

## **Overall Summary: Accelerated Education Working Group Principles in Action!**

Over 263 million children and adolescents are out of school worldwide. This includes children who never started school or who dropped out after enrollment (UNESCO, 2016). The most vulnerable and marginalized—often displaced children and young people, ex-combatants, girls, and children with disabilities—are more likely to find it difficult to get an education.

Education not only provides vital basic skills and competencies, but offers stability, security and the promise of long-term peace. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Education 2030: Framework for Action have set a global compact to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong education for all” (p. iii). For children and young people who have missed out on education or had their education interrupted by conflict, crisis, poverty and marginalization, Accelerated Education Programs (AEP) are a way to realize this commitment. AEPs offer equivalent, certified competencies for basic education, enabling a return to formal education at age-appropriate grades, or transition into work or other training.

The Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) is an inter-agency working group 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. With the goal of strengthening the quality of Accelerated Education (AE) programming through a more harmonized, standardized approach, the AEWG has identified a set of 10 evidence-based Accelerated Education Principles. The Principles help establish clear, common aspirations for AEPs globally.

In 2017, the AEWG conducted four case studies and a desk review to assess the utilization and effectiveness of the 10 AE Principles and supporting guidance. One of the main findings of this research was that there is a critical need for the AEWG to consider initial and ongoing processes for supporting the socialization and contextualization of the Principles. This process, it was posited, will allow AE program implementers, policymakers, and donors to identify possible constraints to achieving particular Principles or to identify key tensions within the local context between the Principles, and to work together to resolve these issues.

In light of these findings, the AEWG has developed a number of supporting tools and conducted numerous trainings for implementers, ministry of education officials, and donor agencies globally. AEWG members and partners have also used the Principles and supporting materials to design programs, develop curricula, and evaluate program effectiveness. In this panel, presenters will discuss key issues related to dissemination, socialization, and contextualization of the Principles and supporting materials, focusing on three key themes: (1) Alignment with MOE and development of national standards; (2) Curriculum, learning materials, and assessments; and (3) Teacher training and professional development. The panel will also touch on partnership with communities and research and evaluation on AE.

The first presentation, by War Child Canada, will highlight the work the Accelerated Education Working Group has led with the MoE and education partners in Uganda developing national-

level guidelines for accelerated education. These guidelines are based on the contextualized AEWG Principles and aim to support harmonization of programming across implementers and across the refugee camps in Uganda. The presentation will discuss the process of developing the guidelines, including “big issues” in their development and successes and challenges of using global principles of best practice. This presentation will also focus on the process of developing a lower secondary AEP that is aligned with the Ministry strategy in Uganda and uses the national guidelines collaborating with community members to identify AE center sites and students, and developing and piloting the curriculum. The presentation will highlight some of the preliminary reflections from the process, as well as preview War Child Canada’s efforts to support the Ministry of Education in DRC to validate the lower secondary AEP curriculum, using lessons learned from Uganda.

Next, a presentation by an independent consultant to USAID and the Ministry of Education in Guatemala will review the current provision of AE in Guatemala; describe the process of using the Principles to enhance AE provision, including development of curriculum, learning materials, and placement tests, teacher training, and research and evaluation; and discuss some of the successes and challenges of contextualizing the Principles in the Guatemalan context.

Third, a presentation by the team at Teachers College (TC), Columbia University, who developed and piloted a training pack for AE teachers, will explain the collaborative process of developing the teacher training materials, introduce the content of the training pack, and discuss how it can be adapted to meet the context-specific needs of learners and teachers.

Fourth, a presentation by the Carey Institute will describe an online introductory training based on the 10 Principles. The presentation will review the process of offering the training online to global audiences and suggest implications for future trainings using ICT.

The discussion will reflect on the importance of accelerated education in equitable and sustainable development, the application and contextualization of the Principles in the various contexts discussed, and the imperative of monitoring and measuring the dissemination strategy and the uptake of the Principles, guidance, and tools to ensure they contribute to their objectives of harmonization and standardization of AE programs globally, with the long-term goal of increased equitable access to education for out-of-school children and youths.

**References:**

Accelerated Education Working Group. (2017). *Guide to the Accelerated Education Principles*.

UNESCO (2016) Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education? Policy Paper 27 Fact Sheet 37, July 2016.

