

Irregular and Incomplete Primary School Attendance in Rural Ghana

A case-study of late enrolment and early drop-out in the Eastern Region



University in Bergen
Department of Geography,
November 2014

Beth Cathrine Fagerlid Oduro



University in Bergen
Department of Geography,
November 2014

Beth Cathrine Fagerlid Oduro

To the children in Africa who never went to school

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This piece of work is the result of my visit to a village in Ghana back in 2001. First of all I thank God for giving me this opportunity.

I also thank those who have paved the way for me to be able to obtain an education, even as a woman and a mother. I am much grateful to “Statens Lånekasse for utdanning”. Without a public student grant arrangement, higher education would have been out of reach for me and so many others.

Special thanks to my husband who has supplied everything we have needed for living through my many years of schooling, while putting his own dreams on hold. I also thank my father for help when things have been too tight financially, and my mother for looking after my children when I had to attend classes in afternoon time, as well as my mother-in-law for allowing us to stay in her house during my trips to Ghana.

I want to say thank you to all my friends and all the people I have interviewed in Ghana. I am grateful for their openness and sharing personal information with me, and for trusting me to use that information in a decent manner. I thank all my interpreters and fellow students, especially Are, for advice and encouragement along the way. Very special thanks to Emmanuel Asante in Eastern Region for all the help he has provided. Without him this project would not have been possible. And to the very patient and helpful taxi driver for advice and interest in my project. Also thanks to Emmanuel in Accra for helping with the children as well as guiding us around and thanks to my very special Susan; I love you like a sister. I also want to express my gratitude to teachers who have participated in interviews. They have all been open and willing to share information as well as the employee at Ghana Educational Service. I really appreciate it.

Special thanks also to my children Isaac, Victoria and Patrick who patiently have followed me on several long journeys to Africa, in village and in city, in heat and in rain suffering mosquito bites, light off and tropical storms so that I could do my field work. I love you all!

And last but not least I thank my supervisor Ragnhild Overå for time spent, books borrowed, advice given and for keeping up with me - who is a sometimes a very frustrated and un-academic-writer. I have enjoyed these two years. It has been everything from exciting and thrilling to frustrating and annoying. I am happy and grateful to have completed this.

Bergen, November 16th. Beth Cathrine Fagerlid Oduro

ABSTRACT

This study takes a closer look at the issue of late enrolment and early drop out in a rural area in Eastern Region in Ghana. Children enrolling in school later than the recommended age of six, is a persistent problem in Ghana in spite of a fee free public school. Using qualitative methodology through household interviews in two villages, interviews with teachers and staff at Ghana Educational Service, a registration scheme and diaries the study seeks to unravel some of the stories behind these delayed enrolments and as drop-outs.

Through the methodology used the topic of irregular schooling gets a new meaning and becomes a focal point. Empirical findings and discussion is including issues such as late enrolment, temporarily drop out, regular school absence and repetition of classes. By using qualitative methodology, parents and school staffs opinions about what causes late enrolment is being explored, which unveil some surprising and questionable practices in school. One of these is the “sacking” of pupils due to unpaid fees in public fee-free primary schools. Another is the caning of pupils as a punishment for the same. It is my argument that primary schooling in Ghana involves direct payment of fees, in spite of the school fees being abolished in 2005. And that this affects the rural poor in terms of enrolling a child in school and/or keeping the child in school at a regular basis. The most vulnerable children and families therefore struggles to engage fully and uninterrupted in primary school. I argue for a stronger management of rural schools.

Structuration theory is used to look at the interconnectedness of structure and agency, showing that structures lays the foundation for much of the choices made, but agency is also visible within the structures, opposing to a structuralist view that agency is prohibited under constraining structures.

From the schools perspective the main argument is a need for increased funding for the government schools. The Capitation Grant is often delayed which leaves the school managements with the difficult task of running a school with an empty budget. There seems to be lack of communication between the local community and the school and here I argue that parents needs to be viewed as resources and to have more influence on the schools activities. This can increase levels of trust in the public school, which is a pending issue.

LIST OF CONTENT:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	
ABSTRACT.....	
LIST OF CONTENT.....	I
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	III
LIST OF FIGURES.....	III
LIST OF TABLES.....	IV
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHY.....	IV
LIST OF MAP.....	IV
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background for choice of topic.....	1
1.1 Topic and aim of study.....	2
1.2 Research question.....	3
1.3 Access to education.....	5
1.4 Dropping out of school.....	7
1.5 Late enrolment.....	8
1.6 The economic barriers.....	11
1.7 Structure of thesis.....	12
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL APPROACH.....	13
2.0 Introduction.....	13
2.1 Classical approaches to development.....	13
2.2 Rural-what is it actually?	19
2.3 Structure and agency.....	20
2.4 Structuration theory.....	21
2.5 Gender ideology.....	26
CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY AREA.....	27
3.0 Introduction.....	27
3.1 History of education in Ghana.....	27
3.2 Structural adjustment programmes and the effect on education	31
3.3 Introduction to Eastern Region	32
3.4 Introduction to the Kwahu South and Kwahu East District.....	33
3.4.1 Education in Kwahu East District	37
3.5 Introduction to village number one.....	40
3.6 Introduction to village number two.....	42
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY.....	44
4.0 Introduction.....	44
4.1 Qualitative research.....	44
4.2 Case study.....	44
4.3 Time schedule.....	46
4.4 Producing data: Ethics.....	46
4.5 Producing data: Choice of methods.....	47
4.5.1 Triangulation.....	48
4.5.2 Sample selection and access	49
4.5.3 Representativeness.....	52
4.5.4 Household interviews and interviewing context.....	53

4.5.5	Registration Scheme.....	58
4.5.6	Observation.....	59
4.5.7	Diary.....	59
4.6	Working with interpreter.....	60
4.7	Validity.....	61
4.8	Reliability.....	62
4.9	Reflections on my status in the field.....	63

CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS.....65

5.0	Introduction	65
5.1	Condition of school and area.....	65
5.2	Delayed Enrolment.....	69
5.2.1	Reasons for delayed enrolment in parents view.....	72
5.2.2	Disabilities and health.....	73
5.2.3	Unwillingness to go to school.....	73
5.2.4	Distance to school.....	73
5.3	Poverty as a reason for delayed enrolment.....	74
5.3.1	Voluntary gifts to teachers or school.....	75
5.3.2	Sudden and unexpected charges.....	75
5.3.3	Printing fee and examination fee.....	76
5.4	Unpaid fees.....	77
5.5	Quality of the school.....	80
5.6	Drop-out.....	82
5.7	Irregular schooling.....	83
5.8	Results from the Registration Scheme.....	84
5.9	Repetition.....	88
5.10	The schools perspective.....	89

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION.....92

6.0	Introduction.....	92
6.1	Poverty Structures.....	92
6.1.2	Poverty as a reason for delayed enrolment	93
6.1.3	Indirect or direct cost of schooling.....	93
6.1.4	Food.....	95
6.2	School System Structures.....	96
6.2.1	Compulsory KG.....	96
6.2.2	Irregular schooling.....	98
6.2.3	Repetition of classes.....	99
6.2.4	Drop-out	100
6.2.5	Voluntary gifts.....	101
6.2.6	Financial constraints within the educational system.....	102
6.3	School environment and culture.....	104
6.4	Agency.....	105
6.5	Qualitative research methods needed.....	105
6.6	A gender perspective on late enrolment	106

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION.....109

REFERENCE LIST.....	113
APPENDIX	118
Questions for household interviews.....	118
Questions for interviews with teachers/staff/key informant.....	120
Registration scheme in primary school.....	122

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCT	Coalition of Concerned Teachers
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition & Equity
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GES	Ghana Educational Service
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
JHS	Junior High School equal to “ungdomsskole” in Norway
KG 1	Kindergarten first year equal to “barnehage” in Norway
KG 2	Kindergarten second year equal to “førskole” in Norway
NAGRAT	National Association of Graduate Teachers
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
P1	Primary one: equal to class one
PTA	Parent-Teacher-Association
SFAI	The School Fee Abolition Initiative
SHS	Senior High School equal to “Videregående skole” in Norway (Also called SSS)
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WB	World Bank

LIST OF FIGURES

5.1 Number of children who were late enrolled by gender and locality.....	71
5.2 Late enrolled pupils in one primary school in village one.....	71
5.3 Households whose children have been sacked from school in village one.....	79
5.4 Households whose children have been sacked from school in village two.....	79
5.5 Age composition in primary school.....	85
5.6 Age composition in KG 2.....	86
5.7 Age composition in primary school class one.....	87
5.8 Age of enrolment in school 2008-2014.....	87

LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Education level for adults over 25 years old.....	10
3.1 Educational institutions in Kwahu East.....	37
4.1 Time schedule for thesis.....	46
4.2 Description of households interviewed in village one.....	54
4.3 Description of household interviewed in village two.....	55
4.4 Diary informants.....	59
5.1 Reasons for delayed enrolment.....	73
5.2 Estimated school related expenses for one term.....	76
5.3 Example of school related expenses from diary, August 2013.....	77
5.4 Description of households who's children had been sacked from school.....	80
5.5 Responses on the quality of school.....	81

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHY

3.1 Cape Coast Castle.....	28
3.2 Philip Queque's boys school.....	29
3.3 Private house in Obo, Kwahu South.....	35
3.4 Private house in Kwahu East.....	35
3.5 Cocoa farm.....	42
3.6 Cocoa beans drying in the sun.....	42
5.1 New building from the government, not yet completed.....	66
5.2 Building used by primary school B and KG.....	66
5.3 Old building for government school A and B, no longer in use.....	66
5.4 Inside of classroom.....	68
5.5 Primary school - building number two.....	68

All photography's are by the author. Beth Cathrine Fagerlid Oduro © 2014.

LIST OF MAP

Map 1.1 Ghana Districts.....	4
Map 3.1 Eastern Region.....	27
Map 3.2 Kwahu East District.....	34

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background for choice of Topic.

In 2001 I met three young boys on a path in a village in Eastern Region. They had been sent home from school because they had not paid their school fees. At the time, I felt bad for the children who were sent home from school and I was wondering if this was common in Ghana. I soon realized that it is all too common. This was the beginning of my long lasting relationship with school children in Ghana. Since 2005 school fees have been abolished, but children still have irregular and incomplete school attendance. This has triggered my curiosity and my passion to write this thesis.

In academia, in politics, in Non-Governmental Organisations, international organisations and even in most societies there is no lack of understanding of the importance of education. Very few people, I believe, would dispute the relevance of education if not for anything else, than at least for the purpose of getting a job in the adult life. There are of course many other reasons for educating yourself, which different groups of people would rely on at different times and in different places. There is no lack of academic work, about education and its benefits or even side effects. Since this is already much established knowledge, I will only sum it up here, without any further discussion around it: Education increases your future income, causes or influences economic growth in the nation, decreases poverty levels, it increases social mobility, educated people are healthier (due to ability and knowledge to prevent diseases) and they are more involved in democratic processes and in civil society. Educated people are even happier (Brint 2006, Hjellbreke and Korsnes 2012, Centre for Global Development).

Because of the great value we place on formal education, governments, NGO`s, religious organisations and international organisations have all been involved in different ways in trying to achieve the Millennium Goal of ensuring “that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” (United Nations Development Programme 2014). Countless efforts have been put in place, and certainly results are also following. However, not only is there a global attempt to ensure all children a basic education, but the last decades there have been increasing focus on the importance of *free* schooling, as a means of reaching this goal, since economic barriers have been recognized as a main barrier for schooling in Ghana as well as other African nations. It has

been formally agreed upon in the Human Right Declaration which states in Article 26 that: *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory...”* (United Nations 2014).

The United Nations as well as other organisations have started several programmes aiming to remove school-fees in many developing countries. The School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI) was launched by the UN and the World Bank in 2005, in order to support policies which will remove parental costs of schooling (user fees, school fees, tuition fees etc.) (United Nations Girls Initiative 2013). The Ghanaian Government has also made efforts in this direction, removing school-fees in public primary schools in 2005 and implementing the Capitation Grant the same year (which is a grant given to the schools based on number of pupils). I will discuss this more in detail in chapter five and six, but for now I want to argue that most people today agree about the importance and relevance of formal education and that education at least at a basic level should be available for all children globally. And that—although a bit more controversial- primary education should be free of charge.

But, however much we dream of this, our dreams are being shattered by the harsh realities of life. I had a conversation with a mother whose nine year old daughter was just about to complete class one in Ghana in 2013. I asked her why the child did not start school at the recommended age of six. She looked at me with hopelessness in her eyes, shook her shoulders and said “I can not afford it” (private conversation, 2013). Ghana Living Standard Survey of the 5th round (Ghana Statistical Service 2008) concludes that the main reasons for children not enrolling or dropping out of school is economic. In this study I am therefore exploring how this is possible in a country operating with a free and compulsory primary education.

1.1 Topic and Aim of study: Late enrolment and early drop-out.

This thesis is concerned with irregular and incomplete schooling at primary level in Ghana. I am addressing the two most common treats of irregular schooling, which I here mainly see as late enrolment and early drop-out. Drop-out is a term referring to children who have been initially enrolled in school, but who drops out, either after a very short time, or after a few years in school. Late enrolment is a term referring to children who are enrolling later than the recommended school entry age at six years old. Enrolling in school or staying in school is ultimately a matter of access or accessibility to education. Because late enrolment and drop-out is generally common in Ghana it causes children to have irregular schooling, which is a

major challenge in the Ghanaian educational system. “Access” is defined in the Oxford dictionary as “right or means of approaching or entering”. The word “accessible” is defined as “able to be reached or obtained” (The Oxford English Minidictionary, 1994). I am in other words concerned with children’s opportunities of entering school or how able children are to obtain and complete a basic education. A child is every person between 6-18 years, as according to international standards. The recommended school going age in primary school and Junior High School (JHS) in Ghana is from the age of 6 to the age of 15.

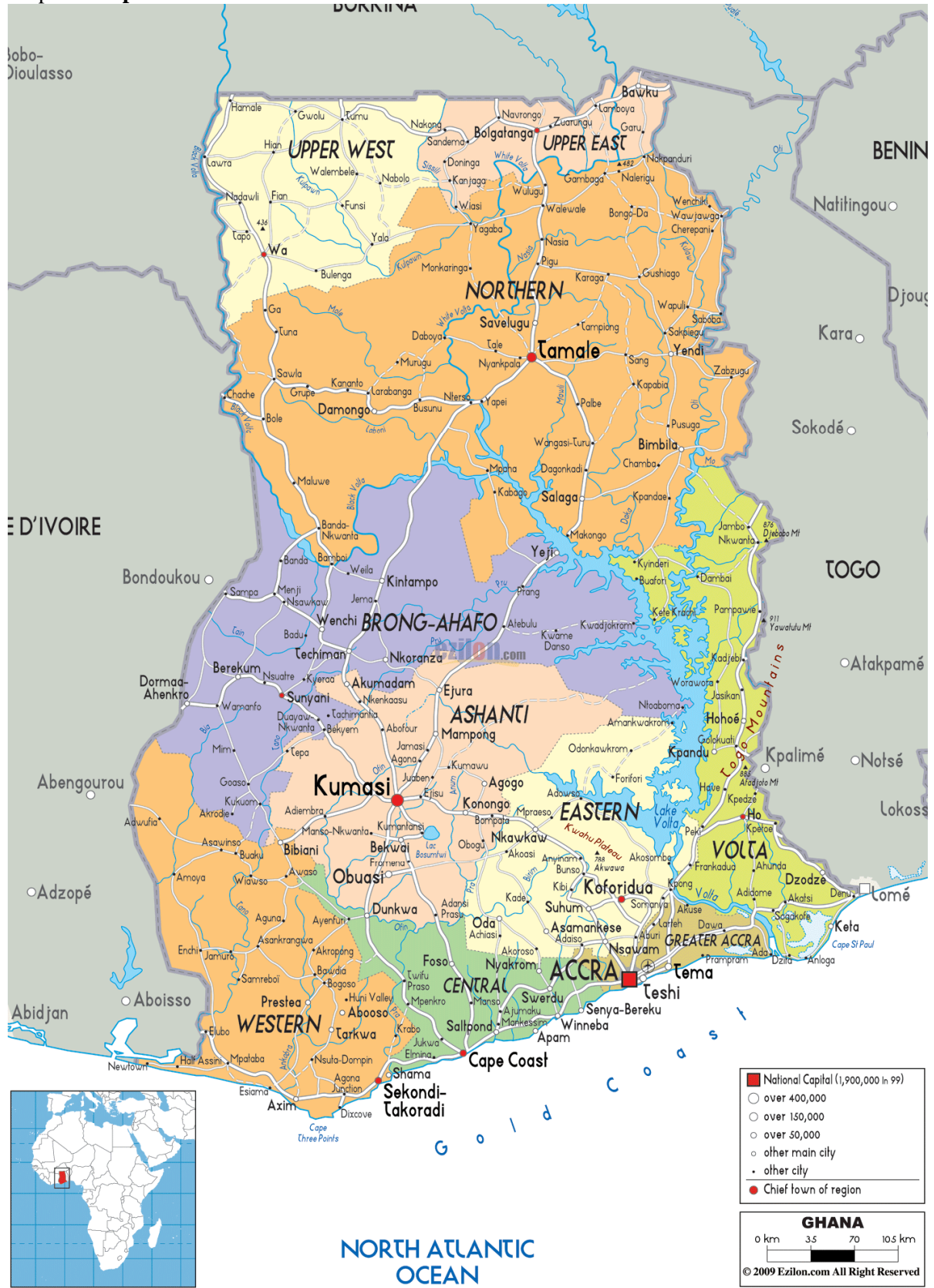
The aim of this study is to bring some clarity and awareness around the issue of late enrolments and early drop-outs in two rural public primary schools in the Eastern Region. Very specifically that means finding the reasons behind late enrolments and the reasons behind early drop-outs. I hope to reveal some of the complicated decisions that parents/guardians and students face in the search for education. I hope to clarify the issues at stake and to raise some awareness for decision makers on what they need to consider if late enrolments and early drop-outs is going to be reduced. I am then aiming to increase my own as well as reader’s knowledge about the constraints and opportunities which people face in the search for an education in Ghana.

1.2 Research Question:

In order to study the enrolments and the drop-outs my main research question is:
What causes the irregular school attendance for rural children in the Kwahu District Ghana?
Looking into the causes of irregular school attendance I have formulated two sub-research questions: Why do children enrol later than the recommended enrolment age of six years in primary school? And: Why do children drop out during primary school?

The data generated through these research questions will be analysed using a structuration-theory perspective in order to identify structures which constrain or enable late enrolments and early drop-outs. Equally I am looking for agency, which is the individual’s effort or capability to overcoming the constraints to education.

Map 1.1 Map of Ghana Districts



Source: Ezilon Maps

1.3 Access to education

The geographical unequal distribution of education in Ghana is well documented and seems to influence in many different areas (Essuman 2007). Most commonly discussed is the North/South divide in Ghana which has been present for several hundred of years. The second well known geographical divide in Ghana is that between the rural and the urban. A child born in rural Ghana has a statistically lesser chance to achieve a full primary education, if any, and the number of children growing up in rural Ghana has a percentage of enrolment in Universities at 0 % for females and 5 % for males! (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2012:25). A rural child has less opportunity to choose his own life. If you are born in rural Ghana by rural farmer parents, you're most likely going to be a farmer, with a few years in school so you can read and write, and that's it. It's not a lot of choice involved in this process. Life is chosen for you already. Now, I want to make it clear that I am not against being a farmer or being a rural inhabitant. My point is that it is better to be a farmer by choice, than to be a farmer because there's no other alternative.

Geography will very much determine the quality of education you will receive, and if you will receive any education at all. The place you are born in Ghana, or grow up, will decide it all. Whether or not a child has access to school depends on several different factors. The physical availability to a school in an acceptable distance is only one of the factors. Children's access to school is depending on their parent's education and interest as well. A report written by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition & Equity in 2007 mentions health, disability, parental education, migration, gender, location and economy as relevant issues relating to access to school in Ghana (CREATE 2007). Fentiman et al (1999) mentions health, parent's perception of the child's maturity, distance to school, school environment, interest in western education, gender, migration and also economy as issues relating to access, after studying enrolment patterns in the north of Ghana. Another report by CREATE in 2008 about school drop-out in Ghana concludes that the decision is often a result of multiple events with factors such as poverty and school supply being important. Poverty is often interacting with other social situations such as orphanage, minority language group/migrants and some gendered structures in the household the author claims (CREATE 2008:52-53).

Yet another report by CREATE (2011a) concerning never enrolled children also concludes that poverty, large families, migration and the parental educational levels seem to influence decision on not enrolling children in school. Here too, several factors together are affecting

the decisions and not one event all together. They also mention family shocks as causal, for example the death of a parent, or other sudden changes. A family which experiences multiple problems may not have the resources necessary to address the children's right or need for an education. In a developing country where education is still an economic burden for many parents or guardians, their economic ability to pay what is necessary for the child's education, is a key element.

Access to school then, depends not only on the school building, but also on the financial situation of a family. However, the issue is even more complicated. Because of the chaotic system of suppliers of education in Ghana (public and private) the choice for parents is never a straight forward one. Ultimately several conditions must be taken into consideration before deciding upon sending a child to school. In some areas the only alternative is a private school, as no public school is available. In other places public schools are present, but some parents prefer private schools due to bad reputations of public schools. Longer distance to Junior High School and Senior High School might affect the low enrolment rates in secondary education. But secondary education is also more expensive than primary. To me, statistics seem to show a clear relation between the increasing expenses and the declining enrolments.

The fact that family-economy still plays a vital role in the provision of children's education in Ghana opens for a class-perspective. This also seems to be supported by statistics. When comparing the wealthiest income quintile and the poorest income quintile in Ghana, the poorest one always comes out less fortunate. Looking at children out of school shows that within the poorest income quintile there are 40.8 % of primary school age children who are not attending school. Within the wealthiest income group there is 11.5 % in the same age group who are not attending school. For older children between 12-14 years the poorest income quintile has 23.4 % out of school, while the richest income quintile have 5.3 % out of school (UNICEF 2012).

It is interesting in the Ghanaian case that economy still is an important factor relating to children's ability to stay in and complete primary school, in spite of the fact that public primary schooling is fee-free since 2005. Globally there are about 57 million children who are not attending primary school (UNESCO 2013). According to a United Nations Report on out-of-school children in Ghana an estimated 850 000 children between 6 and 12 years of age who were not in school in 2008. When you add youth up to 14 years the number of out-of-

school children is close to a million (UNICEF 2012). Why do so many children drop out of school after a few years of schooling now when it is free? I must therefore assume that *either* school is not as free as it is being claimed, *or* there are other issues at stake, which may be equally important as economy, and I will have a closer look at what these issues are in this thesis.

1.4 Dropping out of school

Dropping-out of school has been a persistent problem in Ghana, and it is increasing. As school enrolment rates have increased, so has the drop-out rates. In 2008 drop-out rates for children in the age 6-11 years was 12 % against 2.7 % in 2003. The drop-out rates for 12-14 year olds was 54.1 % in 2008 against 27.8 % in 2003 (UNICEF 2012:30). Some claim that those who drop out are most likely never to return to school (CREATE 2007, UNICEF 2012). Statistics do not easily reveal the truth about this. Because of the late enrolments and high drop-out rates, statistics do not inform us about the actual share of children in Ghana who complete a basic education at the expected time. What we can say is that apparently, more than half of the children in Ghana do not enrol at the age of 6 and many use more than 6 years to complete primary school. In addition we know that approximately 10-15 % of those will drop out during primary school, and that the risk of dropping out increases with age and the time which the child enrolled in school (CREATE 2007). Drop-out-rates are slightly higher in rural areas than in urban areas, but they are highest amongst the poor.

According to a report made by UNICEF Ghana in 2012 the highest drop-out rates in Ghana occur after completing primary school class 9. About 61 % of all children who completed primary school do not proceed into senior secondary school. Here we also see the regional disparities most clearly. In the Upper East Region the drop out after class nine is at 74 %, while in the Greater Accra Region the percentage of drop-out is 54 % (UNICEF 2012).

What statistics can not do, is to inform us of the actual *reason* for the increasing drop out. This is where qualitative research methods become useful to fill in the answers. Quantitative research can tell us about a trend of increasing drop out rates, or geographical differences in drop out. But qualitative methods can help informing us why this is the case, why it is a higher drop out amongst the poorest income quintile or why rural areas experiences higher drop out rates.

There have been some attempts made to understand the issue of drop-outs, but more research is most likely needed. The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity did a literature review on the topic in 2008. The author says that there was surprisingly little research done about the issue and especially considering that this is a major challenge within the school system in Ghana (CREATE 2008:51). We know that factors such as socio-economic background, gender and geographical location influences drop out “yet we know less about the qualitative stories which surround them and how interactions between factors work in particular contexts” (CREATE 2008:51). My research will address the processes or causes which leads or not leads to school enrolment. There are several initiatives made politically in order to enrol more children in school, but not so much focus on getting children enrolled at the age of six.

1.5 Late enrolment.

Relating to drop-out is the issue of late enrolments. This is a term referring to children who enrol in class one later than the official entry age, which is six years old. It has been noted by several authors that it seems to be common that children enrol late (Fentiman et al. 1999), but to my knowledge not so much research has been done trying to understand the nature of these late enrolments. Since late enrolments have proven to have negative outcomes related to drop-outs, especially for girls and rural girls in particular, it is important to know more about the issue, in order to make any improvements. Fentiman et al. (1999) found that reasons for *not* enrolling in school at the recommended age in the northern part of Ghana was economy, distance to school, poor health of the child, parents perception of the child’s readiness to go to school, gender issues and low interest in western education (Fentiman et. al, 1999). This thesis is offering some insight into the reasons for late enrolments in the Eastern Region in Southern part of Ghana, as compared to the northern areas. Since late enrolments statistically increases chances of dropping out of school at some point, finding the reason for late enrolment is equally important to the reasons for drop-outs, or maybe even more important, since decreasing late enrolments is likely do decrease drop-outs in transition to JHS and SHS. The late enrolment is therefore also a key issue for the Ghanaian educational administrators and authorities. Solving the problem of late enrolments and drop-outs would most likely improve Ghanaian children’s years of schooling, and especially the rural children since they are more affected both by late enrolments and drop-outs. Rural girls would benefit most.

When reading statistics about education in Ghana it is important to note that they are only based on estimated population censuses. Overall, the statistics relating to education in Ghana can be quite confusing. There is at least one crucial differentiation which is important to know, and that is the difference between Gross Enrolment (GER) and Net Enrolment (NER). GER tells us about how many children are enrolled in school at a chosen level (for example primary school). It does not say anything about whether those children are in the correct class level according to their age, whether they have repeated classes or whether they will stay in school and complete. Being initially enrolled in school in Ghana is not a guarantee that you will stay in school for very long, as already noted. This is why Ghana had a gross enrolment rate at 110 % in 2012 (World Bank). When the gross enrolment is over 100 % it means there are more children in primary school than there is supposed to be, meaning there are older children there. How many who are older we do not know. NER tells us how many children from a chosen age group (for ex. 6-11 years old) who are enrolled in the expected school level (for example primary school). The NER for Ghana in 2012 was 82 % (World Bank 2014). Again, the NER does not tell us whether these children will complete school.

Since 2007 two years of kindergarten became part of the compulsory basic education in Ghana. This means that basic education consists of two years in kindergarten (KG1 and KG2), 6 years of primary school (from the age of 6 to the age of 12) and 3 years of Junior High School (from the age of 13 to 15 years). It is important for readers to note that this is the ideal and the recommended school circle. It is not the reality for many Ghanaian children. 54.2 % of all 6-year old children in Ghana in 2008 were out of school in 2008 (UNICEF 2012:34). It may suggest that over 50 % of the six-year-olds did not enrol in class one. 33.4 % of all 7-year were also out-of-school which may suggest that about one third of seven-year-olds did not enrol in school (UNICEF 2012). The number decreases with the age increasing, so amongst 11 year olds the percentages who are out-of-school is 10.9 % (Ibid. 2012:34).

These numbers tells us that all together children enrol late (or never) in school. And this is why we can find a quite large age span in the same class. In one district in northern Ghana the children in class 1 ranged from 6 to 17 years of age (Fentiman et al 1999). Children generally enrol at an older age in rural areas (CREATE 2007). From those who enrol in class one (at whatever age) almost 50 % complete primary school class six at the indented time according to CREATE (2007). Some pupils repeat one or several years in school and are able to

continue in JHS at a later point in time, but there are no specific statistics on this phenomenon.

Generally school enrolment into primary school has had a steady but slow increase the last fifteen years assumable related to the many educational reforms and political efforts to increase access to education for the poor or disadvantaged (CREATE 2007). There is also an increase in enrolments after the introduction of the Capitation Grant in 2005, but unfortunately the increase in enrolment is being disturbed by the high drop-out rates (Ibid.). Some therefore claim that the main challenge in the educational system in Ghana is not longer to increase enrolments, but to decrease the drop-outs (CREATE 2007). Children who enrol at the age of eight years in class one, are then approximately 14 years when they complete class 6. This increases chances of dropping out without continuing to secondary education according to statistics (Ibid.). The table below shows the obtained educational level for adults in Ghana. However, this does not tell us about how many who tried, but could not make it.

Table 1.1 Education level for adults over 25 years old

Education level obtained	Rural women	Rural men	Urban women	Urban men
No education	71 %	59 %	51 %	22 %
Primary education	26 %	23 %	24 %	17 %
Secondary education	3 %	13 %	20 %	41 %
Post-Secondary education	0 %	5 %	5 %	20 %

Source: FAO 2012:24-25 (based on GLSS 5th round 2005).

The statistics speak for them selves. Rural women in Ghana does not make it into post-secondary education at all, according to a report made by the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO 2012:24-25). Only very few of the rural men have obtained a post-secondary education. On the contrary, the urban women and men are to some degree able to obtain a post-secondary education even though there is a gender bias also in urban areas. Its no so surprising though, that few rural women can obtain a post secondary education when you know that less than a quarter of rural women have obtained even a primary education and also less than half of the rural men (FAO 2012:25).

