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# A comparative analysis of the implementation of Education for All (EFA) policies in two countries: Barbados and the Republic of Ghana

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Education

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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) POLICIES IN TWO COUNTRIES:  
BARBADOS AND THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

by

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Faculty of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
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## ABSTRACT

This study's goals are to analyze Education for All (EFA) policies in these two Global South countries, Barbados and Ghana, and compare their adaptation, their implementation processes and the outcomes, in conjunction with UNESCO's EFA goals. The research design used to carry out this project is a comparative case-study as it provides an understanding between the context and the processes, the structures and the actions pertaining to EFA in these two countries. This comparative case-study is based on a document analysis as a method for data collection and analysis with a critical democratic perspective. The findings have shown that factors that have contributed to these countries' progress towards EFA goals are multilevel and multidimensional. Strategies aiming at economics and finances, politics, administration, education and pedagogy, human resources and non-human resources, have had positive impacts on the EFA implementation. The analysis of the data helped determine whether or not there is anything that can be learned of practical value for other countries which have, thus far, been unable or struggling to meet their EFA goals in terms of early childhood care and universal primary education of quality, gender equality, literacy and lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** education for all (EFA); UNESCO; policy implementation; policy outcomes; Barbados; Ghana; comparative case-study.

## DEDICATIONS

À ma famille...

To all of you, wherever you are...  
from Marseille, France...  
to Davie, Florida...  
to Port-au-Prince, Haïti...  
to Montréal, Québec.

You have been there for me, and with me, every step of the way.

You were...  
the ears I cried to and laughed with...  
the phone calls I received at random hours, saying “Just wanted to hear your voice and say,  
*Keep going! Don’t give up!*”...  
the emails that said “*You can do it!*”...  
the Skype video calls that stayed with me until I finished a difficult chapter...

You were all that and so much more!

This thesis is as much yours as it is mine!

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Description of the major problem

Education for All, EFA as it is commonly known, is an initiative launched by UNESCO in March 1990, in Jomtien, Thailand with the explicit mission of providing education to all children, women and men in the world. Participants at the conference were responding to the then current situation of education worldwide where more than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, had no access to primary schooling; where more than 960 million adults, two-thirds of them women, were illiterate; and where more than 100 million children and countless adults failed to complete basic education programs (World Education Forum, 1990). By 2000, at the second World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, considerable efforts and accomplishments were made, but yet the gap remained, and to a certain extent, widened. Around 323 million children were still not schooled; within which 30% were missing primary education and the remainder was missing secondary education (Cohen, Bloom, Malin & Curry, 2006).

During that second forum, six goals for EFA were elaborated:

- Goal 1.** “Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Goal 2.** “Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Goal 3.** “Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

**Goal 4.** “Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

**Goal 5.** “Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

**Goal 6.** “Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 15-17).

The principle underpinning EFA is the “determination to implement worldwide a basic, universal right to education” (Skilbeck, 2006, p. 99). EFA can be seen as a continuing struggle to universalize education and offer free access to children around the world, particularly those from Global South countries where most of the out-of-school children live. As Nguyen (2010) puts it, EFA targets and focuses on the “most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups in poor and developing countries” (p. 341), in order to ensure that equitable access to basic education of quality is available to all children, youth and adults. Moreover, EFA is viewed as a means to attaining the Millennium Development Goals whose main mission is to halve poverty.

First, as a principle, then as a policy, EFA has been accepted by 180 countries throughout the world. With their acceptance of EFA principles, these countries have elaborated and adopted policies, and have put in place programs targeting different aspects of the EFA scheme. Each year, UNESCO, among others, publishes the EFA Global Monitoring Report that gives an account of each country’s progress towards EFA goals and touches on specific issues such as the marginalized, inequality, governance, literacy, armed conflict and education, youth and skills. While there has been significant progress in several countries from the Global South (GS) in

meeting the EFA goals (World Education Forum, 2000), some have done much better than others. That begs the question as to why some GS countries are more successful than others in reaching the EFA goals and why some are still ‘at risk’ of not meeting their own EFA goals by 2015. This study attempts to find out why some countries have been successful in meeting their EFA goals and what lessons can be learned from two case studies with the purpose of providing insights for other Global South countries.

### **Objectives or goals of the study**

This study’s goals are to analyze EFA policies in two selected countries from the Global South and compare their adaptation, their implementation processes and the outcomes, in conjunction with UNESCO EFA goals. In doing so, the study seeks to draw out lessons (in terms of patterns and trends) from the implementation of EFA policies in two chosen settings. It aims to help improve understanding of the complexities and contradictions of educational reforms in the Global South, at the same time keeping in mind, as Little (2008) puts it, that “while a strategy that has ‘worked’ in one country provides food for the thought it does not follow that it should necessarily be followed in another” (p. 80).

The second aim of this study is to determine whether or not there is anything that can be learned of practical value for other countries which have, thus far, been unable or are struggling to meet their EFA goals in terms of early childhood care and universal primary education of quality, gender equality, literacy and lifelong learning. This project aims to study and compare the experiences of two different countries in order to offer insights into what has worked and not worked in the implementation of EFA policies. In this way, I am drawing on one of the key founders of the field of Comparative and International Education (CIE), Sir Michael Sadler, who

asked, in 1900: “How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?” (cited in Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008, p. 18).

The hypothesis I put forth is this: “Critical Democratic Theory provides a framework for the comparative analysis of two countries’ educational systems, Barbados and the Republic of Ghana, and their progress towards meeting EFA’s six goals. Moreover, this comparative study provides important lessons that other Global South countries struggling to meet their own EFA goals can draw upon.” The study contributes to providing comparative data that will help decision-makers take a more thorough look at their own EFA policies and continue or adjust what they are actually doing.

### **Rationale for choice of countries**

I am comparing the implementation of EFA policies in two different countries from the Global South: Barbados and the Republic of Ghana. Barbados is an island in the Lesser Antilles, in the Caribbean, situated to the northeast of Venezuela. Its population of 288,725 is divided into 93% of Afro-Bajan (black), 3.2% of White, 2.6% of mixed, 1% of East Indian and 0.2% of other ethnic groups (CIA, 2013a). Although visited early on by the Spanish, then the Portuguese, the island became an English colony until it obtained its independence in 1966 and became a member of the British Commonwealth. It functions as a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. Barbados is considered a high-income economy with a human development index (HDI) number of 0.825 which positions the country at 38 out of 187 countries, and with a GDP that put the country at the 60<sup>th</sup> place out of 229 countries and territories (CIA, 2013a; UNDP, 2013a, 2013b; World Bank, 2013). This makes Barbados one of the most developed islands in the Caribbean. In Barbados, education is compulsory for all

children until the age of 16 and the system mirrors that of the United Kingdom. The government spent on average 6.7% of its GDP on education during the 2005-2011 period (UNdata, 2013a).

The Republic of Ghana is a Western African country bordered by Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo, on the Gulf of Guinea. The country has a population of 25,546,000 habitants divided into ten different ethnic groups and speaking eleven different languages with English being the official one. After being colonized by the British, Ghana became, in 1957, the first sub-Saharan country to gain its independence. After that and in spite of coups and turmoil, the country has established a constitutional democracy, and is a member of the British Commonwealth. With a medium human development index of 0.467 and considered a middle income economy, Ghana is ranked 130<sup>th</sup> in the world. The country's economy is divided between its rich natural resources and agricultural productions, and the services sector which accounts for 50% of its GDP. The Ghanaian education system comprises a 6-year primary education, a 3-year junior high school and a 4-year senior high school. With a school life expectancy of 10 years, the country spent on average 5.5% of its GDP on educational expenditures during the 2005-2011 period (UNdata, 2013a; CIA, 2013a).

My rationale for choosing Barbados and Ghana is threefold. First, both of the countries I have chosen are from what is considered the Global South and share a colonial past from the same colonial empire. They represent two different continents, each unique in its own way and its current situation. Furthermore Melhuish and Petrogiannis (2006, p. 1) discovered that features such as a country's history and political ideology, social structures and culture have "direct and indirect impact on the quality of the experiences of young children [and youth and adults] and, ultimately, on their development." Second, according to studies and research, these countries are both meeting EFA goals [or are "on track" of achieving them (Bruns, Mingat &

Rakotomalala, 2003)]. Therefore there is a potential variety of approaches each of these countries might use, as well as the wide array of outcomes that have resulted from their actions and that might be very different from each other. And finally, my choice was also influenced by the fact that compared to other countries and with regards to EFA's main goals and areas of focus, much literature is available about them either from primary sources such as Ministries of Education, UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, World Bank, universities from these countries, or from secondary sources like scholarly articles referring to these themes.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions are designed to guide this research and to structure the ways in which the study's goals will be achieved.

1. What are the programs, approaches or actions that Barbados and Ghana have adopted to meet their EFA goals? In other words, what are the policies that have been put in place by the governments and educational communities in these countries to achieve these goals?
2. What results have these actions produced? In other words, what are the outcomes from the implementation of these policies?
3. What can other Global South countries learn from the experiences of Barbados and Ghana in meeting their own EFA goals?

### **Investment and self-positioning in the work**

I was born, raised and completed all of my compulsory and secondary schooling in Haiti. Both during and following my undergraduate studies in Education Sciences in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, I worked, and still do, in the education system, mostly with low socio-economic status students and their families. My democratic commitment to the improvement of education for the

children of Haiti stems from the fact that still 51% of the school-age youth in my country does not attend school (UNFA, 2006). This has led me to ask: What can be done to provide education for all Haitian children? As a person interested in comparative education, I have asked myself: “What can Haiti learn from how other countries have implemented their EFA policies?” Therefore, I found it appropriate for this project to research into EFA policy implementation processes from other countries of the Global South and figure out what we can learn from them, in terms of trends and patterns.

Although I am an insider to Haiti, I am an outsider to the countries under study in my thesis. In this research, I am conducting this study from what Phillips & Schweisfurth (2008) term ‘an outsider vantage’ or an outsider with my own perspectives. This means that, although I am from and have resided in a Global South country which might offer certain similarities, these two settings are unfamiliar territories to me to a certain extent. Furthermore, I am doing this research while studying in a Global North university, thus influenced by perspectives developed while living and studying in Canada.

### **Assumptions**

My assumptions stem from both my positionality and my reasons for doing this project, as well as the lessons I want to get from this research study. Here is a summary of these assumptions.

- By looking at other countries’ EFA policy journey, patterns and trends can be found to help other countries and their policy-makers.
- Certain countries are moving towards achieving their EFA goals with actions that are having positive impacts.



- Certain countries will have EFA actions and implementation processes that do not provide the results those responsible were seeking.
- Some countries, despite their efforts towards their EFA goals, have education systems that remain unchanged.
- There exist a wide variety of factors hindering progress towards reaching EFA goals, despite all efforts made by those responsible.

### **Concluding summary: Outline of the study**

To carry out this study, it was important that certain procedures and steps were respected, just as it was essential that certain information was provided in order to understand the big picture and the comparative analysis that follows. I will therefore conclude this chapter with an outline of the whole study. In **Chapter I, Introduction**, I have introduced the project with a brief description of the problem, the goals of the study, the research questions, the rationale behind the countries' choice, and my positionality and assumptions. **Chapter II, Literature Review**, reviews the extensive literature about Education for All (EFA) by looking at the background and history of EFA, some comparative studies on the topic, and implementation processes and outcomes. As for **Chapter III, Theoretical Framework**, I sketch out the elements of the theoretical framework underpinning this research and that are relevant and of value to it. In **Chapter IV, Methodology and Methods**, I first describe the research design and my reasons for it; then I explain the method for data analysis. The following **Chapter V, Findings**, starts by providing a description of each setting, continues with a description of the codes used, and finally reports the data collected from the various documents. **Chapter VI, Analysis**, is divided into two sections: the first one examines the findings through the theoretical framework, and the second section compares both countries' implementation policies and results,

looking for similarities and differences. Finally in the **Conclusion, Chapter VII**, I summarize my findings and analysis, thus answering my research questions; I explore the possible implication of this study; then I outline the challenges I had to face while carrying-out this study; and finally I conclude with some personal reflections.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

This chapter will review the research literature about Education for All (EFA). It is divided into three sections. In the first section, I will review the background and history of this UNESCO policy. The second section will outline some of the comparative studies relevant to my study. In the third section, I will examine the implementation processes and outcomes of EFA.

### 2.1. The history and background of EFA

The history and the background of the development of EFA have been thoroughly examined in the research literature. EFA followed a long tradition of international attempts and initiatives of providing universal education for all children and youth (Cummings, 1986; Miller, 1992; Chabbott, 2003; Cohen, Bloom, Malin & Curry, 2006; Draxler, 2008; Cheng, 2010). According to Torres (2000), conferences held in Bombay (1952), in Cairo (1954), in Lima (1956) and in Karachi and Addis Ababa in the early 1960s, to name just a few, had that world mission to achieve universal literacy and schooling by 1980. The author further argued that the EFA Jomtien Conference was “an official recognition of the failure” of these previous attempts (Busquet, 1990, cited in Torres, 2000, p. 3) and also a redefinition of “the vision and scope of *basic education*” (Torres, 2000, p. 4). This suggests that these initiatives and the processes related to them were not as productive and efficient as the policy makers wanted them. This also

raised the question as to why this time around EFA would be different from the previous attempts given the fact that the history of education has been a continuous “redefinition of the idea of ‘all’” (Miller, 1992). However, as Torres (2000) noted, since developments of education reforms are “neither uniform nor linear” (p. 4), this can explain the widespread and broad consensus generated by the first World Education Forum in 1990.

Indeed, many scholars have shown great interest in the reasons and rationale behind both World Education fora, including Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000. Among the reasons and rationale for these fora were identified the high rate of unschooled children and illiterate youth and adults, the perceived and acknowledged role of education in poverty reduction, in economic and agricultural growth and productivity, in health improvement, in reduction of fertility, infant and maternal mortality rates (Kadzamira & Rose, 2001; Bruns, Mingat & Rakotomalala, 2003; Cohen, Bloom, Malin & Curry, 2006; Sperling, 2006; Cheng, 2010). As Cohen, Bloom, Malin and Curry (2006) asserted, education provides economic benefits, builds strong societies and polities while reducing fertility and improving health. Furthermore, arguments were made that these benefits would assist (and have assisted) women, in particular, by allowing them to engage effectively in society and in the economy, to develop their own potential, to make rational and informed decisions, and so forth.

Moreover, the development of EFA has been linked to the situation of educational systems around the world after the World War II and the Cold War, pointing out the strains and stresses multilateral education and multilateral commitments faced (Jones, 2007; Mundy, 2007; Nguyen, 2010). During this post War period, a new world order was remade, based on the principles that education is a universal right, that illiteracy among youth and adults should be eradicated, and that a coalition of multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental agencies and

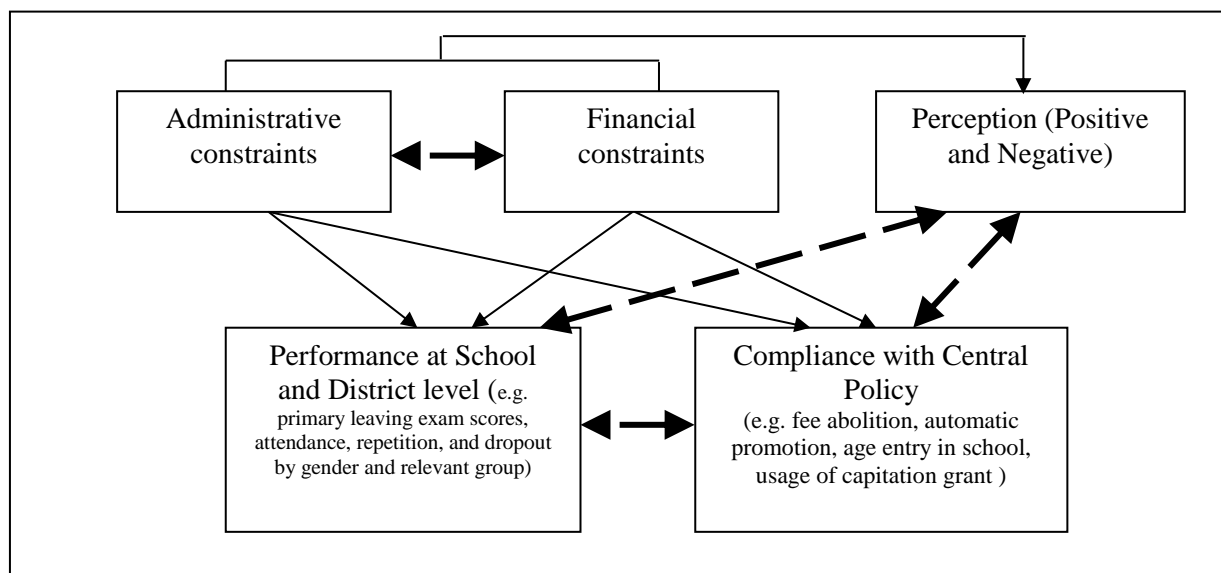
organizations will tackle these problems in a specific timeframe. As Mundy (2007) pointed out, education became a central focus in the post-World War II era of multilateralism; and it was believed to be essential and crucial for world peace.

In the following section, I turn my attention to the literature on comparative studies related to the EFA scheme.

## **2.2. Comparative studies related to EFA and its goals**

The body of literature on EFA is quite extensive and comparative studies represent just a fraction of it. Nonetheless one of these studies, done by Mehrotra (1998), is highly relevant to my research as it compares and explains the common features that have helped ten high-achieving countries (HAC) from different continents succeed in universal primary education (UPE), where others have not. In his review, Mehrotra (1998) highlighted common elements of policies that have shaped their UPE agenda, thus acknowledging the importance of supply-side and demand-side factors. Another comparative analysis by Nishimura, Ogawa, Sifuna, Chimombo, Kunje, Ampiah, Byamugisha, Sawamura and Yamada (2009), was conducted during a three-year study (2006 to 2009). This project compared how UPE is played out in four Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, Ghana, Malawi, Kenya and Uganda. After having identified common themes emerging from each country's response to UPE policies (Figure 2.2.1), the authors suggested that issues such as accountability, sustainability and ownership must be addressed and it requires the involvement of key stakeholders (government, school administration, parents and communities). They also pointed out the complex relationships between the different actors involved stating that "sustainability of the UPE policy can be ensured only with this mutual accountability relation" (Nishimura *et al.*, 2009, p. 157).

**Figure 2.2.1 Conceptual framework created by Nishimura and colleagues.**



*Source: Nishimura, Ogawa, Sifuna, Chimombo, Kunje, Ampiah, Byamugisha, Sawamura and Yamada. (2009, p. 150).*

Pence's (2004) comparative study concentrated on early childhood development (ECD) policy development and implementation in Africa. It provided valuable insights into the challenges, barriers and impediments many African countries had (and are still facing) with regards to ECD, as well as pointers on what actually helped overcome these obstacles. From Ghana and Tanzania to Namibia and Eritrea to Mauritius and Malawi, issues such as political stability and, governance, interactions between multiple stakeholders (from local to national to international), policy instruments such as mandates, inducements, capacity-building, system-changing technical support (Datnow & Park, 2009), have not only influenced the implementation processes but also have determined the success or failure of this policy. In other words, similarly to Datnow and Park's (2009) opinions, Pence (2004) highlighted how the relationships between –and combination of– these elements greatly affected the outcomes and results of ECD policies in several African countries.

### 2.3. Implementation processes and outcomes about EFA policies

In this section, I will outline the literature review regarding EFA implementation processes and outcomes as they relate to my research questions. In other words, I will be looking at policies, programs, actions and approaches that countries have used (and are using) towards achieving the EFA goals. Throughout the extensive body of literature, I will, first, explore factors that have hindered progress towards EFA goals; then, I will examine factors that have facilitated progress towards this UNESCO global educational policy.

Whichever goal is considered, the factors that impede progress towards achieving EFA fall into five categories: economics and finances, politics, administration, pedagogy and programs, human resources and non-human resources. The **economic** factors have to do with the costs and the financing of every aspects of the EFA scheme from direct educational expenditures (per pupil spending, teacher and non-teacher costs, infrastructures, etc.) to indirect educational expenditures (fees and expenses assumed by parents/adults, opportunity costs). The former represents the bulk of the budget allocated to education in most countries; as for the latter, the higher these expenses are, less likely are the children to attend school or the adults to further educate themselves. Furthermore, these expenses become problematic and decreased when they are related to girls and women. Also, the constraints affecting literacy programs comprise also the under-estimation of costs of the programs and the non-efficient utilization of the financial resources available (Hilderbrand & Hinzen, 2004; Bhalalusesa, 2005; Bracho & Martínez, 2007).

In addition to all these issues, according to EFA GMR (2008), while there has been an increase in aid to basic education between 2000 and 2004, a decline in that aid, starting in 2005, has been observed, underlining that international donor/aid agencies and partners have not

respected their commitments; and what is presently allocated is still inadequate and insufficient. Bray (2004) further explained that depending on a country's economic situation their educational expenditures will vary and each country will have different priorities. As Colclough and Al-Samarrai (1998) stated, "how much education this buys, in both quantitative and qualitative terms depends upon national wealth" (p. 16). In other terms, rich economies can afford to concentrate on improving the quality of their education systems from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to lifelong learning (LL), while poor countries will more likely focus on increasing access strategies.

To follow in that same vein, the research literature has pointed out the critical role of international donor/aid agencies and partnerships. As these partnerships are based on four features (program approach, commonly agreed benchmarks, joint funding and direct budget support, and impact and expenditure tracking), they vary greatly and immensely depending on the receiving country (Draxler, 2008; Feeny & Clarke, 2009). This means that this aid is unevenly distributed and allocated. In addition to that, international agencies and partners often struggle between doing too much or too little according to Cumming (1986), thus resulting in overshadowing or overpowering the involvement of locals. Therefore they should seek a middle ground between the two extremes.

Another body of the EFA literature points to the fact that little attention has been given to issues of the sustainability of these six goals. King (2009), for example, talks about how, with the push to achieve these goals, very few have been interested in how the Global South countries have become more and more dependent on external aid and how they will sustain themselves when the assistance is terminated. The author reminds that according to UNESCO and the



World Bank's estimation, 42% of the total expenditure for EFA is from external aid; and that this aid is known for its "volatility and unpredictability" (King, 2009, p. 177).

The **political** factors that have hindered EFA's progress are concerned with the political climate in a country and issues such as instability and governance, as well as levels of political participation. International pressures from firms, multilateral organizations and other countries only add to these constraints because in a certain way, they influence the type of international aid these countries receive, thus increasing their dependency (Bruns, Mingat & Rakotomalala, 2003; Birdsall, Levine & Ibrahim, 2005; Corrales, 2006; Lewin, 2007; Vellani, 2010).

Other research has looked at the role and involvement (or lack of) of government in the reduction of illiteracy among youth and adults, pointing out that this group has not been a priority for many governments; a situation that can be understood by the fact that each country was (and is) responsible for setting the appropriate age group benefiting from these programs (Bracho & Martínez, 2007). In other words, the political climate affects positively or negatively the promotion of adult and youth literacy (AYL) programs. Moreover, certain population groups (migrants, indigenous people, ethnic minorities and disabled people) are more often than not excluded and/or have limited or reduced access to both formal schooling and literacy programs (EFA GMR, 2002, 2007).

The **administrative** constraints refer to issues hindering the day-to-day life and the administration and management of the system at all levels. It includes problems such as high pupil-teacher ratio, urban/rural educational gap, among others. For instance, administrative constraints regarding AYL programs have to do with the duration of these activities that is not sufficient enough to achieve basic and functional literacy, or the neglect of illiterate adults over

40 years-old, with focus only on youth and young adults (Hilderbrand & Hinzen, 2004; Bhalalusesa, 2005; Bracho & Martínez, 2007; Lind, 2008).

