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# SITE VISIT: GHANA—CARING TO LEARN, LEARNING TO CARE

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Source: Dr. Seema Agarwal (1994). Caring To Learn-Learning To Care: Children's responsibility in providing care. Case evidence from Ghana. UNICEF. Paper presented at UNICEF-CORNELL Colloquium on Nutrition and Care, Ithaca, NY, USA. Oct 12-15, 1994. Distributed at ICDC Workshop, Florence. May 31-June 6, 1995.

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## *Overview of the Project*

The Child, School, Community Project in Education (CHILDSCOPE) project in the Afram Plains aimed to identify the current learning context of the rural Ghanaian child. The project investigates both formal and informal areas of children's learning. The key question posed is: *Why do children appear not to be learning very much in school?* The project then identified those changes which could be made in order to enhance this context.

Despite increased inputs to Ghanaian primary schools in recent years, there are staggering challenges for improving access, quality, efficiency, and effectiveness still remaining within the education system. Teachers have been retrained and provided with essential resources such as chalk, guides, and stationary, and supervision systems have been put in place. These changes have given many students access to a basic set of learning resources within the classroom. Despite these changes the effectiveness of the average public primary school remains very low, as does the level of learning achievement of the majority of public primary school students. The failure of primary schools to provide even minimum levels of learning and literacy to the majority of the pupils presents a crisis in Ghana's implementation of its educational reform.

Through an integrated community-based development approach, CHILDSCOPE places the child at its center, and uses school as the primary resource for changing people's behavior to improve their lives.

The program uses participatory approaches to planning in order to empower teachers and parents to understand the interplay between education and development, and assist them in determining what schools can provide for both the children and community.

The project focuses on improving the quality of the education service and the child quality. The view is taken that the Active Learning Capacity (ALC) of the child can only be maximized when multiple determinants such as nutritional, health and socio-economic status, degree of parental stimulation, overall quality of the home and school, can come together in an integrated and dynamic relationship that works towards meeting the needs of the young child.

The CHILDSCOPE project examines the possibility of integrated development. Central to the project is the concept of basic education for better nutrition, health and development, and an exploration of the degree to which the offering of services in one place can increase people's access to those services.

In tackling the task of identifying the current learning context of the rural Ghanaian child, and the possible changes that could be made in order to enhance the context, a specific approach to research was adopted. Whereas the majority of research on educational quality confines its focus to the classroom, this project researched broader issues of the wellbeing of the Ghanaian pre-school and school child. The project in the Afram Plains provides a practical example of using research data gathered through interviews and observations to inform the process of empowering teachers and children to adopt meaningful active learning strategies. The data provides a powerful picture of the role of children as child minders.

## *Background*

CHILDSCOPE's goals are built around the philosophy of the Child-to-Child approach. The project aims to make school-based teaching and learning child-centered, related to care and nutrition needs and responsibilities of children, as well as to the general promotion of health. It is believed that by making learning in school relevant and meaningful to the children's everyday lives and needs, the interaction between the child and school will become a more active and enriching experience, rather than a passive, tiring or alienating experience for the child.

CHILDSCOPE operates by working directly at the school and community level as well as by developing an active network between the local, district and national levels. Facilitators for the project are given in-depth training before engaging the community in the process. *Participatory methods* are employed to encourage people at all levels to look at their situation, to identify and analyze their strengths and weaknesses, and to take action. Methods include an approach to baseline data collection that uses a wide range of participatory tools. *Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)* activities are used to help community members and teachers identify and analyze school and community factors that affect children's learning and to develop action plans to improve teaching and learning.

## *The Context/Need*

- About 90% of Ghanaian children aged 0-6, especially those from rural and poor areas, do not have access to early childhood services.
- The majority of poor children aged 0-6 are at risk of malnutrition, disease, lack of security, and inappropriate development practices.
- Recent figures (1994) suggest that although IMR and U5MR have declined over recent decades, IMR was estimated in 1992 at 82 per 1,000 live births and U5MR at 132 per 1,000 live births. Regional disparities show a worse situation in certain areas, with IMR broadly being 30% higher in rural areas, and U5MR 20% higher in rural than in urban areas.

