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# RESEARCH BRIEF: STRATEGIES FOR ACCELERATING LEARNING POST-CRISIS

A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE

November 2020

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by Karla Giuliano Sarr, Nitika Tolani, Idalia Rodriguez Morales, Ryan Aghabozorg, and Amy Mulcahy-Dunn for EnCompass LLC and its partner MSI, a Tetrattech company, for the Data and Evidence for Education Programs (DEEP), Contract No. GS-10F-0245M. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the numerous education practitioners in the United States and worldwide who responded to our inquiries as we searched for the most relevant evidence to support this review. We are particularly grateful to Ash Hartwell, Mary Burns, Brenda Bell, Ritesh Shah, Gaelle Simon, Norma Evans, A'Ame Joslin, Kristen Bub, Emily Morris, John Muskin, and Suzy Pepper Rollins, who provided valuable insights to help us contextualize and ground the findings within the larger context of work focusing on learners trying to catch up (see Annex for a full list of experts consulted). In addition, the following individuals contributed feedback on the draft and participated in the co-creation workshop: Olga Merchan, Anjuli Shivshanker, Ash Hartwell, Brenda Bell, Martha Hewison, Nina Weisenhorn, and Kayla Boisvert. We hope this review will be helpful to USAID staff and international partners, in particular, as we all try to move forward during these challenging and complicated times.

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEWG	Accelerated Education Working Group
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
MOE	Ministry of Education
TaRL	Teaching at the Right Level (Pratham Program)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented global challenge. In April 2020, approximately 1.6 billion learners, from pre-primary through tertiary education, were affected by COVID-19-related school closures in at least 194 countries.<sup>1,2</sup> In addition, while COVID-19 presents a massive educational disruption, significant numbers of global learners in developing and crisis- and conflict-affected contexts regularly experience disruptions to their education. The need to accelerate learning and help learners catch up after educational disruptions is an enduring challenge beyond the COVID-19 response. Despite its importance, however, the evidence on the teaching and learning components of *how* to accelerate the learning process is scarce. The present review further extends the work of the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) in reaching out to various sub-fields within education and within both Global North and Global South contexts to identify promising curricular and pedagogical practices that can enhance learners' core competencies within an accelerated or catch-up education program in crisis-affected contexts.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this evidence review is to aggregate, analyze, critique, and present existing evidence on how to effectively accelerate learning for all learners at the basic and secondary education levels, including the most marginalized. The primary audience for this review is the USAID COVID-19/Education Task Team as well as USAID Mission staff, ministries of education and higher education, and implementing partners. The review seeks to assist in the development of guidance on how to design and structure education interventions to accelerate the learning process and help learners catch up in response to COVID-19 and other disruptions. The acceleration of the learning process refers to helping students develop knowledge and skills more quickly, more deeply, and more effectively.<sup>3,4</sup> Accordingly, this evidence review is guided by the following question:

**What teaching and learning strategies help to accelerate learning (to learn faster, deeper, more effectively) in an equitable and inclusive way?**

Two sub-questions further elaborate the research aims:

1. What are effective strategies for **condensing curricula and adapting instructional time**<sup>5</sup> to accelerate learning for all learners, including the most marginalized?
2. What are effective **pedagogical practices** (including the integration of psychosocial/social emotional learning and distance learning strategies and approaches) to accelerate learning for all learners, including the most marginalized?

## METHODOLOGY

Given the breadth of the inquiry, the research team employed an appreciative inquiry approach to identify effective education programs and to draw out elements of their structure and strategies that could best support accelerating learning.<sup>6</sup> The review team utilized a multi-pronged approach that included 1) reviews of known published resources and subsequent identification of potentially relevant resources through publication references, 2) searches of academic databases, and 3) Internet searches for grey literature from websites of key organizations and repositories. The literature search was complemented by phone calls and emails with subject experts, who directed attention to additional

resources, specifically grey literature. (See [Annex A](#) for more information on individuals contacted.) A smaller expert panel also reviewed the initial first draft. This same group convened for a co-creation workshop on September 14, 2020, to validate findings and deliberate on initial high-level recommendations. Screening criteria were loosened throughout the review process in order to allow enough documentation for analysis. The review favored more recent evidence, going back as far as 2004. Due to limited evidence in international development and crisis- and conflict-affected contexts, relevant literature from middle-income and high-income countries was sourced in order to address gaps. Similarly, the review drew across multiple sub-fields within education, including accelerated education, international development programs, community education, and remedial education.<sup>7</sup> In total, 73 studies were reviewed.