The restraints related to **pedagogy and programs** encompass several aspects of the teaching and learning process, as well as other issues directly or indirectly impacting the latter. For example, a number of authors have argued that, in the literacy programs, the training methods and curricula disregard the learners' needs (Hilderbrand & Hinzen, 2004; Bhalalusesa, 2005; Bracho & Martínez, 2007). Regarding lifelong learning (LL), Janjua (2011) pointed out that the skill training (apprenticeships, vocational/technical training, on-the-job training) is obtained through either social and family contacts, or on-the-job training. In other words, if someone does not have any of these contacts, it is more likely that he/she will have to go through an informal training. There are also concerns over the quality, standardization and actuality (up-to-date) of these LL training programs (Janjua, 2011; Noronha & Endow, 2011). The same remarks can be made concerning the quality of literacy programs (Hilderbrand & Hinzen, 2004; Bhalalusesa, 2005; Bracho & Martínez, 2007; Lind, 2008) and of ECCE programs (Myers, 2001; Charles & Williams, 2006; Schady, Galiani & Souza, 2006; Young Children, 2007; Lee & Hayden, 2009; Habibov, 2012). Moreover, the fact that the demand is far greater than the supply is particularly affecting LL, which results in an "oversupply of skilled workers" (Noronha & Endow, 2011, p. 119) for every one opening; in other terms, unemployment.

Another issue discussed in various studies (Braun & Kanjee, 2006; EFA GMR, 2008) refers to the consequences of assessments to students. From this perspective, the downside of these tests has to do with the lack of –or insufficient– preparation the students receive prior to taking these tests. As a result, the students who failed experience loss of self-esteem and sense of worth, and the situation also pushes them to drop-out altogether.

The research literature also addresses the lack of **human resources** affecting all six EFA goals. First and foremost, there is a lack of appropriate qualified teachers and principals for early childhood care and education, universal primary education, adult and youth literacy and lifelong learning programs. In their study, Smith and Motivans (2007) described how developing countries, in order to increase pupil enrolments or face high pupil enrolments, often hire unqualified or less qualified teachers –which should be accompanied with continuing/on-going training and support but most of the time is not– or lower the teachers’ qualification standards, or spend more on educational expenditures thus reducing teachers’ salaries (see also Mehrotra & Buckland, 1998). EFA GMR (2006) stated that in order to achieve a gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 100% by 2015, the number of additional teachers is too high for several countries which might be close to impossible for them to achieve.

Human resources constraints with respect to literacy programs include insufficient training of instructors, evaluation exercises not available outside the programs, insufficient monitoring and counseling and non-efficient utilization of the available human resources (Hilderbrand & Hinzen, 2004; Bhalalusesa, 2005; Bracho & Martínez, 2007).

**Non-human resources** constraints are related to the lack of geographic access to schools (i.e. distance to school) as well as inequitable distribution and geographical coverage of literacy programs (EFA GMR, 2002, 2007; Hilderbrand & Hinzen, 2004; Bhalalusesa, 2005; Bracho & Martínez, 2007), causing drop-out of participants when the centers are too far away or when they do not have enough instructors. On one hand, authors like Noronha and Endow (2011) mentioned that the conditions of the training facilities are preventing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) attendance by youth and adults. On the other hand, according to

EFA GMR (2002, 2007), in many countries, there are issues dealing with the demand for more adult learning opportunities, which means a need for more facilities.

More relevant to my research questions, scholars have pointed to several factors that have facilitated progress towards achieving EFA goals. These factors are also categorized into five groups, similar to the previously mentioned one: economics and finances, politics, administration, pedagogy and programs, human resources and non-human resources. Additionally, based on Mehrotra's (1998) study, reviewed by Little (2008), these factors are also divided into supply-side and demand-side factors.

When it comes to implementing EFA policies, several scholars have pointed out the importance of funding and investment in education (Naik, 1994; Bray, 2004; Cohen *et al.*, 2006; Glewwe & Zhao, 2006; Mehrotra & Delamonica, 2007). Therefore **economic** strategies such as introduction of school capitation grants that help defray school expenses, compensation programs offering early childhood care and education (ECCE) support, professional development for staff, incentives for teachers, to name these few, have been very helpful when implementing universal primary education (UPE) and ECCE, as well as lifelong learning (LL) and adult and youth literacy (AYL). Also, concerning LL, Sohnesen and Blom's (2005) study in Colombia discovered that the "rate of return" (p. 20) of lifelong learning education is particularly profitable for youth and adults between 20 and 40 years-old, with incentives from their governments such as tax returns and absence of tuition fees.

With educational expenditures including unit cost (per pupil spending), teacher salaries and non-teacher costs, one of the strategies used to finance EFA policies is to include them within the national gross national product (GNP). This share ranges from 20% (mainly Arab

States) to as little as 5% (Sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America and the Caribbean) of the government total expenditure allocated to basic education (EFA GMR, 2008). Another strategy deals with how these educational expenditures are spread out across levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary). In their study, Glewwe and Zhao (2006) found that, compared to other regions in the developing world, South Asia is the region whose spending per primary school pupil is the lowest (with 46 US\$) while maintaining high enrolments. This suggests the possibility of maintaining spending per pupil (unit cost) at a low level, and of redirecting funds to other educational expenditures (Mehrotra, 1998; Bruns, Mingat & Rakotomalala, 2003), thus insuring a high commitment to education (Colclough & Al-Samarrai, 1998). A combination of these elements can make financing education an easier burden for governments that are financially strapped. Some countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua (Glewwe & Zhao, 2006) have provided grants and subsidies to parents to send their children to school or offered programs targeting health issues. These programs have made getting an education easier for the population. In particular, with regards to gender equality, to ensure girls' enrolment and attendance, stipend programs and household subsidies represent some policies that have been put in place (Herz, Subbarao, Habib & Raney, 1991; Antrobus, 2006; Glick, 2008).

The **political** factors that seem to work, according to the research literature, concentrate on strengthening accountability from local communities as well as from governments; thus leading to a more active community and a more trustworthy state. Particularly with adult and youth literacy (AYL), some countries have worked out regional or South-South partnerships and collaboration programs based on their own country's successful experiences. For example, the Cuba-Haiti 2002 regional collaboration involved Cuba helping Haiti in tackling the huge literacy

challenge the country was facing. Cuba was responsible for organizing all aspects of the training: from training trainers and preparing materials to coordinating, supervising and monitoring (EFA GMR, 2002; see also Hilderbrand & Hinzen, 2004). Furthermore, concerning political involvement and participation, China's case is worth mentioning because there has been a substantial reduction of illiterate adults (by 98 million) due to the government not only increasing primary schooling but also targeting geographical groups and 15-40 age groups (EFA GMR, 2007). China's example showcases what Bhalalusesa (2005), Oxenham (2008) and Lind (2008) meant by saying that "political will and commitment are important" (Lind, 2008, p. 81) because they help integrate literacy projects into the agenda for national development.

**Administrative** strategies that have helped push forward EFA goals vary from double-shift schooling to flexibility in attendance (Bray, 2000; EFA GMR, 2008). Several countries have adopted flexible approaches to school terms and timing of classes (EFA GMR, 2011). Columbia, for example, has proposed nine flexible educational models targeting disadvantaged students that schools have to put in place and for which teachers were trained. In Mali, community schools are scheduled according to harvest periods, and have courses for two to three hours a day, for six days per week (EFA GMR, 2011).

Strategies related to **pedagogy and programs** come from a wide assortment of policies. Those aiming at the quality of education take into account the relevance of educational experiences, in terms of purposes and challenges; the pertinence of educational services at every level (early childhood care and education (ECCE), universal primary education (UPE), lifelong learning (LL) and AYL); and the attention to the particular conditions of the learners (families and communities included). These policies are also concerned with the efficacy of the system, making sure the fundamental goals are attained; the efficient allocation and use of every resource

available; and the creation of equal opportunities, leading thus to equity (OREALC/UNESCO, 2007).

Research has revealed that curricula reform impacts all levels of the education system (ECCE, UPE, LL and AYL). The content of these curricula, its relevance, the language of instruction, acknowledgement of the teachers' and students' experiences, and local beliefs and traditions affect the quality of education. In other words, the curricula must focus on the four pillars of learning: "learning to know", "learning to do", "learning to be" and "learning to live together" (OREALC/UNESCO, 2007, p. 13; see also Ramachandran, 2010).

In particular, LL programs concern livelihood skills or work-related skills offered in what is called Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). These programs take place in different types of locations: public school-based TVET, public training or centre-based TVET, enterprise-based TVET, given through the formal and informal sectors, the private for profit and private non-profit training centers (King, 2011). It also includes skill training, apprenticeships and formal and non-formal education programs. Moreover, Noronha and Endow (2011) have discovered that diversified curricula leading to diversified skills are really an advantage, particularly when salaries are low (see also EFA GMR, 2006).

Plus, when planning LL programs, research (Sohnesen & Blom, 2005) has also found that the length and flexibility of programs matter a lot. It is more productive when the participants have the possibility to work and study at the time, and when classes do not extend over a long period of time.

Studies have reviewed various factors and actions that have led towards three approaches to literacy acquisition: literacy skills, application of literacy for specific purposes, and

empowerment and transformation. They involve, for example, mass literacy campaigns and large-scale adult educational programs (development programs, participatory techniques, learner-designed programs, etc.), formal schooling (particularly for youth) and non-formal adult programs (EFA GMR, 2006). Countries like Bangladesh (EFA GMR, 2006) have assured and sustained the progress made in their literacy programs by adding a post-literacy component. Another education strategy to promote adult and youth literacy (AYL) is to include and integrate literacy programs into some work skills training. According to Hilderbrand and Hinzen's (2004) study in Guinea, this not only helps develop livelihood and subsistence means but also it serves as a framework for development aid programs.

Compensatory or complementary programs are considered effective as they target disadvantaged populations (rural, migrant and indigenous groups, over-age students) and are delivered in non-formal or informal settings. The United Republic of Tanzania and Mexico have tried these approaches: specific curriculum covering numeracy, literacy and life skills, possibility to transfer into formal schooling, support to parents and professional development for staff (EFA GMR, 2008, 2011).

Another set of programs relates to conducting evaluations and assessments of learners. The case study of the United Republic of Tanzania has shown that the use of exams as a diagnostic tool has helped reduce early drop-outs. Instead of being selective exams, they help identify learning difficulties and students who need remedial education (EFA GMR, 2011).

The **human resources** strategies that help facilitate progress towards meeting EFA goals contain a wide range of features. For instance, regarding teachers in universal primary education (UPE), early childhood care and education (ECCE), lifelong learning (LL) and AYL settings,



some of the actions include training, support and follow-up system, on-the-job supervision and adjustment made.

For ECCE and literacy programs, research shows that human resources encompass the participation, support and involvement of parents and communities who, all, share the responsibilities of these programs (Windham, 1992; Birdsall, Levine & Ibrahim, 2005; Young Children, 2007). This support comes from, and happens in public and private spheres such as home, school, workplace and local community centers.

Some studies from Guatemala and Columbia, for example, have observed that the quality of education improves when teachers are valued, their abilities and realities respected, when they are taken into account in the implementation of reforms, thus being active and feeling empowered (Kim & Rouse, 2011). In other words, this means that when society changes its general attitude towards teachers, the latter's attitude towards their work change as well for the better.

**Non-human resources** strategies that promote EFA goals vary in width and depth. With UPE, ECCE and LL, the learning environment contributes to effective learning outcomes. Regarding AYL (as well as ECCE, UPE and LL), the establishment of literate environments has contributed a lot to the success of these programs. It consists in paying attention to written materials and their languages, access to books and working materials, access to electronic medias and information and communication technology (EFA GMR, 2006). In fact, Leacock (2009) advocates for these positive settings, arguing that:

The quality of education is greatly enhanced if the physical environment is pleasant and conducive, not only to learning but also to fostering positive relationships within the school and the community that it serves (p. 25).

Positive learning environments are more likely to render students, teachers, administrators, parents and communities more productive and cooperative, and also to nurture in the students their self-esteem and sense of worth (Leacock, 2009). Moreover, with relation to gender equality, some studies have shown that the schools' environment affects girls' attendance, retention and completion of school (Glick, 2008). These environments are related to learning (merit-based awards, teacher quality), to facilities (girls-only washrooms and water fountain) and to services (mid-day meals). And that also includes extensions and improvement of school infrastructure and equipment (Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu & Hunt, 2007; EFA GMR, 2008).

To summarize this section, I will explore Mehrotra's (1998) and Little's (2008) notions of supply-side and demand-side factors. These authors have divided all the above mentioned policies and strategies into these two main categories, adding thus more precision into discussions about what it takes to promote and achieve EFA goals.

**Supply-side** strategies refer to what is being offered in order to prevent barriers in future development. From Mehrotra's (1998) study, more focused on universal primary education (UPE) but applicable as well to early childhood care and education (ECCE), adult and youth literacy (AYL) and lifelong learning (LL), they include state-supported basic education (while the state is principally –and financially– responsible to provide primary education, the community is also involved in the process); high public expenditure on education that comprises the proportion of gross national product (GNP) and total public expenditure allocated to education; equity across levels in terms of per pupil cost from primary to higher education to literacy and skills programs; low unit costs and internal efficiency that encompass keeping unit costs per pupil low, finding a balance between higher number of teachers and their training at a

low-effective cost, double-shifting (see also Bray, 2000), keeping teacher salary at a reasonable level; and maintaining quality with decreased rates of pupil-teacher ratio, of drop-out and repetitions, balance between teachers' emoluments and salaries, minimum level at achievement tests.

Little (2008) also referred to them as strategies to promote and realize EFA and divided them into eight sub-categories. First, securing support funding involves actions such as building commitment and support among political leaders and communities while defining each group's responsibilities; developing partnerships with donors (both local and international, private and public), civil society organizations and NGOs and highlighting ways to maintain long-term commitments with them; and fostering aid efficiency and harmonization through silent partnerships.

Second, strategies targeting capacity building and enabling environments are meant to create the atmosphere needed to promote EFA. In fact, they look at ways to improve inter-agency coordination, dialogue with and participation of civil society in the education sector. Knowledge-based strategies improve through data collection and monitoring and are disseminated through international co-operation like South-South co-operation; the Cuba-Haiti collaboration on literacy serves as an example. Developing instruments to measure quality and coordinating technical assistance not only help building capacity but also help promote good governance. Finally, by reducing wage and employment discrimination, human rights are also promoted.

Third, strategies geared towards funding provision deal with prioritization in educational funding allocation (be it for ECCE, UPE, LL, AYL), as well as social equity in financing. After

that, foci are placed on the poorest or the most disadvantaged greatest needs, the gender disparities, the unregistered births and children. For all these strategies, key indicators of access and quality are monitored.

Fourth, human resources actions address both increased teacher recruitment, particularly of female teachers, and ‘brain drain’ issues of educational personnel. They concern also improvement and acceleration of teacher qualification and training through strategies such as reduced pre-service training with more in-job practice and professional development (pedagogical and administrative). Other aspects of these human resources strategies are about improving teachers’ working conditions –specifically if there is any staff with HIV/AIDS– and their carrier evolution while securing incentives for them, particularly those working in remote/rural and/or at-risk areas.

When referring to the fifth sub-category, non-human resources, infrastructure is the main theme; for example, classroom refurbishment, school construction or opening closer to communities, ‘literacy-rich’ settings. Furthermore, in today’s modern times, developing information and communications technology (ICT) is key to progress and extension of opportunities.

The sixth one stresses the importance of appropriate provision in special situations. These strategies concentrate on providing specific and targeted services and initiatives in conflict zones, and for street and working children. They encompass emotional support, participatory reconstruction actions, adapted curricula and materials, promotion of education for social cohesion and elimination of discrimination or ethnic biases. In sum, these strategies are intended and designed to offer social protection.

Seventh, alternative modalities represent great strategies especially when dealing with rural areas. They embrace administrative matters such as multigrade schooling and teaching, community schools and non-formal education; educative/pedagogical matters, for example adapting curricula and language of instruction; and cultural, familial and societal matters, for instance flexibility and seasonality in school/programs attendance, health conditions in locality, customized parental support (based on each family's different needs).

And lastly, strategies aiming at raising internal efficiency include education related actions such as those geared toward reducing grade repetition (with automatic promotion, for example), increasing completion and survival, monitoring outcomes. Financial-centered actions contain efficient savings to use for expansion, re-allocation within education section and anti-corruption initiatives. Administrative actions encompass decentralization of educational management and their strengthening, information sessions to foster public accountability and respect of commitments and to discourage misuse of funds.

Finally, **demand-side** factors represent family-related factors that influence parents and individuals as “determinants of demand”, from Little's (2008, p. 75) view point. In other words, these features are related to issues permitting or preventing the access to the different services offered. They consist of costs to parents, youth or adults; complementary programs as incentives to encourage parents to send their children to school such as school feeding programs; female enrolment affected by more female teachers, schools' proximity, more school facilities and free tuition; and compulsory education legislation which may be useful when child labor is an issue. Again, Little's (2008) study provided more detailed explanation about the demand-side strategies geared towards EFA's promotion and realization which are based on Mehrotra's (1998) research.

First, policies that seek to reduce direct costs include abolishment of school fees, provision of scholarships and grants, particularly for marginalized groups, and provision of transition bursaries for secondary education for those completing universal primary education (UPE). Then those for reducing indirect costs relate to expenses made in order to attend an education program specifically early childhood care and education (ECCE), UPE, adult and youth literacy (AYL), such as textbook funds for poor households, free or low transportation cost, reduced or subsidized costs of uniforms and/or equipment. And finally, strategies intended to reduce opportunity costs are more in the lines of household income support, cash grants for community-based efforts to reduce child labor, special incentives for orphans and/or vulnerable children, retirement pensions programs for elderly (instead of depending on the children's pay).

Some demand-side strategies involve complementary incentives or support relating to health and safety. They encompass school-feeding and school-based health programs, establishment of code of conduct in order to eliminate or limit corporal punishments. Further strategies deal with family-related issues such as reducing student domestic workloads and increasing parental and community participation and aid. Although the before-mentioned strategies concern more children and youth, the following ones affect all EFA participants: strategies to eliminate verbal and sexual abuse, to stimulate social mobilization and sensitization, through the use of media and civil society.

Approaches concerning accessibility, quality and relevance vary from educational and pedagogical factors such as teaching in mother tongue, improving teacher training and qualification, offering 'second chance' routes and 'bridging' programs for youth, to administrative features such as attention to rural and local settings, appropriate provision for

conflict situations, incentives to persevere and complete a program, and flexibility in providing programs, particularly in relation to distance and routes.

Equity and inclusion strategies insure that special and appropriate educational opportunities are available for the disabled and those affected by HIV/AIDS. Moreover, these equity and inclusion strategies as they relate particularly to gender issues, seek to provide separate facilities for girls (boarding, toilet and sanitation) and make these environments 'girl-friendly', safe and private, and to sensitize staffs to girls' needs. More broadly, these strategies aim at eliminating stereotypes in educational materials and settings, eliminating gender violence and harassment, addressing issues of gender balance in teaching staff, and providing accommodations for pregnant girls and young mothers.

Lastly, policies assuring progression opportunities take into account issues that might prevent students from further pursuing their education such as increasing the number of secondary schools and access to these schools; expanding early childhood care and education (ECCE) while putting in place preventive measures regarding malnourishment and child related illnesses.

Even though one would argue that these supply-side and demand-side factors focus heavily on achieving universal primary education, other aspects such as equity and gender equality, early childhood care and education, health and nutrition are also considered, although not as broadly. All these policies that boost EFA progress can be explained as being cost-saving, cost-shifting and quality-enhancing policies while at the same time having a macro-social perspective.

### **Concluding summary: Gap in the literature**

This chapter has reviewed the literature, the history and background of EFA, as well as the factors that have hindered and facilitated progress towards the six EFA goals. Furthermore some of the few comparative studies on specific EFA goals have also been analyzed and their findings will surely contribute to the discussion of this project. However, there is a lack of critical comparative analysis regarding *all EFA goals* and their implementation processes and outcomes, as most studies do not directly take into account all six goals in their comparison of different countries. Instead, they simply enumerate the trends found in each country regarding *specific goals*. As Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) state,

Comparisons between schooling in different countries are almost exclusively conducted in terms of educational *policies* and only rarely [...] are questions raised as to the relationship of such policies to the realities of schooling (p. 197).

Therefore, this study proposes to add to that sparse body of comparative literature by finding and analyzing trends, common patterns and relationships between two chosen countries with respect to their initiatives towards *all EFA goals*. And from there, I will describe lessons from which other Global South countries can draw inspiration for their own actions. In fact, through this project, I seek to contribute to what Wolhuter (2007) pointed out as “the need..., in particular, of south-south comparative educational research” (p. 357). Furthermore, this study intends to research, analyze and compare the implementation processes and outcomes of *all six EFA goals* in Barbados and Ghana through a critical democratic lens. This particular framework which will be discussed in the next chapter will help me shape and orient the analysis of this project.



## CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

This chapter looks at the conceptual framework underpinning this research. Given the fact that this study intends to find “*What are the programs, approaches or actions that Barbados and Ghana have adopted to meet their EFA goals?*” and hopes to discover “*What results have these actions produced?*”, it is fitting that I draw on a normative conceptual framework, Critical Democratic Theory (CDT). As a normative theory, it offers value-based judgment about how the world ought to be. According to Velasquez (2008), it expresses how the world is supposed to work. As such, this theory will constitute the basis on which this study will build upon by providing the foundation to answer the research questions. In this chapter, I will sketch out the elements of CDT that are relevant and of value to my study.

### **3.1. Critical Democratic Theory**

For this research, I use a critical democratic lens based on principles as elaborated by Apple and Beane (1995), Portelli and Solomon (2001), Perry (2009) and Pinto (2012), among others. According to Blaug (2002, cited in Pinto, 2012, p. 6), democracy is more a “personal, social, and political experience” than a form of government. And critical democracy, thus, results from this philosophy as it represents a “way of life” which fosters citizens’ engagement in all aspects of society’s life. As such, these ‘critical democratic’ citizens become “agents of social change” (Pinto, 2012, p. 7). Furthermore, educational systems and their policies are

neither fully democratic nor fully undemocratic, and as such critical-democracy represents an ideal towards which democratic educational systems should aim.

Critical democratic theory (CDT) is, in fact, based on the critical democracy principles that, according to Pinto (2012), encompass the ideal of redistribution of power in order to achieve inclusion and empowerment for all citizens, particularly the inclusion of those on the margins of society. These principles are also associated with equity (equity of opportunity and outcomes), diversity, social changes, cohesion and participation. For the purpose of this study, I draw partly on and from Portelli and Solomon's (2001), Perry's (2009) and Pinto's (2012) conceptualization of this "emergent theoretical paradigm" (Pinto, 2012, p. 6) that encompasses the following nine key concepts.

First, **equality** is considered as one of the most basic democratic principles in education and education policies. When analyzing equality, attention should be brought to two aspects that portray the promises and the challenges of education: *equality of opportunity and outcome*. This concerns access to schooling of, and education for all children. In other words, resources should be allocated –and equally distributed at every level of the system– to ensure that children and youth are able to attend schools (Gutmann, 1999; Perry, 2009). In fact, Perry (2009) argues for free education, stating that:

Providing free education at the primary and secondary levels is [...] considered democratic because it ensures that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or financial resources, have the equal opportunity to gain an education and develop their potential to the benefit of themselves and the greater society (p. 434).

