



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON TACKLING THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHALLENGE IN WEST AFRICA: RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO DRIVE ACTION AND INVESTMENT

JUNE 2024



Executive Summary

Background: Existing data indicates that there is a growing out-of-school population, particularly in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Sierra Leone. This crisis is fuelled by a combination of factors, including poverty, sociocultural barriers, inadequate school infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers, especially in rural areas. Additionally, the challenge of ensuring quality education and basic reading proficiency further contributes to school dropouts. These issues are exacerbated by fragile and conflict-ridden environments, limited education budgets and insufficient emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion. To address this complex problem, the research suggests scaling up accelerated education programmes, such as speed schools and complementary basic education models, as a cost-effective solution for governments in the sub-region. As a result, a high-level conference on "Tackling the Out of School Challenge in West Africa" was held in Accra, Ghana on June 11 and 12, 2024, and brought together experts, researchers, government officials from Ministries of Education, academia, and civil society from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Mali, and Burkina Faso. This conference expanded on the results of the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG), which met in Senegal in 2022.

Findings: Research and data showed that the number of out-of-school children has increased in countries over the previous five years, including Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Delegates from International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the AEWG, governments, and civil society organizations working on alternative education paths met to discuss the evidence and devise a continental strategy to address the out-of-school crisis. Research on Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) in Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, supported by GPE/KIX/IDRC, has yielded promising results. AEPs effectively target the most marginalized out of school children and youth (OOSCY), including those in conflict-affected areas. The program accelerates learning, enabling students to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy in a significantly shorter time compared to traditional schooling. This boosts their confidence and increases the likelihood of completing primary education. AEPs also empower girls, reducing early marriage and teenage pregnancy rates. Moreover, these programmes are cost-effective, offering substantial savings to governments and several governments have initiated the establishment of institutional arrangements to manage the programmes in close collaboration with civil society. These arrangements include policies on AEPs and OOSCY, as well as legislative instruments and curriculum to establish agencies within the Ministry of Education¹. AEP curriculum, which can be adapted across the continent, have been devised, certified, and evaluated for country-wide use by certain administrations in collaboration with the private sector and civil society.

Conclusion: To resolve the crisis of OOSCY in West Africa, governments must prioritise the institutionalisation of complementary and alternative education systems. It is essential to allocate substantial funding to these programmes, with a particular emphasis on AEP. It is imperative to establish an International Fund that is specifically dedicated to the support of OOSCY to bolster these endeavours.

Recommendations: To achieve global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 quality education targets, sub-regional governments must allocate 7-10% of basic education budgets to AEP for OOSCY. Stakeholders call for Governments in West Africa to institutionalize a complementary/alternative system for reaching out of school children and youth in Africa. Secondly, increased funding for investment in complementary/alternative education with a focus on Accelerated Education Programming in West Africa including an International Fund for Out of School Children and Youth. Moreover, the recognition and full integration of AEP into national and educational system through appropriate policies and legislation to ensure sustainability. Each government to develop a road map and action plan for tackling the out of school crisis and policy on Complementary/Alternative/Accelerated Education. Furthermore, governments and education innovators Countries to develop and enhance partnerships with research institutions, CSOs and the private sector to support AEP development and scale-up. All governments urged to collaborate with civil society organisations to develop and test AEP curriculum as well as to approve curriculum for country wide usage.

¹ Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and other West African countries.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Abbreviations	v
1.0 Introduction	1
1.2 Rationale and purpose of high-level conference.....	1
1.2.1 Specific Conference Objectives	1
1.3 Conference Approach and Methodology	2
1.4 Conference Participants.....	2
1.5 Expected Outcomes of Conference	2
1.6 Keynote address: Deputy Minister for Education.....	3
2.0 Context:	3
2.1 Sub-Saharan Africa and West Africa is home to almost a quarter of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) Phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa	3
2.1.1 <i>OOSCY situations in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone</i>	4
3.0 Evidence: Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY), Accelerated Education Programmes (AEP) and Girls Focused Models (GFM) in West Africa	5
3.1 Ghana’s Accelerated Education Programme (AEP): Complementary Basic Education (CBE).....	6
3.2 Nigeria: Cost-effectiveness of Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs).....	6
3.3 Sierra Leone: Social inclusion and Gendered Dimensions of AEPs.....	7
3.4 Key Lessons from Day 1	8
4.0 Some Burning Issue Presentations(UNESCO, INEE, AEWG)	8
4.1 <i>Teacher Professional Development in Emergency Contexts: A Small Sample Exploratory Analysis for Five East African Countries</i>	8
4.2 <i>Investment Case for Targeting Out-of-School Girls: Notes on Nigeria’s Pathways to Choice and Cost-Benefit Analysis</i>	9
4.3 Integrating Accelerated Education into National Plans (<i>INEE/AEWG</i>)	9
5.0 Cost of Scaling AEPs	10
5.1 Cost of Not Investing in AEPs	10
5.2 Investment framework.....	11
6.0 The Plan of Action and Roadmap for Accelerated Education to reduce OOSCY in West Africa: Panel Discussion	11
6.1 Theme 1: Lessons Learned from AEP to Reduce OOSCY Challenges	11
6.2 Theme 2: Transition of OOSCY AEP Graduates into the Formal Education System	12

6.3 Theme 3: Some Challenges in Transitioning AEP Graduates into Mainstream Education.....	13
7.0 Parallel Thematic Working Group Discussions	13
7.1 Theme 1: Partnerships between Governments and Education Innovators.....	13
7.2 Theme 2: Development of an Investment framework for scaling AEPs.....	14
7.3 Theme 3: Improving the scale of AEPs through community-driven approaches	16
7.4 Theme 4: Research and Innovation.....	17
8.0 Closing Observations of Key Participants (country-level).....	18
9.0 Conference Recommendations to Strengthen Policy and Practice	19
Annexes
Annex 1: List and Web Links: Conference Presentations
Annex 2: Conference Participants	ii
Annex 3: Conference Brochure	vii
Annex 4: Working Group Presentations	xxiii
Annex 5: Media Engagement and Reportage of Conference.....	xxvii
Annex 6: Photographs of Dignitaries Participating in the Conference.....	xxix

List of Abbreviations

AENN	-	Addressing Education in Northeast Nigeria
AEPs	-	Accelerated Education Programmes
AEWG	-	Accelerated Education Working Groups
AFC	-	Associates for Change
ALPs	-	Accelerated Learning Programmes
CBE	-	Complementary Basic Education
CSEA	-	Centre for the Studies of the Economies of Africa
CSOs	-	Civil Society Organisations
CSR	-	Corporate Social Responsibility
CWDs	-	Children with Disabilities
FGDs	-	Focus Group Discussions
GEM	-	Global Education Monitor
GEOP	-	Ghana Education Outcome Project
GILLBT	-	Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
GIS	-	Geographic Information System
GPE	-	Global Partnership for Education
IDRC	-	International Development Research Centre
INGOs	-	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INEE	-	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IPs	-	Implementing Partners
KIX	-	Knowledge Innovation Exchange
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
OOSCY	-	Out of School Children and Youths
PHC	-	Population and Housing Census

PWDs	-	Persons with Disabilities
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal
SSA	-	Sub-Saharan Africa
TPD	-	Teacher Professional Development
UIS	-	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	-	The United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	-	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	-	The United Nations Children’s Fund

1.0 Introduction

“Education is considered a universal human right, as well as an issue of public good and responsibility. However, there are still many — particularly children in developing African countries — who do not enjoy this right.” (Kaledzi, 2022)²

Although education remains important in the lives of citizens, a segment (approximately 98 million) of the population in sub-Saharan Africa are marginalised and excluded in accessing education (un)intentionally. While some can afford to educate their children in private schools in cities, this option is not available to all. A substantial number of families, particularly those in rural and impoverished areas do not have access to this option.¹ Consistent with this evidence, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that over one-fifth of African children between the ages of 6 and 11 are not in school, while nearly 60% of youth between the ages of 15 and 17 are not enrolled.¹ In Nigeria for example, over 20 million children and youths are considered to be out of school.

To address the overwhelming challenges confronting the education system, the development of African nations, and most importantly the prospects and livelihoods of citizens including marginalised populations, a two (2)-day high-level conference was held in Accra, Ghana, on the 11th – 12th June 2024 at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel. The overall purpose of the conference was to tackle the out-of-school challenge on the West African sub-region and use research evidence to drive increased action and investment towards scaling up accelerated education programmes (AEPs) in Africa and to tackle the persistent increase in the number of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) in the sub-region.

The conference was collaboratively underscored by efforts from a consortium of research organisations and think tanks that comprised Associates for Change (AFC) in Ghana, Complementary Education Agency (CEA) in Ghana, Dalan Development Consultants in Sierra Leone and, the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) in Nigeria.

The need to converge was informed by evidence from research projects undertaken by the consortium over the past four (4) years funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The interrelated country-level projects undertaken by the consortium in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone simultaneously, explored and evaluated accelerated education and complementary basic education innovations focused on reducing and ameliorating the persistent problem of access to quality education in the West African sub-region: the OOSCY phenomenon. As a result of evidence provided through collaborative research, the conference was geared towards highlighting the need for greater investments of resources, especially financial investments to address this problem. This conference is timely since less than 1 out of 5 African countries reach the education financing benchmark. Suggesting that governments in Africa are still not spending what is required to secure quality education for children on the continent (UNICEF, 2024).

1.2 Rationale and purpose of high-level conference

The high-level conference aimed to provide a platform for stakeholders within the West African context to share best practices, empirical/research evidence, explore and coalesce AEPs. It provided a platform for dialogue, collaboration and mutual learning among various actors to drive collective actions towards guaranteeing inclusive education for all children in West Africa³.

1.2.1 Specific Conference Objectives

Specific objectives of the conference included:

1. Fostering full investment ownership and enhanced partnership for AEP integration. This objective aims to foster complete investment and ownership among stakeholders to fully integrate accelerated

² Kaledzi, I. (2022). Why education remains a challenge in Africa – DW – 01/24/2022. Dw.Com. <https://www.dw.com/en/africa-right-to-education-remains-a-challenge/a-60518000>

³ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aVHrBJTQrSrtx6PhS7Sb9iw2n7tKtAuE/view>

education programmes (AEPs) into existing basic education systems across participating countries. Crucially, this endeavours to ensure that the OOSCY are not only reached but are also provided with quality educational opportunities that align with national education standards and goals.

2. Sharing key evidence on the growing numbers of out-of-school children, lack of sustained investment and the cost of the OOSCY challenge in West Africa along with the cost of not addressing the problem.
3. Discuss country-level legislative instruments, policies and curricula developed to support AEP programming across the West African sub-region. The high-level conference sought to create dynamic platforms for the exchange of innovative curricula, effective policies, and strategic approaches across West Africa.

Please refer to *Annex 3* for the Conference Brochure, including the agenda.

1.3 Conference Approach and Methodology

The conference employed a diverse and multifaceted approach to address the complexities of AEPs and OOSCY. It featured both in-person and online presentations by key experts, focusing on cost-effectiveness of AEPs, the consequences of not investing in them, and their social and gendered dimensions. The conference also included thematic panel discussions among education experts, donors and innovators, who shared insights on AEP programming, strategies for transitioning learners to formal education and on the challenges of sustaining and scaling AEPs. Also, conference participants engaged in working group sessions that focused on key themes of government partnerships, funding and investment frameworks and community-driven approaches to scaling AEPs. The media were engaged to disseminate outcomes and question-and-answer sessions ensured active participant engagement.

1.4 Conference Participants

Participants in the conference were representatives of the diverse group of education sector stakeholders. Government actors included policymakers, government representatives, and education ministers. International bodies and donors including UNICEF, UNESCO, GPE/KIX IDRC were well-represented. Additionally, the conference was attended by private international and local NGOs, education innovators, researchers, education practitioners and community leaders from across the West African sub-region—Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, and Sierra Leone—and beyond. Please see Annex 2 for a full List of Conference Participants.

1.5 Expected Outcomes of Conference

The expected outcomes of this high-level meeting, as defined in the Conference Brochure (Annex 3) and agreed by participants, were:

1. Enhanced understanding of effective practices and research evidence related to addressing the out-of-school children challenge.
2. Strengthened partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders in the education sector.
3. Development of a collective action plan to accelerate efforts in reducing the number of out-of-school children in West Africa.
4. Commitment from participating countries and organizations to implement and support evidence-based interventions and policies.
5. Agreement on a regional framework for sharing curriculum, policies, and strategies.

1.6 Keynote address: Deputy Minister for Education

Mr. Ntim Fordjour, the Deputy Minister for Ghana, delivered an impactful opening speech, setting the tone for the discussions that followed. He reiterated the significant challenges faced in addressing the issue of OOSCY and underscored the importance of AEP/ALPs, and CBE in tackling this global concern. Following this, Mr. Fordjour began by highlighting the magnitude of the OOSCY crisis, noting that approximately 280 million children worldwide are affected and calling for concerted efforts to provide educational opportunities to these children. He commended the organizers and partners for their dedication to addressing the challenges of OOSCY and for seeking lasting solutions through various educational initiatives.

