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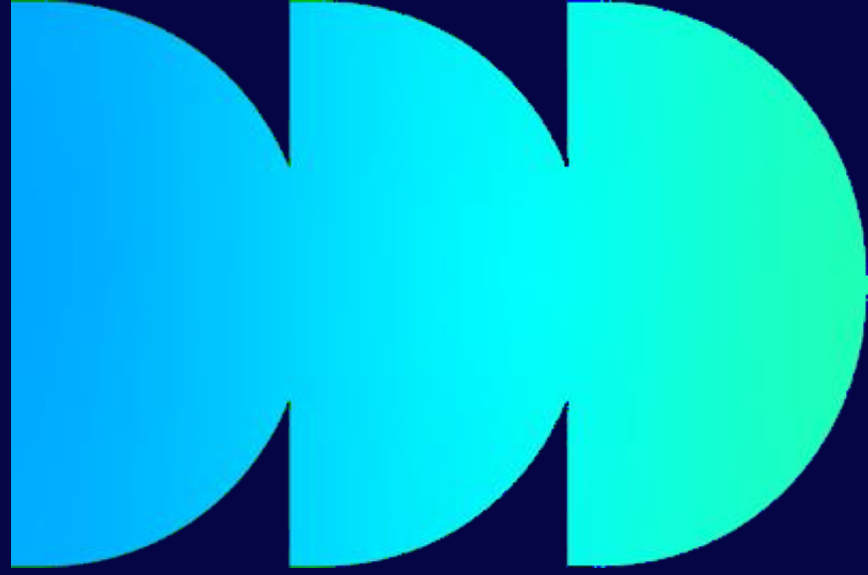
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Catch Up Learning Programmes:

A Landscape Review in the NGO Space.

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Contents

Introduction	4
Methodology	5
Summary of Initiatives	6
Analysis	9
Conclusion	16
Annex A: Synopsis of Initiatives	17
Annex B: Deeper Dives into Three Initiatives	26

Introduction

This landscape report aims to provide a review of humanitarian educational programmes designed to improve foundational learning skills for vulnerable children and increase their access to and progress within formal educational systems. The report explores key aspects of these programmes, including children targeted, content focus, pedagogical approaches and delivery systems. By analyzing these dimensions across various accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives, the report seeks to understand what decisions organizations are making in their design, implementation and evaluation of programmes. and how these choices impact outcomes.

In particular, the report aims to inform the World Vision Catch-Up Programme (CUP) by mapping similar initiatives, exploring outcomes and identifying both commonalities and differences with other initiatives. This comparison can then help to position CUP within the broader context of accelerated and catch-up education for children affected by conflict, displacement, or other crises.

The landscape review focuses on examples of accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives active in the past three years, many of which have been profiled by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). The following major NGOs and their accelerated and catch-up learning programmes are covered: Luminos Fund, Save the Children, War Child, Plan International, VVOB, Creative Associates International, UNICEF and FHI 360. All implement programmes in multiple countries and contexts.

Methodology

This review is of accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives active in the past three years (2022 to 2024) within the NGO space. To be able to identify the initiatives, the first point of search was the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) profile list of NGOs working on accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives, followed by a wider scan on the google web to identify more initiatives. This approach was used as information on most of the learning initiatives fell under the category of grey literature, hence academic databases were not searched.

Focus questions for the landscape review were:

- What is the overall purpose of the program? E.g., improving foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes / supporting out-of-school children into school / enabling in-school children to succeed at their grade level / building resilient learners who complete basic education.
- Which age/grade/characteristics of children are being targeted?
- What is the overall approach?
- What is the content?
- What is the delivery system and who delivers?
- What kinds of outcomes are being achieved?
- Are there any data / reflections on cost-effectiveness?

After the identification of accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives through the grey literature search, we narrowed the focus to learning more about three of the most active and long running initiatives with a scalable impact track record, which align with World Vision International's goals for their catch-up learning initiatives.

We identified key contact people within these organizations and interviewed four people directly involved with these accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives. These were.

- Luminos Fund - Professor Kwame Acheampong, Board of Directors;
- Luminos Fund in Ethiopia - Hassen Assen, Country Manager and formerly Senior Programme Manager;
- Luminos Fund in Ghana - Suwaida Aziz, Programme Manager;
- Save the Children - Crystal Holt, Senior Education Advisor, Save the Children UK.

Summary of Initiatives

No	Name of initiative	Age Range	Duration	Scale	Vulnerability	Approach	Outcomes
1.	Luminos in Ghana	8-14	10 months	6,017 learners (since March 2022)	Out of school children due to child labour in cocoa producing areas of the Ashanti region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joyful and foundational learning 	Foundational literacy and numeracy acquired for transition into Government schools
2.	Luminos in The Gambia	8-14	10 months	1,587 learners (since 2022-23)	Out of school children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joyful and foundational learning 30 learners per class for 5 days a week Incorporate Gambian stories, songs, and games into the activity-based curriculum 	Foundational literacy and numeracy acquired for transition into Government schools
3.	Luminos in Lebanon	8-14	10 months	8,455 learners (since 2016)	Out-of-school children (often Syrian refugee children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joyful and foundational learning Collaboration with local publishers to incorporate Lebanese stories into the curriculum 	Foundational skills in Arabic, English, and Math, as well as psychosocial well-being support
4.	Luminos in Liberia	8-14	10 months	23,420 learners (since 2016)	Out of schoolchildren and those with learning losses to catch up to grade level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joyful and foundational learning Collaboration with local publishers to incorporate Liberian stories into the curriculum 	Enter or re-enter into government schools
5.	Luminos in Ethiopia	9-14	10 months	238,308 learners (since 2011)	Children who are out of school and living in remote areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading with four times as many hours than the formal classroom Student-centred instruction Integrated lesson delivery with activity-based learning methods Emphasis on continuous formative assessment, taking time for feedback and remediation 	Foundational reading, writing, and maths skills, which help children transition into 3rd or 4th grade at local government schools

