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SABRE EDUCATION

Winner of the 2026 Khalifa International Award for Early Learning:

Best Programs, Curricula, Teaching Methodologies and Practices Category

Doing More with What Exists: Scaling Early Childhood Development through Public Infrastructure

Abstract

Sabre Education is an international NGO that has been working since 2004 to provide children in Ghana with the best possible early childhood (kindergarten) education by partnering with government to deliver play-based learning at scale.

Sabre's Kindergarten (KG) Play-based Teacher Training tackles weak learning outcomes across Ghana, where 62% of children still lack basic reading skills by Primary 2. By putting play at the heart of teaching - one of the most effective ways to boost learning - Sabre is helping to change this picture.

Using a Train-The-Trainer model, the programme strengthens the education system to support KG teachers in delivering Ghana's play-based curriculum. It trains regional and district Ghana Education Service officers to train and monitor teachers and equips headteachers to coach and support their staff.

The model champions play-based teaching, gender equality, and inclusive learning, helping children build strong literacy, numeracy, and psychosocial skills.

Innovation

Our holistic approach to teacher training is highly innovative because it reaches every part of the ECE ecosystem. By equipping teachers, school leaders, and government education officials with the tools to transform KG teaching quality, we are reimagining learning for generations of children.

Classrooms that were once dull and disengaging are now joyful, child-centred spaces where children love to learn. The resulting gains in learning are not only changing children's futures but also elevating the status of KG in Ghana- reshaping it from a lower-status profession into being recognised as the most important stage of a child's education.

Importance

Improving learning outcomes at the KG level is critical, as poor-quality early education can hold children back for years to come. One major driver of weak outcomes is the shortage of trained KG teachers - a challenge Sabre directly tackles through our play-based teacher training programme.

The transformation in classrooms is remarkable. Instead of rote teaching in uninspiring spaces, teachers now create vibrant, play-rich environments full of exploration and creativity. And the stark contrast in learning outcomes between Sabre-trained and traditional classrooms shows just how vital it is for this training to reach every teacher in Ghana.

Impact

We have gathered strong evidence showing that our training significantly improves teachers' ability to deliver play-based teaching - leading to clear, positive gains in children's learning outcomes.

Our impact also reaches far beyond direct beneficiaries. The success of our approach has led the Government of Ghana to involve us in shaping key ECE policies and initiatives, and we are now on the cusp of scaling our teacher training nationwide.

Feasibility & Sustainability

Sabre's training approach informed the KG In-Service Education and Training (KG-INSET) Manual, adopted in 2023 as Ghana's national standard for KG teacher training. In 2026, KG-INSET will be scaled nationwide to all 30,000+ public KG teachers - equipping every teacher to create vibrant, child-centred classrooms.

Beyond the national rollout, there is strong potential to expand further: across Ghana's private sector, which accounts for 44% of ECE provision, and internationally through technical assistance to governments and NGO partners seeking to strengthen their early childhood systems.

Doing More with What Exists: Scaling Early Childhood Development through Public Infrastructure

1) How innovative, creative, and ground-breaking is the program?

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. Our three key areas of work are:

- Influencing early childhood education policy and practice
- Training teachers and school officials in quality early childhood education
- Transforming learning environments to facilitate positive play-based learning.

Sabre's ultimate goal is for our work to reach all 30,000+ kindergarten (KG) teachers in Ghana, ensuring that all 1.2 million kindergarten aged children across the country get a quality start to their education.

Sabre's work in the KG sector is imperative as although Ghana offers two years of free, compulsory KG, which has expanded access, quality has lagged. In fact, the government's 2020 ECE Policy acknowledges that play-based teaching was not being delivered effectively, with serious consequences for learning outcomes. By Primary 2, when Ghana first assesses learning outcomes, 62% of children still lack basic reading skills[1].

Sabre, as an implementing partner to government has therefore been supporting the early education sector in Ghana for many years, modelling, testing, and scaling play-based kindergarten (KG) teacher training approaches to improve quality in both teacher and child outcomes, at increasingly larger scale.

