Gender, education and global poverty reduction strategies

Working paper 1

Four forms of disconnection: Negotiating gender, education and poverty reduction in schools in Kenya and South Africa[1]

Elaine Unterhalter, Amy North, Jenni Karlsson, Jane Onsongo, Herbert Makinda

This paper explores themes emerging from data collected in 2008 from case study research in schools in Kenya and South Africa which looked at connections and disjunctions between global, national and local policy and practice regarding gender, education and poverty reduction. The analysis reported here is part of a larger study, which will examine the relationship between school-level responses and those articulated in national and provincial departments of education and global and local NGOs. We are particularly interested in what conditions the inter-play between these different policy sites, the actions taken in each setting, and the interpretations developed. A key concern is what constrains and facilitates forms of practice that might help realize goals for gender equality in education.[2]

Policy enactment

Ball has written extensively about the process of education policy enactment, that is the ways in which official policy prescriptions move and become recontextualised in local settings, where an amalgam of official and pedagogic practices come into play and where local disputes and conflicts are a crucial aspect of the interpretations made and actions undertaken (Ball, 1998, 2007). Grindle (Grindle & Thomas, 1991) , in an analysis partly built on an exploration of the ways in which the state in Kenya in the 1980s responded to a crisis with regard to its ability to assert control over economic and social relationships, points out how states are engaged in struggles through policy and practices associated with its implementation to ensure external and internal security, perpetuate their access to revenues, and exert hegemony with regard to social relations. Neither Ball, nor Grindle, give specific attention to questions of policy enactment or strategic state negotiations with regard to gender, but a considerable literature exists on how difficult it is to translate general prescriptions on gender equality policy into practice (Cornwall, Harrison, & Whitehead, 2007; Pearson & Jackson, 1998; Rai, 2002, 2008, 2003) and how complex local conditions often marked by long histories of gender inequality make the implementing gender equality in schooling particularly challenging (Fennell & Arnot, 2007; Greany, 2008; Morrell, Epstein, Unterhalter, Bhana, & Moletsane, 2009).

 Frances Stewart and her colleagues (see for example, Stewart, 2008) have drawn attention to the ways in which societies, like Kenya and South Africa, characterized by marked inequalities between groups, perpetuate these inequalities over generations and how various forms of violence are

[2] The overarching research questions for the whole project are:
- What are the connections or disjunctures between global, national, regional and local policy and practice regarding gender, education and poverty reduction?
- What conditions the interplay between global policy goals in gender, education and poverty reduction and the interpretations and action undertaken in a range of different sites regarding these?
- What forms does implementation take?
- What ideas and actions strengthen and undermine different forms of practice aimed at realising these goals?

implicated in horizontal inequalities. These inequalities are cross-cut by internal divisions of gender and age. Lewis and Lockheed (Lewis & Lockheed, 2006, 2007) have argued that there is a high correlation between high levels of ethno-linguistic fragmentation and discrimination against girls from certain groups entering school, possibly because policies supporting girls access to school have not been tailored to particular groups or anti-discrimination laws have not been put in place.

In the analysis we develop below we draw on all these elaborations of the difficulties in putting gender equality policy into practice in highly unequal societies to draw out how four forms of disconnection are evident in the implementation of gender and education policies in a Kenyan and a South African school. Firstly, there is a vertical disconnection, which resonates with forms of local policy enactment identified by Ball and the struggles of the state to assert hegemony outlined by Grindle. We consider whether this form of disconnection has special features because it is concerned with gender, or whether there are similar issues related to other areas of policy contestation that have been well documented, for example concerning parental rights, cultural emblems or high stakes testing (Brighouse, 2000;Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Gereluk, 2008).

The three other forms of disconnection we identify highlight aspects of disconnection between schools and the poor communities in which they are located, and between the different interpretations of gender equality. In this we think that the deep-seated historical divisions Stewart (2008) notes based on race or ethnicity might be coming to characterize socio-economic relations in both societies. We also draw out the ways in which understandings of gender equality are particularly contested and controversial and how processes of 'rational' policy implementation have cut off opportunities to explore very different ideas about what gender equality is.

Enacting Policy

Methods of Data Collected

Work with two schools, one in each country, was undertaken in order to explore how global and national initiatives regarding gender equality in education were being interpreted, reasons for this and the form of actions which followed. In each country one co-educational primary school was identified as a research site. These schools were selected because they enrolled a high proportion of children from families classed poor, were well managed by engaged head teachers, and each had an active school governing body. The schools were thus well functioning sites in which global and national policy could be put into practice.

Roughly similar socio-economic conditions were identified in both school locations before data collection began. Both are in peri-urban areas roughly 20 kms from the centre of large cities (Durban and Nairobi), both are in townships with a reasonable community infrastructure of post office, transport links, shops, health centre, and some local employment. In both neighborhoods electricity and water are available. Both schools have a relatively long history: the South African school opened in the early 1980s and the Kenyan school in the early 1950s. Both schools have seen some changes in administrative oversight. The Kenyan school was initially founded by Christian missionaries but is now a state public school administered by the District Education Board of the Kenyan Ministry of Education. The South African school was initially administered by one of the racially segregated education departments of the apartheid era, but now falls under the province of KwaZulu-Natal which administers schools for all children in the area.

The communities in which the schools are located both comprise large numbers of people who have spent less than 20 years in the area, many migrating from rural areas. The South African township was established partly because of a large urban migration from impoverished rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal province. Levels of unemployment are high with considerable economic dependency on state grants and pensions. People in work are employed in or around Durban or are active in the informal sector. The community served by the school is almost entirely Zulu speaking. English is the second language. The Kenyan school community, although based on land once owned by Maasai, comprises two other ethnic groups, who have lived in the area for about 20 years, as well as some Maasai. Some people are engaged in small scale agricultural and dairy farming, while others are wage labourers employed in Nairobi or its environs; many work in the informal sector. At the time of field work many of the pupils at the school lived in an informal settlement, adjacent to the school. In the immediate post-election violence of January/February 2008 large numbers of internally displaced

people were coming into the area, possibly to live with relatives. Some enrolled their children in the school.

In both schools data was collected in two phases. Between March and May 2008 initial discussions with the head teachers led to agreements to conduct observations, headcounts, interviews, focus groups and a scrutiny of school registers (see Appendix 1 for letters regarding access to the school). The instruments for data collection had been developed collaboratively by the research team comprising South African, Kenyan and British researchers. These were adapted and refined in the field (Appendix 2). Extensive field notes were collected and a large number of interviews tape recorded, transcribed and translated. Preliminary findings were fed back to the school community by the researchers involved in a series of meetings between May and October 2008. A second wave of data collection in the schools between October and December 2008 filled in gaps with regard to information on registration statistics.

Some difficulties were experienced during fieldwork. In the early weeks of data collection in Kenya no tape recorder was available. The material noted was selected by research assistants and inevitably there was a loss of nuance in this process. However, later interviews in Kenya were tape recorded, allowing for more in depth reflection on what was said.   In South Africa, one of the days of intensive observations at the school in March 2008 coincided with a day of action by teachers regarding pay. Lessons were suspended and the responses of teachers on that day and on subsequent visits need to be read carefully in the context of some continuing concerns regarding employment conditions. In both schools, the translation of focus group discussions conducted in isiZulu or Kiswahili have inevitably resulted in a loss of nuance and emphasis. All these issues have been taken into account in trying to analyse the data. This paper is thus our first attempt to draw out some major trends evident in both settings and some of the differences between the two schools.

The school setting

Although both the schools where the study was conducted were co-educational government schools, the South African school had twice the number of pupils and teachers, compared to the Kenyan school. Table 1 shows the total numbers of pupils enrolled at each case study school

Table 1 Total pupils enrolled in schools Kenya and South Africa

	Total pupils enrolled	Girls	Boys
Kenya	685	329 (48%)	356 (52%)
South Africa	1262	614 (49%)	648 (51%)

Source: School registers 2008

Despite the differences in the total number of pupils, the proportion of girls and boys enrolled in the two schools was roughly similar. However, there were gender differences between classes and the pattern of enrolment and attendance by grade was different at the two schools as is discussed below.

Table 2 gives details of the staff employed at both schools and it can be seen that the proportion of women and men teachers is roughly the same.

Table 2 Total staff employed by gender

	Total teachers	Women teachers (%)	Men teachers (%)	Total support staff
Kenya	18	14 (78)	4 (22)	1
South Africa	34	25 (74)	9 (26)	4 plus 2 cooks

In both schools there were large classes with the teacher: pupil ratios (PTRs) considerably above the UNESCO recommended maximum PTR of 1:40 and the overall PTRs achieved in each country according to the 2009 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) data and what both government consider appropriate for effective teaching (see tables below). According to provisional figures given in the

MoE Education Statistical Booklet 2003-2007 (Kenyan Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 27)[3], Kenya had an overall PCR (pupil: classroom ratio) of 1:35.5 and South Africa's PTR according to the Global Monitoring Report 2009, published by UNESCO was 1:36 in 2004 (UNESCO, 2008, p. 355), so in terms of overall enrolments both schools are probably typical in their respective countries: the overall PTR is 1:38 in the Kenyan case study school and 1:37 in the South African school. However in some classes these ratios are much higher. In Kenya many classes had between 40 and 50 students to one teacher, with the two classes in grade 7 having 49 and 52 pupils to one teacher respectively. The high enrolment in these grades can be explained by class repetition. Those pupils who perform poorly in the end of year examinations are asked to repeat grade 7. At the same time those who do not qualify for enrolment in secondary schools after sitting the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education repeat grade 8. The pass mark at KCPE is 250 marks out of 500 marks. In South Africa the grade R classes each had a PTR of about 1:50, even though the official PTR for grade R in the province is 1:30.[4] At both schools there were considerably more women than men teachers (around 75%), although in both the head teacher was male. In the South African school a female support staff member worked as the clerk, while the three General Assistants were male. In addition two female cooks, who cooked the meal served daily to children attending the school, were paid for by the Nutrition scheme funded by the provincial government and not considered to be staff of the school. Male support staff were responsible for maintenance and security. In Kenya the school had only one member of support staff – a male security guard.

In both schools there are active governing bodies with some devolved responsibilities. In terms of the South Africa government's Norms and Standards for School Funding system and census data, the South African school has been allocated quintile-4 status which means that the school may charge school fees and the state does not provide much financial assistance beyond teachers' salaries.[5] In 2008 fees were set at R100 per learner.[6] However the principal said that most pupils do not pay fees as they are too poor and therefore exempted. According to the national funding allocation guidelines it is recommended that a quintile 4 school, such as this one, should receive about R388 per learner in 2008, over and above what is paid by the provincial department in salaries to teachers.[7] However it is the discretion of the provinces how they allocate their revenue across the various social services on the basis of needs and priorities. This allocation does not include grade R learners who receive a separate subsidy. The allocation, together with the fees charged to parents, is supposed to cover expenses such as water, electricity, furniture and equipment, bank charges, events, salaries of temporary staff. A school feeding scheme has been in operation since circa 1998. This is funded by the KwaZulu Natal provincial government and provides for a cooked midday meal for all the children on virtually every school day. However, during some of the field visits the school feeding scheme was not operating because of delays associated with the beginning of term.

The governing body is responsible for maintaining and developing the school and has oversight of how the school resources are to be allocated. The Treasurer is a businessman, who lives in the area. While the school premises are basic, they are relatively well-serviced and maintained. Nevertheless, there is no central library to support the curriculum and the computer room is no longer in use following theft of some equipment. However the governing body had used its funds to provide for include book shelves in each classroom, trophy display cabinets in the main foyer, and the construction of a security guard's office at the main entrance. The governing body comprises 5 parents, two educator staff and one non-education staff, with a total of 6 men and 2 women, plus the (male) principal who serves as ex-officio as the manager of the school and must implement the governing body decisions.

