

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, specializing in Comparative and International Development Education (SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholar).
- Experienced education scholar with global expertise in education system leadership and policy implementation. In-depth experience leading, conducting and analyzing rigorous mixed-method, multi-level research on district leadership, education policy implementation in Ghana, Rwanda and Senegal, in collaboration with local institutional partners and education experts.
- Fifteen years' experience in international education policy and programme development with UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics as staff (2010-2019) and independent consultant (2020-present). Focus areas: data, policy and programming for out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out and improving accessibility of research for improved evidence-informed decision-making.

EDUCATION

University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education <i>PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy (Graduation June 2025)</i> <i>Collaborative specialization: Comparative, International Development Education</i> Thesis: "The Middle-Tier in Education Delivery: An Exploratory Study of District Support to Schools in Ghana."	2019-2025
University of York, UK <i>Master of Public Administration – International Development</i>	2014
McGill University <i>Master of Arts in Political Science</i>	2010
The University of British Columbia <i>BA (Hons) in Political Science, Minor French</i>	2008

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Bell, Sheena. 2025. "Understanding the Competing Logics of District Education Office Work: the Case of Ghana." *International Journal of Educational Development*. 113 (March). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2025.103219>.

Asim, Minahil, **Sheena Bell**, Michael Boakye-Yiadom, Hope Pius Nudzor, and Karen Mundy. 2024. "Management Practices and Implementation Challenges in District Education Directorates in Ghana." *Education Administration Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X241230527>.

Chmielewski, Anna K., and **Sheena Bell**. 2023. "Cross-National Socioeconomic Inequality and Educational Policy." In *Handbook on the Sociology of Education*, edited by M Berends, B Schneider, and S Lamb. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications. (<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/the-sage-handbook-of-sociology-of-education/book250209>)

Research papers

- Mundy, Karen, Minahil Asim, and **Sheena Bell**. 2024. "Strengthening System Level Educational Leadership and Management in Low and Middle-Income Countries: A Review of Recent Paradigms and Research." UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2024/25 Background Paper. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000392419>.
- Beggs, Christine, and **Sheena Bell**. 2024. "The Middle Tier and Improving Foundational Literacy Outcomes: New Evidence from Best Practice Districts in Rwanda." Science of Teaching Research Report. Research Triangle Park: RTI International.
- **Bell, Sheena.** 2024. "The Middle Tier's Role in Education Improvement: Insights from Social Network and Bureaucratic Norms Research". Science of Teaching. RTI-International. https://scienceofteaching.site/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/RTI-SOT-Literature-Review_19SEP2.pdf

Sheena Bell

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- **Bell, Sheena**, Asim, Minahil, Mundy, Karen, Pius Nuzdor, Hope, Boakye-Yiadom, Michael, & Mensah Adosi, Christopher (June 2023). How do regions, districts and schools respond to the introduction of a delivery approach: Evidence from Ghana. DeliverEd Initiative Working Paper. (<https://educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/How-do-Regions-Districts-and-Schools-Respond-to-Delivery-Approach-Ghana.pdf>)
- **Bell, Sheena**, Clare Leaver, Zahra Mansoor, Karen Mundy, Dana Qarout, and Martin J. Williams. 2023. "The Role of Delivery Approaches in Education Systems Reform: Evidence from a Multi-Country Study." DeliverEd Initiative Working Paper. (<https://educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-Role-of-Delivery-Approaches-in-Education-Systems-Reform-Evidence-from-a-Multi-Country-Study.pdf>)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

RTI International (Consultant)

February 2024 – Present

Education Researcher for "Science of Teaching", funded by the Gates Foundation

- Research lead for mixed-methods study of district office and school leadership and data use in Senegal.
- Qualitative research lead for mixed-methods study of education district office leadership in Rwanda.
- Wrote literature review of district instructional leadership, social networks and bureaucratic norms to inform future programming on middle-tier leadership.

UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (Consultant)

January – December 2024

Background paper co-author

- Co-author literature review of leadership and management research and programming on central and middle-tier levels of education systems in low- and middle-income countries, with Dr. Karen Mundy and Dr. Minahil Asim.

DeliverEd Research Initiative (Oxford University, Education Commission)

October 2019 – Sept. 2023

Qualitative Researcher

- Qualitative research focal point for the Ghana project team (University of Toronto, University of Oxford, University of Cape Coast, Ghana). Studying recent public service reforms in education, called "delivery approaches" which emphasize management and leadership practices to improve the implementation of education policies to improve learning outcomes. Project funded by FCDO and the Education Commission.

UNICEF Education Section (New York, USA)

Jan 2022 – May 2023

Education Consultant

March-April 2020

- Lead technical consultant to coordinate and revise the UIS-UNESCO Global Initiative of Out-of-School Children *Operational Manual (2023 Revision)*, in coordination with thematic experts from UNESCO, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, ILO, UNICEF and GPE.
- [2020] As part of COVID-19 response, conduct household survey analysis of 19 MICS6 datasets to calculate the share of school-age children with access to devices for learning. Co-wrote blog describing data findings.

The World Bank, with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Jan 2020 – Sept 2020

Education Consultant

- Support 9 member states of the OECS to develop an education data framework to support the strengthening of national Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) for national, regional and international reporting.

UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (Geneva, Switzerland)

2015-2019

Regional Education Specialist

- To improve UNICEF country office programming and technical support to governments in Europe and Central Asia for improved education systems to improve access and learning outcomes, especially for the most marginalized children:
 - Provided in country and remote technical assistance to 23 UNICEF country offices in Europe and Central Asia to improve education data monitoring systems, SDG4 monitoring, dropout prevention programmes and policies for out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out. Countries

visited: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

- Regional education in emergencies focal point. Provided technical assistance to UNICEF regional and country programming related to the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe (Germany, Greece, Italy), Syria response (Turkey), and Disaster Risk Reduction (Kyrgyzstan).
- Developed global and regional resources and peer networks to identify needs, package and present education research and best practice for use by UNICEF and stakeholders.
 - Development of thematic briefs (ex. early warning systems for dropout prevention); webinars, knowledge network, as part of the *Regional Improving Education Participation Initiative*.

UNICEF Headquarters, Education Section

Feb-April 2019

Secondary Education Specialist (Stretch assignment)

- Drafted the UNICEF global guidance on secondary-age education, outlining a framework and methodology to guide UNICEF country offices in prioritizing and developing programming for secondary-age adolescents. Featured guidance on education system strengthening for adolescents in school, and supporting alternative pathways to learning for adolescents out of school.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Montreal, Canada)

2010 –2015

Assistant Programme Specialist

- Project coordinator and co-author of the UIS-UNICEF report *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education For All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children*.
- With UNICEF, co-author the UIS-UNICEF *Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children Operational Manual*, an expanded and revised guidance for countries on the analysis of out-of-school children data and policies.
- With UNICEF, co-organized four OOSC Initiative regional workshops to train national team (UN and government) participants in statistics and data on out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out: Eastern Caribbean States, Middle East North Africa, South Asia, West and Central Africa.
- Contributed reports, statistical data analysis and figures to UN publications and Initiatives: Global Education First Initiative, the 2012 and 2013 Millennium Development Goals Report, the UIS/GMR factsheets on out-of-school children, and the UIS eAtlas on Out-of-School Children.
- Co-authored background paper on impact of conflict on education for the 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report.

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS (role in italics)

UNICEF and UNESCO. 2023. *OOSCI Operational Manual: 2023 Revision*. New York: UNICEF. (Role: Co-author and publication coordinator). www.allinschool.org

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and UNICEF. 2015. “Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children.” Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fixing-broken-promise-efa-findings-global-initiative-oosc-education-2015-en.pdf>. (Role: Project manager and co-author).

———. 2015. “Global Out-of-School Children Initiative Operational Manual.” New York: UNICEF.

<http://allinschool.org/guidance/operational-manual/>. (Role: Co-author)

UNICEF ECA Regional Office. 2016. “Monitoring Education Participation: Framework for Monitoring Children and Adolescents Who Are Out of School or at Risk of Dropping Out.” Vol. 1. UNICEF Series on Education Participation and Dropout Prevention. Geneva: UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/eca/reports/monitoring-education-participation>. (Role: Project manager and reviewer).

———. 2017a. “Improving Education Participation: Policy and Practice Pointers for Enrolling All Children and Adolescents in School and Preventing Dropout.” Vol. 2. UNICEF Series on Education Participation and Dropout Prevention. Geneva: UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/eca/reports/improving-education-participation>. (Role: Project manager and reviewer).

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2010. "The Quantitative Impact of Conflict on Education." UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report Background Paper. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=191304&set=005B82A6E7_1_329&gp=1&lin=1&ll=1. (Role: Author).

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCES

Bell, Sheena. 2025. "Understanding the Competing Logics of District Education Office Work: The Case of Ghana." Presented at the 2025 CIES Annual Conference, Chicago.

———. 2024. "District office leadership: navigating multiple logics in Ghana's basic education system". Presented at the 2024 CIES Annual Conference, Miami.

———. 2024. "Conceptual frameworks on out-of-school children driving global and national research agendas". Presented at the Canadian Association of International Development Professionals Annual Conference, Carlton University Ottawa.

———. 2023. "I'm not there to be a witch hunter': the evolution of the district's role in policy implementation in Ghana's basic education schools". Presented at the 2023 UKFIET Biannual Conference, Oxford.

———. 2023. "An exploratory study of organizational and political factors shaping district support for teaching and learning in Ghana". Presented at the 2023 CIES Annual Conference, Washington.

———. 2023. "Multiple Accountabilities, Management Practices, and the Service Delivery Gap: A Study of District Education Directorates in Ghana". Presented at the 2023 AERA Annual Conference, Chicago.

———. 2022. "How do I run the office without funds?" Understanding how districts plan and implement education policy in Ghana" Presented at the RISE 2022 Conference.

———. 2019. "Lessons learned: Data and response to out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out." Presented at the GPE webinar on the UNICEF-UIS Out-of-School Children Initiative, Washington, April 2.

———. 2014. "Out-of-School Children and Exclusion from Education: Data Challenges, Methodological Innovations and Policy Responses." presented at the CIES Annual Conference, Toronto.

———. 2011. "The Quantitative Impact of Conflict on Education." presented at the CIES Annual Conference, Montreal.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

- Graduate studies: SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship PhD; Ontario Graduate Scholarship PhD; CGS Masters.
- Upon BA graduation: Walter D. Young Prize for the best student in Canadian Politics at UBC and the Stanfield prize for outstanding achievement in Political Science.
- Undergraduate: UBC National Entrance Scholarship, Millennium Provincial Scholarship, B.C. Provincial Exam Scholarship, Undergraduate Scholars Program, CMSF Regional Scholarship, UBC Pierre Berthier Education Abroad Scholarship, Dean's List.

OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPERIENCES

- *Teaching Fundamentals Certificate Program*. University of Toronto (2024-2025 ongoing).
- *Core course of the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET)*. University of Bern. July 2018.
- *Children's Human Rights – An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. University of Geneva, through Coursera. July 2017.