1.6 The economic barriers

Create (2011 b) also confirms that the socio-economic situation of families and households affects children's school attendance. "The link between poverty and school dropout is highlighted in a number of studies", the author says (Create 2011 b:4). Amongst those who have a university degree in Ghana, no one is to be found in the poorest 10% income quintile. On the other side, amongst the poorest 10% of the Ghanaian population 80.3 % of them have no formal education, 3.5 % of them have primary schooling only and 15 % have middle school too. Those who have university degrees are non-existent in the poorest 10%. Even in the poorest 30 % there is nobody with university degrees (Rothchild 1991 in Donkor 1997:225). But many of these studies are conducted in the early 2000 decade or before. In fairness to the Ghanaian School System it could be argued that new studies need to be conducted, after the introduction of the Capitation Grant in 2005, in order to find whether or not poverty and school costs still plays a key role in relation to school drop out. This is eventually what I am trying to pin point in this case-study.

As noted by other authors and also noticed by myself through conversations with people in Ghana "it often appears to be the case that other fees apart from the tuition are charged" (Create 2011b:5). It seems that even though school-fees were officially abolished in 2005, parents are feeling that fees are still there, just in different forms. A master thesis written in 2010 reported that parents often send their children to private schools rather than the public school even though the public school is supposedly free. One father claiming "*it's the same story, I will have to buy uniforms, books and pay fees even though they claim it's free...*" (Asare 2010:34). This is a particular interesting statement since the man is claiming that there are still fees to be paid in the public schools.

Often school related costs (excluding school fees) are referred to as "indirect costs of schooling". However, school related expenses are not indirect, but rather experienced as direct cost of schooling. Indirect costs are also connected to the child's ability to get his or hers physical being into school, following the teaching and exercises and having enough food to get through. School uniforms are by all means compulsory, and can therefore not be regarded as an indirect cost. Parents also have to buy school related materials. Buying notebooks and pencils are the parent's responsibility. For any European reader this may seem like a minor issue that can hardly be a problem. The truth is that for some parents buying a notebook or a pencil is just another expense they can not afford. Barbara Asare notes this in one rural school

where she conducted her fieldwork: *“Those students who did not have exercise books sat idle as their friends wrote and did exercises. A student said: “I do not have books to write in so I watch my friends write, my mother has promised to buy me some when she gets money”* (Asare 2010). I was also introduced to this problem when I visited a village school in Eastern Region in 2011. Clearly, a student’s performance in school will be negatively affected by lack of essential school materials such as the above mentioned. How can you learn to write without a pencil or without a book? Moreover, how long can the school administration allow the child to stay in school without the book? How long can the parent withstand the embarrassment of not being able to buy the book?

The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity also argues that some conditions within the school and the poor socio-economic background of children together can result in children dropping out of school (Create 2011b). These conditions are for example (placed under the umbrella of quality of school) availability of school materials, teachers’ absence, teachers’ attitudes and behaviour towards the pupils and teachers punishment (beating and caning) of pupils (Ibid.).

1.7 Structure of thesis

In this chapter I have introduced some of the problems in the Ghanaian educational system. I have listed several causes which can affect school drop out from school and also causes which can influence on enrolment into school. The next part of this thesis is the theoretical approach. The chapter includes classic approaches to education in development, theory of rurality and finally structuration theory by Anthony Giddens. Chapter three is introducing the study area including history of education and context in terms of demography, climate, employment, health and education. Chapter four describes the methodology, including some reflections on strengths and weaknesses of these as well as reflections around ethics. Chapter five presents the empirical findings, focusing on issues like late enrolment, drop out, irregular schooling and repetition of classes. In chapter six I will discuss these findings and link different examples to the structuration theory. The final and closing chapter is presenting some final thoughts about the issues discussed, and offering some recommendations for interested parties.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework used in this thesis. First I will introduce some classical approaches to development and place the view on education within it.

Following this is a discussion of the concept “rural” as opposed to the “urban”, showing that the distinction between the two is constructed rather than fixed and that developing the rural might be a matter of attitudes to the rural and not solely a matter of geography. The last part includes a description and discussion of social science theory with emphasis on the structuration theory by Anthony Giddens. I will also give a brief introduction to gender ideology.

2.1 Classical approaches to development

The earlier development theories focused on economic growth as development. In the West Rostow’s Growth-model was dominating. The theories during this time placed different countries at different levels of development, according to their level of technology, economic growth and more. The idea was that all countries follow the same path to an industrialized consumer society. These modernization theories saw the relationships between the urban and the rural as one where economic growth would spread or trickle down from the urban developed places to the rural underdeveloped places. For example in Hirschman’s development theory it was believed that no measures should be taken to encourage development in rural areas, as this would happen by itself through spontaneous processes as a reaction to the concentration of development in core areas (Potter et al. 2008). Unequal development of the rural and urban places was therefore rather encouraged, with the faith that this would lead to development in the rural areas by time. Intervening in this unequal development became politically incorrect (Ibid. 2008).

Later several scholars, such as John Friedman, developed arguments which opposed to the doctrine of unequal growth. These counter theories claimed that development does not proceed in a linear historical progress. Rather as soon as polarization occurs (between the core and the periphery), it persists and is reinforced exactly by the same forces or systems that caused development in the first place (Potter et al. 2008). Historical empirical evidence seemed to support a persistent disequilibrium between the core and the periphery. Unless governing strategies was implemented the development of the periphery would not become a

reality (Ibid. 2008). From these ideas new theories about dependency came along. They argue that inequality was founded during the colonial era in the relationship between the colony and the colonial power and this produces “far greater levels of inequality and spatial concentration...than may be socially or morally desirable” (Potter et al. 2008:105-106).

By the end of 1960`s there was a renewed interest in Marxist ideas. Karl Marx main argument is that the society consists of different classes who ultimately take advantage of each other. More specifically the capitalist over-class exploits the working power of the working-class. The workers use their time on working in the factories for wages barely possible to sustain a life on, while the capitalists are the ones earning all the profit from the products produced. The surplus from the production does not benefit the workers, but only the capitalists. Capitalism is such a system which is dependant on different classes. Therefore capitalism is a system of embedded inequality. The 60`s and 70`s was therefore characterized by dependency theories which was a perspective having its roots in the development countries. It rejects the western idea that they hold the key to development and sees global poverty and inequality as a result of historical processes of colonial rule and cultural oppression (Eriksen and Feldberg 2013, Potter et al. 2008). Unequal opportunities for trading globally, has been a vital argument. Inequality in the world seems to be increasing, rather than shrinking. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening.

Dependency theories and Marxist thoughts has in large part been rejected in the western world since the 1980`s and the 90`s. However, new ideas about globalization brings up many of the same points. Globalization produces processes of exclusion and inclusion globally and locally, just as the dependency claim that inequality is the other side of the coin of the modernity project. It is during this period of industrialization and modernization that education became necessary not only for a social elite, but for the general population as nation-states were in need of people with technological knowledge which was not provided by the more general reading and writing skills (Feldberg 2013:164).

In line with the view on development at the time, African nations newly freed from colonial rule also made strong efforts to increase and improve on educational institutions. This was influenced by the idea that all nations go through a linear process of development, and that industrialization is the key to a successful development (Ibid). Mass education in Europe was inspired by political incentives to increase loyalty to the King (Brint 2006). In America mass

education became a means of building democracy. In more recent time education or schooling has become an arena for integrating religiously and culturally heterogeneous groups into the American culture (Ibid.). In general, in modern societies, the school plays a key role in establishing and strengthening democracy and national identity (Feldberg 2013). Education is therefore used as a means of strengthening political, ideological, cultural and religious foundation in the nation-states, which can be viewed both positive and negative.

Strengthening democracy is for example seen as positive in Western countries while strengthening the communistic regime in China on the other hand is perceived with more ambivalent emotions in the West. The emphasis on economic development and growth in modern time has made education strongly linked to the prosperity of the nation-state as well as in the Human Capital Theory.

It is an overall agreement globally that education, in general, is something positive. This thesis is concerned with the general positive attributions which education offers. If education is discussed it is often the theory of human capital which is the focus. Human Capital is basically economic in that it claims that productivity can be increased when the populations human capital increases or is improved (that is mainly health and education) (Todaro and Smith 2006). Education is increasing or producing skills in the population. This makes the population more capable of for example making use of new technologies (Ibid. 2006). When people are educated they receive better payment later in life. The Human Capital Theory says that this also affects the economic growth in the nation as whole. Investments in health can increase the returns from education and vice versa (Todaro and Smith 2006). Formal schooling also brings in the modern society individual benefits.

Education is not only to acquire a skill or credentials, although that is a vital purpose. It also improves people's lives in terms of improved health and general satisfaction in life.

Knowledge on how to avoid or prevent certain diseases and knowledge on the general functions and needs of the body, for example nutrition (and not least the ability to pay for treatment) gives people chances to stay healthy as compared to people without this knowledge. This might be a point rather underestimated within the literature on education although it has been acknowledged that education of girls and women causes less births and healthier children. Nothing can predict your future more accurate than your level of education. The extensive literature available on this topic tells us that education is linked both to the individual's development and to the economic development of the nation.

The personal attributes are future level of income, better health, more engaged in the society where they live, more tolerant attitudes, higher democratic involvement and involvement in civil society. Even happiness is higher amongst educated people (Brint 2006). The attributes of an educated population to a nation, is related to economic development and growth, democracy and political involvement. Human capital is the skills people have acquired through a formal education. An educated workforce gives advantages internationally in the production of new knowledge and therefore also contributes to the economic growth (Ibid.). Today, the earlier industrialized country who's competitive advantage was in production of different industrial or technological items, have become knowledge producers. This means that they are rather competing on the level of highly educated professionals, as compared to developing countries who have large masses of unskilled or semiskilled labourers. In developing countries there are still children who are never to put a leg in a school building. Leaving out masses of rural (and urban) children in this educational race is not just an ethical one, referring to the individuals right to education, but also a real "Russian roulette" for the state in respect to the national economic development.

When it comes to human resources or human capital the question of causality is pending. During the late part of the 20th century the dominating idea has been that economic growth (seen as development) can influence human resources or human capital. This should mean that for example growth in GDP will cause more finances spent on ex education, which in turn increases the human capital in the population. Amartya Sen is questioning this causality, using Japan as an example of the opposite. He actually says that the Japanese example "*goes against – and to a great extent undermines – the belief that has been so dominant in many policy circles that "human development" (as the process of expanding education, health care and other condition of human life is often called) is really a kind of luxury that only richer countries can afford*" (Sen 1998:41). Japan rather experienced economic growth because of the great human resources available. The literacy rate was high before industrialization took place, and not after. "Japan's economic development was clearly much helped by the human resource development related to the social opportunities that were generated" (Sen 1998:41). Another example of India and China is also brought up in Sen's book. He is arguing that China has had a more successful transition into a market-oriented economy due to its more educated or larger share of literate people than that of India, who also has had less success in the effort to open up the economy.

“When China turned to marketization in 1979, it already had a highly literate people, especially the young, with good schooling facilities across the bulk of the country. In this respect, China was not very far from the basic educational situation in South Korea or Taiwan, where too an educated population played a major role in seizing the economic opportunities offered by a supportive market system. In contrast, India had a half-illiterate adult population when it turned to marketization in 1991, and the situation is not much improved today” (Sen 1998:42).

However, “many researchers in the human capital school concluded that human resources development alone was not sufficient to produce economic growth” (Brint 2006:91). During the 70`s then basic needs strategies shifted from the strong emphasis on economy in development, to focus more on other needs as health, education and employment (Feldberg 2013:17). The ideas was short-lived as the 80`s soon became characterized by neo-liberalist ideas and marketization. It is during this time that structural adjustment programmes was implemented, which has been so harshly criticized in the aftermath for reducing access to healthcare, education and public services in general. The devastating results from the structural adjustment programmes have fuelled new ways of seeing development, also called the third way (Ibid.) or “state-led development” (Brint 2006:92).

This third way of development acknowledges the complexity in the relationship between economic national development and that of education (Brint 2006). It also perceives reduction of poverty as a problem which needs to be solved by the help of the poor themselves through cooperation between local communities and authorities (Eriksen and Feldberg 2013). An author which has added to these ideas is Amartya Sen. As the third way development approach he reconceptualises the regular understanding of development such as economic growth, industrialization and technologic development or the general modernization of society, and introduces the idea of development as freedom. Freedom from for example poverty, hunger, illness, social deprivation, political tyranny and war (Sen 1999). Freedom is “both the processes that allow freedom of actions and decisions, and the actual opportunities that people have, given their personal and social circumstances” (Sen 1999:17), much similar to the ideas of structure and agency which will be presented later in this chapter. Freedom is the ability and opportunity to choose and education is the means which increases people`s opportunities for future choices (Eriksen and Feldberg 2013).

Education has received renewed interest the last decades, not only as the way to economic growth, but as a means of empowering the individual to make better choices, which again have strengthened the idea of education as a human right. Although this is not a theory in itself, it is a political ideal which different governments globally strive to fulfil. Katarina Tomasevski (2003) warns so powerfully against converting education into a development goal, instead of emphasizing that it is in fact a human right. She claims that is exactly what has happened during several decades, through a series of events. She argues that during the 1980`s and the neo-liberal policy thinking, education was changing form being a public responsibility to a “free-market mechanism or fee-for-service” sector (Tomasevski 2003:72). Ghana also felt this. The previous fee-free primary school during the 60`s was imposed with fees as Ghana joined the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In 1986 free school was no more. Public schooling became a service paid for by parents, such as also healthcare became a paid for service.

“From a public good protected by public law and public funding, education became a freely traded service. An ideological justification followed: `We exercise choice when we’re going to buy a car or when we’re going to buy a box of cereal` and why then would education be any different? Such endorsements of school choice in the US disguise the fact that choice is available only to those with purchasing power” (Tomasevski, 2003:87).

Tomasevskis point, is not so much the school-fees per se, or whether education is a public or private sector, but that the view on education changed from being right-based, to something which was a nice development goal. There are also others, such as Lisbeth Lundahl, who also warn about the changing “new mission of education” (Lundahl 2014:32). Using Sweden as an example she describes how the state seems to have a weakened influence over education as compared to the market. Sweden has experienced increased marketization of schools and educational institutions often as joint-stock companies. She fears that “education becomes redefined as a private rather than a common good” (Lundahl 2014:32). In addition the focus on education is more often based on the economic benefits for the state (in terms of economic growth) ignoring the other important benefits of education, such as strengthening democracy or cultural aspects (Ibid).

2.2 Rural – what is it actually?

An interesting correlation between geography and education is presented by Pryor et. al (2003) in Lindberg (2005). Pryor finds that children from relatively wealthy families in rural areas are still getting consequently lower school results than children of wealthier families in urban areas. He therefore claims that it can not only be the economic situations of families that predicts or influences the children's results in school. The rural "place" is also affects a child's success in school. Lindberg therefore asks: "If space matters in education systems, what then could be the contribution from geographers for the understanding of them? (Lindberg 2005:17). To sum this up in one question: why does geography play such a vital role in the educational provision for Ghanaian children? What is it about the rural place?

Michael Woods shows that the concept of rurality is not as easy as we firstly think. He says rurality is "culturally specific" (Woods 2005:4). Woods, building on Halfacree (1993) describes four different approaches used to define the rural. The first, descriptive definitions relies for example on population indicators to define rural areas. These do however vary greatly. In Iceland for example the maximum population of a rural settlement is 300 people. In Japan it is 30 000! United Nations uses 20 000 as the measurement for rural settlement. In England it is 10 000 and in United States it is 2 500. (Woods 2005:6). In addition to these different numbers, rurality may differ within nations in different parts. In Ghana for example a rural area in Eastern Region is defined by populations less than 2000 people (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development). According to the Population and housing census 2010, rurality is defined as a locality with less than 5000 people, while more than 5000 people is classified as an urban locality (GSS 2012).

Woods says that "descriptive definitions simply reflect preconceptions about what rural areas should be like, but offers no explanation as to why they are like that" (Woods 2005:9). In my case I could say that several reports and articles have demonstrated that late enrolment is more common in rural Ghana than in urban Ghana, but they may not be offering an explanation to why this is the case or even why late enrolment is so common in general. A second discourse called socio-cultural definitions explains the rural through how the society is, claiming that rural life is for example calm, personal and stable as opposed to urban life which is for example impersonal, busy and unstable (Woods 2006:9). A third attempt to describe rurality, is done by production and consumption, claiming that rural areas for example produce primary products.

These different discourses have led to a fourth approach, seeing rurality as socially constructed. Rurality is a “state of mind” (Woods 2006:11). It has not yet been successful to define rurality through fixed boundaries or descriptions, but many people define themselves as rural people. “The question of defining rurality hence becomes one of how people construct themselves as being rural” (Ibid. 2006:11). Yet, as Woods (2006) notes, many governments today operate with clear distinctions between urban and rural areas and different policies are applied. Relating this to the Ghanaian context, I have to question why the distinction or what is often called the rural-urban gap in education is so extreme. Tomasevski (2003) claims it’s really all about priorities. “...problems are inversely related to proximity to the national capital – the more distant the children are, the less likely problems are to be addressed” (Tomasevski 2003:24). She says that “increasing a central government budget does not automatically translate into funding for teachers, schools, textbooks, and everything else children need” (Ibid. 2003:24) and exemplifies this with the fact that in the 90s only 60 % of the educational budget was actually spent both in Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali (Ibid, 2003:24). She goes on arguing that “most children do not live in the national capitals- hence their schooling necessitates a functioning country-wide educational system” (Tomasevski 2003:24).

2.3 Structure and Agency

Social science theory’s goal is to understand what goes on in the world and why so. Why do people act as they do, why does an event occur, or why not. How and why humans act is a question which have been debated for thousands of years in different cultures, societies and religions. How do we or should we cope with life, and how do we cope with people around us? How do we create harmony and how do we create system and order? This is the core of social sciences in general, and in philosophy of science as well. Throughout history different and often contradicting theories of society has been born, reborn and passed away.

Throughout times science and philosophy has had different approaches as to how to answer the questions about human behaviour, or how society works.

During the 20th century two competing directions have been battling; followers of “structure” versus followers of “agency”. This competitive view on structure or agency has its source in the western culture. The idea of individualism and personal freedom is strong in our society. On the other side, social order, system and control is also viewed as an important ideal (Hays 1994). This has caused social science theory to be torn between the idea of individual freedom

and social order (Ibid.). The debate between structure and agency became polarized during the 1980`s to the extent that you would have to choose either or. Theories focusing on structures are basing their understanding of society and what goes on in it on the structures shaping the society. Theories focusing on agency base their understanding of society on the individual and his or her choices to act. The most extreme of structure-based theories is Marxism, while humanism has been on the other side of the spectrum, focusing on the individual person.

Within the field of sociology of education this same debate has been ongoing. Studies of education have therefore been divided into either macro level studies of national policies on one hand and micro level, small scale studies of for example social interaction in single schools on the other hand (Shilling 1992). This division of macro and micro level studies is unfortunate according to Shilling because it implies that people live in and function on different social levels, which makes us act either as human agents or influenced by larger structures (Shilling 1992).

The two directions here which have been and still are competing with each other are also referred to as structuralist approaches and interpretive or voluntaristic approaches.

Structuralism in education research is most concerned with the larger political and social structures which influences and determines how educational systems are functioning. This perspective is neglecting the individual agency (Shilling 1992). Interpretative approaches on the other hand, focuses on the human agency but fails to recognize the social structures and their influence on educational institutions (Ibid 1992). This dualism is what has been a thorn for the social science theory. This has fuelled new theories like structuration theory by Anthony Giddens. Shilling suggests that structuration theory by Giddens “offers a resolution to the dualism which has hampered theoretical progress in the sociology of education” (Shilling 1992:77). Baber says structuration theory “is intended to compensate for the lack of an adequate theory of action” (Baber 1991:221).

2.4 Structuration Theory

Structuration theory came to life in the 70`s by the author Anthony Giddens. Structuration theory is an attempt to be a “framework for analyzing how human beings make their own history, how society is produced, reproduced and changed” (Clark 1990:23). As any social science theory, it is concerned with how society is constructed and functions.

What Giddens is doing is to build bridges between structure and agency, making both an option (Aitken and Valentine 2006). Drawing on this statement from Marx a hundred years ago; “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please...” (Marx 1981:15 in Baber 1991:221) Giddens echoes this and says that “human beings make their own history, but not just as they choose: they make it under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past” (Giddens 1984 in Clark, 1990:23). While Marx saw structures as solely constraining, Giddens claim is that we need to reconceptualise the terms structure and agency. Giddens is separating structure and social systems and says that structures are also the outcome of human agency through the repetitive actions in time and space (Baber 1991). Seeing structures as repetitive human actions allows him to see structures not only as constraining, but also as enabling.

Structuralism, such as Marx, tend to see structures as the foundation of everything, beyond human control; it is an external force constraining the human initiative (Baber 1991). Man is forced to act according to the structure. Man is not even aware that he is acting according to this; he is acting unconsciously, victims of the structures in the society he lives. Giddens on the other side, says that structures do not really exist, at least not on their own. They are rather the result of repetitive human action. Sewell Jr. (1992) calls structure a metaphor due to the lack of definitions of the term. He also says that structure usually is related to the idea of stability.

Structure in structuration theory is not necessarily neither stable or solely constraining. Structures can also be enabling. This is a key point in structuration theory. Unlike Marxism, structuration theory rejects the idea that human beings are trapped in structures which forces them to act in certain ways. Giddens opens up for a more self-reflecting individual with a capability to make changes in their own life (Clark 1990). This idea is absent in Marxism, which sees people as acting strictly according to their class position. It does not mean that Giddens rejects structures all together. He acknowledges structures, but not as some universal force shaping us, but as routinized practises or repetitive actions, which then turns into the common way of behaving. Human beings can shape the structures and structures can shape human beings. Structures should not only be identified as a macro problem, as typically done in Marxism. Here the overall large structures become the focus. But structures can also exist at a micro level, according to structuration theory (Outhwaite 1990). As an example gender structures within the family or household can be of importance.

Human agency is both capability, knowledgability and motivation for Giddens (Shilling 1992:81). Every person is for example capable of making changes and choosing his actions. Agency for Giddens is based on action. A person have multiple choices and can choose how to act or what to do. The person could have acted otherwise, is Giddens claim. But, as Hays (1994) points out: choices are made sometimes conscious, sometime un-conscious, sometimes with intent and sometimes un-intended. Choices made also sometimes have un-intended results (Ibid. 1994). In addition “although we tend to conceive of choices as individual decisions implying individual freedom, choices are *always socially* shaped and are also quite regularly *collective* choices” (Hays 1994:64). Choices are further more able, available or possible within any given social structure, that being an enabling or constraining structure. Choices or agency is therefore not complete freedom (Hays 1994). However, social structures can enable choices, or increase choices, as well as the opposite.

Other authors, like Giddens, are also bridging the gap between structure and agency. Sharon Hays for example, suggest there is no, or should not be any gap or competition between structure and agency. Rather we should avoid dichotomies between the two and recognise that structure and agency is interconnected (Hays 1994). She problematizes culture, as an example, arguing that theorists understand and use this term differently. For anthropologists, for example, culture is a key factor determining human behaviour and therefore culture is viewed as a structure. For sociologists, she says, culture is often seen as excluded from structure and viewed more as “a measure of freedom from external, material constraints”, which ergo makes culture a form of agency (Hays 1994:59).

Hays (1994) is using an example from Willis (1977) which also serves to show the link or interconnectedness of structure and agency. Some school boys from a working class background are individually acting as agents, refusing to comply with school regulations or school ideology. This leads them to early drop out from school which means higher risk of being unemployed in the adult life and ending up in labour intensive work in the industry sector. The boys might appear to act on their own will (did not want to go to school) but ironically “what they actually accomplish is the reproduction of existing social structures” (Hays 1994:63).

Acting on individual and multiple choices (as in Giddens they could have acted otherwise) they made choices which limited their future choices. A social structure is created or recreated

through the boys choice – which they made based on habitus (Hays 1994). Giddens says that social systems or structures are simply the result of repetitive actions of people which in turn means that people create structures. Therefore they are not only slaves of the structures. People can also change the structures. As this example shows, though, people act individual, but this can result in a system. The separation between agency and structure is then not so clear. The example also points out that structures are a process. Hays goes as far as saying that “human agency and social structure, then, have a simultaneously antagonistic and mutually dependent relationship” (Hays 1994:65).

The aim of this study is to bring some clarity or awareness around the issue of late enrolments and early drop-outs in Ghana. A structuration-theory perspective is applicable in educational research because education is both a matter of structures and a matter of agency. Achieving an education therefore exemplifies the duality of structure and agency. Educational institutions are a structure in itself, and is a structure in the larger society affecting individual’s fate and affecting the society as a whole. It is a structure which has the capability of shaping the society, but society also shapes the educational structure; for example what should be on the curriculum, how old children should be when they enrol and when holidays are appropriate. Educational structures are very dynamic in this way exemplifying the relationship between structure and agency. In our modern world and in our part of the world, this structure is mostly viewed as positive, enabling and empowering, both for the individual and for the society. However, to achieve an education, there are different structures which need to be put in place. Equally some structures in society can discourage or prevent some people from achieving any education at all.

Constraining structures which can shape or influence our life choices and opportunities for education are often of a social character. But other constraining structures can be financial constraints, family situation of different kinds, religious or cultural influences and acute political events, such as war or famine. In a peaceful society structures can be helpful to us and create possibilities for us which would have otherwise not been available (Aitken and Valentine 2006). Education and educational institutions are one of the structures which can enable us, rather than restrict us. Education gives the individual opportunities to climb the social ladder and increases the individual’s prospects for a solid economic situation in the future.

In the Ghanaian context larger structures easy to recognize which *prohibits* school attendance are for example the absence of a school or long distance to school. This is clearly a constraining structure. The low standard of school blocks especially in rural areas is another structure which can affect parents and pupils interest in school. Structures in the household in Ghana which can prohibit school attendance and retention is number of siblings and gender expectations. Large families are not always able to send all the children to school. Who is chosen to go, and who is chosen to stay home, in a large family might be the result of both structures in the society and in the family, as well as agency within the family. Some communities might have individuals, NGO's, religious groups/churches or government officials who has made an effort in encouraging or supporting education in general or supporting needy families through some sort of scholarship to pupils. This can be based on the fact that the family is basically in need or that the pupil is showing great interest and academic capability. This can be recognized as structures which are enabling school attendance.

My task is to ask: what makes a child enrol later than the age of six, whiles other enrol at the expected age? We can then separate this question in two by asking: Which structures (economic, cultural, political) prohibits children from enrolling at the age expected? Is it for example a fact that parents choice on sending a child to school is based on several conditions, whereas finances, cultural expectations and the child's apparent interests in school can walk hand-in-hand. This mixture of structure and agency can appear confusing. But hopefully it can also be enlightening to see that choices are influenced by several factors, and that every factor solved, will increase the child's opportunity to go to school.

Agency is not personal intention, but rather the individuals capability of acting, according to Giddens (Outhwaite 1990). Sen distinguishes freedom into *process* and *opportunity*, where the former means that freedom can be "processes that allow freedom of actions and decisions" whereas the latter is "opportunities that people have, given their personal and social circumstances" (Sen 1999:17). As I understand it process is similar to macro structures that enables or restricts, but opportunity is more a structure on micro level. For example a family makes certain choices based on their economic position. At a macro level we can imagine a village where there is a school available, functioning and free. The structure is giving all the people there the freedom to send their children to school. However, at a micro level, the economic or socioeconomic situation of two neighbouring families gives them different

opportunities to send the children to school. One family with many children, an unemployed parent or a chronically ill family member might feel less able to send all the children to school, despite the availability of the school. They might not have the resources they are in need of to fill their aspirations. So their opportunities are strained by some structures at micro level within the family. This might just be the key issue in Ghana when it comes to late enrolment and school drop out. Because in spite of a school being physically available, social systems or structures within the household or within a local community can still strain peoples opportunities to complete primary schooling.

2.5 Gender ideology

There have been many different feminist movements during the last decades using different ideological foundations for the fight for equality between men and women. I will not go in details due to space-constraints in this thesis and will only briefly introduce some issues which may be applicable in the cultural context where my research was conducted. Feminist movements from the developing countries or “the third world” have emphasized the differences between the sex as opposed to western feminist movements who has been more concerned with removing the differences claiming that sex (biological gender) is separated from gender (social gender) (Waldrop 2013). In this movement also called radical feminism (“radikalfeminisme”) or social feminism (“sosialfeminisme”) the reproductive- and caring-skills of women are seen as important and highly valued. The goal is therefore not to make women similar to men, but to make society appreciate the differences between the sexes (Waldrop 2013). It might be this thought that is reflected in Ghanaian society when it comes to enrolling girls in school. Girls and females are expected (but also valued) for the domestic work and reproductive work they do. Education of girls may therefore not be given high priority in the households in rural agrarian contexts where working opportunities outside the household is very limited. It is also found that teachers may be expecting girls to drop-out early, and that this may affect teachers attitude towards girls, which in turn “becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy” (CREATE 2011b:9).

CHAPTER THREE: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY AREA: HISTORY, CONTEXT AND MAP

3.0 Introduction

The next section will give a brief introduction to the historical development of formal schooling in Ghana. Contextualizing thoroughly will give the reader an understanding of the maybe conflicting relationship that some Ghanaians may have to what some refer to as “western education”. I will then continue with recent history, with a focus on structural adjustment programmes and policies of free primary schooling in the 21st century. Following is an introduction to the study area including information about climate, demography, employment, health and education. Three maps are showing the locality of the Eastern Region and the Kwahu District. Kwahu is separated in South, East and West. My fieldwork was carried out in Kwahu East. However, Kwahu East was caved out from Kwahu South in 2008 and due to lack of specific information from Kwahu East I am also using information from Kwahu South. The chapter is closing with an introduction to the two villages also including some information about employment and education.

