Non-formal Education for Adolescents and Youth in Crisis and Conflict Contexts: a Proposed Taxonomy

**Inter-agency
Network for Education
in Emergencies**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

AEP	Accelerated Education Program
AEWG	Accelerated Education Working Group
AEWS	Alternative Education Workstream
ALS	Alternative Learning System
CBE	Complementary Basic Education
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EDC	Education Development Center
EiCC	Education in Crisis and Conflict
FLS	Flexible Learning Strategies
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
I/NGO	International/Non-governmental Organization
INEE	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
NFE	Non-formal Education
PSS/SEL	Psychosocial Support/Social Emotional Learning
RVA	Recognition, Validation, and Accreditation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TECs	Temporary Education Centers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

PREFACE

This *Background Paper* and its companion *Issues and Considerations Paper* were commissioned in 2019, well before the world was overtaken by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the pandemic led to the unprecedented closure of schools worldwide, at one point forcing approximately 90 percent of the world's student population to stay at home. While some students were able to continue learning at home through a variety of distance education modalities, many were denied their right to education. This was because no distance education opportunities were available or students were unable to access available programming, or because other pressing concerns, such as the economic impact of the pandemic, affected their ability to return to school.

While data on the impact of COVID-19 specifically in crisis contexts is limited, the pandemic affected over one billion learners worldwide due to school closures in 2020 (UNESCO, 2020). Amid the devastating loss caused by the pandemic, an unprecedented need for non-formal learning models has surfaced. On the one hand, the pandemic has prompted a significant (and in some cases irreparable) decline in the number of students engaged in schooling and in turn their learning outcomes; the World Bank estimates that five months of school closure will result in a learning loss of 0.6 years of schooling, adjusted for quality (World Bank, 2020). In contexts where learning outcomes were already poor, a further decline puts an additional burden on struggling students and education systems. On the other hand, the pandemic has forced national and local governments, donors, and civil society to reexamine their assumptions and ways of working relative to education, which has prompted rich and promising innovations in our thinking about education's purpose, modalities, and essential content. In this regard, there is reason to be hopeful that the formerly rigid boundaries separating formal and non-formal education may soften and ultimately lead to a blending of the best of both worlds, to the benefit of more students.

In this time of unprecedented global upheaval in education, this paper is more relevant than ever. We hope it will facilitate further dialogue about the need and audience for non-formal education in crisis- and conflict-affected settings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, the global community reasserted its commitment to the provision of high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education for all by 2030 (UNGA, 2015). Despite this pledge, a significant number of adolescents and youth living in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts around the world are currently out of school.[1]

Non-formal education (NFE) programs offer an alternative to formal education for out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth, and for learners for whom the formal education system is not a good fit. NFE programs provide a flexible, responsive education that is better suited to the unique circumstances of these groups, and it enables them to continue or to complete missed education, and/or to build necessary life and professional skills. However, NFE programming in crisis and conflict settings currently varies widely in its content, delivery modalities, educational quality, the certification provided upon completion of the program (or lack thereof), and target populations. Moreover, there is little shared language or common understanding in the current literature to explain which needs NFE programming addresses, and for whom. This variety causes confusion and makes it difficult to establish clear policy, design, quality, and operational guidance.

This *Background Paper* and its companion *Issues and Considerations Paper* aim to address the confusion about NFE's definition, purpose, audience, and quality. The *Background Paper* proposes a taxonomy and definitions of NFE programming for adolescents and youth in conflict- and crisis-affected environments. It summarizes the historical and current use of terms related to NFE and reflects current policy and programmatic use of these terms. The companion *Issues and Considerations Paper* highlights the essential NFE-related challenges faced by adolescents and youth affected by crisis and conflict, and offers ideas for how to address them. Both papers are written for the benefit of education practitioners, donors, and policymakers working in crisis- and conflict-affected environments.

The taxonomy proposed in this Background Paper locates non-formal and alternative education within the broad landscape of education program options relevant to crisis- and conflict-affected contexts (Figure 1). It is intended to provide a shared understanding of the boundaries, relationships, and intersections between NFE and other forms of education, with the goal of supporting funders, policymakers, and implementers in conceptualizing how education programs may serve out-of-school adolescents and youth most effectively. The aim of the taxonomy is to represent various educational options that are equally valuable and have different purposes and benefits based on context.

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1   The World Health Organization defines "adolescents" as people between 10 and 19 years of age, whereas the United Nations defines "youths" as individuals ages 15 to 24.

Figure 1: Taxonomy of Alternative Education Programs
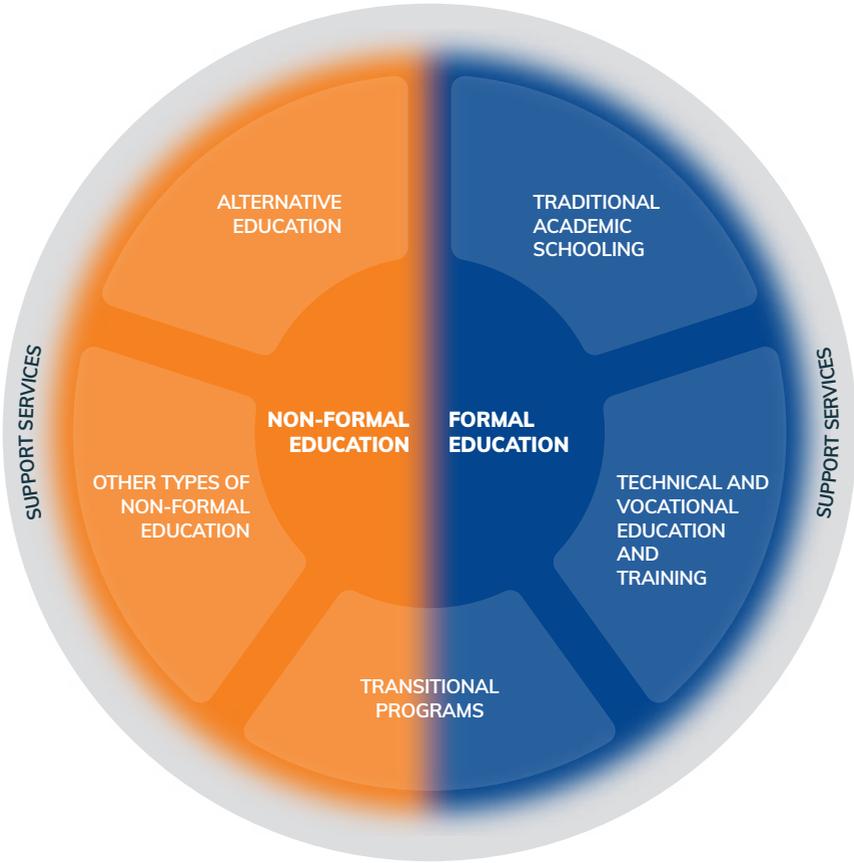
The definitions offered in this paper are not meant to be conclusive. They are, rather, suggestions related to a broader effort to make the variety of education terms and program types more coherent, and thus to be a first step toward better understanding of the NFE landscape in crisis and conflict settings. Given the wide variety of definitions currently in use, those offered here may not be immediately (or universally) agreed upon. This is as it should be: the consensus-building process should involve the full range of NFE stakeholders. Regardless of which terms are ultimately chosen, however, this discussion cannot wait. As the world's crises grow longer and—in the case of COVID-19—broader, millions of out-of-school adolescents and youth urgently need access to high-quality, flexible, and accredited education opportunities that meet their needs. Clarifying the different types of NFE programs and their relation to the formal education system are essential first steps in informing education policy and practice for out-of-school adolescents and youth.

The *INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery* (INEE, 2010) is the only global tool that articulates the minimum level of education quality and access during emergencies and through to recovery.[2] The INEE Minimum Standards for Education contains 19 standards, each with accompanying key actions and guidance notes. The handbook aims to enhance the quality of education preparedness, response, and recovery; increase access to safe and relevant learning opportunities; and ensure clear accountability and strong coordination in providing these services. The guidance in the *INEE Minimum Standards* is designed for use in a range of crises, including disasters caused by natural hazards and conflict, slow- and rapid-onset situations, and emergencies in rural and urban environments.

Learn more in the *INEE Minimum Standards:*

In this paper, text boxes will refer to the Minimum Standards that link the content of the paper to the broader Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) framework for providing quality education in emergencies. Each reference will indicate where you can find more information in the Minimum Standards.

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2   INEE is an open, global network of UN agencies, I/NGOs, donors, governments, universities, schools, teachers, learners, and crisis-affected populations. INEE members are I/NGO and UN personnel, ministries of education and other government staff, students, teachers, donors, and researchers. Our mission is to ensure the right to a quality, safe, and relevant education for all who live in emergency and crisis contexts through prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (INEE, 2010).

BACKGROUND

Crisis and conflict present many challenges to young people hoping to access high-quality education and improve their future opportunities. In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 127 million primary and secondary school-age children and young people living in crisis-affected countries were out of school, which is almost one-half of the global out-of-school population (INEE, 2020). Only 65 percent of children in conflict-affected countries complete primary school (UNESCO UIS, 2015).

The effects crisis has on education are compounded for older children. Among adolescents ages 10 to 19 living in emergency contexts, only 54 percent reach lower secondary school and 27 percent reach upper secondary school, compared to approximately 80 percent and 50 percent of their peers, respectively, in non-emergency contexts (UNICEF, 2018). For refugees in particular, the rate of attending secondary school is far lower (23 percent) than for secondary school-age children worldwide (84 percent) (UNHCR, 2017).

Although education data on youth ages 15 to 24 who are living in crisis and conflict contexts is scarcer, these young people are considered a priority population that has the potential either to contribute to ongoing conflict or to build peaceful societies. Only 79 percent of youth in such contexts have basic literacy skills, compared to 93 percent worldwide (UNESCO, 2011). In sub-Saharan Africa, where the proportion of youth relative to the total population is highest (Fawcett, Hartwell, & Israel, 2010), an estimated 89 million youth ages 12 to 24 are out of school (Inoue, Di Gropello, Taylor, & Gresham, 2015). These youth lack education certification and the basic skills they need to succeed in life and work. Equity in school access, promotion, and completion differs for children and youth across marginalized groups, depending on the context.

Adolescents and youth living in crisis and conflict contexts are out of school for many reasons. The Global Education Cluster's *Synthesis Report and Guidelines for Cash Programs* (2019) differentiates between supply-side and demand-side barriers to accessing education. Demand-side barriers include (a) social and cultural barriers (e.g., household choice, perceived lack of benefits from education); (b) economic barriers (e.g., payment to schools for tuition and other fees, payments needed outside of school for exams or to Parent Teacher Associations, opportunity costs of lost child labor); (c) protection-related barriers (e.g., conflict- or crisis-derived trauma, bullying, disability, school-related gender-based violence, physical violence and abuse in school, discrimination, missing documentation for enrollment or grade level). Supply-side barriers include (a) social and cultural barriers (e.g., biased or selective provision of services, bias among teachers); (b) service-related barriers (e.g., damaged or poor quality school structures, insufficient school capacity for an influx of students, inadequate teacher/learner ratios, untrained and/or uncertified teachers, foreign curriculum, curriculum language); and (c) protection barriers (e.g., lack of safety in, around, or while traveling to/from school; military use of schools; armed groups recruiting children in schools; gender-based violence in schools) (Global Education Cluster, 2019; Justino, 2014; UNHCR, 2018).

Poverty, adverse health effects, low returns on education, the threat of recruitment into armed forces, and persistent fear and insecurity often prevent children and youth from accessing education (Justino, 2014). Interruption of schooling due to conflict or crisis events can be one of the most significant barriers to returning to education.

