

Workshop report
Change through Culture

30 October – 2 November 2017, Freetown, Sierra Leone



**Workshop facilitated by Dr. Judi Aibel, Executive Director
Grandmother Project – Change through Culture**

In collaboration with Pikin-to-Pikin, National Youth Awareness Forum & Children Advocacy Forum

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Change through Culture

“When development programs recognize culture, they produce a change rooted in the values, knowledge and lifestyle of a community, and they are more likely to succeed. When programs impose external cultural values, they damage the cultural system by devaluing local knowledge and local capacity on which the community depends on.”

J. Sengendoⁱ, 2000, UNESCO

“For education to be meaningful in Africa today, it has to be based in the wisdom, teaching and traditions of the continent’s ancestors. It would be foolish indeed to ignore whole realms of experience and meanings that have been nourished for generations, and on which we can draw for insights about nourishing our own lives.”

Dr. Yatta Kanuⁱⁱ Education Professor, Canada, 2007

“Generally, we frown on our culture and are quick to embrace foreign cultures. The Change through Culture approach is unique because it teaches us to value our way of life. I am sure that this approach is going to add value, acceptance and results to our interventions related to teenage pregnancy, early marriage, rape, etc.”

Alhassan Jalloh, Pikin-to-Pikin

“The Change through Culture approach is really adapted to Africa. It can help Africans to value the elders who are rich in knowledge and wisdom. We need them to help us bring back our culture.”

Samuel Conteh, Teacher

“We are asleep and forgetting our culture. We need to wake up and embrace our culture. The Change through Culture approach is a revolutionary idea but my fear is that people will reject it. I call on all development practitioners and partners to embrace this idea as I know it will yield positive results”.

Sheku Tarawally, Pikin-to-Pikin

“When we engage grandmothers, we value our culture.”

Abdul Swaray, Child Advocacy Forum

“Grandmothers need to be encouraged to teach our youth about our rich cultural heritage and thereby ensure that it is preserved.”

*Anne Konneh, Gender Unit
Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (MEST)*

Introduction

A workshop on the innovative ***Change through Culture*** approach, developed by the NGO ***Grandmother Project – Change through Culture (GMP)***, was organized in Freetown between Oct. 30 and November 2, 2017 under the auspices of the national NGO, ***Pikin to Pikin***. Participants in the workshop included 17 staff of three partner NGOs, Pikin to Pikin, National Youth Awareness Forum and Children Advocacy Forum and 2 from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). The workshop was funded by the Rockdale Foundation and facilitated by the founder and Executive Director of GMP, Dr. Judi Aubel.

The ***Change through Culture*** approach was developed by the NGO, Grandmother Project – Change through Culture (GMP), an American and Senegalese NGO. GMP is specialized in development of programs that promote culturally-grounded and community-driven change. ***Change through Culture*** is a generic approach that can be used to develop and implement programs dealing with all issues, especially those related to the well-being of women and children dealing with their health, education and protection. The four pillars of the approach are: 1) to base all community programs on existing cultural roles and values; 2) to explicitly recognize the critical role of elders in society and to involve them in all community programs, and especially grandmothers given their role in the growth and development of women and children; 3) to strengthen communication between the generations of youth, adults and elders; and 4) to use communication and education methods which elicit dialogue and consensus-building.

Pikin to Pikin and its partner organizations provide support to schools and communities. They requested this workshop to provide their staff with an introduction to the ***Change through Culture*** approach and in order to determine if and how elements of the approach could be used to strengthen their programs. Participation of senior MEST staff was also significant as it allowed them to understand the approach and to gain their support for its use in programs implemented by the 3 NGOs across the country.

This reports provides information on: the goals of the workshop; the participatory adult education methodology used throughout the workshop; the topic of each of the workshop sessions; a brief description of the participatory learning activities in each session and quotes from participants related to the topics discussed; results of the evaluation of the workshop by participants; and recommendations from the GMP consultant for follow-up to the workshop.

Goal of the workshop

The overall goal of the training was: to introduce participants to the ***Change through Culture*** approach to promote children's health, education and development and to protect them from gender-based violence in schools and families.

