



## Comprehensive (Meta) Analysis

### Research Title:

**“Increasing Access to Quality Education for Rural and Marginalised Children in West Africa— A Comparative Study of Accelerated Education and Girls Focussed Programmes in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone”**

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## Table of Contents

<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Acronyms</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Objective of the Comprehensive Analysis .....	2
1.2 Methodology .....	2
<b>1.3 Available Datasets on Out of School Children in Ghana</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of Datasets .....	5
1.5 Frameworks underpinning the Meta-Analysis & Definitions .....	9
<b>CHAPTER TWO: ANALYSIS OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN USING EXISTING DATA</b> ...	<b>11</b>
<b>2.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 OOSC context using international-level data.....	11
2.2 National Level Analysis .....	14
2.2.1 OOSC context in Ghana using MICS data (2017/18) – General levels.....	14
2.2 Regional Level Analysis .....	21
2.3 Analysis based on Census Data .....	28
2.4 Analysis based on GDHS Data .....	30
2.5 Analysis based on EMIS Data.....	34
<b>CHAPTER THREE: SUPPLY BARRIERS TO THE OUT OF SCHOOL PHENOMENON</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>3.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>35</b>
3.1 Supply Trends.....	35
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DEMAND BARRIERS</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>4.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>39</b>
4.2 Social cultural practices .....	39
4.3 Teenage Pregnancy.....	40
4.4 Poverty levels .....	40

<b>CHAPTER FIVE: PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>5.1 Institutional and Policy Challenges and Direction .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>5.1.1 Enabling policy environment.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>5.3 Analysis on partner AEPs .....</b>	<b>42</b>
5.3.1 CBE program under USAID/DFID.....	42
5.3.2 Performance by Education Innovators (EIs) .....	43
5.4 Effectiveness of the strategies of the EIs .....	45
<b>CHAPTER SIX: OVERALL FINDINGS CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>47</b>
6.2 Conclusions - what the data tells us about the numbers of out of school children in Ghana .....	47
6.3 Supply trends and barriers .....	47
6.4 Demand Barriers.....	48
6.5 Programmatic level .....	48
<b>References .....</b>	<b>50</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of the data sources and the strengths and weaknesses of each dataset .....	6
Table 2: Dimensions of the UNICEF OOSC Framework .....	10
Table 3: Out of School Children and Adolescent 2015-2020 .....	11
Table 4: Regional rates on out of school children in Ghana.....	12
Table 5: Primary School Aged OOSC in 20 Countries.....	13
Table 6: Primary school attendance and out of school children – national context .....	16
Table 7: Lower secondary school attendance and out of school adolescents and out of school adolescents – national context .....	18
Table 8: Upper secondary school attendance and out of school youth – national context .....	20
Table 9: Primary school attendance and out of school children – regional context .....	23
Table 10: Lower secondary school attendance and out of school adolescents and out of school adolescents – regional context.....	24
Table 11: Upper secondary school attendance and out of school youth – regional context .....	25
Table 12: Gross intake, completion and effective transition rates .....	27
Table 13: Educational attainment of the female household population .....	31
Table 14: Educational attainment of the male household population .....	32
Table 15: School attendance ratios .....	33
Table 16: Net enrollment/attendance ratio – 2018/19.....	34
Table 17: Table 1: Number of Primary Schools by Type of Education, 2016/17 - 2017/18 .....	35
Table 18: Teacher Gaps – Public schools only.....	37
Table 19: Performance of AfriKids CBE programme .....	44
Table 20: Performance of GILLBT CBE programme .....	44
Table 21: Performance School for Life CBE programme.....	45

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Out of school numbers .....	1
Figure 2: UNICEF OOSC Framework 2018.....	9
Figure 3: OOSC population in millions - Half of the world's OOSC is concentrated in 14 countries .....	14
Figure 4: Percentage of OOSC population across primary, upper and lower secondary .....	15
Figure 5: Out of school dimensions for levels of education.....	21
Figure 6: School Attendance Status of Population 3 Years and Older by Sex .....	28
Figure 7: School Attendance Status of Population 3 Years and Older by Type of Locality .....	28
Figure 8: School Attendance Status of Population 3 Years and Older By Region.....	29

## Acronyms

AE	Accelerated Education
AEP	Accelerated Education Program
AEWG	Accelerated Education Working Group
AfC	Associates for Change
AU	African Union
BED	Basic Education Division
CBE	Complementary Basic Education
CEA	Complementary Basic Agency
CET	Center for Employment and Training
COVID-19	Coronavirus Diseases 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
5DE	Five Dimensions of Exclusion
DEOC	District Education Oversight Committee
DfID	Department for International Development
DPs	Development Partners
EAC	Educate A Child
EIs	Education Innovators
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EOF	Education Outcome Funds
ESPR	Education Sector Programme Review
ESR	Education Sector Reform
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

GAC	Ghana AIDS Commission
GALOP	Ghana Accountability and Outcome Fund
GARs	gross attendance ratios
GDHS	Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GILLBT	Ghana Institute of Linguistic, Literacy and Bible Translation
GLSS	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPA	Innovations for Poverty Action
JHS	Junior High School
JSS	Junior Secondary School
KG	Kindergarten
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MOE	Ministry of Education
MSC	Most Significant Change
NARs	Net attendance ratios
NFE	Non-formal education
NFED	Non-Formal Education Division
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations

NMCP	National Malaria Control Programme
NPHRL	National Public Health and Reference Laboratory
NSAs	Non-State Actors
OOSC	Out of School Children
OOSY	Out of School Youth
PHC	Population and census
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
PTTR	Pupil Trained Teacher Ratio
R4D	Results for Development
REACH	Reaching Educational Attainments of Children in the Hinterlands
RECOUP	Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRF-CF	Statistics for Results Facility – Catalytic Fund
STAGE	Strategic Approaches to Girl’s Education Project
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WIDE	World Inequality Data on Education



# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND CONTEXT

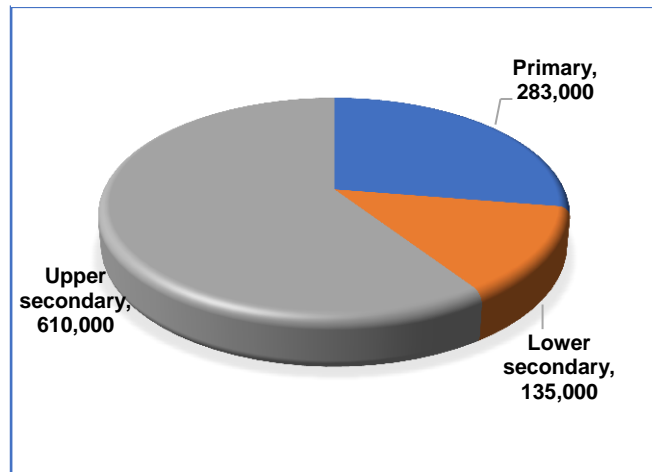
### 1.0 Introduction

Six years after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) and the promise to provide universal quality primary and secondary education, not much progress has been made towards reducing the global number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth (UIS 2019). Globally, it is estimated there are about 258.4 million out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth (UIS, 2019). This figure represents one-sixth of the global population. More than one-third of the figure (ninety-eight million out-of-school children) live in sub-Saharan Africa with the majority (53%) of them being girls. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimates that one out of five children between the ages of about six and 11 in sub-Saharan African are out of school. A further one out of three youth aged about 12 to 14 is out of school. More alarming is the fact that about 60% of youth aged about 15 to 17 are not in school. The most marginalized are most at risk, including forcibly displaced children and young people, girls, and children with disabilities. With each missed school year, there is greater likelihood that these children will be unable to return to formal education, resulting in greater risks to their protection (Ananga E., 2011; Casely-Hayford et al., 2017).

The out of school phenomenon in Ghana follows a similar trend. In 2018, UIS reported that about one million Ghanaian children aged five to sixteen years were out of school. Available data by UNESCO on out-of-school children in Ghana further shows that there are still OOSC in Ghana (particularly those aged 12 to 16) despite government efforts at increasing access to education through interventions such

as the school feeding programme, distribution of free uniforms and abolishment of school fees. The current 2020 data by UNESCO places the total number of out-of-school children in Ghana at 283,000 children of primary school age in Ghana who are out of school with a further 135,000 school-age children at the lower secondary level (Figure 1). The out of school numbers at the upper secondary level, represent about double of the numbers at both the primary and lower secondary level, 610,000.

Figure 1: Out of school numbers



Source: Ghana Education Fact Sheets, MICS-EAGLE (2020)

In percentage terms, about seven percent of children in Ghana are said to be out of school at the primary level, with differentials across indicators including wealth status - children from the poorest wealth quintile having higher out-of-school rates compared to their peers from other categories (MICS, 2017/18). At the lower secondary level, the national out-of-school rate is also at seven percent, with the share of children from the poorest quintile who are out of school is similar to that of primary. At the upper secondary level, the out-of-school rate increases for all groups, and the national rate increases to 25%, with more girls out of school than boys. Different data sources also provide slightly different projections relating to the out of school numbers in Ghana.

In lieu of the fragmented, uncoordinated and data gaps relating to the out of school issue in Ghana, the meta-analysis sought to gather and synthesize information and data on out of school children (OOSC) to set the base for the roll-out of the other research activities under the IDRC study. The meta-analysis therefore consolidates and synthesises the fragmented data to better inform alternative education programming in Ghana.

This document analyses the out of school situation using available datasets on out-of-school children from both global and local sources including the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, (UIS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS); national census data; Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS), Education Management Information System (EMIS) data and other recent research work on OOSC in Ghana as well as the analysis of programme-level data. The analysis is disaggregated by gender, locality (rural/urban dynamics), wealth status (quintiles) and regions. Chapter one provides details on the background context of the comprehensive analysis, objectives, methodology, sources of data, the strengths and weaknesses of the various datasets and the frameworks for measuring out of school children. Chapter two covers the analysis of the OOSC data using existing global and national level data; chapters three and four highlight the supply and demand trends and barriers relevant to the out of school issue; chapter five provides analysis at the programme level, with chapter six highlighting the key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **1.1 Objective of the Comprehensive Analysis**

The overarching goal of the comprehensive-analysis was to synthesise information/data on the prevalence of out of school situation in Ghana and to measure effectiveness and adaptability of the education innovations in relation to the Out-of-School Children (OOSC) population and girls at the programme level. The comprehensive analysis contributes to answering research question one of the larger study, as specified below:

### **1.1.1 Research Questions**

The comprehensive analysis provides a synthesis of reports, assessment, evaluations, and research studies conducted on OOSC to answer the following research questions that are part of the larger research on comparative analysis of AEP projects.

1. What is the current profile of OOSC and what can be learned using the latest sources of data and evidence, particularly in relation to girls?"
  - a. What is the scale and prevalence of out-of-school girls and boys of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds in selected rural zones across the three countries (Ghana)?
  - b. What are the profiles of the different categories of OOSC?
  - c. What is the drop-out rate across the various innovations, particularly for girls and children living with disabilities?

## **1.2 Methodology**

A review and synthesis approach was used in systematically engaging with the evidence on OOSC. This involved making a summary analysis and synthesis of programme/project reports, and using datasets from both international, national and programme levels to establish/approximate the prevalence of the phenomenon of out of OOSC in Ghana. Specifically, the team followed three key processes comprising the following:

- a. The first process entailed preparing a detailed literature review of peer reviewed journals, reports and other relevant documents in generating empirical evidence on OOSC, AEP

programmes and outcomes in Ghana. The search was done by exploring the web-based portals of educational and related institutions as well as academic and scholarly sites/databases including Google Scholar, Scopus, PubMed, Taylor and Francis, JStor, Science Direct, Researchgate and African Education Journal using the following key terms: “out of school children”, “Basic Education”, and “Ghana”. Reports and papers in the education sector were also selected by reviewing their executive summaries, abstracts and titles and also using accompanying references obtained from the lists of references on the reports and papers. The review focused on only studies and reports published in English.

▪ **Exclusion criteria:**

With reference to online resources and databases, a repetitive process was used to surf all the identified sources, thus allowing for the repetition of all the key words. In addition, citations identified in journals relevant to the review were also followed up and later searched for inclusion. The search was limited to the period from 2010 through 2022. Reports and papers were excluded if they were not focused on OOSC and basic education or were set in contexts different from or not related to those of this study.

▪ **Inclusion criteria:**

In all, about seven reports and 10 articles were generated from the search using the above-mentioned key words and databases. The numbers of identified articles were further reduced by removing duplicates. The titles of the reports and articles were screened, and publications not related to the objectives of the review were dropped.

▪ **Results**

The in-depth screening produced five relevant reports and six articles based on the search criteria and the objectives of the review.

- b. The second phase involved the use of different datasets including UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), EMIS, Census data, Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) datasets to estimate the size/prevalence of the problem of out of school children. These datasets were identified through the in-depth reviews using the key term ‘out of school children’. These datasets and reports were identified as having detailed information on out of school children in Ghana and as such served as the basis for the OOSC estimates.
- c. The final phase entailed the programmatic analysis<sup>1</sup> - the use, review and synthesis of project/programme implementation and evaluation reports from the partner AEPs. This process provided deeper understanding of implementation strategies, outreach, and impact made by the AEP interventions.

### **1.3 Available Datasets on Out of School Children in Ghana**

This section provides highlights of the key data/report sources used in writing-up the comprehensive analysis.

#### **1.3.1 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)**

The Ghana Statistical Service conducted the sixth Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 6) in 2017/2018 as part of the Global MICS programme in collaboration with the Ministries of Health; Education; Sanitation and Water Resources; Gender, Children, and Social Protection; the Ghana Health Service; and the Ghana Education Service, as well as international donor partners including the UNICEF, KOICA, UNDP, USAID, and the World

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<sup>1</sup> The programmatic analysis focused on using data from implementors of the Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) to estimate the number of out of school children, dropouts, completion levels and transitions

Bank through the Statistics for Results Facility – Catalytic Fund (SRF-CF). The primary objective of the MICS data collection was to generate evidence that could be used to evaluate policies, developmental programs, goals (SDGs and Ghana's Medium-Term National Development Framework (2018-22) goals/targets), and existing conditions in order to inform social inclusion and poverty reduction policies and interventions. The specific objectives of the Ghana MICS 2017/18 were to:

- Report on SDGs and the Ghana Medium-Term National Development Framework (2018-22) goals and targets;
- Strengthen data and monitoring systems in Ghana;
- Identify vulnerable groups and disparities, which will inform social inclusion and poverty reduction policies and interventions.

The MICS survey report generally provides information relating to reproductive and maternal health, child health, nutrition and development, learning, protection from violence and exploitation, living in a safe and clean environment, and an equitable chance in life. However, the report also provides some level of data/information on the educational attainment/attendance of children, OOSC and related issues, and on educational and foundational learning skills in Ghana. Preliminary evidence from the report shows that the child development index (education) in Ghana is about 68%, with early childhood development index among children not attending early childhood education or primary at 53.8%. Most children not attending school were found to be in 'good' condition, having physical skills (92%) and learning skills (79%). The report further shows that 11.9% of children were not participating in early primary or primary school with low attendance at the JHS level as compared to the primary school. The MICS reports an increased disparity in urban and rural gross intake as the children progress through school.

