Accelerated Learning in Post-conflict Settings

A discussion paper

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List of Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Accelerated Learning. (The key component of APEP, which targets 170,000 children across 17 provinces and employs, through local partners, 6,800 Mentors, 680 Provincial Trainers and 51 Master Trainers.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLS</td>
<td>Accelerated Learning Longitudinal Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Accelerated Learning Programme. One component of APEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEP</td>
<td>Afghan Primary Education Programme. USAID funded 3 year programme, of which Accelerated Learning is the key component. APEP is a consortium of nine organisations (all sub contractors) led by the prime contractor, CAII. CiC, as a sub contractor, provides the training and materials development support to the APEP AL Programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAC</td>
<td>Bangladesh Rural Advancement Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAFS</td>
<td>The Continuous Assessment Feasibility Study in Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Care International</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Community Education Committee or Community Education Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIC</td>
<td>Children in Crisis. Technical partner of CAII in APEP ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREPS</td>
<td>Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (An accelerated learning programme in Sierra Leone.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td>Catholic Relief Service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Distance Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGOs</td>
<td>International Non Government Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>INSET</td>
<td>In-service training</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>International Rescue Committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Land Mine Education Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRI</td>
<td>Magnetic Resonance Imagining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memo of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPE</td>
<td>National School Primary Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PET</td>
<td>Positron Emission Tomography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESET</td>
<td>Pre-service training for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTT</td>
<td>Radio based Teacher Training, a component of APEP, implemented by MSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCUK</td>
<td>Save the Children UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCUS</td>
<td>Save the Children USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEP</td>
<td>Teacher Education Programme produced by UNESCO - PEER</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNECSO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Cultural and Science Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development. Funds APEP and ABEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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Foreword

This paper is based on an analysis of documents collected by the Save the Children Alliance on accelerated learning and alternative education programmes. The documents, listed in the reference section, describe accelerated learning approaches implemented by a number of different organisations in a variety of countries. Based on the initiatives described in these documents, this paper summarises the main elements affecting the design and implementation of accelerated learning programmes in post-conflict settings and identifies best practices and pitfalls.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first discusses accelerated learning in general and specific approaches which have been implemented in post-conflict settings. The second section looks at best practices and pitfalls identified in accelerated learning programme design and implementation. The third section takes a more in-depth look at best practices and pitfalls specifically related to teaching and learning.
Section 1 Discussion

1. Introduction and Background

'Accelerated learning' inevitably means different things to different people and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Accelerated learning is commonly defined as a process through which students complete required learning faster.

The term accelerated learning (AL) has been used over the last 30 years or so to describe how brain research has been applied to learning. Advances in medical technology (PET and MRI scans) have enabled scientists and educators to see how the brain functions while it is thinking and performing tasks, and thus which teaching practices actually maximise learning. Since 1960 there have been four main developments in brain research:

- **1960s Paul McLean**
  - The brain has three layers with a hierarchy of functions, and separate if interrelated areas specialising in survival, emotional and rational behaviours.

- **1970s Roger Sperry**
  - The brain is split into right and left hemispheres which have different functional specialisations and dominance in processing information and completing tasks.

- **1980s Howard Gardner**
  - The brain has eight different types of intelligences processed through different areas of the brain.

- **1990s Gazzaniga (with Roger Sperry)**
  - The brain has three layers with a hierarchy of functions, and separate if interrelated areas specialising in survival, emotional and rational behaviours.

Leading authorities in the field\(^1\) have used the brain research to develop a series of practical approaches for understanding learning: the influence of motivation and self-belief; our preferred style of learning; knowing and using our different sorts of intelligence; and the knowledge of how we retain and recall information.

AL methods do not apply to a specific group, age range, or ability level. They are not ways to play ‘catch up’, hothouse, or fast track learners. AL starts from the individual needs of the learners, motivates and actively involves them, and is interesting and fun. As such, it is accelerated because it allows learners to fulfil their potential and reach levels of achievement that may seem beyond them. The learning is faster, deeper, and more proficient. Students understand their learning preferences better and develop lifelong skills in the process of learning. Students learn how to learn.

Early research on the application of AL methods focused on foreign language learning\(^2\) in adults. AL methods have since been adopted and used extensively in the corporate workplace.

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\(^1\) They include Hank Levin, Alistair Smith, Colin Rose, Eric Jenson, and Barbara Given. Dave Meier, C. Rose and M. J. Nichol, A Smith and J. Vos have all developed frameworks for planning accelerated learning lessons.

\(^2\) Students made astounding progress: adults learnt more, in a faster time and retained it for longer. They were considered to have had a deeper learning experience.
Companies like Disney and IBM have training programmes that apply the new knowledge about learning.

AL principles and practices have more recently been used in schools throughout the developed world with notable success. They have been used with disadvantaged groups— the disabled, students with learning difficulties, low income and/or marginalised groups—and to improve standardised test scores.

Alistair Smith was one of the first practitioners to write about the application of adult AL methodology to children in classrooms. He pulled together findings from the world of neuroscience and cognitive neuropsychology, human motivational theory and performance psychology, learning theory, and school improvement and effectiveness research. He combined the AL principles and practices that focused on the learner, with the factors effective in raising student achievement in a learning environment focused more on the school. Smith believes that AL offers ‘a structured system in which knowledge about the learner, learning and the learning environment comes together’.

Alistair Smith’s ‘accelerated learning model’ (see appendix 2) advocates two main components:

• Optimise conditions for learning by applying principles of AL
• The AL cycle

The ‘accelerated learning in the classroom’ model is based on an understanding of how we learn rather than what we learn. The underlying theory is that given good health, motivation, positive personal outcomes, and access to useful strategies, we can all learn. Perhaps not all in the same way or with the same outcomes but we can all learn. It is the new knowledge about brain function in formal learning contexts that can help us to design more effective learning experiences and lessons.

This concept of AL is similar to the concept of effective teaching and learning in developed/industrialised countries and relies on a set of assumptions about the learning environment i.e. that it is accessible to all, free, safe, secure, inclusive, and resource rich.

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3 For a table of AL principles and practice see appendix 1.
4 Accelerated Learning in Practice. Brain-based methods for accelerating motivation and achievement by Alistair Smith
2. Accelerated Learning in Developing Countries

Most AL experience in developing countries has been in situations where instruction and learning are linked to “more pressing development needs and local, regional, or national strategic priorities—literacy, vocational training, or micro-enterprise development” (Intili and Kissam 2004). These are frequently short term projects in primary, basic (literacy and numeracy) or adult education.

In developing countries where the education system is under-funded, under-resourced (both in terms of human resources and materials), or overstretched and reaches only a proportion of the school population, AL is usually delivered through an AL programme with distinct characteristics.

An accelerated learning programme (ALP) promotes access to primary and secondary education for disadvantaged groups and older out-of-school youth. In an ALP, the required learning is completed in a shorter span of time and the goal is completion of primary education or integration\(^5\) into the formal system at an age appropriate level. The assumption is that older, more cognitively sophisticated children/youth will learn faster. Most ALPs complete two grades in one year. The curriculum incorporates appropriate life skill subjects and may include vocational education, and/or micro enterprise activities. An ALP is frequently donor funded, short term in nature, and focused on access, retention, and completion.

There are three types of programmes used to accelerate learning in developing countries:

I Using AL principles and practices
In some countries, the MoE has adopted AL principles and practices to improve learning in both formal and non-formal classrooms. They have used AL methods to improve teaching and encourage deeper learning, retention, and achievement. Examples include: ASCEND Alternative Learning System; Accreditation and Equivalency (ALS A&E) in the Philippines; Escuela Nueva in Colombia; and the Continuous Assessment Feasibility Study (CAFS) in Malawi. For more details on these AL programmes and the AL practices used see appendix 3.

II Completing the learning in a shorter span of time
These programmes are often called ‘catch up’ or alternative education programmes. They are not designed around AL principles and practices linked to brain-based research but use alternative strategies to cover the curriculum in a short time period. These involve reducing the curriculum to be covered whilst incorporating more effective teaching strategies. For example: the Complimentary Rapid Education Programme for Schools (CREPS) in Sierra Leone where 6 primary grades were completed in 3 years; the Accelerated Learning Programme for Primary Education, South Sudan where 8 primary grades are completed in 4 years; and the Complimentary Opportunities for Primary Education (COPE) programme in Uganda where 7 grades are completed in 3 years. See appendix 4.

III Completing the learning in a shorter span of time using some AL principles and practices
Combining the two approaches above has been used in some ALPs, where the full curriculum is covered in a shorter time using some AL methods to accelerate the pace of learning. For example: the Afghanistan Primary Education Programme (AEP) Accelerated Learning Programme completes 6 grades in 2 years 10 ½ months\(^6\) and uses Alistair Smiths ‘Accelerated

\(^5\) Integration includes all the steps necessary for a child/youth to become enrolled and recognised as part of the MoE school.

\(^6\) 2,000 AL classes completed the 6 grades in 2 ½ years.
learning in the classroom model'; The Revitalisation of Iraqi Schools and Stabilization of Education (RISE) project in Iraq completes 2 grades in one year and also uses the 'Accelerated learning in the classroom model'. See Appendix 5.

3. AL Programmes in Post-conflict Settings

In post-conflict situations, the education system is dysfunctional and badly damaged. The safe, conducive learning environment that is inclusive and free and in which AL thrives in the west is often absent. A post-conflict ALP has to address this issue and introduce effective learning and teaching practices in order to complete learning in a shorter span of time.

3.1 Strategies for AL Programmes Design

The choice of strategy is often dependant on the following:

- The existence of an MoE recognised curriculum and/or textbooks that are of reasonable quality which can be used in an ALP.
- Length of disruption to schooling. If the disruption has been for only 1 or 2 years, the goal should be to return children to school as quickly as possible at the grade level they would be in if no disruption had occurred. In these cases, the MoE system is still in place and functioning well. Countries which experience prolonged conflicts have weakened MoE systems and lack infrastructure and resources. These countries have large groups of older children who have had their schooling disrupted and large groups of younger children who have had no opportunity to attend school.
- Availability of MoE schools and school places. ALPs with integration as their aim need to have links with schools into which the students will transfer. In areas with no schools, the ALP may need to cover all the primary grades. In post-conflict settings, the MoE is under pressure to meet the needs of the school-age population and primary classes are hugely oversubscribed. A large ALP need to consider the effect of large numbers of students integrating into the MoE system and whether the often fragile school system can cope.
- Target learners. Are they in or out-of-school, how much schooling had they received before the disruption, and why did they dropout? In many countries that had a well respected education system, children/youth denied access are extremely motivated when they have the opportunity to attend AL classes. Some youth who dropped out of education may have learning problems. This situation presents different problems for AL classes.
- Language of target learners both in relation to the language of published curriculum materials and within the class. Refugee and IDP settings often have several mother tongues spoken in one class.
- Length and amount of funding. This especially relevant to ALPs that cover the complete primary cycle. Delays in programme implementation, budget cuts, and reduction in support for school supplies and school feeding programmes by international donors in the final year of the programme can seriously impact students in their final primary grades.
- Funding, technical expertise and time available to adapt/reduce the curriculum so that it can be covered in a shorter span of time.

The following strategies have been used by AL programmes in a variety of post-conflict settings:

Condensed curriculum

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7 In Afghanistan, APEP will have more students graduating from grade 6 in the province of Farah than are currently attending grade 7 in secondary schools.
Condense the National Curriculum to its most essential elements so that it is completed in a shorter period (this often involves concentrating on core academic subjects only)
- Cut subjects (often sport, art, music)
- Remove repetition, excessive or redundant pages from standard textbooks. Textbooks may be used consecutively or consolidated, merging topics that are repeated to create greater depth and interest across the grades.

