



7. Concluding reflections and policy implications

In this study we have attempted to do three things: first to provide an argument for acknowledging and using the cultural dimension in educational development, second to put the case for a culturally more appropriate research methodology; and third to address the issue of access and gender in schooling within a cultural framework.

The argument for taking more account of cultural issues in education and development is now gathering pace, particularly amongst those dissatisfied with economic-centred models of change in developing country settings. Though the

concept of culture is far from simple it does seem possible to arrive at a working definition which views the concept as both about what people think and do and how we, as educators or development people, describe and evaluate those beliefs and actions. The time is now past when culture was viewed as something 'they' did in exotic climates, it now being concerned with issues of relationships (e.g. with time, the environment, power and hierarchy) maintained and changing amongst people and agencies involved in the social domains of the economy, home and the school.

The case for a more culturally-appropriate research methodology has also been well put: the debate moving on from crude debates about quantitative or qualitative approaches to an examination of methods of social enquiry that take greater account of the cultural nature of that investigation.

One of the aims of this study was to demonstrate a case for

according more weight to the use of biographical and life history methods in educational research. In doing so the researcher is faced with maintaining two parallel sets of tensions - first in the balance that needs to be struck between the individual and the contextually-situated nature of individual experiences and second in the balance between the subjective and objective.

In the description and analysis of the study's findings an attempt was made to keep in check these sets of tensions with 'objective' contextual material providing breadth and setting contrasted with the 'subjective' testimonies drawn from individual life histories.

In taking this approach we are emphasising two dimensions of cultural importance: that the teachers' and girl pupils' life histories be told in their own words (and that these 'voices' are given 'space' in the text) and that, as far as possible, be embedded in genealogies of context. If space had permitted

we would have liked to have provided room for full life histories of selected individuals. As it is we have attempted to draw out of the experiences common and shared concerns which should be of use to educationists and aid personnel interested in learning from the grassroots what is and what could be.

In focusing upon the problems of access to and dropping-out of school by young women and girls in one national setting, this study provides a good opportunity for us to gain a greater understanding of the cultural nature of both problem and solution.

In the first domain of the home a picture was painted of a society shaped by matters of kinship, descent, and the extended family. The practice of fostering and its impact on educational opportunities for young girls was identified as one area of particular importance. The work expected of a child (girls being required to take a larger share) in the home was

also identified as a barrier to achieving greater participation of young people in schooling. Attention was also paid to the cultural values inculcated in the child: godliness, obedience, humility, hospitality, gratitude and national pride, and the effect, particularly of obedience and humility towards elders, upon the schooling of girls in a Western-type education system.

Finally, we looked briefly at the major changes occurring within the Ghanaian family e.g. the re-structuring of authority patterns within the home, the changing role of women within society and the likely impact these might have on the girl-child's life at school.

The Northern and Southern settings for the two case studies provided some evidence for the view that support for schooling was generally strong in the South and more so in urban than rural settings. Opportunities for women to play a greater part in the social and economic life of the nation had

led, paradoxically, to a situation where urban extended families looked to poorer relatives in the rural villages to provide help in the home.

Three issues emerged as significant when women teachers and girls talked about growing up, namely the traditional and widely-held attitudes concerning what girls and women could and could not do; the expectations of girls vis-à-vis those of boys; and for girls the importance of successful women as role models. The support offered a girl whilst in school by members of the extended family and the problems young women face at times of family break-up provide food for thought particularly when considering the targeting of aid towards those most in need. Identifying the child-at-risk **as well as** the drop out would follow with the necessity for closer collaboration between professionals working within the social development and educational arenas.

The experiences of girls and young women give testimony to

these changes, with poverty and family break up on the one hand; and on the other, for the successful woman teacher support from the father being factors that determine their futures.

The second domain - the economic described the situation of poverty in Ghana from a macro and micro perspective, arguing that economic policies such as structural adjustment in the former create an array of 'winners' and 'losers' in the latter. The child-at-risk portrayed in our first section more often as not resides within an economically vulnerable household where relative lack of wealth is contingent upon location, gender, age and health.

