Overall Summary

Building the Evidence Base for Accelerated Education

If the world is to realize SDG 4, it must accelerate progress. The UN Secretary General's annual Sustainable Development Goals Report (2017) found that while progress has been made, the pace is "insufficient and advancements have been uneven." Millions of children remain out of school, especially in countries affected by conflict and crisis and where educational systems are struggling with the implementation of universal education, growing populations and increasing displacement and migration. Accelerated Education (AE) could be a pivotal strategy in addressing the millions of children and youth who remain out of school, yet widespread variation exists in how AE programmes (AEPs) are planned, implemented and approached, with little or no overarching objectives, guidance, standards or indicators for what effective AE provision looks like, and critically, very little evidence as to how they impact learners and communities.

In response to this challenge the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG)[1] has made significant investment and efforts in developing a conceptual framework[2] for what constitutes good practice in AE. This conceptual framework aims to support the harmonisation of AEPs globally, ultimately leading to improvements in AEP quality and better outcomes for out of school children and youth who have missed out on significant amounts of education. Concurrent to this work, has been a focus on building the evidence base on what works and why within effective AEPs.

Several streams of work by the working group, and partners, has been undertaken towards this aim. In 2017, the AEWG developed a Learning Agenda for Accelerated Education. This agenda specifies key research questions to test various components of the conceptual framework and to help evaluate the value for money (VfM) of AEPs in chronically underfunded and/or fragile education systems with significant numbers of out of school children and youth. USAID, a key member of the AEWG, also supported completion of two separate reviews on AE. The first, exploring how accelerated learning is approached, found that the focus in AEPs is often on the acceleration of curriculum rather than engagement with accelerated learning theory; that withstanding, the review also noted that some of the key principles of accelerated learning theory—such as a learner-focussed pedagogy, flexible learning opportunities, attention to social emotional learning, increased time on task, and community engagement—were present in many AEPs. Another review, also commissioned by USAID, aimed to better understand the landscape of AE programming in conflict and crisis affected contexts through a systematic review of academic, grey literature and programme evaluations. The review found that the

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[1] The AEWG is currently led by UNHCR with representation from UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, Education and Conflict Crisis Network and War Child Holland

[2] All AEWG tools and guidance that make up the conceptual framework are available on the INEE website here

evidence base for AEP effectiveness is markedly thin. A fundamental challenge is that there is a very wide variety of what constitutes an AEP. This has made it difficult to carry out research and evaluations across multiple projects. It also means that there is significant variability in the intensity and quality of implementation of various components of AEPs. The review strongly recommended that standard programme guidance be developed, a task that has since been accomplished through the development of the conceptual framework and release of the AEWG tools and guidance. The review also noted that an evidence base using evaluation, research and tracer studies was also needed to help researchers, practitioners, and policy makers understand the effectiveness of AE. The AEWG is currently collaborating with the Peace Research Institute, Oslo[3] (PRIO) and the Norwegian Refugee Council, with funds from the Education in Emergencies Dubai Cares initiative[4], on a large study on the impact of AEPs in Uganda which will use tracer studies to track AE students after they have completed their education.

As well as directly undertaking research in collaboration with others, the AEWG sees itself as having a key role in managing knowledge that is being generated from current and upcoming AEP evaluations and research and supporting increased learning and collaboration. This panel is part of this role in supporting increased learning and collaboration and knowledge management. It brings together five organisations working in East and West Africa who have conducted applied research on key aspects of AE including looking at the critical issues of language and literacy; children's and youth perceptions of AE; utilising the AEWGs 10 Principles for Effective Practice to review and analyse a multi country programme and the bigger issues of sustainability, and overall impact of AEPs. Through this knowledge management and strengthened collaboration, the AEWG hope to ensure that the findings serve a formative purpose moving forward and the evidence generated by this research is applied to further development of the AEWG tools and guidance to ultimately provide an evidence base for AE as a pivotal strategy in addressing the millions of children and youth who remain out of school.

