

# NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL'S ACCELERATED EDUCATION RESPONSES

A META-EVALUATION

**NRC**

NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ABE</b>	Alternative Basic Education	<b>GER</b>	Gross enrolment rate
<b>AE</b>	Accelerated Education	<b>GORS</b>	Global Outcome Reporting System
<b>AEP</b>	Accelerated Education Programme	<b>ICLA</b>	Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance
<b>AEWG</b>	Inter-Agency Working Group on Accelerated Education	<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>AL</b>	Accelerated Learning	<b>INEE</b>	Inter-Agency Network for Education and Emergencies
<b>ALP</b>	Accelerated Learning Programme	<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>APES</b>	Accelerated Primary Education Support	<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>CEC</b>	Community Education Council	<b>PBEA</b>	UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Initiative
<b>CIDA</b>	Canadian International Development Agency	<b>PTA</b>	Parent-Teacher Associations
<b>CREPS</b>	Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools	<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>EGRA</b>	Early Grades Reading Assessment	<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committees
<b>EiE</b>	Education in Emergencies	<b>TEP</b>	Teachers Emergency Pack
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System	<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>FEM</b>	Flexible Education Models	<b>YEP</b>	Youth Education Pack



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For over 15 years, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has supported out of school children and youth to regain access to schooling by supporting Alternative Education (AE) programming. Such programming has been and continues to be implemented across a number of the countries and regions in which NRC is responding to humanitarian and early recovery situations. While individual AE programmes have been evaluated and assessed at various points, to date, there has not been an organisation-wide review of this activity.

This meta-evaluation is seen by NRC as an opportunity to share evidence-based best practices and lessons learned from the different phases of the humanitarian and early recovery response with other education actors. Additionally, the meta-evaluation aims to identify both positive and negative patterns in terms of the design, delivery, and assessment of impact of AE provision across a range of contexts and phases of the humanitarian responses. Findings from this meta-evaluation will help strengthen NRC's capacity to design, deliver and evaluate quality AE programmes and responses. It is also aimed to fill some critical gaps in the AE evidence base to date.

## KEY FINDINGS

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- Overall, NRC's AE programmes have made a clear contribution in providing access to education for populations who may otherwise not have such opportunity. Most programmes had either met or exceeded the expected number of out of school beneficiaries served through AE provision.
- A success of many of NRC's AEPs has been ensuring that close to 50% of direct beneficiaries are females, often in contexts where achievement of this gender equity target is challenging. This has been achieved through a careful consideration of gender inclusive practices at all stages of programme design and delivery. For example, many programmes work extensively with the community to socialise messages on the importance of girls attending school. NRC also actively advocates for the increased presence and visibility of female personnel in its programmes. Attention is also given to ensuring that separate water and sanitation facilities for female learners are available, and sanitary packs are provided to girls in schools.
- NRC has also paid particular attention to ensuring relevance to particular subgroups of beneficiaries, such as young mothers and ethnic minority students, and adapted programming activity accordingly to be as inclusive and relevant as possible.
- An area of challenge for many AE programmes is to ensure that the beneficiaries served are indeed the most vulnerable. While most programmes specify their target populations as displaced children between the ages of 9-14, evidence from a number of evaluations would suggest that children either older or younger than this age range, and not holding IDP or refugee status, do end up participating in programmes. In some circumstances this is due to the lack of appropriate documentation to discern these characteristics at the time of the enrolment, but in other cases it has been found that parents and community members will misidentify their children because of the fact that NRC's programmes are perceived to be of better quality and free of cost.
- Generally speaking, children with physical disabilities comprise a very small proportion of those participating in NRC's AE programming. Often, identifying and supporting these learners requires extra resourcing and support, and extensive community mobilisation efforts, which not all programmes have made concerted efforts into doing.
- In a similar vein, while most programmes acknowledge that many of the children in their programmes have psychosocial needs, mechanisms of support within the confines of NRC's AEPs remain fairly limited to address such needs. Interviews with programme staff suggested more could and should be done to support teachers to help students to address psychosocial needs within NRC's AEPs through a combination of increased training to teachers, improved guidance on simple techniques to assist with the symptoms of trauma, and greater monitoring of the level of need which exists amongst beneficiaries.

- NRC programming was found to be conflict-sensitive in a number of ways. Consideration is given to the relationship between host and displaced communities, and to alleviate any tensions, many AEPs allow for the enrolment of a small proportion of host community children in the programme. Additionally, to avoid issues of stigmatisation which AEP graduates might face upon re-entry into the formal schooling system, many programmes actively support and engage with host community schools, students and teachers.
- There is evidence to demonstrate that NRC's AE programming has afforded its beneficiaries pathways for reintegration into the formal schooling system. However, they have varying rates of efficiency in terms of numbers of students initially enrolling compared to those who end up reintegrating due to drop out or failure to sit and/or pass the transition examination to the formal system. Typically this is greater in Alternative Basic Education (ABE) programmes where children remain outside the formal education system for up to four years before transiting. Often when learners do not perform at expected levels on programme specific or national examinations, they are either retained and supported within the AEPs for an additional period, or offered the option to transfer to the formal schooling system at a lower grade level. Also, many learners who do complete NRC's AEPs choose not to transit into the formal system for a number of different factors including concerns of stigmatisation, early marriage, the costs of schooling, or the need to support ones' family.
- For students who do reintegrate into the formal school system, the hidden and actual costs of schooling can preclude them from continuing. While this has been recognised as an important challenge and concern for NRC, programmes have varied in how they respond to this issue. For some it has meant expanding the provision of AE programming to the end of a cycle of basic education. For others, it has meant providing direct financial support to the families of past AE beneficiaries for a finite period of time. Other programmes have worked extensively with the schools that students return into, or directly advocated with the Ministry of Education to ensure that such costs do not become a barrier for former AEP students to succeed. More recently, programmes such as those in DR Congo and Côte d'Ivoire have involved the caregivers of AE beneficiaries in income generation and/or livelihood opportunities in hopes that it will better enable them to continue sending their children to school.
- A real strength and success of NRC's approach has been the active mobilisation of the wider community in support of its AE programming. Communities have played an important role in reducing issues of stigmatisation of overaged and female learners to access education, assisting in the operation and oversight of programming, and supporting the recruitment, selection and retention of learners and teachers. They have also assisted with the construction and/or maintenance of educational facilities for beneficiaries.



- NRC has endeavoured to ensure that (1) the recruitment and selection process for teachers is done in a transparent way and as much as possible, harmonised with the current practices of government and/or other educational partners; and (2) that teachers and other educational personnel receive periodic, contextualised and needs-focused training to deliver the AE curriculum and provide educational experiences that are protective and of quality. This has been achieved to varying rates of success across the programmes reviewed. Programmes that were most effective in the latter aim were ones that placed heavy emphasis on ongoing classroom-based support through microteaching opportunities, classroom observations, regular supervision, and a schedule of ongoing workshops and refresher courses.
- NRC programmes have worked to varying degrees on capacity development with teachers, head teachers, school inspectors, and regional educational authorities in the formal education setting. This engagement has been an important aspect of reducing stigmatisation and ‘culture shock’ for AE students who do reintegrate, ensuring greater ownership and understanding of AE principles and practices within the formal education system, and supporting sustainability of NRC’s efforts.
- NRC has engaged extensively, and worked effectively with the formal education sector and other humanitarian and development actors in the contexts it is offering AE provision within. This has included: (1) developing and/or refining a curriculum that is seen to align itself with the national curricula, adhere to minimum learning competencies, and cover key learning areas; (2) establishing or reforming a set of guidelines for AE programming; (3) agreeing on transition examinations/assessment processes to allow AE learners to reintegrate into the formal education system and recognise learning completed through NRC’s programmes; and (4) ensuring a coordinated response to AE provision in situations where multiple actors are supporting such efforts.
- NRC has acted as an important advocate and promoter of AE provision globally. The organisation’s long-standing engagement with AE provision in many of the contexts it has or continues to work within has ensured that AE programmes and practices have become institutionalised and supported by local, regional and national actors.
- Most of NRC’s programming to date would appear to work by drawing on traits of child-centred methodology to deliver an abbreviated curriculum in a more effective way. Lacking is evidence of students learning in a deeper, more engaged fashion in line with accelerated learning principles.
- Across NRC’s AE programming there is evidence to suggest that monitoring and evaluation activities have served a formative purpose in the refinement and improvement of programme delivery. Monitoring data, specifically that on student retention, drop out and reintegration, has been used to better understand factors pushing students out of school and allowing programmes to respond in kind. However, a significant knowledge gap exists in many programmes when it comes to reintegration trajectories of former AEP students.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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- 1 Within a broader umbrella of inclusive education that is also conscious of gender-based dynamics of participation/exclusion, and other social determinates that influences children's access to schooling, NRC could develop a process for selecting AE beneficiaries against clear vulnerability criteria. These criteria should be context specific and grounded in evidence (based on a needs assessment) of why these populations are the most vulnerable and in need of AE provision.
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- 2 NRC's AE programmes should be designed and funded to consider not only the immediate learning gaps of learners, but also the factors that have pushed learners out of schooling or excluded them from participating from schooling in the first place. Doing so will push AE provision into an activity that increasingly straddles the humanitarian-development nexus.
    - a. NRC may need to situate AE provision within a more integrated response that addresses the needs of displaced and conflict-affected communities through approaches that bring together the core competencies of the organisation. Cross competence synergies that have long existed between Education and Shelter in school construction projects may need to increasingly be extended to include Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance and Food Security core competences as well.
    - b. Synergies between NRC activity and longer-term programming of development-focused actors may need to occur around the shared goal of supporting children to stay in school.
    - c. Thought will need to be given to forms of support for AE graduates, households and school systems that does not foster a culture of dependency, but rather a shared responsibility for supporting every child's right to an accessible education of quality.
- 
- 3 Teacher professional development should be an ongoing commitment and priority of all of NRC's AE provision and should be resourced appropriately.
    - a. Effective pre-service and in-service provision should be based on a thorough analysis of teachers' needs, and contextualised to their classrooms and environments of practice.
    - b. Priority should be given to supporting regular in-service training and support mechanisms such as micro teaching opportunities, structured and informal observations of practice, and demonstration lessons in the classroom. Focus should be given to developing teachers as reflective practitioners through such activity.
    - c. Where possible, supervisions and training opportunities at the school level should be facilitated by skilled, trained local teachers with ongoing support from NRC.
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- 4 NRC should continue to consider and advocate for pathways for the 'unqualified' teachers it employs into its programme to enter into the formal school system through certification, recognised training, and coordination with national training institutes and the Ministry of Education. A key component of the sustainability of NRC's efforts will be the continued presence of the educators it has worked with in the formal schooling structure.

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5 Programmes should better consider to what degree they might move beyond a narrow conception of learner-centred pedagogy to more fully incorporate accelerated learning principles into their programmes – specifically in the guidance provided to teachers, the texts utilised, the nature of the curriculum (subject-specific versus thematically-focused), and the internal assessment regimes utilised. This will require stronger knowledge, on the part of programme managers and team, about accelerated learning principles, and how they have been successfully employed in NRC’s programmes to date.

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6 While supporting local integration and durable solutions is a part of NRC’s current theory of change for AE provision, the important contributions which its programming makes to peacebuilding (as identified by UNICEF’s Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) initiative) are somewhat ignored. Particularly, there is strong evidence to suggest AE programming is contributing to processes of reconciliation, as well as redistributing educational opportunity and recognising and representing the unique needs of marginalised communities through its activities. There is scope to make such ambitions more explicit in the long-term outcomes for AE programming, and better capture what NRC already does.

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7 As NRC moves as an organisation to collect and report on AEP outcomes in a more standardised fashion through the standardised indicators included in the Global Output and Outcome Reporting System, greater opportunities exist for programmes to use such data in a formative way to understand how well its programmes are supporting retention within and across particular cycles, as well as ensuring effective transition to the formal education system. For example, performance of students on end of programme examinations serves as a useful barometer on the quality of the AE programming in terms of appropriately preparing students for re-entry. NRC’s M&E guidance may need to better ensure that data that is being collected is then being interpreted, analysed and understood in consistent ways. At a global level, the systematic collation and synthesis of such data should help NRC to understand how well its AE programming delivers against the theory of change, and where greater attention and effort may need to be given moving forward.

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8 Data on the retention and learning outcomes of AE beneficiaries should be used more regularly as an advocacy tool with local and national stakeholders. By benchmarking such data to national/regional data from the formal education system, it could help show the ‘added value’ of AE provision to the efficiency of the education system, as well as the strength and quality of AE provision in terms of equivalency of learning. The latter issue is of great importance given the stigma and negative connotation thrust on overage learners in many of the contexts that NRC operates in.

# 1

# BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

## BACKGROUND

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Refugee and internally displaced children and youth frequently miss substantial amounts of schooling. With each missed semester or school year there is a greater risk that they will be unable to return to formal education. Recent data from UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report suggest that more than half of the out of school children globally are those living in conflict-affected regions of the world, many of them displaced peoples.

Responding to the needs of these children has increasingly led governments and agencies to explore the possibility of providing Accelerated Education (AE) opportunities to these groups. **Accelerated education programmes (AEP)** are flexible age-appropriate programmes that promote access to education in an accelerated time-frame for disadvantaged groups, over-age out-of-school children and youth who missed out or had their education interrupted due to poverty, violence, conflict, and crisis. The goal of AEPs are to provide these learners with equivalent certified competencies as in the formal system, in an accelerated timeframe, with learners transitioning to mainstream education at some intermediary point, or completing an entire primary cycle within the programme.<sup>1</sup>

While there is widespread agreement on the need for such programming among agencies and governments, there is little significant documentation on the impact of such programming. Globally, there is insufficient documentation to provide guidance, standards and indicators for efficient programme establishment and continuity. In practice this results in AE responses taking different forms in a number of countries, and even within countries.

Recently work done by Inter-Agency Network for Education and Emergencies (INEE) and the Inter-Agency Working Group on Accelerated Education (AEWG) has focused on developing a set of shared language about the various aspects of accelerated education provision.<sup>2</sup> Some key terms, used throughout this report, are adapted from these agreed to definitions. Specifically in this report:

➔ **BRIDGING PROGRAMMES** refer to short-term targeted interventions to facilitate out-of-school children and youth's re-entry into the education system. The intervention can take various forms such as language acquisition and/ or other existing differences between home and host education curricula and systems.

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<sup>1</sup> This definition is taken from the INEE Education in Emergencies (EiE) Term Bank (link in footnote below)

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<sup>2</sup> All definitions come from the INEE EiE Term Bank (<http://toolkit.ineesite.org/term-bank/en/terms/>)



➔ **CATCH-UP PROGRAMMES** refer to short to (in some cases medium term) transitional education activities that focus on the resumption of formal education for children and youth who missed out or had their education interrupted. Catch-up programmes ensure that key learning components are acquired to support re-entry to the formal system.

➔ **ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION (ABE)** programmes refer to longer-term educational programmes that enable learners to complete a full course of basic education within the programme, often in an accelerated fashion.

➔ **ACCELERATED LEARNING** is a pedagogical approach based on principles and practices of teaching and learning that result in better, deeper learning and more rapid acquisition of education content.

NRC has over 15 years of experience supporting the design and delivery of AE responses.<sup>3</sup> Data from NRC's Global Outcome Reporting System (GORS) identifies that in 2014, nearly 40% of NRC beneficiaries within its Education Core Competence<sup>4</sup> were enrolled in some form of AE response. This makes AE one of the more significant activities within NRC's broader education portfolio.<sup>5</sup> The majority of NRC countries of operation have been or are currently involved in AE responses that have spanned bridging, catch-up (sometimes called Teacher Emergency Pack or TEP in some NRC contexts) and ABE.

<sup>3</sup> Original countries include TEP in Angola and Burundi, CREPS in Sierra Leone, ALP Liberia, and later Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo and Uganda. More recently AE programmes have been introduced in South Sudan, Somalia (Somaliland, SC, Puntland), Kenya, Ethiopia, Mali and Zimbabwe. There is new interest in Jordan and Lebanon

<sup>4</sup> The term Core Competency is used within NRC to refer to sectoral area of focus. There are six Core Competences within NRC – Education, Food Security, Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA), Shelter and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Camp Management (CM).

<sup>5</sup> Other NRC activities within education include Rapid Education Responses in Emergencies, Youth Education, Training and Participation, and Teacher Training and Professional Development

Some of NRC's AE responses have also included adult education.<sup>6</sup>

At present, NRC is externally engaged with the Inter-Agency Working Group on Accelerated Education (AEWG), providing a platform on which NRC can strengthen its role as a leading actor on AE and share evidence-based best practices and lessons learned from the different phases of the humanitarian response with other education actors. Additionally, with adoption of the *One Million-Learning in Emergencies Initiative*, NRC has signalled its intent to strengthen and expand AE provision to support the objectives of providing and prioritising education as part of an emergency response, and ensuring that conflict-affected children have access and complete a primary cycle in formal schools or at equivalent non-formal school based settings in schools.

## EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND KEY QUESTIONS EXPLORED

This meta-evaluation is seen by NRC as an opportunity to share evidence-based best practices and lessons learned from AE provision delivered over the past 15 years with other education, development and humanitarian actors. Additionally, the meta-evaluation aims to identify both positive and negative patterns in terms of the design, delivery, and assessment of impact of AE provision across a range of contexts and within different phases of the humanitarian and early recovery period. Through this exercise, the hope is that it will strengthen NRC's capacity to design, deliver and evaluate quality AE programmes and responses. It is also aimed to fill some critical gaps in the AE evidence base where to date, there remains little detailed information about how programmes are structured or implemented, information on medium to long-term impacts of initiatives remains scant, and where lessons learned and best practices from implementation are rarely compiled and disseminated for use by other education actors.

<sup>6</sup> Original countries include Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and later Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC and Uganda. More recently AE programmes have been introduced in Colombia, South Sudan, Somaliland, Kenya, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Mali and Zimbabwe.

Specifically, the Terms of Reference identified several key objectives behind this evaluation including:

- 1 Strengthen the AE programme framework within NRC by highlighting key positive and negative patterns inherent in AE provision to date, and identify important lessons learned to date from programme activity;
- 2 Better understand the structure of AEPs across NRC (past and present) and the added value that flexible approaches to AE provision have offered particular contexts;
- 3 Directly contribute to a number of current and planned products including internally, a Guidance Note of Recommendations to support the future design and delivery of AE provision, and the M&E framework for AE; as well as a series of external products such as a position paper/policy brief on AE provision and a Handbook and Training Package for NRC field practitioners and the wider education community.

To do so, the Terms of Reference specified a number of questions for the meta-evaluation to explore. These include:

### QUESTION 1:

**To what extent have NRC's approaches to the design, implementation and structure of all forms of AE ensured education for all children and youth and stayed relevant to changing contexts?**

- ➔ How have flexible approaches supported continuity of education? What has been the added value of these approaches?
- ➔ To what extent have these approaches been inclusive?

## QUESTION 2:

**What evidence is there of impact in the medium and long-term for direct and indirect beneficiaries, as well as on other education providers?**

- What is the strength of evidence with regards to medium to long-term impacts?
- Is there a need to reframe the AE theory of change to capture actual impacts or to focus on outcome reporting with individual initiatives?

## QUESTION 3:

**To what degree does M&E serve a formative purpose for country programmes and NRC global AE design purposes and what are the ways that this might be strengthened?**

- How well are mistakes highlighted in past evaluations?
- How well do M&E systems capture intended/unintended outcomes?