- Based on an analysis of the 1988 Ghana Demographic Health Survey, one striking finding was that only 2% of mothers exclusively breast-feed during the first 4 months because of the widespread belief among mothers and health workers that babies need to be given water for thirst. Ghana ranks as one of the two lowest of 25 developing countries in which practices in exclusive breast-feeding have been examined.
- Nationally, 52% of infants 0-3 months were bottle-fed; this figure was 46% in rural areas.
- 30% of children aged 3 to 36 months old are stunted, and 31% are underweight.

The CHILDSCOPE Project was initiated in villages in the Afram Plains district, a remote rural district of Ghana's Eastern Region. The village communities are poor, with most families making a subsistence living from farming tigernuts, groundnuts, maize and cassava. Parents are constrained due to their economic hardship and are often not involved in the care responsibilities of their children. Children of primary school age often attend to the everyday care functions for themselves and their families. They are seen as parental resources in the organization of economic and household activities.

Children in many cases are taking on multiple roles: full economic roles such as load bearing or trading on market days, semi-economic roles such as assisting with the farming tasks or the preparation of produce for sale, and full domestic roles such as the carrying of water and firewood. Children engage in a wide range of care activities, such as preparing food for themselves and others, determining what is consumed daily, collecting and using water, washing and cleaning, and providing a source of income for their own food, clothing and schooling. Due to such extensive domestic responsibilities, children tend to be exhausted prior to even getting to school, and they regularly arrive late. During school the children are often tired and hungry and as a consequence fall asleep in the classroom. Because of the extensive demands placed on the young child there is often a pattern of temporary withdrawal from school, sometimes followed by dropping out altogether. The implications of child withdrawal and absenteeism are profound since they lead to poor achievement, failure, perpetuated illiteracy, and lack of learning.

Ghanaian primary schools are failing to provide even minimum levels of learning and literacy to the majority of the pupils. Poor learning achievement in public schools has several interrelated causes:

- Children do not attend school regularly because the school is not an attractive place, the parents do not see their children learning much, the teachers are often absent, teaching methods are not entertaining or challenging, and there are competing demands on the child's time.
- Children drop out of school because of the high cost of primary education. They also drop out because of teacher violence, of distance of the child's house from school, and boring and uninspired teachers.
- Teaching methods are often poor, with most instruction being carried out through rote repetition. Available textbooks often go unused.
- There are no supplementary readers, or other teaching/learning equipment being used. Students are not allowed to take textbooks home.

- There is little external pedagogic or administrative supervision of the primary schools. Any supervision that takes place concentrates more on routine matters, without any sanctions being imposed.
- Teachers do not attend school regularly, often arrive late and close the school early. District officers tend to arrange meetings and events during school hours.
- Official instruction hours are very short.
- The curriculum is overcrowded with abstract factual information, forcing the teacher to spend instructional time teaching information that has no link to the child's life, family, or community.

### *Process—Goals and Objectives*

CHILDSCOPE started in November 1994 in six pilot schools and their surrounding 12 communities in the Afram Plains District of the Eastern Region in Ghana. The Afram Plains, a remote, rural area inhabited by settlers, experiences many of the problems plaguing Ghana's education system—low enrollment, attendance and continuation rates, a shortage of teachers willing to stay in rural communities, and low levels of pupil achievement. The Ministry of Education (MOE), in recognizing the need to address such issues, has developed a national education reform program—Free, Compulsory, Universal, Basic Education for all (FCUBE). CHILDSCOPE, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and initiated by UNICEF in collaboration with MOE, aims to develop a model that will assist Ghana in attaining the goals of FCUBE, namely to improve the quality of education management, to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and to increase access and participation.