Despite these challenges, adolescents and youth, families, and communities in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts prioritize education as a critical foundational need (e.g., Gladwell & Tanner, 2014; Nicolai & Hine, 2015; UNHCR, 2016). Education provides a structured environment and a sense of purpose for individuals living in stressful and fragile contexts (UNHCR, 2018a). It also can provide social-emotional support, protection, and health for adolescents and youth (INEE, 2016). Education also has the potential to reduce the level of conflict and violence in a society and to increase social cohesion (Justino, 2014; Smith, 2010). Such benefits are particularly tangible for adolescent and youth learners, who will become either "peacemakers or peace breakers" (UNHCR, 2018b).

NFE provides a way for out-of-school adolescents and youth to transition to formal education. It does the same for learners for whom formal education may not be the best fit, as it enables them to access technical/vocational/livelihoods training and develop the skills necessary for building good health, safety, and employment. A wide variety of current NFE programs could be understood as an alternative to the formal education system, from ad hoc temporary activities to full basic or secondary education programs that lead to certification. These programs are contextually specific and thus meet a range of needs in a variety of crisis contexts, including complex humanitarian emergencies, protracted crisis contexts, refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camp settings, urban areas affected by gang violence, post-conflict/recovery contexts, and regions affected by environmental disasters or epidemics. This diverse programming goes by many names. In some contexts, "alternative education" is preferred, while in others, "non-formal," "complementary," "extracurricular," or "out-of-school" education is used. Such lack of coherence in NFE naming, objectives, components, settings, and target populations makes it confusing for learners, parents, and communities to understand the purpose and value of various NFE programs and, more broadly, for practitioners and policymakers to clearly discern who is being served and who isn't; to what extent the needs of crisis- and conflict-affected out-of-school adolescents and youth are being met; and how, moving forward, program accessibility, equity, and quality can be improved for this large and growing population.

This *Background Paper* was commissioned by the Alternative Education Workstream (AEWS), which operates within the Education Policy Working Group of INEE with the aim of developing a suggested set of definitions and taxonomy of NFE programs in conflict- and crisis-affected contexts across the globe.[3] The intended audience for this paper is INEE members; this includes practitioners, donors, researchers, and policymakers who support NFE in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. The aim of this work is to prompt discussion and encourage consensus among NFE's diverse stakeholders regarding NFE program definitions, components, purposes, and target populations, and to provide the existing links to NFE programming within the INEE Minimum Standards so that such programs can be optimized to meet the needs of out-of-school adolescents and youths affected by crisis and conflict.

3 The companion *Issues and Considerations Paper* builds on these definitions and taxonomy to highlight, and offer programming guidance for, the major education and skill-development challenges faced by out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict contexts.

A NOTE ON TERMS AND LANGUAGE

Developing a shared vocabulary and taxonomy for NFE is a complicated but essential task. Language is powerful, political, and nuanced, especially when a variety of languages, dialects, and contexts are involved. The many terms used to describe NFE programs for out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict situations are context specific. For example, some stakeholders avoid the term "alternative," as they believe it implies that such programs are inferior to formal schooling; they prefer "non-formal," arguing that it indicates that a program is simply different from the formal schools.

The AEWS recognizes the importance of choosing terms carefully, thus it offers this framework for NFE as a starting point. The AEWS encourages policymakers and practitioners to consider the framework—including the value of moving toward a common set of definitions and taxonomy—when developing their own contextually specific and appropriate framework.

It is not likely that there will be universal agreement on these definitions; indeed, the literature review revealed considerable contradiction and conflation of terms. This first step is aimed at gaining a better understanding of the landscape of programs, and of the history of terms and usage, in order to conceptualize the field most effectively, both now and moving forward.

It also is important to note that the choice of language is relevant when comparing terms. This review was conducted in English, with some review of Spanish-language documents and policy; thus, the examples and data collected via the survey were only reviewed in English. Future work/research that explores the terms used in other relevant global languages would be both complementary and useful.

Learn more in the *INEE Minimum Standards*:
- **Domain 1: Foundational Standards-Community Participation**
  - Standard 2: Resources, Guidance Note 2 regarding **promoting access and security**
- **Domain 1: Foundational Standards-Analysis**
  - Standard 2: Response Strategies, Guidance Note 8 regarding **overcoming constraints of organizational mandates to develop education strategies**
- **Domain 1: Foundational Standards-Analysis**
  - Standard 3: Monitoring, Guidance Note 4 regarding **monitoring of learners**
- **Domain 3 Teaching and Learning-All Standards**
- **Domain 5: Education Policy**
  - Standard 1: Law and Policy Formation, Guidance Note 2 regarding **national education laws and policies ensuring the continuity of education**

Learn more about psychosocial support/social-emotional learning (PSS/SEL) in the INEE Guidance Note on Psychosocial Support.

Learn more about Conflict Sensitive Education in the INEE Guidance Note on Conflict Sensitive Education

HISTORY OF "NON-FORMAL" AND "ALTERNATIVE" EDUCATION: A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Young people whose opportunity to attend school has been interrupted by crisis or conflict may have varied goals. Some may want to complete their schooling but be unwilling to attend primary school with younger children. However, they may be willing to attend an NFE program that enables them to complete the primary or secondary cycle. Others may feel they cannot complete their schooling but would like to gain basic literacy and numeracy, along with a skill or trade, to improve their chances of employment. Moreover, children and youth affected by crisis and conflict will need psychosocial support and the chance to develop life skills so they can engage healthfully in society (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). A range of NFE pathways is being developed to meet the diverse goals and needs of young people affected by crisis and conflict. These pathways have their historical roots in the international development and education fields.

EMERGENCE OF "NON-FORMAL" AND "ALTERNATIVE" EDUCATION

The term "non-formal education" emerged in the development literature in the 1960s (Coombs, 1968) to describe a type of educational programming implemented in reaction to the rigidity and perceived failings of formal education systems around the globe. NFE programs encompassed all the "systematic programs and processes of education and training that lie outside 'formal' education" (p. 9). Like Paulo Freire's work to develop literacy and critical consciousness among the rural poor in Brazil and Chile, much early NFE focused on meeting the needs of adults. It included training for farmers and workers, functional literacy, on-the-job training, and special youth programs (Coombs, 1968).

Many NFE programs were largely based on a Freirean education methodology, therefore they often offered a more flexible, learner-centered pedagogy and deeper, more active engagement in the learning process than what was observed in formal school systems (Christophersen, 2015). While NFE can be defined as organized educational activity that takes place outside the formal school system, it is ideologically associated with a learner-centered, participatory pedagogy. In 1974, Coombs and Ahmed (cited in Rogers, 2004, para. 8) defined NFE as "any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children." However, this definition was imprecise, and individual countries defined NFE in their own ways. Some included every educational activity offered outside schools and colleges; others included educational activities provided by stakeholders other than the ministry of education, such as international/non-governmental organizations (I/NGOs); and still others included educational opportunities provided by other ministries, in specific learning groups, or through radio and TV programs (Rogers, 2004). During its prime in the 1970s and 1980s, NFE was often seen as a solution for the ills of the education systems in developing countries, although some still considered it an inferior subsystem or a second-chance offering for those who missed out on formal schooling (Rogers, 2004).

The term "alternative education," which appears to have similar roots to "non-formal education," emerged in the (primarily Northern and Western literature) as a learner-centered, more flexible option to rigid formal education systems that failed to meet the needs of many learners. It is noteworthy, however, that the term "alternative education" has been more closely associated with alternative school movements in Western countries. While it gained significant prominence in the 1960s and 1970s—at the same time as the NFE movement described above—the alternative school movement in several Northern countries (e.g., United States, Canada, and United Kingdom) has its roots in the efforts of Swedish educator Ellen Key, Italian reformer Maria Montessori, Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (who founded the Waldorf Schools), and Americans John Dewey and Francis Parker, who spearheaded the American progressivist movement (Sliwka, 2008). Alternative education programs may provide mainstream learners with educational choice and pedagogical variety, or offer a "last-chance" option for young people at risk of dropping out.

Still, the term "alternative education" has sometimes been used to describe educational programs in developing countries and crisis- and conflict-affected contexts outside the formal schools (see, e.g., Farrell & Hartwell, 2008; Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Echoing the focus of Freirean educators who used the term "non-formal education," Farrell and Hartwell (2008) specifically emphasize programs that use a radically different, more learner-centered pedagogy. They write, "What we have come to understand about human learning has almost nothing to do with how schooling continues to be conducted" (p. 12), and they argue that alternative education pedagogy aligns more closely with the way we know learning happens. Farrell and Hartwell (2008) cite the same origins of alternative schooling for NFE—that is, 1960s and 1970s literacy and community-development initiatives—including programs such as *Escuela Nueva* in Colombia, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, Schools for Life Ghana, and the Community Schools Program in Egypt as exemplar alternative education programs.

Non-formal and alternative education emerged nearly simultaneously in different global contexts, and with principles and practices rooted in similar critiques of formal education. However, while the two terms are often used interchangeably, they can have significantly different definitions, target groups and goals, and implementation strategies across the international development and education fields.

NON-FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TODAY: EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

After the late 1980s, the concept of NFE nearly disappeared from the education discourse. It reemerged in the 1990s before and after the Jomtien Convention and the birth of the Education For All movement, which emphasized the global need to ensure access to quality education for all children. By the time the SDGs were set in 2015, it had become absolutely critical to acknowledge that children, adolescents, and youth in crisis and conflict settings remained difficult to reach. The global funding pool Education Cannot Wait (ECW) was established during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit with the explicit aim of supporting education in emergency programming. In 2018, ECW supported approximately 260,000 children and youth through NFE programming; additionally, 78 percent of ECW-supported countries included an NFE component in their education responses. Indeed, NFE, as well as its certification and standards, are an explicit component of ECW's (2018) theory of change.

Since 2000, a wide range of NFE programs for children and youth in emergency contexts has emerged. This includes programs for children who do not have access to formal schools (such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee in Bangladesh and Mali's community schools), as well as full NFE programs that lead to certification and accreditation of learning outcomes for adults who did not complete their schooling (such as in the Philippines and Thailand) (Rogers, 2004). Some contemporary groups see NFE more broadly still, such as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, which includes women's groups, agricultural groups, and more, along with non-formal schools for children (Rogers, 2004). However, NFE is now generally understood as organized learning that takes place outside recognized educational institutions, that is often focused on out-of-school children and youth, and that offers a second chance to those who missed out on or did not complete their schooling (Christophersen, 2015; ECW, 2018). These programs are often seen as more flexible and as having less qualified teachers, a simpler curriculum, and different teaching and learning materials than the formal schools (Rogers, 2005).

A NOTE ON "INFORMAL LEARNING"

Rogers (2004) asserts that the resurgence of the concept of NFE in the 1990s was based on the idea of lifelong learning, which reconceptualized education from the primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling model to focus on the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes over the course of a lifetime. The concept of lifelong learning is closely associated with Coombs' early typology, which differentiates between formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

Informal learning is an important concept in the typology of education because it, too, is often confused with the related terms of "non-formal" and "alternative" education. Coombs and Ahmed (1974, cited in Rogers, 2004) originally defined informal learning as

> the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment—at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganized and often unsystematic; yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person's total lifetime learning—including that of even a highly "schooled" person. (p. 8)

By this definition, informal learning is notably different from non-formal and alternative education. Still, it is important to consider the term in relation to NFE and alternative education, as it is sometimes used to describe structured, planned education programs. For example, in 2015, Christophersen noted that,

> in Jordan . . . where non-formal education is very clearly defined as an organized education opportunity for long-term school dropouts (as described above), all other education programs are defined as informal education. Informal education opportunities for Syrian refugees often focus on providing basic literacy and numeracy classes combined with psychosocial support and life skills. Informal education is not regulated and certified by the government and tends to be less structured and have uneven quality. (p. 7)

While Jordanian policy has since been updated, including widening the scope of NFE programming (and, thus, the definition), it is important to understand the diverse and often contradictory ways these terms are used, both historically and contemporarily.[4]

RECOGNITION, VALIDATION, AND ACCREDITATION OF NON-FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In crisis- and conflict-affected contexts, the terms "non-formal education" and "alternative education" have been used interchangeably. For example, INEE used NFE to describe structured education programs outside the formal system that may or may not lead to the accreditation of learning outcomes (INEE, 2010). Works by Farrell and Hartwell (2008) and Baxter and Bethke (2009)—both published by UNESCO—used the term "alternative education" to describe the same type of programming. Many stakeholders (e.g., ECW) currently cite UNESCO's definition of NFE for this same program type. [5]

However, two issues make it particularly important to develop a clear articulation of the types of programs that exist outside of formal schooling and to achieve consensus on their naming: first, the shift of NFE toward providing an alternative education pathway for out-of-school children and youth (following the Jomtien Convention and Education For All movement, on to the Millennium Development Goals and SDGs, and, importantly, as emphasized in the ECW strategy); and second, the push to recognize, validate, and accredit learning outcomes in NFE programs.

