



**20** | Year in  
**23** | Review



**GLOBAL CENTER**  
for the Development of *the Whole Child*

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# A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR AND ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR:

Dear Friends,

As we have reached the end of 2023 at the Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (GC-DWC) and look forward into 2024, we are energized by the efforts of our 38 team members based on campus and around the world, as well as our innovative collaborators, generous friends, donors, and supporters. As we champion whole child development in 25 countries around the globe, we know how important it is to have strong partnerships and an evidence-based approach.

The science is well established that children do not live in a vacuum and need well-rounded, holistic support to survive and thrive. Globally, 250 million children under the age of five are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential because of poverty and stunting (World Bank, 2023). The GC-DWC utilizes family, community, and schools to evaluate, collaborate, and activate nurturing of the whole child: meeting children's basic needs, fostering supportive relationships, and promoting core capabilities and values. To date, our work has reached 496,000 children, 17,493 teachers, and 2,373 parents in our flagship programs in Haiti and India.

We have come a long way, but there is still a long road ahead in terms of creating access to appropriate nutrition, early childhood education, supportive relationships, and safe learning spaces for children in the global south. Strong partnerships, both within the University of Notre Dame and externally with our global partners, remains essential in our ability to meet the diverse range of a child's needs. Critical to this work is embedding a "learning by doing" approach, investing in promising practices and pruning less effective ones, so that research is translated into timely and thoughtful action.

We hope that you enjoy reading through this year in review, and are as encouraged as we are by the work taking place and the opportunities which lie ahead.

Onwards,  
Neil and Hannah



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Boothby'.

Neil Boothby,  
Professor and Founding Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah Chandler'.

Hannah Chandler,  
Associate Director of Programs



# RESEARCH & DISSEMINATION

At the GC-DWC, research and learning dissemination is in our DNA. In 2023:

**25** countries of action and impact

**12** journal articles submitted for publication

**2** technical briefs

**15** lectures, conferences, panel presentations, and workshops

**2** books published

**4** podcasts



# RESEARCH & LEARNING DISSEMINATION HIGHLIGHTS

# GLOBAL CHILDHOODS

## CHILDHOODS & EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: A RESEARCH AND PROGRAM LEARNING PRACTICUM

In the Fall semester, GC-DWC Founding Director, Neil Boothby, taught *Childhoods & Education in the Global South: A Research and Program Learning Practicum*. The course provided students with an evidence-based framework and skillset to implement whole child development education programs in low income contexts. Poverty is complex, and as such, child development and learning in the contexts of poverty requires a multifaceted approach to change the trajectories of children's lives. The course exposed students to the science behind whole child development, and explored how the GC-DWC collaborates with strategic partners to promote whole child development initiatives which address both a child's educational needs and other aspects of their well-being. Students also worked closely with GC-DWC researchers involved with the Center's intervention science initiatives in India, Haiti, and Guatemala.



# RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN

## RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN: PODCAST SERIES WITH THINKND

Why is getting it right in the first 1,000 days of life critical for individuals, communities, and nations, and what does the science tell us?

Neil Boothby, the founding director of the GC-DWC, answers these questions in a discussion for Raising Resilient Children, a new podcast series for ThinkND. The series features conversations between Boothby and Fr. Lou DeFra, CSC, the director of pastoral life for the Alliance of Catholic Education (ACE), and Dr. Carrie Quinn, the executive director of the Mount Sinai Parenting Center. Together, they explore the science of early childhood development and how human relationships, nutrition, and environments in the first 1,000 days between a woman's pregnancy and a child's second birthday shapes the child's future outcomes, as well as how parents, health professionals, and the Catholic Church can do the same. Click [here](#) to register for the series and to learn more.

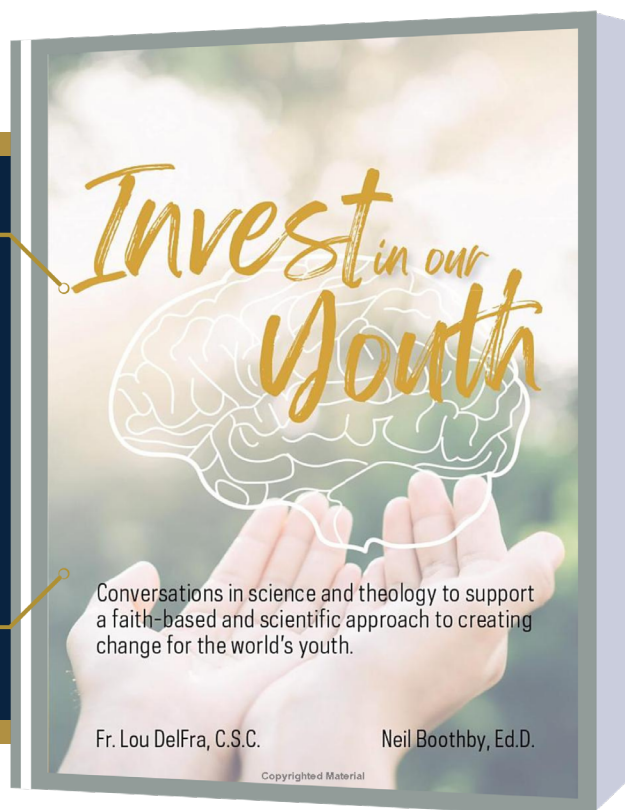


# INVEST IN OUR YOUTH

Imagine a conversation between a psychologist and priest that investigates how science and faith can converge in ways that help some of the world's most vulnerable children. Dr. Neil Boothby, the founding director of the GC-DWC, and Fr. Lou DelFra., the director of pastoral life for the Alliance for Catholic Education, have that conversation and explore the synergies between early childhood development science and Catholic Social Tradition in their new book, *Invest in Our Youth*.

Developed for those championing change for children in the most vulnerable parts of our world, the authors present the science and theology behind investing in early childhood development and illustrate how Catholic Social Tradition paints a directive to address the needs of those at the margins of society, while science, in turn, shows us how to do so. The book highlights themes of human connection and belonging, details the integral roles of parents and caregivers in the lives of children, and challenges the duality of science and theology to unify the two in one common goal: to aid in the lifelong success of vulnerable children through a whole child lens.

*Invest in our Youth* is available in both [English](#) and [French](#) and can be purchased in e-book and print versions on Amazon.



Conversations in science and theology to support a faith-based and scientific approach to creating change for the world's youth.

Fr. Lou DelFra, C.S.C.

