

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:  
MOBILIZATION OF THE PEKI DZAKE COMMUNITY IN GHANA  
FOR SCHOOL RENOVATION

A professional project submitted to the Theological School of  
Drew University in partial fulfillment of  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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FOR SCHOOL RENOVATION**

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The project used the Narrative Approach to determine the ways to mobilize and empower citizens to renovate a dilapidated school building. The setting of the project was Peki Dzake in the Volta Region of Ghana. This was a multi-religious community who shared common concerns. My role there was to be a passionate missionary who cared about their concerns and to coordinate citizens to bring assets together for action.

A lay advisory committee served as volunteers who were trained in ABCD and worked collaboratively with house to house visitations, groups meetings and also individual meetings. They collaboratively involved the community and prepared them toward renovation work. They put them into action when renovation materials were purchased. Interviews were conducted in a relaxed and unofficial manner which allowed free expressions of worries and concerns.

The school building was renovated with a feeling of empowerment as citizens said, 'we did it ourselves.' The work contributed to self-empowerment, spiritual development, social development, economic development, educational development and also community development. They felt God's love as their worries and concerns came to an end.

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To the glory of God

and for

Benjamin, Adora, the Peki Dzake community  
and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana/USA.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Peki Dzake is a peaceful community in the Volta Region of Ghana. Its population, about 3,000 people, is diverse, and includes Christians, Muslims, Hindus and a variety of other faiths. Peki Dzake was the first community I served after my ordination in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). During my tenure of office, from 1998 to 2001, I also served as an advisor to the students and teachers in the Junior High School which was started by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1945, but whose management was transferred to the government of Ghana in 1987.

#### **Narrative of Concern**

In 2011, I returned to Peki for a visit, and was amazed to learn that parents were afraid to send their children to school for fear the building would collapse. The Assistant Headmaster David Kwame Tefe indicated that such fears were not unfounded. On November 7, 2011, a part of the roof collapsed upon a 13-year old boy. Fortunately, his injuries were not severe. On another occasion, a young man leaned against a pillar that suddenly fell. Thankfully, he was not injured.

The Assistant Headmaster also said that he began to send teachers and students home on rainy days because the roof appeared to be unstable in bad weather. This



became apparent one school day when the whole building shook from the force of the rain. He walked me around the building. It looked neglected and abandoned, with a leaky roof and dilapidated windows.

The Assistant Headmaster complained bitterly about the poor nature of the school building and showed me his office and that of the teachers. They were so bad that he and the teachers preferred sitting in the lobby to do their work. There were holes in the walls, floors, and roof. The windows and doors were not in good shape, and the walls were without paint. The entire office area looked abandoned.

The classrooms were worse than the offices. Some did not have windows and doors. There were holes in the floors and walls. The holes in the floors were more or less 'potholes' because they were huge and deep. As I looked at the building, I was touched by its deplorable nature. Remembering my training in Asset Based Community Development with the Shalom initiative, I wondered if I could mobilize the community to renovate the building, averting an imminent disastrous collapse, and replacing Peki's hopelessness with the pride, peace, wholeness, harmony and prosperity that characterize God's shalom.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Shalom**

The Hebrew word *shalom* is not just a synonym for peace, as in the absence of conflict, but represents a complete peace that is the fulfillment of flourishing. We are to seek the shalom of God's creation to find our shalom. One of the scriptural bases for shalom is Jeremiah 29:4-7 in which God's message came through Jeremiah the prophet to the Jews who were in Babylonian captivity. They were to free themselves from idleness and be productive in the community. The Jews were not expecting such a message because they were anticipating that God would desire, as they desired, to return home.

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says, to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there: do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."<sup>1</sup>

The Jews were captured from Jerusalem and taken to Babylonia by King Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians were pagan worshippers with a culture different from

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<sup>1</sup> All bible quotations from the *New International Version* of the Bible (NIV), London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997.

the culture of the Jews. Exilic experience was unpleasant and uncomfortable to the Jews so they were looking forward to their liberation, when Jeremiah said:

- Build houses and settle down
- Plant gardens and eat what they produce
- Marry and have sons and daughters
- Find wives for their sons and give their daughters in marriage
- Seek the peace and prosperity of the city
- Pray to the Lord for it

God wants the Jews to settle down and make lives for themselves, work to have enough to feed themselves and their children, procreate to increase their number because 70 years in exile was a long time and a far distance, and not many of them would return to their homeland. They are to seek the welfare of the Babylonian city and pray on its behalf because when the city prospers they would prosper. In Jeremiah 29:10-14, Jeremiah prophesied the duration of their captivity to be 70 years and after that the Lord would safely bring them back home. It reads in verse 11 that “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm, plans to give you hope and a future.”<sup>2</sup> The Jews in exile were not forgotten but God was purposeful towards them to restore to them peace, prosperity and a hopeful future.

In *Shalom, Salaam, Peace* (2006), Allison Stroke and Pat Patterson write of the nature of shalom, “Shalom is wholeness—a oneness, or right relation, between the Lord,

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<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 29:11.

creation, and humanity”<sup>3</sup> Stokes and Patterson emphasize the interpersonal nature of shalom by quoting Jerry Herman’s lyrics which read,

Shalom, Shalom,  
You’ll find Shalom,  
The nicest greeting you know;  
It means bonjour, salud,  
And skoal and twice as much hello.  
It means a million lovely things,  
Like peace be yours, welcome home.  
And even when you say goodbye,  
You say goodbye with Shalom.  
It’s very useful word,  
It can hardly go wrong.  
This is your home as long as you say:  
Shalom, the nicest greetings I know;  
Shalom, means twice as much as hello.  
It means a million lovely things,  
Like peace be yours, welcome home.  
And even when you say goodbye,  
If your voice has “I don’t want to go” in it,  
Say goodbye with a little “hello” in it  
And say goodbye with Shalom.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Alison Stokes and Pat Patterson, *Shalom, Salaam, Peace* (New York: Womens’ Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, 2006), 8.

Asset Based Community Development has its core value and method in Christian practice. Christian practices are things we do as Christians from time to time to address human needs in response to the grace of God to all humankind through Jesus Christ. ABCD is derived from the word SHALOM and it is the third thread. The word shalom is not just peace but complete peace. We are to seek the Shalom of God's creation to find our Shalom as in Jeremiah 29:7 which read, "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile, pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."<sup>5</sup> This simply means that in every unpleasant life situation, never lose hope but move ahead with your life and wish others the good you wish for yourself. A hopeful life and a hopeful community are engaging in ABCD because care and sharing come to play.

ABCD helps us to understand that by God's wisdom, God has blessed individuals, groups and communities with gifts, graces and talents for better life. The resources God gave us are for the good of our well-being and the well-being of others. It helps us to identify community strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities, gifts and graces and bring them together to address common issues and problems for better life and better living. It opens our eyes to see the ways God has blessed us as a community. It also helps us to hear God calling upon us to practice the abundance of God resources in enriching every community.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah 29:7.

We are blessed with our stories that bring us together and knit our relationship as a community. Peki Dzake community in Ghana had their own stories as they said, ‘Our dilapidated JHS building endangers our kids’ life and their education.’ This means that the dilapidated school building was a threat to the life of students and teachers and that has jeopardized the educational excellence of their kids. Dawn was clear on that as he said, “Some members cannot take the risk of belonging to a community because they feel that they have nothing to offer.”<sup>6</sup> The skills I used to empower the citizens were constructive listening and positive affirmation. When I listened constructively to concern citizens, I listened with a clear mind and passion. This was helpful because it enabled me to positively encourage and awaken the power in them. I listened to the citizens and assured them that they had the potentials and the power to renovate the school building better than anyone else because they had the passion. To be passionate about something is to express what God has laid on your heart. As they expressed it, they acted upon it and that gave them fulfillment and joy. Their passion for the school was the inner power they acted upon.

ABCD needs people who can use their gifted power to effect change. According to Dawn, “We will use our gifts without the human hesitations that destroy God’s power, if we can be consumed by the intense desire to give of our giftedness for all we are worth.”<sup>7</sup> We exhibit God’s power as we utilize our God given gifts and talents in our communities. I believed every member of the community was worth something to offer to the community.

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<sup>6</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Truly The Community: Romans 12 and How to Be the Church* (USA: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1992), 88.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 104.

## Church and Community Empowerment

The apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews about the practical purpose of living as he said, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the day approaching.”<sup>8</sup> The Hebrews were to preserve the welfare of others so that they could together hold on to the faith. In *Building People of Power: Equipping Churches to Transform Their Communities* (2006), Robert Linthicum explores the scriptural basis of shalom in the first and second testaments, and finds there the actions required to build a people of power. These steps are summarized as, “individual meetings, house meetings and action team.”<sup>9</sup> By applying principles of ABCD and biblical shalom, the current project helped the Dzake community identify these steps and follow them in addressing the problem of the dilapidated school building.

The first step of empowering citizens of Dzake was individual meetings with volunteers from the community and from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. This pool of volunteers included other faith groups, community leaders (chiefs and elders), artisans, parents, and teachers who were trained and shared their concerns about the dilapidated building. They exhibited the love they had for their community and the school. Their spirit testified to the presence of Jesus in those meetings, according to the proclamation, “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be

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<sup>8</sup> Hebrews 10:24-25.

<sup>9</sup> Robert C. Linthicum, *Building People of Power: Equipping Churches to Transform Their Communities* (USA: World Vision Press, 2006), 150, 151 & 154.

done for you by my Father in heaven.”<sup>3</sup> The scripture encourages togetherness and mutual agreements of the heart in common desires, wishes, and voices. God is pleased with people who are united together and pray with a sincere heart.

The second step was to conduct house meetings. According to the ABCD process as explained by Linthicum, “a house meeting is an expanded individual meeting. It is seeking to accomplish the very same task as an individual meeting--identifying, motivating, and calling out those people who want to make a difference in their environment and are willing to risk doing something about it.”<sup>10</sup> The volunteers visited homes and families, held meetings with leaders in the community and worshiped with other faith groups, all of which stimulated them to make a difference in the school building. The Apostle Paul instructed the Hebrews to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”<sup>11</sup> In this way there is a passage from that which belongs to the individual to the mutual duties of members of the community.

The third step was to assemble an action team. Linthicum describes the work of the team as one of planning and implementing. “Once house meetings are being held and people are getting motivated to assume responsibility for exercising the Iron Rule (i.e., they are becoming increasingly agitated to assume responsibility themselves for solving the problem), an action team provides the planning and implementing body for acting upon the issue at hand.”<sup>12</sup> When the Dzake citizens were fired up to take up the

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<sup>10</sup> Linthicum, *Building People of Power*, 151.

<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 10:24.

<sup>12</sup> Linthicum, *Building People of Power*, 154.



responsibility, collaboratively with volunteers, the action team provided them with planning and strategies to implement action.

