Particularizing Universal Education in Postcolonial Sierra Leone

Grace Pai
New York University

This paper presents a vertical case study of the history of universalizing education in postcolonial Sierra Leone from the early 1950s to 1990 to highlight how there has never been a universal conception of universal education. In order to unite a nation behind a universal ideal of schooling, education needed to be adapted to different subpopulations, as the Bunumbu Project did for rural Sierra Leoneans in the 1970s to 1980s. While the idea of "localizing" education was sound, early program success was undermined by a lack of clarity behind terms like "rural" or "community." This was exacerbated by a change in the scope of the project beyond its original objectives. Only by well defining the specific constituents of a target group and fulfilling their precise needs can myriad small-scale programs ultimately aggregate to meet the diverse demands and desires of society writ large.

Many contemporary reports and articles wrongfully attribute the birth of the notion of "Education for All" to the Jomtien World Conference in 1990 (World Bank, 2007; Nishimuko, 2007), when in fact, free, compulsory education was argued for as early as 1948 in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1949). Through a historical analysis of education in Sierra Leone from the years leading up to independence in 1961 to the years prior to the civil war in 1991, this paper rectifies that temporal inaccuracy, and revisits past efforts so as to better inform current debates and policies on universal education.

Specifically, this study examines the following questions: *Who wanted universal education, for what purposes and to what effects? Why was universal education not achieved after decades of pursuing such a goal?*

Government documents, organizational reports, newspaper articles, dissertations, journal articles, and oral interviews will be used to "portray the complex interplay of different social forces" (Arnove, 2003, p. 13) that underlie the concept of universalizing education. The article begins with a description of education in Sierra Leone in the 1960s and 1970s as illustrated by policies and reports created by international agencies and the Ministry of Education. This history from "above" is then paired with a history from "below" by shifting the focus to a rural education program called the Bunumbu Project. In this fashion, a micro project is placed in the context of the macro influences of "development" to form a vertical case study of one country's efforts to expand education after independence (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006). The main argument of this paper is that a concept of mass schooling founded on equality increasingly needed to entail a discriminatory method of local adaptation to reach universality. In the case of postcolonial Sierra Leone, it was rural communities to which education policies had to adapt. However, words like "rural" and "local" were often assumed to have one *absolute* meaning, even though their usage refers to entirely different localities and target populations that are actually *relative* in nature. Hence, the goal of attaining universal education should not only be reframed as a myriad of "localized" "community" projects, but to maximize effectiveness, such attempts must also be specific in defining precisely which "local" actors in what "rural" areas are to be the intended targets of a given project.

Education in Sierra Leone (1960s – 1970s)
In 1958, three years before the country gained the status of being an independent nation-state, the first major White Paper on Education in Sierra Leone was published, declaring, "the ultimate goal must, of course, be the establishment of fee-free universal compulsory education" (Sierra Leone Government, 1958, p. 1). At that early stage, the long-term aim was not "merely to produce literates but to enable pupils to make a beginning in obtaining the necessary mental equipment to enjoy a fuller, happier life and thereby to make a greater contribution to the welfare and development of the community as a whole" (Sierra Leone Government, 1958, p. 1-2). In the short run, goals were made to double the number of children in school, concomitant with remedying the disparity between educational facilities in the Colony (where it was estimated that 80% of children had access to schooling) and the Protectorate hinterland (where only 6% had access).

Besides laying the groundwork for the same themes of equity and access that persist to the present-day, education bureaucrats also foresaw the potential discord that a universal primary system could create if it was not linked with post-graduation opportunities. The Government thus proposed to supplant junior secondary schools with three-year Secondary Modern Schools that would offer a "general education closely related to the interests and environment of the pupils and with a wide range covering the literary as well as the practical aspects of life" (Sierra Leone Government, 1958, p. 12). These proposals reflected a desire to balance the philosophy of the Phelps Stokes Commission of the 1920s – which advocated a utilitarian, agriculturally-biased education for the African masses akin to "Negro education" in the Southern United States (Berman, 1971) – with an increasing resistance against the approach on the grounds that it was an inferior type of education rooted in denigrating manual labor (Foster, 1965; Zimmerman, 2008). By diversifying secondary education beyond just the academic and technical tracks, it was hoped that all children would "receive the type of education best suited to their abilities and aptitudes" (Sierra Leone Government, 1958, p. 12).

