



ISLAMIC EDUCATION SECTOR STUDY Ghana

Prepared By | Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ISLAMIC EDUCATION
SECTOR STUDY
GHANA



All photos taken by Ismael Lansah
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A group photo of students at the courtyard of
the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale

Public perceptions of Islamic schools that integrate secular subjects are quite positive among parents and ‘ulama in Ghana. In terms of the effect and impact of Islamic schools on education in Ghana, 213,893 children are enrolled in IEU schools alone.



Assessment Scope and Methodology

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with the input of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and its Islamic Education Unit (IEU), commissioned this assessment. Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, conducted the assessment in collaboration with the Northern Ghana Network for Development (NGND), a Ghanaian nongovernmental organization based in Tamale.

The purpose of the assessment was to gather information about the range of Islamic schools in the country, including information on their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and impact. This information will be used to help USAID and GES assess whether and how some of these schools could be assisted in expanding access to high-quality formal education for Muslim populations in Ghana. In particular, the scope of work was to gather information and report on the following aspects of Islamic schooling in Ghana:

- History of Islamic schooling in Ghana,
- Types of Islamic schools,
- Legal and financial status of Islamic schools,
- Mandates and purpose of the various types of Islamic schools,
- Linkages that the Islamic school sector has with the formal school sector,
- Public perceptions of Islamic schools,
- Effectiveness and impact of Islamic schools, and
- Recommendations for USAID and the GES vis-à-vis leveraging Islamic schools to expand access to high quality education for Muslim communities

To this end, we collected quantitative and qualitative data from 20 schools across four geographically diverse regions of Ghana—Greater Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, and Wa—that contain over 50 percent of the country’s total number of Islamic schools. In our selection of the schools we studied, we were guided by the recommendations of *‘ulama* (Islamic scholars, intellectuals, and decision-makers), IEU recommendations, school reputations (as some are quite well-known), and our general knowledge of schools in each region. We utilized five methods of data collection: interviews with *‘ulama* and teachers, oral questionnaires administered to school proprietors and teachers, focus groups with parents, classroom observations, and review of literature.

Study Context: Islamic Education in Ghana

We identified four major categories of Islamic schools in Ghana. Traditional Qur’anic schools, Arabic schools, and Arabic English schools are private schools. Traditional Qur’anic schools still focus almost exclusively on Qur’anic memorization. Called *makaranta*, they are still widespread, but they do not generally constitute the sole educational institution or experience for most Muslim children. Indeed, many have evolved into evening, late afternoon, or weekend schools, where students study the Qur’an outside of their normal public school schedule. Arabic schools are schools where some secular subjects have been introduced into the curriculum but the language of instruction is Arabic and the focus is still heavily tilted toward religious subjects. Arabic English schools are private schools that generally offer the government curriculum and a program of religious and Arabic language studies.



Outside the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale

The fourth type of Islamic school we identified falls under the management of the IEU. IEU schools are officially and legally government schools, teach the full government curriculum, and offer some Arabic and Islamic studies. The government supplies and pays for teachers and textbooks for IEU schools. The major trade-off that private Islamic schools make when they migrate under the umbrella of the IEU is a reduction in the time they can allot to religious and Arabic studies in exchange for the government supplying and paying all of the teachers (including two Arabic/Islamic studies teachers).

The four school categories we used as a framework to categorize and describe Islamic schools in Ghana—traditional Qur’anic schools, Arabic schools, Arabic English schools, and public integrated schools (IEU schools)—are fluid and not absolute. Some schools straddle more than one category, and some are trying to move from one category to another (e.g., many Arabic English schools are trying to register with the government to become IEU schools). Differences notwithstanding, the mandate of Islamic schools in Ghana is to provide students with an education that is Islamic in nature and fosters the development of Muslim identity. With the introduction of secular subjects into Islamic schools, the mandate for schools that offer secular as well as religious instruction has expanded. These schools must now not only support the formation of children’s religious identity; they must provide a high-quality, rigorous secular education that prepares children to play productive roles in Ghanaian society.

Despite the popularity of traditional Islamic schools, during the last 15 to 20 years Muslim leaders became concerned that Ghanaian Muslims were not participating in sufficient numbers in the economic and political development of Ghana. The leaders felt that not enough members of the Muslim community could speak English, matriculate, and eventually participate as professionals in the larger society. To remedy this situation, some Islamic schools in Tamale, capital of Ghana’s Northern Region, took the bold step of introducing secular subjects into their curriculum. Over the years, these efforts have led to the development of a sector of private Islamic schools, of varying types and academic offerings, which provides students with religious and secular studies within the same institutions.

Findings

As in other countries with a large number of Islamic schools, the GES has begun to subsume some of the private Islamic schools into its system via the IEU. The IEU’s job is to facilitate the transition and change in status of these Islamic schools. At present, 1,418 IEU schools are serving almost one quarter of a million Ghanaian children. *‘Ulama* queried during the course of this research project put the number of non-IEU Islamic schools at around 3,000. As most Muslim neighborhoods and communities have some sort of Qur’anic school, even if the majority of children in that community attend the public schools full-time, this estimate could be low.

Private Islamic schools of all types are financed largely through the charging of fees for attendance, through the benevolence of school proprietors, and through donations from abroad. There are many policy level and administrative links between Islamic schools

which fall under the IEU and the regular public schools, including common national examinations, curriculum, personnel policies, and building codes. The IEU serves as a mediator between Islamic schools and the GES when policy issues arise.

Public perceptions of Islamic schools that integrate secular subjects are quite positive among parents and *'ulama* in Ghana. In terms of the effect and impact of Islamic schools on education in Ghana, 213,893 children are enrolled in IEU schools alone. These schools, combined with private Arabic English schools, and to a lesser extent, Arabic schools, constitute a fairly significant source of access to education for a large number of Ghanaian children, children whose parents might not otherwise send them to public school. Parents and *'ulama* indicated that they expect increased economic and political returns from the growth of Islamic schools that teach an integrated curriculum. They believe that Muslim communities with members who speak English will be able to participate in politics at a more national level and form wider professional and business networks than those who have a purely religious education.

This study did not measure student achievement among students in Islamic schools. However, Islamic school parents, teachers, and headmasters reported high pass rates on government examinations for students. In lieu of student achievement data, we used teacher qualifications, the quality of teaching observed, classroom size (student to teacher ratio), school and classroom resources, and the quality of school management as proxy measures to gauge school effectiveness. A large majority of Islamic school teachers had post-secondary education (over 85 percent), 46 percent were experienced teachers who had been in the profession for more than 10 years, and 64 percent reported having received in-service teacher training.

Teachers scored quite well on the classroom observation protocol used to measure their use of student-centered teaching techniques in the classroom. Likewise, interviews confirmed that teachers had a basic knowledge of student-centered teaching practices. Classroom size was high in all regions included in the study, with the exception of Accra. Schools were moderately well resourced. While teaching and learning materials (TLMs) were severely lacking, basic textbooks were generally present. School management resided in the hands of the school headmaster or school proprietor; and sometimes the two school leaders shared responsibility for management. School management committees existed in a third of the schools but were not composed of a wide variety of stakeholders. Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) were also present in 94 percent of the schools, and while teachers and proprietors deemed them important and even influential, they were not characterized as having a direct management role.

Recommendations

From our assessment's results, we conclude that Islamic schools in Ghana represent an avenue for increasing student enrollment among Muslim children, particularly in Northern Ghana. These schools have the capacity to contribute to Ghana's Vision 2020—which

hopes to see Ghana achieve middle-class status by the year 2020—and this capacity should be explored and developed.

Combining Islamic education with secular education is very popular among Muslim parents, government stakeholders, Islamic school proprietors and teachers, and even the *'ulama* in Ghana. By carefully feeding the demand for integrated schooling, there exists a good possibility that enrollments will continue to rise among Muslims populations, especially in the North and in areas where Muslim enrollment in schooling has traditionally been low.

At the same time, our data indicate that there is an opportunity to further increase the positive impact of Islamic schools on Muslim children's education. While this opportunity should be seized, it should be pursued in a way that respects and upholds the essential character of Islamic schools. Based on our interviews with *'ulama*, proprietors, parents, and teachers, we have the following recommendations:

- 1. Provide support to increase access to education for Muslim children.** This includes enhancing Islamic school facilities and infrastructure and expanding the number of Islamic Junior Secondary Schools and Senior Secondary Schools.
- 2. Provide support to enhance the quality of education in Islamic schools.** This includes identifying meaningful ways to integrate Islamic and secular subjects, certifying Arabic language teachers, developing TLMs or instructional aids specifically for Islamic schools, supporting the development of a standard curriculum for Arabic language and Islamic studies, and increasing pedagogical training for Islamic school teachers.
- 3. Focus government and donor support on capacity development.** To protect the autonomous function of Islamic schools, donor support should focus on capacity-building measures and leave materials development to the Ghanaian government and Islamic educational experts. Capacity-building support includes contributing funds to enable Islamic schools to hire teachers and purchase textbooks, providing support for resources targeted to develop basic English and math resources, and offering training to Islamic school teachers.

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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

ACRONYMS:

AEU	Ahmadiyya Education Unit
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examinations
EDC	Education Development Center, Inc.
FCUBE	Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GOG	Government of Ghana
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
IEU	Islamic Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
NDAP	National Decentralization Action Program
NGND	Northern Ghana Network for Development
NRCDC	The National Redemption Council Decree
PBUH	Short for “peace be upon him,” customarily used in reference to the Prophet Mohammad, (and other prophets) when referring to them in writing
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SMC	School Management Committee
SMCD	The Supreme Military Council Decree

DEFINITIONS OF ARABIC AND HAUSA WORDS:

<i>Ahmadiyya:</i>	An Islamic sect founded by Mirza Gulam Ahmad in 1889 and established in Ghana in 1927.
<i>Barazum:</i>	A whip made from animal skin.
<i>Fiqh:</i>	Legal studies, jurisprudence.
<i>Hadith:</i>	Texts elucidating the life, sayings and traditions of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).
<i>Halaqah:</i>	Learning circle.
<i>Hejira:</i>	Immigration. Used to refer to the Prophet Mohammad’s migration from Mecca to Madina.
<i>Islamiyya:</i>	Islamic.
<i>Khan:</i>	Dormitory, usually attached to a madrasa.

DEFINITIONS

<i>Kuttab/katatib:</i>	One of the Arabic names used for an Islamic school; generally refers to an elementary level.
<i>Madina</i>	City in Arabic. Holy city in what is now Saudi Arabia to which the Prophet Mohammed migrated after he was expelled from Mecca.
<i>Madrasa /madaris:</i>	Madrasa is the Arabic name for school, but it is used in this context to mean an advanced form of makaranta.
<i>Ma'had:</i>	Institute.
<i>Majlis:</i>	Council.
<i>Makaranta:</i>	Hausa word that translates to mean “place of reading, learning or reciting,” “ma” in Hausa means place and “karanta” reading or reciting.
<i>Mallam:</i>	Hausa version of the Arabic word for teacher i.e. Mu'allim. It is also used in Hausa as the equivalent of “Mr.”
<i>Nahw:</i>	Arabic grammar.
<i>SAW:</i>	Acronym for “Salla Allahu Alaihi wa Sallam” which means peace be upon him used whenever the name of Prophet Muhammad is mentioned in speech or writing.
<i>Sunna:</i>	Islamic traditions that mainly originated from the prophet's line of conduct.
<i>Tafsir:</i>	Interpretation or exegesis of the Holy Qur'an.
<i>Tajweed:</i>	The science or art of Qur'anic recitation.
<i>Tariqa:</i>	Arabic word for “way” or “path.” Used in the report to refer to a Sufi order, the Tariqa Tijaniyya that has followers in many Muslim countries.
<i>Tijaniyya:</i>	A Muslim mystic (Sufi) order founded by Sheikh Ahmad Tijani (1737–1815), in 1781 in Fez, Morocco. In Ghana, many of the elderly Muslims and senior 'Ulama are followers of the Tijaniyya Sufi Order.
<i>'Ulama:</i>	Scholars, intellectuals, opinion-shapers; ('alim is the singular of 'ulama).
<i>'Umma:</i>	Commonly used to refer to the global Islamic 'nation' that includes all Islamic countries. The term is also used to refer to a single country.

INTRODUCTION



Mallam Sheikh Omar reciting the Qur'an to his students in a makaranta in Tamale

As Islamic schools have expanded and grown in popularity, donor agencies have become interested in how they can support these schools to provide a high-quality education to those populations that cannot or choose not to enroll in basic government schools.

The social and economic development of the Ghanaian people depends greatly on access to high-quality educational services. An enrollment rate increase of more than 10 percent from 1998 to 2004 signifies a significant improvement in Ghana's education sector. However, the Northern region of Ghana, home to a large Muslim population, is experiencing enrollment levels that are more than 20 percent below the national rate.¹

Islamic schools exist in Ghana wherever there are Muslim populations. Over the past few decades, Ghana has experienced a trend wherein traditional Qur'anic² schools have expanded their curricula to offer both religious and secular subjects. This ongoing development provides the government of Ghana with an avenue to expand educational opportunities for Muslims. As Islamic schools have

¹USAID, Request for Proposals (RFP) NO. Ghana 641-06-002 Assessment of Islamic Education System in Ghana

²Though Qur'anic has several other spellings, this spelling will be used for this study with the exception of direct quotes from other authors.

expanded and grown in popularity, donor agencies have become interested in how they can support these schools to provide a high-quality education to those populations that cannot or choose not to enroll in basic government schools. However, there is insufficient information regarding the state of Islamic schools in Ghana from which to develop a program of assistance for these schools. For example, information on Islamic school student enrollment, the quality of the educational services offered in Islamic schools, and the impact these schools have on the overall development of the nation is lacking or not synthesized into a comprehensive report.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with the input of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and its Islamic Education Unit (IEU), commissioned this assessment. The purpose of the assessment was to gather information about the range of Islamic schools in Ghana, including information on their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and impact. This information will be used to help GES and IEU assess whether and how some of these schools could be assisted in expanding access to high-quality formal education for Muslim populations in Ghana.

The following are not, strictly speaking, research questions. They are thematic areas of inquiry, fleshed out with guiding questions that USAID would like answered. However, for the purposes of this study, the guiding questions under the thematic areas constitute the “research questions” writ large.

- **History.** Over time, how has the Islamic school system in Ghana developed to

what it is today? What is the anticipated future direction?

- **Types.** How many and what types of Islamic schools exist? How is each type managed? Do School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), similar to those in secular schools, play a role in management?
- **Legal and Financial Status.** Regarding finance, sources of income, and expenditures, how do Islamic schools compare with secular schools? Are pupils eligible for food for education, textbook, and scholarship stipend programs? What are the sources of revenues?
- **Mandates and Purpose.** What are the secular and religious regulations that guide the various types of Islamic schools? What is the purpose, by type? What are the philosophies that guide instruction, and how are the philosophies reflected in the curriculum? What efforts have been made to modernize the curriculum? Have any of these efforts been particularly successful?
- **Formal Education Linkages.** How are Islamic schools contributing within the general education system? What kind and level of education are pupils receiving? Does the system allow boy and girl pupils to move easily to formal education programs? How are the schools supporting Ghana’s Education for All (EFA) commitments? What are the Islamic school teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions of public education?
- **Public Perceptions.** How do boy and girl pupils, parents, and religious leaders view Islamic schools? Are these

views shared by the surrounding community? What are parents' preferences in terms of the types of education provided to their children? What is the level of parental involvement in Islamic schools? Are there opportunities to increase parental involvement?

- **Effectiveness and Impact.** How does the quality of education provided in Islamic schools compare with that provided by government and private schools? What types of subjects are covered at different grade levels? Are there sufficient teachers and are they sufficiently trained? How well are Islamic schools managed? What is the situation with regard to classroom size, the rate of girls' attendance by school type, the availability of learning materials such as textbooks, and the management capacity of the schools? Are graduates of Islamic schools able to easily transition to mainstream schools? How frequently do these transitions occur?
- **Recommendations.** What are suggested programmatic interventions by the GES, if any, at the early and primary education levels given its expected

resources, comparative advantages, and legal restrictions relative to work with faith-based organizations? Similarly, what are suggested programmatic interventions? In preparing these recommendations, particular attention needs to be paid to how best to involve Muslim communities and leaders in the planning and implementation of the recommended activities. Care should also be taken to specifically ensure that the needs of girls are addressed.

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization (NGO), conducted the assessment in collaboration with the Northern Ghana Network for Development (NGND), a Ghanaian NGO based in Tamale.

We carried out this assessment using a combination of literature and document review, as well as the careful collection of qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources, including Islamic school teachers and proprietors, parents, *'ulama* and Government of Ghana (GOG) officials.

This report consists of the following sections:

- **In Section II, we examine the background and context of Islamic education in Ghana.**
- **In Section III, we describe the research study design, including information on sampling and data analysis.**
- **In Section IV, we provide an overview of contemporary Islamic schools in Ghana, including reporting and discussion of research findings.**
- **In Section V, we offer recommendations as to how Islamic schools can be enlisted in the GES's efforts to increase access to and increase the quality of basic education.**

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN GHANA



Children at a kindergarten in the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale

The Prophet Mohammad himself stressed the importance of seeking knowledge from cradle to grave. Both in Mecca, before the *Hejira* (the migration from Mecca to Madina), and afterwards in Madina, the disciples of the Prophet Muhammad gathered around him to learn the rudiments of Islam and the Qur'an. Hence, the first real Islamic school was that of the Prophet Mohammad seated with his disciples around him, instructing them in the tenets and practices of Islam.

In Ghana, Islamic education accompanied the spread of Islam across North and West Africa. It has witnessed many developments and transformations throughout the history of the country. For the purpose of this discussion, we have grouped the major developments related to Islamic education in Ghana into three major historical eras.

A. The Early Islamic/Precolonial Periods

- 1. Overview.** Qur'anic schools are the bedrock of a system of Islamic education that flourished in many Muslim countries in precolonial times. Modeled on the educational practices of the Prophet Mohammad and his companions, Qur'anic schools have as a central and defining feature a focus on memorization of the Qur'an through teaching children to pronounce and recite the Qur'anic text according to an accepted recitation style. In doing so, these schools also impart some

literacy and, in some cases, numeracy skills to students. At higher levels, they teach lessons on *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and philosophy. While Qur’anic schools vary widely across the Muslim world, they nevertheless share a common history and a common core curriculum. For these reasons, even though there are vast differences in Qur’anic school practice worldwide, there is also a core of similarity.³

The earliest Islamic school was the mosque. The Prophet Mohammad would sit in the mosque and instruct his companions in the sacred text. The companions would sit around him in a semi-circle, so that all students would be in front of him. The assembly of learners was referred to as the *majlis* (council) or more frequently the *halaqah* (learning circle). This was the principal form of instruction during the time of the Prophet, and, after his death, during the time of his companions. *Halaqahs* continued to function throughout the expansion of Islam, well into the ninth century. Teachers would associate themselves with a particular mosque, and people would travel from all over to study in a particular *halaqah*. Some mosques contained multiple *halaqahs*. Curriculum included not only religious subjects during the later periods, but also philology, grammar, chemistry, physics, arithmetic, algebra, and geometry.⁴

A second form of education—the boarding

school—evolved during and following the prophetic era. Residents of boarding schools studied “reading, writing, Muslim law and the memorizing of chapters of the sciences” under the tutelage of the Prophet himself.⁵ These early boarding schools, attached to mosques, were precursors of the later *madaris* (high schools) to which students flocked to live and study at higher levels.⁶

There is some dispute as to whether the *kuttab* (elementary education) developed in Islam during the time the Prophet was alive or after his death. The pre-Islamic precursor of the *kuttab* taught Arabic literacy, arithmetic, poetry, and history. With the development and expansion of Islam, the mission of the institution changed to include a focus on memorizing the Qur’an. Indeed, as Wagner points out: “One meaning of the word Koran is ‘recitation,’ and for Muslims, prayer is usually interpreted to mean the recitation of the Koran. Thus, the teaching of proper recitation through the memorization of the Koran has been a central feature of Islamic education.”⁷ Memorization was, indeed, the main form of preservation of the Qur’an in the years after the Prophet’s death, as it was not written down for several years after he died.

Activity during this period of Islamic expansion also led to the development of *fiqh*. The companions of the Prophet did not have the same authority as the religious leader in making law or deciding

³Wagner, D. A. (1998). *Indigenous education and literacy learning* (Technical Report TR 98-01). Philadelphia: International Literacy Institute.

⁴Bin Omar, A. (1993). *In quest of an Islamic ideal of education: A study of the role of the traditional Pondok Institution in Malaysia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation (p. 56). Temple University, Philadelphia.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Wagner, D. A. (1991). Islamic education. In A. Lewy (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of curriculum* (1st ed., pp. 265–267). Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press.

on administrative procedures—pressing concerns in the wake of the expansion of Islam into new regions. Establishment of the *madrassa* (an advanced *makaranta*, or place of reading, learning, or reciting described in greater detail on the next page) resulted from the development of *fiqh*, to train students in the complex interpretation of Islamic texts for legal and administrative purposes. As the mosques were not sufficient to house scholars, *khan* (dormitories or residence halls) were established near the mosques to house students and teachers.⁸ By the tenth century, the *mosque-khan* arrangement turned into the *madrassa*, and “By the thirteenth century AD, great Islamic universities had been established in Cairo, Tunis, Fes, and elsewhere, drawing advanced students and teachers from the ever-expanding Islamic community.”⁹

Islam spread west and south to Africa and east to Asia, and the early Islamic educational institutions followed. As they put down roots in local communities, the schools took on the distinct features and cultural characteristics of pre-Islamic educational institutions and traditions in those localities.

2. Islamic Education in Ghana. Islam first came to Africa through Abyssinia. It traveled up to Egypt and spread across the continent to North Africa. The Umayyad invasion of North Africa in 705 brought Islam into Sub-Saharan

Africa through the Ancient Kingdom of Ghana. These Muslims from abroad had their own system of education, which was quickly adopted by the newly converted, and adapted to fit their local traditions and conditions. Schools were established to teach Qur’anic memorization and eventually to teach the other Islamic sciences at higher levels. Indeed, the first centers of learning in Sub-Saharan Africa (including Gao, Mopti, Sokoto, and Timbuktu) saw Islam making further inroads into the region.

Communities generally established Qur’anic schools, and their purpose was to educate children. Parents usually paid the teacher (often in kind) and maintained the school space. Schools were generally flexible, tailored to the needs of the community, and free of explicit administrative structures. Children of mixed ages studied together. The schools tended to serve boys, although schools for girls sometimes existed. Children progressed at their own paces, memorizing the Qur’anic verses assigned and writing them out on a whitewashed board while committing them to memory.

While there were no explicit exams, children did demonstrate mastery through oral recitation for the teacher. If the teacher was satisfied, the pupil was given a new set of verses to memorize; if not, the pupil was sent back, with feedback, to work on the same verses. These schools were characterized by strict discipline and often relied on corporal punishment to maintain that discipline. Parents and teachers often subscribed to the saying that no part of the body struck while memorizing the

⁸Bin Omar, A. (1993). *In quest of an Islamic ideal of education: A study of the role of the traditional Pondok Institution in Malaysia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation (p. 56). Temple University, Philadelphia.

⁹Wagner, D. A. (1991). Islamic education. In A. Lewy (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of curriculum* (1st ed., pp. 265–267). Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press.

Qur'an could burn in hell.¹⁰ Students did not typically memorize the whole Qur'an. Many dropped out to work as they could not afford to stay in school as they got older. There was no stigma attached to dropping out, as most students eventually did. Moreover, the fact of having acquired some Qur'anic literacy (as the ability to recite the Qur'an was characterized) was considered admirable.

Students who excelled in the Qur'anic schools, which in Ghana came to be called *makaranta*, could move on to study at institutions of higher learning. *Makaranta* is a Hausa word that translates to mean "place of reading, learning, or reciting." "Ma" in Hausa means place and "karanta" is equivalent to reading or reciting. At the higher learning institutions (*madaris*), students would learn the Islamic sciences of *fiqh*, *tafsir* (the interpretation of Qur'anic texts) and *hadith* (the sayings of the prophet). These institutions were often found in urban centers, rather than in rural villages, and were supported by wealthy patrons or had endowments.

Teachers, generally known by reputation, were attached to different schools and offered instruction on a fairly open basis. Students would study with a teacher until they had exhausted that teacher's repertoire, and then they might move on to another teacher. Some students studied a range of subjects with different teachers at the same time. A student could, for example, be studying *fiqh* with one teacher while studying *nahw* (Arabic Grammar) with another teacher. Upon leaving, the student would receive what we might now

call a transcript—a letter explaining what the student had studied and where he had left off. This document served to establish the student's level and credentials. Many might open their own *makaranta* and teach other children. Some would become prominent Muslim scholars and religious leaders in their regions. It should be added that the role of itinerant Islamic scholars in the Gonja and Dagomba kingdoms is recognized by historians such as J.S. Trimingham in his book *Islam in West Africa*.¹¹ The first Muslims in Dagbon were the Mende or Dyula (called Wangara in Ghana). They had a lot of influence in the Gonja and Dagomba kingdoms but were more attached to the ruling class as spiritual consultants. It was the Hausa scholars who came as traders, and in the case of Dagbon, also as artisans during the reign of Na Zangina (circa 1700) who brought the Arabic literacy tradition to Dagbon. In addition to leading prayers, Muslim clerics filled roles as secretaries, record keepers, and amulet makers in the Asante Kingdom in particular.¹²

B. The Colonial Era

Traditional Islamic education continued without interruption or major change until the arrival of Western powers and influence, which ultimately resulted in the colonization of the Gold Coast in 1874. According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh,¹³ "The beginning of the formal educational system in what was then

¹⁰Boyle, H. (2004). *Qur'anic schools: Agents of preservation and change*. New York: Routledge Farmer.

¹¹Trimingham, J. S. (1962). *A history of Islam in West Africa* (p. 19). London: Oxford University Press.

¹²Ansah, D. O. (1986). *Talismanic tradition: Muslims in early 19th century Kumasi*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

¹³McWilliam, H., & Kwamena-Poh, M. (1976). *The development of education in Ghana*. London: Longman.

the Gold Coast started with the colonial government in the form of castle schools¹⁴ in the 1600s and later on as colonial schools in the 1800s.” The first colonial schools were established at Cape Coast in 1766.

Indeed, even before the actual occupation of what is now Ghana by the British in 1874, Christian missionaries had come to the Gold Coast and had set up schools, mainly in the south along the coast at Cape Coast, Dixcove, Anomabu, and later in Accra in 1830. Formal education expanded from the coast northwards reaching Ashanti in the forest area in 1831 with the enrollment of two Ashanti princes in a school at Cape Coast. From the time of British colonization until independence in 1957, education, in what was later to become the state of Ghana, underwent some significant changes, which were captured by various foreign and indigenous writers from the colonial era.

Edward Wilmot Blyden, a Pan Africanist, migrated in 1850 from the Virgin Islands to Liberia at the age of 18. In September 1886, he resigned from the Presbyterian Church to become “Minister of Truth.” Blyden saw himself and his mission as “one of proving the African equal to other races and only lacking the enlightenment of Christianity.”¹⁵ Commenting on colonial education policy, Blyden (1903) asserted:

There is no question in my mind

¹⁴Castle schools were founded in the Gold Coast by the colonial powers, which included the Portuguese, Dutch, Danes, and English.

¹⁵Blyden, E. R. (1995). Blyden. Evolution of an Africanist perspective. In Edward Wilmot Blyden and Africanism in America, an exhibit in the Virtual Museum of the Life and Work of Edward Wilmot Blyden. Retrieved September 9, 2007, from http://www.columbia.edu/%7Ehcb8/EWB_Museum/Evolution.html

*that in the British Colonies and Protectorates in West Africa it is of the first importance to train the minds of young Mohammedans according to Western methods—to give them access to the instruments of Western culture, which will not make them Christians, but more strongly Mohammedans, and will enable them to hold the place they should under the Government in the affairs of their own country.*¹⁶

At the time, a great deal of thinking and discussion were devoted to “how to deal” with the Muslims in the North. As referenced in the above quotation, suggestions to introduce Muslims to Western secular education were common.