Using more effective teaching and learning methodology
Using more effective teaching and learning methods can help students develop strong foundations in language and mathematics and learn at a faster pace so that the complete National Curriculum can be covered faster.

Alternative curriculum
Rewrite, create, or adopt another curriculum that meets targets for integration or accreditation in a shorter time span
- Use literacy and numeracy for lower grades
- Write modules on different themes that meet equivalent standards in the MoE and have accreditation exams e.g. ASCEND ALS A&E Philippines³
- Mixed: lower primary grades have an alternative literacy/numery curriculum whilst upper primary grades follow the National Curriculum e.g. BRAC Primary Schools (BPS) and BRAC Adolescent Primary Schools (BAPS) in Bangladesh (See appendix 6).

### Why Use the National Curriculum?

**Advantages:**
- Textbooks and other resources are available
- Teachers exist and are familiar with the curriculum
- Teachers are trained to use the curriculum
- Formal assessment systems have been developed
- There is a recognised system of student accreditation in place
- Integration into MoE schools is generally easier
- It is easier to use the National Curriculum in its full or condensed form than rewrite another.
- Countries that had a respected education system pre-conflict have a higher regard and acceptance of ALP if it uses the National Curriculum. It is not seen as a second best or inferior programme.

**Disadvantages:**
- Out-of-date content and methodology
- Reinforces outdated pedagogical styles i.e. rote learning
- Inappropriate in terms of culture, gender, language or ethnicity/religion
- Not available in mother tongue
- MoE textbooks (which are often the only realistic guide for the curriculum) may have poorly graded language and be text dense with few pictures or maps.

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³ The ASCEND ALS A&E programme has developed 535 modules in the following areas: Critical thinking, problem solving, communication skills, sustainable use of resources and development of self and community.
3.2 AL Programme Implementation

3.2.1 Short Term Programmes

The goal for short term programmes is to rapidly help students catch up with their age appropriate education:

- Use MoE school vacations, facilities, and teachers to complete one lower primary grade for out-of-school or older in-school children (e.g. Children in Crisis/GOAL Winter AL programme and UNICEF Winter ALP implemented by BRAC, both in Afghanistan). This type of programme is best suited to countries where vacations at the end of the school year are 2-3 months long so that one grade is completed prior to the beginning of the new MoE school year. Students can enrol at least one grade higher than before taking part in the programme, a big incentive to older students. See appendix 7 for more details.

- Literacy and numeracy programme of 6-8 months to integrate out-of-school children into lower primary grades. Some programmes include a 3 month bridging programme to assist integration. Often, a recognised programme is used and adapted. (e.g. UNESCO PEER Teacher Education Programme (TEP) developed in Somalia and used extensively in African post-conflict and refugee settings. See appendix 8 for an outline of TEP. More recently NRC has used TEP in its AL programmes in Angola, Burundi and DRC.) See appendix 9 for details of these programmes.

- Completing two grades in one year when schooling has been disrupted for a very short time. Students ‘catch up’ their missed education and after integration continue as if there had been no disruption. (e.g. RISE Iraq funded by USAID and implemented by Creative Associates International Inc (CAII) condensed the curriculum and used the ‘Accelerated learning in the classroom model’ to complete 2 grades in one year. The students re-entered the MoE schools in the class they would have been in if there had been no disruption.)

- Non-formal education programme of 8–10 months for out-of-school youth including vocational education, leading to an accreditation exam in elementary or high school. (e.g. Philippines ASCEND ALS A&E implemented by many NGOs including SCUS.)

3.2.2 Programmes Covering the Complete Primary Cycle

The goal of most of these programmes is the completion of primary education and subsequent integration at secondary level (where MoE schools exist). Most programmes complete two grades in one year until all the primary grades are completed.

There are two models that have been used:

- A single class established with grades covered in sequence—entry at grade one with small numbers (returnees) entering at higher levels during the programme (e.g. APEP)

- Several AL classes established at one location at different grade levels with entry at the appropriate grade dependant on assessment/proof of past education.

In both cases, if MoE schools are available, have room for students, and recognise student records, students can leave the ALP to integrate at a higher primary grade in an MoE school. Both models can be used by the MoE or in a community AL programme.

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9 In most countries primary education consists of 5-6 grades. In Sudan it consists of 8 grades.
3.2.3 Similarities across AL Programmes

Each programme has developed its own AL model to fit its particular circumstances, but they all have characteristics in common. The following includes common design features seen in most ALPs in post-conflict settings:

### Similarities in ALP

- The programme is recognised by the MoE with a signed agreement clarifying integration and accreditation of AL students
- Awareness raising activities are conducted prior to the ALP within the education system at all levels (central, district, and local education officials; within schools: head teacher, teachers, and PTA) and within the local community.
- The community is mobilised to send their children to the ALP and to be involved during its implementation.
- The provision of a safe learning space
- Smaller class sizes of 20-40 learners
- Learners are out-of-school and over-age, generally in the range 10-18, dependant on the MoE rules for enrolment in primary schools.
- ALPs target certain groups (i.e. girls, the disabled, refugees and IDPs, ex-combatants and other groups disadvantaged by religion, ethnicity, language or caste).
- The class has one teacher who stays with the class through the grades to develop a relationship of trust and respect.
- Class times and location are flexible and usually agreed by the community, teacher, and learners.
- Daily classes are between 2-4 hours in duration.
- The programme receives significant resource support:
  - Textbook provision
  - Student kits/stationery
  - Teacher kits
  - Class kits (e.g. black board, sports equipment)
  - Materials to support teaching—recognised education materials (e.g. poster, globes, or materials to support low cost teaching aids like paper, marker pens, scissors, glue)
  - Support for documentation—MoE student assessment record forms, attendance books
- Students receive incentives to attend (free education, provision of student kits, payment of exam registration fees on completion of final primary grade, etc.)
- Teachers receive incentives in cash or kind.
- Additional life skills topics are included in the ALP curriculum.
- Teachers receive initial training in life skills topics and effective methods
- The promotion of learner-centred methodology and cooperative learning (i.e. pair and small group work, coming to the board to work on maths or language, reading individually).
- Teachers are supervised/supported during the ALP by a recognised cadre of trainers
- In-service teacher training is provided.
- The ALP supports students in the enrolment process in MoE schools in the new academic year

Large scale ALPs have been implemented in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda Liberia, DCR, Angola and Rwanda. The AL programmes in South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Uganda are all similar in design and implementation model. The UNICEF/MoE CREPS model in Sierra Leone is based on programmes in Liberia and Uganda. The SC-UK initiated ALP with the MoE in South Sudan looked closely at CREPS. APEP in Afghanistan is a community based ALP. All have features in common.
A Comparison of Four Large Scale ALP\(^\text{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>CREPS Sierra Leone</th>
<th>ALP South Sudan</th>
<th>COPE Uganda</th>
<th>APEP Afghanistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>UNICEF initiated now adopted by MoE</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementer</td>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>Currently SC -UK</td>
<td>Various, most recently SC-UK</td>
<td>APEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>Average enrolment 10,985 8,453 Enrolled June 2005</td>
<td>2,380</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>170,000 grade 1 151,903 grade 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction programme</td>
<td>No Life skills subjects integrated in curriculum</td>
<td>21 days</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>No Life skills subjects added to curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Condensed curriculum</td>
<td>Condensed curriculum</td>
<td>Condensed curriculum</td>
<td>Full National Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of grades</td>
<td>6 grades in 3 years, 2 grade per year</td>
<td>8 grades in 4 years 2 grades per year</td>
<td>7 grades in 3 years grades 1-3 in one year, then 2 grades per year</td>
<td>Grades 1-3 in 13 months, grades 4-6 approximately 6 months each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic year</td>
<td>Parallels MoE school year</td>
<td>Parallels school year</td>
<td>Parallels MoE school year</td>
<td>Own dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>Max 40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class location</td>
<td>MoE school or a temporary classroom built in the community</td>
<td>MoE school or nearby</td>
<td>Not in Formal schools</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class duration</td>
<td>4 hours 10 mins lesson time per day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>3-4 hours a day, 5 days a week</td>
<td>4 hours a day, 5 days a week</td>
<td>Grade 1-3 3 ½ hours, 6 times per week Grade 4-6 4 hours 6 times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target students</td>
<td>Out of school</td>
<td>Demobilised Child soldiers, dropouts</td>
<td>Girls, out of school children</td>
<td>Over age out of school Females 52.5 % (originally 70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>9-15</td>
<td>10-18 and over</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers from?</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>MoE nominated and selected</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>MoE, Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of teachers</td>
<td>1 per class</td>
<td>1 in grades 1-4, 3 teachers for 2 classes in grades 5-8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>National Primary School Exam MoE accredited AL exams</td>
<td>National Exam MoE accredited AL exams</td>
<td>National Curriculum accreditation system</td>
<td>National curriculum accreditation system AL Bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of materials</td>
<td>Textbooks, education materials</td>
<td>Textbooks, education kit</td>
<td>Education kit, Teacher’s manual</td>
<td>Textbooks, class, teacher and student kits,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Incentives</td>
<td>$40 per month (average MoE teacher salary $50 per month)</td>
<td>In kind</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$50 per month (average MoE salary $60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of teacher</td>
<td>1 month initial training 1 day monthly inset Distance Learning Programme</td>
<td>3-4 week initial training</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Grade 1 &amp; 2 12 days, grade 3 - 12 days, grade 4 - 12 days, grade 5 - 12 days, grade 6 - 12 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher support</td>
<td>Scheme of work Teachers manual</td>
<td>Trainers Manual, teacher support documents, Teacher workbook, Time frame</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Trainers Manual, Teacher’s Guide, Plan of school dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher supervision</td>
<td>NRC trainer for 7 teachers MoE trainer</td>
<td>By MoE</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1 trainer for 10 teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) Data from the documentation available
4. Learning Outcomes from AL Programmes set in Post-conflict Settings

4.1 Short Term Programmes
The limited documentation available on short term AL programmes suggests high percentages of completion and integration for lower primary grades:

- In the CiC winter AL programme conducted for 1200 children in District 16 of Kabul in 2002/3, 1175 children subsequently enrolled in the MoE schools in Grades II – IV and 21 enrolled in Grades V - VII.
- NRC, which conducted evaluations on its implementation of TEP in Angola and Burundi (Johannesen Dec 2005), found that in both countries 50-70% students enrolled passed the TEP year with good results. For example in Angola, from 2000 – 2005 95,232 students enrolled in TEP classes and 66,488 completed the TEP year – a dropout of 30%. Data from one province in Burundi which enabled follow up of TEP students in MoE schools suggested that TEP students follow the same pattern as regular students regarding retention and attrition once they are integrated in primary schools.
- The evaluation of the NRC implemented TEP in DR Congo (Johannesen Jan 2005) also suggested low dropout and high rates of integration in TEP even though global statistics were incomplete. In one district (Kalemie) with good statistical data, in 2004, the dropout was 6.9%, most of which was due to students moving back to their home village. Around 70% passed the TEP test, of which 55% integrated into grade 3 and 26% integrated into grade 4 and 5. Only 5.6 % of the students completing TEP did not integrate due to moving back to their home village and the payment of school fees. In the same district, follow up on student retention in the MoE system found that after the incentive of school fees paid for one year was over, the dropout rates soared with an average of 41.4% of students leaving school (ranges of 11.6-72%). If the aim of the ALP in DCR was for retention in primary education, a short term programme may not be the answer in a school fee paying environment.

