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

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Working Paper 4: A Profile of Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures...……………..……………………………………………….3
List of Tables……………………………………………………………………..4

Section 1 International Policies and Widening Participation in Higher Education
1.1 Introduction 4
1.2 Drivers for widening participation in higher education 4
1.2.1 Widening participation to resolve a crisis in global higher education ……*5*
1.2.2 Widening participation as equity and social justice.....................................*6*
1.2.3 Widening participation as economic imperative..*7*
1.2.4 Widening participation for poverty reduction...*7*
1.3 Strategies for widening participation in higher education 9
1.3.1 The role of the state in widening participation in higher education *9*
1.3.2 Widening participation through diversification in higher education *11*
1.3.3 Widening participation in higher education through a balanced education .. system *12*

Section 2: Widening Participation in Higher Education Policies in Ghana.................16
2.1 Introduction 16
2.2 Education policies before and after independence.....................................16
2.2.1 Accelerated Development Plan for Education of 1951..............................*16*
2.2.2 Policies in the early years of independence *17*
2.2.3 The Education Reforms of 1987 ....*18*
2.2.4 The President's Committee on the Review of Education Reforms .... of 2002 ....*20*
2.3. Higher education policies 22
2.3.1 The University Rationalisation Committee (URC) of 1988 ....*22*
2.3.2 The 1991 White Paper on Reforms to Tertiary Education *24*
2.3.3 The National Council for Tertiary Education *27*
2.4 Widening participation in tertiary education in Ghana.............................27
2.4.1 Widening access for women *28*
2.4.2 Widening access for rural communities...*29*
2.4.3 Widening access for students with special needs *30*
2.4.4 Distance Education *30*
2.4.5 Private Higher Education...*32*
2.5 Conclusion 34

Section 3: Widening Participation in Higher Education Policies in Tanzania 37
3.1 Introduction 37
3.2 Education policies since independence...37
3.2.1 The Arusha Declaration and Education for Self Reliance.........................*39*
3.2.2 The Musoma Resolution *41*
3.3 Education policies in the 1990s and beyond 43
3.3.1 The Education and Training Policy………………………..………………45
3.3.2 The National Higher Education Policy 46
3.4 Financing higher education, cost sharing and loan schemes 47
3.4.1 The Universities Act 2005 49

3.5 Widening participation and poverty eradication..51
3.6 Disability and higher education 53
3.7 Conclusions..54
References..56

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Increasing enrolment of men and women in higher education in Tanzania, 2001-2006………………………………………………….....…52

List of Tables

Table 1: Selected educational initiatives of relevance to widening participation in higher education in Ghana.. …………… …………………………...….35-6
Table 2: Selected key policies of relevance to widening participation in higher education in Tanzania……………………….……………………….…………..54-5
Table 3: Higher Education Institutions in Ghana and dates of establishment 1948-2008…………………………………..................................... 63
Table 4: Higher Education Institutions in Tanzania and dates of establishment 1970-2007……………………………………………………………….. 64

Section 1. International Policies and Widening Participation in Higher Education

1.1 Introduction

The recent decade has witnessed an explicit linkage of widening participation in higher education with sustainable economic and social development within globalising knowledge economies. A series of international processes beginning in the 1990s led to the development of policies to transform and reform higher education globally (UNESCO, 1995; UNESCO, 1998; World Bank, 2000; World Bank, 2002). The discourse shifted slightly by the beginning of the twenty-first century, with more explicit consideration of the part that widening participation in higher education could play in poverty reduction (World Bank, 2002; Commission for Africa, 2005:14).

This working paper provides a comprehensive descriptive account of policy development in higher education, first at the international level, and subsequently in the two case study countries. Section 1 reviews international policies on higher education and examines differing and changing ways in which widening participation has been understood within them. It begins with an examination of different ideological and economic drivers for reform of higher education. It then goes on to discuss a range of interlocking strategies proposed within these international policies to widen participation in higher education. Attention is paid to widening women's participation in higher education.

Sections 2 and 3 explore the development of policies for widening participation in Tanzania and Ghana, revealing that although policies for greater equity in access emerged with independence, their translation into practice has been problematic. The imprint of international policies for higher education is evident in national policies emerging since the early 1990s.

1.2 Drivers for widening participation in higher education

Drivers for change in higher education include a range of rationalities, for example the globalised knowledge economy, equity, social justice and social inclusion, and poverty

reduction. The emphasis for widening participation has differed in different locations and at different policy moments. The following sections attempt to summarise the diverse policy drivers and identify international policies in which each came to the fore.

1.2.1 Widening participation to resolve a crisis in global higher education

Widening participation in higher education was presented in international policy documents emerging in the early 1990s as part of a strategy for dealing with a crisis in higher education in what are commonly referred to as 'developing' countries. During the structural adjustment era of the 1980s higher education was positioned largely as a 'luxury good'. As a result, during this period higher education in developing countries received little policy or resource attention from the international donor community (Atteh, 1996; World Bank, 2000; Samoff and Carol, 2003). National governments which were implementing adjustment policies and focusing on basic education provision (and in some cases believing universities to be sites of political resistance) retreated from expenditure on higher education (Samoff and Carol, 2003). The resulting under-development of higher education slowly turned into a crisis which compelled the international community to reconsider its stance in the 1990s (UNESCO, 1995; World Bank 2000). The call for renewed international commitment to higher education was made, following a series of regional consultations, in UNESCO's 1995 *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education*.

The 'crisis' in higher education, UNESCO (1995) argued, was associated with three interconnected trends in the sector in many countries of the world:

- ✓ quantitative expansion in enrolment;
- ✓ diversification of provision;
- ✓ increasing financial constraint.

It was believed that standards and quality were deteriorating in developing countries and the gap between conditions in higher education in 'developing' and 'developed' countries was widening (UNESCO, 1995; 1998). To reduce the gap, UNESCO advocated international solidarity in strengthening higher education, including greater support to changes and development in higher education systems, strengthening higher education and research capacity in developing countries, and, notably, international support to broadening access and participation in higher education (UNESCO, 1995).

Paradoxically, whilst increased participation in national systems of higher education was recognised to be part of the crisis of resource-poor systems in developing countries, it was also advocated as part of the solution. Expansion in higher education had brought with it 'broader access of under-represented categories such as women, ethnic minorities and students from low-income families or rural areas' (UNESCO, 1995:16). However, broader access had not, in the main, been driven by explicit concerns for social justice and equity. Instead, the overall trend was due to a combination of largely economic factors including demographic growth, expansion in provision of primary and secondary education leading to larger populations eligible to enter higher education, as, for example, in Nigeria, Brazil and Pakistan (World Bank, 2000:27), greater awareness of the link to economic growth which fuelled investment in higher levels of skills and knowledge, as in China, (Bai, 2006:131) and Korea (World Bank, 2002:12) and political democratisation which had given rise to transformation of education systems in many countries (UNESCO, 1995:16). However, UNESCO argued that, in future, widening participation should not simply be an unintended consequence of expansion. Greater equity in access had to become an important objective for the future if developing countries were to meet the demands of modern economies and attain sustainable human development (UNESCO, 1995), a theme which will be returned to later.

1.2.2 Widening participation as equity and social justice

Widening participation in higher education was strongly framed as a matter of equity and social justice by UNESCO's 1998 policy statement, the *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action*, agreed at the World Conference on Higher Education. The World Declaration affirmed participation in higher education as a right, and 'Equity of access' as central to its vision for higher education (UNESCO, 1998: Article 3). Drawing on Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration stated that admission to higher education 'should be based on merit, capacity, efforts, perseverance and devotion showed by those seeking access to it' (UNESCO, 1998: Article 3a), and noted that any discrimination in access on the basis of race, gender, language, religion or age, or economic, cultural or social distinctions, or physical disabilities, was unacceptable (UNESCO, 1998: Article 3a). It supported proactive strategies to enable access for 'special target groups, such as indigenous peoples, cultural and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups, peoples living under occupation, and those who suffer from disabilities' (UNESCO, 1998: Article 3d). States with low enrolment in higher education were particularly encouraged to establish plans for diversifying and expanding access to

benefit all minorities and disadvantaged groups (UNESCO, 1998). Supporting equitable access to higher education, the World Declaration stated that all policies for access should give priority to merit (UNESCO, 1998: Article 3d). However, recognising that 'merit' was strongly shaped by inequities in earlier phases of the education system, the declaration drew attention to the need to strengthen links with other parts of the learning system, particularly secondary education, a strategy that will be returned to later.

1.2.3 Widening participation as economic imperative

Widening participation in higher education was presented as essential to national social and economic development in international policies emerging throughout the last two decades and in particular in those emanating from the World Bank since the turn of the Millennium (World Bank, 2000; World Bank, 2002). Following the Declaration on Higher Education, the World Bank and UNESCO convened a Task Force on Higher Education and Society to explore the future of higher education in the 'developing' world. The Task Force (2000) report, *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, fore-grounded the importance of higher education to a global economy in which knowledge-intensive technologies, such as information technology and biotechnology, had become the primary source of wealth creation (World Bank, 2000). A 'knowledge revolution' was taking place, evidenced in the doubling of the rate of publication of scientific papers in the previous decade (for example in China, South Korea and Taiwan), steady increases in the number of patent applications (for example India filed 66 per cent more patent applications in 1996 than it did in 1986) and in access to personal computers and the internet and the speed and efficiency with which information could be shared (World Bank, 2000:33). In a knowledge-driven economy, higher education was no longer a 'luxury' for an elite social group but had become essential to national social and economic development (World Bank, 2000:14).

Supported by arguments that higher education was critical to economic development and would bring about significant social benefits, the role of the public sector in *widening* participation in higher education was emphasised (World Bank, 2000).

1.2.4 Widening participation for poverty reduction

During the first years of the twenty-first century, the discourse started to shift, with international agencies placing increasing emphasis on the role of higher education in poverty reduction. Reports by the World Bank (2002) and UK Commission for Africa (2005) viewed

this relationship in subtly different ways. The World Bank's 2002 report *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* placed greater emphasis on the importance of professional skills for social mobility for individuals within knowledge economies. In the UK, the Commission for Africa report placed greater emphasis on building social systems and new governance practices, arguing that higher education was central to building capacity within social institutions essential to poverty reduction, including national and local governments, the justice system, the financial system, the media and the fields of science and technology (Commission for Africa, 2005).

As a result of increased requests for support to higher education projects, the World Bank reviewed global experiences in higher education to inform its future involvement in the sector (World Bank, 2002). It argued that inclusive participation in higher education was directly linked to development and poverty reduction:

> Tertiary education confers important public goods that are essential to development and poverty reduction – goods that must be accessible to all strata, to all people, and to both men and women (World Bank, 2002:xi).

Higher education, the report argued, contributes to poverty reduction through the processes engaged in building and redistributing social capital. Within society, higher education institutions build knowledge, attitudes and ethics that construct the social capital necessary for healthy civil societies, socially cohesive cultures, and democratic political systems (World Bank, 2002:5). It was argued that widening participation in higher education works to redistribute social capital by opening up opportunities for better employment and income to 'under-privileged' students, thereby decreasing inequity (World Bank, 2002). Manuh *et al.* (2007) demonstrated that increased enrolment to public universities in Ghana was not associated with increased equity of access. Their analysis revealed inherent disadvantages in access with respect to types and locations of secondary schools, region of origin and students' socio-economic background and gender (2007:82). Manuh *et al.* found that region and location of residence were the most significant factors in enhancing chances of access to university in Ghana; nearly 70 per cent of students surveyed came from just three regions. Discussions with students revealed significant deployment of social and material capital in order to secure access to higher education and many students and their parents looked to

relatives in regions with better schools in order to improve their chances of getting into university (Manuh *et al.* 2007:82).

