGs.

The data were analysed comparatively. Gender was a category in the analysis as well as the collection of data, and we scrutinised commonalities and differences in what female and male students and staff discussed and prioritised. We also compared public and private universities, mature and non mature students, students from 'deprived' and 'non-deprived' schools and the two African countries. We also compared the interview data with the statistical data from the Equity Scorecards.

The project chose to undertake comparative research in public and private universities in both countries as the growing number of private higher education institutions is a noticeable feature of expansion in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of universities in the region is now approximately 650 (200 public and 450 private) and private higher education has been perceived as a strategy for enhancing participation and easing the capacity challenge (Varghese, 2004). The World Bank (2009a: xxii) notes:

Arguably, private universities, technical institutes, non-resident community colleges, and distance learning programs could offer financially viable avenues for continued enrolment expansion, while public institutions go through a period of consolidation that concentrates on boosting quality, reinvigorating research, and solidifying graduate programs.

While there are numerous publications on quality and standards in private higher education (Altbach, 1998, 1999; Bjarnason, 2009; King, 2003), there is less information on the sociology of these institutions and how they are experienced by different constituencies. Furthermore, there is considerable diversity among providers. In this study, both private universities were Christian organisations.

The research process also attempted to exemplify the good practices suggested in the Nairobi Report (Harle, 2009), in so far as partnerships between African countries and industrialised countries can help develop research capacities and cultures. On our project, there has been sustainable development of research competencies by providing research training, constructing in-country research teams comprising experienced and newer researchers, and

the provision of a doctoral scholarship for both Ghana and Tanzania. UK researchers have also been privileged to learn about African higher education from a range of experienced and knowledgeable African partners, and user groups.

Equity Scorecards

An innovative feature of the project has been the construction of Equity Scorecards from raw data to examine both advantage and disadvantage simultaneously. Intersections have been measured between a number of social variables, namely gender, socio-economic status (based on the indicators of ‘deprived’ schools /regions), and age, in relation to educational processes: access, retention and achievement in two public and two private universities, and four programmes of study in each university. We chose to examine retention and achievement as well as access, as widening participation initiatives often focus on increasing enrolment, and fail to intersect retention and completion with structures of inequality. The World Bank has also recognised that ‘*Despite rising enrolment in tertiary-level institutions, the numbers of students graduating are pitifully small*’ (World Bank, 2009a: x).

We acknowledge that indicators of socio-economic status are controversial and inexact (Forsyth and Furlong, 2000). Furthermore, theories of social class do not always travel across national boundaries. In educational terms in Africa, socio-economic status is often measured by the type of school attended. In Ghana, we used the available classification of ‘deprived school’ as a proxy for SES, defined as being a (public) senior secondary school that has poor infrastructural facilities, non-qualified and insufficient teaching staff, and which will admit students who achieved lower than average grades in the Basic Secondary School Certificate. In Tanzania, ‘deprived schools’ were defined as junior secondary government or community schools in the poorest 53 districts of the country, based on the proportion of the population living below the 2000/1 basic needs poverty line (262 Tanzanian shillings per adult equivalent per day).

The programmes of study were selected to include disciplines where women have been traditionally under-represented *e.g.* the B.Sc. Engineering in the Tanzanian public university (where an affirmative action initiative has attracted more women) and the MD. Medicine in the Tanzanian private university, and in Ghana the B.Sc. Optometry in the public university and the B.Sc. in Agri-Business Management in the private university. We also selected programmes where women are well-represented *e.g.* B. Management in the Ghanaian public university and the B.Sc. Human Resources Management in the Ghanaian private university. The rationale for the selection was to interrogate how gender intersected with the other two structures of inequality.

The Equity Scorecards have been compiled largely from raw data on admission, retention, completion and achievement. The absence of data is data itself. Datasets have been constructed by using the lists of students enrolled on each programme and tracking information from application forms, central and departmental data and sometimes by contacting students directly. These were then analysed using the STATA statistical software package and Equity Scorecards were produced for each case study university.

The Equity Scorecard was chosen as a high-impact mechanism for conveying complex data to multiple constituencies. It interrogates changing configurations of inequality along multiple dimensions, including disciplinary and institutional location (Bensimon, 2004; Bensimon and Polkinghorne, 2003; McCall, 2005: 1772). By including disaggregated data on programmes of study and structures of inequality, the Equity Scorecards help to evaluate the

effectiveness of existing policy interventions to promote inclusion in the case study institutions. Social inequalities are deconstructed with statistical evidence provided for different categories. The relationship between the different categories at different educational stages is then made more visible.

Equity Scorecard Advisory Groups comprising policymakers, academic managers, student representatives and relevant NGOs were initiated in both countries to comment and advise on data collection and analysis. The research findings were shared iteratively and incrementally at meetings of the Equity Scorecard Groups and at in-country dissemination seminars.

Intersectionality

A guiding theoretical construct for the study has been intersectionality. The multiple markers of identity do not act independently of each other. While gender has received some policy and research attention, it is rarely intersected with other structures of inequality in low-income countries. Intersectionality theory suggests that oppression and discrimination occur in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity, and that there are ‘vectors of oppression and privilege’ (Ritzer, 2007: 204). Intersectionality tries to capture the relationships between socio-economic and socio-cultural categories and identities (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins, 1991). Poor women fall into two socially disadvantaged groups and, as such, can become the invisible ‘other’ in audits of gender or social disadvantage.

The Public/Private Divide: Case Study Universities

The case study universities were chosen for their organisational policies on widening participation. Each university has instigated programmes to attract and support new constituencies of students *e.g.* affirmative action. They were also chosen because of commonalities in programmes and size. The Ghanaian public university had 17,072 students in 2006/2007 while the student population in the Tanzanian public university was 15,608 in 2005/2006. The private institutions were also comparable in size; in 2005/2006 there were 2,809 students in the Ghanaian university and 2,063 in the Tanzanian one (NCTE, 2006; UCC, 2007; URT, 2006). Both private universities are well-established and expanding institutions run by Christian organisations.

Our case study universities claimed above average female enrolments. In Ghana, female enrolments stood at 37.5 percent in the public university in 2006/7 and 54.8 percent in the private university in 2005/6 (Morley *et al*, 2007) compared to 35 and 41 percent in the public and private sectors respectively in 2005/6. In Tanzania, in 2007/8 female enrolment was 33.3 percent in the public university and 42 percent in the private university compared to 30.5 and 35 percent in the two sectors respectively (TCU, 2009). The higher enrolments of women may be in part due to affirmative action initiatives.

Affirmative action at the public university in Ghana included lowering of the cut-off point for entry into some programmes for female students by one or sometimes two points. For the academic year 2007-2008 none of the studied programmes had affirmative action but the B. Primary Education accepted women with 1 point lower in 2005-2006. There were also special entrance examinations and remedial programmes for mature entrants and those from schools identified as ‘deprived’. Mature students are now given a 6 percent enrolment quota while 200 slots are reserved for students from deprived schools (Morley *et al*, 2007). Other initiatives include the introduction of part-time and work-study programmes for teachers, summer courses for Science and Business Studies students whose grades are not sufficient

for direct entry, recognition of equivalent qualifications (*e.g.* the old ‘O levels’) to those required for standard entry based on successful entry exam, and a distance mode programme for teacher education (Leach *et al.*, 2008). The private case study university attracted large numbers of mature students through its worker–friendly flexible delivery mode, with courses being offered in the morning, afternoon and at weekends (Morley *et al.*, 2007).

In Tanzania, the public university’s affirmative action initiatives include a pre-entry programme and scholarship scheme funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York for women who wish to study on the B.Sc. in Engineering. They also have a mature entry route for those aged 25 and over,³ and recognition of equivalent qualifications, as in Ghana.

Outputs, Impact and Influence

While scholarship on African higher education is increasing (Kwesiga, 2002; Manuh *et al.* 2007; Mkude, Cooksey, and Levey, 2003; Morley *et al.*, 2005; Teferra and Altbach, 2004), there is still an absence of policy-oriented and cultural sociology in African higher education, and Africa is still under-represented in publications, conferences and seminars on widening participation. It is not uncommon for higher education seminars with ‘Global’ or ‘World’ in their title to exclude representation from African countries. Consequently, the project has received considerable academic attention. Outputs to date include keynote conference and seminar presentations at: University of Stockholm, Sweden; University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA; University of Goettingen, Germany; Glasgow Caledonian University, UK; University of Trondheim, Norway; National Chi Nan University, Taiwan; University of Hiroshima and University of Tohoku, Japan; University of Vaxjo, Sweden; Helsinki University and Tampere University, Finland; and the Society for Educational Studies Annual Conference, UK. Papers have also been presented at conferences and seminars hosted by the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) (x3), the UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) (x 2 including a symposium), the British Educational Research Association, Consortium for Higher Education Researchers, International Sociology of Education Association?, Gender and Education Association, World Universities Forum, International Equal Opportunities Conference?, and the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme.

There have also been three in-country dissemination seminars: one in Ghana with representation from the Ministry of Education, case study universities, NGOs and student representation, and two in Tanzania, with members of the Equity Scorecard Advisory Group, academic management and student representatives. The project has been supported by strong networks of policymakers, academics, managers, student organisations and NGOs in both African countries. Follow on funding has been sought from the ESRC to allow us to hold large-scale end-of-project dissemination seminars in Ghana and Tanzania.

Long-term impact has been facilitated via publication in academic and professional journals (Morley & Lugg, 2008a and b, 2009; Morley, Leach & Lugg, 2009; Morley & Lussier, 2009), and four working papers written by the three teams posted on the project website (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wphegt>).

³ Although in Tanzania, those aged 25 and above could qualify for the mature entry route, our category of ‘mature students’ includes only those aged 30 and above, this being the age for mature entry in Ghana.

The project has also attracted attention from policymakers and international organisations including the World Bank, The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and The Norwegian National Committee for Gender Mainstreaming.

The project will be monitoring the impact of the research project on organisational practices over the next year in both countries, as part of its impact report to the ESRC.

We anticipate that the project's findings will be of interest to academic managers and policymakers in relation to how successful initiatives have been in attracting new constituencies. The evidence from this project interrogates the extent to which the macro-level policy momentum has succeeded in promoting meso- and micro-level changes in terms of organisational initiatives and in the quality of experiences, aspirations and learner identities of social groups who have traditionally not participated in higher education.

Section 2: Research Findings

A. Policy

1. Why Widen Participation?

The 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris adopted the resolution that higher education is a public good (UNESCO, 2009a). This value was evident in data from our study. Staff and policymakers conceptualised and expressed the public good in the policy vocabularies of economic development and the needs of the labour market (Singh, 2001).

Male and female staff in both countries combined economic with social reasons for supporting WP. They prioritised national development in terms of economic development and producing a highly skilled workforce:

The aspiration of Ghana to be a middle level income nation by a certain target set means that a certain level of manpower will need to be trained, if you want to develop a nation you have to broaden for admission and enrolment into tertiary institutions and when this is achieved then the impact in national development can be greatly felt (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

As for policymakers, in Ghana they tended to focus on the national labour market:

There definitely has been a response to the needs that are expressed from the demands of the workplace for example (Female policymaker, Ghana)

Human development policy has translated itself in encouraging people to go to school and balancing it now, or tilting it towards science and technology where there seems to be a gap. So the policies are geared at human resource development as a whole (Male policymaker, Ghana).

National development was sometimes overtly linked to poverty alleviation, assuming that there would be a public and private return on the investment:

A trained manpower is the best access [to development] a country can have and if we are offering our young ones the opportunity to upgrade themselves, I think that is the best way forward. ... Well I believe that any initiative at all in education leads to a reduction in poverty. The more people you get up the educational ladder, the more work you create for these people and this is going to impact on their families as well (Female government official, Ghana).

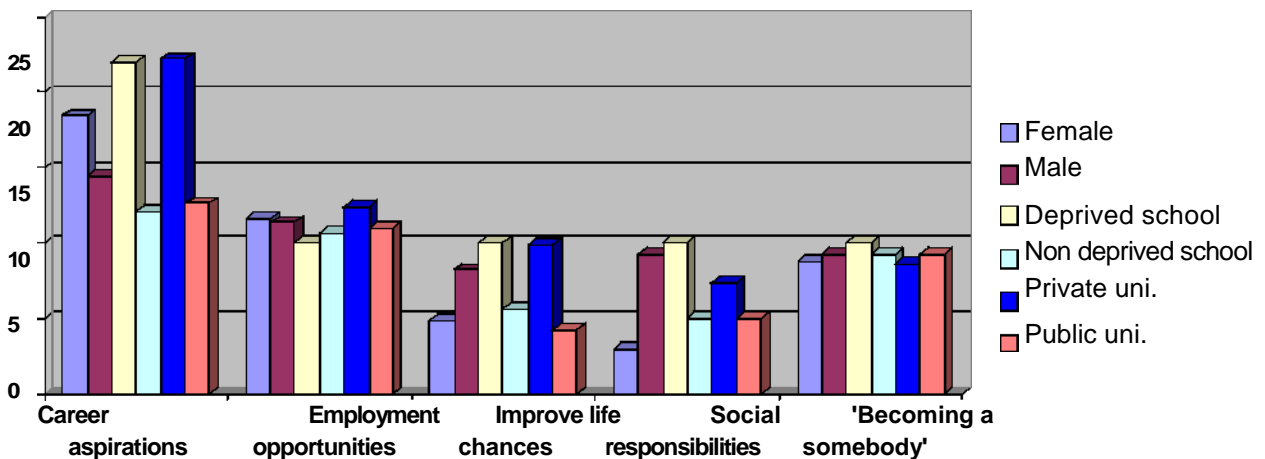
In Tanzania, policymakers discussed national labour market needs as well as the international policy imperative to widen participation:

The basic qualification for a person to get employed at least you need to have a degree... a degree qualification, so it's not a policy per se but rather the demand for higher education which is being reflected to the requirement of the society, what the society needs now (Male policymaker, Tanzania).

Now the World Bank has been in the forefront saying that you cannot do well without good and well-established and expanded higher education, if you want to do well in the development of the nation (Male policymaker, Tanzania).

Tanzanian staff and policymakers talked more about the international knowledge economy and policy momentum than their counterparts in Ghana *e.g.* the Education for All (EFA) policy momentum and the role that multilateral organisations and international donors play in developing higher education systems and structures. More people also used rights discourses in Tanzania than in Ghana *e.g.* education as a human right.

Figure 1: Student's motivations for entering HE



When it comes to students' motivations for entering higher education, as the above table shows, they combined public and private factors. The main reasons cited in both countries were: the labour market *e.g.* career aspirations, employment opportunities, entry into the professions, obtaining professional knowledge. Social status and social differentiation were also important to many students who saw graduate identity as a means of marking them as different. Many talked about 'becoming a somebody' (Wexler, 1992), or getting a 'good life'. Some students were specific about their economic goals and enhanced life chances, *e.g.* escaping rural poverty, or supporting an extended family:

I grew in a poor family, ... in a village where very few people who get opportunity to go to school, I am from there ... maybe I want to be someone... After finishing my standard seven, I go to the O-level, I studied after that... my aim was just to pass and pass and pass until I came to the university (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

Students in all universities were also motivated by the material and symbolic power of gaining a degree. The range of motivators was wider in Tanzania than in Ghana. In Ghana, the main motivators were employment and career, whereas in Tanzania, these were accompanied by social responsibility and escaping rural poverty. For women in the private universities in both countries and in the public university in Ghana, higher education was considered essential as a route into employment and careers in the professions. As such, it was linked to financial and social independence and played a major role in transforming their status from objects to agentic subjects.

2. How to Widen Participation: Affirmative Action?

When asked about strategic interventions for WP in their institutions, staff in the public universities in both countries talked of policies for different excluded groups *e.g.* women, mature students, low SES and disabled students. The most frequently mentioned structural interventions included affirmative action programmes, loans schemes and flexible timing of courses. Much of the discussion around affirmative action focused on women.

Staff and policymakers in Tanzania discussed policies that have been initiated via the Carnegie Corporation of New York to encourage women to study science:

And we also have had overseas agencies like the Carnegie Corporation which has been operating a financial package with the University of Dar es Salaam which has sponsored 50 female students year (Male policymaker, Tanzania).

I think it is Carnegie Foundation ... they have special programme to enable women to enrol to university education if they don't meet the requirements. In the sciences for example, that prior to admission they have a six week programme during which they are given a bridging kind of programme, remedial, if you like it, to women students who could qualify but they lack some skills as identified from the examinations, the national examinations. And after that they are given exam. If they pass well, they are recruited they are admitted into university. This is also another measure for meeting the equity standpoint (Male policymaker, Tanzania).

In Ghana, some staff and policymakers discussed affirmative action in more general terms:

In addition to this, I think we have this affirmative action for gender parity because the girl child is been encouraged to avail herself of education to the higher level, and there are strategies involved for this (Male policymaker, Ghana).

There was sometimes confusion between affirmative action as policy or as practice, and, from one senior manager, recognition that a policy on affirmative action needed to be formalised:

I know that the University have some form of affirmative action, I haven't read it anywhere but I know that it is being practised where in the past for instance the School of Business would have different scores in admitting male, female and in the Faculty of Social Science for instance students from certain schools who have less than favourable numbers would be admitted over students from the so called favoured schools who have similar numbers, that's what I am aware of, but I don't know of any such policy (Male staff, public university, Ghana).

For now, I think that the policies that we, what everybody have to do is to put these policies into maybe our attachment, put them on paper and see to their enforcement (Senior manager, public university, Ghana).

In both countries, affirmative action was strongly associated with the lowering of grades and

special measures to facilitate women's entry:

Also, gender sensitivity of our scholarships, especially with regard to those [women] in deprived areas. There's a special scheme for them to gain access to university at much lower grades. They are quite new especially in the gender aspect but we the potential (Male government official, Ghana).

Although affirmative action was most strongly associated with gender, several staff members in Tanzania talked of the need for a similar affirmative action programme for disabled students:

I mean girls have been given opportunities to come to the university even if they don't meet, even they don't have the qualifications. And some of them have been admitted prior to entering university at science so that they can get good grades to get into the university but students with disabilities are not included (Female staff, public university, Tanzania).

And, in Ghana, some staff in the public university mentioned the recommendation that faculties operate a quota system by offering six percent of their places to students from schools identified as 'deprived' or 'very deprived':

We have, what I will say, unofficial quota, it's not written anywhere in our statute or in our academic board, we just decided that we would give about 6 percent of the yearly admission quota to deprived institutions. And 6 percent, I'm even doubting whether the faculties stick to the 6 percent because the quota is given to the faculties themselves, they are very small and the initial problem with the deprived institutions was that it is very difficult to identify those deprived institutions so we just went by, we happened to stumble onto some data from the GES [Ghana Education Service] which listed some schools as deprived and very deprived institutions. The criteria for determining deprived, we weren't sure, but we assumed that they were taking into consideration facilities that were available, the places where these schools are sited, like mostly rural areas and the teachers that they had, the numbers of teachers, the number of qualified teachers that these institutions had. Those are the criteria they are using in determining what are the deprived or very deprived institutions (Senior manager, public university, Ghana).

Both public universities also offered affirmative action schemes in the form of diversified entry routes. This comprised entry for mature students – in Ghana students aged 30 and above could sit a special entry examination, in Tanzania those over 25 - and entry based on qualification equivalence for those without the necessary current secondary school qualifications.

Affirmative action is a highly controversial policy intervention that is frequently accompanied by resistance and accusations of reverse discrimination and is perceived as a threat to quality and standards (Bacchi, 1997; Baez, 2003a, 2003b; Lihamba, Mwaipopo and Shule, 2006, Tierney, 1997). Affirmative action was viewed as a form of reverse discrimination by many (male) students. This was particularly noticeable in Ghana, where there was a strong tendency among male and female students in public and private universities to see gender difference in terms of preferential treatment for women (17 male and 6 female students in Ghana expressed concern about this). This related to affirmative action programmes as well as to the sexualisation of relationships with tutors and the

perception that women could use their sexuality to obtain higher grades from male tutors. Women were frequently positioned as complicit and manipulative of power structures to their advantage. There was very little analysis of how patriarchy structures inequalities:

They always fight for gender balance Maybe, the female too may not be qualified but, see they say 'oh we want gender balance so let's push a lady'... if you don't take care we will try to discriminate against men (Male student, private university, Ghana).

If you look how students are admitted, if you look at some of the courses you will see a male student, they are supposed to get a grade eight, the female student to get a grade ten for the same programme you are admitted. So I guess there is some sort of disparity.. I think maybe it is maybe an affirmative action to get more of ladies in... And some of the women too because of women empowerment they forget about their responsibilities and always call for their rights (Male student, public university, Ghana).

In Tanzania, the students who talked about affirmative action were mostly women who regarded such measures as largely positive. Tanzanian staff were also overall quite positive about affirmative actions for women, although it was sometimes positioned as oppositional to merit:

I know there has been this initiative...one of which has been the affirmative action. We started with science special programme which ... encouraged students who did not qualify for first entry to go through a programme which enabled them to access education and then I think there has been also Carnegie foundation which offered scholarships to those girls who did not compete during selection processes. I think those initiatives have shown some fruits, like the first science bunch that come under special programme although there were some resistance from some of the staff members, they did finally realise that it was...it was... their fears were unfounded because some of them among the best performers in sciences. Am not saying among girls but among all, quite a number of them were best performers (Female staff, public university, Tanzania).

Affirmative action programmes appear to be controversial because they challenge some men's sense of entitlement to higher education and normative constructions of meritocracy. Our Equity Scorecards suggest, however, that once given the chance to enter higher education, female students and students from low SES backgrounds often thrive - thus posing questions about how merit intersects with social advantage.

Women in Science

There is a global movement to promote the entry of women into science (Bebbington, 2002). This message has been relayed strongly in the Tanzanian public university where there is a structured affirmative action programme to encourage women into the B.Sc. in Engineering. This may explain why increasing numbers of women entering science was noted more often by staff and policymakers in Tanzania than in Ghana, and why they were generally more aware of gender gains. Students in the public university in Tanzania also mentioned women entering non-traditional subjects and their affirmative action programmes.

While it may be that structured interventions such as the pre-entry programme for women on the BSc in Engineering are helping to raise the numbers of women in the sciences, our Equity

Scorecard for this programme (ESC 1) shows us that, when gender is intersected with socio-economic status and age, there are very few mature women from low SES backgrounds.

ESC 1: Access to B.Sc. Engineering according to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status at a Public University in Tanzania by Levels in 2007/2008

B.Sc. Engineering	% of Students on the Programme										
			Low SES			Age 30 or over			Mature and Low SES		
Level 100	73.96	26.04	8.85	6.88	1.97	0.98	0.49	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00
Level 200	75.05	24.95	10.14	8.77	1.36	1.36	0.19	1.17	0.00	0.00	0.00
Level 300	76.83	23.17	9.82	9.07	0.76	1.76	1.26	0.50	0.25	0.25	0.00
Level 400	74.66	25.34	10.78	9.70	1.08	4.31	2.70	1.62	1.08	0.81	0.27

A similar absence of mature students and low SES students, both male and female, was a feature of other STEM programmes (not covered by AA interventions), e.g. the B.Sc. Optometry in the public university in Ghana had no mature or low SES students, and, on the MD. Medicine programme in the private university in Tanzania, although numbers of women and mature students were higher, there were few low SES students, and no mature women from low SES backgrounds at all.