In the Philippines, the ASCEND ALS A&E programme which is an extremely innovative non-formal programme that reaches primary and secondary out-of school dropouts, had a disappointing pass rate on accreditation exams for completion of primary or high school. A case study carried out by Appeal Resource and Training Consortium (ARTC) in 2000 found that only 12% of total test takers from the Sandiwaan Centre of Learning passed the accreditation test. SCUS in its ASCEND Programme Mindanao also had similar low rates of passes with only six passing the accreditation exam out of 419 learners\(^{11}\). Although students already had basic and functional literacy and had been out of school for over a year, the results suggest that 6-8 months is not sufficient to reach an equivalency with the end of primary or high school. ARTC identified inadequacies in the validities of the tests, the difficulty of many of the modules for self-learning, and inadequate support to facilitators as contributing to the low level pass rate.

4.2 Long Term Programmes
The researcher was only able to access two AL programmes which comprehensively documented learner outcomes – The NRC implemented CREPS in three districts\(^{12}\) of Sierra Leone (Johannesen July 2005) and APEP Afghanistan which had a comprehensive MoE system for data analysis and reports set up by its partner Aguirre International. As one is a fully MoE-supported ALP (similar in nature to the ALP in South Sudan, Uganda, and Liberia) and the

\(^{11}\) Figures for February 2005 provided by Cecile Ochoa, Education programme manager SCUS Mindanao.
\(^{12}\) Kambia, Kono, Kailahun
other is community based without MoE support, together they provide information across the continuum of key AL approaches.

**CREPS in Sierra Leone**

**Female Participation**
38% female students (8,453 in June 2005) Female teachers 8.9-10.5%

**Dropout**
Over a period from 2002-2005, the average dropout for CREPS students was 38% with 10% more girls dropping out than boys. The main reasons given were: transfer of residence or transfer to MoE schools, other CREPS centres, or types of training centre. Very few girls left due to marriage or pregnancy.

**Learning competency**
In comparison with MoE students in four subjects in grades 2 and 4, ALP students consistently scored significantly higher than their counterparts.

**Primary completion**
In 2004, 91% (549) of enrolled CREPS students took the National School Primary Exam (NSPE) early and passed with scores comparable to MoE schools. In 2005, 46% (3,885) of the enrolled CREPS students passed the screening test to register for the NSPE. Mock exams suggest a 74% pass rate. Of the students who did not manage to register for the NSPE, 27% were too young. Many are in 'literacy classes' and their lack of achievement may be explained by prolonged absences, recent arrival in the programme, and learning difficulties. These students would be integrated into appropriate primary grades in MoE schools.

**Secondary school dropout**
Follow up in secondary schools suggest little or no dropout of CREPS students despite having to pay school fees. In addition, the students are applying learning techniques used in ALP to their more traditional classes e.g. group work.

Comparing learner competency in two very different systems would be unrealistic, but both programmes show students consistently doing better than their MoE counterparts with students displaying confidence in their own abilities to continue learning using skills they have gained in AL. Students are well motivated to continue their education at secondary level. Parents of Afghan girls have been so impressed with the quality of the education they have received that they are now prepared to give them permission to attend secondary education, a huge attitudinal change.

Learner outcomes from CREPS Sierra Leone and APEP in Afghanistan—both large, successful AL programmes—have distinct differences in female enrolment and dropout. APEP is set in the community whilst CREPS is fully integrated with the MoE. APEP has female enrolment and participation rates of 56% whilst CREPS is 38%. Overall drop out rates are more difficult to compare, but suggest that CREPS has a higher dropout and certainly a higher female dropout of 10% more than boys as compared to 1% more than boys in APEP.

A brief comparison of these two systems suggests that female students do better in a community setting. The more intimate nature of a community classroom better suits female learning preferences (i.e. cooperative, group work). Further evidence can be provided by a study carried out by SCUS amongst Afghan refugees in Balochistan on the effectiveness of

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community (home-based) girls’ schools and conventional refugee schools. The learning achievements of the students in ‘home-based’ schools were greater than the conventional

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### APEP Afghanistan

**Female Participation**

55% female students (83,067 in grade 6) Female teachers 34 – 41 % (3,278 at its peak), 27% female Provincial Trainers (184), 22% female Master Trainers (11 out of 51) with three female Senior Trainers out of seven.

**Dropout and attrition**

Attrition at each grade varied between 3.4 and 4.5 % whilst dropout varied between 2.1 to 3%. Girls showed only a 1% higher dropout as compared to boys (4% - 3%). Estimated dropout rates for MoE schools vary between 10-17% per grade. Of the ALP dropout, half were due to transfer of residence followed by economic reasons, illness, MoE enrolment and marriage.

**Learning competency**

Learning competency - The APEP Accelerated Learning Longitudinal Survey (ALLS) showed that students made impressive achievements in Grades 1-3 in all areas of reading writing and maths with increases each year. At the end of Grade 3, over 95% had demonstrated satisfactory progress, 89% demonstrated full mastery and over 62% were performing above grade level. In Grade 4, the impressive student outcomes were not maintained with nine out of ten demonstrating satisfactory progress and two-thirds with full mastery in these subjects. This is consistent with the consensus that there is a substantially increased difficulty in Grade 4 maths and language subject matter. About one in five students were performing above grade level when all the newly introduced subjects of science, social studies, and second language were taken into account. The outcomes in all grades had not shown any correlation with size of class or any significant correlations with age or gender, apart from the fact that girls were slightly outperforming boys, particularly in reading and writing. Reading outcomes were related to the level of attendance and, in Grade 4, there was a correlation between writing ability and age, with students 10 years and under underachieving in this area. Over 40% of the students in the ALLS survey were able to solve word problems, read novel texts, and write extended pieces, skills which are not promoted in the MoE curriculum.

**Primary completion**

Primary completion -Of the 170,000 ALP places for students from the beginning of the ALP, 151,903 students are enrolled in Grade 6. Over the duration of the project there was an 82% completion rate for students who had enrolled in grade I of which 55% were female.

**Student perceptions**

As the ALP students progressed through the grades, they perceived themselves as more confident, could reflect on their own progress, and with the provision of textbooks, 98% believed they could continue their education with self-directed learning. Student collaboration increased through the grades and peer tutoring of siblings was reported at 66% in Grade 3. Maths and language skills were regularly being applied outside the AL class. Incredibly some students, mostly females, were finding paid employment as teachers in MoE schools.

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schools. In addition, the teaching competencies of home-based teachers, many of whom only had primary education themselves, were often higher than teachers with officially recognised qualifications.
5. Aspects to Consider in AL Programme Implementation

5.1 The Degree of Involvement of the MoE

Some AL programmes are promoted by the MoE and fully integrated within their education systems. They have been developed by or with the MoE in collaboration with donors (UNICEF, USAID, Asian Development Bank), and need assistance from INGOs and local NGOs to fund, implement, and manage the ALP (e.g. CREPS, ASCEND ALS M&E). In these cases, the MoE has unified ALP management, teaching approaches, and accreditation systems and has a strong role in supervision and monitoring. The ALP is supported by administrative, training, and student materials and involves MoE teacher training colleges, MoE supervision, MoE schools, and their staff in the programme. Most importantly, they recognise the ALP and will have an equivalency or accreditation process and may set or ensure compatibility of exams. This makes integration with MoE schools straightforward.

In post-conflict settings, the degree of MoE involvement can vary within the country (i.e. between central, district and local level) and is often dependant on personalities and contacts. It can be almost non-existent and at its most extreme, obstructive. The lack of a formal agreement with the MoE can adversely affect integration of students into MoE schools during/after the ALP.

The formal school system must be fully briefed and understand that the ALP is a discreet time-bound programme that targets children who are barred from attending MoE schools due to their age. ALPs should not be seen as a parallel education system or involve practices that would undermine the MoE system. For example, allowing younger children to attend free AL classes when an MoE school is nearby is often seen as provocative and has created problem in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. Good relationships depend on the degree of government involvement in the programme, awareness raising, and collaboration/cooperation between the donors, agencies involved, and government at both a central and local level.

Most ALPs are collaborations among the MoE, INGOs, local NGOs, and communities. Where an ALP is community based it can still collaborate with the MoE at a national, district, or local level. If the ALP is awaiting recognition by the MoE, collaboration with district and local education departments is a necessity. The following are strategies used in Afghanistan (Nicholson 2006):

- Capacity building efforts can be directed at education officials by inviting them to attend training courses or meeting their requests to train MoE teachers at a local level.
- If the ALP teachers are also MoE teachers, training benefits both systems.
- In Afghanistan, where up to 57% (3,782) of the ALP teachers are also MoE teachers, training is supported with detailed Mentor’s Guides and many teachers were asked to hold mini workshops in MoE schools and/or to share their Mentor’s Guide.
- If textbooks are provided by the ALP for the AL class, once the grade is complete these textbooks can be given to the district education office for distribution in MoE schools.
- Other teaching resources may also be used in both the ALP and MoE schools, if the teacher works in both.
- At a national level, any materials developed can be submitted to the MoE for their use.
- Educational expertise can be offered in National MoE teacher training initiatives and lessons learnt shared.

5.2 Accreditation and Integration of Students

Accreditation of ALP students has been achieved using the following strategies:

1. The ALP is a fully recognised MoE programme and has an accreditation system in place. The students take a recognised equivalency exam (e.g. ASCEND ALS A&E)
2. The ALP conforms to the recognised MoE student assessment system and uses the same MoE forms and procedures (e.g. APEP).
3. The ALP students can sit a national exam used for secondary school entry (e.g. the National Primary School Exam administered by the West Africa Examination Council).
4. Students in lower primary grades pass the MoE school assessment test administered in the school.

Constraints
- An ALP may be recognised and an accreditation system approved but its condensed curriculum (with fewer subjects) may not fully prepare the students to sit all aspects of the National Primary School Exam. (South Sudan ALP faced this dilemma and decided to cover the full curriculum in the last 2 primary grades using the most able teachers or MoE teachers. At the same time, they advocated for the ALP accreditation process to be approved.)
- Even if the MoE has a recognised equivalency exam so that ALP students can enrol in secondary education institutions, the students themselves may express concern about their preparation for secondary schooling given the condensed curriculum. (SC-UK 2005)
- Where there are known constraints in securing a signed agreement/Memo of Understanding (MoU) with the MoE before the start of the ALP, serious consideration should be given to whether to start an ALP. If the decision is to go ahead, what strategy will be developed to ensure integration of students? All efforts should continue to secure an agreement, but where there has been pressure by donors and the community to provide education, the following strategies proved successful in Afghanistan by APEP\textsuperscript{14} when negotiating an MoU with the MoE:
  - The full curriculum and MoE textbooks was used
  - The rules and regulations for examination and assessment set by the MoE were followed to the letter using MoE record forms for student achievement.
  - Strong relationships were developed and built with provincial and local education authorities including MoE schools. This relationship enabled small numbers of students to transfer to MoE schools at various stages during the implementation of the ALP successfully.
  - An Educational Bill was written to recognise accelerated learning, which was vetted and approved by the highest education authorities in the MoE. The approved bill, signed by the Minister of Education, detailed all aspects of an Accelerated Learning Programme, student recognition, and integration into MoE schools. It secured secondary admission for the 150,000 APEP students completing primary education. The Accelerated Learning Bill as an MoE policy document can be used by any AL programme in Afghanistan.