No	Name of initiative	Age Range	Duration	Scale	Vulnerability	Approach	Outcomes
6.	Save the Children	9 to 13 with some slightly older children	12 weeks	In 2022, over 16,000 learners in Uganda, Columbia, Myanmar, Malawi, Bangladesh, Egypt, Afghanistan	Out-of-school children and children falling behind in Grades 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play-based approaches to teaching to make learning enjoyable • Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) • Instructional and livelihood support for facilitators • Child Protection Case Management in support of children's wellbeing • Financial support to families - Cash and Vouchers Assistance (CVA) or links to existing social protection schemes 	Targeted support in literacy and social and emotional learning acting as short remedial classes aiming to address immediate educational needs
7.	War Child	Youth and children	3 months	Over 205,000 children in 8 countries	Children living within conflict and war zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-appropriate flexible education delivered outside of traditional school settings and in a shorter timeframe via a condensed curriculum / intensified timetable 	Improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for children affected by conflict
8.	Plan international	Children and young people	3 years	Over 4,000 children in Cameroon	Out-of-school children in Cameroon due to insecurity and disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational literacy and numeracy skills • Learning about mutual respect, living together, promoting peace in the community 	Help the children finish primary school education within 3 years as against the normal 6 years within mainstream school system
9.	VVOB Zambia	Children in Grade 3-5	2 terms	736,749 Grade 3-5 learners	Primary school students falling behind in literacy and numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning through play, social-emotional learning • 1 hour per day for 2 terms 	Equipping schoolteachers with skills to teach basic literacy and numeracy to Grade 3 to 5 learners Improved learning outcomes
10.	VVOB Uganda	Children in Grade 3-5	Over school year	33,682 learners in 80 primary schools	Primary school students falling behind in literacy and numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching at the Right Level • Learning through play • Catch-up class in the morning before normal classes 	Equipping schoolteachers with skills to teach basic literacy and numeracy Improved learning outcomes
11.	Creative Associates International	8-15	9 months	Over 116,000+ in Somalia	Out-of-school children and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach is woven around 'supporting children's ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach' 	Acquire foundational skills to transition to the formal education system or pursue livelihood opportunities

No	Name of initiative	Age Range	Duration	Scale	Vulnerability	Approach	Outcomes
12.	UNICEF Yemen	Up to 16 years	Not specified	6,128 children	Out-of-school children in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch-up classes conducted during after school hours, and teachers focus on local-language teaching of basic skills in the subjects of language and mathematics through play, games, and active participation • Life skills to build their social resilience and shape their personalities and abilities 	Improving foundational learning to equip the children with the skills and knowledge necessary for their re-entry into formal education
13	Passerelles (FHI 360) Southern Senegal	9-11	9 months	852 children in Years 1-3 versus target of 8.800	Children who have dropped out or are older than the age limit for the grade in which they should enrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational literacy and math skills • Socio-emotional competencies • Learning in safe, nurturing environments • Volunteer teachers' training and coaching locally led and locally monitored. 	Transition to formal school (55%) Improved reading and maths learning (15-18% higher in their composite scores) Higher self-efficacy correlated with transition
14	World Vision International -Ethiopia, Chile, Zimbabwe	6-11	4-9 months	Ethiopia- 339; Chile-416 Zimbabwe- 16,748	Children with low literacy and/or numeracy skills in and out of school. This included migrant children, IDPs, children out of school and children with low foundational skills across contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community or school based catch up classes offered in 2 levels to children based on entry assessment • Scope and sequence of foundational literacy and numeracy integrating social emotional learning • Learning in safe, nurturing, playful environments • Led by community volunteers or teachers 	Improved literacy, numeracy and SEL skills. Increased confidence and connection with learning. Positive transition or retention in formal school.

Analysis

Across these programmes, clear areas of commonality can be seen, which align strongly with features of WV CUP, most notably:

- **Purpose**
 - The programmes aim to enable children to effectively engage or re-engage in mainstream schooling. (The exceptions are War Child and UNICEF in Yemen, where it is less certain that formal schooling is functional in the catch-up settings).

- **Contexts**
 - For all the NGOs (including WV), the accelerated and catch-up learning programmes are implemented in multiple countries and in diverse settings.

- **Content**
 - All programmes have a strong emphasis on foundational literacy skills for children and young people, and most also have a strong emphasis on foundational numeracy skills.
 - All programmes include social emotional learning, explicitly or implicitly.

- **Pedagogy**
 - Joyful, active learning through play is at the core of all the programmes.
 - Teaching at the Right Level is another key principle seen across the initiatives.
 - Structured pedagogy is used, including detailed Facilitator Guides.
 - Assessing children’s foundational literacy and numeracy at the start and end of programmes is common across the programmes, as is lighter-touch continuous assessment during the programme. All programmes use standard tools for the start and end assessments, such as Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), Diagnostic and Proficiency Assessment (DAPA).

- **Delivery**
 - All programmes engage community-based facilitators, if they are not direct teacher professional development initiatives.
 - Strong community partnerships are a critical foundation for all the programmes.

- **Child Protection**
 - All initiatives have a Child Protection component.

However, there are areas of striking difference between the programmes and with WV CUP, principally:

- **Programme Motivation**

- Whilst some of the programmes are responses to the educational disruptions caused by Covid-19 (Save the Children, WV), others have been active for a longer period (e.g., Luminos from 2016, War Child from 2012).

- **Target Children**

- Most of the programmes target children from 8 to 14 years. WV CUP is unusual in targeting younger children aged 6 to 9 years.
- There is a spread across the programmes in respect to whether out-of-school children are the focus, or those in school who are falling behind in literacy and numeracy and at risk of dropping out, or both.
- In Save the Children, the experiences of children with disabilities are forefronted.