Furthermore, equality also relates to this notion of social mobility that having an education should help foster. But critics say that, in fact, education is the major vehicle for reproducing class privilege and social inequality, based on race, class, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic status (Apple in Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006; Perry, 2009; Anyon, 2011).

**Social justice and equity**, the second principles, are considered as essential elements of critical democracy. They revolve around this idea that all members of society are to “interact with peers equitably [...] in order to achieve parity of participation (representation, redistribution, recognition) in economic, cultural and political aspects of life” (Pinto, 2012, p. 8). It also looks at internalized forms of oppression and privilege and is concerned with finding strategies to alleviate inequity and exclusion by changing the institutions that perpetuate them. From Pinto’s (2012) viewpoint, social justice is more concerned about achieving equity than equality. While the latter offers the same opportunities to all individuals, the former ensures that these opportunities are distributed fairly, balancing the differences between the advantaged group and the disadvantaged one.

Through this third principle, **diversity**, a plurality in opinions, viewpoints and philosophies is permitted and promoted. This points to the fact that in most countries, interactions between people of different culture and background are both challenging and strenuous. That situation affects students as they come from this multicultural mosaic. Thus they are bound to have diverse abilities, motivations and interests (Perry, 2009). Given that cultural variety, diversity is also experienced in the core curriculum. Students are offered different core curricula and streams, thus more flexible pathways; but also it was allowed to schools to modify and alter these curricula to meet the students’ needs.

Another aspect of diversity refers to multiculturalism. In education, multiculturalism's objectives are three-fold. First, the voices, experiences and contributions of each cultural group have to be represented in all aspects of education. Second, education should be significant, pertinent and meaningful for minority students. And third, it is about enabling all students, and particularly minority ones, to “actively engage and participate in a diverse and pluralistic society” (Perry, 2009, p. 437). Moreover, a multicultural education works towards the academic success of each student.

Fourth, **participation** in education and education policy is concerned with key notions such as power and control, self-determination and decision making. Participation also refers to the citizens' and local communities' right to control education and to shape it (Apple & Beane, 1995; Gutmann, 1999; Perry, 2009). The fact that participation involves every citizen is meant to encourage dialogue and discussion among citizens (Portelli and Solomon, 2001).

This CDT principle can also be seen through a nondiscrimination perspective. According to Perry (2009, p. 439), it means that “no student should be discriminated against receiving an education necessary for adequate political participation.” To a certain extent, this is related to concepts of inclusion, equity and social justice. While plurality and equality are perceived as pivotal to participation, standards and accountability hinder the latter by centralizing control and reducing local decision making according to McNeil (2002, in Perry, 2009).

The main feature of this fifth concept, **choice**, consists in school choice made by both the students and their family, and the school. In the case of the latter, the administration has the authority to decide who gets admitted into the school, usually based on criteria such as academic performance, talents, and so forth. The other aspect, parental choice, is considered by the United

Nations as a basic human right that parents should be allowed to choose the type of education befitting their children. From this perspective, participation and cultural diversity are very much encouraged. Furthermore, choice is also perceived by critical democratic theorists as a free and reasoned practice in the sense that members of a democratic society should have the right, ability and responsibility to make their own decisions, to participate in the decision-making process that affects their lives (Portelli & Solomon, 2001). Even though there are tensions in the principle of choice which I further outline below, for the purpose of this study, choice is about giving to pupils the possibility of choosing the contents of what they learn. It is about giving options over what they want to learn. It resembles what Apple and Beane (1995) called a *democratic curriculum* which “emphasizes access to a wide range of information” and “help[s] young people seek out a range of ideas and to voice their own” (p. 13). It is also about giving teachers, principals, educational managers, parents, and to a certain extent local communities, more opportunities to choose what goes in the educational agenda.

In CDT, the sixth concept of **cohesion** includes integration, solidarity, identity, membership, trust and inclusion. Mainly, it concerns the relationships between people, individually and as a whole, between society and the state. Scholars have advocated for educational policies that promote cohesion and integration, arguing that it increases tolerance and respect among different groups, as much as it has cognitive and affective impact on students. In other words, these policies and the ensuing mechanisms should touch all aspects of education, all groups of students regardless of their race, ethnicity, socio-economic background and academic ability.

The seventh key concept in CDT, **engagement**, relates closely to participation. The main difference relies in the fact that citizens meaningfully participate and engage in policy decisions

and policy making that will lead to social changes. Moreover, this engagement is exercised by critically thinking about the policies in question, discussing them with peers, thus “deep[ly] learning about things that matter” (Darling-Hammond, 1996, cited in Portelli & Solomon, 2001, p. 17), all the while respecting and being tolerant of others’ opinions (Portelli & Solomon, 2001).

As for **inclusion**, this eighth principle is very much associated with social justice and equity, as well as participation. It ensures that all citizens, through efficient participation, have “equal and effective opportunities to make their views known to other citizens” (Pinto, 2012, p. 18). That also gives them the opportunity to be part of the decision making process of policies that affect them; in a sense, having some degree of control of the agenda.

Another way of understanding this concept is through Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley and Goodlad’s (2004) notion of “schooling for some”. It means that schooling and education are only available for some, that governments have the power to decide and determine who goes to school, how much schooling they get, and moreover “who will learn what under what rules of inclusion and exclusion” (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004, p. 7). Therefore they argue for ‘total inclusion’ because it is imperative for democracy as well as the well-being of society. From Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley and Goodlad’s (2004) point of view, total inclusion includes:

Education for all, without exclusivity on the basis of caste: ethnicity, race, sex, heredity, religion, lifestyles and sexual preferences, wealth, assumed intelligence, physical disability, or whatever else humans are able to think up as bases for discrimination (p. 7).

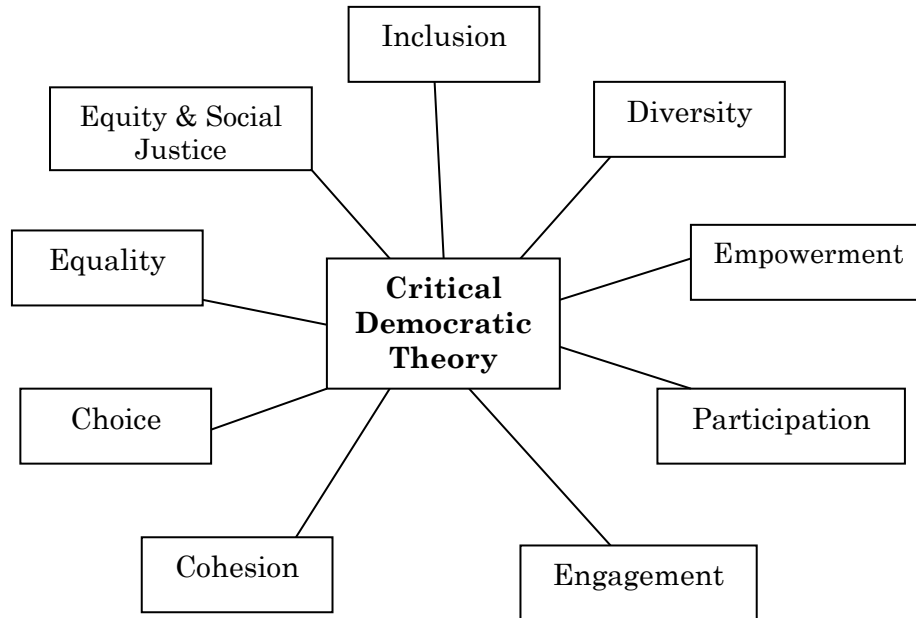
This final key concept, **empowerment**, goes beyond participation and engagement. It is best achieved through a redistribution of power by ensuring that all citizens, particularly the

marginalized, are included in decision-making processes and political activities in which they would normally have been excluded. Empowerment in a democratic society ensures that its members, through the education they receive, collectively participate in the decision-making and policy-making of issues that matter; in other words, “in the process through which their society is being shaped and reproduced” (Carr & Harlett, 1996, cited in Portelli & Solomon, 2001, p. 17).

In summary, Figure 3.1.2 gives a general idea of what critical democratic theory entails based on the above mentioned key concepts that compete against each other at the same time as they complement one another. In fact, critical democratic theory seeks to find a balance between these values because as Fowler (2004, in Perry, 2009) suggests, education policy cannot support all these values at the same time.

It should also be noted that these concepts not only overlap with one another, but tensions also exist between and within them. For example, equality’s focus on equal opportunities is often viewed as being in tension with the equity principle of equal outcomes. In addition, there are also tensions with respect to the principle of choice, which is considered by critics such as Ravitch (2010) as being just another form of inequality, both educational and social; thus considerably reducing disadvantaged students’ access to schooling. Furthermore, opponents argue that school choice not only “undermines social cohesion and a sense of public good” (Miller-Kahn & Smith, 2001, cited in Perry, 2009, p. 441) but it also nurtures inequality and segregation. This points to further tensions in how different people conceptualize the principles associated with critical democratic theory, and how these terms have been used in educational policy reforms.

**Figure 3.1.2 Conceptual framework for Critical Democratic Theory**



The authors from whom I drew the abovementioned principles were themselves inspired by two critical theorists, John Dewey (1964) and Paulo Freire (1978, 2011), whose theories have helped writers such as Portelli and Solomon, Pinto and Perry develop their own framework. In this last section, I will provide insights of these critical theorists’ –as well as others– democratic principles that will assist the framework I have put forth previously; for the former blends well with the latter.

According to Dewey (1964), education and democracy are related in the sense that the society that composes a democracy does so through **interactions** and **shared understandings and interests** from various groups. He thus stresses the importance of **communication between citizens, experts and politicians**. This cultivates a **collective sense of good** as well as encourages personal initiative and adaptation. Essentially, in a democratic society, education promotes **citizen’s growth, diversity and cohesion**, as well as **freedom**.



In a democratic education, Freire (2011) puts emphasis on **working together**. This is best achieved when citizens develop their own **agency** and **capability**. In fact the **agency and capability of each citizen** are what constitutes the basis of his/her potential transformation. It is about a shift in thinking: from perceiving oneself as passive object to becoming an active subject. It is about believing in one's capability of changing the world through one's action. Consequently, empowerment results with him/her taking action. And that is when social changes happen.

Freire further acknowledges that **action** and **reflection** work together, are intertwined in an effort towards a democratic society through democratic education; thus creating what he calls a praxis. By that he means that action has to be reflective, should be preceded with dialogue and discussion; and that reflection needs to act, should take the next step and put the fruits of the dialogue and discussion into action, into concrete deeds. In other words, dialogue allows for reflective participation by those involved. From his point of view, democracy thus relies on **dialogue, participation, political and social responsibility**, as well as a degree of **social and political solidarity** (Freire, 1978).

According to Freire (2011), authentic education, either of children or youth or adults, is not done by the teacher *for/about* the learner, but rather **by the teacher *with* the learner**, “mediated by the world [...] which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to view or opinions about it” (p. 93). While the curriculum should include the students' lives, the fact is that teachers can have more pertinent impact on the learners' educational outcomes and on their performance (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006).

Furthermore, Dahl (1998) talks about **political equality** in the sense that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in the political life and the decision-making process affecting society. That gives citizens a certain **control of the agenda** as they have the opportunity to decide also what is important and what is put on this political agenda. For that to happen, Dahl (1998) refers to not only an **enlightened understanding** where citizens are conscious of what policy debates are going on, of their significance, the alternatives and their consequences but also refers to an effective participation in which citizens are able to express their opinions and viewpoints about the policies in question.

Given the fact that this research seeks to find trends and patterns from two different countries as they implement EFA policies, this lens will, as Perry (2009) asserts, "... aid cross-national comparison by clarifying the key concepts of democratic education and increasing our understanding of their complexity and great variation" (p. 446). Thus by using this framework that meshes with the EFA components, it will provide a means with which a country's outcomes regarding EFA goals can be critically measured.

### **Concluding summary: Relevance of critical democratic theory to this project**

In this study, the chosen conceptual framework has its specific purpose. The critical democratic theory as it applies to education policy will enable me to look in depth, and critically analyze Barbados' and Ghana's implementation processes and their results. Thus it will allow me to focus on 'democratic' trends and patterns that might be of use to other democratic societies in the Global South. While this normative theory is critical of the settings and policies it analyzes, it proposes its own perspective of the whole situation, of the issues and/or concerns this

project seeks to point out. For instance, when looking at the various programs each country put forth, we should not lose sight of the role these principles play in each country's educational system. From diversity, equality, participation to engagement and empowerment to agency, decision makers who take these issues into account are more likely to implement equitable and socially just policies. As Apple and Beane (1995) indicated, democratic schools and, by extension, democratic education systems "do not happen by chance" (p. 9). They result from a series of explicit attempts through policies, programs and actions put in place and embedded in certain principles.

In the next chapter, I explain in detail the methodology and methods this study was based upon.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY & METHODS**

### **Introduction**

This research seeks to answer questions relating to implementation processes of the EFA goals and ensuing outcomes in Barbados and the Republic of Ghana, and then compare the results from each in order to find trends and patterns. To achieve these objectives, I have opted for a qualitative comparative case-study. In this chapter, I will first describe the selected research design, the comparative case-study, and the reason for this choice. Then I will explain in details the method I will use to analyze the data: document analysis. And finally, I will look at some of the concerns and limitations related to this project.

#### **4.1. Research design: A comparative case-study**

As a qualitative research study based on an inductive method, a case-study seeks to provide “an in-depth, intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions... observable phenomena... intentions” (Gonzales, 2008, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 219). Case-study is firmly embedded in reality, providing a deeply probing observation and an intensive analysis of a multifaceted phenomenon (Schweisfurth, 1999). It also means that every detail, every factor, every aspect of the topic under study must (and will, in the case of this project) be taken into account, offering thus a holistic view of the phenomenon. However, it is important to stress that the subtleties and complexities of cases can also be contradictory, at times, as they reflect different perspectives. In fact, certain scholars consider these discrepancies

and conflicting definitions as essential phenomena of case-study (Simons, 1987, in Schweisfurth, 1999; Schweisfurth, 1999).

This inductive method, known as well as the method of discovery, aims at finding and discovering differences and particularities between the cases of “successful” or “on track” countries in the Global South, drawing out the uniqueness of each site. And as such, it seeks to “preserve the wholeness and integrity” of each setting (Silverman, 2010, p. 138). This falls in the same line as Yin’s argument (2009, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) for case studies, recognizing and accepting that

there are many variables operating in... case[s], and, hence, to catch the implications of these variables usually requires more than one tool for data collection and many sources of evidence (p. 289).

In other words, in this case study I will use a combination of data sources to help understand and clarify what is happening in the field and how EFA policies are implemented in the chosen countries, which are the two cases of this study.

A comparative educational study provides thorough descriptions of the consequences of certain courses of actions, of certain policies and their implementation, coming from different settings. It is considered a useful methodology as it represents circumstances or phenomena that are special, if not unique, and that provides an intensive and rich study (Bradshaw & Wallace, 1991). According to Noah (1988), there are several reasons for conducting multi-sites studies such as the description of educational systems, processes and outcomes, assistance to/in the development of educational institutions and practices, throwing light into the relationships between education and society and establishing statements about education that are valid in more

than one country. In this sense, the comparative aspect of a study can provide “a more systematic and theorized understanding of the relationship *between* context and process, structure and action” (Broadfoot, 1999, cited in Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006, p. 2).

In a comparative case study, units of analysis represent the basis of what the case study will be about as well as the settings under observation. This refers to what Schweisfurth (1999) terms ‘selection’: what to study? who to study? and the boundaries of each case. The unit of analysis for this comparative study is EFA implementation strategies and policies and the settings are the two selected countries, Barbados and The Republic of Ghana. The rationale for the countries’ choice has been explained in the introduction chapter. In particular, I am interested in exploring the following factors, among others: the role of governments, NGOs and local communities in the implementation of EFA’s goals.

Aside from examining the implementation processes of EFA’s goals in Barbados and Ghana, collecting evidence about the EFA scheme in these countries will also include detailed descriptions of each context, which is a critical part of a comparative case-study. Authors like Geertz (1983, in Taylor & Bodgan, 1998) and Emerson (1983, in Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) call them ‘thick descriptions’ as they present in detail the context and meaning of the events under study, shedding light into what is relevant. For this project, the descriptions take into account each country’s government and its structure, its economy, its demography and its education system and structure. Providing such information will help understand and decipher what might happen if another country decides to ‘borrow’ the policies under investigation. Therefore, this study serves both to support and caution against potential policy decisions, as Phillips and Schweisfurth (2008) put it, particularly given the fact that my third research question has to do with lessons other Global South countries can learn from the two selected sites.

## 4.2. Document analysis

Documents represent the primary type of data used for this project mainly because of their relatively efficient method, availability, cost-effectiveness, lack of obstructiveness and reactivity, stability, exactness and coverage (Bowen, 2009). Broadly they include graphics, texts, reports, statistical tables, microfilms; in fact, “anything that bears marks, signs, or symbols which have a meaning or conveys a message to someone” (Akanmori, 2011, p. 51; see also Weber, 1990). And since this study is based solely on them, a document analysis will help me “craft the story” (Yin, 2009, p. 130).

Bowen (2009) provides a clear definition of document analysis as it relates to this project. It is a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluation of documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material” (p. 27). In other words, documents will be examined and interpreted as a way of understanding and explaining the subject or phenomenon under study, as well as a way of generating knowledge. As such document analysis provides a window into several dimensions (political, historical, social, economic and cultural) of a phenomenon (Mills, Duperos & Wiebe, 2009). Scholars like Weber (1990) refer to it as ‘content analysis’ which is defined as “a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (p. 9). These inferences concern the sender(s) of the message, the message itself or the audience of the message (Weber, 1990).

Therefore, document analysis is about analyzing the intention and the motivation of the writer(s), the purpose and rationale of a document within a particular historic moment. As such, it provides useful insights into a specific issue or helps “identify patterns, trends, and consistency

or inconsistencies in textual documents” (Akanmori, 2011, p. 52). And that is precisely what this study seeks to find in comparing the EFA policies of the two selected countries.

For this study, I chose documents that report each country’s actions towards the six EFA goals. These reports were produced by each country’s Ministry of Education and its various agencies, and were submitted to UNESCO from 1996 to 2008. I also looked at other documents produced by the Ministries of Education that complemented the UNESCO reports.

The first thing the researcher needs to do is understand the documents. Then the documents should be analyzed in order “to get underneath what it says on the surface” (Stovel, 2000, p. 502). This implies that the documents are broken into several parts or elements as a means to “reveal their relation [...] to one another” (Stovel, 2000, p. 505). To sharpen that process, these questions were considered in this study:

- “What type of document is it?
- “Does it have any particularly unique characteristics?
- “When was it written?
- “Who was the author and what was his/her position?
- “For whom (what audience) was the document written?
- “What is the purpose of the document?
- “Why was the document written?
- “What evidence is there within the document that indicates why it was written?” (The Australian National University, 2009)
- “Was this document meant to be public or private?
- “How accurate or reliable is the source of the document and the information presented?
- “Is the information relevant to the topic being discussed or analyzed?
- “Are there any contradictions in the information presented? Or from information presented in other sources on the same topic?



- “Where was this document produced? Does the geographical location influence the content?”
- “Is the document in the original language in which it was produced? Is the translation authoritative?” (Bélanger, 2006, cited in Akanmori, 2011, p. 52-53).

As an analytical method, document analysis presents specific advantages that mesh well with this project. The first attraction is that the material resources needed are minimal. As Akanmori (2011) suggests, document analysis mainly requires time for selection and analysis of documents, and that will depend on the breadth of the available relevant literature as well as the scope of the research. Furthermore, document analysis facilitates the navigation and sifting through the various documents available.

### ***Data sources and gathering***

Data pertaining to these settings’ EFA implementation actions came from primary sources such as the EFA website (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/>) and the UNESCO website ([www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)) and documents and reports, the World Bank website ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)), the UNICEF website ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)), the two selected countries’ Ministries of Education websites: Barbados Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (<http://www.mes.gov.bb/>) and the Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education (<http://www.moe.gov.gh/>). The primary sources I examined were mainly reports of various implementation processes. They included the following:

- **From UNESCO-EFA:** EFA Global Monitoring Reports (from 2002 to 2012).

- **From UNESCO-International Bureau of Education:** World Data on Education: Barbados (UNESCO-IBE, 2010); World Data on Education: Ghana (UNESCO-IBE, 2010).
- **From Barbados:** Miniature Digest of Education Statistics 1999-2000 (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2000); Miniature Digest of Education Statistics 2000-2001 (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001a); Miniature Digest of Education Statistics 2001-2002 (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, 2002); Miniature Digest of Education Statistics 2009-2010 (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2011); Education in Barbados Information Handbook (Planning & Research Section, 2000); Historical Developments of Education in Barbados 1686-2000 (Planning Research and Development Unit, 2000); Economic and Social Report 2001 (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002); The Development of Education: National Report of Barbados (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b); The Development of Education: National Report of Barbados (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008); Barbados Human Resource Development Strategy 2011-2016 (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development & Ministry of Labour, 2010).
- **From Ghana:** The development of education 1994-1996: National Report from Ghana (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 1996); National Report of Ghana (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001); The development of education: National report of Ghana (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004); 10-Year work plan for education in Ghana (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2006); Report on the development of education in Ghana (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008).

I also used UNdata (<http://data.un.org/>) and CIA's World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>) as sources for statistical data and information about both countries' backgrounds.

Secondary sources have been used as well, as they represent scholars' interpretation and points of view about EFA's implementation processes in the two chosen countries. Through the

primary and secondary sources, the available data sources consisted mainly of written records, reports, tables, graphs, policy documents, articles and microfiches. As recommended by Yin (1981), the protocol I followed was based only on relevant data pertaining to the implementation processes and strategies and the outcomes of EFA policies in Barbados and Ghana.

### *Coding and Analysis of data*

Taylor & Bogdan (1998) see data analysis as a creative and dynamic process, for it is an ongoing discovery that helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at hand, in the context in which it evolves. Analyzing the documents is about analyzing the collected and coded data. It is viewed as the process of working with the data, organizing it, breaking it into units, synthesizing and finding patterns, and discovering what is important and relevant for others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). According to Yin (2009), data analysis is concerned with the examination, categorization, tabulation, testing or recombination of evidence in order to draw what the author calls, “empirically based conclusions” (p. 126). Through this document analysis, useful data was identified, sorted and separated from those not relevant to the study. Furthermore, silences, gaps and omissions were also pointed out as they were significant to the study’s research questions (Rapley, 2007).

This project seeks to discover and describe patterns, commonalities, differences and similarities, generate themes and examine applications and operations in different contexts (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). As such, the analysis of the documents was based on a “back-and-forth interplay with data” first by keeping this question in mind “What kinds of ideas are mentioned in [the] documents?” (Bowen, 2009, p. 37), then by inductively identifying patterns, by constantly checking and rechecking concepts, by scrutinizing and comparing data

organized in categories. In other words, it was about looking at how the different themes were interrelated.

