Promoting Innovation and Capacity in EiE

EiE Pilot Project Report

September 2021

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STREET CHILD OF CAMEROON: EiE PILOT PROJECT REPORT

Acknowledgement

This education in emergencies (EiE) pilot project was a collaborative effort to bring much needed educational opportunities to the underserved children of Northwest-Southwest Cameroon in an innovative and thereby impactful way.

Street Child would like to thank all partner organisations – Authentique Memorial Empowerment Foundation (AMEF), Martin Luther King Memorial Foundation (LUKMEF), Nkong Hill Top Association for Development (NADEV), Strategic Humanitarian Services (SHUMAS), and Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Services (SUDAHSER) – who worked with us to deliver this EiE project. Their enthusiasm, initiative and collaboration inspired the Street Child team to bring the best possible projects to the children of NWSW Cameroon and made partnership a true collaboration.

Finally, Street Child would like to thank all of the communities which welcomed these projects with such interest and passion, making it possible to deliver education where often previously thought impossible.

For any questions or comments on this report, please contact: nienke.mollen@street-child.org

Executive Summary

Despite education having been at the heart of the ongoing conflict in NWSW Cameroon, education in emergencies (EiE) response has been limited due to the perceived lack of access for EiE projects coupled with a lack of funding and lack of technical EiE support to local organisations on the ground.

Recognising the urgent need for EiE support for children's learning, protection, and wellbeing, as well as the opportunity to build on changing community attitudes towards education to provide education services in previously inaccessible communities, Street Child worked with five local partners to develop and pilot needs-responsive, scalable interventions between April and July 2021.

Five small-scale pilot projects tested interventions that address instructional, financial, social and infrastructural dimensions identified in Street Child's Global Strategy 2021 as barriers to education, capturing and sharing learning from and between partners.

Key achievements of these pilots include:
- 3,367 children were provided with access to learning, 73% for the first time in several years
- 78% of children demonstrated improved language learning levels and 74% children demonstrated improved mathematics learning levels by the end of the pilots
- 102 teachers and community facilitators received training in psychosocial support and child protection
- 100 vulnerable caregivers were provided with livelihoods support to meet the cost of education, and 98% of these caregivers increased their income by 81%
- 16 schools and 7 learning spaces reported improved safety planning and preparedness

The interventions were designed to build on existing community education efforts and community structures. This approach enabled access for the project, which was implemented across urban and rural, easier-to-reach and harder-to-reach communities, achieving high levels of engagement and buy-in from community stakeholders. This would not have been possible without the knowledge and existing community relationships of the local partners involved in this project, highlighting the need for and benefits of localised humanitarian response. High levels of community satisfaction with the project has since be leveraged to gain access for the provision of further services, such as nutrition and health, in the same communities.

In addition to enabling access, designing the project to leverage on existing community efforts and resources means the interventions tested are replicable across different community settings, and are low-cost. Learning was provided to 3,367 children at a cost of only £16.91 per child. The interventions piloted are therefore well suited to rapid scale-up to reach many more children and communities, even in the underfunded context of NWSW Cameroon.

The detailed achievements, lessons learned and best practices identified as a result of these pilots are presented in this report. It is hoped that these lessons will support other actors to design and scale effective programming to better meet the high education needs on the ground in NWSW Cameroon.

1. Introduction and Overview

1.1. Background

Education has been at the heart of the ongoing conflict in NWSW Cameroon with boycotts on GoC education enforced by Anglophone secessionists since the beginning of 2017. As a result, education in emergencies (EiE) response has been limited due to the perceived lack of access for education projects, a lack of funding, and a lack of financial and technical support for local organisations.

Firstly, over the past four years, key stakeholders have tended to perceive that it is not possible to implement community-based education projects due to tensions around education in the NWSW, and that advocating for or advancing education interventions could negatively impact wider humanitarian access. However, there is emerging evidence that the realities in communities have come to counter this perception: a recent Street Child needs assessment found that an estimated 45% of children across the region are already accessing non-formal learning, and that in 67% of communities non-formal learning has started within the past year[1]. The current moment therefore presents an important opportunity to support and build on existing community-led efforts to improve children's access to safe, quality, conflict-sensitive learning.

A second barrier to effective EiE responses in NWSW has been a lack of technical support and guidance to local organisations. In Cameroon as in other emergency contexts, local organisations have been at the forefront of the response, including in education, often relying on their own resources to implement small-scale projects. Many of these organisations have been working in the affected communities long before the crisis and have excellent access and community relationships. However, many have to date received little or no coaching on EiE standards and approaches and have not had access to funding for education response, and therefore may not have the resources to implement the most effective and efficient EiE responses in this complex context.

Recognising these key barriers to improved EiE response in the region, Street Child mobilised internal resources to set up a small-scale pilot programme to develop and test needs-responsive approaches to education which are tailored to the context, build on existing community efforts, and build the technical capacity of five local organisations with whom we worked in partnership to implement this programme.

1.2. Approach

In collaboration with 5 local organisations with whom Street Child had conducted a COVID-19 response programme and the aforementioned needs assessment, 5 projects were designed and implemented between April and July 2021. These projects sought to test interventions and capture lessons that address four interdependent dimensions – instructional, financial, social and infrastructural – identified in Street

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[1] Street Child Non-Formal Education Needs Assessment, March 2021: https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/street-child-cameroon-non-formal-education-needs-assessment-march-2021

Child's Global Strategy 2021 as barriers to education across a range of urban and rural, easier- and harder to reach areas, and in both formal and non-formal learning spaces.

1.3.   Theory of Problem

AMEF's Last Mile Learning project in peri-urban communities around the town of Kumba, Southwest was an instructional intervention which recruited and trained facilitators to deliver Street Child's LML approach and provided teaching and learning resources to children who have suffered tremendous disruption to their education and often dropout from school. To meet the psychosocial needs of these conflict-affected children this was accompanied by a social intervention which promoted prevention, recognition, response and reporting of risks to children in communities. This integrated model ensured rigorous, robust instruction and psychosocial support for children to learn in community-based, non-formal learning settings.

LUKMEF's school safety and DRR project in the rural community of Awing, Northwest was an infrastructural intervention which strengthened the safety and security of community schools that have re-opened for the first time this year due to community efforts, but require support to become safe spaces for children, parents and teachers to feel safe, protected and learn. This approach leveraged existing community education committee institutions, training them on EiE, child protection and school safety action planning, with the aim to continue to implement this approach in other schools using community-level resources.

NADEV's Teaching at the Right Level project delivered in schools located in the urban areas of Buea and Tiko, Southwest was an instructional intervention which trained teachers to deliver TaRL approach, to children who have missed several years of school and are missing foundational language and mathematic skills. This catch-up model, supported with teaching and learning resources, therefore delivered a child-centred, targeted instructional approach that met the learning needs of different children in formal learning settings.