### **1.3.2 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS)**

The most recent Ghana Demographic and Health Survey was conducted in 2014 and was implemented by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), the Ghana Health Service (GHS), and the National Public Health and Reference Laboratory (NPHRL) of the GHS. Financial support for the survey was provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Global Fund through the Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC), the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and the government of Ghana.

The GDHS provides up-to-date estimates of basic demographic and health indicators such as fertility levels, marriage, sexual activity, fertility preferences, awareness and use of family planning methods, breastfeeding practices, nutrition, childhood mortality, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, malaria treatment and prevention, estimates of anaemia prevalence among children and women, and other health and related issues. The GDHS also provides information on education parameters for women and men aged 15 to 49 years - including information on attendance and literacy levels for specific age groupings. The preliminary findings showed that nearly one in five women and nine percent of men in Ghana had no education. More than 40% of women and men had attended middle/JSS/JHS education. More than one in five women and 35% of men had also attended secondary plus education. Women and men in urban areas were much more likely to achieve higher levels of education than those living in rural areas, and men were more likely to be literate than women.

### **1.3.3 National Population and Housing Census**

Ghana's most recent and first fully digital national population and census (PHC) was conducted in 2021<sup>2</sup> by the Ghana Statistical Service. The 2021 PHC was conducted to provide updated demographic, social and economic data for research, policy and planning to

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<sup>2</sup> Was initially scheduled for 2020 but had to be postponed for a year because of the Covid-19 pandemic

support national development activities and to track the implementation of national, continental, and global development goals, such as The Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017-2024); An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All; AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want; and Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2021 PHC report provides disaggregated data on the main census results and features 11 volumes presenting findings from the different modules of the census questionnaires, with Volume 3D: Literacy and Education being the most pertinent to this comprehensive analysis. The report provides details on literacy in English and indigenous languages, current school attendance, and educational achievement by sex, region, and type of community. Further details on education include information on the attendance status of children aged three and older, six and older, and fifteen and older. According to the survey, one in every five children aged three and older has never attended school, with the majority of them being females. Additionally, the survey found that although one in ten children aged three and older who have never attended school live in urban areas, three in ten children who have never attended school live in rural areas, and vice versa for children who previously attended school. At the JHS level, the percentage of females who had previously attended school was greater than the proportion of boys who had previously attended school. The report further indicates that 20.8 % of out-of-school children aged three and older have never attended and 39.8% had attended in the past.

#### **1.3.4 Education Management Information System (Ministry of Education)**

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) is an annual census conducted by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service with support from donor partners. The EMIS provides census data at the national, regional and district (all 216 districts) levels for all relevant education parameters including attendance and out of school population, with the most recent EMIS census being that of 2018/19 academic year.

The key focus of the EMIS is to make adequate and reliable data and information available for scientific policy formulation, planning and implementation of various programmes and projects for the education sector in Ghana – thereby establishing a strong database within the Ministry of Education. The 2018/19 report, which is the fourteenth census, provides basic data including enrolment, teaching staff, school facilities and examination results for basic schools. The out of school numbers are calculated using the population and enrolment figures as provided in the EMIS data.

#### **1.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of Datasets**

The various datasets used for the comprehensive analysis generally use different parameters in trying to estimate the out of school situation in Ghana. All the datasets provide information on school attendance and non-attendance, as well as literacy levels but do not give direct information on out of school children with the exception of MICS. However, the information on net attendance ratios and literacy levels is used to estimate the out of school numbers/proportions. The different datasets also adopted different methods, used different age cohorts and targets posing some level of validity and reliability challenges. In line with this, the various datasets/reports therefore have inherent strengths and weaknesses which are highlighted in this section (Table 1) to provide a clear context.

**Table 1: Summary of the data sources and the strengths and weaknesses of each dataset**

Data Set	Approach to data collection	Most recent data availability	Strengths	Weaknesses	Number of OOSC (percent)
MICS (2017/18)	This is a household-based survey of a representative probability sample across all 10 regions (original regions). The data was collected in urban and rural areas using Computer Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The questionnaires adopted were a household questionnaire, a water quality testing questionnaire, a questionnaire for individual women, a questionnaire for individual males, and a questionnaire for children aged 5 to 17 years (given to the mother/caregivers).	2017/18	<p>The frequency with which the survey is carried out means that longitudinal trends can be tracked, which also means that most recent data is available. In addition, the collection of multi-indicators rather than a survey focused specifically on education indicators means that patterns of enrolment can be validated across other indicators.</p> <p>The data also provides up-to-date statistics on the country's out-of-school children. Additionally, it contains information on the five dimensions of out-of-school children.</p>	<p>The number of out of school children cannot be calculated on a community basis and only the proportions of children out of school can be provided at regional levels across the country.</p> <p>Although the sample is large and spans across all regions, it is based on a representative probability sample which means that it is reliant on the accuracy of weighting calculations.</p> <p>It is limited to only the ten previous regions and has no information on the six new regions</p>	<p><b>Not Attending early childhood or primary</b> Total 11.9%</p> <p><b>PRIMARY</b> Total 6.5% Female 6% Male 7%</p> <p><b>JHS</b> Total 6.9% Female 6.4% Male 7.4%</p>
Ghana 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC)	This is the most recent national level data source. Provides age cohort data available for each age cohort; includes number of in school and out of school children per age between 0-18 years. Data reports on out of school grouped by school level age cohorts.	2021	<p>The greatest strength of the GPHC is that it includes every individual present in Ghana on the date of census. The precise numbers of children not in school on the day of the census are therefore available.</p> <p>The report provides the most</p>	<p>It does not give equal information at all levels. For instance, there is no information about the educational levels in which children aged 6 years and older dropped out of school as it did for aged 15 years and older. Again, key data including teacher-classroom ratio and teacher absenteeism were not</p>	<p>3-years and older Never attended 20.8% Attended in the past 39.8%</p> <p>6-years and older Never attended 20.5% Attended in the past 43.3%</p>

			up to date statistics available in the country. It gives the specific information on children who have never been to school and who attended school in the past. It gives data on the newly created regions and data on out of school children as well.	reported.	
GDHS	The GDHS is a household-based survey, implemented in a representative probability sample of more than 12,000 households selected nationwide. This sample was selected in such a manner as to allow for separate estimates of key indicators for each of the 10 regions in Ghana (original regions), as well as for urban and rural areas separately. It is mainly focused on the health status of Ghanaian's but also covers information related to their overall socio-economic and demographic status including education.	2013/14	The frequency with which the survey is carried out means that longitudinal trends can be tracked, which also means that most recent data can be validated. In addition, the collection of multi-indicators rather than a survey focused specifically on education indicators means that patterns of enrolment can be computed across indicators with possibly less bias. The DHS asks questions related to number of children attending primary and JHS and number of children in the household who have never attended school.	The main limitation of using this survey data is that it cannot be used for calculating out of school numbers at the district level. Proportions of out of school children can only be predicted at the regional levels.	The GDHS reports the Net Attendance Rates of children so that it calculates the percentage of 6–11-year-olds who are actually at primary school: For 2013/14 this was:  Male: 73.8%; Female: 74.2% Total: 73.8%
Education Management Information System (EMIS) data from MOE/GES	Annual census of school data collected in questionnaire form each year. This data is available from the early 1990 period onward.  Age cohort data available for 5- to 14-year-olds which is further disaggregated to primary and	Yearly education management information data.	The strength of the EMIS data is that it gives actual numbers of children in school at each level and grade and also provides Net Enrolment Rate (NER) information about the ages of children at each level. Furthermore, the school census is conducted annually	The main weakness of EMIS is the fact that it only counts the children who are in school. Furthermore, underage and over age children are reported by level (Primary School and JHS) and so it is not possible to extrapolate how many children of each age (from 5 to 14) are	NER Data available at Primary and JHS Levels:  6-11: Total: 84.1%; Male: 84.2%; Female: 83.9%  12-14: Total 47.8%; Male: 51.0%; Female: 44.5%

	<p>JHS age ranges: 5 to 11 and 12 to 14</p> <p>Raw data is collected on an age-by-age basis;</p>		<p>which means that enrolment trends can be tracked to validate and gauge the accuracy of current data. The school census is also conducted in every community which has a primary school across the country and the data can be used to generate data at the district level.</p>	<p>actually in school and use the same data to calculate the number of out of school children with accuracy.</p> <p>There is also the risk that the head teachers contributing to the EMIS data during the annual data collection exercise inflate the enrolment which will therefore lead to an underestimation of the number of out of school children in the district or region.</p>	
<p>Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSC) study</p>	<p>The research used qualitative and quantitative approaches to profile and gather information on barriers/bottlenecks and policies and strategies relating to OOSC. It also relied on secondary data sources including the Ghana Demographic and Health Surveys (GDHS) of 2003 and 2008, Education Management Information System (EMIS) of Ministry of Education and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MIC) by UNICEF (2006)</p>	<p>2012</p>	<p>The document mainly focuses on out of school children. It contains specific information about out-of-school children, as well as educational challenges obstacles, impediments, and bottlenecks not found in other sources.</p>	<p>The data, though relevant, is not very current and provides data across only the 10-previous regions.</p>	<p>Dimension 1 Females 26.5% Males 30.1%</p> <p>Dimension 2 Primary school age Females 23.9% Males 25.1% Primary school age adjusted Females 13.4% Males 14%</p> <p>Dimension 3 Lower secondary school age Females 12.8% Males 11.7%</p>



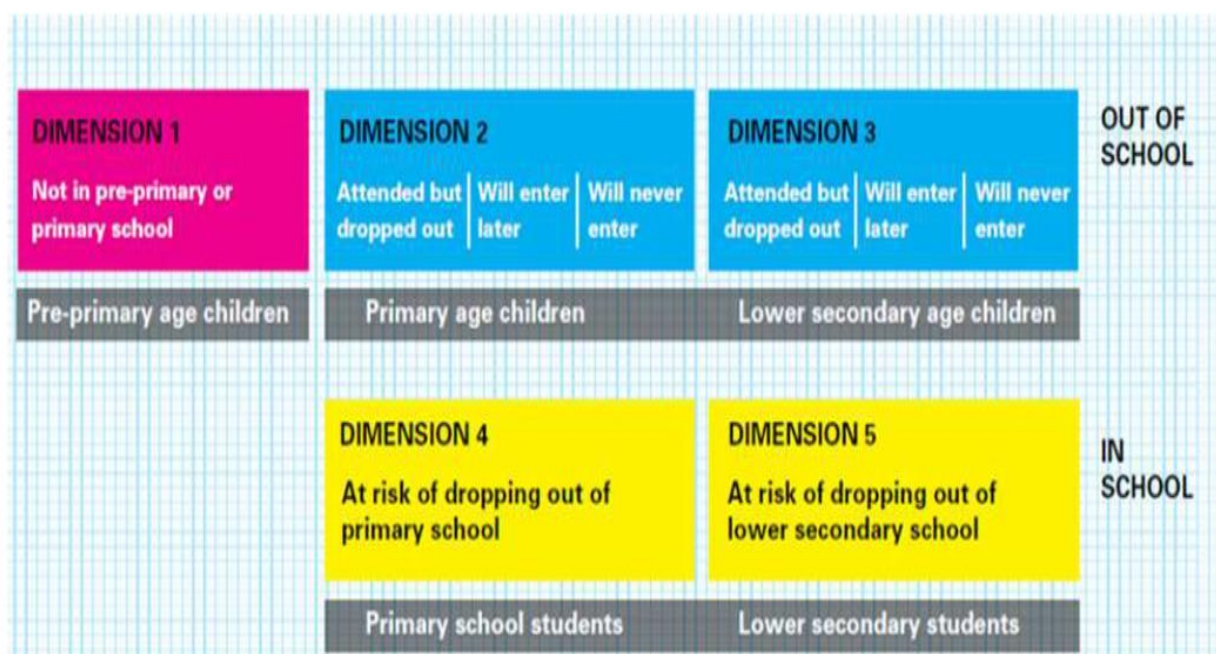
## 1.5 Frameworks underpinning the Meta-Analysis & Definitions

The UNICEF OOSCI model/framework underpins the development of the comprehensive analysis.

### 1.5.1 UNICEF OOSC Framework (2015)

The framework provides a systematic approach to identifying out-of-school children and is implemented by compiling data on excluded children from pre-primary to lower secondary school age. The framework outlines 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)', which includes five target groups of children and spans three levels of education: pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary (**Figure 2**). It focuses on both children who are out of school (Dimensions 1, 2, and 3) and those who are in school, but at risk of dropping out<sup>3</sup> (Dimensions 4 and 5). By taking a multi-dimensional approach to the issue of OOSC, the 5DE allows for the analysis of patterns associated with different exposures to schooling and of disparities that cut across the dimensions, with potential to improve the tracking and targeting of unique groups. The inclusion of dimensions that address children who are in school, but at risk of dropping out, aids in the linkage of issues and policies pertaining to education quality with those of access and enrolment. By including children from pre-primary, primary, and secondary, the model also underlines the importance of transition and the need for coherence in policies across school levels.

Figure 2: UNICEF OOSC Framework 2018



Source: UNICEF Out-Of-School Children Framework (2018)

<sup>3</sup> The assumption is that children who were overage for grade, those with irregular attendance and those who were low achievers are categorised as being at risk of dropout.

**Table 2: Dimensions of the UNICEF OOSC Framework**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Dimension 1</b>	Children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school (6-10 years)
<b>Dimension 2</b>	Children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school (11-15 years)
<b>Dimension 3</b>	Children of lower secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school (16-18 years)
<b>Dimension 4</b>	Children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out <sup>4</sup> (6-10 years)
<b>Dimension 5</b>	Children who are in lower secondary school but at risk of dropping out (11-18 years)

### **1.5.2 Definitions of Out-of-school-children**

Out-of-school children have been defined differently by different organisations and entities. For purposes of this comprehensive analysis, we adopt the OOSC definitions of UNICEF (2015) and the UNESCO UIS definitions as stated below:

- Out-of-school children could be either those who entered school in the past and dropped out, or those who have not entered school at all.
- The UNESCO Institute for Statistics defines out-of-school children as “children of primary or lower secondary school age who are not enrolled in primary or secondary education,” including “a small number of children in pre-primary education and in non-formal education (NFE)” (UNESCO UIS, 2015).

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<sup>4</sup> The ‘at risk population’ is defined as children being overage for grade, low performance or irregular attendance.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ANALYSIS OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN USING EXISTING DATA

#### 2.0 Introduction

This section provides contextual and synthesised details on the out of school phenomenon using existing datasets comprising, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Population and Housing Census (PHC) data, Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) and the Education Management Information System (EMIS) datasets. The analysis is done at the international, national and regional levels.

#### 2.1 OOSC context using international-level data

According to the most recent statistics from the UNESCO institute for statistics, there are an estimated number of 265,188 primary aged children who are out of school in Ghana. The figures are more staggering for adolescent and youth, with a total population of 2,126,094 currently out of school (Table 3). The majority of these children have never been to school despite having the appropriate age to enrol, or have dropped out for various reasons which are explained in detail in the supply and demand barriers section of this report.