The general objectives of the workshop were as follows:

1. *To discuss the role of culture, elders and indigenous knowledge in schools and communities and how these contribute to children's health, education and development*
2. *To discuss the principles of Grandmother Project's - Change through Culture approach and its relevance to health, education and community programs for children in Sierra Leone*
3. *To discuss the 5 generic steps in a Change through Culture approach and how they can be applied to address different issues related to the health, education and protection of children*

Workshop teaching methods

The workshop sessions involved the use of a variety of adult education participatory learning activities to involve participants in: reflecting on their past knowledge and experience working with schools and communities; reflecting on new concepts related to the Change through Culture approach (especially regarding an elder-inclusive, grandmother-specific and intergenerational approach); and drawing their own conclusions on the relevance and possible use of certain aspects of their Change through Culture approach in their current programs.

In the various sessions, the following participatory learning methods were used: exercises in pairs and in small groups; large group discussions; brain-storming; video presentations and discussion; simulations of a rapid assessment tool, of an interactive learning game called the “Wisdom of Grandmothers” and of a story-without-an -ending; and lecturettes by the facilitator. Flipcharts, photos and drawings were used to illustrate various concepts and to elicit discussion. Power Point presentations were not used during the workshop.

Workshop sessions

In this section, the topics addressed in each session during the 4-day workshop are presented along with the learning exercises used to involve participants in actively reflecting on their past experience and considering new ideas related to their programs with communities. In many cases, participants’ thoughts related to the session topics are included as quotes.

Session No. 1: The role of culture in families and communities in African societies and in development policies and programs

Organized in small groups, participants were asked to reflect on three quotes, each dealing with the importance of culture in the life of a society. Based on their discussions they concluded that while cultural values and identity are very important in all cultures in Sierra Leone, the policies and programs dealing with different sectors of development do not give sufficient attention to cultural roles, values and practices that communities cherish.

“Culture may be the missing link to development in Africa. Africans need to rediscover the positive aspects of their cultures. This is the only way that they will have a sense of ownership, of identify and of confidence in themselves. I am convinced that sub-Saharan Africa needs to rediscover its culture, its heritage that was largely destroyed by colonialism. I don’t know any nation in the world that has been able to move toward the future without having their culture to support them.”

Wangari Maathai, Kenya
Nobel Prize, 2004

“Generally, we frown on our culture and are quick to embrace foreign cultures. The Change through Culture approach is unique because it teaches us to value our way of life. I am sure that this approach is going to add value, acceptance and results to our interventions related to teenage pregnancy, early marriage, rape, etc. I have no doubt that it is going to yield good fruit.”

Alhassan Jalloh

“The discussion of culture has made me reflect on my origins. I have realized that culture is not and has never been a barrier to development but rather a lubricant for development. “

Sylvester Amara, Pikin-to-Pikin

Session No. 2: The role of elders in African societies and their involvement in community programs dealing with children’s health, education and child protection

iii During this session, participants discussed the role of elders in African societies and their place in current development programs. Through a small group exercise in which participants discussed a series of quotes dealing with the role played by elders in African societies, they arrived at the conclusion that there is a significant gap between the central role played by elders in African societies and the limited role they are given in development policies and programs.

“Elders ensure the transmission of cultural values from one generation to another. They play a critical role related to the stability, social cohesion and continuity of a society.”

Adjaye & Aborampah, 2008, Ghana

“For any program to be successful there should be 100% involvement of the elders because they have experience regarding what will work and what won’t. Their input will have a positive influence.”

Joseph Lavalie, Teacher

“Elders are important in all aspects of life and learning. They help us discover our past that serves as a resource to guide us to development and success in life.”

Dauda Kallay, Teacher

Session No. 3: The importance of cultural identity and African cultural values for today’s children

Building on the two previous sessions dealing with the importance of cultural values and the role of elders in African societies, this session first involved a discussion on whether it is important for today’s children to learn about their cultural identity and values and second, on the extent to which today’s children have learned the traditional story tales, proverbs and games.

The concerns of a Sierra Leonean professor of education professor at a Canadian university, Dr. Yatta Kanu, were discussed. Kanu writes about her concern that today’s children are not being taught many key cultural values nor are they being exposed to the rich traditional modes of learning namely, story tales, proverbs and games that are valuable teaching tools.

