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

Professor James Opare
Dr Linda Dzama Forde
Mr Godwin Egbenya

University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Professor Louise Morley
Professor Fiona Leach
Dr Rosemary Lugg

Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research
University of Sussex, UK
Why This Research Is Important
The Knowledge Economy

Higher education seen as a central site for:

- facilitating skills, knowledge and expertise essential to economic and social development in low-income countries
- generating research and analysis to improve effectiveness of government policy and services

A Political Economy of Participation in Higher Education

Lack of data on:

- Higher education, poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals
- How different structures of inequality intersect e.g. gender and socio-economic background
- Private higher education and widening participation
- Socio-cultural theory in the context of African higher education.
Higher Education and Poverty Reduction

Higher education may affect poverty by:

- raising the incomes of those with education
- fostering high level skills, knowledge and competencies, to promote economic growth.

Poverty increasingly perceived as capability, as well as material deprivation (Sen, 1997).
Mass Higher Education?

- Student enrolment worldwide:
  - 13 million in 1960
  - 82 million in 1995
  - 137.8 million in 2005

Interventions to Widen Participation

- Quota systems for:
  - deprived regions/schools (Ghana, Nigeria and Sri Lanka)
  - black students (South Africa)
  - marginalised groups, e.g. caste (India), ethnic group (Malaysia), indigenous peoples (Australia)

- Affirmative action programmes and scholarships for women (Uganda)
- Pre-sessional programmes for women (Tanzania)
- Changing aspirations of ‘non-traditional students’
  - ‘Aim Higher’ (UK)
Higher Education Capacity in Africa

- Africa has:
  - 54 countries
  - Over 700 million people
  - 300 universities

(Teferra and Altbach, 2004).
African Participation Rates in Higher Education

- 5% in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 5% in Ghana
- 1% in Tanzania
- 24% globally

(UNESCO, 2007)
Challenges Within the Higher Education Sector in Africa

- The rise of private higher education
- Management and governance
- Social inclusion v. expansion
- Policy implementation
- Over/under-representation by gender and social class (participation, service delivery and employment)
- Quality and relevance of the curriculum
- Brain drain
- Research capacity
- Languages and indigenous knowledges
- HIV/AIDS.
International Policies on Widening Participation in Higher Education

Policies targeted at:
- Increasing access to HE globally
- Widening access to HE for less privileged groups
- Reducing the gap between conditions in HE in ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries

- UNESCO (1995)
Criticisms of Widening Participation

- Lowers the value of HE
- Dilutes standards
- Creates unrealistic expectations for learners
- Overloads systems that are under-resourced
- Stigmatises ‘non-traditional’ students
- Leads to ‘diploma disease’ i.e. educational inflation.
Some Policies for Widening Participation in HE in Ghana

Botsio Committee (1959) recommended
- increasing access to university education for national development

University Rationalisation Committee (1988) recommended
- expanded access to higher education
- sustainable funding
- broadening tertiary education to include post-secondary education institutions
- greater access for students previously disadvantaged through poverty or gender

White Paper on Reforms to the Tertiary Education System (1991) recommended
- expanding access through private institutions
- cost-sharing and cost-recovery
Recent Policies for Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana

National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) Act (1993) established new institutions
- NCTE to advise on the development and financing of tertiary education in Ghana, and to recommend norms and standards
- National Accreditation Board (NAB) and National Board for Professional and Technical Examinations (NABTEX) to accredit tertiary institutions

Presidential Review Committee on Education (2002) recommended
- expanding access through distance education and information communication technologies (ICT)

- gender equity at all levels in education
- private sector development
- cost-sharing and revenue diversification
- establishing an Open University
Challenges to Widening Participation in Africa

- Triangle of family, school and community
- Micro-level decision-making
- Socio-cultural barriers
- Educating women perceived as unproductive
- Poverty
- Low participation rates in schooling
- Under-investment in HE
- Violence, war and disease
- HE as a public and private good. Cost sharing. Who pays?
- Access to what?

(Kwesiga, 2002; Morley et al. 2006)
Who is Participating?
Who is Participating in Ghana?

Higher Education in Ghana

- In 2005, GER for tertiary education rose to 5% (UNESCO, 2007)
- 34.3% of students in public universities are women (2006/7) (NCTE, 2007a)
- 41% of students in private universities are women (2005/6) (NCTE, 2006)
- 10% of university students are enrolled in private institutions (2005/6) (NCTE, 2006)
- Demand for public HE: 43% of ‘qualified’ applicants to public universities are new entrants (2006/7) (NCTE, 2007b)
- Cf: 75% of qualified applicants to private universities are new entrants (2005/6) (NCTE, 2006)
- The majority of HE students continue to be men from wealthy backgrounds
- Women’s participation is highest in Education, Social Sciences and Arts
- Women’s participation is lowest in Science, Engineering and Agriculture

BUT
- Where are mature students, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds, found in the HE system?
Who is Participating in Tanzania?

Higher Education in Tanzania

- In 2005, GER for tertiary education was 1% (UNESCO, 2007)
- 30% of HE students are women (MHEST, 2005)
- 10% of university students are at a private university (MHEST, 2005)
- 36% of undergraduates at private universities are women (MHEST, 2005)
- Women’s participation is lowest in Commerce, Science and Engineering
- Women’s participation is highest in Law, Education, Medicine
- The majority of students continue to be men from wealthy backgrounds.

