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GHANA TRANSITION AND PERSISTANCE PROJECT (TAP)

Ghana TAP Final Narrative Report

2010 - 2013

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Dedication

The TAP Final Report is dedicated to Douglas Titiati, Education Specialist for the TAP project until his passing in 2011. Prior to that position, Mr. Titiati had served as Learning Advisor for Plan Ghana since 1997, working in over 300 Plan communities. He was a caring colleague and dedicated worker, passionate about the right of all children to a quality education. Mr. Titiati's memory will forever be honored through the lives he positively impacted through his work with Plan Ghana and with the TAP project.

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List of Acronyms

AfC	Associates for Change
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CDC	Community Development Committee
CE	Construction Engineer
CF	Community Facilitator
CMP	Community-Managed Project
CRI	Child Rights International
CT	Construction Technician
DCE	District Chief Executive
DED	District Education Directorate
DEO	District Education Offices
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ETC	Education Technical Coordinator
EMMP	Environmental Monitoring & Mitigation Plan
ER	Environmental Review
ERF	Environmental Review Form
F4D	Football for Development
GB	Gigabyte
GES	Ghana Education Services
GEU	Girls Education Unit
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GHz	Gigahertz
IBC	International Building Code
ICT	Information Communication Technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JHS	Junior High School
KVIP	Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
LED	Light-Emitting Diode
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal, & District Assemblies
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
OC	Occupancy Category
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RAM	Random-Access Memory
RGCO	Regional Girl-Child officers
RROCC	Rights and Responsibilities of the Child Club
S2S	School to School Program
SD	Secure Digital
SEA	School Excellence Award

SFE	Social & Financial Education
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SPAM	School Performance Appraisal Meeting
TAP	Transition and Persistence
TLM	Teaching & Learning Materials
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UEW	University of Education, Winneba
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USB	Universal Serial Bus
USG	United States Government
WADEP	Women and Development Project
WC	Water Closet

Executive Summary

The Ghana TAP Final Report summarizes the activities and impact of the project over the past three years, covering the period from July 1, 2010 to November 30, 2013. It provides details on the project's accomplishments and challenges, and actions taken to address those challenges. Project expenditures totaled \$9,494,239.97. Plan submitted a request for a no-cost extension on July 22, 2013. USAID granted the no-cost extension on August 26, 2013, extending TAP's completion date to November 30, 2013.

The Transition and Persistence (TAP) project was a three-year education project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The project supported Ghana's efforts to achieve the Education for All goals. The program also contributed to USAID's Strategic Objective 8 (SO8): "Improved Quality of, and Access to, Basic Education" with an emphasis on "Increased Access to and Completion of Basic Education."

The TAP project, implemented by Plan Ghana, aimed to increase junior high school (JHS) enrollment and completion rates in 156 junior high schools (JHSs) across 13 districts in four regions (Brong Ahafo, Central, Eastern, and Greater Accra). TAP collaborated with the Ghana Education Service (GES), the district education offices (DEOs), and USAID to select the project sites based on an analysis of education data. The findings identified transition districts with the greatest opportunities to realize ambitious JHS enrollment and completion rates in the four project regions. The schools in the selected districts had good performance at the primary level but reduced transition rate to the JHS level. The three main objectives of TAP project were to:

- Increase the number of improved spaces available for JHS enrollment in targeted districts through building new facilities or rehabilitating existing facilities.
- Increase JHS enrollment in targeted districts by improving teacher quality; strengthening district level GES oversight; providing more diverse and innovative educational opportunities for children; promoting community involvement and ownership of the SIP process; and creating incentives and rewards for teachers, children, and communities for improving performance.
- Increase JHS completion rates by institutionalizing the processes and systems that will be used to increase enrollment.

The project's Final Evaluation, conducted by an external consultant, *Associates for Change* (AfC), found that the TAP project recorded enormous improvements by increasing learning spaces, improving physical infrastructure, and reducing socio-economic barriers to JHS enrollment and completion for pupils and their families across 156 TAP schools in 13 districts of Ghana. The external evaluation revealed that the TAP project was a highly valued intervention by all stakeholder groups interviewed, particularly teachers, communities, and children. Evidence from interviews revealed that TAP interventions met the immediate practical needs of households and schools. Key stakeholders at the district and school levels also suggest that the TAP project should continue, with only minor modifications. Two key TAP interventions stood

out in terms of the frequency with which they were mentioned by stakeholders and with regard to their impact on the beneficiary populations: *Girls' Camps* and *Football for Development (F4D)*.¹

For each indicator of the project's objectives, the evaluation found that all but a few targets either met or exceeded the expected TAP objectives.² Targets for Component 1, which include the infrastructural development of schools to expand and improve spaces for JHS pupils, included seven completely renovated schools due to the extent of dilapidation, 23 with major repairs, and a further 101 schools with minor repairs. In addition, the construction of 13 information communication technology (ICT) labs and libraries was conducted as part of the School Excellence Award.

One key outcome of improving pupil spaces was the extent to which pupil enrollment in schools increased and that, once enrolled, students were able to persist to complete the JHS level. In the vast majority of TAP supported schools, pupil spaces were significantly increased and this led to increased enrollment particularly girls' enrollment at the junior high school level.

The evaluation found that the TAP project has made significant progress toward increasing access and retention at the JHS level by narrowing the gender gap. TAP made a particularly strong impact on girls' attitudes toward schooling and their ability to sustain participation at the JHS level, along with addressing the socio-economic barriers to their education.

Percentage changes in both transition and enrollment rates across the 156 TAP schools show positive upward increases, with the higher increase in enrollment for girls compared to boys. Total enrollment change of girls across all TAP districts examined showed that the percentage change of girls' enrollment was higher than that of boys. In relation to the baseline, total enrollment went up by 10.7% by 2013, with girls recording a significant increase of 14.2% compared to 7.8% for boys. This trend is reflected in the percentage change enrollment of girls in the TAP schools in every district except Dormaa Municipal, Brong Ahafo, where there was a marginally smaller percentage change in enrollment for girls than boys. This was a significant achievement of TAP in attracting and retaining more girls than boys across their target schools.

The change in enrollment over the three-year period in TAP schools shows cumulative growth of 10.7% compared to the cumulative decline of negative (-31.2%) in non-TAP schools over the base year in the 13 districts. The increase in transition and enrollment has led to a number of emerging challenges, including over-enrollment and over-crowding in a few TAP classrooms, resulting from, in some cases, inward transfers from other schools in the vicinity. There is a concern that the popularity of the TAP schools could negatively affect the quality of teaching and learning through overcrowding.

Component 2 of the project aimed at providing a quality environment for learners. Inputs focused on the provision of training for teachers, managers, and community members in order to

¹ *Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project*. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

² *Ibid.*

improve infrastructural development and quality teaching and learning across the 156 TAP schools. Targets for the numbers of personnel trained were met and, in some cases, exceeded the initial targets. Classroom observations at the end of the project suggest that the some TAP teachers were using the training they had acquired, particularly in the ICT and math subject areas, but less so with English language.

In-kind scholarships for the most marginalized students were the most visible incentives to motivate both parents and children for improved school attendance; these incentives also helped mitigate the social and economic barriers to retention and completion. The teacher training in child-friendly pedagogy and training of circuit supervisors in effective monitoring and supervision methods addressed the causes of poor quality and poor performance among pupils, while providing timely feedback to school and project staff. The School Performance Appraisal process was only partially embedded in the school/community accountability processes. Learning outcomes in schools that are provided with significant support for improvement take more time than three years to demonstrate change in learning outcomes; findings related to percentage change in the BECE pass rates is still too early to assess across TAP schools.

The most promising approaches that TAP used in transforming the quality and participation of children at the JHS level was the strong emphasis on community participation and the strengthening of community based institutions (e.g. SMCs/PTAs and CDCs). The formation and training of community development committees (CDCs) facilitated participation in school development and built a sense of community ownership. The supervision of construction works was a significant achievement. Community engagement will assist in the sustainability of the TAP interventions and infrastructure projects. In most cases, the community-based approach allowed for deeper consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders and brought together the community and school in partnership to improve education quality.³

³ *Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project*. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

I. Description of Planned Activities & Achievements

TAP had two main strategies (components) to achieve the project's objectives. The first component aimed to expand and improve classroom spaces for JHS pupils, while the second aimed to reduce barriers to JHS enrollment. The two components both used community-engagement as their core approach, and complemented each other in terms of getting poor Ghanaian children to enroll in and attend junior high school with the necessary infrastructure and quality pedagogy required at their schools,

Component 1 expanded and improved spaces available for JHS Pupils. TAP expanded and improved school infrastructure to meet USAID standards by walling-in and strengthening classrooms, providing girl-friendly latrines and hand washing stations, enabling access for students with disabilities, and improving access to water and electricity in project schools.

Component 2 reduced barriers to JHS enrollment for pupils and their families. TAP strengthened the quality and relevance of JHS education through activities that addressed social and financial barriers to schooling while increasing community accountability and ownership. TAP created child-friendly teaching and learning environments by enhancing teaching quality, promoting the use of child-friendly pedagogies by training teachers, and strengthening school oversight by headmasters and circuit supervisors.

The second component targeted reduction in socio-economic barriers to the retention of students in public JHSs, such as in-kind scholarships for the most needy. New and innovative co-curricular activities, such as Girls' Clubs and Football for Development, were introduced to make school attractive and engaging for students. TAP enhanced the capacity of the community, especially the school management committees (SMCs), for ownership, participation, management, and accountability.

Component 1: Expanded and Improved Space Available for JHS Pupils

To improve enrollment, retention, and completion rates in project schools, TAP improved the school environment by building or rehabilitating existing school buildings and related infrastructure, thus providing more space to accommodate more students, and to make the school environment conducive for students and teachers.

Using a two-pronged approach, seven completely new schools were built in communities that had extremely poor or temporary school buildings, while other schools were rehabilitated (Table 1). TAP used a direct contractor-managed approach to build the completely new school buildings to ensure uniformity, compliance to the GES design, and quality and timely completion of school buildings. In contrast, the rehabilitation of existing school infrastructure was done through micro-grants and a community-managed approach to reduce construction costs and to strengthen community ownership of schools and maintenance of school facilities. Community development committees (CDCs) were formed and received training to enhance participation in school development and to build a sense of local ownership. They supervised the construction which helped to build the sustainability of the interventions for these community-managed projects (CMPs). Table 1 shows a reduction in the number of schools connected to electricity or a water

system, compared to the project target, and this variance is explained on pages 10 and 11 (below).

Table 1: Planned and actual rehabilitation work undertaken by TAP

Intervention	# Planned	# Actual
Complete Replacements	7	7
Major Rehabilitations	19	23
Minor Rehabilitations	100	101
KVIP Latrines Block (5 cubicles + wash room)	66	69
KVIP Latrine Improvement	36	21
Connection to existing source of electricity – 2 spans	87	42
Water system: rain catchment system or connection to piped water system, if available	140	44
ICT/Library construction– including furniture & equipment	13	13

A total of 443 classrooms and 261 auxiliary rooms were constructed by TAP (Table 2). All achievements of Component 1 can be found in the Component 1 Tracker (Appendix A).

