

Perspectives on Welfare Provision and Low Continuity Rates within
Ghana's Public Education System

Education and Welfare in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an exploration of welfare provision and low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system.

The first chapter provides a brief introduction to the study, including the background and motivation for undertaking this research. The introduction is then followed by a literature review and theoretical framework section that presents some of the influential literature that have framed my thoughts and analysis.

A discussion chapter follows to define in figures, what the issue of low continuity rates looks like in Ghana, and how Ghana compares to exemplars in the field of Comparative Education as well as to geographically proximate and economically similar countries.

Historical and Current Welfare Interventions in Ghana which target education are then presented and analyzed for their effects on education, especially on continuity rates. The following chapter then outlines some of the major causes, followed by a chapter that makes suggestions for tackling low continuity rates in Ghana's Public Education System all from the perspectives of Elite Stakeholders in the education sector in Ghana.

This thesis then concludes with a summary chapter that acknowledges limitations to the study and finally closes with some concluding thoughts and further research ideas.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Papa Kojo Botsio is a master's degree candidate from Ghana, studying for an MPA in Social Policy at the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs (CIPA) - Cornell University, in Ithaca, NY. He previously received a BA in Sociology and Anthropology, with a minor in Environmental Studies from Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, PA.

He is an ardent reader of comparative and international education reform successes, and follows with deep interest, the recent spate of welfare reforms and experiments including universal basic incomes, as well as increased adoption of cash transfer programs and other social protection schemes in "emerging welfare states" in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South more generally.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Accelerated Development Plan for Education	ADPE
Bolsa Familia Program	BFP
Comprehensive Education Act	CEA
Capitation Grant Scheme	CGS
Finnish National Board of Education	FNBE
Ghana Education Service	GES
Ghana National Association of Teachers	GNAT
Ghana School Feeding Program	GSFP
Junior High School	JHS
Senior High School	SHS
Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty	LEAP
Lower Middle Income	LMI
Ministry of Education (Ghana)	MoE
National Development Planning Commission	NDPC
Sub-Saharan Africa	SSA
Teacher Professional Development Program	TPDP
West African Examination Council	WAEC

"Any Educational Program which fails to furnish criteria for the judgment of Social, Political, Economic and Technical Progress of the People it purports to serve, has completely failed in its purpose and has become an Educational Fraud."

(Francis Nwia-Kofi Nkrumah, 1943, p. 37)

Introduction

Ghana is currently on the threshold of drafting a new development agenda to set ambitious targets for reaching some big development goals by 2057 on the celebration of its 100th year of independence from the British (Jotie, 2015). The immediate past President, John Dramani Mahama announced in 2015 that the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) was drafting a 40-year development plan that will be all encompassing and will look to reform the public sector including Education, over a 40-year period from 2018-2057 (Ibid.).

At Independence, Ghana could boast of an education system that was seen as an exemplar to other nations in Africa. Under the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan for Education (ADPE) and the 1961 Comprehensive Education Act, Ghana particularly invested in education infrastructure from basic education through university level, and the higher education level drew students even from all over the continent (Graham, 1971). According to Kosack (2012), the education system during the period 1951-1966 provided a fairly uniform quality countrywide and was evidently inclusive in its access to all citizens. For example, in 1961, the percentage of students in the university whose fathers were farmers and fishermen was 37.7% (Kosack, 2012). Such careers had traditionally limited social and educational mobility of the future generations within a family, and so this percentage was indicative of successful efforts to include open access to the youth of all socio-economic origins. Teacher training students were also paid stipends and assured jobs with starting salaries that were comparable to what were received by those in generally more desirable white-collar jobs (Kosack, 2012). However, metrics including proficiency in English declined from the 1960s after the first republic, and only recovered back to 1960s levels in the early 2000s (Ibid).

Today, there are a number of social policies and intervention programs targeted to solve various issues in our education system. The Capitation Grant Scheme (2003), The Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP, 2004) and the Free School Uniforms Program (2009) have mainly ameliorated the problem of access to education, and have arguably resulted in increased enrolment rates. However, the most recent review in 2014 of the Capitation Grant Scheme by the NDPC summarizes that while enrolment rates have increased, there is evidence of declining retention and continuity rates from basic education through to post-secondary education (NDPC, 2015). From recent figures in the last few years, only approximately 50% of basic education students continue into senior secondary education and only 28% of the 50% continue into tertiary (12.2%) and non-tertiary post-secondary education (16.8%), resulting in approximately just over a quarter of students going through a traditional “full cycle” of education in Ghana (World Bank, 2014; NDPC, 2015).

With this background in mind, this research paper aims to present the Ghanaian government’s various social protection interventions targeted at the education sector, and why there remains a pervasive problem of low continuity rates (or high attrition), measured by sharp declines in enrolment with advancement in level in our public education system. Particular will be placed on presenting current welfare programs, juxtaposing them to the major causes of low continuity rates which seem to persist regardless of these welfare programs, and then offer perspectives on needed interventions suggested by elite stakeholders in Ghana, as well as perspectives that could be considered from reform exemplars in the field of Comparative and International Education.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This paper does not particularly seek to prove or disprove a theory. However, there are a number of conceptual frameworks that are useful for guiding our analysis on the benefits and short-fallings of Welfare reforms and interventions on the educational, social and economic development of the Ghanaian especially with regards to education and continuity through the full cycle. However, an analysis is made on how the nature of welfare interventions and introduction of new interventions may address the issue of low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system.

History of Education in Ghana

Charles Graham (1971), in the "*History of Education in Ghana*," recounts important changes in the education landscape in the Gold Coast in the pre-independence era through the period immediately after independence. He captures important policies and government provisions which provide us with a needed backdrop to the nature and the role of government in developing and incentivizing quality and accessible education today. Of particular interest is the role of Kwame Nkrumah in revolutionizing education in Ghana from when he was made leader of government business in 1946, till he was deposed in a coup d'état in 1966. Nkrumah's policies and welfare incentives for teachers, students and their families are highlighted by Graham, and their successes somewhat measured by various metrics including government spending on education, access to education by lower classes in society or the masses, and incentivizing of teachers, families and students through various welfare schemes including teacher and student stipends.

Stephen Kosack (2012), in *“The Education of Nations: How the Political Organization of the Poor, Not Democracy, Led Governments to Invest in Mass Education,”* also conveys to us various successes of education policies by the first President, Kwame Nkrumah’s government in Ghana, though the overall focus of his book is to outline the role of the political organization of the poor in government’s investment in education. Kosack gives us some vital information including government’s spending on teacher training, on teacher incentivizing and on scholarship and other welfare schemes to allow the poorest students from families of the lower class in society including children of farmers and fishermen to have access to education; even higher education which was just picking up in the country.

Government Welfare Provision, Social Inclusion and Development

Esping-Andersen’s Welfare State Typologies try to group government’s provision of welfare under three main types – Liberal, Conservative and Social- Democratic (Tach, 2016). While these labels may seem as strait jackets, it is their **measurement indices** that we focus on in this paper. These indices include **commodification** - the degree to which welfare provision is tied to the beneficiary’s work, **social stratification** - the degree to which welfare provision either ameliorates or exacerbates existing social orders and limits social mobility, and **public-private mix** - which is the least considered in this analysis but provides an analysis of the private sector’s involvement in securing the welfare of citizens (Tach, 2016).

A welfare analysis is important in this paper because I believe that successful education reforms especially in developing countries will require a great deal of welfare provision to

incentivize the provision of quality, and ensure the ease of access to a quality education for the most marginalized. For example, improved benefits and incentives for teachers, hypothetically, will attract the most qualified individuals to go into the teaching profession leading to a higher quality in the supply of knowledge and skills. Also, welfare benefits for families of students could also ensure that they are able to afford to take their children to school instead of requiring them to work to support the family.

The **Human Capital Theory**, according to Assié-Lumumba (2001) in *"Gender, Race and Human Capital Theory: Research Trends in the United States from the 1950s to the 1990s,"* summarizes that the higher your educational attainment level (as well as quality of education received), the higher your economic status and (human) development level. Education has been found to increase productivity of the human, leading to greater earnings and effectively a greater welfare of the individual (Assié-Lumumba, 2001). We consider this framework as a tool to track the trends in educational attainment in the two periods in question 1951-1966 and 2001-2016, to further the argument that particular trends in enrolment, retention and continuity rates especially at the basic education level in Ghana, should affect the economic attainment levels of citizen-beneficiaries of education and the development potential of the nation as a whole.

Another useful framework in the analysis of education reform and the welfare state in Ghana in the post-colonial and 1st republic era (1951-1966) and the 4th republic (2001-2016) is the **Functionalist Theory**. The functionalist theory propounds that each part of society has a way of contributing to development and some people in society may be less functional organs or

appendices (Assié-Lumumba, 2001). The Functionalist theory asserts that education serves the function of sorting people out based on their functions.

A question posed by Assié-Lumumba (2016), is my main consideration in using this analysis that, ***“assuming this functional theory is true (or beneficial), what can society do to make those considered less functional more valuable?”*** (Ibid). Also, what kinds of careers should the “less functional” in society be pushed towards? (Ibid). This question guides my analyses of instances where it seems apparent that the reforms and policies discussed in this paper have particularly led education recipients to be segmented according to the functionalist theory. Also, how has the government improved the value of the less functional in society? Are those who go into teaching part of the less functional appendices? How does that bode for the education system as a whole?

In *“Give Poor People Cash,”* an article published in the September 2015 edition of The Atlantic, the author Charles Kenny, makes the overarching argument that in place of various in-kind welfare benefits and vouchers that afford recipients access to particular needs including food and housing, welfare recipients should just be given a direct cash transfer to take care of their various needs. Using evidence from cash transfer programs and experiments around the world, the article shows that Giving Poor People Cash has done exactly that. The conclusion that is reached is that giving poor people cash leads them to take care of the particular needs that various in-kind benefits are targeted at anyways, and additionally leads to financially productive habits like saving and investing.

Cultural Influences on Formal Education, Informal and Non-Formal Education.

Professor Assié-Lumumba on *“Types and Forms of Education”*, gives a clear differentiation of the different formal, informal and non-formal setups of education, how they play out in society and their individual foundations and importance. In my work, her analysis of these types of education help me to explain the cultural influences on the administration and participation in education especially in rural areas and how this feeds into the issue of low continuity rates in Ghana’s public education system. Most cultural areas have a preference for non-formal education that may result in immediate economic returns over formal education which government has invested heavily in and continues to increase its access through providing various welfare incentives and interventions (Assié-Lumumba, 2015).

Education Statistics: Focus on Low Continuity Rates in Ghana

The World Bank Databank’s education statistics, the *UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)*, and the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Services’ (GES) *Education Management Information System (EMIS)*, provide information on the provision on enrolment, attendance, attrition (retention and continuity), amongst other key statistics needed to describe the education system in Ghana.

Current / Main Education Interventions Today

The National Development Planning Commission’s duty is to both design and evaluate various social policies for various government sectors in Ghana including Education. They have designed and conducted evaluations on various government social policies including the 2014

Citizens' Assessment Report on the Capitation Grant Scheme (CGS). This evaluation is important to our study because it highlights the success of the CGS in ensuring both quality and access to public education, while also revealing that even amidst the success of the CGS the issue of low continuity rates still persists.

The NDPC in 2015 published the *Citizens' Assessment of the Capitation Grant Scheme*. This report provides feedback on the successes and problems of the capitation grant, and also reports the rates of satisfaction of the program from the perspective of school heads and families of students in beneficiary school districts. The government of Ghana website gives us further information on programs including the Ghana School Feeding Program, the First Lady's Free Uniforms Initiative, and the Free Sandals Initiative, all of whom were introduced to improve access to students who were not attending schools because they were deprived of one or all of the basic needs that the above listed programs now offer.

UNICEF and the University of North Carolina published an impact evaluation of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) unconditional cash transfer program in Ghana which has shown results for increased enrolment, attendance and attrition (continuity/retention) amongst students in LEAP-beneficiary households. This case is particularly interesting as it supports recent proliferation of literature on various welfare experiments that point to unconditional cash transfers as ways of empowering poor families out of poverty. Related literature on both UCTs and CCTs like Bolsa Familia, are referenced from World Bank project documents, and articles from media like the Atlantic, the Economist, and selected Political and Economic journals.

Methodology

In investigating the issue of low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system, and the impact that government's current welfare provisions have on this phenomenon, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Quantitative methods used were minimal and only sought to describe the extent of low continuity rates in numerical terms. Qualitative methods were more widely applied to assess the issue and solicit perspectives on the causes and possible solutions from stakeholders directly involved in education planning and implementation in Ghana. The methodology for this research is detailed below:

Quantitative Methods

Secondary data from the Ministry of Education's Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), the World Bank Data Bank's Education Statistics, and also from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) website constituted the basis for the quantitative analysis. Data that was reviewed include enrolment and completion rates in primary and Junior High School, enrolment and completion rates in junior high and senior high school, and enrolment rates in both tertiary and non-tertiary post-secondary schools. Reviewing and presenting these figures in this paper serves the purpose of illustrating numerically, the stark drop in enrolment or low continuity rates with advancement in Ghana's Public Education System. These figures for Ghana are presented and some comparisons with other countries are drawn to argue the existence and the extent of this problem of low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system.

Qualitative Methods

Interviews and discussions were held with relevant “elite stakeholders” (practitioners and policy leaders) from government and non-governmental agencies like the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana Education Service (GES), West African Examination Council (WAEC), Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the College of Education at the University of Ghana, the National Development Planning Commission, and also with some Renowned Educationists.

Secondary data was also obtained through the review of documents including government reports and press releases on the various welfare programs affecting Education in Ghana, impact evaluations from both government stakeholders, and independent and non-governmental bodies who have assessed the impact of government’s social protection and welfare programs especially those targeted at improving education outcomes.

Other relevant research and academic papers were also consulted especially for historiographies on education and welfare in Ghana, former and current successes, how they compare, and what disparities can be seen between two chosen periods of education and welfare development in Ghana – from 1951-1966 under Kwame Nkrumah’s 15 year rule first as leader of government business, and subsequently as Prime Minister and President of Ghana under the 1st Republic, and from 2001 to 2016 under the 2nd to 4th Presidencies of the 4th Republic of Ghana.

