

5.1 Accelerated and alternative education

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| <p>Overview</p> | <p>This tool looks at:</p> <p>Part 1: Accelerated education</p> <p>Part 2: Alternative education</p> |
| <p>INEE Minimum Standards</p> | <p>Domain 2: Access and learning environment</p> <p>Standards in this domain focus on access to safe and relevant learning opportunities. They highlight critical linkages with other sectors such as health, water and sanitation, nutrition and shelter that help to enhance security, safety and physical, cognitive and psychological well-being.</p> <p>Domain 3: Teaching and learning</p> <p>These standards focus on critical elements that promote effective teaching and learning, including curricula, training, professional development and support, instruction and learning processes, and assessment of learning outcomes.</p> <p>Domain 4: Teachers and other personnel</p> <p>Standards in this domain cover administration and management of human resources in the field of education. This includes recruitment and selection, conditions of service, and supervision and support.</p> <p>Domain 5: Education policy</p> <p>Standards in this domain focus on policy formulation and enactment, planning and implementation.</p> |
| <p>Primary users</p> | <p>National and sub-national levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EiE programme managers: INGOs, civil society organizations; • EiE advisors, e.g., technical specialists in gender, refugees and internally displaced persons, curriculum planning and reform. |
| <p>Purpose of tool</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify key actions that can be taken to ensure quality, inclusive alternative education provision. |

Introduction

Alternative education programmes are a central approach in EiE responses, ensuring the ongoing availability of education in crises.

Alternative education offers flexible programmes for out-of-school girls, boys, and adolescents that should lead to certified competencies in academic or technical and vocational subject areas. Alternative education options are usually designed to remove barriers that prevent children and adolescents from accessing education by fitting education around their commitments and schedules (for example, holding classes outside conventional school hours).

Box 5.1.1: Essential definitions

Formal education is “Education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies and, in their totality, make up the formal education system of a country. Formal education programs are thus recognized as such by the relevant national educational authorities or equivalent, e.g. any other institution in co-operation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education. Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognized as being part of the formal education system.”¹

Non-formal education (NFE) is the overarching term that refers to planned, structured, and organized education programmes that are outside the formal education system. Some types of NFE lead to equivalent, certified competencies,² while others do not. NFE programmes are characterized by their variety, flexibility, and ability to respond quickly to the new educational needs of learners in a given context, as well as by their holistic, learner-centred pedagogy. Informal learning (knowledge and skills naturally obtained through day-to-day interactions and activities) is not considered NFE.³

1 UNESCO, 2011 cited in Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2020) Background Paper and Proposed Taxonomy of Non-formal Education for Adolescents and Youth in Crisis and Conflict Contexts. New York, NY.

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

3 Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2020) Background Paper and Proposed Taxonomy of Non-formal Education for Adolescents and Youth in Crisis and Conflict Contexts. New York, NY.

Learners may be provided with alternative education for many reasons, including but not limited to:

- missing out on education as a result of crises and therefore becoming too old to be accepted in formal school ('over-age');
 - inability to access formal education because of the context, including displacement;
 - marginalization as a result of gender, disability, ethnicity, language, poverty, etc.;
 - policy restrictions (e.g., due to age, refugee status);
 - unsafe schools: damaged, occupied, or vulnerable to attack; routes to formal schools are too dangerous;
 - teacher shortages.
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Key information

A recent literature review⁴ commissioned by the INEE alternative education work stream within the Education Policy Working Group found that alternative education is defined differently across different contexts, which can be confusing.

However, a useful taxonomy has been developed by the Group.⁵ See also [Annex 9.1](#) of the EiE-GenKit.

Definitions: Alternatives to formal schooling

Alternative education

"Alternative Education is planned, structured education programming for out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth that leads to equivalent, certified competencies in academic or technical / vocational subjects".⁶ Alternative education is usually flexible to accommodate and meet the needs of out-of-school learners.

4 Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2020) Background Paper and Proposed Taxonomy of Non-formal Education for Adolescents and Youth in Crisis and Conflict Contexts. New York, NY.

5 INEE 2020

6 INEE, 2020, p.47

Examples include:

- accelerated education programmes (AEPs): see Part 1 of this tool for detailed information and guidance on AEPs. “AEPs are flexible, age-appropriate programmes, run in an accelerated timeframe, which aim to provide access to education for disadvantaged, over-age, out-of-school children and youth – particularly those who missed out on, or had their education interrupted due to poverty, marginalisation, conflict and crisis.”⁷
- alternative basic education;
- second chance programmes;
- youth livelihoods training programmes.