The target for Indicator 1 (number of student spaces) was set before a thorough infrastructure assessment had been conducted. At the end of Year 1, TAP transitioned to using the USAID indicator of the number of classrooms built or repaired with USG funds. The Year 1 target was changed from 840 individual student spaces to 21 actual classrooms. Based on this revision, TAP exceeded the target for Year 1 by building or repairing 95 classrooms, in addition to 49 auxiliary rooms (head teacher office, staff rooms, store, or library). The auxiliary rooms were not planned for as part of TAP, but community members and education officials helped the project and donor understand their importance for creating a complete school environment. The addition of the auxiliary rooms shifted resources from classroom construction. In Year 2, TAP completed 55 classrooms and 23 auxiliary rooms. All complete school replacements had been constructed by the end of Year 2. In Year 3, TAP completed 293 classrooms and 189 auxiliary rooms, which were mostly minor and major repairs, managed through the CMPs. In total, TAP built or repaired 443 classrooms with USG assistance, in addition to 261 auxiliary rooms.

In consultation with USAID and the SMCs, TAP shifted resources, as determined by need, from student mono desks and to teachers’ furniture and a staff common room. This resulted in fewer mono desks than the initial target to cover the costs of these additions, but TAP met the need of the student mono desks at its schools, as the projected number was higher than the assessed need on the ground.

Table 2: Provision of school blocks and furniture⁴

Items & description	School Blocks		Furniture			
	# Classrooms	# Auxiliary rooms	Target # Mono desk	# Mono desks	# Teachers' furniture (sets)	Teachers' staff room (set)
# Provided	443	261	7286	7088	206	20

Indicator 1

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Project TOTAL
			Year 1	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3	
1	Number of classrooms built or repaired with USG assistance	0	21	95	342	55	287	293	443

A. Activities and Results

1. Construction of new JHSs and rehabilitation of classroom blocks through direct contracting

TAP hired a contractor to construct new school buildings and to rehabilitate classroom blocks that required major repairs. This strategy helped to ensure high quality, uniformity, and timeliness in completing work. A total of 106 micro grants were provided to the local CDCs for rehabilitation of classroom blocks that required minor rehabilitation to meet TAP-specific standards.

Seven schools received completely new and fully-furnished three-classroom school buildings. All the schools that were constructed or repaired with USG funds were provided with ramps for easy access for persons with disabilities. In addition, girl-friendly latrines, hand washing facilities, electricity, and water were provided to the school facilities where this was possible (see Table 1 above).

a. Complete replacement

TAP planned and completed seven new classroom blocks of three classrooms each, a head teacher's office, a storage room, and a staff common room for each of the beneficiary schools (Figure 1). These had been schools that were housed in temporary structures, mostly under sheds, and therefore were prone to human and weather inconveniences.

⁴ Number of classrooms did not have an initial target- these were developed and revised during implementation, with USAID's approval.



Kobikope D/A JHS old and new classroom block with jubilant community members

The Brong Ahafo region had the largest number of newly-built schools (three), followed by Greater Accra (two), while Eastern and Central regions had one each (Table 3).

Table 3: Beneficiary schools of newly built classroom blocks

Region	District	School
Brong Ahafo	Dormaa East	Wamfie Methodist JHS
	Dormaa Municipal	Aboabo No. 4 Methodist JHS
	Tano South	Bechem Model Girls School
Central Region	Gomoa East	Achiase/Bedzeadze D/A JHS
Greater Accra	Ga West	Kpobi Kope D/A JHS
	Dangme West	Prampram S.D.A JHS
Eastern Region	New Juaben	Suhyen S.D.A JHS

b. Major rehabilitation

During the course of Year 3, one major rehabilitation and four minor rehabilitations transitioned to “extreme major rehabilitations” due to the extent of dilapidation, bringing the total number of major rehabilitations to 23. Still, TAP continued its strategy to engage with the communities in this work. Four of the five schools that became “extreme major rehabilitations” were done as community-managed projects (CMPs). Extensive dilapidation of five schools, Dawatrim R/C JHS, Sisiamang Yiti and Akumersu D/A JHS in the Upper Manya Krobo, Nsuhia R/C JHS in the Dormaa Municipal, and Dabenyin D/A JHS compelled TAP to undertake significant major repairs in these schools with substantial support from the respective district assemblies and the communities.

In the case of Nsuhia R/C and Akumersu D/A JHS, part of the buildings collapsed just before work was to begin on them due to extensive dilapidation. Support from the district assemblies enabled TAP to build virtually ‘new’ classroom blocks. Dawatrim R/C JHS, was originally a two-classroom mud block with the JHS3 students being accommodated in the primary school block. The head teacher and community passionately appealed to TAP and succeeded in getting material support (stones and sand) from the Upper Manya Krobo district for a major rehabilitation to the building. The community also offered communal labor as their contribution to the project.



Original Dawatrim R/C classroom block



Old and new Akumersu D/A JHS blocks



Collapsed building and after rehabilitation Dabenyin D/A JHS

At Dabenyin D/A JHS in the Gomoa East district, the walls of the school collapsed when work began. As a result, TAP had to undertake substantial major repairs on the building. All these variations in planned works had budgetary implications far above the budget allocated for the work. These changes necessitated the suspension of rehabilitation on other school buildings, which the TAP construction engineer (CE) and leadership assessed to be in relatively good condition. As such, 130 out of the 156 schools had classroom construction.

2. Rehabilitation of JHSs through micro-grants and community-based construction

Apart from the completely new classroom blocks that had major rehabilitation work, TAP provided micro-grants to communities to manage minor rehabilitation and to provide latrines to the schools. The CDC members were trained, and in some cases received refresher training, on how to manage these CMPs, with a total of 1,859 persons being trained (once or twice), see Table 4. Twenty-two Plan staff received training in overseeing community-managed projects (CMPs) (Appendix B).

a. Minor rehabilitation (community-managed projects)

TAP completed a total of 101 minor rehabilitations where communities rehabilitated their existing school buildings through micro-grants and community-based construction. Delays in the CMP training and the onset of the rains were some of the key challenges. The number of auxiliary rooms to be repaired increased the work duration/costs per school. The rate of work on the minor rehabilitations was also quite slow because students were in school during the construction period and so repair work could only be carried out after school hours and during weekends in most of the school communities.

b. Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit (KVIP) latrine blocks

The construction of KVIPs was also executed through micro-grants and a community-managed approach. TAP constructed 70 new girl-friendly latrines, 69 of which were 5-seaters. One 6-seater water closet (WC) for St. Joseph’s R/C JHS was constructed with the support of the municipal assembly and the parent-teacher association (PTA), school management committee (SMC), and the community development committee (CDC). A bore hole to provide regular water supply to the water closet was also provided by the PTA. Furthermore, while 30 KVIP repairs were planned, the project engineer revised this number to 21 after a needs assessment. The economic justification could not be made to repair the latrines that were in irreparable states.



Huhunya community digging a KVIP trench



Constructed KVIPs at Akro D/A JHS & Asokore Methodist JHS ‘A’

c. Electrical connection

Forty-two (42) communities applied for electrical connections to their schools and all were connected. Of the remaining schools that were not connected, it was deemed to not be possible in 12 because of lack of proper infrastructure, while 24 were not done because their CDCs did not submit timely quotes or were otherwise not meeting project management expectations. Two communities did not provide a status report on the electricity situation of their communities. In

the 42 schools, TAP worked with the district assemblies and communities to help establish the connection to the national electricity grid. The Gomoa East District Assembly and the Ga West District Assembly have taken the initiative for electrical connection on themselves and committed to ensuring that all TAP schools in their districts receive electricity once the project has closed. Both districts have initiated the process.

d. Water supply

TAP initially proposed providing either rain catchment or pipe-borne water systems to 140 schools. The schools that had pipe-borne water close to the school campuses did receive the provision of water during the implementation stage. Of the 62 schools that had potable water in their vicinity, 45 schools submitted cost quotations from the service provider, the Ghana Water Company, to the TAP project. Of these, TAP successfully connected 44 schools to water during the project period. One school, Kosane M/A JHS, did not begin the process even though approval was granted, because the CDC delayed the liquidation of earlier disbursements for the release of further micro-grants as required.

TAP supplied 45 schools that were without storage facilities, but had existing water connections, with a 500-gallon capacity water tank. TAP provided four additional water tanks to schools without storage facilities, but with existing potable water. Most of these schools have pledged to work with the PTAs and SMCs to install the tanks as their contribution to the project during the next school term. The remaining 95 proposed schools do not have pipe-borne water in their vicinity. Given that additional resources and training was needed to communities to understand how to purify and guarantee the safety of rain harvested water for drinking by the students, the TAP team decided not to proceed with this activity. This was previously reported to USAID.

e. Construction of ICT/library Centers

The construction of 13 ICT Centers, awarded to excellent school communities, were all completed and handed over to the communities. The construction of the final center at Akumersu D/A JHS was completed in November 2013 after initial challenges in getting the solar panels connected due to unavailability of electricity in the community.

Each ICT Center has:

- Brand new (or in one case newly renovated) room
- 21 Inveneo Low Power Desktop computers (15.6" LCD monitor; 2GB RAM, 1.80 GHz Intel, 320 GB hard drive, 6 USB ports, SD card reader, wireless-enabled system unit, USB keyboard; optical mouse; Windows 7 Professional OS, and Microsoft Office 2010) for the students and teacher
- Inveneo hub server a library
- Low wattage BenQ LED projector (200 lumens)
- Offline browsable educational package (eGranary Digital Library)
- Internet connections (wireless local area network and mobile data router)
- Electrical connection (inverter battery backup power solution for continuous power between 4-8 hours).



Newly installed ICT Center



Students attend ICT class

TAP worked with all 13 beneficiary school communities to develop sustainability plans for the management and maintenance of the ICT/library Centers. Community facilitators (CFs) held meetings with all stakeholders of these schools to facilitate the process. The communities completed their own sustainability plans with the TAP staff reviewing and providing feedback before finalization.

B. Conclusion

A key outcome of Component 1 on improving pupil spaces included the extent to which enrollment increased and that, once enrolled, students were able to persist to complete the JHS level. In the vast majority of TAP supported schools, pupil spaces were significantly increased and this helped to increase enrollment, particularly that of girls.

Component 2: Reduced Barriers to JHS Enrollment for Pupils and their Families

TAP increased JHS enrollment and completion by strengthening the quality and relevance of the JHS education; addressing social and financial barriers; and increasing accountability and embedding ownership of the schools in the communities. Plan implemented its holistic school improvement approach and expanded it to districts targeted under TAP. TAP engaged all key actors in the teaching and learning process, including district education authorities, circuit supervisors (CSs), headmasters, teachers, children, and community members. Through these efforts, TAP ensured that the community and all stakeholders are more capable and motivated to support quality education for all school-aged children in the target communities. The combination of infrastructure improvements and innovative activities targeting teachers, students, and community members was proven to be effective, as students' enrollment in TAP schools increased by 6.8% over the course of the three-year project. Some project participants have engaged in more than one training. Each individual training is represented in Appendix C and the tables below.