Biblically, the action team has a basis in the organizing work of Nehemiah, as a cupbearer to the Persian King. His responsibility was to taste the king's wine to make sure it wasn't poisoned. He was also the king's trusted advisor who carefully planned the implementation of rebuilding of the Jerusalem wall when he appeared before King Artaxerxes in Nehemiah 2:1-8:

In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, "May the King live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gate has been destroyed by fire?" The King said to me, what is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time. I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.<sup>13</sup>

This passage shows how Nehemiah's strategic plan was carefully implemented:

- He showed a sad face to the king to help the king sense a problem
- He politely addressed the king and presented his problem
- The king understood his problem and sensed his need

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<sup>13</sup> Nehemiah 2:1-8.

- Nehemiah prayed to God before expressing his needs
- When the King granted his request and supplied his needs he requested authorization in the form of a note that would enable him to travel safely.

Nehemiah's example is worth emulating by a visionary leader who wants to help bring a solution to a problem facing his or her own people. Nehemiah never left God out when trying to win the heart of the king. Nehemiah served the most powerful ruler in the world and I believe God placed him in that position at that time, in order to accomplish His will and purpose. As Linthicum explains, "One of the best biblical examples of research actions is that undertaken by Nehemiah, as he prepared for his action of getting the Israelites to rebuild both their walls and their life together as God's people."<sup>14</sup>

As I empowered Dzake citizens, I emphasized on the following:

- Courage and strength
- Determination
- Faith
- Action
- Victory

These are the attributes required of the Lay Advisory Team, in prayer with God, to successfully organize, accomplish, and celebrate the renovation of the Peki Dzake Junior High School. These are the attributes that God enables, in scripture and in life. As I reflected on my project, I learnt that the church has more to do than preaching, teaching, liturgy, denomination and tradition. She has to move from her comfort zone to awaken

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<sup>14</sup> Linthicum, *Building People of Power*, 156.

the worth, value, talent, gift in every child of God. A child of God is not only in our church community but the community at large. God made a best world and best humankind for a better community and a better life. According to Green, “When people discover what they have, they find power. When people join together in new connections and relationships they build power. When people become more productive together, they exercise their power to address problems and realize dreams.”<sup>15</sup> The question is who will spearhead to reveal the power in humankind to discover what they have? How do we connect them to become more productive in their community? It takes courage, determination and faith to be productive and successful in every undertaking as we depend on the creator God for victory.

### **Courage and strength**

When we are fearless then we can face extreme dangers like roof falling on a student. As the community was in fear of the entire school building collapsing on students and teachers, the only solution was to be brave, face the challenge and find solution to it. The community needed power to take up the challenge without any hesitation. We find our courage and strength through the Bible and it reads,

*“Be strong and courageous”<sup>16</sup>*

After the death of Moses, God spoke to Joshua for him to be strong and courageous because the task ahead of him was not easy. The Amorites were on the promise land and they were strong to fight the Israelite. They trusted God because they

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<sup>15</sup> Mike Green, John O’Brien, Henry Moore and Dan Duncan, *When People Care Enough to Act: ABCD in Action* (Toronto: Inclusion Press, 2006), 10.

<sup>16</sup> Joshua 1:6.

knew what God could do. God delivered them from Egypt, destroyed Pharaoh and fed them in the desert with manna and water from the rock.

The statement to “Be strong and courageous.”<sup>17</sup> These words were to inspire and motivate the community in time of distress. As they were faced with fear and anxiety about the dilapidated school building, I assured them that the strength of God would sustain them to be people of good courage. Kretzmann and Mcknight rightly said, “Every person, no matter how poor, has certain specific ideas about where he or she wants to be and what one wants to be doing in the future, and each person also uses individual creativity to attempt to make these dreams a reality. When people are able to combine their dreams and coordinate their efforts with other members of the community, the entire community can be strengthened from the energies that are released.”<sup>18</sup> I knew every member of the community had ideas as to how they wanted their school building be the envy of all. All they needed was to be informed that as they trusted in God, dreams could become reality when efforts were put into action. Everything was possible as they measured their challenges against God strength. I believe the power of courage and strength moves every community to act on concerns.

Fear destroys our ability to think and to see the possibilities of achieving successes. God empowers us not to be afraid of any challenge because God will go before us and be with us. Philippians 4:13 reads, “I can do everything through Him who gives me

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> John P. Kretzmann and John L. Mcknight, *Building Community from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Findings and Mobilizing a Community Assets* (Chicago: ACTA Publication, 1995), 84.

strength”<sup>19</sup> meaning with the strength of Christ we can face troubles and challenges. God said, “Do not be discouraged” meaning don’t be deprive of courage, hope, confidence, dishearten and dispirit. When we are discouraged we become powerless as community.

### **Determination**

The community had to be purposeful and be firm in any decision taken to fixing the problem. The citizens were not to give up despite the unfortunate incident of collapsed roof and pillar on students. The best they could do was to decide how the problem would be fixed. As they took a decision, they had to come out with a plan of action to achieve their desired goal. Scripture said that,

*“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”*<sup>20</sup>

To develop our community is a matter of caring enough to work with our hands to avoid shame and neglect. Paul was teaching the Thessalonians to be ambitious and not to be dependents. They were in expectation of the immediate coming of Christ therefore neglected their daily work and depended on the bounty of others. Their expectation was right but the neglect of their daily work was wrong. Ephesians 4:28 reads, “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need,” As people of God we should desire freedom from pecuniary embarrassment and work and get the means of

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<sup>19</sup> Philippians 4:13.

<sup>20</sup> 1Thessalonians 4:11-12.

supplying the need of others. The Dzake community did not wait for their government to renovate the dilapidated school building but with determination took the power in their own hands to put the building into its proper shape to benefit students, teachers and the entire community. Determination always leads to success. I believe power of determination is a tool to community development as the people said in Ghanaian ‘Ewe’ language ‘mia te nu awoe’ meaning we can do it.

### **Faith**

Faith can move mountains and with faith all things are possible. Faith is a powerful tool to move and shape our world and our community. If you have complete confidence in whatever you are doing, then it means you have faith. As you believe in God and yourself as a child of God then your abilities, capabilities, gifts and talents would easily affect your community positively. Mark 11:23 reads, *“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to the mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”* God is omnipotent so faith in God is all-powerful. Christ Jesus may have had the Mount of Olives in mind as the scripture said, *“On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives and will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.”*<sup>21</sup> The picture of a mountain depicts God’s provision of a way of escape for his people. No matter how huge your trouble is, with the power of faith in God, you will find a way out.

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<sup>21</sup> Zechariah 14:4.

It takes faith to bring an end to community issues. This I think is a challenge to the church to encourage everyone to be strong and firm in their faith to curtail worries and anxieties. Linthicum said, “The future of the Church lies in our capacity to move out the comfortable ways we have learned to be “church” in order to embrace “church” as that community which is in mission to the world.”<sup>22</sup> Empowering communities to have faith and take up challenges is what we need today as a church.

### **Action**

When we consider the book of Nehemiah chapters 1-7 we noticed that it was written during the period of the Jews’ return to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity. The Babylonians took the Jews into captivity from Palestine to Babylon when they captured Jerusalem and overthrew the nation of Judah. Later the Medes and the Persians overthrew the Babylonians and began a policy of allowing the Jews to return to Palestine. After the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> return of the Jews to Palestine under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra, the 3<sup>rd</sup> return was led by Nehemiah.<sup>23</sup>

Nehemiah saw the problem when he was in his wealthy position in Persia and returned to his fractured hometown, rallied his people to rebuild the Jerusalem wall. Nehemiah demonstrated excellent leadership. He was spiritually ready to heed God’s call. He used careful planning, teamwork, problem solving, and courage to get the work done. According to Lupton, “The people had embraced the challenge of rebuilding the

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<sup>22</sup> Robert C. Linthicum, *Building People of Power: Equipping Churches to Transform Their Communities* (USA: World Vision Press, 2006), 113.

<sup>23</sup> David E. Pratte, “Commentary on Nehemiah: Bible Study Notes and Comments” The Gospel Way.com. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://www.gospelway.com/commentary>.

wall with volunteer labor. And in spite of the daunting complexity of the project, the construction had begun without a hitch.”<sup>24</sup>

Nehemiah organized his people in rebuilding the Jerusalem wall. In Chapter 4:6b Nehemiah reads, “... for the people worked with all their heart.”<sup>25</sup> Because the people felt rebuilding the wall was a good thing, they did it wholeheartedly. The people had confidence in themselves as Nehemiah said, “I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me.”<sup>26</sup> Nehemiah inspired the Jerusalem leaders to rebuild the wall as he shared his experience with enthusiasm. According to Brown, “Nehemiah has mentioned the wall but his central theme is the sufficiency of God. His mind dwells on the Lord’s greatness as he shared his spiritual ideas with those he wants to work alongside him. They must relate well to one another as fellow-workers, but their greatest need is to be united in the things which matter most-their confidence in, dependence on, and love for God.”<sup>27</sup> Nehemiah never left God out in his undertakings because success of every project depends on God. As the leaders of Jerusalem depended on God as they work alongside with Nehemiah they were able to build the Jerusalem wall.

God was present with the community when renovating the school building. Every meeting held prayer to God was first and foremost. As the citizens shared their stories, I listened. I noticed the urgency of putting the school building back into its proper shape. I

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<sup>24</sup> Robert D. Lupton, *Renewing The City: Reflections on Community Development and Urban Renewal* (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 157.

<sup>25</sup> Nehemiah 4:6b.

<sup>26</sup> Nehemiah 2:18.

<sup>27</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Message of Nehemiah: The Bible Speaks Today* (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998), 57.



empowered them to be courageous in giving out what they have and be determined to put them into use as they are bold enough to act. I mobilized the citizens to renovate the dilapidated school building.

I appointed 12 volunteers who served as my advisory committee, trained them by building their self-confidence. They assured themselves that coming together to renovate their community school building would encourage their kids to go to school and learn. They believed absenteeism of teachers would be reduced and parent would have peace of mind. Knowing that they were doing something good for their community, they embraced the school project wholeheartedly. They therefore realized their ability of bringing the community together and the power to effect change in their community.

### **Victory**

*“.... for victory, you need many advisers.”<sup>28</sup>*

It is always wise to ask for advice in any decision taken. The school renovation project in a community deserved twelve advisers to enhance its victory. Jesus called twelve disciples to transform the world. He sent them two by two and gave them power to go and make disciples in Mark 6:7. The same way I chose twelve advisers who became volunteers. As I gave them the training in ABCD they became empowered and collaboratively went to the community to help make the school renovation project possible.

When citizens realized that renovation work was a good thing, the entire community worked wholeheartedly and celebrated the outcome. They reflected on their

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<sup>28</sup> Proverbs 24:6b.

achievement and shouted repeatedly in 'Ewe', "akpe na mawu, mie woe" meaning 'thank you God, we did it ourselves.' They saw the love and the goodness of God.