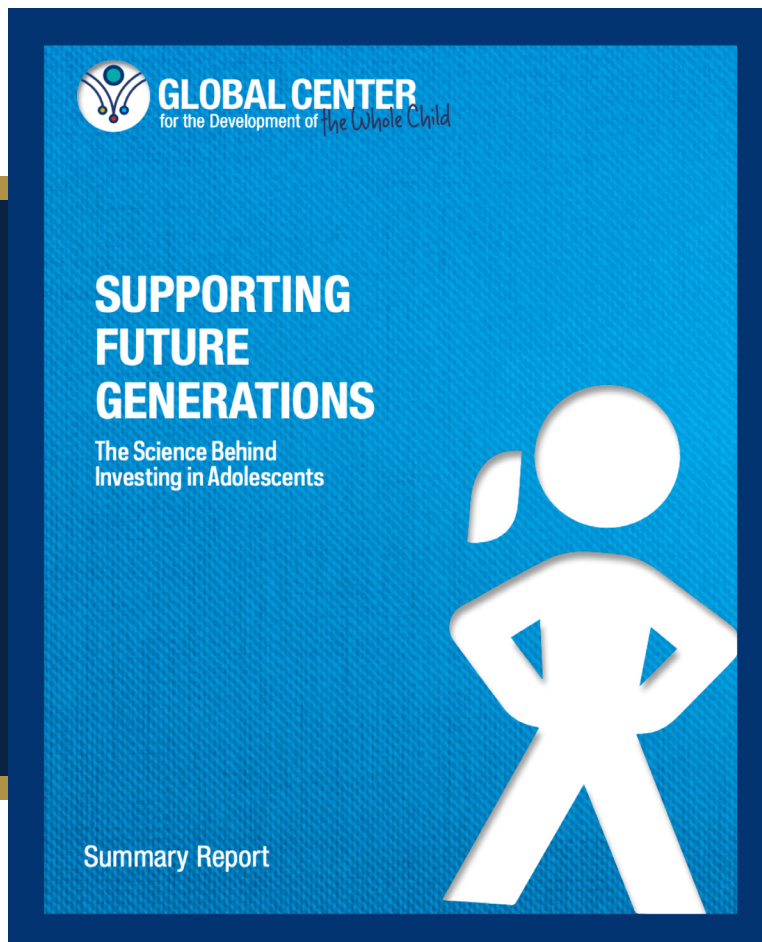
Neil Boothby, Ed.D.

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# SUPPORTING FUTURE GENERATIONS

Investing in adolescents builds strong economies, inclusive communities and vibrant societies. However, adolescent development is often neglected in education programming and evaluation. *Supporting Future Generations: The Science Behind Investing in Adolescents* highlights the key findings and emerging themes from three domains in adolescent development: supporting adolescent mothers and their children, advocating for flexible learning approaches, and addressing mental health and wellbeing. The brief examines how a holistic approach to adolescent development has the potential to produce a triple dividend on investment, yielding benefits to adolescents in the short term, across their lifespan, and for the next generation. Ultimately, it aims to promote more effective, impactful programs that foster resilience for adolescents facing adversity (such as poverty, displacement, humanitarian emergencies, conflict situations), using a whole child development lens.

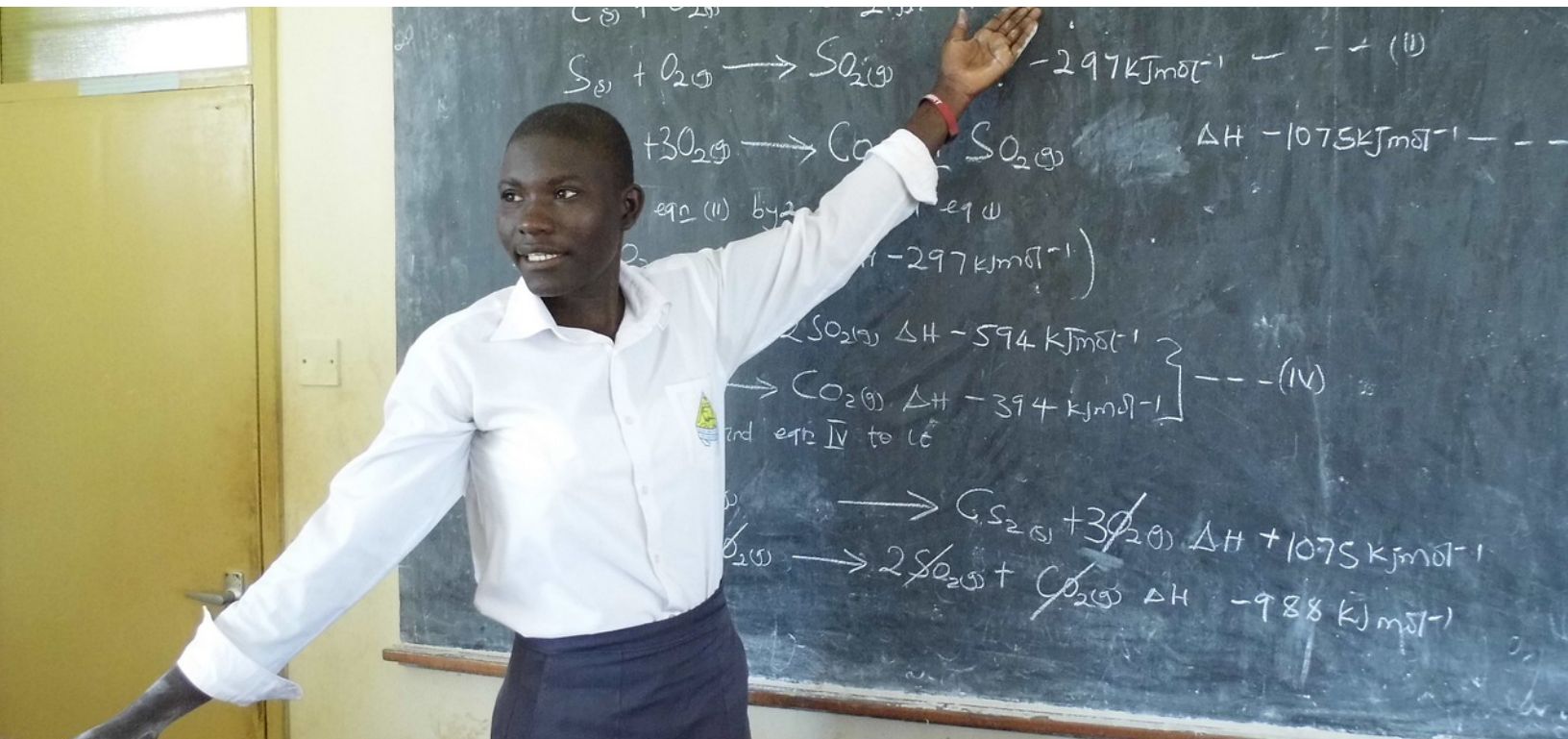


# TEACHER WELL-BEING IN UGANDA

## PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHT:

### **"WELL-BEING, THAT WORD IS VERY WIDE": UNDERSTANDING HOW TEACHERS IN UGANDA DEFINE AND NAVIGATE THEIR OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING**

