

CREATE CONFERENCE IN GHANA

The joint MoESS and CREATE conference in Ghana was held at Forest Hotel Dodowa 20-21st April 2009 and University of Cape Coast 23rd April 2009. This paper provides a summary of presentations.

*Presentation in University of Cape Coast Conference

**Repeated in University of Cape Coast Conference

Speakers and summary of presentations

Keith Lewin: The CREATE project

Keith provided an introduction to CREATE's work in general and the zones of exclusion model of educational access.

Joseph Ghartey-Ampiah: Educational Access in Northern and Southern Ghana**

The presentation is based on fieldwork in southern and northern Ghana. Household survey of children in P1, P4, P6 and JHS1 was carried out to generate baseline school data. Pupils in the selected classes took achievement tests in English language and mathematics at P4 level. In addition, never enrolled children and school dropouts were identified and children who were over-age and irregular school attendees were tracked over a period. The findings of this study suggest that factors which put children at risk of dropping out of school may not necessarily be the ones which eventually cause them to drop out of school. It identified ten critical events (child labour, poverty, parents' lack of interest in formal education, death, fostering, poor performance, teachers, sickness, pregnancy and miscellaneous events), preceded by six at-risk events (difficulty in learning, corporal punishment, irregular weekly school attendance, irregular monthly school attendance, repetition and over-age/under-age learners). Among these, child labour and poverty (i.e. household's inability to provide for basic livelihood needs) accounted for the final reasons leading to the dropout of children.

Kwame Akyeampong: Capitation Grant in Ghana: hidden realities

This paper provides insights into the 'hidden realities' of the capitation grant policy in Ghana. It applauds the establishment of School Management Committees (SMCs) and the termly preparation of the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP), an off-shoot of the capitation policy. However, it notes that given the 17% rise in enrolment a year after the introduction of the capitation grant, the amount of the grant as a percentage of unit cost per primary child (2005) represents a 4% rise, and raises concern about the ability of the policy to enhance educational quality. The paper argues that capitation provides an opportunity to increase quality and suggests the need to link capitation to

classroom-based policies such as overage enrolment, drop out and irregular attendance in order to impact on quality. The paper provides three key policy messages: increased capitation should target disadvantage groups; there should be provision of incentives to school with good record of progression and completion; and effort should go towards the shortening of the capitation delivery chain.

Luke Akaguri: Capitation Costs and Access to schooling in rural Ghana**

This presentation addresses the question of whether the capitation grant has made public schooling in rural areas a more viable choice relative to private schooling. The study finds that capitation has made schooling more accessible to households but food and uniform costs continue to constitute significant proportions of rural households' educational expenditure and could pose a barrier to the very poor households. It also finds the marginal cost of schooling between public and private is not significantly high enough to discourage households from enrolling their children in fee paying private rural schools - it costs rural household about a quarter more when they enrol in private schools. The paper suggest the need for government to implement school feeding alongside the capitation policy in all poor rural communities to enable children from poor households to access education.

Paud Murphy: Teachers in Ghana: improving access to school

This presentation highlights the significant role teachers play in improving access to schooling. It traces the historical development of education in Ghana and acknowledges the country's strong commitment to education development. However, it points out that frequent changes in educational policies, inefficiencies particularly in the area of recruitment and deployment and growing private education has militated against access to schooling. It raises a number of pertinent questions regarding teacher production and utilization and argues that while there is national recognition of teachers' contribution through the best teacher awards and other incentives, a significant proportion of teachers do not teach and/or are untrained. In addition, poor supervision and monitoring have impacted negatively on the quality of education. It recommends a number of measures towards improving teacher supply and demand.

Seidu Alhassan: Teacher Perceptions on Access to Schooling in Ghana**

This presentation assesses what teachers perceive as contributing to pupils' lack of access to schooling in the Winneba Municipality. A triangulation of measures was used to collect data from a purposive sample of schools, teachers and a random sample of pupils. The study finds among others that: teachers did not perceive themselves as acting in ways that hinder access, instead they belief poor parental and

community attitudes to schooling are the main causes. The study found that pupils' perceive lack of access in terms of irregular teacher attendance, lateness and absenteeism and parental irresponsibility (i.e. parents showing little or no interest in child's education). In addition, pupils viewed corporal punishment as a factor which encouraged poor attendance. The study recommends the abolition of corporal punishment in schools, while it calls on the District Education Authorities to step up supervision and monitoring of schools to ensure teacher punctuality and regular attendance at school.

E. Ekumah: Improving Access, Perceptions from the District**

The role of the district in improving access to schooling is a prerequisite for the achievement of expanded and sustained access to school. However, there appears to be little evidence on how districts respond to problems of access to schools in their districts. The study investigated how Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District (a district with poor school attendance and high dropout) deals with issues of access at different grade levels. The first findings are located in the first two zones of CREATE analytical framework: children who never enrolled (zone 1) do so because of poverty, lack of parental responsibility and children's lack of interest in schooling. While children who drop out (zone 2) do so because of parental neglect, inability of parents to meet food costs, other direct costs of schooling and long distances / difficult journeys to school. Critical structures such as the District Education offices (DEOs) and the School Management Committees (SMCs), were dysfunctional. The study suggests prompt payment of transport allowances to circuit supervisors to enable them to ensure the regular monitoring of schools and SMCs made functional through capacity building workshops.

