



AEWG at CIES 2019: Talking Evidence and Tools

By Kayla Boisvert

At the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) 2019 Annual Conference in San Francisco, representatives of the [Accelerated Education Working Group](#) (AEWG) and its partners working in Accelerated Education (AE) presented evidence on the impact of Accelerated Education programs (AEPs) and reflected on the use of the AEWG tools to support policymakers and practitioners globally.

The AEWG and its partners collaborated on two panels:

1. Building the Evidence Base for Accelerated Education

Chaired by **Kayla Boisvert** of the USAID [Education in Crisis and Conflict Network](#) (ECCN), this panel discussed various evaluation and research studies that examine the effectiveness of AE. This panel aligns with the first broad objective identified in the AEWG's [Learning Agenda](#), as well as the AEWG's third strategic focus for 2019, to build the evidence base for AE and begins to fill the gap in knowledge about the effectiveness of AE.

- **Jessica Oddy** from [Save the Children UK](#) presented findings from their [AEP research study](#), which explores the perspectives of children, families, teachers, and wider educational stakeholders regarding what supports or hinders education transition along their displacement journey. The findings from the children's workshops enabled the team to gain a rich understanding of children and young people. Please see presentation [here](#).
- **Jessica Lowden** from [Geneva Global](#) presented on applied research, focusing on the execution of their flagship education project, Speed School, in Ethiopia and Uganda. The Speed School model accelerates the first three grades of primary school into ten months. She discussed findings from a [six-year longitudinal quasi-experimental study](#) which found that Speed School students attended school more regularly, were more likely to stay enrolled, achieved higher results on literacy and numeracy tests, and had higher educational aspirations than their peers in the formal schools. Please see presentation [here](#).

- **Romain Cardon** from [Plan International in Burkina Faso](#) shared good practices and lessons learned from their AEP, PASS+, including the importance of AE being a legitimate, credible education option for most at risk out of school children, and emphasizing gender equity and alignment with the national education system. He noted the steps the PASS+ project has taken to foster sustainability and alignment with national education systems at multiple levels, from local to national, and contributing to successful implementation at the regional level. Please see presentation [here](#).
- **Anne Breivik** from [Strømme Foundation](#) presented on a recent [Norad-funded impact evaluation](#) of Strømme Foundation's Speed School program in West Africa. The evaluation concludes that the program provides an efficient and cost-effective way to bring out-of-school children back into education. 90 percent of children enrolled in the period 2014–2017 completed the course, of which 48 percent were girls. The evaluation also found that the program provided high value for money, at an average cost per enrolled child of \$132 over a ten-month period. Please find the presentation [here](#).

Sabrina Hervey from [Educate A Child](#), a global program of the Education Above All foundation, concluded the presentations. Hervey provided incisive comments and questions about the importance of building the evidence base for AE, the need for participation of beneficiaries in research and evaluation, gender-sensitive programming and examining gender equity through evidence, and the need for additional studies, including exploring value for money.

The panel presentations contribute to the growing evidence base on AE and suggest important future directions to understand the efficacy of AEPs globally. The AEWG and partners continue to build this evidence base, recognizing the need for a greater understanding of what works and why to meet the needs of over-age, out-of-school children and youth.

2. Principles in Action! Roundtable

The second session was a roundtable discussion chaired by **Ash Hartwell** of ECCN. AEWG members and partners presented various ways they are using the AEWG principles and tools globally.

- **Caroline Keenan** from [War Child Canada](#) discussed how stakeholders developed national AE guidelines based on the [AEWG 10 Principles for Effective Practice](#) to support harmonization of AEPs across implementers in Uganda. She also explained the process of developing a lower secondary AEP aligned with the Ministry strategy in Uganda, collaborating with community members to identify AE center sites and students as well as developing and piloting the curriculum. Please see summary [here](#).

- **Kayla Boisvert** from ECCN presented on work she conducted with USAID Learning Appender and the Ministry of Education in Guatemala, using the AEWG 10 Principles to enhance provision of alternative education in Guatemala. Her presentation described how they support the development of curriculum, learning materials, placement tests, teacher training, and research and evaluation. She also discussed some of the successes and challenges of adapting the Principles in the Guatemalan context. Please see summary [here](#).
- **Claire Stiglmeier, Lauren Gerken, and Alison Doyle** from [Teachers College Columbia](#) (TCC) University presented the development of a much-needed teacher training pack for AE. They discussed the importance of the collaborative process the AEWG undertook in developing the teacher training materials that were initially drafted by TCC and the AEWG. They also introduced the content of the training pack and described how it can be adapted to meet the context-specific needs of learners and teachers. The AEWG teacher training pack will be piloted in 2019. Please see summary [here](#).
- **Mona Younes** presented work she has done with the [Carey Institute](#), describing an online introductory training to AE based on the AEWG 10 Principles. She reviewed the process of offering the training online to global audiences and suggested implications for future trainings using ICT. Please see summary [here](#).

Ash Hartwell then facilitated a discussion about teacher training for AE, the practical implications of secondary AE, and the critical importance of advocacy and policy-level partnership and collaboration. Participants were highly engaged in this roundtable, which both highlighted the key issues faced by those implementing AE and connected those working in AE, to facilitate ongoing dialogue about the use and contextualization of the AEWG tools in a variety of contexts.