Presentation #1: Geneva Global- Jessica Lowden

Speed School – Moving an Accelerated Education Program towards sustainability and formal government adoption

The proposed presentation will be based on applied research focusing on the execution of Geneva Global's flagship education project, Speed School. It will touch on themes relevant to this year's topic of "Education for Sustainability". Speed School is an accelerated education

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[3] https://www.prio.org/ The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) conducts research on the conditions for peaceful relations between states, groups and people

[4] Dubai Cares committed at least 10% of all it's funding for education in emergencies to research at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. This research envelope titled, Evidence for Education in Emergencies (E-Cubed), focuses solely on generating evidence on effective preparedness and response strategies in education in emergencies

program that Geneva Global has implemented for seven years across sub-Saharan Africa on behalf of a group of philanthropic clients. GGI has successfully managed accelerated education programs in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Liberia in the past and is currently operating in Ethiopia and Uganda. The presentation will address various themes such as how Speed School strives to integrate with the formal school system and establish a foundation for eventual government adoption of the model. In it, I will also examine research and analysis conducted by an independent firm to assess the program's impacts as the basis of a broader discussion on global education and accelerated education in particular.

In the presentation, I will provide a brief overview of the Speed School program and method, explaining how Geneva Global has worked with local partners and government to achieve impressive learning outcomes and establish an effective model for government adoption through the innovative, student-centered, activity-based model. The presentation will be based on the first-hand experience I have as the Program Director, my colleagues' contributions, evidence based on internal monitoring and reporting, and external evaluations of the program primarily in Ethiopia and Uganda.

As a review of the learning outcomes, I will examine the different models that Speed School uses for regular assessment such as continuous in-classroom assessment, formal tests at the end of each learning module and placement exams for the transition into formal schools. I will also discuss how these results are used to form a basis for community outreach and engagement and also to engage government officials in discussions around the impact of the program. I will also touch on external longitudinal research that was conducted over seven years in Ethiopia and is ongoing in Uganda.

I will further delve into our engagement with the Ministry of Education officials whom we work with to tailor the curriculum so even the accelerated model, which condenses three years of primary education into ten months, is aligned with the formal school curriculum. Locally, partners also work closely with Ministry representatives to identify the government schools that students will attend upon completion of the accelerated program. These critical partnerships represent an ongoing dialogue that is used to modify and adapt the program to ensure that is relevant to the local context and both scalable and sustainable.

Finally, I will discuss the external and internal evaluations of the program and the programs' effectiveness in using accelerated learning as way to transition children into the formal school system. This will be based on research conducted by an external evaluation firms and internal staff. I will address how this research can be used to enhance the broader discussion on implementing accelerated education programs and aligning them with the formal school system.

***Presentation #2*: Save the Children- Jessica Oddy**

To gain a deeper understanding of children's experiences and perspectives of Accelerated Education Programmes and post-primary opportunities in protracted refugee/host community contexts in Uganda.

Uganda adheres to the guidelines of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1951 Refugee Convention and affords the same education rights to refugee children as Ugandan nationals. While this is something to be hailed, there are numerous barriers that keep children from accessing quality education. There has been little research that has asked children their thoughts and experiences of Alternative Education programming and even less around capturing their thoughts on transition, whether to post- AEP opportunities or between different levels. This is critical as globally, adolescents are amongst the most marginalised and the least likely to complete education in displacement (UNHCR:2016).

I shall present the findings from Save the Children's AEP research study (to be published in December 2018) that explores children, families, teachers and wider educational stakeholders perspectives on what supports or hinders education transition along their displacement journey. As numerous host community children also attend AEP centres, this study will also capture their thoughts and perspectives.

Research Methodology:

I shall also present in detail the research methodology, tools and training that were used in this report. The research study used a mixed methods approach, with a strong emphasis on child participatory research methods that included role play, drawing, storytelling and puppetry. I argue that participatory methods and techniques should be used when engaging adolescents, as these methods are familiar, less threatening and build trust and relationships quickly. Ensuring that findings are shared back to the group is also important part of the research design.