Table 3: Out of School Children and Adolescents 2015-2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total (6-11 years)</b>	...	...	<b>90,704</b>	<b>153,986</b>	<b>35,432</b>	<b>265,188</b>
<b>Male</b>	...	...	56,903	84,794	26,649	155,175
<b>Female</b>	...	...	33,801	69,192	8,783	110,013
<b>Out-of-school adolescents and youth</b>						
Out-of-school adolescents and youth of secondary school age, both sexes (number) – <b>(12-17 years)</b>	858,516	902,520	910,194	887,784	724,820	620,302
Out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age, both sexes <b>(12-14)</b>	174,586	219,240	228,204	299,372	208,105	152,569
Out-of-school youth of upper secondary school age, both sexes (number) – <b>(15-17 years)</b>	683,930	683,280	681,990	588,412	516,715	467,733
Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth of primary and lower secondary school age, both sexes (number)	<b>858,516</b>	<b>902,520</b>	<b>1,000,898</b>	<b>1,041,770</b>	<b>760,252</b>	<b>885,490</b>

Source: UIS Statistics, 2021

### 2.1.1 Regional statistics on out of school children in Ghana (%)

The regional data from the World Inequality Data on Education (WIDE) shows that across all levels of education, the Northern region has the highest out of school rates. At the primary level, the out-of-school rate in the Northern region is 20%, while with the exception of the Upper West region at 11%, all the other regions have a rate of 7% or lower. The Greater Accra region has the lowest out-of-school rates at the primary and lower secondary levels. However, at the upper secondary level, the region's out-of-school rate spikes to among the highest across all regions. All regions see a double-digit increase in their out-of-school rates between lower secondary and upper secondary.

**Table 4: Regional rates on out of school children in Ghana**

Region <sup>5</sup>	Primary (%)	Lower Secondary (%)	Upper Secondary (%)
Western	4	4	23
Central	4	8	23
Greater Accra	3	3	27
Volta	7	3	20
Eastern	4	3	23
Ashanti	4	5	25
Brong Ahafo	6	9	28
Northern	20	18	31
Upper East	7	8	23
Upper West	11	15	26

Source: World Inequality Data on Education (WIDE - 2021)

### 2.1.2 Educate A Child Report - exclusion from education, the economic cost of OOSC

The Educate A Child (EAC) Institute in collaboration with Results for Development (R4D) published a second report on the costs of not providing universal primary education to individuals and to twenty nations, including Ghana, in 2013 using more recent data from UIS and covering more countries. The key findings from this research are that the costs of not educating out of school children significantly outweigh the necessary investments for providing universal primary education, and that for some countries these costs exceed the value of an average year of economic growth.

Analysis of the results shows Ghana is one of the countries with a high rate of out-of-school primary school-aged children, with out-of-school rates of 16%, which was relatively lower than the rates for all the African countries included in the analysis except for Ethiopia (13%). Compared to other countries outside the African space, the OOSC rate for Ghana was higher than those for Indonesia (1%), India (1%), Brazil (13%) and six other countries (Table 5). The data was re-examined in terms of children who had dropped out of school. It reveals that countries with a low rate of out-of-school children have a higher rate of dropouts and vice versa. In Ghana context, the proportion of children who had left school did not change significantly from those out of school.

Additionally, as of 2013, in Ghana, around 76% of OOSC were more likely to attend school (Table 5). This was a higher estimate than those in Senegal and Mali. According to the MICS and DHS 2013, around 12% of children in Ghana are unlikely to attend school, which is fewer than in Nigeria. The survey showed that around 3.9 percent of Ghanaian children would not complete primary school, which is lower than the rate in some countries such as Burkina Faso, Cote D' Ivoire, and Mali.

<sup>5</sup> Based on the previously 10-regions

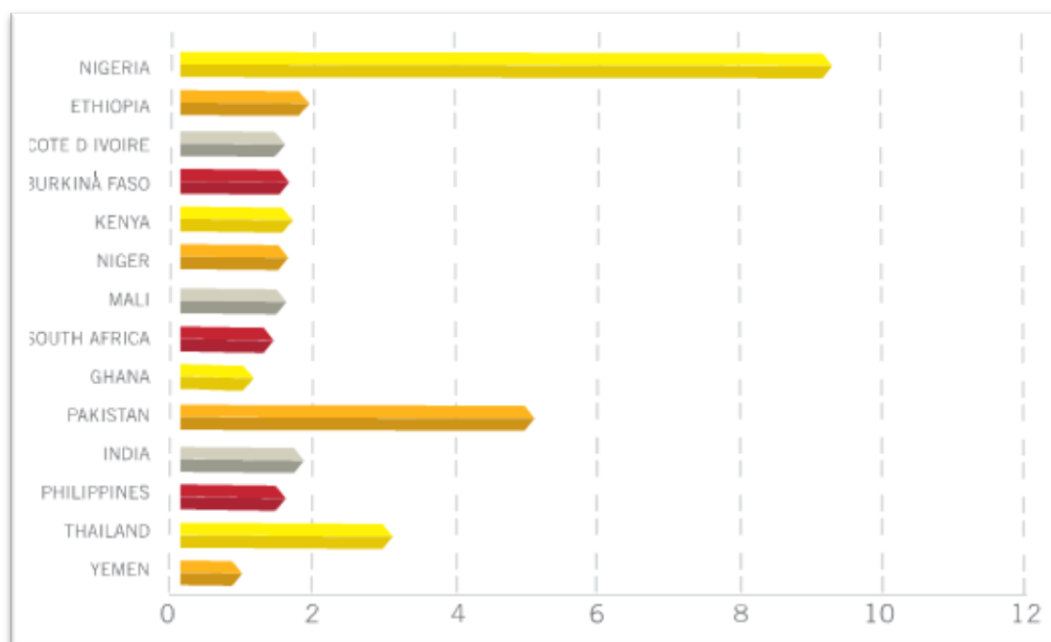
Table 5: Primary School Aged OOSC in 20 Countries

Country	OOSC*	% Left School*	% Likely to Enter*	% Unlikely to Enter*	% Non- Completing OOSC
Bangladesh	14%	18%	80%	3%	2.9%
Brazil	2%	24%	76%	0%	0.5%
Burkina Faso	37%	5%	19%	76%	30.0%
Cambodia	2%	23%	68%	9%	0.6%
Cote d'Ivoire	37%	11%	32%	57%	25.4%
DRC	22%	24%	54%	22%	10.1%
Ethiopia	13%	12%	79%	9%	2.7%
Gambia	30%	3%	19%	78%	24.4%
Ghana	16%	12%	76%	12%	3.9%
India	1%	14%	38%	48%	0.6%
Indonesia	1%	53%	45%	2%	0.6%
Lesotho	25%	46%	44%	10%	13.9%
Liberia	59%	1%	90%	9%	6.1%
Mali	33%	3%	4%	93%	31.7%
Nigeria	30%	5%	21%	74%	23.7%
Pakistan	28%	6%	61%	32%	10.6%
Senegal	21%	8%	9%	83%	19.0%
Thailand**	10%	43%	46%	11%	5.6%
Vietnam	1%	23%	67%	10%	0.3%

**Source:** UIS calculations based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Demographic and Health Surveys, 2013.

Further analysis in relation to the actual numbers on the out-of-school issue across the same 20 countries showed Nigeria, Pakistan, and Thailand had the highest numbers of out-of-school children, with the Nigerian figure a little over 9 million children who are out of school and the other nations having figures between one and two million. The raw numbers for Ghana places Ghana as the second lowest in terms of absolute figures of about one million OOSC (Figure 3).

Figure 3: OOSC population in millions - Half of the world's OOSC is concentrated in 14 countries



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2013

## 2.2 National Level Analysis

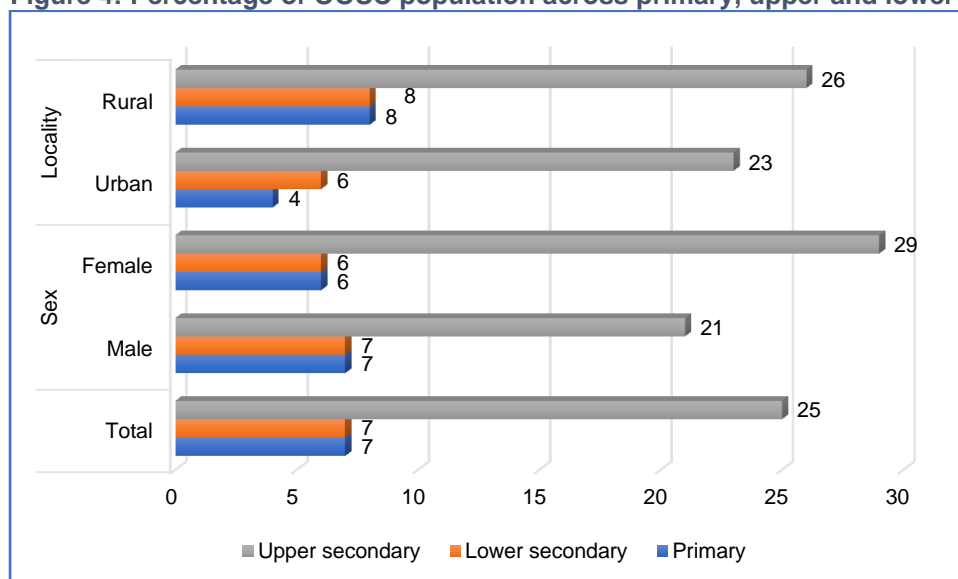
The national level analysis uses national level data in establishing the out of school context in Ghana. The key data/report sources comprised the MICS, Census data, GDHS and EMIS datasets.

### 2.2.1 OOSC context in Ghana using MICS data (2017/18) – general levels

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2017/2018 survey for Ghana provides statistics on school attendance and out-of-school children across all pre-tertiary levels - primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. In Ghana, children enter primary school at age 6, lower secondary at age 12 and upper secondary school at age 15. There are 6 grades in primary school and 6 grades in secondary school (3 Junior High and 3 Senior High School grades). In primary school, grades are referred to as grade or Primary 1 (P1) to grade or Primary 6 (P6). For lower secondary school, grades are referred to as grade 7 (Junior High School 1) to grade 9 (Junior High School 3) and in upper secondary to year 1 (Senior High School 1) to year 3 (Senior High School 3).

Figure 4 provides an overview of the out of school situation across primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. The data shows higher proportion of out of school occurs at the upper secondary level, accounting for about 25% of the expected population at that age. Further, about 7 percent each of children of primary and lower secondary school ages are classified as out of school. The gender dynamics show slightly higher proportions of out of school children among males compared to females at the primary and lower secondary levels but higher among females at the upper secondary level. The locality dynamics also show relatively higher out of school numbers across rural areas at all levels compared to urban areas.

**Figure 4: Percentage of OOSC population across primary, upper and lower secondary**



Source: MICS Data (2017/18<sup>6</sup>)

### 2.2.1.1 Out of school population at the primary level

In total, approximately 283,000 primary school-age children were out of school as of 2018 according to the MICS data (MICS, 2017/18). This equals about seven percent of primary school age children who are out of school. Poverty levels have been proven to be one of the key determinants of out of school children in Ghana despite the introduction of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in Ghana (Casely-Hayford et al, 2018). Analysis of the wealth context in relation to the OOSC situation shows quite large differentials, with children from the poorest wealth quintile having out-of-school rates that are higher than the national average. At the primary level, only one per cent of children from the richest wealth quintile are out of school, compared to 16% of children from the poorest quintile. Out-of-school rates for rural children are slightly higher than the national average, while the rates for urban children are slightly lower (Table 6).

The MICS data further shows that there is high rate of attendance and low dropout at the primary school level (Table 6). The data reveals a 79.6% rate of attendance at the primary school level, with the gender analysis relating to dropout showing a higher proportion of boys (7.4%) being out of school compared to girls (6.4%).

<sup>6</sup> The percentages are based on the most recent MICS data (2017/18). Estimates are calculated by age groups – primary (6-11); lower secondary (12-14); upper secondary (15-17). The OOSC was calculated as the proportion of children within the specified school age-groups who are not in school or attended but dropped out.

**Table 6: Primary school attendance and out of school children – national context**

Background Characteristics	Male			Female				Total				
	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children
		Attending early childhood education	Out of school <sup>7</sup>			Attending early childhood education	Out of school <sup>7</sup>			Attending early childhood education	Out of school <sup>7</sup> (6-11 <sup>7</sup> )	
<b>Total</b>	79.6	13.4	7.0	5646	82.2	11.8	6.0	5357	80.8	12.6	6.5	11003
<b>Residence</b>												
Urban	87.0	9.8	3.2	2385	86.3	9.1	4.5	2268	86.7	9.5	3.8	4653
Rural	74.2	16.0	9.9	3261	79.2	13.8	7.1	3089	76.6	14.9	8.5	6350
<b>Age at beginning of school year</b>												
<b>6</b>	43.7	45.0	11.3	1029	53.7	38.5	7.8	927	48.5	41.9	9.6	1956
<b>7</b>	76.3	17.6	6.1	984	75.2	16.9	8.0	896	75.8	17.2	7.0	1880
<b>8</b>	87.3	6.2	6.5	942	86.2	9.3	4.5	921	86.7	7.8	5.5	1862
<b>9</b>	90.2	4.4	5.3	942	89.9	2.7	7.4	818	90.1	3.6	6.3	1760
<b>10</b>	91.3	1.8	6.9	900	95.8	1.0	3.1	973	93.6	1.4	5.0	1873
<b>11</b>	94.1	0.3	5.6	849	93.6	0.8	5.4	822	93.8	0.5	5.5	1672
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>												
Poorest	64.2	18.1	17.7	1342	69.4	15.5	15.1	1207	66.6	16.9	16.5	2549
Second	74.3	19.3	6.4	1291	82.0	13.3	4.7	1154	77.9	16.5	5.6	2445
Middle	85.7	11.8	2.5	1138	78.9	15.8	5.3	1101	82.4	13.8	3.9	2239
Fourth	89.1	7.8	3.1	1018	90.0	8.0	1.8	953	89.5	7.9	2.5	1971
Richest	92.3	5.7	1.9	856	94.8	4.3	0.9	943	93.6	5.0	1.4	1798

Source: MICS Data (2017/18)

<sup>7</sup> Estimates are calculated by age groups – primary (6-11) and the OOSC was calculated as the proportion of children within the specified school age-group who are not in school or attended but dropped out.



### **2.2.1.2 Out of school population at the junior high level (lower secondary)**

Table 7 presents lower secondary level out-of-school and attendance rates, disaggregated into various categories such as sex, residence, age at the beginning of school year, and wealth quintile. This is to provide a quantitative picture of the geographical, gender, and socio-economic disparities in lower secondary education access in Ghana. The data show that the lower secondary out-of-school rate (national average) is 6.9 percent, with the portion of males high at 7.4% compared to the portion of 6.4%. While the out-of-school rates are quite high, the rate for females is one percentage point lower than that of males. This indicates some level of progress in terms of limiting the previously wide gender disparities related to females' access to lower secondary education.

Disaggregating based on residence, the share of urban children in total out-of-school population at the lower secondary level is 5.6% (6.1% for males and 5.2% for females) while children from rural populations account for 7.9 % (8.2% for males and 7.5% for females). The data shows that the rural out-of-school rates are higher than those of urban, suggesting that most excluded children are in deprived areas. The potential driving factors could be education underfinancing in deprived areas, rural poverty or economic deprivation, and socio-cultural practices, among others. Notwithstanding, the difference between rural and urban out-of-school rates is about 2.3%, which is not as wide as one would expect. This demonstrates that urban out-of-school rates are not too different from rural out-of-school rates, which could be explained in terms of extreme urban poverty, rising numbers of street children in urban areas, and the need to engage children in income generation activities, among others. Further, the female out-of-school rates in both rural and urban areas are lower than the corresponding rates for males.

