Background Paper

Alternative Education and Return Pathways for Out-of-School Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Secondary Education in Africa:

**PREPARING YOUTH
FOR THE FUTURE
OF WORK**

Alternative Education and Return Pathways for Out-of-School Youth in sub-Saharan Africa

(A background paper for the Secondary Education in Africa: Preparing Youth for the Future of Work)

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Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

> *'Education is not a way to escape poverty, it is a way of fighting it' - Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the late president of the Republic of Tanzania.*

Africa's share of the global youth population is expected to increase from one-fifth in 2012 to one-third by 2050 (AfDB, 2016), a phenomenon described by demographers as 'youth bulge'. According to Natama (2014), slightly over 70% of individuals in Africa living on less than $1.25 a day are young persons aged 15 – 24 years. This is an indication of the vulnerability facing young people in the current global social and economic dispensation. Providing education and training to the youth is one way to mitigate this vulnerability.

In 2014, the out-of-school youth (OOSY) in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) made up 35% of the world's out-of-school children and youth (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2017; The World Bank Group, 2018). There were 25.7 million out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age, and 34.4 million of upper secondary school age in SSA (UIS, 2017). This translates to out-of-school rates of 34% for the 12-14 years age group, and 58% for the 15-17 years age group. The out-of-school rate for the 15-17 years age group is arguably the highest anywhere in the world, with 3 in every 5 girls in SSA being out-of-school.

Many young people face hardships accessing and/or completing formal secondary school, either because they never enrolled in or attended school, or dropped out prematurely (Moyi, 2013). As shown in Figure 1, a considerable proportion of youth in SSA were out-of-school. However, the number of youth who are out-of-school varies by gender, with girls more likely to be out-of-school at every age (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the proportion of OOSY has stalled (see Figure 1) in the last few years, a signal that programs focusing on its reduction may not be yielding the expected gains.
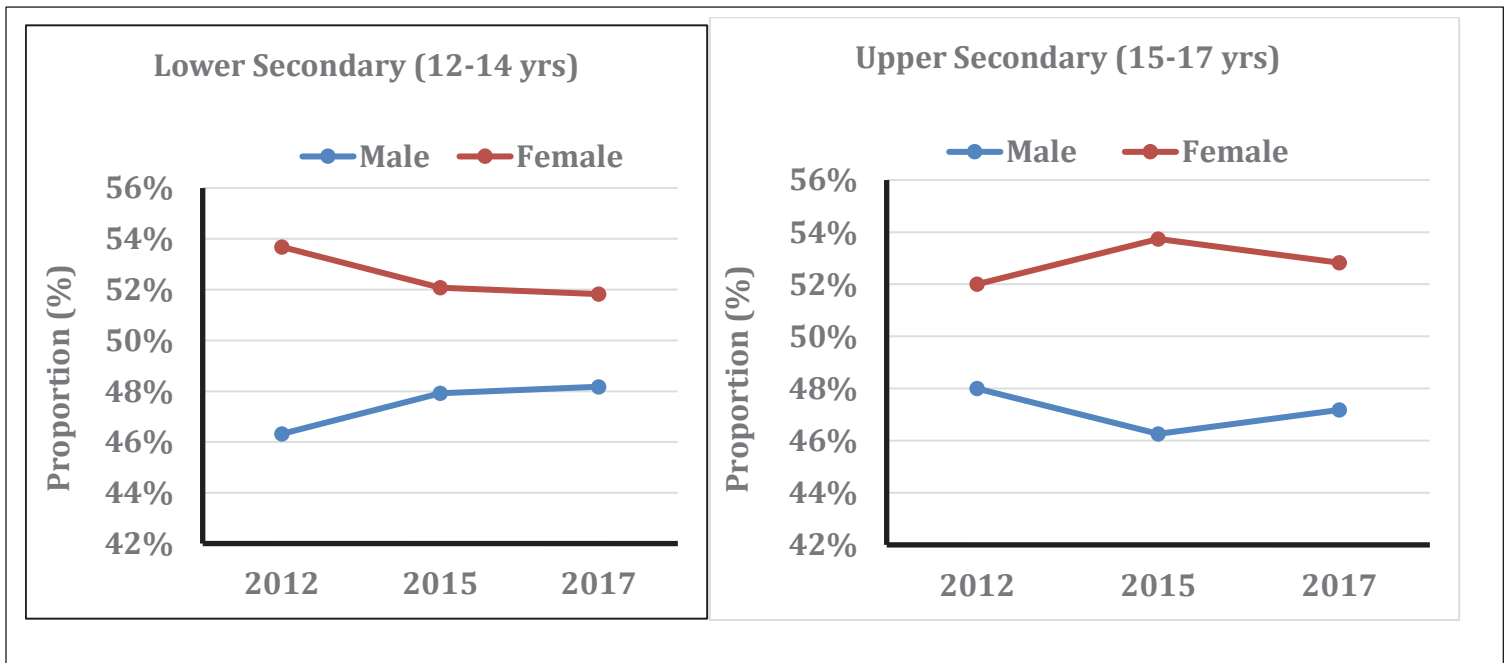
Figure 1. **Out-of-school children and youth in SSA**

Inoue, Gropello, Taylor, & Gresham (2015) outlined factors that contribute to out-of-school youth including, but not limited to, low retention in primary school, inadequate school places, early marriage for female youth and household social capital. Understanding these factors is not only important for school re-entry programs but has implications on workforce entry for youth. For instance, being out-of-school exposes youth to insufficient active learning required in the 21st century workplaces, and a skills' mismatch that make them inadequate to enter the job market (Sparreboom & Staneva 2014; Shehu & Nilsson, 2014). According to Sparreboom and Staneva (2014), youth with less than primary or only primary education are more likely to be in vulnerable employment compared to those with secondary and/or post-secondary education. In their study, among youth in vulnerable employment, 16% had less than primary education while only 7% had tertiary level education. This underscores the need for youth to access and complete their education and training.

Being out-of-school means one has a very low chance of accessing relevant basic knowledge and skills, and the certificates to signal them. It also erects barriers to dignified and fulfilling employment, well-being, poverty reduction and economic growth, at the household, community and national levels. The literature proposes three approaches to mitigate this problem. These include: (i) remediation through alternative education; (ii) integration into the labor market through non-formal education and/or technical, vocational education and training (TVET); and, (iii) retention of at-risk youth in school. However, there is less focus on re-entry into formal education especially at the secondary level. One of the key factors for a successful transition to work is education and training. Youth with low education and training qualifications are more at risk of exclusion from the labor market (Bell & Blanchflower, 2011; Scarpetta, Sonnet, & Manfredi, 2010; Costanza, Werner, & Corrado et al., 2012). To mitigate such a risk, programs that focus on alternative education, non-formal education and/or technical, vocational education and training, and, school retention are critical. In a paper that analyses employment differences of general and vocational schooling, Hanushek, Woessmann and Zhang (2011) argued that youth with vocational education tend to be absorbed faster in the labor marker than those with other forms of education. This probably supports OOSY programs with a strong focus on TVET.

This background paper synthesizes theoretical and empirical information on:
- alternative pathways, and existing pathways to get the youth back to formal education systems (especially lower and upper secondary);
- how the alternative pathways support access to knowledge and skills that they would otherwise get via secondary school; and,
- how pathways back to formal education systems compare with alternative pathways.

The pathways of interest are those that potentially substitute for or enable youth to return to formal education systems, or to receive a formal qualification, and the possibility of undertaking these efforts at scale.

Overall approach

The study was a desk review that relied on secondary data, and organizing and synthesizing available information on OOSY. A literature search focusing on SSA was conducted using academic databases and grey literature to find information on as many models as possible. The literature was synthesized into key features in alternative provision of education and training for OOSY and pathways back to formal education. Annex 4 presents more details on how the search was conducted.

Overall, the search focused mainly on seven online databases known to provide access to quality education materials: UNESCO Institute for Statistics; ERIC; ProQuest; Google Scholar; University Database; World Bank; and Pub Med HINARI. Keywords used in the search included "alternative education", "alternative approaches to education", "out-of-school youth", "second chance education models", and "pathways to learning". A total of 190 articles that met the set criteria were retrieved and 66 of these were included in the review. Among the inclusion criteria for retrieved reviews were the date of publication (less than 10 years to be included), area of focus (out-of-school children and youth of lower and upper secondary school age), as well as the region (sub-Saharan Africa). More than 15 project reports (grey literature) were accessed online and used to develop case studies as well as the information provided on Table 4, in section 3.

Additionally, the short case studies were enriched through telephone and Skype interviews with program staff and relevant senior government officers. The case studies were informed by the literature reviewed and also included profiling OOSY programs in selected countries. Information from case studies was transcribed, and coded based on the guiding thematic areas. This approach was found suitable for adducing and enriching evidence on the contexts and best practices on alternative pathways to acquiring knowledge and skills among OOSY, especially those who miss out on secondary education in SSA. This approach was also suitable for documenting realistic strategies of managing the challenge of OOSY. The interviews probed pathways identified for sending the OOSY back to formal education systems including accelerated learning programs, and other secondary school-oriented programs designed to help students transition back into the formal school system or receive formal accreditation. The short case studies on the best practices and lessons learned from programs and policies on pathways to alternative education, and pathways back to formal education systems focus on two countries – one Francophone (Cote d'Ivoire) and one Anglophone (Kenya). Liberia, an Anglophone country, was initially targeted for case study interviews, but appointments were unsuccessful even after four attempts. The choice of countries considered geographical spread in SSA, linguistic background – with majority of Francophone countries in SSA being located in West Africa, and fragile environment and/or post-conflict as was witnessed in Liberia.

