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## **Glossary of Abbreviations**

BECE	-	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CEF	-	Commonwealth Education Fund
CRS	-	Catholic Relief Services
DASF	-	Development Alternatives Services Foundation
DEFATs	-	District Education For All Teams
EFA	-	Education for All
EFAFTI	-	Education For All Fast Track Initiative
FAWE	-	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGDs	-	Focused-Group Discussions
GEI	-	Gender Equity Indices
GER	-	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GES	-	Ghana Education Service
GNAT	-	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GNAT-Lads	-	Ladies branch of the Ghana National Association of Teachers
GPER	-	Gross Primary Enrolment Ratio
GPI	-	Gender Parity Index
GPRS II	-	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
JSS	-	Junior Secondary School
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
MOES	-	Ministry Of Education And Sports
NDPC	-	National Development Planning Commission
NGOs	-	Nongovernmental Organisations
NNED	-	Northern Network for Educational Development
PRSP	-	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTAs	-	Parent Teachers Associations
SMCs	-	School Management Committees
SNV	-	Dutch International Development Agency
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children’s Educational Fund
UPC	-	Universal Primary Completion
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
WVI	-	World Vision International

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## **Executive Summary**

The Northern Network for Educational Development (NNED) is a network of nongovernmental development organizations dedicated to promoting equitable access to good quality education for all in the three northern regions of Ghana. However, the dearth of reliable and accurate information on the status of gender parity in education in the operational areas of NNED has constrained its ability to generate alternative strategies that will effectively promote the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals on education, with particular emphasis on the promotion of equitable participation of girls in education in northern Ghana.

This study was therefore commissioned to enable NNED and her partners appraise the extent to which Northern Ghana is meeting the global target of eliminating gender disparity in basic education by 2005 and the way forward for attaining gender parity in all districts by 2015. In particular, it seeks to unearth the reasons why some districts have made greater progress toward the attainment of gender parity than others. Hence, the study covered three districts, one in each of the three northern regions. NNED pre-selected the districts for the survey, based on their assessment of their different levels in the attainment of gender parity in educations.

A combination of survey methodologies comprising data collection from school records, interviews with head teachers and teachers in the sampled schools, in-depth interviews with 100 respondents in each district for a total of 299 valid responses, as well as, community consultations with 100 heads of households (average of 30 in each district), were used. The data from the various sources were analyzed and triangulated, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Based on the data, the study finds that although the availability and accessibility of educational infrastructure differs from one district to the other, between the districts, it does not seem to be a major determinant of the attainment of gender parity in schools. For, districts in which children were reported to be traveling longer distances and/or confronting seasonal obstacles on their way to and from school, reported higher gender parity rates than those that did not face similar challenges.

Although across board school enrollments in the primary and junior secondary school levels have been on the increase since the 1999/2000 school years, it is observable that enrolment and attendance levels, especially for girls tends to taper off towards the upper primaries and the second and third years of the junior secondary school levels. Several factors, including poverty and socio-cultural practices have been cited as causal factors for this phenomenon.

Be it as it may, the tapering syndrome on the enrolment of girls in schools raises questions on how gender parity indices can be used as a good inter locational and inter temporal indicator of equitable access of both boys and girls to educational services. For, while a gender parity index for a given location (school, district or region) may be good when viewed from a global perspective, it may mask the fact that the parity indices

between classes can be below the average for the entire stream of classes. The parity indices may also vary from one year to the next, moving above and below 1, as circumstances permit. In other words, the parity index may well be a moving target rather than a stable measure for the status of girls' enrolment and attendance in school.

It is also observable that poverty doubtlessly influences a family's investment decisions on the education of their wards. However, girls tend to have a higher chance of dropping out of school than boys, due to a number of socio-cultural beliefs and practices that put little or no value on the education of girls. This is in spite of the considerable awareness of the rights of girls to have equal opportunities for education in the surveyed communities. Ironically, girls have been blamed for having a lesser desire for education than boys. This is in spite of the fact the data from this study show that given the same opportunities, girls are willing and capable of rising up to the challenge of going to school same as or even more than boys would. By and large, the data suggests that blaming of girls for their low representation in the educational system is an excuse rather than a fact.

The findings suggest a holistic approach to promoting gender equity and parity in education for girls. The incentive packages several stakeholders have provided may have helped increase enrolment and attendance of girls in particular. However, the poverty levels of households seems to be a confounding rather than a major factor in the attainment of gender parity in schools. Hence, interventions that aim to increase and sustain gender parity rates in access to education need to look beyond the economic model. Accordingly, part of the initiatives for bringing and keeping girls in schools will have to include bringing the schools to the girls, rather than maintaining the status quo where girls often have to traverse long distances for their daily commute to and from school. Locating schools, especially nursery and primary schools closer to communities, as well as, the provision of access roads should be important issues to advocate for.

But more importantly, considerable investment is required to dismantle the socio-cultural barriers emanating from the negative perception of the utility of girls' education to their families. To effectively deal with this will require the use of behaviour change communication strategies that deploy culturally appropriate media and symbolisms to reach out to the ordinary people in all communities.

Ensuring community participation and ownership of the behaviour change process will also be indispensable in initiating and/or sustaining attitudes and behaviours favorable to the education of girls. The establishment of family and/or community awards for the attainment of gender parity, as well as networking with other service providers to sustain gains made in increasing enrolment and attendance of girls must be part of the comprehensive strategy for the client and her partners.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background To The Study**

The Northern Network for Educational Development (NNED) is a network of nongovernmental development organizations, associations and individuals dedicated to promoting equitable access to good quality education for all in the three northern regions of Ghana, which incidentally are the poorest parts of the country. In furtherance of its objectives, NNED and her partners, SNV and the Commonwealth Education Fund require credible information on the state of gender parity in education in general, and on girl-child education in particular in its operational areas. This data will enable the NNED and her partners to generate alternative strategies that will effectively promote gender parity in education, with particular emphasis on the promotion of the education of girls in northern Ghana.

NNED and her partners are, however, confronted with a dearth of good quality and credible data from existing sources. In the absence of good primary researches, there is an over reliance on secondary sources of data whose credibility cannot be established for several reasons. Consequently, NNED and her partners are unable to use existing data for the generation of “meaningful alternatives” to enable it and its partners advocate for sound educational policies and strategies that would facilitate the achievement of Education For All in Northern Ghana, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. It is on this basis that NNED commissioned this study on gender parity in education in the three regions of northern Ghana to provide relevant data for its programs.

### **1.2 Context of the Proposed Study**

#### *1.2.1 Endemic Poverty*

Endemic poverty is the bane to development in the three northern regions of Ghana, comprising the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. According to the World Bank, the Upper East and Upper West Regions in particular have the highest concentration of the poor in Ghana. According to recent statistics, "Almost 90% of the people in the Upper East Region are poor. All except 10% of the people in the Upper West Region are poor"<sup>1</sup>. Chronic food insecurity and the inability of many households to access life-enhancing social services characterize this poverty. As the World Bank notes, "Poor in this contest (sic) means they don't have enough to eat"<sup>2</sup>.

The link between the levels of poverty, household food security and the level of education, especially that of women, has long been established. It is commonly acknowledged that improved access to basic education is the most effective intervention for reducing chronic food insecurity in the long-term. This link is evident in all three dimensions of the food insecurity paradigm, namely, availability, access and utilization. On the level of availability, which corresponds to a people's ability to produce adequate food for their own consumption, it is proven that the level of education of the farm family contribute directly to increasing productivity of farm families. Studies show that a farmer

with four years of education is 9% more productive than a farmer without an education. One additional year of schooling increases an individual's output by 4% to 7%<sup>3</sup>. In the context of northern Ghana, where more than 80% of the population depends on agriculture as a source of their livelihood, this finding has very significant implications for the production of food to meet domestic consumption.

In non-agrarian families, education also enhances per capita income of members of the family. As a 1993 study by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) points out, "each year of schooling for men and women increases wages by 10-20% and farm output by up to 5%."<sup>4</sup> Increased household incomes have a direct impact on the ability of the household to access food in the market.

Education also enhances the food utilization capacities of the farm family. Educated mothers have a greater awareness of the nutritional value of foods and the basic hygiene and culinary practices that go to improve the health and well-being of households.

### *1.2.2 Relation Between Poverty and Gender Parity in Education in Northern Ghana*

In northern Ghana, education has been an important exit point for household food insecurity and poverty in general. Through the provision of new knowledge and skills, education creates alternative livelihood opportunities for poor families. For this reason, educating a child is often considered as an investment, which is expected to yield multiple returns to the household. For instance, Kees (2002) in study on vulnerabilities in the Upper West Region of Ghana reports that "...investing in formal education can be very rewarding ...[for poor families], when it enables a son or daughter to find a secure, formal sector income."<sup>5</sup> Blunch and Verner confirm this view across the country when they point out in their study of child labor in Ghana that household demand for schooling, especially in poor communities is often based on the fact that "...education is viewed as an investment in human capital"<sup>6</sup>. According to this view, households "will thus choose to invest in education of their children up to the point where the marginal benefit from an additional year of schooling equals the marginal cost of an additional year of schooling."<sup>7</sup>

Experiences from several communities in northern Ghana have supported this demand-driven approach to household investments in education. As Kees notes, the people of the Nandom area in the Upper West Region of Ghana still make a strong association between education and the transition to improved food and livelihood security, the exit points from poverty. In a study of household food and livelihood status in the area, he notes that:

The fact that the four men who furthered their education beyond the secondary school level were all in the most secure group indicates that investment in education does pay off in the long term. A short educational career, on the other hand, is no guarantee for a more secure livelihood.<sup>8</sup>

Research has also established the nexus between poverty, livelihood security including household food security, and the education of women in particular. The education of women is widely acknowledged to have multiple effects on food and livelihood security of households because "educating girls has benefits at the personal, community and

social levels that make it one of the most important investments that any developing country can make”, as the World Bank notes<sup>9</sup>.

In the agrarian context of northern Ghana, this finding underscores the importance of education for reducing household poverty. Apart from raising their families, women contribute more than 47% of all domestic food production and handle more than 70% of all post harvest food processing and marketing activities. On the access level, women dominate the trade in foodstuff, making it possible for food to be carted from landlocked areas into the urban centers, as they control the small and micro-enterprises responsible for the processing of food crops, to increase their market value and/or shelf lives. For many households in the north, the ingenuity of women in their off farm income generation activities is often the only means through which households have food on the table, when the family barns are empty in the hungry season. Women also control the culinary domain in households, determining the quantity, quality and distribution of food to family members. Hence, educating girls has long-term beneficial effects on their families, even when they choose to remain in their agrarian communities.

Paradoxically, although education is the gateway out of poverty for poor households, poverty restricts households’ access to, and investments in education. This is because of low “household income, demand for child labor and parental education are found to be key factors in determining the likelihood of children attending primary school.”<sup>10</sup> As the World Bank noted in its poverty report on Ghana in 1995 in relation to access of poor households to education:

“The cost factor was also prominent in the views expressed about public education. In addition to school expenses (books, school supplies, desks, school building maintenance, etc.), the poor were particularly concerned about the opportunity cost of schooling, in terms of the time lost to potentially income-generating activities.”<sup>11</sup>

In other words, although households may recognise the benefits of education in breaking the poverty ratchet, poverty is a major constraint to their investments in it. Hence, in many poor communities in Ghana, the relative cost of education has induced a reverse application of the investment model of education where poor households resort to the use of children to supplement short term household earnings instead of sending them to school for the longer term investment gains accruable from education. Not surprisingly, the rural areas are worst hit by this phenomenon because “...the incidence of harmful child labor is more than twice as high in rural areas than in urban ...possibly reflecting the usage of children in agriculture”<sup>12</sup>.

The withdrawal of children for work to supplement household income has important effects on the completion rates of children in schools. As the report of CAS and UNICEF on child labour notes, in many communities, older children are more likely to be taken out of school to work because “...many parents believe that it is sufficient for their children to learn basic literacy skills and be able to count. Many regard higher education – even to the secondary level – as an extravagant luxury.”<sup>13</sup> Findings from Blunch and

Verner support this assertion. They note that school persistence, completion, and transition rates tend to suffer greatly because older children are more likely to be taken out to work as their "... earnings foregone raises with age. As children grow older and their potential earnings increase, they are pulled out of school."<sup>14</sup>

In the context of northern Ghana, the poverty ratchet has tended to be self-perpetuating, as increased withdrawal of children before they complete basic school increases and intensifies the incidence of poverty. This in turn affects households' willingness to invest in education, especially in the light of perceived diminishing returns on investments in education, due to the quality of education in public schools.

### *1.2.3 Exiting the Poverty Ratchet Through Increased Gender Parity in Education*

Creating opportunities for households in northern Ghana to break out of the poverty trap requires innovative approaches to promoting education, which can demonstrate a higher benefit stream in the short and long term. Unfortunately, the current educational system in Ghana has been hard put to demonstrating the net benefit of education because of the widespread perception that education has ceased to yield dividends due to the poor quality of education the system delivers. The inability of most children from poor, rural households to progress beyond the primary and Junior Secondary School levels due to poor quality of teaching and learning and/or poor grades obtained in at terminal exams has been cited as good reason for high drop out and low transition rates in rural schools.

Against this background, achieving gender parity in education in northern Ghana faces a particularly daunting task, especially given the combination of cultural and educational factors that predispose girls to early withdrawal from school. Consistent with the investment model, households are only willing to invest in education of girls if the short and long term benefits of education can be demonstrated to be higher than the immediate investment costs. Since girls tend to marry out with their education and all the benefits accruable from it, it is to be expected that the education of boys would, culturally, take precedence over that of girls in northern Ghana. As the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) notes, the persistence of gender disparity in access to education is attributable to socio-cultural beliefs and practices in which "Majority of societies silently believe that 'educating a girl is like watering another man's garden'"<sup>15</sup>

### *1.2.4 National Policies, Programs and their impact on Gender Parity in Education*

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana mandates government to provide equal education for all, irrespective of gender and location. Ghana also subscribes to the Millennium Development Goals in which the promotion of gender parity in education is a major component. Under the Dakar Framework for Education for All (EFA), Ghana further commits herself to meeting the EFA goals of promoting early childhood care and education, providing good quality elementary education, and improving literacy and life skills education for adults and young people. But of particular importance to this study are the other objectives of the EFA that focus on eliminating gender disparity in education by 2005 and ensuring gender parity by 2015. In accordance with commitments,

the provision of access to good quality education receives major attention under the human resource and service provision thematic areas of Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

To support the implementation of this objective under the PRSP, the government of Ghana, along side other 17 countries, attracted some financial assistance from its development partners under the Education For All Fast Track Initiative, to enable the country improve its policy framework and mobilize the requisite resources to achieve the Universal Primary Completion (UPC) targets. In September 2005, the Government of Ghana also launched its final report on the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) in which it gives prominence to the need to address access to good quality education to all, especially girls, in the country in general and in deprived areas in particular. In particular, the education sector initiatives in GPRS II seek to address "(i) inadequate progress in school enrolments; (ii) persistent geographical and gender disparities in access to education; (iii) less than satisfactory quality education; (iv) inadequate technical and vocational skills and ICT training"<sup>16</sup>. Specifically, the education and human resource development objectives of the GPRS II are designed to:

- (i) increase access to and participation in education and training at all levels; (ii) bridge gender gaps in access to education in all districts; (iii) improve quality of teaching and learning; (iv) improve efficiency in the delivery of education services (v) promote science and technology education at all levels with particular attention to increased participation of girls<sup>17</sup>

In compliance with these commitments, the Government of Ghana has been making tremendous efforts to provide equal opportunities for girls in particular to access and participate in basic schools. In deed, available records indicate that considerable gains have been made in getting girls into school in Ghana and particularly the most deprived areas. In its 2003 Annual Report, the National Development Planning Commission reported that the Gross Primary Enrolment Ratio (GPER) nation-wide "increased from 79.5% in 2001/2002 to 81.1% in 2002/2003 academic year" with tremendous leaps recorded in the gross primary enrolment rates in the three deprived regions above the national average growth rates. The report notes that "...the GPER in the Upper West Region increased by 6.5 percentage points from 63.1% in 2001/2003 academic year to 69.6% in the 2002/2003 academic year exceeding the GPRS target for 2005 projected at 63%"<sup>18</sup>. It is also known that more girls than boys are enrolled particularly at the lower levels of primary school in some communities.

Despite these achievements, there is still a gender disparity in education in several districts in the country. For instance, the same report that indicates gains made in promoting gender parity in education also points out that more children, "...particularly girls are still missing education."<sup>19</sup> The Ministry Of Education And Sports' Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report of 2005 admits that even though increases in enrolment have outstripped the projected population growth, enrolment of girls continues to lag behind that of boys. For instance, while the Total Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has increased from 84% to 87.5%, nationally, the change in total enrolment for females increased from 80.1% to 84.4%, while male enrolments increase from 87.5% to 90.5% over the three year period that the report covered. As the report notes, while the "Male

GER misses the target for 2004-05 by a fraction; female GER falls short of the target by 6.5%. The gender parity index has in 2004-05 remained at 0.93 and it had not been possible to reach the targeted gender parity index of 1.00.”<sup>20</sup>

Other reports indicate that the National Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) of girls at primary and JSS for the year 2002/03 were 72.5% and 59.3%; suggesting that about 27% of girls, nationally, are denied their rights to primary education. At the JSS level, the situation is worse [as] more than 40% of the girls are not having this right fulfilled”<sup>21</sup>.

### *1.2.5 The Need for Concrete, Accurate and Complete Data on Gender Parity in Education*

To many rights based actors including NNED, the challenges to girl- child education are not new. What has always been expected is an attempt to translate these national and international commitments into practical, realistic strategies, to be implemented, monitored and evaluated. This must be guided by accurate data known to all.

However, the lack of consistency in the data being provided from official sources, as indicated above, have raised concerns about the quality and reliability of such data for effective programming for agencies such as NNED and her partners. In deed, “there appears a mixed impression and questions as to the credibility or otherwise of official statistics provided, and Northern Ghana’s ability to achieve gender parity in basic education in the next 50 years<sup>22</sup>” remains questionable.

The lack of concrete and credible data has also created a situation where frontline implementing officers of GES usually resort to quoting unsubstantiated ranges of figures on school enrolment, attendance, transition, and completion rates instead of providing concrete and verifiable statistics on issues such as number of girls’ enrolled, retained and/or dropping out in basic schools. On the qualitative side, officials tend to generalize the causes and solutions of gender disparity in education instead of providing concrete and specific information that would guide policy formulation and implementation.

## **1.3 Purpose and Objectives of Proposed Study**

NNED and its partners seek to address the deficiency in accurate, specific and complete data for programming in the educational sector in Northern Ghana through the commissioning of this research into gender parity in education in the three northern regions of Ghana. The main aim of the NNED in commissioning this study is “to appraise the extent to which Northern Ghana is meeting the global target of eliminating gender disparity in basic education by 2005 and the way forward for attaining gender parity in all districts by 2015”<sup>23</sup>.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. “To facilitate qualitative and quantitative situational analysis of access and participation of girls to basic education.
2. To provide a base for measuring efforts for attaining gender parity in Northern Ghana.
3. To provide advocacy issues for NNED’s campaign to achieve universal basic education in Northern Ghana”<sup>24</sup>.

## **1.4 Methodology**

To support the clients’ needs, DASF carried out multi-tier qualitative and quantitative surveys to establish the extent to which gender parity in education has been achieved in northern Ghana. The study also seeks to document the reasons why disparities still exist in some districts, and the alternative courses of action for eliminating gender disparity in education in this part of the country.

