

## Helpdesk Report: Complementary Basic Education

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**Query:** (1) What countries implement complementary basic education programmes (or similar programmes) which support out of school children to re-integrate into mainstream schools? (2) Provide the evidence of what works best for the programme to become part of the normal sustainable MOE business, in particular where should the leadership and coordination roles lie at national level? (3) What is the evidence on ensuring effective cooperation between Government at all levels and Civil Society Organisations to improve access, completion and (re) integration of out of school children?

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#### 1. Introduction

Since 1990, many countries have been working toward providing access to basic education for all children (EFA). During that period, primary school enrolment rates have increased but in 2011, 57 million children were still not receiving basic education and it is currently predicted that 54 countries out of 122 will not meet the EFA goal for Primary Education by 2015 (UNESCO: 2013: 52).

Most of these out of school children are in different and difficult circumstances: some who are unreached or underserved, without access to traditional schooling because of crises (e.g. conflict) or because of where they live (e.g. remote areas) or who they are (e.g. indigenous populations), and some who have started school but have dropped out for various reasons (e.g. poverty). Therefore, it has been increasingly recognised that the goals of EFA cannot be achieved unless more attention is paid to meeting the particular needs of these out-of-school children. As a result, many different innovative and 'alternative' approaches to traditional or formal schooling are being taken to provide basic education for out of school children.

One approach that has been tried is the complementary basic education system (CBE). These systems are complementary in the sense that they provide an alternative route through formal education but match its curriculum to the 'official' curriculum, thus allowing learners to return to formal schooling at some stage. These may sometimes be referred to as 'bridging programmes' (Baxter and Bethke, 2009) or para-formal (Hoppers, 2006) as it is the (re)integration of children into the mainstream education system, which is the *main* goal of CBE. Many CBE systems offer accelerated learning programmes (ALP) which focus on completing basic learning in a

shorter period of time although others have the same number of grades/levels as the matched school system.

This short paper has been prepared in order to (i) identify countries which implement CBE systems and (ii) to present evidence of what works best to (a) integrate CBE into regular MOE 'business' and (b) assure cooperation between the state and non state partners involved in CBE.

## 2. Main Findings

The evidence reviewed for this paper suggests that:

- Many countries implement CBE programmes and they are very diverse; some have been initiated by the state and others by non state actors such as non government organisations. Some CBE programmes are time bound and some are on-going. A number of countries have more than one CBE programme targeting different sub populations.
- There is substantial robust evidence suggesting that CBE's have achieved considerable success in meeting the needs of underserved populations, not only in terms of access and equity but also in completion, learning outcomes and a return to formal schooling.
- Not all CBE programmes have Government sponsorship and support. Where they do, it is usually, but not always, the Ministry of Education (MoE) where overall responsibility for coordination lies. However, it can be different sections within the MoE which take the lead.
- As CBE systems offer an alternative *means* to access the *same* basic education as children in regular Government Schools, rather than an alternative *education*, they seem to be *more often* managed and co-ordinated by the Basic Education Division rather than the Non Formal. Nevertheless, there is little to no *concrete evidence* available that this approach is what works *best* rather than that this is what makes sense in light of the nature and aims of CBE. Moreover, evaluations of some CBE programmes indicate that strong connections to the formal basic education is one of the major success factors as it accords some parity of esteem with public formal education, which generates public confidence.
- There is some emerging evidence of what works to ensure CBE programmes are successful and therefore, more likely to become part of national education plans and regular MOE business. One factor that is *consistently present* across the evidence is the policy space accorded by the national government and their willingness to engage in innovative partnerships with other state and non state actors.
- Although there is substantial evidence about *why* it is important to establish innovative partnerships and cooperation between state and non state actors, there is currently little evidence on *how* this can be established and maintained. The little evidence there is to hand indicates that the most effective ways to ensure cooperation between the Government and other actors is to define clear roles and responsibilities, which are centred on what each partner does best.

## 3. CBE programmes by country

Both governments and non-state providers in many countries have initiated CBE or similar programmes to support out of school children to (re) integrate into the formal system. The following is a summary. It should be noted that the list only includes information about CBE systems for which the specific intention is for children to (re)enter the formal system. It does not include programmes which offer the *equivalence* of a formal education and which have different curricula and examination systems. Furthermore the list *only* includes countries and programmes for which there was sufficient information and evidence available in the literature consulted for this review. There is, therefore, no claim that it is fully comprehensive. This

evidence was compiled from a wide variety of sources which are listed in the additional information section at the end of this paper rather than referenced in the paper.

