Research Title:

"Increasing Access to Quality Education for Rural and Marginalised Children in West Africa— A Comparative Study of Accelerated Education and Girls Focussed Programmes in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone"

Tracer study of AEP beneficiaries in the technical school, world of work and those with special needs in and outside communities including the urban areas

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Associates for Change (AfC) and
Ministry of Education Ghana

Submitted by
Associates for Change (AfC)
www.associatesforchange.org
Tel: (233) (0302)245 612 or 0244 255 170
Email: afcghana@yahoo.com and comdev9@yahoo.com

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List of Acronyms

AEPs	Accelerated Education Programmes
AFC	Associates for Change
CLA	Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation
CSEA	Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa
GFMs	Girls' Focused Models
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OOSC	Out-of-School Children

Executive Summary

Introduction

This study explores the transformative impact of Accelerated Education Programs (AEPs) in addressing educational disparities among marginalized populations, particularly in rural and underserved communities. By targeting out-of-school children and youth, AEPs aim to provide foundational literacy, numeracy, and life skills while creating pathways for beneficiaries to transition into formal education or vocational opportunities. The study sheds light on the socio-economic contexts that influence AEP implementation and evaluates its impact on beneficiaries' life trajectories.

Objectives

The primary objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of AEPs in enabling marginalized individuals to achieve educational and vocational milestones. Specific objectives included identifying challenges faced by AEP beneficiaries, analyzing gender-based disparities, and evaluating the long-term impacts of AEPs on life outcomes such as employability, economic empowerment, and community engagement.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Surveys were administered to 1,246 AEP beneficiaries across multiple communities, while in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with key stakeholders, including beneficiaries, program implementers, and community leaders. Data were analyzed to identify trends, challenges, and areas of impact, with a focus on gender and social inclusion.

Results

The findings indicate that AEPs have been instrumental in bridging educational gaps and equipping beneficiaries with foundational skills. While 45.6% of beneficiaries transitioned to junior high school and 24.6% progressed to senior high school, challenges such as financial constraints and societal expectations led to dropouts for some participants. Gender analysis revealed that females were more likely to be overburdened with domestic chores, affecting their educational attainment. Additionally, AEPs significantly influenced beneficiaries' vocational choices, fostering skills in areas such as tailoring, hairdressing, farming, and weaving, and instilling life skills like time management and resilience.

Conclusion

The study concludes that AEPs play a vital role in addressing educational inequalities and fostering economic empowerment among marginalized populations. Despite significant achievements, challenges such as financial constraints, limited vocational resources, and socio-cultural barriers persist. Gender disparities, while narrowing, remain a concern, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable access and participation for all.

Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight critical areas for improving the design, implementation, and impact of AEPs. To address the challenges identified and maximize their potential to transform lives, a number of actionable recommendations are made. These are aimed at enhancing program sustainability, promoting equity and inclusion, fostering economic empowerment, and ensuring long-term systemic

integration. Through collaborative efforts involving governments, communities, development partners, and the private sector, these strategies can help to ensure that AEPs achieve greater effectiveness and reach.

1. To ensure the sustainability and scalability of AEPs, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and development partners should increase funding and resource allocation. These funds should focus on improving infrastructure, providing teaching and learning materials, and supporting vocational training centers. Financial support mechanisms, such as scholarships or grants, should also be introduced to alleviate the financial constraints faced by beneficiaries, enabling more participants to transition successfully into formal education or the workforce.
2. AEPs must integrate gender-sensitive strategies to address the unique challenges faced by girls and women, including teenage pregnancy and early marriage, harmful social norms and behaviours, and the inequitable distribution of household responsibilities. Community-based interventions should aim to shift cultural attitudes towards stereotyped gender roles, emphasizing instead the value of girls' education and empowerment. Additionally, targeted support for people with disabilities (PWD) should be prioritized, including more accessible learning environments, teacher training, specialized resources, and advocacy campaigns to combat stigma, exclusion and discrimination.
3. Vocational training programmes within AEPs should be aligned with local market demands to ensure that beneficiaries acquire skills relevant to available economic opportunities in their communities. Partnerships with local industries, businesses, and agricultural initiatives can create pathways for internships, apprenticeships, and employment. Establishing job placement services and entrepreneurship training will further support graduates in achieving economic independence. The importance of challenging gender stereotypes in the vocational skills which young women and men are trained should be considered.
4. Community involvement is critical to the success of AEPs. Community leaders, parents, and local organizations should be actively engaged in promoting the importance of education for all and supporting beneficiaries. Creating mentorship programs and support networks within communities can encourage retention and provide additional resources for learners. Additionally, empowering communities to participate in decision-making processes regarding program implementation will enhance ownership of AEPs and their sustainability.
5. Governments should integrate AEPs into their broader national education frameworks to ensure consistency, accountability, and long-term impact. This includes adopting policies that recognize AEP qualifications to allow smooth transitions into formal education or vocational pathways. Standardized curriculum frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms should be established to maintain AEP effectiveness and relevance.
6. Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems for AEPs is essential for tracking progress, identifying gaps, and making data-driven improvements. Regular assessments should evaluate educational outcomes, transitions, and economic empowerment of different beneficiary population groups. Performance indicators that are gender sensitive and transformative will enable GESI outcomes and outputs to be more fully assessed. Leveraging technology for data collection and analysis can enhance the efficiency and accuracy of MEL systems, enabling more informed decision-making.

7. Collaboration with private sector entities can provide innovative solutions and resources to enhance AEP effectiveness. Public-private partnerships can contribute to infrastructure development, digital literacy programs, and financial support for beneficiaries. These partnerships should also focus on fostering entrepreneurship and creating equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities for program graduates.
8. Efforts should be made to broaden the reach of AEPs to underserved and remote areas where educational disparities and GESI challenges are most pronounced. Mobile learning centers, digital tools, and flexible schedules can help overcome geographic and logistical barriers, ensuring that marginalized and excluded populations have access to quality education and skills training leading to expanded educational and vocational opportunities.

By implementing these recommendations, AEPs can be optimized to achieve their full potential, empowering individuals with diverse social identities, transforming communities, and contributing to sustainable development across Ghana and beyond.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background: Out of school situation in sub-Saharan Africa

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics (UIS) highlights that despite significant global efforts to achieve universal primary and secondary education under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), progress in reducing the number of out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth remains minimal (UIS, 2019). In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), governments have invested continuously over the past two to three decades to promote equitable access to quality education for all children. However, more than one-third of the world's 258.4 million out-of-school children—representing approximately 98 million children—reside in SSA, with the majority (53%) being girls (UIS, 2019). The UIS further estimates that in SSA, one in five children aged 6 to 11 years is out of school, one in three youth aged 12 to 14 years is not enrolled in school, and an alarming 60% of youth aged 15 to 17 years are excluded from education.

This significant out-of-school population is closely linked to disparities in access to quality education driven by factors such as gender, economic status, ethnicity, and disability. High poverty levels exacerbate these inequalities, particularly affecting children in rural households and urban informal settlements who face challenges like hunger, stigma, internal exclusion, and limited resources for learning (UNICEF, 2019). To address these pressing challenges, the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange/Global Partnership for Education (KIX/GPE) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) are supporting a comparative study titled "A Comparative Study on Accelerated Education and Girls' Focused Programmes in Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone". This study, implemented by Associates for Change (AfC), Ghana, Dalan Development Consult, Sierra Leone, and the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Nigeria, focuses on exploring innovative solutions to out-of-school challenges in rural, extreme poverty, and fragile environments across West Africa.

1.1 The West Africa Research Programme

The overarching goal of the study is to enhance access to education for out-of-school children by leveraging knowledge on effective Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) and Girls' Focused Models (GFMs) to promote scalability and investments across the region. Specifically, the study investigates the efficiency, effectiveness, and scalability of these educational models, particularly in reaching marginalized populations in rural and conflict-affected areas where teacher deployment is challenging. Additionally, the study places a unique emphasis on tracking and tracing AEP beneficiaries who have migrated from their original communities to new locations for economic activities. This aspect provides critical insights into the long-term impacts of AEPs on beneficiaries' lives, their transitions into formal education, and their ability to sustain livelihoods.

The research adopts a Collaborative, Learning, and Adaptation (CLA) approach, utilizing a mixed-method evaluative design. This includes two longitudinal surveys aimed at measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs. The study also employed the Collaborative, Learning, and Adaptation (CLA) approach, conducts investigations into the barriers to education access for children with disabilities, strategies for improving girls' education, and the retention of AEP beneficiaries in formal schooling systems.

The consortium is partnering with seven education innovators across Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, whose initiatives demonstrate potential for scalability and alignment with the educational contexts and priorities of governments in these regions. This collaborative effort not only strengthens the evidence base for AEPs and GFMs but also highlights the importance of adaptive, context-specific solutions in addressing the persistent challenge of out-of-school children in West Africa.

1.2 The Ghana out of school context

Ghana's education sector is faced with many challenges - key among them is the significant number of school-age children who are not in school. There are children in Ghana within the school-going age that have never attended school or who have had access to basic education but later dropped out. Available data from UNESCO on out-of-school children in Ghana show that as of 2018, 1 million Ghanaian children

aged 5 to 16 years were out of school despite government efforts at increasing access to education through interventions such as the school feeding programme, distribution of free uniforms and abolishment of school fees (UIS, 2018). The current 2020 data by UNESCO places the total number of out-of-school children in Ghana at 283,000 children of primary school age in Ghana who are out of school with a further 135,000 school-age children at the lower secondary level. The out of school numbers at the upper secondary level (610,000), represents about double the numbers of OOSC at both the primary and lower secondary level.

In percentage terms, about seven percent of children in Ghana are said to be out of school at the primary level, with differentials across indicators including wealth status; children from the poorest wealth quintile have higher out-of-school rates compared to their peers from other categories (MICS, 2017/18). At the lower secondary level, the national out-of-school rate is also at seven percent, with the portion of OOSC from the poorest quintile being like that of primary. At the upper secondary level, the out-of-school rate increases for all groups, and the national rate is high at 25%, with more girls out of school than boys. Different data sources also provide slightly different projections relating to the out of school numbers in Ghana.

1.3 Overall objective

The overarching objective of this study was to assess how has accelerated education programs and girls-focussed programmes impacted on the educational outcomes and life trajectories of beneficiaries and communities in addressing out-of-school phenomena.

1.4 Research question

The overarching question was how has alternative education programming and girls-focussed programmes impacted on the educational outcomes and life trajectories of beneficiaries and communities in addressing out-of-school phenomena? Some of the questions of the study include:

1. What are the life trajectories of the AEP beneficiaries?
    a. What impeded or helped to transition into next stage of life?
    b. How did the gender norms and behaviour in your family help or impede you?
    c. What did AEP graduates learn on AEP that has helped them?
2. What is the larger context of AEP beneficiaries or AEP learners? (i.e., inherent or external conditions)

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research design

The research adopted a longitudinal mixed-methods approach, grounded in principles designed to assess and measure access to quality education through Accelerated Education (AE) programming. This approach was deemed appropriate for the study as it provided robust insights into patterns over time, enabling the observation of changes in student performance. The methodology offered highly accurate information on transitions, retention, learning outcomes, and the acquisition of life skills, thereby capturing how change occurred over time for both boys and girls of different ages. The study measured, traced, and tracked AEP graduates over time, focusing on their transitions into formal schooling, retention, and learning achievements. It compared four innovations, including three AEP models across Ghana, to evaluate their potential for increasing access to quality education for rural and marginalized children and supporting their transition to primary and secondary education.

The research team utilized the Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation (CLA) approach, GESI framework, throughout the study (USAID, 2013). The CLA framework facilitated effective collaboration with key stakeholders in the education sector, including both state and non-state actors, across the three study countries. This approach enabled stakeholders to learn, share, reflect, and adjust the research design in response to emerging data and contextual changes. The adaptive nature of the CLA framework ensured that the study remained relevant to the evolving policy needs of the governments in these countries. By engaging government representatives, development partners, and civil society organizations, the study incorporated ongoing inputs to enhance the utility of its findings and recommendations, fostering their uptake to improve public policies aimed at increasing access to primary and secondary education for out-of-school children (OOSC).

2.2 Study setting and context: research locations and respondents

Given the study's emphasis on gender equality, equity, and inclusion, the research applied a Gender and Social Inclusion Evaluative Framework. This framework was used to analyze issues of gender and social inclusion, particularly for beneficiaries living with disabilities. Fieldwork during the study was conducted in two urban districts and project districts, which sometimes extended beyond the primary scope of the project. The study specifically targeted AEP beneficiaries of senior high school (SHS) age who were engaged in the workforce, had migrated, were living with disabilities, or were enrolled in technical schools. To identify these beneficiaries—those who had migrated, completed SHS, or were living with disabilities—the research team utilized pre-listing and household surveys, coupled with community visits to guide the process.

The field research was categorized into specific thematic areas, with each participating country conducting a follow-up on completion rates and exploring one or more themes to generate comprehensive insights. This systematic approach ensured that the study captured the diverse contexts and challenges faced by AEP beneficiaries, contributing to evidence-based recommendations for scaling effective education interventions in West Africa.

2.3 Sampling and study participants

The study targeted those who had dropped out of secondary school, completed secondary school, or were enrolled in technical schools, as well as children below the secondary school level who had migrated. To prepare for this case study, the team conducted a pre-test by visiting a migration hub in Accra Central. The pre-test aimed to identify AEP/CBE program alumni residing in urban

areas and to refine the research instruments. Following this, a separate team conducted studies in selected urban areas to locate and assess the current circumstances of both secondary school graduates and those who had not completed their studies. Using the findings from the telephone surveys, researchers directly contacted children residing within the study areas.