To accomplish this, DASF used various quantitative and qualitative techniques to gather data that permitted an in-depth analysis of the factors affecting gender parity in education in ways that would allow findings to be used for the advocacy and information requirements of the clients. In designing the study, DASF recognized that accessing gender parity in education is more than counting enrollment figures. Therefore, in this study, DASF assessed gender parity along the continuum of *access*, *participation*, *transition*, and *performance* of boys and girls in schools. To do this, different quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used. These include:

### *1.4.1 Desk Study:*

DASF solicited and collected reports and documentations on the status of the *Education For All Initiative* from various sources for review. The sources contacted included, but were not limited to the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ghana Education Service, NGOs with programming interests in education in northern Ghana, as well as NNED and her partners. DASF also reviewed all the relevant documentation/literature available from various sources on the status of attainment of gender parity in education in northern Ghana. Specifically, DASF reviewed documentations regarding the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, focusing on the level of achievement of the MDG indicators in general and sections that have a bearing on education in particular. Particular attention was paid to the availability and extent of achievement on national, regional and district level strategic plans towards the elimination of gender disparity in basic education, especially in Northern Ghana.

DASF recognized that in many cases, external bodies such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the Education for All Program, among others, have more accurate and reliable data on local situations than can be obtained from in-country sources.

Accordingly, DASF carried out extensive web-based research for documentation available at such sources for data that would throw light on the situation of gender parity in education in northern Ghana.

DASF also recognized that several NGOs have been carrying out different programs designed to increase the enrollment and attendance of girls in schools in some parts of the north. To take into account the effects such programs may have on gender (dis)parity in education, DASF identified and contacted such organizations to obtain records of their target districts, communities and schools; the kinds of interventions they support; any records of results and reports on the outcome of their interventions. This literature was reviewed and the results used to triangulate findings from other sources to isolate factors that may have promoted or hampered the achievement of gender parity in some districts/communities.

The desk study preceded field studies; and the findings from this stage informed the design of appropriate tools/instruments used to collect relevant primary data in the field study.

#### *1.4.2 Field surveys:*

##### *a. Structure and Organization*

##### *i) Review of School Records*

To ascertain, quantitatively, the situation of gender parity or disparity in access to, participation and performance in education in the study areas, the teams visited sampled schools in selected districts where it collected and reviewed the following sources of data:

1. Enrollment records of the selected schools for the last seven years (1999/2000 through 2005/2006 academic years), disaggregated by gender
2. Average attendance records of the students in the sampled schools over the last two school years.
3. Transition records of sampled primary schools, indicating how many students progressed from the primary school level to the JSS in the sampled schools
4. Performance records at the BECE examinations of sampled JSS schools, to determine performance levels of students as disaggregated by gender.

##### *ii) In-depth individual interviews*

DASF also carried out in-depth individual interviews with a cross section of stakeholders in the educational sector to determine their knowledge and perceptions of the factors that promote or hamper the achievement of gender parity in education in northern Ghana. For this, trained enumerators from DASF's multi-disciplinary team administered structured, and semi-structured questionnaires to a cross section of stakeholders from the selected districts and communities that the study covered using both closed and open-ended questions.

The interview process created space for in-depth individual testimonies of the experiences of stakeholders regarding gender parity issues and the realities of girls' education in the selected districts. This provided opportunities for the teams to learn at first hand, document, and analyze what is happening on the ground.

*iii) Community consultations*

Field teams carried out community consultations involving community members, traditional rulers, identifiable women's groups, members of community development structures such as members of Village Development Committees, Unit Committees, Area/Town Councils, District Assemblies, among others. The community consultations generated ideas on broad issues affecting the achievement of gender parity in education, with particular emphasis on the factors that support or hinder the enrollment, participation and attendance of girls in schools. This process also helped to flag contentious issues for further discussions during the key informant interviews and the focus group discussions.

*iv) Key informant interviews*

Policy level staff of the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education and Sports such as the district directors of education and/or their representatives, heads of department of relevant organizations, directors of NGOs involved in education programming in the districts, leaders of women's groups and associations, leaders of NNED's District Education For All Teams (DEFATs), and those of various School Management Committees (SMC's) and Parent Teachers Associations (PTA's) among other identifiable individuals in the selected districts were engaged in in-depth individual conversations to elicit their views on issues relevant to the study. Interviews with the community level key informants enabled the researchers to delve into the socio-cultural and related factors that affect the education of girls, in particular.

Interviews with the personnel of the educational establishment permitted the study to learn at first hand the policy and management issues that impinge on the planning and implementation of the Education For All (EFA) program in particular, and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in general.

*v) Focused-Group Discussions (FGDs)*

To validate information generated during the quantitative data collection and through the key informant interviews, DASF carried out focused group discussions with a cross-section of interest groups in selected communities. The target groups for the FGDs included but were not limited to members of interest groups in the educational sector such as the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and its ladies wing (GNAT-Lads), members of Parent-Teachers Association (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), members of District Assemblies, identifiable women groups, girls and boys groups in schools, among others.

This component of the research elicited the experiences of the groups on the realities of girls' access to and participation in basic education. The discussions also allowed the study to benefit from a cross fertilization of ideas and experiences as well as permitted for participants to pool their individual and collective experiences on challenges and opportunities for the realization of gender parity in education in Northern Ghana.

#### *vi) Back-up Instruments*

Other qualitative survey instruments were used as and when the need arose to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the study. The data was triangulated across study sites and methods to enhance the quality of the research and ensure consistency across the study sites.

#### *1.4.3 Instrumentation*

Appropriate forms were designed for the collection of enrollment, attendance and performance data from the schools. Prior training of interviewers ensured accuracy in the identification and recording of the data required. Field supervisors verified all forms filled out to ensure completeness and accuracy.

Instrumentation for the key informant interviews and the focused group discussions also applied Barrier Analysis techniques to identify behavioral determinants associated with the willingness or reluctance of families and communities to send their girl-children to school. The aim was to identify the positive attributes of individual and/or community actions that have supported the education of girls and the attainment of gender parity.

The identification of the negative barriers to behavior towards the education of girls would provide the platform for the design and implementation of programs that change individual and community perceptions and behaviors in support of gender parity programming. It would allow the client to design more effective behavior change communication messages, strategies and supporting activities for changing cultural preferences, personal and group behaviors and attitudes in favor of the education of girls. This would also enable the client to design and “sell” behavior change programs in support of gender parity and girl-child education initiatives to its development partners.

To ensure consistency in data collection across study sites, a set of open-ended questions were used to guide the key informant interviews and focused group discussions. Interviewers were trained on the administration of the questionnaire in the interviews, as well as, in the facilitation of the focused group discussions. With prior consent of the interviewees, the interviewers recorded the proceedings on paper.

#### *1.4.4 Sampling of study sites and respondents*

##### *a) Sampling of Schools for quantitative data collection*

A stratified random sampling methodology was used in the selection of schools for the collection of enrollment, attendance and performance data. The stratification was based on the following identified characteristics of the schools in northern Ghana.

- i) Public vs. private schools – this stratification was essential because private schools tend to be patronized by educated and relatively well to do parents who are likely to be better informed in their decisions to support gender parity in the education of their children. The converse is true for parents who patronize public schools. Public schools are defined as all schools receiving full or partial subvention from government. These included schools managed by faith-based organizations whose teachers are on the Ghana Education Service’s pay roll.
- ii) Urban vs. rural schools – rural parents tend to be poorer and more likely to have lower levels of education and/or less exposure to the benefits of education than urban parents. At the same time, parents in urban areas are more likely to have greater alternative uses of the time of their children than rural folks. Children in urban areas are also more likely to have greater alternative uses of their time than their counterparts in rural areas. Since these factors are potentially important determinants of school enrolment, attendance and performance, the classification of study sites by location allowed for a better appreciation of any differentials in the factors that favor or hinder the attainment of gender parity in the education of children in rural versus urban areas.
- iii) Primary vs. JSS – the literature on gender parity shows that transition rates for girls tends to taper off towards the upper primaries and the Junior Secondary School level. To establish the reasons for this, the study also stratified the selection of schools through the selection of a mix of Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in the selected districts.
- iv) Treatment versus non-treatment schools – DASF recognizes that several NGOs and District Assemblies have programs directed at improving the enrolment and attendance of girls in primary schools. To assess the effects of these treatment on the attainment or otherwise of gender parity in schools, DASF obtained a list of treatment schools from identifiable service providers such as the Catholic Relief Services, World Vision International, ActionAid, among others, once it was determined that these agencies have had active programs in the promotion of girl child education in the selected districts over the last five years. Questionnaire were designed to capture the schools in these programs, the type of treatments they received and any records of impacts they said treatments are purported to have had on the attainment of gender parity in the schools.

b) *Sampling of communities and households for community consultation*

The sample frame for communities comprised of communities within the catchment areas of all schools that were randomly selected for the school-based data collection. From a list of communities servicing the school, which was obtained upon entry into the sampled school, households were randomly chosen for interview.

c) *Sampling Procedure and Sample Size for in-depth individual interviews*

Since the study was conducted in three different districts with varied histories, it made use of a multi-stage sampling process to accommodate the different ethnic, social and economic composition and other context specific characteristics of the study areas. The sample size per district was calculated with the following formula:

$$n = z^2(pq)/d^2$$

Where **n** = sample size; **z** = statistical certainty chosen; **p** = estimated prevalence/coverage rate/level to be investigated; **q** = 1 - **p**; and **d** = precision desired.

The value of **p** is defined by the coverage rate that requires the largest sample size (**p** = .5). The value **d** is based on the precision, or margin of error, desired (in this case **d** = .1). The statistical certainty chosen is 95% (**z** = 1.96). Given the above values, the following sample size (**n**) needed was determined to be:

$$n = (1.96 \times 1.96)(.5 \times .5)/(.1 \times .1)$$

$$n = (3.84)(.25)/.01$$

$$n = 96$$

For each of the districts, the **n** was rounded of to 100. Hence, the study interviewed at least 100 respondents in each of the three districts for a total of 300 respondents. Within each district, a stratified random sampling methodology was used to select the respondents according to the strata identified below.

d) *Sampling Frame for in-depth individual interviews*

For the selection of interviewees for the in-depth interviews, DASF used the following sampling frame, to ensure a capture of the diversity of stakeholders and interest groups in the selected districts (see table 1 below). In the field, however, a total of 299 respondents were interviewed.

**Table 1**  
**Sampling Frame for In-depth Individual Interviews**

District	STRATA OF RESPONDENTS						Total
	District/Municipal Chief Executives, District Directors of GES etc.	Teachers, Proprietors of schools	Members of Unit Committees, D/Mas	Chiefs and other traditional leaders	CBO/PTAS and SMCs	Community Members	
District 1	10	10	20	5	25	30	100
District 2	10	10	20	5	25	30	100
District 3	10	10	20	5	25	30	100
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>300</b>

### 1.5 Data capture and Analysis

All data forms filled in the study were transmitted to the Head Office of DASF for collation, entry, cleaning, and analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.0 was used to capture and analyze the quantitative data that was generated in this research. Open coding techniques were used for the capture and analysis of the qualitative data. Triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative data was done at multiple levels to reinforce the findings.

A draft report was presented to NNED and its partners for review. The same report was also presented to a cross section of stakeholders in education in all three participating districts. Comments, views and suggestions received from the review process and the workshops have been addressed in this final report.

### 1.6 Limitations of Study

The major challenge the team of researchers faced was the dearth of properly kept records on school enrolment and attendance at the district/municipal education offices. This was largely due to improper records keeping as a result of the inadequate or non-existent, information management and retrieval systems in place at the regional/district directorates of the GES, and the selected schools. As a result, it was generally difficult to get information on the enrollment, retention, dropout rates and transition figures in the schools, especially for back years. Most of the headmasters and/or their assistants complained that they were newly transferred to the schools and hence did not know where to trace the records. In some cases where the head teacher is not new, improper records keeping and management constrained access to school records.

In particular, records of results of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results were not readily available both at the district offices of the GES and at the selected schools. Hence, it was impossible to get reliable data for the assessment of performance rates in the target schools, as the design of the study had intended.

There existed a general phobia and reluctance to cooperate among teachers who were available for interview because of the belief that the teams were there to “expose their inefficiencies to the relevant education authorities”. Some of the teachers blatantly refused to deal with the teams of researchers because they claimed to be “fed-up with being disturbed almost everyday by NGOs and other organizations doing similar exercises”.

The timing of the conduct of the survey was also a major challenge. Most respondents, especially at the school level, were engaged in the audit for school registers organized by the Ghana Education Service. Hence, in some cases, researchers had to revisit the schools several times as the registers were said to have been taken to the district offices for the audits.

The timing of the study also coincided with the approaching of the end of the school term. As such, the concentration of teachers and school pupils was on the preparation of end of term examinations, hence they did not give the teams the needed attention. This delayed the process of accessing and collecting data in some cases.

At the household level, heads of households, community leaders and officers at the district assemblies could not readily give the number of households in the communities. In most cases, the household heads were reluctant to give the number of children who had dropped out of school in their households.

Finally, due to resource constraints on the part of the client, the initial proposal for the study was scaled down to meet the resources available from the clients. This had implications for the sample size and the number of study sites the team could cover in the study.

## II. FINDINGS FROM STUDY

### 2.1 General Characteristics of Sampled Schools

#### 2.1.1 Categories of schools sampled for the study

The school-based study was carried out in 32 basic schools in the Savelugu-Nanton, Bongo and Lawra districts of the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions respectively. It covered 16 primary schools and 16 Junior Secondary Schools (JSS). Of the 32, only one school system had both primary and JSS components under one management.

Of the three districts covered, the Savelugu-Nanton district had a total of 12 out of the 32 schools sampled. These were made up of 6 primary schools only, 5 JSS only, and one school with a combined stream of primary and JSS components. The other districts had 10 schools each, which were equally split between primary and JSS under separate management structures. Table 2 below presents further details.

**Table 2**

**Crosstabulation of Type of schools Sampled by District of school**

Type of	District of			Total
	Savelugu Nanto	Bong	Lawra	
primary school	6	5	5	16
	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	18.8%	15.6%	15.6%	50.0%
JSS	5	5	5	15
	41.7%	50.0%	50.0%	46.9%
	15.6%	15.6%	15.6%	46.9%
primary and	1			1
	8.3%			3.1%
	3.1%			3.1%
Total	12	10	10	32
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	37.5%	31.3%	31.3%	100.0

#### 2.1.2 Ownership and Management Structure of Participating Schools

Schools in Ghana are managed by different agencies under the auspices of the Ghana Education Service. As the management systems of the different units can have an influence on the enrolment, attendance levels, as well as, the quality of education that impact on gender parity, the study determined the management structures of the sampled schools.

Of the 32 sampled, all belonged to the category of what is commonly called public or government schools, which are managed by various educational units under the guidance of the Ghana Education Service. The local authority or District Assembly Schools (commonly called government schools) were in the majority (13/32), with the Catholic Education Unit taking 11 out of 32. The Islamic Education Unit came next with 7/32, with one school coming under community management.

Although the study had intended to sample a mix of private and public schools, no private schools were available in the selected districts for inclusion in the sampling frame. Consequently, the study does not capture this category of schools.

By district, it is noteworthy that most of the local authority schools (6/13) were in the Bongo District. Incidentally, the local authority schools also constituted the majority of schools in that district (6/10). Schools managed by the Catholic Education Unit were concentrated in the Lawra District (6/11), also making up the majority of sampled schools in the district (6/10). The Savelugu-Nanton District, on the other hand, had all the schools under the Islamic Education Unit (7/7), which also made this category of schools the highest in the district (7/12) – see table 3 for details.

**Table 3**

**Crosstabulation of Management Unit of School by District**

Management Unit School	District of			Total
	Savelugu Nanto	Bong	Lawra	
local authority	3	6	4	13
community		1		1
catholic education	2	3	6	11
Islamic education	7			7
Total	12	10	10	32

The distribution of schools according to the management units in the districts reflects the concentration of educational activities of these units in the respective districts. For instance, it is common knowledge that the Catholic Church has a larger number of schools in the Lawra district.

### *2.1.3 Location of Schools Sampled*

The selected schools were split between the district capitals, those located on the outskirts of the district capitals and those located in rural areas. Of the 32 schools sampled, 10 were located in the district capitals, 12 on the outskirts and 10 in rural areas.

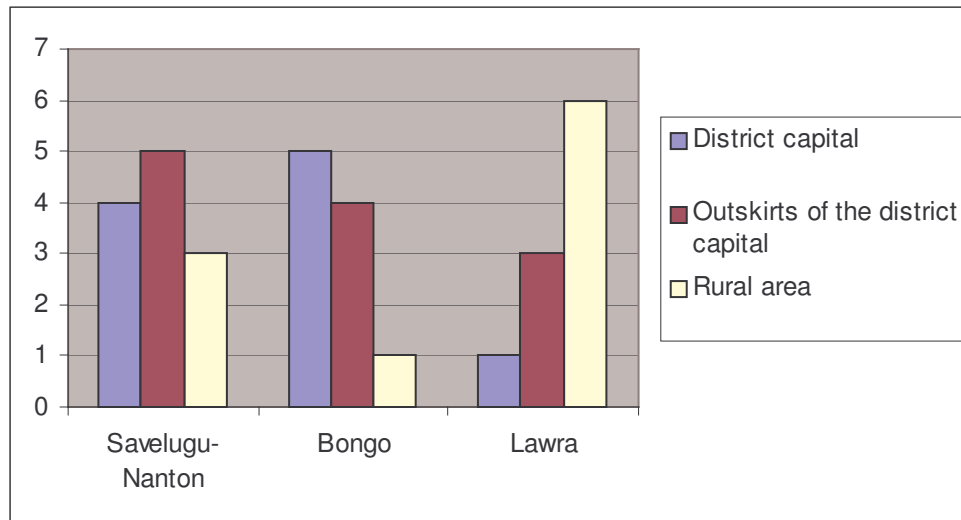
**Table 4**

**Location of school Sampled Schools by District**

Location of school	District of school			Total
	Savelugu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
district capital	4	5	1	10
	33.3%	50.0%	10.0%	31.3%
	12.5%	15.6%	3.1%	31.3%
outskirts of the district capital	5	4	3	12
	41.7%	40.0%	30.0%	37.5%
	15.6%	12.5%	9.4%	37.5%
in a rural area	3	1	6	10
	25.0%	10.0%	60.0%	31.3%
	9.4%	3.1%	18.8%	31.3%
Total	12	10	10	32
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	37.5%	31.3%	31.3%	100.0%

Disaggregated by districts, the split is shown in the graph below, where Lawra district had the bulk of its schools sampled from rural areas.

**Figure 1**  
**Graph Of Location Of Schools Sampled By District**



Since the schools were randomly sampled from the list of schools obtained at the District Offices of the Ghana Education Service, the sample is fairly representative of the distribution of schools between the urban, peri-urban and rural areas of the respective districts. It must be noted, also, that while the three district capitals would qualify as “towns” or urban areas according to the population criteria of the National Population and Housing Census, the communities lying immediately around them, and described as

peri-urban are to all intents and purposes, rural in nature. Therefore, the schools in these communities are often only hardly better than their rural counterparts, in terms of infrastructure. The only defining element is often the access to teachers, as teachers posted to these schools are able to get accommodation in the district capitals and commute from there to the schools daily.

