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Dubai Cares

VSO

# EVALUATION REPORT

Final Version, 10 June 2019

# Midterm External Evaluation of the *Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda* (SSRR) project


Funded by: Dubai Cares

Implemented by: Voluntary Service Overseas

Evaluation conducted by: TANGO International

# Executive Summary

The Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda project (SSRR) is a project funded by Dubai Cares and implemented by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Rwanda from April 2016 through September 2019. The project goal is to improve school-readiness of children in Nyamasheke district through an increased enrolment of children in early childhood education (ECE) schools and an improvement of school-readiness for children entering primary school. The project strategy is to address specific issues in the education sector in Rwanda, namely: the shortage of skilled ECE teachers, limited local leadership and government support to ECE, lack of enabling and inclusive environment for children to access ECE, lack of learner-centred ECE teaching materials, and the lack of parent or community support. Project activities focus mainly on 30 model schools and, community support and education system capacity strengthening, benefitting a total of 11,618 children to date. TANGO International conducted this mixed method midterm evaluation from March to June 2019 in close collaboration with the project team from VSO Rwanda.

The project design is consistent with national ECE objectives, policies and planning of the Government of Rwanda (GoR) by providing capacity building on the ECE curriculum management, application and learner centred methodology to key beneficiaries and stakeholders, thus scaling up early childhood development services at village level. The project geographic targeting is highly relevant based on low capacity of ECE teachers, limited number of ECE classrooms, and high levels of poverty and persons with disability in Nyamasheke. The project timing is relevant considering that the Government of Rwanda is currently considering introducing salaries for ECE teachers, and the SSRR project provides important lessons and options for low-cost and reliable co-payment models.

Overall, project activities were delivered effectively, with most project output targets met and good progress made towards outcome targets at the time of the mi-term evaluation. Delays incurred in the first year of the project were absorbed in the second half of project implementation. For outcome 1, project activities are of good quality and targets are generally met. Key stakeholders and beneficiaries were trained on the ECE competence-based curriculum, the learner-centred approach and inclusion-based education. Project activities under Outcome 2 are of varying quality but project targets for this component are met. School general assembly committee trainings were of good quality and successfully leveraged parents' interest, participation and contributions to ECE teacher salaries and school-based meal interventions. Sanitation and hygiene results are varied. Limited and unreliable access to water was observed as a critical factor to enabling good sanitation and hygiene practices in model schools. Project activities under outcome 3 are of good quality and project targets for this outcome are broadly met. Outcome 3 activities contributed to the inclusion of ECE in school planning and supervision process, and strong awareness and knowledge of ECE needs at sector and district levels.

Internal factors that affected results included the ambitious project design which, particularly for non-education specific interventions, was a challenge for project staff and resource capacity; there was a lot to do in a short time. The qualification of volunteers was high, specifically capacity as education experts. Additional focus on key functions such as knowledge management and external advocacy would have strengthened sector dissemination of the SSRR experience. Project management demonstrated a high degree of adaptive management, which enabled the project to successfully address design and implementation challenges. External factors that affected implementation include low ECE awareness and differing expectations from parents regarding the support provided by the project, which affected enrollment rates in the first half of the project. Throughout project implementation, an implicit area of focus was to address the dependency mindset at school,

community and household level. There was ECE high teacher turnover, due the salary issue that is at the heart of the SSRR project design, which was pro-actively managed by project staff. The project contributed to strengthening parent contribution models, but such contributions remain an external variable with many determinants that are beyond direct project influence, i.e., agricultural productivity and unforeseen expenditures, including due to a range of shocks and stresses.

The evaluation report presents five recommendations for the remaining project implementation period, including a strategic recommendation for a potential extension to continue bridge support to ECE in Rwanda, in anticipation of the financial support for ECE teachers from the GoR.

1. Update (based on what worked well, and what was less effective) and appropriately package the VSO training material in a user-friendly format and distribute it to all 30 project model schools. This will ensure that fit-for-context reference and training materials will remain accessible to ECE and P1 teachers even after project phase out.
2. Further develop the parent contribution model to ensure its sustainability even when the Government of Rwanda starts paying ECE teachers. The result of combining government provided salary to ECE teacher and parent contributions into a co-financing model will strengthen teacher retention and support school-based initiatives such as school meals.
3. School feeding activities should not be cancelled. Findings from the evaluation indicate that the meals-in-schools activity is a main driver for parent contributions to and interest in ECE.
4. Focus any project savings into strengthening the knowledge management function of the project and use the remaining time of the project to develop lessons learned that can be shared with government stakeholders at sector, district and national levels.
5. Explore structured employment referral or internships opportunities, in collaboration with the Rwanda Education Board and Teacher Training College (TTC) management, for TTC students in ECE model schools. Continue supporting certification of ECE model teachers at the TTC Mwezi; at a minimum, update current TTC training material before the project ends.

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# Acknowledgments

TANGO International wishes to thank Dubai Cares and Voluntary Service Overseas for making the evaluation a very constructive experience. The support provided by Voluntary Service Overseas colleagues, the Ministry of Education and Nyamasheke District in Rwanda enabled the evaluation team to collect valuable information with project beneficiaries and relevant project stakeholders. This evaluation owes enormous credit to the individuals who gave freely of their time and company to be interviewed by our teams. Without their generosity and openness in sharing invaluable information, this important evaluation would have never happened.

TANGO International

10 June 2019

Front cover picture credit: TANGO International, picture taken with permission of school administrator and children.

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| 12YBE | 12 years of free basic mandatory education |
| CBC | Competence Based Curriculum |
| CWD | Children with Disabilities |
| DDMO | District Disability Mainstreaming Officer |
| DEO | District Education Officer |
| DHS | Demographics and Health Survey |
| ECD | Early Childhood Development |
| ECE | Early Childhood Education |
| ECLPE | Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education |
| EDPRS 2 | Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies |
| ESSP | Education Sector Strategic Plan |
| ET | Evaluation Team |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GoR | Government of Rwanda |
| HVP Gatagara | Home de la Vierge des Pauvres Gatagara |
| IDELA | International Development and Early Learning Assessment |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organization |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| MIGEPROF | Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion |
| MINAGRI | Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources |
| MINECOFIN | Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning |
| MINEDUC | Ministry of Education |
| MOH | Ministry of Health |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| P1 | Primary one teacher |
| REB | Rwanda Education Board |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| SEO | Sector Education Officer |
| SGAC | School General Assembly Committee |
| SSRR | Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda project |
| TLM | Teaching and Learning Material |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| TRC | Teacher Resource Center |
| TTC | Teacher Training College |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| VSO | Voluntary Service Overseas |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

# I. Introduction

## A. Purpose and objective of the evaluation

This midterm evaluation provides an external assessment of program implementation to date to evaluate if the Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda program is on-track to meet its intended goal, as well as highlight opportunities for improvement. The overarching objectives for the evaluation, as outlined in the terms of reference (available in Annex 1) are listed below.

1. Provide an independent verification of the program outputs and achieved outcomes against its expected results to date.
2. Identify and assess key internal and external factors (positive and negative) that have contributed to, affected, or impeded the progress of program activities and associated achievements to date, and how Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) is managing these factors.
3. Assess the current progress of program activities in order to identify key recommendations that will help inform VSO and Dubai Cares in strengthening the design of the remainder of the program.

This report includes the factors affecting observed results, including project partnerships, staffing and management, resource efficiency, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and local community and stakeholder involvement. These factors provide an assessment of the project implementation, lessons learned and associated recommendations for design and development of similar projects in the future.

## B. Evaluation audience and use

The primary audience of this midterm evaluation is Dubai Cares and VSO. This evaluation provides an objective assessment of the Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda project and includes relevant and applicable recommendations for future early childhood development (ECD) programming within Dubai Cares and VSO. Specifically, VSO can use the evaluation findings to strengthen strategic guidance for future ECD projects, as well as to support government-led efforts in developing ECD at country level. The secondary audience for this evaluation includes sector partners for ECD programming in Rwanda that are positioned to apply relevant best practices and lessons learned.

## C. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation utilized a mixed methods approach to assess project progress towards key results and the overall objective: to improve school-readiness of children in Nyamasheke district. The mixed methods approach included a comprehensive review of project documents (see Appendix 6: List of documents consulted for a full list of documents reviewed), and qualitative and quantitative data collection in all 30 project early childhood education (ECE) model schools. Data collection took place from 5 March through 1 April 2019. Data processing, analysis and reporting took place from 3 April to 31 May, 2019.

Primary qualitative data collection in the 30 project-supported schools consisted of 50 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 11 focus group discussions (FGDs) with VSO staff, VSO volunteers,[1] project stakeholders and beneficiaries, including primary teachers, head teachers, School General Assembly Committee (SGAC) members, and parents of children enrolled in ECE or primary school in project model schools. KIIs included 30 ECE teachers (3 males, 27 females), 28 head teachers (22 males, 6 females), 12 primary teachers (3 males, 9 females), six district, sector and national government

[1] From now on referred as volunteers in the report.

stakeholders (3 males, 3 females), nine volunteers (5 males, 4 females), and two teacher training college (TTC) staff (2 males). Eleven FGDs were conducted with parents of children (27 males, 34 females), and one FGD with TTC student teachers (6 males). The inception and data collection schedules can be found in Appendix 3: Inception visit & field visit schedule. A full list of KIIs and FGDs is provided in Appendix 4: List of KIIs and FGDs. The qualitative data collection matrix and evaluation analysis plan can be found in Appendix 1: Evaluation matrix and Appendix 2: Analysis plan.

Primary quantitative data collection in the 30 schools was conducted through a survey of ECE teachers and structured observation of classroom, school compounds, sanitation and hygiene utilities using a checklist. Tools developed for the 2017 baseline survey were used to inform the design of the ECE teacher survey questionnaire and school observation checklist, thus allowing for comparison of project performance between project baseline and midterm stages. Details on the design and discrete findings of the quantitative survey and checklist observation are available in Annex 2.

## D. Evaluation team

The evaluation team (ET) consisted of four TANGO consultants. TANGO Vice President, Bruce Ravesloot, was the evaluation team lead and responsible for overall evaluation quality. TANGO Research Associate, Jeremie Kaelin, and TANGO national consultants, Daria Muteteri and Justin Tuyiringire conducted data collection, and supported analysis and reporting.

## E. Limitations to the evaluation

No apparent limitations affected the quality of this evaluation or data collection.

# II. Project description

## A. Country context

Rwanda is a small, landlocked country covering 26,000 km$^2$ in the Great Lakes region of central Africa.[2] It borders the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, Tanzania to the east, Uganda to the north, and Burundi to the south.[3] Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa; in 2017, its population density was measured at 467 people/km$^2$ with a total population of 12.75 million.[4, 5] Many social and development indicators have improved since the end of the genocide, which left in its wake a collapse of civil society, economy, and social services.[6]

Post-genocide, Rwanda has made great economic and social strides and has experienced political stability. Despite this, Rwanda remains a low-income, food-deficit country,[7] with an annual gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 9.1 billion,[8] or USD 748.4 per capita.[9] Annual GDP growth has been high, averaging 7.2 percent since 2010,[10] and the Gini coefficient has consistently improved between 2006 (0.52) and 2017 (0.29).[11] Agriculture represents 39 percent of the country's GDP.[12] Seventy percent of Rwanda's labor force is employed in agriculture[13] and 90 percent of the population depends upon subsistence agriculture.[14]

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) is implementing a national plan, Rwanda Vision 2020, which aims to transition the country away from dependence on subsistence agriculture toward a service-oriented, internationally integrated economy with middle-income status by 2020.[15] However, poor infrastructure and lack of consistent access to electricity constitute major constraints to private investment.[16] As a result of the GoR's commitment towards reducing poverty, the poverty rate dropped from 60 percent in 2000 to 39.1 percent in 2015.[17, 18] To continue improving the standard of living in Rwanda, the GoR implemented the Second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) for 2013-2018 in conjunction with Vision 2020.

**Nutrition**

According to the 2015 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, 20 percent of Rwandan households are food insecure (473,847 total households).[19] Among those, 13 percent (63,696 households) were severely food insecure. The highest incidence of food insecurity was found

[2] UNDP. 2008. Assessment of Development Results: Evaluation of UNDP Contribution.
[3] UNDP. 2015. About Rwanda.
[4] NISR. 2017. Rwanda Statistical Yearbook.
[5] World Bank. 2015. World Development Indicators.
[6] WFP. 2015. WFP Rwanda Brief.
[7] FAO. 2016, Low-income and food deficit countries (LIFDC) – List for 2016.
[8] World Bank. 2017. Data: Rwanda.
[9] Idem.
[10] WFP. 2016. Rwanda: Current issues and what the World Food Programme is doing.
[11] UNDP. 2018. Human Development Reports: Income Gini coefficient.
[12] World Bank. 2013. Agricultural Development in Rwanda.
[13] Feed the Future. 2015. Country profile: Rwanda.
[14] UNDP. 2015. About Rwanda.
[15] MINECOFIN. 2000. Rwanda Vision 2020.
[16] World Bank. 2015. Rwanda: Overview.
[17] African Development Bank Group. 2015. African Economic Outlook.
[18] NISR. 2017. Rwanda Statistical Yearbook.
[19] MINAGRI, NISR, WFP. 2015. Rwanda Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis. March 2016.

in Western and Northern Rwanda, with the highest rates in the West (46 percent).[20] Food insecurity is much higher in rural than urban areas, with the highest food insecurity persisting in the northern and western areas bordering Lake Kivu and along the Congo Nile Crest.[21]

Stunting occurs in 41 percent of rural children, compared with 24 percent of urban children.[22] In rural areas, 10 percent of children are underweight, contrasted with six percent in urban areas.[23] Wasting levels of children under five are low, at two percent, and vary minimally in relation to location and wealth.[24] Micronutrient deficiency anemia is a public health concern; 36 percent of children under five and 19 percent of women of reproductive age affected.[25] Maternal nutrition remains a challenge, particularly regarding anemia, which affects 20 percent of pregnant women.[26] The most common causes of anemia are lack of iron in the diet and intestinal worms that the absorption of micronutrients and minerals such as iron. Worm infections affect 65 percent of the population in Rwanda, and school-aged children are particularly affected. The main drivers of malnutrition include unavailability of sufficient quality food and water, low uptake of nutritional foods due to cultural biases, climatic conditions, poverty, poor hygiene, sanitation and care practices.[27]

**Education and School Feeding**

Educational attainment has been a key focus for the Government of Rwanda in recent years. The GoR implemented the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) from 2013-2018 in line with the EDPRS 2 policy. ESSP aims to promote access to education at all levels, improve the quality of education and training, and strengthen the relevance of education while emphasizing equity for disadvantaged groups.[28] Under the ESSP, the GoR provides 12 years of free basic mandatory education (12YBE).[29] Due to the GoR's provision of 12YBE, primary school enrolment is nearly universal at 98 percent.[30] The student-to-teacher ratio is high at 58:1, resulting in limited time for teachers to interact with students individually.[31] The 2017 education statistics indicate that more efforts are needed to decrease the student-to-teacher ratio to the target ratio of 48:1.[32,33] Quality of education still has challenges, as evidenced by low competencies in literacy and numeracy among primary-school-going children. Overall, less than half of children in public schools, especially in rural areas, achieve the required literacy and numeracy competency levels to move on to the next grade.[34]

The average primary school has one toilet for every 75 students. The national target is 40:1 for boys and 30:1 for girls. Fifty-three percent of schools in Rwanda have access to piped tap water.[35] Since 2016, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the GoR are working to expand the existing government

[20] MINAGRI, NISR, WFP. 2015. Rwanda Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis. March 2016.
[21] USAID. 2014. Rwanda: Nutrition Profile.
[22] NISR. 2016. Rwanda Demographic and Health survey 2014-15. Final report.
[23] Idem.
[24] UNICEF. 2018. Situation Analysis of Children in Rwanda: Summary report.
[25] World Bank. 2016. Prevalence of anemia among children (% of children under 5).
[26] Republic of Rwanda. Ministry of Health. 2014. National Food and Nutrition Policy, 2013-2018.
[27] UNICEF. 2018. Situation Analysis of Children in Rwanda: Summary Report.
[28] MINEDUC. 2013. Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013/14 – 2017/18.
[29] UNHCR. 2015 UNHCR country operations profile – Rwanda.
[30] MINEDUC. 2018. 2017 Education Statistics.
[31] World Bank. 2017. Pupil-teacher ratio, primary.
[32] MINEDUC. 2018. 2017 Education Statistics.
[33] MINEDUC. 2017. 2017/18 Forward-Looking Joint Review of the Education Sector Summary Report.
[34] UNICEF. 2018. Situation Analysis of Children in Rwanda: Summary Report.
[35] MINEDUC. 2018. 2017 Education Statistics.

school feeding programme throughout the country over a five year period aided by a US$25 million grant from the United States.[36] As of 2017, 11.9 percent of pre-primary schools were participating in school feeding, and 9.9 percent of schools had a school garden to promote nutrition awareness.[37]

Early Childhood Care and Education has received a higher profile in the government's agenda with the establishment of an inter-ministerial ECD implementation framework, which is coordinated by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) with the education responsibility held by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), and health responsibility held by the Ministry of Health (MOH). Under this framework, children aged zero to three years (pre-nursery) fall under MIGEPROF's responsibility, and children aged three to six (nursery) under MINEDUC's responsibility. [38] In 2017, the gross enrolment rate for pre-primary education reached 24.1 percent, and net enrolment rate 20.6 percent.[39] According to MINEDUC, in 2017, 220,435 learners between the ages of three to six (50.8 percent girls, 49.2 percent boys), were enrolled in ECE.[40]

Most nursery schools are located within compounds of public schools and are run either by public schools or outside initiatives (i.e. community/parents, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions).[41] At present, the GoR does not pay teacher salaries for ECE although government interviews show that the intention is to start this by 2020.[42] MINEDUC estimates that 84.7 percent of teaching staff are qualified but only 41.6 percent are trained to teach at nursery level. For this reason, in the 2017 education statistic report MINEDUC emphasized the need for increased trainings of teachers.[43] In terms of learning materials, the pupil-to-book ratio remains high for all subjects, especially pre-writing books (ratio: 17 children to one book in Nursery 1, and 9 children to one book in Nursery 2).[44] As for sanitation and hygiene, improvements were made between 2016 and 2017, with 72.3 percent (2,302 nursery schools out of 3,186) of pre-primary schools equipped with toilets.[45] Although still low, 2017 reported values show that improvements were made in terms of pre-primary schools equipped with improved drinking water (19 percent), rain water harvesting systems (25 percent), tap water supply (24 percent), and hand washing facilities (24 percent).[46]

**Gender and Inclusivity**

The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013-2018 emphasizes access to learning for disadvantaged children, including girls, the poor and children with disabilities.[47] In addition to high net primary enrolment (98 percent), gender parity in terms of enrollment has been largely achieved in primary and secondary schools. In 2016, the net enrolment rate for girls was 98.0 percent and 97.3 percent for boys. In 2016, girls comprised 50.1 percent of enrolled primary school students and boys accounted for 49.9 percent. The primary school completion rate in 2016 was higher for girls than boys, at 71.1 percent and 59.3 percent, respectively. The number of female students is higher in pre-

[36] News of Rwanda. August 2015. "US boosts feeding program in Rwanda schools".
[37] MINEDUC. 2018. 2017 Education Statistics.
[38] MINEDUC. 2018. National Pre-Primary Education Minimum Standards and Guidelines for Rwanda.
[39] Idem.
[40] MINEDUC. 2018. 2017 Education Statistics.
[41] Idem.
[42] Idem.
[43] Idem.
[44] Idem.
[45] Idem.
[46] Idem.
[47] MINEDUC. 2013. Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2013/14 – 2017/18.

primary, primary and secondary levels but shifts at higher levels, with higher numbers of male students at the tertiary level (60.6 percent males, 44.6 percent females).[48]

Despite these improvements in gender-equity, equitable access to primary schooling remains an issue among vulnerable populations such as children with disabilities, especially wheelchair and crutch users. As of 2017, 5.7 percent (183) of pre-primary schools were equipped with adapted infrastructure and materials for children with disabilities. The number of children with disabilities enrolled in nursery school decreased from 1,545 in 2016 to 1,362 in 2017, with a higher percentage of male representation (male 60.9 percent, female 39.1 percent). In terms of teacher capacity, education statistics show that 314 teachers (72 male, 242 female), were trained in special needs and inclusive education. Additional relevant national indicators are presented in Annex 3.[49]

## B. Project overview

The Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda (SSRR) project was designed to address specific issues in the education sector in Rwanda. Focus issues include the shortage of skilled ECE teachers, limited local leadership and government support to ECE, lack of enabling and inclusive environment for children to access ECE, lack of learner-centred ECE teaching materials, and the lack of parent or community support. The project goal is to improve school-readiness of children in Nyamasheke district through (1) an increased enrolment of children in ECE schools and (2) an improvement of school-readiness skills for children entering primary school.