The relationship between poverty and schooling is particularly striking within this nation setting with evidence that structural adjustment and 'dash for growth' economic strategies provide, 'a strong and positive relationship' between enrolment and poverty status. There is also surprising

support for private education (particularly in the capital) and evidence that the mean parental expense of educating girls is significantly higher than that for boys at both primary and secondary levels.

The experience of poverty of those interviewed fell into two broad categories: the first termed, 'the culture of power' - a critical understanding of current and past circumstances that bring about poverty, and the second, the 'power of culture' - in which individuals and communities speak the language of possibility and coping strategies.

In the first case, it is clear that many girls are put at risk economically for very small amounts of money and that some parents, particularly fathers, are abrogating their responsibilities in supporting their daughters, leaving the girls themselves to juggle between attending school and becoming the family breadwinner. The value women teachers put upon the financial sacrifices of their family in supporting them

through school and college indicates the importance in differentiating between willingness and ability to pay for an offspring's schooling.

A consequence of the liberalisation of the economy and an encouragement of the free market has been the realisation by many family members that being out of school is more profitable for their child than being in. This has serious implications for those involved in improving the quality of Basic Education, with parents more conscious of schools providing 'value for money' and more effective vocationally-orientated training.

A curious view to emerge from the experiences of older and younger females is the belief that economically times are much harder now. It would appear that though, on a macro-scale, Ghana experienced severe economic depression in the late 1970's and 1980's, many feel that the quality of schooling remained high with parents shielded from the financial

burdens faced by parents currently.

In terms of ways forward the research confirms the view that whereas in the past schooling was viewed as "free" parents today are much more discriminating in their attitude to sending their children to school, many taking the view that 'failure' in examination or the incidence of pregnancy "wastes" precious economic resources.

Solutions to help those in financial difficulty include reducing school fees for the very poor, payment of fees in instalments, and recognition that many girls can finance their own education given flexibility in school hours and curriculum.

A re-examination of the relationship between the world of the school and the world of work is necessary therefore and needs to take account of the experiences of those who manage to succeed through school often as a result of their own resilience and resourcefulness.

The world of school made up our third domain. Here we found a situation where many of the core cultural values described earlier translated into how the teacher behaves and how he or she expects the children to learn. Knowledge valued for its own sake, reliance upon question and answer and rote learning, and fluctuations in the quality of educational provision, particularly between the North and the South of the country, shape the educational experiences of most children.

A major issue seems to be the amount of time on task a child experiences with many children spending significant periods of the school day doing nothing and learning very little. The rhetoric of educational reform needs to be placed alongside the lack of attention (even in the rhetoric) to issues of language policy and teaching - learning methodology.

The women and girls interviewed, once again showed an optimism and sense of realism in looking for ways forward. These tended to be grouped into two broad areas: first ways

in which the community can continue to help schools with provision of furniture, lunch-time snacks for children, housing for teachers, and secondly arrangements made within the school to improve the teaching-learning process. Here the 'voices' of the children need to be listened to much more with sensible suggestions advocating such things as reading clubs and class libraries.

The life of the teacher is generally a sorry one with many still enjoying their career but believing that it was much more difficult now with teachers receiving less respect from the children and the community and for many seeing teaching as a stepping stone to a better paid and higher status occupation.

For children, life at school is worthwhile in terms of potential social investment but an experience fraught with difficulty and disappointment. Heavy emphasis upon punishment, the equation of success with the academic, and a belief that

education is given to rather than being drawn out of a child characterises the culture of many schools.

The 'too old for the class' girls and those with special needs are most at risk with learning difficulties being seen as the responsibility of the child rather than the school or the teacher.

In terms of policy implications this research indicates that much more needs to be done in framing both problem and solution within a holistic framework that takes account of the domains of home, economy and school. The chart below gives a number of examples of ways forward which, though located in a particular domain, should be viewed within the larger world of the child's life.