## 2.2 Enrolment And Attendance

### 2.2.1 General Trends in Enrolments in Basic Schools

To determine the general patterns in school enrolment in the basic schools in the selected districts, the study collected enrolment data from all 32 schools made up of 16 primary schools only, 15 Junior Secondary School only, and one school that had both the primary and JSS as part of the same school system. Of the 32 schools studied, 12 were in the Savelugu Nanton District, and 10 each in the Bongo and Lawra districts (see Table 5 below for details)

**Table 5**  
**Cross Tabulation Of Number Of Schools Sampled By Type And By District**

Type of school	District of school			Total
	Savelugu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
primary school only	6	5	5	16
JSS only	5	5	5	15
primary and JSS	1			1
Total	12	10	10	32

Source: This study

#### 2.2.1.1 Trends in Enrolment in Primary Schools

Between the 16 primary schools sampled, a total of 27,650 valid records of enrolments in the three districts covering the 1999/2000 through the 2005/2006 academic years were collected and analyzed in this study. This covered the records of 14,972 boys and 12,678 girls. Table 6 below provides a summary of the enrolment records for all classes (P1-P6) for the sampled schools.

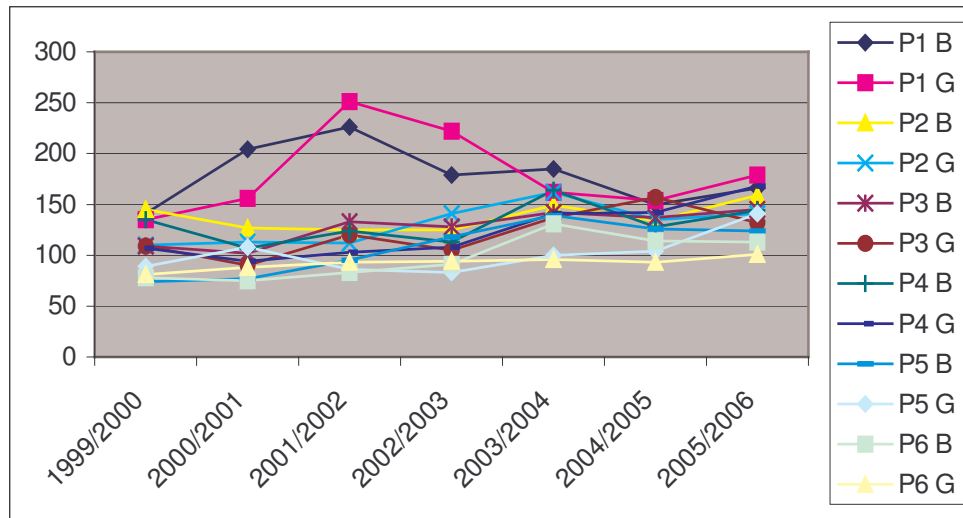
**Table 6**  
**Summaries of Gross Enrollment Levels by Districts, Years and By Sex**

Year	SAVELUGU-NANTON			BONGO			LAWRA			TOTALS
	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS	
1999/2000	656	324	980	378	383	761	682	631	1313	3054
2000/2001	626	238	864	381	419	800	692	649	1341	3005
2001/2002	700	344	1044	398	452	850	786	765	1551	3445
2002/2003	551	231	782	670	794	1464	754	753	1507	3753
2003/2004	890	434	1324	651	770	1421	910	798	1708	4453
2004/2005	1014	576	1590	748	890	1638	789	785	1574	4802
2005/2006	1138	740	1878	707	840	1547	851	862	1713	5138
<b>TOTALS</b>	5575	2887	8462	3933	4548	8481	5464	5243	10707	27650
<b>Ratio of Girls to Boys</b>	0.52			1.16			0.96			

Source: This study

Apart from the enrolment for both boys and girls in primary one which showed considerable variations between the 1999/2000 and the 2002/2004 academic years, the general trend in the data from the sampled schools has, by and large, tended toward a gradual but steady increase in enrolment for both boys and girls in primary schools since the 1999/2000 school year, as figure 2 below depicts

**Figure 2**  
**Graph of Enrollment Levels by Districts, Years and By Sex**



The trends here corroborate the findings in the preliminary report of the Ministry of Education and Sports that school enrolments in all districts have been on the increase, especially in the three northern regions of Ghana, as cited in the introductory section of this report.

### 2.2.1.2 Trends in Enrolment in Junior Secondary Schools

The enrolment data for the JSS level covered 16,634 records of which 10,369 were records for boys and 6,265 were records for girls. Table 7 below presents a summary of the enrolment data from the schools surveyed.

**Table 7**  
**Summaries Of Gross Enrolment Data For Jss By Districts**

Year	SAVELUGU-NANTON			BONGO			LAWRA			TOTALS
	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS	
1999/2000	244	62	306	414	367	781	298	227	525	1612
2000/2001	446	77	523	466	384	850	302	258	560	1933
2001/2002	367	64	431	484	370	854	378	341	719	2004
2002/2003	542	130	672	462	452	914	434	374	808	2394
2003/2004	648	164	812	443	430	873	407	369	776	2461
2004/2005	974	351	1325	470	589	1059	480	460	940	3324
2005/2006	1039	415	1454	531	668	1199	540	472	1012	3665
<b>TOTALS</b>	4260	1263	5523	3270	2501	5771	2839	2501	5340	16634
Ratio of Girls to Boys	0.296			0.765			0.881			

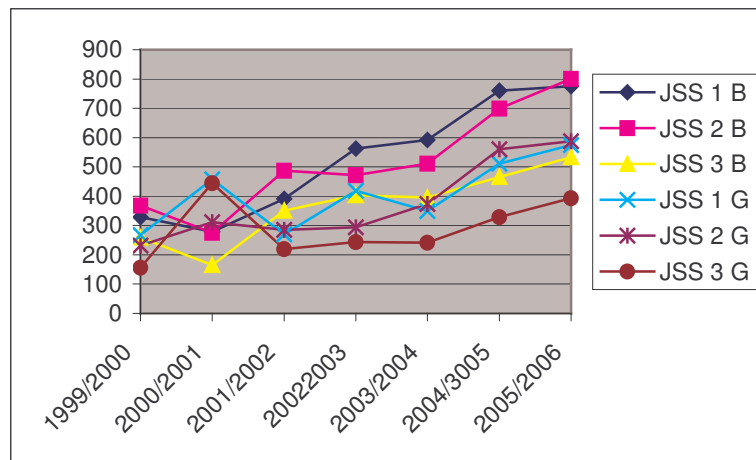
Source: This Study

As is observable from the data above, at the Junior Secondary School level, total enrolment for JSS 1 through JSS 3 have been on the increase, as well, since the 2000/2001 academic year in the sampled schools. By sex, however, total enrolments for boys have been consistently higher than that of girls since the 2000/2001 academic year.

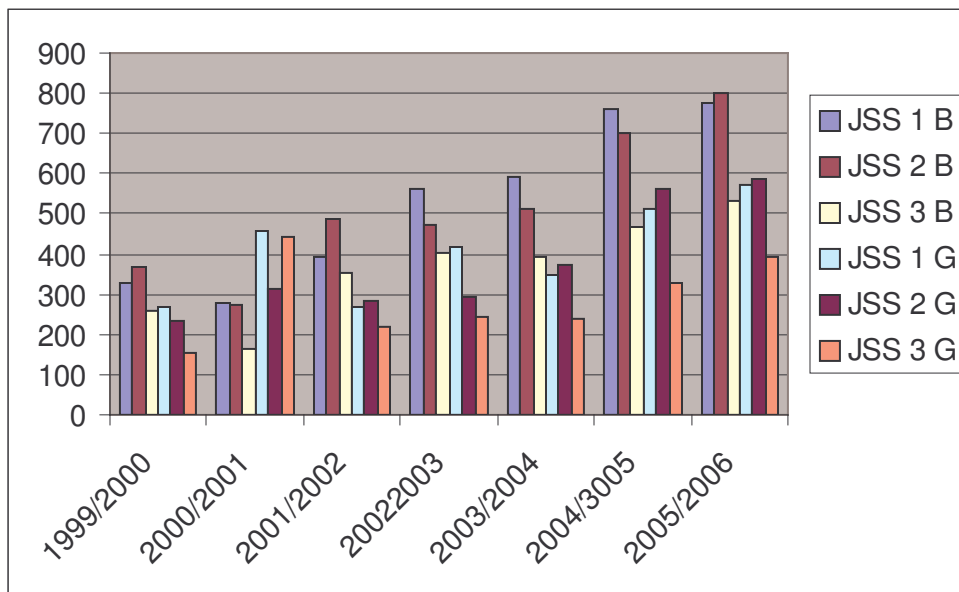
It is also observable that for both boys and girls, total enrolments tend to decrease between JSS 1 and JSS 3. This indicates some attrition in enrolment levels across the sex divide during the transition between JSS 1 and JSS 3. However the enrolment levels for girls in JSS 2 has consistently been higher than that for JSS 1 from the 2003/2004 school years onwards.

As will be observed from the graphs below, there was a dramatic increase in enrolment levels for JSS 1 and JSS 2 in the 2000/2001 school years for both boys and girls in the sampled schools. The reasons for this shall be examined later in this report.

**Figure 3**  
**Line Graph of Enrolment Patterns for JSS for Selected Schools**



**Figure 4**  
**Bar Chart of Enrolment Patterns for JSS for Selected Schools**



### 2.3 Gender Equity<sup>25</sup> in Primary School Enrolments

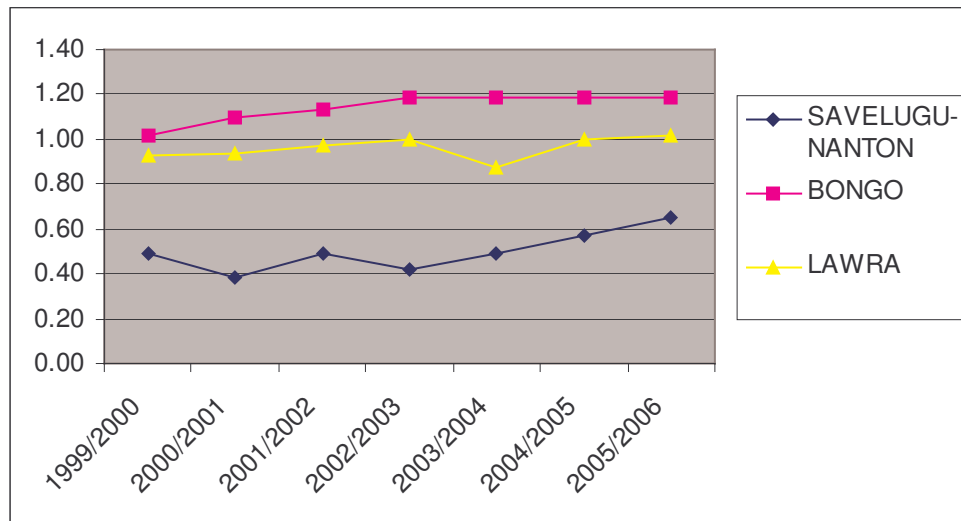
Providing equitable opportunities for both boys and girls to access and participate in schools is essential for the attainment of gender parity in education, and in the long run, the Millennium Development Goals. It is, however, observable from the enrolment data from schools sampled in this study that despite the general trend of increased enrolments for both sexes in the selected schools, the enrolment levels for girls have consistently been lower than that of boys in some districts. Computed on a year on year basis, the

table of Gender Equity Indices (GEI) below indicates that the Bongo District in the Upper East Region has consistently achieved Gender Equity Indices above 1. This indicates that on average there are more girls than boys enrolled in primary schools in that district for the seven-year period under consideration. The Lawra district follows closely with a GEI that keeps very close to or above 1 over the last seven years. The Savelugu-Nanton district in the Northern Region, on the other hand, has consistently fallen behind the other two districts, with a parity index remaining below the 0.5 mark for 5 out of the seven years for which data has been collected in this study. Some progress has, however, been made in the Savelugu-Nanton district since the 2003/2004 school year as the index experienced a continued rise from 0.49 to 0.65 in the 2005/2006 school year. Table 8 and figure 5 below provide further details.

**Table 8**  
**Gender Equity Index By Year And By District**

Year	SAVELUGU-NANTON	BONGO	LAWRA
1999/2000	0.49	1.01	0.93
2000/2001	0.38	1.10	0.94
2001/2002	0.49	1.14	0.97
2002/2003	0.42	1.19	1.00
2003/2004	0.49	1.18	0.88
2004/2005	0.57	1.19	0.99
2005/2006	0.65	1.19	1.01

**Figure 5**  
**Graph Of Gender Equity Index By Year And By District**



Disaggregated by class, the data show that gender parity in primary school enrolments tends to decrease during the transition from one class to the next. In other words, it would appear that, in all three districts, more girls than boys tend to drop out of school as a cohort progresses from Primary class 1 to 6. This trend is compatible with findings from other studies.

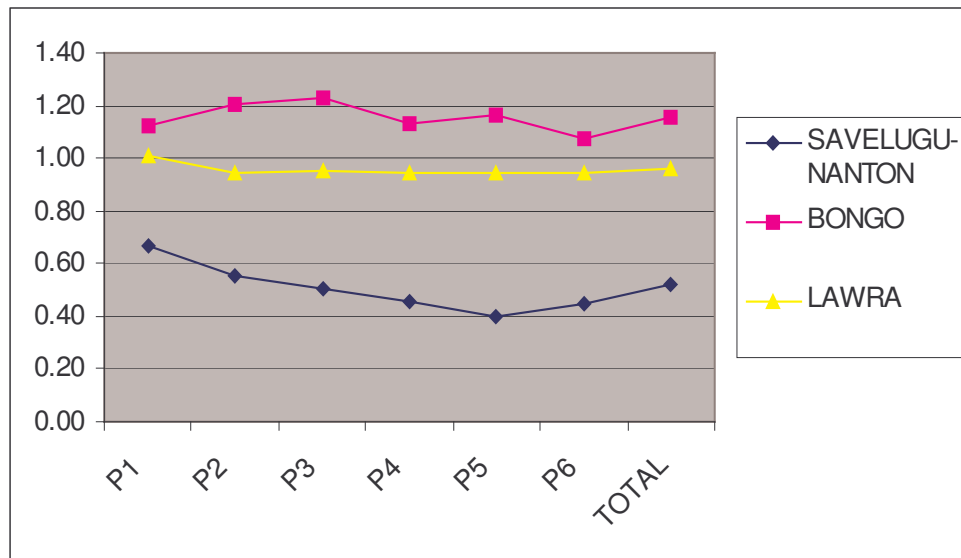
It is nonetheless observable that of the three district studied, the Lawra district is the only one that seems to have maintained a fairly constant GEI from P2 through to P6 in the sampled schools. The rest have shown marked variations between classes.

It is also noteworthy that after the persistent drop in parity between Class 1 through 4, schools in the Savelugu-Nanton districts seems to experience some stability and even possible lifts in equity indices from Primary 5 to 6 (see table 9 and figure 8 below).

**Table 9**  
**Gender Equity By Class By District**

CLASS	SAVELUGU-NANTON	BONGO	LAWRA
P1	0.67	1.13	1.01
P2	0.55	1.20	0.95
P3	0.50	1.23	0.95
P4	0.46	1.13	0.94
P5	0.40	1.16	0.94
P6	0.45	1.07	0.94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>0.96</b>

**Figure 6**  
**Gender Equity By Class By District**



## 2.4 Gender Equity in Enrolments in Junior Secondary School

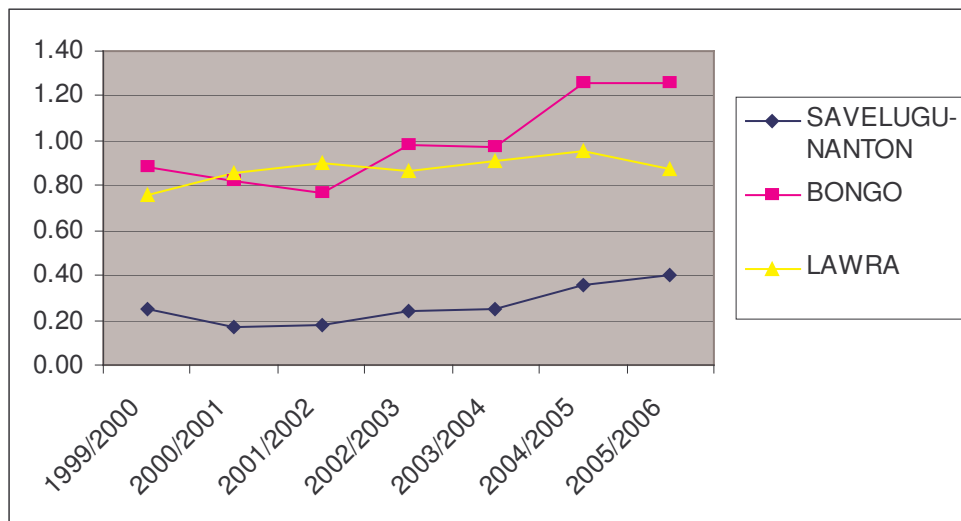
At JSS level, the Bongo district again leads the pack with a gender parity index of close to 1 (actual measure is 0.997) when total enrolments in the sampled schools for the 1999/2000 through the 2005/2006 academic years are considered. The Lawra district comes close with a parity index score of 0.88 for the same period, with the Savelugu-Nanton district reporting a parity index of 0.30 for the same time frame.

On a year-by-year basis, the sampled schools in the Bongo district consistently remain close to or above the equity index of 1 since the 2002/2003 academic year, when it suffered its worse decline to 0.76 in the 2001/2002 school year. Sampled schools in the Lawra district also consistently edged close to the index of 1, though never really making it. In the 2005/2006, the index for the sampled schools has declined slightly from its 2004/2005 level of 0.96 to 0.87. The Savelugu-Nanton District, however, has remained below the 0.5 index mark, with its highest achievement being an index of 0.40 in the 2005/2006 academic year (see Table 10 and figure 7 below).

**Table 10**  
**Gender Equity Index By Year And By District**

Year	SAVELUGU-NANTON	BONGO	LAWRA
1999/2000	0.25	0.89	0.76
2000/2001	0.17	0.82	0.85
2001/2002	0.17	0.76	0.90
2002/2003	0.24	0.98	0.86
2003/2004	0.25	0.97	0.91
2004/2005	0.36	1.25	0.96
2005/2006	0.40	1.26	0.87

**Figure 7**  
**Gender Equity Index By Year And By District**



Source: School-based data of this study

In brief, the data above from the sampled school show that the Bongo district is doing better than the other two in providing opportunities for equitable access and participation of girls in education at both the primary and junior secondary school levels than the other two. The Savelugu Nanton district lags behind the other two in achieving gender parity in school enrolment in both the primary and junior secondary school levels. In deed, the district seems to have done better at the primary school level, where its lowest parity

index is 0.40 than in the junior secondary schools where its highest parity index in school enrolment currently stands at its peak of 0.40.

## 2.5 Community Reports on Gender Equity in Enrolments and Participation

To provide alternative data for determining the extent of gender parity in access to, and participation in education, heads of households were asked during the community consultation component of the study to provide head counts of the children of school going ages (children between ages of 6 and 14 years) in their respective houses who were either going to school or not attending school. The head count included a capture of those children who had dropped out of school either before reaching primary 6 or JSS 3. The community consultations also provided a basis for validating the findings on school enrolment and participation obtained from the school-based data.

The 100 heads of households who provided valid responses to the question together reported having a total of 608 children of school going age (age 6 years to 14 years) in their households. Of this number 317 were girls and 291 were boys, giving a ratio of 1.1 girls to boys in the surveyed households. Table 11 presents the summary of responses from the community consultation process with respect to the reported average number of children of school going age in sampled household who were in or out of school and those who did not complete Primary 6 or JSS 3 for each district.

