

A Model for a Progressive Preschool Approach in Ghana

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Abstract

In recent years, Ghana has made strides to meet international mandates for early childhood education. With the implementation of the Early Childhood Care policy in 2004, Ghana has made attempts to provide holistic care for children 0-8 years. This thesis will be two-fold: the first part will consist of the progress Ghana has made in the years since the policy's implementation in getting children ready for primary(grade) school. The second portion of the thesis is a proposal to the Government of Ghana (specifically, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and Ministry of Education) on a preschool approach novel to Ghana that will meet the needs of the modern Ghanaian child. The thesis will provide an overview of the current preschool system in Ghana based on extensive research on the strategies that are in place to meet this goal. The thesis will attempt to analyze the complex challenges and gaps of the current educational policies and practices in place. Based on the information gathered, the thesis will include a progressive preschool model that utilizes the Developmental- Interaction model of education with a social services component that has the needs of the family central in its focus.

Keywords: Ghana, education, social work, preschool, progressive, child*

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To my parents, thank you for the countless sacrifices; this is for you.

To my husband, Evans, thank you for being you.

In Him I live, I move, and I have my being

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, Ghana has shown great promise and dedication to the rights and development of children. One of the policies that came out of this interest is the Early Childhood Care and Development policy (ECCD). The ECCD takes a holistic approach to the implementation of policies and programs for promoting the growth and development of children between 0 and 8 years of age (Republic of Ghana, 2004). This is done by focusing on major issues in the child's life, including health, nutrition, education, protection and sanitation to foster the chances of a better life. The rationale behind the ECCD policy is to provide a framework for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to meaningfully contribute to the growth, development and survival of the child. The introduction of this policy also enhances the collaboration between MDAs and stakeholders in providing integrated and well-coordinated services for the optimum development of the child. (Republic of Ghana, 2004; Okai & Amoah, 2016)

Long before the ECCD, children's education in Ghana was mobilized at the community level where children at every stage of development engaged in activities that prepared them to contribute to the community. The education was facilitated by the family, i.e. parents, grandparents, siblings and extended family relations. Elderly women in the community occasionally took to taking care of children in groups during periods that called for community mobilizing, e.g.: during the rainy seasons (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008). Basel missionaries in Ghana first formal introduced daycares alongside their primary schools in the mid-18th century. This was done in an attempt to provide Ghanaian children with formal education while introducing them to the Christian faith (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008).

Around 1960, 3 years after Ghana gained independence, the government began to express

interest in early childhood development in the form of directives on reports of special commissions, decrees and laws that focused more on social welfare and cognitive development of the child instead of the holistic development of the child (Boakye, 2008). In efforts to meet the mandates of international treaties such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child and local treaties such as the new constitution in 1992, Ghana started paying serious attention to the care of young children. The government realized that there was an urgent need to address the plight of young children in the country and that having an Early Childhood Development policy would be an effective strategy. Young children in Ghana are affected by poverty, an associated high rate of child mortality (49.3 per 1000) (UNICEF, n.d., Ghana), lack of access to clean water sources and sanitation, limited access to education, and child labor (UNICEF, n.d., Situation). The ECCD would be a single consolidated document that all stakeholders could reference to for the care of children (Boakye, 2008). The ECCD identified stakeholders as Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana National Association of Teachers and recognized Association of ECCD Practitioners (Republic of Ghana, 2004). The rationale of the ECCD is not only to provide a framework for the implementation of ECCD programs by stakeholders, but also as a guide for sector ministries, district assemblies, communities, families, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations and the donor community who are interested in ECCD programs (Republic of Ghana, 2004).

The process to having an ECCD was not an easy one. It had many challenges and the document took more years than initially intended to produce. A national seminar was held in November 1993 with support from Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Ghana National Association of Teachers, and the

Danish National Federation of Early Childhood and Youth Education (Boakye, 2008). The seminar created awareness of the challenges of young children and the need to correct it. A task force was set up to collate ECCD information from organizations and draft a policy. The first draft was produced in 1995. A setback to the policy was deciding who would coordinate the ECCD policy which caused an almost 5-year delay. Factors that influenced the delay in the policy formulation were the indecision over which ministry should coordinate the ECCD since the policy touched on different facets of child development, a long preparation time by the task force, frequent draft rewrites, changes in political administration, and submission of drafts to stakeholders for review throughout the country (Boakye, 2008).

After the delay, the document was placed under the GNCC-Office of the President. The draft went through the offices of all the different stakeholders to suggest edits and to ensure that each stakeholder was well represented in the draft; this process took a few years to finish. In the year 2000 it was ready to go to cabinet, but the government was changed. The new government placed it under MOWAC (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, now Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Protection), under whose auspices the document remains to date. The policy was eventually adopted in August 2004 and all stakeholders began the process of meeting the goals outlined in the policy (Boakye, 2008).

Even though all the goals outlined in the ECCD are related to early childhood education, a few of the goals that are directly relevant to education are that the ECCD expects for there to be a provision of a pre-school education, fee-free tuition in pre-schools, provision for the preparation (training) and upgrading of pre-school teachers and caregivers, promotion of nutrition and household food security and the provision of information and skills to parents and primary care-givers (Republic of Ghana, 2004; UNESCO,2006). The ECCD views kindergarten

education as central to improving early childhood development and learning. Because Ghana is relatively new to having a preschool system, there is a great need to constantly analyze the policy and take note of what is working, what needs to be adjusted, what needs to be dropped and what strategies are developmentally appropriate. This will ensure that the ECCD policy is up to date on what is currently known about the development of young children along the domains of their physical, social, emotional, language, cognition and educational needs. Presently, proper nutrition, exercise, sleep, a safe and loving home, adequate health, early stimulation, learning opportunities and economic security for families are among the determinants of healthy development (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019; UNICEF, 2017; WHO, 2019).

The current education system in Ghana attests to the remnants of colonialism (Mfum-Mensah, 2005). Ghana's education system closely follows the British educational system and does not adjust itself to fit the needs of the Ghanaian community (Mfum-Mensah, 2005). Nsamenang (2004) argues that the type of education that most Africans receive is a disservice since it does not support creativity, imagination or self-expression. It is focused on training children in a system that prepares them to enter professions such as doctors, lawyers, or accountants which require extensive training in the English language. Even though there are other professions that equally contribute to the growth of the Ghanaian economy, the notion of white collar job is still perpetuated as the status quo of achievement (Dzisi, 2008). The problem with this educational model is that it does not meet the cultural, economic, and environmental structures that exist in African societies, Ghana included (Nsamenang, 2004).

Aside from formal education in the classroom, which was introduced during the era of colonial masters, Ghanaians have had informal modalities of education which occur in the home and in the community and are integrated in the daily activities of children (Prochner & Kabiru,

2008; Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012). Children learn about “important aspects of culture and values, such as sharing, social responsibility, belonging, mutual dependence, mutual respect, continuity, obedience, respect for elders, cooperation, fear of God and ability to relate with other people” (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008, p. 124). The learning takes the form of direct instructions, observations, participation in ceremonies and apprenticeships as the child continues to grow. During infancy, the child acquires language and begins to form bonds with others through the learning of lullabies, songs and games. As the child grows, the child usually learns about philosophical attitudes that are in tune with community norms and values through oral literature in the form of stories and legends (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008). Around the age of 7 years, the child is socialized into societal gender-appropriate roles where girls help with taking care of younger sibling and household chores. The boys run errands and partake in manual labor like the care of livestock or farm work (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008).

This informal way of education is still relevant today and translates into the skills utilized in maintaining small and medium-sized enterprises. Some of the attributes which are developed from informal education are high levels of confidence, desire of interdependence and responsibility, openness to innovation, high optimism about the success of ventures and high levels of persistence and motivation (Dzisi, 2008). Among indigenous Ghanaian female entrepreneurs for example, over 50% attested that the formal education they received was helpful in the successful creation and operation of their businesses even though only 59% (out of 241 participants) of them had a basic level of education (completed primary school) (Dzisi, 2008). For these women, a vast number of their years of training were informal. The women mentioned that skills such as bookkeeping and preparing financial statements were advantages of receiving formal education. It is important to note that the business venture of the indigenous Ghanaian

women is not monotonous but extends to various traditional and non-traditional women's businesses such as trading, services, agro processing, manufacturing, textiles and fabrics, agriculture, education and construction (Dzisi, 2008). Informal education provides skills in activities like dressmaking, hairdressing, jewelry production and bead making.

The data coming out of Ghana show that formal and informal ways of learning are important contributions to the economic growth of Ghana through entrepreneurship opportunities (Dzisi, 2008). The attributes of informal education listed above such as openness to innovation and high levels of confidence are the driving forces behind the success of indigenous entrepreneurs. The Ministry of Education attests that our current formal education system does not promote creativity and ingenuity and that it is important for Ghana to adopt an educational stance where creativity and ingenuity are encouraged in children (Ministry of Education, 2012). From the example of the Ghanaian female entrepreneurs, it is obvious that the informal educational training they received has been more advantageous to them than the formal education. This drives home the point that the current educational model does not benefit the Ghanaian economy or the growing Ghanaian child.