Within the Commission for Africa report (2005:15), poverty was understood not only in terms of economic deprivation but also as exclusion from basic human rights and social justice, including exclusion from political participation and from services such as education and health. This would accord with theoretical developments that have conceptualised poverty in terms of deprivation of capabilities (Sen, 1999). According to the Commission for Africa (2005:29), the root causes of poverty in Africa were poor governance and weak institutions. Others have argued that external forces such as colonialism and mal-distribution and appropriations of resources are major contributors to poverty in Africa (Manuh *et al.*, 2007:12; Mama, 2003:104). As higher education is essential to building institutional capacity through developing skilled professionals, it plays an essential part in poverty reduction. The Commission recommended a long-term programme of investment in Africa's institutions of higher education in order to build strong social institutions. It also recommended investment in Centres of Excellence in Science and Technology to develop greater numbers of scientists and engineers (Commission for Africa, 2005:67). Within this vision for Africa, widening participation in higher education was driven by the enormity of the challenge; strong social institutions cannot be built, the report argued, if 'only elites are educated' (Commission for Africa, 2005: 27).

1.3 Strategies for widening participation in higher education

Whilst international policies developed during the 1990s and early 2000s differed in the emphasis given to different drivers for transformation, a consistent set of strategies for widening participation emerged within them. These included a new role for the state, increased diversification in the sector, institutionally-based access strategies, and longer-term investment in the whole education system.

1.3.1 The role of the state in widening participation in higher education

International policies for the reform of higher education argued that, in order to meet increased demand for higher education and to enhance equity of opportunity, diversified systems of higher education were essential (UNESCO, 1998; World Bank, 2000). These would include public, private and non-profit institutions, as well as a range of types of

programme and modes of delivery. Indeed, reports (World Bank, 2002) and research (Altbach, 1999; Varghese, 2004) have noted the rapid expansion of private higher education in many parts of the world, and its contribution to increasing access in both ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries. For example, the World Bank noted that private higher education institutions enrolled almost 40 percent of the student population in Portugal, 35 percent in Jordan, 30 percent in the Cote d’Ivoire and in Iran, and 15 percent in Bangladesh (World Bank, 2002: 68-71). In some countries, private higher education institutions provided access for more than half of all students, for example in the Philippines private higher institutions enrolled 80 percent and in Korea 75 percent of students (World Bank, 2002: 71). The rise in private higher education in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania to an average of 22 percent of students was particularly remarkable as no private institutions existed in these countries prior to 1990 (World Bank, 2002: 68-69).

Whilst acknowledging the rise of private higher education and its contribution to expanded access, the international policies on higher education stressed the role of the state in widening participation (UNESCO, 1998; World Bank, 2000). This emphasis was founded, on the one hand, on renewed recognition of the considerable social benefits arising from investment in higher education, and, on the other, on a commitment to equity and democratising access. In contrast to the policies of the 1980s, international agencies now supported increased public investment in higher education (UNESCO, 1995; World Bank, 2000; Commission for Africa, 2005). There are a range of critical explanations for this. One view is that the driver is economic as Africa is being constructed as a major new market and that more educated workers are required to produce and consume. Discourses of globalisation also indicate how, in a networked knowledge economy (Robertson, 2007), there needs to be parity of skills and competencies across national borders.

Within policies emerging from the renewed dialogue on higher education in the 1990s, the World Bank argued that the state alone could not meet the insatiable demand for higher education. Instead, by opening up higher education provision to the market, demand could be met by public and private providers, and through cost-sharing mechanisms (World Bank, 2000). The role of the state should shift towards regulation of this new market through quality assurance and accreditation. Its own role in supporting greater equity in education was constructed in terms of primary education (Carnoy, 1995). However, by the late 1990s, the World Bank had acknowledged that the state had a particular role to play in promoting equity

in higher education and providing elements 'that would not be supplied if left to the market' (World Bank, 2000:53). Despite the dramatic expansion in private higher education, which made a significant contribution to increased participation during the 1990s, it recognised that the growth of the private sector had not necessarily led to increased diversity within the student body, or in curricular offerings. Its review of global experiences confirmed that financial aid was an effective form of equity intervention for capable students from underprivileged or minority populations (World Bank, 2002). It also acknowledged that reforms in financing higher education, including 'cost-sharing practices' such as tuition fees, were difficult to implement successfully without equity measures to help disadvantaged students gain access (World Bank, 2002). As a result, the World Bank identified the promotion of equity mechanisms to create and expand access for such students not only as a priority for the nation state, but also as one of its own key roles (World Bank, 2002).

1.3.2 Widening participation through diversification in higher education

Diversification within higher education systems was advocated within international policies as a strategy for *increasing* available opportunities for participation, and for *widening* participation to more diverse communities of learners (UNESCO, 1995; UNESCO, 1998; World Bank, 2000; World Bank, 2002). A range of forms of diversification were supported:

- ✓ new forms of higher education;
- ✓ different types of institution;
- ✓ wider varieties of programme;
- ✓ varied means of delivery;
- ✓ new technologies.

It was believed that these forms of diversification would extend access 'to an ever-wider public' (UNESCO, 1998: Article 8).

As well as being more equitable, a diversified system of higher education was advocated to be a more relevant system to today's high skills economy (Brown *et al.*, 2001). Institutional differentiation could provide for both increasing specialisation of knowledge, and diversity amongst students as 'new and reformed institutions can best serve the public interest by focusing on a well-defined set of goals for a particular set of students' (World Bank, 2000:35). Thus, it was believed that specialised institutions would respond to the specific needs of particular groups. Furthermore, expanding and diversifying programme options would enable

individual institutions to address the learning needs of non-traditional students with a variety of aims and motivations for learning (World Bank, 2000). Diversified options would include short-term, continuing education studies (World Bank, 2002:36). Different modes of delivery, for example distance education, were advocated as having 'great potential' for expanding provision to groups that had previously been excluded (World Bank, 2000:31; UNESCO, 1998). Flexible entry and exit points were supported as strategies to enable access and broaden opportunities for participation across different institutional locations and throughout a learner's life (UNESCO, 1995; 1998), linking strategies for 'widening participation' to ideas of 'lifelong learning'.

1.3.3 Widening participation in higher education through a balanced education system

Access to higher education is profoundly shaped by inequalities in opportunity operating throughout the education system (UNESCO, 1998; World Bank, 2000; World Bank, 2002). Many affirmative action interventions in higher education are already too late to assist the majority of students who have not had access to a primary and secondary education of sufficient quality (World Bank, 2002). As a result, strategies for widening participation in higher education had to include integrated and longer-term investment in primary and secondary education so that larger numbers of disadvantaged groups could compete for access to higher education (UNESCO, 1998; World Bank, 2000). Yet, this should not be interpreted as a return to donors' earlier emphasis on basic education. Arguing for strategies that would have greatest impact on reducing poverty, the Commission for Africa (2005) also argued that donor commitments to education had to support a balanced overall system, that included secondary, higher and vocational education, adult learning and teacher training.

1.4 Widening participation for women

1.4.1 Women as a priority 'target group'

International policies for the transformation of higher education have drawn attention to the specific exclusion of women (UNESCO, 1995; UNESCO, 1998: World Bank, 2000). Equally, international policies for gender equality have drawn attention to the limited educational opportunities for girls and women in some parts of the world (UN CEDAW, 1979; UN BPA, 1995). Although women's participation in higher education had increased globally from 34 per cent of all students in 1960 to 43 per cent in 1980 to 45 per cent in 1991 (UNESCO, 1995:16), the policies noted that women continued to be in the minority worldwide, and were

significantly under-represented in some parts of the world, and in particular disciplines of study (UNESCO, 1995:16). Consequently, the World Declaration on Higher Education identified equitable participation for women as an urgent priority for the sector (UNESCO, 1998: Article 4). It noted that this required efforts to eliminate economic, cultural and political barriers to women's participation and to their active involvement in decision-making in higher education, barriers that remained in many parts of the world. Widening participation for women was also constituted in terms of changing gendered patterns of participation within the system of higher education, for example differences in participation at different levels of the system and across all disciplines of study (UNESCO, 1998). Women's over-representation in alternative forms of higher education such as distance education, teacher training, nursing and non-university institutions of higher education (World Bank 2000: 75), and their concentration in degree programmes directed at low income professions (World Bank, 2002) were also pinpointed as areas for change. Today, despite women now being slightly in the majority in higher education worldwide, with a Gender Parity Index of 1.05 (UNESCO, 2007), these issues of unequal participation across the sector remain.

1.4.2 Widening women's participation in Science and Technology

International policy documents argued for widening women's participation in Science and Technology as both a matter of equity (UNESCO, 1998) and of economic necessity (World Bank, 2000). Particularly strong gender imbalances in Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Engineering were noted by all policy reports and redressing this imbalance was identified as an area of particular concern (UNESCO, 1995:16; World Bank, 2000:75). Given the impact of Science and Technology on economic growth, the need for increased investment in these areas of higher education in developing countries was emphasised (UNESCO, 1998; World Bank, 2000). Strategies recommended to promote women's participation in Science and Technology included financial support through scholarships and loans, systematic attention to gendered practices affecting women's participation in Science at primary and secondary levels, mentoring programmes for women who study Science, active recruitment of women for graduate study, and establishing support networks. Strengthening associations between women's participation in Science and local economic development, the Task Force report argued that increasing women's participation would also reduce brain drain as 'professional women tend to be less internationally mobile than men' (World Bank, 2000:76).

1.5 Implementing policies for widening participation in higher education

Drawing on international policies for widening participation in higher education, several countries are implementing national policies to widen participation in their higher education systems, including India and the US (World Bank, 2002), in Bangladesh (Quddus, 1999), China (Hong, 2004) and the UK (DfEE, 2000; DfES, 2003). Several countries in Africa have also implemented policies for widening participation, including South Africa (Boughy, 2003; Naidoo, 1998), Uganda (Kwesiga, 2002), Tanzania, South Africa and Nigeria (Morley *et al.*, 2006) and Ghana (Morley *et al.*, 2007). The World Bank 2002 review of global experiences in higher education noted that there was only limited research on how successful widening participation strategies have been (World Bank, 2002). Research available indicates some limited success. For example, Kasente (2001) noted that affirmative action strategies introduced at Makerere University in Uganda in 1991 had contributed to women's increased enrolment, from 24 percent in 1989 to 34 per cent in 1995. Yet, in spite of progress in access for traditionally less privileged groups, higher education - especially universities - continues to be elitist, with most students coming from wealthier segments of society. Gender differences in participation also remain marked in many parts of the world. Other determinants of inequity, depending on country, that contribute to unequal access and outcomes include caste, ethnicity, language, regional origin, gender and physical disability. Even nations that have achieved open access for all secondary graduates face challenges in achieving equity in academic outcomes in higher education as these continue to be strongly influenced by socio-economic origins (World Bank, 2002: 55).

1.6 Concluding remarks

The above sections have argued that, during the 1990s and in the early years of the new millennium, the international education policy community reversed its earlier decision to focus support on basic education at the expense of higher education, and developed policies for the reform of global higher education. Within the policies, different drivers for *widening* participation in higher education have been identified, for example meeting the knowledge demands of a globalised knowledge economy, closing the gap between systems of higher education in 'developed' and 'developing countries', commitments to equity, social justice and social inclusion, and poverty reduction. We are aware that critics are cynical about the social drivers for change and have suggested that reform has been economically driven

(Manuh, 2007). These sections have also argued that, whilst different policies placed differing emphasis on each of the policy drivers, they all argued for similar strategies through which to widen participation for larger and more diverse communities of learners. These included diversified systems of higher education, new relationships between state and market in higher education, and institutional strategies to support new groups of learners. Predominant amongst new constituencies in higher education were women, but attention was also drawn to groups that risk exclusion, including disabled students, poorer students, rural students and students from ethnic minority communities. Poverty reduction has become a dominant policy discourse and questions are being posed around the globe about the role that HE can play in poverty alleviation. Equally, it is pertinent to ask how poverty impedes opportunities for participation.

Sections 2 and 3 of this working paper explore the development and implementation of policies for widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania respectively.

Section 2: Widening Participation in Higher Education Policies in Ghana

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews education policies which have impacted on efforts to widen participation in higher education in Ghana from 1951 to the present. It highlights the events antecedent to the formulation of the policies and the problems that the policies were intended to solve. It also addresses the challenges faced in the implementation of the policies and their impact. Where relevant, it considers whether the policies were part of a broader shift in the political and economic foci of national development and attempts to identify and highlight trends and linkages between policies.