They learned that one needs to care about the well-being of his/her community. Never sit in your comfort zone unconcerned. Think about others who are not fortunate like you and help them change their situation. That is the only way one can express God's love for his/her community. Asset Based Community Development to me is about giving what you have for the sake of love for your community. For God, the Father gave Jesus the Son for us to have 'life in fullness' as in John 10:10. Fullness of life is a complete physical, spiritual and mental well-being.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE PROJECT

#### **The Context**

Peki Dzake is a friendly community in the Volta Region of Ghana that has historically valued education. When the Bremen missionaries arrived in Peki in 1847, Dzake was the first town they visited. To gain a better understanding of the people of Peki Dzake, this chapter presents the following topics of research:

- Brief History of Education in Ghana
- Brief History of Peki
- Brief History of Peki Dzake Junior High School
- Impact of the School Building on Teaching and Learning

#### **Brief History of Education in Ghana**

Ghana is a peaceful country renowned for the warmth and hospitality of its people. Betty Stein George, author of *Education in Ghana* (1976) writes, “Ghana probably holds a special place in the memory of the growing number of Americans who visit Africa each year either as a tourist or as students or teachers in African studies programs. If asked what is special about this small rectangular Country on the West of Africa Coast, they would probably say it is the people, The Ghanaians strike so many as hospitable and warm, and they make so many want to return”<sup>29</sup> It is my experience that

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<sup>29</sup> George, Betty Grace Stein. *Education in Ghana* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1976). Stein introduced Ghana’s history and people and

George's assessment of the Ghanaian people is true: that if you visit Ghana once, you will want to visit again because the people are so friendly and hospitable.

Before winning its independence in 1957, Ghana was known as Gold Coast under British Colonial rule. In Africa, Ghana is considered a leader in education. Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang, Minister for Education bears witness to this priority when she writes, "The overall goal of ministry is to provide relevant quality education for all Ghanaians especially the disadvantaged to enable them to acquire skills which will make them functionally literate and productive to facilitate poverty alleviation and promote the rapid socio-economic growth of the Country."<sup>30</sup> This understanding of the positive correlation between education and economic growth has resulted in the national prioritization of education in Ghana.

In September 2007, the Ghanaian educational system adopted a westernized style that progresses from 2 years of kindergarten, 6 years of primary, 3 years of junior high and 4 years of senior high, with the hope of access to higher education. Universal basic education became free and compulsory and every Ghanaian is expected to have at least elementary education from the age of 4 to 15. This culminates in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). After Basic Education, the pupil has a choice between General Education (Senior High School), or Vocational and Technical Education.

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traced the story of educational development since 1951 and described the present formal educational system.

<sup>30</sup> Prof. Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang is the current Minister for Education in Ghana. She was appointed in 2013 by President John Mahama after the 2012 Ghanaian general election. She is a member of the National Democratic Congress. *Government of Ghana*, accessed February 29, 2016, [www.ghana.gov.gh](http://www.ghana.gov.gh).

Ghanaian leaders believe that education helps cognitive development and enlightens individuals. Ghanaian citizens are always encouraged by the government of Ghana to have at least basic education.

### **Brief History of Peki**

Peki is a town in Ghana located in the Volta Region with a regional capital in Ho. Ghana has ten regions, namely Greater Accra, Central, Eastern, Western, Ashanti, Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Volta. The people of Peki in the Volta Region speak the 'Ewe' language. The food they love to eat is called Fufu, which is made from cassava, plantain or yam. The favorite regional festival is the Yam Festival, a time of bounty that holds the promise that the people will never go hungry.

Peki citizens are proud farmers and learners. The oldest person you meet on the street of Peki can fully express him or herself in English. Peki is made out of eight towns, namely Dzake, Avetile, Afeviofe, Blengo, Dzogbati, Wudome, Azokoe and Tsame. Peki township is properly laid out and very accessible to visitors who might enjoy wandering without getting lost.

Peki artists and community leaders Kodzo and Adzoa Ababio promote trade and development by hosting volunteers and visitors to their farm and gallery, The Roots Yard. Their webpage offers a history of Peki that features the mediating role of the citizens from ruling powers to local populations. "Peki is historically very influential. From the migration of the Ewe from Dahomey (Modern Benin) in the 15th Century, due in part to the Tyrannical rule of King Agorkoli, the settlers in Peki empowered themselves as mediators between the ruling Akwamu and other Ewe States and Towns."

The Ababios reiterate the warmth and friendliness of Peki, as they write, “With the warm, sincere greetings you will receive as you explore, we know you will feel at Home, experiencing both Traditional and contemporary Ghanaian life.”<sup>31</sup>

In 1847, King Kwadzo Dei Tutu Yao II (the King of Peki) invited the North German Missionary Society to Peki. The North German Missionary Society was a Presbyterian Christian organization based in Bremen, formed on April 11, 1836 to unify missionary work in North Germany. The Bremen missionaries arrived in Peki from Christiansburg in November 1847 to begin mission work in Peki.

The hard work of the missionaries led by Lorenz Wolf gave birth to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana in 1847. The vision of the E.P.C., Ghana is “Renewal and Transformation” with a mission statement, “Bringing light where there is darkness.” In 1848, the first school was opened with fourteen boys at Peki Blengo. As the missionaries sought the development of Christianity and education in the Volta region, Peki was the gate way to the ‘Ewe’ land.

### **Brief History of Peki Dzake Junior High School**

Peki Dzake is the oldest township in Peki, and the name Dzake means peaceful. When Lorenz Wolf arrived in Peki on November 14, 1847, he was carried as a guest of honor in a litter by strong men. Before meeting the King of Peki in Blengo, he went through the townships of Dzake and Avetile. Recording his travels, Wolf lauds the beauty

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<sup>31</sup> *The Roots Yard*, accessed February 28, 2016, [www.roottyard.org](http://www.roottyard.org). According to the website, “The philosophy of roots yard is to promote Ghana made produce wherever possible.” The Ababios quote Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana who said, “For unless we attain economic freedom, our struggle for independence would have been in vain, and our plans for social and cultural advancement frustrated.”

and hospitality of Dzake: “The town consisted of three places. When I passed the first (Dzake), it was the most beautiful African village I had ever seen, clean houses and a line of trees on both sides of the broad street. People shouted with joy and accompanied me in the hundreds. The same happened to me at second place (Avetile).”<sup>32</sup> These observations still have bearing today. The people of Peki Dzake love to keep their town clean. The demarcations of land, whether private or public, are demarcated such that the town is properly laid out with roads in-between the buildings. They love to plant trees. When you enter Dzake Township you will see trees planted all over. They have social places where they gather for meetings. The citizens of Peki Dzake are so united that every member of the community knows each other. In times of joy or pain, they show concern for each other.

In 1945 the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana erected a school block that is now the Junior High School. Since the time of the first school building, the community has been showing concern about their kids’ educational well-being. At first the Junior High School was managed by the E. P. Church, and later the management was taken over by a branch of government known as the District Assembly Education Directorate. Over the decades, the academic performance of the students had established a reputation of excellence, and many alumni held high positions in the country of Ghana. And yet, since the school’s establishment in 1945, no painting or renovation work had been done on the building, and by the time of the start of this project, the building was in very bad condition.

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<sup>32</sup> *Government of Ghana*, accessed February 29, 2016, [www.ghana.gov.gh](http://www.ghana.gov.gh).

A correlation became evident between the unhealthy building and poor academic performance; the deterioration of the building had a devastating effect on the students' learning. In 2011, performance was very low. 55 candidates were registered for Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). 35 passed and had aggregate scores of 6 to 30 (61.81%). Only one person qualified technically to climb the academic ladder. This meant that the student who qualified obtained the aggregate 1 to 5 in his best six subjects. Although 35 students passed the BECE, the aggregate of their best 6 subjects did not qualify them for higher education. This shows that passing was not the only issue inhibiting success; those passing were not making qualifying grades. Perhaps even more seriously, attendance became hazardous due to the condition of the building, and some parents were threatening to remove their kids from the school. For more information about Peki Dzake Junior High School, refer to Appendix B.

### **Impact of the School Building on Teaching and Learning**

Peki Dzake Junior High School students are between the ages of 11 and 14 years. Children at this age have their own challenges. They are trying to identify who they are and become confused if they don't have a sense of belongingness. If the dilapidated school block posed a challenge to the students academically then the likelihood is that it also endangered them personally.

As the community grew to fear disaster from the dilapidated building, that anxiety also affected the academic performance of the students. Fear and anxiety in the lives of school-aged children impacts their ability to be who they are and what they want to be in the future. Fear of safety or fear of unpleasant consequences affects children's behavior and ability to develop positive attitudes towards learning. Safety and hope for success are



therefore necessary to the lives of young students. If the young ones do not complete Junior High School and earn the Basic Certificate, they become dropouts; if they drop out, then they will not have a good job; if they don't have a good job then they will not be well paid; if they are not well paid, then they will be poor; if they are poor then they cannot provide for their families, and the cycle continues from generation to generation. If students are learning in a good environment with a standard school building, their academic performance will be higher, and they will have positive emotional qualities such as inspiration, interest, serenity, hope and joy.

This project stems from the belief that a renovated school building would lead to a sense of increased wellness in the learner and his or her academic performance would be higher. Students would attend school and complete Junior High School. Education would be reprioritized by the community, and a positive attitude towards learning would be renewed. If students could receive the community's hope for their future, then their performance would improve, they could pass the Basic Education Certificate Examination, and proceed to higher education. They would end up getting well-paid jobs and would be able to provide for their families.

A dilapidated school building affects not only students but teachers as well. Dangerous and depressing conditions can result in high absenteeism, reduced level of effort, lower effectiveness in the classroom, low morale, and reduced job satisfaction on the part of teachers. In a dilapidated building the atmosphere would be despair and frustration. A renovated school would lead teachers to feel a renewed sense of hope, commitment, and a belief that the community cared about what went on in the school building. Lateness would be ameliorated and teachers would show up for school. Good

working condition would result in high morale, enthusiasm, cooperation, and acceptance of responsibility.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is the perfect tool to help students, teachers, and parents find resources for hope and restoration and curtail fear, anxiety, despair and frustration. Mike Green writes about local people forming a community partnership that empowers citizens to be the determinants of their own destiny. “This partnership worked together towards a purpose that involved their community in action. In this kind of partnership-sometimes called a community organization - most members are everyday citizens, not the staff of helping agencies. Local citizens and their associations are at the center of decision-making and are the principal producers of outcomes.”<sup>33</sup> I believed that what the Dzake community needed was to be empowered to come together toward one common purpose, the renovation of the Peki Dzake Junior High School.

Following the principles of ABCD, one of our initial questions will be, ‘What is the Ministry of Education in Ghana doing to solve this problem?’ One of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in Ghana is to provide and improve infrastructural facilities. There are other primary and junior high school buildings with even worse conditions than Peki Dzake Junior High School. The Ministry of Education in Ghana is trying to construct, rebuild and rehabilitate these deteriorating school structures one at a time.

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<sup>33</sup> Mike Green, John O'Brien, Henry Moore, and Dan Duncan. *When People Care Enough to Act: ABCD in Action* (Toronto: Inclusion Press, 2006),91.