In terms of age disaggregation, the share of age 12 children in total out-of-school population at the lower secondary level is 6 per cent (6% for males and another 6.1% for females); the share of age 13 children is 7% (7.9% for males and 6.4% for females), and the share of age 14 children is 7.6% (8.3% for males and 6.8% for females). The data shows that the out-of-school rate increases with age, though the rate of increase is more rapid with females. This is likely driven by factors such as menstrual management issues, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy, among others.

Finally, the wealth quintile disaggregated data shows that the portion of children from the poorest quintile is 15.2% of the total lower secondary out-of-school population, compared to 5.9% in the case of children from the second quintile, 5.6% for those from the middle quintile, 3.5% for those from the fourth quintile, and 3% for those that belong to the richest quintile. The data shows that poorer children are more likely to be excluded from lower secondary school and the opposite trend for richer children

**Table 7: Lower secondary school attendance and out of school adolescents and out of school adolescents – national context**

Background Characteristics	Male				Female				Total			
	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children
		Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending primary school	Out of school	
<b>Total</b>	36.6	54.7	7.4	2496	42.6	49.2	6.4	2650	39.7	51.9	6.9	5146
<b>Residence</b>												
Urban	45.6	46.2	6.1	994	51.7	40.5	5.2	1236	49.0	43.0	5.6	2230
Rural	30.6	60.3	8.2	1503	34.6	56.9	7.5	1414	32.5	58.6	7.9	2916
<b>Age at beginning of school year</b>												
12	18.0	75.5	6.0	831	24.2	67.9	6.1	926	21.3	71.5	6.0	1757
13	39.1	52.3	7.9	831	43.9	48.8	6.4	878	41.5	50.5	7.1	1710
14	52.6	36.4	8.3	834	61.4	29.2	6.8	845	57.0	32.8	7.6	1680
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>												
Poorest	20.9	61.8	16.3	582	26.2	59.3	13.9	491	23.3	60.7	15.2	1073
Second	29.8	64.6	5.3	611	26.7	65.0	6.6	600	28.3	64.8	5.9	1212
Middle	33.9	59.5	5.8	480	41.4	51.8	5.5	586	38.0	55.3	5.6	1067
Fourth	46.2	47.1	4.7	480	52.0	43.3	2.5	514	49.2	45.1	3.5	994
Richest	65.4	28.8	2.1	343	72.0	20.9	3.7	458	69.2	24.3	3.0	801

Source: MICS Data (2017/18)

### **2.2.1.3 Out of school population at the Senior High level (Upper secondary)**

At the upper secondary level, the out-of-school rate increases for all groups, and the national rate increases to 25%, with more girls out of school than boys (Table 8). In fact, the portion of females is high at 29% compared to 21.3% in the case of males. This sharply contrasts with the with the sex-disaggregated data on out-of-school rates at the lower secondary level, which shows higher out-of-school rates for boys than girls. This appears to suggest that females' risk of dropping out increases as they advance to higher levels of education. This is consistent with conventional wisdom as some girls drop out of school to fulfil other social conventions such as marriage.

The data (disaggregated by residence), mirrors the national picture. The portion of urban children in the total out-of-school population at the upper secondary level is 22.9% (18.8% for males and 27% for females). The portion of those from rural populations is 26.5% (23.1% for males and 30.9% for females). Consistent with the lower secondary level data, the disaggregated analysis of upper secondary out-of-school rates (by geography) shows that the exclusionary rate at the senior high level is largely driven by children from deprived areas. But it is interesting to note that the difference between rural and urban out-of-school rates is around 3.3%, which is not as high as one would expect. Thus, urban out-of-school rates are not too different from rural out-of-school rates. (See page 18 for the possible reasons.) Also, the female out-of-school rates in both rural and urban areas are higher than the corresponding rates for males. This means that, irrespective of location, females face stronger barriers to education as they progress higher.

Moreover, disaggregating by age shows that the portion of children aged 15 in the total out-of-school population at the upper secondary level is 12.7% (11.7% for males and another 13.9% for females); that the of portion of children aged 16 is 14.6% (11.1% for males and 18.5% for females); that the portion of children aged 17 is 29.9% (26.3% for males and 34.4% for females), and that the portion of children aged 18 aged is 45.2% (37.5% for males and 53.3% for females). The data shows that the risk of staying out-of-school rises with age. The reason is that the opportunity for education decreases as children get older. For females, the risk much higher as most of them start thinking of marriage after age 18.

The wealth quintile disaggregation shows that the portion of OOSC from the poorest quintile is 31.4% of the total lower secondary out-of-school population, compared to 25.7% in the case of children from the second quintile; 23.4% per cent for those from the middle quintile; 23% for those from the fourth quintile; and 19.8 per cent for those that belong to the richest quintile. Consistent with the lower secondary level data, the quintile disaggregated analysis shows that poorer children are more likely to be excluded from upper secondary school while the opposite holds true for richer children. However, the exclusionary rates are significantly high among children, especially females, from all quintiles, which indicates the presence of structural barriers to upper secondary education.

**Table 8: Upper secondary school attendance and out of school youth – national context**

Background Characteristics	Male				Female					Total					
	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:			Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:			Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted) <sup>1</sup>	Percentage of children:			Number of children
		Attending lower secondary school	Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending lower secondary school	Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending lower secondary school	Attending primary school	Out of school	
<b>Total</b>	19.9	47.3	11.4	21.3	2665	19.3	43.2	8.3	29.0	2309	19.6	45.4	10.0	24.9	4974
<b>Residence</b>															
Urban	30.8	43.1	7.3	18.8	1112	28.2	38.9	5.8	27.0	1107	29.5	41.0	6.5	22.9	2219
Rural	12.2	50.3	14.4	23.1	1553	11.0	47.2	10.6	30.9	1202	11.7	49.0	12.7	26.5	2755
<b>Age at beginning of school year</b>															
15	8.4	59.1	20.7	11.7	763	8.8	60.3	16.9	13.9	682	8.6	59.7	18.9	12.7	1445
16	22.1	54.2	12.5	11.1	590	21.1	51.9	8.2	18.5	548	21.6	53.1	10.5	14.6	1138
17	21.3	45.0	7.4	26.3	699	26.1	34.9	4.2	34.4	559	23.4	40.5	6.0	29.9	1258
18	30.6	28.5	3.3	37.5	613	23.7	20.5	1.3	54.3	520	27.5	24.9	2.4	45.2	1133
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>															
Poorest	8.5	46.2	18.5	26.6	590	5.5	41.9	14.6	38.0	428	7.2	44.4	16.9	31.4	1018
Second	6.4	55.6	15.5	22.5	591	8.0	52.8	9.5	29.8	475	7.1	54.3	12.8	25.7	1066
Middle	18.8	51.0	9.3	20.9	527	18.9	49.1	5.5	26.1	502	18.8	50.1	7.5	23.4	1029
Fourth	29.8	46.1	6.1	18.0	599	23.2	40.8	6.2	29.5	465	26.9	43.8	6.1	23.0	1064
Richest	46.3	32.0	4.9	16.7	358	41.2	29.9	6.2	22.3	439	43.5	30.8	5.6	19.8	797

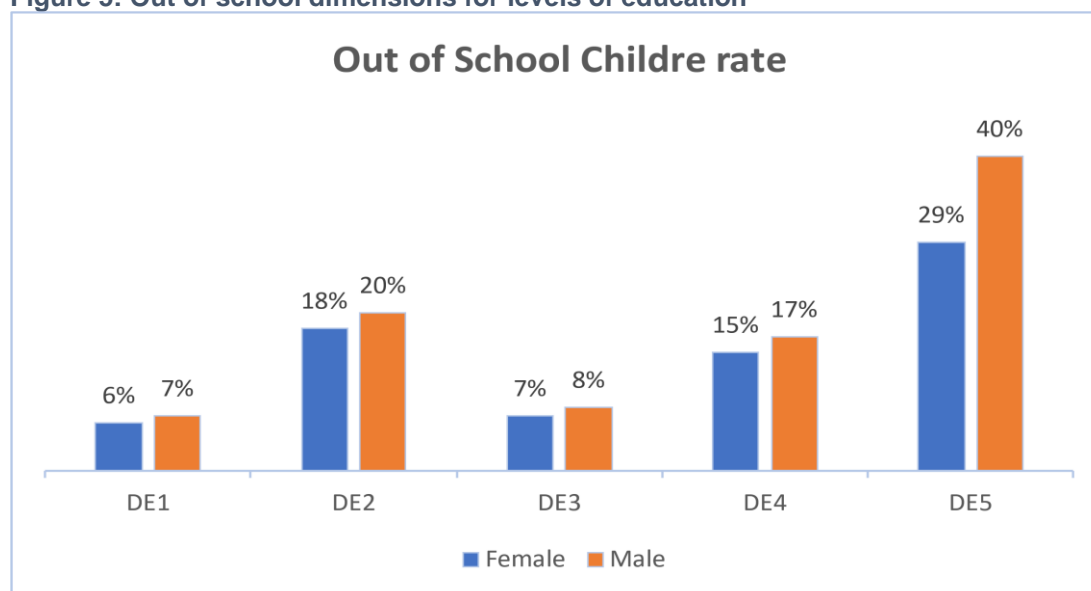
Source: Ghana MICS Data (2017/18)

### 2.2.1.4 Analysis based on the 5-Dimensions<sup>8</sup>

Further, the analysis groups the out of school numbers into five dimensions based on the UNICEF OOSC framework. The findings as presented in Figure 5 show that in dimension one, the proportion of boys and girls who do not attend a programme of early childhood education or primary education is fairly comparable – showing 7 percent of boys and 6 percent of girls respectively are not attending either early childhood education or primary school.

The statistics revealed a slightly higher proportion in the number of males classified under dimension two, that is children of primary school age who are not enrolled in school – boys accounting for 20% of the OOS number under dimension two, compared to 18% for girls. In dimension 3, both boys and girls had comparable proportions. Additionally, the research revealed that males (17%) are more likely to be in dimension 4 than girls. While dimension 5 revealed a greater disparity in the percentage of boys and girls, the survey revealed a significant disparity in the proportion of boys and girls. A general synthesis of the data shows that boys are more likely to drop out of school or be out of school than girls.

Figure 5: Out of school dimensions for levels of education



Ghana MICS Data (2017/18)

## 2.2 Regional Level Analysis

### 2.2.1 Regional analysis of OOSC – primary level

At the national level, the total number of out-of-school children for primary school is 6.5% compared to 12.6% of children attending primary school in Ghana. This is based on a total net attendance ratio of 80.8%. further, there are more male children (7%) out of school than female children (6%) at the national level. The three regions having the highest number of out-of-school children in Ghana are as follows: Northern (19.9%), Upper West (11.5%), and Volta (7.3%). The Northern region has 19.7% male OOSC and 20.2% female OOSC. This is followed by the Upper West region, with 13.4% male OOSC and 8.9% female OOSC. The

<sup>8</sup> **Dimension 1:** Children not attending an early childhood education programme or primary education

**Dimension 2:** Children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school

**Dimension 3:** Children of junior secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school

**Dimension 4:** Children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out (overage by 2 or more years)

**Dimension 5:** Children who are in junior secondary school but at risk of dropping out (overage by 2 or more years)

Volta region has 9.2% male OOSC and 5.3% female OOSC.) The Greater Accra region has the lowest number of OOSC at the primary school level (3.1%). However, there are more female (4.6%) than male (1.6%) out of school children.

### **2.2.2 Lower secondary school attendance and out of school youth – regional context**

Table 10 presents the analysis of attendance and OOSC numbers at the lower secondary level. The total number of out-of-school children at the national level for lower secondary school is 6.9% compared to 51.9 % of children attending lower secondary school in Ghana. This is based on a total net attendance ratio of 39.7 percent. At the national level, there are more male children (7.4%) out of school than female children (6.4%). Three regions have the highest number of out-of-school children in Ghana: the northern region (17.6%), Upper West (14.7%), and Brong Ahafo (9.2%). The northern region has males (16.3 percent) and females (18.8 percent). This is followed by the Upper West region having 19.6% male OOSC and 10.3% female OOSC. Brong Ahafo region 9.1% male OOSC and 9.2% female OOSC. The Eastern region has the lowest number of OOSC, 3.1% at the lower secondary school level. There are more male OOSC (4.9%) than female OOSC (1.7 percent).

### **2.2.3 Upper secondary school attendance and out of school youth – regional context**

Table 11 presents data on upper secondary school attendance and out of school youth across all ten regions. With 4,974 children sampled, the data show that (24.9) were OOSC. As expected, the data shows two regions recorded the highest portion of out-of-school youth occurring in the Northern Region (30.8) and Brong Ahafo (28.2). On the other hand, Volta Region recorded the lowest portion of out-of-school youth (20.4).

Overall, the percentage of out-of-school youth is higher for females (29.0) than that of males (21.3). This points to a step toward achieving attendance parity at the secondary school level. The regional gender-disaggregated analysis shows an interesting trend. All the ten regions recorded varying numbers of out-of-school youth when comparing male and female. The portion of female out of school youth was marginally higher in seven regions out of ten, with three regions having higher portions of male youth who were out of school: Western region: males (23.0%) over female (22.7%); Upper East males (23.6%) over females (21.6%) and Upper West males (27.9%) over females (22.4%). By contrast, the Brong Ahafo Region, recorded the highest portion of female out of school youth, with females (36.9%) over males (21.4%).