More specifically the goals of CHILDSCOPE are to:

- improve primary education so children can read, write and be numerate by the end of primary school;
- maintain (or increase where necessary) enrollment; and
- increase attendance and continuation rates, especially among girls.

The CHILDSCOPE Project aimed to replace the schoolwork which led only to examinations in the primary schools of the Afram Plains with methods that promote active and critical thinking. Adopting the philosophy of the *Child-to-Child* approach, which is based on the belief that children not only need to have better health, but are also able to give information about better health to others, the CHILDSCOPE Project aimed to make school-based teaching and learning child-centered, and related to care and nutrition needs and responsibilities of children and to the general promotion of health. The project aimed to create links between basic education and intersectoral priorities of better health, nutrition, water and sanitation, hygiene, food production, and child care practices.

## ■ THE APPROACH

*Community involvement* was key at all stages of program design and implementation. By using participatory approaches to planning, the project aimed to involve all levels of the community in the development of appropriate goals for the program. Extensive interviews and observations were used as an integral part of the *TRIPLE A (AAA)* approach that was developed by UNICEF. This approach to program development highlights the importance of the role of local personnel as action researchers, and views the process of development (**A**ssessment of a given situation, **A**nalysis of the reasons why, and **A**ction based on the findings) as cyclical. Thus the program goals and ongoing objectives were developed and continually revisited and revised using locally-generated information. For instance, interviews were conducted with mothers, parents, teachers, head teachers, community elders, assemblymen, members of the village/town and children in diverse locations reflecting the multiple factors that create the child's learning environment: the home, school and community.

## ■ THE BENEFICIARIES

Rural Ghanaian primary school children, as well as their younger siblings (who they provide child care for on a regular basis) are the focus of the program. One of the key objectives is to maximize the primary school child's active learning capacity (ALC). In meeting the needs of the primary school child the CHILDSCOPE project integrates a wide range of people into the process. The child, school (which includes teachers and head teachers) and community (which includes parents, local opinion leaders and other community members) are all active participants in the formulation and facilitation of improvement strategies. Thus, in many ways, all involved in the project design and implementation process benefit from their active roles.

## ■ THE STRUCTURE

The CHILDSCOPE team is a network of organizations, decentralized departments, and individuals. In the beginning a core team was formed, bringing together representatives from the District Education Office (DEO), Community Development Office, the national Commission for Civic Education, the Afram Plains Development Organization (APDO)-a local NGO-and UNICEF. During CHILDSCOPE activities these core members are joined by other individuals from the appropriate organizations or departments, and individuals such as community members and teachers. For instance, during the participatory baseline data collection in the five expansion schools and their 25 communities, five teams of five or six people were formed, including a male and female community member, teacher, DEO official and either a Community Development, or NGO representative.

In addition to initiating new efforts that incorporate existing local and district-level knowledge, CHILDSCOPE strives to support and enhance initiatives and programs that already exist. For example in the Afram Plains, the District Health Management Team (DHMT) is primarily responsible for conducting the school health check-ups. CHILDSCOPE provides them with support such as transportation to the school and provision of the health cards. CHILDSCOPE also helps the DHMT develop activities based on the problem areas identified during the check-ups and through incorporating the Child-to-Child approach. Ultimately the DEO will absorb

CHILDSCOPE so it becomes part and parcel of their program. They will then draw on other resources in the district-NGOs, other decentralized departments and the District Administration.

In the Afram Plains the program found that liaisons with the appropriate district offices and creating a demand-driven process within the schools and communities was effective. (This process can take up to a few months, depending on on-going activities and other commitments.)

In the Afram Plains the following nine stages were followed:

**1) Meetings with District Education Office and District Assembly/Administration representatives:** discuss education and on-going development activities in the district; provide a briefing on objectives and strategies of CHILDSCOPE; and identify possible zones or circuits in which to work.