Many ALP students do not complete their primary education or fail their final exams. In these cases, an alternative method of assessing and placing the student needs to be established so that the students can integrate into MoE schools. Often they are more motivated and confident, and so are less likely to dropout. Community AL classes face a problem if there is no MoE school with which to integrate at primary or secondary level. Refugees face a similar problem if they leave an ALP in a camp to return to their home area. Often the education opportunities in these areas are not known\textsuperscript{15}. It is only when the camp AL class closes that the parents and authorities take any action to solve the problem of continuing their children’s education.

\textsuperscript{15} A problem experienced by AL student in the NRC programme in Liberia (NRC 2005)
5.3 Programme design and implementation is also accelerated

In post-conflict settings, the ALP is usually initiated by the donor in response to needs identified by the MoE, local, and international NGOs. The ALP is designed and implemented by a variety of interested parties linked in a consortium or by a formal agreement of cooperation. Successful programmes have shown a high degree of collaboration and cooperation among all the agencies involved, with clear roles and responsibilities assigned. A clear strategy, plans for implementation, and clear and realistic responsibilities agreed by those involved are key in the success of an ALP. The accelerated nature of grade completion has a huge impact on the recruitment of staff, mobilisation of communities, and the preparation, procurement, and distribution of materials to support the programme. The procurement and distribution has to take into account the weather, access, and security situation as well as providing for 2 grades a year. If the strategy involves materials production (condensing/rewriting/adapting the curriculum, producing administration, community, and teacher training support materials) this requires technical expertise, time, and a significant budget. The pressure and demands at the start up of the programme are huge. The production of appropriate materials to meet the needs of the program requires heavy inputs and heroic effort at the beginning and early stages of the programme. If the strategy, planning, or partnership has not been clearly established, the ALP can become bogged down in petty details, overlap, and beset by delays.

5.4 Ownership of the Programme – by the Community or the MoE?

This is an important aspect of any ALP and can define its success. In the initial stages of a community based ALP, the community is mobilised to support and assist in the setting up of the class, possibly in teacher selection, and in the establishment of a school management committee or community education council. Many communities are then happy to leave the running of the AL class to the MoE/teacher. Successful programmes have promoted and actually encouraged full community participation for the duration of the classes (e.g. APEP and NRC in DCR). The community is involved fully in all aspects from teacher selection, to supply and distribution, provision and security of the learning space, and providing support to the teacher and students. The community and parents’ understanding of their responsibilities is greater and they are more supportive of the teacher and their children. The transfer of skills and the concrete benefits from the ALP students to the community increases community commitment to education and support for the class. Attendance is higher, dropout reduced, and community attitudes can dramatically change with regard to girls’ education, and that of other disadvantaged groups.

If the AL class is based in or around a school and has a high degree of MoE involvement in the teaching, supervision and provision of a learning space, the community still needs to be mobilised to participate fully in the PTA and in “school life”.

During an ALP there may be changes in the attitudes of the stakeholders, particularly the MoE, who may feel more capable at providing education services for out-of-school children themselves. The MoE may request changes to AL class times to fall in with the academic year, or set up its own NFE systems which may make local AL classes redundant as students transfer, a situation experienced in Nepal (Webley 2003). What place does an ALP have in relationship to the MoE efforts? The ALP should not be in competition with the MoE and indeed may have been a positive influence on the MoE class.
5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The very nature of a post-conflict setting and the need to get programmes up and running immediately often means that a system of monitoring and evaluation is not considered in the early stage of programme design. Student details are not collected systematically and dropouts are not monitored, so there is no measure of how successful the ALP is at meeting its goal of integration. Most ALPs have no student, teacher, or programme data with which to effectively evaluate the programme when finished. Of the ALPs analysed for this paper only one, APEP, has systematically carried out M&E with a needs analysis, pilot study, collection of student, teacher, class, and community data (including information on dropout). Throughout the ALP, it has conducted an in depth longitudinal study on student competencies and learning outcomes. Setting up such an M&E system is not only time consuming, but will often meet resistance from the stakeholders who feel it is merely a tool for accountability. The large amount of data that must be collected on students, teachers, and communities in the initial stage of APEP put huge pressure on the local NGOs during the set up of AL classes. The delays in collection, compilation, and analysis aggravated this situation. Once analysis of grade 1 was completed and presented, the value of M&E was immediately apparent in highlighting strengths and areas in which remedial action needed to be taken. The continual grade by grade M&E analysis informed all partners of innovation and successful strategies which could be shared. In particular, it highlighted that girls were doing as well if not better than boys, validating the efforts some communities had gone to in girls’ education (Nicholson 2006). NRC has conducted evaluations of the ALP it has implemented, most notably on CREPS in Sierra Leone (Johannesen July 2005), but was unable to find systematically recorded data from the early stages of the programme. Base line surveys, M&E, and final evaluations are essential for successful ALPs to inform the MoE of interventions that can be adopted in future education programmes. For an outline of the M&E system used in APEP Afghanistan, designed by Aguirre International (now a Division of JBS), see appendix 10.

5.6 Flexibility of Class Time and Location

One of the big advantages of an ALP is that it can be flexible in relation to class duration, class timings and location. There is no rigid time of the year or time of the day for the classes to commence. It can meet the needs of many disadvantaged groups by taking their circumstances into account. For example: holding early morning classes for girls, who can then complete their domestic/family chores during the rest of the day, late classes for boys who need to work in the fields. The community, teacher, and students can agree on the most suitable times for the class, and this encourages greater responsibility for regular attendance. Classes do not need to follow the formal school year if primary completion is the key aim, and can take advantage of times when children are freer of responsibilities (e.g. the winter). Classes can be held everyday of the week and therefore for a shorter time.

The timings of AL classes held in MoE schools are influenced by classroom availability and can generally only be held after the regular school day is over. This may conflict with parents’ wishes for their children to work or attend religious instruction (e.g. in Liberia ALP). In specially dedicated or constructed ALP classrooms, class times may have to be coordinated with MoE schedules and vacations, or influenced by teacher preferences or student perceptions of what school times should be. In South Sudan, the MoE has asked that AL classes adopt the school calendar (SC-UK 2002).

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The location of the class is also flexible and should be determined by the needs of the learners. Once a location is determined, it is not necessary to stay there if a better alternative is found. In APEP, some classes relocated from a cramped community learning space for girls to a boys’ MoE school during vacations. In some rare examples, an AL class and teacher will relocate to the high summer pastures where the students have to tend their flocks for the summer period.\textsuperscript{17}

An AL class may be located in:
- An MoE school using their classrooms. The MoE recognises the ALP and has approved use of MoE classrooms, though the AL students may agree on another location.
- A separate room(s) near/attached to a MoE school often purpose built
- A community space (e.g. purpose built room, private rooms or an abandoned building) or a community venue (e.g. mosque, in a MoE school classroom when it is vacant).

A community learning space may be selected for the following reasons:
- There are no government schools in the area/village so the community provides a learning space.
- There are no government facilities for girls so a community space is used
- An ALP class in the community encourages girls to attend by satisfying the community’s need for protection and safety, reducing parental anxiety, and taking less time away from chores
- The ALP class has older learners so is located away from the government school to prevent problems between students and to improve the self-esteem of older learners.

If the MoE school system is fee paying and the ALP provides free education, it may have a detrimental effect on regular education provision. Young students may want to join the ALP and schools may resent that there are no fees to support their teachers. The distribution of resources (classroom, furniture, sports equipment and textbooks) can create envy in the MoE schools. NRC in Liberia\textsuperscript{18} has found that promoting the sharing of facilities and sports equipment can reduce this and help integration of students.

The table below prepared by the New Sudan working group on Accelerated Learning\textsuperscript{19} gives a comprehensive comparison of ALP classes located within an MoE school or located separately.

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{17} APEP in Baghlan Province.
\textsuperscript{18} Norwegian Refugee Council  “Emergency Education, RREP and ALP in Liberia 2005” Final Report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Norwegian Refugee Council April 2005
\textsuperscript{19} The Accelerated Learning Programme for Primary Education - Meeting of the Working Group 29\textsuperscript{th} May – 2\textsuperscript{nd} June 2002. Malual Kon, Aweil East. Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan
\end{footnotesize}
Within the compound / under the administration of the formal schools

Advantages:
- Ownership by the local school and authorities
- Clear position within the existing community and education authorities' recognised structures
- Maintains position as an ‘access’ route into main school (children only stay in ALP class until they are ready to join their appropriate age / academic level)
- Share administration roles and responsibilities (roll taking, assembly, cleaning of compound)
- Reduces work for PTA (only small class construction required)
- May encourage lower classes in formal school to have one teacher per class (widely recognised as being to the benefit of the child)

Disadvantages:
- Resources intended for ALP class (exercise books, pens etc.) are shared though out the school making it difficult for ALP students to compete the ALP objectives in the short period
- ALP class differences (e.g. teaching/learning hours, single teacher etc) likely to be altered or streamlined with the main school
- Older students mixing with younger students in common area. Can cause potential problems, especially younger girls – older boys etc.
- ALP classes finishing earlier and going home earlier may cause problems.
- ALP students will place pressure on the existing space in the formal school and its resources

Located / administered separately

Advantages:
- Recognised as different to the formal school system (less likely to be streamlined, more likely to maintain differences)
- Teachers specifically trained in ALP teaching and management
- As ALP classes expand, enables space for ALP education independent of other schooling
- Students seen as attending ALP classes for short period, and then physically leave and join the formal school
- Time differences of ALP class does not affect other learners
- Age differences of ALP learners does not affect other learners

Disadvantages:
- Likely to be seen as an NGO initiative that is not incorporated into main schooling system
- May not be owned by community and local education authorities
- Creates extra work for PTA (class construction required, and also latrines, store, head teacher’s office etc)
- Students may tend to stay in ALP system, and not reintegrate into formal system
- ALP may be seen as a parallel initiative and not as an ‘access’ route

5.7 Teacher Selection and Recruitment

Almost all ALPs have a distinct policy on whether or not teachers should be recruited from within MoE schools. All hold the conviction that the recruitment of ALP teachers should not disadvantage MoE schools. MoE schools themselves often have a high percentage of untrained teachers (e.g. in Liberia\(^{20}\) it is estimated as 50%; in the South Sudan ALP MoE schools, 75% of teachers were themselves only primary school leavers).

Selection of MoE teachers

- The ALP is a recognised MoE strategy for education. Teachers can be selected from amongst the school staff for the ALP classes held within the school e.g. South Sudan, the AL teacher is a volunteer and can come from the formal system.
- The school day is short or involves a shift system of morning and afternoon classes. Government teachers are free to teach AL classes during the afternoon when MoE classes have finished for the day or during the alternate shift\(^2\) (e.g. Afghanistan has a shift system in schools so MoE teachers can work for both MoE and AL classes.)
- The recruitment of MoE teachers for the ALP is mandated by the Provincial Authorities (e.g. In APEP the Provincial Governor of Nangarhar province provided a list of candidates for teacher selection, Nicholson 2006).
- Communities, when given the choice, select MoE teachers living in their community to teach in AL classes during their free time (e.g. APEP).
- In Afghanistan, the low salaries of MoE teachers meant many were leaving education to work in better paid employment elsewhere. South Sudan also has a high turnover of teacher in MoE schools for the same reasons. Employing MoE teachers in AL classes in addition to their MoE positions provides teachers with two salaried teaching positions and keeps teachers employed in education, to the benefit of both MoE and AL classes.
- Government teachers are used on a part-time or temporary basis for teaching of mother-tongue classes or in the final primary grade of ALP when there are nationally recognised exams (e.g. South Sudan and CREPS Sierra Leone). The MoE teacher is more familiar with the exam system and better able to prepare students to take and pass the exams.
- The AL class needs a female teacher and the only available women already work in MoE schools (e.g. APEP and South Sudan ALP)

Selection of non-MoE teachers

- There are many unemployed and qualified teachers from which to recruit.
- Refugee/returnee teachers are not recognised for employment in MoE schools. Until they are registered with the MoE, they can only work outside the formal system.
- The community wants to recruit a teacher from its own community – qualified or unqualified
- Many government teachers use traditional rote learning and class management techniques which are not suited for an ALP. There is a belief that these teachers cannot change their style of teaching.

