

# **Improving early years education & health in rural Ghana through community-run Play and Reading Schemes.**

## **Independent End-line Evaluation**

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Commissioned by Lively Minds UK

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## List of acronyms

BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CEO	chief executive officer
CGI	Common Ground Initiative
CHPS	Community-based Health Planning and Services
CS	circuit supervisor
CSO	civil society organisation
CR	Comic Relief
DDE	District Director of Education
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECCD	early childhood care and development
ECCE	early child care and education
ECD	early childhood development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FGD	focus group discussion
GES	Ghana Education Service
GFD	Ghana Federation of the Disabled
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GNECC	Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
GOG	Government of Ghana
GPEG	Global Education Partnership Grant
INSET	In-service Training
JHS	junior secondary school
KG	kindergarten
LM	Lively Minds
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NNED	Northern Network for Education and Development
NR	Northern Region
PTA	parent teacher association
PTR	pupil teacher ratio
PTTR	pupil trained teacher ratio
R4D	Research for Development Institute
SfL	School for Life
SMC	school management committee
TLM	teaching and learning materials
TOT	training of trainers
UER	Upper East Region
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VM	volunteer mother

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## 1. Executive Summary

This independent evaluation was commissioned by Lively Minds and its funding partners, Comic Relief and UNICEF, to assess its Play Scheme and Reading Scheme projects which were funded between the period between March 2013 and February 2016. The focus of the evaluation was on process, impact and scalability. Its purpose was to enable Lively Minds (LM) and its funders to understand both *what* differences the project has made and *how* it has made those differences in order to inform future design and implementation.

### Evaluation methodology

The evaluation took place over a period of two months and included a brief desk review of project documents, five days of community and district visits, and in-depth and follow-up interviews. The visits to four communities and two districts took place between 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and consisted of 18 focus groups and 20 key informant interviews based on a semi-structured interview guide, as well as guided walks of the schools, observation of the Play Schemes in-session and home visits. Stakeholders interviewed included the primary beneficiaries (Volunteer Mothers, KG teachers), non-volunteer mothers, Primary 1 and head teachers at the schools, other household members of the Volunteer Mothers (VMs) including husbands and older siblings of the children in the Play and Reading Schemes. At district level, interviews took place with Lively Minds staff in Tamale and Bolgatanga, circuit supervisors (CS) of the selected schools, District Directors of Education (DDEs) and District Early Childhood Development (ECD) Coordinators of the Kumbungu and Bongo Districts. Nine (9) telephone/Skype interviews were held with Lively Minds UK staff, Lively Minds' funders and non-governmental organisations working in Ghana with similar objectives or approaches.

The four communities were selected to be a representative sample based on: regional representation, Model 2 communities (in order to demonstrate the most recent strategy), being in existence for as long as possible, running both Play *and* Reading Schemes so that both could be observed, a mix of more and less successful Schemes, and location near and far from the district capital.

### A note on the Reading Schemes

It was not possible for the evaluation team to gather sufficient evidence to independently evaluate the Reading Schemes as many are yet to take off in earnest. However, two focus group discussions with Scheme members suggested the readers and listeners are finding them useful: increasing their confidence and boldness to speak, their ability to read, speak English more fluently, construct good sentences, and pronounce and spell words. They have also increased their interest in reading and in books and the amount of reading they do, which they feel has improved their overall school performance. The evaluation team thought that the Reading Schemes could potentially be used to spread the ethos of the Play Schemes to the older classes. However, this would require additional organisational capacity on the part of LM, the community, school authorities and Ghana Education Service (GES) district offices, and ownership by the last three stakeholders. If these cannot be achieved, then LM's energies may be best channelled into its work in early childhood development (ECD).

Most of the following findings focus on the Play Schemes.

## KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation found that the objectives of the project funded by Comic Relief and UNICEF had largely been met or exceeded, and that their impacts went beyond those intended. The

Play Schemes also offer a potentially transformative approach to community participation in educational development, and can serve as a channel for other development initiatives that seek to reach young learners. At a time when the Ghana government is striving to set up its kindergarten (KG) system throughout the country, Lively Minds' Play Scheme model has the potential to provide a sound framework that is systematic and results-orientated, but which also affects the quality of people's relationships, their moral codes and standards of living. It promotes peace, non-violent discipline, inclusion of marginalised children and brings joy and confidence to mothers, children and thus families and communities as a whole. It can be used to implement, in low cost and practical ways, several aspects of GES's National KG Operational Plan that was developed in 2012. Indeed, it demonstrates that government policy is possible and workable in spite of the resource limitations faced by the education system and by some of the poorest communities in the country.

Specifically, the evaluation found that:

**The Play Scheme is an effective, low-cost, replicable model that responds to many educational, social and health challenges simultaneously.** Stakeholders confirmed the findings from Lively Minds' monitoring results, reporting clear increases in KG children's cognitive skills in just 6 months. In addition, the Scheme achieves:

- Social and emotional impacts on its primary beneficiaries (KG children, Volunteer Mothers and KG teachers), such as effective alternatives to violent discipline and dispute resolution and increased confidence.
- Impacts on non-school hours as much as school hours, and on home as much as school. It also strengthens home-school relationships.
- Increased attendance of both children and teachers, reduction in pupil:teacher ratios (PTRs) and specialised, practical, KG teacher training at very low cost. The model can handle large numbers (a major challenge in many public schools in Ghana, especially in rural communities), achieve small group levels of attention for each child, and combines pedagogical and organisational aspects of teacher training.

It also offers:

- An easy-to-learn, structured and replicable model of good KG pedagogical practice using fun, play-based methods, that places the child at the centre, nurtures children's enjoyment of learning and first language development. This leads to making play-based methods real, understood and respected by parents and teachers alike.
- An ethos as well as a methodology through its conviction that communities can control their own development, through volunteering and using locally available and low-cost resources to achieve high quality results.
- A relatively simple to administer but thorough monitoring system that results in rapid remedial action, improvements in the model, as well as impact data that can be used in future.
- An on-going capacity-building mechanism through its monthly Top-up Training, enabling programme refinement while also maintaining volunteer learning and motivation.
- A channel that can incorporate health and other development and personal development content and skills, reaching two hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups at once, namely young children and marginalised women in deprived communities.

- Marked improvements in the health of KG children and their families through the use of 'Tippy Taps' for hand-washing, and education on diarrhoea, malaria and other preventable diseases.
- A system for producing low-cost or no-cost, locally adapted teaching and learning materials.

**The model needs some modification to be sustainable and scalable.**

The evaluation team found some weaknesses in the approach used to implement the model, and thus in the theory of change, which could affect the prospects of long term sustainability. The model is conceived as community-based, rather than community-driven, and focuses heavily on working with the primary stakeholders (KG teachers, VMs, and KG children). Those who have the power to help sustain the Schemes in the future have not been fully integrated into the Scheme. Model 2 is heavily focused on implementation by GES, without corresponding ownership by communities.

As a result, those in authority based in the community, both outside the school and even inside the school, do not always feel a sense of ownership or responsibility for the Schemes. However, the evaluation found a widespread willingness among community members to play a part in making them work.

LM and its Play Schemes have few connections with other government or CSO actors, at community, district or national levels. This is understandable for this phase of its development as limited resources have had to be focused on developing and implementing the model.

The work of promoting and establishing the Schemes is currently reliant on LM, particularly in terms of planning, monitoring, maintaining standards, introducing new ideas and fund-raising. This is also inevitable at this stage, and LM is keenly aware of the need to pull back, while not doing so too soon when the model has not been consolidated. LM also understands the need to build the capacity of its Ghana office to be ready for scaling up.

The KG children are widely acknowledged to be able to do things that children two or more years their senior cannot do. This raises questions about how to spread, not just the methods but, the ethos of the Play Scheme throughout the schools.

**The Scheme is strongly aligned with national KG policy and can be readily mainstreamed.** The 2012 National Operational Plan for KG specifically recommends many of the things that the Play Scheme provides, including the need to scale-up good practice, improve home-school relationships and prioritise the training of KG teachers. There is therefore every reason for GES, and its development partners that have committed to supporting early child care and education (ECCE) in Ghana such as UNICEF, DFID and the World Bank, to give this programme their full support by providing long-term funding, active technical partnership and wider public acknowledgement.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. Continue with and nurture the same approaches, content, and ethos to the Play Schemes, but modify the model from a community-based to community-driven one).**
- 2. Consider putting the Reading Scheme on hold until sufficient dedicated human and material resources can be devoted to its development and with buy-in and commitment from GES.**



**3. Use a ‘bottom up’ approach to scaling up, focusing on partnership at the district level,** where the District Education Office (DEO) of GES leads a process of replication (“saturation”<sup>1</sup>) and expansion, and then champions the Schemes within GES more widely. In so doing, LM:

- retains its focus on prioritising the most deprived KG children and on developing its inclusive practice in order to reach the most marginalised children, including those with disabilities and ethnic minorities.
- tests strategies to adapt the Scheme to run successfully in different environments such as in urban communities, and in better resourced and organised schools (ref. Recommendation 4, iv).

**4. Build alliances, to advocate for ECCE in Ghana and to support scaling up.**

A fully costed Operational Plan has been drawn up to support the implementation of Government of Ghana KG policy. GES needs partners to help implement this plan. LM’s Play Scheme model is well aligned with the Operational Plan and can help to move it forward. It is recommended that:

- i. LM-Ghana joins with others who can offer a contribution to the delivery of part of the National KG Operational Plan and considers itself as part of a national effort to implement it.
- ii. LM-Ghana, supported by LM-UK, organises with others to set up an Alliance for ECCE, plan a collegial way forward, and periodically (annually) monitors progress in a joined up and mutually supportive manner. Also contributes to (or leads) the establishment of an Alliance for ECCE website with allied social media platforms to create a community of practice in support of ECCE, sharing progress and fostering collaboration.
- iii. LM uses its evidence base, including this evaluation report, to argue the case for play-based and child-centred learning, as well as for working successfully with community volunteers and building pathways for government-community collaboration at community level. Partner with academics in Ghana in support of this.

Replication and scaling up does not have to be done by LM alone. The model for the Scheme can be taught to others who are interested in implementing it. Towards this:

- iv. LM should continue to actively document and disseminate its evidence and also position itself to offer technical support to others wishing to implement the model, such as those in less deprived communities or schools.

**5. Provision of long term funding support for ECCE in Ghana**

Establishing ECCE in Ghana, and the Play Scheme model in particular, requires long-term funding. Continued piecemeal and short-term funding will be inefficient and poor value for money. It is recommended that:

- i. LM uses the findings from this evaluation, and other evidence it has already, to secure long term funding to:

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<sup>1</sup> A term used by LM itself to mean replicating the Scheme to the point where there is a critical mass that will influence the whole.



- continue its work at district level, including development of strategies to increase community-ownership and replication in other districts
  - work with others to develop an Alliance for ECCE
  - together with the Alliance, roll out aspects of the National KG Operational Plan which are in line with its mission.
- ii. UNICEF-Ghana, having invested in this pilot that has demonstrated excellent results, unites with other development partners working in ECCE in Ghana to assure long-term funding to LM and other organisations implementing aspects of the National KG Operational Plan.
- iii. Comic Relief continues to fund LM-UK and Ghana in support of the internal change management process implied by handing over and supporting government (GES) to mainstream (go to scale).

## 2. Background

The **Government of Ghana** mainstreamed kindergarten (KG) into basic education in 2007, in line with the Education for All goals established in Dakar in 2002, and the Millennium Development Goals 2 & 3. Through its Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010-2020, it prioritised expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE). To carry out this commitment, the Ghana Education Service (GES) over a period of 18 months (July 2011 to September 2012), developed a comprehensive, costed and prioritized plan to scale up quality KG education in Ghana entitled: Programme to Scale Up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana. This was achieved through a highly consultative process involving public and private sector stakeholders, and with the support of a small national and international expert team. The development of the Operational Plan was co-funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation.

Established in Ghana in 2008, **Lively Minds** aims to improve ECCE by setting up high quality educational Play Schemes in kindergartens. These Schemes give kindergarten children access to age-appropriate and interactive games that are designed to improve cognitive skills, school preparedness and health of children. LM's programme also aims to bring about behavioural change in caregivers, so they can provide better ECCE for their children. To achieve this objective Lively Minds trains kindergarten teachers and 30 Mothers from each community, targeting marginalised women, to run the Schemes themselves as Volunteers so that they have the skills, tools and motivation to run and sustain educational Play Schemes and provide better ECCE for their children at home.

The 57 Play Schemes LM has now set up, aim to provide a child-friendly learning environment, where children enjoy learning and discovering through play, using a variety of stimulating materials, in a caring environment. Children are divided into small groups with 5:1 child/volunteer ratio to benefit from small group work and care. The Schemes also incorporate health practices, in particular handwashing. The approach relies on Volunteer Mothers who are trained to run the Play Schemes on a voluntary basis using local materials. The project uses a highly structured training model that is replicated in staggered phases. It has aimed to standardise its model as far as possible, in order to establish proof of concept and also scalability.

In addition to the Play Schemes, LM has also set up Reading Schemes in 26 deprived rural primary schools. Each school is given a collection of books, receives 8 training sessions and teachers and "Readers" (children in Upper Primary Schools) are trained to tell stories using pictures in the books, and to translate these into the local language. Once trained, the Readers run weekly story telling sessions to the lower primary classes.

LM has refined its Play Scheme model. It began with 'Model 1' which involved LM staff implementing the programme directly. After an internal evaluation, it decided to change to 'Model 2' from October 2014, using a training-of-trainers approach and working through the Ghana Education Service in order to scale up and reach more schools and children. Comic Relief UK funded its Model 1 work from March 2013 and contributed to Model 2 up to February 2016, while UNICEF has funded its Model 2 approach which is intended as a pilot test to establish proof of concept, and identify a pathway to scale.

**This independent evaluation** was commissioned by Lively Minds to assess its Play Scheme and Reading Scheme projects funded by Comic Relief and UNICEF (March 2013-February 2016), focusing on process, impact and scalability. Its purpose is to enable Lively Minds and its funders to understand both *what* differences the project has made and *how* it

has made those differences in order to inform future design and implementation. The terms of reference can be found as Appendix 1.

### **3. Methodology and timeframe**

The evaluation took place over a period of two months beginning with a desk-based review of project documents (see List of References in Appendix 2), followed by five days of community and district visits, and in-depth and follow-up interviews by Skype and phone. (See Appendix 3 for the list of people interviewed, and Appendix 4 for notes on national context and the work of other organisations).

The visits to four communities and two districts took place between 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and consisted of 18 focus groups and 20 key informant interviews based on a semi-structured interview guide, as well as guided walks of the schools. In the schools, the evaluators observed the Play Schemes in-session (only one school with a Reading Scheme was chosen and there was no session on the day of visit) and placed emphasis on hearing from (or observing) the primary beneficiaries of the project (Volunteer Mothers, KG teachers, children in the Play Scheme). Other stakeholders interviewed included non-volunteer mothers, Primary 1 and Head teachers at the schools, other household members of the Volunteer Mothers including husbands and older siblings of the children in the Play and Reading Schemes. Some of these took place during home visits. At district level, interviews took place with Lively Minds staff in Tamale and Bolgatanga, and Circuit Supervisors of the selected schools, District Directors of Education and district GES personnel in charge of Early Childhood Development (ECD) of the Kumbungu and Bongo districts.

Nine (9) telephone/skype interviews were held with Lively Minds UK staff, Lively Minds' funders (Comic Relief, UNICEF and Research for Development Institute) and non-governmental organisations in Ghana with similar objectives or using similar approaches e.g. using or promoting play and working with and through volunteers or GES structures, as well as with national level personnel of the Ghana Education Service (GES). The evaluation team would have liked to have interviewed a wider circle of potential partners, but there was insufficient time for this.

#### **Community selection**

Given the requirements of the terms of reference, as well as the short time in the field, the team aimed to hear from a representative sample that would provide an overview of Lively Minds' work, while also potentially showing differences and comparisons. The emphasis in going to the field was to complement the documented data, and gain an insight into the work, recognising that the data gathered in the communities would only be indicative.

The four communities were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- i. Two in each region where LM works (Northern and Upper East)
- ii. Location in the districts where the majority of LM's work takes place (over half of the communities in NR where LM works are in Kumbungu District)
- iii. Model 2 communities - as LM had already decided on this strategy as a way forward to achieving scale.
- iv. Having been in existence for as long as possible given the above point, in order to give the most chance to see change (thus no schemes that had just recently been set up were selected).
- v. Running both Play *and* Reading Schemes, so that both could be observed at once, and potentially the dynamic between the two, though with emphasis on Play Schemes as they form the majority of the work.

- vi. A mix of more and less successful schemes – evidenced by data on the numbers of VMs and children participating in the schemes and challenges with teacher and VM attendance.
- vii. Near and far from the district capital - to compare the Model working in both remote and relatively urban communities. For this reason, one community in Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly was selected together with a more remote one in Bongo District instead of two in Bongo. In addition, it had both Play and Reading Schemes.

Communities Visited		
Community	District	Reason for selection
UPPER EAST REGION		
Beo Kasingo	Bongo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating since July 2015</li> <li>More remote location – one of furthest from LM office</li> </ul>
Nyariga Doone	Bolga Municipal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating since December 2013</li> <li>One of the most urban communities where LM works</li> <li>Runs both play and reading schemes</li> <li>Large numbers</li> <li>Many more girls in the play scheme</li> </ul>
NORTHERN REGION		
Tibung	Kumbungu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating since November 2014</li> <li>Large numbers</li> <li>Challenges with KG teacher attendance*</li> </ul> <p>*(Ref.: See data p25 UNICEF narrative report Sept 15)</p>
Voggu	Kumbungu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating since November 2014</li> <li>Challenges with teacher attendance</li> </ul>

## The Reading Schemes

Comic Relief provided a grant towards setting up 30 Play Schemes and 30 Reading Schemes over 3 years. The UNICEF grant was for Play Schemes only. The target beneficiaries of the Reading Schemes are 6-13 year olds. The expected outcomes were:

- Increased language and comprehension skills for Reading Scheme “Listeners” (children aged 5-8) and “Readers” (children aged 11-13)*
- Improved school attainment for participants of Play and Reading Schemes and Readers*

From the data provided by LM to the evaluation team, LM had established 13 Reading Schemes from April 2013 to October 2014, all in the Model 1 schools where 13 Play Schemes had earlier been established. Two additional Reading Schemes were established in Kootingli and Yipeilinaayili, bringing the total to 15. Eleven more Reading Schemes were recently established in Model 2 schools but had only become operational in January 2016, the month this evaluation began so they could not be assessed for impact.

It was apparent that LM has, understandably, with the change of approach and UNICEF funding being only for Play Schemes and just for a year, focused much of its effort in the last year on the Play Schemes. Despite this, to fulfil the terms of reference of this evaluation, one of the four communities (Nyariga Doone) visited was selected because it ran a Reading Scheme as well as a Play Scheme. Unfortunately, there was no reading session on the day of visit by the evaluation team because the original date for the visit was changed due to the teachers participating in a training programme.

For all the above limitations, it was not possible for the evaluation team to gather sufficient evidence during the field work to independently evaluate the Reading Scheme in any depth. However, during two focus group discussions with Scheme members (one of Class 6 readers of 12/13 years of age and one of Class 2 listeners of 8/9 years of age – all girls) as well as within interviews with parents and teachers in Nyariga Doone, the following changes/benefits of the Reading Scheme were shared:

The readers said that the Reading Scheme had:

- Increased their confidence and boldness to speak, especially in front of people
- Increased their ability to read, learn new words and understand what they have read.
- Improved their language skills, their ability to speak English more fluently, construct good sentences, pronounce and spell words.
- Increased their interest in reading and in books and increased the amount of reading they do.
- Improved their school attendance, as they did not want to miss reading to the children
- Improved their overall school performance, as they were able to read their own questions and answer them during exams, read their class notes and generally understand text better than before.

The children said that they had not experienced any negative effects on their studies so far because the time used to read to the younger children is during their break period. They also prefer to read to the younger children than to their teachers because they learn a lot from doing it and it has helped build a good relationship with the younger children.

*“The younger children will always call on me to teach them whether at school or in the house and they listen to me and respect me very much.”*

*“We also learn the good lessons from the stories we tell to the children and practice them”.*

The ‘listeners’ in Class 2, who had been listening since Class 1, similarly shared their enthusiasm for the Scheme, explaining that it had impacted on their attendance, their ability to read, as well as on other aspects of learning. Their strengthened relationship with older children made them more approachable in general, and thus a source of help with their studies as well as other things.

The children interviewed felt that other classes (4 & 5) should be trained so that when they leave, the scheme will be sustained, and that the school authorities should integrate the scheme into the timetable so that it becomes a regular practice.

With the change from Play Scheme Model 1 to Model 2, and the priority attention currently being given to the Play Schemes, it is too early to arrive at any conclusions about the Reading Schemes, except to say that the concept holds a lot of potential, particularly if synergy can be created between the two schemes. However, the Reading Scheme requires significant attention for it to be set up and sustained. It is not something that can simply be added on to the Play Schemes as they involve a different set of people (P5 and P6 children, trainers and skills in handling older children, supervision by different teachers), uses a different model, and requires different specialist knowledge. Nevertheless, the overall management could be common (SMCs, community leadership, head teachers, circuit supervisors and support from LM). Going forward, the reading Schemes require additional organisational capacity on the part of LM, the community, school authorities and GES district

offices, and ownership by the last three stakeholders. If these cannot be attained, then LM's energies are best channelled into its work in ECCE.

#### 4. WHAT difference has the project made to people's lives?

In order to assess the extent to which the project outcomes had been achieved, the outcomes from the two projects funded by Comic Relief and UNICEF were merged by key beneficiary group for the purposes of this combined evaluation, see Table 1 below. The two projects had closely related, though slightly differing, outcome level objectives. A complete table of the outcomes can be found in Appendix 5:

Table 1: Combined Project Outcomes (CR and UNICEF)	
<b>Children - Play</b>	Improved cognitive skills and school readiness of participating children aged 3-5 (CR) 4-6 (UNICEF)
<b>Children – Reading</b>	Increased language and comprehension skills for Reading Scheme “Listeners” (children aged 5-8) and “Readers” (children aged 11-13)
<b>Children - Play &amp; Reading</b>	Improved school attainment for participants of Play and Reading Schemes and Readers
<b>Volunteer Mothers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved confidence and wellbeing of Play Scheme Volunteer Mothers</li> <li>Improved capacities of rural Mothers to provide quality ECD at Play Schemes and at home.</li> <li>Increased understanding and awareness of child health issues by Volunteer Mothers</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers</b>	Increased capacity and performance of Teachers
<b>Health</b>	Reported reduction in diarrheal diseases and improved health of children living in the communities where the projects are set up.

The following section seeks to assess the degree to which the outcomes above have been achieved and in what ways. As LM already has extensive statistical data, emphasis has been placed on how the beneficiaries expressed the changes in their lives.

#### The Difference to the Children

LM sought to:

- *improve the cognitive skills and school readiness of participating children aged 3-5 (CR) 4-6 (UNICEF),*
- *increase the language and comprehension skills for Reading Scheme “Listeners” (children aged 5-8) and “Readers” (children aged 11-13), and*
- *improve school attainment for participants of Play and Reading Schemes and Readers.*

To do this LM:

- Set up 57 Play Schemes (26 Model 1 and 31 Model 2) and 26 Reading Schemes
- Enrolled 6,493 children in Play and Reading Schemes – (3,268 girls and 3,225 boys)
- Trained 62 teachers (under the UNICEF funding), 2,162 VMs and 22 Circuit Supervisors
- Conducted 2 community meetings in each community
- Ran quarterly ‘Top-Up Training’ workshops for the KG teachers. The teachers in turn provided ‘Monthly Activities’ workshops for the VMs, covering 21 topics: parenting, nutrition, revision, malaria, financial capability, self-esteem, advanced games,

parenting/stimulation at home, two sessions on disabilities, wellbeing, communication, oral hygiene, littering, make believe, advance games, team building, bush burning, new school/term/enrolment/revision, decision making; celebration/new games. Husbands were invited to the sessions on nutrition, malaria, financial capability, disabilities and oral hygiene

A fuller description of the approach can be found in Appendix 6.

### **Improved cognitive skills.**

Lively Minds' most recently published data analysis<sup>2</sup>, shows impressive improvement in the overall child cognitive performance of the children enrolled in the Play Scheme. At baseline, in the Model 1 schools, the overall cognitive score was 47%, which increased to 66% after 3 months and to 73% after 6 months from the baseline. In the Model 2 schools, the overall cognitive score was 49% at baseline and 64% 3 months later<sup>3</sup>. The result after 6 months was not yet available at the time of the evaluation. The results in areas such as: semantic knowledge, patterns and sorting, following instructions, and animal sorting all showed significant improvements.

These changes are significant and parents, older siblings, teachers, school authorities at both community and district level, and community leaders in all the four communities visited as part of the evaluation were unanimous in their view that the Play Scheme participants had both greatly improved their cognitive skills and were more ready for school as a result of the project. The skills most mentioned were the ability to recognise and differentiate between letters, numbers, colours and objects such as animals, and their ability to count. Parents, teachers and older siblings all marvelled at the rapid change that the programme can bring about, as well as the age at which such standards have been achieved. As an older sibling in Tibung remarked: *"It surprises me because when I was her age I couldn't have done any of those things!"*. The Head Teacher of Beo Kasingo observed: *"They are now ready for P1!"* and one parent concluded: *"With this rate of learning, the number of years spent in basic school can reduce!"*. Many interviewees estimated that the children were two years ahead of the usual standard for this age. Several head teachers, P1 teachers, parents (VMs, husbands and non-volunteer mothers) and circuit supervisors observed that they are able to do things that children in P3 are not able to do. Sadly, some mentioned classes even older than this. There was a general belief that the children had been given the foundations for literacy and numeracy and that this was likely to improve their academic performance when they move up the school. Parents also referred to school now having clear benefits: *"Previously our children only went to school to dirty their clothes for us to wash!"* (a non-volunteer mother) and to the children learning useful things: *"The children can now check on phone numbers for us."* (a non-volunteer mother). Others predicted the risk of the gains from the Play Scheme being lost if early primary education is not well managed to support the children to continue their rapid progress.

