

Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) Project

**LANGUAGE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH:  
HANDBOOK FOR A MULTI-SITE CASE STUDY**

**IEQ undertaken by:**

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in collaboration with

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# Table of Contents

<b>ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 OBJECTIVES.....	1
1.2 WHO WILL USE THIS HANDBOOK?.....	1
1.3 SUGGESTED USES FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES .....	2
<b>2 OVERVIEW OF THE IEQ2/GHANA PROJECT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 GHANA’S SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY .....	3
2.2 THE RESEARCH STUDY .....	4
2.3 IEQ2 PARTNERSHIPS.....	4
Advantages of Partnerships .....	5
Limitations of Partnerships.....	6
Continuity and Mobility .....	6
Schedule Conflicts.....	6
2.4 COMMUNICATION AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT .....	7
Communicating with the Sites .....	7
Logistical Support.....	8
<b>3 TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS AND DATA COLLECTION: LEARNING BY DOING .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 MAJOR WORKSHOPS.....	9
Workshop One .....	9
Workshop Two.....	11
Data Analysis .....	11
Literature Review .....	11
Workshops Three through Five.....	12
3.2 OTHER WORKSHOPS .....	13
Workshop with Research Assistants .....	13
Workshops on Achievement Test Administration and Data Analysis .....	13
3.3 OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES .....	13
Visits to Bilingual Programs in the USA .....	13
Participation in World Bank Seminar .....	14
3.4 DATA COLLECTION.....	14
The Research Sites.....	15
3.5 INSTRUMENTS, PROCEDURES, AND KINDS OF DATA COLLECTED.....	17
Phase One.....	17
Phase Two.....	18
3.6 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS.....	19
Organizing the Data.....	19
Writing Up the Data .....	19
Cross-site Analysis.....	20
Emerging Issues.....	21

<b>4 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS.....</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1 FINDINGS .....	22
Awareness and Availability of the Language Policy Document.....	22
Attitudes .....	22
Use of Ghanaian Language and English as Media of Instruction.....	22
Teaching and Learning Materials.....	23
Teacher Placement or Posting.....	24
Teacher Training.....	24
Supervision.....	24
4.2 IMPLICATIONS for POLICY .....	25
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>27</b>

# Abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
CRIQPEG	Centre for Research on Improving Quality of Primary Education in Ghana
ERNWACA	Education Research Network for West and Central Africa
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
HLM	Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM)
IEQ2	Improving Educational Quality
L1	First Language (Mother Tongue)
L2	Second Language
MOE	Ministry of Education
MoI	Medium of Instruction
NUD*IST	Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing software
OAU	Organization of African Unity
P1-P6	Primary Class (Grade) One through Primary Class (Grade) Six
PME	Program Monitoring and Evaluation
PS1 – PS3	Teacher Training College Classes One through Three
PSC	USAID Personal Service Contractors
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
QUIPS	Quality Improvement in Primary Schools
RAC	Research Advisory Committee
SMC	School Management Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
TTC	Teacher Training College
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UCEW	University College of Education at Winneba
UG	University of Ghana
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

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This handbook is written for anyone who is interested in actively improving educational quality through research and action on first and second language teaching and learning in classrooms. In this handbook we present the process of how we collaborated to design and conduct a qualitative research study to explore this topic in Ghana.

The purpose of this handbook is to: (a) present the process of our decision making, (b) explain the sequence of training workshops and data collection and analysis in qualitative research, (c) describe the research instruments we developed, and (d) discuss our findings and interpretations. We present this information not to prescribe how this research should be done, but to serve as a guide to those who are interested in conducting a similar study and/or to assist others in reflecting on their own choices and decisions in conducting a related kind of research.

## 1.2 WHO WILL USE THIS HANDBOOK?

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Since the orientation of this study was to understand the implementation of a school language policy, the research design needed to provide information from the perspectives of schools and their communities as a means of discovering and explaining factors that differentiate non-implementers from implementers of the policy.

Certain audiences in the country have enormous influence, directly or indirectly, on the educational process of the country, especially on the primary education system. It is pertinent that information gathered from a study such as this be made available to these audiences so that they can offer meaningful comments and suggestions after digesting the information. These groups include:

- parents, students, teachers, and headteachers
- Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs)
- religious leaders and community opinion leaders
- Circuit Supervisors, Assistant Directors of Education for Supervision, and District Directors of Education
- teacher trainees, tutors, and researchers in colleges and universities

- officials from the Ministry of Education (MOE)/Ghana Education Service (GES), and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education
- Development partners, including UNESCO/OAU Council of Ministers, ADEA, World Bank, MOE/USAID Quality Improvement in Primary Schools (QUIPS) Project-Special Studies
- International colleagues in Education (on the Worldwide Web)
- Research organizations, such as ERNWACA

### 1.3 SUGGESTED USES FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

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We recommend that those interested in developing education should form themselves into a group and organize for a to brainstorm both how to conduct the study as well as discuss and act upon information learned from the study. Topics for discussion at these for a may be centered on factors that militate against successful implementation of the language policy and how to eliminate them. Some other possible uses by other bodies are listed below.

- Graduate students for preparing a dissertation proposal
- Non-Governmental Organizations for formative evaluations
- University researchers to contribute to broader body of knowledge
- Ministries of Education to gather baseline information to guide their actions
- Development Partners/Donors to collect information for education reform initiatives

We hope this Handbook will be useful to you in your efforts to add to the knowledge base on language research.

## 2 Overview of the IEQ2/Ghana Project<sup>1</sup>

The main objective of the Improving Educational Quality 2 (IEQ2)/Ghana project was to strengthen the capacity of Ghanaian researchers to conduct educational research in qualitative research methods. The long-term objective of this effort was to focus research on the implementation of education reform, particularly at the regional and local levels, so as to identify, assess, and analyze key factors that affect performance and quality of teaching and learning in the primary school. Researchers provided information through meetings, seminars, and conferences to further the dialogue on educational quality at all levels of the system. The research process highlighted the importance of undertaking collaborative research in educational reform.