Map 3.1 Eastern Region



3.1 History of Education in Ghana.

Ghana is situated on the West-Coast of Africa, earlier known as the Gold Coast. As many other African nations it carries the brutal history of human trading, which went on for centuries. Slave trading was flourishing at the same time as young brilliant inhabitants of the Gold Coast where being sent to Europe to further their university education. Along Ghana’s coast line of 500 km there was over 60 castles built by Europeans between 1600 and 1700 (Hernæs 1998). It is believed that a total number of about 644 940 slaves where taken from the Gold Coast by European and North American traders between 1700 and 1809 (Richardson 1989). The British were the main slave traders in this area, the French following second. But also Dutch, Portuguese, American and Danish colonialists and imperialists participated.

It was in the slave-castles that formal educational institutions first appeared. European nations were fighting to increase their power and trading opportunities and therefore they needed

translators, soldiers, clerks and other administrative staff. This was the beginning of government schools. Many British and other European men settled for years in the Gold Coast and many married to native women, in traditional marriages, leaving their European wife in Europe waiting for them to return. This caused many mixed-race children to be born. A fund called “the mulatto fund” was established in Cape Coast in order to provide education for these children of “mixed blood” (Graham 1971).

The Royal African School was put up at Cape Coast Castle in 1694 by the British Royal African Company. This school ran by Rev. John Jameson was open both to mulattoes and blacks. In 1752 a missionary called Rev. Thomas Thompson came to Cape Coast. He studied the local language and traditions on his many journeys along the coast, and approached the chiefs in an effort to convince them to put up schools for the African children (Graham 1971). One of his students, Philip Quaque, was sent at the age of fourteen, to London to further his education. Quaque completed a Masters of Art at Oxford University. He married to an educated British woman called Catherine Blunt, during his ten years long stay in London. Together they returned to the Gold Coast in 1766. He reopened his former teacher Thompson`s school in a private house, but was soon asked to continue his teaching in the

Photography 3.1 **Cape Coast Castle**



Cape Coast Castle, which he did. The school was first aiming to teach mulatto children, but soon African children were also admitted (Ibid.). In 1794 we know that the school was supplied with text-books and other learning materials by the African Company (Graham 1971:3). I would like to emphasize here that the main business of the Royal African Company was slave trade. In fact Philip was running a school in the upper floors of Cape Coast Castle while at the same time in the basement, slaves were being stored, tortured and shipped to America. This bizarre

combination of activities in the Gold Coast continued throughout centuries. However, Quaque also opened a school a few blocks away from the Castle. This school is still running today and is known as Philip Quaque's Anglican boys' school, the first school in Ghana. During the next

decades several church communities and missionaries opened schools around the country. These were aiming to teach African children, as opposed to mixed-race, and therefore they opened schools also inland. It developed into hundreds of privately ran schools. Some

Photography 3.2 **Philip Queques boys school 2013**



became government-supported, called “grant-in-aid” schools and many of these schools were later handed over to the government and are today public schools, but still carrying the name of the church which originally opened it (Graham 1971).

The praxis of sending African children to Europe to educate them was an effort to increase the political influence in the colony. Often sons of chiefs or promising pupils were sent and this happened all over Africa (Graham 1971). A.W. Amo was sent from Axim to Wurtemberg in 1707. There he obtained a doctorate. He spent 37 years in Europe before returning to the Gold Coast and his home town Axim (Ibid.). Jacobus Captain was sent to Holland only 9 years old. He started his university degree in 1737 and married a European woman. Jacobus completed his degree and returned to the Gold Coast as the first African Protestant priest. He was sent to the Dutch Company at Elmina to serve there. There he managed to put up a school teaching both African and mulatto children, including girls. By his death in 1747 he had educated over 400 boys and girls. He also pioneered getting the local language Fanti down on paper, making it a written language (Graham 1971).

The opening up of schools in the 19th century then was a cooperation between missions and chiefs and the local people who sometimes came together to build the classrooms. Some chiefs even financed the school by themselves in so far that the mission provided a teacher (Graham 1971). There were some attempts made to introduce agriculture in the schools curriculum. This was however not received well amongst the local population. According to Graham (1971) this was because agriculture and labour on fields were too closely linked to the recently ended slavery. The Africans wanted academic subjects in school, not physical

labour. The efforts from the missionary still continued. They saw potential for schools to be self supplied through this.

During the 20th century these efforts were more successful. But it became clear that educated children did not enjoy this type of labour, they resented it (Graham 1971). “Formal instruction in agriculture in schools had little bearing on peasant farm practise, and the educated boy rarely saw himself earning his living as a farmer” (Graham 1971:124). The Phelp-Stokes Commission also confirms this view. We can recognise that educated children inhabit different ambitions as compared to uneducated children. This is an important point to emphasize, linking back to the introduction and human capital and economic development. It also shows that there was some alienation of the home culture related to education. This might still be a challenge in Ghana, since the language of instruction is in English and the curriculum might still be something which needs to be more related to the people’s daily life, but that discussion is no space for here.

In 1840 the Wesleyan missionary Rev. Freeman succeeded in reaching the Ashanti’s headquarter Kumasi. Freeman was a mulatto born in England by a British woman and a freed slave. The Ashanti King gave the missionary a piece of land and permission to start a school there. Toward the beginning of a new century 15 new schools had been opened in Ashanti land (Graham 1971). The Roman Catholic Church built several schools in the northern regions, amongst them in Navorogo. The number of government schools increased and consisted of 235 schools in 1925 holding 30 465 pupils. This was including the missions “grant-in-aid schools”, which means that many of the schools where opened and run by missions, but received support from the government. 44 of the 335 schools belonged to the Wesleyan mission. It is assumed that there was in addition 308 schools holding 13 500 pupils (Graham 1971). According to the Phelp-Stokes commission (1922) the Wesleyan mission in 1920 rapports to have at least 415 smaller schools referred to as “bush schools”, in addition to the 44 supported by the government. The church spend 15 000 £ yearly on education where 6200 £ was payments from parents, 3600 £ from the government and 500 £ was from the church (Phelp-Stokes Commission 1922:132).

In 1920 the Phelp-Stokes Commission on Education came to the Gold Coast. The commission consisted of an American Doctor, a Scottish missionary couple, an American professor and one African professor. The African professor, Dr. James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey was a Fanti

born in the Gold Coast and educated at the Wesleyan mission school in Cape Coast Castle. He travelled to America 20 years old and completed his PhD at Columbia University, USA. The Phelps-Stokes Commission reported that the teacher's training school in Accra "...is one of the best observed in Africa" (Phelp-Stokes 1922:132). The only negative comment by the Phelps-Stokes Commission was that the schools curriculum and training in general was directed towards a city career. "There is very little regard for the rural needs of the colony", they commented (Ibid. :132).

The Commission pointed out that there was much inequality between different regions both regarding number of schools, share of children enrolled in schools as well as the share of girls in school. Along the coast in the southern parts there was 186 schools with 25 000 children. And in Ashanti there were 23 schools with 2600 children. In the northern parts of the colony they found only 4 schools with 225 pupils in spite of the fact that the population in the North was almost equal to that in Ashanti. "It is evident that the inland areas are practically untouched by educational agencies" (Phelp-Stokes Commission 1922:130). The commission further pointed out that schools were lacking in rural areas compared to the cities (Ibid.1922:130).

What we should note from this history section is that the development of educational provision very early became separated in public and private schools. Private schools were dominating for a long time. Secondly we should note that the geographical uneven development regarding number of schools also started very early in Ghana, and that this inequality in many respects have persisted (although there have been improvements). Thirdly the issue of girls share in school is an interesting one, since girls were allowed to go to school from the very beginning, but they were less in numbers than boys. Fourthly education in Ghana has been a paid for service historically and therefore Ghanaians may have a more accepting attitude to this fact. It may even be more or less accepted that education is not for the poor.

3.2 Structural Adjustment Programmes and the effect on education

The next decades after the time of independence in 1957 external debt was growing and prices for export commodities such as cocoa and coffee were declining. The oil crises in 1973 exaggerated these problems causing raising interest rates. Then yet another oil crisis in 1979 made the cup run over. Following the economic crises in the 1970's numbers of teachers and

educationists migrated to other African countries, Europe and North America where conditions for their profession was better (Panford 2001). The Economic Recovery Programme was introduced in 1983. And Structural Adjustment Programmes –the second phase of recovery-was implemented in 1986. In 1986 it was decided to increase fees on secondary and tertiary education as one means of reducing the official spending on education. Tuition-fees, boarding-fees and payments for books became the parent’s responsibility.

Panford argues that “the rise in poverty associated with the Structural Adjustment Programs and the high cost of education may account for the declining enrolment and the high drop-out rates” (Panford 2001:231). Real income did not improve during the Structural Adjustment period. In fact “real wages in 1995 were half what they had been in 1970” (Overå 2007:541). In the 1990 the privately covered fees rose from 186 500 cedi to 416 500 cedi in the school year of 1999/2000. This is more than a doubling of the user fees. 400 000 cedi was at this time approximately equal to 400 USD. When we know that the per capita income of the average Ghanaian at the time was 500 USD we can imagine that only a few could afford a University education with fees almost equal to a yearly income (Panford 200:231). Panford therefore argues that the Structural Adjustment Programs adversed the goals reached by the Accelerated Educational Plan of 1952.

This section have briefly showed the historical development of education in Ghana relating to the rural-urban unequal distribution, the development of public and private schools, the cultural issues relating to schooling and the unstable policy of free primary schooling. I will now move on to an introduction of Eastern Region, Kwahu District regarding the present situation for education and general human resources.

3.3 Introduction to Eastern Region

The Eastern Region has a wet semi-equatorial climate characterized by two rainy seasons between May and October and high temperatures between 26° C in August and 30° C in March. The relative humidity which is high throughout the year varies between 70 per cent - 80 per cent. The Eastern Region includes part of the Volta Lake, rivers and dams as well as mountains and forest highlands. Fishery, farming and mining is common activities. Here are minerals such as gold, diamond, bauxite-tantalite, limestone, kaolin and clay, but only gold and diamond have been mined commercially. The reason for this is the many ecological and environmental concerns related to the exploitation of other minerals, as the forest is the

habitat of many rare and exotic species (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014).

There are 10 Regions in Ghana and Eastern Region comprises 8.1 % of the total land area. The District inhabits about 11 % of the total population in Ghana which makes it the fourth most densely populated region in the country. The population density of the Eastern Region increased from 54 persons per square kilometre in 1960 to a 109 persons in the year 2000 (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014). Two thirds of the population here is living in rural areas. Half of the urban localities in the region have under 10 000 inhabitants while an additional one third of the urban areas have less than 20 000 people. Koforidua which is the regional capital is the only urban area in the region which exceeds 50 000 people (Ibid.). The traditional family structure with three generations or extended family living together is prevalent in the region.

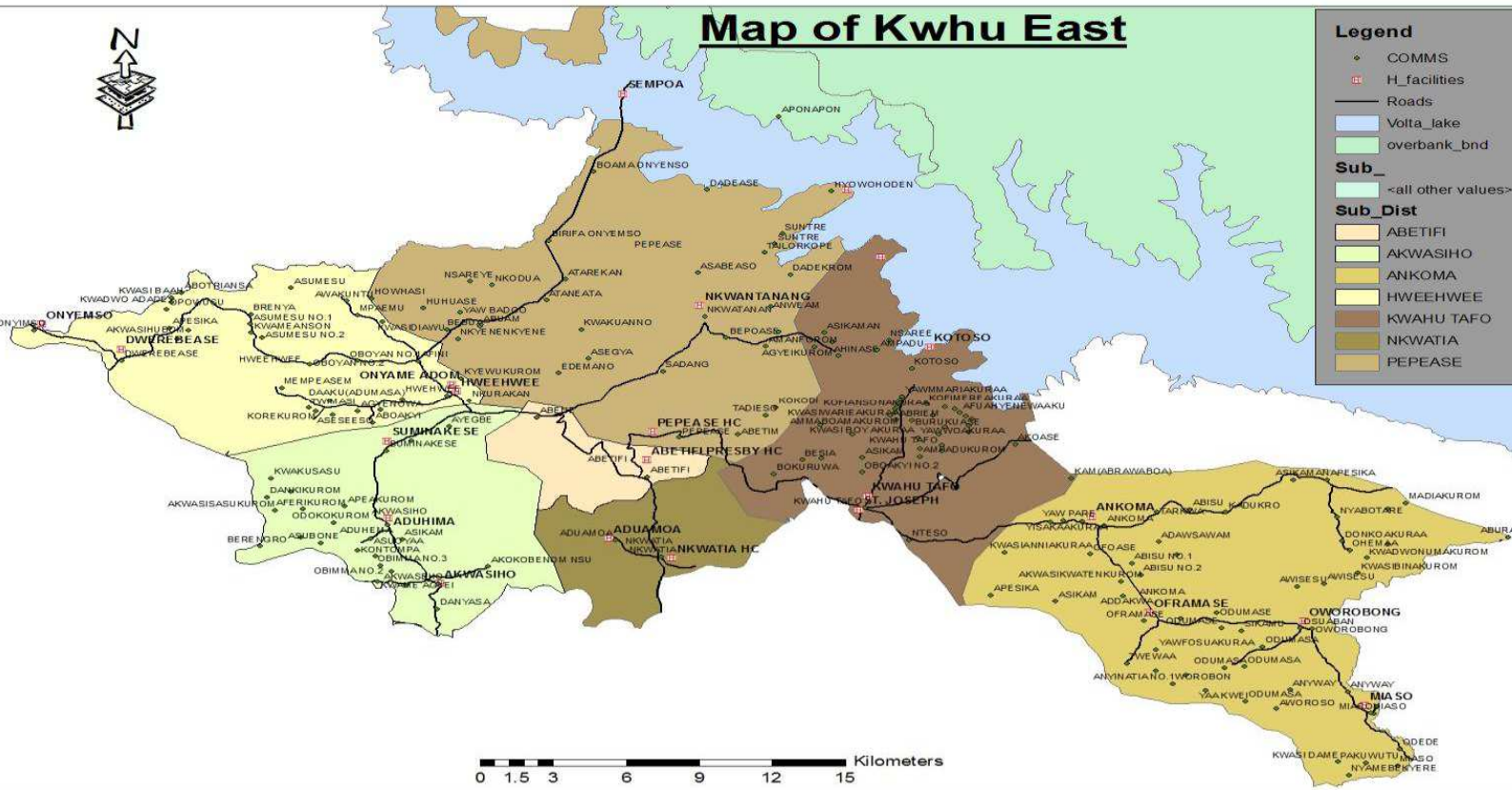
The majority ethnic group is Akan, which accounts for over half of the population. There is also Ga-Dangme (18.9%), Ewes (15.9%) and the Guans (7.2%) living here. The major religious group Christianity, which accounts for 82.8 % followed by some 6% Muslims and 2.4% belonging to Traditional religion (Ibid). The Total Fertility Rate in the region for women aged 15-49 years is 3.7 births per woman. This is actually slightly lower than the national average of 4.0 births per woman. The survival rate in the region is at 86.5 % compared with 81.9 per cent nationally. This is at least partly due to high vaccination rates (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014). This might also offer an explanation to the high number of young children in the region.

3.4 Introduction to the Kwahu East and Kwahu South District:

My fieldwork is carried out in the Kwahu East, which is one of the 27 Districts in Eastern Region. The District Assembly is the highest administrative and political authority consisting of 34 members. Kwahu East was earlier a part of the Kwahu South District Assembly. It was established in 2008 with Abetifi as the District Capital. Readers should not be confused, but be aware that the population statistics for Kwahu South was based on the population census in 2000, when Kwahu East was included and therefore the demographic information for Kwahu South is also valid for Kwahu East; at least until the next population census is completed. The population in Kwahu South in the year 2000 was 217 485 which is almost a doubling of population in the last 20 years (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development) and

the estimated population in Kwahu East (after the separation in 2008) was 77 125 people in the year 2012 (Kwahu East District Assembly 2012).

Map 3.2 Kwahu East District



Source: Kwahu East District Assembly 2012

Rural settlements in this District typically have a population of 2000 or less, while urban settlements have about 5000. Kwahu East is primarily rural with a rural-urban ratio at 21.9 % - 78.1 % (Kwahu East District Assembly 2012). The population is young with 51 % being between 0-9 years old, which affects the dependency ratios in the area. The Eastern Region has a dependency ratio at 90.7. This means that for every 100 person in working age, there are in addition 91 persons who are in the dependant ages –either children or elderly. In Kwahu South the dependency ratio is 100.1 % which means there is a large proportion of children and elderly (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014). The high proportion of young and elderly can also indicate out-migration of the working age adults, as well as higher survival rates for children in recent years.

Approximately 58 % of the total population in Kwahu East is employed within the Agricultural sector. In the rural areas of the district the percentage of the labour force employed within agriculture is about 71.8 % (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

2012). Comparatively the Akuapim North District in the south of Eastern Region has 29.8 % employed in the agricultural sector and 38.7 % in service. Still, trading of different kinds is claimed to be the main occupation in Kwahu East (Ministry of Food and Agriculture 2014).

According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2012) there is lack of lockable stores and infrastructure in general which negatively affects the marketed and trading activities in Kwahu East. In addition there is no permanent market infrastructure but only smaller periodic markets with insufficient infrastructure. Other areas of employment in this area are pottery and clay work, mechanics, blacksmithing, palm oil extraction and gari processing (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012). Contradictions may strike you if you travel around in the Kwahu area. The socioeconomic differences in the population within a thirty minutes drive, is quite obvious.

Photography 3.3 Private house in Obo, Kwahu South



Photography 3.4 Private house in Kwahu East



Farming activities are mostly subsistence farming or food cropping which constitutes about 78 % of the farmers here (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012). About 14 % of the farmers are doing cash cropping, while only 8 % are involved in livestock farming (Ibid). Farmers grow a variety of crops such as cocoa, oil palm, coffee, citrus, yam, cassava, coco yam, banana, plantain, pine-apple, tomato, pepper, onion, groundnut and maize and more. There are also breeding of several animals in Kwahu East, amongst them is cattle, goats, pigs, poultry, rabbits and grass-cutter. Methods of agriculture include mono-cropping and mixed farming, use of slash and burn practices and use of semi-intensive and free range systems (Ministry of Food & Agriculture 2014). According to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development there are in general many potential resources which to this time remain unutilized. Amongst potentials are minerals, clay, tourism, fish farming on the river and increased vegetable farming. Some districts though, are predominated by coco-farmers.

Only four towns in Kwahu East are said to enjoy pipe born water. The rest of the district relays on 137 boreholes with pumps and 119 hand-dug wells (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014). Some communities do not have pumps, partly because of the underlying rocks and difficulties of making boreholes. They therefore rely strictly on wells and rivers as their water supply which is most likely the reason that waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea and typhoid fever are not uncommon here (Ibid.). Malaria is the most reported disease in Kwahu East. Other common reported diseases are anaemia, pneumonia, skin diseases and heart diseases (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012). Authorities have tried to raise awareness and introduce mosquito-spraying habits; which has proven to be effective in reducing number of reported malaria-cases (Ibid. 2012).

Anaemia is in general not uncommon in rural Ghana, probably as a result of little varied diets. Fentiman et al. (2001) found that 70 % of the 6 and 7 year olds in 1310 households were anaemic. The study was carried out in Afram Plains, Eastern Region in 1995. Anaemia can affect children's cognitive abilities and can have potentially life long consequences. Welch and Graham (1999) describes how anaemia can affect children's ability to concentrate in school, thereby affecting their school results if the condition is staying untreated over time. Lower school results will in turn affect your life as an adult, placing you in a group of people who are less educated and therefore having less income. Welch and Graham argues that this is a vicious circle of micronutrient deficiencies and poverty. Children's health and education are

two issues which must be treated simultaneously. I have therefore placed some emphasize to give a small impression of the health and sanitation situation in the District.

General Development goals of the Kwahu South District Assembly has been to increase water and sanitation coverage, improve agricultural production, improve storage and agro-processing, improve infra structure (roads and electricity), improve environmental conditions (bush fires and deforestation), increase health deliveries and quality and reducing poverty levels from 60 % to 40 % (Kwahu South Development Objectives, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014).

3.4.1 Education in Kwahu East

Education in Kwahu East is mainly public with some private suppliers. All levels of education from pre-school to University are present in the Kwahu East, but the availability of educational institutions varies between the different districts and sub-districts.

As can be seen from table 3.1 it's obvious that the number of Senior Secondary Schools is drastically less than the primary schools. The challenge for this area is that it consists of many small communities scattered around and transportation is difficult. A JHS or an SHS which is not far away measured in kilometres is still out of reach for certain communities because of transportation options and poverty. There are 254 educational institutions in Kwahu East. The table below shows the number of schools at the different levels.

Table 3.1 Educational institutions in Kwahu East:

Level	Public	Private	Total
KG/preschool	50	10	60
Primary School	66	11	77
Junior High School	70	34	104
Senior High School	5	1	6
Technical/vocational	3	0	3
Tertiary	1	3	4
Total			254

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2012).

Building more schools closer to the communities is therefore necessary, but also increasing the quality of the ones already there. Increasing the number of secondary schools is vital. The authorities acknowledge this and building classroom blocs and rehabilitating classroom blocks is one of their objectives. It is also recognised that the quality of secondary and tertiary education is quite good and that the quality of primary school buildings (and materials) is the main problem (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 2012). Enrolment patterns in

Kwahu for females are generally lower than that of males, and decreases with higher levels of education. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:36 in primary and 1:64 in kindergarten. In JHS and SHS this improves and lies respectively on 1:20 and 1:22 (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014).

Due to lack of information on the educational situation in Kwahu East I am relying on information about education in Kwahu South, since the situation is comparable. In Kwahu South 25 % of the teachers are not formally trained and lack of teachers in the rural schools is in general a problem (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014). Another problem is the low academic performances for pupils. In 2004 only 42 % of the pupils obtained the BECE certificate. The problems of the educational sector in Kwahu South is summarized like this:

1. Lack of permanent office accommodation.
2. Poor academic performance.
3. Inadequate residential accommodation for staff and teachers.
4. Inadequate school infrastructure – Classrooms and furniture.
5. Shortage of teachers especially for the rural schools.
6. Inadequate teaching and learning materials.
7. High female drop out rate in the higher institutions.
8. Poor sports development.
9. Inadequate supervision due to mobility problems.

Source: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development 2014.

In a POCC-analysis (Potential, Opportunity, Constrains and Challenges Analysis) the problems in Kwahu South relating to education is low academic standard, inadequate teaching and learning materials and poor educational structure. These problems are being linked to challenges such as “frequent teacher’s strikes, inadequate supplies of teaching materials by M.O.E and delays in the release of funds” (Kwahu South POCC-Analysis). It is important to emphasize though, that several programmes have been implemented by the government in an attempt to improve on the educational situation. Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2012) states that the Capitation Grant and the School feeding programme has had a positive effect on enrolment in school. There has been an increase in the Capitation Grant from GH ¢ 3 to GH ¢ 4.50 per pupil which has “contributed immensely to smooth school management

and has served as motivation to parents and guardians to send their wards to school as they no longer pay school fees” (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012:13). The Kwahu East Development Report (2012) has a different view on the Capitation Grant. That very same year in 2012 they report that:

“the release of the Capitation Grant in the year under review was unreliable and erratic. According to the Education Directorate, beneficiary schools received grants for only one term in the whole of 2012. The situation negatively affected the smooth running of the schools especially in terms of projects funded under the grant. It is hoped that release of funds shall be more timely to promote effective academic work in the basic schools”
(Kwahu East District Assembly, Development report 2012).

There have been other reports in the news in Ghana about schools who claim they did not receive the Capitation Grant for the whole of the academic year 2012/2013 and only for one term in the year 2011/2012 both in Eastern Region and in the northern Regions (Kyei 2013, Bruce-Quansah 2012).

The school feeding programme in Kwahu East covers eight schools, where of seven primary schools and one kindergarten (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2012). According to the Kwahu East Development Report 2012 (p.24), the School Feeding Programme was extended to cover 13 schools all together in 2012. Whether it is eight or 13 schools, this is a positive intervention, but it is by all means not sufficient as 54-59 public schools are still not covered by this programme. The Kwahu East Development Report (2012:24) acknowledges that the programme needs to be extended and also mentions the nutritional status of the rural children as an important drive behind increasing the School Feeding Programme saying that:

“The implementation of the Programme has helped to not only improve enrolment and retention rate in the beneficiary schools but more importantly addressed the nutritional deficiencies in rural children. It is therefore hoped that the expansion exercise will continue for a lot more schools to benefit”.

According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2012) other interventions have also been made such as:

- supply of free exercise books for basic schools,

- supply of free school uniforms to pupils in rural and deprived areas,
- elimination of schools under trees through construction of new school blocks for basic schools, and classrooms and dormitory for senior high school.

(Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 2012:14)

The Kwahu East Development Report (2012) claims that 55 033 exercise books have been distributed freely to in all 29 schools (primary and JHS) in the District in 2012. “The distribution of the books was been hailed by parents in the District as one of the most innovative ways of making education more accessible to the poor” (Kwahu East Development Report, 2012:25). 180 school uniforms have also been delivered to pupils. “It is hoped that the programme (Free school uniforms) will contribute to encouraging the rural poor to send their children to school” (Ibid. 2012:25). One of my main arguments, as already mentioned, is that some parents and pupils suffer from school related expenses, and that this in fact can discourage school enrolment, leading to late enrolment as well as drop outs. This is further discussed in chapter five and six.

3.5 Introduction to village one

The first village is situated in the Kwahu East District in Eastern Region. This is a mountain area which is green and fertile. The population in the year 2000 was 2042 people. The main occupation is farming where most is subsistence farming and some is cash crops. Some are also trading, typically having a small shop selling items such as fruit-juice, cold drinks, biscuits, candy, beverages and hygienic articles. The trading has however been suffering due to the bad infrastructure. The road to the village from the near by city is in a bad condition and has been so for years. The village has called on the government to improve the road because the farmers are being charged extra money for transportation for their crops because of the deplorable condition of the road. Some farmers can not afford these extra charges on transportation and therefore are unable to bring their crops to the market (ghanaweb.com). There has up until recently not been any health facilities available in the village unless you travelled to any of the nearby cities like NkawKaw or Abetifi. But the government have now opened a small clinic along the road between Nkawkaw and the study village. The distance to the clinic still requires transport, which is in general a problem for those amongst the population who can not afford it. There is no local transportation such as” tro-tro” (mini-bus) in this area. The only option is therefore taxi.

There are two community latrines in the village and no household or institutional latrines. Overall this leads to unsanitary conditions and soil degradation due to uncontrolled sewage water from the households according to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2014). There is no pipe born water but also within recent years two water pump has been put up in the village. One is located in some distance to the centre of the village due to difficulties with making boreholes in the rocky undergrounds. Inhabitants rely on this pumps as their water supply. The water must be carried from the pump to their houses, which requires both time and muscles. Washing of clothes is also done by the help of the water pumps.

Education in the village is provided by two government primary schools and one government Junior High School. There is also one small private muslim primary school. The two primary schools are located close to each other but managed by different head teachers. There is no cooperation between the two schools. The case study school was founded by a local church but because of financial problems it was handed over to the government about five years ago (private conversation 2011). There is no Senior Secondary School (SSS) in the village. Most of the village inhabitants therefore do not have SSS education (private conversation 2013). Those who can afford it may travel daily to the nearby areas for SSS. There was a private kindergarten open previous years but it was closed down due to lack of finances. The local church reopened the KG again in September 2013. The government also runs a kindergarten in the village in one of the school buildings they have to their disposal. The government KG disposes one room with open windows. There are no toys or learning materials available. The school is not covered by the school feeding programme and pupils must therefore bring food from home. Sometimes there will be food prepared by local women and pupils can then buy lunch. Most parents therefore send money will the children on a daily basis, to cover for a lunch-meal during the school day.

As part of good governance in the district the authorities has put on the agenda to build classroom blocks and teachers quarter in order to improve the overall access to education. A new three unit classroom has been under construction for since 2011 when I visited there. By 2014 the building is not yet completed and can therefore not be used yet. Other means to improve on education is to increase supplies of school textbooks as well as other school materials, strengthen supervision and enforce educational laws (Kwahu South Development Objectives). The public primary is at present using two different buildings within a walking

distance. More detailed description will follow in chapter five. The JHS is using a three unit building.

I provided some school materials to the public primary school in 2011. The items were some toys, sports equipment and some puzzles and play games. This was handed over to the headmaster in July 2011. There is no internet or computer available elsewhere in the village which means that school children have to go to the nearest town to print their examination certificates.

3.6 Introduction to village two

The second village where additional household interviews were conducted is also situated in the Kwahu East District. It is a smaller community than the first one and is dominated by cocoa farmers. 70 % of the world's cocoa production comes from West Africa and Ghana is the second largest cocoa exporter. But still cocoa farming is primarily a family business consisting of over 700 000 small family farms with two to three hectares.

Photography 3.5 **Cocoa farm**



Photography 3.6 **Cocoa beans drying in the sun**



Cocoa farming districts are often deprived areas and so is this area. According to the farmers in village two, “the winner of the year” farmed and sold 15 sacks of cocoa at 200 cedi which gives a yearly income of 3000 cedi (936 USD or 6365 NOK). On average though a cocoa farmer can farm and sell about 6 sacks of cocoa beans a year, which gives a yearly income of 1200 cedi (374 USD or 2546 NOK). That would be a monthly income of 100 cedi.

The coco-farmers explained that their main harvests is once a year during August to October. This time of the year they also sell their products on the market. The income generated from this must be kept through the year until the next harvest. The time from January to July is for the coco-farmers a very difficult time financially. This affects their ability to keep children in school.

The distance to the school in this particular place is very long, approximately a couple of hours in walking distance. There is to my knowledge, no other private schools at any closer distance. There is no local transport other than taxi, but because of the deprived socio-economic situation, many can not afford taxi. The primary transport then is walking. The government installed some solar-cell light poles in the village to provide electricity. However the inhabitants complained to me that they are not working, therefore there is no light. Water supply is provided by a borehole with water pump. A health clinic is now available, which is the one also serving the first village. In general this is a poverty stricken area.

