CATCH-upEDUCATION

A longitudinal study with war-affected children

Summary

About us

The Fostering Resilience Initiative:
Our interdisciplinary team works to ensure positive outcomes for children and youth facing adversity.

By measuring and addressing risks and assets at the child-level, as well as within homes, schools, and communities, we promote a holistic approach to child and youth development. Our goal is to create environments that not only fulfill children's and youth's basic needs, but also promote nurturing relationships, socio-emotional skills, and civic engagement.

We work with non-governmental organizations, policy makers, communities and other stakeholders in seven countries: Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, India, Kenya, Tanzania, and Peru. Our initiative focuses on three key areas:

1. Learning and Development

Improving learning and development of children and youth, both at school and outside of school.

2. Risk Measurement

Developing, validating and piloting measurement tools to assess risks, assets, and outcomes across several countries.

3. Global Network for Resilience

Building a global network of actors who foster systemic resilience.

Neil Boothby
Director, Fostering Resilience Initiative

Catch-up education is a **short-term transitional programme** for children and youth to learn content missed because of the disruption of their education due to wars, insecurity, and attacks on schools in emergency contexts.[1]

Introduction

Children in crisis face enormous challenges, such as the loss of family members, changes in family roles, recruitment by armed groups, food insecurity, disease, and injury. These challenges are compounded by the disruption of education, with children often falling months or years behind in their school curriculum (USAID, 2016).

Photo by Zahirah McNatt

One way to ensure youth in crisis receive the catch-up education they need is through Accelerated Education Programs (AEPs). AEPs provide children access to flexible, age-appropriate curriculum in an accelerated time frame.

Imagine a setting... in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where 7 million children aged 6 - 17 are not in school (USAID) or in Tanzania where hundreds of refugees from Burundi flee each month to escape political violence and food insecurity (UNHCR). How can we best reach and support marginalized learners and how can we integrate them into formal or vocational education?
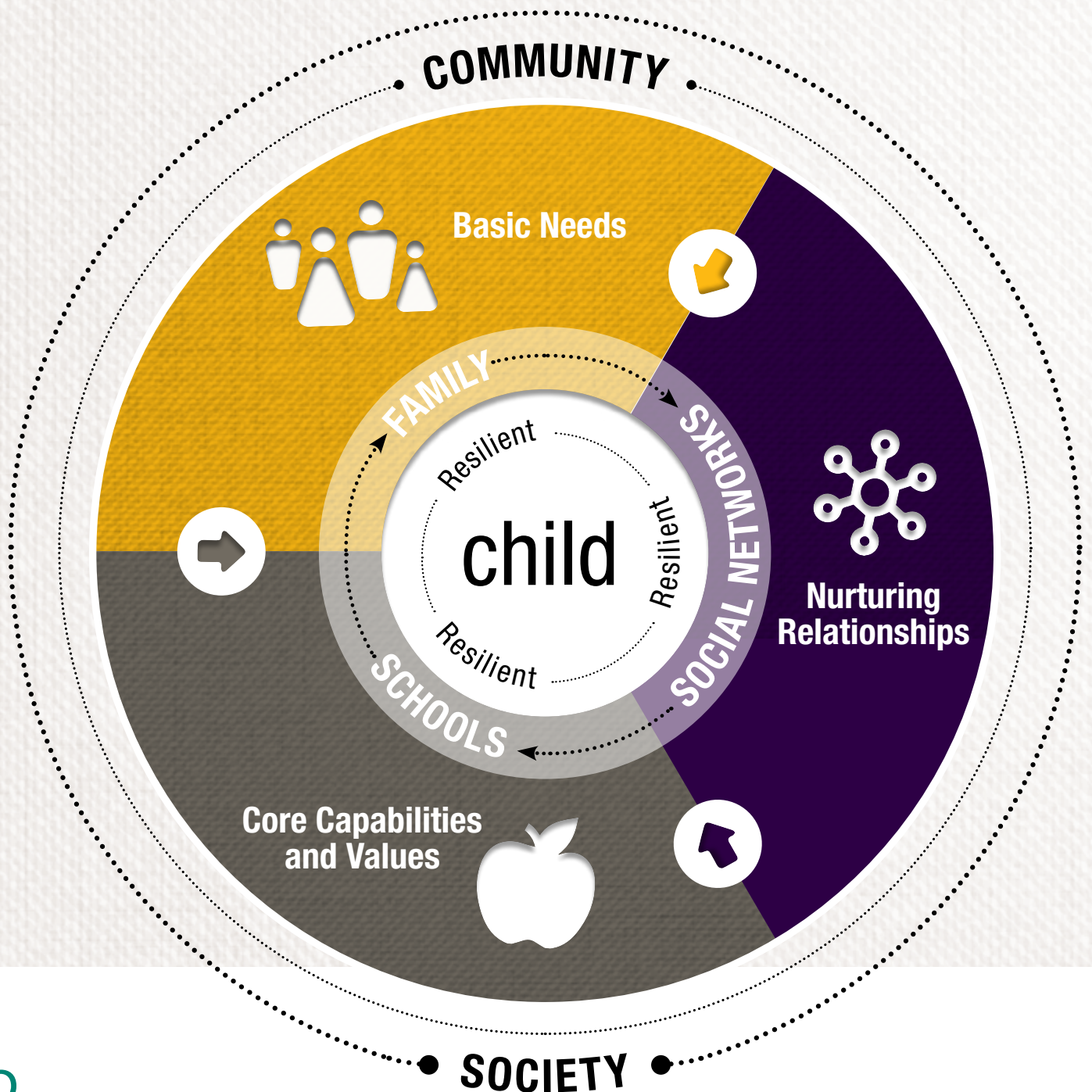
The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) provides two different AEPs to internally displaced populations in community settings in the DRC and to Burundian refugees in camp settings in Tanzania. One program is a one-year curriculum for children aged 10-13, and the second is a three-year curriculum for 10-17-year-olds. Both address the unique academic and socio-emotional issues associated with crisis and conflict. What is unique about NRC's humanitarian project is its embedded research component—a mixed methods, four year (2018-2022) longitudinal study, which will enable a better understanding of the success of these AEPs over a long period of time.