### 2.1 GHANA'S SCHOOL LANGUAGE POLICY

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As in many African countries, the issue of the best language of instruction in schools also has been a thorny one in Ghana. Approximately 60 languages are spoken in Ghana, and none is a national language. English is used as the official language, as well as the MoI from Primary Four (P4) through university, yet a majority of Ghanaians do not speak English as a first Language (L1).

In 1971 the Government of Ghana formulated the following language policy for schools:

In the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction, whilst English is studied as a subject. From Primary Four, English replaces the Ghanaian language as medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language is treated as just another subject on the timetable.

Attempts to implement this language policy have been beset with problems, including officials with political power not finding favor with the policy, the absence of funds to properly implement it, and confusion over which of the local languages prevalent in an area must be used. Unsubstantiated statements have been made regularly about the use of the Ghanaian language as MoI in lower primary and as a subject in the upper primary. Significant among these is the belief that the policy itself largely accounts for the low level of literacy in English among pupils and students. Others believe that lack of resources, teacher preparedness, and other concerns hinder schools' ability to carry out the policy as

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<sup>1</sup> The Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) project is part of a USAID long-term global initiative to develop in-country capacity to investigate educational issues and inform policy makers of research findings in order to promote positive educational change. IEQ projects have been conducted in more than 10 countries since 1991. Ghana participated in IEQ 1 from 1992 to 1996 and in IEQ2 from 1999 to 2001.

intended. The problem of implementation is compounded by negative attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian language for instruction.

## 2.2 THE RESEARCH STUDY

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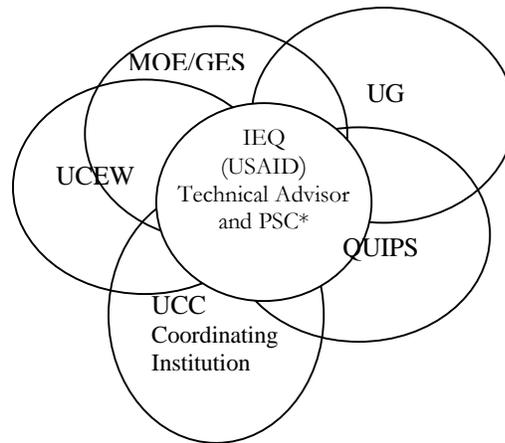
In order to address the foregoing concerns on Ghana's school language policy, and in response to a MOE sub-committee on language policy request to assess the effectiveness of its implementation, a team of researchers from three universities and the GES formed a collaborative partnership under the auspices of IEQ. Researchers from the University of Cape Coast, the University College of Education at Winneba, and the University of Ghana/Legon decided to conduct a multi-site case study on the implementation of the language policy in Ghana's primary schools in order to explore what was going on in various parts of the country and to complement the existing USAID/MOE education reform in Ghana on Quality Improvement in Primary Schools.

Despite the official language policy, it was well known that some schools in the country used English as MoI whilst others used the local language. The IEQ1 study had already established that pupils' proficiency in English in one region of the country was poor due to little exposure to English, lack of textbooks, pedagogy, and other factors. The purpose of the IEQ2 research was to describe the range of ways in which the mandate to use the mother tongue in schools was being implemented and the consequences of how the policy was being carried out, with a goal of more effective implementation or possible modification of the policy. The ultimate aim of the research was to generate knowledge about the use of the Ghanaian language or English as MoI in the classroom and then to create or use existing mechanisms to share the knowledge and its implications. The specific objectives of the study, that is, the 'Big Question' and sub-questions, are listed in Chapter Three.

## 2.3 IEQ2 PARTNERSHIPS

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IEQ 2/Ghana was a unique collaboration of professionals from three universities and the Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service, with technical assistance provided through USAID by Technical Advisor Shirley Miske. The team members had varied backgrounds of expertise in Teacher Education, Anthropology, Linguistics, Educational Administration, Primary Education, Math Education, Research and Statistics, which served the team well.

**Figure 1. IEQ2 Partnerships**

\*Three PSC liaisons served as USAID liaisons over the course of the two- year project.

Development partners or donors such as USAID champion the concepts of capacity building and the sustainability of skills and programs. IEQ2's cross-institutional partnership enhanced this principle. In addition to the research team partners, the members of the IEQ2 project advisory body, the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), represented all levels of the educational sector and included members who provided links to various segments of the educational system in order to facilitate access to and utilization of the research findings. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast who served as the RAC chair simultaneously chaired the national GES Council and so had influence and close access to the policy implementing body of the GES. As a nationally and internationally recognized leader of the educational reform effort in Ghana, the Vice Chancellor was an important link to policy dialogue in educational reform. For example, he approached the Minister of Education to set up a meeting for researchers to share their findings.

Institutional collaborations such as the IEQ2 partnership have advantages and limitations. The unique experience of IEQ 2 is discussed below.

#### ADVANTAGES OF PARTNERSHIPS

The researchers' varied backgrounds enabled them to tap each other's experience and expertise, thus contributing a great deal to progress in the research process. For example, the anthropologist shed light on cultural issues, the teacher educators discussed the complexities of teaching and learning, and the Ghana Education Service team members (GES) presented information on the implementation of other government education policies besides the school language policy. Involving practitioners from the GES in the research process gave them firsthand information of what goes on in schools. By working alongside GES officials, university researchers learned firsthand about issues arising at the MOE/GES and reasons why schools have peculiar problems. This collaboration also erased myths surrounding the various personalities and institutions and gave insights into each other's professions.