In order to analyze these documents, themes and categories emerged from the literature review and they served for coding throughout the data collection. In fact, coding as an integral part of the methodology of document analysis does nothing more than “compressing many words of text into fewer content categories” (Stemler, 2001, cited in Akanmori, 2011, p. 58; see also Weber, 1990). Coding deals with the underlying ideas of the documents, rather like a “summary mechanism for categorizing ideas for analysis” (Akanmori, 2011, p. 60). The various code units, also known as recording units (Weber, 1990), were the categories used for data collection and the analysis as they reflected and related to the key concepts of the study (Akanmori, 2011). Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to them as being astringent, meaning “they pull together a lot of material, thus permitting analysis” (p. 58). In doing so, measures were taken to insure that no ambiguities or confusion or hidden meanings exist. Through the review of the literature on EFA, I identified descriptive codes that pinpointed and labeled the data, which require little interpretation initially. These were:

- Economics and finances
- Politics
- Administration
- Pedagogy and programs
- Human resources
- Non-human resources

Later on in the analysis, these descriptive codes led to pattern codes that were inferential and explanatory (Miles & Huberman, 1994). That has helped me interpret, interconnect and

conceptualize the data; for example, supply-side and demand-side factors regroup and categorize some themes, thus facilitating analysis and discussion. Furthermore, Miles and Huberman (1994) stress the importance of defining the codes used in order to avoid confusion and to assure that their meaning is precise and clear, in case another researcher is doing a similar study. In sum, coding occurred at different levels of the analysis, from the descriptive ones to the inferential and made the huge amount of data I collected intelligible and meaningful.

#### **4.3. Research concerns & limitations**

From the start I do acknowledge that this study relies solely on documents available to the public. As it often happens in document analysis, some pertinent documents may be missing or unavailable to the researcher. I am also conscious of the fact that to carry on this study, I have chosen to rely solely on documents which in itself can be considered as a limitation since interviews and/or surveys (or any other research methods) were excluded from the methodology design. Nonetheless, in this section, I will principally discuss two limitations to this methodology that I will address throughout the study. And they are trustworthiness and transferability of findings.

##### ***Trustworthiness***

Addressing this issue of trustworthiness, also labeled internal validity or credibility or authenticity, is very essential for my thesis considering the fact that I was drawing lessons from which other countries can learn. Mainly, trustworthiness looks at how authentic my results and findings will be, and if I am portraying a true picture of the reality of these settings (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2006). The fact that this study primarily focuses on and uses official government documents and reports is a limitation to this project.

According to Bearson (2013), even when government records and documents are factual and solid, they also reveal only what governments allow the general public to know; and as such they are written in order to maintain a certain image that governments are concerned to portray. Furthermore given the fact that most reports and documents are written with specific purposes and are directly or indirectly “shaped by systems of regulation and monitoring established by nation states and, increasingly, by international agencies” (Scott, 1990, p. 59), Finnegan (2006) cautions that

Who the supposed audience is and the extent to which the creator of the account/speech/report shares the audience’s preconceptions are likely to affect both what is said and what is left unsaid (p. 145).

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) further acknowledge that these official documents are viewed by many researchers as “extremely subjective” because they present the biases of the promoters (in this case, the government agency), an “unrealistically glowing picture”; it is rather an “official perspective” (p. 137) of the subject under study. Moreover Scott (1990) states that “all account of social events are of course ‘distorted’, as there is always an element of selective accentuation in the attempt to describe social reality” (p. 22).

However, there is still value in making use of official documents despite the limitations mentioned above. By looking at the notion of trustworthiness from another vantage point, it is clear that the various documents used for this study offer an “official perspective” of the EFA reality in both countries under study. Furthermore, it is mentioned in the conclusion chapter that considering other data sources in conducting further studies on the implementation of EFA represents another venue for researchers.

To deal with that particular ethical concern, I “cross-check[ed] information” from different vantage points, as Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) would put it. In fact, I did a triangulation of sources in order to have “the picture as clear and suitably meaningful as we can get it” (Stake, 2006, p. 77). In this study, qualitative and quantitative data stemmed from three different sources: international with organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF, national with government reports and secondary literature from scholars’ research. I looked at themes emerging from these multiple sources and diverse types of data found. Then I compared, regrouped and cross-checked all the obtained information; thus avoiding being accused of having one single source or one single method or one investigator’s bias (Stake, 2006; Bowen, 2009). Therefore, if there is convergence in the themes and information found from these various sources and in multiple formats, then I can say that the study is trustworthy (or internally valid or credible or authentic) as well as the results and findings.

### ***Transferability of findings***

In the policy arena, the notion of transferability of findings can be replaced with what Ball (1998), Levin (1998) and Lingard (2010) call “policy borrowing” and “policy learning”. That notion refers to governments looking at and taking up what their counterparts are doing and applying it to their contexts. Also referred to as external validity or fittingness, this research issue asks questions such as “Are the characteristics of the original sample of [...] settings, processes (etc.) fully described enough to permit adequate comparisons with other samples?” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 279). In that same vein, this issue of generalization consists of making inferences to a broader sample than that used in the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2006; Silverman, 2010). In other words, it is about “transferring assertions from those

cases to others” (Stake, 2006, p. 88), presumably for policy decision, policy-making and collective practice.

As it will be exploring the EFA policies in only two countries, this study does not generalize its findings to all countries from the Global South. The experiences of these two countries are solely theirs. They are deeply rooted and embedded in their specific contexts. This study’s goals seek to provide the type of comparative data and information needed by one country to improve its own policies. The elements of comparison provided will be rich and descriptive. In fact, these context-relevant statements will offer enough data allowing those in charge to assess the findings and decide about the appropriateness of contextual and cultural adoption and adaptation. Crossley and Vulliamy (1984, cited in Schweisfurth, 1999) clearly state this point of view:

... given the epistemological foundations of case study [...], no attempt is made to extrapolate general laws or universal applicable recommendations [...]. Rather, at its broadest, this study attempts to offer [...] insights and critical perspectives on the process [...], to generate increased awareness and understanding of the factors that influence the functioning of such change strategies (p. 337).

However, in the policy arena, there is more of a tendency, as Halpin and Troyna (1995, cited in Levin, 1998) put it, to borrow policy from other countries for “largely symbolic purposes than there is of governments looking carefully at the *results* of each other’s experience” (p. 136). This research, as any other policy research, cannot avoid that type of situation since the real and effective use of it rests in the hands of those responsible for the country’s EFA policy implementation. Therefore, any lessons drawn from this comparative research should be taken with caution as it represents just the perspectives of one researcher drawn from only two countries.



### **Concluding summary**

The study seeks to find patterns and trends in comparing and analyzing EFA implementation processes and strategies in Barbados and Ghana. As such, a comparative case-study as a research design is a good fit for this study because the research questions find their answers in the very definition of document analysis. Moreover, this project concerns an educational policy which is part of the international community's agenda. Therefore, issues such as trustworthiness and transferability of findings take a front row seat and are addressed before, during and after the different stages of the research. With the methodology and methods clearly explained, the following chapter, Findings, will present the results and findings of this study.

## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

### **Introduction**

The first part of this chapter offers a description of each setting: a general background including the demography (population, ethnic groups and language), the country's history, the government's structure, the economy and a background of the educational system. The second section first defines the codes used, then gives an account on each country's EFA status so far and finally reports the data collected from the various documents for each country. This chapter represents, in a sense, the core of this project as it describes and reports the findings related to the first two research questions posed in Chapter I, which are: (1) What are the programs, approaches or actions that Barbados and Ghana have adopted to meet their EFA goals? In other words, what are the policies that have been put in place by the governments and educational communities in these countries to achieve these goals? (2) What results have these actions produced? In other words, what are the outcomes from the implementation of these policies?

### **5.1. Barbados and Ghana: Background contexts**

#### ***Barbados: General background***

Barbados, an Eastern Caribbean island at the border of the Atlantic Ocean, was habituated by Amerindians for over 800 years (from 650 to 1540). Invaded by Europeans in 1625, the first groups of English settled in 1627. These pioneers relied on their fields of tobacco,

cotton and indigo. Sugar cane, its machinery and slave trading prospered during the mid-1630s. During this colonial period, Barbados was ruled by a governor and an appointed council. Even with anti-slavery actions and resistance, it was not until 1807 that the slave trade was abolished, and 1834-1838 when the emancipation process began. Following this period, Barbados experienced several issues such as economic crisis, depression and poverty, conflicts of interests between planters (employers) and workers, tenancy, exclusion of blacks and creoles from political and administrative life, political unrest and the rise of a merchant elite. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, despite much turmoil, things started to slowly change through social, political and economic organization, mobilization and reform. And after years of negotiations with England, on November 30, 1966, Barbados gained its full sovereignty and became an independent state within the British Commonwealth (Hoyos, 1978; Beckles, 1990; Chamberlain, 2010).

In 2013, Barbados had a population estimated at 288,725 inhabitants with 17.1% being 14 years old and under, and 25% under 18 years old. The country is divided into 11 parishes with Bridgetown, the capital, counting itself 122,000 habitants. English is the official language and is shared by six major ethnic groups which are Black/Afro-Caribbean, White/Euro-Caribbean, Chinese, East Indian, Arab and Mixed ancestry (EFA GMR, 2012; CIA, 2013a; UNdata, 2013a). The political system is multi-party, based on the British Westminster electoral system, with the party that wins the majority appointing the Prime Minister and forming the government. Having a bicameral legislature, Barbados elects members of the House of Assembly; and the Governor General, on recommendation, appoints members of the Senate (Inniss, 2007).

With fragile natural resources, Barbados has adopted an open economy approach based on a narrow range of exports and a heavy dependence on imported goods. The country has diversified its economy which includes tourism, light manufacturing, financial services and informatics, sugar industry and other agricultural activities. However, according to Inniss (2007), the country's open economy remains vulnerable to external shocks such as the slight recession following the September 11, 2001 attack in the USA and the inflation over the high world oil prices. Nonetheless, Barbados is one of the Caribbean countries with the highest GDP per capita estimated at \$14,604.58 Canadian (U\$14,497.30) (Inniss, 2007; EFA GMR, 2012; UNdata, 2013a). In addition, in 2008, unemployment in Barbados was at its lowest at 8%.

The nationalized health system is part of the social safety net available to Barbadian citizens. It is under the government's responsibility as both the regulator and the provider. And as such, services, facilities and essential drugs are free of cost to all in government-funded institutions. In fact, the government allocates 16% of its expenditure to the Ministry of Health for primary care, health promotion, education and occupational health (Inniss, 2007). Moreover, special health programs are offered to pregnant mothers and adolescents.

### ***Barbados: Educational background***

Three phases marked the development of formal education in post-colonial Barbados. During the first period (1945-1960), the curriculum was consolidated and the system expanded. The second phase (1960-1980) witnessed an emphasis on equity and fairness of the education system (free secondary schooling, social support systems). And during the third period (post 1980), training and human resources development for the new technology and communication era were highlighted (Downes, 2001).

Two major reforms had a profound impact on the educational system. The 1981 Education Act, proclaimed in 1983, defined the structure of the system, made provision for private schooling (2 private special education schools and 9 private secondary schools in 2009-2010) and established compulsory schooling (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b; Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development, 2011). The 1995 White Paper on Education Reform included many initiatives which encompassed a child-centered approach, curriculum reform, focus on information technology in curriculum, diagnostic testing and assistance to children-at-risk (Planning Research and Development Unit, 2000).

The Ministry of Education, which is currently called Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, is mandated by the government to provide education to all Barbadians. Presently, it is divided into 13 departments/sections: Curriculum and Assessment; Education Project Implementation Unit; Examinations; Media Resource Department; Nursery and Primary; Planning, Research and International Relations; Programme Coordinating Unit; School Meals; Secondary Education; Student Revolving Loan Fund; Student Support Services; Teacher Evaluation; and Tertiary (Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2013a, 2013b). The Ministry delegates the management of primary schools to school committees and of secondary schools to Boards of Management; and education officers supervise the schools grouped in school districts (UNESCO-IBE, 2010; Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2013a, 2013b).

The Barbadian educational system is a national system that has 3 levels. The primary stage caters to children from 3 to 11 years old. It includes pre-primary education (3-5 years old) taught in nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools; and primary education divided into the 5-7 years-old group who follows an early childhood care and education (ECCE) program

and the junior group (8-11 years old) who follows the national curriculum. The secondary stage groups pupils from 11+ to 16+ years old. And the tertiary, post-secondary level offers different types of education: teachers' college, polytechnic and vocational, community college and university education. Education is compulsory for all Barbadian children and youth from 5 to 16 years old. In 2010, the Barbadian government was responsible for 4,937 pre-primary pupils in 9 state-funded infant and nursery schools as well as in primary schools, 19,819 primary school-aged pupils in 70 public primary schools and 19,333 secondary school-aged youth enrolled in 22 public secondary schools with two of them being single-sex schools (Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development, 2011; EFA GMR, 2012; Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2013a, 2013b).

### ***Republic of Ghana: General background***

The Republic of Ghana, a Western African country located on the Gulf of Guinea and bordered by the Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Togo, was inhabited by native tribes such as the Ashanti before the Portuguese came, settled and established a trade relationship with the locals in 1471. During the next two centuries, other Europeans followed and established gold trade. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the American slave trades forged various alliances and rivalries between Europeans and local tribes. The abolition of the slave trades forced these groups to turn to agriculture and legitimate commerce such as cocoa production and export. Since it was declared a British colony in 1874, the society in the country has changed and became more individualist and quasi-capitalist (Howard, 1978). The country's push towards independence resulted in a series of riots in 1948, strikes and trade union mobilization, and the rise of consciousness among Ghanaians (Library of Congress, 1994; Cooper, 1996). On March 6, 1957, this western African state, known at the time as the Gold Coast, became the first British

colony in Africa to become a free and independent nation, Ghana, and a member of the British Commonwealth. Three years later, on July 1, 1960, Ghana was declared a republic with its first president.

In 2013, Ghana had a population estimated at 25,199,609 people with 38.4% aged between 0 and 14 years old, and 54% under 18 years old. Accra, the capital, counts 2,573,000 habitants and is located in one of the country's 10 regions which are divided into 110 districts. English is the official language of the country; however 5 native languages are spoken by a significant portion of the Ghanaian population. Five major ethnic groups –divided within themselves– represent the population's demographic makeup (EFA GMR, 2012; CIA, 2013b; UNdata, 2013b). Ghana's government rules through presidential democracy with members of the Parliament being elected and with an independent judiciary system. Moreover, an urban and an area council are present in each district, as well as unit committees. In accord with the government decentralization efforts, all these institutions are responsible for planning their development based on their needs (Agorsah, Amponsah, Etse, Sabaa & Sackey, 2002).

Ghana's economy is agro-based with 70% of employment from this sector which has decreased over the years. The industrial sector, however, has been picking up fast with communication and information services making a serious impact in the country's economy. In fact, services provide 50% of the GDP<sup>1</sup> while agriculture brings in 40%; and the GNP<sup>2</sup> per capita has increased and reached 1,343.07 Canadian Dollars (US\$1,333.20) in 2010 (Agorsah *et al.*, 2002; EFA GMR, 2012; UNdata, 2013b). One of the first countries to undergo structural adjustment, Ghana remains one of the heavily indebted poor countries with a debt increase of

<sup>1</sup> GDP: Gross domestic product.

<sup>2</sup> GNP: Gross national product.

72% as of 2002. Therefore, the country's economy is vulnerable to fluctuations in the global prices of exported key commodities such as gold, cocoa and crude oil (Agorsah *et al.*, 2002).

The health status and infrastructures in Ghana vary depending on the regions. The government has set up health education in order to promote preventive health measures and protection against HIV/AIDS and to enhance children's nutritional health status. Construction of new facilities and renovation and upgrade of existing ones have been part of the government efforts to improve the health system. In spite of all the gains, the Ghanaian health system still faces issues such as inadequate access to quality care (long travel distance), potable water, modern facilities for waste disposal management, infectious and parasitic diseases (premier causes of death and disability) and facility disparities between urban and rural areas. Another issue affecting Ghanaians' health is the "cash and carry" system that consists in paying for health services before and after treatments, although in 2003, an alternative to this system, the National Health Insurance Scheme was established to provide basic healthcare services to Ghanaians who have come to accept it over the years (Directorate of Corporate Affairs & Strategic Direction, 2013; National Health Insurance Authority, 2013). The "cash and carry" system has prevented many Ghanaians from accessing the services, particularly those living in rural areas, although there is a government policy against this system that protects vulnerable groups such as the poor, children under 5 years old, pregnant women, people with specified diseases and adults over 70 years old (Agorsah *et al.*, 2002; Ministry of Health, 2007).

### ***Republic of Ghana: Educational background***

Since its independence, Ghana's educational system has evolved. Two main reforms reshaped the system. The 1987 Education Reform tied the development of the school system to



the socio-economic realities of the country. Then, in 2002, the Review of Education Reforms shifted and embraced a holistic perspective of the citizen (well-balanced, self-actualization) (UNESCO-IBE, 2010b).

The Ghanaian Ministry of Education is responsible for the provision and management of education in the country. The Ministry has eighteen agencies under its wing: Ghana Education Service (GES), Ghana Library Board, Council for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (COTVET), Non-Formal Education Division, National Service Secretariat, West African Examinations Council, Secretary General, Ghana National Commission for UNESCO, National Council for Tertiary Education, National Accreditations Board, Ghana Book Development Council, National Board for Professional and Technical Examinations, National Inspectorate Board, Encyclopaedia Africana, Centre for Distance Learning and Open Schooling, Ghana Education Trust Fund, Funds for Procurement and Management Unit, Students' Loan Trust and Bureau of Ghana Languages (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2013). The management of education is done at divisional, regional and district levels with each level headed by a director of education (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001).

The education system in Ghana includes: pre-school education in nurseries, crèches and kindergarten (2-6 years old); basic education divided into kindergarten (4-6 years old), primary (6-12 years old) and junior secondary (12-15 years old); senior secondary education (15-19 years old); and post-secondary education which covers technical and vocational education (3 years), polytechnic education (3 years) and university education (4 years). Education is compulsory for children and youth between 4 and 15 years old (UNESCO-IBE, 2011b). In 2010 and 2011, the pre-tertiary system had a nursery population of 238,670 pupils, a kindergarten population of

1,534,183 pupils, a primary population of 4,078,472 pupils, a junior secondary population of 1,386,252 students and a senior secondary population of 731,685 students (Ministry of Education, 2013).

## 5.2. Results

When looking at and examining documents, either from primary or secondary sources, I have found different types of policies, actions and programs in Barbados' and Ghana's implementation of the EFA's six goals as well as the outcomes and results the former has yielded. I have grouped these policies into six coding categories: economics and finances, politics, administration, pedagogy and programs, human resources and non-human resources. In this section, I first define each coding category, then give a summary of Barbados' and Ghana's EFA status, and lastly report my findings.

### *Definition of coding categories*

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I will explicitly define each coding category. **Economics and finances** deal with every financial aspect of the policy, such as direct or indirect implementation costs, per-pupil funding and supply-side programs. **Politics** refer to the government and its ministries, and their direct and indirect participation and involvement in the education system and its reforms. This category also takes into account the relationships established between the state and any non-governmental parties such as international and local community organizations and financial institutions (local or international). The **administration** category is related to the administration and management of the system at all levels, particularly at the school level. It concerns everything that affects the day-to-day life and activities of

principals (head teachers), teachers and unit/department managers when dealing with implementation policies and actions.

The **pedagogy and programs** category refers to the teaching-learning process at all levels of the system (from pre-primary to post-secondary). It covers length of study, content and programs offered, as well as assessment and evaluation. The **human resources** group includes all and any participants involved in the education system: teachers, administrators (principals/head teachers), staff, parents, community members. The **non-human resources** classification refers to raw materials, physical resources and infrastructure such as school buildings and facilities and instructional material and equipment such as books, computers, audio-visual aids.

### *Status on EFA goals: Results for Barbados & Ghana*

This section shows the results of Barbados' and Ghana's EFA policies and programs. It is meant to showcase both countries' achievements and how they are perceived by UNESCO to be on track of meeting the EFA six goals. These results come from the different EFA Global Monitoring Reports published thus far by UNESCO:

- 2002 Education for All: Is the world on track? ;
- 2003-2004 Gender and Education for All: The Leap To Equality;
- 2005 Education for All: The Quality Imperative;
- 2006 Literacy for life;
- 2007 Strong foundations: Early childhood care and education;
- 2008 Education for all by 2015: Will we make it? ;
- 2009 Overcoming inequality: why governance matters? ;
- 2010 Reaching the marginalized;

- 2011 The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education;
- 2012 Youth and skills: Putting education to work.

Furthermore the various results listed below are used in each country's implementation process as they represent the outcomes of different policies and actions put in place. They will also be used in the Analysis and Discussion section (Chapter VI) as they will help link the policies to the different principles of the conceptual framework.

### **EFA goal 1: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

EFA goal 1 has set the objectives of “Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 15-17). Table 5.2.1 shows both countries' ECCE gross enrolment ratios.

**Table 5.2.1 ECCE gross enrolment ratio (GER).**

	<b>1999</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Barbados</b>	75%	108% <sup>3</sup>
<b>Ghana</b>	31%	69% (2009)

*Sources: EFA GMR, 2012.*

### **EFA goal 2: Universal Primary Education (UPE)**

EFA goal 2, universal primary education, is concerned with access and completion of primary education: “Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and

<sup>3</sup> Gross enrolment ratio (GER) that exceeds 100% means that its value is inflated by the number of early and late entrants and repeaters in schools (EFA GMR, 2003, p. 51).

compulsory primary education of good quality” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 15-17).

Table 5.2.2 shows Barbados’ and Ghana’s net enrolment ratios in primary education.

**Table 5.2.2 Net enrolment ratio (NER) in primary education.**

	1999 <sup>4</sup>	2010
<b>Barbados</b>	95%	95% (2008)
<b>Ghana</b>	61%	84% (2011)

Sources: EFA GMR, 2011, 2012.

### EFA goal 3: Lifelong Learning (LL)

EFA goal 3 looks at the preparation and training of youth and adults for the workplace with the objective of “Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 15-17). Table 5.2.3 shows both countries’ youth literacy rate.

**Table 5.2.3 Youth literacy rate (15-24 years old) with GPI.**

	1990	2000	2005	2010
<b>Barbados</b>	99.8%	99.8%	-	-
<b>GPI</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Ghana</b>	81.8%	91.1%	77% (2006)	81%
<b>GPI</b>	-	-	0.94	0.98

Sources: EFA GMR, 2002, 2008, 2012.

### EFA goal 4: Adult and Youth Literacy (AYL)

EFA goal 4 intends to reduce the illiteracy rate by “Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and

<sup>4</sup> The data in the column 1999 or 2010 indicates data from the school year ending in 1999 (1998-1999) or in 2010 (2009-2010). This is available for every date figuring in the tables in this section.

continuing education for all adults” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 15-17). Table 5.2.4 shows the adult literacy rate for Barbados and Ghana.

**Table 5.2.4 Adult literacy rate.**

	1990	2000	2005	2010
<b>Barbados</b>	99.4%	99.7%	-	-
<b>GPI</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Ghana</b>	58.5%	71.6%	64% (2006)	67%
<b>GPI</b>	-	-	0.80	0.84

Sources: EFA GMR, 2002, 2008, 2012.

### EFA goal 5: Gender Equality

EFA goal 5, gender equality, relates to access, participation and inclusion of girls in schools by “Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 15-17). Barbados’ and Ghana’s results are shown in gender parity in primary education (Table 5.2.5) and in secondary education (Table 5.2.6) which includes the gross enrolment ratio with the gender parity index.

**Table 5.2.5 Gender parity in primary education: gross enrolment ratio (GER) with gender parity index (GPI).**

	1999		2005		2010	
	Total (%)	GPI	Total (%)	GPI	Total (%)	GPI
<b>Barbados</b>	103	1.04	108	1.00	120	1.02
<b>Ghana</b>	81	0.93	94 (2006)	0.98	107 (2011)	1.00 (2011)

Sources: EFA GMR, 2007, 2012.

