

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY OF BRIDGE OF HOPE GIRLS' SCHOOL
EDUCATION MODEL IN POST- CONFLICT LIBERIA: A CASE
STUDY OF AN ALL –GIRLS SCHOOL IN AN INFORMAL
SETTING IN THE CITY OF MONROVIA**

**BY
JACKSON GARPU WEAH**

A Dissertation submitted to the University in partial fulfillment
of the degree of Doctor of Ministry Leadership for
Change and Reconciliation in Africa

Approved:

Supervisor:

Dr. George Renner

Internal Examiner:

Dr. Rosemary Mbogo

External Examiner:

Prof. Mary Getui

July, 2017

STUDENT DECLARATION

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I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College
or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Africa International
University or the Examiners

(Signed)

Jackson Garpu Weah

July, 2017

ABSTRACT

This qualitative empirical research used a “case- study” methodology presents the evidence derived from empirical research that the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls’ School is actually producing significant identifiable changes in girls. Some of the factors which were examined to indicate successful change include creation of pathways for disadvantaged girls to access the process of, retention of students in the institution, progression of students to higher grades at appropriate times, and completion of school by the girls.

This investigative research sought to provide a comprehensive case study of the Bridge of Hope Girls’ School within the context of all-girls education model for girls. The main focus of this dissertation is to propose new paradigm of doing girls’ education herein referred to as the Bridge of Hope Girls’ Transformational Education (BOHGTE) Model. A Christian transformational education (girls-only) model provided at BOH that has produced an empirical evidence of a significant measurable positive difference in reducing cultural disparity between boys and girls education, transform negative cultural assumptions and changing social narratives of girls in ways that lead to increased enrollment, retentions and progression of girls in Monrovia informal setting. The study participants included the girls at Bridge of Hope, alumni, administrators, faculty, staff, and trustees. Data was gathered through opened -ended interviews and document analysis. With thorough analysis of all data (interviews and documents) the following themes surfaced: Environment aids student learning outcomes; Christian worldview and ethical foundation of BOH model ;Organizational systems; Gender differences in how boys and girls learn and behave in educational setting; Emphasis on staff development -qualified teachers and training teachers to do “transformational education; Distractions in co-education; In classes that are separated by gender, male and female students work and learn on the same level as their peers and relevant curriculum for girls emphasizing implicit and explicit contents.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the precious girls at Bridge of Hope Girls School who have allowed me to share their journey and stories through this research. It is also dedicated to all teen- age girls and young women in post conflict Liberia struggling with issues of cultural disparity, gender based violence and stereotyping, prejudice, poverty , illiteracy, negative cultural practices and identity crises whose tears this research attempts to capture. This research is also dedicated to my deceased Mother Daytee Weah who sacrificed her tender teen age life to save the entire Weah's family from being sold as a slave to the Americo-Liberians along the seacoast. Also to my late Dad Weah Geesanwon Fouah whose outstanding leadership qualities and core values transformed my ministry' life and services to humanity.

This dissertation is also dedicated to Sis. Nancy Cricket Barrozzotto and partners at God's Economy that funded this research project and provided airfares to Nairobi Kenya. To my Mentor and hero Apostle Alfred Jackson/TOP/SC/USA whose prayers and encouragement led to the completion of this dissertation. To my partners and friends Hank, Marilyn and Steve at BOH/USA. Finally to Victoria Gbeh Weah and our four precious girls: Josephine, Jackie, Pauline and Peace.

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In a unique way I want to acknowledge all friends, organizations, families and ministries who, in one way or the other, immensely contributed to the completion of this work.

And to God....Nancy Cricket Barrozotto and the Board of God's Economy for their financial and moral and prayer support, which enabled me to comfortably complete the studies at Africa International University.

The Executive Council of the Hope Renewal Ministries and the entire membership of the Hope of Praise that granted me sabbatical to complete this tedious task over the period of four years.

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Sincere gratitude go to Dr. George Renner whose tireless efforts and transformational leadership led to the completion of this work. Grateful to Bishop Charles Kaloki for giving me accommodation during my three years residences.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFELL	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
BOHGTE	Bridge of Hope Girls' Transformational Education
BOHGS	Bridge of Hope Girls' School
CRC	Constitution Review Commission
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalist
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Development Product
ICG	International Crises Group
iPRS	interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
LET	Liberia Education Trust
LISGIS	Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NSCR	National School Census Report
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPGE	National Policy on Girls' Education

PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
UBF	United Brother Fellow
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Funds
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Developments Program
UPE	Universal Primary education
USAID	United States Aids for International Development
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WANEP	West African Network for Peace
WIPNET	Women for Peace Network

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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to present the evidence derived from empirical research that the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls' School in Liberia is actually producing significant identifiable changes in girls. Some of the factors that will be examined to indicate successful change include creation of pathways for disadvantaged girls to access the process, retention of students in the institution, progression of students to higher grades at appropriate times, and completion of school as stipulated by the curriculum. Qualitative empirical research using a "case study" methodology which examines this model school will add to the knowledge base regarding girls' education in post-conflict Liberia.

Problem Statement

Liberia, like many other African countries, finds herself with an unbalanced ratio of girls to boys undergoing education.¹ The fourteen years of war in Liberia, coupled with low standards of education, exacerbated the high rate of illiteracy and poverty especially among women and young girls. Moreover, half a million children do not attend school. Two thirds of the students who do attend schools have been taught by

¹Peter Ben. Deputy Minister of Education. UNMIL *Regular Press Briefing. Liberia Government Drafts National Policy on Girls' Education*. January 29, 2006.

unqualified teachers. “Girls’ enrollment rate lags far behind that of boys.”² There is a high rate of school dropouts among girls due to teenage pregnancy, early marriages and harmful traditional practices. Girls are dropping out of school at an alarming proportion to cook and clean for their family, or earn a meager living selling food or fresh water on the streets.³ A high percentage of girls are being denied education in Liberia due to limited number of schools, a situation that increases the gap between girls and boys education in a nation with a high illiteracy rate of 90% among girls and women.⁴ Furthermore, the strong preservation of traditional social norms and values in rural areas exerts a negative impact on entry, retention, progression and completion of school by girls and women.

The present situation for girls in Liberia is quite alarming. The high incidence of poverty, discrimination, and gender disparity for women and girls in the Liberian society continues to be a major factor that has a negative impact on the girl-child’s attempt to access and benefit from educational opportunities. Poverty has been universally affirmed as a key obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights, and it has a visible gender profile. Poverty commonly results from violations of human rights, including right to education. This reality disproportionately affects girls, trapping them in a vicious downward circle of denied rights that in turn leads to exclusion from the labor market and marginalization into the informal sector or unpaid work. This

²Tina Hyder . Open Society Foundation. Voices. President Johnson Sirleaf backs early childhood development in Liberia. June 4, 2014. The first Liberian early childhood development conference held in Monrovia in April 2014. It was an important step towards positive change. Organized by the Ministry of Education, and attended by over 500 delegates with supports from UNICEF and Open Society Foundations.

³Deputy Minister of Education. UNMIL Regular Press Briefing. Liberia Government drafts national policy on girls’ education. January 29, 2006

⁴ Mission and vision More Than Me: Retrieved from:
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/09/15/more-than-me-academy-aims-to-get-liberia-s-girls-off-the-streets.html>

perpetuates and increases poverty among women.⁵ Poverty's effects interact with security fears over sexual violence and attacks by groups opposed to gender equity in education to keep girls out of school.⁶

Families prioritize boy's education – only 44 percent of the country's primary school students are girls, compared to 55.6 percent of boys. The divide widens in secondary school, where 37.4 percent of the student body is female and 62.6 percent is male. Sexual harassment, abuse and sex for grades are also major problems in Liberian schools.⁷

Women and girls perform most of the productive activities in the society. Many girls provide domestic labor and are engaged in small scale trade to supplement family income, leaving them with little or no time to acquire an education. Rape and sexual violence has accompanied armed conflicts throughout history, yet insufficient attention has been paid to the devastating effects on education. Prioritizing girls' education (especially through developing single-gender schools) is one of the most effective ways of closing the gap between boys and girls education. So to summarize the problem to which this study is responding, we are saying that...

1. Liberia's 14 year civil war had devastating effects on the nation's educational

system (school are few and teachers are poorly trained);

⁵Vision and Mission for African Women Educationalist (FAWE) Strategic Plan 2008-2012. 2008.

⁶ Global Monitoring Report for references. Retrieved from www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2011-conflict/.

⁷ Mission and vision More Than Me: Retrieved from: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/09/15/more-than-me-academy-aims-to-get-liberia-s-girls-off-the-streets.html>

2. There is a systemic pattern of discrimination against girls in the Liberian culture
3. Traditional cultural values do not encourage the girl-child to pursue formal education
4. There is a large disparity in school enrollment rates between boys and girls
5. Liberia has a high rate of illiteracy among girls and women.

The lack of education consigns a vast majority of girls and women to a life of poverty and makes them vulnerable to further denial of human rights

Audience /Ministry Opportunity

The Christian community in post-conflict Liberia is the primary audience to whom this study is addressed. Even among Christians, the value of educating a girl child remains debatable. Creating awareness of the needs of girls and mobilizing church leaders, para-church organizations, alumni of all girls' education-model and conventional schools, potential and prominent women, and marginalized women and girls could help to advance the "transformative" agenda for educating girls in post-conflict Liberia. The Christian community, when effectively mobilized, could serve as a possible advocate to minimize the high cultural disparity between boys' and girls' education as well as bringing hope, help, and healing to this most vulnerable constituency (girls and women).

The Church remains the conscience of the Liberian society, custodian of values and ideals of Christ, as well as the voice of the voiceless. The success of all girls education model in post-war Liberia is therefore, predicated on building a strong team of transformational leaders to aggressively foster change and serve as agents

of this new paradigm.⁸ “Transformational leadership is about leadership that creates positive change in the followers whereby they take care of each other's interests and act in the interests of the group as a whole. In this leadership style, the leader enhances the motivation, moral and performance of his follower group.”⁹ Like Jesus who is our role model, these transformational leaders should emulate his kingdom example to go against the status quo and to care or create a safe-space for women and girls in our society. The Church is that potential instrument instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ with an imperative to create that enabling environment to promote this new paradigm of all- girl’s education model.

Potential Ministry Implications

Research has shown that providing an opportunity to educate women and girls is the single most effective strategy to ensure the well-being and health of children, and the long-term success of developing economies.¹⁰ The education of women and girls is essential not only to promoting gender equality, but also in addressing the full

⁸Hope Renewal Ministries, an indigenous Church Ministry (the vision bearer) has given all her meager resources, time and supports to ensure disadvantaged girls get practically free education in a conducive atmosphere freed from boy’s pressure. The unflinching moral and financial supports to disadvantaged girls in post conflict Liberia has served as a vehicle for driving this new paradigm. The Abba Arms along with friends of Bridge of Hope USA has invested enormous resources for this cause resulting into sustained support for this initiative. God’s Economy a faithful partner, has sacrificially contributed her resources to training the researcher in acquiring more skills in transformative leadership, establishing a feeding program, agricultural farm and providing logistical supports etc. thus creating an enabling environment for achieving transformative education for the disadvantaged girl in a nation with a high rate of poverty and illiteracy. The Tabernacle of Praise International with headquarters in York South Carolina/USA has been a key supporter for this indigenous initiative to achieve the goal of transforming one girl child in a nation where girl’s education is discouraged. Several partnerships in East and West Africa with ministries such as (Eternity Gospel Church, East Africa, and Liberia : Christ Missionary Assembly, Lighthouse Ministry, New Life Tabernacle and many Christian organizations helping to drive this urgency of transforming the social narratives of the girls.

⁹James MacGregor Burns. Transformational leadership. Retrieved from: <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/leadership-james-m-burns/1007313756#productInfoTabs>.

¹⁰Educating girls: Retrieved from <http://www.educatinggirlsmatters.org/challenge.html>

range of challenges presently unfolding in post war Liberia.¹¹ Women are the face of future development, therefore by educating women and girls, all of society benefits. There is plenty of evidence that educating girls is not just the right thing to do, it is the best thing to do. Its long term impact is both social and economic.¹² The Global Campaign for Education asserts that,

“Education enables girls and women to improve their livelihoods; widespread research demonstrates that investing in girl’s education is an effective route to ensuring both long term economic growth and sustainable social development.”¹³

The Clinton Global Initiative also outlined the compelling benefits associated with girls' education:

“Girls' education yields some of the highest returns of all development investments, yielding both private and social benefits that accrue to individuals, families, and society.”¹⁴

By educating girls in a developing country like Liberia, girls themselves and their nation eventually grow. The benefits associated with educating girls and women are tremendous and effective in reducing gender disparity and population growth, improving health of women and their families, decreasing poverty, and contributing to gross national product as well as reducing education disparity. Efforts to get more girls into school may improve the development of the entire community. In essence,

¹¹ Educating girls: Retrieved from <http://www.educatinggirlsmatters.org/challenge.html>

¹²Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn. Half the Sky. Turning oppression into opportunity for women.

¹³Global Campaign for education: Retrieved from: <http://www.globalcampaignforeducation.nl/1/n/library/download/584078>. One extra year of primary school boosts a girl’s eventual wages by 10-20%. Women and girls also make good use of the money they earn, reinventing 90% into their families compared to only 30-40% for men. Increasing women’s education also increases national growth, a 1% increase in the number of women with secondary education can increase a country’s annual per capital income growth by an average of 0.3 percentage points.

¹⁴ *Global Sources: The Global Fund for Women World Bank, the Clinton Global Initiative.*

investing in girl's education is wise, strategic and "profitable" approach to tackling numerous problems in the Liberian society.

The words of Lawrence Summers (former US Treasury Secretary) summarize the importance and urgency attached to women and girls' education:

"In a former capacity I undertook research yes—a solid source that convinced me that girls' education represented the single highest return investment that any developing country in the world could make. Nothing that has occurred since then has led me to change my view. The World Bank has recently estimated that if sub-Saharan Africa had seen just the East Asian rate of improvement in the gender gap in education since 1970, GDP and living standards would be 15-25 per cent higher in those countries today.

Education always pays off. What is especially attractive about educating girls is the additional benefit that accrues to empowering the member of the household with the greatest capacity to alter the life prospects of the generations to come.

Letting girls go to school, learn to read and experience more of the world beyond their homes makes them better off immediately and enriches their families. The result, in country after country, is smaller, healthier families enjoying longer, happier lives. The cost of keeping girls in school for just one extra year more than pays for itself in the social and economic benefits in the form of higher incomes and a smaller number of infant and maternal deaths.

Educating girls holds the further benefit of helping to prevent the spread of HIV/Aids. Studies in Zaire, Zimbabwe and elsewhere all suggest strongly that higher rates of female secondary school enrolment are associated with a much slower rate of transmission of HIV. And across the developing world, data confirm that levels of education are now highly correlated with the probability that women will practice safe sex."¹⁵

Stakeholders

The Liberian Ministry of Education, parents, community members along with local and international non-governmental organizations remains to be major stakeholders in girls' education because they craft, strategize, fund, and implement

¹⁵ Lawrence Summers. Benefits of women and girls education. Retrieved from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/education-will-help-to-solve-africas-problems-714426.html>

education programs. In response to international protocols and commitments, the Ministry of Education has prioritized the implementation of the Education For All (EFA) Goals through the development of a National Action Plan. The plan includes programs focused on issues such as early childhood education, free and compulsory primary education, gender equality, adult education, skills training for out of school children, the Accelerated Learning Program and HIV/AIDS awareness. This National Action Plan led to the enactment of the Education Law of 2001, making primary education free and compulsory for all Liberian children.¹⁶ To specifically address these challenges, in 2006, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the President of Liberia Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and international organizations and friendly countries launched the National Policy on Girl's Education and established a Girls' Education Unit within the Department of Planning, Research and Development.¹⁷ This national initiative was timely and historic in post-war Liberia. It helped to undergird, clarify, and articulate the road map to minimizing cultural disparity between boys' and girls' education.

The second major category of stakeholders in relation-to transformative girls' education in post-conflict Liberia are international and national NGOs (UNICEF,

¹⁶Policies to improve Girls' Education in Liberia. Revised National Policy on Girls' Education. (Monrovia: Ministry of Education), 2013. 1. The education Reform Act of 2011 was signed into law on August 8, 2011, replacing the Education Law of 2001, approved January 8, 2002. Some of the objectives of the Act are as follows: Promote gender equity and equality throughout the educational system and opportunities for education. Promote equal access to educational opportunities for Liberians without discrimination of any kind. Promote and protect the concept of human rights for all Liberians, both with respect to access and opportunities for quality education. At the UN Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995, governments established universal primary education as one of the key human development targets for 2015. According to Article 28 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child in 1989 November, the right to basic education is the basic right of the children and call for all nations to make primary education compulsory and available free to all. The problem of gender bias on education is common especially in developing countries; the gender bias against the education for female begins at home. According to the UN, girls make up 46 percent of primary enrolment, which then takes a huge drop to 16 percent in secondary school enrolment.

¹⁷ President of Liberia. Speech on girls and women education Retrieved from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/education-will-help-to-solve-africas-problems-714426.html>

FAWE, USAID, OXFAM, PLAN, IRC), that provide funding for the implementation of education projects and human power for training. They should keep being engaged and mobilized to see the urgent need to change the social narratives of marginalized girls.¹⁸

Third major category of actors are parent-teacher associations and community leaders. This research is cognizant of this huge task, hence it has engaged several parents of our students living mostly in the informal setting of Matadi and Lakpazee communities where Bridge of Hope Girls' School is located. In the course of the research, these parents were contacted to find out the reasons as to why school entry, retention, progression and completion among girls is low.

Parent-Teacher Association is a major actor and has a great stake in the process of helping to reduce the cultural disparity between girls' and boys' education. Greater parental involvement in school governance helps all children not just girls.

The transformative model of girls' education requires greater community participation and ownership; hence parents are major players in driving this change. Major change is said to be impossible nor sustained for a long time unless major stakeholders are active supporters.

Background and Importance of the Study

Girls' education in most traditional cultures, including Liberia, is regarded as less important than that of boys. In traditional cultures, the female role remains tied

¹⁸ Several stakeholders meeting were held with these organizations to clarify and articulate the thrust of this new model. The researcher participated in several strategic planning meetings to promote girls' education in Liberia; one specific launch of the revised national policy mobilization and awareness consultation at the Ministry of Education on October 2013. Several actions were taken to implement the national policy on girls' education. There are still huge hurdles to this implementation because the government had failed to make budgetary allocation for the Department of girls' education thus paralyzing the work of the entity.

to marriage and child rearing and therefore girls are often given household and child-care duties instead of education.¹⁹ In Liberia all the indigenous groups are patrilineal and have ideologies of male dominance. Many girls fall behind boys in many things and especially education because of gender discrimination in schools and poor education quality. Girls often suffer due to a curriculum deficient of choice and learning materials, as well as biased methods and teaching attitudes.²⁰ The issue of gender equality and access to education and its consideration to the alleviation of poverty (and more particularly, the issues of single –sex education) still remains a complex issue and subject of debates in many circles of our society. Liberia is still battling to narrow the gap between boys’ and girls’ education.

Traditional practices, along with a lack of schools and financial support, are some of the challenges which must be overcome.²¹ Girls’ education is a major human rights issue, and providing education to girls is the best investment a developing country can make. However, more than five decades after the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted, many countries, including Liberia, are still a long way from achieving education for all, including that of girls. Individuals and other stakeholders have been devising ways to address the issue of gender parity and equal access to education in a culture where girls are lagging behind boys in education.

The researcher and his wife (Victoria) saw these social perils that presented themselves in the form of injustices and discrimination against teen age girls; so they

¹⁹Deputy Ministry of Education. UNMIL Regular Press Briefing. Liberia Government drafts national policy on girls’ education. January 29, 2006.

²⁰Instructor -Bridge of Hope Girls’ School. Personal Interview. April 2014.

²¹ Policies to improve Girls’ Education in Liberia. National Policy on Girls’ Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 2006, 10-15

were convicted to intervene because of their Christian convictions to establish the Bridge of Hope Girls' School as a rescue missions. The researcher serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the wife as Principal, respectively.

Definition of Concepts and Terms

The purpose of this study is to present the evidence derived from empirical research of the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls.' This research has employed concepts and terms which are to this research not unique, but clarifying exactly how the terms are being used in this dissertation.

Child Labor - work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as any human being under the age of 18.²²

Completion- means a girl child completing her school in the required time frame set by the new Education Reform Act of 2011, just as in the case of her boys' counterpart.

Completion Rate - percentage of students completing the last year of primary school. It is calculated by taking the total number of students in the last grade of primary school, minus the number of repeaters in that grade, divided by the total number of children of official graduation age.²³

²²United Nations. Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). New York: United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

²³Policies to improve Girls' Education in Liberia. National Policy on Girls' Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education. October. 2013. 34

Disparity - means lack of similarity or equality; inequality; difference . In this research the assumption is that in a just society there will be approximately equal numbers of boys and girls enrolled in primary education.

Early Marriages – getting married before attaining the right age of 18. The Liberia Marital Law states that the appropriate age for a girl is 18 and for a boy 21

Entry- According to the Education Reform Acts of 2011, the specified age of 3 years is the time frame for every child in Liberia, including girls, to enter school. The age of entry into primary-education, which begins with grade 1 is age 6 and is in line with regional and international standards.

Girl Child - the term “girl-child” simply refers to a female offspring under the age of 18. The expression implies that girls are different from boys or face special circumstances.²⁴ In a typical Liberian culture there is an age –old negative cultural assumption that “girls/women are another man’s property” hence they are in transition and as such they should not be given formal education.

Gender equality - a situation in which women and men have equal conditions and opportunities for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural, and political development. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full

²⁴ Desiree Segura-April. Asbury Seminary CD551 Children’s Seminar. March 19, 2011.

partners in their home, their community and their society. ‘Gender equality starts with equal valuing of girls’ and boys’.²⁵

Gender equity in education – this refers to fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective educational needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligation and education opportunities

Life skills - these are the psychological and social capacities that would enable one to cope with life and its stresses. They are part of the curriculum to prepare pupils for real living and to be more self-assured and self-reliant. For instance, at Bridge of Hope Girl’ School, the curriculum provides students with life skill training in “Home Economics”, computer literacy, and agriculture.

Progression – is defined as a movement or development toward a destination or a more advanced state, especially gradually or in stages. In the context of education, we refer to the institution’s capacity to monitor the upward trend of the girl child at every stage of her school. Educators ask such questions as: Is she succeeding or not; what are the challenges? What does she need to do more? How to overcome her hurdles in order to keep her excelling?

Retention – speaks of creating every available means to keep the girls in school.

Transformative learning- is “the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-set) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or

²⁵National Policy on Girl’s Education. Ministry of Education, Monrovia, Liberia. October 2013. 34

justified to guide action.”²⁶ A “meaning perspective” refers to “the structure of cultural and psychological assumptions within which our past experience assimilates and transforms new experience”.²⁷ The end result of transformative learning is that previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are examined and decisions made to either keep the old ones or give way to the formation of new ones.²⁸

Transactional sex -this is a transaction wherein an older man solicits illicit sex from a teen age girl in exchange for gifts or services such as mobile phones, money, or employment. Transactional sex is prevalent in post war Liberia among teen age school girls where the rate of poverty and illiteracy still remain very high. It is possible channel for the fast spread of HIV and AIDS among girls and women.

Underlying Assumptions and Research Objectives

As we stated from the onset, the purpose of this study is to present the evidence derived from empirical research that the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls’ School is actually producing significant identifiable positive changes in girls. The research is founded on certain assumptions which we believe are validated through interdisciplinary research, including empirical analysis.

Assumptions

1. There are theological and philosophical grounds for insisting on gender equality in education. The wide disparity between the numbers of boys

²⁶J. Mezirow, & Associates. (Eds.), *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on A Theory In Progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2000, 7-8

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

versus girls enrolled in Liberian schools, i.e. 44 % girls to 55.5 boys, is immoral. To deny women and girls their basic human rights is theologically abhorrent.

2. Traditional values which undergird the pervasive gender-based discrimination against girls in Liberian society are unjust and destructive to society.
3. To develop a just and prosperous society, Liberia must educate every girl to enable her to achieve her full potential. National economic development is contingent on providing opportunity to girls.
4. As a result of the cultural patterns and systemic prejudices which operate in Liberian society, Liberian girls will experience a greater degree of positive transformation if they are educated in all-girls (single gender) schools.
5. Education provided in a Christian all-girls school model can be demonstrated to result in significant transformation in the lives of girls.
Specifically:
 - A. This study assumes that introducing a new model of Christian girls-only learning that seeks to promote transformative learning could encourage entry, retention, progression and completion of school by girls.
 - B.** This study also assumes that establishing all girls' schools could minimize factors responsible for high cultural disparity between boys

and girls education as well as effectively promote self-esteem, self-worth and values of girls.

Statement of the Research Questions

- RQ #1 – What are the primary contributing factors that result in the disparity between boys’ and girls’ education that could impact entry, retention, progression and completion of school in a same-sex versus a mixed school?
- RQ#2- What evidence exists to verify that the government’s policy on girls’ education, massive mobilization, and huge international resources have impacted the lives of girls in the Liberian society?
- RQ#3 -What evidence exists to verify that a girls-only environment does create a gender-sensitive learning environment which produces more positive outcomes in a girl’s educational experience?
- RQ#4- What is the evidence that a Christian transformative education (girls-only) model such as that offered at Bridge of Hope can make a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of girls?

Desired Outcomes

This research is keen to recognize previous and on-going works done in this area by either individuals, past or present governments, and national or international NGOs, but it has equally noted with serious concern, the level of work still needed to be done to enhance the well-being of girls and women in post-conflict Liberia. This piece of literature is not asserting that these desired outcomes will immediately provide solutions to the immense, complex, and deep-seated cultural problems associated with girls and women education in the nation as it is recovering from war and natural disaster. However, the researcher is certain that with the actual implementation of the government’s national policy on girls’ and women’s education and by adopting the BOHGTE Model the life of a girl child could be transformed in post conflict Liberia. What this research seeks is to bring about a long term impact in

the lives of these vulnerable girls. Everything that this research is attempting to do, in addition to our primary goal, in the lives of these girls is geared towards bringing about sustained transformation that will help to get them from their present state of low self-esteem, inferiority, illiteracy to become girls or women of noble character as well as valuable assets to the society (desired future).

- First, the impact made by this BOHGTE model could be shared with major donors, partners, and NGOs with an aim of encouraging them to embrace the concept. This would result in a decision by donors to provide grants for funding 15 new Bridge of Hope girls' schools in the 15 political sub-divisions of Liberia
- Second, the national government will begin to play a more proactive role in assisting all-girl's education model school like BOH to enroll girls and women at all-girls' education model school.
- Third, effective programs will be designed at the national level in partnership with all – girls education model schools, parents, and community leaders to encourage entry, progressions, and completion of education on the part of girls.
- Fourth, this research seeks to encourage the Liberian Ministry of Education to implement resolutions and recommendation gathered by advocates of girls' education in the past years lying on the shelves that could help bring about changes in the life of a girl-child at all girls education model school. Girls' and women's education in Liberia has been limited to awareness campaigns, capacity building seminars and workshops, and advocacy roles being played by international and national NGOs.

- Fifth, this research is seeking to foster the formation of a national movement of boys and men/women and girls that will be responsible for the promotion of “model schools” in post-war Liberia as a means to enhance girls’ and women’s education. The National Association for the Promotion of Girls’ and Women Education (NAPGWE) will facilitate the development and coordination of a national movement of women and girls.
- Six, Christians of many denominations will unite in championing the cause of justice for girls and in promoting “Bridge of Hope” model for education. Churches of Liberia should cooperate and create 15 new “Bridge of Hope” model schools within the 15 sub political divisions of Liberia which they could sponsor.

The desired outcomes of this research will not be possible unless this work mobilizes well informed leaders (transformational leaders) to translate these noble desired outcomes into practical realities in the scope of this new paradigm by creatively instituting change and creating a vision to guide the change through inspiring others to follow.

Integrated Transformational Leadership

One of the factors affecting quality and access to girls’ education is related to governance and leadership. Partial implementation of the Education Reform Act and lack of awareness of, and an implementation plan for, the National Policy on Girl’s Education are also governance and leadership factors. Therefore in light of the above cultural reality, a new kind of leadership is required to create a vision to guide the change through inspiration. Present leadership styles (transactional) will only perpetuate the status quo and seek to maintain current power dynamics, thus

perpetuating unfavorable conditions that impede the growth and development of girl's education. To achieve this alternative model which propagates the Kingdom agenda (inclusive of both boys and girls) which this research is strongly advocating requires leaders who are shaped by the philosophy of "transformational leadership".²⁵

What this research needs at the helm of authority at the Ministry of Education or requisite girls institutions is a new breed of leaders who are informed by transformational leadership values. Transformational leaders are required since they will be seeking to change deeply engrained cultural prejudices and help to make people set their hearts on new possibilities for girls in a nation recovering from fourteen years of brutal civil war and a long-ineffective educational system. Transformational leaders will engage others in such a way that they and their followers can raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality to achieve the goals of changing the social narratives of girls in post war Liberia.²⁹

The success of the transformational model is therefore dependent on radical leaders who are able to rethink the values and possibilities for girls. In Liberia we need leaders that will inspire commitment and not impose it. In essence we need role models that can inspire the followers and raise their interest in the task of transforming the social narratives of the girls. One of the long time crises experienced in our nation is the lack of national consciousness on the part of many "so-called educated people" who make Liberia their second home and America their first. This new breed of leaders to implement this new model should be able to

²⁹Burns extensively discussed the concept: "transformational leadership can be seen when "leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of morality and motivation." Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work towards common goals. Unlike in the transactional approach, it is not based on a "give and take" relationship, but on the leader's personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goals.

challenge themselves to take greater ownership for the work which can be emulated by their followers.

In addition transformational leaders could be identified by a basic ethical system that sets them apart from that of others who are just aspiring to attain power and status. Hence these ethics would make the transformational leader people-centric as opposed to ego-centric. The qualities of the transformational leaders we seek to implement this new model are those with noble ethos like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, India, Gandhi, Martin Luther and Laymah Gbowee, and those who are able to bring the led up into the same atmosphere.

Summary

The previous chapter introduced the topic and has given the statement of the problem, audience and ministry, stakeholders, background and importance of study, statement of research questions, assumption of study, desired outcomes as well as integrated transformational leadership.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to present the evidence derived from empirical research that the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls' School is actually in girls. The research was founded on certain assumptions which we believe were validated through interdisciplinary research, including empirical analysis.

This chapter focuses on the review of related literature and the theoretical framework on which the study is based. Hence, this chapter reviews research related to two main domains: Education in Liberia, Development and growth of all- girls' educational model.

Education in Liberia

This domain of education in Liberia is divided into three main sections. The first section will give a short history of education in the traditional Liberian culture before 1822, the slavery, colonial and commonwealth period of Liberia up to the Declaration of Independence 1839-1847, and the period of the first republic up to present. Section two describes the main challenges currently facing the Liberian education sector. The third section describes those challenges that are relevant to girls' and women's education.

Education in Traditional Liberian Culture Before 1847

In his work *Liberian History up to 1847*: Joseph Saye Guannu narrated that Boys and girls were taught separately to help prepare each gender for their adult roles. This traditional philosophy of isolating girls from boys in education as well as greater involvement of the community has been unique to educating boys and girls in the traditional Liberian culture. This age-old phenomenon is inherent to the goals and aspirations of this 'BOHGTE model' that seeks for exclusive schools for girls. Separating girls from boys has some strength and some weaknesses. There were good practices that go on when girls are isolated from boys in the bush school – for example, the school centered on preparing girls as young mothers and wives for marriage and womanhood. It teaches girls to respect elderly people, take care of themselves during menses and abstinence (sex education) and different styles of dancing (cultural and traditional practices).

Prior to the arrival of the settlers to Liberia in 1822, education was received from peers or those representing the next developmental level. Boys of the same age group and girls of the same age group formed separate organizations for fishing, sports, and other services to the community.³⁰ They were like colleges of today where students go to receive advanced training. Two of these societies are still in existence but are less influential now than in the past. They are the Poro, which is exclusively for boys and men, and the Sande' which serves only the needs of girls and women. In the Poro, men learn the duties of good fathers and husbands. They also took advanced training in government, medicine, carving and weaving. In the Sande,

³⁰ Joseph Saye Guanu. Third Edition. *Liberian History Up To 1847*. Sanniquellie: Catholic Pres: 1997. 22.

the initiates also learned the customs and traditions of the community and midwifery.³¹

Every member of the community had a hand in contributing to the educational upbringing of the child. Guannu asserts that Education is the process of learning. In Liberia of the past, education was received from the family, peer groups, and associations, dancers and other entertainers. In every state, there were secret societies that performed cultural and political functions. These professionals may have created a caste system. There were for example the family of blacksmiths who provided blacksmith services for the community for a long time as one could remember. It was difficult for migration to another profession to happen.

The old system had this sociological limitation. Certainly it did create this a stratified society with limited opportunity for “mobility.” As stated above the old were useful in many but also were detrimental to human rights and human development in others. Hence, programs such as BOH need to embrace the positive dimensions of traditions but overcome the negative outcomes through transformative education.

Joseph Saye Guannu tracing education in traditional Africa before arrival of Europeans or Americo-Liberians recognized that education in most parts of Africa follows similar patterns. Hence, education in the period prior to the arrival of the establishment of the modern nation-state, Liberia took the same trend. It began as a tool to prepare the local youth to take their place in their respective societies and not necessarily for life outside of the village setting or outside of Africa. In some areas, the Pre-European colonialism school system consisted of groups of older people teaching the youth in skills aspects and rituals that would help them in adulthood. It

³¹Joseph Saye Guanu. Third Edition. *Liberian History Up To 1847*. Sanniquellie: Catholic Pres: 1997. 22.

had a large emphasis on developing skills for one's trade, such as hunting, metal working, animal husbandry, healing, farming. In other areas, education in early African societies included such things as artistic performances, ceremonies, games, festivals, singing and drawing. In spite, of the benefits such traditional and cultural practices may have in that era, BOHTGE model encourages the pupils to pursue functional education beyond the limited scope of the village which could prepare them for life in a modern society which is strongly influenced by globalization. BOHTGE model affirms that education must prepare a girl for "success" in real life contexts. BOHTGE model also is aware that urban living in this new millennium is different from traditional village culture and so the life skills required are different as well.

The traditional educational system was designed to develop the body, the mind and the character of a person. Children were taught by their parents to know and honor the customs and traditions of the community, to obey authority, and respect everyone particularly older persons. By observing their parents, children learned most of the skills and habits that were to help them in the future.

Guannu's in-depth descriptions of the traditional education in early Liberia gave this research deeper insight to find out whether "all- girls educational model" can produce significant identifiable changes in girls. His education and long experience coupled with his traditional background gave him the moral rectitude to discuss this traditional education from an "emic' perspective with profound insights that have enabled us to draw an analogy for the transformational model of girls' education in post conflict Liberia. Notwithstanding this research is keen to recognize as stated above that the deep-rooted discrimination patterns against women in the culture were definitely as a result of the old traditions. For example the practice of

female genital mutilation overshadows these benefits and labels the essence of the traditional school as inappropriate. Apart from the health implication of female genital mutilation, the school denies girls access to quality education, improvement in performance, increase in retention, and competition at all levels.

Education In Slavery, Colonial And Commonwealth Liberia Up To The Republic Era

Prince Y. Johnson in his book, “The Rise and Fall of President Samuel K. Doe” explains that prior to independence on July 26, 1847, Liberia operated a commonwealth system under the direct control of the American Colonization Society (ACS) which repatriated free slaves back to Africa and settled them on the Providence Island given to them by the natives. Right from the proclamation of independence, it was immediately noted that two distinct “Liberias” had been created within a single geographic location. What was intended to be one Liberia was a region now belonging to two groups namely: the natives and the Americo-Liberians. This divide affected the educational system and all other systems that disadvantaged the natives. Women and girls were not given education at this time except that which took place in bush or informal schools. The Independence document did not only fail to include the natives who had not been inhabitants of the United States but also called them barbarians. This act of omission and commission was deliberate and was intended to constitutionally regard the natives as aliens or total strangers who had no right to the wealth of the land and other opportunities, including basic rights to education.³²

From President Joseph Jenkins Robert to all the 21st successive presidents, the treatment of natives was in accordance with the Greenleaf’s Constitution. Education and job opportunities were provided according to names. If one had an indigenious

³² Prince Y. Johnson. *The Rise and Fall of President Samuel K. Doe. A Time to Heal and Rebuild*. Lagos: Soma Associates. 2003. 1-5.

name, he was denied opportunities. Oppression was at its peak to the extent that the natives who lived with the Americo-Liberians had to change their names to American or English names in order to be educated or gain employment. Before independence, many wars were fought between the natives and the Americo-Liberians. It can well be noted that when the repatriated free slaves were first welcomed and given land, it was the expectation of the natives that there would be friendly co-existence.³³ Unfortunately, the way of life of the settlers, their religion, the desecration of the holy places of the natives and total discrimination towards them sparked off friction and resistance. “This alienation reached its zenith in the fourteen years civil war that raided the nation of its educational institutions, wealth, manpower, infrastructures, economic development and the loss of over 3,000 innocent Liberians lives, 90% of which were indigenous.”³⁴

Guanu’s work on Liberian History up to 1847, also proposes that in the history of Liberia, education and Christianity have been so closely tied together that it is very difficult to discuss one without the other. He explains that Liberia was founded by American churchmen and politicians to be the medium for spreading Western civilizations and religion in Africa. To these churchmen and politicians it has been repeatedly stated that Africans were not civilized, Africans had no religion. To improve these conditions, Americans and Europeans insisted that Africans should adopt Western Civilizations; and since any religions and civilization can best be

Ibid.³³

³⁴ Prince Y. Johnson. *The Rise and Fall of President Samuel K. Doe. A Time to Heal and Rebuild*. Lagos: Soma Associates. 2003. 1-5.

spread through a well-devised system of education, this is why in Liberia education and religion have always gone hand in hand.³⁵

This dissertation in part supports the “marriage concept” proposed by Guanu, which sees Liberia’s formal education system closely related to religion from the founding of the nation. Guanu critically captures the past by presenting an objective history of the marriage between education and religion which persists till today. Education in most African nations was introduced by the church in order to transmit its teachings and combat “false doctrines.” Formal education has helped to promote the cause and spread of the gospel witness in a nation that is entrenched in strong traditional beliefs and practices. But consistent with the inherent philosophy and ideals of BOHTGE model which will be described at length in chapter 6 of this research we are asserting that the founding fathers should have strengthened educational institutions with relevant and contextual curriculum, equipped staff, solid infrastructures, and long term goals. Guanu did not fully capture this in his writings. Moreover, whatever the founding fathers did for this new nation was mediocre and patterned after the mentality of their white slave masters who were not interested in giving indigenous people a formal education. However, when the nation grew and expanded, the government needed more and more junior staff to help them run things, and it was expensive health wise to bring in more free slaves since they were dying of tropical diseases.

Paul Harrison, *Inside the Third World*.³⁶ argues that it was this historical factor i.e. the needs for trained civil servants that provoked the change and caused

³⁵Joseph Saye Guanu. 3rd Edition. *Liberian History Up To 1847* (Sanniquellie: Catholic Press. 43-44.)

³⁶Paul Harrison brought the realities home through the dramatic first-hand accounts of poor people living in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He presents a tragic story of billions of struggling

the new government to train the masses to produce civil servants that will be loyal and disciplined and literate in their ‘imported language’ so they could do the jobs required of them.³⁷ Hence, education for the indigenous masses was neglected, and a native elite was created in the image of the free slaves to help dominate and exploit their countrymen. This research has recognized similar backlash of these native elite and their heirs (settlers) evidenced by the coup of 1980 that unseated the last Americo-Liberian President William R. Tolbert, Jr. This coup ushered in the first native man (Master Sargent Samuel K. Doe) to power and saw the birth of the first republic.³⁸

Harrison’s attempts to weave the thread of education irrelevancy from the past to the present make lots of contributions to BOHTGE model . His argument explains the ‘kind of education’ still existing in post conflict Liberia. Education had suffered irrelevance in most societies including Liberia. Education has taken a longer time to adjust to changing reality, to have a greater cultural sensitivity than almost any other sphere except religion. Harrison contributed an explanation of the roots of the misfit between education and reality in most developing countries tracing it to the colonial times. He argues:

“that the colonial powers undermined self- sufficiency and subsequently handed power to the elites who were a product of colonial education system; and second that cultural imperialism, a product of western civilization, today creeps down key arteries of indigenous society poisoning it.”³⁹

lives. He presented his devastating picture up to 1990. Living inside the Third world gives him a firsthand account of lives there.

³⁷ _____, *Inside the third world. The Anatomy of Poverty. Third Edition. The Classic Account of Poverty in the Developing Countries.* England: Clay Ltd. 1993. 322 -323.

³⁸Joseph Saye Guanu. Third Edition. *Liberian History Up To 1847.* Sanniquellie: Catholic Press: 1999. 43-45

³⁹Paul Harrison. *Inside the third world. The Anatomy of Poverty. Third Edition. The Classic Account of Poverty in the Developing Countries* (England: Clay Ltd. 1993. 322 -323)

The ripple effects are felt today in our educational sectors long after colonization has ended in Africa as evident by the challenges faced in Liberia's post-war educational sector.

Current Challenges to Education in Post Conflict Liberia

This section of review as it relates to education in Liberia focuses mainly on the current challenges facing the Liberian education system in her post-conflict era. But this review is insignificant unless it is set in a historical context. Historically, the education system was distinctly different from that of any other African country being founded by freed slaves from United States. Its educational system was modeled on the American system. Public primary and secondary schools were established in the 19th century for the children of the settlers, but there was little money to extend schooling into the interior of the country for the indigenous people. Church schools were also established. The Western –style schools trained Liberians in the new settlement for work in offices. A few students were prepared for legal or theological profession. The reality of challenges facing the Liberian educational system is glaring because Liberia's educational system inherited the system of neglect for one large segment (indigenous poor and illiterate rural dwellers including young girls and women). Education was restricted in urban Liberia for the sons and daughters of the settlers. The challenges are numerous but this review has restricted itself to 'effective teaching, underfunding, corruption, illiteracy and dependency syndrome.' These challenges are set forth by USAID works in support of policy reforms that set new directions for education in Liberia, and in a new Education Reform Act that was signed into law by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2011.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Liberian education system. Retrieved from: www.usaid.gov/liberia/ed.

Challenges Relevant To Girls in Liberia

This third and final section under the domain of education in Liberia focuses on specific challenges facing girls' education in Liberia. These are the challenges that impede the growth and development of girls' education in post conflict Liberia. Reviewing challenges at all levels of education is a necessity because 'transformational girl's education' does not occur just because of a proposed concept.