“For education to be meaningful in Africa today, it has to be based in the wisdom, teaching and traditions of the continent’s ancestors. It would be foolish indeed to ignore whole realms of experience and meanings that have been nourished for generations, and on which we can draw for insights about nourishing our own lives.”

Dr. Yatta Kanu, 2007

“I believe that the elders are very important in all societies. We will never succeed if we ignore their role in every aspect of life. We need to respect the elders and to ensure that they participate in all programs.”

George Foday, NYAF

Participants concluded that the level of knowledge of today’s children of traditional stories and proverbs is extremely limited, and that their familiarity with traditional games is also quite limited. Participants discussed the benefits to children of these traditional modes of teaching which not only pass on positive cultural values like respect for elders, honesty and solidarity, but which also strengthen communication between them and their elders, the guardians of a society’s cultural heritage. They concluded that complementary efforts should be made by schools, families and communities to revive the use of these traditional ways of teaching to contribute to children’s adoption of positive culturally-grounded values and attitudes.

“We are not giving children the opportunity to know our traditions through the teaching of stories and proverbs in families, schools and communities. We should allow children to benefit from the knowledge of culture and traditions transmitted by the elders.”

Sheku Tarawally, Pikin-to-Pikin

“I have realized the value of the elders in my culture who are the custodians of it. There is a need to transmit our cultural values to the younger generations through stories, proverbs, riddles, games, etc. using both formal and informal channels to ensure continuity.”

George Foday, NYAF

“I am interested in the use of traditional mode of teaching and communication. Ideas are easily grabbed when indigenous mode are used and by using the traditional modes, we also keep culture alive in generations.”

Samuel Johnson, MEST

“The idea of going back to our culture moves me because when we use stories, proverbs and games with children it brings out their creativity and makes them be good writers in the future. Stories especially help children to be grounded in their own history and values”.

Joseph Lavalie, primary school teacher

“There should be collaboration between the family, school and community to promote traditional modes of teaching because the child’s development leans on the culture of the community.”

Abdulai Swaray, Pikin-to-Pikin

Session No. 4: Differences between collectivist and individualist cultures and their implications for programs to promote children’s health, education and development

Anthropologists categorize cultures on a continuum from “individualist” to “collectivist”. There are profound differences between western individualist cultures, which value individual accomplishment and competition between people, and non-western collectivist cultures in which cooperation, solidarity and intergenerational relationships are highly valued.

In a small group exercise, characteristics of the two types of cultures were categorized. Participants concluded that Sierra Leonean society is primarily collectivist however, some people are becoming more and more individualist and less concerned about others. They concluded that it is important that schools give greater emphasis to teaching these positive values that reinforce interdependency and individual responsibility toward others in the family and community.

Professor Yatta Kanu discusses important collectivist social and ethical values that should be taught to children in schools, namely, cooperation, interdependency and the individual’s responsibility to the group (2007).

“Donors and their funds support and promote the culture of their own individualist societies. They need to design projects that are more in line with our collectivist cultures where values are woven into group life.”

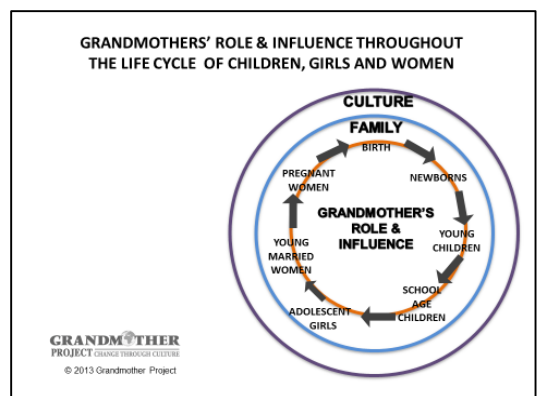
George Foday, NYAF

“From times immemorial, development programs in Africa have popularized the child rights ideology forgetting children’s corresponding responsibilities. This has given more power to children to a point of misusing it. Till now we are fighting the mismatch between that culture and our traditions. Development programs should therefore merge the rights and responsibilities of the child to fit in our culture and traditions.”

