AfriKids

EXTERNAL SITUATION ANALYSIS
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Introduction

This External Situation Analysis was conducted to understand the context in which AfriKids will operate from 2021-2030, helping to shape its strategic priorities during this period.

While future-gazing is notoriously difficult, this Analysis seeks to highlight relevant trends and emerging issues in the global, Ghanaian and UK operating environments that are likely to impact on northern Ghana's development as well as on AfriKids' activities and priorities during the period leading towards the 2030 target date for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Analysis seeks to take account of developments in the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental and Ethical (PESTLE) dimensions and to examine developments in the key thematic areas of AfriKids' work (education, health and child protection) as well as in global development and the UK and international donor environment.

The Analysis of the external environment facing AfriKids draws on the following sources:

- A variety of published materials from multiple sources (see Appendix 1)

- Interviews with a number of well-informed experts and stakeholders (see list at Appendix 2). Note that the input of interviewees is treated as non-attributable but informs the relevant aspects of the Analysis. All interviewees have been anonymised.

- Assessment of the work and plans of ten comparable organisations, selected by AfriKids

The Analysis was initially put together by Action Planning, AfriKids has since updated it for publishing online to include hyperlinks to key sources of information and update the key statistics included within the document with more recent figures where necessary.

The Global Environment

The global development agenda set in 2015, known as Agenda 2030 and underpinned by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), challenges all countries to, among other things, end poverty, promote healthy lives and wellbeing for all, provide inclusive and quality education and achieve gender equality. An important difference between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that ended in 2015, and the SDGs is to shift the focus from national targets to sub-national goals. This takes much greater account of inequalities within countries and between sub-regions.

The rights of children are part and parcel of the SDGs, but it is the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which codifies those rights. To mark the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, a report entitled A Second Revolution: Thirty years of Child rights, and the unfinished agenda (2019), published by Child Rights Now!, highlights many of the major strides made in life expectancy, access to education, health and primary care and improvements in child protection from violence and exploitation. Yet many persistent challenges remain, especially when it comes to issues that usually affect the poorest children, including child labour and exploitation, child marriage and sexual violence, and the rights of children with disabilities. These tend to mutually reinforce each other.

In terms of the international development agenda and the donor environment at large, according to Global Aid Trends in the Reality of Aid 2018: Growing Diversions of ODA and a diminished resource for the SDGs "it (Official Development Assistance) is increasingly instrumentalised for donors' narrow economic and political purposes." It sees the conditions that are determining aid decisions as "Neo-liberal policies within donor countries calling for significant reductions in public sector expenditures (…) accompanied by a pervasive donor discourse that relies on the market as the main driver of development and poverty reduction." This means that donor policies may be overly influenced by the politics and economic ideologies of donor countries rather than the needs of the developing countries themselves, that international aid and development financing is increasingly constrained and that policies are often driven by the business, economic and security interests of donor countries.

Ghana and northern Ghana

The drivers of the socio-economic disparities within the North are shown to be mutually reinforcing.... Given poor road connectivity, low levels of urbanization, limited public facilities, markets and related infrastructure, it is hard to attract private investment or to sustain the provision of social services, such as healthcare and education, which are critical for enhancing human development outcomes.

Source: Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018

Political and economic background

Northern Ghana has traditionally lagged behind the rest of the country in terms of economic and social development for a number of reasons, including historical, colonial and political ones, but also geo-spatial and environmental; northern Ghana represents more than half of the country's landmass and only one-fifth of the total population, with insufficient roads and other infrastructure. As the driest area of the country, its agriculture is rainfall dependent which affects crops and yields only one annual harvest. This has a strong effect on livelihoods and out-migration; northern Ghana is home to 44% of Ghanaians living in poverty (Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 7: poverty trends in Ghana 2005-2017), which is starkly disproportionate.

Ghana's economy is growing rapidly and has been for a while. In 2011, it was re-classified as having Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC) status, and it reached many of the MDGs before the target year of 2015. However, sub-national disparities increased and the North-South development and income gap have widened. The challenge posed by the SDGs and recognised by the Ghana Government is to address these within-country differences.

The Government's vision is one of "Ghana beyond Aid." (GBA) "What this means in the simplest terms is growth through private sector development and reduced reliance on foreign aid." Interviewees were somewhat sceptical about the consequences of the policy, indicating that it has led some development partners to reduce their aid to Ghana and it doesn't necessarily address key issues beyond aid dependency, especially growing inequality and gaps in service delivery. Some donor propositions that could have been helpful in this regard have been declined by the Government as not being in line with the Ghana Beyond Aid agenda.

Interviewees in Ghana and the review of comparable organisations have highlighted the importance of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) engaging at national level with the Government's policy agenda as the Ghana Beyond Aid philosophy continues to be developed. This would include promoting and supporting policies to address poverty, inequality and inadequate funding and provision of critical services.

There are positive developments. According to the Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018, a variety of government schemes, including "Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), School Feeding Program (SFP), National Youth Employment Scheme, Youth Enterprise Support, and the Affordable Housing Scheme have helped to improve social indicators" though these initiatives have not benefitted all segments of the population equally.

The LMIC status and Ghana's relatively rapid economic growth in recent years have also meant a changing donor attitude, though in line with overall global trends, moving from aid to trade. Another trend observed was for donors to fund networks or consortia rather than individual NGOS. It means (international) NGOs have to adapt their fundraising strategies so that they negotiate and build partnerships with others to create propositions for donors, rather than seeking funds individually (See Fundraising Environment below)

A very recent and significant political development is the division of the northern region into three regions: Northern, Savanah and North East. Together with Upper West and Upper East, this now means there are five northern Ghana regions. This poses an interesting future environment for AfriKids moving forward. It means entirely new sets of regional and local government structures are being established.

Decentralisation and local government are enshrined in the Ghanaian constitution and there are multiple layers of regional and local/municipal government, with varying remits and degrees of legislative power. They include traditional leaders. Interestingly, the SDGs are included in policy making at local levels: Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are required to include the SDG targets in their medium-term development plans, annual work plan and programmes.