This summary highlights the importance of effective catch-up education programs for children in crisis, as well as the need for more evidence-based research to determine how best to ensure safe, quality education in crises. It introduces the scope and timeline of NRC's unique four-year study, as well as some of the Phase 1 baseline findings of children enrolled in AEPs in the DRC and Tanzania, including their household characteristics, past experiences with school, and exposure to violence.

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[1]   See UNHCR, https://www.unhcr.org/59ce4f5b4

Building blocks for children's resilience

A holistic approach—one that not only addresses children's basic needs, but also promotes nurturing relationships, socio-emotional skills and civic engagement—is the foundation to fostering resilience in children facing adversity.

COMMUNITY

Basic Needs

FAMILY

SOCIAL NETWORK

Resilient

child

Resilient

Resilient

Resilient

SCHOOLS

Nurturing Relationships

Core Capabilities and Values

SOCIETY

Catch-up Education in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania

at-a-glance

1 in 3 children[2] (aged 5-17) are out-of-school in **countries affected by war and natural disasters.**

Photo by Zahirah McNatt

3.5 million[3] **children of primary school age** are not in school across DRC.

Less than **4%**[4] **of humanitarian funds** are dedicated to education.

Tanzania hosts
230,000 refugees[5] from Burundi who are fleeing political violence and food insecurity.

Photo by Zahirah McNatt

2 https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/1-3-children-and-young-people-out-school-countries-affected-war-or-natural-disasters
3 https://www.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo/education
4 https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2018/06/29/if-education-cannot-wait-then-humanitarian-aid-needs-to-increase/
5 https://reliefweb.int/report/united-republic-tanzania/burundian-refugees-tanzania-return-home

What are Accelerated Education Programs? How effective *are* they?

Accelerated Education Programs

Accelerated Education Programs (AEPs) are flexible, age-appropriate programs that promote access to education in an accelerated time frame for out-of-school, over-age children and youth in crisis or conflict situations.

AEPs are a type of catch-up education that fill a critical gap in the provision of essential educational services. They ensure learners receive an appropriate and relevant education responsive to their life circumstances.