**Table 5.2.6 Gender parity in secondary education: gross enrolment ratio (GER) with gender parity index (GPI).**

	1999		2005		2010	
	Total (%)	GPI	Total (%)	GPI	Total (%)	GPI
<b>Barbados</b>	108	1.12	113	1.00	101	1.09
<b>Ghana</b>	40	0.81	45 (2006)	0.88 (2006)	58 (2011)	0.91 (2011)

Sources: EFA GMR, 2007, 2012.

### EFA goal 6: Education Quality

EFA goal 6 takes into account the learners, the teaching and learning process and the available resources with the objective of “Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (World Education Forum, 2000, p. 15-17). With respect to Barbados’ and Ghana’s progress, Table 5.2.7 shows their survival rate to grade 5, Table 5.2.8 their transition rate from primary to secondary school, Table 5.2.9 the number of female teachers in primary education, and Table 5.2.10 the pupil-teacher ratio in primary education.

**Table 5.2.7 Survival rate to Grade 5.**

	1999	2008
<b>Barbados</b>	92%	92%
<b>Ghana</b>	66% (2000)	78%

Sources: EFA GMR, 2012.

**Table 5.2.8 Transition rate from primary to secondary school.**

	2007	2008
Barbados	99%	-
Ghana	98%	91%

Sources: EFA GMR, 2011, 2012.

**Table 5.2.9 Female teachers in primary education.**

	1999	2010
<b>Barbados</b>	76%	78%
<b>Ghana</b>	32%	37% (2011)

Sources: EFA GMR, 2010, 2011, 2012.

**Table 5.2.10 Pupil-teacher ratio in primary education.**

	1999	2010
<b>Barbados</b>	18	13
<b>Ghana</b>	30	31 (2011)

Sources: EFA GMR, 2010, 2011, 2012.

### ***Barbados: Policies/actions/programs & outcomes/results***

#### *Economics & finances*

One of Barbados' most important implemented educational strategies is free education for all Barbadian nationals regardless of color, class, religion and gender, and at all levels, from primary to tertiary. The Barbadian Ministry of Education clearly states it in its mission: "ensure equitable access to quality education programmes for all our citizens so that their potential is fully realized" (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008, p. 2). As a result of such a policy, students have full access to primary and secondary public schools; and there is a high percentage of participation in post-secondary/tertiary education (Planning & Research Section, 2000; Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b; Peters & Best, 2005). This policy has a direct impact on the government expenditure on education. In 2009-2010, the total public expenditure on education reached 14.3% of the government total expenditure (with an average of 6.7% for the 2005-2011 period), which represents 7.5% of the GNP (Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development, 2011; EFA GMR, 2012;



UNdata, 2013a). According to the Planning & Research Section (2000), this “reflects the government’s policy of using education as an instrument of social change” (p. 40).

Furthermore, the government provides financial assistance to multiple sectors. Private secondary schools receive assistance in the form of annual subventions for specific areas (science, commercial subject, home economics, industrial arts and crafts), monthly salary grants, and annual bursaries for school fees for eligible pupils (Planning & Research Section, 2000; Inniss, 2007). The Ministry also offers several bursaries, grants and scholarships at the tertiary level to encourage participation and attendance (Inniss, 2007). The government has demonstrated its financial commitment to education in many ways. For example, in 2001, the Ministry purchased \$750,000 Barbadian worth of materials for the Audio Visual Aids Department and the Barbados Community College (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002).

### Politics

Barbados’ Ministry of Education has shown its commitment towards the education of all Barbadians through a series of actions and reforms. One of the first actions was the creation of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council responsible for the planning, implementation and coordination of TVET policies. The 2001 reforms set out the following objectives: establishment of the concept of life-long learning, development of skills for the workplace, equity of delivery of education, equality of opportunity in access, re-evaluation of teachers’ role, sensitization of teachers to learners’ individual needs and organization of partnership between school, parents and community. Another objective is concerned with strengthening the Ministry’s own capacity for more effective planning, management and

evaluation (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). In the 2011-2016 Human Resource Development Strategy, the emphasis has been put on bridging the gap between academic and technical skills, on lifelong learning for adults and youth, on TVET and on second chance opportunities for youth (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development & Ministry of Labour, 2010).

There have been many partnerships on various projects with the international and regional community. Through its Division of Education, the Ministry of Education has continuously “forge[d] relationships with international organizations as they relate [sic] to educational projects and bi-literal agreement” (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008, p. 4). For example, the World Bank assisted during the implementation and the evaluation of different phases of the Education Sector Enhancement Programme; a Chinese construction firm, China State Construction Engineering Corporation, was responsible for the construction of several educational institutions; and the InterAmerican Development Bank and Caribbean Development Bank financed part of the 1998 Education Sector Enhancement Programme (Planning & Research Section, 2000; Pirog & Kioko, 2010). The Barbados government with funding assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank has established a Student Revolving Loan Scheme which helps Barbadian students interested in specific and technical careers (Inniss, 2007). Another type of partnership within the Ministry of Education has to do with collaboration between the different agencies and outside stakeholders which include the private sector, unions and educators, to name a few (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). For example, the committee in charge of curriculum has sought teachers’ participation and involvement during the curriculum reform and has used their

feedback in planning professional development activities and workshops (Pirog & Kioko, 2010; UNESCO-IBE, 2010a).

### Administration

One of the administrative strategies in Barbados is related to the management of the schools. The Ministry delegates the management of primary schools to school committees, and of secondary schools to boards. In the Nursery and Primary department within the Ministry, there is one Senior Education Officer to whom five Education Officers and technical staff report. Each Education Officer is responsible for supervising one of the five primary school districts (Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2013a). The school committees assist the Ministry by overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school plants, their state, and by making recommendations to the Ministry. At the secondary level, each public school is managed by a Board of Management. The boards are in charge of implementing the Ministry's policies, controlling the schools' finances, and making recommendations for teaching staff appointments (UNESCO-IBE, 2010a; Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2013b). The members of these boards are nominated by the Chief Education Officer, the school's parent-teacher association and the Congress of Trade Union and Staff Associations of Barbados. All primary and secondary schools are evaluated on an ongoing basis by the education officers to ensure that they are well managed and are following the curriculum. The evaluation is then reported to the Supervision and Management unit (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b).

Another measure used to achieve equitable access to education has been the co-education system, meaning places are available to boys and girls, both. At the primary level, there are only

six single-sex schools: one all-boys primary and one secondary school, two all-girls primary and two secondary schools (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b).

The pupil-teacher ratio indicates the number of students a teacher is in charge of in a classroom. Over the past decade, Barbados has kept these ratios very low at the pre-tertiary level with a slight decrease. In 2008, in pre-primary schools, there were 16 children for 1 teacher (from 18 in 2005); in primary schools, 13 pupils shared 1 teacher (from 15 in 2005); and the secondary schools counted 15 students for 1 teacher (EFA GMR, 2008, 2011).

### Pedagogy and programs

In 2001, in order to “improve the quality and relevance of the education system” (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b, p. 13), the 2000 Education Sector Enhancement Program, known as EduTech, planned initiatives such as the physical rehabilitation of schools, technological infrastructure, curriculum reform, human resource development through teacher training and institutional strengthening (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). On one hand, there was the curriculum reform, “the bedrock of the entire reform effort and [...] an important vehicle for effecting system-wide change in various areas” (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008, p. 16), that put emphasis on learning at different rate, learning styles, teaching stimuli, and learning that interests and is meaningful.

This curriculum is based on a constructivist philosophy, which gives students the opportunity to operate at different levels within the classroom, experience multiple methods of learning and assessment, think divergently, and apply the knowledge gained to real-life situations (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002, p. 3).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the curriculum included a wide range of skills and knowledge sections such as aesthetics studies, health and family life education and technology, and core subjects like communication (information and communication technologies), literacy, language development, numeracy and mathematics, social studies and natural sciences. In addition, the curriculum also focused on the socialization of students through specific social and emotional learning skills, and on local culture and national identity through heritage conversations and use of indigenous materials (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). Moreover, in 2007, a National Policy on Reading was implemented in order to “extend literacy opportunities for all students”, “increase the consistency with which high quality reading instruction is delivered across the school system”, “provide supplemental, individualized interventions for students with reading challenges” and “emphasize the role of language variation and culture in the acquisition of literacy” (UNESCO-IBE, 2010a, p. 7; see also Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008).

On the other hand, the development of attainment targets and standards for each year group at the primary level was also part of the curriculum reform. An outcomes-based education approach was also introduced and adopted. It links more closely the student’s performance to the teaching and learning strategies. This reform was piloted at all primary schools. To carry this reform out, testing and measurement schemes and programs were put in place (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002). First, ECE pupils in the 4-5 years-old groups undergo the Basic Skills Assessment Battery given at the entry of grade 1 which seeks to measure and ensure children’s readiness to fully participate in, and engage with, the primary curriculum. Teachers use them to help students with specific developmental programs. There is also the Criterion Referenced Test taken at the end of class 2 in order to identify early weaknesses.

Teachers then provide remediation programs before the students sit for the Common Entrance Examination (Inniss, 2007). Finally, all secondary students take a national examination, the Caribbean Examination Council, to determine whether or not they are prepared to enter the workplace or university (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b).

As mentioned above, the government has demonstrated its financial commitment to Barbadian youth. Around 2003, policies and programs to encourage youth development were put in place such as Youth Service, Youth Development Programme and Youth Entrepreneur Programme. These programs were believed effective because they encouraged youth autonomy in various divisions as they relied on an effective information and research system (World Bank, 2003). In addition, the Audio Visual Aids Department within the Ministry of Education is responsible for providing media resource materials, for training educators in the use of educational media, for promoting and facilitating teaching strategies for student-centered learning, and for maintaining an Educational Media Resource Centre as a support to the teaching/learning processes in Barbadian schools (Planning & Research Section, 2000). These actions were carried out to meet with some of the objectives set by government for the reform of the educational system such as:

- “increase the efficacy of the teaching/learning process by encouraging teachers to shift to child-centered and more collaborative forms of learning in their classrooms;
- “prepare students for life in a technologically-advanced society by ensuring that all students who leave schools in the twenty-first century have a good knowledge of, adequate skill in, and favorable attitude towards the use of information technology” (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008, p. 5).

A government policy stipulated that if a primary school had enough space and facilities, it could open a nursery for 3-5 years-old children (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and

Culture, 2001b; Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008). Later on, pre-school education units were added within public primary schools. As a result of such policies, during the 1990 decade, female pupil enrolment rates were higher than males in ECE schools (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). In 2005-2006, as part of the effort to increase early childhood participation, a three-phased Nursery Expansion Programme started with the goal of providing additional ECE units and places. In phase 1, existing government primary schools incorporated ECE units; in phase 2, new nursery schools were open; and in phase 3, a partnership was established with privately owned nurseries in order for them to expand their capacities (Inniss, 2007). Also, during this Nursery Expansion Programme, additional teaching and learning resource materials were provided to teachers as well as teacher training, in order to help them facilitate the expansion program (Inniss, 2007). This recent push towards ECE resulted in 2009-2010, in a gross enrolment ratio of 108% with a gender parity index of 1.00 (EFA GMR, 2012).

Barbadians have access to various post-secondary programs –considered alternative pathways– which use a wide range of qualifications for entry requirements. This ensures a diverse student pool (Peters & Best, 2005). In fact, the tertiary level is divided into three categories: the formal sector with universities, teachers’ college, community college and polytechnic schools; the quasi-formal institutions which provide continuing education to adults; and the informal Adult and Continuing Education sector which includes several private colleges and institutes (Peters & Best, 2005). These various programs provide a second chance education and training for Barbadians which, according to the government, is “built on the concept that, through an organised structure, an individual can actualise an education opportunity

missed or failed the first time around” (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development & Ministry of Labour, 2010, p. 1).

The Ministry has implemented strategies to provide assistance to special needs students such as assistive devices, Individual Education Plans and special education services (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008). Two special schools exist for two groups of pupils: one for those physically impaired (deaf, hearing impaired, blind) and another for those with global development delays and other disabilities (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002). The Ministry of Education plainly expressed its conception of special education in this statement.

... special education is conceived as a technical tool for the service of the regular education stem [sic] and it is offered in specialised institutions and regular educational facilities, in accordance to the necessities of the pupil (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008, p. 9).

Children and youth referred by the Juvenile Courts for detention are also taken care of. They are enrolled in either a general education path (11-14 years old) or a vocational program (those over 14 years old). Furthermore, students-at-risk, emotionally and socially, are placed in a centre that follows the Ministry’s Out-of-School Suspension Programs. In the same vein of reaching to all Barbadian students, the government has developed a policy of flexible transfer. This policy acknowledges that each student progresses at his/her own pace; therefore, it allows students to transition, particularly into secondary education, at the appropriate time, “commensurate with their specific learning, needs” and with specific assistance (Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008, p. 13).



As a result from all the above mentioned reforms, the various policies implemented and the wide range educational institutions from nursery to university, Barbados shows a literacy rate that is above 90%. Furthermore, the transition rate from primary to secondary school is 98% (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b; UNESCO-IBE, 2010a). Table 5.2.11 shows in detail the literacy rate for youth and adults for a decade.

**Table 5.2.11 Barbados' adult literacy and youth literacy rates (in %).**

	Adult literacy (age 15 +)		Youth literacy (age 15-24)	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Female	99.3	99.7	99.8	99.8
Male	99.4	99.7	99.8	99.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>99.8</b>

Sources: EFA GMR 2002, 2003.

### Human resources

Regarding the management of the national curriculum, at the early stage of the 2000 curriculum reform, every school was assigned personnel to aid and support in the implementation of the new curricula (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). Officers from the Curriculum Section of the Ministry regularly visit classrooms in order to assist teachers with instructional and lesson plans, to observe their practices, to demonstrate relevant methodology, to organize workshops and to advise on curriculum materials (UNESCO-IBE, 2010a). In fact, professional training for school managers, teachers and temporary teachers as well as teacher appraisals are provided and conducted by the School Supervision and Management Unit. Moreover, institutional strengthening activities were offered by foreign consultants through workshops, exposing the participants to diverse patterns and valuable

knowledge of techniques and skills of effective supervision such as observation, assessment and evaluation (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002).

In the same perspective of providing support and assistance, the Out-of-School Suspension Programme center has a diverse and multi-functional staff. It includes a program coordinator, a social worker, special needs educators, classroom assistants, remedial teachers, among others (Planning & Research Section, 2000).

This whole process shows the value of teachers within the system whose training is viewed a key to the success of the reform. The Ministry acknowledged that fact in its 2001 report to UNESCO, stating:

Educational reform cannot be successful without the recognition that teachers are an integral part of the process. As a consequence, it has been deemed necessary to empower teachers and to regulate the teaching/learning environments to allow teachers reasonable scope in their duties (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b, p. 50).

Regularly, teachers are trained, principally at the Teachers' Training College, in various areas, as well as through in-service and site-based training. During the years it took to implement the 2000 curriculum reform, teachers were given numerous opportunities to take in-service professional development courses at the teachers' college. Consequently, as shown in Table 5.2.12, between 2005 and 2008, the number of teachers has increased at the primary level (from 1,000 to 2,000).

**Table 5.2.12 Barbados' teaching staff throughout the levels, between 2005 and 2008.**

	Teaching staff	Trained teachers (in %)	Percentage of Women
Pre- primary	400	63	95 → 98
Primary	1,000 → 2,000	73	78 → 79
Secondary	1,000	57	59

Sources: EFA GMR 2007, 2011.

Other aspects of human resources strategies have to do with the emphasis on the involvement and participation of families and parents. The Ministry Student Services unit is in charge of various projects regarding students and their families. These projects include a manual containing approaches to service delivery, and parent sessions for groups of parents and guardians of students with chronic absenteeism. This unit works with other inter-agency committees for services in counseling, psychology, special needs and school attendance. This unit also works with police forces with the aim of reducing loitering of students and visiting homes of absentee pupils (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002). Furthermore, a Parent Volunteer Support Programme was established by the Ministry in 1996, which supports parents in their role in pre-primary education. The parent volunteers involved in the program receive continuous training because they assist regular teachers in the nursery classes (Planning Research and Development Unit, 2000; Planning Research & Development Section, 2002; UNESCO-IBE, 2010a). In fact, the general goal of this program which is clearly stated in the Ministry's report is to develop a partnership between principals, teachers and parents to work and use all available resources towards empowering each child in becoming lifelong learners:

- “fostering a greater partnership between the school, the home and the community” (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b, p. 6) ;

- “provid[ing] support for students to improve their academic and personal development” (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b, p.29).

### Non-human resources

Non-human resource strategies deal with both infrastructure and physical materials required for teaching and learning. The Ministry has implemented several projects and programs aimed at ensuring active participation of staff and pupils in school. Reform documents, mainly the 2000 reform curriculum, reached all teachers at the early stage of the reform (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). Secondary students have access to the Textbook Loan Scheme, a service that provides them with the books they need for the school year. An annual rental fee is requested at the beginning of the year; but depending on circumstances, these fees can be waived (Planning & Research Section, 2000). The School Uniform Grants is a scheme that provides a one-time grant for a uniform to each qualified student entering a post-primary education program for the first time. A School Lunch Programme provides a daily cooked lunch to all primary, composite and senior public schools children, as well as in some private schools (Planning & Research Section, 2000). Other programs include transport assistance, such as subsidized bus fares.

One of the four components of the 2000 Education Sector Enhancement Programme, known as EduTech, was concerned with technological infrastructure. One of its projects was a pilot project named NETSchools. It provided students in the selected schools with Study Pro laptop computers (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). Another project consisted in equipping all public schools and some private schools with computer hardware, software and technical infrastructure, in classrooms and laboratories, and available to students

and staff. This project aimed at dealing with issues of inequities in the distribution of public educational resources to all schools (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b).

Another component of the EduTech reforms included civil works such as physical rehabilitation of schools. The initial plan was to repair and upgrade schools' physical plants, retrofit buildings for physically handicapped students, make schools computer- and network-ready, and build new schools. At the end of the seven-year initial period, two-thirds of the total funding was used with only one-third of projects completed. Having encountered many unanticipated obstacles, the scope of some work was reduced when the extension loan of the project was approved by the other financial partners, the InterAmerican Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank (Pirog & Kioko, 2010).

### ***Republic of Ghana: Policies/actions/programs & outcomes/results***

#### ***Economics & finances***

The Ghanaian government has established in the Education Act of 1961 the policy for free and compulsory basic primary education. In order to increase access and enrolment, provisions were made in the 1992 Constitution to provide for all public funded educational institutions, including the free, compulsory and universal basic education of children from 4 to 11 years old (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001; Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). And in 2007, the Government White Paper on Education Reform reaffirmed the provision of “free, quality education for all Ghanaian children [...] regardless of gender, ethnicity or circumstance” (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2006, p. 12). By doing so, the government wanted to make

education more accessible to all children of school-going age, improving equity and the quality of education as a whole and making education more relevant to the socio-economic needs of the country (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 5)

The government focused on “the reduction of barriers to entry to primary education and the creation of awareness among parents and students of the benefits of attending primary education” (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2006, p. 10). It has thus introduced, in 2004, a Capitation Grant Scheme, in which every primary school child in the public school system receives a fixed amount per annum (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2006). The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETfund) is another financial scheme which, among other projects, supports secondary education and provides scholarships, particularly for girls (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004; Akyeampong, 2010). These structures contributed to the rise in enrolment. In 2004-2005, there has been an increase of 16.6% of pupils at all levels (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008; Tagoe, 2011b).

The government’s allocation to social expenditures (education, health, social security and welfare, community water and sanitation, and other social services) has fluctuated over the years. The share allocated to education expenditures has gone from 31.6% of the national budget expenditure in 1998 to 24.4% in 2010 (EFA GMR, 2012). Given the fact that the country’s GDP has increased from US\$7.985 million in 2000 to US\$32.520 million in 2010, the amount of funds allocated to education has also increased although the percentage is less (UNdata, 2013b). The Ministry of Education, through various arrangements, finances several literacy and non-formal education programs and expansion projects. For example, the government paid 30% of the budget for the National Functional Literacy Program (NFLP).

### Politics

The government has demonstrated its political commitment to education in many ways. The 1992 Constitution states the provision of country-wide educational facilities available to all and of resources for “equal and balanced access to secondary and other appropriate pre-university or equivalent education” (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 4). The Constitution also mentions a 10-year Universal Primary Education (UPE) program, free adult literacy programs, free lifelong education and vocational training, rehabilitation and resettlement of disabled persons (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 1996; UNESCO-IBE, 2010b).

The Ministry of Education has a decentralized administration. Districts and local representatives are allowed to address educational issues in their region. The same principle is applicable to the Ministry’s various entities. A Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) was created with the ultimate goal of eradicating illiteracy in Ghana by 2015 through a National Functional Literacy Programme. A Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) was established. Its main tasks are to develop policy, coordinate and regulate all aspects of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Both divisions have recognized that lifelong learning, non-formal education (NFE) and TVET represent a second chance at education –an alternative pathway– for many Ghanaians; and have especially targeted rural communities with emphasis on women (Siabi-Mensah, 2000; Owusu-Mensah, 2007; UNESCO-IBE, 2010b).

Another example of the Ghanaian political commitment is seen with the establishment of a Girls’ Education Unit in 1997 which demonstrates the government’s “determination to ensure equity [...] and equality [...] in education” by “promot[ing] the education of the girl-child as a

means of attaining gender parity in education, particularly, at the basic level” (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004, p. 12-13). As such, the unit’s specific purpose and objectives are to increase female participation at the primary level by providing equal access to education and opportunities; to reduce girls’ drop-out rates; and to increase female’s transition rates to senior high school. The unit developed programs promoting girl education and launched the Scholarship Scheme for girls. This unit also showcased the government commitment to partnerships, some of which were formed with World Food Programme and Catholic Relief Services to provide food rations for girls (with the objective of retaining them in school). And, according to the Ministry of Education report (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004), the various initiatives put in place by this unit have yielded results: there have been a general increase in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for girls, a rise in their junior schools’ enrolment rate and a decrease in the GER gap in favor of the boys (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004; Tagoe, 2011a).

Table 5.2.13 shows the country’s gross enrolment ratio in primary education with details related to female and male enrolment.

**Table 5.2.13 Ghana’s gross enrolment ratio in primary education (in % with GPI).**

	<b>1990-1991</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>
Female	68.4	76.5	107
Male	82.2	83.8	107
<b>Total</b>	<b>75.3</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>GPI</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Sources: EFA GMR 2002, 2003, 2012.

As mentioned earlier, in Ghana, the government and the Ministry of Education have close partnerships with international institutions and NGOs as they both play a great role in the



evolution of the Ghanaian education system. Together, they co-share the cost of educational expenditures at various levels. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Department for International Development (DFID) from the United Kingdom, the Norwegian and the Canadian governments and the United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF) were among the international donors who financed several reforms and programs. Certain projects also included teaching and learning initiatives (UNESCO), children's rights and ECCE (UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, World Vision International), eSchools and community initiatives (ORACLE & CISCO) and online portal in math and science (INTEL). An agreement, called Memorandum of Understanding, was signed with the World Food Program (a United Nations agency) to provide the school feeding program, particularly in the underserved districts of the country (Agorsah *et al.*, 2002; Tagoe, 2011a). Other organizations cooperating with the Ministry are the Commonwealth Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The British Council, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the German Agency for Technical Co-Operation (GTZ), the United-States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Microsoft (Agorsah *et al.*, 2002; Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004; Owusu-Mensah, 2007).

The government has also established partnerships with national non-state actors such as private businesses and local organizations. For example, a Public Private Partnership policy has the businesses collaborating with private schools in establishing 80 eLearning centers across the country (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). Collaborating NGOs have offered small grants to parents to alleviate the cost of sending girls to school (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004). Moreover, local communities (with strong female representations)

actively participate in and manage programs implementation; even sometimes as to take ownership of it. The Ministry has put structures in place to supervise and monitor these programs, responsibility that falls to the District Education Office (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008).