Nikhil D'Sa, Assistant Professor and Director for Research, Hannah Chandler, Associate Director of Programs, and their consortium published an article in the *International Journal of Educational Research*, titled, *"Well-being, that word is very wide": Understanding how teachers in Uganda define and navigate their occupational well-being*. Teachers in Uganda are overstretched and exhausted. Occupational well-being—how teachers feel and function—is associated with satisfaction and retention. Yet, we know little about what teacher well-being looks like in low-resource contexts. The GC-DWC and co-authors worked with 148 Ugandan teachers to understand how they conceptualize well-being. They described well-being as economic, social, emotional, and physical health. Female teachers were more focused on displaying (over receiving) respect while teachers working with refugee children more frequently described the need for intrinsic motivation and training. The article discusses not only the broader implications for understanding TWB in other low-resource and fragile contexts but also how interventions in Uganda need to focus on the interpersonal dynamics that are more proximal to teachers' lived experiences.





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

# PROJECT SAMPOORNA



## TELANGANA, INDIA

Reaching 270,600 children and 1,398 teachers, and 239,400 students across 399 schools in India, Project Sampoorna aims to build, operate, and replicate a Whole Child Development (WCD) model of education in India through holistic systems engagement. Both new and existing initiatives have bolstered Project Sampoorna's goal to implement a holistic education system that meets the complex needs of learners, while also creating safe, empowering, and inclusive learning environments. The Telangana Social/ Tribal Welfare Residential Education Institution Societies (the "Society"), an office of the state government dedicated to improving educational outcomes for these students through residential education, envisions advancing the social and educational equity of children by offering them more effective, high-quality, and holistic learning and life skills opportunities.

As the implementing organization for Project Sampoorna, the GC-DWC is matching the Society's vision with the tools and support they need to achieve their goals, refine their processes, and sustain them into the future. Through engaging senior Society leadership at the systems level—and its school directors, teachers, and students at the school level—the GC-DWC's Telangana- and Notre Dame-based teams are continuing to invest in student empowerment programs that focus on core skills like problem solving, innovation, collaboration, leadership, and communication skills.

# Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative

In response to increased reports of bullying, theft, student self-harm and wellbeing concerns, the Society asked the GC-DWC to focus on the Safety and Protection portion of their Whole Child Development (WCD) framework and launch a Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative (SISI) which promotes safe and empowering school environments. Beginning in 2022 and continuing through 2023, Project Sampoorna has implemented its innovation package in 61 schools, creating and implementing a school-wide policy to ensure students and staff are encouraged to behave and interact with each other in a way that supports the school's mission to effective, high-quality, and holistic learning and life skills opportunities for all students.

## Whole Child Development (WCD) Training Center

The GC-DWC is continuing to partner with the Society in the application of the WCD framework and scaling of the SISI, as the society has chosen to embed these approaches annually, offering to absorb the cost. At the request of the Society's Secretary, the curriculum and learning from this Safe and Inclusive School Initiative was scaled through the newly formed WCD Research and Training Center. A total of 61 Society teachers were trained for a period of 24 days in June and July 2023 to work as full time champions of safe and inclusive schools on their campus. These Teacher Trainers (TTs) were recruited from 3 Society institutions: the TTWREIS (37), TSWREIS (20), and EMRS (04). As a part of the school-wide SISI implementation, the TTs were trained on the introduction of the 'We Succeed Together Agreement,' weekly implementation of student activities, and SEL integration in the classroom.



## We Succeed Together

The *We Succeed Together Agreement*, a cooperative school-wide contract intended to create a safe and supportive school culture where everyone can succeed, fosters prosocial conduct while being clear about the consequences of negative behavior to reduce incidences like bullying, vandalism, and body shaming. The *We Succeed Together Agreement* predicated on the assumption that students will respond positively to school-wide norms that are successfully communicated, upheld, and exemplified by school staff. It is implemented from the principals' office, to the dorm by house-parents, to the classroom by teachers. As a result, it serves as a strong, excellent tool for creating safe and inclusive learning environments, which are critical to the success of all students.

Complementing this implementation, activities for students, tailored specifically to the context of residential schools, have been progressively rolled out in each participating school to foster prosocial conduct and enforce the agreement. These activities, such as cooperative games, blob tree activities, thematic assemblies, and circle time, encourage students to cooperate with one another, build confidence in their relationships with classmates and school personnel, and feel a sense of belonging in their school community, ultimately benefiting mental health and wellness.



## Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

The SISI implemented Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum training for Grade 5 teachers who were trained to create and implement SEL integrated lesson plans in their classes. These one day workshops across nine locations in Telangana reached over 550 teachers, providing them with lesson plans as well as professional development support for classroom facilitation. Teachers learned how to best implement SEL practices into their classroom culture, focusing on themes such as empathy, self-esteem, perseverance, critical thinking, and collaboration. To emphasize “learning while doing,” the training will be complemented by continuous support from a coach on their campus.

With this phase of the workshop spanning across 61 schools, the GC-DWC aims to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to confidently implement SEL practices into their pedagogy, further fostering safe, inclusive, and empowering school environments.

## Rapid Assessment, Evaluation, and Learning Methodology (REALM)

To ensure success, it is essential that we incorporate our learnings as we move forward systematically with the implementation phase of the Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative. At the onset of our implementation, we embedded Rapid Evaluation Assessment and Learning Methodologies (REALM) to ensure that we are learning quickly and continuously about our program’s progress, and if needed, correcting our methods of implementation.

We have created an internal dashboard to help Project Sampoorna staff make informed decisions about programming, and supporting Teacher Trainers to coach teachers in their schools. The dashboard provides real-time updates on the classroom and activity observation data collected by the trainers, which helps track fidelity, guide inputs to Teacher Trainers, and where relevant, drive discussions around best practices in the school. We are continually learning and working to ensure the best possible program for our schools, school staff, and students.