AL programme strategy usually includes the recruitment of the most qualified and experienced teachers available. In reality, this is difficult and many teachers are unqualified, untrained, and inexperienced. In Grade 1 in Afghanistan APEP recruited 2,380 teachers (35% of those recruited) for its community classes that had not taught before (Kissam et al 2005). In Sierra Leone 75% of the AL teachers have secondary school qualifications (‘O’ levels) with only 6.3% qualified (Johannesen 2005). This does not necessarily mean untrained teachers are less successful, but they do require far more support. Many unqualified teachers are from the community and show high levels of commitment and motivation. They are also more likely to use new more effective teaching practices in their class if fully supported. CREPS in Sierra Leone also found that teachers with fewer qualifications are performing well if given Teacher’s Guides and regular support visits (Milan 2005). In addition, many programmes recognise that to recruit female teachers they need to adapt their recruitment strategy and often accept females with only primary education.

With regard to the age of the teacher, many ALPs set it at 19 years (i.e. that they should be older than the students). APEP found that there were strong correlations linking high attendance

\(^2\) In Afghanistan, lower primary attend in the morning and upper primary in the afternoon. An upper primary school teacher will be free in the morning.
with younger teachers and high attendance where community commitment was strong Intili J, E. Kissam, (2006).

Most ALPs recruit one teacher for the AL class which stays with them through the grades. This builds up strong relationships of trust and respect, no time is wasted in teacher changeover and there is continuity of AL approaches. When the ALP is for the full primary cycle, many AL teachers experience difficulties teaching higher primary grades – the number of subjects increase, curriculum content and language is more complex. The MoE may have a system in schools in which teachers specialise is certain subject areas (e.g. science and maths, language arts) in higher primary grades. One AL teacher may feel overwhelmed or have no experience of teaching the subject at these higher primary grades. A community or school which has several AL classes may be able to assign the most able teacher to higher grades or hire specialists for some subjects. In small communities, specialist teachers may not be available even on a part time basis. Possible solutions involve screening the teachers at recruitment or before the higher grades to select the most competent. South Sudan has recruited three teachers for two classes at level 3 and level 4 and for those AL classes held in MoE schools suggested requesting an experienced primary 8 teacher to teach AL level 4 on a temporary basis (SC-UK 2005). CREPS combines an MoE and AL class for the final primary grade, especially if it helps in exam preparation (SC-UK 2005). In community AL classes, volunteers from the community have taken specialist subjects (Nicholson 2006). The trainer/supervisor can play an important role and take difficult subjects e.g. second language, on their support visits.

5.8 Teacher Incentives

In post-conflict settings, the level of teacher incentive must be very clearly thought out. It must encourage commitment to the ALP and recognise the work involved. In post-conflict settings, where MoE schools have short shifts, the ALP teacher may be teaching longer hours, for more months of the year. Teacher incentives must be sensitive to MoE salary structures and not discourage local community initiatives to support their teachers. There are particular problems where the incentives for MoE teachers are very low and teacher turnover high. Paying larger salaries does not necessarily improve teacher commitment to the ALP or education in general. If the NGO offers AL teachers higher salaries yet has an agreement with the MoE for them to transfer to the MoE system at a lower salary at the end of the ALP, the teacher is unlikely to stay and turnover will be high.

The provision and payment of fees for teacher training through distance learning, linked to a recognised certificate, has proved most effective at motivating teachers in CREPS Sierra Leone. Providing training that is not formally recognised by the MoE prevents AL teachers who are transferred or employed by the MoE at the end of ALP from earning a salary commensurate with their training and experience (as observed in Afghanistan). Conversely, the lack of certification of the ALP teacher makes them a cheaper employment option for the MoE.

5.9 Teacher Training and Support

Regular teacher support and in-service training are essential when introducing more effective teaching and learning practices and ensuring they are adopted in the classroom. Both CREPS Sierra Leone and APEP Afghanistan found that their more intensive systems of in-service

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22 In Afghanistan, the AL classes are frequently of longer durations than MoE classes. Teachers also do not have long vacations but time between grades sufficient to complete training. AL teachers work 30 periods per week for $50/month. MoE teachers work 24 periods a week for approximately $58 (Grade XII qualifications)

23 See Mary Ombaka 2005
training and teacher support were the prime reasons for new methodologies being adopted and teaching standards improving (Johannesen 2005). A teacher faced with many new approaches is often wary to use them and may only try out one in the classroom. Once they discover its effectiveness, they may want to adopt other approaches, but need to receive training on them again. Continued in-service gives them this opportunity (Nicholson 2006). Many ALPs have agreed that MoE staff will carry out this activity – yet is this putting too many demands on an already overstretched system? The MoE staff will also need some training in AL approaches to support these teachers well and to adopt the new AL teaching methodologies. As many teachers are unqualified and untrained, they need a lot more support, more than perhaps the MoE can provide resources for. In these cases it may be more cost effective for an NGO to support the AL teacher. Successful ALPs have a high trainer-teacher ratio (e.g. APEP has 1:10, CREPS 1:7)

5.10 Age of Students
The entry age for students needs to be thoroughly researched before the ALP begins. One of the assumptions of an ALP is that older learners are cognitively more sophisticated so can learn much faster. If the ALP is for a full primary cycle, the student age at the end of the ALP must be calculated. Does it now fall into the age group eligible to enrol in secondary schools, if integration is the goal of the ALP? This will define the upper age limit for registration in Grade 1 of over-age children and youth. The lower age limit must be calculated to ensure the student has reached the age of secondary enrolment by the end of the ALP. The lower age limit is also determined by the MoE enrolment rules for primary schools, and more particularly Grade 1. In Afghanistan the upper age limit for enrolment in Grade 1 is nine years old. The ALP lower age limit was then set at 10 years old (Nicholson 2006). Pressure from the community to include younger students in the ALP can lead to problems in higher primary grades. These children are not as sophisticated cognitively and though they may succeed in lower grades, evidence in APEP Afghanistan indicates they do not perform as well in competency based tests and formal assessment. The drop out rate of younger students in the upper grades is significant. APEP recorded a drop out of 21% of students aged 8 or under in Grade 424, when estimated overall drop out was 4% (APEP M&E Grade 4). In Grade 4, there was a correlation between writing ability and age, with students 10 years and below underachieving in writing competencies.

Where there are many AL classes at the same grade level, students are better grouped by age as they are then similar in maturity and interests and can maintain a similar pace of learning.

5.11 Attendance and Dropout
Accelerating students through their grades requires high attendance levels for students, and more particularly the teacher. A student missing a few days can have a huge impact on his or her own achievement level but a teacher’s absence will impact the whole class. Student competency tests for APEP correlated reading outcomes to the level of attendance throughout the grades25. Poor attendance leads to dropout. This has a significant impact not only on the student but impacts the class. High rates of dropout in a small class (20-40) will affect class size and dynamics over the grades (especially in ALPs which cover the primary cycle). At what point do low student numbers make the class unviable? Policies for minimum student numbers and strategies to maintain high student attendance, appropriate standards for new student entry

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24 ALP class rules state that children should be between 10-18 years old, but some communities allowed younger children to attend.
and class merger must be developed in the early stages of the ALP. (For an example from Afghanistan see appendix 11.)

The rate of dropout may also depend on the background of the students. If students never had the chance to attend an MoE school or dropped out because their families moved or could not pay school fees, motivation levels in the ALP class are likely to be high and dropout low. If students dropped out of MoE schools because they had problems learning, their levels of self-esteem may be much lower, and if their learning needs are not met they are more likely to dropout.

5.12 Mother Tongue or English
The decision on whether to use the National language of education (often English) or mother tongue for lower primary grades with a transition to the National language of education/English in higher primary grades needs to be made in line with available teaching expertise or lack of it. Finding teachers with good language skills in mother tongue and the National language of education/English can be difficult. In South Sudan, most teachers do not know how to read or write their mother tongue. To enable mother tongue teaching to take place in the ALP in the short term, they proposed ‘borrowing’ the MoE school’s mother tongue teacher\(^{26}\), and in the long term, training the teachers in mother tongue so they can teach it themselves (SC-UK June 2002). In situations involving refugees, returnees and IDPs, there may be many languages spoken as mother tongue in the target group. Should they attend AL classes held in the language of instruction of the local MoE schools? APEP Afghanistan had several classes of Pashto speakers who decided to hold classes in Dari, the language of the Secondary school in their district in Afghanistan (Intili J. E. Kissam, 2006). Education systems that use English need to spend more class time on learning the language to give a solid foundation in reading and writing skills for future learning.

5.13 Female Participation
Many ALPs have an increase of female participation as their goal. As suggested in section 4 on learning outcomes in the last paragraph, community AL classes have been found to have a higher number of female students who are less prone to dropout. The following are some strategies used:

ALPs in MoE schools
- Provide free education
- Take part in or provide a school feeding programme (Liberia)
- Build latrines for girls (Liberia)
- Recruit female teachers
- Community sensitisation
- Provide a uniform

ALPs in communities
- Close to female students home
- Flexible and shorter hours fits in with their chores
- Female or older male teacher they trust and respect recruited
- Female only classes – girls feel more comfortable
- Classes meet the cultural norms of the community

\(^{26}\) Most MoE schools and churches have specially designated mother tongue teachers in South Sudan
Continued dialogue with the men in the community with an agreement for a boys class if a girls class can be established (Carneal, McLaughlin 2005)

Include some ECD provision. Often the main childminders are girls

In Afghanistan, a conservative, patriarchal society, the female participation and success in the ALP is unprecedented. (For strategies used in APEP in Afghanistan see appendix 12.) The ALP successfully promoted employing women throughout the programme including at the most senior level (each local partner has a female education coordinator for its programme). This policy developed positive role models for female teachers and girls to look up to and follow. In addition, the growing percentage of mixed classes throughout the AL grades from 16 – 25% suggests that interaction between ‘over-age’ male and female students is gradually becoming more acceptable. This alone will contribute to the long term development of more positive attitudes towards gender equity in the future. In the communities there is an increasing awareness of the benefits that female participation can bring and a renewed respect for the women who are committed to education. Teachers and trainers are starting to take on more responsibilities and a greater representational role in their communities, from participation in Community Education Committees to winning seats in parliamentary elections.

5.14 Participation of other Disadvantaged Groups

Many ALPs were set up with ex-combatants as the target group for ALP (e.g. South Sudan). Their maturity, previously active lifestyle, and a potential fast pace for learning would make it difficult for them to reintegrate into the lower primary grades in MoE schools to a system of repetition and seemingly slow progress through numbers and the alphabet. Even if these ex-combatants were willing, a class filled with older boys is a deterrent to the enrolment of younger children especially girls (South Sudan working group). These students frequently find it difficult to conform to a formal school environment, cannot sit still for many hours, and have short attention spans which can lead to disruption and violence. This group is often better in a smaller class with a group of students of similar age. Learner centred methods and enjoyable activities that students benefit from immediately work well with this group. Ex-combatants are best served by ALPs that include goal setting, cooperative work, challenging and interesting activities, and positive and immediate feedback that links success and effort. They need to be taught by capable teachers.