A. Activities and Results

1. Create a child-friendly teaching and learning environment in TAP schools

The quality of teaching in a good school environment is paramount to promoting effective schooling. One of the strategies employed by TAP to improve quality of education in schools was to build capacity of teachers in ICT and child-friendly pedagogy in English and Mathematics. The purpose was to equip teachers with requisite skills and knowledge to enhance their teaching in the classroom. In addition, 77 teachers were also awarded a 2-year distance

learning scholarships to acquire tertiary education in basic education and other related courses. With these teachers being more knowledgeable, confident, and motivated to use appropriate teaching methodologies to make lessons interesting and effective, the students would find lessons more interesting and eager to actively participate in the teaching-learning process. This invariably would result in regular school attendance and better academic performance. Details on all these achievements can be found in the Component 2 Tracker (Appendix C).

Indicator 5

	Description	Base-line	Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Project Total
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3			
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	
5	Number of teachers/educators who successfully completed in-service training with USG support	0	650	587	174	761	20	1045	1148	2193	670	2430	1100	3530	6484

TAP exceeded the target for number of teachers trained every year of the project. Students were also trained for RROCCs, but this was not included in the calculation of Indicator 5. Two teachers, instead of one, were trained in each school. Aflatoun and S2S patrons were also given refresher training to make them more effective. This change was reflected in the revised PMP. In total, TAP trained 6,484 teachers and educators with USG support, although this number includes some teachers who participated in multiple trainings.

a. Teacher distance learning

Most rural schools are staffed by poorly trained or untrained teachers because these areas are deprived and therefore unattractive to many trained teachers. Teachers in rural schools often lack appropriate knowledge and skills to effectively teach. This, coupled with poor school infrastructure, is a disincentive to both teachers and students, resulting in low school enrollment, higher absenteeism, dropout, and subsequent poor academic results, especially on the BECE.

TAP originally planned to sponsor 195 teachers (15 per district) for distance learning on various education-related courses. This system is cost-effective in that it allows teachers, especially rural teachers, to acquire further education and improve their professional skills and knowledge without necessarily leaving the classrooms.

Seventy-seven (77) teachers were sponsored to participate in a two-year distance-learning program at various tertiary institutions. As a result, 77 of the 156 project schools have teachers with improved skills and technical competencies. The TAP scholarship included their transportation and accommodation for the second year, as teachers were sometimes required to attend campus lectures on weekends or during vacations. Distance learning has proven to offer a cost-effective alternative for rural teachers to upgrade their certifications and improve their knowledge and teaching skills.

Although enthusiasm among teachers was very high, resulting in several teachers showing great interest in the first year of the project, it seemed that only 68 (35%) teachers (34 females, 34 males) met the criteria in terms of type and duration of program, and therefore fully benefited from the award. Some applicants could not meet the criteria of a two-year program in education and some had already begun similar programs before TAP. However, record-keeping errors led to the omission of some teachers from the Central Region in Year 1 who had begun the distance learning program. This error was detected and corrected and the total number of sponsored teachers came to 77 (Table 5).

Table 5: Distance education details

Region	District	Admitting Institutions		Total
		UEW	UCC	
Brong Ahafo	Dormaa East	5	4	9
	Dormaa Municipal	4	3	7
	Tano South	2	0	2
Central	Gomoa West	1	10	11
	Gomoa East	13	1	14
Eastern	Akuapem North	2	2	4
	Asuogyaman	6	0	6
	Lower Manya	4	2	6
	New Juaben	9	0	9
	Upper Manya	4	1	5
	Yilo	2	2	4
	Total	52	25	77

All 77 beneficiaries successfully completed the program in June 2013 and TAP expects they will remain in their current schools for the next academic year, at least, to help improve academic performance in these schools.

It is premature to assess the impact of the distance learning training, except for the finding that beneficiaries were very appreciative of the support given them by TAP and also showed more confidence with their teaching. Moreover, many of the beneficiary teachers had participated in other TAP-initiated interventions such as Football for Development or the Girls' Clubs. The cumulative effect of all these interventions will be reflected in subsequent years.

b. Teacher training: ICT skills development training

A total of 156 ICT teachers were trained in the first year of the project. These ICT teachers reported that they had acquired very useful skills in the training, as they were exposed to scientific, yet easy approaches to solving basic problems. The main challenge ICT teachers faced in their respective schools was the lack of ICT facilities and tools (computer labs, computers and accessories, and internet connectivity).

Monitoring reports after the training indicated that some vacancies had been created as a result of transfer or departure of teachers. To ensure that technical support for the operations and maintenance of the 13 ICT Centers of Excellence, 26 teachers (13 ICT teachers and 13 teachers of other subjects) were trained in Year 2 of the project. A total of 150 teachers (135 males, 15 females) were given a refresher training in the third year of the project. This brought the total number of teachers trained in ICT to 332. The components and objectives of the Intel Teach training program can be found in Appendix D.

c. Teacher training: child-friendly pedagogy

A total of 476 teachers, out of 494 teachers, and 26 circuit supervisors were trained in child-friendly pedagogy in English, ICT, and mathematics in Year 1. An additional 283 participants attended the training in Year 3, bringing the total to 759 participants. Some of the teachers could not attend the training due to health problems, while others had to attend promotion interviews or were engaged in other official assignments at the time. The agenda of the child-friendly pedagogy training program can be found in Appendix E.



Teachers participate in group work at the Child-friendly Pedagogy training

All teachers reported that the training was very useful and informative. Mathematics teachers, for example, said they had learned how to explain concepts instead of just stating formulae and how to use games to make lessons more interesting for students. Some reported that the application of the concepts, however, is not easy because students are not ‘used to critical thinking,’ which requires them to analyze issues. Teachers were also confronted with inadequate teaching/learning materials (TLMs) to effectively apply the methodologies. Some also reported difficulty in applying the methodology due to large class sizes. Due to transfers to non-TAP schools and departure of teachers for further studies, it became necessary to train new teachers who had filled those vacancies. Moreover, monitoring reports indicated that teachers needed refresher trainings to consolidate the knowledge acquired early on in the project.

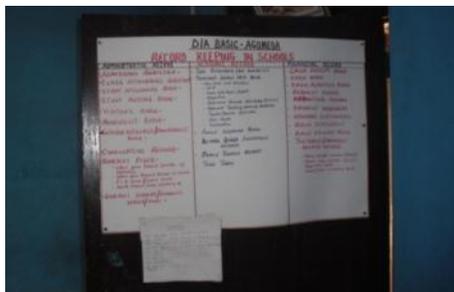
Many teachers use varying child-friendly methods in teaching English, ICT, and math to enhance academic performance. According to an English language teacher in the external evaluation, "Using games during lessons, involving class participation, and avoiding reading of long or lengthy passages for comprehension have enhanced the reading skills and word recognition in most of the students." Students now enjoy English Language lessons, participate fully in class, and have formed reading clubs to further develop their interest in reading.

Teachers reported that the child-friendly methodology refresher courses had helped them to consolidate the approach and made them more confident. They found that using these types of methodologies, while helping students to engage, takes time and has been a barrier to fully completing lessons planned for the term. The trainings enhanced lesson delivery in TAP schools as teachers became more confident and knowledgeable in their respective subject areas and some were found to be doing very well. A math teacher at Boso Presby JHS applied skills acquired at the TAP training to improve students' BECE results in math. As a result, the district education office used him as resource in the district in-service training for teachers.

d. Head teachers and inspectors training: school management and leadership training

A total of 154 head teachers and 26 circuit supervisors (180 total) were trained in school management and leadership skills to sharpen their skills in effective school management and supervision. Two head teachers could not attend the training because they were engaged in other official assignments. The agenda of the school management and leadership training program can be found in Appendix F.

Monitoring reports indicated that most head teachers found the training very useful and had acquired skills to better manage the school. It also helped them to improve their relationships with both staff and students.



Head teacher's record keeping chart

e. School supervision: support to GES and CSs

District directors of education in the 13 TAP project districts decided to release two circuit supervisors (CSs) for monitoring TAP activities in each district. The 26 circuit supervisors, all males, were trained together with the head teachers in school management and leadership skills development and child-friendly pedagogy in English and mathematics (see above). They worked closely with TAP CFs and later with the education technical coordinators (ETCs) throughout the project, and gained valuable data management skills. Apart from monitoring TAP activities, they also facilitated several training sessions such as SMC and CDC trainings.

f. Teacher accountability: Teacher Excellence Awards

Each year, TAP awarded two teachers who had distinguished themselves in each district, with an Excellence Award. TAP collaborated with district education directorates (DEDs), head teachers, circuit supervisors, and school management committees (SMCs) to shortlist, rigorously assess, and identify deserving teacher for the award. The selection criteria included punctuality,

attendance, pupils' performance at the BECE, participation in extra curriculum duties, appearance and general comportment of the teacher, educational and professional background, experience in disadvantaged areas, ability to work under pressure, evidence of social and community involvement, knowledge of education policies, and matters on instructional supervision and current affairs.



2013 Teacher Excellence Award awardees display their computers

A total of 78 teachers, comprising 41 males and 37 females, were awarded over the three years. Although TAP planned to award a male and female teacher in each district every year, male teachers won the award in in the Tano South district in the second project year due to poor performance of all the female teachers who were nominated, as reported by the District Panel. In the third year, no female teacher contested in the Akuapem North district. All the beneficiaries use the awarded laptops for teaching purposes at their schools.

2. Reduce Socio-economic Barriers to Girls' and Boys' Retention in JHS

For some students, school uniforms and educational materials, including exercise books, pencils, mathematical sets, BECE exams fees, etc., were beyond their means but necessary to stay in school and participate effectively in learning. With a set criteria and a participatory approach, the project procured and distributed in-kind scholarships to these students as a strategy to promote enrollment and completion. Additionally, TAP enriched the school experience by making opportunities available for students to participate in extracurricular activities such as the Girls' Camp and various clubs. Not only did these activities reinforce learning in the classroom and strengthen students' leadership and other life skills, but they likewise provide additional incentives to enroll in and attend school regularly. All of the club attendance statistics can be found in Appendix G.

a. Scholarships

School authorities and stakeholders identified poor students from each school for the award of in-kind scholarships. Each beneficiary received a package of ten exercise books, a mathematical set, two school uniforms, and a school bag through the district education offices.

In-kind scholarships were the most visible motivating incentives in school attendance and regularity at JHS, as they helped reduce socio-economic barriers that parents have in educating their children. Each year TAP awarded 20 needy students (60 total) from each project school

with basic educational needs to enable them to remain in school. The costs for these scholarships are included under the in-kind scholarship budget line, for 3,120 students annually. TAP collaborated with school authorities and the SMCs to identify the neediest students for the award. Monitoring reports indicated that targeted students would have dropped out of school had it not been for the in-kind intervention.



In-kind items before distribution



In-kind items handed out



Students display new items

A total of 8,942 students (3,933 girls and 5,009 boys) benefited from the in-kind scholarships over the three years. The scholarships provided the students most at risk for dropping out the support they needed and led to an improvement in school attendance and academic performance of the beneficiary students.

b. Bike to School program

TAP procured and distributed 945 bicycles to the 13 districts in the first year of the project as part of the in-kind scholarship, provided by non-USAID match funds. These were distributed in September/October of 2011 to students who traveled more than 5km to school each day (Table 6). The Bike to School program was eventually discontinued because most of them broke down and as assessment showed it was not sustainable. However, monitoring reports indicated that in many instances especially in the Brong Ahafo Region, the bicycles had contributed to school attendance and had also motivated other children to enroll in school with the hope that they too would be supported. Parents were more willing to support their children's education because the children returned home early and could support household chores.



