



Adapting, testing, and scaling accelerated pre-primary education programs in Tanzania, Laos, Cambodia

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Progress and challenges in Early childhood Education

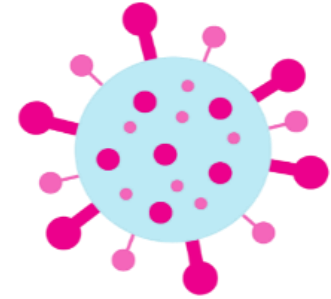


SDG 4.2: By 2030, ensure that ALL girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education



Despite progress globally, **50%** of pre-primary school aged children not enrolled

- **30%** in Laos
- **65%** in Cambodia
- **23%** In Tanzania



180M children had ECE disrupted during COVID-19 school closures

- ECE **not** prioritized during school reopening
- ECE often **left out** of country COVID-19 responses

Learn plus (global grant, GPE-KIX)

Adapting, Testing and Scaling Accelerated Pre-Primary Programs

Objectives of the project

Support Ministries of Education in Tanzania, Laos and Cambodia to adopt **evidence-based, quality, gender-responsive accelerated pre-primary education programs** to meet the needs of girls and boys in underserved communities.

- Implement and research the programs to generate evidence about its viability as an alternative, cost-effective model
- Work with Ministries of Education to implement the accelerated programs and use project evidence to advocate for its uptake and scale up

Implementing organizations

- Plan International – Tanzania, Laos, Cambodia supported by Canada
- The Mother and Child Education Foundation (AÇEV)
- The American Institutes for Research (AIR)
- Universities of Dar Es Salaam and Royal University of Phnom Penh

Reaching children left behind through ACCELERATED pre-primary education program

Background

- Originally developed by the **Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV)** to support marginalized Turkish children and Syrian refugees
- Designed to serve **5–6-year-old** children in rural and remote areas, primarily **where there is no government pre-primary education** programs and who are **about to enrol in grade 1**
- Meant to be a **short-to-medium-term** measure to ensure marginalized children without access to PPE are **ready for school** while government is still working towards universalization of PPE.
- Successfully adapted, pilot-tested in **Lao PDR**, and included by the Government of Laos as an innovative strategy in its **Education and Sports Sector Development Plan, 2021-2025**
- Now being adapted, tested in **Cambodia and Tanzania, and taken to scale in Lao PDR**, supported by the Global Partnerships for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (**GPE-KIX**), a joint initiative by the GPE and the International Development Research Center

Accelerated pre-primary education/school readiness program

Innovation to Scale

Accelerated, child centered, gender-responsive program targeting vulnerable **5–6-year-old children**, in rural and remote areas with **no access to any form of pre-primary education**, and are **about to enter grade 1**

- Develops physical, language, cognitive and socio-emotional skills
- 200-300 hours of indoor and outdoor of active-learning and play-based activity delivered by grade 1 teachers (Laos, Cambodia) or community teaching assistants (Tanzania)
- 8–12-week period before grade 1 starts
- Promotes healthy eating and hygiene
- Daily routine promotes gender-responsive and inclusive teaching-learning approaches
- Parent education component



Gender Equality & Inclusion

The SPP/SRP program strengthens the educational foundation of marginalized girls and boys by addressing barriers faced at the school and household level. The program contributes to gender equality and inclusion outcomes through:

- **Teacher trainings** on gender-responsive and inclusive curriculum and pedagogies in the classroom that:
 - Builds teachers' understanding of gender roles and how they affect the experience of girls and boys, especially in education
 - Builds teachers' capacity to promote gender equality and inclusion in their classrooms through practical strategies in their day-to-day practices, empowering both boys and girls through child-centered approaches
- **Parenting education sessions** on gender-responsive parenting skills and equal support of caregivers in their child's education, including:
 - Promoting men's engagement in early learning and fostering equal and joint parenting responsibilities
 - Promoting parental modelling of more equitable gender relations that also improve the social position and value of girls
- **Learning and teaching materials** that are inclusive and do not reinforce gender stereotypes and norms (i.e., gender-responsive manuals, IEC materials, books, play items, etc.)

DAILY routine



Does the program work?

Lao PDR, Impact Evaluation by American Institutes for Research, 2016-2018

Accelerated Pre-Primary (Summer Pre-primary)