- **Delivery**

- The duration of the programmes varies considerably from 3 to 4 months (Save the Children, War Child, WV) to approximately 1 year (Creative Associates International, FHI 360, Luminos, VVOB) to 3 years (Plan International).
- The session time per week also varies widely from 2 to 5 hours (VVOB, WV) up to 35 hours per week (Luminos).
- The exposure time for learning is therefore very different across the programmes. The initiatives with lower exposure time tend to describe themselves as catch-up programmes; whereas those with higher exposure time describe themselves as accelerated learning programmes and have a slightly extended curriculum.
- The approach to class sizes varies; for example. Luminos have 25–30 learners per class, WV CUP has a recommended maximum size of 25 learners but the demand from communities may lead to increased class sizes. In contrast, Save the Children have class sizes of 40 to 50 learners, but with two facilitators. FHI 360 also have class sizes of 50 learners.

- **Formative Assessment**

- The frequency of formative assessment varies across programmes. For example, for Luminos in Ethiopia continuous assessment takes place every week, based on that week's content, with results recorded in Kobo Toolbox. For Save the Children, continuous assessment is every two weeks. Whilst in other programmes, such as WV CUP, formative assessments are less structured and timetabled and more informal approaches are used.

- **Use of Technology**
 - War Child is the only initiative that foregrounds technology. The ‘Can’t Wait to Learn’ programme uses digital technology and co-created, contextualized content aligned with national curriculum to deliver learning through online and offline games. Children learn to read and count at their own pace via tablets, laptops, and mobile phones. The programme was adapted for remote delivery to meet challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Additional Provision**
 - Save the Children is the only example seen of providing financial support to families through Cash and Vouchers Assistance (CVA) or links to existing social protection schemes as a component of the catch-up learning programme.

Of particular interest may be areas where there are both similarities and differences with WV CUP; where organisations arrive at a similar point but from different philosophies or motivations, or a similar approach manifests in different modalities in practice. Examples include:

- **Adaptation Approaches**
 - All organisations make adaptations / contextualisations for different countries and potentially for different settings within these different countries. What varies is how the adaptation is conceptualized – whether this is seen as a set of global products available for country / local adaptation or a set of global principles that guides the design and development of programme materials and delivery within each country. Of course, this is not a straight dichotomy, but more two ends of a spectrum, on to which individual programmes’ approaches fit. This leads on to what underpins the adaptation approach and process – to what extent are the programme values, content and delivery driven by local cultures in each country, to what extent are local stories and artefacts used, to what extent are Government materials used. For example, Luminos speak about an Afro-centric approach built on the philosophy of ubuntu, with a strong emphasis on local oral cultures.

- **Capacity Building and/or Expansion**
 - Another spectrum, against which the programmes can be looked, is the extents to which they build the capacity of existing educators, to which they bring in new actors to support children’s learning, and to which new ‘learning teams¹’ are formed. The VVOB programmes are direct teacher

¹ [Learning Teams for Foundational – LGI \(learninggeneration.org\)](https://www.learninggeneration.org/)

professional development initiatives. In contrast, most other organisations bring new capacity into the local education ecosystem through community-based facilitators, as does WV CUP. What is less clear is how often bringing in new actors to support children's learning reaches a point where it might be said that the school and community-based facilitators are working as a team with people taking on new roles and extending or adapting the scope of their existing roles or responsibilities. WV in Zimbabwe is an example where teachers and community-based facilitators adopt more team-orientated practices.

- **Structured Pedagogy Practices**

- As highlighted earlier, all initiatives adopt a structured pedagogy approach, but there is variation as to the level of detail and prescription within the facilitator guidance and lesson plans. Luminos in Ethiopia provide a Facilitator Guide with Individual lesson plans, with a strong emphasis on phonics for first-generation readers. Save the Children provide a detailed scripted learning curriculum of levelled learning activities, but it is up to the individual facilitators to decide upon what activities to use within each session. VVOB provide Teachers' Catch-Up Guides, setting out the teacher's role as a facilitator and relevant techniques and activities, sample lesson plans and guiding frames, but do not 'script' each learning session.

- **Relationships with Schools and Government**

- There are diverse relationships with schools and Government around the extent to which they are collaborators, active participants, or partners for change. All programmes work together with national and local ministries of education. Some initiatives, such as Luminos Fund, use Government textbooks and materials in their accelerated learning programmes, whilst others engage Government in active approvals of the teaching and learning resources they develop. Some programmes, such as VVOB, work directly in schools with classroom teachers; others site their programmes within schools and are purposive about promoting changes in teaching and learning in mainstream classes, such as Luminos Fund; whereas others implement their programmes in informal settings, such as War Child. The extent to which the initiatives seek to drive change in the formal system also varies. A notable example is Luminos in Ethiopia, where the programme has two strands, one of which is Government adoption which scales up the programme in Government schools, with Luminos support for training Government teachers and supervisors. Luminos in Ethiopia has also influenced the Government accelerated learning policy and the establishment of the Government Accelerated Learning Unit.

- **Intentionality of Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

- SEL principles are embedded across all programmes. For example, Creative Associates International fosters an environment where children can grow by integrating SEL into its programming. In Luminos Fund, each child has a classroom responsibility, such as ambassador, cleaner, lawyer, attendance taker, water person, police officer, and these roles revolve every 15 days. However, SEL is more intentionally included in some programmes. For example, Creative Associates International includes trauma support learning in conflict affected settings. The UNICEF Yemen Catch-Up Learning Programme purposively includes life skills training to help children to build their social resilience.

- **Extent of Evidence Capture**

- All programmes aim to improve children’s foundational learning, but the ways of capturing evidence vary. In most programmes, including WV CUP, pre- and post-intervention testing is conducted through a simple standardized assessment tool. Other organisations gather further evidence. Luminos in Liberia use randomized controlled trials (RCT) to explore learning gains among children on the Second Chance programme. For Save the Children in Malawi, a quasi-experimental longitudinal panel study was conducted to assess the effects of cash on student participation in Catch-up Clubs and learning outcomes. For War Child, a quasi-experimental mixed-methods evaluation of their digital game-based learning programme for out-of-school children in Sudan has been conducted.
- As well as improving children’s foundational learning skills, the programmes aim to enable children to engage or re-engage effectively in formal education. There are different approaches to finding out what happens to learners if / when they go to school. For some initiatives, this is outside the remit of their standard monitoring and evaluation processes and collected where possible. However, for the Luminos Fund, children, who transition, are followed for the next 3 years to see how they progress in school. In addition, a 7-year longitudinal study was undertaken by the University of Sussex tracking the progress of Second Chance graduates.