An additional reason as to why the current education system does not suit Ghana is that the educational system in Ghana leaves many students feeling incompetent. This is because the educational model is not tailored to be flexible in accommodating the various interests and talents of children (Ministry of Education, 2018). The current system is perfect for training children to be vast reservoirs of theoretical knowledge who are excellent in reproducing material taught by the teachers during exams (Ministry of Education, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2018; Haffar, 2019). The system is unable to prepare learners for the world of work, career progression or sustainable development because of the rigid structure of the curriculum and extensive

material that needs to be covered (Ministry of Education, 2018). As such it is possible that children who do not excel in regurgitating the theoretical information provided in classroom do not feel up to par in comparison with their colleagues who are able to do so.

The education in Ghana from the preschool level is based on “chew and pour”. Chew and pour is a euphemism in Ghana used to mean a student’s ability to memorize theoretical information that a teacher provides- “chew”; and then regurgitate that information during examinations- “pour” (Aizenman & Warner, 2018). Professor Akosua Adomako Ampofo, who is a renowned Ghanaian lecturer and activist alluded on a talk show to the fact that Ghanaian children who are unable to fit the mold of the “chew and pour” system of education can be viewed as incompetent as opposed to embracing it as a child who is thinking outside the box (Adomako Ampofo & Kaufmann, 2018). This thinking outside the box should be viewed as a characteristic of creativity and innovative thinking because there are different types of students some of whom are not all “academically inclined” (Adomako Ampofo & Kaufmann, 2018).

It is important for Ghana to begin to think of children who are unable to adhere to the “chew and pour” model of education as students who are in touch with their creativity, ingenuity and students who think outside the box. It is also possible that the high rate of unemployment in Ghana is because most college graduates are consumers of knowledge instead of producers of knowledge. As such in a world now where innovation, technology and development of solutions to problems are prized and highly regarded, Ghanaian youth are failing to keep up simply because the education system received from the preschool level is not experiential, hands-on and activity based but rooted in “chew and pour”. Ghana boasts of college graduates, yet the Ghanaian graduate is not trained in applying the concepts taught in school. Simply put, the

education that Ghanaian children receive does not enable them to “translate theories...into useful outcomes” (Adomako Ampofo & Kaufmann, 2018).

The preschool system which is the foundation of formal education in Ghana provides varying lens through which it can be analyzed. In reports, it appears that Ghana is doing considerably well with programs such as the implementation of NALAP, the ECCD policy, mainstreaming the kindergarten system as part of the free basic education and an increase in preschool enrollment (Mensah,2014; Okai & Amoah, 2016). On the other hand, there are certain serious gaps that cannot be ignored such as different levels of teacher training, methods of classroom instruction and preschool children’s access to necessary facilities (UNESCO, 2006; UNICEF, 2011; Ntumi, 2016; Haffar, 2016; Innovations for Poverty, 2016). Ghana only recently started paying attention to the importance of preschool in a child's life, and there is emerging literature of what is working and what is not working.

This thesis is a rudimentary work in an attempt to shed light on the current state of the preschool system in Ghana. The first half of the thesis will focus on the progress that Ghana has made and the challenges to factors that influence preschool education. The areas under consideration are quality of education, teacher education/training, curriculum implementation, school infrastructure, and parental support. The second portion of the thesis will be recommendations to the Ghana government based on the progress and challenges. It will also include a proposal for a novel preschool project that factors in the challenges of the current model and provides recommendations to meet the needs of the modern Ghanaian child.

Chapter 2: Progress and Challenges

Quality of Education

It is interesting to note that even though the UNICEF (2011) evaluation showed that “increases in pre-primary education attendance have been substantial and have exceeded national goals” (para.2), research by Innovations for Poverty Action (2016) provided data from 2015 that showed that the increase in the pre-primary education is because of the growing number of private schools in the country. The number of public, that is, government owned preschools in the country have been at the same level since 2011.

Private schools are very promising in providing an education for younger children because they provide additional avenues for preschool education and push the goals of the ECCD policy (Nsiah-Peprah, 2004; Edwards, 2017; Innovations for Poverty Action, 2016; Republic of Ghana, 2004). Unfortunately, though, the fees involved in attending private school can be high in comparison to the cost of public schools (Edwards, 2017; Innovations for Poverty Action, 2016). In a 2017 list which pulled the 10 most expensive schools in Ghana, all the school were private with a high of GH¢109,567 (approximately \$21,913) to the lowest being GH¢6,000(\$ 1200) (Larnyoh, 2017). For private schools with low fees, the tuition ranges from \$18 to \$120 (Brion, 2017). This limits the children who can attend to families who are wealthy or parents who are willing to spend a huge proportion of their income on school related fees.

From a sample of families with preschool children living in Kasoa, a peri-urban area outside of Accra, parents spend 35% to 42% of the household income on education (McCullough, Hatipoglu & Burnett, 2015). Even though this sample is not representative of Ghana, it shed lights on the cost of attaining quality education for a child. Based on data from the Ghana Statistical Services poverty index, the annual average household income across Ghana in

2012/2013 was GH¢16,645 (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014) with an annual average income per household of GH¢8,184 for the area of Kasoa (McCullough et al., 2015). If families in the Kasoa vicinity are spending even 35% of the household income on education, that leaves GH¢5,319.6 to be spent on other family expenses. These data go to show that, families in at least Kasoa are willing to spend a significant amount of resources on attaining quality education. Parents who cannot afford to pay higher cost of tuition send their students to government run preschools, which are usually understaffed and overpopulated (Ntumi, 2016; Pesando, Wolf, Behrman, Tsinigo, Aber, 2018).

In Ghana, the focus on preschool is on kindergarten and not the stages before. Even though the ECCD policy is targeted towards children 0-8 years, the educational aspect of the policy makes specific mention of kindergarten education. Considering that, there are Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) programs which are supervised and coordinated by the Department of Social Welfare for children 0-2 years. The Department of Social Welfare is responsible for registration and maintenance of standards for facilities that cater to this age range (UNESCO, 2006). There are also the curriculum development ECCD programs, which are run by the Department of Education for children 3-5 yrs. This is because formal education in Ghana starts at the age of 4 when children begin kindergarten for 2 consecutive years: kindergarten 1 when they are 4 years old, and kindergarten 2 when they are 5 years old (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012). Due to the presence of two institutions running the affairs of preschool education, there are setbacks to ECCD activities being carried out because of a lack of collaboration between the two governing bodies (UNESCO, 2006). For example, in order for teachers to be certified to teach nursery school (ages 3 to 4 years), they need only 3 months of training at the National Nursery Teachers' Training Centre with its model nursery school to provide hand on

training to be awarded a certificate “A” (Nyarko & Mate-Kole,2016; Morrison, 2002). Kindergarten teachers on the other hand had to have either a diploma or a degree (UNESCO, 2006; Nyarko & Mate-Cole, 2016). The diplomas and degree could be taken as fulltime, sandwich course or distance course at either the University of Cape Coast or the University of Education at Winneba with one year, 2-year, 3 year of 4-year options for certifications (University of Winneba, 2019; University of Cape Coast, 2019). Over the years, other institutions have embraced training preschool teachers; as of 2016, 7 out of the 38 public schools for education offer diverse courses in early childhood education. This provides additional sources of training for preschool teachers (Ministry of Education, 2012; Okai & Amoah, 2016).

For the 2011/2012 academic school year, of the 51,946 preschool teachers in the country, only 15,622 were trained (Nyarko & Mate-Kole, 2016). Of this, 754 of the 9529 nursery schoolteachers were trained and 35% of kindergarten teachers were trained (Nyarko & Mate-Kole, 2016). It is interesting to note that, there were more trained teachers in the public sector than the private sector. This can be attributed to the government providing in-service training for its preschool teachers and recruiting grandaunts from teacher training colleges directly into public schools (Nyarko & Mate-Kole,2016).

The government of Ghana though must be applauded for the efforts it is making towards making schools more accessible to children. Because of the tuition cost involved in private schools, the government in 2012 made preschool education a part of the free basic education available to all children (UNICEF, 2011; Okai & Amoah, 2016; Boakye, 2008). Even though preschool education in Ghana includes children of kindergarten age and below (Republic of Ghana, 2004; UNESCO, 2006), the government tries to make kindergarten more accessible by requiring all primary schools to have a kindergarten attached so that by 2010 there were 25,337

kindergarten schools in the country (Okai & Amoah, 2016). This move on the part of the government is not truly beneficial to the KG classes or the attached primary schools because the healthy noise levels from child-centered KG classrooms would disrupt the primary school students and teachers (Ministry of Education, 2012). In a statement release by one of the officials of the Ghana Education Service in 2016, the number of Kindergartens has rather increased from 18,915 in 2011/2012 compared to the current figure of about 20,960 in 2016 (Okai & Amoah, 2016). From the figure that UNICEF provided in 2011 and the figure released in 2016, the consensus is that the number of kindergartens has increased as the years have progressed. Unfortunately, though, even with the increase in schools, in rural areas children must still travel long distances to get an education (UNICEF, 2011).