The study focused on towns with high concentrations of migrants and significant numbers of blue-collar occupations, as well as areas with dense populations of squatters. For example, Agbogbloshie in Accra was identified as a key location due to its large population of *kayayo* workers (female head porters) from the northern regions. These hubs, where migrants tended to congregate in specific locations, facilitated the identification and study of AEP beneficiaries. By employing these thematic approaches, the study generated valuable insights into the retention, transition, and long-term outcomes of AEP learners, including those who had migrated to urban centres. The research team revisited communities and schools attended by students enrolled in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) schools and special needs programs, replicating methodologies used in Years Two and Three.

2.4 Data collection methods and approaches

Data were collected using a combination of updated data collection methods and innovative approaches tailored to specific contexts:

2.4.1 Phone surveys and community visit

Trained research assistants (RA) with extensive experience in phone interviews and knowledge of the pre-listed data on beneficiaries conducted short phone interviews. Contact details of participants were used to contact and trace AEP beneficiaries who were initially identified in year two of the research. This approach helped to trace beneficiaries' status (i.e., whether in the world of work, migrated to urban areas or had transitioned into formal schools–JHS and SHS levels). This also provided the opportunity to update and complete the records of each selected AEP beneficiary. Through these interviews, the research team was able to identify and collect data on the extent of completion, transition, and dropout as well as beneficiaries who were involved in economic ventures. In situations where direct contact with a beneficiary was not possible, the researchers relied on facilitators, headteachers, community leaders, and parents to provide information that facilitate the tracing process. In cases where no information could be obtained through these means, the researchers conducted community visits to identify the children and gather data.

2.4.2 Fieldwork: face-to-face interviews, most significant stories of change, focus group discussions

Triangulation of data collection methods was employed to collect qualitative data for the study. These included face-to-faced interviews and most significant stories of change with AEP beneficiaries while community/opinion leaders were engaged in focus group interviews. This facilitated methods and data source triangulations contributing to the reliability and validity of the data (Campbell et al., 2020).

The research team comprised 13 members, including 6 males and 7 females, ensuring a balanced representation of perspectives. In the Accra Metropolitan area, a team of 8 members—4 males and 4 females—was assembled to conduct the fieldwork. A separate team was deployed to the Tamale Metropolitan area to administer the instruments. The teams utilized a combination of paper-based and digital recording approaches to administer five research instruments. This method ensured flexibility and efficiency in data collection, accommodating the diverse settings and contexts of the study. The composition and deployment of the teams were strategically

planned to optimize the effectiveness of the data collection process across the study locations. Prior to data collection, a two-day training was conducted for enumerators/Ras on various aspects of the project (research questions), data collection instruments, IDRC GESI framework, research ethics, community entry and exist procedures.

After the training, the instruments were pretested in the Accra Metropolitan area before being deployed in the remaining districts. This pretesting phase ensured that the tools were refined, and suitable to the sociocultural contexts. The process also provided an opportunity to address any challenges related to the instruments and methodologies, ensuring their effectiveness and reliability for the study. Prior to pretesting, all data collection instruments were reviewed by international experts with extensive experience in AEPs and non-formal education innovations. Fieldwork commenced with surveys conducted with (non-)AEP graduates. Data collection across the study districts lasted a period of one (1) from August to September 2024. During this period, AEP beneficiaries were identified and interviewed at Agbogbloshie, Tamale and Bolgatanga. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with AEP beneficiaries in the world of work. During these interviews, their "rivers of life" were explored. Also, most significant stories of change interviews were conducted with AEP beneficiaries to explore the impacts of AEPs they considered significant. This helped the team to conduct a flexible evaluation of the AEP programmes without strict indicators, hence, enhancing researchers' ability to explore in-depth. Focus groups discussions were also used to complement data obtained through the other data collection approaches. See Table 1 for details of data collection methods, and instrumentation.

Table 1. Description of data collection instruments

Method	Participant type	Instrumentation
Survey	AEP graduates	The instrument solicited information on the demographic characteristics, learning situations, academic performance of AEP graduates, attitudes to learning, teaching, and learning resources, teacher, and learner attendance at school, etc.
	Non-AEP graduates	This instrument was used to gather information on the academic performance of AEP graduates, attitudes to learning, teaching, and learning resources, teacher, and learner attendance at school, etc.
	Headteachers	This instrument was administered to all headmasters/mistresses at the SHS to solicit information on teaching and learning resources, the performance of AEP graduates in school, school climate, needs of the AEP graduates in school, and aspirations of the graduates.
	Housemaster/mistresses	The housemasters/mistresses survey sought information on AEP graduates about their behaviour, attitudes, etc. in boarding houses.
Most significant change (MSC) story	AEP graduates	MSC story interviews were conducted separately for AEP graduates. This was done to solicit separate information on the most important changes that have occurred in the life experiences since the AEP programme was implemented and

		over the course of their life, during their educational pursuits and learning progression. In addition, we interviewed parents to obtain information about their experiences with AEP graduates as well as their perceptions about progress of AEP graduates in school.
Focus group discussion (FGD)	AEPs and non-AEP beneficiaries	FGDs were conducted with AEP and non-AEP graduates. This tool will solicit information on the perspectives, experiences, and attitudes of these AEP graduates.

2.5 Quality assurance procedures

The study employed complementary approaches to ensure that the research and data collected are reliable, valid and credible. Data collection instruments were developed by the research team with diverse expertise ensuring that the possible biases that may result from a particular researcher was addressed. Data collection instruments were also peer-reviewed by two (2) international researchers who have extensive research experience in accelerated education and informal education innovations. Additionally, each instrument developed was pretested to ensure that the questions were clear to participants without any ambiguities, and findings from the pretesting was used to review the final instruments for fieldwork. Findings from the pretesting was not included in the main report. Again, methods (focus group, most significant stories of change, face-to-face interviews and surveys) and data sources (AEP graduates, community//opinion leaders, etc.) were used to ensure that inherent biases and weaknesses in each method was addressed. Finally, stakeholders with relevant knowledge of the issues been explored were purposively chosen, and during interviews, information provided were summarized to participants for their approval to ensure it accurately reflects their views and experiences.

2.6 Data analysis

Data collected during the fieldwork were analysed using complementary approaches in quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. Pre-listed quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage scores. These were summarised and presented using tables and charts. Qualitative data gathered through face-to-face interviews, most significant stories of change and focus group discussions were analysed using Braun & Clarke's (2023) thematic approach. First, all interviews were transcribed verbatim and back-back translations were done and verified by two language experts. All transcripts were then imported into Dedoose Desktop software. Five researchers independently coded the transcripts after several rounds of reading. Team members reviewed the codes and subcodes and subsequently discussed the codes to development relevant themes. For instance, participants receiving educational resources and support from others were discussed under the theme: "*educational support and resources*". The themes were described and supported with responses from participants. This systematic approach reinforced the reliability and validity of the findings, fostering trust among participants and stakeholders in the research outcomes.

2.7 Research Ethics

The research was conducted in accordance with relevant ethical principles. First, study participants' consent was obtained to participate in the research without any form of coercion. The purpose of the study, the methods of data collection and data usage as well as duration of

data collection (questionnaire/face-to-face interviews) were thoroughly explained to participants. Their consent to be included in the study were obtained verbally and in writing/thumbprint. At the time of the interviews, the consent form was read aloud to participants in each of the three communities to ensure clarity and understanding. All the participants approved their participation in the research. Also, prior to the commencement of each interview, participants were informed of their rights to withdraw from the study without any harm or repercussions to them. However, there were no sensitive or harmful questions asked during interviews. Participants were subsequently assured that their identity will be treated confidential and anonymous. This was done by ensuring that traceable information was not reported in any research outputs produced from the data. Hence, pseudonyms (e.g., AEP beneficiary, Male) were used to identify participants and their responses. These identities were used in saving interview transcripts to prevent easy identification. Participants were also informed that all data collected will be used for research purposes and to inform policies and interventions. All transcribed interviews, participants traceable phone contacts and personal details were stored under password protected Google Drives to ensure inaccessibility to third parties.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY RESULTS

3.1 Socio-economic context:

3.1.1 Households characteristics

Segbenya et al. (2023) emphasized that demographic characteristics provide readers with a deeper understanding of respondents' backgrounds, enhancing the interpretation of study results. The data collected offered insights into the demographic profiles of AEP beneficiaries currently engaged in the workforce. The results begin with a description of the sample the study managed to contact.

Subsistence agriculture

The Northern Region of Ghana, one of the fastest-growing urban centers in the country, was surrounded by numerous deprived rural communities where the study was conducted. These communities were shaped by distinctive socioeconomic characteristics, including traditional cultural practices and agriculture. The targeted districts were predominantly agrarian, particularly in the more deprived areas where data collection took place. The communities primarily engaged in subsistence farming, cultivating key crops such as maize, rice, pepper, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and onions. Additionally, livestock rearing, including goats, sheep, fowls, and cattle, was a significant economic activity. The income of most households was derived largely from these agricultural activities.

Drinking water

The primary sources of drinking water in these communities were rivers and dams. However, a few communities, such as Tolon Daboashei, had access to boreholes. Tolon Daboashei, for instance, had approximately five boreholes, which were established through the efforts of individual actors and local initiatives. Sanitation facilities in the targeted communities were generally inadequate. Most residents resorted to open defecation in bushes, while only a few households had access to pit latrines, KVIP/VIP, or flush toilets within their homes or neighbourhoods. These conditions reflected the significant challenges faced by these communities in accessing basic amenities and improving their quality of life.

Sanitation facilities

Table 3 shows that 24 AEP participants representing 19.8% responded to have use the pit latrines when nature calls. 15 representing 12.4% use the Flush/Pour flush toilet, 11 representing 9.1% use the KVIP/VIP. However, a majority of 71 representing 58.7% of participants use no facility and resorted to the bush or the field to attend to nature calls.

Table 2. Sanitation facilities (toilet facility type)

Toilet facility type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pit Latrines	24	19.8
Flush/pour flush toilet	15	12.4
KVIP/VIP	11	9.1
No facility/Bush/Field	71	58.7
Total	121	100

Source: Field Research, 2024

Infrastructure and basic needs (roads, communications, health facilities)

The road infrastructure in the Northern and Southern communities visited was found to be poor, with significant challenges in accessibility. Tarred roads in several areas had deteriorated, with extensive potholes worsening the condition of the roads. The rough and dusty nature of the unpaved roads made transportation difficult for residents and travellers alike. Most of the communities also faced issues with limited mobile network connectivity, making communication and reaching them by phone highly challenging. These infrastructural deficiencies underscored the barriers to development and access to essential services faced by these communities. None of the communities visited had a local health centre. Residents travel to district capitals or urban centres, such as Tamale, Kumbungu, and Tolon, to access healthcare services. This lack of health facilities posed significant challenges for community members, particularly in emergencies or for those with limited mobility.

Conclusions and analysis

Road infrastructure in the targeted communities in the Northern and Southern Regions recorded poor road network challenges. However, many in many of them deteriorated contributing to the dusty nature of the many roads in the deprived targeted communities. Limited mobile network communication was also recorded as another challenge the communities faced making access to communication difficult. Moreover, none of the communities visited had a health center compelling their migration to the urban areas such as Tamale, Kumbungu and Tolon to seek health care services. A higher number of beneficiaries used the no facility/bush/field to attend to Nature calls while a minimum number of AEP Beneficiaries used the KVIP/VIP to attend to nature calls.

Educational status of target households

The educational levels of the beneficiaries' mothers show that nearly half (48.8%, 59 individuals) had no formal education. Similarly, the data on the educational attainment of beneficiaries' fathers reveals that a significant proportion (32.2%, 39 individuals) had no formal education, only 20.7% (25 individual mothers) completed primary school, while 14.0% (17 individual fathers) completed primary school, 7.4% (9 individual mothers) reached junior high school and while 2.5% (3 individual fathers) reached junior high school. No mothers attained senior high school or A' Level education, however, 13 (10.7 individual fathers) completed SSS A 'Level.

Moreover, 9.1% (11 individual mothers) reported non-formal education whereas 18.2 (22 individual fathers) responded to attended non-formal education. Additionally, 14.0% (17 individual mothers) of beneficiaries did not know their mothers' educational level (Figure 5) whereas 22.3 (27 individual fathers). This data highlights the low educational attainment among mothers, reflecting the broader systemic barriers faced by women in these communities and their limited access to education in the past.

These results underscore the intergenerational challenges of low educational attainment in the communities, particularly among male figures, though with slightly more formal education compared to the mothers.

