Research Title:

"Increasing Access to Quality Education for Rural and Marginalised Children in West Africa— A Comparative Study of Accelerated Education and Girls Focussed Programmes in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone"

Research Report

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List of Acronyms

AE	Accelerated Education
AEP	Accelerated Education Programmes
AfC	Associates for Change
CBE	Complementary Basic Education
CHPS	community health compounds
CLA	Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSEA	Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa
DA	District Assembly
DEOs	District Education Offices
EI	Education Innovators
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GDHS	Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
GFPs	Girls Focused Programmes
GILLBT	Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
HHS	Household Survey
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
JHS	Junior High School
KG	Kindergarten
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
LA	Local Assembly
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Study
MS-Excel	Microsoft Excel
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NYEP	National Youth Employment Programme
OOSC	Out of School Children
PRIM	Primary

PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
PTTR	Pupil Trained Teacher Ratio
RC	Roman Catholic
REACH	Reaching and Teaching Out of School Children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SfL	School for Life
SMC	School Management Committee
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTC	Parent Teacher Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STAGE	Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Acknowledgements

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[1] Associates for Change's (AFC) mission is to generate policy relevant research and high-quality consulting services in the socio-economic, governance and development sectors in order to influence social change, equity and policy reform in Africa.

Executive Summary

The Out of School Children Mapping (OOSC) mapping survey is the first key study under the "Increasing Access to Quality Education for Rural and Marginalised Children in West Africa" project which focused on gathering data on out of school populations being reached by the alternative education innovations across selected districts and communities in the northern part of Ghana. The mapping study gathered data on the profile of OOSC in eight districts across the Northern, Upper East and North-East regions based on gender, age, disability, and other socio-demographic characteristics. A household survey, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews were also conducted to help understand the socio-economic, cultural, demand and supply factors that drive the OOS situation in the selected districts. Further, the mapping exercise explored the diverse contexts within which education innovations are being implemented (rural deprived and extremely deprived contexts, socio-cultural and poverty context). This report, therefore, presents the findings of the out of school mapping study conducted across eight districts in the Northern, Upper East and North East Regions.

Mapping Design and Methodology

The out of school mapping exercise employed an explanatory mixed-method approach utilizing quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the mapping questions. This approach enabled the team to combine numerical data with qualitative data, which made it possible to explain, enrich and validate the findings of the quantitative analysis with qualitative data. The quantitative data was generated from structured household interviews/surveys, community and school-level checklists and key informant interviews while qualitative data was generated from focus group discussions and key informant interviews with district education officials, community leaders, headteachers, teachers, AEP facilitators and students. These approaches provided robust, and reliable data through triangulation of methods and key stakeholder groups regarding out of school children, AEP programming, completion, transition, and supply and demand drivers of out of school numbers. The team adopted a multi-stage sampling approach to generate robust samples at each stage of the survey process — a key variable being exposure to any AEP programme — focusing on intervention regions and districts. The community level selection focused on sampling both intervention and non-intervention communities for the household and school level survey.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Out of school incidence:

- **General statistics on identified children**

In all, about 3,536 children aged 17 and below *(age of interest for the study)* were studied across the study communities/households. The identified children were further categorized into age groups using the UNICEF Framework on OOSC. Children 'currently and fully in school' (1,836), children who are 'sometimes in school' (88), children who 'dropped out of school' (304) and children who have 'never attended' formal school (1,308), with the 'never attending' population constituting the highest proportion of the identified children and providing the needed evidence for AEP interventions.

- **Prevalence of OOSC by age groups**

The out of school population is estimated using the 'never attended' and 'attended in the past (dropped out)' population with specific focus on the population aged 4 to 17. The findings show that the out of school population age 4 to 17 (KG – SHS) stood at **983**. The population of out of school, excluding children aged 4 to 5 years (KG level) reduces to **849** children. The results further show that the incidence of out of school is predominant among children aged 6-11 years

(primary level). The high out-of-school rate among children of primary school age is largely driven by factors such as fosterage, parents' inability to afford school expenses, need to involve children in income generation activities, supply constraints, among others. Interestingly, the number of children aged 4-5 (KG) in the 'never attended' category is substantial (132), implying that many children experience delayed enrolment in KG or do not have access to KG facilities. In relation to drop-out incidence, the numbers are higher at the senior high level (15-17) indicating that children face higher risk of dropout as they get into higher levels of education (SHS).

- **Out of school population by sex**

The evidence shows high incidence of out of school children among the male population (55%) compared to the female population (45%). This result is in sync with the national-level evidence from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Study (MICS) which indicates that there are more males out of school compared to females in Ghana. Further, the 'drop out' population across both males and females is twice as low as the 'never attended' category, implying that a higher number of children within the school going age are actually out of school.

Drop-out situation/context

- **Drop-out numbers by class level and sex**

The findings relating to drop out by class show that dropout incidence was higher at the primary level (Primary 1-6) with children in primary 2 recording the highest drop-out incidence (17%). The data further shows the out of school population decreased across the junior high level. The gender dynamics also show that the proportion of male drop-out (64.3%) is twice that of female dropout (35.7%), which is consistent with the gender disaggregated dropout statistics at both the primary and JHS levels.

Children at risk of dropping out:

The 'at risk of dropping out' population was estimated using three key variables – overage for grade level, frequency of repeating a class level and regularity of school attendance.

- **At risk of dropping population – using overage at grade level**

The findings in relation to the 'at risk of dropping out' using the 'overage for grade' variable show that out of the 1,924 children currently in school, 592 are at risk of dropping because they are overage for their current grade levels. At age 12, children are expected to be at the junior high level; however, about 297 of these children are still in primary school at different grade levels. This increases the probability that they will drop out. Secondly, at age 15, students are expected to be at the senior high level; however, about 292 of these children were found at either the primary or JHS level, which could also put them at a higher risk of dropping out.

- **At risk of dropping population – using frequency of repetition**

Further, the study assessed the 'at risk of dropping' population of students currently in school using 'frequency of repetition' *(how many times children repeated a class)* disaggregated by AEP and non-AEP communities. The findings show that of the 158 repeaters that were studied, 25 of them (representing 16%), who had repeated a class more than once were at risk of dropping out and about two-thirds of this number were in primary school. These findings suggest that the children may be more likely to drop out, particularly given the high proportion in primary school. Further, no child repeated more than twice in non-AEP areas.

- **At risk of dropping population – using frequency of attendance**

The results in relation to the at risk of dropping out of school using the 'regularity of school attendance' variable show that out of the 1,862 students who are currently in school, about 435 (23%) have a higher likelihood of dropping out of school because they miss some school days. The finding is in sync with the results of a study by Casely-Hayford et al., (2017), which showed that students who miss more school days may eventually drop out of school. The findings further show that a significant proportion of children who missed school in the most disadvantaged localities were in lower primary school and kindergarten. While the proportion of children who miss school in rural deprived regions is substantial, non-attendance rates in these areas are weakly correlated with students' grade level. Comparatively, there were more children missing school in the rural deprived regions (303) than in extremely marginalized areas (132).

Transition, Retention and Completion Levels on AEPs
- **Number of transitioned AEP learners – school level data**

Overall, the results show there are about 664 AEP graduates in formal schools across the study areas. The findings further indicate that on average, a greater proportion of AEP graduates in primary school were females (69 percent), which may be attributable to the conscious focus of most AEPs to increase school access for girls. The study revealed that there were more AEP-enrolled pupils in P4 (173, 26 percent), with a higher number of female AEP graduates at the P4 level than at the other levels. Primary 2 and 6 had the lowest numbers of AEP learners (15 percent and 17 percent respectively).

- **Impact/Achievements**

The introduction of AEPs and Girls Focused Programmes helped to tackle a lot of issues being faced by girls in the rural and deprived societies. Prior to the introduction of the girls focused programmes, the incidence of child marriage was on the rise because parents did not value academic education for a female, believing her place was in the home, where she would learn to serve her future husband. Following the implementation of the Afrikids' STAGE Project which targeted out of school girls, there has been a significant change in the lives of girls in these communities. The STAGE project sought to enable out-of-school children, particularly, girls who had dropped out of school due to different factors such as teenage pregnancy and poverty, to go back into the formal education system or acquire a skill in catering, dressmaking, soap making, beadmaking or hairdressing. The findings show that not only has the STAGE project helped to enroll girls into the formal school system or helped them acquire skills, it has also empowered girls to know their rights and enlightened parents on the importance of girl-child education. Some SMC/PTAs confirmed that activities of Girls Focused Programmes have been visible and have brought about an increase in the number of girls who have enrolled in school, bridged the gap between boys and girls in terms of education, and reduced the incidence of child marriage.

Recommendations / Implications
Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

Government/Policy level actions:

- **Need for improvement in access to schools**

Access to basic education lies at the heart of development. The findings show that most of the communities in the study areas are without schools, with the average distance between the communities and the nearest primary school being between 3 to 5 km. 'Walking distance' has been established as a contributing factor to the out of school phenomenon. It is therefore

recommended that government work through the district education directorates to re-map-out the communities that need community-based schools and work at supplying basic school facilities in such communities.

▪ **Need to have a targeted approach to addressing the OOSC phenomenon**

The findings show that the out of school phenomenon occurs predominantly among children aged 6 to 11 years (primary level), accounting for almost half (49%) of the out of school population. This shows a lot of the children in the sampled districts are within the primary school going age but are not in school. In line with this, it is recommended that the Complementary Education Agency (CEA) and the NGOs/CSOs operating within the AEP space refocus their interventions and programming at the primary level to ensure that children in this age group are kept in school. Though most of the AEP programmes target children between ages 8 to 16, focus should also be on children younger and above these ages.

▪ **Need to address high PTR and PTTR at KG level**

The findings show very high pupil teacher ratio (PTR) and pupil trained teacher ratio (PTTR), especially at the KG level, compared to the other higher levels. This suggests the presence of huge deficit in teacher supply at the KG level – which is the foundation for educational development. To address this challenge, it is recommended that the government takes a concerted effort to train more teachers for the KG level through the Colleges of Education and also incentivize them to accept postings to remote and hard to reach areas. This will contribute significantly to building a stronger educational foundation for Ghanaian children.

▪ **Need to re-evaluate KG education**

The numbers in the 'never attended' category at the KG category was quite significant. This seems to suggest that enrolment of children in deprived communities is either delayed or they do not go through the KG system at all, perhaps due to lack of access to KG facilities. This creates the need for a comprehensive assessment and relook at the KG system in the country through the establishment of more KG centers coupled with training and retraining teachers at that level.

▪ **At risk of dropping population – using overage at grade level**

The findings in relation children being at risk of dropping out using the 'overage for grade' variable show that out of the 1,924 children currently in school, 592 are at risk of dropping because they are overage for their current class level. To address this, we recommend that special attention be paid to overaged children who are integrated into the formal school system so they do not end up dropping out of school. The strategies could include assigning special mentors to these children to provide oversight and mentorship with the objective of helping them stay in school.

Programmatic and strategic approaches to attain SDG 2 and presidential commitment to halving the numbers of out of school children:

▪ **Need to sustain the gains achieved on AEPs and Girls Focused Programmes:**

The evidence from the out of school mapping exercise show that significant progress has been achieved in relation to completion and transition levels for the girls' focused models. These models have proven to be very effective at addressing the out of school issues, especially for girls. It is therefore recommended that government support these programmes through concretizing the proposed one percent budgetary allocation as part of efforts to expand and scale-up these programmes to achieve maximum benefits:

     o   The Ministry of Education (MoE) should ensure that the 1% commitment to basic education earmarked for CBE is realised each year to sustain and scale up the CBE programme across the country.

- **Filling the teacher gap:**

One of the key variables for achieving quality education as stipulated in SDG 4[2] is the availability of teachers, especially, trained teachers. The study found that though the trained teacher numbers are relatively high across the study areas, the qualitative data points to high teacher absenteeism at the school level. Consequently, it is recommended that alternative teacher training models like the UTDBE[3] programme be revisited. This will help in getting "community-based" teachers/ volunteers who have given at least two years of quality volunteer service to the system and who are willing to stay to teach for a few years in their respective communities. Engaging such competent adults who are committed to their communities will help reduce the level of teacher absenteeism, especially in extremely deprived and hard-to-reach areas.

For Education Innovators:

- **Targeting of OOSC should be gender neutral**

The evidence shows the presence of more out of school children among the male population (55%) compared to the female population (45%) - statistics that is largely in sync with the national-level evidence. This requires that the strategy focused at addressing the out of school phenomenon should target the boy-child as well as the 'girl-child' so as to avoid a future crisis of having to institute 'boy child education'.

- **Need to build a comprehensive database on OOSC**

The evidence from the mapping exercise revealed the District Education Directorates as well as the education innovators (NGO's) had poor data bases on out of school children. Therefore, it is recommended that the District Education Directorates work with the innovators to generate a common pool of information on the out of school children in their respective districts so that appropriate and more targeted approaches can be proposed.

For Schools and communities:

- **Need for continuous education of parents/primary caregivers**

The study showed that although the interest of parents in getting their children educated has improved over the years, the situation is still quite dire, especially with regards to educating girls. Against this backdrop, we recommend that community level engagements with parents be initiated and sustained by the Education Directorates working in collaboration with the traditional and community leaders to sensitise parents to understand the imperative of educating their children irrespective of their sex;

- **Need to improve upon family income through alternative and sustainable jobs**

The findings also show that high poverty levels account for a substantial proportion of the issues related to the out of school children. Parents are unable to provide basic necessities for the education of their children, sometimes resulting in the children having to work to contribute to family income. It is therefore recommended that state and non-state actors work together at improving living standards of families in these extremely deprived areas by undertaking

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[2] Ensure inclusive and equitable quality of education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all
[3] Untrained Teacher Diploma in Basic Education

economic empowerment programmes aimed at achieving sustainable income-generating activities and improving living conditions.

1.0   Introduction

1.1   Background to the Study

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics (UIS) notes that while many countries show greater promise towards achieving universal primary and secondary education under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), little progress has been made with regard to reducing the global number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth (UIS, 2019). Governments in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), for example, have made continuous efforts, over the past two to three decades, towards promoting equitable, access to quality education for all children. Notwithstanding, more than one-third of the world's 258.4 million out-of-school children (representing 98 million children) live in sub-Saharan Africa, with majority (53%) of them being girls (UIS, 2019). The UIS estimates that one out of five children between the ages of 6 and 11 in SSA are out of school. Moreover, one out of three youth aged 12 to 14 is out of school. More alarming-- about 60% of youth aged 15 to 17 are not in school. The large out-of-school numbers are associated with huge disparities in access to quality education across gender, economic status, ethnicity, and disability. High poverty levels are also closely linked with disparities in access to education and learning achievement across the region, as students from poor, rural households and urban informal settlements often confront hunger, stigma, internal exclusion, and other factors which negatively affect their learning experiences (UNICEF, 2019).

As part of the ongoing global and local level innovations focused on addressing these out of school challenges, the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange/Global Partnership for Education (KIX/GPE) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is supporting "A Comparative Study on Accelerated Education and Girls Focused Programmes in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone" which is being implemented by Associates for Change (AfC), Ghana, Dalan Development Consult, Sierra Leone and the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Nigeria. The KIX IDRC research is a cross country study of Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) and Girls' Focused Models (GFMs) that focuses on vulnerable children and youth in rural, extreme poverty and fragile environments across West Africa. The overarching objective of the study is to increase access to learning for children who are out of school through the strengthened use of knowledge on effective AEPs and GFMs to ensure scalability and investments across West Africa.

The study is also a comparative one across innovations in the three countries and seeks to investigate the efficiency, effectiveness, and scalability of the selected Accelerated Education models in rural, fragile and hard- to-reach areas within West Africa. The comparison being done includes investigating the efficiency and effectiveness of these models to reach large populations of out of school children particularly in areas where trained teachers have difficulty working and refuse posting due to conflict and rural remoteness. The study also includes mini studies regarding approaches towards increasing access to education for children in poor rural areas, access to girls' education, access for children with disabilities and the transition and retention of AE children in formal schooling. The research design uses a Collaborative, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) approach and also uses an evaluative mixed-method approach including two longitudinal surveys related to the programme's efficiency and effectiveness.

In all, the consortium is working with seven education innovators across Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, which show a level of evidence for potential scalability and are relevant to the country contexts for the regions, states, and governments with which they are working.

1.2   The Ghana out of school context

Ghana's education sector is faced with many challenges - key among them is the significant number of school-age children who are not in school. There are children in Ghana within the school-going age that have never attended school or who have had access to basic education but later dropped out. Available data from UNESCO on out-of-school children in Ghana show that as of 2018, 1 million Ghanaian children aged 5 to 16 years were out of school despite government efforts at increasing access to education through interventions such as the school feeding programme, distribution of free uniforms and abolishment of school fees (UIS, 2018). The current 2020 data by UNESCO places the total number of out-of-school children in Ghana at 283,000 children of primary school age in Ghana who are out of school with a further 135,000 school-age children at the lower secondary level. The out of school numbers at the upper secondary level (610,000), represents about double the numbers of OOSC at both the primary and lower secondary level.

In percentage terms, about seven percent of children in Ghana are said to be out of school at the primary level, with differentials across indicators including wealth status; children from the poorest wealth quintile have higher out-of-school rates compared to their peers from other categories (MICS, 2017/18). At the lower secondary level, the national out-of-school rate is also at seven percent, with the portion of OOSC from the poorest quintile being similar to that of primary. At the upper secondary level, the out-of-school rate increases for all groups, and the national rate is high at 25%, with more girls out of school than boys. Different data sources also provide slightly different projections relating to the out of school numbers in Ghana[4].

1.3   The out of school mapping survey

The OOSC mapping survey is the project's first key study, which focused on gathering data on out of school populations being reached by the alternative education (AE) innovations across selected districts and communities in the northern part of Ghana. The mapping study gathered data on the profile of the different types of OOSC (gender, age, disability etc.) and also on the demand and supply barriers to their education. The study also explored the diverse contexts in which the innovations are being implemented (rural deprived and extremely deprived contexts, socio-cultural and poverty contexts) and is also serving as a baseline for the other research activities to be conducted within the project duration. The mapping of the incidence of OOSC was based on the UNICEF's OOSC framework's measurement of the five dimensions of exclusion:

1. children one year younger than the official primary-school entrance age who are not in pre-primary or primary school;
2. children of primary-school age who are not in primary or secondary school;
3. children of lower-secondary-school age who are not in primary or secondary school;
4. children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out;
5. children who are in lower-secondary school but at risk of dropping out.

1.3.1   Objectives and research questions

The overarching objective of the out of school mapping was to gather data on the prevalence of the out of school situation in Ghana which was to serve as a base for measuringeffectiveness and adaptability of the education innovations in relation to the OOSC population (girls in

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[4] See comprehensive analysis for details

particular) at the programme level in the subsequent research activities (longitudinal and tracer studies). The mapping survey contributed to answering the following research questions:

    a. What is the scale and prevalence of out-of-school girls and boys of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds in selected rural zones across the three countries?
    b. What are the profiles of the different categories of OOSC?
    c. What is the drop-out rate across the various innovations, particularly for girls and children living with disability?
    d. To what extent do AEP graduates transition to formal schools?
    e. To what extent do OOSC enroll in AEP programmes?

2.0   Mapping Methodology

2.1   Study design

The out of school mapping exercise employed an explanatory mixed-method approach utilizing quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the research questions. This approach enabled the team to gather numerical data through the quantitative method and to also elicit qualitative data to interrogate, validate and explain the findings of the quantitative data. The quantitative data was generated from structured household interviews/surveys, community and school-level checklists and key informant interviews while qualitative data was generated from focus group discussions and key informant interviews with district education officials, community leaders, headteachers, teachers, facilitators, and students. These approaches provided robust, and reliable data through triangulation of methods and key stakeholder groups regarding out of school children, AEP programming, completion, transition, supply, and demand factors and so forth.

2.2   Sampling procedure

Associates for Change (AfC) adopted a multi-stage sampling approach to generate robust samples at each stage of the survey process (the regional, district, community and household levels). Sampling was based on exposure to any AEP programme, focusing on intervention regions and districts. The community level selection focused on sampling both intervention and non-intervention communities for the household and school level surveys. This was done to enhance efficiency in data collection

2.2.1 Criteria for sampling of regions and districts
The KIX/IDRC Ghana mapping exercises was carried out across three regions (Northern, North East, and the Upper East Regions) and across eight districts[5]. The regions and districts were sampled based on the following criteria:

    1. Education Innovators' presence and implementation of Accelerated Education Programmes in those regions and districts over the last 3 to 5 years;
    2. Extreme poverty zones - areas with high levels of deprivation;
    3. High incidence of out of school children and challenges to girls' education;
    4. Regions and districts having AEP and non-AEP communities;
    5. Districts that had received interventions from different NGOs in the past.

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[5] Yendi, Saboba, Mamprugu Moagduri, Kumbungu, Talensi, Karaga, Gushiegu and Tolon

2.2.2 Criteria for community sampling
In all, sixty-four communities (32 intervention and 32 non-intervention communities) were sampled for the OOSC mapping (8 communities per district) based on the following criteria *(See Annex 3 for details on selected communities):*

1. Communities that had benefited from AEP intervention in the past five years;
2. Communities that had not benefited from AEP intervention in the past five years;
3. Communities with high levels of teacher gaps;
4. Proximity factor – communities closer and not too far from each other with high incidence of OOSC);
5. Communities that had received interventions from different NGOs in the past.

