

End of Project Evaluation
**"Educo Education and Child Rights
Projects in Ghana"**
August 2017

ABBREVIATION

APPLE	Association of People for Practical Life Education
CSLD	Center for Sustainable Local Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDUCO	Fundación Educación y Cooperación
ET	Evaluation Team
GES	Ghana Education Service
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IP	Implementing Partner
IT	Information Technology
LTP	Learning Through Play
NNED	Northern Network on Education Development
PAORP-VWC	Pan-African Organisation for Research and Protection of Violence on Women and Children
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SAVSIGN	Savannah Signatures
SMC	School Management Committee
TLMS	Teaching and Learning Materials
YDRC	Youth Development Resources Centre

Executive Summary extracted from document "Evaluation of Educo Education and Child Rights Project" prepared by The Center for Sustainable Local Development, Tamale, Ghana in August 2017.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

EDUCO, an International Non-Governmental Organization and a member of the Child Fund Alliance, through a partnership with six local Implementing Partners, implemented 6 projects in Ghana between January 2016 and June 2017:

- 1- Integrating ICT in Education implemented executed with Savannah Signatures
- 2- Reducing Poverty through Early Childhood Development executed with Tuma Kavi
- 3- Empowering Rural Youth to Build Sustainable Livelihoods through Vocational Education and Skills Training executed with The Youth Development Resource Centre (YDRC)
- 4- Promoting Basic Education for Children in the Savelugu/Nanton Municipality executed with Pan-African Organisation for Research and Protection of Violence on Women and Children (PAORP-VWC)
- 5- Strengthening Education Accountability executed with NNED
- 6- Anti-Child Trafficking Project in North Tongu executed with APPLE

As part of project closure activities, EDUCO engaged the services of the Center for Sustainable Local Development (CSLD) to conduct an end of project evaluation of these projects. The main objective for undertaking this evaluation was to meet the requirements of the Registrar General's Department and the Department of Social Development. Specifically, the evaluation sought to assess/identify:

- The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the six projects supported by EDUCO's.
- The overall impact of the projects on the beneficiaries, beneficiary communities' systems and practices and
- Best practices in educational management, lessons learnt, successes and challenges and to make recommendations that will contribute to increased performance, sustainability, replicability and policy formulation.

In order to address these evaluation questions, the Evaluation Team (ET) adopted a mixed evaluation approach where they combined desk reviews with field data collection. In doing the desk reviews, relevant data and information in the form of project proposals (both technical and financial), concept papers, field reports (narrative & financial reports), baseline reports etc. were obtained from EDUCO and the Project Partners and reviewed. The field data collection instruments used to complement the secondary sources included mainly semi-structured interviews, questionnaire and focus group discussions. The ET used a three-stage stratified sampling procedure in selecting a sample size of 384 from a population of 400,802 which was required for the study. The ET then proceeded with the evaluation.

KEY FINDING FOR EACH PROJECT

The key finding for each sub-project are summarised along the major specific objectives and outputs/outcome areas below:

1- Integration of ICT in Basic Education

This sub-project was implemented by Savannah Signatures. After an in-depth analysis of the field data and matching them with project objectives, the ET found that:

- The project was **very relevant** in meeting objectives 1.3, 2.1, 2.2 and 3.3. It also met the critical ICT needs of both children and teachers in terms of exposing them to ICT and preparing them to take the ICT exam at the BECE level.
- In assessing **the impact** of the project, the team after evaluating all the data available came to the conclusion that the project added substantial value to efforts aimed at improving the quality of education as it improved teachers' skills in ICT pedagogy for effective teaching in project schools; improved data management practices in project schools for effective school planning and decision making and empowered students to assess their teachers and voice their opinions in the selected schools.
- The ET also noted, with delight the **building of partnerships and strategic alliances** between SavSign and other EDUCO implementing partners.
- The team similarly found that budget line items were appropriate for implementing project activities and for achieving project objectives. Project budget was realistic and **cost effective**. To this end, the Team came to the conclusion that SavSign and EDUCO achieved value for money.
- The ET concluded that the project included **best practices** such as the Young Reporters Model which are good for sustainability and replication.
- the ET is however convinced that, the short duration of the sub-project, technical challenges with SMISs and unreliable power supply did not allow the gains made in partnerships and **sustainability** to be sufficiently consolidated.