- **Linguistic Diversity**

- Most programmes make conscious efforts to use local languages, but responding to linguistic diversity of the learners in sessions remains challenging. The extent to which this is surfaced varies. Perhaps the most explicit reflections encountered are from Luminos in Ghana, where one facilitator may be with a group of children speaking a range of languages (perhaps three or more).

A final reflection is how the above aligns with the principles of Accelerated Education Working Group ([Catch-up Programmes: 10 Principles for Helping Learners Catch Up and Return to Learning | INEE](#)).

LEARNERS

- Principle 1: The catch-up programme meets the holistic needs of learners whose education was disrupted for several months to approximately a year.
- Principle 2: The learning environment is physically and emotionally safe, and emergency prevention, preparedness, and response plans are in place.
- Principle 3: The catch-up programme curriculum is condensed — prioritising, integrating, and reinforcing the most essential competencies.
- Principle 4: Instructional time, delivery modality, and examinations are adapted.
- Principle 5: The catch-up programme effectively uses learner-centred pedagogy.

All the initiatives have these principles at the core of their programmes, but, as seen above, are enacted in a variety of ways.

TEACHERS

- Principle 6: Teachers are (re)engaged and their well-being is supported after the education disruption.
- Principle 7: Teachers have the capacity and resources to re-engage all learners and implement the catch-up programme.

There is greater variation amongst the initiatives as to who the educators are (i.e., whether they are teachers or community or volunteer facilitators), the extent of initial trainings provided and the extent to which ongoing support is built in and practicable.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

- Principle 8: Learners, families, and communities are informed, consulted, engaged, and accountable.

Again, all the initiatives have these principles at the core of their programmes, but are enacted in a variety of ways in very diverse contexts.

ALIGNMENT WITH MOE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

- Principle 9: The catch-up programme is recognised by and aligned with the national education system and has clear transition pathways.

- Principle 10: The catch-up programme is integrated into the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture.

There is greater variation amongst the initiatives as to the extent to which the programmes are linked to or more formally embedded in the national and local education systems and to how transition into formal schooling happens from specific placement examinations run by the local system to more informal practices.

Conclusion

This report maps out key accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives active within the past three years in the NGO space. The grey literature search highlighted their implementation approach and key elements of their design, such as area of focus, aims and objectives, and targeted groups of children. Interviews were conducted with the Luminos Fund, Luminos in Ghana, Luminos in Ethiopia, and Save the Children. This led to a deeper understanding of the practical day-to-day running of their learning initiatives.

The landscape report highlights a diverse array of accelerated and catch-up learning initiatives aimed at improving foundational learning for vulnerable, in-school and out-of-school children across various contexts. Common themes among the programmes include a focus on joyful and active learning, community-based approaches, and tailored interventions based on the children's specific needs. For instance, the Luminos Fund operates in multiple countries, using joyful learning methods to engage children, leading to significant learning outcomes in foundational literacy and numeracy. These programmes help children transition back into formal education systems. Save the Children incorporates social and emotional learning, while providing financial and community-based support, ensuring a holistic approach to addressing children's learning and wellbeing.

A critical element in many of these programmes is the focus on children affected by crises or living in conflict zones, such as War Child and Plan International, which emphasize flexible, accelerated learning opportunities tailored to the children's realities. UNICEF also provides education in emergency settings, equipping children with foundational skills while focusing on resilience-building to prepare for future challenges.

In reflecting on this analysis, it becomes clear that, while there are commonalities in the goals and approaches of these programmes — such as fostering foundational skills and preparing children for reintegration into formal education systems — the specific strategies, durations, and vulnerability contexts vary. The collaborative, inclusive nature of the interventions seeks to ensure that even the most marginalized children can regain access to learning, making these initiatives vital for advancing educational equity. By embedding learning through community engagement, leveraging local resources, and focusing on practical applications, these programmes not only restore educational opportunities but also have the potential to build a foundation for lifelong resilience and learning.

Annex A: Synopsis of Initiatives

A1.Luminos Fund

The Luminos Fund works in five countries, namely [Ethiopia](#), [Ghana](#), [Lebanon](#), [Liberia](#), and [The Gambia](#). Luminos collaborates with multiple partners, such as the national Governments (usually directly with Ministries of Education), community-based organisations (CBOs) and other NGOs to co-create and run its learning programmes. Popularly called ‘Second Chance’, the programmes aim to develop resilient learners, especially girls, who ‘survive’ and complete basic education, and to do this in ways that positively influence the learning relationships, pedagogies and practices in mainstream schools. Using a structured pedagogy approach with Government textbooks as well as their own learner packs and facilitator guides, Luminos catch-up learning programmes cover the first three years of schooling in the space of 10 months to prepare children to transition into 3rd or 4th grade at their local government schools. The catch-up sessions entail reading, writing, and arithmetic skills with a key emphasis on placing children at the centre of the learning relationship. Children are also exposed to the sciences, music, art, and environmental science. Children’s local languages are considered. A typical class size is between 25 to 30.

Luminos’ approach includes the following elements:

- Community teachers - training and supporting facilitators drawn from local communities
- Teacher-led assessment
- [Phonics for First-Generation Readers /](#)
- [Joyful Learning](#)
- [Community partners](#)
- [Iterative Design](#)
- [Real-Time Data](#)
- Identity & Self-Belief

Tracking studies provide positive evidence of children’s improved learning and completion of basic education.