The Deputy Minister emphasized the critical role of empowering human resources in SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. He pointed out that the success of AEPs, ALPs, and CBE programmes hinges on the effective mobilization and utilization of human resources. Teachers, administrators, and community leaders must be well-equipped and supported to deliver these programmes successfully. Mr. Fordjour also highlighted the importance of partnerships in securing additional support for educational initiatives. He called for stronger collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international agencies, and local communities to pool resources and expertise. These partnerships are essential for scaling up successful programmes and reaching more OOSCY. Innovation in policymaking was another key point in the Deputy Minister's speech. He stressed the need for innovative and forward-thinking policies to overcome the challenges associated with OOSCY. This includes creating flexible educational frameworks that can adapt to the diverse needs of children in different contexts, especially in marginalized and rural areas. Policies must also address the socio-economic barriers that prevent children from accessing education, such as poverty, child labour, and cultural norms.

Mr. Fordjour concluded with a call to embrace innovative solutions and enhance collaboration in order to make significant progress toward ensuring that every child has access to quality education, thereby achieving SDG 4.

2.0 Context:

2.1 Sub-Saharan Africa and West Africa is home to almost a quarter of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) Phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa

Access to and retention in education remains a significant policy agenda worldwide, with considerable attention in the 'Agenda 2030' Sustainable Development framework. The indicator 4.1.4 used in measuring country-level progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, the out-of-school rate, is conceptualised as the '*proportion of children and young people in the official age range for the given level of education who are not enrolled in pre-primary, primary, secondary or higher levels of education*' (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UIS, 2022)⁴.

In 2021, there were an estimated 244 million children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 years worldwide—118.5 million girls and 125.5 million boys—who were not in school. These global estimates imply that OOSCY remains a significant problem, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The current status of education in Africa is contextualised by one startling statistic. According to the recent State of Global Education Update, over 9 out of 10 children in SSA will not be able to read and comprehend a simple paragraph by the time they are ten years old due to being out of school. Compared to a global OOSCY rate of 9.0% recorded in 2021, regional estimations indicate that SSA's rate of 19.0% is significantly disturbing because this rate is double the global figure. Thus, urgent policy attention and action is required to address the growing OOSCY incidence across the continent since the sub-region not only has the highest proportion of OOSCY population, but is also experiencing a geometric growth in population (Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, 2022)⁵. Such exponential growth could worsen and deepen educational problems.

⁴ UIS. 2022. Out-of-School Rate (1 Year Before Primary, Primary Education, Lower Secondary Education, Upper Secondary Education). Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/out-school-rate-1-year-primary-primary-education-lower-secondary/education-upper>.

⁵ Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report. (2022). Out-of-school numbers are growing in sub-Saharan Africa | Global Education Monitoring Report. <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/2022-out-school>

2.1.1 OOSCY situations in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone

Ghana has a fluctuating rate of children who are out of school. In Ghana, the percentage of children who were not in school fell by 17,908 (3.17%) in 2021 compared to 2020. However, compared to the previous two years, there was a noticeably greater proportion of children absent from school (Sasu, 2024).⁶ According to UIS data, about 547,863 children of primary school going age were out of school at the end of 2021 (The World Bank Group, 2024). Nearly 623,500 children of primary school age are still not enrolled in primary school and one out of four children in the kindergarten age range (from four to five years of age) are not in pre-school (UNICEF, 2015). Recent data from Ghana's 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC), suggest that 1,215,546 children in Ghana between the ages of 4 and 17 do not attend school (GraphicOnline, 2022). Currently, there has been a further increase in the OOSCY population, to about 1.9 million children in Ghana—some of whom are as young as eight years old—who are not being allowed to pursue their education (Right to Play, 2024). Numerous factors account for the persisting rate of OOSCY in Ghana. These include too many students in each class, poor water and sanitary facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers and inadequate educational materials, low quality of education, poor learning outcomes and child labour (UNICEF, 2015).

Of the regional estimates, 20 million OOSCY are located in Nigeria, whereby 118.5 million are girls (Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, 2022). Sixty-six (66%) of all OOSCY are located in the Northeast and Northwest regions of the country. About 86% are from rural areas and 65% are from the poorest quintile. Nigeria's OOSCY population accounts for 15% of the global total. More than 50% of girls are not attending school in basic education level (UNICEF Nigeria, 2022). This substantial statistic underlies UNICEF's recent declaration of Nigeria as the country with the world's highest number of OOSCY. The number of OOSCY has constantly grown in Nigeria, rising from 10.5 million in 2013 to more than 18.3 million in 2024, despite many efforts to address the situation⁷. These rates are suggested to be higher in states located in the Northeast and Northwest parts of Nigeria (UNICEF, 2013). Predominating factors accounting for OOSCY in Nigeria include socio-cultural norms and practices, economic barriers, limited or dilapidated school structures and infrastructure (e.g., school buildings, no toilets, desks, chairs), travelling longer distances from home to school, different values placed on education, skepticism associated with western-style learning, beliefs that girls do not need education, and regional instability. These factors create challenging environments for learning to thrive thus, discouraging attendance among the children and especially girls. Other reasons include declined willingness and interest in education as the child grows and some schools are not willing to accept older children due to concerns of bullying (Alimi, 2024; UNICEF, 2013).

Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 181 out of 191 countries in the most recent Human Development Index (UNDP, 2022). This could be associated with the persistent educational problems faced by the country because access to quality education, retention and completion of school remain challenges for children (UNICEF, 2017). The average primary school dropout rate per cohort is 52.2% and over a three-year period, 44.2% of the population reported never having attended school; however, this percentage is nearly three times greater in rural regions (32.7%) than in urban areas (11.5%). The percentage of OOSCY in primary, junior and senior secondary schools is as follows: primary school (18%), junior secondary school (19%), senior secondary school, 36% (UNICEF, 2017). This has resulted in higher percentage of illiteracy in rural regions (38.64%) compared to urban areas, 12.64% (Shrestha, 2023)⁸. As a result, half of children leaving primary school are unable to read or write (UNICEF, 2021). Like other West African countries, countless challenges play a key role in explaining the significant OOSCY rates observed. Failure to recognise the importance of child education, unfriendly and unsafe learning environment, low number of trained and qualified teachers, inadequate teaching materials and gendered traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and child labour. Schools being owned by faith-based organisations, communities, private individuals and the government also leads to inconsistent service and efficiency in terms of quality of education, particularly

⁶ See <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1276322/number-of-children-out-of-school-in-ghana/>

⁷ Ajilore-Chukwemeka, O. (2024, June 5). Out-of-school children: Exploring alternative schooling models outside 6-3-3-4 and 9-3-4. TheCable. <https://www.thecable.ng/out-of-school-children-exploring-alternative-schooling-models-outside-6-3-3-4-and-9-3-4/>

⁸ Shrestha, S. (2023, August 17). A new project on reducing barriers to child education in Sierra Leone. Feed the Minds. <https://feedtheminds.org/a-new-project-on-reducing-barriers-to-child-education-in-sierra-leone/>

concerning curriculum goals and child developmental needs. The majority of the community schools in Sierra Leone are also located in isolated and rural areas, and they rely on local donations to pay for stipends for unqualified and voluntary community instructors as well as the cost of basic teaching and learning supplies. These schools may see a reduction in instructional hours or perhaps closure if community members, who are poor, are unable to generate enough money (Shrestha, 2023; UNICEF, 2017).

Additionally, existing data on the incidence and causes of OOSCY points to the existence of gender disparities in the SSA context. Although gender differences at the global level no longer exist, there are persisting differences in both directions in specific regions. Recent data suggests that females compared to males are more likely not to access and/or be retained in school. The female out of school incidence rate is 4.2 percent more than that of men⁹. This supports the fact that an estimated 34% of adolescent girls remain out of school today (Kwakwa, 2023)⁹. The intersecting role of sociocultural norms prevailing in most patriarchal societies across the three countries and other factors earlier emphasised, causes female children to drop out of school at a greater rate (UNICEF, 2021).

These country-level insights indicate that the OOSCY phenomenon is too serious to be ignored, even during conflicting crises like inflation, energy, food security, and climate change. The role of basic education as well as secondary, postsecondary, technical, and vocational training cannot be overemphasized in building the capacity of young generations to obtain employment and support economic growth in the future. In a fast-paced growing world economy where knowledge and digital skills are becoming increasingly important, failing to engage millions of children and youth in productive activities could lead to social unrest.

High OOSCY incidence underpins the need for educational models in West Africa that cater to the specific needs of such children. Traditional schools may not be well-suited for these children, who may have social and academic challenges due to their age and background. Accordingly, the consortium partners (AfC, CSEA, and Dalan) alongside with education innovators and governments of Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, are working collaboratively and tirelessly with OOSCYs to deliver alternatives and routes back to education (*see* UNICEF, 2022b) such as accelerated education or learning programmes (AEP/ALPs). Hence, alternative approaches like the complementary basic education (CBE) and girls' focused education models of implemented in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Offering a faster-paced alternative education pathway for OOSCYs, who might have more sociological challenges adjusting to a conventional school due to their age and other personal reasons, will enable them to catch up to their peers in a shorter timeframe and reduce the stigma of being older than their classmates. Scaling these alternative models could potentially and effectively address the rising OOSCY challenge across the sub-region.

3.0 Evidence: Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY), Accelerated Education Programmes (AEP) and Girls Focused Models (GFM) in West Africa

Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford, director of AFC, presented cross-country evidence on the scaling up of AEPs as part of an extensive research report. The presentation urged African governments to take proactive measures to address the OOSCY challenges across the continent. This call to action emphasized the critical need for immediate and sustained interventions to ensure that every child has access to quality education.

One of the key highlights from the research was the multi-dimensional nature of AEP/ALPs and CBE programmes. These programmes are built on robust foundations, incorporating various educational strategies to meet the diverse needs of OOSCY. They are designed to provide accelerated learning opportunities that can quickly bring children up to speed, ensuring they can integrate into the formal education system effectively. The research also indicates that AEP/ALPs and CBE programmes are not only effective but also cost-efficient compared to traditional formal education systems. The findings presented suggest that learners who transition from these accelerated programmes tend to perform better than their peers who have remained in the

⁹ Kwakwa, V. (2023). What Will It Take for Africa to Lead an Education Turnaround? World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/african/what-will-it-take-africa-lead-education-turnaround>

conventional education system. This superior performance underscores the potential of these programmes to provide a viable solution for improving educational outcomes for OOSCY.

Moreover, Dr. Leslie emphasized the importance of government commitment in terms of resource allocation for AEP, ALP, and CBE programmes. Adequate funding and support are crucial for the sustainability and expansion of these programmes. Without proper investment, the significant progress made in these areas could be undermined, and the goal of reducing the number of OOSCY may remain unachieved. The presentation concluded with a strong recommendation for the creation of a regional fund dedicated to supporting OOSCY programmes in Africa. Such a fund would provide a steady financial stream to ensure the continuous operation and scaling of these vital educational programmes. This regional approach could foster greater collaboration among African nations, facilitating the sharing of best practices and resources to tackle the OOSCY challenge more effectively.

3.1 Ghana's Accelerated Education Programme (AEP): Complementary Basic Education (CBE)

Dr. James Natia Adam presented significant findings on the impact and effectiveness of AEPs on foundational learning in West Africa, with a focus on the most fragile and deprived rural areas in Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. This research draws on extensive fieldwork, interviewing and observing children and youths enrolled in AEPs.

One of the key insights from the research is the growing challenge of OOSCY in West Africa, exacerbated by socio-economic and cultural factors. UNESCO's underscores this alarming trend and the urgent need for effective interventions. AEPs offer a vital solution, particularly in deprived and rural areas, by providing foundational literacy, numeracy, and life skills over a condensed nine-month period. These programmes are crucial in offering educational opportunities to children who otherwise might remain excluded from formal education systems. The study's findings reveal that AEPs not only meet but often exceed the performance levels of non-AEP learners. This is especially notable among female students, who showed significant positive results compared to their male counterparts. The accelerated nature of these programmes allows children to skip three to four years of formal schooling while achieving equivalent competency levels in literacy and numeracy. This remarkable achievement demonstrates the potential of AEPs to bridge educational gaps effectively and efficiently.

Moreover, the research indicates that AEP and non-AEP learners perform comparably in their academic achievements, particularly in reading and comprehension. The curriculum's values-based approach fosters a sense of community service, especially in agrarian communities, where education is integrated with local cultural and economic practices. This holistic approach not only enhances learning outcomes but also instils a sense of responsibility and belonging among the students. Despite these promising results, it was highlighted that the effectiveness of AEPs in enhancing the learning of graduates have not been thoroughly understood, primarily due to a lack of resources and comprehensive research. This gap underscores the need for further studies and investment to fully capture the benefits and areas for improvement in these programmes.

The presentation concluded with a call to action: how can cost-effective AEP models be adapted and scaled to maximize their impact? Addressing this question is crucial for expanding the reach and effectiveness of AEPs, ensuring that more children in West Africa and beyond can benefit from these transformative educational opportunities. By investing in and scaling these programmes, stakeholders can make significant strides in reducing the number of OOSCY and improving educational outcomes for all children in the sub-region.

3.2 Nigeria: Cost-effectiveness of Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs)

Mr. Kashema Bahago's presentation on the cost-effectiveness of AEPs in West Africa provided valuable insights into the financial sustainability and scalability of these initiatives. His presentation delved into the economic aspects of AEPs, addressing critical questions about their cost-effectiveness and the strategies needed to scale and sustain them in the sub-region. He also highlighted the specific case of Nigeria, focusing on the costing and implementation of AEPs in Northeast Nigeria under the Accelerated Education for Nigerian Children (AENN) program.