This chapter has given some information about the population trends, health issues and the educational situation in my study area as well as an historical contextualisation. Within the field of education it seems that the main problem in this District is the quality of primary schools and general lack of secondary schools. The next chapter will describe the findings during my fieldwork in 2014.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

Methods are in any scientific work chosen as a result of the time limits and resource limits that frame the work. In this chapter I will describe the choices of methods I have used and reflect upon the advantage and disadvantage of these. I will describe the time schedule, experiences in fieldwork and how choices of methodology affect validity and reliability. The qualitative nature of this project involves some degree of flexibility. I have therefore made some effort in describing the original plan for the fieldwork and the changes made during the fieldwork and the reasons why. The last section includes a description on my fieldwork experiences including my various statuses in the field as well as some reflections on ethics in qualitative studies applying in my case.

4.1 Qualitative research

Grenness (2004) says that qualitative methods can more difficult to plan than quantitative. Whether or not the interviews are successful in terms of getting the information you are looking for, is not possible to predict. The interviewing process is a learning process as well (Ibid. 2004). I was also advised to have a plan B, in case plan A did not work. The culture in Ghana is not so bound to time as in the western culture. Things tend to take more time than planned. I knew that I had to be ready to accept changes in plans and schedules.

Qualitative research belongs to the ideographic philosophy of science. It argues that every case is culturally and historically unique. On the opposite side is the nomothetic philosophy of science which searches for universal laws. The epistemological foundation for qualitative research is that how we view the world is influenced by our conception or interpretation of what the world is like, and also of our verbalization of it (Madsbu 2011). Qualitative social science is aiming to understand a problem or phenomenon through interpretation. Aase and Fossåskaret (2007) describes the purpose of qualitative research as also seeing a case from different perspectives or different conceptions of reality.

4.2 Case study

This is a case-study of late enrolments and early drop-out in the Kwahu East District in Eastern Region. It is based on household interviews in two villages and a registration scheme filled in one public primary school in one of these villages. The school has approximately 160

pupils divided on six classes plus an additional KG 1 and KG 2. There is also a JHS. A case study is a method which is studying a specific event, issue or place. Case studies are detailed descriptions of a case and combine subjective and objective data as well as using multiple types of data in order to describe a situation in detail (Cohen et al. 2007). It “can establish cause and effect” and “indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real context, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects” (Cohen et al. 2007:253). Another strength of a case study is that it is based on the researchers own experience, as opposed to a quantitative questionnaire sent through mail for example. In a case study the researcher has been present, doing face-to-face interviews, observing and participating. This gives a realistic look at the case and the “participants lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for the situation” (Cohen et al. 2007:254). A case-study focuses on a particular group of people or actors, such as in my case late enrollers and drop outs, and mainly seeks to describe this group and their perceptions of the case (Ibid. 2007). The participants view on the situation or their feelings and opinions becomes a focus.

Quantitative studies have the opportunity to be large scale studies finding patterns and trends within a field. A case study is much smaller and more intense. It “separates the significant few from the insignificant many” (Cohen et al. 2007:258). Aiming at increasing the knowledge on late enrolments and early drop-out, trying to understand different causes and choices of parents or pupils in Kwahu District, a case study is favourable. I have recognised that each rural school or village may have its distinctive features, although being run by the same government. The production of data during the fieldwork was short, efficient, intense and geographically localized within one District. The preparations before the fieldwork was however much broader as described more detailed in a later section here.

Cohen compares a case study to a television documentary. This is because a case study seeks to document a certain event or case. For this reason, Cohen et al. (2007), drawing on Nisbet and Watt (1984) warns that case study researchers should not become journalists who want to display the most sensational cases and leaving the less sensational events out. That will not be a reliable research and will give a distorted view on the case all together. This represents a potential disadvantage for the case study method. Likewise the researcher must be honest about his or her findings and present all findings, without preferences for certain findings, which may support a predetermined conclusion (Cohen et al. 2007). The analysis should be balanced and showing the case in all its forms. In my case I am mainly focusing on parent’s

perception of the reasons for late enrolment or drop out and describing their feelings around that and their viewpoints. But on the other side I am also describing teachers and staffs expressed opinions and attitudes about the same issue. This gives a more balanced picture of the whole case. Also parents are of different opinions, which help balancing this case.

4.3 Time schedule

The time schedule for the thesis work was approximately 11 months, of which two journeys to the field has been conducted. There was a preliminary fieldwork in July and August 2013. The main fieldwork for this thesis was carried out between 18th of June to 24th of July 2014. During the preliminary fieldwork I conducted informal interviews and field conversations with a headmaster in Accra, several teachers and parents in the Eastern Region and in Accra. I spoke to children attending a public primary school in a suburb to Accra and children in Eastern Region. I spoke to a former school teacher and youth in Accra about their aspirations for higher education and a Kindergarten teacher in the Eastern Region. During this time I was also able to gather six informants to write a diary for one year, starting July 2013 ending in July 2014. The goal was to collect specific information about the expenses that a pupil pays during one academic year. This was partly founded on a hypothesis that I have, that people might in fact be paying for primary education in spite of the fee-free public policy, and that this might be an issue affecting late enrolments or drop outs.

Table 4.1 Time schedule

Fieldwork 2013 5 weeks	Literature review 6 months (January- June 2014)	Fieldwork 2014 5 weeks (June-July 2014)	Completion 4 months (August- November 2014)
Agreeing with informants to write diaries	Search for relevant literature and statistical material	Collecting diaries and interviewing informants	Analyzing the data
Field conversations and informal conversations	Literature review	Interviewing of pupils, parents and key informants	Reflection on fieldwork experiences
Observation		Registration scheme at school	Completing the thesis
Search for literature		Observation	

4.4 Producing data: Ethics

The process of producing data or choosing the methods of the production of data is involving some issues which need to be considered. In a study which is basically qualitative the issue of ethics in science comes up as an important one. This involves informed consent, which is

important in social science and qualitative studies. Informed consent meant that all participants in the project (informants, participants) should be informed of any risks or discomfort or benefits involved. They also need to be informed that participation is strictly voluntary, which gives the right to withdrawal at any time. While giving this information to participants the researcher should be careful not to overwhelm them with so much information that it can be confusing or intimidating (Cohen et al. 2007). Coming from a wealthy European country to a rather poor rural community, there is a risk for me to be conceived as somewhat intimidating. I wanted to get as much honest information as I could about the real expenses and obstacles people face in the pursue for an education for their children, without putting people in a pressured situation where they feel intimidated that someone would know “who said what”. After all, this is a small community and some people could be recognized. I have therefore informed all participants that all information used by me will be anonymous also including the name of the particular village and name of the school. I have also made it clear that I am a student and not working for any agency whatsoever. There should therefore not be any risks involved for those participating. I am therefore operating with two anonymous villages in the Kwahu area throughout this thesis.

One of the elements to consider for a researcher is the access to sensible information (Cohen et al. 2007). In my case this is also an issue. The reasons for dropping out of school or for delaying to enrol in school may for example be perceived differently from the schools perspective as opposed to the parent’s perspective. In addition, information about payments for school and family economy may be very sensitive information. Different views on the issue could potentially create tension between school staff and parents. It was therefore important for me to make clear that my intension is not to persecute anyone. To get access to sensitive information, I need to protect my informants with anonymity, so that they could feel safe when sharing the information with me. Indeed all of my informants seemed satisfied with the anonymity offered. Some might feel that it was not so necessary, whiles others felt it was very important. Writing a thesis equally involves some ethical considerations. As researchers we should treat our informants respectfully also when presenting data which may be produced in a country far away (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007).

4.5 Producing data: choice of methods

The production of data for this thesis is as mentioned based on the time limits and financial limits that frames the thesis and frames my own experience. It is not so that a researcher is

free to spend as much time and money as he wishes while doing the research. The time is usually set, and resources are for a student based on his or her own finances. That does not mean that the methods are not satisfying, it only means that choice of methods is also based on time and resources.

4.5.1 Triangulation

I have used a variety of methods to produce data for this thesis. The use of multiple methods and sources to produce relevant data is known as triangulation. Triangulation is used to increase the validity of qualitative research projects (Grenness 2004). This has for me involved using secondary sources to add to the information produced during the fieldwork. During fieldwork the methods I have used are a registration scheme, semi-structured questionnaires, diaries, observation, field conversations and informal conversations. But previous to the field work I have searched through secondary sources for information about primary education in Ghana and more specifically around the issue of late enrolments and drop-outs, abolition of school fee, capitation grant, rural-urban inequalities and more. As there is a lot of information available on the issue of education it was important to narrow down the search of literature.

Instead of looking at education in Africa in general, I have rather focused on literature on education in Ghana specifically. Education can also be a lot, ranging from the KG to University, my focus here being on the primary level. My main interest has been to discover whether or not public primary schooling is free of charge in Ghana, as school fees were officially abolished in 2005, and whether or not this affects school enrolment. There is limited literature on this particular issue, much due to the relatively short time since school fees was abolished and the time it takes to conduct research. There are statistics available, around the issue of late enrolments and drop-outs, but most of it is quantitative and there is less qualitative research for a deeper understanding of the issues.

The secondary sources I have taken advantage of is reports by the Ghana Statistical Service, United Nations and the World Bank. Reports written by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity was especially useful for me. Other sources are scientific articles, journals and other scientific literature as well as articles and reports by the Ghana Ministry of Education, Ghana Ministry of Finance and Economy and Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Information has also been found on websites written by the above mentioned

Ministries. Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development have provided information about demographics, political goals and achievement and educational achievements. I have used several reports by the Kwahu East District Assembly and Kwahu South District Assembly. In addition I have found useful newspaper articles, news on the internet and news on the radio in Ghana during my fieldwork.

Triangulation is not only the use of several methods. It can also mean using multiple theoretical approaches, known as theory-triangulation (Cohen et al. 2007). This thesis is using different theoretical perspectives and therefore takes a holistic approach to the topic. Other forms of triangulation are time-triangulation, space-triangulation and investigator-triangulation. These different forms of triangulation refer to the collection of data over longer time or in different times, in multiple geographical or culturally different places and the use of multiple researchers. The goal is, like with methodological-triangulation to increase the validity of the work because you are relying on multiple sources to strengthen your own findings in the field (Cohen et al. 2007).

Using different theoretical approaches can help to shed some light on different angles of the topic, in this case late enrolment and drop out-issue. The researcher can for example potentially be able to show two different sides of the case; the parents perspective, children's perspective or the school staffs perspective. In methodological-triangulation we can say that if data produced by the method of interviews is also supported by the use of observation, then the reliability of the data is increased. If methods are contrasting and yet supports the data findings, reliability is increasing even more (Cohen et al. 2007). Because this case study is small, short-time, relies on one researcher and with limitations to use time- or space-triangulation, the use of methodological-triangulation is rather important in order to increase the validity and reliability of the data.

4.5.2 Sample selection and access

Choosing the informants involves a few considerations. First I need to consider the access to the informants, such as the school children and their parents. How can I best connect with relevant informants and do I really have access to them? As Cohen says: "Investigators cannot expect access to a nursery, school, college or university as a matter of right. They have to demonstrate that they are worthy, as researchers and human beings, of being accorded the facilities needed to carry out their Investigations" (Cohen et al. 2007:55). A method for

sampling and recruiting informants is to use gatekeepers. King and Horrocks (2010:31) define gatekeepers as “someone who has the authority to grant or deny permission to access potential participants and/or the ability to facilitate such access”. According to Cohen et al (2007:109) gatekeepers are “people who can control researcher’s access to those whom they really want to target”. A gatekeeper in that sense can be a valuable person who can help the researcher have access to interesting informants. This can of course turn out either negatively or positively. The gatekeeper can be helpful to get informants or he can be in the way and close the access. I have experienced both, from different persons.

Doing research in a primary school it was reasonable to consider help from the headmaster to find, select or get in contact with late enrollers. The headmaster is a gatekeeper in this case. The plan A was to deliver a registration scheme in the local primary school in order to create a profile over the late enrolment and drop-out patterns at the school and possible to choose informants for further interviews. This was meant to be late enrollers. During the fieldwork though, I realized that for several reasons I should make use of the plan B instead, which was to find the late enrollers without the help of the school or the headmaster. The reason was many. Firstly I realized that I will get a problem to get in touch with people after school, because many did not have a mobile phone and addresses are difficult to describe. It might also have become more time consuming than what I was able to fulfil, if I was going to make arrangements for interviews at certain times and days.

Secondly, when I visited the school to ask for permission to use the registration scheme, I felt very uncomfortable with the head masters reaction. He agreed to allow me to go from classroom to classroom to fill the information on the scheme about the pupils age and enrolment age, but he and several teachers followed me around, watching and commenting on my notes. Although I will say that the teachers were cooperative, there was something which did not feel right. I therefore decided not to proceed with any cooperation with the school management in order to connect with potential informants.

That being said, I have met with the headmaster during a visit in 2011. I did experience the same feeling of rejection at the time so I was therefore prepared for a possible negative response. I therefore had already prepared a plan B, which was to find informants of late enrolment and drop out without help from the school, but rather through another gatekeeper or insider whom I knew from the preliminary fieldwork in 2013. He is a kindergarten teacher in

a private KG in the village, born and raised there and knows the area well. He became an indispensable helper to get in contact with households for interviews and he was also willing to assist me with interpretation. He has completed SHS and can therefore communicate well in English. It turned out to be the kindergarten teacher who became my main gatekeeper. Without his help with guiding, interpreting and getting in contact with the households it would have been a lot more time-consuming and very difficult for me. In practice, he became my research assistant and interpreter. Also, unexpectedly, a local taxi driver who drove me every day from the hotel I was staying in Nkawkaw to the village, became a very important helper for me during my fieldwork, both driving me patiently around in the bush, and helping me to connect with parents who had children who had dropped out from school in the same district. He also knew the area well and once he had followed the interviews in one village he recommended that I should go to the neighbouring village for more interviews there, since in that place might have more school drop outs. Both the taxi driver and my interpreter took sincere interest in my project and assisted me in many ways, and much by their help I was able to accomplish what I had planned to do.

Cohen et al. (2007) mentions two ways of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. A non-probability sampling method, which is also called a purposive sampling, implies that the researcher is targeting a specific group of people in the sampling selection. Probability sampling is a random sampling procedure, which means that from a population researched everyone has an equal chance of being chosen in the sample. In a case study a strategically chosen sample could be used as a case study typically is aiming to explain the causes or consequences of a particular group of people or a particular event (Cohen et al. 2007). A random sampling does on the other side give an opportunity to generalize the findings, which a purposive sampling can not do (Ibid. 2007).

Aiming to explain reasons for late enrolments and early drop outs it was reasonable for me to choose informants who had enrolled late in school or who had dropped out of school, either periodically or more permanently, but due to the time constraint I choose a random sampling which meant walking from house to house in the village, asking for people who had children enrolled in the local government school. From the 23 household interviewed in the first village, five households did not have children who enrolled late, while 19 households had children who did enrol after the age of six years. In village number two 14 out of 16 interviewed households had children who enrolled later than six years old. One family had

children enrolled at six years and one family I do not know the age of enrolment, since all the children in the family had dropped out of school after class four.

4.5.3 Representativeness

Ideally, deciding on a sample size should be done according to the total population of the study area, if the representativeness is to be as accurate as possible. The term "representativeness" refers to whether or not the sample size is large enough to represent the total population. In quantitative studies the sample size can be quite accurately measured, based on some different criteria. In qualitative studies the representativeness is more difficult to measure. This is much because the qualitative study aims at different goals than quantitative studies. In a case study such as this, representativeness is not so much the issue, since the case represents nothing but itself (Cohen et al. 2007). However the use of triangulation is strengthening the validity and also the representativeness. By using a probability sampling representativeness about the frequency of late enrolments is possible to consider as opposed to a non-probability sampling. Household interviews are representing the parents view and opinions, but it is possible to claim that similar views and opinions can be found in other areas of Ghana with similar socioeconomic contexts.

New researchers, or researchers in training might however lean on a minimum number of informants, due to the lack of experience (Cohen et al.2007). A minimum number of informants in a qualitative study is often said to be somewhere around 25-30, although "the more the better" (Ibid. 2007). Cohen (2007) further suggests a number of thirty informants for each variable. As a researcher in training with time-constraints my goal was to at least interview 25 informants.

After the fieldwork was completed I had interviewed all together 23 households in village number one and 16 households in village number two, which makes a total of 39 households in the Kwahu East District. I used a registration scheme in the primary school in village number one. It was used only to get an overview of the pupils' age, gender and whether or not they had repeated classes. I then used the information to calculate the age at when they enrolled in class one. In addition I interviewed all together thirteen teachers in four different primary schools, including one head teacher. All the schools include JHS and are situated in the Kwahu East District. Two are situated in the study village and the two others are situated in the neighbouring area. Finally I interviewed one employee at the Ghana Educational

Service in Kwahu South District. I also interviewed one kindergarten teacher in the Kwahu East District.

4.5.4 Household interviews and the interviewing context

I came to the village on a Friday morning, eager to get started. I and my interpreter therefore started immediately after arriving to interview households in the village whom had children in the local government school. We just walked from one house to the next and asked if they would participate in interviews. This method was functioning well, although the interview situation was a bit odd in my first interviews due to my lack of experience and it was especially difficult to ask people about their financial situations. After some interviews I started feeling a bit more comfortable. I was however satisfied with the information I got and I felt that I was welcomed to do the interviews. We therefore continued going house to house during the whole weekend. Since this method was working well, I decided to continue like that and the plan of getting informants from the registration scheme became a plan B instead.

Going house to house was increasing my chances of also finding school drop-outs, which would be impossible to find through a registration scheme in the school. It was more plausible that I would find them at home. Before the interviews I was worried that going house to house might be taking too much time, since maybe many would not be interested in participating. But I soon discovered that my project was welcomed by parents, who might have felt that I gave them a chance to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about the local school. Some of the parents remembered me from my previous visits in the village and expressed that they were happy to see me. To others I was unknown, but I did not experience any household who declined to participate in an interview. All of the informants have welcomed me to go on with the interview as soon as my agenda was explained. Since houses are located closely together we did not spend too much time on walking from one house to another. Before we would sit down, we asked whether or not the household had members who were pupils at the government school. Once this was cleared, my agenda could be cleared and the household members who were at home would gather with me. At some occasions the women would be preparing food during the interview, while, others would stop their tasks and take a break while I was there. I was aware that I was disturbing their daily tasks, so I always tried to be as efficient as I could so they could go on with their work. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one hour. Interviews with teachers lasted from 45 minutes to one and a half hour.

I took a taxi from the nearby city Nkawkaw to the village every morning and returned in the afternoon, because I chose to stay at a hotel in Nkawkaw. This was both for security and comfort since the living condition in the area is very different from what I am used to. Taxi was the only transport since local transportation like “tro-tro” (mini-buss) does not go to the village. Also, I was told to make arrangement for the taxi who drove to come and pick me in the afternoon, because there are no place you can find a taxi in the village when you want to return. The village is located about one hour drive from Nkawkaw. However, the taxi driver soon took interest in the project and waited in the village while I went around for interviews. The road is sandy and hilly, as this is a mountain area. Most of the population is as described earlier, farmers, and different crops are farmed. The household interviewed represents different socio-economic statuses, family sizes, family compositions and age groups.

Table 4.2 Description of households interviewed in village one

Providers	Total number of children	Children in school age (6-15)	Presently attending school	Occupation
Mother/father/GP	6	3	3	Farming
Mother/father/GP	5	3	0 (2)	Farming
Mother/father/GM	3	1	1	Trading
Mother/father	2	1	0	Farming
Mother/father	3	3	0 (3)	Farming/trading
Mother/father	3	2	1	Farming
Mother/father	3	2	1	Farming
Mother/father	4	3	3	Seamstress
Mother/father	2	1	1	Farming
Mother(W)StepF	4	2	0 (2)	Farming
S.Mother/GM	2	1	1	Farming
S.Mother/GM	3	2	2	Trading
S.Mother/GM	2	1	1	Unemployed
S.Mother/GM	6	3	2	Trading
S. Mother	1	1	1	Farming
S. Mother	4	3	3	Farming/electrician
S. Mother	2	1	0 (1)	Unemployed
S. Mother (W)	4	2	1 (1)	Trading
S. Mother(W)GP	5	2	1	Unemployed
Grand mother	3	1	1	Farming
Grand mother	2	2	2	Farming
Grand parents	2	1	2 (1 older)	Farming
Grand parents	1	1	1	Farming

Note: GM=Grand mother, GP=Grand parents, W=Widow, S. Mother=Single mother, Step F=Step father

(2) =Number of children enrolled in school but presently out because of “sacking”. Will return to school as soon as fee is paid, according to parent. (Have presently been out of school between 3 days and one week).

(1 older) = child is older than 15 but attending JHS.

Source: Field data 2014.

The family members who were at home at the time I came, were present; including parents, children and grandparents. All the interviews were therefore household interviews where both children and adults had the opportunity to answer the questions. Although I focused on the parents, there were some occasions where the parent could not answer, but the child knew the answer. This was interestingly enough about school expenses. When children were present I asked why the child did not go to school today to clarify if he or she was a temporarily drop-out, a permanent drop-out or there were other reasons for staying home. Answers will be presented in chapter five. Most of the interviews were conducted from morning time to around 3 p.m. This gave me an opportunity to notice if children were in the house, rather than in school, which also happened several times. Some interviews though, were done during the weekend, and I would have to ask specifically whether the children were presently in school and going on Monday.

Table 4.3 Description of household interviewed in village two

Provider	Total number of children	Children in school age (6-15)	Presently attending school	Occupation
Mother/father	3	2	1	Farming
Mother/father	4	3	0 (2)	Farming
Mother/father	2	1	1	Farming
Mother/father	3	2	2	Farming
Mother/father	3	2	3 (1 too young)	Farming
Mother/father	3	3	2(+1 drop out P3)	Farming
Mother/father	5	2	2	Farming
Mother/father	12	2	3 (1 too old)	Farming
Mother/father	3	3	3	Farming
Mother/father	4	3	4 (1 too old)	Farming
Mother/father	5	3	5 (2 too young)	Farming
S. Mother	6	2	3 (1 too old)	Farming
S. Mother	2	1	1	Unemployed
S. Mother (W)	6	2	0 (all drop out P4)	Farming
S. Mother (W)	3	1	0 (1)	Farming
S. Father (W)	2	2	2	Farming

Note: W=Widow, S. Mother=Single mother, S. Father=Single father. (1) =Number of children enrolled in school but presently out because of “sacking” (Have presently been out of school for three weeks/one month).

(too young) = child is five years or younger enrolled in class one.

(too old) = child is older than 15 but attending primary or JHS.

(+ 1 drop out P3) = one child dropped out of school after completing class 3.

(all drop out P4) = all the six children have dropped out after class 4.

Source: Field data, 2014.

After a very intensive and hectic work in the village with 23 interviews conducted I felt that I had reached a point of satisfaction concerning late enrolment, but I had little information about primary school drop outs. The search for this group therefore continued in a

neighbouring village in the same district. I started interviewing parents and households in the neighbouring village after a recommendation from the local taxi driver who drove me every day back and forth from Nkawkaw. He had grown up in that particular place and knew that I might find some more school drop-outs there, than I could find in the first village. Table 3.3 shows a description of the households interviewed in village number two.

King and Horrocks (2010:42-43) recommends that interviewing should be done in a place private, quiet and comfortable. This to ensure that disruptions does not happen which could lead to incomplete answers. This advice might however be a little culture specific. In the local community where I conducted my research there are hardly places which are quiet and private, due to the cultural context and the socio-economic situation of people living here. I could not ask people to turn off the radio (which is often on loudly) or stop pounding fufu (local food) or tell the hens to be quiet, just because I have to do an interview. I had to find a place to fit in to their daily routines and find places which were at least as quiet and private as possible in the context. The interviews of parents or households were therefore for the most part conducted at the courtyard or on a bench right outside the house.

Following advice about qualitative interviewing, I made all my questions short and uncomplicated and avoided leading questions (King and Horrocks 2010). I made sure the interviews did not last for too long, approximately thirty minutes to one hour, depending on the informant's answers and how the conversation was flowing. I emphasized my student status during all interviews and this was important to me to keep an as relaxed situation as possible. I did not record interviews. I think that recording in the context of rural Ghana would have been perceived as a bit intimidating and could have made my status as a white foreign woman even more alien. Also it would be very difficult to avoid the surrounding noise from household members, livestock, neighbours, radios and so on. Rather I took notes and explained to everybody involved that my notes are only accessible to me personally. The downside of not recording is of course that you have to write fast and if the person speaks a lot, you might just miss some of the content. What can be helpful is to take as many notes as possible during the interview, and as soon as the interview if finished you sit for a few minutes somewhere and write as much more as you can remember. In Ghana it's common that several households live together in a compound. In this case if I interviewed several households, I had to finish all before I could sit somewhere and make additional notes.

Face to face-interviewing has the advantage that it reduces non-response which can occur in surveys and ensures that the respondent have provided the answers himself. In addition it gives the researcher an opportunity to observe the non-verbal communication such as face expressions or body language during the interview. Interviews also allows for the researcher to explore “attitudes, values, beliefs and motives” in line with the qualitative research tradition (Barriball and While 1994:329).

In the second village 16 interviews were conducted in total. The village is located quite deep into the bush with only one very small sandy road leading to the settlements. First you pass through a typically sandy but wide enough road in the District, after a road cross you continue on a much smaller dirt road in a bushy landscape. The distance from the primary school (and KG) belonging to this community immediately struck me, as a problem for school attendance, since we drove over 45 minutes from the time we passed the school before we reached the village settlement. The road is very small and would maybe be labelled a pathway, rather than road. It is a smaller community than the first village and primarily consisting of cocoa-farmers. Because of the small size of the community it was soon discovered that a white foreign person was visiting, and curious villagers came to watch and find out what I was doing there. Once they heard that I was interested in talking to them about education of their children they lined up in a queue, all eager to have a say. The interviews in this place were therefore conducted mainly on a bench under a tree in the middle of the village. Parents and children where present listening and discussing between themselves. Each interview was still done individually with each household. Both parents and children where present during several of these interviews.

Some interviews were also conducted along the road before reaching the village, as households are settled along the road between the school and the village. These interviews was conducted either inside the house or outside on the courtyard, according to where they invited me so sit. I was always given a chair or bench to sit on under the shadow of a tree before the interviews started. In this area too, I felt welcomed to proceed with the interviews, maybe even more so. This is a small community and people were happy that someone would bother about their situation. Of course there is a chance that people are having very high expectations to me being a foreign interviewer, maybe hoping that I would change their living situation. This was what I felt most ambivalent about. Its does not actually feel right to listen to people telling you that their children have been “sacked” from school and have been at

home for one month, and then after completing the interview I would say “thank you and good bye”. This might be one of the negative or difficult sides of qualitative methods like in-depth interviews. Because after all you are dealing with human beings and it is emotional and it is a face-to-face encounter and you can not know what you might come across during the interviews. I did, as mentioned, emphasize my student status and made it clear that I am doing it for my education. But that only removes me from a sort of official responsibility. The moral or ethical responsibility is still hanging over me and I have to question whether or not it is ethically defensible to leave someone behind whom I know I could have done something to help? Is it ethically defensible to make people tell you about their problems, and then leave happy to have documented it? I thought a lot about this issue and was very torn about my role as a “researcher only”. In reality I was not able to stay completely in the role as researcher only and in several occasions I stepped out of the researcher-role to just be a fellow human.

4.5.5 Registration Scheme

I used a registration scheme in the public primary school. The questions in the scheme provided information, at each level, about the children’s age, gender, which class they are attending presently, if they have repeated classes, how old they were when they enrolled and if they have missed years of school (periodic drop-out). The scheme was filled in all classes ranging from class one to class six. In this way I could also create a profile over drop outs at the school and how common late enrolment is at this particular school. To avoid the risk of getting few responses, Cohen says it can be an advantage for the researcher to be present while a questionnaire is being answered (Cohen et al. 2007).

In my context, this was a primary school, so instead of delivering the scheme and expecting the pupils to fill it themselves I rather filled the scheme myself, going from pupil to pupil in the classroom. I had a young man from Accra with me to interpret, because my main interpreter was busy this day. This could be done as none of the questions required any sensible information. But, what I did discover was that some pupils were quite old for the class they attended, and there was some laughing in the classroom and some discomfort amongst the pupils. Others had repeated classes several times, which also obviously was leading to some discomfort when I asked. On one occasion a girl also told me her age, saying she was nine years old, whereby the teacher interrupted and claimed that she was ten years old. The teacher then tried to explain to me that “some of the children they don’t know their age. She’s ten”. This also led to some laughing and unrest in the classroom. More details on

the results from the questionnaire will be presented in chapter five. The use of the scheme depended on whether or not I could get permission from the headmaster or school authorities. I did get permission to fill the scheme, but the head teacher followed me all the way around and the teachers were looking over my shoulders commenting on my notes. The situation felt uncomfortable especially since I could sense discomfort from the head teachers face. Due to the negative atmosphere I did not want to continue by asking the head teacher for an interview. However I was able to interview two of the teachers at the school during the week. This provided some insight into the staff's attitude to the issue of late enrolment, what they consider being the causes and whether they think these are issues which need to be resolved.

4.5.6 Observation

The day when the registration scheme was being filled at the school I also took the opportunity to observe the school, the classrooms, furniture, materials, teachers, teacher absence and anything else observable. It took approximately two hours of filling the scheme and observing. The results are presented in chapter five. Observation was also generally used during household interviews. For example older girls were sometimes seen carrying their younger siblings at their back or washing clothes by the water pump.

4.5.7 Diary

The pupils who agreed to write a diary were all attending a public primary school. Three of the pupils were attending a government school in the Kwahu District village one, while three are in the capital Accra Region, in a suburban area to Accra in Ga West Municipal District. The informants are five girls and one boy. See table below for information about their age and level completed in school.

Table 4.4 **Diary informants.**

Region	Age	Gender	Class completed in July 2013.
Eastern Region	13 years	Boy	Class 5
Eastern Region	13 years	Girl	Class 3
Eastern Region	11 years	Girl	Class 4
Accra Region	15 years	Girl	Class 6
Accra Region	12 years	Girl	Class 6
Accra Region	9 years	Girl	Class 1

Source: field data, 2013.