The interviews revealed that, for many women who managed to gain entry to STEM subjects, whether through affirmative action programmes or not, this was just the beginning of the struggle. It sometimes seemed as if their gendered identity was in opposition to STEM achievements:

I'm offering mathematics and in our level I'm the only woman, so sometimes they do tease me, they call me with or something but I take them to be a joke or something. And sometime when there is something happening and I want to see or something they say oh as for you, we know you can make it so don't come and disturb us or something so that's what sometimes maybe I feel bad or something (Female student, public university, Ghana).

Discouragement from entering STEM subjects, perceived as too difficult for women, was reported by some female students:

Actually, I liked science, bookkeeping and commerce, but my father was telling me that, if I like both it is better I take bookkeeping and commerce. He did not want me to get these difficult lessons like physics and all those things (Female low SES student, private university, Tanzania).

I think people when I was telling them that I am going to pursue my degree in Engineering, in one way or another they used to discourage me and say why are going there? In one way or another they were pulling me back (Female student, public university, Ghana)

Entering STEM subjects frequently involved minority status and the accompanying visibility:

Because it is a new course, there are few people, up to this moment there are only three, two girls which are in energy engineering (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

The STEM subjects were closely associated with men and masculinities. Entering STEM subjects implied becoming like a man:

It was the moment when I was working with the carpentry workshop.... Things were very tough but it was too hard to hold the jerk plane which we use to make the plain surface for the wood, it was too difficult. But when I came to finish that one, that is where it gave me the courage that I can do men's work (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

In conclusion, it appears that, while affirmative action to promote women's participation in STEM subjects in HE may help increase numbers of women, evidence from the one programme in the Tanzanian public university which offered such an intervention revealed that this appeared to be assisting more advantaged women and that, when gender is intersected with age and socio-economic status, low SES and mature women students were almost non-existent.

In both countries, different access routes were available for students from under-represented groups. For example, public universities in both countries offered mature students' entry exams. The public Ghanaian university also allowed students who did not have a senior secondary school certificate (the usual entry requirement) - such as people on the labour market or those wanting to enter science programmes via the science remedial courses - to access via equivalent routes. These students are required to write three exams including one general paper and two programme-related exams. Candidates are then ranked according to their scores and can fill the spaces in the respective programmes. Quotas for equivalent entry are decided by each faculty.

ESC 2 Opening Access through Diversified Routes at Level 100 on 4 Programmes of a Public Ghanaian University in 2007/2008

Programme	% of All Students			% of Male Students			% of Female Students			% of Deprived Students			% of Mature Students		
B. Commerce	73.33	19.44	7.22	72.99	19.71	7.30	74.42	18.60	6.98	60.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	43.48	56.52
B. Management Studies	86.16	11.32	2.52	95.28	3.77	0.94	67.92	26.42	5.66	100.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	69.23	30.77
B. Education (Primary)	26.77	0.00	73.23	29.29	0.00	70.71	17.86	0.00	82.14	38.46	0.00	61.54	7.00	0.00	93.00
B. Sc. Optometry	100.0	0.00	0.00	100.0	0.00	0.00	100.0	0.00	0.00	--	--	--	--	--	--

3. Policy Successes

There was a marked tendency in both countries and in both public and private sectors to evaluate the successes of WP in terms of increasing numbers of women. There was less consideration of poverty or age:

Fortunately, (our) University has very good statistics when we consider the gender issue. The ladies are about 55 percent to 60 percent of the student population. Ever since the university started its graduation programmes, in my department for instance, all the awards we've given they were only two gentlemen who got the 'Best Accounting Student'. All of them were ladies. Most of the time, the best students emerge as ladies. I think that... I don't know but maybe we haven't studied or we haven't done any research to find out why we have a higher proportion of females coming ...than the males (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

While this staff member celebrates women's achievements in his private university, enrolment data collected from his institution indicated that the proportion of women varied considerably across programmes and that very small numbers of students from low SES backgrounds and mature students were enrolled (See highlighted figures in ESC 4). This was broadly the case in all the institutions.

In Ghana, staff in both institutions believed that WP policies had increased the participation rates of students from deprived schools, working students and mature students as well as women, and those in the public university believed that it had specifically increased the numbers of women studying science, and that distance education and pre-entry programmes had aided access of under-represented groups. In Tanzania, both male and female staff in the public university believed that the numbers of women and mature students had increased. In the private university, staff talked mainly about WP strategies in terms of loans, scholarships and timing of courses as access enablers, with flexible timetables having helped mature working students to enter in greater numbers than in the public university.

Most of these observations were based on impressionistic accounts and personal and professional experience and speculation since social identities are not monitored except for gender. The Equity Scorecards tell a different story for both countries. For the purpose of this report, we present below a selection of data from our pool of 100 Equity Scorecards which relate primarily to the first year cohort (Level 100) of each of the programmes studied. These are presented as illustration of the most salient patterns of inequality in student participation on the programmes studied. Although there was considerable variation between programmes and levels *e.g.* over the proportion of women, mature or low SES students enrolled, some elements remained constant. It is these consistent features that we will focus on here. To assist the reader, the relevant columns being referred to in the narrative are highlighted on the Scorecard in a different colour.

In Ghana, in the public university (ESC 3), consistent features included the absence of mature students and low SES students on the B.Sc. Optometry programme, the higher percentage of mature students on the B. Education and the near absence of mature women of low SES on all programmes.

ESC 3: Access to Level 100 on Four Programmes at a Public University in Ghana according to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status

Programme	% of Students on the Programme										
			Low SES			Age 30 or over			Mature and Low SES		
B. Sc. Optometry	69.23	30.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B. Commerce	76.11	23.89	2.78	2.22	0.56	12.78	9.44	3.33	0.56	0.56	0.00
B. Education (Primary)	77.95	22.05	10.24	8.66	1.57	78.74	59.84	18.90	7.09	5.51	1.57
B. Management Studies	66.67	33.33	1.89	1.26	0.63	8.18	1.89	6.29	0.00	0.00	0.00

In the private university (ESC 4), consistent features included the higher percentage of women on the B.Sc. Human Resources Management programme and the disproportionately low percentage of women and the near total absence of students from deprived schools on the B.Sc. Agri-Business Management programme. While the private universities in Ghana enrolled more women than the public (41 percent versus 35 percent nationally), women made up only seven percent of the B.Sc. Agri-Business Management cohort at Level 100 (and it had no mature students at all at Level 300 and 400).

ESC 4: Access to Level 100 on Four Programmes at a Private University in Ghana according to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status

Programme	% of Students on the Programme										
			Low SES			Age 30 or over			Mature and Low SES		
B.Sc. Economics	61.04	38.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.90	3.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B.Sc. Human Resources Management	36.56	63.44	4.41	0.44	3.96	10.13	2.64	7.49	1.32	0.44	0.88
B.Sc. Agri-Business Management	92.86	7.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.57	28.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
B.Sc. Accountancy	65.63	34.38	6.88	2.50	4.37	8.75	5.62	3.13	0.00	0.00	0.00

In Tanzania, the very low numbers of mature students, and especially mature students from low SES, across the programmes in the public university (ESC 5) were noticeable.

ESC 5: Access to Level 100 on Four Programmes at a Public University in Tanzania According to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status

Programme	% of Students on the Programme										
			Low SES			Age 30 or over			Mature and Low SES		
B. Commerce	66.88	33.12	7.59	5.82	1.78	1.62	1.45	0.16	0.00	0.00	0.00
LLB.Law	71.88	28.13	14.58	11.46	3.13	2.08	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	0.00
B.Sc. Engineering	73.96	26.04	8.85	6.88	1.97	0.98	0.49	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00
B. Science with Education	83.75	16.25	18.75	16.25	2.50	0.75	0.75	0.00	2.08	2.08	0.00

In the private university (ESC 6), consistent features were the greater number of mature students entering the B.Ed. Maths and very low numbers entering Law and Medicine, as shown below.

ESC 6: Access to Level 100 on Four Programmes at a Private University in Tanzania According to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status

Programme	% of Students on the Programme										
			Low SES			Age 30 or over			Mature and Low SES		
LLB. Law	58.48	41.52	4.68	3.51	1.17	9.36	5.85	3.51	1.17	0.58	0.58
B. Business Administration	56.67	43.33	8.33	5.00	3.33	23.33	15.00	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
MD. Medicine	73.58	26.42	4.72	3.77	0.94	13.21	10.38	2.83	0.94	0.94	0.00
B.Ed.Maths	86.98	13.02	11.63	11.16	0.47	52.56	47.91	4.65	5.58	5.58	0.00

In summary, an examination of the above Equity Scorecards at Level 100 reveals that in all four case study institutions, although numbers of women were relatively high on some programmes, when gender is intersected with age and SES, numbers are consistently extremely low. The full set of Scorecards shows that patterns of access varied between years but intersectionality reveals this constant feature across all levels. There was no evidence to suggest that under-represented groups are entering a wide range of disciplines. We can therefore conclude that, in terms of policy successes, progress has been made in providing greater access to women but less so for students from low SES and mature students – and, while numbers of mature students from disadvantaged backgrounds are very low, they are particularly low for women in this category.

4. Monitoring and Accountability

Equity initiatives frequently remain at the level of aspiration in many national locations. They often fail to be accompanied by strategic action plans and effective evaluation procedures (Deem, Morley and Tlili, 2005). They also often fail to be intersected with quality assurance procedures (Morley, 2003). As noted in the previous section, reported successes were often fairly impressionistic as the case study universities and staff had not always embedded the monitoring of WP policies into their management or professional practices. Government led Quality Assurance procedures were cited as monitoring mechanisms by female and male staff in Ghana and by male staff in Tanzania; female staff in Tanzania expressed particular concern about lack of monitoring and accountability. The World Bank recently suggested that for higher education the *'formidable policy challenge is that of balancing educational quality against rising enrolments'* (World Bank 2009a: xxvii). From what students in our study reported, there seemed to be a gap between policy intention and policy implementation in relation to quality assurance in both countries.

There was little discussion by staff in either country of the student experience or student voice as an evaluation mechanism. Accountability was mainly conceptualised in relation to the state, rather than to consumer groups. Nor did there appear to be formalised management information systems to check WP or the progress and achievement of under-represented groups, either in the organisations themselves or in the ministries:

I'm not aware of any at the moment, if there's any national body that controls or manages this improvement you know, so the monitoring of these policies, but I don't think there is any such thing and if there is then I think we are lacking there a bit. I think there should be a proper monitoring facility for that (Male, government official, Ghana).

Monitoring was perceived as a fairly unsystematic and impressionistic affair in the private universities:

As far as I know it is the end of semester results that are published that we use to consider who is doing well and who is not. But we don't really have a system that tracks down these students that are coming from various places and how well they're performing. All we do now is, once we get results, then we can sort of do a conclusion that well, this is a good student; that is not. That is all that we do (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

For students, one important consequence for their studies of poor monitoring and accountability was in the area of assessment. 16 male and 10 female students from both countries raised problems with assessment. There was a sense of instability and unfairness in many accounts:

We wrote an exam in computer, and the grades that came out were not favourable. ...my performance in all other computer exams, I did very well. ... I managed to help somebody out. And that person rather had a better grade than I did. ... We went to the lecturer for confirmation, it was like what the lecture had as his results were different from what was on the notice board. ... The lecturer was apart-time lecturer, not a full-time lecturer and he was a young person so he was kind of... pushing us around. It was like... you come to see him today for your result but he will tell you "I cannot show it to

you” but he was showing it to others. At the end of the day, we wanted to go for re-marking but there was nothing like that in the system... So we just had to accept the grades like that (Female student, private university, Ghana).

It seemed that assessment was not comprehensively regulated by quality assurance procedures *e.g.* there were no grade criteria or service-level agreements. Individual lecturers could award and change marks, and set assessment tasks. Questions were sometimes posed about assessment in relation to the curriculum:

For sure the studies are not very difficult if you get a good teacher. You’re taught something and if a teacher... will evaluate you in what he taught we really do it. But sometimes a teacher can teach you something and when he comes to evaluate he evaluates something different from what he taught and that is what I have experienced (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

There were complaints about lack of transparency in assessment:

But once I know that maybe I wrote the same words with the same student, he scored more than I did, it becomes a problem and psychologically affects your performance, because you think no matter how much you learn and how much you produce, at the end of the day the other person is going to score more than you did (Male student, public university, Ghana)

In other courses they have course work. They see their course work before examination UE (University Exams) but in our Faculty you never see it so you enter in the examination room without knowing even how much you have in your course work. So even if you are told that you have scored E or maybe D you can not even complain because you don’t know how you scored in your course work (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

An issue that was often raised was how academic and financial matters collided in the private universities, and permission to enter assessment was linked to payment of fees:

I can remember, last year when there was a University administration follow up for those who had not yet paid the tuition fee, quite a good number of students including myself were barred from attending class... That was the real pain to me because the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) was still scrutinizing whether to sponsor me or not. Being among defaulters, I was refused permission to sit for final examinations. I had to stay at home moving around the centre until the IOM granted me a support. This was actually a bad moment for me. (Female low SES student, private university, Tanzania).

Likewise, quality assurance mechanisms for soliciting student evaluations appeared to be weak, and open to abuse. They could sometimes be used to victimise the students:

I quite remember Level 200... there is this lecturer when he comes to class he just teaches his stuffs and goes away. So when we complained, he said he also didn’t understand certain things until he read his Masters. So meaning we have to wait... We read the meaning from it that we have to wait until we are reading our Masters. So there was this assessment form that we have to fill, we filled it in. Our recommendation was that such lecturers are not supposed to be lecturers. At least he should be given

administration work so that he will be doing. They showed this assessment form to this lecturer. He came to come and told us that we have marked him and its now time for him to mark us. Now is the last lecture he had with us and of course the marks were very, very bad. Some of us were expecting A-A in our papers. We end up getting C, D and the rest (Male student, public university, Ghana).

In terms of measuring quality and performance in the case study institutions, various indicators were mentioned. In the private Ghanaian university, quality was seen in terms of student employability:

We have an Alumni Association and from the feedback we get from them, that tells us that they are doing very well in the society. Secondly, students at level 400 go for internship for a semester; and it so happens that most of them get absorbed into the system in the offices before they even graduate. And that goes to tell you that they are doing the right thing (Female staff, private university, Ghana).

In the Tanzanian private university, completion rates were seen as an indicator of quality by some:

What gives me the right to be proud is the acknowledgement that although it is only one year since I had been involved in dealing with students, all female students have graduated ... I remember that the only student who did not graduate was from the Faculty of Law ... but he was a male student (Female staff, private university, Tanzania).

If we take completion data as a measure of performance, the Equity Scorecards reveal considerable variation between programmes in all the studied institutions, and also between groups. The following three Scorecards (ESCs 7-9), from the Ghana public and private universities and the Tanzanian public university,⁴ show that completion rates in Ghana were overall lower on the B. Commerce in the public university and on the B. Sc. Human Resources Management in the private university, and on the B. Science with Education in the Tanzanian public university, relative to the other programmes. Most noticeably, the completion rates were much lower for mature students on the programmes than for the overall cohort, with the exception of the B. Education (Primary), where they did almost as well as the cohort. Low SES students, on the other hand, performed much better, with 100 percent completion on three programmes, and 94 percent on another, in Ghana. They only did less well on the B. Management Studies in Ghana and LLB in Tanzania (and minimally the B.Sc Science with Education). Women's completion rates hover around the overall rate for the cohort on most programmes, sometimes slightly above, sometimes somewhat below. With women and low SES students completing their programmes in a similar proportion to the overall cohort, the need for close monitoring of the retention of mature students is a critical issue.

⁴ Completion data were not available for the private university in Tanzania

ESC 7: Rate of Completion of Degree for 4 Programmes at a Public University in Ghana by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status in 2007/2008

Programme		Men			Women			Low SES Students			Mature Students		
B. Commerce	79.51	70.62	57.95	82.06	29.38	21.56	73.39	3.23	3.23	100	22.10	12.40	56.10
B. Management Studies	84.16	54.35	49.38	90.86	45.65	34.78	76.19	1.24	0.93	75.00	17.70	11.18	63.16
B. Education (Primary)	89.44	56.52	49.69	87.91	43.48	39.75	91.43	10.56	9.94	94.12	72.67	64.60	88.89
B. Sc. Optometry	100	75.00	75.00	100	25.00	25.00	100	0.00	-	-	0.00	-	-

ESC 8: Rate of Completion of Degree for 4 Programmes at a Private University in Ghana by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status in 2007/2008

Programme		Men			Women			Low SES Students			Mature Students		
B.Sc. Economics	95.83	83.33	79.17	95.00	16.67	16.67	100	4.17	4.17	100	0.00	-	-
B.Sc. Human Resources Management	80.18	29.52	22.91	77.61	70.48	57.27	81.25	0.88	0.88	100	4.41	2.20	50.00
B.Sc. Agri-Business Management	100	72.73	72.73	100	27.27	27.27	100	0.00	-	-	0.00	-	-
B.Sc. Accountancy	93.79	57.76	54.04	93.55	42.24	39.75	94.12	0.62	0.62	100	3.11	2.48	80.00

ESC 9: Rate of Completion of Degree for 4 Programmes at a Public University in Tanzania by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status in 2007/2008

Programme		Men			Women			Low SES Students			Mature Students		
B. Commerce	90.02	70.73	63.45	89.71	29.27	26.57	90.75	6.26	5.92	94.59	1.86	*	*
LLB. Law	89.58	58.30	52.90	90.73	41.70	36.68	87.96	7.72	7.34	95.00	6.56	4.25	64.71
B.Sc. Engineering	83.72	77.67	62.56	80.54	22.33	21.16	94.79	11.16	8.84	79.17	5.35	3.49	65.22
B. Science with Education	73.33	60.90	44.76	72.31	38.10	28.57	75.00	10.48	7.62	72.73	6.67	3.81	57.14

* Incomplete data on the age of withdrawn students from this programme

The lack of systematic attention to monitoring and accountability, including the analysis of performance data, the poorly developed management information systems and the reliance on impressionistic evaluation raise questions about the nature of structured interventions to support students to achieve and complete their programmes. Our experience in gathering official data on completion reveals that information is scarce, partial and incomplete, and often does not take into account withdrawal in the first academic term. There was also little discussion of the value of student feedback for evaluation purposes. If no information exists on student progress, it is uncertain who is at risk, and what kind of support is required.

5. Support Services

Students from non-traditional backgrounds are frequently constructed as a risk to universities and to the state which invests in them (Leathwood and, O'Connell, 2003; Reay, 2002). There is a vast literature on student drop out and retention (David *et al.*, 2009; Davis & Elias, 2003; Longden, 2004; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1997; Quinn, 2004, Quinn *et al.*, 2005; Thomas, 2002; Thomas *et al.*, 2001; Tinto, 1993; Yorke *et al.*, 1997; Yorke 1999a, 1999b; Yorke & Longden, 2004). A way of minimising risk is to install structured support mechanisms. The subject of support for WP, and indeed for all students is a matter of increasing research attention (Jacklin and Robinson, 2007; Jacklin and LeRiche, 2009; Robinson, Jacklin and LeRiche, 2007). Support in our study was seen as financial *e.g.* scholarships, academic *e.g.* improved and student-centred pedagogy, practical *e.g.* accommodation, and emotional *e.g.* counselling. Counselling was the support service most mentioned by female and male staff in both countries as a means of increasing student retention (41 out of 88 respondents in Ghana and 18 out of 84 in Tanzania). This was followed by accommodation, financial support and scholarships. Whereas it might seem that the emphasis on counselling was a recognition of the affective domain in higher education (Hey and Leathwood, 2009), counselling was also conceptualised in practical as well as emotional terms:

So most people who come from those deprived schools have financial problems as well ... it is towards examination that you are reminded that you haven't paid your school fees, you haven't finished paying all the fee you will be sacked, you wouldn't be allowed to write and so there's extra stress put on them. But somehow when they go to the Counselling Centre some are brought here and then we go to the Registrar and some letter is written for them to be allowed to write, in fact it's been done and I know that so much debt has been accumulated for the university by some of these students. I don't know how we're going to recoup that but somehow the university is doing its best to get some of these to go through even though they are not getting the necessary financing for their own education. The university seems to be absorbing it (Male staff, public university, Ghana).

The above quotation suggests that low SES students are seen as a financial liability for universities. It also suggests that student poverty is managed in crisis rather than in strategic mode.

Some respondents in Ghana discussed specific strategies that their department had put in place to improve retention and achievement. These included: face-to-face tutorials, the sexual harassment committee and a quality assurance unit to monitor teaching in the public university and, in the private university, student placements in industry, the appointment of highly qualified teaching staff and announcing names of students with good grades at

graduation ceremonies. Strategies for retention in the public university included allowing students to repeat papers that they had failed and to receive counselling on how to approach their studies so that they could return the following year. Counselling was offered in both countries and in both private and public universities. Academic counsellors were introduced into departments in the Ghanaian public university to offer assistance to students and the university also tried to support retention through lecturers, student councils, and peer support. In the private university, collaboration with overseas universities had been introduced so that students could continue their programme in the USA for example.

The retention and achievement strategies mentioned in Tanzania included study skills development, linkages with other departments and professional institutions, more time for disabled students to do their exams, accommodation, pedagogy, student groups, religious support, financial support, library services, time management and information literacy classes, discussion groups and practical training for students. Lack of support and retention issues were particular concerns. Lack of support for disabled students was seen as a problem by male and female staff. All of the suggestions from both countries were aimed at enhancing completion rates.

As noted in the previous section, completion rates are seen as a performance indicator in many quality audits of HE (QAA, 2008). There has also been considerable policy attention in the UK to degree classifications (Burgess Group, 2007). Concerns have been articulated about the usefulness of the degree classification to employers and the myriad ways in which degree classifications are calculated. There have also been concerns in the UK about educational inflation, with the majority of students now gaining upper seconds (Morley *et al*, 2006). In our study, the class of degrees awarded varied considerably between programmes and between institutions (see ESCs 15-18 in Section C on Under-Represented Groups). No students from the private university in Ghana gained 1st class degrees on any of the selected programmes in 2007/8. In Tanzania, three programmes awarded a few 1st class degrees, and a relatively high proportion gained 2nd class degrees in both the public and private universities. It is of note that 5 percent of low SES students and 4.26 percent of women achieved a first class degree in Engineering – the programme with affirmative action. This suggests that, once given the opportunity, women and students from disadvantaged backgrounds can excel in STEM subjects.

While the staff in all the universities cited a range of interventions for support, lack of support was mentioned by all categories of students, except in the private university in Tanzania. More male students than females complained about lack of support, as the table below shows:

Table 1: Percentage of students who mentioned lack of support

	Mature N=38	Non mature N=153	Female N=103	Male N=97	Low SES N=53	Non Low SES N=145
% of respondents						
Ghana Private	0	6.45	4.54	5.26	0	5.71
Ghana Public	10	6.52	0	13.79	14.29	7.31
Tanzania Private	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tanzania Public	0	8	3.23	9.68	12.5	4.54

Lack of support from lecturers and lack of services and facilities *e.g.* libraries, IT, accommodation and social amenities, especially in the private universities were the categories most frequently discussed.