If the citizens of Peki Dzake were to wait for the Government to renovate the school for them, the wait could be so long that the outcome would be disastrous. In *Asset Building & Community Development*, Gary Paul Green and Anna Haines note the range of methods available for community development, but emphasize the importance of self-help. “Although there are some common issues and problems in the field of community development, there is still wide variation in how practitioners approach their work. One of the ways of conceptualizing these differences is the typology developed by Christenson (1989). Christenson identified three different community development themes or models: self-help, technical assistance, and conflict.”<sup>34</sup>

As I used the self -help model to empower the citizens, they took the initiative to renovate the school, and they solicited help from the government. In every country, the power lies in the people and the government must recognize, respect and accept that fact. Robert Linthicum clarifies the role of self-determination in the success of community transformation. “It is community organizing that leads to transformation of a community, because it results in people’s attitudes toward themselves being changed-they perceive themselves as being in control and competent - and that results in the government and outside agencies recognizing that the people are a legitimate force to be taken seriously. That is truly transformational.”<sup>35</sup> Indeed, by standing in their own authority, the citizens achieved respect, and the government of Ghana was willing to give them the necessary support. Linthicum continues, “Doing community organizing is always doing ministry

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<sup>34</sup> Gary P. Green and Anna Haines, *Asset Building & Community Development* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), 15.

<sup>35</sup> Robert C. Linthicum, *Building People of Power: Equipping Churches to Transform Their Communities* (USA: World Vision Press, 2006), 291.

“with” a community, never “to” or “in” a community.”<sup>36</sup> As I empowered them to take up the challenge I agreed with Green and Haines who rightly said, “... community development is primarily about helping people to help themselves.”<sup>37</sup> According to ABCD experts, the best way forward is to increase the capacities of the citizens to be part of the solution.

The power that strengthens communities to do things for themselves is the power that sustains community building and community transformation. Renowned community organizer Saul Alinsky clearly stated that “It is impossible to over emphasize the enormous importance of people’s doing things themselves. It is the most common human reaction that successful attainment of objectives is much more meaningful to people who have achieved the objectives through their own efforts. The objective is never an end itself. The efforts that are exerted in the actual earning of the objective are part and parcel of the achievement itself.”<sup>38</sup> Instead of the citizens waiting for the Government to renovate the Junior High School, they took the power of ownership to renovate it themselves

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<sup>36</sup> Opcit.

<sup>37</sup> Green and Haines, *Asset Building & Community Development*, 16.

<sup>38</sup> Saul D. Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1989), 174–175.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### **The Lay Advisory Team**

Picture of some concerted lay advisory committee/volunteers.



This photograph was taken with their permission. They were 12 lay advisory committee but only 6 concerted to allow their pictures taken after the training sections of volunteers.

The picture shows their readiness and eagerness to work collaboratively with me on the

project. The ladies are teachers in the school and the gentlemen are leaders of the community and the church. This was taken in EPC, Dzake chapel

This team consisted of twelve persons who holds various leadership positions in the church and the community. The Doctor of Ministry program of Drew University required the student to choose lay advisory team to assist him or her work on his or her project. This project was not a solo undertaking. I used the lay advisory committee who served as volunteers in the implementation process. Savage and Presnell wrote, “A successful Doctor of Ministry research project is not a solo undertaking. In fact, working with a selected laity team who will help identify the focus of research, help plan, execute, and evaluate it, and remain in reflective theological dialogue with the leader/researcher, is a requirement of the postmodern narrative approach.”<sup>39</sup> I worked collaboratively with this team to attain the goal of my project. They assisted in the planning and the execution of the school renovation project through individual and group visitations and together empowered the community to take up the challenge to curtail their worries and concerns.

### **The Twelve Volunteers**

The lay advisory team served as volunteers and I trained and equipped them on effective approaches to community mobilizing, community organizing and also with the tool of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). This enabled them to assist in the implementing process such as mobilizing assets, gifts and graces to renovate the Junior High School block. Membership consisted of 6 persons from the church and 6 persons

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<sup>39</sup> Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Kentucky: Indian University Press, 2006), 77.

from the community. This included the Parish Pastor who is the Local Manager of the School, an elder who was the Project Director of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, 2 elders who are teachers in the school, an elder who was the Director of Local Rural Bank, an elder who is a community women leader, the chief of the Town, chairman of Parent Teacher Association, chairman of the Local Council of Churches, building contractor, assistant headmaster of the Junior High School and the Assembly Man representing the community in the government of Ghana.

### **Training of volunteers**



These are pictures of some volunteers who attended the training sections who concerted to publishing their picture. On the right is Galant Sena Amankwa (chairperson of the lay advisory committee - he was the former EPC, Ghana project director), on the left is Reynold Adipah (secretary to the lay advisory committee – he is a retired banker and active elder of EPC, Dzake), and in the middle is Mr. Setordzor Asamoah (active lay advisory committee member).

All the twelve volunteers participated in all the training sections. It lasted for eight days. The first four days were to teach them and the remaining four days were to put the information into use. To enable them understand what Shalom approach to Asset Based Community Development was all about, I gave them a brief overview of the Boko Haram incident in Nigeria in West Africa. This was a message forwarded to me through email by the Clerk of General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (The Rev. Godwin Osiakwa) on January 20, 2012 which was sent to him by the General Secretary of WCRC (World Communion of Reformed Churches) Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi. This message reads:

***Message to WCRC member churches about situation in Nigeria from the General Secretary***

*Dear friends,*

*As a communion, we are called upon to pray for one another. In recent weeks our sisters and brothers in Nigeria have been going through some difficult challenges. The bombs in some churches on Christmas Day 2011 and the violence that continues to be meted out have been distressing.*

*As people of faith wrestle with the Boko Haram phenomenon, let us keep our sisters and brothers in our prayers. We pray for both Christians and Moslems in Nigeria.....*

*We are aware of how the situation in Nigeria has been made even more complex by the removal of subsidies on petroleum product in Nigeria and the protests and strikes that have followed. While the Nigeria government may be looking to address.....Let us hope that decisions made on this matter by any party will have the welfare of the people of Nigeria, especially the most vulnerable, at heart.*

*We therefore call upon all to pray for our sisters and brothers. Let us pray for peace, let us pray for wisdom, let us pray for life to replace the forces of death.*

The prayer request of the General Secretary of World Communion of Reformed Churches to me is SHALOM. Shalom approach to Community Development is when the citizens care enough to act to save their lives and their country. The meaning of the Hebrew word Shalom is not just peace but complete peace. It is the feeling of contentment,



completeness, wholeness and harmony. According to Strong's Concordance, Shalom means completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony and the absence of agitation or discord.

As volunteers ponder over the message, they understood Asset Based Community Development to be the Asante Proverb which says, 'I am because we are and we are because I am' No one can live alone in a community; we all need a support system. It is necessary to know that everyone in a community is important no matter that person's religious background. The health of our community at large enhances church growth and community development.

I prepared volunteers for the training section by dividing the training topics into four sections, as outlines below. See Appendix A for details.

- Introduction to Asset Based Community Development
  - They learned about what ABCD is, and why they needed to know about ABCD
- How to identify assets in a community
  - I trained them in asset mapping and how to identify stakeholders
- How to organize a community for action

- I trained them about how to get organized and organize their community
- How to mobilize people to support a community project
  - I trained them in how to assess community needs and resources, how to tap resources to support community projects.

### **Brief Introduction to Asset Based Community Development**

I gave them a brief definition of Asset Based Community Development approach to Community Development. Asset Based approach is the value of a community. For instance who are the people in a community and what do they have. I asked personal questions: Who are you? And what do you have? How can you use what you have to support your community? Asset Based approach therefore determines their value as citizens of a community. Community Development is where people living in a community with collective action come together to find solution to a problem. The question I asked was, what can you bring to the community table? In what way can you help in finding solution to community problem? Asset Based Community Development approach simply means bringing your resources together such as talents, gift and graces, skills, abilities and capabilities together for solution to a common problem. This definition became cleared to the volunteered and we proceeded to how they could identify Asset in their community.

### **Identifying Assets in a community**

To enable the volunteers understand the Assets in their community I educated them about the key assets they could find in their community such as Individuals, Institutions, Associations, Connections and Physical Assets. It is important for them to note that individual residents in the community are assets to the community. They have their gifts, talents and skills to support the school renovation project. They needed to recognize and identify them and tap their resources to help renovate the school block. The institution in the community such as government agencies and private businesses are another valuable resource they could identify in the community. It is important for them to take note of small informal groups of people in the community such as 'Novisi Haborbor' (meaning Unity Group). They are association that has common interest. Their common interest is to support one another when in need. They and other associations are resources to community development. Getting connected to the individuals in the community is an asset on its own. Building relationship with individuals and groups in the community is paramount because it would help them know more about what they could offer. Physical assets such as buildings, land and funds are also assets that they could use in the school renovation project. I told the volunteers that all these assets are there to improve the community

### **Organizing community for action**

It was important for the volunteered to understand the gravity of the school block on their kids. Although they were already aware of the bad shape of the school block, detailed explanation would make them act as issue of emergency without delay. For

better understanding, I used Robert Linthicum action and reflection spiral as he explained that “The empowering cycle of the organizing of people begins, not with reflection but action. Like George Merck, we must *act ourselves into a new way of thinking*. In community organizing, that action begins with the most radical activity of organizing-the individual meeting.”<sup>40</sup> Green also made a statement to emphasize the productiveness of locating potentials and motivating people to act as he said, “The point of asset mapping is to create relationships that mobilize a community’s assets for productive action. These relationships grow when leaders locate assets, identify potential contributions and motivations to act, and then find a way to invite contributions that make sense from the contributor’s point of view. Almost every person and association in a community has something to offer.”<sup>41</sup> I wanted the 12 volunteered with collaborative effort to arranged and bring the citizens together to implement the project. I explained to them ways and means in which they would approach them. First of all, they should visit them and explained the assets they had and how they could use their assets to support the project. Green rightly said, “ABCD organizers focus on engaging the gifts of every community member. They challenge and encourage the leadership group to keep reaching out to bring in the assets and energies of people who are often left out.”<sup>42</sup> They should help the community to understand their abilities and capabilities, skills and talents. Since the citizens knew the problem, they would surely act when called upon to bring their resources together. According to Gary and Anna, “After mapping these community assets, community organizers attempts to build relationships across the community that

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<sup>40</sup> Robert C. Linthicum, *Building Community of Power*, 202.

<sup>41</sup> Green and Moore, *When People Care Enough to Act*, 111.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 96.

will help implement the goals and vision of the project. Mobilizing assets requires broad-based development approach relies on leveraging local resources to gain outside support. Although it is important to build from local resources, it is also important to tap into existing resources that will enhance those assets.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Mobilize people to support community project**

The volunteers with collaborative effort were to bring the citizens together by systematically bringing awareness of the assets they had to support the school renovation project. According to Perkins, “There is a growing consensus that those who live in the environment understand it best and are best equipped to prioritize and design solutions”<sup>44</sup> I equipped the volunteered as I asked them to write down names of groups, institutions, individuals, organizations and authorities in the community and take a closer look at those who were to influence the project and could not be ignored. I trained them on various strategies to attain their goals such as marketing principles to attract the citizens to be fully involved in the community project. I helped them to understand how to developed goals and objectives by using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound). Fundraising strategies was also part of their training. I asked them to create a budget to determine the amount to be raised, set income goal, decide how many donors were needed a timeline. Communication is very important so I asked them to come out with a communication plan to know why they needed to communicate, those they needed to communicate with and make note of what the community think

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<sup>43</sup> Gary Paul Green and Anna Haines, *Asset Building and Community Development*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> John M. Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing it Together and Doing it Right* (Michigan: Published by Baker Books, 1995), 82.

about the issue. Green said, “Sometimes holding a learning conversation about people’s interests and gifts with a group of people who know and care about a person both reveals the foundation for that person’s participation and mobilizes the necessary for action.”<sup>45</sup> They should be able to tell what they wanted the community or citizens to know, think, and do. Perkins rightly said, “An important problem-solving tool in community development is the pedagogy of reflection and action, a process through which people analyze their situation and together craft strategies to address what they determine are needs. Beginning with the basic felt needs and appropriate solutions, it builds in analysis and action to deeper levels of systemic evaluation of political, social, and religious systems and projects and actions.”<sup>46</sup> Citizens understanding of their community can build a good future together by discovering ways of addressing community needs.

