

# From idea to impact: A pivotal year for evidence- based policy making

Annual Report 2023-2024





# OUR ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS ARE RESHAPING EDUCATION POLICY, THANKS TO OUR GROUND-BREAKING APPROACH TO EVIDENCE GATHERING, ANALYSIS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT

## FOREWORD

Concrete system-level improvements are hard to catalyse. Yet, having established our foundations in our first years of operating, we are now harvesting tangible, lasting change.

**Over the past year, we strengthened the design of accelerated education policies and programmes following post-COVID-19 lockdowns across parts of Africa.**

Our flagship guidance on the **nine critical factors of success** for accelerated learning programs, developed from a synthesis of **750** papers, left a mark on national guideline development, programme design, and planning in Sub-Saharan Africa. Deep engagement with Kenya and Sierra Leone led to a redesign of policy frameworks impacting up to **2.3 million students**.

Evidence-based decision making is becoming a shared imperative, rather than a nice-to-have, as we work with leaders across the education sector to build the bridge across practice, research and policy to improve learning for children and young people everywhere.

**We developed a rigorous process to incorporate a broader range of evidence into our analysis so that our insights are more actionable.**

Our **innovative and rigorous approach to widening the education evidence base** - incorporating **local voices and contexts** - ensures that the quality of guidance to education leaders is responsive to their needs, increasingly relevant and more actionable than ever. Our **new evidence appraisal standard**, developed as part of our 'International Working Group' was successfully tested with policy-makers and researchers in-country and is being further refined.

**With a proven and unique approach to impact, we are now ready for scaling up across more countries and addressing new challenges.**

Our work is **impactful and cost-efficient**; and we're planning for growth opportunities, **expanding our engagement** with national, regional and global networks; **scaling our insight generation** to cover more policy areas; **disseminating our standards and guidance** on evidence use; and building a model **for embedding a culture of evidence use** within governments and implementing partners.

*Randa Grob-Zakhary*

Dr Randa Grob-Zakhary, Founder & CEO of Education.org

# OUR BLUEPRINT FOR IMPACT IS CLEAR

In just two years since our most recent synthesis launched (click below to see more), we have shown how actionable insights can shape policy and practice, to improve learning outcomes for marginalised children and youth. Our impact spans across four areas:

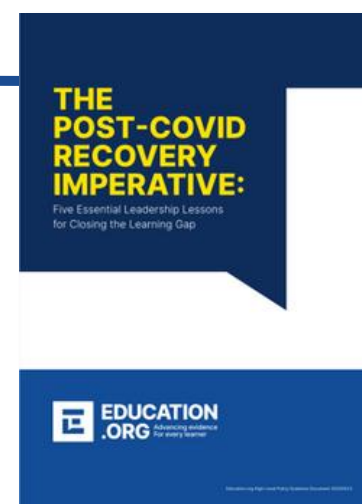
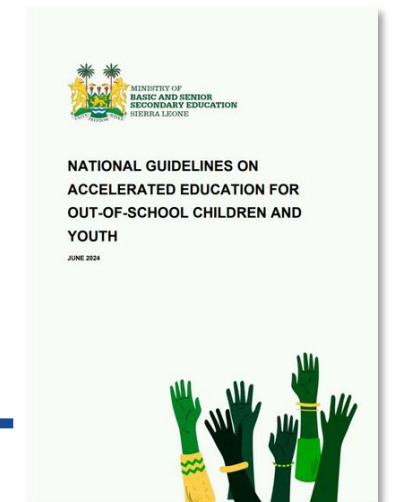
**Policy:** Our insights have informed new policies and national strategies targeting the hardest to reach children and young people in Kenya and Sierra Leone.

**Practice:** Implementers are embedding these guidelines and policies into programming in formal and non-formal education settings.

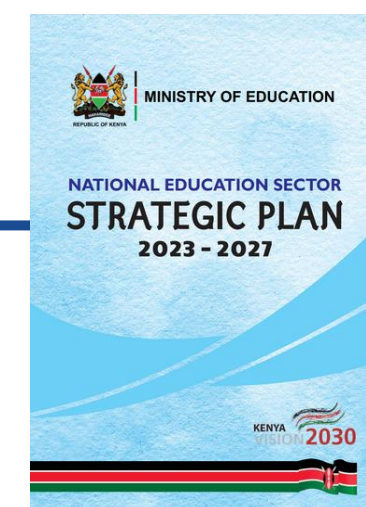
**Research:** We have developed a novel, rigorous appraisal method for uncovering unpublished reports and maximizing the value of local voices and evidence.