SHUMAS' Last Mile Learning project in rural communities across Menchum and Ngo-Ketunjia, Northwest was an instructional intervention which recruited and trained facilitators to deliver Street Child's LML approach and provided teaching and learning resources to out-of-school, internally displaced children living in remote areas who do not have access to basic services or education. To encourage adolescent engagement this was accompanied by a financial intervention, conditioned on enrolment in the learning component, which supported them to establish an enterprise. This integrated model enhanced children and adolescent learning and livelihoods security in non-formal learning and hardest-to-reach settings.

SUDAHSER's livelihoods for education project in urban areas of Bamenda, Northwest was a financial intervention which trained, coached and supported caregivers with children out of school because of school-associated and competing costs to establish enterprises and save for their children's education. This model also supported caregivers to enter their enterprises into saving schemes and cooperatives which will enhance their livelihoods security.

Name and Location	Partner	Need Targeted	Approach
Last Mile Learning SW, Kumba (peri-urban)	AMEF	In communities where learning spaces have been set up, facilitators rely on traditional teaching approaches and struggle to meet the learning and psychosocial needs of conflict-affected children.	Leveraging existing community spaces, train facilitators to provide life-saving language and mathematic skills to children through Street Child's 'Last Mile Learning' approach which uses a combination of pre-recorded lessons, self-learning packages, and games.
School Safety & DRR NW, Awing (rural)	LUKMEF	Some formal schools have re-opened for the first time this year due to community efforts, but school and conflict-related risks remain. Schools, teachers, parents, and children need support to be feel safe and protected in their schools.	Set up and train community education committees (CECs) on EiE, child protection and school safety, and support the CECs to develop school safety action plans.
Teaching at the Right Level SW, Buea & Tiko (urban)	NADEV	Many children enrolled in formal school have missed out on several years of schooling and struggle to acquire foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers do not have pedagogic knowledge to be able to tailor their teaching to the needs of these children, and they continue to fall further behind.	Train teachers on a child-centred, targeted instructional approach to teaching and learning, building their capacity to meet the learning needs of different children in their classrooms and to support children who have been out of school to catch up.
Last Mile Learning NW, Menchum & Ngo Ketunjia (rural)	SHUMAS	The challenge of low access to education in very rural communities has been exacerbated as IDP communities have moved to semi-permanent settlements in the bush, where they feel safe but do not have access to basic services or education.	Train community facilitators to provide life-saving language and mathematic skills to children through Street Child's 'Last Mile Learning' approach to out-of-school children through a combination of pre-recorded lessons, self-learning packages and games. To encourage adolescents to learn, provide them with livelihoods support conditioned on enrolling in the literacy and numeracy component.
Livelihoods for Education NW, Bamenda (urban)	SUDAHSER	In urban areas where formal schools are operating, many families (especially IDP families) face financial barriers to education and children are out of school because they cannot afford school fees, books, exam fees and opportunity costs of schooling.	Provide vulnerable caregivers of children who are out-of-school or at-risk of dropping out with livelihoods training, a start-up package and ongoing business and savings coaching to improve their capacity to meet the cost of education for their children.

2. Achievements and Lessons Learned

Instructional Achievements

- 1460 (78%) children and youth demonstrated improvement of one or more language learning levels.
- 1387 (74%) children and youth demonstrated improvement of one or more mathematic learning levels.
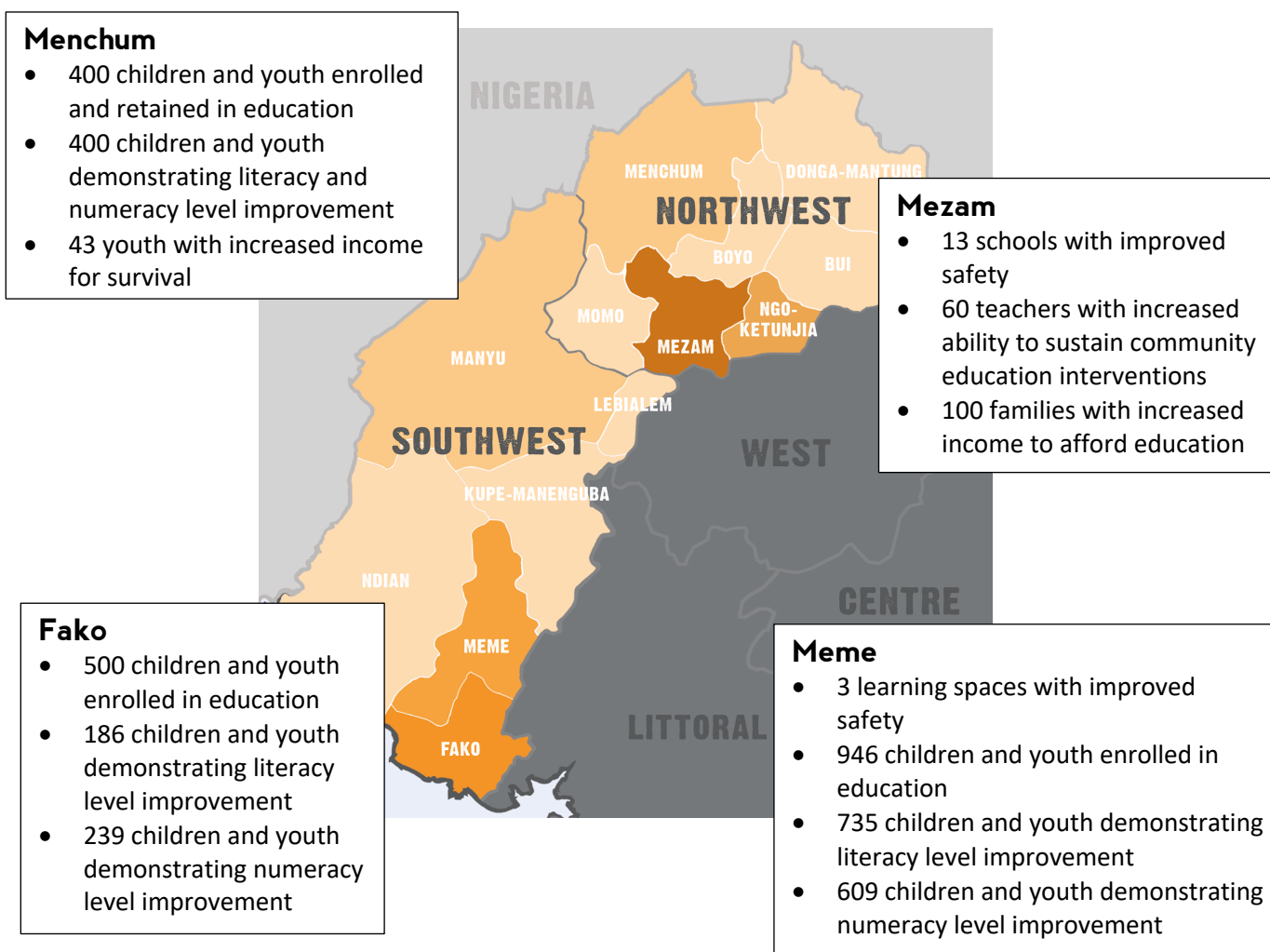
Financial Achievements

- 53 youth increased their income for survival through engagement with livelihood opportunities.
- 98% of caregivers increased their income by 81% to meet education costs by establishing small businesses.

