



# SCALING INCLUSIVE HOME-BASED EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE (SIHELI) CONCEPT NOTE

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**Project Duration:** 33 months

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| <b>What is the overall goal of the project?</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To generate evidence to contextualize and scale the impact of inclusive early learning for smooth transition from pre-primary to primary school for all children.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>What questions will the project answer?</b>        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we scale wide scaling lessons from the SIHELI model on community engagement and system level actors from Uganda, Ghana and Liberia to ensure sustainable early learning initiatives particularly in areas where KG provision is not available.</li> <li>How can we contextualize child to child play pedagogy in home-based models to increase participation of all children including those with special needs in early learning in Uganda, Ghana and Liberia.</li> <li>How can we contextualize gender-responsive pedagogy in the home-based model to increase participation of fathers in childcare in Uganda, Ghana and Liberia.</li> <li>How do we scale wide gender responsive ECCE teacher capacity development programme to remove gender biases and stereotypes on how boys and girls participate in early learning activities and opportunities.</li> </ol> |
| <b>What is the SIHELI model?</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A hybrid Early Childhood Development (ECD) model combines the best aspects of home-based and school/center-based approaches. By merging these two models, it aims to mitigate their individual weaknesses.</li> <li>This hybrid approach introduces the concept of integrated ECCE, connecting centers with health facilities to provide essential services like deworming and vitamin A supplements. Additionally, it places centers under parental and community management and involvement, ensuring that all children, including those with disabilities, are catered for.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>What is the geographical scope of the project?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project is expected to create 15 SIHELI centres—5 in Uganda; 5 in Liberia; <b>5 in Ghana</b>. There will also be non-intervention schools selected for the randomised control trial to measure impact of the intervention.</li> <li>In Ghana, 2 districts/municipalities were chosen for the study. Communities will be chosen from each of the districts to establish SIHELI centres. The districts include depending on the scoping results: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Region, Nanton (5 communities— 5 SIHELI centres).</li> </ol> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



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| <p><b>How will SIHEL centers be established?</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify through community consensus a home that can host the centre.</li> <li>• Work with community to identify parent leader to head the centre and other parents who will help to do other activities in the centre.</li> <li>• Work with community to establish a management committee for the centre (members can include PTA/SMC and other locally based women's groups/organisations like Christian mothers or Islamic mothers' associations etc).</li> <li>• Work with committee to set aside structures for the centre (Class space, latrine, kitchen, play spaces etc).</li> <li>• Work with management committee to initiate linkages to health care facilities, CDO, Education office in line with available government guidelines.</li> <li>• Develop a routine for the centre with responsible persons.</li> <li>• Recruit children into the centre (Not more than 30 children) with special emphasis on special needs children between 3-10 years of age)</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>How will the model operate?</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons are conducted from <b>9:00Am – 1:00Pm</b> with <b>snack time</b> in between.</li> <li>• <b>Mondays and Thursdays:</b> 2 or 3 Parents volunteer to tell stories about their culture, sing cultural songs, say riddles, poems and tongue twisters. They also teach home chore activities, project work and self-care activities.</li> <li>• <b>Tuesdays and Fridays:</b> 2 community-based volunteer teachers engaged children in literacy and numeracy activities.</li> <li>• <b>Wednesdays:</b> It is a day for free play, with no academic work. 2 or 3 parents volunteer to supervise play for safety.</li> <li>• <b>Children with disability</b> if identified will be provided with Individualised Education Plan (IEP) till they are ready to join others in the centre. Such children will join on a Wednesday, then Mondays, then Thursdays, then Tuesdays and finally Fridays depending on how they adapt.</li> </ul>                                               |
| <p><b>What other activities will be undertaken?</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other activities to be carried out include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability screening for children.</li> <li>• Helping to establish a Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO) for parents.</li> <li>• Providing livelihood training and skilling for parents.</li> <li>• Parent Education sessions (facilitated by different experts).</li> <li>• Parenting sessions (Led by Centre parent leader to mentor other parents to help children extend what has been learnt at school to home).</li> <li>• Child open days to display what children have learnt to community.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>What methodological approach will be used?</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project adopts an Action research design that actively involves communities in the design and implementation of the SIHEL model.</li> <li>• The following stages will be used: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Design Phase (3 months) (Facilitated by knowledge sharing and capacity building)</li> <li>ii. Testing Phase (6 months) (Facilitated by knowledge sharing, capacity building and system strengthening)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |



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|                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Implementation Phase (16 months) (Facilitated by knowledge sharing, capacity building and system strengthening).</li> <li>iv. Random Control Trial (RCT) impact evaluation.</li> <li>v. Produce more evidence for knowledge sharing, capacity building and system strengthening.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Who will be the target groups for this research project?</b></p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Ghana, the project will comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Children – 150 (30 from each SIHEL center)</li> <li>ii. Parents – 150 (across the 5 centers)</li> <li>iii. ECE teachers – 10 (across the 5 centers)</li> <li>iv. Education officials – 10 (District Education Directors, ECE officers/SHEP officer, Basic Education officers and Special Education officer)</li> <li>v. Local community leaders – 50 (Chief, PTA/SMC, Women's group leaders and other community leaders)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Who are the implementers of the SIHEL model in Ghana?</b></p> <p><b>What are their roles?</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SIHEL model will be implemented and supported by the <b>Ghana Education Service</b> at national, regional and district levels</li> <li>• The GES Offices in the districts will have a core team of ECE Coordinator, SHEP Coordinator, SPED Coordinator and Basic Education Coordinator. They will help establish and monitor the community-based parent driven committee which will establish the ECE centers in their community.</li> <li>• Other key stakeholders involved and supporting will include the rural banks, women's income generating organizations (Social Welfare Department, Ghana Health service and CSOs' who are operating in the communities of selection (e.g. women's groups etc.)</li> <li>• Learning partners who will assist share the evidence with the Government Policy Learning working group are the Sabre Foundation and Lively Minds.</li> <li>• The following roles will be performed by the implementers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with community members/leaders to identify homes and parent leaders and other parents to establish and host the ECE centers.</li> <li>• Work with communities to establish management committees for the centers and side structures for the centre (Class space, latrine, kitchen, play spaces etc).</li> <li>• Work with management committee to initiate linkages to health facilities, Community Development Officers, Education office in line with available government guidelines and develop a routine for the centre with responsible persons.</li> <li>• Recruit and train educators for the SIHEL model centers</li> <li>• Collaborate with experts to educate parents.</li> <li>• Identify and recruit children (N=30 for each Centre), including differently abled children/special needs, for the SIHEL model centers. Conduct disability screening to map the diverse special needs of CWDs identified.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



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|                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help establish the SACCO and provide livelihood training and skills support for parents in the project communities.</li> <li>• Guide centre parent leaders to mentor other parents to help children extend what has been learnt at school to the home setting.</li> <li>• Organise community open day sessions with for children to display what they learnt to relevant stakeholders in their communities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <b>How does the government play into this?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Monitoring and Supervision:</i> Oversee the establishment and operation of ECCE centers, ensuring they meet the standards and objectives set by the project.</li> <li>• <i>Training and Capacity Building:</i> Participate in and support the training of teachers, parents, and local government officials to enhance the quality and sustainability of the ECCE centers.</li> <li>• <i>Integration with Public Services:</i> Coordinate with health and education departments to integrate essential services like health check-ups, deworming, and vitamin A supplementation into the ECCE centers.</li> </ul>                                                                      |
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| <b>Who will manage the SIHELI centers?</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SIHELI centers will be managed by trained management committees comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Parents</li> <li>ii. Local community leaders (Chief's rep, PTA members, retired teachers, and women's leaders)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| <b>What are the intended project outcomes?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of the project, we aim to develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Teacher capacity building model for promoting quality early learning in home-based community driven ECE centers.</li> <li>ii. Contextualized child to child play pedagogy model approach that uses local and culturally relevant play activities to promote learning.</li> <li>iii. Contextualized Inclusive home-based early learning model that meets the learning needs of all children within their communities with focus on special needs children.</li> <li>iv. Gender responsive model that promotes participation of boys and girls in early learning activities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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| <b>Who are the learning partners?</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Ghana Education service at national, regional and district levels</li> <li>• Sabre Education</li> <li>• Lively Minds</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |