Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

ACCELERATED EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

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Executive Summary: Accelerated Education in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda

March 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Accelerated Education and the Building Resilience in Conflict through Education (BRICE) project

In 2017, the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (INTPA) allocated significant funding to support multi-year education projects under their Building Resilience in Conflict through Education (BRICE) initiative. Through the BRICE programme, the European Union aims to improve quality education in pre-school and at primary and lower secondary levels for children in fragile and crisis-affected environments. BRICE is currently being implemented in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda from 2018 to 2021 and totals EUR 24 million.[1].

This report focuses on Accelerated Education (AE) in DRC, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, where BRICE funded partners provided AE to conflict-affected children. AE is a crucial intervention for over-age, out-of-school children and youth aged 10-18 years. Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) are flexible, age-appropriate programmes, run in an accelerated time frame, aiming to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth – particularly those who missed out on or had their education interrupted due to poverty, marginalisation, conflict and crisis[2].

Globally, accelerated education programmes are being employed more frequently to address this need and provide access to flexible education opportunities for large numbers of over-age out-of-school children and youth. However, in practice, there is an incredible diversity of programs labelled AEPs; to address this, the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) was established to strive for harmonisation and standardisation.

The AEWG is part of the Inter agency network for education in emergencies (INEE) with representation from UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, NRC, Plan, IRC, Save the Children, Education Development Centre, ECHO, and War Child Holland. The AEWG aims to strengthen accelerated education programming quality through a more harmonised approach aligned with the AEWG 10 Principles for Effective Practice[3].

ACCELERATED EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

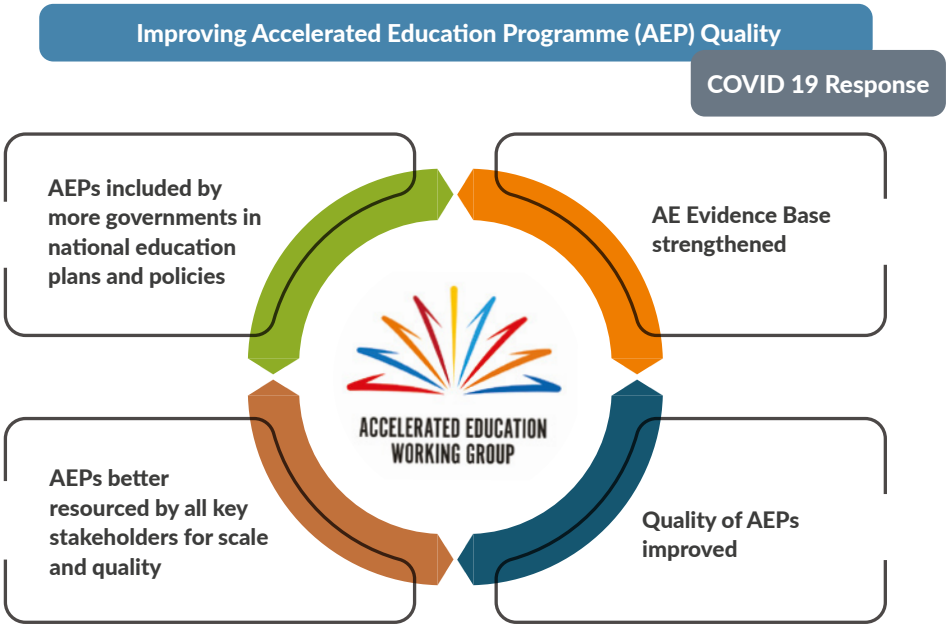
1 See https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/stories/giving-everyone-chance-access-education_en
2 See https://www.unhcr.org/accelerated-education-working-group.html
3 Ibid

Methodology of study

To understand the AE landscape in each BRiCE supported country, the AEWG decided to conduct an Education Situation Analysis (ESA). An ESA has synergies with the Political Economic Analysis (PEA)framework, which considers the structures, institutions, and agents that influence education in any given context. BRICE programme contexts are incredibly dynamic and affected by relationships between political and economic systems, institutions, agents, and associated interests. PEA provides a means of unpacking the political and economic interests and affinities that underpin and intersect with AE educational policies and interventions, from setting policy agendas to policy formulation to implementation, whilst recognising that these interactions do not occur in isolation from broader social issues, structures, and processes.