The Kenyan school committee comprises eight parents representing Class 1 to 8, three members representing the Church sponsor; two representing the District Education Board (DEB), the Chief (an

---

[3] Note that this data is pre-publication

[4] Personal communication with Mr N Brijlall, Manager of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education ECD Directorate on 18 September 2008 in Durban

[5] All South African schools have been banded into five groups or quintiles according to estimates of the income of the parents whose children attend the school. Only in schools in the two lowest quintiles (quintiles 1 and 2) are no fees charged,(Pampallis, Karlsson, Chikoko, Bhengu, & Chaka, 2007, pp. 17-20).

[6] At the time of gathering data there were approximately R12 to the £.

[7] Pampallis, Karlsson, Chikoko, Bhengu and Chaka, 2007, pp.17-20

appointed local government official) and the Head teacher (Secretary to the committee). The membership comprises eleven men and two women. Two places are open, reserved for women to represent two classes, but they are still to take their positions.

The school charges no fees, as free primary education was introduced in 2003. However, children attending the school were required to pay a levy because the electricity had been cut off. In addition levies were charged for classroom construction, desks, examination fees, extra tuition in the early morning, on Saturday, and during school holidays. The charging of selective levies by many schools in Kenya, despite the introduction of FPE has been noted in a number of studies (Right to Education, 2008; Alubisia, 2005). A school feeding programme had been in operation in the school from the year 2000, but had been stopped in 2004. A number of different reasons for this were suggested by officials and members of the school committee. It may have been because the school was deemed to no longer meet the criterion of need, or it may have been because there had been some mismanagement of resources. The school did not receive any money from the Constituency Development Fund of the serving Member of Parliament, but it had constructed an additional classroom for Class 2 with money from the Local Authority Transfer Fund, and a room to hold a library with funds from the Area Member of parliament. An NGO dealing with Environmental Education had supplied the school with seedlings to support tree planting in the school.

In both schools large numbers of children were enrolled in each class. There was a reception or pre-unit year in both schools, but the children enrolled for this was only a small proportion of those taking up places in Class 1. Tables 3- 12 give details of the numbers enrolled and attending by gender and class.

Table 3 South Africa and Kenya: students enrolled by gender, 2008

	South Africa total enrolled	South Africa girls enrolled (%)	South Africa boys enrolled (%)	Kenya total enrolled	Kenya girls enrolled (%)	Kenya boys enrolled (%)
Reception (SA) & Pre-Unit (Kenya)	114	50 (43.9)	64 (56.1)	42	20 (47.6)	22 (52.4)
Class 1	193	95 (49.2)	98 (50.8)	73	32 (43.8)	41 (56.2)
2	127	57 (44.9)	70 (58.1)	90	46 (51.1)	44 (48.9)
3	174	91 (52.3)	83 (47.7)	73	31 (42.5)	42 (57.5)
4	114	57 (50)	57 (50)	92	45 (48.9)	47 (51.1)
5	162	74 (45.7)	88 (54.3)	96	47 (49)	49 (51)
6	82	40 (48.8)	42 (51.2)	86	45 (52.3)	41 (47.7)
7	156	84 (53.8)	72 (46.2)	101	48 (47.5)	53 (52.5)
8 (Kenya only)				74	35 (47.3)	39 (52.7)

If we look only at year groups and enrolments, that is children on the register, it appears that girls are a minority in all classes in Kenya except 2 (class 2 and class 6), while in South Africa girls are a minority in 4 out of 8 year groups, comprise an equal proportion with boys in 2 year groups, and are a majority in 2 year groups. However, if we look in more detail at particular classes in each school and attendance as well as enrolment, the picture becomes more of a mosaic.

Table 4 South Africa: Students enrolled by gender and gender parity index[8]

	South Africa total enrolled	South Africa girls enrolled	South Africa boys enrolled	South Africa ratio girls: boys enrolled (GPI)
Reception (SA)	114	50	64	0.78
Class 1	193	95	98	0.97
Class 2	127	57	70	0.81
Class 3	174	91	83	1.10
Class 4	114	57	57	1
Class 5	162	74	88	0.84
Class 6	82	40	42	0.95
Class 7	156	84	72	1.17

Table 4 shows that looking solely at enrolments, that is the numbers of children with names on the register, there are more boys than girls in all years, except, for class 4, when there are equal numbers of boys and girls enrolled, and class 3 and 7 when girls outnumber boys. When the numbers are disaggregated further, the gender parity picture is even more varied

Table 5 South Africa: Pupil: teacher ratio by class, gender and GPI

	Boys enrolled	Girls enrolled	Total size of class working with one teacher	GPI
R a	30	27	57	0.90
R b	34	23	57	0.68
1 a	18	22	40	1.22
1 b	17	18	35	1.06
1 c	21	20	41	0.95
1 d	21	17	38	0.81
1 e	21	18	38	0.86
2 a	22	18	40	0.82
2 c	20	22	42	1.10
2 d	28	17	45	0.61
3 a	21	22	43	1.05
3 b	23	23	46	1.00
3 c	20	25	45	1.25
3 d	19	21	40	1.11
4 a	20	18	38	0.90
4 c	18	20	38	1.11
4 d	19	19	38	1.00
5 a	29	27	54	0.93
5 b	30	22	52	0.73
5 [c]	27	25	52	0.93
6 a	20	23	43	1.15
6 c	22	17	39	0.77
7 [a]	26	26	52	1.00
7 b	21	31	52	1.48
7 c	25	27	52	0.90

Table 5 above shows that in at least one class for every year group there are more girls than boys in the class, and therefore that 12 out of the 34 teachers in the school have day-to-day experience of more girls on the register than boys, although for all the other teachers the number of boys on the register exceed girls, and in some classes (rb, 2d, 5b) by a large proportion. These patterns may be due to what has been noted in data from the Birth to Twenty cohort study of children born in 1990 in

---

[8] The gender parity index is the ratio of female to male values. Gender parity of 1 indicates equal numbers of boys and girls. Gender parity below 1 indicates fewer girls than boys, and gender parity above 1 more boys than girls.

the greater Johannesburg area, where it appears boys repeat more than girls (Fleisch and Schindler, 2009). As the Department does not allow children to repeat a phase more than once it appears that more boys are being enrolled in Class 2 and Class 5, each of which represents the end of a phase.

When we examine the February census data on attendance in table 6 it can be seen that, with the exception of boys in class 2d and class 3d more than 95% attendance was being recorded for boys and girls in each class. The GPI for attendance is very similar to the GPI for enrolment except a few classes where it is more equal than that for enrolment (Rb, 1e, 2d, 3d, 6 c). This is because boys are absent or where the numbers of girls attending are more than the numbers of boys. Thus, in terms of numbers attending girls have a very good presence in the school.

Table 6 South Africa: attendance on February census day by gender, % of enrolment), and GPI, all classes

	Boys attending Census day	Boys attending as % boys enrolled	Girls attending census day	Girls attending As % girls enrolled)	GPI attendance	GPI enrolment
Ra	29	96.67	27	100.00	0.93	0.90
R b	33	97.06	23	100.00	0.70	0.68
1 a	18	100.00	22	100.00	1.22	1.22
1 b	17	100.00	18	100.00	1.06	1.06
1 c	21	100.00	20	100.00	0.95	0.95
1 d	21	100.00	16	94.12	0.76	0.81
1 e	21	100.00	20	111.11	0.95	0.86
2 a	22	100.00	17	94.44	0.77	0.82
2 c	20	100.00	21	95.45	1.05	1.10
2 d	25	89.29	16	94.12	0.64	0.61
3 a	21	100.00	22	100.00	1.05	1.05
3 b	23	100.00	25	108.70	1.09	1.00
3 c	20	100.00	25	100.00	1.25	1.25
3 d	17	89.47	21	100.00	1.24	1.11
4 a	19	95.00	18	100.00	0.95	0.90
4 c	18	100.00	20	100.00	1.11	1.11
4 d	19	100.00	19	100.00	1.00	1.00
5 a	29	100.00	26	96.30	0.90	0.93
5 b	30	100.00	22	100.00	0.73	0.73
5[c]	28	103.70	26	104.00	0.93	0.93
6 a	19	95.00	23	100.00	1.21	1.15
6 c	22	100.00	19	111.76	0.86	0.77
7[a]	26	100.00	26	100.00	1.00	1.00
7 b	20	95.24	32	103.23	1.60	1.48
7 c	25	100.00	27	100.00	1.08	0.90

The Table shows that the general pattern for the year groups of high attendance as a proportion of enrolment (over 95%) for boys and girls is evident in all classes for girls and virtually all classes except Class 2D and 3D for boys. The GPI for attendance, however, has a more erratic pattern. With 6 classes having a roughly equal attendance ratio for girls and boys (1c, 1e,2c,4a, 4d, 7a), but all the others having either many more girls than boys attending - 8 classes (1a, 1b, 3b, 3c,4c, 6a, 7b, 7c) or more boys than girls - 9 classes (Ra, Rb, 1d, 2a, 2d, 51, 5b, 5c, 6c)

The pattern in Kenya is a little different:

Table 7: Kenya: students enrolled by gender and GPI

	Kenya total enrolled	Kenya girls enrolled	Kenya boys enrolled	Kenya ratio girls: boys enrolled (GPI)
Pre Unit	42	20	22	0.91
Class 1	73	32	41	0.78
Class 2	90	46	44	1.05
Class 3	73	31	42	0.74
Class 4	92	45	47	0.96
Class 5	96	47	49	0.96
Class 6	86	45	41	1.10
Class 7	101	48	53	0.91
Class 8	74	35	39	0.90

 The enrolment pattern for year groups shows that there is a marked gender gap in favour of boys, except for class 2 and class 6 where girls outnumber boys. However when this is looked at in terms of pupil, teacher ratios it is evident that girls outnumber boys in one class in every year group except year 3 and year 7 (1x, 2x, 4y, 5y, 6x, 8x), but that in the other classes in that year group there is a marked gender gap in favour of boys. Thus, a notable number of teachers and pupils do not have a day-to-day experience of girls in a minority inside each class, a much larger number children and teachers in 10 out of 16 classes do.

Table 8 Kenya: Pupil: teacher ratio by class and gender

	Boys enrolled	Girls enrolled	Total size of class working with one teacher	GPI
Class 1X	17	19	36	1.12
Class 1Y	24	13	37	0.54
2 X	19	28	47	1.47
2 Y	25	18	43	0.72
3 X	22	14	36	0.64
3 Y	20	17	37	0.85
4 X	28	17	45	0.61
4 Y	19	28	47	1.47
5 X	26	22	48	0.85
5 Y	23	25	48	1.09
6 X	18	23	41	1.28
6 Y	23	22	45	0.96
7 X	28	24	52	0.86
7 Y	25	24	49	0.96
8 X	15	21	36	1.4
8 Y	24	14	38	0.58

With regard to attendance, Table 9 shows that on the census day the gender gap in favour of boys evident on the enrolment registers was largely maintained. In class 3, where there were more girls than boys enrolled, there was gender parity in attendance, and in class 6 girls attending continued to outnumber boys attending. When attendance as a percentage of enrolment is scrutinised it is evident that for five year groups (class 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8) girls had more than 95% attendance, while boys achieved this level in 7 year groups.