The paper also utilizes secondary data to examine the magnitude of OOSY over time. Secondary data analysis of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) for three phases – namely IV, V and VI – from 23 SSA countries was used. Phase IV was conducted between 1997 and 2003; phase V conducted between 2003 and 2008 and phase VI conducted between 2008 and 2014. Using the household schedule tool of the DHS, data was restricted to the age groups of interest, that is, from 15 to 24; thereafter, the schooling status and education level of this age group was established. The various datasets (from the three phases) were thereafter combined and weighted using the survey weight.

An out-of-school variable was constructed using individuals aged between 15 and 24 years who have ever or never enrolled, and currently out-of-school and have not completed their secondary school education. Following this, an OOSY education attainment variable was coded as: no education, incomplete primary, complete primary, and incomplete secondary, complete secondary and higher (see Figure 2 and Table 2 in section 2).

The data from the DHS is presented by gender, age group, place of residence and social economic status. The age of the OOSY is categorized into three groups of 15–17, 18–20 and 21–24 years for purposes of presentation and understanding what could be happening within these groups. The data are weighted and this provided an opportunity to estimate the country and regional prevalence of OOSY. Finally, we compared the calculated statistics from the DHS with other existing data from the World Bank and UNESCO.

The following section 2 outlines the current status of OOSY in sub-Saharan Africa including gender dimensions. Section 3 explores existing models for alternative provision of education and training for OOSY, as well as pathways back to formal education systems. The section also highlights lessons learned for the case studies. Sections 4 and 5 evaluate the effectiveness and scalability of the OOSY re-entry programs in Africa, respectively. In the last two sections 6 and 7, the authors present a proposed way forward and areas for further research; as well as recommendations for actors such as donors, implementers and the private sector.

2. Current status of OOSY in sub-Saharan Africa

2.1 Who are they and where are they?

There are three categories of out-of-school youth: those who have never attended school; those who have dropped out before completion of at least 12 years of schooling; and, those who are out-of-school after completing secondary school (Jimenez, Kiso, & Ridao-Cano, 2007). There are several risk-factors associated with youth who are out-of-school. OOSY are more likely to come from poorer households with fewer working or educated adults, live in rural areas and be female (Inoue et al., 2015). Those living in households where the head of the household has completed secondary education are two times more likely to complete school before the age of 24 years than those whose parents are not educated. Late entry to school, and repetition which result in children being over-age for their grade also contribute to adolescents dropping out of school (UIS and Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR), 2016). Life outcomes for youth who drop out of school early are particularly worrying. They are more likely to commit crimes, become teen parents, find themselves working at very young ages and have shorter lives than high school graduates (Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 2008). They are also less likely to raise healthier children, to be engaged in civic activity and to vote (Hall, 2006).

Although Africa has a sizeable proportion of OOSY when compared internationally, there are vast variations among African regions. Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali have the highest proportion of OOSY (more than 60%), while Uganda, Liberia and Nigeria have the lowest proportion, with less than 40% (UIS and GEMR, 2016). In terms of typologies, low-income countries in Francophone Africa, and countries with a history of conflict tend to have a higher proportion of youth who have never attended, or who have dropped out of school than countries in the lower- and upper-middle income brackets, in Anglophone and Lusophone Africa, and those without a history of conflict (Inoue et al., 2015). For instance, a high proportion of OOSY are living in conflict zones, such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo; in camps for internally-displaced people; and as refugees, such as the Somalis living in Kenya (Watkins, 2013). Using household survey data, a study carried out by UNICEF between 2005 and 2009 (UNICEF, 2014) in West and Central Africa (WCA[1]) found that 34% of children old enough to be in lower secondary education were missing in

[1] Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

schools and the figure for those of upper secondary age that were out-of-school was 49% during the same period. Furthermore, out of the total estimated out-of-school children and youth population of 23.2 million in WCA, 8.6 million (37%) were of lower-secondary age. The study also revealed that 3 million (13%) lower secondary students were at-risk of dropping out before completing their studies.

Reports indicate that, whereas 40% of youth aged 15 to 18 years are out-of-school across SSA, this rate increases to almost 70% among 19-24 year-olds (this includes those who have completed secondary school). The increase in out-of-school rates with age is found in all regions of SSA (UIS and GEMR, 2016). Screening examinations at the point of entry or exit seem to play a role in being out-of-school in SSA. Financial barriers represented by tuition and non-tuition related costs may also prevent many students from attending secondary school. Further, lack of available spaces and poor quality of secondary education, characterized by insufficient and inefficient teacher recruitment, retention and deployment, poorly resourced schools and outdated curricula, keep rates of secondary school participation in many countries low (Moore, DeStefano, Terway & Balwanz, 2008). For instance, statistics reveal that in Uganda and Malawi, less than 40% of children in primary school progress to secondary school. In Zambia and Senegal, only half of children in primary school make a successful transition to lower secondary school (Glassman, Hoppers, & DeStefano, 2008). Labor-force participation, which increases with age, from 61% among those aged 15–18 years, to 75% among those aged 19–24 years, may be influenced by the fact that secondary school is not compulsory in many countries, and work is more attractive than school for older cohorts (UIS and GEMR, 2016).

The magnitude of the OOSY
In order to understand the educational attainment of the OOSY, the paper focuses on level attained rather than years completed, largely due to data availability. The paper relies on various datasets, the main one being the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) datasets. DHS data are usually large-scale surveys conducted periodically in the majority of SSA countries. Most of the DHS data is standardized and collected at the household level. The periodic data collection, usually after every 5 years, provides an opportunity to understand trends in the OOSY.

The DHS collects information about individual members in a household including their education attainment and schooling years completed in the highest level attained. Following this, we construct data for the DSS phase IV conducted between 1997 and 2003, phase V conducted between 2003 and 2008, and phase VI conducted between 2008 and 2014.

Although there are varying education systems among countries in SSA, the DHS tries to harmonize education attainment and this provides an opportunity for comparison along the same scale. The DHS codes education attainment in six categories: no education, incomplete primary, complete primary, incomplete secondary, complete secondary and higher. Current schooling status is captured in terms of whether an individual is still in school.

Using the household schedule data, we constructed a variable to capture those out-of-school as individuals aged between 15 and 24 years of age, currently not enrolled in school and the highest education attained as incomplete secondary education and below. The data from the DHS is presented by gender, age group, place of residence and socio-economic status. The age of the OOSY is categorized into three groups of 15–17, 18–20 and 21–24 years. The data are weighted and this provides an opportunity to estimate the country and regional prevalence of OOSY. Finally, we also report the statistics obtained from literature, especially data from the World Bank and UNESCO.

Table 1 presents the proportion of youth who were out-of-school at various phases of the DSS data collection. Overall, the proportion of OOSY increases with age. That is, the proportion of OOSY is lower among youth aged between 15 and 17 years, compared to those aged between 21 and 24 years. It is imperative to establish at what age the wasting happens. Existing evidence suggests this to happen during the transition years from primary to secondary (Inoue et al., 2015).

Table 1: Proportion of OOSY by selected background characteristics

Variable and DHS Phase		Age Group (years)		
		15-17	18-20	21-24
1997-2003	**Phase IV**			
	Overall	0.51	0.72	0.81
Gender	Male	0.45	0.63	0.75
	Female	0.57	0.79	0.86
Residence	Urban	0.38	0.57	0.66
	Rural	0.56	0.78	0.88
2003-2008	**Phase V**			
	Overall	0.35	0.58	0.71
Gender	Male	0.30	0.48	0.62
	Female	0.39	0.68	0.78
Residence	Urban	0.26	0.45	0.56
	Rural	0.39	0.65	0.80
2008-2014	**Phase VI**			
	Overall	0.34	0.58	0.68
Gender	Male	0.31	0.48	0.60
	Female	0.37	0.65	0.74
Residence	Urban	0.23	0.42	0.51
	Rural	0.40	0.67	0.79

Data Source: Various DHS data sets, 1997-2014.

On a positive note, over time, the proportion of OOSY is significantly decreasing across the three age groups. For instance, in the late 1990s, 51% of the youth aged between 15 to 17 years were not in school as compared to 34% in phase VI of the DHS data. The trend is similar for the other two age groups.

However, the proportion of OOSY in rural areas seem to have stagnated at about 40% in the last 10 years prior to 2014. UNESCO estimates that in 2016, globally, almost 263 million youth were out-of-school (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018). According to UNESCO, in 2016, almost 37% of the lower (ages 12 to 14) and upper (ages 15 to 17) secondary school going age youth in SSA were out of school; this rate is significantly higher than the 34% (phase VI) observed when using the DHS data for ages 15 to 17 (upper secondary school going age). The UNESCO estimate translates to about 35.8 million while the DHS to 21 million as an absolute number of upper secondary school age youth who are out of school.

However, the overall statistics for OOSY mask disparities among countries. For instance, seven out of the 23 countries included for analysis have more than one-half of the 15-17 year olds as OOSY including Burkina Faso (66%); Cote d'Ivoire (55%); Mali (60%); Niger (76%); Senegal (51%); Tanzania (53%) in phase V of DHS data. Most of the countries have existing universal primary education policies that may not necessarily be translating into increased access to lower secondary schooling (Coffin, 2013). Countries with the low OOSY rates for ages 15-17 were Cameroon 27%, Lesotho 25%, Namibia 23% and Congo, Malawi, and Zambia each at 22%, while Kenya was 12% and Liberia 19%. Several other countries, e. g., Zimbabwe and Ghana, recorded very minimal changes in the proportion of OOSY aged 15-17 across DHS phases IV and V.

Despite the majority of the countries in SSA being low-income, Gresham (2013) stratified SSA countries by income levels and found that most OOSY were from the poorest countries in SSA as well those in conflict. Moreover, in the lowest income countries such as Chad and Burkina Faso, almost one-half of the OOSY never attended any type of schooling.