The full report explores AE in reference to the AEWG five areas of focus, which align with a PEA multi-level model: 1)AEPs included by more governments in national education plans and policies; 2)AE evidence base strengthened; 3) Quality of AEPs improved;4) AEPs better resourced by all key stakeholders for scale and quality and 5) Support to the COVID response[4]. These areas align with a PEA by examining structures, institutions, and agents or key stakeholders involved in Accelerated Education in the BRICE programme.

In 2021 the AEWG have four areas of focus plus COVID-19:



4 AEWG 2020 Year in Review: available at https://inee.org/resources/aewg-2020-year-review#:~:text=AEWG%202020%3A%20Year%20In%20Review%202020%20marked%20the,a%20year%20marked%20by%20global%20challenge%20and%20innovation.

Similar to most PEA tools and frameworks, this report covered multi-stage processes involving determining the focus and scope of analysis, desk research, stakeholder mapping and analysis, primary data collection in the form of key informant interviews and analysis, and reporting and dissemination.

The research included a desk review of policy documents, academic literature around PEA and ESAs, AE reviews, programmatic evaluations and assessments, including sources from South Sudan's Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP), Education statistics (UNESCO, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) country sitreps), Education Sector Plans (ESPs) and partners programmatic documentation was undertaken to inform understandings of contexts and sectors, key challenges, and knowledge gaps.

Due to Covid restrictions, the author was unable to travel to conduct data collection. Therefore, the primary field research involved interviews via zoom calls and an online survey with identified AE stakeholders. The consultations included education stakeholders in South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, DRC, and regional and global levels.

One of the limitations of this study has been the number of stakeholders that the author was able to consult within each context. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the author could not conduct primary data research with children, parents and communities, despite these groups being the most crucial education stakeholders in assessing the state of AE. Furthermore, national and local community-based AE actors are absent. To mitigate their absence, where possible, the author examined programmatic documentation, which included evaluations, assessments and reflections by children, parents and community groups supplied by the AE stakeholders. For the analysis, where possible, the author also applied an equity lens as identified by Shah and Lopes Cardozo[5], educational access and equity concerns concurrently require both an intersectional as well as the intersectoral lens, respectively acknowledging the intersectional, hybrid dimensions of opportunity and disadvantage (including geography, ethnicity, gender, religion).

Key Findings - South Sudan

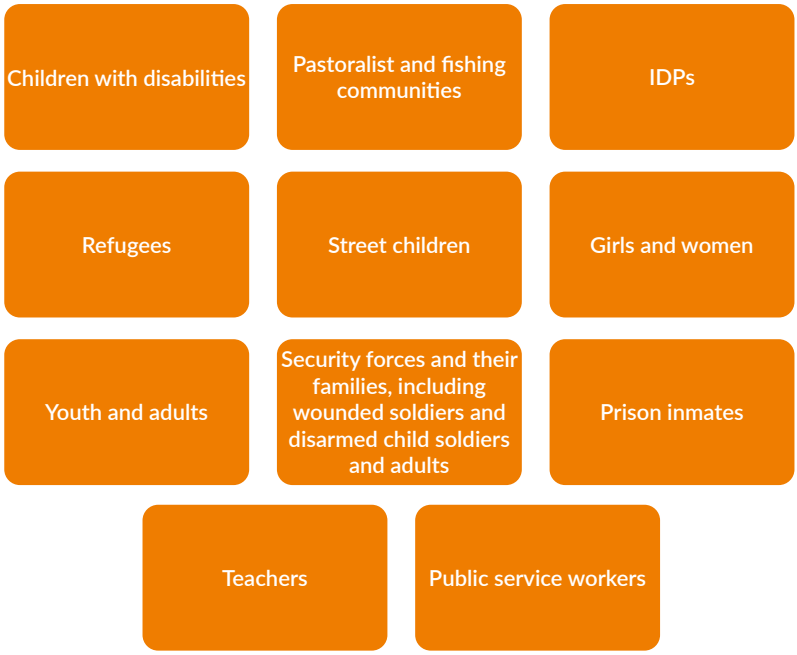
Key educational statistics

- In South Sudan, the Constitution and the Child Act provide free primary education, yet only 31.5% of children aged 6-14 were enrolled in school in 2019
- The rate of primary school completion sits at just 25.7%
- The Secondary Education enrolment rate of approximately 5%.

5 Shah, R., and M. Lopes Cardozo. 2019. "Achieving Educational Rights and Justice in Conflict-affected Contexts." *Education and Conflict Review* 2: 59–64.