**Table 9: Primary school attendance and out of school children – regional context**

Background Characteristics	Male				Female				Total			
	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children
		Attending early childhood education	Out of school			Attending early childhood education	Out of school			Attending early childhood education	Out of school	
<b>Total</b>	79.6	13.4	7.0	5646	82.2	11.8	6.0	5357	80.8	12.6	6.5	11003
<b>Region</b>												
Western	75.7	19.7	4.6	550	86.2	10.7	3.1	553	81.0	15.1	3.9	1103
Central	81.1	14.2	4.6	556	83.0	14.3	2.8	528	82.0	14.2	3.7	1084
Greater Accra	89.6	8.8	1.6	487	89.0	6.1	4.6	503	89.3	7.4	3.1	990
Volta	71.4	19.4	9.2	488	78.6	16.1	5.3	445	74.8	17.8	7.3	933
Eastern	81.6	14.1	4.3	675	87.0	10.3	2.7	644	84.3	12.2	3.5	1320
Ashanti	87.2	8.4	4.4	1328	85.2	11.3	3.4	1199	86.3	9.8	3.9	2527
Brong Ahafo	75.3	17.5	7.2	534	81.4	13.5	5.1	520	78.3	15.5	6.2	1054
Northern	67.5	12.8	19.7	663	66.6	13.2	20.2	672	67.1	13.0	19.9	1334
Upper East	80.0	12.4	7.6	201	82.4	11.4	6.1	168	81.1	11.9	7.0	370
Upper West	74.0	12.5	13.4	162	78.7	12.4	8.9	125	76.1	12.5	11.5	288

Source: MICS Data (2017/18)

Table 10: Lower secondary school attendance and out of school adolescents and out of school adolescents – regional context

Background Characteristics	Male			Female			Total					
	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:		Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted) <sup>1</sup>	Percentage of children:		Number of children
		Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending primary school	Out of school	
<b>Total</b>	36.6	54.7	7.4	2496	42.6	49.2	6.4	2650	39.7	51.9	6.9	5146
<b>Region</b>												
Western	36.6	59.7	3.1	265	46.5	45.6	5.5	286	41.7	52.4	4.3	551
Central	38.1	54.3	7.5	252	42.9	49.4	7.7	250	40.5	51.9	7.6	502
Greater Accra	50.2	42.6	4.4	216	63.0	31.3	2.4	224	56.7	36.9	3.4	441
Volta	25.1	70.9	3.0	230	29.3	63.6	3.8	215	27.1	67.4	3.4	445
Eastern	35.3	59.2	4.9	286	50.5	46.2	1.7	344	43.6	52.1	3.1	630
Ashanti	48.2	42.7	6.6	562	48.7	44.9	3.7	625	48.5	43.9	5.1	1187
Brong Ahafo	32.0	57.5	9.1	233	39.2	50.9	9.2	225	35.6	54.2	9.2	458
Northern	25.8	56.8	16.3	281	22.5	58.3	18.8	312	24.1	57.6	17.6	592
Upper East	19.4	70.4	9.1	105	32.1	61.3	5.9	95	25.4	66.1	7.6	200
Upper West	21.9	57.9	19.6	66	23.4	66.3	10.3	74	22.7	62.4	14.7	140

Source: Ghana MICS Data (2017/18)



**Table 11: Upper secondary school attendance and out of school youth – regional context**

Background Characteristics	Male				Female					Total					
	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:			Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:			Number of children	Net attendance ratio (adjusted)	Percentage of children:			Number of children
		Attending lower secondary school	Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending lower secondary school	Attending primary school	Out of school			Attending lower secondary school	Attending primary school	Out of school	
<b>Total</b>	19.9	47.3	11.4	21.3	2665	19.3	43.2	8.3	29.0	2309	19.6	45.4	10.0	24.9	4974
<b>Region</b>															
Western	16.3	51.4	9.4	23.0	236	18.8	47.8	10.6	22.7	219	17.5	49.7	10.0	22.8	455
Central	17.6	54.5	11.8	16.1	267	14.7	48.4	6.3	29.9	251	16.2	51.5	9.1	22.8	518
Greater Accra	34.5	33.8	6.8	24.7	197	26.3	37.6	7.1	29.0	241	30.0	35.9	7.0	27.1	438
Volta	11.2	54.6	18.5	15.6	243	15.1	44.1	14.7	26.2	202	13.0	49.8	16.8	20.4	445
Eastern	24.8	45.5	11.2	18.5	325	23.9	41.4	6.6	28.0	279	24.4	43.6	9.1	22.9	604
Ashanti	28.5	44.5	7.1	19.9	629	25.3	41.1	3.2	30.0	563	27.0	42.9	5.3	24.7	1192
Brong Ahafo	15.8	51.6	10.8	21.4	282	12.6	43.4	7.1	36.9	217	14.4	48.0	9.2	28.2	499
Northern	11.4	44.2	14.7	29.7	323	13.1	39.1	15.3	32.5	205	12.1	42.2	15.0	30.8	528
Upper East	7.5	49.7	19.2	23.6	82	10.1	50.5	16.2	21.6	76	8.7	50.1	17.8	22.6	158
Upper West	4.6	46.7	20.9	27.9	82	3.6	57.6	16.4	22.4	56	4.2	51.1	19.0	25.6	138

Source: Ghana MICS Data (2017/18)

#### **2.2.4 Gross intake, completion and effective transition rates**

The MICS data also provides data on gross enrolment, completion, and effective transition rates for primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools. The analysis results (Table 12) show gross national intake at the primary level is high (99.2%), with the majority of this group (103.1%) being females, compared to 95.4% males. Additionally, rural areas have a higher primary gross intake than urban areas. This could be accounted for by the concentrated and conscientious efforts targeted at getting rural children into school for many years.

Despite the large intake, the national completion rate is 71%, with girls having the greatest percentage of primary school completion. In comparison to children in urban communities, rural children have a lower completion rate at the primary level, despite their high enrolment. According to the 2017/2018 MIC report, completion rates were low in the three northern areas of Northern, Upper East, and Upper West compared to the other regions.

Additionally, the average gross intake at the lower secondary level decreased to 82%, with boys outnumbering females (87% compared 77% respectively). The findings indicated that intake at the lower secondary level was low in rural areas and high in urban areas. At the wealth quintile level, the statistics indicate a progressive decline in the rate as the children progress in the educational system. The completion ratio was extremely low in the lowest income quintiles and extremely high in the highest income quintiles.

**Table 12: Gross intake, completion and effective transition rates**

Back-ground Characteristics	Gross intake rate to the last grade of primary school	Number of children of primary school completion age	Primary school completion rate	Total number of children age 14-16 years	Effective transition rate to lower secondary school	Number of children who were in the last grade of primary school the previous year and are not repeating that grade in the current school year	Gross intake rate to the last grade of lower secondary school	Number of children of lower secondary school completion age	Lower secondary completion rate	Total number of adolescents' age 17-19 years	Upper secondary completion rate	Total number of youth age 20-22 years
<b>Total</b>	99.2	1672	71.0	4263	94.9	1670	82.0	1680	47.4	3315	47.4	2290
<b>Sex</b>												
Male	95.4	849	68.9	2187	93.7	811	87.0	834	44.9	1752	54.5	1022
Female	103.1	822	73.1	2076	96.0	858	77.0	845	50.2	1564	41.8	1268
<b>Residence</b>												
Urban	96.4	737	78.7	1867	93.3	767	93.7	713	60.8	1499	61.4	1151
Rural	101.4	935	64.9	2396	96.3	903	73.3	967	36.4	1816	33.4	1140
<b>Wealth index quintile</b>												
Poorest	79.3	387	52.2	874	95.5	341	49.1	360	23.1	668	18.7	363
Second	112.8	340	65.2	951	92.3	358	86.1	377	27.3	685	32.4	415
Middle	96.1	362	74.6	872	93.8	365	84.3	339	46.5	715	39.4	481
Fourth	116.8	292	80.7	897	96.7	312	101.2	327	64.5	672	54.0	514
Richest	95.8	291	85.9	669	96.8	294	93.5	278	80.6	576	80.6	517

Source: Ghana MICS Data (2017/18)

## 2.3 Analysis based on Census Data - 2021

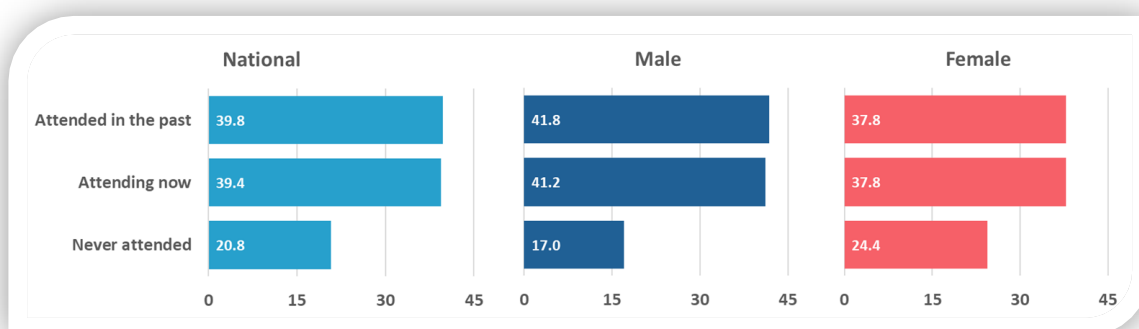
The census provides the most recent national level data on education indicators in Ghana including attendance and literacy levels in Ghana. These are used to estimate the out of school numbers in the country – using the proportion of those who have ‘never attended and those who attended in the past’.

### 2.3.1 Attendance levels

Analysis of the 2021 census statistics shows about 20.8% of children aged 3 and older have never attended school with a further 39.8 percent having attended in the past (Figure 6). This implies that on the average, there is about **60%** of children aged 3-years and older who are out of school (*attended in the past and never attended*). The data further shows that a higher proportion of females fall within the out of school category (62.2 percent) compared to males (58.8 percent). This invariably points to a major issue in the country’s quest to improve access to quality basic education.

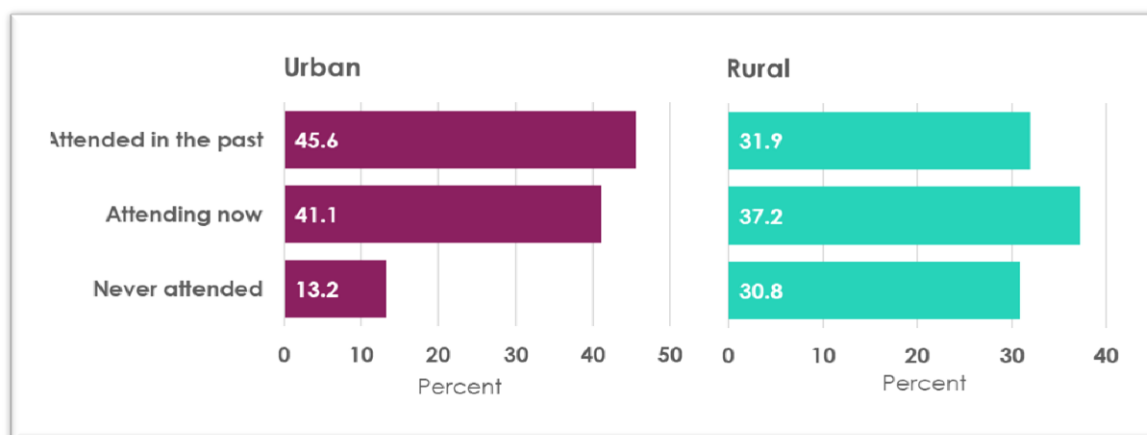
The locality dynamics pointed to a more dire situation with about 62.7 percent of children age 3-years and older living in rural areas, reported as being out of school compared to 58.8 percent in urban areas (Figure 7). Though the numbers are higher across rural areas, those of urban areas are comparable. This implies the need to focus all interventions (AEP programming) in both rural and urban areas.

Figure 6: School Attendance Status of Population 3 Years and Older by Sex



Source: GSS, 2021 PHC

Figure 7: School Attendance Status of Population 3 Years and Older by Type of Locality



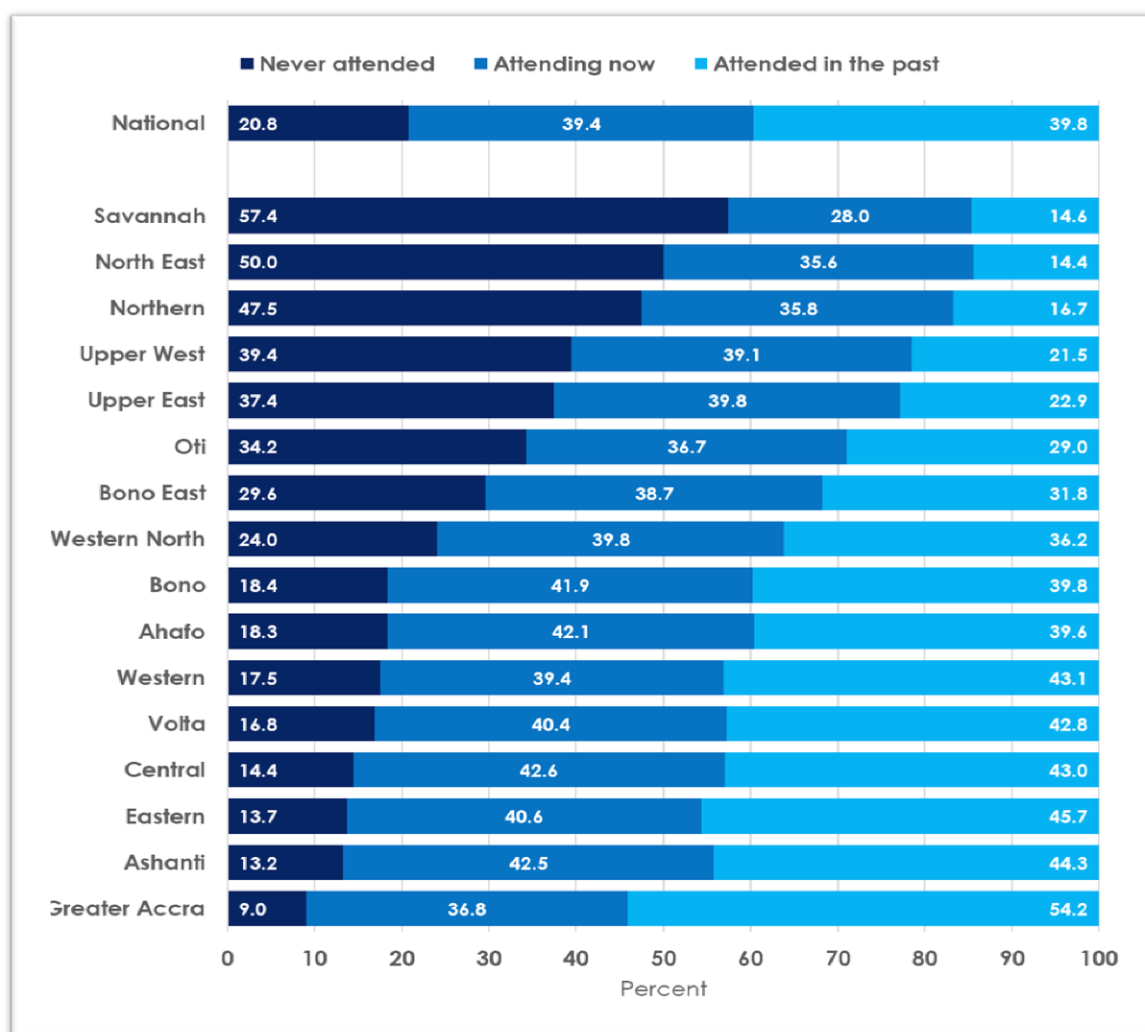
Source: GSS, 2021 PHC

### 2.3.1.1 School attendance status of population three years and older by region

The regional level analysis shows varied differences but a higher concentration of OOSC in the northern sector of the country (Figure 8). The Savannah region accounts for the highest proportion of children aged three years and older who are out of school (72%) with the Northeast (64.4%) and Northern (64.2%), accounting for the second and third highest proportions respectively – which are all higher than the national average.

The Central region (57.4%), Ashanti region (57.5%) and the Bono region (58.2%) represent the regions with lower numbers of OOSC though the proportions are relatively still very high. This result shows that the out of school phenomenon, especially for the population three years and older, is pertinent across all regions of the country.

Figure 8: School Attendance Status of Population 3 Years and Older By Region



Source: GSS, 2021 PHC

## **2.4 Analysis based on GDHS Data**

### **2.4.1 Educational attainment of household population**

The GDHS provides gender, locality and age-group disaggregated data on the level of education of household members aged six and older. Further analysis is done by region and by wealth status of the households. This provides evidence on the proportion of females and males who have never attended school, compared to those who have only primary, secondary or tertiary level of education.