In this section, we estimate the education attainment of OOSY using various DHS datasets (Figure 2). A large proportion of the youth has either no education or not completed primary education. This is consistent with the policy perspective work on the out-of-school children in SSA, which found that a considerable proportion of youth has not attained any level of education, more so in the poorest countries (Inoue et al., 2015). Despite this, there is apparent progress in terms of the education attainment of the OOSY. For instance, those with no education significantly reduced from 43% in phase IV to about 31% in phase VI. At the same time, the proportion with incomplete secondary education significantly increased by 11 percentage points. These changes are pronounced when the data is stratified by gender. However, slightly more female OOSY have not attained any education (33%) compared to male (28%).
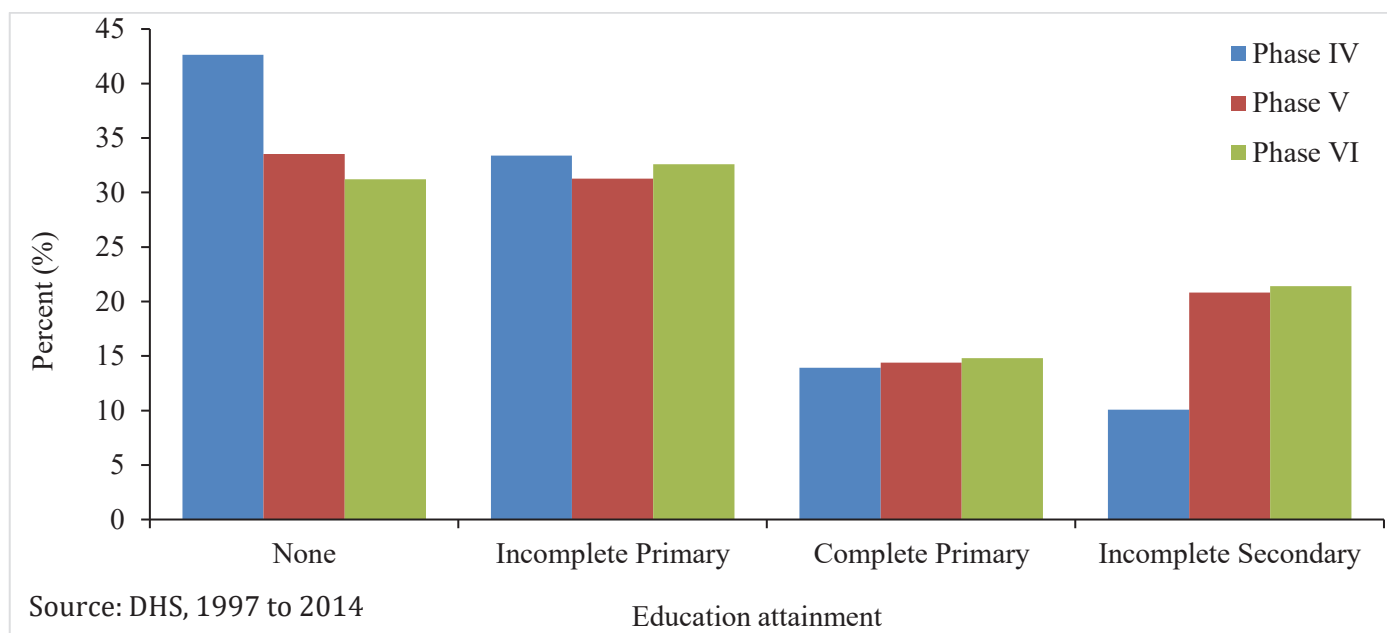
Figure 2: **Education Attainment of OOSY over time**

A large proportion of those aged between 15 and 17 years have no education in comparison to those aged between 21 and 24. This is an important statistic, as it is an indication that with time, some of the youth do eventually rejoin school or training. If this were not the case, the scenario would be that the proportion of OOSY with no education would increase with age. It has been noted that the proportion of youth with no education by age group increases over time. That is, when the data are stratified by age group and DHS phase, there is a movement towards incomplete primary and secondary levels of education attainment and a decrease in the proportion with no education [Table 2].

Table 2: Education attainment of the OOSY by age group and DHS phase

Phase/age	No education	Incomplete Primary	Complete Primary	Incomplete Secondary
Phase IV				
15-17	0.51	0.33	0.11	0.04
18-20	0.43	0.33	0.14	0.09
21-24	0.36	0.33	0.16	0.14
Phase V				
15-17	0.43	0.33	0.14	0.10
18-20	0.35	0.30	0.14	0.20
21-24	0.27	0.31	0.15	0.26
Phase VI				
15-17	0.39	0.36	0.14	0.11
18-20	0.32	0.32	0.15	0.21
21-24	0.27	0.31	0.15	0.27

Source: DHS, 1997 to 2014

In DSS phase IV, 51% of the youth aged between 15 and 17 years were out-of-school and this reduced to 39% in phase VI. During the same periods, we observe an increase in the proportion of OOSY with incomplete secondary education. While this is important, the proportion of youth with incomplete and complete primary education seems to have stagnated and shows little progress. Moreover and despite the progress, the proportion of OOSY with incomplete primary and incomplete secondary education as at phase VI is an indicator that children are still dropping out of school. Moreover, many countries in SSA initiated universal education policies that targeted mainly primary school-going age children, with little emphasis on transition to secondary school. This potentially lowered dropout rates at primary but increased vulnerability of dropping out at secondary school (World Bank, 2012). For instance, in 2004, Mozambique introduced the primary education reform program that increased education opportunities through construction of classrooms and teacher training. According to data provided by FHI360, between 2004 and 2012 Mozambique recorded a significant increase in gross enrolment rates in primary school, while transition rates to secondary school reduced between 2006 and 2012 (FHI360, 2013a). In contrast, in 2002 Burkina Faso introduced a Ten-year Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB) that promoted free and compulsory primary and secondary education. Since then, there has been a remarkable growth in both primary school enrolment and transition to secondary school (Vachon, 2007; FHI360, 2013b). However, the country still has one of the highest proportion of out-of-school children and very low education attainment. The complete primary shows those completing the primary level education, but due to some reasons, do not transit to secondary school. While other datasets exist on OOSY, many do not show the education attainment of some of these age groups.

Literature shows gains in the education attainment of the OOSY, though such gains vary by country. For instance, Ethiopia made the greatest achievement in reducing the proportion of youth aged 15 to 17 years with no education from 80% to 40% between DHS phase IV and VI; however, those with incomplete primary education increased from 17% to 54% during the same period. Although this is a positive change, the gains are still relatively low and this calls for interventions that will provide re-entry opportunities for the vast majority of the affected youth. Other countries made very little progress and by phase VI, still had a high proportion of OOSY with no education. For example, countries such as Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Niger and Sierra Leone had at minimum, 60% of the OOSY with no education. On the other hand, in Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Malawi and Ghana, a paltry 10% of the OOSY had no education. It is important to note that countries with high and low proportions of youth with no education have universal education policies and are committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Reasons for not being in school

The literature has highlighted several reasons why individuals never enroll in or drop out of school. They vary by context and in some instances depend on the level of education (primary or secondary). Other reasons are cross-cutting and are found either at the macro- or micro- level.

Macro-level factors: These factors occur mostly at country level and include: (i) the adequacy and equity in the allocation of resources to the education sector; (ii) population growth, and existing policy and legislation frameworks on education; (iii) lack of sufficient, adaptable and flexible systems of education especially for marginalized populations such as those who live in remote, rural and hard-to reach areas; and (iv) lack of tailored education opportunities particularly for dropouts, girls and children with disabilities. The work by Inoue, et al. (2015) showed a negative relationship between the share of GDP spent on education and the proportion of OOSY. That is, countries that spend a higher percentage of GDP on education also had a low proportion of OOSY. The rate of population growth was also associated with the proportion of youth who were out of school. That is, SSA countries with lower population growth also had a lower share of the youth who were out of school. Indeed, in such countries, their average share of the OOSY was almost 7% lower than the regional mean of individuals aged between 15 and 18 years. Countries with high population growth tended to also have a high proportion of OOSY, with their average share of OOSY being 6% higher than the regional mean.

Relevant policy and legal frameworks influence a country's provision of education to its citizens. Currently, most SSA countries have universal basic education policies that are expected to promote inclusive and equitable education. This is mainly in response to international conventions, which have made education a right that is guaranteed in their constitutions. However, it is the implementation of these policies (or lack of it) that determines the level of access to education, and therefore the educational attainment of learners (Juuko & Kabonesa, 2007). The implementation of the policies is tied to the amounts of available resources, which in most cases are limited.

Micro-level factors: These are factors at the individual or household level. At the individual level, such factors include interest in school; age (over-age children more likely to drop out); sex and gender-related issues such as early marriages and menstruation management; and access to schooling. Access and distance to school may be related to distance traveled to school, and the quality of education provided in terms of school infrastructure, educational materials and qualified teachers (Human Rights Watch, 2017). In particular, school environments may affect girls' access to school through teachers' negative attitudes with regards to their academic potential and general gender biases within the classroom. Participation in paid work, place of residence and marginalization are the other factors (Juuko & Kabonesa, 2007). Other factors that also need to be considered include cost of schooling and low quality of education which determine access at micro-level (ADEA, 2017). At household level, these factors include socio-economic status (where households may face economic barriers with regards to ability to pay school fees, as well as the 'hidden costs' of education and opportunity costs of sending their children to school (Berliner, 2009; Okumu, Nakajjo, & Isoke, 2008; Hill, 2016)), education level of parents (Okumu *et al.*, 2008), number of school-going age siblings, household place of residence as well as other factors such as food security and early childhood development (Save the Children, 2013). Issues linked to religious beliefs are part of the challenges affecting education for OOSY. Among the Muslim community in Kenya, men should not sit together with women especially during public events. This practice is also seen in schools, especially secondary schools where girls and boys face the dilemma of sitting arrangements that go against their faith. Islamic influence is also invoked to justify the importance of *duksi* (or madrasa) as opposed to the formal schools. The non-formal schooling considered a waste of time (ActionAid, 2018).