Analysis

From my review of the education statistics, individual and focus group interviews, document and literature review, I first catalogue and analyze the impact of some of the policy

interventions made by the government from 1951-1966 and more recently from 2001-2016 which is our main period of interest, I do a thematic analysis of the most pertinent causes of low continuity rates in Ghana from the perspective of the elite stakeholders that I engaged in conversations with, and also offer some of their suggestions for the solutions and reforms that they deem urgent (not necessarily feasible) to address the issue of low continuity rates in Ghana's Public Education system. I also highlight some transferrable lessons from exemplars in the field of Comparative Education, to address some of the causes outlined by my research subjects, for increasing continuity rates in Ghana's public education system.

Defining the Issue: Low Continuity Rates in Ghana’s Public Education System

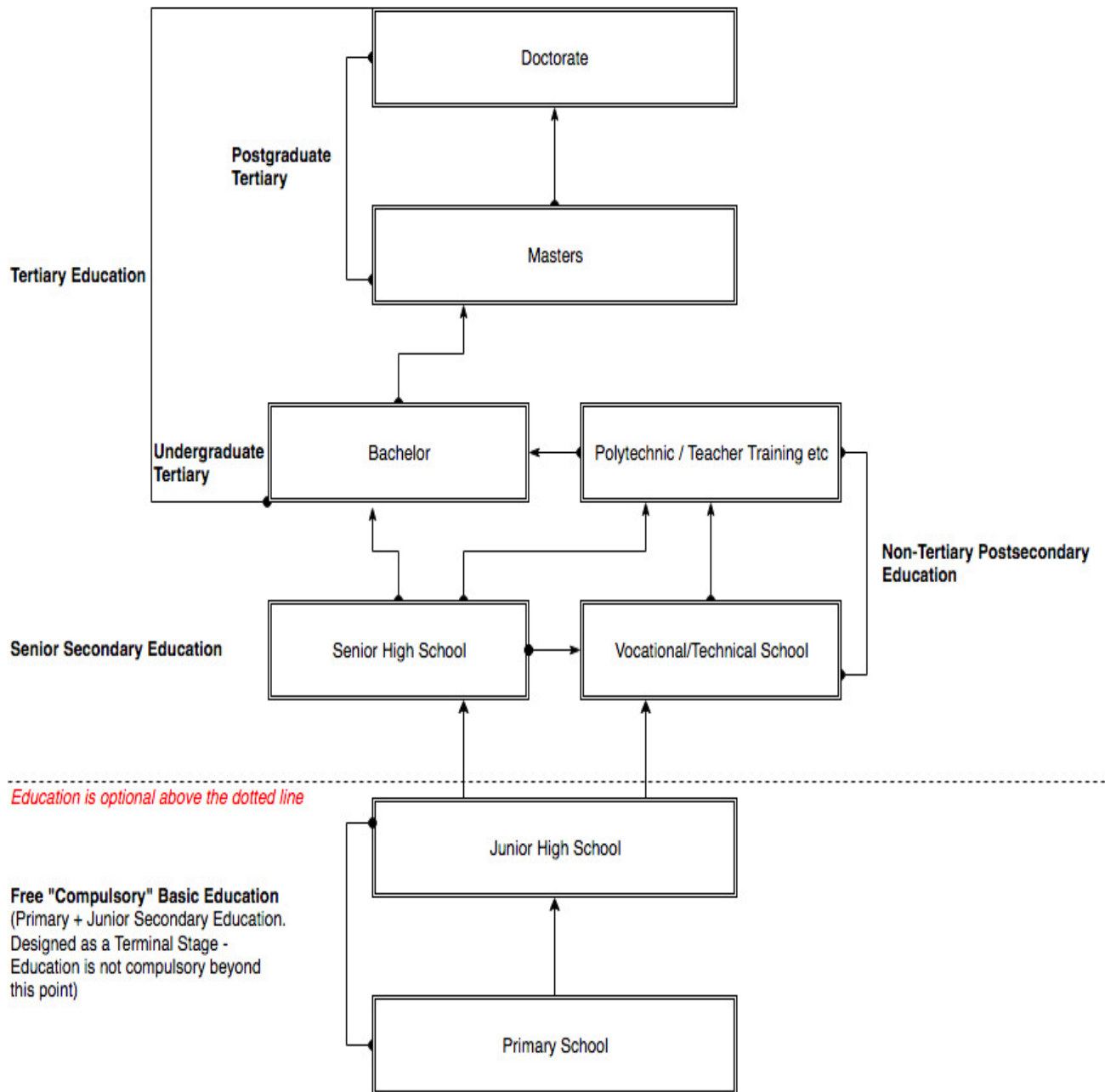


Fig 1.0 Ghana’s Public Education Structure, created by Author - Papa Kojo Botsio, adapted from EP-Nuffic (2015, January). “Education System Ghana” version 2. The Hague: EP-Nuffic.

The Ghanaian public education system is divided broadly into basic education which is made up of primary and junior high school, senior secondary education which is made up of

senior high school, vocational and technical education (non-tertiary post-secondary) which can be accessed at two levels - either after junior high school or after senior high school, and tertiary education which is made up of the undergraduate level - solely accessed after senior high school, and the postgraduate levels (Masters and PhD/DPhil) which are accessed after the Bachelor level. The flow map above (Fig 1.0.), illustrates the structure of the public education system in Ghana.

Decrease in Enrolment Rates with Advancement in Level (Attrition) Implies Low Continuity

In defining the issue of low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system, the following figures and tables are taken from the World Bank Databank (Education Statistics) which pulls this data originally from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and with some supplementary data from the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Ghana. Because of temporal limitations and disparities found in data from various sources at this stage, instead of computing continuity rate as the deficit in student enrolment in the beginning of a calendar year compared with completion at the previous stage of education in the previous calendar year, the resolve was to define the issue of low continuity rates by focusing on 2014, the most recent calendar year with the most complete data from the World Bank Education statistics, and then showing a snapshot of the stark drop in enrolment with advancement at each stage in that same year. Comparisons are made to show where Ghana stands in this issue amongst Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries and Lower Middle Income (LMI) countries, but more importantly, what we should be aspiring to with the backdrop of our 40-year development plan 2018-2057, by comparing our current situation in enrolment and continuity rates, to that of exemplars including the BRICS countries, Finland, Malaysia, and Cuba.

Primary Enrolment

We define the issue by first showing the recent success Ghana has chalked in ensuring Universal Primary Education (UPE). The second UN millennium development goal (MDG – 2), calls for the achievement of UPE and Ghana has hit that target (UNDP, 2015). From the World Bank Education statistics and as shown below in fig 1.1, net enrolment rates in Ghana hit 88.6% in 2014. From fig. 1.2 we see that Ghana’s primary net enrolment rate is higher than the average for LMI countries (87.4%), SSA countries (78%), and is within reach of the BRICS countries. Ghana is also notably less than 2 percentage points below India, and 5 below Brazil in 2014.

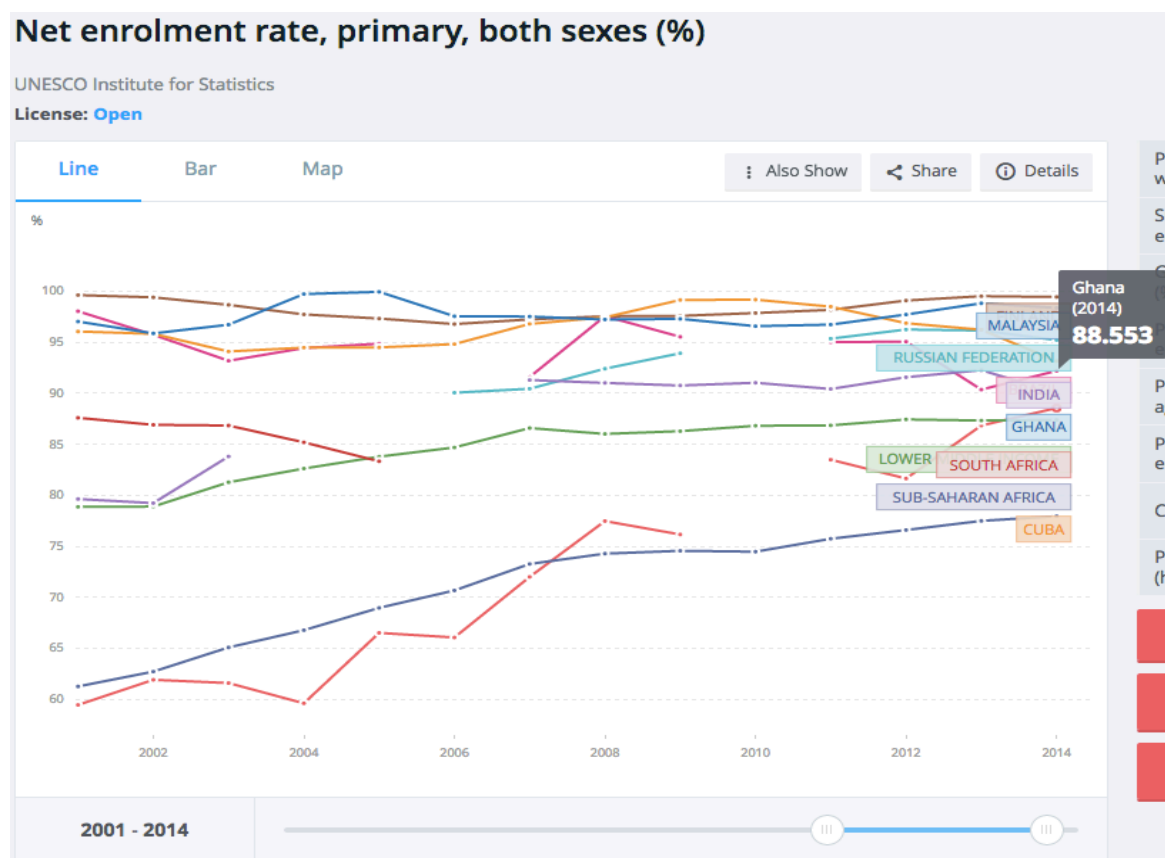


Fig 1.1 - Line Graph of 2001-14 Primary Net Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons from The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%) | Data.*

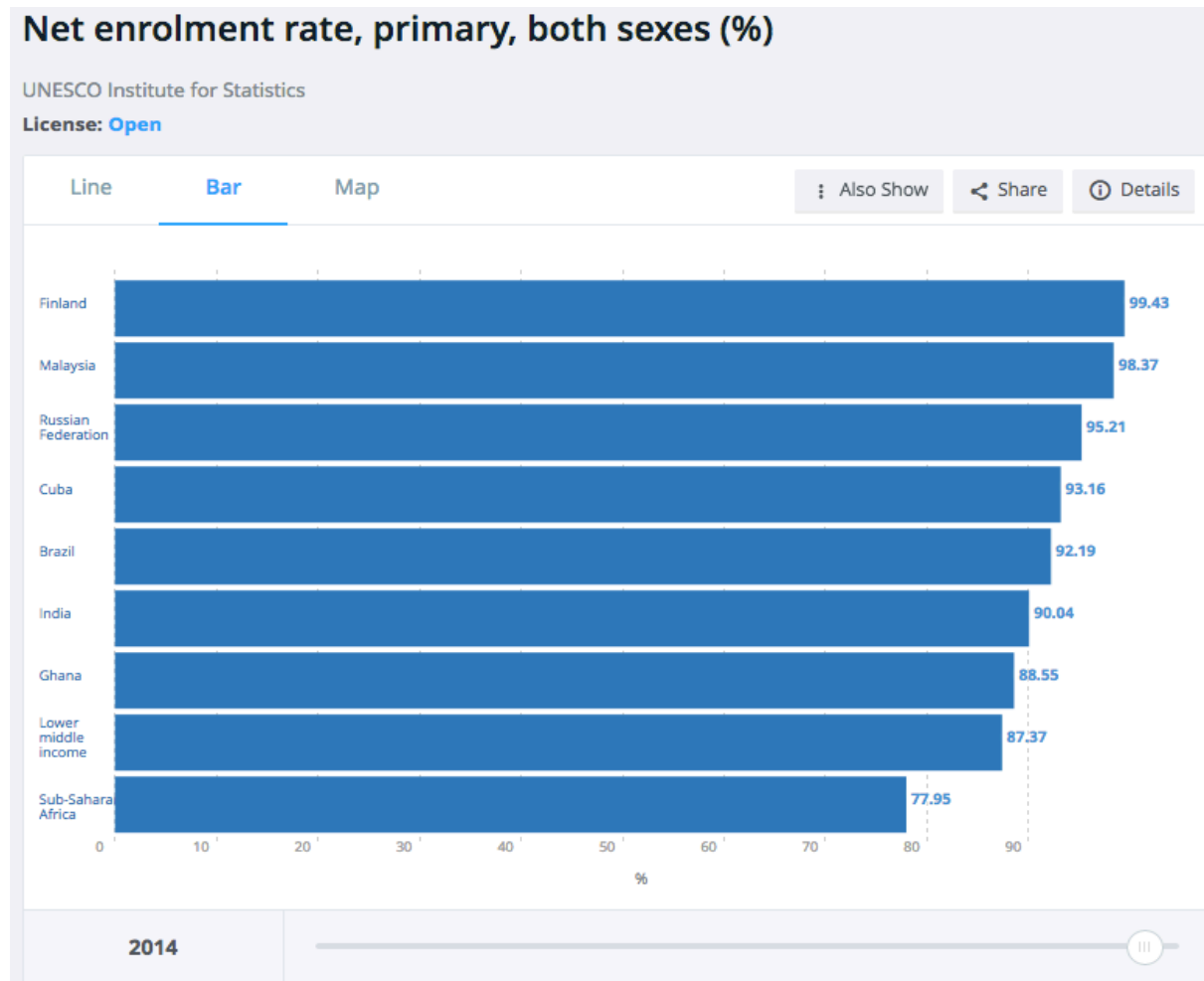













Fig 1.2 - Bar Graph of 2014 Primary Net Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons from The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%) | Data*.

