



School for Life
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 - 2024

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBE	Complementary Basic Education
CS	Circuit Supervisor
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CVTP	Community Volunteer Teacher Project
DA	District Assembly
DEO	District Education Office
DEOT	District Education Oversight Team
DFID	Department for International Development
DTST	District Teacher Support Team
E4L	Empowerment for Life Program
EQUALL	Education Quality for All
EQUIP	Education Quality Initiative Project
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
GDCA	Ghana Developing Communities Association
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNECC	Ghana Network for Education Campaign Coalition
GV	Ghana Venskab (Ghana Friends)
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
PPP	Public Private Partnership
MoE	Ministry of Education
NNED	Northern Network for Education Development
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SfL TC	School for Life Technical Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMC	School Management Committee
T2T	Teach2Teach International
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TPDP	Teacher Professional Development Project
UKaid	United Kingdom Agency for International Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines the strategic focus of School for Life (SfL) from the year 2020 to 2024. SfL is a local Non-Governmental Organization, which functions as a lead organization in delivering, demonstrating and advocating for mother tongue education in schools in Ghana. It also advocates for the implementation of complementary basic education in underserved and marginalized communities in Ghana and provides complementary basic education services and quality education programs to both Government and Non-Governmental Organizations.

As a unit under the umbrella of the Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA), SfL works with other units to contribute to the achievements of the objectives of other programs, e.g. the Empowerment for Life Program. School for Life's vision is **"A Ghana, where the right to relevant quality education is fulfilled leaving no one behind"**.

To achieve its vision, SfL works to strengthen civil society's role in improving access to relevant quality basic education in deprived and hard to reach communities.

STRATEGIC AREAS

School for Life has expertise in the following strategic areas:

Access to Education: This is to ensure that all children have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their social class, gender, ethnicity background or physical and mental disabilities

Quality Education: SfL will work to ensure that children in deprived, hard-to-reach and marginalized communities have access to quality education. Key elements to be addressed are the physical space, qualified and committed teachers, relevant teaching and learning materials

and community support.

School Governance: As part of the school governance structure at the Basic Education level, the Government has instituted committees to support in the management of schools. SfL promotes well-functioning governance structures with adequate capacity and access to engagement platforms.

Equity: Equity in education requires putting systems in place to ensure that every child has an equal chance for success. SfL promotes a fair and inclusive system that addresses barriers to equal opportunities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This Strategic Plan focuses on the following strategic objectives:

1. To strengthen collaboration with and active participation in leading national networks and increase the funding base of School for Life.
2. Promote access to education for children in deprived and marginalized communities;
3. Promote and contribute to achieving good learning outcomes in basic schools;
4. Promote and strengthen the functionality of formal and informal education structures for accountable governance;
5. Promote inclusiveness, fair allocation, distribution and accountability of education resources

2.0 BRAND STATEMENT

School for Life is a lead CSO offering mother tongue functional literacy to out-of-school children in deprived and hard-to-reach communities in Ghana.



From Darkness to Light

3.0 HISTORY, MISSION AND VISION

3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

SfL started in 1995, springing from cooperation on rural development between the Northern Ghana based civil society organization, Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA) and a Danish NGO Ghana Friends (GV).

The partners saw education as a pillar for development and at the same time realized that there were serious challenges to education performance in deprived parts of Northern Ghana. One major challenge identified was the high numbers of out-of-school children. As a way of providing access to out-of-school children, SfL developed a functional literacy model, which has proven to be highly effective, and has been

adopted as government policy, now known as Complementary Basic Education (CBE).

COLLABORATIONS

SfL has since been implementing the model in collaboration with partners including DANIDA, USAID, DFID and UNICEF and with support from relevant Government agencies such as the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service. Nine other CSOs/NGOs joined in the implementation of the model under the Ghana CBE Programme 2013-2018.

SfL has also collaborated with other partners to contribute to quality education in regions of the North of Ghana. These partners include Tzedek, OXFAM, World Education International, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), Right to Play (RTP), and Teach2Teach International (T2T).

3.2 VISION

School for Life's vision is

"A Ghana, where the right to relevant quality education is fulfilled leaving no one behind"

3.3 MISSION STATEMENT

The organization works to strengthen civil society's role in improving access to relevant quality education by functioning as a lead organization in delivering, demonstrating and advocating for innovative and inclusive approaches to education in Ghana. We strive to be a centre of excellence that inspires breakthroughs in education and provides technical support to civil society and other education stakeholders.

3.4 CORE VALUES

Transparency & accountability

We are honest, open and accountable to ourselves, partners, supporters and communities; we take personal and collective responsibility in using our resources efficiently and achieving results.

Collaboration & participation

We work as a team and value our differences. We work with and involve partners, communities, civil society and state actors to make a difference for children and communities.

Equity

We believe in fair and equitable access to and distribution of resources and social services. We work for a just society that values everybody’s differences.

Inclusion & non-discrimination

We include the most deprived communities and children in our work independent on divisions based on ethnicity, religious beliefs, political allegiance, gender and ability. We never compromise our impartiality in selecting beneficiaries of our work, and we work for inclusion in all parts of society.

3.5 STRATEGIC APPROACHES

In order to achieve the above, School for Life will bring into play the following strategy approaches:

CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

This will involve the provision of training and orientation to the various education groups (School Management Committees - SMCs, Parent Teachers Associations –PTAs, District Education Oversight Committees – DEOCs) to support in increasing their understanding on their roles and responsibilities.