Transitional programmes

“Transitional programs are short-term educational programs that help learners transition into formal or alternative education programs. They alone do not lead to certification or equivalent competencies, and they are often implemented by NGOs.”⁸

Examples include:

- learning readiness;
- catch-up programmes;
- bridging programmes (e.g., language).

Support services

“Support services include programming offered to students in addition to their formal or non-formal education studies.”⁹

Examples include:

- tutoring and after school support;
- remedial education;
- dropout prevention, learning readiness;
- elements of the following integrated into curriculum: life skills, health, disaster risk reduction, safety, psychosocial support/social emotional learning, peace education. For more information on these elements see:

5.3: Protection and well-being

⁷ Definition from [Accelerated Education Working Group](#) website.

⁸ INEE, 2020, p. 47

⁹ INEE, 2020, p. 47

Figure 1: When to use an accelerated or alternative basic education programme?¹⁰



10 Adapted from Accelerated Education Working Group Decision Tree, [The Case for Accelerated Education](#) p.3.

Part 1: Accelerated education programmes

Essential resources

The [Accelerated Education Working Group](#) has developed [10 evidence-based principles for effective practice](#) to inform accelerated education programming, along with a [Guide to the Principles](#). Sensitivity to gender and social inclusion feature throughout the principles, but there are some specific action points that can be taken to encourage more inclusive practice (see below).

Table 5.1.1: Checklist for inclusive AEPs¹¹

The questions and notes below draw out the equity and inclusion factors associated with AEP principles.

| AEP Principle 1: AEP is flexible and for over-age learners |
|--|
| Question |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the time and location of the AEP class flexible?• Has this been checked with the community, teacher, and above all, the specific needs of both female and male learners? |
| Note |
| <p>Flexibility can help to ensure consistent attendance and completion.</p> <p>Flexible timetabling can be particularly important for girls to accommodate early morning chores and work, or for young mothers who have child care responsibilities. It can also be important for boys to accommodate their responsibilities to work (paid, income generation, or helping with agriculture, heavy household chores, etc.). This may be particularly so when families are dependent on their income in the absence of other male family members due to crises or other reasons.</p> |

11 This checklist is based on the Accelerated Education Working Group Principles for Effective Practice and the [Guide to The Principles](#).

AEP Principle 2: Curriculum, materials, and pedagogy are genuinely accelerated, suitable, and use the relevant language of instruction

Question

- Are the AEP curriculum, learning materials, language of instruction, and teaching methods adapted to suit over-age children (e.g., do they use relevant age-appropriate language)?
- Do they reflect gender-sensitive or gender-responsive and inclusive education practices?

Note

Girls and other marginalized children, including boys, may need support to prepare for learning, such as psychosocial support, social and emotional skills, community-based rehabilitation, and adaptations to learning materials. For advice and guidance on adapting curricula and materials, see:

✕ [5.3: Protection and well-being](#)

✕ [5.6: Curricula, teaching and learning materials](#)

AEP Principle 3: Accelerated education learning environment is inclusive and safe

Question

- Does the AEP ensure access to water and separate latrines for girls and boys and provide sanitary (menstrual hygiene management) materials when relevant?
- Has the learning location been chosen in consultation with girls and women, including those with disabilities?

Note

Sex-segregated, accessible water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities are an essential component of gender-responsive AEPs. This ensures the learning location is safe, gender-appropriate, and accessible.

✕ [5.2: Facilities and services](#)

AEP Principle 4: Teachers are recruited, supervised, and remunerated

Question

- Do AEP teachers sign a code of conduct, including guidelines to prevent physical violence and school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) against male and female learners?

Note

Teachers found to be using violence or sexually assaulting boys and/or girls should be immediately removed from teaching until a review has taken place.

✘ [5.3: Protection and well-being](#)

Question

- Does the AEP provide information to students and teachers on mechanisms for reporting and following up exposure to violence and GBV?

Note

This is a key component in the provision of safe, protective, and accessible AEPs.

✘ [5.3: Protection and well-being](#)

Question

- Have teachers been recruited from target geographic areas?
- Are teachers familiar with learners' culture, language, and experience?
- Is gender balance assured among teacher recruits?