The 1960s
During the wave of decolonization in Africa in the 1960s, the rise of human capital theory and the principle of education as a universal human right merged to influence newly independent countries to institute mass education policies for social and economic development (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000). Despite the widespread consensus that schools should be a core component in "manpower planning" the growth of national economies (Psacharopoulos, 1991), there were also those who were wary of the potentially negative effects of such a rapid expansion of education. These uncertainties surfaced in 1961 at the "Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa" held in Addis Ababa. The goal of achieving universal primary education within two decades was formally established at the meeting, but anxiety about an overproduction of educated people in excess of what "development" could accommodate also lay at the heart of conference discussions:

> The real problem is that any good primary school will widen children's horizons beyond what can be satisfied by the economy of three-acres-and-a-hoe. The school leaver expects a higher standard of living than his farmer father, a better house, pure water and easy access to medical and other public services. He is willing to drive a tractor or a lathe, but can hardly be expected to respect the back-breaking energies with meagre output yields, which are forced upon his father through lack of modern equipment (...) So, when the primary schools turn out large numbers who are expected to accommodate themselves to a three-acres-and-a-hoe civilization, what can be expected but frustration and exasperation? (UNESCO, 1961, p. 6-11)

To mitigate a potential mismatch between education output and labor market demand, conference attendees argued that agricultural productivity and rural employment must be increased. This would "diminish the number of school leavers who flock to the towns and cities for employment," but are left "suspended between two worlds" when there are insufficient jobs

to meet the labor supply. "Adapting educational programmes to rural conditions" was consequently highlighted as the means to stimulate such rural development. (UNESCO, 1961, p. 6).

Three years later, global discourse percolated to Sierra Leone, as themes similar to those discussed at the international conference became instituted in the national *Development Programme in Education for Sierra Leone 1964-1970*. In addition to recommending a postponement of the deadline for universal education to 1990 instead of 1980, the Programme recommended the establishment of farm schools offering two years of practical training, since "anything less usually proves to be ineffective; anything more surely leads the farmer's son to seek urban, or at least salaried employment" (Sleight, 1964, p. 30). In part to stem the rural to urban migration, justifications for education expansion subsequently evolved from fostering national development to fostering rural and "local" development. Accordingly, a new national trial syllabus, that was to be "more relevant to local and national needs," was issued in 1969 (Hawes, 1976, p. 11). Class 3 students, for instance, were to learn about the "local community as part of a larger unit" (Hawes, 1976, p. 32). In this way, education would no longer be, as the then Director-General of UNESCO put it, "isolated as a whole from life and society … cut off from the rest of human activity" (Maheu, 1970, p. 2).

The 1970s
By the 1970s, as Western academics grew critical of whether universal education was in reality a sensible aim, the elevated optimism of the previous decade became increasingly muted. Abernethy (1969) questioned whether mass education was an unaffordable welfare; Coleman (1965) argued that an overly aggressive imposition of equality would scatter the resources and weaken the capacity of a political system; Foster (1965) demonstrated how the disparity between a rising number of school-leavers in Ghana and the low rate of economic expansion led to mass unemployment among the educated. Furthermore, while the 1960s emphasized the development of secondary and postsecondary education to meet the shortage of skilled manpower, the modern industrial sector began to stagnate in the 1970s. The worldwide economic recession and shortage of crude oil had rippling effects across the country and continent that contributed to a contraction of the diamond-mining sector and declining per capita income (Government of Sierra Leone, 1981).

The unevenness of development was also raised in the *National Development Plan 1974/5 – 1978/9*. There were "marked disparities in the levels of economic social and political-administrative development between Freetown and its environs…on the one hand and the rest of the country…on the other" (Hawes, 1976, p. 2). School enrollment was "higher in the towns than in the countryside and highest in the Western Area" near Freetown, as was the quality of school conditions (Hawes, 1976, p. 3). After a decade of "development", the long-standing gap between the former Protectorate and the Colony was growing wider instead of narrower.

