



End of Project Evaluation

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TRANSFORMATIONAL KINDERGARTEN TEACHER TRAINING IN THE EASTERN REGION, GHANA

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Sabre Education is an international NGO which, since 2004, has been providing children in Ghana with the best possible early childhood education by partnering with government to implement play-based learning at scale.

Sabre focuses on:

1. Influencing early childhood education (ECE) policy & practice.
2. Training teachers and school officials in quality early childhood education.
3. Transforming learning environments to facilitate positive play-based learning.

Our mission is to support Ghana to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.2 - universal access to quality ECE - as we work towards our vision of a world where early learning supports every child to succeed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	iv
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vi
1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS: A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT'S IMMEDIATE POLICY AND OPERATING CONTEXT	1
1.1 BRIEF INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 PROJECT'S IMMEDIATE POLICY AND OPERATING CONTEXT	1
1.2.1 <i>Brief background on ECCD Policy</i>	1
1.2.2 <i>The ECE Policy</i>	1
2. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION	4
2.1 OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION	4
2.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION	5
2.3 STRUCTURE OF EVALUATION REPORT	6
3. EVALUATION APPROACH	7
3.1 SURVEY DESIGN AND SAMPLING	7
3.1.1 <i>Sampling process for KG 1&2 learners</i>	7
3.1.2 <i>Sampling process for KG Teachers and headteachers</i>	7
3.1.3 <i>Sampling of student-teachers and in-service teachers.</i>	7
3.1.4 <i>Sampling Process for Parents</i>	8
3.1.5 <i>District education office staff and District Education Oversight Committee (DEOCs) members</i>	8
3.1.6 <i>CoE tutors and Principals</i>	8
3.1.7 <i>National level Education duty bearers</i>	8
3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis	9
4. EVALUATION FINDINGS	10
4.1 RELEVANCE AND FIDELITY	10
4.2 EFFECTIVENESS	17
4.2.1 <i>Teacher Lesson Observation Findings</i>	17
4.2.2 <i>Learner PAC Assessments</i>	21
4.2.3 <i>Findings on the extent of coaching KG learners by headteachers</i>	25
4.2.4 <i>Parents Survey Findings</i>	27
4.3. EFFICIENCY	29
4.4 COHERENCE	33
4.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICABILITY	35
5. CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	39
5.1 Conclusions	39
5.2 Recommendations	40
ANNEXES	42
Annex 1a. Additional Tables of Learners' assessment Results	42

Annex 1b. Additional Tables of Lesson Observation Results	45
Annex 2 Evaluation tools	48
Annex 3 Terms of reference	49
Annex 4 List of documents used	55

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 3.1 Summary of sample allocation for data collection	8
Table 4.1 Proportion of teachers who obtained an outstanding score for each teaching methodology competence	18
Table 4.2 Proportion of teachers with an outstanding class engagement and attitude	19
Table 4.3 Proportion of teachers with an outstanding learner attainment level	19
Table 4.4 Proportion of teachers who obtained an outstanding score on classroom management	20
Table 4.5 Proportion of teachers who obtained outstanding scores in the classroom learning environment	20
Table 4.6 Proportion of teachers who obtained outstanding scores on teacher attitude	21
Table 4.7 Proportion of learners who demonstrate mastery in psycho-social skills (5Cs)	22
Table 4.8 Proportion of learners who demonstrated mastery in Oral language skills	22
Table 4.9 Proportion of learners who demonstrated mastery in early reading skills	23
Table 4.10 Proportion of learners who demonstrated mastery in writing skills	23
Table 4.11 Proportion of learners who demonstrated mastery in numeracy skills	24
Figure 4.1 Proportion of teachers who are outstanding or good at providing lesson plan/session notes and up-to-date information relevant to the session being taught (%)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 4.2 Source of knowledge about the TTT project	Error! Bookmark not defined.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CoEs	Colleges of Education
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
D/A	District Assembly
DDSup	Deputy Director Supervision
DTST	District Teacher Support Team
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
fCUBE	Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GESI	Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion
INSET	In-Service Teacher Training
KG	Kindergarten
KII	Key Informant Interview
M/A	Municipal Assembly
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPCs	Model Practice Classrooms
NaCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NTC	National Teaching Council
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PAC	Pupil Achievement Checklist
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PPS	Probability Proportionate to Size
PRESET	Pre-Service Teacher Training
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHS	Senior High School
SISOs	School Improvement Support Officers
SMC	School Management Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
TLMs	Teaching and Learning Materials
TLRs	Teaching and Learning Resources
TTT	Transformational Teacher Training
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brief project description

Sabre's Transformational Teacher Training in the Eastern Region is a three-year project started in 2019 and has been Sabre's largest project to date. The project aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning across all government kindergarten schools in six districts (Akwapim North, Akwapim South, New Juaben North, New Juaben South, Nsawam Adoagyir, and Okere) in the Eastern Region of Ghana. It also aimed to improve the quality of student teachers' practical classroom experience and ensure future generations of teachers are able to enact the play-based pedagogy.

Through the training of District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs) – a training of trainers' model, Sabre Education delivered nine days of training for kindergarten (KG) teachers, headteachers and district Ghana Education Service officers. KG teachers then received classroom-based support and a resource pack with items such as story books, building blocks and a teaching and learning resource-making toolkit. Headteachers were trained to coach and support their KG teachers and Ghana Education Service officers were given the skills and tools to monitor and maintain quality teaching in the classroom. In the final year of the project Sabre provided further training to a cohort of KG teachers to enable them to become mentors to student teachers from the nearby colleges of education with their classrooms serving as 'Model Practice Classrooms'.

Evaluation Approach

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to elicit information from stakeholders to address the evaluation questions. The study employed the probability (or random) sampling techniques in the selection of schools, teachers, students, etc., for the study. Non-probability sampling techniques were, however, adopted for the qualitative survey. The data collection tools used for the evaluation included learner assessments, teacher lesson observations, key informant interviews (KIIs) and a survey. Overall, a total sample of 2,475 stakeholders were engaged in the evaluation.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation results found the Sabre project as largely effective in achieving its set objectives. Thus, significant proportion of KG learners in Sabre intervention schools performed better than their peers in non-intervention schools. Specifically, while 74.6 percent of KG learners in intervention schools have mastered or achieved literacy (i.e., oral and reading skills) as compared to only 40.5 percent of KG learners in non-intervention schools. The evaluation found also that a significantly higher proportion of KG learners (71 percent) in intervention schools performed better in psychosocial skills than their fellow learners in non-intervention schools (49.5 percent). Similarly, for numeracy skills, a significantly higher proportion of KG learners in intervention schools (74.5 percent) demonstrated mastery or achieved as compared to 27.4 percent of KG learners in non-intervention schools. The evaluation results found that a significant proportion of the KG learners in intervention schools demonstrated mastery or achieved in 2 out of 3 attributes for early writing skills compared to those in non-intervention schools.

The Sabre project was found to have played a vital role in contributing to the effective delivery of the new standard-based KG curriculum in intervention districts. The provision of training to KG teachers in intervention schools on play-based, child-centred methodology has deepened KG teachers' understanding and implementation of the new standard-based KG curriculum.

Thus, a computation of all lesson observations scores showed that a significantly higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools (70.2 percent) performed considerably better than teachers in non-intervention schools (39.0 percent) in the seven core criteria areas¹ assessed during the evaluation.

Specifically, the evaluation results found that a significant proportion of KG teachers in intervention schools (83 percent) outperformed their counterparts in non-intervention schools (68.9 percent) in obtaining outstanding or good scores for providing lesson plans and updated information relevant to the session being taught.

A higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools (70.7 percent) obtained an outstanding or good score for demonstrating competence in teaching methodology than those in non-intervention schools (38.5 percent). A significantly higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools (62.5 percent) demonstrated outstanding or good class engagement and attitude than teachers in non-intervention schools (34 percent). Similarly, the evaluation results found that a higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools (69 percent) obtained outstanding or good scores in learner attainment level than their peers in non-intervention schools (28.2 percent). Regarding classroom/behaviour management and learning environment, teachers in intervention schools outperformed those in non-intervention schools. For teacher attitude competencies, the results indicate that a significantly higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools (81 percent) obtained outstanding or good scores in motivating learners during lessons and listening attentively to learners in all situations than their counterparts in non-interventions schools (62.6 percent).

The Sabre project was found to be highly relevant to the needs of beneficiary schools, KG teachers, headteachers, and KG learners. Thus, the project's key activities directly addressed the main challenges facing the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sub-sector through the provision of in-service teacher training, building the capacity of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), Deputy Director Supervision (DDSup), Education Management Information System (EMIS) teams, tutors, and student teachers. Within the project, parents and community members in intervention schools played a key role in supporting the education of KG learners.

Sabre's project was found to have utilised cost effective and efficient measures during the implementation of the intervention. Thus, the evaluation found that project resources were judiciously utilised to deliver project outputs and competitive procurement processes were employed before contracting service providers and resources persons for the implementation of project activities. Also, the organisational strength of the Sabre project implementation team was developed and intensified as a result of partnering and collaborating with many educational stakeholders in Ghana.

The evaluation found that the Sabre project was coherent and aligned with the SDG 4.2 and its activities were consistent with safeguarding and gender, equality, and social Inclusion (GESI) considerations. Aside the project's objective of ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning, being coherent with Ghana's achievement of the SDG 4.2 and its sub-indicator 4.2.1, the project significantly contributed to improving the learning outcomes of KG learners in intervention districts in psychosocial skills, oral language skills, reading skills, writing skills and numeracy skills as compared to their counterparts in non-intervention schools. This was mainly as a result of Sabre supporting GES to train KG teachers to effectively teach the new KG curriculum using play-based methodology.

Regarding sustainability and replicability, the evaluation found that the net benefits and achievements of the Sabre project are likely to remain and continue beyond Sabre's exit from the districts. More than 95 percent

¹ The seven core criteria areas for teachers' lesson observation namely teaching planning, teaching methodology, class engagement and attitude, learner attainment, classroom/behaviour management, learning environment and teacher attitude.

of headteachers and KG teachers interviewed in intervention schools have shown high enthusiasm to continue to implement coaching and mentoring and to implement the play-based, child-centred methodology.

The sustainability and replicability of the gains made by the project was affirmed by GES district officials during qualitative interviews. During interviews with the GES officials, it was found that some KG teachers in intervention schools have adopted peer teaching enabling them to share their knowledge received on play-based learning to build the capacity of other KG teachers who were not part of the training programme. The evaluation found that the involvement of College of Education (CoE) tutors and principals, ECE coordinators and other district GES officials is helping to maintain the achievements of the project through continuous training of student teachers and supporting and monitoring the actions of KG teachers in basic schools. The evaluation observed that involving these key education stakeholders motivated and provided them with recognition to continue to play their role in contributing to ensure quality early grade teaching in the classroom.

Recommendations

1. In future projects, Sabre should conduct a baseline evaluation to measure the indicators that are relevant for tracking the performance of the project prior to the start of the intervention. In this case, after the project closes, the end of project evaluation should be done with the same set of tools (could be revised to reflect changes in project strategy) to allow for comparison of data.
2. In future projects of similar nature, Sabre should consider involving the entire community where the basic schools are located in order to involve parents of KG learners in both intervention and non-intervention districts. With the help of district GES officials, district/municipal assembly and the traditional authority, durbars could be organised where community members are sensitised on the importance and relevance of ECE in the educational development of children. This approach may contribute to influencing parents in non-intervention schools to take ECE more seriously. Community members should be encouraged to support their children with learning and learning materials at home, helping to build learners with positive attitudes.
3. The project's strategy of collaborating with key education stakeholders such as GES (at the national, regional and district level) and CoEs is important and significant and should be replicated in future interventions of similar nature for the sustainability of the project net benefits.
4. In future, Sabre should consider setting up Model Practice Classrooms (MPC) in close vicinity to CoEs as that will help student teachers to easily put into practice the theories and knowledge gained from college.
5. Sabre should consider training education stakeholders such as CoE principals and district GES directors and officials on developing proposals to secure donor funding to support quality teaching and learning in the classroom. As stated earlier, the project's plan for sustainability by involving CoEs tutors and principals, the establishment of MPCs, training DTSTs, ECE Coordinators, KG teachers, headteachers and other GES district officers was commendable and should be continued in similar interventions in future. That notwithstanding, an additional avenue for sustainability will be created when the capacity of key education stakeholders such as CoE principals and district GES directors and head of departments is built to consciously look out for donor opportunities and develop proposals to secure funding to support the quality of teaching and learning in the districts. Also, the evaluation found that activities on sustainability were focused on during the final year of the project. However, it might be more helpful if Sabre considers integrating activities on project sustainability



from the onset of the project instead. That way, challenges and risks facing project sustainability may be identified early and addressed before project closure.

1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS: A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT'S IMMEDIATE POLICY AND OPERATING CONTEXT

1.1 BRIEF INTRODUCTION

According to the World Bank², only sixty percent (60%) of children globally between 3-6 years have access to primary education and 250 million children under the age of five (5) are at risk of not reaching their full potential largely due to poverty. In efforts to fight this challenge, the United Nations developed Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Ghana, like many other countries, recognizes the importance of early childhood education and invests in teacher training programs to enhance the quality of education at that stage. The Ghanaian government, along with various non-governmental organizations and international agencies, has initiated several teacher training programs to support early childhood education in the country.

1.2 PROJECT'S IMMEDIATE POLICY AND OPERATING CONTEXT

1.2.1 Brief background on ECCD Policy

The Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) introduced an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) policy in 2004 to guide the provision of care and education services and programs to children from birth to 8 years. The ECCD policy aims to improve children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development and expand early childhood development services such as immunization, weighing and nutrition to all children. The ECCD policy is multisectoral and is particularly useful to the education sector as well as health, social welfare, and civil society sectors. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has the sole responsibility to formulate early children education (ECE) focused programmes and the creation of an enabling environment for parents, caregivers, children and ECE services and sectors to operate effectively in providing the needed care and education. In 2016, the Early Learning Standards and Indicators for 4 - 5-year-old children was developed under the ECCD policy and used at the kindergarten (KG) level to provide guidance and support for achieving the developmental milestones of children. Later in 2022, the ECCD policy was revised to be in line with the Nurturing Care Framework³ to ensure effective implementation of programmes in all essential aspects.

1.2.2 The ECE Policy

As part of Ghana's commitment towards the SDG 4.2, it recognised the benefits of Early Childhood Education (ECE). This contributed to the development of the ECE policy framework for Children aged 4 to 5 years for the provision of quality KG service delivery. In 2020, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) secured the approval and endorsement process of the ECE policy framework. The main aim of the ECE policy is to strengthen the ECE sub-sector to advance the physical, cognitive, psycho-social and emotional developmental growth of all 4-and 5-year-olds including the disadvantaged, vulnerable and those with disabilities and special needs children (GES, ECE Unit)⁴. Specifically, the ECE policy intends to:

- a) Ensure the availability of KG spaces for all KG learners in Ghana
- b) Ensure the effective implementation of the KG for improved play-based learning

² World Bank (2023) Early Childhood Development. Investing in the early years is one of the smartest things a country can do. Early childhood experiences have a profound impact on brain development – affecting learning, health, behavior and ultimately, lifetime opportunities

³ The Nurturing Care Framework provides evidence about how early childhood development (from pregnancy period to age 3) unfolds and how it can be improved by policies and interventions.

⁴ Retrieved from <https://ges.gov.gh/early-childhood/>

- c) Equip in-service and pre-service teachers and non-professional workers in the ECE space
- d) Engage families and communities to provide learning opportunities at home to support children's school readiness
- e) Ensure monitoring and supervision at all levels of ECE service delivery
- f) Encourage the development of socio-emotional skills and healthy physical development of learners
- g) Enhance social change and social justice through the reduction of inequality amongst the vulnerable and marginalized children.

In 2018, the MoE developed Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030 as an embodiment of Ghana's commitment to education at sectoral, national, continental, and global level. The Government of Ghana, through the MoE is committed to fulfilling improved access to quality ECE for every child by 2030 and the application of the play-based approach to improve children's learning and development. Ghana is also focused on initiating developmental projects including education, healthcare, recreational facilities, and learning centres to meet the needs of children. According to the GES, ECE prepares children in readiness for primary school, and to develop holistically, their physical, social, emotional, intellectual needs in order to build a broad and solid foundation for their wellbeing. Achieving this relies on a strong ECE sub-system, built through quality government structures and in partnership with strategic stakeholders, including parents and families, aimed at ensuring a collective ECE implementation and addressing children's needs, especially the marginalized and most vulnerable including those with special educational needs.

The MoE and the Ghana Education Service (GES) have established enablers through the development of the ECE Policy Framework to build on the Education Act (2008), which supports the constitutional commitment to Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE), providing for two years of kindergarten education amongst children aged four and five years. Six (6) action areas were rolled out by the education ministry to form the spine in the development of the ECE policy framework. They are namely:

1. Effective Planning and management
2. Curriculum development and implementation
3. Pre-service (PRESET) and In-service Teacher Training (INSET)
4. Family and community engagement
5. Child-Friendly Safe Space (Environment)
6. Monitoring, regulation, and quality assurance

Through the ECE policy, the MoE aims to facilitate an enabling environment conducive in an integrated approach to the strengthening of collaboration with all relevant stakeholders and build a strong foundation for all KG learners and ensure they have the necessary readiness skills to access primary education and beyond.

In spite of the progress that Ghana has made in improving children's access to school, most children do not have the required literacy and numeracy skills. Since the Government of Ghana introduced two years of compulsory kindergarten education in 2008, enrolment levels have hugely increased, yet the quality of the education children received and the facilities available continued to suffer. Available data from desk research on Early Grade Literacy and Mathematics Assessment showed that by the second year of primary school, most learners in Ghana were not yet able to read with fluency and accuracy and that the rote-based approach to maths instruction did not adequately prepare pupils for more complex maths in the higher grades. After four years of compulsory education (two years of kindergarten and two years of primary), only 2 percent of learners are attaining the desired standards for literacy.