The link with USAID's larger QUIPS project with the Government of Ghana afforded researchers access to existing data on the QUIPS schools selected, thus enhancing understanding of the schools and communities. Also, through the participation of one member of the QUIPS Program Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) project component on the IEQ2 team, qualitative research was introduced to that unit which was engaged primarily in quantitative research. In turn, the PME team member was a critical asset in linking achievement test results to overall data analysis from the six sites.

The partnership also enabled certain types of work to be done by a sub-section of the partnership for the benefit of the whole team. For example, several team members would develop a particular data collection instrument and others would critique it rather than having to develop a similar instrument on their own.

#### LIMITATIONS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Cross-institutional collaboration is very useful and should be encouraged. However, as development partners and others advocate for this kind of research, they also should factor in ways of dealing with some of the possible limitations and how to address them as they come up. Two aspects of partnership the IEQ2 team had to deal with included the mobility of members and schedule conflicts due to multiple commitments.

#### **Continuity and Mobility**

In developing countries where professional salaries are low there is often high occupational mobility. In the second year of the IEQ 2 study, the two GES partners left their institution for other jobs, thus leaving empty places in the research team and a gap in institutional connections with the GES. The issue arose whether they should be replaced or whether research skills were so advanced that by that time new replacements might be completely bewildered. Several RAC members recommended that replacements join the IEQ teams but researchers agreed instead to seek advice from the GES when they needed clarification on any issue. The partnership linkage with the GES was sorely missed.

Researchers also may take on additional work responsibilities or leave their institutions temporarily for further study or sabbatical leave. One researcher was made head of a center at his institution. This new responsibility placed excessive demands on his time and schedule, at times making it impossible for him to meet his commitment to the partnership. Thus, if a collaborative approach is undertaken, it should be tailored to be responsive to the possible changes in the conditions of researchers' status and work.

#### **Schedule Conflicts**

Though the partnership was flexible and allowed each institution to develop its own schedule of activities, invariably there are times when all researchers need to meet (e.g., for workshops). Due to

the different calendar of activities, especially in the universities, it was sometimes difficult for researchers to agree on meeting times and places for workshops that lasted six to ten days. Location of workshops was also an issue, as members of particular institutions were constantly interrupted if meetings or workshops were conducted on their premises.

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## 2.4 COMMUNICATION AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

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In any research effort, adequate preparation (i.e., logistical support and communicating with data collection sites) is essential. With four institutional partners involved, the design was even more complicated and required adequate support at both institutional and cross-institutional levels. IEQ2 had a half-time coordinator based at the Centre for Research on Improving Quality Primary Education in Ghana (CRIQPEG) located at the University of Cape Coast.

### COMMUNICATING WITH THE SITES

In the IEQ 2 Study, research teams visited the six sites four times. Before each visit, the project coordinator made logistical preparations and sent information about the visit to the field. He sent letters or made phone calls to the sites before any fieldwork commenced. The purpose was either to seek permission or to inform the schools of the researchers' forthcoming visit. For the initial visit, the coordinator sent letters to district education offices and schools, seeking permission to conduct a study in the districts and the schools. IEQ 2 researchers carried copies of the letters along with them to the field.

The letter to the sites described the study being conducted, congratulated the school and/or district for being selected to participate in the study, stated the duration of data collection at the sites, and gave some information on the time the researchers would be round. As a way of preparing sites for the arrival of the researchers, the coordinator briefed the officers and the teachers on relevant aspects of the study. However, since the study was qualitative, the coordinator was careful not to reveal too much information about the study that would interfere with the researchers' need to observe the normal situation at the sites.

After the first visit to the sites, it was not deemed necessary to write to the district education offices again to seek permission for subsequent school visits. The coordinator did, however, inform sites well ahead of time about follow-up visits, and continued to familiarize himself with the sites and develop acquaintance with the staff and the officers. It was essential on an on-going basis to solicit their cooperation and any other assistance the researchers would need to conduct the research effectively.

In some cases, letters mailed did not reach the schools or destinations before the arrival of the researchers. In such situations, researchers produced copies of the letters they carried with them. On the occasion of the second data collection, a few schools did not get their letters before the study.

More than one school had arranged to engage in sporting activities that coincided with the period of data collection. In another case, all the teachers of the school left to attend a Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) meeting in another town and the activities the researchers had planned for that day could not come on.

After the data collection exercise, as a matter of courtesy, the coordinator wrote to the schools and the offices to thank them for the permission granted the researchers, for their participation in the study, and for any assistance given the researchers.

#### LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

The preparations researchers made prior to leaving for the field contributed tremendously towards the success of the fieldwork. Before leaving for the field, the researchers edited the research instruments developed and printed adequate copies for the data collection. The project also provided other materials for the fieldwork, such as notebooks, pens, pencils, rulers, tape-recorders, audiocassette tapes, and batteries.

The importance of taking along enough funds for transportation costs, living expenses and for meeting contingencies in the field cannot be over-emphasized. Individual research teams estimated meeting costs in the field and submitted applications to the finance office at least two weeks before the visit for funds to be released for the visit.

Other arrangements such as transportation to and accommodation at the sites also were taken care of before the visit, which enabled researchers to concentrate on data collection when they were in the field.

### 3 Technical Workshops and Data Collection: Learning by Doing

The diverse background of the researchers from the partnership institutions demanded that professional development workshops be held in order to (1) equip members with the skills needed for carrying out this kind of research and (2) improve capacity of the institutions to effectively organize future research studies such as this. Therefore, five main workshops were organized over the two-year span of the project with the technical advisor on the themes listed below in Table 1. Highlights of these workshops are presented in the sections that follow. The collection and analysis of data carried out in between the workshops is described later in this chapter.