**Funding:** Funding is being aligned with our evidence-informed insights to make the best use of scarce resources, for example in new funding to support out-of-school children and youth in Sierra Leone return to formal education, appropriate training or employment.

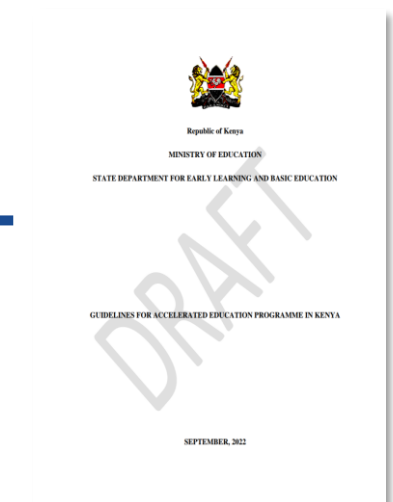
*Sierra Leone's Guidelines for Accelerated Education, July 2024*



*Available in Spanish, French and English*



*Kenya's National Education Plan, May 2024, and Guidelines for Accelerated Education, September 2023*



Our Ministry is committed to making decisions based on the best-evidence. It is clear that Accelerated Education can help out-of-school children learn and progress, and now we have guidelines to ensure the quality of these programmes, based on independent analysis. [Hon. Conrad Sackey, Minister for Basic and Secondary Education, Government of Sierra Leone](#)

These guidelines are incredibly timely and serve as an essential tool for our efforts, as we lead a consortium of partners who will implement alongside with the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and Sierra Leone's Teaching Service Commission in a newly designed programme for 60,000 out-of-school children in Sierra Leone. [Patrick Osede Analo, Save the Children Country Director for Sierra Leone](#)

## OUR WORK WITH GOVERNMENTS HAS BEEN COLLABORATIVE, APPLYING OUR ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS TO THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

### SIERRA LEONE

National Guidelines on Accelerated Education were co-created and outline the overall standards expected, including a clear pathway to enable the transition of children and youth back into formal education, appropriate training, or employment.

**60,000**

Children immediately impacted due to direct implementation by a consortium led by Save The Children.

**524,000**

Out-of-school children, who could have their learning outcomes improved by this policy.

### KENYA

Needs of Out-of-School Children addressed for the first time in Kenya's National Education Strategy and Plan, while new guidelines for accelerated education are being developed.

**1.8M**

Children and adolescents are out-of-school in Kenya.

# HOW HAVE WE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE AN IMPACT SO QUICKLY?

## What makes us different:

- 1** Our **size and independence enables us to be agile, responding directly to the needs of education system leaders**, and addressing policy issues that they have told us are a priority to improve learning outcomes for children.
- 2** We're **tackling some of the toughest challenges in education in response to requests from governments** - issues that receive relatively little attention or funding.
- 3** Our evidence-informed **policy guidance addresses the needs of the most marginalised children**, including girls, learners with disabilities or learning differences, and refugees.
- 4** We're **elevating local voices by** embedding rigour into the use of 'grey' literature so that our guidance reflects the best, most-relevant evidence.
- 5** We focus on providing **relevant, easy to understand, actionable insights**. Rather than developing new research, we are collaborating with education system leaders to build a culture of evidence-use while using media to enable broad dissemination of our work.

By together identifying solutions and building the capacity to tackle the identified challenges more effectively, Education.org is helping us to stand on our feet... This is different from some partners, who tell you: 'This is the water; drink it'. **Partners in Kenya's Ministry of Education**



# OUR DISTINCTIVE, ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS ARE THE KEY TO OUR IMPACT

A consistent criticism from education-system leaders is that research literature is often technically dense and without contextual, relevant, actionable guidance. Education.org is trying to change that.

As part of our evidence synthesis on Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs), we investigated what effective programmes have in common and translated this into insights that can inform stronger policies and guidelines. This is a major distinguishing feature of our work compared with standard academic reviews.

This year, building on our synthesis, Education.org published “[Steering through Storms: Five Recommendations to Policy Leaders to Close the Learning Gap in Times of Crisis](#)” as well as policy guidance in an even more digestible format: “[Key Notes for Ministries](#)”.