The Education Sector Analysis (ESA 2018), which was developed in line with the ESP (2018-2030) revealed that the ECE sub-sector is challenged with issues ranging from planning and management, teachers,

curriculum, parents, and community engagement as well as monitoring, regulation, and quality assurance. The aforementioned challenges can be attributed to:

- Weak accountability in education management at district, school, and community levels
- Inefficient planning and management of issues related to teacher training, deployment, retention, and attrition
- Overage and underage enrolment, creating inefficiency in the system
- Inadequate budgetary allocation for service delivery and infrastructure provision
- Limited information on children with disabilities, resulting in weak systems for inclusion
- Quality of school infrastructure and provision of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) have not kept pace with enrolment, leading to regional and district disparities
- Weak inter/intra-sectoral coordination, resulting in inefficient service delivery
- Mismatch between parental expectation of how children learn and the play-based pedagogy of the curriculum

Though much has been done towards addressing these challenges through the introduction of the new KG curriculum (2019), which focuses on play-based learning, there is much to be done to help bridge gaps such as ensuring inclusiveness of children with special education needs, ensuring KG spaces are available for all KG children in Ghana, ensuring effective implementation of KG curriculum for improved play-based learning, equipping in-service and pre-service teachers and non-professional workers in the ECE space as well as educational sensitization on the relevant role played by ECE in a child's development, encouraging families and communities to provide learning opportunities at home to support children's school readiness.

It is within this context that Sabre Education, for the past 12 years has strived to develop innovative and carefully considered interventions in response to the numerous challenges facing formal education at the kindergarten level through the delivery of playful schools and the provision of transformational teacher training programmes. In 2013, Sabre Education partnered with the GES to provide in-service training and pre-service training to teachers in partner schools of OLA College of Education in the Central Region. This also resulted in the construction of the first centre of excellence to support the college's student teacher training. In 2016, Sabre extended the training to Holy Child College of Education and its partner schools in the Western region and constructed a second centre of excellence demonstration KG school for the college. Having tested the trainings in the partner schools of the two colleges, in 2017, Sabre, in partnership with GES, piloted a district-wide training of all KG teachers, headteachers and GES district officers, through a training of trainers' model in Abura Asebu Kwamankese (AAK) District. The organization in 2018 supported the development of a new bachelor of education degree for early grades and assisted in the development of Ghana's play-based national kindergarten curriculum.

In 2019, Sabre was supported by its funding partners and in partnership with GES, replicated the district-wide in-service teacher training programme, also known as Transformational Teacher Training, it had piloted in AAK District to six (6) districts in the Eastern Region. The districts are: Akwapim North, Akwapim South, Okere, New Juaben North, New Juaben South, and Nsawam Adoagyiri in the Eastern region of Ghana.

2. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Transformational Teacher Training in the Eastern Region, a three-year project started in 2019 has been Sabre's largest project to date, reaching six districts (Akwapim North, Akwapim South, Okere, New Juaben North, New Juaben South and Nsawam Adoagyiri) in the Eastern Region of Ghana with Sabre's In-Service Teacher Training (INSET) and Pre-Service Teacher Training (PRESET) package. The INSET began with the Training of Trainers drawn from the Ghana Education Service in each district, who then went on to deliver nine days of training over the course of a year to Kindergarten (KG) teachers, headteachers and district Ghana Education Service Officers. Teachers also received classroom-based support and a resource pack with items such as story books, building blocks, baby dolls and a teaching and learning resource-making toolkit, to enable the teachers to set up play-based centres in their classrooms. Headteachers were trained to coach and support their KG teachers and Ghana Education Service officers in each district were given the skills and tools to monitor and maintain quality teaching in the classroom.

The first year of the project focussed on training practising teachers and headteachers from a small cohort of schools (40). These schools served as a dynamic model for other teachers in the districts to better understand the active play-based methodology they would be learning. Year two saw the project go districtwide, reaching every government kindergarten across the six districts. In the final year, Sabre worked with two Eastern Region Colleges of Education (Presbyterian Women's and Seventh Day Adventist) to establish a network of Model Practice Classrooms to serve student teachers with quality practical placements. Teachers in these model KG classrooms were given another year of training to become competent in coaching and mentoring student teachers who came to their classrooms for study teaching placements. College tutors were also supported to teach the play-based approach to their student teachers. Over the duration of the project, Sabre supported the School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) led by the Deputy Director in Charge of Supervision (DDSup) and the Education Management Information System (EMIS) teams to monitor the performance of teachers and trainers respectively. Specifically, the SISOs carried out termly monitoring of teachers to assess their competence in using play-based learning in the classrooms whilst the EMIS team assessed the quality of training delivery by trainers.

Project stakeholders and beneficiaries included i) 83 District Education Office (GES) staff in six districts consisting of the District Director, Dep. Dir. Supervision, SISOs, EMIS, KG Coordinator (also referred to as ECE Coordinator) and District Training Officers; ii) Staff and learners in Public Schools consisting of 1,159 KG Teachers, 269 Headteachers, 18,941 KG 1 & 2 Learners; iii) Staff and student-teachers of two Colleges of Education – College Principal, ECE College Tutors, Student-teachers at SDA College of Education at Asokore and Presbyterian Women's' College of Education (PWCE) at Aburi; iv) National Teaching Council (NTC) and v) Community: District Assemblies, parents.

The three-year project began in September 2019 and was extended to April 2023 due to school closures and a change in the academic calendar caused by COVID-19 in 2020.

2.1 OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to assess what changes occurred during the life of the project and whether the objectives of the project were met in relation to the implementing organisation, project beneficiaries, boundary partners and policy makers whilst providing information on the project's key performance indicators, and documenting lessons to guide future design and implementation of projects. Specifically, the evaluation is aimed to:

1. Assess Sabre's contribution to the effective delivery of the new standard-based KG curriculum by teachers using the child-centred, play-based methodology in the classroom in 6 districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana
2. Assess Sabre's contribution to improving learning outcomes among the KG learners in the 6 districts
3. Populate end-line results for its logframe; and
4. Serve as a learning document to inform future project/intervention design.

2.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This end of project evaluation covers the following key evaluation questions:

Relevance and Fidelity

- To what extent was the project approach and its main activities relevant to addressing the ECE related challenges identified by the Ministry of Education (MoE EMIS) in the 2017/18 academic year.
- To what extent did the project fit into Sabre's strategic objectives.
- Are there any unexpected outcomes for beneficiaries (positive or negative)? If so, what are the factors for these?
- To what extent was the project implemented according to plan?

Effectiveness

In comparison to a sample of non-project schools,

- To what extent has each outcome been achieved?
- How have learning outcomes (in writing, oral reading, literacy, numeracy, and psychosocial skills) of KG1&2 Pupils changed as a result of being taught by teachers trained on the project. What are the key factors contributing to these changes?
- What are the levels of KG1 & 2 pupils in relation to the 21st century skills including confidence, communication, cooperation, curiosity, and concentration.
- To what extent has the project contributed to changes in teachers' attitudes towards
 - o their own professional development (kindergarten teaching?)
 - o children's learning?
- To what extent are teachers (student-teachers and in-service teachers) able to:
 - o Plan their lessons
 - o create a child-friendly environment to support children's learning
 - o manage children's or classroom behaviour in a positive way (with appropriate strategies)
 - o use appropriate teaching methodologies to deliver the child centred approach to teaching and learning
 - o make teaching and learning resources (TLRs) and other resources.
 - o Assess children's learning using the pupils' achievement checklist
- To what extent has the project contributed to changes in the headteacher's function as school leader and coach?
- Are the headteachers playing their coaching role? How effectively do they do that? SISOs role in supporting and coaching teachers?
- To what extent has the headteacher's leadership and coaching function influenced activities in the KG classrooms?
- To what extent do the KG teachers and headteacher engage the parents and guardians of KG learners the way it was discussed during the training?
- To what extent do the KG teachers, Primary 1 teachers and the headteachers work together to transition the KG learners to Primary 1?

- In what ways have headteachers, ECE Coordinators, School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), the District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs), and CoE lecturers contributed to deepening and sustaining play-based learning in schools and colleges?
- To what extent has the project motivated and increased the self-esteem of KG teachers? How has the project contributed to reducing the stigma associated with being a KG Teacher? To what extent has the project influenced the attitudes and practices of duty bearers (the Ministry of Education, GES, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), National Teaching Council (NTC) and the two colleges of education) towards KG education. What have been the most effective strategies for this?
- To what extent did the strategies work?

Efficiency

- To what extent were the project's resources (human and material, money) used judiciously to deliver the project results?
- What net benefit has the project created?
- How has Sabre ensured value for money in the Project?
- How has Sabre's organisational development been impacted by the project?

Coherence

- In which ways did the project's design align with SDG 4.2, and how were the activities consistent and aligned with safeguarding and Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations?

Sustainability and replicability

- What appears to be missing from the intervention logic but critical for sustainability and replicability?
- To what extent, and what evidence would support the sustainability of the project's benefits or some components of the project beyond the end of this project? To what extent is this project replicable or scalable?

2.3 STRUCTURE OF EVALUATION REPORT

Besides chapter 2 which focuses on the introduction, the rest of the report is presented as follows: chapter 3 outlines the evaluation approach; while chapter 4 presents the evaluation findings using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) /Development Assistance Committee (DAC⁵) criteria of relevance and fidelity, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability and replicability. The evaluation report closes with a fifth chapter which focuses on the conclusions and recommendations.

⁵ Development Assistance Committee from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

3. EVALUATION APPROACH

3.1 SURVEY DESIGN AND SAMPLING

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to elicit information from stakeholders to answer the evaluation questions. The study employed the probability sampling techniques in the selection of schools, teachers, students, etc., for the study. Non-probability sampling techniques were, however, adopted for the qualitative survey. In particular, a cluster sampling technique was employed in the selection of the learners. Under this method, 50 intervention schools were randomly selected across the 6 project districts using probability proportionate to size (PPS). Thus, the schools were sampled based on the population of Public Basic Schools (with KGs) in the participating districts. To establish the counterfactual situation, a propensity score matching approach was used to randomly sample 50 non-intervention schools from districts that did not benefit from the Sabre interventions.

3.1.1 Sampling process for KG 1&2 learners

The multi-stage cluster random sampling approach was used to determine the appropriate sample size of KG learners for the assessment. A cluster sample was preferred because schools within each particular district are largely homogeneous. In obtaining this sample, the study adopted a 95% confidence interval, a 5% margin of error, and a design effect of 2. Based on the sample size, 8 KG pupils were sampled from each grade (KG1 and KG2) for each of the 50 sampled intervention and non-intervention schools. The total number of pupils, therefore, stood at 800 from intervention schools and 800 from non-intervention schools yielding a total of 1,600 KG learners. At the school level, students in KG1 & 2 were sampled for the evaluation. Based on the sampling design, two observers were assigned to each school for the purpose of evaluation. Each observer then randomly selected 4 pupils without the interference of the teachers or headteachers in the class. This was done to ensure that teachers do not deliberately select good students to influence the results of the analysis. As a requirement, the pupils randomly selected were unaware they were being observed for the assessment. This was to prevent the pupils from becoming nervous during the assessment. For both observers, a 5th pupil from the class was selected and observed to satisfy the interrater requirements for validation purposes.

3.1.2 Sampling process for KG Teachers and headteachers

In each of the schools sampled, two ECE teachers were purposely selected for classroom observation and in-depth interview to assess the variable of interest as stipulated in the RFP. In total, 203 teachers were observed and interviewed across the intervention and non-intervention schools. In each of the sampled schools, the head teacher was interviewed on the research questions.

3.1.3 Sampling of student-teachers

Student teachers from the two CoEs were randomly sampled and interviewed. Thus, 15 interviews were conducted with Level 400 student teachers to assess the extent to which they create a child-friendly environment to support children's learning; manage children's or classroom behaviour (with appropriate strategies); use appropriate teaching methodologies to deliver the child centred approach to teaching and learning. In addition, the assessor reviewed the lesson plans of student teachers.

3.1.4 Sampling Process for Parents

In each school community, at least 4 parents were interviewed to assess how they were engaged by teachers and head teachers concerning the children's learning. This yielded a total of 454 interviews with parents in the school community.

3.1.5 District education office staff and District Education Oversight Committee (DEOCs) members

These stakeholders include the district education directors, their deputies, SISOs, and heads of departments. A total of 7 key informant interviews were conducted in each of the 6 intervention districts. At least 2 members from the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) were interviewed as part of the evaluation. A total of 42 interviews were conducted with district education office staff and DEOC members.

3.1.6 CoE tutors and Principals

Five tutors from each of the two CoE were reached with key informant interviews in addition to their respective CoE Principals. A total of 12 interviews were conducted with college tutors and principals.

3.1.7 National level Education duty bearers

The evaluation successfully engaged the National Director for Early Childhood Education to examine the extent to which the ECE project has influenced their attitudes and practices towards KG education.

Table 3.1 Summary of sample allocation for data collection

Target stakeholder	Data collection tool	Achieved sample size
KG Learners	Observation	1,616
Student teachers	Interview	15
KG Teachers	KIIs/Observation	203
Head teachers	KIIs	100
Parents	Survey	454
District Education officers	KIIs	42
National level duty bearers	KIIs	1
CoE Principals and tutors	KIIs	12
Sabre Staff	KIIs	4
TOTAL		2,475

3.2 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

JMK employed a thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data according to themes. Thus, qualitative data collected from KIIs were categorized to summarize the data. Data analysis was carried out by assigning initial codes to the qualitative responses to reveal themes on the Project's key indicators. Repeated responses of the same idea expressed from different respondents were regrouped to represent a particular stakeholder's idea or opinion. The analysis has been presented with reference to the OECD/DAC⁶ evaluation criteria as stated in the terms of reference.

The quantitative analysis was carried out using version 17 of the STATA software. Descriptive statistics on the extent to which KG teachers demonstrate outstanding competencies in classroom management,

⁶ More information on the OECD/DAC criteria can be accessed below:
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>



methodology, lesson planning, inclusion and school management were produced for both intervention and non-intervention schools. Learners' demonstration of key skills such as psycho-social skills, oral language skills, reading, writing and numeracy skills were also quantitatively analysed. As part of the evaluation, parents' knowledge of the Sabre Project, its perceived impact on their wards' learning outcomes, and the sustainability of the gains of the Project were also analysed using STATA. The results from the quantitative analysis were summarized in tables, charts, and graphs, and disaggregated into intervention and non-intervention schools for comparability. To establish the effects of Sabre's Project, the Pearson Chi2 test of independence was used to test for the level of significance in the differences in proportions between intervention and non-intervention groups; to determine whether there was an association between intervention status and the research questions.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS



4.1 RELEVANCE AND FIDELITY

The relevance of Sabre's Transformational Teacher Training project was assessed in terms of how the project approach and its main activities addressed ECE related challenges identified by the Ministry of Education (MoE EMIS) in the 2017/18 academic year and how the project met Sabre's strategic objectives.

In spite of the government of Ghana's strong policy commitments to the kindergarten sector, it continues to face challenges of access and quality. According to the MoE EMIS report (2017/2018), the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sub-sector is confronted with significant challenges as follows: About 38% of KG teachers have never received any formal training in ECE. Learning is typically delivered through a rote-based "chalk & talk" methodology, which is far less effective according to extensive global research as compared to active and play-based methodology advocated by the GES. Despite being prohibited, corporal punishment is highly prevalent in kindergarten classrooms, and has a damaging effect on children's learning. Learning materials are in short supply, with one workbook for every three children enrolled. Last but not the least, kindergarten classrooms are often over-crowded with an average of 55 pupils per class and suffer from issues of over- and under-age pupils (MOE EMIS report 2017/2018).

The evaluation assessed project relevance assessing the extent to which the intervention fit into Sabre's strategic objectives. The primary goal of Sabre is aimed at supporting Ghana to achieve SDG 4.2: universal access to quality pre-primary education. Sabre's strategic objectives as stipulated in its 2020-2023 strategy focuses on three main pillars.

They are namely:

- **Pillar 1** - Expand Reach of KG curriculum using active and play-based methodology (Sabre's Model) through Direct Implementation & Partnership
- **Pillar 2** - Partner with Government to Scale Impact
- **Pillar 3** - Consolidate our Position as a Leader on Quality Pre-Primary Education

The evaluation findings show that the TTT project fits directly into all three pillars of Sabre's strategic objectives. Thus, for pillar one, the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative survey revealed that the KG teachers, headteachers, college tutors and student teachers have all benefited from training on the application of child-centred, active play-based methodology. Sabre's partnership with GES through training of trainers of DTST members to build the capacity of teachers was directly in fulfilment of pillar one.

A review of Sabre's strategic plan 2020-2023 revealed that one of the measurements of success for pillar 2 was the development of training packages with the NTC and implement and monitor training for KG teachers. In fulfilment of the second pillar, the evaluation found that Sabre has developed INSET and PRESET training packages which can be adopted for the training of KG teachers nationally. More importantly, the evaluation found that Sabre is one of the NGOs that has supported GES to develop a National KG INSET package that will be used to train KG teachers nationally.

An interview with the national ECE director confirmed that the GES is in partnership with Sabre and other NGOs to scale up training activities on the play-based methodology for KG teachers countrywide. She stated that,

"I talked to Sabre Education and other NGOs, to support us to develop a standard document that can be used to train KG teachers. So, based on that, we developed the National KG INSET Package. So, they supported the various units to develop this. So, the content of the package is what would be used to train the KG teachers. ...When we developed the draft document, we invited Sabre Education and other ECE related NGOs and stakeholders to review and give us feedback. Sabre was motivated to continue its partnership and support us in doing this. Led by the Deputy Minister for Education, we launched the revised training package on July 7th (2023) at Coconut Grove. Now, we are in consultation with an external consultant to assess the scale-up situation in order to determine the cost and all that will be needed. So, we are planning to scale this across the country... it's a good thing".