South Sudan has a well-established AE system. As early as 2003, the then Secretariat of Education and its development partners decided to create an Alternative Education System (AES) strategy to address educational access in the emerging new country. Children and youth aged between 3 and 17 represent 44 per cent of South Sudan's population.

The Ministry of General Education and Instruction in South Sudan[6] has pledged to enrol all children of school-going age over the next five years in line with the implementation of the General Education Sector Plan (GESP), 2017-2022, which prioritises expanding access to children and adults who have not had the chance to go to school AE.



As the table above demonstrates, AES provision in South Sudan targets a wide and diverse range of learner profiles.

Girls are disproportionately out of school, with an overwhelming 76 per cent not attending school. In 2021, Covid-19 further exacerbated the number of children out of school, making AES, and accelerated education provision even more important to disenfranchised groups.

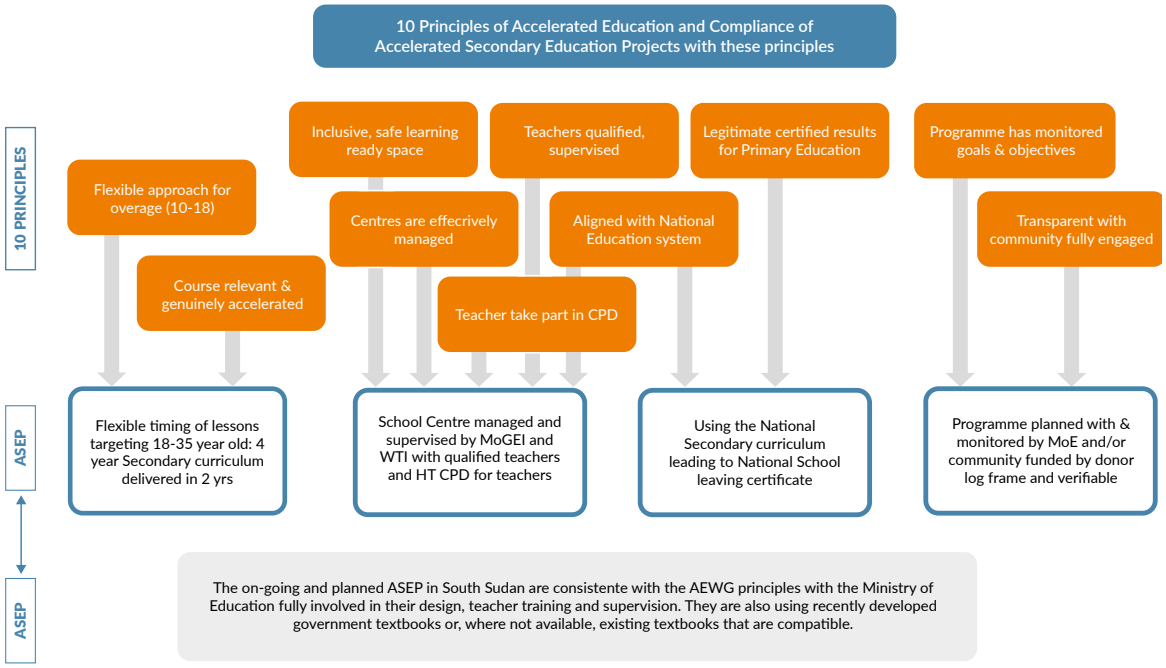
In South Sudan's AES, there are seven programmes. However, three stand out as explicitly providing a condensed, accelerated education.

- **Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP):** AEP in South Sudan is known as the ALP and condenses eight years of primary into four levels and is designed for children aged 12-18 (though youth in the armed forces up to age 30 are allowed to participate). ALP classes provide a pathway to enter (or re-enter) primary education or complete the Primary Certificate of Education (PCE). The ALP is fully developed with an ALP Training Manual, ALP Teachers Handbook and Level 1-4 textbooks in four subjects (language, maths, science, social studies).