ECCD programs involve day care programs, in home programs, after school home care, nurseries, nanny homes, nurseries for children aged 3-4, day-care centers for the age group 2-3 years, and crèches that cater to children under 2 years of age. Parents can choose to go with the daycares setup up by the Department of Social Welfare, which were developed to allow mothers to have a dependable place to send their children to during the day while they work (UNESCO, 2006). Such daycares do not usually provide learning instruction for children and are literally daycare centers where parents can “dump” their children while they work (Dartey, 2014). The use of the term dump is disheartening and even harsh but highlights what is happening in the country. Parents need a place to keep their children since they have to work and for younger children, the daycare centers serve as more of a babysitting experience than a space for children to be nurtured in the absence of parents. “A visit to some communities in Ghana reveals how some Day Care Centres are been run, one will not be surprised to spot poor surrounding, poor infrastructure, lack of learning materials, [and] teachers with no or low qualification teaching the

children” (Agyei Amponsah, 2016, para. 13). This is because while some individuals set up daycare centers to provide care to children, others see daycare centers as an avenue to make high profits and skimp out on providing adequate resources and infrastructure to manage the daycare centers (Agyei Amponsah, 2016).

Teacher Education/ Training

Similar concerns of insufficient resources arise when looking at teacher education. Many preschool teachers are not trained (UNICEF, 2011). Considering that, Ghana has implemented training facilities like the University of Education (located at Winneba) Training College which offers a degree, certificate, diploma and graduate coursework in early childhood education. The University of Cape Coast also allows students to take courses in early childhood care and development as part of their education requirements. There are also short courses organized by the National Nursery Teacher Training Center for teachers already in the field. Seven out of the 38 public colleges of education have also been running various courses in Early Childhood Education. (UNICEF, 2011, Okai and Amoah, 2016. In addition to that, most of the graduates from these colleges are employed by the government. The private schools on the other hand, usually have a head teacher that is trained, and the classroom teachers lacking in training. Private schools that are able to hire and retain trained teaching staff usually charge tuition fees that the average Ghanaian parent cannot afford.

Overall though, Ghana has shown dedication to training teachers. This is evident by the number of trained teachers which has gone up through the years due to the provision of certification and training from these institutions. There were between 42,417 trained teachers (Nyarko & Mate-Kole, 2016) and 41,484 trained teachers (Ministry of Education, 2012) during the 2011/2012 academic year as against 52,007 teachers in 2016 (Okai & Amoah, 2016). The

general consensus from various sources is that the training that preschool teachers are receiving is on the rise as the years have progressed (UNESCO, 2006; Nyarko & Mate-Kole, 2016; Ministry of Education, 2012).

In a news article in 2016 looking at how far Ghana has come since the implementation of the ECCD in 2004, the article cited some specifications that the government has taken to improve early childhood education such as providing accelerated training programs for KG teachers and caregivers to get certified (Okai & Amoah, 2016). May's Day Care and Educational Centre is an educational Centre that is certified by the Department of Social Welfare to provide a year-long training programme in Early Childhood Care and Development. Since its training department in 1999, May's Day Care and Educational Centre has trained and graduated over 247 caregivers (Ministry of Education, 2012). May's Day Care and Educational Centre's training department is one of the examples of accelerated programs for preschool teachers to bridge the gap between trained and untrained teachers. Accelerating training programs are helpful but only to the extent of training individuals who serve as assistants in the classroom. The short-term courses are not enough to ensure that these individuals get the necessary understanding of the development of children necessary to create content specific to the developmental level of children (Okai & Amoah, 2016).

Another approach to increase the training available to preschool teachers was to affiliate all colleges of education to the University of Cape Coast since the University of Cape Coast is premier for teacher education (Asare-Danso, 2014). There are also remedial programs that teachers can enroll in at any of the Colleges of Education. Since the 2013/2014 academic year, the government introduced a 3-year program where students spend the first two years and last semester of their final year on campus and the first semester of their third year for their off-

campus teaching practice (Asare-Danso, 2014). These opportunities provide more avenues for teachers to get the training that they need. In 2015, there was a teacher training program organized by Innovations for Poverty Action that targeted teacher classroom behavior. The training involved training workshops and in classroom coaching. The material covered how teachers can involve play based activity into teacher, child centered practices and diverse approaches to teaching language and literacy (Wolf, Aber, Behrman, & Tsinigo, 2018).

Curriculum Implementation

In 2011, the Ghana Education Service (GES), which is part of the Ministry of Education responsible for implementing policies put in place by the ministry, started a plan to improve the quality of kindergarten to one where learning would be collaborative and interactive, with an emphasis of activity-based learning. This is with the hope that teachers will be trained in how children develop and learn (Okai and Amoah, 2016). The concern for curriculum instruction cannot be overstated. Of the 62 teachers that Ntumi interviewed in 2016, 45 of them stated that they did not understand the curriculum and when they tried to go by the learning concepts outlined in the curriculum, the students did not grasp it. Forty-five teachers cannot follow the curriculum because the class size is too large, 46 teachers responded that they do not receive any in-service training on using the curriculum, 56 teachers mentioned that they do not have the learning materials needed to go along with the curriculum and 57 agreed that do not receive any support from school administration in running the curriculum.

It is important to note that as of 2016, information coming out of the country provides two different views on the state of early childhood education Ghana. The research study by Ntumi (2016) is showing that teachers are not effectively trained to cope with the early childhood curriculum put in place by the Ministry of Education. Yet, the Early Childhood

Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service attests to training programs being implemented to build the capacity of KG teachers to operationalize the curriculum and increases teaching methodology (Okai and Amoah, 2016). With this information, it is apparent that there is a gap in the training being provided on how teachers are able to effectively implement the curriculum in the classroom.

As of 2016 when Ntumi published his article on challenges to teachers, teachers living in the vicinity where the two universities accredited for training trainers in early childhood development still struggled with understanding the curriculum, among other problems. From Ntumi's study, it is highly unlikely that the predicament of teachers in further places in the country will be any different or better if teachers in the immediate vicinity of the training institutions have dire challenges related to curriculum implementation (Ntumi, 2016).

Aside from teachers proper use of the curriculum, the current KG curriculum being used in Ghana appears to have been in place since 2006 (Ministry of Education, 2018). Its foundation is on an emphasis on the use of official syllabuses, textbooks and teacher handbooks even though it was supposed to be an activity-based approach (Ministry of Education, 2018). Because it follows an objective-based curriculum defined in subject syllabuses, it was difficult to involve inquiry, creativity, manipulation, collaboration and social interaction between students and teachers. This leads to a classroom environment which is not child-centered but rather didactic in its approach (Ministry of Education, 2019). The good news is that this curriculum is soon to be updated with a newer curriculum beginning in the 2019/2020 academic year (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment). The reason for the updated curriculum is to "respond to a national priority of shifting the structure and content of the education systems from merely passing examinations to building character, nurturing values, and raising literate, confident, and engaged citizens who can

think critically” (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment, 2019). This way of thinking about curriculum implementation is a shift in the right direction from moving Ghana’s educational system from a model of rote knowledge and “chew and pour” to an educational model that promotes creativity, innovation, critical thinking.

The new curriculum has four learning areas across the curriculum; these are the 4Rs of wRiting, Reading, aRithmetic, cReativity (Ministry of Education, 2018). Some of the features of the new curriculum include reducing the number of learning areas at the kindergarten level from seven to four. The new curriculum is for children from KG to JHS3 (grade 9). It is divided into different phases with kindergarten 1& 2 serving as the foundation level or Key Phase 1. The curriculum is supposed to provide instruction for students in the subjects of english, mathematics, science, history, creative arts, our world our people and physical education (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment, 2019). The goal of the upcoming curriculum is to ensure that Ghanaian children leave school as scientifically literate citizens (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment, 2019). This is in line with current trends in the world where there is a push for technological advancement rooted in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. STEM education has as its foundation in innovation, creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking which the new curriculum will address (Ministry of Education, 2018). The framework that Ghana hopes to adopt will definitely provide students with more hands-on experimental learning since it will no longer be focused on rote knowledge.

The new curriculum will no longer offer language and literacy, environmental studies, mathematics/science and technology, creative activities (music, dance and arts, music dance and drama, physical development, and psychomotor skills. It will only offer language and literacy using a dual immersion approach, numeracy, creative arts and our world and our people with

integrated themes of history, religious and moral education, geography, science and physical education at the kindergarten level (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Another area where the Ministry of Education has tried to make progress in preschool education curriculum is the language of instruction. The Ghanaian government, in an effort to improve children's ability to read and write early in their education implemented NALAP (National Literacy Acceleration Program) in 2009 (Hartwell, 2010). NALAP is founded on the premise that children learning in their first language makes the acquisition of learning a secondary language easier (Hartwell, 2010). NALAP mandates that all preschool instruction in addition to the first 3 years of primary school is done in a native dialect (Ministry of Education, 2018) with the English language being gradually introduced first orally, then as a subject, before being transitioned as the language of instruction by class 3 (Hartwell, 2010). This is a step in the right direction towards having an education system that meets the need of the Ghanaian child (Okai & Amoah, 2016). This is because even though English is the official language of the country, there are multiple ethnicities in Ghana with their own culture and most importantly, language. Ghana boasts of over 250 languages and dialects, but English is predominantly used to conduct official business affairs and is the standard language used for educational instruction (Embassy of Ghana, 2019). Most Ghanaian children are born into families where the ethnic dialect of the parents is spoken as the primary means of communication in the home (Opoku-Amankwa, Edu-Buandoh & Brew-Hammond, 2014). Even though English is the official language of the country, most children have little to no experience with English until they begin school. As such, it is important that in the early stages of development, children are instructed in their native dialect since that familiarity can serve as a transition from the home life to the school life (Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2014).