Social Achievements

- 1485 children received psychosocial support sessions.
- 60 teachers and 41 facilitators received training in psychosocial support and child protection.

Infrastructural Achievements

- 1985 children and youth were enrolled in education, 94% of whom were retained throughout the project.
- 16 schools and 7 learning spaces reported improved safety planning and preparedness.

Menchum
- 400 children and youth enrolled and retained in education
- 400 children and youth demonstrating literacy and numeracy level improvement
- 43 youth with increased income for survival

Mezam
- 13 schools with improved safety
- 60 teachers with increased ability to sustain community education interventions
- 100 families with increased income to afford education

Fako
- 500 children and youth enrolled in education
- 186 children and youth demonstrating literacy level improvement
- 239 children and youth demonstrating numeracy level improvement

Meme
- 3 learning spaces with improved safety
- 946 children and youth enrolled in education
- 735 children and youth demonstrating literacy level improvement
- 609 children and youth demonstrating numeracy level improvement

2.1.   Access to Quality, Conflict-Sensitive Learning

This project has showcased that it is possible to improve children's access to learning in the challenging context of NWSW when projects are designed and implemented with a clear understanding of the conflict dynamics in each community, contextualisation and community engagement. 3,367 children were provided with access to learning through this programme, 73% for the first time in several years. This was achieved by gathering community and stakeholder input on which approaches would be most effective in their context and building on existing community-based interventions identified in our needs assessment in March to increase access to learning. Engaging all community stakeholders throughout the design and implementation process was key for gaining acceptance.

In both formal and non-formal learning settings in the NWSW regions, teachers and facilitators have limited knowledge of how to meet learning, life skills and social-emotional needs of conflict-affected children. Street Child leveraged successful pedagogical approaches developed in other emergency contexts and worked with our local partners and communities on the ground to adapt these. This included, for example, training of teachers on targeted approaches to teaching and integrating life-saving, life-sustaining content into learning. The feedback from partners, teachers and children has been that these approaches have improved teaching and learning in all settings targeted in this project – and that they hope to continue to build their knowledge of different approaches.

2.2.   Integrated Programming

Grounded in an understanding that the barriers to children's learning and wellbeing are complex and interlinked, this pilot integrated education, child protection and livelihoods approaches to provide holistic, child-centred support. Child protection was centred in all teaching and learning activities – for example, through the inclusion of modules on how to prevent, identify and respond to child protection concerns in all teacher and facilitator trainings, and the inclusion of child-friendly protection and life-skills messaging in all learning materials. In addition, livelihoods support to families was integrated as a strategy to improve education (reducing the financial barriers to education) and child protection (reducing the risks of families turning to harmful coping mechanisms) in a comprehensive, sustainable manner.

This integration builds on conversations in NWSW coordination fora calling for the need to improve collaboration and coordination between different sectors to meet the needs of children in a holistic and effective way. The integrated approach has also been welcomed by teachers; despite working with conflict-affected children every day, the teachers engaged in this project had not received any previous training on how to respond to signs of trauma or abuse, but after being introduced to the topics many are now stepping down their knowledge to other colleagues.

2.3.   Localised and Low-Cost

Given the scale of children in need of education support in the NWSW, a key aim of this programme was to test localised, low-cost approaches to learning which could easily be scaled up to reach many more children.

All projects relied on local resources and materials (eg. tarpaulin, chalk, sticks and stones for learning games) rather than high-cost materials (such as electronic devices) and engaged community contributions where possible (for example, parents and community members coming together to build a temporary learning space out of available resources). Furthermore, as a result of low-cost approaches the project provided learning to 3,367 children at a cost of only £16.91 per child, including all operational and staff costs for 6 organisations who planned, implemented and monitored the pilot projects. This cost per child is expected to be further reduced as operational and programmatic costs such as curriculum design and development, project staff salaries and monitoring visits are benefitted by economies of scale. Such localised, low-cost approaches are critical for scalability and replicability not only because they provide a foundation to meet education needs at scale in the low-resource, underfunded context of NWSW Cameroon, but also because they increase the likelihood that communities will be able to sustain the projects self-sufficiently.

2.4. Local Partner Capacity Strengthening

In line with Street Child's meaningful local partnership[2] with front-line local organisations this project emphasised building partner organisational, institutional and technical capacity in order to achieve sustainability. To help redress the under investment in local organisations Street Child provided tailored support to each partner where specific organisational capacity gaps were identified.

Partner organisations were introduced to Street Child's Partnerships Framework including an Organisational Development Model[3] (ODM). This ODM is comprised of four steps including (i) an orientation to Street Child's Partnerships Framework and the ODM, (ii) vision casting the organisation's strengths and vision for the future, (iii) a self-assessment which assesses areas of the organisation required to achieve the vision and (iv) a plan for the development of areas assessed and identified as organisational priorities. This framework and its ODM are intended to form the foundation for partners to develop in order to be able to manage larger-scale EiE programmes in the future and support the scale-up of EiE response in the NWSW.

To strengthen institutional and technical capacity, Street Child engaged partners throughout the project through training and ongoing coaching. Training and coaching in project design, finance and M&E included, for example, topics such as on the development of cohesive logical frameworks, MEL plans and workplans, and the development and implementation of financial procedure manuals. Partner staff were also introduced to INEE minimum standards, and to innovative approaches to education in emergencies (EiE). These included Teaching at the Right Level[4] (TaRL) – an internationally recognised intervention to improve foundational language and mathematical skills – as well as Last Mile Learning[5] (LML), Street Child's flagship EiE approach to assure life-saving learning through recorded instruction and interactive resources for hardest-to-reach children.