#### **2.4.1.1 Educational level of female population - out of school context**

Table 13 provides evidence relating to the educational level of female population based on GDHS data. The analysis shows that as of 2014, about 26% of the female household population had never been to school, which showed a five-percentage decline from 31% in the preceding GDHS in 2008. Among females aged six and older, 27% had some primary education; 5% had completed primary school only; 39% had some secondary education or had completed secondary school; and 4% had more than a secondary school education. The disaggregation by age groups shows that the proportion of females with no education is higher in the older ages (from 20 to 24 and beyond), indicating some slight improvement in education in Ghana resulting from the FCUBE initiative started in the late 1990s. Further analysis by locality showed that females living in urban areas were more educated than those in rural communities with about 35% of females in rural areas having no education compared to 18% of those living in urban areas. Urban females are more likely to be educated than their rural counterparts. A similar trend is observed across the other educational levels (Table 13).

The regional-level analysis using the ‘former ten regions’ showed higher percentages of women in the three northern regions as having never attended school. The highest percentage of females who had never been to school was in the Northern region (59%), followed by Upper West (53%) and Upper East (45%), as compared with only 14% of females in Greater Accra. Further, the percentage of female household members who had never been to school decreased with increasing wealth, from 52% in the lowest quintile to 8% in the highest quintile.

#### **▪ Out of school context**

Estimating for the out of school population for females as presented in Table 13 shows that the population age 6 to 9 years had the highest proportion of OOSC, accounting for about 40% of the total sample (dimension 1). About two-thirds (59.8%) had also had some level of primary education, meaning, they had started primary but had had to drop for one reason or the other and did not complete their primary education (dimension 2). The female population aged 10 to 14, however, recorded lower out of school numbers (4.8%) but a very high percentage in relation to those who had had some level of primary education but had dropped-out along the line (68.5%).

Table 13: Educational attainment of the female household population

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary <sup>1</sup>	Some secondary	Completed secondary <sup>2</sup>	More than secondary	Total	Number	Median years completed
<b>Age</b>									
6-9	40.0	59.8	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,296	0.0
10-14	4.8	68.5	8.1	18.6	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,646	3.6
15-19	4.6	16.2	8.1	64.9	6.0	0.2	100.0	1,661	7.1
20-24	12.2	9.0	5.3	40.1	26.0	7.3	100.0	1,637	8.5
25-29	17.2	9.9	4.0	38.1	16.4	14.4	100.0	1,622	8.4
30-34	21.6	12.2	5.3	42.8	9.9	8.1	100.0	1,387	8.1
35-39	24.5	13.6	4.4	43.2	9.2	5.0	100.0	1,300	7.8
40-44	32.5	14.9	6.0	41.5	2.3	2.8	100.0	1,056	5.4
45-49	35.6	14.1	5.2	41.4	0.6	3.2	100.0	859	5.0
50-54	42.1	12.6	4.8	36.0	1.3	3.2	100.0	990	3.9
55-59	40.7	13.1	3.9	38.1	0.2	4.1	100.0	608	3.7
60-64	49.0	10.9	2.3	34.0	0.0	3.8	100.0	517	0.6
65+	73.4	7.5	1.4	14.7	0.3	2.7	100.0	1,197	0.0
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	17.9	23.6	4.3	38.5	9.3	6.4	100.0	9,063	6.5
Rural	34.9	29.8	5.2	25.8	2.9	1.3	100.0	8,715	2.3
<b>Region</b>									
Western	21.1	26.7	4.9	38.3	6.4	2.6	100.0	1,850	5.4
Central	23.9	26.2	6.4	33.8	6.3	3.3	100.0	1,766	5.0
Greater Accra	14.4	23.7	3.9	38.0	10.5	9.6	100.0	3,321	7.3
Volta	28.3	29.5	5.2	30.2	4.4	2.4	100.0	1,480	3.6
Eastern	20.6	27.2	7.0	36.5	5.4	3.3	100.0	1,725	5.3
Ashanti	18.5	26.8	4.7	39.9	6.6	3.5	100.0	3,340	5.8
Brong Ahafo	31.3	28.0	4.8	29.4	4.6	2.0	100.0	1,506	3.3
Northern	58.9	25.4	1.9	10.5	2.3	1.0	100.0	1,569	0.0
Upper East	44.8	32.0	5.2	13.7	3.0	1.3	100.0	731	0.6
Upper West	53.3	27.8	3.2	11.6	1.8	2.2	100.0	490	0.0
<b>Wealth quintile</b>									
Lowest	52.1	31.1	3.7	12.2	0.8	0.1	100.0	3,277	0.0
Second	36.1	31.5	5.7	25.2	1.4	0.2	100.0	3,548	2.1
Middle	23.3	28.3	6.2	36.6	4.5	1.1	100.0	3,716	4.7
Fourth	14.5	24.8	4.8	43.0	9.1	3.8	100.0	3,717	6.7
Highest	7.8	17.7	3.2	42.2	14.7	14.4	100.0	3,520	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17,778</b>	<b>4.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> Completed 6th grade at the primary level

<sup>2</sup> Completed 6th grade at the secondary level

Source: Ghana Demographic Health Survey, 2014

#### 2.4.1.2 Educational level of male population

The analysis on the male dynamics shows slightly better proportions relating to access to education. Table 14 shows that 18% of males had never been to school, which is about six percentage points higher than that of the female population. Thirty-one percent of males had had some primary education or had completed primary education; 44% had had some secondary education, and 8% had had more than a secondary education. Similar to females, the proportion of males with no education was higher in the older ages. Twenty-five percent of males in rural areas had no education, compared with 10% in urban areas.

The regional level analysis shows patterns for males as similar to those observed for females. Higher proportions of males had never been to school in the three northern regions (Northern, 44%; Upper West, 41%; and Upper East, 32%) compared with 20% or less of males in other regions. The percentage of males with no education is strongly associated with wealth; those in the lowest quintile are the most likely to have no education (385), compared with only 55 of males in the richest households.

▪ **Out of school context**

The analysis as shown in Table 14 indicates a slightly higher proportion of the male population age 6 to 9 years who were out of school (43.6%) compared to the female population. On the other threshold, a slight decline is observed among the population who had had some level of primary education but dropped along the way (56.2%) compared to the female population at the same age. About two-thirds (59.8%) had also had some level of primary education, meaning, they had started primary but had had to drop for one reason or the other and did not complete their primary education (dimension 2). The male population age 10 to 14 also recorded almost the same proportion (4.9%) as compared to females (4.8 %) but showed a very high percentage in relation to those who had had some level of primary education but dropped along the line (70.1%).

**Table 14: Educational attainment of the male household population**

Background characteristic	No education	Some primary	Completed primary <sup>1</sup>	Some secondary	Completed secondary <sup>2</sup>	More than secondary	Total	Number	Median years completed
<b>Age</b>									
6-9	43.6	56.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,292	0.0
10-14	4.9	70.1	8.9	16.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	2,700	3.6
15-19	3.2	18.0	8.0	63.9	6.0	0.9	100.0	1,814	7.1
20-24	6.1	8.5	3.9	40.9	32.0	8.6	100.0	1,366	9.0
25-29	11.0	8.7	3.3	33.6	22.6	20.7	100.0	1,255	8.9
30-34	12.0	8.4	4.3	41.1	16.0	18.2	100.0	1,143	8.6
35-39	14.2	8.5	3.6	44.2	15.8	13.8	100.0	1,047	8.5
40-44	15.4	8.0	3.9	54.9	7.2	10.6	100.0	920	8.9
45-49	19.6	7.6	3.6	55.6	3.3	10.3	100.0	754	9.2
50-54	21.1	10.1	1.7	53.8	1.6	11.7	100.0	643	9.2
55-59	25.8	7.7	2.9	49.0	2.4	12.1	100.0	486	9.2
60-64	28.2	5.3	3.5	48.8	2.1	12.3	100.0	511	9.1
65+	43.7	8.3	1.1	37.4	1.2	8.2	100.0	837	3.0
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	10.3	23.2	3.6	39.5	11.9	11.5	100.0	7,763	8.2
Rural	24.5	30.5	5.1	31.3	4.9	3.7	100.0	8,008	4.1
<b>Region</b>									
Western	13.0	25.3	4.8	40.3	10.4	6.2	100.0	1,580	7.2
Central	15.3	26.7	5.5	37.8	7.3	7.3	100.0	1,456	6.4
Greater Accra	7.7	23.1	3.4	38.8	14.0	12.9	100.0	3,025	8.3
Volta	15.8	30.7	4.6	37.6	5.7	5.6	100.0	1,347	5.6
Eastern	13.4	27.6	5.2	40.2	6.9	6.7	100.0	1,537	6.4
Ashanti	11.7	24.1	5.1	42.4	8.5	8.1	100.0	2,792	7.8
Brong Ahafo	19.6	29.4	4.1	35.2	6.9	4.9	100.0	1,344	5.2
Northern	44.3	28.9	2.4	16.0	3.8	4.6	100.0	1,555	0.5
Upper East	31.6	38.8	5.3	16.3	3.9	3.9	100.0	678	2.1
Upper West	41.3	30.3	2.7	16.4	4.2	5.1	100.0	458	1.0
<b>Wealth quintile</b>									
Lowest	37.7	34.9	4.0	20.3	2.2	0.8	100.0	3,252	1.4
Second	22.0	31.9	6.7	34.0	3.8	1.6	100.0	3,104	4.4
Middle	14.4	28.1	5.1	40.2	8.0	4.2	100.0	3,034	6.2
Fourth	8.7	23.1	3.8	45.0	11.6	7.7	100.0	3,081	8.2
Highest	4.5	16.8	2.2	38.0	15.8	22.6	100.0	3,301	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>15,771</b>	<b>5.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Completed 6th grade at the primary level

<sup>2</sup> Completed 6th grade at the secondary level

Source: Ghana Demographic Health Survey, 2014



## 2.4.2 School Attendance Ratios – estimation of OOS percentages

---In providing further evidence to support the out of school phenomenon, the 2014 GDHS gathered data on school attendance for the population age 3 to 24 that allows the calculation of net attendance ratios<sup>9</sup> (NARs) and gross attendance ratios<sup>10</sup> (GARs). The analysis however, focuses on only the net attendance ratio since it provides the age-specific levels categories.

Table 15 presents data on the NAR for the household population by level of schooling and sex, place of residence, region, and wealth quintile. The findings show that about 69.6% of children aged 6 to 11 who should be attending primary school are currently doing so, **showing an out of school population of about 30% of children.** The gender disaggregation shows no differences between the proportion of males and females who are out of school indicating no notable gender gap in school attendance for the Ghanaian school-age population who should be attending school at a given level. The NAR is, however, much lower, at the secondary school level: 39% of students age 12 to 17 who should be attending secondary school are in school (NAR), a slight decrease from 42% in 2008. **This shows about an out of school population of about 60 percent at the secondary level (lower and upper secondary).**

The locality analysis shows the NAR at both the primary and secondary levels is lower in rural areas than in urban areas; in rural areas the NAR at the primary school level is 66% compared to 74 in urban areas. Similarly, the NAR in rural areas at the secondary school level is 32 percent, compared with 46% in urban areas. Regional differences are also pronounced. The primary school NAR is lowest in the Upper West region (64%), and the secondary school NAR is lowest in the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions (30% each).

Over the years, it has been established that a strong relationship exists between household economic status and school attendance at all levels. This is reflected in the findings with the primary school net attendance ratio increasing from 61 to 64 percent among students from households in the lowest two wealth quintiles to 81 percent among students from the richest households. Similarly, the NAR for secondary school rises from 25% among students in the lowest wealth quintile to 50 to 54% among those in the top two wealth quintiles (Table 15).

**Table 15: School attendance ratios**

Background characteristics	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
<b>Primary (6-11 years)</b>			
<b>Total</b>	69.6	69.6	69.6
<b>Locality</b>			
Urban	74.5	74.3	74.4
Rural	65.8	65.8	65.8
<b>Wealth status</b>			
Lowest	62.5	64.8	63.6
Second	63.4	58.1	60.8
Middle	70.0	71.5	70.8
Fourth	78.4	76.8	77.5
Highest	79.9	82.0	80.9
<b>Secondary (12 – 17)</b>			

<sup>9</sup> The NAR for primary school is the percentage of the primary-school-age (6 to 11 years) population that is attending primary school. The NAR for secondary school is the measure of the secondary-school-age (12 to 17 years) population that is attending secondary school

<sup>10</sup> By definition, the NAR cannot exceed 100 percent.

Total	38.4	38.6	38.5
<b>Locality</b>			
Urban	45.5	45.5	45.5
Rural	32.5	32.0	32.3
<b>Wealth status</b>			
Lowest	24.9	25.0	25.0
Second	30.8	28.7	29.8
Middle	40.9	37.8	39.3
Fourth	46.3	53.8	50.3
Highest	58.8	49.5	53.9

Source: Ghana Demographic Health Survey, 2014

## 2.5 Analysis based on EMIS Data

The most current EMIS data (2018/19), provides details on the Net Enrolment Ratio which is a percentage of the age-specific population that is attending school at a particular level. This is used to estimate the out of school phenomenon. Table 16 shows that of the 1,609,130, population aged 4 to 5, about 1,187,817 of them are currently enrolled in school, indicating about 421,313 are out of school. This represents about **26%** of the population of that age group.

The net attendance rate at the primary level, however, shows a higher proportion (87.3%) attending school. Based on this, the OOSC population age 6 to 11 years is estimated to be 13%, which is higher than all the estimates provided across the various datasets.

Analysis of both KG and Primary enrolment data shows that the enrolment figures at the Primary level are more than twice the enrolment figures at the KG level. This runs through all the different enrolment indices and points to the fact that a lot of children skip the KG level of education and go straight into primary one, forfeiting the basics at the KG level. Evidence from literature points to high proportions of this phenomenon occurring in rural communities where children are enrolled in school later in their development lives (UNICEF 2012). This phenomenon is not a healthy development for a country that seeks to achieve higher levels of learning outcomes.

The net attendance ratio at the JHS (lower secondary) level shows that less than half of the population age 12 to 14 years is actually in school (48.4%) – indicating over a million children aged 12 to 14 years are out of school. This figure is similar to what was recorded by MICS (2017/18) but falls short of the UIS projection.

Table 16: Net enrolment ratio – 2018/19

District	Population	Enrollment	Out of school <sup>11</sup>	% Attending
KG (4-5)	1,609,130	1,187,817	<b>421,313</b>	73.8%
Primary (6-11)	4,285,464	3,739,140	<b>546,324</b>	87.3
JHS (12-14)	1,945,752	942,616	<b>1,003,136</b>	48.4

Source: EMIS data, 2018/19

<sup>11</sup> Projected out of school figures

## CHAPTER THREE

### SUPPLY BARRIERS TO THE OUT OF SCHOOL PHENOMENON

#### 3.0 Introduction

The barriers affecting children's education in Ghana are diverse. The primary barriers to education are classified under two broad categories - demand side and supply side barriers. This section highlights some of the supply barriers to education in Ghana.

#### 3.1 Supply Trends

The main supply drivers identified in the literature comprise quantity of schools/access to schools provided by government to meet the gross/net enrolment targets, trained-teacher to pupil population, teacher deployment and related issues, and retention of teachers in very remote and hard-to-reach areas.

