2025–2030 STRATEGY

In this strategy, we will remain focused on what we are known, and stand for: Quality basic education and complementary education. The strategy therefore addresses the needs of learners and the responsibilities of educators, policymakers, and communities.

2025-2030 STRATEGY

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List of Acronyms

CBE	-	**Complementary Basic Education**
CEA	-	**Complementary Education Agency**
CESA	-	**Continental Education Strategy for Africa**
CSC	-	**Community Score Card**
CSOs	-	**Civil Society Organizations**
DEOCs	-	**District Education Oversight Committees**
ECDE	-	**Early Childhood Development and Education**
ESP	-	**Education Strategic Plan**
FCUBE	-	**Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education**
FSHS	-	**Free Senior High School**
GES	-	**Ghana Education Service**
GPE	-	**Global Partnership for Education**
GSDI	-	**Ghana Skills Development Initiative**
MEAL	-	**Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning**
MMDAs	-	**Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies**
MoE	-	**Ministry of Education**
NEET	-	**Not in Education, Employment, or Training**
NGO	-	**Non-Governmental Organization**
OECD	-	**Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development**
PETS	-	**Public Expenditure Tracking Survey**
PTA	-	**Parent Teacher Association**
RVA	-	**Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation**
SBC	-	**Social and Behavior Change**
SDGs	-	**Sustainable Development Goals**
SF	-	**Strategic Focus**
SfL	-	**School for Life**
SMCs	-	**School Management Committees**
SO	-	**Strategic Objective**
SPIPS	-	**School Performance Improvement Planning**
STEM	-	**Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics**
SWOT	-	**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**
TVET	-	**Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

INTRODUCTION BY THE DIRECTOR

Wedad Sayibu
Director

This Strategic Plan (2025–2030) provides a direction for the work we intend to do, and the changes we seek over the next six years. The strategy was developed following extensive consultations with communities, young people, School for Life (SfL) alumni, development partners, staff, and management of SfL, CSOs, and policymakers. Through this strategy, we seek to consolidate and extend work on quality basic education and reinforce our credentials as sector leaders in promoting complementary basic education. Whilst, our footprints in promoting quality basic education are widely known, we recognize there is still work to do. For instance, the Ghana Statistical Service in its 2021 census report reveals that, 1,200,000 children from deprived backgrounds are out of school in Ghana. Ghana's 2018-2030 Education Strategy Paper also highlights many challenges in the basic education sector. These challenges include under-and over-age enrolment, poor school infrastructure including water and sanitation facilities, long distances to school particularly in rural areas, poor infrastructure, and weak governance and accountability mechanisms, among others. It is within this context that I present the major actions we will be taking over the next 6 years.

We remain committed to our identity and vision of working towards a Ghana where the right to relevant quality education is fulfilled, leaving no one behind. In furtherance of this, we will work around four strategic objectives at the programmatic level, and an institutional strengthening objective, both carefully chosen to reflect the changing trends and dynamics, to enable us to better work to address the needs and aspirations of children and communities, including those facing significant barriers. We will work with allies to promote access to quality basic education, reaching out to 300,000 children in the process, with 53% of them being girls. 37,000 out-of-school-children and out-of-school-youth will be supported to transition to mainstream schools, equipped with foundational literacy, numeracy, and life skills relevant for them to thrive in formal education. We will also take several initiatives including addressing issues of teacher capacity and promoting social and behaviour change. One other objective we will pursue is to ensure accountability and system strengthening at both school and systemic levels, given that the link between school accountability and quality education is a strong one. In this regard, we will work to improve and strengthen school governance and embark on evidence-based advocacy, as well as promote gender-transformative pedagogy, among other strategies. We recognize that there are many people excluded from conventional learning systems. We will remain true to our pursuit of a fairer world, and as a result, SfL will work to provide opportunities for lifelong learning and alternative pathways to meet the needs of this group to empower them and extend agency. In addition, we are passionate about uninterrupted schooling and access to quality education. We believe this is better achieved by working collaboratively with communities. We will therefore work with local communities to lead in sustainable inclusive education solutions, and intergenerational learning and also to enhance

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resilience, adaptability, and accountability in the education system. It is important to state that these objectives stand a greater chance of success when there are strong systems and processes at the institutional level to drive implementation. We have always emphasized the importance of both the journey and the destination. We will therefore take actions to improve the working environment and invest in systems and capacity to nurture a robust and resilient SfL to sustain operations and upscale on impact. In this strategy, we will remain focused on what we are known, and stand for: Quality basic education and complementary education. The strategy therefore addresses the needs of learners and the responsibilities of educators, policymakers, and communities. Nevertheless, we recognize that other matters have consequences on the outcomes we seek, and must be addressed. For instance, the education of children, particularly girls, in highly patriarchal and resource-poor communities, will suffer if action is not taken to address issues such as poverty, negative socio-cultural norms and attitudes, gender-based discrimination and bias, and a deteriorating climate. The 2025-2030 strategy therefore addresses immediate and remote obstacles to achieving quality basic education through actions such as functional literacy for out-of-school youth, promoting local climate resilience and literacy, and deepening social behavior change campaigns. This is vital for bringing about lasting beneficial change for our core constituents and the whole of society.

As we embark on the journey to 2030, where coincidentally both the globally agreed sustainable development goals and Ghana's Education Strategy Paper (2018-2030) will come to an end, it is imperative for me to emphasise that we are not alone on the journey. The strategy will thus be delivered largely through partnerships and collaborations with local communities, development partners, CSOs, policy makers, and other supporters and allies. We will galvanise critical talents and skills to work towards inclusivity and a fairer world, using both direct strategic service delivery mechanisms and advocacy tools.

Finally, our strategy aligns with and feeds into several national and global policies including the SDGs. Notable among these are the ESP 2018-2030, the Complementary Education Agency Act, 2020 (Act 1055), the African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 13,16 and 17. I must add that we aspire to work directly with 1,500 schools located in 1,000 communities spread across 50 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in 10 of Ghana's 16 administrative regions. We are confident our work will make substantial contributions to the pursuit of quality basic education and a more inclusive and fairer society.

We count on your support as we embark on this promising phase of our work.