In table 1.2 (see the appendices), we also realize that Ghana, amongst the LMI countries is ranked in number 23 (third from bottom) out of the top 25 countries with 2014 World Bank Data on net enrolment rates at the primary level. In perspective, we see that even though Ghana has approximately 89% net enrolment rate at the primary level even just amongst LMI countries in 2014 we have many other countries ahead of us. When we add middle, upper-middle and high-income countries, our achievement of 89% is dwarfed, thus showing that Universal Primary Education, by 2014, had been attained by many countries, and even to a more complete degree

than we had in Ghana. Table 1.3 below shows that in the SSA context we ranked 10th amongst the countries from World Bank data in 2014, with countries like Cape Verde, Rwanda, Mauritius, way above us and with net enrolment rates similar to what was achieved by high income countries like Finland in 2014.

All in all, Ghana and the other African countries shown below achieved arguably remarkable net enrolment rates in 2014, and the focus of this paper and where the problem lies is in enrolment at the subsequent stages – secondary and post-secondary (particularly tertiary), which is illustrated and discussed in the following sub-sections.

Table 1.1 – Highlighting 2014 Primary Net Enrolment Rates in Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa

Country	2001	2014	
Cabo Verde	95	98	
Rwanda		96	
Mauritius	93	96	
Benin		96	
Burundi	49	95	
Sao Tome and Principe		95	
Seychelles	86	95	
Cameroon		92	
Togo	85	91	
Ghana	59	89	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%) | Data*.

Secondary Enrolment

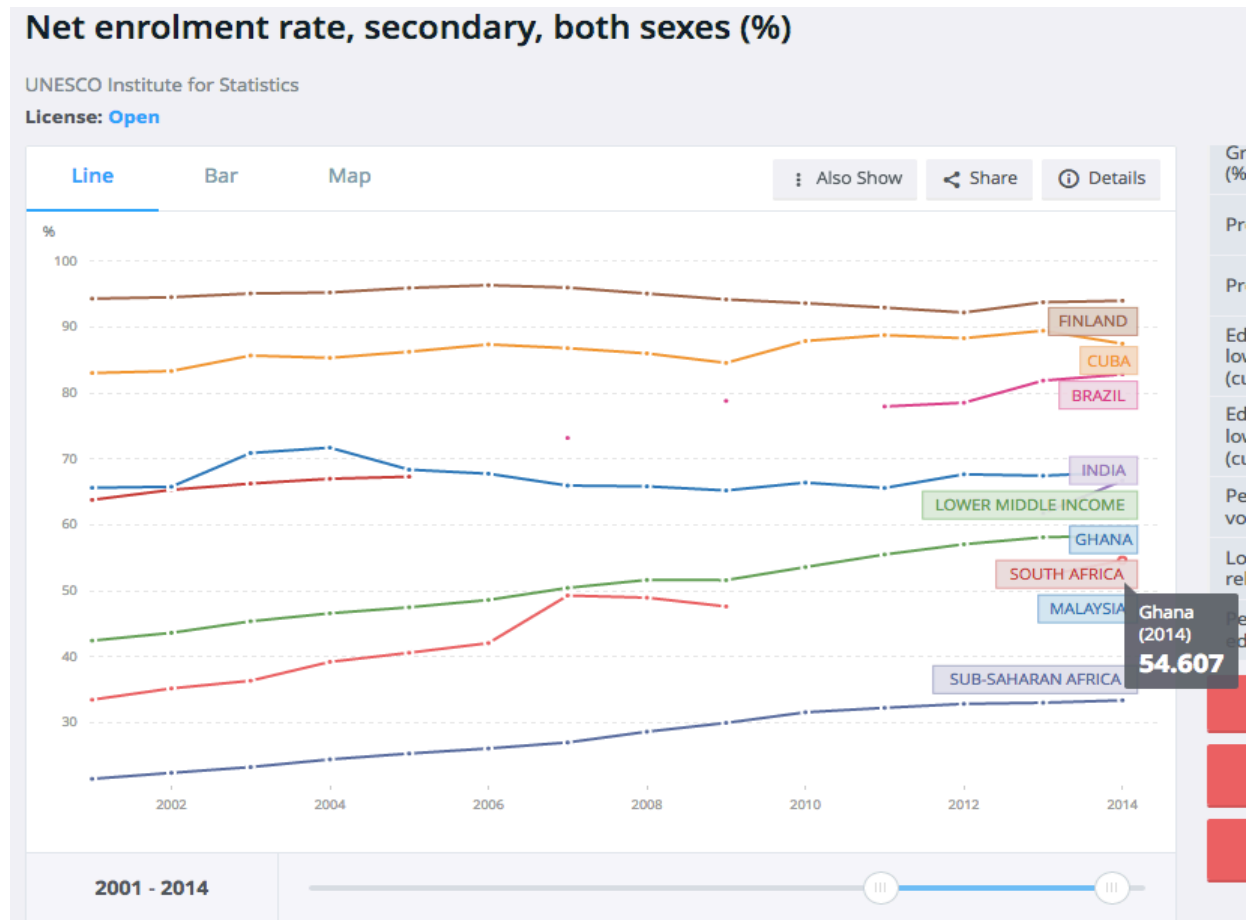


Fig.2.1 –Line Graph of 2001-14 Secondary Net Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons from The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%) | Data.*

Secondary enrolment figures in 2014 begin to illustrate clearly, the problem of low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system. In fig. 2.1. above, we see that Ghana's secondary enrolment rate in 2014 is a mere 54.6%, a figure that shows a gaping disparity of 34% between net enrolment of school-going aged children at the primary and secondary levels. This measure precisely tells us that in the calendar year 2014, at the primary level, 88.6% of primary-school aged children were enrolled in primary school, whereas only 54.6% of secondary school-aged children (both junior and senior secondary school) were enrolled. We clearly begin to see

what the issue of low continuity rates really means, even though we are limited by our inability to, for example, track the students from completion of primary school to secondary school. Regardless of this limitation, there is a glaring problem that of all the 100% of secondary school-aged children in Ghana in 2014, only 54.6%, merely a little over half were actually enrolled as students.

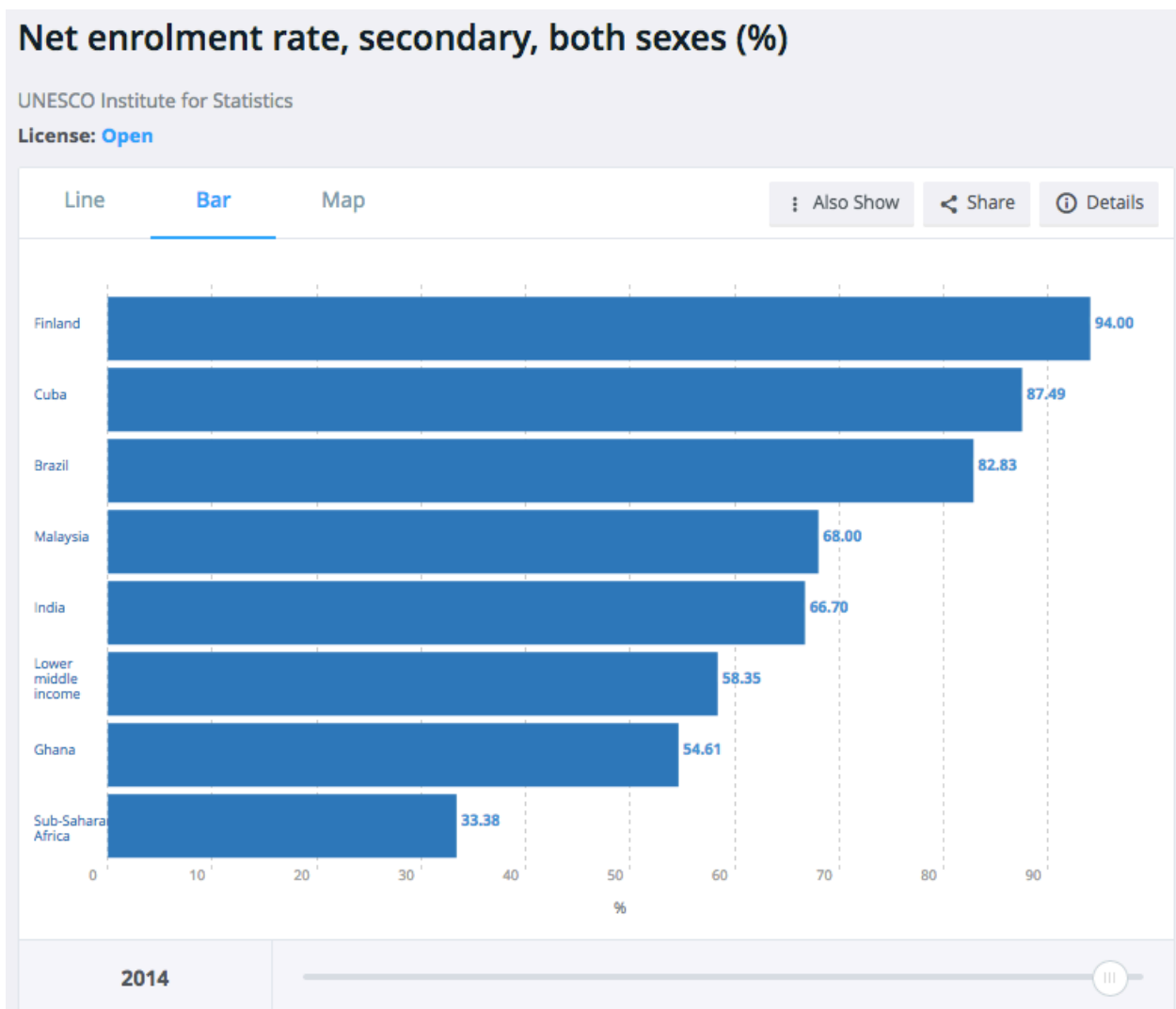


Fig. 2.2 – Bar Graph of 2014 Secondary Net Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons from The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%) | Data.*

Fig. 2.2 illustrates even more clearly how Ghana stands in comparison to countries that we can call exemplars. We recall in figure 1.2 that Ghana was actually above the LMI average in net enrolment rate at the primary level. Not so at the secondary level, where we find ourselves actually below the 58.4% average secondary enrolment by the LMI countries, with 54.6%.

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the gulf between our net secondary enrolment rate and that of our closest exemplar India, is now about 8 percentage points, up from a difference in primary enrolment rate of just 2%. Additionally, we see Finland atop the comparison chart with a 94% secondary net enrolment rate, a whole 40% difference between us and them. We should also consider that the deficit in net enrolment at the secondary level compared to the primary level in Finland is just a mere 5%, compared to Ghana's deficit of 34%.

The comparison with Finland is important here in my opinion, because with our 40-year plan as a backdrop to this comparison, we know that it is possible to reach almost complete enrolment as we see with Finland who also has a 40-year development plan for education, initiated by their School Systems Act in 1968. The 2014 figures show Finland's net enrolment rates 46 years after commissioning their Schools Systems Act in 1968, and so it will be interesting to make similar comparisons in the future considering the same temporal scope.

Malaysia is also particularly important to us as a case for comparison because we gained Independence in the same year, 1957, yet we seem to fall short in the development of various sectors, not the least in Education. Malaysia after 57 years of independence in 2014 has 68% of its secondary-school aged population in school, while Ghana has about 14% less at 54.6%. Cuba is also another interesting case of a country that earmarked a 40-year development plan and in

2014 has a 98% net enrolment in primary and an impressive 87.5% net secondary enrolment rate – a whole 33% greater enrolment rate than Ghana has.

Table 2.1 below shows the figures in the bar chart, but this time a little more clearly in tabular form. It also shows the enrolment rates in 2001 compared to 2014, thus outlining that Ghana has recorded remarkable growth over those 15 or so years, but still lies significantly below countries that we should be aspiring to in terms of net enrolment rates.

Table. 2.1 – Highlighting 2014 Secondary Net Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons. Selected Countries and Economies

Country	2001	2014	
Finland	94	94	
Cuba	83	87	
Brazil		83	
Malaysia	66	68	
India		67	
Ghana	33	55	
Sub-Saharan Africa	21	33	
Lower middle income	42	58	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%) | Data*.

We see in table 2.3 (see appendices) that amongst LMI countries with 2014 world bank data Ghana is still comparatively not doing exemplarily well and even conflict-ridden areas like

West Bank and Gaza, island nations like Cabo Verde, Samoa and Sao Tome and Principe, all have higher secondary enrolment rates.

Low continuity rates, arguably, can be defined to be a prominent issue in Sub-Saharan Africa, as in table 2.2 below we see Ghana with the 4th highest net secondary enrolment rates out of the countries with 2014 data, up from having the 10th highest net enrolment rates at the primary level in the same year (see fig. 1.3). The island nations also seem to be the more impressive ones in this case and there may be an argument to be made with further research in the future on why they are recording comparatively higher net enrolment rates – perhaps their small sizes are a factor, perhaps they spend more per capita on education, allowed by the structure of their economies, if they indeed are unique compared to continental African nations.

Table. 2.2 – Highlighting 2014 Secondary Net Enrolment Rates in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Country	2001	2014	
Seychelles	71	75	
Cabo Verde		69	
Sao Tome and Principe		64	
Ghana	33	55	
Cameroon		43	
Swaziland	30	36	
Lesotho	23	35	
Mali		35	
Malawi	27	33	
Guinea	16	32	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%) | Data*.

Post-Secondary / Tertiary Education

While it is important to consider continuity within the whole continuum of public education in Ghana, this section focuses particularly on the transition to Tertiary Education (out of all the post-secondary options) after the secondary level. A percentage of students actually go on to non-tertiary post-secondary schools (vocational and technical schools) to learn various specialized vocations and technical skills, including nursing, plumbing, teaching, electrical work, to name a few. The transition to non-tertiary post-secondary schooling is a complex one and deserves its own volume. At this stage, with an intentionally limited research scope, we focus particularly on the transition from secondary education to tertiary education in Ghana.