Note

During recruitment, consider the kinds of attitudes and behaviours needed to facilitate inclusive learning for all girls and boys. Consider geographical location factors, safety measures, and incentives that may be needed to attract female teachers to work in an AEP. Consider setting targets for females being present and making decisions in teacher recruitment, in addition to encouraging female teacher recruitment.

✘ [5.4: Teacher recruitment and support](#)

AEP Principle 5: Teachers participate in continuous professional development

Question

- Have principles of equity and inclusion been included in teacher training and supervision sessions?

Note

Principles of equity and inclusion can be discussed during ongoing teacher support and supervision (e.g., classroom challenges to achieving equity and potential solutions) and can often be more effective than cascade training.¹²

✘ [5.4: Teacher recruitment and support](#)

12 AEWG (2017) [Guide to the Accelerated Education Principles](#), p.43.

AEP Principle 6: Goals, monitoring, and funding align

AEP Principle 7: Accelerated education centre is effectively managed

Question

- Have recording or accountability systems been set up in the AEP so that student enrolment, attendance, retention, dropout, completion, and learning can be recorded and monitored?

Note

These should be sex- and age-disaggregated and aligned with government systems, protocols, and templates to the extent possible.

Ensure that gendered challenges and risks are identified and managed, including dropout due to the cost of schooling, managing competing demands on girls' time, and responding to negative social norms, attitudes, and behaviours around inclusive schooling.

Consider setting targets for female enrolment and teacher recruitment – these have been effective in contexts such as Bangladesh and Uganda.¹³

AEP Principle 9: AEP is a legitimate, credible education option that results in learner certification in primary education

AEP Principle 10: AEP is aligned with the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture

Question

- Are learners actively supported to take examinations to gain certification?

Note

This might require transport subsidies, ensuring a budget is available for examination fees, working with parents, and recognizing the specific and different barriers to examinations that girls and boys may face.

Question

- Are learners actively supported to make the transition from alternative to formal education, if required?

Note

For example, young mothers or fathers may need access to free/affordable child care to enable them to access formal learning. Older adolescents may have more responsibilities outside of education that may mean teachers will need support to adapt their pedagogy.

13 Ibid, p.50

Box 5.1.2: Gender and AEPs – the evidence

AEPs can deliver good quality learning outcomes for girls, and these outcomes are higher than for their counterparts in formal schooling. For example:

- VAS-Y Fille! Congo reported that girls who attended an AEP at least from midline to endline scored approximately 15 percentage points higher on the Early Grade Reading Assessment ($p < 0.001$) and 10 percentage points higher on the Early Grade Maths Assessment ($p < 0.001$) than the girls who remained out of school. (Shah & Choo, 2020: 23)
- STAGES Afghanistan reported that AEP girls had higher reading fluency and numeracy scores than their government school counterparts in the same grade, with girls in AEP classes scoring significantly higher than their peers in government schools. (Shah & Choo, 2020: 23)
- “Female AE learners continue to struggle more than males in respect to retention, completion and transition. [Older adolescent girls, in particular, tend to have high drop out and low transition rate into formal schooling due to increased responsibilities at home – Shah & Choo, 2020: 31].
- AEPs are increasingly demonstrating gender sensitivity in their programme designs and approaches and acting to address barriers precluding female learners from accessing, attending and completing AEPs through a range of gender responsive actions such as:
 - Affording flexibility in terms of the timetabling and location of AEP activities to accommodate the constraints facing girls from attending classes;
 - Provision of gender-appropriate and separate latrines and sanitary materials;
 - Employment of female teachers and centre leaders;
 - Establishment of gender-segregated classes; and
 - Establishment of clear codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms for violations against learners of any kind.
- Fewer AEPs demonstrate a sustained commitment to gender transformative action. Where this is done, it is mainly centred on reshaping teacher and learning practices and community perceptions and beliefs around the value of educating girls in their community. The impacts of these actions are still poorly measured and assessed and rarely feature as an outcome in themselves for AEPs.” (Shah & Choo, 2020: VI).