In terms of pillar 3, the evaluation finds the Sabre TTT project and its accompanying benefits for KG teachers as a key indicator that Sabre Education is undeniably one of the leaders in supporting quality pre-primary education in Ghana. As quoted above, Sabre Education was considered by government as one of the key stakeholders in ECE and was invited by the GES to support the development of the National KG INSET Package which will be used for the training of KG teachers across the entire country.

The evaluation found that Sabre's TTT project has had a high level of relevance and fidelity as its objectives and activities are consistent with the expressed needs of the MoE. According to the majority of headteachers and teachers interviewed in project schools, the Sabre project has built the capacity of KG teachers to be more effective in their teaching using the play-based, child-centred approach. Some headteachers in intervention schools also revealed that the play-based learning method allows more effective learning since teaching is not so abstract and that makes KG learners very happy. Some teachers in project schools also added that the play-based, child-centred learning method makes learning more effective in the classroom as compared to the traditional chalk and talk teaching and learning method. They explained that the traditional method was mostly teacher-centred and did not engage learners in the lessons.

The evaluation also found the Sabre project to be relevant because according to most headteachers and teachers in intervention schools, the issue of inadequate training for KG teachers was directly addressed as the project equipped KG teachers with the requisite skills and knowledge for effective foundational teaching. Headteachers and teachers in this intervention confirmed that the project, among other things, provided them with nine days of intensive training on the application of play-based, child-centred teaching and learning methods and the development and proper application of TLRs. The evaluation found that the training on the play-based, child-centred teaching and learning method has been very helpful especially because most KG teachers had not received any formal training since they were posted from the CoEs. Some teachers revealed that through the play-based learning approach, learners are able to identify things and solve problems on their own with little assistance. Some also explained that the training offered KG teachers a better understanding of how to implement activity and play-based pedagogy in the classroom. A case in point was when a KG teacher in Nsawam district revealed that the Sabre project has played a significant role in her career because she was originally posted to the junior high class but due to lack of vacancy, she was sent to a KG class to teach. She narrated that, *"the Sabre training has helped me a lot because when I came to the school, I was a nursing mother and there was no vacancy at the JHS [where I was posted]. So, I was sent to KG and the training helped me a lot. Initially, I did not have the idea of how to teach the KG learners but when we went for the training about three times, I understood how I should handle them".*

Another KG teacher from Effiduase Presby Basic School in New Juaben North District revealed that the training received from the Sabre project has built her capacity in using the play-based approach and TLRs to facilitate learners' understanding. She also suggested that her teaching has improved through sharing innovative ideas with other KG teachers. During a qualitative interview, she narrated that, *"I have attended more than three (3) workshops which have helped me to build upon my teaching skills in the play-based*

learning, which is a vastly different approach from the way I used to deliver my lesson. [Now,] the KG learners are exposed to various learning materials that fortify their understanding in every lesson delivered using the play-based learning. With the Sabre's active play-based, I talk less and portray more actions for the KG learners to learn by themselves. I have also gotten the chance to share ideas with other KG teachers".

Input from the National Director for Early Childhood Education affirmed that the Sabre project is of high relevance to the challenges related to ECE and KG teachers' ability to teach the new standards-based curriculum. According to the ECE director, KG teachers were finding it challenging to implement the new KG curriculum because they did not know how to integrate play-based activities into their teaching delivery at the KG level but the implementation of the Sabre transformational teacher training in the Eastern region has resulted in great improvement. During a qualitative interview, she explained that *"...Sabre's Transformational Teacher Training project really came on time because it came when we (GES) had to train the KG teachers on the standards-based curriculum because the play-based pedagogy was a bit difficult for them. So, we had the opportunity to take the teachers through the play-based pedagogy and child-centred and other creative pedagogies for the teachers to grasp the concept, own it and use it for effective teaching and learning in the classroom".*

The national ECE director was also full of praise for the Sabre project by explaining that the project was very relevant and successfully implemented because the contents of the training were similar and in line with the contents of the new KG curriculum. *"The project was designed according to what the new curriculum requires teachers to do in the classroom. They trained the teachers on how children learn and how to create the right environment in the classroom for effective learning to take place. The teachers were also taken through class behavioural management and then of course the play-based learning that the curriculum also talked about was also taken into consideration... So, it reinforced the skills and then the knowledge that the teachers have acquired".*

In addition, the national ECE director revealed that the Sabre project has helped KG teachers to better understand the subject matter of the new KG curriculum and how to use the play-based pedagogy to facilitate lesson delivery. She stated that teachers have become more proactive and well equipped to develop their own TLRs, especially as the government is yet to supply public schools with TLRs. Below is a quote from the national ECE director:

"...I think the Sabre project has helped the teachers to know the subject matter of the curriculum and it has empowered them to own the class. So, when you get to the class, you can see that they know what they are doing, and they teach with much ease and joy. They don't wait and say they are waiting for the government to send them teaching and learning resources. Thanks to Sabre, they understand that with a play-based pedagogy, they have to develop TLRs to make their classrooms very lively, attractive, and interesting, so that learning will be retained".

Input from CoE student teachers also affirmed the relevance and fidelity of the Sabre project. According to all student teachers interviewed, the play-based methodology is far better than the old rote system of teaching. Hence, the training from Sabre has helped them to improve in their teaching practice. Some student teachers also revealed that the use of the Model Practice Classroom (MPC) has enabled them to gain more confidence and know what to do when teaching in the classroom.

- *"When we came, they [Sabre] gave us training on the play-based methodology and through that we have learned a lot of things. You know some of us haven't taught before, so we have no experience. But through the training and our practice in the MPCs, we got to know how to teach children and get them*

to understand and appreciate what you're teaching... and it is through the play-based teaching and learning. – KII with CoE student teacher, Akuapem South district

- *"...When I reflect on myself for instance, initially it was difficult for me to teach children to understand what I am teaching. You know, the children are really small, and their level of understanding is not very developed but through the training no matter how small a child is, I am in a better position, and I know that I can teach the child to understand". – KII with Student teacher, New Juaben North district*
- *"I think the play-based, child-centred teaching approach is very nice. When I went for my STS at other places, it was different from the one at Asokore Methodist. It was very good and with the way teachers taught the learners was interesting; I liked it. The new approach allows the use of TLM's and play method as compared to the old way of teaching. The new approach makes use of phonic starters like music to draw the attention of learners and also gives them some knowledge about what is going to be taught. I consider the new approach as better. – KII with student teacher New Juaben North district*

The relevance and fidelity of the project was also emphasized by Sabre project staff. According to Sabre staff, the play-based learning approach has built KG teachers' capabilities and placed them in a position where they are able to develop their own learning materials for demonstrative activities in the classroom. Some staff also revealed that the various training programmes offered through the project have helped many KG teachers to gain a better understanding of the new standards-based curriculum introduced in 2019 by the MoE through GES. Below are some more quotes from project stakeholders:

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- *"Formerly, teachers who were posted to KG classes delivered only from the skills and knowledge they acquired from the training college without receiving any additional training. But I would say because of the Sabre project, KG teachers receive frequent training or go to several workshops to refresh and add more to their teaching skills. Now I can say that with the frequent training and my coaching, the KG teachers in my school have advanced their learning and delivery at the KG." – KII, Headteacher, Akwadum RC Primary School, New Juaben North district.*
 - *"To a large extent, the training received from Sabre has equipped me with more knowledge on how to manage learners' behaviour in the classroom, and how to create various centres such as a shopping centre, and a game centre which has helped learners to enjoy lesson delivery." – KII, KG teacher, Gyankama Methodist Basic School, Akwapim South district.*
 - *"The project has trained us more seriously because in those days, there wasn't frequent training for KG teachers but this time round there is regular training for us, and the impact on the learner is manifested seriously." KII, KG teacher, Asemaneye M/A Basic School, Akwapim North district.*
 - *[As KG teachers], ...previously, we hardly received any extra training but with the intervention of the Sabre project, the SISO officer and the headteacher gave us regular training on the play-based teaching and learning approach to the KG teachers. The active play-based is less stressful and is a very good method of delivering better teaching and learning as compared to the chalk and talk method of teaching". KII, KG teacher, Asokore RC Schol, New Juaben North district.*
 - *"Sabre's programme has been great, and it came just at a time we needed it. Just as the new curriculum was introduced, Sabre came in to help us understand what the programme entailed. So, Sabre's intervention became appropriate for the municipality. The programme has contributed to the effective delivery of the curriculum because when the new curriculum was introduced the GES officers that*
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attended the training didn't delve into the KG specifics. For instance, how to use the daily plan was not known, we understood circle time, but not group activity one and group activity two. What do you do at those times? We were not conversant with it but through Sabre, we were able to know what to do at specific times. Thus, Sabre's intervention helped us to better understand the new curriculum and also introduced us to the play-based methodology. Although we knew about it, we were not implementing it. But Sabre coming in helped us go back for the play-based methodology to make our teaching child centred". – KII with ECE coordinator, Nsawam Adoagyir district.

- *"The program has really helped because before we started the standards-based curriculum in 2019, we had no idea how to go about it but we were fortunate to have Sabre coming in to support us. They collaborated with NAGRAT to design the KG curriculum. So, it was like a top up for some of us. So, they have really helped us in terms of lesson notes preparation, how to go about the KG activities, both outdoor and indoor activities. They have also supported us with a lot of TLRs. And even during COVID era, they provided us with tissues, hand sanitizers, liquid soaps, a whole lot. They added durable mini poly tanks for all the KG schools. So, in a nutshell I will say that Sabre has been very helpful to the KG class". – KII with ECE coordinator, Akuapem South*
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The evaluation also found the project to be of high relevance as its design and approach sought to directly address the issue of inadequate TLRs confronting KG teachers by supplying all schools in intervention districts with materials for the preparation of TLRs to support effective teaching and learning. According to a majority of KG teachers and headteachers in intervention schools, the issue of inadequate TLRs has been vastly improved because Sabre provided them with a lot of materials including flashcards, storybooks, crayons, scissors, paper glue, and construction boxes to help them prepare their own TLRs. According to the teachers, the provision of TLRs by Sabre has helped to solve the problem of inadequate TLRs. One headteacher stated that, *"...the Sabre project has helped to improve the use of TLMs very well. Previously, we found it difficult getting TLRs for teaching the KG learners. But, now with the help of Sabre, all the strands have adequate TLRs to deliver".*

A headteacher from Akuapem North district stated that *" Previously, we found it difficult in getting TLMs and TLRs for teaching the KG. But now, with the help of Sabre, all the strands have adequate TLMs to deliver. The project has helped us to improve the use of TLMs very well by training the teachers on how to use low-cost and no-cost materials to make their own TLRs.*

Interviews with GES officials affirmed that the Sabre project has been highly relevant in addressing the issue of TLRs schools in the project districts. They confirmed what was revealed by the headteachers that through the project, KG teachers have the ability to prepare their own TLRs for effective teaching and learning. According to a GES official in Okere, *"...the [Sabre] project made it clear that teachers can use low-cost or no-cost materials to prepare TLRs. It's not just that,... they provided some storybooks and construction blocks and other materials for the template of making TLR's and other things that were given to the schools. Even during the COVID 19 period, some PPEs were supplied to the schools as well, which all contributed to addressing some issues in the education of the learners."*

Another GES official from Akuapem South district stated that, *"I think one thing that has contributed immensely to the success of this project is getting teachers to know how to prepare low-cost or no-cost teaching learning resources and therefore making all their classrooms print rich environments. That has helped KG teachers and the learners immensely". – KII GES official district*

On the issue of high prevalence of corporal punishment, the evaluation found that the Sabre project has contributed immensely by training headteachers and KG teachers to avoid using canes and harsh punishment in the classroom. Interviews with headteachers and teachers revealed that using canes in the classroom brings fear to learners and discourages effective learning. Input from qualitative interviews revealed that teachers utilise alternative methods for correcting behaviour such as isolation where learners will have to sit at the back of the class until they are asked to join their peers.

Below are some more qualitative verbatims from interviews:

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- *“To a large extent, because Sabre has provided the school with enough TLRs such as story books, human parts (descriptive cards), and flashcards, all these TLRs have helped me to easily assist learners in the classroom.” – KII, KG teacher, Gyankama Methodist Basic School, Akwapim South district.*
 - *“...the Sabre program has really helped a lot because when we went for the training, we were given some of the materials to prepare. They gave us crayons, scissors, glues, and all those things so that we will be able to make our own materials”. – KII, KG teacher, Apirede Presby Basic School, Okere district*
 - *“The [Sabre] project has really helped. It has improved our use of learning materials because previously, it was hard for us to get TLMs (teaching and learning materials) to teach the kids, but they [Sabre] have provided us with TLMs and then they have taught us to identify some TLMs too in our environment which can also help us to teach. So, we have more than adequate TLMs now”. – KII, KG teacher, Anglican Primary School, Nsawam Adoagyiri district.*
 - *“During the training programme, teachers were cautioned not to use canes on their learners but were taught different ways to correct learners’ behaviour. For example, KG teachers were taught to use methods like the time-out. So, learners who misbehave are asked by the teacher to go out for some time, then later the teacher will ask the learners to come in to join their colleagues to take part in the lesson”. – KII, Headteacher, Aburi Anglican M/A Basic School Akwapim South*
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The evaluation found the Sabre project highly relevant when most teachers and headteachers in non-intervention schools confirmed that they are severely challenged in their efforts to teach effectively due to lack of TLRs, inadequate training and lack of skills and experience in ECE. For instance, a KG teacher from Traio Presby M/A Basic School, a non-intervention school in Suhum district was asked about the challenges she faces when teaching KG learners, she stated that, *“...I have not been trained in early childhood education so teaching in the KG level is difficult. You would think it is simple but actually, it is not... it’s a whole different thing. I do my teaching based on the new curriculum but because I have no training on ECE... some of the things are new to me”*. Another KG teacher from a non-intervention school revealed that, *“...learners tend to forget things they learnt quickly when they are taught due to the unavailability of learning materials meant for their learning.*

Due to the unavailability of TLRs in non-intervention schools, the qualitative findings suggest that KG learners in non-intervention schools are mostly involved in less activity and play-based learning practices which makes them easily forget what they have been taught. Some headteachers also revealed that they are challenged by some KG learners being irregular and lacking punctuality in school attendance as a result of most parents of KG learners not regarding pre-school as an essential part of a child’s education. This challenge affecting non-intervention schools was addressed through the Sabre teacher teaching project in intervention schools

with KG learners' parents sensitised on the importance of early childhood education and providing support to children to ensure that they are provided with care and good quality education.

Below are quotes from headteachers and teachers from non-intervention schools.

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- *"I wish my school will participate in similar programs in the future to gain more knowledge on ECE because the KG teachers in this school have challenges in teaching using the play-based approach and some of them lack the requisite skills in the teaching profession because they are SHS graduates. Some of my teachers cannot prepare the weekly lessons, so I am the one who is still training them to be able to prepare their notes and deliver the play-based teaching approach. They are SHS leavers, but they were employed because we lack teachers in the KG department". – KII Headteacher, Kraboa Methodist Primary D/A Ayensuano district*
 - *"I do not know anything about the play-based teaching approach, and I don't think the KG teachers here know anything about it as well... Our KG is severely challenged because our classroom structure is not standard. To be honest, we don't have a standard KG classroom. The one we have is not meant for KG, so, I will say we don't have a classroom for KG. The teachers are also challenged due to inadequate teaching and learning materials". – KII, headteacher, Amanase Aboabo D/A Primary School, Ayensuano district*
 - *"Class control is the main challenge. Because they are children, they always want to shout and roam about. Some even sleep. At times, the parents think that those at the KG don't write, so they don't buy books for them. Also, their punctuality to school is poor. At times, you will even finish teaching before some of the children come to school". – KII KG teacher Begoro D/A Church of Christ Primary, Fanteakwa North District*
 - *"My main challenges are child absenteeism. The KG pupils don't come to school regularly and some children don't have the learning materials including writing books. Some too don't pay attention to what is going on in class especially when they are hungry. Also, we don't have good learning facilities". – KII, KG teacher Nankasi MA/KG Basic School, Suhum District.*
 - *"Due to the unavailability of TLRs, the learners are late in catching up with lessons, writing and pronunciation of sounds of the alphabet. We are also affected by poor parenting and lack of logistics supply (chairs, tables, books, pencils), etc. and classroom space is not secured (no door, or windows) as you can see, hence making intruders have access to the classroom and hung materials". – KII, KG teacher, Osorase Rails D/A Basic School Achias District*
 - *"Inadequate TLRs coupled with no KG prepared (model) classroom, no learning centres (shopping centre, nature corner, make believe and sand tray), no picture reading books are my challenges. Due to large enrolment the lesson meant for the day is always not fully covered when you want to attend to individual needs. Absenteeism and truancy are also hindering learning because lessons need to be repeated for those who didn't come to school to catch up with". – KII, teacher Akim Swedru St. Agatha R/C KG Birim South District*
 - *"Most of the materials and resources needed for quality delivery of the play-based lessons are not supplied by stakeholders hence the little the school can provide is not enough. There are limited TLRs since we must prepare them through improvisation. Coupled with the above, there are inadequate textbooks to explain the strands of the curriculum. Books and pencils as the basic writing materials are also not available". KII, KG teacher, Adiendra R/C KG/ Primary Birim South District*
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4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

In measuring the effectiveness of the TTT project, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the project achieved its set objectives and results, including any differential results across groups. To determine how the TTT project has been effective in achieving its objectives, this section will present findings from the teachers' lesson observations, learner assessments, extent of coaching of KG learners by headteachers and parent surveys.