BUT
- Where are mature students, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds?
What the Project is Doing
Methodology

- Examining the influence of social processes on differential participation in, progression through, and outcomes for under-represented social groups

- Quantitative methods:
  - international, national and institutional statistics
  - Equity Scorecard

- Qualitative methods:
  - analysis of policy documents
  - life history interviews with students
  - interviews with staff
Research Sites

Public Universities

- University of Cape Coast, Ghana
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Private Universities

- Central University College, Accra, Ghana
- Tumaini University, Tanzania
Quantifying Inequalities
What is an Equity Scorecard?

- A **Scorecard** provides quantitative measures of critical moments in complex processes.

- An **Equity** Scorecard compares these measures for different groups.

- Datasets can be explored in multiple ways;
What We Are Measuring

- Sociological variables e.g. gender, age, socio-economic status
  In Relation to:
  - Educational indicators e.g. access, retention and achievement
  In Relation to:
  - Programmes of Study e.g. medicine, management
  - Institutional Sites e.g. public and private HEIs.
Scorecard 1: Public University, Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>% students women</th>
<th>% students ‘deprived schools’</th>
<th>% students women from ‘deprived schools’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSc Physical Sci</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Commerce</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Mgmt</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Ed (Primary)</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scorecard 2: Public University, Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Equity Index (% women on prog/% women in uni)</th>
<th>Equity Index (% students from deprived schools / quota)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSc Physical Sci</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Commerce</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Mgmt</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Ed (Primary)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings from the ESC

- Rates of participation for students from ‘deprived schools’ are low;
- Rates of participation of women from ‘deprived schools’ are extremely low;
- Women are clustered in Education and Business Management, and not in Science

Women make up 31% of the undergraduate population at UCC (UCC, 2006)
Scorecard 1: Admissions to 2 Degree Programmes at Univ B in Tanzania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>% admissions women (2007/8)</th>
<th>Equity Index</th>
<th>% admissions aged 30+ (2007/8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LLB (Law)</td>
<td>42.20</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>13.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B BA</td>
<td>42.10</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Admissions to 2 programmes (Dataset 1, 2007)

Enrolment in first degree programmes at Univ B (2005/6) %F=40.9% (MHEST, 2006:2)
### Scorecard 2: Admissions to Programmes at Uni A and Uni B in Tanzania, 2007/8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Univ A</th>
<th></th>
<th>Univ B</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%F</td>
<td>Equity Index</td>
<td>%F</td>
<td>Equity Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Com / B BA</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLB (Law)</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSc Engineering</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Ed (Sci)</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Datasource:** Admissions to 4 programmes (Dataset 1, 2007/8)

% F enrolment 2005/6 Uni A: u/g 37.2%  
Uni B: u/g 40.9% (MHEST, 2006)
Findings From The ESC

- Rates of access for women in Law and Commerce degrees at this university are higher than the national average for women’s participation in HE.
- Rates of access for women in Law and Commerce degrees at this university are similar to their rates of participation in this university as a whole.
- Rates of access for mature students to Law and Commerce have been measured.

Women make up 30% of the undergraduate population at in Tanzania, and 36% of students at private universities (MHEST, 2005).
Illuminating the Statistics
Life History Interviews with Students

Soliciting data from 100 students per country on:

- enablers & barriers to participation;
- social and learner identities;
- how identities might influence educational choices;
- linkages between material, cultural, and social factors.
Why Life History?

- Participation in HE can be influenced by long-term factors in students’ lives
- Inequalities in participation in HE are evident throughout the lifecourse of participants and non-participants
- Opportunities in the early stages of education can play a key role in whether HE is an option
- Life history interviews can deepen understanding of how disadvantaged learners overcome barriers to participation, and how they negotiate their identity as learners in HE.

(Gorard et al. 2006; Reay et al. 2001; Archer and Hutchings 2000).
Interview Findings from Students in Ghana and Tanzania

- Gender (domestic duties, motherhood, non-traditional subjects for women)
- Agents of support (mothers and fathers, extended family, teachers, peers, colleagues)
- Influence of early years (schooling; urban/rural)
- Motivations for entering HE (career aspirations, escaping poverty)
- Decision-making process (strategic, delayed)
- Diverse experiences of HE (pedagogy, skills acquired, social networks, confidence, status).
Interviews with Staff

- 100 policy-makers per country:
  - in Ministries with responsibility for higher education
  - in national organisations with an interest in higher education / equity / poverty reduction
  - in the case study sites.
Preliminary Findings from Staff Interviews

- HE is critical to national development, but has been under-invested e.g. by the World Bank;
- Excluded groups include: women, rural communities, the poor, mature people, the disabled;
- Uneven engagement with policy and implementation gaps e.g. between international, national and institutional levels;
- Diverse recommendations for action e.g. affirmative action programmes, developing quality and standards of junior and high schools for all students; effective policy monitoring; support and facilities to retain, as well as attract ‘non-traditional’ students.
Working Towards...

- Constructing knowledge that can contribute to the democratisation of higher education.
Website

www.sussex.ac.uk/education/wideningparticipation
Acknowledgements

- ESRC and DFID for funding this 3-year project.
Some Questions For Your Consideration

- Why do you consider this research project to be important?
- What do you see as some of the major challenges?
- What do you think that the research team needs to take into consideration in the Ghanaian context?
- How can you support the project?
- What impact would you like the project to make? Who could benefit from the research findings? How can the research findings be applied and disseminated?
References


References (contd.)


- NCTE (2006) *Student Admissions by Programme and Gender for Private Tertiary Education Institutions, 2005/6* Accra: NCTE

- NCTE (2007a) *Summary of Enrolments in Public Universities by Institution, Programme and Gender, 2006/7* Accra: NCTE

- NCTE (2007b) *Admission of Students into All Programmes By Public University and Gender, 2006/7* Accra: NCTE
References (contd.)


References (contd.)