In summary, a wide range of mechanisms to support student retention were referred to by staff in all the institutions, with counselling being the most frequently mentioned. In contrast, students tended to talk about lack of, or inadequate, support. The data do not allow us to estimate the contribution that effective support mechanisms made to the completion rates presented in the previous section (ESCs 7, 8 and 9). However, it is important to note that, despite students from non-traditional backgrounds often being considered a risk by universities, this is not born out by our data, which show that low SES students, once in higher education, do as well as, or even better than, those from more advantaged backgrounds. Mature students however had a lower rate of completion, suggesting that universities need to look at ways of improving support to this group.

6. Challenges to Widening Participation

Multiple logics appeared to be at work in the discussion with staff of challenges to WP in both countries *e.g.* a sense of pressure as a consequence of unfunded expansion accompanied by concern that more students should gain access. The resourcing and infrastructure of HE were problematised by male and female staff in both public and private universities in both countries.

Table 2: Percentage of staff who mentioned resourcing as a challenge

	Female N=60	Male N=140	Staff Private University N=66	Staff Public University N=108	Policy makers N=26
Tanzania	17	25	13	23	6
Ghana	13	62	21	46	8
Total	30	87	34	69	14

There were concerns that expansion has not been resourced or planned, and about the capacity of HE to meet the increasing demand in terms of staffing and funding. The lack of human resources, *e.g.* overload and brain drain, were seen as ongoing difficulties. These concerns were accompanied by a focus on the students *e.g.* whether they know how to access HE, whether they have sufficient funding and careers advice. Public university staff and policymakers in both countries identified capacity, demand exceeding supply, unfunded expansion and staffing as major challenges to WP.

An issue that received a lot of attention in both countries by both sexes and in both universities was the admissions process, *e.g.* admission criteria, selection process, different entry routes, number of admission by programmes, corruption to get a place. One concern about admissions in the public university in Ghana was the concept of ‘Protocol’ - the practice whereby a small number of places were reserved for applicants put forward by staff in management positions. It was thought that this privilege could lead to bribery and corruption in the context of demand exceeding supply and the high value placed on university education:

Protocol ... everybody has at certain position from the top so many protocol people ... so I guess the vice chairmen might have twenty and then it goes down I have like ... three or something as the head of department ... the dean might have five... I can bring in two, one ... on protocol ... and also ... this is something they won't tell you ... but the

fact of the matter is ... that most people in my position and people are chastising me because I don't take money... I could get paid up to ten million ...for one ... of mine and people at the upper levels get paid even more than that so if you have ten and they're paying you twenty million and parents will pay... the same guy that I told you, he had three daughters. He said if you told me I had to pay ten million I would find a way to pay ten million and I will pay it ... tomorrow ... and he's a nice ... good Christian person ... he wants to do the right thing ... He says I know because I didn't get the right education and if they don't get it they will be nowhere (Female staff, public university, Ghana).

Our scrutiny of admissions procedures suggested that under-represented groups were applying, but often getting rejected. For example, if we compare the percentage of applicants in the Ghanaian private university accepted by gender on ESC 10, we can see that in some programmes such as the B.Sc. Agri-business Management and the B.Sc. Accountancy, it is significantly lower for women than for men. This is particularly striking for the B.Sc. Agri-business Management where the acceptance rate for women is almost three times lower than the overall acceptance rate. Moreover, our data indicate that half of the women rejected on that programme actually met the minimum criteria to enter university. The concerns of many staff that the admissions procedures need reviewing in all universities therefore seem fully justified. While the admissions figures to the four programmes in the public university in Ghana were more equally balanced, and a higher proportion of female applicants (albeit a very small number) were accepted onto the B.Sc. Optometry than men, the above suggests that affirmative action could contribute strongly to increasing the gender balance on some programmes (ESC 11).⁵

ESC 10: Applications and Admission to Four Programmes at a Ghanaian Private University in 2007/2008 Disaggregated by Gender

Programme	Number of Applicants			% of Women Applicants	Reason for rejection				% of Applicants Accepted		
	Total	Men	Women		Women		Men		All	Women	Men
					BC	NMC	BC	NMC			
B.Sc. Economics	391	267	124	31.71	52.73	47.27	49.58	50.42	11.51	11.29	11.61
B.Sc. Human Resources Management	1575	567	1,008	64	46.53	53.47	52.27	47.73	14.41	14.29	14.64
B.Sc. Agri-Business Management	102	81	21	20.59	50.00	50.00	52.94	47.06	13.73	4.76	16.05
B.Sc. Accountancy	1050	620	430	40.95	35.47	64.53	33.72	66.28	15.25	12.79	16.96

BC: Percentage of women or men applicants rejected because they did not meet the cut-off point assigned by the university to the particular program applied.

NMC: Percentage of women or men applicants rejected because they did not meet the criteria to enter the university.

⁵ Data on rejection in the Tanzanian universities were not available.

ESC 11: Applications and Admission to Four Programmes at a Ghanaian Public University in 2007/2008 Disaggregated by Gender

Programme	Number of Applicants			% of Women Applicants	Reason for rejection				% of Applicants Accepted		
	Total	Men	Women		Women		Men		All	Women	Men
					BC	NMC	BC	NMC			
B. Commerce	930	707	223	23.98	93.37	6.63	93.40	6.60	19.35	19.28	19.38
B. Management Studies	971	675	296	30.48	97.14	2.86	94.55	5.45	16.37	17.91	15.70
B. Education (Primary)	239	171	63	26.36	22.86	77.14	28.57	71.43	53.14	44.44	56.25
B. Sc. Optometry	99	85	14	14.14	100.0	0.00	85.07	14.93	26.26	57.14	21.18

BC: Percentage of women or men applicants rejected because they did not meet the cut-off point assigned by the university to the particular program applied.

NMC: Percentage of women or men applicants rejected because they did not meet the criteria to enter the university.

Table 3 offers further insight into the proportion of students from low SES backgrounds in Ghana who apply and were selected for entry to university. Based on an analysis of national data on the senior secondary certificate examination in 2006-2007 and admission data for 2007, it reveals that, in Ghana, 25 percent of all the students who completed senior secondary school in 2007 and met the minimum requirement to enter higher education institutions were from a deprived school. However, only 4.63 percent of these students were selected to a HEI compared to 15.39 percent of the students from non deprived schools who met the same criteria.

Table 3: Eligibility and Selection to HEI in Ghana in 2007 by category of school

	Number of students meeting criteria	Number of students selected	% selected	% of all students meeting criteria	% of all selected students	% of all students meeting criteria that were accepted
Students from Deprived Schools	31,365	1,453	4.63	25.05	9.07	1.16
Students from Non Deprived Schools	94,073	14,474	15.39	74.95	90.93	11.59
Total	125,221	16,014	12.79	100	100	12.79

Overall, students from a deprived school who managed to be selected to a HEI in 2007 represent only 1.16 percent of all the Ghanaian students who met the criteria to enter HE that year. This proportion is ten times higher for students from non-deprived schools.

Returning to the interviews, massification and the ever-increasing hunger for higher education were also mentioned as challenges to WP:

In fact the greatest challenge we are facing is expansion. We have turned down a lot of capable students because we haven't got the required facilities to absorb them (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

Those in the private university explicitly mentioned the difficulties of gaining finance for their expansion:

The basic constraint is funding. But it will interest you to know that we took a lot of loans one of the banks to put up those buildings and now it looks as if we are getting highly geared, we can't go beyond what we've got. Now we want to get some permanent premises for our MBA students, but we can't go in for any other loan because if they ask you, "Where is your collateral?" you don't have anything as collateral. So that is the problem: financial (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

There have been many challenges and one of them is of course financial. There are inadequate funds that is in broad terms resources. Resources have been difficult to come by and that has affected very much expansion (Male staff, private university, Tanzania).

Tanzanian policymakers identified increasing demand and the capacity challenge:

Prior to 1996 we had about two universities ... now we have more than thirty universities ... the universities are enrolling almost close to fifty-five thousand students (Male government official, Tanzania).

I will hasten to say that the government was trying its best to implement all aspects of the higher education policy ... but the main part which was receiving most attention has been the financing part of it as well as expansion ... in the sense of providing more places of higher education to the expanding secondary education provision. The demand for places of higher education has been rising due to the ever increasing demand that has also been occupying the government quite a lot (Male government official, Tanzania).

The capacity challenges and under-funded expansion were felt strongly by many students in both countries. Lack of, or poor quality, facilities, lack of infrastructure and overcrowding were widely reported.

Table 4: Number of students who mentioned under-resourcing

	Mature N=38	Non mature N=153	Female N=103	Male N=97	Deprived N=53	Non deprived N=145	Ghana N=100	Tanzania N=100
Lackof/poor facilities	7	38	18	27	17	28	11	34
Lack of support	7	25	15	17	14	18	17	15
Overcrowding	3	17	9	11	7	13	14	6

Sometimes because our class is very large and some teachers are low speakers so during that time we get difficult to hear them (Female student, private university,

Tanzania).

Yes, this place, everything is about queue, queue. So if you don't go early, you will be the last person to enter. For our lecture halls, if you don't go early, you will stand outside and peep through before you can hear or listen to something. So it always makes me sad if I don't go for lectures early (Female student, public university, Ghana).

Sometimes I would say sometimes it's a little bit, tough ... for instance we have more than two hundred and seventy five students. And if you go to campaign law lecture, for example, we are more, we are bachelor of commerce, bachelor of management studies and we have other students from education faculty joining us. So sometimes we have more than eight hundred students in the class (Male student, private university, Ghana).

In teaching hall, in lecture rooms there are some of the courses which we are taking, we are so many students... like seven hundred up to, up to one thousand and five hundred students in one lecture room. So somehow if you're late to come it means you will be studying standing or sitting on the floor where there are no chairs...It has, it has effect since you can never study while you're standing for maybe since one period it takes one hour. So when you are standing for one hour you will never recall, you will never grasp all these ah the lecture what has been taught (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

Overcrowding has been documented by the World Bank:

The ratio of academic staff to students has fallen significantly, producing overcrowded classrooms and unrelenting workloads for teaching staff (World Bank, 2009a: xxvii).

It is crucial that WP is not achieved by adding more students to systems that are already overloaded and poorly-resourced. Quality and equality need to be intersected.

7. Private Higher Education

In line with recommendations by the World Bank (2009a), there was universal belief among staff and policymakers that private higher education (PHE) could play a part in WP. However, concerns were expressed about quality and standards, lack of, or poor, facilities and staffing provision, and the part that PHE could play in reinforcing socio-economic privilege.

I think we should encourage the private universities to continue, so that those who do not have access to the public universities can go there. However, I must sound a word of caution. We don't want to have a repeat of what happened in the United States. If you open up private universities and you shirk your responsibilities towards the public universities, you'll create the problem that we are all trying to solve. That is, we create a privileged class in this country. Those who can afford will go to university and those who can't afford will still not have access to these private universities because the public universities will either be so disenchanted or so neglected that it may not be useful going to the public universities. Meanwhile to go to the private schools will be very expensive. So where do the deprived ones go to? So, my position is that, even though the establishment of private universities, it should not wash its hands of the

public universities (Male staff, public university, Ghana).

First of all, in terms of access I think they are doing a good job. Because if they were not there these kids wouldn't have the opportunity to get to higher education, I think they are doing a good job in terms of widening participation in higher education. Maybe, performance, that is the big question, and in terms of their competence... (Female staff, public university, Tanzania).

Some staff in the private sector suggested that the quality of facilities was higher than in the public universities:

Well the key thing is more quality; it's the quality and facilities. Quality, comfort and facilities, yes. Because even now if you visit some, of course not all, private universities... and some public, you compare certain areas, you can see that we tend to focus more on facilities than they do – the reason is simple: the public universities have to depend on money, funding from Government. Government brings money whenever it is able to find some money. We planned a lot ... once we find money we do it. We have a science laboratory ... If you go there and you go to some of the public laboratories you'll clearly see the difference. So, if we continue at this rate then I can see a very key competition for the public universities (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

When there is a scarcity of highly qualified human resources, the threat of poaching is always present. Some staff working in the public university in both countries suggested that expansion of PHE is a risk to the public university in terms of competition for students and staff.

We know most of these private universities - their access to staff is the University of Dar es Salaam. Go and read their prospectus, most of the staff within the university are also mentioned there as part timers ... These private universities, most of them started with business studies ... when I hear about a new university coming in town, I am scared, because I know my staff are now to quit (Female staff, public university, Tanzania).

The above observations are cause for concern as they raise issues about split focussing for staff and the threat of staff absenteeism or de-prioritising public sector responsibilities. Hence, the development of PHE could lead to further deterioration of quality in the public sector.

Although some students expressed their appreciation of private universities, citing their religious orientation, the smaller size and, for some women, the greater sense of safety on a smaller and less isolated campus, others saw it as second choice. Ten female and seven male students from private universities (out of a total of 82 interviewed) stated that it was their second choice. Discourses of loss were noticeable in both countries *e.g.* loss of opportunity to enter higher status public universities and loss of status where PHE is seen as second choice. Students were conscious that they were working within limits, and that they had had to buy an education (Kenway *et al*, 1993), as they were not entitled to state funded provision. This caused ontological issues of spoiled identity, and material difficulties in meeting the fees in a commercially based contractual relationship with their universities.

Second class citizenship was exemplified by different indicators in the two countries *e.g.* students in Tanzania talked about lack of computers, while students in Ghana talked about over-crowded classrooms (these issues were also raised in the public universities). There were numerous complaints in both countries about quality and standards in the private university - particularly in relation to lecturers, lack of facilities, support, accommodation and services. There was little sense of student entitlement to quality in pedagogical and academic practices.

It would be erroneous to suggest that all the quality problems related to private universities. There were numerous accounts of poor services, pedagogy and facilities in the public sector too. In both sectors, the quotidian micro-level experiences of students and staff provide some indication of the massive macro-level changes that are required to assure and enhance quality and standards and promote good governance in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa.

8. The Millennium Development Goals

The project interrogated staff and policymakers' understandings of an important aspect of the international policy architecture – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It could be argued, using the discourse of the knowledge society, that higher education has the potential to play a pivotal role in the achievement of all eight MDGs, by contributing professional knowledge and research expertise to areas such as clean water, maternal health and child mortality. However, many of the staff in both countries had difficulties making explicit links between the MDGs and HE. Many did not understand the question. Those who were able to discuss the topic tended to focus on MDG 2 (See Appendix 2) - universal primary education. They believed that increased primary enrolments would eventually result in an increased demand for HE.

Well, we must be thinking forward for the next 10, 15, or 20 years. We have to think strategically as a country ...we are creating a lot of avenues for pupils to get into primary education ... you should also be thinking about creating facilities for secondary, senior high school and even the university ... I think the government should think about this holistic development. While we are developing the base, we should also think about developing the top so that there will be no 'humpty dumpty-ness' in education here (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

The need for integrated planning was widely expressed in both countries:

I think it would be good if the government should spread over the whole educational continuum rather than focusing on one sector at a time. If the resources are spread ...then there would be a smooth transition or movement of students from one level to another. But right now that a lot of emphases are being based on the basic, there will be a time when the tertiary will face problems (Male staff, public university, Ghana).

The issue of HE in relation to MDG 3 - gender equality and women's empowerment - was mentioned, for instance the role that women in HE can play to promote girls' education.

For instance, there are lots of girls in primary school so we expect that there'll be lots more girls from secondary up to the higher education level, that is the university level. So this might be one of the reasons for why the government is hammering on taking the

girl child to school and giving higher access, at every level of the educational ladder (Male staff, public university, Ghana).

By the number getting increased, even other women find their own way, and through other means also to come to the university. So if we really do kind of assessment you will find okay the programmes did not only benefited the few who came here but then others who saw okay that is a possibility to pursue their higher education (Male staff, public university, Tanzania).

Some staff believed that HE had a part to play in relation to MDG 1 - poverty alleviation via knowledge production:

The Millennium Goals are supposed to be kind of indicators of development. So higher education has a role to play in bringing about those objectives of those goals ... Poverty is not just a question of money, it is the poverty of thinking and higher education is supposed to really help people to think much more dynamically ... The more people are exposed and are helped to develop their cognitive sort of abilities.. the better they are able to see how they can overcome the problems of poverty (Male staff, public university, Tanzania)

Policymakers in both countries, who were closer to policy discourses than many academic staff, seemed to be much more *aufait* with the MDGs, raising questions about dissemination and ownership. The development of human capital was a central concern of policymakers:

Education is essential because you need to have well qualified people, highly qualified people to take the right decisions and then we are going to eradicate poverty (Female government official, Tanzania)

The knowledge society was also conceptualised in terms of educated people being more receptive to ideas for poverty alleviation:

Higher education. Well, I think the relationship is just like a hand in glove, because education is very basic in terms of tackling problems regarding poverty. Since independence we are kind of singing about three problems which are ignorance, diseases and poverty. But ignorance, you could say education is central to tackling the other two problems. Education is kind of a key leading to solving problems affecting human kind. Because, as I hinted earlier, most of our people live in rural areas.. How do you improve their agriculture? You cannot talk to them about new seeds or crop husbandry, or new methods of keeping their livestock, ...co-operative unions, the importance of preventing post harvest losses and the like if these people are not educated. If they are better educated they will be more receptive to the ways of improving their lives as advocated by the government and non-governmental institutions. So, the Millennium Development Goals set up by UNESCO and other fora can be met when you have a well educated population which will be more receptive to the ways which are being advocated for improving their lives (Male government official, Tanzania).

Education was also linked to enhanced productivity:

We have here the strategy for poverty alleviation the so called Mkukuta. We have it in the, the development policy 2025, I think it is also expanding to the Millennium

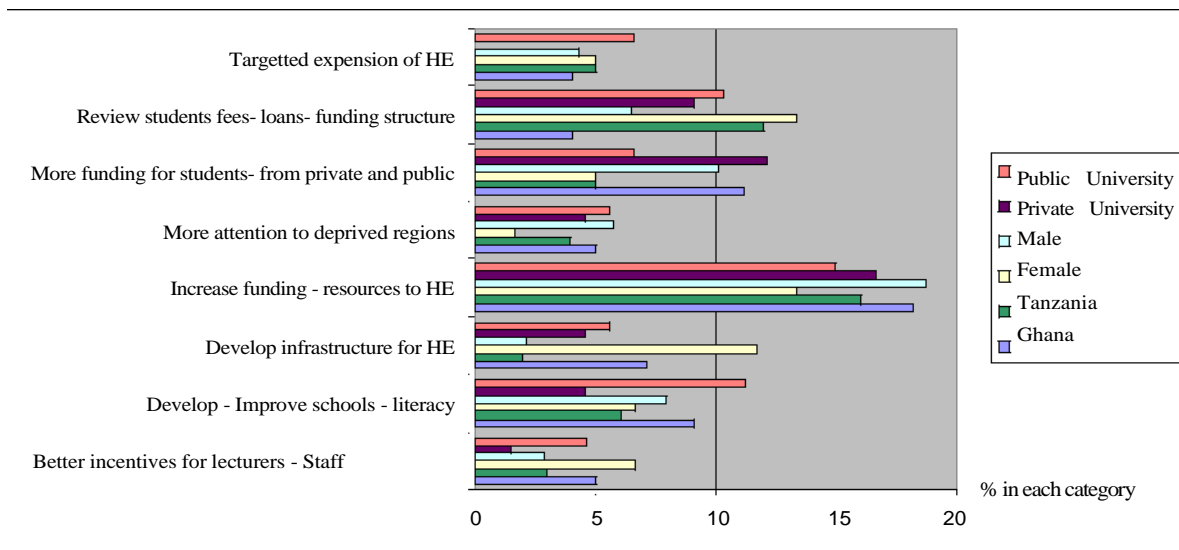
Development Goals, ...Poverty alleviation in general that is what we have to do. We have to restructure our education system in such a way that poverty... is alleviated... the more people become educated the higher the production, the productivity factor goes up and therefore alleviation of poverty (Male government official, Tanzania).

The MDGs need highly skilled professionals to implement them effectively (World Bank, 2009a: 1). While policymakers often had views on the MDGs in both countries, these ideas had not always reached the case study universities, raising important questions about how academic staff positioned their work and that of their institutions in relation to the knowledge society and to the long-term goal of poverty alleviation.

9. Policy Recommendations from Staff and Policymakers

While many staff did not engage with macro-level policy priorities such as the MDGs, they had clear ideas of how higher education should be developed and improved. Male staff in both countries prioritised an increase in funding to HE as the major recommendation, whereas female staff in both countries tended to recommend improvement to student services, facilities or finances. The chart below reveals that the most frequent recommendation to government made by staff in all four universities was increased funding and resources. Staff in the private universities also mentioned increased funding for students more frequently than those in the public universities, and female staff wanted to see better infrastructure and a review of student fees and loans.

Figure 2: Staff Recommendations to Government



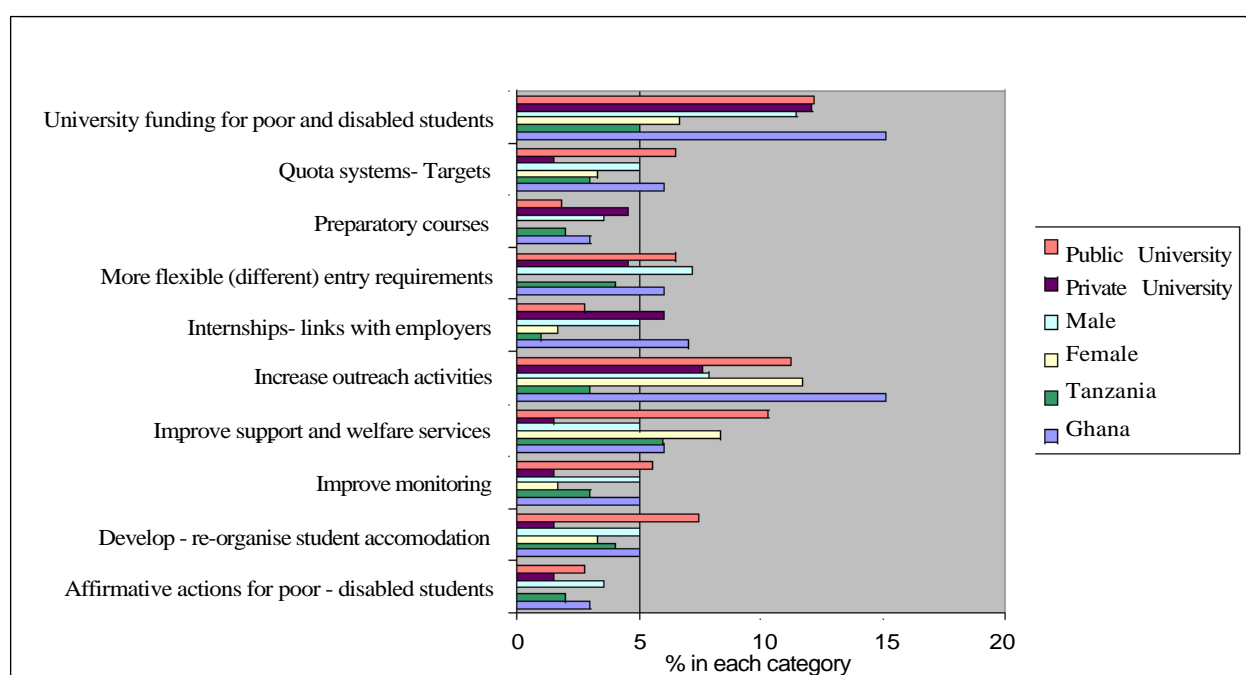
The government needs to also look into financing of higher education from the government budget, how much they allocate and how they arrive at these costs because sometimes an amount of money can sound quite big but it is not necessarily going to be sufficient for the particular need. So just saying you spent 3 billion, 3 billion might sound very big, but if the needs of that sector or that institution is 5 billion you are still short (Female, government official, Tanzania).