Increased on-time Grade 1 enrollment



Increased school readiness at the start of Grade 1



Convergence of learning outcomes at end of Grade 1

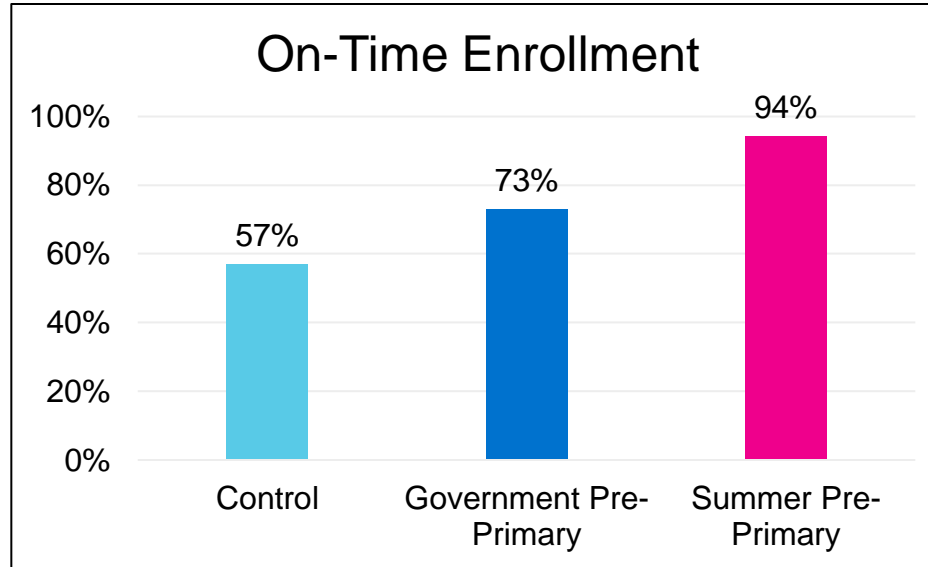


Increased number of children completing Grade 1

Impact Evaluation Findings

Improvements in on-time enrollment for grade 1

Very strong impacts were found for the SPP related to on-time enrollment for non-Lao children in grade 1





Where we are
right now?

Program Adaptation

- Led by a Technical Working Group from the Ministry of Education and Sports
- Pilot-tested in 2016-2018; found effective
- Successful advocacy to MoES led to integration of program as innovative strategy in 2021-2025 Education and Sports Sector Plan
- Program toolkit: teacher manual, children's workbook, parent education materials, implementation manual
- Trained trainers, teachers, head teachers, support system

Expansion of program

- Families and communities engaged to support implementation
- Expansion of implementation in additional communities and districts

Knowledge generation

To inform policy advocacy for scale up by government

- Feasibility study
- Costing simulator tool
- Targeted knowledge products (i.e., policy brief, program brief, case studies, videos)

To support scale up

- Program toolkit (including videos)
- Costing scenarios co-developed with District end users (DESB) using simulator tool

Knowledge mobilization and capacity strengthening

- Stakeholder mapping
- Stakeholder engagements at national and sub-national level to advocate for scale up
- Training of national and sub-national officials to support scale up of program

Cambodia

Program Adaptation

- Led by a Technical Working Group from the Ministry of Education and education partners
- Series of meetings to align program to Cambodian policies, programs, standards and school calendar
- Adapted program materials: teacher manual, children's workbook, parent education materials
- Trained trainers, teachers, head teachers, support system

Piloting of Program

- Families and communities engaged to support implementation
- Piloting initially in 2 communities
- Full roll out in 30 communities

Knowledge generation

To inform program adjustments

- Gender equality and inclusion study
- Implementation research

To inform policy advocacy

- Impact study and cost study
- Targeted knowledge products (i.e., program brief, case studies)

To support scale up

- Program toolkit

Knowledge mobilization and capacity strengthening

- Stakeholder mapping
- Stakeholder engagements at national and sub-national levels to advocate for scale up
- Training of national and sub-national officials to support scale up of program

Tanzania

Program Adaptation

- Led by Technical Working Group from the MoEST, PO-RALG, other government ministries, education partners
- Build on existing school readiness program developed by Tanzania Institute of Education with EQUIP.
- Enhancements include gender equal parenting education, gender-responsive and inclusive teaching, enhanced cognitive development and active learning through play; healthy eating and good hygiene
- Adapted program materials: CTA manual, children's workbook, parent education materials
- Trained trainers, community teaching assistants, teachers, head teachers, ward and district education officials

Piloting of Program

- Families and communities engaged to support implementation
- Piloting initially in 10 communities
- Full roll out in 30 communities

Knowledge generation

To inform program adjustments

- Gender equality and inclusion assessment
- Implementation research

To inform policy advocacy

- Impact study and cost study
- Targeted knowledge products (i.e., program brief, policy brief, case studies, videos)

To support scale up

- Program toolkit

Knowledge mobilization

- Stakeholder mapping
- Stakeholder engagements to advocate for scale up
- Training of national and sub-national officials to support scale up

Lessons learned: Strategic stakeholder engagement

- **Close and sustained collaboration with government stakeholders** at national and sub-national levels from planning, implementation, monitoring helps ensure program ownership and sustainability, and engages them as allies in promoting gender equality and inclusion
- **In-depth engagement** can build program advocates who can promote broader systems change
- **Proactive sharing of knowledge and evidence** to stakeholders at all levels critical in strengthening the program and promoting buy-in
- **Community ownership** can support improved access to education beyond pre-primary education

Lessons learned: Maximizing program impact

- Reaching children left behind **requires innovation and flexibility**
- Accelerated pre-primary programs demonstrate how **short-term support can make a difference**
- **Children internalize gender norms and stereotypes early** requiring gender transformative approaches in early childhood education. Accelerated programs demonstrate how this can be done
- Need for flexibility and scenario setting in promoting the scale up of program
- Program adaptation, pilot-testing, and advocacy for scale requires **longer timeline** for sustained impact

Next steps

- Knowledge and evidence generated from project will be used to advocate for the following:
 - Recognition and inclusion of the program as an **innovative strategy to reach disadvantaged children in Cambodia**
 - Use and **scale up of the enhanced SRP model in Tanzania**
 - Evidence generated from research and studies will inform advocacy for government to operationalize the Education Sector Plan and finance the **scale up of the program in 15 priority districts in Laos**
- Development of program toolkit and training cadre of trainers to facilitate scale up in 3 countries
- Mobilize funds to deepen implementation of the program in Tanzania and Cambodia and create a critical mass of program champions that will promote the scale up
- Knowledge sharing through GPE-KIX Hubs, World Conference on ECCE, CIES, ARNEC, AfECN



Thank you!

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