One thing to note is that our tertiary enrolment statistics measure “gross” enrolment and not net enrolment as used for primary and secondary enrolment. Gross enrolment ratio, according to UNICEF’s website on Education (UNICEF, 2017), is a measure of all enrolled in a particular level of education regardless of being in the correct age bracket to receive that education, whereas the net enrolment ratio measures within the appropriate or usual age bracket. UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank all seem to measure both gross and net primary and secondary enrolments, but at the tertiary level only seem to provide “gross enrolment ratios,” hypothetically because many students complete their degrees over a longer period of time than usual at the tertiary level, and also others transition later from non-tertiary post-secondary into tertiary education.

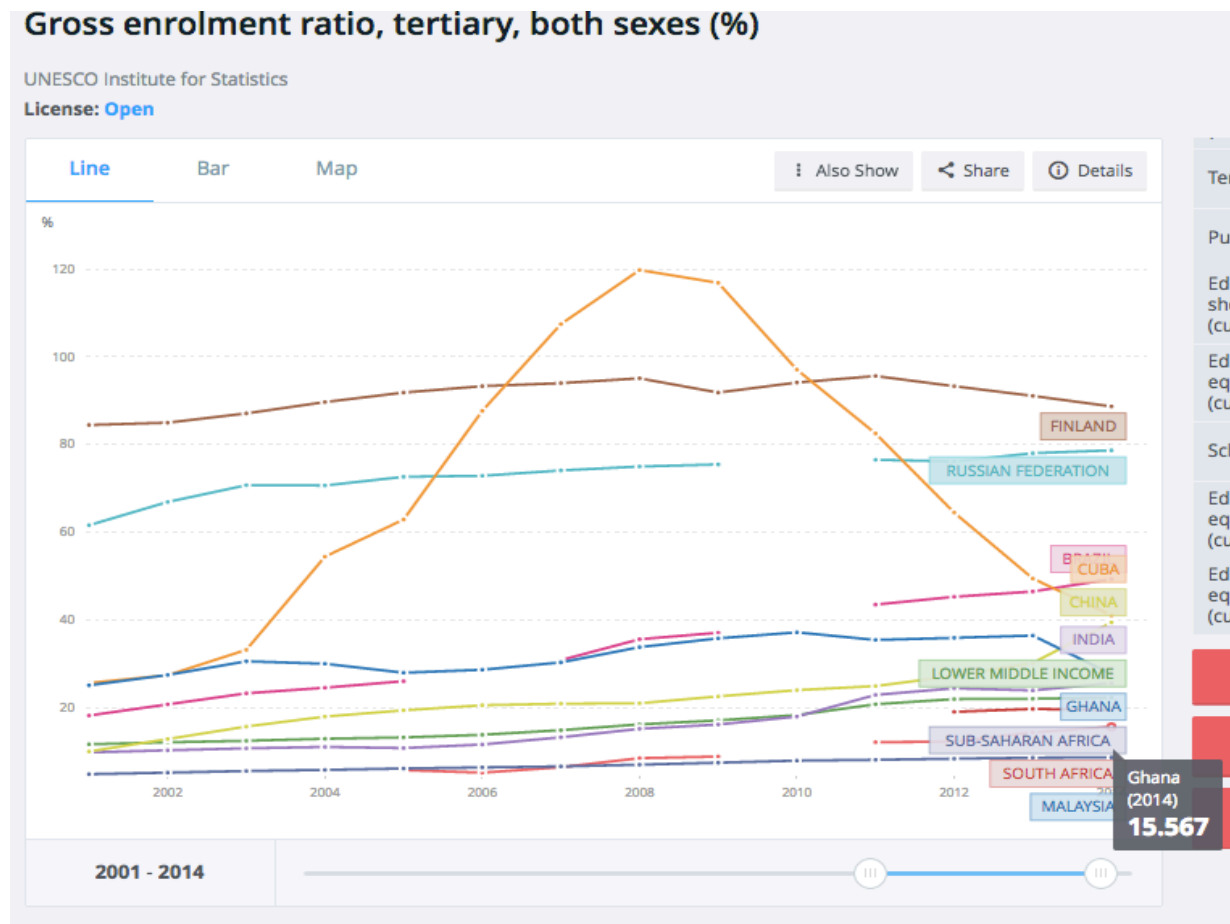


Fig.3.1 – Line Graph of 2001-14 Tertiary “Gross” Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Comparisons from The World Bank Group. (2016). "Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%)." *Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%) | Data.*

Figure 3.1 above and Table 3.1 on the next page illustrate Ghana’s comparative position with exemplars in gross enrolment rates of students in tertiary institutions. Figure 3.1 shows us the trajectory of gross enrolment rates from 2001 to 2014. Ghana’s recent 2014 figure for gross enrolment ratio at the tertiary level is highlighted to be approximately 15.6%. This figure means that only 15.6% of Ghanaians who qualify for tertiary education (even those who are past the traditional age for this level), are currently enrolled as students.

Table 3.1 below highlights 2014 figures in gross enrolment rates for Ghana and selected exemplar countries and what is immediately evident is that in 2014 the gulf between Ghana’s

gross enrolment rate at the tertiary level compared to exemplary countries is extremely large. Ghana is still above the SSA average but is still below the average for LMI countries and the gulf between Ghana and arguably the ultimate exemplar, Finland, is at about 73%. Our independence compatriots, Malaysia, also have 12% more people enrolled in tertiary education in 2014 than we have.

Table. 3.1 – Showing 2014 Tertiary “Gross” Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons.

Selected Countries and Economies			
Country	2001	2014	
Finland	84	89	
Russian Federation	62	79	
Brazil	18	49	
Cuba	26	41	
China	10	39	
Malaysia	25	28	
India	10	26	
South Africa		19	
Ghana		16	
Sub-Saharan Africa	5	9	
Lower middle income	12	22	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%)." *Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%) | Data*.

While we focus on the case of Ghana, it is interesting to note that in 2014 only three countries in SSA are above the tertiary gross enrolment ratio for LMI countries. It is troubling that

only Cape Verde, Mauritius and Botswana have tertiary enrolment outcomes that reflect LMI averages when countries like Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Senegal, to name a few are all LMI countries but with globally uncompetitive outcomes. There must be some external factors that are strongly limiting continuity within public education in SSA countries and this should be investigated if not already in subsequent research, to help tackle this issue.

Table. 3.2 – Showing 2014 Tertiary “Gross” Enrolment Rates in Ghana, SSA Countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa			
Country	2001	2014	
Mauritius	17	39	
Botswana	7	28	
Cabo Verde	2	23	
South Africa		19	
Sudan	8	16	
Cameroon	5	16	
Ghana		16	
Guinea		11	
Senegal		10	
Togo		10	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%)." *Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%) 2001, 2014 | Data.*

Major Government Welfare Interventions and their Bearing on Continuity Rates

Ghana at independence was seen as the beacon of Africa, expected to lead the way in all matters of national development; employment creation, infrastructure development, governance, and self-determination in all matters; not the least in education. Ghana has implemented education reforms from as far back as when local participation was allowed in the governance of the Gold Coast after Kwame Nkrumah won elections from prison to become the leader of government business in 1951. With this victory came the opportunity to govern the different sectors of government including trade, agriculture, welfare and education. With this victory Nkrumah formed his first cabinet, even before attaining full independence, to take control of the development trajectory of the country. He appointed Kojo Botsio as the first Minister for Education and Social Welfare in 1951, to ensure the general welfare and educational development of the citizenry.

Many reforms and programs have been introduced since then, some of which are reviewed in this section to assess their impact on the development of the citizen-beneficiary of education, as well as the impact on the nation as a whole. Unfortunately, after Nkrumah became leader of government business, and finally gained full independence in 1957, the nation fell into a trough dug by sporadic and quite frequent coup d'états after the first one deposed Nkrumah in 1966. The successive and frequent coup d'états inhibited development of all sectors of government including education. For this reason and for the purpose of keeping a strong focus on particularly successful eras of education development in the Gold Coast and Ghana, this paper does not consider educational reforms in the coup-marred years between Nkrumah's reign and the beginning of true democracy and stability with the establishment of the 4th Republic in 1992

when civilian rule and the stable climate needed for development were finally fully restored. We first present a historical overview and an evaluation of education policy and reforms from 1951-1966, and then do same for the period after the 4th republic from 2001 to 2016, to effectively capture the first fifteen years and the most recent fifteen years of education reforms and interventions under post-colonial leadership.

In this section, we identify areas of particular success or apparent failure today, and compare them to the successes from 1951-1966. We also identify potential areas for urgent reform in order to move Ghana to her rightful place with regards to the Educational Development and Welfare of the country and her citizens.

History of Education and Welfare - Major Education Reforms and Policies Under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (1951-1966)

Accelerated Development Plan for Education (ADPE, 1951)

In 1951, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was named the leader of government business, a position that was effectively equal to the position of Prime-Minister. The British decided to cede some power to the local Gold Coasters, after a long battle by Nkrumah and his right-hand men in the Convention People's Party (CPP) to foster the process of self-determination (Graham, 1971, p. 177). Nkrumah won the local elections by an overwhelming majority with his party, the CPP, winning the vast majority of seats in a British-led parliament. By virtue of this victory, Nkrumah was named Prime-Minister and was conferred the duties of naming a cabinet for the governance of the Gold Coast. Nkrumah named Kojo Botsio as the Gold Coast's first ever Minister of

Education and Social Welfare, and he effectively put in charge of managing all education and welfare affairs of the Gold Coast (Kosack, 2012, p. 159).

With this election win also came the drawing of a new constitution in 1951, and according to C.K. Graham in *“The History of Education in Ghana,”* the ADPE was laid before parliament with the following objective:

“To help develop a balanced system working towards universal primary education as rapidly as consideration of finances and teacher-training allowed, but maintaining at the same time proportionate facilities to further education for those most fitted to receive it”

- (Graham, 1971, p. 177).

The objective as outlined in the quote above shows the intent that Nkrumah and his government had; the clear intent to provide for the welfare of the people. A universal primary education in itself signifies a very social democratic system where the target for providing primary education is *Everyone*. A universal primary education system automatically can be acknowledged for its intended function of providing welfare in the form of education to everyone without any means-testing or commodification. Universal primary education was not tied to one’s background or one’s family’s work or income, hence the intention of making it accessible to everyone could be noted. The objective stated above however, mentions that this system will be implemented as thoroughly as financial considerations or constraints would allow. It also considered not just the service being provided but also the training of personnel (teachers) and the provision of educational facilities. The mention of providing for “those most fitted to use” (Ibid) may deceive us to think that there was some kind of means-testing but the best interpretation I can give to it, in the absence of Graham’s further analysis is that it would be

implemented progressively, making sure to address the areas of greatest need of educational infrastructure in order to strive for equity as the end outcome.

The government planned and announced the Accelerated Development Plan for Education (ADPE) to provide six years of “quality basic education to every Ghanaian child” (Kosack, 2012, p. 170). The catch here was not just the quality but the goal of making sure that this quality reached every nook and cranny of the country. According to Graham the ADPE had a number of specific goals or proposals (Graham, 1971, p. 177). They included six-years of compulsory primary schooling which was to be free starting from January 1st, 1952; facilities for training teachers were to be expanded by doubling the sizes of the six existing teacher training colleges; and plans for the creation of ten new teacher training colleges in addition to the six to make a total of sixteen (Graham, 1971, p. 177-78). Additionally, teachers who were already at work had provisions to receive additional training in order to get the new A certificate in place of their B certificate to ensure that the quality of teaching and education was improving while access was increasing concurrently (p. 178).

Teachers’ salaries for both those who were trained and untrained were guaranteed, and in addition teachers in training were being paid the same salaries as actual teachers in full employment to attract more people to join the profession to lessen the student-to-teacher ratio and also to give them very best training to improve the quality of education (ibid.). The government also invested beyond just primary education to embark on building additional day secondary schools in addition to the predominantly missionary-built boarding secondary schools (ibid). Finally, they increased scholarships to secondary schools considerably to ensure

continuity, so that basic school leavers could afford to continue with their education through to the secondary level at least (ibid.).

In just 15-years from 1951 to 1966, the Nkrumah led government successfully increased primary enrolment five-fold from 234,00 to 1.13 million under the ADPE (Kosack,2012, p. 170). Nkrumah was deposed in 1966, and by then more than 8,000 new primary schools were built in Ghana, and they were built so fast that Keteku (2005) referred to them as “*mushroom schools*” (Kosack, 2012, p. 171). There was also a drive to absorb private schools (some of which were missionary schools) which totaled about 1,400 (p. 171).

Kosack (2012) relays that Nkrumah and his government invested heavily in mass education for all citizens especially seeking out the poor masses (p. 160). Their focus on the masses was a deviation from the elite education offered to politicians and to train clerks for the British colonial government. The fact that they focused on mass education also signified a deviation from the existing social stratification that was caused by the colonial education system, into a more inclusive one that sought to enhance the welfare of all, especially the socially excluded. The British absolutely did not seem keen on mass education earlier, but Nkrumah and his government challenged the status quo of providing “*selective education*” to introduce the concept of “education for all” for the very first time; a very social democratic concept.

Nkrumah invested heavily in education to ensure a high educational attainment for a larger proportion of the population, and in order to develop Ghana’s human capital. According to Kosack (2012), “In the 1944-45 school year the, the Gold Coast Government spent GBP350,000; by the 1954-55 school year the government was spending GBP 6.4 million,” on

education (p. 170). This increased spending aimed to meet three particular goals; **free access to quality free education** for everyone who wanted it, develop a higher education system that was **accessible and world-class** and **provide trained professional and technical workers** to staff Ghana's New Economy (Ibid.). One welfare principle that was advanced further by this move was social inclusion and effectively a deconstruction of social stratification. Nkrumah indeed did clearly target the socially excluded as the main beneficiaries of his policies in order to eventually create a far less stratified society than the British had created.