AEPs: 10 principles for effective practice[6]

1. The AEP is flexible and adapted for over-age learners.

2. The curriculum, materials, and pedagogy are genuinely accelerated and use the relevant language of instruction.

3. The learning environment is inclusive, safe, and learning-ready.

4. Teachers are recruited, supervised, and remunerated.

5. Teachers participate in continuous professional development.

6. Goals, monitoring, and funding are aligned.

7. The AEP center is effectively managed.

8. The community is engaged and accountable.

9. The AEP is a legitimate, credible education option that results in learner certification in primary education.

10. The AEP is aligned with the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture.

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[6]   See Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, http://s3.amazonaws.com/inee-assets/resources/AEWG_Accelerated_Education_10_Principles_ENG_screen.pdf

NRC's Four-Year Study:

Mixed Methods

The EU's **Building Resilience in Crises through Education** (BRICE) program aims to improve access to high quality education in DR Congo, Ethiopia, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

This work is implemented through four consortia led by Oxfam, Save the Children, Plan International and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

NRC's mixed method, four-year study across two countries is a unique opportunity to broaden the evidence-base on education in crisis contexts and to determine the success rate of AEPs in reaching marginalized learners and integrating them into formal education. It will conduct qualitative and quantitative data collection at baseline, prior to graduation, post-program graduation, and one year after enrollment in formal school using **MIXED METHODS** as follows:

- Child-facing social and emotional learning questionnaires
- Student test scores
- Teacher performance through observation
- Dropout rates
- Rates of transition into formal school
- In-depth interviews of high and low achievers

Highlights from Phase 1: Baseline Data[7]
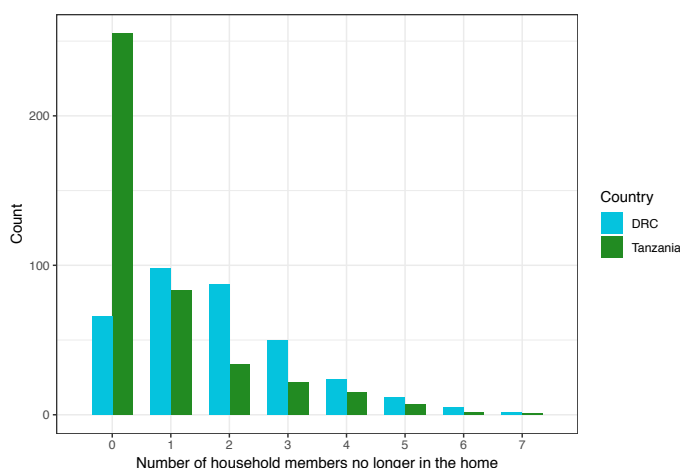
Social Continuity

During displacement, children lose members of their household, or get separated, which has an impact on their emotional stability. Of the 420 Burundian children, 72 have been separated from a parent or a primary caregiver. Most of these children were separated from their parents permanently or at least over one year. Of the 309 children from DRC who are displaced, 30 indicated they spent time separated from their parents.
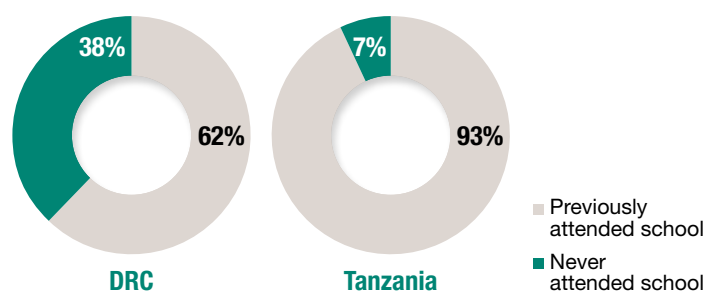

Economic Life

About one quarter of the Burundian students surveyed and half of the children from DRC **have worked in their lives**. Around 34% of the Burundian students had to stop going to school because of the financial burden. In DRC, many of the children's mothers and fathers work, as well as their brothers and sisters. The most common industry is agriculture (i.e., sugarcane).

	DRC	Tanzania
Has ever worked	**50.1%** *421*	**26.4%** *420*
Missed a meal	**80.8%** *416*	**25.7%** *420*

Previous School Attendance and Absence

In both DRC and Tanzania, most students left school in the lower grades. Of the 421 children in DRC, 259 had previously attended school. Of the 420 Burundian children, 389 had previously attended school. The most common reasons for absence or leaving school are illness, lack of supplies, to help with the household, and lack of money for supplies. In DRC, most of the children are 1-4 years out of school. The longer the students are out of school, the harder it may be to successfully resume education.