Policy Implications



<p>That home life for many schoolgirls is shaped by matters of kinship, descent and the extended family. The practice of fostering and the work expected of many girls has implications for the development of compulsory schooling.</p>	<p>That the concept of the 'Girl Child' be extended to include the 'Girl Child at Risk'. It is clear that 'drop-out' is not an event but a process and often involves very small amounts of money. The question of 'safety net' provision at national and local level needs to accompany policies to</p>	<p>That schools are still places where many children spend significant periods of time doing nothing and learning very little. Many of the cultural core values described earlier translate into how the teacher behaves and how he or she expects the child to learn.</p> <p>That little attention is paid to the 'culture of the classroom' where issues of attitude to</p>
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That recognition be given to the cultural values inculcated in the child at home. Obedience and deference to elders, for example, will have implications for those keen to develop more child-centred teaching methods.

That the situation of rural

increase participation in schooling.

That macro economic policies such as structural adjustment create an array of 'winners' and 'losers', particularly at the micro level of extended family.

The encouragement of the free market has also led to a realization for

knowledge, teaching methodology, and language policy constrain efforts to implement reform.

That the life of the teacher is still very hard with many perceiving their profession as low status. Improving the position of teacher requires not only better conditions of service but the development of professional practices within schools. Such a task falls to the head teacher well supported

girls be accorded particular attention e.g. in the development of non-formal provision for girls working as domestic servants in urban homes.

That attitudes towards the education of girls still raises questions of parental awareness of

many that being out of school is more profitable for their child than being in.

That in many poor homes the sole breadwinner is the girl-child at school.

Recognition of this needs to be accompanied by more flexible school time tabling and a re-appraisal of vocational training.

by district education offices.

That the experiences of the child in school be accorded more importance. The frequency of punishment, support in the learning of literacy and numeracy, and the existence of successful women teachers as role models for girls and boys are areas mentioned by many children. We need to listen to what the young people are telling us

the benefits of schooling, the necessity of examining the support available for poor families to send girls to school, and the broader question of the amount and flexibility of schooling provided.

That the introduction of school fees has meant that 'success' is now a question of a return on an investment. The 'culture of failure' in many schools with excessive and poorly administered assessment procedures can have major consequences for the underachieving

about their educational experiences and the solutions provided by them.

child.

That solutions to these problems lie in both hands of policy-makers and in the creative way many girls and young teachers juggle the relationship between the world of school and the world of work.

For those charged with improving the educational system it would seem important to look not just at an array of inputs that need putting into the system or the outputs as measured

by examination scores but to giving greater priority to the day-to-day processes of teaching; to examine ways in which the teacher can be better supported in what he or she tries to achieve. Giving more attention to the cultural dimension of being a teacher will result in considering such issues as the social standing of the profession, the interface between the teacher's life in the classroom and in the community, and in enhancing the career path of those who enter the profession. The importance of successful women as role models to young female pupils and the negative stereotyping of some women within the profession are also matters of concern.

Finally, much more importance needs to be accorded to the voices of those most affected by educational reform. The women and girls interviewed in this study are not passive recipients of Government or Donor initiative but resourceful individuals able to provide ideas and solutions grounded in the realities of their daily lives. It is up to us to listen.



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Appendix 1 - Transcripts of three life history interviews with girl drop outs

Interview with Ayishetu Hassan (Drop Out, Laribanga)

Ayishetu Hassan is a girl of about 13 years. When she was invited for the interview, she refused and even started running away. When she was caught, I explained what I was doing and why I was doing it. Ayishetu agreed to have the interview. She was afraid but soon got over it when we started. On the tape she seemed to have spent about 30

minutes but in reality, the interview with Ayishetu was over an hour. I had to occasionally press my pause button in order not to waste the tape. She was pleased with herself, manifested in smiles when it was over. The interview was in Kamara, her mother tongue. This was conducted in July, 1995.

Q: Where were you born?

