

**TRIP REPORT: ACCRA, FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 19, 1999****JOEL B. ARONSON****PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION WORKSHOP**

I arrived in Ghana on Sunday evening, February 28 and, early the next morning, was driven to Ajumaku to take part in the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Workshop for two days, returning to Accra on Tuesday evening (March 2). Though I also was scheduled for the Ajumaku workshop on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> to lead a 9-hour skills development session (jointly with Wade) on monitoring and evaluation, the training schedule had to be revised and that segment was dropped.

**STAFF TRAINING**

I used the time suddenly available to me, and the materials I had prepared, to begin some formal TMG staff training. In all, over the next 2 weeks I spent about 25 hours with Emma and Michael covering basic statistical concepts, including: probability, sampling theory and normal variation, the properties of the normal curve, means and medians, standard deviation and variance, reliability and validity and the relationship between them, t-testing, regression and the correlation coefficient, z-scores and transformations, and the properties of different types of scales. Where appropriate, these topics included hand-calculated examples.

In addition, I covered some basic test theory, including: test item selection, the difference in construction between criterion referenced tests and achievement tests, item analysis with respect to item stability and maximizing item-total correlation, test and item bias, attitude scaling, selective perception, categorical data and the critical need to train field observers well and to make sure their observations are behaviorally based.

As for the baseline reports, Emma, Michael and I reviewed all of the data available and drafted a basic outline of the proposed contents. I left that draft at USAID for their comments during my exit meeting. In addition, I worked with Emma and Michael on an item analysis of one of the math achievement tests and requested that they complete analyses of each of the other achievement tests by gender and by district.

**COORDINATION WITH THE OTHER QUIPS PROJECTS**CSA

We had had some concerns about the new methodology used by CSA for tracking community participation. I met with Gerry Boardman and his new monitoring and evaluation staffperson, Kay Leherr, to discuss their instrument construction and data gathering. Kay had been working on data summaries for each community and she provided us with a copy of the complete data set. After two lengthy sessions with Gerry and Kay and a further phone conversation, I'm convinced that the CSA scaling and data-

gathering was done in an effective and reproducible manner. However, the information remains heavily attitudinal. They make almost no attempt to gather more concrete, observable information such as the proportion of school-aged children attending school, or progressive headway on the community development plans.

CSA has completed data gathering with their new instrument in both cohort 1 and cohort 2 communities and for both participant and comparison communities in each cohort. Altogether, they have responses from 78 communities. These data replace the data originally collected by CSA from the cohort 1 communities and are not compatible with the earlier data set. It is not clear how the Basic Data and ILP Items (questions 1-16 in their instrument packet) actually provide useful answers to questions such as whether children bring texts home for evening study.

Toward the end of my visit, we acquired the CSA summary data for all 78 communities and carried out some preliminary analyses of questionnaire response data.

### ILP

I met with Rudi to review data collection and data analysis activities. During the meeting Rudy expressed some concern about the efficacy of some of the information ILP's field teams were collecting. I offered to meet with Rudi to review what they were getting and to see if, together, we could sharpen their inquiry and minimize the amount of data gathered. He agreed, and we met the next day in his office for more than 2 hours brainstorming the issues. He suggested a half-day session with his field teams to define a number of critical elements of school change and to identify appropriate means for capturing those changes.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

1. I reviewed the GOGAS tracking audits (draft documents) for USAID Non Project Assistance funds and found them to be very thoroughly done with many good suggestions. I'd like to include some of the summary information in my Baseline Report and it is my understanding that the substantive elements of the two reports (which are very similar in content) will be abstracted and emailed to me.
2. Emma's computer had slowed down and I found that the loading of the EMIS database had used all but a scrap of hard drive space and the whole system was poised to crash. I upgraded her machine with a secondary 6.4 Gigabyte drive, which can be used as the resource drive with EMIS and our other large data collections, thus freeing substantial space on her personal work drive.
3. I implemented decision (already made) to change internet provider due to the poor quality of the Ghana.com link. While we were at it, I enabled several of the office computers to link with the new email-Internet account. During my next trip, I think I'll be able to set up multiple mailboxes for email so that the mail is not downloaded to whatever computer happens to be logged on at the time the email arrives. The

email browser I use at home has that capability and is available as downloadable freeware on the Web.

4. I installed the flatbed scanner I brought from Washington and trained Emma and Sally in its use. Unfortunately, the OCR software packed with the scanner is a limited use version, so a full version needs to be purchased and installed. I will research that and let Jenkins know what to get.

After a virus damaged a laptop, I downloaded a current version of Norton AntiVirus software and the most recent virus library and loaded both onto all the office computers. Joanne's machine had virus protection, but it was more than 3 years old and her hard drive was riddled with more than 65 infected documents. Her disks were circulating among other office staff. In order to achieve a better level of virus protection, I have shown Emma and Michael how to find, download, and install the monthly virus updates from Norton. I will obtain and bring a more complete version of Norton AntiVirus that will automatically check every file as it comes into the computer via the Web or via floppies.