

# School for Life

Abridged Version of SfL Strategic Plan 2013-2018



*Tamale, Ghana, April 2013*

## VISION

A Ghana where the right to relevant quality education is fulfilled; and all people contribute towards the positive development of the country.

## MISSION

SfL works to strengthen civil society's role in improving access to relevant quality education by functioning as a lead organisation in delivering, demonstrating and advocating for mother-tongue based complementary basic education in underserved areas of Ghana.

## Introduction

This document is an abridged version of the School for Life Strategic Plan spanning over a five-year period (2013-2018). The strategy defines the overall strategic direction and focus of School for Life for the period 2013 - 2018.

Five strategic priority areas have been identified that together will contribute to the overall strategic goal and mission of School for Life. The Strategic Plan will span over a five-year period to allow for programme and organisational development, expansion and implementation essential for achieving lasting changes for out of school children in Ghana.

### School for Life's 5 Strategic Priority Areas

1. Education Advocacy and Policy Change
2. Civil Society Coordination and Participation
3. Delivering, Demonstrating and Promoting CBE
4. Learning, Development and Evidence Based
5. Organizational Capacity Development

## Section I: Background and Achievement

### 1.1 Background

School for Life started in 1995, springing from cooperation on rural community development between the Northern Region based civil society organisation, Ghana Developing Communities Association (GDCA)<sup>1</sup>, and a Danish NGO, Ghana Friendship Groups. The partners saw education as a pillar of development and at the same time realised that there were serious challenges to

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educational performance in deprived parts of Ghana. The intention was to give out of school children beyond school starting age an opportunity to attain basic literacy and numeracy in their mother tongue, combined with some basic skills and knowledge that is relevant to their families and communities.

Community involvement, the use of mother tongue, a locally adapted curriculum, as well as locally recruited community teachers are major features of the model<sup>2</sup>. The model provides instruction to out-of-school children in their mother tongue for nine months. After this period of instruction, the learners become adequately proficient in numeracy and literacy and are then integrated into primary 3 on wards in the formal school to continue their education. The model has proven to be an effective one in tackling the phenomenon of out-of-school children in Northern Ghana.

### ***A typical School for Life Class in session***



## **1.2 Key achievements and lessons learnt**

### ***Development of a flexible CBE module for out-of-school children***

Since its establishment, School for Life has successfully developed a model for complementary basic education, which can improve access to quality education at primary level. Initially this model was implemented solely with DANIDA support in the Ghanaian – Danish partnership mentioned above. An impact assessment was conducted in 2007, when – after more than ten year's implementation – it was possible to collect sufficient evidence to draw reliable conclusions on the effectiveness of the model. This assessment showed significant impact at individual, family and community level. The convincing results achieved by School for Life have paved the way for expanding the scope through cooperation with major development partners in education. Since 2004 it has been possible for School for Life to expand operations through funding from USAID (for components of the Education Quality for All - EQUALL project), DFID (the Literacy for Life

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Change Project), UNICEF, and Innovations for Poverty Action and Community Based Organisations supported by IBIS. Together with continuing DANIDA support this has made it possible to reach communities in 17 districts, mainly in Ghana's Northern but also Upper East and Upper West regions; and over 200,000 children have benefited directly from gaining access to education. Apart from the direct implementation of CBE, SfL has also provided technical support to the Afram Plains Development Organisation (APDO) in 2012 and the Directorate of Education in Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirim (KEEA) District in 2013 under the UNICEF support Programme to implement complementary education in Kwahu North and South in the Eastern Region and in the Central Region respectively.

#### ***Provision of Technical Support for startup of the Ghana CBE Programme***

Even though SfL continue to implement CBE under the Ghana CBE Programme, it also continue to provide technical support to the Management Unit in the form of training of CBE trainers, translation and transposition of CBE materials from English to target Ghanaian Languages and various resource documents to aid the start-up of the Programme.

SfL also provided orientation to member organizations of the CBE Alliance on implementation of CBE and assisted them on how to write proposals for the implementation of CBE in the first year (2012) of the Ghana CBE Programme. This contributed to most of the CBE Alliance members winning contracts to implement CBE.