Similarly, it also refers to the provision of in-service training programs on new educational models for beneficiary public schools teachers and the education groups. In order to sustain the best practices in improving quality education, District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs) will also be provided with in-service training to in turn train public school teachers. They will also be given the responsibility of providing orientation programs to the SMCs and PTAs. Acquired skills and knowledge through these training programs will be used to enhance quality teaching and learning in schools. The education groups will also be taken through how to engage and

advocate duty bearers on relevant educational issues.

The support to SMCs and PTAs has graduated from individual SMCs and PTAs to networks of SMCs and PTAs. This is to generate a louder voice for these education groups and to strengthen their relationship with duty bearers. Their capacities will also be built to enable them form networks at district level.

Further, under the in-service training, SfL will be working with three (3) E4L operational Districts (Mion, Kumbungu and Karaga) to implement the Teacher Professional Development Project (TPDP). The Project seeks to strengthen relational competence of teachers and motivated active students in schools that will lead to achieving good learning outcomes at the primary school level.

EVIDENCE GATHERING

This will involve getting relevant information to develop evidence on issues of equity and pro-poor policies in education and use it for advocacy and lobbying. The approach in this will include surveys, research, document reviews, observation, focus group discussions and multi-source feedback. In this regard, SfL will collaborate with relevant CSOs.

COLLABORATIONS/ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborating and forming strategic partnerships with other CSOs within and outside Ghana will be one of the strategic approaches SfL will employ. Such collaborations will concentrate on identifying and advocating duty bearers on relevant educational advocacy issues. The CBE Alliance and similar platforms will also be strengthened to step up advocacy activities.

Apart from the Government of Ghana SfL will partner with corporate organizations such as Financial Institutions and Communication Companies to provide the needed resources for CBE implementation.

At the international level, SfL will continue to

partner with DANIDA through GV to continue to support Sfl by linking it up to other Development Partners for networking and partnership.

NETWORKING

This approach will emphasize on identifying organizations or Alliances with relevant expertise and similar goals to work with. Based on this Sfl will network with CSOs and networks such as NNED, GNECC, GNAT and SEND – Ghana on pro poor educational policies.

LITERACY PROVISION

Sfl as a Unit under the Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA), is noted for its expertise in the provision of literacy education, otherwise referred to as Complementary Basic Education. Sfl intends to continue the implementation of the CBE Program depending on availability of funds. Under E4L Phase IV

(2020-2023), the Education Thematic Area will include the provision of literacy, numeracy and entrepreneurial skills to non-literate young women.

The Young Women in Literacy Project aims at supporting non-literate young women to achieve basic literacy, numeracy and entrepreneurship skills to enable them conduct their business in a functional and professional manner in future.

The beneficiary non-literate young women will undergo eight-month literacy, numeracy and life skills training. Community facilitators will be trained to handle the beneficiary learners.



3.6 ACHIEVEMENTS

THEMATIC AREA	RESULTS
Access to Education for All	<p>Developed a functional literacy model, which provides access to education for out-of-school children in very deprived and hard-to-reach communities in Northern Ghana. It is an accelerated approach providing literacy and numeracy in the mother tongue for 9 months using child-centred, participatory and gender sensitive methodologies. Read more about the components and values of the model here: www.schoolforlifegh.org/cbeprogramme</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implemented the SfL functional literacy model in 25 districts in the Northern and Upper East Regions with funding from DANIDA, UNICEF, USAID and UKAID, making over 300,000 children literate in their mother tongue. The model serves as a bridge to education; and approx. 85% transition into the formal school system after completing the 9 months’ community classes; 2. The SfL model is recognized by the Government of Ghana as an effective approach for reaching out-of-school children. Ghana’s Complementary Basic Education (CBE) policy is modeled on the SfL approach, and received Government approval in 2014; 3. Lead role in forming and running the CBE Alliance to advocate Government for approval and roll-out of the CBE policy. Other members include the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC), OXFAM, the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) and the Northern Network for Education Development (NNED); 4. Lead implementing partner role in 5-year Ghana CBE program funded by UKAID and USAID in close cooperation with Ghana Education Service and 9 other implementing partners. These implementing partners were trained by SfL before implementation; 5. Developed CBE materials into a standardized CBE package for usage by all Implementing Partners. The material is now available in fourteen (14) local languages 6. Provides technical support to the Ministry of Education/GES on the implementation of CBE; 7. Provides technical support to other CSOs (e.g. World Education and Plan International Ghana) on the implementation of CBE.