We also ensure clear case studies are available so that policy makers can review examples that are directly relevant to their circumstances (click to see more):

Ethiopia



Liberia



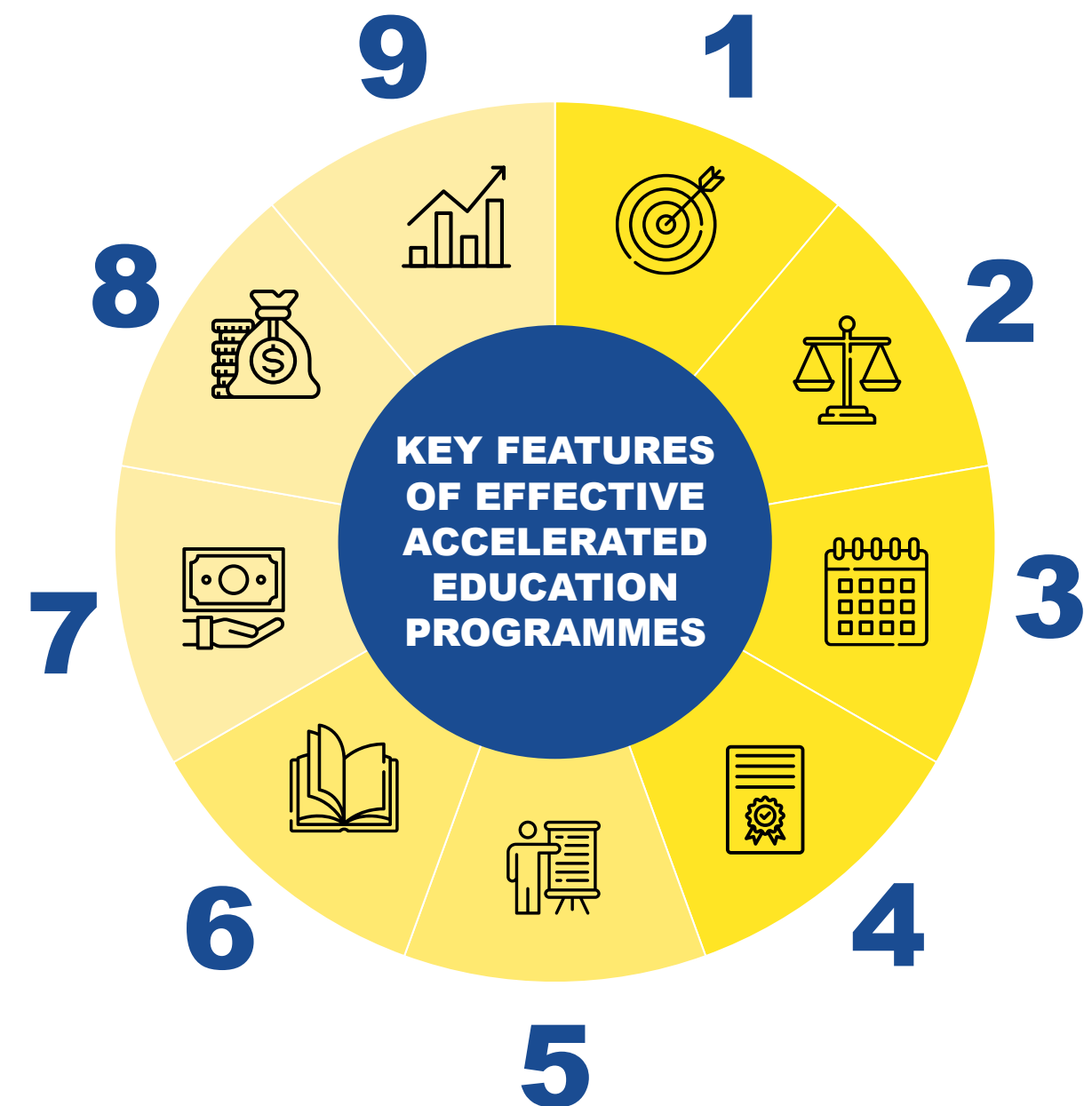
Nigeria



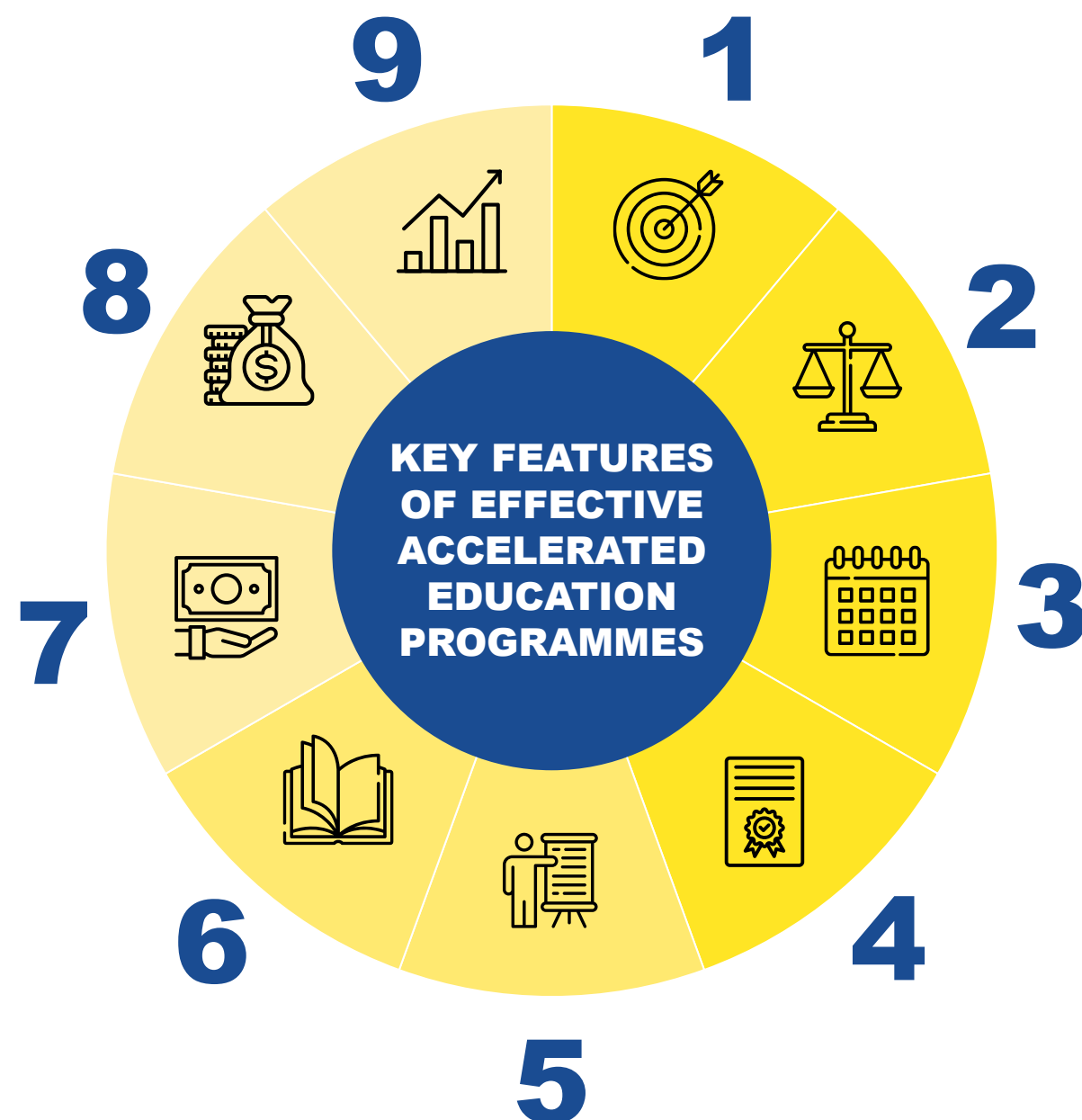
South Sudan



Kenya



*Graphic: Key AEP features as a basis for improving policies, from “Steering through Storms” – details on next page*



### 1. PROGRAMME GOALS

Goals focus on achieving key competencies in an accelerated period and transitioning to future pathways (formal schooling, training or employment).

### 2. EQUITY & INCLUSION

Equity is promoted by design, with strategies to remove barriers to enrolment and completion for the most marginalised. Inclusion is enhanced through the engagement of local communities and is responsive to local needs.

### 3. CURRICULUM & CALENDAR

Content is aligned with the national curriculum but focused on essential competencies on an accelerated timeline. Pace is age-adjusted & supports foundational, social and emotional learning. The calendar maximises access to pathways after certification.

### 4. ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATION

Learner assessment promotes flexibility of progression. Programme completion is marked by MoE-sanctioned certification and enables transition to formal school, training or employment.