One of the key takeaways from the presentation was the importance of government-driven interventions in the successful implementation of AEPs. The AENN program's effectiveness was largely attributed to strong governmental support and leadership, which ensured that the necessary resources and infrastructure were in place. This underscores the vital role that government commitment and involvement play in the success of educational initiatives, particularly in regions facing significant socio-economic and political challenges. He emphasized the need for governments to investigate and adopt cost-effective measures and tools to tackle the issue of OOSCY in West Africa and beyond. By focusing on the financial efficiency of AEPs, governments can ensure that these programmes are not only effective but also sustainable in the long term. Additionally, scaling and sustaining AEPs require a strategic approach that balances cost-effectiveness with the ability to reach a significant number of children. Mr. Bahago suggested that governments and stakeholders explore innovative financing mechanisms, partnerships, and community involvement to support the expansion of AEPs. Leveraging technology and digital tools can also play a crucial role in reducing costs and enhancing the reach and impact of these programmes.

Mr. Bahago concluded his presentation with a call for governments to investigate and implement cost-effective measures to ensure that AEPs remain viable and impactful solutions for addressing the educational needs of OOSCY. Through strategic planning, innovative financing, and strong community and governmental support, he emphasized that AEPs can continue to provide valuable educational opportunities for children across West Africa.

3.3 Sierra Leone: Social inclusion and Gendered Dimensions of AEPs

Madam Fatu Yumkella presented insightful findings on the impact and effectiveness of AEPs in promoting gender and social inclusion in West Africa. Her presentation highlighted the multifaceted factors contributing to the OOSCY phenomenon, including economic, social, cultural, and political aspects.

One of the most striking findings was the high transition rates of female AEP participants to the formal education system. For instance, the GILLBT program reported an over 80% transition rate for female students, while the School for Life program saw 86% of its participants, regardless of gender, move on to formal education. These impressive statistics underscore the effectiveness of AEPs in bridging the educational gap for marginalized children and facilitating their reintegration into mainstream schooling. At the secondary level, although non-AEP students tend to perform slightly better than their AEP counterparts, the differences are not significant. This indicates that AEPs are efficient in preparing learners for successful transitions to formal education systems. The relatively small performance gap demonstrates that AEPs provide a robust educational foundation, enabling learners to keep pace with their peers in traditional schooling environments.

The crucial role of community ownership in the successful roll-out of AEPs was also emphasised during the presentation. Community involvement ranges from sourcing the necessary infrastructure to providing financial contributions that support learners in various capacities. This grassroots support is vital for the sustainability and effectiveness of AEPs, as it ensures that programmes are tailored to meet the specific needs of the community and are bolstered by local resources and commitment. Moreover, AEPs served as a strategic prevention mechanism against teenage pregnancy and child marriage. By keeping children, particularly girls, engaged in education, these programmes help delay marriage and pregnancy, providing young women with greater opportunities for personal and professional development. This aspect of AEPs highlights their broader social impact beyond immediate educational outcomes. Further evidence presented shows that AEPs stimulate a sense of resilience, self-worth and agency among beneficiaries.

In conclusion, Madam Yumkella's presentation underscored the significant role of AEPs in advancing gender and social inclusion in West Africa. The programmes' high transition rates to formal education, efficient performance outcomes, strong community support, and preventive benefits against social issues like teenage pregnancy and child marriage all attest to their impact. Additionally, the empowerment and resilience fostered by AEPs further reinforce their value in creating inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for all children in the region.

Please see detailed country presentations: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone ([Annex 1](#)).

3.4 Key Lessons from Day 1

Key lessons from day one of the conference stressed the critical need for increased investment in and effective implementation of AEP/ALPs, and CBE to address the escalating issue of OOSCY in the region. The presentations emphasized the importance of data-driven policies, resource allocation, partnerships, and innovative approaches, along with strong partnerships between governments, development partners and communities. Special attention was given to ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all, particularly vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities (PWDs). Overall, day 1 of the conference emphasised the need for concerted efforts, innovative solutions, and robust partnerships to tackle the challenges of OOSCY in West Africa.

4.0 Some Burning Issue Presentations (UNESCO, INEE, AEWG)

4.1 Teacher Professional Development in Emergency Contexts: A Small Sample Exploratory Analysis for Five East African Countries

UNESCO's representatives, Victoria Kisaakye and Quentin Wodon, presented findings on a small exploratory study conducted on teacher professional development in emergency contexts, in five East African countries. Collectively, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in TPD for teachers in conflict and refugee settings, with the aim of informing policymakers and educators about the best practices and necessary interventions needed to support teachers effectively. Majority of the sample were males, within the ages of 21–30 years, teaching in public, primary schools, and district school inspectors as well as from Uganda.

The presented offered valuable insights into teacher professional development (TPD) and its impact on student performance within emergency contexts. Several factors according to the presentation influence student learning outcomes. These include female teachers and principals, teachers with professional diploma or pre-service training, private school, large class size, language of instruction, teacher serving also as tutor and country effects. Also, evidence shared highlighted two crucial points regarding TPD value and participation. It was disclosed that not all teacher professional development programmes are perceived as equally beneficial. Teachers likely prioritize training that aligns with their needs and teaching contexts resulting in a positive correlation between perceived training value and participation rates because there were increased chances of teachers participating in training programmes, they considered valuable. However, the presentation revealed several areas where teachers require the most support through TPD programmes—school management and administration, content and performance standards in core subjects, learners' counselling and psychosocial support, teaching students with special needs and teaching learners from multicultural backgrounds.

Teacher participation in TPD opportunities, particularly in crisis-affected areas were shown to be hindered by clashes with existing work schedules, cost of TPD programmes, lack of employer support, limited funding, time, human resources, materials and management skills. Other challenges highlighted in the presentation included high teacher turnover, heavy workloads, limited time, language barriers and gender biases, lack of motivation due to few incentives and limited ICT skills, harsh weather conditions and security concerns as well as absence of relevant TPD opportunities and insufficient curriculum specifically designed for crisis situations.

In addition, Mr. Wodon disclosed that addressing these problems requires the provision of more funding and resources, increasing teacher pay, reducing workloads, and hiring more teachers, offering language training or providing translators in refugee settlements, strengthening leadership for planning, promoting community participation, and involving stakeholders to create a more collaborative approach, strengthening the curriculum, providing incentives for teachers to participate in TPD, and developing a blend of refresher training programmes that are practice-oriented, in-person, and online. Most importantly, accommodation and transportation allowances could help address financial and logistical barriers for teachers.

Mr. Wodon concluded his presentation indicating that there is the need to incorporate specific themes—learner-centered pedagogies, age-appropriate curriculum, clear and harmonised curriculum contextualised to the

specific learning and sociocultural environment, and an inclusive teaching environment with inclusive teaching and learning materials. He finally called for the need to understand and provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to teachers.

4.2 Investment Case for Targeting Out-of-School Girls: Notes on Nigeria's Pathways to Choice and Cost-Benefit Analysis

Quentin Wodon of UNESCO IICBA provided significant insights on educational measures that are meant to improve the lives of females in Nigeria, namely through the “Pathways to Choice” program.

According to the presentation, adolescent girls getting married too young is a serious problem in Nigeria, and the initiative seeks to address it. With the goal of empowering girls and lowering the risk of early marriage, which can be harmful to their health and prospects, the project offers educational possibilities.

Wodon emphasised the program's remarkable results, pointing out that females who took part in "Pathways to Choice" had a 65%-point lower likelihood of being married two years after the intervention. The impact of the programme on educational uptake, which rose by 69 percentage points among the treated females, is strongly correlated with this trend. This illustrates how well the programme works to promote education as a respectable substitute for childbearing. Again, the programme adopts a “safe space plus” strategy, which emphasises fundamental reading and numeracy skills in addition to giving females a safe atmosphere. This dual emphasis makes sure that girls feel protected and encouraged while they pursue their education while also assisting in the development of vital life skills.

Moreover, involving communities and parents in the educational process is crucial, according to Wodon. The program's impact is further increased when girls achieve academic success because it creates a supportive atmosphere in which parents and communities encourage girls' education. The program's economics were also discussed in the presentation, and it was found that the benefit-to-cost ratio was at least 2.4. This shows that the programme is both fiscally feasible and beneficial to society, which strengthens the case for expanding such projects in the future.

In conclusion, Quentin Wodon emphasized the transformational potential of educational initiatives such as "Pathways to Choice" in Nigeria. It also showed how these initiatives may be economically viable while postponing marriage, boosting educational attainment, and cultivating community support.

4.3 Integrating Accelerated Education into National Plans (INEE/AEWG)

Aiming to improve education in crisis circumstances, the Accelerated Working Group (AEWG) and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) presented several important subjects.

The significance of incorporating AEPs into national Education Sector Plans (ESPs) and policies was underlined in the presentation. The efficient implementation of educational programmes across diverse areas and their alignment with national agendas are contingent upon this integration. Also, the necessity of cooperation between different stakeholders, such as governments, UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and research institutes, was one of the important points brought up. To maximise resources, exchange best practices, and improve the overall efficacy of educational interventions during emergencies, a collaborative approach is important.

The presentation emphasised how important it is to localize educational initiatives so that they are customized to the unique requirements of various communities. With a focus on diversity, the organisation promoted inclusive methods that consider the different experiences and backgrounds of students. Another crucial area of attention was building the case for faster schooling. The group indicated how strong data collection and analysis are essential for making informed policy decisions and raising the calibre of instructional materials. This evidence-based strategy is essential for growing successful projects and guaranteeing their financial support.

In addition, the presentation included high-quality resources and guidelines—available in several languages—to assist practitioners in the field. These tools are intended to improve Accelerated Education Plans' efficacy and guarantee that they follow the 10 Principles for Effective Practice in Accelerated Education. The group also reported on the organizing of 299 participant workshops held in 11 different countries with the goal of

increasing stakeholder capacity and information sharing. This program is a component of a larger plan to increase educational results and resilience in crisis-affected communities.

The INEE/AWG highlighted the importance of evidence-based, collaborative, and locally relevant approaches to improve education during emergencies and guarantee that all students have access to high-quality educational opportunities.

5.0 Cost of Scaling AEPs

Millions of children in the sub-region are not attending school, which is a catastrophe that will have a negative impact on social, economic, and personal development. Insufficient funding perpetuates poverty, restricts personal income potential, and impedes innovative ideas within the community. West African nations can end the cycle of poverty, develop their human capital, and promote sustainable development by funding AEPs and putting in place effective funding frameworks. The amount of money needed to provide these children with a better future is significantly less than the expense of doing nothing. Scaling AEPs is, in essence, an investment in the human capital and economic development of the region rather than just a cost. This significant information is detailed in the following sections on presentations about the cost of not investing in AEPs and investment framework for scaling AEPs.

5.1 Cost of Not Investing in AEPs

Dr. Adedeji's presentation on the costs of not investing in education in the West African sub-region highlights several critical issues that arise from the growing number of OOSCY in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. *See [Costs of not Investing in Education in West African Region](#)* for more detail.

The presentation emphasizes the alarming statistics regarding out-of-school children in West Africa, with Nigeria having 20 million, Ghana 1.2 million, and Sierra Leone 500,000. These growing statistics mean that the situation is a significant concern as education is a fundamental pillar for both individual and societal development. The consequences of underinvesting in education manifest in various forms, including economic, social, and human costs. A critical aspect discussed was the opportunity costs associated with neglecting OOSCY. The presentation notes that failing to invest in education results in a loss of increased earning potential for individuals. This not only affects the individuals but also has societal implications for economic growth and development in the region, promoting a cycle of underdevelopment. At the community level, the negative externalities of education on communities were discussed, highlighting that a lack of education leads to a loss of potential innovation and invention, which are crucial for societal progress. This is because educated individuals contribute to their communities by fostering innovation, which drives economic development.

Again, the spending priorities of African countries regarding education was highlighted. According to the data presented, countries with the highest numbers of OOSCY tend to prioritise educational spending the least. This paradox exacerbates the issue, as those who need education the most are often the least likely to receive it. Consequently, the presentation revealed strategic approaches to address these challenges across the three countries. Ghana's strategy focuses on addressing the educational needs of children living in extreme poverty and those with disabilities. These groups are disproportionately affected by the lack of educational investment, which further marginalises them in society. Nigeria's strategy prioritises education in crisis and emergency zones, recognising the urgent need to provide educational opportunities in areas most affected by conflict and instability. Likewise, Sierra Leone's approach places significance on addressing the educational needs of vulnerable populations and deprived regions.

In conclusion, the presentation effectively outlines the multifaceted costs of not investing in education in the West African region. And stressed the urgent need for governments across West Africa to increase educational investment to break the cycle of poverty, enhance individual earning potential, and foster community development.

5.2 Investment framework

Mr. Festus Ankrah, the Research and Consulting Manager of AFC, proposed an investment framework for AEPs in West Africa. He comprehensively outlined a framework aimed at addressing educational exclusion and enhancing access to education for marginalised groups, particularly OOSCY. The framework is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals 4 (SDG4), which advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education. A significant aspect of the framework is its focus on monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which are essential for assessing the effectiveness of educational programmes. The framework highlights six main components that need attention: funds, infrastructure, facilitators, curriculum, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This structured approach ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and that educational programmes are responsive to the needs of the targeted communities and OOSCY.