THEMATIC AREA	RESULTS
Quality Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adapted key elements of the functional literacy model such as participatory, child-centred and gender sensitive approach as well as locally available teaching and learning materials to be used in the formal school system; 2. Implemented these methodologies through the Alliance for Change in Education (a consortium of 7 Ghanaian and Danish partners), which combined School for Life educational approaches with the wing-school model as part of the formal system; 3. Development of training models, curriculum and instructional materials as well as in-service training to CSOs in education and Districts Directorates of Education; 4. Implemented Community Teacher Support Programmes, supported by Education Quality for All (EQUALL) Project; Innovations for Poverty Action; and Teach2Teach International to provide better support systems in rural schools and to cater for children who lag behind; 5. Implemented teacher training in participatory methodologies and the development of learning resources in 341 formal schools under the Education Quality Initiative Project (EQUIP) funded by Tzedek from 2013 to 2016. A review in 2019 showed better performance in these schools compared to other schools in the same district.
School Governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extensive experience in cooperating with GES at national, regional and district level, as well as capacity building of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs); 2. Strengthened school governance in 445 schools across thirteen Districts in Northern Region through capacity building of SMCs and PTAs. This resulted in more transparent and accountable school management and stronger community involvement; and 3. Community ownership and involvement are key elements of the Sfl model, and strong community entry skills is a high priority in the organization.
Equity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School for Life works closely with the Northern Network for Education Development and other educational stakeholders in Northern Ghana to advocate for inclusive education and promotion of pro-poor policies to address inequity in education; 2. In the Sfl model there has to be gender balance in the class. This has helped many girls who would otherwise not have had access to education; 3. Promoting girls' access to education through girls education campaigns; and 4. Developed holistic approach to promote girls' education through community dialogue, use of role models, and involving institutional stakeholders at community and district level.

3.7 SWOT ANALYSIS

The strategic plan development process led to an assessment of the capacity of SfL through an organizational capacity assessment. The findings from the assessment highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of SfL which can be seen in the table below:

SWOT ANALYSIS	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading organization on access to education for out-of-school children • Solid experience in innovative educational approaches for formal and complementary basic education • Legitimacy through long-standing presence in Northern Ghana • High capacity staff • Strong systems and procedures for grant management • Wide experience from cooperation and partnerships with local and international donors and CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking at the national level needs strengthening • Branding and marketing needs further development • Fundraising/resource mobilization
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well positioned to contribute to SDGs 4 and 5 • Good relations with the media • Strong think tank, networks and coalitions at the national level • Stable democratic environment with relevant policies in place • Strong relations with Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service • Good relations with some INGOs and Development Partners • Availability of resources through PPP and CSR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana beyond aid: Donors moving out or changing focus • Changing political priorities in education • Frequent transfers of key collaborating partners within MMDAs and GES

The assessment brought out the following key issues in relation to addressing weaknesses and threats:

3.7.1 INTERNAL ANALYSIS

Networking at the national level needs strengthening

SfL's visibility is primarily in its operational areas, although it is part of the national CBE Alliance specifically related to complementary basic education, and is consulted by GES and MOE as well as international development partners in matters relating to CBE. As the organization is increasingly addressing quality and governance issues in the formal school, it will seek to actively participate in national networks addressing a wider educational agenda.

Branding and marketing needs further development

Strategic branding and marketing is one of the areas that need strengthening. SfL has over the past few years developed communication platforms including an updated website and social media platform. The organization will seek support to use these more strategically as a means to promote activities and support in the positioning of SfL to pursue its mission.

Fundraising/resource mobilization

In a changing environment for funding opportunities, the organization will actively pursue new opportunities such as Public Private Civic Partnerships and companies wanting to direct their CSR activities towards education. Further, the intensified branding and marketing will focus on positioning SfL for funding in areas where expertise has been built up in recent years

3.7.2 EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

Ghana beyond aid: Donors moving out or changing focus

Ghana acquiring the status of lower middle income country, and the Ghana beyond aid agenda has led to shifting priorities and reduction in donor funds. Education is, however, still recognized as fundamental in working towards the achievement of the SDGs. SfL will intensify its efforts to draw the attention of the government and development partners to the educational gaps the country needs to address.

Changing political priorities in education

There is shifting political focus within education. After approval of the CBE policy and the exit of the 5-year nationwide CBE program, it was anticipated that government would allocate resources to continue implementation of CBE. However, free secondary education for all was given top priority – an overwhelming task for the country, which meant less focus on basic education and out of school children. SfL has an important task in holding the duty bearers to account and exposing inconsistencies and gaps, which further disadvantage vulnerable groups.

Frequent transfers of key collaborating partners within MMDAs and GES

SfL collaborates with MMDAs and GES to institutionalize methodologies and approaches. Frequent transfer of institutional partners in key positions means that crucial knowledge and capacity built up in the collaboration is removed, and momentum is lost. SfL strives to ensure a high level of stability through Memoranda of Understanding and on-going anchorage in the institutions.

3.8 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen collaboration with and active participation in leading national networks and increase the funding base of School for Life
2. Promote access to education for children in deprived and marginalized communities;
3. Promote and contribute to achieving good learning outcomes in basic schools;
4. Promote and strengthen the functionality of formal and informal education structures for accountable governance;
5. Promote inclusiveness, fair allocation, distribution and accountability of education resources

Objective 1 deals with Sfl’s organizational development, while objectives 2 to 5 reflect the change areas School for Life is addressing in pursuit of its vision and mission.

3.9 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Context

School for Life aims to be a strong and active civil society organisation that influences and facilitates lasting change in basic education in Ghana. The organization will seek to continuously deliver results through quality programming, and strengthen its expertise in research and documentation for strategic use in rights-based advocacy and policy influencing. Further, School for Life will pursue relevant opportunities to strengthen its funding base.

For School for Life to effectively pursue its mission, there is a need for strong relationships with other organisations and institutions. The organization will build upon good relationships created with a variety of stakeholders particularly in relation to complementary basic education, but will furthermore seek to build new collaborative and networking relationship in line with its broader strategic interests in promoting quality education for all. Working in partnership

is at the core of School for Life’s history, mode of operation and understanding of how change happens.

