



Ministry of Education
Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia

This is the third results paper documenting experiences and lessons learnt from support provided to pastoralist education by QESSP Afar Region.

ABOUT QESSP

The Quality Education Strategic Support Programme (QESSP) aims to enhance the capacity of the education sector in Ethiopia to improve outcomes for learners. We support partners to implement reforms, enhance policy dialogue and improve the evidence base to inform education policy by providing technical assistance, management support and flexible funds.

We focus on these areas: teacher education, school leadership, inclusive education, curriculum development, and system wide strengthening. QESSP is a four-year programme funded by UK aid from the UK government and managed by the British Council.

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Increasing Access to Education through Alternative Basic Education Centres: Afar Region

The experience of the Quality Education Strategic Support Programme (QESSP)

KEY MESSAGES

Training and associated materials are more effective when based on a skills gap analysis.

The engagement of REB staff in revising the training materials has resulted in a strong team that is committed to a more effective implementation of ABE.

A skills gap analysis provided the evidence required for the regional education bureau (REB) to review the facilitator recruitment process and revise the training programme.

Involving local stakeholders in the recruitment of the ABE facilitators has reduced turnover – a serious challenge for the REB.



THE CHALLENGE

Ethiopia has made strides towards increasing access to education over recent years. In 2015-16, the national gross enrolment rate at the primary school level was 108.7 percent (103.5 percent females). However, basic education for all is still not even across the country and some regions lag behind.

Afar is primarily a pastoralists region. Families move from place to place in search of water and grass for their cattle. Young people often leave school early to go with their parents and this affects school enrolment rates, which was only 66 percent (62 percent females) in primary schools.

The region tried to increase access to education through Alternative Basic Education (ABE) centres. ABE suits the pastoralists' way of life and has enhanced participation in education among pastoralist communities.

The ABE centres differ from formal schools in three ways:

- A flexible schedule is developed with the consent of the community (rather than a rigid school day as in the formal system)
- Students are taught by facilitators (not formally trained teachers)
- Children complete their primary first cycle education within four years and then join formal schools for grade five

The ABE centres were originally meant for older children who did not have the opportunity to go to school at an appropriate age.

According to an impact evaluation on the effectiveness of ABE conducted by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2017, the performance of ABE was weaker than formal primary schooling. One of the key challenges identified by the study was the quality of ABE facilitators.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES

QESSP supported the Ministry to unpack this challenge further and commissioned a follow-up study: 'Skill gap assessment of ABE facilitators and instructors at the Assayita College of Teacher Education'. The study sampled 30 ABE centres and 30 facilitators and highlighted some key challenges.

Recruitment of ABE facilitators

Though the national standard for the recruitment of ABE facilitators required candidates to complete grade 10 and receive formal college training in facilitation, the survey revealed that:

- Only 17 percent of facilitators met the requirements
- Only 27 percent of facilitators had completed grade 10
- 57 percent of facilitators had not completed grade 10 or received any formal training
- The majority of facilitators did not speak the local language making lesson delivery almost impossible

Pedagogical skills of ABE facilitators

- The majority of facilitators did not have the minimum level of pedagogical knowledge and skills as required in the ABE Inspection Framework
- Facilitators did not have the opportunity to grasp the curriculum during the short orientation workshops and training programmes, and therefore had limited knowledge of the ABE curriculum
- A significant number of the facilitators lacked the confidence to teach ABE subjects

Student facilitator ratio

- In the majority of ABE centres, the student to facilitator ratio was above the national standard (50) due to a shortage of facilitators
- Only 10 percent of the ABE centres met the standard student facilitator ratio of 1:50

The training is the first of its kind in terms of the number of ABE facilitators it produced and the quality of the training. It has transformed the training practice by bringing together all the key players and using evidence to determine the best course of action. I would like to assure you that the region will use the training as a benchmark for subsequent work.

Ato Mohammed Uda, Head, Afar REB



THE RESPONSE

QESSP has worked with the Ministry of Education to make education more inclusive across Ethiopia. A key objective was to build the capacity of target regions to plan and implement programmes suitable to pastoralist and indigenous communities. The Afar region was targeted to enhance the quality of the ABE programmes.

Pre-training/preparation phase

- The findings of the skill gap assessment were shared with the 30 instructors from the Assayita College of Teacher Education and four experts from the REB and Zone Education Department
- In light of the findings, the pre-service training materials and modules for ABE facilitators were revised in partnership with the REB

Training/implementation phase

- Three hundred trainees (17 percent females) were selected from communities where there was a demand for ABE services
- All candidates attended an 8-month training programme and 294 trainees (16 percent females) successfully completed the training

Post-training/deployment phase

The graduates were deployed to 34 woredas and all have resumed their roles. All qualified facilitators have undergone the training in their mother tongue.

Table 1: Number of woreda facilitators who participated in the training by zone

Zones	Number of woredas to which the new graduates were assigned	Total number of trained facilitators assigned to each zone
One	9	119
Two	8	72
Three	7	30
Four	5	29
Five	5	41
Total	34	294

THE RESULTS

More effective training practice

- QESSP supported the revision of the facilitator recruitment process. Candidates were selected from the communities they come from, which in turn facilitated the deployment process and ensured more sustainability. In the past, trained facilitators were recruited from elsewhere and often refused to go to remote communities
- Training materials and modules were revised and translated into local languages
- For the first time the training was delivered by qualified instructors who spoke the local language. This improved the quality and uptake of the training

Better prepared facilitators

Facilitators were monitored after the training by woreda education officers and ABE centre coordinators. The results were positive and there was a marked difference in the knowledge of the subject and pedagogy skills between the recent graduates and their predecessors.

Increased number of facilitators means that more students access ABE centres

- Over 700 new teachers were assigned to the various woredas in the 2017-18 academic year. This would not have been possible without the 294 new ABE facilitators supported by QESSP
- The standard teacher student ratio in primary schools is 1:50. With the 294 newly trained facilitators, it will be more realistic to reach the 15,000 children in the region
- The REB has extended the reach of the ABE centres to remote kebeles of woredas such as Koori, Qad Daqar, Ixu, Afxeera, and Yallo

Strengthened capacity of staff

Staff from both the REB and the instructors from the Assayita College of Teacher Education (CTE) benefitted from the training and learned new skills, including the revision of the new training modules.

Table 2: Criteria for the selection of ABE facilitators

Criteria	Before	After
Selection criteria: education background	The majority of trainees completed grade 8	All trainees fulfilled the minimum entry requirement: grade 10
Selection criteria: personal background	The majority of trainees were recruited from the neighbouring region (non-natives) and did not speak Afar Af	All ABE facilitators were selected from the local community and all (except those from Argoba Special Woreda) speak Afar Af as their mother tongue
Background of trainers	The training was mostly conducted by untrained personnel simply because they spoke Afar Af	The training was led by trained professionals who were the first ever graduates of the Semera University with a BA degree in Afar Af
Training modules	The modules were outdated, not student-centred or tailor made	There were newly revised ABE facilitator training modules
Gender inclusion	Female participation was far lower. In some woredas, there were no female trainees	Female participation has increased by 16%



LESSONS **LEARNED**

Stakeholder coordination enhances effectiveness

The REB worked closely with the woredas and the CTE to improve the ABE centres, recruit facilitators, and roll out the training programme. The initial skill gap assessment was conducted in partnership with the CTE, which provided the evidence required to revise the programme.

Woredas played a key role in the recruitment of facilitators from local communities. In the past, graduates looked for other jobs immediately after they collected their ABE facilitator certificates. Now the certificates are sent directly to the REB and the woredas, who facilitate the smooth deployment of the graduates.

Working together (state and non-state actors) can generate wider socio-economic benefits for communities

The government was looking for a solution to tackle youth unemployment in the region. The Ministry worked in close collaboration with the woredas on this intervention. Since the woredas led on the recruitment, it enabled them to target a sufficient number of young people in the local communities that required jobs. Young graduates were hired as facilitators and are now gainfully employed.