### 5. TEACHER SOURCING & DEVELOPMENT

Recruitment of teachers from the local community promotes closer family and community engagement. Teachers receive special AEP orientation, training and mentoring.

### 6. PEDAGOGY

A learner-centred, gender-equitable pedagogy promotes enrolment, retention and completion; socio-emotional learning with small classes in safe spaces, teaching at the right level, and high community engagement.

### 7. TEACHER REMUNERATION

Timely, fair remuneration reduces teacher turnover.

### 8. FUNDING & BUDGETING

Ongoing funding, even if partial, supports programme continuity. AEP inclusion in national government budgets advances sustainability.

### 9. MONITORING, EVALUATION & DATA COLLECTION

Programme effectiveness is monitored, with key data collected and integrated into an educational management information system (EMIS) to assess and improve policies.

# OUR INSIGHTS ARE ACTIONABLE BECAUSE THEY DRAW FROM A WIDE RANGE OF EVIDENCE

Globally, education systems are looking increasingly towards a strong evidence base to inform their policy and practice. However, the definition of “good” or “quality” evidence is usually limited to research published through academic and traditional channels. The omission of large volumes of work of great value – so-called ‘grey literature’ – severely limits the available evidence base.

Much of this ‘grey literature’ is locally-contextualised and practice-derived evidence, produced by non-governmental and civil society organisations, and especially researchers based in the Global South. Developing ways of using this broader range of evidence – including making it easier to find, access and appraise – will help policy makers to draw up national policies and guidelines that address their specific challenges and contexts.

To address this challenge, Education.org established an ‘International Working Group’ (IWG) to build on existing appraisal guidance and to develop a new, coherent and intellectually rigorous system for making a wider range of evidence easier to identify, access, and use in educational decision making. This year, we worked with members of our IWG to develop a framework for rigorous appraisal of a wider range of evidence for education decision-making. Building on existing tools, our guidance places emphasis on the inclusion of a diversity of voices, to elevate locally-generated evidence when generating actionable insights for education decision-making.

## 750

Sources collected

## 136

Sources selected from 49 countries

## 76%

of these were classified as ‘grey literature’ or unpublished reports

Education.org provides an important opportunity to accelerate our progress by drawing on work from other countries across a range of topics. We really need this.