#### ***School for Life providing training to some members of the CBE Alliance on proposal writing for the Ghana CBE Programme***



**SfL's contribution to quality education:**

**TCAI.** In contributing to address challenges to quality education in Ghana, SfL collaborated with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), from 2010 to 2012, to implement the Teacher Community Assistant Initiative (TCAI) Project. The Project engaged community support teachers to run remedial classes for children who lagged behind in the lower primary.

**ACE.** Beyond the work with TCAI, School for Life was also a key partner in the Alliance for Change in Education (ACE), which run from 2008 to 2013. Within the terms of the Project, SfL provided technical support by developing its curriculum materials. ACE Project operated in the Karaga and Gushegu Districts with the aim of using Wing School concept to get children in very deprived communities who are out of school into school. The key element of the ACE strategy was to promote and use the wing school concept. School for Life organised experts in Mathematics, English Language, Science, Creative Arts and Ghanaian Language to form a writing, translation and transposition team to develop the curriculum materials (for grades 1,2 and 3) for the ACE Wing School Project. An orientation workshop was organised for the team for it to be well informed about the ACE Wing School concept and the background of the targeted communities. The materials were first developed in English, transposed and/or translated into Dagbani and Likpakpaaln languages to cover the first three grades of the primary school. These materials were tested, validated and piloted in the Karaga and Gushegu Districts.

Apart from the development of the curriculum materials, SfL trained 14 District Teacher Support Team Members from the two districts and 6 tutors from Bagabaga College of Education who in turn trained 200 community teachers in basic teaching and pedagogical skills that would enable them teach effectively in their respective communities.

To ensure quality output, SfL led in the assessment of the performance of both pupils and teachers of the wing schools who were randomly selected. The quality assessment exercise was conducted in seven former wing schools and six public schools in Gushegu (4 former wing schools and 3 public schools) and Karaga (3 former wing schools and 3 public schools) Districts.

**ADVANCE.** Similarly, the Association of Church-Based Development Programme (ACDEP) under the Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) contracted SfL to develop a numeracy manual and a Learners' Workbook for its farmer groups. After developing

these two books, SfL went further to organize a training of trainers' workshop for the 50 resource persons for the Numeracy Programme. The resource persons in turn trained about 200 farmer groups made up of 10,000 individual farmers. This project started in 2014 and is continuing into 2015. In addition, to ensure quality implementation of the programme activities, SfL monitored the activities of both trainers and the farmer groups under the ADVANCE Programme.

In addition, SfL is collaborating with Tzedek, an organization based in the UK, in implementing the Education Quality Initiative Project (EQUIP). The Project aims at contributing to improve quality education in schools in deprived communities by providing in-service training to lower primary school teachers, supplying teaching and learning materials, textbooks, organizing quiz competitions, best teacher awards, best school awards, providing orientation for SMCs/PTAs on their roles and responsibilities and providing funds to the District Directorates of Education, to support monitoring and supervision of schools. The Project started in 2012 and is scheduled to end in 2016.

**SfL Programmes' contribution to the drafting of the CBE Policy:** The developments in SfL's CBE Programme, between 1995 and 2005, among others, attracted the attention of the Government (MoE/GES), which led to the commissioning of a study on complementary education systems in Ghana in 2006, with a focus in Northern Ghana, and with particular emphasis on School for Life. The results of the study showed commendable merit in the School for Life model for tackling the out-of-school children phenomenon.

The results of the study led to the drafting of a CBE Policy by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2007, based on the School for Life model.

**SfL involvement in the CBE Alliance:** Following the drafting of the CBE Policy, SfL championed the formation of the "CBE Alliance" in November 2010. The CBE Alliance, led by School for Life, with support from other CSOs such as IBIS and NNED, is composed of like-minded organizations and individuals committed to advocating for access to and quality of basic education. Since its inception, the CBE Alliance embarked on intense advocacy drive to ensure the acceptance and ratification of the CBE Policy. Realizing that the out-of-school children situation was a nation-wide phenomenon, the ratification and acceptance of the Policy by Government, was necessary to provide a basis for nation-wide implementation of the Ghana CBE Programme. The efforts by School for Life and the CBE Alliance paid off since the policy has now

been approved by the Ministry of Education (December 2014). The Policy provides a standardized framework for nation-wide implementation of the Ghana CBE Programme.