However the diary project was not as successful as I hoped for. I was able to collect two of three diaries in the Kwahu area, although one family had moved from the village to a nearby

town. One of the follow up interviews was therefore conducted in Nkawkaw. The third diary writer from Kwahu had migrated to Accra and I was not able to find the person. The three diaries which was delivered in a suburb to Accra, was even more unsuccessful since I was only able to localize one out of three informants as I came there to collect the diary. The person whom I was able to localize participated in an interview, but the diary I was not able to collect since the person claimed the book which she was writing in was picked up by her brother who needed an exercise book. But the two diaries I picked up in Kwahu verify much of what I found during the household interviews. The diaries have been neatly filled throughout the year and provide interesting insight into school related expenses.

4.6 Working with an interpreter

The challenge when using an interpreter is to find someone who speaks enough English, who is not partial and who has got the time to help. The interpreter must be informed that he/she must interpret and not analyze what is being said. My interpreter was very helpful and willing to assist me, but I was also aware that I am taking his time. We were both eager to have things done effectively, to the extent that we would sometimes forget to eat all day.

The interviews and field conversations was conducted partly in English and partly by the use of an interpreter (Twi to English). My interpreter was a kindergarten teacher/electrician who was also guiding me around in the area. As mentioned, I knew him from the preliminary field work in 2013 and felt that I was communicating well with him. He has graduated SHS and therefore speaks English. He is also born and raised in the village and knows the area well. This was to my advantage because it made the time spent on walking from house to house more effective, since he knew the road and had some idea of which houses that might have children attending primary school in the household. In the village of my case study most of the parents where able to communicate to some extent in English. Almost all the parents I interviewed had completed or attended JHS. Very few parents had completed SHS. The grandparents I interviewed had typically less schooling, some had no schooling and others had attended primary some few years. There where also some few parents who did not have any schooling. The interpreter was therefore most used when talking to older people and to those who have less or no schooling. However, during the household interviews, no interview went on strictly in English. Both Twi and English were used. Interviews with teachers at the school and employee at Ghana Educational office was conducted in English only. This went on without any particular problem as both parts understood each others well. But at times I

would ask an additional question when they answered something by saying “did you mean that..” or “are you talking about ...” This was necessary to clarify that I understood the answer correctly. Kapborg and Berterö (2001) concludes that to decrease validity problems while using an interpreter, researchers should “spend more time to learn about the country before commencing the research, in order to be familiar with the culture and people” (Ibid 2001:56). This foundation was already laid for me (see 4.9) so I did not need to use any time on this during field work.

4.7 Validity

Validity is a concept referring to whether or not a research is informing us about what it is intended to inform us of. According to Cohen et al. (2007) validity is necessary for any research simply because the opposite of a valid research would be an invalid research. But validity can best be viewed as a scale where the more valid, the better. As researchers we must strive to obtain as much validity as possible. This takes a different form in quantitative and qualitative research. Cohen describes, based on Winter (2000), elements that can influence on validity in a qualitative research such as “the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness and objectivity of the researcher” (Cohen et al.2007:133). Qualitative and quantitative research differs in several areas. Not only do they principally rest on different epistemological and ontological foundations, but they also differ in use of methodology, just because of this.

One suggestion in this debate is that validity in qualitative research should rather be replaced by “understanding” according to Maxwell (1992 in Cohen et al. 2007:134) and Michler (1990 in Cohen et al. 2007:134). The term understanding is referring to human perception of the world. Both the researcher and the researched have a perception of the world, and the researchers’ task in a qualitative research is to describe and understand the informants’ perception of the world or of a topic or issue. The informants’ perception or opinion is not seen as any less valid than the view, perception or opinion of the researcher. Therefore a researcher who is capable of understanding the researched perception is expressing a higher degree of validity, in a qualitative research. This is not the case in quantitative research which rests validity on very different criteria.

While I am trying to inform about reasons for enrolling late and reasons for dropping out during primary in Ghana, the validity of my research will be a question of whether my data is actually telling us something about these reasons, or whether in fact it is telling us something else. When the researcher and the researched are belonging to different cultures it is important to evaluate the cultural validity. This term refers to whether or not the research is appropriate in the culture where it is to be conducted. To increase the level of cultural validity the researcher should consider some questions of importance. For example whether or not the researcher is the right person to do this particular research, whether or not the research ethics is appropriate in the researched culture context, whether or not people from the researched culture is given an opportunity to comment on the final results and also whether or not the researcher can be able to communicate the conclusions in a fair way in his or hers home culture (Cohen et al. 2007:139).

I find it difficult to assess the cultural validity of my own data. But I can reflect over it and share those reflections here. To my advantage I have visited the study area four times over a 13 year period. I have visited the school and nursery and have spoken to staff at several occasions. I have corresponded with school staff over several years and have been involved in some charitable efforts in the area. More over I have been married to a Ghanaian man over 13 years which gives me some insight into the culture. Being an in-law and staying with the family for weeks and months have given me insight into the daily conduct, appropriate behaviour and formal greetings, daily routines and gender relations. I think this is valuable knowledge to carry with me when I go into an area to conduct a research. I have at least some knowledge of how to address people (titles like sir, madam, “auntie” and more), how to dress appropriately and how to conduct myself in general. I have met people with a humble attitude, as open minded as possible and ready to hear their stories. At the same time I can not eradicate my own background and I might not be aware of my own “cultural glasses” (Aase and Fossaskaret 2007).

4.8 Reliability

As with the term “validity”, the term “reliability” is another debated term between the quantitative and qualitative research traditions. Lincoln and Guba (1985 in Cohen 2007:148) suggests that instead of using reliability, qualitative research should rather use terms such as “credibility”, “dependability” or “trustworthiness”. This indicates again that qualitative studies are distinctively different from quantitative studies, and qualitative researches do not

need to strive to copy quantitative researchers or methods. It also indicates that in qualitative studies reliability (and validity) is based on the criteria of the data itself and not on the method of producing the data.

Reliability then is influenced by the researchers account and openness about his or hers position or status in the field and methodology used in the data production. Other questions which the researcher need to consider according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994 in Cohen et al. 2007:148) is “whether the researcher would have made the same observations and interpretation of these if they had been observed at a different time or in a different place”. In a case study like this, observation in a different place is maybe not applicable, but it is certainly worth considering if in two years the same results would have been found, or if another researcher would have found the same results as my self in the same place of study. However, the reliability of a study is not necessarily less if one researcher concludes differently than another researcher, even if studying the same issue or case. Because qualitative studies view social situations and most of all perception of the world or of reality around us, as vital to the production of knowledge, two different accounts could therefore prove different perceptions of the truth or that “truth is multilayered” (Cohen et al. 2007:149).

4.9 Reflections on my status in the field and ethics in research

Status is a social position which includes some rights and duties. In addition to the status there are different ways to play out this status, through different roles (Aase and Fossåskaret 2007). According to Aase and Fossåskaret (2007), successful participant observation relies on the relationship which the researcher is able to build with the informants and also that the researcher is able to reflect on his or hers status in the field. As mentioned, this was not my first visit to the area. At the same time I am married to a man who's roots is in this place, and because of that we do as a couple have “one leg within” the community. My husband has distant relatives there and lived for several years in the village with his grandmother during his childhood. I might therefore be perceived not only as an outsider, but also somewhat as an insider. Mullings (1999) describes the insider/outsider problem as moving between the different positions in different situations, rather than being either or.

The challenge for me was to uphold some separation between my different statuses and play them out with clarity. Firstly I have a status as a wife of a Ghanaian man which carries along some expected behaviour as being respectful and decent in public settings. Secondly I have a

status as a charity worker. This gives me some liberty in terms of building relationships with people in the area. Thirdly I have a status as a student, doing a fieldwork, and this status is the one which I constantly emphasised during my field work, because it gave me the “right” to ask questions and interview people. I had to balance these different statuses and use them at the appropriate time and in relation to different people, rather than mixing them all together. But my status as a charity worker is also important for me to build relationships on, and it also gives me some reason to be curious about everything and asking how things works.

As a wife and mother of three children (motherhood is very important and highly valued in Ghanaian society), I hoped that the parents I interviewed felt that we have something in common. I hoped this would help to relax the situation during the interviews, hopefully enough to downplay the fact that I am a white, European woman. I do not know if this was actually the case, since it was only me and the interpreter present at the interviews. Also I can not eradicate my whiteness, and being white is always a risk-factor, meaning that people can “fear me” (feel shy to speak to me) and not be willing to share sensible information. It can however function as the opposite, that my whiteness is a “magnetic power”, which makes people more than willing to speak to me, just because it’s exciting to speak to a foreign woman. In retrospect I think that because I emphasized my student status people did not see me as intimidating. If I was a professional researcher it might have been a little different that me being a student in university. A student status is after all not all that intimidating. And it was positive in terms of the topic of education that I was also a student undertaking my own education.

CHAPTER FIVE: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the fieldwork conducted in Eastern Region in June and July 2014. The correlation between education and poverty has been pointed out by statistics and research. No education means a life in poverty. The causality of this statistics can however still be debated. Does poverty lead to non-enrolment in school? Or does non-enrolment in school lead to poverty? In this chapter I am analyzing the data I have produced during fieldwork in order to shed some light on these questions, rewinding back to my research question of causes behind late enrolment and early drop out. Based on fieldwork data there are four terms which I want to discuss in relation to primary education in Ghana: delayed enrolment, drop-out, repetition of classes and irregular school attendance. The discussion takes place in chapter six. Here follows a presentation of empirical findings in four parts. First I present findings from observation in the school, secondly follows results from the household interviews, thirdly results from the registration scheme and the last part presents results from the interviews with teachers and employee at GES.

5.1 Condition of school and area

Village number one has several primary school buildings scattered around an area. It took me a while before I understood which building belongs to whom. It was essentially confusing. Observation as well as field conversations have clarified the situation. There are presently two government primary schools in the village (named A and B in this chapter) plus one small, private Muslim primary school and KG combined. There is a government JHS and a government KG, plus one private Christian KG. They are located as following: The Muslim school/KG in a small self supplied building. The Government primary school A is in a six-unit classroom block. The second government primary school (B) is using two different buildings with approximately ten minutes walk from one building to the other. The government JHS has its own building in a three-unit block. An old school building for the government primary A, which was also used by the government B primary, but which is no longer in use, is still standing close to the present building of government primary B. A new building for the government B primary is built, but not yet completed and is therefore not in use. It is located between government school B and JHS.

Photography 5.1 New building from the Government, not yet completed.



Photography 5.2 Building one used by primary school (B) and KG.



Photography 5.3 Old building for government school A and B, no longer in use.



It was in the government primary school B that I used a registration scheme. I was filling the registration scheme in this school on a Monday morning around 11.00. It took me approximately two hours to fill the registration form and thereby also observing at the school.

The first observation is the condition of the school building itself. The first building was where KG and class one and class four was using. The head masters office is also in this building. I will describe the building as a typical rural school in Ghana which is built with blocks and metal plate-roofing. The windows are open without any glass or net, which is common in Ghana. On a stormy rainy day, these windows can not keep the rain away. You can choose to close the shutters in front of the window to block the rain, but that will result in darkness inside the classroom, as there is no electricity. Even with windows open on a sunny day, as when I was there, the classrooms appear a bit dark. Inside the classrooms the furniture is old wooden benches, also typical for rural Ghana. Tables and chairs were for some reason stacked and stored at the back of some of the classrooms. There were no colours, no posters, no maps, signs or anything else of interest for children. It's grey, dark and only a blackboard is available.

The number of pupils in the classrooms were strikingly low, some only nine pupils in a class. I realized that many pupils were not present that particular day. Many pupils were running and playing outside the school when I came there, making it difficult to know whether it was a break-time or school-hour, since some pupils were sitting in the classrooms with the teacher. It did appear unorganized, but it might be that my presence was the cause of that, leading to disturbance, because the children were of course curious about the white person who is walking around.

Only from observing I can see that some of the children look quite a bit older than their classmates. The teachers were often standing with a broom in their hands. This is generally used for caning the children in Ghana, as punishment for different causes. Class one and class four did not have a teacher present. The pupils did however sit in the classroom. One of the other teachers therefore stepped in to help me fill the registration scheme to get the children's age correct. The building has urinals available on the land. There is a public toilet not far away which the pupils have access to.

To get to the second building used by the same primary school you have to walk about ten minutes up a hill and cross the road. Here class two, class three, class five and class six was using one classroom each. The building is generally in a similar condition as the first. It is built in the same materials but the windows were different with patterns in, commonly used in Ghana, but difficult to describe. See Photography 5.5. Because of the windows, the rooms

appeared dark to me. There is electricity in this building, but I did not see any light in the classroom. Class four, who was in this building, did not have a teacher present. Here too, furniture was stacked and stored at the back of the class rooms, which made the room dark and messy in my impression. Likewise there is nothing interesting on the walls, only a black board. The picture below shows a piece of the classroom with the stored furniture and a piece of the outside of the building.

Photography 5.4 **Inside of a classroom** Photography 5.5 **Primary school building number two**



To get to the village at all you have to drive from Nkawkaw. Public transport does not go here, so taxi is the only means of transport for a visitor like me. A few people might own a truck which transports people at some occasions. Some people might also have a bicycle. But mostly transportation here is done by walking long distances in the heat along the road. At some point the concrete roads ends and a red sandy road continues through a bushy and fruitful land. At a crossroad a very small road continues to this village far into the bush. Settlements are scattered along the road but they are few and some in a deplorable condition. We drove and drove and we passed a primary school. We continued to drive for about 45 minutes after the school before we came to a small village. I was struck by the long distance to the school, and asked if there were maybe other schools there, or if the children in this village would attend the school we passed on the road. It was confirmed that the school we

passed was the school they had to attend and that they have to walk the long distance to the school every day.

The school building itself was not too bad. It was again a typical rural school, but the school block was built only a few years ago and is therefore rather new. But as so common in rural schools there were no signs of toys or playing materials. During the interview I was also told that they were in need of learning and teaching materials and especially they wished to have a football. The area around was suitable for football and the head teacher was frustrated that they did not have one. Teachers were holding a wooden stick in one hand. And some older pupils were weeding the grass outside the school.

The village and the community around where I conducted the interviews can be described as a deprived area. The teachers also used that term to describe the place and the people's condition. Houses are simple and often made in mud and there are no electric lines. However the government has supplied them with a couple of solar cell light poles. Although this is a positive support, the inhabitants were complaining to me that the light poles did not work and therefore it was complete darkness after 6 p.m. Inhabitants here are mainly cocoa-farmers and there were cocoa-trees along the road all the way to the village. There were also tables where the cocoa-beans are laid to dry in the sun in front of the houses.

5.2 Delayed enrolment

Before talking about delayed enrolment in school let me just clarify the terms. "School" in this thesis refers to class one, and upwards. In Ghana it is very common to use the term "school" also about nursery and kindergarten. When interviewing parents in Ghana it is important to clarify whether one is actually talking about school or kindergarten.

Delayed enrolment is a common problem in primary school in Ghana. However we must be sure whether the problem is that the children enrol late in school (that is class one) or they delayed in enrolling for Kindergarten/nursery which in Ghana is also referred to KG 1 and KG 2. In 2007 two years of preschool in terms of KG 1 and 2 was added to the primary education. It was in other words made compulsory to have completed KG 1 and 2 before enrolling in class one. The purpose was to prepare children for schooling so they do not come completely without institutional experience when they enrol in class one. But is KG 1 and 2 compulsory or not? During my interviews and field conversations some parents have told me

that their child enrolled late in KG and that is why they are also delayed in enrolling in school. I spoke to a mother of a 9 year old girl who just completed class one why she was at this age in class one. The mother said because of money she could not enrol her in school early so she was seven when she went to KG 1. I then asked her if it is compulsory to complete KG 1 and 2 before you can go to class one. She replayed “yes”.

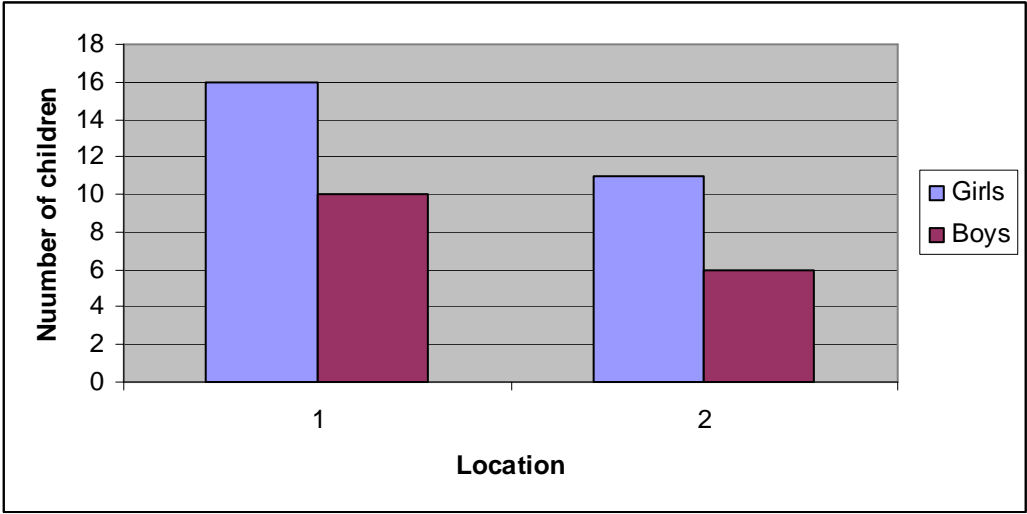
When I interviewed an employee at Ghana Educational Service in Kwahu South District I also asked if it is compulsory to complete KG 1 and 2 before enrolling in class one. His response was :”*ehm...not compulsory. If a child has reached a certain age and has not gone to KG and the parents now want to enrol the child in school (class one) they can admit him*”. This means according to him, that children can enrol in school without KG if they have reached school age or maybe beyond. This is primarily positive as far as not further delaying a child who has already passed school going age. But, there are some issues in need of consideration. Firstly, it appeared to be entirely the schools decision whether to enrol the child in school or to enrol him in the KG first, which means that there perhaps is a need for developing some clear guidelines for the handling of delayed enrolments. It should be clear whether it is the local school or national regulations which decide whether a child of the age seven should enrol in KG or in class one.

Secondly another question which arises is whether or not the parents are aware that the KG is not necessarily compulsory? Do they have a say in the decision or are they left out? Thirdly, at exactly what age or in which situation is the KG not longer compulsory? So, in addition to clearer guidelines, the lack of communication between parents and the educational sector should be improved on this issue. A better communication and clearer guidelines for enrolment could help solve some of the late enrolments into school. One of my main objectives with this thesis was to find the reasons behind the delayed enrolments because delayed enrolment into primary school is after all a symptom of some underlying causes. The distinction between preschool and school must therefore first of all be clear.

During my fieldwork 39 household interviews conducted in two neighbouring villages, using a probability sampling. This showed that 32 families had children who were older than the age expected at the present class they were attending. In the first village five of 23 households did not have any late enrollers in the household. Two families had a child who had enrolled at the age of six but because of repetition now were older than the age of their class. The 16

remaining households had at least one child who had enrolled older than the age of six. In the second village 14 out of 16 households reported to have at least one late enrolled child. Totally it was 30 families who had at least one late enrolled child. The number of children in these 30 families who were late enrolled was totally 43 children. Figure 5.6 shows the difference between girls and boys amongst the late enrolled children, demonstrating an overweight amongst girls.

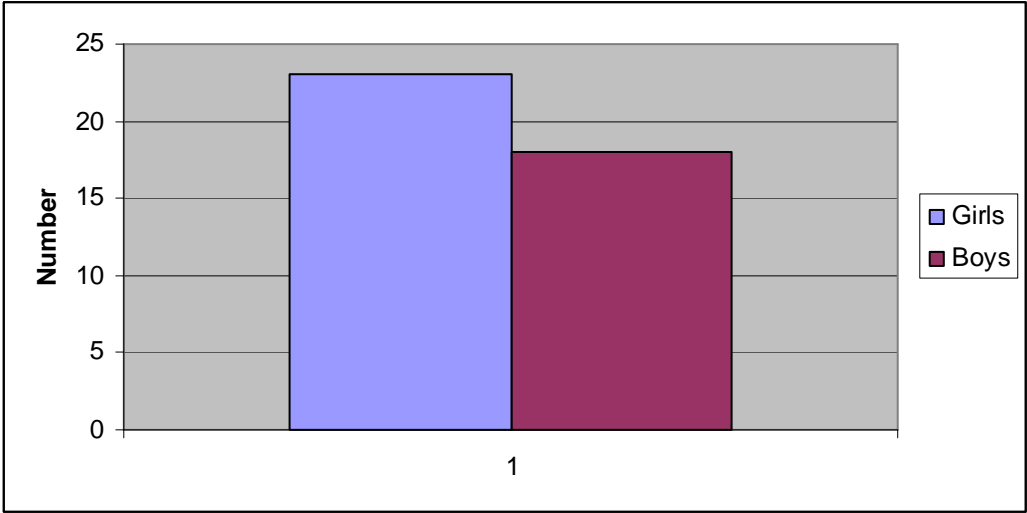
Figure 5.1 Number of children who were late enrolled by gender and locality in village one and two. Based on 39 household interviews



Source: Field data, 2014.

N=43

Figure 5.2 Late enrolled pupils by gender in one primary school in village one. Based on registration scheme



Source: Field data, 2014.

N=67

The registration scheme also showed a similar tendency of girls being enrolled late more often than the boys as can be seen in figure 5.2. The next section will present the parents' view of late enrolment based on household interviews.

5.2.1 Reasons for delayed enrolment in parents' view

This thesis main objective was to find the reasons behind late enrolment. Most of the households interviewed had at least one child who was late enrolled, but some had not as explained in the first section. Those who did not have a late enrollee were still asked what they think is the reason that late enrolment is so common in this particular area. The question was open and parents themselves gave me these reasons for late enrolment. In village number one: "financial problem, child's ability to learn, no permanent living, child don't want to go to school, child do not want to learn" and "the teaching".

In village number two I also asked what are the reasons for delayed enrolment. This is the reasons parents and grandparents have answered without having any suggestions from me: "financial problem, distance to school, stubborn children, death of parent, health of child, family was moving or just moved to here, the school will decide when the child enrolls, no food to take to school" and "material in school is lacking". These different causes or reasons for delayed enrolment are supported by other data from for example Fentiman et al. (2010), who also finds health, distance, migration and parents' perception of the child's maturity as issues affecting school enrolment. Create (2008) also mentions family shocks as a casual factor affecting school attendance or drop out.

Due to the qualitative nature of the interviews parents have spoken freely what comes to their mind when I ask for reasons for delayed enrolment. Some have therefore mentioned several reasons, for example it was a financial problem and they were moving to a new place, and this was causing the delayed enrolment. The frequency of the causes of late enrolment is presented in table 5.1 following here. To simplify it I have categorized answers like "the teaching" and "the school material is lacking" into one category of "quality of the school". Likewise answers like "stubborn children" and "child don't want to learn" is joined in the same category of "unwillingness to go to school". "Health of child" and "child's ability to learn" has also been joined together.

Table 5.1 **Reasons for delayed enrolment, based on household interviews**

Reason	Village one (N=23)	Village two (N=16)	Total: N=39
Financial problem	11	12	23
Distance to school		6	6
Quality of school	2	1	3
Child unwilling to go	3	1	4
Health/ability of child	5	1	6
Death of parent		1	1
Moved recently	1	1	2
No food in the house		1	1
Delayed into KG	1		1

Source: Field data, 2014.

N=39

5.2.2 Disabilities and health

An issue which is important not to forget is that of special need children or children with disabilities. Children with minor or non-visible disabilities will most likely be overlooked in a country like Ghana, because of lack of knowledge and lack of resources to help the child. Statements such as “her brain is not good” and “she can not read yet at the age of thirteen”, “he likes playing, not studying”, “the child did not talk” indicate that there are children who are in a need of extra care and help, but it will never be available to them in a village in Eastern Region. One father also spoke of his son who was late enrolled due to a “stomach problem” which was still worrying the child who was now thirteen years old. It was clearly a chronic problem which had persisted over years, and no medical treatment is given due to lack of both knowledge and money as well as access to health care.

5.2.3 Unwillingness to go to school

Four of the households interviewed sited that the child’s unwillingness to learn or to go to school was what had caused delayed enrolment. This could be a sign of another underlying cause, such as a hidden learning disability or problems relating to the school environment. It might also reflect parental attitudes towards the necessity of schooling. One widow expressed that she had problem controlling the children because of the absence of a father.

5.2.4 Distance to school

The distance to school was not an issue in the village were the case-study school was situated. It was however an issue mentioned by six out of sixteen households in the neighbouring village, were the school was situated far from the settlements. One mother also described how the daughter would often complain over headaches after walking for hours every day the long distance in the hot sun.

5.3 Poverty as a reason for delayed enrolment

Financial problem was the most common cited reason mentioned by parents as a reason or contributor for delayed enrolment. One of the questions I asked at the end of the interview was: “does the public school cost money?” Interestingly some of the parents first responded “no” to that question. But when I followed up the question by asking: ...”So you don’t pay for anything?” they stopped and had to think for a moment before listing up different things. Some parents also responded by saying “no, we don’t pay directly, but indirectly”. These are the fees or expenses that parents have mentioned to me during interviews with explanations following after: printing fee, exam fee, PTA, school uniform, registration fee, admission fee, craft fee, sports fee, extra classes, meeting fee, building fee, exercise book, books, reading books, chalk, pencil, pen, eraser, sandals, mathematical set, debt in school and voluntary gifts to the teachers. Some also said you have to bring a broom for craft-lessons. Some said they bring vegetables from their farms to the teachers. The KG children have to bring a toilet roll every term and also soap if requested.

PTA is a Parent Teacher Association. They charge money from parents which are supposed to be used for renovation of schools. This payment is compulsory. The PTA fee is 15 cedi per year, which makes 5 cedi per term. The PTA also has some meetings during the year and parents are expected to participate. However several parents I spoke to claimed if they did not come to the meeting the school would give them a fee to pay instead. This is called for example “meeting fee” or “refusal to attend fee”. One diary informant paid 2 cedi in march 2013 as a ”not attendance fee”. This practise of charging money to parents for not attending the PTA-meeting was confirmed by several other informants. Moreover during the meeting there is also done collections called “meeting collection”.

Some of the parents also said they paid 10 cedi as a registration fee when the child starts in class one. One mother said she paid 30 cedi as an admission fee when the child enrolled in the KG “*because we came from Accra*”. Other parents also confirmed that when you come from another school, because of moving to new place, they will charge a registration fee. Craft was another fee mentioned by several of the parents. Some said you pay 2 cedi or 3 cedi (depending on what the teacher requested for) and some said you have to buy and bring a broom or money for craft, anytime the teacher asks for it.

5.3.1 Voluntary gifts to teachers or school

Some of the parents did mention voluntary gifts to teachers. When I asked how much that should be they would answer “you give from your hart”. Any amount will be accepted. My diary informant in Kwahu reported to have given 5 cedi in August, 5 cedi in September, 5 cedi in November, plantain worth 7 cedi in January and finally yams in May. A second diary informant from Kwahu who had moved from the village a little closer to Nkawkaw reports to have given 12 cedi in August, 8 cedi in November, 12 cedi in December, 10 cedi in January, 12 cedi in February, 6 cedi in March and 5 cedi in April.

5.3.2 Sudden and unexpected charges

Parents seemed utterly confused about the different payments and expressed that this was why they think many people delayed by enrolling the children in school, because as a father proclaimed “*you can't cope with the incoming charges*”. Several of the parents interviewed expressed similar emotions of stress, discouragement and resignation. One mother said “*sometimes the child will say that the teacher said we should bring money, so indirectly we pay money, but no explanation*”. Another mother said there is “*no school-fees, but they will tell you to bring broom, bring spoon, bring printing fee, sports fee. Anytime they can ask you something*”. One father claimed these sudden fees or charges from teachers was even more difficult to handle than the school fee which was removed back in 2005 as he said “*there are no fees, but indirectly we pay. The indirect fees are more than the earlier school fee*”. Another father expressed a similar view when I asked him how he feels about the free schooling policy, as he claimed that “*paying a yearly stable fee, was better than paying anytime, suddenly*”. Yet another mother confirms the unstable fees saying “*sometimes the teachers ask for 1 cedi or 3 cedi and you have to bring it*”. A grandmother also expressed frustration and said “*anytime they (the teachers) can collect something small, small. They collect for example 3 cedi for printing fee, pencil. The teachers say its debt in school and tell the parent to pay. They (the parent) don't know the meaning of it, they don't get a clear explanation*”. Clearly many parents expressed lack of overview over the school related expenses. Expenses appeared the parents to be sudden and unexpected and some of them ended up having problems with paying at the time given by the teacher. However communication between parents and school seemed to go between the pupils and not directly between teachers and parents. Consequences of unpaid fees would rather be put on the pupil and not on the parents, which I will describe later in the chapter.

5.3.3 Printing fee and examination fee

The most common cited fee was the printing fee. Thirteen of the 23 households in village one mentioned printing fee as something they have to pay. Another six households mentioned the exam fee. One informant said that the printing fee and the examination fee is the same but it is called by two different names. I am still insecure about what is correct.

There are three semesters during one academic school year in Ghana. Each term ends with an exam and approximately three weeks vacation. For each term parents must pay the examination/printing fee as well as the PTA fee. This is not only in the Eastern Region or in the Kwahu area. I have spoken to head teachers and teachers in Greater Accra region, Northern Region and in Upper East Region who also confirm that printing fee or examination-fees are paid every term. With an exception in the Upper East were the head teacher told me that parents have to cover the examination fee for term one and two but that the government provides term three. According to my informants the printing fee is 5 cedi each term and is paid previous to the term exam. PTA fee can be paid every term or once a year if you pay all in once.

Table 5.2 **Estimated school related expenses for one term (three months) based on household interviews**

Cost item	Amount
Food/lunch money	60
PTA	5
Examination fee	5
Printing fee	5
Craft fee	3
Books	2
Voluntary gifts to teachers or school	12
Uniform	19
Total	111 cedi per term

Note: 111 ¢ = 235 NOK = 34 USD

Source: Field data, 2014.