Known scholars during the colonial era include Mallam Ghamba (1807), who had a school in Kumasi, and Al Haj Umar who migrated to Salaga from Hausaland in 1874. Al Haj Umar taught the highest level of Arabic and Islamic scholarship, comparable to that taught elsewhere in the world. After the Salaga Civil Wars in 1894, Al Haj Umar moved to Kete-Krachi and continued with the tradition of teaching and writing until his death in 1934. The writings of this scholar spun epistolary (letter writing with model letters). This is depicted by his first work written while he was still in Salaga in 1877. Writings such as *Panegyrics* and *Admonitory Poetry* show the significant level of mastery of the Arabic language he had attained. Al Haj Umar also set up a school to which Muslims flocked for learning, which indicates that by the time colonialism

¹⁶Blyden, E. W. (1903). West Africa before Europe. *African Affairs*, 2(VIII), (359–374).

took root in what is now Ghana, Islamic education had reached a very high level.¹⁷

The kinds of schools or centers of learning that Al Haj Umar set up could be described as *madrastas*—places to receive an advanced level of traditional Islamic education. It is no wonder that Iddrisu observed:

*The description of Salaga in the last decades of the eighteenth century therefore, as a town where every one could read and write in Arabic is a striking example of the state of learning that the British Colonialists met with in the area that was to become the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast.*¹⁸

Furthermore, Iddrisu identified three major challenges to Islamic learning and Muslim education in the Gold Coast under the colonial era. First, there was an effective exclusion of the Christian missionary effort in the North, an area with the highest Muslim population. This exclusion occurred because the mission effort elsewhere in Ghana challenged the Islamic learning institutions, in an effort to meet and instill colonial standards of functional education. The second challenge was the half-hearted introduction of secular education by the British. Third, the British elected to provide secular education only to the sons of chiefs in the direct line of inheritance, to qualify them to effectively manage and lead their people in compliance with British structures under

the Indirect Rule system. This, of course, implies that there was limited access to such education because only the ruling class could qualify for entry into the system.¹⁹

C. The Modern Era

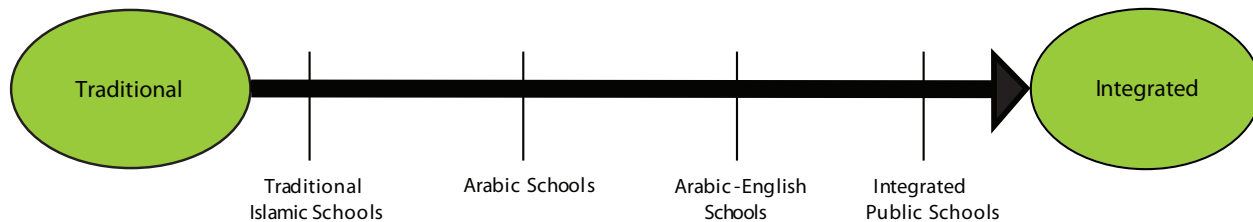
When the Gold Coast became Ghana after independence in 1957, a significant number of Muslims were rather skeptical about the intentions of the Christian-oriented, Western secular system of education. Many elected not to send their children to these schools, and continued to patronize the *makaranta* exclusively. Yet, the exigencies of the time eventually led Muslims to conclude that without some “secular” education, they could be left out of national affairs, employment in government institutions, and rewarding jobs. This realization gradually led to the emergence of Arabic English schools. While traditional *makaranta* continued to exist, many *makaranta*, especially in and around Tamale (the predominantly Muslim capital of the Northern Region) began to expand their curriculum to offer both secular and religious subjects. Nuriyya School in Tamale is perhaps the first example of a traditional Islamic school deciding to incorporate secular subjects. Other institutions followed suit. As illustrated by Figure 1, the schools existed, as they do today, along a continuum whereby some continued to teach in Arabic, while incorporating secular subjects, especially English.

This situation—the coexistence of traditional Qur’anic schools and Arabic English schools—persisted until the IEU was

¹⁷Iddrisu, A. R. (1996). *Al Haj Umar of Kete-Krachie, a teacher, poet and a social commentator of his time*. Unpublished master’s thesis, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon.

¹⁸Iddrisu, A. (2005). The growth of Islamic learning in Northern Ghana and its interaction with Western secular education. *Africa Development*, XXX(1 & 2), 53–67.

¹⁹Ibid.

Figure 1: Continuum of change for Islamic schools in Ghana.

formally established in 1987 under the GES, which is under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS).

1. Integration and the Establishment of the Islamic Education Unit. The first attempt was made to integrate secular subjects into the Islamic system in 1932, when the Ahmadiyya Mission attempted to arouse “more interest in government schools on the part of the Muslims.”²⁰ The Ahmadiyya Mission experienced isolated success in 1940 with the establishment of the Ahmadiyya Primary School at Zogbeli in Tamale. Later, the school shed its religious character, adopted a secular curriculum, and the basic attraction became not the religious subjects, but the religious ethos under which the school operated. The Ahmadiyya initiative was rather conservative, for there was still the fear of instituting a radical change in the type of traditional Islamic education known to the people. Western secular education was still considered a preserve of the “infidel Christian,” and the Ahmadiyya attempt was further weakened by doctrinal differences.²¹

²⁰Letter from Local Head of Ahmadiyya Mission at Saltpond, Mr. Nazir to CCNT, Tamale, FW K. Jackson. 25 June 1931 PRAAD, Tamale NRG 8/19/1.

²¹Iddrisu A. (2005). The growth of Islamic learning in Northern Ghana and its interaction with Western secular education. *Africa Development*, XXX(1 & 2), 53–67.

The idea of integrating secular subjects into the Islamic schools’ curriculum persisted and was ultimately initiated by the Islamic School sector itself (mainly Arabic English schools). The Ambariyya Islamic Institute, the Nurul Islam Islamic School, the Nah’da Islamic School, and the Nuriyya Islamic Institute were some of the first Islamic schools that were transformed from Arabic-only into Arabic English. The schools wrote to the government to request that the GES help them introduce secular subjects into their curriculum. The government solution was to provide teachers; these schools were thus introduced into the public education system during the 1972–1973 school year. Secular teachers were posted to the schools with the express approval of the then Commissioner of Education Mr. Owusu Fordjour.²²

At present, there is no institution which sets up, certifies, or qualifies people to become decision-makers within the Islamic school system in Ghana. The desire and willingness to set up an Islamic school—irrespective of one’s qualification, knowledge, or ability—are the main criteria. All over Ghana, individuals have set up schools to teach children or even adults. Hence, there is great variation

²²IEU National Headquarters. (n.d.). *Report on the state of Islamic Education Unit, GES*. Unpublished report, Tamale, Ghana.

in the level of school quality and in the variety of types of schools that exist. In order to effectively manage and organize the schools, the GES established the IEU in March 1987 to oversee and assist in the transformation of traditional schools into integrated institutions that teach the government curriculum, while maintaining their religious character and, to varying degrees, the religious subject matter.

The GES was established as part of the Public Service of Ghana in 1974 by the National Redemption Council Decree (NRCD) 247 and subsequently amended by NRCD 252, NRCD 357, and SMCD 63. The GES is governed by a 15-member council, and is charged with the responsibility of implementing pretertiary education policies of government. This is to ensure that all Ghanaian children of school-going age are provided with quality formal education and training through effective and efficient resource management. This management facilitates the making of education delivery relevant to manpower and social needs of the nation.²³

The GES has established a national IEU office in Tamale and regional offices in the 10 regions of the country. The regional units were established for the following purposes:

- To provide an opportunity for Muslims to gain easy access to education;
- To enhance the success of government policy of compulsory basic education for every Ghanaian child; and
- To integrate the Islamic way of life into modern education so that products of the

educational system are able to participate meaningfully in society's development.²⁴

The units have many specific objectives, including the following:²⁵

- To bring all *makaranta* at the basic level into the unit in order to be absorbed into the public school system under the GES;
- To contribute to decision-making regarding the appointment of teachers and administrators for the Islamic schools;
- To participate in managing the schools in collaboration with the school proprietors;
- To maintain the Islamic identity of the schools, to build trust with the community, and to encourage parents to send their children to the newly reformed schools; and

To explore ways of encouraging Muslim parents to enroll their daughters (Muslim girls) in the schools.

2. IEU Schools and the Various Types of Islamic Schools. While the IEU is now spread across the length and breadth of Ghana, it does not touch or control all Islamic schools. Indeed, one reason its reach is limited is due to insufficient resources. The unit now oversees 497 kindergartens, 699 primary schools, and 255 junior secondary schools (JSSs) nationwide, totaling 1,418 schools nationwide, serving 213,893 students (boys and girls). Table 1 illustrates how this is broken down for the four regions we examined in this study.²⁶

²³Ghana Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. (n.d.). *Ghana Education Service*. Retrieved June 27, 2007, from <http://www.edughana.net/ges.htm#bed>

²⁴IEU National Headquarters. (n.d.). *Report on the state of Islamic Education Unit, GES*. Unpublished report, Tamale, Ghana.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶The data in Table 1 was contained in December 2006 IEU records provided by the IEU National Headquarters in Tamale.

Table 1. Number of IEU schools and students in the regions included in this study. (It is likely that the figures in the shaded area that were supplied by the IEU in this table are not correct, as generally one would not find identical numbers for boys and girls in a particular region.)

other Islamic subjects. In many IEU schools, Islamic subjects are relegated to the background; in order to receive teachers, the schools are obliged to follow the government curriculum. Lessons in Arabic, Qur’anic, and Islamic Studies are done in the afternoons after the secular teachers have left. A school that opts to be

Table 1. Number of IEU schools and students by region.

Regions	Kindergarten	Primary Schools	Junior Secondary Schools	Number of Students	
				Boys	Girls
Greater Accra	58	72	35	18,660	18,660
Northern	146	282	44	40,887	29,707
Ashanti	71	82	39	12,684	11,274
Upper West	13	29	14	4,947	3,587
Totals	288	465	132	77,178	63,228

Reliable figures on the numbers of *makaranta* and other non-IEU, private Islamic schools were not available. We asked the ‘*ulama* we interviewed to offer an educated guess. Their estimates for the number of IEU schools were surprisingly close to the number cited above. Their overall average guess was that there are about 3,000 *makaranta* and other non-IEU private Islamic schools. Given the number of IEU schools currently operating in Ghana, reports on the high numbers waiting to become IEU schools, and the fact that most majority Muslim communities have at least some form of *makaranta*, we believe this guess most likely has merit. The IEU schools have support from the government in terms of payment of teachers, but this is often at the cost of accepting a significant reduction in time available for the study of the Qur’an and

under the IEU accepts the need to reduce its focus on Islamic and Arabic topics. This is why some *madrasas* prefer to become private, integrated schools. Since they do not accept government assistance, they have more latitude in structuring their school days and deciding what subjects will be taught. There is a lot of pressure on the proprietors of such schools to raise funds, but they are usually happy to dedicate more time on the schedule for the study of the Qur’an, Arabic, and other Islamic subjects.

There is another coordinating unit for Islamic schools within the GES. This is the Ahmadiyya Education Unit (AEU), which has schools all over the country. It is predominately a secular educational establishment. The government pays all AEU teachers, while the management of the schools is in the hands of the

Ahmadiyya Movement who set up the school. Integration of AEU schools predates the establishment of the IEU. The AEU is distinct from the IEU, but at present the relationship between the institutions is unclear. Ahmadiyya schools are clearly Islamic schools, and receive assistance, but not through the IEU. Other sects and religious groups have units as well, most of which predate the establishment of the IEU. In the Ahmadiyya schools, according to AEU school stakeholders, there is no particular or strict emphasis on Arabic or Qur'anic studies. The curriculum is decidedly secular, and the AEU schools compete favorably with the best of the Christian Educational Unit institutions, such as the Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian Educational Unit schools.

In terms of the private, integrated Islamic schools (i.e., non-IEU schools), several groups have interesting histories. The Islamic Education Project organizes National Service personnel for teaching assignments in *madrasas* that are not under the IEU. This organization currently has an office at Mamobi in Accra, and has so far succeeded in getting university graduates and diploma holders to teach in the private Islamic schools while on National Service. The National Service Secretariat pays such teachers an allowance.

Weekend Islamic schools are becoming increasingly popular in Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale. During the weekends, Muslim children who attend various secular schools gather for the Qur'anic memorization instruction and reading and Arabic and Islamic studies these schools provide.

Some of the IEU schools also offer weekend classes in exclusively Islamic and Arabic subjects. Usually, the weekend schools attract higher numbers of pupils, including children of the elite who may be attending very expensive private schools during the weekdays.

A continuing education system is available for grown-ups who wish to continue their Islamic educations. This is usually done by reading certain classical Islamic books in the private homes of selected learned scholars, usually in the early hours of the morning. Subjects studied include *tafsir*, *nahw*, and *fiqh*. This type of continuous education is common among the Tijaniyya, especially in Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale.

Other places of learning that can be characterized as Islamic educational institutions are known as *ma'had* (institutes). The *Ma'had at Madina* in Accra specializes in the training of Arabic School teachers. The *Islamic Research and Reformation Centre* in Nima, Accra is a purely Arabic secondary school, and its graduates are able to continue their education in universities in the Arab world. Many go on to study at the Islamic University of Madina in Saudi Arabia.

Muslim women also have the opportunity to continue their Islamic educations in a number of schools. The proprietress of the Fatimatu Bint Rasul Islamic School at Darkuman in Accra runs such a program at the premises of her school. Other such women's schools have sprung up in Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale—classes are even held in a mosque in the Tamale market for the market women and older girls.

3. Common Types of Islamic Schools.

Several types of schools fall under the general rubric of Islamic education. However, from initial interviews with *‘ulama* in Accra, including the director of the IEU in Accra, we identified four of the most common types of Islamic schools in Ghana (in some cases, these are amalgam of the more detailed listing of types of schools above):

- **Traditional Qur’anic Schools.** While *makaranta* simply means school, it is the term most commonly used to describe traditional Qur’anic schools. At these schools, the Qur’an and religious texts, as well as Arabic, are studied exclusively; schools do not receive government support, and they are generally established by a proprietor and supported by the proprietor and the community, whether through tuition and fees paid by parents, or by donations. They tend to be extremely resource poor, often operating outside and under trees. With the proliferation of public schools and private Islamic schools that teach secular subjects (described below), traditional *makaranta* sometimes operate as weekend schools only or even “after-school schools,” whereby children study in the late afternoon or evenings, after attending primary school. Some serve adults as well on weekends or in the evenings.
- **Arabic Schools.** These schools are also referred to as modern traditional Qur’anic schools. Their course of study includes the Qur’an and religious texts as well as the Arabic language. These subjects constitute a large segment of the curriculum;

other subjects like math or science are studied in Arabic. Schools do not receive government support and are generally supported in the same way as the *makaranta*, either by the proprietor, the community (through tuition and donations), or by outside organizations. These schools are less traditional in the way they teach than the *makaranta*; they often have desks and chairs, have blackboards, and separate children into different groups by age. Again, some of these schools offer weekend study to children and adults, focusing on religious subjects, mainly Qur’anic memorization.

- **Arabic English Schools.** These are private, integrated Islamic schools. In these schools, students study secular and religious subjects, and they study secular subjects in English, not Arabic. Greater time is allocated to secular subjects in most instances. These schools sometimes receive governmental support in the form of teachers, but they are generally supported by the proprietor, by the parents/community through the charging of tuition and fees, and by outside organizations. Many of these schools are on the cusp of applying to become IEU schools. Many of them have poor facilities that do not meet the standards of the GES, and this is a key obstacle to their becoming IEU schools. Again, these schools often offer weekend classes in religious subjects (mainly Qur’anic memorization) for children who attend public schools.

- Public Integrated Islamic Schools.** These schools fall under the auspices of the IEU. Students study both secular and religious subjects, with greater emphasis put on secular subjects and a larger amount of time allocated to them. English is used as the medium of instruction except in religious subjects where Arabic is used. These schools receive governmental support in the form of teachers for the secular subjects and in terms of resources like textbooks as well as school infrastructure. Students take governmental exams to pass to the next level of education, and there is no problem transitioning from an IEU school to a regular public school. Again, since the schools were originally established by a school proprietor who often still runs the school on a day-to-day basis, these schools also sometimes offer weekend religious classes for children and adults.

As depicted by Figure 1 (see page 22), these types of schools exist along a continuum. Many Islamic schools in Ghana are on a continuum of change. They started out as traditional *makaranta*, and while they have taken steps toward curricular expansion, they have not yet decided to (or are not yet qualified to) become a full-fledged GES Islamic school. It should be noted, however, that we found that Arabic schools and Arabic English schools were less common than traditional Qur’anic schools and public integrated Islamic schools. Most *‘ulama* experts verified this as well. The trend is that Islamic schools, once having made the decision to offer secular subjects, endeavor to become GES schools under the IEU.

The GES unit has criteria for how a private Islamic school must qualify to become a GES school, and many traditional *makaranta* do not have the resources—mainly in terms of infrastructure—to qualify. Hence, many schools take some steps to integrate their curriculum but remain in the domain of private, not public schools in Ghana.

Many of the schools we studied classified themselves in dual ways due to the existence of weekend classes. The existence of weekend classes did cause many proprietors and others to consider their institutions as Arabic schools, despite the fact that they had already stated that they were registered under the IEU. Thus, “weekend school” is a bit of a cross cutting category of school and indicated the dual mission and identity of many of Ghana’s Islamic schools.

RESEARCH STUDY DESIGN



JSS students at the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale

This study is largely qualitative in nature, in that the majority of data was generated by interviews with *'ulama* and teachers, oral questionnaires with school proprietors and teachers, focus groups with parents, and classroom observations. Nonetheless, the oral questionnaires did query quantitative information as well, allowing us to make quantitative estimates and determinations on a range of factors (e.g., number of students per school and class, ratio of boys to girls in subject schools, legal status of schools).

A. Sample

First, it must be acknowledged that the school sample for this study is quite small. USAID originally requested a sample of 12 schools across four areas of Ghana. We proposed an increase in the sample size to 20 schools, and USAID accepted this suggestion. Hence, the study took place in five schools in each of the four research sites—Greater Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, and Wa—for a total of 20 schools (see Appendix C for details on the participating schools divided by region and category).



Figure 2: Map of Ghana.

There are two main reasons behind the selection of the four regions. First and geographically speaking, the four regions are located in different parts of the country. Tamale is in the North, Accra is in the coastal part, Wa is in the far northwest, and Ashanti is a central region. Second, these four regions have the largest Muslim population in the country.

Therefore, the number of the Islamic schools in these regions represent over 50 percent of the total number of Islamic schools in Ghana. The map of Ghana shown in Figure 2 illustrates the geographic diversity of the research sites.

In each area, we visited one of each of the four types of schools described above, with the fifth school in each area being generally an IEU school or another *makaranta*. Schools were identified to participate in the study based on *'ulama* recommendations, IEU recommendations, school reputation (as some are quite well-known), and our general knowledge of schools in each region.

We utilized five methods of data collection: interviews, oral questionnaires, parent focus groups, classroom observations, and review of literature. Tables 2–5 provide an overview of each group interviewed. We identified

the *'ulama* interviewees noted in Table 2 by reputation and by our prior knowledge and inquiry (i.e., asking already-identified *'ulama*, school proprietors, religious figures and members of the IEU in each site). The guidance of Sheikh Zakaria Seebaway was particularly helpful, as he is a well-known and respected figure among the *'ulama* of Ghana. The NGND has extensive contacts with both the education and religious communities, particularly in the north of Ghana, and hence their knowledge and networks also aided in the identification of interview targets.

Proprietors extended an invitation to parents to participate in the focus groups, explicitly urging mothers and fathers to come and participate. The parents who showed up made up the sample outlined in Table 4. In total, we conducted 25 focus groups with parents for the 20 schools that participated in this study. It should be noted that some focus groups were separated into male and female groups and run separately, hence the greater number of focus groups than schools.

As most schools had only one proprietor, our selection of schools encompassed the selection of the proprietor interviewees shown in Table 3. In most cases, the proprietor was also the school headmaster.

Table 2. Number of *'ulama*, by region and gender that we interviewed for this study.

<i>'Ulama</i>	Males	Females	Total
Northern/Tamale	4	1	5
Ashanti/Kumasi	7	0	7
Upper West/Wa	3	0	3
Greater Accra/Accra	9	0	9
Totals	23	1	24

Table 3. Number of proprietors, by region and gender, who completed questionnaires for this study.

School Proprietors	Males	Females	Total
Northern/Tamale	5	0	5
Ashanti/Kumasi	4	0	4
Upper West/Wa	5	0	5
Greater Accra/Accra	4	1	5
Totals	18	1	19

Table 4. Number of parents, by region and gender, who participated in focus groups for this study.

Focus Group Discussions with Parents			
Region/Town/City	Males	Females	Total
Northern/Tamale	50	34	84
Ashanti/Kumasi	43	26	69
Upper West/Wa	50	50	100
Greater Accra/Accra	14	10	24
Totals	157	120	277

Table 5. Number of teachers, by region and gender, who completed interviews and questionnaires for this study (interviewees were a subset of those completing the questionnaires).

Teachers					
Region/Town/City	Questionnaire	Males	Females	Interviews	Total Participating Teachers
Northern/Tamale	45	29	16	16	45
Ashanti/Kumasi	41	22	19	12	41
Upper West/Wa	39	19	20	10	39
Greater Accra/Accra	17	12	5	10	17
Totals	142	82	60	48	142

We used a stratified random method to select the teachers shown in Table 5. We wanted a mix of religious and secular subject teachers and as balanced a mix of male and female teachers as possible. Likewise, with the selection of classes to observe, in that we wanted both religious and secular classes where applicable. The element of convenience was also at play in the selection of teachers and classrooms to a certain degree. We had to interview teachers who were willing to be interviewed and who had time and we had to take classes that were in session during our school visit. Overall though, the sampling was both purposeful (as regards the school selection and hence the proprietor selection) and random (in regard to the teachers and classrooms).

In addition to the interviews and questionnaires, we conducted classroom observations at each of the participating schools. As noted in Table 6, observations were divided between secular and religious subjects. The (18 out of 20 schools) of schools observed offered some secular subjects. The IEU schools offered far more secular than religious subjects, as did some of the Arabic English schools.

B. Instruments

Research instruments for this study were adapted from instruments that we had used in the past for similar purposes. EDC had a set of Islamic school teacher and proprietor questionnaires and interview protocols from research in Nigeria and Ethiopia. In addition, EDC had classroom observation protocols from both countries, which were used in the study of Islamic and Qur'anic schools in both places. Likewise, NGND had focus group protocols used in gathering information from parents about schooling. These instruments were adapted to the Ghanaian context by the three lead researchers Ismail Lansah of NGND, Helen Boyle of EDC, and Sheikh Zakaria Seebaway, a consultant to EDC. We field-tested the instruments during the training of the researchers at an Islamic school in Tamale, and we revised them based on their utility in that context as well as to respond to data collector comments and feedback (see Appendix D for copies of the research instruments used in collecting data).

Table 6. Number of classes, by region and subject area, observed for this study.

Classes Observed	Arabic/Islamic Studies	Secular Subjects	Total
Northern/Tamale	3	7	10
Ashanti/Kumasi	4	6	10
Upper West/Wa	4	7	11
Greater Accra/Accra	2	9	11
Totals	13	29	42

C. Data Collector Training

The following teams of data collectors were recruited by NGND and by Sheikh Seebaway from the Islamic University of Accra:

- Tamale—One research team of three data collectors;
- Wa—One research team of three data collectors;
- Accra—One research team of two data collectors; and
- Kumasi—Two research teams of two data collectors each.

The data collectors were brought to the Tamale area and trained over a period of three days in using the instruments developed by the lead researchers. The training consisted of orienting the data collectors to the study and its purpose, introducing them to the instruments, having them practice with the instruments in a series of role play/simulation activities and then use the instruments in a school in the Tamale area and lastly, participate in a debriefing on the experience of using the instruments. In addition to learning how to use the instruments, the data collectors practiced introducing themselves to the school members and explaining the purpose of the study to teachers and proprietors.

Sheikh Zakaria Seebaway accompanied the data collectors in the Accra area and carried out many of the *'ulama* interviews. In the Tamale area, Sheikh Mohammed Harroun accompanied the data collectors, and Ismail Lansah and Helen Boyle carried out the *'ulama* and IEU interviews. Ismail Lansah and Helen Boyle accompanied the data collectors to one school in the Wa area and carried out the *'ulama* and

IEU interviews there, and Ismail Lansah accompanied the data collectors in the Kumasi area and carried out the *'ulama* interviews there. As the IEU was having a meeting in Accra the same week that the data collection for this study began, many of the IEU representatives were in Accra, and Sheik Seebaway interviewed them there.

D. Data Collection Schedule

For a full schedule of the data collection, please see Appendix E.

E. Data Analysis

We analyzed data using the comprehensive statistical software program SPSS. We also utilized the qualitative analysis software *Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing*. The latter software allows researchers to systematically examine text-based, qualitative data and identify common themes and responses.

CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN GHANA:

REPORTING AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS



Primary students at the Marhalia Islamic School in Tamale

A. Mandate and Purpose

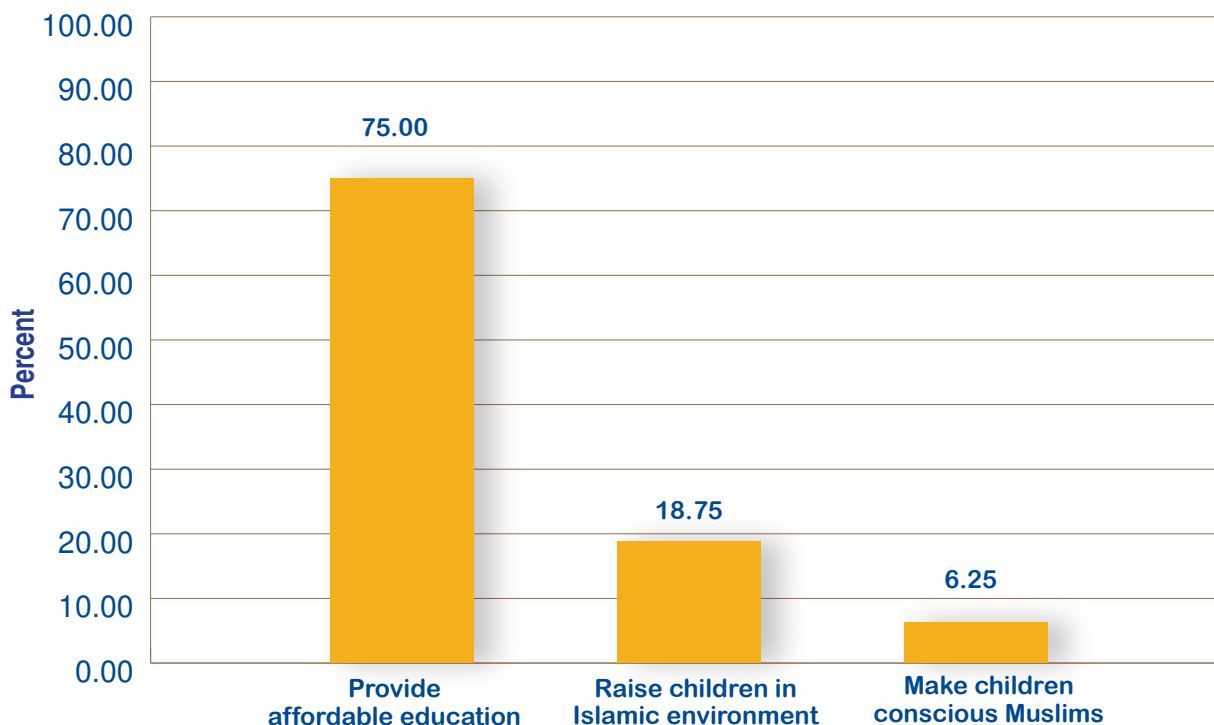
According to *'ulama*, Islamic school proprietors, and teachers, as well as parents of children attending Islamic schools, all types of Islamic schools share the following religious mandate and purpose:

To provide students with an education that is Islamic in nature, such that students will develop a sense of Muslim identity.

However, contemporary Islamic schools in Ghana—specifically those that provide both secular and religious instruction—have a concomitant mandate:

To provide a high-quality and rigorous secular education to children, in order to prepare them to play productive roles in Ghanaian society.

Figure 3. School proprietors’ articulation of mandate and purpose of schools.



1. Proprietors’ Reasons for Establishing Schools. We questioned Islamic school proprietors on their reasons for establishing their schools. Some of the respondents provided multiple reasons. Thus, of the 16 proprietors questioned, there were 31 responses, as displayed in Figure 3.

The pragmatic choice of “provide an affordable education” was selected most frequently; indeed, 75 percent of the proprietors selected it as a reason for the establishment of their schools. As most of the schools in the study had some level of secular education as part of their mandate, this response speaks to the degree to which Islamic schools have incorporated a secular mission into their overall mission and, concomitantly, are looked upon as viable and attractive avenues for opening up secular education to Muslims in Ghana.

The other responses given, “raising children in an Islamic environment” and “making children conscious Muslims,” if combined (as they are clearly related and even to some degree synonymous), total 25 percent of the responses and confirm the ongoing centrality of the religious mission of the school.

2. Parents’ Perceptions of the Purpose of the Schools. Parents felt that the purpose of the school—the reason it exists—is to help children understand and promote the Islamic religion. As illustrated by Figure 4, consensus in 15 out of the 25 parent focus groups, or 60 percent of the focus groups, was that the schools’ primary purpose is to help children to understand and promote the Islamic religion.

Figure 4. Parents' perceptions on the purpose of the Islamic schools to which they send their children.