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[2] For more information on Street Child's localisation approach go to https://www.street-child.co.uk/championing-local-actors
[3] For more information on Street Child's approach to partnership in Cameroon, please contact joshua.bullen@street-child.org
[4] For more information on Teaching at the Right Level go to https://www.teachingattherightlevel.org/
[5] A blog post introducing Last Mile Learning and its impact on learners can be found at https://www.street-child.co.uk/blog/2020/9/4/last-mile-learning

3. Partner Projects & Achievements

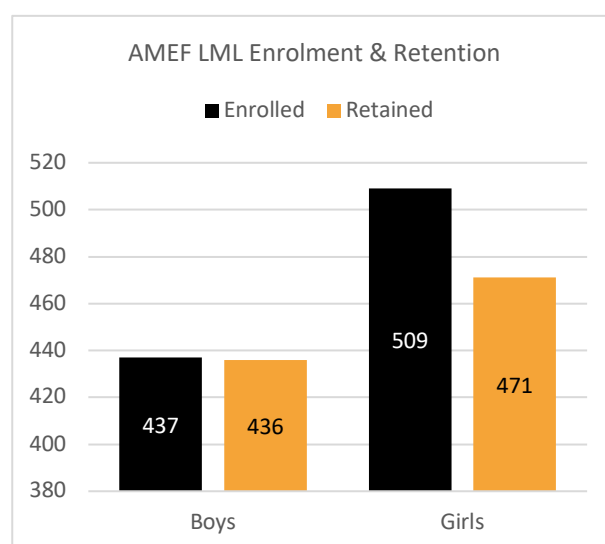### AMEF: Last Mile Learning in Meme Division

Objective:
To provide key literacy, numeracy, and life skills knowledge to out-of-school displaced and conflict-affected children, and to build the capacity of communities to continue to provide these learning opportunities to their children.

Approach & Activities:
In 3 peri-urban communities where formal schools are currently not operating and there are high numbers of displaced children and families, community learning spaces were supported with the introduction of Last Mile Learning, Street Child's flagship EiE approach to assure life-saving learning through recorded instruction and interactive resources for hardest-to-reach children. 22 community facilitators were trained on the teaching approach, EiE and child protection to deliver lessons to 907 children. The teaching approach enabled facilitators to tailor activities and lessons to the individual learning levels of each child, rather than their age or grade level. A simple assessment approach that tracks progress across learning levels in language (beginner, letters, words, paragraphs and stories) and mathematics (1 digit, 2 digit, 3 digit, addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division) was used. This simple approach was critical to community facilitators being able to analyse and act upon the data to drive improvements in the quality of learning.
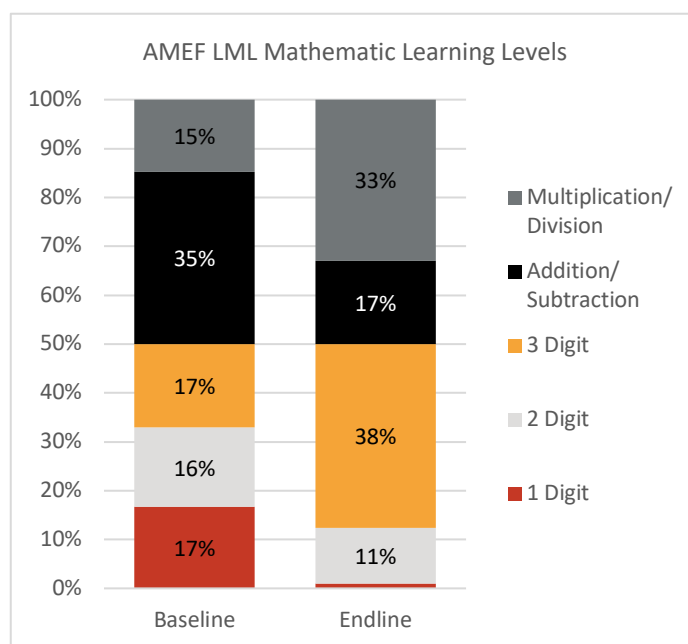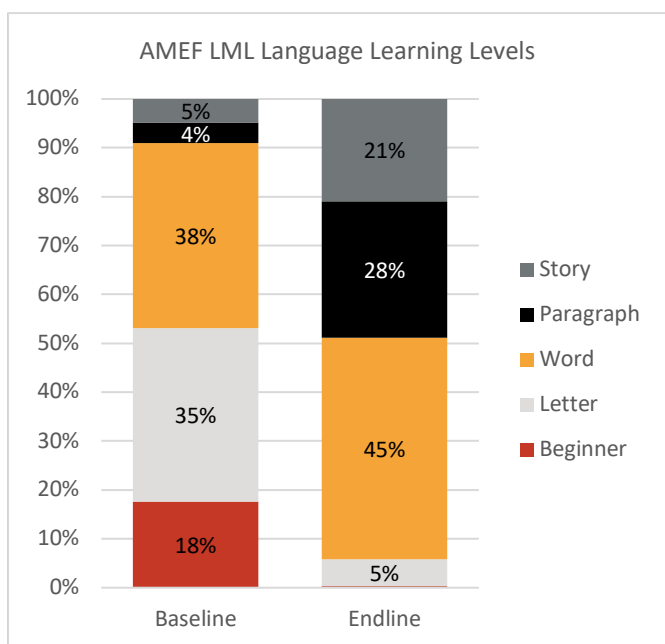
Achievements:
- 18 community-based facilitators (5 female, 13 male) were trained on EiE and child safeguarding.
- 946 children (46% boys and 54% girls) were enrolled in learning, 96% of which were retained throughout the project.
- In just 7 weeks, 81% of learners (48% boys and 52% girls) moved up at least 1 language learning level
- In just 7 weeks, 67% of learners (42% boys and 58% girls) moved up at least 1 mathematic learning level.

AMEF LML Enrolment & Retention

■ Enrolled ■ Retained

	Boys	Girls
Enrolled	437	509
Retained	436	471

Lessons Learned:
Need for scale-up: In the target communities, the desire to enrol in the project was higher than expected. High numbers of children attended the learning sessions, which at times led to overcrowding in the community learning space, negatively impacting on safety and learning. It is recommended that future projects should increase the number of learning spaces and facilitators, to be better able to meet the scale up the needs in these peri-urban communities.

AMEF LML Language Learning Levels

Baseline:
- Beginner 18%
- Letter 35%
- Word 38%
- Paragraph 4%
- Story 5%

Endline:
- Letter 5%
- Word 45%
- Paragraph 28%
- Story 21%

Legend:
- Story
- Paragraph
- Word
- Letter
- Beginner

AMEF LML Mathematic Learning Levels

Baseline:
- 1 Digit 17%
- 2 Digit 16%
- 3 Digit 17%
- Addition/Subtraction 35%
- Multiplication/Division 15%

Endline:
- 2 Digit 11%
- 3 Digit 38%
- Addition/Subtraction 17%
- Multiplication/Division 33%

Legend:
- Multiplication/Division
- Addition/Subtraction
- 3 Digit
- 2 Digit
- 1 Digit

Spotlight on Success: Expanding Access through Evidence

This project was implemented in an area where many communities fear or resist schools and learning re-opening after years of conflict and threats to education. The communities engaged in the project were ones that had already started or shown a desire for community learning, whereas other communities who were not yet demonstrating this engagement were not targeted. However, the news of the project and its achievements quickly spread beyond the targeted communities; by the mid-point of the project, neighbouring communities were reaching out to request if the same support could be given to their children. For example in one community leaders stated that "if this project could reach our community it would be life changing for our children". This points to the possibility of scaling up non-formal learning carefully through evidence of success, and through a community-based approach.