In her opening speech at the formal launching of the Revised National Policy on Girls Education, Minister of Education recognizing these numerous challenges, asserted:

“Despite the enormous focus on girls' education by the Government and its partners, there exist several challenges. At pre-primary and elementary level, most girls do not have an opportunity to enroll in school because of the absence of education facilities and social and cultural practices. The number of girls enrolled at junior, secondary, and tertiary levels has experienced a significant decrease owing to many factors such as weak institutional structures, harmful cultural practices, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, over-aged enrollment, low performance, and poor learning environments, among others.”⁴¹

This research could not catalogue all of the numerous challenges but has highlighted some primary issues such as the lack of educational facilities and weak institutional structures. These major challenges have their roots in the faulty educational foundations' in our nation. The realities of these challenges are felt in present day Liberia after 168 years of independence with a visible profile in massive failures of students in public and higher institutions placement exams.⁴²

⁴¹Minister of Education. Formal launching Statement. Revised National Policy on Girl's Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education. October 2013. 1.

⁴² Failures in Public and Higher Institutions Placement exams . Retrieved from: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201308280218.html> .

As it relates specifically to girls' education to address these challenges; numerous calls and interventions have been made some even resulted into this well-crafted "Revised National Policy," but there still exists several challenges as the 'national document' falls short of its ultimate intentions of changing the social narratives of a girl-child. The architects were specifically inconsistent with crafting clear pathways for its implementation, e.g. how to narrow the widespread gender gaps between boys' and girls' education. It is more theoretical than practical; it is written and kept on the shelves of the Ministry of education due to lack of government funding. It fails to show strong indicators as how it is going to succeed; and lacks transformative leaders to ensure its implementation. As the result of these lapses in the national policy document, there is still an unbalanced ratio of girls to boys being educated in our primary, secondary and tertiary schools.

Paul Harrison, *Inside the Third World. The Anatomy of Poverty* highlighted the second kind of challenges similar to what is faced by girls and women in post conflict Liberia which this research attempts to address. Harrison asserts that while the rest of the world is moving onto more 'pupils –centered methods' aimed at developing creativity, teaching in most developing countries, including Liberia, still centers on 'the memorizing of often irrelevant information', in which the teacher's omniscience and authority is unquestioned.⁴³ However, the BOHGTE model as discussed in this dissertation is aimed at being learner-centered education and the teacher serves as a facilitator or guide with the aim of transforming the learner.⁴⁴

⁴³Paul Harrison. *Inside the third world. The Anatomy of Poverty. Third Edition. The Classic Account of Poverty in the Developing Countries* (England: Clay Ltd. 1993 .126-127.)

⁴⁴ Our respondent (Kebeh Juah pseudonym), a sixth grade student at the Nancy B. Doe Elementary School (public school run by the Ministry of Education) lamented about the kind of methods teachers were still using to teach in the 21st century. In our Health Science class the teacher has only one text book he used while he sat this course in High school probably 20 years ago. It is out

Irrelevant information in our context speaks of passing on instructions that are not contextual and relevant to the realities of post conflict Liberia.

Harrison further explains that government in many developing countries, like Liberia, has a slogan that says ‘education is the key to development’. Nevertheless, the kind of education which is “key” according to our transformational theoretical framework is not the kind of education made up of academic irrelevance, alien concepts and sentiments. We must reject education of the kind that fills children’s heads with dreams of the city and unfits them for the life in the village, the kind that brands many as failures so the few can enjoy the excessive rewards of success.⁴⁵ Conversely, the BOHGTE which will be developed in this dissertation seeks for relevance and consistency with practical needs and values of Liberians living in a post conflict society experiencing the high rate of poverty and illiteracy.

The proposition of the BOHGTE model in post-conflict Liberia will be demonstrated to be consistent with Harrison’s concept that the lack of education among the most vulnerable group (women and girls) would truly place them in precarious situations. In the philosophical framework of BOHGTE model to be described in chapter 6 we will explain that it should be a central mechanism by which a person learns to develop himself or herself. To this end, the study of the BOHGTE model will show that it is keen to note that it is not interested in just any kind of

of print and we can’t find it to do his assignments. He has refused to share it with the class except through scanty notes or at times printed handouts with limited information of course for sale. Another respondent Joyce *(Barnes Foundation) said the instructor gave us an assignment that we can’t find the source of his information even on the internet. In the final analysis the teacher has several hidden intentions; He doesn’t want for the student to understand the course thus he thinks he is a bastion or reservoir of knowledge; he wants to take bribes from impoverished students who are eager to pass the course even if they do not understand, female students may have to sell their most precious commodities (bodies) to pass the course which dampens their sanctity and promote transactional sex.

⁴⁵ Paul Harrison. *Inside The Third World. The Anatomy of Poverty. Third Edition. The Classic Account Of Poverty In The Developing Countries* (England: Clay Ltd. 1993. 326-27.)

education, but only the kind that will affect the ethos of the learner. The values of the model to be proposed seek to produce a transformed woman who will in turn teach her daughters and sons that the life of a girl or woman is not restricted to bearing and rearing children.⁴⁶

Education becomes irrelevant and far remote if it teaches children very little about the real world of work and family they will have to cope with and fails to produce right mixture of skills that each country can employ. Faustin Ntamushobora addresses similar concept of ‘relevancy and consistency’ in his Dissertation. He explains: “For education to be effective, it needs to be relevant to and be consistent with the needs, values, context and goals of a society. The context of a society should be the standard for judgment of the effectiveness of education, for the goal of education.”⁴⁷

The third major challenges facing the girls in post conflict that this research is attempting to address is the issue of ‘illiteracy’ which has its strong root in poverty. Paul Harrison has provided a comprehensive guide to the roots of mass poverty, to the social strains and political instability that “turn one Third World country after another into dangerous flashpoints - an ever-growing threat to the world's peace and prosperity.” Illiteracy, like other forms of educational disadvantage, weighs heaviest on the groups who are already disadvantaged in other ways. The disadvantages for girls and young women can be seen in Harrison’s arguments when he explains about the illiterate woman or man.

⁴⁶ BOH Philosophy of Education. Handbook. Central New Matadi. Monrovia.

⁴⁷Faustin Ntamushobora. From Transmission to Transformation: An Exploration of Education for Holistic Transformation in selected Christian and Public Universities in Kenya. PHD Dissertation. Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. May 2012.

“An uneducated woman or man is totally dependent on the sometimes questionable honesty and competence of lawyers and officials. He or she cannot read signs or official announcements. If he or she wants a job, he can't look in the classified columns, he or she has to go round on foot and hope he or she will stumble across something. He or she may be able to count his small change – but he can be cheated out of his or her inheritance.”⁴⁸

Girls and women are the ones mostly disadvantaged in post conflict Liberia more so in rural areas and slum communities which have much higher proportion than the cities. In most instances, poverty, accentuated by the effects of the war and early exposure to sex, is a major factor in the high dropout rates among girls in school.⁴⁹ To be illiterate is to be helpless in a modern state run by way of complex laws and regulations. The girl or woman who cannot read and write is at the mercy of those who can.

The fourth challenge relevant to girls and young women in post conflict Liberia is the issue of the so-called ‘Bush School’ described in Arthur F. Kula’s (retired Methodist Bishop) book, Theological Education in Liberia. A well respected clergy and statesman, Kula discussed this challenge with a wealth of experience as a former adherent of this traditional practice but with a renewed mind he presents a different perspective. Kular explains that ‘there are certain things about the Bush school that the church can learn a great lesson.’ He further argues that it would seem appropriate for the Christians to have their own kind of Bush School. For example, he said when the adherents are admitted in the bush school for the training, they are considered ‘dead,’ and when they return they are considered “born again or newly born.” From the inception of their return they are expected to communicate and

⁴⁸ Prince Y. Johnson. *The Rise and Fall of President Samuel K. Doe. A Time to Heal and Rebuild* (Lagos: Soma Associates. 2003. 304-305)

⁴⁹ Beijing Platform. Response to the Questionnaire to Governments on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). 8-10.

behave like mature persons.⁵⁰ This research partially agrees with Kular's concept of 'contextualization' probably of learning with respect to certain positive concepts, but insists it should employ a high degree of caution in order to avoid 'syncretism' which has characterized many Historic Mission and African Initiated Churches in Liberia. In essence we are saying that the gospel must be presented in terms that are easily understood, but truth must also remain distinct from untruth. This occurs in churches that understand the culture in which they function and adapt their methods to the preferences of that culture. Gospel truth remains, presented in a culturally relevant manner, and no attempt is made to "sanitize" the cross to avoid offense (1 Corinthians 1:23).

BOHGTE model 'maintains 'what we are advocating for is not the closure of the bush schools because they have been used to pass on some valuable traditional and cultural values.' Rather, what we are asking is 'why such practices like female genital mutilations' (harmful cutting) and opening of the bush school during conventional schools which prohibits girls' opportunities of enrollment in the conventional schools are permitted? Hence, this research has maintained that traditional practices such as the Sande' society and early marriages do play havoc with girl's education in Liberia. The Sande' society is associated with the informal training of the girl child by women cultural elders in preparation for marriage; such training takes up to three years depending on the tribe. This dissertation assumes that eradicating these inherent cultural beliefs is a process and requires persistent awareness, mobilization, and the involvement of the adherents. We that advocate for BOHTGE maintain that persistent and intense advocacy by the Church, civil society, women's organizations, and the Ministries of Gender, Children and Social Protection

⁵⁰ Arthur F. Kular. *Theological Education in Liberia*. UK: Scp/Third World Literature 1993.

and Information, Culture, and Tourism could help to minimize or end the practice. Past governments, however, have been quite supportive of cultural practices for fear of alienating the tribal leaders and “shamans,” commonly referred to as Zoes, for the fear of losing their votes during elections

Effective Teaching

History has demonstrated that building a wholesome and functioning society after war entails a complex process. The task to unite a people under a government and create an enabling environment in which their educational, cultural, economic and political aspirations can be met is undoubtedly an enormous one. The Liberian education system is emerging from a prolonged and brutal destructive period of civil unrest. Liberia is significantly lagging behind most other countries in the African region in nearly all education statistics. After 14 years of civil war, which resulted in the destruction of much of the country’s trained workforce, the country is still in the process of rebuilding its education system. The challenges facing post conflict Liberia are immense. As a nation with only 2,000 teachers, 62% of whom have no formal training, it leaves one to critically ponder how do the politicians immediately meet the educational needs of the country’s children without letting down a generation?⁵¹ “USAID, in concert with other donors along with the Ministry of Education is to address education challenges related to access, quality of instruction, financial resources and effective teaching.”⁵²

⁵¹ Abraham Conneh, Education Programme Officer, Oxfam GB Liberia. United Nation Girls’ education initiative(UNGEI). Liberia news line: Plummeting enrolments and escalating violence against girls.

⁵²Ibid

American experts on education Tomlinson and McTighe wrote an article and asserted that effective teaching in the classroom can be influenced by four essential elements:

“Whom we teach (students); where we teach (learning environment), what we teach (curriculum content); and how we teach (educational method). Teachers have to focus on all these elements in order to have positive impact on the students.”⁵³

In consonance with the proposition of these experts, the researcher has over thirty eight years of direct involvement with the education system. He has experienced first-hand the ineffectiveness in the education system in post-conflict Liberia which has greatly impeded the growth and development of education. For instance despite the infusion of massive capital into teacher education at the elementary level by USAID and UNICEF, effective teaching may still be a challenge for our post war educational system. This is reflected in our poor performance in Liberia Senior High School Certificate Exam! given by WAEC-Liberia and now the University entrance exam. The failures of our students in Government-administered certificate examinations and university entrance matriculation were predicated on inadequate preparation, inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, poor and inadequate classroom equipment and supplies, as Tomlinson and McTighe correctly argue. Liberian schools furthermore, must address the widespread lack of libraries and science labs in our schools, as well as the lack of a well- defined and relevant curriculum, and efficient and effective school administrations. All of these factors are addressed in the article by Tomlinson and McTighe. The President has implemented numerous cabinet reshuffles involving the top leadership at the Ministry of Education. In addition, President Sirleaf-Johnson’s government has been effective

⁵³Tomlinson and McTighe. Effective teaching. Retrieved from :www.liberianobserver.com//challenge.

in securing of huge foreign aid, yet the system had not been transformed. Rather the problems persist.

Transformational leadership here speaks about values, purpose and meaning:

“Essentially the leader’s task is consciousness-raising on a wide plane. ...The leader’s fundamental act is to induce people to be aware or conscious of what they feel -- to feel their true needs so strongly, to define their values so meaningfully, that they can be moved to purposeful action.”⁵⁴

As the research unfolds, it will become evident that the ideals and philosophy of BOHTGE are coherent with Burns’ concept of leadership. Burns model asserts that “true leadership not only creates change and achieves goals within the environment, but changes the people involved in the necessary actions for the better as well: both followers and leaders are ennobled.”⁵⁵

Underfunding of Education Institutions

The Center for Transparency and Accountability is a whistle blower in post war Liberia. In an article “Corruption in Schools Undermines Liberia Development,” the authors argue: ‘the quality of education is grossly affected by underfunding of educational institutions, insubstantial salaries or incentives for administrators and teachers as well as the prevalence of unqualified teachers.’ There also exists a fundamental problem with integrity when teachers are unqualified and lack the moral rectitude to resist the many temptations common within the education sector. While teachers easily fall prey to the lure of corruption, administrators blatantly reward

⁵⁴ Transformational leadership. Retrieved from: <http://www.leadership-central.com/burns-transformational-leadership-theory.html#ixzz3LfcIN32K>

⁵⁵ Transformational leadership. Retrieved from: <http://www.leadership-central.com/burns-transformational-leadership-theory.html#ixzz3LfcIN32K>

contracts that are opaque, thus undermining the quality of school infrastructure.⁵⁶ Years of conflict and mismanagement have left Liberia one of the poorest countries in the world. In the bid to improve the social, economic and political well-being of its citizens, the President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf-led Government crafted a national policy document called Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in April 2008. Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) articulates the government's overall vision and major strategies for moving toward rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth and development during the 2008-2011 period.

“The critical importance of this period cannot be overemphasized as Liberia shifts from post conflict stabilization to laying the foundation for inclusive and sustainable growth, poverty reduction, and progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). United States Aid for International Development (USAID's) programs supported the PRS and furthered the Government of Liberia's plans to consolidate peace and security, revitalize the economy, strengthen governance and the rule of law, rehabilitate infrastructure and deliver basic services including education.”⁵⁷

According to the government's PRS, poverty is pervasive, and is particularly acute in rural areas and the most remote corners of the country. Poverty has many dimensions, including low levels of income and consumption, poor nutrition and food security, low health and education indicators, and inadequate infrastructure. It is reinforced by inequalities, especially in access to justice and economic opportunities.

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The underfunding of the education sector is practically visible in the budgetary contest. Liberian girls and women are forced to compete for funding for security, poor health sector, war –destroyed roads, electricity grid, limited running water and

⁵⁶Center for Transparency and Accountability. Corruptions in schools: Retrieved from: www.cental.org

⁵⁷ Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy. Republic of Liberia, Monrovia, April 2008, 24

⁵⁸Ibid

sewage systems, a dysfunctional justice system, and other institutional and infrastructural problems. The lack of specific budgetary allocations in the national budget for girls' education has gravely impeded the actual implementation of the well-crafted National Policy on girls' education.

The Liberian Government has in reality abandoned its girls' education policy. The Poverty Reduction Strategy claimed that school attendance has risen dramatically at all levels, with the ratio of girls to boys increasing. The numbers of trained teachers, textbook to students, gross enrollment ratios and net enrollment ratios have been improving according to the government report. Furthermore, it claimed that the improvements in education have been due to strategic approaches in addition to increased budgetary support to the sector.⁵⁹ But the reality unfolding in the Liberia's educational sector does not support government's claims. School enrollment among girls is still low due to poor incentives, low teachers' salaries, lack of trained teachers, and absence of decent and equipped schools.

In an overview of the educational system, the researcher argues that:

“The Ministry of Education is the principal government agency charged with overseeing the planning and implementation of education and school policies in Liberia. Though the reconstruction of the country's social infrastructure has taken place at a rather slow pace, educational opportunities also have been provided to Liberian students by a range of non-governmental organizations (local, national, and international) and with the financial support of bilateral partners and intergovernmental agencies. For example, in the year 2000, UNESCO celebrated 50 years of partnership with the Liberian Ministry of Education in development programming and UNESCO has continued to

⁵⁹Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy. Republic of Liberia, Monrovia, April 2008. 24

provide substantial funding to Liberia in the post-war years to support a wide variety of educational and cultural programs.”⁶⁰

But unless government prioritizes education in the face of ‘so called financial crises and structural adjustment policy’, the educational budget may be slashed and employees involved in education laid off.⁶¹ The result of this action on the part of the national government has constantly witnessed slow and at times incomplete school construction which cannot keep up with the increasing number of students. Furthermore, learning environments of children continue to deteriorate in rural as well as in the slum communities of Liberia. For example, instead of the government standard of forty students to a class, the post war Liberia school system has witnessed over one hundred students studying in a single classroom.⁶² There are shortages of desks, chairs, text books, labs and so forth. In addition, “teachers’ wages are suppressed at low levels while opportunities for teachers training are decreasing, thus obstructing the intellectual advancement of teachers and lowering their social status.”⁶³

It is therefore not the amount of funding Liberians received from the international community, friendly government, partners or NGOs for education that will bring about needed changes. The crucial factor is that if transformative leaders are not at the helm of authority to sacrificially initiate substantive transformation and bring the system at par with the rest of the sub region or continent, those huge international funding grants will be meaningless and end up in the pockets of some

⁶⁰[Liberia - Educational System—overview - War, School, Women, Liberian, Percent, and Fighting](http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/848/Liberia-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW) Retrieved from: <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/848/Liberia-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW>.

⁶¹ibid

⁶²[Liberia - Educational System—overview - War, School, Women, Liberian, Percent, and Fighting](http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/848/Liberia-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW) Retrieved from: <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/848/Liberia-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW>.

⁶³ Joseph Cummings. Principal, New Hope Academy. Monrovia. Personal interview. May 2013. The researcher served as the commencement speaker at this school and heard the Principal making this stalling revelations about the number of students in each class as the academic report was been read.

corrupt officials. Hence, Liberia will still have a broken and ineffective educational system.

In the words of Faustin Ntamushobora: “Even if Africa received millions of dollars for education, if Africans themselves are not able to be innovative, the funding can work for some time but cannot solve the problem of Africans. It is only after Africans have been transformed and equipped to transform their society that true development on the continent will occur.”⁶⁴

The remedy is the coalition of a new breed of transformative leaders with high moral integrity, clear vision and a willingness to fix the broken education sector of our post war Liberia.

Corruption in Schools

The education system in post conflict Liberia is besieged by these negative vices. Even if the girls do manage to avoid the streets, they still face greater challenges in pursuing an education in post war Liberia.

Center for Transparency and Accountability (CENTAL) asserts:

“... the education sector serves as a reservoir from which a country draws its workforce. Education represents the engine that drives national growth and development. As such, when instructors sell grades to students, they undermine intellectual and professional growth and subsequently national competitiveness. When school administrators misappropriate supplies and ignore the transgressions of instructors, they are also in complicity in undermining quality education. When public officials confront the deplorable state of our educational system with inaction while corruption corrodes the system then the country’s socio-economic revival is in trouble.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴Ntamushobora, Faustin Ntamushobora. From Transmission to Transformation: An Exploration of Education for Holistic Transformation in selected Christian and Public Universities in Kenya. PHD Dissertation. Talbot School of Theology, Biola University. May 2012. 62

⁶⁵ Center for Transparency and Accountability. Corruptions in schools: Retrieved from: www.cental.org

These descriptions by CENTAL and others accurately fit our education system in post conflict Liberia. Transformational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope in post -conflict Liberia is in consonance with CENTAL's report. It is hope that this research will help transform the minds of stakeholders and major actors in girls' education as well as battle this 'monster' called 'corruption' that was recently described as 'vampire or cancer' by the President on January 4," 2014 "State of nation address". If the education sector should serve as a reservoir from which our workforce is drawn then it must seek for integrity and moral rectitude. Education truly represents the engine that drives national growth and development. As such, when instructors sell grades to students, they undermine intellectual and professional growth and subsequently national competitiveness. When school administrators misappropriate supplies and ignore the transgressions of instructors, they are also in complicity in undermining quality education.

CENTAL further asserts that Liberia educational system stands out as a culprit of rampant corruption. From admission to graduation corruption is pervasive. This is clearly exemplified in the quality of students that graduate from educational institutions. The alarm bell rings whenever our students are grossly under-prepared to deal with the many complexities that confront the nation and their agenda for personal progress. Testimonies to the poor educational abilities of a significant proportion of our student population have been accentuated by employers in public and private sectors.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Corruption in schools: Retrieved from: Retrieved from: www.cental.org.CENTAL

Development and Growth of Single –Sex Schools

This second main domain of the literature review focuses on the development and growth of transformational girls' schools in Liberia. In this section the research considers the goals of girls' schools and a short history of girls' education in Liberia. The origin of women's organizations and movements will be highlighted.

In the government's report titled, "State Party Report on the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women"(CEDAW) issued in Sept. 2008 we read the following analysis:

Gender inequality and women's marginalization in Liberia are entrenched in traditional and religious perceptions that portray women as the weaker sex. There is a high social and cultural tolerance and support for female subordination and male superiority, which enhances social and economic disparities. Negative social and cultural attitudes and perceptions against women's role in society limit women's participation in management and decision making at all levels. These perceptions, sustained and maintained by the traditional and cultural system of socialization, are transferred to the schools, communities and the workplace. It is in reality this situation which determines and maintains the rigid gender based division of labor and gender roles; the inequalities within the inheritance and property rights systems; women's limited access to and low participation in leadership and decision making positions; and girls' low participation in education. It is this system of gender beliefs and practices that promote gender inequality and discrimination.⁶⁷

We argue that it is in reaction to the above cultural realities that during the Liberian civil war many civil societies and women's organizations came to prominence in our political arena and even succeeded in advocating for the end of the fourteen years of brutal civil war. These groups produced the first Female President of Africa and two Nobel Peace Laureates. In spite of these laudable achievements the social narratives of many rural and urban slum communities' women and girls have practically remained unchanged. In the wake of these historical

⁶⁷Government of Liberia, State Party Report on the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women_(CEDAW). Sept. 2008

realities it was necessary to find an ‘alternative model’ of bringing transformation to this most marginalized constituency; hence the introduction of BOHTGE. We will be demonstrating that a Christian education patterned after the BOHTGE aims to help underprivileged girls escape a life of forced labor and sexual exploitation on the streets. The goals of this alternative model are put forth in the next section of the review.

The Goals of Single -Sex Schools

James Wilhoit set the pace for this review of the literature in this section on the goals of transformational girls’ education. He clarifies the goal of ‘transformational Christian education’ in his book: *Christian Education and the Search for Meaning*. An associate professor of Christian education at Wheaton College, he carefully crafted the concept of ‘Transformational Christian education which sheds light on our first goal of all- girls’ educational model (discovering God-centered meaning).’ Wilhoit’s aim of transformational Christian education which is transforming the learner is in consonance with the BOHTGE model.

He clarifies: “The purpose of Christian education is to assist people in developing a perspective that helps them make sense [find God –centered meaning] out of a troubled and perplexing world.”⁶⁸

Wilhoit’s scholarly work distinguished him among his contemporaries such as Kenneth Gangel, Warren Benson, and Howard G. Hendricks. In Wilhoit’s theoretical framework, a ‘transformational’ model of teaching is compatible with biblical teaching. Wilhoit’s experience enables him to introduce fresh insights and richness

⁶⁸ Jim Wilhoit. *Christian Education and The Search For Meaning, 2nd Edition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House .9-10)

in theological understanding of the purpose of Christian education after presenting several other models which he says have secular origins and made their way into Christian education. He then asserts:

Tragically, much of Christian education today is plagued by purposelessness. Mere activity is not enough to tackle the problems Christian education is called to address. Transformational education can provide a sense of purpose and direction that will enable one to have a ministry of meaning.⁶⁹

Having carefully studied Wilhoit's model on Christian education, this research sought to find out how his model informs the BOHGTE Model as set forth in Chapter 6.

The second goal for 'single –sex school' is further explained in Diana Meehan's book *Learning like a Girl: Educating Our Daughters in Schools of Their Own*. Diana Meehan is the founder and director of the Study of Women and Men at the University of Southern California. Meehan's proposition speaks to exclusive schools for girls. "She argues that a variety of social science studies seemed to make a strong argument for single sex schooling for girls, simply because 'girls' schools are good for girls.' What is good about them is they are totally and exclusively dedicated to girls as well as enable girls to focus on academics when they aren't distracted by members of the opposite sex, and may find it easier to participate actively in classes where everyone is the same sex."⁷⁰

Meehan's argument was corroborated by brain researcher Ruben C. Gur at the University of Pennsylvania and Bennett and Sally Shaywitz at Yale.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Diana Meehan. *Learning like A Girl. Educating Our Daughters In Schools Of Their Own* (New York: Public Affairs, 1-10).

Although nobody yet knows what the differences mean, there is evidence that male brains are compartmentalized, dividing tasks between the left and right hemispheres, which may be what, allows males to focus closely but make them less adept at visually sorting through a variety of objects..⁷¹

Certainly there is a need for further research because we are lacking definitive proof which enables us to say whether women are created with a specific “female brain structure” or whether this structure evolves because a girl is socialized this way. The Yale research further explains that females use both hemispheres to solve problems, which could conceivably explain why they typically connect feelings and ideas, integrate diverse subjects, and perceive things differently.

Finally the BOHGTE model will not thrive in the absence of an environment conducive to its emergence and individual committed to its development. In a fresh look at scripture, on women in missions, ministry and leadership, Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton⁷² in their book: *Why Not Women?* clearly set the pace for this review of an environment that is receptive, not hostile with alienating structures.

“Millions of women all over the world are looking over the shoulder of the church longing to see the freedom Jesus purchased for them at Calvary. Millions more have found freedom in Jesus but are still bound by human ideas-that pressure a woman to let culture, not God, determine her place in the Kingdom.”⁷³

We agree with these authors and lament the fact that often in the churches; it is local culture which dominates gender issues.

“While hurting men and women outside the church cry out, “Is there any hope? Does anyone care?” their sisters in the church are asking. “How can I share the hope I have? How can I, a woman, serve the Lord?” Many women,

⁷¹Ibid. , 10-13.

⁷²Loren Cunningham is a founder of one of the world’s largest mission societies, Youth With A Mission (YWAM), and David Hamilton, a dedicated student of the Word.

⁷³Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton. *Why Not Women? Seattle*: Youth With the Mission Publishing . 2000.

having heard God call them into public roles in the Kingdom, are serving in positions of leadership, they are asking, Will the church support us?”

In this research we have recognized that the Church is a major stakeholder in bringing about ‘transformation’ to this vulnerable segment of our society.

In further pursuit of creating this ‘enabling environment’ (safe-space) J. Lee Grady argues that the Church has that responsibility. In his *Charisma Magazine*, J. Lee Grady, a senior editor, discusses and draws the conclusion that the church is responsible to bring about this transformation, yet it has been slow and even in some instances failed. In his article “It is time for the church in Africa” Grady further explains that the time is now for the church throughout the world—to address abuse and injustice against women and girls. In the words of J. Lee Grady we affirm that the gospel is the answer to the problem of illiteracy, gender-based violence and oppression of girls and women. Jesus Christ defied the cruel male domination of His day when he healed women, forgave them publicly, defended them from their chauvinistic accusers and called them to be the first witnesses of His resurrection. But the gospel’s full power to transform culture cannot be unleashed unless the church and its leaders courageously and meticulously apply it to society’s problems.⁷⁴

In many parts of Africa, including Liberia, Grady further explains that church leaders have been unwilling to challenge the status quo, even though countless women are suffering black eyes, bruised ribs, HIV infection, Ebola virus, acid burns and broken hearts. Grady urges; that churches respond responsibly, for we never want to find ourselves working against God’s purposes. The acute shortage of girls’

⁷⁴ J. Lee Grady. *Charisma Magazine*. It is time for the church in Africa and throughout the world to address abuse and injustice against women and girls.

schools in Liberia is the basis for the review of this final session of the review as we present a brief history of girls' education in Liberia.

History of Single-Gender School in Liberia

This section of the review is intended to visualize the limited numbers of transformational schools in past and present day Liberia. During the Commonwealth era in 1830, the ACS constituted a special committee to address the question of education in the settlement, in its reports the committee recommended also that schools be established in Monrovia, Caldwell and Millsburg and placed under the direction and superintendence of the colonial agent. The committee recommended that arithmetic, writing and reading be taught in these schools. The recommendations were approved and implemented. Before Independence in 1847, two of the leading schools in the settlement were the Boys' school in New Georgia and Girls' School located in Caldwell.⁷⁵ Written records are rare in the area of girls' schools in pre-war Liberia. Official literature on girl's education is mute; for instance there is little data regarding the percentage of girls per year who drop out of school. These are the girls who leave school for a period of time and re-register for school a semester or more later.⁷⁶ The researcher therefore has to rely heavily on experiences, observations, and oral history. Prior to the Liberian civil war there were two major entities that operated single- sex schools (Catholic and the Episcopal Church).

Though the government may attempt to 'provide equal education' in practice girls are more likely to drop out of schools than boys. There are numerous factors

⁷⁵Joseph Saye Guannu. *Liberian History Up to 1847*. 4th ed. (Monrovia: Sedco Longman. 1985. 29.)

⁷⁶National Revised Policy on Girl's Education. Ministry of Education. Monrovia, Liberia. October 2013.

among which are the tendency of poor families to spend available money needed for school fees or the costs of books and uniforms) on the education of boys, because males are viewed as the future breadwinners. This statement was alluded to in the Revised National Policy on Girl's Education.

“An analysis of trends in girls' education in Liberia indicates that the overall improvement in the situation of girls' education is very slow with minimum progress despite substantial efforts by the Government of Liberia Development Partners, Gender disparities and imbalances in girls' education are common in every region of Liberia.”⁷⁷

In spite of the fact that education shall be free for all at least in the elementary and fundamental stages, most girls are not in school in Liberia. The second factor is the expectation that girls will carry out domestic and household work, and finally the pressure in some cultures for girls to marry young, particularly where they are seen as an economic burden on families. An economist such as Hashim Abro argues that ‘When women are equipped with learning and share decisions about families and livelihoods, the productivity of a society rises.’⁷⁸

In direct support to this concept, the Forum for African Women Educationist (FAWE), an umbrella organization that advocates girls and women education in Africa, clearly affirms this in their Vision and Mission statement:

“A world in which gender disparities in education are eliminated and all African girls access education, perform well, and complete their studies as well as promote gender equity and equality in education in Africa by fostering positive policies, practices and attitudes towards girls' education”.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Hashim Abro. Status of women. Retrieved from: The Nation: Retrieved: <http://www.our-africa.org/women>.

⁷⁹“Vision and Mission” Forum For African Women Educationist Strategic Plan 2008-2012.” 2008.

FAWE's vision and mission informed BOHGTE model it seeks to pursue a post-conflict Liberia where gender disparities in education are eliminated and all Liberian girls access education, perform well and complete their studies. The challenges remain huge in the face of cultural, political, social and economic hurdles; yet the researcher is determine to pursue such goal by providing education for vulnerable girls at Bridge of Hope Girls' School.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT OF MINISTRY

Brief History of Liberia

Original Inhabitants of Liberia

History records that the original inhabitants of Liberia between the 12th and 16th centuries migrated into this region [now Liberia] from Northern and Eastern Africa. Over a period of several centuries; what we now consider to be indigenous Liberian tribal groups, Kruan speakers (Dei, Kuwaa [Belle], Bassa, Wee, [Krahn] Kru, [Klao], and Grebo [Glebo], and Mande speakers (Maa [Mano], Dahn [Gio], Loma, Gbandi, Mende, Vai and Madingo) are believed to have migrated to what became known as “the Grain Coast” in successive waves in response to socio – political and economic disturbances in the great Sudanese empires. The tropical dense forests that covered the entire country made it impossible for the area to be densely populated prior to the arrival of the settlers in 1822 but there were indigenous groups in separate kingdoms.⁸⁰ Portuguese explorers established contacts with Liberia as early as 1461 and named the area Grain Coast because of the abundance of “grains of paradise” (*malegueta pepper seeds*). There were no reports of European settlements along the Grain Coast until the arrival of freed slaves in the early 1800s.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Milestones: 1830-1860. Retrieved from <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/liberia>.

⁸¹ D. E. Dunn & S.B. Tarr, *Liberia: A National Polity In Transition* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press. 1988.)

The Founding of Liberia

The nation of Liberia was founded in the early 1800s as a result of domestic politics of slavery and race in the United States as well as by the U.S. Foreign policy interests. Liberia was one of the few African countries that was not encompassed into the sub-Saharan European empires at the time, or did not suffer from colonial rule in the 19th and 20th centuries.⁸² Furthermore, Liberia was also not impacted by Islamization of Africa such as was true further east in Mali, Niger, Nigeria. It is significant that even though the original migration of the people is traced to ancient Sudan region that the people were not under influence of Islam.

In 1816 the American Colonization Society (ACS) was founded by white Americans to deal with the ‘problem’ of the growing number of free blacks in the United States by resettling them in Africa.⁸³ “It was hoped that in their former African homeland they might be happier; one would at least be rid of them-for, in the eyes of the former slave-owners, the free Blacks were a greater nuisance than the slaves themselves.”⁸⁴ Actually, the country was literally a philanthropic project of a private white benevolent organization, the American Colonization Society (ACS).⁸⁵ Members of the ACS included prominent Americans such as Robert Finley, Bushrod Washington, Elijah Caldwell, John Randolph, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. Former President Thomas Jefferson publicly supported the organization’s goals, and President James Madison arranged public funding for the Society. The motives for joining the society were vast as a range of people from abolitionists to slaveholders

⁸²Milestone 1830-1860 retrieved from <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/liberia>.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ John Baur. *2000 Years Of Christianity In Africa. An African Church History* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa. 1998. 113.)

⁸⁵ Joseph Saye Guannu. 3rd edition. *Liberian History up to 1847* (Monrovia. 1976. 3-5.)

and religious leaders counted themselves members.⁸⁶ A well-known Liberian historian Saye Guannu outlines the problems that resulted to the repatriation of the freed slaves:

The freed slaves presented three serious problems to the American society. First, slave owners were troubled that, so as Africans who were free remained in America, those of them; who were still slaves would become more stubborn and even rebel. Second, some Americans believed very deeply that Africans or black people as a whole were inferior to white people and as such, the two races should not live together lest the black contaminate the white race. The third and most critical problems presented by slavery in America were the frequent rebellions by slaves and free slaves.⁸⁷

In 1818, the Society sent two representatives to West Africa to find a suitable location for the colony, but they were unable to persuade local tribal leaders to sell any territory. In 1820, 88 free black settlers and 3 society members sailed for Sierra Leone. Before departing they had signed a constitution requiring that an agent of the Society administer the settlement under U.S. laws. They found shelter on Sherbo Island off the West Coast of Africa, but many died from malaria. In 1821, a U.S. Navy vessel resumed the search for a place of permanent settlement in what is now Liberia.⁸⁸ The settlers attempted to retain the culture they had brought from the United States and for the most part did not integrate with the native societies. Today, about 5 percent of the population of Liberia is descended from these settlers.⁸⁹

Early Divisions and Cleavages

Upon arrival of delegations from North America in West Africa, the local leaders resisted American attempts to purchase land. The Navy officer in charge,

⁸⁶Milestone 1830-1860. Retrieved from: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/liberia>.

⁸⁷ Joseph Saye Guannu. 3rd edition. *Liberian History up to 1847* (Monrovia. 1976. 4.)

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

Lieutenant Robert Stockton, coerced a local ruler to sell a strip of land to the Society.⁹⁰ The Sherbo Island group moved to this new location and other blacks from the United States joined them. The local tribes continually attacked the new colony and in 1824, the settlers built fortifications for protection. In that same year, the settlement was named Liberia and its capital Monrovia, in honor of President James Monroe who had procured more U.S. Government money for the project.⁹¹ However, the formation of the ACS was more than just creating a nation of freed slaves. Evidently there was also an underlying religious goal. The First President Joseph Jenkins Roberts clearly confirmed this during his fifth inaugural address to the new nation:

... In establishing Liberia, God designed to make of her an instrument for good in imparting to Africa the inestimable blessings of a Christian civilization. It was in the spirit of this Mission that our pioneer Fathers laid here, in blood and sweat, the foundation of a Christian state...⁹²

The founding of Liberia therefore owes much to the problems created by slaves in America. Many persons spoke strongly against slavery because they feared it violated the laws of God. Other Americans opposed slavery on the grounds that it deprived a person of his human dignity. The men and women who opposed slavery and worked toward setting Africans free were called abolitionists. With one goal both those who opposed the practice of slavery against the laws of God or believed it was degrading to humankind concluded that the best alternative to the problem was to

⁹⁰ _____, *Liberian History since 1990. Fifth Inaugural Address of President Joseph Jenkins Roberts* . 1874. Monrovia: Sedco Longman Liberia . 22.

⁹¹ Milestone 1830-1860. Retrieved from <https://history.state.gov/department/history/people/monroe-james>

⁹² Joseph Saye Guannu. *Liberian History since 1990. Fifth Inaugural Address of President Joseph Jenkins Roberts* . 1874. Monrovia: Sedco Longman Liberia . 22

remove freed slaves from America and relocate them, preferably in Africa. Africa was the overwhelming choice for many reasons.⁹³

Freed slaves that returned to Africa were educated in Western civilization. What they learned had either negative or positive impacts on their relationships with indigenous in Africa. This relationship has impact on everything including the educational system and all other systems that disenfranchised the natives.

Disenfranchised Indigenous Women

There were three categories of women in Liberia; the settler women, some of whom owned property and by that standard were qualified to vote; poor settler women who did not have property and were excluded. There was yet another group, the indigenous women who like their male counterparts, could not vote until the 1950s.⁹⁴ Hence, in spite of the constitution's stance on the equality of all persons, the political class at the time set aside the real meaning of the equality "doctrine" and therefore ignored the constitution. Similarly, this was a replica of the "American so-called doctrine of equality".⁹⁵

This was a contradiction of the constitution which proclaimed the equality of all people, and the inalienable rights of all its citizens to participate in their governance. If interpreted, the constitution was fashioned in a way favorable to one segment of the society-the property class.⁹⁶ Certainly, this was the beginning of the

⁹³Joseph Saye Guannu. *Liberian History up to 1847*. 3rd edition (Monrovia. 1976. 4.)

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶Joseph Saye Guannu. *Liberian History up to 1847*. 3rd edition (Monrovia. 1976, 4.)

discrimination of all Liberian women which in a way reinforced the already existing cultural bias against women.⁹⁷

This discrimination affected the educational system and all other systems that disadvantaged the natives. Women and girls were not given education at this time except that which took place in the “bush” or informal schools.⁹⁸ The independence document did not only fail to include the natives who had not been inhabitants of the United States but also called them barbarians. This act of omission and commission was deliberate and was intended to constitutionally regard the natives as aliens or total strangers who had no rights to the wealth of the land and other opportunities, including basic rights to education.⁹⁹

Liberian Christian Heritage

This research sees the providential hand of God at work in bringing the gospel to the indigenous. The theoretical framework used to explain this assumption was developed by Mark Shaw using the “Kingdom framework.” It seeks to emphasize how God is raising up witnesses to the redemptive aspects of his kingdom.¹⁰⁰ This approach seeks to recognize the witness borne by both freed slaves and indigenous persons. Even though there was no prior presence of traditional white missionaries or visible indicators of the presence of the gospel, “witness” was taking place in the culture prior to the arrival of the freed slaves. It is clear that God was divinely orchestrating the plans to set black slaves free in order to return and bear explicit

⁹⁷ Emily Erskine. *Liberia Permanent Representative to UN*. Retrieved from: www.liberia-unog.ch.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Prince Y. Johnson. *The Rise and Fall of President Samuel K. Doe. A Time to Heal and Rebuild* (Lagos: Soma Associates. 2003, 1-5.)

¹⁰⁰Mark Shaw. *Kingdom of God in Africa* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996, 14.)

witness to the kingdom of God in the African continent.¹⁰¹ It therefore rests on the shoulders of the Church as a major stakeholder to keep bearing witness to this kingdom by creating an enabling environment for the education of young girls and women in post conflict Liberia.

The advent of Christianity in Liberia is inseparable from the arrival of ex-slaves from American states of South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia to Liberia. Following their emancipation, the American Colonization Society (ACS) assisted in their voluntary relocation to Africa. As already said earlier, some of them were churchmen who looked forward to making their newfound home a Christian community. As Joseph C. Wold records, “In 1820 the Baptist Church, Methodist and Protestant Missionary society were organized on board the Ship Elizabeth,” which brought the first settlers to Liberia.¹⁰²

Liberia has claimed to be a Christian nation just like Uganda and Zambia, even though our current constitution (revised in 1985) declares Liberia a secular state. In April 2015 after three decades of unsuccessful vigorous attempts by Christians to “re insert” the clause that ‘Liberia is a Christian nation’ in our Revised Constitution, a new day had dawned when the Constitution Review Commission finally accepted the phrase as one of twenty five proposals to be submitted to the President and National House of Representatives and Senators for review and subsequent

¹⁰¹Mark Shaw. *Kingdom of God in Africa* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996, 14.)