### Administration

In an effort to improve the general performance at every level, the Ministry has introduced a decentralization policy that affects the management of education provision. This means that the operation, management and delivery of pre-tertiary education services are done by Regional, District and Headquarters Directors (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001; Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004; CREATE, 2008). The Ministry ensures that the process is strengthen

...by posting highly qualified personnel to all managerial and administrative positions in the service, while through in-service training courses all categories of serving personnel of the service receive regular upgrading of knowledge and skills to enable them perform to standards required of them (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 21).

Furthermore, the policy also includes the decentralization of the sector's budget which entails that districts are provided with their budget allocations (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004). As for the tertiary level, it is managed by the governing Councils of Tertiary Institutions and the National Council for Tertiary Education coordinates as well (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004). The next step in the decentralization process includes greater school and local community participation through various bodies such as Parent-Teacher Association, School Management Committees, District Teacher Support

Teams, District Education Planning Teams and District Education Oversight Committees (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001b). Moreover, a ‘Head-teachers’ handbook’ and teachers’ code of conduct guide were elaborated to assist the schools and help them regulate professional behaviors.

One of the strategies at the administration level was multigrade teaching in rural & small school communities when one teacher is responsible for a class of students with different academic levels and various learning needs. This permits disadvantaged children, particularly those living in rural areas where fewer enroll, to access school as it allows more flexibility in both school timetable and curriculum to address the needs of these mixed groups (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008).

Another strategy at this level is related to the evaluation and strengthening of educational institutions. The Ministry has elaborated a system called the School Performance Appraisal Meetings that are part of the Participatory Performance Monitoring (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001; Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). These assessments in which parents in the community can participate give an account on how well schools are faring; together they discuss school performance, set new goals and strategies for the school (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008; UNESCO-IBE, 2010b). There is also the Whole School Development program which aims at improving teaching and learning in basic schools. It is done through courses in school administration, management and finance for principals, courses in continuous assessment, and guidance and counseling for principals and teachers (UNESCO-IBE, 2010b).

In Ghana, pupils-teacher ratios remained constant throughout the years, with a slight decrease at the primary and secondary levels, and an increase at the pre-primary level (see Table 5.2.14).

**Table 5.2.14 Ghana's pupil-teacher ratio throughout the years.**

	1999	2005	2010-2011
<b>Pre-primary</b>	25	32	35
<b>Primary</b>	30	35	31
<b>Secondary</b>	20	19	19

Sources: EFA GMR 2008, 2012.

### Pedagogy and programs

The strategies found in the 1995 educational reform, *Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education* (FCUBE) touch several aspects of the education system in its quest to “improve the quality of education” (Zame, Hope & Respress, 2008, p. 116). These strategies concerned, among other things, the revision of curriculum, the provision of curriculum materials such as textbooks and syllabus, and the improvement of teachers' education programs with practical training.

The Ghanaian government acknowledged that “education should result in the formation of well-balanced individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and aptitudes to enable them become functional and productive citizens” (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008, p. 5). With this mission in sight, the pre-tertiary curriculum was reformed. While developing minimum standards of learning, the 2007 revised curriculum put emphasis on participatory and problem-solving pedagogy, thus encouraging critical and scientific thinking (UNESCO-IBE, 2010b) as “pre-conditions for developing the new type of Ghanaian who will [...] be able to perform effectively in society” (Republic of Ghana Department of Education,

2008, p. 35). It included active learning, intellectual competencies and skills and aptitudes (particularly for lifelong learning), literacy and numeracy strengthening, competency-based training, apprenticeship training, technical and vocational education training, science and technology, and information communication technology (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). The curriculum adopted an integrated subject-based approach designed to strengthen understanding and acquisition of knowledge on various topics which included citizenship education and social studies, democracy and human rights, environmental degradation, person to person communication, health and sanitation, belief systems and population and family life education. To that effect, many subjects were combined with one another; and curriculum overload was reduced by making timetables more flexible (UNESCO-IBE, 2010b).

One of the strategies that changed schools throughout Ghana was the policy that mandated each primary school to have a kindergarten attached to it (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008; UNESCO-IBE, 2010b). The pre-school program was envisioned to promote “a healthy mind and body” while “pay[ing] attention to children’s socialisation process” (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 6). As such, two years of kindergarten was added, in 2007-2008, to the free and compulsory basic education, taking it from a nine-year cycle to an eleven-year one (UNESCO-IBE, 2010b). In order to benefit from the capitation grant allocated to kindergarten pupils, nursery and crèches were transformed into kindergartens and were attached to primary schools. This increased the numbers of kindergarten schools and the ECCE enrolments by 120% from 2004-2005 to 2007-2008 (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). In fact the EFA Global Monitoring Reports (2003, 2012) indicated that the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education has gone

from 59.3% (0.99 of gender parity index) in 1999-2000 to 69% (1.04 of gender parity index) in 2008-2009.

The Ghanaian government has encouraged civic and social clubs for students. In fact, schools were authorized by the Ministry to include student body representatives and councils in the decision-making process, thus participating in the school governance. These actions aimed at fostering integrity, tolerance, harmonious work-relations between teachers and students, and dialogue for problem-solving (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004).

Within the Ministry that “has adopted inclusive education as the main policy which will inform the [...] direction for special educational provisions” (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008, p. 26), there is a Special Education Division mandated to create and carry out policies aimed at including children and youth with special needs. These students physically-disabled and/or mentally-handicapped are educated in mainstream schools and/or special schools. They can be followed, from basic to tertiary education, in segregated and interpreted settings that include special boarding basic schools for the deaf, for the blind and for the intellectually challenged (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004).

As in Barbados, the Ghanaian government is committed to youth and adult education. Various lifelong learning programs are provided at different levels such as the Technical, Vocational and Agricultural Education and Training (TVET) and the Non-Formal Education (NFE). The former is done through technical institutes, agricultural institutes and apprenticeship institutions which provide the training formally (in classrooms and on-the-job) and non-formally (traditional and informal on-the-job). The Competency-Based Training is a new approach to TVET delivery methodology which highlights practical skills for employment (Republic of

Ghana Department of Education, 2008). The latter provides programs that not only target literacy and numeracy but also cover all aspects from all development sectors such as agriculture, health and nutrition, family planning and reproductive health, civic education, environment, literacy skill acquisition, gender and legal rights, and so on and so forth (Owusu-Mensah, 2007). There are also cost-effective complementary basic education programs which seek to provide basic education, learning programs to children (particularly those out-of-school) outside the formal educational structure in order to enable them to enter the formal one (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008; Tagoe, 2011a).

Complementary education [...] encompasses the provision of an enabling teaching and learning environment relevant to the mental growth of learners, who are disadvantaged as a result of unfavorable socio-economic and cultural practices, to acquire a minimum knowledge and skills for continuing education in the formal sector (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008, p. 20).

With centers such as School for Life (in the Northern Region), there is a coverage of 25% of the villages in eight districts of this region.

The Ministry of Education has implemented various models of evaluation of students and teachers. For the students, there are the Continuous Assessments on the pupil's actual classroom performance which is done at the basic and second cycle levels. This includes also the Basic Education Certificate Examination at the end of junior secondary high; the Senior Secondary School Examination during the final year of senior high school; and the Criterion Referenced Testing, a random test assessing skills in mathematics and English in Primary 6 (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001).

As a result of all these policies and programs, enrolment trends have varied depending on the children's age group and gender. For children in the 6-10 years-old bracket, enrolment rate between girls and boys are not significantly different. Based on EFA Global Monitoring Reports (2002, 2003, 2012), drop-out and repeaters in all grades rates decreased although they vary depending on the group age and gender (see Table 5.2.15 for the overall rates). Moreover the 2000 Ghana Living Standard Survey has shown that 50% of Ghanaian adults are literate in English and/or a local Ghanaian language, medium of instruction in ECCE (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008; UNESCO-IBE, 2010b). Overall, over the years, literacy rates have been increasing (see Table 5.2.16).

**Table 5.2.15 Ghana's internal efficiency: repeaters in all grades & dropouts in all grades (%).**

	Repeaters all grades		Dropouts all grades	
	1998-1999	2009-2010	1998-1999	2009-2010
Female	4.1	2.6	42.0	31.3
Male	4.3	2.5	39.3	24.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>40.6</b>	<b>27.8</b>

Sources: EFA GMR 2002, 2003, 2012.

**Table 5.2.16 Ghana's adult literacy & youth literacy rates (in %).**

	Adult literacy (age 15+)			Youth literacy (age 15-24)		
	1990	2000	2005-2010	1990	2000	2005-2010
Female	47.2	63.2	61	75.4	88.6	80
Male	70.1	80.3	73	88.2	93.6	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>81</b>

Sources: EFA GMR 2002, 2003, 2012.

### Human resources

The 1995 *Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education* (FCUBE) legislation made provision for in-service teacher training at all levels, including head-teachers, supervisors,



districts directors, regional managers of educational units. It also provided incentives for teachers working in difficult areas of the country such as inducement allowance, free electricity accommodation and study leave with pay (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004), as well as annual award for the best teachers because the government acknowledged that “teachers play a key role in nation building especially in human resource capacity building” and “recognized the[ir] capacity [...] to bring about peace and harmony into society and communities” (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004, p. 22). Teachers go through a Teachers’ Self-Appraisal, a Participatory Performance Monitoring (PPM) that includes a Performance Monitoring Test (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001). Later on, the Ministry of Education created a National Teaching Council in charge of coordinating and regulating teacher education and training programs. To implement the 2007 revised curricula, the Curriculum Research and Development Division trained a team of trainers to “guide and instruct” resource personnel in charge of the teacher training colleges and teachers’ education (UNESCO-IBE, 2010, p. 7), with emphasis placed on teachers working in TVET, special needs education, guidance, counseling, information communication technology (ITC) and foreign language (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). The Ministry has also developed a sponsoring scheme for teachers. This entails that sponsored teachers can be contacted to teach for three years in rural and/or disadvantaged areas or the district that sponsored them (UNESCO-IBE, 2010b). A system has been put in place for untrained teachers to take remedial courses through distance learning (Distance Education) (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004). Furthermore, teacher education was remodeled as emphasis was being placed on multi-grade teaching, reflective teaching, co-operative learning and creative learning (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). Additionally, all divisional directors and unit heads

underwent computer literacy for management training in 2007, while training facilitators, logistics for institutional capacity building and general support were available during the National Functional Literacy Program (NFLP) programs (Owusu-Mensah, 2007).

Another strategy used by the Ministry for the literacy programs was to use only volunteer facilitators; although it is important to mention that volunteering has different meanings in impoverished settings in the Global South. In recognition of their efforts, the volunteers were rewarded with utilities and accessories such as electric torches, raincoats and Wellington boots in order for them to reach their classes in case of bad weather. The facilitators that finished their programs were given bicycles, sewing machines or sometimes motorcycles as rewards for long service and to meritorious ones (Tagoe, 2011b).

#### Non-human resources

In order to attract and increase enrolment in universal primary education (UPE), the Ministry introduced school feeding programs which consist in providing to primary school pupils with one hot meal per day. When locally grown food is used, children are given one snack and one hot meal per day, instead of distributing the rations to parents (Akyeampong *et al.*, 2007; Republic of Ghana, 2008; Tagoe, 2011a). Moreover food aid incentives for girls have encouraged enrolment, attendance and completion of basic schooling by girls, particularly in Northern Ghana (see Seidu, 2003, in Akyeampong *et al.*, 2007). Campaigns for more awareness of the importance of schooling for girls complemented the food aid program in encouraging parents to send girls to school (Akyeampong *et al.*, 2007).

The 1995 *Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education* (FCUBE) planned grants for head-teachers for teaching materials and supplies. Non-Formal Education programs, while using

radio programs, also received reading materials (for participants) and logistics (for institutions) which were funded through various partnerships (Siabi-Mensah, 2000; Owusu-Mensah, 2007). Starting in 2001, the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETfund) allocated funds for the expansion of academic and physical facilities at the tertiary level, such as student hostels, lecture halls, laboratories, etc. These projects were complemented with the distribution of computers in teachers' colleges, in divisional, regional and district directorates of education. In fact, the Ministry has defined information communication technology (ICT) in education as

... one of the cross-cutting strategic policy areas that impacts on a functional education delivery for development and a drive towards enhancement tripod of teaching, learning and management efficiency (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008, p. 41).

With the Ghana eSchools and Communities Initiative, six out of ten regions in the country were equipped with a computer laboratory comprised in 25 computers, satellite internet and other equipment for eLearning. Additionally, private businesses provided eLearning centers to private schools. Moreover, during the 2007 curriculum reforms, the new syllabuses were digitally converted, transferred to compact disks and distributed to all districts and schools (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008).

### **Concluding summary**

This chapter has reviewed Barbados' and Ghana's implementation policies of EFA goals, as well as the results and outcomes they have engendered. This data has been collected under specific coding categories such as economics and finances, politics, administration, pedagogy

and programs, human resources and non-human resources. We can see that both countries are committed to the education of their citizens from early childhood care and education to lifelong learning programs, and everything in between. The policies and programs used in both countries have taken into account supply-side factors and demand-side factors. They have put emphasis on ECCE extension programs, on alternative pathways for youth and adults, on communication and information technologies, and on assessments and evaluation, to name these few. However, there are a few differences between both countries; and those include, for example, decentralization of educational administration in Ghana and a high degree of parents' and families' involvement in Barbados. Therefore with all this data in hand, in the next chapter, Analysis and Discussion, I will analyze the data by doing a "back-and-forth interplay" (Bowen, 2009, p. 37) between the data, the literature and the selected conceptual framework.

## CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

### Introduction

In this chapter, I first analyze the policies and programs put in place in Barbados and Ghana through various principles of Critical Democratic Theory (CDT). At first glance, these results show that Barbados' and Ghana's programs and policies are reflective of CDT principles which include, not exhaustively, equality, diversity and inclusion, participation, communication and dialogue, social justice and equity, action and reflection, political and social responsibility and solidarity. I then compare similarities and differences between Barbados' and Ghana's implementation policies. Finally I outline some of the lessons learned from this study. These steps were taken in order to answer all my research questions: (1) What are the programs, approaches or actions that Barbados and Ghana have adopted to meet their EFA goals? In other words, what are the policies that have been put in place by the governments and educational communities in these countries to achieve these goals? (2) What results have these actions produced? In other words, what are the outcomes from the implementation of these policies? (3) What can other countries learn from the experiences of Barbados and Ghana in meeting their own EFA goals? Because, as Pinto (2012) puts it, 'critical democratic' citizens aim to become "agents of social change" (p. 7).

## 6.1. Critical democratic perspectives

The results of Barbados' and Ghana's implementation policies reviewed through the Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) lens are intertwined. That is to say that one policy or program can be demonstrating one, two or more CDT principles. Furthermore, a certain CDT principle can be more evident in one country than it is in the other, if it is present at all. In this section, I analyze the results of Barbados' and Ghana's implementation policies through fourteen CDT principles while also taking into account the body of literature on EFA goals.

### *Equality*

Considered the most basic democratic principle in education and education policies, equality in Barbados and Ghana can be seen through a variety of policies, programs and actions. One of the most important ones is related to economics and finances: free education. Barbados' policy of free education at all levels provides equal opportunity for all Barbadians since they have full access to primary, secondary and tertiary public schools. As such, the results have been equally satisfying (equality of outcomes) as the literacy rates of youth and adults have reached 99.8% and 99.7% respectively, and the transition rate from primary to secondary education is 98% (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b; EFA GMR, 2002, 2003; UNESCO-IBE, 2010a). By the same token, Ghana's abolishment of school fees for basic education has provided as well equal opportunity for Ghanaian children and youth (from 4 to 15 years-old) to attend public schools free of charge. The Ghanaian government with the introduction of a Capitation Grant Scheme and an Education Trust Fund (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004; Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008) also offers more opportunity to children and youth by allocating a fixed amount of money per year per

pupil. Mehrotra (1998) and Little (2008) have advocated for these supply-side and demand-side features (free tuition, state funded education and grants) while Glewwe and Zhao (2006) have seen their impact on countries like Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. Perry (2009) clearly summons the reach of these policies in this statement:

Providing free education at the primary and secondary levels is [...] considered democratic because it ensures that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or financial resources, have the equal opportunity to gain an education and develop their potential to the benefit of themselves and the greater society (p. 434).

In their quest towards providing equal opportunity of education to all their citizens, Barbados and Ghana have put forward policies implementing early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs. Barbados has added ECCE units to all its primary schools and Ghana has made two years of kindergarten compulsory to basic education. By doing so, both countries have realized, as Pence (2004) had in his comparative study, that political involvement and mandates have their impact on the implementation process. They have also acknowledged, as Windham (1992) had, that preschool and primary school activities are a “continuing progress of development” (p. 28) and that by making these programs accessible and affordable, children are more likely to attend. Each country’s gross enrolment ratio (GER) attests to that fact. In Barbados, the GER went from 75% in 1999 to 108<sup>5</sup>% in 2010; and in Ghana, it increased from 31% in 1999 to 69% in 2009 (EFA GMR 2003, 2012).

However, critics have said that offering equal opportunity to students is not enough if they do not stay in school. Ghana, particularly, faces this issue which depends on the age group.

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<sup>5</sup> GER that exceeds 100% means that its value is inflated by the number of early and late entrants and repeaters in schools (EFA GMR, 2003-2004, p. 51).

According to Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu and Hunt (2007), even when enrolment is increasing, the real problem is to prevent early drop-out, overage enrolment, and in- and out- of the school system tendencies. Drop-out rates vary among age group, gender and economic situation. Girls are more likely to drop-out more so as they age. Drop-out rates from pupils in the 15-17 years-old group are higher than those in the 6-11 and 12-14 years-old groups. Factors identified as increasing the risk of children dropping-out of school are: low attendance, low attainment, grade repetition, socio-economic and household features. One particular study has shown that in a twelve-month period, some Ghanaian pupils will have temporarily withdrawn from school more than once and for various reasons (Akyeampong *et al.*, 2007).

Other equal opportunities are offered to Barbadian children and youth considered at-risk, with special needs and in the judiciary system (Planning Research & Development Section, 2002). Resources are allocated to these programs which give them an equal chance to further their education. More occasions exist for Barbadian and Ghanaian youth and adults to access education in the forms of adult literacy programs, lifelong education and vocational training. In Barbados, they are part of the post-secondary level, funded by the government for all its citizens; and in Ghana, they are free programs financed by the government as well, and youth can start vocational and technical training as early as secondary school. Following Little's (2008) recommendation, Barbados and Ghana are offering second-chance routes and alternative modalities of obtaining an education.

Aside from the policies mentioned above, both countries have also provided school lunch or feeding programs which help secure school attendance by alleviating these costs from parents. In addition, Barbados offers textbook loan schemes, school uniform grants and transport assistance and subsidized bus fare, ensuring that all children and youth have what they need to



attend school. These programs represent what Glick (2008) termed services to ensure attendance and retention while Mehrotra (1998) and Little (2008) called them demand-side strategies family-related. In essence, all the policies and programs ensuring equal opportunity and outcomes in Barbados and in Ghana represent direct and indirect educational expenditures. In other words, they are part of the demand-side and supply-side factors previously mentioned in the literature.

### ***Diversity & Inclusion***

One aspect of diversity that is present in Barbados' educational policies has to do with multiculturalism. It is clearly stated in the Ministry's documents that the Ministry provides education to all Barbadians "regardless of color, class, religion, gender". This can be explained by the fact that Barbadians are a mixed population with six major ethnic groups (Black/Afro-Caribbean, White/Euro-Caribbean, Chinese, East Indian, Arab and Mixed ancestry) and that 8% of the population is unemployed. As for Ghana, educational facilities are available to all Ghanaians. As such, this ensures that every student, wherever he or she is coming from, can participate and engage in school and/or educational programs.

As much as these policies reflect diversity, they also are inclusive. And Barbados and Ghana have implemented several policies and programs related to the different aspects of inclusion. In fact, both Ministries have decided that these various groups should have a chance at education, which follows Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley and Goodlad's (2004) recommendation of total inclusion:

Education for all, without exclusivity on the basis of caste: ethnicity, race, sex, heredity, religion, lifestyles and sexual preferences, wealth, assumed intelligence,

physical disability, or whatever else humans are able to think up as bases for discrimination (p. 7).

As a means to avoid “schooling for some”, as Goodlad and colleagues (2004) put it, free education was established at all levels in Barbados and for basic education in Ghana. As such, these countries ensure that their children and youth have access to education.

Special needs, at-risk and incarcerated students represent, not in the commonly known sense, a different type of minority. The fact is that they are being educated in Barbados and Ghana, and offered a means to later on participate in society. Barbadian students-at-risk are enrolled in out-of-school suspension programs as a way of keeping them in the education system and avoid drop-outs. Similar programs exist for children and youth in the judiciary system. They follow general education and vocational programs. In Ghana, multigrade teaching targets particularly disadvantaged children and youth as it gives them more flexibility, time- and curriculum-wise. It also focuses on rural and small school communities. As it was experienced in Tanzania and Mexico (EFA GMR, 2008, 2011), complementary basic education programs seek to particularly include out-of-school village children into learning programs. They give these children means to enter formal schooling. As Little (2008) suggests, these programs represent alternative modalities appropriate especially when dealing with rural areas.

Another aspect of inclusion seen in these countries relates to assisting and including special needs and disabled persons in the education system by providing them with facilities and programs. In Barbados, special schools, individual educational plans, special education services and assistive devices are available to these students; which represent some of the ways the Barbadian Ministry of Education has put forward to support these groups. Ghana has put in

place rehabilitation and resettlement programs for disabled Ghanaians. By putting forth programs targeting special needs and disabled students, Barbados and Ghana have challenged Peters (2007) who has critiqued the neglect of these specific groups in the EFA policies.

Furthermore, in Barbados and Ghana, alternative pathways of education encourage and include a diverse pool of students (youth and/or adults), making sure that each student's own experience and abilities are taken into account. This aspect is closely related to the curriculum and programs offered. Secondary schools and tertiary education which includes technical and vocational education training (TVET), lifelong learning, literacy programs, colleges and universities, offer different curriculum streams from which students can choose. In the literature, Noronha and Endow (2011) have discovered that diversified curricula lead to diversified skills which represent a real advantage to youth and adults, particularly when salaries are low.

Diversity and inclusion policies also seek to make citizens part of the decision-making process. Barbados, by involving its teachers in the curriculum reforms and by having parents engage in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings, has provided these groups of Barbadians with the opportunity to not only be part of the process but also to make their opinion known to one another. In Ghana, two sets of actions have achieved these outcomes. First, through the decentralization of the system, those responsible are part of the decision-making of educational matters at different levels. Secondly, when the teacher education curriculum started emphasizing reflective learning, co-operative learning, creative learning, problem-solving pedagogy, critical and scientific thinking, it can be said that students who benefited from these new approaches are better equipped to, later on, be part of the decision-making process of policies affecting them.

Another aspect of diversity and inclusion that is present in Ghana has to do with the plurality of opinions permitted. Through the decentralization of the system, several voices are heard at multiple levels: schools, districts and regions (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001; Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004). And with the responsibility of managing the system, those in charge are offered the possibility of voicing their opinions and of enacting them. Also student representatives and councils can sit in school meetings, participating in decision-making and dialogues towards problem-solving (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004). In Barbados, this facet of diversity and inclusion is seen with the teachers' involvement in the curriculum reforms. Then their voices and opinions are both heard and taken into account, especially when the Ministry is creating professional development workshops (Pirog & Kioko, 2010; UNESCO-IBE, 2010a). These actions are also closely related to the Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) idea of participation.