Policy in many areas is now determined at the regional level (eg health and water/sanitation), though education remains more centralised. The implications and impact of the decentralisation of the Northern Region into three parts are still not clear. While the political level is established, the operational level is not complete and there is no clear timeline for full transition (eg the education office for Northern is still managing all three new regions).
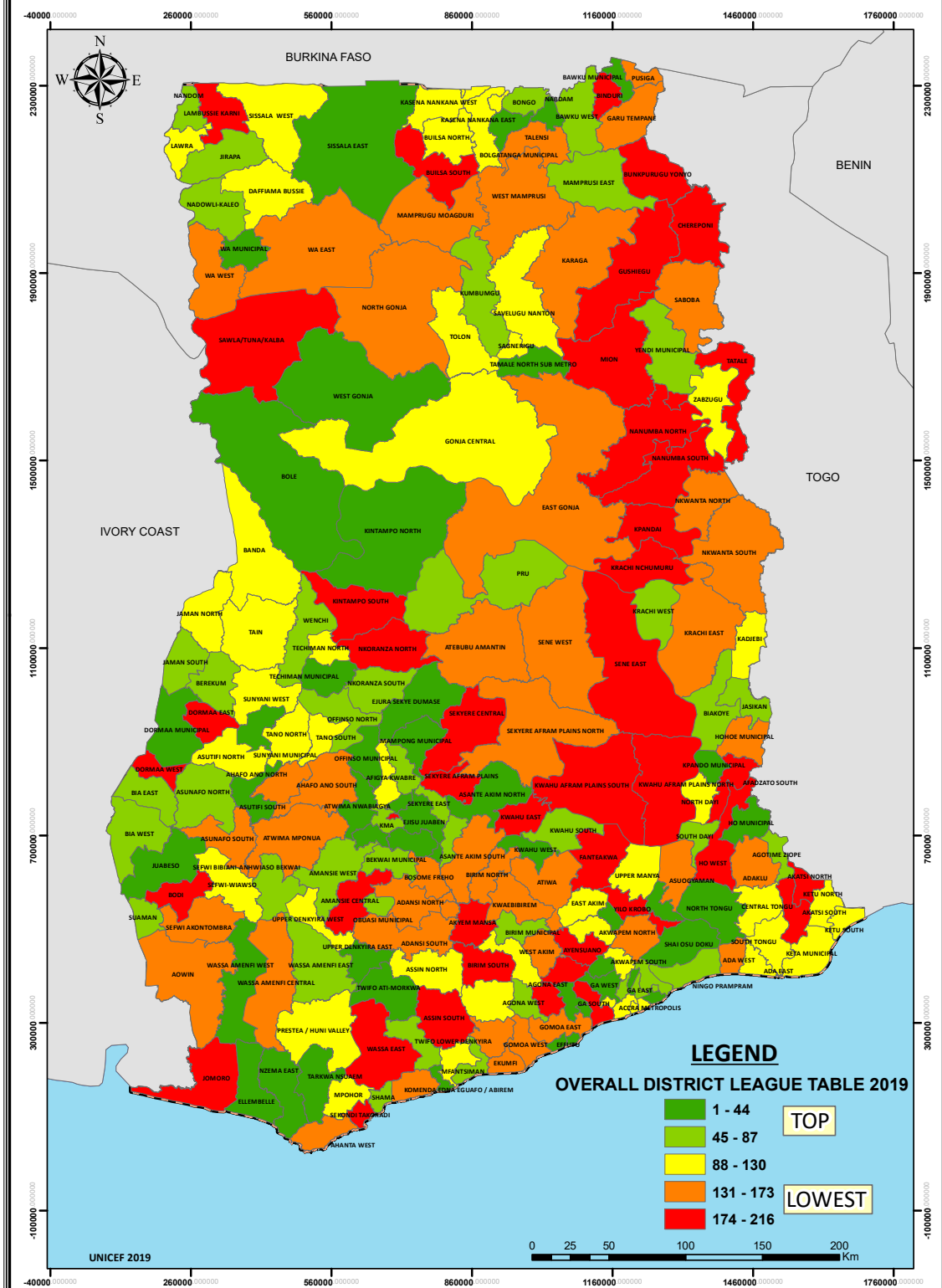
The new regions in northern Ghana are an opportunity for AfriKids. Most NGOs work in the north but tend to be concentrated around Tamale, leaving many districts underserved. The Government will want to see NGOs working in the new regions and there will be an opportunity to build relationships with new regional administrations. Geographically though, according to one interviewee, there is a danger of AfriKids spreading itself too thinly if it tries to operate across all five northern regions. A more focused approach to the selection of Districts may be appropriate.

Poverty

Taking into account the economic and political backdrop and trends, it is important to assess how these developments are likely to impact on outcomes and needs in AfriKids' key thematic and geographical priority areas.

The Ghana District League Table is a useful resource in this regard. It examines various outcomes in education, health, sanitation, governance and security. The overall ranking of Districts is represented in the following map:

MAP OF THE GHANA DISTRICT LEAGUE TABLE (DLT II)

LEGEND

OVERALL DISTRICT LEAGUE TABLE 2019

- 1 - 44 — TOP
- 45 - 87
- 88 - 130
- 131 - 173 — LOWEST
- 174 - 216

UNICEF 2019

Source: District League Table p.29

In the District League Table report – under the Education heading (here) – there is a similar map of district rankings in the education sphere. The overlap between these two maps can be used to identify Districts in the northern regions where the lowest overall rankings coincide with the lowest rankings in education. The overlap between the two maps could be the basis of geographical prioritisation for AfriKids with activities starting in the Demonstration Districts.

A 2018 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, describes the poverty and inequality facing Ghanaian people despite the country's high level of economic growth. He concludes that "the benefits of record levels of economic growth experienced over the past decade have gone overwhelmingly to the wealthy. Inequality is higher than it has ever been in Ghana, while almost 1 person in 4 lives in poverty and 1 in 12 lives in extreme poverty." Social programmes aimed at addressing this poverty and disadvantage are not adequately funded and the prospects for Ghana of meeting many of the SDGs are "not encouraging." He highlighted, in particular, the plight of young girls faced with early marriage associated with family poverty, perpetuated across generations as it "meant the end of their education and the continuation of a life of poverty for the girl and her children." In relation to the Northern Region the Special Rapporteur expresses particular concern that "70 per cent of the residents are in the bottom 20 per cent income group nationally; 47 per cent of men have no education; only 27 per cent of women are literate; almost one quarter of students do not complete primary school; 111 of every 1,000 children born die before the age of 5; and 82 per cent of children are anaemic, one third are stunted and one fifth are underweight."

He also notes that "Child poverty rates are especially problematic with 3.65 million, or 28.3 per cent of all children, living in poverty. A child is now almost 40 per cent more likely to live in poverty than an adult, compared to only 15 per cent more likely in the 1990s. One child in 10 lives in extreme poverty, meaning that 1.2 million children live in households that are unable to provide even adequate food. The majority of persons living in poverty live in the north. The regions with the highest poverty rates are the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions…" and "persons with disabilities and families with a disabled child face a double burden of poverty."

The UN Special Rapporteur highlights inequality which has been rising consistently over the past 20 years and is the highest it ever has been, giving Ghana one of the fastest growing rates in Africa, with the north/south divide a particular feature. He concludes that "the Government has done very little to explicitly address this challenge, and most of its policies seem set to increase rather than minimize inequality."

This is the context in which education, health and protection rights, needs, policies and services must be addressed.

Education

Over 450,000 children are out-of-school; they come mostly from the poorest households and within the three northern regions.

Source: Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030 p.6

"In the northern regions, pupils have only 35 per cent of the trained teachers they need; about 30 per cent of children have no school nearby; 20 per cent will not enter school; only two thirds of the entrants reach the end of primary; and of those who finish primary, less than one third pass the final exit examination. For instance, in mathematics, the secondary school pass rate is 86% for boys in Greater Accra, but only 16% for girls in Northern region. The regions with lower overall pass rates have the highest levels of gender inequality."

Source: Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018 p.49

Level of education	Years
Kindergarten (KG)	2
Primary	6
Junior High School (JHS)	3

These three levels together form the basic education sub-sector which is free and compulsory for all children. At the senior secondary level, students can either follow the academic track of senior high school (SHS) or pursue a more technical and vocational direction at a technical institute or specialised courses at a senior high technical school. Senior secondary is now also free but demand is so overwhelming that not every student can be accommodated, and there is a lack of resources that makes implementation highly challenging.

According to one interviewee, while the move to free senior high school provision has increased enrolment, most of the new students come from the top 60% of the wealth structure and the poorest are still held back. So the impact could be regressive, while at the same time causing budgets in other areas to be even more stretched. Most of the budget goes on teachers' salaries, leaving little for initiatives to improve the quality of provision. This is a key role and opportunity for NGOs like AfriKids – to get involved in initiatives to improve quality.

Another interviewee emphasised some of the reasons why poor and rural children are so often unable to access quality education: the children frequently have to travel long distances to schools where there are shortages of teachers and materials. At the same time there is often too little understanding of the value of education – parents are often illiterate and prioritise agricultural work and family chores ahead of school. Traditional practices such as fostering also interfere with education, eg children are frequently fostered out to extended family members who see them as a source of domestic labour and don't send them to school. Across Ghana 44 per cent of children attend schools without toilets and 62 per cent attend schools without water sources (Ghana Country Programme, p.3).

According to Ghana's District League Tables Report and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017-18, Ghana as a whole has made enormous advances in terms of enrolment of children into primary school and achieving gender parity in access and completion rates at primary level. The country's Education Strategic Plan 2010-2020 (ESP) has goals around universal access, improved quality and relevance, and greater efficiency as well as around the organisation and structure of the education system. Yet the Government's own 2018 Education Sector Analysis (ESA) recognises the regressive element of education reforms and the high levels of inequality in access and outcomes (urban/rural, north/south, by gender, particularly at secondary level, by relative wealth and for those with disabilities).

The proportion of children with disabilities in basic education makes up less than 0.5% of enrolment, despite accounting for 1.6% of the total population at this age.

