K4D | Knowledge, evidence and learning for development

Enablers and barriers to the successful delivery of accelerated learning programmes

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Question

HDR 859 - What are the enablers and barriers that affect the successful delivery of complementary/ accelerated learning programmes in low income countries, particularly countries in Africa (where possible)?

Contents

1. Summary

This review identified enablers and barriers to the successful delivery of accelerated learning programmes and complementary education. The policy environment is identified as being an overarching factor that can behave as both an enabler and a barrier, with contexts that integrate non-formal education into policy texts being among the most enabling. Other enablers and barriers are explored in relation to programme delivery, followed by a brief exploration of learners transitioning into the formal education system.

The report identified inconsistencies in the terminology surrounding accelerated learning and complementary learning programmes, and has therefore adopted the most common language used: accelerated education programmes (AEPs). The majority of the literature identified in this review is drawn from independent evaluations of AEPs, and meta-evaluations of a series of programmes, conducted in the last five years. The author also interviewed three experts in the field, in addition to receiving resource suggestions from others. The review identified that the most successful programmes were able to effectively identify the barriers that prevent learners from entering or re-entering the formal education system, and putting in place enablers to remove or lower those barriers. Successful AEPs therefore adopt proactive and holistic approaches to creating enabling environments for learners and local communities to promote both access and the quality of learning.

The below table outlines the key enablers and barriers identified in this review, divided by section.

Table 1: Summary of barriers and enablers to the effective delivery of AEPs

Barriers	Enablers
Policy environment (the policy environment is the context in which all accelerated education programmes take place, and can serve as a barrier and an enabler)	
• Lack of policy provision for non-formal education • Scope of AEPs restricted • Government recognised curriculum not condensed	• Clear policies that include non-formal education, including accelerated education • AEPs given freedom to creatively tackle barriers in the formal education system • Clear integration with the national system
Programme-level (barriers and enablers in delivering AE programmes)	
• Lack of sustainable funding sources • Poor data to monitor learners progress and track retention • Gender-based barriers (cultural norms/values; poor infrastructure; household responsibilities; gender-based violence; young pregnancy/motherhood)	• Strategies to overcome gender-based barriers • Community engagement • Accelerated curriculum that clearly connects with the national system • Teacher* training

• Lack of accelerated curriculum • Gaps in funding • Lack of teacher training	• Effective monitoring and evaluation systems
Transition of AE learners into the formal system (barriers and enablers that affect AE learners ability to transition into the formal system)	
• School fees • Stigma associated with being an AE learner • No access to schooling (i.e. no local schools) • Gender-based barriers • European language of instruction • Weak EMIS makes it difficult to track students	• AE centres connecting with national schools • Supporting resource generating activities among local communities • Working with local and national educational authorities • Effective monitoring systems

Source: table based on a summary of the literature and interviews with experts

*This review refers to those delivering AEPs as 'teachers', though the literature lacks consistency in terminology. Many AEPs refers to those delivering programmes as 'facilitators', as they often do not have teacher qualifications or experience. For consistency, 'teacher' will be used throughout this review to refer to all individuals delivering programmes.

A key reflection from this review is on the tension that exists between successful AEPs integrating effectively with national systems, whilst also remaining independent enough to overcome the barriers faced by those same systems. One of the experts interviewed summed up this tension:

"*You want government ownership but when you have it at scale you can lose some of the AE benefits. How can we move to a place where we strengthen the system without removing the intent of accelerated education systems altogether?*" Accelerated Education expert

It is the separation from formal systems that arguably gives AEPs the freedom to be creative in overcoming systemic barriers. Future consideration is therefore needed in trying to understand what lessons can be learnt from AEPs that can be applied to formal education systems.

2. Defining accelerated and complementary learning

Clarity around terminology

The literature and policy context surrounding accelerated and complementary learning lacks consistent terminology. Accelerated learning, accelerated education and complementary education can all be used interchangeably. There are also different ways of characterising initiatives, with some accelerated programmes named 'Speed Schools', such as those in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Complementary Basic Education in Ghana (Akyeampong et al, 2018a; Kebede, 2018; Akyeampong et al 2018b). The majority of the

evaluation literature identified in this review were focussed on accelerated education programmes, though not all used this terminology consistently.

Further confusion can also arise from the use of the term 'alternative education', which can often have the same acronym as 'accelerated education'. AEPs are typically aimed at children and youth who have missed out or fallen behind on school. They are designed for students to catch up with mainstream learners and are aimed at learners aged between 10-18 years old. 'Alternative basic education', in contrast, is typically adopted as a solution for younger children who do not have access to formal education.

The Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) has attempted to provide consistency around the language used when referring to programmes. Their decision tree is a particularly helpful resource in navigating this terminology and in determining appropriate interventions for different types of learners (AEWG, 2018). The AEWG define accelerated education as the following:

> "*A flexible, age-appropriate programme, run in an accelerated timeframe, which aims to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth. This may include those who missed out on, or had their education interrupted by, poverty, marginalisation, conflict and crisis. The goal of Accelerated Education Programmes is to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies for basic education using effective teaching and learning approaches that match their level of cognitive maturity.*" (Shah and Choo, 2020, p.9)

Experts interviewed were keen to point out the distinction between accelerated education and accelerated learning. Accelerated learning was noted as focussing more on changes to pedagogy and can include catch up classes, with AEPs focussing on condensing curriculums. Further information on the taxonomy of different types of non-formal education can be located on the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) website (INEE, 2020).

Defining success of AEPs

As this report is focussed upon the enablers and barriers to the successful delivery of AEPs, this section will outline what success criteria is often used in determining the outcomes and impact of AEPs. A key indicator of success for many programmes is whether students transition back into the formal education system. However, this can be problematic given that many of the barriers that prevented out of school children and young people (OOSCY) attending formal education in the first place persist after they have attended an AEP. Further challenges posed include short funding cycles that do not extend long enough for programme evaluations to monitor the transition of accelerated education learners into mainstream schools.

The below table outlines some of the key outcome measures for AEP success. The review does not explore these in depth. All evaluations identified in this review are listed in Annex 1, alongside associated sources.

Table 2: Overview of different outcome measures used in AEPs

Outcome measured	Description/example
Enrolment rates	One of the most common measures used across all identified programmes was the enrolment onto AEPs. These often include gender-based enrolment targets. *Example:* the AEP in South Sudan enrolled between 1316 to 1677 between the years 2014-2018 (Nicholson, 2018, p.16)
Completion rates	Some programmes also use completion rate as a success criterion. *Example:* Education Recovery Support Activity (ERSA) Mali (cohort 1), reported a 75% completion rate by the end of the first year (77% for girls and 73% for boys) (EDC, 2018, p. 13).
Learner academic achievement	Some programmes use learner academic achievement as an outcome measure. *Example:* STAGES Afghanistan found girls outperformed their peers in government schools in reading fluency and numeracy (Shah and Choo, 2020, p. 26)
Transition back to formal education system	Transition back to formal schooling is often a key long-term outcome measure for the majority of AEPs, though many lack the long-term funding to enable them to effectively monitor this. *Example:* 90% of AEP learners transitioned back to school or progressed to Level 2 after completing ESRA Mali (PARIS 1 learners) programme (EDC, 2018, p. 14).
Performance in mainstream school after transitioning	For programmes able to continue to monitor learners when they re-entered formal schooling, measuring academic performance against their peers was used as a success criteria. *Example:* The Second Chance programme in Liberia found that AE learners consistently outperformed their peers in English and Math by an average of 10% (Luminos and the University of Sussex, N.D.)
Changing attitudes and behaviours towards education	Some programmes also consider a change in attitudes to be a successful outcome. *Example*: in the Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Programme (ZALP), the programme organisers considered "the project was most successful where communities moved along the entire continuum of

	behaviour change" from learning about the programme to ensuring it was effectively implemented (World Education and UNICEF, p.8).
Reduction in early marriage and teen pregnancy	For programmes targeting girls specifically, gender-related outcomes are used to measure success.

Example: in a Save the Children AEP in Uganda, qualitative fieldwork with participants indicated that they believed they could have entered into early marriage without the AEP programme (Save the Children, 2019, p. 20). |
| Educational aspirations | Increasing aspirations of students was referenced in a small number of evaluations.

Example: in Speed School Ethiopia, the programme measures the number of students who stated they wanted to continue their education beyond Grade 12 (Akyeampong et al, 2019) |
| Work readiness | Not all programmes aim for AE learners to re-enter the formal education system. Some programmes also look at work readiness and entry into employment as a successful outcome.

Example: Advancing Youth Liberia measured learners' confidence in their ability to develop business plans and in sustaining new business (Shah and Choo, 2020, p. xxi). |
| Wellbeing | Gains in psychosocial measures was used in reporting for some programmes, though didn't always form an integral part of the programme design or delivery.

Example: the AEP in South Sudan used the Education Cluster psychosocial check list to determine how conducive classroom environments were to wellbeing. The end-line study indicated that the programme had contributed 15% to the psychosocial wellbeing of participating learners (Nicholson, 2018, p.13). |

Source: table based on a summary of the literature and interviews with experts

3. Policy level enablers and barriers

There are multiple dimensions to the policy context that can make it both an enabler and a barrier to the effective implementation of AEPs; these enablers and barriers are summarised in the table below.