Unfortunately, the implementation of NALAP has been met with many challenges. First, there are many dialects and languages spoken in Ghana, yet NALAP materials are available in only the main Ghanaian languages of Asanti Twi, Akuapem Twi, Fanti, Dagaare-Wali, Dagbani, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem and Nzema (Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2014). This might raise the problem of minority communities who do not speak any of the main languages not benefiting from NALAP. In such communities, it becomes difficult for teachers to decide which language to instruct the children in. Secondly, a teacher might not necessarily speak the dialect/language of the neighborhood that he/she find themselves in and will be unable to effectively implement the mandates of NALAP if even provided the necessary materials for instruction or training in the language matter (Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2014; Hartwell, 2010; Diesob, 2017). Thirdly, due to emigration, children in one classroom might speak several dialects/languages in the class so it is not feasible for the teacher to instruct the children in one language. Another issue that complicates this is that even though this is a government mandated policy, many private schools continue to teach in English since they are of the belief that an English-only language instruction is the way forward and that is what parents expect (Hartwell, 2010). In light of that, many private schools are not engaged in NALAP. Additionally, private schools overwhelmingly received NALAP teaching materials late and had to supplement training cost of their teachers (Hartwell, 2010). As of 2017, even though NALAP was implemented, there was no body/agency organized to monitor its implementation in private schools (Diesob, 2017).

NALAP and other policies are failing to work because private schools and public schools do not have a standard curriculum that they must follow. A simple internet search of the best private schools in Ghana produces a list of schools that utilize a foreign curriculum. A vast majority of these schools utilize a foreign curriculum with American or British being preferable

(Ezebuiri, 2018). Private schools in Ghana that follow an international curriculum afford the children of foreign nationals living in the country, expatriates or children of diplomats residing in the country an education that is on par with what their children will be able to access outside of Ghana (Excellent Home Classes, 2017, 2019). Local Ghanaian citizens hoping to provide their children with a basic education that prepares them for higher education outside the country also invest in sending their children to private schools that follow an international curriculum (Excellent Home Classes, 2017;2019). An explanation to why some Ghanaian families seek to enroll their children in schools that adhere to a foreign curriculum is the gaps in the education that parents with formal education are able to recognize, and, in an effort, to want a better future for their children, enroll them in such schools (Excellent Home Classes, 2017;2019).

School Infrastructure and Materials

Teachers in Ghana sometimes have to work under conditions that are not optimal such as poorly ventilated and lit classrooms, disproportionate number of chairs and tables to students, limited access to chalk, poster boards, and materials that the teacher needs to instruct the class (UNICEF, 2011; UNESCO, 2006; Ntumi, 2016). The textbooks are often outdated or have pages ripped from them. To help combat the problem of the shortage of teaching material, the Textbooks and Learning Materials Program (TLMP) was established in 2002 to help Ghana among other Sub-Saharan African countries (Chicago State University, 2019). Since then, Ghana has benefited from over 5 million workbooks, teachers' guides and other teaching material necessary to support education in the class (Chicago State University, 2019).

Around sanitation and access to drinking water, there is conflicting evidence. The UNICEF (2011) report provides data showing that in nine out of the ten regions most preschools have access to water and not sanitation. The reason for this might be because preschools sources

of clean water may be shared between primary schools and attached kindergartens have access to water. The problem with this is that, because of the age of young children, the toilet facilities will have to be structured to accommodate their small statures and setting aside funds to allocate toilet amenities to small children is not available. Due to that, in only 5 regions do over half kindergartens have access to toilets (UNICEF, 2011).

Contrary to that information, in a 2016 news interview with Anis Haffar who is a Ghanaian teacher/educator, he mentioned that most schools in the country do not have access to water and sanitation. Growing up in Ghana, it is a common occurrence for children to use nearby bushes to ease themselves and return to class without washing their hands. Preschool aged children's inaccessibility to adequate sanitation contributes to the cases of diarrhea and cholera outbreaks which can impact a child's school attendance (UNICEF,2011).

Parent Support

Parents, in the best efforts to support their children in attending school, might not be presently well equipped to support their child's academic pursuits to the best of their ability. Results from a study by Innovations for Poverty Action in Accra show that after a parental training session, parents had a negative contribution to the classroom experience (Wolf, Aber, Behrman, 2016). This is because a vast majority of Ghanaian parents expect their wards to read and write at an early age and to them that is learning so if a child cannot read the alphabet or say their numbers then as far the parent is concerned, the child is not learning anything in school and the school is not helpful to the child (Aizenman & Warner, 2018; Kabay Wolf & Yoshikawa, 2017). So, the parents put pressure on the teachers and schools to educate their children on literacy at younger and younger ages, even though preschool children's education should be focused on emotional and social development in addition to learning basic arithmetic and reading

(Ministry of Education, 2012).

Ntumi's 2016 study, on the other hand, provided another reason for the negative parental effect on preschool education. His study revealed that parents see preschool education as a waste of time and a place where children go to play (Ntumi, 2016). Again, this is because Ghanaian parents want the children to learn and be ready to be marketable in the global world (Aizenman & Warner, 2018). So, if a child is in school, their ability to read and write at an early age is proof that the child is getting an education. For parents who have not obtained formal education, there is a disconnect since they are unsure of how to be actively involved in their child's education (Ngwaru & Opoku-Amankwa, 2010). They might see their role as ensuring the child gets to school, pay school fees, feeding the child and ensuring that the child is clothed for school (Ngwaru & Opoku-Amankwa, 2010). As such, involving themselves in the affairs of the school is not something that most parents are interested in since they see teachers/school as authoritative figures responsible for educating their children instead of viewing their child's education as a partnership (Ngwaru & Opoku-Amankwa, 2010; Adomako Ampofo & Kaufmann, 2018).

Over the years, the perception parents have of the purpose of preschools has not changed. In 2010 when UNICEF conducted focus groups, there were no changes in the attitudes of parents towards psychosocial development in children or their improvements in their interaction with teachers. Unfortunately, a study by Wolf, Aber, Behrman, (2016) revealed that parents still maintain similar perceptions towards school as of 2015. In this study, the parents' focus group had a negative effect on the teacher's ability to provide emotional support and behavior management strategies. Parent education is one area that the government will need to visit in order to improve attitudes towards early childhood education.

Despite these reasons, the study by Innovations for Poverty Action (2016) provided data

to show that parents who are educated value preschool education and are more likely to enroll their children in preschool at an early age. This might be because such parents have gone through the preschool themselves and from personal experience understand the benefits of a preschool education.

Overall Progress

Government initiatives that promote preschool education have been focused primarily on kindergarten initiatives (4 and 5-year-old) as opposed to including other preschool aged children (0 to 3-year-old). A possible explanation for this would be that kindergarten is regulated by the Ministry of Education, which is in charge of other levels of education, as such it would be easier to address challenges that affect kindergarten aged children. The move to include kindergarten as part of the free basic education available to Ghanaian children, strengthened its access to the availability of resources.

The additional training that preschool teachers receive is a move in the right direction to continue to provide teachers with the support that they need in educating children. The availability of diverse programs will ensure that teachers are different levels in their training receive the ongoing training that they need to improve their level of competency in the classroom. National Nursery Teacher's Training Centre also conducts training programs to build the capacity of teachers of KG children with In-service Education and Training (INSET) programs also being operationalized to focus on effective KG teaching methodology.

Chapter 3: Recommendations for Government

Based on the information collected, there are a few key areas of additional work that the Ghana government, specifically, the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs can address. The policy makers, stakeholders, and ECCD workers also need to be on the same page in understanding that the ECCD is maximized when it is viewed through a holistic lens. Bases on information presented in Chapter 2, some areas of improvement that Ghana could benefit from are teacher education/ training, curriculum implementation, parental support and quality of education.

Teacher Education/ Training

It is amazing the strides Ghana has made in recent years to provide a higher level of education for children with the different options available to training teachers. An area of focus should be on routine in-service training for teachers at the school level, district level, regional level and national level. There should also be cross training programs between public and private school teachers to make the vast knowledge between the two sectors readily available to all teachers. This will create a richer pool of knowledge available to Ghanaian teachers where teachers with many years under their belt can provide new teachers with tried and tested ways of classroom management. New teachers can in turn provide teachers who have been in the field with new ways of teaching which they acquired from their training.

Also, across all training and degree awarding institutions, the criteria for certification should be standard across private and public school irrespective of where a teacher might want to gain employment. This will ensure that whether a teacher is employed in the public or private sector, they are attaining the same level of training.