2- Reducing Poverty through Early Childhood Development

This project was implemented by Tuma Kavi in partnership with EDUCO between January 2015 and June 2017 in Dinga and Sahakpalgu communities in the Savelugu/Nanton Municipality. The project sought to increase the participation of children, parents, teachers in ECD through the provision of teaching and learning materials, facilitation of LTP groups, and then building the capacities of SMCs and PTAs.

In reviewing the baseline survey report, the ET realized that there were no formal school buildings in the beneficiary communities that were child friendly. ECD lessons were held in sheds and under trees with no outdoor play equipment as well as furniture. Additionally, there was no source of portable water in Dinga.

After analysing all field and secondary data, the ET discovered that:

- The project was indeed **relevant** as it met these critical needs identified in the baseline by providing two ECD centres with all necessary complementary facilities in Sahakpalgu and Dinga as well as portable water for Dinga.
- By delivering an **ECD centre and services**, EDUCO's project GOAL 1: ensuring children and adolescents exercise and enjoy their right to an equitable, transformative and quality education throughout their lives had been met.
- The project furthered Tuma Kavi's mission to assist needy people, especially women and children, and **improve the quality of their living standard** through education of children, primary health care, nutrition education, water and sanitation and micro-enterprise development.

- The project **impacted positively** on the beneficiaries and beneficiary communities by substantially improving conditions of ECD with the construction of an ECD centre, playground, materials, and training as well as increased awareness of parents on the importance of ECD. It also came to the fore that the project had contributed significantly to improving quality of ECD education by increasing the competencies of children in literacy and numeracy and preparing them for primary education.
- To a very large extent, EDUCO achieved value for money in that the **activities funded were appropriate** for achieving project activities and results, costs were reasonable and Tuma Kavi spent within budget and in strict compliance with EDUCO's procurement, finance and reporting procedures.

3-Empowering Rural Youth to build Sustainable Livelihoods through Vocational Education and Skills Training

This project was implemented by YDRC. At the time of evaluation, the ET found out that:

- **Nearly 100% of all the project outputs/outcomes had been achieved.** Sub-objective 1 which sought to enhance employability and opportunity for self-employment for 50 young people from 10 communities in Kumbungu had been fully met. This is because result 1 which sought to enhance the vocational knowledge and skills of 50 young people was hundred percent accomplished as 30 hairdressers, 10 weavers and 10 dress makers were trained and resettled.
- **Result 2 which centred on business management classes was equally fully met** as all the 50 graduants were found to have participated in business management classes twice a month during their training.
- **Sub-objective 2 of the project** which sought to improve access to vocational education and training in Kumbungu District, the ET found that there were **2 key indicators** to this objective. Indicator 1 meant to ensure that 50 young people completed a one-year course (hairdressing and weaving) or 18 months course (dressmaking) of vocational education and skills training while indicator 2 was to ensure that young people from remote areas had access to a newly built community training centre. The ET confirms that a community training centre had been built, equipped and commissioned in Gbullung and that 50 young people from all over the district were trained, passed out and provided with start-up tool kits.
- The trainees also participated in monthly reproductive health and child care classes.
- the opinion of the many stakeholders consulted was that, the project is **both relevant and the impacts far reaching**. This is evidenced by the numerous testimonies provided by beneficiaries. Besides, the ET found that all planned results especially those that sought to enhance employability and opportunity for self-employment for 50 young people from 10 rural communities in the Kumbungu district had been achieved.
- YRDC **adhered strictly to budget lines** and conformed to EDUCO procurement, finance and administrative as well as reporting procedures. At the end of the evaluation, the ET also found that, out of a total project budget of GH\$316,863.80, YDRC delivered the project to each beneficiary at a cost of GH\$6,337.28 which the evaluators find very reasonable and **cost effective**.
- YDRC management and staff and the community had some innovative ideas as to how to sustain the project. However, to the extent that at the time of the evaluation the centre had unmet financial needs put the **sustainability** plan at risk. The ET is a bit sceptical about the success of these strategies.