### Detailed outlined training sessions

<b>March 2012 (Training Section)</b>	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Session</b>	
Topic: Introduction to Asset Based Community Development	
2-4pm	Talk – What is ABCD
4-6pm	Talk – Why ABCD
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Session</b>	
Topic: How to identify Assets in a Community	
2-4pm	Talk – Asset Mapping
4-6pm	Talk – Identification of stakeholders
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Session</b>	
Topic: How to Organize Community for Action	
2-4pm	Talk – How to get organized
4-6pm	Talk – Community organizing
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Session</b>	
Topic: How to Mobilize people to Support Community Project	
2-4pm	Talk – Assessing Community Needs and Resources
4-6pm	Talk – Tapping Resources to Support Community Projects

<sup>45</sup> Green and Moore, When People Care Enough to Act, 142.

<sup>46</sup> John M. Perkins, Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing it Together and Doing it Right, 230.

## WEEKLY ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

### SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

#### What is ABCD?

Asset Based Community Development is a methodology that seeks to uncover and utilize the strengths within communities as a means for sustainable development (Wikipedia Encyclopedia).

ABCD is a methodology that considers local assets as a primary building of sustainable community development; ABCD draws upon existing community strengths to build a stronger and more sustainable communities (Roger Courville. [www.slideshere.com](http://www.slideshere.com)).

#### ABCD Approach to Community Development:

- Identify and mobilize individual assets
- Build members and community relationship
- Give power and roles to community members to lead

A = Asset

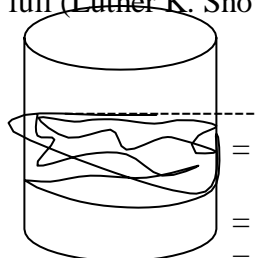
B = Based

} Collaborative Effort (sharing stories, lessons and resources)

C = Community

D = Development

- Assets plus Community equals Development.  $A + C = D$  (“use what we’ve got, to get what you want.”) (Luther K. Snow. The organization of hope, p4-7.)
- Half glass full (Luther K. Snow. The organization of hope, p2.)



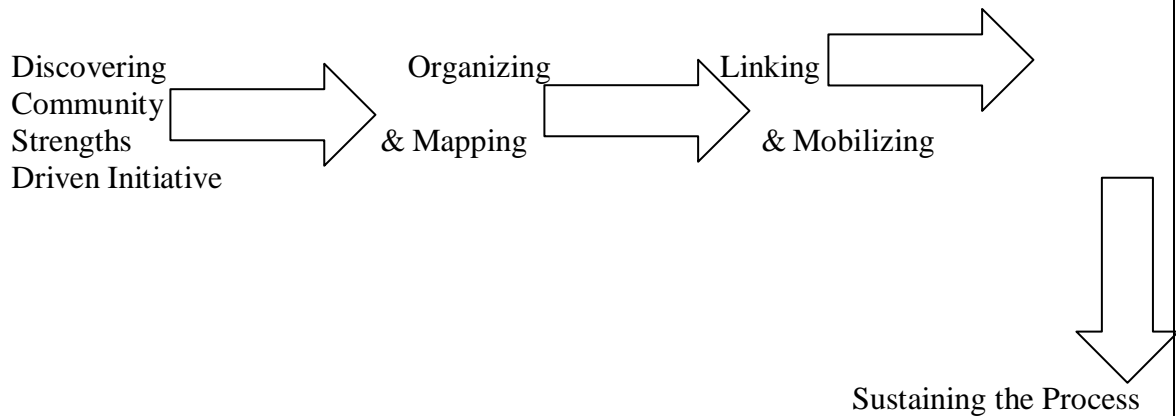
= Concentrate on what you have and not what you don't have

= Tap capacities of citizens to make things work right

= Use your assets in new ways to create more assets

The other half of the ABCD equation, the “C” in  $A + C = D$ , is Community (talents and skills)

## Methodology of Asset Based Community Development



### Why ABCD?

- Empowerment
- Citizenship
- Social justices
- Allows engagement with other diverse communities etc.
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*In four small groups share some ways you can practice ABCD.*

## SESSION 2: HOW TO IDENTIFY ASSETS IN A COMMUNITY

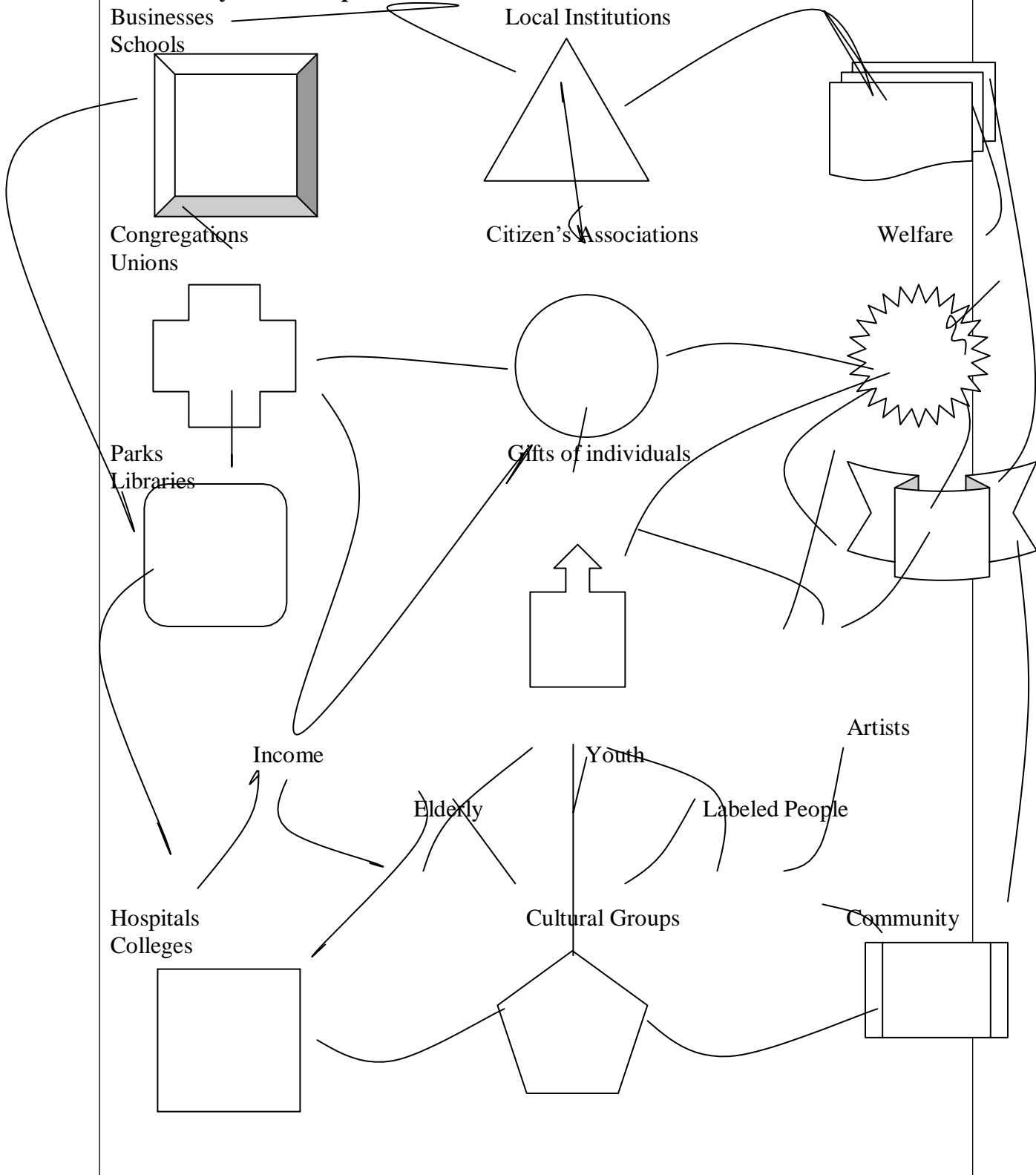
Types of Assets:

- Individuals - people we know and people we label (talents, skills)
- Economy - businesses and commerce
- Associations - Informal and formal groups
- Physical - spaces and places (land, property)
- Stories - memories, experience, histories
- Institutions – formal organizations



**Asset Mapping** (Mike Green. When People Care Enough To Act, p28.)

**Community Assets Map**



## Mapping Community Assets as Potential Partners for Local Schools

### Building Productive Relationships Between Local Schools and the Community

(Kretzmann & Mcknight. Building Communities from the Inside Out, pp. 212, 213.)

#### PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:

Hospitals, community colleges  
Police stations, libraries, Parks

#### INDIVIDUALS:

young people, artists, seniors

#### THE PRIVATE SECTOR:

Businesses, banks, corporations

#### ASSOCIATIONS:

community development  
corporations,  
community organizations, churches

**SCHO  
OL**

### Identifying Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people, groups or organizations that have an interest in or might be affected by the outcome of the project.