¹⁰² J.C. Wold. *God's Impatience in Liberia*. California: Eerdmans, 1968.

actions.¹⁰³ There are several reasons for this assertion that Liberia is a Christian nation:

The Birth of the Nation: Unlike other countries in Africa, the nation of Liberia was born within the Church, thus making it a Christian nation. The eleven men, who signed its declaration of independence in the Providence Baptist Church in 1847 thus making it a sovereign state, were all men of the Church. Monrovia (formerly, *Christopolis*): Because of her Christian heritage, following her independence, the capital city of Liberia was first called *Christopolis*, meaning “the city of Christ.” That name was later changed to Monrovia in honor of America’s 5th president, James Monroe, whom, it is said liquidated a certain debt, which was owed by the Liberian Government to the United States. And as a way of honoring him, some unspiritual-minded leaders of this nation sold our birthright by changing the name of our capital city from *Christopolis* to Monrovia, meaning, “village of Monroe.”^{104 105}

Moreover, a National Day of Fasting and Prayer as a national holiday is another convincing reason to hold on to our Christian heritage. Unlike other countries in Africa, Liberia celebrates a national holiday called “Fast and Prayer Day.”¹⁰⁶ This holiday is intended as a day set aside to mobilize national prayer for the spiritual cleansing and healing of the nation on the basis of the promises articulated in 2 Chronicles 7:14. This national day was birthed out of a political crisis between Liberia and the British colonial parents of Sierra Leone in the mid-1800s. In this conflict Liberia, along with its political leadership, was delivered only by the power

¹⁰³ Constitution Review Protesters Gbarnga: Retrieved from www.christiantoday.com . “Liberia could break up over move to make it a Christian nation, says protesters” (Constitution Review Committee) held in Gbarnga, Bong Country April 2-4, 2015. The proposal on the other hand had been denounced by Baptist and Catholic leaders who claimed it is in consistent with Liberia’s constitution and plural nature. Muslims on the other hand had also denounced “the move by Christian extremists and threatened to secede territories that were predominately Muslim before the creation of the so-called Christian principled state”

¹⁰⁴ Jerry Kular. Methodist Pastor. Vision 2027. Retrieved from <http://www.liberia2027.com/627324>

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

of prayer. Since that time this national Fast and Prayer Day has been observed.¹⁰⁷ It is interesting that Liberia and USA share the same ambiguity about the “Christian nation” dynamics. The United States of America struggles with this today. At its founding in 1700s, most people in the USA were Christian or “deist”. But legally in the US constitution, it never states that they are Christian.¹⁰⁸ It deliberately rejected having a “state-church” since it was renouncing the “Church of England” model. Today Americans deal with a degree of diversity in religion that the founders could never have imagined. In their limited experience in 1700s, everybody they knew was some variety of “Christian”. It seemed totally obvious that this was their culture. So they chose to adopt “freedom of religion” as the constitutional norm. By this they meant in 1789 that one could choose Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, congregational, Unitarian, Anglican, even Catholic. Back then, they never imagined that it would evolve one hundred years later to include Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Animists, Atheists, New Age pagans.¹⁰⁹

With such an undisputed Christian heritage, one would expect that the Church of Liberia be in the vanguard of spearheading indigenous missions into the rest of Africa and the world and practicing justice and righteousness such as advocating for the poor and marginalized population (women and young girls). But, sadly, this is not the case. “Women or girls may be oppressed by national, international and religious injustices, and by family systems that give husbands, fathers and brothers the whip

¹⁰⁷Jerry Kular. Methodist Pastor.Vision 2027. Retrieved from:
<http://www.liberia2027.com/627324>

¹⁰⁸Ibid

¹⁰⁹Ibid

hand. But the true teachings of the Bible do not support such practices.”¹¹⁰ Even though throughout history, “religion –any religion- has both in word and deed sanctioned and made sacred the oppression of women as God-given doctrine that must not be challenged. In essence religions have placed women in a social status out of which they dare not move.”¹¹¹ This should not be so because the Church has an obligation to deal with dehumanizing situations positively and practically (Matthew 25:31-40).”The Church of Liberia still lags far behind in sensitizing both men and women on the need and importance of educating their daughters, battling with prejudice and negative cultural assumptions.”¹¹²

Relationships: A Poor Beginning

With regards to evangelization, social justice, and practical Christianity, the Gospel had a very poor beginning among the natives. That is, the initial Christians who brought the Gospel to Liberia did everything but proclaim Christ to the natives. For a very long time these pioneer missionaries restricted themselves along the coast, and remained socially, politically, religiously and culturally isolated from the natives. They referred to themselves as “Americo-Liberians”, meaning Africans with the prejudices and predilection for the bias and aspiration of white men, and would have nothing to do with the natives. According to Wold, “(Christianity) became one of the marks of being an Americo-Liberian which distinguished them from the tribal

¹¹⁰ Loren Cunningham , David Joel Hamilton et. Al. *Why Not Women?. A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women In Missions, Ministry , and Leadership*. Seattle: (YWAM Publishing. 2000, 111-112.)

¹¹¹ Hazel O. Ayanga. *Liberation of the African Woman. Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays*.(Nairobi Kenya: Acton Publishers. 2003, 91.)

¹¹²Jerry Kular. Methodist Pastor. Vision 2027. Retrieved from <http://www.liberia2027.com/627324>

people. To them it was incredible that an uncivilized tribesman, who could not even speak English, might become a Christian.”¹¹³

The settlers’, including the Christians, only attempt to relate to the natives was not to proclaim the Gospel, but rather to exercise political control over them. That attempt often resulted in warfare.¹¹⁴ A patriotic Liberian, E. Wilmot Blyde, lamenting the socio-economic, political and religious disparity between the settlers and natives describes the situation in the 1800s, “A group of returned exile-refugees from the house of bondage (USA) settled along a few hundred miles of the coast of their fatherland, attempting to rule millions of people, their own kith and kin, on a foreign system in which they themselves have been imperfectly trained, while knowing very little of the facts for the history (and culture) of the people they assume to rule...and taking for granted that the religious and social theories they have brought from across the sea must be adapted to all the needs to their un-expatriated brethren.”¹¹⁵ Peter Falk also observes that the separation of the settlers from the indigenous population “caused a political and social difficulty and even obstructed the evangelization of the indigenous population.”¹¹⁶ Wold here provides, in summary, reasons why the Gospel initially failed to make any positive impact on the indigenous people, thereby laying a foundation of superficial Christianity in Liberia for many decades.

First the wars between the pagan tribes and settlers kept the former geographically isolated from the Christians. Second, the tribesmen never

¹¹³ J.C. Wold. *God's Impatience with in Liberia* (California: Eerdmand, 1968.)

¹¹⁴Jerry Kular Methodist Pastor. Vision 2027. Retrieved from <http://www.liberia2027.com/627324>.

¹¹⁵E. Wilmot Blyden. Retrieved from : http://www.azquotes.com/author/53544-Edward_Wilmot_Blyden

¹¹⁶ Peter Falk. *The Growth of the Church in Africa* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House. 1979.)

considered Christianity a real possibility for themselves because it was identified with a foreign culture. And third, unfortunately, the moral laxness and social injustice of the settlers in their relation with the tribes did not commend Christianity as a way of life.¹¹⁷

With such a very poor beginning, the indigenous people developed a negative impression of the Gospel, not as a message of liberation, but one that enslaves. Hence, superficial Christianity became a way of life of both indigenous and ex-slaves for more than a century.¹¹⁸ Even today, Christianity in some major cities of Liberia still bears the brunt of a Christianity that has “a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:5). Later, when the Americo-Liberians attempted to reach the natives with the Gospel, the settlers brought along with them Freemasonry and, when mixed with traditional secret societies, became a pervasive influence within the Church. As a result, traces of syncretism are still prevalent in some churches in Liberia today.¹¹⁹ The western cultural lifestyle of the settlers greatly influenced the kind of Christianity and political system they introduced in Liberia. This practice of syncretism among Americo-Liberians was largely responsible for the kind of superficial Christianity that characterized the Church and several of its leaders in Liberia, until about three and a half decades ago. Because these settlers were for more than a century at the helm of political affairs, heads of the Church, and simultaneously engulfed in the Masonic and other forms of secret societies, the Church became a toothless bull and voiceless against the social, economic and political ills that oppressed and marginalized the natives.¹²⁰ Since many top Church leaders were deeply rooted in secret societies, the Church tolerated the practices to the extent that they co-mingled with worship services in certain mainline Churches. For

¹¹⁷ J.C. Wold. *God's Impatience with Liberia* (California: Eerdmans, 1968.)

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Jerry Kular. Methodist Pastor. Vision 2027. Retrieved from <http://www.liberia2027.com/627324>.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

example, the Grand Master of the Masonic Craft at the time of the first military coup in 1980, which ousted the Tolbert-led Government, was also National Chairman of the one ruling political party (True Whig Party) and Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Liberia. The 18th President of Liberia, a lay preacher of the United Methodist Church was also Grand Zoe (Chief Priest) of all secret societies in Liberia until his demise in July 1971. His successor, also a Baptist minister, was declared Grand Zoe upon his ascendancy to the nation's Presidency. He further legalized the Poro (for men) and Sande (for women) societies and created a department for its practice at the Ministry of Internal Affairs.¹²¹

While the 14 years of the senseless and devastating Liberian civil war which claimed more than 250,000 precious lives can never be justified, it is important to note that the unhealthy silence of the Church to the resulting immorality, corruption, oppression, and marginalization of the ordinary people (such as women and young girls) contributed to paving the way for the anger, hurt, bitterness and retaliation felt by the majority.¹²² This explains the warm embrace given by the ordinary people to the 1980 military coup and the 1989 popular rebellion. Because the Church failed to be "salt and light" in Liberia when darkness was covering the people, and because the Church compromised the integrity of the Gospel by refusal to advocate for justice and righteousness in the land, Liberia has today degenerated and is classed among the poorest of the poor nations of the world.¹²³ Yet, there is still hope for Liberia because God has promised that "If my people... pray...I will heal their land (II Chron. 7:14).

¹²¹Jerry Kular. Methodist Pastor . Vision 2027. Retrieved from <http://www.liberia2027.com/627324>.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Jerry Kular. Methodist Pastor . Vision 2027. Retrieved from <http://www.liberia2027.com/627324>.

This hope that we envisage could begin with girls and women who are caught up in a vicious cycle and who think hope is elusive. The road to this transformation may be difficult but it is not impossible.

Election Of The First Female President

The election of a female president in 2006 certainly represents little progress in reducing the stigma against women and enhancing their education for a society that has been historically plagued by political discrimination against women.¹²⁴ However, this researcher sees this development as only one step of progress on a long journey to eliminating discrimination against women. It is therefore, essential for the government to keep on this right trajectory in order to sustain the gains made so far. One of the most deplorable effects of the civil war was the increase in sexual-based violence against females (young girls and women). Although females in general were targeted, mothers were disheartened at seeing their daughters subject to sexual exploitation. Women also witnessed the recruitment of their sons, their husbands, their brothers, etc. in the army. This motivated them to be a driving force to the peace process that led to the end of the civil war. Women's agony, helplessness and vulnerability led them to assume the role they had long been deprived of (peacemakers).¹²⁵ The ripple effects of the civil war are pervasive even today in the lives of young girls and women in our society as briefly enumerated by this research.

In October 2005, presidential and legislative elections were held with a subsequent run-off, held in November 2005, which led to the victory of Ellen Johnson

¹²⁴Emily Erkin, Liberia Permanent Representative to UN. Retrieved from: www.liberia-unog.ch

¹²⁵Prince Y. Johnson. *The Rise and Fall of President Samuel K. Doe. A Time to Heal and Rebuild*. (Lagos: Soma Associates. 2003, 1-5).

Sirleaf's Unity Party (UP). These were the most free, fair, and transparent elections held in Liberia to date. Sirleaf became the president of Liberia and Africa's first female president. In spite of the election of first female president in Africa, the lives of young girls and women in post-war Liberia have not been transformed.¹²⁶ Illiteracy and poverty rates remain high, most especially among rural girls and women. Liberia continues to slowly emerge on the international stage, but domestically lives of average citizens have not improved as poverty and unemployment still remain pervasive. Corruption has undermined the successive gains of the Johnson-Sirleaf led government thus creating discontentment among the citizens. The country still faces many challenges, including an 80% unemployment rate, and the lack of adequate health and educational services.¹²⁷ This lack was evidenced by the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus in 2014 that killed over 5,000 innocent Liberian citizens,¹²⁸ most of whom were young girls, children and women. However, the security situation has improved and relative peace returned because of the presence of over 12,000 United Nations Forces and police officers.¹²⁹

¹²⁶Academics at Cuttington University. Retrieved from <http://www.cuttington.org/academics.html> Department of State. (2010). Background note: Liberia. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm>.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸ Paula Mejia. Liberia is ebola –free after once leading in death toll. Retrieved from Europe.newsweek.com.

¹²⁹Academics at Cuttington University. Retrieved from <http://www.cuttington.org/academics.html> Department of State. (2010). Background note: Liberia. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm>.

Geographical Descriptions

Liberia's Location

Liberia, situated on the west coast of Africa and the oldest Africa's modern republics, has an area of 111,369 square kilometers (43,000 square miles). Liberia is situated north of the equator. Liberia is bounded on the north by Guinea, the south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the east by Cote d'Ivoire and on the west by Sierra Leone. Liberia has a coastline of 579 kilometers. The Liberian border with Guinea is 515 kilometers, with Cote d'Ivoire, 615 kilometers, and with Sierra Leone, 254 kilometers.¹³⁰

Demographic Statistics

Population

According to the official statistics from the last census conducted in 2008, the total population of Liberia stands at a little over 3.4 million people.¹³¹ It is growing at an annual rate of 2.1%. Women comprise about 49.4% of the 3.4 million population of Liberia, meaning nearly half of the population is women. Statistics projection point out to the fact that the population of women is increasing both in the rural and urban areas. Even though many women and children lost their lives during the civil war there is evidence that there is an increase in their population. There are a number of factors responsible for such an assertion. For instance there is a high fertility rate in both rural and urban areas. The Housing Census also revealed that large population of women are of reproductive age, but more so the practice of early marriages of Liberian girls before the age of 18 is also contributing to the increase in population.

¹³⁰National Population and Housing Census Final Results. Retrieved from :dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf./fr201.pdf. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services.

¹³¹D.E. Dunn & S.B. Tarr, *Liberia: A National Polity In Transition* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.1988).

Traditional and cultural practices such as polygamy and practice of unsafe sex (the generally low utilization of contraceptive services) are contributing factors to population explosion among women and children.¹³²

Structure

The population of Liberia is young. Over half (55.6%) is below the age of 20 years. Children less than 15 years old account for 46.8% of the population; children less than 5 years account for 14.4%, while children 0-9 years constitute approximately 66.5% of the total child population. Child-dependency stands at 94.0% and old-age dependency is 6.9%. Thus, the total dependency in the population is high at 100.9%; this means that for every 100 adults of working age, there are about 100.9 persons to be fed, clothed, educated and provided medical care. The dependency burden is actually much heavier, in view of the very high unemployment rate.¹³³

Socio-Economic And Cultural Contexts

Liberia is the oldest African independent state, founded in 1847, yet it has 70% illiteracy rate and the rate is 90% among women. The scourge of the civil war as it relates to domestic violence and the effects on girls' education cannot be overstated. The challenges in educating the girl child in Liberia are indisputable, but equally, their ability to contribute to Liberia's growth is unquestionable.¹³⁴

¹³²National Population and Housing Census Final Results. Retrieved from :dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf./fr201.pdf. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services.

¹³³National Population and Housing Census Final Results. Retrieved from :dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf./fr201.pdf. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services.

¹³⁴Morris Taryoue, "No policy for pregnant school girls as Liberia's education law is silent on the issue "News time Africa, July 6, 2012.)

Additionally, programs intended to increase girl's enrollment in government schools failed to adequately address issues surrounding retention and empowerment.¹³⁵ "While there is a law on girl's education, there is no proper mechanism for effective implementation and monitoring. Also, the national budget does not respond directly to the learning needs of Liberian students from a gender-based approach, leaving girl's education policy issues on the margin."¹³⁶ Sadly many girls will continue to engage in premature and unsafe sex just to survive and remain in school, until policy makers recognize and take appropriate actions to address the interaction between poverty and girl's education.

It is a glaring fact that development and growth of girls' education in Liberia is still a major problem. Leymah Gbowee, the Executive Director of the Women Peace and Security Network- Africa (WIPSEN- Africa) and Nobel Peace Laureate, in her recent address to post-war Women's Colloquium asserted that young girls were "selling sex for money". She further lamented "The biggest challenge was to know that there was a very poor standard of education."¹³⁷ Teenage pregnancies, exploitation, sex for grades, alcoholism, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS were the order of the day in post-conflict Liberia, sending a clear signal and wake- up call demanding the promotion of the BOHGTE model approach to girls and women education.

Men still dominate women in every nation in the world, resulting in widespread discrimination against women and girls. Most men the world over still

¹³⁵ National Population and Housing Census Final Results. Retrieved from :dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf./fr201.pdf. Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Madam Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate, "*Sexual Exploitation on the Rise in Liberia*" Interview, Front Page Africa Monrovia, November 27, 2011.

hold on to negative cultural assumptions about women's education. Prominent American author Kurt Vonnegut said, "Educating a woman is like pouring honey over a fine Swiss watch. It stops working!"¹³⁸ The overarching aim of education in Liberia according to the Ministry of Education's philosophy is "to promote the full and well-rounded development of the physical, intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of all pupils so that each can develop into a complete person for his or her own personal fulfillment and the good of the society."¹³⁹ This is how important education is. However, in our Liberian school system, students, especially girls, are still not experiencing this educational philosophy because of discrimination and prejudices meted against them resulting into low self-esteem and a low school enrollment. Hence they need an alternative education to reach a stage where they can value and appreciate education.¹⁴⁰

The impact of unequal power relations and discrimination is often felt severely when material poverty exists, as this increases vulnerability. Inequality has an impact on the provision and content of education, as well as on the ability of girls to enter, and remain in school. Corruption and unethical practices among some unpatriotic Liberian civil servants and presidential appointees have impeded girls' education. There are cases in which the Government received funding and made proposals and strategies which were never translated into practical help for girls.¹⁴¹ Despite the

¹³⁸ "25 Years of Thumps," *New Woman* October 1995. 234.

¹³⁹Policies to improve Girls' Education in Liberia. Revised National Policy on Girls' Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 2013. 1-2.

¹⁴⁰Policies to improve Girls' Education in Liberia. Revised National Policy on Girls' Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 2013. 1-2.

¹⁴¹ Marie G. Mensah (Not her real name), Personal interview. June 13, 2013, Director of Girls' Unit (MOE) entrusted with charting a new course for the education of the country's girls and women, in her squeezed office on the 4th floor at the Ministry of Education makes these startling assertions: "For ten months my staff has not received salaries from the National Government, but Hope Renewal Ministries is still committed to bringing hope to many disadvantaged girls in our

introduction of free and compulsory primary education, massive mobilizations, national policy on girls' education and huge international resources for girls' education, many young girls in this post-conflict Liberia remain out of school; continue to face discrimination, sexual violence, family pressures, early pregnancy, forced marriage, and harmful traditional practices.¹⁴²

Finally, the lack of extra-curricular activities and gender-sensitive school environment and curricula and the absence of special programs for girls lagging behind in their lessons tend to undermine both access and quality.¹⁴³ A girl-friendly school environment is essential to the entry, retention and progression of girls.¹⁴⁴ Incentives can help get girls into school and lower the barriers to their retention and progression through the education system. But what happens in the classroom is also critical. Education planners in Liberia need to ensure that girls find a supportive environment (safe-space) that expands horizons and challenges the stereotypes that restrict ambition.

country". What is further frustrating is the fact that the President Madam Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf has organized a Non Private Organization (NGO) called Liberia Education Trust that is been heavily funded through President's personal appeals to western donors. The unanswered question is why has there been less support from the Liberian government to the self-styled created Girl's Unit to implement the National Policy on Girls' education. This research has discovered that the President seems to lose confidence in the staff at the Ministry of Education since the former Minister Dr. Joseph D. Korto was implicated in an audit report for alleged misappropriation of huge sums of money and later dismissed. UNICEF stop financing girls' education projects through the Liberian government in January 2009 instead chose to channel money to International NGOs. UNICEF also decided to revoke its funding of the Girls' Education Unit's salaries and operational cost as of January 2010.

¹⁴²Policies to improve Girls' Education in Liberia. Revised National Policy on Girls' Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 2013. 1-2

143. Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ A separate survey conducted at five others girls' schools including (F-Sham, St. Teresa Convent, Obaa girls, More Than Me, Bloomey Mission) revealed to this research girls' friendly environment had increased entry, retention, progression of girls over the last five years. Girls' club, sports, debate team, and hospitality team of new girls at orientation had motivate more girls into these institutions.

Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or achieve in education. If the issue of gender-based discrimination against women and girls, which is prevalent in our Liberian society, must be addressed, then BOHGTE model of education plays a particularly important role with its specific emphasis on single – sex education.

Single Parenthood

One of the key contributing factors to girls’ poverty in Liberia is single parenthood or lone parenting. Some youth, especially females, are sole caretakers and have to take care of three or four or more children. As a result, some of these parents give up sending their children to school. Some children are not provided with adequate support to attend clinics when they fall ill, they do not get adequate and nutritious meals, and are at most times marginalized and excluded in their communities, especially in rural areas. The two main causes for single parenthood are death of one parent, especially resulting from the 14 years of war, and family separation. The third cause could be many unmarried girls co-habiting and giving birth as a result of prostitution. Given the pressure to make ends meet, many of Liberia’s girls who are also single parents engage in child labor (using their children as “bread winners”), a violation of the children fundamental rights.¹⁴⁵

Child Labor

In most Liberian communities children work to supplement a meager family income or otherwise to help with the family business. Many children who find themselves in this condition live with single parents who are unemployed. Therefore a key contributing factor to child labor in Liberia is single parenthood. The Liberia

¹⁴⁵Policies to improve Girls’ Education in Liberia. Revised National Policy on Girls’ Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 2013. 1-2.

2007 Demographic and health survey indicates that Liberian households consists of an average of 5.0 persons and that almost one-third (31%) of households are headed by women.¹⁴⁶ Many children work full time engaging in petty trade in local markets and plantation areas, which means they work throughout the day, week and months to sustain themselves and their families. Many of these children and youth are not in school. The most vulnerable are households headed by a child, mainly by a girl.¹⁴⁷

Maltreatment of Children Living With Foster Parents

Significant numbers of children do not live with their biological parents, but with uncles, aunts, or other extended family members. If both parents die, for example, the children are taken in by extended family members of the parents, typically the father's family. Discrimination in such situations is quite common and the new children in the household are often expected to do extra work.¹⁴⁸ These children may be subjected to maltreatment, such as food deprivation and beatings, and they lack access to the dominant pathway of receiving redress. A classic example is Kebeh (pseudonym), age 14, a 4th grade student at BOH who lost both of her parents prior to the outbreak of the recent Ebola crises. She lives with her uncle in the slum community of Matadi. She used to sleep in class and she appeared weak and

¹⁴⁶National Population and Housing Census Final Results. Retrieved from [dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf./fr201.pdf](http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr201.pdf)) Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services.

¹⁴⁷Sarah Gbagee (pseudonym) lives in the Firestone Concession area near The Robert International Airport Call on our Talk Show "Bridge of Hope Girls' Hour FM 91.1 Liberia Democracy Radio" on Tuesday March 10, 2015. Sarah was born and raised on the plantation. Sarah's father and mother have been workers of Firestone since 1999 and earned their living by tapping rubbers. Sarah lamented, 'my parents are aging so I have been supplementing their efforts to secure this little income for our family and because of this I am not in school.' This is just little bit of the story of many girls in post conflict Liberia.

¹⁴⁸Policies to improve Girls' Education in Liberia. Revised National Policy on Girls' Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 2013. 1-2

famished when interviewed by the BOH Counselor.¹⁴⁹ Kebeh, complains of long hours of work and less time to study and receiving little food. In the wake of such abuse and to address this inherent social problem, BOH has engaged in the feeding of the girls during school days.

Unemployment

One of the main issues for Liberian families is unemployment. Liberia, like most developing countries, is experiencing high unemployment and is often classified as one of the world's poorest countries. Many children and youth live in poverty, with parents who have no employment or gainful employment and as a result cannot provide the needed support. The issue of unemployment in Liberian society is a serious concern, and it poses a threat to peace and stability in a country that has just emerged from a protracted civil crisis.¹⁵⁰ The ripple effect of this is seen in children dropping out of school because their parents are unable to pay the high cost of tuitions, uniforms and other school supplies. To supplement Government's efforts, Bridge of Hope Girls' School is providing tuition free quality education in the Matadi slum community for over 200 underprivileged girls most of whom parents are unemployed and live in abject poverty.

Lack of Relevant Skills and Training

With the increasing emergence of vocational –technical training centers and schools by friendly nations, private institutions, non- governmental organizations, UN Systems with minimum or no support from the national government many girls in Liberia have been trained in the various disciplines offered, especially in tailoring,

¹⁴⁹BOH Health Science Teacher and Counselor. Personal Interview. Monrovia. February 24, 2015.

¹⁵⁰Policies to improve Girls' Education in Liberia. Revised National Policy on Girls' Education. Monrovia: Ministry of Education, 2013, 1-2.

soap making, and hair dressing. The training offered in most of the existing institutions does not meet the needs of girls and the various sectors in Liberia in the real sense of employment. As a result, matching available skills with the market demands has been difficult. In an attempt to prepare the girls for world of technology even at a primary level, Bridge of Hope Girls' School offers computer literacy and agriculture in addition to home economics for the girls as early as grades 4-6. This researcher is strongly advocating that there should be life skills training in the academic curriculum of post war Liberia.

Cultural and Traditional Contexts

Traditional or Bush Schools

The purpose of these societies is to instill a cultural norm for the community. For example, in the bush school the initiates are taught their cultural history, folklore, and customs. They are taught to respect their elders and how to perform certain task with the community. While this model of generational wilderness school is not necessarily a bad model for teaching; you will find the controversies have not been about the model of teaching per se, as much as they have been about what is taught in them and what is done to the students.¹⁵¹

One of Liberia's most popular traditional practices is the secret society (Sande'/Bush school)¹⁵² where girls are taken and kept for several months to undergo

¹⁵¹ Blogging without maps a Journey through Liberia. Retrieved: bloggingwithoutmaps.blogspot.com

¹⁵²The term 'bush school' is a concept well understood by the Liberian's culture. It does not convey any negative connotations in the Liberian situation. In the indigenous Liberia society, it is clearly understood to be an informal school where cultural values are taught to both boys and girls. Furthermore, the terminology has also carried over to the sacred grove where the bush school takes place. These areas are commonly called 'Devil Bush' in the normal Liberian vernacular. One is forbidden to enter a 'devil bush' without being invited and this was at one time punishable by death.

genital mutilations and the rite of passage.¹⁵³ Apart from the health implications of the female genital mutilation, the school recruits her students and open the doors at the same time when conventional schools are about to open. This denies girls access to quality education, improvement in performance, increase in retention, and completion at all levels. Mary Sangbe,¹⁵⁴ age 14 and currently in grade 6, did not return to BOH during second semester of the 2012/2013 school year. Investigation found out that Mary, of the Kpelle tribe, was taken to Central Liberia (Bong County) into the bush school for the initiation rite. Unfortunately Mary did not return after the ceremony.¹⁵⁵

Traditional practices which were effective in propagating cultural values of the Liberian society can no longer be accepted in the face of the wave of changes sweeping across the continent. Hence we need transformative education that will transform this cultural method of imparting informal education so as to minimize high cultural disparity between girls' and boys' education. Some of these cultural practices have served as huge impediments for girls' education in Africa, and more specifically in the nation of Liberia. The result is a high cultural disparity between boys' and girls' education in a nation where most rural and illiterate parents chose to rather educate their boys than the girls. In Liberia for instance women or girls are still considered as passive and domestically oriented, while men are depicted as dominant and as breadwinners. Most rural parents in Liberia do not see the benefits of girls' education

¹⁵³Morris Taryoue, (pseudonym) "No policy for pregnant school girls as Liberia's education law is silent on the issue" *Newstime Africa*, July 6, 2012.

¹⁵⁴ Pseudonym.

¹⁵⁵ Registrar Bridge of Hope Girl's School. Official class roster. 2012/2013. Personal interview. July 2013.

because girls are given away in marriage at an early age to serve their husband's family. Sons are given preferential treatment in terms of education¹⁵⁶.

Cultural and religious beliefs may influence people to give preference to traditional schools over formal schools. In Muslim dominated areas, such as Lofa, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount counties bordering Guinea and Sierra Leone, Islamic education is seen as a prerequisite to entering regular school. Girls are often coerced to get married at an early age without their consent.¹⁵⁷ It has become a barrier to the education of girls and dangerous to their health. Although good practices are incorporated in these schools, for example, the schools are centered on preparing girls as young mothers and wives for marriage and womanhood in general; the practice of female genital mutilation overshadows these benefits and renders the essence of the traditional school as inappropriate. Apart from the health implications of the female genital mutilation, the school recruits her students and open the doors at the same time when conventional schools are about to open. This denies girls access to quality education, improvement in performance, increase in retention, and completion at all levels. Mary Sangbe,¹⁵⁸ age 14 and currently in grade 6, did not return to BOH during second semester of the 2012/2013 school year. Investigation found out that Mary, of the Kpelle tribe, was taken to Central Liberia (Bong County) into the bush school for the initiation rite. Unfortunately Mary did not return after the ceremony.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Fact Sheet No. 23, Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against women (art.5) (a) adopted by General Assembly Resolution 34.180 of 18 December 1979.

¹⁵⁷ Bridge of Hope Girls' Hour (Talk Show). *Liberia Women Democracy* Radio FM 91.1 Tuesday March 16, 2015.

¹⁵⁸ (pseudonym).

¹⁵⁹ Registrar Bridge of Hope Girl's School. Official class roster. 2012/2013. Personal interview. July 2013.

Early Marriage

Because of the present economic situation in Liberia, most parents encourage their female children to marry young. This practice has become a norm is widely accepted because it is a source of support for parents and their dependents. The economic perspective overshadows the devastating result of exploitation. Although parents may benefit, that still does not make it right. “Girls who marry as children are often more susceptible to the health risks associated with early sexual initiation and child bearing, including HIV and obstetric fistula.”¹⁶⁰ Lacking status and power, these girls are often subjected to domestic violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation. Early marriage almost always deprives girls of their education or meaningful work, which contributes to persistent poverty. The international community recognizes child marriage as a serious development problem, but growing awareness has not led to committed and coordinated action against this practice.¹⁶¹

Boys’ Preferential Treatment in the Family

Education is a human right and it is fundamental to the development of human potential and the full participation in a democratic society. Everyone has the right to education, regardless of gender, race, social, cultural or religious affiliation, or disability. However, in some parts of Liberia, families allow boys to attend school, but not their girls.¹⁶² Culturally it is believed that the boy child will carry the father’s name and so the family name and roots will not be cut off or buried. However, the girl child will get married and take on her husband’s name; therefore the family name

¹⁶⁰ Medical Doctor. John F. Kennedy Medical Hospital. Personal Interview. Monrovia. January 2015.

¹⁶¹ Bridge of Hope Girls’ Hour. Radio Talk Show. Views gleaned from the public. Tuesday March 17, 2015.

¹⁶² National Revised Policy on Girls’ Education. Monrovia. October 2013. 12-15.

will be lost.¹⁶³ Because of gender stereotypes, there remains a strong belief that the man is the head of the house and family, and this will always be. So for the girl child in relation to her male siblings, favors and honor are often given to the boys. This gender insensitivity is a big cultural challenge to girls' education and development in Liberia.

Community Context

BOHGS is located in the densely populated Central New Matadi Community of Monrovia, with a population of over 15,000. Half of the community inhabitants are swamp dwellers.¹⁶⁴ The researcher, as an inhabitant for the past twelve years, has realized among many things the enormous social, political and economic problems that impeded girls' education. Many of the *Matadians* live with the negative outcomes of the civil war, evidenced by unemployment, abject poverty, no electricity, limited piped water, and no public latrines. They are living on a large plot of undeveloped swamp land. With weak central security system left in the hands of Liberian government (as UN troops pulled out), the slum community is the hide outs for hard-core criminals and drugs gangs which are destroying the lives of teen age boys and girls.

¹⁶³Bridge of Hope Girls' Hour. Radio Talk Show. Liberia Women Democracy Radio FM 91.1. Views gleaned from the public. Tuesday March 17, 2015.

¹⁶⁴National Population and Housing Census Final Results. ([dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf..fr201.pdf](http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr201.pdf)) Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services.

Prostitution, transactional sex, teen age pregnancies, single parenthood are the order of the day for the youthful population. Most parents are uneducated and entrenched in cultural and traditional practices antagonistic to the girl-child's education.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵National Population and Housing Census Final Results.
([dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf./fr201.pdf](https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr201.pdf)) Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services.

CHAPTER 4

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

Theological and Biblical Roots for Transformational Girls' Education

This research is interdisciplinary. I draw on knowledge from various disciplines. The researcher is beginning from a very deliberate theological stance. I am a committed Christian and I undertake this study as a Christian for whom the Bible is authoritative as far as essential anthropological teachings and ethical values are concerned. Thus, in this chapter I examine central Biblical texts which present the fundamental teachings/values of the Bible. These theological themes will guide all the recommendations which will be forthcoming at the conclusion of the research. The research will incorporate empirical data which will be derived from social scientific methodologies (see chapter 5 for explanation of social research). But empirical data alone is not definitive for establishing research conclusions in this study.

Theological teachings and ethical values grounded in the Bible will be held up as normative standards for the assessment of the BOHTGE model which is the focus of the research.

The focus text will be Genesis Chapter 1 & 2 along with Jesus' model of dealing with women exemplified in the Gospel narratives. Our assumption is that traditional and religious structures have created roadblocks for educating a girl-child or woman. Our examination of Bible teachings will verify that in spite of the

traditional and religious belief systems that may have created roadblocks, there are still sufficient reasons in the Word of God to transform the roadblocks into resources and educate a girl-child or woman. In other words, we have a biblical and theological mandate as a Church to educate the girl-child or woman; although again we cannot require that this be done in a girls-only space. But we will argue that this is pedagogically wise. However, in order to create an enabling environment for the education of girls and women in a man dominated culture where the concept is counterintuitive; we must make a conscious decision to set in clear terms the biblical basis for such a proposition.

Re-Examining The Church's Theology about God's 'Image and Likeness'

(Foundational texts: Gen. 1:26-28, 2:18-25).

I will now proceed to explore the theological and biblical assumptions about what the Bible says about women. We shall also explain the biblical role of women by re-examining the Church's theology about this subject (*Gen. 1:26-28, 2:18-25*). The creation narrative begins with a strong emphasis on 'Who' the creator was (1:1-2). The narrative progresses to give us a broad panorama of 'What' was created. In that account it started with physical the world and concluded with the crown of God's creation (humanity)-1:3-2:3. Our focus text concluded with 'How' God created what He created (2:4-25). God created man and woman in His own image from the dust of the ground. Key passages such as (Gen. 1:26-28 and 2:18) are among the most misinterpreted and frequently misunderstood passages in the context of God's image in the creation narrative. God, the Master designer, set forth his creation narrative with human life being described as the peak of his creative endeavors. The creation narrative progresses through the development of infinite space resulting into establishments of the heavenly bodies surrounding the earth. Then it narrates the

creation of the earth itself. God in his sovereignty caused the earth to produce the vegetation, while land and sea combine to birth forth animal life.

A dramatic change is realized relative to His creation account. Up until this juncture God had used His word as the creative power to bring into being what he has created. What brought forth each phase of creation was the verbal command spoken by the Creator. As he approaches the creation of human, the narrative took a different trend. In Chapter 1 and verse 26, God deliberately decided to make human beings in His image and to assign to them the task of exercising dominion over the earth. Our view of man and woman in the creation narrative is very crucial as to why we should provide equality, liberation and education for women and girls. What we seek to do here in this section of this dissertation is to make clear to the Church what the Bible teaches about how God distinctively invested in the prime of his creation (man and woman) with his image for the purpose exercising equal dominion over the earth.¹⁶⁶ When God said ‘*let us make man in our image, after our likeness*’ He was transcending beyond intention to action for the purpose of human creation.¹⁶⁷ The narrative points out some central truths that we cannot overlook if we must fully grasp the concept of ‘*his image and likeness*’ in both the man and woman. The confusion over the construction of the phrase needs clarifications. In the original (Hebrew) the design was let us make “*man*”(singular), but later the “man” was being referred to as “*them*.” (Plural) similar phrase occurred in vs. 27. It is not an error in Hebrew as anyone would suppose, rather they reflect the fact that the designation “*man*” is a generic term for “human beings” and carries the understanding of both male and

¹⁶⁶ Gilbert Bilezikian. *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985. ch 1.)

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

female. This concept is even clearer in Genesis 5:2 ("He created them male and female; at the time they were created; he blessed them and called them man.") In essence when God declares in an unequivocal term "Let us make man in our image..." the term man refers to both male and female. Biblically and theologically both man and woman are God's image-bearers (*imago dei*). There is no ground in Genesis 1 for anyone to suppose that this image existed only in males.

In further clarifications of God's expressive image in both man and woman, the Genesis 1 account points out another interesting phrase, "in our likeness". Genesis 1:1-3 clearly described God as the Father –Designer of the universe (vs. 1), nurturing, protecting Spirit (vs.2), and as creative Word (vs.3), Therefore the plural reference to God is set forth in the context of multi-personality existing within the Triune God.¹⁶⁸ What this implies is that God in His whole being, with the active participation of the three persons of the Trinity, is directly involved in the creation of humans. This plurality of characters will be reflected in God's prime creation that bears his distinct image (*imago dei*). Man comes as male and female is the reflection of an essential aspect of the Trinity within the being of God. Genesis 1 and 2 account says that both men and women are made in the image of God. The original order called only for the creation of "man" but the product had to conform to the specifications of the divine image," "man" inevitable came as male and female.¹⁶⁹

What this entails is that the male/female sexual differentiation reflects realities contained with the very being of God and derived from Him as His image. Accordingly, femaleness pertains to the image of God as fully as maleness. God is

¹⁶⁸Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), ch 1.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

neither male nor female. There is a very close connection between humans possessing the image of God and the divine mandate for them to have dominion over the earth. By virtue of the fact that they bear God's image, humans are delegated to exercise some of His authority over creation and not over each other. They are authorized to act as God's commissioned agents. "In essence, since both man and woman bear the image of God, they are both assigned the task of ruling the earth, without any reference to differentiation on the basis of sex."¹⁷⁰ God did not give division of labor in entrusting the earth realm into the hands of man and woman to rule (Gen. 1:28). What this implies is that both of them are equally entitled by God to act as His vice regent for the rulership of the earth. The absence of restrictions or any form of qualifications in their participation in the task further presupposes roles of equality for man and woman.¹⁷¹

The concept of *imago dei* is set forth in a clear term Hebrew poetic structure of Gen. 1:27:

"The parallelism of lines one and two is resolved in the formal synthesis of line three. The third line provides a definition of the imago as male and female. Although sexuality does not exhaust the meaning of the imago, it expresses an essential trait of the divine nature. In other words, the difference between male and female in human life is similar to the distinctions between the persons of the Trinity within the being of God. The imago concept justifies this analogy while allowing for unity, equality, and complementarily within the plurality of persons in the divine mode of existence as well as in human life. The fact that the Trinity is imaged by a duality in human life instead of a human "trinity", "indicates that the intent of the imago is not to create miniature duplicates of divinity and there can be only one God."¹⁷²

The BOHTGE model is a response to the biblical value seen in Genesis. It applies the Biblical ethic by giving special attention to girls' education. This is in the face of a culture of discrimination and systemic oppression of females. The 'Creator

¹⁷⁰Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), chp

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid.

from the beginning made both man and woman in his image' (*imago dei*) according to the book of Genesis. 1:26-27. David Hamilton summarized the first three chapters of Genesis asserting 'man and woman have a shared origin, a shared destiny, a shared tragedy and a shared hope'.¹⁷³ His assessment speaks to the fact that neither man nor woman is made more in the image of God than the other. From the beginning, the Bible places both man and woman at the pinnacle of God's creation. Neither sex is exalted and neither depreciated. In essence men and women were equally created in God's image, equally responsible for sin, equally redeemed by Christ, and equally gifted by God's Spirit for service and held responsible for their God-given gifts.¹⁷⁴ Created in the image of God simply means to relate in a holy and perfect way to each other. But more so, this image in the human body is the means whereby man attains dominion: in other words, dominion which is God's attribute is given only by God to the prime of his creation. Man's body, therefore, as that of one who rules, is erect, and endowed with speech, that he may give the word of command. It is explicitly clear that the soul is first in God's image. On the other hand an external likeness may refer to man's reason, free-will, self-consciousness and so forth. But more prudently '*in God's likeness*' implies something closer and more inward. It refers to man's moral powers, and especially to his capacity of attaining unto holiness. Fortunately man did not lose the image and likeness during the fall (Gen. 9:6, I Cor. 11:7, James 3:9) but rather they were weakened and defiled by the fall, but were still retained in a greater or less degree. But the redemption story brought transformation to this fallen race. "In the man Christ Jesus both were perfect; and fallen man, when new-created

¹⁷³ David Hamilton. *Daughters of Eve. Why Not Women? A Fresh Look At Scripture On Women In Missions, Ministry And Leadership.* Seattle (WA: YWAM Publishing, 200. 93-96.)

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

in Christ, attains actually to that perfection which was his only potentially at his first creation, and to which Adam never did attain.”¹⁷⁵

The implications of “*Let us make man in our image, after our likenesses and let them have dominion...*” (Gen. 1:26) is very cardinal to this dissertation as we establish the theological foundation for the urgent need for girls and women’ education in post conflict Liberia. This is the biblical basis for giving education to our disenfranchised girls and women in post war Liberia, because they too are made in the image of God.

Theological and Biblical Mutuality In Equality – (Gen. 1:28)

‘Mutuality in equality’ was God’s original intention for his creation. This dissertation therefore argues here that ‘mutuality in equality’ in the context of creation is the basis for providing transformational girls’ education. God prescribed in a clear term human rulership over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over everything that moves over the earth including cattle and creeping things over all the earth (vs. 26, 29). The order and hierarchy of creation is seen in Genesis 1 from the stars in space to the fish in the sea. But there is not the slightest indication that such a hierarchy existed between Adam and Eve. The absence of such an organizational structure in the creation narrative concerning climatic creative achievement of God presupposes that their relationship was one of mutuality in equality and that considerations of supremacy of one over the other were alien to it and may not be imposed upon it. As a new paradigm of understanding the concept of hierarchy and order relative to man and woman in the creation narrative Genesis 1 clearly exempts the male/female relationship of internal hierarchical constraints. “Maleness and

¹⁷⁵Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers. Genesis Chapter 1& 2. Retrieved from: <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/ebc/>

femaleness are presented as divine gifts reflecting diversity with the *imago dei*. The text does not permit their exploitation to support hierarchical dichotomies that might justify predetermined role distinctions.”¹⁷⁶

The concept of equality in mutuality is further explained in vs. 28 “*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.*” This mandate to procreate or the command to reproduce and to populate the earth offers an added explanation for the sexual differentiation between man and woman. This was not intended for one sex to dominate the other. On the contrary, through their harmonious union, man and woman were to fulfill God’s command to establish human rule over creation. It is clearly seen here in this Genesis 1 narrative that both man and woman are actively involved in procreation; both contribute cooperatively to the earth being subdued.