Beyond the CBE Alliance's work in advocating for approval of the CBE policy, it has also partnered with the Regional Coordinating Councils and Regional Directorates of the Northern, Upper East and Upper West to organize regional education fora for the three regions in 2014. The regional fora provided a platform for SfL and the Alliance to draw the attention of Education Authorities to certain problems debilitating against BECE performance and achievement of overall education goals, education of the public on the implementation of the Ghana CBE Programme and to get the District Authorities to devise strategies to address challenges of education delivery in the District and integration of CBE learners in the formal schools. The Northern and Upper West Education fora were published on Daily Graphic and aired in the evening News of Joy News and Viasat1 News.

Following the Northern Regional Education Forum, the Regional Minister formed an Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) to make follow-ups to the Districts to ensure that they were implementing strategies devised during the regional forum. SfL is a key member of the Group.

School for Life sees it as a privilege to work with other institutions and organisations with a passion for giving all children an opportunity to enjoy their right to quality education. The organisation has a sincere belief that education is a key ingredient in building a strong, inclusive and democratic society and will therefore work for education to stay high on the development agenda also in the post MDG era. And we believe that our positive achievements, know-how and capacity developed over the years give us a good basis for promoting this agenda.

### 1.3 Values

#### Values

##### **TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

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

##### **COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION**

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

##### **EQUITY**

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

##### **INCLUSION & NON-DISCRIMINATION**



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

## 1.4 Situational and Problem Analysis

### Poverty and regional inequity

Ghana's poverty profile reveals that at least 45 % of the country's population is below the poverty line with the vast majority of the poor living in the three northern regions. Poverty levels in Upper West are as high as 81 %, 73 % in Upper East and 56 % in Northern Region<sup>3</sup>. Regional inequality remains significant with an average per capita income in the Northern Region 2-4 times lower than elsewhere in Ghana, while inter-regional income inequality has continued to account for about one fifth of the total inequality in Ghana<sup>4</sup>.

The World Bank's analysis (2010) on the efficiency and effectiveness of Ghana's education sector suggests that the poor in the northern regions of Ghana receive less than 30 % of Ghana's national resources per school age pupil compared to their southern counterparts despite the poverty profile of northern Ghana. This is validated by recent studies on poverty and education, which investigate the impact on educational equity on the poor from a qualitative perspective<sup>5</sup>. Statistics reveal that the regions with the highest incidence of poverty and lowest levels of education are also the regions with the least per pupil GoG expenditure in education, with the three regions in the North experiencing a gap of between 59 % and 83 % of substandard expenditure per pupil. The lack of financial equity is mainly a result of poor deployment of trained teachers which has meant that far too few teachers have been deployed to the neediest areas of the country.

### Out of School Children

A growing body of evidence shows that there is a very strong regional poverty dimension, as described above, to educational exclusion. 330,000 out of school children are found in the three regions in the North (Northern, Upper East and Upper West). There are also high numbers of out of school children in the Western Region (104,763), Central Region (98,176) and Volta Region (96,002). These regions experience the highest poverty rates and also contain the highest proportion of out of school children<sup>6</sup>. Root causes for children being out of school are closely linked to Ghana's development bottlenecks which include intergenerational poverty, educational poverty and the social dynamics of structural inequality. These bottlenecks are also a major challenge to educational inclusion due to poor quality of education and non-equitable human resource distribution in the sector.

Poor quality education is probably the greatest collective barrier, reinforced by inefficient educational resource allocation across the most deprived regions, and results in exclusion at all levels. Poor quality learning coupled with poor life skills outcomes are deterring Ghana's poor

<sup>3</sup> UNDP, 2009; World Bank, 2010; Ghana Statistics Service, 2008

<sup>4</sup> DFID, 2009

<sup>5</sup> PPVA, 2010

<sup>6</sup> GLSS, 2008

from enrolling their children in school and/or keeping them there. Improving quality of education for those children in school is vital for breaking the poverty cycle and ensuring especially that women are able to limit family size and improve the quality of life for their children.