4.2.1 Teacher Lesson Observation Findings

Based on the methodology adopted for the teacher lesson observation, the GES-approved *teacher monitoring tool* was used to conduct the lesson observation. The teacher monitoring tool is comprised of seven core criteria areas, these include:

- Teaching Planning
- Teaching Methodology
- Class Engagement and Attitude
- Learner Attainment
- Classroom / Behaviour Management
- Learning Environment
- Teacher Attitude

Each of these criteria areas comprised specific competencies which were assessed during the lesson observation. The competencies were scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 4, where 1= Unsatisfactory, 2= Satisfactory, 3= Good, and 4= Outstanding. The results presented in this section include competencies which were classified as both "Good" and "Outstanding" by lesson observers. The results are also presented by grouping them under teachers in intervention and non-intervention schools.

Teaching Planning

The teaching planning criteria was intended to ensure that the KG teachers had prepared their lesson plans before the start of lesson. The enumerators inspected all lesson plans in both intervention and non-intervention schools. To be classified as outstanding or good, teachers were to demonstrate that the Lesson Plan was available and complete, followed the acceptable format, provided adequate information, and partially or completely covered all relevant indicator(s). It is important to note that teachers and school heads were not informed about the modalities

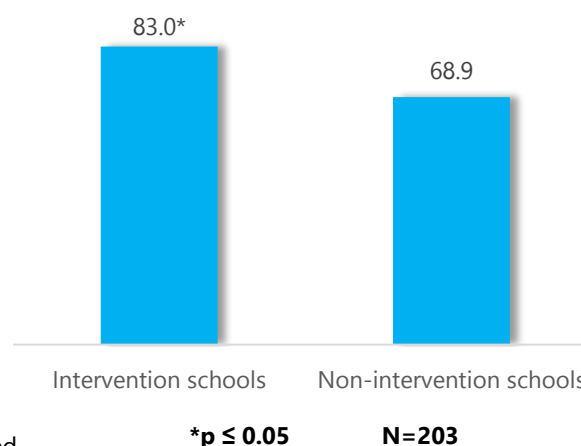
Figure 4.1 Proportion of teachers who are outstanding or good at providing lesson plan/session notes and up-to-date information relevant to the session being taught (%)

of the lesson observation before the start of data collection.

Figure 4.1 presents the proportion of teachers who obtained an outstanding or good score in the **teaching planning competency**. As shown in the figure, 83.0 percent of the teachers in intervention schools obtained an outstanding or good score as compared to about 68.9 of teachers in non-intervention schools. A chi-squared test revealed that the results are statistically significant. A key observation made by lesson observers was that in minor cases, some teachers observed in non-intervention schools were not qualified teachers. This observation was made in Abamkrom Methodist Basic School in the Upper West Akim district.

Teaching Methodology

The teaching methodology criteria of the observation monitoring school is comprised of 13 competency areas. These include lesson introduction, lesson presentation, targeted instructions, thinking task (differentiation): giving clear and simple instructions, occupying learners with activities, clarifying learners' misconceptions, challenging stereotypes and providing equal opportunities, demonstrating mastery in content knowledge of learning indicators, assessing learners' understanding of the sub-strands by using open-ended questions, making 3 centres accessible to children and carrying out rotations for facilitated activities at the learning centres.



Results displayed in table 4.1 shows that a significantly higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools obtained an outstanding or good score in 12 out of the 13 competency areas as compared to teachers in non-intervention schools. For example, while 72 percent of teachers in intervention schools use both teacher and learner led activities such as TLRs, only 35.0 percent of teachers in non-intervention schools are doing the same. While 68.0 percent of teachers in intervention schools are using targeted instructions, only 27.2 percent of their peers in non-intervention schools are doing the same. Also, while more than half of teachers in intervention schools are making accessible 3 centers for children and carrying out rotations for facilitated activities at the learning centers, less than 5 percent of teachers in non-intervention schools are doing the same.

Table 4.1 Proportion % of teachers who obtained an outstanding or good score for each teaching methodology competence

Description of methodology area	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
<i>Lesson introduction: creating a conducive classroom environment for learning through recapping and preparing learners' minds.</i>	84.0*	68.0
<i>Lesson presentation: facilitating interactively using appropriate gender-sensitive play-based approaches and methodologies.</i>	79.0*	29.1
Using both teacher and learner led activities as TLRs	72.0*	35.0
Targeted instructions: using differential teaching approach	68.0*	27.2
<i>Thinking task (Differentiation): providing tasks that engage and challenge learners</i>	66.0*	36.9
Giving clear and simple instructions and allowing time for learners to process what has been said	76.0*	60.2
Occupying learners with activities	74.0*	39.8
Clarifying learners' misconceptions encourages discussion among them without any discrimination and helps identify their successes	57.0	43.7
Challenging stereotypes and providing equal opportunities to boys and girls	71.0*	47.6
Content knowledge mastery of the learning indicator(s)	88.0*	71.8

Description of methodology area	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
Assessing learners' understanding of the sub-strands by using open-ended questions (why, when, how, where, who)	69.0*	33.0
Making accessible 3 centres to children for use	60.0*	4.9
Rotations: being carried out for facilitated activities at the learning centres.	56.0*	3.9
N	100	103

***p ≤ 0.05**

Class Engagement and Attitude

In order to obtain an outstanding score for the class engagement and attitude criteria, the scoring conditions require that teachers are to ensure that all learners are involved in an activity even when faced with challenging tasks. It also requires that learners ask open-ended questions, and the teacher encourages discussion from other learners. Thirdly, the criteria require that the teacher creates opportunities for group work and all learners work collaboratively in their groups. And lastly, the criteria are for all learners to accept feedback to improve their own learning progress.

The results from the class engagement and attitude criteria are presented in Table 4.2. As shown in the results, 83 percent of teachers in the intervention schools achieved a rating of 'outstanding or good' in engaging their learners in activities as compared to 54.5 percent in non-intervention schools. Also, 75 percent of intervention teachers were rated 'outstanding and good' in engaging their learners in collaborative work during activities as compared to just 28.2 percent in non-intervention schools. Additionally, a significantly higher proportion of learners in intervention schools (31.0 percent) ask questions during an activity, as compared to 5.8 percent in non-intervention schools.

Table 4.2 Proportion % of teachers with an outstanding or good class engagement and attitude

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
Learners are engaged in an activity	83.0*	54.5
Learners asking questions during an activity	31.0*	5.8
Learners working collaboratively with each other during activities	75.0*	28.2
Learners accept feedback from teachers or peers and work with them	61.0	47.6
N	100	103

***p ≤ 0.05**

Learner Attainment

The learner attainment criteria of the lesson observation tool is aimed at ensuring learner engagement and contribution during a lesson through completion of tasks assigned by teachers. To obtain a good or outstanding score, at least 50 percent of the learners should be seen to have completed a task assigned by a teacher during lesson delivery. Also, teachers should be able to show records of learners' skills and understanding in an observational notebook. With respect to the former, a significantly higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools (77.0 percent) obtained a good or outstanding score than those in non-intervention schools. For the latter, a significantly higher share of the teachers in intervention schools (61.0 percent) obtained a good or outstanding score than teachers in non-intervention schools (6.8 percent).

Table 4.3 Proportion % of teachers with an outstanding or good learner attainment level

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
Proportion of learners completing teachers' tasks during the activity.	77.0*	49.5

Teacher can show recorded observations of pupils' skills and understanding in Observational notebook	61.0*	6.8
N	100	103

$*p \leq 0.05$

Classroom / Behaviour Management

The classroom management criteria of the teachers' lesson observation tool emphasizes the rule of no sight or use of canes in the class. In that light, a teacher who is able to consistently manage the behaviour of learners in the classroom without the sight and/or use of cane is classified as outstanding or good. Also, teachers who formulate classroom rules, rehearse them with learners consistently and display them in the classroom are classified as good and teachers who do the same but also go further to draw learners' attention to the rules during disruptions are classified as outstanding.

Table 4.4 presents the proportion of teachers who obtained an outstanding or good score on classroom behaviour management. As seen in the table, nearly 9 out of 10 teachers in intervention schools obtained an outstanding or good score on the sight or use of cane in the classroom as compared to about 6 out of 10 teachers in non-intervention schools. The difference between the scores is statistically significant. Also, a significantly higher proportion of the teachers in intervention schools (68 percent) obtained an outstanding or good score on formulating, rehearsing, and displaying rules in the classroom as compared to less than a tenth of teachers in non-intervention schools. With regards to mending relationships after consequences, a significantly higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools (55 percent) obtained good or outstanding scores than their peers in non-intervention schools (24.3 percent).

Table 4.4 Proportion of teachers who obtained an outstanding or good score on classroom management (%)

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
No cane nor use of cane in the classroom	89.0*	67.0
Positive classroom rules have been formulated, rehearsed with the learners, and displayed	68.0*	8.7
Consequences-classroom rules: Are strictly applied	57.0*	6.8
Mending Relationship after consequences: Teacher repairs the relationship after giving a consequence.	55.0*	24.3
N	100	103

$*p \leq 0.05$

Learning Environment

The learning environment criteria is composed of two main competencies. These are the display of strand-related charts and learners' work in the classroom and ensuring that learners tidy up after most or all activities. Based on the results from Table 4.5, a significantly higher proportion of teachers in intervention schools obtained outstanding or good scores in ensuring a learner-friendly and clean classroom environment than teachers in non-intervention schools.

Table 4.5 Proportion of teachers who obtained outstanding/ good scores in the classroom learning environment (%)

Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
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Learner-friendly classroom: Display of strand-related wall charts, posters, and learners' work	58.0*	22.3
Cleanliness: Classroom is clean and tidy	68.0*	32.0
N	100	103

**p ≤ 0.05*

Teacher Attitude

To obtain an outstanding mark on teacher attitude competencies, teachers are required to use positive language to engage all learners throughout the entire lesson. Teachers are also required to recognize effort and helpfulness as well as achievement in a graduated manner giving rewards appropriately and explaining why they are giving these rewards and lastly, teachers are required to pay attention to all learners. As shown in Table 4.6, teachers in intervention schools obtained significantly high scores on the reward system, thus motivating learners during lessons and listening attentively to learners in all situations. The results on teachers' politeness and use of positive language however showed no statistical variation between teachers in intervention schools and non-intervention schools. That notwithstanding, the finding on politeness may have been influenced by the presence of the lesson observers as teachers may be inclined to try to choose their words more carefully and tactfully.

Table 4.6 Proportion % of teachers who obtained outstanding/good scores on teacher attitude

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
Politeness: Teacher uses positive language throughout lesson	89.0	83.5
Reward System: Teacher motivates learners during the lesson	76.0*	61.2
Attention to Learners: Listens attentively to learners in all situations	86.0*	64.1
N	100	103

**p ≤ 0.05*

4.2.2 Learner "Pupil Achievement Checklist (PAC) Assessments

Various bodies of research work indicate that kindergarten education lays the foundations for a child to become an effective learner. A review of project documents revealed that Sabre sought to contribute to building the children's educational foundation by developing the 5 Cs of learning, namely Confidence, Communication, Cooperation, Curiosity and Concentration as well as the basic skills of Literacy and Numeracy. This study adopted the Pupil Achievement Checklist (PAC)⁷ to assess the learners based on the 5 Cs and basic skills. The PAC used three scoring scales for each observed competency. The scoring criteria are **1= Developing, 2= Achieved and 3= Mastery**. The results presented are the proportion of learners who obtained both Achieved and Mastery scores after the assessment in intervention and non-intervention schools.

⁷ The Pupil Achievement Checklist (PAC) is a one-page formative assessment for every child which covers all of the key learning domains for KG1 and KG2 learners. This concept of pupils' assessment in Sabre's TTT intervention is particularly an observation of learners' development in psycho-social, numeracy, pre-reading, creativity, and pre-writing skills using the Pupil Achievement Checklist.

In Kindergartens 1 and 2, lesson observers randomly selected eight students from each class to observe and record their activities. In ensuring an objective assessment of learner performance, the teachers played no part in sampling learners. The observers randomly selected the KG learners using a random generator app. The sampled learners were observed in at least three lessons during the day in intervention and non-intervention schools to ensure that the teachers covered the competency areas satisfactorily. The objective of the assessment was to establish the effectiveness of the project in improving learners' performance. The results have been presented in the order of the PAC tool for both KG1 and KG2 learners.

Table 4.7 shows the proportion of learners in both intervention and non-intervention schools who demonstrated either mastery or achieved in the 5Cs of learning. As shown in the results, a significant proportion of KG1 learners in intervention schools performed better than their fellow KG1 learners in non-intervention schools across all the psychosocial skills domains. Similarly, a significant proportion of KG2 learners in intervention schools performed better than KG2 learners across all the psychosocial skill attributes.

Table 4.7 Proportion % of learners who demonstrate mastery or achieved in psycho-social skills (5Cs)

	KG 1 learners		KG 2 learners	
	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
<i>Cooperation: Work and play well with others in a group, mostly follows rules of the games</i>	88.0*	69.8	94.9*	76.5
<i>Concentration: Can attend to task and show persistence in completing it</i>	81.3*	58.3	87.8*	76.0
<i>Self-Regulation: Can offer suggestions about how own behaviour can be changed.</i>	54.0*	26.2	55.1*	38.5
<i>Confidence and Curiosity: Asks questions for clarification.</i>	52.3*	24.3	54.3*	29.8
N	400	392	424	400

**p ≤ 0.05*

Table 4.8 presents the proportion of KG1 and KG2 learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in oral language skills. As shown in the results, a significant proportion of KG1 learners in intervention schools (74.5 percent) demonstrated mastery or achieved in oral language skills as compared to their peers in non-intervention schools (44.1 percent). Similarly, KG2 learners in intervention schools performed significantly better compared to KG2 learners in non-intervention schools.

Table 4.8 Proportion % of learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in Oral language skills

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
KG1 learners		
Can express his/her feelings and ideas	74.5*	44.1
N	400	392
KG 2 learners		
Can role play some characters in a story heard	83.7*	39.0
Can speak audibly and express their feelings and ideas clearly.	90.8*	66.8
N	424	400

**p ≤ 0.05*

Table 4.9 presents the proportion of KG1 and KG2 learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in early reading skills. As shown in the results, KG1 learners in intervention schools performed significantly better than KG1 learners in non-intervention schools across all the attributes for early reading skills. However, for KG1 students in intervention schools there was a significant dip in "identifying spoken words when represented in written form. Similarly, the performance of KG2 learners in intervention schools was significantly better than their counterparts in non-intervention schools in identifying sounds of letters and reading level appropriate sounds. Also, there was a significant improvement in the proportion of KG2 learners in intervention schools demonstrating mastery or achieved in the ability to suggest alternative endings to stories compared with learners in non-intervention schools.

Table 4.9 Proportion of learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in early reading skills (%)

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
KG1 learners		
Can tell her/his own short stories about a picture.	76.3*	29.3
Can identify selected sounds in given words	73.5*	42.2
Identify spoken words when represented in written form e.g. Can read 3 or more words on display in the classroom.	56.8*	24.1
Listen to stories and be able to respond to basic questions such as Where? When? and Who?	75.2*	23.6
N	400	424
KG2 learners		
Can identify sounds of letters and be able to blend sounds and syllables	81.1*	62.8
Can read level appropriate sight words.	70.7*	48.0
Can suggest alternative endings to stories	63.5*	24.8
N	392	400

**p ≤ 0.05*

Results in Table 4.10 presents the proportion of KG1 and KG2 learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in writing skills. For KG1 learners, a significant proportion of the learners in intervention schools can engage in a variety of gross motor activities compared to learners in non-intervention schools. However, there was no significant difference in performance between KG1 learners in intervention and non-intervention schools in writing letters of the alphabet. Regarding KG2 learners, a significantly higher proportion of learners in intervention schools could draw and label objects and use invented spellings to spell words compared to learners in non-intervention schools. Interestingly, although the ability of learners to write letters of the alphabet had the lowest score in both intervention and non-intervention schools at KG1 level, it jumped considerably at the KG2 level (see Table 4.10). This perhaps suggests that learners' writing skills improves with age.

Table 4.10 Proportion % of learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in writing skills

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
KG1 learners		
Engages in a variety of gross motor activities e.g. Can throw a ball to knock down a target at a distance.	84.0*	60.1
Engages in a variety of fine motor activities e.g. Can screw and unscrew a bottle lid.	82.0*	60.4
Begins to write letters of the alphabet e.g., Writes own name with no copy.	52.8	47.4
N	400	424
KG2 learners		

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
Can write letters of the alphabet.	92.6	82.3
Can draw and label objects around the environment.	85.0*	59.3
Uses invented spellings to spell words	56.9*	17.8
N	392	400

**p ≤ 0.05*

Table 4.11 presents the proportion of KG1 and KG2 learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in numeracy skills. As shown in the results, KG1 learners in intervention schools performed significantly better than learners in non-intervention schools in demonstrating mastery across all the numeracy attributes. Similarly, KG2 learners' performance in intervention schools was significantly better than their counterparts in non-intervention schools. The attribute with the highest proportion of KG2 learners demonstrating achieved or mastery score was **"Can compose and decompose numbers up to 20 using concrete materials,** with intervention school learners performing significantly better than those in non-intervention schools.