DRC — 38% / 62% **Tanzania** — 7% / 93%

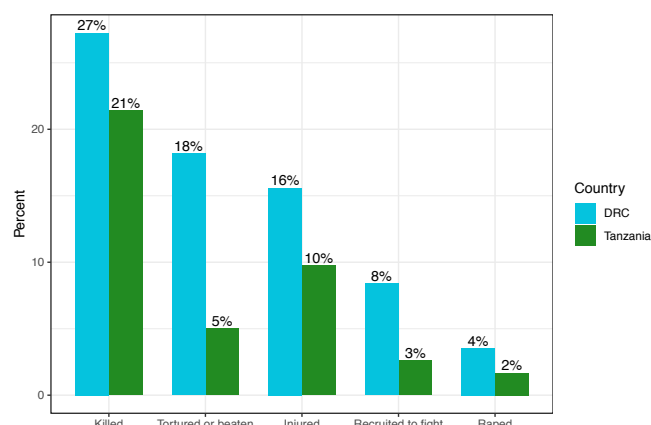Previously attended school
Never attended school

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[7]   Varying conditions in DRC and Tanzania necessitated the use of different sampling (random-convenience) approaches. Country comparisons are therefore indicative

Exposure to Conflict-related Violence

Exposure to violence can have a big impact on a child's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. More than one fifth of the Burundian students know a family member who was killed during conflict, and almost 10% know someone who was injured. In DRC, more than 25% of the students know a family member who was killed during conflict, and 15% know someone who was injured.
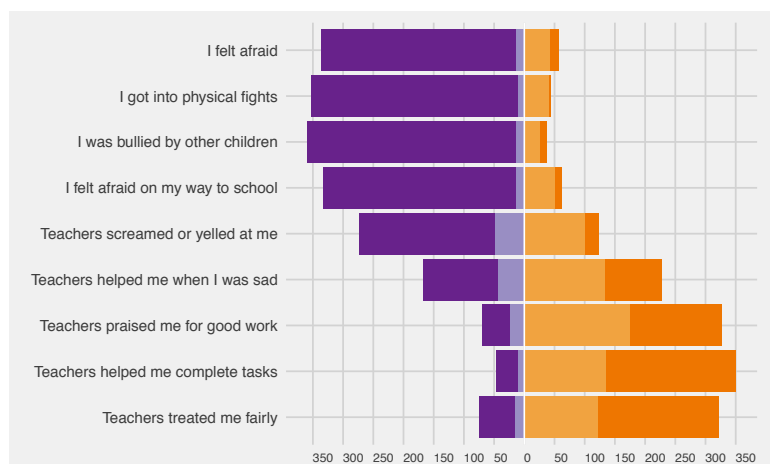

Previous School Environment

Most students had positive experiences at their previous schools in Burundi. They expressed that teachers treated them fairly and praised them for good work. Some noted physical violence on the side of the teachers and students, but most stated they never felt afraid. Most of the students from DRC felt safe in their previous classrooms and on their way to school.
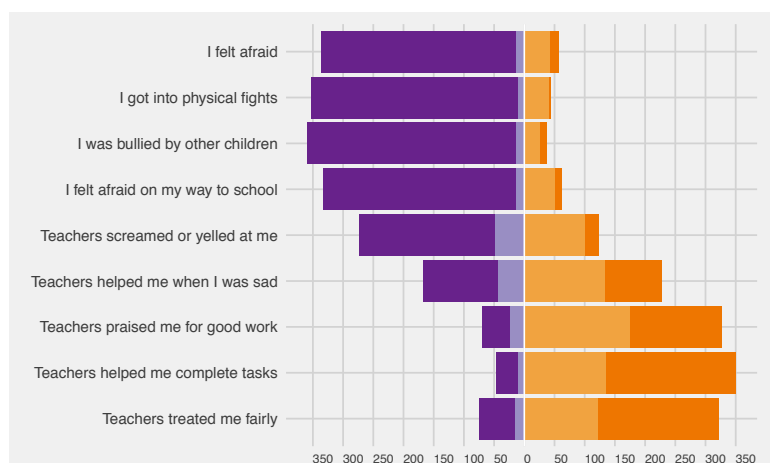
DRC

Tanzania

The way forward

Photo by Zahirah McNatt

Conflict and displacement significantly reduce the capacity of education systems to deliver quality education, affecting children's ability to learn, develop and access opportunities. Catch-up education programs, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council's accelerated education programs (AEPs), fill an important gap for children in crisis. Quality and inclusive education promotes resilience of refugees and the internally displaced, and it mitigates conflict, instability, and fragility.

