



Executive Summary Accelerated Education Working Group: **Accelerated Education Principles Field Studies**

Background

The Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG)¹, is made up of education partners working in Accelerated Education (AE). In 2016 the AEWG developed *10 Principles for Effective Practice for Accelerated Education* and an accompanying Guide. The 10 Principles aim to clarify the essential components of an effective AE program. Each principle contains evidence-informed best practices which can be viewed as a series of key actions or indicators to support the design, implementation and evaluation of AE work. The accompanying Guide specifies key definitions, essential information, recommended actions based on good practice, indications of challenges, examples, case studies, and suggested reading.²

Testing of these tools commenced in mid 2016 and included: (1) development of a checklist, based on the 10 AE principles and associated subprinciples which was disseminated to AE programs through the AEWG; (2) solicitation of feedback from global AE experts; and (3) field visits to 4 AE programs in 3 locations: Kenya, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, (with a desk study conducted in Mali) to test the relevance, utility and application of the AE Principles and Guide within various contexts, with different target populations, and at various stages of the program cycle.

Summary of key findings

There is a need for the AEWG to see the development of the Principles and Guide as the first step in improving the quality of AE provision globally, and producing a stronger evidence base on which advocacy for AE can better occur in international and regional arenas. Findings from the field study make clear that:

- 1 There was a sense that for too long, there has been a high level of inconsistency in terms of what constitutes a 'quality' AE program, and approaches to delivering AE programs have varied significantly. The field work confirmed the value of having AE principles and guidance to support programming.
- 2 The Principles and Guide were also noted to provide programs with clear structure in terms of key design features for AE programs, and important considerations when undertaking internal or external assessments of activities conducted to date. Across all four field study sites visited, there was also a clear sense that the principles in accompaniment with the Guide, could serve a critical role in advocacy work.
- 3 In most settings where AE programs occur at present, the Principles need to be viewed as aspirational rather than common standards of practice. There are institutional, contextual and programmatic constraints which may not be immediately resolvable. This necessitates a long-term view to supporting and strengthening AE provision globally.
- 4 The production and distribution of the Principles and Guide on their own are unlikely to wield sufficient traction. For this reason there is a critical need for the AEWG members to consider an initial and ongoing process for supporting the socialisation and contextualisation of the Principles. This process 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.
- 5 Results from both the Principles Checklist and the in-depth field studies suggests that interpretation (and subsequent enactment) of each of the 10 Principles will vary significantly with the broad parameters set out. There is some danger that the specificity of the subprinciples and an interpretation of the Principles as standards rather than guidance, may work against this critical aspect of contextualisation.
- 6 Each of the 10 Principles requires different levels of action from various actors involved in AE funding, policy, implementation and assessment. Further guidance and support will be needed to ensure that these actors understand what this might look like and tangible actions and steps they can take.

¹ The AEWG is currently led by UNHCR with representation from UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, NRC, Plan, IRC, Save the Children, ECCN and War Child Holland.

² This Guide was developed by Enabling Education Network (EENET) for the AEWG, and was based on an extensive review of the literature and partner program documentation.

- 7 Linking program performance against the AE Principles with key AE Outcomes should not be done in totality, but with clear articulation of how particular principles link to specific outcomes for the program.
- 8 As the Principles and Guide are increasingly utilised by a range of AE programs, policies, donors and supporting institutions, a stronger evidence base, as well as key learnings will emerge. These should then be incorporated into subsequent versions of the Principles and Guide, to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to changing contexts.

Recommendations

The report also makes a series of recommendations for consideration by the AEWG in terms of its next steps. Some of the key recommendations are highlighted below.

Principles Checklist

1. Better guidance and support needs to accompany the Principles Checklist to ensure that it is being used for formative purposes.
2. The Principles Checklist should also collect data on program outcomes, particularly if it is to be collated and used for research and advocacy purposes by the AEWG.
3. The domains currently specified in the Guide and the Principles Checklist (learner, systems/policy, programme management) may need reorganising to better reflect the specific intent behind each of the Principles. A suggested reorganisation is to use the categories of learners, programme management (which includes community engagement), alignment, and teachers.

Further dissemination of the Principles and Guide to the Principles

1. The Guide needs to clarify that there are inherent tensions between the 10 Principles, that sometimes cannot be easily resolved.
2. A clear process for socialising the AE Principles and Guide should be developed by the AEWG so that the broader AE community understands the rationale and purpose of having the Principles and Guide, as well as the need to contextualise these Principles to their context. Within this plan, consideration needs to be given by the AEWG of how key messages from the Guide/Principles may need to vary, depending on the context and audience.
3. The Guide may need to be adapted or supplemental guidance produced if it is to support the range of different stakeholders, and different stages of AE design, delivery and assessment. Specifically, further guidance is needed on the role and responsibility of policy makers and donors in supporting the Principles, as well as specifications in areas such as design (namely whether AE is the right response in a particular context), and monitoring and evaluation.
4. Engagement with donors, relevant government and/or humanitarian actors is critical for the Principles to have relevance and immediacy for AE program designers and implementers.

Researching the relationship between alignment and AE outcomes

1. If the aim of a principles checklist is to assess the alignment of AE programs globally to core tenets, it may be necessary for the AEWG to consider collecting data on a few key principles or sub-principles that are at the core of the purpose of AE, as specified in the AEWG definition of AE in the Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies Term Bank.
2. Linking AE outcomes to the 10 Principles in aggregate may not be possible or wield useful information. Rather, thought may need to be given to mapping the relationship between particular principles and specific AE outcomes.