2.2 Education policies before and after independence

2.2.1 Accelerated Development Plan for Education of 1951

The promulgation of a new Constitution in 1951 marked Ghana's attainment of self-government status, prior to independence in 1957. It was noted by the government at the time that there had been poor growth in education in the colonial period between 1844 and 1951. In 1951, for instance, only 153,360 children were enrolled in primary school, 6,6175 in middle school and 5033 in secondary school (Hayford, 1988, cited in Akyeampong, 2007). During that same period, there was only one University College in the country with 208 students following degree courses (Eshun, 1998: 239). The new breed of leaders recognised that the country would need well educated people to contribute to the educational, political and social development of the nation. This realisation led to the promulgation of the Accelerated Development Plan for Education, which tasked the Department of Education, later to become the Ministry of Education, with implementing as well as monitoring and evaluating the progress of the policy.

The Accelerated Development Plan for Education of 1951 was aimed at increasing access and participation in primary education, thus providing the first stimulus for educational expansion in the country. It abolished school fees for primary age children, opened new academic secondary and technical secondary schools and also increased the number of

private and mission schools which could receive government assistance (Hilliard, 1957: 114-5). By independence in 1957, there were 455,053 children in primary school, about three times the figure for 1951 (Dwomoh, 1994). The number of government approved secondary schools increased from 12 to 38 during the same period (Graham, 1971: 179). This unprecedented increase in enrolments at both primary and secondary levels had important consequences for the educational system as a whole (MacWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

However, the rapid and unrestrained expansion led to a myriad of resource problems. There were too few classrooms, inadequate funds to sustain the expansion, and too few trained teachers. According to Graham (1971: 174), only about 40 percent of primary school teachers in 1950 had received any training. This resulted in falling standards as well as in increased numbers of unemployed school leavers, as economic growth failed to keep pace with educational expansion (Antwi, 1992; Government of Ghana, 2004).

In spite of its shortcomings, the Accelerated Development Plan laid the foundation for the development of higher education in Ghana, as increases at the lower levels applied pressure for expansion at the upper levels, with increasing numbers of secondary school graduates feeling entitled to enter post-secondary education. Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first President, built on this plan for educational expansion at all levels, with a clear, albeit ambitious, agenda to reduce poverty through increased economic productivity riding on the back of advances in science and technology (Akyeampong, 2007).

2.2.2 Policies in the early years of independence

In 1959 President Nkrumah established a committee headed by the ex-Minister of Education, Kojo Botsio to address the problem of the increasing numbers of young people who completed secondary school and qualified for higher education. Its recommendations led to the granting of full university status in 1961 to the University College of the Gold Coast (later the University College of Ghana), which had been established in 1948, and the University College of Science and Technology, established at Kumasi in 1952. In 1962, the University College of Education, affiliated to the University of Ghana, was established at Cape Coast with the specific purpose of training teachers to meet the unprecedented demand brought about by the rapid expansion in school places (Antwi, 1992). This would become the University of Cape Coast in 1971. By 1962, therefore, Ghana had three higher education institutions with a total enrolment of 4301 (Eshun, 1998: 241).

The Botsio Committee also recommended that the sixth form in secondary school should prepare Ordinary Level graduates for direct entry into higher education. With the British A level examination as the existing entry requirement, only the most academically able students who attended the very small number of senior secondary schools could enter higher education in Ghana - or in some cases secure government scholarships to study abroad (especially for first degrees in law, medicine and the applied sciences). Alongside this proposed reform, the Committee made recommendations for the future development of university education.

The Education Act that followed in 1961 made ten-year basic education (six years of primary and four years of middle school) free and compulsory for all children of school-going age. The subsequent rise in enrolments inevitably fuelled demand for secondary places. Enrolments in basic education increased from 586,464 in 1960 to 1,404,939 in 1965, while for secondary they rose from 12,922 to 31,241 (Dwomoh, 1994: 2481). Numbers of teachers increased too, with an increasing proportion being trained, from about 5000 trained and 10,000 untrained teachers in 1952, to 12,000 trained and 8,000 untrained in 1960 (Dwomoh, 1994: 2481). This expansion, however, was unable to meet the huge demand for education at the post-basic level.

In February 1966, Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup. The National Liberation Council (NLC) established by the military regime appointed the Kwapong Committee in the same year to conduct a comprehensive review of the educational system at all levels (Antwi 1992; Government of Ghana, 2004). This Committee addressed the issue of the majority of pupils from primary schools who could not gain entry to the restricted number of places in secondary schools by introducing the concept of the two-year Continuation School, a policy that was later criticised as elitist as it promoted inferior education for the masses whilst secondary education became the preserve of elite Ghanaian children (MOEYS, 2004).

2.2.3 The Education Reforms of 1987

The period from 1966 to the mid 1980s was a turbulent one for Ghana, with a series of military coups interspersed with brief periods of civilian government, and an economic crisis in the mid-1970s brought on in part by the global increase in the price of oil and disappointing growth in the country's economy. The quality of education deteriorated, school enrolments stagnated and the proportion of the GDP allocated to education was reduced from

a high of 6.4 percent in the mid-1970s to about 1.3 percent in the mid-1980s (Dwomoh, 1994: 2481). According to a US Library of Congress Report on Ghana's Education System, (http://www.country-studies.com/Ghana/the-education-system+.html), of the 1.8 million students who completed primary and middle school in 1985, only 125,600 were able to continue to the secondary level and fewer than 20,000 entered vocational and technical institutions, due to the limited number of post-basic institutions. Total enrolment in the three existing universities stagnated at around 9000 until the 1990s (Effah, 2003; Dwomoh, 1994).

The education reforms of 1987 were brought in by the second military government of Flight Lieut J.J. Rawlings (1981-1992) as part of a Structural Adjustment Programme negotiated with the IMF and the World Bank and aimed at halting the decline in expansion and quality through a radical overhaul of both the structure and the content of education. The aspirations behind the reforms were made clear in a government paper in 1987:

> … it is the basic right of every Ghanaian to be able to read, write and function usefully in the society. The educational system as it is organised now makes it difficult for this right to be enjoyed. (MOE, 1987)

According to Effah (2003: 340), the 1987 reforms were intended to:

- Increase access to education at all levels to provide expansion and equity
- Improve institutional infrastructure, pedagogic efficiency, and effectiveness
- Expand school curricula to provide for academic, cultural, technical, and vocational subjects

Most notably, the restructured system reduced the length of pre-university education from 17 to 12 years. The new structure provided six years of primary and three years of junior secondary schooling, consolidated into a uniform and continuous nine year cycle of free and compulsory basic education. Those who passed the junior secondary leaving examination (about 40 percent in 1991 according to Dwomoh, 1994: 2482) moved on to three years of senior secondary education. To compensate for the shorter school structure, higher education was lengthened from three to four years (minimum) for an honours bachelor's degree (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 43). This new structure replaced a 17-year cycle of six years of primary, four of

middle school, five of secondary and two of senior secondary school. From 1993, the British Ordinary and Advanced Level system of examinations was to be replaced by a single Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSC) examination administered by the West African Examinations Council (Keteku, 1999). Whereas the old middle school had followed the grammar school model of preparation for secondary education, the new diversified junior secondary school (JSS) along with the new senior secondary school (SSS) was intended to provide a practical and work-related curriculum that would equip students who could not pursue formal education beyond the secondary level with skills that would enable them to be successfully integrated into the country's work force.

The result of this reform was a further increase in enrolments at the primary level, from 455,053 in 1957 to 1,803,148 in 1991 (82.5 percent of the age group) and at the new three year junior secondary level from 115,831 to 569,343 (35 percent of the age group – compared to 25 percent under the old structures) (Dwomoh, 1994: 2480). However, the hope that the 1987 reforms would set the stage for improvements to the number and quality of entrants to higher education was not fully realised. The international community, and in particular the World Bank which had provided financial and technical assistance for the reforms, described them as unrealistic and unsustainable due to the cost implications (Afeti, 2006).

The scale of demand for access to higher education continued to be enormous: according to Effah (2003: 340): in 1997, 87,198 candidates from both public and private schools wrote the university entrance exams (these were subsequently abolished and the SSSC became the sole requirement for entry to university), but only 9730 were shortlisted. This meant that about 60 percent of those who qualified for entry on the basis of their examination results failed to secure places (Effah, 2003: 341). Moreover, it is likely that this small group is over-represented by students from wealthier backgrounds: a study by Addae-Mensah (2000) of two universities in Ghana revealed that the majority of students came from the top 50 secondary schools in the country, i.e. fewer than ten percent of the country's secondary schools.

2.2.4 The President's Committee on the Review of Education Reforms of 2002

The Chief Director of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Mr. Ato Essuman (cited in Amankwah, 2007) noted that the education system created in 1987 by the PNDC and NDC governments, both headed by former President J J Rawlings, had failed to make any

substantial impact on the educational system of Ghana. Instead, the system had over the years become a recipe for sub-standard work and low achievement at all levels. He observed that the shortcomings of the then basic education system had led to a situation where large numbers of secondary school graduates were deficient in literacy and numeracy and unable to proceed higher up the educational ladder. Statistics showed that one out of every eight pupils who entered a JSS failed to complete it (Amankwah, 2007). And even for those who did manage to complete it, only about 40 percent managed to gain admission into SSS. These graduates also lacked sufficient skills to enter the job market.

On its assumption of office in 2001, therefore, the National Patriotic Party expressed serious reservations concerning certain aspects of the 1987 reforms. These doubts were shared by wide sections of the public, notably parents, and led to the setting up of the 2002 Education Review Committee chaired by Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, Vice Chancellor of the University of Education Winneba.

The terms of reference of this committee were to:

- Examine the goals and philosophy of the present education system with a view to ensuring their relevance to the development of human resources in the light of new challenges facing the nation
- Determine how best to mainstream pre-school education into the formal education system
- Re-examine the basic school system
- Determine the restructuring of post-basic education
- Examine the emphases given to vocational and technical education and the links to polytechnics and the world of work
- Examine the role of polytechnics in the production of middle and high level human capital for the country.
- Examine tertiary education, including alternative ways of increasing access
- Examine distance learning using information and communication technology (ICT) as a mode of instruction at the basic and secondary levels
- Determine strategies for the introduction of ICT in all schools and colleges
- Consider strategies for the professional development of all actors in education (teachers, instructors, lectures and administrators).

The recommendation that distance education and the use of ICT should be encouraged was taken up by higher education institutions (see 2.4.2 below).

2.3. Higher education policies

Until the 1990s, Ghana had only three universities, which together with a small number of research institutions and professional associations, represented the country's higher education sector. Starting with under 100 students in the University College of the Gold Coast in 1948, the number of students in higher education reached 9,000 in 1976 and remained roughly at that level until the commencement of the Tertiary Education Reform Programme in 1991 (http://www.moess.gov.gh/history.htm).

During the 1980s, the universities experienced considerable student unrest and disruption to the academic year as a result of financial constraints and attempts to implement cost recovery measures such as the introduction of student fees and the removal of student subsidies such as hostel accommodation, as demanded under the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme. There was also an exodus of lecturers and other personnel to better paid jobs either in overseas higher education or in the private sector in Ghana (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 40; Sawyerr, 1994). Relations between the military government of Rawlings and the universities was tense, with the former seeing the latter as conservative and reluctant to embrace change.

The government's commitment to expand access to higher education is enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, which declares that 'higher education is "equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity" and will be progressively made free' (Manuh *et al.*, 2007). In the next section, the key policies behind the expansion of the sector are examined, along with several key strategies for widening participation.

2.3.1 The University Rationalisation Committee (URC) of 1988

The University Rationalisation Committee was established by the Government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) headed by President Rawlings, with the task of undertaking a comprehensive review of post-secondary education in the country as part of the 1987 Education Reform Programme. Amonoo (1992: 261) summarised the shift in policy on higher education as follows:

> Government policy, as echoed in the National Program for Economic Development Revised, July 1, 1987, and especially in the report of the University Rationalisation Committee (URC) in January 1988, stressed the need to gear university training and research more closely to "actual experiences of Ghanaians", maximising the use of facilities, reducing costs through a phased removal of institutional feeding and residential subsidies, instituting students' loan schemes, and making higher education more accessible to more people, through part-time and nonformal education.