Assembled bikes ready for distribution



Students display new bikes

Table 6: Bike distribution schedule to districts

S/N	Districts	# Bikes received by school		
		Total	Boys	Girls
1	Asuogyaman	66	Not available	Not available
2	New Juaben	76	Not available	Not available
3	Yilo Krobo	84	48	36
4	Dormaa East	38	19	19
5	Dormaa Municipal	77	45	32
6	Tano South	50	23	27
7	Ga West	74	Not available	Not available
8	Gomoa East	91	Not available	Not available
9	Gomoa West	29	Not available	Not available
10	Dangme West	100	57	43
11	Akuapem North	113	87	26
12	Lower Manya Krobo	62	45	17
13	Upper Manya Krobo	72	45	27
	Total	945	369	227

Note: In some instances gender disaggregated data is not available

c. Girls' Camp

TAP collaborated with the Girls Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service to organize an annual Girls' Camp aimed at increasing the enrollment, retention, and completion rates of girls in JHS. Each year, school authorities collaborated with the SMC and the regional girl-child officers (RGCOs) to identify four girls who had performed well academically and had demonstrated good behavior. The activities included in the Girls' Camp can be found in Appendix H. The external evaluation found the camps to have had a profoundly transformational effects on the girls who participated.

TAP organized two National Girls' Camps and 3 Regional Girls' Camps for 1,950 selected girls (Year 1– 623; Year 2– 619; Year 3– 708). The selection process included a panel comprised of teachers, SMC members, circuit supervisors, and the TAP project Community Facilitator of each district to select four (4) girls from each TAP school based on their academic performance, attendance, and overall character. The selected girls participated in a seven-day camp, during which they interacted with peers from different backgrounds, role models, and professional women who could serve as future mentors. All activities aimed at developing self-esteem and motivating young women to succeed in school. During the camp, the girls also participated in lectures and discussions about the benefits of education, career development, technical and

vocational opportunities, reproductive health, good hygiene practices, and the dangers of sexually transmitted infections. Municipal/district Girls' Education Officers served as chaperones for the girls to and from the camp venue with the support of the community facilitators of the project.

Initially, the organization of the Girls' Camps was centralized for the first two years and held in the Achimota School in Accra, involving the collaboration of TAP and the Girls Education Unit (GEU) of the Ghana Education Service (GES). In a desire for greater participation of all stakeholders at the grassroots level, and to foster sustainability, the 2013 Girls' Camp was decentralized and organized at regional levels. Brong Ahafo and the Eastern Region organized separate camps while Greater Accra and Central Regions, which had two project districts each, held a joint camp. The evaluation and feedback from the GES and the school teachers have shown a great impact, as most girls returned to the communities more determined to succeed, with changed attitudes toward peers and parents, and with positive and healthy relationships with others.⁵



Girls from the School for the Blind, Mampong, developing bonds of friendship (Akuapem North District)



Hands-on exhibits at the Girls' Camp

d. School to School (S2S) program

The S2S program was introduced to encourage cross-cultural learning through international partnership, helping students to gain valuable insight into their own culture and values, while sharpening their communication skills. The program linked students in schools in Ghana and the

⁵ *Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project.* Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

United States. The S2S program energized 261 students (116 boys, 145 girls) in 10 TAP schools, as it afforded them the opportunity to exchange with their global peers and to learn about their culture. On monitoring visits, the TAP students reported that the activities had helped them strengthen their communication skills. The students developed their creativity as well, with the accompanying art and other interactive activities. The students that participated in this activity felt privileged, as not all students at the school received this opportunity. Most of the schools in S2S were enthusiastic about the program but were confronted with some challenges such as email address errors and the high costs of postage to share letters or arts and crafts with their counterparts in the US.

e. Rights and Responsibilities of the Child Club (RROCC)

The Rights and Responsibilities of the Child Club (RROCC) focused on building the capacity of children to develop their skills to assess their rights on their own and to understand their responsibilities. The intervention was implemented in partnership with Child Rights International (CRI), a TAP sub-recipient. A total of 7,239 students participated in RROCCs. The Training Guide for Patrons (Child Rights Club Manual) can be found in Appendix I.

RROCCs were set up in all the 156 TAP schools and patrons were trained to facilitate club activities. A total of 1,124 patrons and teachers received training in RROCC. Club activities included the planting of trees around schools, cleanup activities, and awareness raising about child abuse and protection. Some clubs organized games for children to both entertain them and help them develop their talents. The plethora of clubs at some schools, led the TAP project to train 324 patrons and teachers in how to integrate several clubs into one in the project schools.



RROCC sensitization in the community

Students embraced the lessons on the rights and responsibilities of the child. Most clubs members were able to explain what rights of the child are and gave examples such as the right to education, right to shelter, right to information, right to health care, and right to speech. The RROCC were very vibrant, despite a number of challenges, and indicated that they would be able to sustain club activities after TAP, according to the external evaluator.

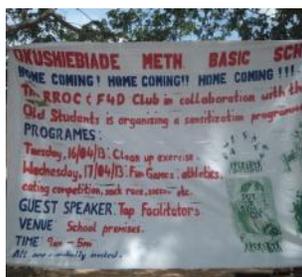
f. Aflatoun

Aflatoun’s vision is to inspire children to be socially and economically empowered through social and financial education (SFE). Aflatoun activities provide children with the building

blocks of life to understand their uniqueness, know their rights and responsibilities to themselves and society, encourage them to save their personal/environmental resources, and start social and financial micro-enterprises. Aflatoun aims to empower students to make positive changes in their lives and their communities and eventually break the cycle of poverty in which many find themselves.

The Women and Development Project (WADEP) was contracted to implement Aflatoun in 30 schools in the Eastern Region in Asuogyaman, Yilo Krobo, Lower Manya Krobo, and part of Upper Manya Krobo districts. Thirty-seven clubs were formed in three districts and a total of 115 patrons were trained to facilitate Aflatoun activities in the schools. As a result, 1,428 students (642 boys, 786 girls) participated in Aflatoun activities through their schools.

Clubs were formed in the schools and club activities began in the first year. Most clubs held weekly meetings. Aflatoun activities continued to be creative and participatory, resulting in steadily increasing club membership. Students elected their leaders in a democratic way, and planned and undertook a variety of activities. Okwenya D/A JHS, for example, organized an excursion to Aburi Botanical Gardens and hosted an Aflatoun Gala for the clubs in the three districts to participate. Most of the clubs had student savings schemes. Activities were documented with the help of club patrons who were originally only teachers, but then community members were also included to make the clubs more sustainable. As a result of high interest, more children from neighboring schools and primary schools joined.



Students participating in Aflatoun activities

g. Football for Development (F4D)

Football for Development (F4D) is a strategy to attract girls and boys to enroll and complete JHS, and at the same time to develop life skills, such as cognitive, social, emotional, and analytical skills. Apart from promoting team building, sportsmanship, and fitness, the F4D clubs provide a variety of additional opportunities for learning and development. Members were introduced to vocational skills and career counseling and exposed to adults who are trained to support them during this transitional time in their life. The external evaluation found the F4D clubs to be another extraordinary success of the TAP project.

The project established 156 Football for Development (F4D) clubs and successfully trained 156 school teachers as coaches in club management for effectiveness and sustainability in Year 1. The services of a consultant were procured to develop a Psychosocial Life Skills Manual, which

was pilot-tested in some TAP schools. Training on the manual was organized for all the football coaches, sport organizers in all districts, and all RROCC/Aflatoun patrons from all the 156 schools. Post-training monitoring on skills and activity management monitored the implementation of what was learned.

As part of integrating life skills into F4D activities, the project facilitated a three-day district-level refresher workshop for an additional 260 F4D coaches and RROCC patrons (bringing the project total to 416). This training was designed to help with the integration of F4D activities into the other clubs' activities to encourage participation; equip RROCC patrons with the knowledge, skills, and right attitude of F4D activities; and make club activities livelier. It further provided a platform for the introduction of a new Training Manual for the various clubs and the F4D coaches in particular, to refresh their skills. The training attracted sports personnel such as the District GES Sports Organizers and the physical education tutor of the host institution, Afienya Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institute.

F4D items were procured and distributed to the project schools, including 1,560 footballs, 312 sets of jerseys, 156 sets of training kits, 780 pairs of goalkeeper's gloves, arm bands, eye visors, whistles, and life skills manuals. These figures were included as part of the annual work plan and budget approved by USAID. Over the three years, 5,171 students (2,652 boys, 2,519 girls) participated in F4D. F4D is one of the most successful of TAP's intervention and all the schools had indicated that they would sustain it after TAP ended.



F4D participants in field training



Girls' F4D club



Students practicing football

h. Reading Chains

All schools were supplied with their full complements of books for the Reading Chains. Initially, many schools were not implementing Reading Chains as expected. The concept of the Reading Chains was misunderstood by some head teachers and English teachers, so pupils were using the materials as though they were just library books to be used during library hours. After a reorientation by TAP, most schools were able to correctly implement the Reading Chains. Both students and teachers kept well-organized and detailed records of their reading patterns. At their request, TAP supplied additional reading books to all schools, far beyond what originally proposed. In Year 3, School Excellence Award winning schools were given additional books for the ICT/library Center. The highest ranking school in each district, for example, received 940 books for the ICT/library Center. The 117 schools that did not win School Excellence Awards received 25 story books in addition to those supplied earlier. This increased the number of books

for the Reading Chains to 110 for each of these schools. In total, 2,146 students (1,065 boys, 1081 girls) participated in Reading Chains in TAP schools.

Indicator 6

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Project Total
			Year 1	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3	
6	Number of teaching and learning materials (TLM) - reading chain books and mathematical sets provided with USG assistance	0	4560	8829	6900	28329	12480	55965	93123

TAP exceeded the targets for teaching and learning materials every year. In Year 3, TAP distributed 21,645 reading books to needy students as School Excellence Awards, in addition to 3,120 math sets. In addition, TAP gave needy children 31,200 exercise books through the in-kind scholarships. In total, TAP provided 93,123 teaching and learning materials with USG assistance throughout the life of project.

3. Community Ownership, Participation, and Accountability in the Teaching & Learning Process

Community engagement is vital if improvements to the teaching and learning process are to be locally owned and sustained after a project ends. The findings from the mid-term limited scope study show clearly that strong community leadership and ownership is linked to school performance.

a. SPAM Meetings

To strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to support schools to perform in a sustainable way, school-based School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAMs) were organized in all TAP communities. This was in addition to the annual community/cluster-based SPAM organized by the GES in order to help encourage increased interaction among stakeholders, greater participation of children in the process, and provision of a forum for in-depth discussion of issues concerning each school.

The SPAMs create an enabling environment for all stakeholders to come together to analyze issues/problems of schools in order to bring about improvement in teaching and learning, and improvement in the general performance of the school. The key stakeholders that participated included district/municipal directors of education, circuit supervisors, teachers, SMCs, PTAs, pastors, parents/community members, and pupils. TAP community facilitators also participated in SPAMs in their communities. Focus group discussions with male and female students,

teachers, and chiefs were held to discuss the BECE results and the general performance of the schools in question. The views of the various groups were then presented and discussed at plenary and possible factors affecting the performance and solutions were suggested.