1. Training of community facilitators on LML and EiE in Meme division

2. Facilitators and learners ready to use their learning packs in Meme division

## LUKMEF: School Safety in Santa Division

Objective:

To improve the protection and wellbeing of children going back to school and improve the capacity of communities to keep school-going children safe.

Approach & Activities:

In communities where schools have re-opened over the past year, teachers, learners and parents face a range of challenges. Two key challenges they face are the need to rehabilitate school structures and resources that have been abandoned for several years, and fear amongst children and parents that going back to school will put them at risk. This project aimed to pilot a community-based approach to strengthen school safety planning and preparation. Community education committees (CECs) were established and trained on school safety and child protection. Teachers were also trained on EiE, child protection and child safeguarding. SBMC members and teachers were then supported to work together to identify key barriers or risks for learning in their schools, and design community-based action plans to be able to mitigate and respond to these barriers and risks. In addition, schools were provided with basic learning materials (benches, desks, textbooks) to ensure they are safe, well-equipped spaces for learning.

Achievements:

- 40 teachers and 20 CEC members were trained on EiE, school safety and child safeguarding.
- 5 school representatives responsible for implementing the training reported improved school safety after designing and implementing school safety action plans.
- 972 children benefited from school safety plans and the distribution of desks, benches, and teaching and learning resources.

LUKMEF Training Participants

Males ■ Females

	Teachers	CEC Members
Females	11	2
Males	29	18
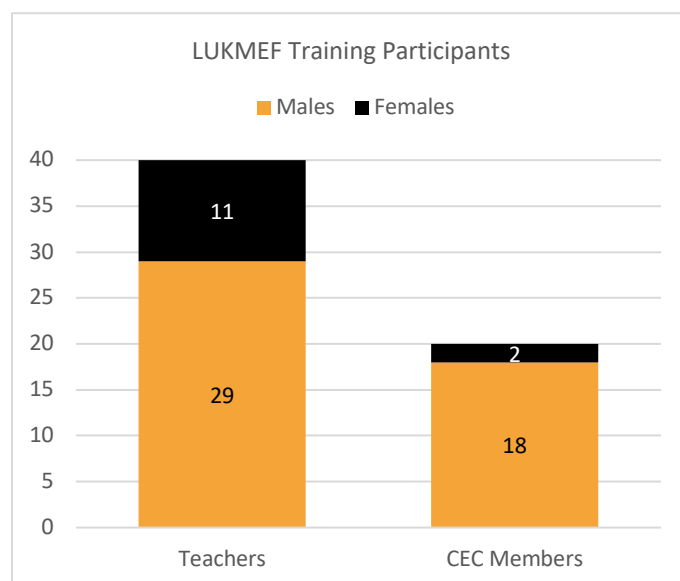
Lessons Learned:

<u>Leveraging existing community structures</u>: Working with existing institutions such as the community education committees provided this project with an opportunity to ensure sustainability as these groups have taken the model, its content and approaches, and will continue to implement it in other schools using their own community-level resources. For example, following the end of the project, the community structures established replicated the model introduced to develop school safety action plans in other schools in the community, in preparation for the resumption of the school year in September.

3. Children in school in Santa division proudly showing off their new learning materials

Spotlight on Success: Community Engagement for Sustainability

At the core of this project was the set up and capacity building of community committees to manage and improve school safety in their community. Aside from establishing CECs, the project sought the input and buy-in of existing community structures such as the community Cultural and Development Association. Not only have these committees and structures decided to continue supporting schools in the community after the project ends, but they are also working to mobilise dedicated resources from key community members and projects to be able to continue providing financial support where needed (e.g. for infrastructural improvements towards improved safety in schools).

4. Training of teachers and CEC members from Santa division on EiE, school safety and DRR

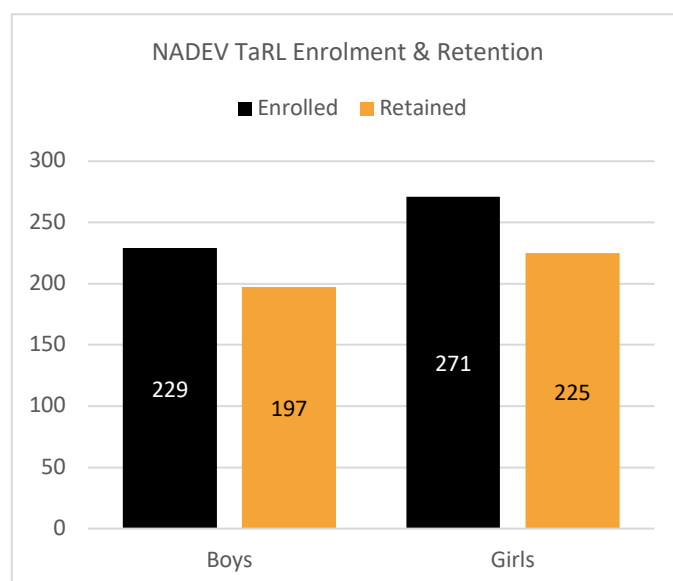## NADEV: Teaching at the Right Level in Fako Division

Objective:

To provide effective, fun after-school classes to IDP and conflict-affected children who have missed out on school, helping them to catch up and increasing their confidence and resilience.

Approach & Activities:

In cities and town where schools are now open, many of the children who are back in school have missed out on 2 or more years of learning. Many more are still arriving in safer towns from areas where schools are still closed and are entering school for the first time in 4 years. In overcrowded classrooms, teachers struggle to meet the different learning levels and needs of different children, and children who lack the foundational skills to access the curriculum get left further and further behind. To address this, teachers in 3 formal schools were trained in Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), a child-centred, targeted instructional approach to teaching and learning, building their capacity to meet the learning needs of different children in their classrooms at their level rather than their expected age or grade level. The teachers used this approach in after-school classes, helping children to catch up on their foundational language and mathematic skills.
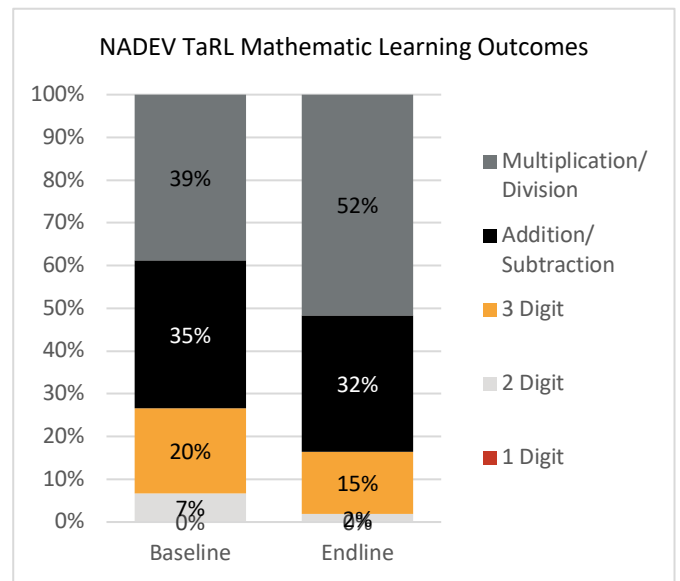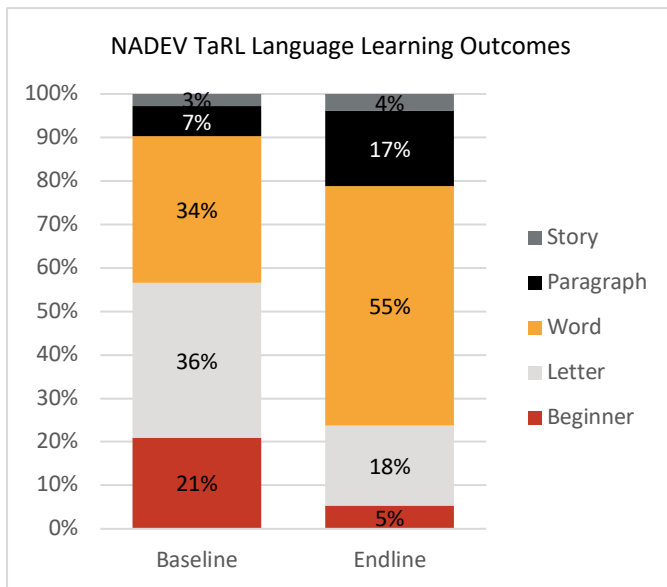
Achievements:

- 13 teachers and head-teachers trained on Teaching at the Right Level and EiE.
- 500 children (77% IDP, 46% boys and 54% girls) were provided with child-centred, targeted catch-up classes.
- In just 7 weeks, 44% of learners (42% boys and 58% girls) moved up at least 1 literacy learning level.
- In just 7 weeks, 57% of learners (57% boys and 43% girls) moved up at least 1 numeracy learning level.

NADEV TaRL Enrolment & Retention

Enrolled — Retained

Boys: Enrolled 229, Retained 197
Girls: Enrolled 271, Retained 225

Lessons Learned:

<u>Attendance:</u> The TaRL lessons were held after school hours, after the children had already had a full day of classes. Some children were identified as attending irregularly, and follow-up revealed the main reason for this being 1) parents wanted children to come straight home after school in a group with other children, to ensure their safety and 2) children who may not have eaten that day were too hungry to stay on after school. Future projects will seek to integrate TaRL into the school day where possible, and where not possible seek to provide some snacks or school feeding to the children to ensure they have the energy to participate in after-school classes.

NADEV TaRL Language Learning Outcomes

	Baseline	Endline
Story	3%	4%
Paragraph	7%	17%
Word	34%	55%
Letter	36%	18%
Beginner	21%	5%

NADEV TaRL Mathematic Learning Outcomes

	Baseline	Endline
Multiplication/Division	39%	52%
Addition/Subtraction	35%	32%
3 Digit	20%	15%
2 Digit	7%	2%
1 Digit	0%	0%

Case Study

Brothers Julius* and Divine* live with their aunt Esther* and 4 cousins in Cameroon's SW. They have been living here since they fled their village in the NW region. As a result of the conflict and having to move, they hadn't been to school in over two years. Esther managed to enrol them in school, but then realised they couldn't keep up in class because they couldn't read or write. Esther explains: "I had to get someone to teach them after school, but the cost was too heavy for me… My greatest challenges were to provide my nephews with books and extra classes to help them read and write."

Since NADEV supported their school to provide free classes to help children like Julius and Divine catch up, Esther has less of a burden to carry – "as soon as my kids got involved in the project, I was relieved and less stressed because I knew they would be well taken care of. I also benefited financially since I could now use the money I was paying for extra classes for food and clothes". She sees the improvements the boys are making every week, and is sure the knowledge they are gaining will remain with them and help them in future. Esther also knows that there are many other children and caregivers struggling as she was, and hopes that the project can help them, too.

5. Checking letter knowledge at after-school class in Fako division

6. Songs and games make learning letters easy in Fako division

SHUMAS: Last Mile Learning in Rural Menchum & Ngo Ketunjia Divisions
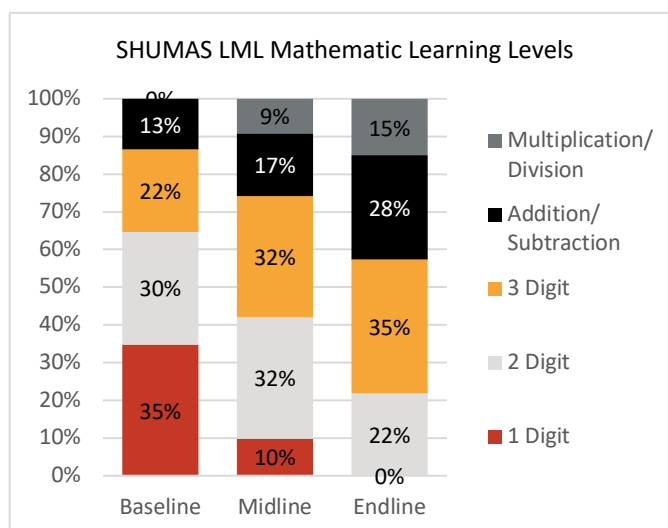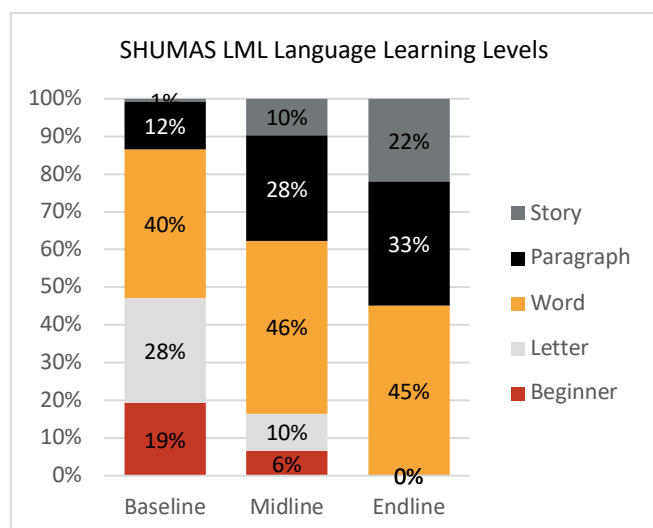
Objective:

To provide community-based learning opportunities for displaced children in rural areas where access to services is extremely limited.

