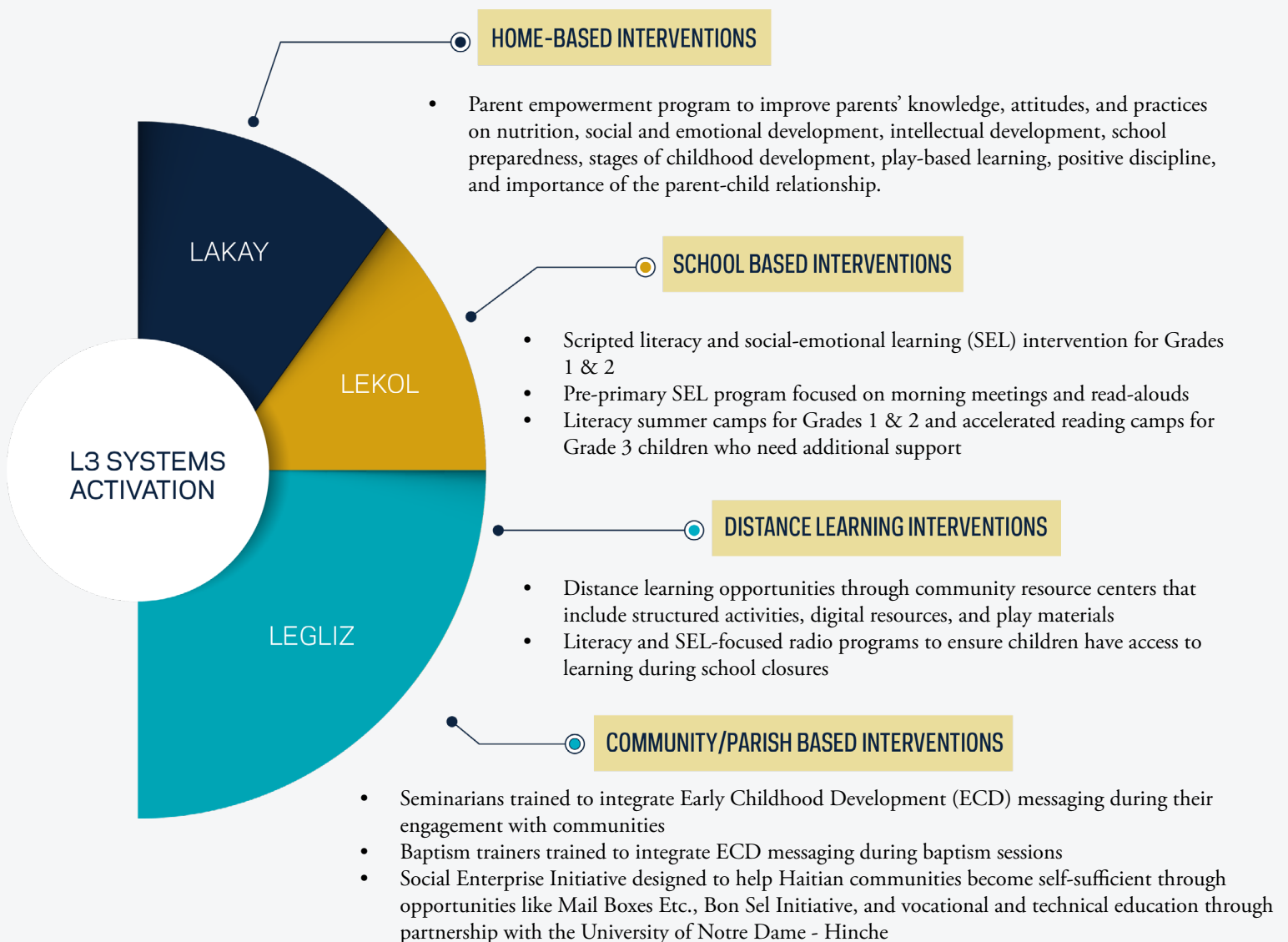


Strong Beginnings for Children in Haiti

2020-2024 Learnings Brief

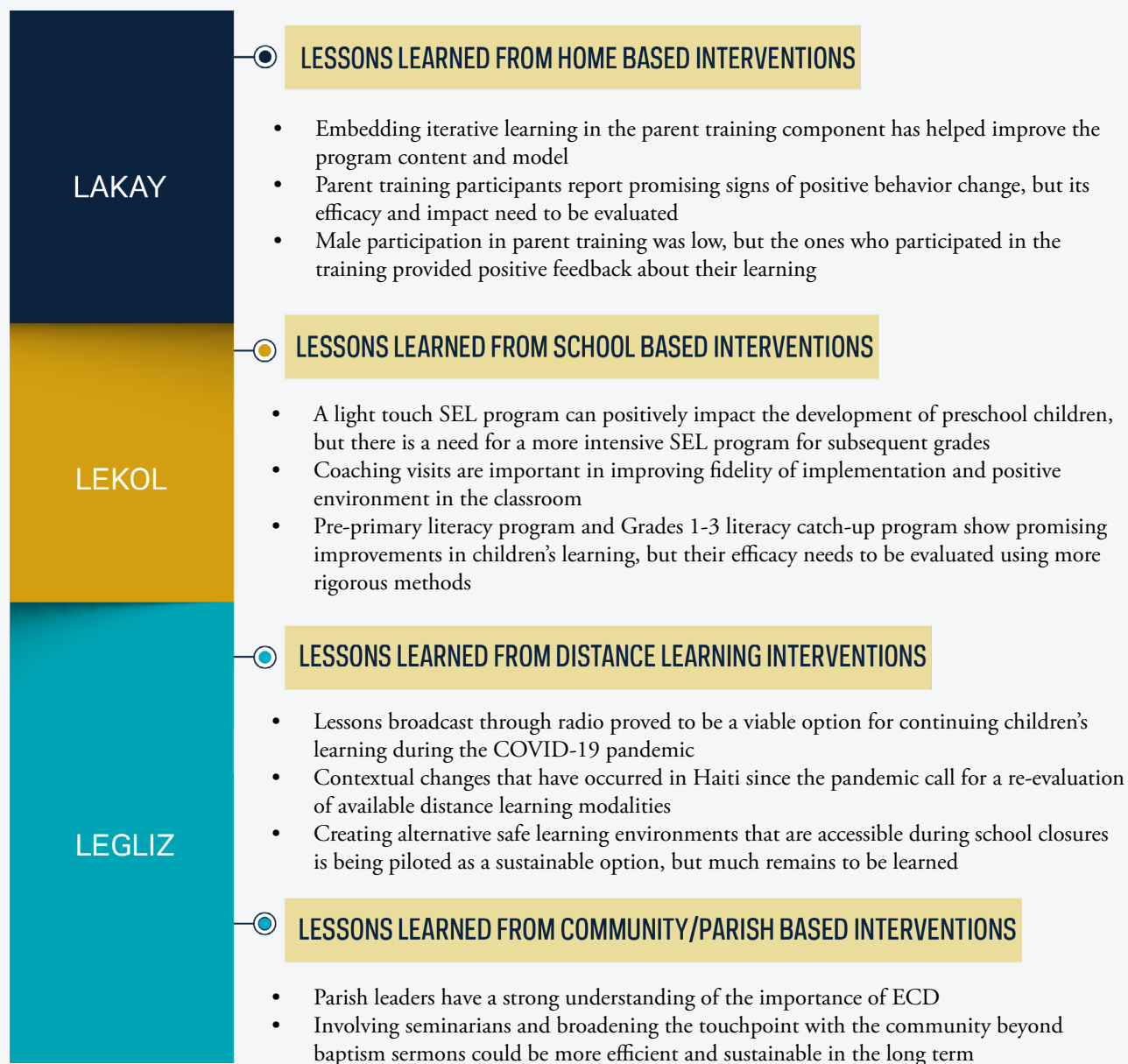
Shwetha Parvathy, Nikhit D'Sa

There are numerous challenges facing young children in Haiti, including political upheaval, gang violence, civil unrest, community violence, closures, shortages of necessities, and natural disasters. This fragility has had a detrimental impact on the learning and development of young children. To address these multifaceted risk factors facing children in Haiti, the Strong Beginnings initiative focused on leveraging the assets of the primary settings—lakay, lekol, legliz (home, school, and parish)—where young children learn and develop daily. Over four years and spread across six of the 10 departments in Haiti, Strong Beginnings has worked to activate this lakay-lekol-legliz (L3) system through interventions and approaches that were need-based, developed in partnership with communities, iteratively tested and improved, and gradually scaled.



Takeaways: Lessons From the L3

During the 4 years of implementation of Strong Beginnings, each component of the project was iteratively improved before scaling through [Rapid Evaluation Assessment and Learning Methodologies \(REALM\)](#), a form of implementation research. We also collected regular monitoring data to understand the teacher-led activities' fidelity to implementation. In addition, two impact evaluations were conducted to understand the impact of the SEL intervention for pre-primary and Grades 1 & 2 on children's SEL skills. We also used the Qualitative Impact protocol—double-blinded interviews with key stakeholders—to understand the changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices of stakeholders who were a part of the interventions implemented in the L3 ecosystem, and to understand to what they attribute the change. The full [report](#) synthesizes the learnings from all of the evaluations and learning exercises conducted over the past 4 years (March 2020 – February 2024) by triangulating findings from impact evaluations, secondary analysis of the formative and summative monitoring data, and qualitative studies. **Here is an overview of lessons learned:**



Recommendations and Next Steps