Essential resources

For a full discussion of findings around gender and AEPs, please refer to Shah, R., and Choo, J., (2020) [Accelerated Education Evidence Review](#), section on 'Addressing and changing gender norms through AE programming' (p.34 onwards) and Annexe 8 which provides an overview of challenges and solutions for gender-responsive AEPs

Table 5.1.2: Gender continuum – examples from AEPs





Further reading

- Shah & Choo (2020) [Accelerated Education Evidence Review](#).
- Accelerated Education Working Group Accelerated Education: [10 Principles for Effective Practice](#)
- Accelerated Education Working Group Accelerated Education: [Guide to the Principles](#)
- Accelerated Education Working Group Accelerated Education [Programme Checklist](#)
- DFID Girls Education Challenge (2019) [Lessons from the Field: Alternatives to formal education for marginalised girls](#)
- INEE accelerated education [resource page](#)

Part 2: Inclusive alternative education

The alternative education options outlined in the second part of this tool refer to flexible programmes for out-of-school children and adolescents that should lead to certified competencies in academic or technical and vocational subject areas. These options remove barriers that prevent children and adolescents from accessing education by fitting education provision around their other commitments and schedules (for example, providing classes outside usual school hours).

The actions suggested in Box 5.1.3 will enable practitioners to plan inclusive programmes based on experiences of good practice in non-formal, alternative education emerging from the field.

Box 5.1.3: Alternative education – some key lessons learned so far from Girls Education Challenge in crisis-affected contexts

- “A careful assessment of barriers to girls’ learning – and profiling of their needs, age, education background and learning levels – are essential before deciding on what intervention is the most suitable. A labour market assessment is important for programmes focusing on vocational skills.
- Many older and over-age girls prioritise alternative education pathways over returning to formal school. When girls prioritise skills related to gaining employment or starting a business, projects should also prioritise these skills.

- When designing alternative programmes – catch-up and AEPs in particular – it is important to firstly consider the pace and content in relation to the profile and learning level of the girls. Does the curriculum and timetable allow for girls to gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed (or transition into formal school) once they finish?
- It is important to recognise that barriers to girls' learning are often not just academic, but can also be related, for example, to safety, self-confidence, child-care, cultural norms or cost. Taking a holistic approach to addressing the barriers to girls' learning has led to more successful outcomes for girls.
- To ensure inclusivity, timetables and locations can be tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of girls. For example, in The Somali Girls' Education Programme (SOMGEP), timetables allowed flexibility for pastoralists. SOMGEP also runs programmes in girls' home language to ensure girls can access learning, while building up their knowledge and skills in English.
- Hiring and training female teachers from the communities can help ensure girls' attendance. In addition, teachers from the local community are generally motivated and known by (and accountable to) the community, and are more likely to be in tune with girls' learning needs and challenges.
- Alternative education projects can provide an opportunity to train teachers and community educators in alternative pedagogical approaches that better meet the needs of marginalised girls – particularly older girls. Teaching and learning approaches that are more activity and problem based, and centred on girls' lived experiences can form the basis of teacher professional development programmes.
- Community engagement is key to ensuring the success and sustainability of programmes. In Afghanistan for example, school shuras and School Management Committees have been involved in identifying girls and in ensuring girls are attending regularly, as well as holding community teachers accountable.
- Alternative education programmes should align with wider government education systems and priorities. Government partners should be engaged as early in projects as possible. Transition pathways from alternative education to formal or vocational – as well as examination and accreditation processes – should be clear, and decided with government partners from the outset.¹⁴

¹⁴ DFID Girls Education Challenge (2019) [Lessons from the Field: Alternatives to formal education for marginalised girls](#), p.7.

Actions for alternative education

1. Community-based education

Community-run or based education projects or programmes are established for a range of reasons, for example, when distance or insecurity prevent formal schooling in acute and protracted conflicts, or when there is no access to formal schooling due to location, language, and other marginalizing factors. These schools can provide a more protective environment for girls and boys if they are actively supported by local community members who may host, support, and monitor the school.

Table 5.1.3: Key questions to ask to ensure provision of an inclusive learning environment for community-based education