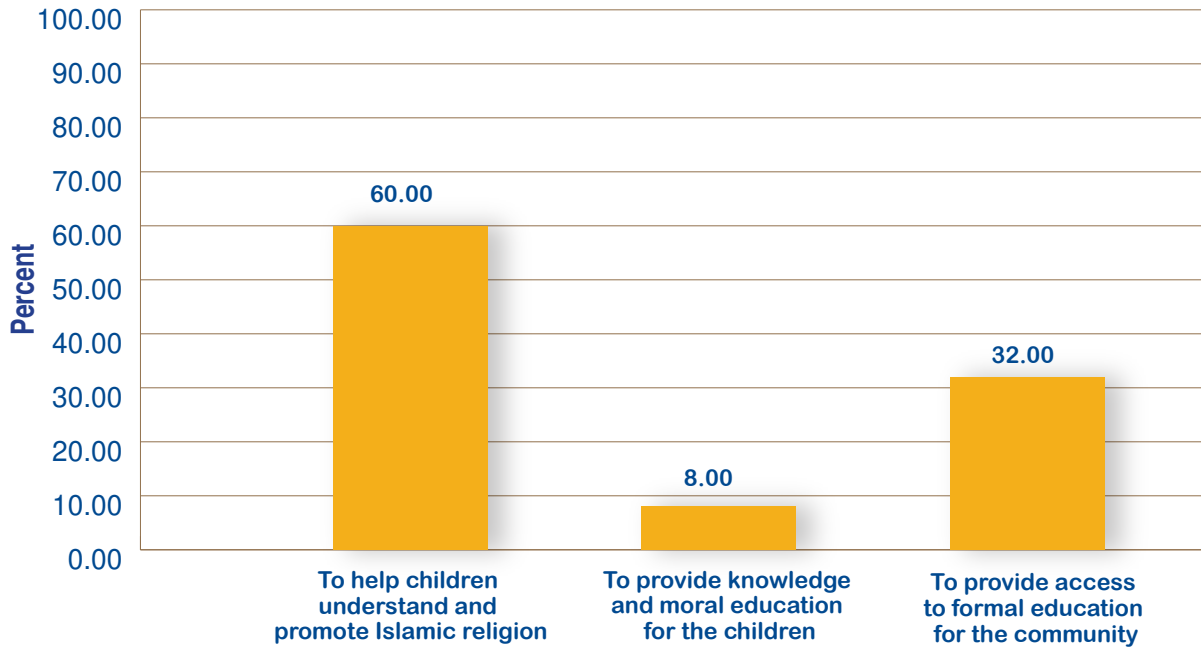
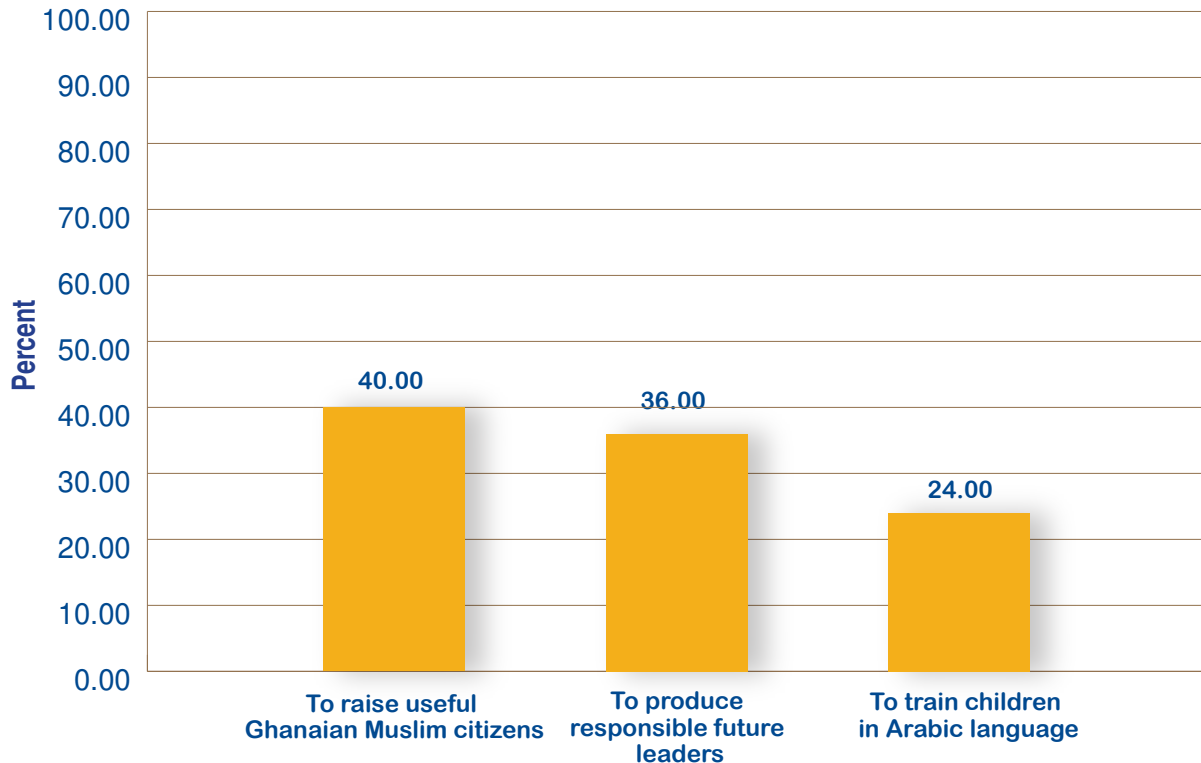


Figure 5. Parents' perceptions of the vision and mission of the Islamic schools to which they send their children.



A parent from a focus group in Accra summed up the general feeling of parents with the following statement:

As far as we are concerned the purpose and the intention underpinning this school is to train Muslim children to understand and know Islam. If there is any other underlying intention, it will see us withdraw our wards.²⁷ (Parent, Accra Focus Group, Hamidiyya School)

Interestingly, when asked about the larger vision and mission of the school, parents responded as shown in Figure 5.

Parents clearly see the school as having a religious purpose. Yet, when asked to speak more concretely in terms of the schools' vision (where it is or should be heading) and mission (goals for itself, mainly in terms of student accomplishments), a full 76 percent of parents (40 percent plus 36 percent) focused not on fostering religious development or identity, per se, but on serving larger national goals linked to the development of citizens and future leaders from the Ghanaian *'umma* (Muslim community). Hence, there is a clear link in parents' minds between shaping good Muslims and shaping good citizens.

3. Perceptions of the Schools' Role in Forming Religious Identity. Religious identity, a key concept in discussing the mandate and purpose of Islamic schools in Ghana, can be characterized by the following:

- Knowledge of basic Islamic texts;
- Knowledge of and adherence to basic Islamic tenets;

- Knowledge of and adherence to basic Islamic practices; and
- Knowledge of the Arabic language.

The degree to which students gain knowledge of basic Islamic texts, tenets, and practices as well as knowledge of the Arabic language depends largely on the type of Islamic education they receive. For example, in traditional *makaranta*, students receive an education that is solely Islamic. Hence, the mandate and purpose of these institutions, in addition to the fostering of Muslim identity, is to make sure students have memorized some or all of the Qur'an, can recite it well, and can read and write in Arabic. In an IEU school, at the other end of the spectrum, the degree to which students are expected to become thoroughly versed in Arabic literacy and Qur'anic recitation is much reduced, but students are still expected to attain some level of Arabic letter and word recognition and Qur'anic recitation proficiency. Arabic and Arabic English schools fall in between these two extremes. Hence, while the mandate and purpose of all types of Islamic schools is to help develop children's religious identity and to help shape conscious Muslims, implementation varies by school type.

Another means of analyzing the breadth of mandate and purpose across the types of Islamic schools in Ghana was through the *makaranta* proprietors' tendency to talk about preparing students for the hereafter by helping them develop character and good morals and bringing them closer to their religion. This propensity by proprietors to see their role as caring for the soul of the student differentiated their schools from the other types, even as they, too, voiced the opinion that secular education was useful and even a necessity in Ghana today. In

²⁷In Ghana, the word "ward" is synonymous with "child."

contrast, IEU officials emphasized the need to prepare students to succeed in this life, although the hereafter was mentioned in some interviews.

The mandate and purpose of contemporary Islamic schools in Ghana that we encountered is not new. Indeed, the formation of religious identity has been part and parcel of the Islamic school mission since the development of Islamic schools.^{28,29,30} What *has* changed is the degree to which knowledge of basic Islamic texts, knowledge of and adherence to basic Islamic tenets, knowledge of and adherence to basic Islamic practices, and knowledge of the Arabic language are defined by educators and parents and emphasized in the school environment. According to the data, *‘ulama*, proprietors, teachers, and parents seem to have accepted the fact that the depth of knowledge of Islamic texts and the Arabic language that students will gain in integrated schools has decreased. There seems to be near universal willingness to accept that trade-off in order to provide a secular education to Muslim children in an institution that would still endeavor, explicitly, to develop their identity as Muslims.

This trade-off is mainly in evidence in the Arabic English schools and in the integrated public (IEU and AEU) schools. While some Arabic schools do integrate secular subjects, the fact that they teach in Arabic and not English limits the options for their graduates

in Ghana—and suggests that they have not embraced a more limited focus on Arabic subjects in order to increase the focus on secular subjects. Since *makaranta* do not offer secular subjects at all, this trade-off does not affect them unless they decide they want to be an integrated school.

It is worth noting that *makaranta* are not completely disappearing, despite the fact that they have not changed their essential mandate and purpose. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Muslim children who attend non-Islamic public schools during the week are increasingly attending *makaranta* in the late afternoon/early evening and on weekends.

Makaranta represent a link to tradition in Ghana, as was pointed out by a *makaranta* proprietor in Tamale. This link could represent another reason as to why *makaranta* seem to be surviving the upsurge in enrollment in schools that provide secular as well as religious instruction. By altering the way in which they fulfill their mandate and purpose (i.e., as weekend or evening schools), traditional *makaranta* seem to be maintaining an educational niche in Ghana. Indeed, traditional Islamic schools have tended to be adaptable to the changing educational landscape worldwide,³¹ and this appears to hold true for Ghana as well.

4. Perceptions of Islamic Schools’ Role in Providing Secular Education. The growth in the number of Islamic schools under the IEU of the GES, and the long list of Islamic schools seeking to be integrated into the secular system, was

²⁸Boyle, H. (2004). *Quranic schools: Agents of preservation and change*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

²⁹Günther, S. (2006, August). Be masters in that you teach and continue to learn: Medieval Muslim thinkers on educational theory. *Comparative Education Review*, 50(3), 367–388.

³⁰Talbani, A. (1996). Pedagogy, power and discourse: Transformation of Islamic Education. *Comparative Education Review*, 40(1), 66–82.

³¹Boyle, H. (2004). *Quranic schools: Agents of preservation and change*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

confirmed by the regional managers of IEs in Northern and Ashanti regions (two regions with the highest Muslim populations in Ghana). This growth exemplifies the acceptance of the integration of secular education by a growing number of Muslim parents in Ghana. An Islamic scholar and school proprietor in Kumasi said:

Walahi (by Allah) the introduction of secular education has greatly enhanced secular education among we Muslims in Ghana and we need to pray for those who nurtured this idea. Indeed, Muslims in Ghana are beginning to rub shoulders with others, hence, we will continue to pray and work hard for this to keep improving among us the Muslims.
(Proprietor, Ashanti)

The large-scale acceptance of the trade-off between depth of religious study and secular subjects is a significant development in the history of Islamic education in Ghana. It is, therefore, worth exploring how this change came about. Information for this section comes from both the review of literature and from our subjects—*‘ulama*, including IEU officials, as well as teachers, school proprietors, and parents.

The mandate for Islamic schools to provide a secular education emerged from the fact that parents felt more comfortable sending their children to Islamic schools, despite the fact that they wanted their children to learn secular subjects. In the past, most Muslim parents were reluctant to send their children to secular schools because most of them evolved from or were in some way linked to the Christian mission schools that took root in Ghana during the colonial period. Muslim parents feared that the faith of their children would be influenced in favor of Christianity.

The majority of children from the growing Muslim population in Ghana were thereby enrolled in Islamic schools, whose curriculum was mainly the Qur’an and Islamic literature to the neglect of secular subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies. Graduates of these Islamic schools were, therefore, limited in terms of relevant skills and knowledge, and they remained in the lower strata of the Ghanaian society.

In the late 1970s, Ghanaian Muslims began to take note of this situation. They realized that knowledge of English and secular subjects were critical if the Muslim community in Ghana was to have a voice in national affairs and an influence on the government policies that could impact their lives.

The Qur’anic schools were the first type of schools to emerge in Muslim communities. These came about through individual efforts. Some also inherited them from parents. With the second type, they emerged with the realization by Muslims that they were not contributing directly to the general effort to move the country forward. So they accepted the idea of secular subjects being introduced so that they could also produce doctors, engineers, etc. (IEU Official, Accra)

Hence, by the 1980s, there was a more formal and concerted push by stakeholders (*‘ulama*, including school proprietors and prominent teachers, as well as parents), not to eliminate Islamic educational institutions, but to bring secular education to their doorstep through the integration of secular subjects into the Islamic school curricular offerings. This culminated in the formation of the IEU in 1987, as described above.

The following quotation is illustrative of the general opinion of our interviewees toward the integration of secular subjects into Islamic school settings:

Integration of secular and Islamic institutions is a perfect thing to do. This will enable a person to benefit in this life and the hereafter. The secular subjects taught will make it possible for one to make a meaningful contribution towards the general effort to move the country forward. The religious subjects will make one worship and serve his/her Lord better. (Regional Manager of Schools, IEU, Ashanti)

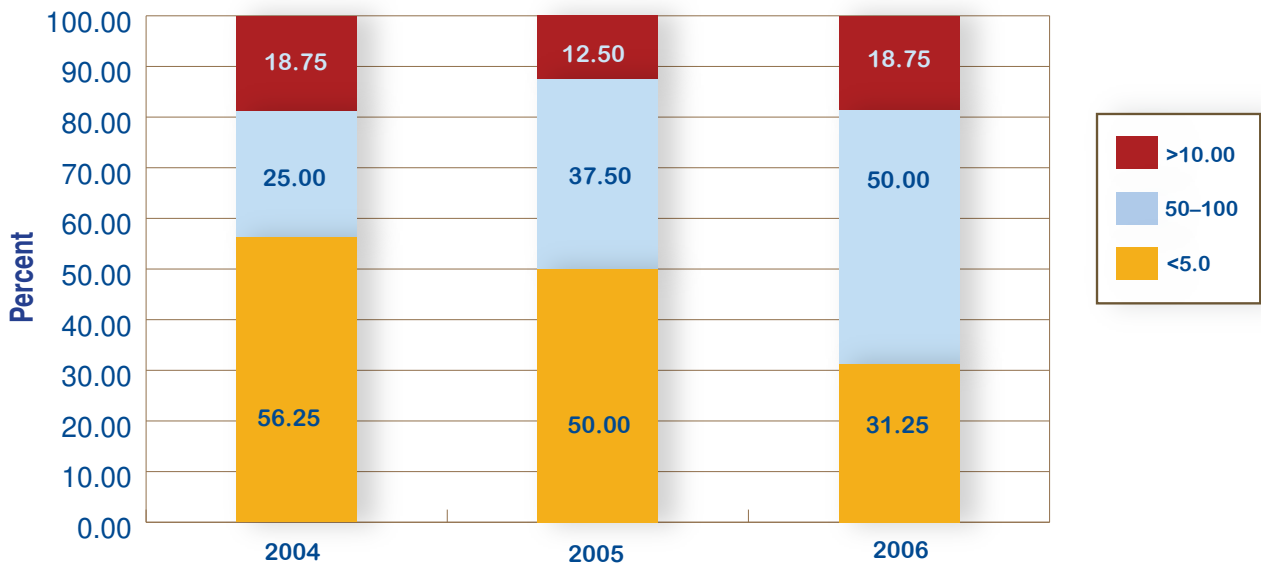
Indeed, one ‘*alim* (singular of ‘*ulama*) even took issue with our terminology, saying that there is no divide in Islam between the religious and the secular and that there is no dissonance in Islamic schools teaching subjects such as math, English, and science:

Because Islam is not all about praying and fasting. If you divide the Qur’an into four it is only one quarter

that talks about faith; all the rest talks about science, animals, and mountains. If you take a look there is a Hadith asking Muslims to acquire knowledge even if it is in China. (‘Alim, Tamale)

Many of the ‘*ulama* we interviewed were quite critical of the fact that they (the Ghanaian ‘*umma* or Muslim community writ large) have let education languish as a lesser priority for many years. Several ‘*ulama*, including IEU officials and school proprietors, expressed a sense of frustration that the Muslim community is playing catch up on a national level in terms of educational attainment. Hence the “new” mandate and purpose for Islamic schools, specifically those that serve as sole and primary education providers (i.e., full-time day schools for students), to provide an integrated curriculum has a great deal of ‘*ulama* support. Interestingly, out of the 20 ‘*ulama* interviewed, 13 reported that they send their children to secular schools (not IEU schools) and then provide them with

Figure 6. Proprietors’ characterization of enrollment trends in their schools.



makaranta education on the weekends. One confirmation of this support for integrated schooling is the steady increase in enrollments in full-time Islamic day schools, both private and public. Proprietors of Arabic English schools and IEU schools reported steady growth in enrollments over the past two years, as shown in Figure 6.

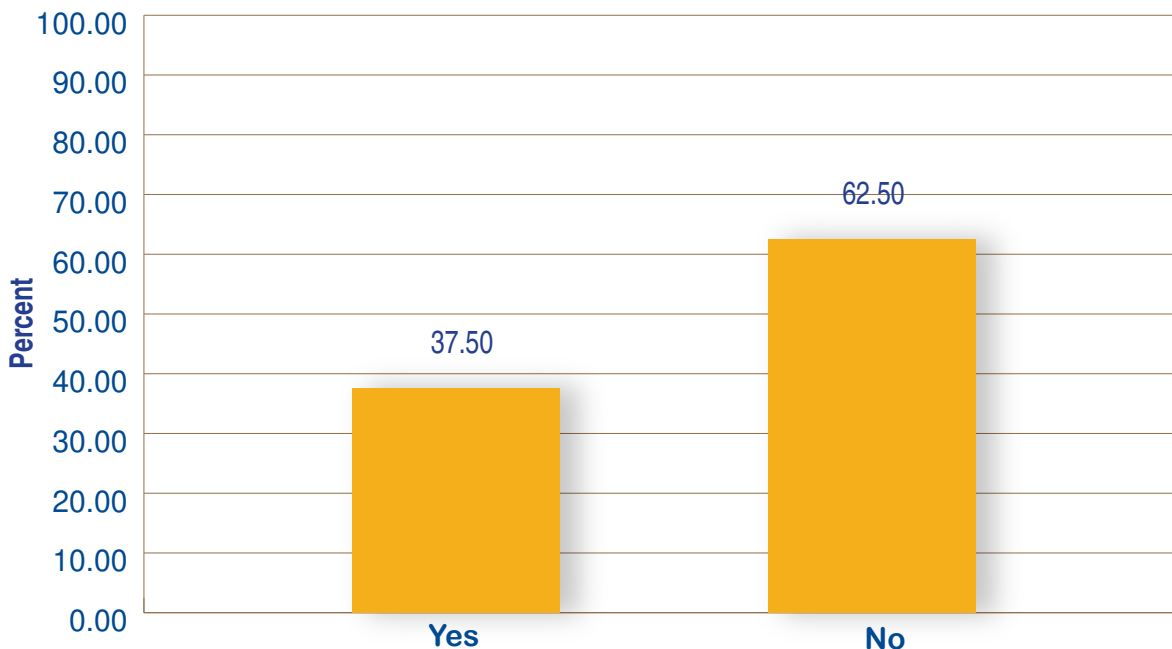
There is a caveat to the enrollment data. Out of the 18 respondents who answered this question, 12 reported steady growth and 9 of those 12 produced numbers to substantiate the claim; three did not produce actual numbers, while asserting growth. However, five respondents reported steady growth, even as the numbers they gave for the past three years (2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07) actually indicated a slight decline in enrollments. Only one proprietor reported a slow decline, and he was from an IEU school. These five proprietors might be taking a longer view, looking at trends over the last

10 or 20 years. However, it was clear that there was a perception that the schools are flourishing, and there was evidence that half of the schools did indeed demonstrate growth (9 out of 18 schools). In none of the cases was the growth phenomenal; in most cases, the growth was between 10 and 20 students yearly. The same is true in cases of declines.

Finally, in relation to school mandate and purpose, a word on the various sects is appropriate. Islamic schools are commonly associated with one of the Islamic sects in Ghana. The major sects are Tijaniyya, Ahmadiyya, and Ahlul Sunna.³² We queried proprietors as to

³²The Tijaniyya sect is a Sufi order founded by Sheikh Ahmad Tijani in 1781 in Fez, Morocco. Many elderly Muslims and senior *‘ulama* in Ghana are followers of the order. The Ahmadiyya sect was founded by Mirza Gulam Ahmad in 1889, and was introduced in Ghana in 1927 in the town of Saltpond, a coastal town in the then Gold Coast. Roughly half of Ghanaian Muslims regard themselves as Ahlul Sunna Wal Jama’a, which literally translates as “The People of Sunna and the Community.”

Figure 7. Proprietors’ responses to the question on the impact of sectarian beliefs on what is taught in the school.



whether and how the sectarian nature of their schools impacted what was taught. In general, proprietors were hard pressed to articulate how the sectarian orientation of the school influenced its mandate and purpose. As indicated by Figure 7, most said that it did not influence what was taught at the school.

For the proprietors who selected “yes” in response to the question of whether sectarian beliefs influenced their schools, the data is deceptive because all identified themselves as Ahlul Sunna. This basically means they are Sunni Muslims, and not members of the Tijaniyya or Ahmadiyya sects in Ghana. To illustrate, one proprietor who self-identified as Ahlul Sunna and selected “yes” said: “The world over, we have only two sects, Shia and Sunna. The whole of Africa is Sunna. The Sunna we learn is the worldwide Sunna” (Proprietor, Kumasi).

Of those proprietors who self-identified as Tijaniyya or Ahmadiyya, only one (from the Ahmadiyya sect) indicated that sectarian beliefs influence what is taught in the school. A Tijaniyya proprietor seemed to sum up the reason for why sectarian proprietors responded “no” to the question: “No, because there is only one Qur’an” (Proprietor, Kumasi). Likewise, for those who did not identify themselves as sectarian at all, the theme of the unity of Islam was prominent. The theme of this answer was reflected in many of the “no” responses. A proprietor from Accra said, “I do not belong to any sect. I am a Muslim.” Hence, sectarian inculcation did not figure prominently in the stated mandate and purpose of the schools participating in this study.

B. Legal and Financial Status

The legal status of an Islamic school in Ghana often related to its sources of financing and vice versa. Legal status is more straightforward than financing in that there are many potential sources of funding but only one purveyor of legal status—the government.

1. Legal Status of Islamic Schools.

Makaranta schools are entirely private institutions that are not registered with the government. Generally, proprietors or communities establish these institutions. A proprietor can open a *makaranta* without permission from the government and is not required to take any steps to register the school.

Arabic schools generally fall under the rubric of private schools. While their curricula can vary significantly between religious and secular subjects, all classes are taught in Arabic. Private schools are generally required to register with the GES. The degree to which Arabic schools do register with the GES was unclear from our data.

Arabic English schools were generally registered with the GES as private schools. Further, some had applications pending with the IEU to become integrated public Islamic schools. Many private schools desiring to fall under the auspices of the IEU simply failed to qualify because they did not meet the IEU basic standards, especially in terms of facilities. Presumably, once they make improvements to meet the basic standards required by the IEU, they will be recognized as IEU schools and their status will change from private to public. Finally, IEU schools, with their status as government

public schools, do not have an issue with registration. They are already government supported and regulated.

2. Financing of Islamic Schools. Figure 8 provides an overview of the sources of funds for Islamic schools. *Makaranta* are financed for the most part by the proprietor and the community, in the form of fees paid to the proprietor for the education provided. Many proprietors reported that parents often fell behind in the payment of their fees and were in arrears. Nonetheless, the schools generally did not expel the children from the school but rather allowed them to continue to attend.

Private schools that offer a mixture of secular and religious subjects do qualify for some governmental support. Arabic schools reported that they received governmental support, as did Arabic English schools. Governmental support to these institutions came in the form of teachers. Arabic schools also reported receiving some support from external donors. This was confirmed but not deemed highly significant by *'ulama* and IEU officials. One IEU informant said the following concerning the financing of private Islamic schools:

They get some kind of support from wealthy individuals but this is not regular and it is also not sufficient. Some proprietors solicit help from embassies in Accra but this does not actually show in the schools. These monies are also irregular and a substantial part of it is misapplied (e.g., for marriage, acquiring property, and solving personal problems of individual clerics). (Regional Manager of Schools, IEU, Ashanti)

Another IEU official stated:

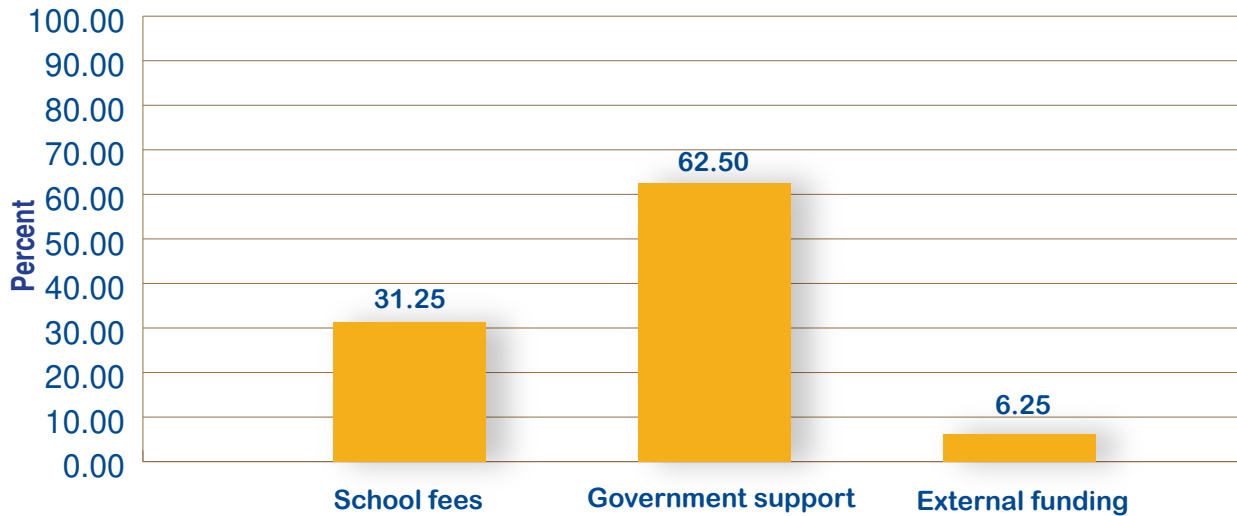
First, private Islamic schools are financed by the proprietor. Second, through weekly or monthly payments by parents of wards attending the school. Third, through donations by individuals or foreign NGOs but the last one is not regular. (Regional Manager of Schools, IEU, Upper West Region)

Some participants in the study pointed out that some funding comes from the Iranian Ahlul Bayt Foundation and Kuwait Zakat House. Most participants indicated that the source of funding doesn't affect the practices in these schools. However, a few respondents suggested that the source of external funding does indeed influence what is taught in the school:

For instance, schools assisted by the Islamic Republic of Iran or Ahlul Bayt Foundation tailor their activities towards Shia practices. Those financed by Saudi Arabia also have their characteristics—maintenance of long beards and wearing long garb and usually against members of tariqa [sect]. (Regional Manager of Schools, IEU, Ashanti)

Many proprietors, in side conversations, said that the assistance from abroad was mainly in the form of scholarships to individual students to help them remain in school. The school usually facilitated such scholarships. *'Ulama* mentioned that proprietors would approach embassies or missions from other countries to seek out this type of assistance. In addition, many members of the teaching staff at all types of Islamic schools were trained in the Gulf countries. Many had a purely Islamic education in Ghana and went to the Gulf for higher studies, as they did not speak English and therefore could not matriculate

Figure 8. The various sources of Islamic schools' finances.



in Ghana's higher education system. Thus, many schools have links to the Gulf States through their teaching staff. The amount of external funding appeared to be fairly minimal and it mostly goes to Arabic schools.

The Government of Ghana financially supports Islamic schools that are registered under the IEU and supports some private schools as well, under the GES but not necessarily under the IEU. As mentioned above, support comes mainly in the form of supplying teachers and paying their salaries. Once a school registers as an IEU school, the government provides it with teachers to teach all of the secular subjects. Additionally, the government supports two Arabic/Islamic teachers to teach Arabic and religious topics at the primary school level and one at the JSS level. In times past, the government supported a larger number of Arabic/Islamic teachers. Many school proprietors complained bitterly about the fact that the government now limits its support of Arabic/Islamic teachers:

The arrangement started very well [the integration of secular subjects into the Islamic schools] because they [the government] were paying Arabic

instructors and teachers. Some few years ago, no matter how big a school is the government qualified [limited] their number on the part of the Arabic instructors—only two of them! It has given us a lot of problems and most of the instructors are questioning me [on this] saying, “We told you that these people will cheat us.” [Apologizes to IEU representative, who arranged the interview, for being so frank.]....Now we have a lot of students who are good in both the Islamic and English but this particular policy is very discouraging. (*‘Alim, Tamale*)

This policy, more than any other, has influenced the character of the IEU schools. Limiting the number of Arabic/Islamic teachers has de facto limited the exposure students have to Arabic and religious subjects. IEU officials characterize this as a financial decision more than anything else. As the number of IEU schools grew, and given the limited IEU resources, the unit was forced to limit the number of Arabic and Islamic religion teachers it would finance. However, this does suggest that GES and IEU officials attach more importance to the delivery of the Ghanaian

curriculum (mostly secular subjects) than to the religious and Arabic studies subjects offered in Islamic schools.

Finally, in regard to financing, we queried stakeholders on their willingness to (hypothetically) accept funding from international donor organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, DFID, and USAID. The most common response was that funding would be welcomed as long as it did not require the school to change in any way that would be un-Islamic:

UNICEF, USAID, UNESCO and other[s] coming to support Islamic schools in Ghana is a good idea and will be appreciated by all. The French government is funding the teaching of French in Ghana. This has helped in advancing French. Ghanaian Muslims will see the help as a good thing and will think otherwise about the notion in some circles that these organizations are against everything that bears the title of Islamic or Muslim. (Regional Manager of Schools, IEU, Upper West Region)

Out of 20 *‘ulama* interviewed, 13 were very positive and enthusiastic on the idea of outside assistance. Only three were decidedly negative and four provided no information on this topic. Some participants were more skeptical than others, raising the concern that schools should be careful regarding funds that come from these sources. One interviewee pointed out:

If we rely very much on these, care must always be taken. UNESCO is for everybody though but still one must be careful in dealing with such organizations, so that certain ideas do not creep into Islam. (Regional Manager, IEU, Accra)

Overall, though, interviewees demonstrated a genuine willingness to consider the acceptance of outside financial assistance, recognizing that the needs of their schools were great. In particular, the IEU respondents seemed quite eager to explore this possibility, should it ever arise.

C. Formal Education Linkages

The Islamic education sector and the public school sector, personified by the GES in many cases, are linked at two main levels—the policy/administrative level and the student level. At the student level, the linkages relate to examinations and movement between the two systems.