**How to identify stakeholder** (Source: NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation, THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH (LFA). 1990 pp. 28-33)

1. Write down the names of interest groups, institutions, individuals, organizations, authorities, who are:
  - Concerned in any way with the project
  - Hold an influential position
  - May be affected by the problems addressed in the program
2. Group the parties involved into type of organization, i.e., individual, organization, government etc.
3. Take a closer look at some of the groups and select the most important i.e., those expected to have particularly strong influence over the project and cannot be ignored. Analyze these groups according to:
  - a. Characteristics social (members social background, religious, cultural aspects)

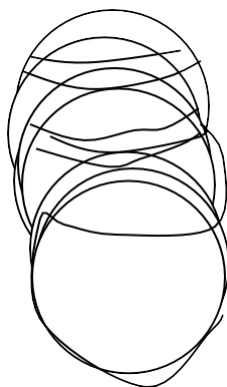
- b. The main problems affecting or facing the group (economic, ecological, cultural etc.)
  - c. The main needs and wishes, interest (openly expressed, hidden, vested), motives (hopes, expectations, fears) and attitudes (friendly/ neutral/ hostile towards implementation agencies and others) as seen from the group's point of view.
  - d. The potential in terms of both strengths (resources) the weaknesses of the group, and what could the group contribute or withhold from the project.
  - e. The linkages indicating main conflicts of interests, patterns of cooperation or dependency with other groups.
4. Set priorities: decide whose interests and views are to be given priority in addressing problem?
- Which are the groups most in need of external assistance?
  - Which interest groups should be supported in order to ensure positive development? In which way should they be considered?
  - What conflicts would occur by supporting given interest groups and what measures can be taken to avoid such conflicts?
  - Essentially, how should the project react towards the group?
  -

### **SESSION 3: HOW TO ORGANIZE THE COMMUNITY FOR ACTION**

**The Action-Reflection Spiral** (Linthicum. Building People of Power, p.202)

#### REFLECTION

Felt Community Needs  
 More Substantive Issues  
 Examination  
 of System / Structures  
 Awareness of One's Own  
 Action  
 Complicity



#### ACTION

Individuals and House Meeting  
 Initial Action  
 More Substantive Actions  
 Confrontation of Systems / Structures  
 Substantive Community Transformation

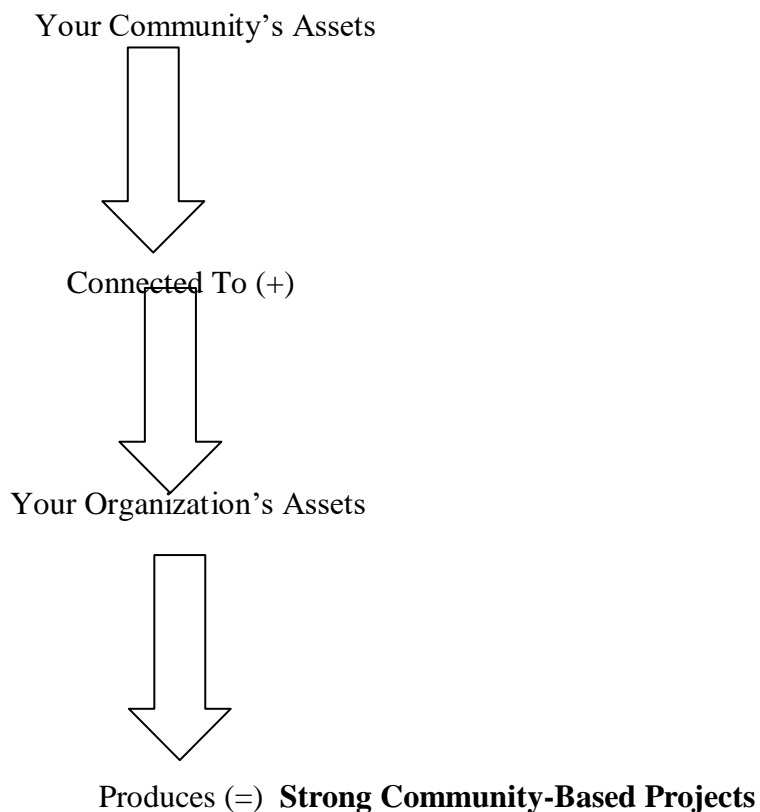
Form groups of four with three people in each group:

1. Make a list of community needs
2. Name specific plan of action to address community needs
3. Discuss with your colleagues what you learned from making the list of needs and plan of action.

### **SESSION 4: HOW TO MOBILIZE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

1. Write down the names of interest groups, institutions, individuals, organizations, authorities, who are:
  - Concerned in any way with the project
  - Hold an influential position
  - May be affected by the problems addressed in the program
2. Group the parties involved into type of organizations, i.e., individual, organizations, government etc.
3. Take a closer look at some of the groups. Select the most important i.e. those expected to have particularly strong influence over the project and cannot be ignored.
4. Set priorities: decide whose interest and views are to be given priority in addressing problems? (Source: NARAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation, THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH (LFA). 1990 pp. 28-33)

**Producing Strong Community – Based Projects** (Kretzmann, McKnight, Dobrowolski & Punttenney. *Discovering Community Power: A Guide to Mobilizing Assets and Your Organization’s Capacity*, p3.)



### Using Marketing principles to support community projects

Awareness of Marketing Principles (Tempel, Seiler & Aldrich. Achieving Excellence in Fundraising, p11.)

Strategic checkpoint:  
Demonstrate Stewardship  
& Renew the Gift

Action checkpoint:

Solicit the Gift

Action checkpoint:

Activate Volunteer Corps

Planning checkpoint:

Prepare Communication Plan

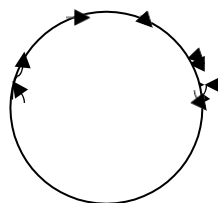
Planning checkpoint:

Prepare Fundraising Plan

Planning checkpoint:

Identify Potential Giving Sources

Planning Checkpoint:  
Examine the care



Planning checkpoint:

Select Fundraising Vehicle

Planning checkpoint:  
Analyze Market Requirements

Planning checkpoint:

Prepare Needs Statement

Planning checkpoint:

Define Objectives

Action checkpoint:

Involve Volunteers

Planning/Action checkpoint:

Validate Needs Statements

Planning checkpoint:

Evaluate Gift Market

### Potential Community Needs

1. School dropouts
2. Poor infrastructure
3. Unemployment
4. Poverty
5. Illiteracy
6. Crime
7. Disease (Malaria, HIV/AIDS)
8. Truancy
9. Teen parents
10. Hunger

### Developing Measurable Program Goals and Objectives

**S** – Specific

**M** - Measurable

**A** - Achievable

**R** - Realistic

**T** – Time-bound

### Fundraising Plan

1. Create a budget

2. Determine the amount to be raised from individual donors
3. Set income goals
4. Decide how many donors you need
5. Put it on a timeline

**Communication Plan 7 steps** ([www.jossey.com](http://www.jossey.com))

1. Know why you need to communicate (what do you want to be different as a result of communicating)
2. Consider who you need to communicate with (make a list of your potential audiences)
3. What do these audiences think about the issue or topic now? (How can you find out? Make a note of what you know or what you need to do to find out.)
4. Define. (What do you want your audience to KNOW, THINK or DO as a result of the communication?)
5. Write key messages for each audience. (These may be the same for each audience, or you may have to consider addressing their differences. Remember the purpose of your communication.)
6. Decide when to need to deliver your messages. Your timing may determine how you need to communicate.
7. Decide how to deliver your messages. (If you are trying to generate awareness, written communication may be enough. If the message is complex, or controversial, you may need to plan for more interactive approaches including face to face communication.
  - Who will deliver the message? How will you prepare them?
  - What resources are required?
  - How will you enable feedback? How will you know that your audience has received the communication?
  - How will you follow up if additional information is required

**Volunteered strategic meeting**

After the training section, I organized weekly discussion meetings with the volunteered and planned how and when to meet with citizens to implement the project. The goal of the meeting was to involve the twelve volunteered to use Asset Based Community Development principles and a Shalom approach to reflect and discuss a

practicable means for action in mobilizing the community for a successful, sustainable implementation of the project for transformation.

The following were the agenda for the meetings:

**April 2012 (committee meetings)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting with Lay Advisory committee**

General Group Discussion (implementation of the project)

1. Meeting with people in the community
2. Planning fundraising strategies

**2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting with Lay Advisory committee**

Group Discussion on Actions to be taken

**3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting with Lay Advisory committee**

Dividing into 4 groups for Action

**4<sup>th</sup> Meeting with Lay Advisory committee**

Action:

1. Meeting with community leaders
2. Worshipping with community churches
3. Meeting Parent Teacher Association
4. Meeting with artisans etc.

After the meeting was held we collaboratively acted on the following:

1. meeting with people in the community
2. printing fundraising envelopes to solicit for funds to support the project
3. contacting philanthropies and Non-Governmental Organizations for financial support
4. contacting benevolent persons, groups and societies for funds
5. informing the community about the due date for school renovation
6. mobilizing them and getting them ready to work

We divided ourselves into four groups and we took action as follows: meeting with community leaders (chief and elders -local traditional leaders), worshipping with community churches, meeting Parent Teacher Association, meeting with artisans and more others. According to Linthicum, “the essential elements of action: individual meetings, house meetings, action teams, research action, and action. These are the



primary strategies for equipping a people to act powerfully.”<sup>47</sup> Meeting opinion leaders in the community became very important because they were the movers and shakers of the community. Such meetings were very important because it enhanced relationship building and everyone in the community felt powerful enough to act. Linthicum was right as he said, “We begin the process of building our relational power one on one-sitting down with the people of our church, neighborhood, community, or city to talk about public things that really matter to them-the joys they take in their community, the concern that worry them, the issues that start a fire in their belly, their desire and willingness to contribute leadership to the rebuilding of their community or city, and the people they perceive as leaders, as well. A relationship is built with each one of them. Once a sufficient foundation of relational meetings has been laid, house meetings begin to form where people can share with each other the pain they feel and can take courage from each other that something significant can be done about these community-destroying issues.”<sup>48</sup>

### **Fundraising Strategies**

I used the following strategy to help raised funds to support the project:

#### *Fundraising Strategies*

- Identify Potential Giving Sources
  - Citizens home and abroad
  - Benevolent societies
  - Non-Governmental Organizations

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<sup>47</sup> Robert C. Linthicum, Building Community of Power, 231.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 202-203.

- Philanthropies
- Prepare Fundraising Plan
  - Create a budget
  - Determine amount to be raised from individual donors
  - Set income goals
  - Determine how many donors you need
  - Put it on timeline
- Prepare Communication Plan
  - Know why you need to communicate
  - Consider who you need to communicate with
  - Decide when you need to deliver your messages. Your timing may determine how you need to communicate.
- Activate Volunteers
  - Citizens

#### *Implementation strategies*

- Engage every member of the community
- Utilize all skills, talents, gift and graces
- Organize fundraising reception
- Purchase all necessary renovating materials
- Voluntarily renovate school building

#### **Collaborative action**

The project engaged the assistance of up to 3000 citizens. Home visit was done collaboratively with the 12 volunteers. Individual homes and families were visited and

they were involved in the renovation work. The artisans were to help with their skills, women were to provide water, men were to mix concrete, and youth were to help when necessary. The project was estimated to take approximately 7 to 8 months to finish.

The work on the school building was organized for the following results:

- Windows and doors changed
- Roofing sheets replaced with new ones
- Walls both inside and outside of the classrooms plastered with cement
- Floors removed and concreted with cement
- Pillars plaster with cement
- Floors of the veranda leading to the classrooms concrete with cement
- Painting work on walls of the building both inside and outside of the classrooms and the offices of the teachers.

Renovation work was done on the school building when students were on vacation. The cost of renovating the school building was approximately 20,000 Ghana Cedis (about 15,000 US dollars). Through collaborative effort, this amount was raised through fund raising durbar organized by citizens with collaborative effort by volunteers in August 2012.

It was organized in such a way that every member of the community was invited from the youngest to the oldest. Every individual in Dzake community attended the durbar and participated in the fund raising joyfully. They all brought their resources

together and were able to raise the \$15,000 to support the Junior High School renovation project.

In collaborative effort with the volunteers; we purchased the following in July 2012:

- Cement
- Sand
- Roofing sheet
- Paint
- Door frames & doors
- Window
- Other needed materials

In collaborative effort with the volunteers we saw oversight of the project. The entire building of 46/12.9 square meters was renovated including 3 classrooms and 3 offices for teachers, headmaster and assistant headmaster. At its completion the school building looked elegant, admirable and conducive for students learning.