**Presentation #1: Supporting Refugee Education in Uganda**  
Ashley Meek, Alfred Okech, War Child Canada

When afforded the opportunity to gain the skills they need to lead productive lives, gain employment, and positively contribute to society, children and youths affected by conflict have the potential to be the future leaders in rebuilding their home countries. However, in low-income countries, host to 28 percent of the world's refugees, only 9 percent of children and youths attend secondary education (UNHCR, 2018), challenging both the immediate and long-term realities for these children and youths and their wider communities.

Uganda has been recognized for its progressive refugee policies, which include access to quality education for all, an important step toward successful integration with host communities and durable long-term solutions. According to research carried out in Uganda, for every extra year a refugee child spends in school, their income increases by 3 percent (UNHCR, 2018). The longer refugees spend in quality education, the more resilient and more likely they are to stand up for themselves. Today, however, at least 353,000 (57 percent) refugee children and 171,000 (34 percent) local children in refugee-hosting districts of Uganda do not have access to education (TheirWorld, 2018). War Child Canada is working to improve access to quality education for out-of-school refugee and host community learners.

According to the Accelerated Education Working Group's 10 Principles for Effective Practice, alignment with Ministry of Education and policy frameworks are critical for effective implementation of AEPs. To that end, War Child Canada is collaborating with the Uganda Ministry of Education to develop an accelerated learning program for lower secondary students that is aligned with the Uganda Education and Sports Sector Plan (2017/2018 – 2019/2020) and is being reflected in the Uganda Education Response Plan. An ALP implementation strategy is being developed concurrently, establishing guidance for language accommodation as needed, a teacher training and support strategy, and clear guidance and agreement around certification of learning.

Further, War Child Canada is working closely with local community members to identify sites for the ALP centres and to assist with the identification of potential students for the program. The curriculum will be piloted in both refugee and host community contexts and rolled out in the 2019 school year. The success of the pilot, which demonstrated sustained attendance, learning outcomes, and teacher and student satisfaction, will help to inform the feasibility of developing ALP curriculum for the remainder of the secondary grades, recognizing the gap in opportunity for over-age children and youth wishing to earn their secondary diploma. In addition to formal education, the project includes transferable skills training and career guidance to prepare youths for alternative pathways, such as employment, entrepreneurship, or scholarship opportunities.

The project includes a significant learning component, and the presentation will highlight some of the preliminary reflections from the process, in addition to War Child Canada's efforts to

support the DRC Ministry of Education to validate the lower secondary ALP curriculum building on lessons learned from Uganda.

### **References:**

UNHCR (2018). Left Behind: Refugee Education in Crisis.

TheirWorld (2018, September). Landmark refugee plan launched to tackle Uganda's education crisis.

### **Presentation #1: Development of National Guidelines for Accelerated Education: Case Study Uganda (to be combined with the above)**

Over one million South Sudanese have crossed into Uganda due to the crisis (UNHCR, n.d.); 65 percent of these refugees are children (UNHCR, 2018). School-age children represent over 54 percent of the total population, but only 46 percent have access to formal and informal education, with a significant gender gap in enrolment, especially at secondary level, where fewer girls are in school compared to boys (UNHCR, 2018).

Many of those who are out of school have dropped out, never enrolled, or are above the correct age for entry into primary school. Access to education for these children is difficult; children who do not start school at the correct age will likely remain out of school, and those who do enter when they are already over age face multiple challenges including sharing the classroom and learning with much younger children. Further, the increasing number of learners puts a strain on already overstretched facilities with overcrowded classrooms, limited teachers, and insufficient learning materials and mixing older and younger learners makes teaching difficult and raises protection concerns.

Accelerated Education Programmes (AEP) provide an opportunity for these over-age out-of-school children to access education, catch up and transition back into the formal system, secondary education, vocational training or livelihoods. However, there are currently no AE guidelines in Uganda, and the AEPs implemented in the refugee camps vary in design and implementation between partners and between camps.

Education Cannot Wait (ECW) recently awarded a grant to a consortium led by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), with Save the Children International (SCI) as a partner. The ECW project places an emphasis on the need for the harmonisation of AEPs to improve quality through the development of AE guidelines. In order to ensure the development of the guidelines are based on globally agreed upon good practice, Uganda used the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) 10 Principles for Effective Practice (AEWG, 2017) as a foundation.

This presentation will describe the process of the development of the guidelines: their progression, scope, specific areas and content; “big issues” that were raised at various stages from various stakeholders and at various levels, and how these evolved over time (for example, the structure, terminology, alignment with existing policies and guidance documents, and the

age range); and the positive outcomes of and challenges with utilizing “good practice” tools developed at the global level and contextualizing them to a specific context.