OBJECTIVE 1

To strengthen collaboration with and active participation in leading national networks and increase the funding base of School for Life

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A well-established voice in networks promoting quality basic education at national level;
- Strengthened organizational systems and capacity for research & documentation as well as branding & marketing;
- Funding base increased to allow for stronger impact in pursuit of the organization’s mission.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Develop active working relations with relevant stakeholders and networks

For School for Life to be effective in what it does, there is a need for positive (helpful) external relationships with other organisations and institutions, i.e. to network, advocate, lobby, and facilitate change processes. This includes ability among staff to facilitate change processes, as well as to negotiate and communicate. This is in line with a rights-based approach and community-driven development rather than instructing and providing solutions and delivering services.

School for Life was founded and developed on a strong partnership with the long-term Danish partner, the Ghana Friends. Our ambitions in education will not be secured by us alone, so building partnerships with different societal actors, and working with those partners to encourage and promote the realisation of children’s developmental rights, is at the very core of School for Life’s vision and mission, and is reflected in our history.

School for Life will maintain and continuously develop its long-term and mutually respectful relationship with the Danish partner; who has been supporting the organisation since 1995. School for Life will furthermore utilize this Strategic Plan to seek equal and mutual partnerships with likeminded international and civil society organisations, coalitions and agencies with vision, mission and values compatible to that of School for Life, and who are willing to support the implementation of School for Life's Strategic Plan including supporting capacity building of School for Life in the areas mentioned above.

Apart from the more strategic partnerships, School for Life will identify potential implementing civil society organisations that will be supported technically to implement CBE models/wing school models in line with the CBE Policy in deprived districts in Ghana. In all partnerships, School for Life will ensure participation and influence in the development of the partnership agreements/Memorandum of Understanding so that attention is given to quality programming and implementation of activities.

Strengthen research and documentation capacity

For School for Life to be able to effectively attract donor support and ensure sustained implementation of its programs, there will be the need for the organization to strengthen its capacity in the area of research and documentation. Research on beneficiaries for instance can provide the opportunity for their views to be discussed and data analysed to identify potential gaps and opportunities to fill.

In the coming years, School for Life will seek to continuously strengthen its expertise in research and documentation for strategic use of these results and research for rights-based advocacy/ policy influencing and campaigning. This implies strengthening School for Life's modelling and demonstration approach and in particular how this is documented and utilized in advocating

around underlying structural causes of continuous poor access to relevant quality education in Ghana, and in suggesting alternative solutions. Civil society participation and strengthening is equally an area School for Life will work on, especially in providing strategic leadership to the CBE Alliance. School for Life will seek support to develop its expertise in these areas by engaging with partners, organisations and resource persons.

Further develop organizational capacity in strategic branding and marketing

This aspect looks at a series of capacities related to branding and marketing, rebranding and retaining brand value through innovation and marketing strategies.

School for Life will strengthen its capacity to be able to reposition itself to the highest esteem and make itself more visible and attractive through strategic branding and marketing. To start with, the brand name "School for Life" will be changed to "School for Life Ghana". Further, SfL will constantly update its website by including captivating graphics and change/ success stories to attract more audience.

Develop resource mobilization strategies

School for Life needs to have well developed strategies that can provide a sense of direction for resource mobilization. As part of its resource mobilization strategies, School for Life will engage in public private partnership ventures that will provide it with the opportunity to demonstrate its expertise in quality education delivery and the implementation of the CBE policy in Ghana.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE AND BENEFICIARIES

The target audience and beneficiaries for the strategic plan will include the following in relation to the four strategic areas:

Access

The target beneficiaries under access are out of school children in deprived and hard to reach communities and children who drop out at the primary school level.

The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service, District Assemblies, Development Partners, and community based organizations will constitute the audience.

Quality Education

The primary beneficiaries under quality education will be school children in deprived and hard to reach areas as well as more generally in public and private schools. Secondary beneficiaries are the teachers at the basic level of education, SMC and PTA networks.

The audience will comprise the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, Development Partners and CSOs in education, Traditional authorities and opinion leaders.

School Governance

The target beneficiaries under school governance will be the District Education Oversight Teams (DEOCs), School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).

The audience will constitute the Ghana Education Service, Development Partners, CSOs in education and traditional and opinion leaders.

Equity

Under Equity, the primary targets will be the networks of SMCs and PTAs as well as CSOs and networks targeted for collaboration.

The audience will constitute District Assemblies, District Directorates of Education and CSOs in education.



5. STRATEGIC AREAS

5.1. ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN

CONTEXT

The strategic goal for basic education in Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030 is 'improved equitable access to and participation in quality basic education'. In recent years, access to basic education has improved significantly but there remain a number of key challenges to access to education especially in the Northern part of the country.

There is a significant number of children out of school, with the majority coming from deprived and hard to reach communities. The incidence of out of school children in these deprived communities is attributed to poverty, low level of parental support, far distances to access formal education, among others.

Age-appropriate enrolment is a challenge for the basic education sub-sector which currently hampers the efficiency of the system. There are significant numbers of under-age children enrolled in KG for whom the sector must currently allocate resources, from its limited resources, as well as over-age children at all three levels of basic education.

Disparities in access are still a feature of the basic education system, particularly at the JHS level. Gender parity is lowest in the 3 Northern Regions (Savanna, North East and Northern) and Western Region (0.95%) and the highest in Upper West Region (0.99%). It is generally observed that more boys enrol and complete school than girls (EMIS- 2018).