According to UNESCO (2015), "in a lifelong learning system, learning opportunities must be made available through all channels: formal, non-formal and informal. As lifelong learning values all kinds of learning experiences, learning outcomes should be recognized and validated independently of how, where and by whom they are acquired" (p. 11). Beginning in the late 1990s/early 2000s and gaining significant momentum from 2010 to 2015, many nations of the world accepted the need to recognize, validate, and accredit learning gained through education pathways outside the formal schools.

UNHCR (2019) currently emphasizes the accreditation of learning obtained in non-formal programs: "UNHCR strongly discourages investment in informal education when it is presented as a substitute for formal or non-formal education or that doesn't provide pathways leading to further accredited learning" (p. 14). This sentiment is echoed by a number of nations that have developed specific legislation, policies, strategies, and practices for recognizing and accrediting non-formal and informal learning (UNESCO, 2015), including many countries affected by crisis and conflict. This push to recognize, validate, and accredit the knowledge and competence obtained in education outside the formal system has highlighted the emergence of a subset of NFE programs that (1) help learners gain competencies equivalent to those gained through the formal system and to receive certification in those competencies; or (2) result in recognized certification/accreditation that supports the transition to upper grades or entry into formal education. The proliferation of these programs creates the need to more clearly define the types of programs implemented outside the formal system.

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4   See the Jordan Ministry of Education's (2017) national Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022, in which NFE programming, described as accredited by the government, includes programs implemented both by government and I/NGOs.
5   As noted above, "informal" education is also used in some contexts, while other terms, such as "complementary" education (e.g., Hartwell, 2007) add to the myriad terms.

In this *Background Paper*, we frame our literature review and our proposed taxonomy and definitions within some of these historical discourses and debates, and in light of the wide range of programming options designed to meet the needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. We do this noting that the proposed taxonomy and definitions do not describe clearly bounded categories of programs; rather, as Rogers (2004) noted, the boundaries are "fuzzy." Still, we find it important to update the terms and the taxonomy, specifically in light of the growing recognition that many out-of-school adolescents and youth need programs that allow them to develop competencies equivalent to those generally gained in formal schools, and that those competencies must be recognized, validated, and accredited. We note that the terms used will continue to evolve, be contextualized, and be contested.

Learn more in the *INEE Minimum Standards*:
- **Domain 3: Teaching and Learning**
  - Standard 3: Instruction and Learning Processes, Guidance Note 3 regarding **appropriate teaching methods in formal and non-formal education**

METHODOLOGY

In order to produce this report, we conducted an in-depth literature review, which we supplemented with a foundational survey and targeted consultation with experts in the field. An overview of our methods is provided below.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research was guided by the following questions, which were developed in collaboration with the INEE AEWS:

1. How is non-formal/alternative education for adolescents and youth conceptualized and defined in diverse crisis- and conflict-affected contexts?

    b. What program types/modalities exist? Who are the providers? What are the program objectives?

    c. What are the programs' key elements? What relationships exist between alternative/non-formal and formal education programs?

    d. What key tensions and contradictions exist?

2. What needs are non-formal/alternative education programs trying to address in crisis-affected contexts?

3. How can the relationships and boundaries be conceptualized by diverse non-formal/alternative education programs in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts? What taxonomies exist to conceptualize the range of non-formal/alternative education pathways?

4. What needs and challenges are facing non-formal/alternative education programs developed for adolescents and youth in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts in terms of access, quality, accreditation, certification, and sustainability?

5. What promising policies, approaches, and practices exist in non-formal/alternative education in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts? What must donors, implementers, and policymakers consider when determining which type of non-formal/alternative education program to administer?

This literature review is the first of two papers examining the NFE landscape for out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict contexts. It focuses on research questions 1 through 3.[6]

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6   Research questions 4 and 5 are addressed in the accompanying *Issues and Considerations Paper*.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This literature review is grounded in our conceptual framework for NFE programming for adolescents and youth in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. In this section, we elaborate on the previous historical review of alternative and non-formal education by defining crisis and conflict, as well as adolescents and youth. In order to work through the challenges inherent in reconciling the different interpretations and use of terms, this conceptual framework was iterated over the course of ten months, in close collaboration with the INEE AEWS.

Defining Crisis- and Conflict-affected Contexts

A challenging aspect of research on NFE in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts is trying to define what exactly is meant by "crisis" and "conflict." Education programming differs substantially in accordance with the type of crisis and across the regions of the globe. Thus, considering the landscape of NFE programs requires some differentiation among the various contexts.

Crisis, conflict, and emergency encompass a broad range of contexts. Humanitarian crises generally differentiate between man-made emergencies (i.e., armed conflict or a severe accident), disasters associated with natural hazards (i.e., earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, droughts, storms), biological hazards (i.e., epidemics), and complex emergencies (defined below). In Box 1, we offer definitions from the education in crisis and conflict (EiCC) and broader humanitarian literature.[7] These definitions and typologies highlight contextual elements that are critically relevant where NFE programs are operating. These definitions are overlapping and fluid, as a context may begin as a complex humanitarian emergency and become a protracted crisis over time. Moreover, in a context where there is a large population of forcibly displaced persons, it may be considered both a protracted crisis and a protracted refugee situation.

The list in Box 1 is helpful in situating approaches to serving out-of-school adolescents and youth within complex, dynamic contexts that affect the functioning of both state and non-state education providers. The capacity of governments to respond to the needs of all people affected by crisis and conflict depends on the nature, duration, and intensity of the particular situation, as well as the existing political, social, and economic conditions. For example, integrating Syrian refugees into schools in Turkey, where a strong, well-resourced education system was in place prior to the Syrian crisis, was accomplished far more readily than integrating South Sudanese, Congolese, and Burundian refugees into schools in Uganda, where schools were largely underfunded and overcrowded, and where a large proportion of the host population's children were out of school. Integrating non-state education providers—primarily I/NGOs—into the response is another factor to consider when planning education programming.

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7   The EiCC literature reviewed for this paper rarely offered in-depth definitions that differentiated between various contexts, except for noting the difference between a conflict-affected and disaster-affected context (King et al., 2019). Moreover, the majority of examples and programmatic literature reviewed for this paper focused on alternative education programs in protracted crisis contexts, which aligns with the literature (Nicolai & Hine, 2015).

BOX 1: DEFINITIONS OF CRISIS AND CONFLICT CONTEXTS

Complex Humanitarian Emergency Contexts

UNOCHA defines a complex emergency as "a multifaceted humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires a multi-sectoral, international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme" (retrieved from King et al., 2019). *Examples: Yemen, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Mozambique*

Protracted Crisis Contexts

"Protracted crisis" is used to describe "those environments in which a significant proportion of the population is acutely vulnerable to death, disease and disruption of livelihoods over a prolonged period of time. The governance of these environments is usually very weak, with the state having a limited capacity to respond to, and mitigate, the threats to the population, or provide adequate levels of protection" (FAO et al., 2017). *Examples: Haiti, DRC, Iraq, Syria, South Sudan, Mali, Honduras, Bangladesh, Yemen*

Protracted Refugee Situation

UNHCR defines a protracted refugee situation as one in which "refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries" (2004, p. 2; retrieved from King et al., 2019). Protracted refugee contexts may involve refugees living in both camp and non-camp settings. This term is used alongside the above protracted crisis definitions to further specify contexts with large refugee populations. *Examples: Kenya, Uganda, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Bangladesh*

Post-conflict Contexts

"Post-conflict contexts" have been defined as "conflict situation[s] in which open warfare has come to an end. Such situations remain tense for years or decades and can easily relapse into large-scale violence" (Junne & Verokren, 2005). Brown et al. (2015) suggest the following milestones toward a context being labeled "post-conflict": (a) cessation of hostilities and violence; (b) signing of political/peace agreements; (c) demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration; (d) refugee repatriation; (e) establishing a functioning state; (f) achieving reconciliation and societal integration; and (g) economic recovery. The USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) (2018) adds locations where active conflict ended within ten years. *Examples: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Colombia*

Post-crisis (non-conflict) Conflicts

The aftermath of disasters associated with natural hazards is often identified more clearly than those associated with conflict. Geophysical and meteorological disasters (e.g., earthquakes, tsunamis) turn toward recovery when the disruption has passed; climatological (e.g., droughts) follow similarly. Health epidemics are declared over when the number of new illnesses drops back to pre-epidemic levels. Underlying social, political, and economic conditions in a country influence the impact of a disaster, and there are myriad post-crisis contexts in which disasters and conflict interface. These contexts often may concentrate on "preparedness," especially in locations where disasters associated with natural hazards may reoccur. Post-crisis context responses are critically conflict sensitive and focus on resilience, disaster risk reduction, and preparedness (GFDRR, 2013).

Our review of the literature revealed that a great deal of emergency education programming takes place in situations of protracted crisis. There is further differentiation within this category that is notably relevant to the delivery of education programming, and to cooperation and alignment with government programming, based on capacity. Box 2 presents a typology of protracted crises, which describes various contexts and highlights important and significant differences across this category.

BOX 2: TYPOLOGY OF PROTRACTED CRISIS

Crises in contexts affected by recurrent or cyclical slow-onset natural hazards, which may be combined with low-intensity conflict, chronic vulnerability, and elements of state fragility, particularly where government-led social-protection systems work poorly and national crisis risk-management capacities, including access to risk financing, are limited
Examples: parts of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

Crises in contexts affected by low-frequency but high-intensity natural hazards, such as earthquakes or cyclones, in contexts with existing chronic vulnerabilities are compounded by environmental degradation, epidemics, and displacement
Examples: Haiti, DRC (Ebola)

Crises in states suffering from medium- to high-intensity conflict and large amounts of internal and/or external displacement and thereby require a political solution
Examples: Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Yemen, Mali

Crises in middle-income states hosting large influxes of forcibly displaced people from neighboring countries with relatively strong capacity and domestic resources to manage crisis
Examples: Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey

Crises in low-income states hosting large influxes of refugees from neighboring countries, with relatively weak capacity and resources to manage crisis
Examples: Uganda, Kenya, Bangladesh

Contexts with sustained and large-scale gang violence and recruitment of adolescents and youth into gang activities and membership, requiring intervention at the state and international level
Examples: Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua
Source: UNOCHA (2015)

The review below considers NFE programs in a variety of the contexts mentioned above, including the following:[8]

- For Syrian refugees in neighboring host countries Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey
- For IDPs and those affected by ongoing conflict in their home countries of South Sudan, Mali, Yemen, and Syria
- For youth affected by gang violence in Latin America
- For post-conflict contexts that are still fragile for youth, as in Sierra Leone and Liberia
- For long-term, large-scale refugee contexts, such as Kenya and Uganda
- For complex humanitarian contexts, such as the ongoing Ebola outbreak in the DRC
- For contexts exposed to high-impact disasters associated with natural hazards, such as South Asia or Haiti

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8   The relevance of the nature of each context is highlighted and elaborated on in the findings section, and is addressed in greater depth in the companion *Issues and Considerations Paper*.