As work commenced on the evaluation, it became clear that there were other areas of interest to NRC. These included questions regarding the strength of evidence in regards to the incorporation of accelerated learning principles into programme design and delivery, the degree to which programmes engage with the formal education system to ensure sustainability/ownership and the challenges and opportunities associated with doing so, the effectiveness of engagement with parents and other community members, and approaches to the recruitment, training and ongoing professional support of teachers working within NRC's AEPs. As a result of further discussion with the Evaluation Steering Committee, it was agreed that these issues would also be explored within the confines of this evaluation and are incorporated as part of the response to the first two evaluation questions noted above.

The report is structured to respond to these questions, not as discrete chapters, but rather under key thematic areas and issues.

## METHODOLOGY

The meta-evaluation was conducted in two major phases. The first involved an extensive desk review of existing NRC evaluations and project documentation that were AE specific and had been made available to the Education Advisors in Oslo from country programmes. Evaluations, project documentation and local monitoring data were made available from 16 current or prior countries/regions where NRC had supported AE provision since 2000. A full summary of the documentation reviewed is included in Appendix 2.

The quality and utility of this documentation varied greatly. Of greatest usefulness to this meta-evaluation were project proposals,<sup>7</sup> and independent evaluations and tracer studies conducted at various stages in the programme life.

Through this desk review, an analytical framework (See Table 1 on following page) was produced which sought to map information in these documents against the evaluation questions. The initial evaluation questions were refined for this exercise to explore the key evaluation questions in more than one domain and ensure that important patterns of convergence and divergence could be identified amongst NRC AE Programming globally. The way in which the evaluation questions were responded to within the headings of the analytical framework is noted in Table 1 below.

From the key headings of the analytical framework, a short discussion document was developed to highlight key themes, issues and tensions such as the challenges that programmes had faced in measuring medium to long-term impact, but also when this was explored, what constraints programmes faced in responding to the issues identified. Similarly, it was found that in many programmes, being flexible and responding to context was an uneasy partner with 'good practice' in AE provision, specifically linking to existing government systems and practices. The completion of this exercise helped to then focus the selection of case study AEPs for further exploration in the

<sup>7</sup> Particularly proposals for Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs where there is a lesson learned section as part of the template.

**Table 1:** Mapping of evaluation questions against thematic areas

KEY EVALUATION QUESTION	EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES	EVIDENCE OF ALL PRINCIPLES IN PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DELIVERY	EVIDENCE OF GOOD PRACTICE	EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT	EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS	STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING
Approaches staying relevant to changing contexts?	✓			✓		
Approaches supporting continuity of education?	✓			✓	✓	
Added value of approach?	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Is theory of change for AE the right one?	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Strength of evidence for medium to long term impacts					✓	✓
Mistakes highlighted?						✓
M&E capturing intended/unintended consequences	✓					✓

second stage of the meta- evaluation. It was agreed that AE provision in Somalia (with a focus on differences between the three regions of South-Central Somalia, Puntland, and Somaliland and the reasons why), Colombia (due to its innovative pedagogical models and strong evidence of systematisation of AE provision into provincial and national educational policies), and DR Congo (due to the longevity of the programme and recent innovations that were prompted by evaluations of the programme).

During the second stage of the evaluation, key informant interviews<sup>8</sup> by were carried out with those responsible<sup>9</sup> for the design, delivery and assessment of impact of NRC’s AEPs in country, and additional programme documentation was sought and obtained by the evaluator. In total eight individuals in programme teams were interviewed – two in DR Congo, two in South

Central Somalia, one in Puntland, one in Somaliland, and one in Colombia – as well as three individuals from NRC Oslo to provide greater insight into the shifting nature of NRC’s AE responses globally.

## LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted almost exclusively as a desk-based review. It relied extensively on information that was provided by the education advisors in Oslo through the respective programme teams in country. It quickly became evident that the decentralised nature of operations within NRC meant that knowledge on individual programmes was very much held in country, and that gaps in documentation and information would need to be filled directly by chasing up programme teams. Not all teams were able to respond to requests for

<sup>8</sup> Interviews were conducted virtually rather than face to face.

<sup>9</sup> Typically this was either the Programme Manager and/or Programme Coordinator of the specific AE programme.





information in a timely fashion, and it is acknowledged that what is presented in this report may not present the most up to date information from each programme, nor may it be exhaustive of all evaluations and reports produced within that country to date. Similarly, for AE responses that have ended (such as those in Angola and Liberia), and key personnel moved on to other organisations or activities, the conclusions made on these responses are only as good the quality and depth of the information available through documentation about them.

Additionally, due to the reliance on secondary rather than primary data for much of the analyses in this evaluation, the reliability and accuracy of some of the analyses conducted, or the basis on which some claims in evaluation reports have been made, cannot be independently verified. Additionally, the absence of primary data on the longer-term impacts for many AE responses limits this evaluation's ability to draw broad conclusions on the efficacy of AE provision in the medium to long-term. Initially, this desk review was to be one of several stages of a more systematic evaluation of

NRC's AE programming. As such, the evaluation attempts to identify later in the report some areas where the collection and analyses of new primary data may be necessitated.

Finally, the quality of past evaluations varied greatly in their depth and rigour of analyses. It became evident that as monitoring and evaluation practices have become more standardised and systematised within NRC, so too have the quality of reports and the evidence-base feeding into conclusions made within them.

# 2

# RELEVANCE AND IMPACTS OF NRC'S AE PROGRAMMING TO DATE

## INTRODUCTION

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This section combines the first two evaluation questions regarding the relevance and impact of NRC AE programming to date, both at an immediate outcome level and in the longer-term horizon following reintegration into the formal schooling system or society at large. It also explores some of the key factors – such as the effective identification and recruitment of beneficiaries, the incorporation of accelerated learning principles into programme design and delivery, the recruitment, training and support of AE teachers and other involved education personnel, mechanisms of integration with the formal schooling structure, and approaches to community mobilisation – which play a role in influencing the outcomes noted.

## PROVIDING ACCESS TO OUT OF SCHOOL POPULATIONS

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Strong evidence exists across all of NRC's AE programmes that its activities to date have provided access to education for populations who may otherwise not have such opportunity. Most programmes had either met or exceeded the expected number of out of school beneficiaries served through AE provision. Oftentimes the target populations for such programming were either children or youth who were overaged and unable to (re) enrol in the formal schooling system, or

children affected by displacement who did not have access to the formal schooling system otherwise within their host communities. The majority of programmes served a population of children and youth between 9-14 years old, in line with NRC's current Education Programme Policy.<sup>10</sup>

## SUPPORTING FEMALE LEARNERS

NRC's AEPs have to date worked hard to identify and provide access to those most marginalised within the communities they serve. In many programmes this has meant giving particular attention to the needs of female learners who are more likely to be out of school, particularly in contexts of displacement. A strong success of many of NRC's AEPs has been ensuring that close to 50% of direct beneficiaries are females. When compared to rates of female participation in formal schooling systems in many of these countries, the ability of achieving gender parity signals even greater success. In Somaliland and Puntland for example, primary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for girls in 2010/11 was approximately 38%. Through the AEPs in both regions of Somalia, a 2011 evaluation suggests that NRC was able to greatly increase the GER of girls regionally – by at least 10% if not more – and reduce the disparities in GER between male and female learners in both regions.

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<sup>10</sup> The notable exception to this was Colombia, where previously NRC had also supported AE provision for adult populations.

The success of NRC in improving access to education for girls is a product of several factors. Many AEPs work extensively with the community to socialise messages on the importance of girls attending school. For example, during the programme design phase, NRC programme teams work extensively with the community to understand the access-related barriers for female learners in particular. Programmes are then either designed or refined to take into account the specific needs of female learners. Teams also work extensively with community leaders and religious leaders (often through community education councils or PTAs) to change existing community perceptions regarding the acceptability of girls, particularly overaged ones, attending school. Several programmes (i.e. Somalia, Pakistan, DR Congo) have indicated that the mobilisation and support of community leaders behind such a message has been instrumental to increasing female participation in the programme. When these programmes engage communities in the recruitment and selection of learners for AE provision, clear guidance is given to them to ensure that as much as possible, final enrolment lists should reflect a balance between the sexes.

Girls' enrolment in AE programming is also supported by the increased presence and visibility of female teachers in the classroom. Many of NRC programmes make an explicit effort to recruit and select equal numbers of male and female teachers to support its classes. This has proven to be difficult in many programmes, where due to either a lack of other forms of employment (which then leads to men seeking teaching opportunities first), or cultural barriers and perceptions that preclude women from working outside the household, the pool of available and/or qualified female teachers is quite small. As ways of addressing this challenge, some programmes have developed innovative solutions. In South Central Somalia, for example, the programme is supporting promising female candidates, identified by the community, to complete secondary schooling so that they can later meet the minimum qualifications for being trained as a teacher and working within NRC's AE provision. In Liberia, NRC recruited female teaching assistants to compensate for the lack of qualified female teacher candidates. Irrespective of the actual composition of the teacher workforce,

programmes also emphasise gender inclusive practices in the course of its pre and in-service training, to encourage and prompt teachers to think about how their actions can either enable or preclude the effective participation of girls in class.

Attention is also given to ensuring that separate water and sanitation facilities for female learners are available, and sanitary packs are provided to girls in schools.

In Colombia, a Gender Equality Officer has also been budgeted and supported as part of NRC's involvement in a larger Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded initiative with Save the Children. This has led to the development of a Gender Equality Strategy that identifies potential sources of gender-based bias and exclusion in the curriculum, textbooks, and learning experiences and provides some clear recommendations to the programme team in terms of potential modifications to the design and delivery of its Flexible Education Models (FEM) for both male and female learners.

While most NRC programmes reviewed disaggregated analysis of key output and outcome data (participation rates, completion rates, retention rates, transition rates to formal schooling) for male and female learners, less monitoring data was collected on the qualitative dimensions of a gendered experience of schooling. The exception to this were the FEM's in Colombia, which as part of its ongoing monitoring activities looked specifically at issues of relevance and inclusiveness of curriculum, pedagogy and learning experiences for male and female learners. This could be an area where NRC might be able to provide greater guidance on as part of its overall gender mainstreaming policy within AE programming.

## **TARGETING CHILDREN AFFECTED BY DISPLACEMENT**

In line with NRC's broader mandate, attention has also been given to ensuring that children affected by displacement are the primary beneficiaries of its AE programming. Within this population, an additional criterion is that beneficiaries are over-age to enter into the formal schooling system at

## GETTING YOUNG MOTHERS INTO EDUCATION: THE CASE OF LIBERIA

In the Liberia Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), NRC developed a specific stream of AE provision for young mothers. The young mothers' classes were introduced in 2007 following the high dropout rate of girls on account of pregnancy and early marriage observed in earlier stages of the programme. NRC thus created a further condensed bridging programme to enable girls to quickly return to AE programming after delivering their child.

Classes were conducted by ALP teachers thrice weekly for two hours. Class times were flexible, and scheduled to the convenience of the mothers. Each class was provided with a child-minder who babysat the children of the mothers while they study. Classes included instruction on basic numeracy and literacy skills that are taken from Level 1 of the ALP curriculum. Some additional components to the curriculum such as health education, hygiene and HIV/AIDS were also incorporated.

Once in the programme, the young mothers were also provided with dry food rations (through WFP) and small loans. The learners were grouped together as a single-sex cohort, to reduce stigma.

A 2010 Evaluation found that these classes were extremely effective in mitigating the stigma associated with early pregnancy and eased their resumption of schooling. Additionally, the programme attracted a number of non-ALP older mothers who had dropped out of schools several years earlier, and provided them a safe space in which to return to school. For these older mothers in particular, the evaluation identified that it created a window of opportunity to access basic literacy. For teenage mothers, it also afforded them a pathway back into schooling, with many subsequently either continuing on in NRC's three year ALP, or reintegrating into the formal schooling system.

the level they would need to (typically lower primary). Clear evidence existed of NRC programmes making explicit, as part of its beneficiary selection process, these two factors, and collection of such data appeared to be systematic across all programmes reviewed. In many circumstances, programmes were successful in ensuring that children accessing its programming were in the majority IDPs/refugees, and were also too old to access the formal school otherwise. Some evaluations made light of the fact that when programmes relied on self-report or community selection of beneficiaries, and were unable to use identity cards or other formal means of verification as a form of triangulating these selections, children typically younger or older than the target population were enrolled. For example, in South Sudan, an evaluation found that more than 50% of the beneficiaries that the team interviewed were either under or over the target population age of 12-18. Often these learners were enrolled at the bequest of their local communities, who saw few other options for these individuals to access education. The concern, however, is that from a protection standpoint it places students at risk (particularly when those older than the target population are enrolled), or makes the job of the teacher more difficult when there is a need to cater to a wide range of age-specific needs and issues. The inability of verifying the status of beneficiaries as displaced peoples, can also lead to much higher numbers of host community children enrolling in AEPs, particularly when the programmes are seen to be of better quality and lower costs than the formal schooling system available. Evaluations of NRC programming in DR Congo and Angola identified that a large proportion, sometimes close to 50% of participants, were host community children.<sup>11</sup> School directors when asked about this felt that parents had hidden their actual status from NRC, miscommunicated whether their children had previously enrolled in school, lied about their age, or in some circumstances bribed officials/community members to gain access to the programme.

<sup>11</sup> See for example, NRC (2012) *An Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Teacher Emergency Package-Programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 15-6 and NRC (2011) *Final Evaluation - Teacher Emergency Package Burundi 1999-2011*, p. 29-30.

Similarly, the 2012 evaluation<sup>12</sup> from DR Congo noted that, “*children and families hide their actual status to increase their chances of becoming beneficiaries of the programme.*” It also made the point, however, that in longer-term humanitarian crises such as that which exists in the Kivus, “*inhabitants are always in a constant state of flux, and the lines between the status of IDP, returnee and local can become blurred.*”

On the latter issue, NRC has acknowledged, that in many of the contexts it is working in, the formal schooling system is so weak, that the needs of host community children are also insufficiently attended to, creating demand for AE provision amongst this population as well. In response, some programmes include host community children in AE provision, typically as a small percentage of the overall beneficiary population, or otherwise work with the Ministry to advocate for improved access and opportunity for these children. There is also cognisance that many host community children may attend schools that are lacking in quality. Programmes are often designed to be inclusive and strengthen the needs of host community schools and teachers in so far as is possible, by including teachers and local educational personnel in training activities, improving school infrastructure of host community schools (when facilities are shared), and creating opportunities participating in both forms of schooling to interact with each other through sporting or other recreational activities. In DR Congo, this has led to a significant reduction in the stigmatisation which former AEP students used to face upon re-entry. The inclusion of the host community in AE activities is also done in a number of contexts to reduce potential jealousies or tensions between host communities and displaced populations regarding having access to qualitatively different forms of educational provision – a reflection of good practice within INEE’s Conflict Sensitive Education pack.

In the context of some countries, questions remain whether NRC programming is in fact targeting the most vulnerable through its focus on displaced

populations. Specifically, in the context of the Horn of Africa, programme managers interviewed felt that NRC needed to consider bolstering or expanding AE provision to nomadic and pastoralist communities who are otherwise excluded from formal schooling pathways due to their lifestyle. There was a sense that NRC’s approaches with IDPs could readily be expanded particularly through mechanisms such as teachers going to the location of the students, rather than the other way around – a model which NRC has utilised as part of its FEMs in Colombia, for example.

### **INCLUSIVITY TOWARDS DISABILITY AND PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS**

An area where less evidence exists of NRC programming being inclusive is in regards to disability. Data reviewed to date (when available) suggests that the number of disabled beneficiaries included in AE programming remain quite small.<sup>13</sup> Given that children with disabilities are a particular target group within NRC’s Programme Policy for Education, this low number is somewhat surprising. An evaluation from Burundi (2011) suggest that there may be several challenges that stand in the way of greater numbers of disabled beneficiaries participating in AE programming. One is a lack of identification of children with disabilities within the education system. Another is a lack of appropriate support given to children with disabilities within AE programming. The evaluation found, for example, that teachers did not report giving any special attention or having any specific knowledge of how to work with children with disabilities, and as a result, most dropped out of the programme. Finally, the evaluation identified a strong community perception that children with disabilities did not need to go to school because they were not noticed or seen as of value within their families. These beliefs and practices persisted despite the education team making efforts through teacher training and socialisation activities with the local PTAs to change them. The challenges faced in Burundi would appear to be a common

<sup>12</sup> NRC (2012) An Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council’s Teacher Emergency Package – Programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> As an example, in NRC’s current programming in Côte d’Ivoire, only one child with a disability has been reported as being a beneficiary in the 2013-4 cohort out of a total of 4,435 participants.



across many of the contexts where NRC is supporting AE provision.

NRC's TEP in DR Congo, however, has made significant strides in recent years to proactively address some of these issues, and establish a learning environment where children with disabilities are encouraged to be part of the programme. For example, school construction standards includes specific guidelines about the construction of wheelchair accessible ramps and toilets that are wheelchair accessible, as well as the placement of the chalkboard, desks and chairs to ensure unfettered access to physically disabled children within classrooms. Additionally, through a partnership with Handicap International, NRC's entire education team in country has been trained multiple times on aspects of inclusive education, including how to better identify and target those with physical disabilities to be part of AE programming. A 2012 evaluation<sup>14</sup> of the DR Congo TEP noted that these efforts had led to greater numbers of children with disabilities being enrolled in the

programme<sup>15</sup> and that these numbers are, "...impressive considering the context of the DRC... [where] education of children with disabilities is not always at the top of the agenda."

Another important aspect of inclusivity is ensuring that children with psychosocial needs have venues within NRC's AEPs to cope with emotional and psychological issues that may be conflict-induced. Research shows clearly that for children to learn effectively, their emotional and social wellbeing must be attended to first. Documentation reviewed suggests that most of NRC's AEPs include as part of their teacher training modules this message. Most programmes also provide guidance to its educational personnel on ways to identify children with such needs, and mechanisms for referral onto specialist services and support. A challenge, however, is that the capacity of many of these services is low, and cannot cope with the high level of need. Interviews with programme staff suggested more could and should be done to support teachers to help students to address psychosocial needs *within* NRC's AEPs through a combination of increased training to

<sup>14</sup> NRC (2012) *An Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Teacher Emergency Package - Programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 19

<sup>15</sup> Specifically, the evaluation identified five children with disabilities enrolled in the TEP cycle in Petit North Kivu and ten in Grand North Kivu. Updated information from DR Congo was sought, but was not available for this evaluation.



teachers<sup>16</sup>, improved guidance on simple techniques to assist with the symptoms of trauma<sup>17</sup>, and greater monitoring of the level of need which exists amongst beneficiaries.

Finally a review of current project documentation suggests that monitoring and evaluation activities do not seem to appropriately track and monitor the needs of this group of beneficiaries, and provide evidence of specific programmatic modifications that have been put in place to better address the needs of such groups. As part of any evaluation exercise it is critical that inclusivity is explored in the broadest possible sense, to better consider how well individual programmes are addressing the needs of those with physical disabilities and conflict-induced trauma.

## → RECOMMENDATION

NRC should continue to be conflict-sensitive in the way it approaches beneficiary targeting and be conscious of the particular context it is offering AE provision within. Having quality assessment tools, aligned with the INEE Minimum Standards and Conflict Sensitive Education pack, may provide individual programmes with better guidance on ensuring their approaches to the targeting, recruitment, and selection of beneficiaries are inclusive and indeed targeting the most vulnerable in the communities NRC is working in. Within this guidance, particular attention should be given to supporting increased numbers of children with disabilities (physical and intellectual) to be part of NRC AEPs, in so far as resourcing and capacity of the teacher workforce allows. Additionally, all programmes should be encouraged to strengthen their approaches to psychosocial support for AEP beneficiaries, given that emotional wellbeing is an important precursor to effective learning.