	Country	Programme	Brief Description
1	Afghanistan	Afghan Primary Education Programme (APEP)  Home Based Schooling (HBS)	USAID funded and implemented through LINGO's. Offers accelerated elementary education for out-of-school youth between ten and eighteen years of age, focusing on females.  Developed and implemented by IRC, targeted mostly at girls. Children study for half day sessions in the local community. The end goal is to absorb the students into government schools when the Ministry has the capacity to effectively educate more children in their local communities.
2	Angola	Programme for Literacy and School Acceleration (PAAE)	State provided: A second-chance learning opportunity for literacy, numeracy and life skills for adolescents through a condensed and adapted primary school curriculum, which can be completed in two-and-a-half years rather than the full six years of primary schooling so out-of-school children can complete primary education, come back into the school system and continue to the second level
3	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)	Non state: Schools offer a four year programme that covers the five year standard curriculum to poor, rural, disadvantaged children and drop-outs who cannot access Government Schools. These one-room schools are for children between eight and fourteen years of age. Each school typically consists of 33 students and one teacher. As of 2012, had been replicated in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Haiti and The Philippines.
4	Brazil	Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)	State provided and managed: short term programme, aimed at overage learners.
5	Burkina Faso	Speed Schools	Non state provided: a nine-month programme that equips out-of-school children aged 8 -12 years with the basic education and skills needed to pass public school entrance exams and enter the formal school system.
6	Burundi	Teacher Emergency Package (TEP)	State and Norwegian Refugee Council provided: aims to get non-schooled children or dropouts (9-14 years) into the third grade of formal primary schools at the end of a 10 month intensive course.
7	Cambodia	Educational Support for Children in Underserved Populations (ESCUP)	State and USAID: Aimed at non Khmer speaking Highland Minority Groups. Works through government primary schools to implement a Supplementary Khmer

			Language (SKL) programme for grade one students in select highland communities. Usually this is done in a way to complement an existing lesson in language or some other subject. Thus, the program tries to work within the framework of the existing curriculum as well as supplementing it
8	Colombia	Escuela Nueva	Targets isolated rural areas. Offers a flexible curriculum focused on a cooperative, active, and participatory learning methodology where students can advance at their own pace. Adopted by the government as a national education policy and replicated in 16 countries around the World including El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador and Mexico.
9	Democratic Republic of Congo	'Catch up Classes'	IRC and UNICEF: Literacy classes for out of school youth and "catch up classes" for primary school students to help prepare students affected by conflict for mandatory end of year exams so they can enter the formal system.
10	Ecuador	Escuela Nueva	See Colombia
11	Egypt	Community Schools Programme	State provided with UNICEF support; Targeting out of school children in remote hamlets in Upper Egypt especially girls;
12	El Salvador	Escuela Nueva	See Columbia
13	Ethiopia	Speed Schools	See Burkino Faso
14	Ghana	School for Life (SfL)	First three years of primary school, with transfer into government schools at grade four.
15	Guatemala	Programa Nacional de Autogestión para el Desarrollo Educativo (PRONADE)  Nueva Escuela Unitaria	Self-run schools with Government and World Bank support mostly set up in and by rural indigenous communities. Non-accelerated, implements the same curriculum in the same timeframe as Government Schools. See Colombia
16	Haiti	Accelerated Learning Programme (EKLA)	Focus on Literacy and Numeracy. Two years learning taking place within a year.
17	Hondurus	Ecucatomas	USAID funded; designed to reach both underserved and disadvantaged populations, as well as providing a basic education for students who abandoned school prior to completing grade nine. Offers 6 grades of primary education in 3 years
18	Indonesia	Sekolah Terbuka	State managed open schools. Learning in small groups takes place in the local community. The community groups are attached to a formal system mother school.
19	Iraq	Revitalization of Iraqi Schools and	USAID funded; designed to mitigate high dropout rates of long term out of school