“The sexual differentiation was partly intended by God to provide humans with the means to exercise dominion over the earth they were to populate. There is nothing in the text to indicate that the purpose for the sexual differentiation was structural or that it was intended for half of the population to govern the other half. Instead, the sex difference is shown as being instrumental for man and woman to effect together their God-ordained mastery over the earth. In this shared partnership they are equal. Their equality is further emphasized in the second chapter of Genesis, where the additional and even more basic reason for the sexual differentiation is given as mutual fulfillment” (Gen. 2:23-24).¹⁷⁷

The Genesis narrative therefore set the paradigm for equality in mutuality as the basis for us to indicate that neither maleness nor femaleness connotes a disparity in rank or function. Both man and woman bear the image of God, so that their sexuality is the reflection of different aspects of the Creator’s personality. As a result, they both share equally the God-assigned task of creation rulership without any intimation of role distinctions.

¹⁷⁶ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985. ch 1.)

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

This dissertation is not denying the unique differences between men and women. The word '*mutuality in equality*' as used in this research helps to describe the relationship between the genders. What we are asserting is that the Bible teaches that men and women are equal in terms of their worth and value to God, their shared inheritance and their shared role in governing creation. This does not mean that men and women are not uniquely designed. God created male and female with inherent physical and emotional distinctions and the New Testament declaration 'there is no male or female in Christ is not a biblical endorsement of androgyny' (Gal. 3:28). In essence scripture teaches that while men should be masculine and women should be feminine, a person's gender does not limit him or her from enjoying the benefits of salvation or pursuing her or his God-given destiny.

Critical Re-Look at the Rich Meaning of 'Helpmate'

Our intention here is to carefully re-examine the key statement of this verse. "*It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.*"(Gen. 2:18) This portion of Genesis narrative is seen as God's final act in forming man and woman. Adam had everything he needed in the garden such as the landscape, precious stones, active physical shape and many other great physical features (Gen. 2:8, 9, 10-14, 15, 19). In spite of all of these Adam was not fulfilled or complete. The image of God in him, itself the imprint of the triune nature of God, yearned for the presence of his female counterpart without whom there was no fulfillment.¹⁷⁸ This yearning accordingly goes beyond just fulfillment in marriage but clearly reflects that human beings are complementary to each other. Adam's challenge was the fact that God created humans as social beings and that each person needs other persons for

¹⁷⁸Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985. ch 1.)

self-definition. It is essential in this passage to discuss the original meaning of the word *helpmate* which has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by the Body of Christ. If fully understood from the biblical perspective it would engender true advocacy for the girls and women who are suffering from low self-image, discrimination, prejudice. The Bible says God designed woman as “*a helper suitable for him* (Gen.2:18). Some use this to say that man was “*greater*” and woman was just his “*helper*.” The Hebrew language has four other words for “*helper*” that denote subordination. None of those words are used in reference to woman in Genesis 2. “Woman's role as ‘appropriate helper,’ therefore, does not carry with it an implication of subordination.”¹⁷⁹ The Hebrew phrase translated ‘*a helper suitable*’ is *-ezer k'neged*. The first word in the phrase ‘*ezer*’ is a powerful Hebrew word. It means a helper not a subservient person or thing rather a more capable, more powerful, more intelligent friend. It is the same word used throughout the Old Testament when we are talking about God (Ex. 18:4, Deut. 33:7, 26, and 29, Ps.30:2). The Psalmist used this word when he declared, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from.....?” (Ps.121:1-2). “The one who helps is the one who has something to offer the one who is helpless or needs help. Adam needed help. He had no partner. God created a partner – helper”.¹⁸⁰ The second word of the phrase is, “*k'neged*,” which shows what kind of partner God gave Adam. God qualified the powerful word, “*ezer*” “with the adjective “*k'neged*,” which means ‘equal.’ He made for Adam an equal helper. So in Genesis 2:18, God gave man ‘a help corresponding to him...’ equal and adequate to himself.’ In essence ‘woman was created to serve along_with

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰David Hamilton – *Daughters Of Eve. Why Not Women? A Fresh Look at Scripture On Women In Missions, Ministry And Leadership.* Seattle WA: YWAM Publishing. 200. 93-96.

Adam and not to serve him.”¹⁸¹ ‘Woman was not a separate creation but a separate expression of the same creation.’¹⁸²

In light of the Scripture’s meaning and the ethical mandates that are derived from this foundational anthropological teaching, when bias is perpetuated against women and young girls by Christians, the message it sends is that God is unjust. Christian leaders acting justly reflect on the character of God who loves and accepts every gender. Christianity, the vehicle for propagating the ideals of Christ and his kingdom, should offer women equality as well as setting the platform to discover God’s purposes for the Church and His Kingdom here on earth as it relates to the different genders.

Exploring the True Meaning Of ‘Weaker Vessel - I Pet. 3:7

We are called to work to end the dehumanizing conditions of girls and women in our community that could possibly lead to minimizing the high cultural disparity between girls and boys in every facet of our society. The Church is the custodian of women and girls’ values and responsible for creating a safe- space for those they considered “weaker vessels” (I Pet. 3:7. When Peter says that women may be “weaker” (Gk. *Asthenestero*) the immediate context may have indicated God’s pattern for the home; pointing out that prayers become ineffective when these principles are not observed. But considering the wider context Peter also had in mind the vulnerable plight of first century women; with no public voice and no civil rights. Women had only their husbands (male relatives) as a means of defense. The word ‘weaker’ here

¹⁸¹Ibid, . 95.

¹⁸²Ibid,. 96.

was referring to physical and differences between the sexes. Peter was not implying moral or intellectual inferiority, but recognizing women's physical limitations.¹⁸³

Women in his day, if unprotected by men, were vulnerable to attack, abuse and financial disaster. Today, with all the numerous interventions women are still vulnerable to sexual based violence, rape, transactional sex, prostitution, discrimination, prejudice. Women's lives may require less punishing physical labour today because of all the advocacies, but women are still vulnerable to criminal attack and family abuse. And in spite of increased opportunities in the workplace, most women still earn considerably less than most men, and the vast majority of the nation's poor are single mothers and their children. A man who honors his wife as a member of the weaker sex will protect, respect, help, and stay with her. He will not expect her to work full time outside of the home and full time at home, he will lighten her load as much as he can.

He can be sensitive to her needs and he will relate to her with courtesy, consideration, insight and tact. Peter, in the context of Christian conduct as husbands, exhorted Christian husbands to give their wives two gifts: a.) understanding and b.) love. The words (*Gk.kata gnosin*) translated considerate (more literally) according to "knowledge" or "with understanding" points out that husbands should understand and be considerate of their wives' spiritual emotional and physical needs. The reason is simple, for wives are their husband's fellow heirs of God's gracious gift of life. Peter added that husbands who do not treat their wives with consideration and respect or honor (*Gk timen I Pet.27*) cannot expect to have their prayers answered.¹⁸⁴ Paul

¹⁸³The Quest Study Bible. Why call wives the weaker partner? (I Pet. 3:7).

¹⁸⁴Roger M. Raymer. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* . New Testament. I Peter. Dallas: Victor. 1983. 849.

also elaborated on the responsibility of the husband to protect and care for his wife just as Christ does the church (Eph. 5:28-30). The Church universal, not excluding the Church of Liberia, had communicated a negative cultural implicit (sometimes it is explicit) message that women are considered second –class (subservient) citizens because of their gender. This we assume may have come out of the concept of the order of creation (Adam was created before Eve). David Hamilton reminded us that ‘God’s design for each of His created beings is what gives them value and not the sequence of their arrival.’¹⁸⁵

Harvesting the True Meaning Of “Submission’ Eph.5:22-25

According to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* *hupotassō* to be submissive means ¹⁸⁶ to cooperate voluntarily with someone else out of love and respect to God and for that person. Ideally submission is mutual (“submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Eph. 5:2). Even when it is used -to apply to one gender only, however, the expression of submission can be an effective Christian witness. Jesus Christ submitted to death so that we could be saved. We may sometimes have to submit to unpleasant circumstances so that others will see Christ in us (see I Peter 4:12-16). Christian submission never requires us to disobey God, remain in an unsafe situation, or participate in what our conscience forbids. One sided submission requires tremendous strength. We could not do it without the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. (Examples of “scripture twisting” by the Church may have been evidenced in the past and even in our contemporary society. But throughout the history of the church, leaders have distorted the Bible in similar ways to deny women

¹⁸⁵Roger M. Raymer. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* . New Testament. I Peter. Dallas: Victor. 1983. 849.

¹⁸⁶*Hupotassō* is the Greek word from which we get the terms relating to submission in marriage. It usually appears as submit, subject, or submissive. From G5259 and G5021; to subordinate; reflexively to obey: – be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self-unto.

the right to perform religious duties as men are permitted(including to preach, teach, pray publicly, pursue ordination). The Bible has been used to encourage women not to pursue careers other than homemaking and to teach that motherhood is a woman's only God-ordained call in life. Eph. 5:22 which states, "Wives, submit to your husband's as to the Lord," has been used to compel Christian wives to tolerate physical or sexual abuse from their husbands in order to glorify God with submissive femininity. Submitting to one another is often a misunderstood concept. "It does not mean becoming a doormat."¹⁸⁷

In Paul's day, women, children and slaves were to submit to the head of the family-slaves would submit until they were freed, male children until they grew up, and women and girls their whole lives.¹⁸⁸ Paul emphasized the equality of all believers in Christ (Gal. 3:28), but he did not suggest overthrowing the Roman society to achieve it. Instead, he counseled all to submit one another by choice –wives to husbands and husbands to wives, slaves to master and also master to slaves, children to parents and parents to children. "This kind of mutual submission preserves order and harmony in the family while it increases love and respect among family members. There is nowhere in the teaching of Paul that he gave absolute or unlimited authority to husbands. Paul told wives to submit to their husband."¹⁸⁹

One way to disarm the antagonism that the external culture may inject into the marriage relationship is to remember that the wife gets to submit and the husband gets to renounce self-assertion. According to the Bible, the man is the spiritual head of the

¹⁸⁷ Life Application Bible . In-depth explanations. Ephesians. 5:22-25.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Life Application Bible . In-depth explanations. Ephesians. 5:22-25.

family, and his wife should acknowledge his leadership. But real spiritual leadership involves loving service (a form of dying), just as Christ served the disciples, even to the point of washing their feet, (and dying!!) John 15: 13 so the husband is to serve his wife. A wise and Christ-honoring husband will not take advantage of his leadership role and a wise Christ-honoring wife will not try to undermine her husband's leadership. Either approach causes disunity and friction in marriage.

Christ's Model of Abolishing Discrimination and Prejudices

Jesus went out of His way to challenge the cultural biases against women that were pervasive to Israel during the New Testament era. We must understand that in the pre-modern world in which Jesus lived, women were considered little more than a property. They were viewed as evil, ignorant and repulsively immoral. Rabbi Elizer asserted that "Rather should the words of the Torah be burned than entrusted to a woman...Whoever teaches his daughter is like one who teaches her obscenity."¹⁹⁰

Jesus Christ, our role model, abolished discrimination against racial minorities, slaves and women in both the church and marriage. What He teaches was the fundamental equality of believers of all racial and ethnic groups and all economic classes should serve as our prime examples. Jesus came to set in motion the healing God had promised when Adam and Eve shared the great tragedy of the Garden. He came to end the painful consequences of a broken and sinful world, including the rift between men and women. Jesus came to set men and women free but because of the terrible exclusion that women had suffered, His open welcome meant even more to them. Women had been offered so little in a hostile world. "Jesus did not start a movement for women, but a movement for humans. It is not surprising, however, that

¹⁹⁰ Rabbi Eliezar, quoted in Mishnah Sotah 3.4; B . Sotah 20a quoted in Tucker and Lieffeld, Daughters of the church , 60.

women were especially responsive to His ideas. Trapped in the isolation of a sometimes hostile family, women knew how insecure, unjust and lonely the world was.”¹⁹¹ Jesus’ mission was not gender biased, it was gender inclusive.

In John 8:1-11, – Jesus exemplified a model of compassion, forgiveness and justice and in a Gospel narrative that should be emulated by his Body in the earth realm. In the man-centered world just like in the days of Jesus there is double standard of dealing with, excluding, and limiting women’s God-given destiny. Gender prejudice with its pervasive influence has affected many institutions in subtle ways. Religious chauvinism has been around since the fall of the human race and it lies like a filthy residue on all our institutions. But Jesus came to reverse this order of treating women. An example of this injustice is the woman caught in adultery. *Can woman commit adultery by herself?* It is impossible. She could not have been caught in the very act alone. And what about the biblical law the men were supposed to be zealously upholding? It stipulated that in the case of adultery, both man and woman were to be put to death (Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22). Why did these “teachers of the law” forget to arrest the other guilty party? The truth was that their actions were governed by double standard of their culture rather than by the Word of God. Jesus refused to be pulled into their biased judgment. Jesus would not support a culture that favored one gender over the other. As Starr puts it, “He refused to approve a double standard. He rebuked the cry of his own and of subsequent ages: ‘Stone the woman and let the man go free.’¹⁹²” Jesus’ words were few, but they spoke volumes. Sin was sin whether it was committed by a man or a woman. Every one of us will stand

¹⁹¹Elsie Bounding. *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*: Boulder: Westview Press, 1976. 358.

¹⁹² Lee Anna Starr. *Biblical Status of Women*. Eph. 21-22 (cited in) David Hamilton- Daughters of Eve. *Why Not Women ? A fresh Look at Scripture on Women in missions, ministry and leadership*. Seattle WA: YWAM Publishing . 200. 93-96.

before God in judgment. No one will be able to hide or slip away. No one will be able to point to another. The woman's sin was NOT worse than the man's -nor was it better. When equity is the standard, stones are rarely thrown exclusively at one party.

Biblically the Jewish leaders had already disregarded the law by arresting the woman without the man. The law required that both parties to adultery be stoned (Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22). The leaders were using the woman as a trap so they could trick Jesus. If Jesus said the woman should not be stoned, they would accuse him of violating Moses' law. If he urged them to execute her, they would report him to the Romans, who did not permit the Jews to carry out their own executions (18:31). Jesus did not condemn the woman accused of adultery, but neither did he ignore or condone her sin. He told her to leave her life of sin.

Jesus is seen here as the bringer of justice and righteousness to this impoverished and voiceless woman. This is an ethical value which undergirds the model of Bridge of Hope Girls' school in post conflict Liberia. He is demonstrating forgiveness and compassion. He came to redeem women from their sinful condition and elevate them to experience His presence as true followers. This is the model that we are challenging the Church of Liberia to emulate. In the New Testament, Jesus was continually in conflict with religious leaders over the essential meaning of the law. Just treatment of people was at the core of his concern: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith; it is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others" (*Matthew 23:23Version*).

When Jesus challenged the Pharisees and Sadducee, he was confronting the public policy decision-makers. Jesus said they neglect justice and mercy and

faithfulness and their pretension to be righteous when in fact they are the very ones who murder the righteous (23:25-36). Gray S.W. concluded the interpretation of this text when he asserted: “The righteous treat the poor as the Old Testament had consistently said they ought to be treated , with mercy and justice.” (Distributive).¹⁹³ In the face of the political, social, and religious institutions of our own time, we are likewise called by the Spirit to pray, open our hearts to God, reach out to others in their need, and confront structures, behavior, and policies that impoverish and oppress. We are blessed with a system of government in Liberia that allows us to have a voice in public policy decisions. It is legitimate, even imperative, for us to exercise our prophetic ministry in the public policy arena, secure in the belief that this is how the Bible directs us.¹⁹⁴

Christians are morally obligated to stand up for the voiceless and defenseless. In other words, we must speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. “Speak out, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9). Jesus went against the status quo to care or create a safe-space for women because he was not threatened by them.¹⁹⁵ For instance Mary sat at the feet of Jesus – Lk.10:38-42. Jesus tender words to Mary with which He praised her for choosing the “good part” (vs. 42) were a clear signal that He had come to call women , not just men, to be his disciples. Women had a place at his feet. In our contemporary culture the expression “*at the feet*” sounds demeaning but the context and intention of Jesus was to the contrary. “Sitting at his feet simply means listening to and serving

¹⁹³ S.W. Gray. *The Least of My Brothers: Matthew 25:31-46. A History of Interpretation* (cited) *In the Path of Justice and Righteousness* . BS 602 New Testament Theology Lecture notes compiled by Dr. Chesser Wood. Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. 2004. 161-164.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ W. David Hager. *As Jesus Cared for Women. Restoring Women Then and Now*. Grand Rapids. Michigan; Fleming H. Revell. 1998, 68-72.

Him (vs.39) and taking the posture of a disciple, a learner. It is a believing submission and a submissive faith in Jesus that we must have or perish.”¹⁹⁶ This was not just for academic pursuit but personal. She drew near to Jesus and lingered there in His presence. It speaks of relationship as well as loving Jesus (vs.42).¹⁹⁷

At times it was a moment of worship and praise and experience (Mk. 14:3-9), or a time of grief and anguish like that of the widow of Nain (Luke. 7:11-15). Jesus’ compassionate method in accepting this gender created in the same image of God is the driving force for “BOHGTE Model. As we will demonstrate in the case study of chapter 6, the underlying values of BOHTGE are based on Jesus’ ultimate desire to give hope and help to the most marginalized sector of our society (women and young girls).

Conclusion Biblical Issues and Theological Doctrines -Transformational Girls' Education

The social class of people this dissertation is concerned with in post-conflict Liberia is that of girls and women who are also the lowest in terms of education and economic standing. The Church should be responsible to intervene and alleviate the plight of girls and women, realizing that poverty, sexual exploitation, oppression, and physical abuse are examples of dehumanizing situations which this group of people faces in almost every society. The interaction of Jesus with those who were regarded as “social outcasts” should be a constant reminder to Christians that as followers of Jesus, they should identify themselves with people who have been dehumanized as

¹⁹⁶ Pastor Matt Mitchell. *The Hot Orthodoxy*. Message “Sitting at Jesus’ feet. Sunday April 11, 2010

¹⁹⁷ Christian Classic. Retrieved from: www.spurgeon.org/sermons/10.

victims of various forms of prejudice.¹⁹⁸ The ethical teachings of Jesus compel the church, both men and women, to recognize the need and importance of educating their daughters. This means breaking through the barriers of cultural prejudice.

The BOHGTE Model is grounded in biblical ethics and, as we will demonstrate in the case study presented in chapter 6, has as its purpose the breaking of this vicious cycle and providing transformational education for these underprivileged teenage girls in post conflict Liberia.

Summary of Relationship between Biblical Texts and Development of Transformational Girls' Education

Our focus texts (Genesis 1 and 2) have provided a theological foundation which shows that in God's creation plan, women are given equal dignity, honor, and responsibility to rule (and therefore human rights) as males. These foundational ethical values have driven us to advocate for these underprivileged girls at BOH and in the nation of Liberia. These two chapters in Genesis, along with Jesus' model in the New Testament, have clearly informed us that God has a great destiny for men and women. When He first laid out His plans He said "... and let them rule over... all the earth (Gen.1:28). That is shared leadership with global implications. As if to underline this, God then "blessed them and said to them,' Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen.1:28). It is explicitly clear from the very beginning that God did NOT give man alone dominion over the earth, but he was given it along with the woman who was standing beside

¹⁹⁸Mugambi J.N.K. Mugambi. Theological Basis for care of women and other vulnerable groups. Nairobi: Oxford University Press. 1989. 42.

him. Adam realized that Eve was serving with him. In the words of Lee Anna Starr “Eve was not his property... [but] his associates in government as well as his companion in the home.”¹⁹⁹

In establishing the theological foundations for correct understanding of male-female relationships, we recognize the urgent need to transform wrong scriptural interpretations and applications that have persisted for centuries giving men the upper hand to demean women in every culture.

When we critically reflect on the present realities in post conflict Liberia and other Third world countries, we realize that women are seen as the ‘*main beasts of burden.*’ Biblical ethics compels us to the point of playing a proactive advocacy role for this overlooked group. In the words of Bussert (alluding to this same concept being advocated by the BOHGTE model which we will describe in chapter 6) the Church’s response to sexual and domestic violence is : “We need . . . to begin articulating a faith that will provide women with resources for *strength* rather than resources for *endurance*. We must articulate a theology of empowerment rather than a theology of passive endurance”²⁰⁰ This provides the moral imperative for reaching out to these precious girls at the Bridge of Hope Girls’ School hailing from the slum community of Matadi and its environs.

¹⁹⁹Lee Anna Starr. Biblical Status of Women. Eph. 21-22 (cited in) David Hamilton-Daughters of Eve. Why Not Women ? A fresh Look at Scripture on Women in missions, ministry and leadership. Seattle WA: YWAM Publishing . 200. 93-96

²⁰⁰J. Bussert, J. Battered women: From a theology of suffering to an ethic of empowerment. Minneapolis, MN: Division in North America, Lutheran Church in America.1986. 65

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to present the evidence derived from empirical research that the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls' School is actually producing significant identifiable changes in girls. Some of the factors which will be examined to indicate successful change include creation of pathways for disadvantaged girls to access the process, retention of students in the institution, progression of students to higher grades at appropriate times, and completion of school by the girls. Qualitative empirical research using a "case study" methodology which examines this model school was used to analyze data regarding girls' education in post-conflict Liberia.

The research is founded on certain assumptions which we believe will be validated through interdisciplinary research, including empirical analysis.

Assumptions:

1. There are theological and philosophical grounds for desiring gender equality in education. The wide disparity between the numbers of boys versus girls enrolled in Liberian schools is immoral. To deny women and girls their basic human rights is theologically unacceptable. Traditional values which undergird the pervasive gender-based discrimination against girls in the Liberian society are unjust and destructive to society.

2. To develop a just and prosperous society, Liberia educates every girl to enable her to achieve her full potential. National economic development is contingent on providing opportunity to girls.
3. As a result of the cultural patterns and systemic prejudices which operate in the Liberian society, Liberian girls will experience a greater degree of positive transformation if they are educated in all-girls (single gender) schools.
4. Education provided in an all-girls Christian school model can be demonstrated to result in significant transformation in the lives of girls. Specifically:
 - a. This study assumes that introducing a new model of Christian girls-only learning that seeks to promote transformative learning could encourage entry, retention, progression and completion of schools by girls.
 - b. This study also assumes that establishing all girls' schools could minimize factors responsible for high cultural disparity between boys and girls education as well as effectively promote self-esteem, self-worth and values of girls.

Statement of the Research Questions

RQ #1 – What are primary contributing factors that result in disparity between boys' and girls' education that could impact entry, retention, progression and completion in all model or mixed school?

RQ#2- What evidence exists to verify that the government's policy on girls' education, massive mobilization, and huge international resources have impacted the lives of girls in Liberian society?

RQ#3 -What evidence exists to verify that a girls-only environment does create a gender-sensitive learning environment which produces more positive outcomes in a girl’s educational experience?

RQ#4- What is the evidence that a Christian transformative education (girls-only) model such as that offered at Bridge of Hope can make a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of girls?

The overall research framework utilized an “inter-disciplinary research model.” “Interdisciplinary research is a type of study or research that draws from two or more disciplines in order to gain a well-developed perspective, or discover something new.”²⁰¹

The interdisciplinary method calls for researchers’ “serious engagement with multiple disciplines with the ultimate purpose to understand terminology, perspective, theory, and method that allows one to place particular insights that might emerge from that discipline in context.”²⁰² Further understanding into the interdisciplinary model requires a researcher to take into account important characteristics that are unique to this method. Firstly, it draws upon the knowledge derived from specialized research in a variety of disciplines which have been supported through examined data and literature reviewed. One dimension of this “interdisciplinary” examination will utilize a social science research design called the “case study” approach. Using this method I gathered empirical data that investigated the “BOHTGE model” and its effectiveness in bringing change in the lives of the girls. The interdisciplinary method utilizes multiple theories and methods. Researchers are conscious that all theories, methods, and disciplines are useful for some purposes, but each of these also has

²⁰¹Interdisciplinary Research. Retrieved from:
<http://study.com/academy/lesson/interdisciplinary-research-definition-process-and-theory.html>.

²⁰² R. Szostak. Research skills for the future: An interdisciplinary perspective. *Journal of Research Practice*, 9(1), 2013. Article V3. Retrieved from
<http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/385/308>.

weaknesses. The interdisciplinary model integrates the best elements of disciplinary insights in order to generate a more comprehensive appreciation of the issue at hand.²⁰³

Studying the “success” of the BOHGTE model presents complex social issues that cannot be satisfactorily answered by any one discipline. Thus, our best alternative for this study is a combination of various types of research which incorporates approaches from several disciplines in fields such as sociology, history, anthropology, and Biblical Studies. For instance, when we engage in theological analysis of scriptural texts (e.g. Genesis 1 and 2, Luke. 10:38; Titus 2:4-5; I Pet. 3:5-7,) in our quest to critically re-assess God’s original intentions for both men and women in the creation narrative which is the foundation for this research, we are employing the discipline of Biblical Studies. Critically examining the traditional Liberian values vis a vis girl-child expectations and considering what is required for a change in community values employs an anthropological approach. When this research challenges the Body of Christ in Liberia to live up to its responsibility to be salt and light and engage in ministry that can bring social transformation and healing to the nation, the research is employing pastoral theology and theological ethics. The impact of the failure to educate a girl-child and its terrible socio-economic consequences was researched through the lenses of sociology/development. And finally the unique patterns of learning for girls and how to maximize educational impact during personality development was established based on educational theory. Moreover, the careful examination of success and failures of the BOHGTE model

²⁰³R. Szostak. Research skills for the future: An interdisciplinary perspective. *Journal of Research Practice*, 9(1), 2013. Article V3. Retrieved from <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/385/308>.

employed an empirical research method called “Case Study” method which utilizes qualitative research method from the Social Sciences. All of these approaches can only be successful when interdisciplinary model is fully applied in the context of an integrative approach to research.

Case Study Approach

As was stated previously, this research employed a combination of various methodologies, meaning we utilized “inter-disciplinary research model.” A significant contribution to the study was the data discovered using the qualitative methods from social science, specifically the “Case Study Model,” to determine value and impact of the new paradigm of BOHGTE model. The researcher’s choice was predicated on the fact that “Case Study” method is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life –context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”²⁰⁴ According to certain empirical research taxonomies, one might also refer to this research initiative as fitting within the category of “phenomenological inquiry” since its philosophical foundation is in the field of phenomenology.

The contemporary phenomenon under critical consideration which this research was investigated was girls’ and women’s education. We sought to present data to find out if the assumptions could be confirmed that the BOHTGE model was effective in bringing change. The case study methodology is summarized in this way:

It is a model in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case (s) is bounded by time

²⁰⁴ R. K.Yin. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.1984. 23.

and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.²⁰⁵

In spite of the complexities of the case study method, such as the involvement of multiple sources of data, multiple cases within a study, and the presence of large amounts of data for analysis, the researcher chose this model because of its ‘applicability to real-life contemporary, human situations and its public accessibility through written reports.’²⁰⁶ Further, a case study research generally answers one or more questions which begin with “how” or why.” Accordingly the questions are targeted to a limited number of events or conditions and their inter-relationships. Since this research anticipates further research into the complexities of girls’ education in post war Liberia, the case study approach was suitable because it leaves room for further research. In essence ‘many disciplines use the case study method to build upon theory, to produce new theory, to dispute or challenge theory, to explain a situation, to provide a basis to apply solutions to situations, to explore, or to describe an object or phenomenon.’²⁰⁷

Case Study Step 1- Putting Forth Successful Research Questions

Crafting a successful set of research questions to guide the process was the first step in achieving a successful case study analysis. This dissertation had previously defined the purpose, explained study design, reviewed literature, determined the potential audience, and crafted the following research questions to guide this process as indicated below:

²⁰⁵ R.E. Stake. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage. 1995. (cited in) John W.Creswell. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach* (second edition). London: Sage Publications.2003. 15.

²⁰⁶ _____ . *Case Study Research: Design And Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.1984. 23

²⁰⁷R.E. Stake. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage. 1995. (cited) in John W.Creswell. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach* (second edition). London: Sage Publications.2003. 15.

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RQ#4- What is the evidence that a Christian transformative education (girls-only) model such as that offered at Bridge of Hope can make a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of girls?

The subjects on whom we have focused in this case study are the vulnerable girls at Bridge of Hope Girls' School who are a representative sample typical of the socio-economic experiences of many young girls and women in post-war Liberia. These girls may be experiencing the culture of disparity in education, at home, and in accessing government educational services. The ultimate intention here was investigating the issues through a case study of the BOHGTE model using a variety of data gathering methods. The end product in this approach was to use the data to objectively tell the story of the plight of women and young girls in war torn Liberia and to explain that there is an alternative that is producing empirically verifiable change. In chapter #1 we explained that this is an assumption which we are bringing to the study and for which we are seeking evidence to investigate. Education provided in an all-girls Christian school model can be demonstrated to result in significant transformation in the lives of girls. Specifically:

- A. This study assumes that introducing a new model of Christian girls-only learning that seeks to promote transformative learning could encourage entry, retention, progression.
- B. This study also assumes that establishing an all girls' schools could minimize factors responsible for high cultural disparity between boys and girls education as well as effectively promote self-esteem, self-worth and values of girls.

In the conclusion of this research, we will issue a call for social action to transform the lives of many women and disadvantaged girls in post-war Liberia, as well as reforming the irrational and unjust structures that have impeded the progress, self-determination, and self-development of Liberia's females. This "call" represents the response that we deem necessary in light of all the data which we are presenting from all the various disciplines utilized in the research. Our "interdisciplinary" analysis (which incorporates theological ethics and Pastoral Theology concepts) requires that we propose moral imperatives. The results of the "case study" component of the study will give further direction to our interventions since we are assuming that the data will demonstrate that the BOHTGE model actually results in identifiable positive change.

Case Study Design: (Step 2) -Presenting the Case, Gathering and Analyzing Data Techniques

The second most important aspect in this process of conducting a credible case study was the researcher's ability to clearly identify and concisely select the case which is pivotal to determining the most useful data gathering and analysis techniques. This research has selected the Bridge of Hope Girls' School.

Here the researcher also reflected on credibility and trustworthiness of the instruments used in the research and whether or not the findings of the research are generally applicable beyond the immediate case or cases (generalizability.) ‘Case study external validity can be tested by the ability to withstand variations in places, people, and procedures and still yield the same findings. A case study is also tested by its credibility when it is stable, accurate and precise with regards to measurement.’²⁰⁸ The strength of the case study method is the ability to use multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process.

Data for this research was collected through two means: interviews and document analysis. All interview participants were interviewed using an interview guide. I prepared a list of questions and/or issues in advance, all based on the established research questions, to be investigated during the interviews (Appendix A). The questions were framed around the topics in the guide. The interview was conducted in a conversational manner. The interview guide directs the conversation towards the topics and issues the researcher wants to learn about. In this case, it was investigating a transformational model at BOH for a verifiable evidence of significant positive impact. The guide also helps the researcher know what to ask, in what sequence, and how to pose the questions and follow-up. The interview guide is always revised on an ongoing basis to gather more focused responses from the participants. The interviews were digitally audio-tape recorded and the recordings supplemented by field notes. As each interview was conducted, important points and notes were jotted down by the researcher and also by the assistants from each participant.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸R.K. Yin. *Case Study Research: Design And Methods* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage.1984. 23.)

²⁰⁹L.R. Gay and Peter Airasian. *Educational Research. Competencies for Analysis and Application . 7th Edition* (New Jersey: Merrill Pretrice Hall. 2003, 13.)

This research also utilized rich examples and experiences from entities that were either led by women or work predominately with women or girls, for instance, Madam Leymah Gbowee's Foundation. "The results are thought of as "themes" and not reported as percentages, subjected to statistical analysis (quantitative research), or projected to a broader population. That is because the participants do not make up a randomly selected representative sample, the samples are relatively small, and not all participants were asked."²¹⁰ This research's ultimate intention as we used these instruments was to present verifiable data to support the recommendation that girls benefit significantly from experiencing the new paradigm of transformational approach to girls' and women's education. These open-ended or unstructured questions, for instance, were used to probe the students at BOH to willingly tell their stories whether positive and measurable changes are taking place in their lives. In addition we sought to obtain first-hand testimonies which validate the claim that positive existential changes are taking place in girls' lives.

Case Study Step 3-- Planning and Collecting Data

The third phase of the case study model was simply planning and collecting data. This aspect was intended to prevent the researcher from being overwhelmed by the volume of data generated as well as losing sight of the original research purpose and questions in the process. In order to achieve this goal, the researcher intentionally embarked on the journey of systematically organizing data collected. The data used in this research had been collected over the past three years (2011-2015) since our journey at the Africa International University Doctor of Ministry

²¹⁰ L.R. Gay and Peter Airasian. *Educational Research. Competencies for Analysis and Application* . 7th Edition (New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall. 2003, 13.)

program.²¹¹ Databases had been prepared to assist with categorizing, sorting, and retrieving data for analysis. The data collection and analysis is an important process during the entire research. The simple reason is that a researcher should ‘anticipate key problems and events, identify key people, prepare letters of introduction, establish rules for confidentiality, and actively seek opportunities to revisit and revise the research design in order to address and add to the original set of research questions.’²¹² The researcher analyzed and coded data to discover the meaning of the content and the perspectives and beliefs of the participants. As more data was collected on girls’ education in post-conflict Liberia, the researcher refined prior analyses and understanding. The end product in this approach was to use language to validate if BOHGTE model has made any positive impact in the lives of the girls at Bridge of Hope Girls’ School.

The material collected was specific for this research, since I have not previously collected data for it. The subjects who were interviewed were selected using “purposive sampling” (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling). This sampling technique is one in which a researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when “elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher.”²¹⁰ Because of the researcher’s extensive involvement with the institution over a period of years, it was my belief that I could best obtain a representative sample by using sound judgment rooted in extensive experience. The main intention of this purposive

²¹¹The past four years up to the completion of the study; the researcher or his assistants interacted with the same of group of informants/subjects (administration, staff, students and parents) at Bridge of Hope Girls’ School being informed by longitudinal survey. This was possible because BOH had maintained the same kind of staff and administration for the past eight years of her existence.

²¹² R. K.Yin. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage.1984. 23.)

sampling was to focus on particular persons and characteristics of the BOH population that are most appropriate and knowledgeable in light of the stated research questions which guided the investigation.

The students of Bridge of Hope Girls' School were selected for this case study after the researcher's defense, approval of dissertation proposal, and comprehensive exams on October 2, 2013. The researcher clearly articulated the purpose of the study and appealed to the administration at BOH to assemble key staff and students for interviews. In some instances the researcher or assistants collected and examined organizational documents, e.g. National Policy on Girls' Education (NAPGE) and Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)-- two basic national policy documents of the Liberian government-- to evaluate the policy implementation status vis a vis the stated policies. The researcher stated his intent to request copies of these documents, and planned for storage, classification, and retrieval of these items, as well as the interview and survey data. The researcher's letter of introduction from the Africa International University (AIU) in May 2015 was an added advantage and a key door-opener for the gathering of data from these institutions.

Case Study Step 4 – Providing Proper Tools For the Research Assistants

The training of formal research assistants was part of ensuring proper planning and data collection. This research clearly fulfilled this important aspect by selecting seven persons (three women and four men).²¹³ The researcher excluded himself in some areas because of his status as a leader in the Body of Christ in Liberia. This was

²¹³Those selected and trained to serve as research assistants are: (pseudonym) John Mehdeh, BSc, Biology, 2nd year student Medical College, Instructor Bridge of Hope Girls' School, Francis Fouah, High school Graduate, worked as research officer for many NGOs, Moses Y. Beyan, 3rd year student University of Liberia majoring Geologist, Instructor Bridge of Hope, Esther Dorbor, Senior Student, AME University , majoring in Accounting; Oretha S. Mehdeh, BSc. Biology; Instructor Bridge of Hope Girls' School, Frank J. Tiah , Senior Student African Bible College University, majoring in Theology and minor Christian education; Phoebe B.J. Wesseh, Freshman student Cuttington University College, majoring in Accounting.

intended to remove potential impediments in the way of conducting objective interviews. The research assistants were given lists of specific questions relative to the four (4) research questions stated at the beginning of this research.’ To ensure that the assistants understood and mastered the process, a pilot site was selected and the skills learned were tested in order to uncover any real problems and obstacles in the conduct of the data gathering. In other words, there were practice sessions in conducting open-ended interviews and documenting sources. The research assistants were given a suggested field notes format, and a detailed explanation of the purpose of the case study. During the training session for research assistants, the researcher was careful to establish clear protocols and procedures in advance of assistants’ field work. ‘The training consisted of understanding terms, processes, and methods of proper application of techniques used in the study.’²¹⁴ The training consisted especially of equipping research assistants to be good listeners who could hear exactly the words being used by those interviewed. In some instances we used local interpreters to conduct interviews with uneducated parents to ensure that the interviewees were comfortable. Further, qualifications for research assistants also include being able to ask good and precise questions and interpret answers. They were trained to avoid leading questions, and ask open-ended questions (See list of questions found in interview guide Appendix A). Listening is the most important part of interviewing. In essence, research assistants were trained to listen more, talk less. She/he must not interrupt and must learn to wait. The training stressed that good research assistants review documents looking for facts, but also read between the lines and pursue collaborative evidence elsewhere when that seems appropriate. “Research assistants were trained to be flexible in real-life situations and not feel

²¹⁴R. K. Yin. *Case Study Research: Design And Methods*.(Newbury Park, CA: Sage.1984. 23.)

threatened by unexpected change, missed appointments, or unwillingness of interviewees to avail themselves. Research Assistants were further trained, understood the purpose of the study, and grasped the issues and were open to contrary findings. Research assistants were trained to also be aware that they are going into the world of real human beings who may be threatened or unsure of what the case study will bring.”²¹⁵

Case Study Step 5- Protocols on the Field -Collection of Data

The actual collection of data in the field by the researcher along with the research assistants was the fourth phase in conducting this case study. During the research, arrangements were made with Bridge of Hope Girls’ School and the administration of selected institutions, individuals, and all others that are involved with this case study. This involved appropriate heads of government and administrators of local and international NGOs such as Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and Ministry of Planning. We asked them for appropriate documents such as a mission statement, project proposals, strategic plans, etc., that are helping to achieve the purpose of their organizations. In order to understand the purpose of the visit, we carefully reviewed the purpose of the study with the students and administration and all other key persons who were involved in the interview. In some instances, we corresponded through written communications (for instance the interview conducted with Sis. Marilyn Jones co-founder of BOH, Clay Steiner-(pseudonym) Chairman BOH Advisory Board/USA. Investigators took written notes during the interview and recorded field notes after the interview was completed. The

²¹⁵ R. K. Yin. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage.1984. 23.)

research assistants' recorded time of interview, date, place, interviewer, and interviewee, position of interviewee and briefly described the project.

Field notes and recording using audio recording (when appropriate) added credibility to the research. Hence, research assistants and field researchers were careful with what they recorded as 'field notes.' "In actuality field notes are hunches, testimonies, impressions, questions, responses, stories, and illustrations."²¹⁶ These notes were recorded and used in the reports.

As part of the work of the assistants they crafted notes of stories as they were told by the respondents during the open-ended interviews with the purpose of properly noting them in the final report. "This was necessary as the data collection process is not complete until the researcher codes and enters the data into the database so that it can be used as well as integrated when the case study progresses to the point of cross-examination of data."²¹⁷ The interviews, although open-ended, are structured around the four (4) research questions defined at the beginning of the case study.

Finally the transcribed data was used to identify themes that developed and the responses of the participants were correlated to the four (4) major areas of the interview guide so as to answer the research questions. The four (4) areas covered in the interview guide were:

Table 1: The Four areas interviewed

Interview guide	Research questions
Factors propagating disparity between boys and girls in either all girl school or mixed school?	RQ #1- What are primary contributing factors that lead to disparity between boys' and girls' education that could impact entry,

²¹⁶R. K. Yin . *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. 1984. 23

²¹⁷Ibid.

	retention, progression and completion in all model or mixed school?
Government national policy's impact on cultural disparity between boys and girls	RQ#2- What evidence exists to verify that the government's policy on girls' education, massive mobilization, and huge international resources have impacted the lives of girls in Liberian society?
Creating gender sensitive environment in girls-only school or co-education	RQ#3 -What evidence exists to verify that a girls-only environment does create a gender-sensitive learning environment which produces more positive outcomes in a girl's educational experience?
The impact of transformative education (girls-only) model on Bridge of Hope students	RQ#4- What is the evidence that a Christian transformative education (girls-only) model such as that offered at Bridge of Hope can make a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of girls?

Case Study Step 6- Processing and Evaluating the Data Collected

The sixth important component of the process is the ability to evaluate and accurately analyze the data collected. To this end, this research keeps examining the raw data collected and using many analytical cues in order to find linkages or relationships between the research object (BOH students) and outcomes (verifiable evidence that the transformational model is significantly impacting the lives of the girls at BOH) always with reference to the original research questions.

After all the interviews were conducted, the audio-taped interview of each of the participants was transcribed to help in the data analysis. The transcribed data were cross-checked so as to verify the information reported, identify inconsistencies, and determine the correct information. I reviewed and cross-checked the transcribed interview data of each participant's response to the different areas of the interview guide in order to gather conclusive data for the research.

Document analysis: This process is defined as “the study of written communication found in natural situations.”²¹⁸ The sources can either be prepared for personal or official reasons. While a helpful tool in qualitative research, document analysis can be challenging because of the inability of the researcher to interview the author and observe the situation in which the written communication was developed. Therefore, a study of the document's context and the purpose of writing the document are helpful in analyzing it. Working with the Bridge of Hope administration, I received copies of documents:

- a) Resolutions from Founding Board meetings – expressing primary philosophy and education objectives of the school.
- b) School Handbook – highlighted policies, rules and regulations of the school
- c) Records from Registrar – students enrollment and statistics
- d) Souvenirs from past graduations – intended to verify numbers of graduates and keep track of them
- e) Administrative and staff meeting minutes – assisted in policies implementation

²¹⁸M. Q. *Qualitative Evaluation And Research Methods (2nd Ed.)* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. 1990.)

f) Results from public exams - Government national examination

As the process progressed the researcher remained open to new opportunities and insights.

Case Study Step 7- Preparing A Written Report

“A written report helps paint a clear picture of a complex problem in a way that conveys the reality of the experience to the reader.”²¹⁹ In this study we have been critically investigating the BOHGTE model in an effort to establish that this educational initiative results in significant and positive impact on the lives of the girls. In essence report is intended to describe the findings. Case study findings present data in very publicly accessible ways and may lead the reader to apply the experience in his or her own real-life situation. “Researchers pay particular attention to displaying sufficient evidence to gain the readers’ confidence that all avenues have been explored, clearly communicating the boundaries of the case, and giving special attention to conflicting propositions.”²²⁰ There are unique ways to write out case study report which includes but are not limited to explaining the data gathering and analysis techniques use, appreciating all of the participants, stating the problem, listing the research questions, describing the methods used and concluding with the answers to the questions and suggestions for further research. In this study we have

²¹⁹ R. Szostak. *Research Skills For The Future: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Journal of Research Practice, 9(1), 2013. Article V3. Retrieved from <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/385/308>.