For example, the major issues identified as affecting performance of children in Dangme West municipality were:

- Inadequate support for education by parents and communities: non-provision of learning materials to children and inadequate or lack of parental care and supervision at home
- Lack of subject teachers in some of the schools
- Lack of lodging for teachers in the communities, resulting in tardiness and absenteeism
- Lack of funds to manage the schools: inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) and inadequate school facilities.
- Stealing of school property, including TLMs
- Children not appreciating the value of education
- Some children engaging in behaviors (watching videos, attending overnight wake-keeping funeral rites, alcoholism), which draw them away from studies

These are issues that most school communities in Ghana could easily share. Some school communities were also confronted with poor attendance of parents to the SPAM, leaving only the SMC members and PTA members at the meetings. Some of the key decisions dealt with how to raise the awareness of parents on the need to provide food and basic learning materials for their children. Parents/guardians were also urged to exercise greater supervision on their wards, both at home and at school, and to periodically visit their wards' schools to find out the child's performance. It was also decided that pupils should accompany their parents to farms only on weekends. Teachers were urged to be more committed to their work and to give more homework to the learners. In some communities, by-laws were enacted to curb truancy and to compel pupils to stay in school and achieve academic excellence. Performance targets on the BECE were set for each of the schools, though these occasionally resulted in students having to repeat grades in order to ensure they would not bring down BECE scores.⁶

School management committees (SMCs) are the legally mandated body to manage basic schools in Ghana. In Year 1, TAP trained 745 SMC members across all the 13 project communities and facilitated the development of School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Tracking the performance of the SMCs revealed that many were unable to implement most of the projects stated on the SIPs. The main challenge faced by almost all SMCs was their inability to mobilize adequate funds to implement these projects, as some were too ambitious. The review of the SIP was very necessary, as some SMCs had done very little on what they planned to do.

A 3-day refresher training (October/November 2012) was organized and facilitated by circuit supervisors and CFs for five SMC members from each of the communities in the 13 project districts. A total of 662 out of an expected 780 members, comprising 466 males and 196 females, participated in the training to enable the SMCs to sustain the best practices of the project,

⁶ *Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project*. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

especially skills to regularly review the SIPs, when the project ended. TAP trained a total of 1,407 SMC members in SIP development over the course of the project. SMCs members noted that they had learned from the experiences shared by their colleagues and were going to improve upon their strategies to perform better in future. Some districts, such as Dangme West, had completed and submitted copies of most of their reviewed SIPs to TAP.



A municipal director addresses participants



A SMC member participates in discussion

b. School accountability- School Excellence Awards

The purpose of the School Excellence Award (SEA) was designed to reward the schools that had shown commitment to improve school enrollment, performance, and quality in education (Table 7). The DEDs led the process and collaborated with the other education stakeholders (district/ municipal assembly/ SMCs, GHS, NCCE, police, etc.) to assess communities for the award of an ICT/Library Center. Selection criteria included successful SIP implementation, in-service training delivered by the head teacher, punctuality and regular attendance for students and teachers, BECE performance, evidence of best practices, and change in enrollment.

Table 7: School Excellence Award winners

Region	District	Name of School
Brong Ahafo	Dormaa East	Wamfie Presby JHS
	Dormaa Municipal	Dormaa SDA JHS
	Tano South	Ankaase Community JHS
Central	Gomoa West	Wassa Nkran JHS
	Gomoa East	Mpota JHS
Greater Accra	Ga West	Samsam Odumase JHS
	Dangme West	Mobole JHS
Eastern	New Juaben	Trom JHS
	Akuapem North	Adawso JHS
	Yilo Krobo	New Somanya
	Upper Manya	Akumersu D/A JHS
	Lower Manya Krobo	Okwenya JHS
	Asuogyaman	South Sench JHS

All the 13 ICT Centers have been completed and handed over to the GES and the communities. Maintenance and Sustainability Plans have been developed between TAP, DDEs, and the schools for the continued management and sustainability of the ICT Centers.

B. Conclusion

Component 2 was designed to create an enabling environment for learners, and activities focused on training for teachers, managers, and community members to improve infrastructure and quality teaching and learning across the 156 TAP schools. Targets for the numbers of personnel trained were met and in some cases exceeded the initial targets. Final Evaluation classroom observations found TAP teachers using the training they had acquired, particularly in the ICT and math subject areas, but less so with English language.⁷

In-kind scholarships helped mitigate the social and economic barriers to retention and completion. Teacher training in child-friendly pedagogy and training of circuit supervisors in effective monitoring and supervision methods also addressed some of the causes of poor quality and poor performance among pupils. More work is needed to ensure that the School Performance Appraisal process is well embedded in the school/community accountability processes. Learning outcomes in schools take more than three years to demonstrate change and findings from the BECE pass rates is still too early to assess across TAP schools.

The most promising approaches that TAP used in transforming the quality and participation of children at JHS level was the strong emphasis on community participation and the strengthening of community based institutions (e.g. SMCs/PTAs and CDCs). A significant achievement was the formation and training of CDCs facilitated active participation in school development and built a sense of community ownership by ensuring that the supervision of construction works, and ensuring sustainability. In most cases the community entry approach allowed for deeper consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders and brought together the community and school in partnership to improve education quality.⁸

Indicator 2

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Project % Change
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3			
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	
2	% change in enrollment in TAP schools	Total: 15650 Girls: 7075 Boys: 8575	5%	8842 (3.1%)	7368 (4.1%)	16210 (3.6%)	10%	9264 (8.0%)	7940 (12.2%)	17204 (9.9%)	15%	9247 (7.8%)	8082 (14.2%)	17329 (10.7%)	10.7% increase from baseline

The baseline enrollment data are from academic year 2009-2010 for all TAP schools. The enrollment for Year 1 comes from the district reports on enrollment for the academic year 2010-2011 and for Year 2 from 2011-2012. TAP schools experienced an increase of 4.1% for girls and

⁷ Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

⁸ Ibid.

3.1% for boys in enrollment for Year 1. There was an event greater significant increase for Year 2, with enrollment rising impressively for girls (12.2%) and boys (8.0%). Year 3 enrollment continued to rise for girls to 14.2%. By the end of the project, there had been a 10.7% overall increase in enrollment for TAP schools.

Indicator 3

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Project % Change
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3			
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	
3	% change in completion of JHS 3 in TAP schools	70.3%	5%	88.8% (16.9%)	80.4% (12.1%)	84.9% (14.7%)	10%	78.7% (6.8%)	68.9% (0.6%)	74.1% (3.9%)	25%	77.2% (5.2%)	69.8% (1.5%)	73.8% (3.5%)	73.8% (3.5% increase from baseline)

TAP redefined JHS "completion" as attendance at the BECE examination in accordance with the Government of Ghana. To determine the percentage change in JHS completion, TAP measured the difference between the number of JHS1 students enrolled in December in one academic year and the number of JHS3 students who wrote their BECE exams three years later. Since English is the first exam written by all students at the BECE, TAP used attendance at the English exam to calculate JHS completion rate. Year 1 completion was 84.9% compared to the baseline rate of 70.3%, an increase of 14.7% (boys 16.9%, girls 12.1%). Year 2 completion was 74.1% (boys 78.7%, girls 68.9%) compared with the baseline of 70.3% and Year 1 completion rate of 84.9%, an increase of 3.9% (boys 6.8%, girls 0.6%) over the baseline rate. While still an increase over the baseline, the rate of completion decreased between Years 1 and 2, implying that increasing numbers of students could not complete JHS3. In Year 3, a total of 73.8% completed, with a completion rate 3.5% over the baseline, yet again lower than the previous year (3.9%). This progression resulted in an overall increase of 3.5% (boys 5.2%, girls 1.5%) from the baseline completion rates.

While the end of project data shows an increased completion rate over the baseline, there was a consistent decrease in total basic school completion rates from Year 1 to Year 3. Yet, relatively more girls completed in Year 3 than Year 2. The decreasing trend in completion rates during the project may come from the judgment of many communities that the standard of a school stands on students' performance at the BECE. Good performance tends to attract more students from 'non-performing' schools. As such, many schools conduct what is dubbed as 'justify your inclusion' examinations in the first few weeks in JHS3, and students unable to make the 'mark' are made to repeat JHS2. This practice is usually mandated and sanctioned by communities at SPAM meetings in an effort to improve BECE academic performance in schools. Some of the repeating students are reluctant to do so, especially if the student believes he/she would not pass the BECE, regardless of how many times he/she is made to repeat a class. This often involves transferring to another school, often private, that is willing to admit them into JHS3.

Indicator 4

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Project % Change
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3			
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	
4	Number of learners enrolled in TAP schools	Total: 15650 Girls: 7075 Boys: 8575	5% (16433)	88 42	73 68	16,2 10	10% (17215)	92 64	79 40	172 04	15% (17998)	92 47	80 82	17329 (10.7%)	10.7% increase from baseline

The enrollment in TAP schools increased each year, from 15,650 to 17,329, so that by the end of the project there was a 10.7% increase from the baseline. This includes a 30.6% increase in girls.

Indicator 7

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Project Total
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3			
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	
7	Number of administrators and officials successfully trained with USG support	0	1757	N/A	N/A	1011	746	55	47	102	0	915	610	1525	2638 (Higher than target of 2503)

In the modified TAP Indicator 7, calculations included the number of school management committee members and community development committee members trained. This indicator also includes the number of community members trained as RROCC/Aflatoun patrons. These changes were reflected in the revised PMP and revised targets. The Year 2 target was recalculated to include those who were not trained in Year 1. SMC members were given refresher trainings and were assisted to review their SIPs. All SMC refresher trainings were conducted in the first half of Year 3 after an initial Training of Trainers workshop for community facilitators, facilitated by GES, and subsequent trainings for SMCs by the community facilitators. The total number of administrators and officials trained with USG support was 2,638 over the project's lifetime, surpassing the target of 2,503.

Indicator 12

	Description	Baseline	Targ et	Actual			Targ et	Actual			Targ et	Actual			Project % Change
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3			
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	
12	% change in transition from P6 to JHS-1 each academic year in the 13 project districts	90.9 %	N/A	-0.2 %	-1.3 %	-0.7 %	N/A	19.9 %	38.1 %	29.3 %	N/A	21 %	20 %	20.9 %	20.9% increase from baseline

The baseline year had a 90.9% transition from primary 6 grade level (2008-2009 enrollment) to JHS1 (2009-2010). In Year 1, the rate was 90.2% for the TAP districts. No targets were set for this indicator because TAP cannot be responsible for transition in non-TAP schools. The transition rate increased in Year 2. That is, 29.3% (boys 38.1%, girls 19.9%) more students transitioned to JHS1 in 2011-2012 compared to baseline. In Year 3 (2012-2013), the transition rate decreased marginally by 8.4% from the previous year. However, it increased by 20.9% (boys 21.0%, girls 20.0%) in Year 3, compared to the baseline values.