| Key questions | Notes |
|---|--|
| Access and learning environment | |
| Safe spaces for learners | |
| <p>Are teachers' homes, compounds, or community spaces appropriate places for community schools?</p> <p>Are they protective and private safe spaces for girls to access and use?</p> | <p>See INEE (2019) Guidance Note on Gender, p.26 for further guidance on safe learning spaces for girls.</p> |
| <p>What do girls and women in the community think about the risks associated with a proposed space?</p> | <p>For example, do girls say that they are likely to get harassed for attending learning when they can be seen entering and exiting the building? Do they have suggestions for how to mitigate these risks?</p> |
| <p>Will mixed-sex schools be supported by parents and community members – particularly male elders and male community or religious leaders who often hold decision-making power at the community level – if the boys and girls are from the same community?</p> | <p>In cultures where girls and boys are routinely segregated, it may be possible to reach agreement on educating them together, particularly if trusted community members are employed as teachers.</p> <p>Is it possible to engage traditional leaders in girls' education to counter negative social norms about girls' education and reduce the risk of attacks on education?</p> |
| <p>Have the community members – particularly male elders and male community or religious leaders who often hold decision-making power at the community level – been consulted on safe spaces for learners?</p> | <p>Having male leaders involved from the start helps to achieve buy-in and support later.</p> |
| <p>Is the timetabling flexible to accommodate the needs and responsibilities of female learners in the community?</p> | <p>For example, does the timetabling accommodate child care and firewood or water collecting duties?</p> |

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| <p>If there are no community spaces available or if the population is displaced, is a mobile learning unit an option?</p> | <p>Mobile learning units can come in many different forms. In Bangladesh, Educate A Child and BRAC have partnered to create floating or boat schools which reach children in disaster, flood-prone, and remote rural areas.</p> <p>The School Bus Project delivers education to refugee children in northern France and Greece. It provides schooling for children and adults as well as training and capacity building for education personnel.</p> <p>In Nigeria, Plan is providing mobile learning units and mobile teachers with basic shelters and teaching and learning materials to help improve access to education for displaced girls. Mobile units can be a useful interim measure for delivering education in a safe, protective space using only basic materials and (ideally) trained staff.</p> |
| <p>Teaching and learning, teacher recruitment</p> | |
| <p>Teachers</p> | |
| <p>Are teachers who are familiar to female learners more likely to be accepted in communities?</p> | <p>This includes elder men and religious leaders who may be considered 'safe' for young women.</p> |
| <p>Is it possible to recruit female teachers? As the programme matures, is it possible to recruit female learners into teaching roles?</p> | <p>Put incentives, safety and security measures, support, and supervision in place to encourage female teachers.</p> <p>✕ 5.4: Teacher recruitment and support</p> |
| <p>Is it possible to recruit teachers, including male teachers, who are already active in community affairs and supportive of gender equality?</p> | <p>These teachers can serve as role models for boys and girls.</p> |
| <p>Is gender-responsive pedagogy promoted in the training and supervision of alternative education teachers?</p> | <p>Ensuring classroom practices do not perpetuate gender stereotypes is critical.</p> <p>✕ 5.5: Teaching and learning self-assessment for teachers and project managers</p> |
| <p>Curricula and materials</p> | |
| <p>Has a gender analysis of curricula and learning materials been carried out?</p> | <p>Ensuring that curricula and learning materials do not perpetuate gender stereotypes is critical.</p> <p>✕ 5.6: Curricula, teaching and learning materials</p> |
| <p>Education policy</p> | |
| <p>Funding</p> | |
| <p>Does the community-based education programme risk becoming unsustainable once donor funding is withdrawn?</p> | <p>Encourage community support and buy-in, build links with local government who may be able to cover operational costs, and conduct advocacy with the government for adequate resourcing. Include targeted support for individual female and marginalized male learners in their final year before transition to government schools.</p> |

2. Distance education

Distance learning can help increase access to good quality, accredited education for female learners in crisis settings. It has been used extensively during the recent COVID-19 global pandemic, providing the EiE community with several useful learning points. Extensive repositories of online materials have been built up.¹⁵ During the pandemic, 91% of the world's enrolled students – 1.6 billion – have been impacted by school closures.¹⁶ Governments have responded quickly to the crisis, but differential access to the technologies needed to deliver distance learning has become obvious. The crisis has also exposed that systems of resilience and support are limited for educational managers, teachers, and parents/caregivers who want to facilitate distance learning for children and adolescents.

Distance learning can be delivered by teachers/instructors providing support remotely or in person, or it may involve individuals learning through 'self-study.' Types of distance learning include:

- radio broadcasts;
- online;
- TV;
- DVD, CD;
- self-study textbooks.