Table 9 Kenya: students attending on March census day, as % children enrolled by gender and GPI

	Kenya total attending	Kenya girls attending	Girls attending as % girls enrolled	Kenya boys attending	Boys attending as % boys enrolled	GPI girls: boys attending
Pre Unit	39	18	90.00	21	95.45	0.86
Class 1	68	30	93.75	38	92.68	0.79
Class 2	88	44	95.65	44	100.00	1
Class 3	65	28	90.32	37	88.10	0.76
Class 4	89	44	97.78	46	97.87	0.96
Class 5	90	43	91.49	47	95.92	0.91
Class 6	84	45	100.00	39	95.12	1.15
Class 7	100	48	100.00	51	96.23	0.94
Class 8	74	35	100.00	39	100.00	0.90

In both schools the attendance rate for girls and boys is reasonably high and remains good in nearly all classes. The gender parity ratio for attendance is largely similar to that for enrolment. The girls who are enrolled in the higher classes have reasonably good rates of attendance when considered on 3 census days (Table 10), suggesting these girls are not noticeably staying away from school because of menstruation or gender based bullying, as has been noted in other schools in both countries (Gordon, Zafar, & Karlsson, 2002; Human Sciences Research Council, 2001; Migwi, 2007). Indeed it appears that in South Africa the rate of girls' attendance in the higher classes improves as the year progresses and the high level of attendance is maintained when we look at 3 census days (Table 10). In Kenya the pattern is more varied. Although a comparison of the March census day indicates a high attendance by girls the figures looking at 3 different census days in Table 12 show very varied levels of girls' attendance as a proportion of enrolment and on some census days for class 7 and class 8 girls' attendance is considerably lower than that noted in the lower forms. These patterns point to the need for very detailed scrutiny of class registers in all forms in both countries.

Table 10 Attendance as a proportion of enrolment for girls in class 6 and above on 3 census days (cd) in Kenya and South Africa

	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8
South Africa			
Girls attendance as % enrolment cd1	100	100	
Girls attendance as % enrolment cd 2	102*	100	
Girls attendance as % enrolment d 3	100	97	
Kenya	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8
Girls attendance as % enrolment cd 1	91	94	90
Girls attendance as % enrolment cd 2	110	91	79
Girls attendance as % enrolment cd 3	93	82	92

* Two girls left the school in this year group in the second term, which accounts for this result

Schools and the MDG Targets
Two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have targets concerned with gender and education. The target for MDG3 requires gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary level enrolment. The target for MDG2 requires that all children will have completed a cycle of primary school by 2015.

In order to estimate whether the case study schools provide signals of being on track to achieve MDG2 table 11 looks at the proportion of girls and boys attending in the last class of the primary cycle (class 7 in South Africa and class 8 in Kenya) as a proportion of those attending in class 1.

Table 12 compares retention with regard to gender and enrolments. These calculations have been made as a proxy for trying to develop an indicator for the retention of boys and girls in the two schools. It is extremely difficult to do detailed calculations on retention over a number of years (Fleisch & Shindler, 2009). Registers do not contain enough information to ascertain that the correct child is being tracked, and in some areas there is considerable mobility of children in and out of school. We appreciate this approach to looking at retention is very preliminary and we anticipate doing a proper cohort study in the second round of data collection when we return to the schools in 2010.

Table 11 Retention over the primary phase: Girls and boys attending on census day in final year of as a proportion of those attending in class 1

	Number girls attending census day class 7/8	Number girls attending census day class 1	Girls attending census day class 7/8 as % girls attending census day class 1	Number boys attending census day class 7/8	Number boys attending census day class 1	Boys attending census day class 7/8 as % boys attending census day class 1	Total attending census day class 7 as % total attending census day class 1
South Africa	85	86	98	71	63	113	105
Kenya	35	30	117	39	38	97	109

Table 12 Retention over the primary phase: Girls and boys enrolled in the final year as a proportion of those enrolled in class 1

	Number girls enrolled class 7/8	Number girls enrolled class 1	Girls enrolled class 7/8 as % girls enrolled class 1	Number boys enrolled class 7/8	Number boys enrolled class 1	Boys enrolled class 7/8 as % boys enrolled class 1	Total enrolled class 7/8 as % total enrolled class 1
South Africa	84	95	88	72	98	74	81
Kenya	35	32	109	39	41	95	101

It can be seen that in both countries the proportion of girls and boys attending in the highest class is very high compared to those attending lower down the school. In South Africa there are more boys attending in Class 7, than in Class 1, and in Kenya there are more girls attending in class 8, than class 1. For both girls and boys this pattern of attendance suggests good progress towards the MDG goal.

However the proportions with regard to enrolment are not quite as high as Table 13 shows. In South Africa there is attrition in the number of enrolments in the highest grade of primary school for girls and boys, but the level of decrease is higher for boys. In Kenya the number of girls enrolled in class 8 exceeds that enrolled in class 1 and the number of boys enrolled is close to 100% of those enrolled lower down the school. The high numbers of girls enrolled in grade 8 in Kenya compared to the numbers enrolled in the first grade is, according to the deputy head teacher, due to more girls than boys being enrolled in the school as new comers to the school in the upper classes. It should also be noted that at the time of the data collection pupils affected by the post election clashes in other schools sought admission in the case study school and were enrolled in upper classes. Other children left the school at this time. Since the signing of the National Accord some of these pupils went back to their original schools.

The figures on enrolment and attendance thus show the South African and Kenyan schools at some variance from their country's status with regard to MDG2. Reporting on progress to reach the MDGs the UNESCO GMR 2009 notes Kenya has a high GER – 106% but a much lower NER – 75%

(UNESCO, 2008, p. 307), with more than 1 million school age children not in school. Meanwhile provisional data from the Ministry of Education put Kenya's GER for 2007 at 107.6 and its NER at 91.60 (Kenyan Ministry of Education, 2009, pp. 32-33). South Africa had a higher NER of 88% (UNESCO, 2008, p. 307), and slightly over half a million children out of school.

This suggests both countries have a way to go to achieve UPE, but much of the lack of provision is in areas that are socially distant or excluded and where school infrastructure and responsive governance structures still needs to be established (Department of Education, 2008; Ministerial Committee on Rural Education, 2005; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005) The schools in the study are by no means the most disadvantaged in either country. The figures from the case study schools indicate the numbers of enrolments for boys and girls dropping in the higher classes of primary school in South Africa, while in Kenya enrolments increase, but this may be because of the time at which the data was collected.

The gender parity target for MDG 3 given nationally for each country also appears too optimistic when read in conjunction with detailed school level data. The education target for MDG 3 is gender parity at all levels of education by 2015. The Kenyan Ministry of Education's provisional figures put the GPI for primary school enrolment in 2007 at 0.94 (Kenyan Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 34). The South African data is similar with girls comprising 49% of primary enrolments and the NER GPI at 1.00 (UNESCO, 2008, p. 306). But the data from these schools show considerable variation in the GPI between classes, even if the aggregated figure is close to the national statistic.

In the last year of the primary cycle, which gives a pointer towards the GPI in secondary school, there are considerably more girls than boys in the South African school, and slightly fewer girls than boys in the Kenyan school. Thus, on the basis of the data from these case study schools, there will be difficulties in meeting the gender parity target for MDG3, although reasons for this will vary according to local conditions. It can be seen that in South Africa there may be more girls than boys in secondary school, if the gender parity pattern in class 7 is considered, while in Kenya the effects of population movements associated with the violence at the beginning of 2008 may also have effects on gender parity patterns.

However, the MDGs apart, GPI is only an indicator of the presence of girls and boys at different levels of education. It is not a full enough indicator of other dimensions of gender equality in education, because it gives little indication of how girls and boys are treated in schools and the ways in which they are able to make use of their education (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005). Universal primary education is also a narrowing down of the broader Education for All (EFA) goals which contain a stronger vision of gender issues, noting the significance, not just of schooling, but also of adult education and early years provision, which have particular significance for the ways in which women can benefit from expanded education provision (Unterhalter, 2007). As we discuss below, although these schools suggest good progress towards the gender and education aspects of the MDG goals in these poor peri-urban communities, the administrative data, and the ways in which this is interpreted by the school communities, tend to mask more thorough-going discussions of the nature of gender equality and forms of obligation with regard to taking this forward. To explore this further we now turn to our key research concerns and analyse data regarding how global aspirations for gender equality, associated with the MDGs, EFA, and other global vision documents regarding education and poverty eradication have been interpreted by the school communities.

Four forms of disconnection: Global initiatives and local interpretations

The data from interviews and focus group discussions reveal complex processes of disconnection from global and national initiatives regarding gender equality and education and attention to education for the poorest. Four forms of disconnection were evident and each was associated with particular practices which established distance and disengagement. We consider these disconnections work both vertically, with a gulf between different tiers of policy actors, and horizontally, so that different groups involved in policy enactment on gender equality and poverty erect barriers between themselves, making it very difficult to build forms of solidarity for collective action.

The first form of disconnection works vertically and identifies the ways in which the global process of policy making is disconnected from the practices of teachers, school committees and managers. They

know about fragments of the policy, but these are initiatives that they perceive are taking place a long way away – literally and figuratively – from their everyday concerns. The second form of disconnection works horizontally and is associated with the ways in which the links between schools and communities are formal, but allow very little space for a dynamic interchange of views on controversial subjects like gender or poverty. The lack of dialogue leads to an attenuation of what is identified to be the problem. The third form of disconnection is associated with the ways in which teachers themselves, regardless of their own class origin, use distancing methods generally associated with blame to place a distance between themselves and poor parents and their daughters. The fourth form of disconnection relates to the ways in which gender inequalities are normalised, associated with culture or everyday practice. Thus there is a disconnection from a politics of change or transformation that would seek to challenge and overturn these relationships.

The ideas most frequently evident across both data sets about gender equality in education are associated with teacher views of management, appropriate parenting, and concerns with the behaviour of teenagers. In the next section we map some of the ways in which distancing and disconnection are articulated as a form of policy enactments associated specifically with ideas about gender. In the conclusion we consider what this tells us about the ways in which gender equality in education and global obligation are understood and put into practice and situate the findings from Kenya and South Africa in relation to other literature on this theme.

Global and national policy: heard a long way off

Few of the participants in the study had heard of the EFA goals and MDGs and amongst those who did know about them there was little sense that these were objectives that connected with their own practice or everyday experiences, although they were accorded some official recognition as 'relevant'. There was a sense in which the content of these global statements, the process regarding their development and implementation at global, national and local levels was taking place far away from the policy and practice within the schools. The Kenyan head teacher explained that he had heard about the goals in a workshop. When asked about implementation in the school he responded:

> *You know you cannot have a frame on how you should implement. You just implement as they come. Even some happens without even notice.*

His sense was that he was doing implementation while the goals were a paper exercise. There was a clear sense of distance between the global and the day to day realities of the school – expressed by the South African head teacher

> *I do hear about it [the Millennium Development Goals or the Education for All goals] but I've never given my time to get an explanation about it because it's never touched... I've never get the real explanation about it… Actually, if you get something from far, not next to you, it's very hard.*

A somewhat similar attitude coloured responses to national gender equality and education policy. The Kenyan head teacher only learned about national gender policy through the researchers from the University involved in the project. He had not previously been aware of it nor had he been consulted about its formulation. The South African head teacher's response when asked about the national gender policy was similar. He explained:

> *I have never read about it. But I know that there is national policy talking about gender. No, no. I know about it. I heard about it and then I know. But I've never learned about it.*

What emerges is that the national gender and education policy has been developed in the national Departments of Education but not yet communicated down to school level in any way that either connects with local practice or that publicises the sense of a global movement for gender equality in education. While we see aspects of Ball's (1997; 2007) recontextualisation of a general policy prescription in terms of the pressures of day-to-day practice and implementation, we also see a disconnection of the state's intentions regarding its wider gender and education policy. Using Grindle and Thomas' (1991) analysis we can conclude that this policy was not a significant site of either revenue or important hegemonic relations for either state, hence the lack of attention given to its promotion. It may well be that the largely rhetorical appropriation of much gender policy noted by

Cornwall, Whitehead and Harrison (2007) accounts for the lack of ownership or enactment of the gender and education policy.