### **Celebrating the outcome**

Ghanaians love to celebrate achievements and Peki Dzake will not be an exemption. When the project was completed with collaborative effort with the volunteers, we planned a day for community celebration. The day we set aside for the celebration was a Saturday. Community members did not work nor went to the farm and the young ones did not go to School. Everyone in the community both young and old was invited to celebrate their achievement. Other dignitaries were invited including the District Commissioner (DC). The District commissioner is a government representative who

oversees some portions of the Volta Region including Peki Dzake. The district headquarters is in Kpeve and part of the District offices are in Peki.

A memorable celebration like this can be remembered when Nehemiah said that “At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs and thanksgiving and with music of cymbals, harps and lyres.”<sup>49</sup> After completion of Jerusalem wall Nehemiah organized the people to celebrate their achievement and to give thanks to God.

The day for the celebration of the renovated Junior High School building was announced by the ‘gong gong’ beater (announcer). The entire Peki Dzake Community was fully prepared for achievement Celebration. The chiefs were in their traditional beautiful Kente cloths and sat in their palanquins before matching to the celebration ground. The various churches and their Pastors processed with their choirs. The young ones performed traditional dances. Drums were played and songs were sung to the Glory of God. The whole celebration was fun and joyful. It was beautiful, colorful and memorable.

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<sup>49</sup>Nehemiah 12:27

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION

#### **Interviews**

To conduct the project interviews, I chose an informal style that prioritizes empathy and friendliness. I wanted to communicate that I understood the pain of the community and was passionate about their concerns and worries. Following is a summary of responses. Out of respect for the interviewees' privacy, I will not quote interviews verbatim.

Refer to Appendix C for interview questionnaires.



The above photograph was taken while interviewing some past and present students of the school. These interviews were held at an abandoned Home Science Center on the school premises. Some past students had come around to visit their friends at the school. To respect their privacy, I will not mention their names. As I interviewed them on one Friday, the past students complained bitterly how they had to struggle to pass their final exam. A second year student who decided not to come to school that day accompanied them to the school just to hang out with their friends. As I asked him why he did not come to school, he told me there was nothing interesting going on at the school so it was better for him to stay home and work on people's farms to get some income.

A final year student came outside to join them while his class was in session. What I noticed during the interview was that those students who were supposed to be in class were not interested because they found nothing fascinating about the learning taking place in the school.

After interviewing them, we posed together for another photograph, and I believed I could see a change in their demeanor. Just from our conversation there was a sense hope



expressed in their

Below I am pictured with Togbe Takor Tutu-Brempong XII, the chief of Danorkpedzi (Dzake) and Gyasehene of Peki traditional states. He is a member of the Lay Advisory Committee.



Before he became a king, he was known as Victor Nkpe, a Director of Ghana Cocoa Board. Being the king, I interviewed him about the dilapidated school building, and he was excited to talk to me. He told me that he attended that school years ago, and the present condition of the building had been his worry. As a result of our conversation, he said that he hoped his worries will one day be over. He complained bitterly about how the building was affecting the academic performance of the kids. He told me he was ready to give every necessary support to return the school back to its proper condition and status. During the implementation stage, he was an active volunteer who helped talk to citizens and raise funds from home and abroad.



## The School Building Renovation



This photograph shows the condition of the building when we began the project. The roofing was bad and could not withstand the rain; the pillars fell apart and the roof was held up by sticks. The building was not strong enough to support itself, and it looked abandoned.

I became passionate about this project because the lives of students and teachers were in danger. Education would not be appealing to those who would need to attend school in this building. Parents and citizens worried loudly and expressed their feelings about the building like people without hope. I believed that they had the ability and capability to initiate change in the face of such concerns. All they needed was power.

I made them understand that they had power because they had God-given talents, gifts and graces. Therefore, I believed they could use whatever they had to effect change to the dilapidated school building. As the citizens understood that they could renovate the school building, I empowered them to go ahead and restore pride to their community, a work they accomplished with full joy.



As the citizens took the power into their own hands, they began the renovation work on the school block. The above photograph shows the renovations underway. Extensive plastering work was completed on the building, new pillars were fixed, old roofing sheet removed, wooden framing added to the building for new a roof sheet, and old windows removed. Building materials are also pictured here at the site, indicating that work is in progress.



During the renovation phase, changes in the community were already evident. Although work on the school building was still going on, students had already developed self- confidence and pride to be in school. A student walking into the lobby was walking with self- confidence, boldness, dignity, pride, enthusiasm, hope, excellence and high self-esteem.



Finally, in the above photograph I am pictured with the renovated school. Students, teachers, parents and the entire community came together to design a star symbol with

stones beside the school building. I feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction to see this renovated school building labeled STAR.



The above view of the renovated building is an everyday visual reminder of the power of the community to impact its own destiny. Through this project, the Lay Advisory Committee and I empowered citizens to renovate the dilapidated school building and restore hope to the children and their parents. After the renovation work was done, they boldly said to themselves ‘Yes we did it ourselves.’ The school building looks beautiful, elegant and inviting as a place for students to learn and teachers to teach. Parents are happy, proud and willing to send their kids to school. The community is no longer troubled but happy and proud. What a great achievement when citizens can claim ownership. I am grateful to God that the Peki Dzake Junior High School renovation project offered to the community evidence of its own power, and to the students, an environment in which to excel.

## CHAPTER 6

### RESULTS

#### **Spiritual Development**

This project bears witness to the adage that united we stand and divided we fall. Jesus prayed for his disciples, ‘and may they be one.’ The Peki Dzake Junior High School renovation project united the community and out of that unity, the project was accomplished. Despite multi-faith differences, the community knows they are one, with common concerns and common solutions. Love for their community brought them together. Loving one another and sharing gifts and graces for the wellbeing of their community and shared lives was a sign of spiritual growth. To care for one another and God’s creation is a sign of God’s power in humankind. Addressing common concerns that made life better for their children was a sign of appreciating God’s goodness and love. Fulfillment and happiness are signs of spiritual satisfaction. Instead of worrying, they now say that all is well. If their dilapidated school building is now a star, then it is evidence of the grace of God in their midst.

#### **Social Development**

The grace of God enabled volunteerism of citizens which became important to them. They utilized their ability to renovate the school building. Interdependent relationship was developed among the people. They understood that they were stronger

together in achieving community goals. Their collective qualities nurtured various forms of social cohesion such as trust, co-operation, communication and group problem solving ability. As the entire community took collective action, they recognized their strength. This strengthened the young ones to bond with school and community.

### **Educational Development**

Students now are happy to go to school, teachers are excited to teach, and parents are happy to send their kids to school. School has become interesting again. Self-confidence developed in the students and they were eager to learn and do well on their final examination. Statistics demonstrate a dramatic improvement the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) scores between academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13. In 2011-12, 41 candidates wrote the exams and 41% passed. In 2012-13, 56 candidates wrote the exams and 71% passed. This result means that after renovations, more candidates were motivated to sit the exams, more candidates passed the exam, and more candidates were able to advance to institutions of higher education.

### **Economic and Community Development**

The possibility of getting a good paying job is increased with a higher level of education. The more students advance to higher levels of education, the better they are likely to do over a lifetime of earning potential. This is the pattern, that if alumni/ae are gainfully employed, then they are less likely to suffer unemployment and poverty. They can provide for themselves, contribute financially and intellectually to the welfare of the community, and help in the financial care of their family.

As the citizens gained power through the renovation of the school building, their community was beautified. The felt learning is that if they have been able to address a

current issue then they will be to address future issues of the community. They are empowered, understanding their potentials, abilities and capabilities to do things themselves. They learned the lesson of togetherness and got to know that when they are together they can achieve their aims. They can act voluntarily on anything they care about. The community had proof of what citizens can do. The future of kids in the community is bright, and so the future of the community is bright too.

## CHAPTER 7

### ASSESSMENT OF METHODOLOGY

#### **Strengths**

It was obvious that my relationship with the community helped in bringing the people together. They never saw me as a stranger but instead as one of them who was passionate about their concerns. My informal and friendly style of interview helped them to share their worries without any hesitation. I listened to citizens with affirmation so they also listened to me with readiness as I empowered them to act on their concerns with the power they had.

The training of the lay advisory committee was a strong factor in mobilizing the community for action. As they understood what ABCD was all about we were able to work as a team. The series of meetings I held with them informed them to work steadily and on time. Frequent communication with the volunteers enhanced the success of the project. Some of the meetings were held via conference call (712 432 0031 access code 111595#) due to the distance between us.

My frequent visitation helped the community to achieve success. Despite the distance from the USA to Ghana I had two trips and stayed with them for six months. I spent three and a half months on the first visit, and two and a half months on the second



visit. This enforced the progress of the project since the citizens knew that I was around to strengthen and support them.

Collaboration was established by meeting with individuals, groups, and opinion leaders in the community. These meetings helped inform citizens about useful assets they possessed individually and collectively to support their community. This in turn helped prepare them and communicate what they had to address their common concerns. An emphasis on teamwork brought the awareness that everyone was important and had a role to play.

The renovation work involved every member of the community. No one was left out and so everyone could claim ownership of the achievement. They celebrated their achievement as one people, one community and one fulfilled goal. This strengthened the lived reality of togetherness, love for community and the power to effect change.

### **Weaknesses**

Distance and job commitments made it difficult for me to be away from United States for several months at a go. My presence with the community was not as continuous as I intended it to be. Although I tried every means to be physically and informationally present, I would have loved to be present more completely with the community. But that too would have had a cost to my other obligations in United States. My family had to sacrifice to take care of themselves when I was away in Ghana. My assistant, Rev. Richard Galevo Addo had to take up all the pastoral responsibilities during my absence.

Due to technological and network problems, conference calls sometimes didn't work well. Sometimes I didn't get all the volunteers to be present for meetings because of

family and other commitments. Instead of cancelling meetings because of absenteeism, I worked with those who were present once we formed a quorum. Lateness of some volunteers sometimes delayed meetings. Waiting for all volunteers to be present at meetings sometimes resulted in delays of 30 minutes to one hour, thus prolonging meetings.

Financial commitments posed a challenge due to the high cost of airfare required to visit the community. I had to work and save money for the trips. Although I don't have any regrets, I think staying with the community throughout the project would ease some if not all of these weaknesses.

## CONCLUSION

We all know that comfortable, safe and healthy environments are important components to successful teaching and learning. The deplorable state of Dzake school building was unimaginable. Renovation work became an emergency to the citizens of the community. Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) was used to empower citizens to put their abilities and resources together into action. They cared enough to act because the future of their kids was important to them.

The Bible noted important people who are God fearing such as Prophet Jeremiah who instructed the exilic Israelites to ‘seek the peace and prosperity of the city’ of Babylonia and Nehemiah who strategically rallied Jerusalem citizens to rebuild the broken wall. It took power and the wisdom of God to bring people together for a common goal. It took courage, strength, determination and faith of the citizens of Dzake to come together to renovate the school building. They were empowered to understand their strength, abilities and what they were capable to do.

The context of the project was based on the history of the people in the community, their education and the impact of school building on teaching and learning. Their history defined who they are as people. They are people who love education because when the German missionaries brought Christianity to them in 1847, education

was part of their missionary work. Schools were built and their forefathers had opportunity to go to school. They imparted the essence of education in their kids which was carried on from generation to generation. Their understanding of the past caused the present and so the future of them.