# GC-DWC HAITI



In response to chronic and systemic challenges facing the education system in Haiti, we are continuing to leverage a multidimensional approach to development in Haiti that integrates and evaluates a robust package of interventions for children and their families. Reaching 225,076 children and 5,185 teachers across 692 schools in Haiti—as well as 1,220 parents and 579 religious leaders—the GC-DWC’s unique approach and collaboration with local stakeholders addresses a wide range of developmental needs while empowering parish communities to make their own evidence-informed decisions, ultimately creating opportunities for independence and sustainability.

## L3 Systems Activation

The challenges posed by chronic disinvestment and disruption of core institutions in Haiti mean that a top-down approach to change will never directly reach the individuals most in need. Recognizing that each Catholic parish in Haiti runs a school and is deeply embedded in local culture and home life, we are continuing to activate parish networks to meet children’s holistic needs at all three levels of their social ecology: the home (lakay), school (lekòl), and church (legliz) or L3.

We have implemented various innovative interventions within the L3 system in 2023, including everything from integrating child development and positive parenting messages into sermons and baptismal preparation courses, to introducing nutrition



education and resources to combat stunting within schools, to creating community resource centers for play and learning. By activating the Haitian child's most central networks, engaging key stakeholders, and leveraging culturally-relevant and engaging programming, GC-DWC Haiti promotes a whole child approach to development that values the cultural richness of Haitian communities and will create a ripple effect throughout the country.

## **Evidence of System-Activation: QulP**

To measure whether the L3 system was being activated, the GC-DWC undertook a holistic, system-wide evaluation (Qualitative Impact Protocol). The Qualitative Impact Protocol (QulP) assesses the impact of interventions by collecting narrative statements from program participants. Through the use of open-ended and exploratory questions about changes in expected program outcomes, the QulP aims to disentangle possible sources of influence by avoiding questions that are specific to the programs being evaluated.

According to the QulP assessments, parent empowerment programs seem to be producing the most effective results. A majority of parents and teachers identified L3 training and support as changing their behaviors to be more supportive of WCD for young children. Many parents reported that they stopped beating their child after the parent training program, and attributed improved overall family well-being to the parent training. Others indicated that they began feeding their children more nutritious food at home. Like the parent empowerment programs, teacher training is emitting powerful change. The majority of teachers and school directors attributed changes in their knowledge and behaviors to support WCD in the classroom to L3 training. The top three causal links, which teachers and school directors drew from participating in the teacher training, were increased knowledge of child development and learning, engaging in play-based learning with children in the classroom, and incorporating SEL into the classroom.

The QulP interviews with the priests in each of the innovation communities revealed that they have a surprisingly deep knowledge of and commitment to WCD for the young children in their parishes. Because priests are in charge of the Catholic school in their parish and work closely with the school directors, the school-based influence they have is significant. To accelerate church engagement, we have initiated child and faith preparations for seminarians during their formation period, and will continue to do so.

## **Systems Activation in Emergencies**

The L3 system was used for more sustainable disaster response through the implementation of the Systems Activation in Emergencies project, funded by the LEGO foundation. In August of 2021, a terrible 7.2 earthquake hit the Tiburon peninsula of Haiti, destroying the infrastructure, particularly the schools, and significantly

impacting families and learners. According to UNICEF, in 2021, more than half a million children in those communities struggled to access safe drinking water, shelter, and hygiene. In addition, the nutrition problem and the lack of quality education support from schools and at home hinder the full development of the children in Haiti, particularly in the Nippes department affected by the earthquake. The LEGO foundation funded the Systems Activation in Emergencies project to leverage the home, the school, and the church to address early child development in the Nippes department. We were able to implement this project in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the Episcopal Commission for Catholic Education (CEEC), and the Bureau of Diocesan Education (BDE).

Culminating in October of this year, the LEGO Systems Activation in Emergencies project activated the L3 ecosystem by engaging key L3 community stakeholders and leveraging culturally-relevant programming and activities that promoted a whole child approach to development. The project supported 12 preschools throughout the Nippes department via a robust and comprehensive early childhood development (ECD) training for preschool teachers, provision of play-based materials and classroom supplies to schools, and nutritious hot meals and snacks given to children. Additionally, training was provided for parents of children under five regarding issues such as nutrition, positive discipline, the importance of parent-child relationships, and the cultural identity amongst others, as well as addressing food insecurity needs by providing take-home food kits filled with locally sourced products. Broadcasting daily radio programs for preschool children throughout the Nippes department, the project supported continued education outside of the classroom. Five community resource centers were also installed in areas throughout the department, which changed to nine community projects based upon community needs.





## HOME

To activate the home (lakay), parents were trained on positive parenting, nutrition, and child development in the nine communities over three rounds, each consisting of 10 sessions. Meal kits including locally sourced, non-perishable items with high nutritional value were distributed to all participants at the training.

540

Parents Trained

540

Meal Kits Distributed

41

Facilitators Trained

9

Communities Served



## SCHOOL

To activate the school (lekòl), four supervisors were selected and trained in the Nippes department, each responsible for 3 of the 12 schools supported through the program. Preschool teachers participated in three residential training sessions that focused on implementing play-based SEL and literacy methods in their classroom. Children who were struggling with literacy prior to primary school attended a three-week summer camp to help them catch-up to their peers.

158,724

Hot Meals Served

48,969

Meal Kits Distributed

680

Children Reached Directly Through ECD Preschool Programs

60

Camp Personnel Trained

48

Preschool Teachers Trained



## CHURCH

To activate the church (legliz) and community, radio programming and a partnership with parish and community radio stations was implemented to aid distance education. Radios were distributed to teachers, parents, and facilitators.

Additionally, community projects were funded, including the construction of playgrounds, a well and solar-powered pump, classroom rehabilitation, WASH facilities, and a security wall.

600

Radios Distributed

300

Radio Sessions Broadcast

9

Community Projects Funded

7

Playgrounds Constructed

6

Classrooms Rehabilitated

4

Parish & Community Radio Stations

ALL SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

## Enhancing the Model School Network (MSN)

The GC-DWC has distinguished itself as the leading researcher partner in The Model School Network (MSN), established in 2013 by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Composed of a coalition of education organizations working in Haiti, the MSN works to improve outcomes for children in Haiti's Central Plateau through sustainable, multi-layered, data driven, and effective governmental and civil society partnerships. The MSN strategy is to leverage the coalition of partnerships to deliver strategic interventions in a set of school networks in the Central Department to demonstrate key components of an effective system.