Approach & Activities:

Semi-permanent IDP settlements in remote, hard-to-reach areas have grown as IDPs have fled fighting elsewhere. These communities rely on subsistence farming, have very little access to services, and have no schools. Many children here have never been to school, and the few that have been out of school for four years. In 4 of these communities, SHUMAS established community learning spaces for the first time. Community education committees (CECs) were set up, and 11 community facilitators trained on a simple method to allow them to teach basic literacy, numeracy and key life skills to children. 539 children (260 girls and 279 boys) were enrolled and completed 8 weeks of Last Mile Learning, Street Child's flagship EiE approach to assure life-saving learning through recorded instruction and interactive resources for hardest-to-reach children, many of whom associate school with fear. To encourage adolescent children who have been out of school for some time to join the classes, SHUMAS also provided 53 adolescents between age 14-18 with livelihoods training and a start-up kit (livestock, seeds, manure) on condition of enrolment.

Achievements:

- 11 community-based facilitators were trained on EiE and LML teaching approach.
- 4 CECs with a total of 20 members were trained.
- 539 children were enrolled in non-formal, community-based learning, 100% of which completed the 8-week programme.
- In just 8 weeks, 100% of enrolled learners moved up at least 1 language learning level.
- In just 8 weeks, 100% of enrolled learners moved up at least 1 mathematic learning level.
- 53 adolescents were provided with livelihoods support.

SHUMAS LML Language Learning Levels

	Baseline	Midline	Endline
Story	1%	10%	22%
Paragraph	12%	28%	33%
Word	40%	46%	45%
Letter	28%	10%	0%
Beginner	19%	6%	

SHUMAS LML Mathematic Learning Levels

	Baseline	Midline	Endline
Multiplication/Division	0%	9%	15%
Addition/Subtraction	13%	17%	28%
3 Digit	22%	32%	35%
2 Digit	30%	32%	22%
1 Digit	35%	10%	0%

Lessons Learned:

Selection of children: Initially, the number of beneficiaries had been decided and vulnerability selection criteria had been designed to identify children for classes. However, when the assessment of beneficiaries was conducted, it was clear that all children in the targeted communities met the criteria and exceeded the intended number of beneficiaries. Rather than exclude children, it was decided to re-adjust the budget to increase the number of children who could be enrolled; virtually all children in the communities were then enrolled and attended the learning spaces. Future projects should therefore be designed based on comprehensive needs assessments while also remaining as flexibly inclusive as possible to avoid exclusion.

Gender equality: In the communities targeted, especially as there are no opportunities for education, early marriage amongst both boys and girls, and early motherhood are very common. Despite aims to promote girls' inclusion at all levels of this project, it was a challenge to include adolescent girls as many were pregnant, breastfeeding and/or responsible for childcare. Future projects will work more closely with the community members at design phase to ensure strategies are in place (i.e. provide childcare space, or separate classes for young mothers) to provide adolescent girls with equal opportunities to learn.

Spotlight on Success: Education Enables Development

Humanitarian actors in the NWSW have feared that implementation of education projects in hard-to-reach areas could worsen and compromise humanitarian access in other sectors. However, SHUMAS' experience implementing this project had the opposite result. The access achieved in these hard-to-reach communities through an education project has since been leveraged to mobilise resources to the same underserved communities for health and nutrition work.

This is partly due to the high levels of community engagement with the education project, and the appreciation that the community has for the organisation that brought learning back to their children. Moreover, education has been a source of community cohesion over the past months – bringing community members together to build and manage the community learning space and start up learning in their community has given them a common goal and allowed them to work together, opening opportunities for dialogue and collaboration away from the tensions of the ongoing conflict.

7. Children in rural Ngo Ketunjia in their community-built learning space

8. Distribution of livelihoods start-up materials to adolescents enrolled in community learning in rural Menchum division

SUDAHSER: Livelihoods for Education in Mezam Division

Objective:
To sustainably improve the capacity of vulnerable displaced and conflict-affected caregivers to meet the cost of education for their children.

Approach & Activities:
Where schools are open, financial barriers to education are a key challenge for vulnerable households – especially IDP households who have lost access to sources of income. With the aim of sustainably empowering vulnerable families to meet the costs associated with education, SUDAHSER provided livelihoods support to caregivers of children who were out-of-school or at-risk of dropping out. 100 caregivers were trained on an income-generating activity (market gardening, poultry farming or petty trading) and provided with a business start-up kit. Over the course of 8 weeks, the caregivers were provided with regular coaching on their businesses and encouraged to save daily in a micro-credit unions.

Achievements:
- 100 vulnerable caregivers trained on income generating activities, basic business and savings skills.
- 98 vulnerable caregivers successfully set up a small market gardening, petit trading and poultry farming businesses with an average monthly income increase of CFA10,880 (81%) in 2 months which they are investing in their children's' education.
- 218 children were enrolled in schools as a direct result of income increases achieved by this project's intervention.
- 20 teachers across 8 schools were trained in EiE, PSS and Child Protection practices.

Lessons Learned:
Timing for measuring impact: The short nature of the pilot project meant that the livelihoods was provided only during the school holidays. This gave the caregivers an opportunity to start savings towards the costs of education before the start of the new school year, but it has also made it more challenging to fully evaluate the impact on education – only at the start of the school year will we be able to follow up with the caregivers to see whether they have been able to use their savings to enrol their children. Future projects with longer implementation timeframes will better allow for this analysis.

Competing priorities: 98% of the caregivers supported were successfully turning a profit and making savings from their small businesses at the end of the project. However, 2% were not able to, largely due to competing financial priorities such as illness in the family leading to the cost of medical care being prioritised over savings towards the resumption of the school year. Future projects will seek to partner with other services providers (shelter, nutrition, health actors) to as far as possible ensure that the basic needs of vulnerable families are met, and that savings are made to spend on urgent priorities (such as medical needs) when they arise to reduce the risk of child dropout to contribute to household income earning.

Case study

Sarah Akum* (pictured) has been living with relatives in Bamenda since she fled her village with her 4 children to escape fighting. 2 of her children are school-aged; her 6- year-old daughter Blessing* and 14-year-old son David*.

She had enrolled both in school last year, but her oldest was forced to drop out before the start of the second term because she couldn't pay the second instalment of his school fees. David has been working on a construction site since then, trying to save enough money to re-enrol. Sarah had no work, but was thankful for relatives that took her in and the small plot of land where she could grow food to feed the family.

Sarah was put in touch with SUDAHSER by a community leader who recommended her for the livelihoods for education project. After being trained on basic business skills, SUDAHSER supported her to open a small shop where she sells basic household items and cooks akara for children to buy on their way to a nearby school every morning. With support and coaching from the SUDAHSER team, Sarah has been able to save at least 1,000 FCFA every day. She will use these savings to pay for David's school fees and books in September, to allow him to go back to school – making sure he can finish his education is a priority for Sarah, and she is grateful now has the means to support him to do so.