1. Policy and Administrative

Linkages. The establishment of the IEU reconfigured the relationships between Islamic schools and the GES. Private schools had been linked to the government through the process of registration. Even before the IEU, schools that offered both religious and secular subjects registered with the GES as faith-based institutions. This enabled them to receive support from the government, mainly in the form of teachers. This link still exists in that Islamic schools may register with the GES as private, faith-based schools. However, their leverage to influence the GES is limited in that they are not then part of a larger group of schools with similar needs that can collectively bring pressure to bear on the GES. The IEU to some degree solves this problem, as it constitutes an umbrella organization for Islamic schools, giving them a more direct link to the GES. In some ways, it has the following primary purposes:

- To advocate for the schools on policy issues as well as on resource and operational issues;
- To represent GES policies and administrative codes, rules, and regulations to the schools; and
- To monitor school quality and adherence to GES standards and policies.

The IEU adopts Islamic schools that meet certain government criteria (mainly in terms of facilities). As of December 2006, the IEU adopted 1,418 schools across Ghana, according to IEU records in the IEU National Headquarters in Tamale. On an operational or administrative level, the IEU is responsible for making sure that all the IEU schools have secular subject teachers, have classroom furniture and textbooks, and have facilities that are in good shape. It is also responsible for making sure that all of the Islamic schools comply with the overall administrative codes, rules, and regulations that govern public schools in Ghana, assisting those schools that need help in these domains.

However, the IEU role extends beyond mediating administrative issues between the GES and the Islamic schools, as regards resources, facilities, and administration. The IEU also acts as an intermediary between the GES and Islamic schools at a policy level.

The following policy issues are currently under debate between the schools, the IEU, and the GES:

- Standardizing the curriculum for Arabic language and Islamic studies offered at IEU schools;
- Certifying Arabic and Islamic religion teachers;

- Agreeing upon the number of Arabic and Islamic teachers per school;
- Allocating time for Arabic and Islamic studies during the school day; and
- Agreeing upon the official weekend the Islamic schools should observe.

According to our interviews with IEU officials, there is general support for a standardized Arabic language and Islamic studies curriculum that all GES-recognized schools would use. The AEU does have something of this nature for teaching the Qur'an, and that could be a starting point. However, our data suggests that action on this is still in the early stages.

IEU officials continually raised one policy issue—the issue of promotion and certification of Arabic and religion teachers. Currently, there is no system of promotion for Arabic and Islamic teachers, and often those who come from Arab countries with degrees cannot get them officially recognized by the GES. Even when these teachers are engaged by GES, they are often considered as assistant or student teachers. In some cases, these teachers have to go back to school and acquire some additional secular education and GES qualification before they are completely absorbed by the Ghanaian educational system. One graduate from the Madina Islamic University in Saudi Arabia entered the University of Cape Coast and successfully pursued a Post Graduate Diploma in Education. As a result, he rose to become the Regional Manager of the IEU in Tamale. However, he was able to do this because he had completed basic secular education before going to Saudi Arabia. Most of the graduates who did not have any basic secular studies have few options and end up teaching in non-IEU schools with very low salaries.

We have touched on the issue of the number of Arabic and Islamic teachers per school that the IEU will support. This is an area where schools are lobbying for change. As mentioned earlier, the chief constraint to the provision of more than two Arabic and Islamic teachers per primary school and one per JSS is financial. However, the IEU is well aware of the issue and the general sentiments in the Islamic school community.

We have also referred to the issue of the time allotment to Arabic and Islamic studies during the school day, but it is an issue of some small amount of contention, according to our interviews. There is a sense among proprietors, parents and even IEU officials, that the Arabic and Islamic studies are becoming a bit marginalized and this is a source of concern. As the secular subjects offered at IEU schools and Arabic English schools are part of a set curriculum, there is little room to maneuver. Right now, it seems that no official action is being taken on this policy issue, other than school-based solutions (e.g., offering Arabic and Islamic subjects in the afternoons after the government approved curriculum and going a bit over the regular school day).

The issue of whether to allow Islamic schools to set their weekend days as Thursday and Friday (as the Ambariyya School in Tamale does) has been a long simmering policy issue that has been resolved at least temporarily through the efforts of the IEU in Tamale. Basically, the IEU supplies teachers who do not object to working on Saturday and Sunday to the Ambariyya School and turns a blind eye to the days worked as long as the teacher works a full five-day work week. It is not clear that this policy will endure if the current IEU and GES administration change in Tamale.

Hence, the IEU, while it is not a unit rich in resources according to our interviewees, does constitute an important link between the GES and the Islamic schools in negotiating and addressing the various policy issues laid out above. It is also worth noting that before the IEU was established, the Ahmadiyya sect had a formal link to the GES through the AEU. This unit is still very much in existence. Its job is similar to what is described above for the IEU, except that the AEU is only charged with being a link between Ahmadiyya Islamic schools and the GES. From our limited study, it seems that the IEU and the AEU operate fairly harmoniously, although the exact relationship between them is unclear, even to officials in both units. It would seem intuitive that the IEU would be above the AEU in a hierarchy of units concerned with Islamic education, since the Ahmadiyya sect falls under the overall rubric of Islam. However, that did not seem to be the case. The AEU is very well organized and established, and its schools seem better regulated and supported than the IEU schools. The AEU, for example, organized a large training in Salaga last year for its teachers and has a standardized program for teaching the Qur'an called "Yasurna al Qur'an." (See page 24 for a more in-depth description of the AEU.)

2. Student Linkages and Transition between the Two Systems. In Islamic schools that offer an integrated mix of secular and religious subjects, linkages between the two systems are strong. Especially in IEU schools, students are able to make a seamless transition from Islamic to public primary schools, public JSSs, or senior secondary schools. This is not the case with the traditional

makaranta and with some of the modern *makaranta*-type schools. One reason for this is that students in these schools tend to study in Arabic and in local languages, but not in English. Hence, the transition is hard for students with poor English.

Since IEU schools are basically government schools, there is no barrier to transitioning between the Islamic and the “regular” schools. Indeed, students study the same secular subjects, in the same sequence, as they use the same curriculum for and take the same basic government exams. These exams relate only to the secular subjects the students study. Many private Islamic schools—Arabic English schools—also offer the basic government curriculum and afford students the opportunity to take the basic government exams.

The government does not test in Arabic or Islamic studies, although the social science course offers information on religions including Islam. This subject is tested but it is not *per se* a course about Islam. This explains why many Arabic teachers under the IEU who were interviewed called for the introduction of Arabic into the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE), as French is also studied and examined at that level.

Most teachers and parents interviewed indicated that it is good for children to have both English and Arabic (secular and Islamic) education. They liked the idea of having Arabic English schools, as this encouraged many parents who were skeptical about secular education to enroll their children. For example, all parents agreed that Arabic English schools allow their children to fit into the formal

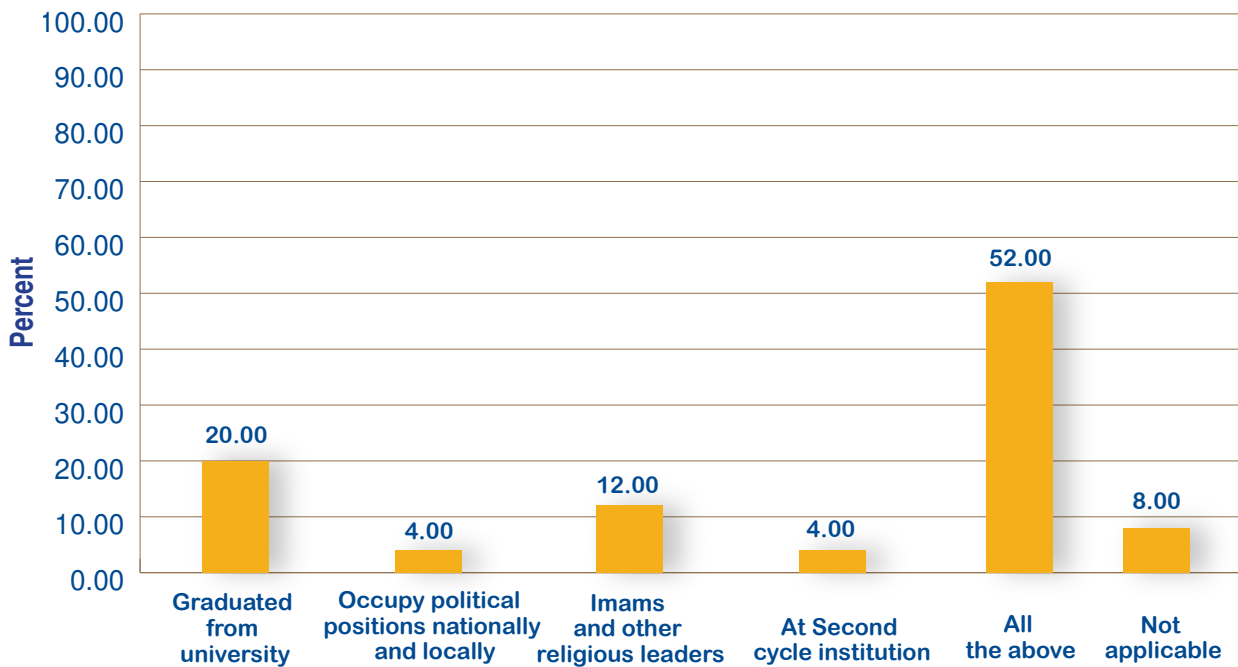
education. Many teachers and parents also said that Arabic English (secular and Islamic) education is well-rounded and good for the material, moral, and spiritual development of the children.

As indicated in Figure 9, many graduates from integrated schools have increased access to various careers and have also continued their educations: (See Figure on next page.)

If there could be any barrier to transition between one system and the other, it is the seeming degradation of Arabic and Islamic studies by the IEU. There are feelings of resentment among many proprietors of Islamic schools over what they consider a sidelining of Islamic and Arabic studies. The courses are often taught after the secular teachers leave for the day and when the children are already exhausted from studying secular subjects all day.

This particular situation is responsible for the hesitancy of some traditional Islamic or private Islamic schools to join the IEU. It also explains why the weekend Islamic schools are becoming very popular. Parents seemed to believe that their children are not getting enough Islamic education from the IEU schools and that they need to receive reinforcement through the weekend Islamic school. This is also the answer for those children who do not have any access to Islamic and Arabic education due to the fact that they attend purely secular or private international schools, or even popular church established schools, especially in the urban centers.

Figure 9. Careers followed by Islamic School graduates, as reported by parents/community.



D. Public Perception

The most overriding public perception regarding Islamic schooling was that it was important, but not enough in and of itself for children in today’s world. All of the respondents we interviewed shared the basic perception (to varying degrees) that their children need secular education, and that the best option is some combination of secular and Islamic study.

1. Parents. Forty-four percent of parents interviewed during the focus group research expressed the opinion that there are no significant differences in standards between Islamic schools and secular schools. In contrast, as illustrated by Figure 10, 52 percent of the parent respondents felt that Islamic schools have higher standards because they include both secular and Islamic subjects.

Parents looked very favorably on the Islamic schools where they send their children. While most wanted more resources, or were able to see ways in which their school or the education it offered could be improved, most liked the Islamic schools and were willing to pay fees so that their children can receive an Islamic education. As indicated in Figure 11, 96 percent of the parents and community members in the focus groups stated that they believe that children from Islamic schools have higher morals and a brighter future than their peers from other schools. The findings in Figure 10 reveal that 52 percent of parents think that the programs offered by Islamic schools put their children ahead of children from other schools in terms of performance. It is interesting to note that while 52 percent of parents said they believe Islamic schools have higher academic standards than public schools (as shown in Figure 10), Figure 12 indicates that only 40 percent of parents report that they chose to send their child to an Islamic school because of higher academic

Figure 10. Parents' comparison of Islamic schools with other schools in terms of performance standards.

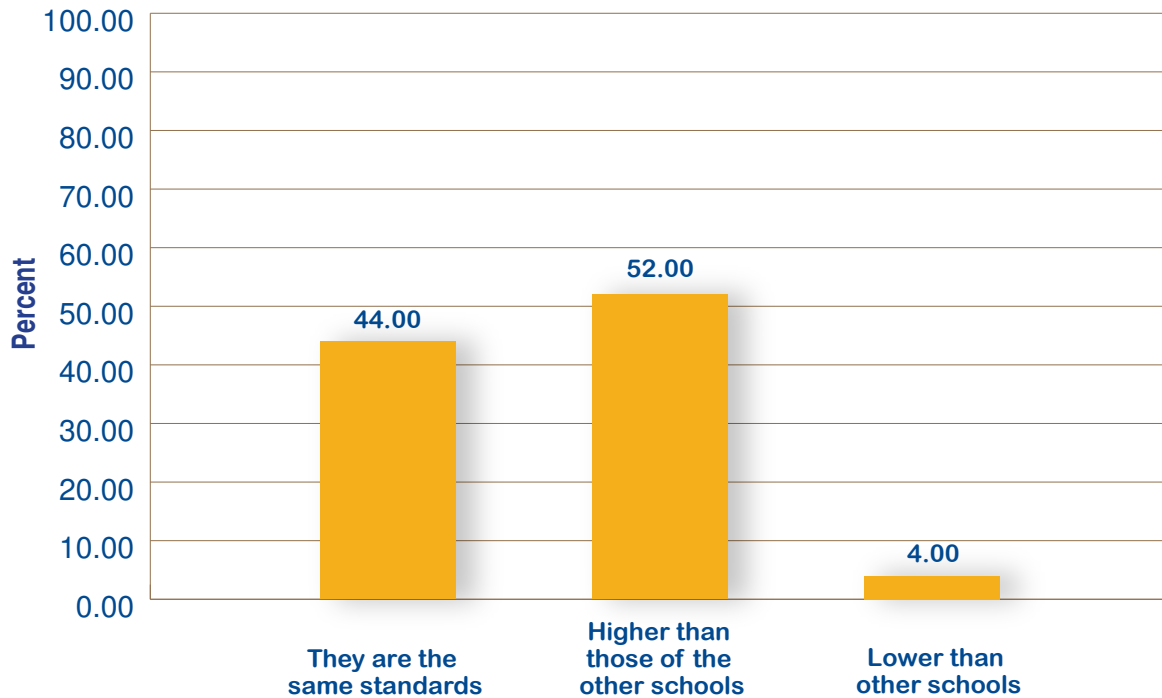


Figure 11. The comparison between Islamic school children and children in other schools in terms of morals and careers.

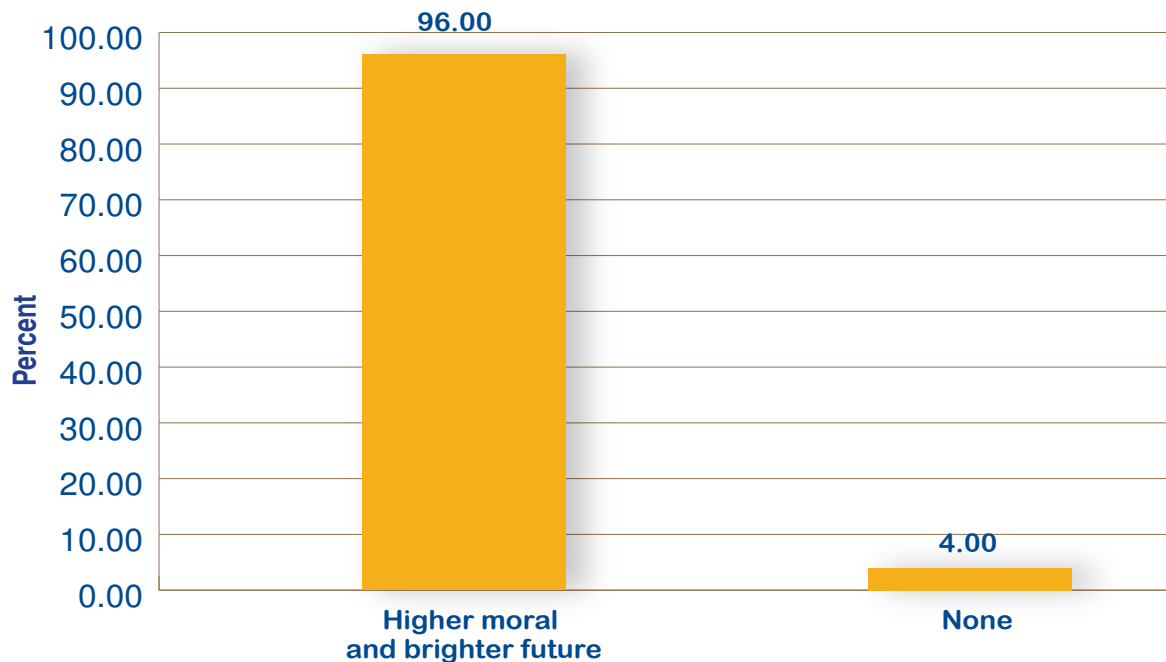
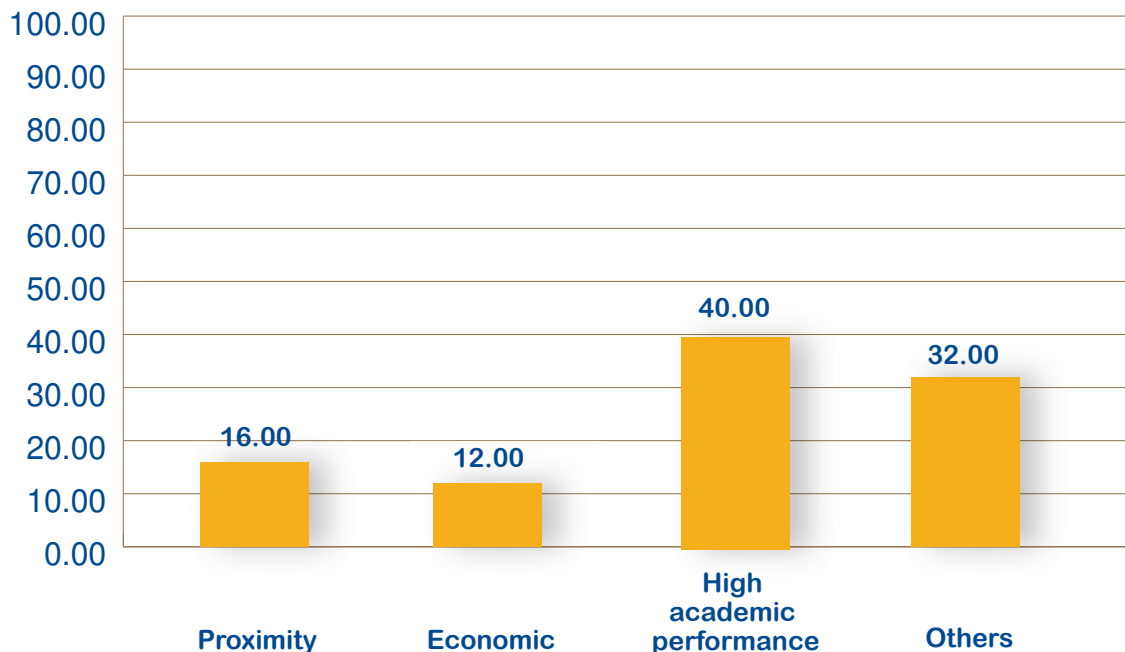


Figure 12. Criteria used by parents in sending their children to Islamic schools.



performance. Parents’ understanding of schools’ mission and vision, as depicted in Figure 5 (see page 35), probably better suggests why parents select religious schools.

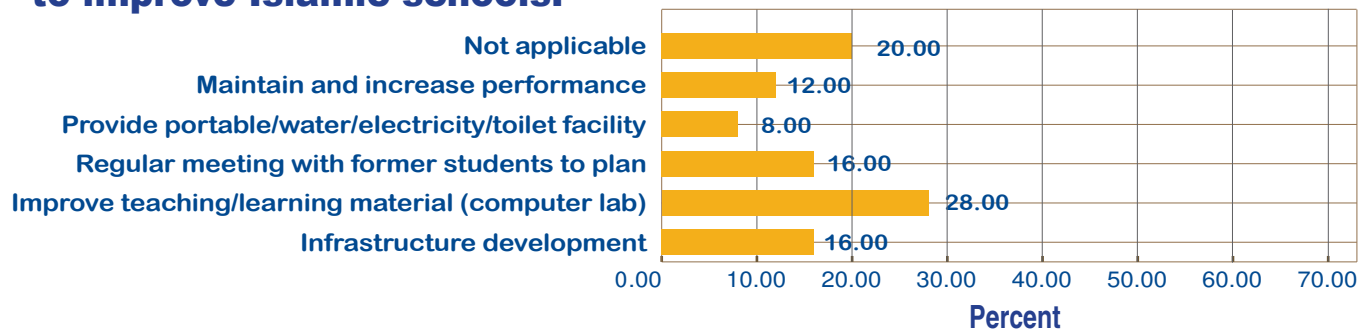
High academic performance did figure prominently in the parental responses as to why they selected a particular school for their children although it was not cited by a majority of the parents as a reason. When queried about the quality of education in their schools in comparison to other schools they know of, parents rated their schools highly in terms of the education their children receive as indicated in Figure 10. This suggests that the teaching force in these schools is effective to some degree.³³

³³It is true that parents are not always the best judges of educational quality. They might, for example, see their children memorizing pages and pages of text from a textbook and think this a sign of good learning. On the other hand, parents are closest to their children, and can judge whether the child is happy at school, whether the child gets homework, and whether the child is frustrated and able to do the work or not. In sum, parental perceptions do figure, in our opinion, as valid input into judging teacher and school effectiveness.

In addition, parents were quite honest. They did not uniformly praise their schools or indicate across the board that they were better than other schools. While a slight majority (52 percent) rated the products (i.e., the students) of their school as better than those of other schools, 44 percent ranked their school as producing equal but not better products as demonstrated by Figure 10. However, of the 25 focus groups conducted, the consensus among all of them was that enrollment in Islamic schools was rising significantly another indication of positive parental perception of Islamic schools.

Finally, parents offered recommendations for the improvement of education at their schools. Most of the recommendations, as shown in Figure 13, are related in some way to the improvement of some aspect of the school infrastructure, whether in the form of materials such as computer labs, toilets, water and electricity or the blanket category of “infrastructure.” Most traditional Qur’anic schools and many of the Islamic Arabic and

Figure 13. Overall distribution of parents' set of recommendations to improve Islamic schools.



Arabic English (private Islamic) schools had very poor infrastructures to begin with, and some operated outside under trees.

2. 'Ulama. Most *'ulama* viewed the situation of Islamic schools in Ghana as "bright." This phrase was oft repeated, verbatim. While there were a few notable exceptions, most *'ulama* were positive in their assessment of the role and impact of Islamic schools. Most felt that Islamic schools were going to continue to grow and expand in Ghana and that this was very positive for the raising of the next generation of Ghanaian Muslims.

One *'alim* reported:

So I see the future bright for Islamic education—but the one that is blended with secular. . . To me the future is very bright but a lot depends on we Muslims. We have to be united and do our best to fit into the right system in our country. . . What I mean by this is that we need to know that Islamic education alone will put us at a disadvantage. But I say the future is bright because I can see many changes even in Nuriyya . . . our schools are becoming more competitive with the best secular

schools in the public exams. This means if it continues like this we shall catch up. ('Alim, Kumasi)

However, others were more critical. They suggested that the future of Islamic education in Ghana depends a great deal on the Ghanaian Muslims:

The Muslims will have to wake up and push for Islamic education to go forward but if we do not it will not move fast like we want it. ('Alim/School Proprietor, Kumasi)

Of the groups queried, the *'ulama* were the most critical of Islamic schools or the Islamic community in Ghana. Many said that Muslims had not organized themselves sufficiently to provide high-quality education to their children, and hence had let education slip to the point that they were in the position of catching up with other groups and regions in Ghana in terms of educational attainment.

In addition, another criticism of the *'ulama* was that the IEU had taken over to the point that Islamic schools were not offering enough in the way of Islamic subjects and Arabic language training. Many were very critical of the IEU for not providing more

Arabic and Islamic teachers to schools and for not accepting the credentials of those Arabic teachers who had been trained outside of Ghana (i.e., in the Gulf countries). Many also questioned why the IEU did not institute some sort of formal Arabic exam such that Arabic would hold more weight in the official curriculum (as a foreign language subject):

According to the rule, the government provides two teachers to the school where we have primary and JSS one for each to encourage Muslims to embrace the civil education. However, if we go to Tamale, we find that each school is given one teacher contrary to the rule. ('Alim, Accra)

Most were also critical of the level of training offered to Arabic and Islamic teachers who taught in the IEU schools:

Our Arabic teachers need a lot of training. So now, the majority of our teachers just went in to study Islam, they are scholars of Islam from the Islamic University, so they are not trained, so definitely they need some training to build their capacities. ('Alim, Accra)

Most took great pains to explain to the researchers the prohibitions in Islam against violence and in favor of tolerance. Clearly, they hoped to reverse the negative stereotypes they perceived exist about Islam and Islamic schools.

Many eagerly explained their openness to nonreligious subjects and their own integrated or balanced worldview:

You know according to my own perspective, I cannot differentiate between secular education and Islamic education because to me all is education—

because we have science, engineering, mathematics and all that in both so I do not differentiate between them. ('Alim/School Proprietor, Kumasi)

E. Impact

1. Educational Impact. The findings of the research generally indicate that all of the various types of Islamic schools have significant impact not only in educating Muslim children, but also in making a contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by promoting access to basic education.

Indeed, it is worth noting that Ghana has made considerable progress toward meeting the MDGs since they have been incorporated into the development objectives in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).³⁴ GPRS has allocated tremendous resources for health, education, and water sanitation. Goal Two in the MDGs is to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015. The GPRS uses universal access (i.e., student enrollment) as an indicator of progress toward achieving the GPRS goals.

According to a Ghana government report released in March 2006, the gross primary school enrollment grew at the national level by an average of 4.7 percent during the 2001–2002 and 2004–2005 academic years.³⁵ The growth of primary school enrollment for the three deprived Northern regions has been particularly encouraging,

³⁴GPRS is the key development policy framework for Ghana.

³⁵Government of Ghana National Development Planning Commission. (2006, March). *Implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy: 2005 annual progress report*. Retrieved September 8, 2007, from http://www.ndpc.gov.gh/pdf/Final_version_of_2006AnnualProgressReport.pdf

Table 7. Number of schools, and students by region and level. (It is likely that the figures in the shaded area that were supplied in this table are not correct, as generally one would not find identical numbers for boys and girls in a particular region.)

NATIONAL SCHOOL AND ENROLLMENT STATISTICS FROM THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION UNIT OF THE GES													
REGION	2004 No. OF SCHOOLS				BOYS				GIRLS				
	KG	PS	JSS	TOTAL SCHOOLS	KG	PS	JSS	Total Boys	KG	PS	JSS*	Total Girls	
NORTHERN	132	258	40	430	4,526	14,299	2,315	21,140	6,845	14,135		20,980	
GREATER ACCRA	49	62	29	140	2,071	6,324	1,501	9,896	1,608	8,474	1,937	12,019	
BRONG AHAFO	7	19	8	34	236	1,410	291	1,937	202	1,358	234	1,794	
ASHANTI	78	75	12	165	1,771	4,544	1,190	7,505	2,076	5,471	1,312	8,859	
WESTERN	29	32	29	90	1,183	2,192	344	3,719	1,152	2,767	385	4,304	
EASTERN	54	29	30	113	1,420	2,065	690	4,175	1,302	2,579	1,051	4,932	
UPPER WEST	11	21	9	41	445	1,781	540	2,766	493	1,767	471	2,731	
VOLTA	15	18	8	41	383	1,161	923	2,467	688	1,489	803	2,980	
CENTRAL	75	60	39	174	3,966	2,309	1,268	7,543	4,351	2,522	1,374	8,247	
UPPER EAST	10	32	11	53	354	2,315	366	3,035	484	2,729	335	3,548	
TOTALS	460	606	215	1,281	16,355	38,400	9,428	64,183	19,201	43,291	7,902	70,394	

REGION	2005 No. OF SCHOOLS				BOYS				GIRLS			
	KG	PS	JSS	TOTAL SCHOOLS	KG	PS	JSS	Total Boys	KG	PS	JSS*	Total Girls
NORTHERN	154	263	42	459	5,453	17,438	2,867	25,758	7,401	15,199		22,600
GREATER ACCRA	56	69	31	156	2,525	7,623	1,809	11,957	4,008	9,112	2,083	15,203
BRONG AHAFO	10	23	10	43	284	1,640	335	2,259	215	1,628	324	2,165
ASHANTI	81	84	43	208	2,134	5,541	1,417	9,092	2,472	5,851	1,411	9,734
WESTERN	32	32	15	79	1,408	2,549	391	4,348	1,324	2,913	410	4,647
EASTERN	57	58	31	146	1,680	2,374	812	4,866	1,531	2,744	1,055	5,330
UPPER WEST	13	25	12	50	530	2,120	628	3,278	573	1,860	491	2,924
VOLTA	15	21	8	44	451	1,399	1,080	2,930	782	1,567	819	3,168
CENTRAL	78	61	44	183	4,721	3,775	1,528	10,024	5,180	2,683	1,477	9,340
UPPER EAST	12	34	13	59	422	2,756	425	3,603	563	2,873	394	3,830
TOTALS	508	670	249	1,427	19,608	47,215	11,292	78,115	24,049	46,428	8,464	78,941

REGION	2006 No. OF SCHOOLS				BOYS				GIRLS			
	KG	PS	JSS	TOTAL SCHOOLS	KG	PS	JSS	Total Boys	KG	PS	JSS	Total Girls
NORTHERN	146	282	44	472	8,656	27,680	4,551	40,887	7,401	19,999	2,307	29,707
GREATER ACCRA	58	72	35	165	4,008	11,911	2,741	18,660	4,008	11,911	2,741	18,660
BRONG AHAFO	10	23	10	43	230	2,562	511	3,303	215	2,085	416	2,716
ASHANTI	71	82	39	192	2,345	8,259	2,080	12,684	2,252	7,399	1,623	11,274
WESTERN	33	35	15	83	1,565	3,921	611	6,097	1,324	3,783	532	5,639
EASTERN	59	60	33	152	1,888	3,652	1,249	6,789	1,531	3,611	1,388	6,530
UPPER WEST	13	29	14	56	600	3,365	982	4,947	573	2,384	630	3,587
VOLTA	15	21	8	44	502	2,136	1,636	4,274	782	2,009	1,070	3,861
CENTRAL	80	61	44	185	5,220	5,718	2,387	13,325	5,180	3,462	1,918	10,560
UPPER EAST	12	34	13	59	468	4,374	669	5,511	563	3,811	508	4,882
TOTALS	497	699	255	1,451	25,482	73,578	17,417	116,477	23,829	60,454	13,133	97,416

Source: Islamic Education Unit National Headquarters - Tamale December 2006

*Figures not available

with all three exceeding targets set in GPRS. For example, in the Northern and Upper West regions, the target was exceeded by 2.7 percent and 4.3 percent respectively in the 2004–2005 academic year.