To address these disparities, as well as the slow increase in enrollment rates (see Figure 1), President Siaka Stevens called for the *Sierra Leone Education Review* – a comprehensive survey of the education system that brought together staff at the University of Sierra Leone, government administrators, and international consultants for a series of meetings in 1973. The review, which was seen to be "locally inspired [and] locally directed" (Hawes, 1976, p. 6), scaled the overly ambitious goal of universal education down to the more achievable target of having 78% of seven year olds enter primary schools by 1990 (University of Sierra Leone, 1976). Additionally, the report highlighted five themes, two of which were *relevance* "to our actual life and work" and *self-reliance* to become "planners and implementers of our own future" (University of Sierra Leone, 1976, p. 2).
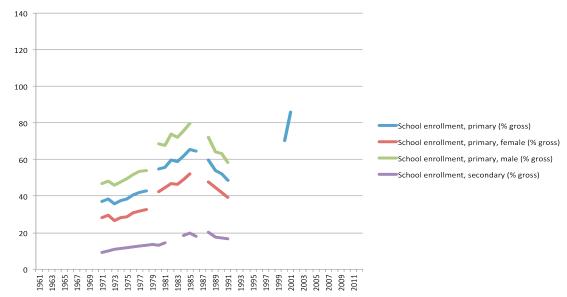
Figure 1. National school enrollment rates in Sierra Leone

Source: Authors' representation based on World Bank microdata (World Bank, 2013). Gaps indicate years of missing data.

The strategy to achieve these twin goals hinged on the idea of instituting a national network of "community education centers" (CECs) that would serve 58,000 youths aged 12-17 and 78,000 adults. [1] Primary schools would then merge with CECs to bring "schooling and traditional life into a co-operative, mutually beneficial relationship" (University of Sierra Leone, 1976, p. 9). This grand vision was first piloted in the rurality of Bunumbu, a chiefdom of less than 1,000 people located about 268 kilometers east of Freetown in the eastern district of Kailahun (see Figure 2). [2]

Figure 2. Map of Kailahun

Source: http://www.globalmidwives.org

The Bunumbu Project (1974 – late 1980s)
In 1974, the Government of Sierra Leone called upon the United Nations Special Fund and UNESCO to assist in implementing the Bunumbu Project – a program designed to make schools more relevant and central to rural communities. Specifically, the project translated the National Development Plan of accelerating primary school expansion into the following strategic objectives:

i) development of a new primary curriculum with a rural bias; ii) expansion of existing functions of the teacher training colleges … and iii) development of a country-wide network of community educational centres providing both formal and non-formal education and training for young people and adults in the rural areas. (UNESCO, 1983, p. 2)

To achieve the larger goal of rural development, the Bunumbu Project attempted to redesign curricula and integrate schools into the "community." In this way, the pilot program brought to life the values of relevance and self-reliance that would reduce educational inequalities and obviate the need for urban migration. However, as argued in the following section, the absence of a clear definition of program targets, compounded by project goals growing more grandiose, later undermined the project's initial success.

Project rationale and implementation

One might wonder why Bunumbu was selected as the project site in the first place. Although Bunumbu was exceptional in that the Methodist Missionary had introduced Western education to the region as early as 1924 (Eastern Polytechnic Administration, 2013), it became the center of national and international attention through the vision and determination of one man in particular. In 1971, Francis B. S. Ngegba became the first African principal of Bunumbu Teachers College after a series of British headmasters had led the school for almost fifty years during the colonial period. Ngegba did not originate from the immediate area but was an alumnus of the College.

Despite the rhetorical emphasis on the "community" orientation of the Bunumbu project, the project seemed to mostly originate from Principal Ngegba's individual ideas and efforts. Earl Welker, a former geography lecturer and later acting Principal who first arrived at the College in 1971 months before Ngegba's arrival, recalled the first time he learned of the project (Personal communication, April 5, 2013):

[Ngegba] called me into his office one day and said, 'Can you bring me a map of this area and locate twenty primary schools within a twenty mile radius of Bunumbu? I looked at him and said: "Yeah, I think I can but just give me a few minutes." So, I went back to my geography lab…took a compass, went back to his office, sat down, and we located twenty primary schools that already existed. Those twenty schools became the pilot schools… This was the first inkling I had of anything called the Bunumbu project. I didn't know what we were doing, why he was doing it, and what he was doing it for. He didn't tell me. Within months, there was a team of UN people who came and asked questions (...) Then we all realized that there was something that was in the works about a project for Bunumbu, we didn't know what. And slowly the idea was filtered down.

