

Charting the path to radical inclusion

***Driving national policy
change for the most
marginalised learners
through gender-
transformative and
inclusive accelerated
education***

An Education.org impact story



Embedding insights into policy to impact implementation

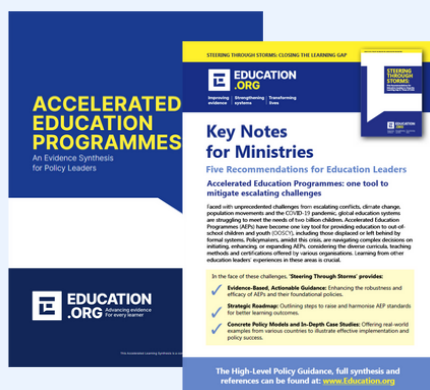
Sierra Leone has recently embarked on a journey to transform its education system by championing radical inclusion.

This includes a shared commitment to strengthening provisions for out-of-school children and youth, ensuring they receive the targeted support and equal opportunities they need to thrive. This involves tailored approaches to re-engage girls impacted by early marriage, pregnancy, and caregiving, making the guidelines a key tool for gender-transformative education.

To boost these efforts, the **Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education** approached **Education.org** to co-develop national guidelines that are now informing national policies' roll out and active implementation at scale.

The guidelines provide benchmarks and criteria to be used by AEP providers across the country, including pre-requisites for a clear pathway for out-of-school learners to transition back into formal education, appropriate training, or employment.

Going from:



A global analysis of roughly **800 sources, 80% unpublished**, distilled into 4 pages for ministries and a longer technical synthesis

To a fully developed set of national guidelines on AEPs for out-of-school children and youth:



Best practices learnt from the process

1

Understand the context

Stakeholder analysis to assess the policy context, identify potential constraints or opportunities for participation, and pinpoint allies and resistance points.

Result: Creating the conditions for participation, acceptance, ownership, and sustainability.

2

Develop a strategy and roadmap

Consultation strategy to define the Guidelines' objectives, outline development and validation processes as well as stakeholder engagement plan.

Result: Securing buy-in from the start and allowing for change and adaptation.

3

Pre-position for impact

Included collaboration with ministries such as Gender and Health to ensure a holistic, inclusive approach responsive to the specific needs of the most marginalised learners, including girls, children living with disabilities, and other historically excluded groups.

Result: Strategising contributions based on interest, influence, knowledge, and relevance.

4

Consultation & Analysis

Consultations to gather diverse views, inform stakeholders, raise awareness about the policy guidelines, mobilise supporters, and address bottlenecks.

Result: Enabling a co-creation process based on context awareness and understanding, with a look to the future

5

Creation

Develop a draft of the guidelines for final review and validation based on the information gathered during consultations.

Result: A mature product informed by inclusive and diverse voices, pre-empting questions and blindspots.

6

Validation & Uptake

Build consensus through a final dialogue with the Reference Group and submit final guidelines to the Ministry's leadership for endorsement and official launch.

Result: Output is informed by a shared vision and calls attention to areas for action and collaboration.

Partnering for impact

Co-creating solutions

To ensure a shared understanding of implementation, measurement, and adaptation mechanisms, the guidelines were developed in collaboration with key stakeholders responsible for validating, applying, and evaluating the guidelines, and who played a crucial role in shaping the creation of guidelines for their trial.

In particular, **we worked closely with the country's Chief Education Officer** and her team to ensure our insights were effectively contextualised, additional local insights incorporated, and a broad range of stakeholders engaged at the regional and national level to enable policy development and uptake.

The process intentionally focused on gender equality, equity, and inclusion. Guided by the Ministry of Gender and extensive consultations, it ensured that the needs of girls, children with disabilities, and other marginalised learners were incorporated from the initial design stage through to implementation.