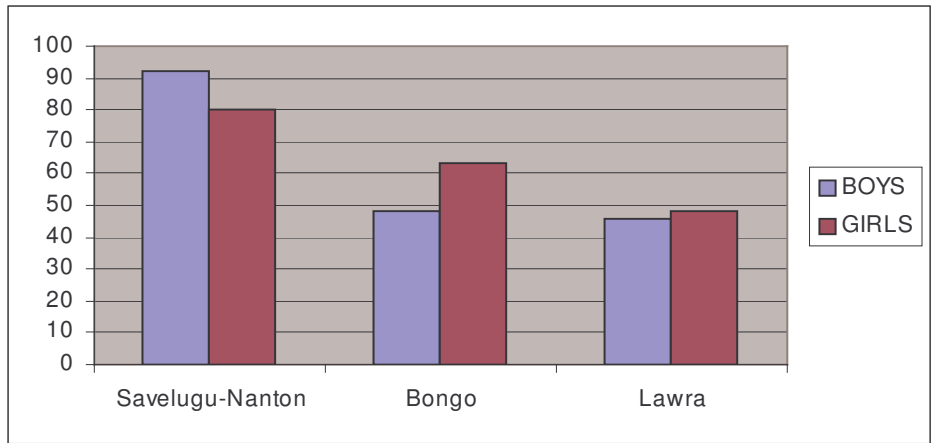
**Table 11**  
**Reported Number of Children of School Going Age in Sampled Household who were in or out of school and those who did not complete Primary 6 or JSS 3**

District	Number of children in the household who are in school		Number of Children in Households who are not in school		Number of children in household who did not complete P6		Number of children in household who did not complete JSS3	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boy	Girls	Boys	Girls
Savelgu-Nanton	92.00	80.00	18.00	23.00	18.00	24.00	10.00	10.00
Bongo	48.00	63.00	9.00	2.00	7.00	20.00	9.00	9.00
Lawra	46.00	48.00	12.00	10.00	12.00	12.00	10.00	16.00
Average Total	186.00	191.00	39.00	35.00	37.00	56.00	29.00	35.00

As reported in table 11, respondents indicated that a total of 191 girls and 186 boys for a total of 337 out of the 608 children of school going age in the surveyed communities (i.e. 62.0%) were in school. Hence, overall, the reported ratio of girls to boys of school going age in the sampled households who were said to be going to school was 1.02, slightly lower than the ratio of 1.1 girls to boys reported to be in all the schools. However, significant differences exist between regions. Figure 8 (above) indicates that in absolute terms, respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton district reported having more boys and girls in school than the other two districts. However, in relative terms, respondents of the Savelugu-Nanton reported having fewer girls than boys in school. On the contrary, respondents in the Bongo district reported having more girls than boys from their households in schools, while those in the Lawra district had almost equal numbers of both boys and girls attending school.

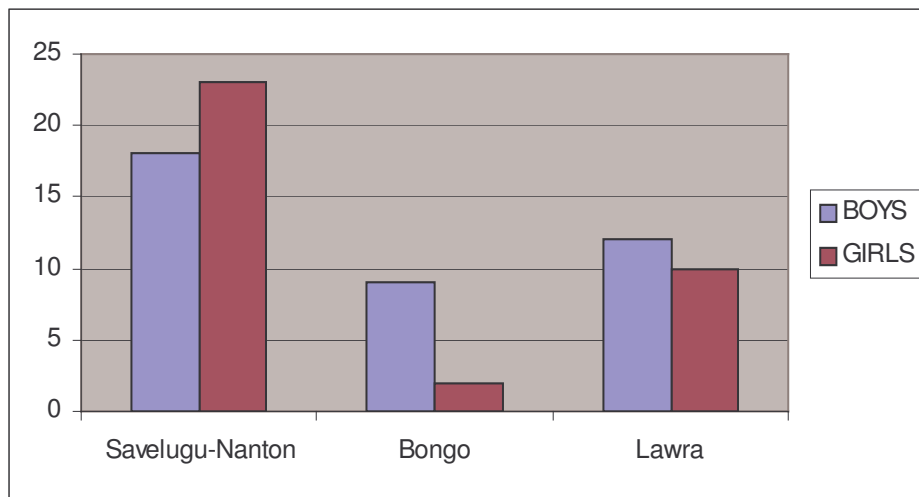
With respect to the number of children not in school, the Savelugu-Nanton district once more tops the list both in absolute numbers for both boys and girls. The district also has more girls than boys out of school. This is contrary to the situation in the other two districts where there are more boys than girls reported to be out of school (see figure 9 below).

**Figure 8**  
**Graph of Reported Number of Children in Household in school**



Source: Community Consultations of this study

**Figure 9**  
**Graph of Reported Cases of Children Not In School**



Source: Community Consultations of this study

## 2.6 Assessment of Gender Parity in Education in Surveyed Communities

The computation of gender parity indices<sup>26</sup> for school enrolment is based on the determination of gross enrolment rates or ratios, which is based on total numbers of children of school going age who are in and out of school.<sup>27</sup> Since the data available in schools only capture the number of children who are in school and not those out of it, it is inadequate for gauging the gross enrolment rates, and therefore, assessing the gender parity index for the surveyed school-communities.

The assessment of gender parity in enrolments in the basic schools was therefore based on data from the community consultations as reported in table 11 above, which captures the reported number of children of school going age (ages 6-14 years) in the 100 surveyed households who are in or out of school.<sup>28</sup>

Table 12 below presents the findings on gross enrolment rates and the gender parity indices for the three districts, based on the data from table 11. From the table surveyed households in the Savelugu-Nanton and Bongo districts reported having 84% of all boys of school going age in school, while the Lawra district reported 79% for the same group. However, the surveyed households in the Bongo district had 97% of all girls of school going age in school while the Lawra and Savelugu-Nanton districts reported 83% and 78% respectively for girls.

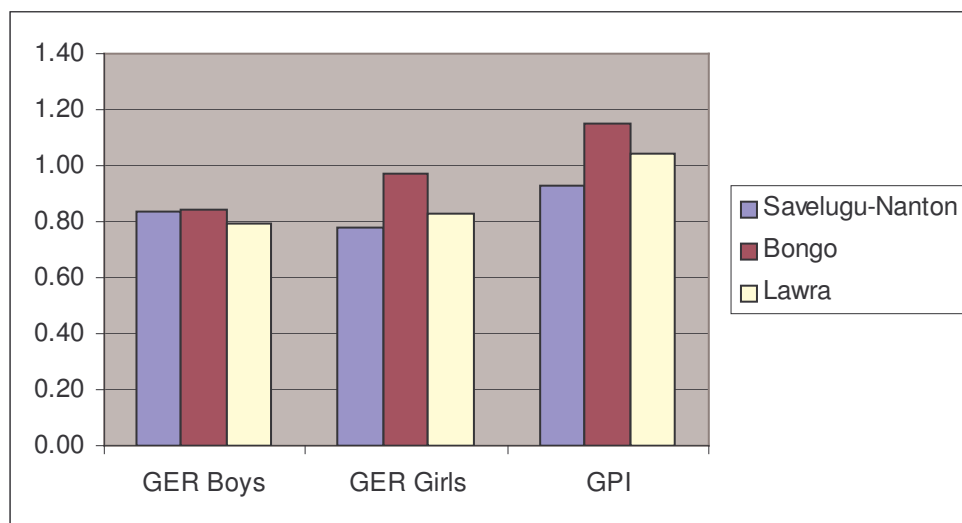
**Table 12**  
**Gross Enrolment Rates and Gender Parity Indices for Surveyed Communities**

District	GER Boys	GER Girls	GPI
Savelugu-Nanton	0.84	0.78	0.93
Bongo	0.84	0.97	1.15
Lawra	0.79	0.83	1.04

Source: This study

Based on the above Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) for the surveyed households, it is observable that while the surveyed communities in the Bongo and Lawra districts have achieved gender parity (i.e. having ratios equal to or greater than 1) in basic school enrolments with parity indices of 1.15 and 1.04 respectively, the Savelugu-Nanton district, with an index of 0.93 is yet to achieve gender parity in basic school enrolments. Figure 10 below presents the situation graphically.

**Figure 10**  
**Graph of Gross Enrolment Rates and Gender Parity Indices**



As will be illustrated later in the discussion session of this report, the community level findings on gender parity in this report are generally consistent with the district level findings by other studies for the three districts in this survey.

## 2.7 Incidence of School Drop out in Surveyed Communities

To ascertain the incidence of school drop outs, the heads of households were asked to indicate how many children in their respective households between the ages of 6 years and 14 years started to go to school but did not complete Primary 6 or JSS 3? An extract of the responses for these questions as presented in Table 11 above provide an overview of the gender parity for the **in** and **out** of school children in the surveyed households (see table 13 below)

**Table 13**  
**Status of Children of School Going Age in Community Consultations**

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ratio Girls to Boys</b>
In School	186	191	377	1.03
Not in School	39	35	74	0.90
Did not Complete P6	37	56	93	1.51
Did not Complete JSS3	29	35	64	1.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>1.09</b>

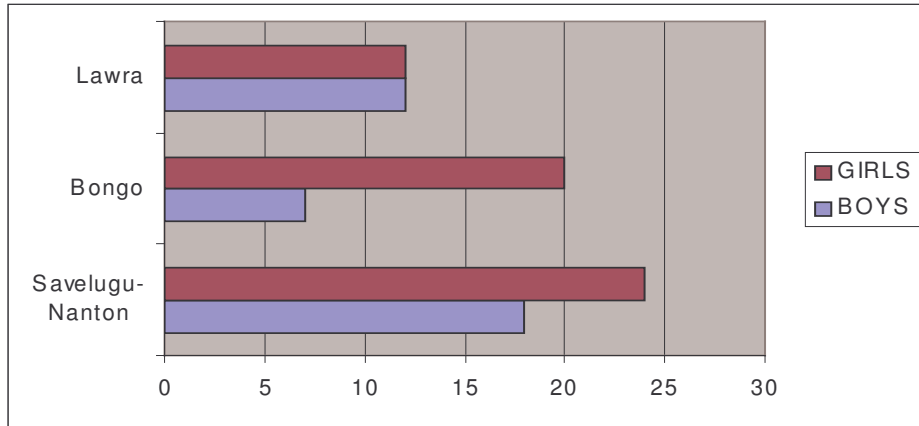
Source: Extract from Table 11 above.

From table 13 above, it is observable that the ratio of girls to boys who were reported not to have completed Primary 6 and JSS 3 was 1.51 and 1.21 respectively. In other words, more girls than boys in the surveyed households were reported to have dropped out of school either before completing Primary 6 or JSS 3. The incidence of school drop out for girls is also higher at the primary school level than at the JSS level.

For children who went to school but did not complete primary 6, while respondents in the Lawra district reported equal numbers of boys and girls who dropped out of school, the Bongo and Savelugu Nanton districts reported more girls than boys dropping out of school before primary 6. Interestingly, the Bongo district which, according to the school-based data has achieved a greater level of gender parity than the other two also reports having more than twice as many girls than boys dropping out of school before they completed primary 6.

School-based data from this study confirm the views of the community consultations and the in-depth interviews that there is a general decline in enrolments between primary 1 and 6 and that girls tend to drop out more than boys in all districts (see figure 11 below). It also confirms the view that some districts fair better than others in the drop out rates. In particular, the Lawra district has kept the gap between boys and girls drop out tighter than the rest. Though more girls than boys drop out in the Savelugu-Nanton District, the gap seems remain fairly constant, with slight variations in some years only.

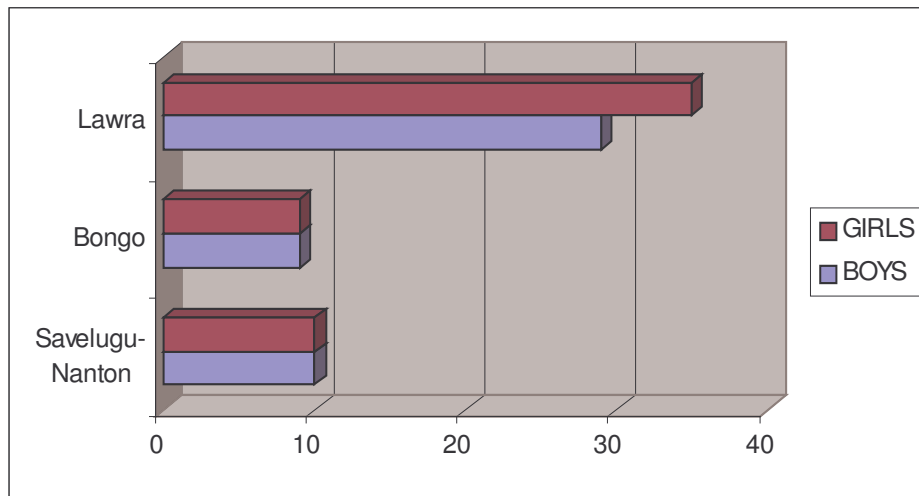
**Figure 11**  
**Graph of Reported Cases of Children Who did Not Complete Primary 6**



Source: Community Consultations of this study

At the JSS level, Lawra district reported more cases of both boys and girls who dropped out of school in surveyed households before they completed JSS 3, with more girls dropping out than boys. The other two districts, however, reported lower and equal drop rates for both boys and girls at this level (see figure 12 below).

**Figure 12**  
**Graph of Reported Cases of Children Who did Not Complete JSS 3**



Source: Community Consultations of this study

## 2.8 Completion Rates

Since school drop out seems to be a problem for all sexes in all the three districts, the study sort to establish primary school completion rates for the districts, using the cohort of students who entered primary 1 in the 1999/2000 school year through to primary 6 in the 2004/2005 academic year, based on the enrollment data collected at the school levels<sup>29</sup>. Table 14 below presents the results of the completion rates for the districts by sexes.

### 2.8.1 Completion Rates for Primary Schools

The completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of students completing (or graduating from) the final year of primary education by the population at the official primary graduation age, and multiplied by 100<sup>30</sup>. When disaggregated by gender, the completion rate provides a measure of how many boys and girls in a cohort were able to move through primary 1 to primary 6 in a given school. This provides a proxy measure of the level of access to, and survival of both boys and girls in the school system of a given district.

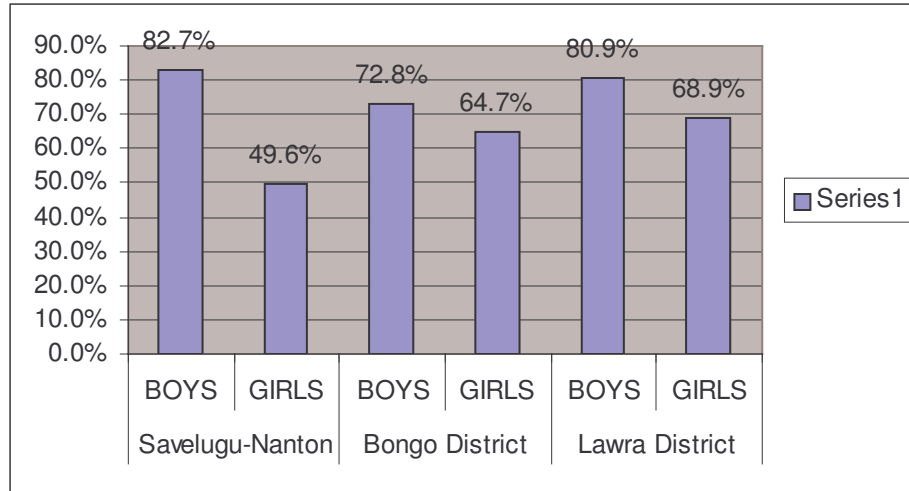
Based on data collected from the sampled schools, it is observable from the table and graph below that the Savelugu-Nanton district had the highest completion rate of 82.7% for boys, as well as the lowest completion rate of 49.6% for girls in the same cohort of students. The Lawra district had a completion rate of 80.9% for boys and 68.9% for girls, while the Bongo district had a completion rate of 72.8% for boys and 64.7% for girls (see table 14 and figure 13 below).

In other words, boys in the Savelugu-Nanton district have a 33.1% more chance of completing primary school than girls in the same cohort. The gender gap in completion rates is, however, lower for the other two districts, with the Lawra district giving boys a 12.1% more chance of completion than girls, while the Bongo district offers an 8.1% more chance for boys than girls. The respective gender parity rates for primary school completion for the three districts are 0.60 for Savelugu-Nanton, 0.89 for the Bongo District and 0.85 for the Lawra district.

**Table 14**  
**Computation of Primary School Completion Rates by District**

Year	Class	DISTRICTS					
		Savelugu-Nanton		Bongo District		Lawra District	
		BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS
1999/2000	P1	185	139	103	136	141	135
2000/2001	P2	124	53	83	100	127	113
2001/2002	P3	130	64	38	68	133	120
2002/2003	P4	77	29	143	148	113	108
2003/2004	P5	121	46	88	94	139	100
2004/2005	P6	153	69	75	88	114	93
<b>Completion Rate =</b>		82.7%	49.6%	72.8%	64.7%	80.9%	68.9%

**Figure 13**  
**Bar Chart of Primary School Completion Rates by District**



2.8.2 *Completion Rates for JSS*

Enrolment data collected for the JSS permits the tracking of four cohorts of students' progression between 1999/2000 and 2004/2005 academic years only. Table 15 below presents the computations of completion rates, the gender gaps in completion rates, and the gender parity index for completion for the four cohorts in the three districts.

**Table 15**  
**Computation of completion Rates for Junior Secondary School**

COHORTS	YEAR	Savelugu-Nanton		Bongo District		Lawra District	
		BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS
CHORT 1	JSS 1 1999/2000	48	18	171	160	110	90
	JSS 2 2000/2001	160	23	184	132	114	120
	JSS 3 2001/2002	93	12	144	101	114	107
Completion Rate		194%	67%	84%	63%	104%	119%
Gender Gap			127%		21%		-15%
Gender Parity Index			0.34		0.75		1.15
COHORT 2	JSS 1 2000/2001	162	30	163	151	120	98
	JSS 2 2001/2002	151	28	188	133	148	124
	JSS 3 2002/2003	140	31	120	101	143	112
Completion Rate		86%	103%	74%	67%	119%	114%
Gender Gap			-17%		7%		5%
Gender Parity Index			1.20		0.91		0.96
COHORT 3	JSS 1 2001/2002	123	24	152	136	116	110
	JSS 2 2002/2003	187	38	137	143	148	113
	JSS 3 2003/2004	139	31	134	121	122	89
Completion Rate		113%	129%	88%	89%	105%	81%
Gender Gap			-16%		-1%		24%
Gender Parity Index			1.14		1.01		0.77

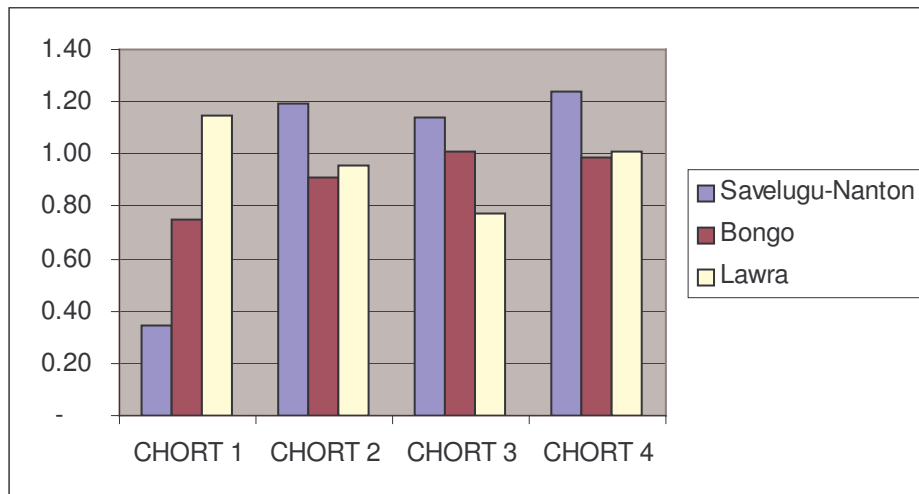
COHORTS	YEAR	Savelugu-Nanton		Bongo District		Lawra District		
		BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	
COHORT 4	JSS 1	2002/2003	215	61	205	208	143	149
	JSS 2	2003/2004	241	65	144	173	126	135
	JSS 3	2004/2005	219	77	135	135	111	117
Completion Rate			102%	126%	66%	65%	78%	79%
Gender Gap				-24%		1%		-1%
Gender Parity Index				1.24		0.99		1.01

Table 16 and figure 14 below present cull outs of the computation of the gender parity in completion rates for the four cohorts of JSS students by district.