The growth of IEU schools in the Northern and other regions has surely contributed to the general upward trend in student enrollment demonstrated nationwide. Table 7 summarizes the increase in the

following: (1) the number of IEU schools nationwide, broken down by kindergarten, primary, and junior secondary; and (2) the student enrollment in those schools, broken down by gender.

As indicated in Table 7, the number of schools has grown nationwide by 13 percent over the three-year period from 2004–2006, with the largest jump coming between years 2004 and 2005. Even more

significant, the aggregate student enrollment numbers have grown by 37 percent between 2004 and 2006 from 155,516 students nationwide in 2004 to 213,893 students nationwide in 2006. These figures do not include private, non-IEU schools of any sort, but data from the study, largely from school proprietors, indicate that enrollment in these institutions is growing as well. For example, 13 of the schools in this study were non-IEU schools; eight of those 13 reported growth in enrollment; three reported a decline according to their actual numbers; and one proprietor did not report. Hence, the trend toward growing enrollment figures is not limited to IEU schools but seems to cut across the board in the Islamic school sector.

The trend is exemplified in a quotation from one *'ulama* who heads an Islamic school not participating in this study:

It [Islamic school attendance] improves very well over time, because if I remember way back in 1995, we began with a single student and now we have a little over 200 students. ('Alim, Accra)

Enrollment was discussed early in this report as a proxy indicator for the overall popularity and appeal of these schools (and their mission and purpose) among Muslim communities. Here, increasing enrollment in Islamic schools is more relevant in terms of the impact it can and will have on Ghana's progress toward the MDGs, and the achievement of its poverty reduction strategy (GPRS) targets.

Proprietors and parents frequently explained increasing enrollment by citing the good performance of the schools vis-à-vis national exams and the discipline offered by the school:

This school is a very good school and many in the community acknowledge that the standards here are good. As for enrollment, any one around will tell you that the number of children keeps increasing and as you can see there is hardly enough space for all of them. (Parent, Hamidiyya Islamic School, Accra)

In fact, every parent focus group (all 25) asserted that enrollments in their respective schools were rising. Parents attributed this to their schools' high standards and discipline, but also to the government Capitation Grants (CG).³⁶ This grant is a governmental initiative to improve access and increase enrollment drive. It has also been designed to empower schools to effectively use financial resources to plan and carry out school quality improvement activities. However, capitation grants are applicable to both public secular and public Islamic schools and would not alone explain the increasing enrollment rates in Islamic schools.

2. Economic, Political, and Social Impact. Increasing enrollment of Muslim children in formal, integrated education can also have an economic, political, and social impact on Muslim communities that can further translate to an impact that is felt nationwide. Indeed, parents, experts (*'ulama*), teachers, and proprietors all spoke in these terms to justify integration and to explain the choices they have made in terms of educating their children or running their schools. Secular education is widely seen to have economic returns;

³⁶The Capitation Grant is a major component of Ghana's Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Policy (FCUBE) to improve access and retention of children in schools.

all of our respondent groups talked of Muslims being shut out of higher earning professions or economic opportunities due to their lack of secular education. As an example, an *'alim*, when asked his perspective on integration, said:

This is very necessary and important. We should integrate secular and Islamic schools because if we do not do so, we are excluding ourselves from the socio-economic development of the country. We will be leaving our children to the mercies of other people.
(*'Alim*/IEU Regional Manager, Accra)

A parent commented:

What attracts us about this school is the medium of instruction—English. This will give our wards the opportunity to practice English more and understand Islam better since they generally receive their lessons at their regular schools in English.
(Parent, Hijra Islamic School, Accra)

And another *'alim* noted:

[Integration is] very marvelous since it affords participants the opportunity to combine Arabic education with the Western form of education, in order to enhance one's religion and expand his job seeking prospects respectively.
(*'Alim*, Cape Coast University)

Likewise, all groups mentioned political marginalization as a consequence of not having a secular education. Many implied that political influence comes from having had this type of education, and in particular, from being able to speak, read, write, and understand English well.

Another *'alim* commented, in regard to integrated education:

This is the type of education Ghana must deliver to its citizens. This is the effective means by which the Muslim population can be carried along in the government's effort to move the nation forward. (*'Alim*/IEU Regional Manager, Upper East Region)

Conversely, few respondent groups spoke explicitly of the social impact of integrating secular and religious education. This kind of social impact could come in the following forms:

- The creation of new social networks through integrated schools;
- The reconfiguring of social networks and social relations as members of the Muslim community assume more prominent roles in society;
- The changing or weakening of traditional Ghanaian education, creating less cohesion between generations;
- The reduced prominence or cultural capital associated with mastery of Arabic or memorization of the Qur'an; or
- A reduction in religious knowledge or observant behavior.

With the exception of one traditional Qur'anic school proprietor who mentioned the loss of a Ghanaian tradition as schools became integrated, the fact that our respondent groups did not mention or comment on the social impact of integration does not mean there will be none. There will undoubtedly be some social impact attached to the changing face of Islamic education in Ghana relative to the aforementioned list of possibilities

and others as well. What is significant is the degree of universal enthusiasm associated with integrated schooling and the fact that there were few reservations about moving forward with it from a social and even a religious perspective. As discussed above in the section on the mandate and purpose of Islamic schools, the continuing existence of the *makaranta* mitigates the reduced prominence of religious studies in integrated schools.

3. Impact on Girls. There is clear evidence that Islamic schools have contributed to promoting access to education for girls in the regions they serve because they offer an option with which parents are comfortable. Both secondary and primary data of this research indicate that girls' enrollment rate has been increasing over time, and, at times has even surpassed the enrollment rate of boys. The increase is due to the various GES programs that encourage education of girls, as well as to the realization by the Muslim communities that boys and girls should benefit equally from education in order to participate in the development of their communities.

The data obtained from IEU National Headquarters in Tamale in December 2006 (see Table 7 on page 53) indicates that the total number of girls enrolled in Islamic schools in the four participating regions is 47,284 compared to 61,821 boys enrolled in the same schools. This demonstrates that more than 40 percent of all children enrolled are girls and constitutes progress in the struggle to achieve gender equity in terms of access and enrollment. It also challenges the traditional concept that Islamic education does not seek to promote education for girls.

The research findings underscore the fact that the majority of the study's participants stated that they believe all children, girls and boys, should have access to education. For example, 77 percent of the teachers questioned in this study agreed that all students can learn, and 84 percent agreed that girls and boys are equally intelligent and capable of succeeding in school. Furthermore, 68 percent of the teachers agreed that education is as important for girls as it is for boys.

Our interviews with the *'ulama* also yielded interesting findings. All *'ulama*, IEU regional managers, and other Muslim intellectuals in the community interviewed for this study strongly supported the education of girls and agreed that educating girls is crucial to the development of the country as well as to the Muslim community. The following quotations from various participants in the study emphasize these findings:

Educating the girl-child and women is very paramount since women in Ghana form more than half of the country's population, and any attempt to ignore them in our educational system could spell doom for the country. ('Alim, Accra)

It is very, very important. Women are the first teachers. Educating women means stabilizing society. Refer to Dr. Aggrey's saying on the education of women. The Qur'an and Hadith also stressed the relevance of educating children—boys and girls. (Regional Manager, IEU, Accra Region)

Girl-child education is very essential since an educated woman is in a position to take better care of children in a home. Also, women who have had formal education have often been successful when given a position of trust. They are found to be less corrupt, less nepotistic, and quite reliable especially in business transactions.

(Muslim Intellectual, Accra)

I think educating the girl-child and women in general is a good thing to do. Women spend more time with children at home than men. If they are educated, they will impart this knowledge to children. Besides, women are more than men in number. So knowledge could spread to all sections of society.

(‘Alim, Kumasi)

All but one ‘*ulama* interviewed thought that coeducational classrooms were not an issue, from an Islamic standpoint. They expressed the belief that keeping boys and girls separate from one another was not a sufficient reason to keep girls out of school. Hence, coeducational Islamic schools provide parents with an appealing educational option for their girls, one that is helping to increase the enrollment of Muslim girls in Ghana, especially in the North. This position is evidenced by the endorsements made above by local ‘*ulama* and the government through its support of IEU schools.

In short, the trend toward rising enrollment in Ghanaian Islamic schools points to the impact that these schools are having and will continue to have in the future in a variety of areas in Ghana. These areas include economic development (poverty

reduction), the attainment of universal primary enrollment, political influence and social change—including gender relations—and the status of women.

F. Effectiveness

1. Student Performance. To a certain degree, the impact that Islamic schools in Ghana have on the country relates to their effectiveness as educational institutions. Economic advancement and political influence relates in some way to children’s mastery of content such as English, math, science, and social studies.

This study did not measure student achievement, given its more overarching descriptive mandate, as well as limited time and resources. However, teachers reported high student pass rates on government exams. Proprietors indicated students went on to the next level of schooling, and some alumni were very successful. The following quotations are indicative of the responses received from teachers regarding the question, “Do the children receive a good, high-quality education at this school? How do you know they are learning? Why do you say this?”

Yes, the reason is that when our children are tested with children from other schools, our children do better. This is because the teachers are hard working.
(Teacher, Adabiyya School, Wa)

Another teacher also cited examination results:

Yes, because our graduates in the BECE are always the best, e.g., in the last quiz in the metropolis, our school came first.
(Teacher, Nashirudeen School, Kumasi)

Several teachers cited graduation and future education as signs of effective learning, as indicated in the following response:

Only yesterday, some former pupils of this school who have written the Senior Secondary School Examinations and have passed well came to me for advice on whether to go to the University or go to a professional institution first. (Teacher, Nahdah School, Tamale)

According to multiple groups of respondents, the performance of some Islamic secular schools in public examinations such as the BECE is comparable to any of the top basic schools in the country. For example, from 2001–2005, students from Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale scored 100 percent pass rates in the BECE exams, with more than 40 percent of the students scoring distinction in the exam. Several students of Islamic schools have gained admission into Ghana’s universities and other institutions of higher learning. The number of Muslims who have passed through Islamic schools and who are now occupying high national and international positions continues to increase in recent times due to increased accessibility of secular education among Muslims.

Teachers cited not only exam results but spoke also in terms of student performance, citing essay contests and demonstrations of subject area mastery as indications of a quality education:

Yes, from assessment with other schools, this school provides a good quality education. The results at the end of the school year and the fact that there are products from this school doing well out[side of the school] shows the good work (e.g.,

quizzes, BECE results, class exercises, home works and contributions during lessons). (Teacher, Nuriyya School, Kumasi)

Yes. Unlike English whereby children at the day care/nursery are introduced to [it] in [the] early ages, it is not so with Arabic. However a pupil in Primary six [in this school] can communicate fluently in Arabic. (Teacher, Central Zhariya, Tamale)

Hence, a variety of sources indicate that Islamic schools do graduate children, regularly and consistently, who pass their exams and who go on to higher levels of education. Parents, as consumers, also seem to be satisfied with what they are getting from the Islamic schools in this study. Presumably, if children were regularly failing their exams and not making progress, parents would not be so satisfied and would pull them out of these schools. While the data cited above are not empirical proof that the Islamic schools participating in this study are effective, they do strongly suggest it.

2. Impact of Teachers’ Level of Education, Experience and Training on Effectiveness. As the study did not measure student achievement, we used other proxy measures to gauge school effectiveness. One hundred forty-two teachers completed teacher questionnaires. Of that number, 45 percent were female and 55 percent male. We also observed 49 lessons being executed by teachers. This was roughly two per school, although some researchers were able to do more than two observations per school, hence the total of 49 completed observation protocols. Through

these instruments, we looked at teachers' level of education, teachers' years of experience, the amount of teacher training received by teachers, and teaching methods used in the classroom. These results are reported below. School management is also a factor affecting school effectiveness.

Overall, as displayed in Figure 14, Islamic school teachers participating in this study were fairly well educated and fairly experienced in their profession. In terms of education, 51 percent of those questioned reported that they had postsecondary education (although not necessarily a diploma or degree); 17 percent reported that they obtained a degree (B.A. or B.S.), and another 15 percent reported that they obtained a postsecondary diploma of some sort. Another 3.5 percent indicated they had obtained a postgraduate degree. Hence, more than 85 percent of the teachers questioned had received postsecondary education to some degree. Another 4 percent indicated that they had

received high level Islamic training (i.e., religious studies beyond a traditional and full *makaranta* education).

This is not entirely surprising, given that the government now supplies teachers to many Islamic schools under the IEU or even to private Islamic schools as faith-based institutions through the GES. Given this scenario, one would expect that the majority of Islamic school teachers (most of whom teach secular subjects now) would have certifications that meet with GES standards. As indicated in Figure 15, there was a fairly normal distribution of years of experience among the teachers participating in this study.

For the most part, the Islamic school teaching force is fairly seasoned. Forty-six percent of the teachers questioned had between 11 and 20 years of teaching experience. Only 10 percent of those questioned were relatively new teachers. However, most of the experience teachers reported was not gained at their present

Figure 14. Overall frequency distribution of teachers' level of education (N = 141).

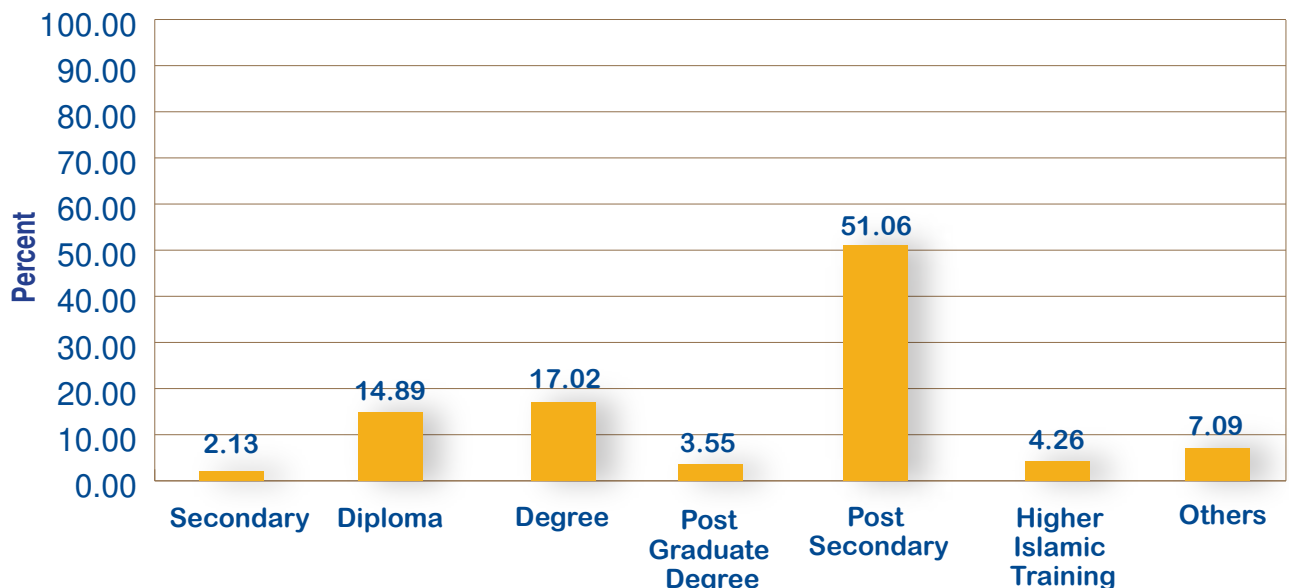


Figure 15. Overall frequency distribution of the total number of years that the teachers have taught (N = 140).

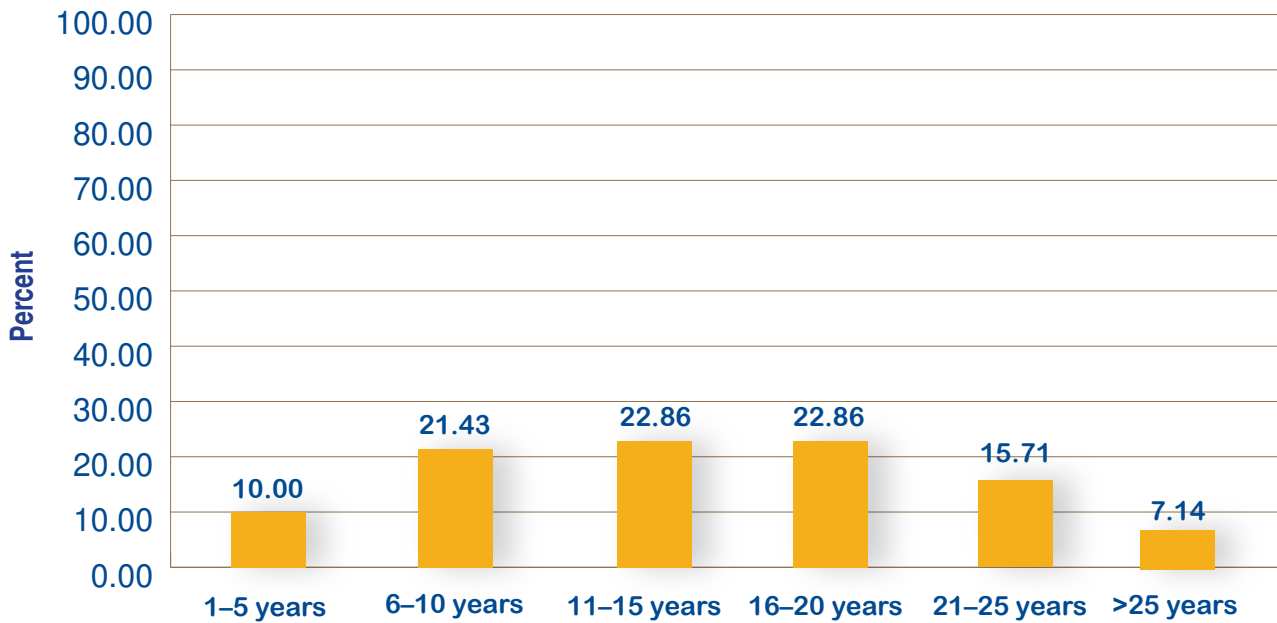
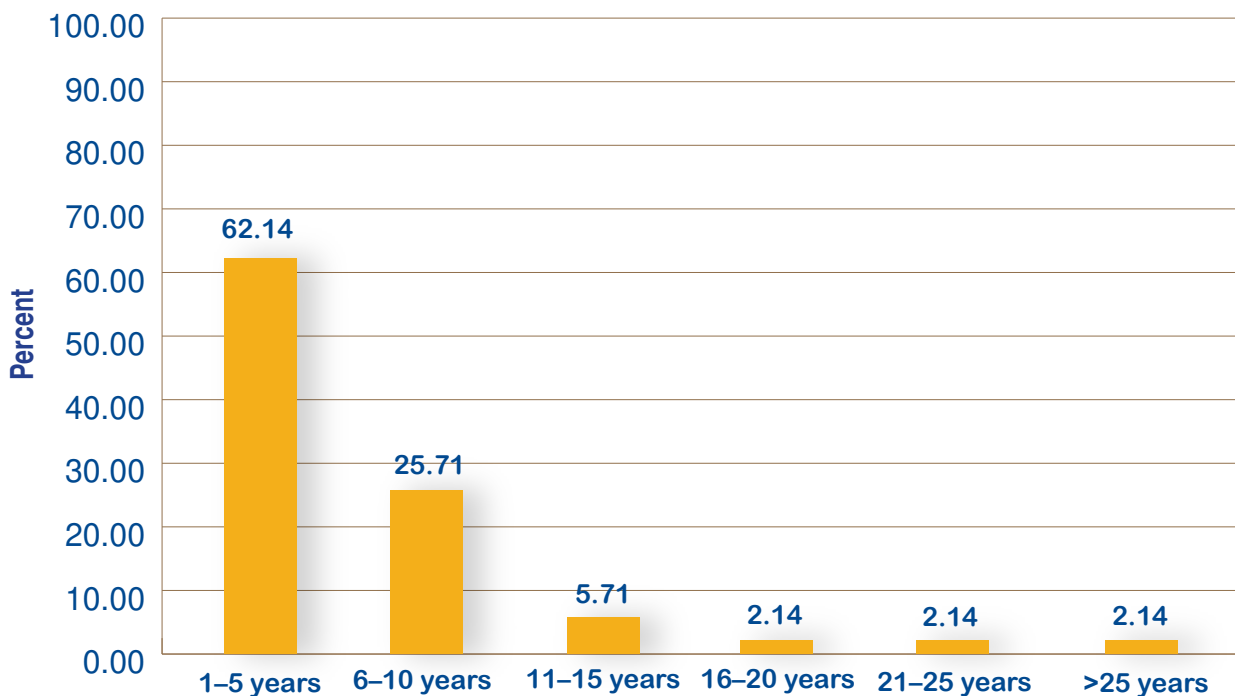


Figure 16. Overall frequency distribution of the number of years that the teachers have taught in their current schools (N = 140).



school. Interestingly, as shown in Figure 16, the majority of teachers questioned (62 percent) were relatively new to their present school.

This is most likely due to the increase in IEU schools over the past few years and the need for the government to place teachers in the newly opened schools. It could also speak to the fact that private Islamic schools (Arabic schools, Arabic English, and traditional Qur’anic) do not pay very well and hence, teachers move on.

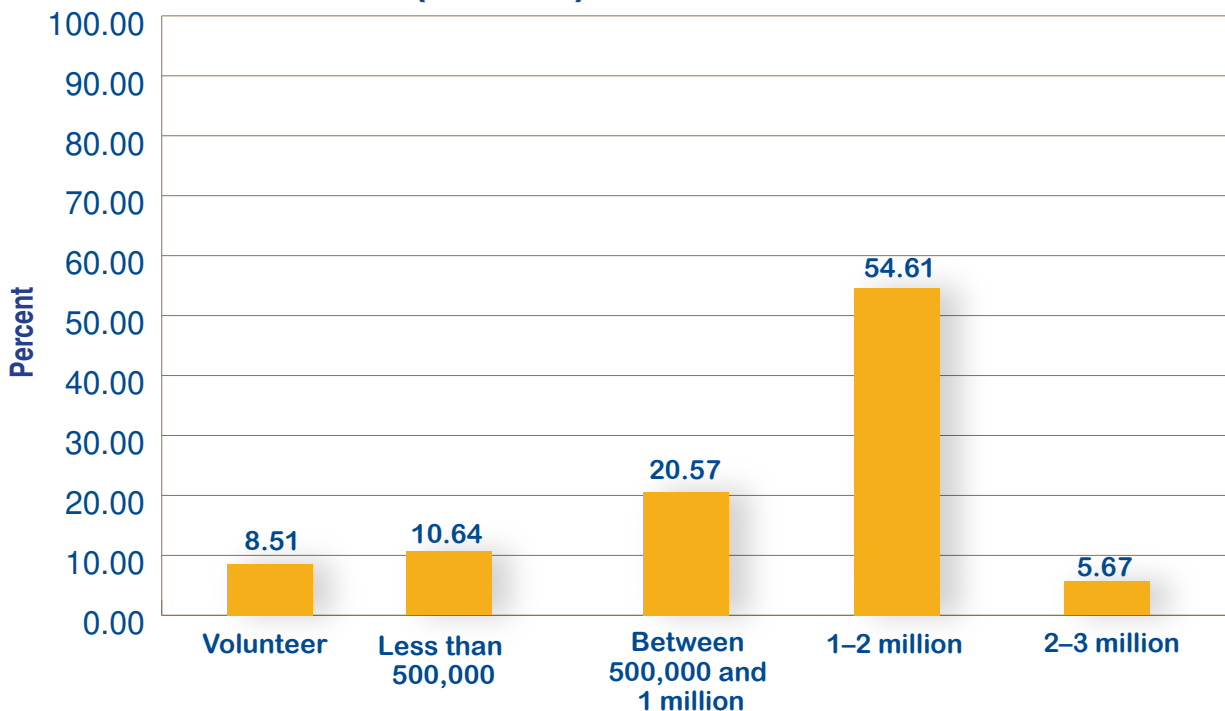
On average, as indicated in Figure 17, Islamic school teachers who participated in this study earn between 500,000 and 2 million cedis per month, with the majority earning between 1 million and 2 million monthly.

Teachers employed by the government have the most salary stability and

consistency. The average salary for a teacher in Ghana with 10 years of experience is between 1 and 2 million cedis per month, so the compensation for the majority of our respondents is competitive or consistent with that of public school (secular school) teachers. It is worth noting, however, that almost 40 percent of the Islamic school teachers surveyed make less than 1 million per month and that this is a fairly low wage if compared to average public school teacher wages.

If the trend of the IEU adopting private Islamic schools continues, then the salary scale will even out for most teachers who work in integrated schools. This will leave the traditional *makaranta* and the Arabic schools, in particular, at a disadvantage in terms of attracting the best Arabic and Islamic religion teachers. These schools might be increasingly forced to charge higher fees, or to seek funding from

Figure 17. Overall distribution of compensation range for teachers (N = 141).



abroad in order to stay competitive in terms of their teaching force. However, the overall trend toward integration will likely hinder their ability to attract students over time as much as the issue of teacher quality does. While the *makaranta* are fast becoming weekend schools or after-school schools, the Arabic schools, due to their broader curriculum, will find it harder to find a role in the education system.

To summarize this section, overall, Islamic schools have a fairly well educated and seasoned teaching force to offer to their constituents. The levels of teacher education, experience, and parental approval suggest that the schools are effective within the context of what is expected in Ghana.

3. Impact of Teacher Training on

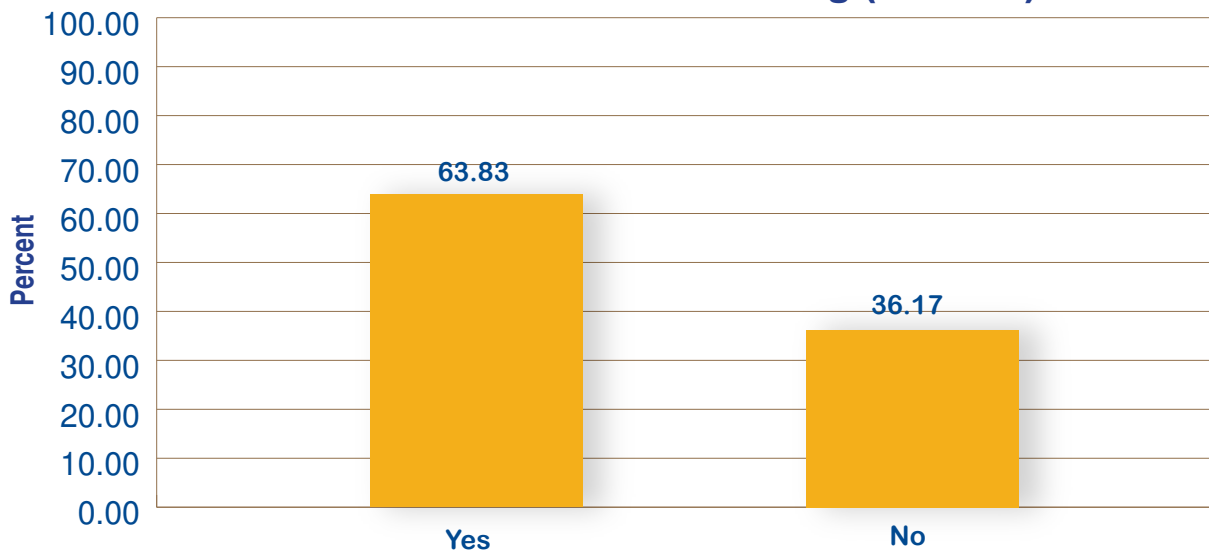
Effectiveness. A majority of teachers completing questionnaires for this study indicated that they had received some formal training to become teachers. In general, nearly 100 percent of those who reported post secondary training (51 percent of teachers surveyed) defined this to mean postsec-

ondary training in teaching. Overall, from our survey, 74 percent of the teachers reported having some pre-service training and 26 percent did not. (Out of the 142 teachers we surveyed, one did not provide a response.)

By school type, 81 percent of IEU school teachers in the sample had pre-service training. Regarding the Arabic English schools 67 percent had pre service preparation; among the Arabic school teachers 73 percent reported some teacher preparation. Finally, of the traditional *makaranta* school teachers 67 percent said they had pre service preparation of some sort, citing attendance at a Normal school for 3 or 4 year certificate programs.

It should be noted that the traditional Qur’anic schools, by design, do not teach secular subjects in any language and have their own methodology for teaching the Qur’an, the main topic of study. This method is largely based on memorization, copying, and recitation. Hence, any lack of “formal” training is not really significant vis-à-vis their teaching and learning

Figure 18. Overall frequency distribution of teachers who had in-service teacher training (N = 141).



goals in the same way it is for the IEU, Arabic English, Arabic school teachers who teach secular subjects (and even for those who teach Arabic language). In Accra in particular, out of 16 teachers queried, 10 reported having had no pre service training although 7 of the 10 did report having a diploma, a degree or a post graduate degree. These were all teachers from Arabic English and traditional *makaranta* schools, which would make sense as the IEU schools would have to follow government requirements for teacher qualifications.