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[1] These are the strategic plans for gender equality, developed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), to promote gender mainstreaming and advance women's empowerment across all sectors.

Sabre, as an implementing partner to government has therefore been supporting the early education sector in Ghana for many years, modelling, testing, and scaling play-based kindergarten (KG) teacher training approaches to improve quality in both teacher and child outcomes, at increasingly larger scale.

Play sits at the heart of Sabre's work. Guided by research, we know that play unlocks powerful learning experiences, nurturing every aspect of development – intellectual, social, emotional and physical[2].

Sabre has also collaborated closely with the government to support the development of the National Kindergarten (KG) Operational Plan (2012), the ECE Policy (2020), the B.Ed. in Early Grades Curriculum (2018), the play-based KG Curriculum (2019). This is all helping to ensure that play-based learning is at the heart of KG classrooms in Ghana.

To date, Sabre has directly trained over 6,060 teachers, headteachers and student teachers and 709 Ghana Education Service (GES) officials in quality play-based teaching, transforming the early education of 361,095 children.

As a result of our many years of work with the government and other ECE partners, the Ghanaian government is now set to scale a harmonised play-based teacher training model (named KG-INSET) co-developed with GES by Sabre, Right To Play, Lively Minds, and IPA across the country starting in early 2026. This ambitious programme, being financed by the Global Partnership for Education, aims to reach all 30,000+ public kindergarten teachers, ensuring that 1.2 million KG-aged children in public schools receive a quality early years education. This marks a transformative phase in Ghana's journey towards expanding quality play-based education nationwide, and Sabre is proud to be playing a key role in this.

But what is our model, and what makes it so innovative, creative, and ground-breaking?

First and foremost, the KG-INSET model has been developed in deep collaboration with the government and key ECE sector stakeholders in Ghana to help ensure that teacher training is no longer delivered in a piecemeal fashion with NGO's and government implementing their own approaches in different areas of the country. Sabre and its partners work has shifted the sector to develop an optimal play-based KG teacher training model (the KG-INSET), now owned by the government, which will achieve equitable learning outcomes for children at scale.

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[2] UNICEF, 2018, Learning through play. Strengthening learning through play in early childhood education programmes.

A key innovation of the KG-INSET model is its use of a train-the-trainer approach, which builds sustainability in the public education system from the outset. It trains regional and district-level GES officers to effectively train and monitor teachers. By using teams of local trainers, we ensure that training knowledge remains within the communities once the training is completed.

The KG-INSET training content, delivered through nine days of training workshops over the course of one academic year, is based on the government-endorsed play-based KG curriculum and covers all the information and skills needed for teachers at the KG level to deliver play-based teaching. It also encourages gender equality and inclusive learning environments supporting children with additional needs.

The model assures children achieve holistic learning with five key skills that are taught and assessed through observation including psychosocial, early reading, numeracy, early language and writing skills. It develops key competencies in KG learners, including; self-confidence, communication, co-operation, curiosity and concentration, as indicated in Ghana's kindergarten curriculum.

Sustainability of the training is crucial, and a number of innovative measures are put into place to ensure that children continue to benefit from the training for years to come:

- **Empowering school leaders:** Headteachers are trained to provide ongoing in-class coaching and mentorship. This ensures that play-based teaching is fully embedded and sustained in schools long after he training has ended.
- **Building Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** Teachers are supported to form KG-specific PLCs, peer learning groups at the school and local community level. These networks create a culture of collaboration, innovation, and shared growth.
- **Engaging families & communities:** Teachers are trained to actively involve families and communities in their children's education. Through open days, PTAs, and KG graduation ceremonies, education becomes a shared journey, reinforcing play-based learning at home and nurturing collective pride in children's progress.

This play-based teacher training model is groundbreaking for Ghana, and is totally transforming KG classrooms. In many KG classrooms across Ghana children are expected to memorize facts, remaining seated quietly in rows. Play-based learning is not encouraged. Children's talents and curiosity are not nurtured, and questions are discouraged. Educational resources are lacking, and the school environment is often not print-rich nor stimulating. Moreover, discipline, often enforced through corporal punishment such as caning, makes school a fearful and unenjoyable place.