**Chief Education Officer, Sierra Leone’s Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education**

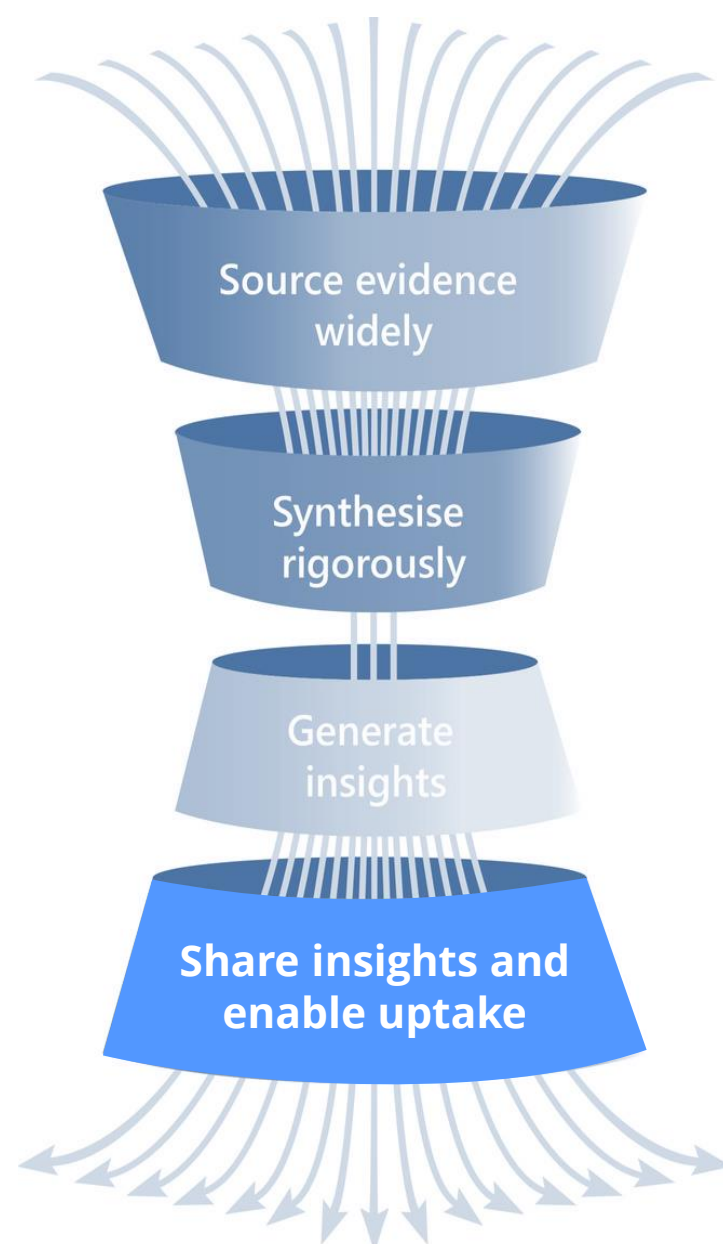


*The International Working Group for \*LEARRN (Leading with Evidence to Achieve Real Reform Now) led by Education.org, with 40 representatives including from: INEE, APHRC, IDRC, The World Bank, USAID, REAL Centre - University of Cambridge, the Open University, the University of Minnesota, the African Union Commission, Dalan Development Consultants, the Government of Liberia, the Government of South Sudan, FAWE, GPE, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Government of Kenya, the Pan-African Evidence Collective, UNHCR, Jacobs Foundation, ESSA, Daystar University, SUMMA, ZiZi Afrique, Global Partnership for Education, The Regional Education Learning Initiative, the Education Endowment Foundation. Our guidance has been tested through country trials in Sierra Leone and Kenya, with feedback presented at this year’s LEARRN roundtable.*



# WE COLLECT EVIDENCE FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO GENERATE INSIGHTS THAT CAN HAVE A NATIONAL IMPACT

A recent example from Sierra Leone demonstrates this link:



## OUR EDUCATION EVIDENCE PATHWAY:

Education catch-up post-COVID-19 raised as major policy challenge by governments.

**750** Sources collected.

**136** Sources selected from 49 countries of which 76% were classified as grey literature. Context and relevance prioritized for further analysis.

**9** Key features of Accelerated Education Programmes used to centre our robust, unique, clear and actionable guidance for policy and practice leaders.

Engage closely with national education teams in crafting tailored plans and policies based on our evidence synthesis and guidance while disseminating and amplifying our guidance through networks and media.

## SIERRA LEONE

We worked closely with the Ministry of Education's Chief Education Officer and her team to establish **new standards for accelerated education programmes and related investments**. We helped to ensure our insights on accelerated education were effectively contextualised; additional local insights could be incorporated; and a broad range of stakeholders could be engaged at the regional and national level to enable policy development and uptake.

### 20 ORGS

Provided expert input on the guidelines to ensure their robustness and relevance to the local context.

### 4 MINISTRIES

Consulted one-on-one on the guidelines, including: the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, as well as the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Health.

### 12 LOCAL

Government authorities provided inputs on the guidelines to ensure their responsiveness to barriers and opportunities of decentralised education processes.



# WE ARE ADVANCING THE CULTURE OF EVIDENCE USE FOR IMMEDIATE IMPACT AND LONG-TERM SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

With partners and education system leaders we've hosted or engaged in action-oriented convenings to strengthen evidence-based decision making as part of our ambition to build an “education knowledge bridge”.



Minister of General Education & Instruction for South Sudan, Awut Deng Acuil, Education.org's Dr Randa Grob-Zakhary, UNHCR's Jennifer Roberts, and Minister of State for Primary Education, Dr Joyce Moriku Kaducu at a co-convened panel at the Global Refugee Forum



Education.org Managing Director for Africa, Dr Kilemi Mwiria, at the launch of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) Kenya Strategic Plan (2023-2026)



Launch of Sierra Leone's National Guidelines for Accelerated Education at the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Freetown, 11 July 2024



Education.org's Dr. Randa Grob-Zakhary and Dr Kilemi Mwiria with Minister of State for Primary Education, Dr Joyce Moriku Kaducu and her team



Kenya's CEO (center front) of the Nomadic Council for Education (NACONEK), HSC Harun Mohamed Yussuf, with Education.org team and partners during a site visit linked to the creation of Kenya's first Accelerated Education Guidelines



Education.org Managing Director for Africa, Dr Kilemi Mwiria, at the launch of the latest Kenya National Education Sector Strategic Plan