2.2 Gender dimension in OOSY

Differences in needs of OOSY by gender

It is evident that due to the push for gender parity through global agenda initiatives, including Education for All (EFA), MDGs and more recently the SDGs, gender disparities in education participation have decreased since 2000. However,

there are differences across and within individual countries. Females in poorer countries are more likely to be out-of-school than those in richer countries. Female youth of lower and upper secondary school age in poorer households are also more likely to be out-of-school than those in richer households (UIS and GEMR, 2016). This illustrates that with regards to gender distribution, the odds are still stacked highly against girls. Barriers to girls' education are many and include cost, distance to school, engagement in domestic chores, and traditional social and cultural expectations about their future roles as wives and mothers. Even when girls (who are already more likely to be excluded from primary education because of community and family attitudes) enroll in and complete their primary school education, they are less likely to attend secondary school compared to boys (UIS and GEMR, 2016). Furthermore, girls aged 15 to 24 years are more likely than boys to be married and engaged in work. As evidence, during adolescence, the proportion of girls who are out-of-school in SSA is 36%, compared to 32% for boys. In addition, girls who are over-age, perhaps because of late entry to school and repetition of grades are also more likely to be out-of-school earlier than boys.

Using DHS data, this background paper compares the proportion of OOSY by sex (Figure 3). Overall, we noticed a decrease in the proportion of OOSY across DHS phases. However, data disaggregated by gender show a disproportionate trend. These differentials are significant and exist across the age groups and over time. Figure 3 plots the gender differences (**females minus males**) in the proportion of OOSY.
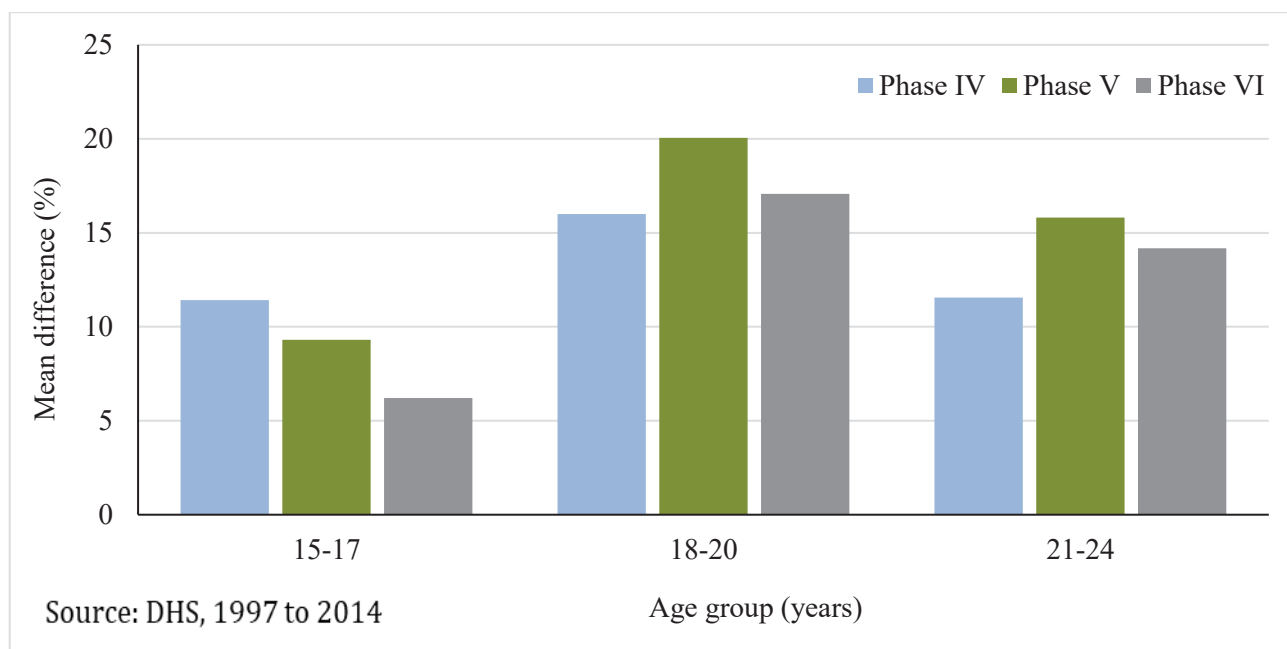
Figure 3: Mean gender differences in the proportion of OOSY

The positive differences (as observed in all the phases) indicate that there are more female youth who are out-of-school compared to males. For the 15-17 age group, there is a steady decline in the difference – perhaps due to gains made in access to secondary education among females. However, this pattern is not observed for the age-groups above 17 years, an indication of poor access to post-secondary education and training over time for females. Females represent a higher proportion of OOSY than males, with the exception of Lesotho where the opposite is true (Annexes 1 and 2). Some countries that have differences as high as above 20% include Nigeria and Sierra Leone at 22%, Liberia (25%), DRC (28%) and Guinea at 29%. In addition to gender, we also observe difference by residence, with the rate of OOSY being high among rural populations. These findings are congruent with the UNESCO findings which show a minimum of 4% gender difference in the OOSY, in favor of the male (UIS, 2018).

In 2000, 54% of the 378 million out-of-school children globally, were adolescents and female youth (UNESCO, 2018). Since the year 2000, the situation has improved such that the female share of the global out-of-school population

reduced to 50% by 2016. While the principle of equality in education is implemented through legal and policy frameworks alongside initiatives in different jurisdictions, in SSA, levels of achievement vary across the countries, and in most cases fall short of the goal with a major bias against girls as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Rates of out-of-school youth and children in sub-Saharan Africa by 2016

Category of youth/children	Rates in % of out-of-school youth and children			GPI*
	Female	Male	Both Sexes	
Children of primary school age	23.5	18.1	20.8	1.23
Adolescents of lower secondary school age	38.8	34.5	36.6	1.11
Youth of upper secondary school age	61.3	54.3	57.8	1.11
Aggregate of out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school ages	35.1	29.6	32.3	1.16

*Source:*UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018) Fact Sheet No. 48 of February 2018 UIS/FS/2018/ED/48; page 5.
* Gender Parity Index

2.3 Challenges faced by OOSY

The OOSY experience varied challenges, ranging from individual, socio-economic, environmental, to cultural. The constraints generally center on the unequal access to resources and the sexual division of labor (Fatuma & Sifuna, 2006), which either push the youth out of school, or define their (un)willingness to take any existing opportunities for alternative education pathways within their locality. In this background paper, the challenges are categorized according to their sources as follows:

(i)   *Individual challenges*

This category of challenges affect the out-of-school youth individually as they live their lives. Generally, they consist of the gendered roles arising from community constructions that assign traditional roles and expectations to both males and females (UNICEF and UIS, 2016), which consequently keep youth out of school. Gendered identities therefore become part of the overarching challenges affecting the youth. In this regard, family and domestic responsibilities have been identified as key obstacles for more female youth compared to their male counterparts (UNICEF and UIS, 2016).

In countries affected by conflicts and severe atrocities (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Central Africa Republic), many youth had difficult experiences during childhood, and they cannot even be adequately categorized by age due to lack of paperwork to provide this information. Insecurity reported in Eastern Africa varies from inter-ethnic conflicts, intercommunal violence and elements of terrorism reported in Somalia and some parts of Kenya (Carotenuto, 2018). The effects of conflict often hinder transition into adulthood as many young people, especially males in these contexts, are stuck in the "youth-man" stage. This social stagnation contributes to tremendous frustrations and loss of hope (USAID, 2013). On the other hand, more female youth tend to be marginalized in such fragile countries. The effects of war can be the root causes of both visible (physical) and invisible (cognitive, mental) disabilities.

In some cases, the female OOSY tend to experience quadruple marginalization in the forms of adverse poverty, sexual abuse, physical violence, and exclusion from such activities as education and leadership. Youth with disabilities (UNICEF and UIS, 2016; Basa, 2017) and others affected with HIV also face additional hardships besides receiving very little support – OOSY with disabilities miss out on programs targeting those in school (Ellingsen, Karacul, Chen, & Simeonsson, 2017). Additional challenges also affect the youth depending on the level of freedom they have in decision making processes. For instance, most of the young women, as opposed to men who are out of school, reportedly face serious restrictions on traveling or in making such decisions as going back to school, which forms a

major barrier to the participation of female youth in the existing pathways to education at almost all levels of study (Bennett & Tayler, 2006). Such restrictions also come about due to the roles the individuals play in the family setup.

(ii) *Socio-economic goals to generate sources of livelihoods*

Many OOSY are usually engaged in economic activities that prevent them from participating in education, whether formal or informal (Hall, 2017). However, boys and young men are more likely to spend their time engaged in income generating activities, compared to their female counterparts (Basa, 2017). Such engagements include working in farms, herding cattle, and selling goods in the trading centers as opposed to taking up the opportunity to participate in the education system. Girls suffer more from the effects of poverty because it costs more to educate a girl than a boy. For the girl, this cost includes tuition costs plus the "opportunity cost" or the cost to the family for the loss of her labor within the household, in the field/farm, and at the market place. The opportunity cost for boys is not as high (Rihani, 2006). Basa's study reported that in sub-Saharan Africa, only 17% of the girls are enrolled in secondary school (Basa, 2017). This demonstrates how the youth (male and female) are socialized into their productive and reproductive roles from an early age. In this regard, given the high opportunity costs of being in school, boys and young men are more likely to abandon the education pathways in order to undertake duties that reinforce a notion of providing for and materially supporting the family. Girls and young women on the other hand are more likely to over-engage in undertaking domestic duties and reproductive roles such as child rearing and nurturing roles which preoccupy their time. Though both genders are expected to be out-of- school early for different reasons, statistics presented earlier in this background paper show higher proportions of out-of-school females, meaning they could be more vulnerable to the barriers.