Table 3: Enablers and barriers in the policy context

Barriers	Enablers
Barriers to programme delivery: • Non-formal education is either not included in policy documentation, or is not under the remit of the Ministry of Education (or equivalent) • AEPs restricted in their scope and range and unable to operate with flexibility to meet the needs of local populations • Curriculum not condensed for AEPs **Barriers to transitioning into formal education systems:** • Lack of examinations/assessments that limit opportunities for AEP learners to gain the accreditation required to re-enter formal education systems • Students unable to re-enter formal education system if over-age • Unstable policy environment that is subject to frequent change	**Enablers to programme delivery:** • Non-formal education is included in official education policy documentation as a means of addressing the needs of out of school children and young people • AEPs given the freedom to creatively solve barriers that prevent participation in the formal education sector, with support from local and national education authorities • National curriculum condensed for AEPs **Enablers to AE learners transitioning into formal education systems:** • Clear transition examinations/assessments that connect non-formal education with the formal schooling system, to enable students to re-enter after successful completion • Flexibility on the age of students to re-enter the formal education system • Stable policy environment • Strong EMISs that make it possible to track learners over time

Source: table based on a summary of the literature and interviews with experts

Some countries, such as Liberia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Lebanon, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, discuss AEPs explicitly within policy texts as a key lever for addressing the needs of OOSCY (Shah and Choo, 2020). Shah and Choo (2020) however also identified at least five programmes that had no connection with local or national education authorities at all.

A meta-evaluation of Norwegian Refugee Council AEPs identified relationships between programmes and the government as being particularly enabling. Work with the formal education sector included:

- "*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*
- *Establishing or reforming a set of guidelines for AE programming*
- *Agreeing on transition examinations/assessment processes to allow AE learners to reintegrate into the formal education system and recognise learning completed through NRCs programmes*
- *Ensuring a coordinated response to AE provision in situations where multiple actors are supporting such efforts."* (Shah, 2018, p. 9).

The NRC AEP programme in Dadaab, Kenya, specifically aimed for students to sit national examinations, and an evaluation noted that AE learners often outperform students from formal schools in those examinations (Flemming, 2017, p.20).

An evaluation of Strømme Speed Schools noted how integrated working with local educational authorities was a factor in success. Their evaluation noted that education authorities, headteachers and teachers all participated in the programming in various ways. Local education authorities played a role in the identification of intervention areas, the monitoring and supervision of the centres, and the evaluation and accreditation of the Speed School Students (Kebede, 2018). The curriculum for the Speed Schools was also developed in close working with the educational authorities, ensuring it was compliant with the national curriculum (Ibid).

4. Programme level enablers and barriers

This section will look at the programme level to identify enablers and barriers. One key observation through interviews with experts is that the most successful AEPs are able to identify the contextual barriers that prevent learners from engaging with the formal education system, and are able to create enabling environments to help lower or remove those barriers. However, some of the same challenges that affect the formal education system also affect the successful delivery of AEPs.

Overcoming gender-based barriers

This section will specifically look at overcoming the barriers affecting girls, though many of the strategies and enablers identified can also be strengthening to the education system overall.

Barriers	Enablers
Community and parental perceptions of the value of education for girls, household chores that prevent girls from attending school, early marriage, lack of female teachers, poor gender sensitivity; pedagogical practices that are not supportive of female learners; concerns over girls safety; restrictions on female mobility; childcare responsibilities of young mothers	Flexible school start times, gender sensitisation training with community members; train and recruit more female teachers from the local community; adopt teaching approaches that give girls more opportunities to interact and engage with learning materials, through approaches such as group work

Gender-based barriers

A range of gender-based barriers were identified by AEPs, with many putting in place strategies to overcome them. Shah and Choo (2020 pp. xxviii-xxxi) identified the key barriers that are faced by girls entering both formal and non-formal education programmes. These included early marriage leading to dropout; traditional norms that place women as primarily responsible for household tasks and childcare, with little value placed on education; lack of gender sensitivity in teaching and learning; gender-based violence by teachers or boys; access issues surrounding lack of female role models and inadequate gender appropriate infrastructure (e.g. WASH facilities, boundary walls) (Ibid). Some programmes found that girls' performance in school was more affected by poverty than their male counterparts. For example, the SOMGEP-T programme in Somalia found poverty to be a "major predictor of underperformance" for girls in the programme (Shah and Choo, 2020, p.36).

In Save the Children's AEP in Uganda, girls identified obstacles for continued attendance, including refusal from parents for girls to attend, household responsibilities such as looking after siblings, and teenage pregnancy or early marriage (Save the Children, 2019, p.21). Parents also expressed concerns in this programme towards girls facing potential sexual abuse or exploitation at school or on their way to school.

