

Training in Africa Programme

LEADERSHIP IS SOMETHING YOU DO



**Accra, Ghana
August 2026**

- **Advocacy**
- **Critical thinking**
- **Information literacy**
- **Strategic planning**

delivered by



in partnership with



**PARENTING
EDUCATION
NETWORK
GHANA**

part of the
Training
in Africa
Programme



THREE DAYS TWO AUDIENCES

In August 2026, we returned to Ghana for three days of work that were closely connected, yet different in purpose.

For the first two days, we worked side by side with school owners and school leaders from across the country, exploring information literacy, advocacy, critical thinking, policy change, and partnership-building. On the third day, we joined PEN Ghana, our local partner, for a dedicated session centred on its own strategic needs.

The Ghanaian context is unique, but many of the challenges are all too familiar: how schools respond to rapid technological change, how leaders make better decisions, how families can be engaged as meaningful partners, and how education prepares children for a future that is difficult to predict.

There are no ready-made answers. We brought research, tools and experience into the room, and worked with participants as they developed responses that made sense for their own schools and communities.



LISTEN, THEN ADAPT

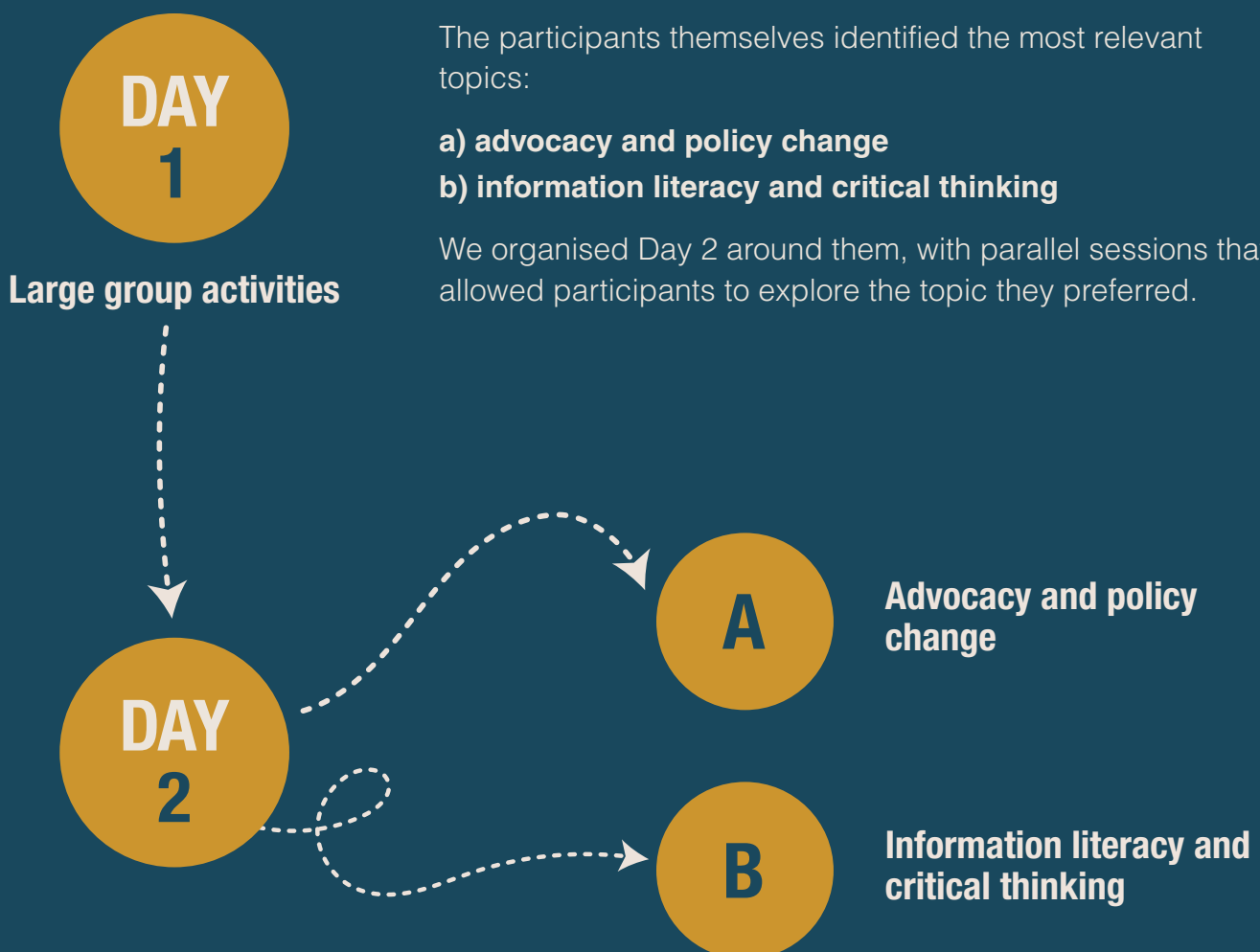
We spent Day 1 working with a single large group of over 70 people. Some of them were surprised to realise that our role as Parents International trainers was not to lecture, but to facilitate. The activities themselves were part of the learning process.