Sylvester Amara, Pikin-to-Pikin

Session No. 5: Roles played by grandmothers in the family and community related to children’s health, development and education in Sierra Leone

In a group exercise, participants identified the multiple roles played by grandmothers in families and communities. Various participants expressed the idea that they did not realize that grandmothers play so many critical roles to support the health and well-being of family members. The results of the exercise during the workshop are similar to those of the research carried out in Bum Chiefdom by Grandmother Project with World Vision in 2013. (See the box below).



Participants concluded that there is a big gap between the significant role, influence and experience of grandmothers in Sierra Leonean cultures and the fact that they are not key actors in policies and programs affecting family and community life.

Study results: The role of grandmothers in Bom Chiefdom

“Senior women, or grandmothers (GMs), play a pivotal role in families given their extensive experience with all aspects of family life. They play numerous roles in the family consisting of advising, coaching and coordinating the activities of other family members and managing family resources. They are guides and supervisors of daughters-in-law on all issues related to the health and well-being of themselves and their children.”

GMP & World Vision, 2013

“We need to recognize and support the grandmothers in their role at home caring for children, telling them stories, etc. as they can have a positive impact on the lives of the younger generation. Today, they are often not consulted in families and the young are going astray with little or no knowledge of their cultural background to guide their lives. We are neglecting the role of grandmothers and we need to revisit this.”

Fatmata Swaray, Pikin-to-Pikin

“In Sierra Leonean communities, grandmothers are often tagged as witches and not included in family and community discussions. This is very unfair considering their contribution to society.”

Augustine Sandy, NYAF

“In the villages, even before children wake up the fathers and mothers go off very early to their farms. It is the grandmothers who prepare the children to go off to school and who are there to receive them when then return from school. It is very good to involve grandmothers in our programs for children.”

Sarah Tarawally, Teacher

“In the past, grandmothers were the teachers of young couples and of children. But times have changed and they are no longer recognized for playing that marvelous role. Now they are viewed as living corpses in our villages. If we recognize them, collaborate with them and empower them they can resume their important function and things will be better off as a result.”

Kemoh Kuyateh, Teacher

“Given the critical role of grandmothers in children’s education and upbringing, it is a priority that the ministry (of education) include grandmothers in policies and programs.”

Sahid Conteh, MEST

“Through these discussions, I have realized that grandmothers are an integral part of child growth and development. If community development workers can recognize, value and utilize their experiences this will contribute to the stability of families, of communities and of the country.”

Sylvester Amara, Pikin-to-Pikin

Session No. 6: Differences between a linear and a systems approach to promote change in communities

Most programs promoting change at the community level use a *linear* and *targeted approach* that involves those most affected by the problem of concern. For example, to address the issues of child marriage and teen pregnancy most programs focus primarily, or only, on girls as they are the “risk group” and those the most affected by these problems.

In several small groups, the participants identified the various family and community actors who influence different issues such as: the diet and care of pregnant women; newborn care; child marriage; teen pregnancy; and female genital mutilation.

Participants concluded that in order to promote effective and sustained change in community norms and practice programs should involve all key categories of individuals who are part of the social system that influence a given issue.

Key characteristics of *systems theory* that are important to remember when designing community programs were presented in a lecturette: 1) all elements of a system are inter-related; 2) in all systems there is a center of decision-making and influence; and 3) to bring about sustained change it is necessary for all key actors within a system to support that change.

“When all community players are involved there will be a cross-cutting sense of ownership, awareness and collaboration. There will be stability and progress.”

Kemoh Kuyateh, Teacher

“Linear and risk group focused approaches do not yield the expected results and therefore they should be avoided. All family and community actors should be taken into account if we are to promote true development”.

Sheku Tarawally, Pikin-to-Pikin

Session No. 7: Principles of GMP’s Change through Culture approach related to the health, development, education and protection of children, especially of girls

A lecturette was presented to explain the 7 key principles of the Change through Culture approach as follows: 1) to strengthen existing positive cultural roles and traditions and discourage harmful ones; 2) inclusion of elders, especially GM; 3) communication/adult education activities based on dialogue and consensus-building; 4) using culturally familiar communication tools (stories, songs, group discussion under a tree); 5) focus on involving leaders in each age and gender category; 6) catalyze communication between generations and between sexes; 7) holistic approach to children’s/adolescents development, rather than a single issue approach.

Following the lecturette a video entitled “*Girls and Grandmothers – Hand in Hand*” was shown to participants, based on GMP’s program in Senegal, to illustrate these various principles.