6 SMoGEI is mandated to develop appropriate policies and strategies and to ensure that other related roles such as oversight and equity issues are dealt with appropriately. These tasks are to be delivered by the seven Directorates of the Ministry, one Secretariat, two centres and a Teachers' Development and Management Services and their respective departments through the stewardship of the Honourable Minister and Honourable Undersecretary. source mogei.com

- **Pastoralist Education Programme (PEP) :** In Sept 2017, the AES Directorate, with UNESCO and other partners, developed the 'Pastoral Education Program (PEP) Strategy Framework 2017-2022 in line with the GESP 2017-2022. As this population has not been included in any census, and no census of South Sudan has been conducted since 2008, only scant demographic information is available on these groups. Nonetheless, it is estimated that pastoralist communities represent approximately 67% of the total South Sudanese population and are designed to reach both children and adults in pastoral areas. Mobile schools, through the PEP, were introduced to South Sudan in 2011, and by 2013 there were an estimated 108 mobile pastoralist schools with an approximate total of between 4,000 and 12,000 students. PEP provides mobile primary education with teachers that travel with the community. PEP uses the formal primary curriculum intending to transition children to formal primary schools.[7]

- **Accelerated Secondary Education Programme for Teachers (ASEP):** In 2017, The Windle Trust and the Ministry of Education began collaborating on designing an AE programme that specifically targeted teachers who had finished primary P8 but had not completed secondary education. The programme has been designed to align with the AEWG 10 Principles of AE.



Key implementing partners: Ministry of Education and General Instruction(MoGEI), Save the Chidren, Plan International, AVSI, Oxfam IBIS, World Vision, UNESCO, UNHCR, LWF, ADRA, Christian Mission for Development (CMD), Nile Hope (NH) , Peace Corps Organisation - Sudan

7 Forcier consulting (2016) https://winrock.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ANNEX-4-RtL-PEP-Study-Report.pdf

Key Findings Uganda:

Key Education Statistics

- Nationally, only a third of all children in Uganda who start Primary level 1 will reach Primary level 7.
- Of those that reach P7, the completion rate is between 61- 69.6% and the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) has a pass rate of 89 %

In 2018, the Ugandan Government, working closely with UN agencies, NGOs, humanitarian and development partners and hosting communities – developed the multi-year Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (ERP). It is the first of its kind worldwide and it sets out how education stakeholders can provide children with a quality education, including AE. Consortium Funding from donors such as INTPA, ECW (amongst others), alongside partnerships and cross-agency coordination has resulted in harmonised and standardised approaches to AE in Uganda. The majority of AE programmes condense as follows:

Grade	AE Level
(P1 to P3) Primary Grades one to three	Level 1
(P4 and P5) Primary Grades four to five	Level 2
(P6 and P7) Primary Grades six to seven	Level 3

Uganda is also pioneering different AE models. For example, since 2020, Finn Church Aid (FCA), Windle Trust International and War Child Canada are piloting Secondary AE education in refugee-hosting areas.

Furthermore, an AE task team, led by the Ministry of Education, FCA and NRC and with suport of the AEWG has resulted in:

- The development of AE guidelines for Uganda. The approval process is in the second last stage of approval by the Ministry of Education and Sports. To ensure the Guidelines' development was based on globally agreed good practice, Uganda used the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) 10 Principles for Effective Practice as a foundation[8].

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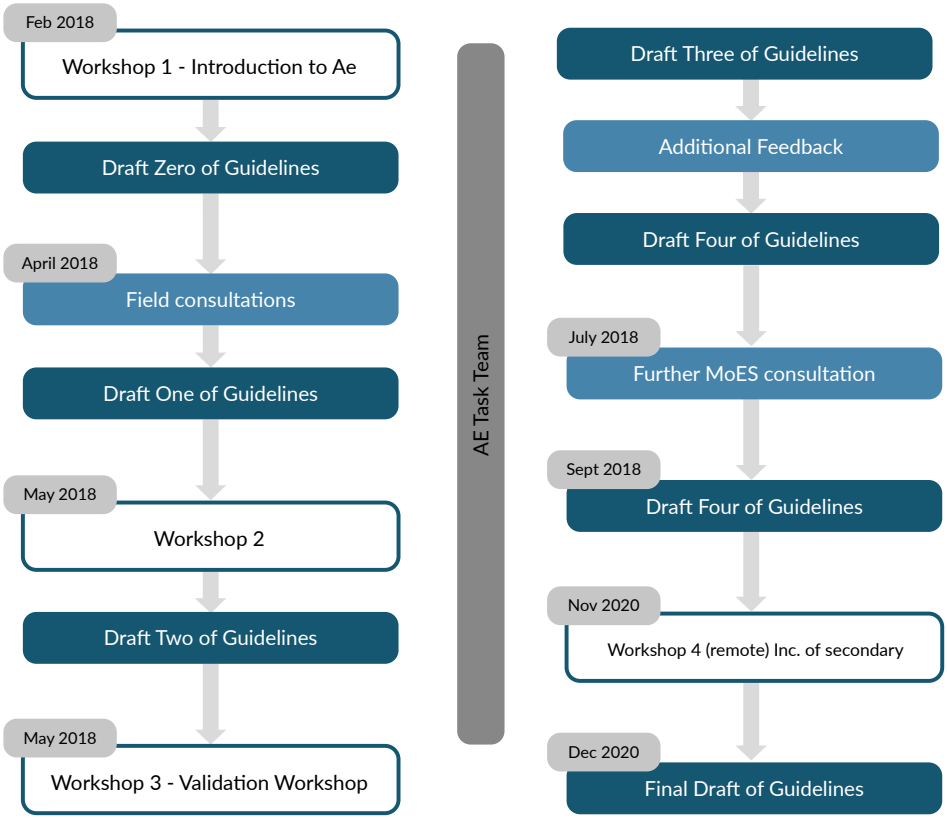
PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AE GUIDELINES