What was lauded as a community-based project was really the brainchild of one man; and what was meant to be a "community" rural development project was neither initiated, nor afterwards implemented, by the "community" of Bunumbu. Instead, it was the combination of a politically adept and ambitious principal not from the local area, UNESCO "experts" sent in from as far as Nepal and Haiti, international volunteers from Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) and the U.S. Peace Corps, and Sierra Leonean teacher candidates from elsewhere in the country, who together became the key executors of the roughly ten-year project (see Figure 3).

Nevertheless, Ngegba deserved credit for recognizing the importance of engaging different players from the "community" to implement the project. Since schools were to be "the hub around which integrated rural development activities radiate[d]," multi-disciplinary teams were formed with primary school teachers at its core serving as the "animateur, leader, co-ordinator and stabilizer" (UNESCO, 1977, p. 5). These teams brought members from each "local community" (UNESCO, 1977, p. 7) together to form self-help groups that contributed building materials and assistance in renovating the selected pilot schools. Ngegba also appreciated the need to involve village elders and the Paramount Chief of Bunumbu: "The conversion of the

chiefs and local elders to rural development needs, could lead to total community involvement" (UNESCO, 1977, p. 8).

**Figure 3. Independence day at Bunumbu
Teachers College (1971/72)**

Source: John Wolfer

On top of training teachers to teach new curricular units, a year-long in-service training was conducted "to sensitize the head teachers [of the pilot schools] to the needs of the rural environment in which their schools are located" (UNESCO, 1977, p. 18). Workshops on nutrition, blacksmithing and weaving were offered as non-formal education programs. Bunumbu teachers and students even made periodic visits to family farms to discuss new ideas about farming. Ngegba's vision was therefore for the Bunumbu Project to "to break the age old tradition of the school being an instrument of alienation" (UNESCO, 1977, p. 18). It was only through such alternative educational structures that schools could "introduce new knowledge and skills to the rural peoples" (UNESCO, 1977, p. 4) and "becom[e] a functional part of the community" (UNESCO, 1977, p. 23).

This seemingly banal notion of integrating the school into the community could not have been more germane to the later success of the project. Whether or not Ngegba was aware of it, the relationship between schools and "locals" was still a very tenuous one. Even after twenty years of independence, many "locals" regarded Western schools with a dose of skepticism because of its foreign nature and its uncertain value. Moreover, the history of slavery and colonialism had still not completely faded from popular memory. Braima Molwai, a Sierra Leonean who now lives in Durham, North Carolina but grew up in Bunumbu as the only one out of eight siblings to attend school, recalls his early experiences at Bunumbu Primary School in the years prior to the beginning of the Bunumbu Project (Personal communication, April 1, 2013):

> I was taught by two English women who only spoke English. They didn't even care to learn Mende. They just told me things like, "Don't sit on this.' 'Stop talking.' (…) Western education came in with their churches and all their establishments, and also to teach us about the Bible. But they didn't care to speak our language (…) And so that communication if you're talking about Western education was just one-sided.

For subsistence farmers like the Molwais, changing the curricular content and role of a school signified a significant shift in making the communication and transmission of Western education "two-sided." This marked a vast improvement from the colonial era when most education in Africa sought either to instill Christian virtues, or to create local bureaucrats who could contract with the British colonial system (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010; Peterson, 2004; Sumner, 1963).