Based on these criteria and on data received from the Education Innovators (EI), the following districts and communities were sampled, with an average of three districts per Education Innovator (Table 1):

Table 1: Groupings of District per Education Innovation

S/N	Region	District	Number of Communities	Education Innovator (EI)
1.	Northern	Karaga	8	AfriKids
2.		Tolon	8	AfriKids
3.		Gushiegu	8	GILLBT
4.		Yendi	8	SfL
5.		Kumbungu	8	SfL
6.		Saboba	8	SfL
7.	Upper East	Talensi	8	AfriKids
8.	North East	Mamprugu Moagduri	8	GILLBT
Total	3	8	64	3

Source: Associates for Change (2022)

2.2.3 Sampling of households

▪ **Definition of a Household:**
The mapping survey adopted the Ghana Statistical Service's criteria and defined a household to include a person or group of related or unrelated persons who live together in the <u>same housing unit</u>, <u>sharing the same housekeeping and cooking arrangements</u> and <u>are catered for as one unit</u>, with an adult male or female as the head.

▪ **Household selection:**
The survey adopted the systematic random sampling approach to identify households in both AEP and non-AEP communities. A two-way approach was used in selecting households - this was done through the following steps:

1. **Selection of households:** Households were selected using a systematic approach. Community teams pre-defined starting points on entry into each community and then selected the first household based on team decision and the subsequent households using every other household criterion to select the 20 households per community. Only one household was selected per structure.

2. **Household heads/primary caregivers:** the household head/primary care giver in each selected household was identified to respond to interview questions based on the following eligibility criteria:
    - Adults aged 18+
    - Resident at selected household
    - Ability to engage in meaningful communication
    - Available during the fieldwork period

Preference was given to primary caregivers since they tend to have more information on household members and household arrangements.

▪ **Substitution criteria for household interviews**

In instances where the selected household was not readily available at the time of call or the scheduled time of interview, the household was replaced with the next available household in the same structure where possible. In situations where the selected household refused the interview, the next available household was selected to replace the originally selected household.

2.3   Instrumentation

Overall, three key data collection methods were employed for the mapping survey: household survey – using structured questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIS). The instruments used for the survey are summarised in Table 2:

Table 2: Summary of Data Collection Tools

SN	Instrument Number	Description/Targets
1.	Household Instrument	▪ Household Survey
2.	Instrument 1: KII with District Local Gov't Officers	▪ KII for District or local government authority officials ▪ Planning Officer ▪ District Coordinating Director
3.	Instrument 2: KII with District Education Officers	▪ KII/FGDs with District Education Officials ▪ District Director of Education ▪ Complementary Basic Education Officers ▪ Officers/ Circuit Supervisors and others
4.	Instrument 3: KII with community & traditional leaders	▪ Community and traditional leaders' interviews ▪ Chief/queen mother ▪ Assembly man
5.	Instrument 4: KII with headteachers & teachers	▪ Teachers and head teachers' Interviews
6.	Instrument 5: KII with AEP Facilitators	▪ AEP/CBE Facilitators Interviews
7.	Instrument 6: FGD with OOSC	▪ Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for OOSC Children and Dropouts ▪ Girls Separate FDG ▪ Boys separate FDG
8.	Instrument 7	▪ SMC/PTA Focal Group Discussion
9.	Instrument 8	▪ Community and school checklist

2.3.1 Piloting of field instruments

A one-day piloting exercise was conducted on the 27th of January 2022 in Balshei in the Nanton District, Northern Region to trial-test the draft instruments prior to the fieldwork. This was to validate and test the reliability of the instruments. Two key instruments (household survey tool and the headteacher/teacher instruments) were deployed for the piloting exercise. The piloting team also assessed the duration for the administration of each instrument, the skip patterns, clarity in questions and so forth. Findings from the piloting were used to slightly revise sections of the instruments and further informed the number of days and the size of the team composition for the actual fieldwork.

2.4 Data collection procedures and data management

2.4.1 Recruitment and training of Enumerators and Supervisors

The field enumerators and researchers were selected from AfC's most experienced researchers in the northern part of the country. The selection process focused on identifying researchers with the necessary language proficiency, education research experience and appreciation of gender issues in education. A two-day intensive centralized training was organised in Tamale for all the team leaders, supervisors and enumerators. The enumerators were trained on the administration of the data collection instruments, community and household entry/mapping and probing techniques. Training content included the purpose of the study, sensitivity to the COVID-19 context, team reflection meetings and writing up the reports. The training included the use of digital tablets preloaded with the survey instruments. The enumerators also practiced using instrumentation for FGDs and conducting interviews with a focus on the administration of FGDs and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The enumerators' training also included addressing ethical considerations relating to obtaining participant consent and ensuring gender equality during data collection. The training of the field team was guided by a training guide that was developed to ensure the highest rigor during the data collection phase.

2.4.2 Quality assurance processes

The AfC teams exercised the highest quality assurance standards at all levels. First, the in-depth training of field enumerators and their data collection rehearsals (including interview skills) in the presence of key members of the research team ensured that the field enumerators understood the nuances of the study. Second, the data was collected using mobile data collection tools, which allowed live data upload of all respondent data in real-time. This ensured that no data was lost during the transmission process between field and data collation; it also enabled the research team to assess the quality of the data being uploaded by each team member. Third, all data collected was thoroughly cleaned to allow consistency in the data used for the analysis. Significant efforts were made to avoid missing data by reframing the questions and probing the respondents further to ensure their full understanding of the question and to elicit the right information.

The team reflection meetings also provided another layer in the quality assurance process. Each field team organised at least two reflection meetings to debrief, identify gaps and correct such gaps in the subsequent days' work.

2.5 Data Analysis

▪ **Quantitative analysis**

A variety of analytical techniques including descriptive and narrative approaches were used in analysing data collected. Primary quantitative data collected was cleaned, stored, and analysed using MS-Excel and SPSS. Basic descriptive, frequency and cross-tab analyses were computed for each survey data set. Further analysis was done in disaggregating data across regions,

district, locality, levels of deprivation (rural deprived and extremely deprived), gender, disability and intervention status.

- **Qualitative data analysis**

The qualitative data was analysed based on the general themes emerging from the mapping survey and was used to validate the findings from the quantitative analysis. Gender-based analysis was also included in the analysis of qualitative data by ensuring that responses from female participants in the FGDs and KIIs were adequately represented across the analysis and reporting stages. Quantitative and qualitative data were integrated after analysis in order to arrive at relevant findings and conclusions.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

AfC is a research institution which complies with all country-level ethical guidelines and protocols in conducting research and evaluations of this nature. The following protocols were used to comply with the highest ethical standards: access and entry protocols to the community and district with special emphasis on adherence to all COVID-19 protocols: maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' information; voluntary participation/withdrawal; informed consent procedures; and maintaining anonymity. AfC was guided by Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People when conducting the endline evaluation of the REACH Project. AFC's evaluation team observed key ethical considerations relating to access and entry protocols at regional, district and community levels and administered informed consent before any interview was conducted. Annex 11 highlights the ethical issues that were considered during the various phases of the study.

2.7 Gender, Equity and Inclusion considerations

Key gender considerations for conducting the out of school mapping included using female researchers to conduct FGDs and KIIs with female participants (particularly AEP beneficiaries), and community leaders, since the interviews required a high level of rapport, and familiarity with the respondents. In addition, the selection of participants for survey, FGDs and KIIs were based on strong gender considerations. Researchers ensured gender balance in all mixed FGDs. Researchers purposively included female-headed households and primary caregivers to participate in the survey. In addition, persons with disabilities, including young females, were selected for engagement to ensure inclusiveness.

2.8 Study Limitations

Some limitations were noted during the out of school mapping survey. The most evident limitation was the COVID-19 pandemic. The need to observe COVID protocols, including observing social distancing and the mandatory wearing of nose masks aimed at reducing the spread of the virus at the time of fieldwork, heightened the stress level of the field teams. Secondly, accessing district level data on out of school children and other educational indicators was a considerable challenge. This may have been due to poor record keeping practices at the District Assembly and District Education Directorate levels. This resulted in gaps in district level data collected.

3.0 Analysis and Findings

This section presents the results of the out of school mapping exercise across selected districts, communities and households. Findings are presented under the main thematic areas as a way of ensuring consistent and coherent presentation of results.

3.1 Demographic /Background Context and Analysis

This section provides an overview of the core demographic contexts/characteristics across the various study sites and further discusses the context of the districts, communities and households relating to enrolment, teacher types, academic qualifications of teachers, infrastructure and so forth. The contexts of out of school children in relation to the five dimensions are also analyzed. These key indicators are presented to provide contextual understanding of key findings.

3.1.1   District Distribution and Context

The out of school mapping was conducted across eight districts – six districts in the Northern region and one district each in the Upper East and North East regions. The selection of the districts was based on the presence of AEPs/innovation partners – School for Life (SfL), GILLBT and Afrikids. The analysis shows that about a third of the communities (33%) enumerated in the OOSC mapping are in extremely deprived and hard-to-reach communities (Table 3). A higher proportion of this community category was found in the Mamprugu Moagduri district (9%) and the Yendi district (7%).

> About thirty-three percent (33%) of the communities visited are in extremely deprived and hard to reach areas

Table 3: Districts & communities by level of deprivation

Districts	Rural Deprived[6]		Extremely Deprived[7]		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushiegu	5	9%	2	3%	7	12%
Karaga	5	9%	3	5%	8	14%
Kumbungu	6	10%			6	10%
Mamprugu Moagduri	3	5%	5	9%	8	14%
Saboba	5	9%	3	5%	8	14%
Talensi	5	9%	2	3%	7	12%
Tolon	7	12%		-	7	12%
Yendi	3	5%	4	7%	7	12%
Total	**39**	**67%**	**19**	**33%**	**58**	**100%**

Source: Household data, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.2   Teacher availability and teacher gaps by district and sex

One of the major challenges facing effective teaching and learning in Ghana is the non-availability of qualified teachers, especially in remote and hard to reach areas (Casely-Hayford

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[6] **'Rural deprived'** – communities less than 2 hours' from the district capital, access to basic school in the community/ less than 10 minutes' walk from community to the nearest school, presence of healthcare centre and access to other social amenities.

[7] **'Extremely deprived'** - communities more than 2 hours' drive from the district capital, no access to basic school/more than 30-minutes' walk from community to the nearest school, absence of healthcare facilities and other social amenities and so forth.

et al., 2017). Table 4 presents statistics on the teacher situation across some of the study districts disaggregated by sex and qualification type (trained/untrained). The findings show about 90% of the teachers across all levels are professionally trained with only 30% of this number being female teachers. Further, males constitute a higher proportion of the untrained teacher population (73%) with females accounting for the remaining 27%. The pupil teacher ratio (PTR) at KG level is much higher compared to the other levels. This highlights the huge teacher gap at the KG level. This is more evident in the Saboba district where the PTR at the primary level is 77:1. A similar trend is observed in relation to the pupil trained teacher ratio (PTTR) where the ratio is again higher at the KG level compared to the other levels with the Saboba district further having the highest ratio at 87:1. This has implications for quality of teaching and learning in the face of limited numbers of trained teachers, which could result in overcrowding.

> - Only 30% of trained teachers are females
> - Higher PTR and PTTR at the KG level compared to all the other levels

Table 4: Teacher situation at the district level

District	Status	Trained			Untrained			Overall Total			Pupil's Enroll.	PTR	PTTR	Average Teacher Per School
	LEVEL	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T				
Talensi	KG	18	89	**107**	6	13	**19**	24	102	**126**	-	36	42.4	-
	Primary	215	143	**358**	16	3	**19**	231	146	**377**	-	35.4	37.3	-
	JHS	279	90	**369**	13	6	**19**	292	96	**388**	-	12.8	13.5	-
	SHS	117	15	**132**	37	1	**38**	154	16	**170**	-	16.9	21.8	-
Kumbungu	KG-JHS	-	-	**-**	-	-	**-**	851	358	**1209**	-	-	-	-
	SHS			115			25			140				
Karaga	KG	63	62	**125**	7	3	**10**	70	65	**135**	-	-	-	-
	Primary	330	55	**385**	18	0	**18**	348	55	**403**	-	-	-	-
	JHS	135	21	**156**	2	0	**2**	137	21	**158**	-	-	-	-
Saboba	KG	30	32	**62**	3	5	**8**	33	37	**70**	5402	77.1	87.1	0.83
	Primary	263	66	**329**	48	20	**68**	311	86	**397**	14973	37.7	45.5	4.73
	JHS	123	20	**143**	52	2	**54**	175	22	**197**	4988	25.3	34.9	2.35
	SHS	74	3	**77**	6	1	**7**	80	4	**84**	1397	16.6	18.1	1
	TVET	42	8	**50**	10	0	**10**	52	8	**60**	1439	23.9	28.8	0.71
Total		**1,689**	**604**	**2,408**	**218**	**54**	**297**	**2758**	**1,016**	**3,914**	**28,199**	**281.9**	**329.4**	**9.62**

Source: KIIs with District Education Officers, out of school mapping, 2022
*(M - Male F – Female T – Total)

3.1.2 Community Context

3.1.2.1 Major economic activities across study areas

Table 5 presents data on the major economic activities across the study districts undertaken by the different groups of focus – men, women and the youth. The results show that mixed farming[8] is the most dominant economic activity across all groups, with men accounting for the highest percentage (85%). Further, over two-thirds (74%) of the youth and 45 percent of women were also into farming. An appreciable number of women (23%) were also doing petty trading – selling foodstuffs, running provision shops, selling cooked food etc., with a few of the women (19%) engaging in shea butter processing. Mining (Illegal mining - galamsey) was also identified as an activity undertaken by men and the youth though the number of individuals involved were few and were mostly from the Mamprugu Moagduri, Tolon and Talensi districts. Other minor economic activities included weaving, commercial motor-bike operations (Okada business), carpentry, masonry and so forth.

> Mixed farming is the most dominant economic activity among men, women and the youth

The qualitative data from the FGDs with SMC/PTAs and other respondents validates the quantitative data. The responses from the FGD show that the pre-dominant economic activity across the study communities is farming – basically mixed farming comprising animal rearing, crop farming and fishing. The findings also show that, apart from farming, community members were engaged in other jobs like smock weaving, carpentry, masonry, crafting and basket weaving. The extremely deprived communities were engaged in farming and trading mostly while those in rural deprived areas had a mixture of vocations including trading, carpentry, and motorbike operations. The following quotes below corroborate this finding:

"Most women in this community engage in petty trading and farming" (SMC/PTA, Dapoore, community, Talensi, Upper East Region)

"Farming, rearing, hunting, fishing, trading, weaving" are major economic activities undertaken in this community (Dapoore primary, Talensi, Upper East Region)

"Farming and shea nut processing, petty trading are the key economic activities in Malzeri" (Malzeri Islamic Primary, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Farming, Illegal mining, animal rearing, trading, picking of shea nuts" are the main sources of income for folks in this community" (Datuko primary, DA, Upper East, Talensi)

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[8] Planting of maize, millet, cassava, animal rearing etc.

Table 5: Economic activities - dominant economic activities by group

District	Men				Women						Youth			
	Farming		Mining		Farming		Trading		Shea butter processing		Farming		Mining	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	5	11%			2	4%	1	2%	2	4%	5	11%		
Karaga	7	15%			5	11%	2	4%			7	15%		
Kumbungu	6	13%					1	2%	5	11%	4	9%		
Mamprugu Moagduri	4	9%			2	4%	2	4%			2	4%	2	4%
Saboba	6	13%			6	13%	1	2%			7	15%		
Talensi	1	2%					1	2%	1	2%			5	11%
Tolon	5	11%	5	11%	3	6%	2	4%			5	11%		
Yendi	6	13%			3	6%	1	2%	1	2%	5	11%		
Total	40	85%	5	11%	21	45%	11	23%	9	19%	35	74%	7	15%

Source: Community checklist, out of school mapping, 2022
*Multiple responses

3.1.2.2 Source of drinking water across study areas

Table 6 presents details on the main sources of drinking water across the study communities. The results show about 70% of the communities rely on boreholes with a further 11% each relying on pipe-borne water and dams. Cumulatively, the results show about 19% of the communities rely on unhygienic water sources including dams and rivers for drinking purposes. The district level analysis shows that Saboba and Talensi districts have the highest number of communities with access to hygienic sources of drinking water (borehole and pipe) with the Tolon District having the highest proportion of communities using unhygienic sources of drinking water.

> About a fifth (19%) of the communities rely on unhygienic water sources including dams and rivers for drinking purposes

Table 6: Sources of drinking water by district

District	Borehole		Dam		Pipe		River		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	4	9%	1	2%					5	11%
Karaga	6	13%					1	2%	7	15%
Kumbungu					5	11%	1	2%	6	13%
Mamprugu Moagduri	3	6%					1	2%	4	9%
Saboba	7	15%							7	15%
Talensi	7	15%							7	15%
Tolon	1	2%	4	9%					5	11%
Yendi	5	11%					1	2%	6	13%
Total	33	70%	5	11%	5	11%	4	8%	47	100%

Source: Community checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.2.3 Access to basic health facilities

Access to basic health care facilities is a fundamental human right and central to efficient healthcare delivery. Table 7 presents the results on the availability of basic health facilities across the study communities. The results show that about 60% of the communities do not have any health care facility which has implications for health care delivery. A further 40% of the communities across the study districts have access to basic health facilities, mostly 'community health compounds' (CHPS compound). This means that they will normally be compelled to travel long distances when their conditions can only be handled at secondary and tertiary health care centers.

> 60% of the communities do not have any health care facility

Table 7: Availability of health compound or health clinic in the community

	No facility		Avail. facility		Total	
District	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
Gushegu	3	6%	2	4%	5	11%
Karaga	7	15%			7	15%
Kumbungu	5	11%	1	2%	6	13%
Mamprugu Moagduri	3	6%	1	2%	4	9%
Saboba	2	4%	5	11%	7	15%
Talensi			7	15%	7	15%
Tolon	4	9%	1	2%	5	11%
Yendi	4	9%	2	4%	6	13%
Total	**28**	**60%**	**19**	**40%**	**47**	**100%**

Source: Community checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.3   School-level contexts

Key school level variables were assessed to understand the context within which schools operate within the sampled communities. This comprises the teacher situation and qualification, access to educational facilities and average distance to school.

3.1.3.1 Number of teachers across selected communities

The availability/presence of teachers, especially, trained teachers at the school level is a basic requirement to achieving a functional educational system. The number of teachers (Table 8) is basically based on the number of schools accessible to the study communities and may not reflect the general teacher situation in the study communities. The data shows that the Kumbungu (21%), Talensi (19%) and Tolon (18%) districts had the highest proportion of teachers while the Gushiegu (6%) and Karaga (6%) districts had the least number of teachers (both trained and untrained). This may be accounted for by the remoteness of the communities within these two districts.

Table 8: Number of teachers by district (selected communities)

District	Freq.	%
Gushegu	20	6%
Karaga	19	6%
Kumbungu	71	21%
Mamprugu Moagduri	22	7%
Saboba	34	10%
Talensi	63	19%
Tolon	60	18%
Yendi	49	14%
Total	**338**	**100%**

Source: School checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.3.2 Educational qualification of headteachers by district

In all, forty-seven headteachers were interviewed during the OOSC mapping exercise (Table 9). The findings reveal a higher proportion of the headteachers had first degrees (79%) in education related courses ranging from educational management, educational planning and so forth, with a further 21% of the headteachers having Diploma in Basic Education which is the basic requirement to teach as a professional in Ghanaian schools. Most of the headteachers with first degrees are in the Talensi district with the least in the Karaga district. Further, the Karaga, Saboba and Talensi districts showed the highest proportion of headteachers having the Diploma in Basic Education qualification. The result implies teachers are improving upon their qualification levels by acquiring higher degrees beyond the basic qualification.

> Over two-thirds (79%) of the headteachers have first degrees in education related courses

Table 9: Educational qualification of headteachers by district

District	Degree		Diploma in Basic Education		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	3	6%	2	4%	5	11%
Karaga	2	4%	5	10%	7	15%
Kumbungu	6	13%			6	13%
Mamprugu Moagduri	3	6%	1	2%	4	9%
Saboba	6	13%	1	2%	7	15%
Talensi	7	15%			7	15%
Tolon	5	11%			5	11%
Yendi	5	11%	1	2%	6	13%
Total	**37**	**79%**	**10**	**21%**	**47**	**100%**

Source: School checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.3.3 Qualification of teachers by district

Overall, the results relating to the educational qualification of teachers as presented in Table 10 deviates from the headteacher statistics. About two-thirds (67%) of the teachers possess the basic teaching qualification (Diploma in Basic Education) with a further 24% having first degrees mostly in education related courses. The other category comprises National Service Personnel, teachers placed on the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), City and Guild and those with O' Level qualifications. This group accounted for nine percent of the entire teacher population. The result shows about 90% of the teachers across the sampled districts are trained, and this is in sync with the data provided by the district education offices across the sampled districts *(Table 4 above).*

> About two-thirds (67%) of the teachers possess Diploma in Basic Education

Table 10: Educational qualification of teachers by district

District	Degree		Diploma Basic Education		Others		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	2	1%	16	5%	2	0.7%	20	7%
Karaga			16	5%	3	1%	19	6%
Kumbungu	22	7%	35	12%	1	0.3%	58	19%
Mamprugu Moagduri	2	1%	17	6%	3	1.0%	22	7%
Saboba	5	2%	22	7%	7	2.3%	34	11%
Talensi	14	5%	36	12%	5	1.7%	55	18%
Tolon	21	7%	26	9%	1	0.3%	48	16%
Yendi	8	3%	34	11%	5	1.7%	47	16%
Total	**74**	**24%**	**201**	**67%**	**27**	**9%**	**303**	**100%**

Source: School checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.3.4 Adequacy of furniture by district

The furniture situation across schools in the sampled districts was also assessed as a measure of quality of education – specifically, seating and writing desks were examined. The results show that over two-thirds of schools (77%) do not have adequate furniture, which has serious implications for the effective conduct of teaching and learning in schools. In addition, 15% of schools indicated they had no furniture for the use of students, a situation which is more evident in the Karaga district (Table 11).