<sup>16</sup> For example, in DR Congo, out of recognition of this greater need, a five-day training course recognised by the Ministry of Education, is now being offered to all TEP teachers and host school teachers.

<sup>17</sup> Such a manual already exists within NRC, in the form of its *Better Learning Programme* handbooks that have been developed to address the psychosocial needs of Palestinian children. Some adaptation would need to occur to ensure that the techniques and approaches are appropriate to the contexts of operation.

## EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST GLOBAL OUTCOMES: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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NRC has recently developed a Theory of Change for its Accelerated Education programming globally. This is presented Figure 1.

Within the Theory of Change, the focus of NRC's AE programming is clear: to provide educational opportunities to out of school children in hopes that they (1) reach equivalent grade level performance; which (2) then affords these learners the ability to (re) enrol in formal schooling at the target grade level; ultimately (3) leading to them completing a full cycle of schooling within the formal system. This section discusses the evidence regarding successes of programmes to date in achieving these outcomes, as well as key challenges faced, and innovative solutions to addressing obstacles encountered.

### EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND REINTEGRATION INTO FORMAL SCHOOLING SYSTEM

Across the programmes reviewed, there is evidence to demonstrate that NRC's AE programming has afforded its beneficiaries pathways for reintegration into the formal schooling system. A challenge, however, is that programmes have analysed and reported on reintegration in different ways. They do not track or analyse the efficiency rates from initial enrolments to numbers passing examinations and reintegrating into the formal schooling system in consistent or systematic ways, and in some cases errors then result in how statistics are reported.<sup>18</sup> In other cases, evaluations spanning from 2005 to 2014 have consistently noted that the lack of monitoring data and poor documentation on AE learners at either the programmatic or Ministry level, undermines efforts to track transition of learners from one

level/grade to another and into the formal schooling system. Where project reporting and evaluation data was sufficiently informative to provide an overview, the data on enrolment, completions and reintegration is provided in Table 2.

From data reviewed, several issues become clear:

- ➔ **Programmes have varying rates of efficiency in terms of numbers of students initially enrolling compared to those who end up reintegrating.** For example, data from the TEP in Burundi<sup>19</sup> for the school years between 2005 and 2010 identified that nearly 100% of the students initially enrolled did transition into the formal school system at the end of the year; while in the case of a 2011 Level 3 cohort in Somaliland<sup>20</sup>, less than half of the students ended up entering the formal schooling system at the end. More concerning are findings from a midterm review in South Sudan<sup>21</sup> which suggest that only 2 of the 38 registered learners in one centre where class registers were available had transitioned from Level 1 to 2, and in another centre, none of the 34 learners who sat the primary school leaving examination at the end of Grade 8 passed it.
- ➔ **Related to this, inefficiencies appear to be greater in multi-year programmes such as ABE/AEPs where children remain in the programme for up to four years.** In the case of Uganda for example, a 2013 evaluation found that only 51.7% of learners completed at least one cycle. Of that group, 55% transition into formal schooling, either by passing the Primary Leaving Examination (45% of Level 3 students), or transiting to lower levels of primary schooling or into a YEP programme (10% of enrolled Level 1 and 2 students). This would suggest that from a sample of 100 students who start an ABE programme in Uganda at Level 1, 52 would complete the first year, and at most 27 of them would transit into the formal schooling system at some point.

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<sup>18</sup> For example, in data provided by the Somaliland programme for its last three years of beneficiaries, analyses compared enrolments and drop out annually, rather than within a cohort group that spans three years and which moves from Level 1 to Level 3. Drop out rates and retention rates reported were erroneously calculated based on changes within a level from year to year, despite the fact that starting numbers within the cohort varied greatly.

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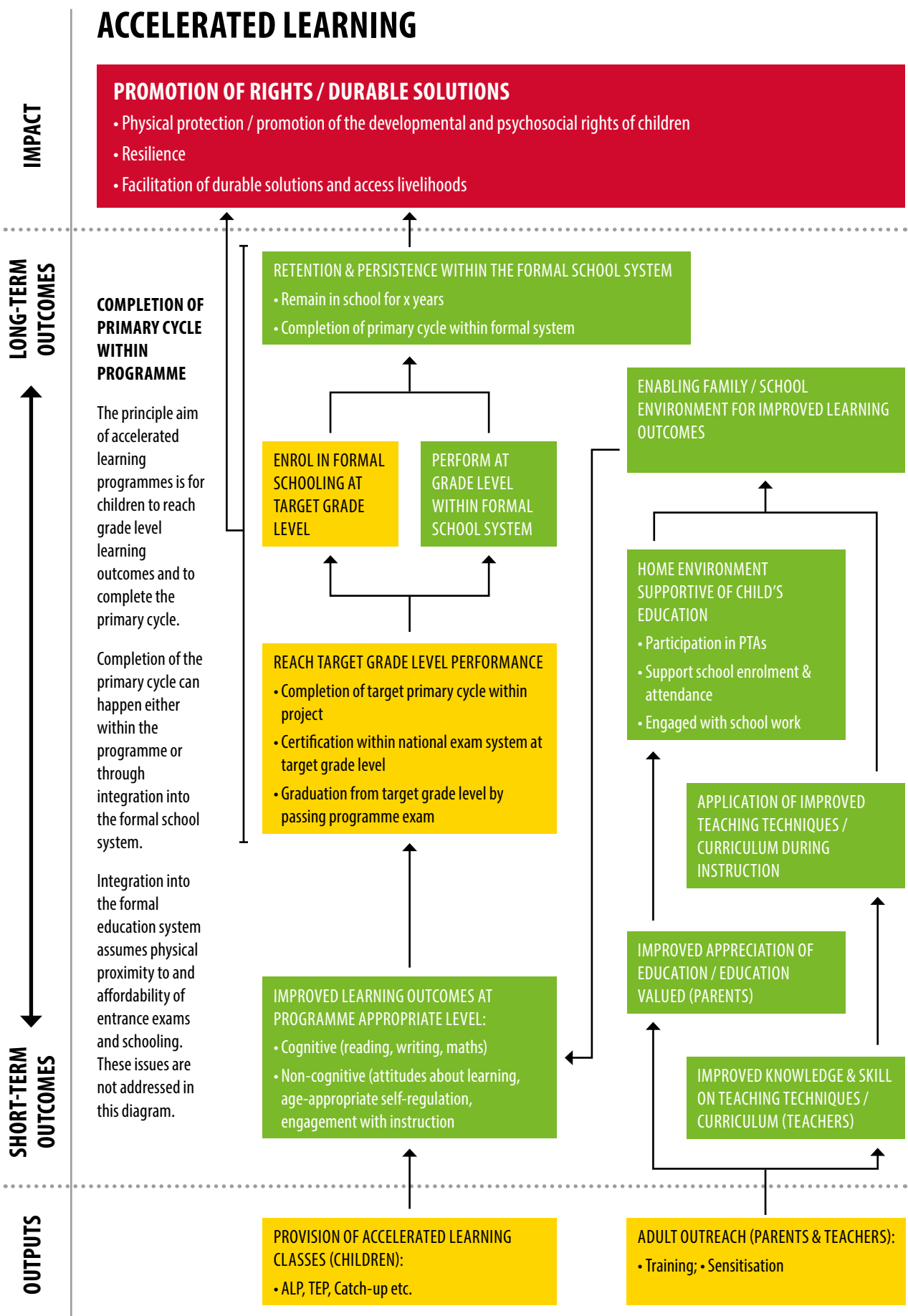
<sup>19</sup> NRC (2011) *Burundi Final Evaluation TEP 1999-2011*, p. 35

<sup>20</sup> Project monitoring data provided by Somaliland team for Hargeisa region under project code SOFT1101

<sup>21</sup> Save the Children and Norwegian Refugee Council (2013) *Achieving Education for All, Alternative Education in South Sudan: Midterm Review Report*, p. 27



**Figure 1:** Draft Theory of Change for Accelerated Learning programming within NRC



→ **In some circumstances, children who complete AE programming are not sitting examinations to formally transfer.** The reasons behind this are sometimes not clear. For example, a 2005 evaluation from Sierra Leone describes how only about half of the students who went through the entire Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS) programme sat the final examination to transition to the formal schooling system. The evaluation speculates that they did not pass a mock/screening exam and thus were not asked to sit the examination. As a result, the evaluation notes it is difficult to ascertain the learning outcomes for the other half of students who did not sit examinations. Similarly, data provided by the Somaliland programme for 2010 suggests that out of a total of 602 learners who could have sat the Level 3 examination to transit into upper primary, 251

(42%) of them did not sit the examination due to them being absent at the time of the assessment. Reasons for this high rate of absenteeism are not known.

→ **It is important to acknowledge that programmes may be making an explicit decision to afford students greater flexibility of when they sit the formal transition examination or move from one level to another.** The programme in Uganda, for example, affords flexibility to programme leaders and School Management Committees to allow a student to take more than one year to complete a cycle of work. Such flexibility is based on acknowledgement that (1) students do not mature at the same rate; and (2) students may not have the same home background and prerequisite educational experience to make progress at the same pace.

**Table 2:** Retention and reintegration data from select programmes

PROGRAMME	NUMBER OF ENROLLED	NUMBER COMPLETING CLASSES AND SITTING EXAM	NUMBER REINTEGRATED	% OF ENROLMENTS REINTEGRATED OR COMPLETING CLASSES
Côte d'Ivoire (2013-14)	4,435	3,736	3,388	75%
Burundi (2008-9)	8,884	8,633	8,633	97%
Liberia (2005-8)	1,200	1,044	971	81%
Mali (2014) <sup>1</sup>	1,856	1,639	1,639 <sup>2</sup>	88%
Pakistan (2013)	N/A <sup>3</sup>	1,213	812	67%
Sierra Leone (2005) <sup>4</sup>	2,026	8,58	N/A	42%
Puntland (2011)	1,000	9,90	990 <sup>5</sup>	99%
Somaliland (2011) <sup>6</sup>	2,400	1,295	1125	47%
South Central Somalia (2014)	N/A	700	650	N/A
Somalia combined (2012) <sup>7</sup>	15,967	N/A	10,235 <sup>8</sup>	64%

<sup>1</sup> As part of a UNICEF grant in Gao and Timbuktu and done in partnership with Save the Children

<sup>2</sup> Of this group, 60% passed the final examination, but an agreement was reached for all children to be reintegrated and for NRC to provide remedial support for those who did not pass. Those who did not pass also transitioned into the formal system at a lower level.

<sup>3</sup> No data was available on the numbers of students who were initially enrolled in the Districts of Nowshera and Charsadda in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where data was presented based on the finalisation of 13 months of student participation in NRC's AE programming there.

<sup>4</sup> Data was only available for Kono region, one of the three regions that NRC was operating at that time. Additionally, no data was presented in the evaluation on numbers of students actually transitioning into the formal schooling system based on their performance on the examination.

<sup>5</sup> While all students who sat the examination transitioned to the formal schooling system, only 43% of children passed the examination at the level required to enter into Grade 5, the expected level following participation. The other 57%, due to their performance, were placed into lower grades (2-4) in the formal schooling system.

<sup>6</sup> Analyses is presented based on data within a single level of provision in the Somaliland ABE programme (Level 3) rather than across all three levels due to inaccuracies in the way in which data would appear to be reported in terms of transition rates from one level to another.

<sup>7</sup> These data come from the combined APES evaluation (2013) which covers all three regions of Somalia

<sup>8</sup> This includes students who transitioned to either upper primary schooling (2,097 learners) or Level 4 of ABE (8,138 learners)

→ **Performance of students on end of programme/national examinations to allow transfer to the grade-equivalent level in the formal system or an equivalency certificate is varied.** The case of Somalia is an interesting example of this. Within the three regions of South Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, reported performance appears to vary greatly. In Somaliland (where students transit into upper primary) and Puntland (where students transition into middle primary), less than half the students who are sitting the examinations are transiting into the expected grade level in the formal system. While affordances are then made for these students to transit into the formal schooling system at a lower grade level, these data would suggest that many learners are not sufficiently prepared for the transition. By contrast, in South Central Somalia, the vast majority of students who are sitting the primary leaving examination (at the end of Level 4, equivalent of end of Grade 8) are passing the examination and moving into secondary schooling. What is not known for South Central Somalia, however, is how many Level 4 students enrolled in the programme are not participating in this examination process. The contrast between the South Central Somalia and the other two regions, however, foreshadows an important issue and question that many multi-year AEPs face: whether in such programmes it is more effective to allow students to complete a full cycle of schooling within the auspices of the programme, or to ‘force’ reintegration at an intermediary point. According to the programme manager from South Central Somalia the decision to expand their programme to Level 4 was done out of cognisance that it was more effective to allow students to complete a full cycle of primary education within the programme.

→ **Successful completion of Accelerated Education programming does not automatically equate with reintegration into the formal education system.** Tracer studies from TEPs in Angola and DR Congo reveal that despite students successfully completing a catch-up programme run by NRC, many students end up not entering back into the formal education system. In Angola, for example, a 2005 Tracer Study suggested that more than 50% of TEP students who qualified for re-entry never ended up reintegrating. Often this is due to the financial costs of doing so, as well as concerns about the qualitatively different educational experience students will enter into in terms of teacher quality, classroom conditions, and accessibility of school facilities (as was found to be the case in South Central Somalia prior to the additional of Level 4). Such concerns are ones which NRC must carefully consider when designing and implementing its AEPs, particularly on questions such as the level of engagement/interaction with schools which students will reintegrate into and the forms of reintegration support provided to individual students/families. Both these issues are discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

## → RECOMMENDATION

As NRC moves as organisation to collect and report on AEP outcomes in a more standardised fashion through the standardised indicators included in GORS, greater opportunities exist for programmes to use such data in a formative way to understand how well its programmes are supporting retention within and across particular cycles, as well as ensuring effective transition to the formal education system. In addition to tracking retention and drop out rates within and across cohorts, tracking the performance of students on end of programme examinations also serves as a useful barometer for gauging the quality of the AE programming in terms of appropriately preparing students for re-entry into the formal schooling system.

## DROPOUT RATES WITHIN THE PROGRAMME

For longer-term AEPs (particularly ABEs), issues of attrition and retention with the life of the programme are more pronounced. Typically programmes aim for a 70-80% completion rate from its ABE cohorts, which compared to the contexts where they are operating in, where completion rates from primary are 50% or less, may be an ambitious target to set. Some programmes have met/exceeded their targets for full programme completion. In Liberia between 79 and 87% of cohort groups completed the three-year programme. Conversely, in Somalia only 64.1% of students transited to upper ABE or the formal schooling, and in Colombia, the high school FEMs have experienced dropout rates ranging from 20-30%, despite setting a target of no more than 15% drop out.

The relative success of the Liberia programme in retaining students in its programming was attributed in a 2010 evaluation to the perception that education was “free, fun and flexible”. Specifically, former AEP students felt that the Liberia programme ensured that education was free of all costs to learners, allowed some flexibility of the timetable for students to balance domestic responsibilities and academic pursuits effectively, ensured that teachers regularly attended classes and were skilled in the use of participatory methodologies which learners enjoyed, afforded opportunities for

recreation and physical education which helped to build friendship, self-esteem and teamwork, and engendered community and parental support for their continued participation in the classroom.

The features noted with the Liberia programme are commonplace across most of NRC’s AEPs. These include: (1) eliminating the actual and hidden costs of school participation through the provision of school uniforms, school meals (sometimes in partnership with other actors), school supplies, and payment of any school fees; (2) ensuring that children have ready access to school facilities that are sufficiently close and safe to their homes; and in some cases (3) being flexible with the timing and scheduling of classes to ensure that it best meets the schedule of the beneficiaries. School reconstruction and rehabilitation projects often occur through AEPs partnering with NRC Shelter teams and/or the local community to construct or rehabilitate school facilities, including provision for gender segregated toilets and hand-washing areas. As a way to reduce costs, a few of the programmes have required the active contribution of parents and community in such projects through the provision of labour, materials or a commitment to the ongoing maintenance of facilities. The case of DR Congo provides a strong example of how such a process can be done in an equitable way. In some cases, however, evaluations have noted that a reliance on the community for the provision of facilities and infrastructure can

## PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SCHOOLING

Before the construction/rehabilitation of a school is initiated in DR Congo, the population is sensitised about important aspects of the TEP approach. As part of this, the community is asked whether they are willing contribute to the construction in the first phase. The requirements are that the population brings raw materials such as sand and/or stones (when available), and prepare the ground; improve the roads (when necessary); and dig holes for latrines (when applicable). At this stage the participation is voluntary. In the next phase of the actual construction, where community members are paid for their labour, a list of potential labourers is made on the frequency and presence of those who participated in the first phase, those with existing qualifications and/or experience (masons and carpenters), and with a balance of locals and IDPs. Paid construction teams alternate, to afford paid employment opportunities to the greatest numbers of community members. Women are paid to bring water to the site. Perceptions from a 2005 evaluation of this activity suggest that this process was seen to be transparent and just, and also helped to engender community ownership over their school.



result in children studying in overcrowded, unsafe classroom spaces.<sup>22</sup>

Reports and studies have identified a number of factors, which lead to students dropping out of NRC's AEPs prematurely. They include: (1) high levels of mobility amongst the populations AEPs serve, with much of this mobility the product of cycles of conflict and stability; (2) early aged marriage; (3) recruitment into armed groups (particularly for male youth); or (4) the need for older students to seek livelihood opportunities or support the family. Often this information is based on anecdote rather than the systematic collection of data or the completion of exit surveys/interviews for those who have dropped out. This points to a weakness in current monitoring and evaluation systems of many AEPs. Conversations with programme teams suggests that having a more robust evidence base on reasons for drop out would be important when thinking about how

programmes might be redesigned or reshape to address the factors leading to drop out.

Some longer-term programmes have developed modularized programmes that allow for greater flexibility in terms of timeframes and pathways for reintegration into the formal schooling system as way of addressing concerns of intermediate drop out. For example, within the Daadab Alternative Education Strategy, the eight-year Kenyan basic education curriculum has been condensed into three cycles. At the end of each cycle, opportunities exist for students, should they choose, to exit the programme and enter back into the formal school system at a variety of grade levels based on their performance against an assessment framework that has been agreed to by the Kenyan Ministry of Education and AE implementing partners. Similar types of arrangements appear to be in place for other ABE programmes, such as ones operating in Somalia, as well as Uganda.

<sup>22</sup> See for example project documentation from Côte d'Ivoire

## THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF ACCELERATED EDUCATION PROVISION?

The data presented in Table 2 provides a varied, and sometimes concerning picture on the efficacy of NRC's AEPs to retain children within its activities, and ensure that they transition to the formal education system at the appropriate level. It must be emphasised, however, that the context and populations in which AE provision is occurring are some of the most challenging globally in terms of ensuring that children enter into, remain and are successful in school. Given this is the case, what is somewhat surprising is the lack of acknowledgement of this in the establishment of key target indicators, and the assessment and evaluation of observed results in monitoring and evaluation reporting. Data comparing relative rates of retention and success on formal assessments between the formal system and NRC's AE programming are far from commonplace, but where they do exist paint a much clearer picture of the added contributions of such activity to the overall education systems of the countries they are operating in.