Moreover, the presentation emphasises the importance of digital infrastructure in education, and the need to implement systems that can collect and analyse data on program performance, which is crucial for making informed decisions and improving educational outcomes. This data-driven approach allows for continuous improvement and adaptation of educational strategies to better serve excluded populations. Additionally, the presentation outlines principles recommended by UN agencies and Ministries of Education for effective management and funding of AEPs in West and Central Africa (WCA). These principles include aligning goals, monitoring, and funding, as well as ensuring that AEPs are effectively managed and integrated into the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture. This alignment is crucial for creating a cohesive educational investment framework that can respond to the diverse needs of the population.

Overall, this framework serves as a vital resource for policymakers and educators aiming to improve educational access and quality, particularly for marginalised or excluded children and adolescents. It underscores the importance of addressing all dimensions of exclusion through an AEP investment framework. For more details on presentation, refer to annex 1: [*Investment Framework for Scaling Accelerated Education Programmes for Out-of-School Children in West Africa*](#).

6.0 The Plan of Action and Roadmap for Accelerated Education to reduce OOSCY in West Africa: Panel Discussion

The importance of a multifaceted approach to addressing the OOSCY challenge in West Africa was emphasised throughout the discussion. This includes data-driven strategies, partnerships, community involvement, flexible education models, and qualified facilitators. Three key themes were considered as summarised below.

6.1 Theme 1: Lessons Learned from AEP to Reduce OOSCY Challenges

The panellists presented diverse strategies for prioritising the needs of OOSCY in West Africa. A common thread among many organizations was the reliance on data to inform their interventions. UNICEF's representative emphasised the need to approach the problem of being out of school holistically, while acknowledging the critical role of AEPs.

The Ghana Education Outcome Project (GEOP) as detailed by the Complementary Education Agency (CEA), focused on regions with the highest prevalence of OOSCY, particularly in northern areas. With the World Bank supporting⁰ and overseeing the implementation of the GEOP initiative, over 17,300 OOSCYs were successfully integrated into mainstream education in 2023 and an additional 21,000 is slated for transition in July 2024 upon completing AEPs. This achievement is largely attributed to collaborative efforts with organizations like Plan International, Jacob's Foundation, and School for Life, who actively engage communities to identify and enrol eligible children.

Luminos Fund, an international education innovation NGO, with a significant impact of integrating 270,000 OOSCY, utilised national statistics and identified gaps in existing interventions. Their strategy included targeting areas with limited school infrastructure or facilitators. For Jacob's Foundation, efforts towards addressing OOSCY are centred on early childhood development, partnering with multiple agencies to fund child education. A local NGO, chosen to prioritise girls' education and adopted a system-change approach.

Their strategy focused on scaling solutions through grant partnerships with a strong collaboration with AFC recognised as a key innovative approach to enhance their impact. Overall, the panellists demonstrated commitments toward addressing the OOSCY challenge through data-driven strategies, partnerships, and a focus on marginalised population groups.

Engaging with various alternative models and approaches to address the out of school problem has exposed relevant experts, implementors and stakeholders in the education space to numerous lessons. These lessons accordingly offered significant experiences that could be used to revise, strategize, and strengthen subsequent intervention design and implementations. Three (3) main areas involving (i) parental involvement and support; (ii) programme design and delivery; (iii) innovative approaches to partnerships; and (iv) facilitator capacity building, are discussed.

Parental involvement and support: A central theme emerging from the discussion is the critical role of parents in the success of reintegrating OOSCYs into the education programmes and school. Panellists emphasised the need for strategies that foster parental commitment and ensure consistent child attendance. This suggests that programmes should include components that actively engage parents and build their capacity to support their children's education.

Program Design and Delivery: The importance of programme structure and delivery was another area of focus. A play-based approach was recommended as a suitable method for engaging young learners. Additionally, the idea of having dedicated facilitators who provide consistent support was proposed to enhance learner attendance and continuity. These suggestions highlight the need to adopt and redesign education interventions to ensure they are child-centred, flexible, and responsive to the specific needs of the target population.

Innovative approaches and partnerships: The value of exploring alternative models and pathways for reintegration was also highlighted by panellists. Referencing the Luminous Fund model, the panellists indicated a need for a multifaceted approach that incorporates diverse perspectives and strategies to address the complex challenges of reintegration.

Facilitator capacity building: The need to have specialised training for facilitators in relation to AEPs was raised during panel discussion. Panellists proposed that there was the need to have a curriculum that focuses on transition, to equip facilitators with the necessary skills to support learners' progress. This discussion emphasised the need for ongoing professional development to enhance the effectiveness of reintegration programmes.

6.2 Theme 2: Transition of OOSCY AEP Graduates into the Formal Education System

This theme explored how out-of-school and at-risk children and youth could be successfully transitioned and reintegrated into the formal education system.

Panellists suggested that successful reintegration of OOSCY into the formal education system is underpinned by societal and communal factors as well as empirical data. They explained that the family, community and baseline data play significant roles in effectively addressing the OOSCY problem confronting the West African sub-region. The perspectives of panellists indicated that parental involvement and community ownership in the process of transitioning and reintegrating OOSCY into the formal education arena is a critical enabler to programme success. Involving parents from the very beginning fosters a sense of ownership and establishes a social contract among the community. This creates a social contract among stakeholders and a supportive environment that promotes the children's reintegration and long-term success in school since parents will be encouraged to bring their children back to school.

Another way to successfully integrate and transition these children could be to focus on addressing teacher deficits constantly threatening the education system. Facilitator training was considered an essential tool to realise successful reintegration of children at the foundational learning level. Key to all these is the role of data.

Data-driven approaches were thus discussed by the panellists. They stressed the need for baseline data to inform the proper planning of AEPs and indicated that baseline data should focus on gathering empirical evidence on key various indicators that could reliably underpin the implementation of educational interventions. Some suggested indicators include:

1. the number of schools
2. the number of children
3. Out of school children
4. Ages of the children
5. Quality of schools
6. Facilities available, etc.

In Nigeria for example, geographic information system (GIS) was used to map and verify the actual number of OOSCY from 3,975 schools, and their reasons for being out of school. This strategy was used to verify and identify 640 children who were out of school. In planning interventions, the panellists recommended that implementors and relevant stakeholders thoroughly consider the outcomes for the children at the end the accelerated education programmes.

6.3 Theme 3: Some Challenges in Transitioning AEP Graduates into Mainstream Education

A major challenge identified was the inflexible nature of the formal school system model. In this system, children spend a full day in the classroom preventing them from engaging in other income earning activities to finance their livelihood and education related costs. The GEOP initiative encountered a similar challenge. Field visits revealed a concerning dropout rate among transitioned learners due to the full-day school schedule which conflicts with children's previous work arrangements. Compared to a more flexible AEP models, such full-day school routine prevents the children from working to earn money for the family, creating a financial burden on parents to provide for food and uniforms.

Three major problems, according to the panellists, hinder efforts to sustaining, scaling and transitioning and mainstreaming learners. First, one major challenge identified related to an inflexible educational structure and delivery of curriculum which do not accommodate the unique needs of OOSCY. The formal educational system uses a rigid educational and curriculum structure that requires children to stay in school for longer hours without having the opportunity to engage in other activities such as economic activities. This makes it impossible for the children to stay in school after being transitioned or mainstreamed into formal schools. Secondly, another challenge panellists identified as inhibiting scaling of AEPs was an inadequate number of facilitators compared to the high number of OOSCYs. Finally, the absence of data or inadequate data on OOSCY in the sub-region was reported as a major challenge. Not having accurate up-to-date data on OOSCY makes it difficult to effectively and properly plan educational interventions to address the issue.

7.0 Parallel Thematic Working Group Discussions

As indicated earlier, working group sessions engaged conference participants in a series of parallel thematic discussion that focused on: (i) partnerships between government and education innovators; (ii) development of an investment framework for scaling AEPs, (iii) improving the scale of AEPs through community driven approaches, and (iv) research and innovation. Please see Annex 5 for a summary of the questions the working groups discussed.

7.1 Theme 1: Partnerships between Governments and Education Innovators

Working Group 1 engaged in discussions on partnerships that could be established among governments and education innovators. The group discussed significant features of effective partnerships between governments and education innovators in the context of AEPs.

The group described key features of a successful partnership between government and education innovators using key dimensions: (i) clearly defined roles and responsibilities; (ii) joint interventions and oversight; (iii) mutual accountability, mutual respect and transparency; and (iv) joint monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). One of the features revealed was the existence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Both

government and education innovators need to be guided by clearly stipulated and designated roles and responsibilities in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of AEPs. This should further be underpinned by a memorandum of understanding (MoU) facilitated by an established contract team.

In relation to the above, the group emphasised a second feature of this partnership—joint interventions and oversight roles. INGOs and implementation partners (IPs) should perform two key respective roles, where the government performs an oversight role, and the IPs and International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) implement the AEPs. Another important feature of collaboration is mutual accountability. Clear paths of accountability were illustrated with each partner expected to be accountable to each other. For example, IPs and NGOs need to account to the government, and the government in turn accounts to the communities, ensuring mutual and reciprocal accountability among these key stakeholders in the context of AEPs. Successful collaboration between government and education innovators was also delineated to portray mutual respect and transparency. Stakeholders should respect each other and practice transparency. Shared resources and plans are periodically reviewed for adaptation. Finally, a joint approach and efforts towards monitoring, evaluation and learning regarding AEPs was considered a key attribute of a successful partnership among government and education innovators.

Successful partnerships between education innovators and the government, citing examples from Niger, Burkina Faso, and Sierra Leone were also discussed. The key collaboration strategies highlighted include information sharing, collaboration and harmonization, funding pool, alignment with government policy, shared objectives and partner contribution, and government co-leadership. In Niger, Burkina Faso, and then Sierra Leone, collaboration was between the IPs and the government. The CABLE models are examples of AEP models entered by the Burkina Faso government. The Education Development Partners Group was cited as another example. This group is co-chaired by government officials and major donors. They mainly meet to solicit and share information, collaborate and ensure harmonization among the different actors in the education sector, especially when it comes to AEPs and potential funding opportunities. Since there could be a potential pool of donors who are ready and willing to fund some of the projects, it enables easier alignment with government policy. For successful partnerships, transparent communication of government policies and shared objectives is crucial. Partners' contributions towards these objectives are essential. Ultimately facilitating information sharing, fostering alignment with government priorities.

The group discussed how there could be mutually beneficial partnerships between government and education innovators. A community-driven approach was proposed. To complement such an approach, establishing local-based and driven management committees that possess necessary sustainability skills and knowledge to takeover projects after external partners exit was an important endeavour. For initiatives to be truly mutually beneficial and sustainable, community participation is essential, along with consistent and adequate resources and cultural representation in the educational curricula of AEPs. The need to address the persistent limited visibility of NGOs in the education sector was also emphasised. For example, many of the NGOs in the education space are not known to the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Ghana's case. This poses significant constraints on the ability to build a resilient education eco-system because of the difficulty in identifying all relevant organisational actors working in the education sector. Being able to enhance the visibility of NGOs to government organisations and regulators including the MoE facilitates successful and mutually benefiting institutional collaborations and partnerships towards addressing the problem of OOSCY. Another important strategy was to comprehensively audit the activities and financials of NGOs. It was stressed that implementing a system where both financial and operational activities of NGOs are audited to ensure transparency and accountability. Mali was recommended for benchmarking to improve overall NGO governance and credibility.

7.2 Theme 2: Development of an Investment framework for scaling AEPs

Central to the conference was the need to discuss how to ensure a sustainable investment framework to reduce reliance on external donors. This was crucial due to the continuous stall and reverse of progresses sustained so far. Working Group 2 focused on identifying existing funding sources to finance alternative education pathways such as AEPs and effectively address OOSCY challenge in West Africa. Funding sources identified comprised international organisations and donors, foundations and philanthropists, governments, private sector, the

public, diaspora, and educational institutions. International organisations included the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, the Global Partnership for Education, IDRC among others. Humanitarians comprised private charitable organizations and individuals were identified under the foundations and philanthropic sources of funding. Government funded sources included local, national and international actors. Funding sources from the private sector were identified as emanating from contributions made by multinational and local companies within the economic space. From the public, diaspora and educational institution sources, the general citizenry, affected communities, universities and other educational establishments were respectively outlined as key sources. These findings imply that there exist a wide range of fundings avenues, from global institutions to local communities, underscoring numerous viable options for supporting informal education initiatives like the AEPs.

Among the funding sources, the group identified sustainable funding models for AEPs. The ranking of funding sources beyond government and private sector caused considerable discussion and varied opinions among group members. A consensus was nonetheless reached on government funding as the most sustainable option for funding AEPs. This was followed by private sector involvement. However, there was significant disagreement on the subsequent ranking of community-driven approaches and donor funding. The group struggled to reach a consensus on the most sustainable funding models after the top two choices were identified.