We questioned teachers specifically on whether they had received in-service teacher training. As shown in Figure 18, a clear majority (64 percent) indicated that they had received in-service training.

In this case, the teachers from Arabic schools came out better than they did on the pre-service training front, with over half saying that they had received in-service training. Conversely, regarding in-service training, it was teachers from the IEU and Arabic English schools who largely accounted for the 36 percent of teachers lacking in-service training support.

Overall, the majority of Islamic school teachers questioned for this research received training in how to teach, whether through pre- or in-service training, as illustrated by the figures presented above. Again, given that many teachers in IEU schools and even Arabic English schools are sponsored by the government and presumably required to meet government standards, this is not surprising. What this does suggest, however, is that in conjunction with the level of education and experience reported by Islamic school teachers, and

the level of parental satisfaction, these schools do have an effective and competent teaching force across school types. While none of this proves that the schools are effective beyond a doubt, and training does not automatically correlate with competence, it strongly suggests that these teachers have the capacity to be effective (or at least as effective as the public schools), have a foundation on which to build and in the eyes of their primary constituents—parents—are competent.

4. Classroom Observations of the Impact of Teacher Methods on Effectiveness. We used classroom observation protocols and some self-reporting through teacher questionnaires and interviews to learn more about how teachers actually perform in the classroom.

The observation protocol required researchers to observe at least two full lessons per school and to note if certain practices and norms were in evidence during the lessons. These were distributed over the following categories:

- Classroom Management and Organization
- Instructional Practice
- Gender
- Instructional Materials
- Pupil Evaluation

Choices on the protocol were “yes,” “no,” and “somewhat.” “Somewhat” was used if a teacher attempted something but did not quite succeed, or used a behavior so infrequently that a mark of “yes” would be misleading. Overall, the results of the classroom observations were quite positive. Under the category of “Classroom Management and Organization,” over 80 percent of

the 49 teachers observed called on all or almost all of the children in the classroom during the lesson (88 percent) and practiced and encouraged appropriate behavior in the classroom (84 percent). However, over half of the classrooms observed had no learning aids visible (e.g., no maps or posters on the wall, no manipulatives for students to work with). Over 78 percent of the teachers seated the children in such a way so as to not privilege one group over another (i.e., boys over girls or younger children over older children).

In terms of instructional practice, observation results were similarly positive. This section of the classroom observation protocol required a bit more informed judgment on the part of researchers than some of the other sections, thus there is the possibility of some inflation in these results. What we mean here is that the quality of the behavior was not evaluated, so when the results show that student-centered strategies were widely used, for example, this does not mean that they were uniformly used as well as they could be or with complete competence. To illustrate the point, a teacher might put children in groups but then have them do a dictation exercise. While grouping is present in this example and indicates that the teacher knows to use this as a pedagogical technique, the technique was not used effectively. It is likely that on our observation protocol, the majority of observers would have selected “yes” or “somewhat” to indicate that group work was present, even if it was not done very well. We point this out to caution that our classroom observation results, although quite positive, should not be interpreted to mean that the teaching in Islamic schools in Ghana is uniformly good.

In addition, it is important to note a trend that we observed during our field test of the instrument. The researchers were trained to use the observation protocol, the norms and behaviors on the protocol were discussed and defined, and the protocol was tested for inter-rater reliability. During the field test of the instrument, however, we detected a tendency among the researchers to lean toward the positive in documenting their observations.

That said, 73 percent of teachers were rated as modeling or explaining material clearly. In 86 percent of the classrooms, interactivity occurred between the teacher and pupils. Seventy-six percent of the teachers asked challenging questions that demanded reasoning on the part of pupils, and 82 percent of teachers used encouragement rather than criticism in their dealings with pupils. Teachers scored very highly on demonstrating good knowledge of the subject matter they were teaching, with 90 percent receiving a “yes,” 8 percent a “somewhat,” and 2 percent a “no.”

Teachers demonstrated more substantial weaknesses in some areas of instructional practice, although in general, the majority scored positively. Forty-three percent of teachers did not allow student-to-student interaction, and 4 percent were rated as allowing it somewhat. In terms of circulating within the classroom, 35 percent did not move around and 10 percent only moved around somewhat. Thirty percent of teachers had students copy off the board for more than one-third of the lesson. Thirty percent of teachers also used rote learning methods throughout the lesson. Regarding the rote learning, 22 percent of teachers were rated as using rote learning “somewhat,” meaning that in total

52 percent of teachers relied on rote to a larger degree than is generally considered advisable.

In terms of behavior to assure gender equity in the classroom, 78 percent of teachers provided equal opportunities for boys and girls and gave equal attention to their work or responses. Eighty-four percent of teachers created a positive environment in the classroom for girls and encouraged their participation.

Instructional materials, or teaching and learning materials (TLMs) as they are called in Ghana, provided a point of difficulty for teachers. Fifty-five percent were rated as not helping pupils use TLMs effectively, and 10 percent received a rating of “somewhat” on these criteria. Eighty percent of teachers were rated as using the chalkboard effectively.

Finally, in terms of pupil evaluation, teachers scored fairly well. Sixty-nine percent checked to see that students understood the material presented, while 27 percent did not (for 4 percent of teachers the question was rated not applicable). Eighty-four percent of teachers provided feedback to students to help them understand and correct mistakes.

5. Teacher Questionnaire Results on the Impact of Teaching Methods on Effectiveness. On the teacher questionnaire, we asked if teachers used any of the practices listed below in their classrooms. Teachers were allowed to select as many as they deemed accurate in characterizing their regular teaching practices.

- Have the students work in groups or pairs?

- Have the students come to the board?
- Have the students stay seated during the whole lesson?
- Allow the children to move around?
- Allow the children to help each other with their work?
- Allow the students to ask questions?

The teachers’ self-reporting on the questionnaire was basically consistent with the observation form. The only areas where the ranking was somewhat mixed was on the question concerning whether students have to stay seated during the whole lesson and whether they can move around. In general, student mobility was not commonly allowed (64 percent reported that they did not allow it). More interesting was the fact that the reported behavior was consistent across school types. School types are liminal at best, with some institutions fitting into several categories (e.g., private integrated schools with some government teachers but not under the IEU that run traditional Qur’anic schools on the weekends with a strong focus on teaching Arabic). The slipperiness of the categorization question notwithstanding, teachers from the four school types we have defined for this study use group or pair work, allow students to ask questions, allow students to come to the board, and allow students to help each other with their work. The traditional Qur’anic schools were a bit weaker in the allowing of student questions and in student use of the blackboard, with only 66 percent of the teachers saying they allow these things. Still, these numbers did constitute a majority of the Qur’anic school teachers.

The questionnaire also contained a section asking teachers to agree or disagree with certain statements on schooling, teaching,

and learning. This section focused on measuring teacher attitudes and beliefs. As teachers' attitudes and beliefs feed into how effectively they teach, the responses to these questions are displayed in Table 8. In general, results were positive. For example, in terms of gender equity, the large majority of respondents felt that boys and girls have equal intellectual and learning capacities (84 percent). A lesser majority (68 percent, but still a majority) felt that education was not more important for boys than girls.

Islamic school teachers' attitudes toward learning were also encouraging. The majority of respondents felt that all children can learn (77 percent), that learning should be fun (75 percent), and that children do not just learn by listening (65 percent). The majority also felt that it was permissible to challenge the teacher (77 percent). These are all positive attitudes, and if teachers do manifest them in the classroom, they are creating an environment that is conducive to learning and thus to creating an effective school. The observation data suggests that teachers are manifesting these attitudes in practice (e.g.,

Table 8. Results from teacher questionnaire about teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

No.	Statement	Agree	Disagree
1	Memorizing and learning is the same thing.	38%	62%
2	Teachers in this school would benefit from learning different teaching and classroom management methods.	86%	14%
3	In school, the only way children learn is from listening to their teacher.	35%	65%
4	Learning takes place most effectively if the classroom is very quiet.	82%	18%
5	Strict discipline is necessary to run a classroom.	57%	43%
6	If children do not memorize, they are not learning.	39%	61%
7	Learning and school should be fun for children.	75%	25%
8	To challenge what the teacher says is disrespectful.	23%	77%
9	All children can learn.	77%	23%
10	If children are not learning, it is because the teacher is not effective.	38%	62%
11	Girls and boys are equally intelligent and capable of succeeding in school.	84%	16%
12	Exams are the best way to judge if students are learning.	58%	42%
13	The more resources a school has, the more children will learn.	80%	20%
14	More time should be given to practical subjects like math and English than to religious subjects.	61%	39%
15	Education is more important for boys than for girls.	32%	68%
16	Teachers should be like mothers or fathers to their pupils.	87%	13%
17	Students should be punished for mistakes.	57%	43%
18	Parents should not criticize the teacher.	61%	39%
19	Feedback from parents to the teacher is helpful.	93%	7%

not favoring boys over girls, using interactive and student-centered methods).

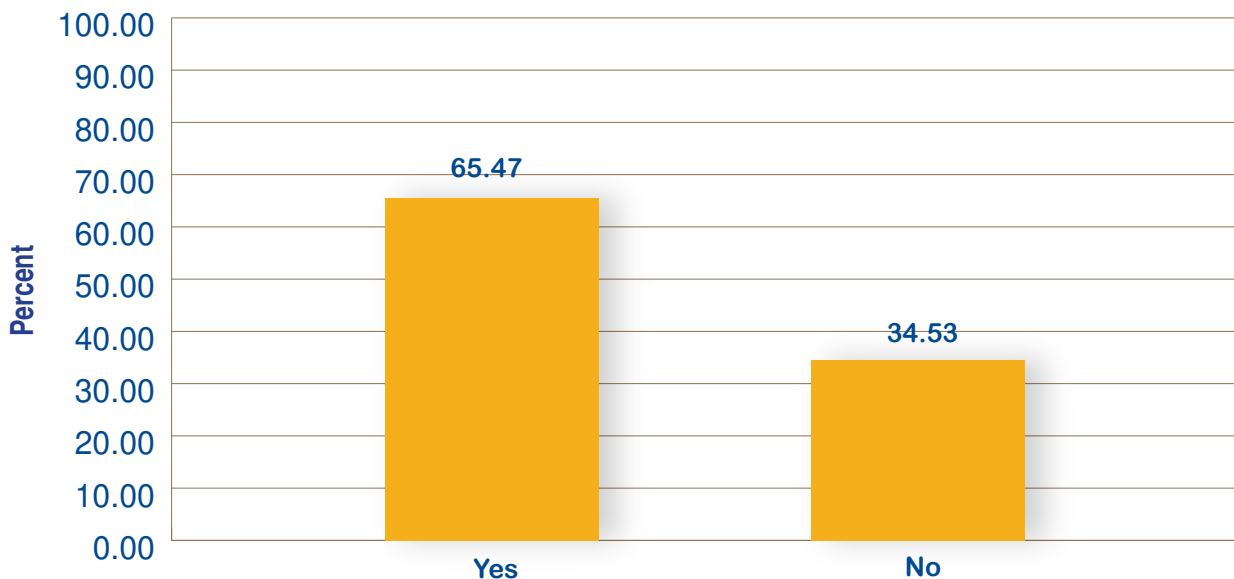
In terms of discipline, teachers participating in this study are a bit traditional. A small majority (57 percent) felt that students should be punished for mistakes and that strict discipline is necessary. Most favored a quiet classroom (82 percent). On the questionnaire, teachers were asked whether corporal punishment was used in their school from time to time. As illustrated by Figure 19, their responses indicate that a clear majority of the Islamic schools participating in this study do still utilize corporal punishment as a form of discipline.

Very strict classrooms tend to value order over interactivity (which is often noisy and slightly chaotic); this tendency toward discipline could limit or hinder the degree to which teachers fully implement active and student-centered techniques in the classroom. While the observation data suggest that teachers do use student-centered techniques, we were not able to rate the level of

competence with which the techniques are implemented. However, on the bright side, a great majority of teachers believed that they should be like parents to their students (87 percent), which suggest that they care about students and would not advocate being excessively harsh with students, even when maintaining strict discipline or allowing corporal punishment from time to time.

The data also suggest that teachers are open to feedback and new ideas. A majority endorsed the idea that more time should be given to secular subjects (61 percent), confirming the basic trend of thought that we observed in all of the study participants (i.e., integrating secular subjects into Islamic schools is highly desirable and critical to the advancement of the Muslim community in Ghana). Likewise, teachers endorsed the idea that they could benefit from further training and new ideas (86 percent). They also welcomed parental feedback (93 percent), although they did not welcome parental criticism (61 percent). Again, the degree to which parents are involved in

Figure 19. Overall distribution of teachers’ responses on whether school uses corporal punishment from time to time (N = 139).



their children's education and the degree to which teachers are willing to accept that involvement can affect how well schools succeed in helping students learn. Finally, teachers appeared quite able to distinguish memorization of material (62 percent) from learning concepts and ideas. The majority did not equate memorization with learning (61 percent), and that, too, is a positive thing, especially in terms of conducting sound and accurate pupil evaluation. A small majority of teachers do believe, however, that exams are the best way to judge learning (58 percent). Nevertheless, this is in line with the basic student promotion systems in most countries; what was encouraging is that 42 percent of teachers disagreed with the statement, implying they believe there are other ways to check whether students are learning.

6. Interview Results Regarding the Impact of Teaching Methods on Effectiveness. Finally, in terms of teacher data, we asked the subset of teachers we interviewed the following question:

Q: Can you explain the methods you use when giving a lesson in the classroom? (That is, what steps do you take in implementing a lesson?) In terms of what the teacher does in the classroom are the religious subjects taught differently from the secular ones?

Responses were surprisingly detailed in many instances. Even teachers who seemed least inclined to talk or elaborate on their answers were generally able to provide a fairly cogent, if brief, answer about their methods that indicated some knowledge of pedagogy. This corroborates the notion that Islamic school teachers in Ghana are pretty

well trained and prepared to teach. Below, we provide several illustrative responses to the question: Can you explain the methods you use when giving a lesson in the classroom? (That is, what steps do you take in implementing a lesson?)

For example, in a mathematics lesson, usually start with a mental drill. After, I introduce the topic with teaching and learning materials (TLMs) I also review the relevant previous knowledge to link what is to be learnt and what is already known. I involve the children in activities. I ask some children to solve problems on the chalkboard while I guide [them]. I ask them questions to ascertain their understanding. If they do [understand], I give them some evaluation work. I make sure I make the exercises and do the corrections with the children if need be. (Teacher, Fallahiyya, Wa)

I use explanation, role play, demonstration and discussion methods. I also make profuse use of teaching materials [TLMs]. (Teacher, Rahmania School, Accra)

Before I start a topic, I first encourage brainstorming and discussion. I also employ pupil-to-pupil and teacher-to-pupil interactions. The religious subjects are taught differently from the secular ones. (Teacher, Madina School, Accra)

I start with open prayer, and asked them to recite some part of the Quran, then I write what I am going to teach on the chalkboard. I read what I write on the board to them and asked them to read after me. I circulate round the class to make sure what is taught is understood. Then comes question and answer time to

evaluate the children and then made to ask questions. The way I teach is not very different from the way the secular teachers teach. (Teacher, Wataniyya School, Kumasi)

While this evidence is anecdotal, in that responses varied from teacher to teacher, and it is self-reported, the above quotations are illustrative of the type of answers teachers gave. The quotations also indicate that Islamic school teachers in Ghana do have knowledge about good teaching practices and how students learn. The degree to which they effectively utilize and apply their knowledge is another question, but the knowledge has to be there before the practice can begin to emerge. The interviews confirm that a cross section of teachers do have a good knowledge base about effective pedagogy.

In summary, the data on teachers indicates that their qualifications (education, experience, and training), their attitudes and beliefs, and their practice in the classroom—all suggest that Islamic schools are working with a minimum degree of effectiveness and that students have a fair opportunity to learn in these schools. Teachers have basic qualifications, they have embraced some progressive ideas on education (e.g., on the use of student-centered pedagogies, on gender equity, on the inclusion of and importance of secular subjects in the curriculum, on the benefits of parental participation in education), and they are implementing these pedagogies in their classrooms to a certain degree. We believe it is fair to say that Islamic schools have, at the very least, created some of the conditions necessary to be effective as educational institutions and that the

teaching force generally has the basic skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to facilitate students' educational achievement.

7. Class Size, Classroom Resources, and Effectiveness. As reported by teachers, on average, most taught fairly large classes. The average class size reported by teachers in Wa was 72; the average class size in Tamale was 48; the average class size in Kumasi was 42; and the average class size in Accra was 27. With the exception of Accra, these are rather large classes, and the pupil to teacher ratio rather high. Many proprietors, parents, and teachers cited the need for more classrooms to avoid this sort of overcrowding. Large class sizes can impede student learning; students are not able to receive any individualized attention, and teachers are more occupied with simply managing the class rather than using the best techniques to teach the children. Hence, class size in Islamic schools is not ideal and could present a real obstacle to ensuring a high-quality education for pupils.

Generally, as shown in Figure 20, we found that teachers have most of the necessary equipment and materials to perform their jobs. For example, more than 85 percent of the teachers report that they have a teacher's desk in their classrooms, and more than 90 percent have the teacher's lesson plan book. Textbooks, student desks, chalk, and blackboards all seemed to be available in most schools.

Electricity, TLMs or supplemental educational materials, and secure cupboards for storage were lacking. Almost half of the teachers had a Qur'an in their classrooms. However, the core

Figure 20. Overall distribution of teachers' responses on the availability of furniture and supplies in their individual classrooms.

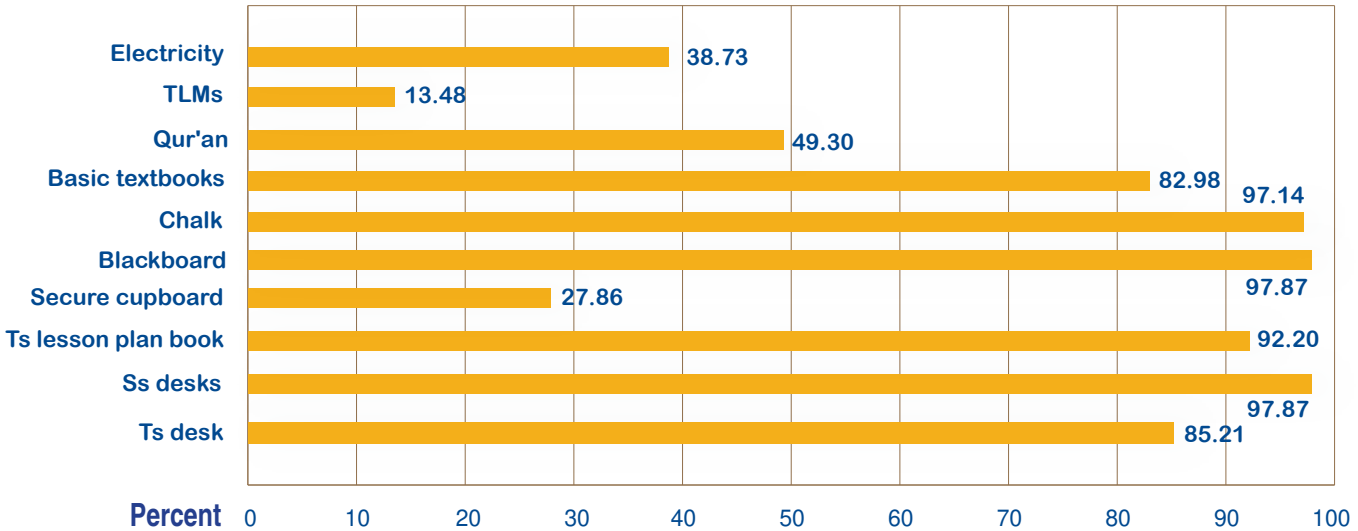
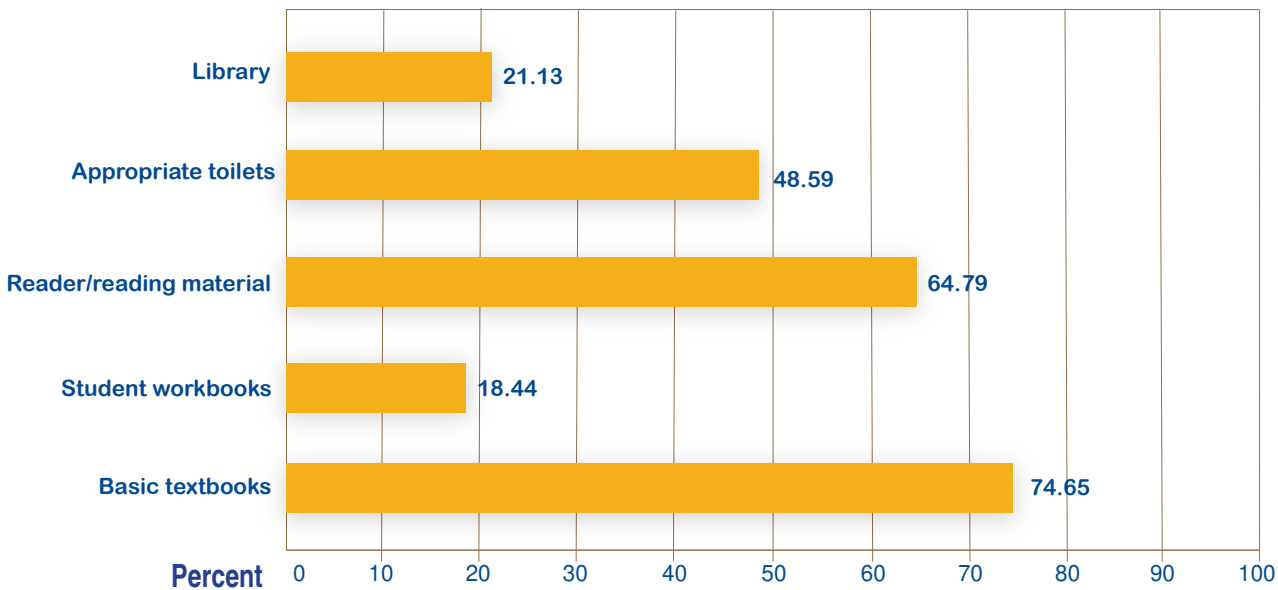


Figure 21. Overall distribution of teachers' responses on the materials supplied by schools to or for the students.



materials were present in most schools in this study. Additionally, 90 percent of teachers reported that they had no access to a computer in the school.

We also asked if the school supplied certain things for student use. As indicated in Figure 21, while the schools do provide basic textbooks, and a majority supply reading materials or readers, students did lack access to some basic things like toilet facilities, a library, and workbooks.

To corroborate what teachers reported on the availability of school resources, we completed a resource checklist for each school in the study. The checklists indicated that most of the schools have the following resources:

- One floor (68 percent);
- Walls between classrooms (89 percent);
- A roof (100 percent);
- Classrooms that lock or are secure (74 percent);
- Stationery for the head teacher and teachers (68 percent);
- Blackboards (95 percent);
- Chalk (95 percent);
- Desks (89 percent);
- Adequate light (100 percent), but no electricity (only 58 percent of schools had electricity);
- Adequate space for movement (68 percent);
- Notebooks, writing implements, and basic textbooks (84 percent);
- Adequate desk space (68 percent); and
- Uniforms (95 percent of students wore uniforms).

The following resources were all lacking in the majority of schools:

- Toilet facilities, especially for female

teachers (26 percent available) and students (42 percent available);

- A water supply (47 percent available); and
- Classroom bulletin boards (32 percent available).

On balance, the schools have the basic infrastructure and supplies to function and probably compare adequately with the Ghanaian public schools in many cases. Hence, a lack of resources did not appear to be an obstacle that would render them less effective.

8. School Management, Supervision, and Effectiveness. Our findings indicate that Islamic schools are managed in many various ways depending on their types. For example, the IEU has strong involvement in managing the public integrated Islamic schools through the government's decentralized district-based management, while the *makaranta* is completely managed by the proprietor and the community.

The Islamic schools have enjoyed and are still enjoying a great deal of autonomy in terms of school management, as well as in generating resources for the schools. This fairly decentralized management history, which still persists, could contribute positively to the National Decentralization Action Program (NDAP). The program's goals are to promote the convergence of the decentralization efforts, to consolidate processes of resource allocation and management, to build capacities for poverty-targeted development and governance at the local level, and to promote partnership and participation between local government, civil society, the private sector, and traditional

authorities.³⁷ The relationship between Islamic schools, particularly IEU and Arabic English schools, and the GES, might constitute a model of greater autonomy in school management that could be devolved to other non-Islamic schools.

Thirty-seven and a half percent of the proprietors participating in this study reported that the school is governed by a combination of the proprietor, the headmaster and the school management committee. Further, 94 percent of the proprietors reported that their schools have PTAs. However, none of the proprietors reported that the PTA has a direct management role. Most respondents underscored that the PTA provides financial support and assists in rehabilitation or construction of new school facilities. It is worth noting that teachers are not well represented in the school management committees. Eighty-one percent of teachers reported that they are not members of these committees, and only 15 percent reported that they have a role in the management of the school as financial officers, advisors, or planning officers. Teachers reported that a variety of actors have management and supervisory roles in running their schools and listed the head teacher, the proprietor, the government, parents and the community as the groups most involved in school management, with varying degrees of influence and authority. For example, teachers were given a set of 10 choices and asked to rank the choices in order of influence in running the school. The choices were private associations, head teacher, proprietor, PTA, government, community, local imam, mosque, funder, or other.

³⁷Decentralization Secretariat Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development. (2003, September). National Decentralisation Action Plan: Towards a sector-wide approach for decentralization implementation in Ghana (2003–2005). Accra, Ghana: Author.

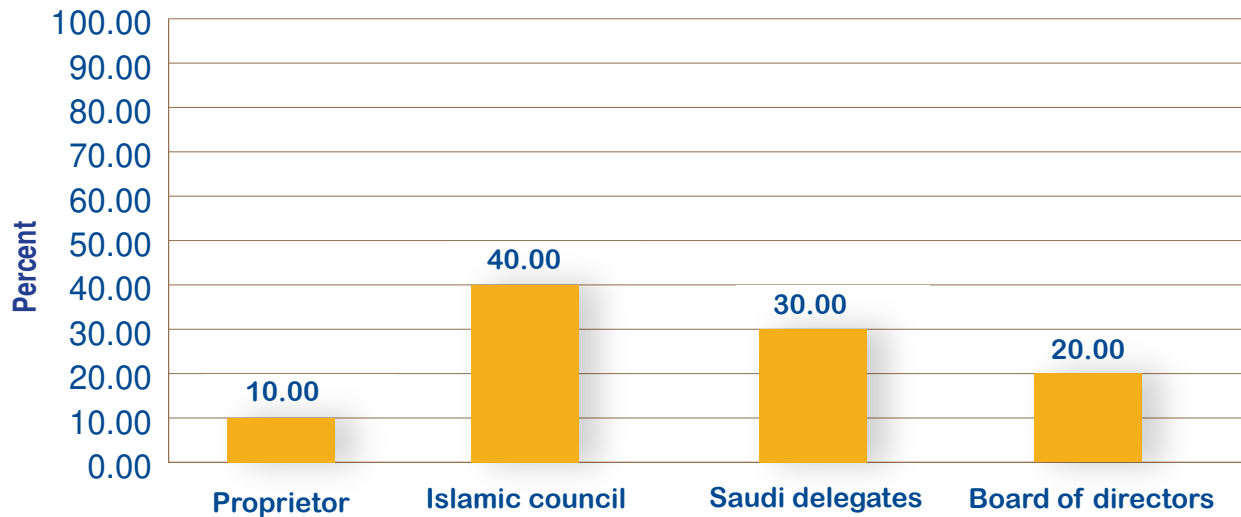
Twenty six percent of teachers ranked the government first (i.e., as having the most influence over the school) with 25 percent ranking the proprietor first in influence; 18 percent ranked the head teacher as first, and only 7 percent ranked the PTA as first. Only a small percentage of teachers reported that the local Imam, the mosque, and the funder are involved in school management at all. For example, only 3.5 percent of teachers ranked the community as first in influence over the school; 1.4 percent ranked the local Imam a first in influence; none ranked the mosque or the funder as first in influence. Further, these latter categories did not rank high as second, third or fourth choices either. In sum, the government, the proprietor, the head teacher and the PTA ranked consistently among the top four choices of teachers in terms of having significant influence in the running of the school.

As far as inspection or supervision is concerned, 64 percent of the proprietors reported that inspectors visit their schools from the GES. However, inspectors are sent also from the proprietors of the schools (when the proprietor is not on site daily and a head teacher handles the day-to-day management), from Islamic Councils,³⁸ especially to supervise the Arabic teachers, and from outside sponsors like Saudi delegates or funders' boards of directors. Figure 22 provides a summary of the sources of supervision reported by the proprietors.

Ninety-two percent of the teachers reported that they receive feedback on their teaching from the various authorities. On the other hand, the findings indicate that there is lack of consistency and collaboration between

³⁸Islamic Councils are NGOs involved in various activities that benefit Islam and Muslims in Ghana.

Figure 22. Other entities that provide supervision to Islamic schools.



the various players when it comes to supervision. This issue was raised by one of the *‘ulama*, who said:

The government policy supervises [the schools] as well and that is good because you have that and our [own private] supervision. Our only problem with that is that they [government inspectors] don’t link up with us so as we can get feedback as to what they have found. (‘Alim, Accra)

Occasionally, government policy collides with the independent management decisions taken by the school heads. For example, with the Anbariyya school in Tamale, there is an ongoing dispute over what days should constitute the official school weekend. School management wants the weekend to be Thursday and Friday (as it typically is in Gulf countries), and the government authorities insist it is Saturday and Sunday.