A Laribanga.

Q: Where did you grow up?

A Laribanga.

Q: Are you the eldest, youngest or somewhere in the middle among you mother's children?

A: I am not the eldest.

Q: How many are you?

A: We are eight.

Q: How many are older than you?

A: Four.

Q: Do they attend school?

A: No, they go for Islamic instructions.

Q: Are you the eldest among the girls?

A: No, we are two girls.

Q: What kind of work do you do at home?

A: Fetching of water, washing dishes and fetching firewood.

Q: What work do your parents do?

A: They are farmers.

Q: Do you have any other child staying with you?

A: Yes, we have an aunt's child staying with us.

Q: Who is older?

A: She is.

Q: Are there days that you felt very unhappy?

A: Yes.

Q: What made you unhappy on such days?

A: They blame me quite often saying I was not hardworking.

Q: What about happy moments?

A: When I was praised.

Q: Where did you start your schooling?

A: In Laribanga.

Q: What did you like about school?

A: I didn't like school at all.

Q: What were your thoughts when you were in school?

A: Nothing.

Q: What and how did you feel? Did you really not like school?

A: No.

Q: Were your school fees being paid?

A: No.

Q: Did you get any help from your parents?

A: No.

Q: Why did you drop out of school?

A: Nothing. I don't have any specified reasons.

Q: Were there other girls like you who dropped out of school while you were there?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, tell me why you stopped going to school.

A: I was asked to pay some money and when I told my

parents about it, they told me they didn't have any money to pay so I stopped.

Q: Did the teachers worry you too much about the fees?

A: Yes.

Q: How did you feel about that?

A: I felt ashamed and that was why I left.

Q: What else worried you so much that you had to leave school?

A: Nothing.

Q: Do you feel you could make it in school?

A: No, I was not good in class.

Q: Was that another reason for leaving school?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you think of any career while you were in school? Did you feel like doing some job after school?

A: I never thought of that.

Q: Were there any drop outs when you were in school?

A: Yes.

Q: Why did they drop out?

A: Some of the good pupils teased the weaker ones in class.

Q: Will you go if we talk to you teacher to warn all who laugh at pupils like you?

A: Yes, I will go back to school.

Q: Considering your experience, what do you think should be done to help girls like you stay in school?

A: Pupils should be given school dresses and sandals for school.

Q: Suppose you have your dresses and your school fees paid, will you go to school even if you are laughed at?

A: Yes.

Q: What do you think your parents should do to help you stay in school?

A: They should give me money.

Q: What do you need money for?

A: To send to school (chop money).

Q: Do you imply that you need food?

A: Yes.

Q: Have you heard of the government?

A: No.

Q: What do you think school authorities should do to help you in school?

A: Nothing. I don't think they can do anything.

Q: Were your parents happy that you went to school?

A: They were happy about it.

Q: What support did they offer you when you were in school?

A: They gave me food when I return from school.

Q: So why did you then stop going to school?

A: Nothing.

N.B. Although the interview doesn't seem long, it took me over one hour to reach this point.

Q: Do you know any drop outs?

A: No.

Q: What about girls who stopped going to school at the same time with you? Do you know any?

A: Yes, she is Sadia.

Q: Do you know why she dropped out?

A: No, I know she was sent to Damongo.

Q: What work do you do now that you have stopped going to school?

A: Going for water, washing dishes, going to market and fetching firewood (*) as going to the farm.

Q: Could you not have been in school whilst doing what you do?

A: No.

Q: So it was not only because your parents couldn't pay the school fees that you stopped going to school?

A: Yes, that was the only reason.

Q: Suppose you had someone to pay you school fees would you continue education?

A: No.

Q: Why will you not go to school despite getting a sponsor?

A: I am not intelligent and that makes me feel shy, I think.

Q: You feel you are not intelligent but we feel you are, why will you not like to go back to school?

A: I feel my friends will laugh at me for not knowing anything.

Q: Do clever children laugh at the less brighter ones in your school?