The specific objectives of the review included the following:

- Re-defining the structure of the tertiary education system, to comprise all post-secondary, pre-service training institutions under the general control of the Ministry of Education;
- Making tertiary education more cost-effective;
- Increasing the capacity of the institutions for income generation and encouraging private sector participation in funding of tertiary institutions;
- Increasing access for qualified people, improving gender balance and providing quality education;
- Obtaining an appropriate balance between science/technology and social sciences/humanities students in relation to national manpower needs;
- Improving the management of the tertiary institutions.

(Source: http://www.moess.gov.gh/history.htm).

The URC's report (URC, 1988) included detailed proposals for far-reaching reforms to the sector, including the creation of a unified tertiary sector and reforms to management, academic, governance and funding structures, including those of the universities. It recommended that all post-secondary institutions operating under different ministries and other government agencies be brought together in a unified tertiary education system and that tertiary education be expanded by the provision of greater access to those previously denied such education, whether through poverty or gender. Such expansion was to be achieved through the upgrading of existing post-secondary institutions to polytechnic or university college status, and by considerably increasing enrolment.

In addition, the URC recommended the reorganisation of programmes and the introduction of diversified modes of delivery so as to accommodate the needs of those in employment and other 'non-traditional' categories of student such as those living in rural communities or from low socio-economic backgrounds. All universities, polytechnics and teacher training colleges were to adopt the semester system of course units and to be non-residential so as to attract students from all walks of life and to increase the intake of females.

2.3.2 The 1991 White Paper on Reforms to Tertiary Education

The policy framework recommended by the URC was subsequently re-formulated in 1991 as a White Paper entitled 'Reforms to the Tertiary Education System'. This implemented the URC's recommendation that a single tertiary sector be created, to include universities, polytechnics, and teacher training colleges.

Subsequent to the Education Reforms of 1987, it was anticipated by the government that the new JSS and SSS structures would increase the number of students seeking higher education opportunities and an acknowledgement that provision should be adequate to absorb these graduates into the next level of education, while at the same time recognising that increased access without a corresponding increase in quality was unhealthy for the whole system. Additional reforms were therefore needed to address participation and retention as well as quality in the newly created tertiary sector, which was already suffering from overcrowded facilities, chronic under-funding and deteriorating quality (Samoff and Carrol, 2003).

Two more universities had already been proposed. The seven specialist diploma-awarding colleges offering post-secondary education were to be upgraded and brought under one umbrella institution in the Central region, the University College of Education Winneba, with a mandate to produce professional teachers for the pre-tertiary levels of education (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 36). This college was established in 1992 and was awarded full university status as the University of Education Winneba in 2004. In 1993, the University of Development Studies (UDS) opened at Tamale in the Northern region to train agricultural specialists and offer degrees in health and development studies. Its mandate was to adopt a practical, action-oriented approach to education and to help address community problems (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 36). As Effah (2003: 339) has noted:

> Beyond improving access, UDS was established to introduce new action-oriented degree programs in areas of development priority, to emphasize practical field training, and to adopt community-based educational systems and problem-based learning approaches. The university's principal objective in this regard is to address the deprivation and environmental problems that characterize Northern Ghana and rural areas throughout the country. The UDS was ….. established to ensure equity in the spatial distribution of universities since the other public universities have been located in the south and central parts of the country.

The planned reforms to the tertiary sector were implemented between 1993 and 1998 through a World Bank funded Tertiary Education Project (TEP) (Samoff and Carrol, 2003; Girdwood, 1999). They were aimed at expanding access, improving the quality of teaching and learning, achieving financial stability and sustainability, strengthening management and governance, and creating institutional capacities for monitoring and evaluating policy relating to tertiary education (Girdwood, 1999; Samoff and Carrol, 2003). It was hoped that the project would reverse the system deterioration in the sector and help provide the much-needed infrastructural base for accelerated technical skills and knowledges for sustainable economic development.

According to Effah (2003: 340), enrolments in the public universities increased by 165 percent between 1991-2 and 1998-9, from 11,857 to 31,460. Amankwa (2007) cites figures for increased enrolment in the universities from 15,365 in 1993-94 to 40,673 in 2000-2001, in the polytechnics from 1,299 in 1993-94 to 18,474 in 2000-2001, and in the 38 teacher training colleges from 18,955 in 1993-94 to 21,410 in 2000-2001.

Despite these very large increases and a consistent rise in the share of the government's recurrent expenditure allocated to the education sector as a whole (from 17 percent in 1981 to 36 percent in 1992, according to the Report on the National Forum on Funding Tertiary Education, Akosombo, January 27-28 1997, cited in Gye Nyame Concord, 2005), public expenditure on tertiary education actually declined by one-fifth during the TEP period, from 15 percent of the education budget to 12 percent (Girdwood, 1999: ix). Committed to a policy of cost-sharing and cost-recovery, by 1998 the government's approved recurrent budget for universities only met about 50 percent of their estimated requirements, and the figure was only slightly better for the polytechnics (Girdwood, 1999). Samoff and Carrol (2003) suggest

that this decline has been a long-term trend: despite the rise in the overall education budget, the proportion allocated to tertiary education between 1970 and 1990 dropped from 25 to 11 percent.

At the same time, the mechanisms put in place to effect cost-sharing and cost recovery were only partially implemented, due to student resistance and student and staff strikes from the mid-1980s onwards and to the transition from a military to a civilian government at the start of the project period. The tough policy agreed with the World Bank by Rawlings' military regime had to be implemented by the fragile democratically elected civilian government, also headed by Rawlings, once the country was returned to constitutional rule in January 1993. It slowed down the implementation of measures that were unpopular with the electorate (Girdwood, 1999; Effah, 2003); in particular, it revealed a weak political will to enforce cost-sharing, with the result that the government only succeeded in imposing a 25 percent student hostel charge, while the student loan scheme accumulated a large deficit and became financially unviable. The resulting institutional deficit adversely affected the quality of education, consistent planning and standards of achievement. The World Bank concluded that the project 'closed with unsatisfactory rating because of little progress on reforms' (Samoff and Carrol, 2003).

Reviews of tertiary education carried out by the Akyeampong Committee (Akyeampong *et al.*, 1998 cited in Girdwood) and by Girdwood (1999) concluded that the implementation of the TEP reforms was fraught with problems of under-funding and weak monitoring and public sector management. According to Girdwood (1999: x), other reasons for the failed reforms included the enormity of the issues to be addressed, the inherent difficulties in the administrative set-up within which the policy was to operate, and the contradictions in the policy statement between social justice goals and the need for improved cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The tendency of the military government to dictate to those in academia what should or should not be done (Girdwood, 1999) also created an uneasy atmosphere within which discussions and consultations were held. The frustrations thus generated encouraged many members of university faculty to seek greener pastures in foreign universities, thus exacerbating the brain drain which has contributed so much to the under-development of higher education in low-income countries (Teferra and Altbach, 2004).

In 2000, to help meet the funding shortfall, the Ghana Education Trust Fund was established, which provided 20 percent of the prevailing rate of Value Added Tax (12 percent) to be paid to the GET Fund for educational purposes. This fund is intended to supplement the provision of education, to develop and maintain educational infrastructure, provide funds for scholarships to gifted but needy students and loans to students, and to offer grants for research and for training exceptional students to become teachers (Effah, 2003: 344).

In 2005, the most recent public university, the University of Mines and Technology (UMAT), was established at Tarkwa, bringing to six the total number of public universities in Ghana. Alongside these public institutions have grown a large number of private universities (see 2.4.3 below).

2.3.3 The National Council for Tertiary Education

The increase in the number of tertiary institutions in the 1990s required an improved management system. The Government's 1991 white paper on Reforms to the Tertiary Education System provided for the establishment of a system of quality assurance headed by a National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). This would be assisted by a National Accreditation Board (NAB), to contribute to the 'furtherance of better management of tertiary education' (www.nab.gov.gh) and a National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABTEX). The NCTE's role is to serve as a regulatory body, with responsibility for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the standards and norms of institutions, as well as to provide leadership in the direction, functions, role and relevance of tertiary education. The NAB is responsible for accrediting institutions offering degree level programmes. One way in which standards in tertiary education are protected is by the requirement that a new degree-awarding institution should be affiliated to an older one for a period of no less than four years.

2.4 Widening participation in tertiary education in Ghana

Against a backdrop of rapid expansion and insufficient funding, the government and individual institutions have endeavoured to introduce measures to ensure that access to tertiary education is widened and not just increased. Some of the policies are detailed below.

2.4.1 Widening access for women

There has been some progress over recent years in closing the gap between male and female enrolments in tertiary education. Effah (2003) has noted that, of the 9,251 students enrolled in Ghana's three universities in 1989-90, only 19 percent were female. This increased to 21 percent in 1991-92 and to 26 percent in 1998-99. The figures for the polytechnics for 1993-94 and 1998-99 were 16 percent and 21 percent respectively. According to Kwapong (2007), in the 2005-06 academic year the male to female enrolment ratio had increased to 35 percent for universities and 30 percent for polytechnics. Although an improvement, this is still far below parity.

The government has made commitments to 'enhance gender equity at all levels and programmes of education' and to support the work of other agencies, including traditional authorities and District Assemblies, in seeking the same (MOEYS, 2004, section 22). However, as Manuh *et al.* (2007) have noted, at the tertiary level, there is a remarkable absence of institutional policies on gender equity: in 2006 gender equity was not cited as an objective in the strategic plan of any of the public universities or in the work of the NCTE beyond the goal of increasing the proportion of female students. In turn, this goal was not linked to any specific output or national objective. They also noted that no institution at the time had an equal opportunity unit, sexual harassment policy or grievance procedures (despite the many complaints of sexual harassment on campus) and they concluded that Ghanaian public universities are 'extremely old-fashioned in their disregard for gender equity' (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 130-1).

Nevertheless, the government recognises that gender imbalances observed at the tertiary level are fed by disparities at lower levels of education. For example, government statistics for 1989-90 showed that only 45 percent of primary school pupils were female. This percentage decreased to 33 percent at the secondary school level, to 27 percent in the polytechnics (and to the 19 percent for universities cited above) (http://www.country-studies.com/ghana/the-education-system.html). The Ministry of Education acknowledges that emphasis on male education doubtless reflects traditional social values, which view the reproductive abilities of women as their primary role in life, while men are valued as breadwinners and, therefore, in need of education to compete in the contemporary economy (http://www.country-studies.com/ghana/the-education-system.html). Prah (2002) and Dolphyne (1991), among others, have argued that schools may contribute in a number of ways to reinforcing society's gender inequalities and therefore to reducing higher education opportunities for women.

The recognition that strong and effective interventions are needed to address the socio-cultural constraints that constitute barriers to girls' education at all levels has led to a number of government interventions to bridge the gender gap. Initiatives include the establishment of Science Resource Centres by the Ministry of Education and of a Science, Technology, and Mathematics Education (STME) clinic for girls. Both have begun to produce positive results (Effah, 2003). Also, the training of more female science teachers to act as role models and the re-introduction of remedial teaching and mentoring programmes by universities for women who apply with poor grades have also been recommended. Within the public universities, one example of affirmative action is the lowering of the cut-off point for entry into some programmes for female students, by one point, or sometimes two points, on the aggregate of the six best grades normally required for entry. In 2002/3, UDS went further and admitted all female students who met the basic entry requirements, resulting in an increase from 111 females in 2001/2 to 277 in 2002/3 (from 17 to 26 percent of total enrolments). Such initiatives have helped raise the male to female enrolment ratio in tertiary education, although Manuh *et al.* (2007: 132) note that this unofficial affirmative action by all the public universities is not always fully honoured.

2.4.2 Widening access for rural communities

While gender parity remains a challenge across all levels, especially at the tertiary level, there also remain problems related to increasing the limited access to tertiary education for rural communities and those in the less developed regions of the country. As Manuh *et al.* reveal (2007: 82-3) in their survey of 1,500 students, 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.

The need to provide access to rural communities was behind the establishment of UDS in the Northern region; however, UDS also attracted students from outside the Northern region who failed to meet the highly competitive requirements of the older universities in the South but had higher grades than students from the North, where schooling was generally of a poorer quality. UDS has therefore adopted a strategy of ranking all candidates who meet their basic entry requirement by position in their school of origin; students from similar schools then compete within their cluster for places. This in effect operates as a quota system for rural

students (Manuh *et al.* 2007: 87). The University of Cape Coast has taken similar action: it sets aside an annual five percent quota for entrants who are graduates of schools that it has categorised as 'deprived' and 'very deprived'.