A 111 cedi may be a monthly income for a cocoa-farmer (see section 3.6). This table shows school related expenses in village one, based on the information from household interviews. Note that 19 cedi per term here is an estimated price for one uniform. Uniforms are not paid every term, but maybe typically at the beginning of first semester/term. However, it is fair to expect that a child needs more than one uniform during a year. In addition, the more school children in the households, the more expenses. This estimation is for one child only.

Table 5.3 Example of school related expenses from diary in village one, August 2013

Cost item	Amount
Food/lunch money	30
PTA	5
Books	5
Exercise books	1.8
Craft	1
Voluntary gifts to teachers or school	5
Uniform	58 (to uniforms and Friday wear)
Total	106.8 cedi per August 2013

Source: Diary, 2013/2014.

This table is an actual example from a diary informant. The informant claims to have paid 106.8 cedi in August 2013. This was including 58 cedi for two uniforms and a Friday wear for one child. August (or September) is the most expensive month for parents with school children because of the uniform. In November for example, the same informant paid only 5 cedi as gifts to teacher plus money for food/lunch. Money for food is actually the highest indirect expense, while school uniform is number two. It also seems that voluntary gifts are equal to PTA contributions.

5.4 Unpaid fees

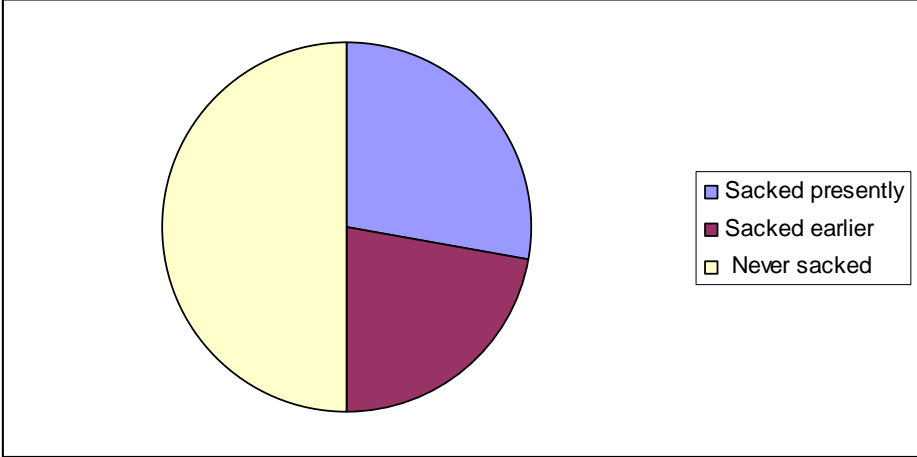
Following up on the questions about fees or expenses I asked: “what happens if you do not pay any of the school related expenses on time?”. The responses I got were immediate without any hesitation each time: “they are going to sack your daughter or son”, “they sack you”, “they sack the children” and “they sack you until you pay”. In fact nineteen out of twenty three households claimed that the children will be sacked from school if a fee (most common the printing fee) was not paid on time. Other responses were “they will not allow the child to write the exams and they will sack the child”. One mother explained that the child will be sacked until the money is paid, and then you have missed classes so it will be difficult to take the next exam. Another parent claimed the child would have to repeat the year, because the child would not be allowed to take the exam. Four households said that the children will be denied to take the exam; while four households also mentioned another disturbing consequence claiming that “they sack them or they beat them” and “Sometimes they will beat you and tell you to go home”. One mother said: “they are going to beat your daughter”. Another mother started laughing loud as I asked what will happen if she didn’t pay the fee. She then said “come again?” and people around were also laughing. I repeated the question and she replied:” *they sack you. Sometimes caning*”, which is beating with a cane (wooden stick). But she also added that some teachers are understanding, while others are not,

which might explain why some children are being beaten and others are not. Some parents mentioned several consequences such as “they will beat you and sack you” or they will beat you and not allow you to write exam”. One parent said that if you didn’t pay the fee “*the teacher will tell you to go home and you don’t want (to go home) and you come back saying your parents are not home, then they will beat you*”. One parent said she does not know what will happen if the fee is not paid, because as she claimed “*I always pay*”. Another one said “*they can call police on you*” if you have not paid the fee. During my preliminary fieldwork in Ghana in 2013 I was also told by an anonym source that some parents prefer private schools because in the local public school “*the teachers will beat them if they haven’t paid*”, meaning that if the parents have not been able to pay a fee which is supposed to be paid, they will beat the pupil as a punishment.

These events were clearly related to emotional stress both for the children and the parents. One mother said her daughter was once sacked from the school because of the printing fee which was not paid. After the incident the girl refused to go back to the school. The mother therefore had to put her in another school after this. Several of the mothers told me that the children and they themselves were feeling uncomfortable when the children were being sacked from school. A father, whose two daughters had been sacked from school the day before I came to interview them, because of a craft fee which was not paid, was clearly in distress. He explained that both he and the wife are very interested in the children attending school, but the situation they were in was causing them to be discouraged. He said “*because of this incidence I will never give birth again!*” (Common way of describing that you will not have more children, used by both men and women).

Parents themselves used the term “sacked” to describe when a child was being told to go home from school because of an unpaid fee. Figure 5.3 and 5.4 presents the families experiences of being “sacked” from school. The first showing results from the village one and the second one showing results from village two. This term or even the topic is not common to find in any scientific literature or statistic about school attendance in Ghana. In this school and in the area where I conducted my interviews it was common understanding and the experience of being sacked was known to everybody I spoke to. I believe it is important to discuss this issue which clearly affected school attainment and caused irregular schooling and periodic drop out.

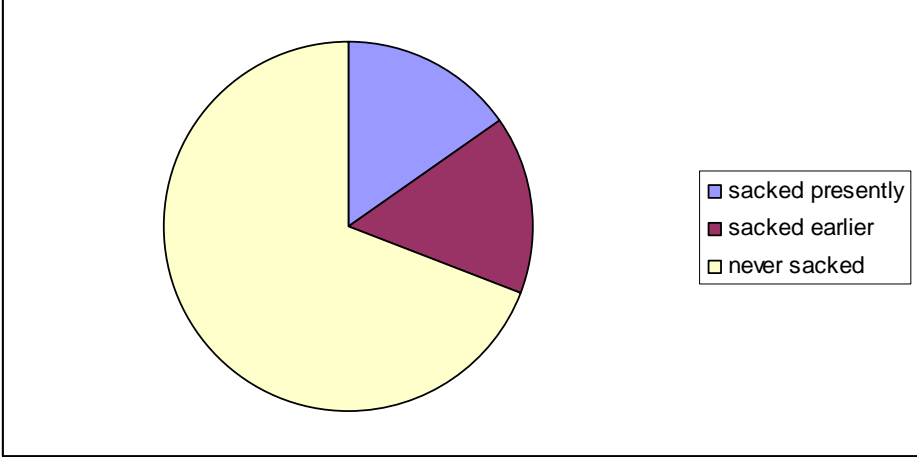
Figure 5.3 **Households whose children have been sacked from school in village one**



Source: Field data/household interviews, 2014.

N=23 Households

Figure 5.4 **Households whose children have been sacked from school in village two**



Source: Field data/household interviews, 2014.

N=16 Households

There appeared to be a different school culture in the two schools. Although the number of informants from the two villages are not the same, it was more cases of “sacking” in village number one. But the practice of sacking when a fee was not paid was known to all parents. It may be that the head teacher or teachers are deciding on who will be sacked. There is no legal foundation for this praxis which means it needs to be investigated more thoroughly.

But which families experience that their children are being sacked from school? Based on the 23 household interviews in village number one I can say that occupation did not seem to be a factor. Both traders, farmers and unemployed had experienced that their children had been sacked, but I do not have data on each family’s income. Following here is a table showing a profile over the households who had experienced sacking.

Table 5.4 Description of households who had experienced their children being “sacked” from school.

Provider	Total number of children	Children in school age (6-15)	Occupation
Mother/father/GP	5	3	Farming
Mother/father	5	3	Farming
Mother/father	4	3	Farming
Mother/father	4	3	Seamstress
Mother/father	3	3	Farming/trading
Mother(W)Stepfather	4	2	Farming
Single mother	2	1	Unemployed
Single mother	4	3	Farming/electrician
Single mother	1	1	Farming
Single mother (W)	3	1	Farming
Single mother (W)	4	2	Trading
Grand parents	2	1	Farming
Grand parents	1	1	Farming

Note: GP=Grandparents, W=Widow

Source: Field data, 2014.

Another question to ask is whether or not the sudden payments affects school enrolment or causes delayed enrolment? The link at a general level parents are reluctant to send the children to school because they know it comes some expenses along with it. I am basing this on the parents responses that financial problem was the main cause of delayed enrolment. They might, because of expected expenses, delay the enrolment in school for the child, but as the child grows they realize it is time to start school in spite of the costs. Some children are therefore six or seven by the time they start nursery or KG. Several problems are therefore intertwined. Parents may delay enrolment due to fear of costs, but then in the end when they are ready to enrol the child, then KG 1 and 2 is compulsory which delays the enrolment to class one even more. Relating to drop out the school related expenses seem to cause temporarily drop out and irregular schooling, which is explained more of later in this chapter.

5.5 Quality of the school

During interviews I asked if the parents were satisfied with the school and/or with the teachers. Results of this was varying, from parents being very unsatisfied to satisfied. At several occasions, when I asked this question, the parents’ immediate response was laughing. Several of the parents answered things like “*it’s okay*” (“eye” in Twi). Some said “*it’s not good, but we’ll take it like that*”, expressing that they did not have any other choice. Others were not afraid to say that the school is not good at all. Based on the household interviews I have made a table showing parents answers to the question: “is the school satisfying your

expectations. Why/why not?” Parents were not asked to cross any scheme, they spoke freely and based on their answers I have classified it like this:

Table 5.5 Responses on the quality of school

	Good	Okay	Not good	Not good at all	Either or
Village nr 1	3	2	6	3	7
Village nr 2	7	3	4		1
Total	10	5	10	3	8

Source: Field data, 2014.

Eight of the households answered “*we will manage*” to the question about quality of school. I have rephrased this as “either or” in table 5.5. However I do interpret the answer “we will manage” as rather discouraging. Parents did not feel satisfied but since there is not a lot of choice they have to manage and take it as it is. The following up question to this was to explain why they were not satisfied with the school. Most answers to this were related to poor academic performance in the school, ineffectiveness of teaching and learning and dissatisfaction with teachers who take the children to do non-school related activities during school hours with statements like: “*they don’t teach them anything, they take them to their farms*”. One mother said she had sent two of her children to another school (migrated) because the school is not good at all. She said “*the teachers are not active or serious in training the children. The teachers are sitting there, taking the children to work. They have to fetch water, sand and petty, petty things to get money. That is not good for the parents*”. A father expressed a similar view claiming that “*the teachers are to blame for the bad performance. They take the children to collect firewood, sand and water. They sell it and get money. This does not happen in private schools*”.

One father was complaining that the teachers come late in the morning. A grandmother was also saying this, but with more understanding. “*The teachers try their best*”, she said, “*but sometimes they do both teaching and farming so when they come to school they are tired because they have already been on the farm*”. Other parents also, expressed a more patient attitude to the teachers saying things like “*they tried*”, “*some children don’t want to learn*”. Others were pointing out the children as the main problem like one mother who said “*I blame the students, they like playing and don’t want to learn. Film they like, not studying*”. One parent said about the quality of school that “*it’s not good, but you can’t buy insurance*”. This metaphor used expresses the feeling amongst parents that they are incapable of changing the

situation, similar to the father who said you can not complain when it is a government school. Insurance is a security or a safety network, which allows for financial compensation if property is destroyed in for example an accident. Using this word “insurance” in relation to the quality of school can be interpreted to mean that he feels like there is no safety net, no one to rescue you if things are not working right in the school. There is a lack of arrangements for parents to control, influence or even receive information from the school. Another parent said “*this is a village, we will manage*” when I asked if they are satisfied with the quality of the school, also expressing their feeling of lack of ability to influence the school. This statement also expresses a resilience in rural people, who have to endure so much wrong, but still will manage. It might also express that as a rural people they are used to not being taken seriously by authorities who might not show particular interest in improving their situations in life.

I have presented these statements from parents about the quality of the school because it is possible that the way they see the school might affect the late enrolment in the area. If parents have little trust in the schools effectiveness and in addition know that there will be expenses related to it, surely it will affect their willingness to enrol the children in school. An important statement came from one grandfather because I asked why the parents do not complain and have things changed when they are dissatisfied with the school. He then explained that if it is a private school, you can complain to the head teacher and he will handle it, but when it is a government school the parents can not complain. “*The teachers do as they want*”, he said. I asked if the head teacher is appointed by the government, and if that is why they feel that they can not complain, which he conformed. This will be discussed more in the next chapter.

5.6 Drop-out

Dropping out from primary school once you have enrolled does not seem to be the biggest problem in the area of my case study. But it depends on how you define and view the term “drop-out”. Permanent drop out and temporarily drop out is two different things, yet a temporarily drop out can in some cases lead to or result in a permanent drop-out. I find it more appropriate, based on my findings to emphasize irregular schooling or temporarily drop-out more than permanent drop-out when we talk about primary schooling. When it comes to secondary education it’s a different story. In this village drop-out primarily happens after completing JHS. Out of 24 households interviewed 14 of the mothers and 15 of the fathers had completed JHS. One mother had no schooling, four mothers had some schooling and one father had some schooling. None of the parents I spoke to in this village had attended or

completed SHS. Some children were staying with the grandparents and amongst these only one grandfather had went some years to school. Four grandmothers had no schooling. This finding is in generally consistent with statistics showing that 61 % of Ghanaians drops out of school after JHS (UNICEF 2012). In the second village five fathers and one mother had completed JHS. One mother and one father had completed SHS. Three mothers and three fathers had no schooling while three fathers and seven mothers had some schooling.

5.7 Irregular schooling

Based on my findings I will suggest some new terms to describe the different situations for different households in rural Ghana relating to school drop out or school absence. The first one is “*forced temporarily drop out*”, by which I mean that pupils have been sent home from school, by the commandment of a teacher, because of an unpaid fee or expense (such as the printing fee). The second term is “*voluntary temporarily drop out*”, which refers to parents who keep their children home from school because of a fee which is not paid. For example one mother explained that her daughter sometimes have to work and earn money because her own health was not good and she was therefore unemployed. When I asked if the daughter (thirteen year old in class four) normally goes to school every day, the mother’s response was honestly “not every day, sometimes she has to work”. As the conversation continued it became clear that she worked in order to pay her own fees. If the school required her to pay for something she might have to go and sell “pure water” (small plastic-bags with drinking water sold all over Ghana) or banana to get the money to pay.

Another 11 year old girl also had to sometimes stay home and “help in trading or going to the field”. An 11 years old boy also stayed home some days working on the family farm, but that was because he had been sacked from school, according to the grandmother. One mother stated that “if the teacher asked for something and I didn’t have, than they will stay home that day”. This statement seems to mean that instead of sending the children to school to be beaten or sacked because a fee was not paid, she would rather keep them home until she had the money ready.

There is a danger of misunderstanding the terms I have suggested, but by separating forced and voluntary temporarily drop out or absence, I am trying to distinguish what role or responsibility the school has in the drop out and what role the family or household situation has. The third term is *temporarily school absence*, by which I mean that pupils are kept home

a few days every now and then because of reasons such as poverty to the extent that there is no food in the house. Some families reported that their children would sometimes stay home because as one mother said “*I don’t even have money to buy cassava*” (a staple food crop in Ghana). In village number two food seemed to be a bigger problem than in village number one, even though the problem was found in both places. When I asked if the children normally goes to school every day one mother stated that “sometimes Fridays they don’t go because there’s no money”. Although it is my own interpretation its possible that the family is trying to keep up with a weekly budget, and by the end of the week the money normally finishes, so the children can not go to school when they have not eaten and have no food to take to school. According to one of the teachers, some children will also stay home because the parents go early in the morning to the farm and by the time they return, the children should have been in school, but they are not.

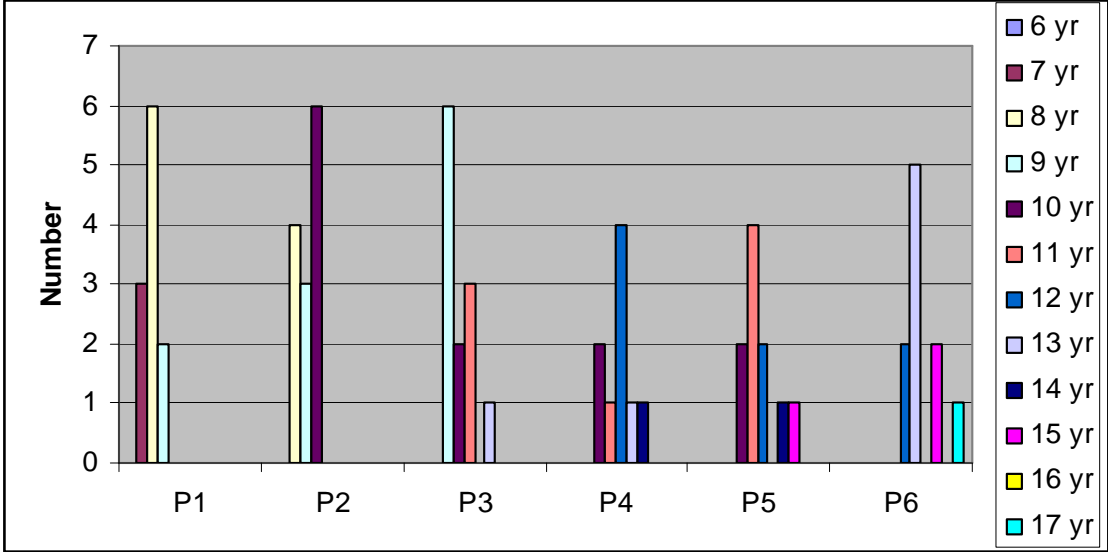
5.8 Results from the Registration scheme

The results fro the registration scheme is interesting in several ways. Firstly it showed a very low attendance the day of the registration. Only 67 pupils out of 160 where present. This was a Monday in the middle of June which meant they still have about a month left before vacating in the end of July. So the low attendance could not be due to people already travelling or migrating for the holiday (migrating to hometowns is relatively common during vacations). The registration scheme, as well as observing, also showed that two teachers, that of class one and class four, was not present. Puzzled by this I thought maybe the teacher had went to the toilet, because I have never seen a school class with no teacher or no other adult present. I was told by an informant that “maybe the teacher did not come after the weekend”. I asked further what he meant by that and was explained that some teachers might travel to their hometown during the weekend, and by Monday they would still not have returned. He spoke of this as it was a common problem. The teacher absence is consistent with other studies and findings particularly in rural schools in Ghana.

The fact that many pupils where not present the day of observation also seem to support results from the household interviews, which showed that many pupils had been “sacked” (sent home from school) due to unpaid printing/examination fees the previous week. However it might also be an expression of teachers’ claims that parents keep children home to work on the farming fields during special seasons like the harvesting times in June, July and August.

When it comes to getting an overview of the pupils present the registration scheme was a good tool. There were three different issues which became clear through this scheme. The first is the frequency of late enrolment. The second issue was the frequency of repetition. And the third is the rate of pupil absence. This raises several issues which need to be discussed. Here I will present the findings in three sections. First, let’s look at the age composition in the classes and the age of claimed enrolment in class one.

Figure 5.5 Age composition in primary school, village one, June 2014.



Note: P1=Primary class one, P2= Primary class two, and so on.
 Source: Field data, 2014.

N=67

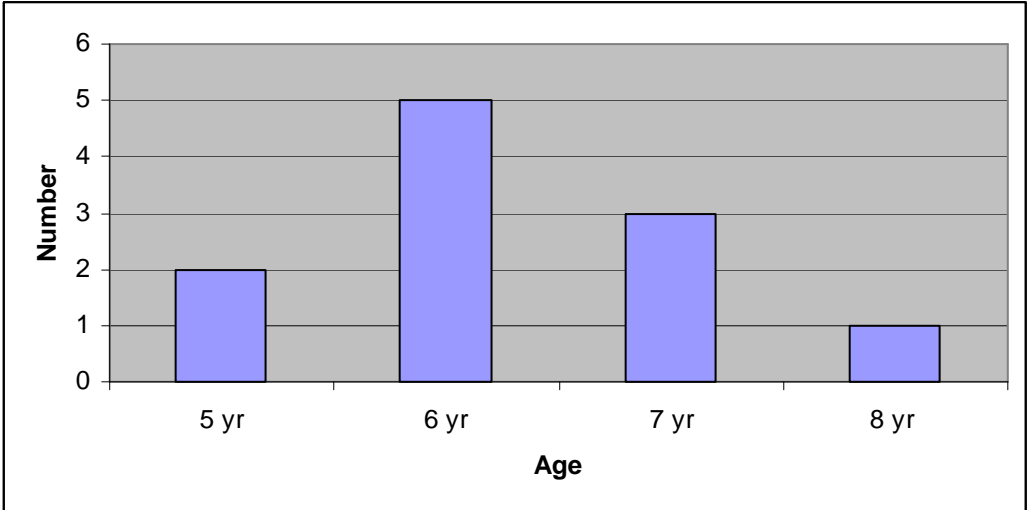
In Figure 5.1 we can see that the pupils in class one (P1) have an age span from seven years to nine years. This data was collected in June, which is the end of the last semester in school. It therefore means that none of the pupils present in class one enrolled in class one at the age of five (born between July and December). Three pupils claimed to be seven years old and since this was in the last semester they could potentially have been six years when they started in fall 2014. But when I asked what age they enrolled the answer was seven years old, which means they must be born later on the year. Semester one in Ghana starts somewhere in the middle of September. According to this then, none of the pupils present enrolled in class one at the age of six years old in this academic year of 2013/2014.

In class two (P2), the age span varies from eight years to ten year old. In class three the age varies from nine to thirteen. The largest age span was found in class five and six, where pupil’s age varied from respectively ten years to fifteen for the former and twelve years to seventeen in the latter. These findings are consistent with other findings of large age span in

primary schools in rural Ghana (Fentiman et al. 1999). It is important to note that the majority of children where lets say a year or two older than expected, whiles a few children are several years older than expected for the class level, so these are exceptions. However exceptions were found in all classes.

As mentioned, the time the children are enrolled in the nursery and kindergarten probably affects the time and age at which they are enrolled in school in class one. Through the registration scheme I therefore also noted the age of the children in KG 2, which is similar to pre-school (“førskole”). These children are supposed to start class one in September 2014. We can see that also in KG 2 the age span varies with about four years between, that is form five years to eight years old. Majority of them are six years old, indicating that they will be turning seven during their first semester in class one. But there are also some who are already seven and eight years old.

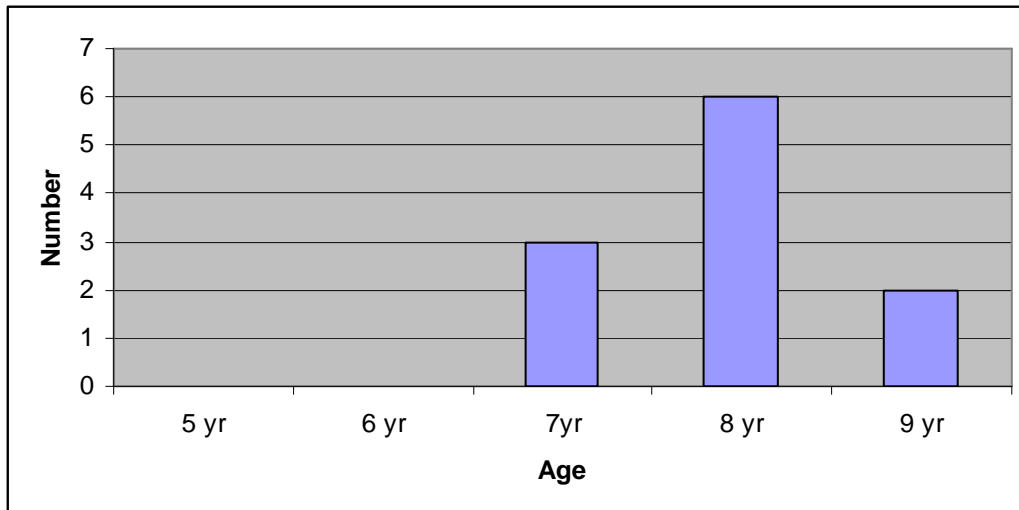
Figure 5.6 Age composition in a government KG 2, in Kwahu East District.



Source: Field data (registration scheme), June 2014.

Figure 5.8 also confirms that majority of the children where seven years old when they started class one and have turned eight during the first year in school. But again, the age span is about three years showing that late enrolment is the trend.

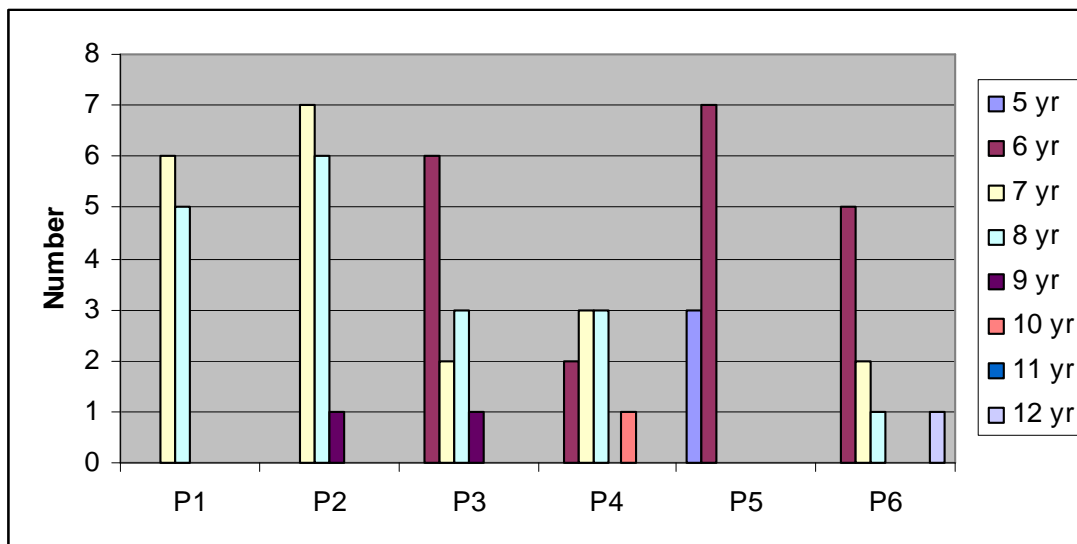
Figure 5.7 Age composition in Primary School Class one, Kwahu East District, June 2014



Source: Field data (registration scheme), June 2014.

If I compare the last six years of enrolment into class one, we can possibly see some pattern in enrolment. This is done methodologically by using the children’s present age, information about repetition of classes, and their claimed age of enrolment, to estimate the enrolment age for all the pupils during the last six years from 2008/2009 to 2013/2014. The data shows how many of the pupils in each class who were in the particular age group at enrolment into class one.

Figure 5.8 Age of enrolment in school, Kwahu East District 2008-2014



Note: The figure shows estimated age of enrolment the last six years in one primary school in village one based on registration scheme.

Source: Field data, 2014.

N=67

From Figure 5.9 we can see indications of an increasing enrolment age the last couple of years. The pupils who are presently in class one and class two enrolled at ages seven years

and eight years. Majority of those who are presently in class three, five and six enrolled when they were six, although the age span varies three to four years. Class four had a more even enrolment between six, seven and eight year olds.

5.9 Repetition

Here follows a presentation of the rate of repetition. From the 67 pupils present at the day of my visit and filling of the registration scheme, 25 pupils reported to have repeated a school year at least once. This gives a repetition rate at 37, 31%. Out of these 25 repeaters, two pupils reported to have repeated twice and three pupils have repeated three times. Since the scheme was filled in the classrooms I did not ask the reason for repetition there, since this can potentially be sensitive to the pupil to talk about in the class room. During household interviews though, I also encountered repeaters and when I asked why they repeated there were a few reasons mentioned.

One common reason was moving and starting at a new school. When you start a new school there will be made a test, and based on the result they place you in the class level they find suitable. Children who moved into this village were therefore normally put one year back. So if you came from class four you would be moved to class three. However if you move from the village to a city you will also normally be repeated because according to the saying, city schools are more effective. This sounds reasonable to some degree, but why moving from one village to another village results in repetition does not seem all that obvious to me. It was my impression that in general when you move in Ghana, you will be repeated at least once. However, there is another more disturbing aspect of the repetition. Because of examination fees which must be paid every term, children are also being repeated because of lack of payment of this fee. If the fee is not paid, you will according to parents and pupils I have interviewed, not be allowed to take the examination. And without the examination, you have to repeat the year again to take the exam. More detail on this can be found in the section on household interviews in this chapter.

During the preliminary fieldwork in 2013 I also spoke to a father who claimed that the headmaster suddenly demanded they should pay a “culture fee”. The parents were laughing between themselves as they explained to me that they do not even know what a culture fee is. I asked if they did not pay it, what will happen, where as the father loudly and obviously in distress, claimed that “if you don’t pay they will not promote you to the next level”. This

means, according to him that if you are in class three and you did not pay the culture fee, then the school will withheld you from going to class four until the money is paid. If the payment delayed by the end of the school year it means you will be repeated.

During the 24 household interviews in the village, 11 of these households reported to have at least one child who had repeated once or several times. This is a repetition rate of 48, 83 %. Out of the eleven repeaters, four of them reported that moving was the reason. One boy in class six in the village was moved back to class four in Kumasi. Another boy was also moved from class six in the village to class four in Kumasi. Another boy moved from Kumasi to the village and was repeated one year in the village. Another boy was moved from JHS 1 in the village to class five in Accra. After completing class five and six in Accra he was placed back in JHS 2 in the village. One family reported that their daughter had to repeat one year because a printing fee was not paid. The parents of a boy claimed he started in class one only four years old, but repeated class one two times. The five last repeaters all reports to have repeated class one either once, twice or three times.