> - Over two-thirds of schools (77%) do not have adequate furniture
> - A further 15% of schools have no furniture for students

District	Adequate		Inadequate		None		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	1	2%	3	6%	1	2%	5	11%
Karaga			4	9%	3	6%	7	15%
Kumbungu	2	4%	4	9%			6	13%
Mamprugu Moagduri			3	6%	1	2%	4	9%
Saboba	1	2%	6	13%			7	15%
Talensi			6	13%	1	2%	7	15%
Tolon			4	9%	1	2%	5	11%
Yendi			6	13%			6	13%
Total	**4**	**9%**	**36**	**77%**	**7**	**15%**	**47**	**100%**

Source: Community checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.4 Household contexts

Key household level variables were also assessed to provide context related to the households within the sampled communities. These comprise the number, types and levels of deprivation of households, educational level and economic activities of household heads/primary caregivers, household size and poverty levels. In all, 954 households were covered across the sampled communities.

3.1.4.1 Households by level of deprivation

All the sampled communities for the out of school mapping survey fall within the rural category. The study further re-categorized the communities into two primary levels *(rural deprived and extremely deprived)* based on established standards of deprivation to further highlight the levels of deprivation across the sampled rural communities. The criteria for classifying 'rural deprived' communities are the following: communities less than two hours from the district capital, access to basic school in the community/ less than 10 minutes' walk from community to the nearest school, presence of healthcare centre and access to other social amenities. The criteria for extremely deprived' communities are the following: communities more than a two-hour drive from the district capital, no access to basic school/more than 30-minutes' walk from community to the nearest school, absence of healthcare facilities and other social amenities, and so forth. The results as presented in Figure 1 shows a third of the households (34%) are classified as living in extremely deprived communities with the other two-thirds living in rural deprived communities. Thus, a third of the communities fall within the hard-to-reach category and have high poverty levels. This provides context to the out of school situation within those spaces.

> A third of the households (34%) are classified as living in extremely deprived communities

Figure 1: No. of households by level of deprivation
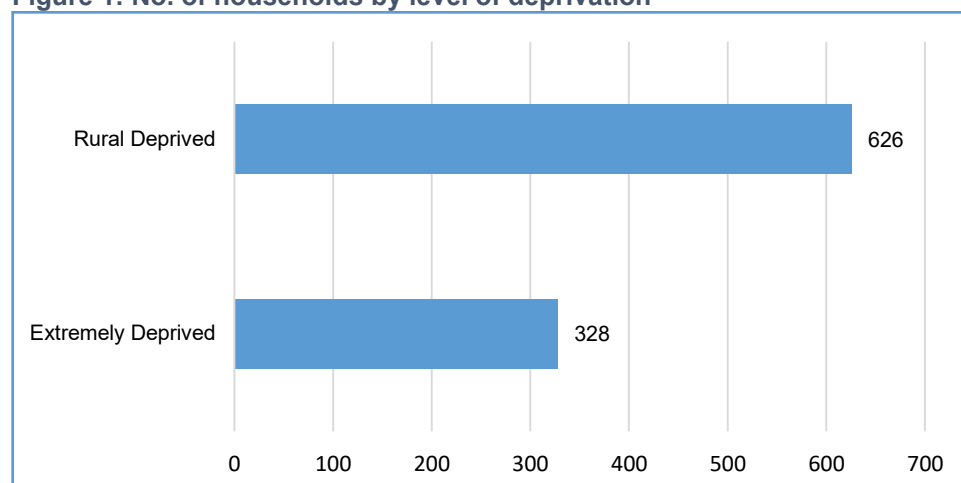
Source: Household data, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.4.2 Households by district and level of deprivation

Table 12 presents findings relating to the level of deprivation of communities in the sampled study districts. Overall, the Gushiegu district had the lowest number of households covered over the data collection period while the Tolon district recorded the highest number of households covered. The results show the Mamprugu Moagduri district (as expected) had the highest number of households in extremely deprived areas, accounting for about a third of all households in this category. This is in line with national level data that puts the district as one of the most deprived and poor districts in the country. The Kumbungu and Tolon districts also accounted for the highest proportion of households living in rural deprived communities. This result further highlights deep rooted deprivation across the study households.

> Households in the Mamprugu Moagduri district account for about a third of all households in extremely deprived districts

Table 12: Households in rural deprived & extremely deprived by district

District	Extremely Deprived		Rural Deprived		Total	
	Freq.	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
Gushiegu	15	2%	62	6%	77	8%
Karaga	63	7%	74	8%	137	14%
Kumbungu	-	-	121	13%	121	13%
Mamprugu Moagduri	94	10%	35	4%	129	14%
Saboba	50	5%	67	7%	117	12%
Talensi	43	5%	91	10%	134	14%
Tolon	-	-	125	13%	125	13%
Yendi	63	7%	51	5%	114	12%
Total	**328**	**34%**	**626**	**66%**	**954**	**100%**

Source: Household data, out of school mapping, 2022

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3.1.4.3 Educational level of household heads

The educational level of parents (household heads) has been established to have a significant association with access to education of children within the household (Ardila, A. et al, 2005). Table 13 presents the findings relating to the sex and educational background of heads of households/primary caregivers. The findings show about 93 percent of household heads are male - which slightly deviates from the national average of about 78 percent. Further, over two-thirds of household heads (80.7%) have 'no education' which could have implications for the education of their children. Among the female-headed households, over ninety percent (91.2%) had no form of formal education, indicating poor educational levels among females compared to males. Further, there was evidence of no female-headed household head having education beyond the secondary school level.

> ▪ Over two-thirds of household heads (80.7%) have no formal education
> ▪ Higher levels of female household heads with no formal education

Table 13: Educational level of household heads

Education status of household head	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
None	62	91.2%	708	79.9%	770	80.7%
Completion of AEP/CBE	1	1.5%	6	0.7%	7	0.7%
Completion of Koranic school	1	1.5%	13	1.5%	14	1.5%
Completion of Primary school	2	2.9%	44	5.0%	46	4.8%
Completion of JHS/lower secondary	1	1.5%	37	4.2%	38	4.0%
Completion of Secondary/upper secondary	1	1.5%	40	4.5%	41	4.3%
Completion of Technical & Vocational	-	-	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
Non-formal education	-	-	8	0.9%	8	0.8%
University/other tertiary level completion	-	-	21	2.4%	21	2.2%
Other specify	-	-	8	0.9%	8	0.8%
Total	**68**	**7.1%**	**886**	**92.9%**	**954**	**100.0%**

Source: Household data, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.4.4 Economic activities of household heads

The findings in relation to the economic activities predominantly undertaken by household heads/primary caregivers follows a similar trend as observed under community context. The results show over 90% of household heads engage in crop farming with a further 41% engaging in animal rearing (Table 14). The gender dynamics tilts heavily towards males, with about 88% of male involved in crop farming compared to only 6 percent of females. This could be explained by the substantial difference in the number of male-headed households compared to that of females. Mining of all forms (gold, diamond, salt and sand) and trading were also identified as key economic activities undertaken by both males and females. Professions falling under the 'other' category also represents a significant proportion and comprise vehicle driving/motorbike riding, head porterage (Kayaye), National Service, teaching, unemployment, and so forth.

Table 14: Occupation of household heads

Occupation of Household heads	Male		Female		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Crop farming	843	88%	60	6%	903	94.7%
Animal rearing	362	38%	28	3%	390	40.9%
Mining	20	2%	2	0.2%	22	2.3%
Trading	38	4%	13	1%	51	5.3%
Remittance	1	0.1%	-	-	1	0.1%
Seasonal migration	11	1%	2	0.2%	13	1.4%
Pottery, Art and crafts	3	0%	3	0.3%	6	0.6%
Cloth Weaving	1	0.1%	-	-	1	0.1%
Gardening	2	0.1%	-	-	2	0.2%
Artisanal trades (carpentry, sewing, hairdressing, tie/dye, embroidery etc.)	17	2%	2	0.2%	19	2.0%
Brewing	3	0%	-	-	3	0.3%
Hunting	20	2%	-	-	20	2.1%
others	54	6%	5	0.5%	59	6.5%
Total	**886**	**93%**	**68**	**7%**	**954**	**-**

Source: Household data, out of school mapping, 2022
*Multiple responses

3.1.4.5 Household size

The household[9] size constitutes the number of people within a typical household – this gives an idea of how small or big a household is. The finding pegs average household size at 6.7 persons, which is about two times bigger than the national average of 3.6 (GSS, 2021). Further, most of the households (51.3%) consist of between 6 to 10 people, with a further 39% consisting of five or less people within a typical household (Table 15). A few of the households (9%) had ten members and more, and these households were generally polygamous households with more than one wife.

> The average household size of 6.7 is twice that of the national average of 3.6

Table 15: Household size

Household size	Frequency	Percent
<= 5	375	39.3
6 - 10	489	51.3
11 - 15	81	8.5
16 - 20	7	0.7
21+	2	0.2
Total	**954**	**100**

Source: Household data, out of school mapping, 2022

3.1.4.6 Household assets

Table 16 provides findings relating to ownership of household assets as a proxy for measuring poverty levels. The findings show that most households own farm-help animals and bicycles,

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[9] In this study, a 'household' was defined as a person or group of related or unrelated persons who live together in the same housing unit, share the same housekeeping and cooking arrangements and are catered for as one unit, who acknowledge an adult male or female as the head (Source - Ghana Statistical Service)

which is explained by the economic activities they engage in. Some of the households possessed a variety of household items, including electrical appliances such as radio, refrigerator, cooking utensils, and cell phones. Education-related assets were reported to be scarce/limited in most households. These consisted of a table and chair, as well as a computer for educational purposes (3 % and 1% respectively). Additionally, a sizeable proportion of respondents (73%) owned a bicycle or a cell phone (75%) in addition to farm tools. For example, a household was more likely to own a bicycle than a car or tractor.

Table 16: Household assets

Household assets	Frequency	Percent
Iron	97	10%
Sewing machine	125	13%
Television	298	31%
Radio	496	52%
Fridge	61	6%
Bed (frame with mattress)	206	22%
Bicycle	699	73%
Motorbike	459	48%
Tricycle	67	7%
Car/truck	6	1%
Tractor	23	2%
Writing Tables and chairs	24	3%
Living room furniture	68	7%
Video recorder	5	1%
Air conditioner	2	0.2%
Computer	9	1%
Cell phone	714	75%
Cooking stove	55	6%
Metal pots and crockery	381	40%
Sideboard/cupboard	9	1%
Plough	36	4%
Canoe	7	1%
livestock	35	4%
Farm help animals	2124	223%
Total	**6006**	**-**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022
*Multiple responses

3.2   Out of school child context - prevalence of Out of School Children (OOSC)

This section provides evidence on the out of school context/numbers across the sampled districts, communities and households. The out of school numbers are estimated using the proportion of those (children) who have *'never attended'* and those who *'attended in the past'* (dropped out).

3.2.1   Out of school context – using national level data
In appropriately situating the findings of the out of mapping study, the report highlights the out of school context in Ghana two key national level data sources - the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS, 2017/18), and the 2021 national population and housing census data.

According to the MICS, 2017/18 data, approximately 283,000 primary school-age children were out of school as of 2018. This equals about seven percent of primary school age children who are out of school. Out-of-school rates for rural children are slightly higher than the national average, while the rates for urban children are slightly lower. The MICS data further shows that

there is high rate of attendance and low dropout at the primary school level. The data reveals a 79.6% rate of attendance at the primary school level, with the gender analysis relating to dropout showing a higher proportion of boys (7.4%) being out of school compared to girls (6.4%). The situation at the Junior High School level also shows that out-of-school rate stood at 6.9 percent (135,000), with the portion of males high at 7.4% compared to the proportion of 6.4% for females. At the Senior High School level, the out-of-school numbers stood at 610,000 with more girls out of school than boys. Further, the portion of females is high at 29% compared to 21.3% in the case of males.

Analysis of the 2021 census statistics shows about 20.8% of children aged 3 and older have never attended school with a further 39.8 percent having attended in the past. This implies that on the average, there is about **60%** of children aged 3-years and older who are out of school *(attended in the past and never attended).* The data further shows that a higher proportion of females fall within the out of school category (62.2 percent) compared to males (58.8 percent). This invariably points to a major issue in the country's quest to improve access to quality basic education.

3.2.2 General statistics on identified children

In all, about 3,536 children 17-years and below *(age of interest for the study)* were studied across the study communities/households. The identified children were further grouped (categorized) into age groups using the UNICEF Framework on OOSC. Table 17 provides details on all the key categories of children: children 'currently and fully in school' (1,836), children who are 'sometimes in school' (88), children who 'dropped out of school' (303) and children who have 'never attended' formal school (680), with the 'never attending population constituting a large proportion of the identified children and provides compelling evidence for AEP interventions to be scaled up.

> ▪ About a third (33.8%) of all children age 4-17 years were out of school

Table 17: Categories of all children across the study areas

Categories		Age Groups				Total	OOS Pop.
		4-5	6-11	12-14	15-17		
Total Sample		236	1643	551	477	2907	**KG: 134 (4.6%)**
In-School	Freq.	97	1103	354	282	1836	
	%	**3.3%**	**37.9%**	**12.2%**	**9.7%**	**63.2%**	**Prim.:** 481 **(16.6%)**
Never Attended	Freq.	132	394	86	68	680	
	%	**4.5%**	**13.6%**	**3.0%**	**2.3%**	**23.4%**	**JHS: 184 (6.3%)**
Drop Out	Freq.	2	87	98	116	303	
	%	**0.1%**	**3.0%**	**3.4%**	**4.0%**	**10.4%**	**SHS: 184 (6.3%)**
At Risk[10]	Freq.	5	59	13	11	88	
	%	**0.2%**	**2.0%**	**0.4%**	**0.4%**	**3.0**	
Total		8.1	56.5	19.0	16.4	100.0	**Total: 983 (33.8%)**

Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

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[10] Sometimes in school

3.2.3 Prevalence of OOSC by age groups

The out of school population is estimated using the 'never attended' and 'attended in the past (dropped out)' population with a focus on the population aged 4 to 17[11]. The findings show that the out of school population age 4 to 17 (KG – SHS) stood at **983**. Further excluding the 4 to 5 years (KG) population brings the out of school population to **849** children (Figure 2). Again, the study finds that the out of school phenomenon occurs predominantly among children aged 6 to 11 years (primary level) accounting for almost half (49%) of the out of school population (Table 18). This shows that a significant number of primary age children in the sampled districts are out of school. The number of children age 4 to 5 (KG) in the 'never attended' category is also substantial (132). This may be due to delayed enrollment of pupils in school or lack of access to KG facilities. In relation to drop-out, the numbers are higher at among 15 to17 year olds, indicating higher dropouts occur at the SHS level.

- 983 children age 4-17 are out of school
- Almost half (49%) of the OOSC are within ages 6-11 (primary)

Figure 2: Comparison of OOSC population ages 4-17 and 6-17
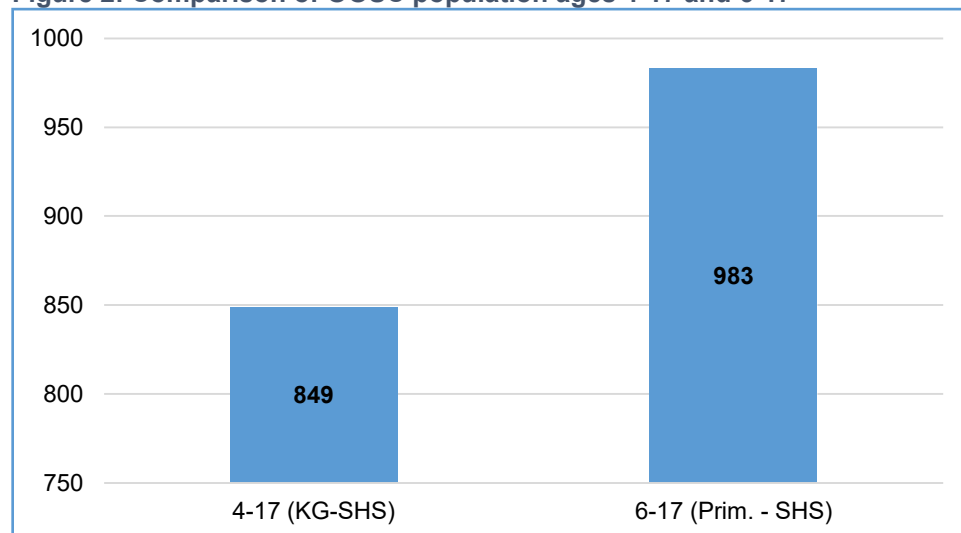
Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

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[11] KG 1 to SHS 3

Table 18: OOSC situation by age groups - Ages 4-17

Age Group	Dropped Out		Never Attended		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
4-5	2	1%	132	19%	134	14%
6-11	87	29%	394	58%	481	49%
12-14	98	32%	86	13%	184	19%
15-17	116	38%	68	10%	184	19%
Total	**303**	**100%**	**680**	**100%**	**983**	100%

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.2.4   Out of school population by sex

Table 19 presents the out of school statistics by sex. The evidence shows the presence of high out of school rates among the male population (55%) compared to the female population (45%). This result is in sync with the national-level evidence from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), which indicates that there are more males out of school than females in Ghana. Further, the 'drop out' population across both males and females is twice as lower as the 'never attended' population, implying that a higher number of children within the school going age are not in school.

> Evidence of more male 'out of school' children (533) than females (438)

Table 19: OOSC population by sex

Out of school Pop.	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Drop Out	108	24.7%	195	36.6%	303	31.2%
Never Attended	330	75.3%	338	63.4%	668	68.8%
Total	**438**	**100%**	**533**	**100%**	**971**	**100%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.2.5   Out of school numbers by level of deprivation

The study also measured the out of school context in relation to the level of deprivation of the study areas (Table 20). The findings show there are slightly more out of school children in the rural deprived communities (525) than in the extremely deprived communities (446). This is as a result of the nature of the study sample, which had more rural deprived communities and households than extremely deprived communities. However, the evidence points to the presence of more children aged 4 to17 in extremely deprived communities/households who have 'never attended' school (75.3%) than those in rural deprived communities (63.2%). The reverse holds in the case of dropouts, with a higher proportion of the 'dropped out' children in rural deprived communities (36.8%) compared to extremely deprived areas (24.7%).

> Slightly more out of school children in rural deprived communities (525) than in the extremely deprived communities (446).

Table 20: OOSC population (4-17) by level of deprivation

Out of school pop.	Extremely Deprived[12]		Rural Deprived[13]		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Dropped Out	110	24.7%	193	36.8%	303	31.2%
Never Attended	336	75.3%	332	63.2%	668	68.8%
Total	**446**	**100%**	**525**	**100%**	**971**	**100%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.2.6 Prevalence of OOSC population by intervention status and district

Tables 21 and 22 provides evidence on the out of school numbers by type of intervention and by district. The data reveals there are more children of school going age who have 'never attended' school in non-intervention communities (at in intervention communities, there are as many children who have dropped out of school (203) as there are children who have never attended school (349). In comparison to non-intervention areas, there are a higher number of dropouts in intervention areas. However, the never-attended rate was equally higher in non-intervention areas as well (44.8%). The findings further showed that the majority of children (632), regardless of intervention type, had never attended school.

The district level analysis follows a similar pattern. The evidence indicates that Karaga and Saboba districts have a higher rate of out-of-school children (19% each). The data further shows that there were more children who had never attended school in the two districts (23% and 20%, respectively). Again, Talensi and Saboba had significantly higher dropout rates than other districts (20% and 15% respectively). Further, the data shows the presence of more dropped out children in the Talensi district compared to the 'never attended' population.

Table 21: OOSC population (4-17yrs) by intervention status

	Intervention		Non-Intervention		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Dropped Out	203	37%	79	22%	282	30.9%
Never Attended	349	63%	283	78%	632	69.1%
Total	552	60.4%	362	39.6%	914	100%

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

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[12] **'Extremely deprived'** - communities more than two hours' drive from the district capital, no access to basic school/more than 30-minutes' walk from community to the nearest school, absence of healthcare facilities and other social amenities and so forth.

[13] **Rural deprived'** – communities less than two hours from the district capital, access to basic school in the community/ less than 10 minutes' walk from community to the nearest school, presence of healthcare centre and access to other social amenities.

Table 22: OOSC population (4-17yrs) by district

	Dropped Out		Never Attended		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushiegu	27	9%	49	7%	76	8%
Karaga	33	11%	154	23%	187	19%
Kumbungu	39	13%	63	9%	102	10%
Mamprugu Moagduri	34	11%	73	11%	107	11%
Saboba	45	15%	137	20%	182	19%
Talensi	60	20%	44	6%	104	11%
Tolon	30	10%	83	12%	113	11%
Yendi	35	12%	77	11%	112	11%
Total	**303**	**31%**	**680**	**69%**	**983**	**100%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.3 Drop-out situation/context

This section presents the findings relating to drop-out statistics across the study communities and households by key variables including class level, sex, level of deprivation and by AEP programming.