Defining Adolescents and Youth

Definitions of "adolescents" and "youth" vary widely and are most often determined by age, but they may also be defined by their cognitive, social, and emotional development or life circumstances, such as being a student or working. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) defines an adolescent as a person between 10 and 19 years of age. This overlaps with the term "youth," which the United Nations defines as individuals ages 15 to 24, and "young person," those ages 10 to 24 (UNDESA, 2013).

Adolescence and youth/young adulthood are periods in a person's life in which they have specific needs related to their stage of development. It is also a time for developing new knowledge and skills, learning to manage emotions and social relationships, and building attitudes and aptitudes that will enable a person to assume adult roles successfully (WHO, 2014).

These terms are often used interchangeably, and they may be used differently in different contexts. For example, while adolescence begins at age 12 in some countries, the African Union defines youth as people ages 15 to 35 (USAID, 2013). Additionally, when data on youth ages 15 to 24 are provided in national datasets, it is often because they have been aggregated in ways that do not specifically distinguish the adolescent years from ages 10 to 19. Moreover, use of the terms "adolescent" and "youth" or of data by age group is often a matter of practicality (WHO, 2014).

In this paper, we generally understand adolescents and youth as individuals ages 10 to 19 and 15 to 24, respectively, following INEE's specified age ranges. However, we note that, in reviewing the literature on adolescents and youth, the documents we reviewed often did not specify the ages covered in their definitions, or they used different age ranges than INEE. Therefore, we use the INEE definition loosely and examine the literature on adolescents and youth as the authors, organizations, and programs define the terms.

Finally, as noted elsewhere (USAID, 2013), in situations of crisis or conflict, adolescents and youth face challenges that are unique due to their age and developmental stage, and to the situation of crisis they are living in. Adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict are more likely to be out of school than their younger peers, and they may be required to take on work and household responsibilities prematurely (UNESCO UIS, 2015). They also are at greater risk than their younger peers of being recruited into armed forces and of experiencing sexual and gender-based violence (USAID, 2013). Finally, young people in crisis and conflict are often considered part of the problem that needs to be addressed or as a threat to be mitigated, such as when crime, violence, and conflict are attributed to "youth bulges," which is when a large share of a population in a country is comprised of children and young people (USAID, 2013).

Noting the unique challenges adolescents and youth face in crisis and conflict situations, we frame this paper around the understanding that young people have both specific needs and unique strengths and abilities. NFE is an opportunity to build on their inherent capacities and agency, to improve opportunities for their own future and for that of their family and community, and to contribute to an equitable, peaceful, and prosperous society.

METHODS

Our methods involved three major components: (1) a systematic literature review, (2) a foundational survey, and (3) consultation with stakeholders. We describe each of these briefly below.

Literature Review

The literature review focused primarily on policy and programming since 2009, when a similar review was conducted by Baxter and Bethke. We used the review as a reference point for framing this paper, with particular emphasis on the changing landscape of alternative and non-formal education programming over the past decade. We conducted an iterative, systematic search of scholarly databases, and of the websites and databases of leading education in emergencies stakeholders (see Appendix A for sources searched). The search used four main parameters that we defined in consultation with the INEE AEWS: (1) relevance to non-formal and alternative education programming; (2) relevance to contexts affected by emergency, crisis, and/or conflict; (3) relevance to out-of-school adolescents and youth; and (4) recent literature (after 2009). We categorized the literature reviewed into six types; Table 1 indicates the number of documents reviewed for each type:

1. Systematic literature reviews or conceptual papers on education in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts that included alternative and/or non-formal education, or reviews of alternative and/or non-formal education that included crisis and conflict contexts

2. Systematic literature reviews or conceptual papers on specific types of alternative and non-formal education, such as accelerated education, complementary basic education, technical/vocational/livelihoods training, and literacy/numeracy programs

3. Issue-specific reviews, such as youth programming, secondary education, refugee education, integration with the formal system, and recognition, validation, and accreditation

4. Country-level policy and strategy documents of national governments

5. Multilateral and regional policy and strategy documents, such as ECW, Global Partnership for Education, No Lost Generation, and Syria Response Plan

6. Other literature that was intended to fill gaps, such as a lack of certain modalities/geographic regions, rigorous evaluations/meta-evaluations, field research, guidance documents, grey literature, and older resources

Table 1: Types of Document for Review

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	NO. OF DOCUMENTS
Reviews of education in crisis and conflict contexts; reviews of NFE/alternative education in crisis and conflict contexts	10
Reviews of specific types of NFE/alternative education	7
Issue-specific documents	14
Multilateral policy and strategy documents	5
Country policy and strategy documents	24
Program documents:	
• Syria Response	14
• Middle East & North Africa	7
• Asia and Europe (not Middle East)	17
• Sub-Saharan Africa	49
• Latin America & Caribbean	14
TOTAL	**161**

Foundational Survey

In addition to our literature search and our consultation with the INEE AEWS, we benefited from our collaboration with the Accelerated Education Work Group (AEWG). From May to August 2019, the AEWG conducted a global survey in order to map accelerated education and other non-formal/alternative education programs. The objectives of the survey were to (a) capture a snapshot of the number, location, and nature of current alternative education programs globewide, with particular focus on Accelerated Education Programs (AEPs); and (b) collate these program details into a resource that would be available to program staff and others around the globe who are working in, funding, or researching AEPs and other alternative education programming. The AEWS provided input that gave the AEWG a foundational understanding of current NFE programs.

The survey elicited 169 completed responses from programs in 55 countries and 81 implementing organizations. Of the responding programs, 55 percent were AEPs and the remaining 45 percent were other types of non-formal or alternative education. These survey data provided key insights that fed into our analysis. They highlighted in particular the holistic nature of alternative programs, since the majority of the programs functioned as a component of a larger project. Moreover, the survey demonstrated that non-formal and alternative education were being implemented in a notably large number of countries. These insights gave our findings greater depth.

Consultation with Stakeholders

Throughout the process of identifying and analyzing the literature and writing our findings, we consulted with members of the INEE AEWS and solicited verbal and written feedback from the wider Working Group. We also consulted with the AEWG during the development, implementation, and analysis of their alternative education survey and exchanged feedback during their biannual meeting. The AEWS and AEWG are both inter-agency working groups; therefore, this review reflects the input of 22 individuals at 18 international organizations and universities who work in education in emergencies.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was its focus on breadth over depth. The primary goal in developing this *Background Paper* was to understand, define, and classify the range of programs available across various contexts, and to fully grasp the issues, challenges, and opportunities faced so we could support the availability of and access to such programming. This was an essential first step in helping policymakers and practitioners strengthen non-formal and alternative education programming in crisis and conflict contexts. However, we note that this review did not attempt to cover any single type of program or any one issue in great depth so that we could prioritize the creation of a broad foundational knowledge base. We hope that subsequent work will be able to build on this knowledge base by focusing in greater depth on underdeveloped priority areas.

We also acknowledge that the majority of our literature searches, reviews, and consultations were conducted in English, although some Spanish documents were reviewed as well. Complementary research conducted in additional languages would make a significant contribution to this foundational piece.

Finally, we wish to note that this paper is framed largely from the perspective of international organizations and entities. We acknowledge that much of the literature reviewed—both academic and programmatic—was written from a Western perspective. Further research that integrates perspectives originating in Global South scholarship, practice, and experience would advance the work already done in this area.

Scope of the *Background Paper*

It is important to note that this *Background Paper* is not intended to serve as a comprehensive review of all program types for out-of-school adolescents and youth in conflict- and crisis-affected contexts. While the literature review was thorough and systematic, our priority was to advance our work on the taxonomy and definitions.

Many programs we reviewed targeted both children and adolescents (e.g., AEPs or alternative basic education) or did not specifically target out-of-school adolescents and youth (e.g., youth livelihoods training programs). We included such programs and documents that described these programs in our review in order to achieve a broad foundational understanding of their goals, objectives, and implementation strategies, and their "home" within the larger EiCC landscape. Therefore, we first offer broad descriptions of the program types and then hone in on the specific applications and implications of these programs for adolescents and youth in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts.

Ultimately, the taxonomy and definitions can be used to describe non-formal and alternative education in contexts affected by crisis and conflict, and more broadly. Our review of the literature suggests that these programs do not have hard boundaries, so we developed a taxonomy and definitions that would reflect this.

We also note that the definitions we propose—specifically those articulating the relationship between alternative education, non-formal education, and formal education—may differ in some ways from definitions offered elsewhere. An important priority for this paper was to consider a broad range of definitions and uses of common terms. We found a good deal of contradiction, conflation, and confusion of terms in many of the documents reviewed. Thus, this paper makes an important contribution by promoting shared understanding and language that will reduce the confusion.

A FRAMEWORK FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN CRISIS AND CONFLICT

There are many types of NFE programs for adolescents and youth affected by crisis and conflict. These programs differ greatly across contexts, as they respond to the variety of needs each crisis creates. These programs tend to take a holistic approach by providing not only academic or technical/vocational education but also by addressing the health, safety, financial, protection, and social-emotional needs of adolescents and youth. Many NFE programs that target out-of-school adolescents and youth directly affected by crisis and conflict may simultaneously target younger children, in-school youth, or young people living in refugee and host communities.

In this section, we propose an NFE framework for adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict contexts that also includes programs targeting younger children, in-school youth, and/or refugee and host-community children. We first summarize the main findings of our literature review.

Program Definitions and Taxonomies

Our review of the literature revealed several key findings that inform our proposed taxonomy and definitions.

First, national governments, multilateral and bilateral donors, and humanitarian agencies and organizations use a wide range of terms to describe education that exists outside countries' formal education systems. For example, in its recent guidelines on providing education to refugees, UNHCR (2019) used the term "non-formal education" to refer to programs that enable learners to develop certified competencies that are equivalent to those gained in formal schools. However, they differentiate these programs from what they call "informal education" (p. 14), or education programs that do not lead to certified competencies. The term "informal" was also used in Jordan to describe programs that meet the needs of Syrian refugees (Christophersen, 2015). In contrast, UNESCO Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education use the term "flexible learning strategies" (FLS) as "an umbrella term for a variety of alternative educational programs targeted at reaching those most marginalized" (UNESCO, 2017a). They state that FLS can be used to meet the needs of out-of-school children and youth by offering NFE, accelerated learning, equivalency programs, flexible schooling, alternative learning/education, and complementary education. They note further that FLS can cover any level or subsector of education, that it focuses on reaching the underserved, and offers equivalent qualifications and flexible programming (UNESCO, 2016).

Individual countries' education sector plans and policy documents use a wide variety of terms to describe education offered outside the formal school system. Countries offering such programs meet the myriad educational needs of a wide range of learners. This finding supports our background review, which suggests that the terms have been defined and applied inconsistently across contexts. Box 3 demonstrates the diverse ways countries refer to their provision of non-formal and alternative education.

BOX 3: TERMS USED IN EDUCATION SECTOR PLANS FOR EDUCATION OFFERED OUTSIDE THE FORMAL SYSTEM

The following examples show the diverse terms used to describe non-formal and alternative education programs, their objectives, their target learners, and their administration in various country strategies and policies.

In **Guatemala**, under the ministry of education, the Directorate of *Educación Extraescolar* (Out-of-School Education) oversees provision of "alternative education," described as contemporary education programs that exist outside of the formal education system, including education for work and entrepreneurship, popular education, and other forms. In strategy documents, alternative education is recognized as being comparable to formal education, and it is aligned with the country's priority to provide education to all over the course of a lifetime (UNESCO, 2017b). "Out-of-school" programs include accelerated primary education for youth and adults, alternative blended and online secondary education programs, municipal training centers, and others. They address the high rates of dropout after primary school, particularly in the country's western highlands (UNESCO, 2017b).

In **Sindh, Pakistan**, where 40 percent of the population has never attended school and literacy levels are low, the Directorate of Literacy and Non-formal Basic Education are responsible for "non-formal basic education programs" and "alternative learning pathways" to meet the needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth. Among the strategic objectives in efforts to improve NFE access and standards is the development of a comprehensive NFE policy and a regularly allocated budget (Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh, n.d.).