4- Promoting Basic Education for Children

This project was implemented by PAORP-VWC in the Savelugu/Nanton District. The ET investigated the extent to which the project achieved planned outputs and or outcomes through interviews, questionnaire administration, FGD, and analyses of relevant documents. The teams' findings are summarised below:

- The ET concludes that **to a very large extent, the project met the general objective of Promoting Quality Education for children in Savelugu-Nanton Municipality where equitable, transformative and quality education is seen as the right of children to exercise throughout their lives by meeting 2 specific objectives;** (i) to contribute to established access to basic education for all children without discrimination with the sole aim to enable them learn to know, do and live to achieve their full potentials in life. According to the project document, the project was to increase by 80% the number of children of school going age who enrol in school and complete a full education cycle (K.G and primary school) in 20 target schools in Savelugu-Nanton.
- The ET confirmed massive sensitization campaigns in all target schools that led to **increased enrolment rate of up to 70% in target schools**. Additionally, **more girls were now in school** unlike previously when they were than were being forced into early marriages. (ii) To facilitate and implement creative and relevant, inclusive teaching & learning methods that are pupils-centred and aimed at helping children to fully bring out hidden talents in them. The benchmark as set out in the project document was to increase by 80% the number of children of school going age to be in school and graduate at primary level with greater satisfaction with the system and educational process. After a series of interviews and discussions, the ET was made to believe that the **capacity of more than 60 teachers in target schools had improved** through workshops in lesson notes preparation and creative leadership training schemes which made them more professional, innovative and responsive teachers.
- Four after School Learning and Play Centers were also set up in target schools to improve learning and play among children. This made the **children in target school participate more** in After School Learning and Play activities which made them more able to express themselves and in doing.
- Result 1 *was based on increasing school enrolment and retention for Children in Savelugu-Nanton*. Specifically, 20 schools and communities were to be involved in activities meant at promoting basic education for children especially girls. The evaluation process revealed that all 20 PTAs, SMCs and community members were involved in day to day running of schools which contributed to improved standards and performance of teachers and pupils.
- Result 2 *was meant to contribute to improved teachers' and children's performance in school through (i) 30% of none discriminatory educational materials-TLMs and (ii) safer school environment for inclusive education made available for all children within target schools*.
- The team of evaluators found out that assorted TLM and play materials were distributed to schools to improve teaching and learning. **Refresher courses** were also organized for more than 60 teachers to improve on their delivery methods in schools. Their knowledge in child-centred pedagogies, **use of creative teaching materials**, formative assessment and creative leadership had been enhanced and teaching and learning is delivered **in a child friendly environment**.
- The evaluators also established that the project delivered on keeping girls in school rather than being forced into child/early/forced marriage. This evidenced by the fact that **more girls of school-going age enrolled now stayed in school** to achieve their full potentials while at the same time, the rate of **child/early/forced marriages within target communities have reduced**.
- The ET identified the After School Learning and Play model as one of the **best practices** that can be replicated.

- The team's conclusion is that, the project was relevant in terms of filling the void in ECD, adding value in the form of capacity development and introducing innovative activities such as the After School Learning and Play all of which contributed to results.

5- Strengthening Education Accountability

This project was implemented by NNED. The project sought to improve the Quality of Education delivery in 15 selected public basic schools in the Savelugu/Nanton Municipality. At the time of evaluation, the ET found that extremely relevant, cost effective, contributed to partnerships and made tremendous impact on the beneficiaries and beneficiary communities in a number of ways:

- The **project objective was accomplished** through increased contact hours resulting from reduced teacher absenteeism and increased time-on-task in all 15 project schools.
- Through **sustained advocacy and engagement** by the project, the Municipal GES office issued a directive for all schools in the Municipality to close at 1:30pm. Although the project targeted ten schools, sixteen schools including Zoonayili and Gbumgbum which were closing at 12:30 extended their closing time to 1:30 pm.
- **Teacher attendance had improved** according to the testimonies of the head teachers and some SMC members contacted.
- Through the dissemination of the findings of a research conducted by NNED, the ET found that key education stakeholders in the Municipality now appreciated the effect of lost contact hours and teacher absenteeism. This realization encouraged them to take steps to address these challenges. Reduced contact hours and teacher absenteeism are critical needs that the project has addressed in the municipality.
- By addressing loss of contact hours and teacher absenteeism, the project had a **positive impact on learning outcomes**. The ET confirmed that owing in part to the intervention, BECE results improved from 9.6% in 2013 to 23.8% in 2014, 38.1% in 2015 and slumped to 19.5% in 2016.
- That project schools now have vibrant and **functioning SMCs** who are actively involved in school governance. It also came to light that all project schools had action plans. The SMCs have shown commitment to support in the management of the schools. All the SMCs are currently actively involved in supporting in the management of the schools.