3.3.1 Drop-out numbers by class level and sex

The data as presented in Table 23 indicates the number of dropouts at each class level by sex. The findings show majority of dropouts occurred at the primary level (Primary 1 to 6) with the highest drop-out number occurring at primary 2 (17%). The data further shows that the out of school population decreased by higher levels across the junior high schools. The gender dynamics show that the drop-out numbers among the male population (64.3%) is twice that of the female population (35.7%) and this reflects in the out-of-school numbers at both primary and JHS levels.

Table 23: Drop-out population by sex

Class level	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
KG1	3	3%	9	5%	12	3.9%
KG2	7	6%	12	6%	19	6.2%
Primary School 1	14	13%	31	16%	45	14.8%
Primary School 2	16	15%	36	18%	52	17%
Primary School 3	18	17%	25	13%	43	14.1%
Primary School 4	15	14%	27	14%	42	13.8%
Primary School 5	12	11%	25	13%	37	12.1%
Primary School 6	13	12%	15	8%	28	9.2%
Junior Secondary 1	4	4%	8	4%	12	3.9%
Junior Secondary 2	3	3%	4	2%	7	2.3%
Junior	1	1%	1	1%	2	0.7%

Secondary 3					
Senior Secondary 3	2	2%	2	1%	4	1.3%
Total	**109**	**100%**	**196**	**100%**	**305**	**100%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.3.2 Drop-out numbers by level of deprivation

Table 24 provides evidence on the drop out numbers by class and level of deprivation. The data shows there are more children who dropped out of school in rural deprived communities than in extremely deprived regions, contrary to what was expected. This is explained by the higher number of rural deprived communities and households in the sample than in the extremely deprived areas and also by the fact that there are more children in school across the rural deprived areas. It is further observed that most dropout incidences occur at the primary level, specifically at primary one and two. At the JHS three level, there were no dropouts in the extremely deprived communities. On the other hand, the majority of dropouts in rural deprived communities decreased by level from P-6 onwards.

Table 24: Drop-out numbers by level of deprivation

Class level	Extremely Deprived		Rural Deprived		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
KG1	4	3.6%	8	4.1%	12	3.9%
KG2	6	5.4%	13	6.7%	19	6.2%
Primary School 1	21	18.8%	24	12.4%	45	14.8%
Primary School 2	24	21.4%	28	14.5%	52	17.0%
Primary School 3	15	13.4%	28	14.5%	43	14.1%
Primary School 4	19	17.0%	23	11.9%	42	13.8%
Primary School 5	6	5.4%	31	16.1%	37	12.1%
Primary School 6	6	5.4%	22	11.4%	28	9.2%
Junior Secondary 1	6	5.4%	6	3.1%	12	3.9%
Junior Secondary 2	2	1.8%	5	2.6%	7	2.3%
Junior Secondary 3		-	2	1.0%	2	0.7%
Senior Secondary 3	1	0.9%	3	1.6%	4	1.3%
Total	**112**	**100.0%**	**193**	**100.0%**	**305**	**100%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.3.3 Factors accounting for the dropouts by gender

A number of factors contributing to the drop-out numbers are highlighted in this section to re-emphasize the key challenges that contribute to children leaving school, based on the perspective of household heads and primary caregivers. These comprise social, financial, cultural and attitudinal factors (Table 25). Attitudinal factors such as (*children not liking school),* accounts for more than half of the responses (52%). Disliking school may be attributable to a number of reasons including parental inaction, unconducive school environment, poor academic performance and so forth, which gradually lead to dwindling interest in schooling and subsequently dropping out. This reason is a more prominent factor for male drop-outs (53.4%) compared to the case of female drop-outs (50.7%). Other key reasons include 'inability to meet school expenses' (27.7%), limited importance attached to schooling (27), poor academic performance (14.1%), household chores (8.9%) and so forth.

The key reason for drop out is 'disliking school' which is attributable to parental inaction, unconducive school environment, poor academic performance etc.

Table 25: Factors accounting for the drop-outs by sex

Factors	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
School is not important	8	10.7%	19	16.4%	27	14.1%
Limited interest in schooling (the child does not like school)	38	50.7%	62	53.4%	100	52.4%
His mother's refusal	1	1.3%	2	1.7%	3	1.6%
Refusal of his father	-	-	10	8.6%	10	5.2%
Refusal of another family member	1	1.3%	5	4.3%	6	3.1%
Must help with housework	6	8.0%	11	9.5%	17	8.9%
Must help with professional activities	1	1.3%	1	0.9%	2	1.0%
Pregnancy	-	-	2	1.7%	2	1.0%
Migration	12	16.0%	3	2.6%	15	7.9%
Inability to meet school expenses	21	28.0%	32	27.6%	53	27.7%
Poor academic performance	13	17.3%	10	8.6%	23	12.0%
Indiscipline	1	1.3%	7	6.0%	8	4.2%
Apprenticeship	12	16.0%	6	5.2%	18	9.4%
Total	**75**	100.0%	**116**	100.0%	**191**	**100.0%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.3.4 Factors accounting for the phenomenon of school drop-out – qualitative

In re-emphasizing the reasons for school drop-out, qualitative data from different respondents were also analysed to provide more evidence in explaining issues of drop-out. This section highlights key qualitative reasons that explain drop-out rates across the study areas; these reasons are largely similar to the general trends across the country.

3.3.4.1 Parental Neglect

Through interviews conducted with officials at the District Directorate of Education and interactions with the 'out of school children', key bottlenecks that hinder the retention of learners in schools across the study areas were identified. Notable among these factors was the issue of 'parental neglect' which manifests in different forms. In some cases, parents do not show interest in the general welfare of their children and as such are not so concerned about the schooling of their children—an attitude which tends to breed apathy towards schooling. In other instances, parents preferred to spend on social and cultural events, including funerals, festivals, and naming ceremonies, than to invest in the education of their children. Due to the heightened lack of parental interest in educating their children, students are forced to leave school and participate in economic activities to support the family or earn a livelihood. For girls especially, parents often assign them numerous household chores that cut into their time for reporting to school and leave them fatigue. This forces some girls to opt out of school. The following quotes highlight some of these issues:

"...Parents have very low interest in the education of their children and would rather spend on funerals and naming of children…" (Tolon District Education Officer, Northern Region)

"Parents' unwillingness or lack of commitment to provide uniforms, books and other stationery for us to go to school" (FGD with OOSC, Yendi, Northern Region)

"They have to walk to school and walk to the stream after returning from school, so they end up dropping out" (FGD with OOSC, Mamprugu Moagduri, North East Region)

A key issue relating to parental neglect that emerged from the sessions with the AEP facilitators was the limited importance some parents attached to the education of their children, especially girls. It emerged that girls are withdrawn by parents at a certain point of their education that the girls can engage in other activities including learning a trade (apprenticeship):

"They enroll the girls in school initially but after a while they let them drop out to learn a trade like hairdressing…" (AEP Facilitator, Yendi)

3.3.4.2 Poverty levels:

Poverty levels have been established as a key factor that affects the retention of learners in school at all levels, especially at the primary level. High poverty levels, especially across the study areas, make it difficult for most parents to provide for the basic needs of their children including the provision of daily meals, books and other key learning materials. Though the cost of education is free, stationery, feeding, uniform and other learning materials have to be provided by the parents. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with out of school children and other key stakeholders show that when students lack basic materials, including school uniforms, books and shoes, they face high risk of drop out. The following quotes speak to this:

"Father got sick and my mother is poor and they could not provide uniform, books and bicycle so I dropped out…" (FGD with OOSC, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Due to lack of funds to get him learning resources such as books, uniform and others, he dropped out of school" (Household head, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

3.3.4.3 Peer Influence and limited prospects after school

Peer pressure was identified as a key factor that contributes to school drop outs, especially in districts close to other neighboring countries including the Saboba District. It is a longstanding practice for kids in this district to drop out of school and travel to border towns to acquire material possessions like motor bikes, dresses, shoes, etc.). The other children in school become attracted to these material possessions and easily get manipulated by their peers to also drop out of school and engage in economic activities that will help them generate income. Interactions with the AEP Facilitators confirmed that students who drop out and have made some money are usually the ones who influence their peers who are already enrolled in school to drop out. The following are some qualitative responses that provide backing to this claim:

"Some of us are not interested in schooling. Those out of school easily get money when they finish apprenticeship or travel than those in school" (FGD with OOSC, Saboba District, Northern Region)

"Peer influence, he was following his friends without my knowledge, and before I realized, he started playing truant and eventually dropped out of school (Household head, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

For some of the out of school children, the prospects for bright futures after school were dim after spending years in school. For most of them, difficulty in finding a job after school is enough reason to show that it may not be worthwhile to spend one's time in school. This reality

contributed to their dropping out: This is one of the lead drivers of out of school, as supported by the responses below:

> *"We dropped out because going to school is very tedious and at the end you may not get a job after completing school"* (FGD with OOSC, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

> *"I wanted to start a business so I don't end up like those who finish school without money or a job"* (FGD with OOSC, Talensi, Upper East Region)

3.3.5 Approaches to addressing issues of drop-outs and OOSC – including what needs to be done:

The processes involved in addressing the drop-out risk factors and the out of school phenomenon are multifaceted and requires the attention of all key and relevant stakeholders across all levels. The study identified some approaches enacted at the community and school levels through traditional leaders, school authorities, and SMCs/PTAs geared towards addressing OOSC and related issues. This section highlights some of these approaches and processes.

3.3.5.1 Community level approaches:

▪ **Setting up an education committee**

Community leaders shared their thoughts on the role of the community in addressing the issues of OOSC. The leaders recognized the need for the community to come together to solve the OOSC situation. In some communities, evidence was adduced to confirm the existence of committees whose responsibility was to sensitize parents on the importance of education, while also serving as 'overseers' (watchdogs) ensuring that children stayed in school. They hold meetings regularly with stakeholders, such as the chiefs, elders and PTA/SMC, to come up with ideas to keep the children already in school, and also get those who have dropped out back to school. The committees also sensitize the children on the benefits of education and the greater opportunities they will have when they are educated.

> *"The community has formed committees to follow up on pupils to identify those school dropouts and encourage them to go back to school"* (Male Chief/Elder, Achinayili, Karaga, Northern Region)

> *""By counselling school children and sensitizing their parents on the need to enroll their wards in school, the committee in charge of children's welfare in the community is able to get children who are at risk of dropping out to complete school"* (Assemblymen, Nakunga Community, Gushiegu, Northern Region)

▪ **Enact by-laws that promote education**

The interactions also brought to the fore the need for the communities to enact by-laws that are targeted at eliminating some harmful actions by parents, including engaging children in excessive work both at home, on farms and in other economic activities. Community leaders pointed out that some parents contribute to the OOSC situation by engaging their children in child labour.

"Together with the help of parents, we can come up with bylaws to stop the school children from going to the illegal mining centers" (Chief/Elder, Datuko Community, Talensi, Upper East Region)

- **Provision of school infrastructure, and teaching and learning materials**

One of the key factors that account for the high numbers of OOSC is the lack of school infrastructure coupled with inadequate learning materials such as books, school bags, school uniforms, shoes, and means of transportation (bicycles) since some of the schools are far away from the communities. Interviews with traditional leaders indicated that one of the approaches by which community members could help to address the OOSC was to lobby the District Assembly to build/establish schools especially, higher levels of schools including junior high schools and senior high schools, with accommodation facilities for teachers. The following quotes validate this finding:

"When the community gives pressure to the assembly to build JHS for our community, they will do it …" (Chief/Elder, Baduli Community, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Put up good class rooms, get them uniforms, books, bags…" (Chief/Elder, Kapligun Community, Tolon District, Northern Region)

"Provide teachers accommodation because most of them commute from the next community, tantala to school late…" …" (Chief/Elder, Wontubri Community, Mamprugu Moagduri, North-East Region)

On the other hand, a few communities shared their ordeal in pursuing officials of the District Assembly and the Ghana Education Service (GES) to assist them toto establish a school – efforts that have proven unsuccessful:

"The community has written letters and invited GES officials to the community and we have made several appeals to them for a school but have not been successful" (Community Elder, Bamboi, Karaga District, Northern Region)

- **Sensitisation of parents**

The interactions with the traditional leaders also brought to the fore the need for continuous sensitisation and education of parents as well as their children on the benefits of education. This could be done by organizing community durbars and inviting stakeholders to give talks on the benefits of education. Traditional leaders also have to form 'watch dog groups' and set by-laws to ensure that all children of school going age are in school. This can be confirmed by the following statements made by community leaders:

"Sensitise parents to support their children's education and stay in the school's" (Chief/Elder, Tolon District, Northern Region)

"Organise Community meetings to help educate parents on importance of education" (Chief/Elder, Tolon District, Northern Region)

"We traditional leaders have to form watch dog committees to ensure that all school going age children are in school. All persons who are of school age and not in school should be punished" (Chief/Elder, Karaga District, Northern Region)

3.3.5.2 Household and parental level responsibilities

- **Provision of basic needs and learning materials**

The role of parents in reducing the OOSC situation is a crucial one which largely has to do with providing basic needs for their children. Interactions with traditional leaders reflected the view that when parents take full responsibility for their children and provide their basic needs including feeding, provision of all education needs (school fees, uniforms, learning materials etc.) it serves as a huge motivating factor for the children and gives them the security and confidence to focus on their schooling. Some of the leaders also reported that parents are sensitized to only give birth to the number of children they can fully take care of so as to make life less burdensome:

> *"…I think parents should be ready to buy all the educational materials their children need to learn"* (Chief, Karaga District, Northern Region)

> *"… Support them to go to school by buying them uniforms, sandals and bicycles and books"* (Chief, Tolon District, Northern Region)

- **Reduction of workload on children**

The interactions with community and traditional leaders highlighted the role excessive child work have on children's susceptibility to dropping. Some of the traditional leaders mentioned that most parents subject their children to work beyond the ability of the child's strength (child labour) and load them with so much work that prevents them from concentrating in school. The leaders opined that the role of parents in addressing the OOSC was to give their children time to study, reduce their workload, and not pressure them to engage in farming during class hours. The following quotes speak to this:

> *"…Parents should reduce children's workload or stop engaging learners during school days or hours"* (Chief/Elder, Zugu yipielgu, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

> *"…Parents should encourage their children to attend school by providing their needs and also reduce the workload."* (Chief/Elder, Yishei, Gushegu District, Northern Region)

> *"…Asking parents not to allow their children go to the illegal mining activities"* (Chief/Elder, Datuko, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

- **Improving interest level in the education of children**

One of the key approaches espoused by community and traditional leaders that could contribute to addressing the out of school phenomenon was for parents to demonstrate much interest in the education of their children by ensuring that the children do not have their own way in staying out of school. The community leaders also highlighted some of the key roles' parents were playing in the education of their children in some of the study communities; for example, some parents were very active in the education of their children, sensitizing and advising them about the importance of education for their own lives and for the society at large:

> *"…Parents sit their wards down and find out the real causes / problems learning to that behaviour, parents should live up to expectations"* (Chief/Elder, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

"…Parents now try as much as possible to encourage their children to go to school even if the child is not willing, they force them or motivate them to go" (Chief/Elder, Gushegu District, Northern Region)

"…Mothers should be talked to since they have control over the children than the men. The women have an influence on the lives of the children especially the girls…" (Chief/Elder, Gushegu District, Northern Region)

3.3.5.3 School level responsibilities

▪ **Make education attractive**

One key factor that contributes to worsening the out-of-school situation, based on interactions with traditional leaders is unconducive school environments. In their view, schools could make education much more attractive by making teaching and learning more fun and child centered. This could be done by creating an enabling environment for learners to study without fear of teachers or certain courses. Teacher enthusiasm and skills in sparking curiosity and creativity in learning will go a long way toward engaging children and encouraging them to remain in school.

"The school would have to introduce educational fun fair programmes where the importance of education is highlighted to arouse the interest of out of school children to get back" (Elder, Karaga District, Northern Region)

"Teachers should create school environment to attract learners to stay and learn" (Elder, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

"Teachers should create conducive school environment for learners" (Assemblyman, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

▪ **Monitor the progress of reintegrated school children**

Community leaders also advised that teachers should be patient and find ways to help reintegrated children (children who dropped out and have gone back to school). Teachers should also have time to interact with children. Also, with the help of the PTA schools should monitor pupils' attendance to school and constantly follow up on those who miss classes:

"Teachers should accept the drop out children in school, handle them well and monitor their studies and share with parents" (Chief, Male, Kumbungu)

"The PTA should try and inspire children to take education seriously." (Queen mother/Women's leader, Yendi)

"The school should monitor pupils' attendance to school and follow up on those who continuously absent themselves" (Other community leaders, Kumbungu)

▪ **Teachers should be professional in their work**

Views shared by traditional leaders on the role of the school suggest that teachers should take their work seriously by coming to school regularly and punctually. By so doing, the students will emulate the teachers and take their education seriously.

"The teachers should be regular to school. They should also teach the children when they come to school and not sit under trees to converse." (Chief/Elder, Gushiegu District, Northern Region)

"The headteacher and teachers should be serious and teach the children well." (Chief/Elder, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

▪ **Sensitization of parents**

Continuous sensitization of parents is needed to help them understand the relevance or benefits of education, and schools must not relent in this. Teachers should organize sensitisation programmes and invite the parents of OOSC to attend. Also, local role models who have achieved success through education, should be invited to speak to children and parents.

"School authorities must continue to sensitize parents/caregivers of children that have either dropped out or at risk of dropping on the importance of education" (Elder, Saboba District, Northern Region)

"PTA should engage with the community members to sensitize parents on the importance of education" (Chief/Elder, Mamprugu Moagduri District, North East Region)

3.4   Children at risk of dropping out:

The 'at risk of dropping' population was estimated using three key variables – overage for grade level, frequency of repetition and frequency of school attendance.

3.4.1 At risk of dropping population – using 'overage at grade level'

The out of school mapping exercise examined children who are presently enrolled in school but may be at risk of dropping out using the 'overage for grade' variable (Table 26). The findings show that out of the 1,924 children currently in school, 592 are at risk of dropping because they are overage for their class levels. At age 12, children are expected to be at the junior high level; however, about 297 of these children are at various primary levels. This increases the likelihood that they will drop out. Secondly, at age 15, students are expected to be at the senior high level; however, about 292 of these children were found at either the primary or JHS level—a situation which could also put them at risk of dropping.

> About **592** children currently in school are at risk of dropping because they are overage for current class level

Table 26: At risk of dropping by age groups (using overage for grade)

Current level of education	4 - 5		6 - 11		12 - 14		15+		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Kg 1	71	42%	100	59%					171	9%
Kg 2	25	16%	130	83%	2	1%			157	8%
Primary School 1	5	2%	310	93%	17	5%	2	1%	334	17%
Primary School 2			243	90%	24	9%	2	1%	269	14%
Primary School 3			214	79%	47	17%	9	3%	270	14%
Primary School 4			95	54%	68	38%	14	8%	177	9%
Primary School 5			49	36%	64	47%	23	17%	136	7%
Primary School 6			14	12%	75	62%	32	26%	121	6%
Junior Secondary 1			5	4%	44	39%	65	57%	114	6%
Junior Secondary 2			1	1%	17	20%	68	79%	86	4%
Junior Secondary 3					9	11%	77	90%	86	4%
Senior Secondary 1							3	100%	3	0.2%
Total	**101**	**5%**	**1161**	**60%**	**367**	**19%**	**295**	**15%**	**1924**	**100%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.4.2 At of risk of dropping population – using frequency of repetition

Further, the study assessed the 'at risk of dropping' population of students currently in school using the 'frequency of repetition' *(how many times children repeated a class)* variable disaggregated by AEP and non-AEP communities. It is established in literature (Casely-Hayford et al., 2017) that the more a student repeats a class, the higher the likelihood of that child dropping out of school. The results as presented in Table 27, show that out of the 158 students who had ever repeated a class, about 16% (25) repeated a class more than once putting them at a higher risk of dropping out, with about two-thirds of this number in primary school. These findings suggest that such children may have a higher propensity of dropping out, particularly given that a high proportion of these children are in primary school. On the other hand, no child repeated more than twice in non-AEP areas.

> About 16% of students who had repeated a class more than once are at risk of dropping out from school, with about two-thirds of this number in primary school.

Table 27: Risk of dropping based on frequency of repetition

Current Level of education	AEP communities						Non-AEP communities				Total	
	Once		Twice		Three Times		Once		Twice			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Kg 1	7	100%					3	100%			10	6%
Kg 2	8	67%	2	17%	2	17%					12	8%
Primary School 1	12	80%	2	13%	1	7%	10	91%	1	9%	26	16%
Primary School 2	10	91%			1	9%	4	100%			15	9%
Primary School 3	17	81%	1	5%	3	14%	4	67%	2	33%	27	17%
Primary School 4	8	67%	4	33%			6	67%	3	33%	21	13%
Primary School 5	8	100%					3	100%			11	7%
Primary School 6	9	90%	1	10%			2	100%			12	8%
Junior Second. 1	6	75%	2	25%			4	100%			12	8%
Junior Second. 2	6	100%					3	100%			9	6%
Junior Second. 3	3	100%									3	2%
Total	**94**	**83%**	**12**	**11%**	**7**	**6%**	**39**	**87%**	**6**	**13%**	**158**	**100%**

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.4.3 At of risk of dropping population – using frequency of attendance

Table 28 presents data on children at risk of dropping out of school using the 'regularity of school attendance' variable and disaggregated by level of community deprivation. The results show that out of the 1,862 students who are currently in school, about 435 (23%) have a higher likelihood of dropping out of school because they miss some school days. This finding is in sync with the results of a study by Casely-Hayford et al., (2017), which indicated that students who miss more school days are more likely to drop out of school in the future. The findings further show that a significant proportion of children who missed school in the most disadvantaged localities were in lower primary school and kindergarten. On the other hand, it was noted that a substantial proportion of children might miss school in rural deprived regions regardless of their grade level. Comparatively, there were more children missing school in the rural deprived regions than in the extremely marginalized areas (303 as compared to 132).

> About a fifth (23%) of students who are currently in school are at risk of dropping because they miss school days.

Table 28: Risk of dropping based on regularity of attendance

| Current Level of Education | Extremely Deprived | | | | Rural Deprived | | | | Total | |
| | Never skipped | | skipped | | Never skipped | | skipped | | | |
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Kg 1	20	67%	10	33%	113	80%	28	19.9%	171	9%
Kg 2	30	79%	8	21%	85	73%	31	26.7%	154	8%
Primary 1	86	72%	34	28%	158	76%	49	23.7%	327	18%
Primary 2	61	72%	24	28%	131	76%	42	24.3%	258	14%
Primary 3	61	74%	22	27%	130	75%	43	24.9%	256	14%
Primary 4	50	83%	10	17%	88	79%	24	21.4%	172	9%
Primary 5	30	83%	6	17%	72	77%	22	23.4%	130	7%
Primary 6	22	79%	6	21%	65	71%	26	28.6%	119	6%
JHS 1	24	80%	6	20%	70	84%	13	15.7%	113	6%
JHS 2	19	86%	3	14%	42	72%	16	27.6%	80	4%
JHS 3	22	88%	3	12%	48	84%	9	15.8%	82	4%
Total	425	76%	132	24%	1002	77%	303	23.2%	1862	100%

Source: Household data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.4.4 Reasons for at risk and vulnerability population

In trying to understand the reasons behind the high number of children that are 'at risk of dropping out' of school population, the study engaged some key stakeholders and opinion leaders including the SMCs/PTAs in interviews to elicit their perspectives. Interviews showed that the reasons were multi-faceted and comprised socio-cultural, economic, supply-side and other factors.

3.4.4.1 Socio-cultural factors:

One of the key factors identified as a leading factor that places children 'at risk of dropping' relate to socio-cultural practices including early marriage, teenage pregnancy, fosterage etc.

These factors mostly pressure students, especially girls, to leave school. Over 70 percent of SMC/PTA indicated that most girls are at risk of dropping out of school because they get pregnant. Some parents also marry off their daughters at an early age, forcing them to drop out of school. The voices of some parents are highlighted below:

"Some of them get married at early age because of financial constraints and parents' inability to cater for their basic needs. Some parents do not also appreciate the value of schooling and as such, do not encourage their children to go to school" (SMC/PTA member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

"These problems emanate from early marriages, teenage pregnancy and poverty" (SMC/ Mamprugu, North East Region)

"Some of the girls leave school to go and marry" (SMC/PTA member, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

"Teenage pregnancy is common among the girls due to the mining activities" (SMC/PTA member, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

"Non-attendance of students to school in this community is as a result of teenage pregnancy, and early marriages" (SMC/PTA member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

Apart from teenage pregnancy, early marriage and fosterage, another key socio-economic factor that increases the risk of children dropping out of school is the limited regard for education due to wrong perceptions. About 30 % of the SMC/PTA's revealed that community members do not value education; hence, they encourage their children to work to help raise income to support family income instead of going to school. They also believe that education has little or no benefit and that almost all those who complete school do not get jobs. Therefore, they prefer to engage their children in farming and mining. The voices of some parents are highlighted below:

"…Some parents have refused to enrol their children in school. They think that children who enrol in school and later drop out or complete without jobs are social misfits since such children no longer like to go to farm or learn a trade. So, some parents prefer to engage their children on the farms instead of wasting their time in school. Those who are half educated I mean the dropouts don't like farming. They claim they can't farm and the school has not benefitted them either" (SMC/PTA, Gushiegu District, Northern Region)

"Perceptions of families, because they always want the children to start making money on their own" (SMC/PTA, Tolon District, Northern Region)

"Some are at home due to negative perceptions about schooling. They think that others have completed school and are not able to get employment. So, they don't understand why should they send more of them to school. Teenage pregnancy and early marriage also cause children not to attend school" (SMC/PTA, Saboba Region, Northern Region)

"Basically, the children do not attend school because of the belief that when you complete school you would not get a job" (SMC/PTA, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

3.4.4.2 Economic reasons:

Analysis of the data shows economic reasons account for a higher proportion of the 'at risk of dropping out' population. Of the SMC/PTA members who were interviewed, about 90 percent of them identified poverty as a key factor that places children at risk of dropping out of school. Responses by the parents suggest that low incomes of parents hinder them from providing the necessary resources/materials needed for educating their children. Some parents cannot afford to buy books and stationery for their children. Parents and DEOs shared their views in the quotes below:

> *"Poverty... That is especially around this time it not easy to get money to buy school essentials like uniforms, books and school sandals."* (SMC, Karaga District, Northern Region)

> *"Their parents can't pay fees, and they feel like it takes long for the children to benefit from education and is waste of money to encourage the children to attend school regularly"* (SMC/PTA Member, Tolon District, Northern Region)

> *"Lack of basic school materials due to poverty on the part of their parents and difficulty in settling into the new system"* (DEO, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

> *"Some parents think it is the government's duty to provide everything including exercise books to their children to stay in school"* (SMC/PTA Member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

> *"Parents do not have money to buy the necessary resources such as uniform, books and others for their children"* (SMC/PTA, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

> *"Unable to pay school fees and buy uniforms, unable to provide adequate meals and scholastic materials for their children"* (SMC/PTA member, Mamprugu Moagduri District, North East Region)

3.4.4.3 Governmental factors – absence/limited school infrastructure:

Interviews with the SMCs/PTAs showed that, the actions and inactions of government contribute to putting children at 'risk of dropping out'. The government is expected to provide infrastructure, teaching and learning materials as well as ensure efficient teacher deployment. However, the SMCs/PTAs interviewed revealed that there were inadequate school structures, teaching and learning materials and teachers in the communities. Parents indicated that some of the communities do not have schools, and as a result, their children have to travel to other communities to attend school. In some communities, school children only have access to primary schools which are mostly in very poor condition and have neither water nor electricity. This makes the children travel far to other communities for their junior high and senior high school education, which contributes to the higher likelihood of their dropping. The following quotes speak to this:

> *"Children have to commute to the nearest community to attend school because government has not established school in this community. This increases their risk of dropping out"* (SMC/PTA member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

> *"… lack of infrastructure, lack of electricity and lack of water affect children's school attendance"* (SMC/PTA member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

> *"The schools in the community are far for some of the children so they may feel reluctant to come to school"* (SMC/PTA member, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

"No school, limited classrooms and teaching materials" (SMC/PTA member, Talensi District, Upper East)

"The school is in a bad shape, there is no school feeding, there are no furniture so the children sit on the floor" (SMC/PTA member, Gushegu District, Northern Region)

"No SHS in this community and we also need more classrooms" (SMC/PTA, Yendi District, Northern Region)

3.4.4.4 Limited/inadequate teachers:

The majority of schools, especially schools in extremely deprived and hard to reach areas, face the perennial challenge of inadequate teachers, especially trained teachers-- which invariably increases the 'at risk of dropping' population. Interactions with the SMC/PTAs across sampled schools revealed the inadequacy of trained teachers across most of their schools. Most teachers who are posted from other communities refuse to report to the school due to the poor conditions of the school and sometimes due to language barriers Also, parents complained that the teacher absenteeism was due to lack of motivation by the government:

"The teachers are not adequate. Some of the classes do not have teachers and children idle when they go to school. Teacher absenteeism is another issue. Sometimes the children go and come back to tell us their class teachers are not in school" (SMC/PTA member, Gushegu District, Northern Region)

"Teachers' absenteeism and lateness to school and limited school supplies affect children's participation and retention in school" (SMC/PTA member, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

"Lack of teachers in school affects children's school attendance" (SMC/PTA member, Yendi District, Northern Region)

"Teachers attitude towards children" (SMC/PTA member, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

3.4.4.5 Inadequate teaching and learning materials:

Teaching and learning materials, which are an integral part of education, are hard to come by in most communities in the study area. Interviews with the SMCs/PTAs showed that the government (or district education directorate) has failed to supply schools with adequate teaching and learning materials such as text books, exercise books, school curriculum and so forth. The following quotes further highlight the relative evidence:

"Government inability to supply the necessary educational materials like books, pencils and erasers can make students not to attend school" (SMC/PTA member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

"There are inadequate textbooks and furniture in the school which impacts on children's non-attendance to school" (SMC/PTA member, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

"There is inadequate furniture in the classrooms and so most of the children sit on the floor to write and this does not motivate the children to come to school regularly" (SMC/PTA member, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

"Reluctance of government to provide school feeding program, lack of textbooks, lack of furniture and school uniforms" (SMC/PTA, Karaga District, Northern Region)

"There are no enough educational materials such as furniture and textbooks so the children are not motivated to come to school" (SMC/PTA member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

3.5. Transition, Retention and Completion Levels on AEPs

The key determinants of the success/impact of AEPs can be seen in the proportion of AEP students transitioned, retained and completing education in the mainstream education system. This section highlights evidence related to these key variables.

3.5.1 Number of transitioned AEP learners – school level data

Table 29 presents data on the number of AEP graduates who are currently enrolled in the mainstream educational system disaggregated by sex using school-level data as provided by the headteachers. Overall, the results show there are about 664 AEP graduates in formal schools across the study areas. Further, the findings indicate that on average, a greater proportion of AEP graduates in primary school were females (69 percent), which may be attributable to the conscious effort by most education innovators to create safe spaces for girls. The study revealed that there were more AEP-enrolled pupils in P4 (173, 26 percent), with a higher number of female AEP graduates at the P4 level than at the other levels. P2 and P6 had the lowest numbers of AEP learners (15 percent and 17 percent respectively). The majority of male AEP learners were found in P-3.

> There are about 664 AEP graduates in formal schools across the study areas – *constituting 36% of all students currently in school (for selected schools visited)*

Table 29: Number of transitioned AEP learners

No. of AEPs Grad. at each level	Male		Female		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
P2	26	13%	73	16%	99	15%
P3	56	28%	84	18%	140	21%
P4	48	24%	125	27%	173	26%
P5	43	21%	98	21%	141	21%
P6	30	15%	81	18%	111	17%
Total	**203**	100%	**461**	100%	**664**	**100%**

Source: Headteacher and teacher instrument, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.5.2 AEP transitioned learners retained in formal schools – district data

The statistics in Table 30 show the percentage of AEP graduates who were retained in the formal school system based on district level data. Based on data from four out of the eight study districts, the number of transitioned AEP learners in the formal school system was 2,230. The results revealed a slightly higher number of girls transitioned into formal school (1,117 out of 2,230) than boys. Across the districts, Talensi had the highest percentage of AEP learners continuing in formal education (almost 90%), with the majority being female. The remaining districts had more boys than girls who remained in the formal school, notably in Gushiegu district.

Table 30: AEP transitioned learners retained in formal schools

District	Male		Female		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	60	5%	35	3%	95	4%
Karaga	6	1%	4	0%	10	0.4%
Talensi	910	82%	982	88%	1892	85%
Tolon	137	12%	96	9%	233	10%
Total	**1113**	100%	**1117**	100%	**2230**	**100%**

Source: District Education Office data, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.5.3   Transition challenges

AEP learners across the country are faced with several challenges. Interviews with District Education Officers revealed that most of the challenges with transition can be attributed to lack of learning materials. Due to poverty and low income, most parents are not able to provide learning materials that ensure a smooth transition of AEP learners into formal education. Providing basic school needs such as uniforms, books, bags, shoes and stationery is a herculean task for most parents of AEP learners. The following responses support this argument:

> *"Lack of basic school materials due to poverty on the part of their parents make it difficult for some AEP graduates to transition to the formal system ..."* (DEO, Talensi District, Upper East)

Distance to the nearest public school was also identified as a key challenge for transitioned learners. According to the District Education Office in Gushegu, a number of communities do not have primary and JHS schools and as a result, the children have to travel long distances to school. This situation discourages the children who tend to drop out of school. This was confirmed by the District Office in Karaga.

> *"Distance from the community to the school is a major barrier to education in this district, explaining why some AEP graduates fail to transition to the formal system..."* (DEO, Karaga District, Northern Region)

> *"Distance to JHS schools, Low parental income are other key constraints that limit the transition effectiveness of AEP graduates into the formal system"* (DEO, Yendi Metro, Northern Region)

Other social factors like early marriage and parents' unwillingness to send their children to school are part of the transition challenges. Some parents lack interest in education and do not allow their children to transition to formal school. This quote speaks to this:

> *"Some parents refuse to allow their wards to go to formal school after they have taken and completed AEP classes"* (DEO, Tolon, Northern)

3.5.4   Proportion of AEP learners completing primary school

Transitioning to and progressing in the formal school system are key determining variables of the effectiveness of the AEP programme, especially, progressing to higher levels (JHS). Table 32 summarizes the number of AEP learners who moved from primary to junior high in each district based on school-level data. On average, the Yendi district saw more than a fifth of AEP graduates (24 percent) move from primary to JHS (Table 31), the highest rate in the study

districts. Gushiegu had the lowest AEP learners transitioning to JHS. Generally, the data shows a significant proportion of pupils transitioning from primary to junior high.

Table 31: Number of AEP students who transitioned from Prim. to JHS

District	Transition from Prim. To JHS	
	Freq.	**%**
Karaga	43	17.3
Kumbungu	23	9.3
Mamprugu Moagduri	20	8.1
Saboba	27	10.9
Talensi	48	19.4
Tolon	27	10.9
Yendi	60	24.2
Total	**248**	100.0

Source: Headteacher and teacher instrument, OOSC mapping survey, 2022

3.6 Demand-side factors that influence OOSC situation

Demand-side factors comprising socio-cultural practices including early marriage, engaging children in household chores, especially for girls, deprivation and poverty levels etc. are key factors that contribute to the out of school phenomenon. This section discusses the demand side barriers that account for the OOSC context across the study areas disaggregated by age groupings.

3.6.1 Reasons for children not attending school by age cohort (4 to 11 years) – KG through Primary

Children drop out of school for numerous reasons. The findings highlight the reasons from the perspective of the out of school children and point to parents' financial difficulties including providing books, food, bags, uniform, and paying school fees. Consequently, parents withdraw their wards from school to help them with farm activities. Other respondents stated that parents are responsible for too many children and cannot support them all. In the case of large families, young girls (daughters) are withdrawn from school to take care of (babysit) their siblings from their immediate family or extended family. Also, some children drop out because no one in their family has been employed after schooling, so they drop out early in order to learn life skills (trade/income generating activities) to support the family. The girls often migrate to other regions and get involved in "*kayaye*" (carrying loads in markets). Also, children do not attend school because they are engaged in farming and cattle rearing. Other factors such as teacher attrition and poor infrastructure contribute to children not attending school. There are no schools in some communities, with children from these areas either walking or using bicycle to commute to the nearest community to attend school. This discourages some children from attending school, who eventually drop. The following quotes corroborate these findings:

"My father asked me to drop out of school and come and help him on the farm. My father complained that he didn't have enough money to take me to school" (FGD with Female OOSC, Mamprugu Moagduri District, North East Region)

"We could not buy books, bags uniform and food" (FGD with Male OOSC, Tolon District, Northern Region)

"My parents got divorced and my mother left the community. My father was unable to financially provide for me to enable me to continue with school, so I had to drop out. I

had to walk to Yendi each day for school without feeding money. The distance to Yendi for school was too far and they could not afford to pay school fees" (Female OOSC)

"We are a large family (many children) and our parents cannot send all of us boys to school. He had to choose between who should go to school and those who should support him on his maize farm. Lack of funds from my parents to cater for me in school caused me to drop out" (FGD with Female OOSC, Kumbungu District)

"Too many children. And I was just told to stop school and support farming activities. Also, our older siblings have not been employed after completing school." (Male OOSC)

"If you complete school there is the possibility of you not getting a job which is why some children prefer to start learning a hand job now rather than wasting their time in school." (Male OOSC)

"The teachers were not regular in school and some of us dropped out to start apprenticeship in tailoring and head dressing" (Male OOSC)

"Parents did not send us to school because there is no school in this community. We found it difficult to travel to the communities with schools especially during the rainy season" (Male OOSC)

"We were attending school at Zulogu and the teachers were not regular. Secondly, there are two streams on our way to the school so during rainy season we're not able to go so we stopped." (Female OOSC)

"We do not like going to school because we have no food to eat. Some of us also wants to learn hand work so that is why we are not going to school." (Male OOSC)

"I dropped out to take care of the other children (babysit). They are no other children in the house to perform house chores, so, I stay home to do that." (Female OOSC)

"Lack of funds to continue attending school. My parents don't have money for me to buy, uniform, food and books for school. The distance to school was too far for me to walk since the school was located in Yendi and I do not have a bicycle because my parents don't have money one so I had to drop out." (Female OOSC)

3.6.2 Reasons for non- attendance 12 to 15 years (junior high)
The key reasons contributing to non-attendance/drop-out at the JHS level are highlighted in this section. Findings from head teacher and teacher interviews emphasize and expand on these issues. The first key factor is the language barrier between teacher and students. This is especially the case when teachers who are posted to basic schools in the districts do not speak the local language. This makes it almost impossible for them to interact with the students, which – impacts on teaching and learning. It was also noted that young girls are sent to live with their extended family to help with farming activities including shea nut harvesting. The following quotes corroborate these findings:

"Additionally, teachers without the language skills to teach children in lower levels makes it hard for children to enjoy school" (Male Head Teacher, Badly EP School, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Girls stay with their aunts who engage them during farming season and shea nut season. Weaving and farming are the main challenge preventing the boys from attending school" (Male Teacher, Malzeri Islamic Primary, Yendi, Northern Region)

3.6.3   Special demand side factors restricting girls

Young girls in rural areas face a multitude of challenges which impact their school attendance. Some families face financial constraints and consequently, the young girls (daughters) seek to earn money to take care of their family. Girls drop out of school and migrate to Accra in search of economic opportunities. They work as *"kayaye"* as means of supporting their families and themselves. In other cases, girls learn some form of life skills/hand work (weaving) in order to earn a living. Some girls are also involved in illegal mining, which is dangerous. Another factor preventing girls from attending school is inadequate resources for personal hygiene during their monthly cycle. The following quotes validate this finding:

> *"Children are mostly eager to go to Accra for kayaye" (*Male Head teacher, Nwogu AME Zion Primary, Kumbungu, Northern Region)

> *"Most girls are engaged in household chores such as nursing their siblings, or involved in apprenticeship (mostly weaving), migrating to work as kayaye"* (Male Teacher, Kpilo/ Napagyili D/A Primary, Kumbungu, Northern Region)

> *"Housemaid services, teenage pregnancy, early marriages, poverty, illegal mining and migration are key factors that drive children out of school"* (Head Teacher, Kpatia Primary, Talensi, Upper East)

> *"Some girls skip school when they are experiencing their menstrual period because they do not have sanitary pads."* (Head Teacher, Kpatia Primary, Talensi, Upper East)

3.6.4   School level barriers

School level and socio-cultural barriers were identified as key factors which force students, especially girls, out of school. From the perspective of the head teachers and teachers, the school factors contributing to school drop-out incidence include lack of proper infrastructure, inadequate supply of furniture, and insufficient supplies of teaching and learning materials. In some cases, the classrooms available are not well-furnished to accommodate the large numbers of students, and the school buildings are dilapidated. In addition, at the lower-class levels, teachers are encouraged to use the local language when teaching primary levels; however, when teachers are transferred to these rural schools, the teachers are unable to communicate using the local dialect, making it difficult for the children to follow classroom conversations. Another barrier is the financial constraints, families' face. Parents cannot afford the basic necessities for their wards such as feeding, uniforms, and footwear among others. Some parents do not perceive education as important or essential, but rather they value earning a living by doing in income generating activities such as farming. Also, some families would like their wards to take over (inherit) the family trade. In assuming these roles as breadwinners, young girls especially are driven to engage in sexual activity which leads to teenage pregnancy and in some cases, these young girls are married off (early marriage). The following quotes validate these findings:

> *"There are inadequate textbooks and inadequate furniture in the school. There is also overcrowding in the classrooms with one teacher having to attend to over 60 students in a class"* (Male Teacher, Tindongo KG/ Primary, Talensi, Upper East)

> *"Poor school infrastructure. Lack of books to teach. Inadequate furniture*" (Male Teacher, Zakoli RC Primary, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Some teachers do not speak the language of the children so they find it difficult communicating when teaching the children in the lower levels" (Male Teacher, Badly EP Primary, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Some parents cannot afford feeding fee, uniforms, books, sandals" (Female Head teacher, Zugu D/A Primary, Kumbungu, Northern Region)

"Most parents do not have money to even cater for their families let alone buy books and pencils for their children. They also do not provide their children with feeding money so the children do not come to school when there is no school feeding program" (Head teacher Badly EP Primary, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Parents feel that it is more important for children to work on the farm and take over their farms than to spend their time in school" (Head teacher Badly EP Primary, Yendi, Northern Region)

"Early marriage, low perceived value of education, eagerness to make quick money are some drivers of out of school in this community"." (Male Head teacher Zugu Yipelgu Primary School, Kumbungu, Northern Region).