Luminos in Ghana

Launched in 2022, Ghana is one of Luminos areas of operations. In Ghana, they are based in the Ashanti region, Kumasi, where child labour in the cocoa sector is common. Luminos collaborates with the Government of Ghana and CBOs such as [School for life](#) and [Link Community Development \(LCD\)](#). Luminos is also working with the Ministry of Education to build upon Ghana’s national accelerated learning curriculum programme [Complementary Basic Education \(CBE\)](#). Luminos accelerated learning classes called Second Chance are targeted at out-of-school children aged 8-14 with the aim of providing them with foundational literacy and numeracy

skills. After completion, children transition into government schools.

Further details are provided in Annex 2.1.

A2. Luminos in The Gambia

Starting in 2022-23, Luminos in The Gambia works in partnership with the Gambian Government to co-create a learning curriculum with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and local community partners, such as [effective intervention](#) and Future in Our Hands, The Gambia (FIOH). The programme targets out-of-school children aged 8-14, who learn how to read, write, and do maths in one school year. Thirty students per class attend five days a week and Gambian stories, songs, and games are incorporated into the joyful, activity-based curriculum, with its focus on foundational learning.

A3. Luminos in Lebanon

Luminos has been operating in Lebanon since 2016. It provides learning support to out-of-school children (often Syrian refugee children) and to children in need of extra support due to learning losses. The aim of Luminos accelerated learning classes supports children to develop foundational skills in Arabic, English, and Maths, as well as supporting their psychosocial wellbeing. In Lebanon, Luminos works with community partners such as [Ana Aqra Association](#) , [Bamen & Zeitooneh](#), alongside the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to co-create and deliver their programmes. Their work here is critical as Lebanon continues to face humanitarian crises, and a high number of [displaced persons per capita in the world](#) with an estimation of [1.5 million](#) Syrian refugees.

A4. Luminos in Liberia

Luminos has worked in Liberia since 2016, working with the Liberian Government and CBOs, such as [Kids' Educational Engagement Project](#) , [Restoring Our Children's Hope \(ROCH\)](#), [Liberia Institute for the Promotion of Academic Excellence \(LIPACE\)](#) and [Special Emergency Activity to Restore Children's Hope \(SEARCH\)](#) .

In the case of Liberia, civil war, the Ebola outbreak and the Covid-19 pandemic have weakened the education system, The Luminos accelerated learning programme targets out-of-school children and those with learning loss to catch up to grade level, or re-enter government schools. Classes of 30 students attend 5 days a week for 10 months, covering the first three grades of school. Luminos has also collaborated with local publishers to incorporate Liberian stories into the curriculum. Lunch is provided for the children.

Evaluation reports include:

- [Luminos fund second chance program, Liberia endline evaluation report June 2019](#)
- [Report On the Evaluation of The Quality of The Teaching & Learning in The Second Chance Program for Out of School Children in Liberia Carried Out, 2019](#)
- [Second chance Liberia endline evaluation report October 2021](#)
- [Liberia 2021-22 endline evaluation report](#)
- [Amid Global Learning Crisis, New RCT Shows Dramatic Learning Gains for Luminos Students in Liberia - Luminos Fund](#)

A5. Luminos in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is Luminos Fund's largest and longest-running programme. Here, Luminos runs an accelerated learning programme targeted at primary aged children who are out of school and living in remote areas. Children are supported to achieve foundational reading, writing, and maths skills. The curriculum also includes sciences, music, art, English and environmental science, and uses children's local languages.

Luminos partners with the Government and with over ten CBOs such as [African Child Policy Forum \(ACPF\)](#), [Emmanuel Development Association](#), [Positive Action for Development \(PAD\)](#), [Tigray Development Association \(TDA\)](#) and [Operation Rescue, a child care project](#) among others. Their Second Chance accelerated learning programme is also known as Speed School and covers the first three years of schooling in ten months and then helps children transition into 3rd or 4th grade at their local government schools.

Key focus areas include:

- Reading - giving four times as many hours as mainstream school classes.
- Student-centred instruction.
- Integrated lesson delivery with activity-based learning methods.
- Emphasis on continuous formative assessment, taking time for feedback and remediation.

Evaluation reports include:

- 2018 [A longitudinal study of out-of-school education in Ethiopia](#) tracked 625 children who participated in the Luminos 10-month program.
- [Luminos Program Impact Evaluation Randomized controlled trial of an accelerated learning program for out-of-school children in Liberia](#)
- [Ethiopia Inaugurates New Speed School Unit to Reach Out-of-School Children - Geneva Global](#)

Further details are provided in Annex 2.2.

A6. Save the Children

[Save the Children](#) runs catch-up clubs (CuCs) to support out-of-school children and children who are behind in their foundational literacy skills. They were started in 2021 to address learning loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Now CuCs provide targeted support for literacy and social and emotional learning, acting as short-term remedial classes aiming to address the immediate educational needs of children who are at greater risk of falling behind due to school disruptions. Target children are from middle to upper primary grades of 3 to 5 or 4 to 6. 90- to 120-minute learning sessions are provided. [Save the Children](#) CuCs have been implemented in over twelve countries such as Uganda, Colombia, Myanmar, Malawi, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Afghanistan.

Some key elements of CuCs are:

- Play-based approaches to teaching to make learning enjoyable.
- Continuous assessment every two weeks.
- Supporting children with child protection and cash and voucher assistance to promote inclusion and overcome protection and poverty-related barriers to education.
- Volunteer Community Learning Facilitators (CLFs) and Community Learning Inclusion Facilitators (CLIFs).
- Community-based; learning facilitators are recruited from within local communities and supported with training.
- Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL).
- Instructional and livelihood support for facilitators.