8. Sarah in front of the shop she established with support from SUDAHSER, in Mezam division*

9. A caregiver tends to their market garden established with project support in Mezam division

4. Integrated Analysis

This project has piloted a variety of interventions which sought to address the four interdependent instructional, financial, social and infrastructural dimensions which Street Child and our partners identified as barriers to education. These interventions, although differing and unique, all adopted a child-centred approach which coupled direct impact for children with an increase in the capacity of caregivers, communities and schools to support children to be safe, in school and learning in the long-term.

AMEF's Last Mile Learning project piloted an intersectoral instructional and social intervention which demonstrated that communities in hard-to-reach, peri-urban Kumba have an immense desire and need for education, and that Street Child's simple LML instructional approach can deliver and measure significant learning gains in a short-term project. In addition, anecdotes from the psychosocial support sessions demonstrated the need to continue to integrated psychosocial support in education programming to provide holistic support to confront compounded challenges children face in this context.

LUKMEF's school safety project piloted an infrastructural intervention which focused on strengthening schools as safe spaces for children to learn through supporting community training and community-based school safety action planning. This demonstrated the importance of a holistic view of school safety beyond the physical elements, and the impact community school management can have on access to and quality of education. Moreover, that leveraging existing community institutions to implement such interventions can ensure sustainability and multiply impact through existing community-level resources.

NADEV's Teaching at the Right Level project piloted an instructional intervention which illustrated the need to provide teachers with child-centred, targeted instructional approaches that enable children who have missed out on several years of school to acquire foundational language and mathematic skills. This intervention also demonstrated that an instructional intervention such as TaRL can deliver and measure significant learning gains in a short-term project and be implemented in formal learning settings.

SHUMAS's Last Mile Learning project piloted an intersectoral instructional and financial intervention which proved successful in hard-to-reach, rural communities where traditional teaching and learning resources are not available. This intervention also demonstrated that significant learning gains can be achieved and measured in a short-term project. Meanwhile, the livelihoods support, conditioned on enrolment in the learning component, demonstrated the value of age-differentiated approaches for maximum engagement of and impact for different groups of children.

SUDAHSER's livelihoods for education project piloted a financial intervention which enabled caregivers with out-of-school children in urban areas of Bamenda to afford schooling costs and enrol their children in school. This financial intervention proved that with training, coaching and support caregivers are able to establish enterprises, enter into saving schemes and cooperatives to enhance their livelihood security and provide their children with education.

5. Way Forward
Key lessons that have come out of this pilot project are:

5.1. Access for safe programming on EiE in the NWSW is possible.
The partners implementing the different piloted approaches were able to access rural, urban, harder-to reach and easier-to-reach locations and secured the buy-in of communities and approval from all stakeholders. The approach used in this pilot of achieving access by building on existing community efforts to improve education access for children has been successful and should be continue in the future as part of reducing risks of harm. Any scale up will need to be done carefully with comprehensive assessment of risks in different locations and for different communities; however, there is a clear opportunity to expand education interventions for children in NWSW Cameroon.

5.2. Local partners need guidance on innovative, low-resource approaches to EiE.
For most of the partners, this project was the first time that they had been introduced to specialised EiE approaches for teaching and learning. There is a need in the programmatic context of NWSW Cameroon for international actors to work with local organisations to create, design and develop innovative, localised and low-cost approaches to EiE and strengthen local actors' capacities to implement these approaches to ensure the sustainability of these efforts.

5.3. Learning gains can be achieved and measured in a short-term project.
There is often the perception that learning outcomes can only be measured over more long-term projects as improvements in learning levels and the assessment of these improvements take time. However, this pilot project demonstrates that agile approaches to teaching and learning can produce rapid learning gains, and equally, that simple, low-cost assessments can track these changes at more regular intervals to inform instruction and intervention. Through the use of innovative EiE teaching and learning approaches learning levels can improve within two months and they can be assessed using simple, low-cost assessments that do not take a long time to conduct or analyse.

5.4. Localised organisational development is required for effective, sustainable response.
Organisational development of front-line local organisations is required to build effective, sustainable response capacity to Cameroon's NWSW education crisis. Without this financial and technical support local organisations have been unable to acquire the funding required to deliver EiE response. To ensure localised organisational development funding must be ring fenced for capacity building activities such as trainings, coaching and consultancies must be incorporated in project design.

6. Annexe

6.1. Outcomes Data

Outcomes	Indicators	Target	Ach.	Partner	Ach.	Sex	Ach.	Division	Ach.
Outcome 1: Improved safety for children in schools and learning spaces	Schools and learning spaces with improved safety	20	23	AMEF	3			Menchum	2
				NADEV	3			Ngoketunjia	1
				LUKMEF	5			Noun	1
				SHUMAS	4			Fako	3
				SUDAHSER	8			Mezam	13
								Meme	3
Outcome 2: Increased inclusion and access for children in schools and learning spaces	Children and youth enrolled in education	1750	1985	AMEF	946	Boys	945	Menchum	400
				NADEV	500	Girls	1040	Ngoketunjia	102
				SHUMAS	539			Noun	37
								Fako	500
								Meme	946
	Children and youth retained in education	1650	1868	AMEF	907	Boys	912	Menchum	400
				NADEV	422	Girls	956	Ngoketunjia	102
				SHUMAS	539			Noun	37
								Fako	422
								Meme	907
Outcome 3: Improved learning levels of children and youth in schools and learning spaces	Children and youth demonstrating one or more levels of improvement in literacy	1655	1460	AMEF	735	Boys	708	Menchum	400
				NADEV	186	Girls	752	Ngoketunjia	102
				SHUMAS	539			Noun	37
								Fako	186
								Meme	735
	Children and youth demonstrating one or more levels of improvement in numeracy	1655	1387	AMEF	609	Boys	671	Menchum	400
				NADEV	239	Girls	716	Ngoketunjia	102
				SHUMAS	539			Noun	37
								Fako	239
								Meme	609
Outcome 4: Increased community capacity to provide education	Teachers reporting increased ability to sustain community education interventions	98	102	AMEF	18	Male	49	Menchum	8
				NADEV	13	Female	53	Ngoketunjia	2
				LUKMEF	40			Noun	1
				SHUMAS	11			Fako	13
				SUDAHSER	20			Mezam	60
								Meme	18
	CBWs reporting increased ability to sustain community livelihoods interventions	4	4	SUDAHSER	4	Male	2	Mezam	4
						Female	2		
Outcome 5: Increased coping capacity of vulnerable families/ youth to absorb shocks and afford schooling	Families engaged in livelihoods with increased income to afford education	75	100	SUDAHSER	100	Males	19	Mezam	100
						Females	81		
	Youth engaged in livelihoods with increased income for survival	50	53	SHUMAS	53	Boys	29	Menchum	43
						Girls	24	Ngoketunjia	7
								Noun	3