OBJECTIVE 2

Promote access to education for children in deprived and marginalized communities

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- The CBE policy is effectively implemented in needy communities in Ghana; most especially hard to reach and marginalized communities;
- CSOs strongly demand for resource allocation for implementation of CBE;
- More out of school children are given access to education through the SfL Model;
- Deprived communities have increased awareness on Right Age Enrolment and retention in school for both boys and girls; and
- SfL has strengthened CSO engagement platforms on access (e.g. CBE Alliance).

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS ON ACCESS

Implementation of functional literacy programs

SfL will draw on its vast experience in providing functional literacy and complementary education to facilitate a bridge into the formal education system for out of school children.

Capacities of other CSOs and the Ghana Education Service/the Alternative Education Agency are built for the implementation of CBE

SfL will ensure that there is no dilution in the implementation of the CBE policy by providing technical support to potential CSOs and Government agencies. SfL will therefore be ready to support these organizations in the area of material development for targeted languages, facilitation of master trainers' workshops, provision of monitoring and coaching support and the provision of professional advice to potential implementers of the CBE Programme.

Effective and efficient support to the implementing organizations will help ensure that the values and principles of the CBE Programme are sustained and applied to the benefit of the CBE learners and their communities.

CBE Alliance and other CSOs advocate for resource allocation for CBE implementation

Non-availability of funds leads to gaps in the implementation of CBE. SfL will therefore collaborate with the CBE Alliance and other CSOs to advocate the Government of Ghana and other

Partners such as USAID, DFID and UNICEF for resource allocation for the implementation of CBE in needy communities in Ghana. Various forms of engagement and campaigns will be used to ensure that the Government and the Development Partners commit resources towards the implementation of CBE. Opportunities for such resources may include Public Private Partnership cooperation and collaboration; Development Partner Support through the Government and individual philanthropists.

To ensure the effective and efficient use of the resources, there will be the need for oversight bodies such as the National CBE Steering Committee and a Management Unit to be put in place.

Campaign for girl-child enrolment and retention

In order to bridge the gender disparity at the basic school level, SfL will collaborate with other CSOs and the CBE Alliance to develop series of campaign strategies that will create more awareness on girl-child education.

SfL will also organize sensitization programs on girl-child enrolment and retention in beneficiary communities and schools to ensure that key stakeholders such as the SMCs, PTAs and Girl Clubs/Pupils’ Parliaments appreciate the need to speak out. In line with this, SfL will employ a range of activities such as role model interface sessions with girls, community dialogue sessions with traditional authorities and the formation of gender advocacy teams.

Campaign for right age enrolment and retention

Right Age Enrolment aims to ensure that all children go through formal education uninterrupted. It also aims at providing children the needed support at the right age in school.

SfL will work with the CBE Alliance and other CSOs to develop relevant campaign strategies to advocate and campaign to create awareness on the need for parents to send their children to school at the right age. The main focus of such

campaigns will be at the community level, most especially, at the beginning of every academic year. SMCs and PTAs will be engaged to participate in such campaigns.

Networking and advocacy towards promoting access to quality education in deprived communities

School for Life will develop and consciously improve its relationship with the media (print, radio/ TV and Internet-based) and regularly brief and lobby the media to take up cases and situations relating to access and quality in education particularly in deprived and hard to reach communities in Ghana. A system of regular press releases and media-conferences will be put in place. School for Life will provide the media with proper orientation and sensitization on current educational matters.

School for Life will seek to strengthen its network with NNED, GNECC and other CSOs to advocate the Government and other duty bearers for the effective implementation of pro-poor policies in education such as the school feeding Program, Government Program on free school uniform for basic schools among others.

In addition, gender disparity and child rights are still issues of concern in most deprived communities in Northern Ghana. SfL will therefore work closely with the CBE Alliance and other CSOs to advocate the Government and other duty bearers to end discrimination against girls and women in education as an important step towards the achievement of SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).





5.2 QUALITY EDUCATION

CONTEXT

Although the proportion of trained teachers has increased over time, it remains poor especially in deprived areas, where pupil-teacher ratios are frequently much higher than GES standards. Learning outcomes is an area of concern, and pupils from rural communities are identified as the most disadvantaged in this regard.

The Ghana 2016 National Education Assessment Report Findings noted that the gap between rural and urban performance for both Basic 4 and Basic 6 pupils' English was particularly large. More than half the pupils in urban areas achieved proficiency in English, Basic 4 achieved 54%. Their counterparts in rural areas achieved proficiency less than 26% for Basic 4. Further, just 14% of Basic 4 pupils from the rural areas achieved proficiency in Mathematics.¹

In examining the performance of girls in schools in rural Ghana, a report by Oxfam, SEND Ghana and Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition indicated that the poorest girls from the most marginalized regions face the greatest challenges. For instance, primary school completion for the poorest girls from the Northern Regions is 26%, compared with 90% for boys from the richest quintile living in Accra.

The report indicates that poor quality education and weak learning outcomes are not spread evenly across all Ghanaian children. The inequality patterns seen in access and progression are also broadly reflected in learning: the poorest consistently perform at lower levels than their wealthier peers.²

1 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Northern Ghana Development Report: 2018

2 BUILDING A MORE EQUAL GHANA - a report by Oxfam, SEND Ghana and Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition).