Poverty levels are one of the key determinants as to whether children are enrolled and retained in school. The largest numbers of excluded children who fail to complete primary education fall back into endemic poverty and are at risk of reproducing these outcomes for their own children<sup>7</sup>. Poverty coping mechanisms often involve children in activities which can sustain economic welfare of the family. Consequently, the most deprived districts have a higher proportion of children out of school and low attendance rates in comparison with the better endowed districts of Ghana.

The direct cost of education including the payment of illegal school fees/related costs, transport, teaching and learning materials and sanitary material for girls is found to be common reasons cited for non-enrolment and non-attendance in Ghanaian primary schools. The opportunity costs of education also have a great effect on children across all the zones of exclusion since parents in extreme poverty rely heavily on their children to support the family. For instance, child activities and labour support to the households have an immediate and visible financial outcome to the family, especially when children perform agriculture, domestic and market tasks. The high opportunity cost of schooling rises with age. Especially children from the regions in the North are also prone to migration to the South for labour in order to support the family.

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

Inadequate school infrastructure restricts access to education and negatively impacts on child retention particularly among the most deprived regions and districts of the country<sup>8</sup>. 11 % of communities in Ghana are without primary schools within a 2 km radius of the community and over 30 % of communities do not have a school within their own community<sup>9</sup>. Many children have to walk long distances to school which affects their punctuality, attendance and the quality of learning in rural Ghana, particularly in the North.

### **Civil Society movement in the context of Complementary Basic Education**

Civil society organisations, both national and international, continue to play a critical role in the delivery of basic education across Ghana's most deprived rural areas. The innovative and flexible nature of their interventions has made their work particularly effective in reaching the poor and deprived areas of the country. There is also evidence that increased levels of accountability are being established through their work with the District Education Offices and as a 'watchdog' on teachers in remote rural areas<sup>10</sup>. CSOs working separately and independent of public sector

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<sup>7</sup> UNICEF, Out of School Study, 2011

<sup>8</sup> Casely-Hayford et al, 2011; IBIS 2010; Hunt 2008; World Bank 2004

<sup>9</sup> GSS, 2008

<sup>10</sup> Associates for Change, 2011; LDC evaluation, 2009

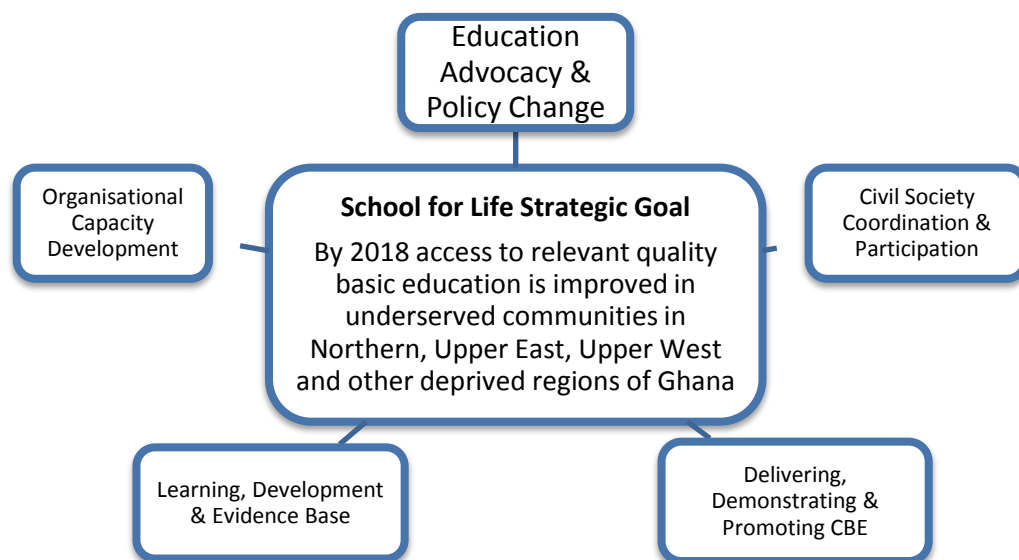


institutions have delivered programmes with far reaching results. The weaknesses include the fact that they are not coordinated and therefore have limited outcomes on a district-wide level due to the often small size of their programming. The civil society sector in Ghana lacks financial support for core funding and remains a weak force in terms of coalition and membership building and has limited capacity to push forward the out of school children agenda. With only one national representative coalition body, 15-20 large scale international/national NGOs and approximately 400-500 local NGOs/CBOs involved in the education sector, the CSO sector needs much greater harmonization, consolidation, common vision and capacity building<sup>11</sup>.