Project Outcomes
By the mid 1980s, the Bunumbu Project had become a nationally and internationally acclaimed program. Markers of success included: the building of twenty pilot schools with the aid of

Catholic Relief Services; a 65% increase in primary enrollment at the pilot schools; an increase from a 68% to 78% pass rate on the national common entrance examination; and the creation of over 300 new curricular units that integrated education with the "local" environment of Bunumbu (Banya, 1989). Teachers, for example, were trained to blend national exam standards into units on creating maps of Sierra Leone and Bunumbu, recording rainfall and examining nearby water sources, and constructing poultry farms and vegetable gardens (Bunumbu Teachers College, 1981). As one headmaster said in an interview: " 'The Bunumbu materials have definitely helped improve our common entrance results…More of my pupils are now going to various secondary schools all over the country' - (Headmaster) Ngolahun Methodist" (Banya, 1986, p. 183). Braima, who also taught for a year at one of the pilot schools, further explains the impact the new curricula had on students (Personal communication, April 23, 2013):

> When they made it into that, what we can swallow, it was much easier for these people. You were not going to teach, you know, what you teach in Cambridge to the children. Adapting it to what was already going on, the agricultural part, was what made the program work…You have most of the students coming from villages, and you're going to tell them about atoms…and this chemistry and all this stuff? No! No, I'm not going to read about snow. Hell no…But to read about our own elders who wrote poems that we can relate to…that worked.

What was striking about the Bunumbu Project was its ability to adopt a Deweyan approach of integrating schools into the society by reaching out to those who had previously expressed no interest in education (Dewey, 1899). By successfully making education more "relevant," the project engaged more families in both the formal and non-formal programs that were offered at the school.

Perhaps because of the initial praise it received, the project grew in scope and grandiosity, and soon became magnified and mythologized both in development discourse and in the minds of an increasing number of Bunumbu residents. The mantra became that "Bunumbu is no longer a project – it is now a spirit" (UNESCO, 1983). This aggrandizement, however, later undermined the project's early success. Although initial project objectives centered on making education more relevant by restructuring the teacher's certificate program, expectations grew to encompass all aspects of rural development. According to one village elder: "'We gave our land and labor freely to the project, with the understanding that we will get some amenities, such as pipe-born water, better roads and dispensary facilities. We are still waiting for the promises to come through' (Elder 503)" (UNESCO, 1983, p. 121). The conflation of education and development led to disenchantment and frustration, which was then aggravated by the departure of expatriates and decreased visits from the Ministry of Education and UNESCO as the project neared its termination date. Community Development Councils began to hold fewer meetings, and participation in community work projects decreased.

Furthermore, not all members of the community approved of the changes to the curricula. Some parents objected to the notion of their children perpetuating their own agricultural livelihood: " 'I want them [my children] to be better than me in terms of employment, to become doctors, engineers, and top civil servants' (Parent 702)" (Banya, 1986, p. 97). Not surprisingly, these parents saw Western education as a means towards social ascension: " 'If my children are to look after me during my old age, they should be successful in acquiring the white man's knowledge, so that they can have key positions in many fields' (Parent 703)" (Banya, 1986, p. 97). Some families may therefore have wanted an academically oriented grammar education rather than the "rurally biased" curricula that was the product of the Bunumbu Project. This sentiment of the state not being able to change the preferences of the people from an academic to vocational orientation echoes the findings of Foster in Ghana twenty years earlier.

The contradiction of both positive and negative feedback shows the importance of precisely clarifying the target population. For farming families like Braima's who had little interest in obtaining Western education, the Bunumbu Project was a huge step forward in adapting the curriculum to meet their way of life and traditional customs – just as Ngegba envisioned when he wished to uproot the belief of schools being a source of alienation. But for families of merchants and professionals whose parents may have gone to school themselves, Braima explains that the Bunumbu Project may have been seen as a step back in their goal of having the next generation break out of an agricultural existence (Personal communication, April 23, 2013). What comes to light is the inherent diversity within a "local community." One goal of CECs was to bring together people from across the chiefdom of Bunumbu – which was divided into the Manowa junction, the Old Town, and the "road." However "community" members could have referred to anyone from Paramount Chiefs, to skilled craftsmen, to subsistence farmers, to the Syrian and Lebanese business owners that comprised a sizable portion of the Bunumbu population. Ultimately, discerning the effects of the Bunumbu Project depends on which "local" one asks. It could not be assumed that just because Bunumbu was "rural," that the entire chiefdom was just one "community" of "locals."