**2) District Level Workshop:** to provide an overview of CHILDSCOPE and get reactions; discuss recommended zones or circuits; and determine the roles and responsibilities of district departments towards education.

**3) CHILDSCOPE Team Meeting:** to discuss meetings and workshop, plan zonal meetings and develop criteria for selection of schools and communities (such as existing PTA, communal spirit, willingness of community members and teachers to take time to focus on improving education, willingness of parents to enroll all children of school age, especially girls (who often lag behind the boys)).

**4) Zonal Meetings:** representatives from each community within a zone meet to discuss issues in education, an overview of CHILDSCOPE and an explanation of criteria necessary to participate. The representatives then take the information back to the communities.

**5) School and Community Visits:** CHILDSCOPE team visits schools and feeder communities to discuss educational issues within the area, clarify CHILDSCOPE in a pictorial way, and discuss and agree upon criteria.

**6) Letter Submitted:** communities submit a letter of application to the District Education Office.

**7) Preliminary Selection:** team (which includes representatives from the DEO, DA and NGOs) meets to do a preliminary selection of the schools and their communities.

**8) Team presents selection to DEO and DA for final approval**

**9) Schools and Communities** are informed and a commitment form, stating that they accept the responsibility of working with CHILDSCOPE and that CHILDSCOPE will also do their best to assist the particular school and its communities, is signed by representatives from the school, communities and CHILDSCOPE team.

### *Selection Process: Lessons Learned ...*

The first six Afram Plains CHILDSCOPE schools were chosen based on meetings held with the DEO, DA and some opinion leaders, as well as through field visits. Now that CHILDSCOPE has been established, the team feels the selection process will be enriched if the community members and teachers participate more actively in the decision-making process. The stages described above were developed in preparation for the expansion of the project, and are based on the processes used by APDO, the local NGO, in its water and sanitation program. Hence, we now disseminate information through zonal meetings, discuss the program in detail with all community members and teachers, require that they apply, and have them sign a short commitment form if they so wish. Using a commitment form seems formal, but when it is short and simple, APDO has found it effective.

Community involvement is a central strategy for CHILDSCOPE. It is through the community that an enabling learning environment can be created for children both in the home or community and at school. Through community participation:

- community members develop a sense of ownership of their school;
- parents recognize their roles and responsibilities regarding their children's education;
- community members identify the efforts or contributions they can make to improve the school and learning environment, take action, and, after some time, assess the impact of their actions.

In order to get communities more involved in their schools to improve the quality of primary education, the CHILDSCOPE team in the Afram Plains decided to use an adaptation of *Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)*, a systematic research methodology that actively involves community members in identifying, analyzing and solving their problems. Based on local people's knowledge, perceptions and beliefs, PRA is a relaxed and informal process that generates in-depth discussion and information through a set of different activities. Today the methodology is referred to as *Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)*.

In *designing a PLA program* it is important to keep a number of principles in mind:

- learn from and with the local people (you are there to listen, observe, encourage discussion, and be an active participant in the process)
- use triangulation (incorporation of various perspectives)
- maintain an informal and flexible process (you are not more knowledgeable or "better" than the people in the community)
- PLA involves progressive learning (there is no blueprint for PLA)
- search for reasons why, causes of problems, trends and changes through facilitation (rather than merely collecting numbers)
- avoid collecting too much information

## *Curriculum/Program Activities*

The following detailed overview of the strategies and types of activities that have taken place as part of the CHILDSCOPE program in the Afram Plains gives a clear sense of the diversity of services being designed and implemented.

- **STRATEGY: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.** To improve school management and community participation in the affairs of the school.