Other initiatives to increase participation by disadvantaged groups have included the introduction of part-time and work-study programmes for teachers at the University of Education Winneba and the University of Cape Coast. The latter also runs summer courses for Science students whose grades are not sufficient to allow them to enrol directly onto courses, and for students of Business Studies. Distance education has also been introduced as an alternative delivery mode by a number of institutions, as will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.3 Widening access for students with special needs

Another highly under-represented group at all levels of education are those with special educational needs. The 2004 White Paper on education acknowledges the need to address this issue (MOEYS, 2004, para 17). The 2002 Education Review Committee recommended that the University College of Education Winneba should intensify the training of competent personnel to support special education activities in the schools and that it should collaborate with the Ghana Education Service in organising in-service training for teachers so as to equip them to handle children with disabilities as well as the gifted (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: 8.4.1). However, the educational needs and entitlements of this group are poorly recognised and no tertiary institution has introduced significant measures to improve access for those with disabilities.

2.4.4 Distance Education

As has been suggested in earlier sections, distance education has been perceived as a major strategy to bring more marginalised constituencies into tertiary education. This mode of delivery was not given serious consideration in Ghana until the late 1980s, although the Institute of Adult Education had been offering it in various forms since the 1960s (Effah, 2003: 341). Distance Education did not become part of a national strategy to expand tertiary education until the 1990s.

At a seminar on distance education organised by UNESCO in September 1990 in Arusha, Tanzania, attended by representatives from all leading distance education institutions and

funding agencies (including the World Bank and the African Development Bank), the need to find more innovative ways to meet the increasing demands for education and training at all levels and for different learner populations in the region was acknowledged. According to Kinyanjui (1996), it was evident during the seminar that distance education had an important role to play in providing greater access to education, and in helping to overcome problems of equity, particularly with regard to disadvantaged groups.

The Arusha seminar persuaded the Government of Ghana that distance education was a viable complement to conventional face-to-face education, which could offer a remedy to the problems the country was facing with regard to the limited and deteriorating facilities in her universities and the rising cost of providing quality education at the secondary and tertiary levels in the country. This step was inspired by the vision that all Ghanaians should have access to all forms of education and training regardless of where they live.

Subsequent to the Arusha seminar, a survey of distance education in Ghana was conducted in 1992 (Kinyanjui, 1996) and a national coordinator appointed in 1994. A National Council for Distance Education was established in 1995.

Kwapong (2007:67), in her study on widening access to tertiary education in Ghana, identified the following underlying factors accounting for limited access:

- Existing tertiary institutions are unable to meet the high demand for tertiary education, which has arisen out of the rapid growth in population and the expansion in pre-tertiary education, following the introduction of the educational reforms in 1987.
- The mismatch between existing academic facilities and physical infrastructure on the one hand, and the increasing number of students admitted into tertiary institutions on the other.
- Limited opportunities and avenues for working people and those who, for one reason or the other, for example lack of funds, have had to terminate their education for a period, to re-enter or acquire tertiary education through other modes.
- Public tertiary institutions being originally developed as residential institutions because of their national character and the model adopted.

- Existing structures and facilities in tertiary institutions providing limited, and in some cases no, access for people with disabilities and special needs.

In addition, there are limited opportunities for academic and professional progression, especially for those who enter the technical/vocational streams, and inadequate opportunities for life-long learning (Kwapong, 2007).

These challenges made distance education a rational choice at the tertiary level as it facilitates participation by a greater number of qualified applicants. The Government of Ghana accepted in its 2004 White Paper the recommendation of the 2002 Education Review Committee to establish an Open University which would provide avenues for work-study programmes and life-long education and post-secondary education opportunities for large numbers of people (MOEYS, 2004). Although an Open University has not yet come into existence in Ghana, there already exist two private distance education institutions, Ghana College and Kludjeson Institute of Technology, and two offshore public institutions, the University of South Africa and Resource Development International (Manuh *et al.*, 2007), the latter being a consortium of British public universities.

The Committee's recommendation that participation rates in education could be increased through the use of distance education and ICT also led a number of higher education institutions to respond by setting up their own distance education programmes. The leading institutions are the University of Cape Coast, the University of Education Winneba, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). Of particular note are the University of Education in Winneba and the University of Cape Coast which together run an expanding distance teacher education programme with over 20,000 enrolled students (Akyeampong, 2007). The University of Ghana, Legon launched its distance education programme in November 2007. Kwapong (2007) argues that it is particularly attractive to women in Ghana who perform multiple roles and have family commitments and time constraints to consider.

2.4.5 Private Higher Education

The development of a private university sector in Ghana has been rapid since the late 1990s, encouraged by the liberalisation of the economy and an apparently insatiable demand for access. Valley View University at Oyibi, run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, was the

first private university to be accredited by the NAB in 1995, followed by Central University College in Accra in 1997. The number of private universities, most of them established by religious bodies, both Christian and Muslim, has increased rapidly. By 2000, the National Accreditation Board (NAB) had accredited 11 private tertiary institutions (Effah, 2003: 341) and by 2004 this number had grown to 27 (http://www.modernghana.com/news/51603/1/cover-private-tertiary-institutions-with-getfund-d.html). The NAB website currently lists ten universities (six public, plus one affiliated public, and three private) and 20 private university colleges (see the list in Appendix 1). As the NAB requires new institutions to affiliate with an existing university for at least four years before they can be granted their own charter, most have linked themselves to public universities in Ghana, although a few are linked to foreign universities. They are brought together under the umbrella of the Ghana Association of Private Tertiary Institutions (GAPTI). Despite their growing number, their student intake is small and currently they account for less than 5 percent of total enrolments in the tertiary sector (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 48).

According to Effah (2003), the advantage of private institutions is that they can introduce innovations in course design and delivery and respond to changes in the labour market more quickly than public universities because they do not have the institutional history of the latter. They are also perceived to be more market-oriented and entrepreneurial and have constructed their programmes in response to the requirements of the current knowledge economy and of their clients' work-life preferences. Central University College, for example, is explicit in its intention to make tertiary education more accessible by structuring its taught programmes into morning, afternoon and week-end sessions, thus enabling 'determined workers to upgrade their knowledge and skills thereby enhancing their effectiveness at a more affordable cost' (www.centraluniversity.org). This flexibility in delivery may be one reason why the percentage of female students is higher in private institutions than in their public counterparts: 41 percent in private universities (NCTE, 2006) compared to 34.3 percent in public universities in Ghana (NCTE, 2007).

Gadzekpo (2007) argues that private tertiary institutions are more creative in their academic programmes. Their establishment in Ghana has made available to students a range of choices and introduced healthy competition with the public institutions, while also freeing government resources to be targeted at the poor and needy. However, Manuh *et al.* (2007: 48-9) point out that they tend to concentrate on the more popular courses such as business

management, IT, computing as well as theology, and none at the time of writing offered the more expensive science courses. Few offer reduced fees for those from less advantaged family backgrounds. Private higher education is therefore largely confined to the wealthier members of Ghanaian society who can afford the high fees, even though student loans are now available to students in private institutions.

2.5 Conclusion

The face of higher/tertiary education in Ghana has certainly changed over the years in terms of new institutions, new modes of delivery and new constituencies of students. The education landscape in Ghana today is the result of several major policy initiatives adopted by past governments as well as the present one. The policies addressed in this section were all intended to increase access to tertiary education in various ways, and some were explicit in seeking to widen participation by bringing in 'non-traditional' students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. These policies, as discussed, have included the involvement of private participation in tertiary education, the lowering of the entry grade points of females to some university programmes, the introduction of quota systems and distance learning initiatives. Having adopted the semester system, a number of institutions are kept open all year round for full-time and part-time students as well as for vacation or sandwich programmes. Weekend and evening classes are also organised by some universities.

Despite the significant expansion in enrolments in tertiary institutions in post-independence Ghana as a result of the reforms discussed here, the increasing demand for tertiary education has not been met. The existing institutions are still unable to absorb all the students who qualify, due to inadequate resources. The participation rate of the 18-21 year age-group in tertiary institutions in the country is as low as 3 percent (UNESCO, 2006) compared to 30-40 percent for the corresponding age group in the more developed countries. For this reason, distance education has become a major alternative. Nevertheless, the sustainable funding of tertiary education remains a problem. Various solutions have been proposed, such as cost-sharing involving government, students and the private sector.

The reforms to the sector have brought about the setting up of the National Council for Higher Education and the National Accreditation Board to ensure compliance to set standards and norms by all tertiary institutions in Ghana. The government's determination to adopt a

holistic approach to the development of education within the framework of mobilising all available resources - human, material and financial - is gradually yielding positive results. Poverty, which has been identified as a major barrier to education, is being addressed through the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), which seeks to provide and enable an environment that empowers all Ghanaians to participate in wealth creation.

The laws, policy documents and reports which have been discussed in this section and which have helped in some measure to meet the educational needs and aspirations of the people are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Selected educational initiatives with relevance to widening participation in higher education in Ghana

Year	Policy	Issues addressed	Impact on HE
1951	Accelerated Development Plan	Access and participation in basic education	Unprecedented increase in basic enrolment which fuels demand at the upper levels.
1959	Kojo Botsio Committee	Increasing numbers of secondary school graduates	University College of Ghana and University College of Science and Technology granted full University status in 1961.
1966	Kwapong Committee	Comprehensive review of the entire educational system at all levels.	
1987	Educational Reforms Review Committee	Restructuring of education to 6-3-3 years of pre-tertiary education; phasing out of ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels	Failed to improve the quality of entrants into higher education due to unrealistic and unsustainable costs
1988	University Rationalisation Committee	Comprehensive review of post-secondary education and plans for: • medium term university development • expansion of access to tertiary education • establishing a sustainable basis for financing, monitoring and evaluation of tertiary education	Recommendations for far-reaching reforms of the management, governance and funding of tertiary education structure. Semester system and non-residential student status introduced.

1991	Tertiary Education Reforms	Expansion of educational access, participation and retention; introduction of a unified tertiary sector under a single authority (Ministry of Education); improvements in quality and infrastructure; consolidation of cost sharing and cost recovery mechanisms	Increase in number of institutions; upgrading of some institutions; strengthening of teacher education; growth of private providers. Overstretched sector with reduced government financing and lower than expected cost recovery.
1993	Creation of NCTE	Enhancement of overall quality, capacity and relevance of tertiary education	Accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms established
2002	Presidential Review Committee on Education Reforms	Examination of vocational/ technical education and role of polytechnics; recommendations for alternative ways of increasing access to tertiary education, including through IT and distance learning	Learning by distance education intensified in public institutions; increased use of IT by both teachers and students in teaching and learning

They were aimed at expanding access, improving the quality of teaching and learning, achieving financial stability and sustainability, strengthening management and governance, and creating institutional capacities for monitoring and evaluating policy relating to tertiary education

Section 3: Widening Participation in Higher Education Policies in Tanzania

3.1 Introduction

This section provides a review of policies that have been important directly and indirectly for widening participation in higher education in Tanzania from the period immediately after independence in 1961 to 2007. The discussion includes the identification of drivers for change in higher education in the country, and the development of policies as a response to continuing needs in the sector. Included are selected proclamations, resolutions and policy directives that have been relevant to the development of higher education, and to widening participation in particular. This review highlights the following factors:

- the nature and purpose of the policies;
- the context of policy formulation and the drivers behind it;
- implementation and outcomes of the policies, including their influence on other policies and/or impact on widening participation in higher education;
- efforts towards poverty alleviation/eradication which were relevant and impacted on higher education and widening participation.

