



Summary of Key Findings from Out of School Mapping Survey across Deprived Rural and Extreme Poverty communities in the Northern and Upper East Regions of Ghana

In 2021, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo made a bold commitment during the Education Forum in London, UK¹ to halving the numbers of Out of School Children (OOSC) in Ghana by 2024. Available data from the United Nations Children's Fund Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2017) estimates the OOSC numbers to be over one million children (1,026,000) in Ghana. As such, the Government of Ghana has been supporting efforts to tackle this quandary. Yet, more work and resources are needed in Ghana's most deprived and extreme poverty communities to address the daunting problems of OOSC. Regrettably, the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan 2018-2030 commits only 1% of its Basic Education Budget to supporting Complementary Basic Education programme².

As part of the efforts at addressing the out of school challenge, the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE/KIX) 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". The overarching objective of the study is to increase access to learning for children who are out-of-school by generating knowledge to improve effectiveness of CBE/AEPs and girls' focused models across West Africa and make a case for scalability and adaptability. The study is being implemented by

Associates for Change (AfC) in Ghana, Dalan Development Consult in Sierra Leone and the Centre for the Study of Economies of Africa (CSEA) in Nigeria. In 2021, AfC conducted an OOSC mapping survey in eight (8) districts across three regions, including, the Northern, Northeast and the Upper East regions using an explanatory mixed-method approach of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The illuminating key findings are:

Prevalence of Out-of-School Children

- The results are that 983 out of 2907 of children (~33.8%) aged 4-17 years across the 8 districts are out of school.
- A higher proportion of the OOSC (481 out of 2907, ~16.5%) are at the primary level (aged 6-11 years).
- Inability to afford school expenses, parental neglect, fosterage, inability to provide the basic learning needs of children, poor conditions of learning materials in schools and teacher absenteeism are the main causes of the high OOSC phenomena.

Dropouts:

- Approximately 10% of children across the 8 districts fall within the drop-out category.
- The results show that fewer girls were entering the formal education system while more boys were found to dropout
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¹ See link
<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Ghana-is-widening-access-to-education-for-all-Akufo-Addo-1322224>

² This is also known as Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs)

Preliminary findings from the Ghana Census 2020 indicate that over 5 million children 3-years and older are out of school



- The male dropout was 195 out of 303 (~36.6%) compared to females, 108 out of 303 (~24.7%) among the OOSC population
- The key reasons for dropout rates in the north include, overaged for grade level, early marriage among girls, parental inability to pay for basic school needs and poor academic performance.
- Dropout rates are more pronounced at the lower level (specifically, between grade 1 to grade 4). The reasons include socio-economic and negative cultural factors e.g., fosterage, economic reasons, supply constraints – teacher absenteeism, amongst others.

At risk of dropping from school:

- The study shows that 592 out of 1924 (~30.8%) children currently in school are at risk of dropping out.
- 25 out of 158 learners (~15.8%) who had repeated a class are at risk of dropping out.
- 435 out of 1176 (~36.9%) skipped school for at least a day due to labour required by farm family, household chores and caregiving of younger siblings.

Complementary Basic Education Graduate and Transitioned Children

- The results show that 664 of 963 (~68.9%) in the CBE/AEP transitioned into P3-P5 levels in the formal education system.
- The number of CBE transitioned graduates (based on data from four out of the eight study districts) is ~2230 learners.
- A higher proportion of those who transitioned were girls.

Recommendations

In addressing the OOSC situation, investments should be made in Accelerated Education / Complementary Basic Education of 4.5 million dollars per year. This will enable the Government to achieve the President's commitment to halving the number of OOSC children across the country over the next five years and providing an alternative pathway for children to attain basic foundation skills in literacy and numeracy.

Secondly, the introduction of the Community Volunteer Teacher Program for youth who have completed SHS and beyond to serve two years or more as teachers in their communities in rural deprived and extreme poverty zones. The reintroduction of the Untrained Teacher Diploma programme would help train these community-based teachers and ensure that these teachers are available in the community for several years in order to continue teaching at their local schools yielding higher time on task and learning outcomes. There should be an investment of 3 million USD towards this programme for the next five years. This is based on the impact study and randomised control trial by Associates for Change on the Untrained Teacher Diploma Programme.

The full policy paper and Mapping Study are available:

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