The SSRR project is implemented by VSO Rwanda in 30 target – or so-called model – ECE schools in the Nyamasheke district in collaboration with government authorities, including the Ministry of Education, Nyamasheke district officials, sector administration, community leaders and health workers. The project also collaborates with the Teacher Training College in Mwezi cell, Karengera sector, as part of its ECE capacity building approach. Five teams of two volunteers each are dedicated to the project, providing training, weekly visits and mentoring to the model schools and communities. Each team is composed of a national volunteer paired with an international volunteer. Each team is assigned six model schools in a specific project zone covering three sectors within Nyamasheke. There are five project zones. In all model schools, the SSRR project focuses on three specific outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Improved quality of teaching in 30 ECE model schools.
- Outcome 2: Improved parent and community engagement in ECE system.
- Outcome 3: Improved education governance and leadership in Nyamasheke.

Under Outcome 1, ECE teachers, and primary one (P1) teachers, are trained by volunteers on the implementation of the Rwanda Education Board's (REB) ECE competence-based curriculum (CBC) using learner-centred and inclusive methods. The project also facilitates the identification and screening of children with disabilities (CWDs) for referral and treatment by Home de la Vierge des Pauvres (HVP) Gatagara, an institution for persons with disabilities based outside Nyamasheke district with referral centers in Kigali and Rwanda's southern and eastern provinces. Interventions on inclusion include the construction of ten inclusive classrooms and latrines in five ECE model schools, and a ramp built in one school. Additional capacity building on ECE-CBC content and implementation is provided to Mwezi TTC teachers along with the construction of a teacher resource center (TRC). At the TRC, student teachers learn how to develop teaching and learning material (TLM) from existing readily available and low-cost materials as part of a learner-centred teaching approach.

[48] MINEDUC. 2016 Education Statistical Yearbook.
[49] MINEDUC. 2018. 2017 Education Statistics.

Under Outcome 2, several interventions were implemented to promote contributions to ECE teacher salary and school-based nutrition schemes, and to promote parents engagement in home-based ECE to complement school activities. Interventions included the development and implementation of school gardens, home-grown school feeding and promotion of sanitation and hygiene. Parent contributions are encouraged either in the form of a monthly stipend to ECE teacher salaries and school nutrition, or provision of staple foods for parents with limited resources. To support this approach, SGACs are trained by VSO volunteers on parent engagement. SGACs members typically include head teachers, ECE teachers, parents and local leaders (Umudugudu). Due to the current status of ECE in Rwanda, SGACs can either include parents of primary and ECE children together or only parents of ECE students. The project promoted home-grown school feeding and school gardens initiatives with the aim to improve children's nutrition and health. The school garden activity was implemented through school-based demonstration plots sustained by parent contributions, which was also intended to promote improved agriculture activities at home. By design, the project expected that 70 percent of the school gardens proceeds would contribute to a home-grown school feeding scheme supported by the project and parent contributions.[50] To improve sanitation and hygiene in schools, the project provided tippy taps and soap and coached teachers on children's hygiene practices such as handwashing after using toilets, before and after meals.

Activities under Outcome 3 aim at strengthening leadership and governance capacities of stakeholders such as head teachers, SGAC members, sector education officers (SEOs) and district education officers (DEOs). Training content included leadership in the ECE context, ECE CBC, and monitoring and evaluation of ECE. The project also organized cross-learning visits for head teachers between model and neighboring school and visits to HVP Gatagara centers to widen project impact and awareness on inclusion. Activities with SEOs and DEOs took place as knowledge exchange meetings and the provision by the project of adapted management and planning tool. This activity also aimed at improving SEOs' and DEOs' performance contract (Imihigo) with regards to sector and district contribution to ECE. [51]

Based on the project proposal, the project targets 4,362 direct beneficiaries and 14,537 indirect beneficiaries. The type of targeted direct beneficiaries is detailed in . Project logframe with performance data against planned indicators and beneficiary data is available in Annex 4.

Table 1: Direct Beneficiary Types [52]

| Beneficiary types | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Children aged 3-6 enrolled in Focus Schools and Centres | 1,080 | 1,440 | 2,520 |
| ECE and P1 teachers in Focus Schools and Centres | 30 | 30 | 60 |
| Focus School head teachers Centre managers | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| District Education Officials and Sector Education Officers | 12 | 5 | 17 |
| Focus School and Centre management committee members | 90 | 90 | 180 |
| Umudugudu community officials local to the Focus Schools and community-based ECE centres | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| Parents of children accessing Focus Schools and community centres | 720 | 813 | 1,533 |
| Children with moderate impairments and special education needs | 45 | 45 | 90 |

[50] VSO. 2016. SSRR project proposal.

[51] Imihigo, a cultural practice relating to performance contracts, modernized to reinforce development planning, implementation and evaluation towards improving living conditions for Rwandans.

[52] Beneficiary type taken from: VSO. 2018. Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda project. Narrative report January-June 2018. Planned beneficiary data taken from VSO. 2017. Revised project proposal.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| accessing Model Schools and surrounding schools | | | |
| Children with mild and moderate impairments and learning difficulties | 20 | 40 | 60 |
| Teacher Training College tutors | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| Teacher Training College student teachers | 100 | 100 | 200 |
| **TOTAL** | **2,188** | **2,414** | **4,362** |

# III. Evaluation Findings

## A. Relevance

**Coherence with policies, plans and strategies[53]**

The SSRR project is timely considering the GoR plan to introduce ECE teacher salaries in the short- to medium term.[54] Interviews with government representatives indicate that efforts are still underway to identify and allocate budget for ECE teacher salaries, which is likely to postpone the implementation until 2020 or beyond. Given the current delay regarding ECE teacher salary funding, the local parent contribution model supported by the project is highly appropriate as a bridging and complementary model for future government funding.

Interviews with government representatives and project staff show that VSO is an important education sector partner and active contributor to technical and strategic planning related to ECE scale up in Rwanda. The SSRR project was an important proof-of-concept initiative that provided evidence that fed into VSO's national advocacy activities.

The project design and interventions are well aligned with national policies, standards and plans that promote ECD, inclusive education, parent and community support as well as ECE teacher skills and capacities. The project contributes to the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024 by scaling up ECD services at the village level.[55] The SSRR project approach captures education principles as framed in the 2015 Summary of Curriculum Framework, including for instance a learner-centred and competence-based approach, and inclusive education.[56] The project components such as holistic service provision, non discrimination, parents at the center of care giving, and gender equality are aligned with principles of the ECD policy, approved by the GoR in 2016.[57]

The 2016 ECD policy and the MIGEPROF 2016 ECD Minimum Standards and Norms recognize the central role of parents as an integral part of early learning programs.[58] The SSRR project is aligned with these standards, notably through the support provided to formal mechanisms to engage parents through SGACs, and the active engagement of parents in the project seeking their support and contribution to ECE, including support to ECE teacher salaries and school nutrition. The parent contributions to ECE teacher salaries approach is particularly aligned with financing options from beneficiary contributions as outlined in the National Early Childhood Development Policy Strategic Plan 2016-2021.[59] ECE teacher salaries are also discussed in the National Pre-Primary Education Minimum Standards and Guidelines for Rwanda (2018), in which pre-primary school teachers entitlement to salary and fringe benefits are clearly acknowledged.[60]

Capacity building of ECE and primary teachers under the SSRR project is aligned with the ESSP 2013/14-2017/18, where it is called for effective education services delivery through effective management and leadership, as well as addressing capacity at individual, institutional and systems

[53] This answers evaluation questions 1g: How is the program tied to the overall aid environment in Rwanda? Are there any notable linkages/disconnects?
[54] The New Times. 2017. Government to pay preschool teachers. https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/222105.
[55] MINECOFIN. 2017. 7 Years Government Programme: National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) 2017-2024.
[56] MINEDUC. 2015. Competence-Based Curriculum. Summary of Curriculum Framework. Pre-Primary to Upper Secondary.
[57] MIGEPROF. 2016. Early Childhood Development Policy.
[58] MIGEPROF. 2016. Minimum Standards and Norms for Early Childhood Development Services in Rwanda.
[59] MIGEPROF. 2016. National Early Childhood Development Policy Strategic Plan 2016-2021.
[60] MINEDUC. 2018. National Pre-Primary Education Minimum Standards and Guidelines for Rwanda.

levels to ensure that the education sector has adequately equipped personnel.[61] The project is similarly in alignment with the ESSP objective to improve access to school readiness programs by 2017/18, as well as school health and nutrition. The project approach to demonstrate pathways to improved school readiness through ECE model schools is directly aligned with the ESSP, which recommends and plans for the establishment of new ECD centres through the period 2013-2018.

The project is appropriately utilizing the 2015 MINEDUC Curriculum for Pre-Primary School from 3-6 years, and builds on the pre-service teacher training programme for pre-primary school teachers established by MINEDUC in 2012 to consolidate the pre-primary teacher workforce.[62] Furthermore, the concrete training provided to teachers in schools and to teacher students at Mwezi TTC directly addresses foundational capacity challenges in ECE and primary education as identified in the EDPRS 2.[63] The project is aligned with the EDPRS 2 recommendation for better trained, equipped, resourced and managed teachers.

Although Dubai Cares does not have specific strategies or policies on ECD, the project is directly aligned with the Dubai Declaration on Early Childhood Development, which was announced jointly by Dubai Cares and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) at the World Government Summit on 10 February 2019.[64] The Dubai Declaration on Early Childhood Development identifies elements and approaches for a holistic package of services for young children ranging from stimulation and play to nutrition and to parental livelihoods.[65] Although dated, a review of ECE challenges listed in the 2015 Education for All report indicates that the project addresses key challenges, including improving ECE teacher training quality in TTCs and dissemination of the ECE curriculum in all pre-primary schools.[66]

An overview table of relevant global and national policies and strategies to which the project aligns is provided in Annex 3.

**Targeting & beneficiary needs**[67]

Geographic targeting of the SSRR project is appropriate, as the 2014-2015 demographic and health survey (DHS) identified the western part of the country as having the smallest number of children enrolled in pre-primary centers.[68] This correlates with data from the Fourth Population and Housing Census (2012), where 73 percent of pre-school-aged children (3-6 years) never attended any form of pre-education, which is higher than the national average of 69 percent.[69] Geographical targeting in terms of poverty is also appropriate. Findings from the 2011 Integrated Household Living conditions Survey (EICV3) identified Nyamasheke as one of the district with the highest share (55 to 73 percent) of population living in poverty and extreme poverty.[70] The household survey also found that Nyamasheke had at that time 4.2 percent of people with a major disability, which is below but close

[61] MINDEUC. 2013. Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013/14 – 2017/18.
[62] MINEDUC. 2015. Curriculum for Pre-Primary School from 3-6 years.
[63] MINECOFIN. 2013. Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II 2013-2018.
[64] UNICEF website. 10 February 2019. Weblink. Weblink to the World Government Summit: here.
[65] Idem.
[66] MINEDUC. 2015. National Education For All 2015 Review.
[67] This answers evaluation questions 1b: To what extent have beneficiary communities been consulted with regards to the program design and implementation? ; 1f: How relevant is the program design in terms of raising awareness and support for Early Childhood Education among communities, families, teachers, students and the government in Nyamasheke District?
[68] NISR. 2015. 2014-15 Demographic and Health Survey. Key Findings.
[69] NISR. 2012. Fourth Population and Housing Census, Rwanda, 2012. District Profile: Nyamasheke.
[70] NISR. 2011. EICV3 District Profile: Nyamasheke.

to the national average of 4.5 percent. Evaluation team interviews with government and project staff confirm the relevance of inclusive ECE in Nyamasheke district based on the need analysis presented above.

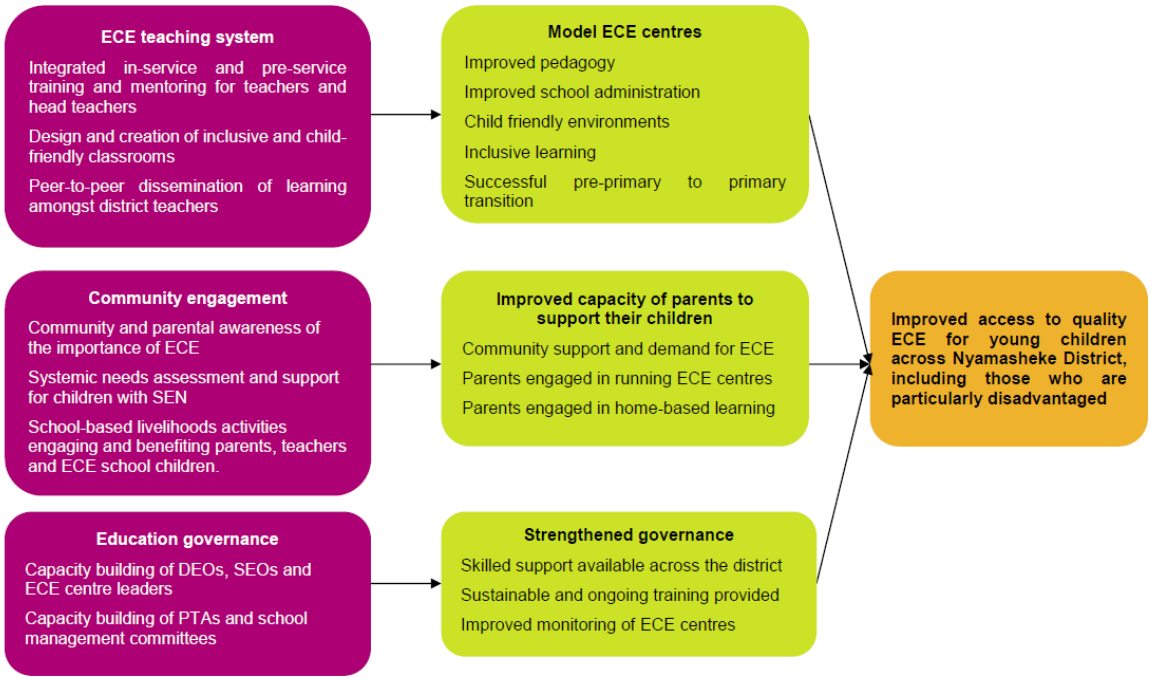
Desk review of project documents did not provide information on the methodology for school targeting. FGDs with project staff and SEOs indicate that the selection was done by Nyamasheke SEOs using criteria developed by VSO. The SEOs selected two schools in each of the 15 Nyamasheke districts, as follows: (1) one school remote from the sector office; (2) one school close to the sector office; and (3) schools that have an active ECE program. Under this approach, consultation with local communities was limited. FGDs with parents and SGAC members indicate that many communities were introduced to the project only after school selections were completed. Desk review of project reports and KIIs with project staff confirm that, as a result of the limited upfront communication, expectations at community level were not aligned with what the project could realistically achieve. High community expectations, including expectations around asset distribution, explains the high number of beneficiaries recorded during the first year of implementation in 2017. This regressed in year two (2018) due to improved engagement with community members and levelling of expectations for project support. Findings from FGDs with parents and project staff indicate that the initially high expectations were not only raised by the SSRR project, but also fostered by years of dole-out activity of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the region.

**Appropriateness of design[71]**

The project design is ambitious as reflected by the project proposal and narrative reports of target interventions in ECE capacity building, inclusion, school feeding, school gardens, livelihoods, sanitation and hygiene. A review of the project Theory of Change (ToC) (Figure 1) indicates a general focus on ECE capacity building across pathways, whereas issues such as school feeding, inclusion, livelihoods, sanitation and hygiene are not as prominent. KIIs with project staff confirm the strong project focus on the ECE component over other project components.

[71] This answers evaluation question 1a: How relevant are the activities designed to improve the learning opportunities and developmental outcomes of young children, especially children with disabilities in the context of Rwanda?

Figure 1: Theory of change for improving quality of ECE and access to ECE in Nyamasheke




Source: VSO. 2016. SSRR project proposal.

The VSO volunteer model represents the backbone of the project design, as volunteers are the primary project implementers engaged in the field with project beneficiaries and stakeholders. National and international volunteers are selected based on experience in the teaching sector. This model is appropriate as it brings in ECE education expertise that is currently not readily available in the country and provides a platform for existing Rwandan capacity to increase. Each volunteer team has a very specific set of specialization and capacities. All volunteers are involved in parent engagement activities. Volunteers meet on a monthly basis to share experiences. Interviews with project staff indicate that volunteer teams tend to focus on meeting targets and ensuring quality of activities in their assigned zone of operation, which covers three sectors in Nyamasheke. The focus on targets became more important in 2017, when efforts were initiated to catch up the year 1 implementation delay (this delay is discussed in next section in more detail). Interviews show that this resulted in limited time and opportunities for cross-zone learning and visits among volunteers, and ultimately in isolating volunteer capacities within their own zone of operation. In addition, interviews indicate that VSO volunteers' main focus is on the ECE capacity building (outcome 1) over other aspects of the projects such as inclusion, school feeding, school gardens, sanitation and hygiene.