Education in displacement is experienced differently by men and women, boys and girls and the distinct roles, skills, activities, positions, and status of men and women in their families, communities, and institutions create gender-differentiated risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities in a humanitarian context. This was taken into consideration throughout the research design and data analysis process e.g selecting participants, facilitators for the Child Participatory research workshop, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. During the secondary data collection, we examined examine existing programmatic data (Registration, attendance and attainment) to understand (where possible) trends by gender/minority groups and children with special education needs.

This enables the development of a holistic and contextual portrayal of the diversified experiences of education in displacement, embedding participatory methods to avoid heavily adult-framed research (Denzin & Lincoln:1994, Doná: 2007) through: (1) Secondary data review

including existing programmatic data, (ii) conduct 12 participatory workshops with children, engaging a total of 144 children (iiii) Focus group discussions with parents and (iiii) undertake Key Informant Interviews with 72 teachers , 4 education practitioners and over 10 INGO/NGO agencies that are implementing AEP.

This study not only produces an original contribution to knowledge around the lived experience of education of displaced children, but also aims to have a direct and focused impact in the field. It will provide guidance and insight to key stakeholders to improve delivery of AEP programming in Uganda and contribute to SCUK EiE research Strategy as well as external groups such as AEP WG, EIEWG and wider bodies.

Presentation #3: Strømme Foundation – Anne Brevik

Impact evaluation of the Speed School programme

A recent Norad-funded impact evaluation[5] of Strømme Foundation's Speed School programme[6] in West Africa concludes that the programme provides an efficient and cost-effective way to bring out-of-school children (OOSC) back into education. This is especially significant in the context of West Africa, where a high proportion of children – notably 32% in Mali, 23% in Burkina Faso and 33% in Niger – remain out of school.[7] Across the three countries more than 3 million children are out of school, of whom close to 54% are girls.[8] This presentation will summarise the key findings and recommendations from the impact evaluation and outline the main lessons learnt.

Speed School is an accelerated education programme that provides three years' worth of schooling in only nine months. The programme is formally recognised by the governments of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, meaning that successful graduates can transfer directly into the fourth grade of formal school. Since 2004, more than 186,000 OOSC have completed Speed School across the three countries. The programme is currently being scaled up through Strømme Foundation's collaboration with Plan International in the PASS+ project.[9]

The presentation will particularly address the key findings related to the gender equality aspect of programme. The impact evaluation found that 90% of children enrolled in the period 2014-

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[5] The impact evaluation was commissioned by Strømme Foundation and carried out by Fafo Research Foundation in February – September 2018.
[6] Designed in Mali in 2004 by West African education experts in partnership with Strømme Foundation, Speed School is a bilingual (local language and French) 9- month programme that aims at integrating OOSC aged 8 to 12 years old into the formal school system at grade 2, 3 or 4 level. It focuses on acquisition of language of instruction (French) and also basic reading, writing and math skills.
[7] UNESCO Institute of Statistics: UNESCO eAtlas of Out-of-School Children, 2018
[8] UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018 http://uis.unesco.org/country/BF; http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ml; http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ne

2017, completed the course, of which 48% were girls. Furthermore, the evaluation recognises that girls' enrolment is complemented by the recruitment of female teachers in the Speed Schools, serving as role models. Between 2014 and 2018, 40 percent of Speed School teachers were female. The gender focus is also reflected in retention rates. Among students who graduated from Speed School in 2015, more girls than boys are currently in formal primary schools both in Niger (69%) and Mali (57%). The presentation will discuss how these results were achieved and how the gender focus can be further strengthened.

The framework used for the value-for-money analysis in the evaluation will be presented together the key results. The evaluation found that the programme provided high value for money. The average cost per enrolled child over a 10-month period was 132 US dollars in the period 2014-2018, while the cost per day was 0.4 USD, substantially lower than the poverty line of 2 USD per day. The presentation will discuss how the programme can continue to provide high value for money while addressing the recommendations put forward in the evaluation.