##### 3.1.1 Number of schools across levels – infrastructure

The literature reveals that the population growth rate, and increased school-age children has far exceeded the rate at which Ghana can supply schooling to match the demand, particularly when considering quality standards to ensure learning outcomes. This has resulted in the expansion of private schools and other approaches such as complementary basic education and other flexible models of schooling to serve remote rural areas and to reach marginalized populations (Casely-Hayford et al, 2018; UNESCO, 2016).

##### 3.1.1.1 Schools by type of education

Over the years, the expansion of access to education in terms of infrastructure has not kept pace with population growth. The EMIS data provides evidence on the yearly expansion in numbers of new schools. The average percentage increase from one year to the next has always hovered around 1.3 to 1.5 percent for public schools. The analysis as presented in Table 17 shows the number of current schools in Ghana by level and by type. The numbers show lower access to school infrastructure at the KG level and the JHS level. This has implications for the out of school phenomenon – which reflects in the higher out of school numbers as recorded in the analysis done using the various datasets.

Table 17: Table 1: Number of Primary Schools by Type of Education, 2016/17 - 2017/18

Level	Type	
	Public	Private
KG	4,821	10,452
Primary	15,291	10,196
JHS	11,131	6,491

Source: EMIS Data, 2018/19



### 3.1.2 Trained Teacher gap at school and district levels

Trained teacher deployment in countries across sub-Saharan African-- particularly to rural deprived and extremely remote rural areas-- remains one of the greatest supply challenges (UNICEF, 2019; 2012). In Ghana, many trained teachers do not accept postings to rural and under-resourced communities (Associates for Change and Crown Agents, 2017; USAID, 2018). As a result, these communities do not receive qualified teachers. Teachers who accept postings to these rural areas are usually untrained, 'pupil' teachers (USAID, 2018). The Early Grade Reading Assessment conducted in Ghana in 2015 showed that only two percent of children in grade two could read fluently at their level. The majority of those who could not read fluently were found in rural and under-resourced areas (MOE, 2015). This underscores the challenges faced by children in rural and marginalized communities as a result of the 'teacher gap' and related issues.

The findings from the latest study on teacher rationalisation and deployment by USAID (2019) indicate some concerning trends, particularly in the north regions where teachers are often unwilling to serve. These findings, along with other key education quality indicators by the ESPR (2018), continue to show disparities in the north compared to the south of Ghana in terms of education trained teacher deployment.

#### ▪ Teacher Gaps based on EMIS Data

Table 18 illustrates the teacher gap situation in public schools based on the current EMIS data (2018/19). The findings suggest that a total of 38.5% of trained teachers were at the nursery level out of the 480 recorded and of that percentage, 46.9% were males and 37.6% were female. At the KG level, the table indicates 85.3 % as the total number of trained teachers and 87.6% as number of trained teachers at the primary level. At JHS level, it was recorded that 94.2% of the teachers were trained out of the 92,828 teachers recorded. Though the figures point to some level of improvement in the pupil to trained teacher ratio, much is still needed to close the gap.

Table 18: Teacher Gaps – Public schools only

Item/Level	Total	Male	Female	% Female
<b>Nursery</b>				
Total	480	49	431	89.8%
Trained	185	23	162	87.6%
% Trained	<b>38.5%</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	<b>37.6%</b>	
<b>KG</b>				
Total	40,076	6,486	33,590	83.8%
Trained	34,166	5,441	28,725	84.1%
% Trained	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>85.5%</b>	
<b>Primary</b>				
Total	110,058	61,356	48,702	44.3%
Trained	96,391	51,766	44,625	46.3%
% Trained	<b>87.6%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>	<b>91.6%</b>	
<b>JHS</b>				
Total	92,828	65,186	27,642	29.8%
Trained	87,428	60,810	26,618	30.4%
% Trained	<b>94.2%</b>	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>96.3%</b>	

## **EMIS Data: 2018/19**

### **3.1.2 Book to Pupil ratio's (EMIS and ESR 2018)**

The Education Sector Progress Report (2018) and the EMIS data (2018/19) indicate key supply gaps in textbook supply. The reports show that textbook supply was inadequate at all levels – KG, primary and JHS. For the core subjects, the evidence showed that approximately 50 English textbooks, 60 mathematics textbooks, and 50 science textbooks were available per 100 pupils. The reports further show that the public schools have a book-to-pupil ratio of 30 English textbooks, 40 mathematics textbooks, and 40 science textbooks per 100 pupils. Private schools, on the other hand, have 100 pupils who share 40 English textbooks, 40 mathematics textbooks, and 40 science textbooks at the primary level. Similarly, the ratio of books to students was low at the junior high school level during the 2017/2018 academic year. According to these two reports, students in public junior high schools share 40 English, 40 mathematics, and 40 science textbooks for every 100 students. That is every 25 students share one book at a public JHS. On the other side, the statistics from the private JHS indicate that every 100 students received 50 English textbooks, 40 math textbooks, and 40 science textbooks. The limited access to the textbooks at all levels contributes to the out of school situation in Ghana and ultimately impacts learning outcomes for those who do not drop out.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DEMAND BARRIERS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Demand barriers to basic education are mostly rooted in socio-cultural norms such as early marriage, household chores allocated to girls and cultural beliefs that hinder parents' provision of education to girls. Additionally, deprivation and poverty prevail, making it impossible for parents to cope with the costs of catering for their wards. This section highlights the demand side barriers that hinder the children from accessing education in Ghana.

#### **4.2 Social cultural practices**

Evidence from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School children (OOSC) 2011 Ghana country study indicates that socio-cultural barriers have been noted as the causes of exclusions identified. In fact, several studies have identified socio-cultural practices as being one of driving factors that result in high numbers of out of school children in Ghana. These practices affect enrolment, transition, completion and retention of marginalized and vulnerable groups including girls, children with disabilities, and orphans amongst others.

##### **a. Fosterage**

Specifically, the OOSC report (2011) reports that a dominant socio-cultural practice prominent among rural and deprived areas in Ghana is the system of 'giving out' younger children to other families to serve as labour often in exchange for money. For some families it is common practice to give out these children and receive a one-time payment. The OOSC case study of Ghana notes that children in fosterage situations are 7% less likely to enrol in or access basic school in comparison to children staying with their biological families. The likelihood of children in fosterage completing primary and secondary school was 28% and 19% respectively. Thus, there is a direct relation between the family a child lives with (biological or foster) and their access to formal education.

##### **b. Early Marriage**

Another key socio-cultural practice which remains a barrier to access to education for children, specifically in Ghana, is early marriage (UNICEF 2012; Casely-Hayford 2018). In the practise of early marriage, parents withdraw their daughters from school to give them out into marriage. Several studies have pointed that this practice is a driving factor for girls who are out of school and those who are at the risk of dropping out. This practice stems from parents' inability to cater for their daughters and sometimes from cultural norms and societal pressures. Since girls at this age are still under their parents' care they have to adhere to their parents' wishes that they get married despite its negative effect on their education. Girls between the ages of 12 to 15 years and at the JHS level have been found to be the target group for the practice of early marriage.

In Amoako and Utazi's (2019) study on early marriage, the authors examined early marriage and union in various locations around Ghana. The article showed that early marriages vary by area and are influenced by cultural norms and economic circumstances. According to the findings, approximately 7% of females marry before the age of 18. The figure was highest (19%) in northern Ghana's Gushie district and lowest (2.7%) in districts such as Brong Ahafo's Jaman North district. The authors discovered that early marriages are more prevalent in the Northern, Upper West, and Volta regions than in other parts of the country. Again, the study discovered

that in 50% of districts in the northern areas, one in every ten females under the age of 18 is given up for marriage.

Furthermore, other studies have shown that education plays a significant role in increasing the average marriage age of adolescent girls. For one, Boahen and Yamauchi (2018) conducted a quasi-experiment study where they compared women who benefited from the FCUBE to women who never enrolled in the FCUBE program. They used the 1998, 2003, 2008, and 2014 Ghana DHS data for this study. The study assessed the influence of FCUBE on early marriage and fertility. They discovered that while the program does prevent early marriage, the impact varies by geography and income class.

### **4.3 Teenage Pregnancy**

The literature indicates that the high levels of drop-outs among children, especially girls in Ghana, is related to teenage pregnancy-- a recurring issue in the rural areas. This happens either due to pressure from their peers or transactional sex where, in return for funds, young girls have sex with older men or boys (UNICEF, 2012). Reports from Ghana's Demographic and Health Survey show that, in 2014, 14% of girls between the ages of 15 to 19 years got pregnant and gave birth regardless of their school going status. According to a case study on girls who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy, teenage pregnancy is met with disapproval from society; however, it is the girls, not the boys, who are mostly forced to forgo their education (Britwum et al., 2017).

### **4.4 Poverty levels**

Rural poverty is closely linked to the disparities in access to education and learning achievement in Ghana. Students from poor rural households and urban informal settlements often battle with hunger, stigma, internal exclusion, and other factors which negatively affect their learning experiences (UNICEF, 2019). In many rural areas in Ghana, poor parents cannot afford to enrol all their children in school because they need additional labour to supplement family income. As a result, families have to make decisions on the number of their children to enrol in school. (Casely-Hayford, Ghartey, Agyei-Quartey 2017).



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1 Institutional and Policy Challenges and Direction**

##### **5.1.1 Enabling policy environment**

The Complementary Basic Education (CBE) programme was designed based on the School for Life model to provide a complementary approach to providing access to education for disadvantaged children in Ghana. This was to provide opportunities for children who had never been to school and those who dropped out of schools between the ages of eight and 14 as a fast-track approach to providing basic education to overaged children and facilitate a smooth transition into the formal school at primary 3 or 4 in the formal school. The out of school programmes have been implemented without a proper state guideline for its regulation since the 1990s with the shepherded schools by Action Aid, School for Life model supported by the Danish, the Education Quality for All programme which adopted the SfL model with sponsorship from USAID between 2004 and 2009, and DfID (FCDO)/USAID supported CBE from 2012 through to 2018. As a result, the Government of Ghana in collaboration with the British Government represented by the Department for International Development (DfID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided support to the Ghana Government for the implementation of CBE. Thus, as part of the process, the Government's capacity was built to roll out the CBE programme across Ghana, in order to provide education for out of school children.

To regulate the implementation of CBE in Ghana, the Government came out with the CBE Policy in 2016 and reviewed and updated it in 2020. The new policy extended the age bracket of CBE learners from ages 8 to 14 to ages 8 to 16 in order to ensure that disadvantaged children aged 15 and 16 were provided with basic education. The CBE programme has provided a structured approach to the management and implementation of the programme. The policy provides structured programmes of learning outside the formal school system with flexible learning factors such as flexible schedules and timetables as well as learner-centered, skill-based and often accelerated functional literacy curricula. CBE seeks to support three types of children - children with no access to school, children who have dropped out of school, and intra-cycle or seasonal dropouts. The policy provides a Steering Committee that has oversight and provides policy direction for the CBE programme implementation. Again, the coming into force of the policy in 2015 compelled the Steering Committee, chaired by the Chief Director, to make it mandatory for all CBE programme related activities to be guided by the policy. Hence the Qatar Fund REACH Project and the STAGE projects were required to follow the CBE Policy guiding principles for implementation.

The Basic Education Division (BED) under the Ghana Education Service (GES) played a vital role at national and district levels. However, with the passing of the Complementary Education Act by the Cabinet in 2021, the role of the GES has now shifted to the Complementary Education Agency as the main agency responsible for managing the complementary education programme on behalf of the government. The CBE Policy must provide a clear direction regarding whose responsibility it is to facilitate the delivery of CBE in Ghana. Prior to the Complementary Basic Education Act, the GES was tasked by the policy to work closely with the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED)/CEA to implement the programme through the

establishment of a management unit at the national and district desk offices, with School Management Committees/Local Committees. In addition, the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) were provided with the oversight role over the delivery of CBE in their respective MMDAs as done for the formal education system. Such a clear structure for overseeing the delivery of CBE at the local and district levels has not yet been established by the Complementary Education Agency and is greatly needed.

## **5.2 Disabling Challenges**

### **5.2.1 No budget for OOSC children earmarked**

The MoE's CBE policy that guides the management and implementation of the programme committed in 2018 to providing the equivalent of one percent of Basic Education budget annually to the programme implementation. CBE has been incorporated into the Ghanaian government's Education Strategic Plan (2018-2030). The Education Strategic Plan (2018-2030) makes provision for increasing enrolment of OOSC in the CBE programme over the period, with annual funding commitments to cover the cost of a cycle's implementation.<sup>12</sup> The policy currently places government at the centre to facilitate the delivery of CBE, with a commitment of an annual budget equivalent to one percent of the basic education budget, and partnership with Non-State Actors (NSAs) for implementation and financing. However, the Government, even though it made provision in the 2019 national budget to fund CBE Cycle 7 with 8 million Ghana cedis, could not do so due to prioritisation at the GES level. Instead, the Education Outcome Funds (EOF), which is a component of the Ghana Accountability and Outcome Funding (GALOP), is earmarked to support improvements in access and learning in every district and in and around the lowest-performing 10,000 schools, including programmes for OOSC in selected districts across the country. In other words, the EOF was selected as an option of funding OOSC. The EOF process targets about 75,000 OOSC in areas of Ghana with high absentee and dropout rates, in districts historically deprived and known for deficiencies in educational infrastructure. Targeting selected communities in Greater Accra and Kumasi Metropolitan districts is a way of curbing urban OOSC. In addition, approximately 120,000 students already enrolled in selected GALOP-beneficiary schools will benefit from strengthened interventions supported by service providers.

## **5.3 Analysis of partner AEPs**

This section highlights key dimensions and achievements of the three key partner AEPs<sup>13</sup> working with AfC on this project in Ghana. The areas of analysis centered on enrollment and transition levels across different cycles.

### **5.3.1 CBE program under USAID/DFID**

The population of primary school age OOSC stood at about 32% in 2003, decreased to 18% in 2014 but increased to 19% at the last multi-indicator cluster study (MICS) in 2018<sup>14</sup>. Based on a simulation-based approach (called rate of change), the results show a steady decline from 540,000 in 2010 down to just over 420,000 in 2020.<sup>15</sup> Since the introduction of the SfL model in

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<sup>12</sup> In 2018 the cost was estimated at GHS8 million per annum

<sup>13</sup> Afrikids, SfL, GILLBT

<sup>14</sup> GSS (2018): Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2017/2018), Survey Findings Report. Accra; GSS (2003) and GSS (2014) Ghana Demographic Household Survey; and MoE (2016) OOSC Incidence Study Report.

<sup>15</sup> MoE (2016) OOSC Incidence Study Report.

1995, the CBE programme has contributed significantly to improving access to education for disadvantaged OOSC. The CBE programme has been implemented mainly in the northern regions (Northern, Upper East and Upper West) of Ghana, providing opportunities for OOSC to undergo a fast-track programme for nine months and then to be integrated into the formal education system.