Overall, however, evaluations of AEPs did not present many gender-based barriers in relation to delivering AEPs. This may be due to programmes successfully identifying and overcoming

barriers that exist for the formal education system, and finding ways to circumnavigate them to improve access and the quality of education for girls. It is also important to note that many of the evaluations reviewed in this report specifically target girls. It was noted in an interview with an expert that there is still a considerable way to go to ensure that AEPs are gender transformative, and move beyond increasing access as being a primary goal.

Gender-based enablers: targeted recruitment of girls onto programmes

One of the key approaches to increasing recruitment of girls onto programmes was working with local communities and parents. This could be through **gender sensitisation training, appointing members of the community to support recruitment of girls into AEPs, or providing financial or other support to households to enable them to release girls to attend school**. The SOMGEP-T programme in Somalia has been successful in overcoming some of the above barriers through their approach to working with the local community. Methods adopted included: engaging community-level stakeholders such as religious leaders, women's groups, men and boys; providing adult literacy and financial literacy classes for mothers; supporting the financial empowerment of mothers through savings groups, business selection and business coaching and mentoring (Shah and Choo, 2020, p.37).

Second Chance Liberia created parent engagement groups to garner support among parents who had limited previous contact with schools and teachers, and parents who were illiterate. Group meetings centred on girls' learning and sought to challenge negative gender norms. Mothers were encouraged to celebrate their daughter's participation in schooling during meetings (Westbrook and Higgins, 2019).

Flexible timetabling was also noted as an approach designed to attract more girls on multiple programmes (Save the Children, 2019; Nicholson, 2018; Flemming, 2017).

Gender-based enablers: training female teachers

Recruitment of female teachers was a strategy employed by Speed Schools in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, in addition to the SOMGEP-T Somalia and AEP Kenyan programmes (Kebede, 2018; Shah and Choo, 2020; Flemming, 2017). Forty per cent of teachers recruited into Speed Schools in Burkino Faso, Mali and Niger were female. However, as noted by Shah and Choo (2020, p. xxvii), recruitment of female teachers can be problematic given systemic barriers faced by women: "the historic low rates of access to education for women, traditional gender norms which limit women's mobility and the ability to work outside the home", all contribute to difficulties in recruiting female teachers.

One programme that was identified as seeking to address the systemic barriers that impede recruitment of female teachers was STAGES Afghanistan (Shah and Choo, 2020, p.xxviii). STAGES provided young women with apprenticeship opportunities through district and provincial teacher education departments and teacher training colleges. The programme aimed to tackle systemic barriers behind the shortage in female teachers, through providing women with financial support to enable them to attend teacher training colleges.

Gender-based enablers: inclusive pedagogical practices

Another approach noted in the evaluation of NRC's AEP in Dadaab, was changing pedagogical approaches to be more inclusive of female learners. Qualitative data indicated that girls preferred working in small groups, as they had more opportunities to speak and engage with peers. The data indicated that the AEP teachers were more equipped for this than government school teachers (Flemming, 2017).

The AEP in South Sudan provided teacher training in gender sensitive practices (Nicholson, 2018). This include respecting girls, asking questions to both boys and girls, and giving girls a choice at where to sit in the classroom. Qualitative data revealed that girls felt they were treated the same as boys in class by teachers.

Flexible start and finish times

Barrier	Enabler
Household tasks prevent children and young people from attending school	Flexible start and finish times to work around learners' household responsibilities

Flexible timings to allow children to fit school around their home responsibilities is a key feature of successful AEPs. Flexible timetabling allows children to still maintain household duties and support their parents in addition to attending school. One teacher in the Save the Children Uganda programme noted that the "AEP programme starts in the afternoon and therefore learners are given ample time to prepare yet the primary section starts in the morning" (Save the Children, 2019, p.32). Oxfam's AEP in Greater Ganyliel, South Sudan, also scheduled lessons for afternoons, as this was identified as the best time for learners who had household responsibilities (Nicholson, 2018, p.12).

Language of instruction

Barrier	Enabler
European language/second language used as language of instruction	Multilingual education – lower levels in mother tongue and gradual transition to language of instruction of formal education

In an AEP operated by Save the Children in Uganda, teachers indicated that language was a barrier to learning, particularly for teaching Level 1 students (Save the Children, 2019, p.32). **Teachers indicated that they were not fluent in all local languages spoken by students, which meant some educational concepts could not be translated** (Ibid). Overall, however, AEPs, including this one, were generally considered successful in overcoming language barriers.