Discussion
This paper began by asking the questions of who wanted universal education and for what purpose. The analysis highlighted the multiplicity of actors – from the international to the national to the local – along with the multiplicity of intentions. For instance, many international expatriates and volunteers supported mass schooling because it was seen as "a fundamental ingredient for the nation's social and economic development" (Sierra Leone Ministry of Education, 1977, p. 1). National bureaucrats reasoned that expanding education would bring about geographic equity while balancing migration patterns. Some "local" families in the "community" of Bunumbu sought education to build social cachet in a modern world that was rapidly subsuming traditional ways of life. Most important though were the children and families who had little interest in education – a group who often gets lost in debates about Western modernization and universal schooling. When one becomes so focused on the end goal of education for *all*, one risks forgetting what the experience means to those who are not as quick to comply. These overlooked constituents, some of whom the Bunumbu Project successfully managed to engage, attest to Grubb and Lazerson's (2004) warning of an "overblown" faith in the "gospel" of education in that a homogenous approach to education is not a uniform good, either in the past or present.

Partly due to these complex and often conflicting desires and intentions, the quest for universal education failed even after three decades of independence. While the Bunumbu Project was a step forward in changing education to make schools more accessible to some, the indiscriminate use of certain words served as a setback. Specifically, relative terms like "local," "community" and "rural" were used as absolute expressions, when in fact the true meaning of these words hinged on *who* was saying it in regards to *whom*. For instance, who really is a "local"? To foreign expatriates, "local" might have meant a Sierra Leonean bureaucrat working at the Ministry of Education. To an official based in Freetown, "local" might have meant anyone living in a "rural" "community" like Bunumbu. [3] To an educated professional living in the "community" of Bunumbu, "rural" might have meant the traditional farming families who had never attended school.

The impulse to aggregate a country as one people is perhaps what led Foster to his finding that an academic education was preferable to a vocational one. Surely his observation rang (and still rings) true, but only to the extent of the subpopulation he was describing; his work may therefore be eliding large subsamples of the population. Similarly, Carnoy and Samoff's affirmation that "given a choice between popular education and formal, traditional bureaucratic schools, the public appears to opt for the latter," is a misleading one (1990, p. 89). Who, in this

case, is the "public"? Without explicitly defining such expressions in specific terms, one runs the risk of falsely generalizing the experience and preferences of a small group as the aggregate – thereby completely distorting the representation of an entire country, or even continent.

Beyond semantics, recognizing diverse intentions and meanings of a simple word like "rural", "local", "community" or "public" has great implications, particularly for decentralization schemes that have gained in popularity in the last few decades. Development solutions often advocate engaging "local Searchers" (Easterly, 2006) or increasing "localism" through empowerment (Carothers, 1999) – as if the "local" is one concretely bound, homogeneous unit. Even James Scott's (1998) often-cited work oversimplifies the "local" as much as it does the state; Scott criticizes bureaucratic rationality for displacing "local" knowledge, or what he calls *metis.* However, simply venerating the "local" does not sufficiently show the heterogeneity of practices, actors, and needs in any particular locality. Anderson-Levitt's (2003) call for balancing World Culture theory (Meyer et al., 1997) with local variability, likewise does not clarify exactly how "local" is defined. Within the work of those who argue that global discourse converges more than local action (Schriewer, 2000; Steiner Khamsi, 2002; Burde, 2004), it is also often unclear precisely who the "local actors" are in a "local community." Without careful specification, these terms, which are intended to be more specific in identifying micro-level targets, end up conjuring the same generalities as macro, national-level rhetoric.

Conclusion
Overall, a central theme in universalizing education in post-independence Sierra Leone was thus: to increase development and school enrollment in the hinterland so as to close the urban-rural gap, the state progressed in making education more relevant to "local" conditions. As argued by James Ferguson, there is no substitute to "answering specific, localized, tactical questions" (Ferguson, 1994, p. 181). That said, how one defines "local" is something that should be questioned. A question like "Was the project a success?" should also be appended by "for whom?", before being followed by an analysis that is "based not on the generic or local, macro or micro … but on the changing relationships between them" (Ball, 2005, p. 76).