Curriculum Implementation

With the new curriculum about to be rolled out, there will be the need for constant communication with teachers to understand what is working and not working in the classroom. Since the new curriculum has a push for a hands-on approach to teaching which a paradigm shift from what teachers are used to, it might be beneficial to have a point person appointed in each district that teachers can readily be in contact with when they have questions about the curriculum. It is likewise important for provision to be made so that teachers can continue to attend conferences and training programs in order to stay abreast with what is going on in the world in regards to preschool education. Finally, teachers should be given room to tailor the learning method to the way that best fits their classroom (Dartey, 2014). A teacher in Ghana, Lena Zar, has taken the lead in this; she teaches her preschool students how to read using a combination of sounds and vocal associations that the children are familiar with in learning to read. The students in her class pick up on reading and by four/five years they are reading proficiently for their age (Mensah, 2014). Lena Zar is already ahead of the curve in ensuring that the education that the children in the class receive are specific to their learning style. Finally, Ghana can also benefit from a progressive model of education. This is a concept that will be discussed in great detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Parental Support

Since parents are instrumental in the development of children, there should be an increased effort to help parents understand the social, cognitive and behavioral development of their children. There can be community forums to address these issues and the use of radio, TV, and public information campaigns to begin to raise community awareness on psychosocial development of children. This will encourage conversation in public spaces such as the market

and on public transportation since that is where most Ghanaian are likely to discuss topics that they are not unsure of.

Quality of Education

Since the private sector is making efforts to increase the number of preschools, the government should also build more public preschools, especially in rural communities. These schools should be fully infrastructured with bathrooms, water access, electricity etc. All schools in Ghana irrespective of public or private should have a standard set-up irrespective of location. The Ministry of Education is already on board with a development of an establishment of national KG standards which take into consideration the level of qualification and continuous professional development of teachers, the understanding of child development, the quality of interaction with children, the infrastructure, indoor and outdoor learning environment and partnerships with parents and the wider community (Ministry of Education, 2012). Since the private sector is also involved in preschool services for children younger than kindergarten age, the department of welfare will need to be involved in setting similar standards for daycare centers.

A final recommendation would be to develop a regular assessment of the education system. This would be an independent arm under the education system that monitors both private and public-school adherence to a level that meets standards set by UNICEF. The assessment would involve random and planned visits to schools and continued ongoing partnerships with foreign organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO which already have the resources necessary for assessment. Ghana could also adopt the standards UNICEF used in 2010 to analyze whether the pilot projects to improve KG education were effective such as interviewing representatives of national ministries, regional and district offices involved in providing services to preschools.

When visiting schools, ensure that the teachers, school administrators are interviewed in addition to observing the classrooms. Finally, there should be a strengthened effort on focus groups with parents of children enrolled in schools (UNICEF, 2011) so that the parents can provide feedback on their experience. Evidence of the importance of partnerships with parents, community members, teachers and children have proved beneficial in bridging the gap that seems to exist between parents and their role in supporting their children's classroom endeavors (Ngwaru & Opoku-Amankwa, 2010).

Chapter 4: The Need for Progressive Education in Ghana

Overview

Not much has changed over the years in how children experience preschool based on the literature discussed above. Despite strides made at the international level on developmentally appropriate methodologies of supporting preschool children, there is great room for Ghana to develop programs that support the needs of the preschool child. The updated curriculum will ensure that Ghana is able to “turn out graduates who are good problem solvers, have the ability to think creatively and have both the confidence and are competent to participate fully in the Ghanaian society”(Ministry of Education, 2018).The Ministry of Education must be commended for the strides it is making in an effort to bridge the gap in progressive models of education prevalent in countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea (Ministry of Education, 2018) since such countries gained independence around the same time as Ghana.

The Ministry of Education recognizes that:

The world in which schools operate has undergone major changes since the beginning of the millennium as a result of the increasing impact of globalization and the challenges of a sustainable future. These developments have made the competences necessary in society and working life to be changing and requiring skills for building a sustainable future. However, in Ghana, the education system implemented a curriculum that is still elitist (or bookish) and narrowly focused on the subject content, with little emphasis on the crosscutting essential learnings that can develop the knowledge and skills required to promote sustainable development. (Ministry of Education, 2018, pp.17)

Part of the reason why the Ghanaian education system lags behind in successfully preparing students to take on current globalization trends is that the current framework is still geared towards educating children in formal education manners to work as storekeepers, clerks in commerce, industry and government which was the rationale behind the colonial masters introducing formal education to Ghana (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012). This way of educating Ghanaian children

is now archaic and there is a dire need to shift to introduce a new framework for formal education that allows for diverse job opportunities.

In a talk show interview, Dr. Anis Haffar who is one of the voices for pioneering new ways of teaching in Ghana mentioned that “there is absolutely no innovation in the way we teach here [in Ghana] ... At the end of the day, how do we mold our youngsters so that they can be creative, they can be critical thinkers, they can be innovative, and they can begin to do something with the education that they are getting” (Haffar, 2019). His words lie at the core of my preposition. Ghana has made great leaps in our education in creating the ECCD, building schools, providing training for teachers etc. At the core of the problem is our approach to education. For Ghana to educate a new generation that can address the country’s needs and be abreast of current world trends, we need to change how we educate our children. The needs of the country call for innovative measures which our current educational pedagogy is ill-equipped to handle.

The Role of the Family

Since preschool aged children rely on the family for support, it is of paramount importance to support the family if we want children to grow up healthy and happy with memories of happy childhoods that prime them for higher educational achievement later in life. Since the family is the child’s primary source of livelihood, the family unit must thrive. As such, it is detrimental to alienate preschool education/child development from other factors that affect the family unit. For example, in a family where the parents cannot afford to feed the family, education is not an immediate need to that family. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, for a family to be able to focus on the educational pursuits of their child, the family should have their basic physiological needs such as food, water, and shelter met (Maslow, 1943). As such,

there is a need to provide an educational experience where the holistic needs of the child (and family) are at the core of the services provided. The approach of such a school needs to be twofold: to provide a progressive preschool to children and to provide services with the goal of improving their family's livelihood. Appendix A is a logic model that illustrates an approach of supporting the family system in providing the growing child with an educational experience that leaves them primed to succeed in primary(grade) school and higher education. Chapter 5 delves into a framework of how the logic model can be conceptualized in the development of the preschool.

Ghana's Approach to Education

Ghana like other countries believes that children are the future of the world and as such wants to invest in preparing them the best way possible. This is evident by the studies coming out the country, and the government's interest in changing the current approach to education. From my experience at a progressive graduate program in Child Development, I know the Ghanaian education system will greatly benefit from adopting a progressive model of education, specifically the Developmental- Interaction model (D-I model) (Nager & Shapiro, 1999). Adopting progressive education should be the goal of preschool education in Ghana because this view of education is conducive to the environmental makeup of Ghana. The six areas of core competencies in the new KG curriculum serve as evidence that Ghana is ready to embrace a new framework for preschool education.

The first competency is in the area of personal development and leadership. This competency has the goal of teaching KG children the ability to distinguish right from wrong and have a lively curiosity about things. The second core competency is critical thinking and problem solving; this can be interpreted as KG children learning how to share and put others

first. The third competency is communication and collaboration; KG children should be able to build friendships with others. The fourth competency is in the area of creativity and innovation; the goal here is for KG children to take pride in their work. The fifth core competency is digital literacy; the goal is to foster the ability to independent thinking and self-expression in KG children. The sixth core competency is cultural identify and global citizenship. The goal here is for KG children to cultivate healthy habits and a love for Ghana (Ministry of Education, 2018). These competencies are compatible with a progressive approach to education and the D-I approach will facilitate its smooth application.

The D-I Approach to Learning

Progressive education is a pedagogical model that emphasizes that the child is a social being that gains knowledge through participation in social experience. The Developmental-Interaction approach has a strong emphasis on problem-solving and critical thinking with the foundational understanding that children learn through play. The D-I model is also in favor of varied learning sources and relying less on textbooks which is the current standard mode of teaching in Ghana. For the D-I model to be effective, the curriculum must be engaging, the classroom set up to ignite curiosity in the children and the teacher, student and parent (or community) are all involved in the learning process. The D-I model is fully aware of the importance of play in children's learning and capitalizes on play as a medium to learn (Nager & Shapiro, 1999).

Play provides children with the practice for fine and gross motor skills needed in development, language acquisition, as well as the ability to develop critical thinking skills. Play has different aspects of importance that can be directly related to Ghanaian values such as respect for the elderly, empathy for another, and knowing how to help around the house

(Ministry of Education, 2018; Prochner & Kabiru, 2008). Growing up, I remember playing games with my friends where, as part of the daily chores, the children would have to sweep the compound of the house and care for younger siblings. We also modeled how our mothers would greet the elderly people they would come across as they were running errands in the community. This type of play helped foster in us community values without our parents always having to explicitly teach them to us.

It is interesting to note that before Ghanaian children begin preschool their play involves the creation of toys for play purposes (Kabay et al., 2017), but once schooling begins, children lose this skill of creating play pieces (Ministry of Education, 2012). Growing up, my brother and his friends often cut out circles from old rubber slippers to repurpose them as tires for their tin cars which were made from empty cans of evaporated milk. Children's involvement in such play allows them to be imaginative and use their hands in creating toys to satisfy their curiosity. The D-I model will definitely welcome the curious and innovative nature of Ghanaian children and provide a channel through which play can be assimilated into their learning experience.

It is truly disheartening that when a Ghanaian child begin preschool, the importance of play is not recognized in the classroom as a necessary tool of education that is appropriate for the age of preschool children (Pesando, 2018; Wolf et al., 2016; Kabay et al., 2017). Children learn through play and to try and distinguish the two is to take the essence, the heart of learning away and the remnant is only a skeleton of true learning. The Ghanaian child will be well equipped and marketable to the global world and more useful to our community and country if we adopted a progressive model of teaching children, especially, the D-I model during the preschool years since that is the starting point of formal learning in Ghana.