Several people alluded to the change in *all-round* cognition, not just the skills. The SMC Chairperson in Voggu observed: *"It has enhanced the ability of the children to understand what they are being taught."* A volunteer mother in Tibung reflected that the Scheme has provided an *overall* improvement in the children's intellectual and social development: *"Before the play scheme started, the children were not holistically (including academically) performing well like the children in KG do now."*

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<sup>2</sup>Lively Minds' report to UNICEF, December 2015

<sup>3</sup> Lively Minds' report to UNICEF: December 2015, pp10



In addition to the formally taught cognitive skills, many other skills, capacities and changes in the KG pupils were described by both those directly and indirectly involved in the scheme. Significantly, the people observing the scheme from afar were commonly able to describe the intended outcomes of the project without knowing what they are. Among these were their **confidence in answering questions** rather than remaining silent, their **ability to speak fluently in both English and their local language**, and the **quality of their play activities when they get home**. Perhaps most importantly, many mentioned that the children ‘bring their learning to the house’ with new home activities including using local clay and charcoal to do creative art, reciting what they have learned to others (older children and adults) and playing cooperatively with other children.

*“Their playing in the community has been influenced by the things they are learning in school.” (P6 sibling in a FGD)*

*“Before we started the play scheme, when the children were asked question(s) they used not to talk (they were silent) and they took that behaviour to the next class and it affected their performance. The KG children we started the Play Scheme with can answer questions they are asked.” (VM in Tibung)*

*“Our children in the SS1 and SS2 have asked us to continue the work we are doing in the school for the KG children, because the poor training they had in their early stages is still affecting them.” (VM in Tibung)*

*“The children now speak our local language very well.” (Chief of Voggu.)*

*“When they return from school they will play and recite most of the rhymes and games learnt at school instead of the very rough games they used to play at home.” (Father/husband Nyariga Doone)*

*“The younger children are now asking older children to cut their finger nails!” (A father)*

*“I was involved in SFL/EQUAL baseline survey; it was then that I got convinced that schools under the LM programme are doing better. There programme has led high outcome levels in numeracy, literacy, etc.” (a Circuit Supervisor)*

These observations suggest that the Scheme is successfully providing an environment that fulfils both Government’s KG policy and its language policy which prescribes that KG children should learn in their first language.

### **School readiness**

Data compiled by LM on ‘improvement in children seen by teachers’<sup>4</sup> showed that in all the indicators for school readiness (number, language problem solving, mood, attention, stimulation, confidence and social) the KG teachers had given scores of ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, with confidence and social skills showing especially marked increases. Model 2 teachers reported even higher rates of improvement in all these areas. This was affirmed by field interviews with community members and other stakeholders.

**Discipline and confidence/eagerness to learn.** Many community members, in particular those not directly involved in the scheme, said that they are impressed by the children’s **discipline and respect**, observing that they now “*know how to greet* (when they get home, when they see a stranger, when someone comes into the classroom) *and give respect*”, as

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<sup>4</sup> LM Evaluation Report to UNICEF, September 2015 pp26

well as how to be orderly and considerate in groups - taking their turn, standing in a line, listening and allowing others to speak. They thus perceive them to be *“learning good morals”* through the Scheme and are pleased about this.

In many of the focus groups, participants described how **the scheme has shown teachers and Volunteer Mothers alike how children can become disciplined, and be disciplined, without corporal punishment**. The training they have received explains early child development and demonstrates positive adult:child relationships.

Parents, teachers and children reported that their **homes and classrooms are now more enjoyable places to be**, with a **less frightening atmosphere** and **more open lines of communication resulting in shared fun and children confiding more**. They went further to say that **the Scheme has also affected the relationships that the adults have with their other children, and with each other**, as well as with the children in KG. Many said that the children play together better, quarrel less and no longer cry when they are going to school as they have no fear of school with their mothers there, and they look forward to the games they will play. As one father put it: *“Now there is peace!”*

*“Now the children are not afraid of us and they come to them to tell us what their problem is. The conversations between us and our children are now interesting.”* (a VM)

The VMs in Beo Kasingo explained that some children do not heed their mothers when they first attend the Scheme and are *“stubborn”*, but that this improved as the Scheme norms became established.

All the older siblings interviewed spoke of how their mothers have become more tolerant, and shout at and “beat” them much less often, and use a cane much less. *“She no longer shouts loud at children and doesn’t beat children like she used to do.”* (Older sibling in Tibung). This was affirmed by the field evaluation team’s own observation of VMs moving on to other children, when one of them refused to take their turn. Traditionally, such a child would have been shouted at or caned. Another older sibling also reflected: *“‘Hard jokes’ such as throwing stones have minimized in school and even in the community because of the availability of the mothers in schools. New games are practiced by the children, but we did not experience those games.”*

The evaluation team noticed some isolated incidents where the VMs using canes to control the children, but this was fairly minimal.

**The play-based approaches develop an interest in learning.** Members of the children’s households happily observed that the children now like coming to school. They deduce that this is partly because they enjoy the games so much and partly because they feel reassured by their mothers’ and grandmothers’ presence.

*“We used to find it difficult to convince the children, especially the younger ones, to go to school but now it’s different. Now they never want to miss school for anything! This because of the games involved in the scheme.”* (a father in Beo Kasingo)

The majority of community members have concluded that using play-based methods both motivates the children to learn, and helps them to learn effectively. They also see that the Scheme has **greatly increased attendance of both children and teachers**. All those interviewed from both the communities and the district education offices found the increased attendance remarkable. One circuit supervisor estimated that the attendance rates *“used to be less than 50% but are now close to 95-100% because of the games introduced in their lessons”*, while a more cynical older sibling in Tibung reasoned that: *“If you are not there*

*your mother will be asking questions!*", implying that the VM's presence in the school affected all ages not just those in KG. The Tibung School Management Committee (SMC) and parent teacher association (PTA) chairpersons felt that the Scheme had combined with other programmes, such as school feeding and the provision of free school uniforms, to boost attendance at their school, thus complementing government initiatives. The Kumbungu DDE thought that the impact on KG teacher attendance was due to the teachers having to supervise the VMs, so they have to be present.

The evaluation team thus observed a mutually reinforcing increase in everyone's attendance: children pester their mothers to take them to school so that they can have fun, Volunteer Mothers understand the benefits of school for their children and the reasons why it is important to arrive on time and not miss session time, the KG teachers feel obliged to play a leading role and set an example, and the other teachers are aware that they are being quietly monitored by the parents of their pupils. The VMs know that their children and fellow VMs are depending on them.

### **Emotional and social development and the added value of Volunteer Mothers**

The LM model incorporates emotional and social dimensions of a child's development as well as cognitive ones. It does this by teaching the children to be mindful of others' needs, being accepting of differences and behaving in an inclusive and cooperative manner. (The section below on Inclusion examines disability and other inclusive practices in more detail).

Parents (VMs, non-VMs, fathers/husbands) all spoke of the way in which they had watched their children's confidence and happiness increase; children want to come to school every day and are less fearful of making mistakes because of the atmosphere of fun, praise and encouragement provided by the Scheme. Some parents and KG teachers recalled that previously it was difficult for some children to make friends and they would frequently isolate themselves, but they now sit together on the mats and play together outside. *"Now there are less complaints from the children about each other having done this or that."* (A father.)

Many feel that the **involvement of the mothers also motivates the children**. They feel safe if their mother or grandmother is there, and are *"more willing to talk because their mother or a known face from community is there."* (PTA Chairperson)

A KG teacher in Voggu thought that VMs being involved in the Scheme so directly has meant that they want to ensure that their children perform as well as possible. *"They quickly prepare the children to go school because they now understand and appreciate the issues in education. Since they also go to the school, the young ones are also motivated to be there."* The teacher has also found that parents are less likely to ask their children to do things during school time and cause them to miss school. Children are also learning to speak their local language better because their mothers speak it to them<sup>5</sup>.

### **Less sickness**

All over the world children who attend school for the first time are prone to picking up ailments from each other as they leave the home environment. Both teachers and parents spoke of a marked reduction in sickness among the KG children which they attributed to the Play Scheme's handwashing practices in particular. (See also section below on VMs' increased understanding and awareness of child health issues.)

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<sup>5</sup> Implementing the government policy to use the local language in the early years can be challenging if there are no teachers who speak it and who are unwilling to come and work in the school. Having VMs there helps this problem significantly. This is especially true of minority languages.

These findings were reflected to some extent in LM's evaluation data<sup>6</sup>. In the Model 1 schools/communities, the incidence of diarrhoea in children in the previous month was 36% at baseline, with 38% after 3 months and a fairly significant drop to 14% after 6 months. In the Model 2 schools, the incidence of diarrhoea at baseline was 26% which reduced to 18% after 3 months. It will be interesting to see if the figures at 6 months show a similar drop to the Model 1 schools. The corresponding figures for malaria in Model 1 communities were 59% at baseline, 36% after 3 months and 24% after 6 months, and only a small reduction in incidence over the first 3 months in Model 2 communities (from 39% to 37%) which is not statistically significant. Further work over time is needed to track and interpret these differences.

### **The Difference to the Volunteer Mothers**

The LM data provided to the evaluation team paints a profile of the Volunteer Mothers (VM) in the Model 2 schools with an average age of 38.2 years old, with the minimum and maximum ages being 18 and 86 years respectively. In terms of education, 83% have no education, 10% have some primary education, 5% completed primary school and 2% have some form of secondary education. For sources of income, 61% are engaged in farming, 25% in trading, 10% have 'no occupation' and 4% are involved in 'other occupations'.

During the project, LM aimed to work with the VMs to achieve the following outcomes:

- *improve the confidence and wellbeing of the Play Scheme Volunteer Mothers*
- *improve the capacities of rural mothers to provide quality ECD at Play Schemes and at home and,*
- *increase the Volunteer Mothers' understanding and awareness of child health issues.*

Under Model 2, VMs are trained by the KG teachers over 9 training sessions and 2 community meetings (under Model 1, the VMs were trained directly by LM staff). The VMs are divided into groups and attend school on assigned days in their groups to teach children at the Play Scheme. Children are divided into small groups of 6 and rotate through 5 different skillset activities, with one VM in charge of an area. They commit to teaching one hour per week during term time, for a period of two years. The VMs are given monthly capacity-building workshops on parenting and life skills topics (under Model 1 by LM staff, under Model 2 by the KG teachers). See Appendix 6 for a fuller description of the Play Scheme.

### **Confidence and well-being**

The VMs themselves and others observing the changes in them, such as the non-volunteer mothers in the community and their husbands and children, all enumerated the ways in which they (the VMs) had benefitted from the Play Scheme. These included:

- Enjoying and having fun with their children – singing and conversing with them and watching them grow and develop well, recollecting songs they know, playing games at home, disciplining using quieter and non-violent means.
- Learning the things that the children are learning – the alphabet, numbers, the names of objects and animals in their language.
- Knowing what to do to help their children perform better at school and being able to teach the children in the house as well.
- Taking care over their appearance and presentation. *"I don't even recognize my wife anymore because she is always looking neat and well-dressed every day!"* (Father/husband Beo-Kasingo)

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<sup>6</sup> LM Report to UNICEF, December 2015 pp11-12

- Using their new knowledge and skills in everyday life, for example, the numeracy in trading, keeping themselves and the family healthy.

### **Capacities of rural mothers to provide quality ECD at Play Schemes and at home.**

At baseline, the mean overall score for 'play stimulation at home' by the women in the Model 1 schools was 43%. After 3 months this had increased to 61% but remained the same at 61% after 6 months. For Model 2 schools, the overall score at baseline was 37% and after 3 months, it was 53%<sup>7</sup>. For the Control communities (which had a smaller data set due to fewer communities), it was also 37% at baseline and 46% after 3 months. These changes were affirmed by the interviews with the teachers, VMs, non-VMs and others in the 4 communities visited, although they appeared more enthusiastic about the changes than the modest increases in the figures would suggest. It is possible that the changes have increased further since then (nearly 6 or 9 months later).

According to the teachers and the VMs themselves, their participation in the Play Scheme has markedly increased their interest in the school and in their children's academic performance and general wellbeing. They said that going through the training, the Monthly Activities and practicing the games and sessions regularly has also changed their attitude and behaviour towards their children. The most commonly cited examples were their newfound abilities to organise and to teach - from getting their own children and themselves ready to go to school in the morning (particularly noted by children and husbands), to using the systems at school for organising the children, to re-organising their households in support of everyone's health (installing a Tippy Tap<sup>8</sup> and insisting on all using it, keeping bowls covered, heating left-over food properly and observing personal hygiene).

The PTA Chairperson at Tibung commented they *"have become teachers"*, and are now able to teach the children at school, their own children at home, as well as others in the household and wider community. The community elders in Beo Kasingo felt that the VMs also now provide a bridge between home and the school.

While most of the VMs do not have overall responsibility for coordination of the Play Scheme, all have been taught many of the capacities needed to do so, and in some communities the evaluation team saw the Volunteer Mothers take complete charge of the entire process of running a session, from selection of the children to settling them down in their various places of play. All have been taught how to make their own teaching and learning materials and many say they have replicated these at home on their own volition.

Other community members are aware of and grateful to the VMs for monitoring *all* the children, not just their own. *"They now question us if our children don't go to school and tell us our children will lag behind in class, but before they used not to care."* (Voggu Non-volunteer mothers).

### **The VMs' increased understanding and awareness of child health issues**

At baseline, in Model 2 schools/communities, the women's average score out of 4 for their own understanding of diarrhoea prevention was 1.51 and for malaria, 1.45. After three months, the increase in understanding was not significant. The score for the control community was similar and the change was also not significant. The data for 6 months from the baseline was not available to the team, however, the VM's increased understanding and

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<sup>7</sup> Lively Minds' report to UNICEF December 2015, pp9

<sup>8</sup> Tippy Taps are simple foot-operated devices using a frame of wooden sticks and a can of water to sparingly dispense water for handwashing. <http://www.tippytap.org/the-tippy-tap>

awareness of child health issues was repeatedly mentioned by all groups. This has been seen in the form of:

- using soap or ash to wash one's hands both at school and at home especially after defecation, before eating or using the teaching and learning materials (TLMs)
- keeping surroundings clean, especially before cooking,
- paying attention to nutrition,
- insisting on the children cleaning their faces before eating in the morning and generally preparing to come to school.
- mothers washing their hands before breastfeeding
- covering water storage containers to deter mosquitos.
- no longer leaving dirty bowls around to gather flies.
- mothers heating left-over food before serving, instead of serving it cold as before.
- little children not being allowed to "suck soil" anymore

All groups interviewed said there had been a marked improvement in the children's health since these practices had been introduced. Mothers recalled how their older children used to get sick much more during the transition from home to school at KG. Parents and teachers in all communities said the children used to have diarrhoea frequently, but now this is much reduced and the children are more active in school and in class. They attributed this change largely to the **culture of handwashing that has been established in school and home**, which has been supported by the assembling of Tippy Taps. Many parents were pleased to report that children both do this themselves without being prompted, *and* prompt others to, including their older siblings and parents. Some were amused that the small children also now insist on their mothers giving them clean bowls to eat from.

This reduction in sickness was said to have impacted on the family budget, reducing expenditure on health and freeing up family funds for other things: "*The rate at which we fall sick has reduced, which has reduced the suffering of our parents.*" (Older sibling). The youth leader in Tibung also spoke of reduced health costs and an improvement in everyone's health not just the children's. Many said that the health messages intended for the KG children have been internalised by the KG teachers and VMs themselves, which has then affected the whole school/household. Unfortunately, it was not possible to verify these views with figures. Staff from CHPS/Ghana Health Service interviewed were generally not aware of the Scheme, despite the outreach they do in the schools, and could not supply any figures on incidence of diarrhoea and malaria among the children.

One of the most striking observations about the VM concept is the **continuity between home and school** that they provide. VMs serve as a bridge that enables new learning to be consolidated at home, as well as spread far beyond the targeted KG children. As other household members, especially older siblings, adopt the new practices (play-based learning, creative play, non-violent discipline, handwashing) this serves to reinforce what the children have learned, as well as benefitting the mothers themselves and the wider community beyond the target group. In this way, the common barrier created by the perception that learning only happens at school has been dismantled.

Despite the positive impacts and benefits, there have been some unintended **negative impacts of volunteering on the VMs**. The three main ones articulated by community members as well as the VMs themselves during the evaluation were:

- being mocked by others in the community for volunteering for free. Nicknames have evolved which translate as: 'good for nothing women' and 'work and no pay'.

- having to add the volunteering time to an already extensive workload - VMs have to add the time for the Play Scheme to their chores at home, as well as their trading and farming activities. The VMs and the older siblings talked particularly about the pressure on them during the peaks of the farming season.
- While it may seem that the one-hour per week per volunteer is not great, once committed the VMs cannot undertake their usual extended seasonal trip (during the dry season) to the south in search of work, resulting in loss of income for the family.

Although all groups could think of ways in which everyone in the community could support the VMs and the Scheme as a whole - helping do the women's chores, providing 'soap money', assisting with labour on their farms - all said there was very little done along these lines at the moment, largely because no one had appealed to them to help.

These issues are addressed in more detail in a Spotlight on VM Motivation in Appendix 7 which looks at VM's experiences, the reasons why they volunteer and some of the suggestions community members have for how they can be better supported.

### **The Difference to the Teachers**

LM aimed to:

- *increase the capacity and performance of Teachers*

It does this by providing both initial training of trainers (TOT) and Top-up Training for the KG teachers, and through regular monitoring and supervision visits from LM staff and circuit supervisors, through which they receive feedback and identify areas for improvement.

According to LM's data<sup>9</sup>, the teacher attendance in Model 1 was erratic and declined from about 80% to 70% over a 12-month period. For Model 2 however, after an initial 5-month period of inconsistent attendance, it stabilized at 100% for the following 5 months. LM staff and DDEs attributed this high rate of compliance to the KG teachers being given the responsibility for training and supervising the VMs and the generally higher rates of compliance under Model 2.

According to the KG teachers interviewed in the four communities as part of the evaluation, their participation in the Play Scheme has made them more effective teachers, built their capacity to run the Scheme with the VMs in future and also impacted significantly on the quality of their relationship with both children and parents.

The level of training that the teachers had received to be employed as GES teachers prior to the scheme varies. Some have completed their teacher training (one of the teachers was trained in early childhood education), others are untrained and some are in the middle of a distance learning course. Irrespective of the level of training, all said they had learned a lot from their participation in the Scheme. Many appreciated the practical approach that has enabled them to learn appropriate methodologies for teaching KG children. *"The scheme has taught them how to handle young children and control them easily."* (SMC Chairperson, Tibung)

*"One great lesson I have learnt is putting children in groups to do group work to learn. They get along and get used to working in groups."* (A KG teacher)

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<sup>9</sup> LM Evaluation Report to UNICEF, 2015 pp24



One Head teacher remarked: *“The KG teachers are now better than their peers at handling children. When you bring other teachers to KG you can see the difference.”* Another concluded: *“They have become smarter.”*

As well as knowing how to organise the children and use the session time effectively, they now have sufficient and well-organised teaching and learning materials (TLMs), which has made teaching and learning easier. They have also been taught to make many of these themselves, and so they can replace them when needed. *“These changes can be attributed to this box”* (pointing to the box containing the TLMs). *It has helped us a lot.”* (A KG teacher). This testimony tallies with LM’s monitoring data, which shows increased use of play-based teaching methods by the KG teachers of the Play Scheme. These methods include outdoor games, turn-taking games, exploration/discovery games, creative play, and small group work. Using a score of 1=Never and 5=Several times a day, in the Model 1 schools, the overall score for “teachers’ use of play-based teaching methods pre-workshop” was 3.18 and this rose to 3.63 after the setting up of the Play Scheme. In Model 2 schools, the figures rose from 2.76 to 3.87. It is noted in the explanation to the data that Model 1 teachers began with a higher baseline. Nevertheless, Model 2 teachers still overtook Model 1 and thus made greater improvements overall. Although the teachers can now replenish the TLMs by copying the ones shown them by LM, the much harder task of thinking up, making and introducing new ones in order to keep the Scheme fresh and exciting is still something that needs to be addressed. LM is encouraging this, and also gradually building up the LM repertoire through the Top up trainings, but there is some way to go.

Several teachers explained that, like the VMs, they had begun to use their new found skills at home with their own children and those in the compound they live in, and made their own TLMs and Tippy Taps. Others said the experience has helped them to diagnose learning difficulties and disabilities in children much earlier. *“If they can’t do the tasks, you know there could be a problem.”* (a VM). One KG teacher also mentioned that her participation in the scheme had made the assignments in the distance learning teacher training course easy to do.

The positive impacts of Model 2 (where the KG teachers are trained to train and supervise the VMs) were especially mentioned by the teachers themselves and their Heads. They spoke of how the experience of becoming a trainer and supervisor of the VMs had enhanced their leadership capacities, taught them the training skills and given them the confidence needed to stand up in front of and talk to *“a group of 100 people”*. Many talked of their improved attendance and punctuality, which some said was due to more regular unscheduled (‘surprise’) visits by their supervisors and the risk of being caught; others referred to the organised and disciplined nature of the Schemes, led by LM. Others referred to their new commitment and the realisation that they needed to set an example, citing an example that they now let their colleagues know if they will be absent. All these have led to the teachers becoming locally famous (one mentioned his pleasure at being recognised by the women in the market for the first time) and feeling valued and respected in the community, as well as among their peers; a refreshing reverse of the normal KG teacher status.

Parents, PTA/SMC and head teachers, as well as the teachers themselves have all noticed the effect of the scheme on the relationships that the teachers have with pupils and parents, generally helping them to become more approachable, with greatly improved two-way communication. *“The children now come to me anytime, climb over me and sometimes my colleague teachers will be driving them away!”* (KG teacher in Voggu)

*“They are now more tolerant with the children and us parents when we approach them for information than they were before.” (a parent).*

## Other changes and impacts observed

This section outlines the other changes observed by the evaluation team in relation to the planned outcomes, as well as some unintended outcomes, most of which were positive.

### Improved relationships

The Play Scheme has helped to bring a **closer relationship between parents and teachers**, breaking down the invisible barriers that hitherto prevented parents from visiting the school. Parent respondents said they feel they can approach the teachers to find out how their children are faring and verify messages about ‘school fees’. *“In the past the child would come home to say we should buy this or that. We will tell our children that they are lying, but now we follow up to the school to find out if it is true. Now parents follow up on issues to make enquiries from teachers.”* (a Tibung VM). Two of the Head teachers said that it is now easier to send messages out to the community now that the VMs come to the school so regularly, and this is not confined to parents of the KG children as most of the mothers have older children and relate with the other parents.

Many of the VMs expressed a **new appreciation for what the teachers do** for their children, especially in the face of large numbers of small children. *“We now know what the teachers are going through, and ask God’s blessings for them, for what they do and are doing for the children.”* (Tibung VM)

SMC and PTA members said that the Schemes have motivated the **PTA/SMC members to go to the school more regularly** and offer their encouragement. The Head teacher of Beo Kasingo also said that the *“attitude of the children has already spread the image of the school to other communities”*.

### Family and community unity

Both fathers and mothers spoke appreciatively of the impacts of the Scheme on family unity.

*“Just as they have been taught, they (VMs) call their children to sit and watch what they are doing at home and thereby learn. This **has improved the respect between the mothers and the children.**”* (A father & PTA chair)

*“The play scheme has **increased our** (wife, self, children) **interest and attention in the schooling of our children.** Our women now appreciate school better because of the increased understanding of what goes into education of children and schooling in general.”* (Husband of a VM)

Examples were given of how the older siblings benefit indirectly: learning the songs, being unable to play truant because their mother is monitoring them as well as the KG children, and learning lifelong lessons about how parents can be involved in educating small children at home.

Many parents, fathers especially, spoke of greater closeness and understanding: *“The play scheme has made us to know ourselves better. The way our children used to fear us and not come close to us has changed. They now greet us after school and tell us what they did in school. We also enquire about what happened in school. This used not to happen in the past.”*

A few examples were given of the Scheme **bringing unity to the wider community**. Most communities are divided into sections, each section representing a clan. The Play Scheme, was said to have improved the interaction among the various sections and whereas the children did not previously have much interaction with the children in the other sections, they now do. *“Now when the children meet us anywhere they come to us and show us so much respect, which makes us happy.”* Others in Beo Kansingo talked of how the Scheme provides the opportunity for the women to work together and cooperate. In some cases, this was said to even extend to ‘rivals’ (women married to the same man) who are not getting along well.

These peace-building impacts are very important for communities that are under immense and continual stress from the impacts of food insecurity, general poverty, migration, party political and chieftancy disagreements, and in some cases violent conflict. All of these can bring divisions in families and communities, and so a project that unites and helps to strengthen relationships is something to be cherished and nurtured.

### **Pupil:teacher ratios and other numbers issues**

Pupil:teacher ratios<sup>10</sup> have been greatly improved by the Play Scheme. Excessively large KG classes are commonplace in Ghana and the Northern and Upper East Regions are especially affected. (See 2014/15 EMIS data on Northern and Upper East Regions in Appendix 8). These are due to a combination of factors including lack of sufficient human and other resources and low prioritisation of KG over a long period of time. The average PTRs in public KGs in Kumbungu and Bongo Districts are 1:48 and 1:52 respectively, and the average pupil:*trained-teacher* ratios (PTTRs) are 1:73 and 1:94. The pupil:teacher ratio for the Play Scheme is just 1:6.

While pupil:teacher ratios (PTRs) are not the same as pupil:trained teacher ratios (PTTRs), both school authorities and parents in this evaluation all spoke of their dismay at the lack of trained KG teachers in the country/region in general, and thus their appreciation for the assistance of the Scheme in tackling the problem in KG in a way that has been rapid as well as high in quality.

All the groups consulted in this evaluation particularly appreciated, how the Play Scheme arrangements provide more individual attention through its small group approach, and in so doing helps them to deal with a very big problem facing GES, namely the lack of sufficient teachers for KG at a time when the KG policy is being operationalised. Parents recalled how previously children came to school only to play among themselves unsupervised. This was said to make parents withdraw their children.

*“Without the VMs in those days, it was very difficult for the teachers to control the children and by close of day, she was exhausted. This is because she did not know what she could do to engage the children for an hour and a half, but now because of the training they have received from LM, they know that after a certain time the child is tired, they have to change the activity they do with the children to keep them engaged. Before, they would prepare a lesson with two activities but will not be able to do them because all their time was involved in controlling them. In addition, she was handling KG 1, KG 2 and P1 at the same time!”* (a non-volunteer mother, Tibung)

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<sup>10</sup> GES distinguishes in its EMIS data between pupil:teacher ratios (PTRs) and pupil:*trained teacher* ratios (PTTR) in order to track its efforts to increase the number of trained KG teachers in the classroom.