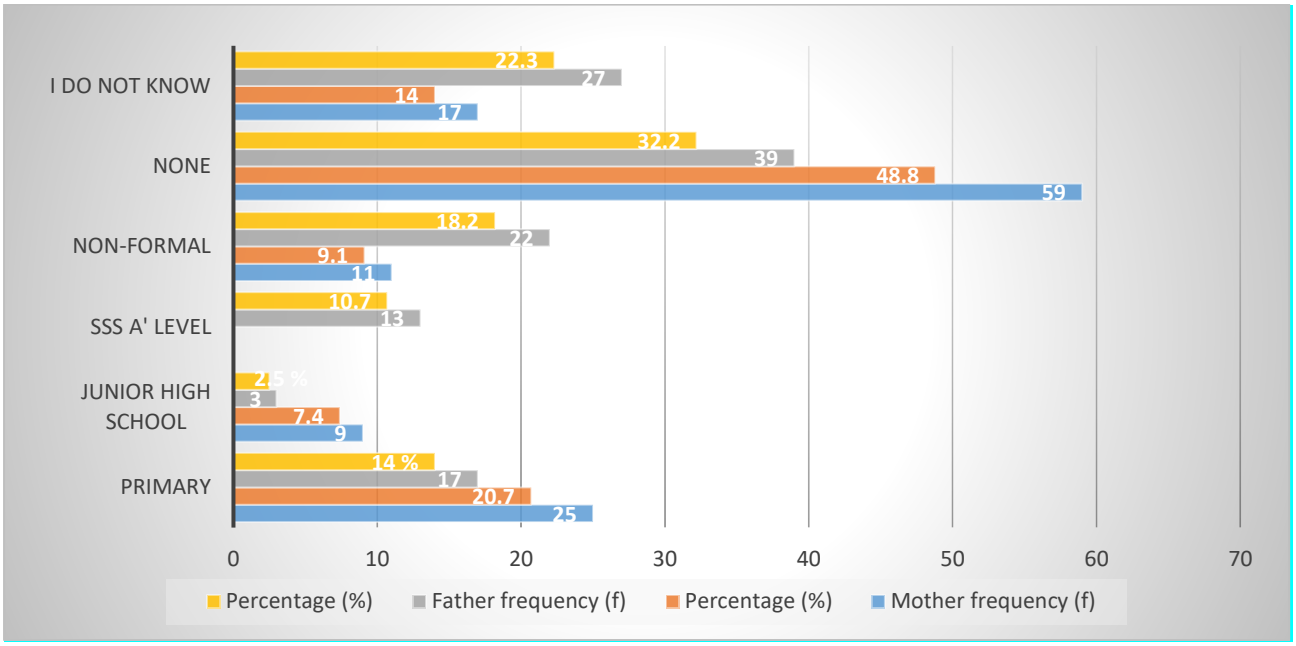
Table 3. Educational qualification

Educational qualification	Mother (n=121)		Father (n=121)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary	25	20.7	17	14.0
Junior High School	9	7.4	3	2.5
Senior High School	0	0	0	0
SSS A'Level	0	0	13	10.7
Non formal	11	9.1	22	18.2

None	59	48.8	39	32.2
I do not know	17	14.0	27	22.3
Total	121	100	n=121	100

Source: Field Research, 2024

The data reflects the significant role of AEP programs in addressing educational gaps for marginalized populations. While many beneficiaries achieved primary or junior high school education, there is a notable drop-off in progression to senior high school and beyond, highlighting persistent barriers to higher education. The findings also underscore the intergenerational effects of low educational attainment, with most parents having little to no formal education. This limited parental education may influence children's educational opportunities and outcomes, further underscoring the importance of AEP programs in breaking the cycle of educational disadvantage and fostering greater access to quality education across generations.



Source: Field Research, 2024

Figure 1. Highest educational levels of AEP beneficiaries' mothers

Analysis and Conclusion

Data shows that out of the 121 AEP beneficiaries in the study, a higher number of 59 representing 48.8% mothers and 39 representing 32.2% fathers responded to no formal education, 25 representing 20.7% mothers and 17 representing 14.0% fathers completed Primary School, 9 representing 7.4% mothers and 3 representing 2.5 fathers completed Junior High School, 11 representing 9.1% mothers and 22 representing 18.2% fathers went through non-formal education, none of beneficiaries mothers had Senior High School background however, 13 representing 10.7% fathers completed SSS A'Level, 17 representing 14 mothers and 27 representing 22.3% fathers did not know their mothers' and fathers' educational level. This data highlights the low educational attainment among mothers, reflecting the broader systemic barriers faced by women in these communities and their limited access to education in the past.

Number of beneficiaries in households with children aged below 15 years of age

Figure 3 shows the AEP beneficiaries that respond to the number and age categories of children they live in the same household with whom are below the age of 15 years. Data shows that 11

AEP beneficiaries responded to live in the same household with 1 child under the age of 15. 14 AEP beneficiaries had 2 years old children in their household who are under the age of 15. 18 respondents responded to having 3 years old children in their households who are under the age of 15 years. 25 live with 4 years old children in their households. 8 had 6 children who are not up to the age of 15years in their household. 6 respondents had 7 children in their household who were not up to the age of 15 years old. 9 people responded to have 8 in the household who are not up to the age of 15. 4 had 9 children in their households. 7 had 10 children in their households who are under the age of 15 years. 4 respondents had 12 children who were under the age of 15 years.

3.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of AEP beneficiaries

Number of female and male beneficiaries

Understanding the gender distribution of AEP beneficiaries was instrumental in contextualizing the findings and drawing meaningful conclusions about their experiences and outcomes. Table 4 shows that out of the 121 AEP beneficiaries interviewed, 58 were females, representing 55.2%, while 47 were males, accounting for 44.8% in Northern Region. This data highlights a slightly higher participation rate among female beneficiaries in the targeted communities of the Northern Region. Similarly, in the Southern Region, the gender distribution revealed that out of the 16 AEP beneficiaries interviewed, 10 were females, representing 62.5%, while 6 were males, accounting for 37.5% (Table 5). This data indicates a significantly higher participation rate among female beneficiaries in the targeted communities of the Southern Region.

Table 4. Gender of AEP beneficiaries from Northern and Southern Regions (n=121)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Northern Region		
Female	58	55.2
Male	47	44.8
Total	105	100.0
Southern Region		
Female	10	62.5
Male	6	37.5
Total	16	100.0

Source: Field Research, 2024

Analysis and conclusion

The report indicates a higher number of 58 (55.2) AEP beneficiaries were females and 47 representing 44.8% were males from the Northern Region whiles 10 representing 62.5% were females and 6 representing 37.5 were males in the Southern Region. Out of the overall 121 AEPs in both Northern and Southern regions, 16-20 years was recorded as the highest age representing 56 (46%) and 21 (25.6%) beneficiaries and 9 representing 56%, 4 representing 25% and 3 representing 18.8%.

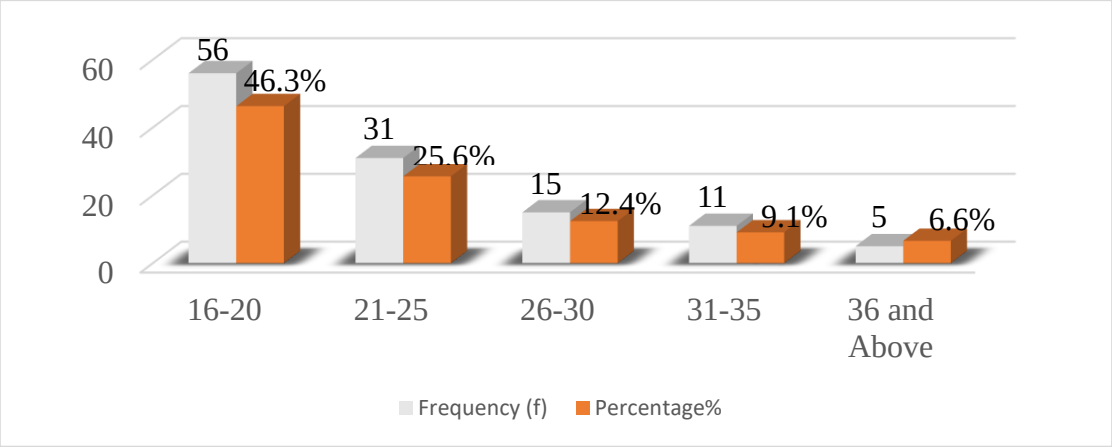
Age distribution of AEP beneficiaries

Figure 1 highlights the age distribution of AEP beneficiaries, with the majority falling within the age group of 16-20 years (46.3%, 56 beneficiaries) in Northern Region. This group represents adolescents transitioning to adulthood, a critical stage for educational and skill development. The second-largest group, those aged 21-25 years (25.6%, 31 beneficiaries), consists of young adults who are likely completing foundational education or pursuing higher education, vocational

training, or employment opportunities. Together, these two groups account for over 70% of the beneficiaries, reflecting the program's focus on supporting younger individuals at pivotal stages in their personal and professional development.

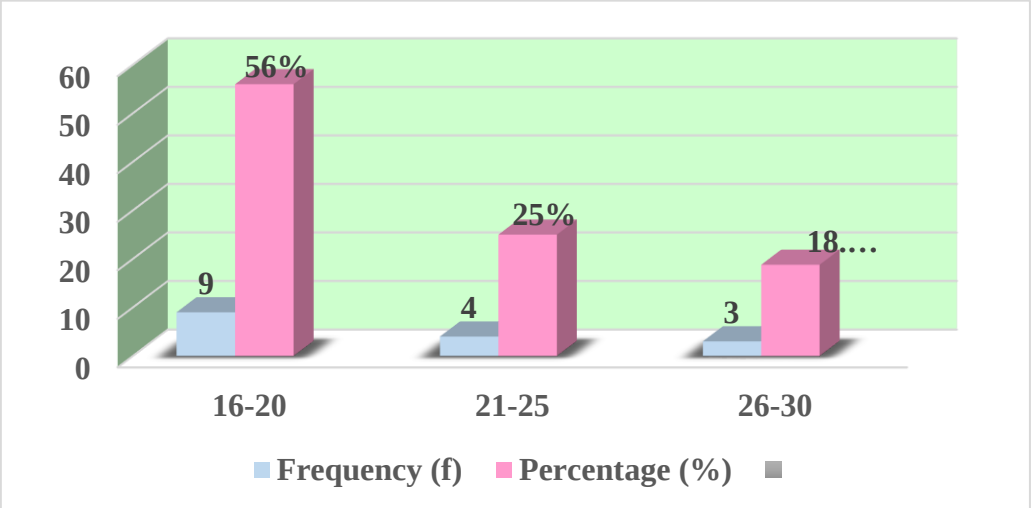
Participation among older age groups declines significantly, with 12.4% (15 beneficiaries) aged 26-30 years, 9.1% (11 beneficiaries) aged 31-35 years, and only 6.6% (5 beneficiaries) aged 36 and above. These groups likely include individuals who have experienced delayed access to education or are seeking second-chance opportunities for skill enhancement and economic participation. While the programme effectively targets adolescents and young adults, the lower representation of older age groups underscores the challenges of engaging mature participants, highlighting an opportunity to develop strategies that address the unique needs of this demographic.

In Southern Region, the data from the field research revealed the age distribution of AEP beneficiaries in the targeted communities. Most respondents, 9 beneficiaries (56.0%), fell within the age bracket of 16-20 years. This was followed by 4 beneficiaries (25%) aged 21-25 years, and 3 beneficiaries (18.8%) within the age range of 26-30 years (Figure 2). This distribution highlights that many AEP beneficiaries in the Southern Region were in their late teens and early twenties, reflecting the program's focus on supporting young individuals transitioning into education or the workforce.



Source: Field Research, 2024

Figure 2. Age categories of AEP beneficiaries in the Northern Region



Source: Field Research, 2024

Figure 3: Age category of AEP Beneficiaries in the Southern Region

Data shows that out of the 16 AEPs who participated in the study in the Southern Region, a higher number of 9 representing 56% were within the ages of 16-20, a number of 4 representing 25% were recorded within the ages of 21-25 and a minimum number of 3 representing 18.8%.

Analysis and Conclusion

Data revealed the profile of AEP beneficiaries who transitioned to the formal education and the world of work showing their gender and age categories. A higher number of beneficiaries interviewed were females for both Northern and Southern Regions. Out of the 121 beneficiaries 58 were females, representing 55.2%, while 47 were males, accounting for 44.8% in Northern Region and 16 AEP beneficiaries interviewed, 10 were females, representing 62.5%, while 6 were males, accounting for 37.5% in the Southern Region. This data indicates a significantly higher participation rate among female beneficiaries in the targeted communities of the Northern and Southern Regions.

Type of AEP enrolled in

The data reveals that most AEP beneficiaries (89.3%, 108 individuals) were enrolled in the *School for Life CBE* programme, while a smaller proportion (10.7%, 13 individuals) participated in the *Afrikids CBE* programme (Table 6). This indicates that the *School for Life CBE* programme had a broader reach and greater participation, potentially reflecting its wider availability, accessibility, or effectiveness in the targeted communities.

Table 5. Type of AEP beneficiary enrolled in

Education innovators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School for Life CBE	108	89.3
Afrikids CBE	13	10.7
Total	121	100

Source: Field Research, 2024

Ethnicity and Faith Ethnic groups

The data revealed that all 121 School for Life and Afrikids beneficiaries interviewed across the districts were predominantly Dagombas, who spoke and understood the Dagbani language fluently in their daily activities. All respondents from the Northern Region were born and enrolled in the School for Life CBE and Afrikids CBE programs within their respective communities. These programmes provided instruction in literacy and numeracy using both Dagbani and English languages, serving as a foundation for their educational journeys.

The three districts/metropolis—Tamale, Tolon, and Kumbungu—were predominantly Muslim, with most residents practicing the Islamic religion. However, there was also a presence of Christians and Traditionalists, creating a diverse religious mix within the communities. Agriculture was the primary occupation in these areas, especially in the Tolon and Kumbungu districts. A small number of beneficiaries from the Upper East Region were found to understand and speak Taleni, Kasem, and Kusal languages. These areas were primarily dominated by Christians, alongside a smaller population of Muslims and Traditionalists. Similarly, in the Southern Region, which was also predominantly Christian, the targeted AEP beneficiaries were mainly Dagombas who had migrated from the Northern Region in search of education or job opportunities. This ethnic and linguistic

diversity highlighted the cultural and geographic contexts in which the AEP beneficiaries lived and underscored the role of the programs in addressing the educational needs of these varied groups.