For example, a 2010 evaluation of NRC's AEP in Liberia identified that completion rates of the three-year programme (equivalent to the first five years of primary schooling) ranged between 67% and 79%, which was significantly higher than completion rates in the formal schooling system for this equivalent period (approximately 11.8% in 2006), and higher than the completion rates for other AE partners in Liberia. Even more impressive with the Liberia programme were the high scores which Level III students achieved on the Western African Examination Council (WAEC) examinations. The evaluation found that 71% of the learners who completed Level III sat the WAEC, and 95% of this group passed the exam with an average score ranging from 80-88%. These scores, *"were comparable, and in some cases significantly higher than those of children who had attended the government and Mission schools"* (p. 18). Such findings were also found in a 2005 evaluation in Sierra Leone of NRC's CREPS students' performance on the National Primary School Examination (NPSE). Overall pass rates for CREPS students that year in Kono stood at 94%, which is slightly higher than the pass rate from pupils in the neighbouring 'normal' schools (91%).

In 2014, the Ministry of Education in Mali utilised the Early Grades Reading Assessment (EGRA) to compare reading outcomes for transit students of an NRC and Save the Children operated catch-up programme of six months (PASSU), with their Grade 2 and Grade 3 peers. Across many reading tasks – such as phonemic awareness, familiar word recognition, ability to read text correctly, and reading comprehension – students in PASSU performed at equivalent or higher levels to their formal schooling counterparts.<sup>23</sup> Having such data on hand led the Ministry of Education to conclude that such programmes have contributed quantitatively and qualitatively to improvements in the national educational system by effectively reaching and teaching the most marginalised in a condensed period. On the basis of such data, the Ministry of Education formally recognised PASSU's programme's 6-month catch-up curriculum for students to transit into Grade 2, and has acknowledged that it may be better suited to emergency situations than other AE models prevalent in the country at present.

In Colombia, recent analysis done comparing the results of students attending the FEM (Ethno Afro-Colombian High School) supported by NRC versus other local schools on the Year 11 National Examinations identifies that students in the FEM are performing in similar ways to students in the mainstream educational setting. The table below provides a comparison of how students performed in each of the tested disciplinary areas by average score achieved.

Having such data on hand is critical to NRC's demonstrating the efficacy of the project-based, experiential, and culturally contextualised curriculum it has supported in these high schools. It also has helped to quell initial concerns voiced by some local education authorities, who believed that by introducing FEMs into locality, it would bring local test score averages down due to the 'disadvantaged' background from which FEM students came.

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<sup>23</sup> Mali National Ministry of Education and UNICEF (2015). *Evaluation des apprentissages des élèves de 2ème et 3ème années en Français et en Mathématiques du programme d'apprentissage accéléré en situation d'urgence.*

**Table 3:** A comparison of results on ICFES, Gr 11 in Colombia

TYPE OF SCHOOL	MATHEMATICS	ENVIRONMENT	SOCIAL SCIENCE	LANGUAGE	BIOLOGY	VIOLENCE AND SOCIETY
Ethno	37	49	38	41	40	41
Mainstream	36	49	40	45	44	41

Finally, an evaluation of the Accelerated Primary Education Support (APES) programme in Somalia in 2011 provides a clear statement on the ‘added value’ or contribution of NRC’s activities to the overall school enrolment patterns in different regions of Somalia. Based on national census data, and Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) for the three regions, the evaluation found that AEPs added 7% to the GER in Puntland, and 9% in Somaliland, despite the fact that both programmes also faced significant drop out issues.<sup>24</sup> Again the importance of using such data for advocacy purposes was and continues to be critical to building government and donor support for AE provision in Somalia, according to the programme teams interviewed.

### ➔ RECOMMENDATION

Data on the learning outcomes of AE beneficiaries should be used more regularly as an advocacy tool with local and national stakeholders. Such data can help to show the ‘added value’ of AE provision to overall enrolment rates, as well as the strength and quality of AE provision in terms of equivalency of learning. The latter issue is of great importance given the stigma and negative connotation thrust on over-age learners in many of the contexts that NRC operates in.

### BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE: SUPPORTING AND TRACKING STUDENTS ONCE IN THE FORMAL SCHOOLING SYSTEM

One of the biggest challenges for NRC’s AEPs to date is to generate an evidence base and better understand whether and how the beneficiaries of their programmes are able to complete a full cycle of schooling once reintegrated. A significant challenge for many programmes has been to track and trace students once they leave. Challenges such as a lack of resources, available data and time are noted as important barriers that prevent such activity from occurring. Additionally due to both funding cycles and the need to maximise coverage, communities served by NRC’s AEPs may vary from year to year, or over several years. As a result, information on medium to long-term outcomes for AEP beneficiaries is known largely through anecdote, rather than any systematic collection of data through activities such as a tracer study. Where students were attempted to be ‘traced’ several years after, such as in the case of the Angola and Burundi tracer study (2005), without systematic tracking in between, it was found to be nearly impossible to appropriately identify AEP students within the formal schooling system.

There are a few examples of studies that have been done over the years that highlight issues and challenges for former AEP beneficiaries, and also evidence of how programmes have begun to respond in kind. These are highlighted in brief below.

<sup>24</sup> See NRC (2011) *Accelerated Primary Education Support Project Final Evaluation*, p. v



## DR Congo

In 2011, after nearly a decade of running a one-year TEP programme to reintegrate out of school children into the formal schooling system, NRC undertook a study to explore the outcomes for former TEP students. The study arose out of anecdotal information that many TEP students were abandoning formal schooling due to their families' inability to pay for the costs of schooling. While in the past, NRC had paid for former TEP students' fees in the first year following reintegration, this stopped after the government announced that education would be free in Grades 1-4 in 2010. The evaluation found that most schools were still charging fees for a number of school expenses related to teacher salaries, insurances, facilities, examinations, security, and identification cards. This was largely the product of many schools unable to get its teachers onto the government payroll following the change in legislation. Interviews with school directors and the partners of TEP students suggested that without NRC's support for paying school fees, many TEP students were dropping out within the first year following reintegration. At the same time, the evaluation cautioned that restoring the payment of fees for one year was

not an effective solution, as interviews also revealed that drop out of former TEP students would defer to the year following the cessation of school fee payments, as had occurred prior to 2010. Principals often reported school abandonment rates of 70% or more of former TEP students due to the costs of formal schooling. The key finding to come from the evaluation was that, *"essentially TEP provided an emergency education but no programmes were implemented alongside TEP to ensure that societal problems, especially poverty, were reduced"* and that, *"...it could be argued that whilst TEP has a significant impact on the communities for a brief period, as soon as the NRC withdraw many of the benefits it provided are lost"* (p. 39).

Since the evaluation, NRC has reformed its TEP activities in two significant ways. One has been for TEP to work more strongly with the whole school it is located within, and which TEP students are likely to reintegrate into. As part of this closer alignment, NRC provides school grants to schools on the proviso that they provide one year of free access to non-TEP students who abandoned school in Grades 3-6 due to costs. At the same time, acknowledging that at some points the households of TEP students will need to pay school fees of





some form to allow their children to remain in school, efforts have been put into working with TEP parents on livelihood and income generation opportunities. This has taken the form of either establishing savings and loans groups where NRC provides seed money to the group, as well as possibilities and options for income generation, and then expects the members of the group to establish small businesses that generate profits that are returned back into the savings and loans group. The group agrees that any funds are first used to assist individuals in paying of school fees, and only after, to other needs/expenses asked for by individual members of the group. Further, in locales where NRC's Food Security programming is occurring, it has been agreed that households with TEP students will be targeted. These households are provided with agriculture/animal husbandry based livelihood opportunities or given seed money to start small businesses, with an arrangement similar to the savings and loans groups described above. Again, the focus is to ensure that the households of TEP students are generating sufficient income to prioritise and pay for school fees. At present, the effect that this latter work is having on the drop out rates of TEP students is being evaluated.

## Somaliland

In 2011, a tracer study of former ABE students was conducted in two regions of Somaliland where NRC had worked in prior. The objective was to better understand the key challenges faced by learners after reintegration, as well as the factors that drive them to drop out of the formal schooling system. Overall, the evaluation provides an encouraging picture regarding the ability of former ABE students to stay in school, with an average drop out rate of 20.4%, much lower than typical drop out rates within the general population. The evaluation also found that boys were more likely than girls to drop out, and that most drop out occurred in the first year following reintegration (Grade 4). Poverty and early marriage were the two biggest factors leading to drop out, while parental support and personal motivation were the key drivers for staying in school. The evaluation also revealed that students reported the scorn and teasing of their fellow students in mainstream schools as one of the immediate challenges they faced following reintegration.

This last issue prompted the evaluation to recommend that NRC give greater attention to the needs of students in the first year of reintegration, given that issues of stigmatisation as well as drop out are most pronounced at this time. Conversations with the AEP manager in Somaliland revealed that while NRC has wanted to do more in response to the evaluation, it has been fairly limited in what it has been able to do due to financial/budgetary constraints. To date, the response has focused largely on addressing the issue of stigmatisation which students face on re-entry, primarily by strengthening socialisation efforts with communities and schools where these students live and access educational services. Additionally, like DR Congo, which also faced significant issues with former TEP students in terms of stigmatisation, more effort has been put into providing material and in-kind support to the whole school, in particular other vulnerable children attending the formal school, and also by extending teacher training activities to include formal school teachers as well as ABE teachers. According to the programme manager, doing this has significantly reduced the issue as mainstream teachers now understand the academic rigour and strength of

the ABE approach, and do not see these students as 'second rate'. With greater resources, the programme manager discussed offering reintegrated students greater economic support in the form of conditional cash transfer payments (contingent on them attending/staying in school) or vouchers to pay for school costs – an approach which has been employed in neighbouring Puntland (described below).

### **Puntland**

The Puntland ABE programme in 2009, began to pilot responses to the reintegration of former ABE students through demand and supply side interventions. On the demand side, it provided vouchers for foodstuffs, scholastic materials and other household expenses on condition of ABE graduates attending school 85% of the time. The eligibility of households was established using socio-economic targeting based on a combination of social categorisation (IDP status) and assessments (which also extended to the host community) of income and asset ownership. Identification of beneficiaries was done through community mobilisation and sensitisation workshops. Eligible households received approximately \$180 USD in vouchers over the course of the year in two separate allotments – approximately \$95 USD in the first semester and \$85 USD in the second semester. In a bid to support the local economy, merchants in close proximity to the beneficiaries' homes who had a permanent presence in the community were selected to accept the vouchers and then receive cash payments from NRC.

On the supply side, the initiative worked with receiving schools to fund the rehabilitation/ construction of additional classrooms, provide teacher training, and support the schools' operational costs on the condition that they would waive tuition fees for ABE graduates. This support was initially piloted with 1000 ABE graduates and 10 partner schools between 2009-11 and formally evaluated in 2011.

The evaluation found that NRC's support in the reintegration process was extremely effective in addressing the hierarchy of access-related constraints for ABE graduates, particularly girls. The conditional cash transfer scheme had a significant

impact on the incentive and decision-making processes of households regarding whether they should send their children to school, and also provided immediate supply-related relief to schools that needed to respond to an influx of new learners. The result was that less than 1% of the ABE students whose families were receiving the voucher dropped out in the two-year period during which the financial support was being provided. A concern noted in the evaluation, and reiterated in conversations with the Programme Manager however, was that a two-year voucher scheme would not address the longer-term financial barriers that would remain for households to continue to send their children to school. Additionally the vouchers were costly to support programmatically, and when funding from UNICEF (related to post-tsunami response) ceased, NRC was unable to continue providing support at this level.

At the same time, it was acknowledged by NRC that if the aim was to keep ABE graduates in school, particularly girls, there needed to be some form of ongoing financial support. A voucher system was set up where NRC agreed, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, to pay half of the monthly school fees of approximately 60% of ABE graduates with the school subsidising/ waiving the other half of the fees and allowing the students to stay in school. Additionally, NRC has extended this support to an additional 500 Grade 8 female students in the same schools who have not come through the ABE programme, to ensure that they complete the year and a full cycle of primary schooling. The programme manager acknowledged that limiting support to approximately 60% of ABE graduates does cause some tension in communities, but that NRC works closely with the Community Education Councils (CECs) and local education officers to identify the most vulnerable households and makes such decisions in a transparent fashion. Monitoring data suggest that such support has been critical to enabling ABE graduates to complete a full cycle of primary, with 95% of those receiving vouchers doing so; this compares favourably to the general rate amongst ABE graduates of approximately 75% completing Grade 8.

## → RECOMMENDATION

The issues and challenges faced by NRC AE programmes to ensure that beneficiaries not only complete the programme, but also continue on in formal schooling following this, raise several important issues for NRC to consider globally. Much of NRC's AE programming to date has been geared towards an emergency education response where the aim is to provide a short-term, protective educational experience to those affected by conflict. The product has been that programmes have been designed and funded based on the primary objective of getting children back into school, rather than keeping them in school. If, however, most children who complete an AE programme subsequently drop out in the first year or two following reintegration how sustainable or efficient is such action?

This would appear to be increasingly acknowledged within the organisation and even within the revised theory of change for AE, which now suggests that the long-term goal of AE is to support the persistence of children in schooling once reintegrated. This will require programmes to be designed and funded to consider not only the immediate learning gaps of learners, but also the factors that have pushed learners out of schooling or excluded them from participating from schooling in the first place. Doing so will

push AE provision into an activity that increasingly straddles the humanitarian-development nexus.

Specifically, NRC may need to situate AE provision within a more integrated response that addresses the needs of displaced and conflict-affected communities through approaches that bring together the core competences of the organisation. Cross competence synergies that have long existed between Education and Shelter/WASH in school construction projects may need to increasingly be extended to include other NRC core competences, as was evident from the DR Congo's programme's alignment with Food Security, as well as important work which NRC's Côte d'Ivoire has done in supporting AEP beneficiaries to receive identification papers and birth certificates in coordination with ICLA.

Additionally, synergies between NRC activity and longer-term programming of development-focused actors may need to occur around the shared goal of supporting children to stay in school.

Finally, thought will need to be given to forms of support for AE graduates, households and school systems that does not foster a culture of dependency, but rather a shared responsibility for supporting every child's right to an accessible education of quality.

## ENGAGING COMMUNITIES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

A strength of NRC's AEPs has been the active mobilisation of the wider community in support of its programming. This approach is in line with INEE Minimum Standards on Education in Emergencies, which stress that communities should participate actively and without discrimination in the analysis, planning, design, and implementation and evaluation of educational responses, and acknowledges the importance of the community as a critical resource for effective implementation.

Typically, NRC has worked within the local schooling infrastructure to either bolster or re-animate the roles of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs), or Community Education Councils (CECs) as part of the AE response. NRC also engaged with other community or religious leaders, out of acknowledgement of the important influence they hold over existing beliefs and practices. Engagement with the community is prefaced on several different objectives including: increasing support for girls' access to and completion of education (see discussion prior); ensuring that caregivers prioritise education over other activities for their children; help communities

hold their schools and those working within it to greater account; reducing the stigma associated with overaged children attending and reintegrating into school and/or making sure that communities took some responsibility for the maintenance and/or construction of school facilities. Often NRC, as part of strengthening or re-establishing these bodies, has also made explicit a desire to bridge community divides and chasms in terms of membership – between IDPs/host communities, males and females, educated/uneducated households – with some, but often not, complete success. To varying extents, communities have effectively harnessed their energies and support behind NRC's AEPs.

In Liberia for example, NRC recruited a cadre of community mobilisers (one per AEP community) to address the challenges being faced in the

programme of irregular student attendance and high drop out rates from AE classes. The mobilisers were trained, equipped with publicity materials, and then asked to deliver weekly awareness sessions within their communities on topics such as child protection, the importance of sending children to school, health/hygiene, and women's rights, as well to enlist their support on the construction and maintenance of school facilities. At first mobilisers were given an incentive of \$20 USD/month. When funding came to an end, the morale and willingness of these individuals to continue on with their tasks reduced drastically. Despite this, a 2010 evaluation suggested that the mobilisers had an influence in increasing community awareness, spawning some level of attitudinal change, and helping to improve attendance in NRC's AEP in Liberia.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCILS IN SOMALIA

NRC worked extensively across South Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland to strengthen the role and visibility of the Community Education Councils as advocates for securing the enrolment of all children into school, and as active partners in the ongoing management and oversight of its ABE programming. In South Central Somalia, for example, NRC helped to establish 11 new CEC's in the communities it was working in, and trained them on their roles and responsibilities, dimensions of leadership, the development of school development plans, mechanisms for organising and mobilising community meetings, school administration and utilisation of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). Across all three programmes, CECs continue to receive ongoing training and support during the summer on topics such as child protection, gender equity, child-centred pedagogy, as well as a more practical components such as record-keeping, school monitoring, and student recruitment and support mechanisms. From the outset of the programmes, CECs have been engaged in ascertaining the educational needs and concerns of their communities, recruited and selected teachers and participating students, mobilised parental and community support on children attending and staying in school, and actively assisted NRC in the monitoring of student and teacher attendance, the quality assurance of teachers and student performance, and the conduct of action research projects. The CECs also follow through on ABE students whose attendance in the programme is inconsistent, and work with the concerned families to ensure that they are encouraging their children to stay actively engaged to the completion of the programme.

According to the programme manager from South Central Somalia, and findings from the 2011 APES Evaluation, NRC's work with these CEC's is critical to the long-term sustainability of its ABE activities given the significant role they now play in the management and oversight the ABE programme, and the role they play in brokering relations between individual programmes and the community. The CECs have already proven to be critical to the continuity of AE provision in South Central Somalia, when during times where NRC was unable to directly engage in monitoring and support activities due to security concerns, the CEC assumed responsibility for such tasks.

In a number of programmes, including Liberia, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and the three regions of Somalia, PTAs or CECs have been actively engaged in the recruitment and selection of programme beneficiaries and teaching staff. The inclusion of community stakeholders in these decision-making processes is predicated on a desire to ensure transparency and fairness within the process, and increase engagement from the outset in programme delivery. Such groups are also engaged to help identify and mobilise learning spaces, particularly in settings where no formal school exists. In the case of Colombia, communities have also been engaged in the initial design of curricula to ensure its relevance and appropriateness to context (discussed in a subsequent section).

A number of reports have suggested that an area where the engagement and mobilising of community has been critical has been in regards to the enrolment of vulnerable, out of school populations. As discussed in a previous section, having influential leaders and spokespeople from *within* the community advocating for a girl's right to education, has been instrumental to increasing the enrolment of retention of female learners in many of NRC's programmes. An additional value of community engagement and support behind NRC's AEPs has been a reduction of the stigmatisation of out of school and overaged learners, particularly when they reintegrate into formal schools. This has been especially true in a context like Colombia, where civil society organisations and parent associations have been supported and strengthened to be advocates for the various FEM models with the local education authorities. Such support was seen, in a 2012 CIDA evaluation, as having a direct impact on the organisational effectiveness of these actors to successfully lobby for and promote inclusive and equity-focused educational models for their community. NRC has also engaged directly with caregivers, and sought to teach them positive parenting techniques. Through such actions, NRC has been able to strengthen home support for its education activities, particularly project-based learning initiatives. It has also led to innovative projects such as the *Family Read and Write Together* in which adults and their children are both engaged in learning.

## STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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A key issue for many of NRC's programmes are whether and how it acts to promote durable solutions in the contexts it is operating within, and catalyse advocacy efforts for the needs of marginalised children and youth within formal school settings. To achieve these aims, it is critical that the education systems of host countries/communities are strengthened to provide longer-term support to the educational needs of out of school children, and improved consideration at the system-level of the factors pushing children out of school in the first place.