1.0 ABOUT SCHOOL FOR LIFE

Since its formation 30 years ago, School for Life has grown to become one of the leading and credible CSOs in Northern Ghana with significant footprints at the national level, recording several signature achievements in the process, and impacting communities and families in many positive ways. We are known for our flagship programme - the 'Functional Literacy Programme' now known as the Complementary Basic Education Programme (CBE). For the past three decades, we have pioneered and led efforts in CBE that targets children in hard-to-reach communities and those facing the highest risks of exclusion from attaining an education. In this important area of work, we have enhanced literacy skills for over 450,000 out-of-school pupils, many of whom have proceeded to acquire further educational qualifications and professional training, enabling them to make contributions to national development in various sectors. We have continued to be active in engaging with and influencing policy, especially in the areas of basic education and functional literacy.

Our approach is grounded on prioritising local stakeholder consultation, factoring in the local context, and cultivating local ownership of all programmes. Over the years, we have been at the forefront of promoting literacy based on local content. In the process, we have developed local language models in eight (8) different languages including, Dagbani, Likpakpaln, Ewe, and Asanti-Twi, among others. Working with communities for three decades has positioned us to appreciate the many interrelated issues that can, and do affect, access to education in particular, and well-being in general. Our programming efforts take into consideration the realities children and communities face. In this regard, we chalked significant successes in addressing rural livelihoods and other pressing community needs. For instance, SfL has provided drinking water to many communities, ensuring that children, especially girls, do not spend precious schooling time looking for water for families. SfL thus has an extensive and well-rooted community presence, and a strong track record of working with communities, partners, and stakeholders to tackle pressing development issues. The organisation is a household name in Northern Ghana and has progressively increased visibility at the national level, with an active presence in eight of Ghana's sixteen administrative regions. It is this background and philosophy that define our vision, mission, and core values.

1.1 Our Vision, Mission, and Core Values

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

Mission
To strengthen civil society's role in improving access to quality education by delivering, demonstrating, and advocating for innovative and inclusive approaches to education.

Core Values
We remain committed to our core values that drive our identity, purpose, and aspirations.

Transparency and Accountability
We are honest, open, and accountable to ourselves, partners, supporters, and communities. We demonstrate these by doing what we say we will do. We also take personal and collective responsibility for using our resources efficiently and achieving results. At all times, we remain committed to creating an environment of trust for both internal and external stakeholders.

Collaborations and Participation
We work with and involve partners, communities, civil society, and state actors to make a difference for children and communities. We believe this enhances ownership and learning.

Equity
We believe in fair and equitable access to, and distribution of resources and social services. We work for a just society that takes into account individual differences, preferences, and needs. We take all necessary steps to address inequality at the workplace and in communities.

Team Work
We recognize the power of the collective to achieve impact. We work together to design and implement actions with communities, learners and essential duty-bearers to enable us to reach out to those at the furthest frontiers. We create a supportive environment for all members of the SfL family including volunteers to achieve their goals.

Inclusion and non-discrimination
We work to address inequality, respect all people and create equal opportunities for all in our programmes and at the workplace. We recognise individual differences and talents and strive to create spaces for all without regards to race, ethnicity, and religion.

Professionalism
We prioritise professionalism and strive for excellence in communities and at the work place. At all times, we embrace best practices, uphold the highest standards of engagement and remain focused on effectiveness and efficiency.

1.2 Developing this strategy

This strategy is a product of extensive consultations and multi-stakeholder engagements. In keeping with our principles of collaboration and inclusivity, we solicited ideas and strategies from a diverse stakeholder base. Following preliminary meetings with the Board, management, and staff of SfL, a comprehensive stakeholder consultation plan was developed to facilitate field visits. We received inputs from children in and out of school, SfL alumni, school teachers, traditional authorities, District Assemblies, and the Ghana Education Service. We also interacted with the Complementary Education Agency (CEA), TVET institutions, Civil Society Organisations, and a cross-section of community members. In addition, there was a separate convening for Development Partners and experts to explore insights into themes relevant to our work. We also did a SWOT analysis to enable us to better appreciate internal and external factors that could have implications for the strategy. To ensure a representative and diverse range of perspectives, stakeholders were carefully selected with deliberate consideration for youth inclusivity and gender considerations. The stakeholders thus included girls, young women, female community members and female teachers.

These consultations supported us to generate a broad range of ideas, strategies, and suggested actions. These were synthesized and discussed at a workshop involving board members and staff, resulting in five (5) broad areas as the main anchors for the 2025-2030 strategy. These broad areas include access to quality basic education, systems strengthening in the basic education sector, access to alternative pathways and life-long learning, promoting community-driven approaches for uninterrupted schooling, and building a vibrant and thriving SfL capable of delivering on its mandate and upscaling. In addition, we reviewed documentation including past evaluation and review reports, and national and global policies and programs relevant to our work to provide the contextual basis for the chosen strategies. A draft strategy was developed with the support of a consultant and presented to internal and selected external stakeholders for validation prior to finalising this strategy. Overall, the process was participatory, extensive and diverse, enabling us to incorporate relevant and inclusive perspectives into the design of this plan.

2.0 THE CONTEXT

The World Bank's Africa Pulse Report (2024) reveals that the introduction of reforms such as free primary education across Africa has played a key role in boosting enrolment rates. Despite this, the report notes that approximately one-third of children in Sub-Saharan Africa drop out before completing primary school owing to, among other factors, poverty and inadequate school infrastructure. In addition, rising enrolment rates have not translated into improved learning outcomes, with conservative estimates suggesting that 9 in 10 children in Sub-Saharan Africa are unable to read and comprehend by age 10, compared to an average of 70% of children who could read in other low- and middle-income countries. In Ghana, The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030 estimates that over 450,000 children are out of school, many of whom come from poor backgrounds and largely from Northern Ghana. Indeed, a staggering statistic from the Ghana Statistical Service's 2021 census report reveals that approximately 1.2 million children from disadvantaged backgrounds are denied access to education. Against this background, African governments have embraced policies and programmes aimed at improving educational attainment.