**Adaptive management[72] and monitoring[73]**

Interviews indicate that project activities were delayed during the first year of implementation (April 2016 – March 2017) due to project management challenges. New staff hires in 2017 put the project

[72] This answers evaluation questions 1c: To what extent are the key contextual changes, threats and opportunities that arise during implementation influencing and informing program implementation?; 1d: How appropriate are the alternative solutions/changes proposed and/or implemented by the team to overcome the challenges faced to date?

[73] This answers evaluation question 1e: How and to what extent are program monitoring findings used to inform decision-making and the improvement of program implementation?

back on track with a revised schedule of planned activities. VSO volunteer teams were re-organized according to their capacities and project focus areas. Additionally, the new project manager was located in Nyamasheke until the end of 2018 to directly work with and support the project teams. Interviews indicate that this was an intensive period marked by weekly meetings to assess progress towards targets.

Project monitoring is effective in collecting data from each project activity through internal reports. Throughout this evaluation the project team was able to answer every request regarding project data, which confirms the functionality of the project monitoring system. Specific monitoring tools have been designed for each project component. As of 2018, VSO is using mobile devices for data collection. The project monitoring is reliable and accurate. Direct observation and interviews show that this functional monitoring system allows the project team to efficiently identify and address issues.

Adaptive management in the project is high, as demonstrated by decisions around home-grown school feeding activities. In December 2017, project activities to develop a home-grown school feeding scheme in 30 ECE model schools were cancelled. The decision to cancel school feeding activities was based on three quarterly field monitoring visits conducted by the VSO Head of Programs and Regional Programme Management specialist. The conclusion of VSO senior managers was that resources and technical capacity were insufficient to deliver reasonable results within 12 months of implementation. To support this decision, Dubai Cares was informed and visited the project twice in 2017 to observe school feeding results and capacity. KIIs with project staff and project reports also indicate that VSO resources and capacities to implement school feeding were limited, and that at local level project staff, school staff and parents struggled to reach a consensus around the type of home-grown school feeding scheme to adopt.[74] However, project and school staff were keenly aware of the importance of some type of meals/snacks in school as a key pull factor for enrollment and attendance. Rather than an immediate end to the school feeding activities, the project instead encouraged local initiatives in the form of parents' contribution (saving schemes). SGACs were used as a main discussion platform to create an enabling environment for various types of meals in school models, and school-based nutrition awareness interventions. Parent interest in these issues led to school- and community-led nutrition activities in 14 model schools at the time of the evaluation, including saving schemes in six schools that directly supported school feeding.[75]

School gardens and livelihood interventions were cancelled in December 2018 by project management as the project did not have adequate resources and technical staff to successfully implement this project component. This was further complicated by unreasonably high parent expectations for livelihood support, which meant that community support for the actual project activities was not there. Moreover, the challenges with the livelihood component was having a negative impact on other activities, i.e., parents were withdrawing their children from school activities. Project staff made the correct decision to drop this controversial component and refocus efforts on the other project activities to positively mobilize parents.

[74] VSO. 2017. SSRR project narrative reports, Jan-Jun 2017, July-Dec 2017, and Jan-Jun 2018.
[75] VSO. 2018. SSRR project. School feeding (Parents' initiatives).

## B. Effectiveness [76]

This section assesses key project results relative to the project objectives, outcomes and activities. The evaluation findings are grounded in primary data and secondary data collected from project documentation. Baseline data are used when possible to triangulate findings. Analysis of progress made towards the three project outcomes are presented in Table 2, Table 5 and Table 8. Data in these tables are sourced from the narrative reports submitted by VSO to Dubai Cares, and validated through evaluation activities.

### *Progress towards project specific outcomes*

**Outcome 1: Improved quality of teaching in 30 ECE model schools.**

**Associated outcome indicators:**

- Number of teachers implementing the national ECE curriculum through learner-centred methods (target 53, actual 48)
- Number of ECE teachers who actively include children with special educational needs (SEN) in learning activities (target 48, actual 48)

Table 2: Performance against Outcome 1 output indicators

| Outcome 1 output indicators | Unit of measure | Target value | Achieved value |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 Number of ECE teachers who complete learner centred trainings | Individuals | 53 | 48 |
| 1.2 Number of ECE children benefitting from learner-centred methods | Individuals | 8,299* | 11,618* |
| 1.3 Number of ECE schools with inclusive physical environment | Schools | 6 | 6 |
| 1.4 Number of children with disabilities identified, screened and supported to get treatment | Individuals | 146 | 126 |
| 1.5 Number of TTC tutors who complete learner-centred trainings and follow up support visits | Individuals | 14 | 14 |
| ** Cumulative value covering three years of project.* | | | |

*1.1 Number of ECE teachers who complete learner centred trainings*

**Development of training content.** The learner centred training is a capacity building approach developed by VSO that aligns with government strategic plans and MINEDUC's ECE minimum standards. The training aims to fill the current capacity limitations of ECE teachers by developing their teaching skills. KIIs with project staff and sector officials indicate that ECE trainings at sector level fall under REB's responsibility. However, these trainings are not always carried out due to the lack of resources available for ECE education at sector level. As a result, some ECE teachers in Nyamasheke do not receive ECE-related trainings as prescribed by REB. For this reason, the project supported SEOs to plan, organize and conduct the trainings for schools that do not receive training from the REB. According to project data, 48 ECE teachers out of the 53 targeted received training on the learner

[76] This answers evaluation question 2a: How well is the program achieving its planned outcomes so far? ; 2b: Generally, are the activities carried out in line with the original plans? If not, are the changes adequately discussed, documented, and justified? To what extent is the design of the program activities contributing to the success/failure of programmatic outcomes? ; 2c: What system and mechanism are in place to ensure accountability to the beneficiaries and to what extent is it being implemented?

centred approach. FGDs with ECE teachers indicate that the training was provided by VSO volunteers in all ECE model schools. Content of the training included learner-centred teaching methodologies, familiarization and application of the ECE CBC and production of learning material with locally available materials. Findings from the ECE teachers survey show that 83 percent of ECE teachers are very satisfied and 10 percent somewhat satisfied with the quality of support and training. This correlates with interview findings that ECE model school staff was very appreciative of the training received. Review of materials show these were of high quality.

Interviews with project staff indicate that model ECE and P1 teachers trained by VSO volunteers play a facilitation role during sector level trainings. The trainings on ECE CBC and learner centred approach represent a small part of the complete training approach of the project. KIIs with project staff indicate that much more effort is invested in coaching and mentoring, conducted on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. ECE teacher survey findings show that ongoing coaching is provided to ECE teachers by VSO volunteers weekly (33 percent), bi-weekly (38 percent), or monthly (23 percent).[77] Interviews with school staff indicate this approach is very effective and appreciated because of the close accompaniment developed through VSO volunteer mentoring.

**Provision of projectors.** All 16 projectors were distributed as planned. KIIs with project staff indicate that 15 projectors were bought and distributed across the 15 Nyamasheke sectors offices, with one additional projector distributed to the TTC in Mwezi. The purpose of the projectors was to support sector level trainings of ECE and P1 teachers and SEOs on ECE.[78] KIIs with project staff indicate that projectors were handed over to sectors offices and the TTC. The purpose and frequency of use of the projectors is not monitored by VSO, although, interviews with project staff show a desire to follow up on the projector usage, by implementing a logbook for example, in order to know if the projectors are also being used for other purposes and why. This information would help inform future hardware investment decisions.

**Provision of smartphones to ECE teachers.** Interviews with school staff show that smartphones are distributed either to SEOs or head teachers and after handed to ECE teachers. Smartphones were not provided in all cases and required ECE teachers or VSO volunteers to ask for the device from the head teacher who kept it. According to project reporting, the VSO volunteers were supposed to develop a schedule for usage by ECE teachers. Reports also indicate that phones were bought and distributed to model schools in collaboration with SEOs and DEOs to ensure ownership. The use of smartphones was supposedly to enable ECE teachers to exchange experience and learning on a discussion group on the WhatsApp application. However, KIIs show that this is not done on a regular basis. A main challenge is that teachers are expected to pay for the data package in order to upload and download content on WhatsApp on a weekly basis, which is too expensive for most. More importantly, the teachers are not sufficiently acquainted with each other, which forms a barrier to peer-led learning approaches, as opposed to the in-person accompaniment by the VSO volunteers, for example. KIIs with project staff indicate that not much can be done from their side to address this issue regarding the extra financial burden teachers have to cover in order to use the smartphones.

**ECE model school teachers training on application of ECE curriculum.** Discussions with project and school staff show that the language used in the ECE curriculum is not adapted to the needs of the teachers. Interviews show that the names and language of six corners and circle time activities are not

[77] ECE Teacher survey conducted by the evaluation team.
[78] VSO monitored sector level trainings but did not monitor use of projectors.

reflective of what the activities under these categories really entail, which has been confusing for teachers learning the curriculum. For example, the corner approach does not necessarily involve work in corners nor does circle time need to be conducted in a circle. However, in many cases, teachers defaulted to the basic understanding that the approach name was synonymous with the method, i.e., corner play could only be conducted in classroom corners.

The project helped develop a schedule of daily activities aligned with the ECE curriculum.[79] Findings from the ECE teacher survey show that this schedule is generally followed and that teachers are proactively adopting the sequence of activities to suit their needs and school environment (see Table 3). There are some challenges. KIIs with school staff indicate that the schedule is sometimes hard to follow, especially with crowded classrooms where classroom management can be time-consuming. For example, some teachers lose a great deal of time accompanying children to the toilets. KIIs with school staff indicate that due to large class sizes some teachers must organize trips to toilets in large groups. Some of the children also need teacher assistance to go to toilet. Since there is a limited number of latrines (usually 4-6), this is a time-consuming task. As the project is also asking for teachers to support hygiene and hand washing, there is then more time lost for the teacher to check that all the students wash their hands and are clean before returning to ECE activities.

Table 3: Class activities usually taking place on a typical ECE day

| Activity | Occurrence | Activity schedule * |
|---|---|---|
| Welcome circle time | 76.7 % | 7.30 – 8.30 |
| Language and literacy circle time | 86.7 % | 8.00 – 8.20 |
| Discovery of the world | 96.7 % | 8.20 – 8.50 |
| Corner play | 93.3 % | 8.50 – 9.40 |
| Tidy up time | 50.0 % | 9.40 – 9.50 |
| Snack time | 83.3 % | 9.50 – 10.10 |
| Outdoor play | 93.3 % | 10.10 – 10.40 |
| Story-telling | 90.0 % | 10.40 – 11.00 |
| Numeracy circle time | 90.0 % | 11.00 – 11.30 |
| Good bye circle time | 96.7 % | 11.30 – 11.40 |

Source: Evaluation team, ECE teachers survey
* Schedule as developed by VSO.

**Training of 30 model school P1 teachers.** This activity is on track to meet project targets, and has provided ECE training to P1 teachers in all 30 model schools. The purpose of the training and coaching was to refresh knowledge on ECE CBC, planning capacity, and assessment capacity, especially of ECE children who graduated to primary education. According to project reports, the project organized the first learning activity in September 2017 for P1 teachers to visit the best performing ECE school in their project zone. Two teachers per model school were invited to attend. In February 2018, the project organized a training to go deeper into the content of the ECE CBC and learn how to bridge the gap between ECE and P1. Two teachers per model school were also invited to attend. After this training, coaching and mentoring was provided to the selected teachers.[80] In March 2018, the project organized a meeting to evaluate what teachers have learned and implemented and to share their experience. One teacher per model school was invited to attend. Interviews show that P1 teachers from model

[79] The six corner play themes are: literacy corner, numeracy corner, book corner, role play corner, creative corer, construction corner.
[80] VSO. 2018. Report of P1 training February 2018.

schools positively assessed the ECE training and confirmed a difference in capacity and performance of children graduating from ECE to primary level one. P1 teachers report that the project ECE activities were very helpful in terms of improving classroom behavior of the ECE graduates, which contributed to improved classroom management and enabled extra attention for both fast and slow learners in P1.

**Learning visits for ECE model school teacher to neighboring schools & Training and learning visits for ECE teachers from neighboring schools at district level.** Project data indicate that 45 teachers (7 males, 38 females) were trained; the project target was met.[81] Interviews with project staff indicate that due to budget and time considerations, ECE teacher visits from model schools to neighboring schools were not conducted. Instead, only training and visits from neighboring ECE teachers to model schools took place. Learning visits between model and neighboring schools is organized by the project, but training at the sector level is organized by SEOs with project. Interviews with project and school staff indicate that 30 neighboring schools were selected by SEOs. This activity was designed to support knowledge and experience exchange between project model schools and schools not supported by the project. The purpose of the learning visit was for ECE teachers from neighboring schools to observe ECE lessons and ECE CBC application in practice. The purpose and content of the learning visit was similar to the ECE training provided to ECE teachers in model schools.[82]

*1.2 Number of ECE children benefitting from learner-centred methods*

Project data indicate that a total of 3,943 children were reached against 3,917 planned, exceeding the project target.[83] To support learning, VSO distributes teaching and learning material kits every term to each project model school. Interviews indicated that acquiring new materials after the project ends is a major concern for both project and school staff.

*1.3 Number of ECE schools with inclusive physical environment*

**Inclusivity and child-friendliness assessment of model schools.** The physical environment assessment was conducted by VSO using a checklist developed for this purpose. Assessment findings as reported in the January-June 2017 project narrative report indicate that most schools' environment is not inclusion-friendly.[84] The project baseline report mentions that most schools lack adequate inclusive physical environment, with only two schools with assistive devices, and only eight schools out of 30 (27 percent) with latrines fitted for children with disabilities.[85]

**Development of inclusive environment in model schools & Construction of inclusive ECE classrooms.** According to plan, VSO constructed ten inclusive classrooms in five model schools, located in Mutongo, Ngoboka, Nyabitekiri, Bushekeri, and Gihinga and a new ramp in Kibingo school.[86] The classrooms built by the project integrate inclusive elements such as ramps, large doors on each side of the classroom to allow wheelchair users access, windows on both sides of the classrooms to improve lighting, blackboard height adapted to children use, and paths connecting the classrooms to the latrines to allow access by CWDs. The target schools were selected by Nyamasheke district officials

[81] Data shared by VSO on updated actual beneficiary numbers. 28 January 2019.
[82] VSO. 2018. Sector training report in Circle times, August 2018.
[83] VSO. 2018. SSRR project narrative report, Jan-Jun 2018.
[84] VSO. 2017. SSRR project narrative report, Jan-Jun 2017; VSO. 2017. Assessment of ECE infrastructure and ECE enrolment 2017.
[85] VSO. 2017. Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda (SSRR) Project. Baseline Study. Final Baseline Report.
[86] Data provided by VSO to the ET, 6 February 2019.

based on the physical assessment conducted by VSO. In each selected school two new classrooms were built. The selection criteria used by Nyamasheke district office include challenges faced by the school (as listed in the physical assessment report), inappropriateness of ECE classrooms, overpopulated classrooms, and existing community participation to support construction.[87] Interviews show that targeting is generally appropriate for these activities.

In comparison with baseline data, findings from the ECE school survey confirm a reasonable improvement of model schools equipped with reachable (baseline: 6.7 percent, evaluation: 34 percent) and user-friendly (baseline: 6.7 percent, evaluation: 30 percent) latrines for CWDs (see table 4 in Annex 2). Interviews with project and school staff indicate that the main challenges for CWD are distance between the toilets and ECE classrooms as well as uneven terrain and slopes that reduce accessibility. CWDs usually require teacher assistance to access and use the toilets. Additional findings from the ECE school inclusive environment survey is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: ECE model schools inclusive physical environment assessment

| | Not | Partly | Fully |
|---|---|---|---|
| The school grounds are physically accessible (even surfaces, ramps, obstacles). | 53.3 % | 46.7 % | 0 % |
| School buildings (other than classrooms) are accessible (no step, ramp if needed; door wide enough for standard wheelchair). | 50 % | 40 % | 10 % |
| Access in to classroom is accessible (no step, ramp if needed; door wide enough for standard wheelchair). | 53.3 % | 33.3 % | 13.3 % |
| Classroom layout allows CWD to move around easily. | 33.3 % | 53.3 % | 13.3 % |

Source: Evaluation team, ECE teachers survey

**Training of SEOs and DEOs on ECE inclusion.** Training took place in the form of meetings to inform decision makers at sector and district level of the services available to support CWDs. The training included a review of roles, responsibilities and provisions at sector and district level towards support of CWDs. Interview findings indicate the content of the training was useful, appropriately built and elaborated on government guidance, and was considered a good update on Rwanda provision to CWDs and led to stronger awareness and understanding on ECE needs and inclusion.

**Training and coaching of model and neighboring ECE, P1, head teachers, and parents of children with disabilities.** The project first provided training for head teachers, ECE and P1 teaches in the 30 model schools. As VSO volunteers do not hold specific expertise in inclusion, training was provided by HVP Gatagara staff. For ECE and P1 teachers (outcome 1), the training aimed to raise awareness on psychosocial support, theory and teaching approach to CWDs and children with special education needs (SEN). For parents (outcome 2), the training emphasized on the importance of inclusion and for CWDs to attend school, with additional information on home support. Similar to ECE and P1 teachers, the training for head teachers (outcome 3) aimed to improve awareness on CWDs provisions and knowledge of adapted learning and teaching material. After this initial phase, the project invited all

[87] Nyamasheke District Office. 2017. Letter to VSO, 25 February 2017. RE: Identification off ECE schools to support with classrooms construction.

inclusion stakeholder to attend district-level training including head teachers, ECE and P1 teachers and parents with CWDs from both model and neighboring schools.[88]

**Learning and exchange visits.** This activity took place as a learning visit organized by the project to HVP Gatagara center for 30 head teachers from project model schools and 30 head teachers from 30 neighboring schools. The learning visit took place after the training at district level facilitated by the project, once all head teachers were familiar with theories and approaches around inclusion. The purpose of the learning visit was to give a sense of reality on inclusion work and on best practices working with CWDs, including the use of specialized learning material.

VSO volunteers mainly have backgrounds in education, with limited background in inclusion. Because of this, the project had them join the head teachers to visit HVP Gatagara. KIIs with project staff indicate this benefited both head teachers and volunteers and provided a common understanding on basic inclusive teaching approaches and inclusive teaching material. This enabled both actors to brainstorm on ways to support learning of CWDs in their schools.

