



REPORT ON CONSTRUCTION OF ICT CENTRE FOR MUSIDEMA
PRIMARY SCHOOL, GHANA.

FUNDED BY: BOSCH FOUNDATION AND TEBIHI e.V GERMANY

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INTRODUCTION

The world is fast becoming a digitalized one where every aspect of our daily lives is affected in one way or another by a computerized system. However, people living in developing countries, especially rural dwellers are lurking behind mostly due to a lack of ICT infrastructure including electricity, educational infrastructure, computers, and high illiteracy levels among others. Successive governments are putting in efforts that range from policy formulation to implementation of evidence-based strategies to increase literacy levels including that of ICT. Unfortunately, these efforts are concentrated in the big cities and towns to the detriment of the rural folks.

Musidema is one of such deprived communities where infrastructural and human development are in short supply. In an area like Musidema where climatic conditions allow for only one farming season per year, high illiteracy levels exacerbate the situation due to lack of knowledge and skills in modern agronomic practices to improve yields and reduce post-harvest losses. Comprehensive formal education including knowledge and skills in information, communication, and technology for future generations is therefore imperative to reducing poverty, hunger, and disease.

However, TeBihi – für unsere Kinder e.V did not have the financial muscle to undertake an ICT project. The support of BOSCH Foundation was therefore sought for the construction of one room that could accommodate 15-20 desktop computers and accessories attached to the already existing Primary school block.

COMMUNITY ENTRY AND ENGAGEMENT

Since the project is aimed at improving information and communication technology literacy among children of Musidema, it was imperative that we engaged community members, especially their leaders to seek their approval and acceptance. There were two separate meetings: first with the community chief and his elders and then with the larger community members. During the meeting, community members were sensitized on how the world is now dependent on ICT and future advancements in technology. We discussed the need for our children to have knowledge and skills in ICT. We also drew their attention to the gap in the current ICT education in their school i.e ICT is taught in the abstract without practical hands-on training. This highlighted the importance of TeBihi/Bosch Foundation ICT Project in their

school and how that is intended to shape the future of their children and the community at large. The chief and his community members expressed their excitement about the project and that they are looking forward to a greater future for their community through the project.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND OWNERSHIP

To ensure community ownership in terms of usage, management, and maintenance of the facility, we solicited the community's contribution towards the project in the form of labour and supply of water.

As part of the division of labour, the men agreed to dig the foundation, mould cement blocks and provide general labour whilst the women took the responsibility of supplying water. This however hit a snag when the project was finally taking off but got resolved after a series of further engagements.

THE STRUCTURE

The structure as planned by the architect was attached to the existing six-unit classroom block. The sub-structure consisted of a concrete foundation and a raised platform with cement blocks. The superstructure is made up of three walls of cement blocks, windows, and door frames. The roof is made up of wooden beams and braces and covered with corrugated aluminum roofing sheets

FINISHING

The windows of the room are fitted with louver blades and the door is an enforced metal security door to protect it from burglary attacks. The windows are also fitted with burglar-proof metals to improve the security of equipment in the room.

FURNISHING

The ICT room has been furnished with eight computer desks and chairs. However, the room can still accommodate more desks and chairs when available. To ensure that the room is conducive for teaching and learning as well as cooling the equipment, two ceiling fans have been installed in the room.

EQUIPPING

By the kind courtesy of an ICT company in Frankfurt which wants to remain anonymous, we got eight pieces of used laptops (5 are functioning), a projector, and other equipment to facilitate teaching and learning of ICT. Due to the old nature of the laptops, they can only

perform better on Microsoft Windows 8.1 version. Although this windows version is old, it can still be used to teach the pupils basic ICT skills at least for the start.

HANDING OVER

A short handing-over ceremony was done and in attendance were the community chief, the district chief executive's representative, and a representative from Ghana Education Service.

USAGE

The facility is currently being used for the purpose for which it was constructed although there are challenges with the laptops since they are old and outdated. Also, there are only five functioning laptops as compared to an average of thirty pupils per class. Although the current situation is far better than previously seen, it is hoped that more donors will come to their aid and increase the number of computers to ease the teaching and learning of ICT in Musidema Primary School.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The school children, their teachers, and parents express their sincere gratitude to the donors and implementers for their kind gesture and promise to make good use of the facility. They have also taken it upon themselves to be responsible for the security and maintenance of the centre to ensure its sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the initial challenges faced with regard to community participation and ownership, the project has generally been a success. Practical teaching and learning of ICT is currently ongoing in Musidema Primary School. However, the shortfall still remains that, the laptops are old and not performing optimally, and also, they are not adequate for the number of pupils per class.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that community opinion leaders, school authority, and district assembly take steps to solicit support in procuring modern desktop computers which are more robust for teaching and learning and appropriate for the tropical weather.