In **South Sudan**, the Education Policy Framework outlines four priority programs. The first program, Access and Equity, includes four components, one of which is the Alternative Education System, whose purpose is to address challenges related to the lack of qualified teachers, insufficient education facilities, inadequate funding, and a shortage of teaching and learning materials. The goal is to reduce illiteracy and provide a second chance for underserved adults, youths, and out-of-school children from disadvantaged communities to receive an education. Alternative Education System programs include the Accelerated Learning Programme, Community Girls' Schools, and the Pastoralist Education Program. Alternative programs offer a pathway to reenter the formal system, and the Pastoralist Education Program supports young people who want to develop livelihood skills.

In **Sierra Leone**, to meet the high rates of adolescents and youth who are out-of-school particularly in areas that were affected by the civil war and Ebola, the ministry of education distinguishes between primary/secondary/tertiary education, colleges and institutes, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and non-formal education programs. The current Education Sector Plan puts a greater focus on non-formal education than previous plans. It defines NFE as "all organized educational and training activities and processes outside the formal education system that are designed to meet the learning needs of out-of-school children, youths, and adults" (Government of Sierra Leone, n.d.). Non-formal education includes literacy programs for adults, and basic education (primary and junior secondary) are provided in community education centers. NFE is overseen by the Non-formal Education Directorate, with implementation support from various units, directorates, and multilateral actors.

In the **Philippines**, the education system includes the Alternative Learning System (ALS), also referred to as ALS non-formal education. ALS is a "parallel learning system in the Philippines that provides a practical option to the existing formal instruction. When one does not have or cannot access formal education in schools, ALS is an alternate or substitute" (Government of Philippines, n.d.). Two major programs are implemented through the Bureau of Alternative Learning System, the Basic Literacy Program and the Continuing Education Program—Accreditation and Equivalency. ALS NFE occurs outside the classroom, in community learning centers, town halls, libraries, or homes, and it is managed by learning facilitators or mobile teachers. This form of education was previously called the Non-formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency system (UNESCO, 2006).

In **Jordan**, the ministry of education's national Education Sector Plan 2018-2022 includes both informal and non-formal education programming aimed at "empowering students to identify their learning paths according to their abilities and preferences" (Jordan Ministry of Education, 2017, p. V). Non-formal education programs are required to take place within public school buildings and to be taught by certified teachers; graduates receive a certificate allowing enrolment in the 11th grade of the formal system, or are eligible to apply to formal vocational programs. NFE programs are accredited by the government and, since the start of the Syrian conflict, they have been largely implemented by the INGO Questscope. In contrast, informal education programs have been typified by their short-term nature (usually under six months) and are operated by a variety of humanitarian actors. These programs are not certified; however, the Ministry's aim is to offer pathways into the formal education system (Dinghra, 2019).

Non-formal and alternative education are described in diverse ways, but many agencies, programs, and countries do not explicitly define either. Others cite definitions provided by other stakeholders, such as UNESCO's (2011) definition of NFE or Baxter and Bethke's (2009) definition of alternative education. Inconsistent definition of non-formal and alternative education in the documents we reviewed added to the confusion of developing a shared taxonomy and definitions.

PROGRAM TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS

There is a wide range of programs that meet the diverse educational needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth affected by crisis and conflict. As described by Baxter and Bethke (2009), some young people may want to complete their schooling during and/or after a period of crisis or conflict in order to obtain certification to either continue their schooling or find employment. Others may want to gain marketable skills by training for a trade or vocation, along with basic literacy and numeracy. Review of the literature showed there were generally two tracks or streams of NFE programming: academic programming, in which participants gained knowledge and skills equivalent to that gained in the formal schools, and technical/vocational or livelihoods training programs geared toward finding employment. Academic programs, such as alternative basic education, accelerated education programs, complementary education programs, and alternative secondary programs, have goals and objectives related to traditional academic and school-based learning, such as literacy and language, mathematics, social studies, and science. Technical/vocational or livelihoods training programs are aimed at helping learners who want to gain the skills needed to create or improve their livelihood opportunities.

The first group of programs identified in the literature was AEPs that help out-of-school adolescents and youth complete their basic education in order to transition back into formal schools, or to find technical/vocational/ livelihoods training opportunities. In fact, while we did not conduct a rigorous or comprehensive analysis of the relative frequency or distribution of programs, it appears that most NFE programs that help learners obtain a basic education are, in fact, accelerated primary or basic education programs. This is perhaps because adolescents and youth who have not completed primary or basic education and are therefore over age are able to complete the lower-level curriculum at a faster pace than their younger peers. Box 4 provides an overview of some AEPs that meet the needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict contexts. AEPs are implemented by a range of actors, from those under ministry of education over-sight to those being implemented by I/NGOs with donor funding.

BOX 4: ACCELERATED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The AEWG (2017) defines AEPs as

> *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. This may include those who missed out on, or had their education interrupted, due to poverty, marginalization, 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.*

AEPs are implemented in several countries affected by crisis and conflict. For example, in post-conflict Sierra Leone, the Complementary Rapid Education Programme in Schools, which is provided by the state with UNICEF support, targets over-age children and enables them to finish primary school in three years. The program, considered part of the regular school system, was offered in regular schools in the afternoons or in the morning at a pro-gram center close to the school. Teaching and learning materials were harmonized with those of formal schools (Baxter & Bethke, 2009; HEART, 2014). Similarly, in post-conflict Li-beria, the state provides the Primary Education Recovery Programme, which targets over-age young adults and youth. The program offers a primary education curriculum compressed into a three-year period (HEART, 2014).

AEPs are also designed to meet the needs of over-age, out-of-school adolescents and youth in contexts currently being affected by conflict, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The USAID-funded Revitalization of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education program helps students complete two school grades within one school year, and the Afghanistan Primary Education Program, which is implemented by I/NGOs and funded by USAID, helps out-of-school children and youth (primarily girls) ages 10 to 18 complete their primary education (HEART, 2014).

Finally, AEPs are frequently offered where a high number of out-of-school displaced adoles-cents and youth are living in urban areas, in refugee/IDP camps, and in host communities. For example, accelerated learning programs are a non-formal option accredited by Lebanon's Ministry of Education & Higher Education that targets learners ages 9 to 16 who have been out of school for more than two years. The accelerated learning program has nine levels (corresponding with nine grades of Lebanese basic education), each of which must be com-pleted in less than four months. The ultimate objective is for students to be integrated into the Lebanese formal school system at the appropriate grade level (UNHCR Lebanon, 2015).

In Dadaab, Kenya, the Norwegian Refugee Council operates an AEP in six schools across three refugee camps that target children ages 10 to 17. The program utilizes the Kenyan NFE national curriculum and condenses eight years of primary school curriculum into four. Learners take annual national exams and may be integrated into the formal school system upon completion of any level, based on their test results (Flemming, 2017).

Providers: ministries of education, I/NGOs, local NGOs and other local organizations; they coordinate with government and humanitarian actors

Objectives: learners obtain certification in basic education and transition into further education, training, or livelihood opportunities; programs allow learners to transition into the correct grade when they reach the right age; learners improve learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy; many programs also aim to improve life skills, psychosocial skills, or health and safety skills

Key Elements: condensed and accelerated primary or basic curriculum; trained facilitators or teachers; interactive, learner-centered pedagogy; community engagement; supplemental services, such as psychosocial support, life-skills training, health/safety training

Some NFE programs offer secondary education; however, there appear to be fewer secondary education programs available in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. Many non-formal secondary programs were seen in Latin American countries affected by high levels of gang and criminal violence. For example, Guatemala offers blended and distance secondary education and is in the process of developing a program for the certification of prior learning for return migrants and others who have obtained knowledge and skills outside the classroom (UNESCO, 2017b). Colombia offers *Secundaria Activa* (Active Secondary), an active and participatory pedagogy that enables over-age, marginalized youth 13 years and older to learn the content of grades 6 through 9 (Colombia Ministry of Education, n.d.). These programs are administered by the countries' ministries of education. Alternative secondary programs exist in other contexts as well, such as RET's AEP in Dadaab, Kenya. This program provides one of few secondary education options for refugees, primarily Somalis, who have completed primary education and want to continue their studies (Boisvert, 2017). Alternative secondary programs may be accelerated, or not, and there is currently substantial debate in the field about the effectiveness of offering accelerated secondary curricula.

Not all non-formal programs focus on the development of academic knowledge and skills. Many programs, most included in the subfield of youth programming, offer livelihoods training and services to help youth transition into the workforce. These programs have quite diverse offerings. Our review of programmatic documents revealed that these programs often have multiple components, including building technical or vocational skills, developing employability or work-readiness skills, financial literacy, apprenticeships/internships, mentorship, job placement, business plan development, savings groups, microcredit, and more. Moreover, many livelihoods training programs incorporate elements of basic literacy and numeracy or are accompanied by full alternative basic education programs. A range of technical/vocational and livelihoods training programs is described in Box 5.

BOX 5: ALTERNATIVE AND NON-FORMAL OPTIONS TO BUILD LIVELIHOOD SKILLS

The World Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative, implemented between 2008 and 2015 in Afghanistan, Haiti, Jordan, Lao PDR, Liberia, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan, used a menu of interventions tailored to the country context, including business development skills training, technical/vocational skills training, and life-skills training, to promote adolescent girls' transition from school to employment.

The Haitian Out-of-School Youth Livelihoods Program was implemented between 2003 and 2010 by the Education Development Center (EDC), with funding from USAID. The goal was to strengthen organizations that prepare youth for livelihoods and increase the basic education and technical skills of out-of-school youth ages 15 to 24 who have little or no prior education. The program offered skills training, life skills education, literacy and numeracy education, and livelihood support services, such as counseling, placement, and business development. The program lasted through 12 months of training, with 6 months of follow-up support (Beauvy et al., 2010).

The Somalia Youth Livelihoods Program, implemented from 2008 to 2011 by EDC and its partner Somali NGOs, was also funded by USAID. The program aimed to help youth access greater work and entrepreneurship opportunities. It had the secondary aim of reducing insecurity by putting youth to work. The program, which targeted youth ages 15 to 24, offered skills training, life-skills training, and cell phone-based job networking, in addition to accelerated basic education (Cook & Younis, 2012).

In response to the high unemployment rate in Honduras, Proyecto METAS, implemented by EDC between 2010 and 2017 and funded by USAID, targeted at-risk youth ages 15 to 35 who had limited access to education and workforce development activities. Through its Basic Labor Competencies and Training Certification Program, the project helped youth develop their workforce and life skills and gave them a certificate to demonstrate their work readiness to employers. The project also developed relationships with the private sector to help identify employment and internship opportunities for youth.

Providers: I/NGOs, local NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs)

Objectives: build hard and soft skills for developing livelihoods (employment or entrepreneurship); facilitate transition to livelihood opportunities

Key Elements: technical/vocational skills training; business skills training; literacy/numeracy training; counseling/mentoring; apprenticeships/internships; some programs offer certification in workforce skills, business plan development, or cash support; some programs target employers to increase links to employment; supplemental services include psychosocial support, life-skills training, civics education, and health/safety training

These programs differ from TVET programs that are fully coordinated and implemented by ministries of education. Most countries we reviewed offered technical/vocational colleges or institutions under the auspices of the formal education system; we excluded these from our review, as we consider them part of the formal system, as do the countries themselves. The programs we reviewed, therefore, are most commonly implemented by INGOs and funded by donors, although they often work closely with ministries of education, youth, labor, and CBOs.

Many of the specific programs we reviewed, as well as the broader conceptual documents on NFE programming for adolescents and youth, emphasized the need for holistic programming. Most programs designed to meet the needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis and conflict contexts incorporated components of PSS/SEL, life skills, peace education, civics education, and health and safety information.