Ghana's efforts aimed at improving basic education over the years have converged at access and quality. The ESP 2018-2030, similar to predecessor strategies such as ESP 2003-2015 and ESP 2010-2020, prioritises both access and quality considerations with a view to equipping all Ghanaians with relevant education and skills to promote socio-economic development and national orientation. The ESP 2018-2030 highlights a number of interconnected challenges in relation to basic education such as under-and over-age enrolment especially at the kindergarten level, poor school infrastructure including water and sanitation facilities at all levels of basic education, and long distances to school particularly in rural areas, with adverse consequences on right-age enrolment. Other challenges highlighted are weak governance and accountability mechanisms in most basic schools, inadequate training, particularly for headteachers, limited government involvement in the implementation of CBE, and weak coordination among education sector players. There are other matters that require attention if efforts aimed at extending quality basic education to all are to achieve the desired results. Early childhood education for instance has not received commensurate attention despite overwhelming evidence that the first few years of life may be the most critical moments to intervene in the lives of children, especially those from low-income households. Despite this evidence, only 31% of teachers in early childhood education are certified (ESP 2018-2030).

CBE provides significant pathways for children out-of-school to be enrolled in mainstream public schools. According to UKaid (2018), CBE based on mother-tongue instruction can make enormous contributions to improve learning and access to public schools for out-of-school children, and also has the potential to close the learning gap between out-of-school children who have had CBE and their public-school counterparts, enabling them to thrive in public schools. The passage of the Comprehensive Education Agency Act, 2020 (Act 1055) by the Government of Ghana is thus a major step towards ensuring that as many children as possible have access to quality education. However, there seems to be a mismatch between legislative intentions and commitment to giving CBE the needed push to ensure that it achieves the desired outcomes. For instance, since 2017, there has been a disproportionate concentration on free senior high education relative to basic education. Within this period, the Ministry of Education spent an average of 9% on pre-school; 17% on primary; and 15% on JHS.
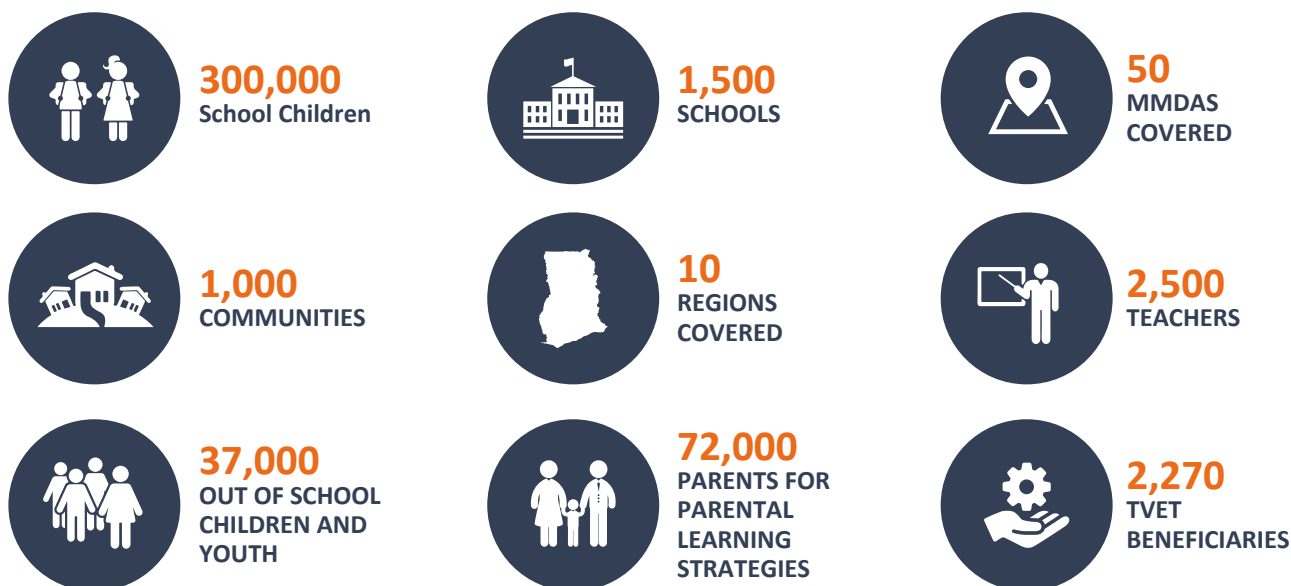
For the same period the ministry spent on average over 26% for Senior High School (SHS) . The actual expenditure for SHS and tertiary education has consistently remained over 20% between 2017 and 2020 as compared to below 20% for basic education. (Budget Statement and Economic Policy (2017-2022), Ministry of Finance. The ESP 2018-2030 was carefully designed to tackle the major issues in the educational sector of Ghana. The guiding principles of the strategy are access and equity, quality, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, and sustainability. These are anchored on three overarching policy objectives as follows: (i) improved equitable access to and participation in inclusive quality education at all levels (ii) improved quality of teaching and learning and STEM at all levels, and (iii) sustainable and efficient management, financing and accountability of education service delivery. The strategy is making contributions to stakeholder efforts in basic education, but there is still work to do towards extending quality education to all. This will require investments in teacher capacity, and advocacy at local and national levels to boost enrolment, especially in hard-to-reach communities, promoting right-age enrolment and strengthening school governance and community participation. It will also involve creating pathways for life-long learning and tackling other barriers to attaining quality basic education including livelihoods and climate change. Our strategic goals for the next five years are thus set within this context.

Over the next six years, the overall goal is to promote equitable access to quality and inclusive education for all children, especially children in hard-to-reach and underserved areas in Ghana. As a result, we will be pursuing 4 programmatic objectives as a means to fulfilling our vision and mission and staying true to our core values. We will also pursue a fifth objective dedicated to strengthening and making SfL resilient and vibrant to effectively deliver on its mandate. The current strategy will end during an important watershed moment; both the globally agreed SDGs and Ghana's ESP 2018-2030 will end in 2030. The timeframe for our strategy is therefore in line with national and global commitments relevant to our focus and gives us the time to learn, reflect and plan for the next strategy in line with the external environment. Overall, we will reach out to 300,000 school children made up of 160,000 girls and 140,000 boys to enhance access to inclusive quality education. In doing this, we will work with 1,000 communities in 10 of the 16 regions of Ghana to promote community-driven approaches to uninterrupted schooling. In addition, we will work with 1,500 Schools to improve school governance and accountability.