²²⁰ R. Szostak. *Research Skills For The Future: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Journal of Research Practice, 9(1), 2013. Article V3. Retrieved from <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/385/308>

used qualitative, interdisciplinary/integrative method, with specific emphasis on case study since we are studying one case-BOH girls' school.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND RESULTS FROM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to present the evidence derived from empirical research that the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls' School is actually producing significant identifiable changes in girls. Factors which were examined to indicate successful change included creation of pathways for disadvantaged girls to access the process, retention of students in the institution, progression of students to higher grades at appropriate times, and completion of school by the girls.

This chapter reports the findings and results of the empirical dimension of the research. The over-all methodology of this study is “interdisciplinary” as explained in chapter 5. This means that I am discovering knowledge from a variety of disciplines. In previous chapters, we have set forth the Biblical-theological foundations which require Christians to address the injustices and discrimination meted out against girls and women. I have presented data from historical sources which help to explain the traditional view of women in the Liberian society. We have also used documentary research to set out the official government position on educational policies and standards in Liberia.

The “case study” research design was the central tool employed in the study seeking to verify how the BOHGTE model is transforming the lives of the girls. Case

study method is a specialized form of qualitative empirical research (explained in Ch.

5). There were four (4) research questions that guided this study.

Statement of the Research Questions

- RQ #1 – What are the primary contributing factors that lead to a disparity between boys’ and girls’ education that could impact entry, retention, progression and completion in all model or mixed school?
- RQ#2- What evidence exists to verify that the government’s policy on girls’ education, massive mobilization, and huge international resources have impacted the lives of girls in the Liberian society?
- RQ#3 -What evidence exists to verify that a girls-only environment does create a gender-sensitive learning environment which produces more positive outcomes in a girl’s educational experience?
- RQ#4- What is the evidence that a Christian transformative education (girls-only) model such as that offered at Bridge of Hope can make a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of girls?

Research questions 1 and 2 were exhaustively discussed in chapter 2 of our Literature review and Ministry context in chapter 3. Question #1 was specifically about the male vs. female disparity in the Liberian education while Question #2 –was on the lack of impact of government national policy and mobilization. Following the order of the Research Questions guiding this study we are using the case study to answer Questions #3 and 4. To achieve this we are presenting a comprehensive case study of the BOHTGE model school which includes a background history and philosophy of education leading to the establishment of the institution, organizational structure, students’ demography, curriculum, central transformation strategies and assessment and evaluations. In gathering data for the case study, the researcher also incorporates the actual stories of girls at Bridge of Hope Girls’ School to verify how their lives have been impacted by BOHGTE model. What this study has done is to

capture the stories of transformative learning process that have impacted girls at BOH through formal class room settings and informal experiences. In presenting the “case,” the researcher will demonstrate how learning takes place at Bridge of Hope in a variety of settings and ways including traditional and non-traditional interactions or settings as set forth by the BOHGTE model. The Bridge of Hope education philosophy of learning is not limited by conventional connotations rather it incorporates both formal and informal learning experiences.²²¹ Highlighted also in this chapter is the operational definition of transformative learning as well as factors responsible for change from the perspective of students, administration, parents and other stakeholders.

In presenting the empirical data found in my research of the BOH School, I will organize the data using the following outline:

I. History and Philosophy

- a) Personal motivations of founding of BOH
 - i) Founders’ testimonies
 - ii) School official statements
- b) Original vision for opening the school
- c) Official "mission, vision, core values"
- d) Philosophy of education
- e) Influence of Christian worldview on school's values
- f) Ownership and governance

²²¹Jay Cross. *Informal Learning: Rediscovering the Natural Pathways That Inspire Innovation and Performance*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. The formal and informal learning have nothing to do with the formality of the learning, but with the direction of who controls the learning objectives and goals. In a formal learning environment, the training or learning department sets the goals and objectives, while informal learning means the learner sets the goal and objectives. At BOH learning is not restricted to the classrooms hence; the school counts on the parents and community to impact informal education to the students.

Ii. Current Organizational Systems

- a) Current administrative structures
- b) Current financial framework -- sustainability
- c) Relationship to government regulations and education ministry legal requirements
 - i) Building of the facilities and formal application
- ii) Ministry Education Requirements for Registration
- d) List of key officials and credentials

Iii. Students ...

- a) Demographics of students served
- b) Numbers and increase over time
- c) Selection of students
 - i) socio-economic class
 - ii) Geographic area
 - iii) Church
- d) Admission criteria
- e) Parental participation
- f) Selection procedures

Iv. Curriculum –Formal Explicit.

- a) Required subject area courses
- b) Sources of curriculum -- government regulations? or "Christian Schools" package ?
 - i) Is Bible a required course?

- ii) How is this “transformational?”
- iii) Is there a sex education component
- c) Grading standards and philosophy -- How is this “transformational”?
- d) Influence of Christian teachings on core content
- e) Supplemental courses which address girls’ issues and which enhance “transformation”
- g) BOH Emphasis- Primary education
- i) Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)

V. Curriculum – Informal (Implicit)

- a) How are teachers distinctive in comparison with other schools?
- b) How are teachers equipped to be "transformational" influencers?
- c) What procedures are in place to promote "transformational" dynamics ?
 - i) Chapel
 - ii) Intentional mentoring
 - iii) Core values taught and modeled
 - iv) Disciplinary procedures
- d) Other "non-academic” experiences programmed into process
 - i) Sports
 - ii) Music
 - iii) Home science
 - iv) Work in school compound/farm
 - v) Peer group mentoring or “big sister" programme
- e) How are parents incorporated?

- f) What other persons are included in the formation process?
 - i) School pastor
 - ii) Guidance counselors
 - iii) Church "mothers"
 - iv) Psychologists
 - v) Athletic coaches
 - vi) Vocational mentor
- g) How does "intentional rite of passage" included in your plan?

Vi. Central Transformational Strategies

- a) The concept of pedagogy as reflected in BOHGTE model
- b) Teacher training
- c) Who trains teachers to be unique? What is the Biblical content?
- d) Peer group interaction --is there any strategy for influencing peer group interaction
- e) Deliberate exposure to positive role models and "heroes"
- f) Specific "classes" which address girls' identity issues
- g) Prominent women as role models
- h) How does the school oversee and monitor the implementation of "transformation

Vii. Assessment and Evaluation

- a) What criteria does the school use in assessment of "success"?
- b) What is the real "Proof" of transformation" to be discovered in the lives of alumni?
- c) Church membership and positive Christian faith

- d) Retention and completion of studies
- f) What “Non-academic” criteria can be used to assess "transformation"?
- g) How do we really assess identity transformation and growth toward “becoming a woman of noble character”?
- h) To what extent do graduates escape social perils which (statistically) entrap most Liberian girls after 1 year post-school?
- i) How does the leadership assure that vision and values and philosophy are successfully Implemented?

History and Philosophy of Bridge Of Hope

Personal History of the School’s Founders

In this history of the school, I served as the researcher as well as being a “subject” of the research as the data was collected for the case study. The narrative about our family was told by Victoria (my wife and current Principal) in a personal interview. The personal data gathered in this section has been previously published hence we are drawing on that source, titled “Rewriting your story.”

Victoria explained that “our four precious girls grew and lived in a typical post-war Liberian culture where educating girls did not take center stage when families discussed their children’s future. In other words, most Liberian parents do not prioritize the education of a girl-child.” Besides, our girls also grew up in a ‘poisonous youth culture’ especially for girls, where parents need powerful tools to help their daughters realize their full potential. As the family envisioned this, we see every little girl growing up in our community knowing she is valued, knowing she is made in the image of God, and knowing that she can fulfill all the potential God has put within her. As a family, our prayer is that ‘Liberian post-war society will not be

bound by traditions hindering girls and young women from growing up and realizing their full potential but rather will be a nation providing equal access to quality education for all its citizens.’²²² This was part of our personal motivation leading to the establishment of the Bridge of Hope Girls’ School.

Moreover, our family background, culture, and life history as children growing up in a typical Liberian culture had an influence on this vision of renewing the hope of young girls through a Christian education and life skills- training. As a family we keep asking ourselves;` What do girls need to thrive and prosper? What keeps them safe and helps them realize their potential? We came to understand that it starts with the moral values each family seeks to impart into the next generation through upholding solid Christian education, traditions, selected cultural values, guidelines, and rituals that provide context and meaning.²²³

In my culture of origin, several things created a family reunion. One common event was death. In Liberia several tribes traditionally honor their dead kinsmen. The government even set aside the second Wednesday in March every year as Decoration Day --a day to remember and honor the dead kinsmen.²²⁴ The Kwa speaking group (Krahn, Grebo, Kru, Bassa and Sarpo,) to which the researcher belongs, truly loved to honor their dead kinsmen. “Culturally, they believed like many Liberians that there exists a spirit world of their ancestors. When death occurred and the family is

²²² National Policy on Girls’ Education. Revised edition. Monrovia, Liberia. October 2013. 10-15.

²²³ Researcher . Rewriting Your Story. A strength to transform your story into glory. Central Matadi. April 2013. 5-10 (Unpublished materials).

²²⁴ Fact Sheet No.23, Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (art. 5 (a),adopted by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979.

mourning, several things occur and many deep and hidden secrets are unearthed. It was time to hear deep cultural proverbs and history. In the Krahn tribe, the section to which the researcher belongs, men and women who died in their very old age were considered not dead, but gone to join the home of their ancestors. Many legends about where they go and how they are received are told. Traditional and renowned singers, warriors, mask dancers were invited to come and honor the dead. These kinds of cultural practices are deeply rooted in the lives of our kinsmen.

Some of these practices are good and had similarities with the Hebraic culture from which we draw lots of our Christian heritage. However, there are some aspects of our culture that are inherently cruel and inhumane. ‘ For example there is nothing wrong with the wife mourning her dead husband, but something is certainly wrong for the community to forcibly ask the widow to get married to the surviving brother or uncle simply because she is considered as a ‘property’ bought by the family.’²²⁵ It is cruel and barbaric to demoralize the woman by allowing her to sleep alone with the corpse of her dead husband for the first three days. It is against her right to refuse her a meal or shower and make mockery of her while she is grieving her late husband. It is wrong and evil to deny the woman every property she and her late husband had acquired simply in the name of not bearing a child-- most especially a boy child for the deceased husband. This was just the tip of the iceberg of the culture into which the researcher was born.

When my oldest sister, Sophia,(pseudonym) died on July 20, 2008 in a tragic motor accident, there were strange revelations about our late mother. Stephen Wesseh (pseudonym) said “one day a cruel tax collector came from Monrovia (along

²²⁵Chief Kpadeh Flomo. (pseudonym) Oral History of Krahn tradition. Personal Interview Oct. 6, 2014

the coast, the home of the freed black slaves from America) to our rural village in Northern Liberia to collect hut taxes.”²²⁶ According to the story, one particular family did not have the amount charged for the hut tax. The consequence was that the head of the family was caught, tied, and with his face lifted up was placed under a blazing sun for failure to pay the hut tax. In this specific case, the prisoner was my maternal grand-uncle. My grand-uncle, who was the head of the family, took my late mother and pawned her to my late father Peter Weka Geesanhun (pseudonym) as a guarantor until the amount in question was refunded. Accordingly, it was difficult to retrieve the money and my mother remained in pawn and became the youngest wife of my father. This was a form of neo-slavery among the tribes.²²⁷ It is very essential to understand the implication of the “Pawn System.” This was the practice of chiefs of certain tribes to send children of their tribe to coastal tribes for work for payment to the chief. History tells us that the situation between the African natives and successive governments headed by the settlers from America got much worse. Inhumane practices went beyond unfair taxation as the government went to the greatest extremes of dehumanization –they started selling inhabitants from the interior regions into slavery for even more cash.²²⁸

My mother went into a home which already had several other wives and became the youngest in the midst of these older women. She was loved and cherished according to the story, probably because of her tender age and beauty. Accordingly my mother died under mysterious circumstance. Whatever the actual history was, I

²²⁶ Hut tax System in Liberia Narrated (Cited) *Rewriting Your Story* . Retrieved from: <https://archives.columbusstate.edu/gah/1996/41-60>.

²²⁷ Researcher. *Rewriting Your Story* Oral story of tax collectors and slavery in the Krahn culture. . Retrieved from: <https://archives.columbusstate.edu/gah/1996/41-60>.

²²⁸Ibid.

grew up as a partial orphan and indigent child. Today my love for orphans, disadvantaged and indigent children has deepened simply because I tasted what it meant to be impoverished and live in an illiterate society. As a boy growing up in the village, my life was restricted to the happenings around me. Boys were growing up to become fathers at an early age without formal education, while girls were becoming ill-prepared mothers. Young girls and boys were forced into *Sande' and Poro* societies (Bush schools) as a means of passage to adulthood.²²⁹

My dad attempted once to educate my sisters but the result was unfortunate as several of them got sexually exploited by young boys and some were impregnated by the village teachers. My dad in turn shut the doors on the rest of the sisters and they were given into early marriages after their initial rites. 'Education alone is obviously not enough to solve the world's problems, but it remains an essential factor in any development activity.'²³⁰

Interestingly my wife, Victoria, in an interview narrated her own story: "I had a similar background where my mother at a tender age without formal education was forced into early marriage to a seafarer with several other wives. My mother was not loved. Hence, me and the rest of my siblings suffered rejection and discrimination and did not experience the love of a real father."²³¹ God brought us together twenty three years ago and gave us the same deep passion for the plight of girls in our community after studies at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in 2004. "Fortified with the convictions about girls thriving in certain educational settings,

²²⁹Sande' and Poro societies (Bush Schools) Retrieved from: <http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Liberia.html#ixzz34P3Kqmkw>.

²³⁰Researcher . *Rewriting Your Story. Transforming your story into glory.* Nairobi. 2013.

²³¹Co-Founder, Central New Matadi. Personal Interview. May 25, 2015.

prime among the qualities of which are academic, innovative, girl-valuing girls' school, safe-space, we set out to establish a single-sex school that met our expectations."²³²

Founder's testimony

According to official minutes the formation meeting of BOH - Board of Trustees –Monrovia. (October 2005,) Bridge of Hope exists to dispel these negative cultural assumptions:

Our purpose is to empower girls to become noble women of high moral character. Bridge of Hope Girls' School supports an education which emphasizes wholesome body images, Christian family values, and sound biblical teaching, along with academic classes. Liberia education system has had a faulty foundation which impedes access to quality learning hence; to help transform the system one must start from the very roots. We targeted ages three to eighteen.²³³

The founders' attitude was that the school was "a rescue mission and a massive outreach to prevent sexual exploitation against young girls. It was a way of closing the cultural disparity between girls and boys education in Liberia."²³⁴ In order to start we gathered potential supporters, entrepreneurs, and teachers, administrators from existing schools, who knew kids and facilities, including possible sites. They invited parents in the Matadi community who have experience with the kind of school we wanted to establish or who have children who might attend.²³⁵ In May 2005 the vision to empower the next generation through sound Christian

²³² Journals of formative years of BOH. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia. June 26, 2006.

²³³ Official Minutes from the Formation of BOH - Board of Trustees – Retrieved from official document. Monrovia . October 2005.

²³⁴ Advisory Board member. BOH /USA Dalton Ohio. Personal Interview. Minutes of Formation Meeting. April 25, 2005.

²³⁵ BOH Handbook. Revised edition. Monrovia Liberia. 2013-2015.

education and life skill training was birthed. In essence the ultimate goal for education at BOH was to equip the next generation for productive and fulfilling lives.

The mission was focused on girls.²³⁶ The founders were convinced that God has given them the passion to bring hope to these underprivileged girls and moreover, “social science research had shown that female behavior, female values, and female learning” are distinctive and different from males. Moreover, the founding fathers and mother were informed by Meehan’s research during the formative stages as this undergird their thoughts: “what motivates girls to succeed, the importance of role models, distinctive ways of approaching technology are all different (for girls) hence they need a school of their own to excel.”²³⁷

Statement from the School’s Co-Founder and Principal

This vision actually came about while my husband was studying at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) where I also served as Assistant in the department of Sponsorship. I saw too many girls’ schools in Kenya an initiative that drew my attention and my passion for such schools began to grow day and night. My mind began to reflect on our native land Liberia where there are few girl’s schools yet has a high rate of illiteracy among women and young girls. Moreover, my mind reflected on many disadvantaged and impoverished girls right in my community that daily played and shared with my girls who need quality Christian education. I thought this concept of establishing an all-girls school would be a good idea to push through.²³⁸

Victoria Weah testified that it was while watching one particular story of a teen age girl that the pioneers were convinced that it was time to take affirmative action to help tackle the huge educational need of Matadi girls and as well as minimize the excessive sexual exploitation of teen age girls in the community. She

²³⁶BOH Handbook. Revised Edition. Monrovia, Liberia. 2013-2015

²³⁷Diana Meehan. Learning like a Girl: Educating our Daughters in Schools of their own. New York: Public Affairs. 2007. 952-953.

²³⁸Co- Founder and Principal. Bridge of Hope Girls’ School. Personal Interview. March 10, 2015.

said that we believed in the UNESCO vision: “Education helps girls and women to have a positive impact on their families: better childcare (vaccination, schooling.), better nutrition, decrease in child mortality, better communication with the children and other family members.”²³⁹

BOH founders purposed to defend the rights of girls because many young girls living in Liberia before and after the civil war had ‘suffered emotional and psychological trauma; and the girls at BOH are not an exception, they too have been humiliated because they lived in a society where culture has told them that educating girls will not yield any dividends.’²⁴⁰ These BOH girls did not have the chance as young girls to make their own decisions as to what to choose or whom or when to get married. Moreover, education facilities and opportunities were scarce. They were denied formal education and became ill-prepared wives and servants in homes filled with older women. The negative cultural and social norms of the day were working against their God-given potential to be who they were created to be. Many more girls in post-war Liberia are eventually treading down the same paths. Hence the founding fathers and mothers (see page 145) believe it was a necessity that an all-girls educational model be formed with a vision like that of the Bridge of Hope Girls’ School. The founders looked for a leader who could muster the courage in the face of anti-girls’ attitudes in education to provide Christian education and life skill training as well as redeem these innocent girls from the dark shackles of sexual exploitation, gender-based violence, early and forced marriages, etc. The founders were acutely aware that many more girls are still languishing in the villages of Liberia

²³⁹ Learning: The Treasure Within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Paris, UNESCO, 1996.

²⁴⁰ Cultural treatments of women: Retrieved from: <http://www.everyculture.com/Ja-Ma/Liberia.html#ixzz34P3Kqmkw>.

being victims of female genital mutilation, or forced into early marriages, or in the urban communities engaged in child labor and commercial sex. This was the cultural narrative that informed the pioneers' mindset about the plight of young girls in their community and propelled them to cultivate the vision of Bridge of Hope Girls' School.²⁴¹

There were enormous challenges in the founding of the school as the typical Liberian culture was antagonistic to this new paradigm in education."²⁴² The founding fathers and mothers stated clearly that this journey to provide quality Christian education for these underprivileged girls was like a birth of a new country there were financial insecurities, political and religious opposition, betrayal and cultural clashes. Against all odds, however, they continued to believe they were doing the right thing.

The Principal testified: "Prior to this we asked ourselves if our vision for girls' school was actually necessary at this time in the Matadi community. Realizing the necessity, in 2006 based upon needs assessment, we discovered that over 80% of the girls in the Matadi community of school-going ages were out of school, victims of teen age pregnancies, and child prostitution. So we prayerfully engaged the dream."²⁴³ The passion for girls' education was greatly influenced by observing these girls lacking status and power. As a result, "they are often subjected to domestic violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation. Girls in such conditions are more vulnerable in communities and less likely to enter school and complete their education. When we

²⁴¹Official Minutes from the Formation of Bridge of Hope Girls' School - Board of Trustees – Retrieved from official document. Monrovia . October 2005.

²⁴² Marilyn Jones(pseudonym). Co-Founder & Advisory Board Member/BOH USA. Dalton Ohio. Personal Interview Dec. 7, 2015.

²⁴³ Co Founder & Principal Bridge of Hope Girls' School. Personal Interview. May 20, 2015.

learned about how male and females think differently, we were encouraged to pursue the vision of having separate classrooms for girls. The founders therefore envisaged a community or nation free from gender disparities in all sectors and an education system in which all children, girls and boys, have equal access to affordable and quality education. Bridge of Hope Girls' School was birthed to provide an enabling environment for gender equality in education.²⁴⁴ A primary and middle school was launched, tuition-free with a vision of renewing the hope of young girls in post-war Liberia through Christian education, trauma counseling, and life-skills training in an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Original Vision of Bridge Of Hope Girls' School

In the education sector, who you are is expressed in the school's answer to the question, "what is your mission?" The mission defines "what exactly an institution about?" "The one thing that cannot sustain itself is a thing that doesn't know what it is."²⁴⁵ The purpose for establishing the Bridge of Hope Girls' school as stated in the BOH Handbooks is as follows: "to provide Christian education and life skills and training to disadvantaged and impoverished girls in informal urban settings in post war Liberia where there is a high cultural disparity between girls and boys education."²⁴⁶ When launching the project, the founders, realized that the best place to start is at the pre-primary and elementary levels where most girls do not have an opportunity to enroll in school because of the absence of education facilities and because of social

²⁴⁴BOH Handbook. Revised edition. 2010-2012. Central New Matadi. Monrovia , Liberia

²⁴⁵Researcher. Rewriting Your Story Oral story of tax collectors and slavery in the Krahn culture. . Retrieved from: <https://archives.columbusstate.edu/gah/1996/41-60>

²⁴⁶ BOH Handbook. Central New Matadi. Monrovia. Liberia. 2008-2012

and cultural practices.²⁴⁷ They saw the vision for girls' education as a war against the high rate of illiteracy in Liberia, high number of school dropout rates among women due to teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and traditional practices.²⁴⁸ The reality of post-war Liberia is that many of its young women have misunderstood their role, believing that the only way to pay for food and education is by selling the only commodity they own-- their bodies.²⁴⁹ In Monrovia, the capital, an estimated 60% - 80% of teen age girls want an education so much, they sell the only commodity they have --their bodies-- to fund it.²⁵⁰ BOH's creators believed in developing in each student a commitment toward lifelong education, through a program of studies and activities, which develops, encourages, and challenges individual abilities.

Official Mission and Vision

MISSION STATEMENT:

“Bridge of Hope Girls’ School seeks to renew hope among young girls in post-war Liberia through Christian education, trauma counseling, and life-skills training in an atmosphere conducive to learning.”²⁵¹

VISION STATEMENT:

“Renewing the hope of young girls in post war Liberia”

Core Values

²⁴⁷ Journals of formative years of BOH. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia. June 26, 2006.

²⁴⁸ Fact Sheet No.23, Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (art. 5 (a), adopted by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979.

²⁴⁹ Marilyn Jones (pseudonym) . Co- Founder & Board Member. Bridge of Hope Girls’ School. Dalton Ohio, USA. Personal Interview. May 24, 2015. (pseudo name for sake of confidentiality)

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ BOH School Handbook. Central New Matadi. Monrovia. Liberia. 2008-2005.

“We challenge each girl child enrolling at BOH to embrace the habits of lifelong learning, engage her with the past and the emerging future, and empower her to serve and shape her world.”²⁵² To this end we seek to foster in each girl child a spirit of connection to others, guide her in developing her spiritual and ethical integrity, and prepares her to take responsibility for herself and her future. BOH strives to maintain her uniqueness as a single sex institution birthed to train girls to be women of noble character, uphold the integrity and moral sanctity of a girl -child committed to her care in a society that devalued girl-child education. One core value of BOH since its inception has been to bring quality Christian education to the most underprivileged and marginalized teenage girls in our society. It is against this backdrop, the founding fathers and mothers entered into meeting one of Liberia’s most essential needs by providing quality Christian education in post war Liberia. Bridge of Hope Girl’ School was established in a nation “where girls’ education is perceived as anti-cultural and girls are sexually exploited, given in early marriage, forced to undergo painful traditional practices, etc.”²⁵³

BOH has been influenced by the statement of David Suzuki’s thought on core values:

“An educational system isn’t worth a great deal if it teaches young people how to make a living but doesn’t teach them how to make a life.”²⁵⁴

These core values become the basis of the behaviors and actions at the Bridge of Hope Girls’ School.²⁵⁵

²⁵²Ibid,

²⁵³ Preston Jones (pseudonym) . Deputy Ministry of Education. UNMIL Regular Press Briefing. Liberia Government drafts national policy on girls education. January 29, 2006.

²⁵⁴David Suzuki. Vision, Mission and Core values. Danville Girls. Retrieved from www.danville.co.za/about-vision-mission-corevalues.php.

²⁵⁵ BOH Handbook. Revised edition. Monrovia. Liberia. 2013-2015

Creating new identity for Liberian girls- We value honor and integrity as central to building character. Our individual and shared commitment to honor, embodied in the core values, creates a foundation of trust and respect essential to an ethical and moral life.

Transforming lives - We value relationships that connect us to each other and to the larger world. We aspire to be a nurturing community that respects the dignity of every human being. We are a Christian community committed to an educational ministry based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. We encourage each student to assume Christian leadership roles, modeling faith in action in her daily life, through the word of God, prayer, worship, and a respect for all phases of human life.

Empowering the next generation - We value intellectual, physical and spiritual wholeness. We inspire young women to discover their talents, pursue their passions, and achieve their very best in life. We recognize the uniqueness of each individual student entrusted to our care and believe in helping each student develop her God-given potential.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning -We value the transformational growth that takes place when teachers and students experience the joy of learning together. A collaborative academic culture nurtures intellectual courage, curiosity, and creativity.

Heritage - We cherish and celebrate our heritage as a school birthed to uphold the dignity of girls and women in the face prejudicial assumptions against them, one that is rich in tradition of advocating for disadvantaged girls, values and opportunities for women. The best of our past forms the foundation for the best of our future.

Safe –space and growth- We believe that our single-sex environment provides unique opportunities for spiritual, social, intellectual, and emotional growth, which enhance self-esteem.²⁵⁶

Influence of a Christian Worldview on School's Values

Bridge of Hope Girls' school has its strong foundation in the Christian ethics (a set of principles by which to judge right and wrong) held by the founding fathers and mothers. By this we mean Christian ethics permeates our entire curriculum and guides the culture at BOH. It has helped to shape their moral opinions about girls'

²⁵⁶BOH Handbook. Excerpt on Core values. Central New Matadi Monrovia, Liberia

education in a culture where this is counter intuitive. In the wake of a high illiteracy rate existing among teenage girls and young women, the founding fathers and mothers envisioned a gleam of hope in spite of the hurdles because of their perspective on the Biblical narrative of God's creation. The ultimate goal of the BOHTGE model is transforming the pupils from within by the grace of God. A transformative model has been embraced that has been greatly influenced by Jim Wilhoit's concept of transformational Christian education.²⁵⁷ Hence, the learning at BOH has been greatly influenced by the biblical Christian perspective that God created us and put us in the world with a purpose. "The purpose is to bring glory to God and to exercise proper and responsible dominion over creation; hence they were obligated from the very beginning to come to the task of knowing what they must teach, how it should be taught, and who should teach it."²⁵⁸ The Christian worldview has greatly impacted the way teachers continue to integrate the faith in every lesson taught at BOH, considering essential truth such as God absolutely exists, created the universe, man is created in God's image and was given dominion over creation. On the other hand this biblical perspective has had a tremendous impact on the life of every girl enrolling at BOHGS. BOHGS strives to dispel the lies among young girls and women that the only way to pay for food and education is by selling the only precious commodity they own –their bodies.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷BOH Handbook. Excerpt of Education Philosophy. Central New Matadi Monrovia, Liberia.

²⁵⁸ Jim Wilhoit. Christian Education. The Search for Meaning 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker House 2000. 108.

²⁵⁹BOH Handbook. Central New Matadi Monrovia, Liberia

Education Philosophy of Bridge Of Hope Girls' School

BOH educational philosophy statement is a document that serves to guide and inspire the school throughout her existence. It captures the positive aspirations of the school's goal and acts as a centerpiece around which all of the school's decisions rotate. It fully subscribes to the Liberian Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, affirming the fundamental human rights of every individual. The underlying philosophy of Bridge of Hope education is enshrined in the BOH's handbook:

- BOH believes that every girl-child will be provided equal access to quality Christian education regardless of race, color, creed sex culture's traditional practices or religion and political affiliations.
- BOH believes that she will provide a secure, nurturing, and caring learning environment by isolating girls from their male counterparts so as to provide them with a conducive learning environment that will secure them from peer pressure.
- BOH believes that it will prepare its students to become productive contributors to nation building through computer and other IT programs and vocational training as well as through pursuit of agriculture, conflict resolutions programs etc.
- BOH believes in some essential elements that are conducive to learning for the students. The teacher's role is to act as a guide, students' access to hands-on activities, students' ability to have choices and let their curiosity direct their learning, and students' need of opportunity to practice skills in a safe learning environment.
- BOH believes that every girl-child is unique and must have a stimulating educational environment where they can grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. It is the desire of BOH to create this type of atmosphere where students can meet their full potential. BOH will provide a safe environment where students are invited to share their ideas and take risks.
- BOH believes that every school has its own unique community, BOH role as the school will be to assist each girl- child in developing their own potential

and learning styles. It will present a curriculum that will incorporate each different learning style, as well as make the content relevant to the students' lives. It will incorporate hands-on learning, cooperative learning, projects, themes, and individual work.

The BOH educational philosophy intends to teach students to describe and evaluate life's experiences from a biblical perspective. It creates a world in which practices and policies devolve from that main purpose. There is unity of purpose: girls are valued, their experiences validated, their values promoted.²⁶⁰ This philosophy recognizes how learning takes place in different settings and interactions. The BOH philosophy of education endorses the UNESCO belief that “educating a girl-child leads to greater self-esteem and self-confidence, and opens up new horizons for girls, enabling them to discover their own potential, to develop themselves fully and increase their resistance to gender discrimination.”²⁶¹ It is very clear that secular and humanistic world-views have made in-roads in Liberia's educational system. These values clash with the truth of the gospel at many points. Finally, the philosophy expresses its commitment to ensuring education equality and fostering an environment where all girls have an opportunity to benefit from educational resources. To achieve this BOHGTE model has endeavored to provide equitable access to high-quality and culturally sensitive relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other education resources.²⁶²

Ownership and Governance

The Bridge of Hope Girls' School is the Christian education arm of the Hope Renewal Ministries Inc., an independent Bible-believing church ministry established

²⁶⁰BOH Handbook. Revised edition 2010-2015. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia.

²⁶¹Learning: The Treasure Within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Paris, UNESCO, 1996.

²⁶²Analysis of BOH Education Philosophy – Excerpt retrieved from: The Student Handbook. Central New Matadi Monrovia.

on Feb. 4, 2006.²⁶³ This Christian education department is responsible for training and sustaining the mission and vision of this independent indigenous ministry. The purpose is stated in the official document of the Hope Renewal Ministry:

“This is our Christian education and training arm of the Hope Renewal Ministries. The primarily goal of this ministry is to intentionally impact the biblical message of hope to all through effective equipping of the saints. In order to achieve the primary purpose of its existence; Bridge of Hope is to engage in effective trainings in every area of needs that will enhance the growth and development of Hope Renewal Ministries Inc. (Hope of Praise Church). The mandate of this ministry includes but not limited to designing a vibrant Christian education program and training manual that will serve as a guide to maintaining our uniqueness as an Independent Indigenous Bible believing Church Ministry. Other subsidiary ministries include but not limited to: Renewal School of Ministries, Bridge of Hope Girls’ School system, Teaching ministries, Annual Training Conference etc.”²⁶⁴

The Christian worldview had a great influence in the way the founding fathers and mothers recruited the founding board members. They were careful at the inception to recruit people with talent and experience in diverse fields, people who agreed to make the school community work, who have a passion for the mission, and time to devote to it. Accordingly, they looked for people who supported the endeavor with time and resources. The board is responsible for creating the mission, the organizational plan, and the budget.²⁶⁵

²⁶³Hope Renewal Ministries Inc. Foundational Manual. Central New Matadi. Monrovia. Liberia

²⁶⁴ Hope Renewal Ministries Inc. Foundational Manual. Central New Matadi. Monrovia. Liberia

²⁶⁵ Ibid

Current Organizational Systems

Leadership

The founding fathers and mothers' concept about school leadership was informed by Meehan who argues that leadership in a school setting is seen in four areas: parents, educators, school trustees, and students. "In other words all of them help shape school policy, participate in activities which support the program, attend school events, and create a community with a shared culture. Their communication skills largely determine how shared the goals are, how binding the trust is, and how understanding the community is."²⁶⁶

In the formative years, the founding fathers and mothers shared the lead but each person had different responsibilities and agreed in advance on their roles; "Parents are responsible for providing students who are healthy, fed and motivated to learn. Educators are responsible for planning, executing and evaluating student learning. Trustees set institutional goals and policy; as well as find resources to accomplish the goals. Students are responsible for presenting themselves program ready to the best of their ability."²⁶⁷

School Boards

According to the School Handbook, adopted in 2007, two separate boards were constituted, one in Monrovia, Liberia and one in Dayton (Ohio, USA) respectively. The Board of Trustees located in Monrovia has the final authority to oversee the vision of the school while the Advisory Board based in Dayton is

²⁶⁶Diana Meehan. Learning Like a Girl. Educating our daughters in schools of their own. New York: BRS Publication. 2001. 953-954.

²⁶⁷Ibid.

responsible to create awareness and raise funds for the operation of the school respectively.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees responsibilities are presently being administered by nine persons; six women and three men. Five persons on the board are parents of students either currently attending or who have attended BOH. The original board members were selected by the founding fathers and have been serving on the board for the past seven years. ‘The original board members were selected by the founders; the board is self-perpetuating unless in case of illness, inability, difference in ideology, or death.’²⁶⁸

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the development, dissemination, and enforcement of education philosophy of BOHGTE model in accordance with the standing rules of the Board. The philosophy expresses its commitment to ensuring education equality and fostering an environment where all girls have an opportunity to benefit from educational resources. To achieve this, the Board has endeavored to provide equitable access to high-quality and culturally sensitive relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other education resources.²⁶⁹ “At the Board level, it is the responsibility of committee on curriculum and text books to ensure that textbook content is free from gender-based prejudice, oversee the hiring of diverse and culturally competent administrative , instructional , and support staff . These persons are deployed to successfully implement the education philosophy of BOH.

²⁶⁸Official resolutions from the formation of BOH. Central New Matadi. Mornovia. April 28, 2007.

²⁶⁹ BOH Board official Policies. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

The Board strives to make the school and teachers more gender sensitive as well as integrate gender-sensitive pedagogy into every training program of the school.”²⁷⁰

“As keepers of the mission and legal fiduciaries of BOH, the Board of Trustees is charged with overall long-range, strategic planning for the School. Each trustee actively promotes the School’s vision while accepting accountability for both the financial stability and financial future of the institution. As stakeholders-board members see themselves as owners of Bridge of Hope Girls’ School.”²⁷¹

Term of reference of the Board of Trustees²⁷²

- Clarify, refine and guard the mission of the school.
- Ensure that all legal requirements, financial health and oversee policy formulation.
- Appoint, dismiss, and evaluate the performance of the administration.
- Assist in developing and approving the strategic plan.
- Be fully informed in order to promote the goals and objectives of the school.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board functions as a channel to solicit financial and material support from friends and partners of BOH in the US through a sponsorship program. The responsibilities of the advisory board are administered by three persons (two men and a lady) who have the responsibility to oversee the raising of funds for BOH in the United States.²⁷³ This board works through a larger organization called Abba Arms which supervises the funds and ensures they are remitted to Liberia through the wire

²⁷⁰ Marilyn Jones. (pseudonym) Co-Founder/BOH USA Board Member. Remarks Board Meeting. October 20, 2011.

²⁷¹ Minutes of BOH Founding Board. Monrovia. October 2015.

²⁷²BOH Handbook. Revised edition. Monrovia Liberia 2012-2015.

²⁷³BOH Handbook. Revised edition. Monrovia Liberia 2012-2015.

system.²⁷⁴ For the purposes of accountability and transparency, BOH Advisory Board/USA makes a periodic report of the funds received through sponsorship and donations to the Board of Trustee Liberia.

Current Administrative Structure

BOGHS is being administered by a team of administrators. The administration is responsible to create a conducive environment for work and learning that will enhance the implementation of the policy and the achievement of the institution's objectives.²⁷⁵ The administration of BOH with their respective roles sees themselves at all times as advocates for girls' education in daily administration of the school. In keeping with the purposes of BOH, the board expects the administration to report ills, especially violence and discrimination against the girl child. As part of their responsibilities BOH administration initiates programs benefiting girls' - education as well serving as caregiver. The administration will carry out their mission by delegating such functions to the teachers and counselors at BOH to care for the girls entrusted into their care.²⁷⁶ Below is the current administrative structure extracted from the of Bridge of Hope Girls' School official handbook:²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Abba Arms Ministry. Retrieved from abbasarmsministry.org. The mission of Abba's Arms Ministry is to provide funds for the support of nonprofit, Christian child care organizations and their workers in developing countries around the world that work to alleviate the plight of homeless, orphaned and at-risk children.

²⁷⁵BOH Handbook. Revised edition. Monrovia, Liberia . 2013-2015.

²⁷⁶BOH Handbook. Revised edition. Monrovia, Liberia . 2013-2015

²⁷⁷Ibid.

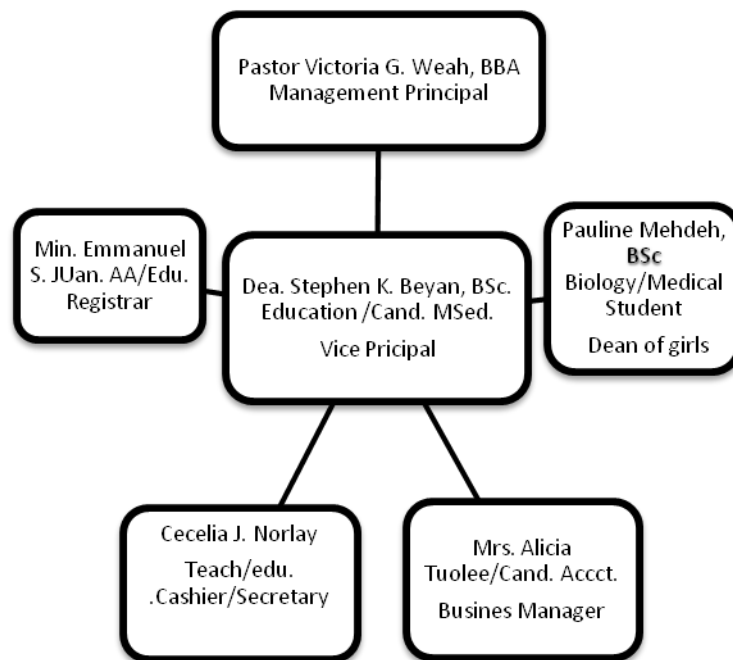


Figure 1: The administrative structure of the school

Note: Chart shows the administrative structure of the school being administered by a team of Christian leaders headed by the Principal and assisted by the Vice Principal and other school administrators.

Administrative Offices: Term of References

Principal:

- Responsible to implement the education philosophy of the school in close consultation with the board
- To implement the administrative policies of the board and operating policy of the school
- To organize and supervise the staff of the school ensuring that the staff members understand their duties and responsibilities
- To serve as an official spokesman of the school.

Vice Principal:

- Principle deputy to the Principal
- Assumes responsibilities delegated by the Principal
- Functions as Vice Principal for administration and instructions
- Check lesson plans and ensure they are intact
- Do all administrative and academic duties assigned to by the Principal

Registrar:

- Ensures that student records are properly kept.
- Responsible to take final instructions from the Principal
- Responsible to oversee sponsorship records at the school.

Dean of girls:

- Responsible to intervene in all matters of concern among students and between students and teachers.
- Keeps and maintain discipline in the school
- Supervises activities and movements among and between students and between students and teachers
- Working for harmony so as to create a learning atmosphere in the school and promote a healthy and conducive learning process in spite students/teachers who may be difficult to deal with.
- Ensuring that the rules, regulations and policies contained in this handbook are faithfully adhering to.
- Report directly to the Principal and do other tasks as deem necessary by the Principal.

Current Financial Framework- Sustainability

A. Main sources of sustaining BOH

According to the official records obtained from the Bridge of Hope Administration : “BOH offers tuition –free education, the main sources of funding have been through sponsorship, donations, and registrations.²⁷⁸ These funds, for example ‘sponsorship and donations,’ are efficiently managed by the Advisory Board through Abba Arms based in Dayton Ohio.”²⁷⁹ Estimated annual expenses for each

²⁷⁸BOH Handbook. Revised edition. Monrovia, Liberia . 2013-2015.

²⁷⁹Abba Arms Ministry. Retrieved from abbasarmsministry.org. The mission of Abba’s Arms Ministry is to provide funds for the support of nonprofit, Christian child care organizations and their workers in developing countries around the world that work to alleviate the plight of homeless, orphaned and at-risk children.

student at BOH including books, uniforms, and feeding are about \$350 US. Sponsorship funds have been used purposely for the payment of 26 staff currently serving at BOH Liberia, while other donations go toward other developments such as: buildings, repairs, computer program and library.

B. Financial policy

In order to ensure financial transparency and accountability for funds, data analyzed by this paper (for instance bank wires, staff monthly salaries, monthly financial records) indicated that sponsorship and donations are collected by the Advisory Board in the US and managed by a non-profit organization called Abba Arms in Dalton USA. Monthly wire transfers are made to Liberia based upon requests from the Board of Trustees for the purposes of keeping the school functional.²⁸⁰ The Board of Trustees has three signatories to the account in Liberia to administer the finances. Registration fees collected or donations received locally are also deposited into a reputable local bank. They are expended through valid requests from the school administration through a voucher system. For the past eight years these locally collected funds have been used for the building projects and the expansion of other facilities. The accounts office of the school makes a monthly financial and operation reports to the Board of Trustees/Liberia who share the reports with the Advisory Board/USA for the purposes of accountability and transparency.