Few ALP have highlighted the involvement of disabled students. Both the Voice for Education Programme supported by SC-UK in Nepal (Webley 2003) and APEP have used positive role modelling in their programme to encourage the participation of disabled teachers and students and to change attitudes throughout the community. APEP included exposure visits for trainers to deaf schools, training on recognising disabilities and methods to support disabled students. The programme also included stories of successful disabled students and teachers in an ALP newsletter that was distributed to all AL classes. AL classes set in the community were also more accessible for disabled students. (See appendix13 for some examples of disabled student achievements in Afghanistan.) The Voice for Education programme found using disabled role models for advocacy in the community and a media campaign highlighting the achievements of disabled children most successful in Nepal.

5.15 Integration of ALP and MoE systems

See section 5.1, “The Degree of Involvement of the MoE”

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5.16 Quality Versus Replicability
Many successful ALPs with demonstrated quality and outcomes may be too expensive to replicate on smaller budgets held by the MoE or other implementers. Should an ALP be designed with this in mind? Should costs be reduced in, for example, teacher support and supervision, so the ALP can be adopted by the MoE or another organisation, or should the ALP strive to provide a model of quality education provision?

Although the costs of a fully supported ALP are high, the costs per student may be more reasonable, especially for completion of primary education. Retention is high, learner competency above average, and the potential for higher retention rates in secondary school good.

6. Areas That Need to be Addressed
In reading the documentation and writing this paper, several areas of interest and programme learning stand out because they are absent or have not been looked into in any way. Some are obvious, like the lack of programme documentation, M&E, and the difficulty in finding out about other similar programmes. The initiative by the Save the Children Alliance that resulted in this paper is in some way addressing this need by sharing materials that have been collected to date.

Areas that would be interesting to develop include the following:

Recording the ALP in video/DVD format
One particularly interesting initiative by a local NGO in the APEP consortium was the production of a 20 minute DVD of the programme as a tool to raise funding. Technology now allows better documentation of programmes—materials can be stored in electronic format, and digital camcorders, cameras, and even mobile phones enable even the most remote areas to be captured via images. Creating the equivalent of an album on the ALP can give a real feel for programme activities and be used as a tool with donors, programme planners, etc., who are frequently unable to visit the field for security reasons. They can also be shared with AL classes. The ability to run DVDs on laptops means digital images can be shared with trainers, teachers, and students in remote areas.

Setting up a web-based library of materials
Including ALP policy documents, guidelines, pertinent evaluation reports, and training materials. Some organisations, most notably NRC, have posted all their evaluation reports on their websites. This is a valuable initiative, but not enough. It takes time and knowledge on who is implementing ALP before a search of the internet can be effective. Materials need to be housed in a central database, similar in nature to the ones organised by INEE. (www.ineesite.org/standards)

Feedback to the field via newletters
True accelerated learning is built on improved self-esteem and positive feedback, yet rarely do the AL learners and teachers receive any, apart from occasional visits to selected ‘model’ classes. In Afghanistan, these classes expressed the concern that visitors’ promises of sending copies of photos and other materials never materialised and were ‘false’. They wanted to have a genuine report on their class that recognised their achievements in a sincere manner. Providing
a newsletter to all classes can fulfill this need to some degree and share ideas/information between classes. It can also encourage students in their own efforts to create a newsletter.  

**Developing materials to improve access for disabled children**
Developing strategies and materials aimed at increasing access for disabled children and support for trainers and teachers. SC-UK and APEP have had some success in this area, but there is no mention of disabled children access in any other documentation. This area needs to be addressed. The use of media is important to develop positive images of the disabled.

**Follow up studies**
Follow up studies of ALP one, two, or five years after programme implementation has finished could really evaluate the effectiveness of the ALP on student motivation and achievement, particularly in life long learning skills. APEP accumulated an excellent body of knowledge during the duration of the programme. It is unlikely that the APEP consortium will still be working together or be funded for follow up studies. This is an area that donors should consider.

**Longitudinal studies**
Longitudinal studies of student learning outcomes can be some of the most effective programme learning methods, yet are rarely carried out. Even mid-programme they can provide useful programme learning.

**Linking Education Programmes**
Looking into radio teacher training, distance learning, and networking can be extremely beneficial to ALP. Already programmes exist (e.g. in Afghanistan, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Pakistan). Where possible, they should be linked to the ALP in some way. Where the national language of education is English, radio teacher training in language skills could have a significant role.

**Research**
Interesting areas suggested for research include:
- The nature of mixed gender classes in highly conservative countries and how they change over the duration of the ALP—what influences the changes?
- The SC-US study comparing single class, home-based girl's schools and regular schools threw up some very interesting findings. They flew in the face of the prevailing male dominated system's belief that female teachers with few qualifications could result in girls with higher levels of achievement than their male counterparts. A study looking into the ways different groups learn and the best environment could make a significant contribution to education programme planning.
- In ALP using AL principles and practices, which methods are adopted and why? Are they transferred to other teachers, classes, and education systems, and if so, how and why?

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28 AL students a class in APEP produced their own newsletter to share in their community. Using the APEP produced newsletter as a model they also used both national languages.

29 In Afghanistan, Media Support Solutions developed a radio teacher training programme for MoE teachers as part of APEP. Equal Access have radio programmes that work in the education field in Nepal, Afghanistan, India, Tajikistan, and Laos. Sierra Leone has a MoE Distance learning Teacher training programme. The Aga Khan Education System in North Pakistan ran a series of English teaching broadcasts to improve language skills.
Section II

7. Best Practices in AL Programmes

In developing countries and post-conflict settings, a successful ALP includes much more than just better teaching and learning techniques. For accelerated learning to take place effectively, there must be a safe and conducive learning environment. As the goal is often to provide and complete primary education for out-of-school, overage children/youth, with the aim of integration within MoE schools, successful practices will include those in project management, community development, and education.

The following best practices have been selected from the documentation of many different AL programmes as listed in the reference section. The examples highlighted do not form a definitive or exhaustive list of practices that might be adopted. They are there to guide and inform implementers on successful strategies, methods, and lessons learnt, so that they are better informed in their own programme development.

7.1 Starting the Programme

1. Inclusive and thorough needs analysis conducted including:
   - Baseline survey
   - An analysis of grades in MoE systems with high dropout so that implementation includes a planned response to those grades.
   - Reasons for overage children/youth out of education
   - Other agencies involved in education or other projects and analysis of their approaches
   - Community needs.
2. Pilot AL classes before the full programme is introduced. Materials (teaching and M&E) can be trialled, providing valuable feedback to inform the planning of future scaled-up programme (e.g. APEP, Nicholson 2006)
3. Proper planning and preparation prevents poor performance (The 6 “Ps”). Involve all key stakeholders—MoE, INGOs, local NGOs and communities—in the planning process so that a common framework and approach is agreed for the implementation of the programme. Develop clear guidelines/policy for:
   - Community involvement
   - Class location and size
   - Teacher and trainer selection and incentives
   - Provision of resources
   - Student selection and assessment for entry into ALP at each grade level.
4. Develop clear roles and responsibilities for each partner organisation within the ALP and conduct regular coordination meetings.
5. Select good local partners using a clear set of selection criteria and procedures to guide the process e.g. APEP (Nicholson 2006)
6. Prepare a detailed plan/schedule of class starting/finishing dates and of in-service training courses for teachers, trainers, M&E staff, etc., that drives the implementation of the ALP. The schedules keep the ALP accountable and on track by guiding the budgeting, procurement, distribution, and monitoring of the ALP. (See appendix 9 for APEP training dates for AL and appendix 10 for APEP class dates for AL.)
7. A strategy for accreditation and integration of ALP students developed and agreed with the MoE and implemented from the start of the programme. This will include planning for student assessment, record keeping, and certification at the end of the programme, future educational opportunities (enrolment in secondary schools, home study, distance learning) and support during the transition to secondary/college education.
7.2 Programme Design

1. Even if the ALP is a top down model, allow local partners some flexibility with the programme implementation so they can adapt plans/budgets to suit local conditions (e.g. in Afghanistan, the local implementing partners for APEP provided heating to enable classes to continue through the coldest months). This flexibility allows managers to solve problems as they arise and promotes local ownership of the ALP (Nicholson 2006).

2. Systematic M&E data collection, analysis, and research to provide feedback on programme effectiveness, quality assurance, and accountability at all levels of the ALP. Maintain a database on student, teacher, and class data for the duration of the ALP.

3. Study student learning experiences, skills gains, and learning outcomes at each grade of the programme included as an integral part of the ALP.

4. Use local partners/NGOs for implementation of the programme especially at community level. INGOs are generally better equipped to provide the technical expertise in training, M&E, and distance learning. INGOs can create links with other organisations, facilitate workshops, and network local NGOs with other relevant organisations.

5. Provision of an induction course before the ALP formally starts. Orientation to school routines, introduction to appropriate life skills, literacy and numeracy, and social interaction skills incorporated in the course. Students are assessed and selected for grade appropriate classes.

6. Full participation of students in the agreement of the class timings and location and when they wish to integrate into MoE schools. Students are given choices in what they learn.

7.3 Coordination

1. Promote cooperation, collaboration and information sharing between all the agencies involved in the ALP—donor, government, INGOs, and NGOs on both a formal and informal basis—and at all levels—central/national, province and district level.

2. Good cooperation and collaboration among other agencies involved in education so that repetition and overlap are avoided and so that different programmes are set up to complement each other. Link the ALP with other types of programmes (e.g. ECD 30, non formal education and vocational education) for those who do not fall within the age group targeted.

3. Invite participation in training courses for those education officials, head teachers, and teachers not involved formally in the ALP. Include talented students in training courses to encourage peer-to-peer teaching (e.g. Nepal and APEP).

4. Provide capacity building and on-the-job training at all levels of the ALP to transfer skills and expertise to local partners and communities. Knowledge and materials are shared (e.g. APEP).

7.4 Community

1. Conduct awareness raising campaigns for the community and education authorities at all levels to fully understand the purpose of the ALP.

2. The community is mobilised/sensitized to participate fully throughout the ALP. Their involvement and responsibilities include teacher selection, learning space selection, class timings, distribution, monitoring attendance of teachers and students, volunteering in the class.

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30 ECD programme benefit girls participation in ALP as they are often responsible for child minding.
7.5 Gender
1. Promotion of gender equity throughout the ALP and at all levels of the programme. Female managers and trainers provide good role models in persuading the community to select a female teacher and in encouraging girls' participation.

8. Pitfalls in AL Programmes

Every ALP has unwittingly made mistakes. Some were resolved with solutions that improved the overall programme and others provide programme learning. The following are some key pitfalls, with solutions and/or antidotes where they were developed.

8.1 Starting the Programme
1. In a post-conflict situation: Ministers and government officials are often transitory and an agreement for an ALP may be difficult to negotiate or late in coming. Pressure from the donor may mean that the programme goes ahead without an agreement. In AL programmes where this has happened, it has involved a lot of disharmony at a local level (with education department officials or head teachers being uncooperative as they have no official authority to support an ALP). This will jeopardise any strategies involving government schools, teachers or provision of textbooks. It can create tension in local communities. The community may feel that if the ALP is not recognised, their effort and commitment to education is not valued and their children's time in the AL classes wasted.
2. Funding is not secure for the duration of the programme and/or is cut dramatically. Delays caused by security, etc., can set back AL programme implementation so that not all the primary grades can be completed. Resources/incentives promised by UN agencies and WFP are reduced/redirected/cut.