#### 3.1 MAJOR WORKSHOPS

**Table 1. Workshops and Workshop Content**

PHASE	WORKSHOP NO. LENGTH	WORKSHOP CONTENT
PHASE ONE	Workshop One Two Weeks	Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods and Design; designing the research study and agenda/schedule, developing the instruments, and planning for baseline Data Collection Set #1
	Workshop Two Two Weeks	Qualitative Data Analysis (by hand); planning for Data Collection Set #2
	Workshop Three Two Weeks	Computerized Qualitative Data Analysis; more Qualitative Methods
PHASE TWO	Workshop Four Seven Days	Achievement Test Data Analysis; planning for Phase Two, Data Collection Set #3
	Workshop Five Six Days	Some analysis of Phase Two data; writing up, publishing, and disseminating the findings

#### WORKSHOP ONE

The collaborative professional development between the international consultant and the research team began at the first ten-day workshop in August 1999 with discussions about quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. Particular topics included what qualitative research is and characteristics of qualitative research, the kinds of questions qualitative research is best suited to answer, who a qualitative researcher is, qualities needed by the qualitative researcher, the kinds of instruments used by the qualitative researcher, and how they are used. We then discussed the research design and work plan for our project and developed the instruments and plans for the first occasion of

data collection. (See [www.ieq.org](http://www.ieq.org) for a copy of the Qualitative Research Training Manual used at this workshop.)

To develop the overarching question of this study we then brainstormed a long list of possible topics and evaluated them according to a list of previously determined criteria. The Big Question that emerged from this session was:

“How is the Government’s Language Policy being implemented in Primary Schools in Ghana?”

The following eight related sub-questions also emerged:

1. What is the nature of the interaction between the teacher and pupils and between and among pupils in the classroom when Ghanaian Language is being used as a MoI?
2. What are the attitudes of teachers and pupils to using Ghanaian language or English as a MoI and as a subject? What accounts for those attitudes?
3. What are teachers’ and pupils’ attitudes towards the language policy in Ghana?
4. To what extent are teachers prepared to teach in the Ghanaian language? In what ways?
5. What behaviors or actions show teachers’ competence in the Ghanaian Language?
6. In what ways, if any, do supervisors help with and/or ensure implementation of the language policy?
7. In what ways does the community support or encourage the use of Ghanaian Language or English as MoI in schools?

During another brainstorming session on what the expectations of the research were, it was agreed that the IEQ2 study must be able to speak to various audiences, for example, to policy makers about how the language policy is being implemented and why; and whether the language policy as it stands needs to be enforced or revised and how. If the policy is to be enforced what would it take to implement it successfully? If, on the other hand, a revision is necessary what will be the basis for it and what should be done?

Evidence is also to be provided to demonstrate what works:

- to the USAID-funded QUIPS project as a “value-added” project for the large primary school reform initiative in Ghana;

- to teacher educators about the current teacher competencies in the teaching and use of Ghanaian language;
- to primary teachers about competencies necessary to teach in Ghanaian languages; and
- to the Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service and others about the attitudes of pupils, parents, teachers, and personnel charged with carrying out the GES policies towards the implementation of the language policy.

Finally, researchers agreed that what was learned in Phase One would inform and affect Phase Two.

## WORKSHOP TWO

### **Data Analysis**

The second workshop in January 2000 focused on analyzing data “by hand” and on writing up the data in report form. In qualitative research such as this, data analysis *nun pari pasu* the data collection but after the collection period it is also important to scrutinize the information gathered, especially on individual sites. The specific objectives of this workshop were to: catalogue data from each case; write up findings; assess present instruments; and decide on questions and instruments for the Data Collection Set #2. In the end, the workshop offered a unique opportunity for cross-site analysis and generated information that could inform policy issues on the research topic.

### **Literature Review**

During the second workshop researchers new to this topic also began to acquaint themselves with the professional literature on first and second language teaching and learning in order to inform their understanding of the IEQ2/Ghana data in a broader context, especially in terms of related studies conducted in Africa and other developing countries. The IEQ Core Project based in Washington DC commissioned a bibliography to be developed that gave researchers access to English language information available on bilingual/mother tongue education. (See [www.ieq.org](http://www.ieq.org) for a copy of the bibliography.)

The team learned that educationists in English-speaking West African countries have debated the relationship between English and indigenous languages as MoI and for literacy in the primary school curriculum for decades. Two main points of view are found, broadly in opposition to each other. One is that if children are given a basis of learning and reading skills in their own language, they will have a head start in their continuing education and in their learning of English. The other is that attainment in English is ultimately the key to the individual’s educational advancement, and so the more and earlier it is taught and used, the better. This view is more commonly observed in practice than it is formulated in policy, especially with regard to the initial teaching of reading (ADEA, 1996).

The use of English as a medium for school work demands a reasonable ability to understand, read and write it, yet most children enroll in school with limited or no proficiency in English. They are very proficient in their own mother tongue, however, and are ready to learn the new ideas and concepts that are taught in the early years of school. Research conducted on the use of L1 has established that its use (L1) as medium of instruction during one's early years of schooling results in improved and faster acquisition of knowledge by pupils. In addition, the use of the L1 as a language of instruction is also effective in helping with the acquisition of second languages (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2001; Andoh-Kumi, 1992; Fafunwa, et al., 1989; Collison, 1972).

#### WORKSHOPS THREE THROUGH FIVE

The main objectives of the third ten-day workshop in June 2000 were to give IEQ 2 researchers the opportunity to: continue analysis of the first data set and revise cases for the end of Phase One; continue capacity building in qualitative methods (e.g., classroom observation, focus group discussions, and computerized analysis); finalize questions and instruments for the next set of data collection; and prepare a work plan for Phase Two, the final nine months of the project.

Researchers felt the computerized data analysis training was particularly useful as they were introduced to the Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing (NUD\*IST) software for analyzing qualitative data. Researchers learned how to enter data for use in NUD\*IST, make a document system, an index system or index tree, code and search text, and analyze data. Nevertheless, subsequent to the workshop researchers decided to return to analyzing data by hand, finding it more manageable for the data they had collected for this study and more accessible, since the computers broke down and were not always readily available.