These activities were integrated into many of the programs. For example, a reintegration and agricultural livelihoods program implemented by Landmine Action Now (now called Action on Armed Violence) for high-risk Liberian youth, including ex-combatants, provided meals, lodging, clothing, medical care, and personal items while learners were in residence. The project also facilitated reintegration into society, access to land, and a package of agricultural tools and supplies for those who completed the program (Blattman & Annan, 2011).

However, entirely separate programs sometimes were "added on" to existing academic or technical/vocational programs to support learners in a more holistic way. For example, the South Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction Program, implemented from 2006 to 2011 by EDC and funded by USAID to provide conflict-sensitive messaging, civics training, and health education, was a supplement to existing programs, including accelerated learning programs and NFE, as well as the formal school systems (Zakharia & Bartlett, 2014). Organizations such as Right to Play and the Lego Foundation used different forms of play within and outside of classrooms to support children's protection, education, and empowerment, which was often implemented in collaboration with formal or NFE programs.

In addition to intensive offerings that were both structured and flexible and that focused on developing academic competencies or technical/vocational skills, there is a substantial number of programs that support learners transitioning into such programs. These "catch-up" and "bridging" programs do not lead to certification or competencies for further education or livelihoods, but they do enable learners to gain the skills required to enter full educational programs within or outside the formal school systems.[9] Box 6 shows some programs that support the transition into full education programs. These programs are primarily implemented by I/NGOs, but are often supported or approved by ministries of education.

BOX 6: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSITIONING TO FORMAL OR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In Jordan, to meet the needs of Syrian refugees ages 9 to 12 who have been out of school for three or more years, the Government of Jordan has developed the Catch-up Programme, which gives them the opportunity to complete two grades per academic year and to transition into the formal system when they are ready (Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2017).

In the DRC, catch-up classes are implemented by the IRC and UNICEF. These literacy classes for out-of-school youth and catch-up classes for primary school students prepare those affected by conflict for end-of-year exams so they can reenter the formal school system in the coming year (HEART, 2014).

Providers: I/NGOs, in collaboration with formal schools and ministries of education

Objectives: develop learning-readiness skills, language, and literacy and numeracy to a level that allows them to transition back into formal schools or non-formal/alternative education where they are at the grade level of their peers

Key Elements: language classes, learning-readiness classes, literacy and numeracy classes, PSS/SEL

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9   For definitions of catch-up and bridging programs, see AEWG (2017).

Finally, not all programs are able to offer equivalent, certified competencies or intensive, structured, long-term education. Instead, a body of programs exists that are more ad hoc, temporary, and an immediate response in crisis situations. They offer skills training, literacy and numeracy, psychosocial support, and educational and peacebuilding recreational activities. These programs are nearly always implemented by humanitarian actors and sometimes by those in fields outside the education sector, such as child protection or health. These activities are described in Box 7.

We also found a difference in the types of NFE programs offered by context. While we did not examine this in a manner that would allow us to comment on the generalizability of this relationship, the ad hoc programs mentioned above and other NFE programs were often found in acute phases of emergencies. The main goal in such contexts is often to resume any type of education activity in order to bring structure and stability back into the lives of children and youth, along with the protection mechanisms such programs provide. Conversely, alternative education programs that required significant cooperation with systems, institutions, and governments—as well as sustained funding over multiple years—were found more often in protracted, refugee, and post-conflict contexts, where more stable conditions allowed for long-term planning and implementation.

BOX 7: PROVIDING OTHER NON-FORMAL EDUCATION TO LEARNERS WITHOUT ACCESS

In Greece, thousands of refugee adolescents and youth are unable to access the formal education system, due to language or logistical barriers, including space in the formal schools. For refugees in both urban and camp settings of the Epirus Region, the INGO Terre des Hommes (2019) and its partners implement NFE programming aimed at learning readiness, Greek and English language, basic math and science, and elements of the Greek curriculum. The programs' aim is not to be equivalent to the formal system but to fill a gap in order to reduce the time out of school for adolescents and youth who want to return to formal education when their displacement ends. The program works in cooperation with the University of Ioannina, as well as CBOs.

In Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, which is home to approximately 350,000 Syrian refugees, informal schools have operated outside of camp settlements for years (UNHCR Lebanon, 2019). Since 2014, the German NGO Schams has funded seven tent schools in one camp that targets children ages 6 to 14 who have no access to formal schooling. Implementation and teaching are done by refugee residents of the camp (Schams, n.d.). This initiative was set to be scaled and accredited in 2019, and was to include building an official school and teaching the official Lebanese curriculum.

Providers: I/NGOS, civil society, members of the affected population

Objectives: increased access to a structured learning environment, reduced amount of time adolescents or youth spend out of school

Key Elements: often less-structured than formal and alternative programs; class time is often less frequent and shorter in duration; teachers may be facilitators or animators who have little or no official training; often founded, operated, or supported by members of the affected population, such as refugee camp residents; may operate alongside other protection-related programming and provide a PSS/SEL component; may be funded by I/NGOs but typically not governments

KEY ISSUES

There are several key tensions and contradictions between programs, as they address different needs in diverse emergency contexts. This is also influenced by countries' social, economic, and political situations prior to a crisis.

First, recognition, validation, and accreditation (RVA) emerged as a major defining characteristic of many types of programs. Moreover, RVA was discussed in the broader conceptual documents on NFE as an important standard to strive for in education programs targeting young people affected by crisis and conflict. This was true for programs that built academic skills, such as accelerated basic education programs and secondary alternative programs, and for some livelihoods training programs. For academic programs, the emphasis was on developing competencies equivalent to those developed in the formal schools. The key issue driving RVA is the need to give currency to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learners acquire in NFE programs so they will be accepted by educational institutions, employers, and communities (UNESCO, 2015). A large subset of programs offered, or were working toward offering, education certification.

Second, our review of the literature highlighted the importance of context. The type of programs offered depended on the nature of the crisis or conflict, as well as the social, political, and economic environment. These factors created certain needs, challenges, and opportunities for NFE. For example, in Latin America, where completion of basic and secondary education is relatively high but unemployment among youth is also very high, livelihoods training programs may not need to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills but to focus instead on students developing a trade and earning a certificate. In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, which is also affected by high unemployment and a low level of education, we see a greater balance of non-formal basic education programs and livelihoods training programs; the latter usually include a component of basic literacy and numeracy.

A final key issue was the nature of programs' alignment with, integration into, or collaboration with national policies, strategies, and practices. The programs we reviewed had a wide range of implementers, from small civil society NGOs, to INGOs, to ministries of education and their partners. Ministries of education also provided a wide range of approval, oversight, and administration. Some programs in some contexts (e.g., refugee contexts in Greece, IDP camps in northern Syria and Somalia) have little government support and oversight and are implemented entirely by I/NGOs. This is especially true in acute humanitarian crises where national systems have been destroyed and a response is needed so rapidly that coordination is a challenge. Non-formal and alternative education programs in some countries are administered and implemented by national governments as a subsystem of the formal education sector (e.g., Colombia, Guatemala, Philippines, Uganda), with technical support from the non-governmental sector. Still other programs operate somewhere in between, with support from national governments, collaboration on developing curricula and appointing teachers, collaborative monitoring of learning centers and development of policy and strategy (e.g., Jordan and Kenya). Moreover, programs are always evolving, national and humanitarian strategies and policies are constantly developing, and there is often movement toward greater alignment and national oversight and administration, as described in Box 8.

BOX 8: EVOLVING POLICY AND STRATEGY FOR NON-FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

In Uganda in 2018, the Ugandan Ministry of Education worked with partners, including the Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children, and the AEWG, to develop national guidelines for providing accelerated education that would meet the needs of over-age, out-of-school adolescents and youth affected by displacement more fully. Despite Uganda's favorable NFE policy, guidelines for accelerated education did not previously exist, and the ministry found it necessary to develop guidelines relevant to the Ugandan context. NFE programs, including accelerated education, fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Education and Sport's Non-formal Education Department. NFE centers are established under Uganda's Education Act of 2008. Note that the guidelines have not yet been formally approved.

To address the influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey, humanitarian actors established temporary education centers. At first, these centers provided instruction in Arabic with a modified Syrian curriculum that did not lead to certification. Establishment of the centers was largely unregulated and they operated outside the national education system, with limited quality assurance. The Turkish Ministry of Education was later able to incorporate temporary education centers into the national strategy and to regulate quality, which enabled the refugees to eventually transition into the Turkish formal schools (UNHCR, 2019).

SUMMARY

As described above, a wide range of programs have been created to meet the diverse needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. The funding, implementation, integration with national and humanitarian architecture, goals, and objectives are diverse, which reflects the different crisis and conflict situations; countries' existing social, political, and economic situations; and, of course, the needs and wishes of the target learners. The broad review of the literature and the main findings described above provide a foundation for the following sections, in which we propose a taxonomy and definitions to describe education programming that exists outside of formal education systems in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts.

TAXONOMY

Figure 1 presents a taxonomy that locates non-formal and alternative education within the broad landscape of education program options relevant to crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. The taxonomy is intended to provide a shared understanding of the boundaries, relationships, and intersections between NFE and other forms of education in order to support funders, policymakers, and implementers in conceptualizing how education programs may serve out-of-school adolescents and youth most effectively in challenging and dynamic contexts. A description and elaboration on this figure are provided below.

Figure 1: Taxonomy of Alternative Education Programs
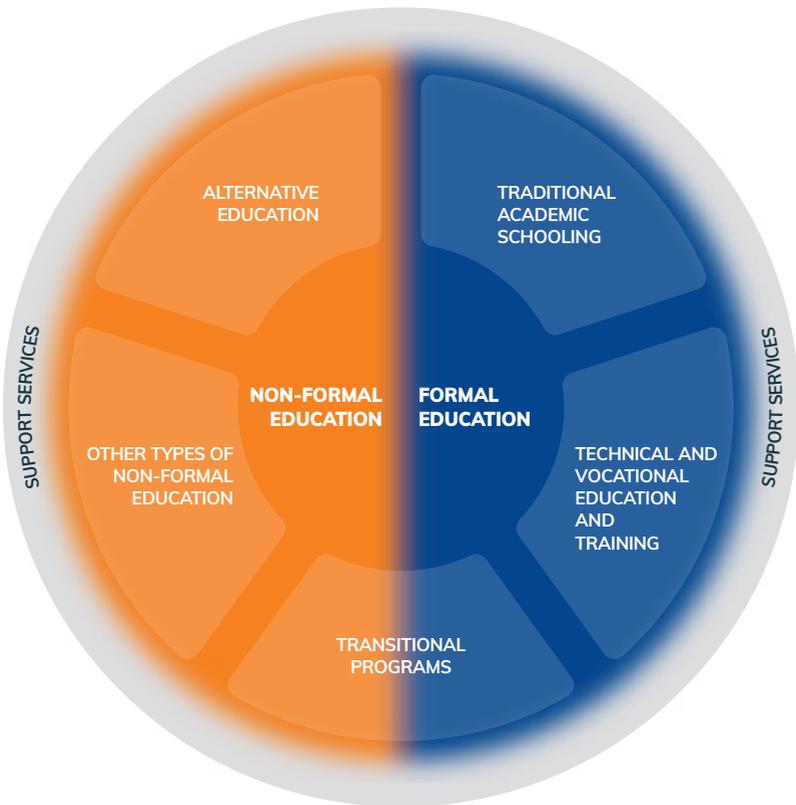
PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE TAXONOMY

As explained in the methods section, the purpose of the literature review was to examine the various definitions, terms, and relationships described across various types of documents and contexts relevant to non-formal and alternative education. While Table 2 displays the definitions we ultimately offer, Figure 1 (the taxonomy) is focused on relationships and boundaries. We propose the taxonomy and definitions based on several key decisions, which emphasize the following:

1. A clear differentiation between "alternative" and "non-formal" education in order to provide greater clarity and consistent use of the terms

2. The differentiation of programs aiming for equivalent competencies from those not aimed at equivalency

3. Various strategies and levels of cooperation and alignment with national systems (which relates to no. 2 above)

4. The legitimate place of non-formal and alternative education in the literature and in overall response efforts

KEY DEFINITIONS

To complement the taxonomy, we have developed key definitions for alternative education and related education options. The definitions describe what alternative education is and what it is not. Tables 2 and 3 present the key programmatic definitions relevant to alternative education and other relevant education types, as indicated by our taxonomy in Figure 1.