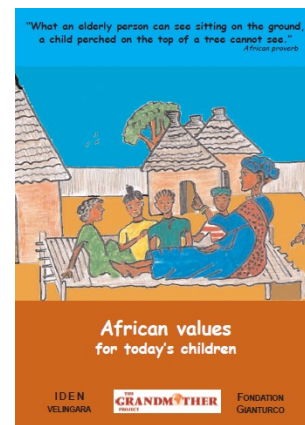
“We have to be creative in order to harmonize the valuable and positive aspects our indigenous cultural values with some of the modern ideas to produce a sustainable development.”

Sheku Tarawally, Pikin-to-Pikin

Session No. 8: Key components and steps to integrate positive cultural values into schools and to strengthen ties between communities and schools

The facilitator presented an overview of the school-community strategy implemented in Senegal. The objectives of the strategy are: to integrate positive cultural values and knowledge into school programs; to strengthen involvement of parents and grandparents in children's up-bringing and education; and to reinforce communication between schools and communities.

The key activities in the strategy were described: the production of 5 reading booklets on different facets of African culture namely, the role of elders, traditional African values, story-telling; proverbs; and the responsibility and rights of children. The positive results related to the three objectives of the strategy were presented along with a description of how certain activities were carried out. Participants concluded that the basic framework of the project implemented in Senegal is very relevant to Sierra Leone given that there are similar concerns and challenges related to the fact that many children have not learned the stories, proverbs and songs that are part of their culture and that these are taught in schools and in homes to only a very limited extent.



Session No. 9: The 5 generic steps in a Change through Culture approach to promote children's health, education and protection

In this session the 5 steps in GMP's *Change through Culture approach* were introduced. These generic steps can be used to develop community programs dealing with all issues of concern to communities and/or to development organizations. All of the following sessions addressed these five steps.

5 steps in the Change through Culture approach

Step 1: Analysis of the role, influence and attitudes of family & community actors on women's & children's well-being related to priority program issues

Step 2: Recognition of positive cultural roles and values, specifically that of the elders and particularly of the grandmothers (GM) related to the well-being of women & children

Step 3: Dialogue within and between different community groups to seek consensus on "traditional" norms & practices to maintain and on "modern" norms & practices to adopt

Step 4: Strengthening the confidence & capacity of GM leaders and other leaders to promote improved norms/ practices within the community-at-large

Step 5: Evaluation of results and learning related to changes in: community norms & practices; and community capacity to promote positive change

GMP has produced a comprehensive guide on the five-step methodology, with support from World Vision Canada. The guide is available on the GMP website. It is entitled: *Involving Grandmothers to Promote Child Nutrition, Health and Development*.

Session No. 10: The initial rapid assessment to understand community roles and influence related to the issues to be addressed in a program/project (Step 1)

It is important that program planners have information on three aspects of the settings for which they develop programs: 1) on the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to the issue/s of concern; 2) on the roles and influence of family and community members; and 3) on the underlying cultural values and traditions related to the lives of women and children. In many programs, initial assessments collect information only on the first of these three categories. In order to increase the effectiveness of community programs GMP believes that it is essential that information also be collected on the roles, influence and underlying cultural values so that they reflect the family and community structure, roles and values dynamics.

A simulation of a small group exercise to identify the roles and influence of different family members was carried out, applied to the case of the *care of newborn babies*. The objective was to allow participants to understand how this same exercise could be used with community groups to collect info on the roles and influence of different family members, related to specific issues of concern to their programs.

GMP has produced a guide dealing with Step 1 in the Change through Culture methodology which describes how to design a rapid assessment to address these three levels of information, to collect the information and to analyze it. The guide is entitled ***“Focus on Families and Culture: understanding family roles and influence to develop culturally-grounded and effective community nutrition interventions.”*** It was funded by USAID and is available on the GMP website.

Session No. 11: Activities in communities and schools to recognize and praise positive cultural roles, knowledge and values (Step 2)

The facilitator presented the second step in the Change through Culture approach, which focuses explicitly on recognizing the positive cultural roles and values in communities. Virtually all community programs aim to promote change in community norms and practices and communities are often uncomfortable when the focus is only on “what needs to be changed”. A key principle in all of GMP’s work is that it is very important that programs recognize existing community strengths, or “assets”, in order to increase community confidence in its own knowledge and experience and to establish rapport with community actors around those strengths before initiating discussion on possible changes in norms and practices.