To examine pupil achievement in the context of the qualitative data collected at its six sites, the researchers collaborated with QUIPS PME researchers to assess pupil performance and collect data on learning gains for pupils in P2/P3 and P3/P4 at the six primary school sites in the study. By learning to administer and analyze the classroom tests in Mathematics and English and the individual English Performance tests, researchers further developed their skills in quantitative research and in the constructive interplay between qualitative and quantitative findings. The QUIPS Achievement Tests were designed to track pupil performance in English and Mathematics among Ghanaian primary school pupils across two academic school years. The fourth workshop in October 2000, therefore, was focused on analyzing this achievement data as well as analyzing Data Set #2 and planning for Phase Two of the study.

The fifth and final six-day workshop was organized in June 2001 with the objective of giving IEQ 2 team members the opportunity to: discuss the communities' reaction to research findings; prepare final drafts of this Handbook, Phase One reports, and a journal article; develop a schedule for final data analysis and final report writing and other documents (e.g., other articles for publication); plan for the

National Seminar on October 3, 2001, and discuss the IEQ Evaluation Cycle and other strategies for disseminating findings.

### 3.2 OTHER WORKSHOPS

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Apart from the five main workshops organized with the Technical Advisor, other workshops were organized to facilitate some aspects of the project. Decisions about these were taken in consultation with her and in all cases she negotiated for technical support from the consultants involved. These are discussed in the sections that follow.

#### WORKSHOP WITH RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

The researchers decided at the first workshop that it would be important to include research assistants in the data collection. They therefore decided to have a special workshop to give the research assistants an in-depth understanding of the IEQ2 project and train them to understand and use the instruments designed for the first data collection set. This workshop lasted three days and gave both the researchers and research assistants an opportunity to practice using the instruments in selected schools.

#### WORKSHOPS ON ACHIEVEMENT TEST ADMINISTRATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

In order to equip IEQ 2 team members with an understanding of the tests and to standardize test administration, the PME Project trained researchers how to administer the achievement test instruments during a four-day training course prior to visiting the research sites.

After the first QUIPS PME tests were administered in the schools, the PME Chief of Party organized two separate workshops to teach a group of IEQ 2 researchers how to use computer software for the analysis of achievement data. The first workshop was on the use of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). The second involved training team members on the use of Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) computer software for analyzing growth in children's learning. The workshops lasted for three days and five days respectively.

### 3.3 OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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#### VISITS TO BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN THE USA

After Workshop Two, team members collaborated to write professional papers about their preliminary findings. Four of the researchers then presented these papers at the annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society in San Antonio, Texas in the USA. Before and after the conference the technical advisor arranged for the researchers to visit transitional and immersion bilingual education programs at schools in San Antonio's Edgewood School District and in Silver Spring, Maryland. The researchers, some of whom had harbored doubts about mother tongue

education based on the problems they had observed in Ghana, observed classes and interacted with pupils, teachers, and administrators, who demonstrated that bilingual education works. Children who had entered school speaking only Spanish in kindergarten (or, in immersion schools, only English) were fluent, literate, and able to compete academically in a second language by P5. This information powerfully influenced future conversations about the value and importance of properly implementing the language policy in Ghana.

#### PARTICIPATION IN WORLD BANK SEMINAR

In April 2000, the World Bank offered an interactive, international seminar for educational leaders in Ghana, Mexico, and other countries. Five IEQ2 team members also participated in this seminar on “Language Policy of Instruction in Basic Education” and were exposed to the latest international research on bilingual and mother tongue education. Information from this seminar also heightened researchers’ awareness of and support for mother tongue instruction.

### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

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The first phase of the study spanned a period of 15 months and was carried out in six primary schools in different districts and regions of Ghana. The study included four classes—Primary One through Primary Four (P1-P4)—and five subject areas, namely, Mathematics, English, Religious and Moral Education, Environmental Studies or Science (P4 only), and Ghanaian Language and Culture. One of the parameters established ahead of time was ensuring that the research was conducted in a language that at least one of the researchers shared with participants in the study. Time, resources, and the terms of reference that USAID had set ahead of time for the study allowed for four weeks of data collection in Phase One of the study. The original plan was to use two weeks in the first term and one week each during the second and third terms respectively. However, due to a national population census that coincided with the second term’s visit and which compelled basic schools to vacate earlier, the second term’s visit could not come off. Hence, two weeks of observation were conducted in the third term.

Based on the preliminary analysis of the first data set, researchers held focus group discussions with parents and teachers during the second visit to the schools. Issues discussed were based primarily on responses during the original individual interviews. Also, researchers conducted a few interviews with students and tutors in three teacher training colleges located near three of the main research sites. In addition, achievement tests were conducted in P2 and P3 in each of the selected primary schools. Researchers deferred decisions regarding the focus and span of Phase Two until they had the opportunity to look carefully at the first and second data sets.

After examining Phase One data from the first 15 months of the study and wanting to learn more about questions of teacher preparation raised in the data, researchers decided that during Phase Two they would collect data from six teacher training colleges located near the school research sites. In

addition, achievement tests were administered a second time in each of the selected primary schools, this time in P3 and P4 in order to track the same pupils tested the previous year.

#### THE RESEARCH SITES

Since the study set out to explore the variety of ways in which the language policy was being implemented, researchers selected schools that reflected the wide range of linguistic, social, and economic contexts of Ghanaian public primary schools. This included schools from one urban, three rural, and two peri-urban communities (with at least one “settler” school); schools in the north and the south where the teachers spoke the same Ghanaian language as the pupils; schools where teachers did not speak the same Ghanaian language(s) as the pupils; schools where English was the MoI and pupils enrolled speaking some English; schools where English was the MoI but pupils enrolled knowing little or no English (e.g., the settler school). Researchers assigned pseudonyms to these six communities and schools in order to keep their actual identities confidential. The following section provides descriptions of these sites.