The inclusion of people from deprived regions was a concern in Tanzania:

When you look at those districts listed in terms of their economic performance from the highest to the lowest and then you start asking for instance ...is there anybody here from Mara District, rural district? You may find that there are no students ... is there anybody here from Nkasi District? In fact you will find that there is no student in Nkasi District at all not even a single student (Male staff, private university, Tanzania).

Staff also had a range of recommendations to universities which included increased financial support for disabled students and additional outreach activities.

Figure 3: Staff Recommendations to Universities



The main recommendation from policymakers in Ghana was for more funding for women from poor backgrounds to access private and public universities. Our Equity Scorecards for the public university in Ghana suggest that while some women are entering some programmes in significant numbers *e.g.* Management Studies, the numbers of students from low socio-economic backgrounds are still extremely low in most programmes except Education. Students from low SES in Education tended to be men. In Tanzania, the number of low SES student was low on all programmes and in both universities. Women from low SES were below 5 percent on all programmes and all levels except for LLB. Law Level 200 at the public Tanzanian university.

It is clear from the above that the strong emphasis in the informants' recommendations on increased funding and improved services illuminates the crisis in HE in both countries as they struggle to reconcile the increasing demand for places and their commitments to widen participation with underfunding. While additional resourcing of HE in low-income countries might be an unrealistic aspiration, particularly in the midst of a global recession in which the sector is suffering in many high-income countries too, it needs to be addressed by

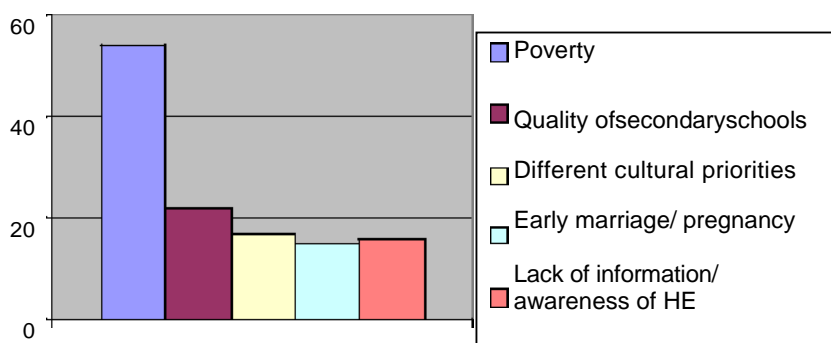
governments if they wish to meet their commitments on improving both quality and equity (Rhoades, 2009; Fenwick, 2009).

B. Structures of Inequality

1. Barriers to HE

The identification of barriers to HE has been a central research concern in many national locations (Archer *et al.*, 2003; David *et al.*, 2009; Eggins, 1999; Kwesiga, 2002; Osborne, 2003). In our study, barriers were conceptualised by academic staff as structural, *e.g.* poverty, and attitudinal, *e.g.* lack of motivation or aspirations. Some staff recognised that aspirations were socially constructed (Appadurai, 2004). In both countries, male staff highlighted socio-cultural practices as a barrier to HE including early marriage and pregnancy, and attitudes towards people with disabilities. Women tended to cite various forms of lack and deficit *e.g.* motivation, information. Both sexes cited poverty and poor quality school education. The public university in Ghana showed greater awareness of socio-cultural barriers *e.g.* lack of role models whereas the private university focused on poverty and fees. Staff in both universities in Tanzania offered similar explanations, that is, poor quality education. Policymakers in both countries discussed different cultural priorities, poverty and poor quality education.

Figure 4: Staff and policy makers' perception of barriers to participation in HE in both countries



Student accounts showed that in both countries barriers started in the early years in family life and primary schools. These included lack of support from fathers and mothers, poverty, rural marginalisation, violence, poor quality, or lack of access to, primary and secondary education. A range of socio-cultural factors including divorce, bereavement, religious backgrounds, family problems and polygamy were reported by all social groups in both countries:

I grew up in... let's say an average financial level home. I grew up in a polygamous home. My daddy had plenty wives and plenty children so like attention wasn't really there but my mum tried her best to give us the little she was able to raise to take us to school (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Extended families often meant that financial resources were diluted, but support was multiplied:

As a child, when I was living with my mum... but after the age of 14 when I got to know my dad and he decided to take responsibility for me and he came for me so I came back to the Accra region. Then I already had half siblings and it was a large home, a very big home. I guess there was support anytime you needed it, siblings like you know, there were always there (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Polygamy, however, could exacerbate poverty:

Like I said, I am now living with the uncle of my stepmother. Yes, I am not staying with my father. And my mother, with my father has I think five children including me, my mother also has six children including me. And aside the children, my father is also paying for a whole lot of people in his family, so I think he has little to give me when I am coming to school (Male student, public university, Ghana).

My father ... is a polygamist ... So it gives a difficulties to my father to allow my brother to go to secondary school... He did not want for pay the school fees... there were 4 in the family ... from different wives... For my mother I have 4 sisters and 3 brothers... my father ... about 25. My father has got 4 wives (Male low SES student, public university, Tanzania).

In countries where medical services are limited and life expectancy is low *i.e.* 59 for men and 60 for women in Ghana, and 51 for men and 53 for women in Tanzania (World Bank, 2009b), bereavement was a common childhood experience leading to severe emotional and material difficulties:

Family life ... was bad, because I lived in a single parent family... My mother and my mother was too old. She was unable to fulfill all the requirements of the family... My father became ill, but my father decided to go in Tabora for further treatment but during that time he died there (Male low SES student, private university, Tanzania).

I grew up at Ruvuma and I started primary school at Mtwara life was very difficult because my family was poor in economic status so even in my education the condition was very bad by then... my family is poor because I don't have mother, my mother and my father had died. I was cared for by my sister and my sister is a standard seven so, we were trying to, to cultivate crops (Female low SES student, private university, Tanzania).

I was at secondary school form two when, my father died. Even before his death, I was paying my own school fees. That was after the 1966 coup. My father never paid my fees until he died in 1974 Eighteen of us and not even a single person has been able to complete school (Male mature student, public university, Ghana).

I was coping until my dad died, everything became crumbled for me... I grew up in a stable family, we were in the midst of a compound house so everything was moving on, if you don't get a thing here you should get it at somewhere. So when my dad died everything, we moved from the place to another place so we found it difficult to move on in life... Now the one to provide for us is not around, and my mum was just a teacher (Female low SES student, public university, Ghana).

Bereavement could exacerbate or create poverty and poverty could lead to child labour:

I was born by parents who are not educated. They were not educated and my mother died at early stage. I lost my mother so I have to go instead with my auntie and I didn't have much motivation to go to school because as early as my infancy I was working in the winter so at the same time. I didn't have much motivation (Female low SES student, public university, Ghana).

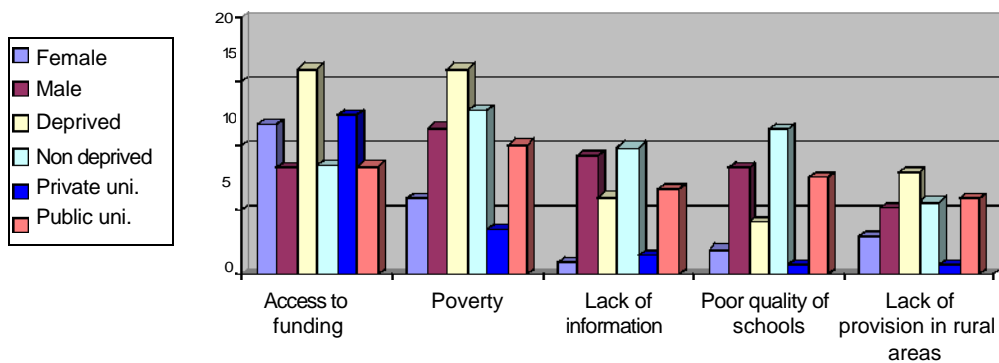
Early years' bereavement was a driver towards higher education for one student:

Whenever I think of my Daddy's death, it was very painful for me and when I look back I just find there is only mother, sometimes she even cries, so I am the one to go there and comfort her 'mum just don't worry, we will live, we will study, we will eat'... so those things made me strong I found my self that I have to reach a higher stage where I could be able to help my mother and not to disappoint her (Female deprived student, public university, Tanzania).

Poverty was the most significant barrier at all educational levels. Many students in our interview sample reported relentless problems with affording fees:

When I worked I saved a lot of money and I said I have to serve a lot of money so that I could not go back to disturb my father to pay my school fees ... I had to assist myself. So from that time I stopped being a beggar so I was not even going to my father saying father can you assist me in this and this because I served something and now I can at least assist my life (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

Figure 5: Students' perceptions of barriers to participation in HE by group in both countries



Gendered power relations played a significant part in determining who should gain access to education and what they should study. A number of gender-related obstacles were cited by students and staff including women's reproductive roles; lack of agency in determining whether or when to marry; poor families believing they were only able to invest resources in boys' education; and widespread gender violence (Dunne and Leach, 2005; Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006).

2. Violence: in Schools

The body was a site of punishment in many primary schools in Ghana and Tanzania. Violence seemed to be endemic in educational life. This ranged from corporal punishment,

bullying and extreme forms of discipline in primary and secondary schools, to widespread sexual harassment in higher education.

Table 5: Number of students who mentioned violence at school by gender and country

	Ghana	Tanzania	Female	Male
Punishment	26	18	17	27
Abuse	3	2	1	4
Bullying	20	5	13	12
Humiliation from teacher	12	1	8	5
Child labour	1	1	0	2
Punishment	26	15	23	18
Abuse	2	4	4	2
Bullying	11	9	7	13
Humiliation from teacher	4	1	1	4
Child labour/Agricultural work	0	6	3	3

Some of the incidents that students narrated about their primary school experiences were shocking and disturbing:

That was an incident with my French teacher... he always wanted me to answer a question which I didn't know but he always forced me and one day I think I annoyed him, I don't know what I really did but I annoyed him very well and he pulled my cheeks, he really raised me up with my cheeks and I didn't really feel very well (Female student, private university, Ghana).

One incident I remember is when I was severely beaten by my class C teacher. ... I did something wrong and she really beat me up ... I got sores, my whole body got sores, so I had to come home (Female student, private university, Ghana).

In addition to this actual violence, there was evidence of symbolic violence (Hearn, 1998). An example was that girls' and women's sexualities seemed to be constantly regulated and problematised. If they mixed with boys and men, they were positioned as promiscuous, if they stayed with their own sex, heteronormativity and homophobia surfaced, with a lesbian identity being seen as a spoiled identity:

When I was growing up, I didn't want to mingle with the opposite sex because it was against the teachings of my parents. So am always almost among the ladies. So this made some of the ladies think that am a lesbian ... That spoiled my name (Female student, public university, Ghana).

The relentless regulation of women's sexuality continued into secondary school:

When I was A-level there is one teacher ... he call in the office and tell me that 'You are a prefect but most of the time you talk with girls, you say that you don't think about the boys or whatever, why do you talk with girls most of the time, you talk about boys?... even yourself you are supposed to...in order to be a living organism you are supposed to reproduce, that means you want to tell me that you don't have a boy friend?' and then I tell him that . . . I can talk with anyone... When the school meeting

came, they call me and asked about that, why [did] you decide to answer the teacher like that? ... then every teacher in the staff they give me one stick so at that time they were fifteen ... That pain me much (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

The gender violence and sexual harassment that were widely reported in higher education appeared to have their roots in early years' education:

My only problem was with my teachers ... the first person was my school teacher, that is the Economics teacher. He tried; I would say sexual harassment, yes. I didn't know. And then, he didn't end there, he tried coming for it again so I had to start doing what a student shouldn't do (Female student, private university, Ghana).

As a girl ... there are students who were looking at us, there were soldiers who were there looking at us and teachers. When you're outside those people who surrounds you looking at you, so it was quite difficult to cope with that environment I am saying that in terms of being approached ... for sexual relationship (Female mature student, public university, Tanzania).

Violence, corporal punishment and its accompanying humiliation also continued into secondary schools:

I remember we went to the headmaster's office, and I was late, the last to enter. And when we entered all the seats had been occupied, and I didn't know there was one seat extra, so I thought that seat was meant for the student so I went and sat on it and it was unfortunately the headmaster's seat. And he nearly got the hell out of me. ... He slapped me first and he, he humiliated me and made me feel like 'who are you? What are you to come and sit on my chair'? I was trying to tell him that it was out of ignorance. And he didn't even bother to understand me. He gave me a slap, pushed me, and I was disgraced before my friends. Ifelt very bad (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Sadistic teachers, who appeared to be unaccountable for their actions, were widely reported in this study:

(The teacher) was very cruel ... he used to beat me ... For example there is a certain day I went to school very late but I explained to him that I was alone at home, my mum was sick so I could not make it and I told him that...it is not my behaviour to come late. I do try myself even to wake up early in the morning so that to come here, but he did not understand he keep on beating me, he keep on insulting me... He was very cruel (Female low SES student, public university, Tanzania).

Punishments were often extreme, dangerous and threatening to physical and mental health:

One day I think some of the students didn't put out their lights during bedtime so I think some of the teachers saw it for afar and he came to the house, brought everybody out, he told us to sleep outside till the next day. So some decided to sleep on rocks... and it was terrible... We were made to sleep outside for 2 weeks - that was our punishment... whatever will make you feel comfortable outside they would allow that... Some allowed the mosquitoes to bite them ... (Female student, private university, Ghana).

The violence, sexual harassment, bullying and embodied discipline often meant that education was perceived as a site of danger for many students. We had numerous remarks about 'feeling bad' in the life history interviews with students. The physical and emotional abuse led to loss of confidence and self-esteem. It also served to reinforce negative learner identities.

3. Violence: at Home

Domestic violence was also reported in the study. This usually involved fathers beating mothers or mothers, fathers and siblings beating the respondents in the life history sample. Violence was sometimes exacerbated by the complexities of extended or second families *e.g.* perceived rivalries between half-siblings and step-parents. Once again the body was the site of discipline and punishments were extreme, and left indelible damage:

I remember there was a day ... after washing my hands I sprinkled the water in my hands on my mother's face. I don't know whatever happened. I was really beaten by my father. That was something... It has been in me all this while. I think that was the time I felt bad (Mature male student, public university, Ghana).

Beatings and bullying were sometimes multiplied in extended families:

As a young child . . . I was staying with my extended family so I had a lot of people showing much care at the same time. They were bullying me.. I don't know how to express it but there is this kind of little disagreement between parents and when one kid of one parent does something wrong the other parent tries to beat him .. And my parents, it's like, were living with their parents and other siblings... And when I did something wrong, it's like when my parents are not around... somebody else will punish you (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Self-blame was evident in so far as violence at school and at home was perceived by some students as an essential educational motivator *i.e.* that they were inherently bad/ lazy and needed galvanising:

In my life of course when I was in primary school, I enjoyed a lot, first of all, when I was in standard one, I was the last students... the last!, the last one in the class, I got zero in both Kiswahili and mathematics... when I came back to my home, just giving those tests to my father, he striked me a lot because at that time...he told me that my mother was the first student in her class, so I decided to struggle and I was the second student because I got 95 percent in Kiswahili and 100 percent in mathematics (Male mature student, public university, Tanzania).

For many students in our sample, education and violence were strongly associated.

4. (Gender) Violence: in Higher Education

Quantitative increases in women's enrolments in higher education only tell a partial story, and gendered power continues to be relayed via quotidian practices. Some staff observed that there appeared to be a *doxa*, or normalisation of sexual harassment:

Sexual harassment is a way of life at this university ... and people don't like to talk about it ... the female students are very vulnerable to lecturers... and the girls think that's a legitimate way to get marks. Boys think the girls have an advantage because they can get marks that way and the men think if the girl comes to me and she's a grown up she's asking for it ...(Academic manager, public university, Ghana).

The Tanzanian public university has a policy context and committed feminists implementing gender mainstreaming, affirmative action and gender sensitisation training. However, this appeared to be undermined by power relations that had naturalised a sexual contract in which some male academics considered it their entitlement to demand sex for grades. There sometimes appeared to be a gender surcharge for women:

Being a girl costs sometimes... There are some things in which people can take advantage of you because you are a girl... There are corrupt staffs... Certain staffs like if you want help they say you have to do this or that or somebody, it is not your fault but he does that so that he can get you ... get sex (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Sexual harassment also seemed to articulate with lack of robustness of quality assurance in assessment procedures so that individual tutors could threaten to fail women students if they refused sex:

My friends who are girls are complaining always like ' the lectures wants to sleep with me I don't love them... they are forcing me, they are just- they scare me like if you don't respond to me I am going to do this to you I don't think if you will be here in the second semester ... I will make you fail' (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

A female member of staff in the Tanzanian private university describes predatory behaviour:

The problem is teachers.... they are not good.... So they are not good, they approach girls ...

Sexual harassment marks out the territory as male, and regulates female agency and visibility. Rumours of sexual exchanges also serve to denigrate women's academic achievements. A female student from the private Ghanaian university constructed the exchange as women's strategic agency:

We do have a lot of females who come to this place with a mind to learn do well, get their grades and go out. And we have those who have come with the mind that they are doing everything to get what they want. ... so if you are the type of person who really wants to compromise positions in terms of having sex with lecturers to get grades, you will get it. The avenue is there, you will get it...if you want to compromise that much I would say it will definitely favour you (Female student, private university, Ghana).

The abusive power relations and sexualisation of student/tutor relationships often meant that female students were reluctant to ask for tutorial support from male lecturers.

There was a widespread belief in favouritism and women's complicity, rather than any analysis of their powerlessness:

Ladies have benefit more than the guys. The gender imbalance works here, whereby the

ladies enjoy more than the guys because you know ladies. You have the perception that lecturers go in for the ladies and the guys are left rejected and whereby a lady's got that looks, that pretty and all that, she might find a lecturer might, I'm not saying it happens, but it can happen. We've had complaints whereby we've had series of complaints whereby people who were not coming for lectures have grades. So the ladies have the upper hand here (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Sometimes we, we marvel you know... Because I remember in Level 100 we wrote certain exams and a particular lady was not in the class but when the results came she had an 'A' and you know some of us said we wished we were ladies, you know, it's like they get special favours (Male student, private university, Ghana).

One of the many negative effects of sexual harassment was that it cast doubt on female entitlement to HE:

Sometime you will see a woman or a lady in a class or maybe in a group discussion ...you wonder how she got admission? But when the paper comes she performs better than you. ...Sometimes some women have been favoured (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Some male students believed that women were disadvantaging male students:

From what I see from the University most of the girls ... some sells their bodies to lecturers, they sell to lecturers to get the marks they sell to lectures for getting I mean questions for the test, or sometimes when we are going to have the test sleep with me then I give the questions. So the women who had supplementary, who are supposed to be discontinued but we are, they are with us now... I have my friend of mine who performed well more than those girls who are with me now who were supposed to be discontinued but they are not there with me.. just because they are men and they can't do anything about it they cannot offer their bodies to the lecturers because they are men (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

The sex for grades exchange is a form of symbolic violence reported in other studies (e.g. Bakari and Leach, 2009). Nwadike's study of Nigeria (2007) codes it as a 'phallic attack', with serious consequences on the victim's learning and health. Omale's (2002) study of Kenya and South Africa identifies sexual harassment as a factor impeding women's participation. Also researching in South Africa, Simelane (2001) confirms frequent incidences of sexual harassment on campus. A theme in the literature is fear - both of the violence itself and of reporting it (Eyre, 2000; Thomas and Kitzinger, 1997). In Zimbabwe, Zindi's study (1998:46-47) discovered that every student surveyed knew lecturers who 'use their influence to exploit female students sexually', and 93 percent of respondents reported that they 'would not report sexual harassment to any authority' fearing further victimisation. Bajpai (1999) notes that the taboo meant that many women refused to participate in her study on sexual harassment in Mumbai. One of the consequences of silence is data on the scale of the problem. Bacchi (1998) believes that institutions are inactive because they separate the institution from the problem of sexual harassment. A woman from the public university in Tanzania discussed this powerlessness:

It is personal stuff and so most of them do not talk but I guess there is a problem there?... There is nobody to be told. {The women staff} ...They are not close to us students ...people may fear going to them ...These female lecturers ...should show us

the way and listen to our problems because at least we will know that there are people whom we can turn to when we have problems... Otherwise we are alone here; we do not have parents here (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Gender violence is undermining policy interventions for gender equity. Sexual harassment pressures women students to reflexively minimise their visibility and academic performance, and constructs negative female learner identities. The *doxa* of sexualised pedagogical relations means that, if women fail, this is evidence of their lack of academic abilities and preparedness for HE. If they achieve, this is attributed to a form of prostitution or women's 'favoured' position in gendered academic markets.

5. Enablers to Higher Education

Enablers were seen by staff as originating in the HEIs, in communities and families, and in the state. Staff and students in both countries cited a range of structural, social and individual explanations. Enablers included:

- ✚ Mothers at primary stage
- ✚ Fathers' aspirations
- ✚ Parents' social capital
- ✚ Siblings' prior educational experiences
- ✚ Teacher encouragement
- ✚ Peer group aspirations
- ✚ Imagined futures

In terms of access to HE, some specific enablers included:

- ✚ Parental education and occupation
- ✚ Quality of schools/ teachers
- ✚ Proximity/ knowledge of universities
- ✚ Professional aspirations
- ✚ Desire to escape poverty/ wanting to 'become a somebody'
- ✚ Experience of HE in extended family.

Early years educational experiences appeared to influence academic identities and feelings about education. Positive experiences of primary education were widely reported in our study - less so in secondary education. For many students, primary school days were associated with fun, the joy of learning and friendship. Access to school was often a struggle, but once entered, the transition opened up the life of the mind:

Yes I really, really, really enjoyed primary school. Especially when I started becoming intelligent (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Academic achievement was often equated with pleasure and positive primary school experiences:

Yes, my primary school and my middle school. The primary school I was very brilliant. Yes and even in my middle school I was very brilliant (Female student, public university, Ghana).

The social relations of primary school were often what students remembered and enjoyed the most:

I don't really know much but I don't really remember. But I remember I used to like friends a lot, I used to hang out with my friends a lot (Female student, private university, Ghana).

My friends and sometimes the teachers (made me enjoy primary school). The teachers were very lively, some of them anyway (Female student, private university, Ghana).

School was very enjoyable as compared to the house, because in school you've got somebody to talk to, friends, your peers, as compared to the house. And when it comes to break time, oh we are happy, very, very happy. So it's good to eat together and you come back to classroom together (Female student, public university, Ghana).

For some, the state acted as an enabler at the primary school e.g. through feeding programmes and free learning materials:

That time we were given lunch around 12 o'clock lunch would be given and we are always interested in having that bread to eat, you share with friends, then after that we go for the 2nd shift, we running morning shift, afternoon shift....It was a happy one they gave us exercise books free, pencils. I was interested in writing; I was always writing and writing, learning how to write (Female student, public university, Ghana).

