

Leadership for Learning (LfL) Ghana: Stories of Most Significant Change (One to Four)

Names of people, schools and their locations have been anonymised

Story One

Title: Stakeholder support improves community participation and relationships

Category: Community

Madam Kate is the headteacher of Prime District Assembly (DA) Primary School, in the Western Region of Ghana. She was introduced to Leadership for Learning (LfL) in 2009 at a workshop at Ajumako in the Central Region of Ghana. She later participated in other LfL workshops at Saltpond and Winneba.

Madam Kate indicated that her involvement in LfL has enhanced her work as a head teacher a lot. Through the workshops, she has acquired skills of dialoguing with and lobbying other stakeholders of her school to support school improvement projects. As a result, the community has been sensitized and they support the school by providing the needs of the school. Teachers are also now actively involved in the administration of the school.

Before the introduction of LfL, the community was not supporting the school in its activities. Opinion leaders were not concerned about school activities. Parents were not providing their wards with educational materials. Also, there were petty conflicts amongst the staff members while the level of truancy among pupils was high.

After participating in the first LfL workshop at Ajumako, parents, teachers and the community leaders were invited to the school and alerted to their roles and responsibilities as partners in the education of pupils in the school. This was followed by dialoguing and networking with the chief, the Member of Parliament (MP), the education directorate and the

community as a whole on the need to support the school. All stakeholders understood and began to support the school willingly and in diverse ways.

Consequently, the chief donated a computer to the school. Parents also purchased four additional computers for the school. The MP renovated a three unit classroom block that was in a deplorable state. The community checked the erosion on the school compound through communal labour and parents supplied their wards with educational materials. The district assembly also provided enough furniture for the children to use in school. On the whole, school-community relationship has improved tremendously.

Madam Kate indicated that though her implementation of LfL has brought about a lot of changes in her school, she saw the change in the attitude of the community and their participation in school improvement as the most significant because it had made her work easier since the community and other stakeholders have understood the principles and have offered to give her the needed support. She feels supported. Teachers as well as the children have been assigned responsibilities and they report on their roles played to the head. In effect, Madam Kate said LfL “has been a success story”.

Story Two

Title: **Transparency through dialogue**

Category: **School**

Headteacher Mr. T. T. Day was first introduced to LfL at a workshop in 2009. Upon his return, Mr. Day briefed his staff on LfL and solicited their support on the need to implement the principles for improved results. The staff agreed to the proposal and they collectively initiated moves to put the principles to practice. However, in 2010, Mr. Day was transferred to head his current school, Juicy Basic School. He continued his links with the LfL Ghana team and has attended all the other LfL workshops for head teachers.

The previous head teacher of his current school was perceived to be using the autocratic leadership style in managing the school. As such, there was no transparency in the use of funds. Teachers complained that they did not know what school funds were used for. The teachers argued that though there were pressing issues that required funding, like repairs to the school roof that had been removed by wind, the previous head teacher turned a deaf ear to their persistent appeals. Mr. Day therefore had to resort to the knowledge and skills acquired through LfL workshops to initiate and move some changes in the school. He outlined some of the changes he initiated to include: putting a prefectorial system in place for pupils to be involved in leadership activities; transparency especially related to how funds are used in the school; shared accountability; involvement of teachers in decision making; and discipline among pupils. As a result of these changes some tangible results have been achieved. These include connectivity to the internet, re-roofing of the school buildings, provision of water in all the blocks and the introduction of the pre-technical aspect to basic design technology course in the school.

Mr Day ensured accountability by selecting some teachers to be in charge of funds. These teachers rendered accounts to all members of staff. This practice was extended to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Parents therefore saw the school administration as transparent and hence lent their support to school activities. Parents contributed monies which were used to print end of term exam questions and answer booklets. Hitherto, exams questions were written on the chalkboard. Parents also pay a levy for internet connectivity. Moreover, two laptops have been bought from internally generated funds including proceeds from school worship service.

Mr. Day is now credited with instilling discipline and transparency in the school. Though he outlined some changes due to his practice of LfL, he considers the practice of transparency in administration as the most significant. He indicated that this change is significant because “without transparency in school administration, there is apathy and the vision of the school suffers”.

Story Three

Title: LfL improves pupils' reading skills

Category: Pupils

Miss Tee, Assistant head teacher of Apples Basic School tells her story of how LfL has helped improved the reading skills of pupils in her school. She was first introduced to the LfL programme in 2009 when the head teacher returned from the Ajumako workshop and briefed the staff about LfL.