As a result of the KG-INSET training, KG classrooms are transforming into inspiring, playful, child-centred environments where children love to come and learn. The training is improving teacher competency, and this is translating into strong learning outcomes for children.

Impact figures from just one of Sabre's programmes clearly demonstrates this impact. 83% of assessed public school teachers in Sabre's largest programme to date across six districts of the Eastern Region demonstrated 'outstanding' competency in implementing play-based learning[3]. As a result, 75% of KG learners in Sabre intervention schools reached "achieved" or "mastered" level of age-appropriate numeracy and literacy skills compared to 27% (numeracy) and 41% (literacy) in non-intervention schools[4].

And these strong early learning outcomes will help to shape society for the better. In fact, research shows that child-centred KGs lay a strong foundation for lifelong learning, resulting in higher literacy rates, healthier populations, lower crime rates, and long-term economic growth. Children who attend high-quality KG programmes tend to earn more as adults, drop out of school less, engage in less criminal activity, and even delay starting their own families[5].

2) How important is the program?

The KG-INSET programme first and foremost is addressing the issue of a lack of trained KG teachers in classrooms across Ghana. 85% of teachers manage KG classrooms with limited knowledge of play-based learning[6]. To date, government efforts to train KG teachers nationally have been ineffective. The standards- based curriculum introduced in 2019 emphasises a play-based, child-centred approach to foster cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth in young learners. At that time, the Ghana Education Service (GES) held a five-day orientation for KG teachers across the country, but it lacked comprehensive, hands-on training in how to actually transform classrooms and implement the play-based curriculum in the classroom.

As a result, effective adoption has been limited, and KG teachers struggle to stimulate and engage young children, resulting in low motivation, a lack of confidence, and poor job satisfaction due to the children's unsatisfactory learning outcomes[7].

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[3] Teacher Monitoring Checklist administered by GES with support from Sabre, 2021

[4] Sabre's Eastern Region Project: JMK Consulting, 2023

[5] CIFF, 2010

[6] (GES) Kindergarten Fact Sheet, 2024

[7] Teachers' experiences based on anecdotal evidence gathered as a result of Sabre working in over 500 kindergartens in Ghana

On top of a lack of teacher training, the KG-INSET is also addressing the issue of poor classroom environments for Ghana's youngest learning. Many classrooms do not have child-friendly furniture, such as small tables and chairs, making it difficult for children to engage in play-based activities. Play areas, essential for early childhood development, are often missing, limiting children's opportunities for hands-on learning and social interaction. Classrooms also often lack essential resources such as storybooks, toys and teaching and learning materials that support play-based learning[8].

As a result of these issues in the ECE system in Ghana, learning outcomes at the KG level are low. Sabre has evaluated a large-scale project across six districts of Ghana's Eastern Region, collecting valuable learning outcome data. This showed that in non-intervention schools (where teachers were not implementing play-based learning), only 27% of kindergarten learners achieve age-appropriate numeracy skills, 41% achieve age-appropriate literacy skills and only 50% achieve age-appropriate psychosocial skills.[9]

It is critical that we address this issue as global evidence shows a direct link between pre-primary education and learning outcomes in primary school. A poor quality KG education negatively impacts children's learning as they progress. According to UNICEF, children who miss out on high-quality pre-primary education are less likely to develop essential literacy and numeracy skills, leading to lower academic performance, higher rates of grade repetition, and increased school dropout rates.[10]

1. As we scale the KG-INSET programme nationwide, we are guided by two core goals that directly respond to identified weaknesses in Ghana's early years sector:Increased % of children demonstrating school readiness at the end of KG2 (the level of school readiness across five domains measuring pre-mathematics, pre-literacy, executive functioning, fine motor skills, and socioemotional knowledge).
2. Increased % of KG classes with teaching practices meeting inspection standards (including the use of play-based methodology and positive behaviour management) and with a full complement of teaching and learning resources.

Through the roll-out of the KG-INSET we hope to reach approximately 30,000 public KG teachers, 14,732 headteachers, 1.2 million children in KGs each year and 3,800 GES officials.