*1.4 Number of children with disabilities identified, screened and supported to get treatment*

**Identification of children with disabilities (CWD).** In 2018, 126 CWDs were supported against a planned number of 146. This performance reflects the project partners (HVP Gatagara) ability to provide support to identified and selected CWDs. Identification and screening were conducted during awareness raising campaigns and events at district level on World Disability Day, and followed by similar additional events at sector level.

The screening and identification of CWDs was conducted under a tripartite memorandum of understanding between the Nyamasheke district, HVP Gatagara medical specialist, and VSO. VSO facilitated the identification process by organizing a screening in each community where ECE model schools are located. In this process, collaboration with Nyamasheke district disability mainstreaming officer (DDMO), a multi-disciplinary team led by HVP Gatagara was invited to conduct the screening. Screening was conducted under each project reporting term. Under this process, identified CWDs are referred to HVP Gatagara for treatment or surgery. However, final decisions on treatment depends on HVP Gatagara. FGDs with parents indicate that HVP Gatagara does not follow-up with children who received treatment, and that follow-up was provided by VSO volunteers in their respective zones from June to September 2018. This is a concern, as treatment complications might not be addressed in time. Most parents interviewed indicated the remoteness and high travelling costs as a challenge to access HVP Gatagara center and treatment. For this reason, a field visit was conducted by the multi-disciplinary team led by HVP Gatagara from 20 January to 1 February 2019, with the objective to follow up on previous activities conducted by HVP Gatagara, including training of head-teachers and SEOs on SEN and children who received treatment. The project covered transportation fees and meals for parents and their children to attend the follow up sessions organized by HVP Gatagara in Nyamasheke district.[89]

Findings from KIIs with project staff and FGDs with parents indicate limited time and resource allocation by the project on this component, which resulted in limited impact and quality of results. Interviews further indicate that, while the project successfully identified CWDs, expectations raised at

[88] Interview with VSO staff indicate that frequency of district level meeting requested by REB are delivered based on needs. Usually the training is held on a monthly basis, with sometimes exceptions with training provided every two or three months.

[89] HVP Gatagara. 2019. Field visit report.

local level where not fully met or no follow up was provided by the project. Interviews with school staff and parents indicate that screening of children was conducted for each project model school, however only few identified CWDs received treatment, while the larger part is still waiting for treatment.

Project interventions in 2019 indicate the establishment of a technical working group or task force on SEN in Nyamasheke district composed of HVP Gatagara, Nyamasheke district DDMO and VSO, as part of the SSRR project. The task force works closely with parents and health workers to ensure that CWDs are able to attend school. Follow up on health issues and needs is also part of the support process to ensure that families have access to a range of social and health services from the district.[90] This project approach is appropriate and evidence of good resource investment to support the development of a disability support mechanism via district-level institutions.

*1.5 Number of TTC tutors who complete learner-centred trainings and follow up support visits*

At the end of 2018, the project trained the total planned number of 14 TTC tutors.[91]

**Preparation and construction of TRC at Mwezi TTC.** Following the project plan, a TRC was built at Mwezi TTC by VSO. The TRC appears well built and equipped with relevant teaching material used for demonstration and learning workshops. The TRC is also a learning center for in-services teachers from the vicinity of TTC. Interviews show that ECE teachers come to the TRC for sector training on how to develop teaching and learning materials.

**Provision of projector and laptop.** As reported under output 1.1.2, the TTC was provided with a laptop and projector to support the quality of learning and teaching at the TTC. The active use of these items was confirmed through interviews with TTC staff.

**Coaching of TTC ECE tutors.** Interviews with TTC staff indicate that support was regularly provided by VSO Volunteers on ECE teaching methodologies and on the development of TLM from local and low-cost resources. However, the project has not facilitated clear linkages between teacher capacity building in model schools and project involvement with the TTC, e.g., more proactive use of key materials such as the Methodology and Resource Making Toolkit Foundations of Education Curriculum, which VSO helped develop and revise.[92]

**Practical work placement in project schools for TTC ECE student teachers.** Interviews with TTC staff indicate that Mwezi TTC mostly operates at sector level. Interviews with project staff indicate that ECE student teachers are engaged in model schools by the project during their teaching practice. Project reports indicate that 12 teacher students (5 males, 7 females) were placed for teaching practice in EP Mwezi, GS Kamonyi and EP Gihinga model schools.[93] However, this approach does not appear appropriate and functioning outside Karengera sector, where Mwezi TTC is located. Interviews with TTC staff shows that the most practical work placements are taking place in Karengera and the neighboring sector, Ruharambuga. Distance and transportation costs were indicated as the main barriers for student teachers to attend schools in remote sectors. Attending Mwezi TTC and working in a different sector is thus not a viable or cost-efficient solution for these students. After graduating, most teacher students relocate to teach in their home sector. Interviews with TTC students find that

[90] HVP Gatagara. 2019. Field visit report.
[91] VSO. 2018. SSRR project narrative report, Jan-Jun 2018.
[92] Foundations of Education. 2014 (revised). Methodology and Resource Making Toolkit – Foundations of Education Curriculum.
[93] VSO. 2017. SSRR project narrative reports, Jan-Jun 2017 and July-Dec 2017.

the prospect of working as ECE teacher is not appealing because ECE teachers are not paid by the government, and thus their salaries are highly variable. This also impacts the Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education (ECLPE) program taught at the TTC. This program is currently underperforming and is characterized by a low enrolment, reflective of its low appeal to potential students. TTC students interviewed indicated that other programs or options at the TTC are full and thus their only choice was to complete the ECLPE program.

**Progress towards outcome 1**

- Good project performance in building capacity on ECE and P1 teacher on learner-centred methodology in order to align with the ECE CBC. Capacity building and coaching has increased teacher confidence and capacity while simultaneously reducing teacher turn-over rates.
- As a result of the capacity-building of ECE and P1 teachers, a higher number of ECE children are benefiting from learner-centred teaching and improved their readiness to transit to lower primary education.
- Low performance of the project in terms of inclusivity and basic content of training. This activity has raised expectations that the project cannot meet. The lack of follow-up with CWDs treated by HVP Gatagara is not in line with long-term treatment protocols, and, for example, could mean that treatment adherence and compliance, and resulting complications, are not addressed.
- The project collaboration with the TTC is limited. The TTC is not appropriately integrated into project components and is mostly active in its own geographical sector.

**Outcome 2: Improved parent and community engagement in ECE system**

**Associated outcome indicators:**

- Number of parents and community members who regularly participate in school meetings and school visits (target 30, actual 30)
- Number of parents and community members supporting home-based learning of ECE children (target 1,758, actual 2,876)

Table 5: Performance against Outcome 2 output indicators

| Outcome 2 output indicators | Unit of measure | Target value | Achieved value |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 Number of schools with local initiatives to engage parents in school meetings and school visits | Schools | 30 | 30 |
| 2.2 Number of parents trained on how to support home-based learning for ECE children | Individuals | 1,758 | 2,876 |
| 2.3 Number of schools who establish school demonstration gardens | Schools | 30* | 30* |
| 2.4 Number of parents participating in school demonstration gardens | Individuals | 750* | 1,600* |
| 2.5 Number of ECE schools who establish school feeding initiatives | Schools | 30* | 18* |
| 2.6 Number of ECE school children benefiting from school feeding | Individuals | 1,360* | 1,678* |
| 2.7 Number of schools who establish good sanitation & hygiene practices | Schools | 30 | 19 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.8 Number of children benefitting from good sanitation & hygiene practices | Individuals | 2,497 | 1,732 |
| * Indicator reported until December 2017. | | | |

*2.1 Number of schools with local initiatives to engage parents in school meetings and school visits*

All 30 project ECE model schools have local initiatives to engage parents in school meetings and school visits.[94] Parent engagement is mainly conducted through SGACs, which have all been either strengthened or activated in each school supported by the project.

**Implementation of project launches at community level.** Desk review and interviews with project staff indicate the project was introduced and launched in each target community through information sessions hosted by project staff and VSO volunteers. FGDs with SGAC members and parents indicate that expectations were high at the start of project implementation, which explains the high number of children enrolled in ECE classes in the first project year. However, this was not only a result of the project promotion, but also the unintended impact of INGOs and NGOs presence in the area that shaped local mindsets and expectations around development assistance. Since ECE is a preparatory class and not mandatory it is up to the parents to enroll their children in ECE. Children that are not enrolled in ECE usually stay home until they are of age to enroll in primary education. Once it became clear that the project goal was not to distribute resources to households who enrolled their children, many parents withdrew their children from schools, which led to a reduction of beneficiary number as reported in the July-December 2017 narrative report.

**Engagement of parents on visiting schools and supporting school ECE and decision-making related to ECE provision led by SGAC with volunteer support.** SGACs are the most effective element and entry point for the project to share key messages and knowledge on ECE, inclusion, sanitation and hygiene, health and nutrition. Desk review of project documentation shows that the project staff coached SGACs and parents in each project zone, particularly focused on engaging key members (headteacher, ECE/P1 teachers, local leaders and parents) and encouraged them to share the content of the training to other parents during SGAC meetings.[95]

FGDs with parents indicate that as a result of the project engagement and VSO volunteers, parents are now more engaged in school visits and classroom observation. Discussions with parents and SGAC members indicate that parents with children enrolled in ECE are more engaged in school-related activities, mainly attendance of SGAC meetings and school visits to a lesser extent. KIIs with school staff confirm that the project increased parent contributions along with school visits and class observation every term. KIIs with project staff, school staff and FGDs with parents indicate that this is adapted to each school. Parents are contributing what they can afford. Contributions generally vary between 500 and 2000 Rwandan Francs per month. Interviews show that this can cover teacher salaries and provide school meals. Since parent contributions vary between each project schools, so do ECE teacher salaries. FGDs with school staff and parents indicate that in some instances ECE teachers are paid almost as much as primary school teachers.

KIIs with school staff and FGDs with parents indicate that in many schools ECE is not considered part of the school system and is thus treated as an entirely separate entity. This means that ECE is not

[94] VSO. 2018. SSRR project narrative report, Jan-Jun 2018.
[95] VSO. 2018. Compiled report of SGAC orientation 2018.

discussed during the standard SGAC meetings. For this reason, ECE parents and teachers took the initiative to create dedicated ECE SGACs that are separate from primary education SGACs. Evidence from FGDs and KIIs indicate that dedicated ECE SGACs have the advantage to better focus on ECE related issues at school level, which is normally not possible under SGACs that combine primary and ECE together. In that case, it appears that dedicated ECE SGACs are particularly empowered in their function, which is highly valued by participating parents. The ET observes the project has successfully used the SGACs as a mechanism to engage parents and strengthen their support and contributions.

*2.2 Number of parents trained on how to support home-based learning for ECE children*

**Engagement of parents on supporting home-based learning and decision-making related to ECE provision led by SGAC with volunteer support.** A total number of 2,876 parents were reached by the project against the planned number of 1,758. The continuous engagement of parents by project volunteers through the schools and the SGACs contributed to this success. A review of internal project reports indicate that meetings hosted through SGACs with parents are used by the project as a discussion and awareness raising platform on ECE provision and parent participation to classroom observation and contribution to TLMs, nutrition (feeding initiatives), health, sanitation and hygiene, as well as home-based learning.[96]

To support SGAC training, VSO used the Pre-Primary Reading Guide for Parents training manual from REB, developed in collaboration with VSO, UNICEF and USAID. [97] FGDs with parents indicate that not many parents support home-based learning as they are busy working and cannot contribute much time to support their kids with home-based learning activities. Instead many parents showed their support through the provision of low-cost material for the creation of TLMs at school.

**Regular follow-up to parents from schools on ECE learning in the home and support for provision in school.** KIIs with school staff indicate that the project facilitated closer and more regular follow-up with parents, particularly in case of student absence or late parent contributions for ECE teacher salaries or school meal schemes.

*2.3 Number of schools who establish school demonstration gardens & 2.4 Number of parents participating in school demonstration gardens*

The school demonstration garden activity has been cancelled by SSRR project management. Project reports indicate this activity stopped in December 2017 and not pursued in 2018.[98] At the time this activity was cancelled, garden schools were established in all 30 model schools, with participation of 1,600 parents out of 750 originally planned.[99] Interviews with project staff and parents indicate the main rationale behind this activity was to develop school-based gardening activities based on local livelihood needs of parents. The school gardens would be used as demonstration plots from where parents could take away lessons and knowledge that they could replicate at home to ultimately improve their livelihoods and revenues. Additionally, as a result of this activity, schools would be able to grow vegetables to support home-grown school feeding as well as to raise funds by selling excess produce at local markets. The project engaged with Social Economic Development officers at all levels and SEOs to brainstorm ideas on school gardening activities, though it was not successful.[100]

[96] VSO. 2017 Annual Review Comprehensive Report 2017 – SSRR.
[97] REB. 2018. Pre-Primary Reading Guide.
[98] VSO. 2017. SSRR Project narrative report, July-December 2017.
[99] Planned number of parents taken from the project proposal.
[100] VSO. 2017. SSRR Project narrative report, July-December 2017.

Interviews with project staff indicate a gap in the required technical knowledge and skills to successfully complete this activity. FGDs with parents indicate that school gardens were designed as demonstration plots and to help parents in preparing balanced meals. However, FGD findings indicate that this activity received little support from parents, and seeds were provided too late by the project. This resulted in garden cultivation taking place in inappropriate seasons. FGDs with parents indicate several reasons why parents did not participate in this activity, including vegetables stolen during the night, lack of water, difficulty to grow vegetables in the dedicated land, and off-season and late start of the activity.

KIIs with school staff indicate that a small number of schools are continuing the school gardening activity as an awareness activity to catalyze parents' awareness and interest in improved agriculture, and to improve nutrition awareness both at home and at school.

*2.5 Number of ECE schools who establish school feeding initiatives & 2.6 Number of ECE school children benefiting from school feeding*

Home-grown school feeding started as a strong and structured component with provision of cups, cooking utensils, kitchens and flour. However, a comprehensive school feeding approach is resource intensive; the project lacked these resources.

**Implement review and planning meetings with SGACs, school teachers and local authorities on school feeding schemes.** The school feeding approach was introduced and discussed in all 30 ECE model schools and involved consultation meetings with local leaders, school leaders, parents and volunteers. Interviews with project staff indicate that the project did not have a dedicated school feeding staff at any point. Complexities related to the implementation of sustainable school feeding across 30 model schools quickly led the project management to cancel this activity.

The collaboration model between VSO volunteers did not support the school feeding at project level and particularly between project zones. Interviews with project staff show that each VSO volunteer has a different set of capacities. At the time of the evaluation, only one volunteer had a background in school feeding. Due to busy work schedules, VSO volunteers do not have time for cross-zone visits and knowledge sharing often, if at all.

**Mobilize parents to support school feeding initiatives and identify and support parent initiatives to contribute to the feeding schemes.** While this activity was discontinued and outcome indicators were not revised, the project still built on local community-led school feeding that was already existing in some schools prior to project implementation. As indicated by the project baseline report and project narrative reports, school feeding is supported by parent contributions across the project ECE model schools, though in different forms as determined by parents' resources. In some cases, children bring snacks or meals from home. In other cases, parents support the preparation of meals in schools. Evidence from FGDs with parents confirms that parent's contribution and approach to school feeding varies across each ECE model school. Parent contribution models can include monthly or weekly cash provisions, in-kind support in the form of food staples, or labor with parents helping in the preparation of meals in school.

Interviews with school staff indicate that some schools proactively contribute to the school feeding schemes by allocating a part of the school's capitation grant to support meals for ECE children, or by sharing primary/secondary school meals with ECE children. For example, some model schools received milk from the government as part of the "One cup of milk a Day" programme, which was also provided to ECE children. In some cases this was provided directly to ECE children and in other cases through sharing from primary children. School staff also indicated personally bringing extra food to school for

ECE children and encouraging them to share. The exclusion of children from school or ECE class was also mentioned as an additional measure to foster parent contributions to the local feeding scheme. KIIs with project and school staff indicate that in some schools children are not allowed to attend school unless parents pay the monthly fees.

*2.7 Number of schools who establish good sanitation & hygiene practices & 2.8 Number of children benefitting from good sanitation & hygiene practices*

Project data report that 19 schools out of 30 planned are establishing good sanitation and hygiene practices.[101] Project data also show that 1,732 children out of 2,497 planned benefit from good sanitation and hygiene practices. This is coherent with findings from the school survey conducted by the evaluation, where findings indicate that 50 percent of project schools fully meet sanitation and hygiene practices and provisions.

**Organize practical sessions on good sanitation for SGACs, school teachers and local authorities.** A review of project internal reports indicates that training sessions on good sanitation and hygiene were organized by the project in each target school. Target participants included SGAC members, parents, ECE teachers, head teachers, education advisors and community health workers at cell levels, and SEOs.[102] For example, training content includes conducting classroom lessons on hygiene through songs and plays.[103] A review of project workplans indicate that training on sanitation and hygiene was well planned and integrated with other outputs such as training on inclusivity and ECE.[104] KIIs with project staff show that content of the trainings was basic but sufficient to be provided by VSO volunteers.

**Identification of necessary hygienic and sanitation facilities and items to meet basic standards.** Identification of necessary hygienic and sanitation facilities was informed by the VSO sanitation and physical infrastructure checklist. The checklist includes criteria such as classroom hygiene, sanitation facilities cleanliness, school compound cleanliness, water availability and accessibility, safe drinking water, waste disposal, and sanitation and hygiene materials such as tippy tap, basin, soap, toilet paper, and posters (IEC material with hygiene messages on walls). The survey of 30 ECE model schools conducted by the evaluation indicates that project support was limited to the distribution of soap, basin, construction of tippy taps, and construction of latrines. Soap and tippy taps were provided in all model schools, while pit latrines were constructed in five model schools (nursery Kibingo, Mutongo, Ngoboka, Nyabitekeri, Bushekeri, and Gihinga). Elements of the tippy taps provided by the project include a wooden structure holding a yellow cannister actioned by a lever linked to the cannister by a small rope.

**Support schools in showcasing and educating parents on better hygienic practices and facilities.** Interviews with project and school staff indicate that several factors affect the quality of sanitation and hygiene in the project model schools. A main factor includes inconsistent school access to water on a year-round basis and distance to nearest water points. The school survey conducted by the evaluation found that 30 percent of project model ECE schools do not have a water point within the school compound. As a result, children are sent to fetch water to refill tippy taps and clean toilets. If

[101] Data shared by VSO on updated project outputs. 28 January 2019.
[102] VSO. 2018. Report of Parental Engagement Orientation. Zone 5.
[103] VSO. Sanitation and physical infrastructure checklist.
[104] For instance workplans for project zones 3 for the period May-December 2018.

water is not available this results in tippy taps not being refilled or maintained, as well as toilets not being cleaned.