Our goal was to focus on topics that actually mattered to participants. We set in motion a series of group activities in which participants discussed their own experiences, compared perspectives, identified challenges, and considered which topics they wanted to prioritise.

The participants themselves identified the most relevant topics:

- a) advocacy and policy change**
- b) information literacy and critical thinking**

We organised Day 2 around them, with parallel sessions that allowed participants to explore the topic they preferred.



TRAINING WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

Before leaving for Ghana, we prepared a digital workbook that participants could access through a QR code. It meant travelling without boxes of printed material while still giving everyone exercises, prompts and resources they could keep using after the training. The workbook was not a token handout. It brought together activities on leadership, future schools, school improvement, stakeholder mapping, governance, resilience, digital-age policies and school-family partnership. Just as importantly, it was designed to remain editable. After Day 1, once participants had identified where they wanted to go further, we revised the material before Day 2.

1

RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

The resources we used did not begin as personal opinions dressed up as training content. They drew on materials and results developed through EU-funded projects, including DRONE.

European answers can't, and shouldn't, be assumed to work regardless of the reality on the ground.

Research provides a starting point; it's up to the participants to find the best way to translate it into workable solutions for their own context.

2

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Additional resources used in our work are available free through the Parents International Parent Library, including practical materials on digital and information literacy, trauma-conscious education, stakeholder engagement and family support.



[HTTPS://LIBRARY.PARENTHelp.EU/](https://library.parenthelp.eu/)

WOULD A SIX-YEAR-OLD UNDERSTAND IT?

A genuine moment of insight came when participants were asked to conceive their own ideal school mission statements.

Many sounded polished and ambitious, rich in the kind of language that often features in educational discourse: “excellence”, “inclusion”, “sustainable”, “future”...

The six-year-old daughter of one of the participants was there, so we asked her to listen to the statements and tell us whether she understood them.

She didn't.

That sent everyone back to their drafts with a new question: School is for children. Is my school's statement understandable to them?

The language became simpler, and the thinking became more precise.

What was striking was how similar the revised statements became. Once the buzzwords were gone, two ideas kept returning: a school where every child is loved, and a school every child loves to attend.

“I will change my mission statement.”



LEADERSHIP IS NOW

Very often, the most useful moments in a training session are not planned. They emerge spontaneously from the interactions of the participants.

As people kept trickling in, altering the composition of the groups we had devised, we asked the participants to form groups of six and seven, and told them that we could not continue until they had found a way to do it.

For a while, nobody moved.

People looked around the room, apparently expecting someone else to decide what should happen. No individual had been given responsibility for the problem, so the problem seemed to belong to nobody.

Eventually, one participant stood up and began directing people towards different seats. There was nothing dramatic about it; she simply saw that something needed to happen and acted. Within a short time, everyone else was moving too, and the groups had formed.

At that point, there was very little for me to add, except to point out that:

**“It’s not my problem”
doesn’t work.**

Formal responsibility matters, but leadership also appears in the moment when someone seizes the opportunity to be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem.