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[8] GES, KG Factsheet, 2024

[9] JMK Consulting Ltd, 2023, 'Sabre Education's Eastern Region End-Of-Project Evaluation'

[10] Unicef: 2020, 'Ghana Education Factsheet'

The successful roll-out of the KG-INSET across Ghana would see a total transformation of KG classes from what is typical. The training is supporting teachers to challenge and replace the traditional KG model, where children sit in rows, passively copying from a blackboard in spaces with few or no learning materials. Now you will see vibrant, play-rich environments that are alive with exploration, creativity and movement. You can instantly see and feel the difference through the wide range of activities taking place:

Learning Centres: Fun, child-centred areas such as construction, shopping, home and reading centres mimic real-life experiences. Here, children develop literacy and numeracy skills while strengthening communication, cooperation, and problem solving through play.

Table-top Activities: Daily, hands-on games such as matching words to pictures or counting with bottle tops reinforce literacy and numeracy, showing that even the simplest materials can unlock big learning moments.

Outdoor Activities: From obstacle courses and football to water play, messy play, and mark-making in sand or clay, outdoor activities strengthen children's physical development while sparking imagination and joy.

Circle Time: The whole class gathers to sing, dance, and talk together, creating a safe and inclusive space for vocabulary building, self-expression, and community.

Story Sharing: Each day closes with story sharing, which helps to ignite imagination. Children list to, but also create stories – using props, masks, and role play to tell their own stories and bring learning to life.

And the contrast in child learning outcomes between Sabre-trained classrooms and traditional classrooms clearly illustrates the impact of Sabre's training. As a result of Sabre's work, children are leaving kindergarten with strong foundational skills that prepare them to succeed as they progress through their education. One striking example comes from Sabre's 2024 teacher training project in Assin South District in Ghana's Central Region; in Sabre-trained classrooms, 79% of children achieved age-appropriate literacy skills, compared with just 19% in a nearby district where the programme was not implemented.

And feedback from the pupils themselves show just how much they enjoyed their kindergarten education; "*The kindergarten classroom had lots of learning resources to play with. It was big and beautiful and we played with resources a lot. Sometimes my friends and I come back to our kindergarten classroom to play.*" Berikisu, who is now in Primary 2 and was educated in a Sabre trained KG.

3) What are the impacts of the program?

Over the years, Sabre has gathered compelling evidence of impact. Studies on the various elements of our programme, including play-based learning, parental engagement, in-service teacher training, and robust teacher coaching and mentoring, have clearly demonstrated the powerful effects on children's socio-emotional skills and learning outcomes in Ghana. Here are some of the most significant highlights of our findings.

Final Evaluation 2023 "Transformational Teacher Training in the Eastern Region" (Sabre Education, JMK Consulting)

An external study, conducted with a quasi-experimental approach, on Sabre's district wide teacher training implementation across six districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana showed that the play-based kindergarten teacher training and coaching model improved teachers' ability to deliver play-based learning in the classroom, and improved kindergarten learners' numeracy, literacy, and psychosocial skills.

- 69% of teachers in intervention schools obtained 'outstanding' or 'good' scores in learner attainment level compared to their peers in non-intervention schools (28.2%).
- 75% of KG learners in Sabre intervention schools achieved target numeracy and literacy skills compared to 27% (numeracy) and 41% (literacy) in non-intervention schools.
- 71% of KG learners in Sabre intervention schools had developed their psychosocial skills appropriately compared to 50% in non-intervention schools.
- 94.8% of the parents reporting from intervention schools saw significant performance improvement in their children.

Transformational Kindergarten Teacher Training in the Assin South District of Central Region, Ghana: Final Endline Report (2024)

In 2024, JMK researchers conducted a study on the Ghana Education Service's (GES) implementation of KG INSET teacher training across the Assin South District in the Central Region, supported by Sabre Education. This one-year initiative was a district-wide implementation designed to closely follow the national scaling model, explain in more detail in the next section.

The implementation engaged 212 kindergarten teachers, 97 headteachers, and 16 GES officers, ultimately reaching 3,691 KG learners. Child learning outcomes were assessed by an external research organisation through a difference-in-difference study comparing results with a control group in the neighbouring Upper Denkyira East District. The study showed very strong learning gains.