In some cases, tippy taps were located in places that were not conducive for children to use. Some devices were either located too far from the latrines or the ECE classrooms, thus not being located on the path between the classrooms and toilets. In addition, some devices were broken or lacking water or soap. In some cases, the rope linking the lever to the cannister was a too long to effectively activate the tap.

Despite the observed challenges, children have adopted positive sanitation and hygiene behaviors through teachers' and VSO volunteers' support in some schools. This positive result was captured by the school survey, as presented in Table 6. While KIIs with school staff indicate that sanitation and hygiene is now being integrated as part of their teaching and daily routine, findings from KIIs also confirms that P1 students who previously attended ECE are in general more disciplined, autonomous, and clean. KIIs with school staff also indicate improved sanitation and hygiene in schools both in terms of behavior and cleanliness of students.

Table 6: Adoption of hygiene practices in 30 ECE model schools

| **Sanitation observation checklist elements** | **Baseline data (%)** | **Midterm data (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| *School basic hygiene practices* | | |
| Safe disposal of human waste | 53.3 | 43.3 |
| Hand washing | 70.0 | 93.3 |
| Check personal hygiene | 73.3 | 60.0 |
| *Classroom hygiene practices promoted* | | |
| Teach children positive hygiene and sanitation behavior | 90.0 | 96.7 |
| Show the appropriate use of latrine/toilet | 50.0 | 43.3 |
| Supply appropriate hygienic tools (soap & brush) | 43.3 | 56.7 |

Source: Midterm data collected by the ET through survey of ECE teachers in 30 ECE model schools.

Findings from the survey of 30 ECE model schools indicate that inclusive sanitation and hygiene provision has improved since project implementation. Table 7 compares baseline and midterm data. However, findings indicate that the cleanliness of toilets has decreased at midterm compared with baseline stage. Data and pictures collected by the survey team for this evaluation clearly show that pitted toilets are generally not covered.

Table 7: Proportion of schools that fully meet key features of inclusive sanitation and hygiene provision

| **Key features** | **Baseline data (%)** | **Midterm data (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| The source of water is protected/water is safe. | 35.7 | 50.0 |
| Hand washing facilities are available. | 23.3 | 100.0 |
| Location of handwashing facilities can be easily reached by CWD (in terms of distance, even surface, and obstacles). | 6.7 | 46.7 |
| Hand washing facilities can be easily used by CWD (in terms physical environment, how they operate). | 6.7 | 43.3 |
| Toilets are clean. | 23.3 | 16.7 |
| Toilets are covered. | 33.3 | 13.3 |
| Toilets can be easily reached by CWD (in terms of distance, even surface and obstacles). | 0 | 16.7 |
| Toilets can be used/easily used by CWD (in terms of physical environment, how they operate). | 0 | 16.7 |

**Progress towards outcome 2**

- Good project performance is observed in activating and strengthening SGACs as a main local initiative to engage parents in school meetings and visits. The capacity building and coaching through VSO volunteers is effective in engaging and strengthening the capacity of SGAC members, including parents and teachers.
- The demonstration school gardens were not successful. The light approach adopted by the project for this activity was not relevant to allow realistic implementation. This activity was not aligned with local needs of schools, children and parents. The production rate of gardens was also too low to successfully support the school feeding component of the project.
- The school feeding approach was more successful than it initially appears. This activity was cancelled due to resource and capacity restraints. However, the strong interest from parents at community level has led to the development of community-driven school nutrition initiatives, which is a result attributable to the project.
- Sanitation and hygiene activities are implemented with a light touch at this stage. The effectiveness and impact of this activity is limited because 30 percent of project school do not have access to a water point in their compound. The lack of water leads to inefficient use of soap, tippy taps and latrines provided through the project. Under these conditions, planned targets are unlikely to be met.

**Outcome 3: Improved education governance and leadership in Nyamasheke district**

**Associated outcome indicators:**

- Number of schools who implement different mutual accountability mechanisms and initiatives (target 30, actual 24)
- Number of school leaders who include ECE teachers in their supervision missions (target 30, actual 20)

Table 8: Performance against Outcome 3 output indicators

| Outcome 3 output indicators | Unit of measure | Target value | Achieved value |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 Number of School General Assembly Committee members trained on community engagement | Individuals | 239 | 239 |
| 3.2 Number of Head Teachers who complete school leadership training sessions | Individuals | 30 | 30 |
| 3.3 Number of District and Sector officials who participate in training workshops on planning and monitoring of ECE | Individuals | 15 | 15 |
| 3.4 Number of engagements using evidence and learning from the project to influence positive change | Document | 1 | 1 |

*3.1 Number of School General Assembly Committee members trained on community engagement*

**Training of model School SGACs and one Umudugudu official per community.** Planned targets are met with 239 SGAC members trained on community engagement. FGDs with SGAC members confirm the satisfactory quality of the training. The activity target is to develop the capacity of SGACs to engage parents and secure their support. Local community leaders are also included in the training as their support carries weight in local communities. To effectively engage parents, the project trained SGAC

members on key ECE themes, including the importance and benefits of ECE, child development, and home-based learning.[105] The approach for this activity involved different types of trainings and methods, such as mentoring, coaching, consultation, mobilization, sensitization, as well as inclusion and collaboration with different local stakeholders to create an enabling environment on ECE, including education advisors, community health workers, local leaders and parents.[106]

**Training of all neighboring School SGACs and 1 Umudugudu officials per community.** Interviews with project staff and project narrative reports indicate this activity was not implemented.[107]

*3.2 Number of Head Teachers who complete school leadership training sessions*

Project data and interviews with project staff indicate that head teachers and teachers from model schools first received training on school leadership at school level. Feedback from school staff indicate a high quality of this training. Following the training of model school head teachers, ECE and P1 teacher trainings were then delivered at sector level aligning with REB requirements for sector level capacity building of school staff on ECE. Sector level training convened by VSO included head teachers, ECE and P1 teachers, SGAC members from both model and neighboring schools in addition to SEOs.[108] A particular aspect of the sector level training is to use the ECE model school staff initially trained by VSO volunteers at school level to facilitate the training. KIIs with project staff indicate that trainings represent a small part of the capacity building approach, where more effort is invested in weekly and daily coaching and mentoring provided by VSO volunteers at local level with head teachers, ECE and P1 teachers, SGACs and parents. To support training and mentoring, VSO used its own training material and manual such as the Education Leadership Toolkit, developed in 2015 by a former Education Leadership Advisor VSO volunteer.[109]

**Learning visits for model/neighboring School head teachers.** Interviews with project staff indicate learning visits for head teachers from model and neighboring schools were organized both ways to foster learning and knowledge exchange. Learning visits are organized once or twice every three months. Internal reports indicate that neighboring schools receive less support visits and trainings than ECE model schools.[110]

*3.3 Number of District and Sector officials who participate in training workshops on planning and monitoring of ECE*

The project engaged SEOs and DEOs through meetings and workshops on ECE methodology, ECE management, monitoring and planning at sector and district levels. The workshops are also building on Imihigo commitments at district level to foster development planning and monitoring around ECE. Project reports indicate that training was provided to 15 SEOs out of 15 planned. Interviews with SEOs indicate their satisfaction of the relevant content and good quality of the training.

ECE workshops on ECE methodology focused on clarifying ECE CBC components, as well as provisions, strategies and standards on ECE in Rwanda in line with child rights as outlined in the Convention of

[105] VSO. 2017. SSRR Quality Implementation – term 1 – year 2. Aspect of the SSRR Program: Parental engagement.
[106] Idem.
[107] VSO. SSRR project narrative reports for the period: Jan-Jun 2017; July-Dec 2017; Jan-Jun 2018.
[108] VSO. 2017. Report - leaders workshop – SSRR project, Zone 4. 5 July 2017.
[109] VSO. 2015. Education Leadership Toolkit.
[110] VSO. 2018. A snapshot of feedback from the review of the project performance at midterm focusing on methodology / teacher development with primary actors. August 2018.

the Rights of the Child. This approach allowed discussion of the needs around ECE CBC implementation at sector and district level.[111]

Interviews with project staff and sector representatives indicate the timely delivery of this project activity. The current momentum around ECE at national level has driven the demand down to sector level for quality disaggregated data on ECE (enrolment, attendance, drop, completion, repetition) as well as information or understanding on ECE-related concerns such as attendance, drop out and CWD inclusion. For this reason, workshops on ECE planning and management with SEOs focused on the provision and use of monitoring and planning tools as well as the consultation of school registration books. Interviews indicate this approach improved the quality of sector representatives' reports on ECE and their understanding of it.

*3.4 Number of engagements using evidence and learning from the project*

**Collect and document evidences, learning and best practices from ECE project implementation through project monitoring activities.** Findings from secondary data review show that evidence, best practices and lessons learned are collected by the VSO volunteers. KIIs with project staff indicate that lessons learned are first discussed internally among volunteers and among volunteers and project staff during annual project review meetings. Although lessons learned are discussed, they are not formally documented. Despite this, interviews indicate sufficient sharing of lessons learned between the VSO volunteers – who are well informed about the realities of the project– and VSO management. There is a strong need to compile and package learning and best practice knowledge for sharing outside of the organization and at the national level.

**Dissemination of evidence, learning and best practices and associated advocacy to key ECE decision-makers at national level.** Interviews with government staff at national level shows a lack of informed opinions on the project and its activity. Interview findings indicate a strong interest in the project progress and lessons learned, particularly around the parents' contribution model to ECE teacher's salary. KIIs with project staff indicate there is a wide panel of national stakeholders currently active in ECE including MINEDUC, MIGEPROF, MOH, MINALOC and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN).

**Collection and documentation of case stories and success stories**. A review of project documentation indicates that few documents were produced and shared with national level government counterparts. Interviews with project staff confirm the project generated important success stories and lessons that have yet to be captured.

**Progress towards outcome 3**

- Planned targets for capacity building of SGACs, head teachers and SEOs are met. This is the strongest project component, supported by the dedication and education skills of VSO volunteers.
- The project clearly invested and focused its attention at local level, ensuring that planned targets are met in order to catch up with the delay incurred during the project first year. As a result, knowledge management was overlooked and less effort was invested in documenting processes and lessons learned.
- Although targets for generating evidence is not high in the project results framework, the

[111] VSO. 2017. SSRR project narrative report, Jan-Jun 2017.

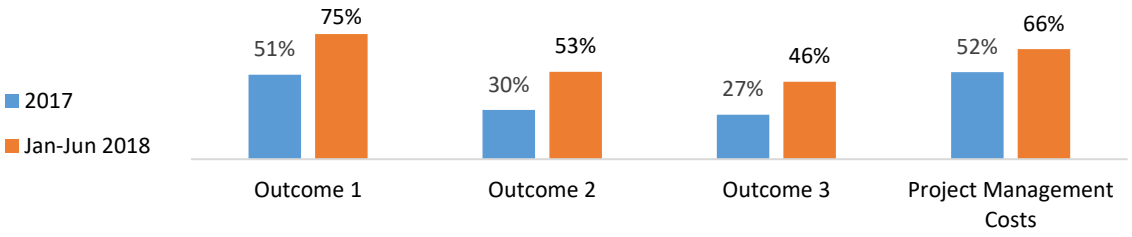
project has many lessons that could bring VSO advocacy at national level.

## C. Efficiency [112, 113]

*Budget utilization and burn rate*

The total budget for this project is USD 1,690,880. This includes Dubai Cares' contribution of USD 1,437,248 and VSO's matching fund of USD 253,632. No revision was made to the total budget. A review of project financial reports shows that USD 1,136,879 was spent, or 67 percent as of August 2018.[114] Budget under outcome 1 has the higher burn rate (75 percent), as presented in Figure 2. Followed by overall project management costs (66 percent). However, less budget was spent under outcome 2 (53 percent) and outcome 3 (46 percent). The high burn rate under outcome 1 reflects the high efforts implemented in terms of training and coaching by the project volunteers.

Figure 2: Project financial burn rate per year




Source: VSO. SSRR Project financial reports 2017 and Jan-Jun 2018.

*Resource allocation*

A review of project financial reports shows that a higher budget was allocated for project outcome 1 than outcomes 2 and 3 (see Figure 3). This is in part because construction of 10 ECE classrooms was allocated under outcome 1. The budget allocated under outcome 2 (10 percent), despite small, appears adapted since performance indicators for school feeding and school gardens were cancelled, allowing for more flexibility and resources use for capacity building of SGACs to engage parents. Outcome 3 was allocated the lowest budget (3 percent of total budget), however this was sufficient. The main reason is that trainings provided by the project usually gathered key stakeholders such as SGAC members, teachers, head teachers, local leaders and SEOs, which allowed for the use of budget lines under outcome 1,2 and 3. A review of internal project planning documents confirms that training and capacity building was provided through an integrated approach combining different stakeholders within similar training sessions which is an efficient approach.[115]

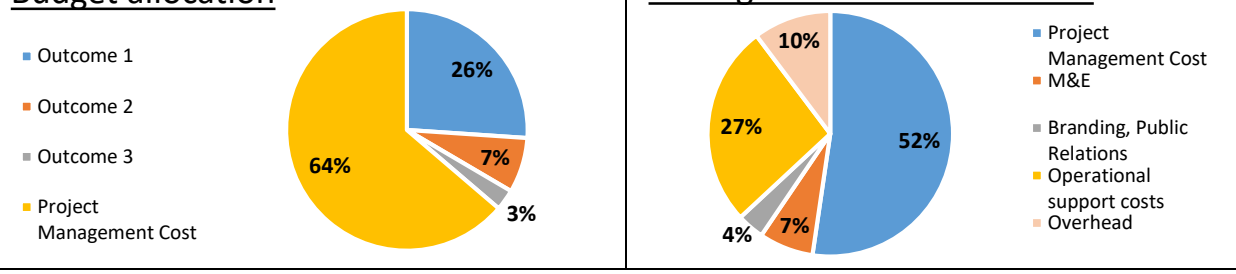
[112] This section answers evaluation question 3a: Is the program implemented based on the best use of existing resources/capacity; e.g. the internal capacity and expertise of VSO itself? What key limitations or opportunities exist on this front?

[113] This section answers evaluation question 3b: To what extent have the program processes, procedures and structures in place been capable of delivering program activities and targets on schedule to date?

[114] VSO. 2018. SSRR project financial report. Jan-Jun 2018.

[115] See for instance: VSO. 2017. SSRR Nyamasheke Plan for November 2017, Zone three.

Figure 3: Project financial allocation by outcome and management costs




Source: VSO. SSRR Project financial reports 2017 and Jan-Jun 2018.

A review of the project financial reports show a reasonable budget allocated for project M&E of seven percent, but a lower amount for advocacy (branding, public relations and awareness) of four percent. The good quality of project M&E data shows that those resources were efficiently used. However, the low budget allocated for project advocacy and branding was insufficient to implement a practice-driven knowledge management system. The small number of communication products developed confirms this. More resources should have been invested in this budget line, especially for this project where the proof of concept is a key feature. In addition, interviews confirm that a dedicated knowledge management staff position should have been created to support both evidence development and targeted dissemination for advocacy. Currently, knowledge products are developed by VSO volunteers and compiled by VSO staff. While VSO volunteers are very knowledgeable about the project success, it is not within their scope to conduct national level advocacy.

Interviews with school staff indicate some inefficiencies in the school feeding project approach. For instance, interviews show that some school kitchens that were built under the project are currently locked and unused. This is an example where resources and material were invested and did not lead to expected results. A school needs assessment prior to activity implementation could have prevented this inefficiency and allowed the project to invest resources differently to support, for instance, a school-based nutrition program in collaboration with parent contributions.

## D. Progress towards impact and sustainability

### *Progress towards project goal*

The project goal is to improve school-readiness of children in Nyamasheke district through (1) increased enrolment of children in ECE schools, and (2) improved school-readiness skills of children entering primary school. At school level, the evaluation shows that the project contributed significantly to improve the school-readiness of ECE children in the 30 ECE model schools supported by the project. In addition, at national level, the project has strengthened public debate and provided evidence for inclusion of ECE in the public education system.

*1. Increased enrolment of children in ECE schools*

At midterm, the project has not increased enrolment of children in ECE and P1 in model schools. Baseline data shows that 2,590 children were enrolled in 2016, whereas 2,169 were enrolled in 2018.[116] The high enrolment rate in 2017, resulting from project introduction and parents'

[116] VSO. 2017. Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda (SSRR) Project. Baseline Study. Final Baseline Report. And also, 2018 data shared by VSO to the ET.

expectations, was negatively affected in 2018 due to expectations being clarified by the project and parents taking their children out of ECE as a result (see Table 9, ECE enrolled column). Interviews indicate that community support for the program is now on the rise and expected future enrollment will be higher; offsetting the drop in 2018. Data further show that the project interventions supported an increase in ECE completion, with less children repeating a year of ECE.

Table 9: Enrollment, drop, completion and promotion in 30 ECE model schools

| **Year** | **ECE enrolled** | **ECE drop out** | **ECE completed** | **P1 promoted** | **ECE retained** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2017 | 3,792 | 690 | 3,102 | 2,572 | 530 |
| *Percentage* | | *18 %* | *82 %* | *83 %* | |
| 2018 | 2,169 | 218 | 1,951 | 1,535 | 416 |
| *Percentage* | | *10 %* | *90 %* | *79 %* | |

Source: Data shared by VSO

*2. Improved school-readiness skills of children entering primary school*

Despite a reduction on the number of ECE children enrolled between 2017-2018, data recorded by VSO indicate that ECE children performed better under the project year 2 (2018) in terms of reduced drop rate and increased completion rate (see Table 9, completed column). Additionally, comparative data compiled by the project shows that the ECE children promotion rate to primary one is higher than neighboring schools in three out of five project zones (see Table 10). While it is not possible to attribute this improvement to the project alone (without a robust counterfactual design), interviews with government representatives, parents, project and school staff do consistently show that ECE children promoted to P1 in model schools are better prepared in terms of autonomy, discipline and hygiene and are already familiar with the school environment. In general, analysis shows that the project is making an important contribution to improved school readiness of children entering primary school.

Table 10: ECE children promotion to P1 in model and neighboring schools

| Project zone | ECE Model schools | Neighboring schools |
|---|---|---|
| Zone 1 | 80.6 % | 58.1 % |
| Zone 2 | 62.3 % | 56.2 % |
| Zone 3 | 55.6 % | 51.5 % |
| Zone 4 | 50.8 % | 71.2 % |
| Zone 5 | 83.3 % | 88.5 % |

Source: VSO. 2018. SSRR project. ECE Children Promoted to P1. Analysis by Zones.