C. Current Sustainability Projects

BOH like other institutions has had financial challenges over past eight years in administering the affairs of the girls' school due to little or no support from the central

²⁸⁰ Financial Policies of Bridge of Hope Girls' School. BOH Finance office. Central New Matadi.

government.²⁸¹ “The lack of concrete budgetary allocations for girls’ education even at the Ministry of Education creates a necessity for BOH to scout for help from donors and friends abroad and at home.”²⁸² In order to sustain the school as its advances in age, BOH’s board of trustees had embarked on several sustainability projects:

Transportation business – in 2007, a minivan for the purposes of transporting the students to school as well as to generating an income for the school was purchased. The business was managed by the accounts office at the school, but had a major challenge and was sold and the proceeds were used to purchase a taxi. After operating the taxi for three years, the administration generated some funds to assist in the construction of the third level of the school.²⁸³

*Provision shop*²⁸⁴ – Located in an empty container, a mini provision shop was opened at the school to assist raise funds to sustain the school. The proceeds go towards, maintenance, operations and field trips as well as to help in the construction of the third level of the school.

Agricultural farm- through the assistance of God’s Economy, BOH secured a grant to purchase an acre of land for agricultural purposes. It has helped the BOH management to secure a property for the future home of the school as well as use the crops help to feed the girls at BOH.²⁸⁵

²⁸¹The lack of government subsidy. Retrieved from: <http://pulse.ng/student/in-liberia-students-ask-government-subsidize-private-schools-id3845540.html>

²⁸² Looking Inside Liberia: Retrieved from: <http://www.theperspective.org/2015/0721201503.php>

²⁸³ Analysis of official BOH Financial Records (2010 -2013). Retrieved from Monthly financial and bank transactions.

²⁸⁴ Fountain of Hope Investment (FOHI) – Analysis of official financial records 2011-2013. Central Matadi. Monrovia Liberia.

²⁸⁵ Secured grants - God’s Economy. Retrieved from www.orgcouncil.com/md/baltimore/gods-economy-inc- Gods Economy Inc. is a charitable organization in Baltimore, Maryland. It was granted tax-exempt status by IRS in March, 2002. For the tax period of Dec, 2013. Independent - This organization is an independent organization or an independent auxiliary (i.e., not affiliated with a National, Regional, or Geographic grouping of organizations).

Rice Kitchen – the cafeteria project at the school has helped to generate a little income for the sustainability projects. But more importantly it has helped to feed the girls and the staff.²⁸⁶

D. Evaluations of BOH sustainability

This research has recognized that the long-term future of the programme for educating girls will be stabilized when effective sustainability projects are implemented that would lead the school to a place of self-reliance. From careful observations, this research has brought to the fore that most of these self-help initiatives which were undertaken by BOH Liberia over the past seven years have not fully succeeded due to several factors. Paramount among them has been the lack of ‘transformational leaders’ to administer the affairs of these ventures. “Church folk are not honest in handling church property. In other words, church members are not good stewards of the material blessings given by the Lord for the enhancement of his kingdom.”²⁸⁷ BOH may be headed down the same path, like many other girls’ schools or programs in Liberia that are heavily relying on donors’ funding to survive. This represents a negative example emulating the national government that lives at the mercy of friendly nations and international communities for the implementation of educational programs in post-war Liberia. This research has brought to light the fact that 75% of the funds needed to effectively operate BOH come from friends and partners in the

²⁸⁶ Analysis of official BOH Financial Records (2010 -2013). Retrieved from Monthly financial and bank transactions.

²⁸⁷**Hugh Whelchel:** *Four Principles of Biblical Stewardship:* <https://tifwe.org/four-principles-of-biblical-stewardship/>

US. This is a situation that is not healthy for the future of the BOH, since in the event that donors withdraw their help, then BOH would be incapacitated to a large extent.²⁸⁸

E. An Attempt at Possible Solutions

The BOH Board has taken initial steps to address this challenge. The school conducted a “Vision and Sustainability” Staff Refresh Workshop held in Central New Matadi, on March 23, 2014. The workshop facilitator, explained to the staff that... “The problem is not the lack of money or resources at the disposal of the church in Africa. It is ‘the mindset that the church in Africa has developed, a mindset that that she must always rely on handouts or gifts to support the work.’”²⁸⁹

Training of key members and leaders in the area of sustainability, empowerment, or good stewardship is an important step towards transforming their mindset. “Records obtained by this research indicated that BOH is endeavoring on that path of sustainability.”²⁹⁰ She has begun training students to believe that they can live from what they grow on the demonstration farm as well as venturing into more effective business ventures to help to realize this sustainability project.”²⁹¹ To achieve this goal BOH has begun the process of training three of its staff in local colleges in accountancy, community development, economics and management. Secondly, it has employed the wisdom of business entrepreneurs in the church to help venture into other income generating projects such as a “water project”. With an acre of land at

²⁸⁸Analysis of official BOH Financial Records (2010 -2013). Retrieved from Monthly financial and bank transactions.

²⁸⁹Researcher and Facilitator, “Vision and Sustainability.” Staff Refresh Workshop. Central New Matadi. March 23, 2014.

²⁹⁰Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

her disposal, BOH could pursue a good business in water and agricultural farming as ways of pursuing the sustainability agenda.²⁹²

The final attempt to sustain the vision of BOH has to do with transforming the minds of over three hundred church members through an ‘extensive training’ to own the vision of the school and develop a deep passion that would result in giving their resources and expertise to this cause. In launching “Vision 2020 Hope and Nations” in March 2015, it was unanimously agreed that 40% of the annual income generated by the church will go toward sustaining the school.²⁹³

Relationship to Government Regulations and Education Ministry Legal Requirements

g) **Formal application**

The founding members used a living room gathering to recruit ideas and additional talent. There they invented a name and further developed the mission at these informal meetings.²⁹⁴ They found a legal mind among them who researched and registered the name and who advised board members about filing incorporation papers. All of these informal planning took place in Central New Matadi between 2005-2007.²⁹⁵ They talked about sites and building plans and possible public facilities like library, resource center, computer lab, chapel, and playground. In 2007

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Hope Renewal Foundational Ministry Manual Central New Matadi. Monrovia Liberia. March 2015.

²⁹⁴ Marilyn Jones (pseudonym) . Founding Member BOH. Personal Interview. May 12, 2014. (pseudo name for the sake of the informant confidentiality)

²⁹⁵ Excerpts of official Minutes from: Formal Planning meetings of the Bridge of Hope Girls’ School. August 2008

a formal application for the operation of BOHGS was filed according to an official school record while the building project was in process.²⁹⁶

h) Ministry Education Requirements for Registration

The government regulations for establishing a school in Liberia outlined in the Ministry of Education policy includes, but is not limited to the followings:²⁹⁷

- Write a formal application clarifying original purpose of the school
- Concrete sources of funding to operate the school for the first five years
- Property owned by the Institution – facilities conducive for school
- Board of governors to manage the affairs of the school
- Qualified administrative instructional staff.

At the completion of the facilities, the application was approved after a series of inspections. BOH School formally opened the doors for academic activities on Sept. 28, 2008.²⁹⁸ The Ministry of Education under the official signature of Keturah B. Siebu, Assistant Minister Bureau of Primary Education, granted BOH an official permit to operate as a school on November 20, 2008.²⁹⁹

i) List of key officials and credentials in the formation of the school

There were key personalities involved in the formation of the Bridge of Hope Girl's School. Some of them were involved in the formal sitting at formation board meetings while others were consulted through emails or telephone for their input.

²⁹⁶ Formal letter of application from the Founding Board members - filed with the Ministry of Education. April 10, 2007

²⁹⁷Ibid.

²⁹⁸Souvenir Program of formal opening of BOH. Sept. 28, 2008. Central New Matadi.

²⁹⁹ Keturah B. Siebu. Asst. Minister Bureau of Primary Education. Ministry of Education School Permit Monrovia Liberia. November 20, 2008 .

These men and women served as “Incorporators of the School.” Many of them eventually became board members while other remained consultants.³⁰⁰

Table 2. Officials and qualifications of Incorporators (Note: pseudonyms)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Educational background</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Profession</i>
Researcher	MA historical studies	Founder	Pastor/ Educator
Fred Johnson	MA Theology	Founder	Christian educator
Anthony Kai	BSc. Computer Science	Founder	Entrepreneur /Pastor
George B. Kaysah	BSc. Math/Physics	Founder	IT specialist /Ed.
Co- Founder	BBA Management	Founder	Manager/Educator
Jestina Kaysah	BBA Accountant	Founder	Entrepreneur/Acct
Cladius C. Wion	HSG/Security	Founder	Security
Reginald Medley	BSc/Teacher education	Founder	Educator
Esther Ross	MDiv./ Educator	Founder	Educator/Pastor

Ministry of Education Institutions Assessments

The assessments and evaluation of educational institutions by the Ministry of Education are regular activities. Since the establishment of BOH in 2008, she has been evaluated annually at the end of school year through MOE’s Assessment and Evaluation workshops.³⁰¹ “A document containing questionnaires is provided by MOE to evaluate institutional effectiveness, opinions and institutional experiences of the students, faculty, staff, administrators and alumni. Another area of evaluation is basic skills such as general cognitive capacity of students. Affective development is also captured in this survey document such as values and social development of the students.”³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Excerpts of Minutes of BOH Formation Meeting. Central New Matadi. Monrovia. October 2005.

³⁰¹ Stephen K. Akoi, (pseudonym) BOH Vice Principal . Workshop Participant MOE Annual School Census Questionnaire 2015. Monrovia, Liberia (Not his actual name)

³⁰² Education Statistics for the Republic of Liberia. Ministry of Education. National Statistical Booklet. 2014

Students

A. Demographics Of Students Served

Registration and academic records analyzed indicated that a total of 1,226 students have been served at BOH from 2008-2015:³⁰³ The chart below shows how many students had enrolled since 2008 -2015. The information in the chart shows the number of students served as well as the growth in student population over the last seven years.

Table 3 Demographics of students served since 200-2015

<i>Class</i>	<i>2008/2009</i>	<i>2009/2010</i>	<i>2010/2011</i>	<i>2011/2012</i>	<i>2012/2013</i>	<i>2013/2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
<i>KG</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
<i>1</i>	25	29	25	23	27	14	19
<i>2</i>	35	38	27	28	32	36	25
<i>3</i>	26	39	30	29	34	31	29
<i>4</i>	24	34	30	31	32	30	28
<i>5</i>	17	30	30	28	32	32	27
<i>6</i>	13	26	23	22	22	24	31
<i>7</i>	-	15	14	-	-	-	25
<i>Total</i>	140	196	179	161	179	167	204

B. Numbers and increase over time

As indicated in the chart above the school started with an enrollment of 140 (Grade 1-6) in 2008 and by 2015 (grade 1-7) it has a total enrollment of 204. Recent statistics for 2016 academic year (KG –grade 8) indicates the school enrollment has increased to 225 students.³⁰⁴

C. Admission criteria and selection procedure

At BOH, admissions policies are inherently constrained by the Christian perspective which mandates the administration to aggressively respond to the severe

³⁰³BOH Academic and Registration records. Central Matadi Monrovia, Liberia

³⁰⁴BOH Academic and Registration records. Central Matadi Monrovia, Liberia

socio-cultural needs of a girl-child in our society in spite of geographical, social or religious divides.³⁰⁵ Everyone has the right to education, regardless of gender, race, color, social, cultural or religious affiliation or disability. In the wake all of the above, since BOH was birthed to meet the education needs of disadvantaged girls, BOH admission policy guides the administration to select students from diverse background. As Christians we support the UN position: “Education is a human right, and it is fundamental to the development of human potential and the full participation in a democratic society”³⁰⁶

From the perspective of the Board of Trustees, supporting the UN position was in no way compromising the Christian education philosophy, admission standards, or core values of BOH. Instead it has helped us to practically translate the message of hope.³⁰⁷

The admission process is largely based upon admission policy. All students seeking admission to BOH must meet the following requirements:³⁰⁸

- Must pass the entrance examination administered by BOH
- Must sit and pass oral interview
- Must submit all required documents from previous school attended such as: letter of recommendation from the Principal of last school attended; valid transcript or report card, recent health certificate from certified and credible hospital.
- Sign a behavioral bond

³⁰⁵BOH Handbook. Central New Matadi Monrovia, Liberia

³⁰⁶ Preamble United Nations, 1948

³⁰⁷ BOH Formation Excerpt of Board Resolutions. June 24, 2007

³⁰⁸ BOH Handbook. Revised edition. 2012-2015. Central New Matadi., Monrovia Liberia

Since the establishment of BOH, it has had several girls enrolled from different political sub- divisions of Liberia as well as girls hailing from different tribes. Moreover, BOH has enrolled students whose parents were either African traditionalists, Jehovah Witnesses or Muslims. Accepting girls from these diverse cultural and religious backgrounds was a way of providing education to all girls in keeping with the global campaign of Education for All (EFA).³⁰⁹

Principal’s Response:

“We have served over 1,200 girls since the establishment of the school in September 2008 from diverse backgrounds e.g. orphans, indigents, abandoned, adopted, Christians, Muslims. We were created for that purpose to provide tuition free Primary Christian education and life skills training to underprivileged girls in our society.”³¹⁰

Testimony of student representing diverse religious backgrounds:

“My name is Annette Kamara³¹¹ My parents are not of the Christian faith. I enrolled at BOH since the doors were opened for academic activities. I served as the valedictorian during my class graduation in 2013/2014 academic year. Two years ago I gave my life to Jesus Christ in a Chapel service and today I am glad to be disciple baptized member of the Hope of Praise Church. Unfortunately for me I lost my father to Ebola last year. Currently I am in the 8th grade and been sponsored by the Principal of BOH.”³¹²

Testimonies of students representing diverse socio-economic circumstances

“My name is Veretha Karlay, age 17, grade 6; I took my primary school examinations in 2010/2011 academic school year. My education had previously been cut off because of the last part of the war 2003. When I came with my

³⁰⁹The Education for All Movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. The movement was launched at the World conference on Education for All in 1990 by UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank. Participants endorsed an ‘expanded version of learning’ and pledged to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade.

³¹⁰Co-Founder. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. June 20, 2015.

³¹¹(pseudonym)

³¹² Annette Kamara. 8th grade student BOH. Personal Interview. June 16, 2015. (Pseudo name for the sake of informant confidentiality)

family to Central New Matadi Slum community it was difficult for me to attend the regular school because I was 12 years old and far older than most girls in my class. I am happy that my uncle told me about a special school in our community for girls like me. I was glad to be a student at Bridge of Hope Girls' School (ALP -I was 22 years old when I sat my first public examinations at the Bridge of Hope Girls' School. When asked how she felt about the exams, her usual hard facial expression became softened and, using both hands, she gave a double thumb-up gesture and said "It was fine". Veretha is optimistic that she will make it through and she looks forward to enrolling in High School in the next academic year. "When I finish my education, I want to become a lawyer". She concluded."³¹³

My name is Esther Yeanay, a 7th grade student at BOH. I was born to a drug - addicted father who was unable to properly care for me and my siblings. As early as 5 years we were taken to the orphanage home and we remained there until I was 16. During those eleven years, the school at the orphanage was in a very poor condition and learning was unstable. Three years ago my Uncle brought me to this new school (BOH) where there are all girls and our learning has never been disrupted; even though I missed my male friends in my former school. ³¹⁴

BOH CLASS-SIZE COMMITMENT

One factor that affects Liberian students' access to quality learning is overcrowdedness in the Liberian school system. The Ministry of Education set the maximum limit of 45 students per class but some in schools (public and private schools) there are as many as 60-100 students per class.³¹⁵ In her attempt to provide quality education, Bridge of Hope Girls' School keeps classes at the minimum of 25 students and maximum 30 per class. (e.g. First Semester 2015 Class roster: KG-20, Grade 1-21, Grade 2 -23, Grade 3- 29, Grade 4-28, Grade 5- 27, Grade 6- 30, Grade 7 – 25).³¹⁶

³¹³Verathy Karlay (pseudonym) Grade 7 Student. BOH. Personal Interview . June 20, 2015.

³¹⁴ Esther Yeanay (pseudonym) 7th grade student. BOH. Personal Interview. June 20, 2015.

³¹⁵Wecee Doley (pseudonym). Failing economy affecting school enrollment in Ebola-hit Liberia. Frontpage Africa. Monrovia. January 20, 2015.

³¹⁶ BOH Registration and Records. Class Roster First Semester 2015.

Curriculum

Introduction:

In this section of the research, keen attention is given to the explicit and implicit contents of the curriculum being utilized at the Bridge of Hope Girls' School. This section also attempts to further assess the extent to which the national curriculum is being placed in context and implemented by the Bridge of Hope Girls' School. All schools in Liberia, including BOH, are under an obligation to use the same prescribed curriculum from the Ministry of Education. The measurable impact of Bridge of Hope Girls' Transformational Education is validated by the way the contents of the national curriculum have been fully contextualized with Christian values by the Bridge of Hope Girls' School.

Realizing that a coherent curriculum should be flexible and reflect the aspirations and hopes of the learners, this research is going beyond specific lessons or academic content taught, the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn. We will also examine issues such as grade level, courses, tests, assessments, non-academic courses, and teachers' training among others. I shall use the following definition of curriculum.

“knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning.”

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³¹⁷ Word data on education. 7th edition, Retrieved from <http://www.IBE.UNESCO.Org>.

Formal (Explicit) Curriculum

A. Required subject area courses

These are the major divisions of subjects taught at the Bridge of Hope Girls' School as required by the Ministry of Education : Language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Others not required by MOE but included at BOH are: health science, physical education, music, arts and crafts, agriculture, population, family life education, and Liberian languages.

B. Grading standards and philosophy -- How is this “transformational”?

Miss Georgette Kolliea,³¹⁸ long standing BOH first grade teacher, responded to the research assistants regarding grading and how her students are evaluated in accordance with the inherent BOH philosophy:

We considered several factors in grading our students such as over-aged component of our students ; poor education system of our nation, and even their impoverished backgrounds, yet we strive for balance as we pursue academic excellence for these girls; therefore grading students at BOH is consistent with several factors as evaluation is not restricted to just grades students scored on the tests, but we consider issues such as character developments, class participations, projects, works, interactions with other students, oral responses and leadership role among peers etc. BOH is more than just a conventional school we seek to completely transform these girls at risk into women of noble character hence learning here is holistic seeking to transform the total girl –child.³¹⁹

C. Influence of Christian teachings on core content

“Changing a girl-child from the inside is the major goal the BOHGTE model seeks to pursue.”³²⁰ Bridge of Hope operates with an eye toward enabling the girl-child to discover their God-centered meaning. This mission places special demands

³¹⁸Georgette Kolliea. (pseudonym). Long serving teacher at BOH. Personal Interview. October 10, 2014

³¹⁹Marilyn Jones (pseudonym) Founder BOH . Personal Interview. October 2006 (Not her actual name)

³²⁰Education Philosophy Bridge of Hope Girls' School. Retrieved from: BOH Handbook. Central New Matadi, Monrovia, Liberia.

on the teacher. “If this is to be a reality and not merely a wish, then she must come to the task of knowing what BOH must teach, how it is taught, and who should teach it, as she considers the total life of a girl- child entrusted into her care.”³²¹ The Bible is the final authority at BOH by which instructions are based and decisions are made. All subjects are taught from this perspective, not as mere theological knowledge, but regarding the Bible as the basic tool for bringing learners into the right relationship with God in pursuit of peace with the community.³²² Consistent with the inherent core values which transform the social narratives of a girl-child, one founding board member alluded to this when she asserted: “In order to achieve the ultimate goal of transformational education in the lives of these vulnerable girls we ought to make the scriptures rule over the entire educational process at BOH; this must influence every aspect of this journey including selection of teachers and even the kind of courses we teach these girls in a society where we are struggling with this new kind of education. It is difficult but we must persist”³²³

The Dean of Girls raised an important issue concerning ‘the influence of Christian teachings on core content’ having been informed by Jim Wilhoit’s concept of “support and challenge” in one of the Teachers’ Refresher Workshop.

“Our highest goal is changing the stories of these girls. If this has to be a reality we must keep working at striking a balance between support and challenge. These girls will change most readily when they are in an environment that fosters change. Learners will open themselves to change when they realize that they are in an environment where change is encouraged.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Marilyn Jones . Co- Founder. Personal Interview. October 2015 (Not her actual name)

³²³ Georgette Kolia (pseudonym) BOH, Grade 1 Teacher. Personal Interview. August. 3,

This kind of environment can't be created except by those of us that function as an alternative Christian school."³²⁴

D. Supplemental courses which address girls' issues and which enhance "transformation"

BOH curriculum seeks to address the enormous unmet needs of the girls as well as ensuring it remains committed to the approved curriculum of the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Liberia.³²⁵ BOH is intentional in seeking to overcome the disconnect between the school curriculum and the realities of life in post-conflict Liberia in which these girls live. The curriculum faces challenges such as wrestling with the belief among many illiterate parents that modern, Western education will alienate their children, especially their female children, from traditional values and practices.³²⁶ Therefore, in addition to the regular primary school courses as outlined in the approved curriculum, BOH teaches other supplemental courses in line with the core objectives as an all-girls' school. After careful comparisons of BOH curriculum with other primary schools in the Matadi slum community, the research assistants recognized other courses unique to BOHGTE model which succinctly address the urgent needs of the girls.³²⁷ The supplementary courses are as follows: Purity, Home economics, Conflict resolution, Phonics, Sex education, Agriculture, Computer science.

³²⁴ Dean of Girls. Personal Interview. May 2015.

³²⁵ Analysis of BOH Curriculum. Central New Matadi. Monrovia

³²⁶ National Curriculum for Primary School: Retrieved from: https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Revised_National_Curriculum_for_Elem.html?id=jn6btgAACAAJ

³²⁷ BOH official handbook. Central New Matadi, Monrovia, Liberia

E. Is Bible a required course? How is this “transformational”?

“Christian education program is the foundation upon which BOH is established.”³²⁸ The founding fathers and mothers at BOH have a clear biblical mandate to engage in teaching the next generation. The Bible is an integral part of the school curriculum. It is among the core subjects (along with Math, Science, Social studies and Language arts) students must pass to be eligible for promotions to the next class³²⁹. The Bible is taught by a trained Pastor with theological education training and a certificate in teaching education. It is the duty of the Church to make available the Bible teacher for BOH. Reinforcement of the importance of Bible teaching is seen in early morning devotions, chapel services, organizing youth groups, and prayer cells, etc., where many girls are actively involved. The Principal stresses the centrality of teaching Bible as the core course at BOH and not just a course to give mere facts to the students:

“At BOH we place strong emphasis on the protective benefits of early nurturing of the girl-child because we know Christian education serves as proactive rather than remedial. Even though other religious groups and stakeholders in our society have been unswervingly advocating for the removal of Bible instructions from our school systems, we are committed to keep it here at BOH; because we are not prepared to repair the damages in the future. To raise children from their earliest years in path of righteousness is surely more desirable than to rescue them later from the ravages of deviance.”³³⁰

Response from the Bible Instructor:

“We teach the Bible at BOH to introduce the girls to God and to strengthen their relationship with him. Our focus is to provide spiritual refreshment and nourishment as well as to impact their mind, habits, and pattern of living.”³³¹

³²⁸ Marilyn Jones (pseudonym), Co-founder BOH. Dalton Ohio. Personal interview. December 6, 2015.

³²⁹ Excerpt from BOH Curriculum: Bible as part of the core courses: Student who failed the course during the regular semester is required to do an enrichment program for two months in order to be eligible for promotion to the next class.

³³⁰ Principal BOH. Personal Interview. May 10, 2015.

³³¹ Bible Instructor BOH. Personal Interview. August. 23, 2015.

The BOH's curriculum mandates the Bible instructor to be cognizance of the ultimate task of Christian education which is not to teach theology, but to use theology as the basic tool for bringing students into a right relationship with God.³³²

Parent's concerns:

We desire that the lives of our girls enrolling at BOH be marked with love for Christ and service to their community, not just for their minds to be filled with Bible facts.³³³

D. Sex education component

In addition to other courses taught at BOH, there is strong emphasis on the course on Purity and Sex education and Health science/Personal hygiene. In a typical Liberia society, there isn't much talk about sex education/purity, not even in Christian homes. Hence the curriculum seeks to explain the importance of a chaste life, the dangers of an unchaste life, and why and how a girl should live a chaste life (Rom. 12:1-2).

The Sponsor of Grade 3 at BOH passionately narrated the challenges facing girls from the slum community of Matadi enrolling at BOH. She reemphasized the urgent need for sex education in this generation for these underprivileged girls growing in the face of the decay of our nation's moral fabric. Traditional values are being overshadowed by indecent behaviors and dressing:

“Sexy dressing may lead to early sex. You must learn how to dress and behave decently to bring glory to God who is our Maker and to avoid acts that would

³³² Jim Wilhoit. Christian Education. The Search for Meaning 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker House 2000. 108.

³³³BOH Parent. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. May 2, 2015. This parent's testimony of changes was corroborated by another parent from grade 4 who is of different faith.

easily entrap you to an early sex life. It is important to fully prepare for one's sex life and not to have 'babies by chance' but by choice".³³⁴

E. Sources of curriculum: government regulations/"Christian Schools" package

The Ministry Education's approved curriculum is the standard for all schools in Liberia, including Bridge of Hope Girls School. In addition to the government approved curriculum BOH added in her curriculum other courses as listed above under Supplemental courses which address girls' issues and which enhance transformation. Liberia's post war education system is recovering from the devastating civil war and as a result, most of the courses listed above are not regularly taught in public schools due to several factors.' For instance 'Christian doctrine' has been removed from public school curriculum and replaced with moral teaching to accommodate Islam, Buddhism, Confucius, African traditional religion and other religions. The Vice Principal intimated the BOH distinctive to the research assistants: "BOH integrates her faith in every aspect of her learning as well as teaching other relevant subjects that are tailored to the needs of the girls."³³⁵

F. BOH Curriculum Emphasizes Pre- and Primary Education

According to the academic records analyzed in this research, Bridge of Hope Girls' School places intentional emphasis on 'primary education' which is core to the health of the education system.³³⁶ Liberia's education system at the primary level

³³⁴ BOH Sponsor Grade 3. Personal Interview. April 2015.

³³⁵ BOH Vice Principal. Personal Interview. June 16, 2015.

³³⁶Ibid.

has been struggling with a faulty foundation.³³⁷ Hence, it is prudent to begin at the very foundation with these vulnerable girls by crafting solid and comprehensive primary education programs considering all major subjects as science, math, language arts, and social studies and with strong emphasis on the reading program for sustainable learning. The words of Johann Amos Comenius reinforced the concept above:

“If we want to educate a person on virtue we must polish him [her] at a *tender age*. If someone is to advance toward wisdom he [she] must be opened up for it is in *the first, years* of his[her] life when his industriousness is still burning, his[her] mind is malleable³³⁸ and his [her] memory still strong.³³⁹

Another reason for a solid primary foundation is that formal education for females is unavailable to so many in post-war Liberia. This lack provides a just reason to give them a solid primary foundation in this alternative school. A substantial portion of these girls living in the urban slums and remote villages of our nation may never have such an opportunity to be educated.³⁴⁰ BOH curriculum prioritizes reading. BOH Vice Principal states: “Once a girl is able to read correctly, she is capable of comprehending every other subject and her success in the rest is secure.”³⁴¹

³³⁷Liberia: 'Fixing Liberia's Education System' - Sirleaf Clarifies 'Mess' At Education Ministry. Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/search>.

³³⁸Ministry of Education. Approved National Curriculum. Primary and Junior high school. Republic of Liberia. 2013-2015

³³⁹ Johann Amos Comenius. Retrieve from: <http://bfbcnews-rivers.blogspot.com/2011/10/chilts-education-is-very-important.html>

³⁴⁰National Policy on girls' education. Ministry of Education. Monrovia, Liberia.

³⁴¹ Vice Principal BOH. Personal Interview. June 18, 2015

a. BOH Pre-Primary Division

Pre-primary education according to the national curriculum is intended for children between 2-6 years of age, and normally covers a three year period. As a goal, it seeks to recognize the development of children in a holistic way, including intellectual, social, physical and emotional achievements.³⁴² The specific objectives and goals of pre-primary education according to the Ministry of Education are stated as:

“Facilitate a smooth transition from home to school; provide adequate care and supervision for children while their parents are at work; provide experiences that will teach the child a positive self –image; teach thorough play the rudiments of letters , numbers shapes, colors and forms. Teach good health habits; expose the children to experiences which would enhance their learning process; develop the children basic communication skills (listening and speaking) and develop in each child the love of others and a willingness to share in work and play and prepare the children to live in an environment which becomes increasingly complex as the children develop.”³⁴³

The MOE approved curriculum has been cautiously contextualized by the BOHGTE model. BOH is committed to maintaining its validity, yet going beyond its normal intentions to deal with the subtle and entrenched prejudices, discrimination, and insensitivity contained therein by ensuring that the dictions, contents, images, outlook, and learning environment create a sensitive learning environment for small girls as well as enhance access to learning.³⁴⁴ The uniqueness is seen in how BOH creates a conducive learning environment for the girls and intentionally integrates

³⁴² Ministry of Education National Curriculum. Pre-primary Division. Ministry of Education. Republic of Liberia .

³⁴³Ministry of Education National Curriculum. Pre-primary Division. Ministry of Education. Republic of Liberia .

³⁴⁴Analysis of Revised National Policy on Girls’ Education. Ministry of Education. Monrovia, Liberia . October 2013.

their faith into every aspect of the curriculum making sure to preserve her Christian heritage as she seeks to impact and transform the social narratives of these girls.³⁴⁵ BOH recruits students into the Kindergarten session between ages 3-4 and provides an education that transitions the girls from home to school in an atmosphere conducive for the girls, teaching them how to build positive self-image as well instructing them through play and the early use of numbers and shapes, forms and colors, good health habits, etc. The major emphases at this point are to teach them listening and speaking skills, as well as how to socialize with others.

b. BOH Primary Division

The goals of primary education according to the Ministry of Education states as:

“The six year primary education program strives to inculcate positive attitudes towards co-operation, dignity of labor, national developmental and continuous learning. The goal of primary school curriculum is to ‘attain universal literacy, numeracy and socio-economic understanding so as to facilitate the betterment of the life of the learner and the society. These objectives are translated into action terms which make provision for knowledge, skills and values necessary to permit the individual cultural environment and participate in civic life in a meaningful manner, acquire manual skills, develop higher mental processes and lay for continual education.”³⁴⁶

Primary education caters for children aged between 6 and 11 years and lasts for six (6) years. The primary school leaving certificate examination was administered at the end of grade six. The Vice Principal reported that BOH participated twice in the examinations, before it was finally abolished by the Ministry of Education.³⁴⁷

“In 2008/2009 we sent a total of 12 students and 11 of them successfully passed their examinations except for only one who did not make a pass. This

³⁴⁵BOH handbook. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

³⁴⁶Word data on education. 7th edition, Retrieved from <http://www.IBE.UNESCO.Org>

³⁴⁷ BOH Vice Principal. Personal Interview. Central Matadi. June 16, 2015.

accumulated to 98%. Our second attempt was in 2009/2010 when we sent 20 students to sit for the exam and all of them passed.”³⁴⁸

G. BOH Curriculum And Accelerated Learning Program

Liberia has to cope with large numbers of children and youth who missed out on formal education due to the war, and who are generally over-aged. “In line with its commitment to facilitate this group’s school participation and integration into age-appropriate grades in the regular school system, the government greatly expanded the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), which had been established in 1998 with UNICEF support based on a model used in Uganda.”³⁴⁹ The following is the story of students:

“Princess Yalley³⁵⁰, 15 was brought to Monrovia from rural Liberia to be educated by her elder brother who lived in the Matadi slum community. Accordingly, the new Liberia education reform law states Princess at age 15 should be in the upper secondary division (grade 10); this was not in the case of Princess who has never been to school.”

The ALP aim was to keep children in school in order to reduce the risk of their recruitment as combatants and to help in the process of reintegration of ex-combatants into society, as well as provide educational opportunities for older youth through structures separate from conventional primary schools. The programme, typically taught by primary school teachers and using primary school facilities, condensed the six-year primary curriculum into three years. The Accelerated Learning Program targets over-aged children (10 to 17 years), who dropped out of school or

³⁴⁸ BOH Registrar. Personal Interview. June 15, 2015.

³⁴⁹NRC/ALP. Retried from <http://www.nrc.no/?did=9129535#.VhLqGXt8NHw>.

³⁵⁰(pseudonym)

never went to school because of the war, over aged, traditional practices and allows these children to complete the six years of primary school in three academic years.”³⁵¹

Another student narrates:

Jamestta Flomo (pseudonym), 16, grade 3, I came to the Matadi community two years ago from West Point (one of the slums community) to live with my nephew and his wife. My learning has delayed because my parents could not afford to pay my school fees. I am 16 and just starting grade 3. I feel ashamed but I am hoping since this an all- girls school my female friends would help me learn faster.

At 16 she is expected to be in grade 10, but this is not the case. Yet BOH Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) made a room for her to enroll. Structures were placed in the curriculum that provided special attention to Princess and Jamesetta in spite of over aged statuses including extra time, counseling on building self-esteem and after school tutorial classes.

This is another story disclosed to the research assistants during an interview:

“My name is Mary Togba,³⁵² 14; I hail from the Kpelle tribe in Central Liberia. I have never been to any school. This year I was brought to BOH to form part of the Kindergarten class. I know I am older than most of the girls in my class. I do not write or speak English well. I have just graduated [referring to the traditional bush school] and I was forcibly taken to town by my elder sister who is a third year college student. In spite of my age I was accepted at BOH and brought to this program (ALP -Accelerated Learning program).³⁵³

³⁵¹NRC/ALP. Retrieved from <http://www.nrc.no/?did=9129535#.VhLqGXt8NHw>

³⁵² (Pseudonym)

³⁵³ NRC/ALP. Retrieved from; <http://www.nrc.no/> (ALP which caters to specific learning conditions like that of Mary and Princess). The Accelerated Learning Program targets over-aged children (10 to 17 years), who dropped out of school or never went to school because of the war, and allows these children to complete the six years of primary school in three academic years.

Sis. Sebiama D. Kopor (pseudonym) , the Kindergarten teacher who directly instructs. Mary asserted: ‘This has been a real challenge’ but interestingly Mary is gradually responding to her lessons and adapting to her new environment.’³⁵⁴

The research’s assistant captured the socio-cultural conditions of BOH girls resulting into “appropriate placement” of girls who under regular conditions would have been previously denied an opportunity to learn in regular curriculum as revealed in the interviews that follow. “These conditions were the basis for which BOHGTE model did carefully assess the girl’s prior learning and then offers a flexible situation referred to as an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) for girls. Formerly over aged girls in such situation are denied access to learning in conventional schools.”³⁵⁵

A story from another girl:

The story of (Valare Koon), 16: “I am a student of BOH, live in the Lakpazee slum community. I entered BOH five years ago as a first grade student. It was difficult for me to accept this class; because I was older than all the girls. I was feeling ashamed to sit in the class with these younger girls. I felt completely different in their midst because of my age and the fact that I could not speak and write well. My parents had refused for me to come to the city to attend even though we had no school in our village. Another thing about my village was that girls were forced to go to the bush school. My older sister had to convince my mother to bring me to Monrovia for school. Thank God today I am a 7th grade student and can read and write well. My only concern has to do with my sisters that are growing up in the village without school; I am afraid that they might go to the bush school and after that get married soon.”³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴KG Instructor. Personal interview. August. 3, 2015.

³⁵⁵Analysis of BOH Academic and Registration records. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia.

³⁵⁶Valare Koon(pseudonym) . 8th grade student . BOH. Personal Interview. Matadi, October 12, 2014.

Informal (Implicit) Curriculum -Powerful Dynamics-Augment Formal Classes

In this section the researcher focuses on the second aspect of the curriculum being utilized by BOHGTE model. Informal (implicit) curriculum in this context speaks of lessons that are not explicitly taught in the classrooms. The informal curriculum refers to the learning experiences adopted from other means outside the formal setting such as interaction with parents, peers, “teaching” received from media, bush school, community. Girls are taught about civics and citizenship through participation in school and external clubs or organizations, student representative councils, elections, and campaigns. Participation in such groups helps students learn the elements of cultural values and how to be involved in democracy through participative decision making as well as to reinforce what has been taught in the classrooms.³⁵⁷ . Career guidance is another key means of helping in the formation process at BOH. A day has been set in the national curriculum and implemented by the school wherein students are taught or given advice by successful or professional in a specific field of study.³⁵⁸

“To this end BOH has over the years engaged in extra- curricular activities. By celebrating African costume day, playing soccer, participating in Spelling BEE, quizzing and field trips purposely to enable students explore some industrial sites, factories, museums, and other historical sites in Liberia as a way of reinforcing what they have been taught in social studies, science and agriculture.”³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Liberia National Curriculum: Junior High School. Formal and informal education. Retrieved from: <https://books.google.com/books>

³⁵⁸ Excerpt of BOH Curriculum. Central New Matadi, Monrovia, Liberia.

³⁵⁹ Sponsor Grade 4 – Director for Field Trip. Personal Interview. May 24, 2014. Historical sites: Providence Island where the pioneers landed in 1822, Cococa Factory – produced soft drinks, etc. Firestone Rubber Company the largest and oldest Rubber plantation in Africa to experience first information how they have tap latex from the trees and what kind of social benefits given to the workers etc.

BOHGTE model chose formal and informal curriculum to meet the needs of the students considering the statutory and syllabus requirements with the aim of making a holistic approach to curriculum planning. This research will discuss more of the informal curriculum under the section -Other "non-academic experiences" programmed later in this research.

A. **How are teachers distinctive in comparison with other schools?**

Al Forsyth asserted in his Teacher Education Professional Standards & Ethics that "A teacher is more than a teacher."³⁶⁰ Because a teacher is entrusted not only with educating students but also with helping them grow and develop as human beings, the effective teacher must be not only skillful at promoting learning, but also a model of ethical behavior. "Teachers are observed very intently—scrutinized—by students for many hours each day. And for all students, teachers may be revered and seem larger than life."³⁶¹

Since teachers play a central role in the educational process, it is important that we carefully compare teachers at BOH with those of government institutions for the purpose of ensuring that they are able to effect the changes BOHGTE model seeks to impact.

"Staff at the Bridge of Hope is called upon to exercise professionalism at all times in the spirit of Christian witness. The staff should at all times be a model of good moral behavior. The student who come to the BOH for formal education both smart intellectually and morally upright expect from the staff and understanding, patience, commitment and love. The teaching staff should not, abuse or destroy the innocence of our children. They must not be manipulated or exploited financially, sexually or otherwise. Each student is

³⁶⁰ Dr. Al Forsyth. Teacher Education Professional Standards & Ethics. Retrieved from: <http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/professional-standards-and-ethics>.

³⁶¹Ibid

unique and must be treated as such. A staff at BOH is expected to conduct himself or herself becomingly on and outside of campus.”³⁶²

These same core values are also set for public school teachers in the ‘code of conduct’ guiding the conduct of education system in Liberia. Secondly, most of the conditions faced by public school are the same facing the Christian teachers at BOH. For examples: low and irregular salaries, low incentives, poverty, unhealthy working conditions, no housing, insurance etc.³⁶³ But the marks of distinction between them and Christian school teachers (e.g. BOHGS) is the grace of God at work in the lives of Christian school teachers.

Moreover the Christian environment, inner convictions to adhere to the code of conduct, institution ability to reprimand unethical behaviors of teachers is some of the marks of distinctions. Although the Lord will keep Christians school teachers in his service to Him, they do have a responsibility to do the right thing to the best of their ability. They must be committed to the core education philosophy of the Christian school because it provides room for quality and sustainability. A Christian teacher should strive to be a model of integrity and professionalism in his/her job, at all times. Most public school teachers who are not Christians utterly depend on their own strength to discharge their duties. They strive to adhere to the code of conduct guiding the teaching profession but in the absence of God’s grace public school teachers may easily adapt the culture of corruption that is prevalent in the Liberian’s educational system. The present Liberian educational system is experiencing a barrage of unethical issues already documented in this research. These unprofessional

³⁶²Bridge of Hope Staff Manual. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

³⁶³Liberia: Police Corruption Harms Rights, Progress". Human Rights Watch. 22 August 2013. Retrieved 13 January 2015.

practices are noticed among instructors, school administrators and high profile officials of government.³⁶⁴ What goes on in these public institutions reflects the kind of educational system.

B. How are teachers equipped to be "transformational" influencers?

“Christian education is an extension of the mandate of the Church and is intended to propagate its ideals and aspirations.”³⁶⁵ “It goes far beyond just teaching the girls for today’s life experience, but includes preparing them for the rest of life.³⁶⁶ Teachers are the central figures in ensuring that transformation has an impact in the lives of these girls. In other words, education that transforms is totally depended on the quality and competence of the teachers. Therefore to change students, the teachers must be changed themselves which is essential to effect the holistic transformation that the school is presenting. Hence; “they cannot simply teach, unless they are taught.”³⁶⁷ Training is vital in this process to ensure that teachers become conduits of change. To this end, BOH has prioritized staff development:

“Staff development has become our tradition here at BOH. We made it our duty to conduct refresher workshops at the beginning of every semester for the past eight years. We have collaborated with our friends and partners from BOH Ohio and Seed of Knowledge/Canada to help us achieve this all important aspect of our curriculum. The training taught subjects such as (classroom management, lesson planning, vision and sustainability, Christian’s school administration and philosophy, phonics, financial and school

³⁶⁴Liberia: Rising Sex Scandals. Retrieved from:
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201004080773.html>

³⁶⁵ Jim Wilhoit. Christian Education and the Search for Meaning. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House .9-10

³⁶⁶ Peter K. Lakpor (pseudonym). Co-Chairman. BOH. Personal Interview. Bushrod Island, Monrovia. June 20, 2015.

³⁶⁷Jim Wilhoit. Christian Education and the Search for Meaning. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House .9-10

management, Gender based violence, Purity .,)³⁶⁸ Besides these, during the formative stages of the school we enrolled 85% of our teachers into LICOSESS Mobile Teacher Training College.³⁶⁹

Responses of Co-Chairman of BOH

We have been intentional in recruiting practicing Christians here at BOH. Seventy percent of our teachers are females; but more so they are trained teachers/ parents who love the Lord and have a deep passion to teach and be role models for these underprivileged girls. They do not consider themselves as ‘just mere teachers’ but play the roles of parents or guardians to these girls seeking for love, self-esteem, acceptance, meaning and direction. In the same manner the men served as both teachers and fathers’ figures to these girls. Together they have collectively strived to fight and achieve the goals and aspirations of BOHGTE model which explained itself in the fight against sexual exploitations, prejudice and discriminations meted out against these innocent girls.”³⁷⁰

According to the training manual obtained BOH teachers have been trained in courses such as: Gender-based violence, purity, specialized skills in teaching in an all- girls school, Agriculture, Conflict resolution and Christian education.. A male teacher revealed to the research assistants his experience after one of the Teacher refresher’s workshops: “I realized five of the girls in my class prior to my ‘specialized training’ were so shy that even when they knew the answers to a question they would just remain quiet. But our specialized training in gender-based violence, educational psychology, and religious education has better equipped me to freely interact with these girls and understand their problems. When I asked one of them after our regular class session, she told me that in their tribe girls were taught not to

³⁶⁸ Teacher trainings: Bridge of Hope Foundation , Ohio/USA September 12-24 (Courses: Language Arts, Teacher methodology, Educational philosophy, Purity, Phonics, Christian doctrine) teachers: Marilyn Jones, Eileen Medley, Ruth Claudius –(pseudonyms).