Table 4.11 Proportion % of learners who demonstrated mastery or achieved in numeracy skills

	Intervention schools	Non-intervention schools
KG1 learners		
Identify and describe objects by colour, size, and name.	73.5*	26.2
Use number names, counting in sequence to find out how many, matching numbers to objects (1-9)	74.3*	26.2
Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category.	72.5*	14.4
Compare lines and other shapes that are the same and different e.g. Can copy a circle when presented with circles and a square	66.0*	9.0
Can extend non-numerical patterns.	73.5*	26.2
N	400	424
KG2 learners		
Can compose and decompose numbers up to 20 using concrete materials.	85.2*	46.8
Can create simple patterns with two of the following: shapes, colour, size, sounds and movements.	79.3*	33.5
Can describe and analyse 2 dimensional shapes and 3 dimensional objects	63.8*	22.5
Can compare objects based on length, weight, and capacity	83.2*	42.0
N	392	400

**p ≤ 0.05*

4.2.3 Findings on the extent of coaching KG learners by headteachers

One of the key project activities of the Sabre project was providing training to heads of basic schools in intervention districts to sustain quality teaching in their kindergarten classrooms. This was done through training headteachers to deliver in-class coaching to KG teachers to effectively deliver play-based methodology in the classroom.

The evaluation found that the Sabre project has greatly contributed to changes in headteachers' function as school leaders and coaches, and the headteachers are playing their coaching role effectively. The evaluation

results confirmed that headteachers were provided with training on how to coach and mentor KG teachers to effectively teach the new KG curriculum using the play-based methodology and child-centred teaching approach. Most headteachers interviewed indicated that they perform their coaching duties by observing KG teachers during lesson delivery and write down all the notable issues for discussion later with the teacher.

For instance, a headteacher from Effiduase Presby Basic School in New Juaben North district stated that, *"I was trained to coach and mentor my KG teachers to use the play-based method of teaching... thus, using learning materials in a play form, engaging learners in reading story books, story-telling and singing during lesson delivery. The training has equipped me to understand how the KG learners learn more easily. From the training, we were provided with some coaching guidelines such as allowing the KG teachers to teach and then we observe. In a given week, I observe KG teachers about three to four times on their lesson delivery and how they use play-based activities to facilitate learners' understanding. When I notice that they are not using the right delivery process, I wait till they are done and then we discuss and make the necessary corrections... So, after my observations, I coach and mentor the teachers". I mentor my teachers to teach well by training and equipping them with the available TLRs. I direct and mentor the KG teachers to create building centres in the various classrooms.*

The evaluation findings from teacher interviews revealed that headteachers are to a large extent playing their role as school leaders and coaches. One teacher from New Juaben North district affirmed that *"...my headteacher comes around from time to time to observe and coach me during my lesson delivery. The coaching gives me the opportunity to discuss my challenges with the head and at the end of the day, we come up with the solution. I think the coaching has been effective in helping me teach effectively using the play-based approach. Now, the KG learners have become creative, and they are able to learn without my involvement... and it is all because of the play-based learning that we use to educate the learners".*

Below are some more quotes from teachers and headteachers in intervention schools:

- *"I was invited for training sessions on coaching the KG teachers to effectively apply the play-based, child centred methodology in the classroom, and it was more than once. I was taken through the course at which the trainer through numerous activities coached us in coming out with different strategies and skills to coach my KG teachers. I really enjoyed the sessions because I think the coaching is an improved and a good method of helping our KG teachers to understand and use the right concept in the delivery of the new KG curriculum using play-based methods. I coach the KG teachers twice in a week. After my coaching, my next lesson is to assess myself by observing how the KG teacher delivered the lesson to determine whether the teacher implemented what was taught during the coaching or not". – KII with headteacher, Akwadum RC Primary – New Juaben North district.*
- *The project trained us to coach the teachers on how to apply the laid down principles of the play-based learning approach. I was taught how to conduct and comport myself during the coaching and it has been very helpful. After coaching the teachers and some challenges are identified, I bring them all together and allow them to express themselves and then we all try to bring out the best possible solutions. At least once in every two weeks, I visit the KG teachers to coach them. Thanks to the Sabre project, I have been able to position myself as one who is leading teachers and coaching them. I have been given specifications as to when and how to do it so I do follow it the way it is structured by Sabre. – KII with headteacher – Al-Rahji Islamic Primary & JHS, Nsawam Adoagyir district.*
- *"As a result of the training received from the project, I am always on the ground to observe how the KG teachers are performing their work and then I coach them. Whilst I'm observing, I take down notes. After the lesson observation, there is a post conference where I interact with the teachers. So, where the teacher performed well, I commend her but if something was not done well, I do not complain nor condemn the teacher but rather I point it out to the teacher*

and ask what she would do differently if she had to do it again. So, the coaching helps me and the teachers to interact in a very open atmosphere and that for me it is very good. Through the coaching, my teachers are doing well... Now, some teachers even bring their laptops to play videos for the children to play and learn". – KII with headteacher, Akraman MA Basic School – Nsawam Adoagyir district.

- *The headteacher, at least, twice a month, provides some coaching to me. He meets me face to face after I deliver my lessons to discuss how I performed. At times, the headteacher helps me to plan my lessons. In fact, the coaching has really helped me on how to plan my lessons. If I should rate him, I say 8 over 10 because his coaching has made me a better teacher and some of the mistakes that I used to make during lesson plans have reduced significantly because of the headteacher's support. – KII with KG teacher, Aburi Anglican Basic School, Akuapem South district*
 - *"The coaching from head teachers has really helped. Some teachers are not well vested in using the play-based methodology because they were not part of the beginning session of the training program. So, through coaching, the headteacher comes around and then helps the teachers as and when needed. The coaching is not to condemn the teachers, but to help and guide us as teachers. So, when they come to the classroom and observe what your weaknesses are, they will come discuss them together with you and then give you the needed support". – KII with KG teacher, Apirede Presby Basic School, Okere district.*
-

The evaluation also sought to assess SISOs' (School Improvement Support Officers) role in supporting and coaching KG teachers in intervention districts. The results revealed that SISOs visit schools occasionally to observe teaching and learning in the classroom and provide coaching to the KG teachers. According to headteachers, the SISOs use a monitoring checklist tool for recording their observations. After their observation, they spend some time with KG teachers and headteachers to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher's lesson and provide some guidance accordingly. The evaluation also found that some SISOs attend Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions to discuss teachers' challenges and support them with solutions. Below are some verbatims from interviews:

- *"The SISO has been coming here often. When he comes, we all go to the classroom, we ask of their challenges then we sit with them and talk. During PLC meetings too, we bring out our challenges and they support us also. If I should rate the support of the SISO, I will also give him seventy percent". – KII with headteacher, Osaabo Primary School, Nsawam Adoagyiri district*
- *"They visit us from time to time to observe the teachers. They have a checklist which they use for their monitoring and when they are done, we discuss their findings both good and bad". – KII with Headteacher, Nana Oware M/A Basic School, New Juaben South district*
- *"Sometimes, the SISOs come around. Whenever they come, they make sure they go around the various classrooms to see what's happening there. So, I will say they are trying their best". – KII with headteacher, Tinkong SDA Basic, Akuapem North District*
- *"Our SISOs are doing very well so with time they also come around to come and assess me and also go to the classroom to assess the teachers". – KII with headteacher, Asikabew Methodist Primary, Nsawam Adoagyiri District*

4.2.4 Parents Survey Findings

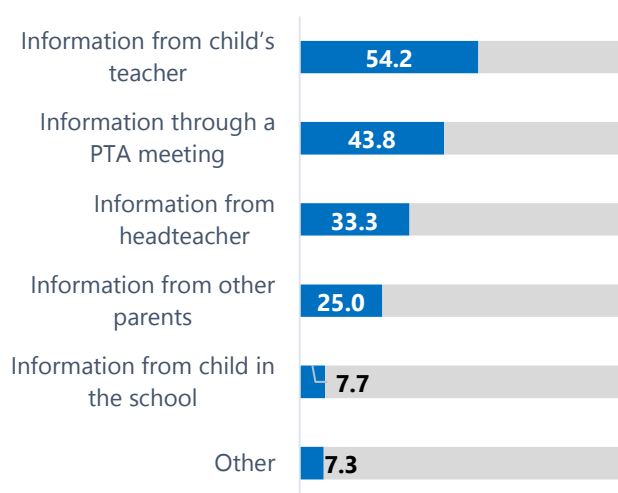
Parents play a very crucial role in ensuring the success of the TTT project. The project objectives require close collaboration between parents, teachers, and headteachers in the schools. Thus, teachers and headteachers

are required to engage parents to follow up on the children's progress. Parents are also expected to support their children at home to improve their performance. As part of this study, a survey was conducted with parents in KG1 and KG2 in both intervention and non-intervention schools to measure the effectiveness of the TTT project thus far in terms of the roles of parents, teachers, and headteachers of the schools.

As part of the study, parents of learners in intervention schools were asked if they had heard about the TTT project or Sabre's intervention in the schools. Based on the responses of parents, 45.7 percent indicated that they had heard about such a project in their wards' schools. Parents who had heard about the project were asked the source of information.

As shown in Figure 4.2, the majority (54.2 percent) of parents in intervention schools obtained information about the project from teachers. About 4 out of 10 parents also obtained information through PTA meetings, while about a quarter also received information from other parents in the school. The parents who were aware of the project were also asked what they were told about the benefits of the TTT project. The responses provided by the parents showed that they understood the benefits of the project. Most of the parents highlighted that the project is intended to improve the learning outcomes of KG learners and also to provide teachers with adequate teaching and learning resources. Some verbatims cited by parents are shown below:

Figure 4.2 Source of knowledge about the TTT project



- *"Will help the child to learn very fast in an interactive way".*
- *"This programme helps children to learn whilst playing and interacting with each other".*
- *"The project benefit to my ward is to bring improvement in his performance".*
- *"The benefits are that they provide training and TLRs for teaching".*
- *"It will help the child to identify objects and their names, my ward is able to communicate well in class".*
- *"It will help the learners to understand what they learn through play".*
- *"It makes learners happy and develop their interest at school".*

Another key objective of the survey was to determine the extent to which teachers engage parents with regard to their children's performance in school. This question was asked to some parents of both intervention and non-intervention schools. The results showed that teachers in intervention schools engage parents significantly more compared with teachers in non-intervention schools. While 74.8 percent of parents from intervention schools reported being engaged by teachers, 52.1 percent of parents in non-intervention schools reported the same. According to the parents from intervention schools, the teachers regularly update them on their wards' performance and suggest ways to improve their performance.

"I was told she was picking up but needs improvement in handwriting".

"I was informed my child is very active in class so I should guide her always so it will be a benefit for her".

"Teacher informed that my ward was able to identify objects but how to pronounce their names was a problem".

"The teacher told me my child does not respond in class or ask questions".

The evaluation found that 87.6 percent of parents in intervention schools reported that teachers had asked them to provide support to their children at home, compared to 64.3 percent of parents in non-intervention schools. In intervention schools, the parents reported that some of the support teachers asked them to provide their wards included completing homework, reducing TV watching time, providing reading and writing materials to practice at home, and encouraging their children to be confident and participate in all activities at school. Some quotes by parents have been provided below:

- *"That I should provide my child with home support, especially homework and also provide her writing materials."*
- *"I was asked to buy manila cards, and the teacher wrote some syllabic words on it for my child to learn at home."*
- *"I was asked to support him by giving him work to do and also ensure he does his homework when he comes home."*
- *"That I should support her when she comes home, doing her homework and also engage her to practice writing."*
- *"I should provide food for my child whenever he is coming to school and reduce the amount of money I give him for school since the money is mostly used for buying sweets. I was also to give guidance in writing."*

In determining the effectiveness of the TTT project, parents were asked whether they had observed significant improvement in their children's performance since the introduction of the project in their school. Importantly, 94.8 percent of the parents in the intervention schools reported seeing significant performance improvement. Also, 98.1 percent of parents have noticed a positive change in their child's interest in school since the introduction of the project. Some notable differences parents cited include their children's ability to write their own names and alphabets, and their ability to identify and read simple words when watching TV.

- *"My daughter has improved in writing and always wants to be in school. She even asks me on Saturdays why she is not going to school".*
- *"...Now, he [my son] can read out some words. It doesn't matter where he sees them, in print or handwritten".*

- *"I have noticed that my ward performance has improved. When he gets home from school, he does his homework promptly before doing anything".*
- *"My child has a high interest in school. He is happy with all the classroom activities. He role-plays all the activities at home".*
- *"Now, when he wants to pronounce a word, he uses the sound by breaking the word into syllables and pronounces it".*
- *"My girl writes very well now. She used not to write, and as a result of that, she was repeated in KG1, but now she writes very well".*

Overall, the evaluation found that the Sabre project was largely effective. A review of programme documents revealed that Sabre's teacher training project reached about **274** government kindergarten schools in six districts in the Eastern region. The evaluation found the project to be largely effective especially considering the fact that the project goals and objectives were at risk due to the project coinciding with the global pandemic (COVID-19) which saw schools in Ghana closed for almost 10 months in the year 2020. In spite of this, Sabre continued its intervention and achieved a total of **1,562** trained teachers, headteachers, CoE tutors, and GES officials enabling them to deliver high quality early years education through play. About **18,941** children have been given a quality play-based education across the six target districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana. More importantly, the trained KG teachers will teach many more children year on year who will also get a quality play-based education.



4.3. EFFICIENCY

One of the key aspects of this evaluation was to assess the efficiency of Sabre's TTT project. The evaluation assessed the project's efficiency by measuring the extent to which project resources (human, material and monetary) were used judiciously to deliver project results. The evaluation found that the project has been efficient by utilising resources economically within budgetary limits and by employing a competitive procurement process before contracting service providers and resources persons. Sabre applied comprehensive procurement procedures to procure good quality resources at best possible rates and in the delivery of administrative duties in general. The evaluation also found that Sabre took diligent steps to ensure value for money. Thus, prior to the implementation of the project, Sabre conducted a needs assessment to determine the exact number of beneficiary schools, learners, KG teachers and headteachers to ensure that resources will not be overly or underly deployed. Explaining how the Sabre project ensured value for money, one project staff stated that *"Sabre is an organisation that does not just pump money for people to spend. Looking at the trainings and resources provided it involves a lot of money. The biggest part of the money is centred around making sure teachers have received the training and have enough resources... and this has been achieved."* The evaluation also found that all resources such as teaching and learning materials were validated with the number of beneficiaries by collaborating with project district officers and district GES officers to ensure effective and efficient use of project resources. Interaction with Sabre staff also revealed that the project results achieved were appropriate for the budget spent and thus the project did not expense beyond its budget.

A project staff opined that, *"...we utilised our resources effectively and the performances that the learners are exhibiting in the classroom are a justification... some of the learners can read, write, and communicate very well among themselves"*. Another staff emphasised that project resources were judiciously utilised by revealing that, *"any resource that we use is done according to the project plan. Aside that, the only thing we*

do is that when new teachers are posted to the intervention districts and are in need of support, that is where we extend our budget. [Even], in such cases we have [already] factored it within the budget plan".

In assessing the efficiency of the Sabre project, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the project was implemented according to plan in terms of the project setup, delivery, monitoring, and reporting. The evaluation also assessed whether the communication (oral and written) between Sabre, beneficiary schools and project partners have gone according to plan.

The evaluation results found that the project has been efficient to a large extent. Thus, about 95 percent of GES officials interviewed revealed that the communication between Sabre and district education offices to a great extent had gone according to plan. The evaluation gathered that the project coordinators for the various districts had a WhatsApp platform that they use for quick dissemination of information. Some GES officials revealed that they were engaged quite often, and the communication of meeting time and venue was always precise. The evaluation found that communication and provision of feedback was particularly excellent between Sabre and the district education officials because the project coordinators had their working station within the premises of the GES office. Below are some quotes from GES officials:

- *"The Sabre coordinator for this district informs us anytime there is an activity. We also have a WhatsApp platform that we use to disseminate information. So, for me, I believe the communication is worth it". – KII with GES official, New Juaben South district.*
- *"I can rate the communication between Sabre and us as good... Even though I came around at the latter stages of the project in November last year, I have witnessed how good their communication is. I have attended about two meetings and had two good communications with them. We were well informed of the meeting, the place, and we started on time and closed on time. I can say it's good and it has gone according to plan". – KII with GES official, New Juaben South district*
- *"Communication between Sabre and us is perfect. We engage them often as one of their officials had a working space here in our district office. Communication and feedback were frequent and consistent. Information was timely received. Communication by far has gone according to plan". – KII with GES official, Nsawam Adoagyir district*
- *We had very good communication channels between us and Sabre. It was excellent. There is always a correspondence that comes ahead for every activity, which makes us as an office prepare adequately. So, I think it went according to plan. – KII with GES official, Okere district*
- *"Communication between Sabre and us has been perfect. There is flow in communication. Whatever information we need to have we get it, and we get it at the right time; so that if there is the need for any activity, we get enough time to prepare towards the said date. Correspondence has also been perfect, and it has gone according to plan. They don't come in without our notice. I would say, they are good partners.". KII with GES official, Akuapem South district*

Input from the ECE national director emphasised that the Sabre project has been efficient in communicating with national, regional and district education offices. The ECE director also indicated that the realisation of the project results has gone according to plan.

- *"Well.... I believe Sabre's communication was very effective and cordial. Sabre doesn't do anything without communicating to all the units involved. Even if they want to communicate to the Minister or Director General, they don't do it without the units. They pass through the proper channels. So, every now and then we are in touch with each other on what is happening in the districts and schools..*
- *The realisation of project results went according to plan. You know... the plan was to train the teachers on the play-based pedagogy, and they followed the plan without any deviations... They intended to*

support the teachers with the play-based pedagogy so that they will be able to implement the standards-based curriculum. And that is exactly what they've achieved. Now, KG teachers in project districts are able to develop TLRs on their own. Unlike previously, when you go there on a monitoring visit and you ask, why are you not using any TLRs? They'll tell you the government hasn't given us anything. But now they don't even wait for the government because they know that they can get most of the materials within their communities and they can use it to prepare their teaching and learning materials which will make their teaching and learning very effective and child-centred and for learners to also have some hands-on activity in their class".