Review of project data and interviews with school staff and parents indicate that several elements of the project contributed to improvement of ECE children's school readiness. The mobilization of parents for instance contributed to this success. The project approach indeed fostered parent interest, knowledge and participation to ECE by building on their initial expectations and understanding around ECE. The flexibility adopted by the project allowed for a tailored capacity building approach, taking into consideration the extent to which parents could support ECE teacher salary but also school-based initiatives, mainly meals in school. Ensuring that ECE teacher salary is covered by parent contributions also allowed schools to retain qualified and skilled teachers, thus allowing ECE children to benefit from quality ECE teaching aligned with the ECE CBC.

### *Project impact*

Findings from the 2016 baseline and the 2018 International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) are used to discuss project impact.[117] Elements of the IDELA were included in the baseline data collection tool, which was administered to 110 P1 children (52 boys, 58 girls) in the 30 ECE model schools. The 2018 IDELA was administered to 120 P1 students in the 30 ECE model schools.[118]

The 2018 IDELA report concludes that children assessed in the 30 ECE model schools are mostly well prepared and show competence in most areas assessed, which ensures that children in ECE model schools are ready to benefit from educational activities offered in the school environment. According to the report, children assessed show increased motivation, engagement and persistence in activities.[119]

A comparison with baseline data confirms that in general, children perform either equally or better in most assessed areas, including gross motor skills, print awareness, shape identification, peer relations and emotional awareness (see Table 11).

Table 11: IDEAL results comparison

| **IDELA assessment areas** | | **2016** [1] | **2018** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Physical development | Gross motor skills | 93% | 99% |
| Emergent literacy and language | Print awareness | 86% | 86-97% |
| | Expressive vocabulary | 75% | 75% |
| | Letter identification | 60% | 53% |
| | Emergent writing | 99% | 99% |
| | Initial sound discrimination | 69% | 66% |
| Emergent numeracy | Measurement and comparison | 97-100% | 98-100% |
| | Classification and sorting | 98% | 69% |
| | Shape identification | 17-94% | 48-94% |
| Socio-emotional development | Peer relations | 90% | 100% |
| | Emotional awareness | 25-75% | 67-92% |
| | Empathy | 84-95% | 77-79% |

[1] VSO. 2016. SSRR project baseline.[2] VSO. 2018. IDELA.

### *Sustainability*

*Outcome 1: Improved quality of teaching in 30 ECE model schools*

The project under outcome 1 has successfully built teacher capacity in ECE model schools to implement the national ECE curriculum through learner-centred methods. Although the project succeeded in building a critical mass of qualified ECE teachers, teacher turnover remains a challenge to the sustainability of this result. This challenge will likely only be addressed when ECE salaries are covered by the GoR. Interviews with VSO volunteers indicate that each time a teacher leaves, additional efforts are needed to train newly hired teachers. However, some ECE model schools have

[117] The IDELA is a comprehensive and global tool designed by Save the Children to measure the impact of ECCD interventions across various settings and countries on children's early learning and development. The aim of the IDELA is to provide ECCD programs, donors, and government with a clear evidence of the status of children aged 3 to 6. Link to website: https://idela-network.org/.

[118] VSO. 2018. Strengthening School Readiness in Rwanda. International Development and Early Learning Assessment 2018 (IDELA).

[119] Idem.

demonstrated that turnover of a teacher can be mitigated by the effective contribution and support of parents through the engagement of the SGAC. Despite being a negative factor for the target model schools, teacher turnover is also considered as a driving factor of cross-fertilization from ECE model school to neighboring schools, provided that teachers who received training from VSO remain active in the education sector.

In terms of teacher qualification, the project also encourages unqualified ECE model teachers to attend the TTC for their certification through regular VSO volunteer coaching and mentoring. This approach contributes to the sustainability and retention of ECE teachers in model schools. It also ensures that model ECE teachers will meet employment criteria of the GoR once it begins paying ECE salaries.

Sustainability of cost-effective ECE material and corner approach activities supported by the project is high and likely to be sustained despite teacher turnover. Interviews with SGACs, parents and school staff indicate that parents of ECE children are providing model schools with readily available low-cost materials for the creation of teaching and learning material.

The sustainability likelihood of project activities on inclusion are limited due to the light approach adopted by the project. The support to identification and treatment of CWDs will likely not be sustained. The training on inclusion does not allow teachers to cater to specific needs of CWDs.

The capacity building of TTC tutors on learner-centred methods has a higher potential for sustainability and will likely continue to benefit teacher-students attending Mwezi TTC, as this learning approach is now integrated and part of the TTC teaching curriculum.

*Outcome 2: Improved parent and community engagement in ECE system*

The sustainability of parents' engagement and contribution is high. SGACs in all 30 ECE model schools received training on parent engagement, including teachers and head teachers. Project activities bolstered local mindsets on parent contributions. Interviews with parents confirm their satisfaction with the current approach. Improved readiness skills observed at home by parents was also reported as an incentive for further supporting home-based learning and contribution of low-cost and readily available materials for the development of learning material.

The comprehensive school feeding approach as per project design was not feasible or sustainable. However, the interest and contribution of both parents and school staff, as facilitated by the project, enabled some form of meals in schools to continue in almost half of the schools. Instead of completely stopping school feeding activities, the project supported a range of local contribution models and reached a high number of parents through nutrition awareness raising sessions during SGAC meetings. This approach, in addition to being efficient, builds on changing local mindsets, which has a high potential for sustainability.

The school garden approach was not sustainable as it was not aligned with parent needs especially in terms of livelihood support and learning. A higher budget allocation and a dedicated staff specialized in agriculture and livelihoods would have been needed for a timely and at scale implementation of this activity.

The sustainability of the sanitation and hygiene project activities will mainly be determined based on each school context. Evidence from interviews with school staff indicate this will be less likely in schools that lack a water source in their compound. Similarly, schools with random locations of tippy taps will not support the assimilation of sanitation and hygiene practice by children if the devices are not located near toilets or classrooms. In such cases, tippy taps will likely not be maintained, and thus

not be sustainable. Model schools with access to a water point have a higher potential to have sustainably functioning tippy taps.

*Outcome 3: Improved education governance and leadership in Nyamasheke district*
The training provided to key stakeholders such as SGACs and head teachers has good potential for sustainability. SGACs, for instance, play an important role in strengthening parent contributions to ECE teacher salaries, school meals, and the provision of raw material for learning material development. Similarly, evidence from interviews with school staff indicate that mindsets are now more dedicated in allocating school budget, when possible, to ECE.

Interviews with sector and district representatives show a clear understanding of the project interventions and that it is discussed internally in terms of project contribution to ECE targets at sector and district levels. Interviews further indicate a clear understanding of government staff on ECE needs at sector and district level. Fostering the sustainability of this result may be done through advocacy for the official inclusion of ECE in district and school leaders' performance contracts (Imihigo).

### *Scalability* [120]

Evaluation findings indicate that some aspects of the project have a high potential for scalability and replication, such as parent contributions to teacher salaries and school meals as well as the use of learner-centred methods supported by low-cost TLMs. Fostering parent contributions through strengthened SGACs and school staff capacity demonstrates a good potential for replication as it builds on core Rwandan social practices. Interviews show that the VSO ECE project portfolio, including SSRR, and its collaboration with UNICEF contributed to a ministerial level paper advocating for structured inclusion of ECE in the public education system. This has resulted in increased public and government debate to organize ECE teacher's salaries, as well as increased funding for school feeding initiatives and classroom construction in general. However, interviews with government officials indicate that budget for ECE teachers is still not secured and that implementation might face delays. There lies an important opportunity for the project to showcase successes and lessons learned for replication potentially outside Nyamasheke district. Findings from interviews further confirm the interest of government stakeholders in the project results.

## E. Factors affecting results

This section discusses the internal and external factors that contributed to the results discussed in Section III – B of this report.

### *Internal Factors*

*Project design*
The project by design is ambitious in integrating numerous activities, including ECE capacity building, school gardens, school feeding, inclusion, sanitation and hygiene. This is a limiting factor to project effectiveness considering that the main project implementors, the volunteers, are primarily specialized in the education sector and not in the other program areas. VSO currently does not have

[120] This section answers evaluation question 5a: Are there feasible and clear scalability channels and strategies in place in order to foster the replicability of any of the program's models by relevant stakeholders in other parts of Rwanda? ; 5b: Is VSO well positioned to assist the government in the strengthening of Early Childhood Education in Rwanda? What, if anything, could be done to strengthen this positioning?

the staff capacity or resources to properly implement all these different components within time and resources available.

*Staff capacity and project management*

According to VSO organogram, only three VSO staff are dedicated full-time to the project, with additional technical support from the VSO Education Technical Advisor.[121] This calls for dedication beyond job description. The important local engagement of VSO staff contributed to strong results at sector and district level. Project findings and lessons for advocacy at national level are used by the VSO Education Technical Advisor. Interviews with staff and government representatives indicate a less-than-ideal level of awareness on the project among stakeholders at national level. Interviews with project staff further indicate this is due to GoR's focus being mainly on evidence rather than on project names, which makes it difficult to evaluate project impact at national level. Nevertheless, as a member of both the Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform (RENCP) and the Donor Coordination Group for Education, VSO remains an important player in terms of national-level advocacy and regularly convenes lessons and evidences from the SSRR project through these channels.

*Project implementation*

The project is implemented by ten VSO volunteers with close follow up by VSO management. Volunteers are recruited for their skills and knowledge in education, which explains the success of the ECE component over others. However, this leaves project management, monitoring and planning to staff based in Kigali, which limits direct modification to project implementation should activities go off-track. This happened during the first year of the project implementation, which led to significant delays. This was only resolved by the recruitment of a new project manager and a temporary one-year relocation in Nyamasheke.

*VSO's Relational Volunteering Model*

A review of the VSO's Relational Volunteering Model indicates that it contributed to bringing a positive change in the field of ECE education in the ECE model schools overall (see Table 12). Their dedication and expertise in education are factors that enabled this success. The identified challenges should be addressed by staff specialized in community development with technical backgrounds in nutrition, inclusion or agriculture. KIIs with volunteers indicate that collaboration does not support an even application of cross-learning among the project zones (see Table 12). Currently, each volunteer team appears to adopt a siloed approach to project implementation, focusing on their attributed sectors with less attention on implementation of cross-learning. KIIs further indicate that cross-zone field visit is hardly organized, even though volunteers regularly host lessons learnt meetings at the VSO sub-office. As a result, project zones perform unevenly. Lessons learnt discussed by volunteer teams are nonetheless shared internally at VSO and with other VSO projects, which is an important contribution to VSO's organizational learning.

Table 12: Analysis of VSO's Relational Volunteer Model

| **VSO's Relational Volunteering Model** | **Evaluation observation** |
|---|---|
| **Quality & effectiveness**<br>Improving services provided by the local CBO through capacity building, skills exchange and strengthening of internal processes. | Volunteers work mostly with schools and local stakeholders such as DEOs, SEOs, local leaders, community health workers. The capacity building of school staff in this context improved the services provided by the schools in terms of ECE learner-centred methods and teaching |

[121] VSO. 2018. VSO Rwanda Organogram, 2018.

| | |
|---|---|
| | aligned with ECE curriculum. |
| **Inclusion**<br>'Outside' volunteers extend the reach of services by (i) increasing effectiveness of services to go further, (ii) identifying inequitable power relations and barriers to inclusion. | Inclusion is not a strong part of this project, nor is it a field of strong expertise of all volunteers. The reach of services was thus mainly limited to facilitating identification and referral of CWDs. |
| **Innovation**<br>By merging 'outside' perspectives with 'inside' contextual knowledge, innovative approaches are created. | The outside perspective on school feeding was not aligned with available resources. However contextual needs and contributions allowed for the development of meals in schools supported by parents' contributions, which is a good adaptation of the project approach on school feeding to local context. Similarly, the outside perspective on school gardens was not effective as it was not aligned with contextual expectations and knowledge. |
| **Collaboration**<br>Volunteers build links with other partners and open doors for potential opportunities and innovation. They also increase interconnectedness. | There is a missed opportunity to improve the collaboration between the model schools and the TTC Mwezi. In the project, the Mwezi TTC appears more as a stand-alone beneficiary. There is a missed opportunity of sharing and interconnectedness between project zones covered by the volunteers, as well as collaboration between volunteers in terms of exchange field/zone visit.<br><br>The training and continuous support provided to school staff and SGAC members has contributed in securing parents' awareness on ECE needs and healthy nutrition, and thus by extension parents' support. |
| **Ownership & agency**<br>Volunteers develop the soft skills of counterparts building confidence, raising aspirations and the capacity for critical reflection which increases local ownership. | Volunteer encouragement backed up local approaches on parents' contribution to school feeding, ECE teacher salary, and through development of TLMs by providing raw materials. |
| **Participation**<br>Volunteers encourage and model more participatory practices/approaches that (i) increases local ownership of initiatives, and (ii) means they are more responsive and aligned with local priorities. | Same observation as for Ownership & agency. |
| **Social action**<br>Volunteers create a 'virtuous circle' whereby individuals are further motivated to volunteer and inspire others to become more active. This leads to and is an expression of active citizenship. | Same observation as for Ownership & agency. Project and volunteer engagement have strengthened parent's contribution for instance to ECE teacher salary, school meals and meals preparation in schools. Interview with parents and SGACs indicate that parents are now attending school visits and classroom observations. |
| **Inspiration** | Support from volunteers, especially coaching |

| | |
|---|---|
| Volunteers inspire new ways of thinking and being through cross-cultural exchange and comparison. | and mentoring of teachers has reduced teacher turnover. Unqualified ECE teachers were encouraged to attend Mwezi TTC for ECE. qualification and widen employment perspective in ECE or education sector. |
| Source: VSO. Our Relational model | |

*Knowledge management*

The evaluation found that the knowledge management and learning function in the project was not sufficiently resourced, especially considering the proof-of-concept focus of the project and the strategic timing of its implementation to align with government efforts to include ECE teacher salaries into public funding. The limited number of knowledge products developed and used through the project indicate a gap in terms of knowledge management.

### *External Factors*

*ECE knowledge at local level*

A review of internal project reports indicates that ECE knowledge and its benefits at local level was low. More stakeholders than planned had to be reached and trained in order to instigate a common understanding on what ECE is and what the project goals are. Prior to that, expectations from parents and local leaders were diverse.

*Dependency mindset*

The project faced an important challenge from local expectations, where some parents were mostly expecting financial or material support from the project, which led to a high enrolment rate at ECE at the start of the project. Interviews with project staff and parents indicate that this mindset was developed due to repeated support from NGOs and INGOs in the region.

*ECE teacher salary*

Currently, the GoR does not provide to ECE teacher salaries. As a result, ECE teaching is not appealing to potential teachers, who instead favor a teaching position in the primary education sector. Consequently, ECE teacher turnover is high. KIIs with ECE teachers indicate that most teachers would abandon their position for better positions or opportunities.

*Parents contributions*

Although the parent contribution model is strong, there are risks. Interviews with parents show that the amount of contribution is relative to each household's livelihood income. As such, the impact of droughts, dry spells and thus water scarcity could impact negatively parents' income. Under such circumstances, parents confirmed they could not be able to sustain their contributions to schools.

# IV. Conclusions

This section summarizes the main conclusions of the evaluation. The conclusions are organized based on the evaluation topics – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency sustainability and scalability, as reflected in the evaluation matrix in Appendix 1: Evaluation matrix. These conclusions build on the findings and analysis presented in this report.

### Relevance

The project design is consistent with national ECE objectives and plans by providing capacity building on the ECE curriculum and learner centred methodology to key beneficiaries and stakeholders including ECE and primary teachers, head teachers, SGAC members parents, local leaders, SEOs and DEOs. The project location is relevant, and literature review indicates a low capacity of ECE teachers and limited number of ECE classrooms in Nyamasheke. The project timeframe is particularly relevant considering that the GoR is currently considering introducing ECE teacher salaries, to which the project could provide important lessons and functional low-cost and reliable models.

The project design on inclusion is highly relevant to the needs of children with SEN and CWDs. However, the light approach adopted by the project is not sufficient to ensure a safe and meaningful impact in the lives of children that received treatment as limited follow up was facilitated through the project. The training on inclusion was relevant in terms of raising awareness but not specialized enough for recipients to handle children with severe handicaps.

Similar observations apply to the project interventions on school feeding, school gardens, sanitation and hygiene. These types of interventions are resource intensive, and the project does not have enough resources to successfully complete all planned activities. Instead, the project focused on key messages on nutrition, health, sanitation and hygiene as part of the training and coaching provided to project beneficiaries, which is a relevant approach.

The project management effectively addressed challenges encountered during project implementation, for instance the recruitment of a new project manager and temporary one-year relocation in Nyamasheke to allow a direct reorganization of project planning, monitoring and follow-up with VSO volunteers. Another example of good adaptive management was the decision to stop activities linked with school gardens and school feeding, and instead shift towards strengthened awareness of beneficiaries on health and nutrition, which enabled locally-driven school feeding models to emerge in almost half of the schools.

### Effectiveness

*Outcome 1: Improved quality of teaching in 30 ECE model schools*

The project activities are of good quality and targets are broadly met. Key activities successfully implemented include training and intensive coaching for school staff, SGAC members, parents, local leaders, community health workers, SEOs and DEOs, as well as ECE classroom construction in five model schools. The quality of trainings is satisfactory, and feedback from trained stakeholders indicates that trainings were highly valued. Teacher capacities have improved to align with capacities outlined in the ECE curriculum. To reach this result, the potential of VSO volunteers as teacher specialists was fully utilized. Findings from the evaluation indicate a light and disconnected approach adopted with the capacity building of TTC tutor and its participation to the project, which could be further improved. Identification and treatment of CWDs was also not satisfactory as the project did not follow-up with treated children in order to ensure the positive impact of treatment and parent satisfaction.

*Outcome 2: Improved parent and community engagement in ECE system*

Although the project activities under component 2 are of varying quality, project targets for the component are met. SGAC trainings were good quality as indicated by interviews with school staff and SGAC parent members. With improved capacities, the SGACs were able to leverage parents' interest, participation and contributions, although some parents indicated their disappointment with expectations not being met due to the cancellation of school feeding and school garden activities. With parents' awareness of ECE and nutrition needs, this approach nevertheless created the momentum needed to foster parent interest, which promoted locally-led school meals. Sanitation and hygiene results are varied between model schools. The lack of water point and access to water was observed as a critical factor to enabling good sanitation and hygiene practices in schools, which by extension also negatively or positively affected the condition and maintenance of tippy taps installed in schools.

*Outcome 3: Improved education governance and leadership in Nyamasheke district*

As with objective 1, project activities under outcome 3 are of good quality and project targets for this outcome are broadly met. Interviews with school staff indicate that ECE is now included in school planning and supervision processes. Some schools were proactive in allocating some part of their budget to support ECE when possible. Interviews at sector and district levels indicate a strong awareness and knowledge of the project as well as ECE needs. This is a positive project contribution that should be strengthened in the remaining project timeframe with the creation of knowledge products that capture key aspects of the project such as parent contributions, school meals and ECE teacher training.