(iii) *Gender stereotypes against women in terms of priority and long distances to access non-formal education (NFE)*

Some communities remain explicitly biased to gender equality. Men and boys are therefore preferred to attend school (whether formal or informal) based on their role as breadwinners and providers for the family (AAIK, 2018). Female youth in such communities often shy off (or remain blocked) from accessing the few opportunities to non-formal education (Aineah, 2017). Distance from school is closely linked to gender stereotypes and is a significant obstacle for many young people. It tends to affect women and girls more than men and boys from accessing alternative education opportunities. Safety concerns associated with distance to school make parents reluctant to send girls to any schools or let them travel long distances to schools (Rihani, 2006; Parkes, Sweeting, Wight & Henderson, 2013). The fewer the schools in an area the longer the distance they would need to cover to reach their nearest schools – a situation that is worsened by poor infrastructure. The distance is also affected by the movement of pastoralist communities (Likoye, 2017) like the situations in Sudan, Somalia, Eastern Uganda and Northern Kenya. The gender bias against women and girls is expressed through community restrictions. For instance, the male youth and boys can rent houses near the schools, while it is a taboo for girls and women to rent houses or live outside their matrimonial homes (AAIK, 2018). In many SSA countries, the situation is worsened by the fact that the non-formal[2] schools are mostly available in marginalized areas or conflict stricken zones prone to programmatic challenges. For instance in Kenya, the programs are available in the informal settlements of large cities like Nairobi. Other such schools are mainly available in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) regions of Northern Kenya. Incidentally, public schools are very few in such areas, even in urban areas which have large populations. In other countries such as Burundi, Uganda, and South Sudan, non-formal schools are located in areas that are most affected by ongoing conflicts or areas that are recovering from a history of violence. In countries and regions that are faced with a scarcity of relevant schools in the neighborhoods, the youth do not only miss out on the opportunity to attend alternative schools, they may also not be informed of such opportunities altogether. Even those who are aware of the existing opportunities may be unable to pay for transport costs to distant locations. Walking to such schools may be the only alternative but it is not sustainable due to competing time demands such as household chores or the search for daily livelihoods. Travelling to the non-formal schools may also be dangerous.

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[2] This term is better used when referring to a non-formal curriculum rather than to non-formal schools. Al the same it has become acceptable to talk about non-formal schools.

(iv) *Gender-blind policy frameworks*

While focusing on girls' education, United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) acknowledged that the achievement of quality education requires a holistic and multisectoral approach (UNGEI, 2008). This provides insights regarding the gender responsiveness of the education policies in SSA in terms of ensuring quality of education for women and girls, or addressing favorable conditions that must be developed to encourage women and girls to stay in school. The situation of OOSY can be directly attributed to inconsistent or lack of appropriate gender sensitive policies for implementing alternative pathways or generally youth and gender issues. Girls and young women are therefore more likely to be out of the alternative non-formal due to such experiences compared with boys and young men across the entire region, but the prospects are poor for both genders (Ndiku, 2008). Inoue et al, (2015) noted further that even in countries where gender disparities decrease with age, such as in Niger, it is not because the outcomes for girls improve with age, but rather because the outcomes for boys worsen. Countries with a high incidence of out-of-school youth tend to have a disproportionately large share of youth who never attend school. For example, in Mali, where 68% of youth are out-of-school, only one in seven out-of-school youth is a dropout, while the other six never attended school due to various reasons. The achievement of gender equality in education is an important development goal, endorsed primarily by the SDGs. Mainstream development literature promotes female education for its instrumental benefits and recommends policies designed to eliminate physical, economic, and cultural barriers that restrict girls' access to school (Livingstone, 2012).

(v) *Insufficient government financing*

Providing quality education to achieve gender parity requires governments to finance the development of gender-sensitive teaching materials and curricula, and to promote their use at all levels of the education system (Education International, 2018). Inadequate government financing therefore determines whether teachers receive adequate training and are given sufficient time and resources to engage in gender-sensitive classroom practices. Training, recruitment and deployment procedures also need to be balanced to ensure equal representation of women and men in the teaching profession at all levels, which remains a challenge in many countries. Critical alternative strategies to the financing of education for both formal and non-formal and out-of-school target groups have not been adopted in some of the neediest developing countries, particularly in the SSA (Nawa-Chimuka, 2017). Inadequate financing affects both male and female OOSY in equal terms. Despite the universal agreement that Education for All (including out-of-school youth) is a fundamental right, most governments limit their focus to access to basic education, especially formal education. In many cases, financing of programs for OOSY is from non-state actors who usually exit once their resources run out. Besides government commitments, non-state actors - including NGOs, faith-based institutions, and communities - play a role in provision of alternative education pathways. However this remains inadequate in certain areas such as teacher training, curriculum implementation and use of appropriate pedagogical methods.

(vi) *Cultural attitudes and practices*

Early and forced marriage of girls by parents is a common practice in many sub-Saharan African countries. Statistics that show that countries which have high proportions of OOSY (Niger: 70% in 2012; Mali: 52% in 2013; and Mozambique: 32% in 2011) also record high rates of child marriage (Niger: 76% in 2012; Mali: 52% in 2015; and Mozambique: 48% in 2011) (UNICEF, 2017). For parents, early marriages of their daughters reduces the number of family members to support and in certain cultures, the bride's family traditionally receives a dowry from the husband's family (Rihani, 2006). Such practices make the female youth to be treated as subordinate to their male counterparts, especially in marriage. It follows that young women are less likely to make independent decisions to join programs for OOSY (Inoue *et al*., 2015). A study in Zambia reported more serious challenges among married girls aged 15-19 than among unmarried girls of the same age, in terms of access to non-formal schooling. In some African communities, girls are generally viewed as belonging to their future husband's families and not their own families, and so their education

is deprioritized (Orodho, Waweru, Getange, & Miriti, 2013). Girls in such circumstances are viewed as a form of 'investment' for the family who should be being married off before they are spoiled (read, educated). This mentality can be seen as critical in explaining the gender disparities in access to alternative pathways in education which show women at a disadvantage.

3. Existing models for alternative provision of education and training for OOSY

Out-of-school youth are motivated to join complementary education programs to acquire basic literacy skills, to find work or set up their own business. Two pathways that have been proposed for out-of-school youth are: (i) remediation programs that aim to bring out-of-school youth back to formal schooling or alternative education programs; and, (ii) integration of youth into the labor market through workforce development. Alternative education programs that are reportedly most successful are those that have multiple entry and exit points, as well as close associations with formal education. In addition, successful programs should: have local relevance in that they are tailored to the local context; be sustainable and scalable through diversified sources of funding; and, have diverse and multi-stakeholder partnerships (Hill, 2016). Coordination between national governments and sub-national entities and availability of sustainable funding are key to successful implementation of such programs (Jimenez et al., 2007). Alternative education programs in SSA are typically either accelerated learning programs that offer equivalency diplomas, or vocational and technical education.

Several equivalency programs have been set up in different countries to enable youth to continue with their schooling while they are still engaged in their work or meeting family obligations. In Tanzania, the Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) program, set up to provide education to out-of-school children was able to reach 36% of the targeted population in 2005 (Macpherson, 2007). In Uganda, the Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA) Program was successful in ensuring that more than a quarter of the enrolled students transferred to formal schools (Ilon & Kyeyune, 2002). Similar programs have been run in Madagascar (Joseph & Harrison, 2007) and Zimbabwe, with some level of success. Large scale alternative education programs that offer a combination of basic literacy and skills, vocational and civic education, and life skills that focus on financial responsibility, gender relations and health have been well-received and have successfully reached the most vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone, Ghana (Aryeetey & Kwak, 2006) and Liberia (Manda, 2011). National programs such as the National Adult Literacy Program (NALP) in Malawi that target men and women over the age of 15 years have given out-of-school youth a second chance to acquire basic education (Jere, 2012). In the next paragraphs, we explore the existing models in various regions of sub-Saharan Africa.

3.1 Educational development context in West and Central Africa

The WCA[3] region is characterized by the lowest economic and educational development levels in the world. Since 2000, nineteen (19) out of the twenty-four (24) countries in this region have consistently been ranked at the bottom of the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI). In 2013, the life expectancy in WCA was estimated to be 55.2 years on average and the mean years of schooling at 4.1 (AfDB, 2016). In terms of exclusion, the gender parity index in the region was on average 0.616. More importantly, during the same period, the newly introduced Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) and Gender Inequality Index (GII) for SSA revealed that high inequality in Africa was hurting economic growth in the continent. For instance, it was estimated that in 2012 Africa lost 35% of its HDI value due to inequality in life expectancy, education and income across the population. The UNDP further indicated that school exclusion in the region was in great part related to great differentials in income, location, and gender and family circumstances (UNDP, 2011).

In general, opportunities to access lower and upper secondary education are low in SSA and much lower in WCA. There are a few reasons for this state of affairs: first of all, public supply of post-primary education opportunities in

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[3] Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

many African countries has been a low priority for governments due not just to the cost of building the needed infrastructure and training the requisite human resources to manage the sub-system, but also the influence of donors who skewed policy towards basic education with their funding. In spite of notable progress in the last six decades during which gross enrollment rates rose from 3% in the 1960s to 40% in 2010 (Fredriksen & Fossberg, 2014, p. 239), only 36% of primary school leavers can be accommodated in existing public secondary schools (Africa-America Institute, 2015, p.8). The ripple effect of this is that access to higher education is still under 10% in most countries. For example, the 2010 enrollment ratio at tertiary level in the poorest WCA countries was: Burkina Faso (3.4%), Burundi (2.7%), Central African Republic (2.5%), Chad (2.0%), and Niger (1.4%). This implies that more than 95% of youth of tertiary education age (majority between 18 and 24 years) in these countries are out of tertiary education. Therefore, improving opportunities for alternative provision of basic education and training in terms of second chances for OOSY is essential for the social and economic development of WCA countries.