- An AE Curriculum developed in collaboration with the National Curriculum Development Centre (Primary & Lower Secondary.
- Secondary AE initiated and currently being piloted.
- Supporting transitional pathways – beginning with a mapping tool.
- Strengthening the referral process for child protection and other needs.
- Supporting appropriate placement (AE placement tool flowchart).
- Development of Primary AE specific textbooks.

Of the four countries, Uganda has the most data on AE. A baseline survey in 2021 highlighted that the transition rate from AE to formal education (primary and secondary) was meagre (32%, n=2,971) based on a survey conducted in three Arua, Yumbe and Moyo[9].

Most of the AE transitions were to primary schools (74%), followed by secondary schools (13%), AEP higher levels (12%) and vocational (1%). However, girls transitions from AE into secondary schools was particularly low, with only about 2 out of 10 learners making the next step on their education journey

Language may or may not affect the transition between levels, on the eligibility of L3 AEP students to sit the primary leaving exam, and transition to post AEP vocational or secondary school options. In July 2018, the British Council funded two studies exploring language and education in refugee-

9 Uganda Emergency Response Plan, June 2021. Not available online.

hosting areas. Over 19 different languages were spoken in some schools, indicating a complex multilingual language situation for teachers and learners to navigate. In addition, most refugee children were trying to learn a language different from the one they had used in their home country and, as a result, were having difficulties understanding[10]. The findings indicate more research and targetted language support is needed in AE to support students comprehension.

Key implementing partners: Ministry of Education , FCA, Windle Trust International, War Child Canada, Save the Chidren, AVSI, Oxfam IBIS , UNHCR, UNICEF, Geneva Global, NRC, LGIHE.

Key Findings - Tanzania:

Key education statistics

- Nationally, an estimated 2 million primary school children between the ages of 7 and 13 years are out-of-school .
- Almost 70 per cent of children aged 14–17 years are not enrolled in secondary education.
- Whilst secondary school enrolment in Tanzania has increased to 31.6 per cent; a mere 3.2 per cent are registered for the final two years of schooling.

Refugee students are not permitted to live outside of the camps. Furthermore, Tanzania's Refugee Policy supports the principle of using the country of origin curriculum[11], and refugee students have not benefited from accessing the nationally accredited AEP education provision. INGOs primarily implement formal Education in camps. Due to the high number of children and adolescents who have missed school due to displacement, in addition to formal education, over-aged and out-of-school children and youth of Burundian origin have access to an Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) operated by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in the Nduta and Mtendeli camps and by Save the Children in Nduta and Nyarugusu camps.

- It took on average one month (33 days) from when children arrived in the camp until they resumed school.
- Nearly 41% of all students had to repeat grades as a result of the displacement.

In 2021, NRC hired a consultancy team to lead the AEP Burundi curriculum development process. The consultancy team worked with NRC's education staff and many other stakeholders, from teachers, educational officials, and NRC's regional advisors, to develop an overview of what to include in the AEP curriculum.

As the table below outlines, the new AE programme is structured to enable two years of primary education to be condensed into one year. As a result, learners can complete their primary education cycle in three years instead of a six-year education cycle.