*Progress towards project goal*

Evidence from the evaluation indicates that the project is on track to reach its stated goal. A review of project data shows that enrolment of children in the 30 ECE model schools has not increased, due to the parent expectation issue in 2017-2018, but that increases are expected going forward. Project data indicate that ECE children perform better under the project in terms of reduced drop rate and increased completion rate. Interviews with school staff indicate that in general, ECE children promoted to P1 are better prepared in terms of autonomy, discipline and hygiene, and are already familiar with the school environment. A comparison of IDELA 2016 and 2018 assessment findings also confirms the trend that children from ECE in model schools are better prepared than their peers in primary one education who did not attend nursery education.

### Efficiency

The project has been able to implement activities on time despite implementation delays in 2017. Findings from the evaluation show that budget was not distributed proportionally across outcomes, indicating a level of prioritization towards ECE-related capacity building activities under outcome 1. This is adequate considering the project main interventions are geared towards the training of ECE teachers. This explains the good results harvested under outcome 1 in terms of school staff and SGAC training on ECE, as well as the limited results achieved under outcome 2 with regard to school feeding and school gardens development. Similarly, while significant resources were invested in the training of project direct beneficiaries, less resources were invested in the development of knowledge products under outcome 3 that could have been used to support advocacy activities at national level. Further observation indicates the project's lack of dedicated staff on knowledge management and advocacy limited the efficiency of these components. This is an important aspect considering the remaining timeframe and project planned impact and contribution at national level on ECE.

### Sustainability

*Outcome 1: Improved quality of teaching in 30 ECE model schools*

The project has successfully built the capacity of teachers in ECE model schools to implement the national ECE curriculum through learner-centred methods. Although the project succeeded in building a critical mass of qualified ECE teachers, teacher turnover remains a challenge to the sustainability of this result. This challenge will likely be addressed when ECE salaries are covered by the GoR. However, some ECE model schools have demonstrated that teacher turnover can be mitigated with effective support from parents through the engagement of the SGAC. In terms of teacher qualification, the project also supports unqualified ECE model teachers to attend the TTC for certification. This approach contributes to the sustainability and retention of ECE teachers in model schools. It also ensures that model ECE teachers will meet the employment criteria by the GoR once it starts paying ECE salaries. Sustainability of cost-effective ECE materials and corner approach activities, supported by the project, is high and is likely to be sustained despite teacher turnover.

The sustainability of project activities on inclusion are limited due to the light approach adopted by the project. The support to identification and treatment of CWDs will likely not be sustained. The training on inclusion provided to teachers does not allow them to cater to specific needs of CWDs. However, basic approaches to inclusion of SEN children is likely more sustainable. Similarly, the capacity building of TTC tutors on learner-centred method has a higher potential for sustainability and will likely benefit to teacher-students attending Mwezi TTC.

*Outcome 2: Improved parent and community engagement in ECE system*

The sustainability of parents' engagement and contribution is high. SGACs in all 30 ECE model schools received training on parent engagement, including teachers and head teachers. Project activities improved local mindsets on parent contributions. Interviews with parents confirm their satisfaction with the current approach.

The school feeding approach was not sustainable. However, the support to parents through SGACs enabled implementation of school meals instead, as parents now financially contribute on a monthly basis for the purchase of staple food. Instead of completely stopping nutrition activities, the project supported this local model of contribution in order to reach out a higher number of parents through awareness raising sessions during SGAC meetings. With the benefit of being efficient, this approach shifted local mindsets, which has a high potential for sustainability.

The school garden approach was not sustainable as it was not aligned with parents' needs especially in terms of livelihood support and learning. A higher budget allocation and a dedicated staff specialized in agriculture and livelihoods would have been needed for a timely and at scale implementation of this activity.

The sustainability of the sanitation and hygiene project activities is limited and will be determined based on each school's context. Evaluation findings indicate that it will less be likely in schools that lack a water source in their compound. Similarly, schools with random locations of tippy taps will not support the assimilation of sanitation and hygiene practice by children if the devices are not conveniently located near toilets or classrooms. In such cases tippy taps will likely not be maintained and be sustainable. Model schools with access to a water point have a higher potential to have functioning tippy taps.

*Outcome 3: Improved education governance and leadership in Nyamasheke district*

The training provided to key stakeholders such as SGACs and head teachers as a good potential for sustainability. SGACs, for instance, play a catalytical role in strengthening parent contributions to ECE

teacher salaries, school meals, and the provision of raw materials for learning material development. Evidence from interviews indicate that school staff is now more dedicated in allocating school budget to ECE when possible.

Interviews with local government in Nyamasheke district show a clear understanding of the project interventions and that it is discussed internally in terms of SSRR project contribution to ECE targets at sector and district level. Interviews further indicate a clear understanding of government staff on ECE needs at sector and district level. The sustainability of this result can be fostered by an improved and thorough documentation of the project processes, models developed, and lessons learned.

### Scalability

Evaluation findings indicate that some aspects of the project have a high potential for scalability and replication. Fostering parent contributions through strengthened SGACs and school staff capacity demonstrates a good potential for replication as it builds on core Rwandan cultural practices. However, at midterm, the project did not sufficiently promote lessons learned, especially at national level with key government stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and the REB. Interviews with government officials indicate that budget for ECE teachers is currently not secured and that implementation of teacher salary provision might face delays. There lies an important opportunity for the project to showcase successes and lessons learned for replication potentially outside Nyamasheke district. Findings from interviews further confirm the interest of government stakeholders in the project results.

# V. Lessons and Recommendations

As project implementation ends on 30 September 2019, this section presents key lessons and recommendation for the remaining time, including a strategic recommendation for a potential extension to continue bridge support to ECE in Rwanda, in anticipation of the financial support for ECE teachers from the GoR. Lessons and associated recommendations build on the conclusions presented in this evaluation.

**Lesson 1: project performance on ECE capacity building and continuity.** Evaluation findings indicate the capacity building of the ECE curriculum and learner-centred methods is the most effective and successful component of the project at local, sector and district levels. This was made possible by the intensive coaching and mentoring provided at individual level by VSO volunteers. When the project ends the coaching at the individual ECE teacher level will largely end as well. However, evaluation findings indicate a good internalization of new ECE capacities aligned with the ECE CBC, which was made possible through the involvement of model ECE teacher as peer educators through their facilitation of ECE trainings at sector level. The capacity building of all key stakeholders on ECE CBC such as head teachers, ECE and P1 teachers, SGAC members will support a lasting ownership of competencies at school level.

- **Recommendation:** VSO training material and toolkits should be updated and packaged in a user-friendly format and distributed to ECE model schools. This will ensure that reference and training materials will remain accessible to ECE and P1 teachers even after project phase out. The training provided to head teachers, ECE and P1 teachers will ensure they are not unfamiliar with the training material, which will facilitate their ownership over the training material. It is recommended to include VSO volunteers in the development of the reference material as their experience can prove useful in identifying and selecting the most relevant training, teaching and learning material content.
    - Who: VSO project management with support from VSO volunteers.
    - When: before September 2019.

**Lesson 2: Parent contribution model.** The ET identifies the parent contribution model as a strong factor in influencing ECE teacher retention in model schools. However, this model needs further fine-tuning in order to consolidate some aspects that currently do not contribute to its sustainability. This model is consequently viable only through regular financial contributions from parents that are determined by household income, which is mainly agriculture-based, meaning that a bad season or water scarcity could jeopardize the contributions to ECE salary and school meals.

- **Recommendation:** Further develop the parent contribution model to ensure its sustainability even when the GoR starts paying ECE teachers. The result of combining GoR salary provision to ECE teacher and parent contributions will ensure teacher retention and further support school-based initiatives such as school meals. In order to bridge the remaining time until ECE salaries are covered by the GoR, VSO has the opportunity to contribute half of the contribution expected by the GoR in order to support parent contribution sustainability. The VSO financial contribution would have to be handled directly by SGACs in order to foster parents' buy-in.
    - Who: VSO project management in consultation with potential donors.
    - When: before September 2019.

**Lesson 3: School meals scheme.** project has demonstrated that mindsets can be shifted through regular engagement, coaching and mentoring. This is a key aspect of the project that differs from other projects. The capacity building of SGACs enabled a positive shift of parents' mindsets, especially in terms of their support to develop local models of school nutrition. Parent expectations did not align with project parameters due to miscommunication by project staff in the inception phase, as well as expectations for material and cash support set by interventions from other NGOs/INGOs.

- **Recommendation:** School feeding activities should not be cancelled. Findings from the evaluation indicate that the main drivers to parents' contribution and interest to ECE are (1) quality ECE teaching, and (2) some type of meals-in-schools activity. It is recommended to revise logframe performance indicators related to school feeding to enable capture of related project results.
    - Who: VSO project management.
    - When: before September 2019.

**Lesson 4: Knowledge management and advocacy.** The project has generated and garnered important lessons that are still within VSO. The project is currently supported by a project manager and a technical advisor, but knowledge management does not fall under their responsibilities. Knowledge management is crucial for this project as it is gathering an important amount of learning and evidence. Interviews with national stakeholders at national level indicate a strong interest in project findings and potential collaboration models.

- **Recommendation:** Focus any project savings into strengthening the knowledge management function of the project and use the remaining time of the project to develop lessons learned that can be shared with government stakeholders at sector, district and national levels. It is recommended to package project lessons and community-based models (parent contributions, SGACs) in the form of a comprehensive toolkit that would also facilitate scalability and replication at scale. Consider also sharing project lessons learned with schools, parents, and TCCs in order to foster their ongoing participation.
    - Who: VSO project management and volunteers.
    - When: before September 2019.

**Lesson 5: Linkage with certification institutions.** The project experience has shown the ongoing need for qualified ECE teachers. Although formal ECE certification is currently not required for ECE teacher employment, this will become a mandatory certification once the GoR starts paying ECE salaries, which – to a large extent – will need to be met by TTCs. Employment referral between TTCs and schools is nascent. There are missed opportunities at TTC level to provide practical work placement or internship experiences in schools that face high levels of teacher turnover and low teacher capacity. In addition, the opportunity for TTC student to undertake internships in ECE model schools would contribute to overall levels of student experience in ECE good practices. In the long run, the internship feedback loop will strengthen the TTC as a center of excellence for ECE teacher development.

- **Recommendation:** Explore structured employment referral or internships opportunities, in collaboration with REB and TTC management, for TTC students in ECE model schools. Continue supporting certification of ECE model teachers at the TTC Mwezi; at a minimum, update current TTC training material before the project ends.
    - Who: VSO project management and volunteers.
    - When: before September 2019.

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# VI. Appendices

## Appendix 1: Evaluation matrix

Table 13: Evaluation Matrix [122]

| Sub-Questions | | Main Sources of Information | Data Collection Methods | Section of Final Report |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relevance | | | | |
| 1a | How relevant are the activities designed to improve the learning opportunities and developmental outcomes of young children, especially children with disabilities in the context of Rwanda? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, stakeholders, ECE/P1 teachers, focus school head teachers, centres managers, FSCM committee members, TTC tutors, TTC student teachers<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal, project reports, communication material | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs, census survey<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III. A |
| 1b | To what extent have beneficiary communities been consulted with regards to the program design and implementation? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, project beneficiaries (parents, students, children with mild/moderate impairment and SEN)<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal | **Primary data**<br>- FGDs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III. A |
| 1c | To what extent are the key contextual changes, threats and opportunities that arise during implementation influencing and informing program implementation? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, stakeholders, DEOs/SEOs, ECE/P1 teachers, focus school head teachers, centres managers, TTC tutors, TTC student teachers<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal, project reports, meeting minutes (if available) | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs, census survey<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III. C |
| 1d | How appropriate are the alternative solutions/changes proposed and/or implemented by the team to overcome the challenges faced to date? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, ECE/P1 teachers, focus school head teachers, centres managers, TTC tutors, TTC student teachers<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal, project reports, meeting minutes (if available) | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs, census survey<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III. C |
| 1e | How and to what extent are program monitoring findings used to inform decision-making and the improvement of program implementation? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project reports, meeting minutes (if available) | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III. C |

[122] Evaluation questions are mainly taken from the Terms of Reference.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1f | How relevant is the program design in terms of raising awareness and support for Early Childhood Education among communities, families, teachers, students and the government in Nyamasheke District? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, project beneficiaries (parents, students, children with mild/moderate impairment and SEN), DEOs/SEOs, ECE/P1 teachers, focus school head teachers, centres managers, TTC tutors, TTC student teachers<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal, project reports, communication material, case studies | **Primary data**<br>- FGDs, KIIs, census survey<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III. A |
| 1g | How is the program tied to the overall aid environment in Rwanda? Are there any notable linkages/disconnects? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, stakeholders<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal, country strategic and policy documents, international/regional strategic plans | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III. A |
| Effectiveness | | | | |
| 2a | How well is the program achieving its planned outcomes so far? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project reports, project M&E data | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.B |
| 2b | Generally, are the activities carried out in line with the original plans? If not, are the changes adequately discussed, documented, and justified? To what extent is the design of the program activities contributing to the success/failure of programmatic outcomes? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project reports, project M&E data | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.B |
| 2c | What system and mechanism are in place to ensure accountability to the beneficiaries and to what extent is it being implemented? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, project beneficiaries (parents), ECE/P1 teachers, focus school head teachers, centres managers<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal, project reports | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.B |
| Efficiency | | | | |
| 3a | Is the program implemented based on the best use of existing resources/capacity; e.g. the internal capacity and expertise of VSO itself? What key limitations or opportunities exist on this front? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project reports | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.B, C |
| 3b | To what extent have the program processes, procedures and structures in place been capable of delivering program activities and targets on schedule to date? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project reports | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.B, C |
| 3c | What is the impact of the organizational volunteer structure on the efficient implementation of the program? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs | III.B, C |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sustainability | | | | |
| 4a | How involved are the key stakeholders in the program so far (e.g. school leaders, parent-teacher committee members, district education officials, and sector education officials, etc.)? What further support would be required to strengthen their engagement? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, parent-teacher committee members, DEOs/SEOs, ECE/P1 teachers, focus school head teachers, centres managers, TTC tutors, TTC student teachers<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project reports | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs, census survey<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.B, C |
| 4b | What is the level of ownership of the intended program outcomes by target groups and is there potential for this ownership to continue after the end of external support? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, beneficiaries (parents, students), parent-teacher committee members, DEOs/SEOs, ECE/P1 teachers, focus school head teachers, centres managers, TTC tutors, TTC student teachers,<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project reports | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs, census survey<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.B, C |
| 4c | What is the level of policy support and financial resources provided by the government in support of this program? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, stakeholders, DEOs/SEOs<br>**Secondary data**<br>- Project proposal, project reports | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs<br>**Secondary data**<br>Desk review | III.B, C |
| 4d | Have VSO been able to secure any additional funding from other donors based on the positive outcomes of this program to date? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, donors, | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs | III.B, C |
| Scalability | | | | |
| 5a | Are there feasible and clear scalability channels and strategies in place in order to foster the replicability of any of the program's models by relevant stakeholders (e.g. government, other NGOs, etc) in other parts of Rwanda? | **Secondary data**<br>- Grey literature from other INGOs and NGOs active in Rwanda | **Secondary data**<br>- Desk review | III.A, C<br>V. A, B |
| 5b | Is VSO well positioned to assist the government in the strengthening of Early Childhood Education in Rwanda? What, if anything, could be done to strengthen this positioning? | **Primary data**<br>- Project staff, partners, stakeholders, DEOs/SEOs | **Primary data**<br>- KIIs | V.B |

## Appendix 2: Analysis plan

| Indicator | | Type of respondent | Main disaggregation | Method and triangulation mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impact | Improved school-readiness of children in Nyamasheke district<br>1. Increased enrolment of children in ECE schools<br>2. Improved school-readiness skills of children entering primary school | | 1. Enrolment data, by gender<br>2. Education statistic, by gender | **Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from survey, KIIs and FGDs<br>**KIIs** with head teachers, ECE/P1 teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents |
| Outcome 1 | Number of teachers implementing the national ECE curriculum through learner-centred methods | ECE Teachers | Gender | **ECE teacher survey:** survey of ECE teachers in project model schools (Survey module C, questions C1 – C4)<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents |
| | Number of ECE teachers who actively include children with SEN in learning activities. | ECE Teachers | Gender | **ECE teacher survey:** survey of ECE teachers in project model schools (Survey module C, questions C5 – C7)<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents |
| Output 1.1 | Number of ECE teachers who complete learner centred trainings. | ECE Teachers | Gender | **ECE teacher survey:** survey of ECE teachers in project model schools (Survey module B, question B9)<br>**KIIs** with head teachers, VSO volunteers<br>**FGDs** with parents |
| | Number of ECE children benefitting from learner-centred methods | ECE students | Age, gender, grade | **Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from survey, KIIs and FGDs<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents |
| Output 1.2 | Number of ECE schools with inclusive physical environment | | # of schools | **Observation checklist:** observation of school building, classrooms and sanitation facilities (toilets, hand washing stations), will be conducted as part of the census survey of all 30 model schools.<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from survey, KIIs and FGDs |
| | Number of children with disabilities identified, screened and supported to get treatment. | SEN students, students with disabilities | # of SEN students and children with disabilities identified | **Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from survey, KIIs and FGDs<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents |
| Output 1.3 | Number of TTC tutors who complete learner-centred trainings and follow up support visits. | TTC tutors | Gender | **KIIs** with TTC tutors<br>**Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data |
| Outcome 2 | Number of parents and community members who regularly participate in school meetings and school visits | Parents of students, SGAC members | # of parents | **Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from ECE teacher survey |
| | Number of schools were parents and community members support home-based learning of ECE children. | | # of schools | **KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Triangulation with qualitative findings from ECE teacher survey |
| Output 2.1 | Number of schools with local initiatives to engage parents in school meetings and school visits | | # of schools | **ECE teacher survey:** survey of ECE teachers in project model schools (Survey module C, questions C9 – C11)<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents, SGAC members, local leaders |
| Output 2.2 | Number of parents trained on how to support home-based learning for ECE children | Parents | # of parents | **KIIs** with head teachers, VSO volunteers<br>**FGDs** with parents, SGAC members<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from ECE teacher survey |
| Output 2.3 | Number of schools who establish school demonstration gardens. | | | Indicator dropped, consequently not assessed. However, the ET will investigate reasons for its cancellation. |
| | Number of parents participating in school demonstration gardens. | | | Indicator dropped, consequently not assessed. However, the ET will investigate reasons for its cancellation. |
| Output 2.4 | Number of ECE schools who establish school feeding initiatives. | | | Indicator dropped, consequently not assessed. However, the ET will investigate reasons for its cancellation. |
| | Number of ECE school children benefiting from school feeding. | | | Indicator dropped, consequently not assessed. However, the ET will investigate reasons for its cancellation. |
| Output 2.5 | Number of schools who establish good sanitation & hygiene practices | | # of schools | **Observation checklist:** observation of school building, classrooms and sanitation facilities (e.g. toilets, hand washing stations), will be conducted as part of the census survey of the model schools.<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents, SGAC members<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from ECE teacher survey |
| | Number of children benefitting from good sanitation & hygiene practices | Students | ECE students, # of students per school | **Secondary data review:** qualitative assessment will be done through triangulation of KIIs findings with field observation, and project quantitative data (enrollment data?)<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents<br>Triangulation with qualitative findings from ECE teacher survey |
| Outcome 3 | Number of schools who implement different mutual accountability mechanisms and initiatives. | | # of schools | **ECE teacher survey:** survey of ECE teachers in 30 model schools (Survey module E, questions E5, E6)<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**FGDs** with parents, local leaders |
| | Number of school leaders who include ECE teachers in their supervision missions. | School leaders | Gender | **ECE teacher survey:** survey of ECE teachers in project model schools (Survey module E, question E1)<br>**KIIs** with head teachers<br>**Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data |
| Output 3.1 | Number of School General Assembly Committee members trained on community engagement. | SGAC members | Gender | **KIIs** with SGAC members<br>**Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data |
| Output 3.2 | Number of Head Teachers who complete school leadership training sessions. | Head teachers, school leaders | Gender | **KIIs** with head teachers<br>**Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data |
| Output 3.3 | Number of District and Sector officials who participate in training workshops on planning and monitoring of ECE | SEO, DEO | Gender | **KIIs** with DEOs/SEOs<br>**Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data |
| Output 3.4 | Number of engagements using evidence and learning from the project to influence positive change. | Communication material | # of documents developed by the project | **KIIs** with project staff, VSO volunteers<br>**Secondary data review:** review of project M&E data |