Facilitating community driven approaches for uninterrupted schooling

Enhancing access to alternative pathways and Lifelong Learning

Creating a resilient and vibrant SfL to sustain operations and enhance impact

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

Promoting access to quality basic education

Promoting accountability and systems strengthening in the basic education sector

300,000
School Children

1,500
SCHOOLS

50
MMDAS COVERED

1,000
COMMUNITIES

10
REGIONS COVERED

2,500
TEACHERS

37,000
OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

72,000
PARENTS FOR PARENTAL LEARNING STRATEGIES

2,270
TVET BENEFICIARIES

3.1. SO1: Promoting access to quality basic education

We are committed to ensuring that all children, irrespective of socioeconomic background or geographic location, have the chance to obtain an education that gives them the fundamental knowledge and abilities they need. The primary target group under this objective will be school children in deprived and hard-to-reach areas. Secondary beneficiaries are teachers at the basic level, School Management Committees (SMCs), PTAs, and local communities. We will implement in-depth strategies and activities to promote access and enhance quality. Broadly, these would cluster around extending teaching capacity, improving pedagogy, provision of teaching and learning materials and improving enrolment, and retention and completion rates. Key strategies to achieve these are outlined below;

How do we know we are successful?

By 2030 we anticipate that at least children in underserved and difficult-to-reach communities have access to quality basic education.

The key indicators include;

• Significant growth in the number of children, particularly from hard-to-reach communities accessing and completing basic education.

• Number of girls accessing and completing basic education.

• Number of CBE graduates transiting to mainstream schools.

• Improved learning outcomes such as enhanced literacy and numeracy skills, as well as better performance in standardized assessments.

• Enhanced climate literacy among learners, teachers and community members.

Key Strategies;

- **SF1:** Advance the implementation of CBE and early childhood education programmes. CBE remains our primary focus, and as a result, we will continue to implement our CBE and early childhood programmes as well as promoting right-age enrolment to reach out to out-of-school children and out-of-school youth. We anticipate that 37,000 children made up of 18,870 girls and 18,130 boys will be targeted directly by the end of 2030.

- **SF2:** Foster inclusive education and participation of girls. We will work in partnership with the Ghana Education Service (GES), MMDAs, the Department of Social Welfare, and like-minded agencies to foster inclusive education ensuring that children with disabilities, girls, and children from disadvantaged communities are integrated into mainstream education.

- **SF3:** Supporting quality teaching and learning. We will promote teacher professional development initiatives to enhance quality teaching and learning through coordinated and structured collaboration with the Ghana Education Service, Universities, Colleges of Education and the National Teaching Council. We expect to reach out to 2,500 teachers in 1,500 schools by 2030.

- **SF4:** Promote and consolidate gains made in literacy and numeracy. We will implement models and pedagogies aimed at promoting learning gains especially in foundational literacy and numeracy as well as promoting ICT education and usage.

- **SF5:** Promote social and behaviour change in communities. In order to consolidate our gains on quality basic education, and in particular on enrolment, retention and completion for girls, we will develop Social and Behavior Change (SBC) strategies to shape attitudes and practices in communities, and among our target groups.

- **SF6:** Improve programming quality. To improve the quality of our programming efforts, and to enhance accountability in our work, we will develop capacity in research and evidence-based programming in partnership with the University for Development Studies and other research institutions.

- **SF7:** Promote effective delivery of education outcomes. We will work with school and community-level structures to uphold standards, provide information, and enhance accountability as a means to promote effective delivery of education services.

- **SF8:** Enhance cognitive achievement of learners. We will advocate and work with allies to promote the provision of appropriate teaching and learning materials to deprived basic schools to enhance the cognitive achievement of learners.

- **SF9:** Advancing collaborations with relevant agencies: we will deepen collaborations and engagement with the Complementary Education Agency at national, regional, and district levels including co-creating projects and programmes.

- **SF10:** Promote climate literacy. As part of our commitment to reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience in communities, we will incorporate climate literacy into the CBE curriculum to ensure that learners gain essential knowledge on climate change and sustainability.

3.2 SO2: Promoting accountability and systems strengthening in the basic education sector

Under this objective, we will continue to support accountability and work with allies including communities to strengthen systems within the basic education sector. School accountability can make significant contributions to better learning outcomes thereby contributing to quality and equitable education for all children. This aspect of our work will contribute to building sustainable and inclusive education structures. By working with the GES, CEA, MMDAs, Parents' Associations, SMCs DEOCs, and other stakeholders, we will be enhancing transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of education systems. Our work will encompass how to leverage accountability and systems strengthening to improve inputs such as curriculum delivery and development, pupil-teacher ratios, teaching and learning materials, and infrastructure. Whilst stakeholder focus has always been on these inputs, our work will also have strong emphasis on student outcomes ensuring that the school system better addresses the needs of pupils and the wider community.

How do we know we are successful?

By 2030 we envisage that systems will be strengthened and accountability enhanced in Ghana's basic education sector to ensure improved learning outcomes.

The key indicators are:

- Stronger collaboration among government, schools, communities, and other stakeholders in promoting teaching and learning.
- A 50% increase in the number of functional School Management Committees (SMCs) and District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs).
- Increasing national visibility of SfL on basic education matters.
- Increased evidence of community participation in school governance.

Key Strategies;

- **SF1:** Accelerate work on influencing and advocacy. We will intensify work to influence policy by upscaling Evidence-Based Advocacy and also deploy both traditional and new media tools to promote advocacy campaigns from subnational to national levels.

- **SF2:** Deepen stakeholder engagement. We will engage with key stakeholders on themes relevant to our work to gain insights, networking, and rallying advocates and supporters for purposes of better policies and programmes.

- **SF3:** Promote social accountability in the delivery of education services. We will work with relevant stakeholders such as communities, the media, and CSOs to promote social accountability through participatory budgeting, Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS), Community Score Card (CSC) and similar social accountability tools/mechanisms as a means to holding public institutions and officials accountable to ensure equitable distribution of education resources and increase effectiveness in delivery of education services.

