

**Child centered community capacity building as strategy for IECCD programs:
Plan's pilot projects in Senegal, Togo and Burkina Faso situated within a
holistic regional program approach on ECCD**

Presenter

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Plan's approach

Plan's Vision is of a world in which all children realize their full potential in societies which respect people's rights and dignity. Plan strives to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in Africa and all other continents through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives by:

- enabling deprived children, their families and their communities to meet their basic needs and to increase their ability to participate in and benefit from their societies
- building relationships to increase understanding and unity among peoples of different cultures and countries
- promoting the rights and interests of the world's children

Plan works through a rights-based child centered community development (CCCD) approach in which children, families and communities are active and leading participants in their own development. It enhances their capacity and opportunity to work together with others to address the structural causes and consequences of poverty at all levels.

Plan supports communities to develop the structures and skills they need to provide a safe, healthy and enabling environment in which children are able to realize their full potential ('community development').

It is Plan's belief, based on many years of experience, that this can be achieved only if children's best interests are at the heart of everything we do and if children themselves actively participate in the process ('child centered').

All Plan's work has its foundations in the fundamental rights of children as expressed and internationally agreed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The child centered approach therefore aims to support children to realize these rights through, for example:

- promoting awareness and understanding of children's rights
- encouraging and enabling children to participate in their own development
- listening to what children have to say about what is preventing them from realizing their rights and adapting projects and programs to address this
- facilitating children to take part in policy discussions at local, national and international levels alongside community members, partners and Plan staff
- acknowledging that children's rights are inextricably linked to the achievement of fundamental human rights within communities as a whole

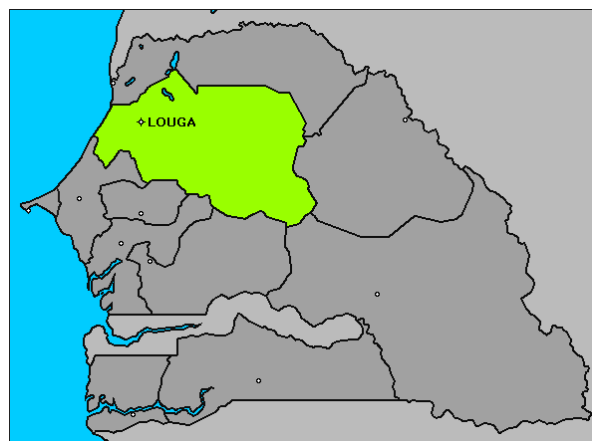
Plan WARO's integrated ECCD-response to iECCD

Through (1) Plan WARO's ongoing commitment to promote children and community learning processes improving children's wellbeing and self-realization, (2) international research-based evidence of the primordial importance of access to quality care and development services for children from a pre-natal stage to the age of entering primary education for children's development and (3) the observation that expenditure targeting children in this life cycle in Plan's programs in the learning domain in West Africa was very limited (see table for FY05 – July 2004 to June 2005 – expenditure in the Plan WARO region in the Learning Domain), Plan WARO is in the process of prioritizing ECCD as a key in its child development programming.

Some key strategies of Plan's WARO's work in ECCD are listed below. There is an ongoing commitment to test this combination of strategies and to perform qualitative and quantitative research to assess the efficiency and the impact of these strategies in order to improve programming. The central characteristic is community participation as a necessary (though not exclusive) condition for making programs work, in particular in working in rural areas working with the most vulnerable and poor children, families and communities.

- Community participation, management and ownership;
- Building upon existing endogenous practices, formulating localized and relevant responses;
- Community capacity building, not service delivery, as objective;
- Holistic, integrated life-cycle approach to child and community development;
- Facilitating a diversity of approaches;
- Building partnerships and relationships.

Case 1: PROCAPE – Senegal



The Plan Senegal four-year project, “*Building local capacity to promote integrated early childhood care and development*” contributes to improving the health, nutritional status, cognitive, social and emotional development and protection of children 0-6 years old in order to prepare them to lead healthy and productive lives. The project responds to priority needs identified by Plan Senegal in the 2003-2018 Country Strategic Plan (CSP), in the 2003-2008 Country Program

Outline (CPO), and to priorities related to Plan’s globally consolidated approach of Child Centred Community Development (2003) (CCCD). It also supports Senegalese government iECCD (integrated Early Childhood Care and Development) policy and program priorities.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to improving the health, nutritional status cognitive, social and emotional development, and protection of children 0-6 years old in four rural communities of the Louga Plan Programme Unit in order to prepare these children for leading healthy and productive lives.