Activities:

### 1. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)

- assess current school-community relationship
- create awareness of parents' responsibilities regarding children's education
- community establishes their role in improving school
- identify factors at home and at school that affect school performance (especially for girls)

### 2. PTA Development

- help identify role of PTA in school affairs
- assist in establishing PTA accounting system
- provide training for PTA executives

### 3. School-Community Interaction

- encourage teachers and community members to rely on each other as resources

- **STRATEGY: TEACHER DEVELOPMENT.** To enhance the quality of instruction through training teachers in child-centred, activity based methods.

Activities:

### 1. School-based Interventions

- regular school visits
- assist teachers to assess needs of teachers and pupils
- support teachers in developing timely action plans
- classroom observation and support

### 2. In-Service Workshops

- Child-to-Child methodology

- varying teaching methods
- using local materials to develop teaching aids

### 3. Supervision and support

- encourage circuit supervisors and inspectors to supervise teachers in a supportive manner
- provide head teacher training to improve supervision and management at school level

■ **STRATEGY: HEALTH PROMOTION.** To utilize health education as a tool to improve the learning abilities of children and to enable them to carry messages from the school to the community.

#### Activities:

##### 1. School Health Checkups and Health Promotion Activities

- link District Health Management Team efforts with CHILDSCOPE schools
- develop health promotion activities based on school health checkup results
- use of children as "health promoters" in communities

##### 2. Advocacy for Child-to-Child

- bring school and community together for better health through use of children as "health promoters"

■ **STRATEGY: NETWORKING AND CAPACITY BUILDING.** To work in coalition with network of communities and the Government of Ghana to implement and monitor project activities.

##### 1. Advisory Committees

- district and national levels

##### 2. District Workshops

- link CHILDSCOPE to efforts of district offices and NGOs

##### 3. Training Through Involvement

- train and incorporate local facilitators (teachers, community members, district officials ...) in all activities.

## *Training*

CHILDSCOPE provides support and training to teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In the Afram Plains taking time to develop a clear understanding of the teachers'

perspectives on teaching and education in general was critical. There was some initial suspicion from the teachers, and concern that the CHILDSCOPE team was trying to introduce more work to their already tight schedules. Progress was made once it was realized that CHILDSCOPE was there to play a supportive role based on their needs and concerns. Teachers were asked to identify both issues at their school and their needs in terms of addressing these issues.

As activities or new approaches are tried, new ideas always emerge. The activities and approach that we use in the Afram Plains developed over time, based on the outcomes and lessons learned of activities that we tried. For instance, after conducting a Child-to-Child workshop at the beginning of our work with teachers, we realized that we needed to step back, observe and find out what teachers felt their needs were. Hence, the classroom observations and needs assessment activities. This helped in tailoring workshops and other activities to the identified needs of the teachers, children and schools in general. We also came to realize that CHILDSCOPE alone could not handle the classroom observations, visits and workshops. We therefore began to make a concerted effort to involve those people from the GES (circuit supervisors, inspectors and head teachers) mainly responsible for such activities.

In the Afram Plains a number of different workshops have been implemented: Child-to-Child, how to use local resources to develop learning-teaching materials (LTMs), how to vary teaching techniques, and how to enhance school-community interaction.

In terms of the Child-to-Child health work in schools in the Afram Plains, a workshop was held for teachers, head teachers and PTA representatives from the six original CHILDSCOPE schools. Those who attended were then expected to go back to their respective schools and train their fellow teachers. They were then given support in the planning and facilitation of the training for their colleagues.

Support has been given to the circuit supervisors, inspectors and head teachers to supervise in a supportive and encouraging manner rather than in a top-down, directive way. This has been done through workshops and meetings, and by involving them in CHILDSCOPE activities. In order for the impact of CHILDSCOPE to be sustained, the DEO needs to build on these initial activities. In the Afram Plains the focus has been on management issues, such as holding staff meetings and keeping records, and supervision issues, such as observing and encouraging teachers in their teaching and writing and uses of lesson plans. Head teachers and teachers have been encouraged to develop timely action plans, and to record interesting events, lessons, efforts at improving the school etc., in a school logbook.