Three limitations characterize this study: 1) the need for contextualization of findings by program designers and implementers, 2) acknowledgment that several conditions are necessary to support effective programming (e.g., appropriate financing for education, sufficient human capacity for implementation, effective management, appropriate student-teacher ratio, availability of materials and learning spaces) and that the absence or malfunctioning of any one of them can devastate the implementation of programming, and 3) how publication bias (i.e., more literature published on well-financed programs) has limited the evidence available from programming. To the extent possible, the review team sought to lessen this bias through expert consultation.

## FINDINGS

The findings below examine the evidence on adapting curricula and instructional time as well as effective pedagogical practices that foster catching up after educational interruptions. Throughout the review, strategies and evidence are presented side-by-side to best contextualize interventions. This presentation also acknowledges how a dearth of rigorous evidence often requires linking more general outcome data with descriptions of programming.

## ADAPTING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Findings pertinent to curricular adaptation and manipulations of instructional time draw upon the literature from both developing and high-income country contexts. Findings provide insights into successful configurations of curriculum and instructional time but fall short of identifying a magic bullet that can work in all contexts.

### STRATEGIES TO ADAPT THE CURRICULUM

In face of interrupted learning, whether due to the COVID-19 pandemic or due to crisis and conflict, there is often an imperative to prioritize curricular content when learning resumes.<sup>8,9,10,11,12,13</sup> In order to promote learning that is faster, deeper, and more effective, several key findings and conclusions should be considered:

- **Maintaining a focus on current grade-level standards, with appropriate support for requisite skills to master the expected material**, has demonstrated stronger results than beginning where learners had stopped prior to interruption. While it may appear counter-intuitive, such an approach helps learners maintain their motivation<sup>14,15,16</sup> and has shown strong

results in practice. A mixed-methods study<sup>17</sup> of five diverse school systems in the United States over a 2-year period presents rigorous evidence to support concentrating on expected learning while scaffolding key skills, vocabulary, and concepts to successfully access the new content. The study found that when students who began the year behind were placed in classrooms that used grade-appropriate assignments,<sup>18</sup> they were able to close learning gaps by more than 7 months, making significant gains compared to peers that were using material that was not grade-appropriate.

- **Prioritizing competencies, namely mastery of literacy and numeracy, is a** recommended and common feature of many programs hoping to bring learners up to speed. This review cites multiple examples including the Speed School model, Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), and Ghana’s School for Life as examples. All three examples focus on literacy and numeracy skills acquisition. As an example, Pratham’s TaRL model, a remedial program, demonstrates that a **focus on foundational skills of literacy and numeracy in concentrated chunks** can be highly effective. The program increased test scores among participants by 0.70 standard deviations in both language and math.<sup>19</sup> While the evidence available does not draw direct causal conclusions between a focus on competencies and learning outcomes, evidence suggests that **prioritizing competencies is a critical approach for catching up learners.**
- Condensing the curriculum can be achieved by **reducing repetition and focusing on foundational skills in close collaboration with local authorities and experts.** One approach may be to eliminate review periods at the beginning of the year or to follow the example of Speed Schools in Burkina Faso and Niger which streamlined the curriculum to reduce overlaps between different grade levels.<sup>20</sup>

## STRATEGIES TO ADAPT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

*When and for how long* learners have exposure to a curriculum is another factor to consider when designing initiatives to catch up on lost learning. The approaches accelerated education programs and other programs have taken toward instructional time vary, with the programs reviewed holding class between 3 and 8 hours per day. Similarly, formulations of time differ between:

- a) **Extending hours:** The Speed Schools models in Ethiopia and Liberia operate for 8 hours per day. IRC’s Healing Classrooms project in Niger is an at-school tutoring model. Both programs have demonstrated improved reading and math skills compared to students that did not take part in the program.<sup>21,22</sup>
- b) **Pull-out models during school hours:** Duflo & Kiessel’s (2014)<sup>23</sup> experimental study showed this formula to be effective for a remedial program in Ghana
- c) **Intensive periodic learning camps:** TaRL found its intensive bursts of 10 days of additional learning time during the school day paired with an intensive 10-day booster camp to be highly effective, with scores for students age seven and above exhibiting 0.70 standard deviations above the control group for both reading and math.<sup>24</sup>

All four programs focus on the primary level.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, multiple variables other than instructional time, including the background of teachers, location of classes, existence of counseling and other wraparound services, and the structure and content of the curriculum prevent strict causal linkages between instructional time and program effectiveness. A more pragmatic approach takes into

account logistical and resource constraints that must be addressed in order to allow effective instruction to take place. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it may also make sense to investigate how **integrating distance learning techniques** can capitalize on technology's potential to speed up, deepen, and render learning more effective, while also extending instructional time.

## EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES<sup>26</sup>

Nearly all of the program examples reviewed espouse **learner centeredness** and **active pedagogies**. This approach aligns with accelerated learning theory based on research from cognitive and neurosciences. However, some critics suggest there is a need to view instructional approaches along a spectrum that acknowledges that explicit teacher-led instruction may be beneficial in some contexts.<sup>27,28,29</sup> In addition, when measuring strategies, disentangling intervention elements can be difficult, which makes it hard to demonstrate the effectiveness of individual interventions. Likely, combinations of strategies and interventions are coming together in order to produce learning that is faster, deeper, and more effective. Finally, programs seeking to follow the curriculum and pedagogic guidelines provided here are most likely to be effective in accelerating learning processes if other minimum conditions for learning are met.

A limited number of studies provide clear causal linkages between design elements and outcomes. Findings and conclusions relevant to pedagogical practices within the context of accelerating learning demonstrate that more successful programs:

- **Provide opportunities for learners to connect to prior knowledge and offer relevant materials and real-world content.** Examples particularly relevant to international and resource-limited contexts include chances to learn about future careers, community and family storytelling events, and interviews with community elders. Terzian and Moore's<sup>30</sup> systematic review of summer programs in the United States found that five of the nine experimental evaluations that incorporated lessons grounded in real-world context resulted in learning outcome improvements.
- **Guide students to reflect upon their learning process and discuss their performance** in order to develop and reinforce learning-to-learn capacities. Speed Schools Ethiopia demonstrates this approach to be critical to its model. A study on the learning outcomes of students attending schools in the United States that implement a personalized learning approach found that students' review and discussion of their own performance promoted learning gains for even the most low-performing students.<sup>31</sup>
- **Establish a supportive and enabling environment within the classroom** that features a positive teacher-student dynamic, sets high expectations for students, and provides adequate support to foster learning. The New Teacher Project's<sup>32</sup> extensive study of primary and secondary classrooms in five large U.S. school districts found that students gained more than 4 months of learning when expectations were high. The study suggests that holding high standards for learners may help them more effectively catch up on learning. The findings of the study also suggest that having teachers follow learners from one level to the next maintains the student-teacher bond and capitalizes on teachers' knowledge of learners to maximize learning. This positive connection with an adult may be particularly meaningful to children/youth in crisis and conflict situations.

- **Organize learners into pairs and small groups, and frequently rearrange groupings to motivate students.** Small groups also offer the opportunity for differentiated instruction. Combined with self-reflections on students' learning, such groupings can be particularly effective.<sup>33</sup>
- **Use approaches that place students in groups according to competency levels.** This approach must acknowledge the challenges for inclusion. Pratham's TaRL program uses this approach and has consistently demonstrated strong student learning gains on a series of rigorous evaluations.
- **Implement a tutoring strategy that fosters a nurturing and positive relationship between the learner and tutor.** Data show that one-on-one tutoring can be particularly effective.<sup>34</sup> Tutoring also offers a way to extend instructional time.
- **Provide instructors,** whether they be certified teachers, paraprofessionals, or trained community members, **with sufficient initial and in-service professional development opportunities, and coaching to effectively implement a learner-centered and active pedagogical approach.** Evidence between lower-income country and higher-income country contexts differs as to the importance of certification. Rather, ongoing teacher professional development is a "key enabler of programme effectiveness."<sup>35</sup>

Lastly, the review concludes that there is a dearth of evidence on how best to accelerate learning inclusive of all learners. More research and disaggregated analysis are warranted to develop targeted and effective pedagogical approaches that accelerate and deepen learning in core competencies for different subgroups of learners.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below emerged from both the evidence review and the expert panel. The text in bold indicates the stakeholders addressed.