Box 5.1.4: Protecting girls from increased risk of GBV during distance learning

"Countries must have specific strategies to both keep [girls] safe and ensure they can access education. The Ministry of Education in Ghana is producing campaigns to encourage parents to allow girls to continue their education and not to increase their household responsibilities. In India, UNICEF has worked with the Ministry of Women and Child Development to develop a manual to help caregivers provide psychosocial support for children. They have also increased the promotion of the 24-hour toll-free helpline for children, CHILDLINE. In Argentina, UNICEF is supporting the development of TV and radio education content that includes messages on violence, abuse, and gender equality."¹⁷

Key lessons from the COVID-19 global pandemic at the time of writing (July 2020) show that, in order to provide more equitable access to distance education during crises, the following factors should be considered:

- Poorer households have less access to digital distance learning. Girls are often even more disadvantaged than boys who may get preferential access to technology. Provide multiple delivery channels for distance learning, including digital and non-digital, radio, TV, and take-home packages.¹⁸
- Teachers, facilitators, and parents who are delivering remote learning need support, including psychosocial support. This should include talking to parents to ensure that girls are not overburdened with domestic duties as a result of being at home.¹⁹
- Strengthen feedback gathering and the monitoring of reach and quality. Ensure that monitoring is ethical and 'does no harm.'²⁰

Box 5.1.5: Distance learning during the Ebola virus in West Africa, 2014

"When the Ebola virus struck West Africa in 2014, three countries – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – had to shut down their school system to prevent the spread of the disease. With support from its partners, including quickly re-allocated funds from a GPE grant, the Government of Sierra Leone developed radio instruction to ensure that the millions of children who were now at home could continue to learn.

The response was quick: Schools had closed in July 2014 – at the end of the school year – and the Emergency Radio Education Program (EREP) started airing in October 2014. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology broadcast an information campaign about the radio instruction to get the word out about the different types of programs and their schedule. To prepare the content, the ministry identified about 30 teachers (the "crème de la crème" of the teaching force, as one of them said) and worked closely with them to prepare the lessons.

Once the lesson scripts were ready, the teachers recorded them in a studio. The lessons were then aired later from these recordings, but once a lesson had been broadcast, a "live" phone line was opened the end of each segment to allow children to call in with their questions.

18 Dreesen et al (2020). 'Promising Practices for Equitable Remote Learning. Emerging lessons from COVID-19 education responses in 127 countries', Innocenti Research Briefs no. 2020-10, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

Lessons were broadcast on 41 radio stations and the country's only television station. The programs aired for three hours every day, five days a week, in 30-minute increments between 11:00 am and 5:00 pm. This allowed some children to still help out with chores at home in the morning.

All levels of education were covered (Grades 1 through 12). The programs included core subjects – English, mathematics, social studies, physical and health education – aligned with the national curriculum.

They also included other important topics like psychosocial and life skills, hygiene and handwashing, and basic information on Ebola. This helped children cope with the crisis and gave them essential information to protect themselves and their families.

UNICEF provided portable solar radios to 34,280 vulnerable families, including 2,000 children in households that were under quarantine because of the virus. Children also received printed materials and lesson notes to complement the radio lessons. UNICEF also recorded the lessons on CDs and USBs to give to families in remote areas where coverage and radio reception was poor.

When schools reopened 8 months later, many students had been able to keep on learning, as demonstrated by the good results they obtained on their exams.

Impact of the programme

- In November 2014, a survey was conducted to determine the awareness levels of the radio program, and associated attitudes, behavior and practices including listenership. The survey showed that:
- Coverage of EREP was 81.6% of vulnerable households with school-aged children.
- Listenership of EREP lessons was high for all levels (69.2% for preschool, 62.2% for primary, 70.6% for junior secondary school, and 75.8% for senior secondary school).
- Learners could recall learning in 40.6 % of the households surveyed."²¹

