



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

Date: 11th – 12th June 2024

Venue: La Palm Royal Beach Hotel, Accra, Ghana

Time: 8:30 AM



Background

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

Objective of high-level Conference

The two-day high-level Conference aims to provide a platform for stakeholders from West Africa to share best practices, present research findings, and explore synergies related to Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs). The high-level meeting seeks to foster dialogue, collaboration, and mutual learning among governments, non-governmental organizations, education researchers, and development partners, driving collective action towards ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all children in West Africa.

Specifically, the objectives of the high-level conference are to:

1. Foster full investment, ownership and enhanced partnerships for AEP integration. The high-level meeting aims to cultivate complete investment and ownership among stakeholders to fully integrate Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) into existing basic education systems across participating countries. This endeavour is crucial for ensuring that out-of-school children (OOSC) are not only reached but are also provided with quality educational opportunities that align with national education standards and goals.
2. The sharing of key evidence on the growing numbers of out of school children, lack of sustained investment and the cost of solving the OOSC challenge in West Africa along with the cost of not addressing the problem will be explored.
3. Countries will share legislative instruments, policies and curricula developed to support AEP programming across West Africa: The high-level meeting seeks to create a dynamic platform for the exchange of innovative curricula, effective policies, and strategic approaches from across West Africa. This collaborative effort is designed to enhance learning and adoption of best practices in addressing the challenges faced by OOSC, promoting regional coherence in educational interventions. Government’s will have a platform to share how they have engaged civil society and led the way in implementation in some contexts including lessons from Burkina Faso and Mali.

Key Themes

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

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this high-level meeting are:

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

Participants

The meeting will convene government representatives, education ministers, policymakers, international and Education Innovators/ NGOs, researchers, education practitioners, donors, and community leaders from West Africa and beyond.

Conclusion

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

1.0 Key goals of the High-level Conference

1. To plan for action and support for scaling up AEP programming to ensure equitable and quality learning for every child.
2. To share existing and tested AEP legislation, policies, strategies, and curriculum from around west Africa
3. To share best practices regarding Mainstreaming and scaling up AEP models in different areas of West Africa.
4. Development of a partnership and investment plan for Accelerated Education in West Africa

DAY 1 : Presenting the Evidence for Action and Investment

Time	Activity	Responsible person
8.30am - 9.00am	Arrival and registration	Associates for Change (AFC)
9:00am - 9:10am	Opening Prayers	Christian, Muslim, Baha'i Prayers
9:10am - 9:25am	Introduction of the participants and program objectives	Dr. James Natia Adam (MC)
9:25am - 9:35am	Welcome address, and Introduction of Chairperson	Dr. Catherine A Pinkrah, Executive Director of Complementary Education Agency (CEA)
9:35am - 9:45am	Chairman's Opening Remarks	Professor Atintono, Principal of Accra College of Education
9.45- 10:00am	Overview of the research, outcomes to the conference, key findings across West Africa	Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford, Director of Associates for Change
10:00 - 10:30am	<p>Expectations and Opening remarks from key invitees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa Union Representative (Dr. Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education) • Global Partnership for Education (GPE) representative • IDRC Regional Rep (Patrick Walugembe) • Head of Development Assistance, Global Affairs Canada, Canadian High Commission Ghana • Representative from the Inter- agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) / Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) • UNESCO KIX Africa 19 Hub Representative, Dr. Victoria Kisaakye Kanobe • CEO Ministry of Education, Sierra Leone (Prof. Kanu) 	MC: Dr. James, AFC Lead Researcher Ghana

