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## Strategic Approaches to Girls Education (STAGE) Project

### Project Summary

**Funding Office:** UK Department for International Development (DFID) under the “Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB)” programme of its Girls’ Education Challenge window II.

**The Project Implementation Team:** Under the STAGE project, there is a consortium led by World Education Incorporated (WEI) which is the lead NGO based in Accra and working with 7 NGOs [*Afrikids, Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems (RAINS), PRONET North, Link Community Development (LCD), Prolink, Ghana Red Cross Central (RCC), and the International Child Development Programme (ICDP)*] in 31 districts across the Central, Volta, Eastern, Northern, Upper West, Upper East and Oti regions of Ghana.

**Project Duration:** 5 years

**Project Goal:** The project aims to support educationally marginalized girls to improve their lives through education by achieving and acquiring literacy and numeracy skills; relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for life and work.

#### **Project Outcomes:**

**Outcome 1:** Improved learning outcomes of marginalised girls supported through GEC.

**Outcome 2:** Improved transition platforms for marginalized girls into and through key stages of education, training or employment

**Outcome 3:** Improved capacities of communities, institutions and stakeholders to sustain changes resulting from learning and transition outcomes of marginalized girls.

**Target:** National Target is 20,100 girls but PRONET North has a target of 3,275 girls with 2025 girls for formal track and 1250 girls (250 girls for 5 years) for Non-formal track

**Target Group:** Girls between ages 10 – 19, with the following marginalisation characteristics;

1. Eloped Girls
2. Teenage mothers
3. Teenage pregnant girls

4. Never attended school
5. Dropped out of school at/before P3
6. Child brides/Girls victims of early marriage
7. Girls living in extreme poverty
8. Girls who are victims of gender violence
9. Girls living in remote locations with no physical access to schooling
10. Girls with disabilities: Girls with difficulties seeing, hearing, walking, communication, and intellectual and emotional/behavioral disabilities
11. Girls who are in modern forms of slavery - bonded labour (with particular emphasis on child labourers)
12. Fostered girls living away from their biological parent's homes often with relatives or non-relatives

### **The STAGE Project Strategy**

The Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education (STAGE) Project combines two mutually supportive tracks for highly marginalized girls - Formal Track girls who will enroll in formal schools after Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and Non-formal track girls who will enroll in community learning centres.

**Formal Track** – Girls (aged between 10 – 14 years) will undergo an initial crash learning course in Literacy and numeracy in community-based Accelerated Learning Programme centers before transitioning to formal schools for three (3) years. During these 3 years, these transitioned girls will be provided mentors to support them with learning and monitoring.

**Non Formal Track** – Girls (aged between 15 – 19 years) will undergo an initial crash learning course in Literacy and numeracy in community-based Accelerated Learning Programme centers before being transitioned to acquire a vocational skill from master craftsmen or community vocational centres set up by private institutions and the National Vocational and Technical Institute (NVTI) for a period of six months every year. After successful completion, they will be assisted with seed funds to set up their own small businesses or transition into other forms of employment.

### **Key activities of STAGE Project**

Key activities to be implemented by the STAGE Project include:

- Literacy, numeracy, and life skills sessions at community levels through Accelerated Learning Programs to get girls on track for transition into a formal education, a vocational learning opportunity, or some form of employment.
- Teachers and facilitators will be trained in gender sensitive inclusive strategies and provided with curricula and supporting materials to meet the diverse needs of the girls.
- The project will collaborate closely with partners such as the Girls Education Unit and Special Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service (GES) to develop basic training modules and teaching and learning materials to facilitate the adequate provision of support to marginalized girls, such as those with disabilities.
- Community bicycle banks to support girls to go back to school
- Girls given skills and training in a vocation
- Intentional selection of 10% of girls with minor disabilities into the project intervention

- Intentional linkage for girls with severe disabilities with Specialized Institutions in regions where they are available.
- Life Skills and Behaviour Change Communication Materials on Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), personal hygiene, career planning, financial literacy
- The project will simultaneously work to sensitize communities and advocate at a national policy level to challenge contextual barriers affecting girls' education. In order to do this, STAGE will establish peer education models involving adolescent girls and boys as allies; work with youth and adult male-led community sensitization campaigns to promote positive behavior change; and engage both the public and private sectors to provide opportunities beyond the learning programs.

### **Expected Benefits of the STAGE Project**

It is anticipated that the project will benefit the target groups and geographical areas in the following ways;

- STAGE will reduce financial barriers, to ensure that girls become better educated and are put on pathways that break the cycle of poverty.
- STAGE will also address underlying cultural myths and attitudes about disabled children that results in exclusion at home, in school, and in their communities. The project will address the challenges of social stigmatization, ill-prepared teachers, and poor institutional support. The role of STAGE is to change mindsets and provide opportunities for disabled girls.
- In schools, STAGE will challenge teachers' attitudes and beliefs to support boys and girls equally and work towards gender-sensitive and inclusive classrooms to better allow all learners (boys and girls, disabled or not) to achieve their full potential. STAGE will address shortages in female role models and educators and work to mitigate the effect that inflexible school schedules have on girls' competing household demands.
- At the systemic level, STAGE will address the lack of enforcement of laws and policies and the limited commitment of district-level decision-makers to ensure that outcomes are achieved and efforts are sustained beyond the project's lifetime. While resources at the central level are challenging to access, efforts will be intensified at the district level to ensure available funding is earmarked towards girls' education efforts. STAGE will actively engage and involve key duty-bearers and decision-makers at the district level to define a vision for gender equality and identify key strategies to achieve this vision.
- Addressing these barriers will engender an enabling environment for girls' education and change the perception at the individual, community, and institutional levels. It will diminish the economic vulnerability of young women and offer them new economic and social opportunities. Ultimately it will equip the girls to be agents of change.

- **Collaborators:**

**National Level-** Ministry of Education/ Ghana Education Service and agencies (Girls Education Unit, Special Education Division, Basic Education Division, Non-Formal Education Division,

National Teaching Council, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, NGOs, Federation of People with Disability, Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), National Vocational Training Institute, Private Sector

**District Level-**Municipal/District Assemblies (MDAs), Ghana Education Service (GES), Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), Non-Formal Education Division (NFED), Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, Association of People with Disability, Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) and Private Sector.