Notwithstanding the above discussions, key gaps in the current investment landscape were established. Gaps identified were at two major levels: implementation level and resource level. At the implementation level, the group identified that there existed siloed working environments because most organisations operate independently without effective collaboration. The problem of short-term funding was visible to the group. They explained that limited financial resources hinder the long-term impact and the capacity of implementing partners to track the progress and outcomes of beneficiaries of AEPs. Both Nigeria and Ghana are examples of countries that face financial challenges in funding education despite growing OOSCY. The regulatory environment was cited to be a major setback. There exists a lack of implementation and enforcements of existing policies to address the OOSCY situation. Besides these implementation level gaps, limitations associated with knowledge and resources were observed. These included inadequate research and data, unknown costs, and donor influences. The group revealed that these gaps portrayed issues relating to insufficient information that hinders effective program design and evaluation; difficulties associated with determining the actual costs of interventions to address OOSCY; and funders or donors specific agenda that are usually not in alignment with most critical needs. It was acknowledged that there existed a problem with engaging the private sector. Being able to attract private investment in education is challenging due to the need for a clear business case.

In terms of innovative financing mechanisms for AEPs, the group concluded that three main financing models are significant to effectively ensure AEPs are continuous and effective in addressing OOSCY. These included public-private partnerships (PPPs), match funding and leveraging corporate social responsibility (CSR). Though PPPs were the primary mechanism recommended, the importance of match funding from government and donors, and the need to explore existing CSR programmes of multinationals and private sector entities as a potential funding source for AEPs was considered important to ensure AEP sustainability. The PPP model was presented as a model currently adopted in Ghana, with a focus on infrastructure development. On the other hand, in Nigeria a federal fund is dedicated by the government to basic education, where matching contributions from states is utilised. Though not the primary focus, the private sector, religious groups, and CSOs are involved in supporting basic education initiatives in Nigeria.

Additionally, the need for a comprehensive approach to financial sustainability of AEPs, encompassing financial planning, legal support, strategic alignment, data-driven decision making, and long-term impact assessment was accentuated. According to discussions, ensuring effective financial management, the enactment of clear legal frameworks and support, ensuring the program fits within the broader education landscape, collecting and analysing data to inform decision-making and monitor program impacts, and following students beyond the AEP program to assess long-term outcomes could not be sidelined when the focus is on financial sustainability of AEPs.

Finally, discussions centred accountability measures to track the effective use of funds and resources emphasized core accountability measures and measures to address corruption and mismanagement. Core accountability measures entailed strong project management characterized by the implementation of robust project management practices; performance-based payment using the GEOP model to link funding to outcomes; and community involvement focused on empowering communities through community-based management committees and fostering community participation. Other viable options include monitoring and evaluation via establishing a comprehensive monitoring framework, and the conduct of independent audits with regular financial and performance audits. Besides this, specific measures aimed at addressing corruption and mismanagement were identified as useful. For example, the use of electronic or digital payment systems to enhance transparency; emphasising the importance of strong leadership and project ownership; and exploring the potential of blockchain technology for secure transaction tracking to reduce issues of corruption and enhance transparency and accountability.

7.3 Theme 3: Improving the scale of AEPs through community-driven approaches

Under this theme, Working Group 3 shared how community driven approaches could be used to scale AEPs across the West African sub-region. The group considered effective ways of engaging communities in the design and implementation of alternative education programmes. First, needs assessment was considered. This involved scoping exercises to identify specific needs and challenges confronting communities, especially concerning OOSCY. As part of the needs assessment, scoping activities need to identify existing projects within the communities to ensure complementarity. Secondly, the suggested step was to understand the needs of communities where AEPs and other education interventions could be implemented. Thorough stakeholder mapping was recommended to identify key individuals and groups within the community, helping to explore the diverse ways of working and facilitate the understanding of what is required to address the problem at hand and be able to carry out the necessary work to address it. In doing so, there is the need to recognise and respect the culture and traditions of the communities. This guides the intervention design and implementation in the focused communities. Most importantly, to ensure ownership of interventions and buy-ins, community participation and collaboration from the onset of projects and interventions are encouraged. The focus here is on involving community members in the entire process through participatory learning and action tools as well as identifying and leveraging existing projects within the community to maximize impact to avoid duplication of efforts. There is also the need to set standards, comprising the establishing of criteria for community participation to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

In terms of how community voices could be incorporated into the planning and decision-making process, the group indicated that marginalised groups should be involved in the planning and decision-making processes. For instance, there is the need to consider gender and disability dimensions when engaging communities to ensure adequate representation of marginalised populations. The importance of feedback also emanated from the group's discussions. The group stressed the need to allow communities to provide inputs and suggestions through diversified feedback mechanisms throughout the project phases. This will help community members communicate their needs or concerns to the implementing teams so that they can be incorporated to improve the project design and implementation, engendering a sense of intervention or project ownership among community members. The importance of understanding the specific context and dynamics of each community to ensure effective engagement fundamentally underpins the proposed strategies. Underscored by existing sociocultural nuances and diversities within communities, the group proposed focus group discussions (FGDs) as a mechanism to engage community members. In some communities, men, women and children cannot be equally engaged due to gender-based norms that dominate social relations at the household and community levels.

The group recommended steps to implement community-driven approaches that could be employed to build the capacities of local actors and communities to support the scaling of AEPs. Yet again, needs assessment was considered with a focus on identifying specific gaps (i.e., community issues) that exist and requirements in terms of what is needed to address the identified gaps. In complementing this strategy, there is the need to clarify the roles of each stakeholder involved. In line with the project process, clear roles and responsibilities need to be

assigned to local stakeholders such as local facilitators, who are assigned responsibilities of facilitating classes. This in turn builds their capacity towards addressing the issues themselves. Adding to the afore, community engagement is central when building local capacities. The perspectives and opinions of community members need to be solicited, respected and considered, resulting in a sense of ownership because of their buy-ins. In line with this strategy, the group share the belief that community members need to be made aware of issues hindering education and subsequently trained to equip them with the know-hows to address the problems faced in relation to education. The community as a result, develops a sense agency and becomes empowered to demand their rights and drive change at the local level. Thus, community members become a catalyst to change. Essentially, the principal objective is to ensure that communities understand their problems, take ownership of solutions, collaborate with external actors and can hold duty bearers and local authorities accountable for AEP delivery to achieve sustainable change in education.

Moreover, discussions highlighted the crucial role of local leadership and community involvement in ensuring the longevity of educational programmes. Central to this is the need for community ownership through active participation in program development and implementation. This includes formulating local by-laws to enforce attendance, leveraging parental supervision, and adapting materials and languages to suit specific cultural contexts. In addition, the importance of collaborative curriculum development was emphasized, advocating for the involvement of local actors and educational institutions to create culturally relevant learning materials. There have been instances where local language or terminologies used for concepts in developed curricula were tested and it was found that such local words were not used in the target community leading to difficulties understanding the concept. Hence, involving communities in developing the curricula results in the use of appropriate languages that are easily understood by the learners. The discussion also stressed the necessity of building community capacity to address local challenges, such as climate change and conflict, as integral to program sustainability. In principle, the group identified community engagement, localisation, collaboration, and capacity building as essential components for the effective and enduring impact of educational interventions.

Furthermore, several key challenges in engaging communities for program implementation were highlighted. Primarily, unrealistic community expectations of financial handouts pose a significant barrier. To address this, the group emphasized the importance of effective communication to clarify program goals and manage expectations from the outset. Sustaining program impact over time was another central issue. This involves maintaining community engagement, advocating for program benefits, and fostering a sense of ownership among community members. Also, logistical challenges such as determining appropriate locations for program activities and navigating communal conflicts were identified. Lastly, the discussion touched on the complexities of language barriers in diverse communities and the need for tailored approaches to address this issue. Overall, the discussion underlines the need for strategic planning, effective communication, and adaptability to overcome these challenges and successfully engage communities in program implementation.

7.4 Theme 4: Research and Innovation

The insights presented by Working Group 4 highlight several critical areas concerning AEPs and the need for a comprehensive understanding of the current gaps in research and the priorities for future investigations.

One of the primary concerns raised is the inconsistency in data regarding the number of out-of-school children. The government and development partners often present conflicting figures, which complicates policy formulation. It is essential to utilize research to establish accurate statistics on out-of-school children, as this data is fundamental for effective policy outcomes. Additionally, there is a pressing need to focus on foundational learning, particularly in local languages, to ensure that facilitators are adequately trained to deliver essential skills during the early years of education.

The importance of stakeholder involvement in the research process is another significant point. Engaging all stakeholders from the inception phase ensures that there is collective ownership of the research outcomes. This collaborative approach can facilitate smoother implementation of policies derived from research findings, as stakeholders are more likely to support initiatives they helped shape. Also, the proposal to conduct tracer studies

is noteworthy. These studies would track the progress of learners who have gone through AEPs, documenting their life outcomes and contributions to society, such as becoming lawyers or policymakers. This longitudinal approach can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of AEPs and inform future educational strategies.

Also, to foster a culture of innovation within the education sector, harmonizing intellectual property rights is crucial. This harmonization can create a conducive environment for sharing innovative practices and research findings, ultimately enhancing the quality of education. Finally, the connection between AEPs and universities is emphasized as a pathway to generate innovative research ideas. By linking AEPs with tertiary institutions, there is potential for developing robust research theories that can be translated into practical applications in educational settings.

In conclusion, the discussions from Working Group 4 underscore the necessity for accurate data, stakeholder collaboration, innovative practices, and strong connections between AEPs and higher education to enhance the effectiveness of educational programs. These elements are vital for fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the education sector.

8.0 Closing Observations of Key Participants (country-level)

Based on discussions from various stakeholders, the following final comments, key lessons and actions were emphasised by representatives of relevant agencies and actors in the education sector across the West Africa:

IDRC representative: Raised concerns about how to effectively download the OOSCY crisis to leaders. He noted that one cannot talk about equity and equality in general terms. At every opportunity, each of these must be broken down for different executives in different boardrooms.

Sierra Leone representative: Sierra Leone has made significant strides in implementing AEPs through its policy of inclusive access for marginalized groups, including girls, children with disabilities (CWDs), rural children, those in poverty, and OOSCY. Recognizing the critical need for AEPs, Sierra Leone has prioritized OOSCY in its education policy. While challenges remain, such as defining specific categories of OOSCY and securing adequate government funding, the 2022-2026 Education Sector Plan incorporates AEPs, signalling a commitment to this initiative. To enhance AEPs, Sierra Leone aims to collaborate with universities for research and establish a dedicated committee for teacher training and AEP implementation. Overall, this conference provided a valuable platform for sharing experiences, identifying areas for improvement, and reinforcing Sierra Leone's commitment to expanding educational opportunities for all children.

Nigeria's representative: The statements emphasize the importance of sharing research findings with a wide audience, building platforms to discuss AEPs, and forging strong partnerships with education agencies. They highlight the need to demonstrate the economic benefits of AEPs to secure funding from both government and private sectors. Additionally, the importance of learning from successful AEP models in the region and ensuring community involvement is emphasized. Successful implementation of this strategy depends on factors such as data availability, supportive government policies, capacity building, and robust monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, to effectively implement this strategy, a detailed communication plan, stakeholder engagement, cost-benefit analysis, partnership development, and a monitoring and evaluation framework are essential. By addressing these areas, the initiative can significantly contribute to improving educational outcomes for marginalized children in the region.

Burkina Faso representative: The proposed AEPs in Burkina Faso aim to comprehensively address the issue of OOSCY by expanding access, improving education quality, and ensuring program sustainability. The program's core strategies involve community engagement, infrastructure development, curriculum adaptation, and teacher training. A phased implementation approach, beginning with pilot programmes and progressing to scaling, is outlined. While the program demonstrates a strong focus on addressing multiple facets of the education challenge, its success hinges on overcoming resource constraints, effectively adapting curricula, and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation systems. By prioritizing needs assessments, strengthening partnerships, and investing in capacity building, the AEP program has the potential to significantly impact educational outcomes for children in Burkina Faso.

GILLBT representative: A comprehensive approach to scaling up AEPs involves leveraging community resources through a bottom-up model, where facilitators are compensated from farming proceeds. To expand AEPs, securing support from the Member of Parliament for teaching and learning materials and a "one classroom a year" initiative is crucial. Standardizing practices and incorporating guiding principles are essential for ensuring consistent quality. While a regional-level engagement strategy is yet to be defined, the necessity for country-specific action plans and effective coordination among institutional networks is evident for successful scale-up.

AEWG representative: To effectively implement AEPs, it is crucial to adhere to the ten principles outlined by the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) and ensure their integration into country-level initiatives. Standardized guidelines should be provided to maintain consistency and best practices across programmes. Building and sustaining a community of practice is essential for long-term success. Fostering collaboration among stakeholders and developing context-specific action plans are vital. Lastly, establishing robust coordination systems in each country will enable informed decision-making and future planning.

CEA representative: Stakeholders must collaborate to reduce OOSCY in Ghana. Budget allocation is crucial, with the Ministry of Education taking steps like the capitation grant through the 2025 budget for CBE. Development partners should allocate one percent of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) to AEPs, mirroring budget funding for AEPs. The CEA aims to regulate civil society organisations (CSOs) through a legal instrument and requires financial statements from them. Efforts to reintegrate OOSCY into schools, explore life learning pathways, and increase CEA and OOSCY budgets are ongoing. Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford should promote frequent high-level conferences. Additionally, securing a Development Partner MoU for OOSCY funding, exploring alternative funding sources, and pushing for the CEA legislative instrument are priorities. Post-approval, CSO and NGO auditing is planned. The target is 20,000 reintegrated OOSCY, and AEP transition pathways will be reevaluated.