RECOGNISING BIASES

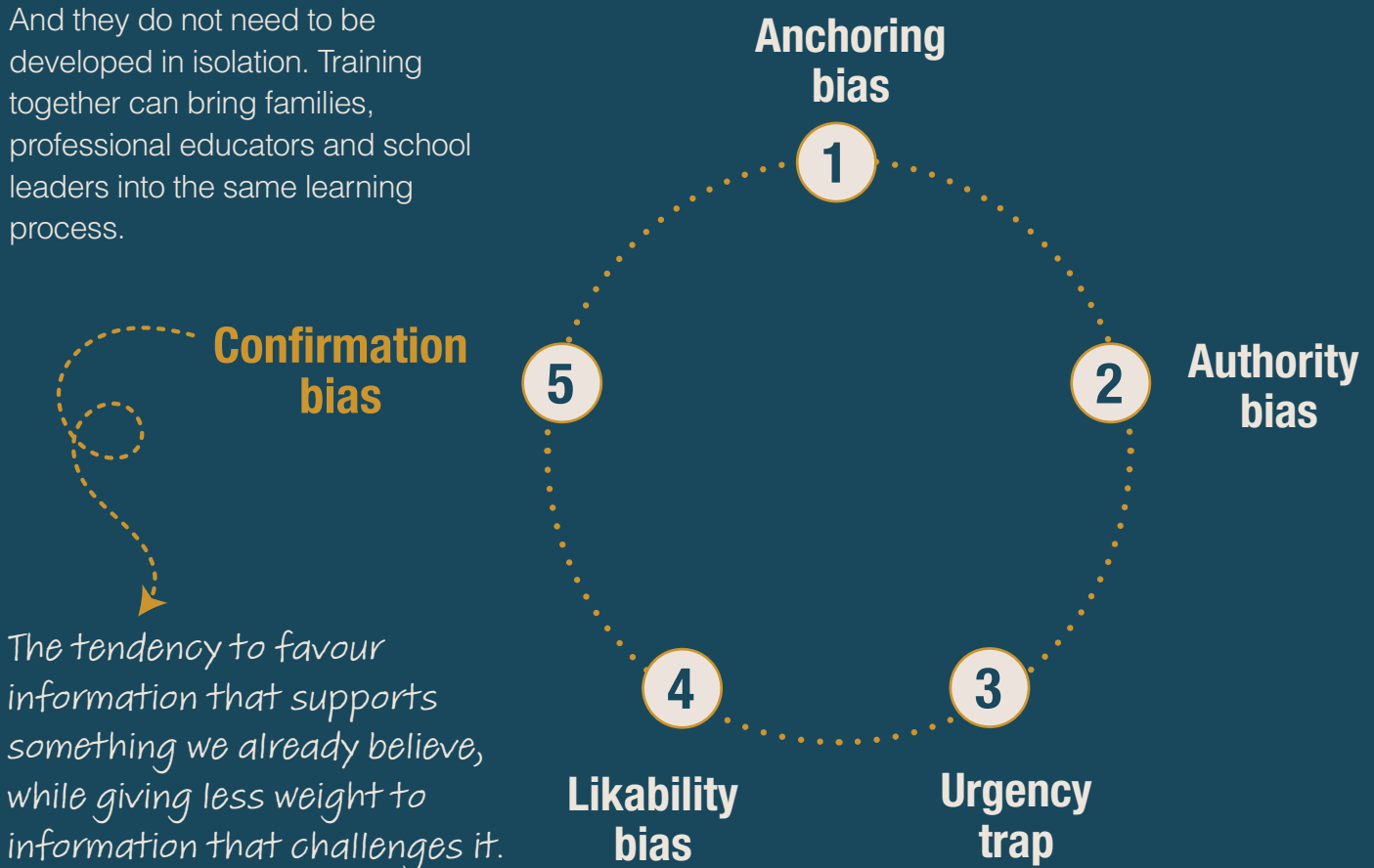
Access to devices and the internet was widespread among participants. They used them for information and solutions, indicating that AI is already part of their everyday practice. A sharp contrast with most education professionals in Europe, who still scared or sceptical of AI.

The question for our group was how critically they would assess what AI produced.

During Day 2, participants explored bias through information-literacy and leadership scenarios. They grasped the concepts quickly, but detecting confirmation bias and producing concrete examples proved more difficult.

This is why the DRONE were so relevant. Critical thinking and information literacy need practice: questioning, checking and verifying information rather than accepting it at face value.

And they do not need to be developed in isolation. Training together can bring families, professional educators and school leaders into the same learning process.