10 uganda_schools_language_for_resilience.pdf (britishcouncil.ug)
11 Joint Education Needs Assessment (2018) https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/67763.pdf

Aep Level	Grade	Subjects	Language of Instruction
Level 1	1 and 2	1. Kirundi 2. Mathematics 3. Human Sciences 4. French	Kirundi French
Level 2	3 and 4	1. Kirundi 2. Mathematics 3. Human Sciences	Kirundi
		4. French	French
		5. English	English
Level 3	5 and 6	1. Kirundi 2. Mathematics 3. Human Sciences 4. French	Kirundi French
		5. English	English
		6. Kiswahili	Kiswahili

Note: *Corresponds to Formation Civique et Humaine (ECH).

Save the Children and Norwegian Refugee Council are the main AE implementors. However IRC also provides bridging programmes in the the camp and learners transition into formal schools that are managed by IRC.

Key Findings - DRC:

- Nationwide, an estimated 3.5 million children of primary school age were out of school before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 44% of children start school above 6 years of age, which is the mandatory age of entry for primary school.
- In the North Kivu Province, adolescents were found to be twice as likely to have less than two years in school (three times as likely for poor females) compared to the national average.

Accelerated Education is firmly established within national policy frameworks, institutions and structures. The Ministry of Social Affairs/DIVAS manages all non-formal education, including the AE the programme, in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

However, despite several institutional frameworks and structures, departments and an evidence-base that AE works for out-of-school children, partners reported the AE is still underfunded and relies almost entirely on external funding.

- *The Programme National de Rattrapage Scolaire* (PNRS)/national school catch-up: The Primary school catch-up for out-of-school aged 9 to 14 is in *'Centre de Ratrappage Scolaire'* (CRS). In DRC, AE programmes are commonly referred to as CRS, translated as AE centres. CRS is run by the state, although often with extensive support from implementing partners.

In 2018, a team of INGO practitioners and Ministry of Education and Social Affairs staff took part in a regional AEWG meeting held in Uganda. Upon their return to DRC, the team set up several initiatives to improve coordination and education quality across AE/CRS. This included:

- The creation of the National AEWG (National AEWG). The Ministry of Social Affairs/DIVAS and MoE/EPST are the technical and institutional reference points for all AE/CRS activities at the provincial level.
- The cascading of the AE workshop training at the provincial level, specifically focusing on the AEWG's ten principles for Effective practice.
- The development of AE/CRS improvement/ Action Plans (per centre and at a national level), based on the AEWG quality checklist.[12]

The significant outputs and subsequent activities underline the massive role training, networking and knowledge sharing can play in driving sector-specific change at a national level.

Given the significant number of out of school children and youth in the DRC, accelerated education and other non-formal education pathways offer a route to return to learning. Despite numerous challenges and recurring displacement in conflict-affected areas of the country, the past year has seen AE programmes pivot, adapt and strengthen community involvement and ownership over learning. With added investment, AE could play a critical role in addressing education inequity in the DRC.

Key implementing partners include the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Save the Children, NRC, UNESCO, USAID, Matt MacDonald, FHI 360, as well as national, community and faith-based organisations

12 See https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/AEWG-Accelerated-Education-Checklist-2017-eng.pdf

COVID-19 and Programmatic adaptations in South Sudan, Uganda, DRC and Tanzania

Globally, COVID-19 has laid bare and exacerbated inequalities, discrimination and division. Before the pandemic, those most likely to be excluded from education were disadvantaged due to language, location, gender, and ethnicity. The pandemic has only increased the challenges of educating refugee children and youth. Principle 8 of the AEWG 10 Principles for Effective practice underscores the importance of Communities being engaged and accountable. Whilst there is a lack of data to assess the impact of Covid-19 on AE retention rates across all contexts, implementing partners credited teachers, parents and teachers associations and school management committees for continuing to support home-based learning initiatives.

Some examples include:

- In **Tanzania**, radio education programmes supported learners in continuing their education during school closures. Over 8,000 refugee children in grades 7, 8 and 9 from Burundi and Congolese children from grades 5, 6 and 8 benefitted from catch-up lessons broadcasted through Jesuit Refugee Services- Radio Kwizera (JRS-RK) with the support of UNICEF. In addition, NRC distributed home-learning kits, which included exercise and activity sheets. Over lockdown, learners received four home learning packages.

- In **Uganda**, schools remain closed until January 2022. Partners like FCA and Geneva Global initiated micro-class approaches where small groups of students met with a facilitator for around 2 hours twice a week with the consent of their parents. AVSI provided teachers with bicycles to travel to small learning pods, and teachers were provided with PSS and training to adapt to the new teaching methods and to be able to offer adequate support to learners. This included building the capacity of the teachers on how to provide PSS, particularly guidance and counselling, to learners and peers experiencing trauma.