The head teachers' horizons are framed by acquaintance with the formal policy texts, but little sense of how this wide remit might connect with everyday practice. Their unfamiliarity with the gender policy stood in contrast to their detailed knowledge and concern with other areas of education policy, for example the ways in which inspectors came into school and observed teachers, the circulars they received concerning fees and grants, and the actions they were able to take with regard to establishing a school feeding scheme. These are all areas in which they are very publicly accountable with much newspaper comment at the time of conducting the studies on the performance of schools. Thus the sense of distance from the gender policy was not because of lack of interest in or engagement with the actions of the national and provincial education departments, but rather a more complex combination of a narrow interpretation of gender equality as merely requiring equal numbers and considerable doubt about those aspects of gender policy that troubled local interpretations of appropriate behaviour by women and men.

Insofar as they saw themselves dealing with questions of gender equality the head teachers' focus was almost exclusively on balancing numbers. In the Kenyan school the head teacher's understanding of gender equality at the school focussed on a concern with enrolling equal numbers of boys and girls in classes as well as some concern with female representation on the school committee, having both girls and boys participating as prefects or games captains. In the latter instance however boys and girls do not necessarily participate as equals: the head teacher explained that,

> there is balance. If the head boy is a boy then the assistant is a girl. If the game captain is a boy, then we have a girl assisting, so we balance

Thus the everyday sense of gender equality at the school was largely to do with parity in numbers and balance in who took which roles. As we detail below there was considerable distance placed between this minimal notion of gender parity and wider concern with redress or special affirmation.

Similarly in South Africa, the head teacher interpreted gender – and the gender policy - as being about quotas – or numbers of men and women in different positions:

> you know, actually, we do hear about the gender policy. It's like a quota in sport. Let's take for instance in cricket or rugby when people are saying 'no let's do this, let's do this' even though there is a policy which says there must be this and this. [For example] people who are participating in this sport must be in this number. Same applies to this in our school.

He notes that they have more female staff then male staff, and when asked about the governing body gives the relative proportions of men to women.

The Kenyan head teacher saw reducing the gap in enrolment between boys and girls in the school as something he is proud of in his school. He also talked about both boys and girls being "able to do the same tasks" – suggesting some concern with what it is boys and girls *do* in school, not just whether or not they are in school. His hopes for changes for the next ten years expressed a vision of gender equality that encompassed ensuring equal opportunities for men and women at different levels, going beyond simply having access to the labour market:

> I hope to see a situation where both men and women are meaningfully participating in the society in terms equal employment opportunities

The South African head teacher had no explicit vision related to gender equality and his aspirations for the school were entirely focused on improving material conditions at the school.

Concern with gender parity in enrolment and employment is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for achieving a wider understanding of gender equality and it was here that both head teachers and their staff expressed views that questioned the promotion of women's employment or protection for pregnant schoolgirls; indicating how difficult they found it to accept ideas about gender equality that

were not primarily about equal numbers and how much they saw this ushering in a harmful lack of attention on boys.

The Kenyan head teacher felt gender equality was difficult to implement because it did not touch deep seated views about the kind of behaviour considered appropriate for men and women

> *[a gender policy that has been hard to put into practice is] that one of being given equal rights, especially as per nature the concept of a man being the head by nature might have affected women in big positions and when they are given positions and they do better than the men. We need to change and know and accept that people are equal and define their professional rights*

In a similar vein a number of teachers at the Kenyan school saw directives on readmitting girls who had become pregnant as flying in the face of deeply held community convictions. Talking in the focus group they felt that policy on readmitting girls was unimplementable as pregnant girls would not return to school fearing ridicule. The policy they felt had not been formulated based on consultation with those responsible for implementation.

Girls were seen to be advancing at the expense of boys. The Kenyan headteacher felt that "the girl child is being stressed upon by gender activists such that now only girls have good jobs, good vehicles against what work the boys do." The SGB focus group in Kenya felt that promoting girls disrupted the traditions and cultural values of the society:

> *a society where the girl child was stressed was spoiling the cultural set up of the area and that even in the church the women had taken all the seats for officials….*
> *We are always talking about the girl child and not the boy. The impact it is creating on the nation is great… Even if you go to the roads banks and all the good jobs you get girls. Now where are our boys? We have left the boys with drugs. What society is this of girls only? Look at the church leadership, it is for women and even for the youth, men are not here. Now the boy child is forgotten… This is a great challenge to us… we need to look at this otherwise the equality we are fighting for will lead to inequality.*

In South Africa the head teacher and some parents voiced concerns that initiatives to promote women had gone too far and that women were becoming too dominant. The head teacher said

> *So now you find that even now the Department says more females must take the senior positions. Only to find already female teachers are there. They are taking senior positions. If you look at my school here, we've got a deputy principal who is a female teacher. There is a female and a male in the deputy [positions]. In HODs [Heads of Departments] you find we've got three female HODs and one male HOD which means we are up to a standard according to my feeling because things are not balancing. You find that females are dominating the males.*

His view was that talking about gender generally implied talking about girls and he felt that this was misguided because boys were neglected in this form of analysis.

> *I see that you deal with the gender too much and then we are on the side of the girls as I am understanding that you are on the side of the girls because of the gender. Because the way you are expressing yourself, everything lies with the girls.*

The concern that implementing the MDG commitment to gender would harm boys because it focussed excessively on girls was also expressed by one community member in the South African focus group. In response to a scenario where the group was asked to comment on a fictitious woman benefactor who had left money to a school to promote girls' education, this male community member said

> *there's something that is wrong with this donation since this person who passed away donated this R25000 to this school. And then specified that these people at that school should cater for the girls only. We feel that that is unfair and that is promoting- I mean, what we don't like - the segregation [of boys and girls education]. And we felt that in order to use this, in*

> *order to avoid chaos in the school once these boys hear that the funds that were mainly donated for the education of the girls, I mean there will be chaos!*

He was the only man in the group and the women did not respond with the same vehemence, but he went on to explicitly query the focus of the MDG on empowering women:

> *But now what I don't agree of or I'm not clear is that gender equality and empowering women - why do we need to specify, to empower women? Because we need to empower everybody with the gender equality. Okay, I agree, but this empowering of a single gender no, that's where I don't agree with.*

Some of the women participating in focus groups in both schools took a different view. In South Africa a couple of female participants spoke out more strongly on the need to empower women "because women have been put aside for a long time" – appearing to challenge the view of the male participant quoted above, although they did not elaborate further on this.

Women in Kenya stressed the way in which they are still burdened with the majority of child care work and asserted that they were "equal with men". However they associated gendered imbalances regarding work and obligation with women being more keen on "touchy issues in society like mentoring children".

It is evident that a number of forms of distancing and disconnection are at work in relation to global and national policy commitments on gender equality in education. Firstly, school communities have not participated in any discussions of these issues and they are seen to come from distant centres of authority with little bearing on day-to-day concerns regarding treatment of teachers or participation of learners. Furthermore there is no sense of them being able to hold policy makers (at national or global levels) to account or expect them to address issues being faced in the school and community. Policy initiatives are pushed down from above, and they are expected to respond to these, but the flow is very much one way, compounded by a sense of powerless dependency as is reflected in comments made by the South African head teacher at the report-back meeting to the school community:

> *if we [were to] put some points under our policy containing the poverty, I think to us it is very difficult because that thing eh, must be done by the department perhaps of social welfare and its people*

Secondly, in so far as gender equality is understood, the major emphasis is on numbers and equal numbers of women and men. Thirdly, there is considerable hostility from male teachers and parents that the promotion of women in work or through education has gone too far. Equality is seen as a zero sum game, so that if women get jobs or education it is considered to be at the expense of boys and men. Lastly, gender equality is seen as dangerously disrupting a natural order of inequality, sanctioned by culture and tradition where men must necessarily be in charge. It is possible that all these tropes of distance are intertwined. The failure to consult and include school communities in the development of gender equality in education policies has allowed an unexamined set of assumptions and assertions to flourish – for example that in schools more women are Heads of Department than men. In South Africa Moorosi's research shows this is not the case nationally or provincially (Moorosi, 2007), and similar findings are confirmed in Kenya (Nyokangi, 2007). Further, the absence of a culture of discussion means that views of equality, as entailing one group flourishes at the other's expense, go unexamined.

The forms of distancing expressed by the male principals and primarily male members of the focus groups set up binaries, for example global/national/local; policy/practice; dictated [foreign] injunction/natural culture and tradition; the advancement of women/the exclusion of men. Areas for further exploration are the extent to which women teachers and members of the SGBs share these views and whether more informed discussion of the background and strategies around the MDGs, including the ways in which they have been incorporated into the policy of NEPAD, might dissolve some of these sharp antipathies and allow a more detailed understanding of locally situated concerns with equality between women and men to emerge.

Schools and communities: formal ties

The sharp binaries that characterise the ways in which the gender policy was spoken about may also be seen as a feature of the ways that the teachers distanced themselves from the communities in which they worked. It was evident during the periods in which data was gathered that the teachers were very concerned with issues of pay and inspection and that their relationship to the community in which they worked was largely formal shaped by relations of employment, rather than shared political concerns. In the South African school it was noticeable how many teachers drove to work and did not live locally. Data was collected from the teachers on the distance they travelled and this showed that only about one third of the teachers reside within 3 kms of the school, with most teachers travelling 10 to 25 kms in privately-owned vehicles to reach school. In Kenya, only the head teacher and one male teacher had motor cars. Other teachers lived more locally or walked to the main road to take *matatus*[9] to their homes.

In both research sites the research teams worked hard to find local organizations concerned with social and cultural development, particularly women's organizations that might have views on gender issues in the schools. They sought out members of local community organizations – church groups, community leaders, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as police, health and social workers. What emerged from the field-notes was that all these organizations were very fragmented with regard to feeling they could contribute to discussions about the school or gender issues. Where connections did exist, they often had a financial or material basis linked either to the provision of material support to the schools, or to the use of school facilities by community groups.

In the Kenyan site some women in the community are organised into merry-go-round groups, concerned with saving and micro enterprise projects. A women's guild, provides funds to "help the needy".

> *Mostly we work with the church as a group, women's guild. We always assist the handicapped, the adults, the children, orphans and others. Every year we always set aside one week to run here and there in order to get the funds to help the needy.*

It provides assistance to particularly poor pupils and takes on wider care duties in the community. Their involvement in education appears directly linked to their caring role:

> *If we recognize the child as a needy one in their school, we assist. We had a case of two children who were orphans. We used to take food to them, clean them and also cloth them. We also took care of their education.* (women's guild interview)

Their involvement in education is here described in ways that mirror the important provision of material assistance (food, clothes, hygiene) but does not suggest a readiness to talk about more substantive concerns with the content or form of that education.

The Kenyan headmaster mentioned that some women's groups use the school facilities for meetings. However there seemed to be no dialogue or interaction between the school and these groups beyond this. The women's groups appeared primarily concerned with material poverty, mutual support and basic needs. Further probing is needed on how they see this connecting with gender or rights, themes which did not come up in the initial discussions.

In the South African research site similar priorities were evident. The primary purpose of the women's groups the research team encountered was income generation, or visiting the sick and helping those affected by AIDS. Women from an older women's group had strong views about the behaviour of younger women and girls – of which they speak disapprovingly (discussed more fully below): "Rights" or issues around equality appeared far from the centre of their frame. One women's group, although using community workshop facilities, appeared disconnected from other groups in the area, saying they know nothing about their work or activities. Regarding connections to the school one explained that

---

[9] Communal taxis

> *at first we were told that we would visit schools… After that [the Department of Social Development] changed their minds and said we should sit down and work.*

Her comment suggests some disappointment at not being able to engage with the school (though it seems unlikely that any such engagement would focus on gender equality issues, rather than possibly selling products through the school).