The Bongo DDE also mentioned how the VM concept is helping to increase the numbers of children enrolled in KG and improve the teacher/pupil ratio at the KG level.

Perhaps the most pleasing outcome of the Scheme however is how it **challenges a widely held perception that big numbers in KG classes are acceptable and that KG children are low priority in the allocation of scarce resources for education**. Parents in particular realise how more attention at this stage in a child's development can provide the critical foundations for both learning and living with others. There were several allusions to this during the evaluation. The two male KG teachers in Tibung described how they had decided to become KG teachers and found that this input in the early years had affected their junior secondary school's BECE results.

**The numbers on register in the communities visited during the evaluation did not always tally with those on record in the LM system**, or with those actually present.

Several KG teachers mentioned that some parents have regarded the Play Scheme as a positive childcare option and sent underage children along with their siblings. A DDE talked of how this highlights the need for the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to coordinate nursery provision in the communities. One KG 2 teacher said they could not say the number of children in the Play Scheme for sure, as it fluctuates between 90 and 110. In one school it was said that the children from a nearby private school sometimes come to the scheme, which also swells the numbers. The table below compares the data on the number of children registered in the Schemes visited provided by LM, with the data collected from the KG teachers or Head teachers during the field visits. While it is incomplete, it does suggest there could be an issue that needs attention.

Table comparing the numbers of children registered with the schemes visited during the evaluation as provided by LM and the KG teachers						
	Data from LM UK records				Data from evaluation field visits <sup>11</sup>	Variance
	Girls	Boys	Total	No of VMs		
Nyariga Doone	115	60	175	35	150	-25
Tibung	134	149	283	31	158	-125
Voggu	47	35	82	31	90-110	+8-22
Beo-Kansingo	45	38	83	38	77 on record but up to 100 come	-6 to +17

**Keeping control of numbers** may also be an on-going problem that requires careful monitoring and decision-making. Are there maximum numbers (of children *and* VMs) for a community after which a decision needs to be taken to: e.g. refuse entry, start another Scheme, or campaign for more resources from GES? Also, is the ratio of children to VM (supposed to be 5/6:1) being sufficiently monitored during surprise visits? The table below shows the average number of children and Volunteer Mothers in the schemes, as well as the

<sup>11</sup> Tibung – Headteacher's school enrolment chart - KG1 = 92; KG2 = 104. Overall total at KG = 196

KG teachers gave: KG1 = 92 KG2 = 66. Overall total at KG = 158

Voggu – KG 2 teacher said she couldn't give an exact number because it varies between 90 and 110. The field team counted 90 that day.

Beo-Kansingo – Acting Headteacher - 77 on record but it fluctuates to about 99. Some children that come are not registered.

Nyariga-Doone – KG 1 teacher: KG1 = 100 and KG 2 = 50. Overall total = 150

communities with the maximum numbers of children and VMs, with 317 children in Cheshegu and 48 mothers in both Cheyohi and Naha Galinkpegu.

	Girls	Boys	Total	No of VMs
Average nos of children & VMs	57.3	56.6	113.9	37.9
Highest nos of children (Cheshegu)	143	174	317	
Highest nos of VMs (Cheyohi and Naha-Galinkpegu)				48

It is clear that keeping an accurate record of enrolment and attendance is going to be challenging for some time in a context where attendance of both adults and children at school can be erratic due to a wide array of factors outside the control of the Scheme. There was testimony from the LM staff however, that this improves with persistence – with consistent messages about how the Scheme works, enforcement of policy on registration by age, and as incentives to be consistent and reliable take root.

### **Making good use of time**

All groups said that the Scheme has made everyone more time-conscious. This is due to the Schemes' rules and procedures, as well as its monitoring tools and regular visits, which make everyone turn up on time. For example, during the VM trainings, anyone who enters more than 20 minutes late is not allowed to enter. One KG teacher confirmed that during LM workshops, the trainers kept to time and would start if even there was only one person, which has made the teachers very time-conscious.

## **Gender and Social Inclusion**

### **Gender**

**Children:** Thorough gender analysis was not possible within the short time for the evaluation and with the limited data available. However, the evaluation team largely met with separate groups of either men or women, boys or girls, some as a result of normal gender divisions rather than design (e.g. all VMs are women and most SMC/PTA chairpersons are men). When asked whether the girls and boys benefit from the Play Schemes in the same way, everyone perceived that both girls and boys are free to benefit from the programme and that they attend in roughly equal numbers. LM's disaggregated data on the numbers of registered children suggests that this is the case *overall*, although in some communities there are significantly more of one sex than the other. The team did not have sufficient time to gather evidence to judge how the girls and boys are treated once in the Scheme. The form for monitoring visits does not disaggregate data on the children by gender. This would be a useful and important addition to make so that the details of attendance and performance can be tracked by gender.

**Adults:** According to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of LM, the team has made considerable effort to involve both mothers and fathers in the Scheme, particularly at the two community meetings, and the men are normally very receptive to the presentations made. They have found however that while both men and women come forward to volunteer at the initial community-wide meeting, previous efforts at working with mixed groups have resulted in negative impacts on women's involvement as the men: *"tend to take over and take key positions and we found that this has a suppressing impact."* *"We try to bring the men along to look and we train*

*the PTA Chairperson, who is invariably male, but there is more we can do.* (CEO LM).

Most of the community members interviewed – women, men and older siblings - suggested that men can play supportive roles, from giving permission and encouragement to their wives as household heads, to young men helping their mothers and becoming volunteers too.

Some of the KG teachers in the schools visited are men. Indeed, those encountered in Tibung had positively opted to become KG teachers and were pleased that their input in the early years had affected the BECE results in the school. It would also be useful to keep a gender disaggregated record of the KG teachers involved in the scheme to aid future evaluation of their impact.

The evaluators observed that some of the VMs bring their babies and toddlers to work, which is likely to be supportive of their participation in the scheme, and enable them to breastfeed and not have to worry about childcare for their younger children.

### **Children with disabilities**

The VMs have been taught how to take care of disabled children and the importance of educating them as well. For example, LM has devised two Monthly Activity sessions on disability which help community members to realise how all members of the community can play a part in community life, and should thus be enabled by everyone else to attend school in order to realise their full potential. It was not possible however, to verify to what extent children with disabilities have been registered and integrated in the Play Scheme sessions. VMs and KG teachers have said it is now easier to detect children with learning difficulties earlier on, which provides the potential to respond to their needs in a timely manner. It is recommended that disability is added to the monitoring system to help track progress. Liaison with the District Special Education Coordinators and the member organisations of Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD) at district level would also be valuable going forward.

**Other children can get left out** in communities, Fulani children for example, and children from minority/marginalised ethnic groups, especially in communities that have experienced conflict. There was insufficient time to look at this aspect during the evaluation. Where possible an inclusive policy needs to continue to be integrated into the Scheme in practical ways and if possible research undertaken to check on how such a policy actually works in practice.

## **The Influence of the Play Scheme/Reading Schemes on the GES**

### **Improved school supervision and INSET**

The circuit supervisors interviewed in Kumbungu and Bongo Districts reported several impacts of the Scheme on their knowledge and practice, their work and the teachers in their Circuits. They feel that their knowledge of Early Childhood Development skills and practices has increased, some of which they use with their own children at home, and their professional profile has been boosted by the certificates of participation given to them after some of the trainings.

For one circuit supervisor (CS) in the Northern Region the programme has doubled the frequency of his visits and mentorship sessions. Prior to the Scheme he would visit a school 4 times/per term, but now visits a school on an average 8 times a term.

The project has also: *“...made the work of a CS very easy. We are able to write reports with confidence because there are concrete results to report on because of the improved performance of the children and teachers.”*

This has in turn positively affected relationships: *“As a result of the programme implementation, I got to know my teachers better. Subsequently I have been able to engage them to address the issues I observed in them.”*

The circuit supervisors observed that teachers are now more punctual as a result of the Scheme’s activities: *“This is because they (the teachers) themselves have activities to implement and monitor, as well as having additional monitoring sessions from the CS and LM staff.”*

The circuit supervisors also described how *“indirectly the programme is being introduced into other schools”*, as they use the methodologies and approaches learned from the Scheme to facilitate in-service training (INSET) sessions in schools where the Scheme is not operating.

### **Resource allocation**

The Bongo DDE described the impacts of the Scheme on his team at the District Education Office mostly in terms of how resources are being differently allocated in recognition of the importance of and needs of KG children. These included:

- getting the head teachers to **budget for KG teaching and learning materials** (mats, cards, KG reading materials, see-saw, merry go round etc.) under the capitation grant and GPEG arrangements, and to choose things that support play-based methods;
- head teachers are now **reserving the biggest classrooms for KG** – this began with the LM schemes but has now spread across the district.

These are significant changes as they suggest a ready and rapid recognition that KG children need facilities, that play-based methods are preferable and require different types of resourcing, and that KG children are equally deserving of resources as older children.

### **Sharing Lessons of LM at Regional and National Levels**

The District Education Office (DEO) representatives interviewed said they have not yet formally shared lessons on the benefits of the Play Scheme at national level but they speak about the work when opportunities arise. An example given by the Bongo District Director of Education (DDE) is at meetings of the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, of which he is the National Vice President. He is also a board member of the Northern Network for Education Development (NNED). Such connections have the potential to offer a forum for future advocacy on play-based methods and promotion of the LM model.

According to the Kumbungu DDE, the lessons and results have been shared at the regional level through meetings between the LM CEO and the Regional Director on two occasions last year. The DDE also acknowledges the results and lessons of the Scheme in its reports to the regional level. At national level, the district included LM’s activities in a report it had to present in 2015 on the NGOs working in the district and the specific activities that they perform.

The DDE of Kumbungu said that her colleagues are trying to replicate the scheme by training other schools where LM is not operating to use the model. So far they have organised four TLM-making workshops and are currently putting together a proposal to send to potential donors to scale up the LM approach across the district.



### **Within each school**

While several P1 and head teachers interviewed said that they admire the play-based and interactive methods being used in the Play Scheme, there was little evidence that this was affecting teaching in other parts of the school. As parents, teachers and circuit supervisors all report that the KG children are now able to do what their colleagues in Class 3 are able to do, this aspect will eventually need to be addressed by the schools and District Education Offices as a whole.

## **5. HOW has the project made this difference?**

### **LM's Theory of Change**

Focusing on the low quality of KG education and poor home-based care and education, LM's theory of change assumed that its activities would result, in the short-term, in: motivated and improved attendance, improved VM awareness of ECCE and involvement in school, empowerment and improved self-esteem of VMs, improved parenting, hygiene and health practices of VMs, children receiving quality play-based learning experiences, improved enrolment and attendance of children, and teachers and VMs remaining committed to the project. The projected Outcomes were: School readiness in children in terms of improved cognitive and socio-emotional skills, healthy children and families, improved academic achievement and confident children & VMs with good aspirations. (See Model 2 Theory of Change diagram in Appendix 6)

Underpinning this, LM assumed that if it worked with and through GES, and through Volunteer Mothers in the community, it would be possible to root the programme within a) the education system and b) the home life of children. Under Model 1, LM staff trained the Volunteer Mothers directly. The switch to Model 2 (training of GES trainers) assumed that this would be a way to scale at lower cost, whilst also strengthening GES involvement.

The evaluation found that all the short-term results envisaged above have been realised, as described in Section 4 on the difference the project has made. This of course is a remarkable achievement. The main gap in the theory of change, is the change needed in the communities that host the schemes in order for the Schemes to be sustained. This has resulted in a lower sense of ownership of the scheme than might have otherwise been possible. It has obviously been necessary during this phase of LM's work to demonstrate how the Schemes can work in order to convince community members and funding partners that they can. Efforts have been made to keep other community members beyond the primary beneficiaries (KG children, VMs and KG teachers) such as husbands and community elders informed (see list of activities in Appendix 6). However, it will be necessary going forward to add this element of galvanizing broader support (both of local communities and wider communities of interest such as those promoting ECD and play based methods) to the theory of change in order for the Scheme to become embedded in community, school and national life. It could be argued that, given the competing demands on LM's limited human and other resources, as well as its ambition to make the Schemes available to as many children who need them as possible, the theory of change was sufficient for the pilot phase it related to, but it would be insufficient going forward. This issue is discussed more fully in Section 7 on Sustaining, Replicating and Scaling Up. An enhanced theory of change could have additional elements to incorporate the process outcomes, the development of community ownership, and the replicating and scaling up, (as well as results for the primary beneficiaries). These imply including organisational and systems elements to add to the changes in the children and mothers.

## Approaches, Standards, Culture and Methods

LM has spent 8 years developing and refining its approaches, standards and methods in an iterative and organic fashion. It is evident that the continuity in the leadership in both the UK and Ghana has helped to enable this. Through action and reflection, persistence, hard work and commitment, the approaches have gradually evolved within the context where they are used and as a consequence are well attuned to local realities. The following are some of the most striking aspects:

**Working through volunteers, who are also mothers.** This is a powerful approach with many advantages. Mothers are used to the children at home, and to relating with children of this age and stage. They provide a bridge between home and school, enabling continued learning at home, rooting children in their local language and challenging the widely held perception that learning only happens at school. They also provide a two-way communication channel with both a child's home and with the wider community. Already familiar with the individual children and their parents, Volunteer Mothers can keep an eye on each one and provide a less frightening environment for the young children as they enter school for the first time. By creating a *group* of mothers with a common training and shared experience, they can monitor and support each other to maintain the Play Scheme collectively. Using *mothers* as the volunteers increases their own knowledge (e.g. in basic literacy numeracy and health), acquaints them with how school works sometimes for the first time and develops the interest in education of the mother, which benefits the child into the future. It also means that the supply of volunteers for that community is more likely to be assured, sufficient, and the Scheme can expand to accommodate more children, based on the assumption that mothers are motivated to care about their children's learning and development and thus become involved. Were the volunteers to have less of a personal interest in the scheme, this might not be the case.

Basing the Scheme on volunteers helps to ensure that the Scheme is do-able in the resource-poor communities that need it most. Insisting on this being a voluntary role does mean that there is no need to wait for funds from elsewhere to cover the major aspect of person-power. Potentially the Schemes can run independently of external funding. The voluntary nature of the role however is not without its disadvantages, all of which seem currently borne by the women themselves. As noted earlier, the VMs complain that committing to be a volunteer for two years exerts considerable financial pressure on them through foregone opportunities to travel down 'south' to earn off-season income. This forms an important coping strategy for poor households. A Spotlight on the motivation of VMs for volunteering as well as a discussion of the pros and cons of the realities of volunteering can be found in Appendix 7.

**GES teachers as VM trainers and Scheme supervisors.** Making the KG teachers the trainers and supervisors of the Play Scheme develops their capacity (ECD pedagogy, classroom management, training skills) and enhances their confidence and status in the community. For some this provides the first KG-dedicated practical training they have experienced, resulting in job satisfaction and greater commitment to working with young children in future. It also gives a degree of professional kudos that can help to propel their promotion and recognition in the school and the community. For more experienced teachers it provides a chance to share their experience, knowledge and skills with a larger group of people who can make an immediate difference to the children in their care.

This approach also locates the Scheme within the mainstream public education system, providing continuity for the children as they enter primary school. It also has the potential to impact on the school more broadly through improved teaching methods, and better

communication with parents, PTAs/SMCs, circuit supervisors and the district offices of GES. In addition, it connects the Scheme with government services more broadly, including the national provisions and plans for KG of government and its international development partners, while potentially offering a simple, practical and replicable approach that government can use to operationalise those plans.

If coordinated, this could also link the beneficiaries of the Scheme to Government's social protection schemes such as School Feeding and Free School Uniforms as well as its Common Targeting Mechanism and health programmes to achieve integrated benefits for some of Ghana's poorest children.

The **relationship between the KG teachers and the VMs** observed during the field visits was, in general, one where the VMs were running the Scheme with the KG teachers supervising. It was only in one school that the P1 teacher, who went for the training and therefore occasionally assists the KG teachers, dominated the Play Scheme session, and this seemed to be to impress the evaluation team.

**Wider community involvement** can make a big difference, although in the communities visited it did not appear this had been extensive. This could have been because only Model 2 communities were visited, and this aspect has lessened with the handing over of some processes to GES. In the Model 1 communities (prior to the Comic Relief grant), the Play Schemes took place after-school and were run by the VMs with supervision from the assembly person, chief and elders.

A number of activities have been designed to engage community members more broadly during mobilisation (see list of activities in Appendix 6) and have been retained in Model 2. Among these, are a meeting between LM staff or the CS and the school and community leadership and two community-wide meetings to which community members are invited. However, it did not appear that the initial conversations with the community members and leadership on early childhood development had been sufficiently deep to reach the point where they had come to their own realisation that the scheme was important. This kind of thorough community engagement process however normally takes time, and bringing a community to this realisation is often constrained by project timeframes and budgets. As a result though, most of those interviewed beyond the primary beneficiaries seemed to be largely on-lookers. In the communities where SMC and PTA members have been involved, such as in the selection and supervision of the VMs, and where husbands have been involved in some of the Monthly Activities, it has clearly helped to reinforce what the VMs are doing. *"Some Monthly Activities include the husbands of the VMs, so when a woman forgets that she has a session on a certain day, the husband is able to remind her."* (a KG teacher). Unfortunately, staff from Ghana Health Service living or working in the community, such as the CHPS staff, seemed generally unaware of the Scheme in any detail, despite the outreach work that they do in schools. None of those interviewed were able to assist with health data on the children.

Going forward, it would be beneficial to combine the strengths from both Models and find ways of deepening the community engagement aspects of Model 2 with broader and on-going involvement of community members. Among other things, this could help the schools to continue to strengthen (or revive) their School Management Committees (SMCs), which were introduced by GES to embrace support for schools beyond just parents and teachers (PTAs). Over the last 15 years or more there have been several large scale projects funded

by GOG and its bilateral development partners<sup>12</sup> that have sought to build community engagement in schools. It may be possible for the Schemes to build on the work and outcomes of these, even if dormant, as organising capacities are likely to still be present.

Overall LM appears to have been fairly inward looking and has few connections outside its geographical area of work. Even within these areas it does not draw on the potential support outside the core implementing people, namely KG teachers and Volunteer Mothers and to a lesser degree the circuit supervisors. While this intense focus has resulted in capacitated individuals and nicely functioning groups, it has not galvanised the wider group of supporters that are necessary for the work to be sustained. In particular husbands and Head teachers seem to be missing, as they are critical for the KG teachers and VMs to continue to do their job, as are community leaders, who in this environment are the ultimate authority. Outside the community, scaling up LM's excellent work will need other partnerships beyond GES, particularly with other civil society organisations who could support and help to create an enabling environment by promoting volunteering and a play-based ethos and approaches to ECD.

### **Setting Standards and Organisational Culture**

*Keeping organised.* Incorporating a social curriculum into the LM model greatly helps the achievement of its learning outcomes. Insisting on time consciousness and punctuality for teachers, VMs and children alike means that more can be achieved in the time available and people don't waste each other's time. Forming orderly queues, rotating activities and taking turns in games also helps to make sure that all the children can benefit, and that the children learn to be mindful of others. Washing one's hands before playing with the TLMs not only lengthens the life of the resources but also teaches healthy habits for life. VMs have seen how to organise materials using plastic wallets and 'chop boxes', which keep things clean, organised and secure. The beneficiaries all clearly value these aspects of the Scheme.

*A spirit of persistence* - many said it was hard for the VMs when they first join the Scheme but their skills and learning came with practice. Children are allowed to make mistakes and try again, while being commended for effort as well as achievement.

*A learning atmosphere based on fun, not fear.* The LM training emphasises that children should be able to learn without fear, so children respond to questions without fear and are praised for speaking up. VMs allow children to make mistakes and children are encouraged to help and correct each other and generally cooperate in their learning.

*Regular and consistent monitoring, supervision and remedial action.* The structured monitoring system facilitates regular and communicated record keeping, as well as taking immediate practical action on matters arising during visits, and tracking action points to ensure they are not forgotten. Supervision is done by both authorities and peers, with the KG teachers and some senior VMs supervising the VMs, and LM staff, the PTA/SMCs and circuit supervisors all providing an oversight function.

### **Methods & curriculum**

LM has built its methodology from scratch. Its essential foundations are:

- Using **play-based and interactive methods** – using games in particular, with rotation around activities lasting 10 mins and taking place both inside and outside the classroom.

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<sup>12</sup> These include the QUIPS and EQUAL projects funded by USAID and The Whole School Project funded by DFID.

- **Working cooperatively in small groups**, with 5 or 6 children to 1 volunteer for indoor activities. The fixed ratios (number of children per mat and number of VMs per community) makes it a model that can easily expand, while preserving the amount of attention given to the children.
- Combining learning of **both cognitive, social and emotional and physical** skills and health knowledge.
- Using predominantly **locally made** (some by the mothers and teachers themselves) **and locally available teaching and learning materials**, complemented by foreign books. TLMs include: shape boxes, bottle-top and nuts and bolts as counters, cardboard puzzles, wooden construction blocks that tessellate, dominos and photocopied books with comb-binding.
- **VMs volunteer**, are selected (between 30-50 per community) and then volunteer in groups once a week during school term time only.
- **Training of trainers and continuous training** - LM staff train the circuit supervisors and KG teachers (10 half-day sessions), and the KG teachers then train the VMs (9 sessions and 2 community meetings). This is followed by Monthly Activities to which other community members like husbands, are sometimes invited. These 'drip-feed' the training, while also accumulating and adding variation to the training content. A fuller description of the LM methodology can be found in Appendix 6.
- **Teaching adults about ECD** – including parenting skills, patience, non-violent discipline methods as well as the academic curriculum.
- **Actively tracking change** – building the capacities of circuit supervisors, LM Ghana staff and to some extent KG and Head teachers to gather, analyse and then use data to make improvements.

## Management of the projects

Although the terms of reference for this evaluation are largely confined to the two projects funded by Comic Relief and UNICEF, because LM is a relatively young and small organisation and does not do any other work in Ghana apart from the work associated with these projects, it is difficult to detach the management of the project from the management of LM in Ghana as a whole. As a result, some of what follows strays into evaluating LM's management as a whole. It is also acknowledged that most of this assessment is based on impressions gathered during a relatively short evaluation, rather than an in-depth organisational assessment.

## By Lively Minds

In some ways LM is a project emerging into an organisation. Although it is 8 years old, it has an office base in three countries, employs 20 staff in two offices Ghana, and competently handles sizeable budgets, in a sense its work is still at the 'planting' stage and operates like a project intervention with a fixed timeframe. As a whole, LM comes across as a brave and bold organisation punching well above its weight. It has consciously chosen the tougher route of working with and through a government organisation (GES), aware of likely risks and challenges, but it is mindful that the alternative is to limit its work to a small geographical area, and continued dependence on external funding.

The evaluators found the LM staff in both the UK and Ghana to be frank, reflective, analytical and aware of and open about their strengths and weaknesses. Their readiness to experiment, analyse and learn has resulted in a dynamic approach to running the projects which shows a preparedness to persist and to change. For example, realising that their initial model based on direct implementation by LM would not bring the impacts they hoped for, they were not afraid to redesign their approach.

Turnover of programme staff in Ghana has been fairly high. This was attributed by staff to two main factors that are common to many Ghanaian CSOs and are linked: staff moving on to better paid jobs in more established NGOs after gaining experience, and LM's conditions of service and inability to pay higher salaries and allowances. Gaps in LM's funding of late has prevented the planned award of salary increases, and with inflation running at 17.5%, this can be challenging for staff.

The standard of LM's documentation is high, with clearly written and well-presented reports and well organised records. After Comic Relief's initial Year 1 scrutiny of LM's financial systems and reporting, LM was considered a 'low risk' organisation to fund. Comic Relief's advice to the LM-UK office to provide capacity building support to its Ghana office was quickly responded to with regular visits from the CEO and technical support from a series of interns with specialist skills and knowledge.

Like many non-government organisations (NGOs), LM is still fairly dependent on its founders, its CEO in the UK and its Country Manager in Ghana, who are both clearly very committed. The organisation appears fairly centralised. For example, there is no separate website or annual report for LM Ghana, and policy, such as the one on working hours, appears largely determined from the UK. These things are understandable at this stage of development, but if the scale of LM's operations in Ghana is to increase in its next phase, then a distinct Ghanaian presence and identity will be an advantage in terms of it establishing itself as a recognised voice and actor in Ghana. This might include a more active Ghanaian board of directors, building alliances with others engaged in ECCE and developing a capacity to raise funds and advocate in-country. Even if LM is to eventually hand over the work it has initiated to the Government of Ghana, the process leading to this is likely to take many years and it will be an advantage if LM is positioned ready for the long haul.

Judging from its annual reports, which are available on its attractive and up to date website, LM UK has an impressive broad-based funding portfolio, which includes unrestricted funds raised from its own fund-raising activities. These provide a buffer to fund activities and salaries between major grants, as well as the means to make autonomous decisions. The fundraising activities are also a source of rich development information for the UK public. LM UK's fund-raising capacity and active social media presence could usefully be extended to Ghana.

At first glance, LM's monitoring system seems overly technical, out of proportion to the size of operation and cumbersome to administer in a context unused to paperwork. However, given LM's ambition to secure large scale support to rapidly scale up and "*saturate the NR and UER and reach 250 communities in the next 3 years*" (LM CEO), it is clear that the decision to develop this kind of dataset and commensurate capacity was necessary in order to properly understand how, and then prove that the model works. Using a waiting list of schools as a control seems an excellent way of solving a common ethical problem with control sites. This has enabled evaluation of 'before and after' scenarios during the pilot without denying children and their communities access to the programme. According to the M&E Officer in the UK, the monitoring and evaluation system is not just useful for convincing potential funders, but it is also used by the LM team on the ground for reporting, planning which communities to focus on and visit, and presenting to the circuit supervisors and others at the District Education Office to show them the status of the changes that the project is bringing in their circuit or district. Presumably if maintained, it will also provide very useful data for longer term impact evaluation by GES later on. According to the M&E Officer, a copy of the monitoring form is left with the community. It would be good if communities

(SMC/PTAs) could be enabled to use these for decision-making too, ideally within the School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) processes of GES. As already noted, it would also be helpful to disaggregate more of the information gathered by gender, disability (and other relevant indicators of inclusion for the project) in order to flag up inequalities that need addressing and to aid later longitudinal impact assessments and better gender analysis. Finally, the monitoring of project outcomes seems to focus largely on what changes are taking place at the school level. For instance, LM staff did not know if and how many compounds (beyond those of the VMs) in the community have installed and are using the Tippy Tap. The evaluation suggested substantial impacts beyond the intended beneficiaries and it would be helpful to know of and measure these as well.