Table 2: Definitions

Education Type	Definition
Formal Education	*Formal education* is "education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies and, in their totality, make up the formal education system of a country. Formal education programs are thus recognized as such by the relevant national educational authorities or equivalent, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education. Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognized as being part of the formal education system" (UNESCO, 2011).
	Formal education is often organized in two tracks: traditional academic schooling, which includes education in literacy and language arts, numeracy and mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, and creative arts; and TVET, which involves skills-based training, work readiness, and employability skills.
	Formal education programs are implemented and managed by national governments and lead to the accreditation of learning outcomes. Curricula are approved and teachers recognized by the government.
Non-formal Education	*Non-formal education* is the overarching term that refers to planned, structured, and organized education programming that is outside the formal education system. Some types of NFE lead to equivalent certified competencies, while others do not.[10] NFE programs are characterized by their variety, flexibility, and ability to respond quickly to the new educational needs of learners in a given context, as well as their holistic, learner-centered pedagogy
Informal Learning	Informal learning is knowledge and skills naturally obtained through day-to-day interactions and activities.

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10   Equivalent, certified competencies refer to equivalence to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in the formal schools.

Table 3: Definitions of Non-formal Education

Non-formal Education Type	Definition	Program Goals, Objectives, Targets, and Alignment/Cooperation with National Systems
Alternative Education Programs	*Alternative education is planned, structured education programming that leads to equivalent certified competencies in academic or technical/vocational subjects for out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth.* Alternative education programs offer a flexible education option for out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth who want to gain essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to transition to further education or training, or to develop a livelihood. These programs may be fully academic in nature with a curriculum similar to formal schools, or technical/vocational in order to lead to improved livelihood and employment opportunities. To meet the needs of out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth, alternative education programs are flexible and often have a holistic curriculum.	• GOAL is to obtain primary, basic, or secondary certificate and/or transition to formal education or livelihoods training, OR to transition to employment and improved livelihood opportunities. • OBJECTIVE is to attain competencies equivalent to formal schooling OR to gain technical/vocational skills, employability skills, and often basic literacy/numeracy • TARGETS out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth, in particular by offering flexible scheduling (i.e., evening classes). • COOPERATES with national education actors, including at policy and/or implementation levels. May differ by context, but is considered ideal. ***Examples include:*** • Accelerated Education Programs • Alternative Basic Education • Second chance programs • Youth livelihoods training programs • Speed Schools

Non-formal Education Type	Definition	Program Goals, Objectives, Targets, and Alignment/Cooperation with National Systems
Other NFE	*Other NFE* is education programming that does not lead to equivalent certified competencies for out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth. These programs may be temporary, ad hoc, or provide a reduced/partial curriculum. These types of programs are often less intensive or structured. They may be focused on academic or technical/vocational skills, and on learning readiness or language development. These programs often have a strong protective function. While it is important to acknowledge education programs with a strong protective function, other NFE excludes programs that do not have a learning or learning-readiness focus, such as purely recreational activities. Other NFE programs often exist in acute humanitarian crises where an alternative or formal education system does not exist, or children cannot access them. They may lack explicit pathways into formal or alternative education.	• GOAL is to provide various education and learning environments for children and youth who lack access to formal and alternative programs. Often, these programs are found in acute humanitarian contexts where there has not yet been the time or resources to establish alternative education options. • OBJECTIVES vary, but they typically relate to out-of-school adolescents' and youths' access to a structured environment; may relate to education trajectories or PSS/SEL; may include language of host country in order to support ultimate transition to formal or alternative options. • TARGETS out-of-school children and youth who lack access to formal or alternative education systems. • OFTEN DOES NOT INVOLVE COOPERATION with national actors or systems at either policy or implementation level. NFE programs strive to provide access to some form of education, often in an acute emergency where national actors and systems may not have the capacity to respond to education needs. This may differ by context, and it is still considered ideal to ultimately work cooperatively with national actors. *Examples include:* • Short-term or infrequent classroom-based programs (i.e., language classes twice weekly, drop-in classes) • Short-term content-based programs (i.e., three-week skills courses such as design, computer skills, project-based learning) • Less structured classroom-based programs (i.e., those taught by untrained teachers, "school" offered 2-3 days a week for one hour) • Experiential or project-based learning activities for children and youth (i.e., field trips with historical learning component, gardening with environmental learning component) that are still learning centered

Non-formal Education Type	Definition	Program Goals, Objectives, Targets, and Alignment/Cooperation with National Systems
Transitional Programs	*Transitional programs are short-term educational programs that help learners transition into formal or alternative education programs. They alone do not lead to certification or equivalent competencies, and they are often implemented by I/NGOs.* Examples of transitional programs are catch-up (which help learners who have missed less than a year of schooling "catch-up" to their peers), bridging (which help youth learn a new language or adapt to a new curriculum in order to access formal or alternative education), and learning readiness (which teach basic school-going skills).	• GOAL is to transition to further education (formal or alternative) or to livelihoods training programs. • OBJECTIVE is to gain skills and competencies that allow a transition into formal (or alternative) schooling. • TARGETS out-of-school youth, especially those who are over-age and/or have missed out on significant chunks of schooling; offers flexible scheduling (i.e., evening classes). • COOPERATES with national education actors, including at policy and/or implementation levels. May differ by context, but is considered ideal. ***Examples include:*** • Learning readiness • Catch-up programs • Bridging programs (i.e., language)
Support Services	*Support services include programming offered to students in addition to their formal or non-formal education studies. These may be stand-alone classes or after-school programs, or be integrated into the curriculum. They exclude programs that are not an add-on to an existing formal, alternative, or other NFE program, such as water, sanitation, and hygiene, health, and disaster risk reduction programs not implemented as a supplement to an existing education program.*	• GOAL is to provide various types of extra learning support, in addition to curriculum, either for all students or for students targeted as in need. • OBJECTIVES vary, but in crisis and conflict settings will typically revolve around the specific conflict-aware needs of the learners in that context. • TARGETS students already enrolled in formal or non-formal education programs in order to supplement their learning. • MAY OR MAY NOT be implemented in cooperation with national actors and systems, depending on the context. ***Examples include:*** • Tutoring/after-school support • Remedial education • Dropout prevention, learning readiness • Elements of the following integrated into the curriculum: life skills, health, disaster risk reduction, safety, PSS/SEL, peace education

READING THE TAXONOMY AND DEFINITIONS

The taxonomy and definitions should be read as a part of a larger ecology of educational, social, health, protection, and other interventions to meet the needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts. These interventions include supply-side and demand-side interventions, which address the specific needs of young people (e.g., health-promotion programs or child-protection interventions) or aim to influence the systems around them (e.g., workforce-development programs). While these interventions are not represented in the taxonomy and definitions, they are nonetheless essential to the ecology of programming for out-of-school adolescents and youth affected by crisis and conflict; therefore, the taxonomy and definitions for non-formal education should be understood in relation to this wider system.

That said, the purpose of developing a taxonomy and the definitions was to develop a system of classification, categorization, and description of the various types of programs outside the formal education system that meet the needs of out-of-school adolescents and youth. Our taxonomy follows historical definitions and those presently used in the field, and it broadly differentiates between these as formal and non-formal.

Formal education is what is typically considered "school" and is often implemented or overseen by ministries of education, with support in many crisis- and conflict-affected contexts from I/NGOs, donors, and humanitarian actors.

There was a less clear distinction in the literature between what was defined as "non-formal" versus what was defined as "alternative." The defining difference we identified was equivalence to formal education in terms of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained. As such, under the umbrella term "non-formal," we delineate "alternative programs" as those that aim for equivalence and "other non-formal" as programs that do not.

More generally speaking, the difference between alternative education and other NFE lies in the intentionality, structure, and intensity of the programs. Another key feature of alternative education programs is cooperation with national systems and actors, and the related comparable competencies an alternative education program seeks to provide. In contrast, other NFE may be more ad hoc, temporary, and single issue, usually due to the nature of the crisis it is implemented in. In the absence of formal education or fully equivalent alternative education programs, other NFE programs fill a much-needed gap, but they may not provide the structure, intensity, and certification of a full alternative education program. Other NFE programs often are implemented by non-education actors who have identified a need and responded with good intentions.

We also included a separate category for transitional programs, which seek to provide students with the skills necessary to integrate into either the formal system or other alternative education programs (e.g., AEPs). The very specific goals and objectives of these programs, which include bridging, catch-up, and remedial education for over-age learners, merited a category under non-formal that allowed their relationship to other types of education to be uniquely highlighted.

Continua and Options, not Boxes and Hierarchies

When reading across the taxonomy, it is critical to understand that categorizing programs into clean, differentiated boxes is challenging and, ultimately, problematic. These categories are not fixed; the aim of the taxonomy is to be useful in situating a program within the larger EiCC landscape, and in considering how the elements of a program overlap with other education options, including the formal system.

Moreover, it is critical to note that the categories are not meant to imply a hierarchy between formal and non-formal, or between alternative and other non-formal education (Figure 1). They instead represent various educational options that are equally valuable but have different purposes and benefits, based on context. Alternative programs should not be considered less rigorous than formal education, and other NFE should not be considered an inadequate alternative education. Alternative education programs provide just that—a viable alternative to the formal system for learners who are unable to access the formal system. Other NFE often fills a much-needed gap when formal or alternative education is not available or needed.

Each form of education should prioritize points of entry and re-entry. As crises develop, worsen, or improve, education modalities will be scaled up or down to respond. Learners will create pathways through the various modalities, which further highlights the necessity of transition points and the continuation of wider support services which facilitate access to, and between, the various formal or non-formal education programs.

CONCLUSION

This *Background Paper* has presented an overview of the results from an in-depth review of literature related to education options offered outside formal education systems in conflict- and crisis-affected contexts around the globe. We present proposed definitions of program types found in our review, as well as a taxonomy that illustrates boundaries and relationships between the program types.

The literature, in particular the programmatic documentation related to this subject matter, was vast and in-depth. This review is meant as a starting point, wherein terminology can be examined and agreed upon. We sought to provide justification for making decisions, along with examples of the programs' diverse details and geographies.

Issues and Considerations for Non-formal Education for Adolescents and Youth in Crisis and Conflict: A Discussion Paper, which is an accompaniment to this paper, dives deeper into key components, considerations, and challenges relevant to NFE programming. It is intended for policymakers, implementers, and funders working globally in EiCC.

We believe there is considerable opportunity for future research into NFE in current crisis and conflict contexts. We recommend an in-depth global mapping of programs and, in particular, a mapping of country policies and strategies that are currently operational. While we reviewed some education-sector plans for this review, we note that a more targeted and in-depth review of such policy, accompanied perhaps by case studies and interviews with Ministry of Education personnel, would enhance understanding of the issues countries face across different contexts. An in-depth review of funders' policies and strategies would also be useful.