Aiming to enhance the MSN, we have built a learning system to enable directors and teachers to make informed decisions on how they can better support student learning, developing a school-based information system (SBIS) framework to meet the needs of the MSN and provide data to respond to the specific Key Performance Indicators. The Framework focused on the demographic data of students and staff, schools' daily operations, attendance, year-end academic results and GPS. Additionally, they reinforced the Longitudinal Benchmarking & Evaluation Systems (LBES) Database to incorporate SBIS and other data sources. With multiple partners' data inputs, we are in the process of creating a more user-friendly dashboard backed by a data warehouse that can provide regular information for network, director, teacher and general public queries. The dashboard will be able to show data from various sources in one location.

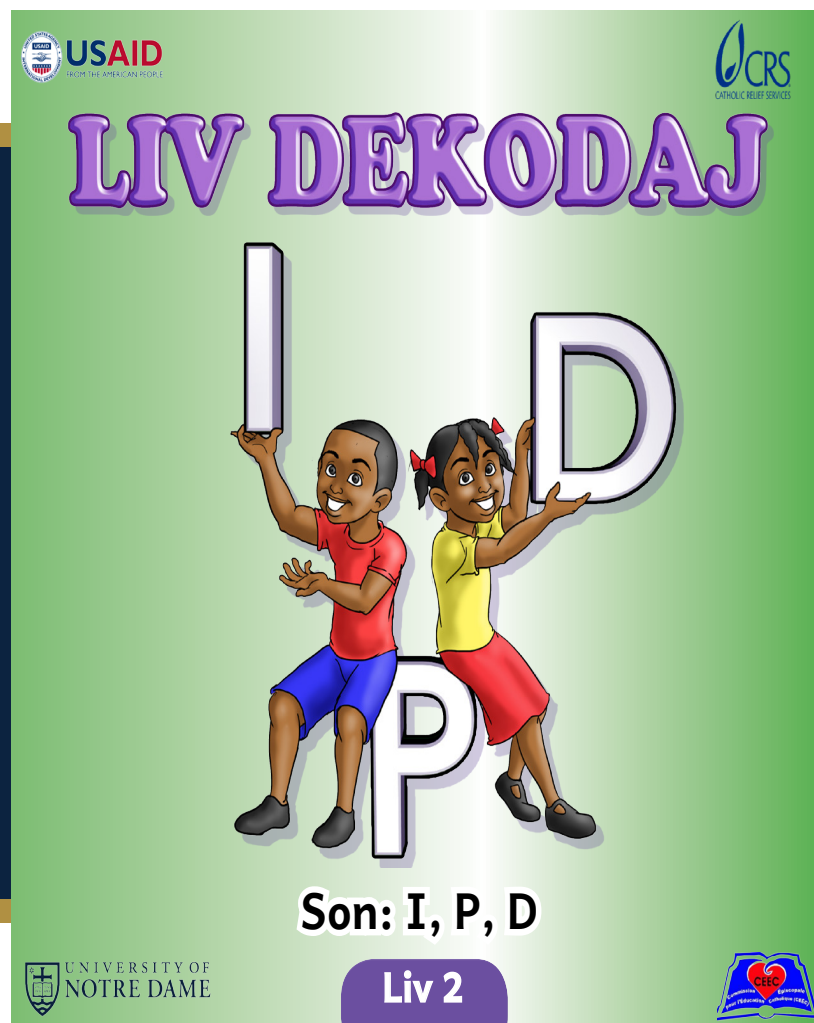
Using lessons learned from LBES and sub-networks' data collection processes, the data collection methods and tools were finalized through the ongoing pilot of a sample cohort of 24 MSN schools. We have created a SBIS handbook for network partners defining terms, methods, best practices and tools for the collection of data, and extensive training and onsite accompaniment at 186 schools was conducted on SBIS implementation. Additionally, we lead annual data collection (LBES) with network partners to inform MSN progress. Significant revisions of the MSN Educational and strategic frameworks have resulted in a more streamlined data collection plan to cover all MSN schools every two years.

## Leveraging a \$23 Million Award for Continuity of Learning (CoL)

Education is the foundation of a strong and resilient population. The GC-DWC has had the opportunity to play a key role in implementing a \$23 million program funded by USAID designed to improve Haitian students' foundational skills in reading, literacy, and social emotional learning by building and strengthening the capacity of teachers, schools, and communities. Partnering with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Episcopal Commission for Catholic Education (CEEC), we implemented a four-year Continuity of Learning (CoL) program, supporting the development of a more resilient education system that delivers uninterrupted access to a safe, quality education for students in first through fourth grade, despite shocks and stresses that may arise.

The start of the second year of the CoL project was significantly impacted by Haiti's continuing political and institutional crisis, increasing violence and unprecedented levels of insecurity, and a country-wide lockdown. Due to a delay of the opening of the school year, CoL promptly shifted to radio programming. Once schools reopened, the team successfully distributed teaching and learning materials to 5,578 learners, 152 teachers and 60 school directors in grades 1 and 2 in the 60 partner schools in the South, West, North and Northeast departments.

With the goal of strengthening the capacity of students, teachers, schools, and communities, CoL aims to promote social and emotional learning (SEL) while also improving students' foundational skills in literacy, and fostering a safe learning environment. This year, the team updated the SEL curriculum for grades 1 and 2 and distributed 2,310 SEL books in Haitian Créole to the grade 1 and 2 libraries in all 60 schools. Additionally, ten decodable books were created for students in the first grade, piloted in ten schools across four departments during the month of November.



# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE



## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE: USING MARKET FORCES TO SUSTAIN PATHWAYS OUT OF ADVERSITY

Guided by the knowledge that low-income and fragile countries face unique challenges and therefore require unique solutions, the GC-DWC embraces a social enterprise model of change and development. A social enterprise lens, through which market forces and business principles coalesce to sustain education, child welfare, and community development initiatives, is especially necessary to employ in contexts where government investments in human capital and social development are woefully insufficient. Unlike other sustainable development options, social enterprise is not only an approach to development challenges, but a solution based on business principles employed by the world's most successful companies and corporations. The GC-DWC's Social Enterprise Initiative (SEI) translates knowledge into opportunities and sustainable excellence for children, families, and communities.

## Mail Boxes Etc. (MBE) Haiti

The shipping industry in Haiti provides a potential pathway to community-driven change and sustainable development. A group of Notre Dame alumni and supporters created Irish Package, purchasing the rights to Mail Boxes Etc. (MBE) in Haiti. MBE, a global brand operating in 43 countries, aims to provide Haitians with business services and low-cost, reliable package delivery while using a social enterprise model to generate profits to support community-led initiatives. Supported by the GC-DWC, these profits are fed back into Catholic schools as well as a local university—University of Notre Dame-Haiti. This all serves the purpose of sustainably bolstering Haiti’s chronically under-resourced education system, using sustainable enterprise for long-term change.