Specifically referring to grandmothers, it is important that initial activities focus on their status in the community, their important role and their vast experience. Key techniques and activities used by GMP at this step were presented: Days of Praise of Grandmothers; Grandmother-Teacher Workshops; songs of praise of grandmothers used in schools, in community meetings and on the radio; and the production of the series of booklets that acknowledge, visually and in the texts, the critical role that grandmothers play in their families and communities. When grandmothers feel that their knowledge and experience is recognized, they are much more open to revisiting certain practices that are harmful to girls and/or to children in general.

Participants were taught a Song of Praise in *Pular*, which is very similar to Fula, from Senegal. Participants also learned a song of praise of grandmothers composed by one of the participants in Mende. Participants realized that simple songs such as these can be written by NGO/community development staff without the help of a well-known song-writer/singer. Below is the Pular song of praise with the English translation.

Song of praise of grandmothers: “Maama Jaara” (from Senegal)	
Maama aŋ! Maamaa jaara Allah ya juutu balde Maama an! Maamaa jaara Allah ya booy e aduna	Grandmother, Grandmother May God give you a long life Grandmother, Grandmother May God keep you in this world for a long while
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maama lootay- laŋ • Maama bambay- laŋ • Maama ñaminay- laŋ • Maama aminay-laŋ 	Grandmother please wash me Grandmother please carry me on your back Grandmother please feed me Grandmother please dance for me
Maama aŋ! Maamaa jaara Allah ya juutu balde Maama an! Maamaa jaara Allah ya booy e aduna	Grandmother, Grandmother May God give you a long life Grandmother, Grandmother May God keep you in this world for a long while

Session No. 12: Adult education principles that engage communities and contribute to community-driven change (Step 3)

In this session, 6 key characteristics of adult education activities were presented that motivate learners and that should be followed in educational activities with community groups: 1) a relaxed setting which favors sharing and discussion; 2) learning activities are based on both participants’ existing knowledge and past experiences; 3) all participants have the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas with others; 4) the ideas of all participants are respected by others; 5) activities elicit dialogue between participants to reflect on how they can combine “old” and “new” ideas in their practices; and 6) activities encourage participants to seek consensus on both the problems and the solutions.

Session No. 13: The differences between a message-driven and a dialogical approach to promote community-driven change (Step 3)

In pairs, participants were asked to arrange numerous words, which either denote a message-driven and directive approach, or a dialogical and problem solving one, into two categories. Through this exercise, participants realized that the words used to describe how communities are viewed and how we see our work with them are very significant and that they orient our attitudes and behaviors when interacting with community leaders and groups. Examples of the words that connote contrasting ways of viewing and communicating with communities are: *community beneficiaries vs community actors*; and *delivering messages vs eliciting critical reflection*.

Participants concluded that it is important for programs to adopt an approach that favors dialogue and critical thinking over an approach that focuses on message dissemination.

In the following sessions (14 – 17) four participatory learning tools that GMP has developed to elicit dialogue and consensus-building regarding both problems and solutions were presented.

Session No. 14: Stories-without-an-ending to elicit community dialogue for consensus building for collective change (Step 3)

GMP has developed an adult education tool called *stories-without-an-ending* (SWE) which can be used with community groups of different ages and both sexes to elicit discussion of any issue which is of concern to communities and/or to development programs. In this session a role play of a SWE dealing with women’s

diet and work during pregnancy and with newborn care was presented along with the series of open-ended questions to structure discussion of the story content. GMP has produced a guide on how to develop and use SWE which is available on the GMP website.

“The idea of using stories and games to facilitate dialogue between community actors is a key for catalyzing change. The stories-without-an-ending encourage discussion between community actors to come out with culturally adapted solutions to community problems.”

Sanusie Fofaneh, Pikin-to-Pikin

Session No. 15: The *Grandmothers’ Wisdom* game to elicit community dialogue for consensus building for collective change (Step 3)

A second participatory learning tool developed by GMP for use with community groups is the Grandmothers’ Wisdom board game. The objectives of the game are to: recognize the positive role of grandmothers in families; to encourage them to share their knowledge and experience related to different issues and situations related to women and children’s lives; to share new knowledge with them related to those issues; and to elicit discussion between peer group members on those issues and how they can individually or collectively address them.