### *Appropriate Training : Learning from Experience*

Lessons from working in the Afram Plains with teacher development:

- clearly explain your intentions to the teachers
- emphasize that you are trying to help them improve their teaching skills
- make teaching and learning more fun

- facilitate a process that helps teachers articulate their needs
- design and implement workshops and other activities according to identified needs
- listen and be sensitive to the teachers' perspectives on issues that are raised
- support teachers on-going efforts in the classroom and school
- provide advice in a supportive rather than directive way
- encourage teachers to interact more regularly with the parents of their pupils and with the community in general
- integrate the DEO into the program from the start
- promote supportive supervision by circuit supervisors, inspectors and head teachers

The project also provided support to the National Training Institute for Early Childhood Educators to upgrade their training program. The vision was for it to operate as a resource center for training programs.

***Aim:*** To improve the professional competence and skills of a core group of educators placed at the national center and at the community level.

***Training design:*** Covering all aspects of child care and development to include pedagogy, psychology, health and nutrition, communication, social development, and the development of children with disabilities.

***Goals:*** The training program on ECD designed for trainers and practitioners at national and community levels will become a formalized curriculum recognized by the Ministry of Education, Health, Social Welfare, Community development, and other institutions.

## ***Knowledge Creation and Dissemination***

One of the key resources that has emerged from the CHILDSCOPE work in the Afram Plains is the publication: ***The CHILDSCOPE Approach: A Handbook for Improving Primary Education Through Local Initiative***. This publication is designed as a practical guide, not a blueprint, and is a resource that aims to serve as a guide to CHILDSCOPE's approach to community / school based, participatory primary education reform. Its intention is to act as a resource to help generate ideas that are appropriate to the area in which the approach is being used. This handbook offers:

- descriptions of the approaches and processes used to enhance community participation, teacher development, health promotion, networking and capacity building
- practical experiences from the CHILDSCOPE project in the Afram Plains
- advice to practitioners based on lessons learned
- references for further information

A **Head teachers Handbook** was written by the GES with input from head teachers, donors and education institutes in Ghana. It is a useful resource for schools and serves as a basis for activities to facilitate with head teachers.

## *Sustainability*

Working through a network of NGOs, the MOE and GES at the district and national levels, decentralized departments, and the communities and schools, CHILDSCOPE aims to build capacity and forge new links to improve basic education. There are, however, a number of issues regarding sustainability, including the institutional arrangements, financial mechanisms, and the CHILDSCOPE activity processes themselves. Through identifying these issues and being conscious of them from the beginning, a systematic way can be developed to deal with them.

## *Institutional Arrangements and Financial Mechanisms*

As noted, CHILDSCOPE was initiated by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF and is implemented at the district level primarily through the DEO, NGOs and the appropriate decentralized departments (e.g., health related activities carried out by the DHMT), with support from the DA. Funding for the program originates from the Canadian International Development Association (CIDA), which is provided to UNICEF as a component of support to girls education. UNICEF then passes the funds through ProNet, the national NGO, which in turn gives it to APDO, the local NGO, based on annual and quarterly activity plans. ProNet is responsible for the financial management of CHILDSCOPE but is not the de-facto budget holder. All budgets are submitted to ProNet by the local NGO, and ProNet advises the local NGO on budgeting and administrative issues. Monthly reports and expenditure returns are submitted to ProNet by the local NGO and ProNet summarizes the reports and presents returns to UNICEF on a quarterly basis. A number of sustainability issues have been identified given these institutional and financial arrangements.