## Section 2: Strategic Priorities

### 2.1 Overall Strategic Goal

School for Life has considered the situational analysis and opportunities in the environment as described above and held it up against its own capacity and internal opportunities through its partnerships and relations. As a result, five strategic objectives and strategies for implementation have been chosen for 2013-18 which combined aim at achieving the **overall strategic goal**:



School for Life will seek to influence service delivery practice rather than delivering services directly or filling in for the absentee state. *Influencing* will take several forms including strategic testing and evidence, and facilitating the development of an independent and proactive civil society to champion their own causes for the social contract between the state and its citizenry to function.

School for Life's activities regarding advocacy for policy change, research, documentation, public awareness raising and monitoring of policy implementation has national coverage. Learning and development of flexible CBE models and solutions for improved access to relevant quality education may even go beyond the borders of Ghana and influence strategies in other countries in Africa.

<sup>11</sup> Casely-Hayford, 2011

## 2.2 Strategic Objective 1: Education Advocacy & Policy Change



**Advocate for pro-poor policies and change in education, targeting access to relevant quality basic education, and promote and support their implementation.**

***Programme Manager making a Statement for the CBE Alliance in the Upper West Region, during a Regional Education Forum***

### **Expected Changes**

- ✓ The CBE Policy is approved by the Ministry of Education and enacted by Parliament
- ✓ Ghanaian authorities and the public are aware of the structural barriers in education, the existence of the CBE Policy and its implementation
- ✓ Financing education is based on needs and addresses the structural barriers that restrict school attendance for children in the poverty zones of the country
- ✓ Utilization of education funds are monitored and documented at all levels
- ✓ Increased allocation of trained teachers, especially female teachers
- ✓ Recruitment of community based teachers

## 2.3 Strategic Objective 2: Civil Society Coordination & Participation



**Provide leadership in promoting civil society participation in policy/decision-making, in CBE implementation and in improving coordination and harmonization among Civil Society Organisations and initiatives for improved accountability and influence.**

**Leslie Tettey, National Coordinator of GNECC, making a presentation during a Civil Society workshop in Accra**

#### **Expected Changes**

- ✓ Improved coordination of civil society stakeholders for joint advocacy in education
- ✓ Improved recognition and funding of CSOs in delivering flexible CBE
- ✓ Efficient implementation and functioning of the CBE Alliance
- ✓ Increased community-driven demand for education

## **2.4 Strategic Objective 3: Delivering, Demonstrating & Promoting Complementary Basic Education**

### **Promoting CBE through the CBE Alliance**



*Deliver, demonstrate and promote flexible and complementary basic education models adapted to the situation and needs of the hardest-to-reach areas and marginalised out of school children of Ghana, particularly in Northern, Upper East, Upper West, and other deprived regions/districts in the country.*

#### **Expected Changes**

- ✓ Out of School Children without access to formal school are able to access flexible complementary basic education
- ✓ The wing-school model is extended to deprived districts and hard-to-reach communities and applied along with flexible CBE implementation

## **2.5 Strategic Objective 4: Learning, Development & Evidence Base**

*Develop and provide evidence, capacity building and technical support for appropriate pedagogic approaches, methods and material to be adopted and applied by the formal primary education system in order to improve access, relevance and quality teaching and learning in formal schools in Ghana and beyond.*

#### **Expected Changes**

- ✓ Improved documentation of the efficiency of mother-tongue education, functionality and child-centred methodologies
- ✓ Strengthened technical capacity of MoE, especially NALAP in ensuring effective methodologies in formal schools

- ✓ Improved tracking and organising of School for Life alumni for effective documentation and advocacy