Reports and evaluations include:

- [Catch Up Clubs Concept Note for Girls and Women](#)
- [Evidence Update 2022](#)
- [Catch up Clubs General Concept Note for Children](#)
- [Catch-Up Clubs](#), 2024.
- [Impact of Catch-up Clubs in Conflict-affected Myanmar: A community-led remedial learning model](#), 2023
- [Malawi Catch-Up Clubs \(CuCs\) Sponsorship Evaluation](#) 2024
- [Impact story Malawi](#) 2024
- [Impact Evaluation Report: Malawi Catch-Up Clubs & CVA: Impact of Cash on Learning Outcomes | Save the Children's Resource Centre](#)

Further details are provided in Annex 2.3.

A7. War Child

War Child runs catch-up learning programmes targeted at children living within conflict areas helping to ensure that children do not miss out on their learning and can catch up on their education. It operates in Uganda, Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other countries. For example, War Child runs the [Can't Wait to Learn@Home](#) programme in refugee camps and host communities within Uganda. In addition to the catch-up learning classes, War Child ensures the safety of children, so they do not miss classes and shields them from violence and exploitation in their journeys to and from classes.

They deliver their catch-up learning classes through condensed curricula and train teachers in delivering these lessons. Their catch-up classes allow age-appropriate education to be delivered outside of traditional school settings and in a shorter timeframe, reaching children and young people who are out of school, disadvantaged or over usual schooling age.

War Child catch-up learning provides:

- Support to caregivers of the children.
- Educational supplies and school meals so that parents can afford to keep their children learning.
- Additional psychosocial support and learning guidance through home visits.

Can't Wait to Learn uses digital technology and co-created, contextualized content to deliver learning through online and offline games. It is co-created together with children - ensuring that the 'game world' reflects their real world and celebrates their unique culture. It is also based on government-approved curricula so that children playing the educational games can progress to the same level as those in formal schooling. Children learn to read and count at their own pace via tablets, laptops, and mobile phones.

Reports include:

- [Can't Wait To Learn boosting education | War Child](#)

A8. Plan International

[Plan International](#) runs accelerated education programmes dubbed ‘a second chance at education.’ One example is targeted at out-of-school children in Cameroon affected by insecurity and disasters. ‘A second chance at education’ was piloted in Logone et Chari and Mayo Sava Divisions. It aims to help children complete primary school education within three years as against six years within Cameroon's normal school system. Plan international partnered with the Norwegian Refugee Council in the construction of a temporal learning spaces, the distribution of school and teaching kits, and the recruitment and training of community leaders and monitors.

Reports include:

- [A second chance at education for out-of-school children](#)

A9. VVOB - Zambia

VVOB focuses on multiple countries, including Cambodia, Ecuador, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Vietnam, South Africa, and Zambia. It runs a number of catch-up learning programmes known as UCatch-Up. These mostly focus on equipping schoolteachers with skills to help children who are out of school and to teach basic literacy and numeracy skills to Grade 3 to 5 learners in remedial catch-up lessons.

In Zambia, VVOB runs a numbers of catch-up programmes with partners, such as the Ministry of General Education (MoE), [Teaching at the Right Level Africa](#), [The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab \(JPAL\)](#) and [Pratham](#)

VVOB supports mentorship and professional development of teachers to help teachers and school leaders in government and community schools to teach basic literacy and numeracy skills to Grade 3 to 5 learners in remedial catch-up lessons. The focus is on learning through play, social-emotional learning, and literacy skills.

Programmes include:

- [Zambia - ABC Catch Up: remedial teaching and learning in Central Province](#) achieving children’s basic competencies through catch-up, with a focus on: professional development of teachers and school leaders; remedial teaching and learning; gender; equity.
- [Zambia - Catch Up: scaling TaRL and learning through play \(Lusaka Province\)](#) with a focus on: professional development of teachers and school leaders; equity; learning through play; social-emotional learning. Government staff provide mentorship and support to teachers and school leaders

in government and community schools, so they can assess and teach basic literacy and numeracy skills to Grade 3 to 5 learners within a framework of remedial catch-up lessons.

- [Zambia - Catch Up: scaling TaRL in Southern & Eastern Provinces](#) has a similar focus, objectives and approach to that in Lusaka Province. It focuses on strengthening the capacity of Government staff at zonal, district and provincial level to ensure the TaRL approach is infused in the regular activities of both schools and the Ministry of Education (MoE).

VA10 VOB - Uganda

In Uganda, VVOB runs the UCatch-Up Kasese1 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Primary Learners initiative to address learning loss during Covid-19, through offering remedial teaching to children.

The programme trains teachers to support children in Grades 3 to 5 to acquire foundational literacy and numeracy skills and social-emotional learning. There is a huge emphasis on the use of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL).

VVOB catch-up classes, known as UCatch-Up, are provided before and after regular school hours, to allow learners to catch up and improve their literacy and numeracy ability. The approach emphasizes learning through play through teacher professional development.

Reports include:

- [Uganda - UCatch Up Kasese 1: Foundational literacy and numeracy for primary learners | VVOB](#)

A11. Creative Associates

[Creative](#) works in over thirty countries, alongside governments and communities, to develop alternative education programmes via non-formal education centres with an accelerated curriculum. Its learning programmes act as remedial and accelerated learning models, to support [out-of-school children and youth](#) to obtain foundational skills and to transition to the formal system or pursue livelihood opportunities. For example, in northern Nigeria through partnership with USAID-funded Northern Education Initiative Plus project, formal [learning centers](#) operate for 9 months. The approach is woven around 'supporting children's ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach.'

Creative catch-up programmes aim to provide:

- A safe environment to learn.
- Focus on basic literacy skills and maths.
- Psychological support before integration into formal schools.
- Social and emotional learning, see trauma support learning [Trauma-Informed Education in Northern](#)

[Ethiopia.](#)

- A curriculum that prioritizes being compatible with existing systems with a path to accreditation. This is essential to ensure that students are not only learning but that their studies are recognized for the next level of schooling or to join the workforce.
- Mainstreaming into formal schools and access to quality education.