The extent of the disconnect that exists between women's organisations and the school is illustrated by the fact that women working in the school as cooks had no knowledge of any women's groups in the area.

Other organisations that appear to be more closely linked with the schools in both sites are local NGOs. In the Kenyan school focus group with the SGB, participants identified a number of NGOs that had assisted the school, providing fencing, trees, desks and books. Churches had given money. In almost all cases the interaction with the school was entirely based on material assistance. With the exception of one conservation NGO, that had facilitated seminars in the school on environmental issues, in addition to planting trees, there was no evidence of other sorts of collaboration. Gender issues did not feature.

In the South African site there is some evidence of more active collaboration. Field notes explain that an NGO assisted the school in developing its School Development Plan, and other NGOs work with the school on issues relating to TB and AIDS. Other organisations actively engaged with the school include Childline, who visited to give out information about issues relating to abuse, while researchers were present and a preacher who gives devotional talks on Wednesdays. The head teacher speaks positively about collaboration with different groups:

> *I think it's very important because they can give us more information and their help too.*

However, he does not identify gender as a possible area for such collaboration, concentrating instead on health.

In Kenya community leaders are involved in discipline cases – when children hide in the slums or "when you find the children have stolen". Similarly in South Africa, local authorities such as the police are called in when there are incidents such *as* accusations of rape. In both cases involvement seems to be limited to support *when there are problems* rather than a more ongoing process of interaction and discussion.

Community members have a formal direct involvement in the schools in both sites as parents of children in the school. In Kenya some parents participate through the SGB, which enables them to take a more active role in the school. For other parents however opportunities appear more limited. While there were reports of parents – usually mothers – coming into school when there were problems with discipline, there did not seem to be efforts to engage the parents on a more ongoing basis. The headteacher felt that the role of parents had been reduced since the introduction of free primary education (suggesting that their involvement was primary considered in financial terms rather than in terms of discussion or engagement with school processes or activities), and explained that they are supposed to provide physical facilities.

In the South African there are some suggestions of more active ways in which the school engages community members. The principals spoke of 'community projects' which "enable the community to learn about tiling, plumbing, adult education". However these seem to be more about the school providing a service to rather than engaging in dialogue with the community. When speaking about the parents the principal acknowledges "we don't involve them that much", other than those who participate in the SGB.

In general there seems to be a sharp disconnection between the school, principal and teachers (and some SGB participants) on the one hand, and the parents who send their children to the school on the other. This disconnect may in part be attributed to the fact that the teachers themselves either don't live in the community (South Africa) or send their own children to different schools. In South Africa of the 14 teachers who reported having school-going children, only one had enrolled their children at a school near the case study school. In Kenya the majority of the teachers who were

interviewed (eight out of eleven) had children in primary schools. When they were asked to indicate where their children went to school, virtually all of them said their children went to school in other schools and mostly private schools in the local area. On a later field visit one of the few male teachers was driving his own children home from the school, and appeared the only teacher to have children attending the school.

The poverty in the two sites and the way it affects the lives of children is visible in both schools, described by researchers as manifested in tattered uniforms, hungry children, and absenteeism. However it also appears to be a means by which teachers and those in "authority" (including members of the school governing board) further distance themselves from the community, the children in their school and their parents. This distancing was evident in many of the comments made by the two principals, and teachers and SGB members interviewed in Kenya. The South African head teacher, when describing the poverty experienced by pupils in the school says:

> Even if you visit their places you can be shocked. Ay, this place… is this place for a human being or is this place just for an animal!

When talking about the area he also describes the crime, and problems with drugs.

In the Kenyan school the head teacher describes parents coming from the slum area saying,

> these are very lower class people who have received little education.

This lack of participatory dialogue between members of the school community and the local neighbourhood might be a contributory process to the establishment of the sharp binaries mapped above. Policy is heard from a long way off, and this is counterposed with the 'real' work of practice which is peopled not by logical diagrams of equality but relationships of shock and distance from the nature of the poverty. The formal relations of employment or enrolment where gender parity might be required are counterposed with the 'natural' relationships of care 'for the needy' in which relationships are not between equals. Thus the different meanings of gender appear to undercut each other in a context of poverty. While the sense of gender as a noun (girls and boys) identified in many policy directives (Unterhalter, 2007) is something that is possibly achievable in contexts of poverty when there is a limited focus on improving numbers enrolled in school (Rose & Dyer, 2006, 2008) , the more detailed analysis of chronic poverty that looks at its multidimensionality, including duration and dynamics, particularly intergenerational transfer, social discrimination and inability to have rights recognised (CPRC, 2008) raises wider problems regarding how gender is understood. The disconnections evident between many teachers and the families living in the communities in which they work make it difficult to build collective strategies to explore this.

There appear to be no spaces where the distancing and the binaries this generates can be discussed. It is unlikely the sweeping statements articulated by the members of the SGBs had been developed in dialogue with members of the local community as the links appear primarily formal. Teachers' views of the community and the dynamic of gender relations are largely from the outside looking in. Further areas for research concern what members of the community, who are not invited via the school structures, think about gender issues and education and what strategies might help build more participatory forums for discussing gender, poverty and education in the two sites.

Poor parents and the problem of girls

One consequence of the social distance between the teachers and the communities in which they live has been the emergence of a pronounced emphasis of blame, particularly of girls and of poor parents. The similarities in these attitudes in the two research sites were striking.

Poverty is clearly a very real – and overwhelming – problem in both schools. It is mentioned in numerous occasions in the interviews and comes up in the researchers' field notes. In the South African school poverty is very clearly seen as a more urgent problem than gender that affects pupils in the school. Tellingly, when the head teacher was asked by the interviewer which of the gender issues in the school he sees as most pressing he replies "Its poverty. Its poverty". Elsewhere he talks about

poverty being "a disaster" and as "entrenched", relating it to low income levels and unemployment in the area.

Similarly the Kenyan head teacher identifies poverty as the major problem that he would like to address in the school and suggesting it to be a more urgent priority than thinking through issues of gender. In both schools hunger is cited (by the headteachers and by the teachers interviewed in Kenya) as a serious problem affecting learners in the school.

The South African head teacher, when asked to identify the most pressing poverty problem in the school explains:

> *I can say it's the hunger, the hunger. It's the hunger which dominates them, which makes them to come to school.*

He talks about the feeding scheme in the school, explaining how it helps the learners most in need:

> *I am feeling… pity when the school closes, because I know that some of the kids they are eating once a day from this school. But if the school is closed that is a problem, ay, it's a problem.*

The Kenyan headmaster was angry at how the government had placed responsibility on the parents for their children's nutrition, instead of supporting the school feeding scheme:

> *I think when we re-sit in the meeting they just talk of asking the government to support with food and as I told you the other time, this zone was removed from the feeding program due to some problems here and there. And when we go to the office to ask for the same, their excuse is it's the responsibility of the parents to feed their children. So we hit the rock.*

However elsewhere many of his own comments similarly place the responsibility/blame on the parents for their children's care and nutrition (as discussed below)

In South Africa the head teacher was particularly proud of the feeding scheme, concerned at the arrangements made to store the food securely, and eager to expand it. But the bureaucracy for this was daunting. The school was required to fill in forms requesting grants for poor families:

> *See now they send to us the papers which need us to identify how many learners we think are struggling or how many learners are using these grants, which shows that the people usually get grants the people are poverty stricken.*

Food theft is identified as a problem within the school in Kenya (where there is no feeding scheme currently active); something that is borne out by the researchers who witnessed a case involving a girl whose hunger had driven her to take food from her friends. The senior teacher explained:

> *Especially in our school there are cases of food theft. There are children who appear hungry early in the morning. Even uniforms are torn in most cases, the children are supposed to wear shoes to prevent them from broken bottles and also from contaminating them when they use the toilets. You see the nature of the shoes they put on is a sign of poverty. The pupils come from very poor homes.*

Such concerns reflect a tendency to frame poverty in terms of (lack of) basic needs: food, clothes and shelter. There are far fewer references to other dimensions of poverty such as discrimination, exploitation or exclusion from decision-making and little knowledge of the inter-generational transfer of these (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2008; Green, 2008). However, some indications of these were mentioned. For some of the Kenyan participants poverty is associated with child labour and children having to work:

> *[The most critical aspect of poverty in our school is that] in the evening you find them doing odd jobs, even during weekends you find them doing work in the hotels.*

In the South African context HIV and child-headed households or children being raised by single parents or grandparents was identified as another aspect of poverty by the headmaster, who sees the feeding scheme as particularly important for children who are weak or orphaned.

Poverty was also linked to unemployment in both countries. However, while in South Africa unemployment seemed to simply be linked to low income, and thus inability to cover basic needs, in the Kenyan focus group discussion with the School Governing Board links are made between unemployment and disempowerment:

> *Another problem is the poverty that affects both the pupils and the teachers. There is a lack of employment; they get small contracts like digging and constructing. So when there is drought and no farming, the parents are rendered jobless and if there can be employment then the parents can be empowered.*

In both schools such dimensions of poverty are seen as secondary to the pressing issue of hunger. There was no discussion of other forms of poverty associated with access to services, participation and access to political and economic power. Poverty is viewed as a characteristic of individuals or communities (the poor) rather than associated with processes of exclusion or structural inequalities. This limited notion of poverty as deficit seems to be associated with processes where teachers and members of the SGB distance themselves from poor parents.

Running strongly through the interview and focus group data from both sites is tendency to talk negatively about the parents of the pupils. This is evident in descriptions of parents' poverty or lack of education in a way that is stigmatising or emphasising the distance between the parents and the speaker or directly or indirectly blaming parents for any (real or perceived) deficiencies in their children's education or behaviour ("I think the problem here is the parents."). Where gender issues are discussed these too are often blamed on parental influences or attitudes, or on different expectations for sons and daughters.

In the interviews with the headmaster, teachers and SGB members and the women's guild, parents not taking their children's education seriously, or not supporting the school is a common complaint in Kenya. In some cases this is linked to the conditions in which they are described as living in:

> *The SGB has long had parents who do not support the school in its running in that they do not positively guide their children <u>given that the school is in a slum</u>*

Parents not contributing to school facilities is one bone of contention – and is blamed on their failure to understand that free education doesn't really mean free (though interestingly the headteacher also recognises that the school development fee paid by parents in the past was badly used by the SGB treasurer). While there is some recognition that poverty often makes it difficult (and numerous mentions of the poverty pervasive in the area), this is combined with a discourse around parents "not caring" or choosing not to prioritise education:

> *The parents keep shifting and at times they don't have money. <u>They don't want to pay</u>*

Discipline problems are also blamed on the parents and poor upbringing associated with children "not being raised in Christian families" or being raised by unmarried parents:

> *If I'm unmarried, there are those issues that my child will learn from me therefore many children lack discipline… in most cases it is parents who are on the wrong*

Ideas around notions of "morality" or respectability reoccur – for example single parents and those who work in bars are associated with irresponsible behaviour. Single mothers are often singled out for particular criticism

> *some of the mothers are single and they engage themselves in prostitution or commercial sex.*

In the interview with the deputy head teacher in Kenya, these "irresponsible parents" are contrasted with the few that are poor but disciplined – or honourable:

> *There are some children who come from poor families but the parents and children are disciplined. The little these parents have they try to use it to provide for their children.*

While not as frequent as in the Kenyan data, similar comments "blaming the parents" are apparent in the interviews in the South African school. For example, the head teacher links children dropping out of school on poverty, but also on parents not caring:

> *No one motivates such children to attend school so they go and start working then the parents become dependent on them for food and income.*

Such lack of attendance is, in turn blamed for children becoming "Tsotsis [gangsters] and hooligans".