3.2 Education policies since independence

The rights and opportunities for all Tanzanian citizens have been enshrined in Article 9 of the 1977 Constitution that states:

> The Government and all its agencies provide equal opportunities to all its citizens, men and women alike without regard to their colour, tribe, religion, or station in life. (Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, in URT, 1998a:18)

At independence in 1961, emphasis was placed on using national resources for the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease, and the equitable development of the people (URT, 1998a:18-19). Article 11 of the constitution stipulates the right to education, including higher education:

> every person has the right to self-education, and every citizen shall be free to pursue education in a field of his choice up to the highest level according to his merits and ability. (URT, 1998a:19)

After independence in 1961, the then Tanganyika Government passed acts that would uphold the values of equality, justice and democracy, the first of which was to replace the Colonial Education Ordinance of 1927 by the Education Ordinance of 1962. Prior to that, schools were administered on a racial basis, with places allocated according to three 'race' groups, namely African, Indian and European, a situation that the first President, Mwl Julius Nyerere, had castigated in 1954 and later in 1956 during the struggle for independence. Mwl Nyerere also complained about the then colonial government's intention to reduce public expenditure on education for Africans, as well as about the slow pace of expansion in education.[1] Besides outlining the need for uniformity in curriculum, examinations, administration and financing of education across the races, the Education Act of 1962 shifted the responsibility for primary education to local authorities, promoted Kiswahili as the national language and English as the language of instruction (URT, 1995: i).

The 1962 Education Act did not effect changes to the objectives of education; rather, it opened up access for Africans to Asian and European secondary schools as a gateway to employment and higher education. The shift was thus from using education to groom a cadre for the colonial administration to one that aimed to groom a new African leadership cadre to replace the Europeans (Mamdani, 2007:1).

The urge to expand education generally and build higher education capacities specifically was also evidenced in the inauguration in 1961 of the University College Dar es Salaam, affiliated to the University of London. Fourteen law students were registered, one of whom was a woman. Until then those who aspired to college education had to attend either Makerere College in Uganda or an overseas higher education institution, usually in the UK, USA or India. Changes followed in 1963 when the University of East Africa was inaugurated, with Dar es Salaam as one of its colleges. At the time of its inauguration, Nyerere highlighted three important roles for an African university: the university as participant in social

[1] Nyerere (1966) 'A Great Urge for Education', quoted in Lema *et al*. (2004:2-5).

revolution; as challenger of all discrimination; and as a place for critical thinking and search for truth which produces people who are ready to serve the public (Nyerere, 1966:218-9). Hence, from the beginning of independent rule, higher education was firmly located in policy terms as a pivotal institution to promote economic and social development in Tanzania.

A significant boost to enrolment was experienced following the inauguration of the University College, Dar es Salaam campus, which enabled it to offer Arts and Science programmes in addition to Law. However, changing socio-political circumstances led to the proclamation in 1967 of substantive policy changes with far reaching consequences in all areas including higher education.

3.2.1 The Arusha Declaration and Education for Self Reliance

The major policy change in education was ushered in by the Education for Self Reliance (ESR) manifesto in the wake of the 1967 Arusha Declaration. The Arusha Declaration was Tanzania's blueprint for socialism (popularly known as *Ujamaa* in Kiswahili). It underlined not only the equality and dignity of the human being, but also advocated the nationalisation of the major means of production and new socialist values and attitudes to underpin the nationalised institutions. Education policy within the ESR manifesto stipulated that primary education should be terminal (i.e. the end point for formal education) and that it should equip students with the relevant skills and knowledge to be self reliant. The school was described as not only an academic space but also a community whose members both studied and worked. The emphasis was on training people to gain respect but also to be productive. There was less emphasis on post-primary education, including university education, which was only seen as relevant in terms of catering for national human resource needs (Nyerere, 1968:267-290).

The economic and political direction of post-independence Tanzania, however, faced challenges through several political contestations. On the mainland, despite Nyerere's charisma, an army mutiny in 1964 shook the leadership (Luanda, 1993) and in Zanzibar a people's revolution threw out the government of the Sultan. Two years later, the thinking that the university would produce an educated group that did not claim privileges had also not been internalised when, in 1966, students at the University College of Dar-es-Salaam rioted in protest at their compulsory participation in the newly organised National Service. The government was also threatened by the growing political strength of the labour unions and

cooperative structures that were developing into significant contenders and it felt obliged to strip them of their political powers. In 1965 it established a one party state.

The political momentum leading to the Arusha Declaration of 1967 and later to the ESR was partly a response to the need to reorient the objectives of education and align them to local realities and national development needs. At the same time the capitalist preferences of many newly independent African states were less attractive to Tanzania, as perpetuating exploitative and oppressive relations of inequality, than the socialist ideals inspired by the experiences of China, Cuba, USSR and the Israeli Kibbutz. Inspiration was also drawn from the African past, which was believed to be built on community-based egalitarianism and thus the concept of *Ujamaa* was adopted (Nyerere, 1968). Through re-directing education objectives it was believed that a truly socialist state would be achieved and the three widely politicised enemies of poverty, disease and ignorance eliminated.

Although the ESR was pro-poor and geared towards addressing the basic needs of the majority of the people, especially in the rural areas, its implementation became quite problematic because its philosophy of incorporating work and study was taken to mean simply the establishment of extra-curricular activities, mostly in the form of gardens or small farms. Moreover, ESR as a transformative pedagogy, to raise awareness among learners of the need, and the potential, for change, was challenged by conventional expectations in education under pressure from segments of the educational establishment. Nyerere was aware of these problems and evaluating ESR twenty years after its proclamation, he pointed out:

> Educationalists seem to be a little afraid of its implementation, and many members of society including some leaders have been unable to free themselves from the mental attitudes to education inherited from colonialism.[2]

In the meantime, in 1974 Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced as another strategy to implement ESR, with what was later seen to be an unrealistic target date of 1977.

Among the major positive outcomes of ESR and UPE was the significant increase in primary school enrolments between 1975 and 1980, which reached almost 100 percent while illiteracy

[2] See Nyerere (1998) in Lema *et al.* (2006: 178)

in the general population was reduced from 90 to 20 percent through mass literacy campaigns and adult education programmes (Yamada, 2007: 29,42). However, the implementation of UPE was also seen as a major factor in the deteriorating quality of education, especially because the qualifications of many UPE teachers were sub-standard and the school infrastructure unsatisfactory (Wedgewood, 2006:4).

While the effects of UPE only influenced higher education indirectly, ESR had a direct impact on the orientation of higher education. The objectives of the University when it was established in 1970 (Act No. 12) were the enhancement of knowledge, the building of a sense of public service in students and cooperation with the government (UDSM, 1970, Section 4). At its inauguration, Nyerere emphasised not the opportunity of widening participation in higher education for Tanzanians but the role of the University in producing people who can think, solve problems, be creative and also who can develop attitudes in tune with socialist practice and ideology (Nyerere, 1973:192-203). The issue of relevance of education to social development was to be a major factor in the introduction of practical training to the university curriculum and this continues to be a popular activity. Less successful was the introduction of self-help activities in the form of farming and business activities; contrary to the ideals of the Arusha Declaration and ESR which informed the role of the University, this initiative found less favour with the University community, which wanted a strongly academic form of education.

The Arusha Declaration and ESR have received much criticism from those responsible both internally and externally for assessing Tanzania's progress on development in relation to these policies (Limbu and Mashindano 2002). However, they both shaped significantly the direction of development in the country, and higher education in particular. Much of its defence was cushioned by the zeal of Nyerere who still saw its worth 20 years later (cited in Lema *et al.*., 2006: 209). Based on these two processes, the ideological role of the University as an instrument for development was nurtured (Mkude *et al.*, 2003:3). It was, however, the Musoma Resolution of 1974 which brought dramatic changes to who gained access to university education, and through what means.

3.2.2 The Musoma Resolution

The Musoma Resolution of 1974 brought changes to higher education by defining it as adult education in line with ESR's positioning of both primary and secondary education as terminal

and not necessarily as bridges towards higher education. It also reiterated the ideal of combining work and study, while changing the procedures for entry into the University by putting more emphasis on work experience, attitudes towards service to the community and hard work rather than academic proficiency at the secondary school level. The value of applied knowledge and work experience in particular was a feature of this period. After secondary education, students were directed to enter employment for one or two years after which, if they had positive references from employers and party organs, they could then apply to the University.

The Musoma Resolution was expected to curtail the elitism in higher education inherited through the British university system on whose model the post-independence universities in many ex-British colonies were said to be established. However, problems emerged almost immediately after the declaration. Shrinking of student intakes and the number of women enrolled at the University are cases in point. The few women who benefited by entering the University as mature students with work experience could not compensate for the number of girls who could not come directly from secondary schools. Out of 802 students admitted during the 1974-75 academic year, for example, 82 were women. The number dropped to 68 women out of a total student intake of 741 in 1976-77 (Kiondo, 1986:3).

Under pressure from the University branch of the women's wing of the ruling party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), partly informed by the right of women to access higher education articulated during the International Year of Women in 1975, some aspects of the Musoma Resolution were reversed for some students in 1976. Specifically, it allowed all women in all programmes and men in the Faculty of Engineering to enrol directly in the University from Form Six rather than having to gain work experience in order to become eligible.

The problems in enrolment were aggravated by low levels of student academic performance. The failure to graduate of many mature students admitted in the wake of the Musoma Resolution brought into question the qualifications of such students for academic study and the relationship between work experience and academic acumen. Mature students had to meet the same entry requirements as others but the cut-off point was not very high and it became apparent that work experience and strong character references did not necessarily equip students who had been away from studying for a long time for academic life. The Resolution

thus widened access for some but made quality difficult to maintain and it was dissolved in 1984.

The Faculties of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, Medicine and Agriculture, which were part of the University of Dar es Salaam when it was established in 1970, were augmented by the Faculties of Engineering (1973), Commerce and Management (1979) and Education (1989). Even though enrolments did not increase significantly, these developments opened up access to new areas of study. Small increases and sometimes stagnation in student enrolment can be attributed to the economic crisis that the nation faced beginning in the late 1970s, which affected developments in higher education. Budgets decreased and the institutions shared in the general contraction in public expenditure.

In 1984, the University's Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences was upgraded into the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), with admission criteria that favoured students who could work and improve agriculture rather than 'academic high fliers' with First Class passes.[3]

After the Arusha Declaration and Education for Self-Reliance, Education Acts were passed in 1969 and 1978. These acts legalised what had been put in place between the years, including the abolition of direct entry from Form Six into the universities (with the above cited exemptions) as determined by the 1974 Musoma Resolution. They also authorised secondary education expansion and the establishment of SUA, MUCHS and the Faculty of Education at UDSM. The 1978 Education Act also introduced a quota system, whereby each district had a quota of places for students at secondary school to ensure district and regional parities and at the same guaranteeing the University fair access or representation, thus acknowledging that merit alone cannot guarantee equity. The Musoma Resolution was dissolved in 1984.

3.3 Education policies in the 1990s and beyond

With the economic crisis of the 1980s and the subsequent structural adjustment programmes imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the Tanzanian government was forced to revisit its economic and development policies. The result was a move towards

[3] See Nyerere (1984) in Lema *et al.* (2006:165).

economic liberalisation that slowly eroded Ujamaa and other socialist leaning policies (World Bank, 1988). There was also a push from the international finance institutions and donors for political liberalisation and thus multipartyism came into effect in 1992. This adoption of political and market reform policies has had implications in the offering of social services, including education.

It is necessary at this point to acknowledge global processes informing higher education that became prominent in the 1990s, leading up to the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000. For example, in Tanzania, the World Bank shift from viewing higher education as a sector with high costs and private benefits to linking it with development and equity (as noted in Section 1) was reflected in the government's recognition of the need to expand higher education as part of its own agenda on development and equity (Mamdani, 2007). National policies on higher education and strategies for expansion within higher education institutions were thus put in place.

In higher education, liberalisation has informed the re-introduction of cost-sharing measures, the expansion of private higher education and widening participation through alternative higher education provision. Policies enacted during the 1990s benefited from such reports as the 1979 Anglo-Tanzania Study Report on *Education Media in Tanzania: Their Role in Development*, the 1980 Makwetta Report resulting from the Presidential Commission of Education's review of the entire education system, and the 1990 Kuhanga Report, which provided comparisons between the higher education experiences of several countries (OUT, 2006). While both the Anglo-Tanzania and the Makwetta Reports recommended the establishment of a correspondence institute to provide university programmes, the Kuhanga Report recommended the establishment of an open and distance learning institution in Tanzania. The government adopted the latter model as the best alternative system for widening participation in higher education and established the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) in 1992 (Act No. 17).