## Appendix 3: Inception visit & field visit schedule

| Inception visit schedule (4-6 February 2019) | |
|---|---|
| Monday, 4 February 2019, Kigali – Nyamasheke | |
| TIME | ACTIVITY |
| AM | • Inception meeting at VSO office. National consultants join at VSO office. International consultants join remotely (Skype) |
| PM | • National consultants travel to Nyamasheke district |
| Tuesday, 5 February 2019, Nyamasheke – Kigali | |
| TIME | ACTIVITY |
| AM | • National consultants visit 2 schools to test data collection tools and receive a general orientation on project interventions in schools.<br><br>VSO to suggest two schools that are conveniently located near the main roads and close to each other; one school should be higher performing against project expected results, the other should be lower performing. |
| PM | • National consultants travel back to Kigali. |
| Wednesday, 6 February 2019, Kigali | |
| TIME | ACTIVITY |
| AM | One hour debrief call from Kigali VSO office. National consultants join at VSO office. International consultants call in remotely through Skype. |

| Field visit schedule (5 March – 1 April 2019) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Time** | **Sector** | **School** | **Activity** |
| 05.03.2019 | PM | Kigali | - | TANGO international consultants arrive in Rwanda |
| 06.03.2019 | AM | Kigali | - | TANGO-VSO introduction meeting at VSO office. Travel to Nyamasheke district |
| | PM | VSO sub-office | - | Inception workshop with VSO staff and volunteers at VSO sub-office, Nyamasheke |
| 07.03.2019 | AM (7.30-9.00) | Kajongo | EP Ruheru B | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |
| | AM (9.00-12.30) | | EP Mutongo | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |
| | PM | VSO sub-office | - | KIIs with VSO volunteers |
| 08.03.2019 | AM | Rusizi | - | KIIs with VSO volunteers |
| | PM | Rusizi | - | KIIs with VSO volunteers |
| 10.03.2019 | AM | VSO sub-office | - | KIIs with VSO volunteers |
| | PM | | - | |
| 11.03.2019 | AM (7.30-9.00) | Ruharambunga | EP Gihina | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |
| | AM (9.00-12.30) | | EP Mwezi | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | PM | | - | KIIs with TTC Mwezi Principal, Director of Studies, TTC Tutors, Student teachers |
| 12.03.2019 | AM (7.30-9.00) | | EP Nyakibingo | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |
| | AM (9.00-12.30) | | GS Bushenge | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |
| | PM | | - | KII with Nyamasheke DEO, FGD with SEOs |
| 13.03.2019 | AM (7.30-9.00) | | GS Kibingo | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |
| | AM (9.00-12.30) | | EP Gabiro | School visit, KIIs with school staff, FGDs with parents, ECE teacher survey |
| | PM | VSO sub-office | - | Internal debrief with VSO volunteers at VSO sub-office. TANGO travel back to Kigali. |
| 14.03.2019 | AM | Kigali | - | KII with VSO Project Manager. |
| | PM | Kigali | - | Collection of additional project data, documents and ECE teacher survey planning for remaining time in March |
| 15.03.2019 | AM | Kigali | - | TANGO-VSO debriefing workshop |
| | PM | Kigali | - | ET departure from Rwanda |
| 18.03.2019 | AM | Gihombo<br>Mahembe | GS Fumba<br>GS Nyakanyinya | KIIs with ECE and P1 teachers |
| 19.03.2019 | AM | Kagano<br>Rangiro | EP Nyakabingo<br>EP Rangiro | KIIs with ECE and P1 teachers |
| 20.03.2019 | AM | Kanjongo<br>Macuba | GS Tyazo<br>GS Cyavumu | KIIs with ECE and head teachers |
| 21.03.2019 | AM | Shangi<br>Bushengi | NS Ngoboka<br>GS Kiziba | KIIs with ECE, P1 and head teachers |
| 22.03.2019 | AM | Ruharambuga<br>Bushekeri | GS Kamonyi<br>EP Bushekeri | KIIs with ECE and head teachers |
| 25.03.2019 | AM | Kagano<br>Cyato | ECD Nyamasheke<br>GS Kajongo | KIIs with ECE and head teachers |
| 26.03.2019 | AM | Karambi | EP Kageyo<br>GS Karambi | KIIs with ECE and head teachers |
| 27.03.2019 | AM | Cyato<br>Rangiro | GS Yove<br>GS Gahisi | KIIs with ECE and head teachers |
| 28.03.2019 | AM | Karengera<br>Bushekeri | EP Rubona<br>GS Gisakura | KIIs with ECE and head teachers |
| 29.03.2019 | AM | Nyabitekeri | GS Buhokoro<br>EP Nyamirundi | KIIs with ECE and head teachers |
| 01.04.2019 | AM | Nyabitekeri<br>Kirimbi | EP Nyamirundi<br>EP Nyabinaga<br>GS Kaburiro | KIIs with ECE teachers and head teachers |

## Appendix 4: List of KIIs and FGDs

| No. | Title | Gender | Organization | Sector/District | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Focus Group Discussions** | | | | | |
| 1 | SGAC – Parents | 3M / 4F | EP Ruheru B | Kanjongo/Nyamasheke | 07.03.2019 |
| 2 | SGAC – Parents | 3M / 2F | EP Mutongo | Macumba / Nyamasheke | 07.03.2019 |
| 3 | SGAC – Parents | 7F | EP Gihinga | Ruharambuga/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 4 | SGAC – Parents | 1M / 2F | EP Mwezi | Karengera/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 5 | TTC Students | 6M | TTC Mwezi | Karengera/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 6 | SGAC – Parents | 4M / 5F | EP Nyakibingo | Shangi / Nyamasheke | 12.03.2019 |
| 7 | SGAC – Parents | 1M / 3F | GS Bushenge | Bushenge / Nyamasheke | 12.03.2019 |
| 8 | SGAC – Parents | 9M / 1F | GS Gihinga | Ruharambuga/Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 9 | SGAC – Parents | 3M / 4F | EP Gabiro | Mahembe / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 10 | SGAC – Parents | 1M / 4F | NS Nyakabingo | Kagano / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| 11 | SGAC – Parents | 2M / 3F | EP Rangiro | Rangiro / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| **Key Informant Interviews (qualitative data collection)** | | | | | |
| 1 | Head Teacher | M | EP Ruheru B | Kanjongo/Nyamasheke | 07.03.2019 |
| 2 | Head Teacher | F | EP Mutongo | Macuba/Nyamasheke | 07.03.2019 |
| 3 | P1 Teacher | F | EP Ruheru B | Kanjongo/Nyamasheke | 07.03.2019 |
| 4 | P1 Teacher | F | EP Mutongo | Macuba/Nyamasheke | 07.03.2019 |
| 5 | VSO Volunteers - Zone 2 | 1M / 1F | - | Rusizi district | 07.03.2019 |
| 6 | VSO Volunteer - Zone 1 | 1M | - | Rusizi district | 08.03.2019 |
| 7 | VSO Volunteers - Zone 4 | 1M / 1F | - | Rusizi district | 08.03.2019 |
| 8 | VSO Volunteers - Zone 5 | 1M / 1F | - | Rusizi district | 08.03.2019 |
| 9 | VSO Volunteers - Zone 3 | 1M / 1F | - | Rusizi district | 10.03.2019 |
| 10 | Head Teacher | F | EP Gihinga | Ruharambuga/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 11 | Head Teacher | M | EP Mwezi | Karengera/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 12 | P1 Teacher | F | EP Gihinga | Ruharambuga/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 13 | TRC Manager | 1M | TTC Mwezi | Karengera/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 14 | TTC Mwezi Principal | 1M | TTC Mwezi | Karengera/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 15 | Head Teacher | F | EP Nyakibingo | Shangi / Nyamasheke | 12.03.2019 |
| 16 | P1 Teacher | F | EP Nyakibingo | Shangi / Nyamasheke | 12.03.2019 |
| 17 | P1 Teacher | F | GS Bushenge | Bushenge / Nyamasheke | 12.03.2019 |
| 18 | SEOs | 2M / 2F | - | Nyamasheke district office | 12.03.2019 |
| 19 | DEO | M | - | Nyamasheke district office | 12.03.2019 |
| 20 | Head Teacher | M | GS Fumba | Mahembe / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 21 | Head Teacher | M | GS Kibingo | Gihombo / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 22 | Head Teacher | M | EP Gabiro | Mahembe / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 23 | P1 Teacher | M | GS Kibingo | Gihombo / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 24 | Head Teacher | M | GS Nyakanyinya | Gihombo / Nyamasheke | 18.03.2019 |
| 25 | P1 Teacher | M | GS Fumba | Mahembe / Nyamasheke | 18.03.2019 |
| 26 | Head Teacher | M | EP Nyakabingo | Kagano / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| 27 | Head Teacher | F | EP Rangiro | Rangiro / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| 28 | P1 Teacher | 1F | EP Rangiro | Rangiro / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| 29 | P1 Teacher | 1M | EP Rangiro | Rangiro / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| 30 | Head Teacher | F | GS Tyazo | Kanjongo / Nyamasheke | 20.03.2019 |
| 31 | P1 Teacher | F | GS Cyavumu | Macuba / Nyamasheke | 20.03.2019 |
| 32 | Head Teacher | M | GS Kiziba | Bushengi / Nyamasheke | 21.03.2019 |
| 33 | Head Teacher | M | NS Ngoboka | Shangi / Nyamasheke | 21.03.2019 |
| 34 | P1 Teacher | F | NS Ngoboka | Shangi / Nyamasheke | 21.03.2019 |
| 35 | P1 Teacher | F | GS Kiziba | Bushengi / Nyamasheke | 21.03.2019 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36 | Head Teacher | M | GS Kamonyi | Ruharambuga / Nyamasheke | 22.03.2019 |
| 37 | Head Teacher | M | EP Bushekiri | Bushekeri / Nyamasheke | 22.03.2019 |
| 38 | Head Teacher | M | ECD Nyamasheke | Kagano / Nyamasheke | 25.03.2019 |
| 39 | Head Teacher | M | GS Kanjongo | Cyato / Nyamasheke | 25.03.2019 |
| 40 | Head Teacher | M | EP Kageyo | Karambi / Nyamasheke | 26.03.2019 |
| 41 | Head Teacher | M | GS Karambi | Karambi / Nyamasheke | 26.03.2019 |
| 42 | Head Teacher | M | GS Yove | Cyato / Nyamasheke | 27.03.2019 |
| 43 | Head Teacher | M | GS Gahisi | Rangiro / Nyamasheke | 27.03.2019 |
| 44 | Head Teacher | M | EP Rubona | Karengera / Nyamasheke | 28.03.2019 |
| 45 | Head Teacher | M | GS Gisakura | Bushekeri / Nyamasheke | 28.03.2019 |
| 46 | Head Teacher | F | GS Buhokoro | Nyabitekeri / Nyamasheke | 29.03.2019 |
| 47 | Head Teacher | M | EP Nyamirundi | Nyabitekeri / Nyamasheke | 29.03.2019 |
| 48 | Head Teacher | M | EP Nyabinaga | Kirimbi / Nyamasheke | 01.04.2019 |
| 49 | Head Teacher | M | GS Kaburiro | Kirimbi / Nyamasheke | 01.04.2019 |
| 50 | DG MOE | F | - | Remote KII | 24.04.2019 |
| **Key Informant Interviews (quantitative data collection)** | | | | | |
| 1 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Mutongo | Macuba/Nyamasheke | 07.03.2019 |
| 2 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Gihinga | Ruharambuga/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 3 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Mwezi | Karengera/Nyamasheke | 11.03.2019 |
| 4 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Bushenge | Bushenge / Nyamasheke | 12.03.2019 |
| 5 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Gabiro | Mahembe / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 6 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Gabiro | Mahembe / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 7 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Kibingo | Gihombo / Nyamasheke | 13.03.2019 |
| 8 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Nyakanyinya | Gihombo / Nyamasheke | 18.03.2019 |
| 9 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Nyakanyinya | Gihombo / Nyamasheke | 18.03.2019 |
| 10 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Fumba | Mahembe / Nyamasheke | 18.03.2019 |
| 11 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Nyakabingo | Kagano / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| 12 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Rangiro | Rangiro / Nyamasheke | 19.03.2019 |
| 13 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Tyazo | Kanjongo / Nyamasheke | 20.03.2019 |
| 14 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Cyavumu | Macuba / Nyamasheke | 20.03.2019 |
| 15 | ECE Teacher | F | NS Ngoboka | Shangi / Nyamasheke | 21.03.2019 |
| 16 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Kiziba | Bushengi / Nyamasheke | 21.03.2019 |
| 17 | ECE Teacher | M | GS Kamonyi | Ruharambuga / Nyamasheke | 22.03.2019 |
| 18 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Bushekiri | Bushekeri / Nyamasheke | 22.03.2019 |
| 19 | ECE Teacher | F | ECD Nyamasheke | Kagano / Nyamasheke | 25.03.2019 |
| 20 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Kanjongo | Cyato / Nyamasheke | 25.03.2019 |
| 21 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Kageyo | Karambi / Nyamasheke | 26.03.2019 |
| 22 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Karambi | Karambi / Nyamasheke | 26.03.2019 |
| 23 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Yove | Cyato / Nyamasheke | 27.03.2019 |
| 24 | ECE Teacher | M | GS Gahisi | Rangiro / Nyamasheke | 27.03.2019 |
| 25 | ECE Teacher | M | EP Rubona | Karengera / Nyamasheke | 28.03.2019 |
| 26 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Gisakura | Bushekeri / Nyamasheke | 28.03.2019 |
| 27 | ECE Teacher | F | GS Buhokoro | Nyabitekeri / Nyamasheke | 29.03.2019 |
| 28 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Nyamirundi | Nyabitekeri / Nyamasheke | 29.03.2019 |
| 29 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Nyamirundi | Nyabitekeri / Nyamasheke | 01.04.2019 |
| 30 | ECE Teacher | F | EP Nyabinaga | Kirimbi / Nyamasheke | 01.04.2019 |

## Appendix 5: Topical outline for KIIs and FGDs

Dubai Cares Rwanda SSRR project midterm evaluation: Topical outline for qualitative KIIs/FGDs

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NOTE: What follows is not a list of formal interview questions, but an outline to guide semi-structured small group and individual discussions. Please use the topics and sub topics to guide the discussion. The questions for the sub-topics are provided as examples only. Not all topics will be relevant to all respondents, so the interviews should focus on topics that respondents are most knowledgeable about and for which they have an informed opinion. Explain that the discussion will take 1 – 1 ½ hours. Gain informed consent.

**A. ECE in school**

1. General background

**B. Project activities – training and capacity building**

1. Training/coaching approach/engagement (VSO volunteer role) - (Baseline report Rec. II)
    a. ECE curriculum planning/implementation & Learner-centred methods (ECE/P1 teachers; TTC tutors) (Baseline report Rec. II)
    b. Follow-up support visits (TTC tutors)
    c. Community engagement (ECE/P1 teachers; head teachers; SGAC members)
    d. School leadership (head teachers)
    e. Home-based learning (parents)
    f. ECE planning and monitoring (DEOs/SEOs)
2. Volunteer relational model: areas the project seeks to bring change about (volunteer tab only)
    a. Inspiration
    b. Quality & effectiveness
    c. Inclusion
    d. Innovation
    e. Collaboration
    f. Ownership & agency
    g. Participation
    h. Social action
3. ECE classroom construction or rehabilitation & other non-monetary benefits
4. Inclusion of students with SEN and CWDs & identification, screening and support (treatment)
5. School local initiatives to engage parents in school meetings and school visits
6. School sanitation and hygiene
7. School feeding
8. School garden

**C. Participation to project and benefits**

1. SGAC meetings, members, participation, attendance, decisions
2. Expectations (Livelihood support; and other …)
3. Knowledge benefits & new behaviors/practices
4. Home-based learning
5. Contributions (parents, teachers, etc…)

**D. Perceived impact and sustainability**

1. Capacities of training beneficiaries (ECE teachers, head teachers school administrators, parents/SGAC members, TT tutors, local leaders, DEOs/SEOs) (Baseline report Rec. II)
2. Children enrolment/dropout in ECE school
3. Student readiness and performance in ECE and P1
4. WASH / sanitation
5. Inclusion
6. Health (nutrition, school feeding, meals in schools, school gardens)

**E. General reflection**

1. Likes
2. Dislikes
3. Challenges
4. Recommendation(s)

## Appendix 6: List of documents consulted


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# VII. Annexes

The following annex documents are attached to this report as a separate document.

Annex 1: Terms of reference for external evaluation
Annex 2: ECE model school survey/checklist findings and data
Annex 3: Relevant national indicators, policies and strategies
Annex 4: Updated project logframe with performance and beneficiary data