Additionally, AE provision is an expensive undertaking, and one that cannot be sustained in perpetuity by external actors. Recognising this, and the desire to not institutionalise a parallel schooling system, NRC has placed strong emphasis on institutionalising accelerated education principles, practices and modalities within the formal education systems it is operating within. This has not been without its challenges, as this section details.

### RECRUITING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS TO DELIVER AE PROGRAMMING

In establishing and expanding AE provision globally, the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of teachers, and other personnel and ensuring that they are well supported and trained has been tantamount to the effectiveness of NRC's programmes. In line with INEE Minimum Standards (Domains 3 and 4), NRC has endeavoured to ensure that (1) the recruitment and selection process for teachers is done in a transparent way and as much as possible, harmonised with the current practices of government and/or other educational partners; and (2) that teachers and other educational personnel receive periodic, contextualised and needs-focused training to deliver the AE curriculum and provide an educational experience that is protective and of quality. This has been achieved to varying rates of success across the programmes reviewed. Table 4 (on the next page) provides a summary of some of the key features of some of these programmes where sufficient documentation was available.

Some of the key issues to arise from review of NRC's work with AE teachers are that:

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**1 Recruitment of teachers has been carefully considered in all programmes.** NRC has carefully considered the best approach to recruiting teachers in a conflict-sensitive and sustainable way. For example, in contexts where there were high numbers of unemployed, qualified teachers (often a member of the IDP or refugee community), these individuals were selected; likewise, in contexts where the existing pool of qualified teachers was already in short supply, NRC acknowledged that recruiting such individuals would drain the formal system of these individuals and instead sought to add value by training unqualified teachers with interest in entering into the education system. Ideally though their involvement in NRC's programming, the goal was to create a pathway for these individuals to reintegrate into the formal schooling system, expanding the pool of skilled and qualified teachers in the country. In all contexts, efforts have been made to seek female candidates with varying success.

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**2 There does not appear to be a direct correlation between the type of teacher recruited and the learning outcomes of students.** For example, in the case of Liberia where unqualified high school graduates were the teachers, the programme successfully prepared the majority of AE students to perform at high levels on the WAEC, and reintegrate into the formal schooling system. Conversely, utilisation of existing teachers in context like Puntland does not presuppose better student performance on re-entry examinations.

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**3 Instead, the quality of ongoing teacher professional development and support appears to be a key enabler to programme effectiveness.** Programmes which invested significant resources into classroom-based professional development opportunities – such as micro-teaching, classroom observation, and school based supervision – resulted in teachers

who reported and were observed delivering curriculum content in a fashion most in line with programme expectations.<sup>25</sup> The more localised and needs based such training was, the more effective it was seen, in the eyes of teachers and school directors in improving practice. Conversely, generic, modularised programmes of support were seen to be less relevant and effective in shifting teacher practice towards ones reflective of accelerated learning principles. For example, a 2011 evaluation from Puntland<sup>26</sup> suggests that, “*an arguably narrow approach to capacity building (focused on trainings rather than rather than continuous adult learning) may have circumscribed competency gains,*” and that a “*wholesale approach to training is unlikely to attain significant competency gains.*”

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**4 Processes for the reintegration of teaching personnel into the formal system is an ongoing challenge.** NRC's programmes have been challenged by the lack of Ministry of Education follow through on earlier commitment to absorb NRC trained teachers into the formal education system (i.e. Burundi, Angola, Somaliland) or to increase flexibility in its regulations to allow AE teachers to remain in such a role but within the formal system (i.e. Colombia). Adding to this challenge is the willingness of these teachers to work in the formal system, where conditions of employment may be less favourable in terms of choice of school of deployment, class size, training opportunities, and salary. Evaluations from DR Congo have found that many former TEP teachers had left teaching for work in the private sector, or moved to urban areas and sought teaching opportunities there.

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<sup>25</sup> See for example NRC (2011) *Burundi Final Evaluation TEP 1999-2011 and NRC (2005) Fast Track to Completion: The Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS) and the Distance Education Programme (DEP) in Sierra Leone.*

<sup>26</sup> NRC and UNICEF (2011). *Support to IDP Education and Pupils Transition from ABE to Formal School in Puntland: Project Evaluation*, p. 19



**5 Availability of appropriate teacher resources has been critical for teachers’ sense of professional efficacy.** There have been concerted efforts on the part of NRC to ensure that its AE teachers have the required resources and materials to do their job well. While emphasis is also put into developing teacher and student made resources in many programmes, the existence of a clear and structured manual or guide, along the lines of the TEP pack, is highly appreciated and valued by teachers. These teachers often enter into the classroom without previous experience. Having a detailed, step-by-step guide for delivery of individual lessons, or at least a framework of model lessons, has been identified in several evaluations as affording them an important ‘crutch’ to rely on at the outset.

**➔ RECOMMENDATION**

Teacher professional development should be an ongoing commitment and priority of all of NRC’s AE provision and should be resourced appropriately. Effective pre-service and in-service provision should be based on a thorough analysis of teachers’ needs, and contextualised to their classrooms and environments of practice. Priority should be given to supporting regular in-service training and support mechanisms such as micro teaching opportunities, structured and informal observations of practice, and demonstration lessons in the classroom. Focus should be given to developing teachers as reflective practitioners through such activity. Where possible, supervisions and training opportunities at the school level should be facilitated by skilled, trained local teachers with ongoing support from NRC.

**Table 4:** An overview of teacher recruitment, training and support within NRC’s AE programming

TYPE OF TEACHERS RECRUITED	REMUNERATION	PRE-SERVICE TRAINING
<b>Liberia Accelerated Learning Programme (2007-2010)</b>		
Unqualified, high school graduates to act as teachers and teaching assistants	Teachers given higher incentive than salary of government counterparts	10 days, focused on curriculum content, teaching methodology, protection, psychosocial needs; delivered by NRC
<b>Côte d’Ivoire Bridging Tomorrow Programme (2012-2015)</b>		
Volunteer teachers from community	None	20 days, focused on curriculum content, teaching methodology and protection, GBV; delivered by NRC/CSO partners
<b>Burundi TEP (1999-2011)</b>		
Mainly unqualified individuals with minimum 9-10 years of schooling	Paid by local communes, at rates set by them. Led to significant problems.	2-4 weeks; Training on curriculum content, participatory teaching methods, child protection by MoE officials
<b>Sierra Leone CREPS (2000-2005)</b>		
Mainly unqualified, untrained teachers not on gov’t payroll	Total incentive greater than equivalent salary of counterparts in government schools	2 weeks; Focused on content of CREPS manual
<b>Ethiopia Dolo Ado ABE (2013-Present)</b>		
Preference given to those from refugee community with Grade 8 equivalency; secondary choice to those from host community with teachers certification	Incentive equivalent to salary for teachers in formal system plus extra incentive for good performance	5-10 days orientation on ABE curriculum areas, teaching methodologies, classroom management, assessment, and psychosocial support
<b>Angola TEP (1996-2007)</b>		
Preference given to qualified teachers within IDP population	Paid directly by government	5 weeks
<b>Somaliland ABE (2004-Present)</b>		
IDPs and those from host community who have completed primary (preferably secondary education)	Incentive provided by NRC with expectation of teachers also receiving some payment from MoE	1 month, focus on ABE curriculum, participatory learning, lesson planning, classroom management, teaching techniques
<b>South Central Somalia ABE (2009-Present)</b>		
IDPs and those from host community who have completed secondary education (those with lower levels accepted but require intensive training/upgrading of qualification)	Incentive paid by NRC and equivalent to prevailing salary of teachers in formal system	1 week with focus on ABE curriculum, basic pedagogy, participatory learning, making learning relevant
<b>Puntland ABE (2009-Present)</b>		
Existing formal education teachers	Extra incentive paid for additional duties assumed	6 days training on ABE teaching methodologies/lesson planning, one day on psychosocial support, one day on gender
<b>DR Congo TEP (2001-Present)</b>		
Qualified teachers (D4 or D6 in pedagogy) who are not currently employed, with priority given to IDPs, returnees and repatriated teachers	Incentive paid by NRC	1 month, focus on TEP Pack, child-friendly teaching methodologies



IN-SERVICE TRAINING	MECHANISMS FOR REINTEGRATION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE
Microteaching, regular classroom based supervision, regular refresher workshops	Pathways created for official qualification/training aligned to MoE minimum requirements	Structured teachers manual with lesson plans for core subjects; MoE textbooks
Two-day refresher workshops, twice annually	Unknown	Unknown
Regular classroom-based supervision, demonstration lessons by local supervisor; ad-hoc workshops	At end of programme, teachers accepted by government for certification pathway, but no guarantees of employment	TEP Teachers Guide (contextualised for Burundi)
Ongoing support from qualified teachers/supervisors through micro-teaching, weekly visitations, monthly workshops	Distance Education Programme over course of 3 years offered to all teachers to earn official teachers certificates; at end of programme promise by government to absorb all qualified CREPS teachers	Provision of syllabus and CREPS teachers' manual
5 days on the job training/month, supported by different implementing partners	Unknown	Syllabus, teachers guide, textbooks to be available
Ongoing courses and workshops on content areas such as Mathematics, Portuguese	Unknown	Structured teachers guide and plan for core subject areas
Ongoing short-course trainings based on analyses of needs of teachers	Opportunity through separate EU funded project for select teachers to earn diploma through structured observations, classes during holiday period over 3 years. Qualified teachers often not absorbed into Ministry personnel	ABE Curriculum, teachers and students' guides
Ad-hoc short course provision based on need	None	ABE Curriculum, teachers and students' guides
Visits by NRC programme team on occasion, expectation of MoE supervisory visits; no refresher trainings	Teachers already part of system	ABE Curriculum, teachers and students' guides
Trainers (MoE inspectors) provide regular oversight of TEP teachers; week long trainings offered 2-3 times over course of programme on modules such as child protection, psychosocial support, peace education	MoU in place with Ministry to integrate TEP teachers into the formal system annually	TEP Manual and Pack

## BUILDING CAPACITY BEYOND THE PROGRAMME

Beyond working directly with teachers immediately responsible for delivering the AE programme to students, NRC programmes have worked to varying degrees on capacity development with teachers, head teachers, school inspectors, and regional educational authorities in the formal education setting. This work has often been predicted on addressing several key issues that have plagued AE programmes traditionally. One is the stigmatisation of AE learners when they reintegrate into the formal schooling system. As discussed previously, educational personnel in the formal system may have preconceived and negative beliefs about the capacity of these learners, and also about the quality of education provided in AE programmes. Another issue related to reintegration is the 'culture shock' AE students experience in terms of pedagogical approach and teacher-student relationships when moving from NRC's programmes into the formal schooling structures where teacher practices may be much less student-focused. A final, and important issue is ongoing support for AEP teachers, who are often supervised, mentored or partnered with colleagues, supervisors and inspectors with less familiarity of the pedagogical approaches of the programme. In some circumstances this had led to AEP teachers being told they are doing things incorrectly, and led to tension between AEP teachers and peers/supervisors.<sup>27</sup>

To surmount these issues, programmes have increasingly engaged with teachers and other personnel in schools where AE students transit into or are hosted in. For example, in DR Congo, out of recognition that a narrow targeting of support on solely the TEP students and teachers was fostering jealousy and stigmatisation, teacher training was extended to the entire host school

where TEP classes are being held.<sup>28</sup> In Colombia, where the focus of NRC's actions is on institutionalising FEM's as standard practice, training targets all teachers within the local Educational Authorities it supports to understand the importance and benefits of such models. Across most programmes, head teachers/school directors and local education officials are often included in NRC's training activities and asked to take on supervisory and supportive roles in the ongoing professional development of AEP educators. In Sierra Leone, the utilisation of Ministry personnel in this regard was seen as a strength of CREPS, and helped to create a clear place and role for the host schools and local educational authorities within the programme.

Finally, where former AEP teachers or trainers have been able to transfer their work to the formal school setting, there has been greater continuity in the educational experiences of transit students, and transference of AL principles and practices into the mainstream system.<sup>29</sup> While this has been a struggle for many of NRC's programmes, the important role these teachers serve in acting as champions of AE should not be lost, and efforts should continue to support their accreditation and integration into the formal schooling system.

### → RECOMMENDATION

NRC should continue to consider and advocate for pathways for the 'unqualified' teachers it employs into its programme to enter into the formal school system through certification, recognised training, and coordination with national training institutes and the Ministry of Education. A key component of the sustainability of NRC's efforts will be the continued presence of the educators it has worked with in the formal schooling structure.

<sup>27</sup> For example, the 2011 APES evaluation from Somalia notes that one component of the programme that has been less effective is the key resource teacher support, where ABE teachers were to be supported by teachers within the formal schooling system. Due to the starkly different approaches employed within the ABE programme, there has been significant resistance on the part of formal school teachers to effectively act as a 'key resource'.

<sup>28</sup> In addition to this, cash grants were given to host schools, recreational activities organised for all students, school materials given to teachers and students in host schools in addition to TEP students, and Risk Reduction plans created with the whole school. The aim was to ensure that issues of stigmatisation, which a 2012 evaluation noted as being a significant barrier for former TEP students upon re-entry, could be minimised.

<sup>29</sup> See 2011 Burundi Evaluation and 2011 DRC Evaluation

## A COORDINATED APPROACH IN DOLO ADO

In late 2012, humanitarian actors responsible for the provision of education in the Dolo Ado camps of southern Ethiopia (Education Coordination Group) agreed to develop a joint ABE strategy in late 2012 in response to the burgeoning number of Somali refugee children (11-14) who had never been to school, but were too old to enter into the first years of primary school. The first step in the process involved developing a common curriculum that condensed the first four years of the primary education Ethiopian Somali curriculum into three years. Acknowledging the need for the Somali refugees, when they return, to be proficient in not only Somali and English, but also Arabic and Islamic, partnerships were created with Koranic schools to support this work. A standardised process for the recruitment, selection and training of teachers was also included in the strategy, and a common incentive payment for teachers who worked in the programme agreed to. Working with the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), the group reached consensus on a harmonised transition competency assessment process with clearly identified roles and responsibilities divided between the ARRA, each of the implementing partners for ABE, and UNHCR. As part of this process, a common process and approach for students not passing the assessment was also agreed to, specifically that these learners will be provided remedial classes by the implementing partners and given the opportunity to sit the examination a second time. Through the education working group, and with the agreement of ARRA it was agreed that students not passing would be transferred to Grade 4, rather than asked to repeat Level III of the ABE programme to reduce drop out.

The development of a shared strategy for the provision of ABE in Dolo Ado is an excellent example of how NRC has worked in partnership with other implementing partners, the local community, UNHCR, and ARRA to ensure a coordinated, substantial and comprehensive approach to the needs of overaged learners in the camp. It is also an important example of how the INEE Minimum Standard on coordination, namely how "...planning, information management, capacity development, mobilisation, and advocacy are coordinated by an inter-agency coordination committee," can be operationalised within the auspices of ABE provision.

## INSTITUTIONALISING CHANGE

It is increasingly recognised that the sustainability of AE provision, and the assurance that individual programmes contribute to broader goals of improving educational access, quality and relevance nationally, regionally and globally, is predicated on such activity having influence beyond that of direct beneficiaries. As Baxter and Bethke (2009) suggest, quality provision is predicated on having a supportive legislative framework (that includes formal recognition for qualification gained through AEPs), clear policy guidance and/or curriculum frameworks for AE provision, dedicated resources, trained and skilled administrative staff on AEPs at the local, regional and national level, and effective assessment regimes to both accredit and recognise the learning achieved by

the beneficiaries of AEPs.<sup>30</sup> In contexts where NRC has been operating, some or all of these conditions may not be present at the outset. In response, strong efforts have been made in various programmes to work to create these enabling conditions for quality AE provision.

Across all contexts, NRC has worked in partnership with Ministries of Education to develop and refine the AEP curriculum to ensure it is aligned with the national curriculum, and covers key learning areas that form the basis of later assessment; or in contexts where a curriculum already exists, to utilise and/or work with the Ministry of Education to modify this curriculum to suit the programme's purposes. In the cases of Liberia and Mali, for example, NRC adapted existing

<sup>30</sup> Baxter, P. and Bethke, L. (2009). *Alternative education: filling the gap in emergency and post-conflict situations*. UNESCO IIEP: Paris.



curriculum developed by either the government or other partners to suit the needs of its own programme. Likewise in South Central Somalia and Puntland, time was spent, in partnership with the relevant Ministries, to adapt the existing AEP curriculum and textbooks from Somaliland (also developed by NRC) to their programmatic needs. In programmes, however, such as Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia (Dolo Ado), and Uganda significant time was invested at the start to create a new accelerated curriculum (teachers manuals, textbooks, curriculum framework). Where other providers were involved in supporting AE provision, NRC coordinated its curriculum development process with other actors.

While focussing on aligning content to the national curriculum, NRC has also ensured that important issues for children facing displacement and conflict such as child protection, peace education, gender sensitivity, conflict resolution and psychosocial support were included into the pedagogy and content of what was taught. In some instances, such as DR Congo, elements of NRC's curricula – specifically peace education and conflict resolution – have gradually made their way into the formal education curriculum, out of acknowledgement of the effectiveness and importance of such pedagogical approaches.

Included in this process has also been the establishment and agreement on transition examinations/assessment regimes to allow AE learners to reintegrate into the formal education system. When possible, NRC programmes have endeavoured to use existing examination regimes and systems (such as the WAEC), but where required, it has also supported the development of new assessments (often in coordination with other AEP providers) to support the transit of students. In order to guarantee quality-assurance and benchmarking of these assessments, NRC has supported Ministries in places like South Central Somalia and Ethiopia, to administer such examinations to ABE and formal education students, and then to analyse whether their performance comes out at roughly equivalent levels or not.<sup>31</sup>

NRC has also worked in partnership with other ABE providers and the national governments to help establish or reform a set of guidelines for ABE programming in contexts like Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. Through these efforts, frameworks have been created to cover critical issues

<sup>31</sup> When this was recently done in South Central Somalia it was found that the ABE Level IV students performed better than their formal school Grade 8 counterparts.

## SUPPORTING THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF FLEXIBLE EDUCATION MODELS IN COLOMBIA

NRC has worked in Colombia since late 2004 on the development and provision of educational services to out of school children and youth through several informal flexible education models (FEMs). These models include: (1) Learning Circles which are catch-up programmes of one year duration to allow IDP children to integrate into the formal schooling system; (2) High School programmes (either High Schools for Peace or Ethno High Schools) for IDP and host community youth (13-25 years old) to acquire a high school diploma, and improve their skills towards promoting peaceful co-existence in their communities; and (3) Adult Education Programmes to support IDP and host community adults to gain basic numeracy and literacy skills, and better enable them to understand and exercise their rights. All models are designed to increase levels of access, permanence, quality and inclusiveness in the education of vulnerable and conflict-affected children, young people, and adults (Afro-Colombian, rural and host communities).

At the outset, NRC was engaged extensively in the delivery of these FEMs. By 2010, however, this shifted to a new set of objectives, specifically to build local capacity to support the institutionalisation of FEMs for IDP populations and to strengthen public policy around education provision for IDPs. As one of NRC's national education officers identified, "we successfully developed three different FEMs, but they were quite costly and the number of beneficiaries we could reach by being engaged in direct service delivery was quite small...by shifting our objectives we could have a greater impact."