Time	Activity	Responsible person
10:30am- 10:45am	Introduction of the Keynote speaker Keynote Speech by Minister of Education, Ghana Government	Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum (Keynote Speaker)
10:45am- 10:55am	Chairman's Closing remarks	Professor Atintono, Chairman
11:00am - 11:20am	Tea Break	
11:20am- 12:20am	<p>Presentation on evidence from Out of School children and Accelerated education and girls' models in West Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross country findings on scaling up AEPs • Impact and effectiveness AEPs on foundation learning • Impact and effectiveness of AEPs in Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) • Cost effectiveness findings of AEPs in West Africa <p>Respondents: Prof. Gunu (University for Development Studies and Dr John Bosco (Bolgatanga) Technical University</p>	<p>Consortium lead researchers</p> <p>Dr. James Natia Adam, AFC, Ghana</p> <p>Madam Fatu/Diana, Dalan Development Consultulants, Sierra Leone</p> <p>Dr. Adedeji/ Bahago, CSEA Nigeria</p>
12:20am- 12:50am	Question and answers open consultation	Dr. Robert Sauder
1:00pm -2:00pm	Lunch	Team
2:15pm - 2:35pm	<p>Short Presentations from each country</p> <p>Ghana: The Institutional Arrangements for Complementary Education Agency (CEA) in Ghana</p> <p>Act of Parliament to establish CEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on Complementary Basic Education • Legislative instruments for CEA, • Current Government vision, Partnerships and investments in CBE) 	Complementary Education Agency (CEA), Ghana
2:35pm -2:55pm	<p>Presentation by Sierra Leone Delegation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The OOSC Landscape in Sierra Leone and strategies for addressing the phenomenon b. Government's plan for scaling AEPs (the Qatar Fund) lessons from Sierra Leone...the investment road map. c. Guidelines for partnering with NGOs d. Partnership Modalities with government and NGOs' to support scaling of AEP programmes. 	<p>Diana Ofori Owusu (Dalan Consultants)</p> <p>Prof. Yatta Kanu (Chief Education Officer of MBSSE), Sierra Leone!</p> <p>Representative from Save the Children</p>

Time	Activity	Responsible person
2:55pm – 3:20pm	Presentation by Nigeria Delegation (Effectiveness of AEPs and Education in Emergency) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. The OOSC landscape in Nigeria (Challenges, and progress) (MoE / UBEC) f. Working with IDP populations in Borno state g. Experience in implementing AEP curriculum: (curriculum development, certification, implementation science) (Dr Chima) h. Impact and cost effectiveness of AEPs in Conflict Environment (CSEA) 	Dr. Chima (Basic Education Division and Borno State representatives)
3.20 pm-3.50pm	Presentation by Burkina Faso Delegation (education in Emergency) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in scaling up Speed school models in Burkina • Working with AEPs in emergency situations • Transition from AEP to formal primary or JHS education • Government framework for investment and support • Looking at the teacher and school transition perspective 	Ministry of Education Rep from Burkina Faso Catherine Kabore (former permanent secretary of Accelerated Schooling Strategy)
3:20pm - 3:50pm	Open consultation on presentations--key lessons learned	Dr. James (MC) and Dr. Yaro Yacouba (CERFODES)
3:50pm - 4:00pm	Video film on Nigeria's Basic Education Alternative pathway (BESAP) CEA film on	Louisa Owusu Adjei (Associates for Change) Philip Deh (CEA)
4:00pm -4:30pm	The INEE and Accelerated Education Working Group Experience and tooling up to support scale UNESCO KIX Africa 19 Hub: Teacher Professional Development in Emergency Contexts: A Small Sample Exploratory Analysis for Five East African Countries on TPD Models	INEE/AEWG Representative (Mali) Dr. Wodon Quentin, Director, UNESCO IICBA & Dr. Victoria Kisaakye Kanobe, UNESCO KIX Africa 19 Hub Focal Point
4:30pm – 5:15pm	Panel discussion with education innovators from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigeria (Horn of Hope, Kanem Borno) • Ghana (School for Life, GILLBT and Afrikids) • Sierra Leone (Save the Children) • Burkina Faso (Catherine/ Dr Yaro Accelerated Education Programme) • Mali (Stromme Foundation) 	Justice Agyei- Quartey, Accelerated Education Programme (AEP expert)

Time	Activity	Responsible person
	Thematic areas to cover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned in AEP programming which reduces the out of school challenges. • Transition back to the formal education system • Challenges in the last 4 years in sustaining and scaling and transition learners/mainstreaming processes for integration... 	
5.30pm	Closing session—Concluding remarks Press conference (6 PM) representatives from each country delegation (lobby of hotel)	Dr. James Natia Adam (MC) Mr. Patrick Twumasi (CEA)

DAY 2 : The Investment Experience and Framework for scaling AEPs and Girls Models in West Africa

Time	Activity	Responsible person
8:00am – 9:00am	Arrival and registration	Associates for Change (AfC)
9:00am – 9:10am	Opening prayer	Christian, Muslim, Baha’i Prayers
9:10am to 9.30am	Recap of day one key findings from Rapporteurs	(MC) Dr. James Natia Adam and Mr. Festus Ankrah
9:30am - 10:00 am	Objective and focus for day 2 West African Framework for scaling AEPs and girls’ models in development and fragile areas. (building on INEE framework)	Mr. Festus Ankrah and Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford
10:00– 10:30pm	Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of not investing in AEPs in West Africa – cases of Nigeria and Ghana (Dr. Adedeji and Mr. Bahago, CSEA) • Using evidence to drive scaling up in Africa (Patrick Walugembe IDRC Kenya) 	MC: Dr. James Natia Adam
10: 45 -12:00	Presentations by development partners and their experience in West Africa on reaching out of school children with AEP investment programmes	Dr. Catherine A. Pinkrah