- In **DRC**, implementing partners partnered directly with the *Direction des Programmes et Matériel Didactique* (DIPROMAD). Community radio stations and community organisations broadcast lessons three times per week in each local language for all grade levels. These 30-minute lessons were rebroadcast the following day or week, depending on the grade level using national radio, and 100 community radio stations. In Bukavu, a Village Savings and Credit Association-funded three teachers to distribute home learning packages and provide door-to-door coaching.

- Several partners, including Plan International and AVSI, developed home-based and distance-learning modalities during the covid lockdown period in **South Sudan**. Small learning groups facilitated by teachers were set up. ADRA recruited 22 educational mentors from Juba, who mentored the teachers and other education officials at the county level and introduced remedial teaching for the primary eight candidates to catch up on the content they had missed during the 6-month school closures and integrated the educational radio programs designed by the MoGEI.

Conclusion

AE provides a route for some of the most marginalised children and youth to continue their education. Notwithstanding, the ESA of AE in all four contexts highlights that there remain significant challenges in ensuring children and youth are retained and transition through the AEPs.

Sustainability issues of AEPs surfaced across the contexts. While the BRiCE offers much needed multi-year funding, governments also need to bridge funding gaps for resilience and sustainability. Having AE in national policies is crucial; however, if systems are to be strengthened, then AEP needs to be co-funded by national governments. This would also shift power from INGOs and consolidate the national educational institutions and civil society as the leading providers of education for marginalised learners.

Teachers and other education personnel should receive continuous support to ensure learning, pedagogy and materials are differentiated and support different learners' needs. Across all the contexts, partners noted a range of different teacher training and professional development approaches. For example, the launch of the AEWG Teacher training package in 2022 will offer a standardised package adapted to the local context. In addition, examples from South Sudan and Uganda emphasised how collaboration with teacher training institutions and teacher unions can maximise the number of teachers with accelerated learning pedagogical skills. Notwithstanding, the issue of low incentive payments due to national policies prohibiting refugees' payment means that teachers earn less than $2 a day in contexts like Tanzania. At a global level, perhaps it is time to review incentive payments, which are noted as demotivating for teachers working in incredibly challenging environments across contexts.

As partners in South Sudan and Uganda highlighted, AEPs no longer focus only on primary education. There is a demand and need for AE Secondary education. In South Sudan, an accelerated secondary education programme (ASEP) addresses the chronic shortage of teachers and women with secondary education certificates by offering ASEP to primary school and ALP teachers. In Uganda, the secondary AEP enables refugee learners to continue their education pathway. However, across the four BRiCE country contexts, only three partners, Windle Trust, War Child Canada, and FCA, implement Secondary AEP. Evidence suggests that this is a service in demand, and there is a need for more programmes that support young people transition from primary AEP. However, this can only happen with multi-year funding, co-ownership and accreditation by the national Government.

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In all contexts, there is a clear need to review, strengthen and support multilingual instruction as learning assessments indicate that whilst learners may have increased access to education, they are not necessarily reaching expected learning outcomes. Integrating multilingual instruction is challenging as the language of instruction is often intricately linked to the political context. Global evidence indicates the importance of mother-tongue and multilingual instruction in multi-ethnic and multilingual contexts however, decisions must be informed through a conflict-sensitive lens. More concerted efforts are needed to examine why many children are struggling to progress through AEPs; however, there is very little consideration on the part the language of instruction may play in the learning crisis.

Evidence of enrolment, retention, and transition between primary levels and post-primary opportunities was lacking across all contexts. Partners need to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation within AEP programmes. Donors should also consider building funds for tracer studies as there is a severe lack of information on post AEP pathways. Understanding how many students can continue their education or vocational training would provide insights into how AEPs should be structured.

Finally, Covid 19 significantly impacted the provision of education globally. AEPs adapted, with home learning packages, radio instruction and peer and community led learning circles emerging to continue education. Despite numerous challenges and recurring displacement in conflict-affected areas of the country, the past year has seen AE programmes pivot, adapt and strengthen community involvement and ownership over learning. These community centred learning models have highlighted how important it is for education programmes to be built with the communities they serve. Going forward, AEP implementors should continue to examine how AEPs can be strengthened by community engagement. The AEWG Pathways for the return to learning provides guidance for helping learners catch up and return to learning and can support AE stakeholders in deciding which type of programme is feasible. At the same time, it is important that organisations centre AEPs around Community Engagement. Meaningful engagement with communities would result in contextualised, 'bottoms up', AE programming. Collobarating with teachers , learners and communities could inform many of the steps and approaches to AE, which in turn could have a positive impact in mitigating learners being pushed out[13] of education.