21 Source: '[How did Sierra Leone implement radio instruction during the Ebola crisis?](#)' GPE blog, 29 April 2020

Table 5.1.4: Key questions to ask for gender-responsive implementation

| Key actions | Notes |
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| Have out-of-school girls and boys identified at the local level? | Work with community-based organizations and informal community groups to identify out-of-school girls and boys. |
| What barriers need to be removed to enable girls and women to participate in distance learning programmes? | For example, barriers may include time, language learning, parental and community consent, writing equipment, and technology. Consider the potential different access girls and boys have to technology. |
| Is distance learning content accessible? | Consider adapted distance learning content that can reach girls and boys with disabilities or from ethnic minorities. Adaptations might include digital textbooks, sign-language content, or translation into minority languages. |
| Do remote learning strategies reinforce good hygiene practices, tailored to both girls and boys? | This is always an important component of distance education, but particularly critical during disease outbreaks. |
| Do directives on social distancing (in the case of disease outbreak) affect the times and locations of educational activities? | Attention must be paid to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimizing additional risks if girls and boys need to travel to/from a central access point for learning; • minimizing exclusion of girls due to possible additional care responsibilities at specific times of the day. |
| Has information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender issues, GBV, livelihood support, empowerment, peace initiatives, and other significant topics been included in curricula adapted to distance learning? | ✘ 5.3: Protection and well-being |
| Is there collaboration with protection partners to take preventative action when schools are closed to ensure girls are not exposed to protection risks and learners are supported? | Implement awareness-raising initiatives in the community on the potential for increased GBV risks, and promote zero-tolerance messaging. Include practical information in distance learning content based on the specific risks identified, such as updated sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) referral pathways, SGBV hotlines, and remote case management. Include psychosocial support components in distance learning content and ensure social and emotional learning interventions for parents, teachers, and caretakers (for example, coping with quarantine, isolation, and the increased burden of household chores and caregiving responsibilities). |

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| <p>Has nutrition information been included in distance learning communications with parents and caregivers?</p> | <p>School feeding programmes can form an essential part of children's daily nutrition. When children are no longer eating at school, boys may be prioritized for feeding at home if food is in short supply.</p> <p>Collaborate with health and nutrition partners to include nutrition education in distance learning content and to conduct related awareness-raising with parents on the importance of girls' nutrition.</p> |
| <p>Can girls and women be approached as volunteer role models to work on community radio stations?</p> | <p>Consider what support girls and women might need to work in radio, whether that might be physical access to radio stations or training to use technology, etc.</p> |
| <p>Does distance education include messages for parents and caregivers advocating for equal sharing of domestic chores and care work between household members?</p> | <p>Girls may have less time to participate in distance learning during a disease outbreak and school closure because of additional caregiving responsibilities and household chores.</p> |

Essential resources

[GATE: Girls Access to Education](#)

The Open University has designed an innovative distance learning pathway to the teaching profession for young women in rural areas of Sierra Leone. The country has experienced a range of crises in recent years including conflict and the Ebola virus outbreak. Young women who have not completed secondary school take up practical learning placements as learning assistants in local schools. They undertake a distance learning programme supported by a tutor to enable them to qualify as teachers. Highly interactive study materials guide their subject study and participation in school.

The programme is being delivered in partnership with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) as part of the UKAid funded Girls' Education Challenge programme led by Plan International. Local partners include international and national NGOs and the teacher training colleges.