Time	Activity	Responsible person
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO Hub 19: Reaching Out of School Children: An Investment Case, Dr. Wodon Quentin, Director UNESCO- IICBA (Virtually) • UNICEF experience in Ghana, West Africa • STAR Ghana Foundation • Jacobs Foundation • Innovator/Investor experiences from Nigeria (Professor Roni) • Ghana Education Outcomes Project (Hajia/GEOP) • Luminous Foundation experience 	CEA Executive Director
12:30– 1:00pm	<p>Questions and Answers/ Open Forum for starting the investment framework with pledges from donors and inputs to the communique</p> <p>How can federal and state governments increase their funding of AEPs?</p>	MC: Dr. James Natia Adam
1:00pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch break and Group photograph	Associates for Change
2:00pm – 3:00pm	<p>Working Group Sessions aimed at developing action plan for West Africa’s AEP scaling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships between Government and Education innovators • Development of Investment framework for scaling in AEPs • Improving scale of AEPs through community driven approaches • Research and innovation 	Madam Fatu Yumkella, Dalan Consult
3:00pm - 3:45pm	Presentations of Working Sessions/ outputs	MC: Madam Fatu Yumkella
3:45pm – 4:45pm	<p>Panel Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan of Action and Roadmap for the acceleration education efforts to reduce the out of school children in West Africa. • Generating Partnerships, Support and Investment plans for Countries in West Africa <p>Rep GPE/IDRC/KIX – Mr Patrick Rep CEA , Ghana Dr. Catherine A. Pinkrah Rep Sierra Leone (Prof Kanu) Rep Nigeria (Dr Chima) Rep Burkina Faso (Mr Marcel/ Dr Yaro) Rep Accelerated Education Working Group Rep from Civil Society and Education Innovators (Save the Children/Horn of Hope/ Afrikids/GNECC)</p>	Chair: Dr. Robert Sauder (NPSIA, Carleton University)

Time	Activity	Responsible person
4:45pm – 4:55pm	<p>Communique /Statement : on Addressing the Out of School Challenge in West Africa the role of Accelerated Education and Complementary Basic Education</p> <p>Closing Remarks – Chairpersons and others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Gunu (University for Development Studies) • GPE and IDRC reps • Professor Atintono (Chair) 	<p>Communique team (James/Festus/Fatu/Adedeji)</p> <p>Rose Bentsil-Quaye, PBME, Ministry of Education</p>
4:55pm – 5:00 pm	Vote of Thanks and Closing Prayer	Eunice Bodza, Conference Organizer
5:00pm – 6:30 pm	Cocktail and Networking Session	Hosts: Associates for Change and the Complementary Education Agency (CEA)

Profile of Speakers



Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum, Minister for Education (Ghana)

Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum is currently the Minister for Education in Ghana. He holds a Master's degree in Education Management from the University of La Verne, California, a PhD in Educational Policy, Planning and Administration from the University of Southern California, and a post graduate Diploma in Teaching from the Chapman University, City of Orange, California, USA. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Land Economy/ Business Administration with a major in Real Estate from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. He is the Member of Parliament for Bosomtwe Constituency in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. He is also part of the Advisory Board of the capacity Building Center School of Education and information studies, California, Los Angeles and High-Level Advisory Group for Mission 4.7.



Hon. Rev. John Ntim Fordjour, Deputy Minister for Education (Ghana)

Hon. Rev. John Ntim Fordjour is a politician, Mineral Engineer, entrepreneur, legislator and ordained Reverend Minister. He has a multifaceted background in Engineering, Mining, International Relations and Economic Policy. He's a second term Member of Parliament for Assin South Constituency in the Parliament of Ghana and serves as Deputy Minister for Education. Fordjour focuses on supporting the Minister to drive education transformation at the pre tertiary level with passion for foundational learning, STEM and inclusive education.



Mrs. Mamle Andrews, Chief Director, Ministry of Education, Ghana

Mrs. Andrews is the Chief Director of the Ministry of Education. She was appointed to this position in April 2023, bringing extensive experience from various governmental roles, including her previous work at the Ministry of Information. In her role, she is committed to promoting gender-sensitive policies within the education sector. She has been actively involved in initiatives aimed at increasing access to education for girls and women, addressing gender-based violence, and promoting safe school practices. Mrs. Andrews currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the UNESCO Ghana Commission.