A: No, not always.

Q: What makes you think like this?

A: Even if I get back my friends will have to help me.

Q: And don't you think they can help till you are also good?

A: I think so.

Q: So why won't you go?

A: It's because they will laugh at me.

Interview with Cynthia Alex - Drop Out

Cynthia is a young woman of about 20 years. She has a child though unmarried. She is an apprentice in hair dressing. The interview with Cynthia was in another drop out's house close to hers. She was very willing to talk to me about herself. The interview was conducted in May, 1995.

Q: Where were you born?

A: Navrongo.

Q: Did you grow up there?

A: No, I grew up here in Tamale.

Q: Are you the eldest of your family?

A: No, but the eldest girl.

Q: What kind of jobs did you do as a child?

A: I cooked, cleaned dishes, swept the compound and went for water.

Q: What work did your father and mother do?

A: My father worked with Rural Development. My mother was a house wife.

Q: Did you live with any relatives?

A: No, just our parents and us.

Q: Do you remember any experiences of your childhood days? They could either be good or bad circumstances.

A: I don't remember anything.

Q: Do you remember anything that made you sad or happy when you were a child?

A: I use to be always happy.

Q: Did you never become sad?

A: Only when I was beaten but that never lasted.

Q: Where did you start your schooling?

A: St Gabriel's in Tamale.

Q: What do you remember about your primary school? Did you find the primary school interesting?

A: Yes.

Q: Why was it interesting?

A: Usually after school during break, we played with our friends and this made us feel like going to school always.

Q: Was it only because of playing with your friends that you liked to go to school?

A: The teachers were also nice to us.

Q: Were your parents supportive when you were in school?

A: Yes.

Q: What did they do?

A: They bought my school uniforms, sandals, books and everything that I needed to make me happy.

Q: Did they do anything other than buying things for you? Did they advise you?

A: Yes, anytime I didn't feel like going to school, they would advise me and encourage me to go to school.

Q: Were there girls in your class?

A: Yes, the girls were even more than the boys.

Q: Do you remember all the girls finishing primary six?

A: I remember 4 dropped.

Q: Do you know why they dropped?

A: The complained of school fees.

Q: Was paying school fees a problem? I guess it was not too much.

A: No, it was not such a big problem but I don't' know why. Some too were not just interested in school.

Q: What are they doing now?

A: They have learnt hair dressing and sewing. They have their own workshops. Some are married and selling in the market.

Q: Which school did you go to after the primary school?

A: Anglican Middle.

Q: What kind of job were you thinking of when you were in the middle school?

A: I first wanted to go to the secondary school but my father advised me rather to finish form four (10 years of basic

education) and get into the Training College so I dropped that idea.

Q: Why then didn't you go to college.

A: We were the last batch of the old system of form four and somehow our final year exam results was never released.

Q: Did you find out?

A: Yes, I was told they were cancelled.

Q: What, while in form four, did you intend doing in future?

A: I thought of being a teacher as my father advised but because I had no certificate for my basic education, I had not admission into the college so I decided to do hairdressing.

Q: What about your younger brothers and sister?

A: She started day nursery when I left form four.

Q: What did you do while in the house?

A: Nothing special. Just the house chores.

Interview with Cynthia Gabriel - Drop Out

Q: Would you say your responsibilities at home interfered a lot with your school work?

A: No.

Q: How did your parents feel when you wanted to continue your studies after form four? (Basic 10 years of school)

A: My father was very interested and even wanted me to go to secondary school but I refused.

Q: And why did you not want to go to the secondary school?

A: I can't explain that, I just felt like being a teacher and wanted to do my training after form four.

Q: Did you have friends when you were in form school?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they all get through to form four with you?

A: Some dropped out.

Q: What urged you on?

A: I liked to go to school and all that I liked to be was a teacher. Even now I still think of school.

Q: Would you want to go back to school if you got some help?

A: Yes.

Q: Where will you start if you go back to school?

A: At the J.S.S.