6-Child Trafficking Prevention

This project was implemented by APPLE in the North Tongu district of the Volta Region. The specific objectives the project sought to achieve are; (i) *to building the capacity of 10 community volunteer peer educators on human rights violence, child rights and child labour prevention in 20 communities;* (ii) *To improve the participation of 200 Opinion leaders and parents of 20 communities in Anti-Human Trafficking, Child labour programs in the North Tongu District of Volta region in 12 months and* (iii) *To provide assistance to 100 re-integrated children from Child labour between the ages 10 to 17 years from slavery in the North Tongu District of the Volta region within a period of 12 months.*

- After reviewing all the documents available to the ET and all the responses provided by respondents, the ET found that, 10 volunteers (5 males and 5 females) were identified, trained and deployed to carry out assigned activities in mainly sending communities.
- With regard to the objective of involving 200 opinion leaders and parents in 20 communities in Anti-Human Trafficking, Child labour programs, the ET confirmed that APPLE had accomplished this task 100 % in the North Tongu District. The community opinion leaders who were sensitized

included chiefs, teachers and parents and their knowledge and capacity has been enhanced. The ET found that these **opinion leaders and peer educators have remained in the communities as change agents.**

- Furthermore, it was established that as spelt out in the APPLE project proposal, the organization had reintegrated and provided assistance to 100 children (50 boys and 50 girls) between the ages 10 to 17 years with school supplies to encourage them to stay in school and learn.
- Some of the additional results the ET noted were successfully carried out were that the project had acquired an office and procured a motor bike for community outreach programmes.
- The Team confirms that the motor bike is still available and in good condition. It was also noteworthy that 80 parents also represented their children at the forums to witness the school supplies packages being delivered to them. The reintegration of trafficked children continues in beneficiary communities to date even after the project.
- The team found that project **budget was reasonable, and the amount was used strictly for planned activities.** EDUCO's finance and administrative and reporting procedures were followed. **The project to a large extent is a good pilot which enjoyed a high level of commitment and buy in of relevant stakeholders.** However, its short duration and inability of APPLE to raise sufficient funds to continue with project activities are likely **to affect sustainability.**
- In conclusion, the project is found to have been very relevant and made the desired impact as it addressed the rights to freedom and education and non-violence against children. The sensitization and enhanced capacity of opinion leaders and peer educators helped in achieving planned results such as freeing and reintegrating trafficked children. The project has brought about a reorientation of minds about child trafficking, abuse and enslavement.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The general conclusions of the ET are that:

- 1- All six projects were developed within the framework of EDUCO's strategic plan (2015-2018) and contributed in diverse ways to its' strategic goals - right to education, protection and governance. In particular the right to education - children and adolescents exercising and enjoying their right to an equitable, transformative and quality education and the improvement of their general wellbeing.
- 2- All six projects were found to be relevant as they addressed real needs of direct beneficiaries and existing gaps in education delivery in the Savelugu/Nanton District.
- 3- All sub-projects were found to have made tremendous impact on beneficiaries as all planned activities were satisfactorily executed which sufficiently contributed to the achievement of all planned objectives, outputs and or outcomes.
- 4- EDUCO and its implementing partners achieved value for money as project budgets were reasonable, cost effective and activities funded appropriate for accomplishing planned objectives and results. Project resources were used judiciously and in accordance with EDUCO's finance, administrative and reporting procedures and the ET found evidence of accountability on the part of partners to both EDUCO and beneficiaries.
- 5- The duration of all sub-projects in the view of the ET was too short for the significant gains made to be consolidated which remains a challenge for sustainability.
- 6- All sub-project partners and stakeholders had fine ideas and strategies for ensuring sustainability. However, the chunk of these ideas and strategies were yet to be implemented and the ET is sceptical about their success.