## 2.6 Strategic Objective 5: Organisational Capacity Development

*Strengthen School for Life's internal capacity to provide strategic leadership and direction in the CBE Alliance, to improve its relationship-building and advocacy approaches, and to document and make known its results, components and values.*

### **Staff capacity building workshops**



#### **Expected Changes**

- ✓ Strengthened programme performance and internal functioning by School for Life in its strategic priority areas
- ✓ Strengthened relationships & partnerships with external stakeholders

## Section 3: Monitoring & Financing the Strategic plan

### 3.1 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER)

School for Life, is currently in a process of implementing results based management (RBM) in its programme work. This involves a review of all MER systems and procedures to become results oriented. The rationale behind RBM approach is to focus on outcomes, and eventually change in and impact on peoples' lives. It also aims to strengthen accountability with respect to both the donor and the target group.

In line with becoming a learning organisation, School for Life will develop an overall MER system. The MER system will contain:

- All objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators of the various programmes and projects
- MER tools & mechanisms (templates, guidelines, ToRs)
- Systems and mechanisms for involvement of and accountability to stakeholders
- Mechanisms for overall organisational learning and improvement
- Roles and responsibilities in MER
- Performance Management system

### 3.2 Resource mobilization & Fundraising

Large scale donor financing appears to still be the most feasible source of funding over the next three to four years (e.g. DANIDA, DFID, USAID and UNICEF), but linkages will be made with other less known financiers in order to build a sustainable model of funding, and in order to pilot niche projects before scaling up with larger funding.

**DANIDA's flexible and long-term core funding** has supported School for Life since its inception in 1995 and through its various phases and changes in terms of the continuation and expansion in service delivery, changes in strategy and direction towards replication and mainstreaming. DANIDA is a likely source of funding to core aspects of School for Life through the Danish partner GV. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' new rights-based strategy for development support will guide the selection of School for Life strategic priorities to be included in DANIDA funded programmes. DANIDA funds can also be utilized as matching funds for other larger funding like EC-grants. Furthermore, capacity building of School for Life, the CBE Alliance, and other coalitions and CBOs to be able to influence the legal framework and implementation is likely to gain support from DANIDA given its civil society strategy.

**DFID support to Complementary Basic Education** is likely to be another important funding channel for School for Life and the CBE Alliance over the next five years in order to ensure that School for Life can implement and assist other NGOs implement CBE on a national basis. The DFID support will involve the development of a standardized CBE curriculum and training facilitators from the communities in order to roll out the national CBE programme. The strengthening and leadership of School for Life in relation to the CBE Alliance will be a key factor in positioning the organisations to take a lead role in this process.

**USAID Learn** will be an important funding opportunity for School for Life to pursue over the coming years particularly given the establishment of the School for Life Learning & Development Centre as a major resource to train teachers and support the role of more effective approaches to early grade reading / numeracy and remedial programmes needed at the upper primary levels of education. School for Life will seek to set up a collaborative partnership with the agencies which win the USAID Learn grant to implement and help improve the NALAP programme implementation across the country. Furthermore, School for Life will explore partnerships with the District Assemblies through USAID Learn funding for expanding teacher training in early grade literacy/numeracy.

**Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA):** SADA's potential support for CBE will be explored and SADA's Board briefed on the impact of the School for Life and CBE programmes of this nature including the ACE model, followed up by a more specific concept note to SADA for consideration. The CBE programme is an excellent example of how CSOs involved in education could help improve the achievement results and gender equity goals of the SADA programme. SADA has identified three areas in which it needs to support basic education challenges: Poor performance of BECE candidates, girl child education and the low level of science



education. Presenting SADA with the evidence of School for Life's relevance and impact, and more broadly the concept of CBE is critical to creating awareness and being part of the agenda setting of SADA. It may be necessary to ensure that the central government buys fully into the CBE programme before SADA support is pursued, given the mandate to only "add value and not substitute what central government is doing."

**Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** has committed 75.5 million USD to the Ghana Government in support of the primary education sector. The decentralized mechanisms used to support the 63 most deprived areas of the country will be the main channel used for the GPE programme. School for Life will explore the options with the World Bank in offering its services to help district assemblies and district education offices develop proposals and provide services in the area of teacher training at lower primary level in order to improve early grade reading, and to support programme monitoring.