Year of AEP completion

The table shows that 17 AEP participants representing 14.0% responded to having completed the CBE programme one (1) year ago in their respective communities. 14 representing 11.6% completed two (2 years ago). 21 representing 17.4% completed three (3) years ago. However, a higher number of 26 representing 21.5% completed the programme four (4) years ago. 19 representing 15.7% completed five (5) years ago and 9.1% completed the programme more than six years ago (Table 7). Their passion for completion motivated their transition to either the formal school sectors or joined the world of work.

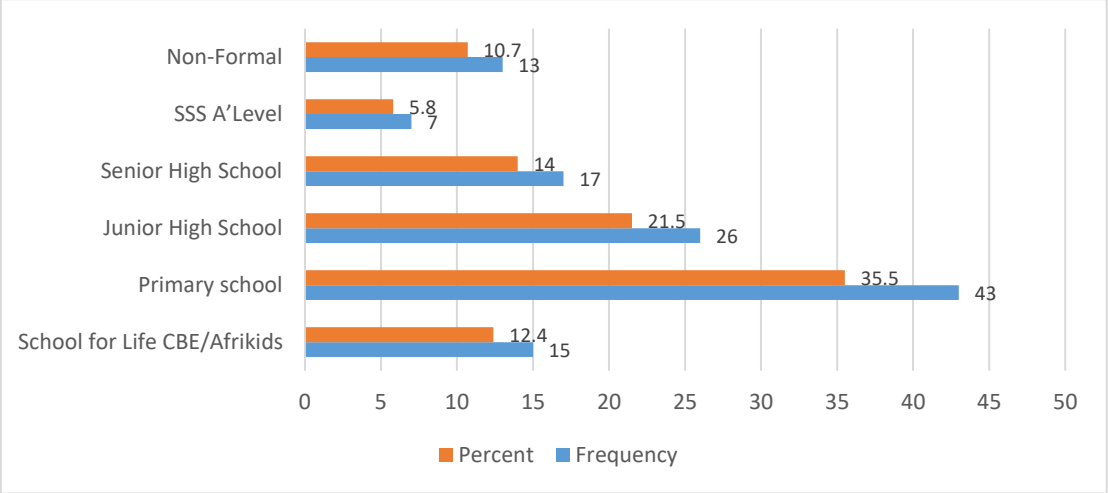
Table 6. Year Completed AEP

Year of Completion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
One year ago	17	14.0
Two years ago	14	11.6
Three years ago	21	17.4
Four years ago	26	21.5
Five years ago	19	15.7
Six years ago	13	10.7
More than Six years ago	11	9.1
Total	121	100

Source: Field Research, 2024

Highest educational levels of AEP beneficiaries

Among the beneficiaries, the highest educational levels achieved varied significantly. A substantial proportion of beneficiaries completed primary school (35.5%, 43 individuals), followed by those who reached junior high school (21.5%, 26 individuals). However, a smaller number progressed to senior high school (14.0%, 17 individuals) or SSS or A'Level (5.8%, 7 individuals). Notably, 10.7% (13 individuals) reported having only non-formal education, and 12.4% (15 individuals) indicated that their highest educational experience was through the *School for Life CBE* or *Afrikids CBE programme* (Table 4). This distribution suggests that while the AEP programs successfully facilitated transitions to formal education for many beneficiaries, significant challenges remain in supporting continued progression to higher levels of education.



Source: Field Research, 2024

Figure 4. Highest educational level of AEP beneficiaries

3.3 Transition and completion among AEP Beneficiaries

The data reveals the transition and completion status of AEP beneficiaries including their gender disparities. The data on the transition and completion status of 1,246 AEP beneficiaries provides a comprehensive view of their educational progress. A significant portion of beneficiaries (45.6%) are currently at the Junior High School (JHS) level, reflecting the effectiveness of AEPs in bridging foundational learning gaps and enabling learners to transition into formal education. Additionally, 24.6% of the beneficiaries are in Senior High School (SHS), with a further 14.7% awaiting entry into SHS. These figures suggest that nearly 40% of beneficiaries have reached or are preparing to enter higher levels of education, demonstrating the program's impact in supporting educational advancement (Table 7).

Despite this progress, challenges remain, as 13.6% of beneficiaries are still at the primary level, which could indicate barriers such as age limitations, socio-economic constraints, or learning gaps that require additional support. The dropout rate of 1.1%, while relatively low, highlights the importance of addressing factors that disrupt educational continuity, such as financial difficulties, inadequate educational infrastructure, and social pressures. Furthermore, only 0.3% of beneficiaries have completed SHS, suggesting that more efforts are needed to sustain learners through to the end of their secondary education and beyond. However, relevant to their gender dynamics in education, the data revealed a higher proportion of (54.7%) females compared to males (45.3%) This indicates an encouraging trend in female participation in AEPs, addressing gender disparities in access to education (Table 9). However, notable differences emerge at specific educational stages. For instance, 65.3% of those still at the primary level are female, suggesting that while more girls are enrolled, they may face greater barriers to progressing beyond primary education, possibly due to socio-economic constraints or cultural expectations.

At the Junior High School (JHS) level, females continue to dominate, comprising 54.8% of the beneficiaries compared to 45.2% males. This indicates that AEPs have been relatively effective in retaining girls through this critical transition phase. Similarly, among those currently in Senior High School (SHS), females also maintain a slight edge at 54.7% compared to 45.3% males.

The completion rate of SHS is equal for both genders at 50%highlighting the need for more support to sustain beneficiaries through higher education. Dropout rates are evenly distributed at 50% each between males and females, but the small total numbers may obscure underlying gender-specific factors. The data underscores the need for targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by both genders, such as financial barriers for girls and motivational or retention strategies for boys, ensuring equitable access to and progression through the educational system.

Table 7. Frequency and number of Gender disparities by AEP Beneficiaries and Completion and transition Status of AEP Beneficiaries

Status	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Awaiting to enter SHS	82 (44.8%)	101 (55.2%)	183 (14.7%)
Completed SHS	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)	4 (0.3%)
Dropout	7 (50.0%)	7 (50.0%)	14 (1.1%)
JHS	311 (54.8%)	257 (45.2%)	568 (45.6%)
Primary	111 (65.3%)	59 (34.7%)	170 (13.6%)
SHS	168 (54.7%)	139 (45.3%)	307 (24.6%)

Total	681 (100%)	565 (100%)	1246

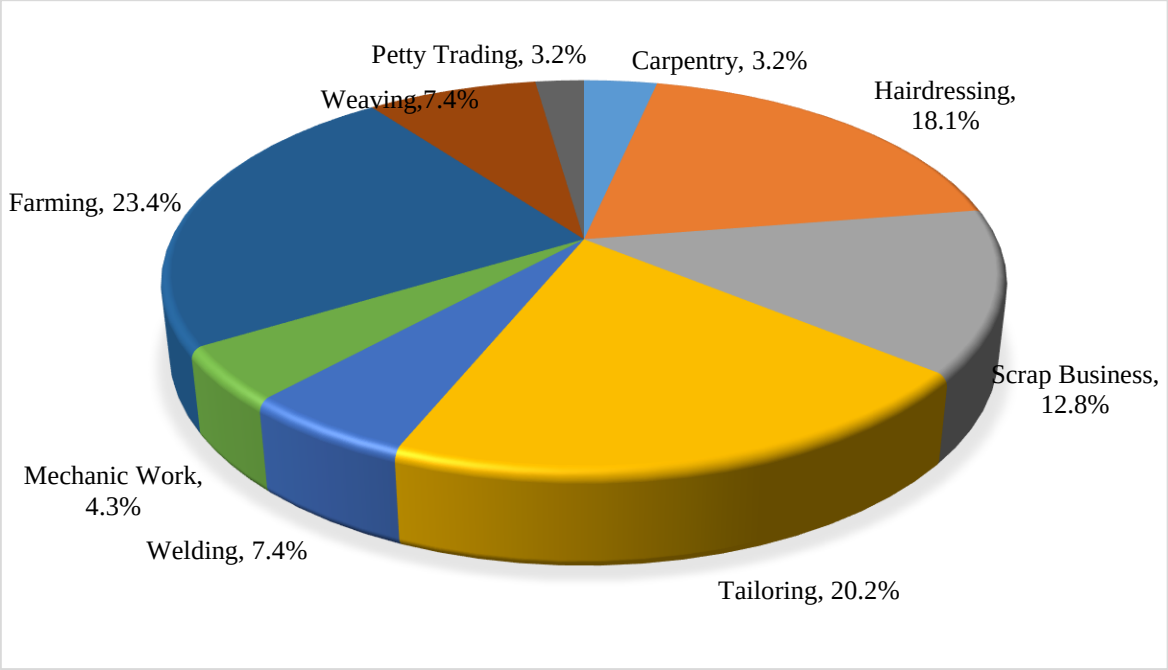
Source: Field Research, 2024

These findings underscore the transformative role of AEPs in providing access to education for marginalized learners, while also pointing to areas for further improvement. Strengthening support mechanisms, such as financial aid and mentorship programs, could reduce dropout rates and encourage retention. Additionally, targeted interventions are needed to help primary-level learners transition into higher education and to promote greater SHS completion rates. By addressing these challenges, AEPs can enhance their long-term impact, ensuring that beneficiaries achieve their full educational potential and are better equipped for future opportunities.

3.4 Economic trajectories of AEP beneficiaries

3.2.1 Economic activities among AEP beneficiaries in the world of work

Figure 7 shows the types of employment and economic activities AEP beneficiaries engage in the world of work. Evidence from the study shows that farming constituted the highest economic activity and employment of 23 representing 23.4% among all the types of employment and economic activities from the data. Tailoring is recorded as the next economic activity is 20.2%, Hairdressing recorded as 18.1%, 12.8% engage in scrap businesses, 7.4% engaged in weaving, welding recorded 7.4%, 4% engaged in mechanic works. 3.2% engaged in carpentry and 3.2% engaged in petty trading respectively.



Source: Field Research, 2024

Figure 5. Type of economic activities AEP beneficiaries engage in

Findings from the qualitative interviews showed that beneficiaries of the AEP programme engaged in numerous economic activities including farming, hairdressing, scrap businesses, weaving and tailoring/sewing. Gender differences in the type of economic activities engaged in by the beneficiaries were found. While hairdressing, tailoring/sewing, and weaving were mainly engaged in by female beneficiaries, their male counterparts were mainly involved in the scrap business. Farning on the contrary was an economic activity that both genders equally participated in. These economic activities presented diverse and unique experiences to beneficiaries.

Farming as an economic activity

Most AEP beneficiaries in this study, who lived in the Northern regions were engaged in farming activities in their communities. While some beneficiaries revealed owning and working on their personal farms, other beneficiaries further provided extra farmhands to their parents in addition to working in their own farmlands. Male beneficiaries who indicated that family is their only source of economic activity and livelihood shared: *"I am only farming now" (Male AEP Beneficiary, 27 years).* This was confirmed in the response of another male AEP beneficiary who had this to say: "*I am a farmer. I am only engaged farming now"* (Male AEP Beneficiary).

Some participants added that besides having and working on their personal farms, they extended support to their ageing parents on their farms. This shows that these beneficiaries also worked on the farmlands of their parents, providing important supports to help their parents farm. This was depicted in the responses of 26- and 24-year-old male and female beneficiaries as follows:

> "I am farming and now cultivating my own farm, while also helping my parents on their farms" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Upper East Region).

> "I am now cultivating my own farm and also helping my parents on their farms" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Northern Region).

Although there is the wide-held belief that household economic activities are segregated along gender, the responses shared above could imply that the domain of agriculture and farming to be specific may not be deeply gendered in nature. This may also be because farming required no formal education or specialised knowledge to engage in, facilitating access to a suitable economic opportunity with no discrimination in terms of gender, education and age in northern Ghana. Another important reason is that, compared to other occupations, farming provides some form of flexibility that allows one to further engage in other economic activities while being the major source of family sustenance. This approach was predominantly reported by female AEP beneficiaries. According to a 29-year-old married female SFL beneficiary who has a child, farming constituted the only basis of sustenance for her family:

> "I am currently into farming activities. I am married, and my marriage is three years old. I have a son who is two years and three months old. I do the farming to sustain myself and my child. I was unable to learn any hand skill work because there were no financial resources to enable me to register for skill training" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Northern Region).

The above statement further indicates that unlike other occupations that require financial basis to learn, farming is readily available as an economic endeavour without facing any financial barrier.

Also, a 20-year-old married female beneficiary added that, she was able to combine her faming activities with other small-scale trading that involved the sale of food items. This was narrated as:

> "I am a farmer, and I also sell gari and popcorn at the schools. I am married with four children" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Upper East Region).

Apprenticeship

In addition to being engaged in farming activities, some participants also mentioned during their interviews that they were involved in apprenticeship trades, where they learn informal trade or occupational skills from their 'madams' and 'masters'. Different trade/occupational skills participants were learning includes hairdressing and fashion design (tailoring/sewing), and this was a major feature among the female participants. It is important to note however that female participants who were married juggled between their apprenticeship work and their conjugal

responsibilities of helping their husbands on their farms. Participants who were into trade learning, specifically tailoring said:

> "At the moment, I am learning tailoring work in the Tolon district. I also help my husband and family with farming activities" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon).

> "I am currently learning tailoring skills in my community. I also help my husband and family with farming activities" (Female AEP Beneficiary).

One's ability as a woman to combine familial roles and apprenticeship activities was evidence by another participant who had to put on hold her apprenticeship process to pursue marriage and birth due to influence from her family shared:

> "I was learning tailoring, but I recently gave birth because my parents told me to find a man and marry. I am married now and plan to continue my sewing training soon" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tailoring Apprentice).