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However, a better understanding is needed of how AEPs foster resilience in forcibly displaced children and how we can improve teaching and learning in crises. Research in humanitarian settings is challenging but possible and can help to better inform practice in real time.
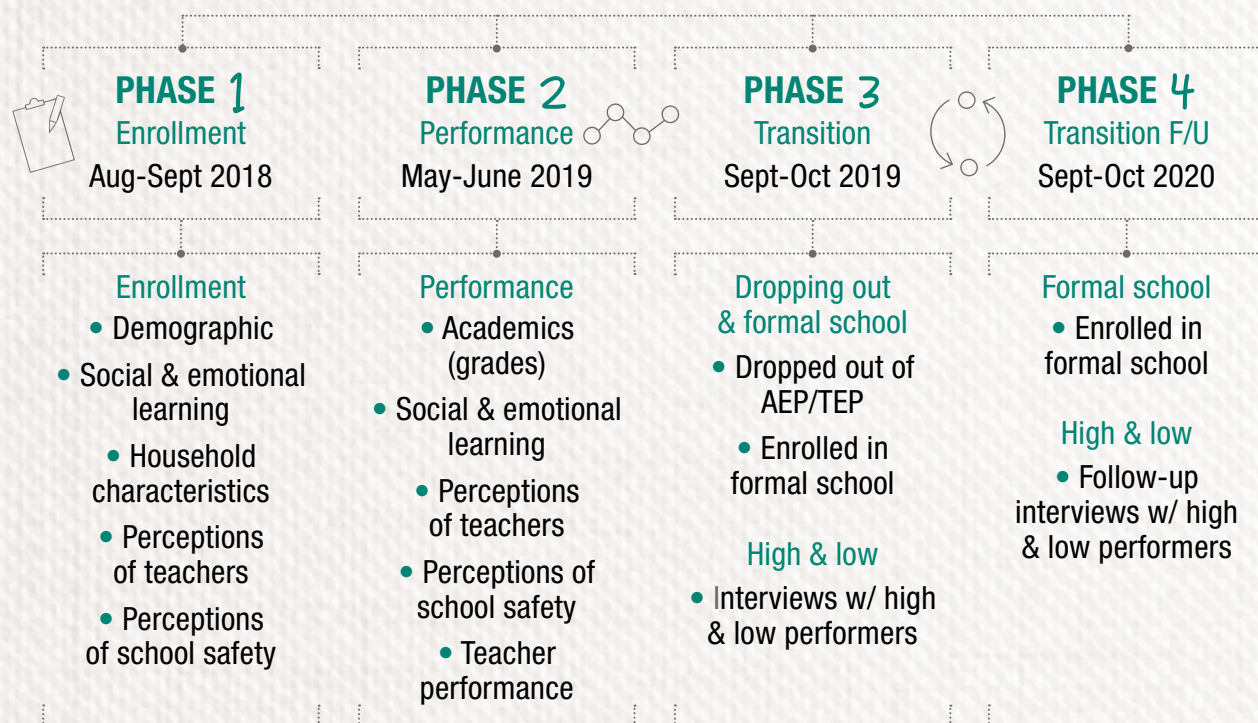
NRC's study is a unique opportunity to examine AEPs for forcibly displaced children over multiple years across two countries. Phase 1 provided a baseline to better understand the experiences of learners enrolled in NRC's AEPs, including social continuity, financial situation, access to education, and the experiences that may have influenced their emotional well-being, such as exposure to violence.

Future data collection and analysis will explore relationships between school performance and other key variables. NRC will use this information to better meet the holistic needs of learners, teachers and families.

Phase 2 of the study, slated for late Spring/Summer 2019, will focus on collecting the second round of data through follow-up interviews with the original 841 learners as well as in-depth interviews with a select group of high and low achieving learners. This phase will also include analysis of the relationships between student performance and teacher performance, student performance and social and emotional learning (SEL), as well as SEL and dropout rates and transition success.

Study Timeline

PHASE 1
Enrollment
Aug-Sept 2018

PHASE 2
Performance
May-June 2019

PHASE 3
Transition
Sept-Oct 2019

PHASE 4
Transition F/U
Sept-Oct 2020

Enrollment
- Demographic
- Social & emotional learning
- Household characteristics
- Perceptions of teachers
- Perceptions of school safety

Performance
- Academics (grades)
- Social & emotional learning
- Perceptions of teachers
- Perceptions of school safety
- Teacher performance

Dropping out & formal school
- Dropped out of AEP/TEP
- Enrolled in formal school

High & low
- Interviews w/ high & low performers

Formal school
- Enrolled in formal school

High & low
- Follow-up interviews w/ high & low performers

fostering
RESILIENCE
initiative

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