Nantwi is a settler community of about 500 people in the Greater Accra Region. Farming and animal husbandry are the major occupations of those who have migrated to this region from all over Ghana and from neighboring countries. Nantwi Primary School’s 124 pupils attend classes in mud brick classroom blocks with thatched roofs. Not all pupils from the community are enrolled in school. Dangme and Ewe are the major languages of the community, although Hausa (a Nigerian language) and other languages are also spoken. This was a school that had participated in the QUIPS project, so researchers knew from existing QUIPS data to expect to find English used and non-implementation of the language policy, since the school contained settlers from several different ethnic and language groups and since no teachers spoke any of the languages of the community.

Apala is a small rural community in the Eastern Region comprised of migrant farmers from Greater Accra and the Eastern regions. The community is ethnically heterogeneous but Twi is the predominant language. One school block is mud brick with corrugated iron roofing; the other is bamboo. The school population is 249. Apala had also participated in the QUIPS project. The team was uncertain if it would find implementation or non-implementation since Twi was the predominant language of the community; however, through the community development component of the QUIPS project the community had decided to work with the teachers to promote increased English language usage at the school.

Awocha is a small farming community in the Western Region on the coast. The P1-P3 teachers in Awocha’s public school speak Ahanta, Fante, and English; all but the head teacher are untrained.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> In Phase One research the head teacher was the only trained teacher in the school but by Phase Two three more trained teachers had arrived.

predominant language of the area is Fante. Teachers use Fante as MoI as well as some English. Ahanta is not an officially sponsored government language that can be used for instruction. Awocha School had also participated in QUIPS. It was selected as a school that was probably implementing the language policy since it was distant from Accra and from English-speaking media and the community did not have additional resources to devote to the school.

The Kapa School is a private school, rich in resources, located in a major urban university community in the Ashanti Region. Teaching and related educational service jobs are the main occupations in the community. The prevalent language of the area is Akan, but pupils come with various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The community numbers about 18,000; the school population is more than 1,700. Kapa School has 48 teachers. As a private school Kapa is not subject to implementing the language policy. We expected it to be an English-only, elite, non-implementing school, the sort of school to which many policymakers in Accra and other large cities would send or aspire to send their children.

The Noto School serves the Noto Township, the main district headquarters, and surrounding clan-settlements. Although Notosco is a public school, parents support it with additional resources. The school was established as a nursery for the children of government staff on transfer here from many parts of Ghana. The school is perceived to offer good primary education, as measured by a child's competence and performance in English. Languages spoken in the area are Kasem and Nankani. The school compound is spacious and well kept. Although we had asked the district to recommend a school for the study that would be implementing the policy, once researchers had arrived at this school to which the district office had directed them, they decided to continue on. They studied Noto as a non-implementing public school that was openly supported and not sanctioned in any way in its decision to not implement the language policy.

Medofo is a nucleated settlement with a population of 2,000 in the Volta Region. Occupations center on farming, although some individuals engage in petty trading. The main ethnic groups are Ewes and Akans; Ewe is the main language for interaction in the community and it is also the predominant language of instruction. Medofo School is a public school with a population of over 250 pupils and 12 teachers; it also has a kindergarten. Classroom blocks are bamboo, cement block, and a roofed pavilion without walls. It was selected as an implementing school; in fact, researchers suspected that it would be a school that "over implemented" the policy; that is, where teachers used the local language in teaching P4 and above.

### 3.5 INSTRUMENTS, PROCEDURES, AND KINDS OF DATA COLLECTED

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#### PHASE ONE

The main instruments used for the first phase of the IEQ 2 study were interview protocols, systematic observations of classroom interactions, maps drawn of schools and communities, and school documents such as log books.

Researchers observed lessons in P1 to P4 classes in the subject areas noted above in subsection 3.4. In all classroom observations researchers took notes as lessons went on and audio-recorded the sessions as well. Also, two boys and two girls were selected at random from each class for special focus using the IEQ1 pupils' observation form. Any extra-ordinary behavior that came to notice (e.g., a child who did not talk at all during the lesson, any extroverted behavior etc.) was also noted and followed up after the lesson.

Second, in-depth individual interviews were conducted in each school with two boys and two girls randomly selected from each of the P1 to P4 classes, their parents, teachers of these classes, the head teacher, four school and community leaders, education officials at the district level (i.e., the Circuit supervisor and Assistant Director in charge of Supervision). During the second visit to the schools, researchers conducted focus group discussions with parents and teachers. Issues discussed were mainly based on their responses during the individual interviews.

Third, relevant documents of the school, such as, registers, log books, textbooks, teachers' guides, and other supplementary materials were examined and noted. Finally, researchers drew maps of the schools, classrooms observed, and the entire community to support profiles of the school and the community. The data collected during the first visit to the schools are summarized in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Phase One Data Collected**

1. Profiles of the schools, communities and all the subjects of the study
2. Classroom instruction and nature of and language used for teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions in-class and out-of-class
3. Information from pupils, teachers, parents, and school and community leaders' on their attitudes towards and preference for MoI
4. Availability and use of textbooks and other materials for teaching and learning
5. Language and mode of instruction in each class
6. Observations about gender
7. Teacher preparation and competence in the use and teaching of Ghanaian language
8. Awareness of the language policy
9. Role of supervisory personnel charged with carrying out GES policies (i.e., head teachers, circuit supervisors and the assistant director in charge of supervision) in the implementation or otherwise of the language policy.

