

Selected recommendations

To Universities

1. **Management information**, monitoring and evaluation - collection and analysis of data on access, retention and achievement, disaggregated by gender, age, SES and disability.
2. **Quality assurance** procedures should:
 - Facilitate consistent educational experiences and standards for students;
 - Monitor staffing and resourcing;
 - Examine admissions and assessment procedures;
 - Promote professional development of lecturers;
 - Ensure codes of professional conduct.
3. **Support for 'non-traditional' students** e.g. academic literacy, inclusive pedagogy, accessible buildings for disabled students.

Research team

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To Policymakers

1. **Quality assurance** – enhance monitoring and accountability of public and private universities, including standardised systems for student feedback.
2. **Capacity and resourcing issues** – human and learning resources allocated commensurately with student numbers.
3. **Preparedness for HE** e.g. Ministries of Education need to develop and monitor within schools:
 - Codes of professional ethics for teachers;
 - Professional development for teachers, especially on social inclusion issues;
 - Robust quality assurance, inspection and audit arrangements;
 - Adequate supply of trained teachers and facilities, particularly in rural and deprived regions;
 - Improved access to good quality science teaching, especially for girls.

See the project website:

www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cheer/wphegt for:

- Project Report and Executive Summary
- Project publications
- Videos of dissemination events
- Resources on WP
- Equity Scorecards
- Case studies
- Interactive Discussions

University of Sussex

School of Education and Social Work

Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania:

Developing an Equity Scorecard

An ESRC/DFID Poverty Reduction Programme
Research Project (RES-167-25-0078)



Cover photo: Panos Pictures/Mikkel Ostergaard



The research project

A new evidence base has emerged from the completion of a three-year ESRC/DFID funded project for widening participation and social inclusion in sub-Saharan Africa.

Case studies of one public and one private university in Ghana and Tanzania comprise:

- 200 student life history interviews: including women, mature, low socio-economic status (SES) and disabled students;
- 200 interviews with academic staff and policymakers on policies, interventions, strategies and challenges for widening participation, and the *Millennium Development Goals*;
- 100 Equity Scorecards: statistics on 4 programmes of study in each university intersecting gender, SES and age to reveal patterns of participation, retention and achievement.

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cheer/wphegt/equityscorecards>



Key findings

Student life history interviews

Narratives of growing up, entering and experiencing higher education (HE) suggested the need to develop:

- Student-centred services and practices e.g. transparency in assessment;
- Quality learning environments e.g. resources, effective pedagogy;
- Lecturer professionalism and accountability.

Students saw the impact of HE in terms of:

- Identity transformation e.g. 'Becoming a somebody';
- An escape route from poverty;
- Enhanced self-efficacy and self-esteem;
- National economic and social development.

Staff and policymaker interviews

Indicated the need to address:

- Monitoring, evaluation and management;
- Impact of poverty on participation;
- Importance of loans systems;
- Effectiveness of affirmative action;
- Capacity challenges;
- Integrating *Education for All* policies and *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) into HE;
- WP should mean more than increasing the number of women in science.

Equity Scorecards

- Support evidence-based policy development and evaluation;
- Comprise detailed statistics on patterns of participation, retention and achievement;
- Yield a nuanced overview of the intersected effects of gender, age and SES.

They revealed that:

- Most programmes enrolled very few (or no) low SES students;
- Low SES students tended to be on programmes with low exchange rates in the labour market;
- Fewer low SES students withdrew and they performed as well as, and sometimes better than, other groups;
- Mature students were most at risk of withdrawal;
- Women, especially low SES and mature women, were under-represented on science programmes;
- More women were entering private, than public universities.