- **SF4:** Strengthen local and school level governance structures: We will foster collaborative school governance and stakeholder participation in education by strengthening local structures and processes including School Management Committees (SMCs), District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs), and School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIPs) to enhance inclusive decision-making and create a more effective learning environment for pupils.

- **SF5:** Foster a safe and inclusive learning environment. We will enhance gender and social inclusion by working with the GES, schools, communities, and other stakeholders to eliminate gender biases and discrimination in schools and promote gender-transformative pedagogy to foster safe and inclusive learning environments for all children.

- **SF6:** Accelerate advocacy efforts and campaigns on quality education. We will work with like-minded CSOs and coalitions to develop policy briefs and proposals to support our advocacy efforts and campaigns to engage, persuade, and inform target audiences with relevant and concise information on essential matters in our chosen themes of work, particularly quality education for all.

3.3 SO3: Enhancing access to alternative pathways and lifelong learning

Under this objective, SfL will work with allies and communities to create an enabling environment in which people can learn according to their individual needs, preferences, and interests in a flexible, unrestricted, and empowering way. Facilitating lifelong learning and alternative pathways can meet the needs of people excluded from conventional learning systems, empower them, and extend agency.. It will also involve providing non-formal education, vocational training, and essential life-skills for young people, especially the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) demographic. We anticipate to reach out to a total of 2,270 young people under this aspect of our work. We believe that a successful implementation of our strategies under this component of work will not only create opportunities for all learners but will contribute to tackling some of the community-level barriers to quality educational outcomes.

How do we know we are successful?

By 2030, we anticipate that communities, particularly young people, will have access to quality lifelong learning opportunities to acquire knowledge, competences and skills necessary for productive participation in society and work.

The key indicators include:

- Number of community members participating in literacy-promoting activities.

- % of learners demonstrating proficient digital literacy skills (e.g., basic computer skills, online navigation.

- Number of young people demonstrating improved essential life skills

- Number of TVET graduates employed or self-employed in their field of study .

Key Strategies:

- **SF1:** Promote a culture of reading in communities. We will support 10 communities to establish community-based mini libraries to foster a culture of reading, promote literacy, and provide inclusive access to diverse educational resources to cater for diverse learning needs. This will also include ensuring teacher or facilitator support to provide guidance for learners to access learning materials.

- **SF2:** Leverage digital tools to increase learning outcomes. We will promote digital literacy and EdTech solutions that are relevant to the life, work, and educational goals of learners as a means to increasing learning outcomes and enhance digital equity.

- **SF3:** Support young people to develop skills and competences for livelihoods. We will work to equip out-of-school youth with functional literacy skills and activity-based learning opportunities, to enable them to acquire essential knowledge, skills, and competencies for lifelong learning, and increased agency and livelihoods.

- **SF4:** Promote financial literacy and financial inclusion to empower communities. We will work to empower communities, particularly adolescents to make informed financial decisions and improve economic resilience by intensifying financial literacy and financial inclusion. We will also work with relevant state and non-state actors to promote access to markets and business advisory services.

- **SF5:** Enhance mentoring and coaching opportunities for young people. We will facilitate mentorship and coaching opportunities for the 2,270 young people targeted, made up of 1200 females and 1,070 males, to equip them with essential life skills towards achieving their educational, career and personal goals.

- **SF6:** Promote employability and economic agency among young people. We will work to implement need-based skills training programs to empower adolescents with competencies, tools, and resources to enhance employability and economic agency. Key skills areas identified by young people include fashion and design, hairdressing, agri-business, beading, and catering.

- **SF7:** Enhance enrolment drives in TVET institutions and programmes. We will encourage youth participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) by promoting enrolment drives in mainstream TVET institutes and demand-driven apprenticeship pathways to enhance skills development, employability, and entrepreneurship.

- **SF8:** Promote environmental sustainability in TVET programmes. We will work with like-minded agencies to advocate and support the development of a policy on Inclusive and Green TVET to promote equitable access, environmental sustainability, and climate literacy in TVET training programmes and practices.

- **SF9:** Raise awareness on alternative learning pathways. We will launch and implement public awareness campaigns about alternative pathways and lifelong learning opportunities to empower young people to make informed choices about educational and career goals.

3.4 SO4: Facilitating community- driven approaches for uninterrupted schooling

The main aim of this aspect of our work is to work with communities to lead in inclusive and sustainable education solutions to ensure that all children have uninterrupted access to quality education. Our programmes stand a great chance of success where communities are actively involved. Communities are thus at the heart of all that we do at SfL. At SfL, we trust the capacity of communities to initiate actions to address the challenges confronting them in a sustainable manner. We believe this will also promote resilience, adaptability, and accountability in the education system.

How do we know we are successful?

By 2030, communities are taking local level actions to guarantee uninterrupted quality education and promote inclusivity for all.

The key indicators include:

- 70% of parents and community members attending school meetings/events and actively participating in decision-making processes about teaching and learning outcomes.
- Number of schools incorporating indigenous pedagogy and approaches and the percentage of instructional content reflecting local languages.
- Nature and extent of agreements and partnerships established between schools and local community with clear measurable results.
- Number of families participating in home-based ECDE learning programs, and foundational Literacy, numeracy and life skills programs and % reporting improved learning outcomes.
- Percentage of community members reporting a decrease in discriminatory attitudes, and embracing inclusive practices.
- Percentage of community members reporting satisfaction about the quality of education learners are receiving.

Key Strategies;

- **SF1:** Deepen engagement with parents and communities: we will deepen engagement with parents and communities as active partners in their children's education and learning processes to enhance academic outcomes and overall well-being.

- **SF2:** Promote indigenous pedagogy: we will promote Indigenous pedagogy, leveraging on the CBE approach to contextualise learning and foster holistic development.

- **SF3:** Support intergenerational learning in communities. we will work with communities to promote intergenerational learning by facilitating and enhancing community-driven approaches to learning, including engendering parent-learner engagement processes, cultivating a sense of community pride, and a learning process that will equip the learner with the necessary skills to turn community resources into productive use.

- **SF4:** Facilitate collaborations between schools and communities. We will work to develop and enhance partnerships between schools and communities to promote mutual support, build trust, and deepen collaboration to enhance learning and community engagement.