³⁶⁹ Liberia Cooperative Standard Education School System (LICOSESS) Mobile Teachers’ Training College offered Associate degree and “C”- Certificates in Teachers’ education. Trains teachers for primary and secondary school education.

³⁷⁰ Peter K. Lakpor. Co-Chairman Board of Trustees BOH. Personal Interview. Bushrod Island Mon. June 10, 2014. Liberia Cooperative Standard Education School System (LICOSESS) Mobile Teacher Training College. Sinkor Old Road, Monrovia Liberia . 2009 -2012 .

speak in public or in the presence of their male siblings. And since you are a male, she said, ‘we gave you the same respect.’³⁷¹ However, Religious Education promotes group discussions through which girls would have the potential to discover who they are and their freedom to decide what is right for them to do. “Traditionally, girls are supposed to keep quiet most of the time, especially in the presence of elderly people. This silence is observed even when they are in class and this result in shyness. Usually girls who are shy find it difficult to interact and share ideas in group discussions.”³⁷²

C. What procedures are in place to promote "transformational" dynamics?

i) Chapel

The School exists to help student develop not only intellectually but also spiritually. To achieve this goal in addition to the Christian doctrine being taught as a core subject, daily devotional services are held at BOH to commence the school activities. Every student is requested to attend chapel service and participate in this extra-curricular activity. BOH Handbook states: “Every student must come to school with a Bible as one of their text books. The Chapel service will regularly be conducted at the start of every school day. Every student is encouraged to take part by singing and reciting Bible verses. Remember that the Chapel service constitutes 25% of your Christian doctrine grade.”³⁷³

³⁷¹ Sponsor Grade 4. BOH. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

³⁷²Dyless Witola Musongole. The Role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls’ educational right in Peri-urban schools: A case study of Chingola District in Zambia. MA Thesis in Religious Education submitted to the University of South Africa. June 2010

³⁷³ BOH Handbook. Central New Matadi. Monrovia. Liberia

ii) Intentional mentoring

The goal of the mentor program at BOH is to make the students “strong from the inside out” by building a village around each girl during a time when many young people search for role models outside of their immediate family.³⁷⁴ To this end BOH searches for a diverse group of qualified female mentors to match with our students. In essence they are helping students to be transformed by the power of God through a one-to one relationship with caring Christians. “We welcome Christian mentors from any race, and nationality or ethnic origin, as we aim to match students with adults who share these identities with them,”³⁷⁵ the Principal asserted. The unique experiences and insights that each student gains by having a mentor enhances education at BOH, and results into rewarding a growth experience for each mentor as well. At BOH the first group of mentors is female teachers; but the school is also receptive to successful Christian women in the community who are willing to assist the girls.

Testimony from a girl:

One of our previous students, who was completing high school and about to become a college student, was asked to describe her relationship with her mentor/role model and simply said, “She just gets me. I can ask her anything and she will still like me.”³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴Dean of Girls. BOH. Personal Interview. May 16, 2015.

³⁷⁵Principal. BOH. Personal Interview. May 17, 2015.

³⁷⁶Jamesetta Wallace(pseudonym). First graduate of BOH, Philadelphia Job Corps Life Science Institute Medical Assistant. Personal Interview. November 30, 2015.

iii) **Disciplinary procedures**

The goal of discipline according to the BOH Handbooks states:

“One of the essential purposes of the rules of BOHGS is the formation of a strong Christian character, enabling the student to do what she ought to do, regardless of personal whim or mood. The rules are aimed at the preservation of good order for common well-being of all in this school. It is obvious, therefore that strict discipline must be maintained at BOHGS at all times.³⁷⁷

BOH Handbook reminds every teacher that discipline must proceed from love. It is the desire of the founding fathers and mothers to see the girls obey. But this obedience is the submission of the girls to the authority. In submission to that authority, she desires to do what God wants her to do. She desires this because she loves God and wants to do those things that will please Him. She finds joy in obedience. Out of her love for God, she willingly obeys those whom God has placed in positions of authority over her: parents, teachers.³⁷⁸

“At BOH a girl-child is punished not because the teacher or administration dislikes her but rather the process is intended to help the child learn and form a strong character that would result into being obedient to God and constituted authority as she learns.”³⁷⁹ “If the girls at BOH will become women of noble character or experience a new identity, this model is proposing that punishment should proceed out of love so as not to dampen self-esteem, pride, and dignity of the girls”³⁸⁰ BOH does not cane students, yet it does not allow “failures” and disobedience to go

³⁷⁷BOH Handbook. Excerpt of Disciplines & Code of Conduct. Central Matadi Monrovia, Liberia

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Chairman Disciplinary Committee BOH. Personal Interview. May 14, 2015. Central New Matadi

³⁸⁰ BOH Christian Doctrine Instructor. Personal Interview. May 16, 2015. Central New Matadi.

unpunished. Several mechanisms have been put in place as outlined in the discipline procedures to reprimand violators of school rules considering restoration and character formation as the ultimate goals. “The Principal asserts: We exist to empower young girls to become noble women of high moral character as well as create new identity for Liberia girls; so we are mindful not to inflict internal injury, or bring shame or dishonor to the girls in the process of punishment.”³⁸¹ It was in this context that we set these basic guidelines below to help achieve the objectives:

Excerpt from the discipline/code of ethics stated on BOH Handbook:

- Students must be regular and punctual at all classes and related activities
- Any student in possession of offensive weapon (s) such as a razor blade, knife, cutlass, firearms. will be suspended for the first offense and will be required to return with parents/guardians. The second or further offenses will warrant an expulsion.
- No student is permitted to bring to school prescribed printed material (pornographic materials, war magazines,)
- Student (s) who intentionally damage the school’s property will be made to pay such or face suspension.
- Any student found bribing or paying money to an instructor for any reason without the consent of the administration will be suspended
- Students must never drink liquor, smoke, use drugs, gamble use profane language or swear
- Students are not to engage in girlfriend relationship on campus. No physical relationship, intimacy, or anything construed as illicit love will be tolerated

³⁸¹Principal BOH. Personal Interview. May 24, 2015.

between same sexes; any two students engaged in such act will be expelled.³⁸²

Testimony from a student:

“For me I started this school from 3rd grade second period where I was looked down upon by other students that said I will not make it. But God helped me to make it and now I am in the 8th grade and I am still here and God is still helping me. I thank him. I loved this school a lot because of the discipline they take us through... helping us to learn not only for today but for the future. I pray for God to help the school with money so as for me to continue my 12th grade education here. I know he will do so because He is the God of everything.”³⁸³

Finally, inasmuch BOH rejects physical punishment or the use of the cane, the handbook rejects the use of ridicule, mockery, browbeating, denigration, vilification, insult, belittling, rejection and other devices which may be far more harmful to the child than a spanking.”³⁸⁴

D. Other "non-academic" experiences programmed into process

Co-curricular activities – “excellent academic results are only one aspect of the school. Girls have plenty of opportunities to explore new interests, develop talents and enhance creativity through our co –curricular activities. Many extra-curricular activities and clubs are offered to provide an opportunity to extend learning outside the classroom.”³⁸⁵

BOH desires to also develop physical and psychological ability in addition to intellectual, moral, and spiritual discipline instilled in the students. Learning is not

³⁸²BOH Handbook. Discipline/Code of Conduct . Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

³⁸³ Alumni BOH age 15. Personal Interview . October 20, 2015.

³⁸⁴Ibid.

³⁸⁵Alexander P. Diggs (pseudonym). *Physical Education Teacher BOH. Personal Interview.* Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

limited to academic and spiritual activities, but also extra curriculum (sports, drama, debates, quizzing, choir, home economics/pastry, sewing.) “Special care is taken to help students develop their talents in the areas of their gifting. All students are required to participate in the extra-curricular activities in accordance with their areas of interest.”³⁸⁶ Any student who refuses to participate in any of such activities, without any legitimate reason(s), may lose the chance of being in BOHGS. Each class is allowed to elect their own class government with their sponsor. Any student desiring to be part of the class government must have at least 80% average and above and have a good moral record. Any student with poor academic record will not be allowed to hold any position in the said government.³⁸⁷

i) Sports – Regular sporting activities form part of the BOH activities. Physical education is a part of the extra-curricular activities at BOH and it helps the girls to keep physically fit and grow healthy and be in sound mind. Students participate in diverse exercises as the curriculum demands. The school has both soccer and kick ball teams.

ii) Music- There are no regular courses at BOH for music but talented students form the school choir. These girls have been trained by the music director. Working with the girls has helped so many of them to bring forth their talents.

iii) Home science- As part of the core subject taught at BOH girls are encouraged to learn how to do the followings: pastry baking, catering. The objective of this course is to give girls life skills training that will empower them after BOH. The research captured the testimony of girls enrolling in the home science class:

³⁸⁶ Alexander P. Diggs (pseudonym). Physical Education Teacher BOH. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

³⁸⁷ BOH Handbook. Education Philosophy. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

“Our class under the guidance of our teacher helped to prepare all the food for the wedding as well as baked all the serving cakes. We have been taught to cater as well giving us skills after our time here at BOH.”³⁸⁸

iv) Work in school compound/farm: As an illustration of the impact of these non-formal educational experiences, I was provided the following testimony from an agricultural teacher:

“Several of the girls are on work scholarships exempting them from paying the little registration fees. Specific duties include but not limited to sweeping the chapel, classrooms, filling the drums with water. This work scholarship is intended to teach work ethics which is essential for life preparations. BOH agricultural farm has been used as a demonstration site to teach the girls how to work with their hands.” It is our intention to teach these girls that God has promised to bless the work of our hands.”³⁸⁹

E. Are parents involved? How are parents incorporated?

Parents are an integral part of the daily life of the BOH family because they help shape the vision and provide a conducive atmosphere for learning. Parents are responsible to discuss academic matters of their child/ward with the Vice Principal or the sponsors. It is the obligation of the school administration to report issues related to student attendance, performance, behaviors and drop out to parents as soon as they are noticed. These matters are discussed in the PTA meetings. Parents at BOH are responsible to help in monitoring the school for student and teacher attendance and other aspects of school life and facilities that impact girls’ entry, attendance, and completion.³⁹⁰

Report from the Principal and the Co-Founder of The School:

³⁸⁸ Korpu Mulbah. Grade 6 Student. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. June 12, 2015. (Not her actual name)

³⁸⁹ Agriculture Teacher BOH. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi.

³⁹⁰BOH Handbook. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

“The school enjoys a constructive and warm relationship with parents. Regular parent drop-in sessions are part of the school program where parents can meet me and share thoughts and feedback without an official appointment. The Parent Staff Association, to which all parents automatically belong, contributes to the life of the school in very many ways, both through its lively schedule of social events and the financial contribution it makes through its fundraising activities. The school and parents work together in our common aim which is to encourage and support the girls.”³⁹¹

The BOH Handbooks states: “The Parent-Teacher Association is one of the essential parts of BOHGS and serves as a bridge between the home and the school in evaluating the progress of the child and other developmental activities of the school.”³⁹² All parents are encouraged to attend all PTA meetings where progress reports are distributed. Parents /guardians are also encouraged to contribute spiritually, morally and financially to the development of the institution. School administrators are periodically engaged with the parents, guardians and community members. Students’ academic and moral performance should be discussed with parents at the end of each marking period.³⁹³

Parent’s testimony at PTA Meeting:

“My daughter came to BOH when she was 8. During her Kindergarten graduation an Instructor from BOH recognized her performance and encouraged me to enroll her at BOH. We did not have the fees necessary for registration at BOH so the instructor helped her to enroll in 2008. Grace (pseudonym), the youngest of our five children, lives with us in Matadi, a suburb of Monrovia, about twenty minutes from the school. During the rainy season, travel to the school is difficult because of the swamps that surround our home. Both of us are unemployed...her mother does petty trading at the local market, while at times finds day hire. BOH Girls’ School is vital for girls

³⁹¹Principal BOH. Personal Interview. June 16, 2015.

³⁹²Ibid.

³⁹³ BOH Handbook. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

like my daughter, who might not be in school without such an institution. Illiteracy continues to be very high in our culture where education for girls and women is traditionally and culturally discouraged, and many of our girls given in early and forced marriages. My daughter is in the 7th grade and is able to read well, and can work independently. What excites me the most is that my daughter behaviors have immensely improved; less contacts with boys and is focused. ”³⁹⁴

Another story from a Parent:

“Our daughter Fasko Washington (pseudonym) was never interested in attending church with us four years ago until she enrolled at the Bridge of Hope Girls School. We are members of the Calvary Baptist Church and currently Fasko is very active in her Sunday school classes and even leading family devotions at home. Our daughter’s attitude towards us and her siblings has changed including her approach to household chores. In my mind, changes and learning had taken place in the past five years of enrollment at this school. Our big challenge is where do we take her after completion at BOH?”³⁹⁵

iv) What other persons are included in formation process?

In this section I am collectively considering all those who are involved with the formation process of the girls at BOH. This research recognizes their unique roles in helping each girl-child at BOH access learning and to shape their growth intellectually, spiritually and physically. Those who are effecting the changes include school pastor, guidance counselors, athletic coaches and vocational mentors and church mothers. The Pastor helped reinforce Christian doctrine taught at the school through his Sunday morning sermons and regular engagements with the girls in the role as guidance counselor and resolving conflicts at BOH. The athletic coach engaged the girls through physical exercises as well to assist nurture the talents of sports in every girl-child.

³⁹⁴ Moses Gbarglo (pseudonym) Parent. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi Community. October 2015.

³⁹⁵Tendee Washington (pseudonym) . Parent. Personal Interview. Fiamah Community . October 27, 2015.

v) **Intentional “rite of passage” experience**

The concept of isolating girls from boys for informal education and life skill training has been an acceptable cultural and traditional practice in the Liberian society since its founding. The Sande’ for girls and Poro’ for boys are the two oldest bush schools in the history of Liberia.

The BOHGTE model attempts to present a parallel concept of isolating girls from boys, but with new dynamism and a paradigm shift of imparting formal education and basic life skills training to vulnerable teen age girls in post war Liberia. Bush schools in Liberia over the centuries have been vital instruments of inculcating significant cultural values in the Liberian society. However, with sweeping globalization and modernization across the continent these practices can no longer be an acceptable means of education.

In a traditional bush school, a girl child is isolated from her boy’s counterpart and given an informal education and life skill training that helped to prepare her for life, family and community. One of the sole purposes of this training was to prepare young girls to be housewives, procreation, and child rearing. BOHGTE goes beyond just preparing the girls for the family, but also to serve the larger society and for life. The traditional bush school is one of the oldest cultural practices of Liberia and is ingrained in the traditional worldview of the people. Essential components of the bush school experience are as follows: it isolates the girl child that is unique in every aspect from her boys’ counterpart; it presents her to an old and experienced mother to give her informal education and life skill training in an environment conducive for learning. This training affects every aspect of the girls’ lives.

The BOHTE model embraces a similar concept by isolating underprivileged girls by entrusting them into the care of faithful and dedicated Christian mothers/fathers to undergo their primary education and life skills training. These teachers serve as role models and help to impart basic Christian values into the lives of these disadvantaged girls, transitioning them from a life of low self-esteem, poverty, sexual exploitation, discrimination, into women of self-worth and noble character. This model will help reduce the wide gap of gender disparity between boys' and girls' education as well as promoting entry, retention, and progression of these most vulnerable girls.

Secondly, BOHGTE model also seeks to capture and cultivate the community-driven aspect of the bush schools, whereby the informal trainings and life skill training remain the sole responsibility of the community leaders. This strong and rich African cultural heritage informed this dissertation in all its ramifications. Moreover, such a community-driven kind of education, when carefully contextualized, would help to restore essential cultural norms, family values, promote morality in a culture where modernization and globalization are displacing valuable cultural and societal norms (as well as morality and Christian's values which are gradually eroding.)

In the African culture, the training of a girl-child is the sole responsibility of experienced mothers who served as role models for the young girls. This concept has some biblical undertones (see Titus 2:4). In spite of the context in Paul's letter to Titus wherein the author does not have in view a 'formal academic classroom,' there is a parallel concept of isolating women and teaching them in their own space. Hence, we can harvest its richness and adopt it to the BOHGTE model which presupposes that isolating girls in a school of their own will enhance their ability to learn in an atmosphere free of pressure from boys. Such an environment provides

space where they can freely learn and aspire to their highest goals without competition. BOHGTE model has also contextualized the aspect of ‘rite of passage.’ A “rite of passage” is defined as “the transition from childhood to adulthood when an individual is institutionalized to the ethics of the group culture. It marks times of a new beginning and transition from one life stage to another for the individual dramatizing the transience of individual existence.”³⁹⁶ Since this rite plays a central role in Africa socialization, it is greeted with elaborate celebrations and it is known as ‘graduation’. “At BOH, we honored girls that complete primary education and move on junior high by honoring them publicly and giving them awards during our annual graduation ceremonies.”³⁹⁷

Central Transformation Strategies

In this section, the researcher is assessing key strategies and programs designed by Bridge of Hope Girls’ school which have resulted in ‘transformational learning’ for the girls. “Transformational learning in this context speaks of: “Any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning take place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings (schools, classrooms) or nontraditional settings (outside-of-school locations, outdoor environments), or whether it includes traditional educational interactions (students learning from teachers and professors) or nontraditional interactions (students learning through games and interactive software applications).”³⁹⁸ Below are the key strategies and programs captured by this research through interviews and data analysis.

³⁹⁶Tesha Davis. Rite of Passage. African Cultural Initiation Rite. Retrieved from: http://www.africanholocaust.net/rite_of_passage.html.

³⁹⁷ Principal BOH. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. October 27, 2015

³⁹⁸ Learning experience Retrieved from: <http://edglossary.org/learning-experience/>

A. The concept of pedagogy as reflected in BOHGTE model

The first strategy and program incorporated into the model is the concept of pedagogues drawn from the Ancient Greek history. It centers on slaves who were foreigners and the spoils of war. These slaves accompanied the sons of their ‘masters’ in the street, took charge of the meals of the sons among other things as well as seating beside them when being schooled. These pedagogues were generally seen as representatives of their wards’ fathers and literally ‘tenders’ of children (Gk. *pais plus agōgos*, a ‘child-tender’). Children were often put in their custody at around seven years and remained with them until late adolescence.³⁹⁹ . This concept is parallel to the BOHGTE model which emphatically stresses primary education as a foundational tool for transforming the lives of these girls. In the BOH setting, teachers take on similar functions but are not necessarily referred to as ‘slaves’ rather as ‘servants’ who are obligated to impact primary education by serving the pupils with every aspect of their lives. This concept of pedagogy is captured as BOH teachers’ attempt to guide a girl-child to learn at a tender age with the intention of making them to be women of noble character:

Response from a teacher:

“When a girl-child enrolls at BOH she is literally entrusted into the care of the teachers who serve as both teacher and guardians to the girl. Since majority of these girls are orphans, indigent, over aged, and come from impoverished backgrounds and have to deal with issues such as low self –esteem, lack of acceptance, never feeling good enough, and suffer from insecurity, it is our responsibility as teachers to demonstrate compassion and tender care. As teachers we are responsible for every aspect of the child’s upbringing from ensuring that they become women of noble character, dispelling the wrong

³⁹⁹A. Brühlmeie. *Head, Heart And Hand. Education In The Spirit Of Pestalozzi*. (Cambridge: Sophia Books. 2010.)

notion that their bodies are meant to be abused by men. We work with them to ensure that they speak correct grammar and have right diction at BOH.”⁴⁰⁰

Story of the concept:

“Tatricia Koleh (pseudonym) age 7, along with her colleagues enrolled at BOH in 2010. She and her colleagues were specifically placed in my hands being the teacher of grade one. I served as both ‘teacher and caretaker’ to Patricia. As a ‘teacher / caretaker’ to Patricia I am more than just a teacher because she along with her colleagues graduated from my class five years ago. But I have maintained a strong tie with them over the years as they journey here at BOH by focusing on forming and shaping their character to be women of noble character, endeavoring to be a role model to these girls even beyond the normal classroom settings. This is an extremely difficult task trying to remain connected to teen age girls beyond the classrooms in a generation swiftly changing but we have seen enormous changes in the lives of these girls over the years.”⁴⁰¹

Another teacher shared her close interactions with the students: “At the beginning of 2010/2011 academic year, as a sponsor of grade 2, I had an important meeting with the Principal and Vice Principal along with the Dean of girls at BOH when they asked me to take on these girls as my daughters and little sisters to help them mature spiritually and excel academically as they pursue primary education. I still relate to these girls on several fronts even though they have transitioned from my class to the next. One unique factor of this process is that we still relate to these girls in several ways because they have accepted me over the years as a ‘big sister’ who can help them with their studies and life complexities. I am honored to play such a little part in the lives of these girls.”⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰Grade 6 Sponsor. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. August 23, 2015

⁴⁰¹ BOH Grade 1 Teacher. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. September 2, 2015.

⁴⁰²Grade 2 Sponsor. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. August 25, 2015.

B. Teacher training

Teacher training is the second major strategy and program designed to enhance student learning. As an institution, BOH always seeks out for more training opportunities for her staff to enable them to keep promoting transformational education.⁴⁰³ Teachers training at BOH had been in a partnership with Christian school educators, Ministry of Education, stakeholders and specialists in the field of education. “It is obvious that all of our training is not undertaken by BOH; this assumption presupposes that the school undertakes regular refresher workshops.”⁴⁰⁴ “The uniqueness as a Christian school takes center stage in those trainings evidenced by the contents of the courses being taught wherein faith is always integrated in every aspect of the training. These workshops are facilitated by trained educators and qualified Christians school educators.”⁴⁰⁵ The training of staff is therefore an inherent educational objective of BOH. “Regular staff development is a unique academic component of the life at BOH and occurs at the beginning of every academic school year, ensuring that staff are adequately prepared and in touch with the current realities unfolding in the world of girls in post war Liberia.”⁴⁰⁶ (see Appendix B for teachers’ credentials).

Liberia’s public education system continues to be of poor quality. The poor quality of education is both largely caused and revealed by several factors: teachers are poorly trained and often lack basic qualifications; the curriculum is outdated and

⁴⁰³ J. Robert Wever(pseudonym). Board Member /Facilitator Teacher’s Refresher Workshop. May 17, 2010.

⁴⁰⁴ Peter K. Lakpor(pseudonym). Co-Chairman BOH Board of Trustees. Personal Interview. May 21, 2015.

⁴⁰⁵Ruth Clay (pseudonym). Bridge of Hope Foundation Education team. Ohio/USA. Sept. 10, 2008.

⁴⁰⁶ Co-Chairman Board of Trustees- Bridge of Hope. Personal Interview. Monrovia, Liberia. May 10. 2014.

of little relevance while textbooks, teachers' guides, and other instructional materials are outdated and in short supply.⁴⁰⁷ This is a just reason for an alternative school to adequately prepare the teachers to respond to. The recruitment and training of more female teachers and making schools more 'gender sensitive' are some of possible steps in enhancing 'entry, retentions and completion' of girls. The presence of female teachers' at BOH has encouraged parents to send their girls to school. BOHGTE model has always maintained that the 'employment of more qualified female teachers and thrusting them into administrative and key positions is a prerequisite for mobilizing more girls in school.'⁴⁰⁸

Co-Founder's response:

“A school is as good as the people who work there. They must be qualified, highly committed, visionary, and they have to care about the girls. They must be willing to work long hours, collaborate with others, do lots of things not on the job description, ensuring that girls are kept clean and healthy, speak good English on and off campus, well-disciplined and above all things, they love the Lord.⁴⁰⁹ The Vice Principal making remarks at the Teachers' Refresher Workshop asserted: “The students require time, attention, a chance to talk about things. They demand a lot from the teachers, and in turn the teachers need training, support, comfort, and professional recognition. It is our responsibility as a school to provide such professional development in every area of need.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid

⁴⁰⁸ BOH Administrative manual. An Excerpt on employment policy. Central New Matadi.

⁴⁰⁹ Marilyn Jones (pseudonym) . Co- Founder BOH, Personal Interview. September 12, 2015.

C. Peer group interaction

“ The third strategy and program designed is the peer group interaction where the girls are influenced toward positive goals in the spirit of competition and also guarded by the administration. “Competition is striving to do better than others and helps people to fulfill their ambitions and one can only fulfill his or her ambitions when he or she works hard.”⁴¹⁰

At BOH there are several inter-lass competitions organized by the administration. One of which is ‘Spelling Bee Competition’, which creates an atmosphere for the girls to compete in improving vocabulary and phonetic skills. Secondly there is a Quizzing competition’ known as ‘Academic Challenge; it is designed by BOH to test the girls’ abilities in various subjects as well as in current events. All these competitions are strategies geared towards influencing peer group interaction toward positive goals.⁴¹¹ BOH is gradually becoming a full Middle school beyond Primary School. Therefore, between grade 1 and grade 8, girls are being helped to overcome their inferiority complex syndrome through these competitions to a level where they would have courage to make wise and constructive decisions. This is the stage where a strong foundation is being laid.⁴¹²

D. Deliberate exposure to positive role models

An attempt at deliberate exposure to positive role models and heroes or prominent women in the society to the girls was the fourth strategy and program design captured by this research. “Girls need role models-- real, actual women and adolescent girls who enact successful roles as athletes, scholars, and leaders in many endeavors. Such models can provide the paths for the girls who follow .”⁴¹³ It is

⁴¹⁰Sponsor Grade 3. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi . April 23, 2015.

⁴¹¹ BOH Curriculum. Co-Curricular Activities. Central New Matadi, Monrovia, Liberia

⁴¹²Coach Interclass competitions BOH. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. May 26, 2015.

⁴¹³Teacher Christian Doctrine BOH. Personal Interview. August 10, 2015.

especially important for girls to have women as role models and for girls of impoverished society to see women of their class playing non-traditional roles. The administration of BOH has endeavored over the years to bring prominent women in the society to speak to the girls at formal and informal gatherings. The Director of Girls' Unit at the Ministry of Education, Madam Louise G. Manuel(pseudonym) , a devout Lutheran, hailed from Northern Liberia, from a humble background was the first guest speaker at BOH graduation and award program in 2009/2010.⁴¹⁴ It was followed by Sister Felecia Kaloki (pseudonym) , a Christian humanitarian, Ugandan and serving as the Country Director of PLAN Int'l, who was an inspiration to these girls with her story of how she struggled with life challenges but made it through the grace of God to where she is right now. The Director who oversees the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation at International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Director for the Association of Female Lawyers (AFELL) are among several other prominent women BOH Administration has exposed to the girls.⁴¹⁵

In 2012/2013 Representative Martha Kerkulah (pseudonym) , the youngest Liberia Lawmaker in the Ellen Johnson-led government and former Miss Liberia Beauty Pageant served as the Guest Speaker during the Graduation and Award Ceremony. She serves as a motivation to the girls considering her age and achievements over the years. Being a model, she challenged the girls to be focused and not to allow the boys to distract them from learning. "You will be more successful than me if you take your learning seriously and don't allow these boys that are not serious to delay your learning. You can go to college, too and even be more

⁴¹⁴ BOH First Graduation and Award Program. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, 2009/2010

⁴¹⁵ Souvenir BOH graduation and Award Ceremony. Central Matadi. July 15, 2010.

successful.”⁴¹⁶ Women in non- traditional roles can exert “a formidable influence” by being in the presence of the young girls who need to see powerful women doing important work in order to know they can achieve their own potential.”⁴¹⁷ By the same token the absence of women role models implies the opposite. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf serving as the First Female President of Liberia in Africa serves as a motivation to teenage girls to aggressively go after education.

Pastor Peter Lakpor (pseudonym) has an alternative view when he asserted:

“We have a big challenge in our nation where the girls are not seeing enough examples to follow. President Ellen Johnson may be the first female president in Africa, but there are lots of negative influences in our society wherein many women are still illiterate and yet living affluent lives, despising education and depended on their social and political connections and the society is hailing them as heroines. Girls’ and women education remains a lip service in our society where majority of girls and women are illiterate and poverty stricken. We need more female role models in addition to the President to inspire the girls to enter and remain in school. Our society adores and rewards elderly women who set bad examples for the girls. Society hates those who stand up for justice, standard and fair play. We need to break this cycle by revisiting our education system more so the primary division as well as family, strengthening family values, and reintroducing the Word of God into our public and private schools.”⁴¹⁸

E. Specific “classes” which address girls’ identity issues

Another important strategy and program designed by the central transformation including in the curriculum specific classes which addressed girls’ identity crises. “Christian education’s prime responsibility and function is to help pupils to come to terms with questions about their own identity, their own value systems and life-styles, their own priorities and commitments, and their own frame of

⁴¹⁶ Excerpt from Speech delivered by the District # 9 Representative. BOH graduation and Award Ceremony 2012/2013.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Board Member BOH. Personal Interview. Brushrod Island. July 28, 2015.

reference for viewing life and giving it meaning.”⁴¹⁹ A fundamental educational concern is to help students to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes which would enable them to participate consciously and critically in the processes by which their lives are shaped.

BOHGTE model shares the above concern. Almost at each stage, there are topics, which help to encourage girls to discover who they are, have self-confidence and self-esteem. Young people need to know and understand themselves first, their potential, their feelings and emotions, their position in life and in society and their strengths and weaknesses.⁴²⁰ Christian Education topics like ‘Growing in responsibility’, ‘How people develop’ and ‘How people make choices’ are some of the topics offered in our Christian doctrine curriculum and have the potential to enable girls attain self-awareness. Self-awareness leads to self-esteem which is awareness of good in oneself. The topics ‘The Talents people have’ and ‘Ambitions and Hopes’ in Christian Education help to encourage girls to work towards achieving the set goals. Girls are capable of developing a self-driven spirit to achieve what they base their hope on. They would be guided to become more ambitious and more hopeful for a bright future. This would motivate them to work hard towards the fulfillment of their ambition.⁴²¹

“Dealing with teen-age girls at BOH puts us in direct contact with girls who struggle with uncertainty and confusion about their sense of identity (knowledge of who they are) probably due to their impoverished backgrounds and entrenched

⁴¹⁹John Dee Beer. Retrieved from:
<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/education/news/archive/publications/monoweb/debeer~1.htm>

⁴²⁰BOH Christian Doctrine Curriculum. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

⁴²¹BOH Board of Trustees duties and functions. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

socio- cultural assumptions of women in our society.”⁴²² What this may result in is insecurity and feelings like “I cannot fit in anywhere,” or “I cannot be quite who I want to be.” BOHGTE model considers such ‘thinking patterns’ as roadblocks to girls realizing their full potential. This model addresses identity crisis through the authority of the Word of God in our Bible classes which gives teen age girls ‘new identity in Christ’ and assures them of their worth and dignity as a ‘person’ not as a ‘thing’ (Eph. 2:12-13, II Cor. 2:17). “BOH courses in Purity and Conflict resolution have been a great means of dealing with confusions in the lives of our students and finally through counseling and exposing the girls to positive role models and heroes.”⁴²³

g) How does the school oversee and monitor the implementation of "transformation

The final strategy and program designed into the model was specified pathways to monitor and oversee implementation of transformational vision. “It is the cardinal duties of the Board of Trustees headed by the Chairman to monitor the overall education objectives of BOH.”⁴²⁴ This is done at every formal and informal sitting through evaluating, reassessing, and strategizing to ensure the ultimate purpose for its establishment is being fully achieved. Details of the assessment are captured in the assessment and evaluation section below. As a prime responsibility of innovating and supervising the transformational learning agenda at BOH; which is an essential component of the vision of renewing hope of disadvantaged girls, the Board shares

⁴²²Bible Instructor. BOH Central New Matadi. Personal Interview. May 10, 2015.

⁴²³ BOH Instructor/Purity & Health Science Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. June 10, 2015.

⁴²⁴ BOH Board of Trustees duties and functions. Central New Matadi. Monrovia, Liberia

the responsibilities with the Administration of BOH through the Principal and her deputies.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are the key words that undergird the discussion in the final segment of Chapter 6- findings and results. ‘Assessment’ in this context of BOHGTE model, speaks of the procedure used to obtain information about performance while evaluation focuses on decision making about student performance and about appropriate teaching strategies.’⁴²⁵ The assessment of student’ learning at BOH has been an ongoing process with the aim of understanding and improving student’s teaching and learning which is a top priority at BOH. To achieve this goal, the administration set goals and standards for student learning and then began systematically gathering and analyzing evidence to determine how well student performance matches those expectations and standards. The main focus in the assessment of our students’ learning at BOH is to document what learning is taking place coupled with how to use the results of assessment activities to improve student learning.

A. What criteria does the school use in assessment of "success"?

Assessments at BOH are not restricted to a particular method, instead they employ various outlets , including tests, homework, worksheets, classroom questions, standardized tests, and parents' comments, spelling bees, quizzing, completion essays, quizzes. Teachers can use student errors on tests and in class as early warning signals to point out and correct learning problems before they worsen. Student’s motivation and achievement improves when teachers provide prompt feedback. Frequent and

⁴²⁵Anita Woolfolk. Education Philosophy . 9th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 2005. 601,605.

systematic monitoring of students' progress at BOH results in enormous benefits to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses in the BOHGTE model. This has further helped the teachers find out what students already know and what they still need to learn by assessing student work.

Another means of assessing success of the school is through the primary school tests. In order to complete the Primary level at BOH, students generally take two kinds of tests: Classroom tests and Primary School Leaver exams; the former is administered by the School administration, while the latter administered by West African Examination Council. Classroom tests help teachers find out if what they are teaching is being learned thus, these tests serve to evaluate both student and teacher. Primary School Leaver exams apply similar gauges to higher primary level (grade six). By giving primary school leaver exams, both BOH and Ministry of Education can see how students' achievement progresses over time. Such tests also help schools find out how much of the curriculum is actually being learned. Primary School Leaver exams can also reveal problems in the curriculum itself.⁴²⁶

The reference point for any measurable impact by BOHGTE Model is primarily the 'lives of the girls' at Bridge of Hope. This significant measurable impact of the (BOHGTE model) is best understood in the context of its mission and vision which 'place high value on a girl-child by giving her equal access to education like her boy counterpart in a classroom of her own (safe- space).' To actualize this goal, the BOHGTE Model has cultivated an assumption that the ultimate goal for education is to equip the next generation for productive and fulfilling lives. But this

⁴²⁶Ministry of Education. National School Curriculum for Primary School. Ministry of Education. Liberia

will not occur unless relevant learning takes place. BOHGTE model through the administration, parents, national government and community critically measures the impact in the lives of the girls by further examining issues such as traditional grades of students, retention rate, completion of studies, non-academic activities, the lives of alumni following graduation, girls' active church membership and positive Christian faith among other crucial aspects of their lives. "Measuring learning outcomes provides useful information for improving educational planning, management, and teaching. The measurement of learning outcomes starts in classrooms, where teachers formally evaluate students' knowledge and performance."⁴²⁷

B. What is the real "Proof" of transformation" to be discovered in the lives of alumni following graduation?

In order to assess the evidence of transformation in the lives of the alumni, this research captured their testimonies through interviews conducted by the research assistants: "Kebeh Varfley (pseudonym), is an alumnus of BOH who is currently a student at Phebe School of Nursing, Central Liberia. Kebeh completed her primary education at BOH. She narrated her story about the secret that kept her progressing unto college. First, she attributed it to the differences in the learning environments experienced at BOH. Asked what has kept her progressing unto high school and college? Kebeh narrated 'I got a good foundation in Reading, Math, Science and English and Social Studies in my former school (BOH). Additionally I was taught to

⁴²⁷Daniel P. Johnson. Sustaining Change in Schools. How to overcome differences and focus on quality. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 2005. 14-15.

do independent work, discouraged from bribing teachers or trading my body for grades or even cheat on exams.”⁴²⁸

Story of second Alumnae

(Joyce Togba- pseudonym), graduated from Bridge of Hope Girls’ School in 2010, and served as valedictorian for her class. She has been out of BOH for eight years; currently pursuing civil engineering at Stella Polytechnic: She narrated “Bridge of Hope has really been a blessing to me it inspired me morally, mentality, physically and even in my spiritual life.

“It helped me understand that women can do anything and that's what keeping me now. Some challenges I faced as a result of attending BOH is that I only love relating to girls in my school especially when it comes to school work, it help me a lot because I always believed that a woman can make it in society at large and even in my engineering journey were I face challenges that the students in my class feel that people from the slum community don’t know anything and they make me feel inferior but I never give up because I feel that I have girls or my family who are looking up to me.”⁴²⁹

Story of Third Alumnae

Another Alumnae Elizabeth started BOH from grade 2; this was the second school she had ever attended. She narrated her story. “My name is Elizabeth Jones (pseudonym),16, grade 12. ; “I was among the 3rd batch of graduates since the school was founded in 2008. Elizabeth stated, “I loved the school therefore I took my lessons serious.” When she was asked what she has learned at BOH? She answered and said ‘my reading skills have been improved, I can do independent work; my grammar and oral speaking have also improved. The lessons, discipline, learning atmosphere, teachers all have helped to change me over the years. At present I am a

⁴²⁸ Kebeh Varflay (pseudonym). BOH Alumni. Current Student at Phebe School of Nursing Bong County. Personal interview. June 12, 2015.

⁴²⁹Joyce Togba (pseudonym), first graduate of BOH, Stella Maria Polytechnic College. Capitol Hills Monrovia, Liberia. Personal Interview. March 30, 2016.

12th grade student at the Len Miller (Salvation Army School) and I am still determined to complete my high school because of what I learned at BOH. Thank God I have maintained my high marks and keep avoiding boys so as not to be distracted.”⁴³⁰

A. Church membership and positive Christian faith

Student Mary Kollie (pseudonym), 16: “ I started my 2nd grade at the Bridge of Hope Girls’ School in 2010 currently in the 8th grade. What kept me at BOH is the fact that the teachers and everyone here embraced me in spite of my background. I came from a Jehovah Witness background, both of my parents are strong Witnesses; it is against our faith to attend Christian schools or even mingle with others. But I chose BOH; because of one reason; it is an all-girls’ school. I am glad my parents have finally agreed to support my studies. I am glad after 6 years at BOH I am an 8th grade student and have learned many new things like reading well, improving in my mathematic skills, and can relate to others. The first thing is that I have come to know Christ for myself as a result of our morning chapels, purity and Christian doctrine classes. Secondly, I am glad we do not have boys here; it has really helped me to focus on my lessons.”⁴³¹ Bridge of Hope is a mission field for the Hope of Praise Church where active evangelism is taking place among the girls. Most of the girls at BOH form part of the local Church (Hope of Praise) and in various ministries of the church (choir, youth, ushers, evangelism team). Since the establishment eight years ago, Hope of Praise had recruited over one hundred and fifty active members among the students.

⁴³⁰Elizabeth Jones(pseudonym) .BOH Alumni. Personal Interview. Wroto town. Sinkor. Monrovia, Liberia. May 18, 2015.

⁴³¹Maketa Looke (pseudonym) . 8th student BOH. Personal Interview. August 10, 2015.

B. Retention and completion of studies

Retention in the context of this research speaks of creating every available means to keep the girls in school. It is evident that in Liberia as a whole fewer girls than boys actually transition to grade 7 and complete grade 9. The gross enrollment and completion rates drop further for senior high girls. There remains a wide gap in the completion rates of boys and girl.⁴³² The culture of disparity between boys and girls education remains an issue of serious concerns in post war Liberia education sector. This is what necessitated the crafting of BOHTE model and its implementation. “Bridge of Hope has retained and worked tirelessly with girls to complete primary education since 2008 and progress to secondary school; because BOH took proactive measures by providing ‘a gender sensitive atmosphere, incentives like scholarships and other means to minimize the cost for girls’ education for impoverished parents. BOHGTE model has realized that this has helped the girls to escape social perils which will normally entrap most Liberian girls. Economic poverty plays a key role when it comes to coping with direct costs such as tuition fees, cost of textbooks, uniforms, transportation and other expenses. Wherever, especially in families with many children, these costs exceed the income of the family, girls are the first to be denied schooling.”⁴³³

To further substantiate whether girls at BOH are getting better grades and not dropping out or getting pregnant at such an early age, and progressing into secondary schools or college this research examines the records of enrollment and completion since 2008. The impact of transformation at BOH is measured in the student

⁴³²National Policy on Girls Education Revised Edition. Ministry of Education. October 2013.

⁴³³Principal BOH. Personal Interview. Central Matadi. June 21, 2015.

performance during classrooms activities, periodic exams, entry, retention, progression and completion

Table 4 *graduation chart*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Grade 6</i>	<i>Graduated</i>
2008/2009	13	12
2009/2010	26	24
2010/2011	23	21
2011/2012	22	20
2012/2013	22	20
2013/2014	24	23
2014/2015	31	29
<i>Total enrollment</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>149</i>

The highest class level (until BOH formally obtained a Middle School status in 2014) was Primary (Sixth grade). Completion refers in the context to students who have successfully completed Primary division and entered Middle School. Between 2008-2015- BOH enrolled the total of 161 in the sixth grade; 149 students successfully completed. The data above is a proof of positive measurable impact in the areas of completion and transformative learning at Bridge of Hope Girls' School⁴³⁴.

C. What evidence can be presented to verify that the "success" of alumni one year after graduation is directly the result of the learning experiences at BOH?

“My name is Wenneta Paye (pseudonym), age 17, 2008/2009 graduate of the BOH. Presently I am in the 12th grade at the Love International School. “I am proud to be an alumnus of BOH.” It is my desire after my high school education to enter the University of Liberia. I have chosen law as my future career. I am confident I will make it to the University after my graduation because of my preparations at my

⁴³⁴ Official minutes of BOH Formation Meeting. Central New Matadi. Monrovia. October 2005.

former school. Even though it was difficult and restricted us; to limit our contacts with boys; I am glad that I was able to withstand all of the tough disciplines. I am grateful to the administration of BOH for all they have done for me to enable me be in the 12th grade I have had no problem in my new school especially with my lessons, discipline, obeying authority, and remaining focused. I am glad I am not pregnant and not willing to trade my body for grades in this new school.”⁴³⁵ The Principal responded to this question from the research assistant when she asserted: “The success of alumni one year after graduation is directly the result of the learning experiences at BOH; evidenced by the conducive learning environment girls’ friendly curriculum and role model instructors to the girls.”⁴³⁶

“The success which alumni experienced after graduation is the result of a collaborative effort by the school and the girls themselves in direct support of the vision of creating a new identity for Liberian girls and empowering the next generation. In the past eight years, we have had six graduations and award programs with over 100 students graduating from the Primary division to secondary levels. Our present records show that 98% of our girls are still progressing towards completing secondary school and anticipating entering Universities.”⁴³⁷

A parent’s testimony:

Another parent remarks and speaks of how her daughter Marie Sumo could not read and understand her lessons five year ago but can do so now. The parent states, ‘she is reading our Bible lessons during our family devotions and even leading prayer

⁴³⁵ Learning experience . Retrieved from: <http://edglossary.org/learning-experience/>

⁴³⁶ Principal BOH. Personal Interview. June 10, 2015.