It is not possible to draw any broader conclusions or patterns from this, which could be representative for rural schools in Ghana. The extent of late enrolment I found is supported by other findings of late enrolment in Ghana. Fentiman et al. (2001) for example notes that 60 % of all the pupils in three different schools in rural Ghana were found to be late enrolled. The rate of repetition I found seems to be somewhat consistent with MOESS statistics in CREATE (2007:32) which also shows a repetition rate at about 30 %. The use of triangulation in terms of using a registration scheme and household interviews have also given similar results, which is strengthening the validity of the data. For example did the registration scheme and the interviews give similar rates of repetition, that being 37 % and 48 %. If the scheme showed few repeaters and the interviews much more it could be a reason to question the inconsistency. But because it is a small scale study gererelizability can be questioned.

5.10 The schools perspective

When parental school fees was abolished in 2005, the Capitation Grant was introduced to replace the payments from parents. It has been recognized by several though, that the Capitation Grant is smaller than the previous school fees which leaves the schools with less funds to run. As already said in chapter three, there has been an increase from 3 to 4.50 GH ¢, which means for every pupil 4.50 GH ¢ will be paid to the school per term. For a school with

160 pupils this will be 2160 GH ¢ (4320 NOK) a year. This is not to cover teacher's wages, but it is meant to cover for every other need the school may have during the year, both in terms of buying teaching and learning materials, books, renovation of buildings and more. However, one of the head teachers in Kwahu East District claimed the capitation was not more than 1.20 GH ¢ pr head. In another school teachers claimed they have not received any Capitation Grant for the last two years. One school said it always delays, so the capitation for the first term does not come before the second term, and second term does not come before third term. Another school said they did not receive any Capitation Grant yet in the year 2014. Some teachers claimed that not all schools receive the Capitation Grant at all. Both teachers and employee at GES agreed that the Capitation Grant is helpful, but should still be increased. As already mentioned other reports also acknowledges that the Capitation Grant is *less* than the previous parental payments, which leaves the schools with less resources after the removal of school fees in 2005.

All 13 teachers/head teacher also agreed that it is difficult to acquire learning and teaching materials. One teacher said "*we only have chalk. You can't teach a lot with only chalk. It makes learning boring for the kids*". This was echoed by a head teacher who said the school materials attract pupils, so without it school becomes unattractive. He also did mention that the government will sometimes provide books and uniforms, but this is provided once a year so if the books have finished there is nothing left for the rest of the year.

School feeding was another topic discussed during interviews with teachers. None of the schools I visited were in the school feeding programme. One informant, a teacher, during an interview said that "*in Ghana here they talk about school feeding programme, but we have never seen it in this area*". For him this was clearly political talk, but not something he had witnessed with his eyes anywhere in the District. Another informant also complained to me that before there was some school feeding, but now they have stopped, because the government did not pay the women cooking the food for the job, as they were supposed to.

These are the reasons for late enrolments which thirteen teachers have given me during group interviews in four different primary schools in Kwahu East. The first school mentioned financial problem/poor homes, parental care/parental problems, not responsible parents and parents not knowing the usefulness of education as reasons for delayed enrolment as well as orphans. One teacher also added that some children don't want to go to school.

The second school mentioned financial problem in terms of payments for uniforms, books and exercise books as the reason for delayed enrolment. The teachers in the third school explained that some children are “dull” because of low nutrition levels. The children’s minds need to grow/mature before they can cope with school. This was the reason for delayed enrolment in their view. Finally the fourth school claimed that poverty, parental care, child’s health, migrating people and family culture (parent’s perception of when the child is mature enough to start school) was contributing to the delayed enrolment in the area. The employee at GES mentioned similar reasons such as parents educational level, location (rural areas), lack of parental care, fostering (children who are living with another family may not be put to school) and orphans (including children with one parent dead) as variables that influences on late enrolment.

When I asked if it is a problem that children enrol late all the teachers said that the older children bully the younger ones. Sometimes the older children are uncomfortable because they do not know things that the younger ones have already learned. One teacher also mentioned that pupils who have enrolled late are not used to the school structure which can explain the parent’s statements about some children who “don’t want to learn”. Late enrolment is in the schools view causing social problems in the classroom.

I asked if there is anything which can solve the problem of late enrolment. The teachers in two of the schools have suggested that there should be more jobs for the farmers. Because the market structure is inadequate, the farmers sell their produce shortly after harvesting and the rest of the year they have little income. Storage/refrigerating facilities could have helped so products don’t spoil quickly after harvesting. It was especially the area of coco farmers were this was said to be a solution. In one of the schools they mentioned that the Capitation Grant should have been increased, so the schools can buy more materials. Better equipped schools attract students, they claimed. A teacher in another school also echoed this saying that if games and playing activities were more available, it could have attracted pupils more. He also mentioned educating parents about the importance of education. The employee at GES said that educating the parents about the importance of education could be useful, something which GES does regularly. He also added that it might be necessary to introduce some sort of punishment to parents who does not enrol the children in school. It may appear a serious action to take, but as primary education is compulsory, a punishment may be in place.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the findings and attempt to relate it to the structuration theory. Based on the findings this discussion will focus on the structure of the public school system in Ghana, the economic constraints faced by poor rural populations in relation to schooling as well as interconnected issues to schooling and finally some gender issues. The goal here is to draw broader lines by using specific examples.

6.1 Poverty structures

The overall constraining structure in the area was poverty. It affects the households ability to enrol and keep children in school both because of school related expenses and because of seasonal or persistent lack of food. The household poverty again constrains peoples opportunities to create changes. Structuration theory permits changes in society if the agents acts differently and thereby changes the social structures, conscious or unconscious. Changes can though, be hard to achieve just because of “the sticky problem of culture” as Hays (1994) describes as a certain lifestyle becomes the norm and the expected way of behaving. Due to the common household poverty, it has become the norm that some children are being sacked, repeated or vanishes from school for some weeks or month. When children are home from school because there is no food in the house, it does not trigger any particular action or worries, because it is all too common.

In a rural agrarian context like this, there is also a lack of finances to invest in whether it be local business, infrastructure (road construction, internet access etc.), health care or other. There did not seem to be any social networks functioning in regard to receiving help from family members to pay for example school related expences. All parents said they are responsible for paying and have no family or other resources to receive economic help from. This may simple be due to the fact that their family members are also poor and can therefore not help with money. The only indication of a pattern which I found in regard to children who had been sacked, was that of single parenthood and grandparents taking care of grand children. These were most often experiencing that the children were being sacked from school because of missing payments of various fees, reflecting the financial situation in the

household. The poverty structure seems therefore to hit most hard on single mothers, widows, grandparents and also some few parents who live together but obviously are very poor still.

6.1.2 Poverty as a reason for delayed enrolment in a fee free public primary school

The most common cited reason for delayed enrolment during my interviews was financial problem. It is interesting that poverty is a cited reason for delayed enrolment because it does to some degree contradict the idea that primary schooling is free in Ghana today. Interviews revealed that parents pay printing fee, craft fee and examination fee every term as well as PTA fee and several other fees. For some reason these fees are still referred to as “indirect cost of schooling” in parents descriptions. Even though parents claim the child will be expelled from school (“sacked”) if a fee is not paid, the parents still see these fees as indirect costs, and not as a school fee. Because Ghana previously up to 2005 had a school fee which was also paid every term, parents now perceive primary schooling as “free” although there are some indirect costs related to it. Some of the fathers did as explained in previous chapter express that it was even easier to pay a school fee before, because fees now appeared to be sudden, unexpected and even more than before. Still, parents consistently referred to these fees as indirect cost of schooling.

6.1.3 Indirect or direct cost of schooling

In academic literature, indirect costs of schooling is mostly referred to as transportation costs, school uniforms, food in terms of school feeding fee, loss of family income when sending a working able child to school and buying of school materials such as exercise books or pencils and such. When I asked parents whether or not the child ever have to stay home from school because they have to work on the farm, most parents replied “only Saturdays” or “they are too young”. In primary school level I doubt if the opportunity cost of schooling is a serious problem if children are perceived too young to work. However, some parents acknowledged that the children worked on weekends and during vacations. Those who were working also during school weeks were children over the age of 10-11 years. It seemed as common understanding that younger children are not allowed to work on the farm. At JHS level it might be more common that children are home some days to help on the farm.

This rather causes irregular schooling and temporarily school absence, and not permanent drop out. If, though, pupils have too much absence, it can maybe affect their long term schooling, causing difficulties of passing the term examinations and possible repetition. The

key issue is what makes a compulsory fee such as printing fee, which is followed by a sanction of beating or sacking if unpaid, to be perceived as an indirect cost of schooling? At least, politicians and the media have been very persuasive in convincing people that primary schooling is fee-free and that the only problem left now is some indirect cost of schooling. I repute that, and my claim is that there are still direct costs of primary schooling, but it is being disguised as “indirect costs”.

CREATE (2010) compared fee free public schools and low fee private schools in three rural households in Mfantese District in Southern Ghana in order to estimate how much of a family’s income is being used on education. The result they presented was 32 cedi in public schools and 62 cedi in private schools per term. My own findings are inconsistent with CREATE (2010) report on this issue, as I find almost three times more expenses. I did not do a survey on equally many schools, and I did not compare public and private. Nor can I claim that my study is large enough to be generalized. But based on diaries, household interviews and field conversations I do however believe that I am providing some insight into the public school system which needs to be paid much more attention to. It does suggest that this issue needs to be researched more closely.

It is the first term/semester which is most expensive due to the school uniform. According to interviews though, it is the third semester which is most difficult for farmers because of the seasonal related poverty. During the first term the farmers have harvested and therefore have cash. The time from February to June however, is often characterized by lack of cash and therefore difficulties of paying school related expenses as well as food. As explained in chapter three an average income for a cocoa farmer is a monthly income of 100 cedi. If a school uniform is 19 cedi alone, how exactly is that family going to make it?

There are two very important issues at stake when it comes to this school related expenses. Should public schools be allowed to charge printing fees or examination fees at all? Are they actually allowed to charge these fees? And should unpaid printing fees cause problem on the pupil, in terms of punishment such as caning, “sacking” or repetition of classes? This is both political and moral questions and I would encourage the government authorities and the local communities to debate it.

6.1.4 Food

When it comes to feeding the children in school it is rather expensive. Without any school feeding programme parents have reported to me that they send from 70 pesueas a day to 2 cedi a day with the child, so he/she can buy lunch at the school. In every school there are some local women who cook and sell food during the lunch break. They are working independently and not hired by the school. In order to get food then, the child must have some money. One mother said she sends 70 pesuas a day with the daughter. Some parents said they send 1 cedi a day and some said 2 cedi a day. This is most likely reflecting the parents ability to pay and willingness to pay, but also what they see as necessary to get a meal during the day. This makes about 30 -60 cedi a month for lunch for one child. For some of the farmers who might earn less than 200 cedi a month, spending even 30 cedi on lunch is a very demanding task. Several of my informants had as mentioned in chapter five, stayed home from school because there was no food or money for food in the house. School food is a real problem for poorer families. The problem is however not necessarily an all-year-round problem, but rather a seasonal problem. Almost all of my households interviewed confirmed that the season from around after January-February up to July was the hardest season for them as farmers. This is related to the harvesting times in July-August and going. From January going the harvest is finished and so is the money from the harvest. This time was described by the farmers as a time “the hardship is more” and “you hold on tight”. An elderly woman said “we are starving here”, as she begged me to bring a bag of rice next time I come around. During this season it is more difficult for the farming communities to pay school related expenses even such as food.

Lack of food or lack of money for food is, on the other side, not something we can blame the school for. The food money is not the schools responsibility. Parents I spoke to did also not express any blame on the school for this. It is poverty which is the problem, and particularly seasonal poverty, relating to sowing seasons and harvesting seasons. But seasonal poverty is not unknown to rural areas in Ghana. Government authorities are most likely informed of the situation. Since this is leading to disrupted primary school attendance by school absence, and potentially drop out, the government could take interest and action to bring forth solutions. Solving the poverty problem is a much bigger task than just to remove all parental payments in public schools. It should therefore be an easier solution for the government to remove payments in school, especially the last term in farming communities, as this is the term when farmers generally have less money available.

Health and health care is another important structure. I call it a structure referring to the overall access to health care. Since structural adjustment programmes was introduced, user fees was imposed also on health care services. Although improvements have been made, for example the introduction of health insurance scheme, the poor people are still finding themselves in a position out of reach for health care. The little money it will cost them to get to the local clinic is still too much. Children suffering from chronic illness may end up dropping out from school or becoming a very irregular attendant pupil, with consequently lower school results.

Micronutrient deficiencies (which people are most likely not aware of) can affect the cognitive ability of the child (Welch and Graham 1999). Health and health care institutions should not be forgotten as an important structure which can improve and enable school attendance and school performance. This also means that different structures are intertwined and together are enabling or constraining in different ways. That means there is a network of structures, where more than one structure needs to be directing people in the same direction, if improvements are to be the result. If late enrolments are going to be improved, it is most likely going to need improvements of both health care institutions, transport to school (or shorter distance to school) and economic improvements for households who are struggling financially. However, none of this would improve the quality of school.

6.2 School system structures

The parts of the school system which negatively affects school enrolment and retention is the compulsory nature of the KG, the physical and social environment in the school and the school culture in terms of lack of monitoring the rural school, hence giving the schools too much liberty in how to run the school. It is fuelled by the economic deprivation of the educational system and the lack of control and affects enrolment, causes irregular schooling, repetition and drop-out, all of which will be discussed here.

6.2.1 Compulsory KG

The empirical findings showed different reasons for delayed enrolment and was very common in both villages. Delayed enrolment into KG was not cited by more than one person as the reason for delayed enrolment into school. They rather mentioned financial problem as the cause of delayed enrolment. However, the financial problem is causing delayed enrolment

into the school system, which starts with KG. Therefore delayed enrolment into KG due to financial problem is really the issue. Since the KG became compulsory children are expected to enrol in school (KG 1), at the age of four. This means that a five year old who is brought to school to enrol should preferably be enrolled straight into KG 2 so he or she would be in class one at six year old. However, because of the compulsory nature of the KG children normally have to attend both KG 1 and 2 before they are allowed to start class one. The employee at GES informed me that there are exceptions made, so children who are older can enrol in school without the KG, but it seems to be children who are much older and not those who are just a year or two older than the official entry age.

We are here dealing with two intertwined constraining structures. First is the poverty as already described, and second is the structure of the school system with compulsory KG for two years. Two constraining structures therefore reinforces each other. It is therefore possible, that the compulsory KG, as a part of the school system, should be stopped or at least become more flexible.

If I am to compare to my own country, the KG (“barnehage”) is not compulsory, but most parents admit the children in the nursery a few years before school because they need to be at work, and the child must be cared for in the meantime. If the KG in Ghana was more directed towards the parents needs maybe early enrolment could increase. In a rural setting this could mean that the KG needs to open very early in the morning whiles parents go to their farms to work. Something similar to the Norwegian “SFO” could also be a possible solution. SFO is an arrangement where children can be cared for at school before school classes actually start, and also after classes end. This enables parents to go to work whiles the children are in a safe place. It is possible that this sort of arrangement could improve on the earlier enrolment if in addition to other measures taken. It does not solve the financial problems but this will be discussed further in a later section. However if financial problems was eradicated, a caring arrangement for children early in the morning, when parents go to the farm, could be a positive intervention. This would also provide some much needed employment in the area. Parental care, or lack of it, was mentioned by several of the teachers in different schools and at GES. But what exactly is lack of parental care? Due to space limitations it is not possible to discuss this in much depth. Shortly I will say that in the context lack of care probably refers both to poverty (parents not able to feed the children sufficiently and paying for their education) and to parental neglect which can be found in every society. Young women who

gives birth tends to leave their children with their grand parents in Ghana. Other problems can be misuse of alcohol or domestic violence.

Poverty, food insufficiency and parental care may as well be linked together. Food insecurity in American families has been linked with parental care. “Psychological impairment and harsh parenting have been found to occur in parents undergoing economic strain” (Alaimo et al. 2001:50). “This does not mean that children who live in food insufficient families necessarily have bad parents, but rather that the stresses that accumulate on parents can affect how well they are able to care for their children” (Alaimo et al. 2001:50). Moreover the stress that parents experience from worrying about finances seems to affect children’s cognitive and psychological development. Lower school results are found to be related to food insecure families, although it’s not clear whether this is because of the stress or because of lower nutrition levels (Ibid. 2001). These social problems can not be solved by any simple task, but rather needs strengthening of social programmes, child protective services, health care institutions and more.

6.2.2 Irregular schooling

At primary level it is not working on the farm which is the problem, but rather the school related expenses causing irregular schooling and school absence. The “sacking” of pupils is causing them to stay home for days or weeks, which on longer terms can led to problems of passing examinations and therefore repetition. It does of course also lead to distrust in the public school system. Poverty in itself is also causing school absence and irregular schooling. When children are kept home simply because there is no food in the house to bring to school or equally no money in the house to buy food at school, then we are talking poverty as a contributor to irregular schooling. For some families poverty is an all year round problem, while for other families poverty is seasonal. Lack of food then, is not the schools responsibility, but the government can solve the irregular schooling it by extending the school feeding programmes. Possibly, school feeding programmes should be targeting pupils of vulnerable families, rather than the whole school, because covering whole schools are much more expensive and may be an impossible task for the government at this point. School feeding scholarships for vulnerable pupils or families might therefore offer a solution. Seasonal school feeding could also be an option. If lunch was free at school during February to July, it could potentially be a main solution in rural agrarian communities.

A problem which the parents themselves did not mention, but which teachers did mention, was the fact that some children “care for themselves”. The parents will go early to the farm and the children have to get up and get ready for school on their own. However, as any young children they are incapable of doing this on their own, and will end up staying home if the parents are not back from the farm before the children are supposed to be off to school. This might be cited as parental care or lack of parental care. I think it is also to be seen as a structure in a typically rural, farming, poor community. Farming is a physically demanding work which still does not bring huge revenue. Working opportunities are not many in a rural community. So in order to generate the income possible from the farming, parents have to go to the farm and do the work required. It is unfortunate though that this will affect children and cause irregular school attendance. Solving this problem is a bigger challenge. My only option I can think of is a government employee whose responsibility would be to go and pick up children from their homes and bring them to school. But this is not possible if younger children are being taken care of by the older school going children. The only solution to this is as mentioned care-taking option and nursery early in the morning in the community as well as better communication with parents who are farmers, trying to educate them about the importance of the children coming regularly to school.

6.2.3 Repetition of classes

A CREATE report in 2007, address promotion, repetition and drop out. Drawing on statistics from MOESS 2006, the author claims that class one have the highest drop out and repetition rates. Statistics from MOESS showed that 559 out of 1000 pupils who enrolled in school also completed class six at the appointed time. 283 out of the 1000 remained in the system through repetition and 159 pupils dropped out (CREATE 2007: 32). Repetition rate here is almost 30 %, but this is a general statistic which therefore might hide geographical differences. My case school showed higher repetition rates, respectively on 37 %. Interviews showed even higher repetition rates at 48 %.

From the ten pupils present in class six, four pupils claimed they had never repeated any class since they enrolled in class one. One student had been away for one year and then returned. Five pupils had repeated at least one class. This means that half of the pupils in class six completed school at the appointed time. The number was similar in class five where also half of the pupils had repeated at least once and the other half had never repeated. Class two showed a lower repetition where four out of fourteen pupils had repeated. All in all, the

repetition rate I found is a little higher than that of MOESS in CREATE (2007), but it is possible that this reflects different repetition patterns in rural and urban Ghana. It is also possible that the individual schools have different practises around repetition. This is something worth more research to clarify.

Except from the actual *share* of repetition the *reasons* for repetition is also worth attention. I do find it worrisome that so many pupils are being repeated at primary level, especially because of unpaid fees, as was claimed by some informants. Others mentioned moving to a new place or school. The tradition of repeating pupils because of moving should be scrutinized to see if it is really necessary. As this is based on a test it may show a need for a national curriculum so pupils can have an opportunity to pass the test also in a new school. Or maybe such testing after moving should be removed all together. Repetition of pupils is wasting their time as well as wasting the parent's money. If repetition is caused by the schools unwillingness to promote the child because of an unpaid fee (as was claimed), it is even more serious as this must be questioned also from a moral standpoint. There is a need for developing strategies for handling delayed payments of fees. This should be dealt with between parents and school management and should not lead to suffering (repetition) on the pupil's part.

6.2.4 Drop-out

The difference between drop out and temporarily withdrawal and even repetition is somewhat blurred. A permanent drop out is more clear, but it can not be said to be a permanent drop out until its certain that the child will never return to school. But if a child is away from school six months and then returns, it must be classified as a temporarily drop out. Or is it repetition, because I assume that a child who is away for six months will have to repeat the year? But what is absence from school three weeks, because the child has been sacked, to be called? Or three months? Or one week? Or absence every Friday? It is difficult to find fitting labels or terms and to separate these categories. Well aware that the different terms are blurred and intertwined I have still discussed them in separate sections here.

In the introduction chapter I referred to statistics about drop out in Ghana. During my interviews and field work I did not have much success in finding pupils who had dropped out permanently during primary level. I only encountered two households who had children dropped out. I was told that this was not common in the village. However, again, it depends

on how we define the term drop out. A permanent drop out from primary is maybe not common. However, periodic or temporarily drop out is rather common.

As I said in the beginning of this chapter the different terms are blurred and intertwined and a simple statistic may not give the actual correct image of the nature of drop out. Irregular schooling (that is regular school absence and temporarily drop out) is the main problem in this area. Statistics on drop out may be misleading because of difficulties in Ghana with records. Therefore children who move or migrate may be recorded as dropped out from a school, even if they have started school in another place. The teachers confirmed his during interviews that children who stop schooling will just vanish without giving any message to the school. Therefore the school does not know whether the child started or continued in school in another place or whether the child has actually dropped out of school permanently. In that particular school it may therefore be recorded as a drop out, even if it is not.

6.2.5 Voluntary gifts

As can be seen in chapter five voluntary gifts to teacher or school was also mentioned by some parents. Money or crops from your farm are given regularly to teachers. Although voluntary, we must consider if there is any social pressure on these gifts. The money spent on these voluntary gifts was not insignificant. Why are parents willing to donate to teachers if they feel unsatisfied with the quality of the school? This particular expense needs to be researched more closely to reveal potential power structures. Several of the countries who implemented the free schooling policy did so in phases stretching over several years, which Ghana also did. This might be the reason that the enrolment rates did not increase in Ghana at the same phase as it did in for example Malawi (World Bank and UNICEF 2012). The World Bank also says that in four out of five countries studied, parents were encouraged to continue voluntary payments (WB and UNICEF 2012). This must have been an extremely confusing situation for any parents, but most for those who have a tight budget. Do I keep paying the school fee and forget about repairing the leaking roof in my house? Will I be looked down upon by the school administration if I do not pay fees anymore? Will the parents who give contributions feel that they are now providing school for the poor inhabitants in the village?

This information can tell us that it is necessary to do qualitative as well as quantitative research on this topic, in order to increase the validity of the data. It can also indicate that rural and urban schools within the same category (public), operates with different fees or

expenses, maybe calling for stronger management of the public schools. At the very least this should inform us that much more research is needed to find more solid facts about the issue of school related costs, including voluntary contributions, in Ghana.

6.2.6 Financial constraints within the educational system

As showed in chapter five, there are conflicting statements about the Capitation Grant. Teachers agree that it is important, but not sufficient, not timely and some claimed they have not received any for two years. There have been frequent teachers strikes in Ghana and while I was on field there were news on radio and newspaper that head teachers across the nation are demanding to receive the Capitation Grant, which have not been paid during 2014.

As mentioned, the Capitation Grant was introduced in Ghana in 2005 to assure the continued operation of the schools after the abolition of levies. Ghana, Malawi and Mozambique received donations for the school fee abolition. Where these donations came from is unclear to me. The WB notes that the support was given by “their development partners” (WB and UNICEF 2012:27). I suppose then that it came from the WB or other international development agencies. If the donated money went directly to the Educational sector is not clear either. Researchers both from the UN and national and international researchers on the topic have documented that school fees are the most important factor hindering children in Ghana from enrolling in school. The capitation grant was therefore a part of the policy to abolish school fees.

However the WB claims that in Ghana the capitation grant was not put in place to cover the user fees, but rather to “provide schools with some basic education inputs” because “the fee income sufficed to cover only some minimum training material and operating costs” (WB and UNICEF 2012:29). I am not sure whether this is a contradiction from the World Bank (since lost user fees must by all means be replaced by something?) or if it is a proof of poor planning strategies in Ghana (for the same reason). The WB further says that the capitation grant “is considerably less than the amount they received from the school levies” (Ibid. 2012:29). If so, was nothing put in place to replace the school fees? How exactly is a school manager supposed to manage a school that suddenly loses income from user fees, and then receives a grant considerably less than the user fees? This means that the school budget will go in minus. We now have a situation then where the government budget is in balance, but the school budget is below zero. This leaves the schools on their own trying to manage successfully.

Osei et. al (2009) firmly states that with the introduction of the capitation grant “schools are therefore not permitted to charge any fees to parents” (Osei et. al 2009:5). My argument in this thesis has been that public schools still charge fees. Maybe not tuition fees but other types of fees. It may not be the bad will of teachers that causes this, but rather the main problem is the lack of funding to schools. This cause the teachers to forcefully charge user fees from parents, because the school is not ran by itself. Chalk does not come walking from Accra to remote villages. Notebooks does not come flying with the birds. It must be purchased with money. Increasing the Capitation Grant might therefore be crucial in order to stop the praxis of charging parents, and hence improve on the late enrolments into school as well as the frequent and temporarily drop-outs.

The poor condition of the rural schools also might have a negative effect on the teachers, who are often placed in rural areas for their teachers training. De-motivated teachers and a frustrated head teacher is a bad combination. Teachers have shown dissatisfaction with their condition during the last years with ongoing and repetitive strikes. Three teacher Unions are presently on strike in Ghana since October 28th 2014. That is Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), and the Coalition of Concerned Teachers (CCT). GNAT and NAGRAT was on strike also in March 2013 (tv3network), in 2012, 2011, 2010 and 2009 (Teacher Solidarity). Isaac Essel reports for Myjoyonline that teachers are on strike inter alia for unpaid salaries. 5000 teachers claim they have not been paid their salaries. The general condition in schools is also addressed in the strike. “It is important to note that for almost three years (i.e under the watch of Hon. Seth Terkper) the Ghana Education Service has never received even up to 20% of its budgetary allocation and this accounts for the lack of chalk, teachers note books, and other teaching and learning materials in our schools, Baokye Darkwa claimed” (Essel 2014). Indeed a blog called “teacher solidarity” claims “things are so bad in Ghana for teachers, that there is a separate organisation called the Unpaid Teachers Association, which represents teachers who qualified in 2010, have been working as teachers and yet have not been paid at all” (Teacher Solidarity 2014).

One case study from Ghana claims that the capitation grant was insufficient and delaying (WB/UNICEF 2012). Several other authors confirm this. In October 2012 there were claims made in Ghanaian media that the capitation grant for the academic year of 2012/2013 has not yet been given to any school. The grant for 2011/2012 was only covering the first out of three

terms (modernghana.com.). This has caused desperation amongst teachers and school staff. Some teachers say they use their own money to buy the simplest necessary item in school like chalk. A head teacher at Chairaa said that “For the past one year, I had to buy these items using my own money for some time. And when it got to the time I could not do so again, I had to get them on credit, and now there are some places in Sunyani that I cannot pass because my creditors will always worry me when they see me.” (modernghana.com).

As mentioned, parents showed conflicting emotions to teachers. Some were merciful to them because they are trying their best. Others were upset because they take the children to their farms and work instead of teaching in the class room. It is not difficult to empathize with teachers if in fact they do not get paid or get paid on time. However, the teachers must find other ways to deal with this, than to be punishing the pupils (by sacking or repeating them). One question remains: Can these political and economic structures which are straining teachers and pupils as well as parents, be overcome? Clearly there is a network of different agents acting by different motivations. Structuration theory claims that repetitive action becomes a social structure. Teachers and head teachers must make a conscious choice to act differently in order to change the system of sacking and improve on school enrolment and drop-out. But on the other hand it is only the government who can improve the economic situation in the educational system. It requires a prioritizing of the educational sector as well as a prioritization of the rural areas.

6.3. School environment and culture

In chapter three I referred to the Phelps-Stokes Commission which described the teacher education in Ghana as directed toward a city-career back in 1922 (Phelps-Stokes 1922). Feldberg (2013:175) also refers to a UNESCO report in 2011 echoing the need for basic education to be more adjusted to rural livelihoods. The report claims that education in rural areas must be related to their experiences in order to create work opportunities and hence changes in living conditions.

Pupils being sent to the teacher’s farms to work are not for educational purposes and neither is the fetching of water or sand or firewood. This occurrence of pupils working during school hours is causing parents to lose trust in the public educational system. It must be dealt with on an administrative level. The problem is connected to the problem of teacher’s salaries; therefore it needs to be solved by the government. Teachers must receive their salaries, and

must be punished if they do not spend their time in school by what they are supposed to do, which is teaching.

6.4 Agency

There is evidence of structures on several levels in this community. But on the other side, there are also some examples of people finding coping mechanisms to keep the children in school in spite of poverty. Some of the grandparents were taking care of grandchildren who were not enrolled late in school, such as a case of a grandmother who said the boy works to pay his own fees and a girl who sold ice-water to pay her fees. The tactic they were using to ensure continued schooling was that the child needed to work to earn money for various fees. This shows that the agent can act and find ways to solve a problem even in the midst of constraining situations. He was, though, capable of working. A child in ill health would not have been able to do that, even if the will to go to school was present.

As described earlier village number two had a long distance to school. This village seemed to have an older enrolment age, than the first. But although the long way to school may be recognized as constraining, it was clear that many children walked faithfully every day (or almost every day) to school showing a persistent and dedicated interest in continuing schooling. Agency is also apparent in the many households who continue to send the children to school, even after they have been “sacked”.