- **SF5:** Support community-driven Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE). We will work with families and communities to support ECDE through home-based learning to enhance holistic development and school readiness. We anticipate to partner with 72,000 families in this regard in the next 6 years, drawing largely on volunteers.

- **SF6:** Promote actions aimed at tackling child labour and child trafficking. We will launch and intensify advocacy efforts aimed at transforming attitudes and enhancing policy delivery on child labour, child trafficking, child streetism and child reintegration programmes

- **SF7:** Deepen efforts on building inclusive communities. We will undertake community-level campaigns to promote positive social norms, and challenge discrimination and bias as a means to inclusive communities.

3.5 SO5: Creating a resilient and vibrant SfL to sustain operations and enhance impact

At SfL, we recognise the importance of both the journey and the destination. In all we do, we prioritise the people, and the processes and systems that produce the outcomes, with the firm belief that each informs and enriches the other. We are therefore committed to growing and nurturing a professional and thriving work culture in an environment that upholds our core values and enables us to effectively deliver on our plans and mandate. Within this strategy period, we will invest in capacity and collaborations to enhance visibility, sustainability, and impact.

How do we know we are successful?

By 2030, SfL has developed capacity, systems and processes to become sector leaders in promoting the delivery of quality basic education in Ghana.

The key indicators include:

- Increase in funding from non-conventional sources.
- Staff demonstrate improved project management, documentation and reporting skills
- 30% reduction in printing materials and a significant reduction in energy costs
- 100% increase in website traffic and social media engagement
- Improved oversight, coordination, communication, and decision-making processes
- Improved visibility of SfL's programming and advocacy efforts.
- SfL becomes the go-to CSO on promoting, supporting and advocating for the provision of quality basic education in Ghana.

To attain this goal, we will;

- **SF1:** Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy targeting a mix of funding sources including local philanthropy and Social Enterprises.

- **SF2:** Extend staff capacity on project management, documentation, and improved reporting, M&E, and data analysis.

- **SF3:** Develop a comprehensive staff development plan to enhance culture and people management.

- **SF4:** Boost operational efficiency and staff productivity by investing in modern office equipment and resources such as state-of-the-art computer systems, software, and related resources. We will also leverage technology to work green and lean to maximise efficiency and reduce carbon footprints.

- **SF5:** Improve organizational visibility and reputation through effective communication strategies including developing an active and interactive website with engaging content, and responsible deployment of new media tools such as social media, podcasts, and online collaborations.

- **SF6:** Strengthen governance and transparency by ensuring a collaborative and accountable relationship between the Board and Management, utilising strategies such as improved coordination, targeted training, developing policies and protocols, Board Sub-Committees, and a clearer articulation of roles and responsibilities.

- **SF7:** Amplify impact and sustain a culture of continuous learning through a comprehensive tracer study of SfL alumni and nurturing the growth of an engaged alumni network.

- **SF8:** Develop extensive capacity to generate high-quality evidence to drive advocacy efforts including those targeted at shaping government policies and programmes.

- **SF9:** Institutionalise the SfL Annual Northern Ghana Conference and Lecture Series on Basic Education as a flagship platform for engaging local and national stakeholders to deepen dialogues and collaborations on quality basic education.

The strategic objectives and the accompanying strategies for 2025-2030 are carefully selected to also address inequality and tackle barriers to realising a fairer society. In a context where patriarchy is entrenched, it will require bold and deliberate actions to ensure that all people and groups facing barriers have access to opportunities and resources on an equitable basis. In addition to the strategies we have proposed under the various themes to address the needs of women, young people, and people with disabilities, we will pursue targeted actions to enhance inclusivity. SfL and community-level partners will use a gender-responsive set of guidelines to select participants in all programmes to ensure equitable representation. Also, part of our advocacy efforts would be directed at addressing issues of inclusivity and tailored to the unique needs of the diverse social groups we work with. Specifically, we will launch and intensify advocacy efforts aimed at transforming attitudes and enhancing policy delivery on child labour, child trafficking, child streetism and child reintegration programmes. Our commitment is to ensure that all programming and implementation decisions will be preceded by rigorous gender and inclusivity analyses at all times to enable us to reduce vulnerability among women, young people, people with disabilities and other excluded social groups, thereby contributing to a fairer society where all individuals can thrive.

5.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL) AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM)

Over the years, we have invested in efforts to improve upon monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning, leading to improvements in MEAL practices. We recognize, that there is more to do, and in particular to learn to enable us increase programme impact and quality of our work. In addition, it is a matter of priority for us to continue to demonstrate and ensure accountability to communities, partners, and our supporters. The MEAL framework under this strategy is thus a comprehensive one designed to enable us to document our achievements and challenges. This will be achieved through the present reporting systems, as well as others that will enhance accountability and learning. Key components of our MEAL system include:

5.1 Baseline Survey

SfL staff, partners and communities will work to gather baseline data on the unit of analysis for our programmes to provide quantitative and qualitative analytical information as a basis to facilitate tracking of progress. This process will entail using both statistical measurements and qualitative approaches to gather information that is practical, accessible, and useful to people at the community level and policy makers. In all instances, data collected will be disaggregated by age and gender taking note of other nuances as the case may apply.

5.2 Accountability and Feedback

SfL and partners will prepare quarterly and annual reports and share them with all relevant stakeholders. The reports will account for progress towards the achievement of results. Progress reports will highlight key implementation challenges, significant change stories, lessons learned, and recommendations to inform implementation and decision-making. To ensure as many community members as possible contribute to the MEAL Strategy, there will be a community feedback mechanism using multiple tools to capture the views of a diverse stakeholder group. These include suggestion boxes, social media, and toll-free lines. These processes will have in-built protection and confidentiality mechanisms to ensure that community members, especially women and young people, feel safe to use them, especially on sensitive issues.

5.3 Action Research/Routine Data Collection and Analysis

SfL staff will conduct regular monitoring visits (quarterly, bi-annually, and annually) to assess progress toward deliverables. These visits will be thoroughly documented using standardized templates to facilitate follow-up and capture key insights, and lessons learned. SfL uses electronic data collection and transmission channels that support our real time data review and feedback mechanisms. This component of the MEAL Strategy aims to answer essential questions such as what strategies are working, what is not working, and what needs to change including the adoption of emerging innovations.