The evaluation also sought to ascertain the extent to which the realization of project results has gone according to plan. The evaluation results indicated that the Sabre intervention has been very efficient. Input from district GES officials revealed that the project activities and its intended objectives have gone according to plan due to the fact that KG teachers have understood how to use the play-based methodology to deliver lessons. Some GES officers stated that the intervention has resulted in boosting the confidence and communication skills of KG learners and has influenced them to ask questions frequently and improve their learning outcomes. For instance, a GES official in New Juaben North stated that, *"...now the children are not afraid to ask questions, they are now confident. During a lesson I observed, a teacher was delivering, and one child had a question. Because we were there, the teacher wanted to overlook the child's question, but the boy kept calling the teacher until he was given the opportunity to speak. In times past, children, especially at the lower Primary are unable to voice out their challenges because they cannot properly articulate what they want to say. But now, the children have the vocabulary to express themselves which has boosted their confidence and learning outcomes".*

Below are some additional quotes from GES officials during qualitative interviews:

- *"I think the project has really gone according to plan. You know that in life, you may not always have things work out one hundred percent to plan. But for the Sabre project, I will say things went according to plan for about 92 to 96 percent. During monitoring, when you see the teachers sing and mime, it tells you that something great is happening unlike those days when teachers are rigid when teaching the children... If the project had not gone according to plan, we [district education office] wouldn't agree in our review meetings that we have to sustain it. With the little that I have seen of the project, I think they are doing well". – KII with GES official, New Juaben South district.*
- *"Well... I believe the project has gone according to plan... Sabre gave us some timelines; that they will be with us for three years. But even before the third year, we were getting results. The teachers had understood the play-based teaching approach, and the children were responding to the plan. So, the timelines and everything is exact. I believe at the start of the project; Sabre's expectations were for KG teachers to get the knowledge and help the children. But now, with the way the children are responding and acting, it has made things more exciting. For instance, we held a culture festival for the KGs a while back, and due to the benefits of the Sabre intervention, the children were able to articulate what they were taught so well. The invited guests were amazed at how the children were performing, reciting poems and acting plays which made us all happy. In fact, it was beyond us". – KII with GES official, New Juaben South district.*
- *"I believe everything else went according to plan; the only issue that arose was COVID. If not, they would have followed their timelines because the COVID-19 outbreak, and the lockdown caused the education calendar to change. Also, the basic school and that of the Colleges of Education do not have the same calendars which caused some delays, so they had to exit somewhere last December". – KII with GES official, Nsawam Adoagyir district*

- *Personally, I think their expectations of implementing new methods of teaching in the KG has been achieved and it has gone according to plan. In that, they ensured TLM's were provided for teachers and learners and also monitoring exercises were conducted to make the programme's result attainable. – KII with GES official, New Juaben North*
- *So far, so good. Everything in the plan was followed. There was a plan where learners were asked to listen and learn. No deviations. The last part is the Model Practice Classroom (MPC), when students in the colleges become mentees to the KG teachers so that they are groomed in a practical manner in early grade teaching so that in future, the process wouldn't be new to them. So, yes, everything has gone according to plan. – KII with GES official, Okere district*

Qualitative input from Sabre staff also suggested that the intervention was implemented successfully according to the project setup and plan and there was effective communication between Sabre and all parties involved. A project staff member revealed that, *"...to a large extent we have been efficient and have implemented the intervention according to plan because per what I know we have been able to achieve most of our objectives from launching to project closure"*. Another Sabre staff member revealed that, *"...the intervention was implemented according to plan, because the SISOs are doing their monitoring every two weeks, and reports are sent to the Sabre officer in charge within the stipulated time indicated. The communication between Sabre and the GES districts' officials has been effective and the communication between Sabre and the beneficiary schools was done regularly"*. Below are some more quotes from Sabre project staff:

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- *"The resources of the project were utilized judiciously to deliver project outputs because before the project there was an assessment that was carried out to know the number of beneficiaries for the Sabre project and we validated all with the resources in our possession which have helped to utilise our resources effectively, and the performance learners are exhibiting in the classroom now (are that) some of the learners can read, write and communicate among themselves"*.
 - *"I believe that the resources of Sabre were managed judiciously, because all the TLRs such as construction blocks are being used almost every day in the classrooms, the reading books that they provided are kept as a book centre where teachers take them as a way to share with learners or learners can go there and just interact with the books. The teaching and learning resources such as templates, puzzles, picture cards, and white cards are all used to support teaching and learning"*.
 - *"As a district program officer, I can say that to a large extent, the results achieved is adequate for the budget spent because a lot of TLRs were given to the various schools, and all KG teachers in the intervention schools have been trained"*.
 - *"Sabre's organizational strengths have been developed due to the project because over the years before we had not engaged in any wider districts' project such as this. But, when we implemented the project in the Eastern region, we employed more project officers in each district to facilitate activities of Sabre"*.
 - *"I strongly believe that Sabre's organizational strengths have been developed because they engaged with other stakeholders in education as part of the project, Sabre's name is being circulated in the country in the state of early childhood education and wherever there is a conversation around education, even at the national level, the name Sabre is mentioned"*.
 - *To a very large extent the intervention was implemented according to plan. In terms of monitoring and reporting, they are always submitted on time. We have really been working a lot to ensure we get all necessary documents to submit for monitoring and reports. Regarding Sabre's communication with beneficiary schools, I will rate it 100%. We do regular follow ups to the schools, we visit the schools, and*
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we are involved in monitoring their activities. We have WhatsApp platforms which we use to communicate as well as phone calls. The communication with GES district offices has been great. I will rate ourselves 95%. We work directly with the district officers as compared to the regional team. Even though we have been visiting the regional officers, we don't meet often. During trainings, district ECE officers were heavily involved and the district directors as well”.



4.4 COHERENCE

The evaluation assessed the coherence of the project by investigating the ways in which Sabre's project design aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4.2⁸ and how project activities were consistent and aligned with safeguarding and GESI considerations. The evaluation found the Sabre's TTT project design to be very consistent and aligned with SDG 4.2. A careful review of the project documents revealed that Sabre's TTT project objective of **“Ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, with particular reference to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education** is directly aligned towards contributing to Ghana's achievement of the SDG 4.2 with respect to access to and the quality of early years' education. The evaluation results also found that the project is coherent with the SDG 4.2 sub indicator 4.2.1⁹ which focuses on *the proportion of children (aged 24–59 months) who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being*. As outlined under Table 4.7 to 4.11, a significantly higher proportion of KG learners in intervention schools demonstrated mastery in psychosocial skills, oral language skills, reading skills, writing skills and numeracy skills than their counterparts in non-intervention schools. This implies that children in intervention schools are developmentally on track in learning and psychosocial well-being. In terms of health, the evaluation found that the significant reduction of corporal punishment on learners is an indicator that the health of KG learners is being safeguarded. In addition, some KG teachers in intervention schools revealed that they have seen improvement in the wellbeing of learners after they engaged parents on personal hygiene and the benefits of consuming healthy foods, all of which signifies that children in intervention schools have demonstrably improved academically and physiologically.

Aside the project being globally coherent, the evaluation also found that the Sabre project is consistent with national educational policy in Ghana. The MoE, together with NaCCA, introduced a new standards-based KG curriculum in 2019, titled – *curriculum for change and sustainable development*. According to the MoE, the rationale for the new KG Curriculum was to provide through play and use of creative teaching and learning approaches positive learning experiences to KG learners so that they are ready for primary education. Sabre's effort in supporting the government, through the six District Education Directorates to train KG teachers in all intervention schools to effectively use the play-based methodology and teach the new standards-based KG curriculum is highly commendable and coherent with national education policy.

Interviews with GES district education officials confirmed that the Sabre project is coherent, and its activities are aligned with safeguarding and GESI considerations. According to most GES officials, the project ensured that schools' environments were safe and friendly to learners and staff. Some added that due to the use of play-based learning and the avoidance of corporal punishment, most KG learners attend school more often

⁸ SDG target 4.2 states that by 2030 to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

⁹ Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by gender.

and everyone is given equal opportunity, freedom to play, collaboration, and opportunity to learn without discrimination.

Some GES officials also emphasised that the project is consistent and coherent with the new KG curriculum by providing TLRs to support effective teaching and learning, and training KG teachers to use brain research activities which involves using innovative teaching methods such as ice breakers, exercise breaks, and group learning to create a conducive environment to enhance KG learners' thinking ability.

Input from Sabre staff supported the coherence of the project and its alignment with safeguarding and GESI considerations. For instance, a Sabre project staff member stated that, *"KG teachers received training on safeguarding. They were taken through behaviour management to ensure that they create a safe environment for children to learn, thus, avoiding the use of canes. They were taken through strategies they can use for correction so that they don't create fear in the children. Also, gender bias is discouraged in the classroom, so all children are given equal opportunities"*.

Another Sabre staff affirmed that the project is coherent and consistent with the SDG 4.2. During an interview, he stated that, *"the project design aligns with SDG 4.2 because learners learn through play-based methodology in the KG classroom, and we are providing teachers with the necessary support in terms of resources and knowledge to achieve SDG 4.2"*.

Below are some additional quotes from stakeholders on project coherence:

- *"The Sabre project is consistent with SDG 4.2 because nobody is discriminated against including learners with difficulties, that is inclusive education. The project trained KG teachers to identify learners with special needs and also know how to support them". – KII GES District Official*
- *"I think the Sabre project is coherent because they came in to support the new KG standards-based curriculum... Also, the project ensures that there is inclusion for all girls and boys... no discrimination. It tackles SDG 4.2, which is to leave no child behind". – KII GES District Official*
- *"The Sabre intervention did not come to do anything different or their own thing. Rather, they helped to deepen and throw more light on what GES is doing. So, I would say it fits 100% into GES' objectives related to early childhood education". – KII GES District Official*
- *"The project's design aligns with SDG 4.2 because it is Sabre's objective to provide quality education to all children in Ghana at the ages of four and five years and the classrooms are designed in a way that learners can learn through play". – KII Sabre Staff*
- *"The project fits into Sabre's strategic objectives as well as the GES objectives related to Early Childhood Education because we are targeting SDG 4.2 where there is access to child education. It talks about where children should get to school and learn through play, and this is exactly what Sabre is doing. It also fits the KG curriculum by GES or MoE, so, the support that Sabre provides is in line with GES objectives". – KII Sabre Staff*
- *"The project activities ensured consistency and alignment with safeguarding and GESI because teachers were taken through activities during the training organised by Sabre to bring all learners on board. There were a series of activities that talk about no child discrimination. During monitoring, the SISOs were responsible for checking whether teachers are portraying certain behaviours in the classroom that exhibit gender stereotyping, which is not in line with inclusion. The teachers are aware when they are grouping learners, they are not to group boys alone but mix boys and girls. For example, when learners are going to the salon centre the teacher should not send only girls to the centre to show that only girls can become hairdressers as we see in our society, but boys are to visit the centre as well." – KII Sabre Staff*



4.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICABILITY

This section assesses the extent to which the benefits of the intervention will or are likely to continue beyond the end of the project. The evaluation found that the net benefits of the project are likely to continue beyond project closure. From our interviews, the vast majority of headteachers and KG teachers in intervention schools indicated that the positive changes created by the Sabre project will endure, and key project stakeholders such as GES (who are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new KG curriculum) and the two CoEs (responsible for training student teachers for future posting in basic schools) are also convinced that the net benefits of the intervention will be sustained. The evaluation found that the crucial role that GES and the CoEs played in the implementation of key activities including training of teachers, monitoring of teachers and trainers, establishing the networks of MPCs, and maintaining their quality standards will go a long way to ensure the sustainability of the project beyond closure.

According to a majority of GES district officials interviewed, the benefits of the Sabre project are more likely to be sustained and replicable. Some district education officers revealed that the achievements of the project are sustainable because of the involvement of college tutors and student teachers in the training programme to ensure that they are also equipped with the same knowledge before they graduate as trained teachers. Other district officers supported the assertion that the project is sustainable. According to an ECE coordinator, *"...the project's achievements and benefits are by far commendable and sustainable because the teachers are very enthusiastic about the programme and the contribution it has brought into ECE cannot be overlooked"*. When asked about the evidence that supports the sustainability of the net benefits of the project, the ECE coordinator stated that *"the district has adopted the peer teaching approach for teachers to share their knowledge received on the Sabre training to help other new teachers who were not part of the training programme to adopt the learning by play approach. Again, the district officers and headteachers in the various schools have been instructed to continue with monitoring and coaching tasks to ensure the continuity of the programme as they were already a part of the programme and have been supportive"*. Another GES officer revealed that the project's benefits are sustainable because there is high enthusiasm among beneficiary learners and the teachers have become used to the new way of teaching, thus, going back to the traditional rote method of teaching and learning is unlikely and not an option for teachers to contemplate.

Interviews with college principals and tutors revealed that the gains made from the Sabre intervention are very likely to remain. They explained that the project's plan of including tutors in the training programme is a good strategy for sustainability as they will continue to impact new student teachers with the knowledge and best practices acquired from Sabre. According to a CoE principal, the sustainability of the project's benefits is palpable due to the fact that the student teachers who will be graduating out of the colleges would have been equipped with the requisite training and skills to perpetuate the legacy of Sabre's achievements (implementation of play-based learning in classrooms). He further revealed that mentors, headteachers, SISOs and district education officers have all been trained to effectively maintain the concept of the play-based learning methodology through regular coaching, mentoring, and monitoring in basic schools. The principal at Aburi Presbyterian Women's CoE indicated that the project is sustainable because the Aburi college has already signed a memorandum of understanding with partner basic schools to continually run workshops and trainings for them.

A college tutor agreed with principals that the gains made from the project are likely to be sustainable. He explained that college tutors are teaching student teachers how to use the play-based learning methodology. This is to ensure that student teachers understand the play-based approach and will apply it in their teaching in future, thereby promoting sustainability. Another tutor emphasized that the gains made from the project

are sustainable because they have examined their student teachers, and the results strongly indicate that they have a good understanding of the play-based methodology.

All student teachers interviewed appeared very confident that the gains made from the Sabre project will be sustained. They mentioned that as incoming students, they have accepted that the play-based methodology is helpful to deliver the standards-based curriculum and will continue to apply it in the classroom. When asked for the type of evidence that supports the sustainability of the project, they mentioned that teachers' confidence has been boosted, they have been equipped to develop TLRs, and frequent monitoring by GES officials are helping to keep teachers on track.

See below for some qualitative quotes:

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- *"The project achievements will be sustained beyond the project exit since all stakeholders were trained including the college tutors who shall be responsible for the continuous lecturing of pre-service teachers". – KII CoE Principal". – KII GES District Official*
 - *"My office ensuring that set standards are maintained through continued effective monitoring is enough evidence the program will be sustained. As we speak, we are soliciting for support from the District Assembly for furniture to facilitate rotational tabletop activities and others in deprived schools. We plan on holding trainings for new early grade teachers to keep them up to speed on how to manage the KG setting". – KII, District Training Officer, New Juaben North*
 - *"The project is quite sustainable since all stakeholders were trained, especially with the training of college tutors who shall be responsible for the continuous lecturing of pre-service teachers. All students coming out of the colleges will already have the requisite training to perpetuate the legacy of Sabre (implementing Ghana's play based KG curriculum). Mentors, headteachers, SISOs and education officers have all been trained so follow-up to the project will be easy". – KII, CoE Principal*
 - *"Through Sabre, KG teachers have embraced the use of play-based methodology in teaching and learning activities and for us as tutors, we have accepted that it should be replicated by student teachers, so they have been encouraged to replicate that. One key evidence supporting the sustainability of the project is that the intervention schools have been well equipped with adequate teaching and learning resources that aids learning". – KII CoE tutor*
 - *The project benefit could be sustained because teacher trainees were involved in the project so they will replicate that in the classrooms. Also, parents have become more interested in the school and some are also willing to move their children from private schools to government schools because of the learning outcomes. Also, I strongly believe that the project benefits will be sustainable in the KG classrooms because the learning environment has improved due to the adequate teaching and learning resources available. The new teachers coming will also learn from old ones because they will see the Sabre content in the schools. – KII CoE tutor*
 - *"Yes, it is sustainable because since it is really helping the KG learners, the teachers are using the Sabre approach to teach in class. They are able to use the new method in teaching so I am sure it will sustain. Everything they do in the KG class is play-oriented, and that is the teaching and learning approach and the materials they have been using". – KII with student teacher, New Juaben North district*
 - *"The circuit supervisors keep on monitoring the KG teachers so it will keep everything going on. So as long as they are able to do that it will keep the teachers on track to always do the right thing". – KII with student teacher, New Juaben North district*
 - *"The benefits are sustainable because now, TLM's are available for teaching, the approach is helping learners in their learning and it is boosting our confidence as teachers; Now, I can speak in public". – KII with student teacher, Akuapem South district*
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Some cautions were however sounded to ensure that the sustainability of the achievements of the Sabre project is not at risk. A CoE principal revealed that the benefits may be affected if some stakeholders ignore what has been taught and also when there is a lack of adequate teaching and learning resources. A tutor revealed that the fragility of handmade TLRs could impede the longevity of use. According to the tutor, even though the materials could be managed well, they would eventually wear out, go missing or become damaged, therefore creating the need for financial assistance to purchase new items before such TLRs could be developed again. Another tutor suggested that the use of ICT such as televisions and sound systems should be introduced to aid teaching in large class sizes, although the high cost of acquisition for the large number of basic schools is an obvious challenge.

Teachers in intervention schools were asked if they believe the outcomes of the project can be sustained even after the project exits. The vast majority of teachers (85.2 percent) were confident the gains could be sustained.