It was not possible to assess the effectiveness of LMs financial systems during such a short evaluation, but they appear to be well managed from the head office in the UK, with up-to-date audited accounts and adequate financial reporting to Comic Relief (financial reports were not required for the UNICEF grant). The impression given is one of an organisation that seeks to make every pesewa count, and to run the project in a way that can be sustained using locally and cheaply available materials and without incurring major expense.

*“We started small and have gone through a process of organic growth. We have grown without a huge sum of money and have always made money go as far as possible and been resilient and resourceful. Now that we are getting bigger funds we haven’t changed our delivery methods. We just try to do more.”* (LM CEO)

Indeed, LM is planning to find ways of making further savings by integrating its training programmes into existing GES INSET. Its approaches thus appear to be cost effective.

## **By GES**

To date, GES’ role in managing the project has been largely at the school level through the KG teachers’ supervision of the Play Schemes in their classrooms and through the circuit supervisors playing a monitoring function.

Both the Kumbungu and Bongo DDEs seem keen to take the Scheme further and are ready to expand it across their districts. They are yet to take up the management of the Schemes however and so far their role has been to lobby for KG and ECD more broadly.

Most of the district staff interviewed had little knowledge of national and international policy on ECD. No one had heard of the 2012 National Operational Plan for KG.

## **By the communities**

The Model 2 Play and Reading Schemes to date have been set up more as community-based initiatives of GES rather than community-driven ones. While during the Model 1 phase, LM staff spent more time with the community leaders because the Schemes were community run, the Model 2 approach has been more about keeping the community informed of and involved in what is going on at the School, rather than developing a sense of community ownership and responsibility for running the Schemes themselves. As a result, community members met during the evaluation were not showing many signs of taking part in managing the Schemes, apart from some interaction by PTA and SMC members.

The evaluation team asked all focus groups and KIIs who they thought owned the Play Scheme. The question brought a range of responses. Most thought that it belonged to either Lively Minds or GES, some said they didn’t know who it belonged to, while a few felt it belonged to everyone. When the staff of LM Bolga office were asked to score the level of community ownership (one for low and ten for high), the score ranged between two and four.



What came across strongly however was a willingness on the part of almost all community members to take up the responsibility for making sure that the Schemes continue to run in future, to support the women to continue volunteering on everyone's behalf, and to spread the concept to neighbouring areas. When asked why this had not happened already, the majority of respondents said that no one had asked them to do so, and offered many suggestions for how this could happen. According to LM however, efforts have been made to involve community members, but they are not always able or willing to sustain their participation.

## **6. Approaches used by Comic Relief, UNICEF and R4D**

The terms of reference required the evaluators to find out how the grant making policies and processes, approach to grant management and use of organisational assets had helped or hindered the delivery of change by LM. This section summarises the responses from LM, as well as the three funding partners, as well as observations by the evaluation team.

### **Comic Relief (CR)**

Comic Relief awarded LM a grant of £140,000 over three years (1/3/2013 - 28/2/2016) to set up 30 Play Schemes and 30 Reading Schemes. The project was funded under Phase 1 of the Common Ground Initiative (CGI) and also under CR's education goal, to enable: *"disadvantaged children and adults gain access to and attain a good quality education"*.

The number of Comic Relief's education grantees more than doubled during the period of LM's grant, with the result that its staff had less and less time to relate with organisations, especially those like LM that had demonstrated sound accounting and other organisational competences during their first year. With a new education programme, they were especially pleased to support an Early Childhood Development project, and one that was based on play-based methods.

Lively Minds' senior staff in the UK expressed particular appreciation for the quality of interaction with the Comic Relief programme manager, in particular her genuine interest in their work, timely responsiveness to their correspondence, and knowledgeable feedback and advice following both a visit to their work in the field and the submission of their Year 1 report. They also appreciated the conferencing and training events that were organised for CGI grantees, in particular the course they attended on advocacy, and two conferences that brought together grantees working in small and diaspora organisations in Africa to share experiences and to network in general. According to them this relationship was in sharp contrast to another UK funder they had at that time whose organisational culture was *"procedure driven, time consuming and 'anonymous', with no one point of contact with a person who had knowledge of the programme and only wanted to track the programme without being involved and interested."* Staff also mentioned how much they valued the *"sensible and flexible approach of CR, allowing us to be led by our learning and make changes, and not be hamstrung by our original proposal."* An example given was when LM wished to switch from direct implementation to the training-of-trainers approach – which diverted from the original plan that had been approved for funding and yet once a convincing explanation was provided, CR gave its full backing. The LM CEO felt that having the CR film crew come to film their work in Ghana *"also made us feel part of their community"* and, that if the footage is broadcast, it could greatly increase their public exposure and thus potentially help them to gain further financial support.

Inevitably, with an expanding organisation, the need for continued and increased funding is never far from view. CR is keen for its grantees to secure funding from other organisations, which LM has been able to do.

The pause in Comic Relief's grant giving process for its 'strategic thinking period' (as currently) with no grants being made for 8 months poses some challenges in terms of continuity for those organisations that could potentially benefit from more than one grant. Gaps in funding can especially affect the ability to retain good staff and divert staff time away from programme work to writing speculative grant applications. The Comic Relief personnel interviewed recognised the time that CR's grant making processes can take from initial application to reaching a decision and actually disbursing funds, and that this can render an organisation in limbo, although LM's reserves and unrestricted funds have helped to provide a cushion.

Comic Relief remarked on the growth in LM's capacity seen during the project period, including, its ability to report effectively to donors, which one may deduce was helped by CR's grant processes and procedures. Their proactive communication was also mentioned, with LM staff initiating the conversations with CR about changes to agreed plans. Their *"excellent blend of hard and soft skills, with strong technical and monitoring capacity enables them to play a role in Ghana that many organisations can't."*

Funded as part of the Common Ground Initiative, LM is appreciated by CR as a 'small organisation' (defined as those with an annual turnover of less than £1million) which, as the CR programme manager pointed out, can play an important role as an intermediary organisation, *"a bridge between big scale funders and big scale problems"*.

### **"Innovations in Education" funding**

In 2014 UNICEF's Innovations Unit and the Results for Development Institute ("R4D") launched a global "Innovations in Education"<sup>13</sup> competition which aimed to *"identify and develop innovative educational models that can improve children's learning outcomes and advance the international equity agenda"*. Innovations in Education: *"identifies potential innovations, provides support to determine if they can be implemented effectively at necessary scales and measures success. UNICEF is collaborating with partners to systematically identify, assess and incubate promising innovations."* According to the Innovations in Education page of the UNICEF website: *In 2014 we have selected a first round of innovations to spur changes in education systems and practices."*

LM's proposal was one of just five selected from over 150 submissions from around the world. In January 2015 a contract was signed between UNICEF Ghana and Lively Minds to provide one year of funding (\$199,955) to set up 30 Play Schemes using its Model 2 (training of trainers, and working through GES) approach.

The programme is described on the UNICEF website as: *"Community Run Play Schemes. This program aims to improve the quality of early childhood care and education in rural Ghana by training and empowering both teachers and parents to provide creative play-based activities for pre-schoolers. The training shows how to use local resources as learning materials and encourages self-sufficiency, creativity, and volunteerism."*

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/education/bege\\_73537.html](http://www.unicef.org/education/bege_73537.html)

**LM has experienced the relationship with UNICEF as interrupted for much of the grant period.** LM was the only one of the five selected projects not to have been proposed for funding by a UNICEF office. Coupled with several changes in personnel in the Ghana education office in quick succession, this appears to have led to a detached relationship with UNICEF. LM would have welcomed much closer collaboration with the Ghana office during the project period as this could have helped it to develop its relationships with GES as well as other big players in the ECD sector, in Ghana and elsewhere. Despite the changes in education personnel, the UNICEF M&E officer in Ghana has provided helpful technical advice, particularly with presenting data to non-technical audiences and offering ideas for using the monitoring data to observe the relationship between geographical location and health. The recently appointed Head of Education visited the project in October 2015.

During the early stages of negotiation, the large proportion of funding proposed by LM for personnel costs appeared to contradict UNICEF policy, but this was ironed out.

**Loss of funding value.** LM has received its funding in Ghana Cedis through its office in Ghana. Payments are made in advance in instalments based on deliverables and no financial reporting is required. According to the LM CEO, while the application, disbursement and reporting arrangements have been straightforward, the value of the funding during a period in Ghana with inflation at approximately 17.5% has affected them negatively. The budget was required in US dollars and was then converted into Ghana Cedis using UNICEF's 2014 exchange rate. From its calculations, LM estimates that approximately 16%<sup>14</sup> of the value of the funding may have been lost as a result of being paid in Ghana Cedis. This shortfall was addressed by using internal reserves from unrestricted funds and foregoing some planned staff salary increases (to keep pace with inflation).

## **Results for Development Institute (R4D)**

LM-UK staff value the ad hoc technical support that R4D has offered during the project period. While R4D did not especially recognise this, for LM it has been very valuable to have access to specialist expertise – something they might otherwise lack, or have to pay a lot for. Examples given were getting advice on the terms of reference for this evaluation and offering ideas for presentation of data in an easily accessible way.

From the R4D staff perspective the best is yet to come for LM with the release of the case study they are currently writing on LM's work. This will soon receive global exposure through their Center for Education Innovations (CEI) website which was said to be used by both large and small funders. It is hoped that the plan for the CEO of LM to accompany the publication of the case study with a blog will bring LM's work into the limelight and thus potentially open up many contacts, including those that might lead to further funding or relationships with researchers.

**What next after innovation?** All three funding organisations assumed that it was LM's responsibility to figure out how they would fund the next steps. While dependency is a common pitfall for funding organisations to avoid, there is clearly a need for new initiatives – innovations and pilots – to get further funding to take their innovation forward. Even if further funding is not available, organisations are often in the position to help the objects of their support to connect up with other sources. In cases where the purpose of an innovation

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<sup>14</sup> Using historical exchange rates, LM received \$168,457 out of the originally budgeted \$199,954, a difference of \$31,497 (15.8%)

project is a pilot to *scale up*, it seems like a cost effective move to commit further support to a previous investment.

There appear to be three key things that LM values in its relationship with its funders:

- An approachable, supportive, consistent contact person who understands their work and can draw in other technical help from their organisation when needed.
- Access to their networks – government, funding, academic or research organisations who can help to put them in touch with people who can help or provide funding to sustain their work.
- If there is a chance of continued funding, then this is organised in a timely manner to enable a seamless continuation of activities and retention of staff.

## **7. Sustaining, Replicating and Scaling Up**

This section seeks to outline what must be in place in order for the activities begun by the project to be sustained, as well as what conditions are necessary for them to be replicated elsewhere, and potentially scaled up within the mainstream education system.

### **Lively Mind's Plan to Replicate and Scale Up**

Lively Minds has made the decision to try and replicate and scale up its work in Ghana in order to reach as many deprived children as possible, using a training-of-trainers approach and working with GES as the principal implementing partner (Model 2). It recognises that it will face many challenges on the way, and that it will have to sacrifice control and some quality, and consequently the programme will need to be different in some ways going forward. Their current plan is to take a 'bottom up' approach to scaling up by replicating the Scheme to "saturate" the Northern Region (NR) and Upper East Region (UER), working district by district, and aiming to reach 250 schools in the next three years. Approaching it this way, they can work gradually, testing, evaluating and reviewing, as they learn how to work at scale and hand over more and more of the implementation and responsibility. Scaling up will then be driven by evidence of success within some of GES' hardest to reach areas. The ECD Coordinators and circuit supervisors will be at the heart of the plan, with primary responsibility for providing the training and doing the monitoring and supervision once each Scheme begins. After a TOT for 10 or so schools, and a year of running the Scheme and providing Top up training, the more practiced circuit supervisors will train and support neighbouring districts. In order to save money and make it more sustainable, LM is currently looking for ways of incorporating the programme into the ECD training that GES offers, including INSET. It is also considering how other organisations such as Ghana Health Service (GHS) and locally based CSOs might be brought in to provide some of the Top Up training.

As part of the Model 2 pilot, LM has already pulled back and handed over some functions to the circuit supervisors and KG teachers. Although they have had initial discussions with Kumbungu and Bongo districts (which they see as already approaching 'saturation'), they are not yet working with GES on planning the future because funding is not yet assured.

### **What is needed to *sustain* the Play Schemes?**

#### **Transfer of ownership**

While the LM Play Scheme model has shown extremely impressive results, and clearly works well internally in many ways, so far this has depended heavily on the impetus

provided by LM staff in the UK and Ghana. One key informant estimated that the ratio of LM to GES effort was 80:20 and that the programme could only be sustained and scaled up if this is reversed. Findings from the visits to the communities during this evaluation suggested that there is currently a blurred and varying idea of who owns the project, and thus who is responsible for it. Ownership and leadership are thus key dimensions that need to be addressed in the next phase. Currently the programme is largely driven by LM UK. In our view, not only does GES need to take up the reins, as has been acknowledged by LM and its funding partners, but so do the community members living with the Schemes.

### **Community-driven rather than community-based**

Interviews with the various stakeholders, suggest that the LM Model 2, as conceived and implemented by LM and GES is a community-based, rather than a community-driven one. Community members beyond the primary beneficiaries have generally observed the project, attending meetings when asked, with some supporting the women in the family to take part. Consequently, most do not feel a strong sense of ownership or responsibility for the Play Schemes, although almost everyone asked during the evaluation expressed a willingness to lend a hand to keep them going if LM were to withdraw. LM staff have observed that despite the continuation of the activities with the wider community as part of the initial Play Scheme process (see Appendix 6 for details), the depth of community engagement may have reduced with the switch from Model 1 (where communities ran the programmes and LM staff implemented directly and thus interacted with community leaders) to Model 2.

For the communities to own and drive the Play (and Reading) Schemes, as earlier alluded to, the conversations with the community members and leadership on the value of early childhood development should take place in greater depth than is currently the case, right from the start of the engagement with communities. Such dialogue, which needs to happen with different groups in the community, would aim to facilitate their own analysis towards the realisation of the importance of the Scheme and then maintain their involvement in a continuous process of engagement, including allocating roles and responsibilities and involving them in gathering and analysing monitoring data.

The critical process of bringing community members to the point where they are *driving* an initiative for themselves is often constrained by short project timeframes (typically one to three years), inadequate budgeting for this aspect of the work and the pressure to demonstrate quick ‘results’. However, in our view this is a vital investment for the long term, as joint community (citizen):GES ownership of the Schemes will be critical for their survival. This will be particularly so because GES staff can be suddenly transferred, potentially taking much of the capacity of that community to coordinate and lead the scheme with them. (In addition, if there are no KG teachers at all in some schools, the Play Scheme could conceivably still go ahead, if there is sufficient commitment from the Head teacher, the SMC and the VMs.). It was observed that while some VMs have the potential to play leadership roles, and some already do, they are currently primarily in support roles and await instructions from the KG teachers. If LM were to adjust the design of the Scheme as it scales up to integrate community ownership and community coordination/leadership into Model 2, the potential energy of husbands, older siblings, assembly members, non-volunteer mothers, health staff such as the community health nurses and volunteers, SMC/PTA and other teachers could all be harnessed in support of the Schemes and make them more likely to survive when LM moves on. This will not be a matter of reverting to Model 1, as Model 2 is based on a different set of arrangements, but it should be possible to adapt Model 2 to integrate this element. This would affect the theory of change, with the need to incorporate organisational and systems aspects, as well as changes in the children and VMs, as well as budget provisions. It should also be remembered that many of the schools began life with

community members uniting to start a school in their community. Some communities may also have taken part in other projects relating to community engagement in education, such as those funded by USAID and DFID. These could provide an advantage in terms of existing community capacity and be built upon where appropriate. In places like Nyariga Doone and Beo-Kasingo this spirit is still very much in evidence, in others the ‘embers’ may still be there.

Considerable time will have to be taken to nurture this aspect of the Model. In practical terms this might mean working with the traditional and religious leaders, and looking for and training *existing* community structures such as the SMC (which includes representatives of the community leadership, unlike PTAs) to govern the Schemes, make decisions etc. Currently, the circuit supervisors attend the entire training given to the KG teachers, but the head teachers of the participating schools attend only some sections. The reason given for this arrangement was that it would be too expensive to include the head teachers in the entire training, and also that the circuit supervisors are responsible for monitoring and supervising the KG teachers. While it is true that it is cheaper to train a few circuit supervisors compared to the larger number of head teachers, the reality is that the latter are responsible for the day-to-day management of the schools and supervision of the teachers and therefore play a key role in school decision-making. As some of the head teachers interviewed pointed out, they are with the KG teachers every day, and therefore in a better position to supervise them and step in if a KG teacher is, for instance, taken ill. KG teachers could remain the main supervisors at school level and take the lead in the classroom, but the more capable VMs could be trained to deputise for them in their absence (under the supervision of the head teacher), as well as working with the KG teachers to train the other mothers in the community to ensure that there are always enough VMs to run the Scheme. The power dynamics among these players will need to be given careful thought to avoid the VMs being marginalised, but the outcome would be a more robust design where citizens have greater control over the Schemes in their community and can knowledgeably hold GES to account if needed.

As well as resolving this core issue of community and school ownership and leadership, the following will also need to be in place to merely sustain the Schemes:

- **Support for the VMs to volunteer** – as described in Section 4 and discussed in more detail in Appendix 7, the VMs make the financial and other sacrifices to be part of the Scheme largely alone. All other community members interviewed said they are willing to help, but this needs organising and coordinating. Suggestions from participants in the focus groups included making sure all community members (in particular husbands/fathers) understand the value of the Scheme for their children, and supporting the VMs to volunteer by giving practical help (at home and on the farm), giving small rewards, paying small allowances (“soap money” from the community or GES was mentioned repeatedly). Others said verbal appreciation and public acknowledgment by the community could also be expressed in a more coordinated way and could take the form of giving a certificate or a one-off gift such as a half-piece cloth to the volunteers at a community-wide forum organised at the end of the academic year to review the schemes. During the last 8 years, LM has taken considerable time to work out how best to respond to this issue, which is likely to be on-going to some extent in an environment used to hand-outs from development projects and political parties. It has recently concluded that the Monthly Activities have been the most successful at motivating the women. The evaluation was not able to verify this however, as changes in VM attendance could be attributed to other factors such as increased supervision by KG teachers. Going forward, the

challenge will be to build on LM's previous experience while also playing a facilitating role, helping each community to work out its system for supporting its VMs, or somehow devising a way of ensuring there are always sufficient VMs in place.

This non-volunteer mother expressed a widely held view: *"To me, what they are doing is very good, and hard work as nobody pays them anything. I know there is no money in the system, but we can contribute no matter how small for them to be able to at least buy soap to wash their clothes. Apart from money support, I think we can also support these women with home activities. For example, during farming season we can come together and support them with their farm work. We can also help by filling their pots with water, as we by the time we have filled ours these women are still in the school helping our children."*

- **Support for the KG teachers** – the District Education Office (the DDE, ECD Coordinators and circuit supervisors, as well as their specialist colleagues responsible for girl child and special education) will need to take responsibility for different aspects of the programme at district level and ensure that the KG teachers are suitably equipped and supported with training (in-service), resources, active monitoring visits, and opportunities for sharing experiences with others running the Schemes. See training for Head teachers below.
- **A system to renew TLMs and games** – TLMs wear out and need replacing, the children and VMs also become over-familiar with them. A regular supply of new games is needed to keep the children excited about coming to the Play and Reading schemes. This requires fresh ideas, and modest funds. LM has begun to devise ways of encouraging the Schemes to invent new things; this needs to be continued.
- **Training of new VMs** – inevitably some VMs will stop volunteering and others would like to start. Some were said to stop volunteering to travel down south to earn extra income. A system for training new VMs, as well as organising the content for the Monthly Activities is needed to ensure continuous availability of VMs for the Scheme.
- **Training for Head teachers** – As noted above, currently head teachers seem to be a missing link in the process, with only KG teachers and circuit supervisors being given the full training. If LM is to reduce their visits drastically, the Heads will become vital for sustaining the Schemes and linking up with the SMCs, circuit supervisors and KG teachers to ensure that standards are maintained. They are also vital for ensuring that the lessons from the Play and Reading Schemes are integrated into the entire school system (whole school change), especially in the lower primary.
- **Community plans** to sustain and develop the Play Schemes and coordinate the above elements need to be developed following a process of facilitated dialogue. Communities requesting support to initiate a new Scheme should back their request with such a plan. Led by the Head Teachers and SMC Chairpersons, and supported by training and accompaniment from LM staff and circuit supervisors to begin with, the school authorities can meet with the KG teachers and VMs to discuss and plan the way forward. The largely operational plans would include a schedule for monitoring and visiting, training new VMs, organising Monthly Activities, how to involve the whole community in supporting the VMs and the Schemes in general, recognising and encouraging the VMs, and organising regular community events to sensitise all community members on the value of play-based learning and volunteering. Ultimately a plan for raising funds also needs to be developed to cover the costs of replenishing TLMs and rewarding the VMs.

If it is difficult for GES and to LM make the time to provide the support needed to get community leadership of the existing Schemes up and running, this one-off function could be performed by local NGOs trained and supported by LM-Ghana staff.

- **Funds** – Despite LMs modest and low cost approaches, funds will still be needed, primarily for LM's technical support, and for the trainings, some of the TLMs and transport costs. Where funds are available through GES e.g. from capitation grants or mechanisms such as Global Education Partnership Grant (GPEG), a system needs to be developed to get them released on time and spent on things that support the Schemes. The proposed separate KG accounts at district level could help greatly with this. Each Scheme may need its own bank account for community contributions as well. This would be managed by the community and the school authorities, and thus give them greater ownership of their Scheme. In some communities, basic resources for KG such as big enough classrooms and KG teachers are also needed. Although this is a fundamental GES responsibility rather than part of running the Schemes, they create the conditions for the schemes to thrive.
- **Partnerships and links** – as well as broader community support for the Schemes, support can be sought from other individuals and organisations based locally. Assembly members, faith-based organisations, the staff and volunteers of Ghana Health Service working in the community or the nearest Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compound, community radio stations, local CSOs, members of the Ghana Federation of the Disabled, and local or diaspora benefactors can all get involved in support of the Schemes.

## Replicating and Scaling-up

Replicating and scaling-up are two aspects of LM's plan to increase the impact of its work. Replicating is about setting up more Play Schemes using the same model. Scaling up is about considering how the nature of the work will change when larger numbers are involved and what it will take to manage a much bigger size of operation. It is also about what it will take to institutionalise or mainstream the Schemes within the GES. While these two aspects overlap to some extent, there are also different things to consider.

### What is needed to *replicate* the Play Schemes?

Whereas sustaining the Schemes is largely the responsibility of those working at community/school level, coordinating their replication is mostly the responsibility of the district actors.

There is every reason to expect that the LM model can be replicated in other schools and communities in the same district. The pilot project has demonstrated that it is possible for GES to provide the training for KG teachers, (and as mentioned above, the head teachers), for the KG teachers to train the VMs, under the supervision of the head teachers, and for the circuit supervisors to actively monitor the Schemes. In addition, the arrangements within each scheme – for recruiting VMs and maintaining PTRs are all easy to replicate elsewhere. Because a sizeable group of VMs (30-50) are present in each community it would be unlikely that all would move away at once and thus there is the ability and capacity to spare some of the VMs to help to set up Schemes in neighbouring communities.

For the Schemes to be replicated in other communities within the same district, the following main activities would need to take place:



- **Dialogue** with the DEO team that would be responsible (DDE, ECD Coordinator, relevant Circuit Supervisors, finance officer) about what would be involved in replicating the Scheme in their district, and then a clear decision made to go forward.
- **A GES District Plan** developed to roll out the Schemes in the communities that request it. According to LM, the Schemes do not run so well in urban areas as many of the mothers are engaged in trading activities outside the community. It may be necessary for a DEO to decide on criteria for a school/community's inclusion in the programme, or alternatively where it wishes to target its resources most. Given that the majority of Ghana's population at the last National Census was living in urban areas, and that urban poverty is increasing, adapting the model to suit urban communities, as well as better organised or resourced communities that might only need 'light touch' support, could be an important aspect of scaling up. The operational plan would need to include a training plan, the roles and responsibilities of both GES and non-GES actors, an M&E plan and an overall budget/funding plan including both GES and non-GES resources.
- **Recruitment and training of volunteer (VMs) trainers** to support the process of sharing the Scheme with other communities. This may mean training more VMs so that the more experienced ones can train others, while the newer ones maintain the home Schemes.
- **Strong documentation (written, audio and video) and guidelines on how to manage a Scheme** as a way of maintaining consistency and standards. These might take the form of audio and video sharable through smart phones, as well as more conventional paper documents and radio programmes. Increasingly smart phones can be found within families in the remotest places and should not be discounted as a tool for reaching and connecting non-literate community members, as well as district-based personnel such as circuit supervisors. Such documentation would enable LM to respond to requests for help in implementing the Scheme in other parts of the country once the Scheme becomes well known.
- **Partnership with radio and other media** – to help create an enabling environment for play-based learning and volunteering. VMs complain of being mocked by other community members for volunteering. LM complains about how other NGOs, political party campaigns and community programmes make volunteering difficult to maintain by capturing community members' attention and time by giving unsustainable T&T payments and other handouts. The media can help to raise the issues for public discussion, as well as broadcasting the successes of the Schemes and lauding the best performing VMs, KG teachers, readers etc. Members of the Ghana Community Radio Network (e.g. Simli Radio in Kumbungu District and Radio Gurune in Bolga), which are development-orientated and use the local language, can also become partners of the Schemes. They can come to the community to interview the various actors, assemble radio programmes, send messages about the Schemes to large numbers of people and generate on-going discussion – a valuable tool for working at scale.
- **Funds** – these will be needed principally for training events (initial training, Monthly Activities and periodic meetings to share and review progress), start-up equipment for new Schemes, a TLM fund, the cost of transport for monitoring and supervision and technical support for the overall design and management of a bigger programme.

## What conditions are required to implement successfully at scale?

Based on LM's proposed bottom-up approach to scaling, as described at the beginning of this section, two stages of scaling up are envisaged. First, a gradual saturation of a district and then replication in other districts within a region (which currently would involve the Northern and Upper East Regions). Second, moving to other regions of the country. It is assumed here that the next phase of LM's programme development would be limited to the first stage only. The second stage would be based on demand from within GES.