### ADAPTING A CURRICULUM FOR CATCHING UP

1. When adapting a curriculum to help learners catch up after an education disruption, try to keep learners on grade level. If a previous skill is missed but is needed/essential, teachers may teach it explicitly in a shorter amount of time, then integrate, reinforce, and build on that skill throughout grade-level material. Teachers should also be aware that some learners may experience difficulties moving through this content in a shorter period of time and be prepared to offer support accordingly. (MoEs)
2. Prioritize the most essential competencies when learning resumes to help learners catch up. Prioritize those competencies in critical content areas (e.g., for the primary level literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning) rather than all of the content that students may have missed during the disruption. **(MoEs, IPs)**
  - a. Competencies can also be integrated and reinforced across content areas (e.g., integrating literacy and social studies, math, and science).

- b. Competencies prioritized should be the ones that are essential skills for success in the next grade level and for passing summative and high-stakes assessments.
  - c. At secondary level/for youth, prioritize standards that promote higher education or job readiness.
- 3. Ensure relevance of the revised curriculum to learners' prior knowledge, lives, and interests in order to maintain and maximize learner motivation so that acceleration is possible (learning faster, more deeply, and more effectively). **(MoEs, IPs)**
- 4. Collaborate with education policymakers and administrative bodies at the central level to adapt the curriculum and to ensure that the adapted curriculum promotes equity and inclusion and that materials themselves are accessible to all learners.

Discuss and explore “expedited approvals” processes of the final curriculum to assure greater time efficiency. **(MoEs/USAID Missions/IPs)**

- 5. Identify processes necessary for adapting the curriculum in each context at the classroom and central levels, and make the processes clear to educators and administrators involved in catch-up programming. Donors and IPs may provide capacity building or technical support as necessary to support MoEs in these processes.

If curricular adaptation can be made at the classroom level, empower teachers with skills necessary to adapt the curriculum to student needs. Possible strategies include training, coaching, and distance learning mechanisms. **(MoEs/USAID Missions/IPs)**

## ADJUSTING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

- 6. Decisions on instructional time adjustments should be based upon what we know about a) how children learn different content, b) what time adjustments are possible in the context, and c) which adjustments are possible for different types of learners.
  - a. Ensure an equity and inclusion lens in making adaptations to instructional time. Consult with and consider the needs of marginalized groups—such as girls, teen mothers, displaced learners, learners with disabilities, working learners, and religious and ethnic minorities. **(MoEs)**
  - b. As necessary, take a pragmatic approach (e.g., schedule additional learning time when it is most likely that students can attend, with attention to the specific needs of more vulnerable learners, such as girls and learners with disabilities, and at times when an environment is accessible that will support and motivate learners).
- 7. Incorporate one-to-one or small group tutoring as a way to extend learning time and make use of a learning strategy that has proven to be effective for improving learning outcomes and offering learners important connections during challenging circumstances. To the extent possible, use professional tutors such as teachers-in-training as results on the use of volunteers has been mixed. Providing adequate training to volunteers and offering incentives for consistent attendance of volunteers may help improve outcomes. **(MoEs/USAID Missions/IPs)**

## ASSESSMENT

8. In an iterative way, verify that summative assessments align with the prioritized competencies identified in the adapted curricula and revise assessments accordingly. Continue to aim for prioritizing competencies, integrating content within competencies, and reducing repetition. **(MoEs)**

## TEACHER TRAINING

9. Invest in teacher training in order to build long-term, systemic resilience, and assure all educators (formal and non-formal) receive pre-service training addressing specific pedagogical techniques/strategies that are effective when catching up learners after school disruption:
  - a. Establish a supportive and enabling environment
  - b. Connect to prior knowledge
  - c. Use relevant materials and real-world content
  - d. Assist learners in developing their “learning-to-learn” capacities
  - e. Organize students in pairs and small groups
  - f. Consider organizing students by competency levels and, if classrooms are inclusive of all competency levels, train on differentiation and remediation strategies.