Another impeding factor for the expansion of primary and secondary education in a number of SSA countries is the competition between Koranic and secular education in majority-Muslim countries. Many countries in WCA, for example, face serious security issues such as the all-out war imposed by Boko Haram in the Sahelian countries (Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria) and with spillover risks to other countries. Boko Haram essentially consists of disgruntled youths who were excluded from the mainstream education systems either because their governments did not provide educational services for all or dropped out of the systems due to internal inefficiencies and lack of socio-cultural relevance of the prevailing formal system vis-à-vis the education system valued by their parents and communities. The extremist religious philosophy of Al Qaeda found a fertile ground within these young people as they attended the unregulated and informally-managed Koranic schools. A similar situation has been observed in East Africa with OOSY in Somalia being the most affected by the religious extremist ideologies - though not to the same extent as Boko Haram. There is now a growing urgency to look into the development of an integrated education system that will strike a balance between secular and Koranic schooling and by so doing improve the attractiveness of modern education (André & Demonsant, 2009; Bah-Lalya, 2015).

Frameworks and budgets for ABE

Efforts, albeit minimal, to address the issue of OOSY have been in existence since the 1960s when African countries were acquiring their political independence. The colonial education systems they inherited had by design been very elitist in nature, leaving a large proportion of African children and youth with no access to schools and educational opportunities. In hindsight, the newly independent governments made very limited attempts at addressing the glaring inequities created by the colonial system. More than three decades after independence, French-speaking Sahelian countries had an average primary school enrollment rate of 32% for girls and 53% for boys in the early 1990s (World Bank, 1997). This implies that a huge proportion of youth were out of school. During this time, the average literacy rate in Sahelian countries was barely 29%, an indicator of the governments' inability to address the educational crisis. Females fared much worse than males with an average literacy rate of 19%. These same challenges remain to date, despite the notable progress made.

State and non-state actors responded to the massive challenge of out-of-school and training children, youth and young adults by formulating adult education and literacy policies as well as non-formal education programs and schemes. It is noteworthy that until the 1990s with the advent of the Education for All (EFA) movement, very few governments in WCA had made adult literacy and non-formal education programs a major priority area for investment. Unlike Cuba and other Asian and Latin American countries where literacy programs and campaigns were given top political and development priority leading to the mobilization of enormous financial and human resources. To date, SSA countries, with very few exceptions (e.g. Tanzania), have failed to mount any aggressive and significantly successful literacy campaigns to this day (Boughton, 2016). Moreover, non-formal education, as an avenue for providing second-chance alternative education and training schemes to the out-of-school children (OOSC), OOSY and young and older adults, is still largely run by NGOs, both local and international. This lack of interest in redressing inequities of access to education and training is best captured in the share of the national education budget allocated to the non-formal education and literacy programs.

In WCA, and for that matter in most of the SSA, the budget allocated to non-formal education remains on average a very small fraction (1-2%) of the total education budget. In 2004, Ghana's allocation to the subsector represented 1.1% of its total education budget (Yasunaga, 2014). Burkina Faso is the only Sahelian country (if not in the entire WCA region) to allocate the highest share of the national education budget to non-formal education and literacy at 4.6% (Kima, 2016) - perhaps this has been responsible for the gains made in the adult (aged 15+) literacy rate from 14% in 1991 to 38% in 2015 (World Data Atlas, 2018).

The EFA movement made NFE and adult education and literacy key strategies for catering to the educational needs of disadvantaged and excluded groups. It is encouraging that SDG 4 has entrenched these strategies more firmly in the international community's agenda for the next 15 years. SDG 4 calls governments and all education stakeholders to "*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*". Three targets out of the seven under SDG 4 further indicate what is expected in terms of strategies and beneficiary target groups:

Target 4.4: *By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship;*
Target 4.5: *By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations;*
Target 4.6: *By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy* (UN General Assembly, 2015).

These three targets reveal the extent to which reforms calling for an articulation of the formal system with other alternative forms of education are going to be crucial in achieving the goals set within the educational framework of the post-2015 agenda. The overall principle of inclusivity that underpins the seventeen SDGs is "leave no one behind," which underscores the important role that non-formal education, adult education and literacy will play in the education sector by bridging the divide that separates schools from alternative forms of provision of education and training.

At the regional level, the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) recognizes the importance of literacy and non-formal education as its Strategic Objective 6 calls for the "*Launching of comprehensive and effective literacy campaigns across the continent to eradicate illiteracy*" by:

> *Revisiting and expanding existing literacy campaigns; Developing curricula and gender responsive pedagogy, to meet the specific education and training needs of all learners; Promoting teaching of languages, social sciences, math and sciences and the use of ICT in literacy programs; Promoting reading and writing activities by revitalizing and expanding African book fairs, school, community and national libraries and through awards to best writers in national languages; Building additional and supporting existing public and national libraries; Increasing the share of the education budget allocated to NFET to at least 10%; Mobilizing students during breaks to teach adult literacy classes and mentor students at primary education level; and, Strengthening and establishing national youth service corps in every African country (*Hanemann, 2014, p. 21*)

Embedded in the SDG 4 targets is the call for articulation between the formal education and the non-formal education systems. In other words, there is need for establishing an education and training *continuum*. Boukary (2016) describes the continuum as follows:

> *The education-training continuum is a strategic approach that is part of a political project to democratize education and training. This entails the structural and functional reform of the whole formal education system linked by pathways to and from all other alternative forms of education for groups of the population who have not been to school and/or for those who are outside so-called modern vocational training. The continuum must ultimately seek to improve the system's internal/external effectiveness and reduce the social divide resulting from unequal access to education and apprenticeships in order to promote better integration into society and the world of work. The continuum incorporates the concept of lifelong learning (p.17).*

General characterization of non-formal OOSY programs in WCA

An analysis of the models of non-formal education programs for OOSY in WCA reveals several approaches. These include: (i) substituting for lack of formal schools (e.g. community-run non-formal schools), targeting out-of-school youth with vocational training and basic education competencies (reading, writing and numeracy); (ii) targeting disadvantaged and vulnerable youth (e.g. agriculturalists, nomadic/pastoralist, fishermen, rural girls and young women, street children/youth in urban settings); (iii) providing education and training to disabled children and youth); and (iv) targeting of illiterate young adults aged over 15 with literacy programs.

By and large, these models have thus far been stand-alone approaches mostly funded by a plethora of NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies, foundations, and faith-based organizations, which appear to be organically disconnected from the official education systems. In WCA, most NFE programs exist outside the official education system and very few countries have (or plan to) integrate them into a holistic education system (ADEA, 2012). As indicated by a 2015 World Bank Report, successful alternative education systems are those that have "*multiple entry and exit points and close associations with formal education…* and *mix academics and cognitive skills with training in life skills as well as mentoring (Inoue et al., 2015, p.75)*".

Even though there are very few such programs and little information on their effectiveness, there is now a growing trend towards providing such opportunities as government and NGOs are partnering with governments to provide second-chance education programs for OOSY with the clear purpose of bringing them into the mainstream/formal schools. These consist of accelerated learning programs; complementary education programs; bridging programs; and equivalency degrees or qualification programs.

Successful transitional alternative education systems are very few in WCA. As indicated previously, non-formal education programs are in general still not integrated with the official education systems and tend to prepare more for the world of work than for transition to the formal system. The lack of information on the effectiveness of the transition/pathway component of integrated NFE programs, the most popular among youth and adults, makes it harder to assess the potential of non-formal education in not only expanding access to quality education for all, but also for improving the quality of education by introducing innovative curricula and pedagogies as is the case with the MBEC in Burkina Faso. For instance, it would be useful to access tracer studies of non-formal education graduates to see how those who are academically able fare both in the world of work and in further studies.

3.2 Existing education and training models in Eastern Africa for OOSY

Similarly in the Eastern Africa region, Yasunaga (2014) reported that the current structure of formal education in many countries was established as another source of exclusion for specific groups of children – meaning it is elitist like in WCA. It is therefore apparent that diverse forms of provision through different learning pathways are required to uphold the right to education of those who are not enrolled in formal schooling, with non-formal education being one such pathway.

3.2.1 Alternative provision of education and training

Since the declaration of Education for All, SSA governments had focused their efforts on universal education, targeting formal schooling. The dream of enrolling all youth into the formal schooling system has not been achieved even as many countries in SSA have implemented global conventions, including the MDGs. The question, therefore, is to establish the extent and ways in which alternative forms of education and training could help governments to achieve the goals (Lewin 2012; ADEA, 2012).

In SSA, the need for alternative education programs in each country are usually initiated to achieve the education rights of out-of-school children and youth (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Malawi, for instance, acknowledged the need for

alternative approaches to basic education in order to cater for out-of-school children and youth by introducing the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) program. The CBE program was initially promoted and supported significantly by donor agencies, but it has since been fully integrated into the country's current National Education Sector Plan (NESP). The CBE program currently provides insight into the potential of non-formal, community-based initiatives to offer a 'second-chance' education to out-of-school children and youth. It also introduced an innovative, accelerated curriculum that provides a framework not just for the delivery of basic education, but for a range of practical skills to improve livelihoods. Malawi has therefore witnessed a shift from the more traditional, high-cost formal technical and vocational training to more holistic, contextualized skills development relevant to learners' needs (Jere, 2012). Malawi is one of several SSA countries whose education systems are characterized by very high initial enrolments in primary schooling, but high repetition and dropout lead to low completion and transition rates to post primary schooling(*ibid*. p.3).