Her response reinforces the assertions that compared to male children, the substantial aspects of the life trajectories of female children in northern Ghana are much regulated and guided by their parents/families.

Unmarried female participants in this study similarly engaged in apprenticeship activities as indicated as follows: "At the moment, I am learning tailoring in Cheshegu as an economic activity…." (Female AEP Beneficiary, Cheshagu, unmarried). Adding to this, an unmarried female participant also stated that though she is involved in learning the tailoring trade, registration fees and the purchase of required equipment to facilitate her apprenticeship learning was yet to be fulfilled:

> "I am currently learning tailoring, but I am yet to buy my own machine and settle my madam's registration fees…" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon-Daboashei).

Such a response may suggest that even in learning trades, these beneficiaries in advancing their self-employability and skills could encounter financial constraints in addressing key requirements to facilitate their transition and completion of the apprenticeship programmes.

Narratives from the interviews further showed that hairdressing was considered by female participants as a viable avenue to learn trade skills that could make them self-employed. Some of them shared their activities as:

> "*I am currently learning hairdressing in my community…*" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Hairdressing Apprentice)

> "I am learning hairdressing as an apprentice, and I am almost finishing. I am not married and live with my aunt in Bukere" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Upper East Region).

A participant who was into a similar apprenticeship learning further added her confidence towards completing soon:

> "I am now a hairdresser apprentice. I am hoping to graduate by the end of the year or, God willing, early next year" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon-Daboashei).

Contrarily, trades and occupations that were considered atypical to males and labour-intensive such as mechanical engineering (mainly car fitting and repairs), welding, were observed among males involved in apprenticeships:

> "I am engaged in a mechanic skill in the Tolon Cheshagu community. I am still learning" (Male AEP Beneficiary).

> "I am learning welding when school is on vacation" (Male AEP Beneficiary, 21 years).

> "I am engaged in…masonry (building and construction), labour work, and any other available work when called upon…" (Male AEP Beneficiary).

Weaving

Aside farming, weaving emerged as another form of traditional indigenous occupation among a few of the females participants who were interviewed in northern Ghana. These participants who are self-employed were found to weave traditional smocks and other regalia, as suggested by a 19-year-old female beneficiary: *"I am a smock weaver" (Female AEP Beneficiary).* Another participant who shared a similar occupation to that of the 19-year-old participant and was self-employed stated:

> *"I am into weaving, and I have my own weaving business now. After I finish weaving the clothes, I put them in a pan and move around houses and areas to market and sell them" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tamale, 29 years, mother).*

The response of the 29-year-old mother above suggests that she does not only weave but further developed her own way of making her products visible to potential customers by actively carrying the items around to sell.

Scrap business

Majority of the AEP beneficiaries who migrated to southern Ghana were exposed to the scrap business[1]. This business was proven to be a male-dominated business since participants interviewed who engaged in these business activities were mainly former male AEP beneficiaries who migrated to southern Ghana to seek economic livelihood. During the interviews, their occupational trajectories were clarified as follows:

> "I am into scrap business. I am not married and do not have a child" (Male AEP Beneficiary).

> "I am into scrap business. I have a wife and one child, but we are not yet married" (Male AEP Beneficiary).

Another participant revealed:

> "I am engaged in the scrap business, but I have occasionally been involved in other work activities when called upon. Currently, I am not married" (Male AEP Beneficiary).

The above findings imply that, although farming appeared less gendered, other economic pursuits among AEP beneficiaries showed traditional gender divisions. Women often had to juggle numerous conflicting roles (being a wife, mother and farmer) simultaneously, highlighting the complexities associated with their economic participation. Secondly, the primary family significantly play a role in shaping women's economic choices and career paths and influenced their marriage and childbearing. Yet, for women in apprenticeship trades particularly, the absence of financial resources was a major challenge. Male AEP beneficiaries preferred 'male-dominated' and labour-intensive occupational trades, informing the sector of apprenticeship. Again, migration to urban areas primarily by the males, exposed them to the prospects of new economic avenues although usually works like scrap collection may be less desirable. The responses therefore reflect the participants' aspirations to learn and grow within their chosen fields, often balancing these pursuits with personal and family responsibilities.

[1] An informal economic activity that involves searching for aluminium and other metals from used and disposed artefacts, equipment and gadgets made of metals. to sell for economic gains.

3.2.2 Factors influencing economic trajectories of AEP beneficiaries

The key enablers of economic trajectories among AEP beneficiaries in this study were investigated. These enablers were thematically categorised to include limited educational opportunities, entrepreneurial passion/orientation, earning/income prospects, financial demands/low start-up costs, and network/family connections and pressure. These themes are discussed below:

Limited educational opportunities

A major important precursor of employment choice among participants was their inability to have desired educational opportunities and pathways, since their parents could not afford related financial obligations.

> "I decided to learn hairdressing because my parents could no longer afford my educational needs…" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 19 years)
>
> "…. I engaged in farming because there was no other opportunity available for me when my parents couldn't afford my educational needs, such as school fees, books, and uniforms" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Kumbungu, 20 years)
>
> "I engage in this activity because it is what I can get to do, and I think it can generate money for me. Lack of funds to support my education is the reason I have not continued, so I had to engage in this scrap business" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Scrap Business, 21 years).

Participants, with the absence of formal educational pathways consequently decided to venture into the world of work, to purposely earn money to continue their education or an opportunity to learn an employable skill:

> "…My parents could not support my education, so I need to work hard through farming to save money and continue my education" (Male AEP Beneficiary, 20 years old).
>
> "I engage in this activity because…I am motivated by the money I earn from scrap dealing, which will help me save and go back to school" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Scrap Business, 23 years).
>
> "Since I could not continue school to the point where I could get a white-collar job, I did not want to waste the opportunity to learn a skill I could rely on in the future" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 19 years old).

Unlike others, a few revealed their poor academic performance compared to their colleagues left them with learning a trade as their last resort. This was reflected in the response of a 22-year-old male participant:

> "I decided to engage in mechanic skill training because I felt like a second fiddle among my colleagues. It was difficult for me to catch up with them in class, so I chose this path instead" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Mechanic Training, 22 years).

Entrepreneurial passion/orientation

Consistent with earlier findings, the desire to be entrepreneurial or gain a skill that was either easy to learn or fueled by one's interest or passion was identified to drive the occupational trajectories of some participants. Two participants, for instance, during their respective interviews, shared their passion for the occupations they chose:

> "As a young guy growing up in the village, I always dreamt of becoming somebody in the future. Among all the available apprenticeships, I have a passion for carpentry work. After I completed SHS and my parents could not sponsor my education, I decided to follow my passion" (Male AEP Beneficiary, 27 years).

Contrary to her male counterpart, the desire to escape the overly 'theoretical' nature of the Ghanaian curricula, and acquire technical and vocational skills and knowledge that could earn her a living was revealed by a female participant:

> "I do not want my life and future to only be centred around education because the Ghanaian educational system focuses on books without technical or vocational knowledge. I wanted to have something to do so that, in the future, I can make a living out of it" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 19 years).

Adding to the above narratives, a 21year old female participant further illuminated that her interest in the tailoring profession was fuelled by her ability to set up a business from it and the associated financial prospects:

> "I developed an interest in tailoring because I can establish a business from it and earn money to support myself…" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 21 years old).

Earning/income prospects

The accounts for the female participants above proffers that most participants' occupational trajectories were reinforced by the possibility of economic gains and earning to be able to personally support their livelihoods and that of their families. This helped participants, predominantly females, to escape poverty. These were expressed explicitly in the response of participants as:

> "I chose tailoring because I want a means to earn a living and escape poverty. School for Life gave me the chance to learn to survive, and I know tailoring will not make me rich, but it will help me sustain myself" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 32 years).

> "I did not go to school beyond School for Life CBE, so I needed something to do to support my children in the future. That is why I engaged in hairdressing" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 27 years).

The consistency of these earnings was of primal importance to some participants in choosing the specific occupation to pursue, as argued by a 19-year-old female participant:

> "[I decided to learn hairdressing skills and not tailoring, even though I studied fashion design, because people wash, braid, and style their hair every day, unlike sewing clothes]. I needed a skill that could help me earn a living consistently, not one where my earnings would come only occasionally…" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 19 years old).

The increasing desire to work and earn income for themselves and their dependents may be informed by the absence of property ownership rights for women in rural northern Ghana, challenging the ability to earn income to support their families. Secondly, the seasonal nature of farming in these rural communities imply that that income from such activities may not be consistent. Hence the need to seek consistent alternative to earn income. This may also point to a shift in gendered sociocultural norms surrounding the roles of women in recent years.

Financial demands/low start-up costs

Moreover, financial demands associated with different occupational trade was disclosed by many participants to play a key role in their choice of economic venture. Prior to deciding on which occupational trade to engage in, participants actively compared the associated costs for each. Female participants mostly decided to learn trades including hairdressing and tailoring because they required less capital and are less costly to become apprentice or start. These work activities were essentially considered to be less demanding financially:

> "I chose tailoring because…you do not need a lot of money to register and start. Once you have a sewing machine, you are good to go" (Female FGD Participant).

> "…In my perspective, tailoring is less expensive. Since I started the training, I have not spent much except for threads and needles. My mother even pleaded with my madam to let me share a sewing machine with her to help reduce costs until I can afford my own" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 21 years old).

This was reiterated by a participant who decided which trade to pursue after comparing the cost of venturing into each (hairdressing and tailoring):

> "…The cost of starting my hairdressing journey was also more affordable than tailoring since I didn't need to buy a sewing machine. The price of a sewing machine is more than enough to get everything I need for hairdressing" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 19 years old).

Similar responses were indicated by male participants who ventured into farming. They clarified that farming required less capital and time to start but physical strength and labour to start in the shortest time:

> "I chose farming because it is the work I can start quickly without much capital, and we have family land available…" (Male AEP Beneficiary, 20 years old).

> "I chose farming because it is the readily available work I can start in the shortest possible time without much capital. As long as I am strong, I can use my own labour to farm…" (Male AEP Beneficiary, 26 years old).

Network/family connections and pressure

Family relations often served as mentors or provided participants opportunities to acquire employable skills and training. While others were able to evade the costs associated with formal apprenticeship, others also had the opportunity to be learn from and be guided by their parents on farming techniques, which developed their confidence to interact with customers on specific farm produce:

> "My uncle's wife is a hairdresser, so I took the opportunity to learn from her because I wouldn't have to pay like other apprentices" (Female, AEP Beneficiary, 19 years).

> "I chose farming because I was taught how economical it is. I wanted to put that knowledge into practice, especially learning from my father. Now, I have developed confidence to discuss with customers and even recommend produce like pepper and tomatoes to my old classmates" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Farming, 22 years).

To some, family expectations and pressures was significant instigator of their career choice. One participant who could not transition into formal school described how she was able to learn the tailoring trade upon stopping school:

> "I did not transition to formal school because my aunt came for me from my father to help her with her sewing business. I stopped school, but I developed an interest in tailoring after observing her design and sew dresses. That is how I started sewing" (Female AEP Beneficiary, 32 years old).

A male participant's response during an interview illustrated that social networks were actively used to identify and pursue economic opportunities. Thus, suggesting a reliance on known people in the occupation as an entry strategy. He said:

> "I engage in this activity because…I also know people in the scrap business…" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Scrap Business).

These findings underscore the significance of family and social relational networks in shaping career trajectories and gaining entry into desired occupations in the informal economy, particularly in contexts and situations where access to formal training and education may be limited.

3.3 Facilitators and constraints of AEP beneficiaries' life trajectories

3.3.1 Facilitators of AEP beneficiaries' educational and economic trajectories

Participants in this study disclosed that numerous supports were received from numerous sources including family members, community members and non-governmental organisations. These various support and resources facilitated and helped participants to progress through their education and economic pathways. These supports are discussed below:

Educational support and resources

Educational support and resources were major support reported by almost all the participants. The findings suggested that sources of these support were diverse including government, communities, and NGOs, with parents consistently emerging as the primary source of support for essential earning materials such as uniforms, books and stationery. While NGOs and governments provided support in the form of financial assistance, mentorship and books respectively, the role of community members focused on ensuring attendance by the children. These respective educational supports were described by participants during the interview:

> "During the CBE program, I received materials like books, pens, and a bag from the school. My parents also supported me with fees and school supplies when I transitioned to formal school, but the support ended when I dropped out" (AEP Beneficiary, Male, 19 years, Kumbungu Cheshegu).

> "Parents provide children, whether CBE beneficiaries or not, with learning materials such as textbooks, uniforms, sandals, and even provisions for those in senior high school." (community leader, Male, rural community)

The complementary role of NGOs such as CAMFED and School for Life, non-government agencies, were described to show how such institutions supported parents to provide education for their children:

> "…I also received materials such as books and crayons from the School for Life programme. My parents provided me with uniforms, sandals, and pens during my school days." (AEP beneficiary, Male, rural community, now in Accra)

> "I received financial support and educational materials from CAMFED during junior high school. However, I am no longer a beneficiary in senior high school. My parents still support me financially and provide motivation, along with school supplies such as textbooks, uniforms, sandals, and bags." (AEP beneficiary, Female, rural community)

The role of the community was added:

> "The community helped by arranging children in the classroom and chasing us to go to school when it was time" (AEP Beneficiary, Male, 19 years, Tolon Cheshegu).