Model instructional strategies in educator training that educators are expected to implement within their classrooms (see Speed Schools for an example.) Provide continued support over a longer period of time. **(MoEs, Donors (including USAID)/IPs)**

10. Produce practical, actionable, simple guidance to support teachers with examples/ideas of successful strategies for catching up. **(MoEs, Donors (including USAID)/IPs)**

## BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

11. Develop strategies to contribute toward the evidence base on adjusting curriculum and instructional time, as well as pedagogical strategies in situations where learners have experienced learning loss due to interruption.
  - a. Include additional guidance and provide examples of effective curriculum adaptation and prioritization of learning competencies.
  - b. Highlight areas in which evidence shows guidance is not effectively adhered to (e.g., adapted curricula often tackle too many competencies and skills). **(Donors (including USAID))**
12. Determine strategies for growing the evidence base with monitoring and evaluation from the field, particularly aligned to guidance and learning agendas emerging from USAID and the AEWG on helping learners catch up. New products should have a particular focus on issues of equity and inclusion in the acceleration of skill acquisition, as well as how adaptations to curriculum and pedagogy serve as an opportunity to build the long-term resilience of education systems by better meeting the needs of all learners. **(Donors (including USAID))**

13. Given mixed findings on the effectiveness and appropriateness of learner-centeredness, further investigate the nuanced spectrum that unites teacher-centered and learner-centered practices to identify curricular/instructional time and pedagogical implications for contexts requiring the acceleration of skill acquisition. Pedagogies to review include structured pedagogy and balanced literacy, among others. **(Donors (including USAID))**
14. Recognizing the paucity of evidence specific to learners of various identities (gender, disability, and other marginalized groups), build the evidence through standalone studies that are designed to provide an adequate level of disaggregation and analysis. Assure a gender and equity lens guides future analyses of all studies on learning outcomes in accelerated contexts. **(Donors (including USAID), MoEs, IPs)**
15. At the implementation level, conduct situational analysis before making a determination of the level of learner-centered to target within instruction. This analysis should take into account skills to be learned as well as learning conditions (e.g., class-size, teacher background, capacity for implementation, and fidelity of implementation). **(MoEs, IPs)**
16. Experts recognized the interdependency between pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment. Additional efforts should further investigate specific assessment strategies that best support learners that need to catch-up after learning has been interrupted. Develop a series of related recommendations as well as guidance notes. **(Donors (including USAID))**

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

17. Develop indicators (that disaggregate by, at a minimum, gender and disability) that will identify the presence of pedagogies that support the acceleration of learning processes and promote positive learning outcomes for all learners (e.g., enabling and supporting conditions, capturing feedback loops, effective grouping strategies, incorporating learning-to-learn strategies). **(Donors (including USAID), IPs)**
18. Ensure programs are monitoring and evaluating student assessment (tracking progress in core competencies) through various mechanisms including self-assessment and continuing assessment and that assessment practices are inclusive. **(MoEs, Donors (including USAID), IPs)**
19. Ensure monitoring and evaluation of the processes and outcomes of curricular and pedagogical adaptation explicitly analyzes issues of equity and inclusion in order to inform inclusive education strategies. Little evidence from this present review explicitly explored how different curricular and pedagogical strategies differentially impacted learners of different ages, sexes, (dis)ability statuses, displacement status, and other marginalized identities. **(MoEs, Donors (including USAID), IPs)**

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# ANNEX: SUBJECT EXPERTS CONSULTED