Indicator 13

	Description	Baseline	Targ et	Actual			Targ et	Actual			Targ et	Actual		
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3		
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T
13	% change in junior high school completion in the 13 project districts	95%	N/A	71.6 %	68.0 %	69.9 %	N/A	74.5 %	71.4 %	73.0 %	N/A	69.0 %	65.2 %	67.2 %

The project used EMIS data to report on this indicator. Although EMIS has enrollment data disaggregated by type of school (public and private), the number of students sitting for the BECE are not disaggregated by type of school. Indicator 13 was therefore computed using data for public and private schools for both enrollment and BECE. Inclusion of private schools is likely to have inflationary effects in terms of completion rates and cannot objectively be compared with Indicator 3. Since English language is the first exam written by all students at the BECE, TAP used attendance in the English language exam to calculate JHS completion rate. Total JHS1 enrollment for public and private schools was compared to the number of public and private JHS3 students who sit for the English BECE exam three years later. The completion rate in the TAP districts decreased in Year 1 by 25.1% to a 69.9% completion rate, compared with the previous year. No target was set for this indicator because the TAP project is not responsible for

completion in non-TAP schools in these districts. DEO data were used in this analysis in Year 2. In Year 2, 73% of students (boys 74.5%, girls 71.4%) completed, as compared with 69.9% in Year 1. In Year 3 the figure decreased to 67.2% overall. The variations observed may have resulted from the ‘justify your inclusion’ phenomenon in the 13 districts, in regard to students being discouraged from sitting for the BECE exam, as mentioned previously.

Indicator 14

	Description	Baseline	Actual			Actual			Actual		
			Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
			M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
14	% change in the Basic Education Certificate Examination pass rate among the pupils of the 156 project schools in the 13 districts	56% pass rate	-21.7%	-16.0%	-19%	12.8%	3.6%	8.6%	-2.4%	5.3%	1.2%

Note: The District did not provide BECE pass rate results in the format required for Upper Manya in TAP’s Year 3. The pass rate was imputed using the other 12 districts’ mean pass rate, which was applied to the number of students in Upper Manya who sat for the exam.

In the base year, 56% of students in TAP schools passed, as compared with 37% in 2010-2011, which is shown above as a 19% decrease over the previous year. In Year 2, the pass rate was 45.5%, an increase of 8.6% over Year 1. In Year 3, the pass rate continued to improve, totaling 46.7%, an increase of 1.2% over Year 2. The increase in BECE pass rate was positive for girls in Years 2 and 3, while boys’ pass rates decreased in Year 3. No targets were set for this indicator, however TAP agreed to report on it as an important outcome of the interventions.

Indicator 15

	Description	Baseline	Actual			Actual			Actual		
			Year 1			Year 2			Year 3		
			M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
15	% change in the BECE pass rate in TAP districts	70.2% Boys: 68.5% Girls: 72.2%	51.9%	55.8%	54.9%	70.7%	71.3%	70.9%	48.7%	51.2%	49.9%

TAP used EMIS data to report on this indicator. As English language is the first exam written by all students at the BECE, TAP used pass rates for this exam to track changes in the percentage of pass rates over the years. There was a 70.2% BECE pass rate in 2009-2010 (base year), as compared with 54.9% in 2010-2011. This implies 15.3% decrease in BECE pass rate in Year 1. In Year 2, 70.9% of students passed, which reflects 0.7% increase in pass rate in relation to the

base year. The BECE results for 2013 show a total pass rate of 49.9%. This indicator remained beyond the control of the TAP project, as it measured students' performance in a majority of non-TAP schools.

Indicator 16

	Description	Baseline	Actual			Actual			Actual			Project % Change
			Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			
			M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
16	% change in enrollment in TAP schools compared to non-TAP public schools	TAP: 15650	T: 8842 (3.1%)	T: 7368 (4.1%)	T: 16210 (3.6%)	T: 9264 (8%)	T: 7940 (12.2%)	T: 17204 (9.9%)	T: 9247 (7.8%)	T: 8082 (14.2%)	T: 17329 (10.7%)	TAP: 10.7% increase
		NON-TAP: 75852	NT: 28860 (28.4%)	NT: 25846 (-27.3%)	NT: 54706 (-27.9%)	NT: 26196	NT: 28916	NT: 55112 (-27.3%)	NT: 27137	NT: 25087	NT: 52224 (-31.2%)	Non-TAP: 31.2% decrease

TAP used DEO data for all public JHSs in the 13 TAP districts to report on the enrollment indicator. Overall, the TAP schools recorded a marginal increase (3.6%), while the non-TAP school recorded a significant decrease of 27.9% in Year 1. In Year 2, total enrollment in TAP schools increased by 9.9%, while enrollment in non-TAP schools decreased by 27.3%. In Year 3, enrollment in TAP schools increased 10.7% (7.8% boys, 14.2% girls) in relation to the base year. The non-TAP schools recorded a decrease of 31.2% in enrollment, their third consecutive decrease.



Students show appreciation for the TAP project

A poem expressing gratitude, written by students of Mpota D/A JHS:

THANK YOU-USAID/PLAN-GHANA

To me you're like an angel, sent by God above,
 To cleanse my soul of sadness, and fill it with love.
 You are my inspiration and I want to thank you,
 For without you, I don't know what I would do.
 You've changed my life around,
 And turned my frown upside down.

You have showed me the way to quality education and bright future
 So that I will never stray.
 For this I want to thank you again,
 For staying close by and being a friend.
 And to end this off I just wanted to say,
 That you are a friend indeed.

II. Monitoring & Evaluation

A. Data Collection

A performance monitoring plan (PMP) was developed and a number of data collection forms and templates were designed at the initial stages of the project to collect data to measure outcomes, which were periodically reported on the indicator progress table and the PMP. Project staff (community facilitators, construction technicians, and circuit supervisors), who were expected to collect baseline data, were trained on appropriate use of the data forms. Construction technicians (CTs) collected baseline data on infrastructure to determine the type and status of infrastructure in each school, while community facilitators and circuit supervisors of the GES were oriented on the appropriate collection of reliable enrollment and BECE data. These were school-based data, or data from the district education offices in the project districts, and where necessary, EMIS data were used.

Indicator 9

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Project Total
			Year 1	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3	
9	Number of monitoring plans prepared by the USG	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

The slow release and low reliability of data collected from the DEOs and schools was a challenge. TAP originally proposed to collect school-based data on a quarterly basis, but when it was realized that the Ghana Education Service conducts only one census a year, the PMP had to be revised accordingly. The format in which TAP required particular data was different from how the DEO analyzed their data, meaning that TAP staff had to work closely with the DEOs to resolve this issue.

Some of the collaborating personnel were not adequately skilled in computer literacy to appropriately handle data. TAP devised some strategies to overcome these challenges by establishing rapport with the GES schedule officers, soliciting the assistance of contact persons and circuit supervisors, and personally analyzing raw data at the GEOs.

Indicator 8

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Target	Actual			Project Total
			Year 1	Year 1			Year 2	Year 2			Year 3	Year 3			
				M	F	T		M	F	T		M	F	T	
8	Number of people trained in monitoring and evaluation with USG assistance	0	26	37	6	43	7	6	4	10	0	30	35	65	118

TAP originally trained 26 circuit supervisors in monitoring, along with 12 community facilitators (CF) and five construction technicians. All have been included under this indicator. In Year 2, six new CFs and four educational technical coordinators (ETCs) were trained in project monitoring procedures and tools. In Year 3, four ETCs were trained in project monitoring procedures and tools. One new ETC was recruited and trained in February 2013. All 60 Aflatoun patrons were given training in monitoring of the activity. In total, TAP trained 118 people in monitoring and evaluation with USG assistance.

B. Baseline Data Assessment

A baseline study was conducted early 2011 although its scope was constrained by an inadequate budgetary allocation. The baseline survey confirmed that none of the 156 TAP schools met the specified minimum standard criteria set by TAP. It also highlighted the status of infrastructure in project schools to help streamline the direction of project implementation (Table 8).

Table 8: Baseline infrastructure in TAP schools

Region	#TAP Schools in District	Total # Classrooms in TAP Schools	% of TAP schools with latrines in good condition	% of TAP schools with water storage	% of TAP schools with Electricity
Total	156	502	26%	13%	24%

C. Semi-Annual Progress Reports

Progress on project activities and achievements were reported to USAID in semi-annual reports. The reports summarized various interventions that took place within the period, achievements, and challenges as well as success stories. Each report had updated progress table that reported on the indicators and PMP as attachments.

D. Limited Scope Study

The sustainability of TAP's impact relies on community participation and ownership of the various activities. Interventions, such as training of SMCs and CDCs and micro-grants for community-managed minor repair works on school buildings, were designed for active

participation of the communities. The baseline study however revealed that some community leaders were not as involved as anticipated. After consultations with USAID and education stakeholders, TAP contracted a Ghanaian consultant to conduct a limited scope study in the second year of the project on community participation in the TAP project. The purpose of the limited scope study was to investigate why some communities were actively participating in their JHS, while others were not.

The study revealed that the project was conceptualized with the traditional homogeneous community in mind; but provisions were not made for non-traditional communities that were heterogeneous in character with a multiplicity of schools. Typical rural and traditional communities experienced comparatively active community participation, while the peri-urban community with a multiplicity of schools did not have the same level of participation.

The study conflicted with the annual award ceremonies of TAP and the end of year examinations of basic schools which was a challenge. This notwithstanding, data collection was successfully undertaken and a comprehensive report that highlighted issues on community participation was presented. The findings and recommendations of the study informed the annual work plan and strategies of Year 3 to take into account the heterogeneity of the TAP communities.

Indicator 11

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Project Total
			Year 1	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3	
11	Number of special studies conducted by USG	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1

E. Final Evaluation

TAP commissioned *Associates for Change (AfC)* through an open competition to conduct the Final Evaluation.⁹ AfC is a research and consulting firm based in Ghana, with expertise in education evaluation and social policy analysis. The Final Evaluation was designed to supplement the routine data collection on indicators and objectives monitored throughout the life of the TAP project, and to explore extensively the five key aspects of the project: its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results, and sustainability. The evaluation involved extensive fieldwork in order to explore in-depth the reasons underpinning the findings from the project data. It involved summarizing primary lessons learned and making key recommendations to improve the quality of on-going and future education programming by the MOE, Plan, and USAID.

The evaluation used a mix of method approach including: interviews across key stakeholder groups, focus group discussions with key beneficiaries including children, and an in-depth review of TAP-related project documents. A total of 27 TAP schools were sampled across 6 districts in three regions of Ghana: Greater Accra, Brong Ahafo and Eastern region.

⁹ *Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project*. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

The evaluation study found that the TAP project recorded enormous improvements in increasing the spaces, improving the physical infrastructure, and in reducing socio-economic barriers to JHS enrollment and completion for pupils and their families. The TAP project was a highly valued intervention by all stakeholder groups interviewed, particularly teachers, communities, and children. Key stakeholders at the district and school levels suggested that the TAP project should continue, with at most minor modifications. Two key TAP interventions stood out in terms of the frequency with which they are mentioned by stakeholders and with regard to their impact on the beneficiary populations: *Girls' Camps* and *Football for Development (F4D)*.¹⁰

Indicator 10

	Description	Baseline	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Project Total	
			Year 1	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2	Year 3	Year 3		
10	Number of evaluations conducted by USG	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

III. Project Analysis

A. Project Management & Partners

TAP strengthened school management and empowered communities by training the SMCs, the legally mandated bodies to manage basic schools in Ghana. SMCs were equipped with advocacy knowledge and skills to enable them develop realistic school improvement plans as well as mobilize resources to implement the SIPs in their respective schools. A total of 1,407 SMC members were trained. During the first training they identified critical issues in the school communities and drew up SIPs to implement them.

