# Mapping the incidence of school dropouts: A case study of selected communities in

# Northern Ghana

## C. Adu-Yeboah

# Breakdown of presentation

- **Context**
- **Purpose of study**
- **Methods**
- **Findings**
- **Conclusion**
- **Implications**

# Context

- **Savelugu-Nanton district:**
  - 4th most deprived of the 53 deprived districts
  - 80% (143 out of 149) of population lives in rural areas
  - Main occupation is farming (about 97% of the population between ages 18 & 54)
  - Prone to child labour, non-school attendance and drop out
  - Migration, child porters and girls' early marriage impact on enrolment and attendance.

# Purpose

- **To find out how children drop out of school before age 16 and why, i.e.**
  - **what conditions/ processes of events/interactions within the family, school and community impact on children's school attendance and shape their exclusion from school.**

# Methods

- **Sample:**
  - One district (Savelugu-Nanton) in the Northern Region selected
  - 4 Circuits known for drop outs, low attendance, truancy due to farming, market and other activities;
  - 6 Communities (4 semi-urban, 2 rural) within the circuits known for farming activities and market days.

- **Procedure for data collection:**
  - Identified loitering children during school hours;
  - Used Snowballing to recruit others;
  - Sought parents'/guardians' consent to interview children;
  - Interviewed 89 drop outs.

# Findings:
## Characteristics of Drop outs

- Average age: 12.8: over 50% between 12 & 15 years;
- Grade level:
  - majority (about 82%) dropped out before JSS. About 47% dropped out in lower primary; 35% in upper primary; 18% in JSS;
- Communities with highest tendency for dropping out:
  - Rural: 74% misses school more often than the semi-urban where 26% misses school often

# Findings:
## Preceding at-risk factors: children's absenteeism from school

| School-related reasons | Household-related reasons |
|---|---|
| ■ Ineffective teaching and learning due to teacher absenteeism on Fridays for:<br><br>   a. Muslim prayers and<br>   b. week end travel. | ■ Market day on Thursdays;<br><br>■ Run errands;<br><br>■ Care for livestock;<br><br>■ Farm:<br><br>62% boys, 37% girls weed, plant and harvest during farming season from June to September. |

# Findings: children's stated at-risk factors

| Factors | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Difficulty in learning | 84 | 94.4 |
| 2. Corporal punishment | 58 | 65.2 |
| 3. Irregular weekly attendance | 34 | 38.2 |
| 4. Irregular monthly attendance | 32 | 36.0 |
| 5. Over-age/under-age | 30 | 33.7 |
| 6. Repetition | 23 | 25.8 |
| 7. Teachers | 10 | 11.2 |

# Findings:
# Final critical events resulting in drop out

| Critical events | % |
|---|---|
| 1. Child labour | 31.5 |
| 2. Poverty | 22.5 |
| 3. The death of a parent | 9.0 |
| 4. Parents' lack of interest in education | 7.9 |
| 5. Fosterage | 6.7 |
| 6. Poor performance | 6.7 |
| 7. Blame on teachers | 4.5 |
| 8. Sickness | 3.4 |
| 9. Pregnancy | 2.2 |
| 10. Miscellaneous | 3.4 |

# Findings:
## Relationship between at- risk contributory factors and final critical events

### Case story 1: Joseph

- **At-risk contributory factors:**
  - Irregular attendance and long absence from school
  - Household labour needs: helping his father on the farm weeding, planting and harvesting groundnuts between June and August
  - Running errands on Fridays for his father
- **Final critical events resulting in drop out in P.3:**
  - Cancellation of his name from the register
  - Child labour

# Findings:
## Relationship between at- risk contributory factors and final critical events contd.

### Case story 2: Rose

- **At-risk contributory factors:**
  - Difficulty learning English/poor performance
  - Corporal punishment
  - Irregular attendance
  - One grade repetition

- **Final critical event resulting in drop out:**
  - Death of a parent

**NB:** Unrelated at-risk factors and final critical events

# Conclusion

- **Single known factors contributing to school drop out, found in other studies are evident**:
  - **Child labour**
  - **Poverty**
  - **Teacher absenteeism**
  - **Irregular school attendance**
  - **Poor academic performance**
  - **Grade repetition**
  - **Corporal punishment**
  - **Family shock (e.g. death of a parent)**
- **Drop out is a process, not an event;**
- **A combination of at-risk preceding factors make drop out easy;**
- **At-risk factors may not necessarily lead to drop out;**
- **Critical events culminate into dropping out when the at-risk preceding factors are not addressed.**

# Implications

- **Local education authorities and school governance bodies should promote policies and practices that would identify advance indications of drop out and minimise its occurrence.**

- **Schools should operate more flexibly to accommodate farming seasons when there is a strong need for children's labour. E.g increase contact hours on days when children are in school.**

- **Local education authorities and school governance bodies should enforce effective supervision and monitoring of schools.**

- **Educate parents and community on practices that harm children's attendance and progress in school and also contribute to drop out.**