Elements of a Quality Learning Environment

The quality of the learning environment is determined by a number of physical, psychological and social factors. School resources such as classroom blocks, play materials, qualified teachers and relevant teaching and learning materials contribute significantly to quality learning environment.

In addition, the supportive attitude of school authorities, parents, teachers and students is crucial to the attainment of positive learning environment.

Physical space

The physical space and equipment must meet the requirements of educational policies and programs, including availability of textbooks, stationery and other learning resources. All educational institutions must have access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation facilities, including separate washrooms for girls and boys, changing rooms for girls and adequate lighting and ventilation.

The buildings and facilities must also provide a secure environment within which the students feel that they are protected and safe from physical harm.

Teachers

Quality education can be attained through the recruitment of well-qualified, motivated and committed teachers. The provision of high quality training and regular professional and career development programs for teachers constitute an integral part of ensuring quality teaching and learning in schools.

A well-motivated teacher is a prerequisite for quality education. Teachers need to be capacitated and well-resourced for enhanced education outcomes

Teaching and Learning Resources

Teaching and learning resources include appropriate curricula and other relevant resources that promote good learning outcomes.

Considering the introduction of the New Curriculum by the Government of Ghana³, SfL will update its existing teaching and learning materials to reflect what pertains in the new curriculum. This has to do with terminologies regarding lesson planning and the introduction of core competencies (Critical Thinking and Problem Solving; Creativity and Innovation, Cultural Identity and Global Citizenship; Personal Development and Leadership; and Digital Literacy).

The application of technology has proved to be an effective way of improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools. Through the use of technology, teaching and learning materials can be made accessible for use in very deprived and hard to reach communities, and teachers can use computers to prepare their lessons and other teaching and learning materials.

Community Support

The recognition and participation of community members in the affairs of school governance constitute an important aspect of promoting quality education. SMCs and PTAs should be seen to be actively involved in promoting quality education in their communities.

OBJECTIVE 3

SfL promotes and contributes to achieving good learning outcomes in basic schools

³ The new curriculum introduced by Government seeks to build character and nurture children to become good citizens. It focuses on Reading, wRiting, aRithmetic and cReativity (4Rs) and has features such as making Ghana a mathematics friendly country, the reintroduction of history in schools as standalone subject and the strengthening of the teaching of French starting from Primary 4.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Schools have Teaching and Learning Resources that support teachers to bring about quality learning outcomes.
- Innovative methodologies that promote good learning outcomes are developed and documented in cooperation with education authorities and colleges of education
- Teachers have the capacity to provide quality teaching and learning in schools.
- Parents and community members understand, appreciate and promote quality education in schools.
- Gender sensitive and child friendly school environment is promoted.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Provision of in-service training for teachers

SfL believes in continuous teacher professional development. This develops the competence and confidence levels of the teachers and hence leads to the achievement of good learning outcomes in their respective schools. The in-service training will focus on the following areas:

- Relational competence and reflective teaching practice;
- Comprehensive and effective use of the primary school curriculum for good learning outcomes in schools;
- Effective use of local resources for the development of relevant teaching and learning resources; and
- Application of appropriate pedagogical skills including core competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving skills; creativity and innovation; and communication and collaboration in lesson preparation and delivery.
- Mentoring and coaching support services will be provided throughout the capacity building process.

Collaborate with education authorities and Colleges of Education

SfL will collaborate with Colleges of Education to examine the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) Model and validate it for adoption by the GES. The TPD Model aims at strengthening the relational competence levels of teachers and reflective practice teaching for improved learning outcomes in schools. The model has been piloted in selected Districts in the Northern Region.

The evaluation results of the pilot project showed improvement in:

- Pupils’ performance
- Relationship between the teachers and pupils.
- Teacher attendance
- SMC and PTA relationship with school authorities

Based on the positive evaluation results, SfL will facilitate the adoption and replication of the model.

Teaching and Learning Resource Manual

A well-designed manual for the development of Teaching and Learning Resources will be developed and made available for teachers. This will not only equip teachers to understand and appreciate the use of local resources in the teaching and learning process, but also support them to respond to the varied learning needs of their learners. Most teachers have the perception that teaching and learning resources can only be acquired from the market or supplied by the Ghana Education Service. The resource manual will therefore focus on the following:

1. Identification of local resources for the development of basic teaching and learning resources;
2. Development of basic but relevant teaching and learning resources by both teachers and learners;
3. Effective use of teaching and learning resources; and
4. Promoting Creative arts.

In order to meet the expectations of both teachers and learners, SfL will solicit the support of artists for their technical advice for a comprehensive approach in the development of the Teaching and Learning Resource Manual.

Capacity Building for SMCs and PTAs on Quality Education

SfL will build the capacity of SMCs and PTAs to appreciate and understand quality education elements and effectively participate in school management. They will be provided the necessary skills that will enable them monitor the activities of the District Directorates of Education, teacher presence and attendance, pupil attendance and availability of relevant textbooks. Monitoring outcomes will be shared through interface meetings with key stakeholders and used to advocate for quality education delivery in the schools.

Promotion of gender friendly school environment

Gender friendly school environment depicts a safe learning environment where all children, both boys and girls have equal access to opportunities and exercise their fundamental rights without any bias and discrimination to develop healthy gender identities.