#	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	ORGANIZATION
1	Bell	Brenda	Senior International Technical Advisor	EDC
2	Burns	Mary	Senior Expert	EDC
3	Hewison	Martha	Education Advisor, AEWG Chair	AEWG/UNHCR
4	Smith	Cristine	Associate Dean for Research and Engagement Professor of International Education	College of Education University of Massachusetts Amherst
5	Comings	John	Senior Technical Consultant at World Education; Adjunct Professor at CIE; formerly faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; Director of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)	Independent
6	Davis	Jeff	Practice Area Lead, Technical Director (Education)	MSI
7	Simon	Gaelle	Technical Manager	MSI
8	Saldanha	Kaitlynn	Senior Research Analyst	Luminos Fund
9	Evans	Norma	Consultant	Evans and associates
10	Torrente	Catalina*	Researcher	Previously with Mathematica
11	Jones	Stephanie*	Professor	Harvard Graduate School of Education
12	Simard	Suzanne	Curriculum Specialist	
13	Sticht	Tom	Previously led training efforts during Vietnam War for the military when seeking to recruit individuals with low reading and writing competency levels, recommended by John Comings	Retired
14	Joslin	A'Ame	Cognitive faculty - to be completed	University of Indiana
15	Shah	Ritesh	Faculty of Education	University of Auckland
16	Sklar	Jennifer*	Deputy Director of IRC's Education Unit	IRC
17	Hirsch Ayari	Susan	Director, Middle East & Asia Portfolio Education for Development Division	Creative Associates
18	Kawar	Rana	Education Specialist	UNICEF
19	Rollins	Suzy Pepper	Author, Founder Math in the Fast Lane	Math in the Fast Lane
20	Cyr	Stephane	Professeur	Département de mathématiques, Université de Québec à Montréal

#	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	ORGANIZATION
21	Arvisais	Olivier*	Professeur	Département de didactique, Université de Québec à Montréal
22	Muskin	Josh	Senior Director of Programs and Education Team Leader	Geneva Global
23	Vega	Laura	Community Connections Coordinator	Escuela Nueva
24	Williams	James*	Professor, International Education & International Affairs	George Washington University
25	Chabott	Colette	Adjunct Professor	George Washington University
26	Margaret	Sinclair	School of Education and Social Work	University of Sussex/NISSEM
27	Conrad	Laura	Program Manager, Liberia Project	STS
28	Frisoli	Paul	Senior Programme Specialist	LEGO Foundation
29	Levin	Henry	William Heard Kilpatrick Professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University	Teachers College, Columbia University
30	Srikantaiah	Deepa	Senior Education and Research Specialist	World Learning

\*Could not be reached for comment.

# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Figures represent country-wide closures as of April 1, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO. “COVID-19 and the Educational Response.” n.d. Retrieved August 20, 2020.

<https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

<sup>3</sup> Charlick, Judith A. “Accelerating Learning for Children in Developing Countries: Joining Research and Practice.” USAID (Basic Education and Policy Support). 2005.

<sup>4</sup> See Conceptual Framework section for a detailed discussion of faster, deeper, and more effective learning.

<sup>5</sup> For example, double shifting; supplementing normal class time with weekend classes, classes on holidays, evening classes; or distance learning opportunities.

<sup>6</sup> Cooperrider, David L., Frank Barrett, and Suresh Srivastva. “Social construction and appreciative inquiry: A journey in organizational theory.” In *Management and Organization: Relational Alternatives to Individualism*. Hosking, Dian, Peter Dachler, and Kenneth Gergen, eds., 157–200. Brookfield, USA: Avebury Press, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Accelerated education, development programs, and community education programs were most prominent within literature from LIC and MICs, while remedial programs were relevant to low-income countries, middle-income countries, and high-income countries.

<sup>8</sup> Nicholson, Sue. *Accelerated learning in post-conflict settings: A discussion paper*. Save the Children, 2006.

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<sup>9</sup> Menendez, Alicia. S., Aparna Ramesh, Pamela Baxter, and Lindsay North. *Accelerated education programs in crisis and conflict*. Prepared for USAID. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago – NORC, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> AEWG. *Guide to the accelerated education principles*. Geneva, 2017. <https://inee.org/resources/accelerated-education-10-principles-effective-practice>

<sup>11</sup> AEWG. *COVID-19 Pathways for the return to learning: Guidance on condensing a curriculum*. 2020.