**Table 16**  
**Gender Parity Index For JSS Completion**

DISTRICT	CHORT 1	CHORT 2	CHORT 3	CHORT 4
Savelugu-Nanton	0.34	1.20	1.14	1.24
Bongo	0.75	0.91	1.01	0.99
Lawra	1.15	0.96	0.77	1.01

**Figure 14**  
**Gender Parity Index For Jss Completion**



The data above show that whereas the Savelugu-Nanton district had a lower parity rate in JSS completion in the first cohort, it has consistently beaten the other two districts from cohort 2 through cohort 4. A scrutiny of the data on enrolment indicates that the district

experienced surges in enrolment in JSS 2 for both boys and girls, but more for boys than girls in all the cohorts. This undoubtedly had an influence on the number of students who eventually moved onto JSS 3.

Although the same phenomenon is observable in the Bongo district for boys in cohorts 1 and 2, and in the Lawra district for boys in cohorts 1 through 3, the rate of increase in enrolment in JSS 2 in the Savelugu-Nanton district is relatively higher than in the other two districts. Noticeably, the Lawra district also experienced substantial increases in enrolments for girls in JSS 2 for cohorts 1 through 3.

To explain such surges in enrolment, the study tried to track transitions from one class to the other through actual counts of dropouts, transfers and re-entries. Unfortunately, the data available at the school levels was inadequate and incomplete to permit an empirical assessment of the causes for the surges in enrolments. However, interviews with heads of schools and other community stakeholders suggest that the surges in enrolment were largely attributable to transfers and/or re-entries of students who dropped out earlier. In the Savelugu-Nanton district, in particular, it was mentioned that students in schools in the Tamale Municipality often take on registration in some of the schools in the Savelugu area in order to jump their classes and take the BECE earlier. There were also suggestions that some students who may have performed badly in the BECE in previous years decided to repeat the class in JSS 2 to improve their chances of passing. Other reasons included genuine transfers from outside the school.

While these assertions are subject to further investigation, they tentatively provide an explanation why enrolments in JSS two tend to increase in all districts, but more especially in the Savelugu-Nanton district.

Irrespective of the compensatory surges in enrolment in JSS 2, the overall results from the community consultations confirm the general pattern observed in the school-based data that even though gender parity in enrollment may be achieved at the lower primary school level, more girls than boys tend to drop out of school before they complete primary 6 or JSS 3. For instance, when community members were asked based on their experiences which category of children in their communities were more likely to stop going to school from Primary 1 before they complete Primary 6, the majority of respondents for all three

**Table 17**  
**Children likely to stop school before Primary 6 by District**

children likely to stop school before P6	district			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
boys	1	6	2	9
	3.4%	18.2%	5.3%	9.0%
% of Total	1.0%	6.0%	2.0%	9.0%
girls	24	13	18	55
	82.8%	39.4%	47.4%	55.0%
% of Total	24.0%	13.0%	18.0%	55.0%
no differences	1	11	16	28
	3.4%	33.3%	42.1%	28.0%
% of Total	1.0%	11.0%	16.0%	28.0%
don't know	1	2	1	4
	3.4%	6.1%	2.6%	4.0%
% of Total	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	4.0%
	2	1	1	4
	6.9%	3.0%	2.6%	4.0%
% of Total	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%	4.0%
Total	29	33	38	100
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total	29.0%	33.0%	38.0%	100.0%

districts (55 out of the 96 valid respondents) cited girls as the more likely candidates for school drop out. As table 17 shows, only 28 of the 96 valid respondents thought there was no difference in the likelihood of drop out of either sex.

By district, the majority of respondents who thought girls were likely to drop out of school before they completed primary 6 were from the Savelugu-Nanton district (24/55) or 82.8%.

When the same question was asked of children likely to drop out of school before they completed JSS 3, the results followed a similar pattern with more respondents suggesting that girls are more likely to drop out than boys (see table 18 below). In all, 62 out of the 100 respondents thought girls were more likely to drop out of JSS than boys.

**Table 18**  
**Crosstabulation of Children likely to stop JSS by District**

Children likely to stop school before JSS	District			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
boys	1	5	2	8
	3.4%	15.2%	5.3%	8.0%
% of Total	1.0%	5.0%	2.0%	8.0%
girls	24	20	18	62
	82.8%	60.6%	47.4%	62.0%
% of Total	24.0%	20.0%	18.0%	62.0%
no difference	1	6	15	22
	3.4%	18.2%	39.5%	22.0%
% of Total	1.0%	6.0%	15.0%	22.0%
don't know	1	1	1	3
	3.4%	3.0%	2.6%	3.0%
% of Total	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	3.0%
	2	1	2	5
	6.9%	3.0%	5.3%	5.0%
% of Total	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%	5.0%
Total	29	33	38	100
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total	29.0%	33.0%	38.0%	100.0%

## 2.9 Gender Parity In Access To Education

### 2.9.1 General Factors influencing disparity in enrollment and participation

To determine what factors account for the differentials in school enrolment and participation for boys and girls within and between the three study sites, a barrier analysis was carried out. The analysis was based on responses to questions included in all three levels of the study, i.e. the school based interviews, community consultations and in-depth individual key informant interviews. At the school level, 32 respondents, representing 24 headteachers, 7 Assistant headteachers and 1 teacher were the main respondents (see Table 19 below). At the community levels, 100 community members were interviewed, while the responses from the in-depth interviews covered 299 respondents.

**Table 19**  
**Position of respondents to school-based in-depth interview questionnaires**

position of	District of			Total
	Savelugu Nanto	Bong	Lawra	
head	9	8	7	24
assistant head	3	1	3	7
teacher		1		1
Total	12	10	10	32

The community consultations focused on determining community perceptions, attitudes and behaviours that influence the attainment of gender parity in education in the study districts. Of the 100 community members interviewed, there were 83 men and 14 women, with three respondents not indicating their sexes. The majority of the community respondents (58 men and 12 women for a total of 70) were parents of children in the schools sampled for the school-based studies. Members of Unit Committees came next with 10 men and two women, with chiefs taking the third slot with 8 respondents (see table 20 for details)

**Table 20**  
**Crosstabulation Of Respondents' Position In Community By District And By Sex**

sex Respondent	Respondents Community	District			Total
		Savelgu-Nanton	Bong	Lawra	
Missing	Teacher	1			1
	Unit committee			1	1
	Total	1		1	1
Male	Parent	12	24	22	58
	Teacher	2		1	3
	Chief of Village	3	3	2	8
	Assembly	1	2		3
	The community Unit committee	6	2	2	10
	Total	1			1
Female	Parent	3	2	7	12
	Total Unit committee			2	2
		3	2	9	14

Educationally, most of the respondents (42 men and 6 women) had never been to school; with another 14 respondents (12 men and 2 women) having been to school but never completed primary 6.

In all, 299 respondents took part in the in-depth individual interviews. Of this number 198 (or 66.2%) were men and 99 or 33.1% were women. Two respondents did not indicate their sexes (see table 21 below).

**Table 21**  
**In-depth Individual Interviews by Sex and by District**

Sex of Respondent	District of respondent			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
male	83	53	62	198
	41.9%	26.8%	31.3%	100.0%
	81.4%	54.6%	62.0%	66.2%
female	18	44	37	99
	18.2%	44.4%	37.4%	100.0%
	17.6%	45.4%	37.0%	33.1%
	1		1	2
	50.0%		50.0%	100.0%
	1.0%		1.0%	.7%
Total	102	97	100	299
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### 2.9.2 Physical Barriers to gender parity in access to education

#### a) Distance from Community to School

The analysis of the physical barriers to accessing education aimed to determine the nature and impact of factors such as distances between the schools and the communities, as well as, the presence of natural obstacles such as rivers, forests, hills etc, and the frequency with which children have to battle with these to go to and from school.

Of the 30 out of 32 (93.8%) school authorities who indicated the number of villages that children in their schools come from, it is observable that the children in the 30 schools come from 187 communities (see table 22 below). On average 6 communities provide pupils to each of the sampled schools. Of this Lawra District had the highest mean of 7 communities per school while the Savelugu-Nanton district had the lowest of 5 communities per school. At a total standard deviation of 3.5, the variations between the districts is fairly small.

**Table 22**  
**Number Of Villages Children Come From**

District of	Mean	Std.	Sum
Savelugu-	5.000	3.5675	60.00
Bong	6.625	2.7222	53.00
Lawra	7.400	3.8064	74.00
Total	6.233	3.5005	187.0

Asked about the distance of the farthest communities to their respective schools, 28 out of the 32 (87.5%) respondents cited distances of more than one mile a way from the school. By districts, Savelugu-Nanton districts was reported to have the shortest distances between the schools and the communities, as 8 out of the 12 respondents cited distances of less than a mile to 2 miles. In both the Bongo and Lawra districts, 9 out of the 10 respondents cited communities servicing their respective schools to be located more than 2 miles from their schools, with the majority citing distances of three miles or more that some children have to travel to get to the school (see table 23 below).

**Table 23**

**Distances Pupils Have to Travel to Get to School**

Distance of community from	District of			Total
	Savelugu Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
less than a	3		1	4
between 1 and 2	5	1		6
between 2 and 3	1	2	4	7
between 3 and 4	2	2	1	5
between 4 and 5		2	2	4
more than 5	1	2	2	5
res 5,6		1		1
Total	12	10	10	32

When community members were asked the same question, 55.3% of the respondents (52/94 valid responses) also cited distances of more than one mile between their communities and the schools their children attend, with the majority in this category (38/52) citing distances of between one and three miles. Paradoxically, however, 51.1% of the respondents who gave valid responses (48/94) indicated distances of less than one mile which their children have to travel to get to their schools.

Incidentally, the “less than one mile” response category consistently received the highest single rating from the community respondents across all three districts. It is also noteworthy that 23/29 respondents from the Savelugu-Nanton district said the schools their children attend are located less than one mile from their communities. By contrast, 20/33 and 26/38 respondents from the Bongo and Lawra districts respectively thought said their children had to travel more than 1 mile to and from school.

It would appear, therefore, that on average distances are not a major barrier to access to education, especially in the Savelugu-Nanton district, where the majority of respondents indicated schools are within less than a mile from many households. Incidentally, this district has the lowest gender parity rates in school enrolment.

**Table 24**  
**Distance of school from community cross-tabulated by district**

Distance of school attend from	District			Total
	Savelgu Nanton	Bong	Lawra	
less than a mile	23	13	12	48
between 1 and 2 miles	5	8	15	28
between 2 and 3 miles		6	4	10
between 4 and 5 miles		2	2	4
more than 5 miles		2	2	4
	1	2	3	6
Total	29	33	38	100

b) Other Physical Barriers to Access to Schools

When school authorities were asked whether children in their schools sometimes have to cross natural obstacles such as streams, rivers and hills to get to school, the majority of respondents in the Bongo and Lawra districts (8/10 in both cases) again answered in the affirmative, while 10 out of 12 respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton district said children attending their schools did not have to grapple with such challenges (see table 25 below).

**Table 25**  
**Do children cross natural obstacles to come to school?**

do children cross natural obstacles to come to school?	District of school			Total
	Savelugu Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
yes	2	8	8	18
no	10	2	2	14
Total	12	10	10	32

Asked how often during the year children have to cross these obstacles, only 1 out of the 12 respondents from the Savelugu-Nanton district said children have to cross rivers or streams “some time during the year” in order to go to school. By contrast, 6 out of the 10 and 8 out of 10 of the respondents from the Bongo and the Lawra districts respectively who answered the question said this happens during some time in the year (see table 26 below). This means the obstacles children have to deal with are seasonal by nature.

Again, the results suggest that, in general children in the Savelugu-Nanton district have less difficulty in physically accessing educational services than their counterparts in the Bongo and Lawra districts. The relatively closely knit nature of the communities in the Savelugu-Nanton district seems to be an important contributory factor to this, as children do not have to travel far to get to their schools.

**Table 26**  
**How often do children have to cross these obstacles?**

how often do they these	District of			Total
	Savelugu Nanto	Bong	Lawra	
every time during the		1		1
sometime during the	1	6	8	15
never during the	1	1		2
skippe	10	2	2	14
Total	12	10	10	32

2.9.3 *Socio-Cultural Barriers to gender parity in educational access*

The survey sought to establish whether there were cultural preferences for the education of girls over boys or vice versa. Respondents in the in-depth individual interviews were therefore asked the question: “If you had to make a choice between sending a boy or a girl to school, which of them would you prefer to put into school?”

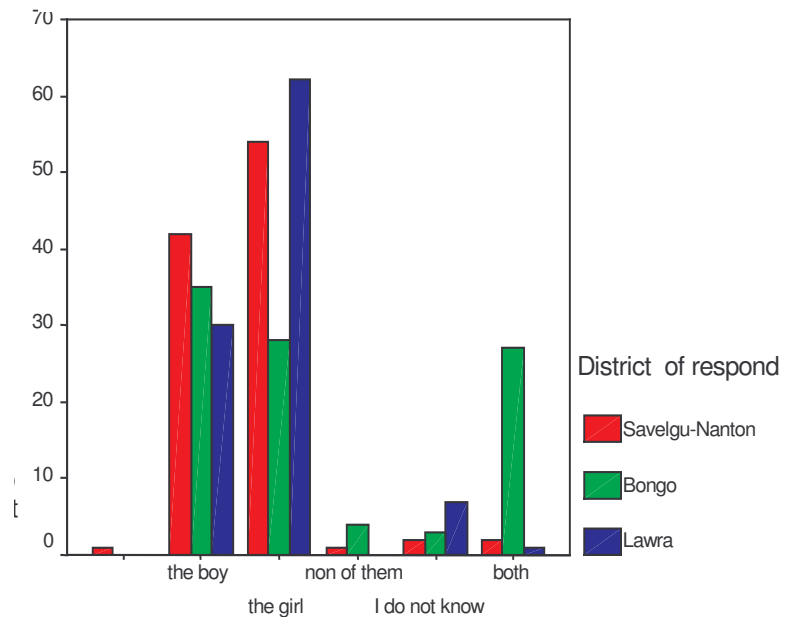
In response, the majority of respondents (144/299 or 48.5%) said they would prefer to educate their girl child. However, more than a third of the respondents (107/299 or 35.8%) said they would prefer to educate their boy child – see table 27.

By district, the Lawra District showed the highest preference for the education of girls over boys, with 62.0% of its 100 respondents preferring the education of girls to boys. This compares to the 52.9% of respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton district (54/102) and the Bongo district showing the least preference for the education of girls over boys 28/97 or 28.9%). The majority of respondents who preferred the education of boys to girls (42/107 or 39.3% of respondents in this category) came from the Savelugu-Nanton District. But as noted above, the district also showed a high preference for the education of girls, beating Bongo district, which according to the school-based data has already achieved gender parity in enrolment, to it - see figure15 to the below.

**Table 27**  
**Cross tabulation of responses on preferred child to educate by district**

preferred child to educate	District of respondent			Total
	Savelugu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
the boy	42	35	30	107
	39.3%	32.7%	28.0%	100.0%
	41.2%	36.1%	30.0%	35.8%
the girl	54	28	62	144
	37.5%	19.4%	43.1%	100.0%
	52.9%	28.9%	62.0%	48.2%
non of them	1	4		5
	20.0%	80.0%		100.0%
	1.0%	4.1%		1.7%
I do not know	2	3	7	12
	16.7%	25.0%	58.3%	100.0%
	2.0%	3.1%	7.0%	4.0%
both	2	27	1	30
	6.7%	90.0%	3.3%	100.0%
	2.0%	27.8%	1.0%	10.0%
	1			1
	100.0%			100.0%
	1.0%			.3%
Total	102	97	100	299
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Figure 15**  
Graph of Preference of education of children by district



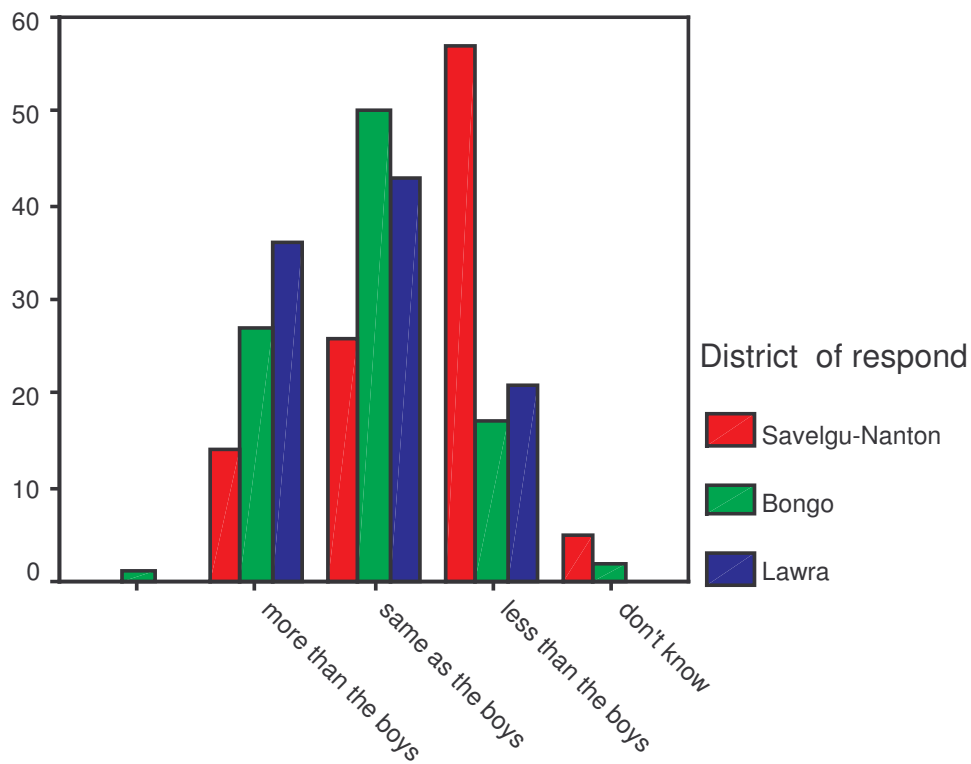
But are girls willing to go to school and stay on till completion either at the primary or JSS levels? When respondents were asked the question: “In your opinion do you think that girls are usually willing to go to school?” the majority of them (196/299 or 65.5%) either indicated that girls were willing to go to school “more than boys” (77/299 or 25.8%) or “same as boys” (119/299 or 39.8%). However, more than a third of the respondents (31.8% or 95/299) thought that girls were less willing to go to school than boys (see table 28 and figure 16 below).

Again, respondents in the Lawra district showed a lot more faith in the willingness of girls to go to school more than boys. The Bongo district came tops in asserting that girls were as willing as boys to go to school. Respondents from the Savelugu-Nanton district, on the other hand consistently expressed the least faith in the willingness of girls to go to school more than or same as boys. In deed, it is noteworthy that of the 95 out of 299 respondents who thought girls were less willing to go to school than boys, 57 of them (or 60.0%) were from the Savelugu-Nanton District. Also, of the 7 respondents who said they did not know whether girls were willing to go to school more than or same as boys, 5 or 71.4% of them came from the Savelugu-Nanton district.