Learning outcomes are recognised to be extremely poor. According to the ESA, for example, "Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) results show that in both 2013 and 2015 only 2% of pupils in Primary 2 could read at grade level, with 50% of those tested unable to recognise a single word." Rates of repetition of school years are exceptionally high at all levels, as high as 16% in some of the primary grades and 19% in the first grade of JHS and up to 15% in the top two grades of Senior High School. Many of the students repeating have not been able to complete the year due to seasonal

work, family responsibilities, or lack of money to pay fees (prior to the free SHS programme). Students from the poorest 20% of households, the most deprived districts, and/or from rural areas are about five to six times less likely to access SHS. Over 450,000 children are out of school, mostly from the poorest households and within the three northern regions.

The following map shows the ranking of Districts in relation to education (using Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) pass rates as the key measure):
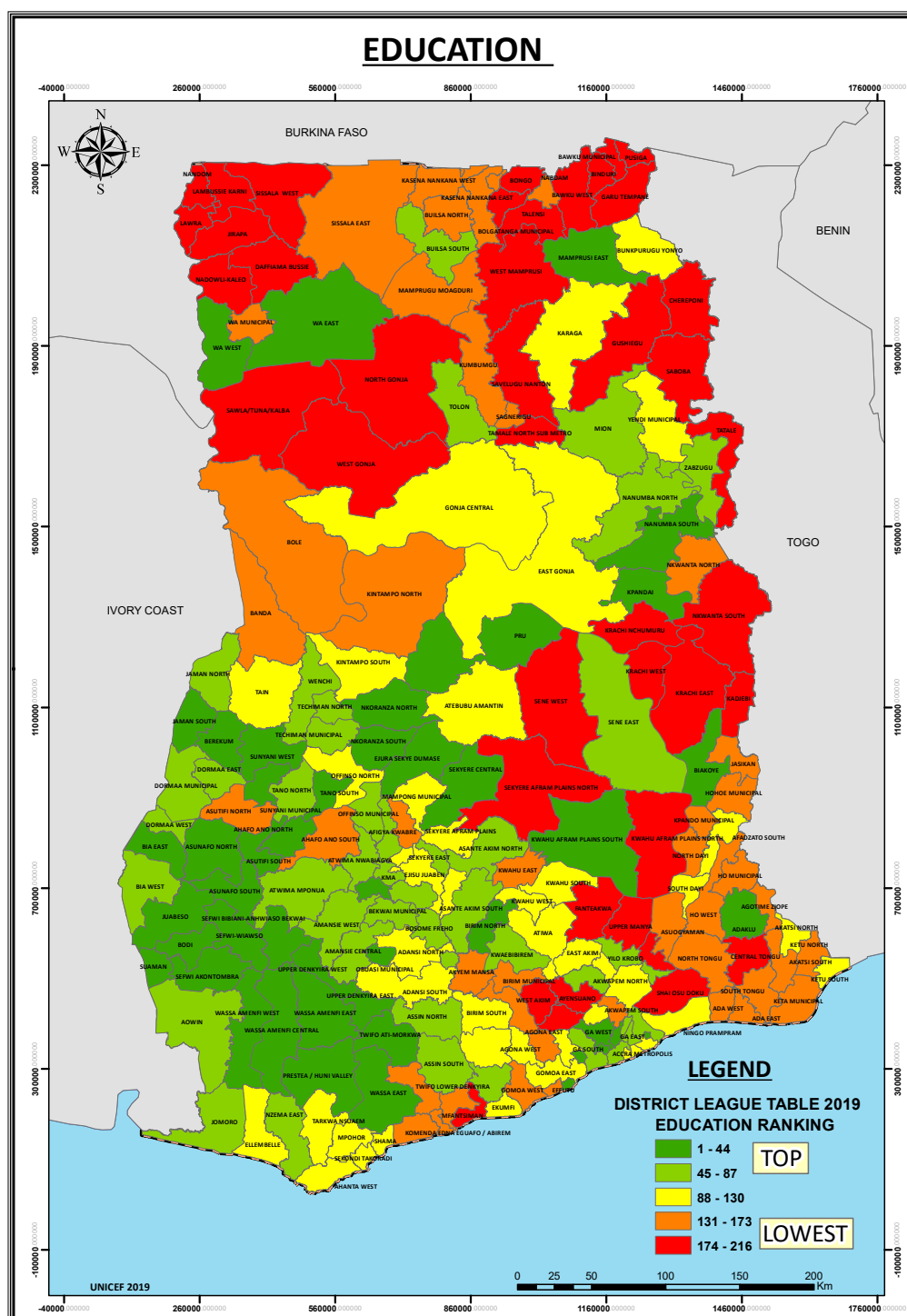
Source: District League Table p.8

Some of the challenges are high levels of untrained teachers in primary education combined with high levels of teacher absenteeism, retention of teachers in rural areas, poor child to textbook ratios, and wide inequalities in funding, access and quality between regions and between urban and rural areas.

Inequality in education starts at the earliest age. In Early Years Education, the Northern region has less than 50% of children enrolled, compared to 86% in the Greater Accra region, according to the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey. This is an issue recognised and addressed by AfriKids with its Early Years education programme. Disparities are also strongly gendered as e.g. the Northern Region has the lowest female literacy rate in the country at 44% in the age group 15-24, versus a national average of 61%.

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey:

- About eight in every ten of children in Ashanti region have completed primary school while this is lowest in Upper West at about five in every ten.

- While attendance rates vary across regions, Volta, Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions are consistently represented in the bottom five – across all levels of education.

- Greater Accra is the highest performer in both reading and numeracy while Northern and Upper West regions are the lowest, respectively.

There is a stipulation in Ghana that no child should walk more than five kilometres to get to primary school. The reality in vast areas with limited road infrastructure is that this is not always achievable. At the same time, access is only the start. Beyond access, it is the quality of education that will really make a difference to children's life chances.

The new Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030 has a strong focus on quality of education and improved learning outcomes. It also aims to ensure better efficiency in working within constrained resources in terms of capacity and funding. It further stresses the need for inter-agency and sectoral collaboration in order to ensure prioritisation is streamlined. For example, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) "works with partners to promote gender equity through such policies as the National Gender Policy, 'Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment into Ghana's Development Efforts', which will affect girls' potential to access and stay in school." The MoGCSP also oversees and finances kevy social protection programmes which contribute to education including the national School Feeding Programme and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme.

The national **School Feeding Programme** creates the opportunity to bring both girls and boys into school by ensuring that they are free from hunger, enabling them to concentrate and focus on learning. The goal of the programme is to deliver a well-organised, decentralised intervention that provides disadvantaged school children with nutritionally adequate, locally produced food. In 2015, the programme reached 3,000 schools and about 1.3 million pupils benefited from a daily meal at their school, with the objective of increasing access to support those most in need. However the programme has been criticised by the Special Rapporteur for corruption in the awarding of contracts and lack of any systematic monitoring of the quality of the food provided, which students are served by the programme, how much "shrinkage" occurs (ie reduction in the size of portions), and what outcomes have been achieved. The existing monitoring mechanisms, involving parent/teacher associations and school prefects, are described as "ineffectual."

The **Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP)** programme is a cash transfer programme which has reached over 200,000 extremely poor and vulnerable households. It is a Government of Ghana programme in partnership with the UK Department for International Development (DFID), UNICEF, and the World Bank. Households with orphaned and vulnerable children are one of the priority categories of the programme. LEAP is effectively an unconditional transfer but Government of Ghana has aimed to apply co-responsibilities in relation to the receipt of cash grants, such as children going to school. The LEAP Endline Impact Evaluation found some impact by the programme on education, with higher enrolment, attendance, and educational expenditure for LEAP beneficiary children compared to similar children in the Ghana Living Standard Survey sample. For example, LEAP is reported to have assisted beneficiary households to meet the educational needs of their children including the purchase of textbooks, school uniforms, and bags, among other things. For the next phase of LEAP the establishment of the Ghana Household Registry is expected to improve the targeting of LEAP beneficiaries to access cash transfer services and linkages to productive and financially inclusive employment opportunities, as well as to improve linkages with other social protection programmes, e.g. the School Feeding Programme. An intersectoral approach is also key for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education sector. However the Rapporteur points out that "it only reaches one in every eight of the 6.3 million people living in poverty." He concludes that, while LEAP "is a potentially very valuable form of social assistance, but its coverage needs to be greatly expanded, the amount it provides to beneficiaries needs to be increased, it needs to be better coordinated with other programmes and its financing needs to be assured."

