

ACCELERATED EDUCATION
WORKING GROUP

The case for Accelerated Education

What is the problem?

There are approximately 263 million children and youth out of school globally today.¹ Conflict, poverty, and other forms of marginalisation often preclude children from entering into school in the first place, or force them to drop out of school earlier than they should. The most vulnerable and marginalised – often displaced children and young people, ex-combatants, girls and children with disabilities – are most likely to find it difficult to access and complete their education.

Yet, passage of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reaffirms a global commitment to ensuring that all boys and girls will have access to, and complete, free, equitable, and quality primary education by 2030. The SDGs are based on the fundamental premise of leaving no one behind and starting with those furthest behind. Yet, **for many over-aged out-of-school children and youth, the formal schooling system may no longer be a viable option.**

What role might Accelerated Education play?

National education policies often preclude learners from enrolling after a certain age. Additionally, over-age learners who do enrol in formal education systems are found to be much more likely to drop out early, with this phenomenon particularly true amongst households in poverty.² Often, when over-age children return to school, there is not only a risk of overcrowding classrooms and difficult teaching conditions with multiple age ranges, but there are also considerable protection risks in mixing older and younger children in one class.

¹ UNESCO-UIS (2016). Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education? (Policy Paper 27/Fact Sheet 37). Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002452/245238E.pdf>.

² See footnote 1.

In response, the *Education 2030: Framework for Action* identifies the need for non-formal and informal education programming which affords flexible and alternative pathways and entry/re-entry points into the formal education system. Importantly, it is acknowledged that the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired in these programmes should be recognised, validated and accredited. Accelerated education programming serves both mandates.

Accelerated Education (AE) programmes are used to promote access to certified education for children and adolescents who have missed out on substantial amounts of schooling.

What are Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs)?

AEPs are flexible, age-appropriate programmes, run in an accelerated timeframe, which aim to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth – particularly those who missed out on, or had their education interrupted due to poverty, marginalisation, conflict and crisis. The goal of accelerated education programmes is to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies for basic education using effective teaching and learning approaches that match their level of cognitive maturity.³