An important observation is that while these initial supports from stakeholders are crucial, sustainability often diminishes as children transition to higher levels of education. This is evidenced in situations where support from government or NGO programmes ends, leaving the burden primarily on parents:

> "…I received textbooks, exercise books, pencils, erasers, and sharpeners from the programme administration. When I transitioned to the formal school, I was given exercise books by the district education office. Since then, I have received financial and basic school needs from my parents and motivation from my husband and family members." (AEP beneficiary, Female, rural community)

> "…During the program, I was given books, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, and a flat file. When I transitioned to formal school, my parents provided books, uniforms, shoes, and

bags, as well as feeding money, until I completed SHS." (AEP beneficiary, Male, rural community)

Financial/economic support and resources

The crucial role of financial and economic support and resources from family members, that is, parents, siblings and husbands, was found to enable participants to pursue their education and engage in income-generating activities. These supports could assist participants cover school fees, learning materials and daily living expenses and livelihoods. Financial and economic assistance received were narrated as follows:

> "My father and brothers supported me financially during formal school, but when they could not continue, I had to stop. Now, my husband supports me whenever he has money" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon Cheshegu).

> "My parents' support enabled me to go into petty trading. With the little profit I make, I am able to provide food for myself and my children." (Female AEP beneficiary, extremely rural community)

> "Most families support children attending school more than those who are not. For non-AEP beneficiaries, the family often looks for vocational skills like weaving, tailoring, or carpentry…" (Male community leader, rural community)

The community leader's observation underscores the fact that families often prioritise the education of children who are attending schools with greater financial and social support compared to those who are not schooling. For most participants, particularly females, family support acts as a crucial safety net, providing financial assistance during times of need.

Emotional resources and encouragement

An important support and resource recognised by participants focused on motivating and encouraging participants to enroll in alternative learning pathways, transition into formal schooling after completing AEPs, and in some situations, to also engage in farming activities. These roles according to participants' narratives were performed by family members, friends and community members. The encouragement and motivation to enroll in alternative learning pathways was clarified:

> "I was encouraged by my family and friends to register for the School for Life program…" (Female AEP beneficiary, rural community)

> "I received motivation and encouragement from my parents and the School for Life program…" (AEP Beneficiary, Female, 24 years, Tolon Gbrumani).

> "The kind of support I received was motivation and encouragement from my parents and relatives…" (Male AEP beneficiary, rural community, now in Accra)

These motivations and encouragement were found to facilitate participants' transition to formal schooling and farming activities towards becoming successful:

> "My parents and relatives encouraged me to transition to formal school and to engage in farming, which I am now doing" (AEP Beneficiary, Male, 27 years, Yishei community).

> "[Most families support children attending school more than those who are not]…For AEP beneficiaries, they are encouraged to transition and become successful." (Male community leader, rural community)

At the community level, however, the attendance of participants in AEP programmes was monitored by community members in addition to encouraging participants to continually attend the CBE programme:

> "The community encouraged us not to stop attending the CBE program. They monitored our attendance and learning progress" (AEP Beneficiary, Female, 25 years, Tolon Daboashei).

These supports helped participants to complete their primary school, while facilitating smooth transitions to higher educational levels such as JHS and SHS. These were indicated by participants during their interviews:

> "These supports helped me stay and complete primary school, transition to JHS, and now I am learning tailoring." (AEP beneficiary, Female, 23 years, Tolon Cheshegu)

> "The support helped me transition into formal school and progress to the SHS level." (AEP beneficiary, Male, rural community)

> "…They [CBE] provided me with books, pencils, and school supplies, which helped me stay in school" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon Gbrumani).

These responses provide compelling evidence for the critical role of social support and encouragement at both the family and communal level in driving educational and vocational successes among beneficiaries. This implies that promoting partnership and collaboration among stakeholders, as well as community engagement could help address underlying socioeconomic barriers. This will in turn create more supportive and enabling environments for all children to reach their full educational potential and achieve suitable economic outcomes.

Accommodation/housing support

According to the findings, most participants irrespective of being a male, female, and residing in rural or urban communities, had access to stronger network relations that helped them to address the challenges they faced. However, rural-urban disparities were identified with the form of support received through these networks. While those who migrated to urban areas received support to access accommodation, their counterparts who stayed back in their communities of origin (rural communities) accessed support on their farms. These were uniquely described as:

> "In the city here in Agbogbloshie, we have network support, such as community-based assistance, where one is supported with a kiosk as a sleeping place as a newcomer[2]…" (SFL-AEP Beneficiary, Agbogbloshie).

> "In the market here, we live in groups according to the communities we originated from in the north. So, we have a strong network of support…" (CBE Beneficiary, FGD).

The response above clarifies the centrality of ethnic relational networks in helping those who migrate to the southern parts of Ghana to negotiate the challenges they are confronted with. Other participants in rural communities clarified the type of support received from their communities:

> "I do not face any network support challenges here" (Female Beneficiary, Tolon-Daboashei).

> "There is network support in terms of community engagement, particularly for farming and ceremonies…" (Female Beneficiary, 19-year-old, Kumbungu-Nwogu).

> "This community is united, so we help each other out, especially with farming needs. I do not face such challenges here" (Female Beneficiary, Tolon-Daboashei).

[2] A person who migrates from northern Ghana either permanently and temporarily in search of better economic opportunities and livelihoods.

3.3.2 Challenges hindering the progression of AEP beneficiaries

Despite the support received, some beneficiaries encounter some challenges that hinder their progression in the chosen economic or educational trajectories. Thus, the challenges confronting beneficiaries in the world of work were explored. The data showed that participants' progression through education and economic trajectories were constrained by several challenges. These are illustrated through the following themes: financial challenges gendered cultural norms, stereotypes/discrimination, experience of abuse, geographic barrier to work/skill development, occupational health risks, lack of access to basic social amenities.

Financial challenges

Irrespective of support received by participants networks, particularly those who migrated to urban areas, financial assistance was a major problem reported. This challenge was attributed to participants' inability to express financial needs to others to be supported, the discomfort associated with sharing personal problems and the lack of access to information on who and where to seek such financial assistance. These constraints affected the educational and economic progress and prospects of participants:

> "While this community is united and we help each other out, financial assistance is still a major gap. Financial support is a major issue for me, especially when trying to access education or work opportunities. Sometimes, I do not know how or who to express my challenges to for help." (Female Beneficiary, FGD).

> "The network support in terms of financial assistance is a challenge and knowing where to access it is another hurdle. Often, people do not want to ask for help because they feel uncomfortable sharing their problems" (Female Beneficiary, FGD).

> "There is limited information about support systems and how to secure financial support or build networks. This contributes to less development and limits our ability to navigate higher educational opportunities" (Male Beneficiary, Agbogbloshie).

These financial difficulties prevented participants from being able to transition into the formal school system to continue their education. While some pf the females who encounter such challenges end up marrying early, others migrate to urban areas in southern Ghana in search of jobs and become head porters. These were narrated by some participants:

> "These days, they encourage girls to go to school. Most educational opportunities and scholarships, such as those provided by CAMFED, target girls. However, financial constraints still cause many to drop out and marry early, which affects their future" (Key Informant, 33 years).

> "To be honest, women or girls' education in this community does not go far. They mostly drop out of school very early due to lack of financial support. Some of them, after dropping out, end up doing 'kayayei' [female head porters]. The family support is mostly not enough." (AEP beneficiary, Male).

This challenge, however, propelled some of the participants to seek work opportunities as a last resort:

> "I dropped out in primary four because I lost my father, and my mother could not afford my school needs. With no one to support me, I left school to learn a trade" (AEP Beneficiary, Female, 20 years, Agbogbloshie-Yishei).

> "I decided to learn hairdressing because my parents could no longer bear the cost of my educational needs…" (AEP Beneficiary, Female, 19 years, Tolon-Daboashei).

> "I decided to learn tailoring because of the financial challenges in transitioning to secondary school…" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon-Daboashei).

Marriage and gendered cultural norms

Nearly all the participants during their interviews highlighted early marriage as a systemic issue, often imposed on girls against their will. This practically limits educational opportunities as marriage truncates their schooling and reinforces gender roles. Parents' reluctance to invest in their daughters' education stems from the perception that girls will "benefit another family" post-marriage. This reflects a transactional view of girls' value, tied to patrilocal customs where economic returns on education are considered lost. Participants has this to share:

> "Young girls in Yishei are mostly given out for marriage at an early age, often against their will limiting their access to education. They are made to carry heavy loads and wake up early to perform household chores that could have been done during the day at an early age." (CBE beneficiary, Male, 18 years)

> "The community does not see girls' education as important because they believe these girls, after being educated, will get married and only take care of their husbands and children, abandoning the family that supported their education" (AEP beneficiary, female 19 years, Talensi,).

> "Parents are often reluctant to invest in their daughters' education, fearing that girls will eventually get married and benefit another family. This perception continues to limit the educational opportunities for girls in our community." (CBE beneficiary, Male, 20 years)

In further articulating this important challenge, some participants further stressed the enormous nature of household chores performed by females, which needed to be done before going to school. This limited either their ability to attend school or concentrate on their studies, leading to disparate access compared to the males:

> "In my community, girls are encouraged to attend school, but they must finish all house chores before going. This limits their ability to concentrate on their studies. Boys, on the other hand, do not face the same expectations, which gives them more time for schoolwork" (FGD, female 22 years, Tolon-Daboashei).

> "Female education is not encouraging because of the work they do in our homes. They have a lot of work in the evenings to do. Some parents allow their children to attend school, but others do not because of the workload in the house" (AEP beneficiary, Male, 25 years).

> "Female education in this community is not given the attention it deserves. Even though parents now understand its importance, they do not invest much in girls' education compared to boys. Girls are burdened with house chores, which distracts them from concentrating on their studies" (FGD, 42).

This attitude towards female education was interestingly and uniquely summarised in the response of a participant who disclosed what her mother said concerning her education. Her account clearly illustrates the extent to which parents, even mothers, devalued the education of females. She clarified the challenge she faced:

> "…my mother often told me there was no point in supporting my education because I would not make it like other girls in the community" (AEP Beneficiary, Female, 19 years, Tolon-Daboashei).

These responses affirm a study conducted by Shaheen, Afzal, Majeed and Gilani (2019) iterated on the fact that girls in the rural communities has the believe that when a girl attains higher education such as a college or university, she might empower other women to challenge the

judgement of family's elders. Gyasi, Lulin, Chen and Amissah (2020) also attested to the fact that parental neglect is a key challenge to girls' education at the expense of their daily duties.

On the contrary, though boys' education is undermined, this is due to only economic pressures, such as migration and being used as farm helps and cowboys. Parents according to the findings, prioritise boys' education because they are regarded as the "pride of the family" and future breadwinners. This is because of the cultural beliefs that boys' education yields long-terms familial benefits to the family:

> "Boys are seen to go further in education compared to girls because they do not face the risk of teenage pregnancy. Parents are more willing to invest in boys' education, as boys are considered the pride of their families in our culture."– (A 41-year-old male opinion leader from the Agbogbloshi area in Accra).

> "While boys are not burdened by teenage pregnancies, they often migrate to cities or mining areas for economic opportunities, which disrupts their educational pathway." (CBE beneficiary, Male, 22 years, Northern Ghana)

Experience of abuse

Besides, a few participants shared that they were subjects of various forms of abuse, including physical, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. For instance, they narrated that they were bullied by senior colleagues at work, shouted on by their superiors and disrespected as well. Though few males shared these experiences, it was however dominant among female participants who were interviewed in this study. These experiences were recounted:

> "There are bullies at the shop. Someone older can just send you on errands, and you cannot complain—otherwise, it causes conflict" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon Daboashei).

> "The bullies from my seniors include sending me on errands while work is in session, like buying food or airtime. Sometimes they insult me when I am tired and refuse to go. This mostly happens when my master is not around" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon Daboashei).

These abuse leads to participants experiencing work-related attention deficit issues and emotional strains such as humiliation and despair, as discussed below:

> "At the workshop, some senior apprentices bully us, especially the younger ones, by making us run errands all day instead of focusing on learning the skill" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Mechanic Training).

> "I receive disrespect and bullying from my seniors who started the training before me. It makes me lose concentration at work sometimes" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Nwogu, 19 years).

> "Sometimes, my boss shouts at me in front of customers when I make mistakes. It is humiliating and makes me feel like giving up" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Weaving).

Stereotypes/discrimination

While the findings portrayed community interest and some level of inclusion, for example, vocational training and participation in farming), negative perceptions and stigma remain prevalent. This inconsistency creates a complex and contradictory environment for persons with disabilities. Participants revealed that though those with disabilities are perceived positively, they experience stigma, exclusion from social and communal activities, absence of disability-friendly infrastructure, negative attitudes towards education which hinder their educational progression beyond primary education:

> "Children with disabilities are not sidelined entirely, but they usually do not progress beyond primary school due to stigma and a lack of specialized resources." (Male opinion leader, rural community)
>
> "Persons with disabilities are marginalized in participating in communal activities due to their condition" (AEP Beneficiary, Male).
>
> "Persons with disabilities have no access to education because we do not have a special school here, and the only school built is not disability friendly…but persons with disabilities are excluded because of their status." (FGD, 7).
>
> "In this community, children with disabilities are not sidelined when it comes to accessing education or being accepted in the community school. Parents here show interest in their education, but unfortunately, most of these children do not progress beyond primary school. Some parents still hold negative perceptions about them, which leads to a lack of attention or failure to enroll them in school" (Key Informant, Male, Kumbungu-Cheshegu).