Below are some quotes from teachers who are confident that the gains from the Sabre project will remain.

- *“Yes, I believe that the project is sustainable because what we have learned from the training is helping the kids learn better and get first-hand information. Since we are learning here, the child will go to KG2 and learn the same. I also think it is sustainable because we still have the TLMs”. KG teacher, Awukugua Methodist Primary School, Okere district*
- *“The project is sustainable because we have all experienced how beneficial the application of the knowledge gained from training has been for us and the learners. So, we will continue to use the play-based approach in our lesson delivery because it has really helped us”.*
- *“...the play-based methodology has improved and developed the thinking and learning abilities of the KG learners. There have been massive changes in the learning outcomes of the learners ever since the play-based learning was introduced by Sabre. Therefore, the benefits of the project will remain because we, as teachers, cannot forget what we have been trained and we want our lessons to do well, so, we will continue”. – KII with KG teacher, Mpaen MA Basic school, New Juaben North*
- *I think the Sabre project is sustainable because if it was not for the Sabre project, I would not have known or identified individual learning differences in KG learners. Now that I have gained much knowledge and skills in the use of play-based methods of learning, I am willing to continue using the methodology in the classroom. It is also sustainable because learners enjoy learning when the approach is used, and they find learning simpler. The thinking ability of the learners have increased, and the learners are always regular and punctual to school knowing that they have playing materials that are creatively designed, placed, and hung in the classroom. KII with KG teacher, Asokore RC, New Juaben North district*
- *Yes, I believe that the net benefit of the intervention is sustainable because all of us believe that play-based methodology has come to stay. – KII with KG teacher, Asokore Salvation Army New Juaben North district*

A minority of teachers (15 percent) were not convinced of the project’s sustainability. Among these teachers, a few explained that some KG teachers who benefitted from the intervention have already been transferred from the school, hence their concern for sustainability. The issue of teacher transfers by GES was raised by other teachers who claimed that the regular transfer of teachers could result in the introduction of new teachers who have not gained any knowledge from Sabre into project districts . In spite of these cautions of sustainability from a small proportion of teachers, the evaluation finds such claims unlikely to threatening the sustainability of the gains made from the Sabre project. This is because teachers in project schools engage in PLC sessions and newly introduced teachers could consequently be exposed to Sabre’s play-based, child-centred methodology. In addition, the support of headteachers and GES officials in the mentoring and

coaching of KG teachers through monitoring and supervision also contributes significantly to sustaining and replicating the benefits of the Sabre project.

Some related quotes are provided below:

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- *“Those who are in charge should be visiting the schools once a while. It will not sustain if only some of us will relax or teachers will relax because the project has come to end but if once in a while, they come round for visitation the teachers will know that even though the project has come to an end, they are still doing follow up so teachers should always be on their toes”. – KII with KG teacher, Nsawam Adoagyiri district*
 - *“Because the external and the project management would not be there to monitor the teachers, so the teachers would not be able to do the right thing.” – KII with KG teacher, Akuapem North*
 - *“Because it will not help the new teachers who are transferring ‘to and fro’ with respect to other non-Sabre schools since they will not benefit from Sabre training.” – KII with KG teacher, Okere*
 - *“Because the school needs support to be able to support the project since the school has no funds to implement.” – KII with KG teacher, New Juaben South*
 - *“All the trained teachers will be transferred to other schools in town. Already, I know some teachers have left”. – KII with KG teacher, Akuapem South*
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5. CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation provides an analysis of Sabre's contribution to the effective delivery of the new standards-based KG curriculum by teachers using child-centred, play-based methodology in the classroom, improving learning outcomes among the KG learners, populating end line results; and serving as a learning document to inform future project/intervention design. The evaluation also assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and replicability of Sabre's transformation teacher training project in the Eastern region.

Overall, the evaluation results indicate that Sabre has played an immense role in contributing to the effective delivery of the new standards-based KG curriculum in the six target districts in the Eastern region. The project's delivery of training to KG teachers on the play-based, child-centred methodology has deepened teachers and headteachers' understanding and implementation of the new standards-based KG curriculum. Almost every stakeholder interviewed during the evaluation process revealed that Sabre's project has been highly successful in contributing to the delivery of high-quality early childhood education and care to children in all Sabre intervention schools. The evaluation results clearly show that the Sabre project is largely relevant to the needs of beneficiary basic schools, KG teachers, schools heads, and KG learners. The project's key activities directly addressed the main challenges facing the ECE sub-sector through the provision of in-service teacher training, building the capacity of SISOs, DDSup, EMIS teams, college tutors, and student teachers and has helped to transform the general outlook of a KG classroom.

The results of the evaluation also showed that parents of children in non-intervention schools underestimate the importance of ECE thereby resulting in lack of support in the provision of learning materials and irregular school attendance. The Sabre intervention was extremely relevant in this regard as parents and community members in intervention schools in the six districts were duly sensitised on the significance of parents' role in the education of KG learners. The results also indicated that parents were engaged by the KG teachers and headteachers with regard to their children's performance in school. With this approach, parents of learners in intervention schools took the education of their wards more seriously as compared to their counterparts in non-intervention schools.

On project effectiveness, the evaluation results indicated that the project was largely effective in achieving its set objectives. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of the project in comparison to a sample of non-intervention schools, the results showed that a significant proportion of KG learners in intervention schools outperformed their peers in non-intervention schools in every learning outcome area. Similarly, the evaluation results revealed that a significant proportion of KG teachers in intervention schools are performing better than their counterparts in non-intervention schools in terms of obtaining outstanding scores for teacher attitude, classroom learning environment, classroom management, learner attainment level, class engagement, teaching planning, and methodology.

Regarding project efficiency, the evaluation results showed that Sabre has been very cost effective in the implementation of the project. The intervention was found to have been implemented according to plan, project resources were judiciously utilised to deliver project outputs, and competitive procurement processes were employed before contracting service providers for the implementation of project activities. The results also showed that the organisational strength of the project implementation team has been enhanced as a result of engaging with a wide range of key educational stakeholders. The evaluation results clearly showed that the Sabre project is well aligned with SDG 4.2 and its activities are highly consistent with safeguarding and GESI considerations. The Sabre project has significantly contributed to improving the learning outcomes

of KG learners in intervention districts mainly as a result of Sabre supporting GES to train KG teachers to effectively teach the new KG curriculum using play-based methodology.

Regarding sustainability and replicability, the evaluation results indicated that the net benefits and achievements of the Sabre project are likely to remain and continue beyond project closure. The results revealed that the involvement of CoE tutors in the training of student teachers on the play-based, child-centred learning approach, and district ECE coordinators and other GES officials to monitor the actions of KG teachers in basic schools, will help maintain the achievements of the project. In addition, the evaluation gathered that the gains made by the project are likely to be replicated as some teachers in intervention schools have decided to adopt peer teaching to share their knowledge received with other teachers who were not part of the training programme so that they can adopt the play-based learning approach.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In future projects, Sabre should conduct a baseline evaluation to measure the indicators that are relevant for tracking the performance of the project prior to the start of the intervention. In that case, after the project closes, the end of project evaluation should be done with the same set of tools (could be revised to reflect changes in project strategy) to allow for comparison of data.
2. In future projects of similar nature, Sabre should consider involving the entire community where the basic schools are located in order to involve parents of KG learners in both intervention and non-intervention districts. With the help of district GES officials, district/municipal assembly and the traditional authority, durbars could be organised where community members are sensitised on the importance and relevance of ECE in the educational development of children. This approach may contribute to influencing parents in non-intervention schools to take ECE more seriously. Community members should be encouraged to support their children with learning and learning materials at home, helping to build learners with positive attitudes.
3. The project's strategy of collaborating with key education stakeholders such as GES (at the national, regional and district level) and CoEs is important and significant and should be replicated in future interventions of similar nature for the sustainability of the project net benefits.
4. In future, Sabre should consider setting up Model Practice Classrooms (MPC) in closer vicinity to CoEs as that will help student teachers to easily put into practice the theories and knowledge gained from the colleges. This will also ensure that students teachers do not travel far to have access to MPCs due to financial and logistical challenges.
5. Sabre should consider training education stakeholders such as CoE principals and district GES directors and officials on developing proposals to secure donor funding to support quality teaching and learning in the classroom. As stated earlier, the project's plan for sustainability by involving CoEs tutors and principals, the establishment of MPCs, training DTSTs, ECE Coordinators, KG teachers, headteachers and other GES district officers was commendable and should be continued in similar interventions in future. That notwithstanding, an additional avenue for sustainability will be created when the capacity of key education stakeholders such as CoE principals and district GES directors and head of departments is built to consciously look out for donor opportunities and develop proposals to secure funding to support the quality of teaching and learning in the districts. Also, the evaluation found that activities on sustainability were focused on during the final year of the project. However, it might be more helpful if Sabre considers integrating activities on project sustainability



from the onset of the project instead. That way, challenges and risks facing project sustainability may be identified early and addressed before project closure.

ANNEX 1A. ADDITIONAL TABLES OF LEARNERS' ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Table 4.12 Proportion of KG1 learners who demonstrate the following psycho-social skills

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Cooperation: Work and play well with others in a group, mostly follows rules of the games	12.0	56.0	32.0	17.5	56.6	13.2	14.8	56.3	22.3
Concentration: Can attend to task and show persistence in completing it	18.5	52.5	28.8	36.8	52.6	5.7	27.9	52.6	16.9
Self-Regulation: Can offer suggestions about how own behavior can be changed.	36.8	46.8	7.3	42.7	23.6	2.6	39.8	34.8	4.9
Confidence and Curiosity: Asks questions for clarification.	35.3	43.5	8.8	35.9	22.9	1.4	35.6	32.9	5.0

Table 4.13 Proportion of KG2 learners who demonstrate the following psycho-social skills

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Cooperation: Work and play well with others in a group, mostly follows rules of the games	4.9	48.0	46.9	10.8	54.0	22.5	7.8	51.0	34.6
Concentration: Can attend to task and show persistence in completing it	12.2	53.3	34.4	23.3	65.0	11.0	17.8	59.2	22.6
Self-Regulation: Can offer suggestions about how own behavior can be changed.	36.5	42.4	12.8	38.3	34.8	3.8	37.4	38.5	8.2
Confidence and Curiosity: Asks questions for clarification.	31.1	37.0	17.4	36.8	26.8	3.0	34.0	31.8	10.1

Table 4.14 ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS for KG1 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery

Can express his/her feelings and ideas	23.8	53.8	20.8	32.8	34.4	9.7	28.4	43.8	15.1
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Table 4.15 ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS for KG2 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Can role play some characters in a story heard	15.8	56.1	27.6	26.3	36.5	2.5	21.1	46.2	14.9
Can speak audibly and express their feelings and ideas clearly	8.4	53.3	37.5	27.5	48.1	18.5	18.1	50.8	27.9

Table 4.16 EARLY READING SKILLS for KG1 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Can tell her/his own short stories about a picture	22.5	59.5	16.8	39.6	28.5	0.7	31.3	43.6	8.5
Can identify selected sounds in given words.	25.0	59.8	13.8	38.4	34.9	7.3	31.9	47.0	10.4
Identify spoken words when represented in written form e.g. Can 'read' 3 or more words on display in the classroom.	41.5	48.8	8.0	46.0	21.5	2.6	43.8	34.7	5.2
Listen to stories and be able to respond to basic questions such as Where? When? and Who?	23.6	51.6	23.6	44.3	22.9	0.7	34.3	36.8	11.8

Table 4.17 EARLY READING SKILLS for KG2 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Can identify sounds of letters and be able to blend sounds and Syllables	18.4	55.9	25.3	32.5	47.5	15.3	25.5	51.6	20.2
Can read level appropriate sight words.	26.0	49.7	20.9	34.8	40.8	7.3	30.4	45.2	14.0
Can suggest alternative endings to stories	29.6	44.6	18.9	36.0	20.8	4.0	32.8	32.6	11.4

Table 4.18 WRITING SKILLS for KG2 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Engages in a variety of gross motor activities e.g.	15.8	57.0	27.0	32.6	46.5	13.7	24.4	51.6	20.1

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Can throw a ball to knock down a target at a distance.									
Engages in a variety of fine motor activities e.g. Can screw and unscrew a bottle lid	17.5	48.5	33.5	33.7	49.8	10.6	25.9	49.2	21.7
Begins to write letters of the alphabet e.g. Writes own name with no copy.	44.3	41.8	11.0	40.3	39.9	7.6	42.2	40.8	9.2

Table 4.19 WRITING SKILLS for KG2 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Can write letters of the alphabet.	7.4	49.2	43.4	15.0	53.5	28.8	11.2	51.4	36.0
Can draw and label objects around the environment.	14.5	52.8	32.1	28.3	51.8	7.5	21.5	52.3	19.7
Uses invented spellings to spell words	31.4	42.6	14.3	45.0	14.5	3.3	38.3	28.4	8.7

Table 4.20 NUMERACY SKILLS for KG1 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Identify and describe objects by colour, size and name. identify and describe objects by colour, size and name	16.8	66.8	16.5	37.3	34.4	5.2	27.3	50.1	10.7
Use number names, counting in sequence to find out 'how many, matching numbers to objects' (1-9)	24.5	59.0	14.5	49.3	21.0	5.2	37.3	39.4	9.7
Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category.	25.5	54.8	19.5	46.0	23.4	2.8	36.0	38.6	10.9
Compare lines and other shapes that are the same and lines and other shapes that are the same and different e.g. Can copy a circle when presented with circles and a squares	27.5	57.3	15.3	43.9	14.4	0.0	35.9	35.2	7.4
Can extend non numerical patterns.	28.5	50.0	16.0	35.1	8.7	0.2	31.9	28.8	7.9

Table 4.21 NUMERACY SKILLS for KG2 Learners who:

	Intervention schools			Non-intervention schools			Overall		
	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery	Not achieved	Achieved	Mastery
Can compose and decompose numbers up to 20 using concrete materials	12.8	65.3	19.9	26.3	41.0	5.8	19.6	53.0	12.8
Can create simple patterns with two of the following: shapes, colour, size, sounds and movements.	17.1	56.4	23.0	33.8	30.3	3.3	25.5	43.2	13.0
Can describe and analyze 2 dimensional shapes and 3 dimensional objects.	30.9	48.2	15.6	37.3	20.8	1.8	34.1	34.3	8.6
Can compare objects based on length, weight and capacity.	11.7	40.8	42.4	26.3	30.8	11.3	19.1	35.7	26.6

ANNEX 1B. ADDITIONAL TABLES OF LESSON OBSERVATION RESULTS

Table 4.22 TEACHING: PLANNING PROPORTION OF TEACHERS WHO ARE OUTSTANDING OR GOOD PROVIDING:

	Treatment				Control			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Lesson Plan/Session notes and up-to-date information relevant to the session being taught:	7.0	10.0	30.0	53.0	7.8	22.3	55.3	13.6

Table 4.23 TEACHING: METHODOLOGY. PROPORTION OF TEACHERS WHO ARE OUTSTANDING OR GOOD AT:

	Intervention schools				Non-intervention schools			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Lesson introduction: creating a conducive classroom environment for learning through recapping and preparing learners' minds.	2.0	14.0	55.0	29.0	6.8	25.2	62.1	5.8
Lesson presentation: facilitating interactively using appropriate gender sensitive play-based approaches and methodologies.	3.0	18.0	60.0	19.0	5.8	64.1	25.2	3.9
using both teacher and learner led activities as TLRs	4.0	24.0	46.0	26.0	18.5	35.9	32.0	2.9
targeted instructions: using differential teaching approach	3.0	29.0	62.0	6.0	12.6	60.2	26.2	1.0
thinking task (Differentiation): providing tasks that engage and challenge learners.	8.0	26.0	49.0	17.0	13.6	49.5	33.0	3.9
giving clear and simple instructions and allow time for learners to process what has been said.	3.0	21.0	48.0	28.0	1.9	37.9	52.4	7.8
Occupying learners with activities	4.0	22.0	50.0	24.0	8.7	51.5	37.9	1.9
clarifying learners' misconceptions, encourages discussion among them without any discrimination and helps identify their successes.	4.0	36.0	42.0	15.0	1.0	52.4	37.9	5.8
challenging stereotypes and providing equal opportunities to boys and girls	3.0	25.0	40.0	31.0	1.0	51.5	39.8	7.8
content knowledge mastery of the learning indicator(s)	3.0	9.0	56.0	32.0	1.9	26.2	63.1	8.7

	Intervention schools				Non-intervention schools			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
assessing learners' understanding of the sub-strands by using open-ended questions (why, when, how, where, who).	9.0	22.0	61.0	8.0	4.9	60.2	29.1	3.9
Making accessible 3 centres to children for use	16.0	22.0	34.0	26.0	68.0	11.7	3.9	1.0
rotations: being carried out for facilitated activities at the learning centres.	13.0	25.0	34.0	22.0	31.1	12.6	2.9	1.0

Table 4.24 TEACHING: CLASS ENGAGEMENT AND ATTITUDE. PROPORTION OF TEACHERS WHOSE CLASSES HAVE OUTSTANDING OR GOOD DEGREE OF LEARNERS:

	Treatment				Control			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Engaged an activity	5.0	11.0	51.0	32.0	3.9	39.8	48.5	1.9
Asking questions during activity	33.0	32.0	28.0	3.0	63.1	21.4	4.9	1.0
Working collaboratively with each other during activities	4.0	21.0	60.0	15.0	23.3	32.0	27.2	1.0
Accepting feedback from teachers or peers and work with them.	9.0	29.0	55.0	6.0	5.8	42.7	45.6	1.9