Translation into local language was identified as a key enabler by multiple AEPs. Save the Children's AEP in Uganda provided instruction in local languages, and teachers considered this to be a feature of the success of the programme. One teacher who participated in the evaluation noted: "translation of the teaching in the local language is done in the AEP, unlike in the primary

school where teaching is basically done in English" (Save the Children, 2019, p. 32). **Although these teachers sometimes encountered challenges with not speaking all local languages or dialects, the multi-lingual approach was considered to be a key positive feature of the programme.**

An evaluation of the Complementary Basic Education programme in Ghana revealed a range of pedagogic practices contributed to learners' success on the accelerated programme, notably the "use of the syllabic and phonetic methods of learning local language" (Akyeampong et al., 2018b, p.43)

An evaluation of Speed Schools in Ethiopia suggested that multi-lingual teaching (in both Amharic and English, and local languages), ensured all children understood learning content (Akyeampong et al., 2018a, p.37). The NRC's programme in Dadaab also noted that overcoming language barriers was an integral part of their programme. The evaluation noted that "L1 is largely focused on acquisition of English, and in both L1A and L1B the teachers use Somali as the language of instruction." (Flemming, 2017, p.12). Teachers also noted that they use Somali in the classroom beyond Level 1, given children do not always have enough competency in English. A 'wing school' in Ghana indicated that graduates from the programme were mostly taught in mother tongue, but English was gradually introduced when children went up in grade level (Abreh and Wilmot, 2018, p.10). **Programmes therefore use mother tongue languages for lower learning levels, and gradually transition to the language of instruction used in formal education for higher levels.**

Community engagement and buy-in

Barrier	Enabler
Lack of community and family engagement, lack of value in education, lack of understanding of AEP, cultural/social norms that prevent participation	Working with local community to increase engagement among the most vulnerable groups

A lack of buy-in from local communities can serve as a barrier to effective delivery on multiple levels. It can prevent AEPs from attracting learners from the local community onto their programmes, and it can also have a negative impact on retention of those learners. Alternate options such as employment may viewed as the preferable options for learners and their families/local community. An impact evaluation of a USAID AEP in the DRC asked learners what the barriers were to them attending alternative education programmes. Learners indicated that they did not believe it would be worth the effort, and also had a perception that part-time employment was more important than education (Seymour et al, 2016, pp.7-8).

In the NRC's AEP in Dadaab, one Parent Teacher Association (PTA) member interviewed noted there was some hesitancy to enrol children into accelerated learning programmes, as they were considered illegitimate. This view was enhanced by a mistrust in donor organisations, who were not perceived to have provided sustainable solutions to problems faced by refugee populations (Flemming, 2017, p.18).

Multiple programmes highlighted how working with local community members enabled them to overcome a series of barriers associated with low value placed on education, particularly for girls. The Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Programme (ZALP) considered community support and engagement to be a critical success factor. This was achieved through a **community sensitisation effort, to help communities understand the value of education and identify children who were not in school "but should be"** (World Education and UNICEF, ND, p.7). Communities were engaged through consultations with local education officials, and holding meetings with community members to keep them informed on the programme.

Family support is a key feature in whether or not learners are able to successfully transition back to formal education systems. An evaluation of the Second Chance programme in Liberia identified this as a key component of effective transition:

> "*All have supportive parents/carers, usually female relatives, who get them to school on time and encourage them to study at night. Some parents alter their income source e.g. step up with selling of maize or switch to selling air fresheners to accommodate students attending SC or Link school to be at home when they return from school.*" (Westbrook and Higgins, 2019, p.40)

Working with PTAs was one of the mechanisms for overcoming barriers. In the NRC programme in Dadaab, Kenya, PTA members noted that a key role of theirs was to work with the local community to convince them of the value of their children attending an AEP (Flemming, 2017, p.19).

One of the enabling features identified in Strømme's Speed Schools was their work with the local community. An evaluation noted that working with local communities improved cost efficiency in addition to programme outcomes. For example, community members played a role in recruiting learners, and also contributed land, labour and materials for the construction and maintenance of education centres, in addition to accommodation for Speed School instructors (Kebede, 2018).

Lack of sustainable funding sources

Lack of resources to implement the AEP successfully was posed as a barrier for multiple programmes. In an independent evaluation of an Oxfam AEP in Greater Genyliel, South Sudan, Nicholson (2018, p.34) identified **long bureaucratic delays and funding gaps as being responsible for the closure of AEP centres**. Level 2 to 4 learners were left stranded when 10 centres closed. (Ibid). Through qualitative interviews, Nicholson also identified the lack of resources to be demotivating for teachers in addition to being disruptive for learners. Funding rounds have implications for teacher retention. Teachers often leave at the end of funding cycles, which may be one year, and new teachers are then recruited when funding is secured for the following year. This can result in teacher training challenges and leads to programme inefficiencies. The AEP in South Sudan noted that high teacher turnover was problematic for their delivery of capacity building exercises for teachers in gender sensitivity (Nicholson, 2018).