Presentation #4: Plan International –Romain Cardon

PASS+ panel presentation

Sharing our experience reviewing and analyzing the PASS+ program using the framework of the AEWG 10 principles

Despite significant progress expanding access to primary education since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reaffirmed and expanded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), large number of children remain out of school around the world. In West Africa, numbers are particularly high; for example, an estimated 3 million children remain out of school in school in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger[10], with a higher proportion of girls.

Accelerated education programs (AEPs) are widely acknowledged as important options for reintegrating out of school children back into the formal education system. This presentation will highlight the experience and learnings of the PASS+ program, which is working to increase access for over 180,000 girls and boys to gender-responsive and inclusive education in Speed Schools[11] and targeted primary schools in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger through accelerated education and direct enrolment approaches. PASS+ is implemented by Plan International in partnership with the Strømme Foundation and with the support of Educate A Child, a global program of Education Above All Foundation.

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[10] UNESCO Institute for Statistics,2017: http://uis.unesco.org/country/BF; http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ml; http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ne

[11] Speed School is a bilingual (local language and French) 9 month programme that aims at integrating OOSC aged 8 to 12 years old into the formal school system at grade 2, 3 or 4 level. It focuses on acquisition of language of instruction (French) and also basic reading, writing and math skills.

Using the 10 principles for accelerated education developed by the AEWG as a framework, the presentation will share analytical findings related to the PASS+ project's good practices and lessons learned, including the second principle, which emphasizes the importance of AEP being

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legitimate, credible, and resulting in learner certification, and the third principle, which emphasizes alignment with the national education system.

Of particular note are the steps that the PASS+ project has taken to foster sustainability and alignment with national education systems at multiple levels: from the regional level where quality assurance competencies for Speed Schools are in the process of being transferred to national governments, and the PASS+ project experience and lessons learned are being shared to support and contribute to this process; to the national and sub-national levels, where ongoing advocacy has led to strong government support for the integration of accelerated education learners into the national education systems; to local levels, where community mobilization around the management of accelerated education programs and the importance of gender equality in and through education has been crucial for the project's success.

Specific examples related to the 10 principles will be discussed, including the project's advocacy work to ensure that children enrolled in the accelerated education program have the birth certificates needed to transfer to primary schools, as well as advocacy related to including accelerated education learners in school canteen programs, which has been an important initiative to promote attendance and retention. The presentation will also connect the PASS+ experience to the soon-to-be developed, national-level action plans for accelerated education in Mali and Niger, which will be outcomes of the AEWG workshop in Uganda in November 2018.

Panellists (organisation)	Presenter (individual)	Presentation topic	Country focus
Stromme Foundation	Anne Breivik	Impact evaluation of the Speed School programme	West Africa
Save the Children International	Jessica Oddy	Research on children's and youth perceptions of AE	Uganda
Plan International PASS + Project	Romain Cardon	Sharing our experience reviewing and analyzing the PASS+ program using the framework of the AEWG 10 principles	Mali, Niger and Burkino Faso
Geneva Global	Jessica Lowden	Speed School – Moving an Accelerated Education Program towards sustainability and formal government adoption	Uganda/ Ethiopia

Panel Chair: **Kayla Boisvert,** AEWG (University of Massachusetts, Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN))

Discussant: **Sabrina Hervey,** Senior Education Specialist, Educate A Child.

90 minute panel

SIG: Education, Conflict, and Emergencies
Research Type: Applied

Format- Formal Panel Session (Group Submission)

Formal panel sessions provide an opportunity for coordinated interaction and exchange among presenters working on a common set of themes, questions or problems related to either research or practice. Proposals for these 90-minute sessions are submitted by a group of presenters (at least 3) who also designate their own chair and discussants (who must also register for the conference. Panel sessions follow a conventional format of individual paper presentations followed by discussant comments and audience discussion. Panel sessions will be scheduled in meeting rooms with overhead projection technology (but no sound).