The next phase involves both continuity *and* change, keeping the current Schemes going, while also managing a sizable change management process as all adjust to their new roles. As a first step, this will need planning carefully in a collaborative manner. The following are some of the considerations for LM, GES and their funders in planning the next phase.

- **Leadership of the Scheme, in Ghana, at all levels.** As LM-UK plays less of a leading role, the leadership responsibility needs to be clearly located elsewhere. While ultimately the Schemes can be subsumed into GES structures, in the short term there is a risk that the project could stall if it is handed over to GES staff, who have a number of other duties to fulfil with very limited and irregular resources. The long term vision and the interim arrangements thus need to be clear to all, and move in the direction of increasing community ownership over time.
- **Changing functions and building new capacities.** Replicating and scaling up implies that just about everyone involved in the project will take up new roles and functions, and with this will come a need to adjust relationships and develop new capacities:
  - GES district offices (led by District Directors of Education, the ECD Coordinators and circuit supervisors) will become those driving the programme at district level. This will involve integrating the Schemes' needs into GES plans such as the national KG Operational Plan and the use of GPEG funds at district level. (School for Life managed such a process and could be a good source of advice.)
  - SMC's (or Unit Committees and PTAs) become those governing and coordinating the Schemes at community level with responsibility for their continued smooth operation and for gathering support from within and outside the community.
  - KG teachers become trainers of others (in addition to running their own Scheme), not just of the VMs in their School but of the KG teachers and VMs in other communities.
  - VMs become trainers of the next generation of VMs in their community, as well as in other communities.
  - Head teachers relate with VMs, SMCs and their teachers to ensure the continued functioning of the Scheme in their school, and perhaps the development of more interactive methods in their School more widely so that when the children produced by the Scheme move up the school they continue to benefit from child-centred and interactive teaching methods.
  - LM becomes less of an implementer and more of a facilitator and technical service provider, (supporting the GES to develop, roll out and monitor its

plan). Immediately it will need to help develop and integrate community leadership capacity as part of the model and to learn how to work with and through government. Within Ghana it will also need to help convince the wider public, so that people *demand* play-based and child-centred ECCE. It may also defend and promote volunteering against a growing trend of payment for community service, and like School for Life, identify allies with whom to advocate locally and nationally, and mobilise large scale and long term funds in support of big scale ECD programmes. As the numbers grow, LM may also help to refine and scale up the monitoring and evaluation system.

- **All people in the Scheme (VMs, KG teachers, Circuit supervisors, SMCs, DDEs) need to play their roles as they should and when they should.** What will happen if they don't? This is a critical condition for scaling up. A revised risk assessment, frank dialogue and realistic planning are three things that could help.
- **Financial control.** Funds need to be released for the Scheme's activities according to an agreed work plan and budget, and in a timely manner.
- **Consistent technical support.** To change from a project-orientated to a system-wide approach, and from a small to a big programme (30 schools to 250+ schools and few districts to all) will involve many new challenges for LM in both the UK and Ghana offices. UNICEF and R4D are likely to have considerable experience of this from around the globe that they could share.
- **Readiness for the 'long haul'.** To embed play-based methods in deprived and hard to reach communities in a relatively new KG system is not a small task. A long-term view is necessary and might include:
  - **Consistent personnel.** As far as possible, key people in LM and GES (DDEs, ECD, circuit supervisors, head teachers and KG teachers) need to be retained to follow the change process through to its conclusion. Where change happens, sufficient resources and time need to be allocated for thorough handing over.
  - **Strategic planning.** To give a realistic sense of perspective, a 10-year strategic plan would be helpful for developing a shared vision and painting a picture of the kind of commitment needed from all parties.
  - **Long-term funding.** The Play Scheme is an exciting and innovative project. It provides a solution for government in terms of reaching the hardest to reach KG children with a simple, cost-effective model that mobilises community members at little additional cost. Lively Minds and GES need the backing of consistent, technically engaged and supportive funding partners to move the work from a pilot project to a system-wide approach that is embedded in community life and in the GES as a whole. This could develop a pathway not just for LM's work, but for a number of other initiatives that positively impact on the quality of KG education provided by GES, and that work with communities in a joint effort.
- **Grassroots understanding and support for ECCE and for play-based, community run KG.** Since implementation by government can be affected by the vagaries of party political differences, it is important for LM-Ghana to gather broad local demand and support for the Schemes and their underlying approaches in order to create lasting demand among citizens (the electorate) as well as cross-party acknowledgement of the importance of the work. The idea of ECCE may be an easier sell than play in a culture that places a high premium on education and family care, but is yet to value play as educational. The following, which have already been

mentioned in this report, would also help the project to withstand such political shocks: i) a capacitated community leadership who will defend the Scheme at community level, ii) widespread citizen awareness of the value of the Schemes through strong mass and social media work, iii) the bottom-up approach to scaling up that LM is already planning. The latter does not require political buy-in at the top level, but rather roots the Scheme in the communities and GES to the point where others want to emulate it elsewhere.

- **Advocacy for play-based methods and volunteering.** LM's work would be enhanced if it is part of a national movement to influence the country's attitude to play and volunteering – both citizens and politicians need convincing. School for Life learned to successfully join with others to defend the case for out-of-school children and has many useful lessons to share.

## 8. Conclusions

*Please note: The following conclusions relate principally to the Play Scheme. A brief note on the Reading Scheme comes at the end.*

Although the LM Play Scheme is presented principally as an early childhood development (ECD) initiative, the evaluators found its impacts far beyond those intended. The Play Schemes offer a potentially transformative and broad approach to community participation in educational development, focussed around the potentials of wider community and national aspirations for the next generation. It can also serve as a 'container' or channel for other development initiatives that seek to reach young learners. At a time when the Ghana government is striving to set up its kindergarten system throughout the country, the evaluators believe that this early work of Lively Minds has the potential to provide a sound framework that is systematic and results orientated, but also constitutes an approach that can affect the quality of people's relationships, their moral codes and standards of living. It promotes peace, non-violent discipline, inclusion of marginalised children and brings joy and confidence to mothers, children and thus families and communities as a whole. It can be used to implement, in low cost and practical ways, some aspects of GES's KG Operational Plan that was developed in 2012. Indeed, it demonstrates that government policy is possible and workable in spite of the resource limitations faced by the education system and by some of the poorest communities.

**The Play Scheme is an effective, low-cost, replicable model that responds to many educational, social and health challenges simultaneously.**

More specifically, the LM Play Scheme model, and the approach to implementing it, offers:

- Rapid impacts on cognition, with clear increases in KG children's cognitive skills in just 6 months, while those around them also learn the same content.
- Social and emotional impacts, such as effective alternatives to violent discipline and dispute resolution that reach beyond the children, VMs and KG teachers to affect household members, KG colleagues and the community more widely. Its impacts on its primary beneficiaries (KG children, Volunteer Mothers and KG teachers) extend beyond knowledge and skills to levels of confidence, resulting, among other things, in feeling they can lead or initiate in different contexts.
- Impacts on non-school hours as much as school hours, and on home as much as school. It also strengthens home-school relationships.

- A solution for three of GES' challenges by increasing attendance of both children and teachers, reducing the PTRs during Play Scheme sessions<sup>15</sup> from approximately 1:50 to 1:6, and providing specialised, practical, KG teacher training at very low cost. The model can handle large numbers but achieve small group levels of attention for each child. It also combines pedagogical and organisational aspects of teacher training.
- An easy-to-learn, structured and replicable model of good KG pedagogical practice using fun, play-based methods, that places the child at the centre, nurtures children's enjoyment of learning and first language development. This leads to making play-based methods real, understood and respected by parents and teachers alike.
- An ethos as well as a methodology through its conviction that communities can control their own development, through volunteering and using locally available and low-cost resources to achieve high quality results.
- A relatively simple to administer but thorough monitoring system that results in rapid remedial action, improvements in the model, as well as impact data that can be used in future.
- An on-going capacity building mechanism through its Monthly Activities, enabling programme refinement while also maintaining volunteer learning and motivation
- A channel that can incorporate health and other development and personal development content and skills, reaching two hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups at once, namely young children and marginalised women in deprived communities.
- Marked improvements in the health of KG children and their families through the use of Tippy Taps for hand-washing, and education on diarrhoea, malaria and other preventable diseases.
- A system for producing low-cost or no-cost, locally adapted teaching and learning materials.

### **The model needs modifying to be sustainable and scalable.**

The evaluation team found some weaknesses in the approach used to implement Model 2, and thus in the theory of change, which could affect the prospects of long term sustainability:

- Model 2 comes across as community-based, rather than community-driven – in other words the starting point, and the control, is external to the community.
- The model focuses heavily on working with the primary stakeholders (KG teachers, VMs, and KG children). As a result, those with authority in the home, school and community (husbands, Head teachers, community leaders), who have the power to help sustain the Schemes far into the future when LM withdraws, have not been fully integrated into the Scheme as should have been the case.
- Model 2, which is a marked improvement on Model 1 where implementation was being done directly by LM, is heavily focused on implementation by GES, without corresponding ownership by communities.

The result of the above points is that those in authority based in the community, both outside the school and even inside the school, do not always feel a sense of ownership or responsibility for the Schemes. There are also widely differing ideas among the stakeholders about who owns them, with the majority assuming they belong to GES or LM. However, the evaluation found a widespread willingness among community members to play a part in

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<sup>15</sup> The pupil:teacher ratio includes untrained teachers is not the same as the pupil:*trained* teacher ratios PTTR.

making them work, and so there is every reason to believe this gap can be addressed, especially now that the value of the Schemes has been demonstrated.

The existing Schemes are more likely to be sustained if LM gradually hands over power and responsibility to the communities and their institutions and builds their capacity to lead and sustain them in conjunction with GES. At the same time, the primary stakeholders, who are typically marginalised, should continue to be supported to maintain day-to-day control. The task is sensitive but feasible. Going forward, the model needs to be improved to ensure Schemes are community-driven, as well as GES-driven. Ultimately, scaling up will also bring the need to modify the model to suit urban communities, and those that are less deprived or with greater organising capacity at baseline. The latter could be an asset to the wider 'ECCE community'.

LM and its Play Schemes have few connections with other government or CSO actors, at community, district or national levels. This is understandable for this phase of its development as limited resources have had to be focused on developing and implementing the model. In the next phase of its development, in which it aspires to scale up the work, LM needs to face outwards more in order to build broader public awareness of, and then the demand for, the Schemes. This means building partnerships or alliances with others in the play, ECCE and volunteering sectors for greater advocacy, especially at the national level.

The work of promoting and establishing the Schemes is currently reliant on LM, particularly in terms of planning, monitoring, maintaining standards, introducing new ideas and fund-raising. This is also inevitable at this stage, and LM is keenly aware of the need to pull back, while not doing so too soon when the model has not been consolidated. LM also understands the need to build the capacity of its Ghana office to be ready for scaling up.

Developing the youngest children in a school to the point where they are widely acknowledged to be able to do things that children two or more years their senior cannot do poses a challenge. This is certainly not a weakness of the model, but it does raise questions about what happens in the rest of the school. Children used to interactive learning methods, and to encouragement to make and learn from mistakes, will want, and indeed deserve, the same as they progress to other classes. The challenge will be how to spread, not just the methods but, the ethos of the Play Scheme throughout the schools. Integrating the Head teachers and SMCs in the Play Scheme more could help.

### **The Scheme is strongly aligned with national KG policy and can be readily mainstreamed**

The LM initiated Play Schemes can help to realise the Government of Ghana's plans for its fledgling KG system. Its 2012 National Operational Plan for KG specifically recommends many of the things that the Play Scheme provides, including the need to scale-up good practice, improve home-school relationships and prioritise the training of KG teachers.

There is therefore every reason for GES, and its development partners that have committed to supporting ECCE in Ghana such as UNICEF, DFID and the World Bank, to give this programme their full support by providing long-term funding, active technical partnership and wider public acknowledgement.

### **A note on the Reading Schemes**

Although the evaluation team was supposed to evaluate both the Play Scheme and the Reading Scheme, due to a number of limitations, it was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to independently evaluate the latter in any depth, and therefore to reach any

detailed conclusions. However, the older readers, listeners, teachers and circuit supervisors interviewed all spoke enthusiastically about its benefits. The evaluation team thought that, in addition to raising the standards of literacy and generating an interest in reading, the Reading Schemes could potentially be used to spread the ethos of the Play Schemes to the older classes in the schools. To do this though would, require additional organisational capacity on the part of LM, the community, school authorities and GES district offices, and ownership by the last three stakeholders. If these cannot be achieved, then LM's energies may be best channelled into its work in early childhood development (ECD).

## 9. Recommendations

We offer the following recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation:

### **1. Continue with and nurture the same approaches, content, and ethos to the Play Schemes, but modify the model from community-based to community-driven**

The Play Schemes are a fresh and exciting concept that achieve rapid results. Both the methods and the inclusive, low-cost ethos should be maintained and further refined. Some specific recommended actions are to:

- i. Develop and test strategies to incorporate a community-driven approach
- ii. Use the evaluation findings to further community engagement and support the communities to plan their next steps for sustaining the Scheme.
- iii. Only work with communities that have their own plans as to how they can own, drive and sustain the scheme.
- iv. Carefully maintain all aspects of the KG and VM training curricula. In particular, the social and emotional, to continue impacting on family and community relationships and inclusion. Also, hone the Top-up Training mechanism as a way of building relationships with other district players and providing a channel to feed in health and other development content.
- v. Test strategies to facilitate the communities and GES to resolve the 'soap money' issue.
- vi. In general, continue to emphasise community benefits rather than individual ones, so that incentives and rewards are based on collective effort and accomplishments. And reward volunteering, rather than paying people to volunteer.
- vii. Support the schools and the GES at district level to spread the ethos and interactive child-centred methodologies up through the school.
- viii. Maintain and nurture LM's honest organisation-wide action-learning approach and seek to imbue the work at community and district level with the same.
- ix. Support GES District Office to continue to develop and use the monitoring system and include more disaggregated aspects to enable the tracking of gender, disability and other aspects of inclusion.

## 2. The Reading Scheme

It is recommended that expansion of the Reading Scheme is put on hold until sufficient dedicated human and material resources can be devoted to its development and with buy-in and commitment from GES.

### 3. Use a 'bottom up' approach to scaling up, focusing on partnership at the district level

We agree with LM's plans to use a 'bottom-up' approach to scaling, where the District Education Office of GES leads a process of replication ("saturation") and expansion, and then champions the Schemes within GES more widely. Some specific recommended actions are to:

- i. Familiarise the GES staff with the National Policy and Operational Plan for KG
- ii. Invest in GES staff involvement and capacity. In particular:
  - the District Directors of Education as overall strategic planners and champions of the Scheme both inside and outside the district,
  - the ECD Coordinators as the lead manager for the Play Schemes in the District
  - The Circuit Supervisors as responsible for standards, and for monitoring, as well as collectively evaluating change,
  - The Head Teachers as overall supervisors at the School level and responsible for liaison with the community
  - The KG teachers as the trainers of VMs and their supervisors in the classroom.
- iii. Use *existing* aspects of GES systems where possible, to save cost and mainstream the Schemes. For example, use its In-service Training (INSET) mechanism as an opportunity to sustain the training of KG teachers, head teachers, circuit supervisors and ECD Coordinators.
- iv. Continue to take a gradual approach to changing the '80:20'<sup>16</sup> balance between LM and GES, such as increasing the number of GES staff visits to the schools and involvement in training programmes, while reducing those of LM.
- v. Invest in community and school capacity to manage the schemes
- vi. Invest in building community-school cooperation, building on previous successes where appropriate.
- vii. Openly dialogue and address gender and inclusion issues with all groups, stressing the value of continuing the empowerment of VMs wherever possible.
- viii. Develop a plan to win resources and support from outside the community.
- ix. Develop partnerships with radio stations – community radios if possible.
- x. Identify and continually involve 'Ambassadors' of the Scheme to speak for them in various strategic spaces at community, district, national and international levels.

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<sup>16</sup> A reference to a comment by a key informant that the ratio of LM to GES effort was 80:20 and that the programme could only be sustained and scaled up if this is reversed.



Enable them to see the work at first hand. Organise visits, events and communicate frequently. ‘Ambassadors’ might include private sector individuals, respected educationalists, academics working on ECCE and women’s and children’s issues, other district level government leaders such as Ghana Health Service, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, National Service and youth related organisations. People who connect with networks.

- xi. retain focus on prioritising the most deprived KG children and on developing inclusive practice in order to reach the most marginalised children, including those with disabilities and ethnic minorities.
- xii. test strategies to adapt the Scheme to run successfully in different environments such as in urban communities, and in better resourced and organised schools.

#### **4. Build alliances to advocate for ECCE in Ghana and to support scaling up**

Ghana is in a good position as government policy on KG is in place, and a fully costed Operational Plan has been drawn up to support it. GES needs partners to help implement this plan. LM’s Play Scheme model is well aligned with the Operational Plan and can help to move it forward. It is recommended that:

- i. LM-Ghana joins with others who can offer a contribution to the delivery of part of the National KG Operational Plan and considers itself as part of a national effort to implement it.
- ii. LM-Ghana, supported by LM-UK, organises with others to set up an Alliance for ECCE, plan a collegial way forward, and periodically (annually) monitor progress in a joined up and mutually supportive manner. Other members might include: civil society organisations such as Sabre Trust, Right-to-Play and Afrikids, and other national and international NGOs working in education. GES and other related government organisations such as MGCSP, DSW, and GHS and international development partners such as UNICEF, DFID, World Bank and USAID can then be lobbied by the Alliance to support ECCE.
- iii. Contribute to (or lead) the establishment of an Alliance for ECCE website with allied social media platforms (Facebook and WhatsApp) to create a community of practice in support of ECCE in Ghana, share progress and foster collaboration.
- iv. Use LM’s evidence base, including this evaluation report, to argue the case for play-based and child-centred learning, as well as for working successfully with community volunteers and building pathways for government-community collaboration at community level. Partner with academics in Ghana in support of this.

Replication and scaling does not have to be done by LM alone. The model for the Scheme can be taught to others who are interested in implementing it. If LM/GES publicises its work, they are likely to be approached by those who are interested in replicating. All can work together to spread the model. Towards this:

- v. LM should continue to actively document and disseminate its evidence and also position itself to offer technical support to others wishing to implement the model elsewhere, in Ghana and beyond.

## **5. Provision of long term funding support for ECCE in Ghana**

Establishing ECCE in Ghana, and the Play Scheme model in particular, requires long-term funding in order to enable LM and other practitioners to focus on the practicalities of implementation. Continued piecemeal and short-term funding will be inefficient and poor value for money. The National Operational Plan for KG was fully costed when written in 2012 and could be fairly readily updated. It is recommended that:

- i. LM uses the findings from this evaluation, and other evidence it has already, to secure long term funding to:
  - continue its work at district level, including refinement of model 2 to increase community ownership and replication in other districts
  - work with others to develop an Alliance for ECCE
  - together with the Alliance, roll out aspects of the National KG Operational Plan which are in line with their mission.
- ii. UNICEF-Ghana, having invested in this pilot that has demonstrated excellent results, unites with other development partners working in ECCE in Ghana to assure long-term funding to LM and other organisations implementing aspects of the National KG Operational Plan.
- iii. Comic Relief continues to fund LM-UK and Ghana in support of the internal change management process implied by scaling up its work in Ghana and handing over to government.

## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

### LIVELY MINDS

## Improving early years education & health in rural Ghana through community-run Play and Reading Schemes.

### End-line Evaluation

<b>Position:</b>	Independent End-Line Evaluator
<b>Reports to:</b>	Lively Minds, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
<b>Salary:</b>	Competitive consultancy fee
<b>Length of contract</b>	23 days consultancy
<b>Location:</b>	Tamale and Bolga, Ghana
<b>Start date:</b>	December 2015

### Summary

Lively Minds is seeking to appoint an independent consultant to conduct an independent evaluation of its Play Scheme and Reading Scheme programme. The programme has been ongoing since March 2013 and has been implemented using two delivery models.

**Model 1** between March 2013 and September 2014 the project was implemented directly by Lively Minds staff.

**Model 2** from October 2014 onwards when we switched to a training of trainers approach.

Comic Relief funded model 1 and made a contribution towards model 2. UNICEF funded model 2.

As the two funders are co-funding the same programme, in order to save of costs we are commissioning one evaluation team. The team will provide a single report on the overall project that will serve as the independent evaluation for both Comic Relief and UNICEF. The consultant will be an impact assessment expert with working knowledge of education and community development programmes in a resource-poor context. The consultancy will take place in December 2015 and will involve participative evaluation including site visits and meetings with project implementers, stakeholders (Ghana Education Service district officials), teachers, and community members (including community leaders and parents) in a sample of project locations.

The consultant will be required to travel to the Northern and Upper Eastern regions, Ghana, with anticipated field trips to a sample of schools and communities.

## Summary Information

<b>Funders</b>	UNICEF and Comic Relief
<b>Grantee</b>	Lively Minds
<b>Implementation partner</b>	Lively Minds Ghana
<b>Project Location</b>	Ghana, Northern Region (Kumbungu, Tamale Metro, East Gonja, Mion and Tolon Districts); Upper East Region (Bongo, Talensi, Bolga Municipal Districts)
<b>Project Name</b>	Improving early years education & health through community-run Play and Reading Schemes

## Background information

### Comic Relief

<b>Total funding from Comic Relief</b>	£ 140,000
<b>Project Start &amp; End Dates</b>	Start: 1/3/2013 End: 28/2/2016
<b>Project duration</b>	3 years
<b>Outputs</b>	30 Play Schemes and 3 Reading Schemes

Comic Relief is a UK-based grant making organisation. This project was funded under their Common Ground Initiative (“CGI”). The CGI programme was based on the belief that small charities and the African diaspora in the UK were significant contributors to social change in Africa but that their work was often overlooked by funders, non-governmental organisations, governments and the business sector. CGI believes that greater support to the diaspora would enhance social development gains in Africa. Specifically this project falls under the education goal, which is “disadvantaged children and adults gain access to and attain a good quality education”. Comic Relief provided a grant towards setting up 30 Play Schemes and 30 Reading Schemes over 3 years.

### UNICEF GHANA

<b>Total funding from UNICEF</b>	US\$199,955
<b>Project Start &amp; End Dates</b>	Start: 8/12/2014 End: 30/11/2015
<b>Project duration</b>	1 year
<b>Outputs</b>	30 Play Schemes (model 2)

In 2014 UNICEF Innovations Unit and Results for Development (“R4D”) launched a global “Innovations in Education” competition. A panel of academics, high-tech industry professionals, venture capitalists and development experts gathered to choose the most innovative initiatives in education. From a total of over 150 submissions from all around the world, the expert panel reviewed 14 and selected a group that could receive a first round of funding. This project was one of those selected. In January 2015 a contract was signed between UNICEF Ghana and Lively Minds. This grant was to set up 30 new Play Schemes using a trainer of trainers approach.

## **Lively Minds**

Lively Minds is a partnership between Lively Minds UK and Lively Minds Ghana. There is also a branch in Uganda. Lively Minds has been operating since 2008. It is a non-political, non-religious organisation. Lively Minds is a UK registered charity. Lively Minds Ghana is an NGO based in Tamale, Ghana, with a second office in Bolga, Ghana. Both organisations share the same mission: to improve the quality of life for deprived children in rural Ghana through creative education programmes that enliven minds and empower communities to change their lives for the better. Lively Minds Ghana are responsible for implementing the project. They are supported and facilitated by Lively Minds UK.

Lively Minds Ghana currently has 15 local employees, headed up by the Country Manager. The Country Manager is line-managed by and accountable to the CEO of Lively Minds. Lively Minds currently has three full-time employees and a part-time fundraiser, and is governed by a Board of Trustees, comprised of 6 members.

## **Project background**

This project addresses the urgent need to expand and improve early childhood care and education (“ECCE”) in Ghana. It tackles two major barriers: poor quality pre-school education, and poor home-based care and stimulation.

In Ghana, Kindergarten (“KG”) quality is impeded by lack of trained teachers (only 50% KG teachers in the Northern Region are trained teachers, and only 32% in Upper East Region) [MOESS 2013] and the majority of these are untrained in ECCD. Quality is further impaired by rote-based teaching, teacher absenteeism and large class sizes. In the two project regions the average KG class size is 55 (Northern) & 52 (Upper East) and PTTR is 108 and 162 respectively. The Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service’s Operational Plan to Scale-Up Quality KG Education in Ghana (the “Operational Plan”) states:

*“Despite the great strides Ghana has made in recognising the value and importance of early years education, the delivery of KG education remains entrenched in a rote learning style, which is neither child-centred nor activity-based. Teacher pedagogical practice typically shows a lack of understanding as to how children should learn and how teachers should teach.”*

The second barrier is low levels of adult education and poverty harm home-based care. The average education attainment for women in Ghana is just 0.1 years (Northern region) and 0.3 (Upper East) [Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (2009)]. These women are unlikely to be aware of importance of stimulation in the early years and fail to give their children adequate stimulation to nurture their development. Low self-confidence and poor aspirations further exacerbate the problem. Only 3% of families in Northern Ghana have access to improved sanitation facilities [2010 Millennium Development Report for Ghana] and consequently diarrheal disease is the second leading cause of child death and sickness in Ghana. This has

long-term health impacts for children, resulting in loss of income for families and delayed or disrupted education for children.

The result of these barriers is that these children are less likely to succeed in school, in turn giving them lower earning potential, placing them at greater risk of poor health, poverty, early marriage and parenthood. Not only does this violate their right to thrive as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is also estimated that this lost potential is associated with a 20% deficit in adult income and will have implications for national development. [The Lancet 2007 & 2011 ECD series]. Children with disabilities and the ultra-poor are frequently marginalised in the education system and at home and therefore likely to be doubly disadvantaged.

## Target recipients

Our project targets deprived rural communities in Northern and Upper Eastern Ghana, where the problems described above are particularly prevalent.

### ***Direct beneficiaries***

- Children aged 4-6 (Play Scheme)
- Children aged 6-13 (Reading Scheme)
- Volunteer Mothers
- Kindergarten Teachers

### ***Indirect beneficiaries***

Additional children of the Volunteer Mothers

## Project Outcomes

1. Improved cognitive skills of participating children aged 3-5
2. Increased language and comprehension skills for Reading Scheme “Listeners” (children aged 5-8) and “Readers” (children aged 11-13)
3. Improved school attainment for participants of Play and Reading Schemes and Readers
4. Improved confidence and wellbeing of Play Scheme Volunteer Mothers
5. Reported reduction in diarrheal diseases and improved health of children living in the communities where the projects are set up
6. Increased capacity and performance of Teachers

## Project description – Play Scheme

The project aims to improve ECCE by setting up high quality educational Play Schemes in kindergartens. These Schemes give kindergarten children access to age-appropriate and interactive games that are designed to improve cognitive skills, school preparedness and health of children.