The National Literacy Survey that was undertaken in 2007 revealed that 7.8 million Kenyans were illiterate, with people aged 15-30 years constituting 35% of the illiterate population. This challenge of illiteracy was reportedly critical in informal urban settlements, arid and semi-arid lands and in other regions experiencing high poverty levels across the country. It was mainly in these environments that Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training (APBET) institutions emerged as viable alternatives to meet the educational needs of children, youth and adults who were unable to join formal educational institutions. The APBET Policy recognized different categories of APBET institutions, including Adult and Continuing Education Centers; Non-Formal Education Learning Centers; Vocational Training Centers; and Alternative Basic Education Program, Non-Formal Schools (NFS), Mobile Schools, Night Schools and Home Schools (Government of Kenya, 2015). The policy also addresses alternative provision of basic education, which seeks to provide different options and choices that are responsive and relevant to the needs of the targeted populations. Such options must have parity of esteem and convey comparable chances for them to be attractive to young people.

Alternative education programs take different forms in different countries, but they can be generally classified into the following three broad categories:

i.   *Bridging programs*

Bridging programs are generally designed for youth who have missed the opportunity to go to school, or dropped out from school in the early stages. It is one form of the transitional program that enables the youth to re-enter the formal system or to complete an equivalent of primary education level. Some examples include the Adult Education and Literacy program in Kenya, the Community Oriented Education Program in Uganda and the Complementary Basic Education (COBET) in Tanzania. The general objective of COBET program for instance, was to contribute to the provision of basic education to school aged out-of-school children (bearing in mind that those aged 17 years or below are children). Bridging programs are also referred to as *second chance education programs*. Such alternative access programs at times face critical challenges in responding to the needs of OOSY especially when the age range for the target groups is very wide and when the members of a group have divergent educational backgrounds, such as combining those who never attended school with those who attended formal schools to higher levels but dropped out due to circumstantial challenges (Baxter and Bethke, 2009).

ii.   *Complementary education programs (CEP)*

There is an enormous range of programs in the field of complementary education and supplementary learning that comprise some of the alternative curriculum provision initiatives in SSA. In some cases, complementary education programs are offered in combination with regular education provision, while in some cases they are ad hoc and discrete. Such programs involve supporting courses or subjects such as peace education, human rights and life skills that are not essentially examined in many countries. Some of the countries that have successfully implemented these programs include Kenya and Sierra Leone (Baxter & Bethke, 2009). Quite often these form of education programs are designed and supported by NGOs in their bid to augment the provision of education by the respective governments. In Kenya the APBET Policy 2009 provides for complementary provision of education as part of the programs which add on or complement the formal education system. The policy further explains that complementary education seeks to integrate the school with community and social realities.

iii. *Non-formal education (NFE) programs*

Non-formal education (NFE) can be loosely defined as intentional and 'systematic educational initiative, usually outside of the formal schooling, where content is adjusted to the unique needs of the learners in special situations to achieve some anticipated learning outcomes' (Ireri, 2014). The uniqueness of this program lies in its flexibility as learners can attend and leave lessons at their convenience. It is argued here that in the non-formal education setting, the learner-instructor relationships are informal hence the roles of teachers and pupils are less rigid and often switch, compared to the settings in formal schools systems. Overall, the NFE is differentiated from the formal system due to its lower use of structures and greater flexibility than formal schools (Ireri, 2014). In some countries such as Kenya, non-formal education is organized in different forms of systematic and quality education and training programs outside the formal school system (Government of Kenya, 2009). Such schools differ in their practices, management, financing, staffing conditions, registration, operating environments and school structures. In practice, there has been confusion among institutions on what schools amount to non-formal, informal or complementary.

The fragmentation in the sector is therefore a reflection of the confusion in the legal structure. An exception to this system in some countries is that non-formal education programs provide youth with instruction equivalent to formal education, focusing on essential learning needs and basic skills such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving skills (Delors, 1996).

Scope, relevance and quality of alternative pathways to education

It is clear that governments in the SSA region acknowledge the need for the alternative pathways in education for their growing population of young people. Governments tend to recognize the need for OOSY to form appropriate links between the non-formal and formal education systems (Mungai, 2013). This is demonstrated by the raft of policy documents, the investment of financial resources (however little) in education and the exponential growth of the education system (UNGEI, 2008; Mungai 2013). The progress made in achieving the desired quality and relevance of NFE remains affected by lack of clarity in the policy instruments, lack of clarity in transition mechanisms, unqualified teachers who often employ inappropriate methods, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of quality assurance mechanisms, and un-coordinated large number of service providers, especially the NGOs (Likoye, 2017).

3.2.2 Pathways for out-of-school youth to return to formal education

The pathways to formal education vary across two main dimensions. The first one is the level of program diversification or the variety of programs that are offered. Unlike the general pathways discussed earlier, these can include differently focused strands or streams such as academic programs, professional and technical courses, vocational education, and even subject-based strands. They orient students toward different post-primary school outcomes (Lamb, 2011). The second dimension is the extent of institutional segregation (or integration), which refers to the extent to which young people are separated into different schools or streams and tracks on the basis of the programs or qualifications in which they enroll. In some systems, this can occur early and extends well back into lower secondary or even primary school. In such arrangements, schools tend to be divided into those offering a more academic, university-preparatory curriculum, those offering specialist technical training and those with a more vocational focus. Institutional segregation and program diversification are linked. Both are driven by curriculum requirements, and the demands of the academic curriculum are central to them. All systems give pre-eminence to academic knowledge, while the general pathways tend to focus essentially on literacy and numeracy or vocational skills (Lamb, 2011).

The re-entry programs enable individuals to complete general primary or secondary education, either by substituting for formal education or by offering "bridges" to return to the formal education system (Mattero 2010). The principal types of second-chance programs mainly found in the Eastern Africa region are discussed in the following paragraphs.

i. *Accelerated learning programs (ALPs)*

Accelerated learning programs (ALPs) give children and youth an opportunity to catch up on missed education in a short period (Mattero, 2010). They use intensive, flexible methods or schedules to complete the curriculum faster than in the traditional education set-up and help youth to re-enter the formal primary or secondary school system. Such programs are common in countries where children's schooling was interrupted by armed conflict or other kinds of social upheaval. In the Republic of South Sudan, ALPs provide basic education to those who missed the opportunity during the civil war. In some countries, this form of alternative access to education program, has been implemented to provide increased educational access to the youth from populations living in marginalized areas or very remote geographical areas. In many cases, the target groups are individuals aged between 10 and 20 years, (Kazis, 2016; Baxter & Bethke, 2009) most of whom are able to manage the condensed education cycle. In South Sudan, the programs are part of a broader alternative education system that reaches more than 165,000 students (mostly ages 12–18), roughly equal to the number of fourth-grade students in primary schools nationwide (Government of South Sudan, 2011).

One of the key elements of accelerated learning programs, is the modification of the curriculum content to ensure that the target groups of youth can learn the required materials in a condensed time frame. The underlying concept in accelerated learning is primarily about how people learn best and then using a variety of methods so that students can learn faster and more effectively (Kazis, 2016). This requires a thorough knowledge of the methodology used to teach the contents. Children and youth who participate in this program need some validation of their learning experiences, since their success is often measured in their ability to pass national exams for primary or entrance to secondary schools. One key success has been witnessed in South Sudan, where the eight year program has been occasionally condensed into four years, to enable older children complete primary education earlier. This program has also filled a much needed education gap for young people in fragile states like Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi. In the latter two countries it helps to observe the legal requirements that limit school age at different levels. Other countries that have implemented this program in the SSA region are Angola, Liberia, Uganda and Rwanda, which are all countries that have been affected by conflicts at different times. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the program has been heavily supported by the UNICEF and some international NGOs like Save the Children and Norwegian Refugee Council which focus mostly on teacher training. Support from some of the donors has since stopped and the respective governments have mainstreamed this program into their policies for effective regulation and sustainability.

ii. *Equivalency education programs*

Equivalency programs are the pathways to formal education by offering curriculum leading to qualifications equivalent to those gained through formal education programs. Equivalency programs target primary or secondary school dropouts and provide corresponding curricula, signaling that the recipient has demonstrated the ability to read, write, think, and compute at the level for which the degree was offered. Equivalency programs vary in terms of admission, age, place, and pace, and they are delivered either via face-to-face learning or distance education. Systematic evidence on the effectiveness of second chance programs is quite limited and mixed. However, in the Republic of South Sudan, the dropout rates during the 2010/2011 school year were 52% for females compared to around 20% in formal schools (Government of South Sudan, 2011). Results were better for males; only 5% dropped out compared with 25% in formal schools. Education systems upholding equivalency degree (in this arrangement) provide programs and courses that work to prepare or select students for university, and this influences school and program organization. Even so, there is considerable variation in the requirements for graduation and access to higher education (Lamb, 2011).

3.3 Existing education and training models in Southern Africa for OOSY

As much as there is low and stagnating retention, transition and completion rates in almost all Southern African countries which lead to huge number of OOSY, the situation in some countries is worse off. Countries that have embraced free primary education programs e.g. Malawi are faced with large numbers of OOSY since the introduction of free primary education (FPE) has not been matched with establishment of secondary schools and quality of teachers (Barrett, et al, 2017) such that a number of students that qualify for secondary education do not have a chance to proceed. Further a large number of unqualified instructors teach in rural/open secondary school e.g.

40% of secondary school teachers in Malawi are unqualified unlike Zambia where 99% of the secondary teachers have a professional qualification. There are also variations in their economic and poverty levels which affect the supply of quality teachers, infrastructure and technological development. These factors have an impact on the availability of school structures and internet which are required when dealing with OOSY. However, similar to other SSA regions, the provision of education and training to out-of-school youths and their pathways to formal education in Southern Africa is mainly done in form of projects and programs implemented both by the state and non-state actors. Current and past projects and programs to integrate the OOSY into formal education systems in Southern Africa states can also be grouped into two: the second chance programs and the accelerated programs. In the context of Southern Africa, this section discusses these two models targeting out of secondary-school youth as well as those of primary-age going children who are to sit for final examinations so that they enter formal secondary school education. The two models are discussed in depth with examples provided for each model being implemented in different Southern African countries.