Over the four years of implementation of Strong Beginnings, several activities aimed at promoting [Whole Child Development](#) were designed, implemented, iterated, and scaled. At the end of the project, in addition to all the key learnings discussed in the previous sections, the project has created invaluable resources that include ECD curricula, primary-grade literacy and SEL curricula, training modules for teachers and parents, data collection systems, and distance learning modules; these resources can be used by other partners in Haiti and are ready to be tested as scaled interventions in future programming. The Strong Beginnings team offers the following recommendations to the sector:

- Implementation research allows for iterative development and testing of interventions, and it should be embedded across programming in Haiti
- The pre-primary SEL program has promise and should be scaled as a part of future programming
- The primary school SEL program has promise but needs a deeper approach focusing on improving school culture and safety
- Distance learning approaches specific to local contexts within Haiti need to be tested, and integrated into the L3 system where feasible
- Crucial next steps for the L3 approach would be streamlining programming to align messaging and leverage linkages across the home, school, and church systems, deepening complementary partnerships to focus on other elements of the WCD framework, such as food insecurity and nutrition—so that the systems strengthening is truly multi-faceted and considers everything a child needs to thrive and grow—and conducting studies to understand the efficacy of the L3 approach as a whole.

The four years of Strong Beginnings has helped the GC-DWC and our partners build momentum in creating and testing interventions to strengthen each component of the L3 system. Through impact evaluations, qualitative studies, and rigorous implementation research that have informed many of the learnings in this report, the project has not only succeeded in laying a strong foundation for systems strengthening in Haiti, but also a clear roadmap in terms of next steps and further learning.

For questions, please contact Shwetha Parvathy at sparvath@nd.edu or Dr. Nikhit D'Sa at nds@nd.edu

Read the full *Strong Beginnings for Children in Haiti 2020-2024 Learning Report* [here](#).

