



## COMMUNIQUE

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### **Early Childhood Education Workshop: Teachers' Capacity Building for Play-based Learning in Ghana**

**Presbyterian Women's College of Education, Aburi, Eastern Region, Ghana**

Associates for Change (AfC), in partnership with the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and the Ghana Education Service (GES), organized a dissemination workshop on May 15, 2024, at the Presbyterian Women's College of Education in Aburi. The event brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Education, headteachers and teachers from public basic schools, principals and tutors from colleges of education, and education innovators (Sabre and Right to Play). The workshop focused on sharing evidence from the KIX GPE supported research study conducted by AFC and ISSER to measure the impact of play based learning in early childhood education and the contribution of teachers' capacity to the success of play-based learning.

#### **Evidence from the Research**

The research project, conducted over three years, evaluated the efficacy of play-based learning interventions in early childhood education across 593 schools in the Eastern and Northern Regions of Ghana. To achieve this, the study compared intervention schools that implemented play-based learning with non-intervention schools to assess various educational outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to survey and interview study participants from public basic schools, colleges of education, education innovators and district officials in education. The findings of the study revealed the following:

- **Improved Learning Outcomes:** Intervention schools demonstrated significant improvements in literacy and numeracy among early learners compared to non-intervention schools.

- **Enhanced Cognitive Development:** Children in intervention schools showed better cognitive development and social skills due to the play-based learning approach.
- **Teacher Readiness:** The research highlighted the need for more comprehensive teacher training to effectively implement play-based learning methodologies.
- **Infrastructure Challenges:** Despite the benefits of play-based learning, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and insufficient play-based learning materials were identified.
- **Community Support:** Engagement with parents and the community was found to be vital for the successful implementation of play-based learning.

## Workshop Deliberations and Recommendations

The workshop participants proposed several actionable recommendations:

1. **Policy Reforms:** Participants emphasized the need for policy reforms to support the integration of play-based learning in the early childhood education curriculum. This includes revising teacher training programmes and developing supportive policies to ensure the effective implementation of PBL.
2. **Investment in ECE:** Increased investment in ECE was highlighted as crucial to effective and quality delivery of PBL. This involves both financial resources and the provision of adequate Teacher Learning Materials and infrastructure to support play-based learning environments.
3. **Teacher Training and Placement:** Comprehensive training programs for teachers are needed to enhance their capacity to implement play-based learning. Additionally, appropriate placement of trained teachers in ECE centers is essential to ensuring the success of these initiatives.
4. **Community and Family Engagement:** Engaging communities and families in early childhood education activities is vital. Strategies such as using local radio stations to sensitize parents and involving local artisans in school activities were recommended to foster a supportive environment for play-based learning in ECE.
5. **Collaboration with NGOs:** The role of non-governmental organizations like Right to Play and Sabre Education in promoting play-based learning was acknowledged. Collaboration with these organizations can help scale up successful interventions and innovations in ECE.

The workshop concluded with a commitment to continue collaborative efforts to enhance early childhood education in Ghana through innovative play-based learning approaches. Participants agreed on the importance of disseminating the outcomes of the workshop to relevant stakeholders and leveraging these insights to drive further action and investment in ECE.

## Call to Action

The stakeholders call on the government, educational institutions, and development partners to prioritize early childhood education and support the implementation of play-based learning strategies. This will ensure that children in Ghana receive a solid foundation for lifelong learning and development.

## Contact

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