Table 4.25 LEARNER: ATTAINMENT

	Treatment				Control			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Proportion of teachers whose classes have outstanding or good proportion of learners completing teacher's task during the activity.	7.0	15.0	60.0	17.0	5.8	39.8	43.7	5.8
Proportion of teachers who are outstanding or good at showing recorded observations of pupils' skills and understanding in Observational notebook	24.0	14.0	26.0	35.0	65.1	6.8	5.8	1.0

Table 4.26 TEACHING: CLASSROOM / BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

	Treatment				Control			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Proportion of teachers who are outstanding or good at use of no cane in the classroom	6.0	3.0	26.0	63.0	20.4	10.7	30.1	36.9
Proportion of teachers whose classes have outstanding or good degree of positively formulated classroom rules, rehearsed with learners, and displayed	10.0	22.0	38.0	30.0	73.8	9.7	7.8	1.0
Proportion of teachers who are outstanding or good at strictly applying class	12.0	27.0	48.0	9.0	32.0	13.6	6.8	0.0
Proportion of teachers who are outstanding or good at mending relationships after consequences: repairing the relationship after giving a consequence	10.0	26.0	42.0	13.0	6.8	31.1	18.5	5.8

Table 4.27 TEACHING: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. PROPORTION OF TEACHERS WHO TO AN OUTSTANDING OR GOOD EXTENT

	Treatment				Control			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Have learner friendly classrooms by displaying strand related wall charts, posters, and learners work	10.0	32.0	40.0	18.0	39.8	36.9	17.5	4.9
Have classrooms that are clean or tidy	3.0	28.0	38.0	30.0	1.9	66.0	26.2	5.8

Table 4.28 TEACHING: TEACHER ATTITUDE. PROPORTION OF TEACHERS WHO ARE OUTSTANDING OR GOOD AT:

	Treatment				Control			
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
Using positive language throughout lesson.	3.0	8.0	45.0	44.0	0.0	16.5	56.3	27.2
Motivating learners during the lesson.	2.0	22.0	49.0	27.0	1.9	36.9	57.3	3.9
Listening attentively to learners in all situations	1.0	11.0	65.0	21.0	0.0	35.9	53.4	10.7

ANNEX 2 EVALUATION TOOLS



Teachers Interview
Guide - Control school



Headteachers



GES Officers -



Final Sabre's CoE



Final Sabre Teachers



Final Sabre Teachers

Interview Guide - Control school Interview Guide - Control school Interview Guide.docx Students KII_revised.docx Interview Guide_revised Interview Guide_revised



Final Sabre



Final Sabre CoE



CoE Student teachers
KII - Control.docx



Teacher Observation
Tool.pdf

Headteachers Interview

Tutors KII_revised.doc

ANNEX 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE



Terms Of Reference (TOR)

End of Project External Evaluation

Transformational Teacher Training in Eastern Region, Ghana (ECE)

Sabre Education, a leader in Early Childhood Education is seeking the services of a consultant to conduct an end of Project Evaluation of its Transformational Teacher Training Programme in six project districts in the Eastern Regions of Ghana.

The evaluation is intended to assess what changes occurred during the life of the project and whether the objectives of the project were met in relation to the implementing organisation, project beneficiaries, boundary partners and policy makers whilst providing information on the project's key performance indicators, and documenting lessons to guide future design and implementation of projects. This Terms of Reference (TOR) details the scope of work to be carried out. The evaluation is expected to commence by **April, 2023**, while the final report is expected to be submitted not later than **July, 2023**.

1 Project background

The Transformational Teacher Training in the Eastern Region, three-year project started in 2019 and has been Sabre's largest project to date, reaching six districts (Akwapim North, Akwapim South, Okere, New Juaben North, New Juaben South and Nsawam Adoagyiri) in the Eastern Region of Ghana with Sabre's In-Service Teacher Training (INSET) package. INSET begins with Training of Trainers drawn from the Ghana Education Service, who then go on to deliver nine days of training over the course of a year to Kindergarten (KG) teachers, head teachers and district Ghana Education Service Officers. Teachers also receive classroom-based support and a resource pack with items such as story books, building blocks and a teaching and learning resource making toolkit. Head teachers are trained to coach

and support their KG teachers and Ghana Education Service officers are given the skills and tools to monitor and maintain quality teaching in the classroom.

Project year one focused on training practicing teachers and head teachers from a small cohort of schools. These schools served as a dynamic model for other teachers in the districts to better understand the active play-based methodology they would be learning. Year two saw the project go districtwide, reaching every government kindergarten across the six districts. In the final year Sabre is working with two Eastern Region Colleges of Education (Presbyterian Women's and Seventh Day Adventist) to establish a network of Model Practice Classrooms to serve student teachers with quality practical placements. Teachers in these KG classrooms are given another year of training to become competent in coaching and mentoring student teachers. College tutors are also supported to teach the play-based approach to their student teachers.

Over the duration of the project, Sabre supported the School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) led by the Deputy Director in charge of Supervision (DDSup) and the Education Management Information System (EMIS) teams to monitor the actions of teachers and trainers respectively. Specifically, the SISOs carried out termly monitoring of teachers to assess their competence in using play-based learning in the classrooms whilst the EMIS team assessed the quality of training delivery by trainers.

Project stakeholders and beneficiaries include:

- District Education Office (GES) consisting of District Director, Dep. Dir. Supervision, SISOs, EMIS, KG Coordinator (also referred to as ECE Coordinator) and District Training Officers;
- Public Schools consisting of KG Teachers, Headteachers, KG 1 & 2 Learners
- Colleges of Education – College Principal, ECE College Tutors, Student-teachers at SDA College of Education at Asokore and Presbyterian Womens' College of Education (PWCE) at Aburi.
- National Teaching Council (NTC)
- Community: District Assemblies, parents

The project timeline did not run as planned across three years from September 2019 to July 2022 as anticipated due to school closures and a change in the academic calendar caused by COVID-19. The project is still ongoing and expected to end by April 2023.

2 Purpose and objectives of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- assess Sabre's contribution to the effective delivery of the new standard-based KG curriculum by teachers using child centred, play-based methodology in the classroom in 6 districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana;
- assess Sabre's contribution to improving learning outcomes among the KG learners the 6 districts.
- populate end line results for its logframe; and
- serve as a learning document to inform future project/intervention design.

2.1 Objectives of the evaluation

1. Assess the extent to which the intervention fits into Sabre's strategic objectives as well as the Government of Ghana/GES objectives related to ECE,
2. Assess the extent to which the intervention was implemented according to plan. a. Project set up
 - b. Intervention delivery
 - c. Monitoring and reporting (vertical and horizontal)
 - d. Communication: (oral and written)
 - i. between Sabre and the Regional and District education offices
 - ii. between the district education offices and the school (teachers and headteachers)
 - iii. between Sabre and the schools.

3. Assess the extent to which the intervention targeted the right audience (for e.g. GES at all levels, teachers, headteachers, colleges of education, student-teachers, college lecturers/tutors, learners) and addressed the right issues.
4. To what extent did the intervention achieve its intended outcomes or objectives?
 - a. What were the enabling or disabling factors?
 - b. Any unintended outcomes?
 - i. What led to these unintended outcomes?
 - ii. Effect of these unintended outcomes on overall intervention.
5. Assess the extent to which the intervention made a difference among key stakeholders and beneficiaries.
 - a. Learning outcomes among child learners.
 - b. Teacher competency in using the play-based child-centred pedagogy in the classroom.
 - c. The role of headteachers, ECE Coordinators, School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), the District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs), CoE lecturers in deepening and sustaining play-based learning in schools and colleges
 - d. Effect of classroom set-up, and the making & provision of teaching and learning resources (TRLs),
 - e. Coaching and monitoring support,
 - f. Engagement of parents, community, and district assemblies.
6. Assess the extent to which resources (human, money and material) were used judiciously
7. Assess the extent to which the changes observed will last.
 - a. Which aspects of the intervention are most likely to be sustained? Why
 - b. Which aspects of the intervention are most likely not be sustained? Why
 - c. How could certain aspects have been made sustainable?
8. Assess what is missing in the intervention logic and its effect on the results observed.

***The intervention logframe will be shared as part of supporting documents for the assignment.

2.2 Key evaluation questions

As a learning organization, Sabre will use the evaluation to learn and inform the design of future projects. The evaluation is expected to make recommendations based on its findings on how to enhance and build effective project strategies, as well as providing any reasons the project strategies may not have been effective, with possible resolutions in the future. The Consultant may review these questions in conjunction with Sabre to align where necessary.

2.2.1 Relevance and Fidelity

- To what extent was the project approach and its main activities relevant to addressing the ECE related challenges identified by the Ministry of Education (MoE EMIS) in the 2017/18 academic year.
- To what extent did the project fit into Sabre's strategic objectives.
- Are there any unexpected outcomes for beneficiaries (positive or negative)? If so, what are the factors for these?
- To what extent was the project implemented according to plan?

2.2.2 Effectiveness

In comparison to a sample of non-project schools,

- To what extent has each outcome been achieved? This should include data collection and analysis relevant to the project's quantitative and qualitative indicators Annex 1.
- How have learning outcomes (in writing, oral reading, literacy, numeracy and psychosocial skills) of KG1&2 Pupils changed as a result of being taught by teachers trained on the project. What are the key factors contributing to these changes?

What are the levels of KG1 & 2 pupils in relation to the 21st century skills including confidence, communication, cooperation, curiosity and concentration.

- To what extent has the project contributed to changes in teachers' attitudes towards
 - o their own professional development (kindergarten teaching?)
 - o children's learning?

- To what extent are teachers (student-teachers and in-service teachers) able to
 - Plan their lessons
 - create a child-friendly environment to support children's learning;
 - manage children's or classroom behaviour (with appropriate strategies?)
 - use appropriate teaching methodologies to deliver the child centred approach to teaching and learning;
 - make teaching and learning resources (TLRs) and other resources.
 - Assess children's learning using the pupils achievement checklist?
- To what extent has the project contributed to changes in the headteacher's function as school leader and coach?
- Are the headteachers playing their coaching role? How effectively do they do that?
- SISOs role in supporting and coaching teachers?
- To what extent has the headteacher's leadership and coaching function influenced activities in the KG classrooms?
- To what extent do the KG teachers and headteacher engage the parents and guardians of KG learners the way it was discussed during the training?
- To what extent do the KG teachers, Primary 1 teachers and the headteachers work together to transition the KG learners to Primary 1?
- In what ways have headteachers, ECE Coordinators, School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), the District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs), CoE lecturers contributed to deepening and sustaining play-based learning in schools and colleges?
- To what extent has the project motivated and increased the self-esteem of KG teachers?
- How has the project contributed to reducing the stigma associated with being a KG Teacher?
- To what extent has the project influenced the attitudes and practices of duty bearers (the Ministry of Education, GES, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), National Teaching Council (NTC) and the two colleges of education) towards KG education. What have been the most effective strategies for this?
- To what extent did the strategies work?

2.2.3 Efficiency

- To what extent were the project's resources (human and material, money) used judiciously to deliver the project results?
- What net benefit has the project created?
- How has Sabre ensured value for money in the Project?
- How has Sabre's organisational development been impacted by the project?

2.2.4 Coherence

- In which ways did the project's design align with SDG 4.2, and how were the activities consistent and aligned with safeguarding and Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations?

2.2.5 Sustainability and replicability

- What appears to be missing from the intervention logic but critical for sustainability and replicability?
- To what extent, and what evidence would support the sustainability of the project's benefits or some components of the project beyond the end of this project?
- To what extent is this project replicable or scalable?

3 Evaluation methodology

A mixed method of evaluation is proposed for this assignment. However, the Consultant is not restricted in the choice of methodology, provided the method is robust and relevant to answer the research questions. The consultant would be required to develop the methodology and data collection tools (quantitative and qualitative) that best address the evaluation questions in collaboration with Sabre. The consultant is expected to ensure adequate sampling of respondents and participants for the primary data collection. Based on the sample, Sabre will facilitate access to respondent groups for field data collection. It is expected that the methods and tools should be participatory, gender and culturally sensitive.

4 Timelines

The assignment is expected start in **April, 2023** to be completed by **July, 2023**.

5 Submission of Proposal

Please submit the proposal (technical and financial) with a short cover letter to Michael.klutse@sabre.education by **17:00hrs, Monday 27th February, 2023**.

6 Assessment of Proposal

Proposals will be assessed based on the technical and financial proposal. The technical proposal will form 70% of the total score with the financial covering the remaining 30%

6.1 Appointment of Consultant

After assessing the proposals, a decision will be made on the consultant whose skills, experience and financial proposal meets the needs of Sabre Education. Sabre Education will communicate directly to the successful individual or firm indicating acceptance of the proposal and request for conversation around areas that may require further negotiations (for example a slight change in the approach/methodology may be discussed etc.).

A contract will be prepared for the consultant to sign, this will detail the fees and payment terms for the assignment as well as timelines for delivery of the various elements of the assignment as well as other details.

7 Deliverables

The successful consultant would be expected to submit the following:

1. An inception report, which should describe and bring out any refinements, specific issues related to the ToR and an evaluation work plan. This should be submitted and approved by Sabre two weeks after signing the contract.
2. An evaluation plan showing evaluation areas of enquiry and key evaluation questions, evaluation methodology, information collection tools and analysis, including sample size, reporting and detailed field visits and meetings.
3. Draft Evaluation Report, which should follow the final evaluation Report Format and powerpoint including summary of findings, key learnings and recommendations (See Annex 2 for format of report)
4. Final Evaluation Report

8 Budget and logistical support

The consultant is expected to cost the entire assignment which should include fees, direct costs and expenses. The financial proposal (budget) should be submitted as a separate document in excel (ensuring all formulas are included).

Sabre will provide the consultant with logistical support;

- Background material.
- Assistance to identify relevant stakeholders for interviews, and their contact details.
- Any other support as agreed by Sabre and the consultant.

9 Data protection and intellectual property

On completion of the evaluation, the results are the intellectual property of Sabre and can only be copied, used or published in any form, only after authorization has been given by Sabre, and Sabre is duly cited.

10 Sabre's Photography Policy

Sabre seeks to regulate the use of all media files taken under its responsibility to ensure adequate protection of the persons involved in the photograph or video, as well as the protection of the organisation against liabilities arising from any misuse, negligent use, or abuse of such materials. These media include, but are not limited to, any photo

or image of a person or a scene taken by any means, electronic or otherwise, any recordings for both audio and video taken of all minors below the legal age of 18 years. The Consultants would be required to sign this policy and would only be allowed to take pictures after receiving express permission from the authorised persons in Sabre and signed consent form from guardians or parents of minors.

11 Child Rights Protection

In addition to its Strategic Plan, Sabre works with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the relevant goals for these two documents, to deliver Kindergarten Education in Ghana. The Consultants would therefore be required to sign Sabre's Safeguarding Policy and Photography and Filming Policy and submit the same before commencing the evaluation.

12 Annex 2: Evaluation Report Format

The Consultant will be responsible for writing an evaluation report of no more than 25 pages, this excludes table of contents and annexes.

Title Page: Name of organization, project being evaluated, location of project, date of evaluation, name and address of Consultant.

Executive Summary: Concise and clear section which should contain an overview of the report's key findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt.

Context analysis: A description of the project's immediate policy and operating context

Background and project description: A brief and clear description of the project, its objectives and key indicators. The logical frameworks and Theory of Change should be clearly referenced and the status of the indicators displayed in an annex. The donor, organizational and operational arrangements that were used to deliver the project should be described in this section.

Purpose of evaluation: This section should describe clearly why the evaluation is being conducted and how the findings would be used. The purpose should reflect the OECD/DAC Criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Scope: The evaluation questions agreed upon with Sabre, geographic and sectoral coverage of the project should be described here. This section should also describe the limitations of the evaluation, sampling issues among others.

Methodology: The techniques of data collection, the use of participatory research approaches, gender segregated data allowing for a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods are documented here. The report should explain how stakeholders were involved and how sampling was done, the report should also explain how children participated in the evaluation and explain the reasons why, if this did not take place.

Findings: Provide robust findings about the project's outcomes and the achievements, which should be measured against end of project targets and the impact created thereof. These linkages should be created with sufficient triangulation of data, and the findings should be clearly linked to the evaluation questions.

Conclusions and recommendations: For each conclusion reached, it must be substantiated with the evaluation findings which should be consistent with the evaluation methodology. The conclusions should answer the evaluation questions and where it is not possible, explanations should be rendered. The recommendations should be action oriented and implementable. They should be relevant and are linked to the identified learning options, providing opportunities for other interventions and the growth of Sabre.

Annexes: Attach here the logical Frameworks, or theory of change, the evaluation ToR, the evaluation plan, list of people involved in the process, data collection tools used, list of documents used and a list of references.

ANNEX 4 LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED

1. Ackah-Jnr, F.R., Appiah, J., Addo-Kissiedu, K., & Kwao, A. (2022). Early Childhood Education Policy and Practice in Ghana: Document and Evidence Analysis with McDonnell and Elmore's Framework of Policy Instruments. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research*, 12(3), 295-321. <http://dx.doi.org/10.447/remie.9964>
2. Publication on Early Childhood Education (ECE) Unit by the Ghana Education Service. Retrieved from: <https://ges.gov.gh/early-childhood/>
3. Education Sector Performance, Draft Report (ESPR) 2019, Ministry of Education. Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PBME)
4. Early Childhood Education Policy. Indicator Framework for Monitoring Access, Equity, Quality and Management in Ghana's Childhood Education. Retrieved from <https://www.ece-accelerator.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/1.%20ECE%20Policy%20Framework.pdf>
5. Challenges facing early childhood education in Ghana. What do stakeholders say? Summarised by: Katherine Lee and Lisa Gee. Article retrieved from <https://www.clcdghana.org/what-are-the-challenges-facing-early-childhood-education-in-ghana>
6. Early Childhood Development. UNICEF works with partners in Ghana to give every child the right start in life. Article retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/early-childhood-development>