The purpose of the four-year project is *to develop and test a model for building local capacity to promote integrated, community-based ECCD services for 0-6 year olds. The model, tested in the Louga region of Senegal, will **strengthen the capacity of families, communities/villages and local government structures** to support, implement, evaluate and sustain strategies that promote the holistic well-being of young children.*

Project efforts to build organizational and community capacity to promote iECCD are implemented in one Plan programme unit (PU), in the Louga Region of Senegal and communities in that PU will directly benefit from it during the life of the project. However, the model developed will in turn benefit all five of Plan Senegal’s program units, and potentially governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in integrated early childhood care and development (iECCD) elsewhere in the country and in other West African countries.

The project design is rather unconventional in so far as the primary focus is on strengthening capacity both within local government structures and within community/village structures to promote and sustain basic iECCD services. In this project, the “capacity-building” goal is translated into a variety of strategies to be carried out at these two levels to strengthen their commitment, knowledge and skills for developing and sustaining basic iECCD services. The indirect anticipated impact of these strategies is improved family practices to promote iECCD, and, in turn, the well-being of young children. A strong monitoring, documentation and evaluation component ensures continuous learning and development of lessons, guidelines and tools that can be used in other regions to implement similar programs in the future. This information will all contribute to development of the iECCD promotion model.

The project strategy is composed of activities at four levels: local government level (*arrondissement*); community/village level; family level; and national level. Greater effort and resources are invested at the first three levels, but the fourth is important as well. Activities will be supported in one local government unit (*arrondissement*), to increase capacity at that level to advocate for, develop and implement integrated iECCD, community-based activities in collaboration with local technical services, especially health, education and water/hygiene. At the community level, the knowledge and skills of community groups and leaders will be strengthened to plan, implement and evaluate two types of iECCD activities. The priority will be to develop activities for 0-3 year old children: home-based play groups to promote improved nutritional status, health and early stimulation, and parent/family education activities organized, primarily for mothers and grandmothers based on their leading role in iECCD. A second priority will be to develop activities for 3-6 year old children: community managed, centre-based activities will be strengthened in three existing centres, and later potentially in new centres, building on lessons learned from the Plan “iECCD Centres” pilot-project. Additional activities will include: local radio programs advocating for iECCD ; development of simple printed materials for families; educational

activities with school children to strengthen their role in iECCD; and creation of toy lending libraries composed of both traditional and “modern” toys. There will be a synergy between these various strategies and activities that will contribute to improved iECCD practices at the family level.

The project is implemented under the shared authority of Plan and the local administrative official, *the sous-préfet*, and a project Management Unit will provide support for the development of all project-supported activities. It is allocated with a 4-year estimated budget of US\$ 1,327,018.

- Child-centred rights-based and community development approach
- Strengthening the role of family members in IECCD
- Culture -sensitive strategies
- Gender-sensitive strategies
- Involving the poorest families and children
- Grandmother-inclusive approach
- Continuous learning approach
- Mass communication through community radio

Based on the project purpose the primary beneficiaries are the users of the IECCD model are:

- Local structures including both local government (*collectivités locales*) and technical services (*services déconcentrés*) in 4 partner *communautés rurales* in Louga Region including two where *Centres d’Eveil* already exist (Mbédiène, Niomré, Nguidilé and Kelle Guèye) in the arrondissement of Mbédiène.
- Civil society groups in partner communities/villages level including traditional leadership structures, women’s groups etc.

The direct beneficiaries of the project however are:

- 13,572 parents and other family members of the partner communities (women of childbearing age, grandmothers, father...)
- 6,700 children 0-3 years of age who participate in home-based play groups
- 3,000 children 3-6 years of age who participate in ECCD centre activities

The following box indicates the key result areas aimed at in the PROCAPE.

Result 1	Strengthened knowledge and capacity of parents and other family members to promote the health, nutritional status, cognitive, social and emotional development of children primarily, 0-3 year olds and secondly, 3-6 year olds through use of the ECCD promotion model.
Result 2	Strengthened ability of community leaders and structures (at village level), to plan, implement and evaluate activities to promote essential community-based IECCD services primarily, for 0-3 year olds and their caretakers, and secondly, for 3-6 year olds through use of the ECCD promotion model.
Result 3	Local government structures (<i>communautés rurales</i>) have increased capacity to involve civil society groups and coordinate support from multi-sectoral technical staff in the development and implementation of integrated community-based ECCD services to communities in their area through use of the ECCD promotion model.
Result 4	National policies on ECCD services are enriched through dissemination and discussion of the model for building local capacity to promote ECCD services for 0-6 year olds.