The method used was to call the twelve lay advisory committee members into volunteerism. The volunteers were introduced to ABCD and with collaborative effort, citizens were mobilized and the school building was renovated. As citizens were called into action, together they worked wholeheartedly.

ABCD is a wakeup call by God to all who are worried about issues surrounding them be it church, neighborhood or the community. The key to address them is passion and action. As I worked on my project I learnt the following:

Firstly, God uses ordinary people who are ready to use their God given talents to solve or to bring an end to worries, fear, anxiety and also devastated situations like the school building. We sometimes feel too weak, too inexperienced and too imperfect to be used by God to fulfil God's purposes. Moses was a prince in Egypt but killed an Egyptian (Exodus 2:12) and escaped to Midian out of fear (Exodus 2:14). Aside his imperfection, he had a limitation of a speech problem (Exodus 4:10). Despite his problems, God sent him back to Egypt to free the Israelites out of bondage to the promised land (Exodus 14).

God promised Abraham that he will be a father of multitude nations (Genesis 17:5). His imperfection made him anxious and had a child with Hagar his servant (Genesis 16:3-6). Despite Abraham's imperfectness, God stayed faithful and gave him

and Sarah Isaac (Genesis 21:1) who later after generations resulted into the nation of Israel.

Peter, once called Simon was one of Jesus' disciples. He later became one of the apostles in the early church. The arrest and trial of Jesus devastated him and fear led him to deny Jesus three times (John 18:15-27). Despite his imperfection, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and preached powerfully on the day of Pentecost about Jesus in public without fear (Acts 2:14-36).

It is important for us to know that despite our limitations and imperfection, God's faithfulness and the presence of Jesus in our lives empowers us to live out the greatness God has meant for us and our community. All that God wants us to do is to make ourselves available. Every humankind is capable of making life comfortable for self and neighbor.

Secondly, if you feel called by God to do something for church and community, do not hesitate to do it. I think ABCD is a useful tool you can use to follow your passion.

Finally, ministry is not only meant for congregation members sitting in your pews every Sunday but also to those who have concerns in our community and needed to be empowered. We as a church can awaken power and self-confidence in people around us to make everyday life as thanksgiving to God.

The importance of the project is the awareness that there are more communities out there who need ABCD. People in these communities has gifts and graces but they lack the power to care enough to act and effect positive changes as in the case of Dzake community. I think ministry today should take a different shape and that shape is a

*ministry of empowerment.* We are living in a chaotic world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. People are suffering, living in poverty and dying every day. Today, when you listen to the news you will hear wars, earthquakes, tornadoes, storms, volcanoes, Isis, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, serial killings, contract killings, homelessness, hunger and more. All we need in the world today is to hear that all is not lost and that when we have life, we have the power to transform the world.

It is interesting to note that every community is unique in history and culture. A successful project in a community is possible when one understands their uniqueness. Citizens of every community should not be underestimated with their abilities, capabilities, gifts, talents and graces. Each and every one living in a particular community has something to offer for betterment of all. Let's learn to tap resources from every individual.

Before we can do any meaningful community project, we must pay attention to establishing relationship with individuals and groups living in the community who will actually do the project. It is advisable not to force project on citizens if there is no interest in the community. The interest of the community is paramount and must be respected if you want a successful project.

It is important to work with volunteer team of collaborators with different types of expertise, from community leaders to artisans and gong gong beater (announcer). You should allocate sufficient time for local volunteer training on a particular project. The volunteer team will collaboratively work with you to achieve your goal.

You should remember that every individual living in a community has power. The best you can do is to acknowledge the power in them by letting them know the assets they have and how important those assets are to the community. It is good to strengthen them to put their power into action. The affirmation 'Yes I can and therefore we can' is very powerful.

The success of every project is loving what you do with a sincere feeling of being not burdened or forced to do it. My project was successful because:

1. I had passion for it. I felt the fears and worries of citizens as I listened to them. I became emotional about their stories and that gave me a strong urge to mobilize them. I empathized with them as I thought about the feeling of finding my own child in that dangerous situation. I told them that no condition is permanent. Their fears were genuine but not permanent. The best way to put their fears to rest was to confront it and make something positive out of it. I asked them to refer to their past successes and believe in themselves for the future.
2. My objective was clear to the citizens of the community. My plan of action was to train the 12 lay advisory committee in ABCD. They became volunteers who worked collaboratively with me and mobilized citizens into action.
3. I believe in the spirit of empowerment that is teaching people to do things themselves. The citizens claimed authority over the project as I motivated them and gave them the opportunity to make their community proud. I encouraged them to succeed as I empowered them to have confidence in themselves. I said to them 'You can do it.' They understood their

responsibilities and gave their best to their kids and the community. They surely made their community proud as they brought their assets together and renovated the school building.

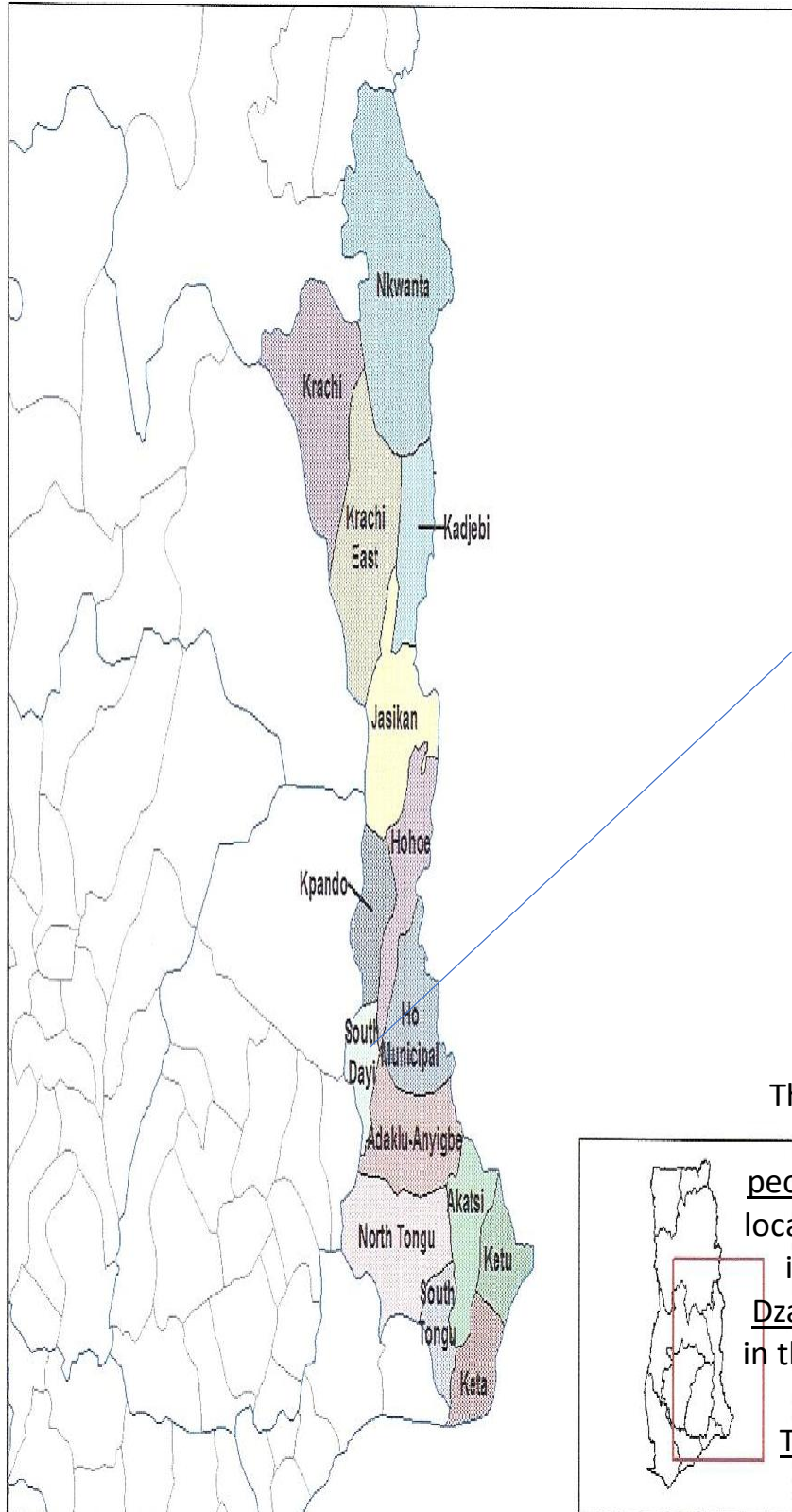
4. My expectation was realistic and meaningful to the community. They already cared about the future of their kids and the outcome of the project was clear to them. They knew that they would have a renovated school building after their hard work. They believed that the danger of the school building would be avoided, teaching and learning would enhance.

I found fulfillment seeing the community and citizens happy about their school. They are now enjoying their shalom with a hopeful future for their kids and their community. ABCD is the tool to use to develop our communities if we have love and passion for better world and promising future for both young and old.



APPENDIX A

Map of Peki Dzake



Peki Dzake

MAP OF SOUTH DAYI- PEKI DZAKE

The district population is made up predominantly of the Ewe people making Ewe the most popular local language. 70% of the population is christian. Peki Avetile and Peki Dzake are the most populated towns in the district. Almost 50% of the total population is found in the Peki Traditional Area. The district also covers the Kpalime, Kpeve and Tongor traditi

## APPENDIX B

**Pictures of the town**

Peki Dzake Township



Road leading to the town of Peki Dzake



The Junction to Peki Dzake Township



Road between Peki Dzake town buildings



APPENDIX C

**Interview questionnaires**

*The Interview Process*

- Interviews were conducted in a friendly manner to enable free flow of feelings and concerns and to create the atmosphere of empathy. Concerns documented after the interview by their permission.

Persons to interview in the community (parents, opinion leaders etc.):

Name-----

Title-----

If possible Telephone Number & Email-----

- Make interview appointment:

Day/Date & Time.....

- Prepare for the interview:

Active Listening - taking notes of the facts of his or her personal experience

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*The Questions*

The questions were constructed such that it covers students, teachers, parents and the entire community These Interviews were conducted Before and After the renovation. This comprises an oral report from the people in the community.

*Before Project:*

How do you feel about the current status of the Junior High School Building?

In what way do you interact with the church, chiefs and the government concerning the status of the school?

What new opportunities for collaborative action?

How will you be willing to help that vision come to pass?

*After Project:*

In what way will the school renovation work help you to better interact with the church, chiefs and the government?

How do you feel being part of this change?

In what way will the school renovation project enhance peace, wholeness, prosperity in Peki Dzake?

- ***Questionnaires – Students and Teachers***

*A few suggested questions:*

- Students – What was your previous experience towards learning and how do you feel now?
- Students – How will you describe yourself as a student before and now?
- Teachers – What was your previous experience towards teaching and how do you feel now?
- Teachers – What are students attitude towards learning before and now?
- Teachers – How will you describe yourself as a teacher before and now?

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