The above comments highlight significant issues worthy of government and non-governmental agencies' attention. Primarily, the need for a concerted effort to address the challenge of OOSCY through AEPs. Central to the discussion is the need for effective communication, collaboration, and resource allocation. Stakeholders emphasize the importance of tailoring AEPs to specific contexts while ensuring quality and sustainability. One of the critical issues highlighted during the conference was the need to effectively communicate with key decision-makers. There was a recognized need to effectively convey the urgency of the OOSCY crisis to decision-makers and to break down complex issues. Another lesson and key message focused on the AEP design and implementation. It was emphasised that AEPs must be carefully designed to address the diverse needs of marginalized groups, including girls, children with disabilities, and rural children. Implementation challenges include securing adequate funding, defining target populations, and building teacher capacity.

Critical among measures discussed was the importance of data-driven decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation to measure programme impact and inform future strategies. Also, partnerships and resource mobilization emanated strongly as key takeaways from discussion. Evidence highlighted that strong collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners is crucial for successful AEP implementation. However, securing sustainable funding from both government and private sectors is a persistent challenge confronting AEPs. Supportive policies and regulations, including CSO regulations and budget allocations are needed to create an enabling environment for AEPs. Additionally, expanding AEPs to reach a larger number of OOSCY requires innovative approaches, such as community-based models and leveraging existing resources. These discussions critically underscore the need for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to address the challenges confronting AEPs across the West African sub-region.

9.0 Conference Recommendations to Strengthen Policy and Practice

For governments to reach global SDG 4 targets, the conference underscores the need for the following policy and practice actions by West Africa governments and other relevant stakeholders:

1. Call for Governments in West Africa to institutionalize a complementary/ alternative system for reaching out of school children and youth in Africa.
2. Increased funding for/investment in complementary/alternative education with a focus on Accelerated Education Programming in West Africa including an International Fund for Out of School Children and Youth.
3. All governments in the sub region to dedicate at least 7% to 10% of their basic education budget to tackling the out of school crisis by investing in Accelerated Education Programming.
4. The recognition and full integration of AEP into national and educational system through appropriate policies and legislation to ensure sustainability. Each government to develop a road map and action plan for tackling the out of school crisis and policy on Complementary/Alternative/Accelerated Education
5. Governments and education innovators to develop and enhance partnerships with research institutions, CSOs and the private sector to support AEP development and scale-up. All governments urged to collaborate with civil society organisations to develop and test AEP curriculum as well as to approve curriculum for country wide usage.¹⁰

¹⁰ In Ghana for instance, it is recommended that good practice examples such as the ‘one classroom per year’ project and initiatives towards procuring teaching and learning materials are discussed with Members of Parliament. This will enhance the implementation, scaling and sustenance of AEPs in the country.

Annexes

Annex 1: List and Web Links: Conference Presentations

DAY ONE: MORNING SESSION	
Cost Effectiveness of AEPs in Nigeria and Ghana	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1B0PDUkKncDn2L_BmLN1ndth62QxhzwWd/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Effectiveness of AEPs: From a Gender and Social Inclusion Perspective'	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1flVhsdv553PwTLFcgARjCzPWC-YIo4kf/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Investigating the Impact and Effectiveness of Accelerated Education Programmes on Foundation Learning in West Africa	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1slcEPTj0c1DLWGQEIVOAGb7F2756BxB1/e dit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Overview of the GPE KIX Research IGNITE: Scaling Accelerated Education Programming (AEP) in West Africa: Lessons from Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LWPAhKboglZ4lK1qndzpArD_C4OQu1cp/e dit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
AFTERNOON SESSION	
Presentation from Save the children Sierra Leone.	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QvtlsNH6dI87GcziZTw1Zx718sWRbq6W/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Out of School Children Landscape In Sierra Leone	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1cB2slsPrEox6MlvKbhRBuyljiCiFcUp_/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Save the Children	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1VEHJXXS2KJKqN3rrz2AW06NSftfKwpAd/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
The Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Landscape and AEP in Nigeria	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_Ougz3qOnw5avNFzE5x1ahdbUFaGnkMM/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Out Of School Children (OOSC): Landscape in Sierra Leone	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/192il3-REaOvCqhU3FhqKxryRsBDyxRTY/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true

The Institutional Arrangements for Complementary Basic Education (CBE) in Ghana	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CAAtT1csnIkNiunsfhx8E95PdPvMG8D9f/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS IN EMERGENCIES EXPERIENCE OF BURKINA FASO	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ZtipK0MIedYiOaKUwAEqfhWvMUR8vvg3/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
DAY TWO MORNING SESSION	
Teacher Professional Development in Emergency Contexts: A Small Sample Exploratory Analysis for Five East African Countries	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/134OqCMSS2B8IVV_Gh0B2L9oMjbtWrlZ/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
AFTERNOON SESSION	
Investment Framework for Scaling Accelerated Education Programmes for Out-of-School Children in West Africa	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1AWpzzZN_IQp_ksaGmYkjhNI0H2RX6BYA/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Using Evidence to drive scaling up in Africa	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1odpiyXstBoXb-a2RGEvmcShbxZy94ZZN/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Costs of not Investing in Education in West African Region	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1bNKUEvbISxsc8BH6JPqNX6qSB5WYqujs/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Accelerated Education Working Group	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_XjAtfh3l2Inlkmyk4sfOLGH7csKZYp/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Next steps in developing a comprehensive Education System in Niger State	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1R4Y8pt7l1kZ9rk0_NSO1c6u8E05zuVgD/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
The Luminos Program in Ghana	https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1WpZU9c3GNdfhcY2pKx8s8LfM6ek66CVh/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=106947169591194970799&rtpof=true&sd=true
Conference Communique	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xqqyZO2ND87Ay33mCdmR51kYvufYsNhB/view?usp=sharing

Annex 2: Conference Participants

S/N	Name	Designation	Organisation/ Institution
1.	Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford	Director	AFC
1.	Dr. James Natia Adam	Research Technical Lead	AFC
2.	Dr John Bosco	Senior Lecturer	UDS
3.	Festus Ankrah	Senior Research Manager	AFC
4.	Eunice Bodza	Communications Officer	AFC
5.	Louisa Owusu Adjei	Research Officer	AFC
6.	Ana Rafaela	Research Fellow	AFC
7.	Er Menan Amaniampong	Research Fellow	AFC
8.	Ernest Nniakyire	MEL Officer	GILLBT
9.	Amadu Zulyaden	Communications and MEL Director	School For Life
10.	Prof. Ibrahim Mohammed Gunu	Dean	Faculty of Education
11.	Peter Kofi Marfo	MEL Officer	Afrikids
12.	Dr. Mawushi Nutakor	Board Member	Olinga Foundation
13.	Prof. Samuel Atintono	Principal	Accra College of Education
14.	Justice Agyei-Quartey	Independent Consultant	
15.	Gaskin Dassah	Coordinator	NNED
16.	Festus Longmatey	Head of Programmes	GNECC
17.	Bernice Mpere-Gyekye	National Coordinator	GNECC
18.	Fakor Kobla Disu	Deputy Director GES, Schools and Instructions	GES
19.	Hon. John Ntim Fordjour	Deputy Minister, General Education	Ministry of Education
20.	Madam Mamle Andrews	Chief Director	Ministry of Education

S/N	Name	Designation	Organisation/ Institution
21.	Madam Justina Djabah	Ag Director, Admin	Ghana Education Service
22.	Catherine Appiah Pinkrah	Executive Director	Complementary Education Agency
23.	Hajia Nana Fatima High	National Coordinator, GEOP	Ministry of Education
24.	Mr. Emmanuel Ntim	Deputy Executive Director	Complementary Education Agency
25.	Madam Gloria A. Mensah	Deputy Executive Director	CEA
26.	Mr. Patrick Twumasi	Head, Corporate Affairs	CEA
27.	Mr. Philip Deh	Ag. Director, Complementary Education and Training	CEA
28.	Prof. Mark Addo Asamoah	Head, Reform Delivery Unit	Ministry of Education
29.	Mr. Ben Nick Barnor	Director, SRIM	Ministry of Education
30.	Rose Bentsil-Quaye	Senior Planning Officer (PBME)	Ministry of Education
31.	Franklin K. Eshun	Director General	Ghana TVET Service
32.	Prosper Nyavor	Head of Education	UNESCO
33.	Prof. Michael Boakye Yiadom	IEPA	UCC
34.	Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah	Head of Development Assistance	Canadian High Commission
35.	Avril Kudzi (Ghana based Jacobs Foundation)	Country Manager	Jacobs Foundation
36.	Louis Afful SEEDS Ghana	Team Member	Dubai Care/ Dubai Seeds
37.	Dr. Ernestina Tetteh		STAR Ghana Foundation
38.	Senyo Tettegah	Country Manager	Luminos Fund

S/N	Name	Designation	Organisation/ Institution
39.	Leslie McCarthy	CEO	Macs Media Consult
40.	Anatu Salifu	Staff	GEOP-MOE
41.	Salima Ahmed	Staff	GEOP-MOE
42.	Isaac Asamoah	Staff	GEOP-MOE
43.	Mawusi Ama Ahiadzi	Product Manager	Seeds Dubai
44.	Bernice Mpere-Gyekye	National Coordinator	GNECC
45.	Fakor Kobla Disu	Deputy Director GES, Schools and Instructions	GES
46.	Leslie McCarthy	CEO	Macs Media Consult
47.	Dr Chukwuka Onyekwena	Executive Director	CSEA
48.	Adedeji Adeniran	Director of Research	CSEA
49.	Kashema Bahago	Research Associate	CSEA
50.	Hassan Umar	Senior Program Officer	Kanem Borno Human Development Association (KABHUDA)
51.	Dr. Abubakar Tijjani	Special Adviser to Executive Governor	Borno State
52.	Mr. Ransom Stephen	Executive Director	Horn of Hope

S/N	Name	Designation	Organisation/ Institution
53.	Dr. Ossom	Lead, Social Mobilization	Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)
54.	Dr. Chima	Researcher	Nigerian Educational Research and Devt Council- NERDC
55.	Abdullahi A. Musa	DDE (EMIS)	Basic and Secondary Education Niger State (Nigeria)
56.	Dr. Umar Suleman	DPRS	Education and School Reforms Niger State (Nigeria)
57.	Fatu Yumkella	PI/Research Manager	Dalan Development Consultants
58.	Diana Ofori Owusu	Knowledge Management Facilitator	Dalan Development Consultants
59.	Mariama Deen Swarray	Snr Researcher	Dalan Development Consultants
60.	Nuru Deen	Director, Programme Operations	Save The Children, International
61.	Dr. Olive Musa	Director, Non-Formal Education Directorate	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)
62.	Prof Yatta Kanu	Chief Education Officer	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)
63.	Dr. Marcel Guigma	Managing Director of Formal Education	
64.	Dr. Yaro Yacouba	Managing Director	CERFODES
65.	Catherine Kabore	Former Permanent Secretary of the Accelerated Schooling Strategy	
66.	Moussa Ouedraogo		Stromme Foundation
67.	Prof. Robert Sauder	Int. Steering Committee Member	Carleton Univeristy- Canada
68.	Victoria Kisaakye	Senior program specialist	CapED/KIXA19 Hub
69.	Patrick Walugembe	Program Officer	IDRC
70.	Dr. Roni Ajao	By-Fellow and Tutor, Hughes Hall.	University of Cambridge
71.	Mr Peterside Adayi	Principal Consultant	MRL
72.	Haifa		

S/N	Name	Designation	Organisation/ Institution
73.	Misbau Adinda		
74.	Mr. Sem Buamey	Support Supervisor	CEA
75.	Mr Annan	AG Head, M&E	CEA
76.	Prince A. Aryee	Staff	CEA
77.	Jonathan Nyarko	Assessment	CEA
78.	Mr Rafael Mensah		CEA
79.	Dr. Dennis Fiifi Darko	AG RPPME	CEA
80.	Patience Agbadi	Administrative Secretary	AFC
81.	Adobea Christiana	HR Admin	AFC
82.	Charles Nuamah Nyantakyi	Finance Officer	AFC
83.	Janet Ampomah	Finance Manager	AFC
84.	Foli Dennis	IT	DopeTech Solutions
85.	Leslie McCarthy	CEO	Macs Media Consult

Annex 3: Conference Brochure



High-Level Conference on Tackling the Out-of-School Challenge in West Africa: Research Evidence to drive Action and Investment

Date: 11th – 12th June 2024

Venue: La Palm Royal Beach Hotel, Accra, Ghana

8:30 AM



Background

West Africa faces a critical challenge with a significant number of out of school children, a situation exacerbated by socio-economic factors, conflicts, and health crises. Recognizing the urgent need to address this issue, a consortium of research firms and think tanks, including Associates for Change (Ghana), Centre for the Study of Economies of Africa (Nigeria) and Dalan Development Consultants (Sierra Leone) have been working over the past four years to investigate and evaluate accelerated education and complementary basic education innovations aimed at reducing the number of out-of-school children across the West African region with a special focus on girls models. The consortium is organizing a two-day high-level conference focused on “Scaling up accelerated education programmes in Africa to tackle the high prevalence of Out of School Children in West Africa”. The event is scheduled for June 11 and 12th 2024, at La Palm Royal Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana.