Dr. Eric Nkansah, Director General of the Ghana Education Service (GES)

Dr. Eric Nkansah is the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service (GES). Over the years, he has worked as a subject teacher (both at Junior and Senior High Schools), banker, lecturer, and policy maker. He holds a PhD in Financial Economics from the University of Zululand, South Africa, a Master of Business Administration (Finance) from KNUST Business School, Ghana, and B. A (Hons) Economics from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Dr Eric Nkansah is passionate about educating and developing people and believes that educating the population is the fastest way to transform Ghana.



Dr. Catherine Appiah-Pinkrah, Executive Director of Complementary Education Agency (CEA), Ghana

Dr. Catherine Appiah-Pinkrah is the Executive Director of the Complementary Education Agency. She previously worked as Director of General Administration at Ghana's Ministry of Education. She holds a PhD in Business Administration and an MSc in Development Planning & Management from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana, and the University of Dortmund, Germany. Dr. Appiah-Pinkrah also served as the Director for Pre-Tertiary Education, where she developed and implemented national policies, including those on digital literacy and ICT education. She collaborates with private sector organizations, NGOs, CSOs, and development partners.



Prof. Samuel A. Atintono, Principal of Accra College of Education, Ghana

Prof. Atintono is a seasoned educator and researcher with nearly two decades of experience in teacher education, specializing in Ghanaian languages, linguistics, literacy, and culture. He has held significant administrative roles at the University of Education, Winneba, including Head of the Gur-Gonja Languages Education Department and Acting Dean of the Faculty of Ghanaian Languages. He holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Manchester and has received prestigious scholarships such as the Commonwealth Academic Scholarship and the Fulbright Visiting Research Scholar award. He has worked on developing and reviewing several of the Complementary Basic Education materials as part of the Government's CBE programme in Ghana.



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

Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah is the Director and Head of Cooperation at the High Commission of Canada in Ghana. She plays a key role in promoting Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which emphasizes gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. She previously worked as Director Education, Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection for Global Affairs Canada.



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

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



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

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



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

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



Dr. Quentin Wodon, Director, UNESCO IICBA

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



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

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



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

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



Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford, Director of Associates for Change and West Africa Team Leader on the KIX research on Accelerated Education and Girls Models in West Africa

Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford has over 30 years of experience in international development and education research in Asia and Africa. She holds a DPhil in International Education from the University of Sussex, where she focused on education, culture, and development in Northern Ghana, and a BA (Honours) in International Development from the University of Toronto. Renowned for her work on quality education, Accelerated Education, equity, and social inclusion, she has led numerous large-scale studies in Ghana and West Africa. She has collaborated closely with Ghana's Ministry of Education on budget analysis and consulted for various international organizations, including the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP, FCDO, Global Affairs Canada and USAID. Currently, she is the West Africa Team Lead on a KIX IDRC research project on Accelerated Education, co-leads a project on early learning in Ghana and Sierra Leone, and serves as the Director for Associates for Change.



Dr. James Natia Adam, Ghana Team Lead, Associates for Change

Dr. James is a distinguished development and educational researcher with over 15 years of experience in research and evaluating programs in emergency and conflict-affected regions. He has been working with Associates for Change over the last 3 years as their senior research lead. He holds a Ph.D. in Human Geography and Public Policy and a Supplementary Diploma in Gender Studies from the University of Bern, Switzerland, and an MPhil in Peace and Development Studies from the University of Cape Coast. Dr. James specializes in scalable educational interventions for marginalized communities and is the Senior Research Lead for two KIX IDRC-funded projects at Associates for Change, focusing on Accelerated Education and Early learning in West Africa. He has managed cross-country research and advised on initiatives like the Sahel Peace Initiative in Burkina Faso. His work, widely published and recognized, impacts educational reform in challenging environments.



Fatu Yumkella, Director of Dalan Consultants and Team Lead for Sierra Leone

Fatu Yumkella is the CEO of Dalan Development Consultants (DDC) Limited, Sierra Leone. Dalan engages in social science research, and monitoring and evaluation activities across all sectors, including the Education sector. Fatu is currently the Research Manager for Sierra Leone, for the KIX IDRC supported AEP research consortium led by Associates for Change (AFC, Ghana), investigating the effectiveness of selected AEP models in increasing access to quality education for girl



Diana Ofori-Owusu, MEL Lead in Sierra Leone

Diana Ofori-Owusu is a highly qualified sociologist with extensive experience in research, development, and educational management. Her expertise spans across multiple sectors, including policy analysis, program evaluation, and knowledge management. Her work has significantly contributed to educational improvements and policy formulation in Ghana and Sierra Leone. Madam Diana has worked as Principal Researcher, Centre for Economic and Social Policy Analysis (CESPA), Sierra Leone.