In terms of project activities, the following table overviews key project activities identified per result area:

Key project activities for each project result	
Result 1: Family level	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↪ Participatory rapid assessment to document household roles, knowledge and expectations related to ECCD ↪ Baseline assessment of ECCD practices of women, men and grandmothers ↪ Development/adaptation of X parent education modules using participatory curriculum development approach ↪ Development/adaptation of booklets on household activities that family members can use to promote ECCD at home ↪ Production of a set of local/traditional and locally-made toys for 0-3 year olds ↪ Production of booklet on traditional and other games for children 0-3 and 3-6 ↪ Parent education sessions carried out in X communities ↪ Play groups organized for 0-3 year olds in X communities ↪ Radio broadcasts on ECCD 	
Result 2: Community level	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↪ Initial training (sensitization) sessions with traditional community leaders and other community leaders (male and female, including grandparents) on integrated needs of children 0-6 ↪ Assessment of community structures, leadership and capacity and identification of capacity-building/training needs related to ECCD ↪ Participating communities are identified through self-selection process ↪ Community volunteers (mothers and grandmothers) are trained to train other parents and grandparents on ECCD and to serve as home-based ECCD coordinators/facilitators ↪ Communities identify mechanisms to compensate/motivate community volunteer educators (for parent/family education) ↪ Establishment of toy lending library (CRESP model and lessons learned) ↪ ECCD topics are incorporated into materials for functional literacy classes for women ↪ ECCD-promotion “out-of-school activities” organized in primary and secondary schools to strengthen family support for ECCD. ↪ Participatory monitoring and evaluation sessions at community level (using adaptation of World Vision model) ↪ Upgrading of existing ECCD centres based on their respective needs 	
Second phase of the project:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↪ Support to X communities to establish new ECCD centres for 3-6 year olds, based on the demonstrated commitment of communities to ECD and functional community organization ↪ Provision of materials, training and follow-up of new ECCD centres 	
Result 3: Local government level	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↪ Training and dialogue with local government authorities with community leaders on the concept of integrated ECCD and on multi-sector collaboration for integrated ECCD ↪ Development of conceptual framework of ECCD by each rural community (communauté rurale) ↪ Participatory training materials/modules developed for use with multi-sector groups to develop integrated vision and strategies for ECCD ↪ Mechanism/s developed to ensure multi-sector collaboration in project development, follow-up and evaluation 	
Result 4: Policy level	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↪ Synthesis report on key programmatic elements and lessons learned on integrated ECCD experience ↪ National level forum to share ECCD lessons learned (with participation of local government authorities and community leaders) 	



Case 2: Community Capacity Building for ECCD – Togo

A similar iECCD community capacity building project is developed in Togo in the Sokodè region, though not overtly aiming at the creation of a replicable iECCD-model and founded upon the local realities of the applicable area.

Two of the main differences with the PROCAPE, however, are the following:

- The target group of the iECCD capacity building project was overtly stated to be children from pre-natal stage to 6 years onwards, divided in workable sub-categories (pre-natal to 18 months, 18 months to 3 years, 3 to 6 years old children).
- The project tries to refrain from allocating a home-based or a centre-based approach to iECCD services for children of particular age categories. Part of the community capacity building objectives includes facilitating processes at community level to identify community relevant strategies to take charge of iECCD at community level. During the feasibility study preceding the project development it became clear that the only framework for reference of community members to offer services for children was the school as centre. Through participative IEC activities, the project tries to expand this one-dimensional service delivery perception to ensure local relevance as well as responsabilization and ownership.

Case 3: Promotion of girls' education through Bisongos in Burkina Faso (as part of the BRIGHT-project; Burkinabé Response to Improve Girls Chances to Succeed)

As part of a larger girls' promotional project in Plan Burkina Faso, the strategy of building on and improving existing endogenous practices may be illustrated by the following chapter of the project document:

Problem: Child care represents a significant portion of girls' chores in the home and often keeps girls from enrolling in or regularly attending school.

Response: Constructing child-care centers, known as bisongos, in communities receiving the girl-friendly educational complexes, BRIGHT's bisongo program will relieve girls of some child care duties while also strengthening early child education for participating youth and increasing the likelihood that they will enroll in primary school.

In collaboration with UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Solidarity (MASSN) and community management committees (COGES), Plan and CRS/BF will construct 33 bisongos during the first year of the project and, pending the results of the first year, 99 additional bisongos during the second year. Plan and CRS/BF will build on the existing, successful CRS, UNICEF and MASSN bisongo program. The bisongos will be constructed at the same time as the rest of the school complex (as part of the BRIGHT). Plan, CRS/BF, the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Solidarity (MASSN), and UNICEF will select communities for the bisongos among the provinces with the lowest girls' enrollment rates and in consultation with parents in the communities.