Education.org's Dr Suzanne Grant Lewis, Chair of Education Science and Policy, hosts a session at CIES on the quality of education evidence, and “the case for a wider range of evidence”



# THIS HAS BEEN A CRUCIAL YEAR IN OUR JOURNEY TO STRENGTHEN EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING AMONG EDUCATION LEADERS

## BUT WHAT'S NEXT FOR EDUCATION.ORG?

We need to get used to working with evidence to avoid the tendency of always resorting to firefighting. Yet, we are not very comfortable with donor partners funding our policy research because what they do often does not reflect what we consider a priority... rarely have we relevant data to support our actions. Education.org's objective of working alongside us in our daily business is very different from how our other partners work.  
Commissioner with Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda

- 1 We're looking to **scale our synthesis work and insight generation**, using network partners and Artificial Intelligence, to generate more insights on more issues that governments are asking for support with while maintaining our rigorous approach.
- 2 Beyond our initial focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, we're working with **more governments and a wider range of partners** to update policy, create new plans or develop guidelines in response to evidence-based, actionable insights.
- 3 We're embedding **rigour into the use of 'grey' literature** so that our guidance reflects the best, most-relevant evidence. Our first of its' kind International Working Group (IWG), is advancing this mission so that locally rooted evidence is used to inform education decisions in regions where traditional research may be limited or often driven by global north-based institutions.
- 4 We're building a model for embedding a **culture of evidence** use in national governments and implementing partners.
- 5 We're leading the **conversation on the importance of evidence-informed decision making** in education as we help build the bridge across research, policy, and practice.

# WE'VE LAUNCHED A NEW “CALL FOR EVIDENCE” TO PLUG A CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE GAP

**Governments are asking, “what can we do to ensure more students transition to formal school or training after Accelerated Education Programmes”?**

Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) achieve their objectives by applying a condensed curriculum, on an accelerated time frame, often covering the curriculum of two academic years in only nine months. This allows students to gain foundational literacy and numeracy skills and catch up to the age-appropriate level of education and transition to other pathways.

Our evidence synthesis on AEPs uncovered that **there are significant challenges in ensuring students effectively transition to school or training**, and how governments can contribute to effective transitions.

To address this, we have launched a new synthesis – the first on this pressing need - to uncover what happens once a child or young person has finished Accelerated Education, and why.

This ambitious new project, which includes an interactive map of AEPs and policies, will help policymakers facilitate the successful enrolment and retention of AEP learners within the formal education system. The outcomes of this synthesis will also be useful for a wide range of partners, including practitioners and researchers, who are interested in the state of post-AEP transitions for marginalised learners.

## 516

pieces of relevant  
evidence received to date

## 29%

of evidence received to  
date specifically  
addresses girls

## 99

countries included in our  
scope for this call



Il ne reste que **3 jours** pour partager des données probantes!

**Ne manquez pas l'occasion de contribuer à** l'élaboration des recommandations qui peuvent aider à garantir que les enfants et les jeunes effectuent la transition des programmes d'éducation accélérée vers l'enseignement formel ou la formation professionnelle.





# OUR IMPACT WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT A SPECIALISED AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE TEAM OR VISIONARY PARTNERS

**We bring distinct experience in education, policy, research, leadership, and communications.**



Dr Randa Grob-Zakhary  
Founder & CEO



Hon Dr Kilemi Mwiria  
Managing Director - Africa



Dr Suzanne Grant Lewis  
Chair of Education Science and Policy



Giulia Di Filippantonio  
Programme Director



Kenechukwu Nwagbo  
Inaugural LIFT Scholar



Deirdre Beecher  
Information Specialist



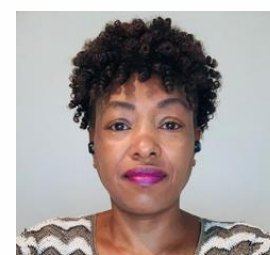
Hon Deng Deng Hoc Yai  
Former South Sudan Education Minister, Advisor



Dr Jean-Marc Bernard  
Chief Technical Officer



Georgina Mallory  
Chief Communications Officer



Dr Evelyn Jepkemei  
Senior Education Officer



Dr Sophia D'Angelo  
Senior Education Officer



Eileen O'Malley  
Senior Advisor



Hendrina Doroba, Head of Skills  
African Development Bank, Advisor



Larry Cooley  
Advisor

# FINANCIAL REPORT – MANAGEMENT LETTER

The Board of Directors and executive management of Insights for Education have considered and adopted the annual report of Insights for Education for the financial year 01 July 2023 – 30 June 2024.