**Table 28**  
Perceived Willingness of Girls to Go to School by district

Girls willing to go to school	District of respondent			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
more than the boys	14	27	36	77
	18.2%	35.1%	46.8%	100.0%
	13.7%	27.8%	36.0%	25.8%
same as the boys	26	50	43	119
	21.8%	42.0%	36.1%	100.0%
	25.5%	51.5%	43.0%	39.8%
less than the boys	57	17	21	95
	60.0%	17.9%	22.1%	100.0%
	55.9%	17.5%	21.0%	31.8%
don't know	5	2		7
	71.4%	28.6%		100.0%
	4.9%	2.1%		2.3%
		1		1
		100.0%		100.0%
		1.0%		.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>299</b>
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Figure 16**  
**Graph of perceptions of willingness of girls to go to school by district**



Respondents' perceptions and beliefs about the willingness of girls to go to, and continue in school is an important determinant of their own willingness to invest in, and encourage the enrolment, participation and continuation of girls in schools. The extent to which the findings in this study can be said to have influenced the gender parity data cited earlier in this report will be discussed later.

To assess the level of awareness of respondents on the state of gender parity in education in their communities, they were asked whether in their communities, it was true or not that there are as many girls as boys who are enrolled in and are going to school between Primary 1 and Primary 3.

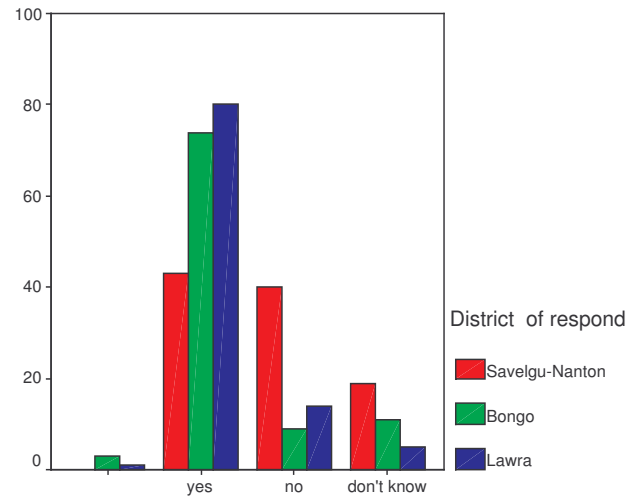
A crosstabulation of the responses to the question by district indicates that while more than 80% and 76.3% respectively of respondents in the Lawra and Bongo districts said there were more girls in primaries 1 through 3, respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton district were about split in agreeing or disagreeing with the proposition. While 42.2% agreed that there were more girls, 39.2% thought there were fewer girls in the lower primaries in their communities. The district also had the largest number of respondents in the category of respondents who disagreed with the proposition (i.e. 40/63 or 63.5% of respondents in this category). The majority of respondents who said they did not know the true state of gender parity in the lower primaries in their communities were also from

the Savelugu-Nanton district (19/35 or 54.3%). The results are presented in table 29 and figure 17 below.

**Table 29**  
**Responses on Girls in P1-3**

more girls in primary 1 and primary 3 in community	District of respondent			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
yes	43	74	80	197
	21.8%	37.6%	40.6%	100.0%
no	40	9	14	63
	63.5%	14.3%	22.2%	100.0%
don't know	19	11	5	35
	54.3%	31.4%	14.3%	100.0%
Total	102	97	100	299
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0%

**Figure 17**  
**Responses on Girls in P1-3**



more girls in primary 1 and primary 3 in community

To determine the reasons for the gender parity or lack of it in lower primary schools in their communities, respondents were asked the question “What do you think is the reason why there seems to be equal numbers of girls and boys going to school at the lower primary level?” Several reasons were given across the three districts. Summarized, these ranged from the parental interests and encouragement for children to go to school at this stage, as well as, children’s own interests and willingness to go to school at this age.

However, there was strong suggestion that parental interest in sending the children to school at this stage was motivated by the low direct and indirect economic cost to them, as several respondents cited the fact that children at this stage have little or no economic utility at home. In fact, sending them to school is a way of keeping them away from home so that parents can concentrate on their work, respondents suggested. Parental incentives is further enhanced by the fact that education is virtually free at this early stage; and in some cases there is the added benefit of various incentive packages such as school lunch and take-home rations provided to children, which can serve as a direct or indirect income transfer for poor households<sup>31</sup>. Details of responses for this question, categorized by themes and by district may be viewed in Appendix I.

When respondents were further asked whether it was also true in their communities that fewer girls tend to progress from Primary 4 until they complete JSS 3, a total of 232 out of the 299 (i.e. 77.6%) respondents said yes, while 48/299 said no. For the category of respondents who said “yes” to the question, we note that the Savelugu-Nanton district had the least number of respondents who subscribed to this view (65/232 or 28.0%). It is

**Table 30 Fewer Girls Progress To JSS 3 By District**

girls do not progress from primary 4 till complete JSS	District of respondent			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
yes	65	87	80	232
	28.0%	37.5%	34.5%	100.0%
	63.7%	89.7%	80.0%	77.6%
no	26	7	15	48
	54.2%	14.6%	31.3%	100.0%
	25.5%	7.2%	15.0%	16.1%
dont know	7		2	9
	77.8%		22.2%	100.0%
	6.9%		2.0%	3.0%
Total	4	3	3	10
	40.0%	30.0%	30.0%	100.0%
	3.9%	3.1%	3.0%	3.3%
Total	102	97	100	299
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

is also noteworthy that the majority of those who said no (26/48) or 54.2% of respondents in this category were from the Savelugu-Nanton district – table 30.

Within the districts, it is also observable that while 89.7% and 80.0% of respondents from the Bongo and Lawra districts respectively said fewer girls tend to progress to the JSS 3 level, only 63.7% of respondents from the Savelugu-Nanton district (65/102) agreed with the proposition.

Asked what they think accounts for the gradual decrease in the number of girls who progress from primary 4 to the JSS 3 level, the a majority of the responses point directly at issues related to poverty, including the fact that either parents take their girl children out of school for economic reasons or the girl-children themselves often choose to drop out of school at this stage to pursue economic interests in petty trading and/or traveling “down south” in search of jobs. A second major set of reason, which is probably a sequel to the economic reasons, is that girls tend to drop out of school at this stage more than boys because some girls get pregnant at this stage and are forced to stop schooling. A summary of the responses to this question is provided in Appendix II.

When respondents were asked if they agreed that girls have equal rights as boys to go to school and remain in school till they complete JSS 3, a total of 93.3% (279/299) of the respondents either strongly agreed (183/299 or 61.2%) or agreed (96/299 or 32.1%) with the proposition. By districts, whereas the majority of respondents in the Lawra and Bongo districts belonged to the “strongly agree” category, the majority of respondents from the Savelugu-Nanton district came from the “agree” category 52/102 as against 42/102 in the “strongly agree” category (see table 31 below).

**Table 31**  
**Do you agree girls have rights to continue to JSS 3 by District?**

girls have equal rights to go to school as boys till JSS 3	District of respondent			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
strongly agree	42	73	68	183
	23.0%	39.9%	37.2%	100.0%
	41.2%	75.3%	68.0%	61.2%
agree	52	18	26	96
	54.2%	18.8%	27.1%	100.0%
	51.0%	18.6%	26.0%	32.1%
do not agree	2	3	2	7
	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	100.0%
	2.0%	3.1%	2.0%	2.3%
strongly disagree		1	1	2
		50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		1.0%	1.0%	.7%
don't know	6	1		7
	85.7%	14.3%		100.0%
	5.9%	1.0%		2.3%
		1	3	4
		25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		1.0%	3.0%	1.3%
Total	102	97	100	299
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Again, awareness of the rights of girls to go to school as much as boys is an important determinant of how parents create the enabling environment for their children to go to school. As a Likert scale measure, this difference in categories of responses is important, as it provides an indication of the level of conviction of respondents on the ability of girls to continue to JSS and beyond. Expressions of strong agreement on the rights of girls to go school may be an indication of parents' willingness to support their girl children as much as boys in their educational efforts.

### **2.10 Perceptions on Girls Ability for educational achievements**

As with the perceptions of the rights of girls to education, perceptions of the ability of girls to achieve as much as or more than boys in school is an important attitudinal determinant in parents' support for the education of children. For this reason, the study sought to determine the extent to which parents believed in the ability of girls to achieve as much as boys in schools.

To determine general perceptions of the educational abilities of girls, therefore, respondents in the in-depth individual interviews were asked whether they agreed girls have the same ability as boys to go to school and learn till they complete JSS 3. In response, the majority of respondents (277/299 or 92.7%) either strongly agreed (170/299 i.e. 56.9%) or agreed (107/299 or 35.8%) with the suggestion.

Once more, the majority of respondents from the Savelugu-Nanton district (52/102) belonged to the category of respondents who merely “agreed” with the proposition. The majority of those who said they did not know (5/6) were also from this district. Table 32 below depicts the situation.

**Table 32**  
**Crosstabulation Of Belief In Girls Ability To Complete JSS By District**

Girls have equal boys to go to school learn till complete	District of			Total
	Savelgu Nanto	Bong	Lawra	
strongly	41	65	64	170
	24.1%	38.2%	37.6%	100.0
	40.2%	67.0%	64.0%	56.9%
agree	52	27	28	107
	48.6%	25.2%	26.2%	100.0
	51.0%	27.8%	28.0%	35.8%
do not	2	3	2	7
	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	100.0
	2.0%	3.1%	2.0%	2.3%
don't	5	1		6
	83.3%	16.7%		100.0
	4.9%	1.0%		2.0%
	2	1	6	9
	22.2%	11.1%	66.7%	100.0
	2.0%	1.0%	6.0%	3.0%
Total	102	97	100	299
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Asked to give reasons for their responses to the question that “girls have the same ability as boys to go to school and learn till they complete JSS 3”, respondents who thought girls had more or the same ability as boys to complete JSS 3 were also very much in agreement that girls have the same natural abilities as boys to pursue schooling up to the JSS level and beyond. They pointed to the fact that both boys and girls were born with the same capacities to learn and hence there are no reasons why girls cannot go as far in education as their male counterparts.

The only obstacle to girls’ progress in education, they mentioned, bothers on social and environmental constraints rather than girls’ innate ability/capacity go progress in school. As one respondent in the Savelugu-Nanton district pointed out, girls “...can learn if they have the same tuition as compared to their male counterparts”. Some even argued that girls are more forceful in learning and perform better once they get into school and are given all the necessary support. A respondent from the Lawra district summed up the environmental argument in the following words: “If society does not discriminate against girls’ education, they will always do better” (This study).

Despite this general agreement on the ability of girls to successfully compete with boys at the JSS level, the dissenting respondents on girls’ ability to go to school up to JSS 3 argued that girls tend to drop out of school at this stage more than boys for yet another set

of environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural reasons. In the words of a respondent from Bongo district, girls “...may dropout from school due to teenage pregnancy and parents inability to look after them in school.” Appendix III presents a summary of the responses per district.

When asked what they think is the highest level of education that girls can attain, the majority of respondents in the in-depth individual interviews cited post basic education levels, with the overwhelming majority 205/299 or 68.6%) indicating that girls can attain university level education. Another 31 respondents mentioned teacher training college (17/299 or 5.7%) and polytechnic level higher national diplomas (14/299 or 4.7%) as educational levels girls can attain.

It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents from the Savelugu-Nanton district (73/102 or 71.6%) shared the view that girls should aspire to university level education. The district also contributed the highest proportion of respondents who believed that girls should go on to the HND level from polytechnics (9/14 or 41.7% of respondents in this category) – table 33.

Given the low levels of gender parity in education in the Savelugu-Nanton district, the findings here raise questions about the match between respondents’ beliefs and actual practices when it comes to promoting the education of girls.

Results of the community consultations also reveal that there is a high desire in the surveyed communities to see girls progress to the highest levels of education, i.e. university education. When community members were asked what they thought was the highest level of education a girl should aspire to, the majority of respondents (65 out of the 95 valid respondents - i.e 68.4%) indicated that girls could aspire to obtain university level education. More than 70% of respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton District (79.3%) and the Bongo district (75.8%) subscribed to this view. Only 44.7% of respondents in the community consultations in the Lawra district thought girls should aspire to university level education – table 34 below.

**Table 33**  
**Believe In Girls’ Educational Abilities By District**

Highest level of education girls can attain	District of respondent			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
they can only complete primary school	1 10.0%	9 90.0%		10 100.0%
they can complete JSS		5 100.0%		5 100.0%
they can complete SSS		3 75.0%	1 25.0%	4 100.0%
vocational/Technical institutes	1 20.0%		4 80.0%	5 100.0%
Training college	11 64.7%	2 11.8%	4 23.5%	17 100.0%
HND from polytechnic	9 64.3%	1 7.1%	4 28.6%	14 100.0%
bachelors degree from university	73 35.6%	73 35.6%	59 28.8%	205 100.0%
other please specify	2 7.4%	3 11.1%	22 81.5%	27 100.0%
	2.0%	3.1%	22.0%	9.0%
	5 41.7%	1 8.3%	6 50.0%	12 100.0%
	4.9%	1.0%	6.0%	4.0%
Total	102 34.1%	97 32.4%	100 33.4%	299 100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 34**  
**Highest Level Of Education Girls Can Attain By District**

Highest level of education girls can attain	District			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
complete JSS	1 3.4%		1 2.6%	2 2.0%
voacational/technical institutes	2 6.9%			2 2.0%
teacher training college	1 3.4%			1 1.0%
polytechnic	1 3.4%			1 1.0%
university	23 79.3%	25 75.8%	17 44.7%	65 65.0%
other specify		6 18.2%	18 47.4%	24 24.0%
	1 3.4%	2 6.1%	2 5.3%	5 5.0%
Total	29 100.0%	33 100.0%	38 100.0%	100 100.0%

It is also quite revealing that of the 65 respondents who said girls should aspire to the highest level of education, 32 of them had never had any education at all. In deed, the majority of respondents who had never had any education of their own (32/49) indicated that girls can attain university level education. Seven out of the 14 respondents who went to school but did not complete primary six (i.e. 50%) and all 12 respondents who indicated they completed middle school or the Junior secondary school also indicated that girls can attain university level education. In other words, 51 out of the 65 respondents who believe girls can attain university level education have themselves had very little or no formal education (see table 35 below).

Taken alone, this finding is a positive sign that people who have never had any or very little education of their own have a lot of confidence in the ability of girls to achieve the same or higher educational laurels than boys. This will be an important entry point for any community mobilization for interventions that promote girls' access to, and participation in education.

**Table 35**  
**Highest level of education girls can attain cross-tabulated by district and by level of education of respondents**

level of education	highest level of education girls can attain	district			Total
		Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
Missing	university	1			1 50.0%
				1	1 100.0%
	Total	1 100.0%		1 100.0%	2 100.0%
never been to school	complete JSS	1			1 2.0%
	voacational/technical institutes	2			2 4.1%
	teacher training college	1			1 2.0%
	university	13	14	5	32 65.3%
	other specify		4	7	11 22.4%
		1	1		2 4.1%
	5.6%	5.3%			
Total	18 100.0%	19 100.0%	12 100.0%	49 100.0%	
went but did not complete P6	complete JSS			1	1 7.1%
	university		5	2	7 50.0%
	other specify			6	6 42.9%
	Total		5 100.0%	9 100.0%	14 100.0%
completed middle school/JSS	university	6	3	3	12 63.2%
	other specify		2	4	6 12.5%
	Total		5 100.0%	8 100.0%	19 100.0%
completed secondary/Technical/vocational	university	2		2	
		100.0%		100.0%	
			1		1 20.0%
			100.0%		
Total			1 100.0%	2 100.0%	5 100.0%
Teacher training college	university		2	2	
			100.0%	100.0%	
Total			2 100.0%	2 100.0%	4 100.0%
HND from polytechnic	university				1 50.0%
	other specify			1	1 50.0%
	Total				2 100.0%
other please specify	polytechnic	1			
		50.0%			
	university		1	2	4 80.0%
			100.0%	100.0%	
Total	2 100.0%	1 100.0%	2 100.0%		

## 2.11 Community Support for Promoting Gender Parity in Education

Asked whether girls who live far from their schools have special needs to enable them continue to go to school, 90% of respondents from all the districts said yes. By districts, the Bongo district had the lowest agreement rate, which was 84.8%.

**Table 36**  
**Girls who live far away from their school have special needs to enable them go to school**

Responses	district			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
Yes	27 93.1%	28 84.8%	35 92.1%	90 90.0%
No			2 5.3%	2 2.0%
don't think so		1 3.0%		1 1.0%
	2 6.9%	4 12.1%	1 2.6%	7 7.0%
Total	29 100.0%	33 100.0%	38 100.0%	100 100.0%

Asked to name some of the special needs girls who live far from their schools have to enable them continue to go to school, respondents gave two broad categories of needs relating to difficulties with transport and long travel away from home, inadequate parental support and counseling and motivation. On the issue of distances and transportation, there were mentions of need for bicycles (all three districts) and motorcycles (mentioned in the Savelugu-Nanton and Lawra districts).

Issues raised with respect to parental support centered on the need for support with textbooks and stationery, uniforms, and lunch arrangements. The list was fairly uniform across all three districts.

Asked what arrangements communities have put in place to help girls who live far away from the school to go to school easily, responses from the community consultations included efforts of individual parents to support girls, efforts by the PTA and SMCs, and the support from community and other organizations. The responses (detailed in Appendix IV) indicate considerable investments by various groups and individuals in the promotion of gender parity in education across all three districts.

When asked from their experiences which category of children are more likely not to complete their education after starting, girls were cited to be more likely to stop schooling before completion of primary 6. Of the 299 respondents in the in-depth individual interviews, 194 or 64.9% opted for this response, with only 34/299 or 11.4% saying that it is the boys who are more likely to drop out of school before completing primary 6.

Of the 194 respondents who believed girls are more likely to drop out of school before completing P6, the majority (85/194 or 43.8%) were from the Savelugu-Nanton District. Respondents who thought boys were more likely to drop out first were however about evenly split across all

the three districts i.e. 32.4% for Savelugu-Nanton, 32.4% for Bongo and 35.3% for Lawra district

**Table 37**  
**Belief in Sex of Children likely not to complete**

Children likely to complete school after starting	District of respondent			Total
	Savelgu-Nanton	Bongo	Lawra	
boys more likely to stop before primary six	11	11	12	34
	32.4%	32.4%	35.3%	100.0%
	10.8%	11.3%	12.0%	11.4%
girls more likely to stop before primary six	85	57	52	194
	43.8%	29.4%	26.8%	100.0%
	83.3%	58.8%	52.0%	64.9%
no defference between boys and girls	4	26	29	59
	6.8%	44.1%	49.2%	100.0%
	3.9%	26.8%	29.0%	19.7%
don't know	2	1	2	5
	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%	1.7%
		2	5	7
		28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
		2.1%	5.0%	2.3%
Total	102	97	100	299
	34.1%	32.4%	33.4%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When asked to give reasons for their responses to the questions on which gender group of children they thought were more likely to drop out of school, three broad categories of response relating to the poverty and parental care; attitudes of the girls leading to teenage pregnancies, and effects of social, economic and peer pressures, were cited. But the poverty argument is dented by the fact that “Most parents have the crude notion that girls education ends at the kitchen; hence they do not want to use their resources on the girl child education”, to use the words of a respondent from the Savelugu-Nanton District. Several respondents from the Bongo district echo the same sentiments when they argued that “Most parents do not value the education of girls”, or that there is a “negative attitude of parents towards girls’ education” or that “some parents conclude that there is no benefit in girls’ education”. Closely associated with the limited value on the education of girls is the finding that “most parents withdraw girls from school to offer assistance to their mothers”, to use the words of a respondent from the Lawra district.