The subject content of the D-I model stems from learning skills that are needed in society. With the various economic and social needs of a developing country like Ghana, bringing up children from an early age where the education is primed to prepare children to solve problems is integral to the development of Ghana. D-I learning is personalized and considers the individual goals and learning style of the student (Franklin, 2000). Most importantly, the D-I model ensures that learning is experienced and understood by the child. Because parents are interested in knowing that their children are learning/benefiting from attending school, the D-I model takes that into consideration and uses projects, productions, portfolio and the like to assess the learning of the child (Schupak, symposium presentation, November 4, 2016). The D-I approach is in line with the new curriculum which follows a similar philosophy that schools shift away from summative assessments to the formative where multiple sources of evidence of learning are utilized to assess each child's learning trajectory (Ministry of Education, 2018).

The D-I model

considers the developmental stages (intellectual, social and emotional) that children move through and considers these stages as guides in designing appropriate curriculum for children of different ages. Within this framework, a child's individual interests and multiple talents are recognized, listened to, and utilized by teachers who work as supporters and partners in the learning process of both individual children and the class (Early Childhood Center, 2016).

The D-I model ensures that learning is something that a child enjoys. Learning is not carried out in a vacuum that is foreign to the child. The teacher uses materials in the child's environment to teach the child. The teacher understands that the child is a being with his/her knowledge systems and not an empty vessel that has to be filled with knowledge (Nager & Shapiro, 1999).

With the D-I model, children's questions act as an entry point to learning, so no question is dismissed or deemed silly. Because the children know that their questions are valued, it encourages them to engage in critical thinking that might otherwise not develop until a later age. The current educational system in Ghana is based on rote knowledge and asking questions is sometimes discouraged (Adomako Ampofo & Kaufmann, 2018). This method of teaching is related to mastering letters and numbers and is neither child-centered nor activity-based (Ministry of Education, 2012). The inability of teachers to capitalize on the imaginative overflow that comes from questions is a part of the reason why Ghanaians and usually Africans are not always innovative (Haffar, 2019).

The present method of classroom instruction discourages the expression of new ideas and new ways of looking at things right from childhood. When children grow up in an environment where their creativity is stifled, they grow up not being in touch with their creative, innovative side. This in turn affects how adults are able to meaningfully contribute to the needs of the society through innovative technologies (Adomako Ampofo & Kaufmann, 2018). The Ministry of Education in Ghana is passionate about Ghana's young people being "nurtured into honest, creative, and responsible citizens, making meaningful contribution to society" (Ministry of Education, 2018). The D-I approach to learning is geared to provide Ghanaian children with an education that grooms them towards the ideal put forth by the Ministry of Education.

The D-I model takes advantage of an emergent curriculum. An emergent curriculum grows out of the interest and questions of the children. The teacher supports this by providing the materials necessary and guiding the children in the learning process. The teacher sometimes supplements this learning process by introducing the children to concepts that are

age appropriate and invites the children to explore novel concepts drawing from their own personal experiences. So, in a country like Ghana where children learning to read and write at an early age is the target goal of parents and teachers, the process of learning such concepts can be broken down into substantial blocks that take into consideration the developmental level of preschool aged children.

The D-I Approach and Early Literacy

Another key aspect of progressive education is its approach to early literacy. Lev Vygotsky was a renowned psychologist whose work in the field of psychology has contributed to our understanding of how children learn through their cultural and social environment. His observations of children attest to the importance of drawing on the experience of children in teaching them how to read and write (Vygotsky, 1980). From observing children, Vygotsky noticed that as young children begin to engage in imaginative play, their play is symbolic and represents a message the child might be trying to convey. During symbolic play, children come to the awareness of being able to let one object represent another object. The capability of something representing another is what children elaborate on for sounds to depict letters, and for letters to come together and create words for which the child already has a mental representation. In a similar fashion, children use gestures to depict actions and sign actions in the air. When given a writing instrument, the child can transport the gesture as scribbles on the picture. To the child's mind, the scribbles are a representation of the gesture. Their gestures in the air become scribbles on paper that depict the gesture. The scribbles on paper are symbolic gestures of images in a child's mind and a mark here, a scribble there all symbolize something to the child. The child can read her scribbles as words that tell a story

(Vygotsky, 1980; Diamond, 2013). In the classroom, a teacher with this understanding can effectively adapt the curriculum to facilitate a child's developing written language.

The Role of the Teacher

For the D-I model to be effective, the teacher's role is to be "attuned to what the child brings to the classroom, the inconsistencies, fears, and joys- and to construct a curriculum that reflects both decisions about content and what children bring to that content" (Franklin, 2000, p. 22). The teacher understands that children learn through playing and those two concepts are not distinct. The teacher sets up material for play available in the classroom and outdoor play areas. It is the responsibility of the teacher to plan experiences that serve as the starting ground for the child's creativity. Finally, the teacher must talk to the children about their play and frame it in a way that allows them to ask questions, get feedback from peers and teachers; this creates a context for learning about ongoing events in their environment (Franklin, 2000). The new curriculum being implemented is in line with this way of thinking and is focused on children having the opportunity to "do" what has been learned (Ministry of Education, 2018).

With the D-I model, learning is tailored to each individual child since no two children are the same. This role is not easy, and the teacher should be willing to engage children in more ways than one. The teacher should "listen to the children and provide different entry points to enter into learning" (S. Schupak, Symposium presentation, November 4, 2016). This is not a small feat since it will require the teacher to be innovative and find ways to engage the class. The D-I approach works best with small class sizes but since small classes are not a reality in Ghana, an example of a way that a teacher can adapt the D-I approach to learning is to place children with similar interests together during group activities. The teacher's job

will be made easier once the teacher builds rapport with the students and can better navigate the temperaments and personalities of the children and know which children might benefit from being in a group with other students.

The Role of the Student

In a progressive classroom, not only does the teacher have a role to perform, the student has a role too. Teachers need to create classroom practices which enable children to be involved and take an active, engaged role in learning (Franklin, 2000). The students will then become open to new experiences, collaboration with peers, tackle new problems, solve problems on their own, seek the help of a peer, before, seeking assistance from a teacher. Activities like these on the part of the students create a community of solidarity, mutual respect, and promotes self-efficacy in the students. This encourages group work and builds social skills by promoting interaction in the classroom among students (Bank Street, 2018). The roles of the student in a progressive classroom are in line with Ghanaian values such as honesty, respect, teamwork and tolerance (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2018) which the Ministry of Education is advocating to be included in the new curriculum.

For the students to understand their role in their learning, the teacher will need to spend some time during the early weeks of class helping the children come up with some guidelines for the class. The guidelines should be ideas that the children come up with themselves through their conversations and interactions with each other. The teacher should structure the class in a manner that will allow the children to actively participate with each other and draw from their experiences guidelines for the classroom.

Classroom Arrangement

The teacher and the student need to be in an environment that supports this type of learning. It is important for the classroom to be a space where children can be themselves, interact with their peers and learning occurs in a natural manner. “The classroom is a setting in which children interact with each other, not just ‘socially’ (in the sense of making friends and so forth) but in the initiation and development of group projects and cooperative learning” (Franklin, 2000, p. 53). The classroom should have space that children can move around with a level of freedom, and the materials in the class should be based on the child’s environment. The presence of open-ended materials allows the children to manipulate objects which can serve different purposes. Blocks can be people one minute and then animals on the farm the next minute. The use of open-ended pieces is a great advantage to the Ghanaian classroom since most schools have limited funding and pieces that serve a dual-purpose can cut down on the expenditure of the school.

“The classroom should be warm, cozy and reflect the children” (Schupak, symposium presentation, November 4, 2016). Some basic materials which foster such an environment are blocks, tools for measurement such as plastic rulers, unifix cubes, string, white and colored paper, clipboards, pencils (lead, colored, markers, crayon, paint), glue, tape, scissors, stapler, brushes, and books (reference books, picture book, chapter books). For the Ghanaian context, additional materials such as wood shavings, charcoal, pieces of clothing material, eggshells, and old tires can be introduced to the class since such materials are readily available in the environment. The current curriculum advocates for schools to utilize resources found in the child’s environment (Ministry of Education, 2012). Schools can organize fund raisers, take donations from community organizations, families, and encourage the children to bring in

items from their homes to share with their peers to cut down on the cost of getting supplies for the classroom. By engaging the community in setting up the classroom, families will feel connected to the school since they know they helped in making provision for their child to learn. It is also an avenue to connect parents with their child's education. The secret to a great classroom is in using material that the children are already familiar with, materials which are local and easily accessible.

Examples of the D-I Approach in Ghana

The D-I model already has roots in Ghana through the FEE and Eco-schools Ghana. The Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in conjunction with the Ghana education system aims to integrate environmental protection into all subject areas in efforts to raise awareness of environmental protection. The best part about the FEE's approach is that it encourages a hands-on approach and there is a lot of room and emphasis on students actively engaging in efforts to protect the environment (Eco-Schools, 2018). Thanks to the already existing work of Eco-schools in Ghana, Ghana is already being exposed to a Developmental- Interaction model of learning. Eco-schools is working with student from the ages of 3 to about 18 years to raise awareness for environmental protection (H. Opoku, personal communication, November 30th, 2016). Eco-schools tackles environmental protection by drawing heavily from the school community's experience with environmental concerns.