The impact of the ADPE reached far and wide. Enrolment rates of school going age Ghanaians jumped from 4% in 1948 to 70% in 1966 (p. 171). Kosack's study – which runs a comparison with Brazil and Taiwan- also reveals that unlike Ghana, in Brazil and Taiwan, such a high increase in access to education came at the expense of quality but the CPP ensured this didn't happen in Ghana (ibid.). It was because of their heavy investment in teacher training concurrently with the proliferation of schools, that the quality of education was improved while access was also ensured. According to Kosack (2012), in 1950, before Nkrumah took over the reins of government in Ghana as leader of government business (or Prime Minister), “19 teacher training colleges were enrolling 1,800 students...and by 1966 this was expanded to 83 colleges enrolling more than 14,000 students” (p. 170). Graham also reveals that teachers who were in training, received stipends and salaries that were comparable to those who were already teaching (Graham, 1971, p.178). Also, Kosack (2012), reveals further that “teachers... were paid more than they could earn in occupations demanding similar qualifications once they started teaching” (p. 171). This move definitely ensured the welfare of teachers. It elevated their roles

as appendices in society, and the very best were sought out and incentivized to provide educational training to future generations.

Today those who go into teaching are only required to have C6 average passes from senior high school (equivalent to a C-) in order to enter the teacher training college (Regluy, 2016). Teacher training colleges under the ADPE, because of the welfare incentives provided, attracted only the brightest and best whose qualifications were presumably way above the lowered threshold we have today. Contrastingly, the teaching profession today could be categorized under occupations offered to those who form the 'appendices' according to the *functionalist theory*. A comparison is made with a recent teacher training program introduced under the leadership of the immediate past President Mahama, to see if it could be considered a welfare improvement from what Nkrumah offered, and also measure what anticipated promise it holds for both quality and access in Ghana's education system.

By Esping-Andersen's criteria we assess a highly stratified society to be one which is unequal and necessitates the need for welfare interventions that addresses the issue of social inequality within systems including education (Tach, 2016). The ADPE was an intervention that addressed the issue of social inequality in the provision of education. Kosack gives evidence of the equalizing outcome of the ADPE when he points out that by 1964, due to the ADPE and a later policy, the Comprehensive Education Act (CEA), almost 40% of fathers of university students were farmers and fishermen – an occupation usually belonging to the poorest social class in society (Kosack, 2012, p. 177). Kosack describes Nkrumah and his mass education investment with the negative label of political entrepreneurship (or populism). However, I believe strongly

that at that stage of nation building, and in order to challenge a previously highly stratified society, pursuing such a policy was more beneficial than harmful, and reflected the ideology of Nkrumah and his party as the ones whose hearts and souls were to elevate the masses. Regardless of populism or any other political motivations for this move, we see that the ADPE offered social mobility and effectively an impulse for future economic mobility by affording the children of farmers and fishermen, the same education received by the elites.

We can arrive at a consensus that the ADPE successfully made efforts to fight off the ***class crystallization*** that colonial education had caused. Mass education and accessible scholarships for continuation into secondary and tertiary schools meant that not just the elite but those who were in need of support to further their education were granted support without discrimination. The ADPE also strengthened teacher training by offering higher certification for teachers, doubled the size of existing teacher training colleges, increased the number from just 10 to 83 in 15 years, and gave the same monetary incentives for going into training as for actually teaching. The stipends and salaries for teachers were also competitive and sometimes even as high as salaries for the more valued white color jobs (Kosack, 2012, p. 171).

The Comprehensive Education Act (CEA, 1961)

The second major reform under Nkrumah's regime was the Comprehensive Education Act (CEA). In 1961 Nkrumah's government passed the **CEA** mainly to make some improvements and expansions of programs under the ADPE. For example, Kosack elucidates in "*The Education of Nations*" that secondary schools under the ADPE were not free (Kosack, 2012, p. 174). We know according to Graham (1971), that at the secondary level the ADPE only provided a finite number

of scholarships to support the brightest students who could not afford to continue school (p. 178). The fees for secondary schools in the 1950s, according to Kosack (2012), averaged around 12 Great Britain Pounds (GBP) and an additional 48-60 GBP for boarding schools (p. 174). This amount was equivalent to Ghana's per capita income in 1960 and so it was obviously not affordable at all for the average family to afford to take even a single child to secondary school after receiving free basic education.

The CEA acknowledged the skyrocketing enrolment rates and the need to ensure continuity by making secondary education affordable. The government tried various interventions including a **private-public welfare mix** by soliciting funds from the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) in 1954-55, which was expanded further under the CMB in 1962, to fund more secondary school students (ibid.). The ADPE, in addition to these scholarships that were given out as bursaries, abolished secondary school tuition fees completely, in a non-means tested policy, which meant that every single person who passed onto secondary school and not just the very poor in society benefitted from free secondary education (Kosack, 2012, p. 174). This move further entrenched the government's Social Democratic welfare provision, as the free education program and bursaries were **not tied to commodification** of any sort – it did not depend on students' or their families' work status, was **socially inclusive** because it was **not means-tested** for only those who earned below a particular income threshold, and hence **actively fought against class crystallization and social stratification** to ensure a more equal society.

The CEA also raised teacher salaries even further, and moved to make both primary and middle school compulsory and not exclusive as they were before (Kosack, 2012, p. 172,173). The

CEA also subsidized higher education, and also technical institutes for type S skilled workers (workers given special training for civil service or government work) (Kosack, 2012, p.175). The success of the CEA according to Kosack (2012), was that comparatively, under the ADPE, secondary school enrolment more than doubled in Nkrumah's first three years in power, however after expansion of the CMB bursaries and the secondary school fees abolishment under the CEA, "secondary enrollment had grown by fifteen-fold to almost 43,000 students" (p. 174).

The success of the ADPE and the CEA in 1961-66, and their socially equalizing factor especially, is most evidenced in this fact, that "37.7% of the fathers of students in the university in 1964 were farmers and fishermen" (Kosack, 2012, p. 177). Schools and teacher training colleges also were spread countrywide. We can say conclusively that the mass drive to increase enrollment and access to education through a social democratic education welfare system, and a private-public welfare mix to increase the resources invested into education made the ADPE and especially the CEA so successful. This was done with a clearly focused goal of blurring the social and economic lines separating the masses from the exclusively educated elite class, to ensure that all Ghanaians had an education, not of different qualities, but of the same quality and standard.

Background and Context- The 4th Republic of Ghana

After a series of coup d'états, Ghana finally held democratic elections under the 1992 constitutional reforms. This came after the longest stretch of military rule under Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings from 1979-1981, and again from 1982- 1992 that preceded the constitutional reforms

and the first true democratic elections since the first republic. At this juncture, education in Ghana had been moribund from the outcomes that were recorded from the first republic.

Because of the quite frequent change in power between military and civilian rule, there was little political stability to facilitate real change. This period was marred by economic survival and while for example, there were some changes including programs to expand access to the higher levels of education especially between 1981-2000 under J.J. Rawlings, (Kosack, 2012, p. 205), we maintain our focus on the most recent 15 years of the 4th republic rule from 2001-2016. This is done in order to have a temporal marker for what impacts and planned changes were made in two very important 15-year periods – from 1951-1966 and from 2001 to 2016.

Recent Reform Policies and Programs Under the 4th Republic (2001-2016)

The Capitation Grant Scheme (2004)

In 2004 the government introduced the **Capitation Grant Scheme** as a Pilot Project for providing cash payments (transfers) to needy schools over the country, to cover peripheral costs associated with the delivery of “free education” at the basic level. This scheme aimed to eliminate all associated costs of basic education for both public schools and families. After a year of piloting, enrolment rates sky rocketed and the program was fully adopted in 2005 (NDPC, 2015). However, the most recent 2015 report on the Capitation Grant Scheme has identified some problems including a 50% rate of dissatisfaction by parents for the financial relief provided by the scheme, and on the other hand a 30% rate of dissatisfaction by school heads mostly due to late payments by government and insufficient payments leading to soliciting of fees from parents and guardians

(NDPC, 2015). Other problems include reported gender disparities in enrolment, attendance and continuity rates of students, and the general sustainability of the Scheme in the face of currently increasing enrolment rates (2015).

The Capitation Grant Scheme was calculated such that schools were given an amount of GHC 3 per head, about \$0.75 USD in today's currency, an estimate of what was then needed to take care of the peripheral needs of students that parents couldn't afford including printing, exercise books and writing materials, for example. The problem that arose was that while some costs were definitely cut, it was soon realized that this amount was not enough, and parents were still being levied to make up the balance.

In 2009, the Government of President Mills came into power and increased the amount per capita, allotted to meet the peripheral needs of students beyond their tuition (NDPC, 2015). He increased the capitation grant per capita by 50% from GHS3 which translates today into approximately \$0.75, up to GHS4.5 which can be converted into approximately \$1.125 (ibid.). While that may seem a meager increase, it is enough in local purchasing power to provide three extra basic exercise books per student, but of-course still unthinkable that some schools may be providing printouts, stationery, exercise books, covering examination fees and activity fees with a meagre GHS4.5 or \$1.125 per student per semester.

The capitation grant has recorded some problems and inefficiencies for a number of reasons. First of all, we know according to the NDPC (2015) survey, that a whole "50% of parents found the support it provides insufficient" (NDPC, 2015, p. 17). This effectively can be assessed

as one of the main reasons for low continuity, as parents still have so much to pay for in levies and fees even after basic school tuition has been abolished (p. 26, 27).

The Ghana School Feeding Program (2005)

In 2005, as part of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) the **Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP)** was established to be a multi-sectorial poverty reduction scheme that ensures enrolment in school while reducing poverty by employing caterers and farmers to provide food to a target of about 1.04million students in deprived areas in its first ten years from 2005-2015 (schoolfeeding.gov.gh). The school feeding program has been successful in increasing enrolment rates, just as the capitation grant scheme has been. Unfortunately, because both programs have been running almost concurrently it is hard to separate and give exact figures for which programs caused what amounts of increase, unless we isolate particular districts that received one program but didn't receive the other. According to research at the University of Ghana, the introduction of the school feeding program in 2005 may have led to only very moderate gains increase in enrolment and student continuity or retention. (Kamaludeen, 2014). Further primary research, perhaps through stakeholder interviews, could give us this additional numerical data and analysis which we do not have at this time.

One of the problems encountered with the GSFP is that some school children would escape from school or sometimes parents themselves would withdraw their children from schools forcefully after the lunch break to help them work in farms or at the market (Interviewee, 2017). It's continuity with further regulations to ensure full attendance of students, could be a vehicle to ensure access to education. One would think that the school feeding program should

ensure that students enjoy full access to schooling while benefitting from the additional welfare provision of receiving free lunches.

We realize that many students' families still have many needs that they need to meet even after they receive free tuition for their children or wards. The GSFP came in to take one less burden off them, but even still we see that parents are withdrawing their children from school to help make ends meet for their families. According to Assié-Lumumba (2015), in a lecture on Types of Education, she mentions that non-formal education, which is a type that is traditionally upheld as culturally relevant to a group of people, sometimes takes precedence over formal education like that which is being funded by the government. Because of the socio-cultural relevance of non-formal education, in addition to the additional and immediate economic benefits it provides to families especially in rural areas, it may take a cultural shift over time, to convince and even incentivize some families to keep their children in school even with the added welfare benefit of providing free lunches. Assié-Lumumba (2015) believed that those cultural forms of education are also important, which I agree, but the government may have to look at ways of regulating children's involvements in both types of educations – formal and non-formal, without diminishing cultural norms and values that take precedence over Western Education in many of our rural and traditional societies in Ghana.

I believe that in order to stop parents and students from circumventing the real intended purpose of the GSFP as a tool to ensure that students stay in school and are not suffering from hunger which drives them away, the GSFP should be tied to a minimum attendance rate to eliminate the problem of students leaving school or being withdrawn by their parents right after

the lunch hour. I believe that an intervention like making parents pay a penalty or pay for the lunch of their wards in subsequent weeks if they leave school right after the lunch hour for more than three times in a month, could serve as a deterrent. Alternatively, there could also be a further reward system for families who ensure that their children or wards do not practice this truancy or try to cheat the system by coming to school and leaving right after the free lunch.

The government if it is to keep the GSFP running with these reported problems, must implement some strict regulations to ensure that students continue school and are not just enrolled to benefit from free lunches. The program is definitely being expanded but at a cost that is high and an efficiency that is low as outlined by the NDPC (NDPC, 2015). According to the Government of Ghana, "As far as the School feeding program is concerned, the total coverage has increased from 441,189 children to 1,739,357 children" from when it started in 2005 till the Mahama government took over in 2012 (Lartey, n.d.). This signifies that in just about seven years the capacity of the program was expanded by about 400%, because there is a clear demand for it. The GSFP is a humane and empathetic intervention for students who go through school starving, but it has become a mere tool for feeding and not for ensuring a sustained access to quality education.

Brazil is an exemplar of how to ensure access and quality even by making interventions that address sub-scale problems like hunger, through the Bolsa Familia (Family Bursary) program which is an anti-poverty program whose main outcome is to achieve Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) amongst other things like employment and educational development. The Bolsa Familia program provides a direct cash handout to families, that is calculated to be enough to provide for school

uniforms, *school feeding*, books, and even enough to invest in the family's business, and the regulation is that they ensure a minimum 85% enrolment rate for their children and annual vaccinations before the school year (Wetzel, 2013). Because the parents also have something to lose (their personal cash bursaries), this program has been successful and has ensured an elimination of hunger amongst students in addition to an increased enrolment rate, a maintained average attendance rate in participating districts at the minimum 85%, and continuity of students from basic to secondary school until the university age of 21 where they are no longer eligible for Bolsa Familia benefits (Nilson and Sjoberg, 2013).

I believe it is in the best interest of the government of Ghana to implement regulations as were done with the Bolsa Familia to ensure that students are fed, are attending school, are staying in school, and are no longer depended on by their families as free labor to help them make ends meet. This should not necessarily eliminate non-formal education for children in traditional fishing, farming, bead-making communities for example, but rather release children from engaging in non-formal education as a compulsory, immediate economic outlet for their families, rather than a truly liberating and developmental tool for their own Human Development and future self-determination. Non-formal education should be an option and not the best alternative in a globalizing, postindustrial world.