Overall, the process included:

12 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

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

20 ORGANISATIONS

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

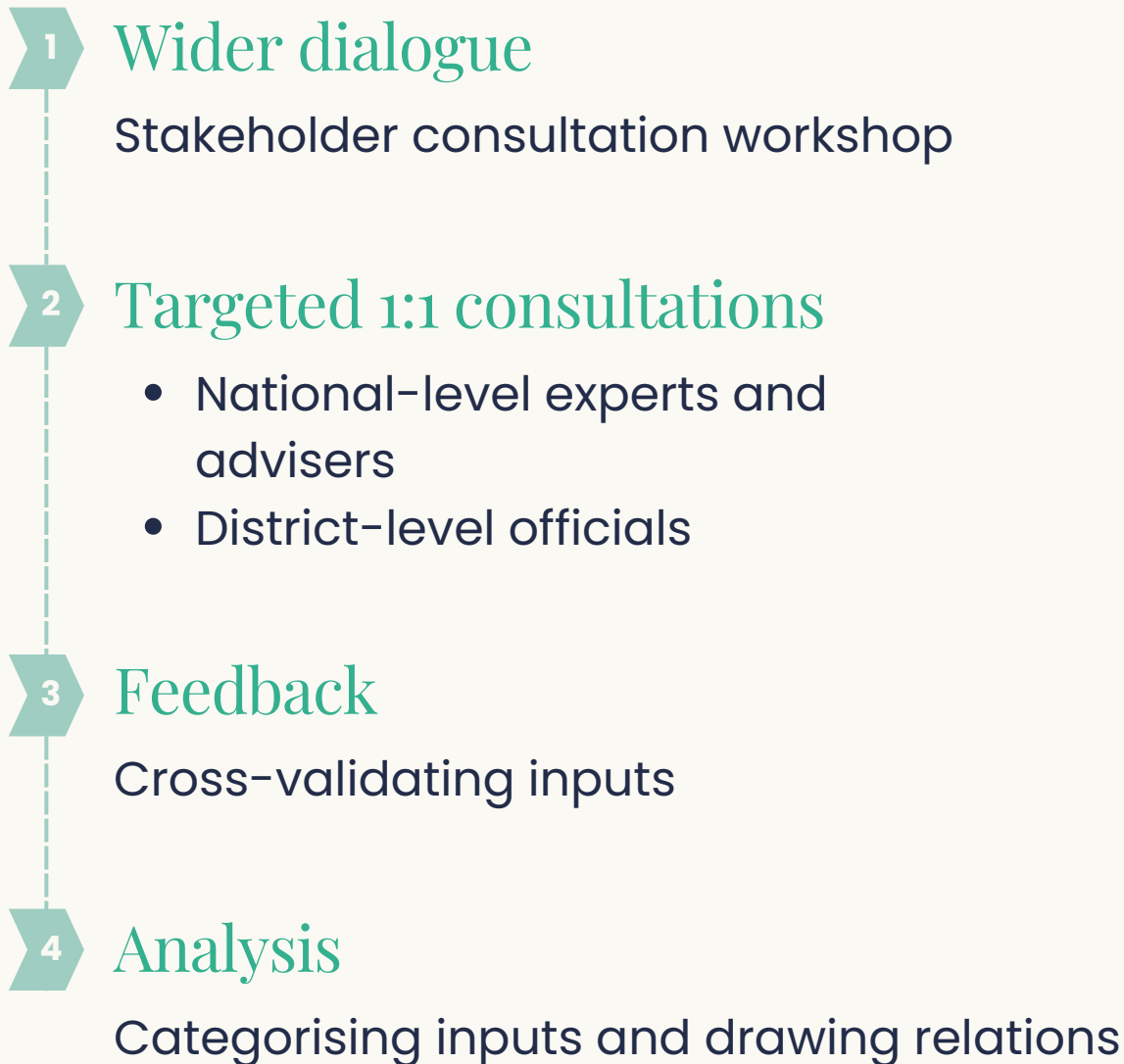
4 MINISTRIES

consulted one-on-one on the guidelines, including the ministries of Technical and Higher Education; Gender and Children Affairs; Social Affairs; and Health.