- 7- All the sub-projects had some innovations and best practices such as the After-School Learning and Play model, the Young Reporters Model, The Teachers Attendance Record Cards and the School Management Information Systems etc. that can be replicated in other schools or consolidated into a novel project.
- 8- All the sub-projects contributed to lasting partnerships among EDUCO partners. The implementing partners also worked very well with EDUCO and we acknowledge EDUCO's effort to foster partnership between its IPs and the Christian Children's Fund of Canada, another ChildFund Alliance member.
- 9- It appears an end of project evaluation was not planned by EDUCO. Not all the sub-projects conducted baseline studies and so did not have baseline data. For the sub-projects that had baseline, the indicators were either not set or poorly set. This made it difficult to measure the desired changes the evaluation sought to achieve and the report largely descriptive.
- 10- All projects encountered minor setbacks in the implementation process but none was serious enough to affect project implementation and the achievement of planned objectives and results.
- 11- Project stakeholders were generally very supportive and played their expected roles which led to the overall success of all the sub-projects.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT

In the course of the design and implementation of these projects, some key lessons have been learnt. They include:

1. Children are vulnerable and prone to all forms of discrimination, abuse and exploitation and special and conscious efforts are needed to safeguard their rights and protect them. Above all, these efforts must be sustainable to ensure lasting change since the Ghanaian cultural context makes issues of rights delicate.
2. Children are very capable if properly trained and orientated in the right environment using the right materials. They can understand, appreciate and even claim their rights.
3. Wider stakeholder engagement and buy-in are preconditions for success and sustainability of projects and should never be taken for granted.
4. Dependency syndrome is high among community members. No matter how much community members understand and or appreciate their role in their children's education and well-being, they still have an expectation of a reward from projects when they play their role.
5. In the face of donor fatigue, networking and sustainable partnerships among local NGOs – pooling of financial, logistics and technical expertise will make them competitive.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

By way of moving forward, the ET recommends the following:

1. In view of the fact that EDUCO is exiting and unable to provide further support that will consolidate the gains made so far, EDUCO should consider linking local partners to other Child Fund Alliance Partners both in and outside Ghana to support the partners.
2. EDUCO IPs should deepen their partnership through joint programming. They can incorporate their project specific best practices such as Capacity Building in Creative Leadership Skills, Young Reporters, Teachers Attendance Report Cards, Reading Festivals and After School Play and Learning models into a joint project that will make a good case for other donors to support so they can consolidate and or upscale the gains made.

3. Sustainability strategies of partners should begin with project inception and monitored as part of the implementation process rather than rolled out at the end of the project. Being part of process monitoring makes room for testing their robustness and reviews in case they are not working satisfactorily.
4. Subsequent projects should span over at least two years with jointly developed exit strategy by EDUCO and Local Partners to avoid the kind of “shocks” experienced by partners in the face of EDUCO’s exit.
5. At the rural level, children’s capacity in literacy and numeracy is generally low. The District Education Authorities should adopt models such as the Peer Teaching model, Refresher Training in Teaching Methods and Lesson Notes preparation, After School Play and Learning etc. and expanded to include literacy and numeracy.
6. End of Project Evaluations should be well planned and proper baselines studies with clear and measurable indicators and robust process monitoring systems put in place to enrich the final evaluation results. Baseline studies should be more scientifically conducted preferably by a third party.
7. To forestall sudden transfers of Teachers whose capacity have been built to support the implementation of similar projects and the disruptions they cause to such laudable projects, EDUCO and its partners should engage G.E.S over transfers at the project inception stage.
8. The best practices under the various sub-projects should be replicated in other schools in the district or consolidated into a new project for greater impact.
9. Stakeholders in Education in the Savelugu Municipality should investigate the decline in BECE results in 2016.
10. The relationship that has been established between EDUCO and the IPs should be sustained even with the exit of the former. EDUCO can continue to hand hold the IPs through; technical and logistics support, linkages with other ChildFund Alliance members globally and advocacy for other international partners to support IPs initiatives.