The First Lady's School Uniforms for Needy Children Initiative (2009)

This initiative was touted as one of the more bizarre interventions by a government. However, not so much in reality because indeed there was and still is a great need amongst poor school children for school uniforms. Many students especially in the rural areas in Ghana are

unable to go to school because of uniforms in a state of disrepair. Sometimes some students skip because they do not have clean uniforms and so the need to provide enough to be able to have clean clothes everyday definitely exists.

The government committed an amount of GH¢21 million which translates into approximately \$5million USD to provide school uniforms for needy children in basic schools around the country ("ModernGhana", 2009). The first phase of this program was to provide 1.6million units to children in 77 of the most deprived districts in the country (ibid.). The government's aim in starting this program was to fulfill their promise of increasing access to education for students countrywide especially in deprived communities (ibid.). Even though a direct evaluation was not performed, the basic education enrolment rate between the start of the program in 2009 and the end of the government's term in 2013 increased by approximately 14.5% (Lartey, n.d.). This increase was attributed to various interventions and subsidies for education, which included but was not limited to the free school uniforms initiative.

The free school uniforms initiative is likely to have increased access significantly as it did address a pervasive issue of lack of uniforms that hindered students from attending school regularly. The provision of school uniforms addresses the welfare issue of social stratification as it allows the poor and rural students without uniforms to attend school just as the more well to do and usually urban-dwelling students to be able to do same unhindered by a lack of uniforms. This means that society becomes some degree less stratified as opportunities for education are opened to those who were impeded by this need for uniforms.

Professor Mills' reign unfortunately was truncated by his sudden demise after serving just two and a half years of his 4-year term. The free uniform program however, was arguably the most notable of his education interventions, though he worked to increase the capitation grant from 3 GHS to 4.5 GHS as well as begin pilot projects for free textbooks and laptops for rural schools.

The Free School uniforms program was rolled out in select districts, presumably the poorest of the poor even though the government did not reveal their criteria for this selection in any of their press releases. Reception of the uniforms was means-tested, to provide for those who do not have the means of acquiring their own uniforms. This makes the program identifiable as a liberal welfare intervention, that targets only those who are in most need and not the whole population as Nkrumah's programs would have done. Selecting particular areas to make this provision seems actually a more efficient way of providing government welfare with limited resources, however, because of problems of transparency we cannot vouch for the efficiency of this program, or that indeed targets were not chosen by cronyism or nepotism but by using the Rawlsian Principle of absolutely choosing those in the greatest need as the recipients of this form of welfare.

Many concerns have been reported with this program, chief of which are that the government counts its success in the number of uniforms provided however students don't benefit from them as most are oversized. Furthermore, many media commentators have bemoaned the fact that local tailors in beneficiary areas could have been employed instead of government opting to import from China rather than contracting them to measure and provide

fitting uniforms for children. This points to the neglect of government in ensuring that this program is implemented efficiently, rather than the apparent populism that they seem to be purporting by taking laurels for an intervention that does not seem to work to the standard that it should.

Free Sandals for School Children Program (2014)

The free sandals for school children project was started to compliment the free school uniforms program initiated by the office of the first lady under President Mills (presidency.gov.gh). This program also did not proceed without controversy as many Ghanaians decried the fact that it was not as dire a need at the moment in time and that monies could be diverted to other needs in impoverished communities including power and water. Additionally, while the government claimed to have commissioned the footwear division of the Defense Industrial Holding Company (DIHOC) in Kumasi to produce the sandals, it was found later in an investigation by the premier news media house in Ghana, MyJoyOnline, that just like the free school uniforms they were actually importing them mostly from China (“Myjoyonline”, 2015). In one particular district, only 3 pairs out of the 500 sandals distributed were actually locally made, pointing to the fact that the President’s promise wasn’t being kept (Ibid.).

The free sandals program carries with it a few problems. The first is that it was touted to provide a second impact of creating employment in addition to helping to facilitate access to education by affording students needed footwear to help them get to school by foot which they usually do. The company contracted by the government to provide the sandals was defunct and the government hoped that it will provide an avenue for them to be revived and to provide

employment. The state of that rejuvenation is not currently documented and the impact of the program is also not known publicly as the program is still in its formative stages.

Just like with the Free School Uniforms Program and the GSFP, I believe that government should merge all these different programs into an umbrella policy that perhaps provides bursaries in addition to the free tuition at the basic level, like was done in partnership with the CMB in the Comprehensive Education Act 1961. This will reduce administrative costs, will reduce wastage as we see with the oversized uniforms and sandals, and can also eliminate bureaucracies if these bursaries are made directly to students and families. According to Charles Kenny (2015), in *“Give Poor People Cash”* direct cash transfers to beneficiaries instead of in-kind benefits and tiered transfers that go through different institutions, actually reduce administrative costs of government by 20% (Kenny, 2015). This amount I believe could be potentially reinvested into increasing direct welfare benefits to students and their families or perhaps add an additional district to the list of beneficiaries of government educational welfare.

Teacher Professional Development Program (TPDP) (2016)

This program was only introduced a few months ago and its progress and impact may not be evaluated till much later. The Teacher Professional Development Program introduced by the outgoing President John Mahama, aims to perform the function of bridging the skills deficit that a lot of teachers already in the teaching profession lack. In Ghana, the average pass rate for teacher training colleges is at a low average grade of C6, which is equivalent to a C-/D+ in the US education system (Regluv Edu Agency, 2016). Even still many in the teaching profession never received this worryingly low pass rate – some go straight into teaching even after being out of

school from middle school. Unqualified and underqualified teachers have been enveloped into the fold of our education through corrupt hiring practices, shortages of teaching staff especially in rural areas, and a general low value ascribed to the teaching profession currently, which has created very low or sometimes non-existing barriers to entry.

The TPDP, therefore, had been introduced to provide and update skills for those who need them instead of abruptly cutting the rolls of public schools. Furthermore, the TPDP only targets basic school teachers, which implies those from kindergarten to JHS 3 (equivalent of K-9 in the US), even though Senior High Schools also do encounter the problem of having untrained teaching staff. This professional development program in itself cannot be labeled as bad or not at all beneficial but the question of whether it is the best intervention for addressing the problem of untrained teachers or the lack of properly trained teachers is pertinent to its appropriateness as a major intervention at this time. Problems of low barriers to entry for people entering teacher training colleges, a lack of incentives for the very best students and most qualified people to enter teacher training and the teaching profession itself, and a lack of textbooks and other teaching materials like chalk and markers still persist and one would think that they could be addressed primarily to ensure that the vicious cycle of admitting untrained and underqualified teaching staff into our schools will be prioritized instead of trying to retrain underqualified staff midway when they have already proceeded to render subpar service to our current students and our future generation of leaders and workers.

Contrasting the Human Capital Theory, I believe that the TDPD only delays the truly needed intervention of ensuring that from the very beginning of their schooling years, students

have access to the very best educators, and in turn are assured that they will become well equipped, strong components of Ghana's human capital in future. In actual fact, I believe that most of the recent programs from the school feeding to free sandals and uniforms do not improve the human capital of the country. They seem to be populist moves that do not squarely tackle the issues at hand of lack of quality, access and continuity in our education system. The TPDP, aims to address quality but I am not optimistic that it will do a good job of providing further training for totally untrained and currently undertrained teachers, who should be eliminated from the system totally instead of polishing over dirt with the Teacher Professional Development Program.

Special Focus: The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program (2008)

The LEAP program was rolled out by the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection in 2008, as a conditional cash transfer program sponsored by the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) (Karimatu, n.d.). The LEAP program is especially interesting and deserves a *special focus* because comparatively, it was not started necessarily as a program targeted towards educational outcomes per se, but rather as a general cash handout program that was means tested for the poorest of poor, with priority given to families with chronic health problems and disabilities to lift them out of poverty into self-sufficiency (IPC-IG, 2014). In actual fact one of the main areas that the LEAP targeted was health outcomes and so the program mandated compulsory enrolment in health insurance for beneficiaries and directly guided them in doing so.

The LEAP program, interestingly, from Impact evaluations carried out by UNDP's IPC-IG and the University of North Carolina (UNC) in 2013, recorded impressive health and education impacts (IPC-IG, 2014). Our focus here however is on the education impacts of the LEAP cash transfers and how they have affected educational outcomes like enrolment and more importantly continuity of student beneficiaries through the school cycle.

According to a policy brief by the International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth (IPC), the LEAP program was successful in increasing school enrolment at the secondary level by 7 percentage points amongst vulnerable students in LEAP beneficiary households (IPC-IG, 2014). LEAP also recorded a 10-percentage point decrease in student absenteeism amongst vulnerable student beneficiaries. (Ibid). Additionally, it also led to a decrease in grade repetition in students both at the primary and secondary levels of education who were from beneficiary households. The single issue with educational outcomes from LEAP, which was also highlighted by the NDPC in their 2014 assessment of the Capitation Grant Scheme (NDPC, 2015), was that there were evident gender disparities on all these positive outcomes, with boys holding the higher share of increased enrolment and continuity rates compared to girls.

To conclude this section, we acknowledge based on the findings presented herein, that the major Education Reform Programs and Interventions in the post-colonial period from 1951-1966, and in the 4th republic from 2001-2016, were arguably successful in especially increasing enrolment of students in the Ghanaian basic education system. The only recent intervention that positively impacted continuity rates is the LEAP program which interestingly was not even purposefully targeted at solving this problem.

One particularly pervasive problem that the reforms of 2001 to 2016 failed to address is the continuity of enrolled student through completion of basic education to senior high and even tertiary education. The ADPE and CEA from 1951-66 purposefully made interventions to facilitate continuity and not just access. For example, in order to increase continuity from basic to secondary schools, the CEA was introduced to cut out secondary school tuition and additionally introduce bursaries and stipends for students. This was successful in increasing secondary enrolment by 15-fold from 1951-66. In the meanwhile, today, continuity from basic to senior secondary education is at a low of just 28% according to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and the NDPC (UIS, 2016; NDPC,2015).

Nkrumah's regime was more social democratic and sought to provide benefits for all, and did so successfully. Recent regimes have been more liberal and conservative at times, because of their Rawlsian approach to providing welfare. They only target the poorest poor, making interventions in a few handfuls of districts and leaving majority of the country, still in need of welfare to facilitate teaching and learning. It is okay to direct resources to those in most need but this possibly assumes that those in less needs are meeting a good enough standard for education. Like Nkrumah did by partnering with the CMB, government needs to also look towards a private-public welfare mix in order to make provision of educational needs for the whole country as even our best standards in the most equipped regions are not internationally competitive.

It is also evident that interventions during Nkrumah's time sought fervently to tackle the issue of quality as it did access. Graham (1971) and Kosack (2012) both make the same evaluation

that government's heavy investment in teacher training and improving the value of the profession through welfare incentives like paid training and salaries compared to white color jobs, ensured that the very best were attracted to teach and develop our Human Capital. Today, teacher stipends have been dropped, pass rates into teacher training colleges are at an all-time low, and even unqualified and untrained Ghanaians are admitted into teaching jobs, with our human capital at risk. Unfortunately, but in tandem with the functionalist theory, teacher training has become one of the avenues for the appendices in society to make a living – not doing what they are good at, but doing what no one else wants to do because of the low remuneration and value ascribed to the teaching profession in Ghana.

The interventions under the 4th republic – Capitation Grant, Free Sandals, Free Uniforms, Free School Feeding, and the Teacher Professional Development Programs, all seem to be inefficiently run stop gaps that do not imbue any confidence in education reform critics including myself that Ghana's system will be built on these shaky pillars to become globally competitive and sustainable. I believe that there are lessons for reform from the 1st republic and even from international exemplars that we can look to, in order to ensure the welfare of citizens and incentivize the development of our Education into one that is of remarkable quality, accessible to all locally without discrimination, and that is globally competitive and exemplary.

Causes of Low Continuity Rates: Elite Stakeholder Perspectives

After cataloguing the government's welfare programs targeted at education and their success or failure in addressing low continuity rates, we realize that we need to analyze what the real major causes of this issue are and assess what changes can be made to welfare interventions to help address this issue. Different reasons can be ascribed to the low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system. In order to find out the causes of this negative phenomenon, some research into the issue was required as the causes of low continuity rates in Ghana have not been studied at any significant depth yet. There are two stakeholder groups that can be identified as the repositories of knowledge on why the problem of low continuity rates is currently so pervasive in our education system. The first group is the elite stakeholder group - those with a direct bearing on the planning and implementation of education policy like the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana Education Service (GES), the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), renowned Ghanaian Educationists, and the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) - all of whom mainly deal with the supply of education. The second group is the non-elites and beneficiary stakeholder group which includes students, families of students, school heads, teachers and school district officers. I had the privilege of interviewing policy makers within the elite stakeholder group and so mainly present their perspectives in this paper. Their opinions on this issue matter because they are directly in charge of designing and implementing education policy reforms in the country.

This section therefore discusses the problem of low continuity rates in Ghana's education system from the unique perspective of elite stakeholders, who are the main subjects in this research. First the major causes of low continuity rates are outlined, some policy options

suggested by these stakeholders are then be presented, and then finally recommendations are made on urgent policy interventions that should be addressed and could be implemented.

Three Common Causes of Low Continuity Rates

Three major factors stand out as chief causes of low continuity rates from my analysis of elite stakeholder perspectives on welfare provision and low continuity rates in our public education system. These are lack of welfare incentives and adequate remuneration for teachers, poverty and the need for improved safety nets for vulnerable students and their families, and finally, the issue of counteracting local culture and a missing sense of purpose in our education system - both of which go hand in hand - as a missing sense of purpose is seen to perpetuate the survival of a culture of ignoring the preached importance of schooling (Interviewee, 2017).