Consultation stages

Engaging a comprehensive and inclusive group of stakeholders



Impact

- 1** **First national guidelines on accelerated education**, raising expectations for programmes and providing steering for new investments.
- 2** **Strengthened collaboration among implementers** such as national and international actors, including FCDO, Save the Children, and EDT.
- 3** Now informing policy and implementation efforts to **reach the country's 600,000 out-of-school children by 2030**, including girls facing the steepest barriers to return.
- 4** Embeds **gender-responsive and -transformative features** crucial for girls' return to learning, such as flexible scheduling, psychosocial support, and life skills training.
- 5** Planting seeds for **stronger ministerial evidence culture** and knowledge bridges with implementers.



In **their** words



"Guidelines provide a framework, guidelines provide the principles within which we should run AEP's in this country.

Guidelines tell us what is feasible. [...]

During the development of these guidelines, we were very pleased because the guidelines have ended up being our document."

Professor Yatta Kanu,
Formerly Chief
Education Officer,
Ministry of Basic and
Senior Education,
Sierra Leone



"These guidelines are incredibly timely and serve as an essential tool for our efforts."

Patrick Osede Analo,
Save the Children
Country Director for
Sierra Leone



"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
Education, Government
of Sierra Leone

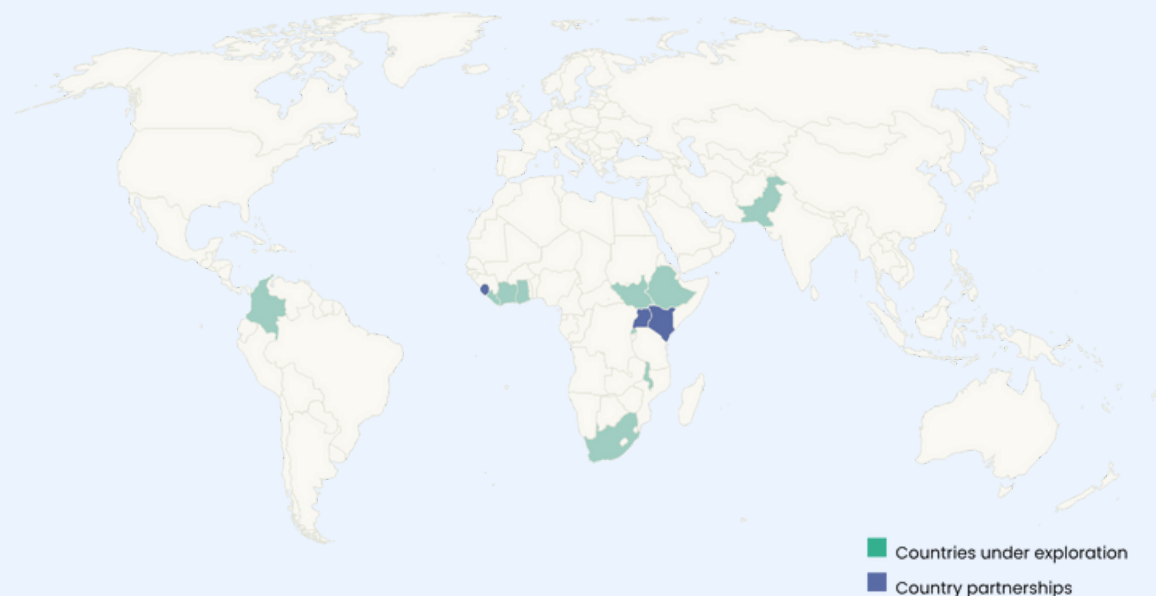
Potential for **scale**

In **Sierra Leone**, the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, alongside partners like UNICEF, is actively implementing these guidelines to create opportunities for out-of-school children and those at risk, especially marginalised groups such as girls and learners with disabilities.

We have also forged strategic partnerships in **Kenya** and **Uganda**, where we are actively driving solutions for out-of-school children and youth, grounded in our evidence synthesis.

In addition, we are exploring how to respond to interest from other countries that share similar challenges, such as **South Sudan** and **Pakistan**, and have had light-touch engagements on the topic with the education ministries in **Liberia**, **Malawi**, and **El Salvador**.

Current partnerships and ongoing conversations with education ministries



For more information



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