Each community selected will benefit from a community child-care center for the younger siblings of girls attending the schools. Members of the COGES will receive a three-day training on how to manage the bisongo from the GoBF. The trained COGES and the AMEs will select one to two volunteer instructors from among the members of the AME on the basis of their ability to care for young children. These selected bisongo instructors will receive a 21-day training on pre-school pedagogical techniques from the provincial offices of the Ministry of Social Action and a two-week refresher training the following year. CRS/BF will train instructors in food management, including proper record keeping, storage and distribution. Plan and CRS/BF will then provide commodities for the preparation of a meal for the pre-schoolers in the bisongo within this grant budget (33 bisongos in year one and 132 bisongos in year two). If possible, WFP will provide food for bisongos in the four Sahelian provinces.

Communities will be responsible for providing a monthly 10,000 CFA (\$20) incentive to the instructors. For the other bisongos in the country, UNICEF has provided 100,000 CFA (\$200) to the local COGES to conduct income generation activities that enhance the communities' ability to support the volunteer instructors. Plan is currently in discussion with

UNICEF about providing this support to BRIGHT project bisongos. Once established, the BRIGHT partners will facilitate the integration of the bisongos into the regular oversight of the MASSN. Using motorbikes previously provided by UNICEF, the MASSN will make monthly visits to supervise and support the volunteer instructors at each bisongo.

Results

Though a lot of research points in the direction that community participation and capacity building are central to ECCD programming, it is too early in the process of implementation, monitoring and evaluation to assess results and impact in the three cases elaborated on.

Conclusion

As a way of concluding this presentation, I merely want to point out some questions/items for reflection:

- What are the key elements to be measured as baseline data in a community based capacity building iECCD project, in order to be able to assess impact?
- How to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of capacity building as a main strategy in the medium and long term?
- How to facilitate the acceptance of the diversification of the educational offer at the level of educational authorities?
- How to measure cost-effectiveness and what makes an intervention cost-effective?
- ...

Domain/Sub-domain (\$000)		WARO Region FY05 Spent	FY04 Spent	As % of Domain Total	As % of Grand Total (all domains)	Growth FY04 to FY05
Learning	Learning General	1,508.37	129.13	7%	2%	1068%
	Learning domain management, support & supervision	1,592.83	1,271.16	7%	2%	25%
	Research / Policy and Practice Development	133.24	206.15	1%	0%	-35%
	Institutional development support for partner organizations	1,972.85	638.85	9%	2%	209%
	Pre-school	331.81	242.74	1%	0%	37%
	Education for children in special circumstances	14.42	8.35	0%	0%	73%
	Non-formal	1,077.71	1,215.80	5%	1%	-11%
	Primary	12,970.89	10,542.15	57%	16%	23%
	Secondary	1,286.11	1,083.79	6%	2%	19%
	Adult education	181.04	10.65	1%	0%	1599%
	Recreation, culture and counseling	1,626.70	845.87	7%	2%	92%
	Regional Office Learning-related Program Management	79.35	52.40	0%	0%	51%
	Learning Total	22,775.31	16,247.06	100%	29%	40%
Growing Up Healthy	GUH General	3,819.87	3,687.37	30%	5%	4%
	GUH domain management, support & supervision	2,379.46	2,033.95	19%	3%	17%
	Research / Policy and Practice Development	33.46	104.80	0%	0%	-68%
	Institutional development support for partner organizations	783.30	681.44	6%	1%	15%
	Under-5 Children	2,031.51	1,662.40	16%	3%	22%
	School-age Children	163.82	71.73	1%	0%	128%
	Children in Special Circumstances	268.25	337.03	2%	0%	-20%
	Health and development of adolescents	140.85	6.40	1%	0%	2102%
	Reproductive health (inc. HIV-AIDS)	2,652.53	2,057.67	21%	3%	29%
	Prevention and control of infectious diseases	491.83	343.57	4%	1%	43%
	Regional Office GUH-related Program Management, Support	96.85	44.35	1%	0%	118%
	Growing Up Healthy Total	12,861.74	11,030.69	100%	16%	17%

Note 1: Plan WARO spent also on potable water, hygiene education and waste disposal, but primarily through an integrated approach in primary education. Hence the figures are not taken into account as contribution to ECCD programs.

Note 2: Figures relating to ECCD programs (as highlighted) should be weighed positively with institutional development and support. One of Plan's key strategies is to work through partners and to build partnerships and relationships.