The meeting will convene government representatives, education ministers, policymakers, international and Education Innovators/ NGOs, researchers, education practitioners, donors, and community leaders from West Africa and beyond. Through collaborative efforts, the two-day high-level Conference aims to provide a platform for stakeholders from West Africa to share best practices, present research findings, and explore synergies related to Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs).

Specifically, to foster full investment, ownership and enhanced partnerships for AEP integration, share of key evidence on the growing numbers of out of school children, lack of sustained investment and the cost of solving the OOSC challenge in West Africa along with the cost of not addressing the problem will be explored. And to create a dynamic platform for countries to share legislative instruments, policies and curricula developed to support AEP programming across West Africa.

The conference addresses the following key themes:

1. Showcasing research evidence: Presentations will include the comprehensive research findings from the consortium's four-year study on the effectiveness of AEP and CBE interventions aimed at reducing the number of out-of-school children in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Sessions will highlight key insights, success stories and challenges for policy and action.
2. Best practices in tackling the out-of-school children challenge: Interactive panels and case study presentations from various countries within the region, focusing on innovative strategies, policies, and programmes that have successfully addressed barriers to education.
3. AEPs as a viable solution for providing quality education to out-of-school children, in West Africa. Discussions will cover scaling up modalities and curriculum adaptation, teacher training, community involvement, and the integration of technology in AEPs.
4. Synergies and collaborative efforts: Sessions dedicated to exploring and highlighting the collaborative efforts between governments, NGOs, community organizations, and international partners in implementing AEPs and other educational interventions. Success stories of cross-border cooperation and partnerships will be showcased.
5. Path forward: Strategic Partnerships for Scaling Up complimentary education: Roundtable discussions on policy implications, scaling up AEPs and planning a collaborative roadmap for accelerated pathways in rural and extreme poverty contexts across the countries, emphasizing sustainability and the mobilization of resources.




The expected outcomes of this high-level meeting include enhanced understanding of effective practices and research evidence related to addressing the out-of-school children challenge, strengthened partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders in the education sector, the development of a collective action plan to accelerate efforts in reducing the number of out-of-school children in West Africa, commitment from participating countries and organizations to implement and support evidence-based interventions and policies and agreement on a regional framework for sharing curriculum, policies, and strategies.




Conclusion

The high-level meeting in Accra, Ghana, represents a pivotal moment for West Africa to galvanize action, share knowledge, and commit to collaborative solutions to ensure that every child has access to quality basic education. By bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, the meeting aims to set a new course towards a strengthening alternative education pathway for marginalized children across the sub-region.

Copies of the full brochure are available on request from Associates for Change (AFC).

Annex 4: Profile of Speakers

 A circular portrait of Hon. Rev. John Ntim Fordjour, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.	<p>Hon. Rev. John Ntim Fordjour, Deputy Minister for Education (Ghana)</p> <p>Hon. Rev. John Ntim Fordjour is a politician, Mineral Engineer, entrepreneur, legislator and ordained Reverend Minister. He has a multifaceted background in Engineering, Mining, International Relations and Economic Policy. He’s a second term Member of Parliament for Assin South Constituency in the Parliament of Ghana and serves as Deputy Minister for Education. Fordjour focuses on supporting the Minister to drive education transformation at the pre-tertiary level with passion for foundational learning, S’TEM and inclusive education.</p>
 A circular portrait of Mrs. Mamle Andrews, a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a grey patterned blazer over a black top. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.	<p>Mrs. Mamle Andrews, Chief Director, Ministry of Education, Ghana</p> <p>Mrs. Andrews is the Chief Director of the Ministry of Education. She was appointed to this position in April 2023, bringing extensive experience from various governmental roles, including her previous work at the Ministry of Information. In her role, she is committed to promoting gender-sensitive policies within the education sector. She has been actively involved in initiatives aimed at increasing access to education for girls and women, addressing gender-based violence, and promoting safe school practices. Mrs. Andrews currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the UNESCO Ghana Commission.</p>
 A circular portrait of Dr. Eric Nkansah, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue pinstriped suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera.	<p>Dr. Eric Nkansah, Director General of the Ghana Education Service (GES)</p> <p>Dr. Eric Nkansah is the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service (GES). Over the years, he has worked as a subject teacher (both at Junior and Senior High Schools), banker, lecturer, and policy maker. He holds a PhD in Financial Economics from the University of Zululand, South Africa, a Master of Business Administration (Finance) from KNUST Business School, Ghana, and B. A (Hons) Economics from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Dr Eric Nkansah is passionate about educating and developing people and believes that educating the population is the fastest way to transform Ghana.</p>

	<p>Dr. Catherine Appiah-Pinkrah, Executive Director of Complementary Education Agency (CEA), Ghana</p> <p>Dr. Catherine Appiah-Pinkrah is the Executive Director of the Complementary Education Agency. She previously worked as Director of General Administration at Ghana's Ministry of Education. She holds a PhD in Business Administration and an MSc in Development Planning & Management from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana, and the University of Dortmund, Germany. Dr. Appiah-Pinkrah also served as the Director for Pre-Tertiary Education, where she developed and implemented national policies, including those on digital literacy and ICT education. She collaborates with private sector organizations, NGOs, CSOs, and development partners.</p>
	<p>Prof. Samuel A. Atintono, Principal of Accra College of Education, Ghana</p> <p>Prof. Atintono is a seasoned educator and researcher with nearly two decades of experience in teacher education, specializing in Ghanaian languages, linguistics, literacy, and culture. He has held significant administrative roles at the University of Education, Winneba, including Head of the Gur-Gonja Languages Education Department and Acting Dean of the Faculty of Ghanaian Languages. He holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Manchester and has received prestigious scholarships such as the Commonwealth Academic Scholarship and the Fulbright Visiting Research Scholar award. He has worked on developing and reviewing several of the Complementary Basic Education materials as part of the Government's CBE programme in Ghana.</p>
	<p>Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah, Director Development and Head of Cooperation, High Commission of Canada in Ghana</p> <p>Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah is the Director and Head of Cooperation at the High Commission of Canada in Ghana. She plays a key role in promoting Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which emphasizes gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. She previously worked as Director Education, Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection for Global Affairs Canada.</p>



Dr. Robert Sauder, Faculty of Education, Carleton University, Ottawa-Canada

Robert Sauder is an Adjunct Research Professor at the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) and teaches courses on foreign aid and international development policy with a particular focus on social development. He is an independent researcher and consultant in international development with a particular expertise in teacher training and education. Over his career he has worked as an educator, including teaching in Africa. He spent 15 years in policy development in the federal government including six years as Director of Research at Global Affairs Canada. He is active in the field of development policy and serves as an advisor to research projects in Africa.



Dr. Roni Ajao, By-Fellow and Tutor Hughes Hall University of Cambridge

Dr. Ajao is a distinguished and experienced Managing Consultant with a prolific career spanning governmental and corporate sectors both in the UK and internationally. She possesses a wealth of knowledge and expertise in various domains, including programme and project management, change management, strategy development, organizational review and design, stakeholder and communications management, and leadership development and training. Her career is marked by a significant focus on public sector policy and management, particularly in emerging economies and the defence industry. Dr. Ajao has operated at the highest levels within government departments and blue-chip organizations, offering her expertise in defence and other critical areas and being a Board Member of Women in Defence in the UK, she actively contributes to increasing the representation of women in the defence sector.



Dr. Patrick Walugembe International Development Research Centre (IDRC) KIX, Kenya Regional Office

Dr. Patrick Walugembe holds a PhD in Population Studies from Makerere University, a master's degree in Sociology (Makerere University), and another Masters in Program Evaluation (University of Saarland, Germany). Patrick has over 17 years of experience working on access to education for the most vulnerable children, adolescents, and youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. His main interests are building monitoring, evaluation, learning, and data management systems. He has previously worked with UNICEF, UNDP and USAID. Patrick is a Project Officer at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), he is deeply committed to advancing the frontiers of knowledge sharing and mobilization to drive impactful educational outcomes. Patrick has been overseeing the work on Accelerated Education in West Africa and has been pivotal in the work of the consortium.



Dr. Quentin Wodon, Director, UNESCO IICBA

Quentin Wodon is Director of UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa. Previously, he worked at the World Bank, including as Lead Economist, Lead Poverty Specialist, and manager of the unit on values and development. Before that, he taught with tenure at the University of Namur. He has also taught at Addis Ababa University, American University, and Georgetown University. A business engineering graduate, after an assignment in Asia as Laureate of a Prize, he worked in brand management for Procter & Gamble. He then shifted career to join a nonprofit working with the extreme poor. This led him to pursue a career in international development. Quentin holds four PhDs, has over 700 publications, and has worked on policy across sectors in over 60 countries. As part of his volunteer work, he has held multiple leadership positions with nonprofits. His research has been covered by leading news media globally.






Dr. Victoria Kisaakye Kanobe, Senior Program Specialist, UNESCO IICBA




Victoria is a senior program specialist in education at UNESCO IICBA. She has 26 years of experience supporting Member States and regional economic bodies (such as the AU, EAC, IGAD, and SADC) in Africa. Her technical areas include curriculum and teaching design for formal and non-formal education, initial and continuous teacher training, the use of ICT in education, quality assurance program design, health and wellness education, education in emergency situations, and inclusive education. Victoria holds a PhD in education, a medal, and a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Makerere University, Uganda, and a master's degree in public health from Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya. She is a member of several educational associations, the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education, and the Global Technical Team for Balanced and Inclusive Education of the Education Relief Foundation in Geneva.



Mr. Moussa Ouedraogo, Programme Coordinator and Education Advisor for Stromme Foundation

Moussa Ouedraogo is a civil servant of the State of Burkina Faso who has been a teacher, Pedagogical advisor and Inspector of Primary Education. He remained there for 28 years (from 1982 to 2010) before joining the Stromme Foundation in September 2010 where he successively held the positions of Regional Education Coordinator (for Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) from 2010 to 2020, Regional Program Coordinator from 2020 to 2023, then Program Coordinator for the Mali office cumulatively with his duties as Education Advisor of the Stromme Foundation in its entirety since January 2024. He has skills in training engineering, development of accelerated education curricula, didactic materials for formal and accelerated education programmes.

	<p>Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford, Director of Associates for Change and West Africa Team Leader on the KIX research on Accelerated Education and Girls Models in West Africa</p> <p>Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford has over 30 years of experience in international development and education research in Asia and Africa. She holds a DPhil in International Education from the University of Sussex, where she focused on education, culture, and development in Northern Ghana, and a BA (Honours) in International Development from the University of Toronto. Renowned for her work on quality education, Accelerated Education, equity, and social inclusion, she has led numerous large-scale studies in Ghana and West Africa. She has collaborated closely with Ghana's Ministry of Education on budget analysis and consulted for various international organizations, including the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP, FCDO, Global Affairs Canada and USAID. Currently, she is the West Africa Team Lead on an KIX IDRC research project on Accelerated Education, co-leads a project on early learning in Ghana and Sierra Leone, and serves as the Director for Associates for Change.</p>
	<p>Dr. James Natia Adam, Ghana Team Lead, Associates for Change</p> <p>Dr. James is a distinguished development and educational researcher with over 15 years of experience in research and evaluating programmes in emergency and conflict-affected regions. He has been working with Associates for Change over the last 3 years as their senior research lead. He holds a Ph.D. in Human Geography and Public Policy and a Supplementary Diploma in Gender Studies from the University of Bern, Switzerland, and an MPhil in Peace and Development Studies from the University of Cape Coast. Dr. James specializes in scalable educational interventions for marginalized communities and is the Senior Research Lead for two KIX IDRC-funded projects at Associates for Change, focusing on Accelerated Education and Early learning in West Africa. He has managed cross-country research and advised on initiatives like the Sahel Peace Initiative in Burkina Faso. His work, widely published and recognized, impacts educational reform in challenging environments.</p>
	<p>Fatu Yumkella, Director of Dalan Consultants and Team Lead for Sierra Leone</p> <p>Fatu Yumkella is the CEO of Dalan Development Consultants (DDC) Limited, Sierra Leone. Dalan engages in social science research, and monitoring and evaluation activities across all sectors, including the Education sector. Fatu is currently the Research Manager for Sierra Leone, for the KIX IDRC supported AEP research consortium led by Associates for Change (AFC, Ghana), investigating the effectiveness of selected AEP models in increasing access to quality education for girls.</p>

	<p>Diana Ofori-Owusu, MEL Lead in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Diana Ofori-Owusu is a highly qualified sociologist with extensive experience in research, development, and educational management. Her expertise spans across multiple sectors, including policy analysis, program evaluation, and knowledge management. Her work has significantly contributed to educational improvements and policy formulation in Ghana and Sierra Leone. Madam Diana has worked as Principal Researcher, Centre for Economic and Social Policy Analysis (CESPA), Sierra Leone.</p>
	<p>Prof. Yatta Kanu, Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Sierra Leone</p> <p>Dr. Yatta Kanu is the Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education in Sierra Leone. In this capacity, she leads the government's Out of School Children (OOSC) programme in Sierra Leone, including the Qatar-funded project with the mandate to prepare and enroll 120,000 out of school children in primary schools in Sierra Leone. Prior to this position, she was a full Professor of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and now Professor Emerita in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba in Canada for 25 years.</p>
	<p>Dr. Onyekwena is the Executive Director of CSEA. He holds a Ph.D in Economics from University of Portsmouth, UK, a Master of Science degree in Economics from University of Kent, UK, and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He also holds a certificate in Executive Education, Financial Inclusion from John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. His research interests include Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Trade, Global Economic Governance, Climate Change, and Financial Inclusion. Within these areas, he has authored various peer-reviewed publications and led several research projects. Dr. Onyekwena is a member of the steering committee of the West African Think Tank Network (WATTNet), a member of the African Policy Circle (APC), Global Economic Governance Africa (GEGAfrica) and Governance of Africa's Resources Programme (GARN) both in South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). He had worked as a part-time lecturer at Economics Department of University of Portsmouth.</p>






Dr. Adedeji Peter Adeniran earned his PhD in Economics from the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. His academic journey began with a bachelor's degree in educational management and economics, followed by a master's degree in economics from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His expertise encompasses education, experimental economics, and public sector economics, supported by robust research, analytical, and managerial skills. Adeniran actively contributes to policy dialogues, conferences, and workshops, addressing significant economic challenges in Africa, notably Nigeria. He has led numerous projects funded by prestigious institutions like the World Bank, DFID, and UNICEF, demonstrating his dedication to impactful research and policy implementation.