- 79% of children achieved age-appropriate literacy skills in Assin South, compared to 19% of children in the control district.
- 80% of children achieved age-appropriate numeracy skills in Assin South, compared to 25% of children in the control district.
- 78% of children achieved age-appropriate psychosocial skills in Assin South, compared to 16% of children in the control district.

Building Teachers' Capacity To Enhance Early Learning Through Child Focused And Play-Based Approaches In Ghana And Sierra Leone, IDRC et al, 2023GPE KIX-funded researchers from Associates for Change and ISSER, University of Ghana, have been studying the effectiveness of Sabre Education's and Right To Play's (one of Sabre's national scaling partners) kindergarten teacher training in Ghana (alongside research with other partners in Sierra Leone). This quasi-experimental study selected districts that Sabre and Right To Play have operated in over the last 3 to 4 years in the Eastern (Sabre) and Northern (RTP) Regions. Four districts were selected (2 intervention and 2 non-intervention) in each region. Below are some of the key findings from this quantitative and qualitative research so far:

Child Impact:

- 56.7% of KG 1 children in intervention schools could identify and describe objects by colour, size and name, compared to 41.4% from non-intervention schools.
- 62% of children from intervention schools could count in sequence to match numbers to 9 objects compared to 35% of children from non-intervention schools.
- 66% of children in intervention schools could read three or more words on display in the classroom compared to 43.5% in non-intervention schools.
- 58% of children in intervention schools could respond accurately to basic questions after listening to a story, compared to 35.6% in non-intervention schools.
- 40% of children in intervention schools could tell their own short stories about a picture compared to 26.4% of children in non-intervention schools.

Teacher Impact:

- 63.9% of teachers in intervention schools displayed a knowledge of Ghana's official KG curriculum, including learning outcomes, compared to 36% in non-intervention schools.
- 66.6% of teachers in intervention schools displayed a 'good knowledge' of children's brain development and children's learning strategies, compared to 33.3% of teachers in non-intervention schools.
- In the Eastern Region (Sabre-supported districts), 61.3% of teachers in intervention schools demonstrated a clear understanding of teaching topics and concepts, including tailoring explanations, questions and answers to the range of abilities of the students in the class, compared to 40% in non-intervention schools.
- In the Eastern region, 50% of the teachers in the intervention schools offer feedback to students' responses that promote active and mutual learning among students compared to 35.7% of teachers in non-intervention schools.

The Quality Preschool for Ghana study (2015–19) marked the first longitudinal evaluation of Sabre's teacher training programme and revealed highly encouraging results. Independent researchers used a randomised trial to evaluate the impact of an affordable, in- service kindergarten teacher training called Quality Preschool for Ghana, using Sabre Education's teacher training content and methodology[11].

This study has shown that in-service teacher training improved classroom quality and school readiness and that adding ongoing coaching and reinforcement training can effectively improve teaching and learning outcomes. The researchers continued longitudinal studies with these children which have shown positive ongoing impacts of quality early childhood education as the children enter primary school.

Qualitative feedback from the teachers Sabre has trained supports the data that we have collected. The training has transformed their way of teaching, their job satisfaction and has given them a new sense of pride and confidence to be KG educators.

"Thank you, Sabre Education, for throwing more light on the KG curriculum for the nation of Ghana. With Sabre's excellent training, things have become simpler, easier, and teachers are more confident. I hope that their work extends across Ghana so we will grow into a greater nation." Mavis, KG Teacher

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[11] Wolf, S., 2019. "Year 3 follow-up of the 'Quality Preschool for Ghana' interventions on child development". Developmental Psychology. Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0000843

GES officials are also noticing the positive changes to both their teachers and pupils.