SMCs now have strengthened capacity to prepare quality School Improvement Plans (SIPs). All the schools have updated their SIPs as well as implemented their SIPs, as determined by the monitoring reports. The SMC of Mobole D/A JHS provided a water station (Polytank) in the school for students so that they would no longer cross the road every morning to fetch water for use in the school. They also built a new two-cubicle girl-friendly latrine for female teachers and girls, and renovated an old urinal for male teachers and boys. Agomeda R/C JHS's SMC mobilized materials (roofing sheets, wood, etc.) to build a canteen for the school.

The SMCs' and CDCs' contributions were voluntary as the project did not offer any direct financial benefits/incentives to them. This meant that their dedication to the project was variable depending on their other obligations and this also affected project implementation timelines. For the majority of members who are farmers, during the rainy seasons they chose to work on their farms with very little attention being given to the project.

The project established 156 Rights and Responsibilities of the Child Clubs (RROCCs) and successfully trained 1,124 school teachers and community patrons in club management for effectiveness and sustainability. The Rights and Responsibilities of the Child Clubs (RROCC)

¹⁰ Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

were set up in TAP schools in with the support of the partner organization Child Rights International (CRI). Child Rights International was the partner for the establishment, training, and monitoring the all the RROCCs. CRI lived up to its responsibilities in delivering the project objectives related to the terms and conditions as a sub-recipient.

B. Construction Management

TAP used direct contracting to construct new school buildings and to rehabilitate classroom blocks that required major repairs. Meanwhile micro grants were provided to the local CDCs for rehabilitation of classroom blocks that required minor rehabilitation to meet TAP-specific physical standards. The project constructed seven complete school replacements by the end of the project. Twenty-three major rehabilitations were completed. Regarding minor repairs, 101 were completed by the end of the project. Furthermore, 69 new latrines were constructed, of which one is a six-seater. All 13 ICT Centers have been completed and handed over to the schools and GES, plus 7,088 mono desks and 206 teachers' tables and chairs have been supplied to the schools.

These achievements were possible due to a number of factors, key among them:

- a) **Community development committees (CDCs)**– many were well organized and effective, leading to active participation and teamwork of the CDC members, who followed procedure and ensured transparency and accountability in all their activities;
- b) **Active community participation;**
- c) **Active involvement of the chief**– regular monitoring of the work by the chief;
- d) **District assembly contributions** supported the construction activities in diverse ways. For example, the Upper Manya District Assembly provided tremendous material support for construction activities in the district; Ga West District Assembly provided financial support toward the construction of the 6-seater WC at St. Joseph's RC JHS; and Yilo Krobo District Assembly provided roofing sheets to reroof the entire Oterkpolu JHS building; and
- d) **TAP staff capacity**- effective facilitation skills, technical supervision, and monitoring of construction activities by TAP field staff, and support given by the management of Plan Ghana Program Unit offices in the Central and Eastern regions.

C. Environmental Management

All construction was required by US law to have a geotechnical study carried out, which was the responsibility of the project engineer. Environmental Review Forms (ERF) and Environmental Review (ER) checklists were completed and approved by USAID prior to the award of a contract for school construction. Monitoring took place in order to ensure compliance with safety standards following the Ghana Building Code, Ghana Standards, the Uniform Building Code, 1997, and the International Building Code (IBC) 2006 or 2009, using the Occupancy Category (OC) of at least III or higher. The project engineer, with the support of the construction technicians, ensured compliance to bills of quantity, materials, and time schedules, as well as addressed technical issues, such as finding appropriate substitutes for unavailable materials and complying with the EMMP environmental mitigation measures.

D. Administrative & Financial Control Systems

TAP held regular meetings to ensure that all staff was aware of the status of various project activities and linked them with the Plan Ghana office. All-TAP staff meetings were held three times a year, often during staff in-service training. Year 3 management meetings included regional directors and technical officers of Plan Ghana, who were actively involved in TAP activities. There were regular bi-monthly management meetings for key project staff.

In order to enhance program oversight of the SMCs and teaching in the Ghana TAP project, Plan introduced four education technical coordinators (ETC) to enable CFs to have full focus on the CMP activities and to enhance the activities in Component 2. The added education technical coordinators focused fully on SMCs, RROCC, F4D, and Aflatoun, which provided support for the GES, CSs, and for the management of the ICT Centers.

The newly decentralized Plan Ghana provided TAP with administrative and technical support. In particular, the areas of administration, finance, procurement, and monitoring of community-managed work and grants were supported. TAP used the accountants at the Plan Ghana regional offices (Koforidua and Winneba) to manage the finances of the project, including payments to communities. The TAP administrative officer focused on administrative support to the central team and Greater Accra. Construction technicians assisted the TAP construction engineer to guide to the community-managed work. The data entry clerk assisted with monitoring and evaluation. TAP provided periodic training to increase the capacity of staff on topics such as management of community expectations, negotiation skills, and refresher trainings on ICT skills to enhance delivery of a quality program. The skills trainings were deemed critical for the community facilitators, who served as the primary connection with communities. They received skills training on negotiation and management of community expectations, and about alternatives the community could seek outside of TAP.

TAP carried out, in conformity with purchasing procedure of Plan Ghana, bulk procurement of supplies and materials that were part of the School Excellence Awards, in-kind scholarships, F4D, and items required to support changing staff roles. Regular asset inventories were compiled during monitoring visits.

In line with reporting requirements outlined in the Cooperative Agreement, TAP submitted all quarterly financial reports and 6-month performance reports to USAID on time.

E. Cross-cutting Themes

a. Contributions of program:

i. Community participation

Community participation was the overall approach in the TAP project to ensure sustainability of the project's achievements after it ended. For the CMPs, many communities fully embraced and were supportive of the CMP concept, while others were apathetic. Even in these difficult communities, the project was able to achieve positive results with increased community awareness and facilitation. For instance, some schools in the peri-urban centers did not have

natural ‘communities’ so it was a challenge for them to own the project and also to mobilize communal labor to support the construction activities. In these areas, the project ownership was usually limited to the CDCs, the Assemblymen, and sometimes the SMCs and PTAs. For such schools, the CDCs, with support from the assemblymen of the areas and often times the PTAs and SMCs, raised funds to hire unskilled labor in lieu of the communal labor. For example, St. Joseph’s RC in the Ga West district had virtually no community ownership of the school due to the location of the school, but the school has a vibrant CDC, PTA, and SMC who took ownership of the project and are the ‘community’ driving the construction activities. The CDC chairperson (a woman), who also doubles as the SMC chair, together with the Assemblyman and some members of the PTA, met with the Unit Committee of Amasaman at the onset of the project and managed to solicit the Committee’s interest. The Committee has since been very supportive of the project, and helped with the recruitment of artisans and laborers. The PTA also prepared meals for the workers to motivate them.

Of greatest note, the project established CDCs, who now have skills in project management, financial and project accountability, basic financial literacy skills, community mobilization skills, resource mobilization skills, and leadership skills, that they can use to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

ii. Local capacity development

From the Final Evaluation, evidence from interviews with community facilitators indicates that the trainings of CDCs/SMCs/PTAs had a positive impact on the implementation of construction projects in the schools. Circuit supervisors were generally positive about the training they received and oversight of TAP schools improved across some districts.¹¹

The evaluation indicated a radical improvement and transformation in project monitoring and supervision after the training of the district education officers and TAP coordinators. For instance, in Ga West, the circuit supervisors adopted a more participatory approach to their work in the field due to the TAP training. The report further pointed out that SMCs/PTAs and CDCs received training on a number of strategies to enable them to perform their roles and responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Focus group discussions with the SMCs and CDCs revealed that the trainings enabled them to mobilize funds locally to construct urinals for the school. The majority of the SMCs also reiterated that they now felt empowered because they know their roles and responsibilities as community members in relation to the school. This empowered them to supervise the activities in the schools, especially teaching and learning outcomes of children and other quality indicators at the school. Interviews with community members during the evaluation revealed that the TAP training workshops had increased their understanding of school ownership and oversight and made them more committed to ensuring improvements in the school.¹²

¹¹ *Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project*. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

¹² *Ibid.*

iii. Host country commitment to program performance

TAP organized regular roundtables with the district directors of education for project guidance and support. Officials in the Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Education were often invited to witness handovers of rehabilitated local schools to the Ministry. The regional directors of education and municipal and district chief executives (DCEs) participated actively in TAP activities. They recognized and appreciated TAP contributions to education in their respective regions and districts, as supported by the Final Evaluation. The participation by the GoG and its agencies was clear during the project's completion handovers at the end of the project. Most education data related to school performance, enrollment, and completion were given to the TAP through the various directors of education.

iv. Labor & employment

TAP consisted of nearly 40 project staff, including senior managers, community facilitators, education technical coordinators, construction technicians, and administrative support staff. This gave the staff members guaranteed incomes to meet their financial needs.

v. Gender

TAP focused on girls' active participation in junior high schools and used a host of activities to ensure that they transitioned from primary school to JHS, and that they found a supportive environment for learning when they arrived. The various clubs engaged them at school and equipped them with skills and confidence that they will carry with them, in addition to the improved quality of education offered by their teachers. All the TAP indicators are disaggregated by gender, where appropriate, and female teachers and students benefitted equally from the TAP project, as did female members of community structures such as the CDCs, SMCs, and PTAs. The Girls' Camps were designed to give the participants the skills and knowledge they need to be full participants in their education process and empowered citizens in their communities.

F. Challenges / Lessons Learned

The TAP staff met and overcame some key challenges through the implementation of TAP. These challenges included:

1. Poor community participation in urban and peri-urban communities as revealed in the mid-term Limited Scope Study. In a contrast, most rural communities with defined leadership, such as a chief, were well organized to participate in CMP activities. This resulted in relatively faster and/or timely delivery of project activities.
2. Transfer of project-trained teachers to non-project schools meant that TAP had to hold new trainings or refresher sessions to bring the new teachers up to speed.
3. Difficulties in accessing data from some DEDs highlighted the very real issues in gathering and using data to make evidence-based decisions.
4. Some communities are inaccessible during the peak of the rainy season. Activities have to be planned around this time of the year. Due to poor road networks, components of the project were adversely affected, including monitoring, transportation of building materials, and transportation of CDCs to Plan offices for project accountability and financial support for project activities.

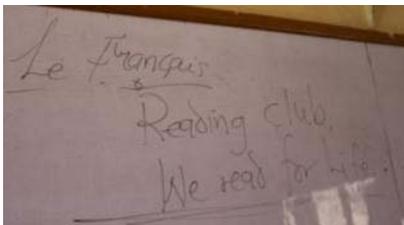
5. Some weak and ineffective CDCs or district assemblies failed to make good on their promised contributions to TAP activities or had low or no local resource mobilization or communal labor. To ensure effectively partnership, some district and municipal assemblies were contacted by TAP to provide support, mostly in terms of sand, roofing sheets, etc. Although TAP received several pledges, some were not fulfilled, which often led to project delays and the need of additional funds to complete the tasks.
6. Poor community participation caused by several factors, such as apathy, conflict, factionalism in the community, or lack of interest by the chief, also affected project implementation, especially the community-managed projects.