### ***Participation & Engagement***

The participation policies in both countries are concerned with ensuring that every student receives “an education necessary for adequate [...] participation” later on in life (Perry, 2009, p. 439). With an adequate education, every student (children, youth and adults) will have the tools needed for active participation in society. This non-discriminative perspective relates in fact to the various educational programs available to students, as well as to their actual involvement in them. Both Barbadians and Ghanaians, children and youth, have greatly benefited from the free education offered to them, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to primary and secondary education. In Barbados, the push towards ECCE and its expansion program have helped increase the GER in ECCE to 108% with a gender parity index of 1.00 in 2009-2010. In Ghana, due to Capitation Grants available for 4-6 years-old pupils,

participation in pre-primary education has increased over the years as the GER proves it, 69% in 2008-2009, representing a 120% increase in early childhood care and education (ECCE) enrolments with a 1.04 gender parity index. Barbados shows a high net enrolment ratio (NER) of 95% in primary education in 2010; meanwhile Ghana's NER has increased in a decade, from 61% in 1999 to 84% in 2011 (EFA GMR, 2012). This confirms what the literature has pointed to: that developing countries put great focus on increasing access strategies such as per-pupil funding, school feeding programs, textbook loan scheme, school uniform grants, transport assistance and subsidized bus fare (Mehrotra, 1998; Glick, 2008; Little, 2008).

Youth and adults in both countries have also taken part in diverse post-secondary educational programs. Barbados shows a high percentage of participation in post-secondary education and high rates in youth and adult literacy rates (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b; Peters & Best, 2005). Ghana's increasing youth and adult literacy rates, with high peaks in 2000, demonstrate the emphasis given to critical thinking, problem-solving skills and aptitudes (EFA GMR, 2002, 2003, 2012; UNESCO-IBE, 2010b). This attests to both countries' focus on providing its citizens with lifelong skills as recommended in EFA Global Monitoring Reports of 2009 and 2011.

As Apple and Beane (1995), Gutmann (1999) and Perry (2009) suggest, another aspect of participation in Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) refers to the notion of citizens' and local communities' right to shape the education they receive. This aspect also refers to engagement as it goes further by having citizens meaningfully involved in decision and policy making processes. In Barbados, such situations are observed with school management, teachers and parents (Pirog & Kioko, 2010; UNESCO-IBE, 2010a; Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2013a, 2013b). School committees oversee the day-to-day

operations of primary schools; whereas secondary schools are managed by a board of management that implements policies, control finances. Both make recommendations to the Ministry. With regards to teachers, they were sought out during the curriculum reform to participate and get involved in the whole process, as part of the Ministry's effort of reaching out to outside stakeholders. Their feedback was used to elaborate professional development activities. As for parents, there is a volunteer program that enables them to assist teachers in early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs. With this program, parents and families participate in these nursery classes and are involved in the children's school lives. In Ghana, another facet of engagement is witnessed with the volunteer facilitators that accept to participate in the literacy programs. This means that by their actions and participation, these facilitators engage in a process that can lead to changes, to social changes because they help youth and adults learn about "things that matters" (Darling-Hammond, 1996, cited in Portelli & Solomon, 2001, p. 17).

In Ghana, the decentralization policy assures that educational matters are discussed at the regional, district and school levels. In fact, this helps prevent what McNeil (2002, in Perry, 2009) feared when he talked about reduced local decision making. However, the other side of these actions can be to take away the responsibility, thus the blame, from the Ministry/government and put it on the people, particularly if something goes wrong. That is what critics of decentralization in education like Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998) have argued and warned against.

### ***Choice***

The notion of choice is not looked at in the sense of school choice, although both countries have made provision for private schools in their reforms. The aspect of choice examined in these policies refers to the ones given to youth and adults to further their education. In Barbados and Ghana, several educational programs are offered at different levels: technical and vocational education training, polytechnic, college and university, non-formal education and literacy programs. Furthermore, both countries have established a system of flexible pathways and/or entry modes. Barbados has given the choice to its students to transfer from one level to another at the appropriate time, at his/her own pace. As for Ghana, secondary students are offered various elective categories in their curriculum: agriculture, science, arts, business-accounting, business-secretary, visual arts, home economics and technical programs. And Ghanaian youth and adults can follow their programs using different approaches: formally, informally and at distance (online). All these programs and options align closely to what Apple and Beane (1995) termed democratic curriculum, given that the programs put emphasis on “access to a wide range of information”, therefore helping participants “seek out a range of ideas” and “voice their own” (p. 13).

### ***Cohesion***

The policies that fall into the cohesion category target different aspects of it: solidarity, membership, integration and inclusion. There is a sense of solidarity that can be witnessed when efforts are made to support private schools. In Barbados, private secondary schools receive government funding for teaching specific subjects considered of use to the country. Whereas in

Ghana, the Ministry has established a Public Private Partnership which aims at financing certain projects for private schools through private businesses.

Barbados and Ghana both went through curriculum reforms which included content restructuring, standards and targets development. In Barbados, for example, there is a focus on socialization of the students through social skills and heritage conversations (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). As for Ghana, all students enrolled in pre-tertiary education have had courses in citizenship education and social studies and Ghanaian language for primary and junior high school pupils only; they are also informed on topics such as democracy and human rights, environmental degradation, person to person communication, and belief systems, to name a few (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008; UNESCO-IBE, 2010b). In a way, this ensures that not only a certain level of standard is achieved but also a sense of identity, of membership among citizens is created and entertained, as the Barbadian Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture (2001b) clearly expressed:

It is hoped that through this effort, students will develop the necessary social and emotional skills to enhance their own development and integrate well into society (p. 17).

In Barbados and Ghana, there are various models of evaluation for students, and teachers and principals. Students go through different types of tests: continuous assessments, basic education certificate examination, senior secondary school examination and criterion referenced testing. Particularly in Barbados and similar to Tanzania (EFA GMR, 2011), these evaluations are used as diagnostic tools; therefore identifying strengths and weaknesses and providing remedial programs (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b; Inniss, 2007; Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development, 2008). And teachers and principals



go through teachers' self-appraisal, performance monitoring test, school performance appraisal meeting, institutional strengthening, supervision and training. These different models of evaluation can be seen as a means to constitute a whole body sharing basic standards and to ensure integration of students upon completion of basic education. In other words, these processes can engender a sense of identity and membership among teachers and schools, and between them as well.

### ***Social Justice and Equity & Social and Political Solidarity***

These principles, social justice and equity, are concerned with the strategies that try to alleviate inequity and exclusion, as well as those that provide opportunities which are fairly distributed. Barbados has several policies and programs in place that aim to do just that. First, second chance opportunities are offered to youth through a system of flexible transfer that allows them to transit at their own pace and bridge the gap between academic and technical skills. Second, special needs students, students-at-risk and children and youth in the juvenile court system are provided with various forms of educational programs. This means that these vulnerable groups are offered the opportunity to one day participate and engage in the society they live in. Along this same line, provision was made to make schools' physically accessible for physically handicapped students. And finally, all public schools were equipped with computers and computer laboratories, and software infrastructure available to all students and school staff, in order to avoid the exclusion of low socio-economic students who cannot afford certain commodities, to "address issues of economic and social justice, by ensuring that students and families in the lower socio-economic brackets will not be disadvantaged by inadequate access to technology" (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b, p. 15).

Ghana's journey towards social justice and equity is seen through the Ministry's programs concerning out-of-school children and youth. These cost-effective complementary programs work with them outside the school system and provide them with the tools needed to enter the formal education system someday. Furthermore, these programs have been successfully serving villages in the Northern Region. Ghana has also established a multigrade teaching system that addresses the needs of diverse groups of pupils through flexible timetable and curriculum. As a means to balance the differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups, the Ministry provides incentives to teachers working in difficult areas in the country. It is a way to encourage them and reward their work in those parts of the country.

These programs and actions show that both governments are, to a certain extent, as much concerned with equity as with equality as they have targeted vulnerable and disadvantaged groups who would have, otherwise, been left at the margins of society. They have acknowledged what Little (2008) suggested when the author talked about prioritization in education, thus having funds allocated to these specific groups. Moreover, by doing so, both governments demonstrate a sense of social and political solidarity, another aspect of Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) which seeks to produce a certain community of interests and/or objectives. These facts speak to sense of responsibility these countries have developed towards these groups. Because by acknowledging their existence and taking care of them at this basic level, society and political players are building capacity and human capital in the interest of the country, thus cultivating a sense of collective good.

### ***Empowerment & Agency and Human Capability***

In these two countries' context, empowerment policies represent mechanisms that seek to provide the tools all citizens need to become included in the decision-making processes. In fact, it is a form of redistribution of power. These policies particularly target marginalized and vulnerable groups. Both Barbados and Ghana have put forth policies and programs focusing on girls and women. In Barbados, due to expansion programs, more girls are attending early childhood care and education (ECCE) and secondary levels than boys. The female enrolment rates actually show that Barbados has reached gender equality: out of the total percentage of enrolments, 49% of female in pre-primary, 49% at the primary and 50% at the secondary level. Several programs in Ghana have helped raise girls' attendance and participation in schools, with a particular focus on the northern regions. As the literature have suggested, these programs include both supply-side and demand-side factors such as per-pupil funding, scholarships and food aid incentives. The Ghanaian results show that progress has been made as more girls are interested in schools (4.25% more females enrolled than males, in 2008); the female gross enrolment ratio (GER) has increased over the years and the gap between boys and girls has decreased. Girls, and later on women, are giving the adequate education that will enable them to make the first step towards their autonomy and independence, their survival and development, and become more engage in their communities and society. As Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) puts it, empowerment is about taking action.

Aside from girls and women, other vulnerable and/or marginalized groups have benefited from these empowering strategies. Barbados has elaborated programs and policies for youth development to better equip and prepare them for their future role in society. Special needs students, incarcerated children and youth and at-risk students are all attending educational

programs which are empowering them. Alternative pathways such as complementary basic education programs offer Ghanaians, particularly out-of-school children and youth, a second chance at education outside the formal school system. These programs support them and provide them with the tools they need to get out of the marginalized category, evolve and get involved in their society. Through all these strategies, these children and youth can later on actively participate in social and political issues processes, instead of being marginalized and cast aside.

The notions of agency and capability of each citizen, put forth by Freire, are closely linked to empowerment. In fact policies with these aims represent the basic need of each citizen's transformation. In order to nurture these characteristics in their citizens, Barbados and Ghana have proposed alternative pathways to education aside from the formal education path. They offer a wide range second chances to students but also flexible transfers, a wide variety of qualification and entry modes and diverse programs such as lifelong learning programs, non-formal education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and complementary basic education programs. Additionally, in Ghana, civic and social clubs for students are not only encouraged but their representatives and councils participate in the school governance (Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004). The main objective of these programs is to allow each student to develop on their own terms and reach their own potential; an objective that reflects Freire's vision. Consequently, Barbados' literacy rate has reached 99.7% for adults and 99.8% for youth. And the percentage of Ghanaians who know how to read and write in English and/or another local Ghanaian language has been increasing over the years (67% of literate adults and 81% of literate youth). This means that more and more citizens are empowered. As such, they are capable of taking an active part in society, of participating in the

decision- and policy-making processes “through which their society is being shaped and reproduced” (Carr & Harlett, 1996, cited in Portelli & Solomon, 2001, p. 17).

### ***Interactions and Shared Interests & Enlightened Understanding***

According to Dewey (1964), education and democracy are linked through its citizens who interact and share interests; thus leading to an enlightened understanding of the situation. In Barbados and Ghana, various partnerships suggest that the different parties involved are both interested in educational matters and are willing to interact and work together to get things done. The interactions occur at several levels: international, regional, national, local and inter-agency (Planning & Research Section, 2000; Agorsah *et al.*, 2002; Republic of Ghana Basic Education Division, 2004; Inniss, 2007; Owusu-Mensah, 2007; Pirog & Kioko, 2010). This also entails that with these shared interests, all parties also co-share the responsibilities and the funding. As the Cuba-Haiti 2002 regional collaboration has demonstrated (EFA GMR, 2002), both countries have built and developed partnerships between multiple stakeholders to help them in their journey (see also Pence, 2004). These collaborations and partnerships align with Little’s (2008) strategies to realize EFA. First they helped secure support and funding for programs and projects. And second, these collaborations helped build capacity through trainings and seminars. Another type of commitment was observed in Barbados when parents and families volunteered to assist nursery teachers. Critical democratic theorists see these various forms of working together as steps towards a democratic education.

Another way of looking into these principles refers to how both Ministries made sure that teachers and principals have the necessary resources to do their work. In Barbados’ case, all teachers received the new reformed curriculum at the early stage of the implementation (Ministry

of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2001b). In Ghana, teachers and schools received a digital version of the new syllabuses; also specific guides ('head teachers' handbook', teachers' code of conduct) were elaborated in order to help these professionals understand the behaviors suited for their work (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001; Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). These actions concur with UNESCO's recommendations of paying attention to teachers' access to working materials (EFA GMR, 2006).

### *Communication*

In both countries, communication between citizens and experts is more pronounced than the one between citizens and politicians. The citizens group includes teachers, parents and families and community members. The experts are either locally trained personnel or foreign consultants. Barbados Ministry of Education has sent aid and support personnel to schools and teachers when implementing the new curriculum. Also international consultants gave training sessions and seminars to school staffs and personnel. Furthermore communication between parents, teachers and principals is promoted and entertained through the Parent Volunteer Program, manuals for parents and parent sessions.

The Ministry of Education in Ghana created a National Teaching Council in charge of coordinating teachers' training. Further, the Curriculum Research and Development Division prepared a team of trainers responsible for teachers' training in the new curriculum. There are also awareness campaigns that discuss with parents the importance of girls' education. Moreover, in Ghana, students have the opportunity to share their viewpoints through the student body representatives and councils that participate in the school meetings. With these actions and policies, Barbados and Ghana have demonstrated that they understand –and share– Dewey's

emphasis on communication between citizens and experts (if not politicians), when it comes to developing a democratic education system.

### ***Dialogue & Political Equality***

As mentioned by Freire (2011), dialogue allows for reflective participation by those involved. And as such, Barbados' strategy of seeking teachers' involvement in the curriculum reform speaks to the country's desire to have them contribute in that reform, since they had a voice and an input in what was going on. In Ghana, this dialogue is witnessed in the decentralization process which allows regional, district and school officials to communicate with one another and with the Ministry. Therefore they have the opportunity to reflect on their actions and act on their ideas since districts, communities and schools have control over the education services provided. From Dahl's (1998) CDT perspective, these actions can lead to a certain control of the agenda through political equality because Barbados and Ghana have provided equal opportunities to various groups of citizens to participate in the decision-making process. Moreover, in both countries, within the Ministry's own structure, each council/unit has public servants in charge of specific educational agenda and for which they seek internal, intra-agency and outside contribution.

### ***Action and Reflection***

Strategies reflecting Freire's (2011) concepts of action and reflection, in both countries' case, are principally related to teachers, their training and practice. In Barbados, teachers are regularly visited by officers from the Curriculum Section who observe, advice and give demonstrations to them (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Culture, 2001b; UNESCO-IBE, 2010a). In this case, teachers have the possibility to reflect on their practice with assistance from

trainers. Also, while working, teachers take in-service professional development courses which allow them to reflect upon their practice, and then enact their views and theories. Ghana's teachers also have the opportunity to improve their teaching skills through practical, on-the-job training; thus combining both aspects. The teacher education program was reformed and now includes reflective teaching, co-operative teaching and creative learning which will benefit particularly the students. Furthermore, untrained teachers also have the possibility to reflect and practice by taking remedial courses through distance learning media (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008). These different opportunities offered to teachers help them reflect on what they are doing –and are supposed to do– in their practice. As Freire (2011) stated, “reflection –true reflection– leads to action” (p. 66).

### ***Political and Social Responsibility***

The whole concept of political and social responsibility refers to the level of engagement and contribution both groups assume. The findings show that in Barbados and Ghana, political and social actors have taken up their share of the responsibility with regards to EFA policies. Both countries' governments have allocated part of their national budget to educational expenditures: Barbados, 14.3% and Ghana, 24.4%. And with this funding, basic education is free to all children and youth; grants, bursaries and subventions are also provided. Both governments have created various units and councils that are responsible for specific aspects of education such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET), literacy programs, non-formal education, student services, teacher education and girls' education unit, among others.



Both ministries have also collaborated with national and local organizations like private businesses and local NGOs. For example, in Ghana, the Public Private Partnership policy elaborated by the Ministry provides resources to private schools; and local private banks waived banking fees for all accounts related to the Capitation Grant Scheme (World Bank & UNICEF, 2009). In Barbados, the social aspect was seen through parents' and families' involvement in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings, as they volunteered and received continuous training.

Another side of this responsibility related to the provision of material resources meant to facilitate teaching and learning. In Barbados, not only new schools were opened but also some schools' physical plants have been repaired and upgraded. As for Ghana, eLearning centers were established across the country. In both countries, the ministries ensured that teaching materials and supplies, reading materials and logistics were provided to schools, teachers and pupils, either through grants, pilot projects or reform programs. Through these various programs and actions, Barbados and Ghana have demonstrated that "political [and social] will and commitment are important", to paraphrase Lind (2008, p. 8). This also showcases that political and social involvement and participation have made a difference because they have integrated these projects in their broader educational agendas (see also Bhalalusesa, 2005; EFA GMR, 2007; Lind, 2008; Oxenham, 2008).

### ***Teaching and Learning***

The concept of education done by the teacher with the learner stresses the importance of the relationships between teachers and learners, and the challenges both of them face, as well as the different ways in which learners are included in their learning journey. Barbados and Ghana

have each elaborated various strategies with this aim in sight. One of the first things Barbados has done is to maintain pupils-teacher ratios (PTR) at a low level. The PTR in Barbados is 16 at the pre-primary, 13 at the primary, and 15 at the secondary level. The case is different in Ghana, where there has not been such progress (35 in ECCE, 31 in primary school and 19 in secondary); although Ghana has the lowest pupil-teacher ratio compared to other Sub-Sahara African countries, according to Bennell (2009). With these low PTRs, Barbadian teacher and pupils have the opportunity and time to work together, to challenge themselves as well as their views/opinions and to include students in the learning process. Furthermore, teachers use the results of the Basic Skills Assessment Battery and the Criterion Referenced Test to help students individually with specific developmental programs, and with remedial programs before they sit for other tests. Both teachers and students have access to computer hardware, software and technical infrastructure in classrooms and laboratories which support them in the teaching-learning process.

In Ghana, the 2007 revised curriculum has emphasized participatory and problem-solving pedagogy, as well as critical and scientific thinking. Teachers are thus encouraged to practice active learning to develop intellectual competencies and skills and aptitudes in their learners. Moreover, once Ghanaian students reach the secondary level, they have the option and possibility to build their own curriculum from the various elective options offered and with flexible timetables. Another strategy put forth was the subject-based approach which consisted in combining subjects with one another, thus strengthening understanding and acquisition of knowledge by the learners. In fact technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs teachers have used a similar approach, the competency-based training, targeting literacy and numeracy and other practical skills for employment from all sectors of development.

These practices in Barbados and curriculum changes in Ghana can be considered as essential to an authentic and democratic education of children, youth and adults, because they seek and aim towards interactions between teachers and learners: an education by the teacher *with* the learner. In other words, these policies have tried to step away from the “banking concept” of education that Freire (2011) warns about; where students are considered as containers and teachers, the bankers depositing knowledge into the students’ empty heads.

## 6.2. A comparative lens

In this section, I compare both countries’ implementation policies and programs, drawing out the similarities and pointing out the differences and particularities. This will help understand, to a certain extent, why these countries’ results vary from one another; and therefore should provide grounds for analysis for any other countries. In essence, these comparisons just show how unique each country is, which is what this comparative case study is interested in discovering.

### *Similar patterns & trends between Barbados & Ghana*

When looking across Barbados’ and Ghana’s implementation of EFA goals, several similar patterns are observed. Some of the factors this project set out to explore are common to both countries: the role of government, NGOs and local communities. The national government plays a significant and vital role in the implementation of EFA goals. Actually it is responsible for setting everything in motion, from policy-making to the evaluation of results. The government in both countries also assumes the financial aspect of the EFA scheme, although it receives aid and assistance from various partners. This leads to the two other factors, the role of NGOs and local communities. In effect the NGOs involved are international, regional and

national; there are also businesses and financial institutions who took part in the process. These organizations and institutions financed reforms, expansion projects, programs, scholarships and grants. For example, in Barbados, the World Bank, the InterAmerican Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank are among the international and regional institutions that have financed several projects; whereas in Ghana, aid has come from a wide range of international donors: financial institutions, foreign countries and United Nations' agencies. Members of local communities were solicited to participate in and manage specific projects such as the Parent Volunteer Support Program in Barbados or the literacy program volunteered facilitators in Ghana.

Both countries have clearly stated their vision and goals for the education provided to their citizens. The Ghanaian government believes that education should result in the “formation of well-balanced individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and aptitudes to enable them [to] become functional and productive citizens” (Republic of Ghana Department of Education, 2008, p. 5), through “opportunities of a kind which would allow him to make the most of his abilities and to contribute to the social and economic growth of the country” (Planning & Research Section, 2000, p. 31). However, Barbados has taken a step further by actually setting practical and measurable goals for its entire education system. It is clearly stated in the 2003 Budget presentation that human resources development is ensured through tertiary education by having one university graduate in each household in the country (Peters & Best, 2005). This suggests that Barbados has a stronger commitment toward post-secondary education whereas Ghana's commitment is more visible in its technical, vocational and agricultural education and training (TVET), its literacy and its non-formal education (NFE) programs that are financed by the state.

In both countries, school fees have been abolished and the state provides a fixed amount of funding per annum, per pupil. In Barbados, education is free for all citizens enrolled in public schools from pre-primary to post-secondary; while in Ghana, the government finances pupils attending public schools, with a particular focus on basic education (two years of kindergarten, primary and junior secondary education). In doing so, both countries have provided equal opportunities to their citizens.

School is compulsory for the same length of years, even when it does not start at the same age in each country: from 5 to 16 years old in Barbados, and from 4 to 15 years old in Ghana. But the difference between these two systems lies in what follows. In Barbados' case, compulsory education includes pre-primary, primary and secondary education. And students start post-secondary education –or the workplace– right after. As for Ghana, compulsory education comprises two years of pre-primary, primary and junior secondary education; after this, students enter senior secondary education for 4 years with options in TVET, agriculture or general programs.

Various programs of post-secondary education can be found in Barbados and Ghana. With both countries having put an emphasis on competencies for life, the tertiary/post-secondary level includes formal, quasi-formal and non-formal training which include non-formal education programs and literacy programs available, free of charge to youth and adults. Complementary basic education programs in Ghana and the Adult and Continuing Education represent other means to receive an education in an informal setting. However, in Ghana's case, there are only five state-funded universities for the millions of students leaving secondary schools (3,646,000 pupils enrolled in secondary education in 2010, according to the 2012 EFA GMR); which forces the non-admitted students to enter the private ones or other post-secondary programs.

Nonetheless this helps in the provision of multiple skills needed for the workplace. They are considered alternative pathways to education, another common trend between Barbados and Ghana. As a matter of fact, these countries have tried, as Dewey (1964) suggested it, to find a balance between the incidental and the intentional, the informal and the formal modes of education.