Prior to the May 2023 opening of the first MBE storefront in Cap-Haitien, there existed no low-cost options to ship packages both in and out of the country, and Haiti’s mail service was essentially non-existent. Mailbox Haiti hopes to leverage the gap in infrastructure and services, allowing local communities the ability to apply a social enterprise model of change to bridge a service gap and simultaneously meet community needs. As of May 05, 2023, the Haiti MBE franchise was purchased, and a property was identified and rented. Additionally, business partnerships for import/export have been established, a tax identification number has been secured, and the construction of the Mailbox Storefront has been completed. Furthermore, staff have been hired and trained, and a soft opening has been launched. The storefront is working to become fully operational after shipping and printing services have been fully tested and operationalized.

Adding to the focus of sustainability, MBE is working to drive local economic growth, employing and training local Haitians. Simultaneously, as part of its commitment to creating sustainable change in the community, MBE will feed profits back into the community through partnering with local schools to cover shortfalls in teacher salary, tuition, and infrastructure needs. These activities will lead to the output of establishing a process to generate sustainable income, ultimately resulting in the outcome of a successful MBE store, meeting student tuition and teacher salary needs in the L3 communities, and achieving the GC-DWC’s Social Change Goal.

## Bon Sel Initiative (BSI) and Nutrition

In coordination with other stakeholders, the Bon Sel Initiative (BSI) is working to stop the transmission of Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) and prevent Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) in Haiti. Since 2006, BSI has provided vital fortified salt to communities across Haiti, and continues to help create pathways to improved educational outcomes through nutritional interventions among students. The initiative focuses internal resources on processing, packaging, and consumer education while leveraging external partnerships for production of raw salt and for distribution of finished salt

products. Currently in Phase 4, BSI is expanding distribution to foodservice and food-processing market segments beyond the Port-au-Prince metro area, including toll-processing partnerships with Haitian salt producers at Delmas and in northern Haiti.

In March, the GC-DWC hosted the “Strengthening Child Cognitive Development through Improved Nutrition Research Design Workshop.” Practitioners and researchers in the field of nutrition were brought together with the goal of identifying focus areas for action to impact micronutrient nutrition on childhood educational outcomes. The workshop was led by GC-DWC Visiting Scientist and Senior Assistant in the Laboratory for Nutrition and Metabolic Epigenetics at ETH Zürich, Jessica Rigutto-Farebrother. Workshop guests developed strategies on how to generate research on nutrition, build sustainable solutions to nutrition deficits, and utilize findings to advocate for policies which have a tangible effect on the lives of those suffering from malnutrition. Strategies incorporated solutions generated by the free market such as the novel operating model and distribution system utilized by the Bon Sel Initiative.

Discussions at the workshop have helped shape an intervention strategy targeting food insecurity including the blueprint for a longitudinal study which looks at the relationship between nutrition, cognitive development, and educational outcomes. As part of the GC-DWC’s social enterprise initiatives, BSI also leverages entrepreneurship, business principles, and commercial supply chains, among others, to address complex social issues and ultimately foster sustainable solutions at local levels.



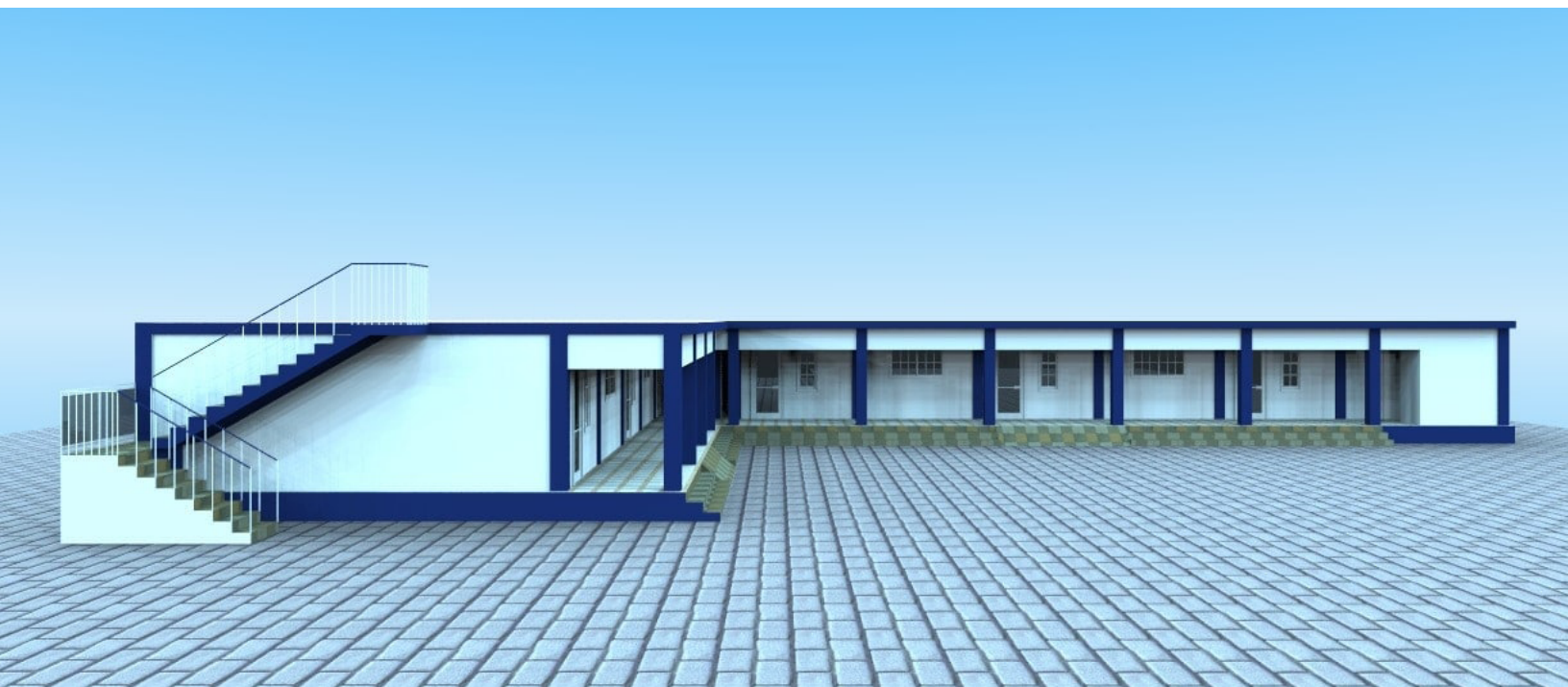


## University of Notre Dame Haiti-Hinche

As part of its Social Enterprise Initiative, the GC-DWC's partnership with the University of Notre Dame Haiti-Hinche (UNDH-H), coined "Our Lady's Partnership," seeks to fill knowledge gaps by providing Haitian students with robust opportunities in bioscience, entrepreneurship, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

UNDH-H has established several engaging and relevant opportunities for Haitian students, such as the development of Haiti's very first Bioscience laboratory and program, equipping the country with the initial resources and infrastructure to cultivate locally-led solutions to complex health challenges. Now—through strategic collaborations with the GC-DWC and the ETH Zurich Institute of Food, Nutrition, and Health—the Bio Science Laboratory is amplifying its current efforts to address LF and IDD with goals to establish its lab as a nationally-recognized center of excellence for public health testing and research while simultaneously providing unprecedented training opportunities to form the next generation of Haitian researchers and scientists.