OUT was designed to offer part-time university learning and its programmes were to be accessible to aspirants of university education who could not follow full time programmes, such as employed staff, women who could not leave their family obligations, and people in rural areas with minimum entry qualifications. However, a hasty establishment of centres in several zones in the country, limited tutors, especially those that could be deployed to centres

outside Dar-es-Salaam, and the lack of reading materials and library spaces challenged development in its early years. Nevertheless, by 1996, OUT had grown to be the second largest of the public universities in enrolment and by 2006, 12,613 (24.4 percent) of the 51,657 total of students in Tanzania were enrolled at OUT (OUT, 2006:20).

3.3.1 The Education and Training Policy

In 1995, the Education and Training Policy was enacted to replace the 1978 Education Act. This policy reiterated the government's stand on promoting access and equity in education as a right for all, equitable distribution of educational resources including between institutions, improving and expanding education for girls and the disabled as well as screening for talented and gifted children. The 1978 quota system, through which an equitable number of students from each region were given a chance to attend secondary schools, was abolished. It was considered to have outlived its usefulness, especially as access to the upper levels of education on the grounds of merit was, along with cost-sharing, part of the liberalisation agenda (URT, 1995:21).

The policy also addressed secondary school level access for girls, including:

- reversing its policy of phasing out boarding facilities in government secondary schools for girls;
- establishing girls' day streams in existing government secondary schools in communities where girls' education was adversely affected. (URT, 1995:19)

In addition, the policy broadened the higher education financial base through cost sharing, in which students were expected to cover certain costs for their education. This was to be in three phases: first, students would be required to pay for their transport, then, the fees for their associations and medical charges, and finally the costs of their food and accommodation (this third stage was never implemented and the full costs are now included in the student loan). Although the idea of cost sharing was introduced in the early 1990s, it became firmly institutionalised through the 1995 Education and Training Policy and later through the 1999 Higher Education Policy. Another policy factor related to widening participation was the liberalisation of ownership of higher education institutions. The 1995 policy invited private individuals and organisations to open up colleges and universities (URT, 2004a: 9).

The outcome of this 1995 policy was mixed as regards equity and widening participation. First of all, the phasing out of the quota system for secondary education meant that not all regions and districts could send students to A level schools, which provided the pool of recruits for higher education institutions. There was a great risk, therefore, that academically poor performing areas would be left out. In 1978 girls' secondary schools had been de-boarded so as to widen participation and cut costs, it being argued that saving on the cost of boarding facilities allowed for greater provision for girls in day schools. However, this policy was reversed, with the government heeding the views of those who complained that de-boarding girls' secondary schools was depriving girls of a safe and learner-friendly environment, and had led to many girls dropping out or under-achieving academically.[4] While the opening up of day streams in areas where girls were educationally disadvantaged would expand enrolment for girls, it needs to be noted that this would not ensure their academic success nor necessarily open up higher education opportunities for them (Wedgewood, 2006:9).

The liberalisation of higher education opened doors to the establishment of more universities and colleges after 1995, as can be seen in Table 2 in the Appendix. The Education and Training Policy (1995) also led to the enactment of the 1999 National Higher Education Policy and the establishment of the Higher Education Students Loans Board in 2004, the implementation of which has facilitated the expansion in student enrolment in some higher education institutions as well as providing inspiration for the establishment of new ones.

3.3.2 The National Higher Education Policy

The National Higher Education Policy enacted in 1999 is currently under review but continues to provide the general framework for higher education in Tanzania. The policy outlines four major arguments for its enactment. These include:

- the creation of a common conceptualisation of higher education
- addressing expansion challenges in higher and tertiary education
- addressing the imbalance in student enrolment between the natural sciences and the social sciences, and

[4] This was a major finding during the TUSEME project. See TUSEME project in UDSM (2004).

- responding to the complex challenges brought about by economic, demographic, political and social changes. (URT, 1999)

To meet the above mentioned needs, strategies were introduced that would allow: expansion in annual intakes within public institutions; institutionalisation of the cost-sharing measures which would enable the government to direct more resources to the necessary expansion of infrastructure; invitation to the private sector and individuals to establish and manage institutions of higher education; the redressing of the gender imbalance through affirmative action for female candidates who meet the minimum entry qualifications for universities; and the enhancement of distance education in order to cope with the growing demand for higher education. In terms of financing higher education, the policy advocated:

- the provision of grants and loans to qualified needy students as a priority;
- the facilitation of scholarships for women students in scientific and technical disciplines;
- the establishment of a special fund for higher education.

Some of the issues given emphasis in this policy were already included in the Education and Training Policy of 1995, for example cost sharing, with a more aggressive approach adopted in the 1999 Act than in the earlier policy, which has greatly influenced access to higher education.

3.4 Financing higher education, cost sharing and loan schemes

The practice of cost-sharing in higher education institutions can be traced back to the colonial period when all students had to pay tuition fees except those from poor families who were assisted through government bursaries (URT, 1998b). Influenced by the Arusha Declaration in 1967, the government decided to grant bursaries to all students attending higher education since all were bonded to serve the country by working in the public sector for at least five years after graduation. In 1974, the government abolished the bursary system and assumed total responsibility for paying all higher education costs for students admitted to public higher education institutions. This move was informed by what was seen as the increased need for educated nationals to take up central positions in government. The move was also possible at this time because the country was experiencing an economic boom. However, as the successive political, environmental and economic crises of the 1980s forced the country to

accept the IMF/World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programmes, the government changed its position. Cost sharing in higher institutions of learning was re-introduced in 1988, but its implementation began formally in 1992, a delay which has been attributed to political expediency.[5]

The re-introduction of cost-sharing in higher education was claimed to be necessary in order, among other things, to maintain the quality of academic programmes, to encourage needy students to attend higher education, and to improve access (URT, 1998b:76). As noted above, the students were to assume in phases the costs for transportation, application, registration and entry examination and tuition fees, some aspects of practical training, faculty requirements (e.g. overalls, contribution to equipment), food and accommodation. In 1994, the government introduced the Students' Loan scheme from which students could borrow to cover food and accommodation costs.

The loan scheme was at first managed by a unit within the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology but was taken over by the Higher Education Students Loans Board (HESLB), which was established through Act No.9 of 2004. The Act details two major objectives of the Board: (i) to strengthen the cost sharing policy by providing loans to academically able but needy students; (ii) to recover the loans given to students who have already graduated. The scheme put much emphasis on 'need' as the major criterion for accessing loans. Section 3.10 of the 2006 Revised Regulations and Guidelines of the Board provides a definition of a needy student as one who 'is an orphan, is disabled or has disabled poor parents, is from a poor single parent family, is from marginalised and disadvantaged groups, or, is from a low income threshold family earning national minimum wage or below' (URT: 2006a). By targeting these categories, the government has put in place an inclusive approach for access to higher education which incorporates groups who would be otherwise disadvantaged.

The Board started its work in a hurry in 2005, thus creating major challenges for itself and the students. During its first year, 2005-06, the Board could not establish the necessary means testing to assess levels of need amongst the loan applicants. Moreover, since 2005 was an election year, the Board succumbed to pressure and all applicants were given loans to meet

[5] Ishengoma (2004:105) argued that the postponement was due to the general elections in 1990.

100 percent of all their financial needs. Complaints seem to have increased with the introduction of the means test during 2006-07, as it did not sufficiently distinguish between students' differing levels of financial need and placed most in the middle category, where they were required to pay 40 percent of university fees (differentiation has now been improved). Matters were aggravated when in the same year the government added other criteria for loans, which limited eligibility to:

- girls with 1st and 2nd class and boys with 1st class Form Six examination results
- those registering in such national priority sectors as Medicine, Education, Science, Engineering, and Agriculture.

These additional criteria for loan eligibility changed emphasis from the needy to the academically outstanding applicants. Eligibility criteria based on academic performance, while justified, has meant that only those students with very good A-level results gain entry to higher education, which indirectly implies those who attend good schools or who have the ability to pay for remedial classes and hence are better off economically. At the same time, however, the inclusion of women who have obtained a second division is set to increase the number of female students entering such traditionally male-dominated disciplines as Medicine and Engineering. Evidence shows that the Board increased the number of those who received loans from 35,000 in 2005-06 to 51,000 during 2007-8 (budget speech, URT, 2007). Earlier challenges to processing loans efficiently are gradually being overcome as innovative steps to minimise errors in identifying eligibility and delays in payment have been taken.

From the outset, there have been complaints by students, parents and some politicians about the cost-sharing exercise in higher education because some feel that it is the government rather than the students or their parents who should shoulder higher education costs. This is in part because of the perception that there is wastage in national resources through corruption and mismanagement and partly because higher education is perceived to be more of a public than a private good.

3.4.1 The Universities Act 2005

The Universities Act of 2005 (URT, 2005a) serves as a culmination of the various processes on expansion in higher education in Tanzania. Up until 2005, public universities were

established by act of parliament while private universities received accreditation from the Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC). Each defined its own objectives and gave rationale to its administrative structures and organs (HEAC, 2005).

The urge to open up more political and economic space for citizens influenced the assessment of the legal instruments of the institutions. When the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) developed a transformation programme to effect changes in its administrative and academic processes, the 1970 UDSM Act was found to be inadequate. In 1998 the UDSM Flexible Act was thus developed, supposedly as a proposal in tune with current developments including liberalisation and multipartyism. Even though UDSM failed to convince parliament to pass the proposed act into law, many of its features were adapted for inclusion in the Universities Act of 2005. At the same time more private universities were mushrooming and so, by 1998, there was a strong movement for change spearheaded by the universities and the Ministry of Higher Education.

The Universities Act 2005 is an umbrella act under which public and private higher education institutions are able to create their own charters. Besides repealing the previous Acts, the 2005 Act abolished HEAC and established the Tanzania Commission of Universities (TCU) as the umbrella coordinating body for the universities. Among TCU's functions are: the provision of guidance on, and monitoring criteria for, university admission; promotion of gender equality and equitable access; and the regulation of schemes that broaden opportunities for participation in higher education.

Since its inauguration, the Commission has faced a number of challenges including the manner in which it awards accreditation to institutions while safeguarding quality, and the need to lessen instances of multiple admissions in many institutions. The system allows applicants to list a number of universities as choices but because the selection procedure is cumbersome and students take too much time to decide their final choices, multiple admission has become the norm. Not only do some slots remain untaken in some universities but also double payments in loan allocation occur and this has deprived some people from benefiting from the limited funds available. Some of the slots are filled by people who are invited to apply late and who invariably miss a few weeks of study if accepted.

3.5 Widening participation and poverty eradication

Poverty has been a major challenge in Tanzania since independence and the search for solutions has led to the various declarations and policies aimed at poverty reduction and its eventual eradication. Researchers have pointed out that, while there is acknowledged urban poverty, poverty in Tanzania is very much a rural phenomenon since 80 per cent of the population resides there (REPOA, 2005:14). The continuing existence of poverty has been attributed to many factors that have included the decline in economic growth and rural infrastructure, poor performance in education at all levels as well as the limited effectiveness of some policies.

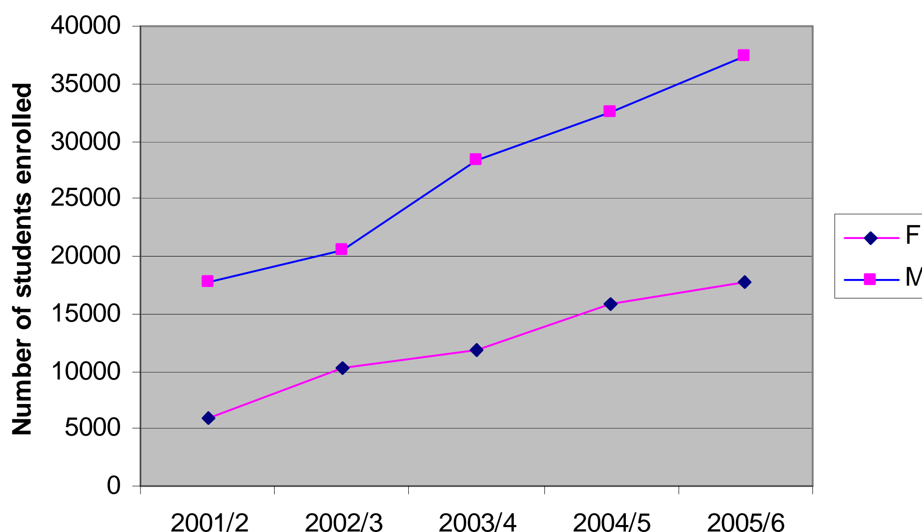
The most recent of the government's poverty reduction initiatives, the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) of 2005/06-2009/10, is informed by two processes, the Tanzanian Development Vision 2025 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), both of which aim to reduce and eradicate illiteracy, diseases, all types of gender discrimination, poverty and degradation to the environment. Within NSGRP, higher education is included as a priority area.