6.5 Qualitative research methods needed

School uniforms are another issue which I think exemplifies the need for qualitative methods in this type of study. If you ask a person to fill in a scheme the price for a school uniform, the answers can be varying. When you interview people they have an opportunity to explain the answer they give. The real cost of a uniform is higher than an estimated average price, because when you buy the material they sell for the uniform, you have to buy five yards in the market. You can not buy only the piece you need to get one uniform. This is common for all materials you want to buy in Ghana. After you got the material you need to have the uniform sewed, which is another expense. So the real price for a uniform is different as to whether or not you calculate that you bought 5 yard for the materials or you calculate the price from the 1 or 2 yard needed for one uniform. In addition, one uniform is not necessarily enough, as children tend to get messy and need to have one extra while one is being washed. Also keep in mind that children do grow, sometimes rapidly, and new uniforms will be needed to fit. This

example shows exactly why qualitative research methods can have strengths as compared to pure quantitative ones.

6.6 A gender perspective on late enrolment

The tendency of girls enrolling at an older age than their brothers and boys in general is an interesting finding. This is an example of structures at a micro level within the households. As mentioned I did not get any impression from parents that enrolling the girls later was intentionally. Still, it was a clear pattern. It might just exemplify the choices made unconsciously in structuration theory. And that the choices that people make individually becomes collective choices, and thereafter reproduces or reinforce social systems and structures showing the interconnectedness of structure and agency.

The registration scheme also confirmed the trend of girls being in overweight when it comes to the age of enrolment. During interviews I did not get the impression that girls were not being prioritized when it comes to enrolling them in school. I do not actually know whether it is intentionally or accidentally that more girls enrolled late as compared to boys. Based on the statements of child's maturity and willingness to go to school I can therefore only speculate whether or not girls are being perceived as less mature or ready to go to school when they are for example around 5 or 6 years old. As girls normally are two years ahead of boys in maturity levels, this does not seem to be correct. Are there cultural gendered expectations in Ghana which sees the girls as less brave and strong than their brothers? The late enrolment of girls can not be related to heavy household chores, since they are too young for that at 5 or 6 years old. Most parents also confirmed that working on farm or selling (ice water or similar items) is not something they do unless they are older; I will say around 10-11 years old. Relating it back to the KG a child is expected to enrol in KG at 4 years old. Maybe it is at this age that the girls are not perceived as ready to leave the house to go to school? And therefore they become delayed in class one.

A teacher mentioned the nutrition levels in the area to be low and said therefore the children's brains need to mature before they can start school (class one). This is also a potentially important statement which can relate to the gender difference in late enrolment. Research has also showed high levels of Iron deficiency amongst 6 and 7-year olds in Eastern Region (Fentiman et al. 2001). Likewise the study found that children suffering from stunting were more often late enrolled as compared to children who are not stunted. Parasitic infections

were also more common in non-enrolled children (Ibid. 2001). Although different health issues affects both boys and girls is it possible that girls are being more affected? Or that they need more time to grow physically to be perceived as ready and old enough to go to school. What we know about the nutrition of children in a household is that it depends mostly on the mother and not the father. The status of women in a society and the income or resources made available for women within the marriage is affecting the nutritional status of children due to the gendered differences in the spending of money (Geheb et al. 2008). Is it actually possible that girls in rural Ghana are being less favoured within the household when it comes to nutrition, and as a result needs more time to be ready and mature for school? In India and other Asian societies there is a known anti-female bias in nutrition (Messer 1997).

African women tend to be highly valued in the society, but also in Ghana poverty or unemployment is gendered and especially in rural areas (FAO 2012). Ellen Messer (1997) discusses the intra-household distributions of food and says that girls might eat less because they are expected to do so. “In many cultural settings, girls are expected to be less active, to eat less and to grow smaller”, she says (Messer 1997:1676). Examples from India, also shows that girls might eat enough in terms of calories, but never the less are lacking micronutrients. Studies in Nepal and Peru showed similar findings; males and females may have the same access to staple foods, but males are favoured in terms of micro-nutrient rich food. Lower intake of micronutrients can cause less growth (Ibid. 1997). Both cultural expectations to what girls are expected to eat and scientific nutritional knowledge might therefore be biased, Messer claims (Messer 1997).

Fentiman et al. (2001) found that parents perceptions on the children’s maturity was a factor influencing school enrolment, and this maturity was often based on the child’s height and not on the chronological age. Focus groups with parents showed an example of two children of the same age, where the tallest one would be described as “grown” while the smaller one was not. She suggests therefore that children are being enrolled based on height and not on age. Fentiman and Hall found in an earlier study that there were physical differences between children who were enrolled in school and children who were not enrolled in school in Ghana. “Non-enrolled children were shorter and lighter than their school going counterparts” (Fentiman and Hall 1997, Fentiman et al. 1999:342). In a study done in Northern Ghana she finds similar statements from parents indicating that “parents may have little concern for chronological age” (Fentiman et al. 1999:342). Rather a child aged six years old may not be

perceived as ready for school unless the child is able to cope with certain age related tasks (Ibid. 1999). These tasks are also related to the child's physical size (Ibid. 1999).

If girls are being less favoured nutritionally it can be a factor which causes stunting and wasting and hence delayed school enrolment. Additionally girls are often naturally physically smaller than boys. It is possible that parents in agrarian communities emphasizes the physics rather than the child's mental abilities, or that parents are unaware that girls are often mentally more mature than boys in the same age-group, even though they are physically smaller. I encountered families who had several children, who were enrolled at different ages. In one family a boy aged 5 years was in KG 2 and would therefore be turning 6 during class one. The daughter in the same family however was eight years old and attending class one. Another 10 year old daughter in the family was attending class 2. Another family had two children; a five year old boy in KG 1 meaning he will be six at the time of enrolling in class one, while his older sister was thirteen years old but only in class four, meaning she enrolled in class one at the age of nine.

Professor Kate Adoo-Adeku in Ghana writes in her book *Gender Education and Development* about a study carried out in 2010. The study was looking at cases of financial difficulties and showed that parents showed preferences to enrol the boy-child because they were scared of the boys "growing to become an armed robber, and a misfit in society" (Aduo-Adeku 2012). Because rural communities lack employment opportunities, school is hardly seen as a way out of poverty and into future employment. It is maybe rather seen as an institution which teaches children some basic skills and possible helps to create structure especially for the boys. If employment opportunities for women was increased in rural areas this could also potentially increase the interest of girl education.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Late enrolment was, much as expected, very common in both villages in the Kwahu East. There was an overweight of girls who were late enrolled, as compared to boys, often within the same family. I have discussed whether this can be due to agrarian communities' expectations of physical appearance or physical abilities as well as lack of knowledge of girls' mental abilities. Or whether it can be due to gender biased household distributions of food. To solve this it can be suggested to increase employment opportunities for women (to increase interest in girl education) and improve knowledge amongst parents about girls mental or cognitive abilities. Research on household food distribution in rural agrarian communities is necessary to uncover if this is causing low growth in girls and ergo affecting the enrolment of girls into school.

However, boys are also enrolled late even if not to the same extent as girls. According to parents late enrolments was caused by financial constraints as well as/or in combination with other reasons such as poor health of the child, death of a parent, moving/migration and more.

Since the compulsory school in Ghana starts at 4 years old in KG 1 it is necessary to focus on this age group when it comes to enrolment into school. An early morning provision of child care in the agrarian communities could be a solution which fits with parents daily work-habits. If the KG was more suited to fit farmers' daily life, it could potentially increase enrolment at an early age. That is if there are no fees attached to it. Arranging a government provided early morning child care could offer employment opportunities for rural women and increase interest in girl-education.

In my suggestion, there needs to be developed some clear and specific guidelines for the schools, to handle delayed enrolments. Delayed enrolment needs to be dealt with early, that is at the KG level. Parents see KG as school in Ghana. Enrolling the child in school means to enrol the child in KG. If this is to be done at the age of four then the government needs to make more efforts in targeting the four year olds.

Health care and nutrition is another relevant topic relating both to boys and girls late enrolment in school. Low nutrition levels are affecting the child's cognitive abilities and will

in the long run lead to this vicious circle of poverty and low educational levels described by Welch and Graham (1999). It is possible that the nutrition of girls is lower than that of boys, but I do not have enough grounding to make that claim here. I can only speculate if girls' low nutrition is causing more girls to be late enrolled. As lack of food is in general a problem in both villages, it is at least reasonable to think that low nutrition levels are in part a reason for delayed growth both physically and mentally. Some of these problems of extreme poverty could be much improved by increasing the school-feeding-programmes. School teachers, GES and parents agreed with this view, as also several other reports. Supporting programmes during the third term in school is a possible solution. So are scholarships for vulnerable families such as grand parents who are caring for school going grand children, widows or single mothers.

I was not able to find many permanent school drop outs in the area. That does not mean that drop outs are not happening. What I did find though is that there is a lot of uncertainty around drop outs, because pupils who drop out do not inform the school previously, they simply stop coming to school. The school then does not know whether the pupil is migrated or have started school in another place. It might therefore be registered as a drop out, even if its not so. To some extent teachers can find out if a family have moved from the village, but there is fluctuations in the staff and therefore they do not necessarily know the area as much as a more stable local inhabitant. Teachers can also not be expected to use their time on going and doing research about who moves and not. I can conclude on this issue that there is lack of communication from parents to teachers about if they are moving and about if the pupil is dropping out of school for what ever reason.

However, the definition of drop out is crucial to our understanding of it. Is drop out only those who never come back to school or does it also include those who are gone for a week, or a month or three months? I am suggesting that the term drop out needs to be reconsidered or redefined, in order to encapsulate the different variations of drop out, as for example voluntary drop out or forced drop out, permanent drop out or temporarily drop out. I do not by any means think that my suggestions of these terms are satisfying, but they might lead to a discussion of the term drop out and better suggestions might come from other authors.

The drop out which is caused by the school is another issue. When a pupil has been sacked from school because of unpaid fees, the school is obviously aware of the reason for the child's

absence. In these cases the schools are also unable to make any effort in bringing the child back to school, since they are in part responsible for the absence. It was these temporarily drop outs which were a more serious problem in the Kwahu East. The practice of sacking appeared to be more common in village one, but was also occurring in village two. This practice must be questioned from several standpoints, both legally and morally. It causes irregular schooling for primary school children with absence from school any time or especially during times when the family is having difficult times financially. It seems to be the most vulnerable families who experiences that their children are being sacked from school, that is single mothers, widows, grandparents who are taking care of grand children (orphan or not) and generally poor parents or households. Certainly the fact that the most poor and vulnerable children are being sacked and sent home from school is not in line with the goals of a free schooling policy. Primary school drop-out is a violation of the child's human rights. It crumbles the child's chances of developing skills, talents, social skills and human resources, which in turn affects the child's surrounding society, depriving communities of human capital.

If the government schools want to improve their reputation and quality, the praxis of sacking is most unfortunate. I disclosed at least some level of un-satisfaction with the school due to accusations from parents that the teachers will take the pupils to their farm to carry water, sand or firewood during school hours.

I observed reluctance amongst parents when it comes to complaining formally to a government school. They expressed views that it was not possible because the head teacher is appointed by the government. They did not seem to have any knowledge on how to influence on what is being done at school. This leaves the parents powerless and disengaged. This is an area where much improvement can be done. Better communication between school and parents/grandparents is necessary. Parents also need to be informed of their rights to complain and the procedure of complaining. Parents need to be more involved in the school activities and daily praxis so they can have more influence over this. Empowering the parents could be giving them an opportunity to be more actively involved and not just be seen as powerless spectators.

On a higher administrative level it means that the monitoring of rural schools needs to be strengthened. The rural schools can not be allowed to run the school as they wish. The school

environment should not be depending on the personality of the head teacher. As mentioned earlier the government authorities are aware that monitoring needs to be strengthened and that is it difficult because of mobility problems. A new road might just solve a lot of that problem. The school feeding programmes should be prioritized by the government and so should a timely and sufficient teacher salary.

Ultimately, the solutions to late enrolment and drop out are much of a financial character. It is easy for any researcher to sit in his safe place and write recommendations on what needs to be done, but in the end, someone needs to pay for it. As the government of Ghana now will start receiving income from the oil-industry, the question is whether they will put priority to care for the rural inhabitants of the nation and provide better health care, improved nutrition and increased educational opportunities.

I will end this with the words of an employee at GES. He said: "there can be a solution (to the problem of late enrolment) if we all go hand in hand. Parents have to do their part and the government has to do their part".

REFERENCE LIST

- Aase, Tor Halfdan., Fossåskaret, Erik** (2007) *Skapte virkeligheter. Om produksjon og tokning av kvalitative data*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget.
- Adoo-Adeku, Kate** (2012) *Gender Education and Development*. Accra, Akrong Publications Limited.
- Aitken, Stuart and Valentine, Gill (Ed.)** (2006) *Approaches to Human Geography*. London, Sage Publications.
- Alaimo, Katherine., Olson, Christine M., Frongillo Jr. Edward A.** Food Insufficiency and American School-Aged Children's Cognitive, Academic, and Psychosocial Development (2001) *Pediatrics*, 2001:108 p. 44-53
- Asare, Barbara** (2010) *Right to Universal Basic Education in Ghana: The realities in rural communities*. Masters Thesis. NTNU, Trondheim.
- Baber, Zaheer** (1991) Beyond the Structure/Agency Dualism: An evaluation of Giddens' Theory of Structuration. *Sociological Inquiry*, 61:2 p.219-230.
- Barriball, Louise K., While, Allison** (1994) Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: a discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* .1994:19 p. 328-335.
- Brint, S.** (2006) *Schools and Societies*. 2nd.ed. California, Stanford University Press.
- Bruce-Quansah, Ebo** (2012) School Heads Demand Capitation Grant. SpyGhana. 23rd of October 2012.[Internet] Available from: <http://www.spyghana.com/school-heads-demand-capitation-grant/> [Downloaded February 20th. 2014]
- Centre for Global Development** (2014) [Internet]. Available from: http://www.cgdev.org/files/2844_file_EDUCATON1.pdf [Downloaded May 6th 2014]
- Clark, Jon., Mogdil, Celia and Mogdil, Sohan ed.** (1990) *Anthony Giddens. Consensus and Controversy*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, Morrison, Keith ed.** (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th ed. London, Routledge Taylor and Francis group.
- Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity** (2007) *Access to Basic Education in Ghana: The Evidence and the issues*. Country Analytic Report.
- Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity** (2008) *Dropping Out from School: A Cross Country Review of Litterature*. Create Pathways to Access. No.16
- Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity** (2010) Public and private schooling in rural Ghana: Are the poor being served? CREATE Policy Brief 3 (2010).
- Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity** (2011a) *Understanding the Social and Economic Lives of Never-enrolled Children: A Case Study of Communities in Northern and Southern Ghana*. Create Pathways to Access. No.66
- Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transition and Equity** (2011b) *Dropping Out of School in Southern Ghana: The Push-out and Pull-out Factors*. Create pathways to access No.55.
- Denzin and Lincoln** (1994) In: Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, Morrison, Keith ed. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th ed. London, Routledge Taylor and Francis group.
- Dicken, Peter** (2007) *Global Shift. Mapping the changing contours of the world economy*. 5th.ed. London, Sage Publications Ltd.
- Eriksen, Tore Linne, Feldberg, Karen Brit (red.)** (2013) *Utvikling. En innføring i utviklingsstudier*. Kristiansand, Cappelen Damm Akademisk

- Essel, Issac** (2014) Myjoyonline. *Stike within strike. Teachers nationwide withdraw services*. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2014/October-27th/strike-within-strike-teachers-nationwide-withdraw-services.php> [Downloaded November 3rd 2014].
- Essuman, A.A.** (2007) *Rural-Urban Inequities in basic education in Ghana*. PhD thesis, NTNU. Trondheim, NTNU-trykk.
- Feldberg, Karen Brit** (2013) Hva betyr utdanning for utvikling?p.162-186. In: Eriksen, Tore Linne`, Feldberg, Karen Brit (red.) (2013) *Utvikling. En innføring i utviklingsstudier*. Kristiansand, Cappelen Damm Akademisk
- Fentiman, Alicia., Hall, Andrew., Bundy, Donald.** (1999) School Enrolment Patterns in Rural Ghana: A comparative study of the impact of location, gender, age and health on children's access to basic schooling. *Comparative Education*, 2010 (35:3), 331-349.
- Fentiman, Alicia., Hall, Andrew., Bundy, Donald.** (2001) Health and cultural factors associated with enrolment in basic education: a study in rural Ghana. *Social Science and Medicine*, 2001 (52), 429-439.
- Food and Agriculture Organization** (2012) *Gender Inequalities in Rural Employment in Ghana. An overview*. FAO.
- Geheb, K. Kalloch, S. Medard, M. Nyapendi, A. T., Lwenya, C. and Kyangwa, M.** (2008) Nile perch and the hungry of Lake Victoria: Gender, status and food in an East African fishery. *Food Policy* 33: p. 85-98.
- Ghana Statistical Service** (2008) *Ghana Living Standards Survey, report of the 5th round*. Education.
- Ghana Statistical Service** (2010) *Population and Housing Census. Summary Report of Final Results*. Accra, Sakoa Press Limited.
- Giddens, Anthony** (1984) in Clark, Jon., Mogdil, Celia and Mogdil, Sohan ed. (1990) *Anthony Giddens. Consensus and Controversy*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Graham, C. K.** (1971) *The History of Education in Ghana. From the Earliest Times to the Declaration of Independence*. Frank Kass LTD, London.
- Grennes, T.** (2004) *Hvordan kan du vite om noe er sant?* Oslo, Cappellens Forlag AS.
- Hall, Stuart., Held, David., Hubert, Don., Thompson, Kenneth (Ed.)** (2007) *Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Malden, USA, Blackwell Publishing.
- Hays, Sharon** (1994) Structure and Agency and the sticky problem of culture. *Sociological Theory*, 12:1 p 57-72.
- Hernæs, Per O.** (1998) *Slaves, Danes, and African Coast Society. The Danish Slave Trade from West Africa and Afro-Danish Relations on the Eighteenth-Century Gold-Coast*. Trondheim, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
- Hjellbrekke, Johs og Korsnes, Olav** (2012) *Sosial mobilitet*. Oslo, Det norske Samlaget.
- Kapborg, Inez., Berterö, Carina** (2001) Using an interpreter in qualitative interviews: does it threaten validity? *Nursing Inquiry* (2002) 9:1 p.52-56.
- King, Nigel., Horrocs, Christine** (2010) *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. London, SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Kwahu East District Assembly.** (2012) Annual Progress Report 2012 [Internet] Available from: <http://www.ndpc.gov.gh/GPRS/Dist%20and%20Sec%20APR%202012/DISTRICT%202012%20APR/EASTERN/Kwahu%20East.pdf> [Downloaded January 28th. 2014]
- Kwahu South District Assembly.** (2013) *The composite budget of the Kwahu South District Assembly for the 2013 fiscal year*. [Internet] Available from: http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/2013/ER/Kwahu_South.pdf [Downloaded January 27th. 2014]

- Kwahu South Pocc-Analysis.** [Internet] Available from: <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/pdfs/kwahu%20south%20pocc.pdf> [Downloaded January 28th. 2014].
- Kyei, Quaci** (2013) Head Teachers to strike over Capitation Grant. OmgGhana, 2nd of July, 2013. [Internet] Available from: <http://omgghana.com/head-teachers-to-strike-over-capitation-grant/> [Downloaded February 20th 2014]
- Lincoln and Guba** (1985) in Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, Morrison, Keith ed. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th ed. London, Routledge Taylor and Francis group.
- Lindberg** (2005) *Education for all in times of global transformations: Aspirations and opportunities of poor families in marginal areas of Sri Lanka*. Ph.D. thesis. Göteborg, Department of Human and Economic Geography, University in Göteborg.
- Lundahl, Lisbeth** (2014) Challenges of educational theory in the age of knowledge capitalism s. 31-40. In: *Making a Difference in Theory. The theory question in education and the education question in theory*. Biesta, Gert., Allan, Julie and Edwards, Richard. (Ed.) (2014) London and New York, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Madsbu, Jens Petter** (2011) Hvordan etablere vitenskapelig kunnskap om samfunnet? Innsamling, fortolkning og analyse av kvalitative data ved hjelp av Sensitizing Concepts. p.13-31 In: Jens Peter Madsbu og Mona Pedersen (2011) *I verdens rikeste land: Samfunnsvitenskapelige innganger til norsk samtid*. Vallset, Oplandske Bokforlag.
- Marx, Karl** (1881) Baber, Zaheer (1991) Beyond the Structure/Agency Dualism: An evaluation of Giddens` Theory of Structuration. *Sociological Inquiry*, 61:2 p.219-230.
- Maxwell** (1992) In: Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, Morrison, Keith ed. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th ed. London, Routledge Taylor and Francis group.
- Messer, Ellen** (1997) Intra-Household allocation of food and health care: Current findings and understandings- Introduction. *Social Science & Medicine* 44:11 p.1675-1684.
- Michler** (1990) Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, Morrison, Keith ed. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th ed. London, Routledge Taylor and Francis group.
- Ministry of finance and economic planning** (2012) The composite budget of the Kwahu East District Assembly for the 2012 fiscal year. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/Kwahu%20East.pdf> [Downloaded February 18th. 2014].
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture.** Kwahu East [Internet] Available from: http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=1518 [Downloaded 21st January 2014].
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.** [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/region/?r=4> [Downloaded January –September 2014].
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.** *Kwahu South Development Objectives*. [Internet]. Available from: <http://ghanadistricts.com/pdfs/kwahu%20south%20dev-obj.pdf> [Downloaded March 2014].
- Modern Ghana** (2012) *Capitation Grant unpaid for one year*. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.modernghana.com/news/426991/1/capitation-grant-unpaid-for-one-year-head-teachers.html> [Downloaded May 30th 2013].
- Mullings, Beverly** (1999) Insider or outsider, both or neither: some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum* 30 p.337-350
- Nigel, King., Horrocs, Christine** (2010) *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. London, SAGE.
- Nisbet and Watt** (1994) in Cohen, Louis, Manion, Lawrence, Morrison, Keith ed. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. 6th ed. London, Routledge Taylor and Francis group.
- Osei, Robert Darko., Owusu, Gertrude Adobea., Asem, Freda E., Kotey, Robert Lawrence Afutu-Kotey** (2009) *Effects of Capitation Grant on Education Outcomes in Ghana*. Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana, Accra.

- Outhwaite, William** (1990) In: Clark, Jon., Mogdil, Celia and Mogdil, Sohan ed. (1990) *Anthony Giddens. Consensus and Controversy*. London, The Falmer Press.
- Overå, Ragnhild** (2007) When men do women's work: structural adjustment, unemployment and changing gender relations in the informal economy of Accra, Ghana. *Modern African Studies*, 45, 4: 539-563.
- Panford, Kwamina.** (2001) Structural Adjustment Programs, Human Resources and Organizational Challenges Facing Labor and Policy Makers in Ghana 219-239. In: Kwadwo Konadu-Agyemang (ed.) *IMF and World Bank Sponsored Structural Adjustment Programs in Africa. Ghana's experience 1983-1999*. England, Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Phelp-Stokes Comission** (1922) *History of Education in Africa. A study of West, South and Equatorial Africa by The African Education Commission*. USA, Phelp-Stokes Fund.
- Potter, Robert B., Binns, Tony., Elliott, Jennifer A., Smith, David** (2008) *Geographies of Development*. 3rd Edition. Essex, Pearson Education.
- Pryor et al.** (2003) In Lindberg (2005) *Education for all in times of global transformations: Aspirations and opportunities of poor families in marginal areas of Sri Lanka*. Ph.D. thesis. Göteborg, Department of Human and Economic Geography, University in Göteborg.
- Richardson, David** (1989) Slave Exports from West and West- Central Africa, 1700-1810: New Estimates of Volume and Distribution. *The Journal of African History*, 1989, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp.1-22. UK, Cambridge University Press.
- Rothchild, Donald** (1991) The Political Economy of Recovery In: Donkor, Kwabena (1997) *Structural Adjustment and Mass Poverty in Ghana. The making of modern Africa*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, UK.
- Sen, Amartya** (1999) *Development as Freedom*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Teacher Solidarity** (2014) Ghana Teachers Strikes as Salary Arrears Still Unpaid [Internet blog] Available from: <http://www.teachersolidarity.com/blog/ghana-teachers-strike-as-salary-arrears-still-unpaid> [Downloaded November 4th 2014].
- Shilling, Chris** (1992) Reconceptualising Structure and Agency in the Sociology of Education: Structuration Theory and Schooling. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 13:1 p.69-87.
- The Oxford English Minidictionary** (1994) Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Tomasevski, Katarina** (2003) *Education Denied. Costs and Remedies*. Zed Books, London and New York.
- Todaro, Michael P., Smith, Stephen C.** (2006) *Economic Development*. 9th.ed. Essex, Pearson Education Limited.
- TV3 Network** (2014) Teachers strike takes full effect nationwide [Internet] Available from: <http://tv3network.com/Education/teachers-strike-takes-full-effect-nationwide.html> [Downloaded November 3rd 2014].
- United Nations** (2014) *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) [Internet] Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a26> . [Downloaded April 8th 2014].
- United Nations Development Programme** (2014) *Millennium Development Goals*. [Internet] Available from: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/mdg_goals/mdg2/ [Downloaded April 8th 2014].
- United Nations Girls Education Initiative** (2013) *The School Fee Abolition Initiative* (SFAI) [Internet] Available from: http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/247_712.html [Downloaded October 29th 2013].

- Unesco Institute of Statistics** (2013) [Internet] Available from:
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-25-out-of-school-children-en.pdf>
Downloaded 7th April 2014.[Downloaded April 8th 2014]
- UNICEF** (2012) *Global Initiative on out-of-school children. Ghana Country Study*. [Internet]. Available from:
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/OOSCI%20Reports/ghana-oosci-report-2012.pdf> [Downloaded April 7th 2014]
- Waldrop, Anne** (2013) Kjønn og utvikling. Perspektiver, bevegelser og bistand. p. 136-159
In: Eriksen Eriksen, Tore Linne`, Feldberg, Karen Brit (red.) (2013) *Utvikling. En innføring i utviklingsstudier*. Kristiansand, Cappelen Damm Akademisk
- Welch, Ross M., Graham, Robin D.** (1999) A new paradigm for world agriculture: meeting human needs Productive, sustainable, nutritious. *Field Crops Research*, 60: 1-10.
- Willis** (1977) In: Hays, Sharon (1994) Structure and Agency and the sticky problem of culture. *Sociological Theory*, 12:1 p 57-72.
- Woods, Michael** (2005) *Rural Geography*. London, SAGE Publications Ltd.
- World Bank**. Data by country. Ghana [Internett]. Available from:
<http://data.worldbank.org/country/ghana>. [Downloaded January 15th 2014].
- World Bank and UNICEF** (2012) *Abolishing School Fees in Africa. Lessons from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique*. The World Bank, Washington DC.

APPENDIX

Questions used in household interviews

Who lives in the household: Mother Father Grandmother Grandfather
 Other Relative _____ Other _____

Children _____ Of whom migrated children _____

Age	Gender	Ever Enrolled	Class	KG 1 or 2	Out of school/home	working	other

Your child enrolled in school at the age of ____ at the local public school. What is the primary cause of that late enrolment?

Gender: _____ Age: _____ Present Class: _____ Age enrolled in class one: _____

Number of siblings: _____ Older: _____ Younger: _____

Is it common, in your view that children enrol later than the age of six? Why?

What, in your opinion, would be needed, if you where going to be able and wiling to enrol the child at the age of six?

Did you go to school yourself? _____

How long? _____

Where? _____

What is your profession today/how do you make a living? _____

Is the school satisfying your expectations? Why/why not?

Are you (parent) satisfied with the teacher? Why/why not?

Is there school feeding programme at the school? yes no I don't know

Do you pay for school feeding? How much?

Does it cost money to go to the public school? yes no

Specify fees:

What happens if you don't pay school related expenses on time?

Are there periods during the year/seasons which are more difficult in terms of expenses?

Do the child/any child need to stay home/work on fields during these periods?

What could have changed this situation?

Do you have any sponsors for your child's education? Who?

Does the child normally go to school every day?

Your child dropped out during primary. Why?

What could have prevented the drop out?

Will the child return to school: yes no I don't know

How is the health of the child/special needs?

Questions used for interview with teachers/staff/key informant

Region: _____ **District:** _____

Occupation: Teacher Head teacher KG teacher employed at GES other _____

Do you experience children enrolling later than the age of six years often?

Is it a problem, in your opinion as a teacher that pupils enrol late and if so, why?

Why, in your opinion, does late enrolment happen?

Does it happen more often with a certain group of pupils and why? (health, gender, economy, broken families etc).

What, in your opinion, would help solve the problem with late enrolment?

Some parents mentioned to me the lack of exercise books. Do you see that often in this school?

Do you see pupils dropping out from school often?

When they drop out, do they return later?

When pupils drop out, do they inform the school prior to the dropout, or do they just vanish?

What, in your opinion, causes the pupils to drop out?

Does it happen more frequently with a certain group and why so? (health, poverty, gender, age etc)?

How much does a teacher earn: _____

Did u notice any increase in enrolments after 2005 when the Capitation Grant was introduced?

According to statistics (GSS) there is a high drop out in class one and class two. What can be the reason for this?

What, in your opinion, could help solve the problem with dropout during primary school?

Are there seasons during which many pupils are not in school because they have to work home/on fields?

Is there any problem/challenge with minority groups, language, religious or ethnic groups which you think affects the enrolment or drop out?

Is a school material a problem?

Did you receive the Capitation Grant in 2012? Yes no some delayed

Did you receive the Capitation Grant in 2013? Yes no some delayed

Did you receive the Capitation Grant in 2014? Yes no some delayed

Do you think that your school receives enough funding from the Government to run the school successfully?

Does it affect teachers motivation?

Registration Scheme Primary School (overview on late enrolment and drop out)

Region: _____ District: _____

Class 1:

	Age (born year)	Gender	Age when enrolled	Repeated classes?	Dropped out periodically	Other comments	
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							