I think we can say that things were available like at school we used to drink porridge and things like that (laugh) teachers were available and books were available even exercise books were given free. But now if I go there I can see the condition actually it is not good, you can find that even that porridge, perhaps now because I heard that there was that program of school feeding but books are problem, teachers still are problem and even if they are, they have teachers but they are not committed and they are immoral I think they don't feel that they are teachers but they are just there to wait for their salaries (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

The power of peers and community was an important aspect of primary school experiences, which helped keep children in education:

At primary school, most of my friends liked me, and in our days we would fight freely and nobody cared, I was very strong, so my peers liked me very much, so if I didn't come to school they would come and find out why I didn't come. So I felt very happy to be among them (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Happy experiences of primary school encouraged some students to want to go higher in their studies:

My life at primary school, actually I can say that it was good...because when am studying at primary school I found even easy in studying [and] no difficulties and where I started to think that due to this I will study until reaching at higher level education (Female deprived student, private university, Tanzania).

We found that mothers often played a vital support role at primary stage:

Sometimes... going to school, I feel very lazy to go to school because looking at the distance where I was and the school, I felt very lazy so sometimes I pretend am sick. I don't want to go at all. But my mum will always encourage us that if we want to become somebody in future, we need to go to school (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Their support often took the form of emotional encouragement or nurturing, via food:

As I already said they (my parents) are illiterate so they don't know the importance of education. So when I failed they didn't mind, they thought I should learn a trade or do something, but I said no, I have to continue my education. My father didn't want me to do a re-sit, but I said no I have to do so. My mother was very helpful, most of the times feeding me at school, she always do well (Mature male student, public university, Ghana).

When parents lacked capital, they were often able to provide other forms of enabling support, particularly in the affective domain. However, when family support was absent, some young people were determined to escape poverty via the social mobility that education could offer and they showed considerable strength, resourcefulness and perseverance in enabling themselves to push through seemingly impossible social and material barriers.

C. Under-Represented Groups

It has already been noted above in Section A3 on Policy Successes that, while the gender gap may be closing on some programmes, numbers of mature students and low SES students remain very low. There is an almost complete absence of mature women from disadvantaged backgrounds on the programmes studied. It has also been noted that completion rates in the three universities for which data were available (presented in Section A4 on Monitoring and Accountability) show considerable variation between programmes, and also between groups. However, completion rates for mature students were significantly and consistently lower than for the cohort as a whole, while those for low SES students were much closer to, and sometimes above, those of the cohort as a whole, with the exception of B. Management Studies. Women's completion rates fluctuated somewhat, with slightly fewer completing on some programmes than the overall cohort and more on others.

In the following sections, we will examine interview and statistical data on access and achievement of students in our three selected under-represented groups (students from low socio-economic backgrounds, women and mature students). We will also discuss the participation of disabled students in higher education, based on interview data.

1. Students from Low SES Backgrounds

In this study, when asked who they believed were the most under-represented groups in their universities, male staff and policymakers in Ghana cited poor students. Students with disabilities were the main group cited by male and female staff in Tanzania and by female staff in Ghana. As we have mentioned before, these views were not based on any systematic collection of statistical data. Our Equity Scorecards confirm that, of the three groups (women, low SES and mature), low SES students were the least represented in both universities in Ghana and in the private university in Tanzania (mature students were the least represented in the Tanzanian public university).

Numbers of students from low SES backgrounds were low on all programmes. In the public university in Ghana, the highest proportion for both men and women, 11.11 and 7.14 percent respectively, was on the B. Education (Primary) at levels 100 (ESC 12) and 400 (not shown). In Tanzania, the proportions were higher: on the B. Science with Education 19.40 percent of males and 15.38 percent of women from this group at level 100 were from a low SES (ESC 13). This difference between countries may be due to a number of factors: the higher poverty rate in Tanzania, the different indicators used in the study to measure low SES (deprived and very deprived schools in Ghana, schools in deprived regions in Tanzania), or to the wider availability of loans in Tanzania. Typically, low SES students, both male and female, constituted a maximum of 10-12 percent on any programme at any level.

ESC 12: Access amongst Women, Students from Low SES and Mature Students on 4 Programmes at Level 100 of a Ghanaian Public University in 2007/2008

Programme	Male Students		Female Students		Students from Low SES			Mature Students		
	% Age 30 or over	% Low SES	% Age 30 or over	% Low SES	% Male	% Women	% Age 30 or over	% Male	% Women	% Low SES
B. Commerce	12.41	2.92	13.95	2.33	80.00	20.00	20.00	73.91	26.09	4.35
B. Management Studies	2.83	1.89	18.87	1.89	66.67	33.33	0.00	23.08	76.92	0.00
B. Education (Primary)	76.77	11.11	85.71	7.14	84.62	15.38	69.23	76.00	24.00	9.00
B. Sc. Optometry	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	--	--	--	--	--	--

ESC 13: Access amongst Women, Students from Low SES and Mature Students on 4 Programmes at Level 100 of a Tanzanian Public University in 2007/2008

Programme	Male Students		Female Students		Students from Low SES			Mature Students		
	% Age 30 or over	Low SES	% Age 30 or over	Low SES	% Male	% Women	% Age 30 or over	% Male	% Women	% Low SES
B. Commerce	2.17	8.70	0.49	5.37	76.60	23.40	0.00	90.00	10.00	0.00
LLB.Law	1.45	15.94	3.70	11.11	78.57	21.43	7.14	50.00	50.00	50.00
B.Sc. Engineering	0.66	9.30	1.89	7.55	77.78	22.22	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00
B. Science with Education	8.96	19.40	0.00	15.38	86.67	13.13	11.11	100	0.00	27.78

Low SES students in all the programmes in the Tanzanian private university also tended to be male, except on the B. Business Administration where 40 percent were female.

ESC 14: Access amongst Women, Students from Low SES and Mature Students on 4 Programmes at Level 100 of a Tanzanian Private University in 2007/2008

Programme	Male Students		Female Students		Students from Low SES			Mature Students		
	% Age 30 or over	% Low SES	% Age 30 or over	% Low SES	% Male	% Women	% Age 30 or over	% Male	% Women	% Low SES
LLB. Law	10.00	6.00	8.45	2.82	75.00	25.00	25.00	62.50	37.50	12.50
B. ^{Business} Administration	26.47	8.82	19.23	7.69	60.00	40.00	0.00	64.29	35.71	0.00
MD. Medicine	14.10	5.13	10.71	3.57	80.00	20.00	20.00	78.57	21.43	7.14
B. Ed. Maths	55.08	12.83	35.71	3.57	96.00	4.00	48.00	91.15	8.85	10.62

The low numbers of students from low SES backgrounds were attributed to a range of factors by academic staff including poor quality schools that did not prepare students for higher studies:

Andfor those in disadvantaged schools we have seen that sometimes the school that you attend gives you some leverage when it comes to examinations. There are people in very disadvantaged schools who have been able to get the required aggregate to enter the university, but because of intense competition they are not able to make it (Male staff, public university, Ghana).

An obvious explanation for the lack of students in this group was their inability to pay fees, especially in the private universities:

Yes, we have people we are not represented here. Our fee levels are comparatively high. And so there are very good ones down that who could not yet access to the public universities who could have come here but they can't make it because our fees are really high (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

Poverty interrupted education:

Actually some of us, our parent are not well to do, so some of us well entered the university not even through the secondary school, start from eh primary school that is a elementary school. When we finishedform four, but our father they were not able to even send us to secondary school so I have to struggle ourselves. Actually, when I completed my elementary school that was 1983 (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Poverty was conceptualised by students in terms of social and economic deprivation. It was seen as either impeding or delaying access to HE. Child labour was mentioned in both countries, while rural poverty was particularly discussed by students in Tanzania.

Rural and regional poverty were recurrent themes in this study. Sometimes regional marginalisation was exacerbated by religious differences:

Zungo is an under resourced, deprived community that is mostly populated by, I would say 80-90 percent Muslims. It is a bilingual, multilingual community but most of them are Muslims who want to maintain their cultural way of living and their social life as well. So you find most of them, they are not against development but because they want to maintain their way of living so to say, Islamic way of living, where you find Muslims being compressed or put in one place, that's what brings about the under development in their communities (Male government official, Ghana).

The Islamic community of Zanzibar was mentioned in Tanzania:

We don't have as many Zanzibaris as we would wish to make it a fully a national university... Either because we are a Christian institution maybe it scares some of them away thinking that they will not be welcome, we do not know (Male staff, private university, Tanzania).

Poverty seemed to be the dominant structure of inequality in our study that worked against access to higher education. However, once students from low socio-economic backgrounds enter university, they often do better than average, and better than mature students. This can be seen by examining the degree classifications for the 2007/8 cohort in each university.

In the public university in Ghana (ESC 15), low SES students achieved more first class degrees than the cohort as a whole on the three programmes where they were present. On B. Commerce, 58.34 percent of low SES students achieved either a first or second class degree compared to 52.29 for the whole cohort of students and 36.59 for the mature students. On B. Education (primary), 82.70 percent of low SES students achieved a first or second class degree compared to 80.75 percent for the whole cohort and 77.78 percent for mature students.

ESC 15: Student Achievement on 4 Programmes, by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status at a Ghanaian Public University in 2007/2008

Programme	Total		Men			Women			Low SES Students			Mature Students		
B. Commerce	6.47	45.82	70.62	7.63	49.24	29.38	3.67	37.61	3.23	16.67	41.67	22.10	2.44	34.15
B. Management Studies	2.80	48.76	54.35	4.57	53.14	45.65	0.68	43.54	1.24	25.00	0.00	17.70	0.00	19.30
B. Education (Primary)	5.59	75.16	56.52	6.59	70.33	43.48	4.29	81.43	10.56	11.76	70.94	72.67	6.84	70.94
B. Sc. Optometry	0.00	68.75	75.00	0.00	66.67	25.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	-	-	0.00	-	-

In the private university (ESC 16), numbers of low SES students were very small, but all of them achieved 2nd class degrees on the three programmes where they were present.

ESC 16: Student Achievement on 4 Programmes, by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status at a Ghanaian Private University in 2007/2008

Programme	Total		Men			Women			Low SES Students			Mature Students		
B.Sc. Economics	0.00	79.17	83.33	0.00	80.00	16.67	0.00	75.00	4.17	0.00	100.0	0.00	--	--
B.Sc. Human Resources Management	0.00	67.84	29.52	0.00	67.16	70.48	0.00	68.12	0.88	0.00	100.0	4.41	0.00	50.0
B.Sc. Agri-Business Management	0.00	81.82	72.73	0.00	75.00	27.27	0.00	100.0	0.00	--	--	0.00	--	--
B.Sc. Accountancy	0.00	85.09	57.76	0.00	83.87	42.24	0.00	86.76	0.62	0.00	100.0	3.11	0.00	80.0

In Tanzania, low SES students were more numerous than in the Ghanaian universities, and a higher proportion gained 2nd class degrees than the cohort as a whole on three programmes. On the B.Science with Education and the B.Ed. Maths, all gained 2nd class degrees, and in the B.Sc. Engineering, five percent gained first class degrees and those with 2nd class degrees were close to the figure for the whole cohort (ESCs 17 and 18).

ESC 17: Student Achievement on 4 Programmes, by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status at a Tanzanian Public University in 2007/2008

Programme	Total		Men			Women			Low SES Students			Mature Students		
B. Commerce	0.75	90.43	70.36	0.80	89.33	29.64	0.63	93.04	6.57	0.00	88.57	2.06	0.00	81.82
LLB. Law	0.00	77.97	58.90	0.00	84.17	41.10	0.00	69.07	8.05	0.00	84.21	5.08	0.00	66.67
B.Sc. Engineering	5.39	82.75	74.66	5.78	81.59	25.34	4.26	86.17	10.78	5.00	82.50	4.31	0.00	81.25
B. Science with Education	0.00	93.51	61.04	0.00	91.49	38.96	0.00	96.67	10.39	0.00	100	5.19	0.00	100

In the private university, a slightly higher proportion on the B. Business Administration and a slightly lower proportion on the LLB. gained 2nd class degrees (the MD. is not included as it is a 5 year course of study).

ESC 18: Student Achievement on 4 Programmes, by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status at a Tanzanian Private University in 2007/2008

Programme	Total		Men			Women			Low SES Students			Mature Students		
LLB. Law	0.00	34.83	55.14	0.00	31.10	44.85	0.00	39.41	7.65	0.00	34.48	12.40	0.00	44.68
B.Business Administration	13.33	74.00	71.33	12.15	72.90	28.67	16.28	76.74	6.00	11.11	77.78	25.33	13.16	60.53
B. Ed. Maths	0.00	100	70.18	0.00	100	29.82	0.00	100	12.28	0.00	100	77.19	0.00	100

In conclusion, an examination of the achievement records for low SES students in terms of the proportion who gained 1st and 2nd class degrees reveals that, for the 15 programmes for which figures were gathered, this group performed as well, or nearly as well, as the cohort as a whole in most programmes, although numbers were very low.

2. Women

While comments on the gendered culture of HE and socio-economic factors spanned both countries, sexes and universities, a central issue was getting more women into science. This is an international movement (Bebbington, 2002), and now appears to be a central indicator for gender equity in low-income countries.

I think one of the, one of the issues is related to the enrolment in the sciences particularly mathematics and science subjects that if you compare with enrolment in other fields you find that enrolment is quite low and particularly for females. Female students you know the number is even much, much lower than male students. That is one of the issues that is currently been looked into (Female staff, public university, Tanzania).

Gender equity is about more than quantitative change, or entry into STEM disciplines. Gender is formed and reformed in the spatial and temporal context of higher education. Our data revealed a range of ways in which gendered power continues to be relayed via quotidian practices. Our interview data with students and staff revealed a considerable range of gender sensitivity. For example, gender was seen as a bigger issue in public than private HE. The issue of fear of feminisation appeared in the data from the private university, *i.e.* women outnumbering men. Gender was not seen as an issue by men in Ghana and by some men in Tanzania. As we mentioned in section B4 on Violence in HE, male staff in the public university in Ghana were less aware of sexual harassment as an issue than their female counterparts and both male and female staff in the public university in Tanzania. Staff in both countries commented on socio-cultural issues *e.g.* the reluctance to educate women, and how women's reproductive roles impede participation in HE. Some commented on affirmative action, women's increased participation and performance once entered into HE, while others commented on gendered rates of attrition. Private HE was also seen to enable WP for women. Policymakers in Ghana believed that the gendered culture of HE and the need to get

more women into science were central issues. While some policymakers in Tanzania talked about the gendered culture of HE, the reluctance to educate women, how women's reproductive roles impede participation in HE and the need to ensure secondary education for girls, the most important issue for them was to get more women into science.

Students in Tanzania discussed the issue of women entering non-traditional subjects, maybe because they knew of the affirmative action programme on the BSc in Engineering. This is consistent with the empirical evidence that we gathered for that programme. However, as illustrated in ESC 1 in Section A2 on affirmative action, when gender is intersected with other structures of inequalities such as age or socio-economic status the proportion of women is extremely low.

The following two Scorecards confirm this pattern. ESC 19 indicates the level of under-representation of women, and the near-absence of women from disadvantaged backgrounds, on the B.Ed. Maths in one university.

ESC 19: Access to B. Ed. Maths according to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status at a Private University in Tanzania by Levels in 2007/2008

B.Ed. Maths	% of Students on the Programme										
	Men	Women	Low SES			Age 30 or over			Mature and Low SES		
			Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Level 100	86.98	13.02	11.63	11.16	0.47	52.56	47.91	4.65	5.58	5.58	0.00
Level 200	82.14	17.86	10.71	10.71	0.71	63.57	53.57	10.00	7.86	7.14	0.71
Level 300	70.18	29.82	12.28	12.28	0.00	77.19	57.89	19.30	10.53	10.53	0.00

ESC 20 reveals that, while there were more women on the MD. Medicine, there were very few mature women and no mature women from low SES backgrounds at all.

ESC 20: Access to MD. Medicine according to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status at a Private University in Tanzania by Levels in 2007/2008

MD. Medicine	% of Students on the Programme										
			Low SES			Age 30 or over			Mature and Low SES		
Level 100	73.58	26.42	4.72	3.77	0.94	13.21	10.38	2.83	0.94	0.94	0.00
Level 200	59.80	40.20	5.88	3.92	1.96	5.88	4.90	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.00
Level 300	59.15	40.85	7.04	5.63	1.41	15.49	15.49	0.00	5.63	5.63	0.00
Level 400	69.23	30.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	20.51	17.95	2.56	0.00	0.00	0.00
Level 500	45.83	54.17	8.33	4.17	4.17	16.67	8.33	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00

If we examine women's achievement in terms of 1st and 2nd class degrees across the programmes in both countries for 2007/8 (ESCs 15-18 in the previous section), we observe that slightly more women than men gained 2nd class degrees on ten of the 15 programmes, including the B.Sc. Optometry and B.Sc. Accountancy, both traditional male subjects. Women scored the same (100 percent) as men on the B.Ed. Maths, and only less well than

men on four programmes. However, more men than women earned 1st class degrees in the public university in Ghana. In Tanzania, a slightly higher proportion of men gained 1st class

degrees except on the B. Business Administration in the private university, where a higher proportion of women did.

The above Scorecards confirm that women's achievement was broadly on a par with that of men, if not better. However, as mentioned earlier (Section B4), there was a tendency among male and female students in public and private universities in Ghana to see gender difference in terms of preferential treatment for women (17 males and 9 females out of 100 interviewed) This related to affirmative action programmes and to the perception that women could use their sexuality to obtain higher grades from male tutors. In Ghana in particular, many students appeared not to understand the questions on gender, or, having said that there were no problems, then went on to describe sexual harassment, constraints for women, the pressure to have a boyfriend *etc.* It is unfortunate that women's achievements were considered as ill-deserved by some.

Gender differences were frequently understood in both countries by women and men in terms of the regulation of women *e.g.* the pressure to have boyfriends, enter early marriage and motherhood, the reluctance to educate girls, and constraints on their personal freedom. Women were often defined by what they were not permitted to do.

It seemed that some female students in higher education experienced a pincer movement of sexual harassment from tutors and also from male peers, with a strong sense of male entitlement to women's sexual and domestic services. The pressure to have a boyfriend (who later appropriated female domestic labour) was widely reported in both countries:

The boys worry you a lot....they bother you. Where are you? Where would I see you? And sometimes when you are not that strong too and they get you and they just use you and throw you away, or they will make you a housewife. You have to cook for them, do this... I don't think that one too is good, yes because when I came at first I was in a relationship but I found out I wasn't focusing on my education so I decided to stop it and then concentrate.... They call you and ask your name and from then they would call you the next day let's go for a walk and you go for the walk. And then they will say when will I see you again... They would come and knock on your door. Sometimes you don't even feel like talking but because you just want to be nice, you don't want to be rude so you'd just talk and then they'd just press on. If you accept it too you have to cook it's annoying. You see it's like you always have to be with them and stuff. ...The university can't do anything about this because it's their right, it's like they think they can do anything but I think it's not good (Female student, public university, Ghana).

Heteronormativity means that if women don't want boyfriends, they rapidly gain pariah status:

It's like you are an outcast. Now it's even normal to have a boyfriend. It wasn't like that. It's a lot of pressure on girls to have boyfriends even if they don't want to. Yes it has affected women a lot (Female student, public university, Ghana).

There was a strong sense from many of the female students that the pressure to have a boyfriend disturbed and disrupted their studies:

When you are in your room people would come knocking, especially the guys, they will come there, disturbing you and the whole lot. Yeah. So for those days I remember them very well (Female student, public university, Ghana).

That is one thing that keeps people down in the studies; because a lot of us face problems in love affairs.. .A lot us spent a lot of time in those issues...it is very difficult for girls because when you think through you will see that boys do not seem to care at all.. .For me for the time being I have decided to surrender and concentrate on my studies (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

The relentless pressure seems to be underpinned by male superiority and also of misogyny:

But in reality the problems which girls face are that they are being despised by the boys. Boys see themselves on top of the world; they are the ones who know better than the girls. So the girls do face inferiority complex. There is harassment from the boys.... the tendencies of boys knowing that they are the ones who are better compared to the girls... the way they talk to us and how they take our understanding (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Our data suggest that female students in both countries carry the additional burden of sexism throughout their educational life course. However, education, particularly graduate status, was perceived as having the potential to provide financial, social and professional independence for women.

3. Mature Students

The Equity Scorecards reveal a diverse picture in terms of representation of mature students (see ESCs 3-6 in Section A3 on Policy Successes). A few programmes, most notably the B. Education (Primary) at the public university in Ghana, attracted high numbers of mature students (79 percent at Level 100 in 2007/8). The next highest figures were for the B.Ed. Maths in the private university in Tanzania, where 53 percent in the first year were mature students, and on the B.Sc. in Agri-Business Management in the private university in Ghana where there were 29 percent. The B.Sc. Optometry in the public university in Ghana took none. It was also very noticeable that the public university in Tanzania took very few mature students (8 percent on the B. Science with Education at Level 300 being the highest).

However, on all the programmes except the B. Management Studies and the B.Sc. in Human Resource Management in Ghana, mature men outnumbered mature women. On the B.Sc. Agri-Business Management all the mature students were male. This suggests that mature entry attracts men in particular, perhaps because they find it easier to accommodate the necessary study time into their daily lives and can more readily find the necessary funds to support their studies than women.

As already noted, completion rates for mature students were significantly lower than for non mature students. In the public Ghanaian university (ESC 21), the rate of withdrawal was

higher among mature students than among non mature students, low SES students and women on all the programmes where they were present.

ESC 21: Rate of Withdrawal on 4 Programmes according to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status for the cohort of students completing in 2007/2008 at a Ghanaian Public University

Programme	Men		Women		Low SES Students		Non Low SES		Mature Students		Non Mature	
B. Commerce	70.62	17.94	29.38	26.61	3.23	0.00	96.77	21.17	22.10	43.90	77.90	13.84
B. Management Studies	54.35	9.14	45.65	23.81	1.24	25.00	98.76	15.72	17.70	36.84	82.30	11.32
B. Education (Primary)	56.52	12.09	43.48	8.57	10.56	5.88	89.44	11.11	72.67	11.11	27.33	9.09
B. Sc. Optometry	75.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	-	100	0.00	0.00	-	100	0.00

In the private university (ESC 22), a much higher proportion of mature students dropped out from the two programmes where they were present than other groups, with half those on the B.Sc. Human Resources Management failing to complete.

ESC 22: Rate of Withdrawal on 4 Programmes according to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status for the cohort of students completing in 2007/2008 at a Ghanaian Private University

Programme	Men		Women		Low SES Students		Non Low SES		Mature Students		Non Mature	
B.Sc. Economics	83.33	0.00	16.67	0.00	4.17	0.00	95.83	4.35	0.00	-	100	4.17
B.Sc. Human Resources Management	29.52	0.00	70.48	18.75	0.88	0.00	99.12	20.00	4.41	50.00	95.59	18.43
B.Sc. Agri-Business Management	72.73	0.00	27.27	0.00	0.00	-	100	0.00	0.00	-	100	0.00
B.Sc. Accountancy	57.76	0.00	42.24	5.88	0.62	0.00	99.38	6.25	3.11	20.00	96.89	5.77

In the Tanzanian public university (ESC 23), the dropout rate was significantly higher than all the other groups on the three programmes for which data was available.