This annual report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Swiss law. In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Foundation's financial position on 30 June 2024, and of the Foundation's activities and cash flows for the financial year 01 July 2023 – 30 June 2024.

- Dr Jan Mischke, Partner, Board President
- Eric Grob, Director
- Eunice Zehnder Lai, Director
- Dr Randa Grob-Zakhary, CEO



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**Report of the statutory auditor on the limited statutory examination**  
to the board of foundation of

**Insights for Education, Oberrieden**

As statutory auditor, we have examined the financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes) of Insights for Education for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the board of foundation. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law. An employee of our company assisted in the bookkeeping during the reporting year. This individual was not involved in the limited statutory examination.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss Standard on the Limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of entity personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of entity documents as considered necessary in the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not comply with Swiss law, the articles of foundation, foundation deed and regulations.

Aarau, 27 August 2024

BDO Ltd



Thomas Schmid

Licensed Audit Expert



p.p. Fabian Hüsler

Auditor in Charge  
Licensed Audit Expert



# FINANCIAL REPORT

## BALANCE SHEET

As of 30 June 2024 (in CHF)

ASSETS	FY 23-24	FY 22-23
Cash and cash equivalents	353,620	1,061,359
Trade receivables	14,131	3,318
Accrued income and prepaid expenses	2,640	3,800
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>370,390</b>	<b>1,068,477</b>
Furniture, installations	4,500	6,000
IT, communications technology	1,700	2,700
<b>TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>8,700</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>376,590</b>	<b>1,077,177</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</b>		
Trade creditors	102,089	96,609
Deferred income and accrued expenses	25,221	327,687
<b>TOTAL SHORT-TERM LIABILITIES</b>	<b>127,310</b>	<b>424,296</b>
<b>EARMARKED FUND CAPITAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>
Available earnings	602,880	475,451
Foundation Capital	50,000	50,000
Annual result	-403,600	127,429
<b>TOTAL FOUNDATION CAPITAL</b>	<b>249,280</b>	<b>652,880</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES, EARMARKED FUND CAPITAL AND FOUNDATION CAPITAL</b>	<b>376,590</b>	<b>1,077,176</b>

### Notes:

**Project Expenses** are those costs that are required to meet objectives of specific projects, these costs would not be incurred if the projects did not exist. **General Administration Costs** are costs for activities or services that support our organisation rather than a specific project. **Administration Shared Costs** are the portion of Shared Costs allocated to administration and determined based on project time tracking. Examples of such costs include occupancy and facilities, utilities, telephone/internet access, etc. Contracted services increased in FY23-24 to reflect a shift towards a geographically distributed team employed through third-party employers of record or individual consultancy contracts. Finance Costs were significantly less due to currency exchange rates.

## INCOME STATEMENT

01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 (in CHF)

OPERATING INCOME	FY 23-24	FY 22-23
Received Grants	1,283,183	1,949,160
<b>PROJECT EXPENSES</b>		
Project-Related Salaries and Benefits	656,949	999,862
Contracted Services	731,207	458,922
Travel, Conferences and Meetings	107,012	112,267
Project Shared Costs	57,727	59,324
<b>TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,552,893</b>	<b>1,630,375</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES</b>		
General Administration Staff Costs	55,567	37,251
Other General Administration Costs	45,449	49,960
Finance Cost	27,336	98,681
<b>TOTAL GENERAL ADMINISTRATION COSTS</b>	<b>128,352</b>	<b>185,893</b>
Administration Shared Costs	3,037	1,864
Depreciation and amortisation of fixed assets	2,500	3,600
<b>TOTAL SHARED ADMINISTRATION COSTS</b>	<b>5,538</b>	<b>5,464</b>
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES</b>	<b>133,890</b>	<b>191,357</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,686,783</b>	<b>1,821,731</b>



## VISION

A world where the education of all children and young people is transformed by the best evidence.

## MISSION

To improve the learning of every child and young person by helping leaders access and use the best evidence to guide their national policies and plans.

**FOR MORE ON WHO WE ARE VISIT**  
**EDUCATION.ORG AND CONTACT US AT**  
**INFO@EDUCATION.ORG**