Q: How old are you?

A: 20 years.

Q: Will you be willing despite your age to go back to J.S.S.?

A: Certainly.

Q: Are you married?

A: No.

Q: Do you have a child?

A: Yes.

Q: Don't you think it will be difficult to care for the child and at the same time attend school?

A My mother will take care of my child.

Q: What work do you do?

A: I am a hairdressing apprentice.

Q: How long have you been doing that?

A: 2 years.

Q: After leaving form four, what were you doing till you started learning to do your hairdressing?

A: I was doing nothing because my father had travelled and there was no one to cater for me at school. On his arrival I left for a vocational school hoping I would be a needlework teacher, but it didn't turn out this was because by the time I

left that vacancy did not exist anywhere. Anyway I couldn't even finish the vocational school for fear that I was wasting time.

Q: Don't you think you could have established a small business if you finished?

A: No, because I did weaving and there is no demand for our woven cloth. Some of my friends who tried doing that have closed down their shops.

Q: Is that why you left do to hairdressing?

A: Yes.

Q: Who pays for you?

A: My father.

Q: What do you plan doing after completing your course?

A: I intend establishing a hair dressing salon.

Q: How do you cope to finance that?

A: I am counting on my father and if he isn't in the position to help I would have to get a loan.

Q: Have you heard of any association that helps women?

A: No.

Q: Haven't you heard of any association that gives loans to women?

A: I heard of one some time ago, tried to get a loan from them but it hasn't been successful. Not one of those I know who applied got it.

Q: Have you stopped following them for the loan?

A: My father has taken up the issue.

Q: Why do girls drop out of school according to you?

A: Some drop out because there is no one to take care of them, some find husbands, others get pregnant. Some even are forced to marry, many of us didn't foresee that the trend of things in the country would change and thought life would remain as it was - easy and simple.

Q: You talked about your friend stopping school and leaving for Nigeria. Why did she do that?

A: She was forced into marriage and her husband lived in Nigeria. She couldn't make it there. She is back to Ghana.

Q: What work does she do now?

A: She is learning to sew, dressmaking.

Q: Do you know of any policy that is meant to help girls in school?

A: No.

Q: Do you still like to go to school?

A: Formerly no, but now I would say yes.

Q: Why do you think they like to go to school now and yet they are dropping out of school?

A It is the problem of getting married early.

Q: Do you think female drop out is a nationwide problem?

A: Nationwide.

Q: Do you know anybody who has dropped out from the south?

A: No.

Q: How do you then know it is nationwide?

A: I've heard interviews of such people on the television.

Q: What were some of their reasons for dropping out?

A: Because their parents were unable to take care of them in school.

Q: Did you hear what their plans were?

A: Yes, to do some work, get some money and get back to school.

Q: Suppose you were offered some assistance of a sort, what would you want to do?

A: I would open a hairdressing salon since I've almost

completed my apprenticeship.

Q: If it was a loan, would you accept it?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there anything that you would want to add? Are there any other reasons why girls drop out of school or that could be done to help girls stay in school that we haven't talked about?

A: Nothing in particular but parents should be encouraged to look after their children and stop forcing the girls into marriage. If girls want to invest in business, they should be encouraged.

Q: So, would you, if you had the assistance use it for business instead of school?

A: No because school is so important. Other people can't cheat you if you are educated. Even to be an apprentice now they require a bit of schooling so that people are able to read and know the kind of cream to use.

Q: How do you see your progress in such a job?

A: Once can be very efficient by doing her work well and giving a good reception to clients. It has a good future.

Q: Do you think you will still be a hairdresser in the next ten years?

A: I don't intend changing a job but I will try to do something in addition (like doing petty trading).

Q: Do you have anything to add?

A: No, that's all I have to say.



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Appendix 2 - Research instruments

Life Histories: Women Teachers Interview Schedule (45 minute interviews)

1. Experiences of life as a child:

Where were you born and grew up?