Through these programs, both countries have reformed their curriculum. It was considered essential to carry out their visions and improve the quality of education. Both countries focused on developing standards and attainment targets. Barbados took into account students' learning process emphasizing learning rate, styles, stimuli and interests. In Ghana, emphasis was put on participatory and problem-solving pedagogy through critical and scientific thinking. As the literature mentioned, these reforms have tried to make the contents more relevant to learners. Moreover to carry-out these reforms, Barbadian and Ghanaian teachers' training education was also remodeled; and institutional strengthening was done through various schemes.

Learners with special needs, physically or mentally, those at-risk and those incarcerated (in Barbados) are all included in the education system in both countries. Education is available to them in formal, quasi-formal or non-formal settings. Sometimes they are included in mainstream schooling; sometime they are enrolled in special schools. By taking every student into account, Barbados and Ghana have made a push towards total inclusion, social justice and equity as Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley and Goodlad (2004) and Pinto (2012) have advocated for.

Last but not least, an assessment system was developed and implemented in Barbados and Ghana. It varies in models and is administered at different levels. The rationale behind this

push, in essence, is similar in both countries: to improve the quality of education. However these evaluation processes vary in each country. In Barbados, the student is included and is active in the process since the assessment is a combination of process and product methods. Whereas in Ghana, the evaluation process consists in specific tests students have to sit in. Nonetheless, in both countries, the results from these assessments enable teachers and school staff to locate where improvements are needed.

### ***Differences between Barbados & Ghana***

One of the differences between Barbados and Ghana is the decentralization of education. With Ghana's decentralization policy, the administration and financial management of education is done at different levels: regional, district and schools. Whereas for Barbados, only the management of schools are delegated to school committees for primary schools and to school boards for secondary schools. In both case, they all report to the Ministry of Education. Even though some scholars oppose decentralization (Whitty, Power & Halpin, 1998), there are others like Little (2008) who advocate for decentralization of educational management paired with the strengthening of the decentralized structures. According to Little (2008), decentralization aims at raising internal efficiency. And Ghana has put in place several mechanisms to support these structures; which include various bodies such as school and local community participation (parent-teacher association), school management committees, teacher support teams, oversight committees, and trainings for district directors, regional managers and supervisors (Republic of Ghana Ministry of Education, 2001).

Also, there is the percentage of expenditure allocated by each country (14.3% for Barbados and 24.4% for Ghana). It has yielded different results: youth and adult literacy rates

higher in Barbados, gender parity index higher in Barbados. This can be explained by the fact that Ghana's population under 18 years old is higher than Barbados', meaning that there are more children and youth to educate in Ghana (54% of a 25.546.000 population) than there are in Barbados (25% of 275.000 inhabitants). Also, there is the fact that Barbados is a much smaller country than Ghana; which suggests that in Ghana there are more regions and localities to reach and cover than there are in Barbados. Therefore the allocated budget has to be proportionate to the population it serves.

Gender equality between boys and girls has not been reached in Ghana compared to Barbados. Even with enrolment rising for both categories, the age bracket matters. For children in the 6-10 years-old bracket, enrolment rate between girls and boys are not significantly different; but in the 11-16 years-old group, the boys have a 8% lead on the girls. The explanation for this, according to Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu and Hunt (2007), is multifaceted and is location-specific. First when girls enroll later than the official age, they are most likely to drop out as they approach adolescence. Second, beliefs and stereotypes of girls' role influenced the decision to send them to school and to keep them there. And third, costs and opportunity costs do not play in the girls' favor, particularly if parents have to choose between sending a son or a daughter to school (Yeboah, 1997, in Akyeampong *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, the enrolment rate also depends on geographical location, meaning urban versus rural. The other factors identified are low attendance, low attainment, high grade repetition, socio-economic and household features, and pressure to enter the workplace, especially for overage pupils.

Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) represents one of the differences between both countries.

Barbados has maintained a constant ratio throughout the last decade: 16 at the pre-primary, 13 at



the primary and 15 at the secondary level, even when the country is suffering from a brain drain of qualified teachers according to Inness (2007). As Mehrotra (1998) suggested, this can be considered as a contributing factor to the fact that Barbados has a high survival rate, 92% to Grade 5 and a high transition rate to secondary school of 99%. Ghana, on the other hand, has a different story. At the pre-primary level, the ratio has increased over the decade from 25 (1999) to 35 (2010); at the primary and secondary level, it remained constant: 31 and 19 respectively. As previously mentioned, Ghana has nonetheless the lowest pupil-teacher ratio compared to other Sub-Sahara African countries (Bennell, 2009). In addition, Ghana's pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) can be part of the reason why Ghana has a survival rate to Grade 5 of only 78% when compared to Barbados' results of 92%. This can be explained with the fact that, despite all the programs and actions in place towards teacher training, there were only 49% of teachers trained, in 2007 (EFA GMR, 2010); which means that some students are being taught by unqualified teachers, one of their reasons for dropping out.

Finally, the health system in these two countries is differently structured. Although the government offers health services, in Ghana there is an issue of coverage and reach: inadequate access and facilities disparities between urban and rural areas affect Ghanaians' health status. According to Akyeampong and colleagues (2007), studies have shown that health status does disturb enrolment and attendance in, and drop-out from school. Hunger, malaria, headaches and poor eyesight are the principal issues affecting children. Whereas in Barbados, the health system is a social safety net available to all; services and essential drugs are free of call in all state-funded facilities. In doing so, Barbados has provided support related to health and safety, as recommended by Little (2008).

### 6.3. Lessons learned from Barbados and Ghana

This final section outlines some of the lessons learned from this study, those that stand out, thus answering my third and final research question: *What can other Global South countries learn from the experiences of Barbados and Ghana in meeting their own EFA goals?* I begin here with Marc Antoine Jullien (1817) who is considered one of the early founders of comparative education. In his proposal for conducting comparative studies, Jullien (1817) stated that

It is necessary [...] to gather the observations, the common measure which must serve to relate and compare them, to appreciate fully the true worth of institutions, of different ways of teaching, of systems more or less appropriate to each sphere of education considered in its entirety and in all its details, and the good or harmful effects which result (cited in Fraser, 1964, p. 41).

This is what I have attempted to do throughout my study in order to find out, as Sadler (1900), another early comparative education scholar, questioned: “How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?” (cited in Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008, p. 18).

In this section, I review some of the lessons learned from this comparative study, although not all, as that would imply restating much of what has already been reviewed earlier in this chapter.

In terms of economics and finances, the strategy that has yielded the most results has to do with free education (and educational programs) at all levels, from pre-primary to post-secondary. Barbados has done so and the results can be seen in the country’s high literacy rate. Also, the allocation of a percentage of the country’s GDP to educational expenditures is a sure

means to help implement various policies related to the EFA scheme. However, Barbados' allocation is lower than Ghana's and the country is more successful in meeting its EFA goals. This suggests that finances and money are just one component of the whole scheme, and that the other elements are just as important.

Regarding political actions, it is important to note the emphasis both countries have placed on partnerships at all levels. Barbados and Ghana have recognized the value of including a wide range of actors and sectors in their educational reforms. Participation, involvement and engagement came from international institutions and organizations (financial, governmental, non-governmental), national organizations and business, local communities, parents and families, teachers and school staff. In addition, parents have been involved in the educational reforms. In Barbados, the Parent Volunteer Support Programme is an example of how parents can participate in their children's school life by assisting teachers regularly and for which these parents receive continuous training.

Another strategy that drove Barbados is the government's long-term goal of ensuring that each household in the country has a university graduate. This type of target and goal setting actually helped the country address specific actions that yielded positive results.

One of the administrative strategies that stood out is Ghana's decentralization policy and how it was carried out. The management and operation of the education system was delegated to regional, divisional and district directorates who are also in charge of the budget allocated to them. Aside from receiving regular training, these different directorates are assisted by various bodies that ensure greater school and local community participation in educational matters. Another strategy had to do with maintaining a low pupil-teacher ratio just like Barbados did.

With regards to pedagogy and programs policies, both countries implemented a holistic approach to their educational reforms. Moreover in Barbados and Ghana, provision to participate in various educational programs was made by the government and Ministry of Education for special needs, at-risk and incarcerated students who, otherwise, might have been cast aside.

Human resources actions that stood out involved teachers and parents. Both Barbados and Ghana reformed the training teachers received to reflect the new vision of their reforms.

Curriculum documents were distributed and reached teachers in the early stage of the reform. Barbados made sure that every teacher received copies of the documents and Ghana sent out electronic versions to all districts for distribution.

This case study of the implementation of EFA policies in Barbados and Ghana showcases many of the aspects of successful educational reform Levin (2012) has proposed including setting goals and targets, building capacity, having a multi-level engagement and strong leadership, using resources effectively, focusing on key strategies while also managing other interests and issues, and aiming for continuous learning through innovation.

This also demonstrates Barbados' and Ghana's commitment to teachers by respecting their professionalism and supporting them in very specific ways throughout the change process such as professional development, assessment and evaluation feedback and incentive programs, which is critical to successful educational reform as Kirtman's (2002) study has shown. As Fullan and Levin (2009) assert, it is fundamental to intensively develop the entire teaching profession to "a high standard of practice" (p. 1).

Given the fact that schools (and societies) are complex systems, it is necessary to consider non-school factors that have an impact on students and their success. Governments in Barbados and Ghana recognized the importance of addressing not only the educational needs of their populations but also addressing other needs such as health and social welfare. For example, there was a focus on children's health status, special programs for pregnant mothers and for adolescents, on preventive health measure, on protective policy for vulnerable groups such as children under 5 years old. Overall, what we see in both Barbados and Ghana is what Fullan (2001) called a "whole system reform" defined as "raising the bar and closing the gap for all students [...] at all levels in the public school system" and to which Fullan and Levin (2009) added that it is about "improving every classroom, every school, and every district in the state, province, or country, not just some schools" (p. 1).

Therefore, it would appear that here is much for other Global South countries to learn from this comparative study about the implementation of EFA policies in Barbados and Ghana. However it is important to note as Little (2008) did, that "while a strategy that has 'worked' in one country provides food for the thought it does not follow that it should necessarily be followed in another" (p. 80). Therefore, as I have previously mentioned (in chapter IV), any lessons drawn from this comparative research should be taken with caution as it represents just the perspectives of one researcher drawn from only two countries that have specific contexts (political, economic, social and cultural).

## Concluding summary

In this chapter, I have explored the connections between the Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) and the results found in both countries. The different aspects of CDT were applied to these findings to figure out how these countries are faring. It was discovered that the policies and programs put in place reflected key features essential to a critical democratic education system, although each country showed various levels of attainment. Some characteristics were more predominant than others; while some intertwined with others. In the second part of this chapter, I compared both countries' implementation processes. The purpose was to find similarities and differences between the countries. The former includes policies such as fee abolition, curriculum reform, alternative pathways to education, partnerships, among others. The latter comprises issues related to gender equality, decentralization policy, health system, pupil-teacher ratios, to name these few. The third section of this chapter outlined some of the lessons learned from this study which, in addition to the critical democratic perception and the comparative discussion, could help other countries in their EFA journey. This analysis and discussion have thus provided elements to answer all my research questions: (1) *What are the programs, approaches or actions that Barbados and Ghana have adopted to meet their EFA goals? In other words, what are the policies that have been put in place by the governments and educational communities in these countries to achieve these goals?* (2) *What results have these actions produced? In other words, what are the outcomes from the implementation of these policies?* (3) *What can other Global South countries learn from the experiences of Barbados and Ghana in meeting their own EFA goals?* In the next and final chapter, I will conclude this case study with a summary, the implications of the study and personal reflections that should serve, as

Phillips and Schweisfurth (2008) suggest, to support and caution against potential policy decisions.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I first summarize the findings and analysis of chapters five and six. Then I sketch out ideas for future research in the second section, Implications. Finally I conclude with some personal thoughts linked to my investment and self-positioning in this project.

### Summary

As stated in the introduction chapter, I am drawing on one of the key founders of the field of Comparative and International Education (CIE), Sir Michael Sadler, who asked, in 1900: “How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?” (cited in Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008, p. 18). To guide me, I set out three research questions which are:

1. What are the programs, approaches or actions that Barbados and Ghana have adopted to meet their EFA goals? In other words, what are the policies that have been put in place by the governments and educational communities in these countries to achieve these goals?
2. What results have these actions produced? In other words, what are the outcomes from the implementation of these policies?
3. What can other Global South countries learn from the experiences of Barbados and Ghana in meeting their own EFA goals?



The data collected and reviewed in Chapter V have helped me answer the first two questions, in term of policies in place and outcomes generated. In both countries, strategies to meet the EFA goals were related to six themes. Economics and finances included programs such as abolition of school fees and school funding schemes, government spending on education, and various forms of scholarships, grants and bursaries. Politics strategies referred to government involvement and commitment to education through funding, creation of specific educational departments/councils and different types of partnerships at all levels (international, regional, national and local). Administration dealt with actions such as decentralization, multigrade scheme, as well as pupil-teacher ratio. Pedagogy and programs comprised curriculum reforms and standardization, evaluation and assessment of pupils and teachers, alternative pathways such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET), non-formal education (NFE), literacy programs and youth development programs. Human resources revealed programs linked to teachers training and support system for teachers, incentives for teachers, as well as volunteering for literacy programs and parents support program. Finally, the non-human resources category included the importance of programs and actions such as school feeding programs, textbook loan scheme, uniform grants, transport subsidies, teaching materials and supplies, and technology laboratories.

Chapter VI has provided a critical conceptual framework for answering the third research question, which has helped confirm my hypothesis *“Critical Democratic Theory provides a framework for the comparative analysis of two countries’ educational systems, Barbados and the Republic of Ghana, and their progress towards meeting EFA’s six goals. Moreover, this comparative study provides important lessons that other Global South countries struggling to meet their own EFA goals can draw upon.”* It was discovered that the policies and programs put

in place by Barbados and Ghana and analyzed through a Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) lens align at some level with CDT principles. It also showcased how some CDT principles are more present than others in both countries. For example, Barbados shows a greater commitment to equality of access to a wide range of educational programs compared to Ghana, which has demonstrated a stronger commitment to administrative and financial decentralization. My findings were based on a comparison of both countries' implementation policies, drawing out the similarities and differences between them, and then finding an explanation for these variances.

In fact, regarding the six EFA goals, there are several policy and program lessons other countries can learn –with caution– from Barbados' and Ghana's experiences. Not exhaustively, the policies related to EFA goal 1, early childhood care and education (ECCE), have to do with the incorporation of ECCE into basic education, the provision of free ECCE programs and funding schemes and the involvement of parents in ECCE programs. Concerning EFA goal 2, universal primary education (UPE), these policies include the abolition of fees for basic education and the establishment of various funding schemes, the provision of family-related costs (books, uniforms, transports, meals), a curriculum reform centered on learners, multigrade teaching and flexible transfers, and the inclusion and provision of programs for special needs, at-risk, incarcerated students. As for EFA goal 3, lifelong learning (LL), some of the actions revolve around making a wide range of post-secondary programs (alternative pathways) available to all citizens, offering second chance opportunities to those who did not make it the first time and providing youth programs, as well as establishing departments in charge of these programs. Strategies for EFA goal 4, adult and youth literacy (AYL), consist of free literacy programs with provision of materials and use of volunteers for these programs. Some of the policies related to EFA goal 5, gender equality, comprise in grants, bursaries and specific

funding schemes for girls, awareness campaigns, girl-friendly environments, as well as Ministry departments for girls. At last, programs and actions pertaining to EFA goal 6, education quality, have to do with maintaining a low pupil-teacher ratio like Barbados, involving teachers in curriculum reform and communities in education matters, providing various teacher training programs (in classrooms, on-the-job, online), focusing on information and technology communications (ITC), providing materials and supplies, infrastructures and facilities to students, teachers, principals, staff and every other person involved in the system, and establishing different structures for the management of the education system. All these policies, programs and actions were established and implemented with multi-level partnerships and co-operation.

### **Implications**

#### ***Areas for future research***

My study points to a few areas for future research. When I took a second look at my data, I noticed two coding categories that would be very interesting to investigate further. These are culture and gender. I think that at some level and at some point, those factors influence the choices citizens make regarding their own education or that of their children. In fact, the literature has alluded to cultural factors such as attitudes, beliefs and dispositions that have hindered progress towards the achievement of EFA goals. They concern, in particular, gender disparities and inequality, as well as dispositions towards certain work due to class, economic status, cast and/or religion, and gender. As Tuwor and Sossou (2008) have mentioned, in order to improve and reduce the gender gap, there should be a change in attitude, beliefs and mentality, and a more proactive and responsible parental accountability. Some research has also

acknowledged the role of mothers, pointing out to programs supporting them and encouraging them to pursue their post-primary education and literacy skills (Birdsall, Levine & Ibrahim, 2005; Lewin, 2007). That being said, culture and gender could be topics for future study, in investigating the implementation of EFA policies.

More comparative studies of other Global South countries continuing in the same vein as my study would enrich the body of comparative literature as well as EFA's already extensive literature. They will provide different outlooks, particularly when comparing *all six* EFA goals. Finally, future research will be strengthened by conducting interviews with EFA key players of the chosen setting. These players could be anyone involved in the EFA scheme of the country, from the Minister of Education and government officials to policy-makers to educators at all levels of the system to stakeholders and society members. Given that they are directly or indirectly involved in schools and/or other educational settings, or concerned by them, these players' interviews would offer valuable insights in their country's EFA journey.

### **Closing reflections: Personal thoughts**

In the introductory chapter of this study, I stated from where my investment in this project stems. I was born, raised and completed all of my compulsory and secondary schooling in Haïti. After completing my undergraduate studies in Education Sciences in Port-au-Prince, Haïti, I worked, and still do, in the education system, mostly with low socio-economic status students and their families. The facts speak for themselves. The country has a youthful population (14 years old and under), representing 35.6% of the 9,993,000 inhabitants (UNdata, 2013c), and yet 51% of the school-age youth does not attend school (UNFA, 2006). With

literacy rate at 52.9%, there is a shortage of skilled labor and an abundance of unskilled labor; the unemployment rate has reached 40.6% in 2010 (CIA, 2013c). Therefore, Haïti has a lot to do in order to educate its citizens. Coming from the country and knowing the situation there, I feel that, as a country, we have a long road ahead of us.

When looking at the patterns found from this case-study, the issues are more about how to apply these strategies nationwide in all state-funded schools. Several private schools and institutions in Haïti have established programs related to school feeding programs, uniform and school supply grants, scholarships, to name a few, which have yielded positive results. Enrolments and attendance rates have increased. However two big questions remain: How to make these programs accessible to all? How to make them sustainable? (see King, 2009).

When it comes to lifelong learning, Haïti suffers from what Noronha and Endow (2011, p. 19) have qualified of an “oversupply of skilled workers” in certain fields, while at the same time there are not enough qualified workers for other fields, considering the fact that half of the population is illiterate (as mentioned above). From my point of view, this can be explained by the fact that not all professions are considered equal or valued the same way in the country. Therefore programs such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) have not really picked up in the country, although our last curriculum reform (early 1980s), similarly to Ghana, has made provisions for alternative pathways when entering secondary school. As Akyeampong (2010) suggested, formal school is ineffective in changing attitudes towards these programs.

As mentioned in Chapter VI, the lessons Haïti (or any other Global South countries) can learn from this comparative study are multifaceted. Funding schemes that target different aspects of education will only work if they are supported by strong political engagement. There are also the various types of relationships (international, regional and national) both Barbados and Ghana have established at different levels; this has helped shared the cost as well as the responsibility. These two countries have emphasized participation and commitment from parents and families (Barbados in particular), local communities and businesses as much as they have encouraged youth development. Building capacity is best done by providing various learning opportunities to youth and adults, as well as various modes of training to all involved in the education system (not solely teachers). Finally offering different demand-side programs such as books, meals, uniforms and transport subsidies will always motivate parents and pupils to attend and stay in school.

In light of all this, I strongly believe that in order for Haïti or any other country in a similar situation to meet its EFA goals, strategies related to economics and finances, politics, administration, pedagogy and curriculum, human and non-human resources need to be implemented simultaneously, holistically, and on a large scale if we want positive results.

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<http://www.undp.org>

## CURRICULUM VITAE

**Name : Pierre Marie Carolyne VERRET**

### Personal Profile: Objectives & Skills

- ♦ Contribute to the improvement of education systems through policy-making and decision-making, by taking actions in different areas and fields and working with different stakeholders at different levels.
- ♦ Through on-going trainings, seminars, innovative practices, help educators, particularly teachers, make school and learning a better experience for their students.
- ♦ Through international and comparative analysis of education systems and policies, draw practical lessons that will help the different sectors I am working with.
- ♦ Team player.
- ♦ Self-motivated, thrive for excellence and work well under pressure.
- ♦ Fluent in Creole, English and French.

### Education

**The University of Western Ontario**

*September 2011 – August 2013*

London, Ontario, Canada

- ♦ Master of Education (Education Policy Studies with focus on Comparative and International Education)

**École Supérieure d'Infotronique d'Haïti**

*September 2009 – June 2010*

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

- ♦ Computer Science (1st year)

**Université Quisqueya**

*September 1999 – July 2004*

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

- ♦ Licence en Sciences de l'Éducation (Bachelor degree in Education)
- ♦ Option: Preschool & Primary Education

### Selected Professional Experiences

**Research Assistant for the DELF-DALF Centre/WesternCAN**

**The University of Western Ontario**

*September 2011 – April 2013*

London, Ontario, Canada

- ♦ Plan, manage and execute DELF-DALF tests; deal and resolve problems and issues arising before, during and/or after exams.
- ♦ Assist candidates by providing information and guidance regarding the different tests.
- ♦ Assist, and coordinate with, satellite test centers (district school boards) in preparation and follow-up of tests.
- ♦ Entertain contact with French Embassy of Canada.

**Co-Director & Pedagogical Advisor****Ti Malice Kindergarten***September 2003 – July 2013***Institutions VERRET (Elementary school)***September 2006 – July 2013*

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

- ♦ Develop and implement curricula, follow-up and assist, and evaluate teachers' practice.
- ♦ Track and monitor students' progress.
- ♦ Supervise and monitor teachers' work and workload.
- ♦ Deal effectively with parents and resolve issues arising.

**Logistic Liaison****Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD) – Église Épiscopale d'Haïti** *February – March 2010*

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

- ♦ Monitor, track progress of emergency relief programs and report to US headquarters.
- ♦ Establish contact with NGOs and UN Agencies.

**Seminar Trainer****Éditions L'Artichaut (Canada) & Librairie L'Action Sociale (Haïti)** *July – September 2008*

Port-au-Prince, Haïti

- ♦ Train teachers and principals in new methodologies and approaches to reading.
- ♦ Decide on the seminar content and format (key notions, schedule, workload).

**Other Experiences****Internship in preschool (Pre-K 3 to Kindergarten)****Ti Malice Kindergarten, Port-au-Prince, Haïti***March 2001 – June 2001***Teacher (in Pre-K 3)****Ti Malice Kindergarten, Port-au-Prince, Haïti***September 2001 – June 2002***Team work and Leadership****Vice-President of Education****Club Toastmasters Libellule, Port-au-Prince, Haïti***2 terms: 2007-2008, 2008-2009*

- ♦ Assist and help club members plan their communication and leadership goals.
- ♦ Assign a mentor to each member, and monitor their progress.
- ♦ Plan the club's monthly and weekly meetings.

**Communication & Leadership Club: Club Toastmasters Libellule****Club Toastmasters Libellule, Port-au-Prince, Haïti***October 2005 – January 2010*

- ♦ Levels: Accomplish Communicator Bronze & Competent Leader

**Trainings****Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française (DALF)****Oral Communication & Expression Certificate****Institution Français d'Haïti, Port-au-Prince, Haïti***March – June 2008*

- ♦ Level: Oral Comprehension & Expression (C1-)