ESC 23: Rate of Withdrawal on 4 Programmes according to Age, Gender and Socio Economic Status for the cohort of students completing in 2007/2008 at a Tanzanian Public University

Programme	Men		Women		Low SES Students		Non Low SES		Mature Students		Non Mature	
B. Commerce	70.73	10.29	29.27	9.25	6.26	5.41	93.74	10.29	1.86	*	98.14	*
LLB. Law	58.30	9.27	41.70	12.04	7.72	5.00	92.28	10.88	6.56	35.29	93.44	8.68
B.Sc. Engineering	77.67	19.46	22.33	5.21	11.16	20.83	88.84	15.71	5.35	34.78	94.65	15.23
B. Science with Education	61.90	27.69	38.10	25.00	10.48	27.27	89.52	26.60	6.67	42.86	93.33	25.51
* Insufficient data on the age of withdrawn students from this programme												

While overall, fewer mature students completed their degree than other groups, the achievement data in section C 1 on Low SES Students shows that some mature students who were able to persist achieved high grades. In Tanzania, on the B. Science at the public university and the LLB. at the private university, the proportion of mature students achieving 2nd class degrees was higher than in other groups, and they performed nearly as well as others on the B.Sc. Engineering. On the B Education (Primary) in Ghana, where mature students comprised nearly three-quarters of the cohort, they performed better than men overall and the same as low SES students. On other programmes they did less well.

As for the interview findings, time was an important construct in considering mature students (Adam, 2004). While age and education are not always aggregated in Africa, there was evidence in our study of mature students, both male and female, experiencing higher education as an off-time event. Within the normative construction of the ideal student, mature students were marked by their difference. Academic staff discussed mature students in terms of their age, part-time and evening provision, their capital and the desire to attract more of them into higher education. Different modes of delivery, e.g. flexible timing of courses offered in the private institutions, were seen as a major enabler for mature students:

If it comes to the morning school, the younger generation are well represented but when it comes to the evening and weekend schools, the older generation are more represented... in fact we have students from 16, 17 to age 70 (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

The concept of maturity sometimes seemed fluid and unstable, with different chronological ages attached to the classification ‘mature’:

I think again we have younger people than the older people... For the mature students, they must be 21 and above, there are also criteria for the number of years of working experience (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

Success in access was described in terms of changing the age range:

When you talk of mature students, that one, I think we have chalked a lot of success in the area because we have actually lowered the entry requirements and we put the age - originally it was at 29 years, but now we have reduced it to 25 years. We have gone round to enquire as to whether there was any legislation putting it at the age at 29 years. We found that there was nothing like that. We thought that by the British Common Law, 25 is about the adult life which used to be in the statutes. So, we adopted 25 years as the mature student age and it has created opportunities for people who would have been otherwise roaming on the streets to enter the university (Male staff, private university, Ghana).

Mature students were also often associated with the world of work in so far as they were post-experience, or learning while earning. While some mature students received sponsorship from their employers, this was not always problem-free:

Their problems are different because these mature people many of them get involved, they want to study, they want to keep their family stable... they need to be sure that their salaries will continue. For example, I have my first year and second year students in Counselling. The Ministry is telling them that Counselling is not Education and this month that have cut their salaries. And you can imagine that is devastating them (Male staff, private university, Tanzania).

While mature students were sometimes thought to have lost educational opportunities in earlier life, they were also perceived as having more capital than younger students:

It's so interesting but what I have seen is that the mature students are actually supporting and they help the younger ones so when you are teaching them and you open any discussion that you want to do you can easier call on the older ones to support the younger ones and they cope very well (Female staff, public university, Ghana).

Mature students themselves tended to tell stories about being different and feeling 'other' in higher education.

Sometimes, when most of them are younger than you, so sometimes they reaction is a little different from yours, but the personalities are good. But some are also a little arrogant (Female student, public university, Ghana).

Sometimes, difference led to offers of help from younger students:

The students [are] like young boys and girls. They really feel sorry for us when they are doing the reading, and they get anything they try and help us. 'We know you don't have time but can we fix up time for you, could we try and study with you?' (Mature female student, private university, Tanzania).

Age diversity was also seen as a source of learning:

I've learnt to associate with a lot offriends especially the opposite sex and even how to deal with them, how to deal with the younger group also, how to deal with the other

person. How to deal with them not to let them know that you are elderly person you always have to rule over them. No you always have to sometimes come to their level for them to understand what's going on. So I've learnt a lot (Female mature student, public university, Ghana).

Some mature students talked about feeling disadvantaged by their lack of secondary education, and the normative assumptions that some tutors and peers made about linear educational progression:

So it was like they were all asking; 'which secondary school did you attend?' But I've up till now, I've never told them I never attended a secondary school, so my friends they all know that I attended a secondary school but I just don't want to tell them.. I'm competing with those who attended secondary school. Sometimes I even make better grades than them (Female mature student, public university, Ghana).

Mature students in both countries also discussed family responsibilities and the challenges of achieving a work/life balance, and in re-entering education. Overall, they appeared to experience a range of academic and social struggles in higher education. In view of the high withdrawal rates for mature students (ESCs 21-23), urgent attention is required to investigate how this group can be supported to complete their programmes.

4. Students with Disabilities

While this project did not set out to research students with disabilities and did not gather systematic data about numbers and experiences of disabled students, this structure of inequality was raised by some academic staff and students. Male and female staff in both countries and both public and private universities discussed students with disabilities in terms of medical and social models of disability (Shakespeare, 2006). The medical model included discussion of facilities and services for people with disabilities. The social model included consideration of attitudes, prejudices and able-bodied norms and assumptions. Both models were used to explain exclusion/lack of participation of students. Exclusion was seen to start early on as a consequence of lack of inclusion in primary and secondary education. Male staff in both countries talked more about the lack of policies for disability and female staff talked more about the need to increase participation. Staff in both private universities noted that they received few applications from students with disabilities, although it is questionable how they know this when so few social indicators are monitored on application.

Disability was discussed in terms of under-representation and lack of advocacy:

I would say persons with disabilities [are under represented] ...even though we don't have any aggregate statistics, but if you look at what we use which is the WHO figures, that's between 7-10 percent of the population being disabled and we have far less than 10 percent of the University population being persons with disability. Even then, they are limited to certain, especially the blind students, are limited to certain subject areas... We don't have too many persons at the helm of the affairs that would actually speak on behalf of persons with disability (Male policymaker, Ghana).

The medical model of disability was frequently invoked e.g. problems with physical access:

Secondly, I think we could take more of handicapped (sic) people but again the infrastructure does not allow it, for example if I had handicapped (sic) people here, people who can not walk, they can not go upstairs on wheel chairs, therefore the infrastructure is not developed to take them. The infrastructure here isn't equipped to educate blind or deaf students, and therefore there is the economic handicap and the physical handicap (Male staff, private university, Tanzania).

The students who talked about disability were mainly disabled students themselves. Of the 11 disabled students interviewed, most talked about the support they received, positive experiences, the problems they faced accessing education, poor facilities for disabled students, negative attitudes, prejudice, exclusion and difficulties. Some talked about being different while growing up and the importance of education to help mitigate the social and material effects of disability. Education could contradict the construction of disabled people as lacking capabilities:

You know what, once you have a problem it will make you work better so that you can fix that problem, you know....I am a disabled, I have to study hard, even people who are normal can understand 'ooh even a disabled student can work with this, yes, that's good'....Now they will exclude you from the people who can't and put you in the people who can (Male disabled student, public university, Tanzania).

Some students with disabilities described how they wanted identities beyond that of their disability:

Now when it was the year 2000, one eye started getting problems and finally lost vision completely... The first eye also began hurting a lot. I then used to go to hospital and they would give me pain killers. But it reached a point where even if I use drugs the pain does not cease, and when it was examined, they said there is no alternative except to take it out. So in 2001 one eye was removed. After that I saw that the only option for my life was to study (Male disabled student, private university, Ghana).

Students reported mixed educational experiences of growing up with disabilities. One student recalled teacher encouragement and support in primary school:

Whether it's because of my ... disability or something but they (the teachers) ... related to me more ... so I was actually enjoying (primary school)...those days when I go to form two ... they were forcing me to write a common entrance so that I could go to ... the secondary school and I actually didn't want to go to secondary school at that time (Female, mature and disabled student, public university, Ghana).

Disabled people's achievements were thought to have the potential to change people's attitudes:

If many of us decide to do something in a certain society, after sometime we'll find that we've managed to change the negative mindset into positive which for sure shows one group is better than the other which is not good as in the Maasai society which sees a physically challenged person as a bad omen. And if so why s/he continue to live in our family, so what they do is to kill or to leave him/her in the forest to be eaten by wild

animals and from they believe they have cleaned the bad omen and they go to celebrate
(Female, mature, low SES and disabled student, private university, Tanzania).

The same student described her pride in overcoming adversity and how her mother instilled in her the belief that education could be an antidote to social prejudices against disabled people:

My mum. She used to encourage and congratulate me... even my brother... they are such kind of people who encouraged and influenced me to study up to this level. I am really thankful to them. Generally I thank my family because even with the discrimination that was existing, sometimes even my mother was discriminated because of my disability... she used to tell me "my daughter study hard, all of these will one day come to an end". Nowadays we [my mother and I] remember that time of discrimination and we are just happy for my achievement.

Reports about how the built environment had not been adapted for people with disabilities and that there were able-bodied assumptions about access were common concerns:

There is these stairs but we have the disabled students, which they don't walk ... the environment of course is not good. It is good for the able bodied but not for the people with disability... yah... And that because I was two years leader of this disabled students most of the time they come with that problem (Female, mature and disabled student, public university, Tanzania).

Disability and HE is beginning to gain some research and policy coverage in high-income countries (Fuller, Bradley & Healey, 2004; Goode, 2007; Jacklin & Robinson, 2007; Jacklin, Robinson *et al.*, 2005-2006; Konur, 2006; Riddell, Tinklin, & Wilson, 2005; Taylor, 2004). However, the project found that the subject of disability in higher education has been significantly overlooked by researchers, managers and policymakers in Ghana and Tanzania.

D. Students' Experiences: Growing Up

1. Family

Our interview data suggest that the universities take a mix of students who are first/not first in the family to enter HE. Table 6 provides a breakdown of numbers of students by social group and HEI who said that they were the first to enter HE. It reveals that, in our interview sample, more first timers entered the public universities than the private, that a higher proportion of women respondents entered the public universities as first timers relative to their overall enrolment rates (4 percent in Ghana and 42 percent in Tanzania), that the majority of first timers from our sample are not mature students and not from low socio-economic backgrounds, although numbers of the latter were significantly higher in Tanzania than Ghana. Further investigation would be needed in order to see to what extent these patterns apply to the whole institutions

Table 6: Number of respondents who were first to enter HE in their family

		Mature	Non Mature	Female	Male	Low SES	Non Low SES	
Ghana	Public university	First in the family to enter HE	4	14	8	11	5	14
		First woman in the family to enter HE	1	2	3	0	1	2
	Private university	First in the family to enter HE	1	6	2	7	3	6
		First woman in the family to enter HE	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tanzania	Public university	First in the family to enter HE	1	21	9	13	10	12
		First woman in the family to enter HE	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Private university	First in the family to enter HE	5	10	6	9	8	7
		First woman in the family to enter HE	0	2	2	0	1	1

Fathers' support was most commonly reported (and appreciated) by students in all HEIs, by male and students from low socio-economic backgrounds especially. As fathers frequently control household finances, this support was essential for allocating family finances to education. Mothers' support seemed to be more important for females and students who had not attended a deprived school, and often took the form of encouragement rather than material support. Positive, supportive upbringings cut across all social categories. Parental expectations were mentioned more by younger students of both sexes who had not attended deprived schools.

A major finding in this study was, unsurprisingly, the crucial part that family support played in educational access and achievement.

Well, I was quite happy to be in school because you know at that age I had friends there but at the same time my parents made me love school because they always encouraged me to learn so I always found a way of enjoying my stay at home (Female student, private university, Ghana).

However, we had several cases of students who were determined to enter education, with or without family support:

Life for me... from my infancy, me... I have suffered a lot. Even from my infancy when I was to school; no one took me to school. It was I myself who followed my two brothers... It was one day they were going to school when I decided to go with them. We went and the headmaster said I was too young. But I refused to listen to him. Anytime they went to school I followed them. And the headmaster got fed up with me so he said they would allow me in. So I was enrolled in school. I enrolled myself. It was myself who went to school. No one took me (Male mature student, private university, Ghana).

To summarise, a positive upbringing is important for access to HE, especially fathers' and mothers' support, as well as parental expectations and encouragement, while family problems, e.g. violence and bereavement, impede access.

2. Experiences of Primary Education

Students in both countries reported a high number of positive and pleasurable experiences of primary school e.g. friendship, the joy of achievement. However, as we reported in table 5 section B2 above on gender violence at school, students also reported (corporal) punishment, abuse, bullying and excessive discipline. Lack of resources and facilities were also cited by high numbers of students, particularly in Tanzania e.g. large, over-crowded classes, shortage or absence of teachers and a lack of facilities. Poverty was also widely reported by both those who had attended deprived schools and those who had not e.g. lack of money to pay school fees, uniform, transport, books etc. Many had to travel long distances to their primary school – often without shoes in dangerous terrain:

Then I travelled close to 10 to 12 kilometres from our village to the next village every day to where the school was. Everyday, madam, it wasn't easy at all. We walked through a rough road. It was a rough road. When you are going, you hardly see people; you hardly meet people on the way. And they were just murdering people on that road so anytime we were going and we heard people talking in the bush or... we run until we get home. So life hasn't been easy for me at a-a-a-l! And I didn't have slippers and I was walking barefooted from the house to school... And when I am going to school, even money for food: nil. I would go on an empty stomach and if I was lucky to get some leftover to eat in the morning, fair enough! (Male mature student, private university, Ghana).

Primary school... It was in the village we could just walk to school, a bit of a distance, like more than forty minutes... (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

Of course because I was walking, there was a distance from where we were living because when I was in Form One I was living with my young sister but when maybe I want to go to my parent's place I have to walk about forty kilometres and sometimes it discouraged me (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

The physical distance and obstacles *en route* sometimes seemed to act as a metaphor for the struggle that many young people had experienced in order to enter and stay in education.

Students from rural backgrounds discussed the lack of infrastructure *e.g.* public transport:

So I had to walk... I cannot tell exactly kilometres but one thing I can remember I used to wake up early in the morning start running from home to school.... there were no buses (Male student, private university, Tanzania).

For seven years, I studied primary education...in Rombo.. . life was very difficult....To go to school is very far we use to walk very far to go to school, maybe at three kilometres. ... walking on foot.... and fetching water very far; go to market very far, go to church very far. Every thing is very far (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

When transport did exist, it was often unaffordable:

It was tough....It was far from home. Sometimes the facilities are not there but we make it.... That is what made me be whom I am now.... There was transport sometimes ... you have to pay....It is very far... (Walking took) three or four hours (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

The story was very different for some students from urban backgrounds:

You now Kumasi, it's very nice place to be, to go to school, you take your car you go to school you come, you see friends, especially during vacation... Kumasi... it's a city (Male student, public university, Ghana).

We had a driver. He used to take us to school (Female student, private university, Ghana).

The long walks to school in poor rural areas meant that young women were vulnerable to sexual attacks:

At that time when we were studying there, it was time when those mining companies were entering that district... sometimes you walk alone on the road you find a certain man standing there... 'so you are getting trouble in going to school, so I will buy you a bicycle'. 'Okay may I give you a lift'... when... yah I remember he tried once there was a car stopping on the road then I went there...yah he sent me up to the school. We were about three students but when we reach there, that man started to tell us... you know what, 'we can buy you phones, we can give you money' ... you know I was very young...so I thought that this is the biggest mistake I have done today, so I won't repeat it. ...My fellows keep on boarding those cars and what... at the end of the day they leave the school, they were pregnant... there are a lot of girls who I know have lost studies, because of that ...yah (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Some students also expressed their disappointment about the quality of education that they received after having made the long journey to school:

As you can imagine, going to school in a village ... The buildings there were... apart from the distance to the place... where you had to walk for a very long time... about two to three hours walk or something. And then when you go to school it's also deplorable and you only go to school where you learn only A, B, C, D... and 1, 2, 3... and nothing else. And the rest maybe you have some park where they play football and other things (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Some reported the positive effects of having good teachers:

I remember I had some teachers; they encourage me and my friends, whom were taking the subjects seriously, we were doing well by that time, so they encouraged us then they allocate some time like a tuition but it was free I was not paying them... .During the holidays, we had to get time to be taught at school especially when we were in standard seven, so they supported us in that way. (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

I would say there was one teacher that I really admired. Usually influenced my life a lot, because he always shared his life with the students, usually talked of his experiences, the way he has passed the education and the many challenges and problems he has faced. That really influenced my life (Male student, public university, Ghana).

My, my science teacher, science subject teacher ... was very good in science and he loved very much to teach students in fact he was devoted to teach I don't what is less to him to me he took me as his young brother. Therefore, he supported me with a lot of materials by giving me extra studies by the time we didn't have such things like tuition but he devoted to teach me. He was able to use his time to teach me in private I remember him very much even today, yaa (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

However, many also made negative comments about teachers. For example, there were widespread reports of teacher's exploitation of primary school children *e.g.* children being forced to do domestic/ agricultural work while in school including weeding or tending teachers' gardens/ farms, and fetching water. There were also signs of resistance:

That was my primary, four, five... The rest of the three days the teachers took us to their various farms. So we went to one of the teacher's farms ... The whole of his farm. I said no, we would not continue it. Although I was small and they were big ones.. I stood my ground... and I feel that what I did was the right thing, because he was forcing me to do something that should not be done. So that day I felt great (Male student, public university, Ghana) .

Of course in primary school, teachers were not properly attending their duties. They were giving us a lot of activities, fetching water for their houses, ordering us to go farming in their farms, and sent us to go to cultivate others' farms so that we generate income for the school, those were the activities which we were doing (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

Boarding schools provided extensive opportunities for domestic labour:

Secondary school life was a bit new from the other schools that I knew because this time I was going to a boarding school and being in a boys' school you were always told: wake up! Sweep! And all kinds of chores that you do... you always have to wash your seniors' clothes and all those things (Male student, private university, Ghana).

The manual labour exhausted young people and was in opposition to academic work:

That school I can say it was very bad, ...it was a boarding school.... The school had many projects, had many projects... They keep livestock.... They have many gardens.... Many, many acres offarms... Therefore I faced hardship in that school and I didn't expect to perform well.... We used to cultivate ourself: cultivation, harvesting, weeding, carrying crops to school each and every ... Sometimes we missed classes - we were going to look for livestock. You know sometimes we used many times to work in the garden. So the school had many, many works and study hours are very few compared to outside works.... it had a very big impact because concentration times are very few. Sometimes you can find that during the nights, during the preparation.... We usually used to sleep in the classroom. We don't study... Because during the afternoon the whole day you're outside working. Therefore you can find that during the evening in the prep time tired, you find yourself very tired.... Therefore you can't study... you can't study..., yaa (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Some students found this difficult, but character-forming:

It was very terrible ...It was very tough because we have to learn self reliance... they had a lot of big farms which we worked on them it was very difficult life. . .I think we grow tough from that time (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

The construction of children as unpaid labourers was resented by many who saw the time lost or stolen from their education:

It's Uburu Secondary School. It is also in Bukoba.... The environment was very difficult because we were the first ones in that school. So we had to study half a day. After that we were going to help (with) building the school, fetching water... Yaa it was a new school so... It had only one class, so we had to build those another classes, to help people to build and what not. ...It affected the studies because we didn't have the whole day to study. And after doing those activities offetching water and what not we were becoming very tired, so we didn't have time to concentrate on the studies (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Children's labour was sometimes also an important contribution to the family economy:

By that time my dad was putting our livestock at home ... we had not yet shifted them to shamba so ... I had to take care before I go to school. So I milked the cows I make sure that they are fed and I go to school (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

The additional burden of work in the home created educational pressures. Whereas young men recalled agricultural work, young women frequently reported domestic labour:

And then even in after school I would have to come and fetch water and cook for the family to eat because my auntie, I should say, my cousin was also busy travelling to Lome to buy goods. So she wasn't getting time to cook for the family so I was the one doing the cooking for the family, taking care of the children so study became... I couldn't have time to study... so all those things affected me. That was why I wasn't able to pass the first time and I had to re-sit (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Some students reported disruption to their primary schooling as a result of moving, migration and living with different members of their extended families, health problems, inability to pay fees or lack of parental support for a sustained engagement with primary education. The social aspects of schooling were reported in both countries e.g. friendship as a positive influence to persist and attend school.

Lack of facilities, resources and overcrowding were reported as problems more in Tanzania than in Ghana. Lack of English language was also reported in Tanzania, but not in Ghana. Problems with maths were reported in both countries. Concerns about lack of facilities for children with disabilities was raised in Tanzania, but not in Ghana, as were problems with accessing and progressing to secondary education.

Bullying, violence, excessive discipline and punishment, and humiliation were reported more in Ghana than in Tanzania. Male and female students in both countries reported positive experiences of primary education, but male students in Ghana reported more problems with discipline and punishment than male students in Tanzania.

Teachers seemed to play a crucial role in shaping attitudes to education and learner identities. There were reports of transformative and positive teachers that supported young people to persist and achieve:

Yeah. I remember. I was so much loved by the teachers. And I was a prefect .. . and they arranged us according to our ability academically so I was in A. I enjoyed there. I had friends and so it was good (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

At the same time, however, there were numerous reports of untrained, unskilled and unqualified teachers:

I never enjoyed primary school. In fact it was my worse memory as a young person growing up. When I was at the primary I was very timid... very, very, very timid. I was scared to walk in the classroom -just to walk from my seat outside. I was very scared and nervous and I think my teachers did not really do well for me because they identified me and they kept on writing in my report card that 'He is a very quiet and shy person'. And they kept on... every term they kept on writing the same thing.So when I was in primary school, I was never happy with any of my teachers (Female student, private university, Ghana).

My primary school too was the same because I think most of the teachers there were from 4 teachers, elementary school. . .I only knew the headmaster who was a trained teacher but apart from the headmaster the teachers all of them were untrained (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Problems with teachers were one of the main causes of unhappiness in primary schools:

There was nothing good... It was the school in the village....Teachers, the teaching was not so good...There are not well educated. You need to put your own effort in order to pass the examination (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Teacher absenteeism was endemic:

In the primary school I wasn't doing that much work... the teachers do not take much care of us ... sometimes the teachers would not come and everybody sit down, see that everything is ok. So I had to work on my own. And I think that's where I start doing things independently, and it's helped me a lot (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Lack of teaching at this crucial development phase left one student feeling a long-term sense of shame:

The teacher will come there, teaches... Sometimes she came or she can not, did not come, so it depend the background of primary school is so tough for me that is why I feel shame sometimes. That situation has affected me (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

Lack of teacher supply was also widely reported:

Teachers were not enough. There were just three teachers for the whole school. So, some of the courses I mean some of the subjects at primary school were not taught very properly. So, you will find that most of students were incapable of going to the secondary school. So, they couldn't make it because of the problem of teachers (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

The environment was good; we had a lack of teachers, yaa that is all (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Lack of teachers meant large classes and lack of pedagogical attention:

My primary education ...basically it was very, very hardit was very hard to the ground that first there . . .was shortage of teachers... You can find one teacher teaching more than three subjects ...more than three different classes. So one teacher to manage the whole class is also a problem but also the number of students whowere being in the same class you can find one class I remember.... we were ninety....In standard four we were seventy-seven (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

Classes were large and often multi-grade and multi-age:

Teachers were few compared to the number of students.. . Students were many compared to teachers. For example in my class we were 92... different ages, different families and so you can imagine how difficult it was for a teacher to take care of such a big class (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Learning, as well as human resources, were often absent:

There is only one primary school in our environment ... first there were no teachers, at that time I remember there were only five teachers teaching from standard one to seven....My primary school was made just from mud, the walls.. .mud buildings, some materials in our school almost I can say that there were no materials, because we have just book for the teacher (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

One student compared the low quality and standards of state education with that of the private sector:

The teachers sometimes do not work hard .. I don't know how to put it but you realise that there is some sort of deficiency if you compare them to the private... They are not well motivated and they themselves were not given then best. Because if you compare how in a private school the teacher will always be on you to learn, extra classes after school, giving you assignment in the primary school you, er primary public school you close from school and that is all. So always you see the students who come to school and the teachers you cannot also blame them so much because some of us, some of the student majority of the students in my primary school, the public one, were people from poor, poor backgrounds (Male student, public university, Ghana).