Reports include:

- [Think Creative issue 5](#)

A12. UNICEF

In Yemen, with financial support from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations European (ECHO), UNICEF implemented the [Catch-up Learning Program Brings Out-of-School Children Back to Schools](#) to support 6,128 (3,423 male, 2,705 female) displaced out-of-school children. UNICEF has implemented a catch-up learning programme across Internally Displaced (IDP) camps in Marib to equip the children with the skills and knowledge necessary for their re-entry into formal education.

The catch-up learning programme aims to support students to make up for the lessons they have missed, teach them skills, and provide them with psychological support services so they can enroll into formal education. Life skills training programmes aim to provide teachers with the competencies necessary to deal with the experiences of out-of-school displaced children.

Other examples of UNICEF catch-up programmes include:

- [Remedial catch-up learning programmes support children with COVID-19 learning loss and inform the national foundational learning strategy \(Rwanda\) | UNICEF](#)
- [Catch-up classes help children in Ukraine recover lost learning | UNICEF](#)

A13. PASSARELLES PROJECT (FHI 360)

The USAID Passerelles project (2018-2023) offered relevant and responsive non-formal education services, creating gateways (“passerelles” in French) for transition into formal schooling in southern Senegal.

The project implemented and supported three non-formal education modalities, designed for specific learners and their communities:

- Classes Passerelles (CP) consisted of nine-month accelerated education programmes targeting children aged 9-11 years who had dropped out or were older than the age limit for the grade in which they should enrol. This modality is included in the table in the main text.

- Écoles Communautaire de Base (ECB) were three-year programmes established in communes with high numbers of out-of-school children and no formal schools, targeting children aged 9-14 years who had never attended school and needed foundational skills in reading and math.
- Daaras Communautaires are Quranic schools where parents send children aged 6 to 14 years for religious education. Passerelles partnered with community and religious leaders to incorporate foundational French and mathematics into the curriculum.

Community-driven needs and asset assessments allowed parents, youth, and local leaders to support and have oversight over the programmes. Volunteer educators recruited from the communities were equipped with the necessary skills and resources to facilitate effective learning. This support enabled children to acquire foundational literacy and math skills, develop socio-emotional competencies, and learn in safe, nurturing environments.

32% of participants successfully transitioned to a formal school – 55% for CP, 34% for ECB and 18% for Daara. CP students had scores that were 15-18% higher in their composite reading and math scores than those who had not participated. Learners across modalities who transitioned were more likely to have higher self-efficacy scores (i.e., their belief in their own ability to succeed), even when controlling for academic achievement.

Reports include:

- [USAID Passerelles Senegal - FHI 360](#)
- [resource-passerelles-transition-to-formal-education-brief.pdf \(fhi360.org\)](#)
- [PA00ZH79.pdf \(usaid.gov\)](#) – 2021 Midline Report

Annex B: Deeper Dives into Three Initiatives

B1: Luminos Accelerated Learning Programme in Ghana

Target Children

- ❖ Out of school children between the ages of 8 to 14.

Approach

- ❖ Condensed curriculum based on mainstream school curriculum.
- ❖ Structured pedagogy: laid out for the facilitators for each step of learning.
- ❖ Local language used: drawing on Ghana's complementary basic education policy of teaching children in their own language. English is also in the curriculum.

Content

- ❖ Foundational literacy and numeracy.
- ❖ Phonics and the use of story books is part of the learning curriculum.

Delivery

- ❖ Community facilitators are recruited with at least a secondary school education, a trained teacher is a plus.
- ❖ There is continuous training of facilitators.
- ❖ 25-30 class size per facilitator.
- ❖ Duration: 3 hours a day, flexible time choice for learners to align with their daily life activities.
- ❖ Mixed ability groupings; including children from 8 to 14 in the same activities.

Other Key Components

- ❖ Community driven: engagement with key community stakeholders from the start of the programme to the end. Includes monthly parental engagement sessions and community stakeholder meetings which help in tackling attendance and improving learning outcomes.
- ❖ Safe learning structures/spaces for children within communities.
- ❖ Safeguarding: classroom policy is do no harm, positive reinforcements, and child protection topics like your right to education, bullying, social emotional abilities to support learning.
- ❖ Sanitary pads for adolescent girls to boost menstrual hygiene.

Learning Outcomes

- ❖ Improved learning outcomes: e.g. an end line found that learners were able to read 22 words per minute and do 10 single digit additions within a minute.
- ❖ Higher performance compared with students in mainstream schools.
- ❖ High confidence levels through interaction with other learners and active contribution in class.
- ❖ Follow up of children throughout their transition to and time in mainstream schools to track their performance.

B2: Luminos Accelerated Learning Programme in Ethiopia

Introduction

- ❖ The Luminos Second Chance programme In Ethiopia Is a 10-month accelerated education programme aiming to ensure that no child Is denied a meaningful and joyful education due to poverty, discrimination or other circumstances.

Target Children

- ❖ Out of school children aged 9 - 14 years, who have never been to school or have dropped out of school for more than 2 years. (Children are expected to start formal school at 7 years).
- ❖ Children from marginalised and very poor communities, and there is a focus on girls.

Approach

- ❖ Two programme strands:
 - Direct delivery by Luminos with local Implementing partners In Government schools. (Most of the programme Is delivered in this modality).
 - Government adoption which scales up the programme In Government schools, with Luminos support for training of Government teachers and supervisors.
- ❖ Focus on joyful, Interactive learning. Learners are active, singing and dancing, in what might seem a chaotic environment! Children practise letter sounds through songs and storytelling, play, use flash cards, craft letters from local materials. (No materials are bought from outside the community).
- ❖ Structured pedagogy, using Government textbooks and materials. There Is a Facilitator Guide with Individual lesson plans.
- ❖ Safeguarding and child protection prioritised, with every facilitator and person engaged with children signing the programme policy, which Is linked to Government structures.