The "blaming the parents" discourse is clearly very closely bound-up with the process of "distancing" associated with identification of parents as poor (as well as illiterate, "non-Christian", un-married etc). Yet there seems to be very little questioning of why poverty is so entrenched in the areas, nor linking of poverty with broader processes of discrimination and exploitation, reflecting the narrow framing of poverty as a deficit and a characteristic of individuals or communities: the poor. Nor do there appear to be efforts to engage parents in issues around their children's education – beyond providing material assistance in some instances.

On the whole, when talking about poverty, interviewees did not make explicit links between poverty and gender issues. There was no special dimension of poverty associated with women, men or gender relations. The South African focus group questioned why it was being prompted to think about this:

> *I think that in that school that the girls are not the only ones who are poor, who come from a poor background. Maybe there are boys who are also poor.*

However when asked about how poverty affects learners on the school some participants in both schools drew on essentialised gendered identities to explain how men and women or girls and boys live poverty differently. In Kenya, participants explained that boys go to the slums to work and poverty is associated with boys using drugs. In focus group discussions meanwhile it was explained that "there is poverty that at times makes the girls do things that do not favour their schooling" and that there was a case of a girl who had taken on a sugar daddy who had promised to buy her bananas (drawing on notions of poverty being antithetical to "morality'). It is evident that commenting on poverty was generally undertaken as a form of distancing and that the evocation of essentialised identities of 'loose' girls or boys who were poor was part of the demarcation of these boundaries.

The obligations of care which fall on girls (and women) are in some cases viewed as being a result of poverty. When asked about the absenteeism of girls the Kenyan headteacher explained:

> *Well, difficult question. But to try it… one, maybe the parents have gone to look for the jobs and maybe the girls are left with the young kids to take care of, or maybe there were some problems at home… the mother goes somewhere, the girl is left with the brothers are sisters.*

However he is keen to point out that boys may also take on care roles: though in this case in the figure of family head and provider:

> *Now the others are maybe the boys… the bigger boy is left with the responsibility of the home… they can go to the kibarua [casual work] to feed the family*

In the context of ongoing poverty however, it appears that it is more often women or girls that pick up – and are expected to pick up – the pieces. Girls take on care duties at home. In South Africa the head teacher notes that where there are single parents these tend to be women:

> *[gender issues and poverty issues] are related to me – according to my way of thinking because you find that a female, a person who's a female person, is the one who is looking after the family.*

He also describes how mothers come to the school asking for food and emphasizes the greater involvement of mothers in the school. For example, he notes:

> *And then the people that are attending the meetings mostly, during the parents meeting, are the female ones. They are dominating actually, so they are the ones who are making the school to survive.*

Researchers in Kenya noted that that it was mostly mothers who accompanied children into the school when they had discipline problems suggesting that involvement in education may be seen as an aspect of care work carried out by women. These connections of mothers to the school point to particular area where there appears potential to build closer links between the poor community and the school and to use this as a basis to examine ideas about gender inequalities and how to change these.

But currently the dynamic to work with parents who are coming into school and showing interest in their children's education appears stalled. In both school settings the blaming poor parents sits quite comfortably with viewing existing initiatives to ameliorate poverty primarily as charity. In Kenya the revival of a school feeding scheme is cited by many as important to address the problem of pupil hunger, but this important aim does go further in requirements of the community or the government. In South Africa the importance of the school feeding scheme is emphasized by the headmaster who explains how, in addition to the provincial scheme, they have someone to provide them with bread twice a week and also talks about giving food to "certain families" – helping the parents as well as the children. They have also got taxi drivers to help with donating school uniforms.

In the Kenyan focus group discussion which asked participants to discuss a scenario concerning how they would spend Ksh 250,000 left to the school by a (fictitious) local businesswoman for girls' education, participants suggested using funds to pay for stationary and sanitary towels, as well as travel and fees for secondary school. The emphasis is clearly on the material, reflected in the South African head teacher's belief that what they really need is money:

> *The top one is finance. If the school can have the finance, most of the things can be solved.*

Initially he suggests that this money could be spent on computers, to replace those that were stolen from the school, seeing this as a way from the community to develop skills that would help them gain employment. However when reminded that he had identified hunger as the most pressing problem he agrees, and reiterates the need to buy food for community members.

In both schools the assumption seems to be that, by and large the problems faced by pupils in the school can be tackled by concrete material interventions to address poverty (as basic needs). The importance of gender equality becomes set against poverty alleviation – that is you either address poverty through providing food or clothes OR do 'gender'. The connections between the two are not seen as evident. Indeed it is suggested that the problem of gender inequality is not deep in the culture and social relations of the society, but is rather the inadequacy of poor parents to understand about equality. The means to address poverty through provision of food or cash, which may be seen as instances of interventions, leave further initiatives on gender equality unspecified

Gender inequality in everyday school life

The texture of everyday interactions in both schools seemed cross cut by gender inequalities. There is a "gender blindness" in many of the schools' activities which provides for some surface elements of parity but this does not go deeper to address relations of inequality. In the South African school gender was not considered an issue that needed to be actively taken into account in events such as the annual award ceremony. Indeed a number of the trophies on display in the principal's office had portrayals of women in traditional guises serving men. Issues such as choosing class monitors or the head-boy were viewed as simply happening in a gender balanced way without the need for any type of active intervention. The head teacher explained:

> *And then after all the classes have their monitors, they come together and elect the head-boy and the head-girl. It goes like that without noticing even the gender. It's happening.*

Similar responses were observed in the Kenyan school. When asked about gender with relation to text book distribution or seating the principal and one of the teachers explained that they don't think about gender, other than to make noise control easier. Moreover, a reluctance to actively intervene in order to affect the way in which different aspects of school life were gendered was evident in a number of responses, as was a clear concern about not favouring girls over boys:

> *Like now, selecting a prefect… if I dictate them to elect a boy, I'll be gender biased. Or if I tell them to select a girl as their leader, I'll also be biased (Kenya head teacher).*

In contrast the (female) deputy head at the same school stressed that they do actively try to ensure that the prefects body is mixed, they encourage teachers to be gender sensitive and to make boys and girls "feel that they are equals", and that they encourage girls to work hard "and tell them that they can perform well". This suggests some recognition of the need to go beyond thinking about just numbers to consider what girls are able to do and perform within school. However, (it does not appear to be reflected in many of the teachers' – and head teacher's comments and) she doesn't go on to consider the structural and power inequalities that affect girls and boys performance and experiences in school: the onus is mostly on the girls to try hard and so do well (interview with deputy head teacher).

Although it was not explicitly addressed within the interviews there are also some suggestions of teachers expecting girls and boys to perform differently beyond school. (For example, the Kenyan researchers observed an incident whereby a girl, accompanied by her mother, was being scolded for attaining low marks. The teacher said "*Where will these marks take you?… Do you want to drive a nice car or wear nice clothes?*".

The neutrality with regard to gender issues goes together with little challenge to the sexual division of labour in school. Observation notes at the Kenyan school revealed how male and female teachers performed gender confirming particular discourses and forms of relationship:

> *there was a duty roster for making tea [in the staff room] and it was the female teachers allocated to that duty. This shows that women carry out the domestic duties in the school.*

A similar observation is made in South Africa where a list of girls' names only is posted on a notice board in the administration block for those assigned during that school term to clean the entrance foyer passages. In terms of pupils' duties within the schools, it is clear that the girls and boys take on different roles. The researchers at the Kenyan school noted that the girls were responsible for mopping classroom floors whilst the boys fetch water. The head teacher said that this was because

> *the girls prefer to clean and they say "Mwalimu, let us clean so that we can go home early because when the boys clean they are not as fast as we are"*

Similarly in the South African school, it was clear that girls and boys were expected to carry out different duties. When quizzed about this the head teacher seemed dismissive, implying that this was not deliberate, but rather something that happens "naturally", suggesting that it is their "culture".

> *You know in our culture (I don't know if it's a black culture or what) where you find in olden days where you find a man go to the veld to look after the fold and then the female person used to collect the wood in order to make a fire at home. Same applies to here. Even we don't apply that method but it happens naturally.*

> *there is a difference between a boy and a girl when it comes to cleaning. It's like cooking. I can cook. I cook. But only to find a lady can cook better than me because I'm not trained to do that. But naturally a female person can do better things than me when it comes to cooking and cleaning.*

Despite the gendered ways in which girls and boys behave, and are expected to behave, within the schools how gender is performed within the school does not appear to be questioned or challenged

and gendered expectations (regarding roles and responsibilities, care and obligation etc) are reproduced within the school space. When asked about girls' roles and responsibilities within the home that may hinder their performance in school the Kenyan headmaster explained "culturally we tend to see and train a girl at an early stage in those (home) responsibilities more than the boys. They even come without noticing." This echoes the South African principal's recourse to issues of culture when explaining how the boys and girls carried out different activities within the school.

This ascription of very traditional gender roles with regard to cooking, cleaning and academic achievement, took a particular form of blame with regard to girls at puberty. Teachers and community members in the focus groups talked about girls who become 'immoral' as adolescence progresses. The Kenyan head teacher explained how teachers talk to learners about how "not to involve in activities that indulge in immoral behaviour". It is girls who start dropping behind the boys after standard six as then "their adolescence starts heating the girls". While clearly his concern is with protecting the girls in the school and encouraging/enabling them to continue their education, the implication is that it is the girls' behaviour that is problematic. There is no parallel discussion of how boys are affected by adolescence or how the interactions and relationships between boys and girls within the school are affected.

Discussions around pregnancy also tend to place the blame on the girl: focus group notes from the Kenyan school suggest that some of the female teachers felt that the hypothetical pregnant girl should not be re-admitted to school. (Interestingly the participants appeared to see the two focus group incidents – getting pregnant and homophobic bullying as comparable: "if the girl will not be sent home then even those molesting the boy should be left"). In South Africa one focus group participant also felt that the pregnant girl should be suspended:

> so she gives love to the child. So this child won't behave like [her mother] did, in the future when she becomes a teenager.

Not only is she clearly placing blame on the girl's behaviour, but the implication is also that mothers are responsible for their daughters' sexual behaviour. The view that having pregnant girls in school is undesirable is reiterated by the headmaster who expresses clear relief that a girl who did get pregnant was taken out of school by her parents.

In both schools, forms of gendered behaviour associated with sexuality and "morality" – including pregnancies that may result - are generally very much associated with girls (and their mothers) only. However in the South African school there is mention of efforts to address issues around sexuality and adolescence in the classroom. The head teacher explains how female teachers speak to the year seven girls "and advise them and give them the lecture on how can you behave if you are a girl at this age". Interestingly he mentions that "even to the boys, you find that the male teachers do talk to the boys, the younger boys or the older boys about behaving themselves" – though it is not clear if these are also relating to issues to do with adolescence/sexuality.

However these ideas were not clearly associated with ideas about gender equality. In South Africa the head teacher had not opposed two girls being taken out of school to attend a mass virginity test:

> The school gave permission to the learners but stated that it was <u>their own private matter </u>and the school could not interfere with what they were doing in that regard.