Opposed to the traditional Ghanaian environmental studies subject that teaches students about the effects of erosion, pollution, and climate change through rote knowledge, Eco-schools approach is to allow the children to come up with ways to tackle these issues with a hands-on approach (Hall, 2018; H. Opoku, personal communication, November 30th, 2016). An example

of the project that Eco-School Ghana undertakes is on their Instagram page that shows how the children went around their community collecting empty plastic bottles. The bottles were cut into two and the bottom parts was recycled and used as nursery pots to grow seedlings of fruit trees, tomatoes, pepper, and maize for a school garden. The children took care of the garden and learnt about tilling the soil, uprooting weeds, and watering the seedlings which are all contents studied in the standard environment science curriculum. The students sold the produce from their garden and bought school supplies. Eco-school's programming model allows the children to be active learners, creative and partake in their learning. There is another picture on the page where in another community, the students collected empty water sachets and the students in the home economics class sew the sachets together to make a soccer ball for the boys to play with. With Eco-school's method of learning, the children can relate to the importance of recycling since they engage in it and can see on a first-hand basis the many ways that materials can be recycled (Hall, 2018; H. Opoku, personal communication, November 30th, 2016).

Apart from the efforts of Eco-schools, a great way that Ghana can take advantage of the D-I model is by organizing field trips. I remember when I was in preschool, I looked forward to trips to cut branches from a tree outside the class, or a class visit to our Headmistress' house since she lived on the school premises. Field trips were more interesting than sitting in a classroom all day and listening to my teacher talk. In Ghana, the weather is conducive throughout the year for field trips to be a year-round thing. The children can visit the local market (practice bargaining with the traders), barbershop, hair salon and different job avenues that are around the school vicinity as opposed to reading to them about different jobs that people do. The children can then build a model city of their choice with different

job prospects that they can draw on from their experience. Through this, the children begin to understand the roles that adults play in the community and the importance of everyone's job.

Finally, the flexibility of the D-I model will equip Ghanaian preschool children with the skills to know how to compete on a global level by being innovative. With a shift from Ghana's current education model to that of a progressive approach, Ghanaian preschool children will be getting the education necessary to meet the demands of a changing society. This approach to education that takes into consideration communication, creative thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills will help foster a future generation that can actively participate in transforming the world we live in.

Chapter 5: Conceptualization of Logic Model for Preschool Project

Introduction of Logic Model

A logic model is a graphic representation of the relationship between components of a project. It provides a visual road map from the problem at hand to the proposed solution including how the solution will be carried out. It allows the reader to explore how aspects of a project are directly or indirectly related to each other. As such, a logic model is instrumental in mapping out how Ghana's current approach to preschool can change from what it currently is. The logic model outlines the resources needed to jumpstart the preschool project, the outputs, i.e., the activities that will be happening at the preschool and who the participants will be. The third part of the logic model showcases the outcomes-impact of the project. This will be the goals that the preschool project hopes to achieve. This chapter is broken into different sections that address the various parts of the logic model such as situation (why there is a need for this project), funding, staff, teaching staff, nutrition, child centered facilities, family support, demographics, and outcomes/goals of the preschool project.

Situation

By the time Ghanaian children are at the age to begin primary school (grade school), there is a noticeable gap in the educational achievements of the children where they are lagging behind in their reading and writing (Pesando et al., 2018; Wolf, 2016; Aizenman & Warner, 2018). Parents from low Socioeconomic status (SES) in an effort to provide their children with better access to education, enroll them in private schools to provide them with a better quality of education since private schools are regarded as a better option than public government funded schools (McCullough et al., 2015; Aizenman & Warner, 2018). In an effort to solve a similar problem in the United States, the United States government introduced the Head Start program to

bridge the educational gap between first graders from low SES and those from high SES (Office of Head Start, 2018). Head Start has made significant progress in the United States in helping bridge the education gap. The Head Start model of education can be adopted in various communities in Ghana to attempt to bridge the education gap that exists. The model will be adapted to fit into the context of Ghana.

The idea of a preschool with a social services component also allows Ghana to continue to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in place by the UN. The SDGs has 17 goals of which access to quality education ranks number 4. Some of the other goals are zero hunger, no poverty, gender education, clean water and sanitation and reduced inequalities among others (United Nations, 2016). With a progressive preschool that tackles family concerns, Ghana will be on her way to attain not only SDG number 4 by the year 2030 but all the other goals since quality education intersects with all the other goals.

Funding

For such a project to take off, it is important that stakeholders are identified for funding purposes. Since children are the future of every nation, the government is identified as the main stakeholder. Other primary stakeholders are the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Services. The introduction of the new kindergarten curriculum about to rolled out in the upcoming academic school year (2019-2020) indicates that the Government of Ghana is aware of the deficits in the current curriculum and the education that Ghanaian children are receiving. The Ministry of Education is aware that this is a monumental project to undertake since will bring about new approaches to teaching children (Ministry of Education, 2018). The new curriculum serves as evidence that the Government of Ghana is willing to invest in children at the preschool level.

Secondary stakeholders are Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and concerned citizens. The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations with its vision to coordinate employment opportunities and labour-related interventions (Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, 2019) will be able to coordinate the provision of different jobs for the school such as teachers, social workers, school administration, cleaners, cooks etc. Concerned citizens can also make philanthropic donations to support the funding of the school through cash and kind. Additional funding will be sourced from UN, UNICEF, WHO and other international organizations committed to child development or early childhood education. This is because such institutions are interested in improving the preschool education of children in Ghana. The goal of the school is to have zero to as little fees charged as possible to ensure that children from low SES are able to attain a quality preschool education without families sacrificing a disproportionate amount of education.

Staff

For this model to be successful, it is important for the school to have staff that are trained in child development and committed to providing services that support not only the preschool child but the family as a whole. Staff in the school will include, administrators, social workers, teachers, kitchen staff, and health professionals. The social workers will oversee the day-to-day activities of the facility to ensure that parenting workshops, and other services that are provided cater to the unique, dynamic and multifaceted needs of the families. This is because for a country like Ghana, parent's access to social services very often affect children's access to education. Even though parents are aware that education is important, the needs of the family might be such that education is not a pressing concern. Once parents are aware and informed that the school

takes into consideration all factors that affect the family, the families will be able to buy into the idea of committing to preschool education.

Teaching Staff

The teachers at the school will be properly trained with credentials from accredited schools. The classroom will maintain a ratio of 20 children to 2 teachers to enable teachers have enough time and space to interact with each child on an individual level. Of the two classroom teachers, one of the teachers will have a master's degree in a relevant field with the other having a bachelor's degree. Classroom support interns will be sourced from neighboring schools from a pool of masters or bachelors seeking students. The teachers will receive routine training and workshops to keep them abreast with innovative ways to interact with children that promote learning in a safe environment. The class will follow an emergent curriculum that builds on children's natural curiosity and allows learning to occur organically through play.

Nutrition

Since nutrition is an integral part of childhood development, the school will offer meals to all children enrolled in the program. The children will be provided with breakfast, lunch and snack five days of the week throughout the school year. This is more than what the Ministry of Education recommends which is for schools to provide one balanced meal a day (Ministry of Education, 2012). The food will provide the nutrients needed in a balanced diet that the growing bodies of children desperately need. The provision of food will be an added incentive for parents to enroll/bring their children to school since they would not have to worry about the nutritional needs of their children for a greater portion of the day and the week.

Child Centered Facilities

The success of the project requires that the building has a play space and a therapeutic playroom for therapy since for families experiencing low SES, child abuse/neglect is an associated risk factor (Ministry of Education, 2018). The play space will consist of an outdoor and indoor space so that children can engage in unstructured activities with each other as the weather permits. This is in line with the Education Strategic Plan to provide “an outdoor leaning environment/space which ensures learning is not constrained to the classroom” (Ministry of Education, 2012). The play space will be equipped with materials mostly sourced from the local community so as to reduce the cost associated with developing that space. Using locally sourced materials will ensure that the children are interacting with materials that they are familiar with given the context of their environment (Ministry of Education, 2012). The play space will also ensure that children have adequate time and space to engage in activities that help them fine tune both fine and gross motor skills which is important for strengthening muscles and bones of children of that age.

The therapeutic playroom will provide children with a space to address any concerns that they may have. Preschool aged children are still learning how to communicate with words and for children at that age, play is their mode of communication. A playroom will have the materials that serve as the words that children can use to shed light of challenges, they may be having but unable to voice out. With the help of the social workers trained in trauma informed care, children can learn how to overcome challenges, fears, concerns and other situations that they be unable to process anywhere else. The playroom is especially important in the Ghanaian context because children are not usually give the space and time to express themselves. As such, some children end up suppressing traumatic experiences which affect their wellbeing and progress at school.

The social workers at the school will engage in ongoing supervision and training to ensure they are fully supported and feel equipped to provide the services that the children need.

