



# Trajectory of multi-year Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) research *in Haiti*

March 2020

*Social and Emotional Learning* (SEL) covers key intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that children use in understanding their emotions, managing their behavior, and successfully navigating their relationships. Over the last few years, SEL programming has become more common in low-resource and fragile contexts given the evidence that children demonstrate remarkable psychosocial resilience and academic achievement when provided with education opportunities that include SEL.

The burgeoning interest in SEL programming has come with two related sets of questions. First, which SEL skills should different programs in different contexts target? Given the normative nature of social and emotional skills, it is likely that several aspects of skills will differ by context: their subjective importance in children's lives, the behavioral manifestation of skills, and the value placed on skills by the community. Once appropriate skills have been identified and programs have been designed to address these skills, there are still questions about the effects of SEL programs in low-resource and fragile contexts. There is limited evidence on the impact of SEL programs on children's development. Do SEL programs in these different contexts actually change the social and emotional competencies in children? What skills do different programs affect, and how? What impact do SEL interventions have on children's academic development?



*The Alliance for Catholic Education Haiti* (ACE Haiti) at the University of Notre Dame recognized the need for an SEL program to accompany their proven literacy programming for children in public and parochial primary schools in Haiti. The SEL program has three components: morning meetings for children and teachers, a school SEL culture training for administrators and teachers, and a classroom library with SEL-themed books. The program team at ACE Haiti partnered with the Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (GC-DWC) at the University of Notre Dame to ensure that there was a structured research and learning framework accompanying their SEL program to ensure that questions about which skills to measure, how to measure them, and how the program could be improved were addressed iteratively over several years. This SEL program-research collaboration has embarked on a multi-year learning endeavor focused on SEL programming in Haiti.

# Research Timeline

5-year Iterative Learning

## Stage 1

### Develop Haitian SEL framework and create program curriculum

Convene SEL Task Force in Haiti (15 academic, programming, and policy leaders from Haiti and the United States) to help develop Haiti-specific SEL framework

Develop and revise SEL curriculum including morning meetings, school culture trainings, and SEL-themed library books included in classroom libraries and integrated into literacy lessons



August  
2017-May  
2018

## Stage 2

### Adapt tools and conduct trend study

Adapt and validate the International Social and Emotional Learning Assessment (ISELA) and the Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment-mini (DESS-mini) for use in Haiti

Conduct trend study in 8 schools to confirm whether tools can capture positive and substantive change in skills over a six-month implementation

Revise tools and program



June 2018-  
May 2019

## Stage 3

### Conduct efficacy study

Conduct trial in 10 treatment and 10 comparison schools to understand if positive and substantive changes in SEL skills can be explained by factors beyond maturation over 6-month implementation period

Collect implementation fidelity and quality data

Revise learning approach and program



January  
2020-May  
2020

## Stage 4

### Conduct effectiveness, quasi-experimental study

Conduct trial in 40 treatment and 40 control schools to understand (a) whether changes in children's SEL skills are attributable to the SEL intervention and (b) effect of SEL intervention on children's reading

Collect implementation fidelity, quality, and dosage data

Revise learning approach and program



August  
2020-May  
2021

## Stage 5

### Cluster-randomized control trial

Conduct an impact study where schools are randomly selected and assigned to one of four conditions: business as usual (control), Read Haiti literacy intervention (Treatment 1), SEL intervention (Treatment 2), and literacy+SEL intervention (Treatment 3)

Study will allow us to understand (a) whether changes in children's SEL skills can be causally attributed to SEL intervention and (b) added-value of SEL intervention in combination with literacy intervention



August  
2021-May  
2022