Keeping in mind AfriKids' work with children with disabilities, the new Educational Strategic Plan notes: "Children with disabilities have lower attendance rates compared to children without disabilities at all levels of pre-tertiary education (...) It is also clear that children with disabilities are not progressing through the education system and a large proportion of those enrolled are over-age. The lack of facilities in basic and secondary schools disproportionately affects children with disabilities, with almost no regular basic schools having handrails, and only 8% being equipped with ramps. (...) There is a need for linkages between educational institutions and social protection, health, and community-based rehabilitation to enable children with disabilities to be supported to access learning and to enter schools with a child-friendly environment and where teachers are trained to practice inclusive education. As laid out in the Inclusive Education policy, the Ministry of Education will liaise with the Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Service to support children with disabilities, with the Ministry of Health making annual budgetary allocations to support the early detection of disabilities amongst children." (italics added)

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in particular achieves poor outcomes. According to the ESA, "improving access within this sub-sector is constrained by poor public perceptions: TVET is usually thought of as an option for underperforming students and many who are placed in these institutions often do not end up attending. Only 2.1% of students selected these institutions through the placement system in 2013. This is further compounded by a low absorption capacity for existing technical and vocational institutions, and the poor state of training facilities and equipment. The participation of women and persons with disabilities in this sub-sector is particularly low, especially in traditionally male-dominated areas such as engineering and construction: 26% female enrolment was registered for 2015/16 ... Currently, technical and vocational education is limited in scope and does not cover the diverse needs of learners. The relevant institutions are also ill-equipped to provide an adequate education....There is a mismatch between the skills supplied and the demand for skills in the labour market, and there is low industry investment and involvement in this sub-sector. In addition, only 52% of technical and vocational institutions' teaching staff possess technical qualifications."

The reality in northern Ghana means vast numbers of children are not in education but should be, access issues for those living in remote rural parts without adequate infrastructure, insufficient or unqualified teaching staff, and lack of teaching resources such as textbooks. Societal problems such as child labour, street child-ism, disability and child marriage are heavily interlinked with poverty and with educational access and outcomes.

Health

In terms of access to primary health care, the picture is not dissimilar to education. The area is vast, rates of clinical staff to population size are low, facilities are limited and there is a gap between policies on paper and implementation on the ground.

According to the Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018: "The Northern Region appears to suffer the most from the sparsely scattered nature of its population and the relative paucity of health facilities, though it has the largest population and the largest land area in the zone. Not only are there relatively fewer health and educational facilities, but these face institutional challenges in attracting and retaining staff. This needs to be addressed, for example, through facilitating access to housing for health and education staff and incentives and identifying innovative approaches."

The Ghana Health Service is the national agency responsible for health service delivery and implementation of the country's national health policies as emanating from the Ministry of Health. It has a series of directorates and regional directorates and operates a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) that is free to a large section of the population, including children up to 18, pregnant women and those living in poverty.

The NHIS was established in 2003. It is 90 per cent funded by revenue from the national health insurance levy, which is basically a 2.5 per cent tax on goods and services, and 2.5 per cent of each worker's basic social security contribution. It currently reaches about one-third of the population. According to the Special Rapporteur "while many of those living in poverty are enrolled, largely because recipients of the "Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty" programme should automatically qualify without any registration fee, many others are not because of the fees and other barriers to entry. The process of annual card renewal and the requirement to travel long distances to government offices are also significant obstacles for many beneficiaries. The Government informed the Special Rapporteur that it is planning to introduce a longer validity period, which should help. The scheme does not cover an important number of services, such as optical and auditory aids or artificial limbs. Moreover, a large proportion of beneficiaries with whom the Special Rapporteur met reported having had to pay for standard medicines at private pharmacies because national health insurance scheme stocks were exhausted or those medicines were not covered. The availability of insurance coverage should not be mistaken for enjoyment of the right to health and there are many problems in the health area that especially affect those living in poverty."

At the local level, Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) are trying to bring health care closer to the people as they seek to provide health services through partnerships between the health programme, community leaders and social groups. CHPS was introduced in 2003 to bridge the equity gap for communities in rural areas which are further away from health facilities than their urban counterparts. CHPS in fact had its origins in the activities and research findings of the Navrongo Health Research Centre (NHRC) which conducted a field experiment in Kassena-Nankana District of the Upper East Region, a district where AfriKids is very active. The subsequent implementation of community-based service delivery has demonstrated the feasibility and usefulness of reorienting health care at the periphery and moving it out of the clinical setting (as per the Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018).

Overall, as with education, even though a lot of progress has been made, inequities remain. Investment in and funding of the health sector is relatively low, receiving only about 3% of GDP, compared to 6% for education. Attainment of the SDGs by 2030 appear far more challenging for the health objectives.

According to the Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018, there is a wide gap between the highest and lowest performing regions, as well as along spatial, gender, and socio-economic dimensions. For example, the Northern Region recorded the highest incidence of under-five mortality followed by the Upper West Region which had 124 deaths per 1000 and 108 deaths per 1000 live births respectively while the national average was 82 per thousand live births, (data for 2011), with malaria identified as a leading cause of death.

The pervasive effects of poverty reveal themselves e.g. in malnutrition, often reflected in stunting (low height for age). Stunting prevalence was the highest in the Northern region (33%) and the lowest in the Greater Accra region (10%). Stunting decreases as the mother's level of education and wealth quintile increase. Under-nutrition is a significant contributor to child mortality.

The UNICEF Country Programme Document highlights the following health concerns affecting children:

- Malaria, diarrhoea and pneumonia together accounted for 45 per cent of under-five deaths.

- The risk of neonatal mortality is doubled for babies born to teenage mothers, demonstrating the risks associated with childbearing at a young age.

- The maternal mortality ratio remains high at 319 deaths per 100,000 live births.

- Newborn and maternal deaths remain persistently high.

- Immunization coverage for the major childhood diseases decreased slightly from 2008 to 2014, from 79 per cent to 77 per cent of children aged 12–23 months fully immunized, with major differences between regions.

- In 2014, 18,621 children aged 0 –4 years were projected to require antiretroviral therapy (ART). In 2015, coverage of ART for children aged 0–4 years living with HIV was 26 per cent.

- From 2008 to 2014, Ghana reduced the percentage of under-five children who are stunted from 28 per cent to 19 per cent. Yet, in the same period stunting among children under 6 months of age almost doubled, from 4.3 per cent to 8 per cent, and the rate of exclusive breastfeeding declined from 63 per cent to 52 per cent. The proportion of children aged 6–23 months fed with the recommended minimum dietary diversity declined from 47 per cent in 2011 to 28 per cent in 2014, and only 13 per cent of children are fed in accordance with accepted guidelines.

An area of particular concern is that of adolescent sexual and reproductive health. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey "The unmet need for family planning is highest among unmarried adolescents while modern use of family planning methods is higher among marrieds than unmarried adolescents. More than a third of married adolescents compared to one in every ten unmarried adolescents reported demand for modern methods of family planning satisfied. Adolescent girls in rural areas and those among the poorest and less educated are at a higher risk of early childbearing.

In 2011, the Ministry of Health discontinued the collection of data on persons with disabilities. Consequently, information on health for those with disabilities is not available. Programmes targeting persons, and in particular children, with disabilities are lacking. It is to be expected that those with disabilities will be seriously disadvantaged in access to appropriate healthcare. This is likely to be especially problematic for those with mental health conditions. According to the UN Special Rapporteur "thousands of people with psychosocial disabilities have been reported to be forced to live in psychiatric hospitals and prayer camps, often against their will, where they are subject to involuntary and often abusive treatment."

A 2013 report by Inclusion Ghana on access to healthcare for persons with intellectual disabilities (ID) concludes that "the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), … does not currently have a clear mechanism to ensure persons with ID do get access to free health care." Persons with intellectual disabilities have often been invisible to mainstream health services and health professionals. They die younger and have poorer health than the general population.