Islamic schools have traditionally been institutions with little bureaucracy and a

management structure whereby the school head is accountable to the community and to those who fund the schools. This management structure seems to have remained, but the government has certainly entered the mix as a key player—indeed as a key provider of funds in many instances, since it pays teachers’ salaries. Given that the IEU is also a relatively small unit with limited resources, Islamic schools (mainly those that receive government assistance) still seem to retain a good deal of school-based decision-making power.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION



JSS students at the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale

We found that Islamic schools in Ghana are having an impact on the enrollment of Muslim children in formal education. The schools serve both boys and girls, and while boys still outnumber girls overall, girls constitute 40 percent of the IEU school population in the four regions of this study (Greater Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, and Wa). Hence, the schools provide an avenue through which to improve education in Ghana by increasing access to education for Muslim populations, traditionally underserved in comparison to other groups in Ghana. Of course, the quality of education provided in any institution is a determining factor in whether students learn. Thus, the recommendations below are grouped into two main categories: those related to increasing access and those related to enhancing quality.

A. Provide Support to Increase Access to Education for Muslim Children

This first set of recommendations focuses on continuing to assure access for Muslim children by building on the elements that have caused parents to enroll their children in school in greater numbers.

1. Enhance Facilities and

Infrastructure. Access issues are often tied to facilities and infrastructure; the case of Islamic schools in Ghana is proving no different. Many existing Islamic schools need infrastructure support in the form of more classrooms and furniture. The buildings housing the schools are often old, shabby, and in poor shape, and the space constraints induce a great deal of crowding, even in some classrooms where the actual number of students is not terribly high. The IEU schools buildings, predictably so, are in the best shape since must meet certain building standards to be accepted as an IEU school. That said, many still need more classroom space, a library, and better toilet facilities—especially for women and girls. The risk of not keeping up with the need for classroom space is that classrooms will become overcrowded which can lead to less effective teaching and impede students' ability to learn. In general, the quality of education dips when overcrowding is severe. Hence, we recommend an increase in the amount of support provided to the IEU to upgrade Islamic school facilities to make them more conducive to learning, especially for girls.

Donors, through local NGOs or even the IEU, might consider offering incentive grants to schools to make basic infrastructure improvements. Donors should attach conditions to the grants so they are targeted to attract and retain female students (e.g., through providing bathrooms), renovating classrooms, purchasing classroom furniture, renovating or equipping library space. Funds should be channeled to these essential improvements, rather than, for example, renovating a room for teachers, upgrading the head teacher's office, or building a soccer field. While these latter improvements might be needed and worthy on some level, they are less directly tied to improving access to learning opportunities.

The IEU itself would benefit from upgraded equipment and training on how to use that equipment. With such support, the IEU could better track enrollment trends, teacher qualifications, and the evolution of traditional Islamic schools, Arabic schools, and Arabic English schools into IEU schools. We recommend providing equipment and training to the IEU at the national level so that it can improve its efficiency and capacity. In all the regional capitals where IEUs are located, the offices are in rented premises and mostly poorly equipped. Support to improve facilities in these regional offices will go a long way to improve supervision and management of Islamic education in Ghana. Even the national office of Islamic Education of the GES located in Tamale is housed in borrowed premises of the Non Formal Education Division (NFED). NFED has generously allotted three rooms to

the National Headquarters of the IEU. Adequate basic office equipment is lacking in all of the regional IEU offices, to the point that less than four of these offices have a basic computer and printer. With improved facilities at the offices and effective supervision and management of Islamic schools, the quality of education provided in these schools will substantially increase.

2. Expand the Availability of Islamic JSS and Senior Secondary Schools (SSS).

A related issue in terms of access is the need for JSS and SSS space and facilities for graduates of Islamic primary schools. For parents who are intent on keeping their children in Islamic schools for the duration of their education, there are often no options beyond JSS. The Islamic JSSs are limited in number, compared to the Islamic primary schools, and thus unable to absorb all of the primary graduates. This situation forces some children to enroll in regular public JSSs which is fine, as long as parents are willing to let their children, especially girls, attend the regular public schools. Historically, this has not always been the case. The national enrollment figures from the IEU show that the enrollment numbers for Islamic schools drop off significantly at the JSS level. In line with supporting Ghana's drive to achieve universal enrollment through JSS, we recommend that support be directed toward Islamic primary schools that could be expanded to house or to include a JSS. We recommend providing infrastructure support to existing public and private Islamic JSSs to ensure that they have proper facilities, such as female toilets and

running water, so that girls will be encouraged to attend. It is essential to renovate and upgrade classroom space at this level. Taking this step will allow Islamic JSSs to enroll more students, especially in underprivileged and underserved areas, and will address what is probably the most pressing need: to expand access to Islamic JSSs for graduates of Islamic primary schools. Further, we recommend that private Islamic JSSs applying to become IEU schools be given expedited assistance to meet that goal.

B. Provide Support to Enhance Quality of Education in Islamic Schools

The idea of combining Islamic education with secular education is very popular among Muslim parents, government stakeholders, Islamic school proprietors and teachers, and even the *'ulama* in Ghana. By carefully feeding the demand for integrated schooling, there is a good possibility that enrollments will continue to rise among Muslim populations, especially in the North and areas where Muslim enrollment in schools has traditionally been low.

1. Identify Meaningful Ways to Integrate Islamic and Secular Subjects. Parental trust in the school system is bolstered by the Islamic character of the integrated schools, and this Islamic character should be maintained. One way to do this is to better identify points of natural integration between Islamic subjects and secular ones. Right now, integration really means the introduction of the government

curriculum, into the Islamic schools and the elimination or condensation of most of the Arabic and Islamic subjects such that children get about two periods or approximately an hour to ninety minutes a day of these subjects. Steps could be taken to more meaningfully integrate the two curricula and ensure that IEU schools do not become Islamic in name only, as some proprietors and *'ulama* were beginning to suggest during the course of this research. This would be a long-term effort, as, ideally, it would or could involve developing curricular modules for use in Islamic schools that integrate some Islamic topics into the mainstream curriculum and vice versa. These could be modified units that teach the basic curriculum but add in information that would be of interest to Muslim populations concerned with the diminished time given to Islamic topics in Arabic English and IEU schools. For example, some elements of *fiqh* could legitimately be included in regular socials studies or civics courses in Islamic schools. Islamic history or philosophical thought could be integrated into regular history and social studies courses in these schools. Reading, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills could also be taught through religious subjects and texts. As religious history or ideas can be integrated into the existing curricula, religious subjects (texts and lessons) can also be used to reinforce core skills emphasized by the curriculum.

Iddrisu posits that meaningful integration has not yet occurred.³⁹ This might or

³⁹Iddrisu, A. (2005). The growth of Islamic learning in Northern Ghana and its interaction with Western secular education. *Africa Development*, XXX(1 & 2), 53-67.

might not be a problem. At present, there seems to be a great deal of support for integration. However, the danger of the current trend, one that is being perceived by some *'ulama*, is that the Islamic subjects are greatly de-emphasized in an integrated program and this could lead to some sort of backlash.

The development of any specialized materials for schools, or the alteration of second language requirements, must be done under the auspices of the GES with help from qualified instructional materials designers and *'ulama* well versed in the teaching of Islamic religion in Ghana. We recommend examining the issue of integration and considering how to provide some elements of traditional Islamic subjects through the vehicle of the current curriculum. However, we feel this is a recommendation that the GES and IEU are best placed to undertake, probably without donor assistance as it could be viewed as highly political. We also recommend that support be given to elevating the study of Arabic within the Ghanaian curriculum such that it is not an extra subject, but it fulfills a curricular requirement as a second or third language for students who wish to pursue it. Indeed, in today's world, Arabic is probably as useful as French as a second language. Assisting the GES and IEU by helping fund a committee of Ghanaian experts and scholars to explore this idea is a fairly inexpensive and very feasible thing that the donor community could do to support Islamic schools and the education of Muslims in general.

2. Certify Arabic Language Teachers.

Related to this, we recommend that the IEU and the GES explore the reinstatement of some sort of Arabic

teaching certificate. The IEU and GES could attach this certificate to a more sustained pre- or in-service training program to equip Arabic and Islamic teachers with sound teaching skills. Most Arabic teachers have had no formal training in teaching and can only use the unrefined methodology used by their teachers when they were students to teach others. There is the need for the IEU to re-introduce the Arabic Instructors Selection Examinations (AESE) and to go beyond this to arrange for higher training for such teachers after they have taught continuously for two or three years. By this method, an adequate number of Arabic and Islamic instructors will be produced to respond to the growing number of Islamic schools in the country. It would make sense to certifying Arabic as a legitimate second language that Muslim children could pursue, in place of French, which they are now required to take, should they so desire. This would entail including Arabic as an exam subject for those children who studied it as their second language (i.e., in place of French).

In addition, many Arabic and Islamic religion teachers have been trained in the Gulf countries, having received scholarships to those countries. Many come back to Ghana ill-equipped to do anything but teach in Arabic. Equipping them to do so at a higher level of competence would serve the Islamic schools, the Ghanaian government, and these scholars by ensuring a minimum level of subject area and pedagogical competence before releasing them into the classroom. The training of more qualified Islamic instructors will

undoubtedly produce more high-caliber teachers to handle Arabic and Islamic studies in Islamic schools. Yet, it will also help sustain the study of such subjects in these schools and allay the fears of most parents that the introduction of secular education in the Islamic schools is a subtle attempt to undermine Islamic education and Islam in general.

3. Develop TLMs or instructional aids specifically for Islamic schools that are gender sensitive and appealing from the point of view of Islamic culture. Educational quality is also a product of having enough classroom resources and a qualified teacher. Supplemental materials appear to be somewhat lacking in Islamic schools, and the distribution of books and reading materials would be a productive use of donor funding. Again, this action could be taken on a rather large or small scale, depending on available funds. We also recommend assisting schools to establish libraries. Given that Islamic schools in Ghana serve diverse populations (e.g., children during the week, adults in the evenings, secular school pupils over the weekend), a library of basic reading materials based in the school would have the potential to reach and benefit a large number of learners.

4. Increase pedagogical training for Islamic school teachers. As indicated above, some stakeholders felt that the IEU does not receive an adequate number of teachers from GES for the schools under its supervision. While there is a general shortage of trained teachers in the country, the

posting of teachers to most Islamic schools is inadequate. We have heard anecdotally that most trained teachers prefer to be posted to other educational units, such as those of the Catholic, Presbyterian, and Anglicans, because the infrastructure of these schools is more attractive. Again, anecdotally, we heard that most trained teachers accept postings to Islamic schools—especially those located in contiguous communities—as a last resort. While our data indicate that the teaching force in the Islamic schools in this study was not grossly untrained or incompetent, we believe that Islamic schools would benefit from assistance in providing in-service training and other incentives to teachers, especially in poor communities.

- 5. Support the development of a basic, standard curriculum for Arabic language and Islamic studies.** There is currently no standard curriculum for Islamic education in Ghana. The government policy of assimilating Islamic schools into the secular education system should go beyond the provision of facilities, TLMs, and trained teachers. There is the need for a policy to ensure standard quality Arabic and Islamic education in Ghana. The current policy of integrating Islamic schools into the public educational system does not touch the curriculum used in teaching Arabic and Islamic studies even though the government is still responsible for paying at least two Arabic Instructors per school of six classrooms. The efforts by UNICEF and, more significantly, the AEU to produce standard curriculum and

textbooks for Islamic studies in their schools should be encouraged and expanded to involve other Islamic schools in order to have a standard curriculum and books of study.

We feel that many of the recommendations here are somewhat political in nature, making it hard for donors to support them without setting themselves up for criticism or accusations of trying to influence religious education in possibly negative ways. We think that donor priorities in the area of quality improvement in Islamic schools should, therefore, be linked to capacity development as opposed to actual materials development for Arabic or Islamic classes. We feel that a priority area is the training/retraining of Islamic school teachers and the general upgrading of their skills. Training activities would benefit all teachers and students. Likewise, the provision of classroom resources targeted at skills development and linked to basic English and math curricula would be useful, especially for schools that have not yet been accepted under the IEU umbrella.

C. Concluding Thoughts

The widespread interest in Ghana in integrating secular subjects into Islamic schools presents an opportunity for the government to extend basic education to underserved Muslim communities with the assistance of the private school sector. Islamic schools have the capacity to contribute to Ghana's Vision 2020—which hopes to see Ghana achieve middle-class status by the year 2020—and this capacity should be explored and developed. By contributing teachers and textbooks, the Ghanaian government can utilize

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

preexisting schools to educate larger numbers of children who might not otherwise be reached. This opportunity should be seized, but it should be pursued in a way that respects and upholds the essential character of Islamic schools. This report describes the current state of Islamic education in Ghana in terms of school types, legal and financial status, mandate and purpose, linkages with formal education, public perceptions, and effectiveness and impact in an effort to assist stakeholders in deciding how best to support Islamic schools as vehicles to extend education to traditionally underserved populations.

The introduction of secular subjects into the Islamic education sector or system has led to an increase in access to secular education for a lot of Muslim children, and this is widely seen as a positive development by Muslims themselves. There are implications, not all of which are clear at present and which surely include both positives and negatives, to moving schools down the continuum from the very traditional *makaranta* style education toward a fully integrated curriculum complete with government oversight and support. Right now, stakeholders seem quite willing to bear the costs that might be associated with that movement in exchange for greater access to the economic and political advantages that come from receiving a secular education.



A JSS Anbariyya Islamic School in Tamale.



Primary and JSS compound of the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale.



Primary and JSS compound of the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale.

APPENDICES



Sheikh Omar recites from the holy Qur'an for his students in *makaranta*, Tamale

Appendix A: Review of Literature on Islamic Schools in Ghana

Appendix B: Literature Review References

Appendix C: Participating Schools in the Study

Appendix D: Research Instruments

Appendix E: Data Collection Schedule

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN GHANA

I. Introduction

The purpose of the following review of literature on Islamic education in Ghana is to summarize the findings of studies and other research that has already been conducted in this area, as well as to investigate and report on what documents exist in relation to this topic. In doing so, we seek to provide a better understanding of the various contexts and issues related to Islamic education in Ghana and how the findings of the present study will contribute to the body of knowledge about Islamic schools in Ghana.

We identified three major sources for this review. First, we explored scholarly writings and academic research. Second, we consulted many government documents related to the topic of Islamic education in Ghana. Third, and because Islamic schools have become a development issue particularly in relation to education of Muslim girls, we examined a considerable number of studies by national and international NGOs. We present each of the three sources in the following report.

II. Scholarly Writings and Academic Research on Islamic Education

Comparatively little research has been accomplished in Islamic education in Ghana—unlike other Anglophone countries in West Africa. Mumuni (2003) noted in this respect that unlike works on Islamic education in Ghana, a full section on Islamic education in Nigeria exists at Bayreuth University. Hiskett (1975) has also produced an in-depth analysis of Islamic education, traditional, and secular systems in Northern Nigeria. Fisher (1963) assessed the modernization of Islamic education in Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Liberia. Braimah (1973) traced the origins of the *makaranta* system in Accrato at the turn of the century. He cited some of the *makaranta* at Cowlane, Tudu, and Zongo, among others. He also provided a catalogue of *mallamin* (teachers) who initiated these *makaranta*. He described the *makaranta* as follows:

A school for learning how to read the Qur'an usually located before the school-master's house. Several children assemble in circles sitting on mats or benches repeating verses of the Qur'an in chorus, following the inflections and the pauses and imitating the tone taught them. They learn to form the Arabic characters by copying a page of the Qur'an on wooden tablets instead of using paper. From time to time, the tablet is washed and set in the sun to dry after which it is again ready for use. (p. 7)

Addae (2001) also observed that by the sixteenth century, Muslims had established large schools in Ghana—particularly in the North. He further contended that scholars at these centers of learning were sensitive to intellectual and literacy influences from other parts of the Muslim world.

Scholars have also noted that from the beginning of the Islamic faith in Ghana, Islamic education was synonymous with Islamic religion, and that the aim was to win new converts. The new converts then memorized selected portions of the Qur'an for devotional use. The relationship between Islam and literacy, as Mumuni (2003) has articulated it, "...is a result of the influence of tradition in which Allah commands Muslims to know Him before they worship him" (pp. 170–171). Sulemana has identified three forms of literacy acquisition in the Ghanaian *makaranta*: the *madrasa* system, the *madrasa* mode, and the secular method. These forms produced scholars with different approaches to teaching and learning Islamic literacy. He has also identified problems in the *makaranta* system, such as lack of teaching and learning materials (TLMs), lack of qualified teachers, lack of infrastructure, little effective coordination of teaching and learning processes, and lack of supervision.

A. The Makaranta System

In a comparative analysis of the *makaranta* and *madrasa* systems, Mumuni (2003) cited Musa as follows:

The old practice of sitting on the floor and the use of any dress at all for school have given way to the use of chairs, tables, and uniformed dress for school. The wooden tablets in which the extracts of the Qur'an were written have given way to exercise books, pens and pencils. The *Barazum* [a whip made from animal skin traditionally used to discipline children] is no more an instrument of instilling discipline among pupils.

Ghanaian Islamic education researchers and writers such as Nehemiah Levtzion, Ivor Wilks Trimmingham, and Peter Clarke have shared the view that the *makaranta* system began in the northern and middle belt of the country in places such as Salaga, Yendi, Prang, Larubanga, Kete-Krachi, Begho, Edina, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Atebubu.

A unique feature of the *makaranta* system relates to classroom management. The teacher sits separated from the pupils, but listens with rapt attention to the different recitations of the Qur'an in chorus by the students. He or she corrects each pupil or group of pupils as and when an error is committed. This way of imparting Qur'anic education has come to be associated with noise and disorderliness. Consequently, it is common to hear in Ghanaian circles whenever there is disorder "you are not in a *makaranta*." Tuition is free, and the greatest economic relief comes to the *Mallam* when students *walimah* (graduate). The *makaranta* that runs "full session" operates in the mornings and afternoons from Saturdays to Wednesdays. There are also dawn sessions and evening classes. Thursdays and Fridays are considered rest days. A predominant feature of the system is the use of the local language—particularly Hausa—as a medium of instruction.

The curriculum places emphasis on memorization, recitation, and writing of portions of the Qur'an. Sulemanu (2002) described the *makaranta* system as a place of rote learning to read and write Arabic text. Other areas of study include theology, mathematics, grammar, and ethics.

B. The Madrasa Mode

According to Mumuni (2003), the *madrasa* is the second form of development of Islamic literary tradition in Ghana. This occurred after the country's independence in 1957—an after effect of embassies opened by Muslim governments such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. The *madrasa* system expanded on the *makaranta* model, often using pedagogical techniques more similar to secular public schools but focused on higher level Islamic studies.

C. The Secular Method

Tiwaa (1995) has investigated the role of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement in the development of pre-university education in the Ashanti Region. She observed that the graduates of the Qur'anic School often end their education at the traditional Arabic primary school, as opportunities for entering secondary and postsecondary schools are closed to them. The causes, she concluded, are the deficiency in English and other subjects considered for entry into government schools. Realizing this condition of the Ghanaian Muslims, the Ahmadiyya endeavored to train its members to become useful members of society by combining secular education with Islamic religious education.

Acquah (1998) produced another work on the Ahmadiyya Muslim educational enterprise in relation to the development of basic education in Saltpond. A major setback of this work was that information available, as the author phrased it, "...was scanty and scattered." The records that were available in the school under study were not well maintained over the years.

Nafisatu (1985) concluded that "Muslim women have not received any attention from the writers whose works have been reviewed. Yet, the role of women in the socio-economic and political development in the contemporary world has been the object of concern of many world bodies such as the UN as well as governments especially of the developing countries like Ghana."

She observed that "Islamic Education reached West Africa before the inception of western education and yet after several centuries of operations, its impact has not been easily felt." She traced the entry of Islam into West Africa and noted that wherever Islam gained patronage, Qur'anic schools were set up. Using the three northern regions as examples, she noted that different grades of Qur'anic schools provide Muslim children with Islamic education, and that the first time a Qur'anic school was identified for a government grant in the then Gold Coast colony was in 1899.

In a study to establish the earliest attempt at secularizing Muslim education, Saeed (1985) states that Reverend M. Sunter, an inspector of schools for West African settlements in 1889, proposed to the Colonial Office a new way of stimulating Muslim interest

in secular education. He suggested the establishment of Government sponsored Muslim schools in the Zongos, and he recommended that Qur'anic teachers not be interfered with, but be allowed to give Muslim religious lessons in government schools. This idea was not taken up due to financial constraints.

The first fruitful attempt at secularizing Islamic education in Ghana was undertaken by Benjamin Sam and his colleague Mahdi Appiah, in 1896. Fisher (1963) stated that Mahdi Appiah was the first person converted to Islam at the hands of Benjamin Sam, and that both of them were beneficiaries of Western secular education. Both men established a Muslim school along Christian missionary lines in 1896 at Ekroful. The school impressed the colonial government, and it was the first Islamic institution of learning to be put on the list of Assisted Schools. An interesting phenomenon about this school is that Christian literature was used for instruction in religious education due to the lack of available materials on Islamic studies and to the fact that Sam and Appiah had limited knowledge of Arabic studies. Another attempt at secularizing Qur'anic education occurred in 1921 by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in the then Gold Coast. The mission's approach to Islamic studies was holistic in nature. Apart from preaching Islam, mission leaders also showed interest in health, vocational, and professional schools. They established schools along secular lines from the basic level to the secondary stage.

III. Government Documents and Strategies

Citing documents on the establishment of the Arabic English schools, Zagoon (2002) noted that J. S. Kaleem, R. A. Yakubu, J. W. Abroquah, E. I. Ben Nyarko, and Alhaji Rahim Gbadamoshi—all former Northern Regional Directors of Education between the 1960s and the 1980s—were behind the founding of this model. The first *madrassa* to adopt this model was the Nuriyya Islamic School in Tamale. Its proprietor, *Mallam* Ibrahim Basha, became the first chairman of proprietors of such schools in northern Ghana.

According to Sulemana (2003), the next strategy of the ministry was to integrate some of the *madrassas* into the Ghana Education System (GES). The ministry then posted trained teachers to teach subjects approved by the government alongside Islamic ones. The implication of this development was that the recommendations earlier made by Reverend M. Sunter in 1889 were implemented in the 1960s. The intention behind the implementation was to enable graduates of the *madrassa* system to fit into the developmental plans of the government.

The Islamic Education Unit (IEU) of the GES was established in 1987 to oversee the activities of these Arabic English schools. The task of the IEU was to absorb other Qur'anic schools into the main educational sector so that pupils of these schools could benefit from secular education. Its main objective was to coordinate and regulate teaching/learning activities leading to the provision of an all-round education to the Muslim child.

The National Report on the Development of Education published by the Basic Education Division, Ghana (2004) highlighted that gross enrollment was 75.5 percent for boys and 25.5 percent for girls in 1987. At the regional level, the analysis of gender participation in education for 1987 in the Northern and Upper-East regions of Ghana, which are predominantly Muslim communities, thus shows a difference of 10 percent in favor of boys.

Since independence, successive governments in Ghana have put in place the following policies that are designed to provide basic education for all citizens:

- The Education Act of 1961, which stipulated free, compulsory universal primary enrollment;
- The PNDC Law 42 of 1983, which made provision for social justice and equality of opportunity for all;
- The establishment of the Girls' Educational Unit by the Ministry of Education to promote girl-child education; and
- The Educational Reform program of 1987, which sought to expand access to education and to improve the equity, quality, and sustainability of education.

The government used the following strategies to implement these policies throughout the country:

- Providing teachers, textbooks, and buildings for schools—especially in the Muslim communities;
- Providing scholarship schemes for the Northern and Upper East regions, which are predominantly Muslim;
- Engaging successful women in the Muslim communities as role models to organize talk shows, counseling, and discussion groups;
- Ensuring the implementation of laws that prohibit the withdrawal of girls from schools for marriage; and
- Ensuring that girls who drop out of school as a result of pregnancy are provided opportunity to continue with their education after delivery.

The government has also embarked on a program of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), which is charged with providing basic education for all its citizens, including those in the Muslim communities.

The Community Improvement Unit (CIU) of the National Service Secretariat (NSS) initiated an Islamic Education Project. The NSS through the CIU carried out a survey on teaching/learning activities in Qur'anic schools located in Nima and Maamobi, both Muslim suburbs of Accra. The study revealed that the Qur'anic schools did not equip the children with the required skills to meet the challenges of the times. This revelation led to a number of discussions between officials of the CIU and proprietors of Qur'anic schools

at Nima/Maamobi. The agreement reached was that the NSS would post teachers to handle English and the Sciences in these schools. By 1990, the program had expanded to include schools in the Tema Metropolis.

IV. National and International NGO Research Contributions

The first Muslim NGO was formed in 1930 and was given the name Gold Coast Muslim Association (GCMA). Its aim was to harness the human and material resources of Muslims in the then Gold Coast. Other Muslim NGOs, which later sprang up include: The Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services, the Al-Muntada Islamic Society, the Agricultural and Rural Development, Federation of Muslim Women of Ghana, Ahlul-Bayt Foundation, and the African Muslim Agency.

These NGOs have put in place a number of interventions to promote education in general with special emphasis on education for the girl-child. In fact, they have gone beyond the provision of spiritual needs and now include education, health, and economic necessities of life so as to ensure qualitative improvement of Muslims' lives and their surroundings. The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) established a project to build schools and supply various textbooks necessary to improve the education of the girl-child. The local chapter of the Federation of African Women Educationist (FAWE) has also been very active in this awareness creation in the form of the TV clip *Send your Girl-child to School* by the Ghana Chapter of FAWE. The Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), in collaboration with the Swedish Teachers Federation, is supplying furniture to schools all over the country to increase enrollment of the girl-child in schools in Muslim communities.

The Muslim Relief Association of Ghana, an Accra-based nongovernmental body researched early childhood upbringing in Qur'anic schools in six selected districts of the Northern and Upper-East Regions for UNICEF (Ghana) in 2001. The study was conducted as part of the community-based Early Psycho-Social Intellectual Stimulation (EPSIS) pivot project in Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development (ECC-SGD). The assumptions underlying the study were that the provision of early childhood education systems is low, and there are no known meaningful efforts to develop early psycho-social and intellectual stimulation among young children in Qur'anic schools on a large scale.

Various stakeholders were concerned that if no significant intervention was made to provide quality early childhood education and to support the development of children's psycho-social and intellectual development among the poor majority in deprived rural areas, Ghana's Vision 2020 would not be achieved. The study, therefore, sought to bring out the problems associated with Qur'anic School education and to recommend workable interventions to enable the children who attend these schools develop their full potential. The study's premise was that the quality of education delivered to the children constitutes a major determinant of the country's future socio-economic development.

V. Conclusion

To conclude, this review and summary of the existing literature on Islamic education in Ghana indicates that this topic has generated a great deal of interest from all partners in Ghana. The performance of Islamic schools is no longer an issue that only the Muslim communities must unravel, but it is a national concern as the education of Ghanaian Muslims is part of the responsibility of the Ghanaian civil society, as well as of the government. As most of the studies indicate, Islamic schools in Ghana are undergoing a great deal of transformation. A notable trend is the effort to integrate these schools into the formal education system so that their graduates can easily fit within the public system of secondary and higher education, leading to more and better opportunities for employment and education.

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APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS IN THE STUDY

The following is a rough categorization of the participating schools in the study. Each school is categorized to be as close as possible to a point in the continuum of change for Islamic schools in Ghana. Only the schools that fall within the IEU can fit within that category; others can fit in more than one. Initially, we identified schools that represented all of the four categories. However, when we examined the collected data from the school proprietors and teachers, we found that they provided conflicting labels for their schools. Based on the data available, we categorize the schools as follows, putting into account that they could be categorized differently:

IEU Schools (Public Integrated Islamic Schools)

1. Nuriyya Islamic School, Tamale
2. Nuriyya Islamic School, Kumasi
3. TI Ahmadiyya JSS, Wa
4. Fallahia Islamic Primary School Wa
5. Nahdah Islamic School, Tamale
6. Adabiyya Islamic Primary School Wa
7. Nurul Islam Islamic School, Tamale
8. Fongo JSS, Wa

Arabic Schools

9. Ambariyya Islamic School, Tamale
10. Hamidia Islamic School (Ashiaman), Accra

Arabic English Schools (Integrated Private Islamic)

11. Hejira Islamic School (Nima), Accra
12. Azahriyya Islamic Institute, Kumasi
13. Wataniyya, Kumasi
14. Central Zhariya, Tamale
15. Madina Islamic School (Madina), Accra
16. Nashirudeen Islamic School, Kumasi
17. Fatimatu Bint Rasul Islamic School, Accra
18. Jujeidayiri Islamic School, Wa

Traditional Makaranta Schools

19. Babal-Waiz Quranic Memorization, Kumasi
20. Rahmania Islamic School (Tema), Accra

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Statement of Informed Consent—Teacher Questionnaire

Researchers, please read the statement below to the subjects to whom you will administer the questionnaire.

Hello. My name is X and I am part of a team conducting a study on the Islamic Education Sector in Ghana. The Islamic Education Unit of the GES has endorsed the study and we are carrying it out with their permission.

As many children in Ghana attend Islamic schools, we want to understand better the type and quality of schools that exist.

One of the most important actors in a school environment is the teacher. The teacher directly influences the environment in the classroom, what is taught, how subjects are taught, how children are assessed, and ultimately whether children learn. Teachers make key decisions every day about education for their students that have an enormous impact on a child's school success. This research consists of talking to 'ulama, school proprietors, head teachers, and teachers, both formally and informally, about Islamic schools. We would like to ask you some questions today about your school and your role as a teacher.

Your real name will not be used in any publication or report and all records will be kept confidential.