In spite of these obstacles, the TAP project staff still managed to carry out its activities. In these difficult areas, with increased community education and facilitation, TAP was able to achieve positive results. For example, in the peri-urban areas in which it was difficult to mobilize communal labor, the construction activities were limited to the CDCs, local assembly members, and often the PTAs/ SMCs, who raised funds to hire unskilled labor in lieu of communal labor.

G. Success Stories

1. Plan Supports Girls' Literacy with USAID-Funded Ghana TAP Project

With a special focus on girls' education, TAP includes many components aimed to boost girls' academic performance and to support their retention in school. This included the introduction of a TAP-sponsored reading chain at St. Joseph's R/C Junior High School (JHS) in the Greater



Reading Chain club welcome

Accra Region, from which students have become more engaged in reading and have strengthened their analytical skills. The 20 students participating in the Reading Chain meet every Friday for one hour after class. The club's facilitator, Eric Gbemu, explained that students take a book home every week and must return the next week with a full summary, analysis, and list of new vocabulary from their reading.

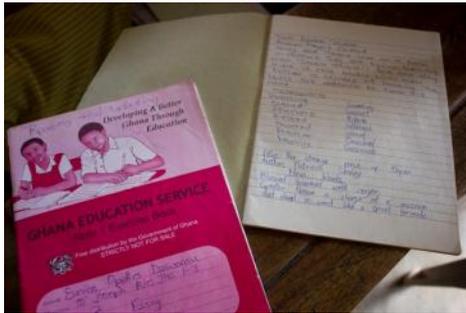
Pamela, a JHS student, discussed her favorite book from the reading chain, titled "It's Not Fair." She explained the plot of the book, which details the life of a family with two sons and one daughter. The girl had trouble finding time to attend school because of her heavy workload in the home. After raising this issue, the girl's brothers began to help with her chores so that she would have time to attend school. This story resonated with Pamela, and from the book she learned that "If we have problems, we should tell our teachers who will tell our parents."



Students participating in the Reading Chain

TAP has demonstrated improvement in the implementation and appropriate use of the reading chain materials among schools. In view of the importance of this activity for improving academic performance, and at the request from most of the schools, TAP supplied more books in 2013. Depending on the performance of each school, TAP provided between 25 to 950 additional books for their libraries.

The administrators and teachers of St. Joseph's R/C JHS reported that students' reading levels had improved with the TAP-sponsored library books and reading chains. TAP supported other interventions in the school, including the construction of girl-friendly latrines, a football for development club, teacher trainings, and a Girls' Club, in which girls learn about such topics as sexual and reproductive health. Six of the students in the Girls' Club had participated in TAP's annual nation-wide Girls' Camp with students from other regions, which enabled them to interact with female role models, participate in excursions, and attend trainings on life skills and career counseling, among others.



Log book for Reading Chain

Over the three years of the TAP project, the enrollment rates at TAP schools have consistently demonstrated higher enrollment rates than the baseline enrollment rate, with Year 2 demonstrating the largest increase of 16.3% for girls and 10.0% for boys. With participation in TAP, St. Joseph's R/C JHS has achieved the second best school ranking in the District and has increased its student enrollment.

2. Ghana TAP: Learning Continues Outside of the Classroom

On a visit to two schools in the Eastern Region, the student bodies demonstrated the strength of extracurricular activities, sponsored by Ghana TAP. From child rights to financial literacy, students are becoming more engaged in and speaking out on issues that impact their life.



Facilitator of RROCC and headteacher at Suhyen SDA JHS

Students at Suhyen SDA Junior High School (JHS) in New Juaben District meet twice a month for the convening of their Rights and Responsibilities of a Child Club. Dominic Kissi, the club's facilitator, guides these 46 students on discussions that include the right to education, equality before the law, good citizenship, and the responsibilities that always come with rights. Kissi explained how students most enjoyed learning about advocacy on child abuse, a topic about which they felt strongly.

The club also engages in hands-on activities that provide students with the opportunity to embrace their rights and to be accountable for their responsibilities. As such, the students planted flowers to beautify the school grounds, planted a garden to grow plantains, cleaned the

library, and visited a dam to learn about its role in the community. When asked about their participation in the club, students reported that because of their participation, they have more confidence and will more easily live with others in the community as they get older.



Esther is an Aflatoun treasurer

Not far away in Yilo Krobo District, students at Abrewankor L/A JHS have gone above and beyond expectations with their school's Aflatoun club. Aflatoun teaches basic social and financial skills to children, providing them with practical experience needed to change their lives and the lives of those around them.

Gladys Dontah, the Aflatoun Facilitator, leads 21 boys and 22 girls in the club meetings that gather three times every term. Also leading the club is the executive board, of which three of four positions are held by girls. Every term the students learn about how to manage their finances more effectively, together with the opportunity to save together as a group. The treasurer, a student named Esther, handles all the money and manages the cash flow in and out of the group's cardboard savings box.

Additionally, the club members learn how to make items out of local materials, which they can then turn around and sell for a profit. Items such as jewelry, fans, and other handicrafts allow the students to earn income and increase the return on their group savings. The students have been working all school year to create a large quantity of items to sell at the school's 61st anniversary celebration, held this past November.

The student members explained how participating in Aflatoun taught them to save their money for the future, to purchase items that will further their education, such as exercise books, exams fees, etc. Likewise, their parents are happy with their new saving habits and their ability to contribute to their own cost of education.



Aflatoun participants at Abrewankor L/A JHS

While the school name "Abrewankor" literally means "old lady doesn't go there" in the local language Tui, because of its far distance to the closest town, enrollment is increasing at this very remote school. Since TAP interventions such as the Aflatoun Club began, enrollment has increased. Additionally, such interventions have improved the pass rate for the BECE national exams, which increased from 11% in 2011 to 87% in 2012.



RROCC members designed club



Handicrafts made by members

3. Girls' Education in Ghana: From Access to Empowerment

The opportunities for girls to attend school in the New Juaben District of the Eastern Region have expanded during the USAID-funded Ghana TAP project's presence in the community. Through school infrastructure improvements and girl-centered programming, girls are now actively engaging in their learning process in this rural Ghanaian community.



USAID marking on Suhyen SDA JHS

Margaret Danqua-Djan has been head teacher of the Suhyen SDA Junior High School (JHS) throughout the project's implementation, and she detailed the numerous improvements to both school infrastructure and quality of teaching over the last 3 years. Suhyen SDA JHS had qualified for a "complete replacement" under the TAP project, including the new construction of three new classroom blocks and their accompanying furniture. In this remote community, Danqua-Djan boasted that hers is a girl-friendly school, but added that the improvements has raised enrollment for boys as well.

In addition to the availability of a safe learning environment, TAP also increased the ability of under-resourced students and their families to afford an education. By providing two sets of uniforms to those 20 students with greatest need, one additional barrier to attending school was overcome.



Dede Gloria and her son, both students at Suhyen SDA JHS

Dede Gloria, a 26-year old mother whose son attends Suhyen, saw the new building and students wearing new uniforms, and decided she too wanted to enroll. She had dropped out of school years before, but as a student now in Form 3, Dede Gloria is attending regularly, studying for the BECE national exams, and once she graduates, hopes to continue her education in senior high school.

Like all the other TAP schools, students at Suhyen SDA JHS also participated in TAP's annual Girls' Camp. In collaboration with the Girls Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service, TAP organizes these annual camps to inspire girls to complete junior high school (JHS). Each

TAP school selects four girls to participate annually, based on the students' high academic performance, good behavior, and participation in extra-curricular activities.

Held for a week in April of 2013, the Eastern Region's camp hosted 307 girls at the Presbyterian College of Education in Akropong Akuapem. Activities at this year's camp included study clubs, physical education, life skills courses, career counseling, discussions on health and relationships, children's rights, field trips to various landmarks and historic sites, and a visit with street children to learn about their hardships. A total of 708 girls participated in the camps across all regions.

Christina, a 12 year old (Form 2) student at Suhyen, participated in the 2013 Girls' Camp. Her favorite part of the week was the group excursion to Accra, her first visit to her country's capital city. She was also inspired by meeting a nurse at the camp who spoke as a role model for the girls, and as a result of, Christina now wants to pursue nursing as a career.



Christina participated in the 2013 Girls' Camp

During their time at camp, girls demonstrated a willingness to take up leadership roles and increased confidence. Head Teacher Danqua-Djan also commented that after the camp, many girls returned back to school with more confidence speaking English, and wanted to continue speaking it even at home.

As a result of these and other project interventions, the school enrollment of Suhyen SDA JHS has increased from 32 to 140 students, many of whom are girls. In appreciation for the increased access to education and opportunities for girls in the community, Head Teacher Danqua-Djan stated, "I will never forget USAID TAP."

H. Recommendations

After thorough analysis of the TAP project and its results, the Final Evaluation proposed the following recommendations for all key stakeholders of the TAP project:¹³

Plan Ghana staff and implementation partner recommendations:

- The beneficiary school selection should consider that some schools might exceed their enrollment capacity as a result of TAP interventions, particularly given the increase in enrollment and demand generated when schools are rehabilitated and/or replaced. There should be more effort made to assist the DEOs select communities using a school mapping approach in order to ensure that the feeder school populations are fully considered during the school selection process.
- The life span of the TAP project should be extended for two years in order to ensure the full realization of learning outcomes and to consolidate the most effective interventions (e.g. training of teachers and enhancing SIPs/SPAMs in order to increase quality delivery of education). Three years was found to be too short and affected the potential sustainability, timely delivery and completion of interventions.

District, school, and child level - head teacher recommendations:

- The child-friendly pedagogy training for teachers in ICT, English and mathematics should be extended to cover all subject areas at the JHS. Interventions by TAP, especially teacher training, proved to be very useful; hence it should be extended and expanded by the GES/MOE to all schools for others to benefit.
- More collaboration is needed with providers currently pursuing in-service training at the cluster level through the JICA-supported program.

¹³ Final Evaluation of Ghana Transition and Persistence (TAP) Project. Plan International USA & Associates for Change. January 2014.

- The promotion policy of the Ministry of the Education should be enforced and monitored in order not to disadvantage pupils and to reduce tendency for repetition.
- The construction of latrines and water facilities should ensure that capitation grants are used to maintain and service these facilities, including the purchase of toiletries.

Community level recommendations:

- The TAP project should be extended to primary schools to achieve the same objectives as the JHS.
- To ensure transparency and accountability, all key stakeholders (GES, MMDAs) should be involved in all aspects of the procurement process.
- There should be more effective collaboration between all education stakeholders including the district education oversight committee and TAP in the design, implementation and sustainability of interventions.

Recommendations on modifications to the TAP project if given the opportunity:

- The level of supervision should be strengthened by way of closer monitoring of school visit activities by the Ghana Education Service supervisors and coordinators. There is a need to increase the level of supervision and monitoring in school by the district education offices and other officials.
- Much more emphasis should be placed on sustainability plans for the TAP project, especially at school and community levels in Year 2 of any future project in order to build capacity for handover.