Unlike many of the other contexts NRC operates in, Colombia has a strong legal framework in place for guaranteeing the provision of education, regardless of circumstance, to anyone under 18, and affording both sufficient resources and flexibility about how such education could be delivered. There is also a strong legal framework to support the rights of IDPs. For Colombia, the issue is not about a lack of resources or an appropriate policy environment to support FEMs. Rather, the challenge is about identifying where out of school children and youth were located, and ensuring that local education providers have the skills and capacities to support FEMs.

Since 2010, NRC has worked with local education authorities to conduct a census of their school-aged population and identify out of school children and youth. To date, these efforts have identified and reintegrated more than 60,000 children into educational institutions, with 8,000 becoming enrolled in FEMs. NRC has also managed to institutionalize three of its FEMs into the Colombian education system. It has also worked alongside Secretariats of Education to develop systems to finance and contract FEMs in their jurisdictions. Working with public universities, and local and community organisations, 231 FEM teachers, coordinators, and facilitators were trained over four years. Additionally, NRC worked with the universities to institutionalise degree programmes focused on training teachers to work in the FEMs, particularly the ethno-education models. Three universities now offer a specialised teaching degree in FEMs as part of their teacher education programmes. Finally, in response to a legal decree passed in 2011 which guarantees education to nearly 11,000 displaced children in the region of Southwest Colombia and allocates approximately \$10 Million USD to achieve this goal, NRC has been contracted by the Ministry of Education to help local education authorities meet this obligation. That the Ministry of Education now sees NRC as best placed to assist it in achieving this mandate is a testament to the successes of its efforts to date.

such as coordination and leadership on ABE provision by government, assessment schemes that allow for the formal recognition and transfer of students into formal schooling, and policies and procedures for the recruitment and professional development of ABE educators. In doing so, NRC

has drawn on its extensive experience in delivering AEPs globally, alongside the INEE Minimum Standards, to ensure that the frameworks that have been established suit the needs of out of school children in a fashion that is conflict-sensitive and does no further harm.

## 3

# ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT PRESENT

## MOVING ACCELERATED EDUCATION PROVISION BEYOND AN ACCELERATED PACE

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In recent years, increased attention has been given to the pedagogy that underpins accelerated education provision. This being spurred by acknowledgement that accelerated education is about more than children learning content at a faster pace, but also on pedagogical practices which allow students to learn in better, deeper, and differentiated ways. A key assertion made by Finnan and Swanson (p. 9) is that, “*accelerated learning is more about deeper learning than faster learning*”.<sup>32</sup> Specifically, accelerated learning (AL) stresses the importance of child-centred and constructivist pedagogies that allow students to connect new knowledge with prior knowledge, and relate lesson content to lived experience. The aim is to enable learners to construct their own personal meanings from the content knowledge gained. Deeping learning also entails scaffolding learning and moving towards increasing abstraction and application of key concepts and ideas. Charlick<sup>33</sup> identifies accelerated learning as consisting of a series of stages which consists of:

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- 1 **Pre-learning:** the student’s minds and bodies are made ready for and open to learning a new concept or skills or to take in the new information

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  - 2 **Learning:** new information is presented to students through any variety of multisensory experiences in order to reach children and youth with different learning styles and intelligences

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  - 3 **Practice:** Students master the new information by explaining it to others, solving potential or real problems relating to real-life situations

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  - 4 **Reflection:** student learning is monitored and evaluated, through self-evaluation, feedback from peers and teachers, testing and real-life applications

As best practice within AEPs, this has been interpreted within pedagogical practice towards shifting teaching and learning towards learner-centred approaches in which the student is more actively engaged in the learning process, their emotional and social needs are better considered, and where higher-order and team skills are emphasised. Additionally learning should be focused on ensuring relevance and applicability to personal context, and afford students opportunities to apply knowledge through project-based learning.

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<sup>32</sup> Finnan, C., and Swanson, J.D. (2000). *Accelerating the Learning of All Students: Cultivating Culture Change in Schools, Classrooms, and Individuals*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

<sup>33</sup> Charlick, J. (2005). *Accelerating learning for children in developing countries: joining research and practice*. Washington DC: USAID.

When assessing the evidence-base to date from NRC's AEPs, it would appear that most have incorporated AL principles into their curriculum in fairly limited ways. While all stressed a move towards participatory and child-centred teaching approaches, it would appear that this was often noted to be focused on particular traits of child-centeredness such as group work, games/music, brainstorming discussion, rather than a systematic rethinking of student-teacher interactions in the classrooms. Often, programmes did not cater instruction to the particular backgrounds and needs of learners and were constrained by a curriculum that was seen by teachers to be fairly rigid. Opportunities to assess students' prior/knowledge and learning, and develop lessons based on this were infrequently noted to occur in evaluations reviewed. In this way, most of NRC's programming to date would appear to work by drawing on traits of child-centred methodology to deliver an abbreviated curriculum in a more effective way. Lacking is evidence of students learning in a deeper, more engaged fashion.

Evaluations, when they involved classroom observations, often remarked that teachers appeared to be struggling to shift the locus of control to the students, and instead maintained a didactic presence in the classroom. While in part this is the product of insufficient training, it is also the product of the condensed nature of the curriculum where there is increased pressure on teachers to move through content at a faster pace to ensure students are able to transit to formal schooling. When assessment regimes remain focused on rote learning and the recall of material, curriculum and pedagogical practices remain influenced by this. It was readily acknowledged in more than one interview with programme teams that despite many AEPs' curricula stressing a holistic, integrated and project-based learning experience, the reality was that teaching remain highly structured, compartmentalized by subject area, and focused on the subjects that were assessed on final examinations (typically mathematics and literacy).

A notable exception is the FEM's in Colombia, where the institutional environment for innovation in pedagogy is more enabling. For example, in the Learning Circles, teachers assess the knowledge and skills of each individual learner, as well

as their psychosocial needs, and then develop an individual learning plan accordingly. As part of this initial assessment, home visits are also conducted to observe the child's actual living conditions and his/her interactions in the home and community. In doing so, the learning experience is tailored to the particular experiences and background of the child, rather than against a grade-level expectation.

With the Ethno High Schools, particularly those developed for the Afro-Colombian population, significant efforts have been given to ensuring relevance of learning to community aspirations. The curriculum development process followed a backwards design process, where the community and prospective learners were asked to articulate its visions and expectations for a secondary education curriculum that would suit their needs. From this, the curriculum took shape. It was later mapped against the national curriculum by a team of expert curriculum designers. The end product was a curriculum that is founded in indigenous values, beliefs and practices but that correlates with national standards and expectations.

The fact that students perform equivalently to students in 'mainstream' schools provides testament to the ability for curricula to diverge from standard practice (see Table 3). The learning process in both the Ethno High Schools and the High Schools for Peace is guided by strong inquiry-based practice, which focuses on topics and concerns that are of interest to students. As described by the national education coordinator, "*the boys in these schools love football, so we teach mathematics and science through sport.*" Additionally, a strong focus of the curriculum is on project-based learning,<sup>34</sup> where students apply learning to addressing actual community concerns – such as security, recruitment of youth into paramilitary groups, and coca harvesting. Data

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<sup>34</sup> Project-based learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge. Projects are typically framed by a meaningful problem to solve or question to answer that features an authentic real-world issue for the students, at the appropriate level of challenge. It is based on a process of sustained inquiry, based on a cycle of asking questions, finding resources, applying information and reflecting on the effectiveness of their inquiry, similar in many ways to action research projects.

provided by NRC Colombia suggests that based on the experiences and perceptions of learners, such an approach is highly relevant, pertinent, and of use. Students interviewed felt that the Ethno High Schools allowed them to learn about their ethnicity, culture and ways of contributing to their community. Students expressed high levels of agreement that the FEMs enabled them to better resolve conflicts peacefully, understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and play a constructive role in family and community decisions.<sup>35</sup>

## → RECOMMENDATION

To date, limited understanding exists amongst programme teams about Accelerated Learning principles and how they are usefully employed into the delivery, design and evaluation of NRC's AE programming. As future guidance takes shape, this should be stressed, and evidence of what is possible within the realm of AE programming should be highlighted (i.e. the case of Colombia). Acknowledging that each context is different, however, programmes should consider to what degree they might move beyond a narrow conception of learner-centred pedagogy to more fully incorporate AL principles into their programmes – specifically in the guidance provided to teachers, the texts utilised, the nature of the curriculum (subject-specific versus thematically-focused), and the internal assessment regimes utilised.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AE PROVISION TO PROTECTION AND PEACEBUILDING NEEDS

It became apparent during the course of the evaluation that an important outcome of activity to date has been its contribution to peacebuilding<sup>36</sup> in many of the contexts it is operating in. While not an explicit or measured outcome, it was highly valued as one by beneficiaries and programme teams alike.

Specifically, NRC's AE programmes have supported the peaceful co-existence of host and displaced communities. In DR Congo, the TEP programme was described as instilling an attitude of tolerance and acceptance within its pupils by virtue of its integration of students from different communities (host and IDP). It was also identified as serving to reduce the typical stigmatisation levelled against IDP populations, and helping to unite the community in a common concern around improved educational opportunities for all.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, in Puntland the ABE programme was found to create opportunities for social interaction between displaced and host communities through meetings and joint activities. It also helped students to understand and empathise with the experiences of others.<sup>38</sup> Programmes where peace education, human rights and conflict resolution were included in the curriculum also equipped learners with life skills that would support reconstruction and stability.<sup>39</sup>

The contributions of programming to peacebuilding also became a recurring theme in interviews with programme managers. In Somalia, for example, it was acknowledged that NRC's support to the CECs helped to bridge clan based divides

<sup>35</sup> NRC Colombia (2015) *FEM Beneficiary Impact Report, Year 4*

<sup>36</sup> Peacebuilding is understood here as more than conflict sensitivity, but rather the construction of a positive peace that begins to transform aspects of injustice and division. For a more extended discussion of what peace building in and through education might look like see <http://goo.gl/lFziyu>

<sup>37</sup> NRC (2011) *An Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Teacher Emergency Package – Programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp 35-36

<sup>38</sup> NRC (2011) *Support to IDP Education & pupils transition from ABE to formal school in Puntland*

<sup>39</sup> NRC Colombia (2015) *FEM Beneficiary Impact Report, Year 4*; NRC (2010) *Protecting Children's Rights to Education: Evaluation of NRC's ALP in Liberia*



and broker effective working relationships between traditionally splintered segments of society. In Colombia, it was felt that the government valued NRC's FEMs largely for its peacebuilding approach. With the current political economy of the country, which is geared towards processes of reconciliation, recognition and redistribution as part of the peace settlement, the FEMs play an important role in helping to restore citizen's confidence in the state, and ensure that education helps to broker a peace dividend within marginalised communities.

### ➔ RECOMMENDATION

While supporting local integration and durable solutions is a part of NRC's current theory of change for AE provision, the important contributions which its programming makes to peacebuilding (as identified by UNICEF's Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) initiative) are somewhat ignored. Particularly, there is strong evidence to suggest AE programming is contributing to processes of reconciliation, as well as redistributing educational opportunity and recognising and representing the unique needs of marginalised communities through its activities. While supporting local integration is already included in NRC's long-term outcomes for AE programme, other dimensions of peacebuilding such as strengthening mechanisms for the representation of marginalised groups in host communities, and fostering a culture of reconciliation between displaced peoples and host communities (outcomes which NRC's AEPs already achieve in many circumstances), could be made more explicit in the Theory of Change.

## LEARNING FROM THE PAST: WHAT ROLE DOES M&E SERVE?

Across NRC's AE programming there is evidence to suggest that monitoring and evaluation activities have served a formative purpose in the refinement and improvement of programme delivery. Monitoring data, specifically that on student retention, drop out and reintegration, has been used to better understand factors pushing students out of school and allowing programmes to respond in kind. As discussed earlier, the financial barriers and pressures facing households have been increasingly recognised within NRC programmes as a key factor driving drop out. In response, initiatives are supporting households financially, either directly or indirectly. Examples such as the savings groups in DR Congo (discussed previously), Mothers Clubs in Côte d'Ivoire, and Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme in Puntland are good examples of this. Additionally, issues around the stigmatisation of former AE students, in contexts like DR Congo and Somaliland, have led to programmes engaging more concertedly in whole-school support approaches that serve to diminish the distinction between AE learners and others.

As has already been discussed, a significant knowledge gap exists in many programmes when it comes to reintegration trajectories of AE transit students. When such information has been made available through tracer studies, there is evidence to show the important role data can serve in reshaping programme design (see earlier discussion). Consideration might be given to providing global guidance on how to effectively conduct tracer studies, and ways that incorporating such tracer studies can be built into programme designs.

While learning within individual programmes has been apparent, what also became evident when reviewing programme documentation and speaking to programme teams, was how little knowledge existed of the current activities and past



challenges and successes of other AEPs.<sup>40</sup> Given the innovative practices and responses that are occurring globally within NRC's AE provision, there would appear to be a need to bolster and strengthen cross-programme learning, potentially by supporting thematically focused or regional evaluations. Current concerns and questions – such as bottlenecks and pathways students face on re-entry to the formal schooling system, teacher training and accreditation approaches, multi-competency responses to AE provision, and what forms that Accelerated Learning principles are incorporated into programme design and delivery – could all be explored from a global or regional perspective, drawing on case studies of innovative practice.

Finally, there are increased opportunities for programmes to use M&E data for learning purposes with a broader constituency, specifically key stakeholders within the educational apparatus in host communities and countries. More could be

done to identify the contribution of AE provision to local, regional, national and international goals of reaching the most marginalised and ensuring they complete a full course of basic education. Doing so would require programme teams to collect and report on comparative benchmark data for the formal education system as a whole more systematically, potentially annually as part of reporting into GORS. Data to be collected would include drop out rates, transition rates, completion rates and passage rates on examinations for students in neighbouring formal schools. This would help programmes to (1) set realistic benchmarks and targets for success; and (2) provide a comparative barometer of how programmes are tracking against the formal schooling system. Comparative analysis could also help NRC programmes to better demonstrate their “added value” to the educational system as a whole (as was done in Somalia for example), and provide stronger evidence of NRC's ability to reach the most marginalised and afford them success in contexts where this is not the normal pattern.

<sup>40</sup> The exception to this were earlier evaluations of the TEP in Burundi, Angola and DR Congo which were all completed by the same evaluator and enabled assessments to look across programmes.

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# LIBERIA

## ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMME

2007 - 2010

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Facilitate access for children ages 10-17 with little or no previous educational background;
- 2 Expand access to Adult Literacy Classes particularly for women;
- 3 Increase community awareness on education, child protection, human/ rights;
- 4 Ensure sustainability of primary schools initiated by NRC

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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Strong evidence of access to education for target population and young mothers; Strong evidence of ability of programme to support students to transition into secondary system based on examination results.

Challenges with retention in full ALP and transition to formal education system (secondary); Concerns raised regarding sustainability because of weak Ministry absorptive capacity to take on management of additional schools.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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Pre learning activities introduced to support learners who had never been to school (preliteracy and prenumeracy skills), teachers reported using group work, brain-storming, learners giving feedback to each other; Condenses 6 year primary education curriculum into 3 year cycle.

Curriculum not deemed to take into account learning needs of children who had not been to school.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Agreement, accredited, alignment with Ministry systems for AEP, ensured regular teacher attendance, establishment of community support mechanisms through PTAs/Community Mobilisers; Pathways created for reintegration into formal system (secondary level), excellent responses to access-related barriers (i.e. flexible timing, school feeding), long-term funding for one full cycle secured (ran 2007-2010), sustained teacher education support (pre and in-service), use of AEP curriculum based on Liberian primary curriculum that had been developed by UNICEF.

Timely resource deployment not achieved due to government capacity issues; Community involvement/management of schools still deemed insufficient to sustainability.

## EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Development of ALP as an early recovery response emerged out of earlier emergency response (REEP) immediately after cessation of fighting.
- Involvement of local religious leaders seen as a strength of the programme.
- Use of AL principles to engage learners and ensure they felt successful.
- Schooling feeding programme (where it existed and consistently employed).
- Addressed gender barriers for young women (particularly young mothers) in terms of accessing education and created tailored programme of support for them, used female teaching assistants due to lack of available female teachers.
- Rehabilitation of school infrastructure reduced access-related barriers.
- Acknowledging constraints with using current Liberian teacher workforce, recruited and trained new teachers instead.
- Insufficient attention to issue of drop out from ALP (particularly girls), focus on equivalency and use of approved curriculum meant programme not necessarily tailored to needs of target population.
- Unable to recruit and attract female teachers (because of context).
- Lack of focus on vocational support/livelihood pathways.
- Lack of female teachers, particularly for Young Mothers Group to discuss topics like SRHR confidentially a concern.

## EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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Evidence exist regarding success rates being equivalent or higher to mainstream schools on national examinations for entry into secondary school between AEP and formal school students; Only anecdotal evidence on longer-term impacts in terms of students success in secondary from some secondary teachers.

## STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- Good tracking of student achievement, attendance within programme.
- No tracking done of those who “dropped out” – a lost opportunity to understand what factors had led to this; no formal tracing of graduates of ALP (only anecdotal accounts).
- Interviews done with teachers in secondary schools but not rigorous.
- Evidence based against outcomes of Adult Literacy, community awareness (mobilisation) and sustainability not strong.
- Little evidence of effectiveness of teacher support.

# KENYA

## DADAAB ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION STRATEGY

## FOCUS ON ACCELERATED LEARNING COMPONENT LED BY NRC

20012 - 2015

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Enable younger Somali refugee pupils to transfer to the formal school system and ensure older students are well placed to face life having achieved functional literacy.
- 2 Catch-up programme/ABE condenses 8-year Kenyan Basic Education curriculum into three cycles, and opportunities for intermediate transit based on competency and promotional assessment developed with partners and Kenyan Ministry of Education

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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Evidence of AEP increasing access to male out-of-school students in particular.

Concern around low levels of female participation in AEP, evidence on completion rates and transition rates still weak based on 2014 interim data.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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No evidence per se of AL principles/practices in curriculum or pedagogy based on documentation at hand. Significant concern that no psychosocial support (a critical component of pre-learning) built into design or delivery.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Strong evidence of alignment and coordination amongst AEP providers by:

- ➔ Following Accelerated Curriculum developed by Kenya Institute of Education.
- ➔ Use standardised set of teaching and learning materials.
- ➔ All providers follow time allocation for teaching of subjects; Attempts to strengthen and support long-term AEP provision by recruiting ALP trained teachers from Kenya, and training teachers in NFE (but limited evidence of effectiveness of this).
- ➔ Construction of facilities and provision of resources to support AEP provision and use of YEP centres for AEP provision to allow for greater flexibility of when/how long classes occur.
- ➔ Training and support to AEP teachers still deemed to be insufficient in terms of incorporation of key AEP approaches (multigrade, NFE curriculum, children with diverse needs); Unclear whether use of non-monetary incentives for AEP teachers (additional training,

materials) leads to lack of ability to recruit suitable candidates; Community mobilisation/ incentives to increase girls' participation and reduce stigma not apparent in AEP provision as it is in formal schooling plans.

## EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Multiple streams of AEP delivery created to address needs of diverse target population groups (transition to formal for those with some education over two years, and provision of functional literacy for other vulnerable groups) facing a protracted period of displacement in Kenya.
- Suggestion of NRC adopting a flexible, modular approach to delivery but no evidence of what this meant in practice; Formal pathways for re-entry into Kenyan system created and recognised by MoE.
- Creation of linkages between YEP and functional literacy stream of AEP.
- Community mobilisation mechanism in place; Multi-year funding commitment allows programme to operate over one full cycle of 3 years.
- Suggestion in start up of inclusion of students from host community (up to 15%) a strength considering poor educational outcomes and potential "jealousies".
- Language of instruction (and assessment) of curriculum a barrier to students' needs but NRC working with MoE to allow introduction of Somali as language of instruction
- No opportunity at present for incorporation of Somali SS into curriculum.
- Whether same flexibilities afforded to females in YEP and formal schooling (child care, school meals) also included in AEP provision of NRC.