Importantly, the project also aims to bring about behavioural change in caregivers, so they can provide better ECCE for their children. To achieve this objective Lively Minds trains kindergarten teachers and 30 Mothers from each community, targeting marginalised women, to run the Schemes themselves as Volunteers so that they have the skills, tools and motivation to run and sustain educational Play Schemes and provide better ECCE for their children at home.

Key innovations in this project are:

- The Play Schemes provide a unique child-friendly learning environment. Unlike the rote teaching in kindergarten, children enjoy learning and discovering through play, using a variety of stimulating materials, in a caring environment. Children are divided into small groups with 5:1 child/volunteer ratio to benefit from small group work and care.
- The Schemes incorporate health practices, in particular handwashing. WASH programmes often find it difficult to reach pre-school children. We are able to reach this group and institute behavioural change, at the age when they are most risk to diarrheal disease.
- Community empowerment: Development projects can inadvertently impact negatively on communities by making them dependent on external aid and “hand-outs”. Our approach relies on volunteerism. We train uneducated caregivers, targeting marginalised and uneducated women, to run the Play Schemes on a voluntary basis using local materials. This develops skills, empowers people to improve their own lives using the resources available to them, ensures sustainability and promotes community participation.

The project uses a highly structured training model that is replicated in staggered phases. We therefore have aimed to standardise the model as far as possible, in order to establish proof of concept and also scalability.

## • Model 1- delivery method

The following delivery model was used to set up 20 new Play Schemes between March 2013 and September 2014. The model consisted of the following stages:-

- 1) **Selection:** Lively Minds and GES officials to identify deprived rural schools using a set of selection criteria. We visit and compare villages, engaging with stakeholders to assess their level of need and interest. The communities are tasked to prepare a short presentation (written or oral) to explain why we should select their village. Based on these findings we then select one of the communities.
  - 2) **Training Volunteers:** Staff hold a community meeting, where they market the project and invite community members to participate, targeting women. A minimum of 30 Volunteer Mothers per community and the KG teacher are trained. Training consists of nine training sessions and a graduation ceremony. Training includes importance of early childhood development, how to make and teach games, outdoor play, handwashing and discovery-led teaching methodologies. Training focuses on confidence and team building.
  - 3) **Volunteers run the Play Scheme:** The community is provided with collection of games and materials. The 30 Volunteer Mothers are divided into four groups, and each group is given a time to run the Play Scheme. The children are also divided into four groups.
- The Play Schemes take place in four sessions throughout the week with six Volunteer Mothers and a maximum of 30 children per session (reaching 160 children per week). This is designed to create a fun, interactive & caring environment and overcome the problem of large class sizes and rote-style teaching.



- Children participate in six different skill-sets (outdoor play, matching, numeracy, reading/literacy, shapes/sizes/senses, building) using locally-made educational games that can be easily replicated. Teaching uses discovery and play-based learning.
- 4) **Incorporating health practices:** Volunteers are trained in the importance of handwashing and children must handwash before entering the Play Schemes. By associating it with a fun activity, this habituates them to this vital practice so they are less susceptible to diarrheal disease.
  - 5) **Supporting Volunteers:** Once Schemes are set up, we provide a package of activities to support the Volunteers, sustain their motivation and develop their skills and capacities. Including: surprise monitoring visits to quality control (24 in year one and 12 in year two); monthly capacity-building workshops on parenting and lifeskills topics; reward and recognition awards. We engage community leaders, teachers, PTAs and hold regular community meetings as their support is essential to motivate Volunteers and children.

## Lessons Learnt

After 15 months of implementation, we identified three key issues to address.

First, direct implementation by Lively Minds staff enabled us to carefully control the project and ensured high quality delivery of training. However, it meant that unit costs are high as delivery is labour and transport intensive. This in turn reduced scalability. Having established the success of the training curriculum, we identified that the pathway to scale and sustainability is to strengthen and utilise existing government channels to deliver and own the project.

Building upon this, a number of government departments and agencies have an interest in ECCE (for example Ghana Health, Social Welfare, GES). However we identified GES and the Ministry of Education as the key partners. This is because KG teachers are already located in the target communities, can be easily mobilised, and there is an infrastructure in place to monitor and support teachers. Moreover, there is an urgent need to improve the capacity of KG teachers, and KG teacher training is the top priority of the Operational Plan.

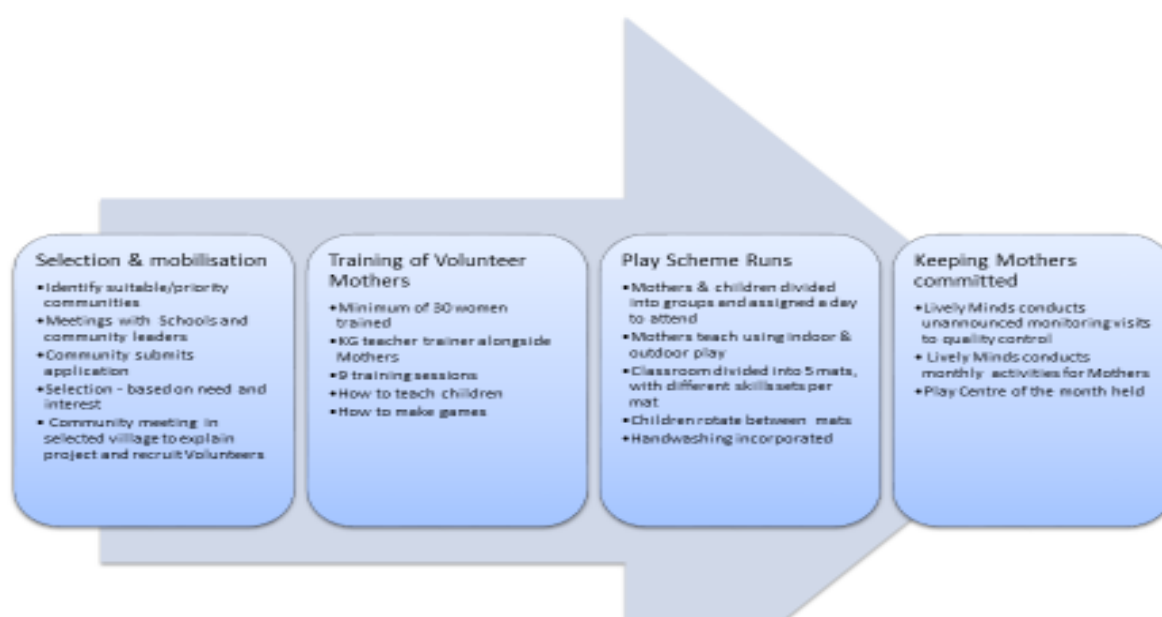
Third, key learning is that there is a need to improve teacher compliance and participation in the project. Lively Minds staff trained Volunteer Mothers and the KG Teachers together. However, teacher attendance and participation in the training was been inconsistent – which meant teachers are unable to supervise the Schemes effectively. Further, surprise monitoring visits showed that teacher’s attendance at schools was sporadic. This had the effect of discouraging the Volunteer Mothers, thus reducing their attendance and the overall running of the Schemes. It also meant that Lively Minds has been using monitoring visits to quality control and provide support to the Volunteer Mothers. But with further effort we believe it would be possible to work with teachers and the education service to improve this situation and to support the strategic aims of the KG sector.

## Model 2- delivery method

In order to address these three issues, we decided to pilot an adapted version of the project, setting up 30 new Play Schemes (“Model 2”).

Rather than train Mothers in the communities directly, Lively Minds held centralised training workshops for KG Teachers from 30 selected communities. These teachers cascaded this training to the Volunteer Mothers in their community, and have been supervising the Play Schemes and providing the monthly parenting workshops. Over time Lively Minds will give advanced training to high performing Teachers so they can set-up new Schemes with only light touch support. Regional and district officials of the Ghana Education Service will be responsible for selection and mobilisation of schools, monitoring the Play Schemes and

## Model 1

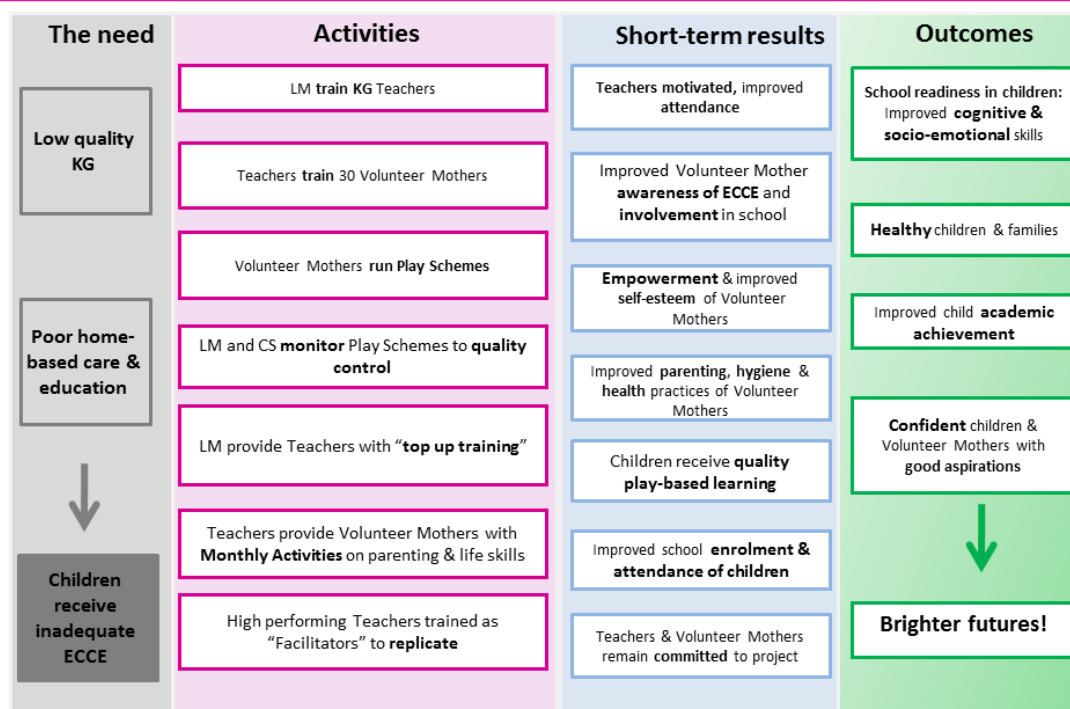


supporting the KG teachers. They are also involved in the training programme - and over time will take over responsibility for this aspect too.

- 2 Kindergarten teachers from each school are trained by Lively Minds over 10 half-day sessions. Training includes the importance of ECCE, how to teach, make and use games, child-friendly teaching style and how to train Volunteer Mothers. Circuit Supervisors attend all sessions. Head Teachers and PTA chairpersons attend some of the sessions.
- The teachers then train a minimum of 30 Volunteer Mothers in their communities over 9 training sessions and 2 community meetings, using the same syllabus and games previously used by Lively Minds. Teachers are observed and supported either by a member of Lively Minds or a facilitator (a high performing teacher from a previous training intake)
- Volunteer Mothers are divided into groups and attend kindergarten on assigned days in their groups throughout the week to teach children at the Play Scheme. The teachers supervise. Schemes take place according to the description in model 1 above.
- Teachers provide monthly capacity building workshops to the Mothers. The syllabus (which is the same one that Lively Minds had been using previously) includes disease prevention, parenting, disability awareness, and life skills topics. Lively Minds and circuit supervisors monitor these regularly for quality control.
- Lively Minds provides quarterly top-up workshops for teachers to solve problems with Schemes and to train teachers in the monthly capacity building activities.
- Ghana Education Service officials are involved in all stages, including selection and mobilisation of schools, and participating in training, monitoring and supporting Schemes and teachers.
- High performing teachers assist and support the setup of additional Schemes in neighbouring communities.



## Theory of change



## Transition of Model 1 schemes to Train the Trainer

In order to consolidate our communities and to make use of the lessons learned from the Model 2 pilot, the teachers from the original Model 1 schools have received additional top-up and refresher training from Lively Minds so that they can now provide the capacity building activities to the Volunteer Mothers directly. As part of the UNICEF pilot, these communities took part in a second round of evaluations (using the same evaluations that are being used in the Model 2 communities), providing an additional set of data that enables comparison between communities in which Lively Minds has been active for some time and the newer Model 2 communities.

### Control communities

A set of communities meeting the Lively Minds selection criteria but in which Lively Minds is not yet active has been selected to provide a comparison dataset. These communities will eventually receive the Lively Minds programme, but before this are administered the same questionnaires as the treatment communities in Model 1 and Model 2 at baseline (selection), 3 months and 6 months.

- **Reading Scheme**

In addition to the Play Schemes run by Volunteer Mothers, we have also set up Reading Schemes in deprived 15 rural primary schools. Each school was given a collection of books and received 8 training sessions from Lively Minds staff. Teachers and “Readers” (children in Upper Primary Schools) were trained to tell stories using pictures in the books, and to translate these into the local language. Once trained, the Readers run weekly story telling sessions to the lower primary classes. Further to the initial training sessions, revision

workshops are held for teachers from the participating schools; these teachers then provide revision training to the Readers.

It is our intention to extend this scheme by adopting a similar train-the-trainer approach as is used in the Play Schemes: ie staff (and facilitators) will provide training for teachers, who then train Readers in their individual schools.

- **Purpose of the independent final evaluation**

The evaluation will address the project's process, impact and scalability. The purpose of the evaluation is to enable Lively Minds and its funders to understand both **what** difference the project has made, and **how** it has made that difference, i.e. understanding the key success factors and barriers and to inform future design and implementation. This will involve independently verifying and supplementing where necessary, Lively Minds' record of achievement as reported through its Reports. This exercise could include verifying information that was collected by the grantee for reporting purposes and possibly supplementing this data with additional information collected through primary and secondary research. Verifying reporting will also necessarily include a review of the data and systems that were used to populate results.

The evaluation will also be used by Lively Minds, in particular

- Lively Minds, Lively Minds Ghana project staff
- Local project partners and stakeholders
- Lively Minds' donor network
- The evaluation will be published on the Lively Minds website

The independent final evaluation report needs to be a substantial document that

- (a) answers all the elements of the Terms of Reference (ToR);
- (b) provides findings and conclusions that are based on robust and transparent evidence; and
- (c) where necessary supplements the grantee's own data with independent research.

## Comic Relief Evaluation

### Evaluation questions

The evaluator(s) should respond to the questions below. Please note that the attention given to each evaluation question may vary depending on the objectives of certain projects and the availability of data, so the independent evaluator(s) should use his/her discretion in the level of effort used to respond to these questions.

#### **What difference has the project made to people's lives (what, who, where, when)?**

- To what degree have project outcomes been achieved? Were there any unexpected outcomes?
- Who has benefited (women, men, girls and boys) and in what ways?
- Are those changes (outcomes) relevant to people's needs?
- Are they likely to be sustainable in the long term?
- Have there been changes to policies, practice and attitudes of decision and policy makers to benefit the project's target groups?
- To what extent has the project contributed to the achievement of broader national and international policies, conventions, targets etc in the country/ies where the project is working?

- To what extent has the achievement of the changes/ outcomes been influenced by external context and other factors?
- To what extent have unpaid community Volunteer Mothers committed to sustaining a community development project? What are the barriers and what are the facilitators?
- How effective has the approach of using older students to improve the educational attainment of younger students been? What are the challenges and facilitators?
- Which methods of raising interest and support for community education projects proved most effective?
- To what extent have the actions of the programme designed to increase girls' attendance and attainment in schools succeeded? (Specifically: involvement of women as Volunteer Mothers to run the Play Schemes, ensuring half of the 'Readers' for Reading Schemes are girls and that the ratio of girls to boys from children participating in the projects is 50:50)

### **How has the project made this difference?**

#### **Approaches used by the project and implementing organisations:**

- What was the overall theory of change for this project? Has it been effective in bringing about lasting change? Were there any gaps?
- What have been the most effective methodologies and approaches the organisation used to bring about changes to people's lives? What has worked and what has not? What lessons have been learned? Who have they been shared with?
- How has the type of organisations funded (e.g. user-led, social enterprise, national or international NGO), both UK and local, helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change?
- How have relationships between partners throughout the relationship chain (looking at UK organisation-local partner(s)-target groups) helped or hindered the delivery of change /outcomes?
- How effective have the project's management, monitoring, learning and financial systems been? How have they helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change?
- Has the project been cost effective?

#### **Approaches used by Comic Relief:**

- How have Comic Relief's grant making policies and processes (e.g. how we define our programme strategies and outcomes, how we assess applications) helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change?
- How has Comic Relief's approach to grant management (e.g. individual work with grant holders, and learning activities with other funded organisations) helped or hindered the delivery of lasting change?
- How has the way Comic Relief used its organisational assets helped or hindered the delivery of change (e.g. use of the media, access to decision makers)?
- Are there any other ways in which Comic Relief has helped or hindered the delivery of change?

## **UNICEF - evaluation**

### **Evaluation questions**

The same questions as above are to be answered for the UNICEF Pilot Project; additionally the report should highlight scalability and replicability of the pilot:

- What must be in place in order for the intervention to be replicable and scalable?
- Is the current strategy to build the necessary implementation capacity replicable?
- What conditions are required to enable successful implementation at scale?

## Indicative materials to review

The existing evidence base includes:-

- Grant proposals,
- Annual report 2014 and 2015
- Reports from monitoring visits (raw data and processed reports)
- Assessment results from psycho-social surveys on sample of children conducted at baseline, 3 months and 6 months (raw data and processed reports); these surveys include sections on semantic knowledge, patterns and sorting, shape recognition etc.
- Assessment results from surveys on Volunteer Mothers conducted at baseline, 3 months and 6 months (raw data and processed reports)
- Transcripts and analysis of focus groups with Volunteer Mothers
- Assessment results from teachers
- Reading Scheme assessment results

The assessment data from these evaluations was entered into multiple Excel files; these have been consolidated and coded for analysis (one row per respondent; approximately 600 children and 400 Volunteers among the 3 cohorts answering at both baseline and 3 months), and these data files will all be made available to the evaluation team.

In addition, staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders will be available for interviews.

## Evaluation methods

The consultant or consulting firm commissioned for the independent final evaluation will work alongside Lively Minds to choose the methods that are the most appropriate for the purpose of this evaluation. Evaluation methods should be rigorous yet at all times proportionate and appropriate to the context and budget of the project intervention.

Relevant primary and secondary research may include:

- interviews with staff
- focus group discussions with beneficiaries
- surveys or discussion with relevant stakeholders
- systematic reviews of secondary studies and sources, measuring impact where possible and proportionate through comparison groups and other quantitative methods;
- verifying reported data through back checking and quality control assessments.

### The report

The report should be clear and simply written, free of jargon. The main body of the report should **not** exceed 30 pages and should include an executive summary and recommendations. Technical details should be confined to appendices, which should also include a list of informants and the evaluation team's work schedule. Background information should only be included when it is directly relevant to the report's analysis and conclusions.

The report's authors should support their analysis of a project's achievements with relevant data and state how this has been sourced. Recommendations should also include details as to how they might be implemented.

We expect the report to include guidance on the process by which findings will be shared and discussed with all stakeholders including those who are benefiting from the project and how any resulting changes in the report will be included.



**Appendix 2: List of references**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Date</b>
Grant Proposal Comic Relief – stage 1	2012
Grant Proposal – stage 2	2012
Budget	2012
Start-up form – outcomes and learning questions	May 13
Annual Report Year 1 (incl annexes and finance report)	April 14
Comic Relief Feedback	April 2014
Annual Report Year 2 (incl annexes and finance report)	April 2015
Grant proposal	Nov 2014
Budget	Nov 2014
Gantt chart	Nov 14
Logframe	Nov 14
M&E Learning plan	Nov 14
Inception Report	March 15
Data analysis 1	May 15
Data analysis 2	September 15
Narrative Report	October 2015
Narrative Report	December 2015
Volunteer Assessment Old	2013
Volunteer Assessment - New	March 2014
Volunteer Household Assessment	
Focus group script	
Child Assessment Old	2013
Child Assessment – New (booklet)	March 2014
Child assessment record form	March 2014
Play Scheme Monitoring Form (Year 1)	2013
Play Scheme Monitoring Form (Year 2)	From March 2014
Teacher questionnaire – motivation/teaching	
Teacher questionnaire - feedback	
<b>M&amp;E Framework &amp; Instruments- Reading Scheme</b>	
Reading Scheme (Reader Assessment) Old & New	
Reading Scheme (Listener assessment) New	
Teacher questionnaire	
Monitoring form	
List of play centres & beneficiaries	
List of capacity-building activities	
Consolidated focus group analysis	
Explanation of data processing systems	
Consolidated monitoring summary	
Consolidated questionnaire data (inc analysis)	
Consolidated questionnaire data (exc analysis)	
Control communities data	
Example monitoring data entry form	
Example questionnaire data entry form	

**Websites**Lively Minds: <http://www.livelyminds.org/>School for Life: <http://www.schoolforlifegh.org/>Sabre Trust: <http://sabretrust.org/>R4D: <http://www.resultsfordevelopment.org/> <http://r4d.org/focus-areas/center-education-innovations>UNICEF Innovation for Education page: [http://www.unicef.org/education/bege\\_73537.html](http://www.unicef.org/education/bege_73537.html)Ministry of Education: <http://www.moe.gov.gh/site/statistics>



**Appendix 3: List of people interviewed**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role/title</b>	<b>Organisation/community</b>
<b>LIVELY MINDS</b>		
Alison Naftalin	Chief Executive Officer	Lively Minds UK
Chris Lewis	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer	Lively Minds UK
Yakubu Iddrisu	LM/Tamale Co-ordinator	Lively Minds, Tamale
David Abukari	LM/Country Manager	Lively Minds, Tamale
Abukari Musah	LM/Field Officer	Lively Minds, Tamale
Ayisha Babadua	LM/Admin & Finance	Lively Minds, Tamale
Jonah Chantiwuni Isiah	LM/Field Officer	Lively Minds, Tamale
Sualisu Abdul-Razak	LM/Senior Field Officer	Lively Minds, Tamale
Mohammed Jacob Duah	LM/Field Officer	Lively Minds, Tamale
Joyce Banzie	Field Staff	Lively Minds, Bolgatanga
Adongo Georgina	Field Officer	Lively Minds, Bolgatanga
Rebecca Avoole	Field Officer	Lively Minds, Bolgatanga
Caesar Alenu	Admin and Finance Officer	Lively Minds, Bolgatanga
James Awini	Project Coordinator	Lively Minds, Bolgatanga
Roland Mahama Mbhatia	Field Staff	Lively Minds, Bolgatanga
<b>FUNDING PARTNERS</b>		
Teresa Sguazzin	International Grants Programme Manager - Education	Comic Relief, UK
Mark Roland and Vidya Putcha	Senior Program Officer	Results for Development Institute
Aarti Saihjee	Education Office	UNICEF-Accra
Timoah Kunchire	Education Officer	UNICEF-Tamale
<b>GES &amp; ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN ECCE OR WITH GES</b>		
Margaret Okai	Deputy Divisional Director for Basic Education and National Coordinator of ECD	Ghana Education Service
Alhaji S.O. Saaka	Programme Manager	School for Life
Alhaji Karimu A. Mohammed	Curriculum Development and Replication Coordinator	
Alhaji Hussein A. Ziblim	Deputy Manager, Operations	
Lawrencia Dakurah-Abakisi	Deputy Manager, Advocacy & Gender	
Dominic Bond	Managing Director	Sabre Trust
George Ahiabile	Programme Manager	Right to Play
<b>PEOPLE INTERVIEWED AS PART OF THE FIELD WORK</b>		
<b>Northern Region</b>		
Napari Salifu	Voggu Circuit Supervisor	GES (Kumbungu District)
Hawa Yusiff Pont	Kumbungu District Director of Education	GES District Directorate
Elizabeth Naah	Kumbungu ECD Co-ordinator	GES District Directorate
Zakaria Azindow	PTA Chairman	Tibung Primary School/Tibung
Abukari Yakubu	PTA Vice Chairman	
Abdulai Salifu	SMC Chairman	
Masahudu Tahiru	SMC Vice Chairman	
2 P6 boys age 15 yrs	Older siblings of Playscheme children	Tibung JHS
2 JHS 3 girls age 15yrs	Older siblings of Playscheme children	Tibung JHS
Ibrahim Zakaria	Youth Leader	Tibung
Alhassan Kelan	Staff Nurse	CHPS/Tibung
Abubakar M. Issah	Enrolled Nurse	
Fouzia Mohammed	Enrolled Nurse	
Zeynab Abubakar	Enrolled Nurse	
Arishe Alhassan	Non-volunteer mothers	Tibung

Name	Role/title	Organisation/community
Sala Alhassan	Non-volunteer mothers	
Kubura Alhassan	Non-volunteer mothers	
Alhassan Babau	Husband of Volunteer mother	Tibung
Abdul-Karim Siba	KG Teacher	Tibung Primary
Abdulai Alhassan	KG Teacher	
Maili Baba	Volunteer Mother	Tibung
Azahra Mahama	Volunteer Mother	
Kubra Alhassan	Volunteer Mother	
Isha Yakubu	Non-Volunteer Mother/Mother of beneficiary children	Tibung
Adam Alhassan Suhuyini	Headteacher and P1 Teacher	Tibung
Imoro Yakubu Salifu Abdul-Rahman	PTA Chairman	Voggu
	SMC Chairman	
Mohammed Sumani Salifu Naporo	Community Leader /Voggu Tali Naa	Voggu
	Community Leader/Voggu Tuu Naa	
Lansah Philip	Assembly Person	
Alidu Sumani	Husband of Volunteer Mother/Father of Beneficiary child	Voggu
Salman Faris	In-Charge for the CHPS	CHPS/Voggu
2 girls (19yrs & 16 yrs)	Older siblings of children in play scheme	Voggu JHS/Voggu
2 boys (16 yrs)	Older siblings of children in play scheme	Voggu JHS
Zurera Alhassan	Volunteer Mother, Has no children	Voggu
Shita Alhassan	Volunteer Mother & Mother of beneficiary children	
Abiba Munkaila	Volunteer Mother & Mother of beneficiary children	
Fushena Haruna	Volunteer Mother & Mother of beneficiary children	
Abbiba Mumuni	Non-volunteer mother	Voggu
Amadu Balawu	Non-volunteer mother	
Iddrisu Kandi	Non-volunteer mother & Mother of beneficiary child	
Upper East Region		
David Awine Kwame	Circuit Supervisor	GES, Bongo District
Anabila Isaac	PTA Chairperson	Beo-Kansingo Primary School
Albert Ayine	SMC Chairperson	Beo-Kansingo Primary School
Dominic Akunkai	Head Teacher	Beo-Kansingo
2 girls	Older siblings	Beo-Kansingo Primary School
8 men	Fathers /VM husbands	Beo-Kansingo
Emmanuel Ayriga	P1 Teacher	Nyariga Doone Girls Primary School
Justice Atanga	Head Teacher	Nyariga Doone Girls Primary School
FGD – 4 Class 6 girls (2 12yrs, 2 13yrs)	Readers in Reading Scheme	Nyariga- Doone Girls Primary School
Diana Adagzina	KG 1 Teacher	Nyariga- Doone Girls Primary School

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role/title</b>	<b>Organisation/community</b>
Madam Adombila Aweligiya	PTA Chairperson and founding Member of the School	Nyariga- Doone Girls Primary School
Madam Atanga Aduko	PTA Treasurer	
Rev. John Akaribo	SMC Chairperson and founding Member of the School	
Akuiribire Apuona	Chief's Representative	
FGD - 3 Class 5 girls	Older siblings of Playscheme children	Nyariga-Doone Girls Primary School
Agaalga Atanga	Father and Husband	Nyariga-Doone
Nsohma Asora Lawricia Adongo Atinga Asibi Asampana Asubira Adongo Hannah	Non-Volunteer Mothers	Nyariga Doone Girls Primary School

## Appendix 4: Notes on national context and the work of other organisations

### The Ghana Education Service Kindergarten (KG) Policy and Operational Plan

In line with the Education for All goals established in Dakar in 2002, and in fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals 2 & 3, the Government of Ghana mainstreamed kindergarten into basic education in 2007. Through its Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010-2020, it prioritised expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE).