Family Support

Ghanaian parents like most parents around the world aspire to prepare their children for the future and providing them access to the best education they can afford is a way to do so in support them in their learning in school (Wolf & McCoy, 2019; Aizenman & Warner, 2018). Yet, some parents lack the understanding and support necessary to nurture their preschool children (Ngwaru & Opoku-Amankwa, 2010). Creating preschools that have enough teachers, materials and the proper infrastructure is not enough in meeting the needs of the Ghanaian child. In order to truly provide holistic support to the child, the family as a whole must be considered since the systems that the family interact with contribute to the growth and development of child. The school is one facet of a child's development, but the family unit is the primary unit of socialization where children learn about their identity, self-worth, expression and sense of self (Prochner & Kabiru, 2008). As such, it is important that the family is taken into consideration when providing resources for the child. A research study by Wolf and McCoy (2019) which looked at the relationship between household socioeconomic status and parental investments and children's school readiness in Ghana revealed as parent's education level increases, a child's school readiness increases. This data goes to show that it is important to educate parents and that is why it is necessary to have a family services component as part of the model preschool project since the programs developed will target deficits in the family. With this in place, the novel school model will have a family services division that provides support to the family in an effort to properly support the child. The family services will include social workers who are familiar with the needs of the family enrolled in the program.

The services that families receive will involve access to a food pantry, an onsite health clinic with a stationed family nurse and routine consultations with specialist doctors. The food pantry and nurse will be available throughout the year to support the families enrolled in the program since health and nutrition needs are a necessary part of a family's wellbeing. The health consultations will consist of a rotating schedule of Obstetrics/gynecologist, ophthalmologist, ear, nose and throat doctors and other specialties as needed based on the needs of the community. Other services that will be available to the families are on-site classes that prepare them for job placement skills such as WASSCE(GED), English language classes, sewing, hair braiding etc. The social workers in conjunction with the families in the program will provide targeted workshops that address the needs of the families. These classes will be offered in conjunction with services from stakeholders, community organizations and generous citizens. The services available to the family will be in line with the goals of the ECCD of providing preschool aged children education, promotion of nutrition and household food security, and the provision of information and skills to parents and primary caregivers (Republic of Ghana, 2004; UNESCO,2006).

Demographics

Due to the nature of the project, participation will be limited to families in the immediate vicinity of the school to ensure that families in the identified community are the ones benefitting from the project. The school will be located in a community with low SES since its purpose will be to bridge the gap educational outcomes of preschool children in low SES and high SES communities. It will be the job of social workers to conduct necessary background checks during the intake and screening process so that families in need are those benefitting from the project. Another reason why families should reside in the community is to ensure that participation of

families is maintained throughout the school year and children attend school consistently. This is to reduce the incidence of parents losing momentum halfway through the school year because the school is too far, and transportation is tedious.

Outcomes/Goals

The outcome for this model of preschool will consist of short, medium- and long-term impacts for both the children and their families. A short-term goal for the children is that they will be able to get two square meals 5 days of the week due to the presence of an onsite kitchen staff. The family will also benefit from the food pantry which will provide food for sustenance. A medium-term goal for the child will be the ability to meet developmental milestones and free vaccinations to support proper healthy development. The goals align with the aspirations put forth by the Ministry of Education to ensure that preschoolers are in “a high quality, happy, healthy, caring and safe learning environment” (Ministry of Education, 2012). A medium-term goal for the family will be gaining a better understanding of how their child is developing and how to support that growth at home. An additional family goal is parents getting marketable job skills. A long-term goal for the child is getting a strong educational foundation to begin to build upon and to grow up to be a contributing citizen to the country. A long-term goal for the family is parents getting jobs that will help set them on a path to eradicate poverty from the family.

Some of the assumptions made about this preschool model are the amount of support that the government will provide and the likelihood of this project being a success. Apart from assumptions, an external factor that will greatly affect the success of this pilot project will be whether the community that the school is set up in will welcome the project and enroll the children.

**See appendix A for logic model. **

Chapter 6: Conclusion

From its inception, the ECCD has provided a framework for Ghana to begin working on ways to provide children with the best care possible needed for optimal growth. The ECCD also provided some guidelines and strategies as to how to maximize development for children. The ECCD understands the role that early childhood education plays in a child's development and that is why the country has provided different policies, conducted research, educated teachers and provided free preschool education as part the government's promise to early childhood care. "A national ECCD policy not only envisions the best interests of all young children but also indicates the modalities to provide for that reality" (Aidoo, 2008, pp.37). Ghana has made progress in all areas relevant to preparing children for primary school, but more work remains to be done. The challenge to a national ECCD is government commitment, political will, and money.

With the model preschool project, families with preschool children will finally have an opportunity to provide their children with the resources and support they need to have a safe and nurturing school environment where the needs of children are at the forefront of policies and community interventions. The families enrolled in the program will be primed for a future where children have the skills necessary to begin primary school and grow into Ghanaian citizens capable of solving the country's problems.

A progressive education, specifically, the Developmental- Interaction model, is well suited to the challenges and demands of Ghana. The model preschool will raise children who are competent in their abilities and skills, with a mindset aimed at problem solving and critical thinking in response to their environmental conditions. Such children will grow up to be responsible members of society who contribute to the development of the nation with innovative

ideas. This model preschool project shows the children of Ghana that we are listening to them, paying attention to their needs and believe that they are the future of Ghana and as such we are willing to invest in them. The preschool project is beneficial for all parties involved- the Government of Ghana, the families and most importantly, the jewel of the nation, the Ghanaian child.

This preschool model represents the future of Ghanaian education and provides an opportunity to glimpse the possibility of how primary and higher levels of education can be approached in the future. Since this model of education is vastly different from what is currently practiced in the country, there will be a need for a learning curve for teachers, parents, students, community members, the government and all parties involved in order for this to be a success. It goes without saying that this model brings with it challenges and a level of complexity that will require an adjustment period. If the government's interest in preschool education serves as an indication of the Ghanaian society, then Ghana is ready to accept a model of education that takes into consideration aspects of the preschool Ghanaian child that have never been addressed in this fashion.

Dr. Elise Effah Kaufman who is the first biomedical engineer in Ghana and currently the quiz mistress of the National Science and Maths Quiz in Ghana eloquently defined the gap in the educational system. She mentioned that “we need to rethink the way we are teaching and the way we are educating our young people because they have so much potential, but it is not being translated into useful products; solutions of our [Ghanaian] real life problems” (Adomako Ampofo & Kaufmann, 2018). This approach to education runs throughout the educational system in Ghana including preschool. For change to happen, it needs to begin at the preschool level when Ghanaian students are exposed to formal education. The model preschool approach

proposed above falls in line with strategies to improve the current educational system and will be a step in the right direction in providing children with a holistic approach to development.

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Appendix A

Program: Preschool Project Novel to Ghana Logic Model

Situation: Even though there are preschools in Ghana, many of the schools do not use a child development framework to provide resources for the families enrolled in the schools. Due to this, the education that most children receive do not adequately meet the needs of the modern-day Ghanaian child. This logic model provides a conceptual framework for what the preschool will entail and the purpose it will serve.

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	Participation	Short	Medium	Long
<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government of Ghana Grants from local and foreign NGOs such as UN, UNICEF, WHO - Philanthropy/fundraisers - Man-hours from staff - In-kind contributions - Pro Bono partnerships with diverse organizations - Tuition is paid on a sliding scale with 90% of the population from low income families <p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative staff - 2 Social workers - 8 Teachers (2 for each class) - Kitchen staff - Health professionals: Permanent onsite nurse with visiting doctors e.g.: OB/GYN, pediatrician, Nutritionist, optometrist, dentist, ENT doctor <p>Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 classrooms (2 3-year-old classrooms and 2 4-year old classrooms) - Bathrooms in each class with 3 stalls each - Cafeteria - Staff lounge - Admin offices - 2 Training/meeting rooms - Outdoor play space - Pool - Therapeutic playroom 	<p>-Screening and enrollment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation of families to schoolservices provided <p>Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom of 20 children - Emergent curriculum with field trips, swimming, recess and naptime incorporated - In classroom Parent participation - Provision of breakfast, lunch and late snack - School hours:9am- 4pm <p>Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops based on identified needs of families - Health care (sight, hearing, OBYN, family planning - Vaccinations and walk in visits provided by onsite nurse - Social workers provide support in navigating services necessary for families with preschool aged children - Social workers provide counseling and case management for families - Weekly access to the food pantry (and later expands to include a clothing pantry) - Community partnerships to teach marketable skills (secretarial skills, paralegal, baking, chef, adult education classes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low income families with preschool aged children - Families must reside within a 5-mile radius of the school - Families must be able to drop off and pick up children (later to include the possibility of transportation services) - Preschool will be located in a high needs community (families whose children will be the first to get an education, single head of households, families with parents working menial jobs, families identified by neighborhood reference as high needs) - Community organizations to provide food for pantry and other in-kind donations as needed 	<p>Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nutrition at school - Age appropriate education - Health care - Happier and staying in good health due to direct access to nurse <p>Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proper nutrition - Health care - Marketable job skills 	<p>Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved self-confidence because of relatable course material - Happier and healthier - Meeting developmental milestones <p>Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved self-confidence with the ability to provide for oneself - Better understanding of how children develop - Feel supported by staff at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Livelihood of family is improved - Children get a higher level of education - Parents attain jobs that allow them to provide adequately for the family - Parents get a better understanding of how children develop - Children will have happier childhood memories to reflect on as they get older and would want a similar/richer experience for their children