The Mental Health Act of 2012 lays out the legislative framework for a levy and says the finance minister should set up this resource to fund mental health services through parliament. The levy has yet to be established.

Despite the existence of the NHIS, underinvestment in health persists and inequality in health conditions and access to services is a significant challenge.

Child Protection

In terms of child protection, the laws and policies, though perhaps disjointed, are there; Ghana was the first country to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, it has ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (2005) it has the Children Act (1998) and many other, often standalone policies, as highlighted in the box below.

> The Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560) provides for the rights of the child and covers issues of parental duties and responsibilities, maintenance, adoption and fosterage; it protects children from exploitative labour and child marriage and stipulates responsibilities for care and protection of children. The Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653) also deals with the child in conflict with the law. Other national laws on children include); Criminal and other Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29); Intestate Succession Act, 1985 (PNDCL111); the Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694; the Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (Act 732) Child related policies and plans of action include the National Plan of Action (NPA) on Child Labour and the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 2009-2015; the National Plan of Action (NPA) on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), 2010-2015; the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy, 2004; the National Domestic Violence Policy and the Plan of Action, Hazardous Child Labour Framework; Gender and Children's Policy Standards have been developed for some child and family welfare services, such as residential homes for children.
>
> Source: Child and Welfare Policy, Government of Ghana, 2014.

Since 2010, Ghana has been actively engaged in the analysis and mapping of its existing child protection system and found it to be inadequate. According to the UNICEF and Global Affairs Canada (2015) case study Building a national child protection system in Ghana: From evidence to policy and practice: "The system lacked a national framework and comprehensive approach, linkages between upstream policies and downstream actions, and an effective coordination mechanism. (...) further research determined that funding was inadequate, and much of the legal framework, inherited from the colonial era, failed to reflect the country's current context. Also, during this period, a comprehensive bottleneck analysis was made of birth registration."

The process resulted in two distinct but linked policies, together forming the national Child Protection Policy framework: the Child and Family Welfare Policy, and the Justice for Children Policy, both approved by the Cabinet in 2015.

According to the case study: "(...) [it] has improved coordination as well as alignment of various initiatives. The operational plan for the Child and Family Welfare Policy identifies a child protection sector working group as a new coordinating body that will monitor roll-out of the system changes. (...) This key milestone will elevate and give greater prominence to child protection issues in the country. (...) The consultation processes in developing the Child and Family Welfare Policy also raised awareness of child protection issues, parental responsibilities and communal accountability for protection. Some traditional leaders involved in the process (such as Queen Mothers and Chiefs) have also taken initiatives to promote protection issues in their communities. Strengthened awareness and coordination at community level was an unintended and beneficial consequence of the policy development process, and it should be exploited as the policy is fully rolled out and operationalized." (italics added)

Ghana has a strong tradition of family and community support. In rural areas, child protection issues are often still resolved informally through discussions between families, or with traditional leaders. Customary chiefs and elders investigate the problem and hear the views of those involved. They seek to resolve the problem in a way that preserves the family, promotes reconciliation and restores peace and harmony. Children do not usually take part in these discussions and traditionally the interests of the child victim have not been seen as an important consideration. However traditional leaders have been involved in the establishment of Community Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPCs) in many parts of the country, often with the support of international agencies (eg UNICEF, Plan, World Vision).

It appears there is a degree of momentum around child protection and child welfare and it seems crucial for AfriKids to take the opportunity to consider advocating for the implementation of these new policy initiatives in the areas where they work. Equally, it is worth recognising that the work and impact of AfriKids has been noted by the Government of Ghana as they were requested to participate in developing and reviewing the National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana 2017-2026.

In response to the strong policy development, there has been a surge in comprehensive multi-donor investment for child protection and systems strengthening from donors such as USAID, UNICEF and the governments of The Netherlands, Canada and the USA, resulting in at least US$28 million of multi-year support.

With policies and funding for child protection improved, it is nonetheless the reality on the ground that speaks the loudest and that needs to be addressed.

Looking at the Northern Ghana Human Development Report (2018) and a UNICEF funded government report on baseline child protection research: Northern Region Profile (2014) there are certain challenges very specific to northern Ghana, while in some ways the strong family structures potentially offer a strong support system.

Violence reported by children at school in the Northern Region, for example, is lower than in other regions but punishments can be harsh, and 21% of children reporting humiliation by a teacher in the past month is cause for concern. Physical punishment at home is common, with 75% of girls and 78% of boys aged 1-14 reporting any physical punishment in the past month, rising to 94% for both sexes for any violent discipline (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2017-18). This clearly indicates a long way to go to reach SDG 16 on elimination of violence.

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, "Registering children at birth is the first step in securing their recognition before the law, safeguarding their rights, and ensuring that any violation of these rights does not go unnoticed. While vitally important for both girls and boys, the implications of low birth registration rates for girls are significant, rendering them more vulnerable to certain forms of exploitation they are at greater risk of, including child marriage and international trafficking. Although average birth registration rates are similar for girls and boys, children with mothers who have no education may be less likely to have their births registered. While girls and boys face similar risks of experiencing violent discipline -which includes physical punishment and psychological aggression-by caregivers in the home, gender inequality and domestic violence are among the factors associated with an elevated risk of violence against both girls and boys."

According to the Northern Region Profile, "teenage girls are sexually abused in schools and at home by their peers or older adults, and the girls are often blamed rather than the perpetrators. (...) Children in the Northern Region report the lowest rates of commercial sexual exploitation in the country (37.3 per cent). That being said, this is still an unacceptably high percentage of children who have to submit themselves to sexual abuse in order to meet their basic material needs."

Sexual abuse can lead to unwanted pregnancy, burdening the girl with both the abuse and the consequences thereof. Teenage pregnancy, also as a result of a consensual relationship, can be high risk and girls sometimes die from complications in childbirth because their bodies are not developed enough to cope with the birthing process. Non-stigmatising and easily accessible family planning services are crucial for girls and boys.

Child labour is a thorny issue. It is important to distinguish between child work and child labour, a distinction made by the ILO, as it cannot be assumed that all children's work is incompatible with child welfare and development (Northern Ghana Human Development Report). Without going into definitions, it is fair to observe that the extent of children's involvement in work in northern Ghana is very high: given the predominance of high levels of poverty, the pressures to put children to work are also high.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey report has the following data on child labour:

- About one in every three children age 5 to 17 years is engaged in child labour.

- One in every five children 5-17 years is engaged in hazardous working conditions.

- Children 5-17 years are more engaged in economic activities than household chores, particularly the 5-11 years age group.

- Children 5-17 years involved in hazardous working conditions are mostly found in rural areas, among the poorest and among those not attending school. There were no huge disparities related to sex of the child.

- Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions had the highest proportions of children involved in child labour.

With so many things, child labour in northern Ghana is gendered, and in the case of girls is strongly linked to migration.

There are specific areas in the Northern Region from where adolescent girls migrate south to Accra or Kumasi to work as kayayei, head porters or street vendors. This has been shown to stem from poverty, a lack of education and employment opportunities, and the need to accumulate wealth in preparation for marriage ((Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018). Their migrant status and the nature of their work make them vulnerable to (sexual) abuse and exploitation. Many become pregnant or return home with sexually transmitted infections. Children are more vulnerable to child labour related migration during the dry season (July to September) when families are unable to adequately feed their children.

Forms of child labour that tend to have higher involvement of boys are (illegal) small scale artisanal mining, or galamsey, as well as agriculture and forestry. Children are vulnerable to accidents, e.g. with machetes. Boys tend cattle and girls collect water and firewood. Children take an active part in planting, weeding, harvesting, carrying firewood, acting as scarecrows, working in markets and street hawking. Children also work washing dishes in chop bars, selling water by the roadside, and whatever manual labour they can find in more populated areas. (Northern Region Profile)

Another issue is child trafficking, prevalent in some communities (e.g., Wungu, Kpaasenkpe, Janga, Bugya, Yaama and Bulbia), and sometimes thought to be a case of child fostering, which is part of the Ghanaian culture, turned abusive. Child trafficking can be a planned activity involving negotiation, offer and acceptance with the contractors being experienced native male migrants -directly or through agents- who have lived in Southern Ghana for long but still have ties with their families back home. It tends to peak around Christmas and is mostly attributed to poverty (Northern Ghana Human Development Report).