UNDH-H is also working on the development of a Social Entrepreneurial Center (SEC) that provides a unique opportunity to equip Haitian students with the entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to create small-to medium-sized businesses that drive locally-led development efforts and employment opportunities in Haiti. Similarly, working directly with underserved youth in the GC-DWC's network of 340 schools, UNDH-H's Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Center will develop and offer practical training tracks that equip youth with the necessary skills to return to their communities and find work in their parish communities.



# SHARE



## SUPPORTING HOLISTIC AND ACTIONABLE RESEARCH IN EDUCATION (SHARE)

Supporting Holistic and Actionable Research in Education (SHARE)—a \$40-million cooperative agreement awarded to the University of Notre Dame by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—seeks to develop a replicable and adaptable model to advance efforts to strengthen education systems in low-middle income countries, bringing together education-policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and knowledge disseminators to ensure education research meets the needs of and is accessible to key stakeholders in the education systems. This program, led by UND's Pulte Institute for Global Development, is a true collaboration of partners across Notre Dame including the GC-DWC and the Keough School of Global Affairs.

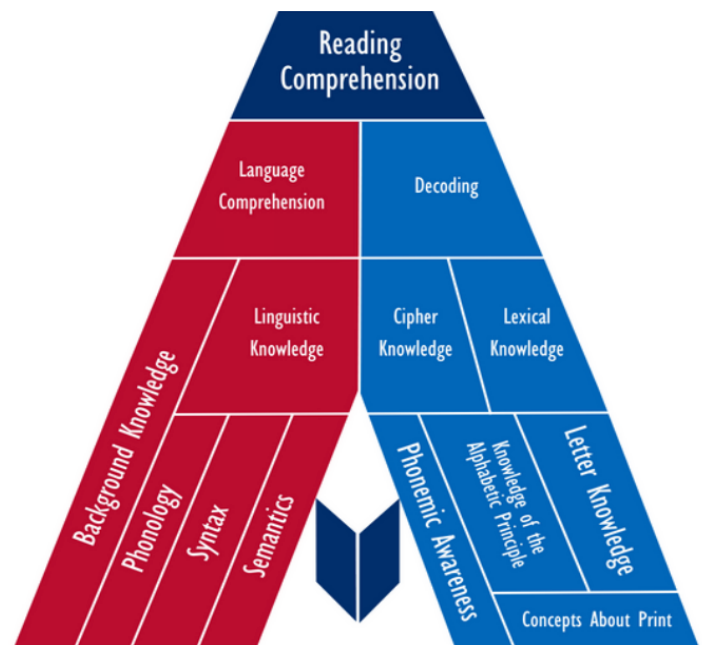
Now in its fourth year, SHARE is engaging in research to help USAID identify and shape education policy. The team continues to mentor an impressive coalition of partners in higher education and offer a series of capacity-strengthening actions, including training sessions, workshops, mentorship, and technical assistance across Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. To date, SHARE has supported projects in 16 different countries: Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Indonesia, Kenya, The Philippines, Malawi, Egypt, Cambodia, Rwanda, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Mali, and Guatemala.

# SHARE

## 2023 RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

### THE RECEPTIVE AND EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE MODULE (RELM)

The need to measure various facets of language for better understanding of reading comprehension is critical in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where millions of children learn to read in languages they may not speak or use at home. Yet, most existing assessments in LMICs do not measure language skills. Led by the GC-DWC's Fernanda Soares, The Receptive and Expressive Language Module (RELM) is designed to fill this gap as it assesses pertinent aspects of receptive and productive language skills in students in pre-primary and primary grades across LMICs. The RELM examines critical components of students' linguistic abilities and how these relate to reading competency. The RELM is proposed as a module for the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) but can also be implemented as a stand-alone module. The intent is that the RELM will help users to disentangle floor effects (or zero scores) for EGRA and, thus, drill down on the key components affecting reading comprehension. Click [here](#) to learn more about RELM.



(Adapted by AIR, 2021)

### HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS GENERATING HOLISTIC AND TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUTIONS (HEIGHTS)

HEIGHTS (Higher Education Institutions Generating Holistic and Transformative Solutions), led by the GC-DWC's HyoJung Jang, is a set of two cross-national studies across Kenya, Indonesia, and the Philippines: 1) Innovation Ecosystem (IE) study and 2) Financial Sustainability (FS) study. HEIGHTS - IE analyzes what types of investments, policies, institutional arrangements, and educational approaches governments, the private sector, and higher education institutions (HEIs) in low- and middle-income countries are pursuing to enhance increased engagement in innovation ecosystems, and what factors influence the success of these strategies. HEIGHTS - FS examines what strategies HEIs in low- and middle-income countries implement to promote financial sustainability and the most effective strategies in different contexts.

## BASIC EDUCATION QUALITY AND TRANSITIONS (BEQT)

The purpose of this SHARE Buy-In for the USAID Mission in Guatemala is to evaluate the “Basic Education Quality and Transitions” (BEQT) Activity by measuring its impact on improving the transition rate from sixth grade to the first grade of lower secondary (primero básico) in Guatemala, and the factors that contribute—positively or negatively—to transition rates. This evaluation seeks to 1) shed light on the multidimensional factors that affect the transition rate from primary to secondary education in Guatemala and 2) provide USAID with evidence regarding the impact of its investment in the BEQT Activity. The proposed evaluation has three main specific goals: 1) Assess BEQT’s effect on transition rates from sixth grade to primero básico in intervention schools. 2) Establish whether BEQT activities generated equity in transition rates between boys and girls, urban and rural residents, and the indigenous and non-indigenous populations. 3) Identify the factors that impact transition rates.