Note: Instruments used to collect Phase One and Phase Two data are available on the Improving Educational Quality website, at [www.icq.org](http://www.icq.org)

## PHASE TWO

After completing Data Collection Set #2 in Spring 2000, the researchers developed a heightened concern about primary school teachers' inadequate preparation to implement the language policy through mother tongue instruction. The researchers used their findings from brief visits to teacher training colleges to inform the next set of research questions, and applied the skills developed in primary school classroom observations and interviews to research in the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) for Data Set #3. During the nine months of Phase Two, researchers collected data from six teacher training colleges located near the main research sites. They observed lessons in PS2 to PS3 classes, including English language, Ghanaian language, Mathematics, Science, Environmental Studies and Religious and Moral Education. In all classroom observations researchers took notes while lessons were going on and audio-recorded the sessions as well.

Second, in each college researchers conducted in-depth individual interviews with heads of departments (or tutors) of English language, Ghanaian language, Mathematics, Science, Education, and Social Studies; principals and vice principals; and with 16 students (eight young men and eight young women in the case of the mixed/coeducational institutions) randomly selected from each of the PS2 to PS3 classes. Researchers also examined relevant documents of the school, such as syllabuses, textbooks and other supplementary materials.

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### 3.6 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

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#### ORGANIZING THE DATA

As mentioned above, the second workshop focused on analyzing data “by hand” and on writing up the data in report form. Researchers engaged in cataloguing data from each case, writing up findings, assessing instruments used for the first fieldwork visit, and deciding on questions and instruments for the next set of data collection. The main analytic processes researchers went through are discussed in the sections that follow.

Since the process of data analysis is eclectic, and there is not one “right way” to proceed (Tesch, 1990), the team employed a combination of categorizing systems and analytic frames to organize the data from the six different sites.

**Developing a Catalogue:** As a first step in the organization of data the team sorted the data under four main headings, namely, profiles, interviews, field notes, and documents. Team members were assigned a particular site, then classified their data and checked on the quantities of each item. This was to ensure that every datum collected was available for analysis.

**Categorizing and Coding:** A system of categories, subcategories, and coding was developed by the team to recapture and interpret the data on individual sites. Team members then identified items on the instruments and data that fell within a stated category (e.g., attitudes). They attached the codes to the appropriate items on the data collection instruments to assign that information to a category. This made it possible to make comparisons and contrasts on single sites. The categories were refined as the workshop progressed and new ideas and situations emerged.

**Charts and Matrices:** Charts and matrices were developed to further focus on selected categories as a means of summarizing the data. This made it easier for the researcher to readily identify responses and coincidences of responses and viewpoints.

#### WRITING UP THE DATA

**Assertions:** Team members wrote up assertions derived from the data. Such assertions took note of discrepant cases and also the extent of similarities or differences. These were done along all determined and refined categories. In this way it was found, for example, that four sites were not implementing the language policy.

**Quotes:** Team members were asked to use field notes and interview schedules to recall striking comments and responses made by respondents whilst on the field, e.g., “English determines if a child

has benefited from education” (statement from a parent). These quotes were used as supports for assertions made about a particular category for analysis.

**Pseudonyms:** The team developed pseudonyms for the sites. This was to keep the identity of the sites protected in an ethical manner so as not to break confidentiality.

**Descriptions:** Team members were requested to write descriptions of schools, communities, and portraits of teachers within their sites for discussions.

**Operational Definitions:** The team tested the definitions of the terms they had constructed when setting the parameters of the study against the data. For example, it was agreed that “over-implementation” would refer to a site where the Ghanaian language was used as MoI after P3. After re-examining the term in the context of the data, researchers questioned the policy’s mandate of transition from L1 to L2 in P4. They asked whether using L1 in P4 was, in fact, “over implementation” or whether it was appropriate, based on other second language acquisition research they had read.

**Activities:** Data for the various sites were shared among team members so that one team member was kept in charge of one of the team’s sites. This was done to ensure that members eventually had in-depth knowledge of one assigned site whilst maintaining the shared knowledge of the two sites for their institution. This facilitated individual site analysis to bring out trends within each of the sites. For example, although Medofo was an implementing school, in Data Set #1 the majority of parents (14 out of 16) interviewed preferred that English be used as the medium of instruction in the Lower Primary. Their reasons were varied. They stated, for example:

I prefer English because with it you can go everywhere and have no problems.

English is an international language. It will therefore be easier for the child to communicate well even if he travels outside.

## CROSS-SITE ANALYSIS

Apart from the individual site analysis, the team also looked at the trends across sites and captured similarities and differences in the implementation, attitudes, and other variables in the data collected. For instance, the majority of parents across sites wanted English as MoI right from P1; but P1 pupils preferred mother tongue instruction because then they could understand what was being taught. Awocha looked somewhat different because they were using a second Ghanaian language (Fante) for instruction in their school instead of the community’s first language (Ahanta—a language without an orthography) and they were concerned about losing their identity.

## EMERGING ISSUES

As discussions advanced, the team kept track of issues that demanded clarification following initial analysis. They also took into account the feedback and observations of the Research Advisory Committee. These matters were kept in focus to inform members of the types of questions to consider for the next data collection set. These were some of the issues: How is the language policy disseminated and publicized? What are the effects of (a lack of) textbooks on the language policy? What kinds of materials are necessary for language policy implementation? How are languages chosen as MoI? What are the bases for parents' attitudes? How do schools' institutional practices support English over Ghanaian language? Can the study look at pre-schools?

## 4 Findings and Implications

### 4.1 FINDINGS

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Findings that were prominent after the IEQ 2 researchers visited the six schools and training colleges are being analyzed in other articles and publications. A summary of findings by category include the following:

#### AWARENESS AND AVAILABILITY OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY DOCUMENT

1. Stakeholders do not have copies of school language policy document. No one interviewed had copy of the circular or the policy statement.
2. Most community members are not aware of the language policy.
3. Tutors and students in the training colleges are aware of the language policy.

It is not surprising that parents, community members, and even teachers are unaware of the policy since copies of the document appeared not to exist. However, tutors and TTC students were very aware of the policy and most were very supportive of it.