"My vision for kindergarten education in Ghana is that the play-based concept that I saw in the Sabre-supported schools is practised in every school. Every child was involved and active with indoor and outdoor activities. I also noticed how the teachers were enjoying the teaching." Patty Assan, former GES Director of Schools and Instructions

Teachers that have passed through Sabre's training are also being recognised as some of the very best kindergarten teachers in Ghana. In 2024, a teacher trained by Sabre won the prize for the 'Best Kindergarten Teacher' at the Ghana Teacher Prize, and at the 2025 awards another Sabre trained KG teacher was named at the first runner-up for the 'Overall Best Teacher' award.

Parents, who were once sceptical of play-based teaching methods, are now fully supportive of the transformation the teachers are making now that they are seeing the positive impact it is having on their children. In fact, 95% of parents in intervention schools in Sabre's Eastern Region project reported seeing significant performance improvement in their children.

"I see play-based learning to be highly effective. We live near students who attend private schools, but my child who goes to a government school can recite rhymes and songs and often shares them with those private school children."

And of course, we cannot forget the pupils themselves. Our ultimate beneficiaries are delighted to be learning in classrooms that are child-centred and filled with activities and play. Precious, a KG2 pupil, shared how her classroom is different to other classrooms in her school; *"I become happy anytime I come to school and when we close, I do not want to go home. My classroom is beautiful and my teacher plays with us. I like my teacher because she is nice and helps us to learn well. We do outdoor and indoor learning. We move from one activity to the other. My classroom is different from the primary classroom because it has lots of learning materials."*

The qualitative and quantitative data we have collected over the years clearly demonstrates that our teacher training programme improves teaching quality and, in turn, strengthens child learning outcomes.

As the next question will highlight, these collective efforts have brought us to an exciting turning point, one where we are now poised to scale the KG-INSET programme across the entire country.

4) How feasible and sustainable is the program?

Sabre has worked hand in hand with the Government of Ghana to transform kindergarten teaching from rote learning to joyful, play-based practice. A journey that began with one school in a fishing community in 2004, and then moved to 20 schools at one time in Ghana's Central Region in 2013, is now shaping the country's education system. To date we have directly trained over 6,060 teachers, transforming the early education of 361,095 children.

As a result of the many years of modelling, testing and scaling our teacher training approach, in direct partnership with the government, in 2021, Sabre Education, Lively Minds and Right To Play, with Innovations for Poverty Action as a learning partner, joined forces to support the government's efforts to scale quality ECE nationwide. As leading NGOs in Ghana, we collaborated closely with the ECE Unit to design and expand play-based KG teacher training while strengthening the entire KG education system. This initiative leverages the proven evidence of impact of our prior and ongoing programmes in targeted regions. By early 2023, we had supported the government to develop a unified national KG teacher training approach, the In-Service Education and Training (KG-INSET) Manual. In July 2023, the GES officially launched the manual as the standardised national framework for in-service kindergarten teacher training, marking a significant step towards expanding quality play-based education nationwide.

The Government of Ghana, with technical support from Sabre, Right To Play, Lively Minds and IPA, will implement a comprehensive KG-INSET training programme for all public KG teachers. The programme, delivered as capacity building across one full school year in each district, will be led by the GES, supported by technical assistance partners.
This landmark achievement means 30,000+ kindergarten teachers in the public sector – and the 1.2 million children they nurture every year – are set to benefit from proven, practical play-based training that sparks curiosity, creativity, and a lifeline love of learning.

In the last two years, we have supported the government to unlock critical investment from the Global Partnership for Education and a Swiss consortium of foundations and corporates, to pave the way for the government's bold, four-year national rollout of play-based kindergarten teacher training, set to begin in early 2026. Sabre will continue to stand alongside the Ministry of Education as a trusted technical assistance partner throughout this process, working alongside government to ensure that the national rollout is delivered with quality and fidelity.

The result of this scaling effort will be nothing short of a revolution in early childhood education – one that will equip every teacher with the tools to create vibrant, child-centred classrooms, giving Ghanaian children the strong foundation they deserve.