		Stabilization of Education (RISE)	children where students completed two grades in one school year.
20	Ivory Coast	Bridging Classes and Ecole Pour Tous (EPT)	Supported by UNICEF and the Norwegian Refugee Council. Established to assist children to re-enter the formal school system after their education had been disrupted due to the conflict.
21	Kenya	Undugu Basic Education Programme (UBEP)	Instruction to disadvantaged out-of-school children and youth particularly street children. The accelerated learning takes three years to complete and graduates are expected to go into formal education at secondary level.
22	Liberia	Primary Education Recovery Programme (PERP)	State provided: Targeting overage young adults and youth. Offers a compressed programme designed to give the 6 year primary education to older students in a 3 year period.
23	Malawi	Complementary Basic Education	State Provided: Fully incorporated into four-year Education Sector Implementation Plans; Targets children and youth aged between 9 and 17 in rural areas with high dropout rates. Aims to return children to formal schools at standard 6.
24	Mali	Community Village Schools  Speed Schools	USAID funded – Save the Children implemented with LNGO support. Provides the full six years of basic education focused on acquisition of functional literacy in the native tongue and prepares students to pass the national primary school examination. USAID facilitated the formal recognition of the schools by the Government. See Burkino Faso
25	Mexico	Cursos Comunitarios (CC)  Escuela Nueva	Initiated by CONAFE, a local NGO, but operating under a legal agreement with national authorities. Offers Primary Education to small isolated rural communities. Provides the national curriculum and official certification. See Colombia
26	Myanmar	Mobile Schools  Special Programme for Overage Children  Monastic Basic Education	Targeted at children who frequently move to a new place with their parents. The school follows the community and offers the official curriculum An accelerated programme which enables children of 7 or 8 years old to complete basic education in 3 years and those of 9 to complete it in 2 years Use the formal education curriculum and flexible hours according to the students availability
27	Nepal	School Outreach Programme (SOP)	State Initiated: Condenses the four year primary cycle into three years for children aged 8 – 14. Children attend a satellite

		Urban Out of School Programme (UOSP)	<p>school and are expected to be integrated into the mother school (a state school) in grade 4.</p> <p>Is a 20 month programme which is supported by UNICEF and the National Government. It is a CBE programme for 10 – 14 year olds working in urban areas.</p>
<b>28</b>	Niger	Speed Schools	See Burkina Faso
<b>29</b>	Pakistan	Community Girls School Project	Provides full primary school to grade 5 for girls in poor, rural villages.
<b>30</b>	Sierra Leone	The Complementary Rapid Education Programme in Schools (CREPS)	State provided with UNICEF support, targets overage children and allows them to finish primary school in three years instead of six. Considered part of the regular school system with a tight connection between the two. Teaching occurs in regular school in the afternoon or in a CREPS centre close to the school in the morning. Syllabus and manuals from MOE to ensure harmony with the regular school.
<b>31</b>	Sri Lanka	Accelerated Learning Programme	ALP uses the National Curriculum textbooks and is designed to provide students who have dropped out of school or fallen behind their age competencies to catch up.
<b>32</b>	South Sudan	Speed Schools	See Burkino Faso
<b>32</b>	Tanzania	Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET)	State provided with UNICEF support; Provides basic education and life and survival skills to children – particularly girls who cannot access or who have dropped out of formal schooling. The programme has a condensed, three-year, competency based curriculum which prepares children to return to the formal education system and access secondary or other post-primary education opportunities. Delivery is flexible, so children can attend lessons when they are free to learn, and they do not have to wear uniforms.
<b>33</b>	Uganda	Community Oriented Primary Education Programme (COPE) Basic Education in Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA)	<p>Offers a three year programme which brings children to the equivalent of grade 5 and able to transfer.</p> <p>For out of school children and youth aged between 8 and 19. The core curriculum of BEUPA is a condensed version of the primary school curriculum, which is delivered in three rather than 5 years.</p>
<b>34</b>	Zambia	Open Community Schools (ZOCS)	Provided by Non Profit Organisations; ZOCS works with empowered communities to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (particularly orphans and girls) aged 6 – 18 and increase their

			access, progression and retention in, quality basic education, as well as their transition to senior grades and tertiary education. The Zambian Basic Education Curriculum is used in ZOC schools
35	Zimbabwe	Second Chance	ALP that helps out of school children, particularly those affected by HIV AIDS catch up. State and NGO provided with UNICEF support. Offers a 3 year curriculum that links to the National Curriculum and allows children to sit national grade 7 examinations.

#### 4. Evidence

Although there are many differences in the programmes and approaches listed in section 3, what they all have in common is a focus on developing basic competencies in early numeracy and literacy, usually in the locally spoken language coupled with subjects, more practically oriented to the specific lives of learners (Longdon, 2013).