Prof. Yatta Kanu, Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Sierra Leone

Dr. Yatta Kanu is the Chief Education Officer in the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education in Sierra Leone. In this capacity, she leads the government's Out of School Children (OOSC) programme in Sierra Leone, including the Qatar-funded project with the mandate to prepare and enroll 120,000 out of school children in primary schools in Sierra Leone. Prior to this position, she was a full Professor of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and now Professor Emerita in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba in Canada for 25 years.



Dr. Olive Musa, Director of Non-Formal Education in the Directorate of Non-Formal Education, Sierra Leone

Dr. Olive Musa is the Director of Non-Formal Education in the Directorate of Non-Formal Education of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary (MBSSE) engaged in literacy and non-formal education targeting the out of school population. Olive is currently promoting access, enrolment retention, completion of out of school vulnerable children in communities and hard to reach areas to transition to formal and non-formal education in Sierra Leone.



Dr. Onyekwena is the Executive Director of CSEA. He holds a Ph.D in Economics from University of Portsmouth, UK, a Master of Science degree in Economics from University of Kent, UK, and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He also holds a certificate in Executive Education, Financial Inclusion from John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. His research interests include Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Trade, Global Economic Governance, Climate Change, and Financial Inclusion. Within these areas, he has authored various peer-reviewed publications and led several research projects. Dr. Onyekwena is a member of the steering committee of the West African Think Tank Network (WATTNet), a member of the African Policy Circle (APC), Global Economic Governance Africa (GEGAfrica) and Governance of Africa's Resources Programme (GARN) both in South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). He had worked as a part-time lecturer at Economics Department of University of Portsmouth..



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



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



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



Abubakar Tijjani currently serves as a special adviser to the Executive Governor of Borno State on Education. Prior to this role, he had a distinguished career as a two-time member of the Borno State House of Assembly and a two-time member of the Borno State Executive Council, where he held the position of Transport Commissioner. Dr. Tijjani holds a PhD in Defense and Security Studies from the Nigerian Defense Academy in Kaduna, as well as a master's degree in international relations from the University of Maiduguri..



Hassan Umar serves as a Senior Program Officer at the **Kanem Borno Human Development Association (KABHUDA)**. As a compassionate and seasoned education professional with over five years of experience in humanitarian response, education in emergencies, and community development, he has developed a proven track record of designing and implementing effective education programs for crisis-affected populations. He prioritizes inclusivity, accessibility, and child protection, ensuring that quality education is accessible to all, particularly in times of crisis. Hassan holds a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Maiduguri, Borno State, and is fluent in English, with proficiency in Kanuri, Shuwa, and Hausa.



Ransom Stephen holds a Bachelor of Education degree in English from Ignatius Ajuru University, Rivers State, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology from Jet Jos. As a senior clergy, Ransom Stephen has distinguished himself as a dedicated humanitarian, making significant contributions in the fields of education and peacebuilding. His passion for serving affected populations has taken him to Geneva and the USA, where he was invited as an international guest speaker on Education in Emergencies by the UNHCR in 2015. Additionally, he serves as a member of the Peace Board at the American University of Nigeria, Yola. As the Executive Director of HOHVIPAD, based in Yola with an office in Maiduguri, Ransom Stephen has made immense contributions to education in Borno and Adamawa states. Notably, he has successfully provided a platform for over 20,000 out-of-school children in Northeast Nigeria, with more than half of them mainstreamed into formal education.



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

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



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

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- School for Life-Complementary Basic Education Project (www.schoolforlifegh.org)
- Afrikids-Complementary Basic Education programme, and Strategic Approaches to Girls Education (STAGE) Project (www.afrikids.org)
- Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) (<https://www.gillbt.org/>)

Nigeria

- Kanem Borno Human Development Association (KABHUDA)- Accelerated Education Programme (www.kanemborno.org)
- Horn of Hope Vision for Peace and Community Development (HOHVIPAD) Accelerated Education Programme (www.hohvipad.org)

Sierra Leone

- Save the Children Sierra Leone, Accelerated Education Programme (<https://sierraleone.savethechildren.net/>)
 - Non formal Division; Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education.



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