The NRC AEP in Dadaab, Kenya, also identified **a lack of funding as being a significant limitation to the programme**. The programme had received funding from two separate grants over a five year period, and there was limited funding available for essential activities such as teacher professional development and capacity building, or the recruitment of new teachers (Flemming, 2017, p.18). The centres were also found to lack essential learning materials. The

evaluator did note, however, that the NRC team had worked hard to ensure consistency where possible.

Teacher recruitment, working conditions and training

Barriers	Enablers
Limited supply of qualified teachers; low salaries/allowances/incentives; challenging working conditions; majority of teachers in AEPs do not hold teacher qualifications	Sick pay for teachers; increases in pay; medical support; breaks; shorter working day; provision of initial training when teachers join the programme; ongoing support from qualified supervisors

Many teachers on AEPs do not hold formal qualifications, and many might not have complete secondary education. In the AEP in South Sudan, among teachers recruited in Panyijar County, 86% had completed primary school, of which 20% had completed secondary (Nicholson, 2018, p. 18). The programme also struggled to recruit female teachers. Similarly, teachers in the Second Chance programme in Liberia had reportedly low levels of education themselves, and do not have any prior experience as teachers (Westbrook and Higgins, 2019).

Provision of training is an important factor in ensuring successful delivery of AEPs and overcoming barriers of low teacher education. The Second Chance programme addresses a lack of qualifications among teachers through **weekly classroom observations conducted by qualified supervisors, in addition to providing teachers with training** (Westbrook and Higgins, 2019, p.6). Training involved modelling pedagogic practices that can be directly applied in classrooms (ibid). Supervisors on the Second Chance programme keep lessons logs of their observations, and report back to management on a two-weekly basis. Teacher capacity building was therefore coupled with a clear accountability system.

In the AEP in South Sudan, Oxfam provided refresher training to teachers based on government guidance. Content for training included: "**methodologies appropriate for older learners such as brainstorming, class discussion, pair work, group work, debate, and role play**", in addition to **lesson planning, gender sensitisation and teaching in multilingual classrooms** (Nicholson, 2018, p.20). However, the programme faced issues with funding, high inflation and short funding cycles, meaning the number of training days decreased throughout the duration of the programme from 15 days in 2015 to 3 days in 2018 (Ibid).

In many programmes, particularly those in humanitarian response situations, **teachers are paid daily rates and are not on secured contracts**. Payments are often referred to as 'allowances' or 'incentives' opposed to salaries. **High teacher turnover in the AEP in South Sudan was attributed to late payments of incentives, short contracts and teachers moving to other NGOs paying incentives** (Nicholson, 2018, p. 19). Short contracts were a direct result of the short funding periods (Ibid).

Poor working conditions was also noted as constraints in other programmes. Teachers in Save the Children's AEP in Uganda noted they sometimes **worked weekends without compensation, and that the lack of "appointment letters" meant they missed out on other financial benefits** (Save the Children, 2019, p.34) Teachers in Liberia's Second Chance

programme also noted low 'salaries' to be a challenge, which was exacerbated by **long working hours, lack of assistance with medical needs and travelling to teach in communities they did not reside in** (Westbrook and Higgins, 2019, p.7). The evaluation did state that teaching staff had received pay increases, but this was still not enough. **The evaluation suggested provision of sick pay, shortening the working day and giving teachers more breaks as solutions to these issues (ibid).**

Other barriers identified

Barriers	Enablers
Lack of accelerated curriculum; lack of data and poorly implemented admissions policies	Work with education authorities to ensure an accelerated curriculum connects with the curriculum in formal education; ensure robust monitoring systems are in place

In the Dadaab, Kenya AEP, Flemming (2017, p.13) identified further barriers to effective delivery. The Kenyan non-formal education curriculum was identified as a barrier for teachers in their ability to effectively implement an accelerated programme. Due to the lack of accelerated curriculum, **teachers were forced to accelerate the content in the curriculum for their own classrooms, which teachers described as an "intensive task that they were not explicitly trained to carry out"** (Ibid). This indicates issues with the policy context, but also issues in not providing adequate teacher training to enable them to respond to the context.

In a number of evaluations there was a lack of accurate data that could fully support claims made about programme outcomes. This lack of data was also linked to poor admissions policies, where students who did not meet the criteria for participating in the AEP were admitted onto programmes, with a lack of monitoring of target populations or tracking of progress. Shah and Choo (2020, p.23) identified a case in Afghanistan where a programme that was intended exclusively for girls was admitting boys. Monitoring data identified that 13% of beneficiaries on the programme were boys, and that 40% of children attending were unregistered (ibid).