The evidence indicates that CBE's have demonstrated considerable success in meeting the needs of underserved populations, not only in terms of access and equity but also in completion a return to schooling and, most importantly, in learning outcomes. For example, Escuela Nueva in Colombia, with over 20,000 schools, serves more than 50% of the country's rural areas and learning outcomes are superior to those in conventional schools (USAID, 2006). Furthermore, analyses of cost effectiveness indicate these results are attained with unit costs equivalent to—and sometimes less than—the public primary school system (DeStefano *et al*, 2007). The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) primary schools for instance, help rural children complete sixth grade three times more cost-effectively than regular public schools in Bangladesh, and BRAC students outperform public school students in reading, writing and math (Schuh Moore, 2006b). Therefore, for Governments in countries where trying to achieve EFA means reaching regions and populations that are persistently underserved and attaining levels of equity and demonstrable learning that traditional education systems have failed to meet should consider making CBE part of 'normal business' and establish a state wide system that draws together different forms and providers of basic education.

As the list of countries and programmes indicate, some CBE systems are managed, supported or sponsored by the state and some are not. For the systems that are supported by the Government, they are *usually* but not always coordinated by the Ministry of Education (MoE). In Nepal for example, the Urban Out of School Programme (UOSP) is managed by the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Local Development and in Myanmar the Monastic Schools are the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which works in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

Despite the readily available literature pointing to CBE programmes that are supported by the MOE, including their performance, there seems to be little to no *concrete* evidence offered on what works best for such programmes in terms of *where* the leadership and coordination roles should be within the MoE, for example whether formal or non formal divisions should take the lead. There are different models. For example, the CBE in Indonesia has been managed by the NFE division whereas in Liberia and Malawi, it is managed by the basic education section. The query is legitimate and interesting however, as the evidence indicates that there may be a definitional issue with CBE systems.

Although some documents reviewed for this study view CBE systems as NFE programmes (e.g. Hoppers, 2006) according to USAID (2006) Complementary Basic Education systems are *not* meant as a Non Formal Education Programme. Non formal education is seen as an educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide a wide variety of different types of *alternative education* to particular sub groups (adults as well as children). Such sub groups and programmes include: agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes, and various community programmes of instruction in health, family planning, cooperatives and the like (Hoppers, 2006). CBE systems on the other hand are designed to *complement* the government education system and therefore do not provide an *alternative education* but rather an *alternative means* to access the same basic education for unreached or underserved children with the intention that they obtain educational outcomes equivalent to students in regular public schools. Although CBE programmes offer a modified or more focused curricula that are locally relevant in terms of language and content, most offer a *form* of the national curriculum and many use Government textbooks and enter students for national examinations.

It is the connection with formal education, which has been identified as one of the success factors of CBE programmes in some countries (DeStefano, 2007; Longdon, 2013; Thompson, 2001). The links not only facilitate access between with the Government sector but accord some parity of esteem to CBE systems (Thompson, 2001) as NFE is often seen as a second rate system (Rose, 2007). For example, in Liberia, the positioning of the CBE ALP in the formal primary system and in the same MOE institutional and governance structures was found to be very efficient academically and economically as it ensured trust from both parents and learners of the quality of teaching and learning (Manda, 2011).

The links with the basic education system in the MOE can also help improve the Government school system. In some instances, learning has been bi-directional and Governments have used lessons from CBE programmes to improve the state system. For example, in Tanzania, COBET field experiences and best practices influenced the Government resulting in a number of policy decisions in the provision of quality, basic education. Examples of these best practices include abolition of mandatory school fees and contributions, uniform as a non-requirement, Child-Friendly curriculum and environment and eliminating corporal punishment (Musroache, 2005). Longdon's (2013) cross analysis of ALP indicates that a lot can be learned from CBE systems in terms of curriculum reform

In reviewing the evidence, it is clear there are more similarities between formal and complementary approaches, than non formal and complementary in terms of the curriculum followed and in preparing students for higher levels of education and that complementary approaches are converging towards government, rather than the other way around. Therefore, it seems to make most sense to place it within the basic education division. UNICEF (2013) note a recent 'management push' of such programmes from NFE into Primary Basic Education, such as in Indonesia and the Philippines due to the need to embed CBE into the formal system in order to achieve EFA which has seen (UNICEF, 2013)

Nevertheless, no matter what division within the MOE that overall responsibility for coordination and management lies, Bexter and Bethke (2009) argue that, it is not enough to involve *only one section* of the Ministry. The recognition and inclusion of stakeholders at different levels and at different parts of the process, together with transparent and clear communication is vital for the ongoing success and integration of a programme.