To carry out this commitment, the Ghana Education Service (GES) over a period of 18 months (July 2011 to September 2012), developed a comprehensive, costed and prioritized plan to scale up quality KG education in Ghana entitled: *Programme to Scale Up Quality Kindergarten Education in Ghana*. This was achieved through a highly consultative process involving public and private sector stakeholders, and with the support of a small national and international expert team. The development of the Operational Plan was co-funded by DFID and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation.

The Operational Plan was broken into three phases as follows:

- Phase 1:** Focus on teacher training, pedagogy and independent monitoring and evaluation of the operational plan outcomes
- Phase 2:** Focus on infrastructure, learning materials and resources, and public awareness.
- Phase 3:** Focus on reviewing curriculum, inspection, internal monitoring and evaluation, development of PTAs/governing bodies and strengthening Special Educational Needs support

These phases are not on a strictly sequential basis and a degree of overlap is anticipated.

The number one priority of the KG Operation Plan was the training of existing and future KG teachers in the appropriate pedagogy and practice of child-centred and activity-based learning. The Operational Plan also stated that, *'Training/orientation of KG Coordinators, Circuit Supervisors, head teachers and key district staff must cover these elements as well. It will be essential to the success of the new approach for all personnel to understand the underlying pedagogy and expectations being placed on teachers'*.

Since its development, a number of organisations like UNICEF, Lively Minds, Sabre Charitable Trust are testing and piloting the innovative approaches Operational Plan contains, so they can be refined for national level replication.

*Source: GES KG Operational Plan. 2012*

### Sabre Charitable Trust

Sabre is a UK charitable organisation operating in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana. It provided two technical staff to the small international expert team that supported the development of the KG Operation Plan. Sabre is currently implementing Building Better Schools (BBS) programme where it has developed, evaluated, optimised and replicated a safe sustainable kindergarten complex that provides a child-friendly learning environment. It has completed six schools to date in partnership with Arup, a private company. With funding support from Tullow Oil and a number of oil and gas companies, Sabre has also recently built on-campus Kindergarten Centres of Excellence at

the OLA (Cape Coast) and Holy Child (Sekondi) Colleges of Education, in direct response to the priorities of the 2012 Operational Plan. In 2015, Sabre and Arup began the process of developing a scalable version of the existing Safe Sustainable Kindergarten Complex, which will deliver a high quality early learning environment, at a lower cost than the current model. Their intention is for this scalable, safe, sustainable kindergarten complex to fully meet the needs of the Ghana Education Service and institutional donors for a model kindergarten school which can be replicated at scale throughout Ghana. In 2016, Sabre will build four of these scalable, safe, sustainable kindergarten complexes which will operate as District Model Schools in four different districts of the Western Region. Over the next four years, Sabre expects to build at least 15 of these new scalable schools in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana.

Since 2013, Sabre has been implementing the Fast-track Transformational Teacher Training project, which was conceived in the KG Operational Plan. In 2013, in partnership with the Ghana Education Service and OLA College of Education and with funding from the Vitol Foundation, Sabre developed and piloted this innovative and intensive teacher training project. It combines in-service and pre-service training to create a network of Model Practice Classrooms in the vicinity of the College of Education, which in turn support enhanced student teacher placements as part of the Early Childhood Education Diploma. With funding from DFID, the Vitol Foundation and Comic Relief, the project has been scaled up to a second region with Holy Child College in Sekondi, and the network of Model Practice Classrooms has been expanded to 124 classrooms across the two regions.

Through a partnership with the NGO Afrikids, which has also received funding from the Vitol Foundation, Sabre will support Tumu College in the Upper West Region to take on the training methodology from 2016. This will make it 3 out of the 7 colleges of Education accredited to train kindergarten teachers in Ghana. This is the first stage in an expansion programme that could see all of the colleges adopting the same approach.

*Source: Briefing Paper and interview with Sabre Trust Managing Director*

## **School for Life**

### **Sfl Website 21.2.16**

School for Life Ghana, currently runs three crucial programmes (the Complementary Basic Education programme, the School for Life/Tzedek Education Quality Initiative project and the School for Life Learning and Development Center). The complementary Basic Education programme is School for Life's flagship programme and is aimed at giving out of school children beyond school starting age an opportunity to attain basic literacy and numeracy in their mother tongue. The CBE as it is called now, makes adaptations from the original School for Life's functional literacy program for out of school children. The original School for Life's functional literacy program for out of school children has been in operation since 1995, and has benefited over 170,000 children and their families.

The School for Life/Tzedek EQUIP programme started as a pilot project in Saboba and Cheriponi Districts. During the pilot, Ten schools were chosen as EQUIP schools in each of the pilot Districts. After the pilot, the project extended its coverage to include two new districts; i.e. Savelugu District and Kumbungu District were added to the beneficiary districts of EQUIP.

The School for Life's Learning and Development Centre was established in 2011 to promote quality education through offering expert consultancy & training, and building the capacity of educational institutions, Community Services Organisations and Government in Ghana and internationally. For detail information on the various programmes click on the programme tabs above.

**Extract from an interview for this evaluation with three management staff of Sfl**

- Before the launch of the Ghana Complementary Basic Education (GH CBE) programme by GES and its development partners (DP):
  - SLF had been running (and still does) the methodology/literacy for many years in Northern Region with initial support from Danida before other development partners (DP) like DFID, UNICEF, USAID and thru them the approach was extended to other regions of the country through the GH CBE programme.
  - Before the national CBE programme, SFL provided technical support to Ibis to implement CBE in two districts in Northern Region.
- The role of SFL in Ghana Complementary Basic Education (GH CBE) Programme:
  - An implementing partner with other implementing partners of the Ghana CBE programme – a government and donors initiated programme.
  - Still running its own literacy classes like they have done at its inception.
  - Provides technical support to the Ghana CBE programme in terms of material development and as master trainers to other implementing partners of the GH CBE.
  - The other implementing partners (IPs), apart from SFL, for the GH CBE are: Ibis, Pronet, ActionAid, Ghana Literacy and Bible Translation, Afrikids, World Education, Laite Development Community, PLAN Ghana, Care International.
- SFL's experience of working with community volunteers
  - They have the following categories of volunteers
    - CBE Facilitators who teach the CBE learners – they do many hours a week.
    - Community volunteer teachers who were trained in deprived communities to complement the teacher numbers. They provided them a small allowance, termed 'soap money'. Under the USAID supported EQUALL's project, these volunteers were assisted to go to teacher training colleges (they don't run this scheme any more).
    - In each community there's a local committee (school Board) who continuously engage with the district assembly and GES district office, with the support of SFL.
- For the CBE facilitators, they train them and give them refresher trainings and provide them soap money. Other incentives - if someone is willing to continue another cycle of volunteering, he/she is given a bicycle and if not continuing, he/she is given half the cost of a bicycle. They also organise Facilitators' Day to publicly show appreciation to them for their work. Those who want to continue with their secondary education but have difficulties paying to re-sit their exams, SFL assist them financially to do so. The community on its part is supposed to assist facilitators in cash or in kind by assisting them on their farms or giving him/her food stuff, periodically. This some communities are not able to do.
- Right from the start, communities are part of the process. It is the community which identifies the CBE facilitators.
- The challenges with facilitators: Some communities do well to support the facilitators and others don't, which discourages them (the facilitators). Another challenge is that SFL have to travel far to identify deprived communities and volunteers. SFL seeks to promote the recruitment of women volunteers but some communities are not able to find a volunteer who can write or read in the local language and this is worse when it comes to identifying women volunteers.
- Working with GES:
  - It is very useful and important to work GES so as to have a system in play

- However, from SFL's experience, they always need to be prompted to do ABC. They have all the human resource to do what it takes to bring about quality education but they lack funding
- To train teachers, SFL first trains the District Teachers Support Team who then train the teachers.
- They train GES resource persons who in turn do the training for the facilitators.
- They believe that if a project or organisation wants GES to sustain what they are initiating, then they must play a major role in it. This way, in their case a broad number of GES staff, especially at the district level, know the content and approach of CBE. They have been a major player in making the CBE known. It is the GES which can influence policy so when they are convinced, they will take it up the other levels – regional and national.
- Policy Advocacy:
  - SFL does policy advocacy at district, regional and national directorates. The district level is part of the advocacy at the regional and national levels. SFL signs MOU with the district/municipal/metropolitan directorate of GES.
  - SFL also works with the Basic education division – especially the Director and sometimes with the MoE directly. It also engages the Parliamentary Education Sub-Committee.
  - To be effective in its advocacy, it went into an alliance with other NGOs who share same thinking, starting with Ibis and later, with all of the IPs of the GH CBE programme, except Care International. It was through this alliance that the advocacy for CBE to be implemented as a national programme was intensified.
  - They also participate in international conferences to sell the idea of quality education and CBE.
  - After about 10 years of implementation, SFL initiated an impact assessment by an independent consultant. The report from this assessment served as a strong advocacy tool. They disseminated it at all levels – district, regional, national. They employed the services of experts to develop policy papers from the report for use in advocacy engagement. Getting the evidence written down is key to acceptance.
  - In mid-2006, GES did its own study on CBE with emphasis on SFL's approach and this formed the basis of the CBE policy (starting with a concept paper) in collaboration with other stakeholders.
- Role of Development Partners (DPs)/Funders:
  - DFID and UNICEF were keen to get government to accept and implement the CBE policy.
  - SFL was one of the two members who decided on the formation of the CBE Alliance and through this Alliance did a lot of engagement with government – GES, Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Education, etc. and issued a number of position papers.
  - SFL then supported the Alliance members in writing winnable proposals when the call for proposals was put out for the implementation of the Ghana CBE programme.
- What helped SFL was the sustained support it had from Danida through SFL's friendship partner in Denmark who were responsible for getting funding. Danida funded SFL through the friendship partner to implement the its literacy/CBE programme for 10 years – from 1995 to 2004. This was done in phases.
- When SFL moved into advocacy and capacity-building, Danida supported the advocacy directly, no longer through the Friendship partner. Currently Danida is supporting SFL in its

advocacy on quality education and in vocational education but not in the literacy/CBE programme.

## Right to Play

### Extract from Interview with George Ahiable, Programme Manager of Right to Play

- What RTP does
  - Promoting child-centred learning
  - Focus on children and youth – in and out of school – using play-based learning approach. In school, it focuses on KG to Class 4.
  - In the classroom, it seeks to integrate play into the curriculum requirement of literacy and numeracy. For example, using play-based approach to teach maths.
  - It also uses play-based approach to teach health, hygiene and attitudinal change – issues about health and sanitation; and to develop knowledge and skills for life-long learning skills.
- In KG, the focus is on:
  - School readiness
  - Cognitive skills
  - Social skills
  - Emotional skills
  - Physical skills – coordination and flexibility.
- They do these through three sets of training KG teachers.
  - The first is functional. This is related to behavioural management and how children learn. After 6 months, they evaluate it.
  - The second is play-based learning – how teachers can use play to help children learn, for e.g. spelling. After 6 months, this is also evaluated along three lines (i) Reflect – what the children have learnt; (ii) connect – what they have learnt with how the application (iii) What needs doing differently, next time.
  - When training teachers, they have two steps to every play activity: (i) Introduction of key learnings; and (ii) closing discussion – this is an evaluation of the activity which has happened.
- RTP is working in 11 Districts:
  - In the Upper-East Region (i) Bongo (an existing district); (ii) Bolga Municipal (new district)
  - In Northern Region (i) Savelugu; (ii) Tolon; (iii) Kumburungu
  - In Upper-West Region (i) Wa Municipal (new)
  - Greater Accra (i) Ga South (Weija)
  - In the Volta Region (i) Central Tongu (ii) North Tongu (iii) Keta Municipal
  - Central Region (i) Essikuma-Odoben-Brakwa
- When it comes to collaboration, if they are working in same community, they are in favour of harmonising methodology. They would however prefer not to work where another NGO is working.
- Most important changes required in ECD in Ghana relates to play – there's general lack of knowledge or research on how play can lead to learning. There is the need for evidence to show play is not only for leisure but is also a powerful approach to learning. Teachers for ECD are not equipped with the requisite skills. They have learnt them theoretically but not



practiced them (time for practice when they are in college is short). When they complete school, they need to be hands on to help them build their confidence.

- The policies are in place and by and large, they are the right ones, even with regard to teachers' education and assessment for licensing. It is their implementation that is lacking.

## **Links to other ECCD and Education Projects/websites/Partners**

- **MASHAV**
  - 2012 Article on ECD work in Kumasi  
<http://embassies.gov.il/un/NewsAndEvents/Pages/MASHAV-Ghana-education-project.aspx>
- **UNICEF**
  - [http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index\\_60106.html](http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_60106.html)
- **Committee on Early Childhood Care and Development**
  - <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/news/1260-committee-on-early-childhood-care-and-development-inaugurated>
- **GPEG**
  - <http://www.sendwestafrica.org/index.php/latest-news/item/92-gpeg-to-improve-delivery-of-basic-education-services-in-57-deprived-districts>
  - <http://www.globalpartnership.org/country/ghana>
  - June 2015 World Bank Status report:
  - [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/AFR/2015/06/27/090224b082f9bcfd/1\\_0/Rendered/PDF/Ghana000Ghana00Report000Sequence005.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/AFR/2015/06/27/090224b082f9bcfd/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Ghana000Ghana00Report000Sequence005.pdf)
- **GET Fund**
  - <http://www.getfund.gov.gh/index.php/2013-05-09-10-08-27/getfund-act>
  - No mention of KG – set up pre-KG. Potential area for advocacy?
- **USAID – The Learning Project**
  - <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/dec-29-2014-usaid-awards-71-million-support-primary-education-ghana>

## Appendix 5: Table of project outcomes

	Terms of Reference for the Evaluation	Comic Relief Start Up Form	UNICEF Log frame
<b>Children - Play</b>	1. Improved cognitive skills of participating children aged 3-5	Outcome 1: Improved cognitive skills for 4500 children aged 3-5 (Play Scheme participants)	Outcome 1: Improved school readiness for KG 1 & KG 2 children aged 4-6 (Play Scheme participants)
<b>Children - Reading</b>	2. Increased language and comprehension skills for Reading Scheme “Listeners” (children aged 5-8) and “Readers” (children aged 11-13)	Outcome 2: Increased language and comprehension skills for 4500 children aged 5-8 (Reading Scheme Participants) and 1500 children aged 11-13 (Readers).	
<b>Children Play &amp; Reading</b>	3. Improved school attainment for participants of Play and Reading Schemes and Readers	Outcome 3: Improved school attainment for participants of Play and Reading Schemes and Readers	
<b>Mothers</b>	4. Improved confidence and wellbeing of Play Scheme Volunteer Mothers	Outcome 4: Improved confidence and wellbeing of 900 Play Scheme Volunteer Mothers	Outcome 2: Improved capacities of rural Mothers to provide quality ECD at Play Schemes and at home.
<b>Health</b>	5. Reported reduction in diarrheal diseases and improved health of children living in the communities where the projects are set up	Outcome 5: Reported reduction in diarrheal diseases and improved health of children living in the communities where the projects are set up.	Outcome 4: Increased understanding and awareness of child health issues by Volunteer Mothers
<b>Teachers</b>	6. Increased capacity and performance of Teachers		Outcome 3: Increased capacity and performance of KG teachers

	Combined outcomes – terms of reference, Comic Relief Start Up Form and UNICEF project log frame
<b>Children - Play</b>	Improved cognitive skills and school readiness of participating children aged 3-5 (CR) 4-6 (UNICEF)
<b>Children - Reading</b>	Increased language and comprehension skills for Reading Scheme “Listeners” (children aged 5-8) and “Readers” (children aged 11-13)
<b>Children Play &amp; Reading</b>	Improved school attainment for participants of Play and Reading Schemes and Readers
<b>Volunteer Mothers</b>	Improved confidence and wellbeing of Play Scheme Volunteer Mothers Improved capacities of rural Mothers to provide quality ECD at Play Schemes and at home. Increased understanding and awareness of child health issues by Volunteer Mothers
<b>Health</b>	Reported reduction in diarrheal diseases and improved health of children living in the communities where the projects are set up.
<b>Teachers</b>	Increased capacity and performance of Teachers

## **Appendix 6: Details of Lively Minds' Play Scheme methodology**

### **Description of how the Play Scheme Training of Trainers (Model 2) works**

(Excerpt from its report to UNICEF, Oct 2015)

- 2 Kindergarten teachers from each school are trained by Lively Minds over 10 half-day sessions. Training includes the importance of ECCE, how to teach, how to make and use games, child-friendly teaching styles, and how to train Volunteer Mothers. Circuit Supervisors attend all sessions. Head Teachers and PTA chairpersons attend some of the sessions.
- The teachers then train a minimum of 30 Volunteer Mothers in their communities over 9 training sessions and 2 community meetings, using the same syllabus and games previously used by Lively Minds. Teachers are observed and supported either by a member of Lively Minds or a facilitator (a high performing teacher from a previous training intake).
- Volunteer Mothers are divided into groups and attend kindergarten on assigned days in their groups throughout the week to teach children at the Play Scheme. The teachers supervise. Children are divided into corresponding groups and are then further divided into small groups of 6. They rotate through 5 different skillset areas, with one Volunteer Mother in charge of an area. This allows children to benefit from small group work and close attention. Teaching is focused around learning through play and discovery-based methods. Handwashing takes place prior to the start to sensitise children to this vital practice. Lively Minds and circuit supervisors monitor regularly for quality control.
- Teachers provide monthly capacity building workshops to the Mothers. The syllabus (which is the same one that Lively Minds had been using previously) includes disease prevention, parenting, disability awareness, and life skills topics. Lively Minds and circuit supervisors monitor these regularly for quality control.
- Lively Minds provides quarterly top-up workshops for teachers to solve problems with Schemes and to train teachers in the monthly capacity building activities. Ghana

Education Service officials are involved in all stages, including selection and mobilisation of schools, and participating in training, monitoring and supporting Schemes and teachers.

### **Activities with the wider community under Model 2**

The following activities are undertaken with the wider community by LM staff or Circuit Supervisors:

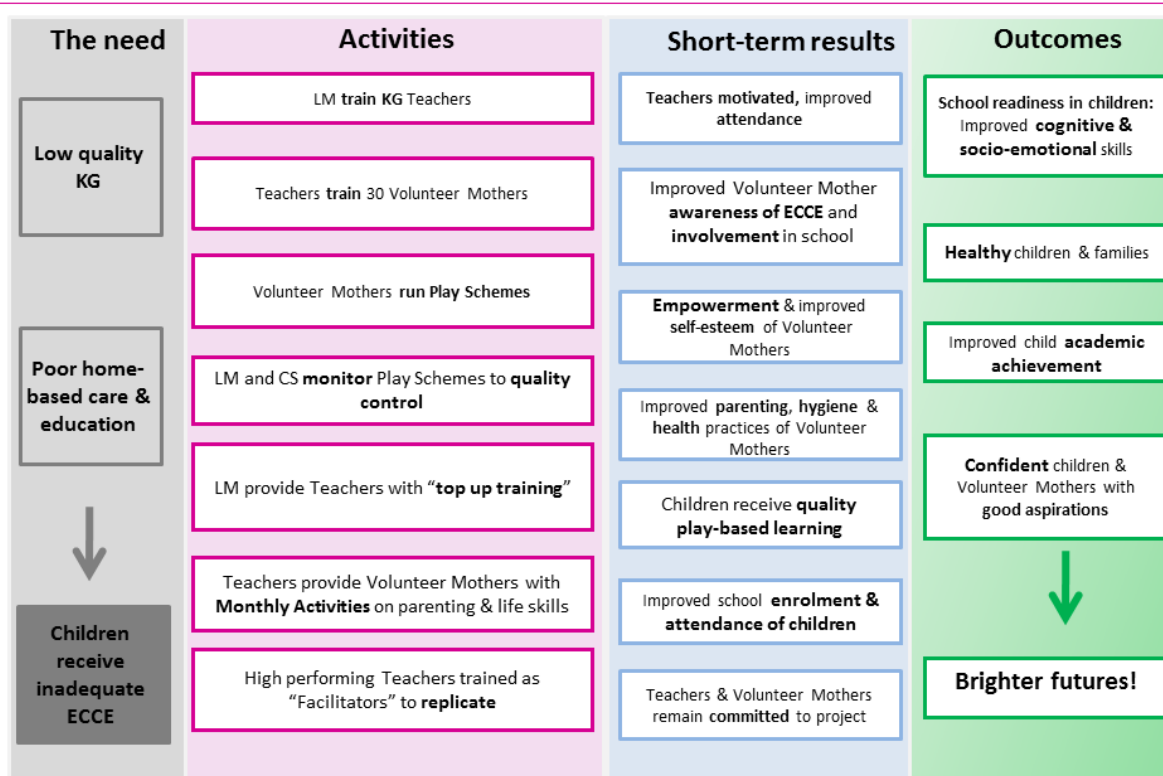
- 1) meet with school leadership, PTA/SMC and where possible the community leadership to explain the programme and its role in achieving the KG vision. They leave behind information about the scheme – including its benefits and responsibilities.
- 2) the school leadership then have to submit a proposal
- 3) KG teachers attend the training. The Head teacher and PTA reps. attend 2 days of this

- 4) teachers and PTA organise a community meeting, inviting key stakeholders and opinion leaders. At this they lead a participatory discussion and demonstration about the importance of ECD and the opportunity afforded by the Scheme
- 5) after the VMs are trained a second community meeting is organised to explain ECD again and invite children to enrol.

### How the Reading Schemes work

Each school is given a collection of books and receives 8 training sessions from Lively Minds staff. Teachers and “Readers” (children in Upper Primary Schools) are trained to tell stories using pictures in the books, and to translate these into the local language. Once trained, the Readers run weekly story telling sessions for the lower primary classes. Further to the initial training sessions, revision workshops are held for teachers from the participating schools; these teachers then provide revision training to the Readers.

### Theory of change



## Appendix 7: Spotlight on the Motivation and Reward of Volunteer Mothers

The Play Schemes are dependent on mothers in the community giving their time as volunteers. So what makes the VMs volunteer, and keep volunteering? And what discourages them? These are some of the reasons given during the evaluation:

### Motivation for volunteering

- Sympathy for the overburdened teachers – *“I feel for the KG teachers having to handle large numbers.”*
- Support for their child’s education – *“My children are reason why I come here.”*
- Love for children – *“I volunteered because it gives me joy in helping the children.”*
- Community spiritedness – *“I want to help to develop our town and community.”*

*“We wouldn’t want this program to leave this community or stop because it has benefitted us a lot. If the program stops it means we have to stop the volunteering, and what will happen to the upcoming children? It will mean we have to stop having children, which will not happen. We wouldn’t like the children coming up not to benefit from it.”*

- Personal development – *“The knowledge I am gaining always makes me want to volunteer.”*

### Why will they stop volunteering?

- *“Because there is no pay for the work we are doing.”*
- *“Because of what people say - our people call us names like ‘good for nothing women’, ‘work and no pay’ and they also say that we control our husbands.”*

### What keeps them volunteering?

As described in Section 4 of this report, the VMs recognise that they benefit in many ways from their participation in the Play Schemes. In particular, they mentioned: having fun with their children, learning the things that the children are learning, knowing what to do to help their children perform better at school and being able to teach the children in the house, taking care over their appearance and presentation and using their new knowledge and skills in everyday life. Some said that they and their husbands (when they attend) particularly benefit from the monthly meetings; others spoke of still coming to the Scheme even when they have moved out of the community. One woman who was absent when the selection took place said she is looking forward to the day when she can become a VM because she can see how she is missing out on what the other women are doing.

In addition to these incentives, they mentioned that the following keep them going:

- Encouragement – This was the main thing that the VMs spoke about that keeps them going and facilitates their consistent attendance. Crucially they said they want encouragement from their husbands, but also other community members and the teachers as well – *“My husband is the one who encourages me to volunteer.” “Just talking can be enough.”* (husband of VM).

It was clear that husbands’ permission, approval, understanding and support is critical for the volunteering ethos to continue. In a way the VM is a family representative who has been freed up by the whole family to attend. There is an opportunity cost to the family in her

attending, so if all understand the reasons for and benefits of her going, she has peace of mind.