The program will be sustained as long as there is:

- a willingness by the MOE and GES to accept CHILDSCOPE as an approach to implementing FCUBE
- a willingness by the government to accept NGOs as partners in education reform
- the ability of the NGOs to plan, implement, monitor and administer
- a commitment by the DEO to improve basic education
- an increase in financial commitment by NGOs and Government, including the MOE, GES, and DA. (CIDA and UNICEF cannot continue to fund the program on a long term basis, so the costs need to be absorbed by the Government and NGOs.) There are a number of costs that CHILDSCOPE currently covers for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of activities. These include fuel, vehicle maintenance, and resource fees for

facilitators and necessary materials such as stationary. In order to be sustainable, such costs need to be met locally—i.e., through the DEO and other district departments themselves.

## *The CHILDSCOPE Process*

CHILDSCOPE processes have evolved over time and, in the Afram Plains center, around five main strategies—community involvement, teacher development, health promotion, networking, and capacity building. There are a number of sustainability and replicability issues related to the CHILDSCOPE processes as they have occurred in the Afram Plains:

- **Sense of ownership:** In order for CHILDSCOPE to be sustainable there needs to be "ownership" at the community, school, district and national levels. There needs to be a sense of internally influenced or motivated process and activity design and implementation. Those within the district need to be encouraged to take initiative with support from the CHILDSCOPE team. This has happened to some degree at the community level in the Afram Plains (PTA meetings, communal labor on the school, increased teacher-parent interaction). However, this initiative taking has not occurred as often at the school, district or national levels. Planning and directing of activities needs to shift from the external—UNICEF and ProNet representatives — to the internal—community members, teachers, head teachers and the DEO.
- **Availability of human resources:** The sustainability of CHILDSCOPE depends on the availability, commitment and skills of local human resources. The project is at a point where the district offices, rather than individuals, need to be involved. Without developing the district offices' abilities to address issues of primary education reform, CHILDSCOPE will never be sustainable. Moreover, as expansion gets underway, it will be impossible to cover the targeted schools and communities without additional skilled local people.
- **Providing a formal link between community and school-based activities and outcomes to district departments and the DA:** To mobilize resources and involve district departments, it is important that a formal relationship be established between CHILDSCOPE and the appropriate district departments and DA. Action plans developed through the PLAs in the communities, or issues that arise in the schools during the course of activities, often need the assistance of district officials (e.g., school infrastructure, chalk in the classroom). In the Afram Plains, CHILDSCOPE began forging these links on an informal basis but is now trying to formalize linkages.

## *Lessons Learned*

- Identify and build on the strengths of existing institutions.
- Build the capacity at all levels—community, school, DEO, DA, other decentralized departments and the MOE and GES at the national level.
- To achieve the tenets of FCUBE, it is critical to merge the knowledge and experiences of people from all backgrounds.

- For primary schools to become community-based, community members and teachers must be involved in identifying and analyzing issues at their schools and in developing solutions.
- NGOs and the Community Development Office, with their experience in working directly with communities, can work hand in hand with the DEO to generate community involvement. Furthermore, the DEO can enhance their work with the teachers by incorporating some of the participatory approaches often used by NGOs.

### *Networking and Capacity Building Tips*

- create a network of organizations, departments and individuals at national, district and community levels
- use inter-disciplinary teams of facilitators, including community members and teachers
- identify and incorporate existing knowledge and experiences into development of CHILDSCOPE in your area
- support and enhance existing district, community and school programs and initiatives
- create fora to share ideas, identify and address issues, and coordinate efforts at and between national, district and community levels
- build capacity at all levels—within communities, schools, DEO and other decentralized departments, DA, NGOs, etc.
- promote local and district "ownership" of CHILDSCOPE efforts
- provide practical, field-based training to enhance concepts covered in a workshop

Certain lessons were also learned with respect to building **gender awareness**:

- include women as team members
- encourage female team members to take a lead role in facilitating
- help people (including facilitators, district officials, community members, teachers and children) become aware of their gender biases and how to overcome these
- develop strategies to encourage women to participate fully in community meetings and activities, school based activities and district workshops

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*Early Childhood Counts: Programming Resources for Early Childhood Care and Development.*  
CD-ROM. The Consultative Group on ECCD. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1999.