Other programmes did appear to have effective monitoring systems in place for teachers or learners. The process evaluation for the Second Chance Programme in Liberia highlighted a clear system for monitoring teacher performance. In addition to supervisors frequently observing teachers using shared templates, weekly meetings and conference calls between supervisors help inform overall strategy, with supervisors coming together to address issues (Westbrook and Higgins, 2019, p.20). Data collected on students predominantly related to enrolment and dropout, though some programmes also used Early Grade Reading Assessments and Early Grade Mathematic Assessments to track learning gains or to compare students' progress against counterfactual groups (see Shah and Choo, 2020, p. 26 for an overview of how programmes use EGRA and EGMA).

The Accelerated Education Working Group developed an Accelerated Education Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit to overcome the barriers noted with effective monitoring and evaluation. The toolkit includes and methods and objectives indicator menu, sample logical framework, sample M&E plan and sample indicator monitoring table.

5. Enablers and barriers for learners transitioning into formal education

As one of the key aims of AEPs is often for learners to transition back into formal education systems, this review has also outlined enablers and barriers to the fulfilment of this aim. It is important to note that many of the barriers highlighted in this section are the same barriers that prevented children and young people from accessing formal education in the first place. Some of these barriers are outside the reach of AE programming, therefore providing mitigating strategies within programmes is not always possible. This is particularly the case where there is a lack of integration with the national system, and a lack of provision for non-formal education in national policy. It may also be difficult to monitor students after they have left AEPs due to weak EMISs, therefore understanding the longer-term impact of AEPs can be problematic.

In Shah and Choo's (2020, p.28) review of the evidence on accelerated education, a series of supply and demand side barriers were identified that prevent learners transitioning from AEPs to the formal education system.

Table 4: Supply and demand side barriers to AEP learners transitioning to formal education

Supply side barriers	Demand side barriers
Lack of transport to reach government schools/long distance to government schools (STAGES Afghanistan, AEP South Sudan)	Early marriage (STAGES Afghanistan; SEP Uganda, Udaan Nepal)
Insufficient teachers, especially female teachers in formal schools (STAGES Afghanistan, Increasing Access to Basic Education and Gender Equality Afghanistan)	Learners' age where many are still over-aged to re-enter into upper primary or lower secondary education (STAGES Afghanistan; Speed Schools Ethiopia; AEP Uganda; ECHO INCLUDE Uganda)
Didactic teaching methods and violent learning environment in government schools (Second Chance Liberia)	Continuing barriers of insecurity and poverty (STAGES Afghanistan; Second Chance Liberia' AEP Uganda; NFMSE Myanmar; AEP South Sudan)
Lack of government schools to transition into (ESRA Mali; AEP South Sudan)	Lack of desire to continue education in formal schools (Udaan Nepal; AEP Uganda)
Lack of clear guidelines on how learners from AEPs can transition into the formal education system (Myanmar NFMSE, Lebanon AEP Pilot)	Household chores (Udaan Nepal)
Lack of availability of secondary or vocational education opportunities (STAGES Afghanistan, ECHO INCLUDE Uganda; AEP Uganda)	Cultural and social norms against females attending schools (STAGES Afghanistan; Increasing Access to Basic Education Afghanistan; Udaan Nepal; ECHO Uganda)

Source: Shah and Choo (2020, p. 28)

Barriers outside the scope of AEP provision

As noted above, not all the above barriers have enabling strategies that can counteract them within the reach of AEP delivery. This section briefly outlines some of the supply- and demand-side barriers identified in evaluations that do did not have clear mitigating strategies identified.

One barrier to AE learners transitioning into the formal system relates to limited schooling options available in learners' local areas. In the South Sudan AEP, learners had limited options for what schooling they could attend after completing the programme (Shah and Choo, 2020, p.18). In the Save the Children Uganda project, a group of teachers in Rwanawanja (refugee settlement) noted that the nearest secondary school was over 7km away, with one school for the whole settlement (Save the Children, 2019, p.33)

Lack of flexibility in hours of formal education was also noted as problematic (Save the Children, 2019). As formal schooling commences in the mornings, it can be problematic for many learners to attend. This could be due to the distance of the school to children's homes, but can also be because children have responsibilities at home they need to fulfil in mornings. As indicated above, AEPs are able to adopt a more flexible approach to mitigate against this, which can support greater enrolment and retention rates of students.