Dr. Chima Jonas Egbujoo works with the **Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC)** as a researcher in policy and programmes development. He currently works as the Deputy Director of Research and head of the policy and programmes development unit of NERDC. He worked as a university lecturer at Imo State University before joining NERDC 16 years ago. As programme and curriculum development specialist, Chima has successfully coordinated many national curriculum and programmes development projects including the Accelerated Basic Education Programme, the National Emergency Education Curriculum, and National Senior Secondary Education Curriculum. He has also led critical national research projects. He was the ACCESS Researcher for Nigeria. He is the technical lead, of the research and development of EiEWG Nigeria. Chima currently coordinates the Accelerated Basic Education Programme National Task Team. Chima holds a PhD in Chemistry Education and Research.



Dr. Ossom is a development specialist with qualifications in Communication Arts, Public Administration and Educational Administration and Management, among others, from renowned national and international institutions including the University of Cross River State (now University of Uyo), Nigeria, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris, France, and the Cambridge Judge Business School (CJBS), Cambridge University, United Kingdom. Ossom deploys his professional skills and competencies in advocating for inclusive, functional, and life-long education at the basic level. He has for over two decades made significant contributions to the delivery of free and compulsory Basic Education at national and sub-regional levels and currently leads the Social Mobilization process at Nigeria's Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).

	<p>Abubakar Tijjani Abubakar Tijjani currently serves as a special adviser to the Executive Governor of Borno State on Education. Prior to this role, he had a distinguished career as a two-time member of the Borno State House of Assembly and a two-time member of the Borno State Executive Council, where he held the position of Transport Commissioner. Dr. Tijjani holds a PhD in Defense and Security Studies from the Nigerian Defense Academy in Kaduna, as well as a master’s degree in international relations from the University of Maiduguri.</p>
	<p>Hassan Umar serves as a Senior Program Officer at the Kanem Borno Human Development Association (KABHUDA). As a compassionate and seasoned education professional with over five years of experience in humanitarian response, education in emergencies, and community development, he has developed a proven track record of designing and implementing effective education programmes for crisis-affected populations. He prioritizes inclusivity, accessibility, and child protection, ensuring that quality education is accessible to all, particularly in times of crisis. Hassan holds a bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Maiduguri, Borno State, and is fluent in English, with proficiency in Kanuri, Shuwa, and Hausa.</p>
	<p>Ransom Stephen holds a Bachelor of Education degree in English from Ignatius Ajuru University, Rivers State, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology from Jet Jos. As a senior clergy, Ransom Stephen has distinguished himself as a dedicated humanitarian, making significant contributions in the fields of education and peacebuilding. His passion for serving affected populations has taken him to Geneva and the USA, where he was invited as an international guest speaker on Education in Emergencies by the UNHCR in 2015. Additionally, he serves as a member of the Peace Board at the American University of Nigeria, Yola. As the Executive Director of HOHVIPAD, based in Yola with an office in Maiduguri, Ransom Stephen has made immense contributions to education in Borno and Adamawa states. Notably, he has successfully provided a platform for over 20,000 out-of-school children in Northeast Nigeria, with more than half of them mainstreamed into formal education.</p>



Dr. Yaro Koare Yacouba, Director General of CERFODES, Burkina Faso

Dr. Yaro works as an International Consultant in Education and on issues of the needs and aspirations of adolescents and young people (Sexual and Reproductive Health, Jobs and professional training, Right to speak and Governance). He has also conducted several studies on violent extremism and radicalism in the Sahel and African countries. He is also a professional coach for institutional strengthening and for the performance of programmes and strategic plans.



BAHAGO Kashema is a distinguished economist with a growing reputation in educational research. He has made significant contributions to and successfully managed several high-profile research projects, notably the "Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Programme" in Nigeria and the "Increasing Access to Quality Education for Rural and Marginalised Children in West Africa—A Comparative Study of Accelerated Education and Girls-Focused Programmes" in Nigeria. He is currently pursuing his PhD in Economics at Nile University, Bahago holds two master's degrees in economics, one from Nile University and the other from the University of Dundee, Scotland, UK

PARTNERS





LA PALM ROYAL BEACH HOTEL
A GOLDEN BEACH HOTEL

WEST AFRICA RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

RESEARCH CONSORTIUM MEMBERS



Associates for Change (Lead)
Email: afcghana@yahoo.com
Website: www.associatesforchange.org



Dalan Development Consultants
Email: dalanconsult@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.dalanconsult.com



Center for the Economies of Africa (CSEA)
Email: enquiries@cseaafrica.org
Website: www.cseaafrica.org



Scan for research outputs

ACCELERATED EDUCATION INNOVATORS

COUNTRY	INNOVATORS
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School for Life-Complementary Basic Education Project (www.schoolforlifegh.org) • Afrikids-Complementary Basic Education programme, and Strategic Approaches to Girls Education (STAGE) Project (www.afrikids.org) • Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) (https://www.gillbt.org/)
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kanem Borno Human Development Association (KABHUDA)- Accelerated Education Programme (www.kanemborno.org) • Horn of Hope Vision for Peace and Community Development (HOHVIPAD) Accelerated Education Programme (www.hohvipad.org)
Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save the Children Sierra Leone, Accelerated Education Programme (https://sierraleone.savethechildren.net/) • Non formal Division; Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education.

GROUP ONE (1)

Group 1: Partnerships between government and education innovators

Strong partnerships between government bodies and education innovators are essential for the successful implementation and scaling of AEPs. These partnerships can ensure alignment with national education policies, provide necessary resources, and foster innovation.

Questions:

1. What are the key characteristics of successful partnerships between governments and education innovators in the context of AEPs?
2. Can you provide examples of effective government-innovator collaborations from your experience or knowledge?
3. What strategies can be employed to strengthen collaboration between governments and education innovators?
4. How can we ensure that these partnerships are mutually beneficial and sustainable in the long term?
5. How can we align AEPs with national education policies to ensure seamless integration and support from governmental bodies?
6. What policy changes or adaptations are needed to facilitate the scaling of AEPs?

GROUP TWO (2)

Group 2: Development of investment framework for scaling in AEPs

Sustainable and scalable AEPs require robust investment frameworks that ensure adequate funding, resource allocation, and financial sustainability. Developing such frameworks involves engaging diverse stakeholders, including governments, donors, and the private sector.

Questions:

1. What are the existing sources of funding for AEPs in West Africa, and what gaps exist in the current investment landscape?
2. Which funding model has the strongest potential for sustainability?
3. What innovative financing mechanisms can be introduced to support the scaling of AEPs?
4. How can we leverage public-private partnerships to enhance investment in AEPs?
5. How can we ensure the financial sustainability of AEPs?
6. What accountability measures should be put in place to track the effective use of funds and resources?

GROUP THREE (3)

Group 3: Improving scale of AEPs through community-driven approaches

Community involvement is critical for the successful implementation and scaling of AEPs. Engaging local communities can ensure that programs are culturally relevant, widely accepted, and effectively address local educational needs.

Questions:

1. What are the best practices for engaging communities in the design and implementation of AEPs?
2. How can we ensure that community voices are heard and incorporated into the planning and decision-making processes?
3. How can we build local capacity to support the scaling of AEPs?
4. What role can local leaders and community-based organizations play in sustaining these programs?
5. What challenges have you encountered in engaging communities, and how have you addressed them?

GROUP FOUR (4)

Group 4: Research and Innovation

Continuous research and innovation are essential to understand the effectiveness of AEPs, identify best practices, and develop new approaches to address emerging challenges. This requires a collaborative effort among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Questions:

1. How can we foster a culture of innovation within the education sector to continuously improve AEPs?
2. What are the current gaps in research related to AEPs, and what should be the priorities for future research?
3. How can we ensure that research findings are effectively translated into policy and practice?

p)

Annex 6: Media Engagement and Reportage of Conference

Media House	Contact Person	Phone number	Headline	Link to work
GBC				
Metro TV	Ebenezer Quayie	0241525278		
Eazzy News	Emmanuel Asiedu	0544660567		
UKTV Ghana	Ernest Frimpong	0247220948	ASSOCIATES FOR CHANGE HOLDS HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE TO ADDRESS THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN CRISIS	https://youtu.be/d6aq8sTcXcM?si=S1IvKGZdqcv4wTnK
Peace FM	George Osie	0208723524	Akan News @ Midday On Peace 104.3 FM (12/06/2024)	https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/videos/202406/99208.php
Class TV	Edem Afanou	0274413629		https://www.facebook.com/myctvgh/videos/1837520813383017/
Class Fm			Ghana aims to return 10,000 out-of-school children to classrooms by end of 2024	https://www.classfmonline.com/news/education/Ghana-aims-to-return-10-000-out-of-school-children-to-classrooms-by-end-of-2024-52343
CNTV	Daniel Mensah	0553712911		
Heritage FM	Nathan Nunana	0540269713		
Homebase TV	Mispa Sekyibea	0246836118		
The Insight Newspaper	Joseph Nana Yaw Cobbina	0244017820		
Ghana News Agency			Governments urged to dedicate 10 per cent	https://gna.org.gh/2024/06/governments-urged-to-dedicate-10-per-cent-education-budget-to-tackle-out-of-school-crisis/

			education budget to tackle out-of-school crisis	
			10,000 out-of-school children to be back to school this year	https://gna.org.gh/2024/06/10000-out-of-school-children-to-be-back-to-school-this-year/#google_vignette
			Ghana to host conference to address school dropouts in West Africa	https://www.msn.com/en-xl/africa/ghana/ghana-to-host-conference-to-address-school-dropouts-in-west-africa/ar-BB1nX01H?ocid=BingNewsSearch
PLUS 233 TV			ASSOCIATES OF CHANGE, TACKLING OUT OF SCHOOL CHALLENGE IN WEST AFRICA	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzMBi2JwtRg
ERLON Media			HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON TACKLING THE OUT OF SCHOOL CHALLENGE IN WEST AFRICA	https://www.youtube.com/live/wY1enkR8ozs?si=BBefkDIPcyoHK_I2
The Vaultz News			Ghana Aims to Reintegrate 10,000 Children Back to School	https://thevaultznews.com/news/opinions/ghana-aims-to-reintegrate-10000-children-back-to-school/
Global Diaspora News			Communique: High-Level Conference to Address the Out-of-School Children Crisis in West Africa CSEA AFRICA	https://www.globaldiasporanews.com/communique-high-level-conference-to-address-the-out-of-school-children-crisis-in-west-africa-csea-africa/#google_vignette
Scooper			Ghana aims to return 10,000 out-of-school children to classrooms by end of 2024	https://www.scoopernews.com/2024/06/12/ghana-aims-to-return-10-000-out-of-school-children-to-classrooms-by-end-of-2024/56228147

Annex 7: Photographs of Dignitaries Participating in the Conference



Honorable Deputy Ministry for Education, Ghana, Mr. Ntim Fordjour addressing the conference participants.



Prof. Samuel A. Atintono (Principal of Accra College of Education, Ghana), Chairman of the Conference



Dignitaries from Burkina Faso.



The Director of Associates for Change (AfC), leading a Working Group session during the conference



From the left, Prof. Kanu (Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Sierra Leone), Dr. Appiah-Pinkrah (Executive Director of Complementary Education Agency (CEA), Ghana), Dr. Casley-Hayford (Director, Associates for Change), and Dr. Olive Musa (Director of Non-Formal Education, Directorate of Non-Formal Education, Sierra Leone).



Mr. Festus Ankra, (Research and Consulting Manager, AfC), engaging conference participants on the proposed investment framework for scaling AEPs.



Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah, Director Development and Head of Cooperation, High Commission of Canada in Ghana.



The Deputy Minister for Education, Mr. Fordjour, with other high-level dignitaries from Canada, Ghana, Nigeria and other West African countries.