In addition to the stigma and discrimination, some participants added that those with disabilities face socioeconomic challenges such as the need to engage in labour-intensive work activities like farming to fund their apprenticeships. This may limit and deepen their economic opportunities and marginalisation:

> "The community shows interest in persons with disabilities, and some of them participate in farming, welding, or tailoring. However, negative perceptions about their nature still persist, and they often face stigmatization, such as people refusing to shake their hands." (Male opinion leader, rural community)
>
> "The community shows interest in persons with disabilities, even though some of them cannot do much by themselves. Some participate in farming activities, while others learn trades like cobbling, welding, carpentry, or tailoring. However, before joining such trades, they often have to farm to earn money to support their training. Unfortunately, there are still negative perceptions about their condition. Sometimes they greet people with a handshake, but some refuse to accept it. If everyone treated them well, they would be much happier in life" (Male Key Informant, Tolon-Gbrumani).

On the contrary, a participant narrated how some beneficiaries of CBE with disabilities had progressed and transitioned into formal education and tailoring trade:

> "The community relates well with persons with disabilities, understanding it as a natural condition. Some who are not psychologically impaired have attended the CBE program and transitioned to formal education. For example, one individual is now a tailor in Tamale and doing economically well, while another is currently in Tolon Senior High School studying General Arts. However, negative perceptions about their nature persist, which sometimes prevents others from giving them the attention they deserve" (Key Informant, Male, Tolon-Daboashei).

According to Gomda, Sulemana and Zakaria (2022), negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities makes it difficult for them to participate with non-disabled children in school. Children in these conditions are compelled to stay home or dropout from school because of the fear of being called a disgrace. The findings proposes that the Initiatives geared towards the proliferation of educational access for particularly people with disabled learners should go above incorporating disabled people into current educational system for the purpose of improving their access to education (Zickafoose et al., 2024).

Geographic barrier to work/skill development

Long distances travelled by participants between home and training centres or workspace posed a significant challenge. This made the time and energy expended on daily commutes substantial,

leading to constant fatigue and potentially reducing the physical strength to remain effective at work. This was stated by a 19-year-old participant who travels on foot daily to his farm:

> "Moving from the house to the farm takes approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, and I have to walk on foot. This makes me tired before even starting work" (AEP Beneficiary, Female, 19 years, Tolon-Daboashei).

This finding was confirmed by another person who was learning a trade as a mechanic:

> "From where I live to the training center is a 1 hour and 30-minute walk. I have no choice but to make this journey daily until I complete my training to become a master. If there were a mechanic shop in my community, I would not have to walk such a distance" (AEP Beneficiary, Male, 24 years, Kumbungu-Cheshegu).

The physical and mental strains associated with long commutes could negatively affect participants' motivation and persistence in pursuing their skill development journey. A female participant expressed the frustration she encounters daily getting to work to learn tailoring skills:

> "The place where I learn my skill is very far from my home. I have to walk a long distance every day, which is tiring and sometimes discouraging" (AEP Beneficiary, Female, Tailoring).

For participants, this may mean that their economic mobility could be hindered because they may not be frequently able to commute to their place of apprenticeship to acquire important employable skills. Secondly, inherent in their accounts of daily commute of at least an hour shows their resilience in finding an alternative pathway to address their economic problems. Females are likely to experience disproportionate effect as compared to their male counterparts, they may not have the need strength to walk daily to work. This could subsequently have implications for economic empowerment for women and gender equality.

Occupational health risks

Furthermore, the findings point to stark occupation health and risk disparities faced by participants. Those who are involved in apprenticeships that are far from their homes and require long walks and scrap businesses may be significantly exposed to higher illness, injuries and health problems

> "The distance is a challenge. It affects my feet and sometimes my health" (Female AEP Beneficiary, Tolon-Daboashei, 32 years).

> "This work has a lot of risk factors. You can get hurt when separating metals with a hammer and chisel. Sometimes pieces of metal hit you, or you are involved in accidents on the busy roads" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Agbogbloshi).

> "We inhale toxic smoke trying to remove parts of metals. The stress of the job is high, as we travel long distances in search of metals and customers" (Male AEP Beneficiary, Agbogbloshi).

Thus, AEP beneficiaries, because of the absence of better paying jobs that is suitable to their skills, must rely on menial low paying work activities to survive. Yet, these jobs pose physical strains and greater health risks to them.

Lack of access to basic social amenities

Despite supports participants received from their relational networks, beneficiaries who migrated to urban areas in northern and southern Ghana faced the problem of getting access to the basic social amenities such as water, and electricity. These were reported among participants in both northern and southern Ghana:

> "[In the city here in Agbogbloshie, we have network support, such as community-based assistance, where one is supported with a kiosk as a sleeping place as a newcomer]…However, access to water and electricity is very challenging" (AEP Beneficiary, Agbogbloshie).

> "[In the city here, we have network support that is mainly community-based; you are given a sleeping place, which in many cases is a kiosk]…but access to water is a challenge" (AEP Beneficiary, Tolon).

Yet, a participant who migrated from his community to an urban area in southern Ghana complained about problematic access to accommodation because of high cost of rest. He explained that some migrants like him end up sleeping on the streets because of the increased cost of rents:

> "Accommodation is a major issue in the city due to high rental costs. Some migrants end up sleeping on the streets." (Male AEP beneficiary from a rural community)

Other problems faced by participants included lack of security, inability to find meaningful employment and language barriers:

> "…lack of security, and inadequate network support make it hard to settle in the city and find meaningful work." (AEP beneficiary, Male, rural community)

> "Language barriers, especially with Twi, make it difficult to integrate and find work in cities like Accra or Kumasi." (AEP beneficiary, Male, rural community)

3.4 Stories of change from AEP beneficiaries

Case studies from the most significant stories of change interviews, illustrate that accelerated education programmes in Northern Ghana have transformative effects by addressing educational disparities through culturally pertinent literacy and numeracy instruction in indigenous languages, facilitating the transition of marginalised individuals such as Rakiya and Yakubu into formal education or vocational avenues. occupational training in weaving, tailoring, and masonry promotes economic empowerment, shown by Lamnatu's weaving firm and Sayibu's masonry endeavours; but, gender-specific occupational trajectories (e.g., women in hairdressing, males in building) may perpetuate conventional labour standards. Notwithstanding their achievements, systemic obstacles endure including financial limitations which hinder business expansion and educational progression (e.g., Martha's withdrawal), while occupational risks (e.g., Yakubu's scrap labour, Martha's chemical exposure) and infrastructural inadequacies (e.g., Lamnatu's absence of workspace) underscore deficiencies in safety and resource availability. The cultural significance of AEPs and their emphasis on locally applicable skills guarantee practicality; nonetheless, their sustainability depends on community-driven multiplier effects, such as Lamnatu teaching apprentices and fulfilling hopes for further education, shown by Yakubu's accounting ambitions. Nonetheless, AEPs alone cannot address structural challenges such as underfunded educational institutions or rural poverty, highlighting the need for comprehensive policy changes to enhance their localised effects.

Case 1: From no educational prospects to becoming a skilled artisan

Rakiya Adam is from Kpalgon, a small community in the Tolon District of Ghana's Northern Region. As the eldest child in her family, Rakiya carried the dual burden of farm work and household chores, which initially denied her access to formal education. Her life took a pivotal turn with the introduction of the School for Life program in her community, an Accelerated Education Program (AEP) designed to provide foundational learning for marginalized children.

Life before joining the AEP

Before enrolling in the School for Life program, Rakiya had no formal education and was unable to read or write. Her daily routine revolved around fulfilling household responsibilities, leaving little room for personal or educational growth. The idea of attending school seemed like an unattainable dream until her parents decided to enroll her in the program.

Experience during the AEP

The School for Life program introduced Rakiya to education in her native Dagbani language, enabling her to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to academic learning, the program emphasized vocational training, instilling in Rakiya valuable skills for self-reliance. With the support of the program, Rakiya transitioned into formal education, joining Primary 3. However, financial challenges forced her to drop out in Primary 6. Despite this setback, the foundational skills and confidence she gained through the program became the building blocks of her future endeavors.

Life after completing the AEP

Today, Rakiya has established herself as a skilled Northern kente fabric weaver, a craft she learned during her time in the program. Beyond vocational skills, the program imparted life lessons that continue to guide her, including time management, communication, personal hygiene, and discipline.

Impact of the AEP on Rakiya's Life

1. Educational achievements:
    - Gained literacy and numeracy skills that enabled her to transition to formal education.
    - Developed a passion for learning that remains with her to this day.
2. Vocational empowerment:
    - Acquired weaving skills, allowing her to become financially independent.
    - Uses her craft to support herself and contribute to her community's cultural heritage.
3. Life skills development:
    - Improved time management and problem-solving abilities.
    - Learned the importance of socialization and effective communication.

Challenges and aspirations

Rakiya's journey is not without its challenges. She faces financial constraints that make it difficult to expand her weaving business, high costs of materials, and exposure to harsh weather conditions that hinder her productivity. Despite these obstacles, Rakiya remains determined to professionalize her craft. She dreams of securing financial support to enhance her skills, invest in modern equipment, and scale her business. Rakiya's story exemplifies the transformative power of Accelerated Education Programs in changing lives and fostering resilience. From a young girl with no educational prospects to a skilled artisan and role model in her community, Rakiya's journey highlights the importance of providing accessible educational opportunities to marginalized populations.

Case 2: Yakubu Abdulai – From Rural Ghana to Urban Aspirations

Yakubu Abdulai grew up in Yishei, a small farming community in northern Ghana. Despite financial challenges that threatened his educational progress, he persevered with the support of the

Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program. In 2023, Yakubu completed senior high school (SHS) and relocated to Accra to seek work and support his aspirations.

Life before joining the AEP

As a child, Yakubu faced significant financial hardships in his farming community. The lack of educational resources and support limited his academic opportunities and nearly derailed his aspirations. Education seemed like a distant dream until the CBE program was introduced in his community, providing him with a lifeline.

Experience during the AEP

Through the CBE program, Yakubu gained foundational literacy and numeracy skills, including sentence construction in English and Dagbani. The program also deepened his cultural knowledge of Dagbani history and traditions. These skills laid the groundwork for Yakubu to transition into formal schooling and pursue higher education.

Life after completing the AEP

With the foundation provided by the AEP, Yakubu successfully completed SHS and moved to Accra, where he now works in the scrap business and engages in construction projects. These ventures enable him to support his family back in Yishei while saving money to achieve his ultimate dream of becoming an accountant.

Impact of the AEP on Yakubu's Life

1. Educational Outcomes:
    - Acquired literacy and numeracy skills, essential for his transition into and success in SHS.
2. Vocational Empowerment:
    - Uses his knowledge to identify and trade in high-quality scrap materials, improving his business outcomes.
3. Life Skills Development:
    - Learned financial management, customer service, and problem-solving skills that have proven invaluable in his work and daily life.

Challenges and aspirations

Yakubu faces physical risks in his scrap and construction work and struggles with financial instability. Despite these challenges, he remains determined to pursue higher education and achieve his dream of becoming an accountant.

Case 3: Martha Nazeig – Building a Future in Hairdressing

Martha Nazeig is a 22-year-old from Datuku in the Talensi District. Her educational journey began through a Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program, which enabled her to transition into formal schooling. However, financial constraints forced her to drop out, redirecting her path toward vocational training.

Life before joining the AEP

Growing up in a financially struggling household, Martha's access to education was limited. Household responsibilities and financial pressures made formal schooling seem unattainable until the CBE program opened doors for her.

Experience during the AEP

The CBE program equipped Martha with essential literacy and numeracy skills in her native language, Talen. Beyond academics, the program enhanced her time management, organizational skills, and ability to multitask, enabling her to balance education with household responsibilities.

Life after completing the AEP

After leaving formal education due to financial difficulties, Martha shifted her focus to vocational training. She is now a dedicated hairdressing apprentice, learning the craft and aspiring to establish herself as a professional hairdresser and trainer.

Impact of the AEP on Martha's Life

1. Educational outcomes:
    - Learned to read and write, facilitating her initial transition into formal education.
2. Vocational empowerment:
    - Developed adaptability, allowing her to pivot to a sustainable career path when formal schooling became unsustainable.
3. Life skills development:
    - Improved time management and multitasking abilities, essential for managing her apprenticeship and personal responsibilities.

Challenges and aspirations

Martha faces limited financial resources and health risks from exposure to chemicals in her apprenticeship. Despite these obstacles, she dreams of becoming a professional hairdresser with her own salon, where she can also train others in the craft.

Yakubu and Martha's stories highlight the transformative impact of Accelerated Education Programs. By addressing educational gaps and fostering vocational skills, these programs empower individuals to overcome challenges and pursue their aspirations. Both cases underscore the importance of targeted interventions to create sustainable change in marginalized communities.

Case 4: Lamnatu Salifu – Weaving her way to empowerment

Lamnatu Salifu, a determined young woman from Napagyili, began her educational journey through the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program. However, due to family responsibilities and financial constraints, she was unable to transition into formal schooling. Instead, she turned to weaving—a skill she learned from her aunt—which eventually became her primary livelihood.

AEP contribution

The CBE program played a pivotal role in shaping Lamnatu's personal and professional development:

1. Foundational skills
    - Equipped her with essential literacy and numeracy skills in Dagbanli, enabling her to manage her weaving business effectively.
2. Entrepreneurial drive
    - Instilled a sense of ambition and inspired her to view weaving not just as a skill but as a sustainable business opportunity.

3. Business acumen
    - Improved her customer relations and financial management skills, which have been critical in growing her weaving enterprise.

Status and aspirations

Today, Lamnatu is a thriving entrepreneur, running her own weaving business and training three apprentices. Despite limited resources, she is determined to:

- Establish a dedicated workspace: Create a professional environment for her weaving activities.
- Expand training opportunities: Increase her capacity to train more apprentices, especially young women in her community.
- Enhance business growth: Scale her operations to meet growing demand and improve her financial stability.