**References:**

Accelerated Education Working Group (2017). Accelerated Education. 10 Principles for Effective Practice. Retrieved from <http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/accelerated-education-10-principles-for-effective-practice>

UNHCR (n.d.) Refugees and asylum-seekers from South Sudan – Total. Retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=229>

UNHCR (2018). South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) 2018. Retrieved from <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/61894>

**Presentation #2:** Enhancing Accelerated Education provision in Guatemala: Focus on teaching and learning

Kayla Boisvert, University of Massachusetts, Education in Crisis and Conflict Network

In Guatemala, while access to primary education has reached nearly 100 percent, more than 1.6 million youths between 15 and 24 years of age are out of school (USAID, 2017) and lack essential basic life skills and work competencies. According to the National Institute of Statistics [Instituto Nacional de Estadística] (2016), girls, indigenous populations, and those who live in extreme poverty or rural areas are most affected. Of those youths who are out of school, the majority cite the lack of financial resources as the primary reason.

Enshrined in law in Guatemala is the guaranteed access to educational opportunities. This includes alternative education, or *educación extraescolar*, for those who are unable to access the formal school system. For children and youths who have been unable to complete their primary or secondary schooling, alternative education provides the opportunity to obtain certified competencies and develop essential life skills. Alternative education meets the needs of marginalized populations who require non-formal education options to access the education system and complete their studies (UNESCO, 2017).

Of the four main alternative education programs in Guatemala, three meet the definition of Accelerated Education Programs (AEP). One of these programs is an in-person AEP for learners who have not completed their primary level schooling. The other two provide accelerated secondary education in either a mixed in-person/online modality or entirely at a distance.

The Accelerated Education Working Group's (AEWG) 10 Principles for Effective Practice highlight the critical importance of AE-specific curriculum, learning materials, and assessment, which further implies AE-specific teacher training and program evaluation and research. While accelerated education is well-established in Guatemala within their alternative education framework, the Ministry of Education Directorate General of Alternative Education identified several needs to strengthen their provision of accelerated education: the need for development of AE-specific curriculum, learning materials, and placement tests; the need for improved teacher training and professional development; and the need for AE-specific program evaluation and research.

Together with USAID Leer y Aprender, the Ministry of Education solicited the support of an independent consultant and is utilizing the AEWG's 10 Principles of Effective Practice to enhance their provision of accelerated education in these three areas. This presentation will review the current provision of AE in Guatemala, describe the process of using the Principles enhance AE provision, and discuss some of the successes and challenges of contextualizing the Principles in the Guatemalan context.

**References:**

Instituto Nacional de Estadística Guatemala. (2016). *Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida 2014*. Retrieved from [www.ine.gob.gt](http://www.ine.gob.gt)

UNESCO. (2017). Bases Conceptuales para una Nueva Educación Extraescolar en Guatemala.

USAID. (2017). *Sector Brief Education*. Retrieved from [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/Sector\\_Brief-Education\\_August\\_2017.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/Sector_Brief-Education_August_2017.pdf)

**Presentation #3:** Development of Accelerated Education teacher professional development (TPD) materials: Collaboration between Teachers College and AEWG  
Claire Stiglmeier, Lauren Gerken, Julie Halterman, Alison Doyle, Teachers College, Columbia University

Children around the world frequently miss out on schooling for a variety of reasons. In particular, forced migration has contributed to a widespread concern over the provision of education to displaced children and youth. For the more than 263 million children out of school worldwide (UNESCO, 2016), every year of non-attendance increases protection risks as well as the likelihood that they will not return to school. Huge gaps in schooling have both academic and social consequences for these children in that they are often robbed of the opportunities for psychosocial well-being and emotional development (Riggs & Davison, 2016).

In an attempt to meet the needs of this vulnerable population, governments and agencies may offer alternative forms of education. Accelerated Education Programmes (AEP) are a flexible form of schooling aimed at meeting the needs of over-age children and youth who have missed out on a significant amount of schooling due to poverty, marginalisation, crisis, and conflict (AEWG, 2017).

AEPs offer age-appropriate programming using teaching and learning strategies to match the cognitive maturity of learners. However, this presents unique challenges to AE teachers, whose classes typically include learners of mixed ages and abilities. As teachers in crisis contexts are often underqualified and lack relevant professional development opportunities, it is important to address this gap in teacher professional development to ensure sustainable, quality education for populations affected by crisis and conflict.