Comprehensive research and comparative analysis of complementary basic education programmes seems to be only just beginning. Although there is little evidence on what works best regarding the overall coordination and leadership roles within the Ministry of Education, there is an emerging body of evidence on what works best in CBE programmes. The following is an overview from some of the key literature.

Thompson, E.J.D (2001)

- Collaboration between Government and non Government partners
- The nexus with Formal Education,
- Demand orientation and innovation
- Official recognition

ADEA (2006):

- Government cooperation with communities
- Genuine decentralisation and local decision making
- Locally recruited teachers

DeStefano *et al*, (2007)

- A policy and institutional environment that enables Governments to them to work in cooperative and innovative partnerships
- A focus on learning outcomes
- Locally recruited and trained teachers

Farrell and Hartwell (2008)

- A bureaucratic attitude which provides for and welcomes innovation and change
- Slow and nurtured growth
- Heavy involvement of parents and the community in general

Day et al (2011)

- A conducive socio-political context
- Focused and targeted programming
- Partnerships with existing local institutions
- Participatory programme planning
- Affordable and accessible community schools
- Inclusive learning environments
- Links to national programmes

The most frequently cited success factor amongst these, and particularly amongst the most successful CBE systems, is the willingness of the National Government in these countries to get out of the way, to loosen control and regulation and provide the policy space for experimentation and innovation to take place. As DeStefano *et al* (2007) point out, 'the most successful complementary education models are based on an important shift away from the government as the manager of public education towards a policy and institutional environment that enables them to work in cooperative and innovative partnerships with, nongovernmental intermediaries, community-based organisations, and other social actors'. How to accomplish this is not clear in the evidence and seems to be a major task for the future.

This cooperation or partnership can take many forms, as illustrated by the CBEs described in the section 3 of this paper, particularly in the relative management roles of state and non-state agencies.

- The highest level of state involvement is when it implements the CBE directly without non-state providers as in Brazil.
- PRONADE in Guatemala is a government programme that allocates resources to communities to establish and run schools.
- The Government in Malawi funds NGOs as CBE service providers within a sector-wide approach.
- In Egypt, the government pays community school teacher salaries.

- In other programmes, the government may contribute some curriculum materials for CBE schools, or may include schools in the official system of supervision and support such as in Bangladesh BRAC.
- Other CBE systems such as the programmes in Afghanistan rely almost entirely on NGO and community input, at least until the schools are absorbed into the re-emerging formal education system.

Despite the different approaches and roles for the state and non state actors in CBE systems, what is common amongst all of them is that they typically involve the community and there is at least a minimum engagement with government about the point of equivalence. This is necessary so that CBE graduates can transfer to public schools. CBE's depend on effective, enduring partnerships between local organisations, communities, government, and development agencies.

Although the evidence overwhelmingly indicates the necessity of forming effective cooperation between the State and its partners to improve access, completion and (re) integration of out of school children there is little evidence on *how* this can be achieved and there is no single lesson or recipe for success. Nevertheless, the following factors do emerge quite frequently.

- Clear understanding and definition of roles, responsibilities, and resources between all the partners. This requires negotiations between ministries of education—and the organisations establishing community schools. The roles, responsibilities, and resources should be focussed on what each partner does best drawing capacity from where it can best be found—asking government institutions to do what they do well, relying on NGO partners to do what they do best, and allowing communities to assume responsibility for what they can best manage (DeStefano *et al*, 2007).
- Ongoing partnerships that can support effective community schools require: drawing on each actor's appropriate resources and expertise—limiting government institutions to doing what they do well (assuring the availability of public resources and establishing standards for quality and accountability); relying on nongovernmental partners to do what they do best (establishing and efficiently managing networks of community and school support); and allowing communities to assume responsibility for what they can best manage (decisions about how to organise and operate their school on a day-to-day basis) (USAID, 2006).
- Transparent and clear communication between all partners. This requires advocacy and consistent communication to make sure that all relevant sections are included as soon as practicable and their involvement is genuine and meaningful (Baxter and Bethke, 2009).
- Genuinely decentralised systems which allow for the development of relationships between local government and local communities and which allow for local design sensitivity and decision making (Rose, 2007).

In summary, what is abundantly clear in the evidence is that there is a need to work closely with Government education authorities, whether formal or non formal or both in the formulation and implementation of CBE in order to ensure that they are not marginalised, that they support the transfer of students from one system to another and that the Government authorities need to be open to different and innovative approaches on order for CBE to fulfil their potential.

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## 7. Additional information

### Author

This query response was prepared by **Lorna Power, CfBT**

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