Content

- ❖ Condenses Government curriculum for Grades 1 - 3 Into a single academic year in 3 phases:
 - Phase 1 (2 months) focuses on mother tongue of the children (reflecting the linguistic diversity In Ethiopia) and maths.
 - Phase 2 (4 months) focuses on mother tongue, maths and environmental science.
 - Phase 3 (4 months) focuses on mother tongue, maths, environmental science and (a little) English.
- ❖ Social emotional learning principles are embedded. For example. each child has a classroom responsibility, e.g., ambassador, cleaner, lawyer, attendance taker, water person, police officer. These roles are revolved every 15 days.
- ❖ Social emotional learning Is Intentionally Included In conflict areas, such as Tigray and Konso. There are 15–20-minute sessions of trauma healing exercises before mother tongue and mathematics sessions.

Delivery

- ❖ Facilitators selected from the community. At first, they were mainly Grade 10 and Grade 12 graduates. Now, unemployed Diploma graduates are recruited and preferred. It is not essential to be a teaching graduate. All facilitators are paid.
- ❖ When facilitators start, there is 3-week intensive training.
- ❖ After children are selected, a baseline of their literacy and numeracy skills conducted via national Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA). These are in mother tongue and cover letter and number identification, words, reading, etc. Classes are based on this, then age.
- ❖ Over 10 months, sessions take place for 7 hours per day for 5 days (Monday to Friday), with remedial classes on Saturday mornings. There are break times and lunch is provided.
- ❖ Session sizes are a minimum of 25 and maximum of 30 children.
- ❖ Inside the sessions, children are grouped for learning in multiple ways (homogenous and heterogeneous). Groups can be by age or achievement. There are different groups for music, flashcards, storytelling, etc. Children that have understood a particular concept help other learners.
- ❖ Continuous assessment every week, based on that week's content (e.g., 2-letter words). Results are recorded in Kobo Toolbox and so each child's progress is followed throughout the academic year. Supervisors randomly cross check 5 children on a regular basis. In addition, the programme has monitoring visits.

Learning Outcomes

- ❖ Children's attendance level is 90%.
- ❖ The aim is to transition into formal schooling. The District Examination Boards make a Grade 3 placement examination, which the Second Chance learners sit. The District Education Office decide if a child will transition to Grade 2, Grade 3 or Grade 4. 90% of learners transition to Grade 4. This acceptance of the programme by the Government is through many years of work. In particular, an external 7-year longitudinal study has influenced the Government accelerated learning policy and the establishment of the Government Accelerated Learning Unit. Ministry of Education personnel also undertook study tours, for example, to Ghana.
- ❖ The children, who have transitioned, are followed for the next 3 years to see how they progress in school.
- ❖ Where children are Internally Displaced People (IDP), e.g., in Konso, Phase 1 and Phase 2 report cards are given. Therefore, if a child completes Phase 1 only before moving on, a report card is given to help transfer to a new school, and similarly with Phase 2.

Cost-Effectiveness

- ❖ In the direct delivery modality, the cost per child (including learners' packs) is \$200 per year and the cost per class (including facilitators' salaries, furniture) is \$5,000 per year. In Tigray and Konso, the costs are higher.
- ❖ In Government adoption modality, the cost per child is less than \$3 per year and the cost per class is less than \$100 per year (as, for example, the Government already pay the teachers).

B3: Save the Children Catch-Up Clubs

Introduction

- ❖ Initially started as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic recognising the learning loss and regressed learning that had occurred because of school closures. The idea of catch-up clubs (CUCs) was to support learners to recover lost learning.
- ❖ The focus has changed slightly to address the huge issue of learning poverty present in many countries. CUCs may be used as a remedial approach for in-school learners who are not reaching the appropriate grade level learning outcomes or for out of school children who have either never been to school or have been out of school for a period of time.
- ❖ The vision is to scale CUCs to support 250 million children in five years, while generating evidence to refine the Catch-Up Club model for maximum impact.

Target Children

- ❖ Children aged between 9 to 13 with some slightly older learners in some contexts.
- ❖ In-school children requiring remedial support and out of school children who require a 'boost' to enable them to either enrol into school or another learning programme e.g. accelerated education programme.
- ❖ A focus is also on children with disabilities within the learning clubs.

Approach

- ❖ The overall aim is to get a child up to Grade 2 level competency (linked back to National Curriculum of the country in question) and then they can go back either into formal school or an accelerated education programme depending on age.
- ❖ Acts as a remedial programme to support in-school children or as a learning boost for out of school children.
- ❖ Utilizes the teaching at the right level approach.
- ❖ There is a detailed scripted learning curriculum of levelled learning activities. It is up to the individual facilitators to decide upon what activities to use within each session.
- ❖ Language used is dependent on Government's policy for language of instruction (LOI); for example, in Nigeria, this is English due to it being the LOI for Grade 4 and above. Different languages have been used e.g. Arabic, French, and also in Bangladesh.

Content

- ❖ Foundational literacy and numeracy to Grade 2 level competency. Some programmes may only use the literacy component whereas other programmes may use literacy and numeracy.
- ❖ A strong social emotional learning component is integrated throughout all sessions.
- ❖ Additional sessions on sexual reproductive health in some contexts e.g. Nigeria.

Delivery

- ❖ Duration: 7 - 9 weeks of intensive learning, 4 - 5 days a week of about 90 minutes instruction each day. Total instructional hours is approximately 55 hours.
- ❖ Community-based facilitators have been the predominant teaching force for CUCs. There are set criteria that facilitators should meet to become a facilitator. Depending on context, schoolteachers may be used e.g. either within the regular school day or after school hours when CUCs are being used as remedial learning.
- ❖ 40 to 50 class size with two facilitators if community-based approach is used.

Learning Outcomes

- ❖ Pilot findings show improvement in children's literacy in 13 weeks. In Uganda, six times more children achieved the highest reading level than at the start of the programme. In Colombia, 100% of children who remained in Catch-Up Clubs reached foundational literacy skills. Additionally, qualitative insights from beneficiaries, including children and their parents, demonstrate positive impact in engagement and progress in learning.

Cost-Effectiveness

- ❖ Despite the high cost to scale, learning outcomes are encouraging. An assessment on costing is due to be published at the end of 2024.

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