**Counting people in higher education by developing Equity Scorecards**

**Introduction**

There is a political economy of access and participation in higher education. Higher education is repeatedly positioned by the international community as a central site for facilitating the skills, knowledge and expertise that are essential to economic and social development in low-income countries. However, globally, there are concerns about who gains access to higher education and whether some socio-economic groups are persistently marginalised. In Sub-Saharan Africa, less than 6 per cent of the population is enrolled in higher education.

**Access to higher education in Ghana and Tanzania**

Access to higher education in Ghana and Tanzania is rising but remains low. In 2004, both countries had Gross Enrolment Ratios that were lower than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa, and other countries with similar levels of (low) income: Ghana (3.1%) and Tanzania (1.2%).

**Who completes higher education in Ghana/Tanzania?**

According to World Bank data, in Ghana and Tanzania the majority of students are male and from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds.

**Quantitative data**

Quantitative data will be collected at four levels:

- international
- national
- institutional
- Equity Scorecard datasets: working with Equity Scorecard Working Groups, the research teams will use statistical datasets generated at the institutional level to identify relevant indicators of access, participation and achievement. The data collected will be analysed in terms of sociological variables linked to student under-representation, for example gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, regional background etc.

**Who will benefit from this project?**

- communities who are currently excluded from higher education
- higher education institutions in Africa
- policy-makers and those implementing the Millennium Development Goals
- international organisations seeking to develop African universities
- NGOs concerned with equity, social exclusion and poverty alleviation
- the international community of higher education scholars and researchers.

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