The goal for this intervention is to raise awareness among teachers, PTA, SMC, and community members on the need to promote gender friendly school and learning environment. In addressing this, SfL will focus primarily on three (3) aspects of gender friendly school environment namely:

Physical Environment

- Access to school
- Adequate lighting and ventilation in classrooms; and
- Seating arrangement facilitates teacher-child interaction

Learning Environment

- Boys and girls are given equal access and opportunity to school enrolment and completion
- Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate actively in the learning process

Facilities

- Provision of clean separate toilets for girls and boys.
- Access to a clean water source is available.

These aspects of gender friendly school environment are more frequently neglected in deprived and hard to reach communities and constitute a major challenge to better educational attainments in schools. SfL will strategically work with teachers, PTA and SMC leadership as well as the pupils to unanimously identify and institute measures to promote gender friendly and sensitive school environments.

Advocacy for quality education for all

The implementation of the ESP 2018-2030 is key to achieving SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education for all. SfL will therefore collaborate with the CBE Alliance and other CSOs to advocate the Government of Ghana to provide the resources needed for the ESP.



5.3 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT

Good governance within education provides strategic direction and guidance to ensure that resources are effectively allocated, used and accounted for so a well-functioning education system fulfils the population’s right to accessible quality education.

Governance structures include both formal and informal setups within a school:

- School Management Committees (SMC)
- The District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs).
- Parent Teacher Associations.

A well-established School Governance structure will promote, among other things, the following:

- Democratic system of school management, including efficient utilization of school resources;
- Accountability in the distribution and usage of education resources;
- Greater participation of all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents and school management) in the development and implementation of school policies, rules, plans, and code of conduct;
- Greater transparency in all school activities, including increased flow of information among all stakeholders.

PROBLEMS

Low capacity and functionality in terms of school governance

Governance structures such as School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations exist but are often weak. Also, the capacities of these governance structures are not strong enough to bring about the desired improvement in school performance.

Low level awareness on PTAs/SMCs roles

PTAs and SMCs need to be educated on their roles and mandate as governance structures in schools. The low level of awareness often results in low level of commitment towards their work and inability to address issues.

Inadequate space and voice to engage duty bearers

PTAs and SMCs often lack the platform to advocate and engage duty bearers for better education outcomes. The level of importance and attention given to the activities of PTAs and SMCs is often low, leading to low participation and interest in their activities.

Lack of voice for pupils in school governance

Pupils often lack the voice to participate in the process of school governance and administration. The lack of avenues to accommodate the concerns of pupils constitutes a major source of teacher-pupil conflict, which could be a recipe for low educational outcomes.

Pupil’s participation in democratic processes in schools is an important part of preparing them for active citizenship as adults.

OBJECTIVE 4

To promote and strengthen the functionality of formal and informal education structures for accountable governance

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- School governance structures are transparent and accountable.
- SMCs and PTAs have had their capacity built and are carrying out their mandate.
- Pupils participate in democratic processes in their schools.
- SMCs and PTAs have formed networks at District level for effective engagement with duty bearers through advocacy

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Capacity building of SMCs and PTAs on school governance

SfL will work to improve the technical capacity of the SMCs and the PTAs on their roles and responsibilities to enhance school governance at the community level through capacity building and mentoring. This will give them the opportunity to understand and carry out their mandate.

In addition, SfL will continue to promote the functionality of the SMCs and PTAs in targeted community schools for strong advocacy and effective school governance. To achieve this, SfL will facilitate the SMCs and PTAs to meet regularly and develop their action plans on how to identify and raise educational advocacy issues for the needed attention.

Facilitate the formation of networks of PTAs and SMCs for strong and effective advocacy

SfL will continue to facilitate the formation of networks of SMCs and PTAs in its operational areas for strong advocacy work to enhance education delivery. This will be done based on experiences from the Empowerment 4 Life Program.

The creation of a network of SMCs and PTAs will provide a formidable front and platform for effective advocacy on relevant quality education issues.

The expected roles and responsibilities of the networks of SMCs and PTAs include the following:

1. Organize regular meetings;
2. Develop action plans and work to effectively implement them;
3. Reach out to more individual SMCs and PTAs to join the District-wide network;
4. Identify engagement platforms for effective engagement with duty bearers;
5. Liaise with GES and DAs to set targets for their schools

Promotion of pupils' empowerment in schools

The involvement of pupils in school matters at the basic school level has been observed to be quite low. The essence of child participation is to support the pupils to develop their own views, to think for themselves and to express their views effectively and decide on what they think is best for them.

In order to promote pupils' empowerment in schools, SfL will facilitate SMCs and PTAs to involve pupils in relevant parts of their meetings and provide them with space to air their views or concerns. In addition, SfL will facilitate the SMCs, PTAs and the School authorities to engage pupils by way of consultation, collaboration and instituting pupil-led projects in the schools.

The prefect system in the schools, of which prefects are democratically elected, can still be encouraged but needs to be strengthened such that prefects are able to participate actively in the decision-making process in the school.

The following will be the expected outcomes if children are allowed to take part in decision making:

1. Offers children the opportunity to contribute to positive changes in their communities;
2. It can lead to increased empowerment and motivation;
3. Serves to protect children – they have greater awareness of rights, more likely to voice concerns;
4. Promotes children's capacities for civic engagement, tolerance, respect and inclusion;
5. It can enable access to training and development;
6. Children will receive better targeted and more relevant services.