1. Lack of Adequate Teacher Remuneration and Incentives

“Eyeh Nyame Adwuma (It is God’s work), Your Reward is in Heaven”

Complaints by teachers of **lack of adequate remuneration, financial incentives to work** are often met with the words ***“Eyeh Nyame Adwuma (It is God’s work), Your Reward is in Heaven*** and this response has become so commonplace that teachers today joke about it, students joke about it, the general public jokes about it without realizing the repercussions of neglecting the welfare of teachers especially those teaching in rural schools, on student continuity. It is commonplace to find that teachers are posted to areas where they are not guaranteed accommodation, and are not given any pre-financing to find their own housing and settle down in these areas which may be far from their original homes. According to the financial

department of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), teachers face a backlog of their meagre salaries, which is approximately GHS 1,000 or \$250 per month, for as long as one full year, sometimes even more, meaning some new recruits may be left to find accommodation, settle down, take care of their daily needs, and teach happily without the financial motivation and effectively the psychological motivation to do so and so it is no surprise when some schools in districts like Manya Krobo, just an hour from the capital Accra, and with better services than many remote villages, can record 0 pass rates in the leaving exams from junior high to senior high school.

According to some members of GNAT, a lack of welfare incentives and inadequate remuneration for teachers leads to a domino effect starting with teacher dissatisfaction, financial hardships, poor teacher performance and teacher absenteeism, which then leads to pupil absenteeism, high fail rates, parents and guardians offering non-formal education and informal employment for their children and wards, and even children and wards finding these alternatives to schooling themselves (GNAT, 2017).

2. Inadequate Safety Net Structure for Vulnerable Students and their Families

Various social safety nets and interventions have been introduced, notably since the Kufuor administration in 2004 to facilitate access to education for the poorest of families. The main interventions include the Capitation Grant Scheme (CGS), The Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP), The Free School Uniforms Program (FSUP) and Free Sandals Program (FSP), and most recently the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) part-conditional cash transfer program. The CGS, GSFP, FSUP and FSP, have all been noted to have contributed to the high gross

enrolment rates in the past decade and some, with enrolment rates peaking as high as 95% in 2014 (NDPC, 2015). However, only the LEAP program whose most recent Impact Evaluation was in 2014, has shown any bearing on continuity of students after these high snapshot enrolment rates. A quick analysis of the nature of these programs show that the LEAP is the only one that gives cash directly to families, and this, as various economic studies have shown on the impact of direct cash transfers to families, allows poor families to diversify their spending, relaxes their budget constraints compared to receiving vouchers or in-kind welfare like free food and clothes, and also encourages habits like savings and investments which allow them to afford what they previously perceived as luxuries like educating their children (Kenny, 2015).

Another aspect of our welfare provision towards education from my research showed that all the aforementioned programs, which are the biggest safety net programs targeted at education are usually terminated after primary school or junior high school, and so suddenly a new burden of provision arises as students advance in grade. It is hard for students to continue to secondary school or tertiary schools when these welfare provisions are cut and the economic situations of their families most likely have not changed. After primary school, students cannot afford food during school hours, they cannot afford school uniforms as they have outgrown the free ones, they cannot afford printing and library dues, they have no textbooks and exercise books after junior high school - all of which are covered by the Capitation Grant Scheme which terminates after junior high school and which according to the NDPC, is not even adhered to in some districts because the payments for Capitation Grants which go directly to the schools are late by a whole year.

3. Formal Education's Intangible Purpose, Cultural Factors, and the Preference for Non-Formal Education

For many families, especially outside the urban areas, whose livelihoods, usually built around the informal fishing and farming industry - which are not a product of formal education - the purpose of formal education is largely intangible and definitely not their problem as it has never been seen to affect their livelihoods. It has led to a local or rural culture of neglect for formal education, and rather a focus on non-formal education and apprenticeships for their children in economically viable and culturally relevant activities like fishing and farming and even bead-making and kente yarn-weaving in some communities. Many urban dwellers bemoan this preference for non-formal education and its immediate economic rewards, and label it as child labor or ignorance. But the truth is that many families and especially the 25% of Ghanaians who are living under the extreme (absolute) poverty line of less than \$1.90 (US Dollars) a day according to the World Bank Databank 2014 figures (World Bank, 2016), cannot afford to wait for the intangible economic futures that education promises them. Parents become removed from their children's education, sometimes preventing them from schooling at all even with free tuition. Even if the students are allowed to attend school, parents are unable to provide them food and textbooks and basic materials necessary for full participation in schooling, and this is especially evident in areas where the GSFP and Capitation Grants do not cover their educational costs.

[The Way Forward: Elite Stakeholder and Comparative Education Perspectives](#)

Suggested Policy / Reform Interventions

1. Improve Welfare for Teacher Trainees and Teachers

Improving welfare provision for teachers is a sensible and needed option for tackling the issue of low continuity rates in Ghana's public education system. Teachers receive a meagre salary of about GHS 1,000 (\$250) according to GNAT (2017). Salaries in some districts are backlogged by as much as two years especially for those posted to rural areas. Teachers already struggle with finding accommodation in areas that are far from home, accommodation which they also cannot afford even after being paid salaries on time. They need to pay for housing and have little left for transportation if the schools are not close by and have little left for personal needs and so they need to be remunerated better to cover all their living costs - they need to be given living wages calculated according to their unique living costs, even more as they're going to teach in some of the most undesirable and deplorable conditions.

Because of how unattractive the teaching profession is now, incentives will also have to be provided to the brightest students to enter into teacher training after their secondary education. Currently pass rates into teacher training college are at a low of C7 (which translates to a C- or D+ in global standards), and it is a shame that ironically the teaching profession is that one being made to receive the students with the worst grades (Regluy, 2016). It is important to incentivize teacher education and teaching as a profession. For comparison, teacher training colleges during the presidency of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah paid teacher training stipends that would equal to what they would receive if they had freshly qualified to teach (Kosack, 2012). These stipends were

comparable to what workers in other white-collar jobs were receiving at the time. And at that time, teacher satisfaction was high and metrics including pass rates in school leaving exams were much higher for example in English language and only grew worse from the 1960s until the early 2000s when student averages rose back to 1960s levels (Kosack, 2012). Improving the welfare provision for teachers therefore, hypothetically, will improve teacher performance, will improve the intake of better qualified teacher trainees into the system, and effectively will improve retention rates by ensuring that students are being taught better and are passing exams to qualify to the higher levels of education. Teacher stipends have been halted for a couple of years now. They were first halted in 1979 during the first Rawlings coup, and were introduced by Rawlings himself after 1992 when he assumed legitimate power, only to be cut out again in the early 2000s (GNAT, 2017). Luckily, the new government of President Akufo-Addo that was inaugurated just this year has promised to reintroduce teacher trainee stipends and so we anticipate the positive results from that move.

2. Improve Structure of Welfare Programs that Support Families of Vulnerable Students

Both the Capitation Grant and the LEAP program are cash transfer programs to provide a safety net for students and their families. The School Feeding Program (GSFP), the free uniforms and free sandals programs are all in-kind (non-cash) welfare programs. All of these programs only cover a selected number of district based on various economic and social means tests, and so there are many more people in need of these benefits who are not getting them. While these programs have been effective in increasing enrollment, the in-kind programs especially have been found to have done little or nothing to increase continuity because parents receive in-kind benefits by enrolling their kids in school to receive them, but after a while withdraw their kids to

work on the farms for example it's been found in many schools that parents send their children to school just for the lunch hour for food given by the school feeding program and then would draw them immediately after lunch to go to work and make money for them. The same can be seen with the free uniforms program where some parents have received the uniforms but still do not take their children to school. Regardless that they do not have to pay for uniforms and sandals parents still feel that they will be missing the economic returns that they get from their children's labor if they allow them to go to school instead of working, according to the NDPC's 2014 evaluation (NDPC, 2015).

Current cash transfers especially the Capitation Grant at just GHS 4.50 (\$1.125) per student annually, are still not sufficient to cover all costs and so parents still have to bridge remaining costs. It was found also that when the Capitation Grant Scheme was introduced enrolment skyrocketed in beneficiary schools but the NDPC evaluation found that it had little to no bearing on retention and continuity (Ibid). This confirms that Direct Cash transfers to families and not to schools work better. The LEAP transfers that goes directly to families have been found to encourage responsible behavior including ensuring School attendance and retention taking care of children's health, investing and saving amongst other positive economic habits. A viable option then is for government to compound the in-kind benefits and the Capitation Grant into a larger LEAP benefits package and the delete program where families receive enough to pay for uniforms sandals various levies in school, school lunches as well as be given extra money for their businesses, enough to substitute the economic benefits that kids bring to them when the work on the farms and at the fishing ports.

While the LEAP program has been found to be successful, it also only covers ages 5 to 15 years which effectively means that students do not receive LEAP benefits after Junior High School (Karimatu, n.d.). Comparatively we know from the success of a similar program in Brazil, the Bolsa Familia, that continuity increased drastically by up to about 85% because it covered students past Junior High School all the way to Tertiary School (till age 21) so the parents would not have to face the financial shock of being suddenly fully provident for the kids' education after the age of 15 years without a guaranteed increase in their income and financial circumstances (Nilson and Sjoberg, 2013). LEAP benefits range from GHS 48 (\$12) to GHS 90 (\$22.50) bi-monthly, depending on number of eligible beneficiaries within a household (Karimatu, n.d.).

3. Cultural Issues Can Be Positive. Leverage Local Culture into a Hybrid Formal - Non-Formal Model to Renew Purpose of Schooling and Faith in its Economic Benefits.

One way in which we can cross the hurdle of the cultural importance of non-formal education and apprenticeship especially in fishing and farming communities, where learning the skills vital to the local economy takes precedence over formal education is to perhaps find a way of involving these cultural elements and local economic skills into curricula in these areas. Renowned figures in education reform discourse in Ghana have professed that school districts can better involve parents, the community and cultural elements in their areas in order to make education more important and culturally relevant and more economically viable to parents and the older generation who withhold their children and wards from school to engage in these local economic and cultural economies. One example of how this will materialize is to include elements of farming for example in science education particularly as a practical aspect of the agricultural

science curriculum shifting from a system of memorization of definitions, processes, and diagrams that label cross sections of plants and animals. Instead, general science and agricultural science classes should intentionally incorporate local cultural and economic elements. For example, in Nkwanta in the Volta Region, according to renowned educationist, Anis Haffar, the school district can challenge the current institutional structure by taking the initiative to encourage parents to take part in the education of their children, by offering their yam farms, as a practical training for children in school (Haffar, 2016). He argues that **one size science education** is not good and science education should leverage cultural elements, like the abundance of yam farms and yam farming as both a livelihood and a lifestyle in order for education to be immediately beneficial to students and their families in these vicinities (Ibid).

We learn different important cultural activities in the Ghana Education Service Syllabi; fish farming, bead-making, yam farming, are part of the scientific knowledge that the system has taught us to approach by rote memorization, but our system of learning needs to be **'value-added'** (Interviewee, 2017). We have local economies and cultures at our disposal to improve both our learning, our sense of purpose, parent involvement and satisfaction, and in all this a potential solution to low continuity rates in our public education system considering the cultural and social causes we identified earlier.

Some Lessons from Comparative and International Education

The case of a proper remuneration of teachers, for example, is made and substantiated by the very best education systems in the world. Cuba, Singapore, and Finland, for example, have all proven that the welfare of teachers is important to creating a good education system whose

hallmark includes the recruitment of the very best students within the system to become teachers. Hypothetically, and logically, we know and can arguably assume that having and keeping the very best students as teachers should result in a reproduction of quality within the education system. This quality is evidenced by satisfied teachers, well-taught students who excel at their exams especially school-leaving exams from one stage to another, and a lower incidence of dropouts because students remain inspired and engaged by equally inspired and engaged teachers.

In Cuba, according to Martin Carnoy in *"Cuba's Academic Advantage: Why Students in Cuba Do Better in School,"* competitive teacher salaries that are arguably comparable to the best white-collar jobs, helps to attract the very best of students to choose careers in teaching who then apply their passions, knowledge, skills and innovativeness towards creating one of the most successful education systems in the world, for a country that is still at the lower middle-income level (Carnoy, 2012).

Similarly, my findings from fieldwork in Finland and according to a policymaker at the Finnish National Board of Education details that the basic salary for teachers at the basic education level is comparable to other white-collar jobs at about 3,000 Euros a month base gross salary for the minimum number of classes (FNBE, 2016). Teachers are further incentivized with the chance to earn larger salaries based on the number of extra classes they teach instead of patronizing especially younger teachers by overloading them with work (Ibid). In the summer months, teachers are also paid their full 2.5 months' salary when the school is on break to ensure

that they are able to sustain themselves and be rejuvenated and happy to prepare to continue in their stellar service for the next academic year (FNBE, 2016).

Provision of Welfare to families of vulnerable students has also proven to be a very successful tool for ensuring retention and continuity in school. In Finland, in addition to free tuition all the way up to the master's level, students also receive stipends, relieving their parents of the need to spend their salaries on the welfare of students. Parents who are in hardship also receive cash transfers from the government welfare agency KELA, to help sustain their own needs (FNBE, 2016). Meeting the needs of both vulnerable students and their families also definitely helps with ensuring minimum attendance, retention and continuity in school. From our data in chapter two, if this Finnish welfare and teacher remuneration focus is anything to go by, then it indeed very well may be the explanation for their 99% net enrolment at the primary level, and a whopping 89% still retained in school at the tertiary levels (World Bank, 2016).

It is important to note that many of the exemplars that Ghana may look up to do not have the same complex socio-cultural and economic structures that if they existed could have different effects on the outcomes of welfare structures on educational outcomes especially on continuity through secondary to tertiary levels of education. Nevertheless, the importance ascribed to welfare provision especially targeted at facilitating the supply of quality education through teachers, and meeting the demand of students and vulnerable families for quality and financially accessible education, offers us lessons on how to regroup and elevate the importance of welfare solutions to problems like low continuity rates in our public education system.