The above indicates that the chances of reaching HE are decided very early on in childhood, with only a few of those experiencing poor quality primary education being able to surmount the difficulties they face in their schooling. Although many students commented on the pleasurable nature of primary schooling, they also raised issues around important deficiencies in resources, teacher numbers and quality, which served to lower their chances of educational success. Additional challenges facing the family such as poverty, break up and dislocation, extended family commitments, violence, and child labour all made the chance of surviving through to HE unlikely.

3. Experiences of Secondary Education

Students in both countries reported a mixture of positive experiences of secondary school (good laboratories, supply of books and teachers, good teachers, good school location, good relationships with other students), and a range of problems relating to lack of resources, quality, teachers, support, facilities and science. They also cited violence, bullying, and excessive discipline and punishment. Corporal punishment was reported and, as in primary education, the body was a site for discipline and humiliation. The social side of education also featured largely, with many discussing friendship, leadership and extra-curricular activities as positive memories. Gender relations and pressures in the form of unwanted male attention were also mentioned in both countries by female students.

Teachers were described as supportive and influential, but also in terms of poor quality and absenteeism. Secondary schooling was often provided by religious groups, and was sometimes single sex. This often supported young women to achieve by focusing pedagogical attention on them:

To be a girl and make me succeed... I was interested to join the school which was studying by girls. I don't like to study with boys (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

Some students described boarding school experiences. These often involved problems with lack of food, work responsibilities and gender pressures. Secondary school education was also disrupted for health reasons, lack of money to pay fees, moving to live with different members of the extended family, and the availability of scholarships.

Narratives of lack and deficit characterised many memories of secondary education. In Tanzania, the lack of English language was a widespread concern. The lack of teachers, particularly in the STEM subjects was reported in both countries, but more widely in Tanzania:

Of course (the) secondary school because there, I met with many problems because at the time being there was no electricity, there was no water and we had a Mathematics teacher in only Form Five. But in Form Six we didn't have a Maths teacher. Therefore because I was coming from the village that means the topics which I covered in A-level are the ones which we only covered when we were in Form Five. Therefore even that of course it discouraged me (Male student, private university, Tanzania).

In form six we had no Chemistry teacher, yes I remember. The form six because our teacher by then I don't remember his name, he become sick because of conducting Chemistry practical. So he had two sessions with us and he was sick because of inhaling Ammonium gas. So we had no books because it was newly established combination (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Something which was negative is concerning about laboratories ... School laboratories, teachers were not enough also you find that some of the science teachers were not very competent in some of the subjects (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

On a negative side, we had few teachers especially in Science subjects, when we entered form three we had no physics teacher and I belonged to science stream, till we finished form four there were no physics teacher at all, therefore even in selecting the high schools to go we were sure that we are going to fail physics and get "F" grade and this disturbed our future (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Lack of teacher professionalism and competence in the STEM subjects was widely reported:

We were not taking physics ... we had no teacher from form two up to form four.... the one who was teaching us failed to undertake that course because the subject was so much difficult. So what happened I remember came one teacher ... he was not competent if you ask the question sometimes himself was very angry. If you ask a question he can't, maybe, he can't teach you well in that area than you find that is angry and sometimes refused even to come to classes (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

The STEM subjects were frequently seen as indicators of quality and progressive education:

It was a low-class school ... they said they couldn't offer me Science (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Minaki Bwana was very horrible school, you know the problem was teachers ... especially for science subjects, especially biology and physics (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Our science programme wasn't very strong, that's how they described us (Female student, public university, Ghana)

The STEM subjects were often associated with boys' schools, and this excluded some young women from important opportunities:

My choice was to study science subjects... I was always good at science subjects, ... but unfortunately... at that moment at that school there was no teacher for teaching mathematics... And I was intended to study, because the nearest school was Tabora boys, to go there to study mathematics, but unfortunately the Headmistress did not allow me to go there (Female mature student, public university, Tanzania).

Lack of teachers and teacher absenteeism continued from primary into secondary education:

I think some of the teachers that we had don't come to class so we were always struggling with those subjects. So I would say that was the time I felt bad... when we don't have teachers for some of the subjects and you always go to class, waste your time, others will be disturbing you and don't even see the use of schooling (Female student, private university, Ghana).

I attended catholic secondary school, in Ashanti region. It was a battle for yourself, I would say. Because they were not having qualified teachers. Some of the subjects you were not having teachers for that. So we had to struggle for yourself. So just study anything, just because we wanted to go to tertiary education... There was a day that we were looking for in our class we were looking for a teacher to come and teach us about something, and then the master didn't come. So we thought that the master who was going to teach us would probably come in the exam. So we did do our best to get knowledge about it in the way expecting the master. And we did it that if this one comes we are now able to write it, so maybe our dreams may not come true. So me and my friends were all extremely sad that day (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Shortage of teachers... lack of library... lack of teaching facilities... even teachers, so you struggle yourself to go somewhere to find materials...we study for three years without the teacher of mathematics...And that is the one which make us to get poor result is the final results (Male student, private university, Tanzania).

There were numerous comments about poor quality schools especially in Tanzania from the students in the private university:

There are some buildings but they are not enough according to the students who they are supposed to be there and these buildings are not sufficient to students since there is no laboratory... there is no apparatus which they are supposed to use in the labs ... there is no enough books (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Shortage of teachers... lack of library... lack of teaching facilities... even teachers, so you struggle yourself to go somewhere to find materials.. Bad school (Male student, private university, Tanzania).

Teacher corruption was also reported *e.g.* not teaching the students, but charging for private tuition.

My 'O' level education was not so good... there were teachers who were teaching us but not in class... We would look for a teacher, we ask him to teach us. Then we arrange the timetable, then we go, and he teaches us... [it was] a private arrangement.. you have to pay. It was like a tuition. Thirty [students]... The pay was hundred per class (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

The above suggests that there is an urgent need for some staff development in professional ethics.

In summary, many students reported positive experiences of secondary schooling, which helped them to complete their studies and achieve high grades. These included: positive relationships and close friendships, good quality teaching, strong leadership, good facilities and adequate resources, and the proximity of the home to the school. However, many also talked about the negative aspects which presented a risk of dropout. These included poverty (the family's inability to meet the cost of fees, books, transport), poor health, corporal punishment, violence, bullying, teacher absenteeism and corruption, distance to school, difficulties with maths and science subjects, and, in Tanzania, poor English language skills. Many of these negative features were also mentioned in relation to primary schooling, but poor facilities seemed to feature more prominently at the lower level, suggesting that secondary schools may be better resourced than primary, and that a major hurdle on the road to HE is entry to a good secondary school.

4. Support and Encouragement for Entering Higher Education

In both countries and both types of university, perhaps not surprisingly, non-mature students talked more about the support they received from their family than mature students. In both countries, men talked less about their family, and family support, than women. In Ghana, 12 females and four males mentioning the support of their family to enter HE and in Tanzania nine females and six males. Where male students did mention family support, they appreciated support from fathers (financial), whereas female students emphasised emotional support, usually coming from mothers. Support from peers - colleagues and friends - was also important for all categories.

Even my boss, my family, colleagues... you know when you are at work you will find that one of your colleagues performs well the work and when you realise that aah he/she has gone to the university... In other times our bosses tell us to go to school.. look on how your colleague performs well at work.. it is because maybe because of the level of education that he/she has. Therefore sometimes it hurts and on the other side it encourages that why don't you try! There are so many people who encouraged me but to a larger extent it was my own desire to acquire education (Female mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Support from partners was also important, especially for women:

My husband was the one who also encouraged me because for that moment I was, or

for the time I was applying I was not pregnant but after receiving the admission letter I was pregnant and I know that my birth always will be by operation and as you know the operation always there is some stuck that you can make. That was, that took me to be discouraged but after being encouraged by my husband and other colleague that you can join the studies and we will taking care of your baby. So some encouragement was therefrom my family and from other staff members (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

Extended families were sometimes a source of support and encouragement:

My uncle's wife also is... just finished her university education. She's now a teacher in one of the secondary school. So she is also a motivating factor because my uncle isn't that educated but he found a wife who is very, very much into education. So the way she behaves toward the family members made me have this feeling of going into the university. So she is also a contributing factor (Female student, public university, Ghana).

As the above quotations suggest, emotional capital can be as important as material capital in constructing and maintaining aspirations.

5. Discouragement from entering HE

There were four main sources of discouragement:

1. Active agents of discouragement e.g. friends and extended family, as one female student from Ghana explained:

It was my uncle! When I said I wanted to come to the university, what he said was: Could you afford the fees? I was discouraged actually. I didn't want to enter the university again but my dad and mum told me I should enter (Female student, private university, Ghana).

2. Material considerations e.g. finance, family poverty:

I think it is a time when I was completing form six a certain girl came... my idea was to take international relations, you see then whenever I talk about that they were discouraging me, of course you are not going to get that university because there those people who get chances over there, they are may be officers' daughters or somebody who is somebody... who has money. So for you, you have to have money so that to go there at that university. So of course I said I don't have that money but I will try; my own goals was that if I struggle hard and get may be division I, even if they won't let me in a good faculty of course I will reach there even if it is education, I reach there. They used to discourage me... you know you can't go there, you know that university is for few people you know it is the first university, so they do take first students, so best schools especially Dar-es-Salaam schools, so you are from regional school you can't get a chance there. Then I said anyway I will try and I will see, so when it came, it was like a miracle... I did not even believe it! (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

3. The affective domain e.g. fears of failure, academic struggle and unemployment, the feeling that HE is a waste of time:

Ok when I completed SS [senior secondary school] I filed for the application right after completion. But I think I didn't get, admission, I didn't gain admission to the university so for the second time, the second time too I, I didn't get it for the second time so filling it for the third time people were saying I should just resit. Yeah that's write my papers again but I wasn't ready to do that. Uh huh. I wasn't ready (Female student, public university, Ghana).

4. The HE product e.g. the status of certain disciplines such as teaching, the length of the course in STEM subjects, quality and standards:

I: And did anyone tried to discourage you?

R: yes a lot of people because you know the course is too long, because my colleague mostly... most people they are doing arts subjects so they go to school for three years only, and get a degree or masters. So five years everybody was discouraging me (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Friends were the main agents of discouragement across both countries, particularly for male students. This might seem counter-intuitive, but it could reveal data about low aspirations in some communities, and the increasing educational disaffection and marginalisation of young men from poor families (Burke, 2009; Woodin and Burke, 2008). Female students were also discouraged by friends but they also expressed concerns about their academic abilities in Ghana and about the length of the course in Tanzania. Financial concerns discouraged female students in both universities in Ghana and male students in the public universities in both Ghana and Tanzania.

The above shows that young people can be discouraged early in their lives from aspiring to enter HE, whether by friends or family, by family or personal circumstances, personal fears and self-doubt or their perception of the HE product.

E. Students' Experiences of Higher Education

1. Transitions to Higher Education

Students were asked about their expectations of higher education. They reported a range of expectations, both positive and negative, including professional development, career opportunities, achievement, hard work, securing a good life, acquiring subject knowledge, and the fear of failure and academic struggle. Of particular note was the evidence that there was little or no expectation of facilities or academic support in the two private universities, and that more women in the public universities (10) expected academic struggle than men (8), whereas more of men (13) expected academic success compared to women (3).

Although transition to higher education is receiving research attention in high-income countries (Aynsley and Jacklin, 2009; David *et al.*, 2009; Laing, Robinson and Johnston, 2005; McInnis, James and McNaught, 1995; Jackson, 2003; Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005; Yorke, 2000), there is little data available on how students in Africa experience it. In our study, the areas that received the most coverage in both countries in relation to transition to higher education related to the affective domain *e.g.* hopes, fears, joy, pride. First impressions of HE related to interpersonal factors *e.g.* social fears, and intrapersonal factors/internalised conversations *e.g.* fear and uncertainty of one's academic abilities. Students in both countries expressed joy at their achievement in entering university but also uncertainty about their academic abilities and fear of failure. Many students expressed concerns over academic struggle:

Yea, initially I was having fears. Yea, I was having a fear. Because I thought I can't make it and come out with a better grade because my siblings come out with second class lower and one came out with second class upper. So I knew I can't make it. And they way they've been coming, telling us the course is not easy but very difficult, I thought I can't make it. But after my Level 100 and first semester 200, I said I had to put everything together, come closer to my book and definitely I will make it (Female student, private university, Ghana).

The fear was there because due to the notion which I was having by that moment that at Universities may be you should have be a bit in, to be a bit qualified or knowing a lot about English which is not my mother tongue I know a little bit about English language that was all my fear but when I came I find that you can even manage by just working hard even if you don't know you just cooperate with others you learn hard so that you can know how... the difficultness (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

What I know was that this place was very difficult and academic wasn't easy. You have a struggle, you have to do a lot of things, you have to make sure you go for all lectures, do all assignments, everything so I was scared. When I was coming I was very scared but I decided to come (Female student, public university, Ghana).

I thought maybe I could understand everything concerning my field of specialisation when I reached here but ...as time went on, I found that my level of competence was decreasing because of being unaware of those things concerning the course. So, I wasn't fulfilled with what I was expecting before I joined the university (Male student,

public university, Tanzania).

The affective was accompanied by the material. Transition could also involve precarious and unsatisfactory accommodation arrangements. Poor quality accommodation, or lack of accommodation, was an issue in the public universities in both countries:

We were told if you get to final year too, you will get back to the hall because in the final year a lot of activities go on that is project work, and other activities. But in the first place when we came, in fact it was different. I mean, just a few of Level 100s were given accommodation in the hall. All of us - all those people who were not fortunate enough - had to get accommodation elsewhere: in the villages and other towns and or what ever. I, for instance, I was a victim of that (Male mature student, public university, Ghana).

Spatial factors, scale and the built environment were transitional issues e.g. the amount of moving around in large institutions, and the high numbers of students compared to secondary school. Some students also found the academic work difficult, and were struck by the different pedagogy and requirements for independent learning:

Yes, it is so different because for O-level and Advanced level you can study alone and achieve better but in University you can't study alone and achieve better. Also the way in 'O' level you can concentrate only the notes given by your teacher and achieve better, but in University you need to go to the library to get more about such subject (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

In spite of all these material difficulties, for some, transition to HE meant independence and freedom:

From secondary school to the university it was very nice for me. Because for me living in secondary school was tensed up. I mean everything was strict; I mean do this or if you do not do you will be punished. Everything is rules and punishment ... I was really happy and the transformation has been good ... For me it is very good because I do things at the right time. I mean get the opportunity if I want to sleep I will sleep. If I think the lectures today are not effective then I either stay in the house or have to be in the library and learn. It is better than the secondary where you always have to do things with strict rules (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Students were also asked about the transition back to their communities, e.g. during vacations or weekends. Enrolment in higher education clearly brought social mobility and enhanced status, resulting in considerable pride:

Being in the university, actually it has changed me a lot because when you go out there, you'd be in the church with some people as they will say: You are in the university. When they are organizing this programme, they will want you to chair this programme, they will want you be the head at that programme - with more ideas. So I think being in the university actually has made me somebody. Yeah! Because when they are organizing programmes, sometimes they take out the university students and... yeah! They give them some prizes and ... yeah... I feel proud. I feel proud. I feel very, very proud (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Sometimes a multiplier effect was reported:

Of course I feel better because now my parents now have been encouraged, my young brothers and young sisters have been encouraged, they are taking their children to the school. Not only that but also even my colleagues... we were teaching together, I encouraged them to take the form so that they can join the universities (Male mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Moving to university also left some students feeling a sense of social difference from those that they had left behind, evoking Walkerdine's (2003) idea that working class culture is something you move away from when ascending social hierarchies.

Ifelt like I'm a different person. The way I related with my colleagues before I came to school, I was a bit different. I valued what I say, I was very, very, very, very careful. I felt like 'hey, I'm not a different person. The way I think might not be the way these people think, so whatever they say I should be able to separate the person from their situation so that you avoid conflict'. So that makes me become a leader (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Students reported that they experienced both joy and anxiety when they enter HE - joy and pride at having gained a place and enhancing their status among peers and community, but also anxiety and fear over academic struggle and failure, and social, interpersonal and practical difficulties. As their initial experiences may be crucial in determining whether they will persist and achieve, universities need to ensure adequate support at this transition stage.

2. Experiences of HE

Students discussed academic, social and practical matters. The dominant experiences in both countries and in both universities were academic struggle and financial difficulties. Whereas students in both countries discussed practical problems, e.g. financial worries, these featured significantly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and posed a major risk for drop-out:

I'd say, at first I was happy entering into the university but then afterwards you reach certain circumstances, I feel like just dropping out ... It's not that the university education is not good, it's good, but then if, if, if you are financially sound you really enjoy it better (Female low SES student, private university, Ghana).

Meeting the fees sometimes involved support from the extended family:

What I found very difficult is finance. That's the major problem I should say. Like someone like me in a private university - the fee is not easy at all. It is a very huge amount. It needs sacrifice from parents and individuals for someone in a private university to make it (Male mature low SES student, private university, Ghana).

Tanzanian students often discussed the disruption caused by student boycotts and strikes. This raises questions about the effectiveness of this form of resistance in a market economy

where students are still expected to pay fees for the boycott periods:

It was when I was in first year there was a big boycotting I think for 40 percent from that time we were suspended back home, and we were told that if we were not going to pay that 40 percent, we were not going back. Of course it was very, very hard for me... I could not even sleep... I was thinking about it where am I going to get those 500,000/= to pay so that I can be back to school? (Deprived female student, public university, Tanzania)

Mature students had to balance their own needs for finance with those of their families:

The cost of living. You have to pay your fees, pay your rent and food. And you don't have to forget about responsibilities at home. And if you don't have any reliable and sensible partner who will understand you, before you get back, you will meet an empty house. (Male mature student, public university, Ghana).

Sometimes how to get food to eat becomes a problem and at the same time you have to study, go and write quizzes and assignments and so forth (Male mature student, public university, Ghana).

Ever since I was a young kid, I had an interest in Law but there came a time my Dad could not support us financially ... So after that I said I will finish maybe I will get my money then I will do something I really want (Female mature student, private university, Tanzania).

Lack of resources in universities often meant that students had to supply their own materials and learning resources:

Yeah difficulties, just economic difficulties yeah economic difficulties. Economic difficulties as in University life almost 70 percent of all materials you must photocopy them. And the money that you are being given by the Loan Board is very little for photocopying. For until you finish the whole semester it reaches a time there is no money (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

The toughest challenge I've encountered were mostly finances. . . . And during the vacation you don't also get the opportunity to work to get something for yourself. So you are always dependent on our parents who send us money to be in school ... The money they send to me is not sufficient but I have to bear with them. And because of that I'm not able to, most of the time to make purchases of certain text books you have to rely on lecture notes, photocopies and all that, which limits your horizon. (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Nevertheless, some students praised their lecturers, both in the private and public institutions, e.g. their availability, willingness to help and support, and their ability to clarify:

Our lecturers are very kind, you can see that may be in the evening if we may be... if we have homework... or any difficult questions you can contact the teachers or lecturers to... give the way how to perform that question (Female mature student, private university, Tanzania).

The lectures they have time for the students... any time we approach them with our

problems they are ready to help. Just this morning I tried my own exercise and I consulted a lecturer, I was asked to place it in the pigeon hole he will pick it and then later invite me for discussion (Female mature student, public university, Ghana).

Lecturers are always there to help if you have any problem, you can face them and they will help you (Male mature student, public university, Tanzania).

The lecturers have their offices here. You just walk into their office and you just ask the lecturer what you don't understand about. It is just like lecturer– student interaction and so it makes easier for you to understand (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Support was also emotional, especially encouragement when students experienced difficulties:

Sometimes they encourage us to... press on and to do it very well; because the more we get higher the more... it becomes tougher (Female student, public university, Ghana).

I went to talk to ProfX directly, and he encouraged me (Female student, public university, Tanzania)

Members of staff they encourage me so much because they are providing me with relevant materials and also they are directing me to people who know certain things about the about my studies (Mature female student, private university, Tanzania).

Our lecturers are helpful. They inspire us to learn more (Male student, private university, Ghana).

However, while many students reported positive experiences, many had experienced problems with assessment, stress and lack of support and facilities. This applied to both public and private universities in both countries. There were also many negative reports of lecturers *e.g.* lack of professionalism, favouritism, corruption, and poor quality:

Yes about this results stuff because when I was outside of the university people have been saying some of the lecturers favoured the students and I didn't know it was true till I found it myself in the school about this results on notice board and some will go to the lecturers and they will just change it for them just like that. I thought it was just a mere saying but it was true.. .Like if the lecturer comes to the class they try to be very close to them especially the guys so that if anything they can just go to him or her so that the person will change for them and the ladies too they do all sorts of things for the lecturers to change the results for them (Female student, private university, Ghana).

I thought it was founded on Christian grounds so there would not be some of these things you have been hearing in other universities. So I thought as a student you learn hard and then you expect to get good results but I have got to learn that besides everything anything goes into it and when you write it, if you do not get a good lecturer, he might fail you without you doing anything to him. Because you might write, you might be a good student and you will fail.... Now for some mates they can go and see him and maybe then you can give him something and he will change it for you (Male student, private university, Ghana).

Lack of support was mentioned by all categories except low SES and mature students in the public university in Tanzania. The poor quality of lecturers was raised by all groups but less so by mature students and students from low SES backgrounds. The findings are open to a variety of interpretations e.g. quality and standards did differ across institutions and programmes but it may be the case that mature and low SES students were less critical i.e. they appreciated the opportunity to study.

As for their courses, there were many positive comments about enjoyment from all case study universities in both countries:

I am enjoying my course very much because with the course I am pursuing because each time I have any attachment at a workplace I do communicate a lot with people and I think it's ok for me... with human resource as a programme we manage talents, experience, behaviours, attitudes combined, it's a challenge but I love doing it (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Well I can say about LLB the Bachelor of Law at first I didn't like it. ...As a matter of time I came to realize it is a good course and I love it and I have learn a lot of things from it, yaa (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

The enjoyment was sometimes linked to social responsibility:

I love the programme I am doing. ...I like helping people, because I like doing things that would help people with the human body. So like working on the eyes sometimes makes me feel very happy. When I started doing my practicals I felt very happy that I was attending to people, that's, my dream was coming and attending to people, helping them with their needs, it makes me feel happy and good (Female student, public university, Ghana).