“I think games give people with different experiences the opportunity to participate, to share their knowledge and to come up their own solutions rather than those proposed by a facilitator who projects his/her own values. If people are involved in the discussion, they will take responsibility for the outcomes.”

Victor Koroma, NYAF

The purpose and structure of the game was explained to participants along with a demonstration of how it is played. Participants concluded that games could be developed using the structure of the GMP game to address a multiplicity of issues and that such games can be used with children, adults and elders. Depending on the reading level of participants, in most cases a literate facilitator would be required.

“Our challenges in achieving girl-child education because of teenage pregnancy and other factors can be eradicated if we encourage, support and maintain dialogue between teenagers and grandmothers, teachers and elderly people within the community.”

Session No. 16: Problem-posing drawings to use with community groups to elicit dialogue for consensus building for collective change (Step 3)

Two types of drawings were shown to participants, those that illustrate both problems and solutions, and problem-posing drawings, which catalyze discussion on possible solutions that could be applied in and by the community. The problem-posing drawings are a third type of activity that GMP uses to elicit reflexion and critical thinking on specific issues with different community groups. As with the example of the problem-posing drawing to the right, the problem of having multiple children and few resources is presented in the drawing. Such drawings are accompanied by a set of open-ended questions to challenge community groups to search for their own solutions.

The problem-posing drawings are in many ways similar to the stories-without-an-ending. Both present problematic situations but challenge participants to identify possible solutions.



Session No. 17: Intergenerational forums to elicit community dialogue for consensus building for collective change (Step 3)

A key objective of the Change through Culture approach is to strengthen communication between the generations and between the sexes so that all segments of the community can work together to promote community well-being. The intergenerational (IG) forum is a key activity for promoting such communication. The IG forum is a two-day event which is facilitated by several experienced facilitators and using a variety of small and large group activities to elicit discussion of priority issues identified by the community and/or by GMP. The facilitator gave an overview of the IG forum. A short video presenting key aspects of the IG forum was viewed by the participants, followed by a question-answer session.

Session No. 18: The role and influence of grandmother leaders in communities in rural and urban contexts (Step 4)

Participants agreed that informal grandmother leaders exist in all rural and urban contexts. They identified the following characteristics of these women: they are respected by others in the community; they have extensive experience related to the health and care of women and children; other community members seek their advice; and they are more open to new ideas than other grandmothers. Participants concluded that in light of their role and influence on others, it is beneficial to establish relationships with them and to give them an important role in community activities dealing with their areas of expertise.

Session No. 19: The grandmother leadership training strategy implemented in Senegal and the results thereof (Step 4)

The facilitator presented an overview of the under-the-tree grandmother leadership training strategy implemented in Senegal in 2016-17. The objectives of the training were: 1) to increase grandmothers' self-

confidence and democratic leadership skills; 2) to increase solidarity between the grandmother leaders and with other grandmothers in the community; 3) to increase their knowledge of adolescence; 4) to strengthen communication between them and adolescent girls; and 4) to increase their collaboration with other community leaders and teachers on behalf of girls. The very positive results of the strategy related to all five objectives were presented.

Session No. 20: Ongoing monitoring and qualitative documentation for learning (Step 5)

A short session dealt with the monitoring and qualitative documentation that GMP uses in all community programs. During all major community events, GMP has a system for documenting all of the significant comments made by community members. These notes allow GMP staff to have an ongoing understanding of the thoughts of community members related to issues discussed and help the staff to develop *lessons learned* on an ongoing basis and these can lead to adjustments in program activities.

Session No. 21: Participant discussion, by organization, on how elements of the *Change through Culture* approach can be used in participants' programs

During this final session, participants were in small groups with others from their same organization/ institution in order to discuss how the ideas and materials presented during the 4-day workshop could be used in their present and future programs. The "next steps" identified during those discussions are summarized below.