Recommendations for Urgent Reforms/Interventions in Ghana

In institutional reform, changing the culture of stakeholders in order to influence institutional change is often a very difficult option to pursue. In addressing low continuity rates in Ghana, and the need to surmount cultural and economic barriers to addressing this issue, the option of introducing cultural elements for example linking students' agricultural science education to parents' yam farms in Nkwanta in order to involve parents in science related curricular activity may take a longer formative process than addressing the need for financial incentives to ensure continuity of students in school as soon as possible. A curriculum level shift can also be made by allowing school heads the autonomy to be innovative. Therefore, the two policy recommendations that are deemed urgent and actionable by the government, is for them to provide financial incentives for teachers to improve their performance and retention, and also provide financial incentives for families of vulnerable students to release their children to participate in formal education without counting their economic losses. Considering this, the two reform options that should be prioritized at this time are as follows.

Increase Teacher Salaries, Restore Trainee Stipends, Make Welfare Provisions for Rural Teachers

Examples abound of why teacher salaries should be competitive to salaries of other reputable jobs. The most educationally developed countries; Singapore, Finland, even Cuba, have teacher salaries as high as salaries in other white-collar jobs including the engineering, banking, medical, and other quaternary services. Competitive salaries keep teaching in Finland and Singapore as a profession with one of the most competitive and qualifying programs to get into

after Secondary School. Restoring teacher training stipends is also important to attract the very best students into the education system as teachers. Special welfare programs including providing housing and other welfare benefits like financial rewards and bonuses for offering to teach in the most undesirable places, should ensure equitable access to the very best teachers, and as a result, reduce rural-urban disparities in continuity rates as well as increase the overall percentage of students retained in the schooling system from primary through to the tertiary level.

Expand the LEAP Program! Send Increased Cash Transfers to Families of Vulnerable Students and for a Longer Period of Coverage.

The success of the LEAP program according to the impact evaluations done by UNICEF and the University of North Carolina, is that it has been able to address the problem of low retention and continuity rates within the public education cycle in Ghana (de Groot, 2016). This success cannot be attributed to just one aspect but to various aspects of the program. One aspect for example, is that families are direct beneficiaries of the cash transfers, compared to other programs like the Capitation Grant Scheme which puts the money in the hands of the school districts and the schools, to purchase what educational materials are needed, cover dues and charges for printing and examinations and library use (if there are truly any), amongst other miscellaneous costs. The other aspect is that parents now have an added basic income to expand their business and even hire extra hands on farms, and so are able to release their children to go to school.

The one problem that should definitely be addressed with the expansion of the LEAP program to cover more impoverished students, is that it should be made to cover students beyond age 15 years old otherwise parents losing all the benefits that LEAP comes with when their children reach that age cannot support continuity of their children in school. Like the Bolsa Familia program in Brazil I believe that it is imperative to increase the duration of LEAP benefits to families till children are 21 years old or at the end of the four years of traditional tertiary education, to allow more poor families to see their children through the full cycle of schooling in Ghana.

Having noticed that in-kind benefits and indirect cash transfers like Capitation Grants to Schools do very little to keep students in school, the government should compound all these benefits into the LEAP program like was done with the introduction of Bolsa Familia (Wetzel, 2013), to ensure that with increased LEAP monetary benefits parents are also coaxed to ensure feeding, clothing, health, and our main target, retention and continuity in school for their children, as a condition for they themselves receiving an extra basic income to run their businesses and cover their daily needs, independent of the economic viability of their children.

[Limitations and Conclusions](#)

Limitations

The main limitation to this study is that most of the welfare interventions mentioned in this paper were not evaluated for their individual impact and so the effect they caused individually may be better attributed to other programs that were running concurrently. This is a common problem faced with evaluating any policy in that you can hardly control for other factors contributing to outcomes that are being recorded. For example, the Ghana School Feeding Program and the Capitation Grant Scheme have been running concurrently since 2005 and so both can be assumed to have increased rates of enrolment. What we can look out for in further studies is whether rates of enrolment increased significantly and suddenly with the introduction of programs compared to an immediately preceding period when they did not exist. While this is a limitation to consider, we can generalize from the fact that while these programs were running, particular positive impacts were being recorded, to say that they may have had some form of net positive impacts.

This paper points out particular nuances of what the nature of education and welfare was in the post-colonial period compared to recent times, with a focus on the welfare and human development aspects that each period especially seemed to target. Another major limitation to note is that because the programs highlighted under the 4th republic are still running, their full impact cannot be measured at this time, and any evaluation made may be more formative than summative. Programs like the Teacher Professional Development Program, only commissioned in 2016, can only be evaluated for their planned function and projected outcomes at this stage,

rather than by any actual outcomes as no evaluations have been made or put out in the public domain as yet.

Data limitations should also be noted. In computing continuity rates, the resolve was to use decreasing enrolment rates with advancement in level of education as a measure of continuity rate. However, at the inception of this research the idea was to compute continuity as the deficit of students who do not enroll at the next levels, for example secondary school, after completing the previous level – primary school. Incomplete data on completion rates limited my ability to analyze the true deficit at these transition stages and what may be uniquely causing them.

Conclusions

Low continuity rates or sharply decreasing enrolment rates with advancement of education level is not a unique problem to Ghana, however it is a problem that exemplar countries like Finland, Singapore, Cuba, experience very minimally. Sub-Saharan Africa from our definition of the issue of low continuity rates seems to experience this issue quite notably. Within SSA, Ghana is consistently in the top 10 highest enrolment rates from primary through tertiary according to 2014 World Bank Education Statistics. When compared with Lower Middle-Income countries globally, however, we fall behind, and notably trail countries and territories that have less socio-economic and political stability than we do which is a cause for concern and perhaps shows a lack of ambition for prioritizing educational outcomes such as this.

From our categorization of historical and current welfare programs that address educational outcomes, we realize that current programs fail to address the causes of low continuity rates - especially the three major ones found from this research. Exemplars like Cuba, Finland, and Brazil with its Bolsa Familia program give us hints on the structure and targeting modes of welfare programs that lead to desired educational outcomes and especially higher retention and continuity rates with advancement in level of education. Bolsa Familia for example, with its structure like LEAP in Ghana, stands as a major signpost for targeting, means testing, and implementing social protection for educational outcomes like retention and continuity at a scale larger than the LEAP program's current scale and impact.

Further research however, may be needed on defining the issue, assessing the causes of low continuity especially from the perspective of beneficiaries and non-elite stakeholders, and also on important economic and socio-cultural factors that stand as intervening obstacles for SSA countries and lower and middle-income countries to implement larger scale welfare and social protection programs for ensuring higher continuity rates within each respective country's public education system.

Finland, Cuba, Singapore, especially, are three countries that I believe provide a glimmer of hope of what can be achieved under a 40-year education reform plan beyond just ensuring high enrolment rates at each stage of education. With further research on their reform processes and how they achieved relatively high continuity rates within their systems, they could be used as benchmarks or models whose best practices can be borrowed and modified, being sure to include the unique socio-cultural and economic features that Ghana's own reforms must

consider, in addressing various areas for educational reform not the least the issue of low-continuity rates in our public education system.

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





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Appendices

Table 1.2 – Highlighting 2014 Primary Net Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons

Selected Countries and Economies			
Country	2001	2014	
Finland	100	99	
Malaysia	97	98	
Russian Federation		95	
Cuba	96	93	
Brazil	98	92	
India	80	90	
Ghana	59	89	
Sub-Saharan Africa	61	78	
Lower middle income	79	87	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%) | Data..*

Table 1.3 – Highlighting 2014 Primary Net Enrolment Rates in Lower Middle Income Countries

Lower middle income			
Country	2001	2014	
Morocco	80	98	
Cabo Verde	95	98	
Egypt, Arab Rep.	88	98	
Sri Lanka	100	97	
Tajikistan	93	97	
Timor-Leste		97	
Kiribati		96	
Ukraine		96	
Samoa	86	96	
Lao PDR	75	95	
Sao Tome and Principe		95	
Mongolia	91	95	
Cambodia		95	
Myanmar	91	95	
Honduras		94	
Uzbekistan		94	
El Salvador	92	93	
Cameroon		92	
West Bank and Gaza	85	91	
India	80	90	
Indonesia	92	90	
Kyrgyz Republic	86	90	
Ghana	59	89	
Bolivia	95	88	
Tonga	99	87	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Primary, Both Sexes (%) 2001, 2014 | Data*.

Table. 2.3 – Showing 2014 Secondary Net Enrolment Rates in Lower Middle Income Countries.

Lower middle income			
Country	2001	2014	
Uzbekistan		92	
Ukraine	97	89	
Egypt, Arab Rep.		82	
Kyrgyz Republic		80	
West Bank and Gaza	75	80	
Samoa	66	80	
Moldova	78	77	
Bolivia	67	77	
Tonga	76	75	
Indonesia	50	75	
El Salvador	49	70	
Cabo Verde		69	
India		67	
Sao Tome and Principe		64	
Bhutan	24	63	
Ghana	33	55	
Timor-Leste		52	
Lao PDR	29	51	
Honduras		49	
Myanmar	35	48	
Guatemala	29	47	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%)." *Net Enrolment Rate, Secondary, Both Sexes (%) 2001, 2014* | Data.

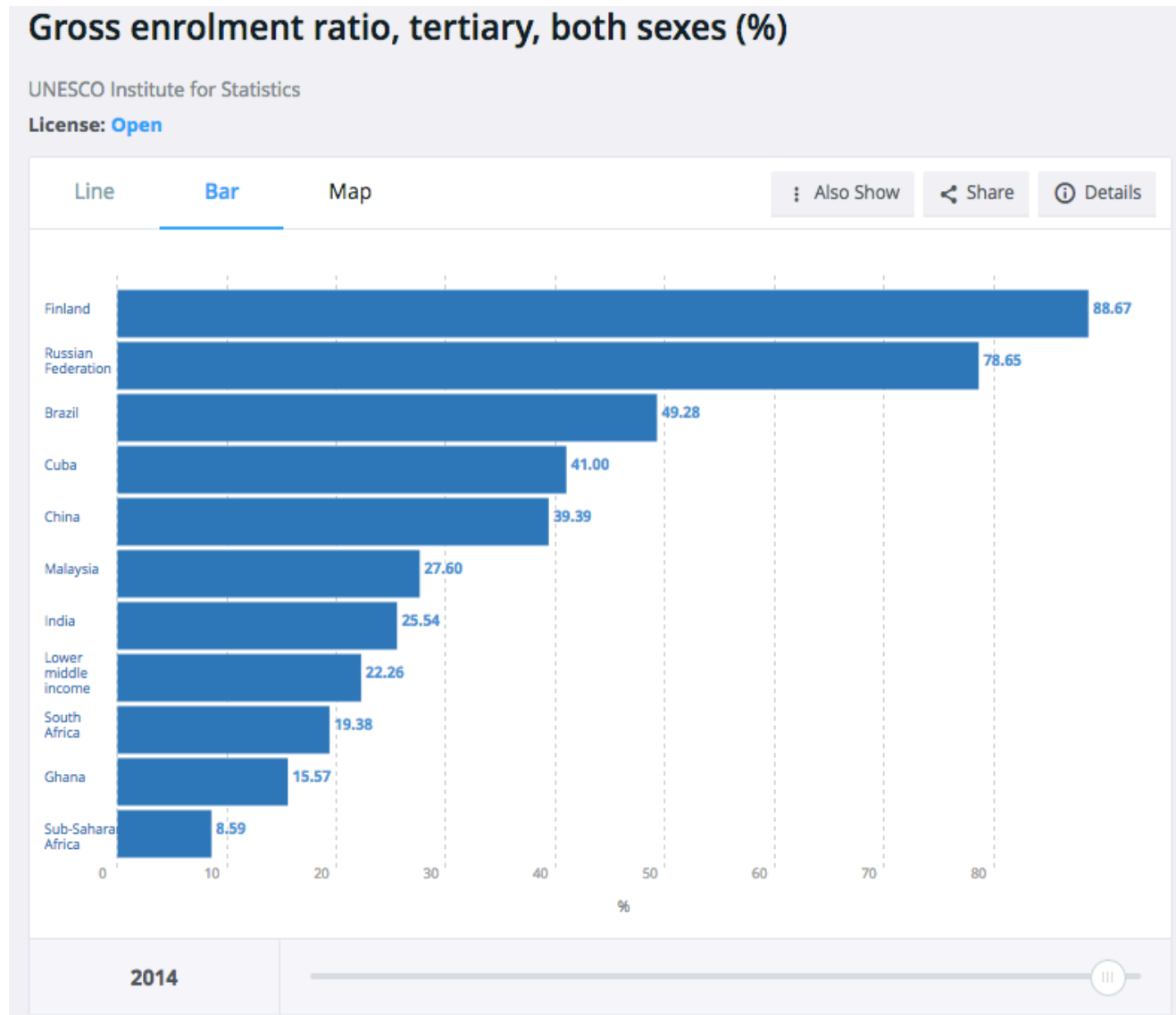




















Fig. 3.2 – Bar Graph of 2014 Tertiary “Gross” Enrolment Rates in Ghana, Selected Comparisons from The World Bank Group. (2016). "Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%)." *Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%) 2014* | Data. (The World Bank Group, 2016. Web. Apr. 2017).

Table 3.3– Highlighting 2014 Tertiary Gross Enrolment Rates in Lower Middle-Income Countries

Lower middle income			
Country	2001	2014	
Ukraine	52	82	
Mongolia	34	64	
Kyrgyz Republic	40	46	
Armenia	33	44	
West Bank and Gaza	26	44	
Syrian Arab Republic		44	
Moldova	32	41	
Philippines	30	36	
Tunisia	22	35	
Egypt, Arab Rep.	30	32	
Indonesia	14	31	
Vietnam	9	30	
El Salvador	21	29	
India	10	26	
Morocco	10	25	
Tajikistan	18	24	
Cabo Verde	2	23	
Honduras		21	
Sri Lanka		19	
Lao PDR	3	17	
Sudan	8	16	
Cameroon	5	16	
Ghana		16	

Source: The World Bank Group. (2016). "Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%)." *Gross Enrolment Ratio, Tertiary, Both Sexes (%)2001, 2014 | Data*.