Establishment of pupils' parliament

As part of the ways to ensure pupils' empowerment in schools, SfL will facilitate the establishment of pupils' parliament in schools, taking inspiration from the Youth Parliament model. The establishment of Pupils' Parliament

in schools is also an integral step of promoting pupils participation in school governance. The Pupils’ Parliament will offer pupils the platform to discuss and contribute to the process of school administration and governance.

To ensure effective pupils’ participation in decision making processes in the school, SfL will further facilitate the establishment of school engagement platforms.

SfL will also facilitate the establishment of “Pupils’ Voice” day to give the public, stakeholders and duty bearers the opportunity to listen to voices of the pupils. On this day, there will be series of events including debates by the pupils to talk on issues that concern them and what they think should be done to give them a better life in future.



5.4 EQUITY

CONTEXT

Equity in education requires putting systems in place to ensure that every child has an equal chance for success. This requires understanding the varied and unique challenges and barriers faced by individual learners and working to help overcome those barriers.

Aspects of equity

Fairness: This means ensuring that personal and social circumstances do not prevent students from achieving their academic potential.

Inclusion: This means setting a basic minimum standard for education that is shared by all students regardless of background, abilities, gender, religious beliefs, ethnicity or location.

PROBLEMS

Inequality in the distribution of education resources

Inequality is widespread across several facets of education service delivery. This is even more pronounced in deprived and hard to reach communities where lack of educational infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and qualified teachers are strong barriers.

Inequality at all levels of education affects quality service delivery in education and constitutes a recipe for poor learning outcomes.

Inadequate educational resources

Inadequate school infrastructure restricts access to education and negatively impacts on child retention, particularly among the most deprived regions and districts of the country. 11 % of communities in Ghana are without primary schools within a 2 km radius of the community; and over 30 % of communities do not have a school within their own community.

Many children have to walk long distances to schools in rural Ghana, particularly in the North, and this affects their punctuality, attendance and the quality of learning.

Uneven Teacher Deployment

Inequality is further expressed in teacher deployment. The regional distribution is very unequal as many trained teachers are unwilling to serve in rural, deprived districts especially in the north. This has resulted in a pupil-per-trained teacher ratio of 89:1 in Northern region, 93:1 in Upper East and 90:1 in Upper West at the early grades of basic education where the educational foundation is laid⁴.

Implementation of the Inclusive education policy and other education pro-poor policies

Appreciable efforts have been done by the government to put in place an inclusive education policy. However, it is observed that very little efforts are done to ensure its implementation. In addition, the schools lack screening centres that can support in detecting certain disabilities among the students at early stages.

Barriers to girls' education

Socio-cultural barriers to especially girls' education, such as early marriage and child fosterage are significant, especially in Northern Ghana. Low levels of parents' education and low level of awareness of the potential benefits of education prevent some parents from sending their children to school. Some parents may be aware of the potential benefits of education, but do not experience concrete learning outcomes that are relevant to the social and economic reality of the communities.

Over the past years, School for Life has been working under the Empowerment for Life Program, to promote girls' access and retention in school in five Districts (Mion, Saboba, Karaga, Savelugu and Kumbungu).

The intervention brought together PTAs, SMCs and traditional authorities to discuss, identify and map out strategies to promote girls' education in the Program districts.

⁴ <https://www.odi.org/publications/11093-leaving-no-one-behind-health-and-education-sectors-sdg-stocktake-ghana>

OBJECTIVE 5

To promote inclusiveness, fair allocation, distribution and accountability of education resources

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Education resources are fairly allocated and distributed;
- Allocated education resources are accounted for;
- Inclusive education policy is implemented effectively in marginalized and deprived areas.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Advocacy and networking for expansion of CBE

The CBE Policy has undergone review with the active participation of SfL and some other CBE Alliance members working with the MOE/ GES. Moving forward, SfL will work with the CBE Alliance and other like-minded CSOs to advocate for the effective implementation of the Policy.

Collaborate with relevant CSOs to advocate for equitable distribution of educational resources

Working with other CSOs will provide SfL the opportunity to have wider advocacy platforms to effectively engage with duty bearers. In addition, it will help SfL to maintain and strengthen partnerships with the CBE Alliance and other CSOs in ensuring equitable distribution of educational resources. Other strategies SfL will be adopting will include holding consultative and collaborative meetings, gathering of evidence on issues of equity and pro-poor policies in education and using it for advocacy and lobbying.

Capacity Building for SMCs and PTAs on Equity

The capacity of SMCs and PTAs will be built to equip them with the necessary skills to advocate, lobby and engage Government and other duty bearers for equitable distribution of educational resources in their respective communities. The SMCs and the PTAs will be taken through social accountability issues and school governance for effective engagement with the duty bearers.

The SMCs and the PTAs will further be taken through the development and use of social accountability tools such as community score card to ensure effective resource tracking.

This will give the SMC and PTA members the opportunity to ask questions and demand answers from duty bearers on certain promises and decisions made.

SfL is cooperating with the Governance Team of the E4L program to facilitate the SMCs and PTAs on resource tracking.

The educational resources to be tracked will include teacher deployment, textbooks supplied, School Feeding Program, Capitation Grant and Classroom Furniture. The results of this will be used to advocate for the effective usage and equitable distribution of the resources.

School for Life is a lead CSO offering mother tongue functional literacy to out-of-school children in deprived and hard-to-reach communities in Ghana.



School for Life
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

RECOGNISED
Education experts
ADVOCATOR

EXPERIENCED

CBE pioneer

Leader in education
EQUALITY
Reaches the marginalized