## EDUCATION IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT (EICC)

The GC-DWC’s HyoJung Jang and Neil Boothby co-led a rapid assessment of an Education in Crisis and Conflict (EiCC) programming and a diagnostic of the education context in the conflict- and crisis-affected regions in Northern Ethiopia. Specifically, this work assessed the barriers to school re-entry faced by children and youth, and the progress of USAID/Ethiopia’s Reading for Ethiopia’s Achievement Developed (READ) II Activity intended to boost the quality of literacy instruction and support for 15 million at-risk students to assess the needs for future programming. This assessment focused on: 1) Assess the progress and challenges of the READ II Activity; 2) Identify barriers to education/learning in the current emergency contexts; 3) Explore promising practices to support students and teachers for students’ learning continuity in the current context in target regions; and 4) Document beneficiaries’ perceptions of the services provided by the Activity and additional needs for support. Click [here](#) to read the final report for EICC.

## THE LEARNING TO IMPROVE BOOK RESOURCE OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS (LIBROS)

The Learning to Improve Book Resource Operational Systems (LIBROS) study aims to identify pathways to strengthen primary education book supply chains in low- and middle-income countries through case studies in Cambodia, Honduras, and Rwanda. To achieve this goal, the LIBROS team, led by the GC-DWC’s Dr. Jeongmin Lee, is documenting policy and practice strategies from these three countries and assessing the impact of these strategies on primary-level book supply chains, along with the underlying conditions enabling the success of improvement strategies. These strategies encompass a digital book track and trace system in Cambodia, local capacity development among professionals in the book supply chain in Honduras, and a multilateral partnership in book title and reading culture development in Rwanda. The analysis is ongoing and will be shared through technical reports and conference presentations in early 2024.

# PALICE



## PLAY AND LEARNING IN CHILDREN'S EYES (PALICE)

When children experience play as joyful, actively engaging, meaningful, iterative and socially interactive, their play is more likely to lead to deeper learning, connecting factual knowledge with real-world experiences. Now in its third year, Play and Learning in Children's Eyes (PALICE) captures children's voices—their diverse experiences of learning through play across ages and geographies—as an important step towards thoughtfully building educational environments that optimize these opportunities globally. Funded by the Lego Foundation, and through FHI 360's leadership, the GC-DWC and other consortium members are developing and validating a set of formative tools designed to help teachers in low-and middle-income countries assess and improve their practice in Learning through Play (LtP), through a deeper understanding of how children experience LtP in their classrooms.

This year, to measure learning to play in action, the LEGO Foundation introduced the Playful Learning Across the Years (PLAY) toolkit and the Teacher RePlay tool, developed by the GC-DWC in collaboration with FHI 360 and other partners. The PLAY toolkit builds a better understanding of the components of great teaching and effective parental learning support that truly foster children's engagement and underpin learning through play, measuring how caregivers and teachers support children's engagement in their learning. The toolkit consists of observation and survey tools for children from birth to 12-years-old and can be applied across diverse learning settings and contexts.

Teacher RePlay is a formative reflection tool to support teachers to improve their practice of learning through play for children aged 3-12 years, allowing teachers to become expert observers of behaviors in their students, equipping them with coaching tips, and allowing them to hear about the learning through play experience in the students' own words.

# OUR GROWING TEAM

6 new colleagues joined the GC-DWC team in 2023.



**Mani Chandana,**  
Field Training  
Coordinator,  
India



**Saketh Gayam,**  
Senior Program  
Coordinator,  
India



**Brooke Parker,**  
Communications  
Associate



**Shalini Pathi,**  
Education  
Coordinator,  
India



**Dakota Peterson,**  
Research  
Associate



**Lamarre Presuma,**  
Research  
Associate



**Riley Wirth,**  
Director of the  
Bon Sel Initiative



**LOOKING FORWARD**

# LOOKING FORWARD

Looking forward, we see a need to engage and continue dialogue with bilateral donors and family foundations to encourage more whole child development initiatives and funding including co-locating food, nutrition, and education, iterating the importance of whole child–whole school approaches. As more work needs to be done to be able to promote critical programming for children in adversity, this will be a big focus of our research and advocacy in 2024.

## Highlighting Student Voices

Policy briefs are a key tool to present research and recommendations to a non-specialized audience, serving as a vehicle for providing evidence-based policy advice to help readers make informed decisions. Students of Neil Boothby's *Childhoods and Education in the Global South* course were assigned to write policy briefs on the benefits of a whole child—school community approach for children in low-income settings.

Food and education was one of the main issues explored in the course, and a few students developed their policy briefs dissecting the issue and offering research based recommendations on why a WCD approach to food security investments within schools will make sustainable change. Read Notre Dame student Isabella Henriquez's policy brief on *School Feeding: A Compromise Between Nutrition and Education Single Sector Initiatives*, and other student work, [here](#).

## Activating the Church

Faith-based communities provide individuals with a sense of belonging, support, and guidance. Rooted in shared beliefs and values, these communities hold immense importance for the children and families within them. We are continuing to work with the global Catholic Church to align the family, school, and church to invest wisely in the world's children. Thinking about the impact of our L3 systems activation method we have implemented in Haiti, and our partnership with the Haitian catholic church in activating that church community surrounding children, we hope to implement more programming in other faith-based communities to positively impact education through a whole child development approach. To have a big impact, we need to use existing systems to do so, and the Catholic Church is that system in many global communities. Regardless of country or resource availability, a systems approach to early childhood development can help to ensure that all parents and children get the resources they need to reach their full potential.



# Whole Child Development Conference in India

While India remains the world's fastest growing economy, millions of India's youths are being left behind. In 2024, the GC-DWC and Society in Telangana, India, plan to hold a national conference to bring together key actors in government, civil society, private sector, and academia engaged in primary and secondary education programs for students from marginalized communities nationwide. It will focus on program learning and empirical evidence from these interrelated topics:

- Teaching social and emotional learning in the classroom
  - Parent and community engagement programs
  - Teacher well-being and professional development
  - Whole child development (WCD) educational initiatives
  - The Role of Civil Society, Human Rights Organizations, and the Private Sector in supporting these educational efforts.
  - Research and learning in education

Keynote presentations reviewing the evidence base for effective practices will be followed by workshops to further examine the evidence bases of key thematic issues, and identify future research priorities to advance whole child development education for marginalized children in India.

Key outcomes of the workshop will be:

1. The establishment of a consortium of key thought leaders and actors committed supporting marginalized learners through primary and secondary education across India
2. Partnerships to generate research and knowledge in whole child development education in India with regional focuses.
3. A multi-year research agenda on WCD education approaches for supporting marginalized learners in India with regional delineation and focuses.





**GLOBAL CENTER**  
for the Development of *the Whole Child*

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