Other times, the enjoyment was linked to the course delivery and the potential for employability:

My course the way it look like at first I enjoy it, because it is conducted well in the sense that the way they present, the way they provide materials and the way they conduct seminars and it is the one of the course which you can expect to get, increase, you can improve your career outside of this university. So it is a, it look like a good course to take that is why I prefer to take it (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

Students also discussed social aspects of their experiences, with friendship, social life and gender relations receiving significant coverage in both countries.

All the above factors are important in promoting retention and completion. As noted earlier, rates of withdrawal (Section C3 on Mature Students) show considerable variation across programmes and groups. It is likely that the above negative factors played a significant role in at least some individuals' decision to terminate their studies prematurely.

In summary, it would appear that students' experiences of HE varied considerably, with both positive and negative features. Some problems were however common, e.g. difficulty in paying fees, poor levels of resources and support, and poor quality and, at times, the misconduct of lecturers. These appeared, not surprisingly, to affect mature students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular.

3. Emotional Engagement in Higher Education

Higher education is an emotional as well as an intellectual experience (Jackson, 2003). Assessment elicited the most emotional responses from all students in both countries

Table 7: Number of students who talked about emotions linked to assessment

Fear of assessment	0	4	3	1	2	2	2	2
Fear of failure	0	15	8	7	2	12	15	0
Joy/success in assessment	7	36	23	23	15	31	28	18
Sadness / failure in assessment	6	29	20	18	11	27	23	15
Shame	0	3	2	1	0	3	1	2

When asked about what had made them happy or sad, the majority in both countries cited success or failure in examinations and coursework. This was followed by fears of failure, pride, shame and relationships with other students, lecturers, and family.

Shame related to failure, performance or language proficiency. Some students, particularly in the private universities, demonstrated lack of English language in their interviews and also chose to comment on it:

Somehow this make me feel shame somehow because according to my basic education, I trying to speak English at the.... maybe.. Secondary level but because it was the interior secondary we are using our mother's language... more... many times... Kiswahili ...Here at the university, the same issue, sometimes I feel shame to speak with others because I say 'can I manage... can I arrange my grammar?' (Female student, private university, Tanzania)

The pressure to perform academically in public also provoked shame:

That was in first year when I was posed a question I could not answer, I felt very bad during the lecture, because it's a whole big class if you are given the microphone to talk, you don't have an answer to it, I felt shy. Everyone was attentive, about to listen to me, and without an answer I felt very bad. (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Whereas these female students expressed shame, many male students talked more about pride e.g. in academic performance and the transition to the life of the mind:

There were moments that I felt very happy to be here. One such moment that I can recall was I'm coming to school ... and ... I am talking to colleagues outside this school, and the way I was able to see ... I can talk intellectually or something. I could see that I had improved by coming to this place so I felt very happy that I was here (Male student, private university, Ghana).

I have much experience, much to talk about, but I'll say that first of all I'm very happy to be in the university, because previously I don't think I would be able to get to this. There was no hope for that. I have many experiences because I'll be able to learn from the lecturers, the mates. Good things (Female student, public university, Ghana).

Students clearly felt an emotional engagement with HE, which could take the form of anxiety, fear of failure and shame, especially in relation to assessment, but it also provoked feelings of pride. Success in examinations was frequently cited as a source of joy. This is indicative of the personal non-material investment that individuals make when deciding to enter HE and its potential to act as a transformative agent, as the following section makes clear.

4. Impact of HE

Higher education was conceptualised by many as an intensely social and emotional process, as well as an intellectual one. This raises questions about whether a central impact of HE is dispositional and relates to transformation of identity. Students generally felt differently about themselves as a consequence of HE participation, and believed that they had broadened their repertoire of social skills, networks and ways of thinking. Actual subject/disciplinary knowledge received much less coverage. Impact was conceptualised in four ways:

- a. The affective domain and personal development *e.g.* self-confidence, maturation, independence, appearance;
- b. Relationships and social domains *e.g.* social skills, capital and networks, exposure to different social groups, social status.
- c. Cognitive domains *e.g.* broadening thinking, increasing learning, subject knowledge and life skills.
- d. Employability *e.g.* adding economic value and acquiring human capital.

The affective and social aspects of participation in HE, in particular the acquisition of self-confidence and social skills, were discussed more than subject knowledge in both countries, especially by female and low SES students.

Yes I have more courage. Yeah. More determination... I know that if I really want to do something I will try my best to it (Female student, private university, Ghana).

The moment you are in school you should know that you are coming in to gain something not just passing through to acquire the knowledge. What you get from your lecturers and advices that you get, so I think, am hoping that, by the end, my end on this course, I come out with confidence in everything that I do (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Self-confidence was often coded in terms of communication and interpersonal skills, *e.g.* public speaking and working in diverse groups:

When I started the first year I had many experiences, I can say... for example talking before students, but now I can express myself (Male student, private university, Tanzania).

From the University I can say I have changed a lot now I can sit here or I can stand

and talk to people with confidence...yaa without fearing anything yaa (Female student, private university, Tanzania).

The university has given me the opportunity to be confident. Yes confident because the programme I'm reading, Bachelor of Management Studies it involves leadership it involves other things ...public speaking and also team work (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Some students related their confidence to the development of communication competencies in class:

At times some of the seminars are really very good. This was a time that speaking in the crowd was really difficult for me but due to movement with friends and sharing experiences with them I think I am coming over those problems, which I think is helping me personally in my life (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Now I can stand in front of people and talking through seminars room, I mean seminars make me feel confidence (Female student, public university, Tanzania).

Many students also believed that they had developed cognitive skills *e.g.* critical and analytical thinking:

University has also helped me develop critical way of thinking because of the courses that we run, the extra curricular activities, counselling sections, seminars and others. They really widened my way of thinking. I can now think more broadly and I think nowadays when I learn I get more understanding than before and I think I am developing intellectually (Male student, public university, Ghana).

Social mobility was sometimes obliquely discussed in terms of changed style of dress and appearance:

I have changed, I have changed.. .now I know how to analyse the things. I know how to express myself like this way ... I have got a broad mind now I can say, and even my appearance even change, the way I used to dress when I was in different stage (Male student, public university, Ghana).

The development of these various forms of capital is an important product of widening participation. Students also felt that the development of affective and social skills enhanced their employability. This was widely discussed in the context of the students' aspirations for the future and is covered in the next section.

5. Future Plans

The knowledge society had been internalised by many students. The most popular imagined future (Ball *et al.*, 1999; Ball, 2006) in both countries related to pursuing a profession and embarking on further studies. For some, plans related to HE as a public good *e.g.* students wanting to pay back their education by applying it to social responsibility and change. Some were also conscious that they could use their education to encourage others to enter HE (multiplier effect). Others positioned HE as a private good *e.g.* support for their families.

Future plans were similar across public and private universities, gender, age and SES. Some differences included:

- a. Male students in the private universities in both countries prioritised pursuing a profession.
- b. Male students in the public university in Ghana and the private university in Tanzania wanted to pursue an academic career whereas no women anywhere mentioned this.
- c. Female students in both universities and countries prioritised the pursuit of a profession except for the private university in Tanzania where they prioritised further study.
- d. Low SES students in both universities and in both countries prioritised the pursuit of a profession.

While many students reported difficulties with their programmes, finances and lecturers, they were not deterred from desiring further studies. The aspiration for postgraduate study was widely reported in both countries and in all universities:

When I leave the university, I want to continue to do my Masters as planned. I planned to go as far as I can (Male student, private university, Ghana).

You know after undergraduate we need also to be post graduate student, even the PhD candidate, you see, those are things which we are thinking for the future (Male student, private university, Tanzania).

You know my father did not try and that is why I am suffering. So I only pray that the God should let me live long so that I can look after my children. They are only three boys. That's why I am saying that I would like to pursue the Masters, so that my children will aspire to go beyond or above what I have achieved (Male student, public university, Ghana).

I want Masters ...because now, now I am twenty two now... My dad says your brain is still warm so you can go for Masters (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

Higher education was seen as a crucial pathway to the professions by the majority of students. The desire to pursue a profession and 'become a somebody' was a dominant theme in future aspirations.

Some had very high ambitions, at national and international levels:

I wish to be an ambassador (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

When I complete my programme of studies I think firstly, to go back to my country, and, try to make agriculture over there to become big. And if God permits, become the Minister of Agriculture (Female student, private university, Ghana).

I plan to become a lawyer, an advocate if possible. I am planning also to become a politician as a member of CCM (Male student, private university, Tanzania).

I'm hoping to become one of the future, great economists, if not in Ghana in the world (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Others had more modest, but socially responsible, plans:

I am hoping to be a good banking student ... that at the end of the day, I will be able to help people out there who will be mismanages their money and then people who will always keep a lot of money with them and will not invest it - at the end of the day then armed robbers come for them ... I hope to become a big person in the future so that we can help the society to build the nation (Female student, private university, Ghana).

Some just wanted to be good at their chosen profession:

Actually if Godwishes, if I can complete my university studies I am trying to be, I want to be a good accountant (Male deprived student, private university, Tanzania).

One mature student just wanted to earn enough to support the family:

First of all to support my family - especially my children to attain higher learning level. I have got four children two are in secondary school now and two are still primary school. I am sure that being in University even at this age has made me to know the importance of having education, of having University education level therefore, I will support my children and the family. And also I am going to use the knowledge I have acquired here in my job (Male student, public university, Tanzania).

As all these quotations suggest that higher education has important transformative potential. It also profoundly influences the capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004).

F. Equity Scorecards (ESCs): High Impact Monitoring Tools?

Policymakers and staff were provided with a brief explanation of the Equity Scorecards during the interview and asked for their opinion on their uses and benefits. The majority of staff in both countries and universities saw them as useful monitoring tools. Some seemed uncomfortable with their ability to understand and interpret the Scorecards as they lacked statistical literacy.

Male and female staff in Ghana thought that they could be used to inform decision-making and aid policymaking, and to expose the areas that need to improve. They also felt that they provided data about deprived schools and were useful statistical tools that could raise awareness about equity. Some staff in Ghana pointed out the difficulties of obtaining data due to weak information management at institutional level and possible resistances from decision makers.

Staff in Tanzania saw the use of the Scorecards in terms of policymaking, institutional learning, advocacy and information for decision-making, and as a statistical tool. Some pointed out their limitations *e.g.* lack of qualitative data. They generally felt that management information was available even though our own experience in gathering data for the Scorecards showed that in all four universities there were several gaps in the data available centrally. These gaps were bridged in different ways such as communicating with the different departments and in some cases asking students directly.

Many staff thought that Equity Scorecards could play a role in monitoring widening participation strategies. They can be used to track different marginalised groups in terms of access, retention, completion and achievement and provide valuable information to assess the effectiveness of the measures being put in place to support different types of students.

Section 3: Conclusion

The World Bank recently suggested that:

Ultimately, the range of policy choices lies between the easy path of laissez-faire expansionism, and the more difficult road of strategic quality management. Unfettered expansion is really no solution. It will lead to further declines in educational quality, an overproduction of graduates in relation to the absorptive capacity of the labor market, consequent high unemployment among graduates, and associated risks of political instability, which will increase the difficulties of generating economic growth
(World Bank 2009a: xxviii).

We support the need for more strategic quality management and suggest that quality and equalities need to be intersected in planning and monitoring activities. Our study has found that while there are many committed and caring individuals working in higher education in Africa, they are not always supported by effective management systems and structures. Currently, it appears that quality is monitored in a fairly uneven and unsystematic way in both countries, and particularly unevenly in the private universities. This is undermining interventions for equality *e.g.* the lack of management information systems, lack of professional development/ codes of professional ethics and lack of attention to student experiences mean that under-represented groups are either not entering HE; only entering certain programmes; are not being monitored for retention and completion; and have no sense of entitlements or service level agreements for the quality of higher education that they are likely to receive. This is apparent in poor pedagogy, assessment problems and abusive student/lecturer relationships. The sex for grades exchange speaks about patriarchy, sexism and gendered power relations. It also relates to lack of quality assurance, suggesting that assessment is not subjected to rigorous external scrutiny.

The main findings from our study are:

Equity Scorecards

- ✚ Mature students' high dropout out in both countries.
- ✚ Low SES students under-represented in all subjects except Education/, and the clustering of under-represented groups in non-elite disciplines with low exchange rate in labour market.
- ✚ SES and achievement- these students represent a lower risk than imagined.
- ✚ AA programmes might contribute to the increase in numbers of women *e.g.* BSc Engineering in the Tanzanian public university, but these tend to be women from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds.
- ✚ Women applying for STEM programmes, but not always getting accepted *e.g.* Agri-business management.
- ✚ In Tanzania, in the programmes we studied, the private university admitted more mature students than the public university. In Ghana, it was the opposite.

- ✚ In both countries, private universities tended to admit a higher proportion of women than public universities but there were significant variations of participation rate between programmes.
- ✚ Women and men's completion rates are similar.
- ✚ Low representation of mature students- particularly in public universities.
- ✚ Degree results are similar for different groups of students.

Interviews

Staff and Policymakers

- ✚ Lack of monitoring/evaluation/management information systems *e.g.* absence of data on social variables apart from gender, and on educational outcomes apart from access.
- ✚ Difference between staff and students' perceptions *e.g.* support.
- ✚ Difference between staff perceptions of WP successes and the ESCs *e.g.* policy successes.
- ✚ Staff discontentment with admissions procedures.
- ✚ Resourcing- WP and under-funded expansion.
- ✚ EFA policies not integrated with HE.
- ✚ WP widely perceived as more women entering STEM.
- ✚ Lack of engagement and familiarity of academic staff with the MDGs.

Students

HE Experiences

- ✚ Lack of student centred services and practices *e.g.* transparency in assessment procedures/ service-level agreements.
- ✚ Poor quality learning environments *e.g.* over-crowding, lack of resources.
- ✚ Professional malpractices- assessment/ sexual harassment/ lack of lecturer professionalism.
- ✚ Symbolic power of becoming a student/ 'becoming a somebody'.
- ✚ HE perceived as a public good (social responsibility/national development) and private good (escape from poverty/lifestyle investment).
- ✚ Positive and negative experiences of HE reported by students, but all reported its impact - particularly on identity and self-efficacy.

Growing Up

- ✚ The importance of social capital in facilitating educational access.
- ✚ Poor quality basic education (lack of teachers/ professionalism, resources) means lack of preparedness for HE- especially in STEM subjects.
- ✚ Violence (actual and symbolic), corporal punishment and exploitation of school children's labour created some negative educational associations.
- ✚ Impact of socio-cultural factors on educational opportunities *e.g.* polygamy, investment in sons.

Structures of Inequality

- ✚ Gendered micropolitics *e.g.* women and academic ability, heteronormativity, rumour and regulation.
- ✚ Transformative potential of HE for women.
- ✚ Students from low socio-economic backgrounds struggled to gain access, but once entered, they thrived.
- ✚ Multiplier effect *e.g.* students from poor rural communities often reported how they aroused interest in HE in their villages.
- ✚ The effectiveness of loans systems for enabling participation- especially of students from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- ✚ Mature students as 'other', and the difficulties of combining study, work and family life.
- ✚ Importance of flexible modes of delivery for enabling mature students.
- ✚ Lack of policy attention for students with disabilities.
- ✚ Students with disabilities believed that HE was a corrective to prejudiced views about spoiled identities.

Our main recommendations are:

To the Universities:

1. Management Information- the need for systematic collection and analysis of data on retention and achievement as well as access, disaggregated by gender, age, SES and disability, for monitoring purposes and strategic planning. Structures of inequality need to be related to educational outcomes. The Equity Scorecards could be used to inform this process. The uneven participation rates of female, older and low socio-economic status students in different programmes of study needs investigating and monitoring.
2. Monitoring and evaluation- of admissions procedures, including for the purpose of facilitating the admission of students from under-represented groups who meet the minimum entry requirement. This should also be applied to retention, completion and achievement.
3. Quality assurance procedures to be introduced and audited to:
 - ✚ Ensure consistent educational experiences and standards for students via service-level agreements, grade criteria for assessment;
 - ✚ Monitor staffing and resourcing issues;
 - ✚ Examine admissions and assessment procedures. More regulation of assessment needs to be introduced *e.g.* double marking, external examining;
 - ✚ Promote professional development of lecturers *e.g.* academic practice, working with diverse learning groups, ethical and professional conduct.
4. Stricter codes of professional conduct need to be applied, especially in cases of sexual harassment, with sanctions for offenders and support mechanisms for victims, including protection against possible ensuing victimisation.

5. More structured support for ‘non-traditional’ students needs to be available *e.g.* academic literacy programmes, access courses, buildings to be made accessible for students with disabilities, peer mentoring and buddy arrangements.

To Policymakers:

1. Quality assurance - enhanced monitoring, accountability and quality assurance of public and private HEIs is needed. This needs to include structured and standardised systems for student feedback.
2. Capacity and resourcing issues - policy and management action to be taken to ensure that human and learning resources are allocated commensurately with student numbers in order to ensure quality of the learning environment.
3. Ministries of education in both countries need to initiate and monitor:
 - ✚ A code of professional ethics for teachers in primary and secondary schools;
 - ✚ Professional development for teachers, especially on social inclusion issues;
 - ✚ More robust quality assurance, inspection and audit arrangements of schools;
 - ✚ Adequate supply of trained teachers and facilities particularly for schools in rural and deprived regions and improved access to good quality science teaching, especially for girls.

To summarise, it appears that there are unequal geographies of knowledge and some archaic patterns of participation in higher education in the two countries studied in this project. Globally, participation rates are rising, but not from a range of social groups in Ghana and Tanzania. For many, widening participation was seen in relation to quantitative change of one particular group-usually women-into STEM subjects. There was less engagement with qualitative experiences of students once entered, or with monitoring educational outcomes including retention and completion, or with intersectionality of social identities. In a globalised knowledge economy, quality and equality need to be intersected, and questions need to be posed about the value of higher education in terms of wealth distribution and poverty alleviation as well as wealth creation.

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APPENDIX 1

Research Questions

1. What have been the achievements and challenges to date in developing and implementing strategies for widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania?
2. How are the case study institutions interpreting and responding to the Millennium Development Goals?
3. Which groups are currently and traditionally under-represented in the case study institutions? Does this correlate with wider national and international patterns of social exclusion?
4. Is there a relationship between learners' prior experiences of education, their socio-economic backgrounds and their experiences and achievement in education? Are there correlations between entry qualifications, progression rates and achievement and completion?
5. What mechanisms for support have been put in place for 'non-traditional' students to facilitate retention and achievement? How do 'non-traditional' students experience these interventions?
6. What do stakeholders perceive to be the main barriers to participation for under-represented groups?
7. What interventions used in other national locations appear to promote or impede widening participation of groups traditionally excluded from higher education? Are these transferable?
8. What strategies can the case study intuitions develop to improve the recruitment, retention and achievement of students from non-traditional backgrounds?

APPENDIX 2

The Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

APPENDIX 3

Number of students by category and year of study in each programme

Private University Ghana

B. Sc. Economics

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	47	30	3	74	0	77
Level 200	17	12	0	29	0	29
Level 300	17	7	0	24	1	23
Level 400	20	4	0	24	1	23

B.Sc. Admin Human Resources Management

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	83	144	23	204	10	217
Level 200	106	286	56	336	7	385
Level 300	93	199	2	290	9	283
Level 400	67	160	10	217	2	255

B.Sc. Agri-Business Management

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	13	1	4	10	0	14
Level 200	17	1	5	13	0	18
Level 300	17	1	0	18	0	18
Level 400	8	3	0	11	0	11

B.Sc. Admin Accountancy

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	105	55	14	146	11	149
Level 200	170	124	0	294	7	287
Level 300	110	88	0	198	6	192
Level 400	93	68	5	156	1	160

Private University Tanzania**LLB. Law**

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	100	71	16	155	8	163
Level 200	134	121	41	214	25	230
Level 300	209	170	47	332	29	250

B. Business Administration

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	34	26	14	46	5	55
Level 200	60	21	21	60	6	75
Level 300	107	43	38	112	9	141

MD. Medicine

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	78	28	14	92	5	101
Level 200	61	41	6	96	6	96
Level 300	42	29	11	60	5	66
Level 400	27	12	8	31	0	39
Level 500	11	13	4	20	2	22

B. Ed. Maths

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	187	28	113	102	25	190
Level 200	115	25	89	51	15	125
Level 300	40	17	44	13	7	50

Public university Ghana

B.Sc. Optometry

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	18	8	0	26	0	26
Level 200	9	4	0	13	0	13
Level 300	9	2	0	11	0	1112
Level 400	12	4	0	16	0	16

B. Commerce

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	137	43	23	157	5	175
Level 200	253	108	21	340	6	355
Level 300	299	146	12	433	14	431
Level 400	262	109	82	289	12	359

B. Primary Education

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	99	28	100	27	13	114
Level 200	63	36	65	34	8	91
Level 300	87	68	91	64	12	143
Level 400	91	70	117	44	17	144

B. Management Studies

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	106	53	13	146	3	156
Level 200	126	112	15	223	7	231
Level 300	158	110	9	259	4	264
Level 400	175	147	57	265	4	318

Public University Tanzania

B. Commerce

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	414	205	10	609	47	572
Level 200	417	200	7	610	51	566
Level 300	418	173	11	580	37	554

LLB. Law

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	69	27	2	94	14	82
Level 200	78	99	0	177	20	157
Level 300	137	96	15	218	28	205
Level 400	151	108	17	242	20	239

B.Sc. Engineering

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	301	106	4	403	36	371
Level 200	385	128	7	506	52	461
Level 300	305	92	7	390	39	358
Level 400	334	96	23	407	48	382

B. Science with Education

	Male	Female	Mature	Non Mature	Low SES	Non Low SES
Level 100	201	39	18	222	45	195
Level 200	111	14	6	119	35	90
Level 300	57	30	7	80	16	71
Level 400	65	40	7	98	11	94

APPENDIX 4: Degree Results and Student Non-Completion During the 2007/8 Year

Private University Ghana

	Frequenc	Percentage
First Class	0	0.00
Second Class Upper	196	46.34
Second Class Lower	123	29.08
Third Class	22	5.20
Pass	26	6.15
Changed University	1	0.24
Withdraw Financial	30	7.09
Withdraw Job constraint	6	1.42
Withdraw Personal	9	2.13
Withdraw Travel	10	2.36
Total	423	100.00

Private University Tanzania

	Frequenc	Percentage
First Class	20	3.19
Second Class Upper	73	11.64
Second Class Lower	227	36.20
Third Class	258	41.15
Withdrawal	44	7.02
Repeat	5	0.80
Total	627	100.00

Public University Ghana

	Frequenc y	Percentage
First Class	42	4.83
Second Class Upper	251	28.85
Second Class Lower	208	23.91
Third Class	135	15.52
Pass	80	9.20
Fail	10	1.15
Withdrawal Academic	137	15.75
Withdraw Other	7	0.80
Total	870	100.00

Public University Tanzania

	Frequenc	Percentage
First Class	24	1.74
Second Class Upper	370	26.77
Second Class Lower	675	48.84
Third Class	50	3.62
Deceased	2	0.07
Withdrawal	184	13.31
Still completing/ Repeat	77	5.65
Total	1,382	100.00