→ Pikin-To-Pikin Movement (P2P)

1. To provide feedback on this training to other PTP staff
2. To conduct a community baseline assessment on the roles of grandmothers and on the relationship between children especially girl children and grandmothers. The baseline should: involve MEST staff; use adult education techniques; analyze the roles and influence of community people related to the school; assess teachers' attitudes toward cultural values; include interviews with MEST officials to determine whether they support the teaching of cultural values in schools.
3. To develop songs of praises of grandmothers
4. To popularize the change through culture approach
5. To develop a project brief on the Change through Culture approach
6. To include the Change through Culture approach in all future proposals developed by PTP.

→ National Youth Awareness Forum

1. To provide feedback to other NYAF staff on the workshop
2. To conduct a rapid assessment on family and community roles and influence related to children's education and development in NYAF operational areas
3. To integrate the Change through Culture approach into all NYAF programs
4. To develop a grandmother-inclusive Change through Culture proposal for pilot implementation
5. To develop IEC materials on positive cultural values related to the education and wellbeing of children.

→ Children Advocacy Forum

1. To do a Rapid Community Assessment concerning the priority issues of interest and to share the results of the assessment with line ministries and all other partners;

2. Once the assessment is finalized, organize a press briefing to present the assessment findings to all partners, ministry and other stakeholders.
3. Discuss with program staff how the Change through Culture approach can be mainstreamed into all of CAF's programs
4. To advocate with the Ministry of Education for the teaching of Sierra Leonean cultural values and traditions in schools and that grandmothers be a resource for doing so.
5. To educate partners and donors on the importance of the grandmother-inclusive Change through Culture approach
6. To include the Change through Culture approach in all P2P program activities

➔ **Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)**

1. To report on the Change through Culture workshop to MEST staff (specifically the Inclusive Management Team)
2. To discuss Grandmother Project's school-community strategy with the Director of Educational Programs and Services
3. To share the Change through Culture approach with donors and implementing partners during the Annual Review in order to mobilize resources to promote grandmother participation in community development strategies
4. To involve grandmothers and other community actors in the design of community activities to involve grandmothers and children in community development
5. To build the capacity and involve grandmothers in identifying solutions to the issues impeding children's education

Workshop evaluation

At the end of each day of the workshop a mini-evaluation was conducted where participants identified both the strengths of the day's activities and made suggestions for improvements. Those suggestions were taken into account in subsequent sessions.

At the end of the workshop, participants completed an individual evaluation form and results were tabulated. Participant responses related to all parameters assessed were very positive.

Overall assessment of the workshop: On a scale of zero to ten, an average score of 9.29 was noted by participants. In other words, their overall assessment of the workshop was very positive.

Assessment of the workshop content: Participants evaluation of the workshop content was also very high with an average score of 9.65.

Assessment of workshop facilitation: Of all of the parameters this one received the highest score from participants with an average of 9.94.

Assessment of training materials provided: Participants gave an average score of 9.24 to the quality of the training materials provided.

Assessment of the training venue: Participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the training venue and gave an average score of 9.41 to this aspect.

Assessment of the food provided during training: During training daily breaks, tea and lunch were served and participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the catering, at 8.65. Some commented that there were not always enough African dishes for lunch.

Based on these results it can be concluded that from the participants' point of view all aspects of the training event were very positive.

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. There was a consensus among all workshop participants from three local NGOs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology that a Change through Culture approach is relevant to programs with schools and communities in Sierra Leone. All participants agreed that it is important for today's children to be grounded in positive cultural values and identity and that inadequate attention has been given in families and schools to passing onto children these valuable aspects of their cultural heritage.
2. The follow-up "next steps" proposed by each of the participating organizations suggest that there is commitment to sharing the Change through Culture approach with other colleagues in participants' respective organizations and to further exploring how key aspects of the approach can be adopted in future program plans.
3. The four-day workshop on the Change through Culture approach was an introduction to an elder and grandmother-inclusive, inter-generational and dialogical approach which elicited reflection and provided information on activities which can be used in programs dealing with various issues including health, education, child protection and WASH. Local organizations may be interested in follow-up workshops and support from GMP that are more specific to these programmatic areas to help them develop and implement programs which incorporate key Change through Culture concepts, materials and activities.

PARTICIPANTS LIST FOR GRAND MOTHER PROJECT TRAINING

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Key : NYAF - National Youth Awareness Forum

MEST - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

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