The CBE Programme established very good results throughout the implementation from 1995 through to 2020. The programme was able to achieve, and even in some cases exceed, its outputs, outcomes and impact indicators. The implementation had a total of 533,352 learners enrolled with over 90% of the learners transitioning into the formal education system. This comprises 290,037 learners under the GoG/FCDO/USAID funded period of 2012-2020; 93,315 under Plan Ghana REACH Project from 2015-2020; and 150,000 by School for Life under USAID and DANIDA support between 1995 and 2012. Other on-going interventions such as the Strategic Approaches to Girls Education (STAGE) project, with 16,794 enrolment, targets 8,025 formal track and 8,769 non-formal track learners. The programme as of March 2021 had a successful transition rate of 69.5% of the total formal track enrolment<sup>16</sup>. The average literacy rate at midline stood at 29.3% as compared to 11.2 percent at baseline; and the average numeracy score was 52% as compared to 30.7% at baseline. In both cases there were percentage gains increase of 18.1 percent and 21.3 percent for both literacy and numeracy respectively. Life skills had a 4.5 percentage point increase from 56% at baseline to 60.5% at midline. There was also a reduction in the number of formal track girls who were involved in employment from 8.0% at baseline to 4.3% at midline. The reason for this might be due to the project beneficiaries' decision to give up working for their household in order to focus on schooling. These results and milestones were made possible as a result of the strong partnerships and support from all stakeholders including communities, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), Development Partners (DPs) and government. The learning outcomes showed improvement in numeracy and literacy over the nine-month cycle of learning. About 91% of learners demonstrated gains in basic numeracy and 87% also had gains in basic literacy<sup>17</sup>.

Generally, the programme's targets for increasing female involvement were exceeded in all areas during the final cycle of the Crown Agents' implementation, especially with excellent results on girls' participation in the programme at 54.16% and female facilitator participation at 30%.<sup>18</sup> This exceeded the programme's target of 20% female facilitators. In addition, the implementing partners' (IPs) gender action plan completion reports provided full feedback on the gender strategies which were effective in reaching CBE targets and outputs.

### **5.3.2 Performance by Education Innovators (EIs)**

Over all, the three EIs (*Afrikids, GILLBT, and School for Life CBE programmes*), enrolled a total of 90,984 (31.4%) out of the 290,037- enrolment achievement of the CBE programme in the Talensi, Nabdam, Bongo, Bawku, Pusiga, Karaga, Gushiegu, Saboba, Yendi, Central Gonja, Mion, Sagnarigu, Savelugu, Wa West, Mamprugu Muagduri, Tolon, Kumbungu and Bunkpurugu Nansuan districts in the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Savanna and the North East regions. Out of this, the three EIs successfully transitioned 80,211 (81.2%) of their total enrolment. AfriKids transitioned 15,929 (91.6%) of their total enrolment of 16,657 into the

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<sup>16</sup> Formal girls transitioned to school in January 2021, Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education External Evaluation Report

<sup>17</sup> DFID (2018). Cycle 5 End line Report, Accra

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.kantar.com/public>

formal school with most learners integrated into primary 3 between 2013 and 2021. AfriKids again took part in the STAGE programme by enrolling 4,011 girls in the formal track and transitioned 3,142 (78.3%) into the formal school system. The non-formal track had an enrolment of 533 with 513 (96.2%) of the learners completing training. School for Life also enrolled a total of 60,344 and transitioned a total of 51,819 (85.9%) between 2010 and 2018. GILLBT transitioned 12,463 (89.1%) out of a total enrolment of 13,983.

### 5.3.2.1 Performance of AfriKids CBE programme

The analysis in Table 19 shows about 16,657 children were enrolled in the AfriKids programme during Cycles 1–5. The majority of the total number were females (39%). Males outnumbered females (58%) in cycle 1, but the female population rose in subsequent cycles. In cycle 5, the gender difference became more noticeable, with females becoming the majority (59%). Again, the statistics indicated that not all children enrolled were able to transition. At the program's beginning, around 77% of enrolled children were able to transition, with the majority being boys (51%). Around 96% of students were able to enter the formal school system, the greatest rate among the three innovators.

**Table 19: Performance of AfriKids CBE programme**

Education Innovator	CBE Cycle	Enrolment				Total	Transition				Percentage Transitioned	
		Boys	%	Girls	%		Boys	%	Girls	%		%
AfriKids	1	822	58%	594	42%	1416	552	51%	539	49%	1091	77%
	2	1083	46%	1293	54%	2376	994	45%	1208	55%	2202	93%
	3	2739	49%	2876	51%	5615	2699	49%	2819	51%	5518	98%
	4	2273	46%	2627	54%	4900	2234	46%	2587	54%	4821	98%
	5	965	41%	1385	59%	2350	945	41%	1352	59%	2297	98%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>7,882</b>	47%	<b>8,775</b>	53%	<b>16,657</b>	<b>7,424</b>	47%	<b>8,505</b>	53%	<b>15,929</b>	96%

Source: AfriKids Annual Report, 2020

### 5.3.2.2 Performance of GILLBT CBE programme

Analysis of the GILLBT-managed CBE programme shows a higher proportion of females across all the cycles except for cycle 4 where there were more males compared to females. Conversely, there was an equal representation of boys and girls in cycle 3. In comparison to transition data, the majority of cycles had an equal number of children transitioning from CBE to formal education. As shown in Table 20, approximately 50% of boys and girls transitioned throughout cycles 3,4,5. At the end of cycle 5, there is a total of 100% transition. Cycle 1 had the smallest proportion of transitioned pupils (85%).

**Table 20: Performance of GILLBT CBE programme**

Education Innovator	CBE Cycle	Enrolment				Total	Transition				Percentage Transitioned	
		Boys	%	Girls	%		Boys	%	Girls	%	No.	%
GILLBT	1	745	45%	920	55%	1665	616	43%	804	57%	1420	85%
	2	3200	49%	3366	51%	6566	2907	49%	3018	51%	5925	90%
	3	2000	50%	2008	50%	4008	1750	50%	1722	50%	3472	87%
	4	530	52%	487	48%	1017	460	50%	459	50%	919	90%
	5	366	50%	361	50%	727	366	50%	361	50%	727	100%

<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>6,841</b>	49%	<b>7,142</b>	51%	<b>13,983</b>	<b>6,099</b>	49%	<b>6,364</b>	51%	<b>12,463</b>	89%
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Source: GILLBT Data, 2021

### 5.3.2.3 Performance School for Life CBE programme

In all, the SfL programme enrolled a total of 60,344 children comprising a slightly higher number of boys (30,774) compared to girls (29,570). With the exception of cycles 4 and 5, female enrolment was generally low across the other cycles. On the other hand, the transition rate was modest (86%) in comparison to Afrikids (96%). Girls' transition rates were also low over the first three cycles of the CBE program. Cycle 2 had a low transition rate in comparison to other cycles. The majority of transitions occurred during cycle 5 (Table 21).

Table 21: Performance School for Life CBE programme

Education Innovator	CBE Cycle	Enrolment				Total	Transition				Percentage Transitioned	
		Boys	%	Girls	%		Boys	%	Girls	%		%
SfL	<b>2010</b>	<b>5207</b>	52%	<b>4793</b>	48%	<b>10000</b>	<b>4160</b>	51%	<b>3978</b>	49%	8138	81%
	1	5201	52%	4799	48%	10000	5201	55%	4202	45%	9403	94%
	2	6552	53%	5738	47%	12290	5128	53%	4636	47%	9764	79%
	3	6422	51%	6282	49%	12704	5772	51%	5448	49%	11220	88%
	4	5518	49%	5832	51%	11350	4601	49%	4812	51%	9413	83%
	5	1874	47%	2126	53%	4000	1820	47%	2061	53%	3881	97%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>30,774</b>	51%	<b>29,570</b>	49%	<b>60,344</b>	<b>26,682</b>	51%	<b>25,137</b>	49%	<b>51,819</b>	86%

Source: School for Life Data, 2021

## 5.4 Effectiveness of the strategies of the EIs

The AEP strategies have been effective for providing basic literacy and numeracy as well as life skills for disadvantaged children in hard-to-reach communities to help integrate them into the formal school system. Among other factors, is the huge contribution to the gross enrolment rate of 119.9 percent through the integration of graduates of the AEP into the formal school system<sup>19</sup>. Many parents and community members in the northern, Upper East and Upper West regions indicated their preference for the CBE programme over the formal school because they believed children are able to read in a shorter period compared to those enrolled in the formal school system<sup>20</sup>. This is largely a result of the use of local language in teaching and learning on the CBE programme which makes it easier to transfer basic literacy skills to learning to read in English. It is also evident that the STAGE project has contributed to the reduction in the proportion of formal school learners who engaged in work during school period from 8% at baseline to 4.3% at midline in 2021.

### 5.4.1 Transition rates

Transition rates for AEP graduates are high, but some challenges such as non-existence of schools in deprived communities, inadequate school infrastructure, teacher gaps, over aged children, dropouts and non-attendance continue to confront the communities and the education sector. It is important that other innovations and interventions be explored to complement the

<sup>19</sup> CBE Management Unit Progress Report 2017

<sup>20</sup> Crown Agents (2018). Parental and Learner Choice Study

AEP programmes in order to guarantee the reduction of OOSC/disadvantaged girls. Some of these interventions include the continuous enrolment drive/right age enrolment, establishment of formal schools in deprived communities beyond a 3 to 5 km radius to the nearest public school, and scholarship interventions for children at risk of dropping out. Again, it is important to take a critical look at community and parental engagement and livelihoods in going forward. This will help to improve parents' incomes and to reduce the use of children for work. It is also critical to take a look at the CBE curriculum so as to reflect the formal school new curriculum as well as improving the delivery of life skills in the AEP programmes as initiated by the STAGE project.

## CHAPTER SIX

### OVERALL FINDINGS CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This section details the overall key findings in relation to the various themes. Key areas of focus comprise the issues relating to the out of school context based on the different datasets, and the supply and demand barriers informing the out of school numbers at all levels including the programme level. Further, this section provides a few recommendations going forward.

#### 6.2 Conclusions: What the data tells us about the numbers of out of school children in Ghana

At the international level, statistics from UNESCO shows that in Ghana at the *primary* level, over 250,000 children are out of school. Nigeria had the highest out of school numbers, with over 9 million being out of school while Ghana had about one million.

At the regional level, the highest levels of OOSC were recorded in the Northern region by the WIDE while the Greater Accra had the least children being out of school. MICS and DHS data has shown that 12% of children are unlikely to attend school while 4% of children are unlikely to complete school at the primary level. MICS 2017/18 data revealed that the out of school situation usually occurs at the upper secondary level, where 25% of children fall into that category. A gender disaggregation of the data shows that at the primary and lower secondary levels there more of out of school boys than girls, but the inverse is true at the upper secondary level. In spite of the introduction of the FCUBE program, 7% of primary aged children account for out of school children in Ghana, and this has largely been attributed to poverty and deprivation. At the lower secondary school level, the rate for out of school children was revealed to be 7% with low net attendance. Using the five dimensions of exclusion, the numbers of boys and girls who are likely not to have received early childhood education are about equal. Regarding children who have never received primary level education, the proportion of males was more than that of females.

The 2021 census data showed that over 50% of children aged three years and above had either never attended school or had dropped out. For males, a higher number had attended and dropped out as compared to those who had never attended. For girls, however, a larger number had never attended school as compared to those who had dropped out. The largest concentration of children who had never attended school was found in three northern regions while the highest dropout rates were recorded in the Greater Accra region.

#### 6.3 Supply trends and barriers

The main supply drivers identified in the literature include the quantity of schools/access to schools provided by government to meet the gross/net enrolment targets, ratio of trained-teacher to pupil population, teacher deployment and related issues, and retention of teachers in very remote and hard-to-reach areas. Between 2016 and 2018, there was a 4.8% increase in the number of public and private primary schools in Ghana. Studies have identified teacher deployment as a significant factor affecting supply barriers to access to education in Ghana. This directly impacts the number of trained teachers posted in the various regions, resulting in teacher gaps across several areas in the country. This is especially true in the northern region where teachers are usually unwilling to serve. On a national level, the proportion of professionally trained teachers is increasing, thereby improving the prospects of PTTR in

Ghana. However, in densely populated urban areas and remote areas, actual teacher shortages are prevalent.

#### **6.4 Demand Barriers**

Exclusion to access to education can be attributed to a number of demand factors in Ghana. Notable among these are socio-cultural practices which are drivers for the high out of school numbers affecting enrolment, retention and completion rates of learners. These factors significantly affect vulnerable groups, especially girls and children with disabilities.

Studies have shown that education of females has a strong relation with marriage and vice versa. In households where the women have had a good level of education, they are less likely to allow their children to become victims of early or child marriage. Additionally, the higher the level of education of a female child, the higher the age of her getting married becomes. Also, the poor economic situation of households drives families to give out their young female daughters in marriage because of their inability to cater for them. This is especially common in the northern region of Ghana.

Another barrier to school attendance is the practice of fosterage, where households give out their children to other families often in exchange for some form of payment. Children in fosterage are often given menial jobs or serve as cheap labour for the families they are given to. This greatly interferes with their enrolment and school attendance. Even in cases where the fostered children are able to stay in school, the jobs they engage in, like hawking and farming, negatively affects] their academic performance.

Further, for decades, teenage pregnancy has been a factor hindering girls in Ghana from receiving education. Transactional sex, where young girls engage in sexual activities with older men in exchange for funds, is quite prevalent in some rural areas of Ghana. This often results from parents' inability to cater for the needs of their female children, though, in some cases, teenage pregnancy is due to peer influence. With the lack of reproductive health knowledge, many girls become victims of teenage pregnancy. Studies have shown that in Ghana when teenage pregnancy happens, the boys responsible are often able to complete school while the girls drop out to give birth and fend for their children.

In a country where special needs education is often not given the attention it deserves, children with disabilities face challenges in accessing education. Stigmatization and discrimination against children and people with disabilities is a recurring issue in Ghana. With their inability to access their basic rights in various cases, children with disabilities are already disadvantaged. This is further compounded when these children are located in rural and remote areas where parents deliberately keep back their children with disability from attending school.

#### **6.5 Programme level**

The CBE programme was developed to offer accelerated education to children who had not had the opportunity to access education or who had dropped out due to demand and supply barriers. CBE is a functional literacy program, providing out of school children between the ages of 8 and 14 with a 'stepping stone' phase of literacy and numeracy classes before supporting them to enrol in formal schooling. This program was run by implementing partners and CSOs until DfID, in partnership with USAID, supported the Government in creating a structure to carry out the program within the country. Through the years, the CBE program has been highly visible to the Government and has resulted in the introduction of the CBE Policy. In spite of the progress of the CBE program, it is not without its challenges and barriers. Notable among these challenges is the lack of funds allocated to OOSC in the country. While Ghana's Education Strategic plan presents goals of utilizing the CBE program to target OOSC in the country and



the national budget makes some provisions for the roll out of later cycles of the CBE programme, these funds have not been readily available.

In terms of impact, the CBE has performed exceptionally well in its mandate for providing education to out of school children. With the methodology of using local language as the language of instruction, children can assimilate lessons efficiently, and their confidence and understanding of concepts is better. Additionally, the use of members of the communities as facilitators builds a level of trust between the community and the implementers of the CBE, often making it easier for parents to allow their children to be enrolled in the CBE program.

## **6.6 Recommendations**

The need to generate further robust data to further demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of AEPs to policy makers in addressing the out of school issue is critical. This requires a synergistic approach to synthesising evidence generation across the various institutions generating out of school data. This will further provide justification to expand the implementation of the AEPs as a tool to immediately address the out of school issue in Ghana, particularly in those areas which are the most deprived.

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