The NSGRP is a broad based policy and implementation in education is dependent upon the support of sectoral policies such as the Higher Education Policy of 1999 and the Higher Education Student Loans Board Act of 2004. However, for monitoring purposes, the NSGRP has clearly set targets for education, aimed at 'ensuring equitable access to quality primary and secondary education for boys and girls, universal literacy among men and women, expansion of higher, technical and vocation education' (URT 2006b: 13).[6] For higher and technical education, the target aims at an increased enrolment in universities and technical colleges to 30,000 full time students, 10,000 part-time and 15,000 distance learners by 2008. Recognising the limited pool of students eligible to enter higher education, two World Bank supported programmes were introduced, the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) and the Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP)[7]. Although these programmes have expanded student enrolment at primary and secondary levels, they have also seriously compromised quality due to too many schools, too few teachers and limited

[6] Cluster II strategies of the NSRGP (URT, 2006b) target on improvement of quality of life and social well being
[7] See PEDP and SEDP documents (URT, 2004c and d)

resources (Sumra and Rajani, 2006; HakiElimu, 2008). Nevertheless, indicators show that there has been an increase in gross enrolment in higher education, as in the chart below:

Figure 1: Increasing enrolment of men and women in higher education in Tanzania, 2001-2006



Source: MHEST Basic Statistics on Higher Education, Science and Technology (URT, 2006c)

The percentage of women has also increased from 23.9 in 2001 to 32.7 in 2005. The 2006 NSGRP status report, however, concedes that further data disaggregation might reveal sectoral gaps of inequalities (URT, 2006b:16). Assessment of the status of poverty shows also that whereas the percentage of the population living below the basic needs line decreased, there is still much poverty in rural areas (REPOA, 2005:14). The Ministry responsible for higher education has admitted that the increase in enrolments has not necessarily been equitable because the transition from secondary schools to higher levels has invariably favoured children from economically better off families. Cost sharing and the increased numbers of private secondary schools have also favoured children from economically advantaged groups (URT, 2004a:48-49; REPOA, 2005:248-249). It has been estimated that only about one percent of the poor as compared to 11 percent of the economically advantaged complete secondary school and thus are eligible for higher education (URT, 2004a:48). The same can be said about other disadvantaged groups such as the disabled and women (URT, 2004a; REPOA, 2005; Wedgewood, 2006).

3.6 Disability and higher education

Contrary to the country's commitment to human rights and inclusion without discrimination in all development processes, access to higher education for people with disability is not yet well grounded in the Tanzanian higher education system and supporting policies. As early as 1974, Nyerere proclaimed that disabled children had a right to education in both special and regular schools. While acknowledging the fact that expansion of education opportunities for the disabled needed to be given priority, he relegated that duty to NGOs since, he claimed, the government lacked the resources for the special programmes and materials that disabled children needed.[8] The National Policy on Disability was established in 2004, more than 20 years after the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP).[9] Following this, Tanzania tabled Cabinet paper No. 19 of 1981 focusing on service provision to disabled persons, which led to the Disabled Persons Employment Act No. 2 of 1982. A major provision of this Act was to ensure that disabled persons secure employment through a quota scheme and the reservation of posts. Later the same year, Act No. 3 of 1982 of the Disabled Persons Care and Maintenance was enacted that designated the responsibility of caring for disabled persons to families, relatives, local government, central government and NGOs.

The above acts informed the National Policy on Disability (URT, 2004b), which was developed with the participation of the disabled themselves and their representative organisations to ensure that people with disability are assisted in receiving education as a human right. The policy, however, addresses access to early learning and basic education only; higher levels of education have not been included. Moreover, in the policy, accessibility is defined simply in terms of making infrastructure conducive for physically disabled people, but not in terms of preferential treatment, e.g. special quotas and materials. Commitments to the disabled in higher education are also tabled in the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction (URT, 2005b), the Education and Training Act of 1995, the HESLB Act of 2004, and the 2007 HESLB Regulations. In spite of all these initiatives, the participation rate of disabled persons in higher education in Tanzania continues to be very low even though disabled people make up 10 percent of the population. Although the policy was

[8] See Nyerere (1974) in Lema *et.al*. (2004:116-119)

[9] Tanzania is also signatory to the UN Rights of the People with Disabilities (1975) and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), the Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities and member of the African Rehabilitation Institute (URT, 2004b).

enacted with pressure from below and included disabled groups, its implementation has also been very slow. In 2005-06, for example, out of 55,134 students enrolled in higher education, only 54 (0.09 percent) were disabled (URT, 2006c:19).

3.7 Conclusions

This discussion of policies and instruments influencing widening participation in higher education in Tanzania illustrates how to a great extent much of the early political strategies were geared towards overhauling the direction of the economy while changing people's attitudes and values towards socialist ideals. Preference was for primary and secondary education rather than higher education. The need for human resources equipped with higher education skills, the challenges brought in by the knowledge industry and the demands from citizens for higher education led to considerable expansion in the sector.

With time, socio-economic and political changes compelled the government to place more responsibility on the people through cost-sharing, while at the same time allowing a liberalised higher education sector to expand enrolment. Currently, the desire to respond to poverty eradication and equity demands/obligations based on different aspects of human rights, gender, disability and low socio-economic status have become salient features, albeit in theory, in initiatives to widen access to higher education.

Table 2: Selected key policies of relevance to widening participation in higher education in Tanzania

YEAR	TITLE OF POLICY	CONTENT
1962	The Education Act	Abolished education provision by race and enabled African youth to enter previously European and Asian Schools, widening participation through access to secondary education.
1967	Education for Self Reliance (ESR)	Pro-poor policy stipulated primary school as terminal, school as space for work and study, limited higher education to meet national human resources needs.
1969	The 1969 Education Act	Legitimised Education for Self Reliance, expansion in secondary education, community schools encouraged.
1974	The Musoma Resolution (MR)	Defined HE as adult education. Confirmed primary and secondary education as the endpoint of formal education. Recognition of the importance of work experience before HE to curtail elitism in HE.

1977	The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania	Equal opportunities to all citizens and rights to all levels of education.
1978	The Education Act	Legitimised aspects of the Musoma Resolution, established a quota system for secondary schools to ensure district parity, boarding schools discouraged in order to open more day schools.
1995	The Education and Training Policy	Reiterated equity in education for all, expansion in education for women and disabled, dissolved the quota system in secondary schools Supported boarding schools and day schools in areas where girls were disadvantaged, legitimised private sector involvement in higher education and cost sharing
1999	The Higher Education Policy	Addressed needs for expansion, encouraged private sector involvement in HE, enhancement in distance learning and provision for grants and loans schemes.
1999	Tanzania Development Vision 2025	Provided guidelines to what needs to be achieved by 2025 in range of areas including the economy, education, and health.
2004	National Policy on Disability	Education as human rights for the disabled.
2004	The Higher Education Student Loans Board Act (HESLB)	Widened participation in HE; strengthened cost sharing; established criteria for loans based on need and achievement at secondary levels; students in private institutions became eligible for government loans.
2005	National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP)	Anti poverty policy linked to the MDGs with set indicators for achievements including in poverty reduction, access to education, inclusion for groups defined in terms of gender, disability
2005	The Universities Act	An umbrella act stipulating the governance and processes for all HE institutions both public and private.
2006	Revised regulations and Guidelines of the Higher Education Students Loans Board	Eliminated inconsistencies between the 1999 Higher Education Act and 2004 HESLB Act as regards eligibility and processes of loan recovery.

4. Conclusion

This working paper has provided a historical overview of policy development in relation to widening participation in higher education, first globally and then in two African countries, Ghana and Tanzania. It starts by providing a brief account of the diverse drivers which have influenced policy development at the international level in relation to higher education, followed by an account of the major strategies that have been advocated by international agencies as ways to widen participation. It then moves on to the two case study countries; in both, a long historical trajectory of policy development in education is revealed, starting from the early years of independence from colonial rule, which has resulted in a dramatic

expansion in higher education. Within this policy framework are to be found specific policy directives and initiatives aimed at widening participation for particular groups who have been underrepresented in higher education, for example women, those from rural or less developed communities, and those with special educational needs. While higher education policies have had some impact on widening participation in both countries, evidence suggests there is till a considerable way to go before the obstacles to participation are removed and full parity achieved.

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Appendix

Table 3: Higher Education Institutions in Ghana and dates of establishment 1948-2008

	Institution	Accreditation	Ownership
1	University of Ghana	1948	public
2	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	1952	public
3	University of Cape Coast	1962	public
4	Valley View University	1995	private
5	Central University College	1997	private
6	University of Education Winneba	1992	public
7	University for Development Studies	1993	public
8	Wisconsin International University College	2000	private
9	University College of Management Studies	2001	private
10	Ashesi University College, Accra	2002	private
11	Catholic University College	2002	private
12	Islamic University College	2002	private
12	Ghana Christian University College	2002	private
13	Methodist University College Ghana	2002	private
14	Maranatha University College	2002	private
15	Methodist University College, Accra	2002	private
16	Christian Service University College	2003	private
17	Presbyterian University College	2003	private
18	Regent University College of Science and Technology	2003	private
19	Meridian University College	2004	private
20	Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration	2004	public
21	Pentecost University College	2005	private
22	All Nations University College	2005	private
23	University of Mines and Technology	2005	public
24	Ghana University Baptist College	2005	private
25	Garden City University College	2005	private
26	All Nations University College	2005	private
27	Pan African Christian University College	2006	private
28	Technical University College of Tamale	?	
29	Knutsford University College	2005	
30	Ghana Telecom University College	2008	private

Source: National Accreditation Board, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Ghana www.nab.gov.gh

Table 4: Higher Education Institutions in Tanzania and dates of establishment 1970-2007

	Institution	Year founded	Ownership
1.	University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM)	1970	Public
2.	Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)	1984	Public
3.	The Open University of Tanzania (OUT)	1992	Public
4.	Tumaini University* Iringa University College (IUCo) Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College (KCMCo) Makumira College	1997 1996 1996 1996	Private
5.	International Medical & Technological University (IMTU)	1997	Private
6.	Hubert Kairuki Memorial University (HKMU)	1997	Private
7.	St. Augustine University of Tanzania	1998	Private
8.	Zanzibar University	1998	Private
9.	University College of Education Zanzibar	1998	Private
10.	State University of Zanzibar	2002	Public
11.	Mzumbe University (MU)	2002	Public
12.	Mount Meru University Arusha	2002	Private
13.	Aga Khan University	2002	Private
14.	Bugando University College of Health Sciences	2002	Private
15.	Mount Meru University (MMU)	2003	Private
16.	Bishop Kisanji University	2004	Private
17.	The University of Arusha (UA)	2004	Private
18.	St Joseph College of Engineering	2004	Private
19.	St Augustine University: Ruaha University College (RUCO)	2005	Private
20.	Tumaini University: Dar es Salaam College (TUDARCO)	2005	Private
21.	The Muslim University of Morogoro (MUM)	2005	Private
22.	Mwenge University College of Education (MWUCE)	2005	Private
23.	The Ardhi University	2007	Public
24.	Muhimbili University of Health Allied Science (MUHAS)	2007	Public
25.	Dodoma University	2007	Public
26.	Tumaini University: Bishop Kolowa University College Masoka Management College	2007 2007	Private Private
27.	St John's University	2007	Private

*Tumaini University was established in 1997 but some of its colleges had been established earlier. Others were established later.

Source: HEAC: 2005 supplemented by personal information