5.4 Review and Reflection Sessions

SfL will host semi-annual and annual reflection and review sessions to assess progress and identify lessons learned. These sessions will be held rotationally in the operational regions and will bring together development partners, community members, key target groups, and beneficiaries. These sessions will enable SfL and program participants to gain valuable insights and evaluate progress. SfL will incorporate the lessons learned and suggested recommendations into the Annual Work Plans for subsequent years, reinforcing a culture of continuous learning to improve programme quality and impact.

5.5 Midterm Review of Progress

We will conduct a midterm review in the third year of implementation to assess progress towards the strategic objectives. This review will highlight success stories, document progress, and identify challenges to inform strategies for the remaining life of the plan. To ensure transparency and relevance, an external team will lead the midterm review that will incorporate the perspectives of a diverse stakeholder group including young people, women, staff, communities, local authorities, and relevant education sector agencies.

5.6 End of Strategy Evaluation

An independent evaluation will be conducted at the end of the sixth year, focusing on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of our programmes in communities and the lives of the core target groups. This evaluation will enable us to identify essential lessons from the implementation process and provide a basis for the next strategic plan and also to demonstrate transparency and accountability. Synthesised versions of the end-of-strategy evaluation will be shared with donor partners and communities.
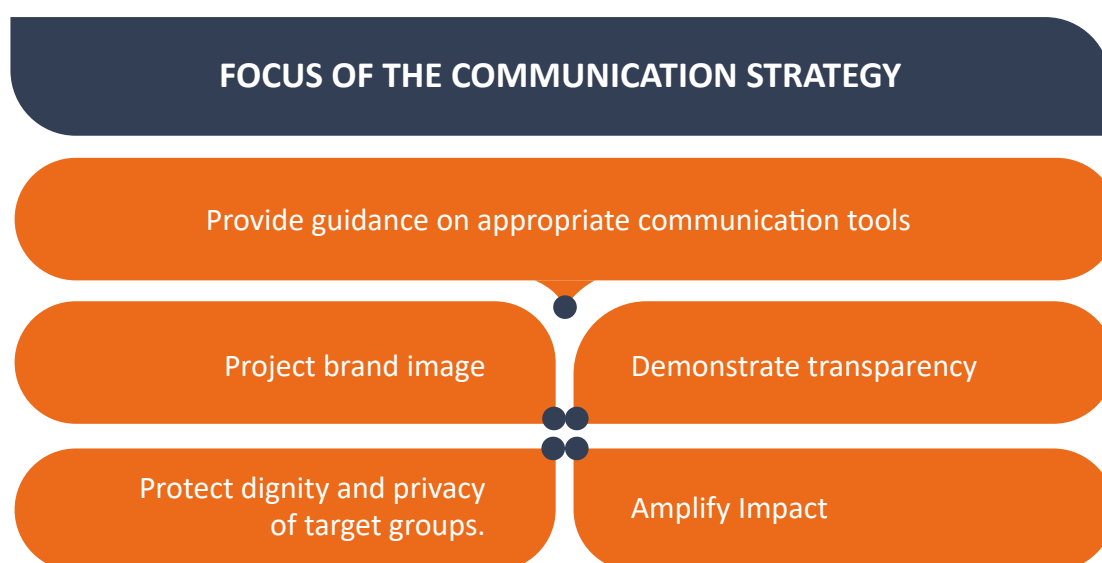
5.7 Knowledge Management

This will involve the systematic identification, acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval, sharing and utilization of knowledge to achieve the objectives outlined in this strategic plan. Knowledge identification will involve recognising the types of knowledge that exist within the organization, including explicit (documented) and tacit (experiential) knowledge. In SfL's work, knowledge is acquired through gathering from various sources such as implementation data, employees, partners, programme, communities, participants, and external stakeholders. Such knowledge is then organized through categorization processes that makes it easily accessible and usable. Knowledge storage will involve storing knowledge in various formats, such as documents, databases and repositories. Knowledge retrieval will encompass enabling employees to easily locate and access relevant knowledge. Knowledge sharing will entail facilitating the exchange of knowledge among employees, teams and departments. Finally, knowledge utilization will involve applying knowledge to improve organizational performance, innovate and make informed decisions.

6.0 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY STRATEGY

At SfL, we are focused on change, especially in our chosen themes of work. This requires that we carry communities, young people, allies, and policymakers along. This implies not only communicating impact but also taking intentional steps to project a positive image and brand. This part of the strategic plan is thus to ensure that our results and achievements are communicated with relevant audiences on a timely basis drawing from our MEAL and KM system, and to particularly showcase SfL's contribution to a fairer world. Our team will take proactive steps to strengthen our niche in the eyes of our target groups, policymakers, and the general public, and to showcase SfL as a sector leader in promoting and advocating for quality basic education and related themes of work.

We will utilise facts, reliable data, and information as the anchors for effective communication and visibility. Through extensive branding activities, we will be able to document and disseminate to a wider audience the link between resources invested and results attained. This will contribute to enhancing legitimacy and mobilising allies for our work. Major strategies in this regard will include, embossing the SfL logo and other approved branding materials on all major projects and supplies to communities and partners, and incorporating the SfL logo on all official email addresses. Where permissible and appropriate, promotion materials of SfL and development partners may be jointly embossed on projects and supplies.

To reach out to truly large numbers of audiences, SfL will use a combination of tools including traditional and new media to display and share content and messages. This will include professional and ethical use of new media tools such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and other social media handles of SfL. Others will include short nudge messages and impact stories, podcasts, policy briefs and technical notes, infographics, webinars, and factsheets. A quarterly newsletter will also be developed and shared with the public and on the website of SfL. Key target audiences for the communication messages include the Government of Ghana and the general public, development partners CSOs, and the media. The specific tools and the communication strategies to deploy in each case are presented below;

FOCUS OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Provide guidance on appropriate communication tools

Project brand image

Demonstrate transparency

Protect dignity and privacy of target groups.