Impact of AEP on Lamnatu's Life

1. Economic empowerment
    - The CBE program equipped Lamnatu with the skills and confidence to become financially independent through weaving.
2. Entrepreneurial mentorship:
    - Her success has made her a mentor and role model, inspiring others in her community to pursue vocational skills and entrepreneurship.
3. Community contribution:
    - By training apprentices, Lamnatu is passing on her skills, creating opportunities for others, and contributing to the local economy.

Challenges and resilience

While Lamnatu faces challenges such as limited access to resources and a lack of professional workspace, her determination and entrepreneurial spirit continue to drive her forward. She exemplifies how programs like CBE can transform lives, fostering resilience and creating pathways for sustained growth and impact.

Lamnatu Salifu's journey underscores the transformative potential of Accelerated Education Programs. Through foundational education and vocational inspiration, she has transitioned from a young girl constrained by responsibilities to a community leader empowering other through her craft.

Case 5: Nimatu Alhassan – Stitching a Future Through Tailoring

Nimatu Alhassan, a resilient young woman from Daboashei, started her educational journey through the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program. Although she transitioned into formal school, financial difficulties forced her to drop out in Primary 3. Despite these setbacks, Nimatu's determination to succeed has shaped her path forward.

The CBE program provided Nimatu with critical support that continues to influence her personal and professional growth:

1. Inclusive learning environment

    - Introduced foundational literacy and numeracy skills using Dagbanli, her native language.
2. Confidence building
    - Boosted her self-esteem and improved her academic performance during her time in formal education.
3. Life skills development
    - Cultivated multitasking abilities and resilience, which have proven essential in her tailoring journey.

Status and aspirations

Nimatu is currently training as a tailor, using her skills to design and create clothing for her family and community. Her long-term goals include:

- Opening a fashion shop: Establishing her own tailoring business to serve her community and beyond.
- Expanding her skills: Enhancing her expertise in advanced tailoring techniques and design.

While she faces challenges such as limited resources and working in open spaces, her aspirations drive her perseverance and dedication.

Impact of AEP on Nimatu's Life

1. Career inspiration
    - The CBE program laid the foundation for her passion and skill in tailoring.
2. Life skills application
    - Nimatu applies resilience and multitasking daily in managing her training and responsibilities.
3. Empowerment
    - Gained the confidence to pursue a vocational career, overcoming societal and financial barriers.

Case 6: Sayibu Adam – Building a path through masonry and transport

Sayibu Adam, from Yishei, faced economic challenges that required him to prioritize farm work over education, leading to his dropout in Grade 5. However, the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program offered him a second chance to acquire foundational skills and improve his prospects.

Life before AEP

Growing up in a farming community, Sayibu's education was interrupted due to economic pressures, forcing him to work on family farms.

AEP contribution

The CBE program became a turning point in Sayibu's life, equipping him with:

1. Literacy and numeracy skills
    - Gained the ability to read, write, and perform basic calculations, enabling him to navigate various professional settings.
2. Vocational readiness

- Enhanced his problem-solving and practical skills, preparing him for diverse economic activities.

3. Personal growth
    - Instilled confidence and a proactive attitude towards learning and work.

Current status and aspirations

Sayibu now works as a mason and operates a tricycle transport service, contributing to his family's financial stability. His aspirations include:

- Professional growth: Becoming a highly skilled mason with his own construction team.
- Community support: Expanding his tricycle transport business to serve more people in his community.

Impact of AEP on Sayibu's Life

1. Economic empowerment
    - The skills gained from the program helped him transition into gainful employment.
2. Multifaceted career path:
    - AEP prepared him for diverse roles in masonry and transport, showcasing the program's versatility.
3. Resilience and independence:
    - Sayibu has become a role model in his community, demonstrating how education and determination can change lives.

Both Nimatu and Sayibu exemplify the transformative power of Accelerated Education Programs. By equipping individuals with foundational skills, confidence, and resilience, these programs enable marginalized individuals to overcome challenges, pursue meaningful careers, and contribute to their communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Conclusion

This research highlights the transformational potential of Accelerated Education Programs (AEPs) in mitigating educational gaps and promoting socio-economic empowerment in marginalised areas in Ghana. By imparting essential literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills in indigenous languages, AEPs have facilitated beneficiaries' transfer into formal schooling or the pursuit of economic endeavours, thereby disrupting cycles of intergenerational poverty. For example, AEPs have markedly enhanced female enrolment in school. This could confront conventional gender practices and signifies progress towards gender parity. The programme's emphasis on native language training has enhanced retention and fundamental learning results. Also, vocational training in tailoring, hairdressing, and masonry has provided individuals with income-generating skills, promoting financial autonomy. Case examples, like Rakiya's weaving business and Sayibu's masonry labour, illustrate how AEPs stimulate entrepreneurship and community contributions.

Notwithstanding these benefits, the study uncovers systemic problems that limit the long-term effectiveness of many initiatives, requiring rigorous evaluation and focused solutions. Gendered cultural norms endure, including early marriage, unequal domestic responsibilities imposed on females, and parental hesitance to invest in daughters' education (seen as "benefiting another family") hinder female advancement beyond elementary school. Although prioritised, boys have economic constraints that compel them to travel or seek employment, so jeopardising their educational continuity. Although inexpensive vocations such as agriculture and tailoring are attainable, they provide restricted economic advancement. Occupational health hazards (e.g., chemical exposure in hairdressing, accidents in scrap work) and cost obstacles to higher training (e.g., sewing machines) sustain precarious livelihoods. Support from NGOs and the community declines at elevated educational levels, resulting in significant dropout rates due to financial difficulties exemplifies the need for ongoing financing and guidance.

Despite these socioeconomic hurdles faced by beneficiaries, the research revealed essential facilitators of educational and economic advancement for AEP recipients, highlighting the need of multi-stakeholder engagement. Families offered essential support via financial assistance, educational supplies (such as uniforms and books), and an emphasis on education, while NGOs and government initiatives like CAMFED enhanced these contributions with resources and mentoring. Communities enhanced engagement by tracking attendance and promoting local projects. Emotional support from families, classmates, and leaders facilitated enrolment and transitions to formal school or vocational training. Migrants obtained homes via ethnic and community networks, whilst rural recipients used communal solidarity for agricultural assistance. Nonetheless, sustainability gaps arose when early assistance from NGOs and communities diminished at elevated educational tiers, resulting in increased dependence on families. The facilitators emphasised the essential function of collaborative ecosystems in fostering progress, while ongoing vulnerabilities emphasised the need for enduring, scalable interventions beyond initial phases. The facilitators emphasised the significance of multi-stakeholder engagement (families, NGOs, communities) in fostering conducive settings for educational and economic progress. Nonetheless, dependence on family and communal networks exposed weaknesses, especially in maintaining support beyond initial phases.

While AEPs have clearly benefited marginalised people, their influence is limited by deep structural disparities. The programs' success is dependent on tackling not just educational inequalities, but also the socioeconomic and cultural environments that perpetuate disadvantage. Policymakers can magnify AEPs' transformational potential by taking a multi-sectoral strategy that includes education, infrastructure development, and gender justice, ensuring that beneficiaries gain long-term empowerment rather than ephemeral resilience. Finally, the research advocates for reframing AEPs as catalysts within a wider framework of inclusive development, in which education is a right rather than a luxury based on circumstance.

4.1 Policy and practice recommendations

The findings of this study highlight critical areas for improving the design, implementation, and impact of AEPs. To address the challenges identified and maximize their potential to transform lives, a number of actionable recommendations are made. These are aimed at enhancing program sustainability, promoting equity and inclusion, fostering economic empowerment, and ensuring long-term systemic integration. Through collaborative efforts involving governments, communities, development partners, and the private sector, these strategies can help to ensure that AEPs achieve greater effectiveness and reach:

1. To ensure the sustainability and scalability of AEPs, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and development partners should increase funding and resource allocation. These funds should focus on improving infrastructure, providing teaching and learning materials, and supporting vocational training centers. Financial support mechanisms, such as scholarships or grants, should also be introduced to alleviate the financial constraints faced by beneficiaries, enabling more participants to transition successfully into formal education or the workforce.
2. AEPs must integrate gender-sensitive strategies to address the unique challenges faced by girls and women, including teenage pregnancy and early marriage, harmful social norms and behaviours, and the inequitable distribution of household responsibilities. Community-based interventions should aim to shift cultural attitudes towards stereotyped gender roles, emphasizing instead the value of girls' education and empowerment. Additionally, targeted support for people with disabilities (PWD) should be prioritized, including more accessible learning environments, teacher training, specialized resources, and advocacy campaigns to combat stigma, exclusion and discrimination.
3. Vocational training programmes within AEPs should be aligned with local market demands to ensure that beneficiaries acquire skills relevant to available economic opportunities in their communities. Partnerships with local industries, businesses, and agricultural initiatives can create pathways for internships, apprenticeships, and employment. Establishing job placement services and entrepreneurship training will further support graduates in achieving economic independence. The importance of challenging gender stereotypes in the vocational skills which young women and men are trained should be considered.
4. Community involvement is critical to the success of AEPs. Community leaders, parents, and local organizations should be actively engaged in promoting the importance of education for all and supporting beneficiaries. Creating mentorship programs and support networks within communities can encourage retention and provide additional resources for learners. Additionally, empowering communities to participate in decision-making processes regarding program implementation will enhance ownership of AEPs and their sustainability.
5. Governments should integrate AEPs into their broader national education frameworks to ensure consistency, accountability, and long-term impact. This includes adopting policies that recognize AEP qualifications to allow smooth transitions into formal education or vocational pathways. Standardized curriculum frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms should be established to maintain AEP effectiveness and relevance.
6. Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems for AEPs is essential for tracking progress, identifying gaps, and making data-driven improvements. Regular assessments should evaluate educational outcomes, transitions, and economic empowerment of different beneficiary population groups. Performance indicators that are gender sensitive and transformative will enable GESI outcomes and outputs to be more

fully assessed. Leveraging technology for data collection and analysis can enhance the efficiency and accuracy of MEL systems, enabling more informed decision-making.

7. Collaboration with private sector entities can provide innovative solutions and resources to enhance AEP effectiveness. Public-private partnerships can contribute to infrastructure development, digital literacy programs, and financial support for beneficiaries. These partnerships should also focus on fostering entrepreneurship and creating equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities for program graduates.
8. Efforts should be made to broaden the reach of AEPs to underserved and remote areas where educational disparities and GESI challenges are most pronounced. Mobile learning centres, digital tools, and flexible schedules can help overcome geographic and logistical barriers, ensuring that marginalized and excluded populations have access to quality education and skills training leading to expanded educational and vocational opportunities.

By implementing these recommendations, AEPs can be optimized to achieve their full potential, empowering individuals with diverse social identities, transforming communities, and contributing to sustainable development across Ghana and beyond.

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Annexes

Districts location of migrants

A	Accra Metro	1	Abgobgloshi
C	Tamale Metro	1	Tamale
D	Bolgatanga Metro	1	Bolgatanga

Districts of special needs schools and technical schools

A	Tamale Metro	Tamale
B	Bolgatanga Metro	Bolgatanga

Districts for the telephone survey

A	Tolon	4	
B	Kumbungu	4	
C	Mamprugu Moagduri	4	
D	Talensi	4	
E	Saboba		
F	Yendi	4	
G	Gushiegu	4	
H	Karaga	4	

Data collection tools

SN	Instrument	Description
School-level instruments		
1.	Instrument 1:	School Checklist technical schools and special needs schools
2.	Instrument 2:	Headteacher/house masters/mistresses in the Technical/tertiary students
3.	Instrument 3:	Interview with AEP Graduates in the Technical/tertiary students
4.	Instrument 4:	Interview with Non-AEP Students in the Technical/tertiary students
5.	Instrument 5:	FGD Guide for AEP Graduates in the Technical/tertiary students
6.	Instrument 6B:	SEGRA test with technical schools
7.	Instrument 10:	Stories of Change Protocol (Case Study) for migrants, technical students, and special needs children
Community-level instruments		
8.	Instrument 7:	Interview with AEP Graduates migrants in the urban areas
9.	Instrument 8:	Interview guide for key informant interviews
10.	Instrument 9:	Survey Instrument for migrants

Targets achieved

Instruments	Expected	Abgobgloshi	Tamale	Bolgatanga
School-based Instruments				
Instrument 1: School Checklist technical schools and special needs schools	4 (1 per school)		2	2
Instrument 2: Headteacher/house masters/mistresses in the Technical/tertiary students	4 (1 per school)		2	2
Instrument 3: Interview with AEP Graduates in the Technical/tertiary students	20 (form 1 to final year)		10	10
Instrument 4: Interview with Non-AEP Students in the Technical/tertiary students	15 (form 1 to final year)		5	5
Instrument 5: FGD Guide for AEP Graduates in the Technical/tertiary students	20 (2-per school) 5 schools	10	2	2
Instrument 6B: SEGRA test with Technical schools	30 (form one to final year)		15	15
Instrument 10: Stories of Change Protocol (Case Study) for migrants, technical students, and special needs children	20 (form one to final year)	10	5	5
Community-based Instruments (migrants)				
Instrument 7: Interview with AEP Graduates migrants in the urban areas	20 (10-per location)	20	20	
Instrument 8: Interview guide for key informant interviews	15 (5-per location)	5	5	5
Instrument 9: Survey Instrument for migrants	50 (20-per community) aep and non aep	20	20	10