"The girls at the JHS level who are not in school are mostly due to teenage pregnancy. Some girls are also sent to their aunts in different communities without informing teachers so we do not know if they are enrolled in school there or not" (Male Head Teacher, Mlazeri Islamic Primary, Yendi, Northern).

3.6.5 Poverty and economic barriers (for households and for children directly)

Poverty and other socio-economic barriers affect the quality of life of a large section of rural populations. Their financial limitations diminish the education and well-being of their children. Parents are not able to afford their children's school fees and learning materials, including uniforms, footwear, and stationery. Some parents cannot afford to feed their children and thus rely on school feeding programme. Also, as the children advance in their education, they face the problem that there is no junior or senior high school in their community. When their parents can't afford a means of transportation, such as a bicycle, they drop out. Due to these economic challenges, children are forced to take up manual work to support their families. Instead of attending school, children engage in illegal mining or kayaye in urban areas to earn money The following quotes validate this finding:

"Some parents cannot afford feeding fee, uniforms, books, sandals" (Female Teacher, Kpilo/ Napa D/A Primary, Kumbungu, Northern Region)

"Their parents can't pay fees, and they feel like it takes long for the children to benefit from education and is waste of money to encourage the children to attend school regularly" (PTA/SMC, Tolon, Northern Region)

"Most parents do not have money to even cater for their families let alone buy books and pencils for their children. They also do not provide their children with feeding money so the children do not come to school when there is no school feeding program" (Badly EP Primary, Yendi, Northern Region)

Some parents cannot afford the fees especially as their children progress to higher levels. Even at the lower level some cannot afford uniforms for their children and books. Some of the children who attend JHS in the next community don't have bicycles to go and this affects them (SMC/PTA, Gushegu, Northern Region)

3.6.6 Contribution of AEPs to addressing the demand – side barriers to education

The introduction of AEPs in rural deprived communities has had a significant impact on the education of OOSC. AEPs provide the vulnerable in the community (OOSC) with easier access to education. These programmes have bridged the gap and in Ghana have played a significant role in transitioning children back into formal school, by focusing on literacy and numeracy they have paved the way for OOSC to rapidly gain the basic skills needed to integrate into P-2 or P-1. Also, in implementing these AEPs, education innovators have provided children with stationery, uniforms, shoes, and bags, and, in some cases bicycles to that they can commute longer distances. AEPs have also informed parents on the dangers of early marriage and teenage pregnancy as well as the importance of educating their children. Some AEPs have also provided girls with life skills, like soap making so they can cater financially for themselves. Further, some have introduced experts in certain fields to guide the children. The following quotes validate these findings:

"It has partially assisted some children to go back to classrooms. It has also supported some girls who are above 12 years to start a trade and earn a living for themselves" (Kpilo D/A Primary, Male facilitator, Kumbungu, Northern Region)

"Education innovators provide uniforms and books to such kids to motivate them to learn.
The school in conjunction with the innovator appoints a guidance and counselling expert to monitor and advise OOS girls who have been transitioned back into the formal system" (Female facilitator, Cheshegu D/A Primary, Kumbungu, Northern Region)

"The CBE program expands education access to vulnerable children and provides support to keep them in school after they have been transitioned into the formal system. Reduction in early marriage, child labor are some unintended benefits" (Afrikids STAGE project, Male facilitator, Kumbungu, Northern Region)

It has helped to improve education delivery children were given uniforms, bags, pencils and books which facilitated their movement into formal education. The program has made the community to understand the dangers of early marriage, teenage pregnancy and others. (Gbenjaga D/A Primary, Male facilitator, Karaga, Northern Region)

3.7   Supply-side factors that influence OOSC situation

The main supply factors that affect the OOSC situation include access to schools and issues related to teachers (availability, deployment and retention) and especially providing enough trained teachers in proportion to the student population. These supply factors are particularly crucial in deprived and hard to reach areas. This section highlights some of these key supply issues in the context of the study areas.

3.7.1   Access to schools

Access to basic education is key towards achieving the sustainable development goal on education. Table 32 presents the findings related to communities with primary schools and the distances between communities and nearest primary school across five out of the eight study districts. The data show most of the communities in Gushiegu were without schools --the average distance being 3 to 5 km between the schools and the communities. Similarly, about fifty communities in Karaga, Talensi, Tolon and Yendi were without schools-- the nearest primary schools being about 3 to 5 km away.

Analysis of the interactions with District Education Officers revealed unequal access across the study areas. Some communities had no primary school, and the walking distance to the nearest one was a challenge. Even in the communities that had access to schools, the schools lacked the needed infrastructure, had insufficient numbers of teachers, and suffered from high levels of teacher absenteeism. The following quotes validate this finding:

> *"Primary education faces a lot of challenges including lack of infrastructure, distance from the community to the nearest primary school and teacher absenteeism"* (**Karaga District Education Office**)

> *"Most of the communities have primary schools but these schools are less equipped with the needed infrastructure and resources for effective teaching and learning"* (**Talensi District Education Office**)

> *"Satisfactory, most communities have schools. Only infrastructure is in deficit in some schools"* (**Tolon District Education Office**)

> *"The state of primary education in the district is not so good in terms of both infrastructure and teaching and learning"* (**Gushiegu Municipal Education Office**)

> *"Below average in terms of infrastructure and enrollment levels. Teacher deployment is now improving"* (**Yendi Metro Education Office**)

Table 32: Average No. of communities, primary schools & distance to nearest school

District Education Office	No. of communities in the district	Number of communities with primary schools	Average distance to the nearest prim. school in communities without schools
Gushegu	250 and beyond	50 to 100	Between 3-5km
Karaga	150 to 250	50 to 100	Between 3-5km
Talensi	50 to 100	50 to 100	Above 5km
Tolon	50 to 100	50 to 100	Less than 3km
Yendi	250 and beyond	150 to 250	Above 5km

Source: KIIs with District Education Officers, out of school mapping, 2022

3.7.2 Teacher availability - primary level

Table 33 presents the findings relating to teacher availability at the primary level across the eight study districts. According to the data, teacher unavailability was more pronounced in some districts than in others. In some instances, one teacher was responsible for more than one class, and this was evident across Karaga, Mamprugu Moagduri, Saboba, Karaga, Tolon and Yendi. Further, there were fewer than five pre-school teachers in Saboba, Gushiegu, and Mamprugu Moagduri. In all, Kumbungu, Talensi, and Yendi had more teachers compared to the other study districts.

Table 33: Availability of teachers

District	Class levels teachers handle	Freq.	%
Gushegu	Pre School	2	1%
	Lower primary	9	3%
	Upper primary	9	3%
Karaga	No assigned class/subject teaching	4	1.3%
	Lower primary	9	3%
	Lower and Upper primary	1	0.3%
	Upper primary	5	2%
Kumbungu	Pre School	16	5%
	Lower primary	15	5%
	Upper primary	22	8%
Mamprugu Moagduri	Pre School	3	1.3%
	Pre School and Lower primary	1	0.3%
	Lower primary	5	2%
	Lower and Upper primary	2	1%
	Upper primary	10	3%
Saboba	Pre School	3	1%
	Pre School and Lower primary	1	0.3%
	Lower primary	11	4%
	Lower and Upper primary	1	0.3%
	Upper primary	18	6%
Talensi	Pre School	12	4%
	Lower primary	21	7%
	Upper primary	18	6%
Tolon	Pre School	9	3%
	Lower primary	15	5%
	Lower and Upper primary	1	0.3%
	Upper primary	21	7%
Yendi	Pre School	9	3%
	Lower primary	18	6%
	Lower and Upper primary	1	0.3%
	Upper primary	19	7%
Total		**291**	**100%**

Source: School checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.7.3 Distance to primary school

Table 34 provides data on the average distance to the nearest primary school by foot. From the perspective of the headteachers and teachers, only three schools are within one-hour walking distance from catchment communities. It was observed that a few primary schools (two) were located more than an hour away from their served communities they served, and this could have implications for school attendance and could put current students at risk of dropping. Overall, over 50% of primary schools were within a ten-minute walk of the communities with a further third (37%) within a 30-minute walk.

Table 34: Walking distance to the nearest primary school

Walking distance to the nearest Primary school	Frequency	%
1 hour	3	6%
10 min	26	53%
30 min	18	37%
Beyond 1 hour	2	4%
Total	49	100%

Source: KII with headteachers and teachers, out of school mapping, 2022

3.7.4   Distance to junior high school

At the JHS level (Table 35), the majority of schools were located within a 30-minute walking distance of the various catchment communities. Around ten schools were within a ten-minute walk. While only few primary schools (4%) were found to be more than an hour from the various settlements, a significant percentage (14%) of junior high schools were located more than an hour's walk from the communities.

Table 35: Walking distance to the nearest JHS

Walking distance to the nearest Junior High School	Frequency	%
1 hour	7	14%
10 min	10	20%
30 min	25	51%
Beyond 1 hour	7	14%
Total	49	100%

Source: KII with headteachers and teachers, out of school mapping, 2022

3.7.5   Condition of furniture by school type

Table 36 provides the results on the condition of furniture in various schools disaggregated by school type. Overall, the majority of schools (74%) lacked adequate furniture, with a higher proportion of this number being District Assembly owned schools. Only four out of the forty-nine schools had adequate furniture, and these were both mission and DA schools.

Table 36: Condition of furniture by school type

Type of school	Condition of furniture	Frequency	%
DA	Adequate	2	4%
	Inadequate	26	55%
	None	6	13%
Local A	Inadequate	6	13%
	None	1	2%
Mission School	Adequate	2	4%
	Inadequate	3	6%
RC	Inadequate	1	2%
Total		47	100%

Source: School checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

3.7.6 Educational challenges relating to supply

The supply-related challenges identified as influencing OOSC comprised the disproportionate distribution of schools within districts, as evidenced by the distance between schools and communities. When asked about educational issues associated with the supply, district officers expressed the following perspectives:

> *"The distance from their community to the nearest JHS. If the distance is far, it may affect the transition process"* (District Education Officer, Talensi District, Northern Region)

> *"Long distance and Poverty are key barriers to education access"* (District Planning Officer, Mamprugu Moagduri District, North East Region)

3.7.7 How AEPs/GFMs have contributed to addressing the supply-side barriers to education

Evidence from the interactions with key stakeholders show that AEPs have had significant impact in reducing the out of school situation across the beneficiary communities. According to the CBE facilitator interviews, the Complementary Basic Education programme (CBE) has helped in reducing supply challenges, influencing OOSC attendance by counselling students, and providing school materials and scholarships. Other CBE facilitators reported that while the CBE programme helped provide some supply services, such as follow-up on transitioning children, it did not provide any physical infrastructure. Nonetheless, some facilitators stated that some NGOs had supplied physical infrastructure, such as changing rooms in the formal school. While the CBE addressed some supply concerns, it was also reported that the programme offered guidance to parents on how to take care of their children's education in order to alleviate the education-related bottlenecks. The following quotes speak to this:

> *"Yes, they gave them, books uniforms and school bags to help them stay in the schools"* (Male AEP Facilitator, AFRIKIDS Ghana, Tolon District, Northern Region)

> *"They provide information, exercise books, pencil and pens, bags, to help students stay in the school's"* (Male Facilitator, Tolon District, Northern Region)

> *"Some girls focused interventions supply sanitary pads, girl-based scholarships, etc. to curb absenteeism among female students"* (Male AEP Facilitator, AFRIKIDS Ghana, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

> *"NGOs like Afrikids STAGE, CRS etc. provide potable water, changing rooms for girls in school"* (Female AEP Facilitator, Mamprugu Moagduri, North East Region)

> *"CBE has a package for them i.e., bags, books, uniforms among others which encourage them to stay in school for more of those things"* (Male AEP Facilitator, Gushiegu District, Northern Region)

The interviews with the District Education Officers revealed that the AEP/Girls Focused Programme had increased enrolment levels of children who had never been to school or had dropped out. Additionally, they indicated that the programme supplied the school with numerous materials - books, clothes, and sandals etc. The following quotes highlight their responses:

> *"AEPs have increased enrolment and improved retention of OOSC in the regular system"* (Karaga District Education Office, Northern Region)

"The introduction of AEP has brought back the children who were out of school. It has improved retention of children in school. A lot of the children were able to transition to the formal education system" (Talensi District Education Office, Upper East Region)

" The AE programme has enhanced the understanding of parents about the relevance of education instilling in them the need to take education of their children seriously, but has also reduced dropout rates. Other AE programmes have focused on helping OOSC to acquire livelihoods skills to help them earn a living and support families. Assisted in Basic schools, uniforms, books, sandals" " (Tolon District Education Office, Northern Region)

"Since AEP started in this community, it has increased enrolment and enhanced access to education and improved student participation rates" (Gushiegu Municipal Education Office, Northern Region)

"We have seen that enrolment of OOSC has increased following the introduction of AEP programmes and transition of these children into the formal system has significantly improved" (Yendi Metro Education Office, Northern Region)

3.8 Presence and impact of AEP programming in the districts/communities – in addressing the issue of OOSC

3.8.1 Scale, enrolment and completion levels of AEPs

Over all, the three Education Innovators (*Afrikids, GILLBT, and School for Life CBE programmes),* enrolled a total of 90,984, representing 31.4% out of the 290,037 OOSC in the districts of Talensi, Nabdam, Bongo, Bawku, Pusiga, Karaga, Gushiegu, Saboba, Yendi, Central Gonja, Mion, Sagnarigu, Savelugu, Wa West, Mamprugu Moagduri, Tolon, Kumbungu and Bunkpurugu Nansuan in the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Savanna and the North East regions. Out of these, the three EIs successfully transitioned 80,211 (81.2%) of their total enrolment. AfriKids transitioned 15,929 (91.6%) of their total enrolment of 16,657 into the formal school, with most learners integrated into Primary 3 between 2013 and 2021. AfriKids again took part in the STAGE programme by enrolling 4,011 girls in the formal track and transitioned 3,142 (78.3%) into the formal school system. The non-formal track had an enrolment of 533 with 513 (96.2%) of the learners completing training. School for Life also enrolled a total of 60,344 and transitioned a total of 51,819 (85.9%) between 2010 and 2018. GILLBT transitioned 12,463 (89.1%) out of a total enrolment of 13,983.

3.8.1.1 Performance of AfriKids CBE programme
The data in Table 37 shows about 16,657 children were enrolled in the Afrikids programme during Cycles 1–5. Of this, the female population was (39%). Males outnumbered females (58%) in Cycle 1, but the female population rose in subsequent cycles. In Cycle 5, the gender difference became more noticeable, with females becoming the majority (59%). Again, the statistics indicated that not all children enrolled were able to transition. At the program's beginning, around 77% of enrolled children were able to transition, with the majority being boys (51%). Around 96% of students were able to enter the formal school system, the greatest rate among the three innovators.

Table 37: Performance of AfriKids CBE programme

Education Innovator	CBE Cycle	Enrolment				Total	Transition				Percentage Transitioned	
		Boys	%	Girls	%		Boys	%	Girls	%		%
AfriKids	1	822	58%	594	42%	1416	552	51%	539	49%	1091	77%
	2	1083	46%	1293	54%	2376	994	45%	1208	55%	2202	93%
	3	2739	49%	2876	51%	5615	2699	49%	2819	51%	5518	98%
	4	2273	46%	2627	54%	4900	2234	46%	2587	54%	4821	98%
	5	965	41%	1385	59%	2350	945	41%	1352	59%	2297	98%
Grand Total		**7,882**	47%	**8,775**	53%	**16,657**	**7,424**	47%	**8,505**	53%	**15,929**	96%

Source: Afrikids Annual Report, 2020

3.8.1.2 Performance of GILLBT CBE programme

Analysis of the GILLBT-managed CBE programme shows a higher proportion of females across all the cycles except for Cycle 4, where there were more males compared to females. Conversely, there was an equal representation of boys and girls in Cycle 3. In comparison to transition data, the majority of cycles had an equal number of children transitioning from CBE to formal education. As shown in Table 38, approximately 50% of boys and girls transitioned throughout cycles 3,4,5. At the end of Cycle 5, there was a transition rate of 100%. Cycle 1 had the smallest proportion of transitioned pupils (85%).

Table 38: Performance of GILLBT CBE programme

Education Innovator	CBE Cycle	Enrolment				Total	Transition				Percentage Transitioned	
		Boys	%	Girls	%		Boys	%	Girls	%	No.	%
GILLBT	1	745	45%	920	55%	1665	616	43%	804	57%	1420	85%
	2	3200	49%	3366	51%	6566	2907	49%	3018	51%	5925	90%
	3	2000	50%	2008	50%	4008	1750	50%	1722	50%	3472	87%
	4	530	52%	487	48%	1017	460	50%	459	50%	919	90%
	5	366	50%	361	50%	727	366	50%	361	50%	727	100%
Grand Total		**6,841**	49%	**7,142**	51%	**13,983**	**6,099**	49%	**6,364**	51%	**12,463**	89%

Source: GILLBT Data, 2021

3.8.1.3 Performance School for Life CBE programme

In all, the SfL programme enrolled a total of 60,344 children comprising a slightly higher number of boys (30,774) compared to girls (29,570). Except in Cycles 4 and 5, female enrolment was generally low across the other cycles. On the other hand, the transition rate was modest (86%) in comparison to Afrikids (96%). Girls' transition rates were also low over the first three cycles of the CBE program. Cycle 2 had a low transition rate in comparison to other cycles. The majority of transitions occurred during Cycle 5 (Table 39).

Table 39: Performance School for Life CBE programme

Education Innovator	CBE Cycle	Enrolment				Total	Transition				Percentage Transitioned	
		Boys	%	Girls	%		Boys	%	Girls	%		%
SfL	**2010**	**5207**	52%	**4793**	48%	**10000**	**4160**	51%	**3978**	49%	8138	81%
	1	5201	52%	4799	48%	10000	5201	55%	4202	45%	9403	94%
	2	6552	53%	5738	47%	12290	5128	53%	4636	47%	9764	79%
	3	6422	51%	6282	49%	12704	5772	51%	5448	49%	11220	88%
	4	5518	49%	5832	51%	11350	4601	49%	4812	51%	9413	83%
	5	1874	47%	2126	53%	4000	1820	47%	2061	53%	3881	97%
Grand Total		**30,774**	51%	**29,570**	49%	**60,344**	**26,682**	51%	**25,137**	49%	**51,819**	86%

Source: School for Life Data, 2021

3.8.2 Achievements and impact of AEP Programming

In addressing the out of school situation in rural and deprived communities, the government and civic actors implemented Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) to help school drop-outs get back into the formal school system or acquire skills such as catering, sewing and hairdressing. The AfC team conducted interviews to ascertain the intended and unintended impacts of AEPs. The SMCs/PTA, headteachers and teachers as well as some out of school children shared some vital information on the influence of AEPs in their communities.

3.8.2.1 Intended impact (transition to formal school)

The SMC/PTA FGDs revealed that the communities in the project area benefitted greatly from the AEPs implemented by organizations such as Afrikids, School for Life and World Education. The SMCs/PTA affirmed that the AEPs brought about change in their communities by developing the literacy skills of most of the out of school children, and as a result, they became adept at reading and writing. The majority of the AEP learners transitioned to formal school, and parents were happy with the AEP practice of teaching in teaching the local language. They attested that this helped the children to understand better. Voices of some of the parents and AEP students are highlighted below:

"There was a great impact because it made them acquire the skills of reading and writing and so when they were transitioned to formal school, they had things easy for them" (SMC/PTA member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

"It has helped me to read and write and speak English" (OOSC)

"They made me motivated to learn to read and write. I felt comfortable to learn and asking questions because of the use of local language." (FGD with OOSC, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

"It made it easy for most of those who were not enrolled in the formal school to transition into the regular education system" (SMC, Kumbungu, Northern)

'Yes, it has improved on the reading ability of the children and through the programme, some of the pupils are provided with free uniform, books and bags" (Headteacher, Nwogu AME Zion Prim. School, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

"The children picked up quickly as they were taught in the local language and were able to perform well when they transitioned" (SMC/PTA member, Yendi District, Northern Region)

"It has helped them to be enrolled in the normal school. It has helped the children by supplying them reading and writing material. It has reduced the burden on parents by proving uniforms, bags and sandals for girls. It has provided girls with bicycle for moving from home to the school" (SMC/PTA member, Saboba District, Northern Region)

The District Education Office in Talensi in the Upper East Region also confirmed the positive impact of AEPs stating that "the AEP has paved the way for those children who were out of school to be enrolled. It has improved retention of children in school. A lot of the children were able to transition to the formal education system."

AEPs have also served as a means of sensitizing communities on the benefits of education and thus, increased access to it. Through this, many communities began to see the importance of educating their children and when AEP classes ended, did not hesitate to enrol them in formal school. This created a substantial increase in school enrolment in almost all the intervention communities. The following quotes serve as a confirmation to the impact of AEPs:

"The program has increased access to education. Children who either dropped out of school or were not attending school got the opportunity to attend school" (SMC/PTA member, Saboba District, Northern Region)

"it increased enrolment, access to education and school participation" (District Education Office, Gushegu District, Northern Region)

"The CBE program has increased access for girls more than boys and thereby, tilting the gender gap in favour of girls" (Chief/Elder, Saboba District, Northern Region)

"Improved awareness for enrolment but drop out after transition. More Children have been back to school" (SMC/PTA, Kumbungu District, Northern Region).