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<sup>12</sup> Student Achievement Partners (SAP). *2020-2021 Priority instructional content in ELA/literacy and mathematics*. 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Institute for Education Policy (IEP). *Don't remediate, accelerate! Effective catch-up learning strategies - evidence from the United States*. Developed for the Global Education Coalition, UNESCO, 2012.

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<sup>14</sup> Terzian, Mary and Kristin A. Moore. “Effective and promising summer learning programs for low-income children: Preliminary lessons from experimental evaluations of social interventions.” *Child Trends Fact-Sheet*, 2009.

<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Effective-and-Promising-Summer-Learning-Programs-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> The New Teacher Project (TNTP). *The opportunity myth*. 2018. [https://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP\\_The-Opportunity-Myth\\_Web.pdf](https://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_The-Opportunity-Myth_Web.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Both studies examined a wide age range of learners and covered primary and secondary levels.

<sup>17</sup> The New Teacher Project (TNTP). *The opportunity myth*.

<sup>18</sup> As discussed below, the study identifies three additional characteristics of classrooms that further support acceleration. TNTP (2018) identifies four resources essential to accelerating learning: “1) consistent opportunities to work on grade-appropriate assignments, 2) strong instruction where students do most of the thinking in a lesson, 3) deep engagement in what they're learning, 4) teachers who hold high expectations for students and believe they can meet grade level-standards.” (p. 22).

<sup>19</sup> Banerjee, Abhijit, Rukmini Banjeri, James Berry, Esther Duflo, Harini Kannan, Shobhini Mukherji, Shobhini, Marc Shotland, and Michael Walton. “Mainstreaming an effective intervention: Evidence from randomized evaluations of ‘Teaching at the Right Level’ in India.” NBER Working Paper No. 22746. 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Stromme Foundation. *Evaluation report of the Speed School in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger*. 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Akyeampong Kwame, Marcos Delprato, Ricardo Sabates, Zoe James, John Pryor, Jo Westbrook, Sarah Humphreys, and Asmelash H. Tsegay. *Speed School programme in Ethiopia: Tracking the progress of Speed School students: 2011-17*. Falmer, Brighton, UK: Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, 2018.

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- <sup>23</sup> Duflo, Annie and Jessica Kiessel. “Every child counts: Adapting and evaluating research results on remedial education across contexts through a nationwide randomized experiment in Ghana.” 2014  
[https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/conference/download.cgi?db\\_name=NEUDC2015&paper\\_id=538](https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/conference/download.cgi?db_name=NEUDC2015&paper_id=538)
- <sup>24</sup> Banerji, Rukmini and Madhav Chavan. “Improving literacy and math instruction at scale in India's primary schools: The case of Pratham's Read India program.” *Journal of Educational Change* 17, (2016): 453-475.
- <sup>25</sup> While these examples focus on the primary level, they may provide insights into possibilities for models at the secondary level.
- <sup>26</sup> This section builds upon and extends previous resources including USAID's [Universal Design for Learning to Help All Children Read](#) Toolkit, the [Social and Emotional Learning and Soft Skills USAID Education Policy Brief](#) and resources from the Global Reading Network (GRN) critical topics series. These include: [Promoting Successful Literacy Acquisition through Structured Pedagogy](#), [Assessment to Inform Instruction: Formative Assessment](#), and [Coaching in Early Grade Reading Programs: Evidence, Experiences, and Recommendations](#).
- <sup>27</sup> Schweisfurth, Michele. *Learner-Centered Education in international perspective*. *Journal of International and Comparative Education*, 2 no. 1 (2013): 1-7.
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- <sup>29</sup> Abadzi, Helen. *Efficient Learning for the Poor: Insights from the Frontiers of Cognitive Neuroscience*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006.
- <sup>30</sup> Terzian, Mary and Kristin A. Moore. “Effective and promising summer learning programs for low-income children
- <sup>31</sup> Pane, John F., Elizabeth D. Steiner, Matthew Baird, and Laura S. Hamilton. *Continued progress: Promising evidence on personalized learning*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED571009>
- <sup>32</sup> The New Teacher Project (TNTP). *The opportunity myth*.
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