The Accelerated Education Teacher Training (AETT) pack aims to fill that gap by providing a flexible and adaptable training programme to support AE teachers working in humanitarian and development contexts. The AETT has been developed by the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) and Teachers' College, Columbia University, in collaboration and consultation with a group of experts in the field of education in emergencies. It is designed to complement the Training Pack for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts (TiCC), an inter-agency, open source training pack developed to build basic teaching competencies for unqualified or under-qualified teachers often recruited to teach in emergency settings.

The AETT is a separate training that adds AE-specific content to support AE teachers as well as school leaders. Each module of the six-module course includes two core sessions as well as supplementary sessions. The materials are meant to be flexible such that agencies may choose the sessions that are the most applicable and helpful to AE teachers in their contexts.

In this panel, we aim to present the collaborative process for developing the materials, introduce the content of the pack, and discuss how it can be adapted to meet the context-specific needs of learners and teachers.



**References:**

Accelerated Education Working Group (2017). *Synthesis report Accelerated Education Working Group: Accelerated Education Principles Field Studies*.

Riggs, D. & Davison, L. (Eds). (2016). *Psychosocial support and social and emotional learning for children and youth in emergency settings*. New York, NY: The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies.

UNESCO (2016). *Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education?*

**Presentation #4:** Bringing Accelerated Education to life: Leveraging dynamic online opportunities to improve practice  
Mona Younes, Carey Institute

From Hatay, Turkey to Kigoma region, Tanzania to Florida, U.S. to Damascus, Syria to Laos—learners from around the world registered for the ‘Accelerated Education in Crisis Context Introductory Course’ in the Fall of 2018. The online course was offered for free, with facilitation, for just four weeks by the Center for Learning in Practice at the Carey Institute for Global Good. A diverse audience enrolled with these purposes in mind: to increase knowledge in AE, connect with others engaged in that field, access resources to support educators’ work, develop skills and gather materials that could be used immediately, reflect on current work and improve outcomes.

Being an introductory course, it focused only on the basics, drawing from the Accelerated Education Working Group’s (2017) 10 Principles for Effective Practice. There is a need to expand the content and provide the online course in different languages and on a wider scale. Challenges include funding and providing access for learners with low (and no) connectivity.

Two lessons learnt from offering this online course in the field include: the vitality to design professional development in a fashion that caters for both contextualization *and* reflection. Contextualization is realized when learners are provided with ample opportunities to apply new concepts, knowledge, and skills in their own context; understanding what works, what will be challenging, and how to find solutions. Reflection develops critical thinking skills and improves future performance by analysing learners’ experience, moving the learning process from surface understanding of concepts to a much deeper level of learning and, ultimately, to transformation of practice.

There is a definite need for professional development in that niche. Using ICT and online tools in particular to build courses and communities of practice is still an underdeveloped solution that needs to be looked at in a very needs-oriented manner.

**References:**

Accelerated Education Working Group. (2017). *Guide to the Accelerated Education Principles*.

<b>Panel Name: Accelerated Education Working Group Principles in action!</b>			
<b>Panellists (organisation)</b>	<b>Presenter (individual)</b>	<b>Presentation topic</b>	<b>Country focus</b>
War Child Canada	Ashley Meek Alfred Okech	Developing AE for secondary; aligning with MOE, piloting tools Application of AEWG tools to support development of national AE guidelines	Uganda
University of Massachusetts	Kayla Boisvert	Application of AEWG tools to support curriculum development	Guatemala
Teachers College Columbia	Claire Stiglmeier Lauren Gerken Alison Doyle	TCC and AEWG collaboration: Development of the AE TPD materials	Global
Carey Institute	Mona Younes	Implementing TPD online for AE	Global
Panel Chair: <b>Ash Hartwell</b> , ECCN/ University of Massachusetts			

**SIG:** Education, Conflict, and Emergencies

**Research Type:** Applied

**Format: Refereed round table**

Refereed Round-Table Session (Group Submission). This is similar to an individual submission for round-table presentation, but in this case one organizer submits three or four summaries of individual round-table contributions. The individual presenters' contributions should be united by a common topic or theme. In this 90- minute session, each presenter gives a short presentation, followed by collective discussion with other conference attendees. Round-table session proposals should also designate a chair whose role is to facilitate interaction and participation. **Audio-visual equipment is not provided for round-table sessions.**