Can you tell me something about your position-in the

family e.g. eldest daughter? Responsibilities?

Parents life? Occupation?

Extended family life?

Memory of a positive/happy experience; difficult/sad time?

2. Experiences of life at primary school:

Where did you go to school?

What memories do you have of school?

What support/encouragement/sacrifices did your parents give with regard to your schooling?

What factors contributed to your success at school?

Do you remember girls dropping out of school?
Causes? What happened to them?

3. Experiences of life after primary school:

How much more schooling did you do?

What career thoughts did you have then?

What was happening to your siblings?

Responsibilities at home?

Parents and family's view of your schooling?

Girls friends? Did they all follow you through schooling?

What motivated you at school and home?

4. Experiences of life as a teacher trainee:

Where did you study?

What memories do you have of this?

What was teaching practice like?

Why did you go into teaching?

Family's reaction to your training? What were your friends doing?

What was the education system like then?

5. Experiences of life as a teacher:

Did you go straight into teaching?

What memories do you have of your first school

job?

What plans did you have for teaching? Career?

Was teaching easy for women then?

Was the life of a teacher very different then?

6. Experiences of life as a teacher now:

Describe your teaching now.

What are the good and bad aspects of the job?

How do you see your career developing?

How does teaching relate to your home and family life? What will you be doing in ten years time?

7. Views of girls dropping out of school:

(refer to completed questionnaire)

Why do girls drop out?

Can you tell us about on girl's experiences? Causes and what happened to her?

What policies exist to help girls?

Do you think the situation is the same all over Ghana? Is your school typical of schools in this area?

What do you think GES and the District Education Office should do?

Anything you would like to say that we haven't talked about?

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS: Girls in School/Girls out

of school Procedure

1. Select a group of 6 - 8 P6 girls and JSS 1 girls. Interview P6 and JSS 1 separately.

2. As far as possible have the female class teacher chair the discussion. Girls should be encouraged to discuss the following:

Is girl drop-outs a problem in this school?

What are the causes?

How could the school help?

How could families and the Community help?

What happens to the girls who drop out?

3. The teacher should encourage the group to talk about why they don't have problems and who helps them do well at school?

4. 30-45 minutes is probably enough time for one discussion.
5. The teacher should decide whether to use the first language or English.
6. The headteacher should of course be kept informed at all times.
7. Refer to the guide on how to conduct Focus Group Interviews and summarise for the teachers.

Other School Data

Data is to be collected from FIVE schools e.g. THREE Primary and TWO JSS.

Schools should be chosen because they have a big problem with drop outs or because they have few problems in this area.

Interview the headteacher.

Interview the PTA chairman and head of school Welfare Committee if it exists.

Check you have enrolment figures and exam results.

Try and visit the school a few times to observe teaching and talk to teachers. Build up a picture of the school.

Note the problems and successes of the school.

Meet with the P6 teacher (s) and suggest class write a short essay on why children drop out of school. Discuss prize for best essays.

Identify with school help girls who have dropped out. Discuss how and where they can be interviewed. Can parents be contacted?

Keep a good record of data collected for each school e.g. who interviewed, follow up visits to be undertaken etc. The following checklist can help:

SCHOOL A

1 Teachers interviewed

Who? 1. 2. 3.

Questionnaire administered?

Interview conducted? Transcribed?

Follow up?

2 Headteacher interviewed

Who?

When?

Follow up?

3 P6/JSS1 Class visited

Focus group interviews

When?

Follow up?

Essay administered? Collected?

4 School PTA Head interviewed

Who?

When?

Follow up?

5 School Observation

When?

Field notes written up?

Follow up?

6 School Enrolment and Exam data

Collected?

Follow up?

Collect anything else of interest

GIRLS OUT OF SCHOOL INTERVIEW DATA

Procedure

Decisions will need to be taken about how to identify drop-out girls and whether it is best to try and interview them individually or as a group. The class teacher might not be the most appropriate person to interview them. I would like to be able to draw up individual profiles of girls.



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