⁴³⁷ Registrar. Bridge of Hope Girls’ School. Personal Interview. May 23, 2015.

and settling disputes among her siblings. When we asked her where you get these kinds of skills from she said her Conflict Resolutions Teacher taught them how to handle conflicts and bring about peace.”⁴³⁸

D. To what extent do graduates escape social perils which entrap most Liberian girls after 1 year post-school?

According to statistics gathered from the Registrar of the school ‘95% of BOH students who completed primary education a year ago are not married, pregnant or serving as prostitutes rather they are progressing to secondary school.’⁴³⁹ The Registrar’s statement is a basis for further investigation into social perils entrapping Liberian girls after graduation.

Are there "failures" that must be acknowledged? Have Students fallen out of the program?

Research assistants investigated former students and alumni of BOH:

“Margaret Kollie, I was promoted to grade 9 and left BOH because I was tired of attending all girls' school. I felt restricted because of the limited contacts with boys on campus. In my new school there are boys and girls and I felt so excited to have male friends. When asked why she is not in school and with a child? She narrated in tears I don't want to remind myself of this one foolish mistake I made just in one night; when my new friends introduced me to alcohol. I will escape from my parents at nights to be with my friends on several occasions; at times we slept out of our home with our male friends. I felt sick and when my Mom took me to clinic the nurse said I was pregnant. I am feeling guilty, shame and embarrassed”⁴⁴⁰

Bridge of Hope Girls' School does not have the structures and resources to maintain these girls beyond middle school. Moreover, these limitations have rendered her incapable to keep track of graduates desiring to progress to high school as well as assist students in practical terms to avoid them being entrapped in the vicious circle of

⁴³⁸ Johnson Sumo. Parent. Remarking at Regular PTA Meeting, August 12, 2015. (pseudonym)

⁴³⁹ Analysis of BOH Academic and Registration Records. Central New Matadi Monrovia, Liberia.

⁴⁴⁰Parent. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. June 23, 2015

dropping out of school and getting pregnant. For example: BOH should provide more incentives to harness retentions, progression and completion. These situations present a need for new strategies and research as BOH advances to Middle School.

The story of another student who fell out of the program:

Eunice Morris (not her real name). “When I graduated from BOH my Uncle sent me back to rural Liberia where we had to walk two hours to school. It made me unhappy about learning so I remained at home. My mom felt worried about sending me to school along with the boys so she told me to wait until the government builds school in our town. As a big sister I was also required to baby sit my toddler siblings or do household chores. During these times at home I became friendly with a boy who promised to buy me a new phone but attached a condition. He wanted sex in exchange and since I was in need of a new phone I accepted. We met several times when my parents were away. One day my mother saw that my physical appearance was changing so she took me to village nurse who said I was 3 month pregnant.”⁴⁴¹

The research assistant also captured the exact words of the Vice Principal and in addition to the students who were affected. The Vice Principal asserted “I could not really point out any of BOH graduates who are commercial sex workers or involved in child prostitution except for few of our students who fell prey to negative peer pressure when they left BOH.” He added that;

“If the school had been up to full secondary school, they could help to regulate the girls until they see them out of high school and probably transition to college. I have talked to the Board Chairman about upgrading the school. The moment these children leave the walls of BOH and enroll in other schools they have different school environment; peer pressure and sexual harassment from male students and teachers.”⁴⁴²

“I could not continue school after I left BOH because I am 16 years old and still in third grade. Even though I desire to be a teacher I am feeling as though I will

⁴⁴¹ BOH Alumni. Personal Interview June 12, 2015

⁴⁴² Vice Principal BOH. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. June 16, 2015.

not make it because of my age. I am also thinking my Dad would be tired of paying my registration fees at this point”⁴⁴³

The Vice Principal narrated the stories of these girls falling prey to social perils. He said if these girls had remained under their guardianship until graduation from high school, it would have been helpful for the girls, parents and even BOH. He continues, “During their studies here we taught them the Bible, sex education, life skills training and help them to make meaning of their lives but in other schools they don’t care about the well-being of girls.”⁴⁴⁴ Another student shared his status with the research assistant:

“I did not return to BOH because my Uncle and his wife relocated to a new community. My Uncle could not afford to pay my taxi fare five times a week to school. He wanted me to continue with BOH but he has no alternative but to find me another school.”⁴⁴⁵

How does the leadership assure that vision and values and philosophy are successfully Implemented?

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the development, dissemination, and enforcement of education philosophy of BOHGTE model in accordance with the standing rules of the Board. The philosophy expresses its commitment to ensuring education equality and fostering an environment where all girls have an opportunity to benefit from educational resources. To achieve this, the Board has endeavored to provide equitable access to high-quality and culturally sensitive relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other education resources.

⁴⁴³BOH Alumni. Personal Interview July 20, 2015

⁴⁴⁴ Vice Principal BOH. Personal Interview. Central New Matadi. June 16, 2015.

⁴⁴⁵ BOH Alumni. Personal Interview July 20, 2015

“At the Board level, it is our responsibility to ensure that textbook content is free from prejudice based on gender diversity, and culturally competent administrative, instructional, and support staff are available to successfully implement the education philosophy of BOH. We strive to make the school teachers more gender sensitive as well as integrate gender sensitive pedagogy into every training program of the school”⁴⁴⁶

Summary

This chapter has presented a narrative “case study” report of an all-girls Christian school in the New Matadi informal community of Monrovia. The data which was used to create this case study was gathered (using the procedures set forth in chapter 5) from documentary evidence obtained from the school’s academic records and public documents such as handbooks, as well as from interviews with current students, teachers, administrators, parents, and alumni. The diverse strands of empirical evidence have been integrated to present the above case study report. It should be clear the data presented offers credible evidence for answering the research questions which were articulated at the onset (especially questions 3 and 4). We will now summarize the themes from the findings which offer “answers” to the two research questions.

RQ#3 -What evidence exists to verify that a girls-only environment does create a gender-sensitive learning environment which produces more positive outcomes in a girl’s educational experience?

This issue about single-sex education and mixed school has been a point of contention among the advocates of both persuasions. This research has investigated the BOHGTE model and presented compelling evidence of positive changes single-sex education is producing at Bridge of Hope Girls’ School.

⁴⁴⁶ Marilyn Jones. Co-Founder/BOH USA Board Member. Remarks Board Meeting. October 20, 2011. (Not her actual name)

The first outcome in girl's education experience is that this girls-only environment improved on student outcomes such as test scores, graduation rates, and solutions to behavioral difficulties.⁴⁴⁷ These outcomes are relevant in the lives of the girls at BOH as compiled by this research in the case study report. Secondly, this study had argued that there are persistent gender differences in how boys and girls learn and behave in educational settings, and that such differences merit educating them separately. One version of this argument holds that brains of males and females develop differently.⁴⁴⁸ This research provided evidence of some girls that had challenges in co-ed schools turned out to excel when placed in an all-girls environment. Due to the unique experiences of the Liberian society (post-war experiences and also perception toward the girl-child), it is clear that this approach of an all-girls only school has helped the girls affirm themselves and BOH has become the gateway to success for most of these girls.

The BOHGTTE model references these developmental differences to argue that by separating students according to sex, the educator is able to meet the needs according to the developmental trajectory of the different genders.⁴⁴⁹ Thirdly this model argued that by segregating the genders, students do not become distracted by the other gender's actions in the classrooms, therefore making them pay attention more to class work than their peers.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ BOH Academic Records and Graduation. Central New Matadi, Monrovia, Liberia

⁴⁴⁸Diana Meehan. Learning like a Girl: Educating our Daughters in Schools of their own. New York: Public Affairs. 2007. 214-216.

⁴⁴⁹Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰Rosenberg, Rosalind. "The History Of Coeducation in America". Archived from the original on 22 December 2012. Retrieved 24 October 2012.

Finally this study has argued in favor of a model school that, (in classes that are separated by gender,) male and female students work and learn on the same level as their peers. For instance the stereotypical mentality of the teacher is removed, and girls are likely to have more confidence in the classroom than they would in a co-educational class.⁴⁵¹ Furthermore, at certain ages, students may be more distracted by the opposite sex in a coeducational setting. This distraction may affect how often a student is willing to raise his or her hand in class and urge students to be less focused on the lesson.

RQ#4- What is the evidence that a Christian transformative education (girls-only) model such as that offered at Bridge of Hope can make a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of girls?

Based upon the comprehensive case study of Bridge of Hope compiled in this research, which incorporated data analysis, actual stories of girls and testimonies provided by administration, parents, staff; it is evident that the Christian transformative education (girls-only) model offered at BOH has made a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of the girls. The school criteria to access and evaluate success of girls has been through traditional and non- traditional methods tests, quizzes, sports, music, spelling bees.

The research had provided substantial evidence to support the claim of transformation in the lives of alumni by tracking the lives of girls a year or more after graduation and to ascertain if they are still progressing into secondary school or college and are not pregnant or become transactional sex workers. The positive differences in the lives of the girls at BOH have been recognized through the girls' positive attitudes towards church membership or positive faith has been documented

⁴⁵¹Ibid

by the study. The retention and completion rate has been high among the students, evident by the huge statistics provided in the research document. The track records of alumni indicated that girls are still progressing into secondary school and colleges in spite of few girls succumbing to peer pressure in a co-education setting after graduating from BOH. There strains of empirical evidence indicate that there is a significant (measurable) positive difference in the lives of girls at BOH. The lives of the girls have been impacted holistically as evidenced by testimonies from the students, parents and administration of BOH. What this paper is concluding is that the Christian transformative education (girls-only) model offered at Bridge of Hope has made a significant positive difference in the lives of girls

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The final chapter highlights the major themes revealed as result of the interviews and data analyses. I summarize and discuss the findings from our qualitative empirical research which used a “case study” methodology supported through interdisciplinary research. We consider implications for ministry and offer recommendations rooted in Bible’s worldview and conclusions.

Summary of Major Themes Revealed By This Project

A. Environment aids student learning outcomes

The strands of evidence provided throughout this research have revealed that a ‘safe environment’ (otherwise known as safe-space) is one of the major overarching themes. Accordingly, a ‘safe environment’ is a major contributing factor that enhances girls’ learning outcomes. A safe environment at BOH seem to help students’ outcomes on test scores, retention, progression and completion rates, and provided solutions to behavioral difficulties as evidenced by some testimonies gathered concerning the BOHGTE model. In the wake of this evidence gathered by the research, we are strongly supporting the premise that a single sex school can be helpful, especially for certain outcomes related to academic achievement and more positive academic aspirations. A

safe environment is likely to make girls feel less pressure as they mature and develop as well as improving in peer interaction. Furthermore this research has recognized from evidence gathered that a safe-environment at BOH provides positive same-gender role models as well as more opportunities to pursue academic and co-curricular endeavors without gender stereotypes. The emphasis here is providing ‘*an enabling environment*’ in every sphere of our society for girls and women to maximize their full potential given by God.

B. Christian worldview and ethical foundation of BOH model

The impact of BOHGTE model is rooted in the second major theme, “Christian worldview and the ethical foundation,” which surfaced in the comprehensive case study (Ch. 6). The culture of disparity reflected in the socio-economic, cultural – traditional, and education systems of Liberia (evidenced by the high rate of illiteracy and poverty among young girls and women) was a just reason for men and women who emulate Christ’s example to move with passion to provide an alternative school (safe-space) for these disadvantaged girls. The Christian worldview and the ethical foundation permeated the personal motivation of founding of BOH, mission and vision as reflected in the education philosophy, core values, staff and teacher recruitment, admission policy, curriculum, disciplinary procedures. BOHGTE model supports the argument that there is a theological and biblical reason for the Church of Liberia to champion the cause of girls’ education. In other word, the “girls-only” model is a necessary approach in view of a culture that perpetuates discrimination of girls in the society. While it is true that this theological work did not explicitly validate “girls-only” education, it does support a bold intervention to rescue girls from oppression and poverty. When prejudice and bias are meted against young girls and women in a male-dominated society and the church does not take a definitive stand to

rescue the marginalized group, it sends negative signals that God is prejudiced and biased. Moreover, the Church goes against its own teaching – for not giving justice to oppressed and giving hope to the hopeless (Isa. 1:17, Ps. 82:3). It is only by the church staying true to its Christian biblical worldview and its God-given mandate that would inspire change of attitudes and ideas that a new society and a new community can be established. This society should be able to reflect the just social shape wherein human dignity will be respected and honored.

In addition, when the institution's core values and pedagogy are shaped by the Christian worldview, the wholistic transformation in the lives of the girls is significantly enhanced. Teachers are more effective in providing transformational education when they are persons committed to the Christian ethic. Such Christian teachers will not accept bribes or exploit girl students; they will assign grades in a just manner. A Christian teacher will never be verbally abusive or violent in punishing a student. These qualities are known to be integrally related to superior performance. In addition, the Christian value system empowers teachers to demonstrate respect for each individual girl, to be kind and encouraging rather than abusive. It is a well known fact that when a student experiences genuine personal care and concern, that a student is much more likely to excel academically.

C. Organizational systems

The third theme that contributed to the success story at BOH was 'effective organizational systems' which stand out as one of the overarching themes captured in the case study narrative. As reflected in the comprehensive case study (Chapter 6), the explicit organizational systems have positively contributed to charting a clear

course, establishing high expectations, as well as accessing and enhancing quality of learning for girls at BOH.

Additionally, the organizational structure has helped to clearly establish the major issue of ownership and governance as well as compliance with government regulations and the Ministry of education's legal requirements. To further enhance quality learning, the founding fathers and mothers clearly articulated in the organizational structure the original passion and vision as well as the education philosophy of BOH. The quality of administrative and instructional staff hired at BOH for the past eight years to oversee learning activities was an indication of the Board of Trustees commitment to create clear pathways in accessing, enhancing and sustaining learning at BOH. Finally, the financial framework and sustainability programs reflected in the organizational systems at BOH have contributed to the success stories as well as revealed the Board's ultimate desire to effectively guide the girls into lifelong learning.

D. Gender differences in how boys and girls learn and behave in educational setting

The fourth major theme emerging from this research was recognized in the differences between the ways boys and girls learn and behave in educational settings. This was one of our motivating factors that led to the advocating of separate classrooms or separate institutions for the girls. The second reason for the advocacy is based on the premise that there are natural differences in how males and females learn. Even though it remains a major debate among both persuasions, advocates for single-sex school make an argument based on research into different brain functions.

⁴⁵² Proponents of co-ed classrooms describe such concept of physiological distinction as a myth. Caryl Rivers, a Journalist and Trustee at Boston University asserted:

“I do think that in the ’50s, the days of the Seven Sisters colleges, when all-male colleges paid really short shrift to girls, these women’s colleges were the only ones saying girls can succeed. But there’s really no difference between single sex education and coeducation. When you look at the data, aside from those studies that are either anecdotal or use really small sample sizes, you just can’t say that single sex is better. You might think that girls would do better without the distraction of boys, but in fact, studies show that in all-girl classrooms in science and math, girls don’t learn to argue the way boys do, so they may be losing out.”⁴⁵³

But on the other hand proponents of single-sex education recently argued based on research on human brain physiology and behavior the opposite; that boys and girls develop and learn in different ways, and separation is beneficial for both sexes. Sometimes equality is not necessarily achieved through identical treatment, but from giving people the best opportunity to succeed given individual circumstances. What may work for one group, may not for another.⁴⁵⁴ Furthermore, recent neuroscience data indicates that boys and girls are different. Boys’ brains are larger, but girls’ brains grow faster and typically their interests and learning styles vary.

This research with the strands of evidence gathered from the testimonies of girls at BOH supports the concept that girls learn differently from boys, most especially when provided separate classrooms of their own (safe-space). This research has also presented clear cut arguments throughout for separate classrooms of their own to enhance their learning. Our argument is supported with the premise that

⁴⁵²Anfara, V.A., & Mertens, S.B. What research says: Do single-sex classes and schools make a difference? *Middle School Journal*, 40, 52-59. 2008.

⁴⁵³A. Datnow and L. Hubbard (eds.), *Gender in policy and practice: Perspectives on single-sex and coeducational schooling* (pp. 227–242). New York: Routledge and Falmer. Gross-Loh, C. (2014).

⁴⁵⁴ Gurian, M, Stevens, K, & Daniels, P. *Successful single-sex classrooms: a practical guide to teaching boys & girls separately*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 2009

single-sex education enhances student success when teachers are trained and use techniques geared toward the gender of their students. As defined by this research, girls are different from boys or face special circumstances. In providing relevant education for a girl-child her gender, temperament, abilities and disabilities and intelligence should be critically considered. Additionally, a keen consideration should be given to her family upbringing, socioeconomic status, culture and stereotypes all of which BOHGTE model had endeavored to consider in this research.

E. Emphasis on staff development -qualified teachers and ongoing training

Staff development has been a major priority at BOH as the leadership has trained staff to adequately respond to transformational education being imparted to underprivileged girls at BOH. ‘Transformation strategies’ captured in the comprehensive case study became the sixth theme emerging from this research. As was provided by BOHGTE model, teachers and administrators at BOH had been ‘consistently exposed’ to diverse training opportunities ranging from specialized gender education, administrative strategies and teacher education to enable them impact transformation education as well as being transformation influencers.

Findings from the case study based research indicate teachers played vital role in transformation agenda of the girls; hence the Board of Trustees has endeavored to provide teachers and others in the system with the necessary support and training to make an impact and succeed. These effective strategies such as, teacher trainings, biblical content in the training, deliberate exposure to positive role models and heroes, the concept of pedagogy, are put into place to engender transformational education for the girls.

F. Distractions in co-education

The seven theme that surfaced in this study was the issue of ‘distractions in co-ed school.’ Safe-space has the potential to change the lives of the learners. This dissertation has argued that a gender sensitive environment is an essential tool to enhance quality of learning for girls. The issue of gender sensitive environment was addressed in the Third Research Question: RQ#3 -What evidence exists to verify that co-education or girls-only environments do create gender sensitive learning environment? In addressing the interview question: RQ#3a: what did you hate about co-education? The issue of distractions emerged as a major theme. Distractions by the opposite sex were consistently mentioned by girls who enrolled at co-ed school prior to BOH. Our first respondent admitted in simple words ‘daily distractions from boys.’ This distraction may present itself in many forms e.g. student may be less focused, shy and withdrawn. The third respondent to this question asserted “these boys troubled us too much for sex and therefore causing us not pay attention to our learning.” The BOHGTE model is arguing here that by segregating the genders, students do not become distracted by the other gender's actions in the classrooms, therefore making them pay attention more to class than their peers.

One of the effective means to sensitize, mobilize, and assure parents and community members to send a girl-child to school is creating a ‘gender sensitive learning environment.’ A gender sensitive learning environment has enormous benefits for boys and girls, as well as promoting gender safety, equity, and equality. The school is the environment in which students learn about their gender identity, the relationships between girls and boys, boys and boys, and girls and girls. Identity formation is a process of learning ‘who am I in relation to the others’, and we cannot

deny the fact that the school plays an important role in this process.⁴⁵⁵ The issue of nurturing a positive gender identity is closely connected to gender equality and safety in schools and learning institutions. Literature gathered on government-sponsored education in post-conflict societies revealed that at the learning institution level, “gender-based violence has been one of the most striking manifestations of gender inequality. Such inequality ranges from verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or harassment by educators, other learning institution staff, or learners.”⁴⁵⁶ We further argue that a school that is friendly towards girls could be an essential gateway to entry, retention, and progression of girls, as well as reinforcing the community and parents’ confidence to enroll their girl child. This research has also gathered data to support the arguments that providing education incentives could motivate girls into school and lower the barriers to their retention and progression through the education system. But more than what goes on in the classroom is also critical. Education planners, stakeholders, NGOs in Liberia need to ensure that girls find a supportive environment (safe-space) that expands girls’ thinking and challenges the biases that restrict ambition. It is with this evidence that we have consistently argued that co-education does not establish and maintain this ‘gender sensitive learning environment’ conducive for providing quality education for girls. Consequently, the conditions in co-educational settings are unhelpful and eventually slow down the progress and completion of the girls’ education. Thus the need for an alternative school is an imperative.⁴⁵⁷ In the mind of many, a school is a place of learning, reading, writing, and arithmetic. But the school is also a learning institution with much broader duties,

⁴⁵⁵ “Coeducation.” (n.d.): Funk & Wagnall’s New World Encyclopedia. Web. 23 October 2012

⁴⁵⁶National Policy on Girls’ Education. Revised edition. Ministry of Education. October 2013.

⁴⁵⁷“Coeducation.” (n.d.): Funk & Wagnall’s New World Encyclopedia. Web. 23 October 2012

which go beyond the sphere of basic subject-matter learning.⁴⁵⁸ The research sees the role of the school as an “environment in which young people learn about social relationships, about norms, values, and the ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts.’”⁴⁵⁹

G. In classes that are separated by gender, male and female students work and learn on the same level as their peers.

This research has argued from the strands of data provided that single-sex education can broaden the education prospects for both girls and boys. This view is opposed by critics who claimed single-sex education is ineffective and/ or undesirable. These critics asserted that “few educators are formally trained to use gender-specific teaching techniques. However, it’s no secret that experienced teachers usually understand gender differences and are adept at accommodating a variety of learning styles within their mixed-gender classrooms.”⁴⁶⁰ Moreover, critics of single-sex classrooms continued to argue the lack of concrete evidence that single-sex classrooms boost achievement. One critic stated:

“The evidence wasn’t very good then [the ’90s] for a gap between the genders’ learning styles so significant that it would mandate separate instruction, and it hasn’t gotten any better.”⁴⁶¹

This research argues, on the contrary, that compared to co-education classes, single-sex education improves learning and performance by allowing a better match for teaching and learning. For girls, for example, single-sex education

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ [Kristin Stanberry](http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/single-sex-education-the-pros-and-cons). Single-sex education: the pros and cons. Retrieved from: <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/single-sex-education-the-pros-and-cons>.

⁴⁶⁰ [Kristin Stanberry](http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/single-sex-education-the-pros-and-cons). Single-sex education: the pros and cons. Retrieved from: <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/single-sex-education-the-pros-and-cons>.

⁴⁶¹ Margaret Talbot. Case Against Single- Gender Classroom. Retrieved from: <https://articles.niche.com/pros-and-cons-of-single-sex-education/>

is viewed as a way to enable them to do better in math and science, opening up careers where females are underrepresented. That is, as with other forms of homogenous grouping, separate classes for girls and boys are seen as enabling teaching and learning and reducing achievement gaps.⁴⁶²

Secondly they make the case that students in single-sex classrooms will one day live and work side-by-side with members of the opposite sex. Educating students in single-sex schools limits their opportunity to work cooperatively and co-exist successfully with members of the opposite sex. This research argues that one key reason they need to be separated by gender is that co-ed schools tend to reinforce gender stereotypes, while single-sex schools can break down gender stereotypes. For example, girls are free of the pressure to compete with boys in traditionally male-dominated subjects such as math and science. Boys, on the other hand, can more easily pursue traditionally “feminine” interests such as music and poetry.⁴⁶³

A mother of one of BOH students, whose daughter has attended the school for the past three years, shared her experience during the PTA meeting: “I feel that the single gender environment has given my daughter a level of confidence and informed interest in math and science that she may not have had otherwise.”⁴⁶⁴ Girls should have the freedom to access learning without being stereotyped by what the larger society: “...whenever girls and boys are together, their behavior inevitably reflects

⁴⁶² Information Resource. Single Sex Pro and Con. Retrieved from: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/singleeduc.pdf>

⁴⁶³ A. Datnow and L. Hubbard (eds.), *Gender in policy and practice: Perspectives on single-sex and coeducational schooling* (pp. 227–242). New York: Routledge and Falmer. Gross-Loh, C. (2014).

⁴⁶⁴ Sarah Gayflor. Parent BOH Student. Making remarks during PTA meeting. June 12, 2015.

the larger society in which they live.”⁴⁶⁵ The fact remains that there are relatively few single-sex schools in post –conflict Liberia. In our nation’s education system, where they do exist, they are offered as an option rather than a requirement. This research is advocating single sex school based upon the present socio-cultural situations of the girls in Liberia. The high incidence of poverty, discrimination, and gender disparity for women and girls in Liberian society continues to be a major factor that has a negative impact on the girl child’s attempt to access and benefit from education opportunities in Liberia. Many impoverished families deny a girl child the opportunities to obtain education in favor of the boy child.⁴⁶⁶

H. Relevant curriculum for girls (emphasizing implicit and explicit contents)

The final theme emerging from this research is the relevance of the curriculum being implemented at BOH. Curriculum here speaks of implicit and explicit contents as well as any other educational tool that is useful to impact girls’ learning at BOH. Drawing on the actual stories of transformation from the girls, this research recognized that learning at BOH takes place through variety of means, thus making the curriculum flexible and relevant for the girls in difficult situations. Whatever the curriculum seeks to achieve at BOH, its ultimate goal has been to promote a learning environment that eliminates all barriers that impede girls’ access to learning. While it is true that the national government requires for all schools in Liberia to use the approved curriculum, BOH goes further to include supplemental courses that are relevant and address girls’ needs as well as enhance transformation in post war

⁴⁶⁵ Kristin Stanberry. Single-sex education: the pros and cons. Retrieved from: <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/single-sex-education-the-pros-and-cons>.

⁴⁶⁶ Ministry of Education. National Policy on Girls’ Education. Social Economic and Cultural Context. Monrovia, Liberia., 9-10

Liberia. The curriculum also recognized that assessment and evaluation at BOH is not restricted to the traditional methods of tests, quizzes, exams. Rather it takes into consideration a barrage of issues affecting the girl-child's education as well as the inherent BOH education philosophy which seeks to impact quality Christian education for these marginalized girls.

Implication of Findings

This qualitative empirical research using a "case study" methodology validated through interdisciplinary research presents the evidence derived from empirical research that the all-girls educational model being implemented at Bridge of Hope Girls' School actually produced significant identifiable changes in girls. In this section, the research examined the implications of the findings of this study. The basic question being answered is what do these findings mean in today's reality?

The implications for the Church, national government, and major stakeholders are that there remains a huge task to be done in order to enhance the well-being of girls and women in post- conflict Liberia. As it is now, there remains a continual, high rate of illiteracy among girls and women, and high disparity between boys and girl enrollment, low retention among girls in our society, and outright discrimination meted against women and girls in Liberian culture.

Recommendations

Having gathered sufficient data on girls' education, as well as providing substantial evidence of transformational education currently at BOH, and having supplied empirical evidence in support of the above themes, this research is therefore making these recommendations to the national government, major stakeholders,

implementing partners and the church. The researcher is certain that with the actual implementation of the transformational education model, (BOHGTE model) which has been demonstrated empirically to bring great changes in the life of a girl-child at Bridge of Hope, that we can change the social narratives of disfranchised girls in post war Liberia.

- In order to reduce this unbalanced ratio of boys' to girls' participating in formal education in Liberia, this research is recommending that the government, NGOs, churches and other stakeholders establish more community girls' primary schools in remote rural areas and informal settings of our war-torn country, emulating the BOHGTE model.
- We passionately recommend that the transformational approach to girls' education based on the BOHGTE model for an all-girls school be considered as a 'relevant method' of doing girls' education in a post conflict situation. It does not provide "quick fix" solutions. Rather it has added *new dynamism* in doing girls and women's education in Liberia.
- The limited numbers of exclusive schools in Liberia point out to the fact that the national government has not embraced the concept of creating an enabling environment for girls' and women's education. This has impeded the actual growth and development of girls' and women's education in our nation. This research is therefore recommending that the current impact made by the BOHGTE model as documented in this research be shared with major donors, partners, and NGOs with an aim of encouraging them to embrace the BOHGTE model so that donors will accept the value of providing grant for funding of 15 new Bridge of Hope girls' schools. This research further recommends that the government, major state actors, partners, and the church vigorously move to eliminate gender disparities in primary school by ensuring a girl-child full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- This research therefore recommends that the both legislative houses (Representative and Senate) do not confirm 'transactional leaders' as

recommended by the government that are bent on perpetuating the unfavorable conditions impeding the growth of girls' education. We urge the national government to bring on board "transformational" leaders that will embrace and implement the BOHGTE model that fully actualizes the government's national revised policy on girls' education.

- This research further recommends that the national government should increase budgetary allocations in the national budget so as to enable Ministry of Education to give subsidy to private schools that are actually implementing government national policy on girls' and women's education as well as establish more gender-exclusive schools emulating the BOHGTE model.
- This research recommends that the Ministry of Education should include in the curriculum subjects such as gender equality, domestic violence prevention, conflict resolutions in schools and universities, as well as propose effective ways or create a clear path ways to deal with the problem.
- This research recommends Christians should firmly unite in spite of being in different denominations in championing the cause of justice for girls and in promoting the BOHGTE model within the 15 sub political divisions of Liberia which they could sponsor. Churches ought also to unite as well to create training institutes for preparing teachers (especially female teachers) for this philosophy of education.
- Finally this research is proposing the formation of an association that will be responsible for the promotion of "all girls' schools" in post war Liberia as a means to enhance girls' and women's education (National Association for the Promotion of Girls' Education- NAPGE).

Recommendation for Further Research

The research is cognizant of the prevailing situations. The evolution of the transformational approach is on-going and open for further investigations. Having researched the Bridge of Hope Girls' School using a "case study" methodology and presented the evidence derived from empirical research and validated through interdisciplinary research that the all-girls educational model being implemented is actually producing significant identifiable changes in girls, there is a need to do

further study in other areas. A comparative study could be done on the experiences of students in co-education schools and that of single sex schools. An in- depth research could be conducted on measuring public perception on single-sex education in African society. It will be interesting to know the outcome of such studies.

Conclusion

This research study has revealed the slow growth and development of girls' education in post-conflict Liberia, evidenced by the government's underfunding of girls' education which has a visible profile of a limited number of girls' schools throughout the nation. This limitation has resulted in an unbalanced ratio or huge disparity between boys to girls in education. This research has also unveiled some hindrances to girl-child education and advancement. Traditional cultural beliefs and practices, such as initiation rites, early and forced marriages, boys' preference, child labor or prostitution are consistent hurdles placed in the path way of girl-child seeking education and advancement. The BOHGTE model as an alternative to girls' education in post conflict Liberia has correlated with the education philosophy of Liberia, which is to guide the provision of education for all Liberians so that they are able to pursue knowledge and skills, manifest excellence in performance and moral uprightness, defend democratic ideals, and accept and value other persons on the basis of their personal worth and dignity, irrespective of gender, religion, ethnic, origin, or any other discriminatory characteristics.

BOHGTE model has been introduced with strong empirical evidence from the current transformational education offered at BOH. This new paradigm when embraced can minimize high cultural disparity between boys to girls in education, increase entry and retention, progression and completion of girls as well as help the girl-child discover meaning to life, promote self-confidence and self-esteem. It is a

glaring fact that women are vital in the education and eventual socialization of their child, hence when we educate a girl-child we are educating a nation and shutting the door to poverty, disease, harmful traditional practices and high rate of illiteracy. In conclusion this passionate appeal for educating the girl child in post-conflict Liberia we deeply treasured the precious words of the former UN Secretary Kofi Annan “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”⁴⁶⁷ This concept has been one of the driving forces in championing the cause of girls’ education in post war Liberia.

⁴⁶⁷<https://www.kancyl.com/quote/1938/knowledge-is-power-information-is-liberating-education-is-the-premise-of-progress-in-every-society-in>

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide- Open ended questionnaires

Introduction: There were seven categories of informants selected for this open ended interview process because of their direct or indirect involvements with the School.

- I. **Founders, Co-Founders and Board members**, - this category of informants are responsible to formulate policies that govern the institution as well as oversee fund raising and legal matters of the schools.

How does the school oversee and monitor the implementation of "transformation?"

How does the leadership assure that vision and values and philosophy are successfully Implemented?

- I. **Administration and Staff** – this group of informant were selected because they supervise the staff and system and help to implement the actual learning process, ensure discipline and as well as conducive atmosphere for learning.

1. How many girls have been educated at Bridge of Hope?
2. How many have begun the process vs. how many have graduated? How does this impact retention rate compare with government schools?
3. What are the background stories of the "typical" BOH school girls?
4. What is the "normal" progression for girls from this background? (Any evidence to prove?)
5. How do girls at BOH score at the end of education on national exams?
6. Are there stories of personal transformation? Can you point out some girls who have substantially changed? Are there "failures" that must be acknowledged?
8. How many BOH grads are commercial sex workers?

9. Are you aware of any girls who dropped out that turned into transactional sex workers?

11. What factors are responsible for the drop out?

12. How many girls are successfully progressing into secondary schools and have the position to enter college?

13. What different careers have they chosen apart from feminine careers?

15. To what extent do graduates escape social perils which (statistically) entrap most Liberian girls after 1 year post-school?

16. What criteria does the school use in assessment of "success"?

II. **Alumni-** this group of informants is responsible to assist the researcher with assessments and evaluations. The impact of transformation after graduation is carefully evaluated among the alumni.

1. What do girls testify to as they graduate? What are their own stories of change?

2. What impact do you see in the lives of the girls regarding national girls' policy?

1. In what ways did your learning experiences at BOH impact your life before you attended co- ed school? Please give an example.

2. In future would you send your girl-child to a mixed school? What reasons can you give for this?

3. What evidence can be presented to verify that the "success" of alumni one year after graduation is directly the result of the learning experiences at BOH?

4. What is the real "Proof" of transformation" to be discovered in the lives of alumni following graduation?

I. **Students** – bear the responsibility to be present to learn hence they were selected to find out if effective learning is taking place in accordance with the model proposed.

1. Would you share one spiritual experience that you went through as a result of your learning at BOH?

2. Can you talk to me a little bit more about your experiences in a co-ed institution?

3. What did you like about it?.

4. What did you hate about it?

5. What influenced you in the choice for attending all-girls school?

II. **Parents** – this group of informants were selected for the purpose of assessment and evaluation from beyond the classrooms.

1. What do parents testify to as far as change? Success? Impact?
2. Is there any factor you might have known or experience that is hindering the girl-child or boy from entry and completion?
3. What will influence any parent's decision to either educate the boy or girl-child?

III. Major Stakeholders

1. What would you say is the level of awareness on girls' education in our nation?
2. What impact do you see in the lives of the girls with regards to the government crafted policy on girls' education and the international organizations role with girls' education?
3. Has this in any way contributed to the way people think about girls' education in our nation?
4. What can you say are the concrete changes in girls' education since this Government led by the First Female President of Africa?
6. What impact does this have on the girls at BOH?
7. Are there any reasons why girls or boys education would delay?

Appendix B: *Personnel Listing & Staff Credentials at BOH excluding support staff.*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Courses</i>	<i>Experience</i>
Co-Founder	BBA/ Management	Purity/Conf.Res. H/econo.	4-8 - 15 yrs.
S. K. Feyan	BSc History	Social Studies	6-8 - 20 yrs
Emmanuel Kuan	“AA” Teach. Ed.	Bible, Phonics	4-8 - 10 yrs
Cecelia Forlay	“C” Teach. Cert.	Self-contained	3 - 8 yrs
Sivili D.Kuvor	“C” Teach. Cert.	Language Arts	4-6 - 10 yrs.

T. K. Alberto	Senior/University	Language Arts	6-8 - 12 yrs.
Law. Hehdeh	BSc. Bio/Chem.	General Science/Math	6-8 - 10 yrs.
Elenora Wiberty	“AA” Teacher Ed.	Social Studies	4-6 - 12 yrs
Sienah Pokpah	Senior /University	Language Arts/S/ Studies	5-8 - 9 yrs.
Dixtus Wrehyahn	“C” Teach. Cert.	Self- contained	4 11 yrs.
Georgette Kolleya	“C” Teach. Cert.	Self – contained	1 10 yrs.
Pauline Hehdeh	BSc. Bio/Chem.	General Science/Math	6-8 8 yrs.
Andrew Wiggs	Diploma/IT	Computer Education	4-8 6 yrs.
Prof. Walonge	Diploma French St.	French	4-8 12yrs.
Evone T.Jones	Soph./University	Teacher Aid	1-3 6 yrs.
Alicia T. Harbah	Junior /University	Health Science	4-6 3 yrs.
Lawrence Wollie	Certificate/Statistics	Librarian	20yrs.
B. D. Kopor	“C” Cert. Tec/Ed.	Self –contained	KG 8 yrs.
S. C. Kahn	Jr St./University	Agriculture	4-8 8 yrs.

Note: These are not the actual names (PSEUDOYMNS) of the staff and administration

Appendix C- Board B- of Trustees –Monrovia/ Liberia - officials and credentials

Name	Position	Qualification
Researcher	Visionary/Chairman	BA/Bib St./MA Hist.St
Peter Kokiror	Co- Chairman	MD/JFK Hospital
Marie McCauley	Secretary	BA/Theology/MS Ed.
Matheline E. Kaysah	Treasurer	BBA/Accountant
Esther Barnes	Member	BA Theology/Pastor
Hawa Telwah	Member	MA Missions /Adm.
Co-Founder	Member	BBA Management
Wiede Sisseh	Member	BRE/Educator/Pastor
Johnson K. Tom	Member	MSEd/Professor

Note. These are not the actual names (PSEUDOYMNS) of the Board members

Appendix D- Board of Advisors / Ohio /USA

Name	Position	Qualification
Steve Steiner	Chairman	Businessman

Hank Rossiter	Co- Chairman	Registered Nurse
Marilyn Jones	Secretary	MDiv. Theology

Note: These are not the actual names (PSEDUOYMNS) of the Advisory Board members

Appendix E- Administrative Structure

Name	Position	Qualification
Co-Founder	Principal	BBA/Management
Sarah Browne	Vice Principal	BSc/History/
Emmanuel Kuan	Registrar	AA Teacher's Ed.
Cecelia Forlay	Cashier	Sr. Student/Teacher Ed
Alicia Harbah	Accountant	Jr. Student/College
Cecelia Norman	Dean of Girls	BSc. Biology/3 rd Yr. Medical College

Note: these are not the actual names (PSEUDLYMNS) of Administrative staff

Appendix F- Sample of 2013/2014 Graduates:

Name of students	Age @grad.	Year grad.	Present class
Maketa Kooke	12	2013/14	9 th grade
Princes Kuncan	13	2013/14	9 th grade
Agartha Mollie	14	2013/14	9 th grade
Marie Wollie	13	2013/14	9 th grade
Jereline Hulleh	13	2013/14	9 th grade
Mazoe Namon	13	2013/14	9 th grade
LiattaMassaquoio	13	2013/14	9 th grade
Mary Mulbah	14	2013/14	9 th grade
Ruth Kukalah	13	2013/14	9 th grade
Josephine Tambolah	15	2013/14	9 th grade
Engenia M. Smith	15	2013/14	9 th grade
Getrude Vamba	13	2013/14	9 th grade
Jestina Farfley	13	2013/14	9 th grade

95% of BOH students who finished primary school a year ago are not married, pregnant or serving as prostitutes but have progressed to secondary school (These are not their actual names PSEUDOYMNS)

Appendix G – Map of Africa –locating Liberia



Appendix H – BOH Students



Appendix I : Letter of approval to conduct research



Africa International University

P.O BOX 24686, 00502,

Karen, Nairobi – Kenya

Tel: +254-020-2603663 or 0715 247 540

April 29, 2014

To Whom It May Concern

Greetings,

We are pleased to introduce Jackson G. Weah, ID# 02024, Third Year student of the Africa International University, Doctor of Ministry Program who has fulfilled all the Course requirements including his Proposal Defense and Comprehensive Examination.

He has been admitted to *Candidacy for Doctor of Ministry degree*. His approved dissertation proposal is on file with DVCAA office. Meanwhile his "pass" grade for DMIN Comprehensive examination is in his academic file at Registry.

Jackson is currently gathering data and working toward the completion of his Dissertation (Topic: “*An Investigative Study of Bridge of Hope Girls’ School Education Model in Post-Conflict Liberia: A Case study of an All –Girls school in an Informal Setting in the City of Monrovia*”). Please grant him all the assistance he needs when he meets with you or your institution to gather data for girls’ education in post conflict Liberia.

Thanks for helping him in this long journey of trying to change the social narratives of the girls in your community.

May the Spirit strengthen you for this big challenge.

George Renner PhD
Director/Program /AIU

Appendix J- Bridge of Hope Girls' School Building



APPENDIX K- Seal of Bridge of Hope Girls' School



Curriculum Vita

Name : Jackson Garpu Weah
 Date of Birth: November 12, 1961
 Place of Birth: Youkorway, Kparblee District , Nimba County
 Gender: Male
 Marital Status: Married (four girls)
 Church Affiliation: Hope Renewal Ministries Inc.
 (Interdominational)
 Nationality: Liberian

Educational Background

African International University:	D.Min. Candidate	
NEGST:	Master of Arts (MACH)	2002-2004
IBB:	Candidate Master Political Sc.	1998-2002
African Bible College	BA/Biblical Studies (Honors	1984-1988
Dolo Memorial High School	High School Certificate (WAEC)	1978-1980
Assembly of God Jr., High	Certificate Junior High	1976-1977
ENI Mission:	Certificate Primary Education	1971-1975

Professional Experience

Professor/Mentor present	Foundation University	2013-
General Overseer present	Hope Renewal Ministries Inc.	2006-
Executive Director present	Bridge of Hope Girls	2008-
National Overseer present	Kingdom Covenant Min. Int'l.	2005-
Professor	Bryant School of Theology	2007-2009
Academic Vice President	Monrovia Bible College	2007-2009
President/Professor	Liberia Christian College	1998-2002
Director	ACFI Training Ministry	1996-1998
National Director	PARACOM (Counseling Inst.)	1996-1997
National Director	National Gospel Outreach	1997-2002
Registrar/Instructor	Liberty Theological Seminary	1995-1997
Principal/Teacher	Bishop Marwieh Institute	1992-1994

Publication

Publications in journal "Is there hope for a new Liberia?"	NEGST Magazine	2003-2004
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Book

"Rewriting Your Story"	Nairobi Kenya	2013
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Contact: jgweah@gmail.com
 +231 777-210-385 or 880-739998