She indicated that the introduction of LfL to members of staff had resulted in teachers now being much more involved in school activities and programmes alongside teaching. Pupils prompt teachers to organise quizzes and competitions and pupils now learn on their own. Pupils are also involved in school administration through the school prefect system.

Hitherto, some teachers were not involving themselves in school activities/programmes apart from the routine class teaching. Pupils were not going for library books to read. The performance of pupils at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) was about 60% pass. Then the LfL programme was introduced as an intervention. The headteacher assigned roles and responsibilities to all the teachers. Quizzes and spelling competitions were organised often for pupils. Pupils were also appointed as prefects to help in the management of the school and keep the school compound clean. Pupils were introduced to reading of library books and encouraged to go for books to read on their own.

After some time of implementing LfL in the school, there has been improvement in the students' reading and learning. Pupils do assignments and home work as expected of them. Pupils are able to organise themselves to learn on their own and there is improvement in the performance of students at the Basic Education Certificate Examination to a 90% pass.

Miss Tee chose this change in particular as the most significant because “Pupils’ interest and ability to read has increased and students’ performance at the Basic Education Certificate Examination has improved”.

Story Four

Title: **Teachers' positive attitude towards work improves school performance**

Category: **Professional**

Miss Kaisia, a basic two class teacher at Groove Primary School in the Central Region of Ghana, was first introduced to the LfL when her head teacher returned from the Ajumako workshop in 2009. She indicated that an LfL workshop was organised for the teachers in her circuit and teachers on her staff.

Miss Kaisia stated that through the knowledge of LfL and the awareness of the need for shared accountability they have established and maintain cordial relationships between the headteacher and teachers, among teachers, and between teachers and pupils of the school. There is better interaction between the school and parents/community and parents are now supporting the development of the school. LfL has also developed the leadership skills of teachers and pupils of Groove Primary School.

Initially, most of the pupils could not read or write. Teachers' attitude to work was not the best. Teachers were usually absent on Fridays (market days) and they did things their own way in the absence of the headteacher. Parents were also not supporting their children in their education. The headteacher upon returning from the workshop at Ajumako briefed teachers and parents about the Leadership for Learning programme and its benefits. He gradually encouraged the teachers to take active roles in the administration of the school. The parents were also educated on their roles and responsibilities towards the education of their children.

Through LfL, teachers became aware that everyone is a learner and have gradually become bold and confident in themselves, willing to take up leadership roles even in the absence of the headteacher. Teachers are now regular and punctual to school and very responsible to work. Teachers no longer wait for the headteacher to prompt them on what they should do because the teachers remind themselves of their duties and responsibilities.

Parents are now cooperating with teachers and supporting the school in its development activities. Leadership skills of teachers and pupils have developed as they take turns in leadership roles/positions.

Miss Kaisia indicated that teachers' positive change in behaviour and attitude towards work was the most significant change in the school after the introduction of LfL. According to her, teachers are now regular and punctual to school and they work diligently when in school. Parents are also now supporting their children and cooperating with the school. She indicated that teacher commitment to duty had improved through this change in attitude and this is reflecting in pupils' performance. For example, a pupil from the school won the presidential award for best performance at the Basic Education certificate Examination (BECE) last year. The school also won a reading competition that was organised at the circuit level.

Further Information

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a qualitative approach to monitoring and evaluation. It involves the collection of stories of “significant change”, the sharing of these stories and feedback on the significance of change they represent. Leadership for Learning (LfL) is a professional development initiative that has operated in Ghana since 2009 with the aim of improving headteachers’ leadership capacity.

In January 2014 the Cambridge team led a two-day research capacity building workshop (funded by the Cambridge-Africa Alborada Research Fund with matched support from the Commonwealth Centre for Education) for Ghana Education Service officers, Professional Development Leaders and colleagues from the University of Cape Coast. MSC was introduced to participants who then used the technique to collect stories from schools in the LfL Ghana programme.

These stories were the focus of a second workshop (June 2014), and provide additional evidence of LfL's impact. Anonymised transcripts of four of the collected stories, each with a focus on a particular domain of change (community, school, pupils or professional), are presented in this document. These stories demonstrate how, five years after the launch of the LfL programme in 2009, LfL is embedded in headteachers’ leadership practice, and change has been sustained.

For further information on LfL Ghana, and MSC, go-to: <https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/cce/initiatives/projects/leadership/>. Alternatively email Louis Major (lcm54@cam.ac.uk) or Sue Swaffield (ses42@cam.ac.uk).

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