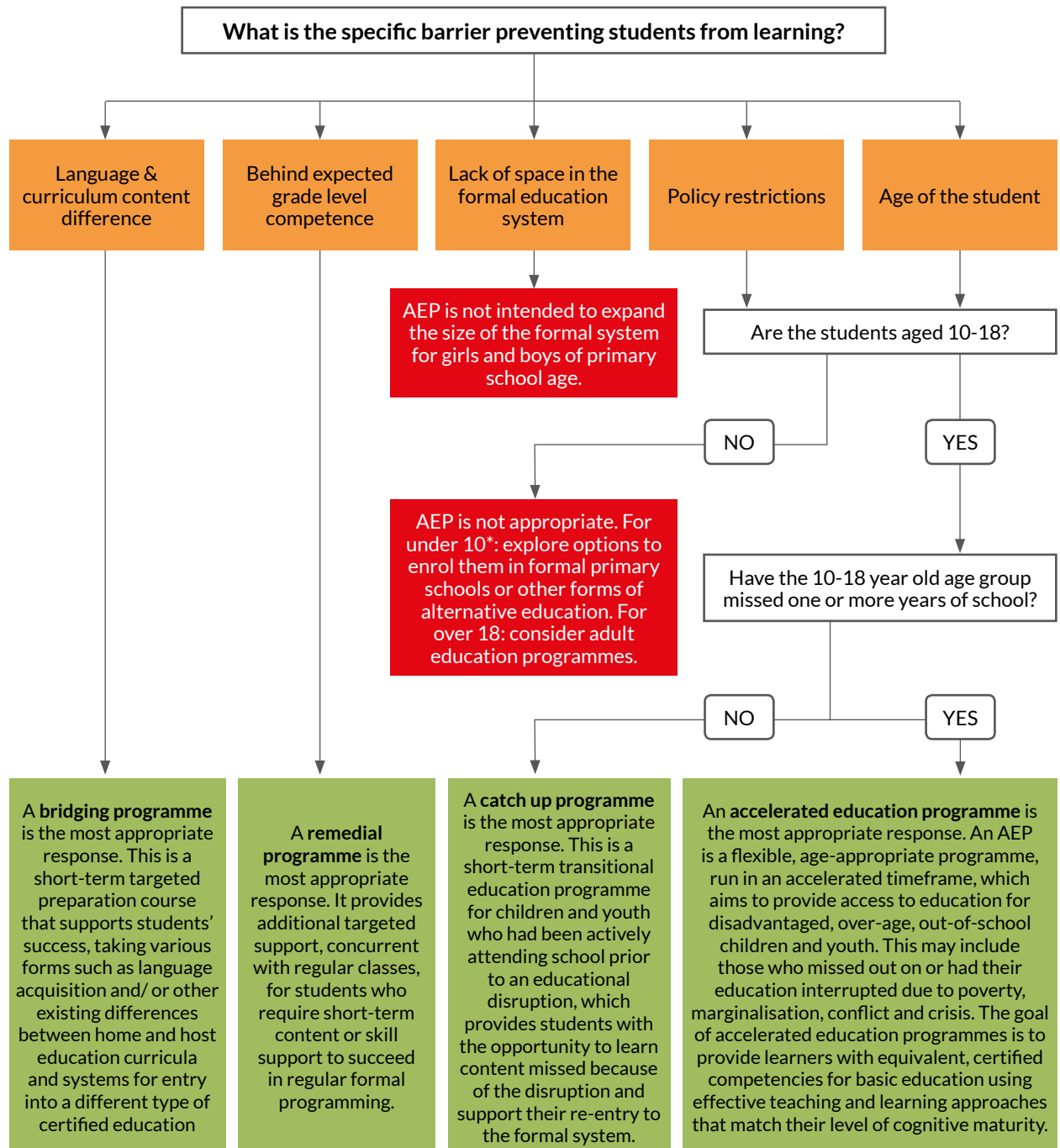
AEPs emphasise acceleration of a curriculum, and allow students to complete a certified, equivalent level of education in a shortened time frame. This requires increased and more effective time on task, an emphasis on literacy and numeracy with a socio-emotional learning component and oftentimes, removal of non-core subjects. Programmes also often demonstrate flexibility to meet the unique needs of the learners they aim to serve – both in relation to timetabling and location of instruction. The intention of this flexibility is to enable students to study in a way and at a level appropriate to their ability, age and circumstance. **On completion of an AEP, the intention is for learners to reintegrate into the formal schooling system, enter into skills-based technical and vocational education, or to enter directly into the workforce, but with core literacy and numeracy skills in place.**

There are varied structures of an AEP, and they vary in their pace of acceleration, the age range they target, and the approach to teaching and learning that they employ. While AEPs normally cover most or all of primary education, some AEPs have also been extended to the secondary level.

It is important to note that AEPs are distinct from other forms of alternative education. The chart below may help programme designers, policy makers, donors and national governments to identify if AEPs are the right response.

³ Accelerated Education definition by the Inter Agency Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG), October 2017.

When is Accelerated Education a relevant response?



What are the core tenets of quality Accelerated Education provision?

With the goal of strengthening the quality of accelerated education (AE) programming through a more harmonised, standardised approach, the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG), led by UNHCR and with representation from nine member organisations, has identified a set of 10 evidence-based Accelerated Education Principles. They help establish clear, common aspirations for AEPs globally and clarify the essential components of effective AEPs. They are broken down into several categories as noted below:

LEARNERS

Principle 1:

AEP is flexible and for over-age learners

Principle 2:

Curriculum, materials and pedagogy are genuinely accelerated, AE-suitable and use relevant language of instruction

Principle 3:

AE learning environment is inclusive, safe and learning-ready

TEACHERS

Principle 4:

Teachers are recruited, supervised and remunerated

Principle 5:

Teachers participate in continuous professional development

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Principle 6:

Goals, monitoring and funding align

Principle 7:

AE centre is effectively managed

Principle 8:

Community is engaged and accountable

ALIGNMENT WITH MOE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Principle 9:

AEP is a legitimate, credible education option that results in learner certification in primary education

Principle 10:

AEP is aligned with the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture

Further details, and specific Action Points for each of these principles are described in the *Guide to Accelerated Education Principles*. This Guide and other resources produced by the Accelerated Education Working Group are available on the ECCN website (www.eccnetwork.net).