Many of the **gender-based barriers** that prevented girls from fully engaging with certain AEPs are the same barriers that prevent girls from re-entering formal education. ECHO INCLUDE Uganda reported particularly low transition rates into secondary education among female learners, with only 2 out of 10 transitions being female learners (Shah and Choo, 2020, p.32). In the Save the Children Uganda project, **teachers believed that stigma for different groups of learners was a key barrier to returning to school**, for example, lactating mothers' fear of returning to school due to bullying (Save the Children, 2019, p.32). Stigma was also noted in relation to poverty and age, with children who have attended AEP usually being noted due to lack of school uniform and being older.

Integration with the formal education sector

Barriers	Enablers
Lack of guidelines on how learners can transition from non-formal to formal education settings	Connect with local schools, or link schools, to help support the transition Connect AEPs with local and national government to ensure certification achieved through AEPs will enable students to return to formal education upon AEP completion.

If the Accelerated Education programme is not supported by local education systems, then the certification achieved by children and young people as part of AE might not be recognised by local school systems. For example, an evaluation of an AEP in South Sudan found that AEP learners were not provided with report cards, which prevented them from moving to other centres or schools (Nicholson, 2018, p.26). In ESRA Mali, AEP learners are unable to earn nationally recognised certificates due to there being no national examinations before grade 9 (EDC, 2018, p. 44).

Connections with formal education settings can be an enabler for effective transition, depending on the nature of the relationship. The Second Chance programme in Liberia has what it calls 'link schools', where AEP learners are able to interact with their peers attending formal education. Students are able to mix during breaks, and teachers from Link schools

conduct lesson observations for the AE learners. This ensures that students are familiar with the teachers in the formal school, and allows for socialising with students in the formal setting. The presence of these link schools were perceived to have had a positive impact on transitions from the programme to a formal setting (Westbrook and Higgins, 2019, p.36).

This approach was also used with ZALP. They identified that **linking learners to the formal school system and providing opportunities for AEP learners to interact with mainstream students through extra-curricular activities contributed to successful transition**. ZALP hosting schools were provided with a small fund of $110 to make this possible (World Education and UNICEF, ND, p. 9).

Although these mitigating strategies do not solve issues related to a mismatch in certification requirements, they do demonstrate how considering integration challenges in programme design can help to mitigate against some barriers.

School fees and financial considerations

Barriers	Enablers
School fees, and informal school costs, prevent children and young people from re-entering formal education system	Put strategies in place to engage community members in revenue generating projects that support school attendance

School fees (either formal tuition fees or informal fees such as the cost of learning materials, contributions to the PTA, school uniform etc.) continue to be a barrier for effective transition to formal education. This is a barrier that often prevents students from attending formal education in the first instance, and may be the reason they are unable to continue after completing AEPs. This was identified in the Second Chance programme in Liberia, Save the Children's programmes in Uganda, and ZALP in Zimbabwe. As was noted in the evaluation by World Education and UNICEF:

> "As the ZALP learners profiles revealed, the overwhelming majority (96%) had initially dropped out of formal school for financial reasons, and so it was logical that even when learners 'caught up' to their peers through participation in ZALP, caregivers were still not in a position to provide financial support to send these children to formal school. Caregivers of ZALP learners essentially took advantage of the free programme that got their children back to school" (World Education and UNICEF, ND, p.13).

A feature of AEP programmes who were able to successfully re-integrate students into the formal education system were those that sought to create an enabling and sustainable approach to financing education through local communities. In the ZALP for example, school and local communities were encouraged to develop local solutions that would generate income to support school attendance (e.g. through community-based income generating projects).

6. Annex: list of programmes and sources

Table 5: List of programmes and source

Programme	Source
Education Recovery Support Activity (ERSA) Mali	EDC, 2018
Speed School Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger	Kebede, 2018
AEP Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya	Flemming, 2017
Second Chance Liberia	Westbrook and Higgins, 2019 Luminos and the University of Sussex, N.D.
AEP Greater Ganyliel, South Sudan	Nicholson, 2018
Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Programme (ZALP)	World Education and UNICEF, ND
Save the Children AEP, Uganda	Save the Children, 2019
Speed Schools Ethiopia	Akyeampong et al, 2018a
Complementary Basic Education, Ghana	Akyeampong, et al, 2018b
AEP Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	Seymour et al, 2016
Advancing Youth Liberia	Shah and Choo, 2020
ECHO INCLUDE Uganda	
STAGES Afghanistan	
SOMGEP-T Somalia	

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Acknowledgements

Key websites

- Accelerated Education Mapping exercise was conducted by the AEWG and can be found here: https://data.humdata.org/organization/aewg

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About this report

This report is based on six days of desk-based research. The K4D research helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of a selection of recent relevant literature and international expert thinking in response to specific questions relating to international development. For any enquiries, contact helpdesk@k4d.info.

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