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Background

Access to quality basic education remains one of the main development issues in Haiti, even though the government has pledged to strengthen public education and improve teacher training. Progress has been made in enrolling girls, but in 2018, more than half of school-age girls in Haiti's Central region did not complete more than 2.5 years of schooling. The main reasons for children (both girls and boys) abandoning school include: parents' inability to afford school fees; heavy household chores; lack of parental support for children at both school and home.

The Government of Haiti is committed to strengthening girls' education and improving opportunities for vocational training. The Ministry of Education has developed a 10-year policy and operational plan to foster collaboration across local, international and government partners geared toward advancing basic education in Haiti.

Project Summary

The purpose of CARE's new initiative is to set up **community-led and community-managed learning centers for girls ages 10-19 who either dropped out of school or have not had a chance to attend one**. The centers will be created and managed by already-established village saving and loan associations (VSLAs) in the target communities. Established centers will provide 9- to 12-month accelerated learning courses tailored to the realities of girls in Haiti and aligned with VSLA savings cycles. The centers will be equipped with learning curriculums based on CARE's groundbreaking program called *Strengthening Opportunities for Adolescents Resilience (SOAR)*. The centers will enroll primarily girls who were unable to either start or remain at school due to the extreme vulnerability of their parents. Participation in the centers will be based on merit among girls from extremely poor families who never got a chance to go to and/or remain in school, and will require a recommendation by a member of a founding VSLA.

Rather than simply replicating the SOAR program in Haiti, we aim to pilot an informal education model in which VSLA groups are the primary drivers and champions. Once established, the model would operate differently than a traditional SOAR program that is fully funded by project resources. Rather, the project will **build and connect local resources to set up an informal education that addresses the issues of education among disadvantaged girls in rural areas**.

Courses will be **tailored to local realities and needs** in order to prepare girls to be confident in their abilities to overcome the adversities and gender social-culture barriers in their societies, and therefore gain the basic skills needed to fulfill their dreams. Courses will be age-sensitive, with a strong emphasis on stimulating and nurturing entrepreneurial spirit among girls. Parents will play a crucial role in the project, which not only will help ensure that impact is sustainable, but also that child-parent relationships are strengthened at home and at school. The centers will support parents to build positive and supportive relationships with their children, while also **instilling a culture of promoting girls' education in the wider community**.

Courses will be organized in a series of two- to three-hour sessions three times a week. Each center will develop its own schedule based on community needs, with input from VSLA members. Centers will be managed by a committee set up by founding VSLAs in collaboration with their local leaders. Every center will aim to provide two courses per year for a maximum of 25 girls per class. The course will provide these girls a path to either transition them back to formal school or to vocational training to give them skills to start and grow a business.

Haiti

Project Snapshot

Name: Community-Managed Girls' Learning Centers

Location: 20 Rural Communities in central Haiti

Fundraising Period: July 2020 – June 2022

Duration: 24 Months (Dec 2021 – Dec 2023)

Funding Requested: \$80,000 (\$40,000 per year)

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With support from MD19 Lions, CARE will implement community-managed girls' centers in 15-20 communities in the Central region of Haiti. CARE has set up more than 300 VSLA groups in the target area, and 50% of these VSLAs are more than 2 years old, mobilizing 6,699 members – 80% women. These members have maintained a consistent pattern of saving and investment in microenterprises that have contributed to set up a voucher school feeding business with formal schools in their catchment areas. As an example of the community impact these groups can have, VSLAs – with support from the French Embassy in Haiti – set up a kitchen to provide food to school canteens. VSLA members have long expressed concerns about not being able to send their children, so they are motivated and eager to find innovative solutions that benefit their entire communities.

For this pilot, the project team will help interested VSLA groups develop business plans for their individual learning centers, with a clear plan for withdrawing CARE financial support to the management of the centers within a 36-month period. From Year 2, the project will intensify business management capacity-building the founding members of the centers to provide them with the required knowledge and skills to effectively manage the centers from a social business perspective.

The project will have three phases of 12 months each, starting in 2021 and ending in 2023. **The proposed MD19 Lions-funded project will support the initial two phases to complement and expand CARE's VSLA work to date to address a crucial issue of girls' education in rural impoverished communities.**

Key activities in the pilot project will include:

- **Mobilize communities.** The project will engage target communities to assess the barriers to girls' education, and mobilize community support for community-managed learning centers.
- **Sensitize VSLA groups on girls' education.** These meetings also will involve school management committees (SMCs) and parent-teachers associations.
- **Set up community-led girls' learning centers.** The project will work closely with interested VSLA groups to identify a location for the learning center, establish a good working relationship with SMCs, and develop a process for recruiting teachers and students, as well as establishing basic rules for the management of the centers.
- **Train VSLA members on financial literacy, business planning and quality monitoring.** The aim is to build capacity among VSLAs and their partner SMCs to manage centers, as well as monitor, report and facilitate dialogue on the quality of teaching and coaching.
- **Improve nutrition.** The project team will help develop action plans at each school for the production of vegetables to improve the availability of nutritious food in a sustainable way, using an environmental protection approach.

Expected outcomes include:

- Increased learning opportunities for children, especially girls, from extremely poor families who don't have access to formal school.
- Functional community-managed girls' centers that serve as a model for supporting girls' education.
- Improved parental guardianship and participation in their children's education.

Target beneficiaries

Over two years, direct beneficiaries will include **1,000-1,200 learners (80% girls)** who are enrolled in girls' learning centers; and **1,500-2,000 VSLA members** who go through capacity-building training, along with 200 people directly related to school management committees or parent-teacher associations.

Budget

Item	Total
Personnel	\$24,000
Girls' Centers	\$30,500
Trainings	\$9,500

Office Costs	\$5,600
CARE USA Technical and Administrative support (13% of gift total)	\$10,400
Total	\$80,000

Thank you for your Consideration!

In Haiti and more than 50 countries around the world, VSLAs have proven themselves to be successful, adaptable platforms for making transformative change in communities. On behalf of potential learners in rural communities in central Haiti, thank you for considering this proposal to fund a pilot project that can generate insights and field experience to inform a potentially much larger program.

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