Peter Devars: Educational Access in Ghana towards Evidence-Based Policy: Perspectives of Development Partners

The presentation focused on the policy perspectives of development partners and observes that, in terms of the policy agenda, no differences exist between the Government and development partners. It reflects on lessons learned from the last few years and argues that even though returns to education have been increasing with higher grade levels over the years, expanded access has experienced extensive growth rates without redress to some important issues. It identifies factors impacting on access to be externally driven and not by policy. It suggests a number

of policies aimed at raising efficiency and effectiveness with a focus on official, financial, planning and management of education.

Caine Rolleston: Tracking Progress in Educational Access in Ghana: Insights from the GLSS

This presentation tracks progress in educational access in Ghana using the Ghana Living Standard Survey data. It begins with an analysis of key trends in educational access and exclusions using the CREATE zones of exclusion. Further, it determines who gained access or was excluded and how the patterns might be explained. The study finds that household welfare, education of household head and employment in public sector positively impacted on who attends school. While boys were more likely to drop out of school, children not biological to household head are less likely to be in higher access group. The paper concludes that the large absolute increase in enrolment appears to have kept pace with population growth. Poorest households due to their large family size are more prone to school dropout and argues that a combination of demand and supply side policies will be required to support the poorest.

Eric Ananga: Typologies of School Drop-out in rural Ghana: The Dimensions and Dynamics**

This paper explores the various types of school drop-out; the dimensions and dynamics of dropout in a rural setting in Ghana. Using the CREATE analytical framework, the paper identifies three dimensions of school dropout located within CREATE's zones of exclusion: Event or Cohor dropout, Sporadic dropout and Permanent dropout. The paper argues that the categorization of dropping out into three dimensions requires specific rather general targeting in dealing with the problem of dropping out of school.

Kwame Akyeampong & Caine Rolleston: Exploring Meaningful Access at the school level*

This paper looked at what have been the key trends in educational access and exclusion in Ghana and who gained access or was excluded and how the patterns might be explained. It used the GLSS data which is a nationally representative cross-sectional household surveys begun in 1987 and data from rounds 3 to 5 (completed in 1992, 1999 and 2006) are employed, because of their highly comparable design and questionnaire modules.

Karakari: Issues from the 2008 Education Performance Report – Access and Equity

This presentation is based on two key thematic areas from the 2008 Ghana Education Sector Performance Report: access and equity. It begins with an overview of enrolment trends from the pre-school level to the tertiary level and provides challenges that confront the various levels of

education in ensuring expanded access and equity. The report argues that the slow pace of enrolment at kindergarten in current years, inadequate attention provided to address the issue of dropout and declining retention rates at the primary level, suggest that achieving EFA by 2015 could become impossible.

Keith Lewin: Regional Perspectives on Educational Access*

Issues related to educational access and exclusion in CREATE's partner countries are presented. It looked at countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and pointed out how the MDG on education for all children by 2012 is unlikely considering problems of over age enrolments, lack of physical access, and teacher unavailability amongst others.

Shireen Motala: Education for All and Access - the South African Case Study*

The South African case of the zones of exclusion is presented. It captures the factors that caused exclusion as school related, school and policy, household factors. The South African example asks the question 'access to what?' and turns the access question around from trying to understand why children are not in school to why they are still in school. Vulnerability and silent exclusion are issues of great concern.

Pai Obanya: Lessons from experience: the way forward for Africa

This presentation begins with an observation that every MDG is education-related and advocates for a shift from 'Education for them All' to 'Education for us All', the latter involving consultation and participation. Further, it urges developing countries to move away from spending on education to investing in education and notes that improving the economic conditions of developing countries is key to dealing with education problems. It adds that countries need to engage in participatory planning, noting that education thrives when the political and socio-economic fundamentals are right. Education, it argues should be understood in terms of lifelong learning rather than simply schooling. It concludes by noting that CREATE should go beyond simply looking at physical access, and urges countries to fully domesticate the process through workshops and publications targeting different audiences. The presentation concludes with a suggestion to DFID to consider funding CREATE beyond 2010.

Angela W Little*: Multigrade Teaching: challenges and opportunities

This presentation looks at what multi-grade means and how it is referred to in different contexts. Examples are drawn from India and England and the question as to whether there are any examples in Ghana is raised.

Christine Adu-Yeboah*: Mapping the incidence of school dropouts: A case study of selected communities in Northern Ghana

The study maps the incidence of school dropout through intensive qualitative interviews. It presents findings on how children dropout of school before the age of 16. The paper highlights the conditions/processes of events/interactions within the family, school and community and how they impact on children's school attendance and shape their exclusion from school.

Gift Luxomo*: Parental involvement in schooling: Increasing meaningful access

In this presentation, parental involvement in their children's schooling and their role in increasing meaningful access is highlighted. It argues that parents play key roles in influencing meaningful access, both adversarial and cooperative roles. Considering the South African example, the issue of parental dissatisfaction with teachers and schools is demonstrated by their refusal to enrol children or withdrawal from school.