#### ATTITUDES

1. In the first set of data, most parents and community members expressed a preference for English-only instruction, and, therefore, had an unfavorable attitude towards the language policy. They wanted children to learn English and thought the best way to do this was begin with English only instruction from P1.
2. The attitude of many community members toward the policy changed after they were made aware of it and discussed it during the focus group interviews.

#### USE OF GHANAIAN LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH AS MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION

1. Pupils participate more actively when L1 is used for instruction.
2. The majority of P1 pupils prefer to ask and answer questions and be taught in their local languages because they understand well what is taught in the local language.

3. The majority of the P2-P4 pupils said they prefer to be taught in English because English would help them to get ahead in the world.
4. Some community members and teachers, along with most tutors and students in the training colleges prefer mother tongue/bilingual education in schools.
5. Teachers in non-implementing schools are aware that pupils understand better when they use the local language in their lessons, but most use English as MoI.
6. Some teachers in P4 (the transitional grade to English) still use the local language to explain some parts of their lessons.
7. Some teachers select MoI depending on the subject and topic to be treated.
8. Some parents prefer use of Ghanaian language as MoI at the lower level because it will enhance understanding.
9. Apart from the Ghanaian Language tutors in the training colleges, other TTC tutors were observed to code-switch in their lessons, using Ghanaian language and English as MoI.
10. An overwhelming majority of TTC Tutors were aware of and supported the use of Ghanaian language as MoI in lower primary; that is, they supported the language policy.
11. Language teaching methods observed in P1-P4 classes included a lot of repetition and one- or two-word question-answer (“point and say”) methods. In one class in one school (Alapa) a teacher was observed to use manipulatives and visuals in an English and a Ghanaian language class.

#### TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

1. There were insufficient numbers of textbooks and teaching and learning materials in both English and Ghanaian language in schools and TTCs.
2. Only one TTC out of six had textbooks in Ghanaian languages (many of which the tutors themselves had prepared). These included Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Reading and Writing Book 1, and Teachers Guides written in Twi and Ewe.
3. Schools and TTCs that do not have Ghanaian language textbooks use supplementary readers in Ghanaian language.

#### TEACHER PLACEMENT OR POSTING

1. Teachers are sometimes posted to areas where they do not speak or are not proficient in the predominant Ghanaian language of the area. In one school, none of the teachers spoke any of the pupils' languages.
2. Teachers who have been teaching for over five years had not received training in language teaching or MoI methodology in the TTCs they had attended.
3. In the schools visited teachers were found not to have received any in-service training in mother tongue MoI methodology.

#### TEACHER TRAINING

1. TTC students sometimes engage in peer teaching by using Ghanaian language as MoI.
2. Most teacher trainees attend TTCs where their first language is one of the Ghanaian languages taught.
3. Teacher Training colleges ensure that the predominant language of the area is learnt in the school.

#### SUPERVISION

1. Most supervisors interviewed do not actively provide supervisory support to implementing the language policy. Some of them disagree with the policy.
2. Supervisors who could support the teachers through the provision of in-service training do not have the technical, educational and linguistic skills necessary to give this kind of support.
3. There was no evidence pointing to the monitoring of the policy. Subsequently there was no evidence of sanctions against education officers or schools that did not implement the policy.
4. The non-monitoring of language policy implementation allowed schools and education officers the freedom to implement the policy the way they saw fit, including developing their own district- or school-based English-only policy.

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## 4.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

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After researchers wrote up their findings (see Interim Report, 2000), they discussed implications for government educational policy and elaborated a list of options for policy makers to consider. As is indicated above, researchers had gathered overwhelming evidence of lack of systemic support from the Ministry for the policy. Evidence included the complete absence of language policy circulars, no Ghanaian language textbooks or subject matter textbooks available in the Ghanaian language, no staff development for teachers who had never been trained in mother tongue instructional methods, teachers posted to schools where they could not speak the predominant language of the area, few officially sponsored languages and a paucity of materials, lack of sanctions for non-implementing schools, and more. At this point, researchers could have urged the government to abandon the policy.

In Phase Two of the research, however, researchers found strong indications of support for the policy. They had encountered widespread awareness of and support for the policy in the six Teacher Training Colleges. In one college tutors were even preparing their own materials to support mother tongue instruction and their students were required to conduct practice teaching lessons in the pupils' mother tongue. In the six school communities, when parents and community members were made aware of the existence of the policy, many began to express interest in and support for it. In addition, researchers had come to know about development partner (GTZ and World Bank) accomplishments in preparing materials for mother tongue instruction in several languages and they had obtained a copy of a circular that the GES had issued to all schools in the country in January 2001. In it the GES both encouraged and indicated that they expected the policy to be implemented. IEQ researchers were also convinced from other studies and from having seen viable bilingual education programs work that the policy was sound, based on research, and had great potential for leading to improved quality education for all children. Hence, rather than urging the government to change the policy, researchers developed options for policy makers to consider that would lead to improved implementation of the policy. Several days before researchers were scheduled to share their findings and recommendations in a well-publicized national seminar, the Minister of Education announced that he was suspending the policy for 10 years, replacing it with a policy of English only instruction.

Nevertheless, the study was an important undertaking. It not only exposed the IEQ researchers to qualitative research, but it also provided researchers coming from various backgrounds and experiences the opportunity to share views and expertise. The study also revealed the nature of the problems regarding implementation of school language policy in Ghana. The knowledge generated also will be able to guide research and policy in countries where policy-makers, policy-implementers, and basic education stakeholders have the interest and political will to pay attention to (perhaps unpopular but scientifically-based) research findings in making informed decisions.

The experiences gained by IEQ researchers will go a long way in helping them to design and conduct future studies. We hope that this Handbook will provide other researchers who have never had such experience with the insight needed for similar studies. Those researchers are encouraged to contact the following agencies below for any further information or advice they would need with regard to the study:

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