Many children in northern Ghana are forced to engage in economic activities to supplement household income because of large household sizes. Children living in families with limited economic resources are at higher risk of abuse, exploitation and violence than children from families with higher socioeconomic status.

Other forms of child abuse and exploitation include the Spirit Child phenomenon, mpraba tradition, polyginy and FGM). But early/child marriage is the issue which is currently gaining the greatest attention.

Some statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017-18:

- One in every five women in Ghana aged 20-24 years was first married before age 18. and one in 20 women before age 15.

- Child marriage more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas

- Child marriage is highest in Northern, Upper East and Volta regions, and lowest in Greater Accra, Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions

- Child marriage increases with less wealth and less education.

Child marriage often compromises a girl's development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, and limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement. It also often involves a substantial age difference between the girl and her partner, thus further disempowering her and putting her at greater risk of partner violence, sexually transmitted diseases and lack of agency. Attitudes about wife beating serve as a marker for the social acceptability of intimate partner violence. Acceptance of wife beating among adolescent girls and boys suggests that it can be difficult for married girls who experience violence to seek assistance and for unmarried girls to identify and negotiate healthy and equitable relationships. Gender-based discrimination may be one of the most ubiquitous forms of discrimination adolescent girls face, and it has long-lasting and far-reaching effects on their personal trajectories as well as on all aspects of social and economic development. (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2017-18)

Violence against children is identified as a significant problem in the UNICEF Country Programme Document, which states that "Girls and boys experience frequent and multiple forms of physical, emotional and verbal abuse and violence. A 2013 report found that 57.5 per cent of respondents aged 14–17 years said they were beaten at home "all the time" or "sometimes", and 34 per cent confirmed being beaten in school by the teacher in the last month." According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey "Almost all of children (94%) aged 1 to 14 years were reported to experience any form of violent discipline. Among age groups, any physical punishment is highest among children 3-4 years and lowest among children 10-14 years.

The Government recognises the problem and has collaborated with Unicef on the initiative Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) which uses generic behaviour change messaging at national level through advertising, billboards, drama etc.

Cross-cutting themes

Northern Ghana is vast, and its environment is not merely determined by economic and political policies set in Accra. The work of AfriKids and the lives they are trying to improve exist in an ever-changing landscape, whether that is the literal landscape affected by climate change, urbanisation and migration, or the more intangible virtual landscape with potentially far-reaching effects of technology on people's everyday lives. People live with religions, with ethnicities, with traditional leadership next to local government. Agriculture is the mainstay but what happens when land and resources cannot sustain a growing population? People engage in activities such as small-scale artisanal mining that can cause environmental damage as well as health damage to themselves.

What are the main risks facing the children and young people of northern Ghana today? The themes which currently describe AfriKids' work – education, health and protection – and the way in which the reality of those themes is likely to change in the future are driven by a variety of related issues: poverty and non-availability of livelihood opportunities for young people, demographic trends such as migration and urbanisation, increasing inequality and the regressive distribution of the benefits of economic growth, the impact of climate change and the availability and effects of new technologies. All these themes impact on AfriKids' work and on the communities AfriKids works with, and they all interact in complex ways. Over the coming period it will be important for AfriKids to take into account these crosscutting themes. Strategically it will need to decide how far these can be addressed through adaptation of interventions in its core themes, and how far they need to drive new programme developments in their own right. These are also themes which are relevant to AfriKids' ability to raise funds and form partnerships

Climate change and environmental sustainability

As highlighted throughout this report, the National Climate Change Adaption Strategy, the north of Ghana is home to a disproportionate number of poor people, and poverty reduces the capacity of people in meeting climate challenges and leading sustainable livelihoods.

Climate change in Ghana is manifested through:

- rising temperatures

- declining rainfall totals and increased variability

- rising sea levels

- high incidence of weather extremes and disasters

As everywhere, vulnerability to climate change in Ghana is spatially and socially differentiated. Each ecological zone has peculiar physical and socio-economic characteristics that define their sensitivity and resilience to climate change impacts. For the north of Ghana, agriculture remains the dominant employer but the climate is not suitable for cocoa and some other cash crops.

Farmers here are mainly engaged in rain-fed, traditional subsistence agriculture yielding one harvest: they use few modern inputs, receive inadequate extension services, and have limited access to irrigation. There is also a substantial difference between poor and rich districts in access to electricity, markets, and roads. And unsustainable farming practices have led to lower soil quality, higher erosion, and lower agricultural output in these regions.

In addition, rainfall patterns have become even more volatile, and crop failure is more frequent. The northern savannas, where subsistence agriculture is the main employment for poor households, have been affected by frequent droughts and flooding accompanied by high temperatures and intense heat. Catastrophic floods in 2007, which affected 317,000 people, were followed immediately by drought—indicative of the high variability in climate and hydrological flows in northern Ghana.

The biggest impact is felt by the small-scale food crop and subsistence farmers or livestock holders -male and female. If they lack the resources to adapt to changing weather patterns and build resilience, they may be pressured to move away. This, in turn, can create new levels of vulnerability.

According to the National Climate Change Adaption Strategy "the increasing rate of migration is attributable to both climate change and socio-economic vulnerabilities. The northern regions and parts of Volta region have substantial numbers of their population moving to the wetter south and urban areas. Increasing weather extremes will exacerbate these movements with consequences of creating open spaces and concentrating populations especially in urban areas

where vulnerability to flooding, diseases, heat waves, poor water supply are aided by poor urban planning and poor infrastructure provision. The major characteristics of these groups that make them prone to climate change impacts are the dependence on nature using poor technology. The poor adaptive capacity is the result of poverty due mainly to poor assets, poor institutions, poor markets, poor physical infrastructure and eroding social support systems. The focus of adaptation should begin with the most vulnerable to climate change impacts and up-scaled to the other groups, rather than enforcing the interest of the few elite."

At the same time, climate change will lead to a rise in the cost of food sources. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), even though food prices in Ghana are forecast to rise in the near future, climate change will exacerbate the situation. The price of rice, which is projected to increase by 60% without climate change, could go up by as much as 121% with the impact of climate change. Similarly, prices of maize are projected to increase by up to 153% in 2050 with climate change, instead of just more than 60% without climate change. It is, therefore, imperative for mitigation and adaptation measures to be pursued to minimise the potential impact of climate change on the lives of people living in poverty, especially women and children.

Other than climate change, there are also the potentially long term and damaging effects of environmental degradation, such as caused by fast growing artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) operations, fuelled by destructive practices and weak government controls. It affects 75% of the country's water courses and contributes to deforestation. Marine fish stocks are being adversely affected by domestic and industrial waste, pollution from fertilizers, and mining. Coastal communities face erosion and other risk from rising sea levels. For northern Ghana in particular, artisanal mining, or galamsey, is a coping strategy for livelihood challenges and is associated with child labour and higher school drop-out rates, particularly in rural areas.

Sustaining growth over the long term will require Ghana to invest better and more in its natural resources. Ghana has lost half its forest cover since 2000, soil erosion is widespread, fish stocks are declining, and the artisanal mining sector has resulted in widespread pollution of waterways. These impacts are largely due to an inadequate regulatory framework and weak enforcement—increasing acreage to cocoa production reflects limited incentives for rising productivity versus clearing new forests; overfishing is affected by a lack of transparency in the licensing of commercial trawlers, while illegal mining has persisted and expanded. The limited attention to natural systems has left Ghana susceptible to climate change as has been seen from the increasing frequency and impact of droughts and flooding that disproportionately affect the poor (as taken from https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/ghanas-challenges-widening-regional-inequality-and-natural-resource-depreciation and Ghana national climate change adaptation strategy).

Sustainability-related programming represents an opportunity for partnerships and funding and can be applied to AfriKids' core thematic areas. Interviewees have suggested for example that AfriKids could support the development of sustainable schools and health centres, having access to clean renewable solar energy.

Migration

Migration from the north to the south has a long history with various drivers and explanations, ranging from the dry climate to the colonial past and the subsequent economic development of the south that is a consistent pull for those living a more precarious agriculture-base existence.

