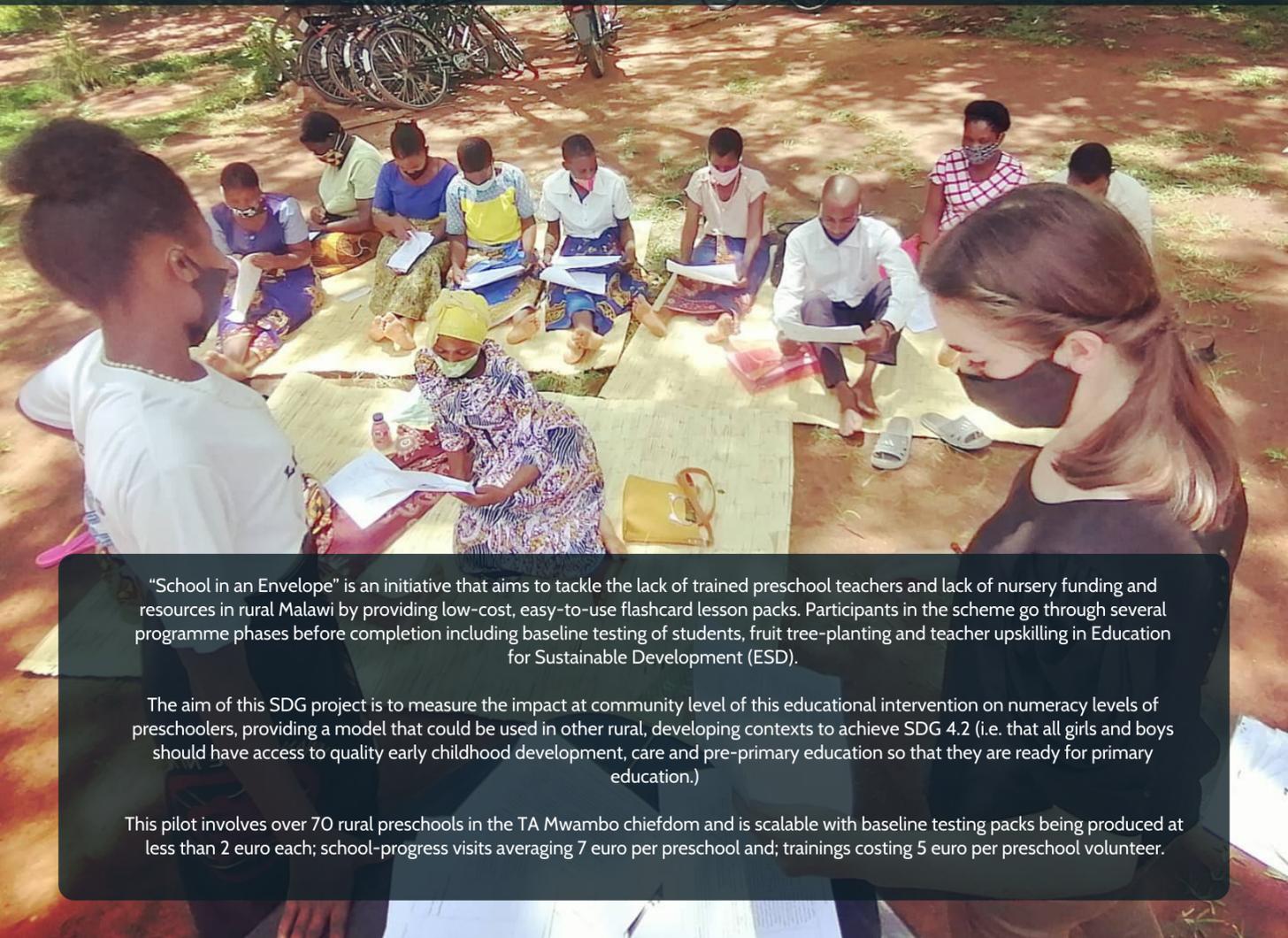


# School in an Envelope

"It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults."  
-Frederick Douglass



"School in an Envelope" is an initiative that aims to tackle the lack of trained preschool teachers and lack of nursery funding and resources in rural Malawi by providing low-cost, easy-to-use flashcard lesson packs. Participants in the scheme go through several programme phases before completion including baseline testing of students, fruit tree-planting and teacher upskilling in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The aim of this SDG project is to measure the impact at community level of this educational intervention on numeracy levels of preschoolers, providing a model that could be used in other rural, developing contexts to achieve SDG 4.2 (i.e. that all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.)

This pilot involves over 70 rural preschools in the TA Mwambo chiefdom and is scalable with baseline testing packs being produced at less than 2 euro each; school-progress visits averaging 7 euro per preschool and; trainings costing 5 euro per preschool volunteer.



## SDG Target 4.2

Target 4.2 states that by 2030, all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

The provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education is encouraged, to be delivered by well-trained educators, as well as that of early childhood development and care.

Source: [SDG Education 2030 \(2020\)](#).



## Mission 4.7

In addition to advocating for the achievement of SDG Target 4.7 (i.e. to ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development) at global, national, and local levels, Mission 4.7 also curates and creates relevant educational resources, push countries for greater investments in quality education, and identifies ways to train and support educators around the world. (Sachs, 2020)

As well as addressing the gap of preschool education in the Mission 4.7 plan, "School in an Envelope" implements Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) through its Lifesavers' Youth Club facilitators. Collaboration with the Vatican Youth Symposium would also be mutually beneficial as "School in an Envelope" currently operates under the auspices of Sitima Catholic Mission, Zomba and uses methods rooted in Catholic Social Teachings to teach leadership skills.



## Malawian Preschools

In Malawi, the participation rate in early childhood, organised learning (one year before the official primary entry age) has been reported nationally at only 44.5 percent of children aged 1-5 years (MoGCDSW, 2016). Funding, training and teacher shortages are still major challenges with high pupil/ teacher ratio especially in rural areas, ranging around 1:80 against a recommended 1:60. (MoFEPD, 2020)



## SDG 4 Nexus

Success in achieving SDG 4 is explicitly linked to six other SDGs including: "Good Health & Well-Being" and "Decent Work & Economic Growth".

SDG 4 is also "substantially linked" to SDG 1 ("No Poverty"), 2 ("Zero Hunger") and 10 ("Reduced Inequalities").

"School in an Envelope" aims to provide a platform from which local communities can begin to achieve the aforementioned targets by bridging the preschool education gap and giving Malawian youth their best possible educational start.



## Lifesavers' Youth Group

The Lifesavers' Youth Club consists of 8 local teenagers who help to implement all "School in an Envelope" programme stages; from pack preparation to training translations. These teenagers act as role-models for their peers and the wider community. They also participate in SDG Academy online training courses and deliver leadership training, complimenting Mission 4.7's objectives of ESD & GCED.



## SDG project methodology

This SDG project will involve desk research on existing preschool models for rural, developing communities; baseline assessments of students in each of the participating preschools; tree-planting; implementation of teacher training; and review of end-line assessments.

"School in an Envelope" is already approved for trial in 70 rural preschools by the local Ministry of Social Welfare and the local District Council granted the Lifesavers' Youth Club "essential service" status since their work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This project is currently supervised by Prof. Patrick Paul Walsh (UCD) & Prof. Jupiter Simbeye (University of Malawi, Zomba) to ensure its statistical significance.

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