8.2 Provision of resources
1. Envy and resentment from Government school personnel and authorities if the ALP is seen to compete with them for school fees, or receives more resources (classroom, textbooks, and supplies). (NRC promotes a sharing arrangement for use of equipment)
2. The size and accelerated nature of the ALP demand effective procurement systems. The late distribution of any resources will seriously jeopardise the accelerated learning of the students. If only one supplier is contracted for all procurements, this can lead to storage issues and long delays in assembling supplies. Distribution of supplies should be coordinated very carefully and take into account the security situation, weather conditions, and accessibility of AL classes.
3. The timeframe for ALP implementation and the delays in provision of MoE materials for an introductory course leaves teachers with no support materials or training. (Adopt a programme that has materials (e.g. Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP) and TEP).

8.3 Community
1. The ALP is a top down programme and community education needs are not considered. The community may not be consulted over the location/type of learning space and therefore takes no ownership of it. This can lead to serious security problems, theft and damage, poor attendance, and low self-esteem amongst students and teachers.
2. The community believes that the responsibility for education lies with the government and apart from giving the child permission to attend takes little interest in the ALP. Strong commitment to community mobilisation can help to change such attitudes.
3. Communities where there is no MoE education provision do not understand why younger children are not accepted by the ALP. This can lead to a community refusing to send age
appropriate children/youth or result in younger children registering. Young adults over the age of registration may feel disappointed. Communities may resent the emphasis on classes for girls with no provision for boys so will not cooperate with setting up a class or giving girls permission to attend.

4. Provision of all learning materials apart from religious textbooks, and training to teachers in all subjects except religion can lead to community resentment that their religion is not valued, and suspicion as to the motive of the ALP. The timetable may still include religious lessons, but the students and teacher are disadvantaged by the lack of support, which may affect the student’s achievement record needed for integration into a government school (Nicholson 2006).

8.4 Staffing
1. Nepotism during teacher selection at community level and within MoE schools. Preferential selection and treatment of influential adults’ children (not always a pitfall as it may encourage others parents to send their children).
2. Teacher incentives for ALP are higher than government salaries. Teachers may leave government positions to join ALP, causing resentment amongst those left behind and undermining the MoE system. If part of the agreement with the MoE is that AL teachers will be hired by the MoE when the ALP is over, the lower salaries do not encourage the AL teachers to stay and results in high teacher turnover (Ombaka 2005).
3. In recruiting female teachers, the issue of maternity leave must be considered. An ALP with large numbers of female teachers can suffer if an arrangement for acceptable replacement teachers is not found. In APEP Afghanistan during maternity leave, AL classes were taught by official substitutes that had attended training courses, or Provincial Trainers. In some cases, a member of the teacher’s extended family (husband, sister, daughter) considered acceptable by the class was hired and received advice from the official teacher in the home during their maternity leave.
4. National technical, programme, and education staff with experience/English ability show little commitment to the programme. When the opportunity arises for more lucrative employment they leave. High staff turnover in key positions (e.g. materials development, translators and M&E) creates problems in the delivery of quality products in time.

8.5 AL Class
1. Agreements with the MoE to use classroom space in a post-conflict setting may be unrealistic if the school is largely destroyed. Priority within the school will be given to the government programme. 75% of ALP classes in Sudan which have agreements to use MoE classrooms are held under trees because any classrooms in good repair are prioritised by the MoE. The AL students may feel they are inferior.
2. Temporary learning spaces (e.g. in Sierra Leone) are easily damaged by weather and need to be maintained and repaired. More permanent structures would have been more cost effective and conducive to students learning.
3. The age range in ALP class is too large (10-25 for example) and has a mix of learning abilities, interest, and pace. Younger students may feel intimidated by their elders, female students intimidated by older males. Older students may feel inferior. Classes of ex-combatants pose particular problems (see section 5.14).

8.6 M&E and Documentation
1. Lack of and poor documentation can prevent students from integrating into MoE schools. Student records must be complete from the first grade.
2. No data is collected on students, classes, teachers, or reasons for dropout so it is difficult to identify and correct poor practice and promote good practice. The programme lacks accountability.

3. M&E data collection forms are too complex and too numerous, causing overload at the start of a programme.

4. M&E data collected and analysed by even the most efficient of systems cannot inform the design of training packages in an ALP completing the grades in sequence. The accelerated nature of the programme means training for trainers/teachers is underway before the M&E evaluation reports on a particular grade are ready. (Use pilot classes for feedback)

8.7 Integration and Certification

Pitfalls associated with integration of students into government schools and accreditation
- The ALP class/programme finishes several months before the accreditation exam.
- Not all the subjects are covered in the final primary grades for the national exam.
- Students using more effective learning strategies and who do not rely on memorisation may be disadvantaged in an exam that relies on a regurgitation of the facts.
- ALP classes were established in areas with no government secondary school provision so students cannot enrol in secondary education.
- Students who dropped out of the MoE school system because they could not pay the school fees and other costs will face the same problem again after the ALP has finished.
- Students familiar with small classes in a fully resourced programme using more effective teaching and learning methods will face difficulties integrating into more traditional, large classes.

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Evidence to date suggests that this is not the case. Students in Secondary schools in Sierra Leone have a high retention rate, and use strategies from the ALP in their classes.
Section III


Successful ALPs, incorporating effective teaching and learning practices to improve both the quality and speed of learning have much in common with the “purer” AL approaches of the west. These practices are not emphasised in terms of brain research and if they were explained may have a bigger impact. Often the explanation of why a process is effective can aid its wholesale adoption and lead to deeper life long learning skills that can be applied to future experiences. Where one of the following ‘best practices’ can be linked to an identified AL principle based on brain research it is followed by a brief explanation in brackets.

9.1 In the Class

1. Provision of a child-friendly learning environment which is safe and secure. Prevention of all forms of punishment and behaviour that intimidates or humiliates students. Encourage the use of alternative disciplinary and management techniques to deal with behavioural issues. (Stress inhibits learning. Providing a safe, friendly environment encouraged ‘relaxed alertness’ the best state for learning.)

2. Inclusion of sports, arts, and music as part of the AL programme. Sports and recreational activities not only attract and retain students, but aid accelerated learning. (Physical movement stimulates the brain, helps us recall skills and improves learning especially for students with special educational needs (SEN). Playing sports increases mental and physical discipline, spatial awareness, strategic thinking, goal setting and team work. Music can stimulate, focus and relax students and the rhythm aids language acquisition.)

3. Provision of textbooks and stationery to students to maintain an accelerated pace of learning. Motivated children will learn to read under the most impossible circumstances provided they are exposed sufficiently to some contact with the written text. When few or no textbooks are available or distribution of textbooks and other essential class supplies are late, precious learning time is wasted on copying. Learner-centred activities, particularly those regarding reading are curtailed. Inexperienced teachers are under far more pressure when there are no textbooks.

4. Provision of essential materials to support the teacher in making low-cost teaching aids.

5. Use of active learning techniques (i.e. discovery and project learning, problem solving, decision making and critical thinking activities) that involve the application and manipulation of facts in real life contexts in all levels of training and in AL classes. (Learning comes from doing the work itself - it is real learning.)

6. Regular use of collaboration and cooperative learning activities, which have a group goal and individual accountability. (Learning becomes more efficient and effective when we do it with others.)

7. Promotion of student participation using appropriate teaching methodology (question and answer techniques, pair work, group work and peer-teaching), student committees, activities in the community and interaction with other AL classes.

8. Teaching materials are gender sensitive and are adapted to reflect the local situation. Learning is a creative act and needs to make a personal connection. It takes place at both conscious and unconscious levels.

9. Provision of supplementary reading materials to allow the application of skills to new materials. If we want to value reading skills we need books to read and enrich the curriculum. (Providing an enriched learning environment will stimulate our learning systems.)

10. Concentration on the basic skills of numeracy and literacy in the early years to build a solid foundation for reading skills and content learning. Good competencies in reading and maths connected with study skills teaching, lead to more self-directed learning in higher grades.
11. Use of good classroom management and communication techniques—clear instructions, different forms of classroom organisation, clear blackboard work and good question and answer techniques.

12. Inclusion of lessons and activities that develop social and communication skills, raise self-esteem and motivation, and enable the students to reach their goals. (The learner must believe that there is value in the learning and that he or she is capable of learning and applying it in some meaningful way.)

13. Inclusion of activities that address all class learning styles (i.e. visual, auditory and kinaesthetic), both ‘big picture’ and step-by-step approaches.

14. Inclusion of appropriate life skills lessons—in health, HIV/AIDS, landmine education, psychosocial support, reproductive and maternal health and future career opportunities. (When stress on the learner is reduced because they are better informed on what to do in a real life situation, they make better decisions.)

15. Provision of visual materials in the class: published posters; visual materials printed for use in the Teacher’s Manual; low cost teaching aids etc. (The brain absorbs images more easily and faster than words and retains them for longer.)

16. Use of positive, specified and timely feedback. (The brain thrives on immediacy of feedback, on diversity and on choice. When learners engage in what is described as ‘pole-bridging’, improvements in reasoning powers are dramatic.)

17. Promotion of games and humour in the classroom. (Humour and play increase attention, and produce a positive emotional state which promotes learning.)

9.2 Teacher Training

1. The teacher training has been organised to include regular in-service courses complimented by comprehensive teacher materials (Teacher’s Guide, scheme of work), distance learning by the MoE, and regular support from a trainer/supervisor in the classroom. One or all of these should lead to an MoE recognised teacher qualification.

2. Support materials for trainers and teachers are all inclusive with details of activities, background information and the possible answers to brainstorming or group discussion activities. This is particularly important if the curriculum is weak, outdated, uses traditional methodology, or where there are many untrained teachers. Teachers’ materials contain pictures to use in class. (When stress on the teacher is reduced because they are better informed on what to do in a real life situation, they make better decisions on which method to use.)

3. Effective teaching and learning practices are used actively in all training courses, including micro teaching and experiential learning. Trainers/teachers who actually ‘do’ a student activity can experience the learning benefits themselves. (Learning comes from doing the work itself - it is real learning.)

4. Demonstration of good classroom management techniques, positive and immediate feedback techniques, and methods of informal student assessment on the training courses. This raises learner self-esteem and leads to better learning retention. Trainers learn by doing.

5. The inclusion of teaching practice for trainers and teachers to develop their methodology, management, content knowledge and feedback techniques. (‘Limiting beliefs’ can be challenged with successful teaching practice.)

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32 Pole bridging involves different areas of the brain in processing information as a task is undertaken. The brain connects information left and right, back and front simultaneously and this process can be encouraged deliberately by talking about the experience as you do it.

33 A ‘limiting belief’ is something that a person believes is true and can act as a barrier between potential and achievement.
6. Training courses which at all times modelled supportive supervision. This includes “reflection sessions” to develop self-assessment and comments on teaching practice which concentrate on the good points and where improvement can be made. (Good communication skills promote interpersonal intelligence. The brain thrives on immediacy of feedback)

7. Inclusion of significant amounts of content knowledge teaching, using effective methods. (The teacher, often untrained and unqualified, experiences a real learning situation and by learning content needed for future AL classes gains a real benefit.)