Among the reasons related to the attitudes of girls which contribute to their high drop out rates at the JSS level in the Savelugu-Nanton district is the “kayayo” factor which has been associated with the fact that “girls want to go to “ Kayayo” because of “the love for flashy things [which] makes women more vulnerable to ending their school”, to borrow the words of one respondent in this district. In a similar vein, girls in the Bongo district were said to be susceptible to stopping “... school due to teenage pregnancy when parents can’t provide their needs”. In the Lawra district, a similar view was expressed when a respondent noted that: “girls like quick money”

For reasons related to the socioeconomic and cultural environment, there was a general recognition that girls are more susceptible to pressures from the environment than boys to stay out of school. According to a respondent from the Savelugu-Nanton district, “Girls are vulnerable to all social and economic issues and this put together can retard their progression in education”. Agreeing with the view that girls face enormous pressure at this stage to drop out of school, a respondent from the Bongo district points out that girls are forced to “engage in trading to prepare them for marriage” or “because of the quest for material wealth”, as a respondent from the Lawra district put it.

In all three districts, respondents were unanimous that although increased drop out for boys also occurs at the JSS level, this is often largely for family and/or personal economic gains. In general, however, boys’ stoppage of schooling is more seasonal than permanent. In the words of a respondent from the Savelugu-Nanton district “some boys also drop out to farm for money during the farming season”. A colleague from the Lawra district couldn’t agree less by noting that “because of the farming activities, the boys usually stop to go and farm” during the raining season. But when girls stop schooling due to “early marriage” as respondents in Savelugu-Nanton and the Lawra districts noted or because their fathers gave them out for marriage, as in the case of the Bongo district, this is likely to be a more permanent stoppage.

In brief, there is a general tendency in the surveyed communities to blame girls for dropping out of school for materialistic reasons. For reasons of logistical and time constraints, this study was unable to verify these assertions through interviews with girls who have dropped out of school or girls who are in school in order to determine the pull and push factors that may affect their decisions to continue in school or drop out. We suggest that a follow up study that focuses on the experiences of girls be carried out to ascertain the challenges of gender parity from their perspective.

### **III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Status of Gender Parity in Study Districts**

As noted in section II of this report, the findings on gender parity in basic school enrolment from the community level consultation data are consistent with findings from UNICEF's district level studies in the target districts conducted in the 2002/2003 school year.<sup>32</sup> According to the UNICEF report, the Lawra district has a GPI of 1.05, which is slightly higher than the regional GPI of 1.02. The index of 1.04 established in this study therefore falls within the range between the district and regional indices for the Upper West Region.

The UNICEF study, however, awarded a GPI of 0.99 for the Bongo district against the regional index of 1.0 for the Upper East Region. The index of 1.15 established in the study is therefore higher than the UNICEF indices for both Bongo district and the Upper East Region. The UNICEF study also reported a GPI of 0.78 for the Northern Region as a whole and 0.63 for the Savelugu-Nanton district in particular. Therefore, the reported index of 0.93 in this study is higher than both the regional average and the district level indices as established for the 2002/2003 school years.

Though no further statistical tests have been carried out in this study to establish the significance of the variations between the indices established in this study and those reported in the UNICEF study, we believe that factors related to inter-temporal variations in enrolment (UNICEF data covered up to the 2002/2003 school year, while this study covers up to the 2005/2006 school year), differences in sample sizes (we do not have information on the sample size for the UNICEF study), and the fact that the data for this studies' assessment of the GPI is based on community recalls rather than enrolment data from the schools, may be contributory factors.<sup>33</sup>

Be it as it may, what is important to note is that the data from the community level consultations confirm the general trend that while the Lawra and Bongo districts are closer to achieving and/or sustaining gender parity in school enrolments for children aged 6-14 years, the Savelugu-Nanton district still lags behind. The possible reasons contributing to the achievement or otherwise of gender parity are discussed below.

#### **3.2 Factors Affecting the Attainment of Gender Parity in Northern Ghana**

##### *3.2.1 Impact of Physical barriers on attainment of gender parity*

The findings from the survey suggest that although there are physical and economic barriers to education in all three districts surveyed, the most serious barriers to the promotion of gender parity in education are in the realm of psychosocial and cultural beliefs and practices. In terms of physical barriers, for instance, the study has revealed that the Savelugu-Nanton district which has the lowest rates of gender parity in education, reports shorter distances between its communities and the schools, as well as, fewer natural barriers to the commuting of children to and from school.

As table 38 below indicates, most heads of households in the Savelugu-Nanton district interviewed in this study (79.3% or 23 out of 29) indicated that the schools children from their communities attend are less than a mile away. None of the respondents in this district reported distances of more than two miles between their communities and the schools their children attend. This compares to the Lawra and Bongo districts where the majority of respondents reported that children had to travel more than two miles, with some traveling more than 5 miles one way to attend school.

**Table 38**  
**Distance of school children attend from community cross-tabulated by district**

Responses	DISTRICT			Total
	1 Savelgu- Nanton	2 Bongo	3 Lawra	
	1	2	3	6
	3.4%	6.1%	7.9%	6.0%
	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	6.0%
1 less than a mile	23	13	12	48
	79.3%	39.4%	31.6%	48.0%
	23.0%	13.0%	12.0%	48.0%
2 between 1 and 2 miles	5	8	15	28
	17.2%	24.2%	39.5%	28.0%
	5.0%	8.0%	15.0%	28.0%
3 between 2 and 3 miles		6	4	10
		18.2%	10.5%	10.0%
		6.0%	4.0%	10.0%
5 between 4 and 5 miles		2	2	4
		6.1%	5.3%	4.0%
		2.0%	2.0%	4.0%
6 more than 5 miles		2	2	4
		6.1%	5.3%	4.0%
		2.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Total	29	33	38	100
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	29.0%	33.0%	38.0%	100.0%

### 3.2.2 *The Economic Dimensions on attainment of gender parity*

Economically, poverty has been cited in all three districts as a barrier to the enrolment of girls, and particularly as a facilitating factor in the high drop out rates for girls at the higher primary and JSS levels. Interventions of NGOs such as Catholic Relief Services, World Vision International that aim to reduce the real and opportunity costs of education to families have reported increased enrollment and attendance levels in schools significantly. For instance, several community members have cited CRS' food aid incentive packages that provide income transfers to families through the school feeding and take home ration programs, as part of the reason why they send their children to school. USAID and CRS have also reported increasing enrolment levels in primary schools by nearly 400% between 1997 and 2001, as a result of the school feeding program (see table 39 below)

**Table 39**  
**Reported Impact of School Feeding Program on Primary School Enrolment Levels<sup>34</sup>**

Year	No. of Students	No. of Primary Schools	Enrolment Per School
1997	55,624	423	131.498818
2001	274,200	1,096	250.1824818
% Change	393%	159%	90%

Other NGOs such as World Vision International and the Ghana Program of ActionAid International have reported similar impacts through the provision of textbooks, uniforms, stationery, and bicycles that aim at reducing the cost of education of girls to their families.

The success stories of these NGO-led interventions notwithstanding, the direct impact of poverty on the attainment of gender parity in education seems to have been put into question by the findings of this research. Nationally, poverty is more endemic in the three northern regions than anywhere else in the country. It is noted for instance, that the “...national average of poverty is estimated as 39 percent while in the Northern Region it is 69 percent, Upper East Region 88 percent and the Upper West Region 84 percent.”<sup>35</sup> One would therefore have expected that these regions would have the lowest indices for gender parity in the country. But as noted in the introductory section of this report, despite the very high levels of poverty in these regions, and especially the Upper East and Upper West Regions, which have worst poverty levels in the country, these regions have managed to achieve gender parity indices above the national average. Similarly, the socioeconomic indicators available to this study from other sources confirm that of the three regions, the Northern Region in which the Savelugu-Nanton district is located, is relatively better of in terms of the poverty levels among its population than the Bongo and Lawra districts, both of which suffer chronic food insecurity and high levels of poverty. But the relatively poorer districts of Bongo and Lawra have also achieved higher gender parity indices than the relatively richer Savelugu-Nanton district.

The foregoing suggest that poverty as an aggravating factor for the lack of gender parity in education in the Savelugu-Nanton district, and for that matter in other parts of the country, is difficult to sustain as an argument. It would therefore seem that poverty is an aggravating factor, but not the primary cause of gender disparity in education. Hence the challenges of promoting gender parity in education have to do with dealing with socio-cultural barriers more than physical and economic factors related to infrastructure location and poverty in general. This means that focusing on poverty reduction alone, as an instrument for promoting gender parity in education, may not work. A more comprehensive approach that includes changing perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of community members towards the education of girls is key to achieving and sustaining gender parity in education.

### 3.2.3 *The Social and Psycho-cultural dimensions of gender parity in Northern Ghana*

To fathom the probable causes of or the barriers for the lag in attaining gender parity in education in the Savelugu-Nanton district, as compared to the other two, the study carried out several hypothesis testing on socio-cultural and attitudinal factors; using the data collected from the in-depth individual interviews in this study. The tests and findings are reported below:

- a) Beliefs And Perceptions As Barriers To The Promotion Of Gender Parity In Education
  - i) *Relationship between respondents' perceptions/beliefs of the sex of children likely to complete school and' preference of the sex of child to educate.*

Beliefs and perceptions often constitute important facilitators or barriers to personal and collective actions. Hence, to establish the sources of the barriers to the attainment of gender parity in education in the Savelugu-Nanton districts, the study tried to find out whether there was any relationship between respondents' belief in the likelihood of a child to complete schooling after enrolling and their own preferences of the sex of child they would send to school, if they had to make the choice between a boy child and a girl child. In other words, would a respondent's perceptions or belief that a certain category of children (e.g. girls) are likely to drop out of school influence their decision not to send children (e.g. girls) belonging to that category to school?

The null hypothesis in this case was that there is no relationship between respondents' perceptions/beliefs of the sex of children likely to complete school after starting and respondents' preference of the sex of child to educate. The alternate hypothesis is that a relationship exists between respondents' perceptions or beliefs in the sex of children likely to completely schooling and their choices of which child to send to school.

In the survey, respondents provided answers to separate questions on the two variables. One was on their perception/belief on which category of children (boys or girls) are likely to stay in school and complete their course of study once enrolled; the other was which category of children (boys or girls) they would prefer to send to school, if they had to make a choice.

A crosstabulation of the two variables provides the table of chi-square values below. It is observable from the table that in the case of the Savelugu-Nanton district, the null hypothesis can be rejected since the possibility of observing a chi-square value of 95.347 with 15 degrees of difference has a two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than the decision point of .05. In other words, for the Savelugu-Nanton district, it can be said that there is a relationship between respondents' perceptions or beliefs in the sex of children likely to complete schooling and their choices of which child to send to school. As the findings reported in other sections of this report show, this relationship tends to favor the education of boys over girls in that district. Put differently, it can be said that because respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton district tend to believe that girls are not likely to

continue in, and complete school once they enroll, they (the respondents) are not likely to send their girl child to school; they will prefer to send their boys to school.

In the case of the Bongo and Lawra districts, however, the chi square values of 19.045 and 12.183 respectively both have two-tailed significance values greater than 0.05. Hence, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between what respondents' belief about girls willingness to stay in, and complete school once enrolled and respondents' own preference on which child to educate. The fact that the two districts have gender parity rates close to or greater than 1 lends support to the findings from the hypothesis testing.

**Table 40**

**Chi-Square Test Of Relationship Between Respondents' Perception Of Children Likely To Complete School After Starting And Respondents' Indication Of Preferred Child To Educate By District**

District of		Value	df	Asymp. (2-
Savelgu-	Pearson Chi-	95.34 <sup>a</sup>	15	.000
	Likelihood	31.27	15	.008
	N of Valid	102		
Bong	Pearson Chi-	19.04 <sup>b</sup>	16	.266
	Likelihood	19.60	16	.239
	N of Valid	97		
Lawra	Pearson Chi-	13.18 <sup>c</sup>	12	.356
	Likelihood	12.24	12	.426
	N of Valid	100		

ii) *Relationship between respondents' perceptions of the likelihood of girls to drop out of school and their preference for the child they send to school*

Would community members still send their girl children to school even if they believed that girls tend to drop out of school faster than boys? To establish this, a test of the relationships between respondents' perceptions of the likelihood of girls to drop out of school and their preference for the child they send to school was also carried out. The null hypothesis in this case was that "there is no relationship between respondents' perceptions of the likelihood of girls to drop out of school and their preference for the child they send to school".

The test yielded similar results as in the previous one. Since, in the case of the Savelugu-Nanton district the possibility of observing a chi-square value as large as 95.34 with a degree of freedom of 15 for a two-tailed significance of 0.000 is less than 0.05 (see table 41) we can reject the null hypothesis that "there is no relationship between respondents' perceptions of the likelihood of girls to drop out of school and their preference for the child they send to school". In other words, the perceptions of respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton district that girls were more likely to drop out of school than boys is more likely to influence their decision not to send as many of their girl children to school as they do for boys if they had to choose between sending a boy or a girl to school.

**Table 41**  
**Test Of Relationship Between Respondents’ Perceptions Of The Likelihood Of Girls To Drop Out Of School And Their Preference For The Child They Send To School’.**

District of		Value	df	Asymp. (2-
Savelgu-	Pearson Chi-	95.34 <sup>a</sup>	15	.000
	Likelihood	31.27	15	.008
	N of Valid	102		
Bong	Pearson Chi-	19.04 <sup>b</sup>	16	.266
	Likelihood	19.60	16	.239
	N of Valid	97		
Lawra	Pearson Chi-	13.18 <sup>c</sup>	12	.356
	Likelihood	12.24	12	.426
	N of Valid	100		

<sup>a</sup>. 21 cells (97.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum

In the case of the Bongo and Lawra districts, however, we cannot reject the null hypothesis, since the possibility of observing chi-square values as large as 19.04 and 13.18 respectively have two-tailed significance values greater than 0.05. In other words, the decision of respondents in these two districts to send their children to school irrespective of gender was not influenced by any perception of which gender category of children are more likely to drop out of school. This may partially account for why girls in these two districts have greater opportunities to attend schools than their counterparts in the Savelugu-Nanton district.

*iii) Relationship between which child respondents would prefer to send to school and their perception of the willingness of girls to go to school*

Is there a relationship between respondents’ gender preferences in the education of their children and their perceptions of the willingness of girls to go to school? In other words, is the preference to send boys to school influenced by a perception that girls are less likely to want to go to school?

To test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the sex of children respondents would prefer to send to school and their perception of the willingness of girls to go to school, a cross tabulation of the two variables layered by district was carried out.

Table 42 below presents the chi-square statistics for the three districts. From the table, it is obvious that for the Savelugu-Nanton district has a chi-square value of 27.137 with a two-tailed significance of 0.028 at 15 degrees of difference. Since for this district the probability that we would observe a chi-square value at least as large as this is less than 0.05, we can reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between respondents’ preference of which child to educate and their perception of the willingness of girls to go to school. Similarly, in the Bongo district, the chi-value of 37.181 has a two-tailed significance of 0.002 at 16 degrees of difference. Since this is less than 0.05, we can also reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between respondent’s preference for which child to educate and their perceptions on the willingness of girls to go to school

Contrary to the findings for the two Savelugu-Nanton and Bongo districts, the chi-square value of 6.422 at six degrees of difference for a two-tailed significance of 0.376 for the Lawra district gives us reason not to reject the null hypothesis in this case. In other words, we can say there is probably a relationship between respondents' preferences for educating their children and their beliefs on the willingness of girls to go to school

**Table 42**  
**Chi-Square Test of Respondents' choice of child to send to school**  
**and their perception of the willingness of girls to go to school.**

District of respondent		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Savelgu-Nanton	Pearson Chi-Square	27.137 <sup>a</sup>	15	.028
	Likelihood Ratio	22.526	15	.095
	N of Valid Cases	102		
Bongo	Pearson Chi-Square	37.181 <sup>b</sup>	16	.002
	Likelihood Ratio	28.640	16	.026
	N of Valid Cases	97		
Lawra	Pearson Chi-Square	6.442 <sup>c</sup>	6	.376
	Likelihood Ratio	9.064	6	.170
	N of Valid Cases	100		

b) Distance between Knowledge, Beliefs and Practices that affect attainment of gender parity

Finally, as noted in reporting the findings on respondents' belief in the highest level of education girls should aspire to, the respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton district presented findings that somehow were inconsistent with the district's position as a category C district in terms of the attainment of gender parity in education for girls in the records of the Ministry of Education and Sports. To establish whether there was any relationship between respondents' beliefs as expressed under that question and their perceptions, attitudes or practices with respect to the education of girls, the study tested the following hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub> = There is no relationship between respondents' belief in the highest level of education girls can attain and their preference for the sex of a child they would send to school.

H<sub>A</sub> = There is a relationship between respondents' belief in the highest level of education girls can attain and their preference for the sex of a child they would send to school.

Table 43 below presents the results of the tests. The Pearson Chi-square values in the table indicate that for Savelugu-Nanton and Bongo districts, both of which registered two-tailed significance values of less than 0.05 in tests, we can reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between respondents' belief in the highest level of education

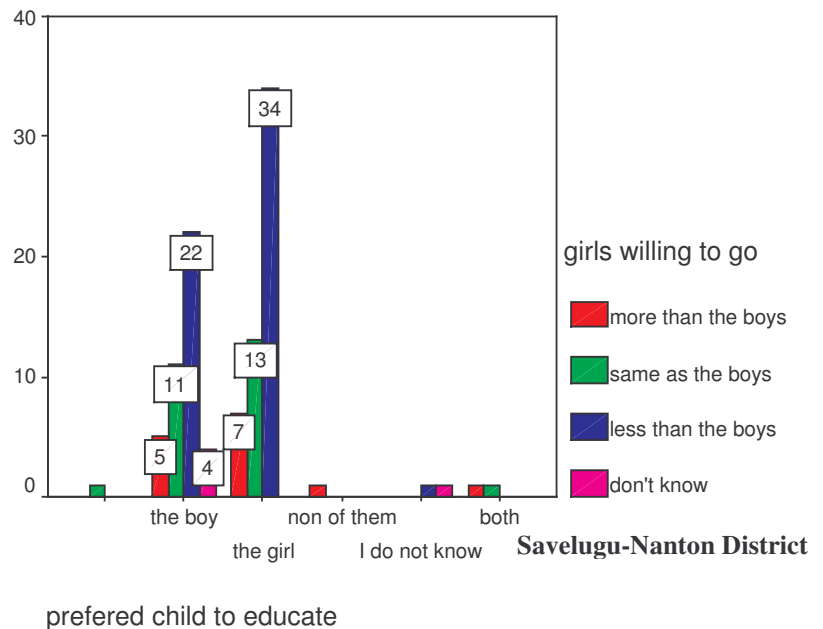
girls can attain and their preference for the sex of a child they would send to school. In the case of the Lawra district, however, given a Pearson chi-square value of 16.037 at 18 degrees of difference with a two-tailed significance of 0.590, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, for this district, there is a relationship between respondents' conviction about the highest level of education that girls can attain and their willingness to give them a chance through enrollment and support beyond the lower primary levels.