- No mention of specific recruitment of Somali teachers into AEP.
- Inability to recruit suitable female teachers.
- Lack of psychosocial support as part of programme.

## EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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To date, very little evidence of students transitioning to formal schooling system (approx. 16 sat end of primary assessment in November 2014), but more data may be available after **Jan 2015 assessment results**.

An issue for Dadaab for students who transition is the poor quality of educational provision within camp and even more, in host community. How this works simultaneously with improving quality/ effectiveness of primary/secondary formal school provision yet to be seen.

## STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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Mechanism for longer-term tracking of AEP students in formal education proposed through ID cards; Suggestion of a needs assessment to identify what out of school learners need and want proposed in 2011, unclear how/if results of such an assessment influenced subsequent design.

# COLOMBIA

## VIVE LA EDUCACION

(Learning Circles/High Schools for Peace/  
Ethno High Schools/Adult Literacy)

2005 - present

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 To support IDP children (6-13), youth (13-25) and adults who are out of the school system and overaged.
- 2 Build local capacity to support institutionalisation of FEMs for IDPs.
- 3 Strengthen public policy around education provision for IDPs using CSOs who work with IDPs.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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Project monitoring data 2014 suggests evidence against outcomes 2 and 3, particularly uptake of ethno-Afro Colombian FEM in targeted areas and identification of OOCS to direct service provision at; CIDA (2012) report suggest dropout rates averaging 22% between different components of FEM (lower than other FEMs), and 64% graduating or integrating into formal schooling system with females reporting better outcomes than men.

Excellent gender balance and outcomes for both teachers and students from CIDA report. Qualitative monitoring data suggest significant shifts in gender-perceptions/injustices through curriculum: less discriminatory practices towards women, less use of sexist language, increased knowledge of rights.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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- ➔ Strong evidence of AL principles in learning circles – based on Escuela Nueva model creation of curriculum materials that are of direct relevance and importance to the learners (ethno-education, education about human rights, gender equality, law for adults and secondary students).
- ➔ Students appear to have some role in shaping curriculum that they are taught; Idea of turning teachers into strong forces for social cohesion. **Supportive policy framework at national level for AL principles to be promoted**; Some FEM's tailored to individual student needs: based on home visit, initial assessment, psychosocial assessment.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Supporting institutionalisation of AEP in Ministry systems, including up-skilling of existing teaching workforce in AEP and AL approaches, ensuring that needs assessments done of out of school youth in targeted areas, strengthening capacity of local



institutions (university) to upskill teachers, strengthen public finance commitment to AEP.

Mobilisation of school community around particular infrastructure or school improvement needs and then resourcing them appropriately; Suggestion of good coordination between different actors; Using Education Improvement Plans as a focus for capacity building; **Gender strategy seen to be an example of best practice.**

### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Addressing the different needs of out of school IDP children, youth and adults through different approaches and with different logics of intervention
- Strength of longevity of action is in how NRC has moved from direct implementation to advocacy/replicability role and ensuring that Ministry systems identifying and supporting more vulnerable children and youth; Excellent inclusion mechanisms of students with disabilities. **NRC now being contracted by Ministry to continue support it with FEM implementation, a signal of real ownership!**
- Violence precludes training interventions from effectively engaging female teachers in equal numbers to men

### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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- Direct impact on targeted beneficiaries in terms of post-transition pathways researched as part of a 2009 master's thesis Evidence in 2014 documentation of NRC creating a more coordinated approach for education responses to IDPs along with the Ministry/UNICEF.
- CIDA evaluation suggest community ownership around FEM's still limited--concern for out of school students still a secondary concern; Suggestion that medium to long term outcomes for OOSC still hindered by factors

such as context of poverty and social conflict, teacher mobility/attrition, resistance to innovation in some schools; Discrimination against target population.

### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- M&E systems suggested to include a strong gender component which is quite unique (not just about gender disaggregation in terms of outcomes/outputs) but also in qualitative monitoring activities.
- CIDA review focused on those who had left NRC's programmes in addition to those currently in it and those who had transitioned out of it.
- Final CIDA evaluation also surveyed students about their experience of FEM's and identified which components they appreciated the most (saw as most relevant).

# CÔTE D'IVOIRE

## BRIDGING TOMORROW PROGRAMME

2013 - 2015

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Providing access to education for out of school overaged children 9-15 (particularly girls) including IDPs, returnees and host community children and support their reintegration to the formal education system through either transition to secondary or vocational education

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Project data suggest achievement of increasing access to target population, but significant inefficiencies in terms of their effective reintegration into formal schooling system –YET NOT FRAMED IN THIS WAY IN PROJECT DOCUMENTATION: Of students in the 2013-14 cohort (4435, 1965 girls) enrolled, 84% completed classes (82% girls), 54% successfully sat final exams (51% girls), and 49% joining formal schooling at upper level (46% girls). Current year cohort has higher % of girls enrolled.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

- ➔ Accelerated learning pace of instruction: two years education condensed into one; Curriculum uses child-centred pedagogy
- ➔ All participating monitoring data suggest all teachers using AL approaches such as group work, peer learning, songs for learning into their pedagogy following training.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- ➔ Needs analysis in each community conducted at outset to understand constraints/enablers to programme delivery.
- ➔ Consideration for sustainability built into design by supporting CSOs and Ministry to build management capacity to run catch-up programme autonomously.
- ➔ Volunteer teachers provided with 20 days preservice and ongoing in service support through partner MoE/CSOs in child-centred teaching, GBV; Provision and deployment of learning resources (handled by NRC) effective and timely.
- ➔ Dependence on community provided spaces in schools means many students studying in unsafe classrooms; Ministry of Education has yet to formally accept/adopt bridging

curriculum developed; Unclear if incentives provided to volunteer teachers sufficient to ensure reliable workforce/attendance; Female volunteer teachers comprise only 25% of overall group.

## EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Development of supportive activities to prevent drop out, particularly with Mothers through income-generation activities, Mothers Clubs.
- High levels of community engagement in the selection of beneficiaries, and delivery of program (selection of teachers, providing classroom spaces and resources) with suggestion that this has led to improvement in girls' access to/completion of education.
- Using programme as a mechanism for supporting birth registration of children.
- Unclear how community involvement in selection of teachers and students is cross-verified to address most vulnerable. Students with disabilities do not appear to be adequately catered to in the programme.

## EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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- Expectation of Ministry taking on/expanding bridging programmes may be unrealistic given current capacity. Project proposal suggest monitoring data will follow students through the reintegration process into formal schooling system but no data available yet.

## STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- Project log frame/indicators have built in longer-term outcome measures such as: % of learners who complete first and second year after reintegration (yet conflated as outputs in log frame).
- Weakness of M&E reporting in terms of a clear overview of efficiency of activities in terms of intake--reintegration.
- Suggestion that lesson learned will be provided to Ministry in the long term. No measurement of teacher attrition rates (particularly important given that these are volunteers).

# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

TEP

2001 - present

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Out of school children (ages 10-13), affected by displacement, access quality basic education in a safe, protective environment. Through a 10 month catch-up programme the aim is to ensure these children reintegrate into the formal schooling system

## EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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2005 and 2012 data suggest programme participants have increased access to catch up educational opportunities, and majority complete programme (i.e. dropout rates during year relatively low). Most 'pass' end of year exam and transition into primary school but year of placement varies on mark achieved.

## EVIDENCE EXIST OF ALL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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- ➔ Programme curriculum originally modelled on UNESCO-PEER TEP Pack: providing basic literacy and numeracy skills based on combining Grades 1-2 into a combined 10 month programme. Focus on interactive and participatory methods which anecdotal evidence from 2012 allowed children to ease their psychosocial issues and learn more effectively (no evidence base behind this statement). 2005 evaluation suggestion of systematic concept teaching based on children's cognitive development. Small classes size (no more than 30-35).
- ➔ Issue noted in 2005 regarding limited use of participatory approaches in classroom, and rather dependence on curriculum materials. Teachers also reported to be struggling with accelerated nature of the programme in terms of timetabling, planning, workload. 2005 evaluation notes that, "the term 'participatory' is used in a limited sense" (p. 32).

## ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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- ➔ Agreement in place for Ministry of Education to reintegrate graduates on passage into formal schooling system, **close cooperation of local school officials and with host schools.** Training using local supervisors/experienced teachers for catch-up programme pre/in service provision and monitoring.

- Using unemployed IDP teachers to run programme and to support their subsequent re-entry into the ‘mainstream school’.
- Use of mother tongue for language of instruction seen as beneficial.
- TEP “Pack” of resources for teachers not seen to be of utility in 2005 Evaluation. Alignment with Ministry systems and local schools has tended to lead to too much control on TEP teachers/programme.
- Recruitment of trainers with experience in AE (Adult Education) may not ensure the right level of expertise in working with children.
- Churn of TEP teachers due to focus in design on reintegrating former TEP teachers into government schools and not building long-term programme expertise.

#### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Use of community sensitisation activities to ensure parent engagement in sending their children to programme.
- Use community labour and cash transfers to support school (re)construction (provide employment/income and ensure stronger ownership).
- Strong emphasis on child protection/psychosocial support training in later incarnations of the programme.
- Provision of hygiene kits for adolescent girls.
- Excellent gender equality/participation rates (2012) due to community sensitisation/involvement in recruitment of participants.
- Target population of children 10-13 specifically selected because they have lost opportunity to enrol in formal education system otherwise.

- School vouchers to participating schools to reduce burden of costs that then might be passed to parents.
- Significant challenges regarding government support and accountability for host schools/participating schools that are part of the programme and guarantee that promises kept in terms fee-free education kept (led to significant drop out after withdrawal of NRC support); 2012 evaluation suggests that majority of beneficiaries not the most vulnerable/marginalised but rather children of those with influence in community (p. 17).

#### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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- Data suggest high rates of drop out amongst former bridging programme graduates, largely due to inability to pay school fees rather than issues of academic achievement (2005 and 2012 evaluations).

#### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- **Significant evidence of how programme has evolved since inception:** Increased length of involvement for students, but reduced number of beneficiaries recognising past failures in reintegration.
- Increased focus on supporting schools and vulnerable children within them (school vouchers, teacher training for whole school, extracurricular activities).
- Increased engagement with parents on livelihood opportunities.
- Elimination of double shifts.
- 2005 Evaluation suggested significant issues with how quantitative data on students within programme is collected and tracked. Data on teachers within programme not kept systematically.

# ETHIOPIA

## ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME

2013 - present

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Provide access to basic education for children (ages 11-14) who have missed out on opportunity to enrol in formal education, Grade 1 through provision of a equivalent primary qualification and ability to transit into primary, secondary or skills-based education afterwards.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

- Effective transition of first cohort from NRC's Level 3 programme into Grade 5 primary (98% passage rates on examination), **important to note pass rate much higher than other actors but reasons for this not discussed. No evidence on dropout rates within/between the various stages of the programme.**
- No date available on dropout rates within/between various stages of the programme from monitoring reports provided, unclear degree to which gender a factor.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

- Accelerated pace of education premised on belief that oral language, oral numeracy and environmental learning for this age population already occurred.
- Teachers trained in providing psychosocial support as well as in accelerated learning approaches, focus on teaching to individual learner needs/interest emphasised, learner-centred teaching methodologies emphasised in training programme.
- Clear timetable for subject delivery.
- Use of local resources, and ensuring relevance of learning to learners.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- **Strong evidence** of coordination between educational actors working in the camp: Development of a joint competency assessment exam and process for conducting examination to judge if students ready to transfer into formal education system and harmonisation of condensed curriculum based on national primary curriculum, shared monitoring approach for quality assurance.

- Flexible timetable of when classes offered.
- Remunerated teachers recruited from refugee community with support provided for them to complete secondary school diploma or pursue teacher training courses, as well as significant pre-service and in-service support throughout life of project, agreements reached with Ministry over transition of students to Grade 5 on successful completion of programme, and agreement that Ministry pays part of teacher salaries with IPs providing a bonus.

### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Target population selected based on recognition they had no other options for accessing formal education otherwise (due to max age of entry), needs assessment informed development of programming, curriculum adaptation based on background/needs of learners (Ethiopian-Somali regional curriculum used as foundation, teaching in Somali language rather than Amharic), collaboration/partnership with Qur'anic schools, strong social mobilisation element to programme within community setting.
- Agreement with formal education provider that to reduce drop out/motivation within programme those failing transition examination would either enter into Grade 4 (instead of Grade 5).
- No consideration of alternative pathways for those failing examination who may not want to go onto secondary schooling (i.e. vocational/livelihood pathways).

### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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Need for evidence on what happens to students once they are in formal system (none provided at present).

### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- Suggestion of establishment of participatory M&E approaches but unclear what this means in practice, establishment of intermediary assessment measures within individual schools, programmes to check and monitor progress.
- A lack of any indicators to look at post-transition experiences of former programme participants.

# SOUTH CENTRAL SOMALIA

## ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME/ ACCELERATED PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT

2008 - present

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Increase access to quality basic education services for children (ages 9-14) and integrate back into the formal schooling system at upper primary or secondary level.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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- ➔ Successful completion and transition of 92% of Level IV students to secondary school.
- ➔ No data available on dropout rates within and between various levels of the programme.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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- ➔ Condensed curriculum (8 years into 4) based on reduction in number of subjects, reduction of repetition.
- ➔ Teacher training includes a focus on use of learning aids, group inquiry, experiential learning, management of multi-age groups, but unclear how much scope curriculum affords to enact this.
- ➔ Use of continuous assessment to inform instruction and guide transition decision-making. Guidance from Ministry of Education suggest: participatory learning, contextual, field trips, inquiry and group work, training on multi-age classroom management but unclear how this was observed in practice (even in 2013 evaluation).
- ➔ No evidence of pre-learning support in the form of psychosocial interventions, provision of pre numeracy/literacy skills.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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- ➔ Worked collaboratively with Ministry (NFE Dept) to develop and test validity of Level IV transition exam.
- ➔ **Strong evidence of community collaboration through CEC's:** involved in identifying potential beneficiaries, managing and monitoring school activities, identify and mobilise temporary learning spaces, assist with maintenance of sanitation facilities, establishment of school year and timetabling.



- Ministry engagement in the monitoring activities in addition to regular monitoring by NRC who provides formative feedback to teachers.
- Increased focus on ensuring children have a safe learning environment through school construction, and WATSAN activities.
- Intermediary opportunities to transition between ABE and formal education system based on completion of levels.
- Recruiting suitable candidates (particularly female teachers) from community with suggestion that where suitable candidates cannot be found NRC will support their upskilling to achieve min. secondary qualification.
- Excellent monthly monitoring of teachers through a structured process that involves observation followed by reflection/discussion and next steps outlined.
- No clear policy in South Central for transition from NFE into formal education; Coverage of complete primary cycle costly and difficult to manage.
- Concern about what elimination of subjects like art, craft, physical education, social studies and civic education means for longer-term view on purpose of education.

#### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- With shift in nature of crises, NRC responding through increased partnership/involvement, particularly in school reconstruction, teacher training based on past efforts with ABE.
- Using CEC's to support monitoring and management in contexts where insecurity prevents support from outside.
- Using locally resourced and developed materials for instruction.

- Strong achievement of gender equality in terms of participation but unclear what are factors contributing to this.
- Effective selection of IDPs.
- Appears to be short period of pre-service training for ABE teachers (1 week) and follow up support to teachers not consistent (i.e. based on needs assessment some participate in follow up training, receive in-service support).
- Linkage with WFP to support school feeding created problems when support phased out (higher drop outs).
- Suggestion in APES Evaluation that peer coaching and mentoring of ABE teacher unsupported by Ministry and resisted in schools (key resource teacher concept).

#### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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No data presented on post-transition outcomes, and noted that at present programme not resourced or within scope to look at this. Lack of data on drop out/transition from one level to another. Lack of data on gender of teachers but available on CEC through monitoring reports (good balance). See tracer study notes below.

#### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- Programme added Level IV (Grades 7-8) to bring programme to end of basic education cycle--in response to 2013 Somalia evaluation. Suggestion of using consultants to continuously revise curriculum and texts. Again on what basis has such revision been done?
- Summative gender data looks encouraging (transition to formal schooling/upper ABE) but not explored systematically within monitoring.
- Security issues have been an ongoing challenge for monitoring activities.

# SOMALILAND

## ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION/ACCELERATED PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT

2005 - present

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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2011: Level completion rates relatively low (62% Level 1, 54% Level 3, **302% Level 2**), transition rates to formal school high for those completing Level 3 (87%). Unclear if gender matters as 2013 evaluation would suggest not despite implication of early marriage being a reason for drop. Suggestion in 2013 Evaluation that the programme contributed 9% of overall school attending population.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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See above.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Support put into sensitising community around ABE and reducing stigmatisation which students may otherwise face; Worked with other providers (Save the Children) and Ministry to develop ABE Guidelines contextualised for Somaliland in 2008.

### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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With declaration of free education, NRC adjusted budget to increase number of teachers it was supporting to deal with influx of children; Provision of sanitary kits to girls; See above for other comments relevant to Somaliland.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Increase access to quality basic education services for children (ages 9-14) and integrate back into the formal schooling system at Grade 7.

## EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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Tracer study suggests approx. 20.4% of past ABE graduates have dropped out after being integrated, boys outnumbering girls slightly. Drop out due to poverty, early marriage. Majority of drop out occurs in first year after transition to formal system due to issues of stigma associated with being an overaged/ABE learner, lack of continued NRC support (particularly materials, school meals, uniforms). Key enablers to retention are parental support and self-motivation.

## STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- ➔ Current incarnation of programme suggest increased focus on capacity development of Ministry but no suggestion in changes to programme delivery (adding Level IV, providing support to those who have transited--could be a product of the short-term (2 year) cycle of funding applied to).
- ➔ Miscalculations in terms of how overall completion rates being reported based on Excel spreadsheet (need to track cohort through time)

# PUNTLAND

## ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION/ACCELERATED PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT

2008 - present

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Increase enrolment, strengthen quality of teaching and learning, and strengthen management of formal and non-formal ABE centres with a particular focus on children (ages 9-16) who are out of school.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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- ➔ Low dropout rates during life of ABE (< 3%) and high transition rates into formal schooling sector.
- ➔ Programme achieved gender parity in terms of participation.
- ➔ Contributed 7% to total enrolment in primary by bringing OOSC into schooling (APES Evaluation).

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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- ➔ Teachers received training in psychosocial support/gender but limited in scope (1 day).
- ➔ Suggestion in APES action research conducted that a need for major improvement in child centred methodologies and participatory approaches amongst teachers, training deemed to be insufficient to need.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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- ➔ Strong integration of ABE activities within host schools: formal primary schools given responsibility for oversight/technical support of ABE centre/classes.
- ➔ Co-location of classes and centres within confines of primary school sites, joint social activities between students of ABE/formal schooling, sensitisation activities on both sides of the fence to smooth transition issues.
- ➔ Established ABE Guidelines with Save the Children and Ministry in 2008.
- ➔ Concern that communities see ABE as free education in replacement of formal education, not as part of it (suggestion of a parallel schooling system) being established.

## EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Introduction of condition cash transfers through a voucher system to support ABE graduates with school related costs (uniforms, school materials) in the first two years of their transition to the formal schooling system. This financial support has proven critical to high rates of retention in formal schooling, and initiated behaviour and attitudinal change of caregivers about sending/supporting children to go to school.
- Significant concerns raised regarding whether children will remain in school once additional voucher support ends--a potential dependency on the voucher to keep children in school, rather than building intrinsic value in education. Note limitations above from APES evaluation.

## EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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CCT studies provide a way of following trajectories of former ABE students.

## STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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Interesting action research project as part of APES project, but unclear how it then promoted learning.

# MALI

## CATCH-UP EDUCATION PROGRAMME

2014 - present

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Ensure that children ages 9-14 who have been affected by displacement are able to reintegrate into the formal schooling system after a short catch up programme of nine months.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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In Gao and Timbuktu: Approx. 80% of those initially enrolled (approx. 1,900 learners) completed final assessment at end of six months. Of that group, 59% passed examination at 'superior level', but all transitioned to formal schooling, but at lower levels.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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- Teachers, supervisors and coordinators trained in large group pedagogy and the Malian AE curriculum. Length of training and provision for follow up unclear.
- Using pre-existing alternative education curriculum developed historically for nomadic groups as a long-term response, rather than as a short-term emergency response intervention. NRC and partners have been working with MoE to adapt/condense this curriculum to suit short-term nature and see it institutionalised. Unclear how curriculum been adapted to bring in AL principles.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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- Learning materials provisioned by UNICEF as part of partnership. MoE actively involved in partnership through: consideration of AL curriculum revision to emergency response.
- Teacher recruitment/training; monitoring; and final assessment prior to transition to formal schools.

## EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Efforts made to provide remediation/other pathways to those not passing end of programme exam.
- Utilisation of existing Ministry curriculum perceived as an ill-suited to emergency response of NRC's work at present. Poor classroom conditions and a lack of school feeding seen as contributing factors to drop out from programme.

## EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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No evidence provided.

## STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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Suggestion that MoE will be involved in an evaluation of the effectiveness of adapted AL curriculum for emergency response.

# SIERRA LEONE

## COMPLEMENTARY RAPID EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS (CREPS)

## DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DEP)

2002 - 2005

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Provide access to basic education for over aged children who have never been to school or whose schooling was disrupted by war. Other stated objectives included: increasing community participation in their children's education, creating equal opportunities for female students, improve teacher capacity and prepare students to pass the primary school examination.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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Total drop out approx. 38% from initial cohort intake. Dropout rates increased as program progressed, particularly from Level II to III. Reasons noted for this include: mobile nature of population, enrolment of under-age beneficiaries at start, early marriage/pregnancies for girls, initiation rituals took children out of school and then never returned. Large proportion of students did not sit NPSE, despite making it to Level III, but of those that sat mock exam, 73% passed. Female enrolment approximately 38%.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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- Condenses six years primary curriculum into three with syllabus/manuals produced by NRC/UNICEF.
- 40 students/class maximum.
- Inclusion of pre-vocational learning as a subject.
- Initial curriculum written for professional and qualified teachers, which was not whom actually delivered curriculum.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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- **Strong evidence of a system of continuous professional development for teachers:** After initial training of two weeks, monthly in-service including micro-teaching along with weekly supervisory visits to teachers classrooms; good use of Ministry personnel to support programme through supervisory visits and creating a place/role for host schools (where classes held in afternoons).
- Use of community mobilisation and community associations to support programme activities but levels of participation varied.



- Evidenced suggest despite in-service support provided, teachers exhibited weak child-centred methodologies. Use of texts (when available) not well utilised, small groups of students not witnessed working together, self-produced didactic materials rare.
- Significant issues with lack of sufficient texts/resources.
- Teachers not receiving salaries on time. Challenges with language of instruction in English for rural teachers.

### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Alternative pathways for students not sitting secondary school entrance examination created for their effective reintegration into primary schools instead.
- Teacher supervisors played a key role in boosting morale/confidence of untrained/unqualified programme teachers.
- Suggestion that pregnant girls were encouraged to stay enrolled/sit exams rather than drop out and that CREPS teachers visited students who had been absent for several days (unlike other schools).
- Low number of female teachers recruited.
- Teacher attrition from program an issue.
- A sense of an inflexible timetable because held in formal schools (had to be held in afternoons).
- Poor infrastructure of host schools meant that often CREPS and regular classes combined (Level III and Grade 6).
- Teachers report unease in teaching students with special needs.

### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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Anecdotal evidence suggest that former CREPS students are doing well in secondary school with dropout rates low, but also suggestion that school fees/other costs a barrier to former CREPS students. Also acknowledged in evaluation that secondary school environment less favourable to students due to lack of textbooks, class sizes up to 80.

### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- Suggestion that improvements were made to CREPS from a 2003 evaluation conducted by UNICEF.
- Record keeping systems for attendance did not adequately report/record drop outs.

# ANGOLA

## TEACHER EMERGENCY PACKAGE

1996 - 2007

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Provide a bridging programme into formal education system for over-age children (10-17) who have missed out on school because of war or displacement.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Approximately 30% drop out rate from programme. Transition to formal schooling system also hindered by need to purchase formal ID cards.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

- ➔ Based on UNESCO PEER Curriculum (which has in it child-centred, participatory methods), focus is on providing initial literacy and numeracy skills to students, as well as incorporating topics of interest to students such as health, nutrition, physical education.
- ➔ Little evidence in practice of teachers tapping into students' prior knowledge, or deviating from TEP pack curriculum. Strong focus on chalk and talk and little evidence of child-centred methodologies.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- ➔ **Strong coordination between MoE/TEP/UNICEF** in different components including flexible use of TEP spaces/TEP teachers between formal and TEP system, harmonisation of school year, and involvement of MoE in decisions about grade placement at end of programme.
- ➔ Initial training of 5 weeks provided to all teachers (more than 2 weeks standard).
- ➔ Teachers provided with lesson guides with model lessons.
- ➔ Supervisors supposed to provide follow up support in schools but unclear quality of this support.
- ➔ Teaching of Portuguese occurred without use of local learning materials/resources.
- ➔ Lack of community sensitisation to TEP.

- Teachers not paid sufficiently and often payments delayed with little additional incentives.
- Heavy reliance/dependence on teachers guide due to teacher inexperience.
- Suggestion in tracer study that sustainability of TEP provision in question due to scarcity of resources in government and lack of other actors to take up responsibility on NRC departure.

### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Provision of school meals assisted retention of students.
- Students placed into formal schooling between Grades 1-4 depending on performance on internal teacher based assessments.
- School construction project in areas where existing school facilities not available.
- Transfer of overage students into Grades 1-2 may not be appropriate to their developmental needs.
- Overall transition process not discussed sufficiently between NRC/MoE.
- Insufficient number of female TEP teachers recruited and trained.
- Costs of transfer into formal schooling system (ID cards) precludes many students from making that move.

### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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- Tracer study conducted in 2005 suggests little interest on part of government in looking at long-term outcomes of former TEP students.
- Suggestion that upwards of 50% of TEP students who quality never enter into formal schooling system, and face similarly high rates of drop out once into the system (for those who join) due to similar constraints.
- Suggestions that TEP students need support until they finish first cycle.

### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- Earlier evaluation suggested high numbers of students who were underage and could enrol in formal education system instead, in response target group moved to 12 up.
- Earlier issues identified with government payment of TEP teachers led to agreement on gov't integrating a certain # of TEP teachers annually into their systems.
- Quality of M&E generally poor: Little systematic tracking of students once they leave TEP programme, poor record keeping within programme.

# BURUNDI

## TEACHER EMERGENCY PACKAGE

1999 - 2011

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Provide a one-year catch-up programme to children ages 9-14 who are out of school to then reintegrate into formal schooling system at Grade 3. Secondary objectives of training a cadre of teaching assistants to meet need for more teachers and provide additional school facilities (through community mobilisation).

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

- ➔ Majority of children (unspecified %) completed TEP programme and 95% transitioned into formal schooling system.
- ➔ During life of programme, dropout rates markedly declined (result of decreasing incidences of famine and more stable, settled populations).

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

- ➔ Condenses two years curriculum into one year based on a TEP kit provided to teachers. Follows formal Burundi curriculum but emphasis on language (Kirundi) and mathematics. Because based on TEP, a focus on child-centred methodologies and approaches. Teachers and supervisors received some specific follow up training in participatory methods (2002). No more than 35 in a class.
- ➔ Close alignment with Burundi curriculum led to an overcrowded and under resourced TEP curriculum with at least 8 subjects. Many teachers were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with full range of child-centred/participatory approaches-use of songs/local learning materials observed occurring most often, only 'very good' teachers observed using a range of approaches beyond teacher-centred instruction.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- ➔ NRC trainer teachers in formal schools to help bridge the gap for former TEP students. TEP teachers noted to be supportive of the psychosocial/emotional needs of learners (unclear what training/support they received to provide this). Availability of WASH facilities in most sites. Target groups (IDPs/returnees) are appropriately identified and targeted for TEP provision. Effective recruitment of female TEP teachers (approx. 40%).

- Classroom management techniques for teachers insufficient as suggestion that corporal punishment still prevalent despite awareness of NRC's stance on this and the code of conduct that they signed each year (threatens schools as safe places).
- Discussions about past conflict/conflict resolution not well addressed in classroom, despite it being an important part of student experience.
- Systems for recruitment and employment of TEP teacher not well synched with government plans/priorities and led to issues in terms of integrating skill set of TEP teachers into mainstream setting (TEP teachers unable to be integrated because 'unqualified').
- Community involvement in school construction activities seen as weak and limited to post-construction maintenance.

### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Significant success of programme is ability to achieve gender parity in terms of participation. Attributed to strong mobilisation efforts within community and with parents on importance of girls' education.
- End of programme examination allows students to enter into either Grade 2 or 3 depending on their performance (multiple pathways) at completion.
- Provision of school meals, no requirement for uniforms and fee-free nature all contributed to high participation. In response to classroom shortages, NRC began to construct school classrooms in later stages of the programme (responding to a changing political context). NRC also shifted its provinces of focus for TEP based on where needs most acute. To ensure support/buy in from local community a small % of local children who are overaged incorporated into programme.

- Children with disabilities not noted to be effectively integrated into TEP, despite this being a program desire. No specific provision to support children who lacked sufficient literacy skills in Kirundi (returnees from Tanzania). NRC may need to better consider the linguistic needs of the populations it works with who may not necessarily carry same linguistic capital due to displacement. Requires need for summer language support or roving teachers to assist students.

### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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- Most TEP students do not have significant issues transitioning into formal schooling system and anecdotally seen to be 'better' than other students.
- TEP teachers despite intentions were not reemployed into formal schooling system. Reports from other donors suggest 15.4% of former TEP students dropping out within a year, and many more do not complete primary due to endemic issues of poverty.

### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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- Earlier evaluations had suggested the need for improved documentation and monitoring related to enrolment, attendance, drop out and transition into formal education system of TEP students. This was put in place by 2011.
- Suggestion that if NRC to advocate for TEP or other alternative education models, it needs to develop a stronger evidence base behind the longer-term outcomes of them which will involve tracing students post-transition.

# PAKISTAN

## ALP CATCH UP CLASSES

2013 - present

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Provide a short-term programme (13 months) of support to children ages 9-14 affected by displacement to reintegrate into formal schooling system.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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Initial data suggest 67% of learners in the first cohort reintegrated into formal schooling system (approx. 50% of these girls).

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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No details on this.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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**Strong community mobilisation component:** Monthly meetings with Parent/Teacher Committees, involvement in closing ceremony. Suggestion that this was instrument in shifting perceptions about girls accessing and completing their education.

### EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- ➔ Ability for learners to re-join different class levels depending on assessment of their competencies (unclear by whom). Suggestion that largest group of mainstreamed students are girls who had never gone to school prior.
- ➔ Issues such as children not wanting to mainstream into a low grade, need to work (instead of going to school), lack of documentation, lack of school facilities/teachers not well thought through in reintegration planning process.

### EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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No data on this yet.

### STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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No data on this

# UGANDA

## RECOVERY FOR ACHOLI YOUTH

2010 - 2013

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 1 Enable out of school children ages 9-14 in return areas to access basic education.

### EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

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Programme met target for enrolments, and achieved close to gender parity. Learning outcomes for students, however, were poor. Only 45% of Level 3 students passed the end of primary school examination with girls much more likely than boys to fail. 10% of students in Level 1 and 2 transitioned to primary school or YEP. Reasons for low rates of transition: absenteeism, drop out.

### EVIDENCE EXIST OF AL PRINCIPLES/PRACTICES IN DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMME

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- All teaching and learning materials provided; Six year primary schooling curriculum condensed into three.
- Appeared to be a presumption that AEP students had some prior schooling experience, despite evidence that this may not have been the case. No support for such learners, particularly in terms of developing critical pre literacy and numeracy skills.

### ALIGNMENT TO AEP BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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- Advocacy with government to develop a NFE policy, and working with Ministry to formally validate accelerated curriculum developed by NRC. Teacher training and support provided by NRC (unclear on professional development support). Construction of teacher housing as part of project help to ensure high teacher attendance.
- Good evidence of synergistic programming within NRC strands--school construction (shelter), YEP, AEP.
- Suggestion that no needs assessment was undertaken in each community, limited AEP flexibility and responsiveness to context; Persistence of corporal punishment in classrooms
- No alignment to teacher training institutions in country.

## EVIDENCE OF FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CONTEXT, AND PLACES WHERE THIS WAS CONSTRAINED

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- Flexible school timetable/annual calendar to adjust with agricultural schedule.
- Opportunities for students who did not transition into formal schooling to acquire skills-based training in YEP.
- **Suggestion of strong alignment/integration between YEP and AEP (details scarce).**
- Opportunities for students failing examinations to repeat (which some opted to do because of it being free versus formal education not being free); Acceptance of students without birth certificates.
- Anecdotal evidence that children chose to stay in ALP rather than transition because they could not afford to enter into formal schooling system.
- Identification of whom were the most “vulnerable” amongst a group of people affected by 24 years of conflict difficult.
- Suggestion that YEP programming had more accommodations for young mothers/adolescents than AEP but need for similar types of accommodations and flexibilities in AEP.

## EVIDENCE OF MEDIUM TO LONG TERM IMPACTS ON TARGET POPULATION

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Small scale tracer study suggested transition/retention to formal schooling low because of costs associated. Suggestion that income generation activities need to be part of AEP to ensure participants have the means to attend formal schooling on completion.

## STRENGTH OF M&E AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

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Complex M&E system set up which was not maintained or understood led to ongoing project data not being collected systematically.



## APPENDIX TWO: SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION REVIEWED

### ANGOLA & BURUNDI

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**Study (2005):**  
One Step Closer but how far? A study of former TEP students in Angola and Burundi

### BURUNDI

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**Evaluation (2011):**  
Final Evaluation - TEP Burundi 1999-2011

**Evaluation (2011):**  
Management response to final evaluation

### DRCONGO

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**Evaluation (2005):** One Step Closer-In Congo  
Evaluation of TEP in Congo

**Evaluation (2012):** Evaluation of NRC TEP  
Programme DR Congo

**Evaluation (2011):** Evaluation of NRC's Country  
Programme in DR Congo 2007-2009

### COLOMBIA

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**Summary sheet (2009):** Background on Learning  
Circles (Escuela Nueva)

**Summary sheet (2009):**  
Education Program NRC Colombia

**Report (2014):** Protecting Children's Education  
in Southwest Colombia

**Evaluation (2011):** Evaluation of the NRC  
Colombia Program 2008-2010

**Independent research (2009):** A case study of  
learning circles in Soacha, Colombia

**Evaluation (2012):** End of Project Summative  
Evaluation: Right to Education and Participation  
of Youth and Children in Narino (CIDA)

**Monitoring report (2015):**  
Year 4 Annual Impact Report

### CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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**Technical report (2014):**  
Dubai Cares Narrative Report for Bridging Classes  
in Western Côte d'Ivoire

**Technical report (2014):** Educate A Child - Côte  
d'Ivoire AE CIFE1201 EAC semi annual Technical  
Report Dec 2014 - HO approved

### ETHIOPIA

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**ToR (2014):** ToR on Transition of ABE Level III  
students to Grade 5 in ARRA Primary Schools

**Proposal (2013):** Final strategy for Implementing  
ABE for out of school children in Dolo Ado  
Refugee Camps in Ethiopia

**Email communication (2015):** Dollo best practice,  
Dollo Ado Examination Transition Results

### KENYA

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**Project proposal (2011):**  
Joint Strategy for Education in Dadaab 2012-2015

**Project proposal (2012):** SCUK-SERD EU  
Proposal

**Policy (2009):** Policy for Alternative Provision of  
Basic Education and Training

**Presentations (2014):**  
Key highlights of ALP in Dadaab

**Mission report (2013):** Update: Accelerated  
Learning Program and Catch Up Courses Dadaab

**Mission report (2011):**  
Education Advisor Mission Report Horn of Africa

**Liberia Evaluation (2010):** NRC Protecting  
Children's Rights to Education: Evaluation of  
NRCs ALP in Liberia 2010 2nd draft

**Evaluation (2011):** Evaluation of the Accelerated  
Learning Program in Liberia (UNICEF/MoE)

**Presentation (2010):**

ALP Liberia Evaluation Presentation

**Report (2009):** Semi-annual report to MFA

**Exit strategy (2010):** ALP Exit Strategy :  
LRFT1001 Liberia Submitted version

## MALI

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**Project reporting (2015):** Summaries of ALP programming against grants (NMFA, UNICEF)

**Fact sheet (2014):** NRC/Burkina Faso Fact Sheet

**Report (2015):** MoE EGRA Analyses of PASSU versus Mainstream Students

## SOMALIA

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**Proposal (2013):** Support to ABE and YEP Program for IDPs and Host Community Children and Youth in South and Central Somalia

**Evaluation (2013):**  
APES Final Evaluation report

## SOMALILAND

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**Policy (2008):** Republic of Somaliland ABE Implementation Guidelines

**Tracer Study:** Somaliland ABE Tracer Study report

## PAKISTAN

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**Summary (2014):** ALP Pakistan Mainstreaming

**Fact sheet (2014):** NRC Pakistan Fact Sheet

## PUNTLAND

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**Project evaluation (2011):**  
Support to IDP Education & pupils transition from ABE to formal school in Puntland

**Policy (2008):** ABE Guidelines for Puntland

**Monitoring report (2008):** ABE Report on Assessment and Data Collection in Puntland

**Presentations (2008):** Various presentations on establishing ABE in Puntland

**Final report (2011):**  
Increasing access to quality education in

Puntland: Lessons from formal, NF (ABE), integrated Quranic schools and Dugsi in Bosaso

**Email communication (2015):** Update from programme manager on ABE programming

**Study (2010):**  
Reaching out-of-school children through conditional cash transfers. A study on household schooling choices in Bossaso, Puntland, Somalia

## SOUTH CENTRAL SOMALIA

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**Summary:**  
Summary of ABE in South Central Somalia

**Other:** M&E tools for ABE programme

**Presentations (2015):**  
ABE in South Central Somalia (2)

**Proposal (2013):** Education and School Infrastructure Support in South Central Somalia

## SIERRA LEONE

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**Final evaluation (2005):** CREPS (Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary Schools)

## UGANDA

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**Final evaluation (2013):**  
Independent Project Evaluation of the Recovery of Acholi Youth (RAY) Northern Uganda