Gender violence and rape was discussed in the South African school, but not mentioned in the Kenyan school: Issues around rape of students – including by their relatives ("not real rape") is identified by the headmaster as a gender issue to deal with. Such cases are handed over to the police – procedures taken "secretly" and parents advised to take the child to the doctor. But there was no indication of active discussion in the school of rape and gender violence. He recognizes that their sensitivity to gender issues is most apparent when there is a problem such as rape of gender violence, rather than a proactive approach to engaging with gender within the school. It is viewed as an issue affecting girls only – hence support is also seen as being available for girls. The principal also acknowledges a case of a teacher being accused (by a parent) of molesting a pupil at the school. However he appears to express doubt about whether this actually occurred "it's not happening in our school because we got the younger ones, because of the age. His response was to call a meeting

with the male teachers only though this was later taken up for discussion in a staff meeting, ostensibly to quash rumour-mongering and ensure the continued "good name" and reputation of the school.

Concerns with issues relating to boys and men arose in a number of the interviews. However these related to different issues than the "problems" of adolescence and sexuality associated with girls. Some of these focused on particular problems faced by groups of boys. Interviewees in Kenya for example expressed concern at boys living on the streets, and the work being done to help them and on issues of indiscipline and drug use and child labour, while in South Africa the head teacher explained that discipline is a problem with boys in his school. Sometimes the problems of boys were identified with an incapacity to admit to their problems:

> *you find that most of the time these female people, they are the ones who come to school and publicise or tell me most of their stories because you find that they tend to have the problems of their kids. They don't eat, they suffer of some sort of the diseases, you see. So most of the male peoples they don't come to school and show their things or publicise or tell us most of their things. They keep all inside.*

But sometimes the problems of boys were linked with the recent attention given to girls:

> *initially the parents used to prefer boys to girls. You see those are just perceptions though you see formerly even when a mother used to go to the clinic and she is asked what baby she could prefer to get, she could say a boy. Currently everybody is singing about the girls that they are most affected. Preference is given to girl child than boys*

He clearly sees this as a problem:

> *The boys feel that they are neglected and because of this tend to withdraw. This is a big problem because at the end of the day they will start rebelling and when they will start rebelling that again may be a big problem because reversing is a problem. That is why we need the gender balancing and giving them equal rights and treatment*

His concern appears to be with ensuring that boys are not left out at the expense of girls, largely within the context of balancing numbers, though he also talks about equal treatment and interestingly employs a rights discourse.

Conclusion

Four types of disconnection between the global and national aspirations for gender equality in education have been identified, each working with particular mechanisms of distancing and disconnection. Firstly the notion of global policy as far away, developed without local participation, generates a series of binary divisions which feed into particular stereotypes of the nature of what gender equality policy is. Thus different levels of policy enactment are each seen to require their own particular relational dynamic. The 'far-away' global or national policy prescriptions assume a form of necessity for gender equality, possibly promoting women teachers or advancing the needs of girls, which are often out-of-step with what are seen as the very concrete everyday relationships of learning and teaching. Secondly the absence of participatory fora with equal numbers of women and men active in developing and interpreting gender or any education policy locally means that only formal relationships of governance or material provision exist between the school and the local community. This lack of space for reflection and discussion means that the school connection with the community or associations for collective decision-making is not informed by a participatory process of discussion and reflection on gender equality and appropriate actions. Thirdly teachers and the SGB, although alert to the consequences of poverty, see only particular elements, namely lack of food as salient and are not close to or well informed about the struggles of poor parents to educate their children and some of the gender dynamics or forms of multi-dimensional insecurity entailed. Lastly there is a disconnection between the broader transformatory gender equality aspirations articulated in the national gender equality policy, documents to which both governments are signatories like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration, and the very unreflective ways in which the school mirrors everyday practices associated with the sexual division of labour and a culture of blame of girls' 'immorality'. The data thus throws up some of the very narrow ways in which gender is interpreted, primarily as a noun, with little evidence of gender being understood as an adjective linked to gender power relations which

intersect with race, class and poverty. Moreover the dynamic of different practices of 'doing gender' or 'doing poverty' are overlooked in favour of more essentialised and fixed identities.

The data collected in the two schools suggests that global and national initiatives for gender equality in education and poverty reduction are being interpreted using forms of vertical and horizontal disjunction. A distance is perceived between policies on gender that are handed down. Fulfilling this policy is interpreted simply as a matter of intervening to ensure equal numbers of girls and boys enrol, attend and take their place as prefects or monitors. Poverty reduction is also seen in terms of interventions to provide food. No wider obligations or processes of dialogue are entailed.

This vertical disjunction is accompanied by a horizontal disjunction in which teachers and members of the SGB express some sharp divisions with the parents of children in the school and the experiences of girls reaching puberty. One way of maintaining the boundary markers of this horizontal disjuncture is to stress essentialised identities of girls, boys and poor parents. It appears that the lack of institutionalised space to consider gender equality or poverty reduction in the school and its community provides one setting in which sweeping statements are made and not critically examined. Thus a horizontal disjuncture is maintained between the school (teachers and SGB) and the community of parents and pupils and few initiatives to challenge this can be sustained; the only institutionalised connection concerned classes on 'morality for girls' and the maintenance of the feeding scheme. In neither was there space to think about forms of gender inequality and how to develop more equitable relations. Similarly the absence of opportunities for critical interaction and discussion regarding gender and poverty mean that the voices of poor parents are not invited into discussions of school policy and that the work of the school does not appear to be a major concern of the women's groups or other social organizations in the community. Thus the horizontal disjuncture is both at the level of ideas and organization.

The combination of vertical and horizontal disjunctures seems to make it peculiarly difficult for the school to act on national and global gender equality and poverty reduction initiatives in anything other than the most minimal form of ensuring equal enrolments. Any deeper engagements with understanding and acting on gender equality and poverty reduction by the schools will require considerably more time, canvassing of a wider range of views, and critical examination than either has been able to achieve to date. The schools have thus put in place some minimal interventions regarding gender and poverty reduction and have received no support or guidance on how to take this further.

References

Aikman, S., & Unterhalter, E. (2005). *Beyond access : transforming policy and practice for gender equality in education*. Oxford: Oxfam GB.

Alubisia, A. (2005). *UPE myth or reality: A review of experiences, challenges and lessons from East Africa*. Nairobi: Oxfam GB and ANCEFA.

Ball, S. J. (1998). Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspectives in Education Policy. *Comparative Education, 34*(2), 119-130.

Ball, S. J. (2007). *Education plc: understanding private sector participation in public sector education* London: Routledge.

Brighouse, H., 2000, *School choice and social justice* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Chronic Poverty Research Centre. (2008). *Chronic Poverty Report 2008-09: Escaping Poverty Traps*. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Cornwall, A., Harrison, E., & Whitehead, A. (Eds.). (2007). *Feminisms in development: contradictions, contestations and challenges*. London: Zed Books.

Department of Education. (2008). National Policy for an equitable provision of an enabling school physical teaching and learning environment. *Government Gazette, 31616*(1438).

Fennell, S., & Arnot, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Gender Education and Equality in a Global Context: Conceptual frameworks and policy perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Fleisch, B., & Shindler, J. (Forthcoming). School participation from 'Birth-to-Twenty': Patterns of schooling in an urban child cohort study in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*.

Gereluk, D. (2008) *Symbolic clothing in school* London: Continuum

Gillborn, D. and Youdell, D. (2000) *Rationing education: Policy, practice, reform and equity* Buckingham: Open University press

Gordon, A., Zafar, S., & Karlsson, J. (2002). *African girls' education initiative: country evaluation commissioned by UNICEF*. Johannesburg: Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management.

Greany, K. (2008). Rhetoric versus reality: exploring the rights-based approach to girls' education in rural Niger. *Compare, 38*, 555-568.

Green, D. (2008). *Poverty to Power: How Active Citizens and Effective States can Change the World*. Oxford: Oxfam International.

Grindle, M. S., & Thomas, J. W. (1991). *Public choices and policy change: the political economy of reform in developing countries*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Human Sciences Research Council. (2001). *A study of school responses to violence and harassment of girls commissions by UNICEF, researched and written by the National Research Programme on Child, Youth and Family Development*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Kenyan Ministry of Education. (2009). Education Statistical Booklet 2003-2007 (pre-publication).

Lewis, M. A., & Lockheed, M. (2006). *Inexcusable absence: Why 60 million girls still aren't In school and what to do about It* Washington DC: Center for Global Development.

Lewis, M. A., & Lockheed, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Exclusion, gender and education: Case studies from the developing world*. Washington DC: Center for Global Development.

Migwi, W. (2007). Small Change Keeping Girls in School: Free Sanitary Towels. *Equals, 19*, 8.

Ministerial Committee on Rural Education. (2005). *Report of the Ministerial Committee on rural education*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Moorosi, P. (2007). Creating linkages between private and public: Challenges facing woman principals in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education, 27*(3), 507-522.

Morrell, R., Epstein, D., Unterhalter, E., Bhana, D., & Moletsane, R. (2009). *Towards Gender Equality: South African schools during the HIV and AIDS epidemic*. KwaZulu-Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Nelson Mandela Foundation. (2005). *Emerging voices: a report on education in South African Rural communities, researched for the Nelson Madela Foundation by the HSRC and the EPC*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Nyokangi, D. N. (2007). *What limits female primary schoolteachers from career progress and promotions in Kenya?* Unpublished MA, Institute of Education, University of London.

Pampallis, J., Karlsson, J., Chikoko, V., Bhengu, T., & Chaka, T. (2007). No-fee schools in KwaZulu-Natal: A study conducted for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education by the Centre for Education Policy Development (un-published).

Pearson, R., & Jackson, C. (Eds.). (1998). *Feminst Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*. London: Routledge.

Rai, S. M. (2002). *Gender and the Political Economy of Development: From Nationalism to Globalization*. London: Polity Press.

Rai, S. M. (2008). *The Gender Politics of Development: Essays in Hope and Despair*. London: Zed Books.

Rai, S. M. (Ed.). (2003). *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratizing the State: International Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Rose, P., & Dyer, C. (2006). *Chronic Poverty and Education: A review of the literature. Background paper for the Second Chronic Poverty Report.*: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Rose, P., & Dyer, C. (2008). *Chronic Poverty and Education: A review of the literature. Background paper for the Second Chronic Poverty Report.*: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Stewart, F. (2008). Note for Discussion: Kenya, Horizontal Inequalities and the Political Disturbances of 2008.   Retrieved 01/03/09, from http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/copy/Kenya%20note%20for%20discussion.pdf

Subrahmanian, R. (2005). Gender equality in education: Definitions and measurements. *International Journal of Educational Development, 25*(4), 395-407.

UNESCO. (2008). *Global Monitoring Report 2009: Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters*. Paris: UNESCO/Oxford University Press.

Unterhalter, E. (2007). *Gender, schooling and global social justice*. London: Routledge.

Appendix 1
Letters from the schools giving permission to conduct research (Note: names have been removed to protect anonymity)

1) Letter from the school in South Africa

_____ PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tel:
Fax:

04 March 2008

Dr Jenni Karlsson
University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus

Dear Madam

RE: ACCEPTANCE LETTER TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH IN OUR SCHOOL

On behalf of the School Governing Body and School we would like to inform you that we agreed unanimously to do your Research Project in our school.

We promise to give a support required from school or from the community.

We expect you as soon as you are ready.

Yours in education,

_____ (Chairperson of SGB)

_____ (Principal)

2) Letter from the district in Kenya granting permission to conduct research in the school

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Telegrams : "DISTRICTER" , Kajiado
Telephone : Kajiado 21004/5
When replying please quote

THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
P.O BOX 1
KAJIADO

Date: 16ᵀᴴ January 2008

Ref: 30/5/330

District Officer,
NGONG.

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION
DR. JANE K. ONSONGO

The above named Lady works with Catholic University. She intends to undertake research concerning **"Gender education and global poverty reduction initiatives"** in your area of jurisdiction.

Kindly accord her necessary assistance.