FROM PROBLEM TO ADVOCACY

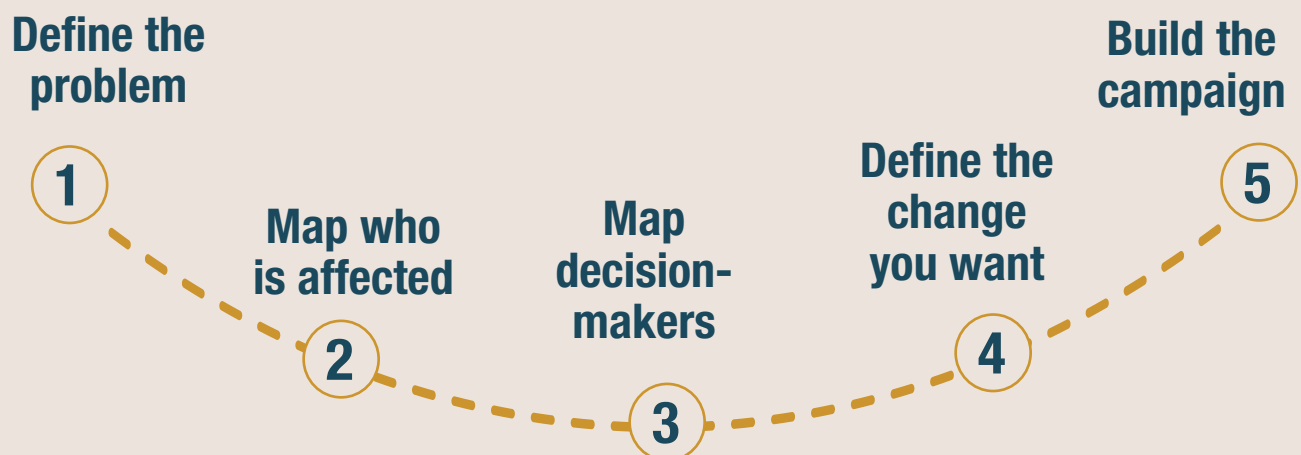
The advocacy group began with a simple question: is this a school problem or a policy problem?

Using issues identified on Day 1, participants worked in small groups to distinguish between problems schools could address directly and those requiring policy change. Where the information was insufficient, the uncertainty itself generated useful discussion.

They then moved to real challenges from their own schools. Using an advocacy canvas, each group identified who was affected, why the issue required policy action, and who might have the power or influence to change it.

Participants then mapped Ghana's policy environment: who decides, who influences, who can support them and which decision-makers are accessible to them. After extensive discussion, all five groups chose one shared challenge: funding pressures on private schools. They agreed to focus their advocacy on funding for teacher salaries, developed campaign approaches, and committed to pursuing one common campaign beyond the training.

BUILDING AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN



CRITICAL THINKING, INFORMATION LITERACY, AND LEADERSHIP

We worked with participants on critical thinking and leadership decision-making, using scenarios, individual reflection and small-group discussion rather than extended presentations. We began by surfacing some of the “unquestionable truths” leaders carry into their work, then moved into scenarios involving bias, case analysis and reflection on habits that can make better thinking difficult.

The emphasis was not on memorising the names of biases. Participants were repeatedly asked to examine how a decision was being made, what might be missing from the reasoning behind it, and what a more thoughtful response could look like.

We then widened the conversation to relationships with industry and technology companies. Schools can benefit from external expertise, real-world projects and access to resources, but partnerships also need clear boundaries. Participants therefore explored questions of transparency, equity, independence, student protection and mutual benefit.

The aim throughout was practical: not to hand participants a model to reproduce, but to create space for them to question decisions and design approaches for their own schools.



STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR OUR PARTNER

The third day was deliberately different.

After two days with school owners and school leaders, we shifted the focus to PEN Ghana, our local partner, and worked with the team on its own strategic needs.

That change of scale matters. Participants take ideas back into their schools, but local organisations remain after visiting trainers leave: they maintain relationships, understand how the context is changing and continue the work within their own communities.

The session with PEN Ghana therefore moved beyond the immediate learning needs of individual participants and towards the longer-term questions facing the organisation itself.

It was not simply a third day of the same programme. It was a different kind of conversation, with a different purpose, but connected to the same principle that shaped the rest of the mission: useful capacity building has to make sense locally and continue beyond the training room.



RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE, PRACTICE INTO CAPACITY

We went to Ghana with a clear plan, research-based resources and experienced trainers. We also went knowing that none of those things would be enough if we were not prepared to listen.

Over three days, participants challenged assumptions, identified priorities and worked on solutions rooted in the realities of their own schools and organisations. The priorities participants identified shaped Day 2.

That is how we understand this kind of work.

Our role is not to arrive with answers for people to adopt, but to bring useful tools, evidence and experience into the room, create the conditions for serious work, and help people build solutions that make sense in their own context.



**If they leave
with something
they can still
use, then the
training has
done what it
was meant to
do.**

BRING THE TRAINING TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Parents International works with parents, professional educators, school leaders and organisations to develop practical training adapted to local needs.

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info@parentsinternational.org

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