Amplify Impact

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE	TARGET AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION TOOLS
Impact and Change Stories	Local communities, government, development partners and CSOs, and the general public.	Print & electronic media, short videos, flyers, documentaries, nudge messages & factsheets, and posts via social media handles.
Advocacy on topical issues	Government, development partners & CSOs, Community leaders and the general public, and the media.	Print and electronic media, policy and technical briefs, factsheets, Nudge Messages, SfL website, pull-up stands, Webinars Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn.
Sensitisation on quality basic education, TVET, CBE, etc.	School children, out-of-school children, communities, local authorities, and the general public.	Radio, Television, short documentaries, pull-out stands, flyers, Nudge Messages & Social media handles

SfL recognises that the communication materials we put out can, and do, affect individuals, particularly children and young people, who are at the heart of our work. We will take deliberate and necessary steps to protect the dignity and privacy of all project participants by adhering to the highest ethical standards and professionalism. In particular, we will protect the rights and dignity of project participants by ensuring that all communication materials and messages we produce are stored, and disseminated with the utmost care and professionalism. All participants featured in stories will provide full, informed consent before we proceed to use the material. They will also receive relevant SfL contact information and are free to withdraw consent at any stage. An approved SfL consent form will be administered to participants before capturing photographs or audiovisual materials. Finally, SfL will not use information obtained for purposes other than our work.

7.0 CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL AND GLOBAL PRIORITIES

We are committed to making meaningful contributions to national and global commitments and actions to ensure sustainable development and a fairer world. Our strategic priorities are thus chosen to also feed into this collective effort. At the national level, our strategy aligns with the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme which focuses on addressing issues of access, equity, and quality in the educational sector. Also, the strategy feeds into Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030 which seeks to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education. Our strategy sits well with the Complementary Education Agency Act, of 2020 (Act 1055) which seeks to promote and provide quality complementary education. In addition, our work will support the Ghana Skills Development Initiative (GSDI) which aims at enhancing skills training and providing non-traditional learning pathways. Other major national policies relevant to the strategy include the Free Senior High School Policy (FSHS) which enhances access to secondary education, as a foundation for further education and lifelong learning opportunities, and the 2020 Ghana TVET Policy that focuses on improving access, quality, and relevance of TVET programs.

At the Global level, our 2025-2030 strategy feeds into a number of global compacts and actions, including but not limited to: Education 2030 Framework for Action which enjoins governments to ensure universal access to quality basic education by 2030; the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which emphasizes the right to free and compulsory education for all; Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which recognizes the child's right to free, compulsory primary education; the African Union Agenda 2063 which advocates well-educated citizens and access to basic education as a foundation for sustainable development; the 2020 World Bank Education Strategy which prioritizes learning for all to provide equitable access to quality education and improve education systems globally; the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) which supports countries to strengthen their education systems and ensure universal access to quality basic education; the UNESCO's Framework for Lifelong Learning which advocates for the recognition, validation, and accreditation (RVA) of non-formal and informal learning; and the 2030 OECD's Learning Compass which encourages policies that equip learners with competencies for future challenges, including digital skills and adaptability.

Finally, our strategy responds to the invitation extended to the global community to contribute to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our strategy thus addresses the following SDGs among others: SDG 1 which seeks to end poverty in all its forms everywhere; SDG 4 which focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all; SDG 5 which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; SDG 8 which seeks to promote sustainable economic growth, productive employment and decent income for all: SDG 13 which calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies; and SDG 17 on partnerships to drive the goals.

8.0 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

RISK	IMPACT	MITIGATING MEASURES
Economic challenges may limit the government's ability to deliver on its commitments to the basic education sector.	High	Work with like-minded CSOs and stakeholders to highlight the primacy of investments in basic education.
Possible changes in government policy on Education in general and basic education in particular.	Medium	Work with relevant government agencies to fully explore the implications of these changes on our plans, and make necessary adjustments in work plans.
Loss of key staff to other CSOs and agencies	Medium	Endeavor to offer opportunities to staff that are comparable to peers in the CSO space.
Inadequate funding may impact our ability to deliver fully on this strategy.	High	Diversify funding sources to include non-conventional streams, and also prioritise interventions in line with available resources.
Families and communities do not place a premium on the education of children	low	Intensify engagements with communities to highlight the important role of education in community and national development.
Economic poverty may force families to keep children, especially girls, out of school.	Medium	Enhance advocacy efforts on enrolment and retention, and work with families to address livelihood issues.
MDA & MMDAs may not cooperate fully towards achieving the outcomes.	Medium	Involve MDAs/MMDAs in plan preparations, implementations, and reviews.
Duplication of efforts by CSOs/NGOs	Medium	Engage with CSOs/NGOs on a periodic basis to share plans and explore joint programming options.
Dramatic Changes in donor focus and priorities	High	Diversify funding portfolio to include other non-traditional funding mechanisms like local philanthropy, social enterprises and crowdfunding.

9.0 CONCLUSION

This strategy seeks to bring together all the work that will take place across SfL over the period 2025-2030. It is an indication of our commitment to working with partners including communities and children to ensure that children and young people have access to education, life-long learning, and opportunities for growth. SfL recognises that our work may produce more outcomes that are not reflected here. This strategy therefore highlights the core work we will focus on especially if funding resources are available to do so. It is important to state that this strategy will periodically need to be adapted to fit changing external trends, and also to ensure we learn from experience. These adjustments in the strategy will be discussed during annual and periodic reviews, and necessary changes documented, ensuring the ongoing relevance of the strategy. We hope that, as with our previous strategies, the 2025-2030 strategy provides useful pathways to SfL and partners to work towards making a positive impact for and with children and young people, leaving no one behind.

2025-2030 STRATEGY

Since its formation 30 years ago, School for Life has grown to become one of the leading and credible CSOs in Northern Ghana with significant footprints at the national level, recording several signature achievements in the process, and impacting communities and families in many positive ways. We are known for our flagship programme the 'Functional Literacy Programme' now known as the Complementary Basic Education Programme (CBE). For the past three decades, we have pioneered and led efforts in CBE that targets children in hard-to-reach communities and those facing the highest risks of exclusion from attaining an education. In this important area of work, we have enhanced literacy skills for over 450,000 out-of-school pupils, many of whom have proceeded to acquire further educational qualifications and professional training, enabling them to make contributions to national development in various sectors. We have continued to be active in engaging with and influencing policy, especially in the areas of basic education and functional literacy.

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