Beyond our scaling efforts with public schools in Ghana, there is great potential for our teacher training model to be furthered scaled and adapted to other contexts.
Firstly, in the private sector in Ghana. Private kindergartens in Ghana fill a supply gap in both urban and rural areas, and now comprise 44% of the country's ECE providers (EMIS, 2020/21), with low-fee private schools (LFPS) serving the majority of these children. However, a lack of teacher training has severely affected learning outcomes in these schools. Most teachers do not hold a diploma or a higher degree and less than 10% have had formal training to teach kindergarten children (EMIS, 2018/19). As a result, they typically implement rote-based teaching with minimal engagement in hands-on, play-based learning (EMIS, 2018/19).

Therefore, our aim is to adapt our in-service teacher training model for the LFPS sector to ensure that children in these schools are not left behind. We first piloted our adapted low-fee private school teacher training programme with 34 schools in 2022, and have since gone on to work with a further 87 private schools over the last three years, replicating our model at a larger scale. We are currently working with 54 schools in Ghana's Central and Western Regions. We will continue to refine, test, and expand our training model, a key step in shaping a clear pathway to scale within the private sector.

The second opportunity for further scaling and adaptation lies beyond Ghana. There is great potential to share Ghana's journey to improved ECE delivery with countries outside of Ghana. Drawing on Ghana's impressive journey, our long-term aim is to offer technical assistance support to other governments and NGO partners working to improve the ECE system. Already, we have started strategic country and partner mapping of ECE in Africa, which will help us to narrow our geographic focus, define Sabre's specific offering, and identify potential partners.
To enable effective scaling and replication, we have created a robust suite of tools and resources that captures the full training programme and includes all materials required for successful implementation. This includes:

- District Implementation Guidelines: Provides operational guidance for district education offices on how to implement the KG-INSET training.
- KG-INSET Manual & Video Pack: Is a comprehensive instructional guide used to deliver the 9-days of teacher training. The training manual is enhanced by a set of videos, which UNICEF has supported the GES ECE Unit to develop to support the delivery of the standards-based KG curriculum.
- Monitoring & Assessment Training Manual: Used to train government officials on how to use the monitoring tools to assess and mentor teachers and headteachers.
- Full Set of Monitoring Tools: Which track teacher performance and child learning outcomes.
- Monitoring & Evaluation Framework: Lists the outputs and outcomes to be monitored to track the success of the KG-INSET delivery.

We have carefully designed the programme to ensure that expensive resources are not needed to successfully deliver the teacher training. The key resources needed include:

- Group of local trainers, who have received training on how to deliver the KG-INSET programme
- Training venue, with space for the hands on, practical training workshops
- Training manuals and guidelines for the trainers who are delivering the training
- Training materials and resources. The limited resources that are required usually include attendance sheets and flipcharts to support the training content.
- Classroom materials, which include teacher reference handbooks and manuals, resource making guides, and a play-based resource pack for each classroom, which includes building blocks, books, floor mats and basic stationary items.

We expect that the rollout of the KG-INSET across Ghana, to all 30,000+ teachers, to cost approximately $29 million, which includes both the government costs and the technical assistance costs for Sabre and the other partners. It is important to understand that this is a one-time intervention with lasting impact, transforming KG teaching from rote-based methods to play-based learning, and the cost efficiency per child is highly encouraging to see.

$29 million = cost of one-time scale-up across all 16 regions of Ghana

$24 per child → In the initial 2 years of implementation (1.2M children).

$8 per child → After 5 years, as new KG1 & KG2 cohorts benefit.

$4.40 per child → After 10 years, as play-based teaching continues for future learners.

This investment will unlock the potential of generations of KG learners and significantly improve foundational learning outcomes in Ghana.

Appendix

Key videos, demonstrating Sabre's work and impact:

20 Years of Impact: The Sabre Story

Learning Through Play Classroom Tour

Scaling Play-Based Kindergarten Teacher Training Across Ghana

Publications highlighting Sabre's work:

https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2025/09/scaling-within-the-system-what-can-be-learnt-from-ghanas-early-years-transformation/

The "Global Report on Early Childhood Care and Education: The Right to a Strong Foundation" was co-published by UNESCO and UNICEF and launched on 17th June 2024 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and featured Sabre's teacher training work:

https://sabre.education/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Sabre_Education_UNESCO_ECCE.pdf

https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/play-based-teaching-improves-early-childhood-education-ghana

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