The District Education officer has authorised the person to do the research
Mmami 16/01/2008

For: DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
KAJIADÓ.

G. K. TARAGON
FOR: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
KAJIADO.

c.c.

Dr. Jane K. Onsongo,
Catholic University
P.O. Box 62157-00200
NAIROBI.

Research instruments used for data-collection in the schools: Interview schedule, focus group activities, rich description

1) **Interview schedule**

Gender, Education and Global Poverty Reduction Initiatives Project
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOLS

(Note: we may also need to adapt some questions for group and individual interviews with teachers)

Interviews will be semi-structured. From responses to the many open-ended questions, interviewers will probe for more detail and follow potentially generative leads.

As we go through this very rough, incomplete draft, we should check the questions against the main research questions and objectives of the project, expand the questions where necessary, note aspects of the research aims that are better met by other means or which call for triangulation.

1. Introduction and background

The interviewer will introduce the project, the purpose of the interview, the confidentiality conditions and any other relevant background information, and then elicit background information from the respondent. For example (some will not be relevant to all officials):

1.1 What is your position/role in the school? (Prompt: subject area, extra-mural activities, school governing body, etc?)
1.2 How long have you been in this position?
1.3 What were you doing before you were appointed to this position?
1.4 What are your qualifications, where were you trained, what professional development activities have you been involved in?
1.5 Is your school involved in any community projects? If so, what are they?
1.6 Does your school network with other schools in the area? If so, in what way?
1.7 In what ways, if any, are the district, community, and province in your school? (Probe for support, monitoring, and other forms of contact and interaction. Probe for regularity, frequency, tone)
1.8 Are there any NGOs that work with your school? If so, in what ways?
1.9 Does your school have links with other government services to the community (for examples, clinics, social development, sports)? What is the purpose and nature of those links?
1.10 How, if at all, is your school involved in:
   Gender work
   Poverty reduction

2. Social context of the school

2.1 We need to understand the social context of the school and its community. Please would you describe it. Probe:
   Family

31

Children in care
Home literacy
Health and nutrition
Prevalence of HIV/AIDS
Migrancy
Language
Income
Employment
Religion
Gendered cultural practices (e.g. FGM, teenage pregnancies, virginity testing)

2.2 How do you think that the social context that you have described affects the school attendance, performance and educational attainments of boys and girls? Probe for:
Drop-outs
Absenteeism
Teenage pregnancy
Bursaries/Child support grants/school feeding schemes
School fees and other costs that parents must mobilize to enable a child to receive an adequate education (e.g. Must parents pay for a desk – as in Kenya; who pays for textbooks)

3. Perspectives on gender, poverty and schooling
As you are aware, the topic of this project is gender, education and poverty reduction.

3.1 In your opinion what are the most crucial gender issues in this community?

3.2 Which of these gender issues do you think are most pressing in your school? Why?

3.3 In your opinion what the most crucial poverty issues in your community?

3.4 Which of these poverty issues do you think are most pressing in your school? Why?

3.5 What are your views on the relationship between these gender issues and poverty?

3.6 Assuming limited resources, what do you think would be the single most important thing that could be done to address the issues you have identified in your school? In the country more broadly?

3.7 Have you heard of the MDG or the EFA goals? If so, do you think they are relevant to your school? Why/why not?

4. Policies on gender, education and poverty

Please tell me what you know about the national gender policy and how it was developed. *If they do know about the policy, possible probes*:

4.1 How did you become aware of it?

4.2 Was there a consultative process? Were you involved/consulted? Do you know who else was consulted?

4.3 Does your school have a copy of the policy document?

4.4 Describe some of the ways in which you have, or could, bring the policy to the attention of your staff?

4.3 In your opinion, what are the most important aspects of the policy?

If they don't know:
4.4 Who would you approach to find out about it?

5. Implementation, capacity development and change

5.1 Describe how you are implementing the policy in your school. Have you been able to implement the policy as planned? If not, what have been the obstacles? How have you tried to overcome the obstacles and who supports you?

If you are not aware of the national policy, or are not implementing it in your school, please tell me about what you are doing to address gender (and poverty) issues in your school.

5.2 Who participates in the implementation? *(Prompt around different groups: Community, male and female parents, teachers, male and female learners)*

5.3 Where are the issues of implementation discussed? (e.g. In the school governing bodies?) Who participates in these discussions?

5.4 What resources have been allocated for implementation? For how long?

5.5 Who provided the resources? Under what conditions?

5.6 What sort of reporting is required by the education authority? To whom? How frequently?

5.7 How, if at all, does the reporting help you? If not, how could it be changed to be more helpful?

5.8 How are new teachers oriented to the policy and how are existing teachers updated and enabled to work with the policy in their everyday school practices?

5.9 How is the school governing body involved in working with the policy?

5.10 How is the policy included in your school's Code of Conduct? (Ask to see the Code of Conduct and probe if appropriate)

6. Practices

6.1 In your school, where do you get new ideas from?

6.2 How do you get to know how well you're doing?

6.3 Apart from the written policies, have you any arrangements at the school to deal with issues of poverty and gender? How did you develop these?

6.4 Who was involved in their development? *(Prompt around different groups: Community, male and female parents, teachers, male and female learners)* How do you make sure that different groups are involved in making decisions around school activities/practices/policies? What do you do if not all groups are in agreement? (Can you give an example?)

6.5 Describe how teachers interact with boys and girls at this school. Do you think this has changed in the last few years/ since the implementation of the policy? How?

6.6 In your school, how do the boys and girls treat one another? Do you think this has changed in the last few years? Has it changed since the implementation of the policy? How?

6.7 In your perception, do parents have different expectations of boys and girls? In what ways? Do you think this has changed in the last few years? Has it changed since the implementation of the policy? How?

6.8 What are you proud of in your school?

6.9 What problems would you like to overcome?

6.10 Have there been particular aspects of the gender policy that have been difficult to implement/put into practice? Or particular changes that have been difficult to make? Why? (*Probe around barriers or resistance to change etc*) How have you dealt with this?

6.11 What do you see as the role of different groups (local government, NGOs, community institutions/leaders) in supporting education in your community?

6.11 How important to you is collaboration between these different groups?

7.Cross-cutting questions

7.1 If you wanted to show a visitor how your school is involved in promoting gender development what would you show them? And poverty reduction?
7.2 What gives you the courage to continue when things are difficult?
7.3 What are your sources of inspiration?
7.4 What changes do you hope to see in the next ten years?
7.5 What will it take to make these happen? What needs to change?

Thank you for participating in this interview. If you would like to add any further comments, please do so.

2) Focus group activities

Gender, Education and Global Poverty Reduction Initiatives Project
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE FOR MIXED GROUP OF PARENTS AND LOCAL LEADERS related to the SCHOOL

Purpose: To look at decision making in action, and get a better understanding of meanings of gender equality and education and global poverty reduction and how those meanings are negotiated and what some of the power relations are within a group and in the group's perceptions of their locality.

Duration: Not to exceed 2 hours.

Introduction

Researcher introduces herself as facilitator of the process, outlines the purpose of a focus group and what it is/is not used for. She will negotiate voice recording of the discussion.

Warm up activity (15 mins)

In advance prepare about 10 cards that have large print phrases of everyday 'talk' that might indicate the diverse ways in which people understand and construct GLOBAL, POVERTY, GENDER, EQUALITY and EDUCATION.

Circulate the cards around the group, asking each person to respond spontaneously/quickly to the statement by drawing either a question mark (I don't understand this), a happy face (I agree) or unhappy face (I don't agree). When everyone has had a turn to respond on each card, hand the cards out among the group and ask which phrase has most question marks/happy/unhappy faces (more than 5?).

Use this fun snap / informal survey as a way of talking and showing that people often have different meanings of concepts such as GLOBAL, POVERTY, GENDER, EQUALITY and EDUCATION.

Researcher ends by reminding the group of the purpose of a focus group discussion.

Now proceed to the two main discussion activities.

Problem 1 (30-45 mins)

A well-known and successful businesswoman who lived in the area near the school has died. Everyone admired her because she had achieved success even though she had very little schooling. In her will she left R25,000 to the school for girls' education. What do you think they should do with the funds and how should they go about implementing your idea?

Towards the end of the discussion (after about 30 minutes) facilitator introduces the wording of MDG 2 and 3. Explain that some international aid sees these as a good way to guide spending money internationally. Ask if they see their discussions about how to spend local donations as being similar or different from these and why.

Problem 2 (30-45 mins)

A report is made in the SMC about two incidents in neighbouring schools. At one school a 14year old girl was pregnant. It was agreed she should not attend school and could not be readmitted to complete Grade 6. In the second school a boy had been badly beaten up by boys and girls, jeering at him that he was girlish. No action had been taken by the head teacher other than to tell the children off for fighting. Do you agree or disagree with the actions taken by the two neighbouring schools? Why?

Towards the end of the discussion (after about 30 minutes) facilitator presents the gender goal from the Dakar Framework and an extract from the Beijing Platform of Action. Ask if they see their discussions as in line with these Declarations or different, and why.

End by thanking everyone for participating in this focus group discussion.

3) Rich description notes

Gender, Education and Global Poverty Reduction Initiatives Project
NOTES TO BE COMPLETED FOR THICK DESCRIPTION related to the SCHOOL

Purpose: To compile a detailed description of the school community, its locality, history and some of the major power dynamics at play.

Organisation: In notebook, on the basis of conversations at the school (with parents and teachers) and in the community, and information collected from school records the researcher takes notes on the following:

1. Numbers of girls and boys enrolled by class 2004-2008

2. Numbers of girls and boys attending by class March 31 (or nearest day) 2004-2007

3. Pass rate in KCPE girls/boys 2004-8 and final exams at end of last year primary school South Africa

4. Number of teachers employed (m/f) and qualifications and level of post 2004-8

5. For one week during data collection in school Feb 2008 count number of children in each class and whether or not a teacher is present. If teacher is not present record reason for absence.

6. For each teacher in the school write a brief bio note recording m/f, where they grew up, where they were educated, where they have worked and for how long, whether they are married, single, have children, where they live, how far they travel to work, where they send their children to school.

7. On the basis of discussions write bio notes of six children (three girls and three boys) in each class the class teacher considers the most typical, the most able, and the most struggling. Note what the teacher knows about where they live, where their parents live and work, how they are progressing in Zulu/Swahili, maths, English, what the reasons are for their achievements or difficulties, how they relate to other children and adults.

8. On the basis of discussions, write as full an account as you can of all the women's organisations at work in the area of the school. What do these focus on – church, community self help, health issues, dance, sport etc, etc? Who are the members of these organisations – younger/older, richer/poorer, well educated/little educated, employed/unemployed, mixed? What activities have they been noted for in the past year? Were these welcomed or criticised? Do they have anything to do with the work of the school? If yes/no, why?

9. On the basis of discussions, write as full an account as you can of all the CBOs at work in the area of the school. What do these focus on – church, community self help, health issues, dance, sport, water, transport etc, etc? Who are the members of these organisations – younger/older, richer/poorer, well educated/little educated, employed/unemployed, mixed? What activities have they been noted for in the past year? Were these welcomed or criticised? Do they have anything to do with the work of the school? If yes/no, why?

10. Who is on the SGB? How long have they been in post? Who nominated them? What issues does the SGB usually discuss? How do people regard the SGB?

11. What levels of service delivery are evident in the locality – e.g. Water pumps, electricity, sewerage, health workers, payment of social welfare (pensions, income grants), agricultural extension or microcredit schemes?

12. Who is the MP and what are views about him/her? Who is the member of local council and the provincial council and what are views about him/her?

13. What access do people have to news in the locality – through newspapers, radio, TV? In one week of observation what local, national, international stories with a gender angle were people talking about?