8. Inclusion of psychosocial issues in the training course and how *teachers* and students can be helped to deal with trauma, stress, difficult memories, death, anger etc. This reduces stressful situations and helps build interpersonal skills.

9. Inclusion of recent brain-based research in training courses and use training sessions that allow the participants to experience and apply accelerated learning methods (e.g. sessions on “limiting beliefs” in teachers and how this affects students learning).

10. Inclusion of exposure visits to schools that teach deaf, blind, and mentally handicapped children, and training on how to recognise and assist children with learning difficulties in the training course. Recruitment of disabled trainers and teachers. Inclusion of stories about successful disabled teachers and students in teacher/trainer support materials, radio distance learning broadcasts and other forms of media.

11. Provision of training, activities, and practice on how to recognise and support learners of different abilities.

12. Training courses include familiarisation to the ALP, its administration, assessment, M&E, and management systems and instruction on how the teacher can promote better community and female participation.

13. Use female and disabled trainers in the training cascade to mixed groups of trainers/teachers as positive role models. Male teachers trained by quality female trainers have a better appreciation of their ability and that of their female students.

14. Professionalism maintained throughout the training cascade particularly in timekeeping, attendance and preparation for an activity.

### 10. Pitfalls in Teaching and Learning

1. The training materials for the ALP are developed for qualified trained teachers (and their level of knowledge) yet the actual teachers recruited are unqualified and untrained, often with only primary education (Johannesen 2005)

2. Many teachers recruited and trained at the start of the ALP will slowly slip into traditional teaching styles without regular support and in-service courses. Many AL classes fail to adopt participatory methods.

3. Many teachers both MoE and newly recruited believe that rote learning is a successful method for covering the curriculum as they know it works and this 'limiting belief' may prevent the adoption of new methodologies. Many older teachers are too ingrained in the use of traditional methods.

4. Condensing a curriculum and producing materials for it takes time, expertise, and funding. It is extremely challenging when there is only a short start up period. This may prove unfeasible with a poor curriculum as it would need substantial changes and input which may not be recognised by the MoE.

5. The ALP is adopted from another country (e.g. UNESCO Teacher Education Programme) but has not been adjusted to the local situation/context.

6. When the country has two national languages, which should be used in a mixed training group? Materials must be produced in both languages and often in English too (donor expectation and INGO expertise involved). Translation takes time and requires translators who are expert in two/three languages, in computer skills, and educational/subject content.
vocabulary. Writing in mother tongue requires specialist education knowledge and good written skills.

7. The MoE, INGOs, and NGOs are male dominated. Issues concerning female education are not dealt with or not taken seriously. As males tend to favour different learning strategies to females, girls taught by male teacher may not learn as quickly or effectively.

8. The teacher training course and classroom practice are different. Often training courses assume a level of pedagogical knowledge that untrained teachers do not have. Training is conducted as presentation and group work discussions. Teachers either copy this group work/discussion unsuccessfully with their AL class or do not feel equipped/confident in other methodology.

9. Accreditation for the student consists of an exam that relies heavily on memorisation. Teachers focus on the exam and traditional methods that favour pass rates rather than learner centred methods.
11. Key Recommendations for Future Accelerated Learning Programmes within Rewrite the Future

The following recommendations are suggested as a guide for future AL programmes operating under “Rewrite the Future”. They will not all be suitable for every context and should not be applied until all key aspects of the local operating environment have been considered and key stake holders committed.

11.1 Starting the programme
1. Clearly establish the donor funding conditions, limitations and restrictions before planning begins. Regarding the duration of funding, will it cover a full cycle primary ALP with sufficient inbuilt set up time or should the ALP be tailored to fit the funding duration. Plan for restrictions (USAID a major education programme donor does not support religious education – what are the consequences, how can the shortfall in textbooks, training be managed etc.)
2. Conduct a thorough needs analysis containing a baseline survey. Analyse MoE school data on dropout rates to find which points in the school cycle are prone to dropout so the ALP has a planned response.
3. It is essential to establish a close working relationship with the MoE from the outset. Ensure the ALP has signed agreements with the MoE which include accreditation for students leading to integration in MoE schools, certification of teacher training and any other inputs e.g. textbook provision. Key MoE staff must be fully aware of this MoU at all levels – national and local.
4. Select experienced national partners to implement the ALP at a local level.
5. Involve INGOs at a technical level to provide expertise in design and capacity building in M&E systems and training in accelerated learning approaches
6. Spend time building partnerships with the agencies involved in the ALP. Plan the implementation strategy with the partners and make decisions regarding ALP policy and guidelines with them.
   • Develop clear criteria for community/MoE school, trainer, teacher and student selection.
   • Develop clear criteria for trainer/teacher incentives taking into consideration the salary levels of MoE schools.
   • Develop clear policies relating to class size, age, entry during the ALP and solutions for dealing low class numbers.
   • Develop strategies to increase female participation in ALP and solutions to maternity leave cover. Include more capacity building for female staff.
7. Prepare a detailed implementation plan to ensure that all implementation staff know what has to happen, when and who is responsible. A plan of training schedules and grade start and finish dates for AL classes will provide much of this information.
8. Develop a comprehensive system and data base for M&E of students, teachers and classes including details on attendance and reasons for dropout. Design a longitudinal survey to study student learning outcomes. Set up systems that support record keeping at school and central level to inform programme management, evaluation and documentation.
9. Raise awareness about the ALP with the community and at all levels of the MoE system. Plan community mobilisation and media campaigns to promote student participation, community involvement and to clearly represent the ALP as an alternative programme that is no threat to established education systems whether MoE, private or voluntary.

11.2 Programme design
1. When an ALP is designed to complete all the primary grades, include an induction course with materials developed in advance or adopted from other programmes to provide life skills
instruction, social interaction, basic literacy and numeracy and provide time to fully assess the correct entry level to ALP.

2. If the ALP is developed from scratch, pilot an AL class(es), particularly for a larger programmes, to trial and test community, teaching and M&E approaches, the results of which can inform the scaling up process.

3. If an alternative or condensed curriculum is used in the ALP provide a bridging course for students integrating into MoE schools.

4. Where the accreditation of the students is by a nationally recognised primary exam, teach the full curriculum for the last two grades using teachers specially selected from within ALP or MoE schools.

5. Provide textbooks, stationery and materials for low cost teacher aids on a permanent or library system basis, on time. Late distribution will severely impact the pace of learning in AL classes and reduce quality of teaching and learning.

6. Support administrators, field education officers and M&E staff with detailed operating manuals.

11.3 Coordination
1. Hold regular programme and education meetings on a two weekly basis, supplemented with working groups at regular intervals during the ALP to evaluate strategy to date, review outcomes and put improvements in place.

2. Involve local partners/NGOs in procurement procedures and security. They are more committed to getting the best value and recognise malpractices. They also have the most informed updates on security.

11.4 Community
1. Where possible recruit committed and motivated teachers from the learner’s community. Involve the community by allowing them to recommend a teacher/short list as part of the selection process.

2. Fully involve the community and build their capacity over the period of implementation to advocate for education activities with the local MoE authorities.

11.5 Gender
1. Locate AL classes for girls in the community and recruit female teachers or locally respected male teachers, approved by the community. If the female teachers are young or have few educational qualifications, provide sustained classroom support and in-service training particularly with regards to English skills if it is the medium of primary education.

2. Demonstrate commitment to gender equity by appointing women across all levels of the programme. Female recruits must have the potential and commitment to develop within the programme and not be mere tokens. Even if this is not possible at management levels at the start of the ALP, continue to promote it throughout the ALP. At teacher level prioritise female teachers for girls’ classes to meet community needs.

11.6 End of Programme
1. Encourage the sharing of ALP successes and failures with a greater audience so others can benefit.

2. Plan to evaluate the ALP 2-3 years after it has finished to assess the long term effects of the programme e.g. Are students still in education? Are teachers still using the improved methods?
11.7 In the Class
1. Prohibit corporal punishment and other forms of intimidation including humiliation and other forms of emotional putdowns. This applies to both the AL class and training room. Train teachers in alternative disciplinarily and class management techniques, positive feedback and assessment so the class is controlled through positive experiences and learning successes.
2. Include life skills, psychosocial skills, study skills, and recreational/art skills in the training programme
3. Link learning to the local context. Provide facts and figures and methods that involve investigation or problem solving in the community. If a specific curriculum is used, make sure it has been adapted for the local context.
4. Use learner-centred, participatory and cooperative learning (applied correctly) methods. Include experiential, discovery, problem solving and critical thinking skills.

11.8 Training and Support
1. Whatever the length or style of implementation of ALP, the most significant factor in student achievement has been the teacher. Programmes with well designed PRESET and INSET training courses supported by distance learning and leading to MoE recognised qualifications, both support and motivate the teacher. Provide regular support in the class by a trainer who can also provide quality instruction in difficult subjects (particularly in second language instruction). The role of trainer in pedagogical support should be distinct from the activities related to distribution of materials and collection of MoE data etc.
2. Training for teachers should include:
   - A 3-4 week pre-service ALP course
   - Regular in-service training courses of a minimum 1 week at every grade level of the ALP. Such training should be scheduled for the vacations
   - Monthly in-service to deal with specific challenges teachers face
   - Weekly support by a trainer well versed in ALP to observe, micro-teach, demonstrate good class management, identify slow learners and teach difficult subjects.
   - Include a distance learning component
3. Training courses and materials must be designed/adapted to the level of teacher qualifications which is frequently at post primary completion level. Language must be clear and straightforward, activities clearly structured, background information provided including answers to discussions and questions posed.
4. Provide trainers' and teachers' manuals and, if using the National Curriculum, a scheme of work. The teacher's manuals should contain lesson plans in difficult topics and instructions on how to conduct activities in detail.
5. The pre-service teacher training course must provide training on recognising and dealing with physical and learning disabilities, and provide strategies and methods the teacher can use with students who are disabled or have learning difficulties.
6. Use digital technology to record training sessions to improve trainer and teacher delivery by giving immediate feedback. Record good teaching practices in typical AL classes demonstrating well structured pair and group work, project activities and new teaching methodologies. Prepare videos on good classroom management techniques and other difficult areas for teachers. Prioritise female trainers, teachers and students in the videos to act as role models to show in training courses where there are few females.
7. Make provision for a suitable learning space to hold training courses which include a teacher resource centre with education materials, a library, and facilities in which audio and visual materials particularly videos can be accessed.
8. All training courses should include sessions explaining the AL programme, administration and record keeping, methodology and content knowledge. Training is experiential, involves micro teaching, demonstration and training/teaching practice
9. Provide more training for teachers in learning languages both mother tongue and English (if the medium of Primary education) and devote more AL class time to language skills.

10. Include training on how to develop a positive learning environment, learning style preferences and ‘limiting beliefs’ in all training courses to trainers and teachers.

11. Each tier of the training cascade should have a similar training course, supported with detailed training materials (manuals, audio and video tapes where appropriate) and apply accelerated learning methods in its delivery.

12. Training of trainers’ courses (three tier cascade) must involve methods of supportive supervision involving good communication skills and practice is supportive techniques.

13. Develop a distance learning training programme using radio and other forms of media (appropriate to the context) to compliment ALP training courses and the National Curriculum. Radio teacher training for language acquisition can help support teachers and students in the classroom.

14. Run training courses on the implementation and success of the ALP to office staff to build and maintain motivation, communication skills and commitment to the ALP by involving them.

15. Recruit female trainers and trainers from other disadvantaged groups as role models in all tiers of the training cascade. They will need more support because they must be seen as capable of the job and not mere tokens.
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