These days, there is a strong link with climate change, as described in the previous section.

Migration has long been used as a livelihood diversification strategy. It usually involves the movement of people from the rural areas to towns and cities in Ghana. The high population growth rate in Ghana over the past three decades is thought to have encouraged migration by generally increasing the domestic supply of labour and putting pressure on the available cultivable land. There are also more generic reasons for migration can occur due to the lack of prestige of farm work, the social denigration and stigma associated with rural living, and the lack of appropriate jobs and social amenities. With regards to the latter, this was observed as a factor in the difficulty in recruiting and retaining e.g. teachers and medical staff to the northern regions.

Traditionally, north-south migration in Ghana was largely male-dominated, long-term and long-distance. However, a new dominant north-south migration stream emerged almost two decades ago involving female adolescents moving independently of their families, mostly towards the cities of Accra and Kumasi, most often as seasonal migrants. The recent stream of young female migrants circulating between northern Ghana and Accra, where they tend to work as street vendors/head porters (kayayei), has been shown to stem from poverty, a lack of education and employment opportunities, and the need to accumulate wealth in preparation for marriage. (Northern Ghana Human Development Report 2018).

For AfriKids perhaps there is an opportunity (in the context of its child protection work) to raise awareness among young people of the hazards, as well as the opportunities, of migration. But at the same time, it is necessary to address the drivers of migration among young people, the predominant among these being the lack of livelihood opportunities.

Livelihoods

Under pressure from the effects of climate change and driven by poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities young people are taking risks to their wellbeing and safety through migration and through hazardous and exploitative labour, including transactional sex. There is an urgent need for alternative livelihoods. Yet technical and vocational education is under-resourced and stigmatised, and the skills taught are not aligned to the needs of the labour market. There could be opportunities for AfriKids, perhaps in partnership with business, to undertake programmes to develop more appropriate skills training for adolescents and to promote entrepreneurship skills (in the context of its education work).

Gender

As has become apparent in previous sections, men and women in Ghana in general are expected to behave and work according to strongly gendered roles, both in the private and the public sphere. Gender differences are apparent in education, especially at secondary level where girls - in particular from poorer rural backgrounds - have lower enrolment and completion rates. Yet, advancing girls' secondary education is one of the most transformative development strategies countries can invest in. Completion of secondary education brings significant positive benefits to girls and societies – from increased lifetime earnings and national growth rates, to reductions in child marriage, stunting, and child and maternal mortality.

Gender-related barriers include women's and girls' disproportionate lack of information, knowledge and technology, resources, and safety and mobility, as well as the gender division of labour and gender norms. For example, a mother's lack of mobility, due to prohibitive norms or lack of transportation, may impede birth registration, nutrition or access to health care, with potential detrimental effects on child outcomes. The internalization of gender norms around masculine and feminine expectations and behaviours may influence women's and men's attitudes toward intimate partner violence and physical punishment of children as well as self-perceptions of well-being, including life satisfaction and expectations for the future. (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2017-18)

In northern Ghana women take a similar share of agricultural work, but they grow different crops, raise different animals and have more limited access to agricultural resources. According to the Northern Ghana Human Development Report (2018) their biggest challenges seem to lie in accessing harvesting technologies, irrigation and veterinary care. Access to solar pumps for irrigation and focused measures to improve productivity would free up women's time for other activities

and help to reduce their time-poverty. There has not been much focus on technologies that women could use. The technologies that they deploy are rudimentary compared to what is in use for crops grown by men (rice, maize).

When a shock occurs, both male and women-headed households sell off assets as a coping mechanism. However, female headed household have fewer options after this. They do not report using insurance, receiving assistance from the community, government or NGOs, taking on additional work or withdrawing children from school. They are less likely to borrow and more likely to rely on assistance from family and friends. So, when a drought hits, a female-headed household has fewer options to cope, which puts her and her family at risk of sliding into poverty. Other factors that make it harder for women to sustain sufficient livelihoods is they often lack land tenure or user rights, and rarely own land, the key collateral.

It's not hard to see the linkages with poverty, climate change and migration (and especially in relation to education and child protection); when a drought hits, a family's capacity to sustain itself is jeopardised. If a family has several children, some may be kept out of school to help out or migrate south to find work there. Potentially, the eldest daughter gets married off so there's one less mouth to feed. Chances are she will no longer go to school, get pregnant at a young age and repeat the pattern of her parents before her.

AfriKids needs to take full account of the gender dimensions of its work in education, health and protection. However, many of the comparable organisations have reoriented their programmes towards an almost exclusive focus on women and girls. For AfriKids though, the primary driver of its work is the rights of the child, female or male. AfriKids, in this context, has built expertise in the area of social norm change and perhaps this can also be applied to gender roles and differences and how these are perceived and addressed, in the community, at school, and among young people themselves, including the attitudes of boys.

Technology

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Ghana has some very specific developments in the use of communications technologies:

- Nine in every ten of households owned mobile phones, 60% own television sets; 57% radio, 22% had internet at home; 15% had computers and less than 1% owned fixed telephone lines.

- Gender disaggregated internet usage in Ghana shows higher usage of the internet by men (35%) as compared to 15% of women.

- Though mobile phone usage is high among both men and women, there is more utilization among men when compared to women (88% for men and 82% for women)

- There are considerable regional disparities in use of mobile phones. In Greater Accra for instance nine in every ten of women used mobile phones against about half of women in the Upper West Region.

- There is relatively less gap in ownership of radios in rural and urban areas. While 59% of urban households in Ghana owned radio, in rural areas, radio ownership is 55%.

The very high penetration of mobile phones in Ghana offers opportunities for the application of this technology in AfriKids programming. This could include provision of information and support to young people through text messaging and mobile applications; the use of mobile apps to support the work of community health workers (as pioneered by Living Goods in Kenya and Uganda), and the provision of platforms for young people to express their voices about issues of concern (as UNICEF has done through U-Report). There are many other examples, such as "Connected Schools" linking schools in different parts of Ghana or in different countries – eg UK and Ghana – via the internet.

The United Kingdom

Political and economic climate

With the recent election of Boris Johnson as Prime Minister a Conservative government is still in place with the potential of no-deal Brexit looming large. The general view of experts is that any form of Brexit will have an adverse impact on economic growth, and a no-deal significantly so.

Unemployment may be low yet many jobs are insecure, low paid gig economy or freelance jobs that offer people little hope of building up sufficient savings for major life events such a buying a house, or even renting adequate accommodation. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), between 1994 and 2017 there was an increase from 13% to 18% in the proportion of people in working households living in relative poverty (an increase of 40%). By 2017, 8 million people in the UK living in working households were in relative poverty, meaning that having a job is no guarantee for living in security.

At the same time, austerity politics continue to impact on livelihoods, with Universal Credit causing uncertainty and delays for people on various forms of benefits, and services such as education and health care still feeling the strain of cuts and forced efficiencies.

In terms of Britain's international profile, the current 0.7% budget spend on international aid will continue to be under threat from pressures to reduce it, or to spend it on things that are not normally considered as aid. In fact, Prime Minister Johnson has already expressed that aid should serve the UK's political and commercial interests while more than a quarter of the aid budget is already spent by other departments, up from a 10th in 2014. It was also announced that the Department of International Trade (DIT) will use increasing amounts of the aid budget to help promote investment in developing countries and to promote British interests, including defence and security.

The political climate in the UK is more uncertain that at any time in recent history and prediction is fraught with difficulty. It seems likely that there will be a general election in 2019 where voting is likely to be driven significantly by opinions on Brexit. The outcome is uncertain but there is a strong possibility that no single party will emerge with an overall majority. There is a threat to the union of the United Kingdom, with the likelihood of a further referendum on Scottish independence, and even the potential for a border poll in Ireland. The one thing we know with a reasonable degree of certainty is that uncertainty is likely to impact on individual and business decisions for the foreseeable future.

Regulation, public opinion and the charitable sector

The fundraising environment is addressed in a separate section below, but related regulatory issues (and the background to those) are described here.