Finally, in light of the shared language and concepts presented in this paper, we note that its dissemination and sensitization will be both essential and challenging. This must be done in culturally, linguistically, and politically sensitive ways, in context, and as it is disseminated to education in emergencies stakeholders. Ultimately, we believe that this review and its findings reinforce the value of agreeing to a shared terminology for and understanding of non-formal and alternative education programming.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE SEARCH

Scholarly Databases
- Academic Search Premier
- EBSCOhost
- ERIC
- Google/Google Scholar
- psychINFO
- psychARTICLES

Multilateral Agencies and Organizations
- Education Cannot Wait
- Global Partnership for Education
- Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)
- INEE Adolescents and Youth webpage
- No Lost Generation
- UNESDOC Digital Library
- UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) webpage
- UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
- UNICEF webpage
- UNHCR webpage
- UNOCHA webpage
- UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) webpage
- World Bank web page

Bilateral Donors
- UK Department for International Development (DFID) webpage
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) webpage
- USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict webpage
- USAID/Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) Resource Repository
- USAID/ECCN Education in Crisis and Conflict Interactive Pathways

Search Terms
- Alternative education
- Non-formal education
- Informal education, informal learning
- Flexible learning strategies, complementary education
- Youth, adolescents
- Out-of-school
- Emergencies, crisis, conflict

APPENDIX B. SELECT TERMS AND DEFINITIONS REVIEWED

Terms Related to Formal Education

Term	Definition	Source	Page
Formal Education	Education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities, and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous "ladder" of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at ages 5 to 7 and continuing up to 20 to 25. In some countries, the upper parts of this ladder are constituted by organized programs of joint part-time employment and part-time participation in the regular school and university system: such programs have come to be known as the dual system, or equivalent terms in these countries. Formal education is also referred to as initial education or regular school and university education (UNESCO, 1997).	USAID. (2013). State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict	IV
Formal Education	Formal education can be defined as organized learning institutions that are guided and recognized by a government that develops a standard curriculum, leading to officially recognized achievements such as a high school diploma or degree. Teachers are usually trained as professionals to guarantee the quality of the education programs.	Christophersen, M. (2015). Educating Syrian Youth in Jordan: Holistic Approaches to Emergency Response	4
Formal Education	Education that is institutionalized, intentional, and planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies and, in their totality, make up the formal education system of a country. Formal education programs are thus recognized as such by the relevant national educational authorities or equivalent—e.g., any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education. Vocational education, special needs education, and some parts of adult education are often recognized as being part of the formal education system.	UNESCO Glossary/ ISCED (2011)	
Formal Learning / Aprendizaje Formal	Ocurre en instituciones de educacion y formacion. Es reconocido por las autoridades nacionales pertinentes y conduce a la obtencion de diplomas y calificaciones. El aprendizaje formal esta estructurado segun dispositivos tales como los curriculos, las calificaciones y los requisitos de la enseñanza y de aprendizaje.	UNESCO. (2017). Bases Conceptuales para una Nueva Educación Extraescolar en Guatemala	3-4

Terms Related to Non-formal/Alternative Education

Term	Definition	Source	Page
Alternative Access Programs	These are education programs that may look exactly like a formal school program but (i) are focused on a different group of learners, or (ii) operate in different geographic areas, and/or (iii) offer different curricula and methods. Alternative access programs also include education programs that provide standard curricula but in a non-traditional environment (such as home schools or mobile schools). Sometimes, while the curricula are traditional, they are not comprehensive; e.g., they may be limited by the resources available. For example, often so-called comprehensive curricula do not offer a full range of sciences because there is no laboratory available, or music may be formally listed as part of the curriculum but it is not offered because there are no suitable teachers.	Baxter & Bethke (2009)	28-29
Alternative Education	The overarching term that refers to all types of education programs that are often not considered formal education programs by agencies, governments, and donors is alternative education. Often, but not exclusively, alternative education programs are offered outside the auspices of the formal government and education system. Alternative education programs include those offered to refugees and internally displaced, by agencies and NGOs where they are not part of the country's education system (i.e., the programs are not managed or controlled by the government of the host country). It also includes non-formal education programs where the certification and validation of the learning is not automatically assured, ad hoc education or awareness programs that respond to a specific perceived need, and short-term emergency education programs that are considered bridging programs (to a real curriculum).	Baxter & Bethke (2009); also cited in INEE Term Bank	28-29
Alternative Education	An alternative to formal education based on public school. These programs respond to a range of youth development needs, including social integration, crime prevention, democracy building, girl's education, workforce development, and health education, among many others. These programs have been characterized by creativity, and by a profusion of partners from other sectors of government and from civil society, including communities, private business, and volunteers. The approaches and methodologies used are unconventional to the extent that they are usually not part of national education strategies (Siri, 2004, pp. 2-3).	USAID. (2013). State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict	IV

Term	Definition	Source	Page
Alternative Education	"Actualmente en Guatemala se entiende la educafcion extraescolar como educacion alternativa. La Educacion Alternativa enmarca las corrientes contemporaneas de educacion no formal, educacion para el trabajo y el emprendimiento, educacion popular y otras tendencias con caracteristicas similares que la diferencian de la educacion escolar"	UNESCO. (2017). Bases Conceptuales para una Nueva Educación Extraescolar en Guatemala	3
Complementary Basic Education	Complementary Basic Education (CBE) systems are complementary in the sense that they provide an alternative route through formal education but match its curriculum to the "official" curriculum, thus allowing learners to return to formal schooling at some stage. These may sometimes be referred to as bridging programs (Baxter and Bethke, 2009) or para-formal (Hoppers, 2006), as it is the (re)integration of children into the mainstream education system, which is the main goal of CBE. Many CBE systems offer accelerated learning programs that focus on completing basic learning in a shorter period of time, although others have the same number of grades/ levels as the matched school system.	HEART. (2014). Helpdesk Report: Complementary Basic Education	1-2
Complementary Education/ Complementary Education Programs	In some cases, CBEs are offered in combination with regular education provision, while in some cases they are ad hoc and discrete. Such programs involve supporting courses or subjects, such as peace education, human rights, and life skills, that are not essentially examined in many countries.	Mastercard Foundation. (2018). Alternative Education and Return Pathways for Out-of-School Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa	19
Equivalency Education Programs	Equivalency programs provide pathways to formal education by offering curricula that lead to qualifications equivalent to those gained through formal education programs. Equivalency programs target primary or secondary school dropouts and provide corresponding curricula, signaling that the recipient has demonstrated the ability to read, write, think, and compute at the level for which the degree was offered. Equivalency programs vary in terms of admission, age, place, and pace, and they are delivered either via face-to-face or distance education.	Mastercard Foundation. (2018). Alternative Education and Return Pathways for Out-of-School Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa	21

Term	Definition	Source	Page
Flexible Learning Strategies	Flexible learning strategies (FLS) is an umbrella term for a variety of alternative educational programs targeted at reaching those most marginalized. FLS have been applied by many governments and civil society organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. FLS overarches non-formal education, accelerated learning, equivalency programs, flexible schooling, alternative learning/education, and complementary education and it can be developed at any level and respective subsector of education. In a country where primary, lower-secondary, and higher-secondary education is available through the formal education system, corresponding flexible programs can be developed accordingly. Similarly, programs can be developed at vocational/professional levels, with vocational, university, or college equivalency and open education programs providing some examples. What are the characteristics of FLS? Reaching the Unreached: FLS are for those most marginalized and unable to access formal educational systems through traditional schooling delivery. Equivalency: FLS covers non-formal education programs whose qualifications are recognized as equivalent to those gained through formal education. Flexibility: FLS are "open" in terms of admission, age, mode, duration, pace, and place, with delivery varying from face-to-face learning and/or distance education, reflective of accessibility. Intensive Learning Quality: FLS are often condensed and tailored to provide scaffolded and relevant learning. Global Citizenship and Lifelong Learning: Approximately 75 percent of the content of FLS is equivalent to formal education curricula, with other functional and relevant life skills integrated on an as-needs basis.	UNESCO. (2016). Flexible Learning Strategies for Out-of-School Children (OOSC) and Youth	
Informal Learning	Forms of learning that are intentional or deliberate but are not institutionalized. They are less organized and structured than either formal or non-formal education. Informal learning may include learning activities that occur in the family, in the workplace, in the local community, and in daily life, on a self-directed, family-directed, or socially directed basis.	UNESCO Glossary / ISCED 2011	

Term	Definition	Source	Page
Informal Learning/ Aprendizaje informal	El aprendizaje que ocurre en la vida diaria, en la familia, en el lugar de trabajo, en comunidades y es mediado por los intereses o actividades de las personas. Mediante el proceso de reconocimiento, validacion y acreditacion las competencias obtenidas en el aprendizaje informal pueden ser visibles y contribuir a obtener calificaciones y otros tipos de reconocimiento. en algunos casos, el termino 'aprendizaje experiencial' se utiliza para referirse al aprendizaje informal que se concentra en aprender mediante la experiencia.	UNESCO. (2017). Bases Conceptuales para una Nueva Educación Extraescolar en Guatemala	4
Non-formal Education	Educational activities that do not correspond to the definition of formal education (see separate entry above). Non-formal education takes place both within and outside educational institutions and caters to people of all ages. It does not always lead to certification. Non-formal education programs are characterized by their variety, flexibility, and ability to respond quickly to new educational needs of children or adults. They are often designed for specific groups of learners, such as those who are too old for their grade level, those who do not attend formal school, or adults. Curricula may be based on formal education or on new approaches. Examples include accelerated catch-up learning, after-school programs, literacy, and numeracy. Nonformal education may lead to late entry into formal education programs. This is sometimes called second-chance education.	INEE. (2010). Minimum Standards Online version	81
Non-formal Education	ECW supports a diversity of non-formal education pathways, including bridge and catch-up classes, accelerated learning programs, and vocational education programs. Non-formal education opportunities allow children and adolescents either to transition back into regular schooling or offer opportunities to further their education through accelerated learning or vocational training.	Education Cannot Wait. (2018). Annual Report	64
Non-formal Education	Any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover education programs to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programs do not necessarily follow the ladder system, and may have differing duration. (UNESCO, 1997)	USAID. (2013). State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict	V

Term	Definition	Source	Page
Non-formal Education	Education that is institutionalized, intentional, and planned by an education provider. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative, and/or complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all. It caters to people of all ages but does not necessarily apply a continuous pathway structure; it may be short in duration and/or low intensity, and it is typically provided in the form of short courses, workshops, or seminars. Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that are not recognized as formal or equivalent to formal qualifications by the relevant national or sub-national education authorities, or to no qualifications at all. Non-formal education can cover programs contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of school children, as well as programs on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development.	Yasunaga, M. (2014). Non-formal Education as a Means to Meet Learning Needs of Out-of-School Children and Adolescents. UNESCO Out of School Children Initiative	7
Non-formal Education	"Non-formal education (NFE) can be loosely defined as intentional and 'systematic educational initiative, usually outside of the formal schooling, where content is adjusted to the unique needs of the learners in special situations to achieve some anticipated learning outcomes'" (Ireri, 2014).	Mastercard Foundation. (2018). Alternative Education and Return Pathways for Out-of-School Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa	20
Non-formal Education	Non-formal education is now often understood as organized learning taking place outside recognized educational institutions. It often focuses on out-of-school youth who are too old to participate in formal schooling opportunities, offering a second chance to those who missed out on school or, for different reasons, did not complete their schooling, or.	Christophersen, M. (2015). Educating Syrian Youth in Jordan: Holistic Approaches to Emergency Response	8
Non-formal Learning/ Aprendizaje no formal	el aprendizaje que se ha adquirido adicional o alternativamente al aprendizaje formal. Ena lgunos casos tambien esta estructorado segun dispositivos de educacion y formacion, per de naturaleza y aplicacion mas flexibles. Usualmente ocurre en contextos comunitarios locales, el lugar de trabajo mediante actividades de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil. Por medio del proceso de reconocimiento, validacion y acreditacion el apredizaje no formal puede conducir tambien a obtener calificaciones y otros tipos de reconocimiento.	UNESCO. (2017b). Bases Conceptuales para una Nueva Educación Extraescolar en Guatemala	4

Term	Definition	Source	Page
Non-formal Education	Education that is institutionalized, intentional, and planned by an education provider. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative, and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all. It caters for people of all ages, but does not necessarily apply a continuous pathway structure; it may be short in duration and/or low intensity, and it is typically provided in the form of short courses, workshops or seminars. Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that are not recognized as formal qualifications by the relevant national educational authorities or to no qualifications at all. Non-formal education can cover programs contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of-school children, as well as programs on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development.	UNESCO Glossary/ ISCED (2011)	

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