- Visits from school authorities - *“The PTA/SMC organizes an end of year get together to motivate them. They also visit and support them when they are bereaved. We also have regular visits from Circuit Supervisors at least twice a month and during these visits Circuit Supervisors talk the VMs”*. KG tr Nyariga Doone
- The KG teacher – *“If it was not for the teacher, we would not have come for the sessions.”*
- The register - *“The KG teachers mark our register, which makes us always want to go to school.”*

### **Challenges with volunteering**

One focus group of VMs explained that when they started, morale was high, but then some of the husbands “withdrew their wives” because other community members were calling them derogatory names and ridiculed the scheme as “just playing”. Though they have benefitted from the Scheme in many ways, they see it as involving considerable sacrifice. The one-hour per week time commitment is not the problem so much as the need to remain in the community when normally they would be migrating at the end of the harvest. The Play Scheme prevents them from doing this and thus earning significant income for the family.

### **Suggestions for how can GES and the community could support the VMs to volunteer**

- Sharing their workload at home - *“The husbands or head of households can free them up from some of their other work so they can be free to volunteer effectively.”*
- Payment of a small allowance - *“soap money.”*
- Understanding what they are doing and taking an active interest - *“The community can also help by not calling us names and also by paying us visit in the school to find out how we are teaching the children.”*
- Expressing appreciation - *“By saying words of encouragement us, because those of us who are volunteering are doing so because of the children and the development of the community”.*

### **Resolving the ‘soap money’ issue**

While some VMs alluded to the sacrificial nature of being a volunteer mother, and being ridiculed by other community members for it, most gave the impression that they felt the benefits outweighed the costs. The most mentioned negative impact came from not being able to travel south after the harvest to make extra income for the family. This issue needs researching further, and it may vary from one group of VMs or community to another, but it is possible for communities to respond to this challenge by organising among themselves, to cover absence or to rotate duties.

‘Soap money’ was the term most people used during the evaluation to suggest what should be given to the VMs. For some this implied regular payment of an allowance, for others a less regular or predictable gesture of solidarity from time to time. Among the limited numbers

of people who took part in the evaluation however, there appeared to be a general preference for in-kind support from the community.

### **LM's experimentation with a solution**

During the evaluation, the LM CEO described LM's experience of dealing with this perennial issue. Over the last 8 years LM has spent much time researching VM motivation and looking for sustainable ways to motivate them and ensure their lasting commitment. They experimented with cash/soap incentives and found that this type of reward system had many negative consequences and created conflict both within the community and among the VMs themselves. Problems experienced included:

- resentment when some VMs missed sessions and yet received the same rewards;
- community members feeling that the VMs were already benefiting from receiving the training and monthly activities;
- community members were unable/unwilling to sustain their participation over time;
- due to the small number of households/polygamous families in these small communities, households were effectively giving rewards to their family members;
- instead of volunteering for self-improvement or altruistic purposes or for the benefit of the community, it created an expectation of monetary reward.

Their testing helped them to identify 2 key factors that make the most difference:

- 1) providing VMs with the Monthly Activities
- 2) managing expectations about community service from the outset.

Their own internal evaluation suggests that the Monthly Activities are valued both as a much-needed second chance learning opportunity and also for the practical skills/information they gain, which translates into other social returns/cost savings. Before LM began the Monthly Activities (pre the Comic Relief grant) attendance from VMs was more sporadic - even when VMs were given more tangible incentives. Since the introduction of the Monthly Activities however, attendance has been relatively high & consistent – around 80%. They believe this is attributable to the Monthly Activities, though it was not possible to verify this during the evaluation. LM also believes that as the Schemes become more normalised across the district, communities will be more sensitised to the roles and responsibilities associated with the Play Schemes and so some of the criticism/misunderstandings from their peers will fall away.

So far, LM has determined the policy, with very clear and constant messages about volunteerism being a critical factor in making it possible to sustain the programme. There is a very real risk that attempting to offer regular payment and then not being able to sustain it could collapse a Scheme, but with ownership transferring from LM to the communities, it is perhaps their choice to make. Whatever the case, communities need to be supported to make decisions about incentives and the issue raised squarely so that it can be integrated into their planning.

### **Lessons from School for Life (SfL)**

School for Life <http://www.schoolforlifegh.org/> is a community-driven functional literacy scheme for out-of-school children in the Northern Region that has used volunteers to run its classes for over 20 years. Its volunteers work considerably more hours than the VMs, have stricter eligibility requirements and are far fewer per community. However, among the incentives for their volunteers that have worked well are:

- Gifts on completion of service or contract renewal such as bicycles. If someone is willing to continue another cycle of volunteering, they are given a bicycle and half the cost of a bicycle.
- Organising of a Facilitators' Day to publicly show appreciation for their work to them.
- Paying exam fees for those who have difficulties finding the money to re-sit their exams.
- The community assists the volunteers in cash, or in kind by assisting them on their farms, by or giving them food stuffs periodically. Some of the communities however are not able to do this.

Rewards must clearly be commensurate with the amount of time contributed. SfL volunteers teach for many more hours a week than a VM. A half-piece of cloth may be something that VMs would appreciate. The above reflect some of the principles underpinning their reward system however, such as rewarding volunteers to continue volunteering rather than paying them.



## Appendix 8: 2014/15 EMIS data on Northern and Upper East Regions

### Northern Region

NO. OF KG TEACHERS	Total	Male	Female	%Female
<b>Northern Region</b>				
Total	3589	1097	2492	69.4%
Trained	2131	664	1467	68.8%
% trained	59.4	60.5	58.9	
<b>Upper East Region</b>				
Total	1603	380	1223	76.3%
Trained	785	225	560	71.3%
% trained	49.0	59.2	45.8	
<b>National</b>				
Total	37,147	6064	31083	83.7
Trained	22934	3712	19222	83.8
%trained	61.7	61.2	61.8	

PUPIL:TEACHER RATIOS	Enrolment	Teachers	PTR	PTTR
Northern	194,932	3589	54	91
Upper East	77,297	1603	48	98
National	1,285,479	37,147	35	56

Source: MOE website EMIS data

<http://www.moe.gov.gh/emis/html/basic.htm>

## Appendix 9: Curricula vitae of the evaluators

# Celia Marshall

**Nationality:** British

**Email**

celiamarshall07@gmail.com

*Freelance consultant with over 25 years' experience of working with and within African civil society organisations, most recently as a founder and co-director of Participatory Development Associates (PDA) [www.pdaghana.com](http://www.pdaghana.com). Widely experienced in evaluation, project management, grant management, process facilitation, facilitative training, qualitative research and capacity building with African CSOs. Personal and professional experience of migration issues and cross cultural relationships.*

## Examples of previous relevant work

**Landsforeningen LEV (Denmark)** (Oct-Nov 14) Evaluator of two Danida-funded projects implemented by Inclusion Ghana, a national network organisation working to reduce stigmatization and promote inclusion of persons with intellectual disability and their families in Ghana by advocating for their rights and needs.

**Comic Relief/DFID, UK** (Feb-Jul 14) One of a 5-person team undertaking the final evaluation of the Common Ground Initiative, a 5-year, £45m jointly funded (PPA) programme managed by Comic Relief to support UK-based small and diaspora organisations to “reduce poverty and injustice among communities in Africa”. The evaluation covered the grant making, OD, advocacy, research and communications dimensions of the programme and used both qualitative and quantitative methods, field work and on-line feedback.

Subsequently (Dec 14-Feb 15) part of the scoping study team for Phase 2 of the CGI. Undertaking consultations with key stakeholders to inform the design of next £27m fund to support the work of UK-based African diaspora organisations. Tasks included facilitating focus groups, key informant interviewing by phone and skype and participating in team analysis meetings.

**Government of Ghana/UNICEF:** (Dec 12 - Jun 13). Led a team of 55 researchers undertaking national research in all 10 regions of Ghana to inform the National Child Protection Policy development process. The study process combined facilitation of 10 regional consultative workshops, qualitative research in 20 districts, 10 regional feedback workshops, as well as a quantitative survey completed by 1500 adults and 1500 children. Work included guiding the data analysis and writing process, reporting to the national advisory group and liaison with international child protection and statistical survey experts.

**Coffey International Development/DFID:** (Dec 12 – Feb 13). Managed a PDA team to provide services to the Evaluation of the DFID- funded Ghana Election Support Programme. Tasks included media monitoring, election-day polling station observation and a telephone survey of 150 polling agents.

**DFID Ghana/Govt of Ghana** (Sep 2012). Undertook the Project Completion Review for the 5-year Institutional Strengthening Project (ISP) of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW).

**Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness, STAR-Ghana** (Nov 10-Mar 15). PDA's representative within the consortium of four organisations managing this 5-year multi-donor (DFID, Danida, EU, USAID) £26m fund. Provided grants and support to over 200 Ghanaian, mostly small, civil society organisations. Contributed to fund design and systems development. Also responsible for design of STAR-Ghana's initial capacity building strategy.

**UNICEF/World Bank/DFID** (July 09 - Mar 10). Co-training and co-coordination of the 20-person research team undertaking three rounds of national research beginning with the Participatory Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment (PPVA) as part of the 2009 Ghana Poverty Study for the World Bank, focussed on northern Ghana and migrant experiences.

**VSO Ghana** (April – May 09) Evaluation of the roles played by Teacher Support Officers and Management Support Officers in Ghana Education Service through the VSO Education Programme. (Jan - Feb 09)

Evaluation of the 5-year Programme Area Plan period of the Disability Programme of VSO Ghana. (Feb - Mar 08) impact assessment of the National Volunteer Service, a project implemented by the National Service Scheme and supported by VSO Ghana. Involved field work in four regions.

**The Rights and Voice Initiative (RAVI)/DFID:** (Oct 04 – Sept 09) PDA's representative on the Management Agency of RAVI – a £4.7m DFID fund aiming to support citizen-government engagement processes in Ghana for the realisation of social, political, and cultural rights through grants and capacity building support to Ghanaian CSOs working at national, regional and district level. Tasks collectively accomplished included setting up the fund, design of all grant management instruments, recruitment of Secretariat personnel, participating in selection processes including organisational assessments, strategic planning, periodic evaluation activities and lesson learning. Also responsible for technical oversight of the capacity building work of RAVI. Designed and co-facilitated quarterly 3-day learn and share workshops with approx 40 participants from RAVI grant partner organisations on facilitating citizen-government engagement, report writing, project and financial management, working with conflict, rights based approaches, power, and citizen government engagement processes.

**Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP):** (1994 - 99) Consultant and resource person providing training and support with project design, proposal and other writing tasks.

*Other previous clients include: Action Aid, British Council, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Christian Aid, Commonwealth Education Fund, Danida, DFID, Ibis, GiZ (GTZ), Save the Children, USAID, VSO, World Bank, UNICEF.*

## Career History

### Freelance consultant based in the UK (Since Sept 13)

#### Participatory Development Associates (PDA) (2000-to date)

2000 to date PDA Board member

2008-2013 Senior Consultant. Team leader for some of PDA's consulting teams.

2000-2008 Co-Director. One of two founders and executive co-directors of a limited liability private company providing facilitators, trainers and researchers in various development contexts, using participatory methods. Joint overall leadership and management responsibility for an organisation which grew to a staff strength of 20 in 6 years.

### Freelance consultant based in Ghana (1993-2000)

#### Project Coordinator, Southern Voices, Manchester. UK (1990-93)

Initiated the organisation, aiming to increase public awareness and understanding of development issues by creating opportunities for people from South and North to interact and learn from each other first-hand.

Included liaison with community groups and study fellows from countries of the South in Britain. Funded by the EC, Oxfam, VSO and Christian Aid.

#### Ghana Education Service – Upper West Region (1986-89)

1988-89 - English Advisor Upper West Region – In-service Teacher Training Project

1986-88 - NJ Ahmadiyya Muslim Teacher Training College, Wa. English Tutor responsible for teaching English to final year students, setting up the college library, teaching practice supervision. Helped establish the Teaching Methods Workshop on campus, the Creative Teaching Project with local teachers and Toytech a regional festival of locally made toys.

#### Stewart Headlam Primary School, Bethnal Green, London (1984-86)

Primary Teacher of top juniors (9-11 year olds), 95% using English as a second language, in a Social Priority Area.

## Education

2004-5	Organisation Development Practitioner Formation Programme – a modular programme taking place over two years in South Africa, Tanzania and Ghana
2000	Certificate in Winning Resources and Support - MBA programme - Open University, UK
1993	Certificate in Managing Voluntary and Non-Profit Enterprise, MBA programme - Open University, UK
1989-90	MSc. Community Organisation for Rural Development - University of Manchester
1983-84	Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Distinction on teaching practice) – Bath College of Higher Education, UK
1980-83	BA (Hons.) Cultural Studies (Upper Second Class) - University of Portsmouth, UK

## Other activities and interests

1997- Present	<b>International Spouses Association of Ghana (ISAG)</b> Helped found the Kumasi branch of this national organisation of foreign spouses of Ghanaians which campaigns on rights issues and offers social and practical support. 2001 - 2004 Advocacy officer of the Kumasi branch, 1999 - 2001 Chairperson of the Kumasi branch. 1997 - 2007 Facilitator of quarterly one-day retreats in Kumasi to provide a forum for discussion and support to members.
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Various arts and crafts, singing.

## **Tony Dzidzinyo Kwesi Dogbe**

**facilitator, trainer, researcher, process consultant**

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Email [tdogbe@pdaghana.com](mailto:tdogbe@pdaghana.com)

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### **Summary**

Tony is an experienced social and community development worker, trainer, researcher, manager, consultant and workshop facilitator/moderator, having completed over 60 consultancy assignments. Over the last 25 years Tony has helped to initiate, lead and establish two Ghanaian organisations (CEDEP and PDA) and to nurture the capacity of many others (including Ghana Community Radio Network, Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights, etc.) through his mentoring, advising, training and process facilitation. He is one of the founders of PDA, its former managing director (2008-2012) and co-director (2001-2008). During this time he was involved in designing, managing and governing several projects and funds such as the Civil Society Strengthening Facility, the Yen Daakye project, Mars' iMPACT project, and the initial stages of the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership. He was also a founding member and later the Executive Director of Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) for nearly nine years (1992-2000) and thereafter served on its Board (2000-2009).

Currently, Tony is leading the qualitative part of the DFID funded independent longitudinal evaluation of the SADA Millennium Village Project, which includes a component of the Reality Check Approach (RCA). He is also a technical consultant to the Dialogue Platform of the Western Region Coastal Foundation (WRCF), which seeks to organise and support effective dialogue between the oil and gas companies, the communities and government agencies. It also seeks to make effective use of corporate social responsibility funds that private sector companies have for development. He is a member of the team undertaking the political economy analysis (PEA) study for the WRCF. He is spearheading a number of new business initiatives including PDA's Agro-industry and Social Enterprise (PASE). This is to serve as a platform to support farmers in production, agro-processing, cooperative organisation, extension, input supply, etc. Tony has also been involved in initiating two citizen movements, namely, the Coalition for the Transparency of the Airwaves and the more recent Citizens' Movement against Corruption. The experience he now draws on as a consultant, advisor and citizen activist is thus based on a broad but in-depth experience of governmental and non-governmental organisations, working from village to national policy level.

Tony holds an MSc in Community Organisation for Rural Development (Manchester UK, 1991), and a BA (Hons) in Political Science with Sociology (University of Ghana, 1982).

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<b>Education</b>	<b>1990-91</b>	University of Manchester - MSc. (with distinction) in Community Organisation for Rural Development. Courses included: organisational aspects of rural development, educational aspects of rural development, adult literacy, agrarian systems and change, rural institutions, planning and implementation of integrated rural development projects. Dissertation Title: 'Development: From Post-Colonial Project to Social Transformation - A Challenge to Community Organisation'.
	<b>1979-82</b>	University of Ghana - BA (Hons.) Political Science with Sociology. Courses included: political economy of African Development, techniques of social research, international politics, public administration, social psychology, political and social theory.
	<b>1978-79</b>	Accra Workers' College - 'A' Level (Remedial).
	<b>1971-78</b>	Mfantsipim Secondary School - 'O' and 'A' Levels.

## Employment

<b>Freelance Consultant</b>	<b>Sept. 2012 to date</b>	Currently, self-employed as a freelance social development consultant.
<b>Principal Consultant</b>	<b>Sept. 2012 to date</b>	Providing backstopping, technical assistance, and quality assurance to PDA staff and associates undertaking training, research, consultancy and project management/ facilitation in the name of the organisation.
<b>Managing Director</b>	<b>March 2008 – Sept. 2012</b>	<p>Participatory Development Associates Ltd., a private limited liability company which provides training, facilitation, research and consultancy services to development-oriented organisations.</p> <p>Overall executive responsibility for the promotion and development of PDA's programmes; coordination of the work of all staff; liaison with partners and clients; and personnel and financial administration.</p>
<b>Co-Director</b>	<b>Since Sept. 2000 to 2008</b>	<p>Co-founder of Participatory Development Associates Ltd., a private limited liability company which provides training, facilitation, research and consultancy services to development-oriented organisations.</p> <p>Responsibilities include the promotion, development and execution of PDA's services in the field.</p> <p><i>(Participatory Development Associates PO Box UP876 KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana)</i></p>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Jan. 1992 – Sept. 2000</b>	<p>Chief Executive of CEDEP, a Ghanaian, private, voluntary and non-profit making development organisation, which provides support to community groups and community-spirited individuals. It is also involved in support to youth groups, women's groups, community leadership development, poverty alleviation, advocacy, training, research, and consultancy services.</p> <p>Overall executive responsibility for the promotion and development of CEDEP's programmes; coordination of the work of programme staff; liaison with government agencies, community groups and other private voluntary organisations; and personnel and financial administration.</p> <p>Brought the organisation from obscurity to one of national and international repute; from a 2-staff organisation to the present staff strength of 50; from sharing an office with no office equipment and vehicles to one with five offices (two in Kumasi, including the Head office and one each in Wa and Accra) four vehicles, and numerous pieces of office equipment, as at the time of leaving.</p> <p><i>(CEDEP, P. O. Box 5601, Kumasi, Ghana)</i></p>
<b>Field Officer</b>	<b>1987-90</b>	<p>VSO is a British volunteer-sending agency working in Ghana.</p> <p>Responsibilities included developing VSO's programme in social and community development; providing professional, personal and logistical support to volunteers; organising orientation course for new volunteers and the annual volunteers' conference; manager of the northern office in Tamale; and occasionally acting Field Director.</p> <p><i>(VSO-Ghana, P. O. Box 6526, Accra-North, Ghana)</i></p>
<b>Project Coordinator</b>	<b>1984-87</b>	<p>Co-ordinated the Gomoa Assin Rural Integrated Project of the National Service Secretariat (NSS). This project involved the construction and development of a children's park and library complex, with a programme of related activities.</p> <p>Responsibilities included overseeing the implementation of the project; animation and facilitation of the community; supervising the national service personnel working on the project; liaising with and reporting to the NSS headquarters.</p> <p>Also acted on two occasions as Regional Coordinator of the Greater Accra NSS office.</p> <p><i>(National Service Secretariat, P. O. Box 46, State House, Accra, Ghana)</i></p>

<b>National Coordinator (National Service)</b>	<b>1982-84</b>	Coordinated the activities of the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) - Ghana Federation.
		Responsibilities included the promotion and coordination of IMCS's activities within member institutions across the country; liaison with the Ghana Catholic Bishop's Conference and the Ghana Catholic Youth Council. As the only member of staff, was also responsible for office management, accounting and secretarial work. (IMCS-Ghana, P. O. Box 306, U. S. T., Kumasi, Ghana)

## Selected evaluation, research management and research work

<b>Research, Reviews, and Evaluations</b>	March 2015 – Nov 2015	Lead consultant, trainer & supervisor of the qualitative impact evaluation studies of the midterm evaluation of the SADA-Millennium Villages Project (MVP)
	Oct 2012 - March 2013	Lead consultant, trainer & supervisor of the qualitative impact evaluation studies of the baseline evaluation of the SADA-Millennium Villages Project (MVP)
	March 2014 - May 2014	Undertook the evaluation of the World Bank's <i>Social Accountability for Inclusive and Transparent Governance in Ghana</i> . The objectives of the evaluation was to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Understand the extent to which the Global Partnership Fund (GPF) grant for Ghana has contributed indirectly or directly to improving institutional quality impacts</li> <li>(ii) Understand the extent to which the development objectives of the grant activities have been achieved both by component and for the overall grant.</li> </ul> The evaluation was done using mixed methods and allowed for multi-stakeholder inputs to the process.
	March 2012 to Oct. 2013	Representing PDA, I lead a team of consultants (national and international) to support the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service in preparing a 5-year Operational Plan for the national scaling up of quality Kindergarten (KG) Education in Ghana.
	Sept-Oct 2012	Research Manager for a research into social labour conditions at four artisanal small-scale mining sites and social and economic concerns of four host mining communities in the Western Region on behalf of Solidaridad. I was responsible for developing the research proposal/design and training the research team.
	Nov. 2011-March 2012	Research Manager for a qualitative research on violence against children and worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in mining settlements: As part of carrying out the Ghana Child Rights in Mining Project on behalf of Free the Slaves (FTS), PDA was responsible for undertaking a qualitative research to understand attitudes and practices within galamsey mining settlements around Obuasi, Ghana, that affect child protection, child rights, and vulnerability of children to physical and sexual violence as well as child slavery and the worst forms of child labor. As the Research Manager and technical advisor, I was responsible for developing the research proposal/design and training the research team.
	May-August 2011	Lead Researcher of the case study of the SEND-Ghana Foundation's participatory monitoring and evaluation of the School Feeding Programme of the Ghana Government: International Budget Partnership (IBP) commissioned PDA to document and analyse the successes chalked by SEND-Ghana and its partners in independently tracking and monitoring the Ghana School Feeding Programme for the purposes of illustrating the value of civil society organizations engagement in monitoring to a wider audience.
	March 2009 – April 2010	Research Field Coordinator for the Participatory Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment Study: This study was commissioned by UNICEF, the World Bank and DFID. It was conducted by a 20-person research team working in 17 sites in the three northern regions and in migrant communities in southern Ghana using participatory rapid

	appraisal research methods. The study focused on two dimensions, namely vulnerability in northern Ghana and the realities of migrant communities with Northern origin. The study was to contribute to the 2009 World Bank Poverty Study of Ghana.
March 2010 – April 2011	Research Manager for Gender, Poverty, Environment and Infrastructure Linkages – Ghana Study: This study, funded by the World Bank, sought to analyse the positive and negative linkage between Poverty, Environment, Gender and Infrastructure (PEGI). The research sought to increase the knowledge base of local women’s and men’s perceptions of the gender-poverty-environment nexus and its interface with infrastructure and other sustainable development programs as well as their views and practices regarding the best ways to turn the negative linkages into positive.
Aug-Sept 2009	Research Manager for Vulnerability Assessment and Participatory Scenario Development for costing Climate Change Adaptation for Ghana: A baseline study on the Social Dimensions of Climate Change within the global context of Economics of Adaptation to Climate Change in Ghana. In May 2009 carried out Field Validation Survey in 8 selected sites of the 4 delineated agro-ecological zones in Ghana to capture people’s knowledge and experience in coping with climate variability and environmental degradation by identifying appropriate strategies for adaptation to adverse impacts of climate change.
April-Sept 2009	Lead Consultant in training and supervising staff and partners of Action Aid International Ghana (AAIG) to undertake a participatory baseline survey on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Upper-East Region
July – Dec 07	Lead Consultant in training staff and partners of Action Aid International Ghana (AAIG) to facilitate dialogue on power and in gathering baseline data/information for the impact assessment of its 2005 Country Strategic Paper (CSP)
April 2007	Lead consultant of an inventory and institutional analysis of seven community radios in Ghana for Free Voice. The inventory looked at their capacity and challenges with regards to the Ghana Community Radio Network’s news exchange and operational and financial sustainability.
Oct 05 – Feb 06	Researched into the Concept of a Civil Society Platform on the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) for GAPVOD, with sponsorship from SNV and Action Aid.
March 03	Trained and supervised a group of 12 Law Students to undertake a PLA/Action Planning with four pilot communities on marriage and child maintenance issues of concern to the community members.
Dec 2002 – 2004	Member of a four-person monitoring and evaluation team which met annually to review and support the work of Ibis’ Organisation Capacity Building programme.
May-Aug. 02	Team Leader for the assessment of Danida (Ghana Office) Country Assistance Strategy (1998-2002).
Jan 02	Lead Consultant to a GTZ funded PRA Study on Promoting Women in a Pluralistic Legal System. Trained a team of lawyers, and women rights activists/advocates to undertake the study and was responsible for the final report.
Sept 00 – April 01	Study co-ordinator for Ghana of “The Consultations with the Poor” Study - A study conducted in over 20 countries as a contribution to the Year 2000 World Development Report. Was responsible for the training of field teams and co-ordinating the field work and contributing to the final Ghana Synthesis Report.
Sept & Oct 2001	Co-researched the feasibility of a national volunteer programme for Ghana – sponsored by VSO, Ghana office. This entailed stakeholder and institutional analysis of which type of



people are likely to enrol on the programme, stakeholders and institutions likely to support the scheme and who could host it.

Jan – June 01	Local Consultant to COWI on an EU funded Study of Poverty Reduction at District Level.
May 00	Member of a team which evaluated Body Shop's trading relations with 10 women sheabutter producing groups.

## Membership of Boards and Advisory Committees

<b>Member, Board of Directors</b>	2015-to date	JAM Media Consult (Atinka FM)
<b>Chairperson, Board of Directors</b>	2014-to date	PDA Agro-industry and Social Enterprise (PASE) Ltd
<b>Chairperson, Board of Directors</b>	2012-to date	Participatory Development Associates (PDA) Ltd
<b>Member, Executive Committee</b>	Since 2010-August 2012	West Africa Fair Fruits (WAFF)/Solidaridad West Africa
<b>Member, National Advisory Committee</b>	2007 to 2010	The African Farm Radio Research Initiative
<b>Member, National Steering Committee</b>	2007 to 2011	The Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (STCP)
<b>Member, Advisory Board</b>	2003 to 2011	Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) Programme of Care International in Ghana
<b>Member, Board of Trustees</b>	1983-1992 & Since 2000 to 2009	Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP), Kumasi, Ghana
<b>Member, Board of Trustees</b>	2000 to 2004	Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), London, U.K
<b>Member, Advisory group</b>	1998 to 2002	Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Brighton, U.K

## Interests and Skills

Clean driving license. Word-processing using Word.  
politics, singing, music, dancing, listening to news on radio and TV.