A final contradiction that may have arisen had the Bunumbu project not been interrupted by the civil war is the competing way in which the project simultaneously attempted to "localize" the content of education while "developing" rural regions. For example, a new curriculum with a "rural bias" was to be created alongside the goal of transforming "rural areas to develop into towns that feed the villages with services like transportation, water supply, power, health care…" ("The Bunumbu Experience", 1977, p. viv). On the one hand, the project sought to make education "relevant" to the current "traditional" conditions of rural areas, but on the other hand, the project sought to use education to launch Bunumbu towards a hypothetical "developed" state. Hence, while the latter objective demanded a step forward towards future modernity, the former objective demanded a step back towards past systems and traditions. The vying forces of planning for the future while adapting to the present resulted in a development gridlock, where pockets of "progress" may have been achieved, but much less predictably and systematically than what was envisioned for the country.

In sum, this case study reveals that while "localizing" education is a positive step in achieving universal schooling, failing to explicitly define popularly used terms like "local" and "community" can undermine program success. Once identified, the state must also take a dialectic approach to alternate between fulfilling the particular needs of individual subgroups through well-specified projects, and connecting these projects to bridge social schisms such as the rural-urban divide. As Clifford Geertz would be inclined to agree: the path towards the general is through the particular (1973), as the initial success of the Bunumbu Project well exemplified. Rather than expanding and overextending the success of one project though, the later struggles faced by the project show that states might be better off modifying and

replicating small-scale efforts, in tandem with building the "bridging social capital" that then unites the distinct particulars (Putnam, 2000). [4] Ultimately, the path towards universalizing schooling should begin with particularizing and diversifying education to meet the needs of well-defined subpopulations, followed by a balancing act of connecting the pluralistic pieces.

Notes
[1] This represented about 5% of the total population of 2.8 million people (Hawes, 1976).
[2] This region was coincidentally where the Revolutionary United Front soldiers later first entered the country from Liberia (Richards, 1996).
[3] Among Sierra Leoneans, the term "bush" was used more often than "rural." As explained by Earl Welker: "When I arrived in Freetown and told people I was going to teach in Bunumbu, the almost universal comment was: 'Oh you are headed for the real bush' – meaning I was not only NOT going to be in Freetown … but I was going to a VILLAGE. In addition to geographical meaning, it also had cultural meaning. 'Bush' meant not sophisticated, not fashionable, not up-to-date, not cognizant of what was really going on in" (Personal communication, April 5, 2013).
[4] The Bunumbu Project was never replicated elsewhere due to the start of the civil war in 1991.

Grace Pai is a PhD candidate in international education in the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University. Email: ghp202@nyu.edu.

References
Abernethy, D. (1969). *The Political dilemma of Popular Education: an African case.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Anderson-Levitt, K.M. (2003). A World Culture of Schooling? In K.M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Local Meanings, Global Schooling: Anthropology and World Culture Theory* (pp. 1-26). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
Arnove, R. (2003). Introduction: Reframing Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local. In R.F. Arnove, C.A. Torres & S. Franz (Eds.), *Comparative Education: The Dialectic of the Global and the Local* (pp. 1-26). US: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
Ball, S. (2006). *Education Policy and Social Class: The Selected Works of Stephen J. Ball.* New York: Routledge.
Banya, K. (1986). *An evaluation of the implementation process and impact of a teacher education program in Sierra Leone – The Bunumbu Project*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Toronto, Toronto.
Banya, K. (1989). Education for Rural Development: Myth or Reality? *International Journal of Educational Development, 9*(2), 111-126.
Berman, E. H. (1971). American influence on African education: The role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund's Education Commissions. *Comparative Education Review, 15*(2), 132-145.
Bunumbu Teachers College. (August 1981). *Teachers Certificate Curriculum*. UNDP/SIL/73/009.
Burde, D. (2006). International NGOs and best practices: The art of educational lending. In G. Steiner-Khamsi (Ed.), *Global politics of educational borrowing and lending* (pp. 173 – 187). New York: Teachers College Press.
Carnoy, M & Samoff, J. (1990). *Education And Social Transition In The Third World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Carothers, T. (1999). *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve.* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
Chabbott, C., & Ramirez, F. O. (2000). Development and education. In M.T. Hallinan (Ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of Education* (pp. 163-187). Springer US.
Coleman, J.A. (1965). *Education and Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Dewey, J. (1899). *The school and society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Easterly, W. (2006). *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* New York: Penguin Press.

Eastern Polytechnic Administration. (March 2013). Retrieved from http://www.eastern-polytechnic.net/about-us/our-history.