Not only have AEPs had an impact on enrolment rate in their communities, they have helped to remedy the lack of trained teachers in the communities and district by increasing the number of community volunteers and pupil teachers. This was confirmed by the officer from the District Education Office in Karaga who said "It helps facilitators to embrace teaching as a profession".

3.8.2.2 Unintended impact (reduction in child marriage, child labour etc.).
Accelerated Education Programmes have achieved some unintended successes over the years. Interactions with SMCs/PTAs show that the implementation of AEPs have to a large extent reduced the incidence of rural-urban migration. The rate at which children used to migrate down south to engage in kayaye and other economic activities have slowed. Parents confirmed this in the quotes below:

"It has reduced rural urban migration and enlightened parents to refrain from the practice of preferring a boy to a girl child in deciding which child to enrol in school" (SMC, Karaga, Northern)

"Going to the city to work has reduced and child fosterage has also minimized" (SMC, Kumbungu, Northern)

"The program has helped the community to realise the dangers of streetism, rural urban migration and others" (PTA, Karaga, Northern)

Another benefit of the implementation of AEPs is the reduction in child labour. Prior to the implementation of some of the AEPs by Afrikids, School for Life and World Education, the problem of child labour was significant. Parents engaged their children in all manner of money-making ventures, which kept the children out of school. After the implementation of AEPs and the continuous sensitization of communities, child labour has diminished. The quotes below are voices of parents, suggesting that AEPs have aided in minimizing child labour in communities.

"The programme engages most of the out of school children so it helped to reduce child labour" (SMC, Talensi, Upper East)

"Due to the project, fewer children are now deployed on the farm to provide labour support" (PTA, Yendi, Northern)

"The programme engages children most of the day and thereby, reducing child labour at home (FGD with SMC/PTA, Yendi, Northern Region)
"It has also enlightened the children by sharpening their numeracy and literacy skills and so, people can no longer take advantage of them. It has also reduced child marriage and teenage pregnancy…" (FGD with SMC/PTA, Tolon, Northern).

Regarding children with disabilities, the team tried to ascertain the impact of AEPs on improving their education and/or ensuring social inclusion. Responses from the SMC/PTA showed that children with disabilities in some communities benefitted from AEPs while those in other communities did not. The majority of the SMCs/PTAs did not have much information on the subject of social inclusion. Responses from about 40% of the SMCs/PTAs showed that some AEPs offered children with special needs the opportunity to learn with other children rather than being made to stay at home. An SMC/PTC member from Karaga District in the Northern Region said:

"The impact of the programme has helped the disabled to see themselves as abled people because they are all taught and given the same task as abled boys and girls."

Another SMC/PTA member from Kumbungu District in the Northern Region confirmed this by his statement "*Children with some forms of disability were enrolled and respected just like others*". Another SMC/PTA member from Saboba in the Northern Region shared that *"children with disability feel accepted in the school and society. They mingle and play with other children without feeling shy."*

Other SMC/PTAs were, however, of the view that social inclusion was not considered and children with special needs did not benefit much from the implementation of AEPs in their communities. For example, an SMC/PTA member from Kumbungu District in the Northern Region said that *"the programme has not covered disability children"*. Another SMC/PTA member from Yendi District in the Northern Region said, *"The project did not really focus on children with disabilities".*

Some OOSC, however, said that they have not benefitted from AEPs partly because they did not complete or attend at all. Others also said they were unaware of the impact of AEPs in their communities. The SMCs/PTAs also revealed that some of the learners refused to transition to formal school and decided to relocate to the city to make money. Interviews with the

headteachers and teachers showed that over 60% of the communities had less than 10 AEP/CBE students transitioning to formal school:

"We have not benefited from such intervention" (FGD with OOSC, Yendi District, Northern Region)

"Most of us did not complete the CBE/AEP" (FGD with OOSC, Mamprugu Moagduri, District, North East Region)

""It has partially assisted some children to transition to the formal system, and helped others to learn a trade. But some children, after earning a livelihood following the skill training, use the proceeds to travel out of the community to major towns in search of greener pastures" (SMC, Kumbungu, Northern)

3.9 Presence and impact of Girls Focused Programmes:

This section provides evidence relating to the presence and impact of girls focused programming in the districts/communities visited meant to promote girls' participation in and reduce the dropout risk factors for girls.

3.9.1 Scale and enrollment of GFPs

The out of school mapping exercise assessed the effectiveness of girls-focused programmes in each district. The data in Table 40 and 41 are presented in relation to their targets, achievements, and rates of transition or completion. The data shows that about a ninth of children enrolled in the AfriKids Stage program were reintroduced to the formal education system (88%). The data further shows that, the programme met 99% of its targets. Four out of five STAGE graduates were able to successfully move into the formal education system. Further, it was found that the programme exceeded its informal cohort targets, with coverage of 103%. while around 96% of participants successfully *completed* the informal training. Also of note, the results indicated that a UNICEF initiative enrolled about 197 females who were already in the formal education in Saboba.

Table 40: Enrolment levels for Girls focused programmes

| Girls Focused Program	Target		Achieved		Transitioned/completed	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Formal (Afrikids)	4050	89%	4011	88%	3142	86%
Informal (Afrikids)	520	11%	533	12%	513	14%
Formal (UNICEF Prog. Saboba)[14]			197	100%	197	100%
Total	**4570**	**100%**	**4741**	**100%**	**3852**	**100%**

Source: District level data, Saboba, 2022

Further, the data also included the number of females enrolled in the Afrikids STAGE programme by age group. The data in Figure 3, the age group for the formal school training

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[14] Empowering Adolescent Girls, Embracing Gender Equality, Advancing Girls' Lower Secondary Education in Ghana (2019-2022)

program was between 6 and 14 years, whereas the informal cohort was between 15 and 17 years. The data shows that enrolment was slightly higher among children aged 12 to 14 years than it was among children aged 6 to 11.

Figure 3: Girls Focus Program stage categorized by age
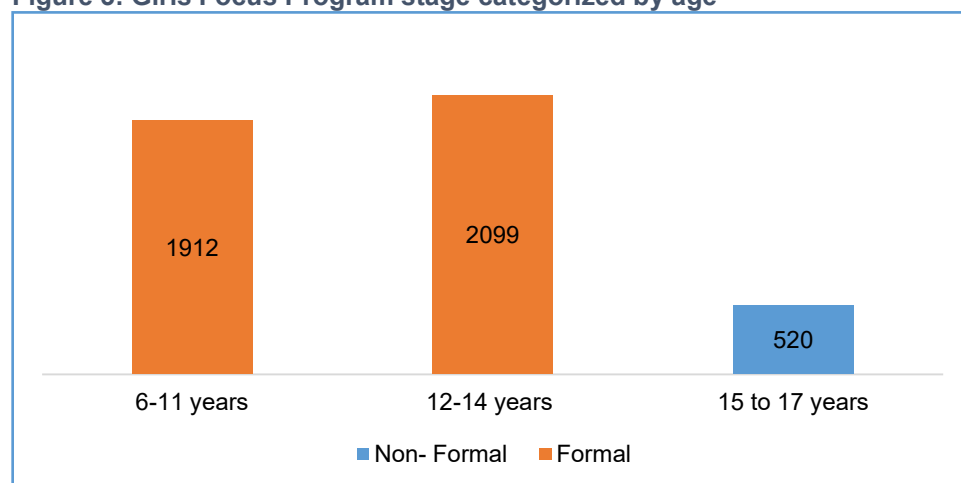
Source: District level data, 2022

Table 41 summarizes the findings from the out of school mapping research across the various grade levels of STAGE graduates. Table 41 shows that, about a third (29.7%) of STAGE graduates were placed in P-3 and most students who transitioned to P-3 were between the ages of 6 and 11. Although some pupils were put in junior high school, the numbers were insignificant; 4.6 percent were placed in JHS 1 and 0.4% in JHS 2. The informal track provided apprenticeship training for the youth aged 15 to 17 years on the STAGE project.

Table 41: Transition from STAGE to formal school

STAGE	6-11 years		12-14 years		15-17 years		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
P3	560	39.4%	526	30.5%	-	-	1086	29.7%
P4	404	28.5%	484	28.1%	-	-	888	24.3%
P5	229	16.1%	269	15.6%	-	-	498	13.6%
P6	203	14.3%	357	20.7%	-	-	560	15.3%
JHS 1	24	1.7%	79	4.6%	-	-	103	2.8%
JHS2	-	-	7	0.4%	-	-	7	0.2%
Apprenticeship	-	-	-	-	513	100%	513	14%
Total	1420	100%	1722	100%	513	14%	3655	100%

Source: Programme data, STAGE Project, 2022

3.9.2 Impact/achievements

The introduction of AEs and Girls Focused Programmes (GFPs) helped to tackle a lot of education access constraints faced by girls in the rural and deprived societies. Prior to the introduction of GFPs, the incidence of child marriage was on the rise because parents did not value academic education for a female and believed that her proper place was in the home, where she was raised to serve her future husband. Following the implementation of Afrikids' STAGE Project, which targeted out of school girls, there has been a significant change in the

lives of girls in these communities. The STAGE project sought enable out of school children, particularly girls who had dropped out of school, to go back into the formal education system or acquire a skill in catering, dressmaking, soap making, beadmaking or hairdressing.

Not only has the STAGE project helped girls to get appropriate education, it has also empowered them to know their rights and has enlightened parents on the importance of girl-child education. Some SMCs/PTAs confirmed that activities of Girls Focused Programmes have been visible and led to a significant increase in the number of girls who have enrolled in school, bridged the gap between boys and girls in terms of education, and reduced the incidence of child marriage. These are the voices of some parents concerning the presence and impact of Girls Focused Programmes:

"… It has reduced early marriage and teenage pregnancy" (SMC Member, Gushegu District, Northern Region)

"…It has helped the children to learn about the dangers of teenage pregnancy and early marriages" (PTA Member, Karaga District, Northern Region)

"A lot girls transitioned from the programme to the formal system and that helped to prevent child marriages" (SMC/PTA member, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

"…A lot of female learners have been transitioned into formal school under this programme" (Chief/Elder, Saboba District, Northern Region)

"The programme made it possible for many girls to transition into the formal education system" (SMC/PTA, Talensi District, Upper East Region)

"The CBE programme reached more girls than boys and so, the gender gap in education access has significantly reduced" (SMC/PTA, Kumbungu District, Northern Region)

4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The out of school mapping set out to gather data on the prevalence of the out of school situation across selected districts, communities and households in Ghana and to assess the effectiveness of education innovations and the potential for adaptability to different contexts. Based on the key findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:

4.1.1 Background context:

▪ **District distribution and context**

The out of school mapping was conducted across eight districts – six districts in the northern region and one district each in the Upper East and North East regions. The selection of the districts was based on the presence of at least one of the three innovations – School for Life (SfL), GILLBT and Afrikids. The analysis shows about a third of the communities (33%) enumerated in the OOSC mapping are in extremely deprived and hard-to-reach communities. Higher proportions of the extremely deprived community category were found in the Mamprugu Moagduri district (9%) and the Yendi district (7%).

- **Teacher availability and teacher gaps by district and sex**

One of the major challenges facing effective teaching and learning in Ghana is the non-availability of qualified teachers, especially in remote and hard to reach areas. The findings show about 90% of the teachers across all levels are professionally trained with only 30% of this number being female teachers. Further, males constitute a higher proportion of the untrained teacher population (73%) with females accounting for the remaining 27%. The pupil teacher ratio (PTR) is higher at KG level compared to the other levels. This implies there is a lower number of professional teachers at the KG level than required; with the situation especially evident in the Saboba district where the PTR at the primary level is 77:1. A similar trend is observed in relation to the pupil trained teacher ratio (PTTR) where the ratio is higher at the KG level compared to the other levels, with the Saboba district again having the highest ratio at 87:1. This high PPTR could result in overcrowding and diminish the quality of teaching and learning.

- **Major economic activities across study areas**

The results show that mixed farming is the most dominant economic activity across all groups, with men accounting for the highest percentage (85%). Additionally, over two-thirds (74%) of the youth and 45% of women were also engaged in farming. An appreciable number of women (23%) were also doing petty trading (selling of foodstuffs, running provision shops, selling cooked food etc.) with a few of the women (19%) engaging in shea butter processing. Illegal mining (galamsey) was also identified as a common activity undertaken by men and youth, though the number of individuals involved were quite few and were mostly from the Mamprugu Moagduri, Tolon and Talensi districts. Other minor economic activities included weaving, commercial motor-bike operations (Okada business), carpentry, masonry and so forth.

- **Educational qualification of headteachers by district**

In all, 47 headteachers were interviewed during the OOSC mapping exercise. The findings reveal that a higher proportion of the headteachers had first degrees (79%) in education related courses including educational management, educational planning and so forth, with a further 21% of the headteachers having a Diploma in Basic Education which is now the basic requirement to qualify to teach as a professional in Ghanaian schools. Talensi district has the highest number of headteachers with first degree while Karaga district has the least. Further, the Karaga, Saboba and Talensi districts had the highest proportion of headteachers having the Diploma in Basic Education qualification. The results show that teachers are improving their qualification levels by acquiring higher degrees beyond the basic qualification.

- **Qualification of teachers by district**

About two-thirds (67%) of the teachers possess the basic teaching qualification (Diploma in Basic Education) while 24% of them have first degrees mostly in education related courses. The other category comprises National Service Personnel, teachers placed on the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), City and Guild, and those with O' Level qualifications. This group accounted for nine percent of the entire teacher population. The result shows about 90% of the teachers across the sampled districts are trained, and this is in sync with the data provided by the district education offices across the sampled districts.

- **Educational level of household heads**

The educational level of parents (household heads) is known to have a significant association with access to education of children within a given household (Ardila, A. et al, 2005). The mapping survey shows about 93% of household heads are male - which slightly deviates from the national average of about 78%. Further, over two-thirds of household heads (80.7%) have

'no education,' which could have implications for the education of their children. Among the female-headed households, over ninety percent (91.2%) had no form of formal education, indicating poor educational levels among females compared to males. Further, the evidence shows that no female household head had education beyond the secondary school level.

- **Household size**

The household size constitutes the number of people within a typical household, and this gives an idea of how small or large a household is. The finding pegs average household size at 6.7 persons which is about two times larger than the national average of 3.6. Further, most of the households (51.3%) consist of between 6 to 10 people, with a further 39% consisting of five or less people within a typical household. A few of the households (9%) had 10 members or more; and these were generally polygamous households with more than one wife.

4.1.2 Out of school incidence

The out of school numbers are estimated using the proportion of those (children) who have *'never attended'* and those who *'attended in the past'* (dropped out).

- **General statistics on identified children**

In all, about 3,536 children aged 0 to 17 *(age of interest for the study)* were included across the study communities/households. The identified children were further grouped (categorized) into different age groups using the UNICEF Framework on OOSC. Of the 3, 536 children who were studied, those 'currently and fully in school' are1,836, those who are 'sometimes in school' are 88, those who 'dropped out of school' are 304 and those who have 'never attended' formal school are 1,308. The 'never attended' population constitutes the highest proportion of the studied children and provides the needed evidence to inform targeted implementation of AEP interventions

- **Prevalence of OOSC by age groups**

The out of school population is estimated using the 'never attended' and 'attended in the past (dropped out)' population with a focus on the population aged 4 to 17. The findings show that the out of school population aged 4 to 17 (KG – SHS) stood at **983**. Further excluding the 4 to 5 years (KG) population brings the out of school population to **849** children. The out of school population is predominantly among children aged 6 to 11 years (primary level) with this category accounting for almost half (49%) of the out of school population. This shows a lot of the children in the sampled districts are within the primary school going age but are not in school. The number of children age 4 to 5 (KG) in the 'never attended' category is also substantial (132). This may imply that a number of the children either do not go through the KG system or do not have access to KG schooling. In relation to drop-outs, the numbers are higher among children aged 15 to17, indicating more dropouts occur at the SHS level.

- **Out of school population by sex**

The evidence shows the presence of more out of school children among the male population (55%) compared to the female population (45%). This result is in sync with the national-level evidence from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), which shows that there are more males out of school compared to females in Ghana. Further, the 'drop out' population across both males and females is twice as high as the 'never attended' population, implying higher number of children within the school going age are actually out of school.

▪ **Out of school numbers by level of deprivation**

The study also examined the out of school context in relation to the level of deprivation of the study areas. The findings show there are slightly more out of school children in the rural deprived communities (525) than in the extremely deprived communities (446). This is the case because more rural deprived communities and households than extremely deprived communities are included in the study sample. However, the evidence points to the there are more children aged 4-17 in extremely deprived communities/households who have 'never attended' school (50.3%) than those in rural deprived communities (49.7%). But in terms of the "dropped out" category, the reverse is the case, with rural deprived communities recording 63.7%.

▪ **Prevalence of OOSC population by intervention status and district**

The data reveals that in intervention communities, there are as many children who have dropped out of school as there are children who have never attended school. In comparison to non-intervention areas, there are a higher number of dropouts in intervention areas. However, the never-attended rate was also greater in non-intervention areas (44.8%). The findings further showed that the majority of children (632), regardless of intervention type, had never attended school. The district level analysis follows a similar pattern. The evidence indicates that Karaga and Saboba districts have a higher rate of out-of-school children (19% each). According to data, more children who had never attended school were in the two districts (82% and 75% respectively). Again, it was established that Talensi and Saboba had significantly higher dropout rates than the other districts (20% and 15%, respectively). Finally, the data shows that, in Talensi, children in the dropped-out category were more than those in the children in the never attended population.

4.1.3 Drop-out situation/context

▪ **Drop-out numbers by class level and sex**

The findings relating to drop out by sex show that most incidences of dropouts occurred at the primary level (Primary 1 to 6) with the highest drop-out number occurring at P-2 (17%). The data further shows the out of school population decreased by higher levels across the junior high schools. The gender dynamics show the drop-out numbers among the male population (64.3%) is twice that of the female population (35.7%), and this is also true across both the primary and JHS levels.

▪ **Drop-out numbers by level of deprivation**

The evidence on the drop-out numbers by level of deprivation shows there are more children who dropped out of school in rural deprived communities than in extremely deprived regions, contrary to what was expected. This is, perhaps, explained by the higher number of rural deprived communities and households in the sample than in the extremely deprived areas. It is further observed that most of dropout cases occurred at the primary level, specifically at Primary one and two. At the JHS three level, there were no dropout cases in the extremely deprived communities. On the other hand, majority of dropouts in rural deprived communities decrease as children progress to higher grade levels.

▪ **Factors accounting for the incidence of school drop-out by gender**

Several potential drivers of the drop-out numbers are highlighted here, based on perspectives elicited from household heads and primary caregivers. These factors comprise social, financial, cultural and attitudinal constraints. The data show that the key reason for drop-out is attitudinal *('children not liking school'),* which account for more than half of the responses (52%). This may be attributable to several reasons including parental inaction, unconducive school environment, poor academic performance and so forth, which gradually dampen the interest of students in

schooling causing them to drop out. This reason is a more prominent factor for male drop-out (62) than for female drop out (39). The other key reasons include 'inability to meet school expenses' (53), limited importance attached to schooling (27), poor academic performance (23), need to engage children in household chores (17), and so forth.

4.1.4   Children at risk of dropping out:

The 'at risk of dropping' population was estimated using three key variables: overage for grade level, frequency of repetition, and frequency of school attendance.

▪   **At risk of dropping population – using overage at grade level**

The findings in relation to the 'at risk of dropping out' using the 'overage for grade' variable show that out of the 1,924 children currently in school, 592 are at risk of dropping because they are overage for their class level. At age 12, children are expected to be at the junior high level; however, about 297 of these children are at various primary levels. This increases the likelihood of their dropping out. Secondly, at age 15, students are expected to be at the senior high level; however, about 292 of these children were found at either the primary or JHS level, putting them at a high risk of dropping out.

▪   **At of risk of dropping population – using frequency of repetition**

Further, the study assessed the 'at risk of dropping' population of students currently in school using the 'frequency of repetition' *(how many times children repeated a class)* variable disaggregated by AEP and non-AEP communities. The findings show that out of the 158 students who had ever repeated a class, about 16% (25) who had repeated a class more than once were at risk of dropping out, and about two-thirds of this number were in primary school. These findings suggest that these children may be more likely to drop out, particularly given the high proportion in primary school. Interestingly, no child repeated more than twice in non-AEP areas.

▪   **At of risk of dropping population – using frequency of attendance**

The results in relation to the 'at risk of dropping out of school' using the 'regularity of school attendance' variable show that out of the 1,862 students who are currently in school, about 435 (23%) have a higher likelihood of dropping out of school because they miss some school days. The finding is in sync with the results of a study by Casely-Hayford et al., (2017), which indicated that students who miss more school days may eventually drop out of school. The findings further show that a significant proportion of children who missed school in the most disadvantaged localities were in lower primary school and kindergarten. On the other hand, it was noted that a substantial proportion of children might miss school in rural deprived regions regardless of their grade level. Comparatively, there were more children missing school in the rural deprived regions than in the extremely marginalized areas (303 as against 132).

4.1.5   Transition, Retention and Completion Levels on AEPs

▪   **Number of transitioned AEP learners – school level data**

Overall, the results show there are about 664 AEP graduates in formal schools across the study areas. On average, a greater proportion of AEP graduates in primary school were females (69%) which may be attributable to the conscious focus of most AEPs in granting more access to girls. The study revealed that there were more AEP-enrolled pupils in P4 (173, 26%). With a higher number of female AEP graduates at the P4 level than at the other levels. P2 and P6 had the lowest numbers of AEP learners (15% and 17% percent respectively).