There has been a strong and critical re-evaluation of the charitable sector at large, and especially charities operating internationally, due to negative media coverage of high pressure fundraising activity and a range of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries and cases of sexual misconduct by - often senior - staff within charitable organisations. Some high-profile names include Oxfam and Save the Children have been implicated and investigated. The long-term effects of this on people's giving behaviour is to be assessed but in the short term, donations for Oxfam dropped and direct debits were cancelled. See the fundraising section for an assessment of the wider impact on fundraising.

Public trust in charities in the UK has been impacted by the negative media coverage arising from a series of scandals. Charity Commission research by Populus in 2018 concluded that "Overall trust and confidence in charities remains at similar levels to 2016 when the research was last carried out. In both years, scandals reported in the media involving major humanitarian charities … occurred before our polling took place, negatively impacting overall trust and confidence. Nevertheless, the sector holds up well compared with others. It is still more trusted, for instance, than private companies, banks, and politicians." Research carried out at about the same time by NfP Synergy found that trust in charities had

dropped by 6 percentage points from 60% in Autumn 2017 to 54% in February 2018. Trust varied between charitable sectors with hospices at 40% and religious charities at only 8%. Overseas aid and development is the sector with the second lowest level of respondents saying they trust the sector 'a great deal' – only 10%.

The scandals have led to increased regulatory scrutiny. The Charity Commission is becoming more interventionist though their interventions will be limited by their declining resources. However, they will certainly pay greater attention to safeguarding especially re. organisations operating in developing countries. AfriKids will need to dedicate resources in this area and ensure good ongoing training for the staff and volunteers in Ghana. The Fundraising regulator is still relatively new and finding its feet but doesn't so far appear to be having a negative impact.

In other regulatory developments, the rules around data protection, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) have changed the costs associated with individual giving, making it very challenging for NGOs that don't already have a strong supporter database to build one.

Technological environment

The UK technological environment continues to change rapidly, as it does globally. Broadband speeds are increasing, though there remains a digital divide, especially in rural areas. More and more transactions are now carried out on mobile devices while the reach of the "internet of things" is growing through smart speakers and smart home appliances. Roll out of 5G is likely to accelerate these trends. Social media is increasingly influential, including for profile and awareness raising, and for advocacy initiatives. Crowdfunding and online giving platforms allow direct connections between donors and recipients even if these are geographically remote. At the same time there is increasing concern about privacy, security and safety in the virtual world.

Environment

While public opinion on international development is perhaps at its weakest, opinion in favour of addressing climate change, reducing plastic, air pollution etc, especially among young people, is strong and increasing.

The Global Fundraising Environment

For AfriKids, the UK environment is most significant in terms of fundraising. But, being a partnership between the UK and Ghana, AfriKids also has opportunities to raise funds beyond the UK.

Africa has an increasing number of philanthropists led by figures. As Ghana itself grows economically there may be increasing opportunities for engagement with high net worth individuals and potential corporate partners in Ghana itself, though detailed research on this is beyond the scope of the current project.

There is currently an intensely competitive fundraising environment for UK charities due to cuts in traditional/statutory funding and stricter fundraising and data regulations. Small NGOs are at a disadvantage in terms of the investments they can make but could have advantages in terms of having a clearly defined niche. Many philanthropists, corporates and individual donors are attracted to relatively small and focused charities, and often appreciate collaborative approaches involving two or more organisations working together.

EU funding is already being affected by Brexit with UK charities being ruled ineligible for many funds even before the UK leaves the EU. Charities are looking for ways to mitigate this, including establishing subsidiaries, associates and partnerships in EU member states. AfriKids, however, has the advantage that its structure makes AfriKids Ghana a separate legal entity, which would still remain eligible as it is not a UK charity. The potential for EU funding within Ghana exists.

Apart from internal scandals within NGOs, there is also increasing scrutiny of the origins of donor money; does the money come from a reputable funder, is the money clean? Recent criticism of major UK charities' portrayal of celebrities as 'white saviours' and discussions about 'poverty porn' add a further dimension to the ethical questions surrounding fundraising in the UK.

AfriKids is in a strong position to take advantage of trends within the UK fundraising market and in international philanthropy. For example, Comic Relief's grant giving is moving away from larger INGOs and towards smaller NGOs (turnover below £10m), NGOs based in and led by communities in developing countries, and projects based in experience in those communities. Its thematic priorities now include Mental Health, Gender Justice, Children (survive and thrive), and Migration. All these are of potential relevance to AfriKids.

Philanthropy is moving towards a more data/evidence driven approach. Some are already succeeding and the amount of funding available is likely to be enormous in time. Their approach is to use data and research to identify and seek out organisations delivering evidence-based interventions that work to produce clear results for identified problems. Like many philanthropists, they are not open to applications but rather seek and invite potential recipients. It is possible for AfriKids to use networks to solicit invitations from such philanthropists. It also emphasises the requirement to ensure strength in data, evidence and evaluation in order to demonstrate impact and value.

Other trends in the world of philanthropy include:

- "Big Bet" thinking, as exemplified by such initiatives as the Audacious project and 100 & Change. These big bet initiatives require huge input from applicants and backing from some HNWIs so may not be suitable for AfriKids (unless perhaps through joint applications with partner organisations). However, the shift in thinking they represent is significant. Donors are looking for applicants to be able to articulate a transformative agenda, to consider what is the Big Win they are working towards, with a clear "arrival point." What is the problem they seek to solve and how will they achieve that solution? This requires NGOs to have a clear capacity for measuring impact. How will they know whether they are making progress towards their Big Win?

- At the same time progress needs to be sustainable. This means making policy shifts happen so that changes can be sustained by government or private sector actors. There must be a clear exit strategy for projects, if not for the work of the organisation as a whole.

- Another key agenda is "localisation." This means that programmes need to be embedded in communities and driven and led at the local level. This is positive for AfriKids and therefore something to be maintained and emphasised. Digitalisation – philanthropists are keen on projects with a digital aspect as technology reaches new areas in Africa and digital skills become essential for young people's livelihoods. How does the digital world impact on education, healthcare, financial transactions, employment and livelihoods? How can AfriKids reflect the digital dimension in its programmes?

These trends in philanthropy are critical as, in the words of one interviewee "The days when UK aid charities could rely on broad public support through individual giving are effectively over. They will increasingly depend on philanthropy."

Charities will need a structured and strategic approach to accessing philanthropic targets. For example, there are various platforms that charities can subscribe to that provide them with access to databases of high-net-worth individuals and bespoke prospects.

Implications for AfriKids

Interestingly (in addition to the specific conclusions highlighted in each section above), this analysis of the external operating environment facing AfriKids as it develops its future strategy throws up a number of conclusions where the needs and opportunities in Ghana are compatible with and mirrored by the trends, needs and opportunities in the UK and in the international donor environment. These include:

- The environmental dimension – sustainability in programming, and public and donor support for environmental issues

- The advocacy dimension – the need for greater policy engagement in Ghana, and donor preferences for programmes which can demonstrate exit strategies through actions by Government, aid organisations and companies to ensure that benefits can be sustained and expanded

- The ethical dimension – the need for authenticity and principle in both programming and fundraising

- The measurement dimension – the need to understand and demonstrate impact both in programming and for the donor/supporter narrative

- The digital dimension – the importance of digital access and engagement for young people in Ghana and the opportunity for connection with supporters in the UK

- The partnership dimension – the requirement for consortium approaches to programming and partnership at the field level, and the potential for philanthropic and corporate partnerships in the UK

- The community dimension – the need for community engagement for the success of development interventions in the field is mirrored by a trend among philanthropists to look for "localised" initiatives to support

- The compliance dimension – in Ghana, it is increasingly necessary to operate in alignment with Government policies and priorities (while also seeking to build on and influence these); in the UK, charities face a regulatory and media environment in which a high level of compliance is essential, with both regulatory and best practice principles, eg in relation to ethical standards, safeguarding policies and fundraising practices

Appendix one
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Appendix two
Interviewees (anonymised)

Members of staff at:

- Comic Relief,

- Children's Investment Fund Foundation

- Unicef Ghana

Consultant working in Ghana

Coordinator for institutional grant funding in Ghana