Ferguson, J. & Lohmann, L. (September/October 1994). The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development" and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho. *The Ecologist, 24*(5), 176-181.

Foster, P.J. (1965). *Education and Social Change in Ghana.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). The *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Government of Sierra Leone. (January 1981). *Education and Development Sector Study 1979.* Freetown: SL/IDA Education Project Unit. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0004/000464/046431EB.pdf

Grubb, W.N. & Lazerson, M. (2004). *The Education Gospel: The Economic Power of Schooling.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard university Press.

Hawes, H.W.R. (1976). *Curriculum and curriculum development in Sierra Leone.* London: Department of Education in Developing Countries, University of London Institute of Education.

Maheu, R. (1970). International Education Year: Extracts from the Message from Mr. Rene Maheu Director-General of Unesco. *Sierra Leone Journal of Education*, 5(2), 2-3.

Meyer, J.W., Boli, J., Thomas, G.M. & Ramirez, F.O. (July 1997). World-Society and the Nation-State. *American Journal of Sociology*, *103*(1), 144-181.

Nishimuko, M. (2007). Problems behind Education for All (EFA): The case of Sierra Leone. *Educate, 7*(2), 19-29.

Peterson, D. (2004). *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, And The Work Of Imagination In Colonial Kenya.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Psacharopoulos, G. (1991). From manpower planning to labour market analysis. *International Labor Review, 130*, 459 - 474.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Richards, P. (1996). *Fighting for the Rain Forest*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Schriewer, J. (2000). World system and interrelationship networks: The internationalization of education and the role of comparative inquiry. In T.S. Popkewitz (Ed.), *Educational knowledge: Changing relationships between the state, civil society, and the educational community* (pp. 305-343). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Scott, J.C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sierra Leone Government. (1958). *White Paper on Educational Development.* Freetown: Government Printing Department.

Sierra Leone Ministry of Education. (1977). *Report (Part II): The development of education in Sierra Lone 1974-1975 and 1975-1976*. Freetown: Planning Unit.

Sifuna, D. N., Sawamura, N. (2010). *Challenges of Quality Education in Sub-Saharan African Countries.* New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Sleight, G.F. (June 1964). The *Development Programme in Education for Sierra Leone 1964-70*. Freetown: UNESCO Educational Planning Mission.

Steiner Khamsi, G. (2002). Re-framing educational borrowing as a policy strategy. In M. Caruso & H-E. Tenorth (Eds.), *Internationalisierung – Internationalisation* (pp. 57-89). Frankfurt/M & New York: Lang.

Sumner, D.L. (1963). *Education in Sierra Leone*. Freetown: The Government Printer.

The Bunumbu Experience – Sierra Leone. (1977). *Bunumbu Times*. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0003/000370/037009eb.pdf

UNESCO. (1961). *Final report: Conference of African states on the development of education in Africa, Addis Ababa, 15-25 May 1961*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000774/077416e.pdf

UNESCO. (September 16, 1977). *Personnel requirements for multi-purpose community education centres in Sierra Leone: The Bunumbu Experiment by Dr. F.B.S. Ngegba.* Paris: UNESCO, Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0003/000312/031279eb.pdf

UNESCO. (1983). *Sierra Leone: Primary school teachers for rural areas. Project Findings and Recommendations.* Paris: UNDP, 1983. UNDP/SIL/73/009. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0005/000560/056049eb.pdf

United Nations. (1949). *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948*. Retrieved from http://www.jus.uio.no/lm/un.universal.declaration.of.human.rights.1948/portrait.a4.pdf.

University of Sierra Leone. (1976). *Sierra Leone Education Review: All our Future: Final Report.* Freetown: University of Sierra Leone.

Vavrus, F. & Bartlett, L. (2006). Comparatively Knowing: Making a Case for the Vertical Case Study. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, *8*(2), 95-103.

World Bank. (2007). *Education in Sierra Leone: Present Challenges, Future Opportunities*. World Bank: Washington, D.C.

World Bank. (2013). *Sierra Leone World Development Indicators* (Data file). Retrieved from http://data.worldbank.org/country/sierra-leone

Zimmerman, J. (2008). *Innocents Abroad: American Teachers in the American Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.