- **AEP transitioned learners retained in formal schools – district data**

The statistics on the percentage of AEP graduates who were retained in the formal school system based on district level data puts the number of transitioned AEP learners in the formal school system at 2,230 across the study districts. The results revealed a slightly higher number of girls transitioned into formal school (1,117 out of 2,230) than boys. Across the districts, Talensi had the highest percentage of AEP learners continuing in formal education (almost 90%), with the majority being female. The remaining districts had more boys than girls who remained in the formal school, notably in Gushiegu district.

4.1.6 Presence and Impact of Girls Focused Programmes:

The out of school mapping exercise also assessed the achievement of each girls-focused programme in the chosen districts. The results show that about a ninth of children enrolled in the AfriKids Stage programme were transitioned into the formal education system (88%). The data further show the programme met 995 of its targets. Four out of five STAGE graduates were able to successfully move into the formal education system. Further, it was found that the program exceeded its informal cohort targets (103%) while the statistics show that around 96% of participants successfully *completed* the informal training.

Further, data were evaluated based on the number of females enrolled in the Afrikids STAGE programme and grouped by age group. According to the data, the age group for the formal school training programme was between 6 and 14 years, whereas the informal cohort was between 15 and 17 years. The finding suggests that enrolment was slightly higher among children aged 12 to 14 years than it was among children aged 6 to 11.

- **Impact/achievements**

The introduction of AEPs and Girls Focused Programmes (GFPs) helped to tackle several issues being faced by girls in the rural and deprived societies. Prior to the introduction of the GFPs, child marriage was on the rise because parents did not value academic education of a female and believed that her place was in the home, and where she would learn to serve her future husband. Following the implementation of the Afrikids' STAGE Project which targeted out of school girls, there has been a significant change in the lives of girls in these communities. The STAGE project sought to enable out of school children, particularly, girls who had dropped out of school, to either go back into the formal education system or acquire a skill in catering, dressmaking, soap making, beadmaking or hairdressing. The findings show that not only has STAGE project helped to enroll girls access appropriate education, it has also empowered girls to know their rights and enlightened parents on the importance of girl-child education. Some SMCs/PTAs confirmed that activities of Girls Focused Programmes have been visible and have brought about an increase in the number of girls who have enrolled in school, bridging the gap between boys and girls in terms of education, and reduced the incidence of child marriage.

4.1.7 Demand Issues

Several key demand-side issues were also highlighted:

- **Poverty levels:**

Poverty levels have been established as a key factor that affects the retention of learners in school at all levels, especially at the primary level. High poverty levels, especially across the study areas, makes it difficult for most parents to provide the basic necessities of their children including daily meals, books and other key learning materials. Though the cost of education is free, other indirect costs (including cost of uniform, stationery, feeding, among others) are taken on by the parents. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with out of school children and other key

stakeholders showed that when students lack basic materials, including school uniforms, books and shoes, they are unable to attend school and eventually drop out.

- **Socio-cultural factors:**

One of the key factors highlighted as contributing most to the 'at risk of dropping' population is socio-cultural practices. Some of these included early marriage, teenage pregnancy, fosterage etc. These mostly force students, especially girls, to leave school. Over 70% of SMCs/PTAs shared that most girls are at risk of dropping out of school because they get pregnant. Some parents also marry off their daughters at an early age, forcing them to drop out of school. Apart from teenage pregnancy, early marriage and fosterage, another key factor causing drop-out is the limited regard for education, based on traditional social roles. About 30 % of the SMCs/PTA's revealed that community members do not value education; hence, they encourage their children to work to support family income instead of going to school. They also believe that education has little or no benefits and that almost all those who complete school do not get jobs. Therefore, they prefer to engage their children in farming and mining.

4.1.8 Supply Issues

- **Provision of school infrastructure, and teaching and learning materials**

One of the key factors that account for the high numbers in OOSC is the lack of school infrastructure lack of adequate learning materials such as books, school bags, school uniforms, shoes and means of transportation (bicycles). The latter are crucial since some of the schools are from the communities. Interviews with traditional leaders indicated that one of the approaches by which community members could help in addressing the OOSC was to lobby their District Assemblies to build/establish schools, especially, junior and senior high schools and with accommodation facilities for teachers.

- **Access to schools**

Access to basic education is critical for achieving most sustainable development goals. The findings show most of the study communities were without schools, with the average distance between the communities and the nearest primary school being between 3 to 5 km. About fifty communities in Karaga, Talensi, Tolon and Yendi are without schools, with the nearest primary schools being about 3 to 5 km away. Analysis of the interactions with District Education Officers revealed unequal access across the study area; even the communities that had access to schools lacked the needed infrastructure, had inadequate teachers, and experienced high levels of teacher absenteeism.

4.1.9. Contribution of AEPs/GFMs to addressing the supply-side barriers to education

Evidence from the interactions with key stakeholders shows AEPs have had significant impact in reducing the out of school situation across the beneficiary communities. From the CBE facilitator interviews, the evidence showed the CBE programme has assisted in reducing supply challenges that impact school attendance by counselling sessions to advise students, providing school materials, and scholarships. The innovators further supported with the provision of other supplies, such as giving exercise books, stationery, sanitary pad, and others, to AEP graduates who have transitioned to the formal school.

Intended impact (transition to formal school)

The SMC/PTA FGDs revealed that intervention communities benefitted greatly from the AEPs implemented by organizations such Afrikids, School for Life and World Education. The SMCs/PTAs bore witness that the AEPs brought about change in the communities. The AEP classes developed the literacy skills of most of the out of school children, and as a result, they

became competent at reading and writing. The majority of the AEP learners transitioned to formal school, and parents were happy with the AEP policy of teaching in the local language, which they believed helped their children to understand better.

4.2 Recommendations / implications

The study makes the following recommendations to strengthen AEP and girls' focused model programming with emphasis on deepening, sustaining and scaling up the gains achieved through these programmes. The recommendations are grouped into four categories: (1) government/policy decisions; (2) programmatic and strategic approaches to attain SDG 2 and presidential commitment to halving the numbers of out of school children; (3) recommendations for civil society and education innovators; and (4) recommendations for schools and communities.

4.2.1 Government/Policy level actions

- **Need for improvement in access to schools**

Access to basic education lies at the heart of development. The findings show most of the communities are without schools with the average distance between the communities and the nearest primary school being between 3-5km. This has been established to be a contributing factor to the out of school phenomenon. It is recommended that government should work through the district education directorates to re-map-out the communities that need community-based schools and supply basic schools to such communities.

- **Need to have a targeted approach to addressing the OOSC phenomenon**

The findings show that the out of school phenomenon is predominant among children aged 6-11 years (primary level), with this category accounting for almost half (49%) of the out of school population. This shows that a significant number of primary age children, in the sampled districts, are not in school. The implication of this finding is that the Complementary Education Agency (CEA) and the NGOs/CSOs operating within the AEP space should focus their interventions and programming more on children of primary school age. Though most of the AEP programmes target children between ages 8-16, focus should also be on children lower and above these ages.

- **Need to address high PTR and PTTR at KG level**

The findings show very high pupil teacher ratios (PTR) and pupil trained teacher ratio (PTTR), especially at the KG level. To address this, we implore the government to make a concerted effort to train more teachers for the KG level through the Colleges of Education and also provide incentives to motivate teachers to accept postings to remote and hard to reach areas. This will contribute significantly to building a stronger education foundation for children.

- **Need to re-evaluate KG education**

The numbers in the 'never attended' category at the KG category was significant. Therefore, stakeholders should commission a comprehensive assessment of the KG system in the country to understand the critical areas of KG education that require redress. One key area that requires attention is upgrading of existing KGs and establishment of same in areas that do not have one. Training workshops must also be organized to train and retrain teachers at that level, to provide them with the skills needed to manage these schools to set a stronger base for the country's education.

- **At risk of dropping population – using overage at grade level**

The findings in relation to the at risk of dropping out using the 'overage for grade' variable show that out of the 1,924 children currently in school, 592 are at risk of dropping because they are overage for their current class level. In line with this, we recommend that special attention be paid to overaged children who are integrated into the formal school system so they do not end up dropping out of school. The strategies could include assigning special mentors to these children to provide oversight and mentorship as a way of keeping these children in school.

- **Need for improvement in educational facilities**

The findings also show evidence of poor school-level infrastructure, especially furniture. This invariably affects quality of teaching and learning and may contribute to drop-outs rates. The study recommends that the district education directorates work at providing adequate furniture, especially seating and writing desks in schools, across their respective districts.

4.2.2 Programmatic and strategic approaches to attain SDG 2 and presidential commitment to halving the numbers of out of school children

- **Need to sustain the gains achieved on AEPs and Girls Focused Programmes:**

The evidence from the out of school mapping exercise showed significant results achieved in relation to completion and transition levels on the girls' focused models. These models have proven to be very effective at addressing the out of school issues, especially for girls. The study therefore recommends that government support these GFPs through the proposed one percent budgetary allocation so as to expand and scale-up these programmes to achieve maximum benefits:

   o The Ministry of Education (MoE) should ensure that the 1% education budget commitment earmarked to support expansion and improvement of the CBE programme is realised each year, in order to scale up efforts towards ameliorating the OOS situation across the country.

- **Filling the teacher gap:**

One of the key variables for achieving quality education as stipulated in SDG 4[15] is the availability of teachers, especially, trained teachers. The study found that though the trained teacher numbers are relatively high across the study areas, the qualitative data points to high teacher absenteeism at the school level. In line we this. Due to the high rate of teacher absenteeism in schools, it is recommended that alternative teacher training models like the UTDBE[16] programme be revisited. This will help in recruiting "community-based" teachers/ volunteers who have demonstrated at least two years of quality volunteer service to the system and who are willing to stay and teach for some years in their respective communities. This will help reduce the level of teacher absenteeism, especially in extremely deprived and hard-to-reach areas.

4.2.3 For Education Innovators

- **Targeting of OOSC should be gender neutral**

The evidence shows the presence of more out of school children among the male population (55%) compared to the female population (45%) which is also in sync with the national-level evidence. This requires that the strategies focused on addressing the out of school

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[15] Ensure inclusive and equitable quality of education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all
[16] Untrained Teacher Diploma in Basic Education

phenomenon target the boy-child as well as the 'girl-child' so as to avoid a future crisis of having to institute 'boy child education'.

▪ **Need to build a comprehensive database on OOSC**

The evidence from the mapping exercise showed the absence of up-to-date database on out of school children at both the innovator and District Education Directorate levels. This impedes the design of targeted, time-sensitive, and context-specific approaches towards addressing the OOS phenomenon. Therefore, we recommend that the Ghana Education Service (GES) should collaborate with the innovators to develop a comprehensive database on out of school children across all districts. This will help government and civic actors identify areas with high OOSC density and those with low OOSC density and thus, adopt appropriate policies for each context.

4.2.4 For Schools and communities

▪ **Need for continuous education of parents/primary caregivers**

The study showed that though the interest of parents in getting their children educated has improved over the years, the situation is still quite dire, especially with regards to educating girls. It is recommended that community level engagements with parents be initiated and sustained by the Education Directorates working in collaboration with the traditional and community leaders to sensitise parents to understand the imperative of educating their children irrespective of their sex.

▪ **Need to improve upon family income through alternative and sustainable jobs**

The findings showed high poverty levels account for a substantial proportion of the out of school issues – with parents unable to meet school expenses of their children, and this sometimes results in the children having to work to contribute to family income. With reference to this, it is recommended that state and non-state actors work together at improving living conditions of families in these extremely deprived areas, through livelihood empowerment programmes to provide opportunities for them to access 'decent' and sustainable jobs.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Other background characteristics

Access to toilet facilities in schools by district

The findings from the out of school mapping study about the adequacy of the facilities in the sampled schools are summarized in Table 1.1. According to the data, about a third of schools (345) lack toilet facilities. This finding has implications for the emergence of cholera in schools. The Yendi district has the highest proportion of schools without toilets. Furthermore, the data suggests that almost half of schools (45%) do not have adequate facilities. The term "inadequate" was used to describe toilet facilities that were either choked or non-functional. Only a few districts have suitable toilet facilities, with the highest concentration in Gushegu and Saboba (6 percent each).

Table 1.1: Access to toilet facilities by district

District	Adequate		Inadequate		None		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	3	6%	1	2%	1	2%	5	11%
Karaga			3	6%	4	9%	7	15%
Kumbungu	2	4%	2	4%	2	4%	6	13%
Mamprugu Moagduri	1	2%	2	4%	1	2%	4	9%
Saboba	3	6%	1	2%	3	6%	7	15%
Talensi	1	2%	6	13%			7	15%
Tolon			5	11%			5	11%
Yendi			1	2%	5	11%	6	13%
Total	**10**	**21%**	**21**	**45%**	**16**	**34%**	**47**	**100%**

Source: Community checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

Table 1.2: Adequacy of seating spaces by district

District	Adequate		Inadequate		None		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gushegu	1	2%	1	2%	3	6%	5	11%
Karaga	1	2%	2	4%	4	9%	7	15%
Kumbungu	2	4%	4	9%			6	13%
Mamprugu Moagduri			3	6%	1	2%	4	9%
Saboba	1	2%	5	11%	1	2%	7	15%
Talensi			7	15%			7	15%
Tolon			4	9%	1	2%	5	11%
Yendi			3	6%	3	6%	6	13%
Total	**5**	**11%**	**29**	**62%**	**13**	**28%**	**47**	**100%**

Source: Community checklist, out of school mapping, 2022

Annex 2: Field Instruments

Field Guide_IDRC
OOSC Mapping_25.0

Annex 3: Summary of Study Sample for the OOSC Mapping – Intervention and Non-Intervention Communities

Mamprugu Moagduri	Gushiegu	Tolon	Talensi	Karaga	Kumbungu	Saboba	Yendi
GILLBT	**GILLBT**	**AfriKids**	**AfriKids**	**AfriKids**	**School for Life**	**School for Life**	**School for Life**
3-5 years	**3-5 years**	**3 -5 years**	**3 -5 years**	**3-5 years**	**3 - 5 years**	**3 - 5 years**	**3 - 5 years**
Intervention Communities							
Prima	Yishei	Dabogashie	Baare	Achinaayili	Cheshegu	Binchakiyado	Achinayili
Tantala	Nakunga	Gburumani	Datuko	Dagadu	Kpilo Napagyili	Bodul-Wapuli	Nabila
Yizesi	Limo	Kpachiyili	Gbane	Gbenjaga	Namdu	Kpegu	Baduli
Tuvuu	Gaa	Kpaligun	Kpatia	Nyong Nayili	Shedua	Bakundiba	Kpalsonando
Back-up Communities							
Yoagri	**Zulogu**	**Naha**	**Sheaga**	**Yalpalsi**	**Silimboma**	**Lifuul**	**Yimashigu**
Non-Intervention Communities							
Kochogilim	Lefti Kura	Tali Botingli	Wakii	Sogu	Singa	Tindano	Nyamboligni
Centa	Gingana	Yipelgu	Tindongo	Bamboi	Voggu	Wajor	Zakoli
Wuntubri	Ubaladan No.2	Zagua	Dapoore	Sakpa	Zangbalun Yepielgu	Wasando	Yinsala
Katigri	Mandaa No.1	Vaeagri	Laabiisi	Gumo	Toligu	Tingbaln	Wassado
Back-up Communities							
Siisi	Lagunguni	Tingoli	Tolla	Didogi	Zugu	Nankurb	Melzen Sagmamba

Annex 4: Field Teams

SN	Name	Gender	Contact No.	Institution	Designation	Location
1.	Jones Agyapong Frimpong	Male		AFC	Regional Supervisor	Accra
			Karaga District (Northern)			
2.	Ahmed Mahama (AFC)	Male	0244820245	AFC	Team Leader	Tamale
3.	Florence Government Officer 3	Female	0244403755	Reform Secretariat	Co-Team Lead	Accra
4.	Abdul Ganiyu Iddrisu (AFC)	Male	0249519857	REACH	Researcher	Karaga
5.	Alhassan Afishetu (District Officer)	Male	0246974400	GES	Girl Child Officer	Karaga
6.	Haruna Kobo Abdallah (District Officer)	Male	0249757708	GES	EMIS OFFICER	Karaga
7.	Abu Uriah (District Officer)	Male	0202378254	GES	CBE DESK OFFICER	Karaga
8.	Sheriff Ayub Mohammed	Male	0243659555	AFC		Tamale
			Tolon District (Northern)			
9.	Latifatu Seidu	Female	0246585683/0264585683	AFC (REACH)	Team Leader	Tamale
10.	Husseina Ibrahim Adongo (Sheriff + Montrose project/ Added to the TEAM	Female	0544657810	AFC	Researcher	Tamale
11.	Awuviri Rashida (AFC)	Female	0242574353/0260855943	AFC (MSC REACH)	Researcher	Tamale
12.	Mad. Harriet Nutsugah (District Officer)	Female	0208159183	GES	Girls Education Officer	Tolon
13.	Fatawu Karandey (District Officer)	Female	0247073436	GES	EMIS Officer	Tolon
14.	Chimsi Ernest Tia (District Officer)	Female	243572426	GES	Researcher	Tolon

	Gushiegu District (Northern Region)					
15.	Khadijah Iddrisu (AFC)	Female	0205159422/ 0243415877	AFC	Team Lead	Tamale
16.	Gladstone Government Officer 4	Male		Reform Secretariat	Co-Team Lead	Accra
17.	Zachariah Sando	Male	0242179562		Researcher	Saboba
18.	Shayawu Fuseini (District Officer)	male		GES	EMIS	Gushegu
19.	Salifu Sakina (District Officer)	Female	0502544041	GES	Girls Education officer	Gushegu
20.	Iddi Modow (District Officer)	Male	0554425550	GES	CBE DESK OFFICER	Gushegu
	Yendi Municipal (Northern Region)					
21.	Ibrahim Abdul Kabiru (AFC)	Male	024-6709813	AfC	Team Leader	Bawku
22.	Habiba Muniru (AFC)	Female	0240147598/050 5038207	AFC	Researcher	Tamale
23.	Mohammed Alhassan Abdulai (District Officer	Male	242712164	GES	CBE Desk officer	Yendi
24.	Sule Yakubu (District Officer)	Male	245030182	GES	EMIS OFFICER	Yendi
25.	Jalan Yaa Comfort (District Officer)	Female	200995356	GES	GIRL CHILD OFFICER	Yendi
26.	Philip Dei (MOE)	Male	206114609	CEA	MOE	Yendi
27.	Jennifer Quaicoe (AFC)	Female	277529264	AFC National	Backup	Accra
	Kumbungu District (Northern Region)					
28.	**Justice Quartey (AFC)**					
29.	Mohammed Abango (AFC)	Male	050 4901652	AfC	Team Leader	Accra

30.	Faris Sulemana Salman (MOE)	Male		MOE		Accra
31.	Amadu Salifu	Male	0243957575	Confirmed	Tamale	Kumbungu
32.	Alhassan Awabu	Female	244425602/0202 181477	AfC	Backup -	Kumbungu
33.	Salifu Sulemana	Male	0246278849	GES	Desk Officer	Kumbungu
34.	Mariama Sulemana	Female	0241121194	GES	Girl Child	Kumbungu
35.	Mohammed Kariyoko	Male	0245123569	GES	EMIS Officer	Kumbungu
Saboba District (Northern Region)						
36.	Mr. Alhassan Andani (AFC)	Male	0244868355/ 0206666727	AFC	Team Leader	Tamale
37.	Jeremiah Kasalku Takal (District Officer)	Male	0249132111	GES	CBE Desk Officer	Saboba
38.	Kenneth Dzisah (District Officer)	Male	0249132111	GES	EMIS	Saboba
39.	Augustina Ubindam (District Officer)	Female	024513791	GES	Girl Child officer	Saboba
40.	Israel Jongbani	Male	0548185247		Researcher	Saboba
41.	Christopher Adongo	Male	0544226229	AC	Researcher	Nalerigu
Mamprugu Moagduri (North East Region)						
42.	Terence Darko (AFC)	Male		AFC	AFC National	Accra
43.	Ernest Nniakyire	Male	0246552539	GILBIT MEL Officer	Team Leader	Tamale
44.	Ramatu Mahama (AFC)	Female	020-8300966/ 020-5657483	REACH	Researcher	West Mamprusi
45.	Amasa Inusah (District Officer)	Male	024072160	GES	EMIS	
46.	Abdul Rahman Aziz (District Officer)	Male	0240473326	GES	Girl Child	
47.	Alhassan Mahinatu	Male		GES	CBE Desk officer	
Talensi District (Upper East)						
48.	Aminu Akparibo (AFC)	Male	024 6822141	AfC	Team Leader	Bolgatanga (3 hours to Tamale)

49.	Charity Bukari (AFC)	Female	050 4901652 / 0550301412	Bolgatanga	Team Leader	Bolgatanga
50.	Bintu Kapuria Kwara	Female	0244982589		Researcher	Talensi
51.	Atubinge Ernest	Male	0243255194		Statistic Officer	Talensi
52.	Maxwell Alenga (District Officer)	Male	0246750822	GES	CBE Desk Officer	Talensi
53.	Mollydean Zong (District Officer)	Female	0244072553	GES	Girl child officer	Talensi
54.	Asati Happy	Female	0240399554	AFC		Talensi