Do you have any questions? _____

Researcher: _____

Name of School: _____

Type of School: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____ Teacher: _____ Gender: M F

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions to the researcher are in **bold-faced** type.

Researchers: Read the questions below to the teacher and fill in the answer the teacher gives. In some cases, there is a list of choices of a possible response. In this case, read the choices to the teacher and put a check mark next to the response that the teacher selects. Finally, some questions require an answer of “yes” or “no.” In this case, please circle the appropriate answer. In cases where “not applicable” might be an appropriate reply, circle NA.

Section 1: Background on the Teacher

- 1) How long have you been a teacher? _____
- 2) How long have you been teaching at this particular school? _____
- 3) What is your level of education?
 - a) _____secondary
 - b) _____diploma
 - c) _____degree
 - d) _____post graduate degree
 - e) _____Islamic teacher certificate exam
 - f) _____traditional Islamic school training
 - g) _____other
- 4) Have you had formal teacher training? Yes No
- 5) What sort of training was it? _____
- 6) Have you had in-service training since you have started at this school? Yes No
- 7) What is the compensation range for a teacher here?
 - a) _____volunteer
 - b) _____less than 500,000
 - c) _____between 500,000 and 1 million
 - d) _____1–2 million
 - e) _____2–3 million
 - f) _____3–4 million

8) Do you teach a single class? Yes No What level? _____
(Researchers: If the teacher teaches a single class, you can skip questions 8 and 9.)

9) Do you teach multiple subjects? If so, what subjects? _____

10) Do you teach multiple classes (i.e., different levels of students)? What levels?

11) How many hours do you teach per day? _____

12) In your classroom, do you:

- _____ Have the students work in groups or pairs?
- _____ Have the students come to the board?
- _____ Have the students stay seated during the whole lesson?
- _____ Allow the children to move around?
- _____ Allow the children to help each other with their work?
- _____ Allow the students to ask questions?

13) If the school has a PTA, are you an executive committee member? Yes No NA

14) If the school has a school management committee, are you a member? Yes No NA

15) If you are on the school management committee, what is your role? _____

Section 2: Background on the School

16) How many students are there in your classroom (s) for:

a) The first subject or level? _____

(Researchers: If the teacher teaches a single class, do not ask about a second or third subject or level.)

b) The second subject or level? _____

c) The third subject or level? _____

(If more than this, continue on the back of this sheet.)

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

17) What is the breakdown of boys to girls in each class that you teach?

a) Subject or level 1: _____ # of boys _____ # of girls _____

(Researchers: If the teacher teaches a single class, do not ask about a second or third subject.)

b) Subject or level 2: _____ # of boys _____ # of girls _____

c) Subject or level 3 _____ # of boys _____ # of girls _____

(If teacher teaches more than three subjects or levels, continue on the back of this sheet.)

18) In the classrooms, do the following furniture and supplies exist?

a) Teacher's desk	Yes	No
b) Student register	Yes	No
c) Teacher's lesson plan book	Yes	No
d) Secure cupboard	Yes	No
e) Blackboard	Yes	No
f) Chalk	Yes	No
g) Basic textbooks	Yes	No
h) Qur'an	Yes	No
i) Teaching and Learning Materials	Yes	No
j) Electricity	Yes	No

19) Are the following supplied by this school to its students?

k) Basic textbooks	Yes	No	NA
l) Student workbooks	Yes	No	NA
m) Reader/reading material	Yes	No	NA
n) Appropriate toilet and urinal facilities	Yes	No	NA
o) Library	Yes	No	NA

(Researchers: If subject answered yes to the last question, ask this question; if not, skip this question.)

20) Do you, the teacher, have access to the library? Yes No NA

21) Do you, the teacher, have access to a computer (at the school)? Yes No NA

- 22) Is the classroom furniture movable (i.e., can you rearrange it in your classroom)?
Yes No NA
- 23) I am going to give you four items to choose from. Please select the one that best describes your school. **(Researcher: Please circle the response the teacher selects.)**
a) Traditional Qur'anic/Arabic School b) Modern Qur'anic/Arabic school
c) Private Islamic school (integrated curriculum) d) Public Islamic school (under IEU)
- 24) How long is one lesson? _____
How many lessons or hours are there in one day at this school? _____
- 25) In one school day, how many of the lessons students receive (or hours of the day) are devoted to Islamic/Arabic studies and how many to secular subjects?
a) Islamic/Arabic subjects _____ b) Secular subjects _____
- 26) If the school has a PTA, do you think it is an important institution at this school? Yes No
- 27) Has it been effective in improving some things at this school? Yes No
- 28) Many people or groups can be involved in running or administering a school. What people or groups are actively involved in the running of this school?
(Check all that apply below.)
a) Private Association _____ b) Head teacher _____ c) Proprietor _____
d) Parents (PTA) _____ e) Government _____ f) Community _____
g) Local Imam _____ h) Mosque _____ i) Funder/Sponsor _____
j) Other _____
- 29) Can you rank your responses in terms of who has the greatest influence?
(Mark the rank that the subject gives on the line next to their selections(s) with 1 being the most influential.)
a) Private Association _____ b) Head teacher _____ c) Proprietor _____
d) Parents (PTA) _____ e) Government _____ f) Community _____
g) Local Imam _____ h) Mosque _____ i) Funder/Sponsor _____
j) Other _____

30) Do you or the other teachers in this school use corporal punishment from time to time?

31) Do learning activities in the classroom demand active student participation?

32) Is supervision and feedback provided to teachers regarding their teaching? Yes No

By whom? _____

Section 3: Teacher Attitudes

Researchers: Read the following statements about education to the subject and ask him or her to say “agree” to the ones that he or she agrees with and “disagree” to the ones that he or she disagrees with. Circle the appropriate response.

Memorizing and learning are the same thing? Agree Disagree

Teachers in this school would benefit from learning different teaching and classroom management methods. Agree Disagree

33) In school, the only way children learn is from listening to their teacher. Agree Disagree

34) Learning takes place most effectively if the classroom is very quiet. Agree Disagree

35) Strict discipline is necessary to run a classroom. Agree Disagree

36) If children do not memorize, they are not learning. Agree Disagree

37) Learning and school should be fun for children. Agree Disagree

38) To challenge what the teacher says is disrespectful. Agree Disagree

39) All children can learn. Agree Disagree

40) If children are not learning, it is because the teacher is not effective. Agree Disagree

- | | | |
|---|-------|----------|
| 41) Girls and boys are equally intelligent and capable of succeeding in school. | Agree | Disagree |
| 42) Exams are the best way to judge if students are learning. | Agree | Disagree |
| 43) The more resources a school has, the more children will learn. | Agree | Disagree |
| 44) More time should be given to practical subjects like math and English than to religious subjects. | Agree | Disagree |
| 45) Education is more important for boys than for girls. | Agree | Disagree |
| 46) Teachers should be like mothers or father to their pupils. | Agree | Disagree |
| 47) Students should be punished for mistakes. | Agree | Disagree |
| 48) Parents should not criticize the teacher. | Agree | Disagree |
| 49) Feedback from parents to the teacher is helpful. | Agree | Disagree |

Researchers: For teachers who will not be interviewed, please thank them for their participation.

Director of Islamic Education Unit in Regions and National Director

1. Can you provide us with a brief overview of the mission and purpose of the Islamic Education Unit?
2. What does the unit do?
3. How do schools come to fall under the purview of the Islamic education unit?
4. Is there a relationship between the IEU and those Islamic schools which are not under the unit's purview?
5. How does the government support these IEU schools? What services do the schools receive from the government? What type of oversight?
6. Does the government support non-IEU schools in any way? What kinds of support does the government provide these schools? Are there other organizations which support these schools?
7. How many IEU schools are there in your region? In Ghana?
8. How many Islamic schools in general are there in your region (including traditional Qur'anic schools)?
9. How many children are served by IEU schools in your region?

- 10.** What is the caliber of teachers in the IEU schools? In other Islamic schools, in your estimation? In regular public schools?
- 11.** Do IEU school teachers need or receive special training?
- 12.** Is there a formal Islamic Education curriculum that IEU schools use?
- 13.** What is the time allocation to secular and to Islamic subjects in IEU schools?
- 14.** Is the quality of the education the same between those IEU schools and regular public schools? Between IEU schools and other private Islamic schools?
- 15.** What linkages exist between Islamic and public schools in Ghana? In your region?
- 16.** Outside of the IEU schools, what are the other types of Islamic schools in Ghana?
- 17.** Do children who graduate from non-IEU schools (i.e., traditional Qur'anic schools) count in toward Ghana's millennium challenge goals of education for all?
- 18.** Are Islamic schools becoming more or less popular in Ghana, in your opinion?
- 19.** What is the future of Islamic education in Ghana? What trends do you see?

Questions for Meetings with 'Ulama—School Proprietors
(not from sample schools)

1. Can you tell us something about the history of your institution?
2. What are the major types of Islamic schools in Ghana? How did these different types evolve?
3. What is your perspective on the integration of secular and Islamic institutions?
4. What sort of education do you recommend for Muslim children in Ghana today? How have you educated your own children?
5. What types of students patronize your school? Why is that?
6. What are your views on the education of women and girls? Why do you say this?
7. How many Islamic schools like yours are there in your region, in your estimation? In all of Ghana?

8. How many children, in your estimation, are served by Islamic schools in general?

9. How are private Islamic schools financed? Are they still community supported, even if they get support from the government? Do they receive support from wealthy individuals? International organizations or foundations? Ghanaian foundations or associations?

10. Overall, are Islamic schools becoming more or less popular in Ghana, in your opinion?

11. What is the future of Islamic education in Ghana? What trends do you see?

Do you or would you welcome assistance from an organization such as UNICEF or USAID or even the government of Ghana?

Resource Checklist for School

Researchers, please check all that you personally observe in the school setting.

I. THIS SCHOOL HAS:

_____ 1 floor

_____ 2 floors

_____ More than 2 floors

_____ Dividers between the classrooms

_____ Walls between the classrooms

_____ A roof

_____ Toilets for the teachers

_____ Separate toilet facilities for female teachers

_____ Toilets for the students

_____ Separate toilet facilities for female students

_____ Running water

_____ Secure storage areas (rooms with locks)

_____ Electricity

_____ Supplies for the head master and the teachers (pencils, pens, paper, notebooks)

_____ Announcement (bulletin) boards

II. CLASSROOMS IN THIS SCHOOL HAVE:

- Blackboards
- Bulletin Boards
- Chalk
- Religious posters on the wall
- Children's work on the walls
- Educational posters on the wall
- Mats
- Student desks or tables with chairs or benches
- Basic textbooks for students to use
- Learning aids
- Windows (adequate light)
- Adequate space for student and teacher movement
- Secure storage area/cupboard

III. STUDENTS IN THIS SCHOOL HAVE:

- Notebooks (blank paper on which to write)
- Luh
- Writing implements
- Basic textbooks
- Student workbooks
- Adequate desk space (3 or less to 1 bench)
- Uniforms or smocks

Directions for USE of Classroom Observation Form (COF)

1. As much as possible, try to select “yes” or “no.” In most cases a teacher will either perform a behavior in the classroom or he will not. For example, if a teacher calls on six girls in a class where there are 30 girls, and calls on many more boys than girls overall, he should get a “no” for item #10 and not a “somewhat.” Just because he called on a few girls does not mean he is giving girls an equal opportunity. If he called on about 15 girls out of 30, you could give him a “yes.” “Somewhat” is not really relevant in this case—the teacher either treats boys and girls equally or he does not.
2. If there is an X in the “somewhat” column, you must select either “yes” or “no.”
3. Select “somewhat” only when it is clear that the teacher is attempting to do something but is not able to do it completely. For example, if the teacher does occasionally use praise or encouragement but does not do so frequently, he could get a “somewhat” because it is clear that he is carrying out the behavior listed in the item, but not regularly or consistently enough to merit a “yes.”
4. If an item is not applicable, simply put **NA** in the notes column and do not check “yes,” “no,” or “somewhat.” An example of where you might use **NA** is item #18; if no TLMs are available in the classroom, the item is irrelevant, as the teacher cannot use them effectively if they are not there. Do not use **NA** for a practice that the teacher could or should perform but does not.
5. You are strongly encouraged to put notes or observations related to your observations in the column to the right of the item and on the lines at the end of the observation form.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM (COF)

Name of Observer: _____

Name of School: _____

Type of School: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____ Male Female

Class and/or subject being observed: _____

Part I: Classroom Management and Organization	Yes	No	Somewhat	Notes on Teacher Behavior vis-à-vis Specific Item
1. The teacher calls on all or almost all the pupils individually during the lesson.				
2. The teacher both practices and encourages appropriate behavior in the classroom.				
3. Learning aids are visible in the classroom.				
4. The seating arrangement does not privilege one group of students (e.g., boys, girls, older children, younger children, etc.) over another.				
Part II: Instructional Practices	Yes	No	Somewhat	Notes on Teacher Behavior vis-à-vis Specific Item
5. The teacher clearly models or explains material to the pupils.				
6. At least 40 percent of the lesson allows pupils the opportunity to practice what they have learned.				
7. Interactivity occurs between pupils and the teacher.				

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM (COF) CONTINUED

Part II: Instructional Practices, continued	Yes	No	Somewhat	Notes on Teacher Behavior vis-à-vis Specific Item
1. The teacher allows interactivity between the students.				
2. The teacher asks the student challenging questions that demand reasoning.				
3. Encouragement is used rather than criticism.				
4. Rote learning is used in support of objectives throughout the lesson.				
5. The teacher helps the pupils use teaching and learning materials (TLMs) effectively.				
6. The teacher makes use of the chalkboard in an effective and useful way.				
Part III: Pupil Evaluation	Yes	No	Somewhat	Notes on Teacher Behavior vis-à-vis Specific Item
7. The teacher checks to see that students have understood the material presented.				
8. The teacher provides feedback to individual students to help them understand and correct mistakes.				

General Notes: _____

Signature of Evaluator

Date of Classroom Observation

Classroom Observation Form—Rating Criteria

The rating “N/A,” meaning “Not Applicable” should be given only if the item is not relevant to the school or to the type of lesson being taught. For example, the statements in the section on Gender would be marked “N/A” if the class were girls-only or boys-only. Do not use “N/A” for practices that the teacher does not perform, but could or should in the classroom context. Mark “NA” in the notes column if you decide it is appropriate as a mark for a particular item.

Classroom Management and Organization

Statement	Criteria or examples to keep in mind when rating
1. The teacher calls on the majority of the pupils individually during the lesson.	<p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses methods other than choral response to encourage student participation; • Avoids calling on the same pupils more than once, even if those pupils continue to raise their hands; • Makes sure that all of the pupils have a chance to respond to a question or to give their ideas or opinions; and • Finds ways to get reluctant or shy pupils to speak at least once during the class.
2. The teacher practices and encourages appropriate behavior in the classroom.	<p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models respect by being polite to students, not interrupting them, and showing them how to take turns; • Notices and rewards or praises good student behavior; • Is encouraging and polite when correcting students; and • Handles disruptions calmly and in a manner that allows the class to proceed in an orderly way.
3. Learning aids, related to any of the subjects taught in the school are visible in the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning aids, such as maps, charts, tables, posters, pictures, and drawings (whether printed or made by the teacher or pupils) are clearly displayed so that all pupils can see and use them.
4. The seating arrangement does not privilege one group of students (e.g., boys, girls, older children, younger children) over another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating boys on one side of the classroom and girls on the other is NOT an example of privileging one group over the other and should not be used as a reason to say “no” to number 4. • One group (e.g., girls, boys, older children) is not exclusively seated in the back of the room or very far off to the side. • One group of students is not privileged over another in terms of seating space (i.e., location in the classroom or number of students per desk or bench). • Boys, girls, and older children have places in the front, back, and middle of the classroom. • If boys and girls are segregated (one group on each side of the room) within the groups, the seating does not privilege one subgroup at the expense of the other.

Instructional Practices	
Statement	Criteria or examples to keep in mind when rating
5. During the presentation phase of the lesson, the teacher clearly models or explains material.	<p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces new material by making a connection between that material and concepts already familiar to the students; • Allocates sufficient time to explain new material; • If the new material is linguistic, models the new phrases/words/expressions; • Adapts introductory methods if pupils seem lost or confused; and • Uses instructional aids or realia wherever possible. <p>The children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate, by their expressions, responses, or questions, that they understand the materials.
6. At least 40 percent of the lesson is devoted to allowing children the opportunity to practice what they have learnt.	<p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes sure that pupils are allowed enough time to think before responding to a question; • Does not simply “lecture” or question pupils for the majority of the time; • Gives the pupils the opportunity to work in their exercise books or at the chalkboard; • Gives the pupils the opportunity to use their exercise books in class to practice what they’ve learned; • Gives pupils the chance to work together in some manner (teams, pairs, groups) in class so they can help and learn from each other; • Gives as many pupils as possible time to share their work with the class or a partner; and • Gives pupils time to work on problems either individually or in groups such that they are trying to solve the problem themselves and not just watching the teacher demonstrate how to do it.
7. Interactivity occurs between the pupils and the teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All or most of the pupils have a chance to respond to teacher queries. • Several students have a chance to ask questions of the teacher. • The teacher asks questions in a way that pupils will understand. • The teacher builds on pupils’ responses when asking a new question. • The teacher allows pupils enough time to reflect before answering.
8. The teacher allows interactivity between the students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher allows the pupils to work in pairs or groups to practice what they have learned. • The teacher allows pupils to consult with each other in relation to the lesson. • When groups are used, there is a balanced grouping of pupils (even numbers and genders). • Pupils listen to each other carefully and then respond. • Pupils are encouraged to ask each other questions, and to listen to each other carefully before responding. • Pupils are placed to work in pairs and groups to master concepts.
9. The teacher asks the student challenging questions that demand reasoning.	<p>In asking questions or giving assignments, the teacher calls upon the students to do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure things out • Do mental calculations • Do calculations on paper • Solve problems • Conjecture • Give their opinion • Explain their responses • Estimate • Analyze • Draw conclusions • Infer

<p>10. Encouragement is used rather than criticism.</p>	<p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses positive body language and smiles; • Uses encouragement and praise to give pupils feedback; • Uses a positive manner in urging pupils to correct themselves or others; • Facilitates pupils' response to questions or contributions to discussion in an encouraging manner; and • Does not make hurtful personal remarks, does not shout, and does not use corporal punishment.
<p>11. Rote learning is used in support of objectives throughout the lesson.</p>	<p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has student memorize segments of text; • Has students memorize information; and • Asks students to recall and present previously memorized text or information.
<p>12. Student-centered teaching strategies are used in support of the objectives throughout the lesson.</p>	<p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates the lesson or information therein to students lives; • Does not simply give the answer but asks students to come up with the answer; • Helps students find information/answers; • Involves students in the lesson; and • Allows students to move around (to come to the board, to come forward and ask questions).
<p>13. The teacher demonstrates good knowledge of the subject matter he or she is teaching.</p>	<p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not give incorrect information; • Is able to answer student questions correctly; and • Correctly models content when necessary (e.g., demonstrates a math problem correctly or speaks the language in question correctly).
<p>14. The students copy material off the board or from a book for more than 30 percent of the lesson time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students spend time copying off the board into their notebooks. • Students spend time copying materials onto a luh. • The teacher spends class time writing text on the board for students to copy.
<p>15. The teacher circulates within the classroom, to the extent possible, to check on what students are doing and help them if they have questions.</p>	<p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves around in the classroom, to all sides, and to the back of the room; • Watches the children work and checks on what they are doing in their seats; and • Offers feedback to individuals as he or she circulates.
<p>Gender</p>	
<p>Statement</p>	<p>Criteria or examples to keep in mind when rating</p>
<p>16. The teacher provides equal opportunities for both girls and boys to answer and equal attention to the responses of both.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution of questions and time given to pupils' answers is roughly equal to the gender make-up of the class. • The teacher pays the same amount of attention to girls as to boys when asking questions and listening to responses.
<p>17. The classroom provides a positive environment for girls and encourages their participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils are respected by the teacher and the teacher encourages pupils to respect each other. • Examples used in the lesson or teaching aids show girls in proactive, decision-making roles. • The teacher calls on girls to participate in the class as frequently as boys. • The teacher calls on girls to lead activities during the lesson. • The teacher does not criticize girls more harshly than boys.

Instructional Materials and Aids	
Statement	Criteria or examples to keep in mind when rating
18. The teacher helps the pupils use teaching and learning materials (TLMs) effectively.	<p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes sure that the pupils are at the correct place in the textbook and are following the lesson in the text; • Makes sure that pupils are using the textbook or teaching and learning materials correctly; and • Explains all directions and tasks adequately.
19. The teacher makes use of the chalkboard in an effective and useful way.	<p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has thought about what to write on the blackboard as part of the lesson plan; • Writes clearly and neatly so that pupils can read what is written without difficulty; • Allows pupils adequate time to copy from the blackboard before erasing; and • Encourages pupils to also use the blackboard as part of the lesson practice.
Pupil Evaluation	
Statement	Criteria or examples to keep in mind when rating
20. The teacher checks to see that students have understood the materials presented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher asks questions related to materials presented. • Teacher goes round to check pupils' notes/exercise books. • Teacher encourages pupils to respond to questions.
21. The teacher provides feedback to individual students to help them understand and correct mistakes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher feedback is not limited to "correct," and "incorrect," but explains why an answer is satisfactory or not. • When a pupil has made a mistake, the teacher's correction provides the pupil the tools to understand why her/his answer was incorrect. • Teachers provide feedback immediately after a student has offered an answer/response. • Pupils are encouraged to correct themselves, and to correct their peers in a positive and supportive way.

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROPRIETORS

Researchers, please read the statement below to the subjects to whom you will administer the questionnaire.

Hello. My name is X and I am part of a team conducting a study on the Islamic Education Sector in Ghana. The Islamic Education Unit of the GES has endorsed the study and we are carrying it out with their permission.

As many children in Ghana attend Islamic schools, we want to understand better the type and quality of schools that exist.

The proprietor is a key figure in the establishment and direction of a school. The proprietor directly influences the selection of curriculum, teachers, how subjects are taught, and how the school is run. Proprietors make key decisions every day about education that have an enormous impact on the education a child receives in their school. This research consists of talking to 'ulama, school proprietors, head teachers, and teachers, both formally and informally, about Islamic schools. We would like to ask you some questions today about your school and your role as a school proprietor.

Your real name will not be used in any publication or report and all records will be kept confidential.

Do you have any questions?

Do you consent to completing this questionnaire?

GHANA ISLAMIC EDUCATION SECTOR STUDY EDC and NGND

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROPRIETORS

Researcher _____

Proprietor _____

Name of School _____

Type of School _____

Location _____ Date _____

THE RESEARCHER SHOULD GO THROUGH THE ITEMS IN EACH SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITH THE RESPONDENT, TICKING OR CIRCLING ALL GUIDED REPOSES AND MAKING NOTES WHERE APPROPRIATE.

1. BACKGROUND ON PROPRIETOR AND SCHOOL

i) Are you the Proprietor of the school? Yes No

(If yes) When did you become the Proprietor? _____

How did you become the proprietor? _____

ii) What is your level of education?

a) Basic b) Secondary c) Diploma d) Graduate e) Post Graduate f) Other

(Explain) _____

iii) Which of the following categories of schools does your school fall under?

a) Traditional Qur’anic b) IEU c) Islamic School (Monday to Friday) d) Islamic Weekend School e) Other (Explain) _____

iv) What level of education does the school offer?

a) KG b) Primary c) JSS d) SSS e) Other (Explain) _____

v) What Islamic Sect do you belong to?

a) Ahmadiyya b) Tijaniyya c) Ahlul Sunna d) Shia e) Other

(Explain) _____

vi) Do your sectarian beliefs influence what is taught in the school? Yes No

vii) What makes your school different from other schools? _____

2. LEGAL STATUS AND MANDATE OF SCHOOL

i) Is the school registered? Yes No

ii) (If yes) When was the school registered? _____

iii) (If no) Why is the school not registered? _____

iv) Do you have any registration number, certificate, or any other document to show?

Yes No (If yes) Can I see it? _____

THE RESEARCHER SHOULD TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT CERTIFICATES, LETTERS OF ABSORPTION, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS AND COMPLETE THE EVALUATION OF LEGAL STATUS AND MANDATE OF SCHOOL BELOW.

a) Satisfactory

b) Not Satisfactory

c) Legal Document

d) Unfamiliar Document

e) Other (explain) _____

v) If the school is not under IEU why is it so? _____

vi) Does the government recognize the school? Yes No

Why do you say so? _____

3. INSPECTION

i) Does the government send inspectors to the school? Yes No

ii) (If yes) Where do they come from?

a) IEU b) GES c) Both IEU and GES d) I Don't Know

iii) Does anybody else send inspectors to the school? Yes No

(If yes) Who also sends inspectors to the school? _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROPRIETORS

4. PURPOSE, MISSION, AND VISION

i) What are the reasons for setting up the school?

a) Provide affordable education

b) Raise children in Islamic environment

c) Make children conscious Muslims

d) Other (Explain) _____

5. EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF SCHOOL

i) How would you describe the growth of the school?

a) Steady growth

b) Steady decline

c) Slow growth

d) Slow decline

e) Other (Explain) _____

ii) Number of pupils in the school two years ago Boys _____ Girls _____

iii) Number of pupils in the school last year Boys _____ Girls _____

iv) Number of pupils in the school this year Boys _____ Girls _____

v) Are there any of your pupils who dropped out of school? Yes No

vi) (If yes) What number of the boys dropped out of school? _____

vii) (If yes) What number of the girls dropped out of school? _____

viii) What reasons account for the boys dropping out of school? _____

ix) What reasons account for the girls dropping out of school? _____

x) Why do more girls (or boys) drop out of school? _____

xi) How would you classify the children who attend the school?

- a) Children from poor homes
- b) Children from rich homes
- c) Children from both rich and poor homes
- d) Children from the community and its surroundings
- e) Children from other communities

xii) Why is the school attended by children from the community? _____

xiii) Why is the school attended by children from other communities? _____

6. MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL

i) Who manages the school? (Circle all that apply)

- a) The Proprietor b) The Headmaster c) The Community
- d) School Management Committee/PTA
- e) Other (Explain) _____

7. FINANCING OF SCHOOL

i) How is the school mainly financed? (Circle all that apply)

- a) Proprietor's own resources b) From the school fees c) Government support
- d) External funding e) Other (Explain) _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROPRIETORS

- ii) Do the children pay any fees? Yes No
- iii) (If yes) How much do they pay per term or month (as the case may be)? _____

- iv) How many teachers and other staff do you have in the school? _____
- v) What is the number of male secular teachers? _____
- vi) What is the number of female secular teachers? _____
- vi) How many Arabic teachers do you have in the school? _____
- viii) Who are the other non-teaching staff in the school?
- x) Do you have a salary as the proprietor of the school? Yes No
(If yes) What is your salary range?
- a) Less than 500,000 Cedis
 - b) Between 500,000 and 1 Million Cedis
 - c) Between 1 Million and 2 Million Cedis
 - d) Between 2 Million and 3 Million Cedis
 - e) More than 3 Million Cedis
 - f) If you have no salary, do you have another job or business? Yes No
- xi) Are the teachers and other staff of the school paid salaries?
- xii) (If yes) How much is an average teacher paid? _____
- xiii) (If no) Why do the teachers continue to teach in the school? _____

- xiv) Does the school have an Old Students' Association? Yes No
- xv) (If yes) Do they hold regular meetings? Yes No
- xvi) Do they support the school? Yes No
- xvii) (If yes) How do they support the school? _____

xiv) Tell me about three past students of the school, who are they, and what are they doing?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

xv) Does the school have a PTA? Yes No

a) (If yes) How long has the PTA been in existence? _____

b) (If no) Why does the school not have a PTA? _____

xvi) When was the last time the school held a PTA meeting? _____

xvii) What is the attitude of parents towards the attendance of meetings?

a) Good

b) Bad

c) Average (Fairly balanced)

xviii) What is the reason for the above attitude? _____

xvix) Which of the parents are most unlikely to attend a PTA meeting?

a) Fathers

b) Mothers

c) Both (Equally)

What has the PTA been able to do so far to assist the school? _____

8. CONCLUSION

How would you make the school better? _____

APPENDIX E

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER 12, 2006—DECEMBER 9, 2006

Week of November 12—18

13 Nov. Monday	Researcher Training
14 Nov. Tuesday	Instrument validation (in schools)
15 Nov. Wednesday	Researcher Training

Week of November 19—25

20 Nov. Monday	Begin data collection in Accra—School 1A Begin data collection in Tamale—School 1T
21 Nov. Tuesday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 1A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 1T Begin data collection in Upper West Region—School 1W
22 Nov. Wednesday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 2A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 2T Data collection continues in Upper West—School 1W
23 Nov. Thursday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 2A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 2T Data collection continues in Upper West—School 2W
24 Nov. Friday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 3A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 3T Data collection continues in Upper West—School 2W

Week of November 26—Dec. 2

27 Nov. Monday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 3A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 3T Data collection continues in Upper West—School 3W Data collection begins in Kumasi—School 1K and School 2K
28 Nov. Tuesday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 4A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 4T Data collection continues in Upper West—School 3W Data collection continues in Kumasi—School 1K, School 2K

APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

29 Nov. Wednesday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 4A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 4T Data collection continues in Upper West—School 4W Data collection continues in Kumasi—School 3K, School 4K
30 Nov. Thursday	Data collection continues in Accra—School 5A Data collection continues in Tamale—School 5T Data collection continues in Upper West—School 4W Data collection continues in Kumasi—School 3K, School 4K
1 Dec. Friday	Data collection continues in Accra—final day, School 5A Data collection continues in Tamale—final day, School 5T

ISLAMIC EDUCATION SECTOR STUDY | Ghana

Prepared By | Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)

Northern Ghana Network for Development

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