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13 The turn 'push out' instead of 'drop-out ' is used increasingly by equity-centred education practitioners. This is to recognised that students are often forced to discontinue their studies for a multitude of reasons, and the onus on them leaving education should be refocused on the education provider.

Key Recommendations

For Governments

Prioritise embedding AE in national systems, institutions and budgets. Given the high number of out-of-school children and youth in many conflict-affected contexts, coupled with recurring displacement, school closures and delays in completing primary and secondary education, there is demonstrated evidence that AE offers a tangible way (for girls in particular) to complete their education.

Integrating AE into teacher training Teachers and other education personnel should receive continuous support to ensure learning, pedagogy and materials are differentiated and support different learners' needs. **Any comprehensive AEP training should be conflict-sensitive.** For example, in areas with language, ethnic and religious diversity, it is essential that culturally, socially, and linguistically relevant curricula are used. In multilingual settings, community-informed decisions will need to be made on the most appropriate primary language of instruction for the lower levels of AEP.

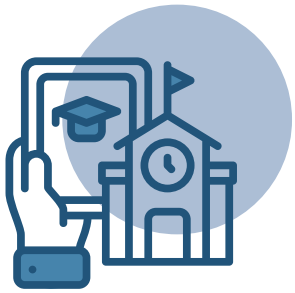
Institutional coordination and partnerships are critical to ensure AE programmes are harmonised and standardised. Ministries should seek to establish AE task teams or working groups in conjunction with broader education stakeholders.

For Donors

For the interim, multi-year funding for AEP is needed, alongside partnership approaches that advocate for AE to transition to being funded directly by the national Government. This would increase sustainability and reduce dependency on educational aid. However, given the scale of learners in need of AE, multi-year funding is needed for the interim. As in most contexts, it takes between three to four years for a learner to complete an entire primary AE cycle and, on average, two to three years for a learner to complete secondary AE. It is important to consider that funding cycles do not necessarily correlate with the traditional school calendar.

Fund Research and evidence to determine what works and where learners transition to. Given the high level of investment in AE programmes, more evidence is critically needed to find out the number of learners enrolled nationally and what is working. In addition, donors should encourage research that empowers children, young people, and communities. Whilst there has been a rise in reading and writing assessments in AEP in recent years, there is little qualitative data to unpack the challenges and success that children, teachers, and their families encounter when navigating AEPs. AE aims to support the most marginalised learners, however, implementers will lack the knowledge to make sound decisions about the most effective programmes to invest scarce time and resources without improved monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning practices and longitudinal research. As this report has highlighted, education inequity is a huge issue and disaggregated transition rates and tracer studies of students who have returned to the formal primary or secondary education system is lacking. Data and evidence could provide critical insight into what is working for different learner groups participating in AEPs, teachers, communities and in different locations.

For Implementors



An Equity-Centred approach to AE is drastically needed. This would entail gender-responsive approaches to education design, looking into the specific barriers that boys and girls face in AEP and seeking to address the issues, in addition to more comprehensive markers that can lead to exclusion from AE. For example, many AE learners are parents or caregivers.

Language bridging programmes are needed to ensure that the multilingual, multi-ethnic AEP cohorts have the language skills necessary to complete the AEP curriculum. AEP partners should conduct language mapping to determine the home languages represented within AEP centres and seek to recruit teachers and assistants who can support and nurture a multilingual classroom environment. In particular, there is a need for a language bridging programme for secondary AEP learners who were previously taught in another language. Without additional language support and intentional instruction, learners' educational trajectories are delayed even longer as they seek to gain fluency in the language of instruction.

Parental and caregiver engagement is vital. Covid-19 has highlighted the critical role that parents, caregivers and the wider community play to keep students learning. Implementing partners should work with schools to enhance PTA/SMC roles and responsibilities, providing training and sharing examples of best practices. Through engagement with community elders, women's groups, and key community influencers from the different displaced ethnic groups, agencies will understand the norms and values placed around girls' and boys' participation in education, resulting in more effective, participatory, and accountable responses.

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