**Support CBOs to gain access to small-scale funding:** School for Life will support and link up partners who want to implement CBE programmes to gain access to the quite small in scale funding opportunities focused on supporting grassroots organisations. School for Life will explore the terms and potential of foundations and funding agencies interested in child literacy and basic education initiatives.

**Private Sector and Corporate Social Responsibility:** There is growing recognition of School for Life's work particularly in the public and civil society sector and more recently within the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education. School for Life is, however, far less recognized within Ghana's private sector for their contribution and on-going work towards literacy attainment with out of school children. This challenge will be increasingly important to address in the coming years as donors scale down funding for Ghana.

Since this is a completely new area characterised by very different cooperation modalities, School for Life will liaise with the programme level of the Empowerment for Life programme on considering a strategy at that level for approaching the private sector based on a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda. School for Life will exploit opportunities for presenting its achievements and potential to the private sector at relevant fora in order for School for Life to develop a stronger impression for funding. Some potential is seen and will be further explored in fast-growing large businesses in the capital of Northern Region.

### 3.3 Management of external risks

Following are the main external risks identified, including considerations on how to manage them

**Inertia of GoG in implementation of CBE and other relevant policies:** GES remains a heavy and rather bureaucratic system to work with; policies are often not costed and the capacity to implement realistic plans often weak, especially in deprived districts of the country. In some cases, there is unwillingness by government officials to exercise transparency, thus inhibiting proper accountability towards the population. As many of the strategic priorities of School for Life depends on other actors for sustainability, in particular the GES, this poses a strong threat to the implementation and efficiency of this strategy. School for Life will seek all opportunities with bi-

and multilateral donors to advocate for capacity strengthening of the MoE and the GES on Education Management, for instance. Furthermore the School for Life strategy on advocacy and community-driven demand for services will be applied to hold government stakeholders to account.

**Conflicts & natural disasters diverting government priorities:** The West-African sub-region has been highly unstable during the past couple of years with various civil strives, post-election conflicts and conflicts derived from economic crises and increased poverty. Although some of these conflicts seem to have been partly solved, there is still a high risk factor. Although Ghana is politically relatively stable, the risk for political instability and/or ethnic or chieftaincy related conflicts is real and may increase as is seen in the West-African sub-region and globally, if a more equal distribution of resources is not sought. Similarly, natural disasters such as floods and draught in School for Life's main operational area may also affect implementation and divert government priorities and resources such as SADA. School for Life will seek mitigation strategies together with other stakeholders through various peace-building initiatives, and through advocating for more political tolerance and equal distribution of resources. Furthermore, School for Life will continue to work across ethnic, religious and party divisions, including in its staffing and governing body, to remain neutral of various divisions.

**Recruiting, retaining and building capacity of suitably qualified staff:** The areas of priority within the Strategic Plan require core competencies of staff. Attracting and retaining qualified staff is essential for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and will be a focus of attention. School for Life will continuously analyse factors of commitment, work environment, terms and conditions as well as staff development opportunities as part of retaining quality staff. This will include analysing its competitiveness in salary and benefits in relation to other organisations of comparison. The organisation will invest in and prioritize learning and development in its human resources as a means to attracting and retaining well-qualified staff.

**Filling the funding gaps:** In order to realize our goal within the above mentioned strategic areas of priority, School for Life needs a strategic and long-term funding base for the next five years as funding for organisational capacity building, coordination, documentation and advocacy are often more difficult than direct service delivery. A fundraising strategy will be developed based on this strategy. It will be reviewed together with School for Life's partners during the lifetime of this strategy to continuously explore relevant funding opportunities and ensure a sustainable approach.

Dissemination of Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will be printed and disseminated to all internal and relevant external stakeholders. A public launching with the presence of relevant stakeholders and the media will also be held.

### 3.4 Review of the Strategic Plan

The School for Life Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually in relation to the annual reporting and planning. The CBE Alliance meetings will be utilized as an inclusive forum for reviewing the strategic priorities.



# ORGANOGRAM