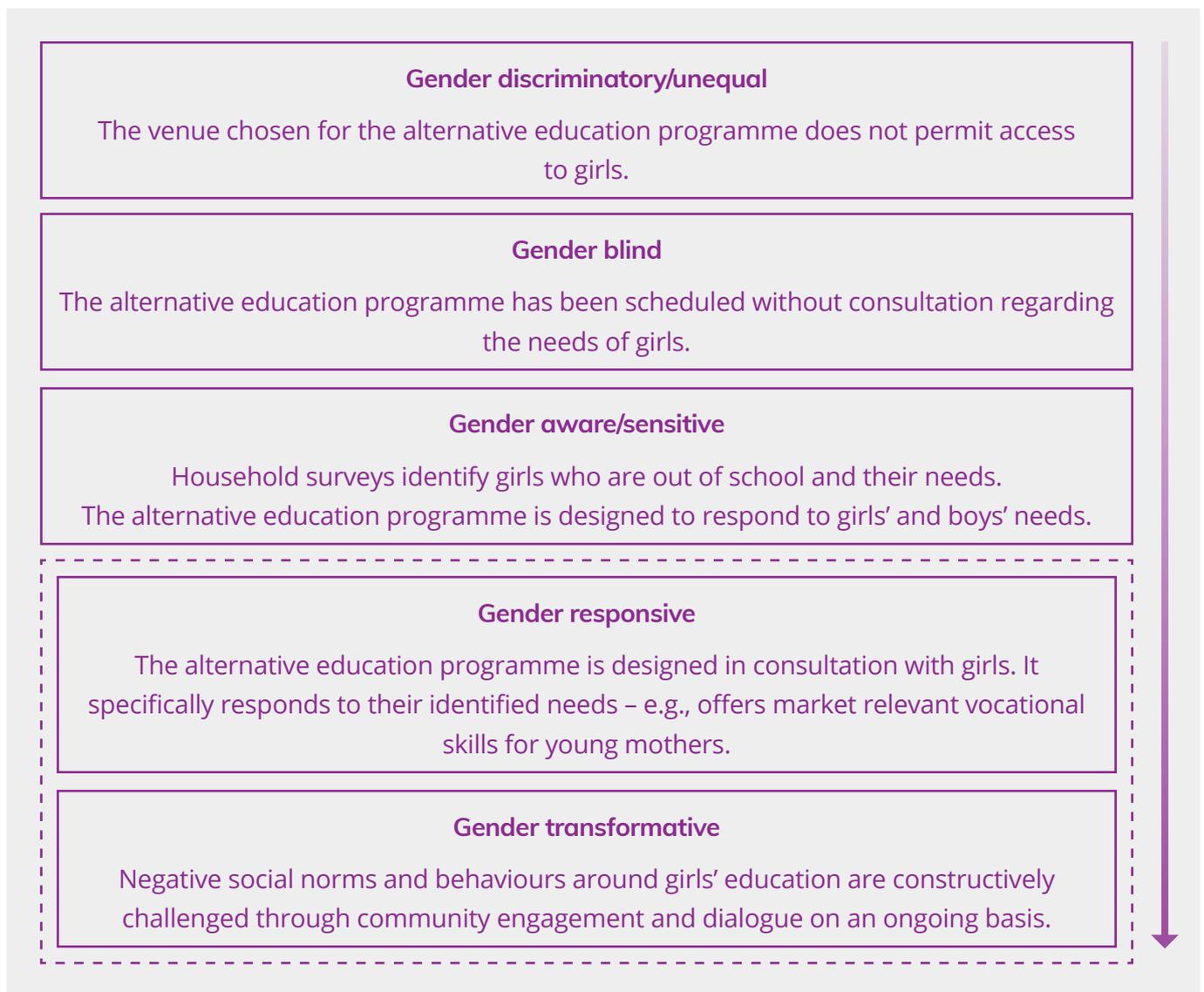
3. Support services: vocational and life skills

The content of alternative and other NFE, vocational, and life skills training programmes combines functional literacy and numeracy with vocational skills and appropriate life skills. Such strategies typically support older adolescent girls and boys who have never been in school or for whom a return to formal schooling is not an option.

Table 5.1.5: Minimum questions to support gender-responsive implementation

| Key actions | Notes |
|---|--|
| Does the vocational training programme respond to local market demand and provide a diverse range of trades and/or skills for girls to learn? | Training programmes should not flood markets with large numbers of workers with the same skillsets. |
| What steps can be taken to avoid gender stereotyping in skills training? | Work with community groups and/or leaders to encourage them to accept both females and males learning skills that will enable them to enter well-respected, paid roles. Consider boys' expectations of skills and jobs and whether these need to be addressed in light of gender equity considerations. |
| How does the programme empower young people? | Work with both girls and boys, and young women and men to address gender issues and sexual and reproductive health. Empower young people to make informed decisions about their own lives and future careers. |
| Is it possible to engage with local female business leaders who can advise and guide girls and act as role models? | Business women may not be as visible as business men at the local level. |
| Are there any men (fathers, community leaders, sports figures, politicians, business people, etc.) who inspire boys to continue education, to live gender-responsive lives, and to be involved in caregiving (e.g., for young fathers)? | The involvement of men is an important consideration when working towards gender-transformative change. |
| Is it possible to harmonize or partner with other agencies and share resources and/or expertise? | This might include sharing resources, working together on joint advocacy, and collaborating to deliver more effective programmes that provide better outcomes for girls and boys. |

Table 5.1.6: Gender continuum – examples from alternative education programmes



 **Further reading**

- Baxter, P and Bethke, L., (2009) [Alternative Education: Filling the gap in emergency and post-conflict situations](#) Paris: IIEP and CfBT.
- DFID Girls Education Challenge (2019) [Lessons from the Field: Alternatives to formal education for marginalised girls](#)
- INEE (2019) [Guidance Note on Gender](#)
- Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2020) [Background Paper and Proposed Taxonomy of Non-formal Education for Adolescents and Youth in Crisis and Conflict Contexts](#). New York, NY.
- UNGEI/ODI (2017) [Evidence Review: Mitigating Threats to Girls' Education in Conflict Affected Contexts: Current Practice](#).