**Table 43**

**Chi-square tests of relationship between respondents' belief in the highest level of education girls can attain and their preference for the sex of a child they would send to school.**

District of		Valu	df	Asymp. (2-
Savelgu-	Pearson Chi-	69.51 <sup>a</sup>	30	.00
	Likelihood	24.25	30	.76
	N of Valid	102		
Bong	Pearson Chi-	42.20 <sup>b</sup>	28	.04
	Likelihood	38.21	28	.09
	N of Valid	97		
Lawra	Pearson Chi-	16.03 <sup>c</sup>	18	.59
	Likelihood	18.58	18	.41
	N of Valid	100		

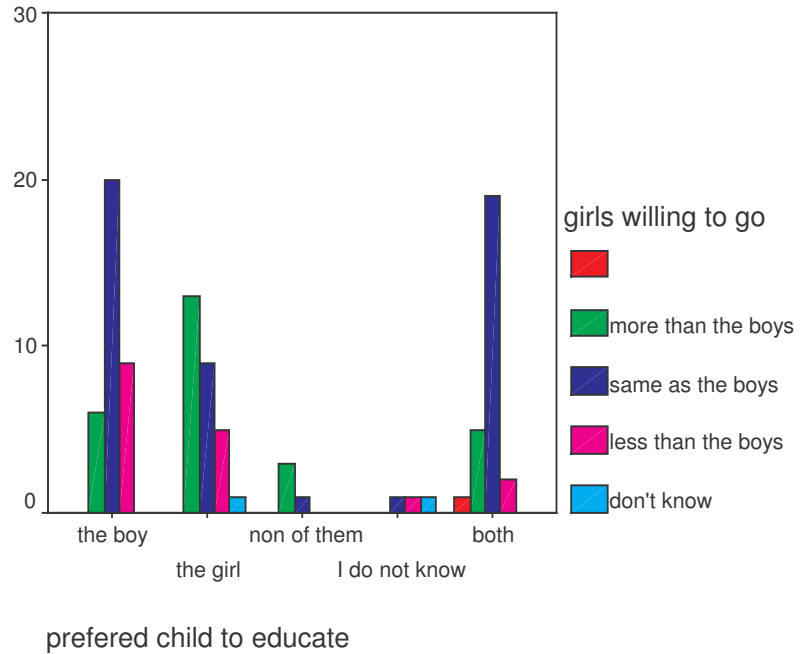
**Figure 18**  
**Perception Of Girls' Willingness To Go To School Against Respondent's Preference Of Children To Send To School - Savelugou-Nanton District**



So, in the case of the Bongo and Savelugou-Nanton districts, is it a situation where belief does not match practice? Figure 18 presents a graphical comparison for the Savelugou-Nanton district of respondents' preferences for the gender category of children they will send to school against their perception of the degree to which girls are willing to go to school. It is observable that of the 42 respondents from the district who said they would prefer to send their boy child to school over their girl child, 22 (i.e. 52.4%) of them indicated that girls are less willing to go to school than boys. At the same time, of the 54 respondents in the same district who said they would prefer to educate their girl child, 34 of them (i.e. 63.0% of this category of respondents) also indicated that girls are less willing to go to school than boys. In other words, even though this category of respondents will

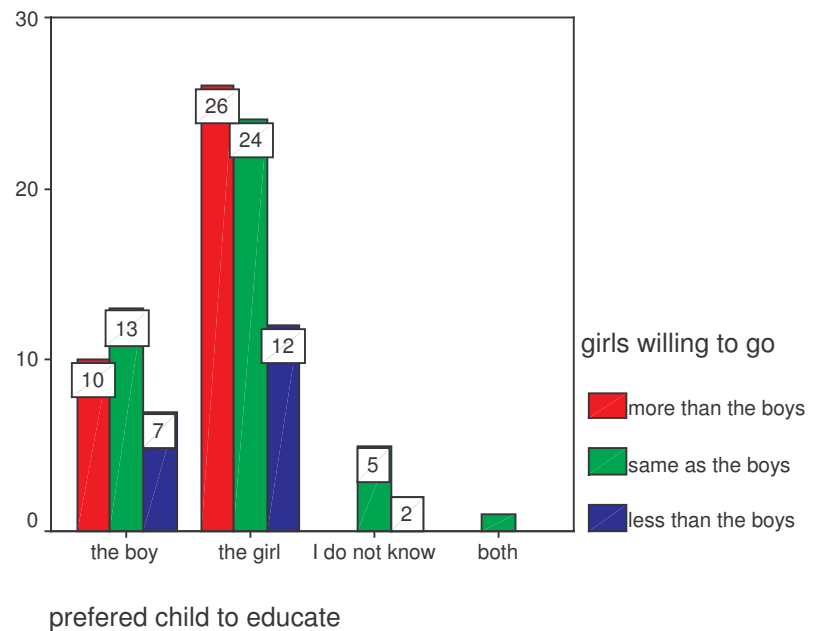
be willing to send their girl children to school, they do not believe that the girls will stay on to complete their education.

As in the case of Savelugu-Nanton, most respondents in the Bongo district who indicated that they would prefer to educate their boy children thought girls were less willing to go to school. Although many of those who opted for the education of their girl children also thought that girls were willing to go to school as much as boys, a substantial number of respondents in this group still believed girls were less willing to go to school, as can be seen from the figure 19. And yet for respondents who believed in giving equal chances to the education of both boys and girls, the majority still believed girls were less willing to go to school than boys.



In comparison, there seems to be some relationship between the responses of interviewees in the Lawra district on their perception of the willingness of girls to go to school and their willingness to send them to school. As the graph in figure 22 shows, of the 62 respondents who indicated they would prefer to send their girl child to school over the boy, 50 of them (i.e. 80.6% of this category of respondents) believed that girls were more willing than boys (26/62) or at least had the same level of willingness as boys to go school. Of the 30 respondents in the district who indicated that they would prefer to send their boy child to school to the girl, 23 of them believed that girls were willing to go to school “more than boys” (10/30) or “same as boys” (13/30). Even for those who weren’t sure which child they would prefer to send to school, the majority (5/7) still believed girls were as willing as boys to go to school.

**Figure 20**  
Perception Of Girls’ Willingness To Go To School Against Respondent’s Preference Of Children To Send To School – Lawra District



The dissonance between beliefs and practice raise several questions of concern for the client's programming options. Unless belief supports practice, commitment to a cause is suspect. Hence, the disconnect between beliefs and practices of respondents can lead to situations of self-fulfilling prophecies in which beliefs inadvertently limit the amount of economic, psychosocial and cultural support parents give to their girl children; which in turn creates conditions for girls being less willing to go to school and/or the tendency to drop out more than boys once they enrol. It also raises questions about the potential role of external factors, such as the various incentive packages that the state and the NGO community have provided in the ability of girls in these districts to go to school.

In brief, the data presented in the foregoing tests of hypotheses suggest that there might be some dissonance between the beliefs of respondents in the Savelugu-Nanton and Bongo districts on the educational abilities of girls and the preferred courses of action of respondents if they had to choose between the education of either girls or boys. In case of the Savelugu-Nanton and Bongo districts, it is perceptible that even though respondents may believe that girls are capable of attaining the highest level of education possible, they may still prefer to send their boy children to school over girls, if they have to make a choice. Even when respondents said they would prefer to send their girl child to school to their boy child, they still believed that girls are less willing to go to school than boys. Simply put, the fact that respondents in these districts believed that girls have the ability to achieve the highest educational laurels possible does not necessarily influence their decisions or choices to support the education of girls. In other words, it appears that beliefs and perceptions about girls' educational potentials do not necessarily translate into concrete actions that support the education of girls in these districts.

## **IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusions on findings**

The availability and accessibility of educational infrastructure is crucial to promoting education, especially for girls in rural and underserved areas. Fortunately, this study finds that in the three districts studied, the government and faith-based organizations provide the bulk of educational facilities in the three districts. The existence of private schools appears to be limited in the surveyed districts.

With respect to the accessibility of the educational institutions, we note that the spatial distance between the communities and the schools differ widely between districts, with pupils in the Savelugu-Nanton district having the least distance to travel, while their counterparts in the Lawra district have the longest distances to travel to school. Similarly, pupils in the Savelugu-Nanton district have fewer or no physical barriers such as rivers, forests or hills to contend with on their daily commute to and from school. Pupils in the Lawra district were reported to have higher levels of seasonal challenges (especially during the rainy season) in getting to and from school.

Despite these inter-district variations, the enrolment levels in primary schools across all districts have witnessed a steady increase, on average, during the period covered in this survey (1999/2000 through the 2005/2006 academic years). This finding is in conformity with the findings of surveys by the Ministry of Education and Sports for part of this period. It is, however, observable that the enrolment levels in all the districts generally tend to taper off between classes 4 and 6, as a result of high rates of attrition after the primary 3 level.

Similarly, the Junior Secondary Schools tend to register higher enrolments in JSS 1, as students from several contiguous schools are pooled to service one central JSS. However, the tapering phenomenon repeats itself between JSS 2 and 3, as children drop out of school. As a result, while gender parity indices for a given school or district may be good when viewed from a global perspective, parity indices between classes may be below the average for the entire stream of classes. The parity indices may also vary from one year to the next, moving above and below 1, as circumstances permit. In other words, the parity index may well be a moving target rather than a stable measure for the status of girls' enrolment and attendance in school.

The data from this survey also point out that there are fewer girls than boys in classrooms at the primary and junior secondary levels in the Savelugu-Nanton and Lawra districts. Of the two, the Savelugu-Nanton district lags considerably behind the Bongo and Lawra districts in the attraction of girls into schools.

On the whole, it is observable that once enrolled in school, girls have a higher chance of dropping out of school than boys. This is largely as a result of the higher value families place on the labour of girls as they grow older. But there are a number of socio-cultural beliefs and practices that put little or no value on the education of girls, due to the

perception that girls tend to take the returns on investments their families have made on them out of the family and into their matrimonial homes once they get married. Consequently, education a girl child is synonymous to “watering someone’s garden” at the expense of yours.

Incidentally, the community-based field surveys indicate that community members are aware of several of the rights-based issues relating to the attainment of gender parity in education. Many respondents in this study believe girls have as much right and capabilities as boys to go to school and attain the highest level of education possible. There is also a high degree of agreement across study sites on the ability of girls to compete as well as boys in educational attainments. However, there is some suggestion, especially in the Bongo and Savelugu-Nanton districts, that it is the girls who are less willing to go to school, even when they have the opportunity to do so. This perception, unfortunately, places the burden of achieving gender parity in education on the girl-child while seeking to exonerate family and community members from the causes of the non-enrolment and/or the high drop out of girls from schools.

Incidentally, the data available from this research and other studies do not support the blaming of girls as the cause of their marginalisation in schools. The fact that girls in Bongo district have been able to achieve parity with their male counterparts in school enrolment and transition despite the prevalent believe that they are less willing than mores to go to school suggests that, given the same opportunities, girls are willing and capable of rising up to the challenge of going to school same as or even more than boys would.

We further note that from the results of various tests of hypotheses based on the data collected in this survey, the fundamental causes for the lag in the attainment of gender parity in education in the Savelugu-Nanton district, for instance, may be related to socio-cultural factors rather than issues emanating from how respondents beliefs and perceptions may have influence their inability to fully support the education of girl children in their families or communities.

It is noteworthy also that personal and collective perceptions about the unwillingness of girls to go to school till the complete when they have the opportunity to do so may have created and sustained some of the physical and/or economic barriers to the increased enrolment and participation of girls in the basic schools in the three districts surveyed.

The incentive packages provided by development agencies such as the Catholic Relief Services, World Vision International, ActionAid Ghana, and District Assemblies in some cases, have been instrumental in reducing the direct and opportunity costs of educating girl children in participating communities in northern Ghana. These have contributed in many ways to encouraging families to send their girl children to school and keep them there to the higher primary school levels. However, poverty does not seem to be the major determining factor in perpetuating gender disparity in some districts. We note that all the three districts in this survey have received more or less the same or similar incentive packages for increasing educational opportunities for girls. Hence, it is less

likely that such inventions have masked the poverty dimension of gender disparity in education in one district over the other, making it possible for the Lawra and Bongo districts for instance to attain higher gender parity rates than the Savelugu-Nanton district.

We conclude that while the incidence of poverty may be an aggravating factor, it is not the primary cause of gender disparity in education in the surveyed districts. Therefore, interventions that aim to increase and sustain gender parity rates in access to good quality education in northern Ghana, and in the country as a whole, must look beyond the poverty paradigm to explore the impact of socio-cultural factors that inhibit the willingness of families to send their girl children to school. We also find that creating local capacities for the attainment of gender parity will have to place considerable emphasis on changing the perceptions and behaviours of family and community members.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

1. *Bring education closer to girls:* Spatial distance is a factor to reckon with in the access of girls to educational facilities in the Lawra and Bongo districts. Therefore, the clients' response should include advocacy for programs that bring schools closer to the girl child in these districts. This may include:
  - a. Advocacy for (re)location of schools closer to the communities through increased investments in the development of educational infrastructure – schools that are closer to the communities, access roads and bridges in inaccessible communities.
  - b. The provision of transportation facilities such as bicycles to girls in affected communities to enable them go to school. Since government policy now provides free rides on metro buses to children in urban areas to commute to school, it should not be too much to ask government to support the provision of bicycles to rural children in communities where bus services do not exist.
2. *Change perceptions to influence/sustain positive behaviours that support the education of girls:* As noted in the report, the dissonance between belief and practice can create barriers to the willingness of respondents to “go the extra mile” in encouraging girls to go to school. To influence and sustain behavioural changes that encourage girls to enroll in and continue in school till completion, we recommend that the client and her partners initiate behaviour change communication programs that:
  - a) Build on and reinforce the positive beliefs that respondents have on the rights of girls to education to the highest level.
  - b) Use its network of members to develop and disseminate information, education and communication (IE&C) packages that focus on changing perceptions and beliefs and, above all, making these influence positive

behaviours for the advancement of gender parity in education. The content of the information, communication and education instruments should place emphasis on eliminating the psycho-cultural and social barriers between respondents' beliefs and their decision-making with respect to the education of girls.

3. *Identify and use culturally appropriate behaviour change communication media:* Given the predominantly illiterate, rural and poor context of the target communities, we further recommend the use of a blend of culturally appropriate mass media techniques such as songs, docudramas, skits, proverbs, with the use of radio churches, mosques and radio as the media of dissemination of the messages.
4. *Engage communities:* Community participation and ownership of the behaviour change process is crucial for initiating and/or sustaining girl attitudes and behaviours favorable to the education of girls. Therefore, we recommend that the clients programs should emphasize on the building of community capacities and support mechanisms that enable community members to individually and collectively overcome the socioeconomic and cultural barriers that prevent them from translating their beliefs into practices. The development of *Mothers Support Clubs* with a full range of interventions that increase their know about the benefits of girls education is one way to build community support mechanisms.
5. *Network with other service providers to increase household capacity to support girl child education:* Support for families to commit to promoting gender parity in education is essential. We therefore recommend that the client consider:
  - a. Instituting recognition awards to families or households that have excelled in sending both boys and girls in their families to school beyond primary 6 level. Such recognition could be in the form of certificates or pecuniary incentives that is awarded annually at the circuit and district levels.
  - b. Networking with education sector stakeholders such as the NGOs and the District Assemblies to sustain the support they provide to towards the education of girls, where possible.
6. *Engage in thorough review of report to identify district and agency specific advocacy issues:* In addition to the suggested areas of advocacy mentioned above, we strongly recommend that NNED and her partners thoroughly review the report to identify issues of advocacy and/or direct action that are specific to their institutional areas of interest, the needs of their districts as highlighted in findings of this report, and/or the capacities of their respective institutions. For instance, while community-based groups may directly engage in awareness raising efforts aimed at changing cultural mindsets for the attainment and/or maintenance of gender parity in education, GES and NGO partners may advocate with government for the creation of enabling environments in support of the attainment and/or maintenance of gender parity in accordance with the status of their respective districts.

## Notes and References

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- <sup>3.</sup> World Bank data from the Basic Education Coalition, “Basic Education: Building the Foundation for Peoples and Nations,” Newton, Massachusetts, (2002).
- <sup>4.</sup> USAID’s Investment in Basic Education: A Description of Current Activities, 2002.
- <sup>5.</sup> Kees van der Geest, Vulnerability and Responses to Climate Variability and Change Among Rural Households in Northwest Ghana, M.A. Thesis University of Amsterdam Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences C.M. Kan Institute (Human Geography and Planning) Impact of Climate Change on Drylands with a Focus on West Africa (ICCD) Footnote 44, p17 available at <http://www.home.zonnet.nl/keesvandergeest/>
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- <sup>7.</sup> Blunch and Verner, *ibid*, p. 9
- <sup>8.</sup> Kees van der Geest, *op. cit.* p. 164.
- <sup>9.</sup> World Education Forum – Education for All 2000 Assessment
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- <sup>11.</sup> Population and Human Resource Division, West Central Africa Department, Africa Region, *Ghana: Poverty Past, Present and Future*, The World Bank Report No. 14504-GH, 1995, Executive Summary, p. iv.
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- <sup>15.</sup> Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) “Girls’ Education And Poverty Eradication: Fawe’s Response” Presented At The Third United Nations Conference On The Least Developed Countries 10-20 May 2001 Brussels, Belgium, p.9
- <sup>16.</sup> Government of Ghana, Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), The Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development In Ghana, 2006-2009, National Development Planning Commission, September 2005, pg 42
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- <sup>18.</sup> Government of Ghana, National Development Planning Commission, “Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003: Annual Progress Report available at [http://povlibrary.worldbank.org/files/Ghana\\_PRSP\\_APR.pdf](http://povlibrary.worldbank.org/files/Ghana_PRSP_APR.pdf)
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- <sup>20</sup>. Ministry Of Education And Sports Ghana, Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report 2005 July 2005, P.16
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, 2005
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, 2005
- <sup>23</sup>. NNED, invitation for expression of interest, October 2005
- <sup>24</sup>. Ibid, 2005
- <sup>25</sup>. Gender equity in access to education here refers to the ratio of girls enrolled to boys enrolled at the various levels and school years. The equity indices presented here are therefore different from the Gender Parity Indices, which will be presented later. It must also be noted that while the equity indices provided here are based on data collected from the schools, the parity indices that will be presented later will be based on data collected from the community studies.
- <sup>26</sup>. Gender Parity Index (GPI) is calculated as the ratio of Gross Enrolment of Girls to that of boys (i.e. GER/Boys GER).
- <sup>27</sup>. Gross Enrolment Rate (or ratio) is defined as the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in give school-year. See, The World Bank, [Caribbean Education Statistics Database](http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/RegionalIndicators/caribbean/definition.html) , Definitions posted on the web at <http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/RegionalIndicators/caribbean/definition.html> as of 5 January 2006
- <sup>28</sup>. Though spot verbal recall of number of children of school going age in the sampled communities presents challenges, this measure provides an approximation of the gender parity index in the participating schools.
- <sup>29</sup>. Although the study has enrolment data for 2005/2006 that would have permitted a computation of completion rates for a second cohort of primary school children, it is too early yet in the academic year (data collected in November 2005) to consider the 2005/2006 enrolment data as stable and, therefore, useable as indications of pupils who actually completed the P.6 in 2005/2006.
- <sup>30</sup> See The World Bank, [Caribbean Education Statistics Database](http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/RegionalIndicators/caribbean/definition.html) , Definitions posted at <http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/RegionalIndicators/caribbean/definition.html> as of 5 January 2006 for precedence.
- <sup>31</sup>. Parents would not have to provide a lunch for their children if they are fed in school. If they can also come home with dry rations of food and/or other incentives such as uniforms, it safes the family some money as well.
- <sup>32</sup>. Ghana: Achieving Gender Parity By 2005, UNICEF Ghana, 26 August 2004
- <sup>33</sup>. Only an excerpt of the UNICEF study was made available to this study.
- <sup>34</sup>. Culled from USAID/Ghana and Catholic Relief Services [SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM IN THE THREE POOREST REGIONS OF GHANA](http://www.equip123.net/EQ_Review/docs/fae-ghana.pdf), available at [http://www.equip123.net/EQ\\_Review/docs/fae-ghana.pdf](http://www.equip123.net/EQ_Review/docs/fae-ghana.pdf)
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