3.3.1 Second Chance OOSY secondary education programs

The second chance model gives a chance to youths that dropped out of or never entered secondary school. Programs under this model are alternative to, run parallel to and go along with formal secondary education system. The model targets OOSY within secondary school going age who never entered secondary school due to limited space in schools that only enroll a small number of academically able students (Dube, 2014). Most of these OOSY learners are found in rural areas where most people cannot even afford school fees. The challenge is compounded by traditional values that people in these areas hold on to, for instance, early marriages (Bantwana report, 2017, Dube, 2014). The second chance models, where the alternative approach is utilized, give an opportunity to the OOSY to do some work and pay for school fees as there is a flexible time schedule for learning (Dube, 2014, World Bank, 2018). It also targets the OOSY within the secondary school going age that dropped out of secondary school education. The objective is to give these OOSY a second chance to catch up and reintegrate into the formal education system or prepare them for different pathways (Dube, 2014). In the second chance model, where the program is designed to run as an alternative to formal secondary education system, there is an introduction of an innovative, accelerated curriculum that provides a framework not just for the delivery of basic education, but for a range of practical skills to improve livelihoods (World Bank, 2018, Bantwana, 2018). The model focuses on the expectations, participation and outcomes of older learners, as well as the challenges faced in the delivery of curriculum content and practical pre-vocational skills training in light of the differing needs of children and youth.

The other programs which run parallel to formal education system within this second chance model in the Southern Africa Region are offered in various forms in different countries based on the needs of targeted youths at entry stage and the ultimate intended goal. Under this model, reference is made to the Part Time Continuing Education (PTCE) program in Zimbabwe, Springboard Humanism (SBH) project in Botswana, Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) and the Open Day Secondary School (ODSS) in Malawi. The Ministries of Education play critical roles in establishing the policies that are to be followed and the type of examinations that are to be administered (similar to the ones in formal education). Where the program goes along with the formal education system, it usually allows for re-admission of the youths – for instance, girls who may have dropped out due to pregnancy or both the boys and girls that had dropped out due to their inability to pay school fees (UNESCO, 2016).

The second chance model is designed to provide the equivalent of a secondary school education to youths who do not have a chance to pass through formal education system or who had a chance but dropped out because of pregnancy or lack of fees (Dube, 2014). For instance, the Zimbabwean PTCE was a two-year (2014-2016) pilot program funded by Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) to provide non-formal education to the growing number of secondary school level youths who were out-of-school and needed another opportunity to access education. PTCE facilitated the setting-up of PTCE centers in government schools where some teachers were identified and trained in non-formal education methodologies, inclusive education and referrals. PTCE facilitated the reintegration of learners into the formal education system. Similar to PTCE, the Botswana SBH project was initiated by an NGO. It aims to empower young women and orphaned male youths from marginalized indigenous groups who dropped out of secondary

school after failing the Junior Certificate Examination to re-sit and pass the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE). The program aims at enabling these out-of-school youths to re-enter senior secondary school and enhance their access to vocational training programs. The Malawi Adolescent Girls' Learning Partnership program is one example that has utilized a holistic approach to ensure that girls are integrated into the formal education system by engaging various partners including communities, local chiefs, teachers, curriculum developers, agriculture extension staff, village savings loan groups and child protection committees to support the students academically, financially and morally (Madalo, 2017). The results have been quite remarkable for within a year more than 23 girls from a single education zone (10 schools) had returned back into the formal education system. The different reasons for why students drop-out of school in Malawi can be viewed in the graph below.
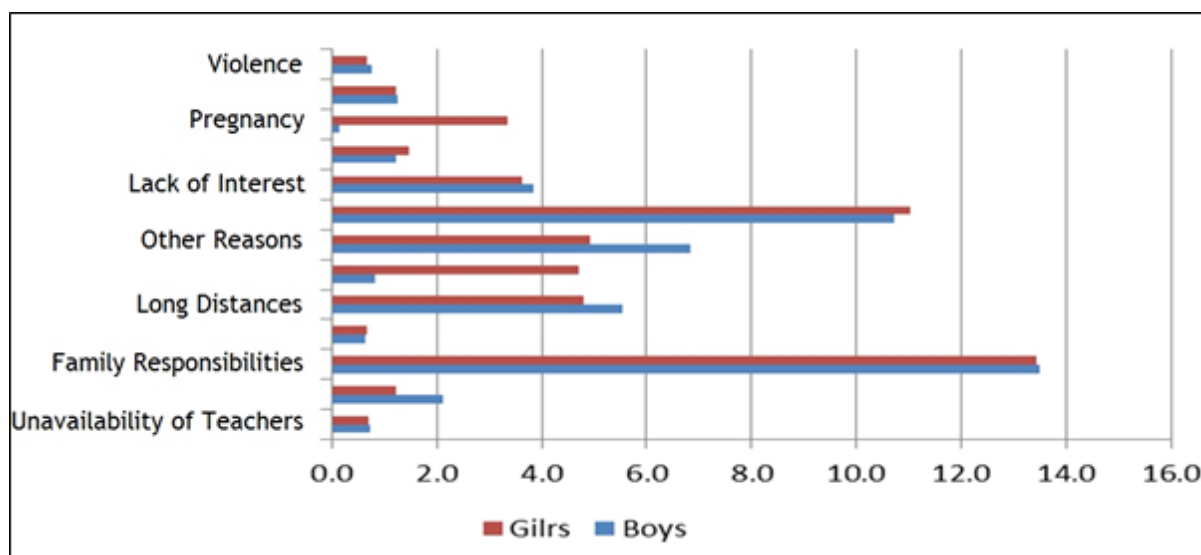
Source: MoEST (2016) – EMIS data
Figure 4: Reasons for dropping out of school in Malawi

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has an initiative that offers second chances to girls and boys to re-enter the formal secondary school system. FAWE chapters in sub-Saharan African countries such as Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Namibia, have lobbied their respective Ministries of Education for the development, adoption and administration of a re-admission policy for girls who drop out due to pregnancy. The policy stipulates clear guidelines on how a girl can be readmitted to her previous secondary school or a secondary school of her choice (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2018).

Who delivers and funds OOSY programs?
The second chance OOSY programs have differing delivery and funding mechanisms ranging from projects funded by NGOs to government programs, as well as full-fledged private programs. It is difficult to get data on how much it costs to run a second chance OOSY education program. For instance, the Zimbabwe PTCE was initially funded and delivered as a pilot program with funding from OSISA but using existing government structures with the aim of ensuring that the program is absorbed by the government after showing impact. Like PTCE, the Botswana SBH is also run as an NGO-funded project that sources funds from the founders and private donors, as well as material support from Barclays Bank and the Lady Khama Charitable Trust (Khudu-Petersen and Mabvuta, 2016). The NAMCOL is run as a semi-autonomous educational institution with funding from the government that is complemented by income generated through fees paid by enrolled youths. On the other hand, the ODSS in Malawi is self-sponsored through fees collected from youths enrolled into the program at each learning center. Fees is approximately 50 dollars per year which is difficult to raise for most people who live on less than a dollar a day. The ODSS, however, utilizes government

structures, government employed teachers, teaching and learning resources available at learning centers (which are mostly government secondary schools). The fees collected from learners are used to pay teachers for hours engaged in teaching the youths as well as contributing to some costs incurred by the hosting school for the use of available teaching and learning resources as well as utility bills (Chimombo et al, 2014). For the re-admission policy program, the students either pay school fees on their own or some are awarded scholarships by government, NGOs, development partners, and individual donors.

Who teaches and regulates second chance programs?
Programs under the second chance model are largely delivered within formal secondary education centers. Young people are taught by teachers who also teach youths enrolled in formal secondary schools (true for re-admission policy programs; ODSS program in Malawi and PTE in Zimbabwe) as well as through open distance learning (for instance NAMCOL in Namibia). Under the re-admission policy program, the government secondary school teachers are the ones that teach the OOSY during the normal classes during the academic calendar year. As for the ODSS in Malawi, teachers from government run secondary schools teach OOSY after formal education class hours and weekends. These teachers receive honoraria administered from the fees paid by enrolled OOSYs. This is also the case for PTCE in Zimbabwe except that teachers are not paid from students' fees but rather by the project which is supplemented by income generated at learning centers from activities initiated by the project. The ODSS centers in Malawi set up their own administration system that is separate from the formal schools (Chimombo et al, 2014). These centers are run on a private basis by a group of teachers with the school receiving a portion of the income generated as cost contribution for teaching and learning resources used and payment for utility bills. The host secondary school provides facilities like classrooms and other teaching and learning materials used in the formal education system. There has been an increase in the number of open day secondary schools which is especially pronounced in countries where FPE was introduced. For instance the number of ODSS in Malawi was 64, in the mid 90s, which rose to 323 by 2016, which is a huge increase. This is attributed to the efforts being made by MoEST to increase access to secondary education (MoEST, 2016). Some second chance models also use volunteer teachers to teach OOSY, especially those that are run as a project. Khudu-Petersen and Mamvuto (2016) indicated that the SBH project in Botswana relies on volunteer teachers as it cannot afford to pay permanent teachers due to funding challenges. These volunteer teachers are paid an allowance for transport and other basic needs. Just like in Namibia, Zambia and Malawi, many OOSY patronize ODSS as they learn from centers which are closer home. However, the time they learn is shorter than students in formal programs and teachers usually give make-up classes to cope with the syllabus demands.

The second chance model also utilizes open distance learning as is the case with the Namibian NAMCOL program. Enrolled youths are reached using an open distance learning approach alongside support services in terms of printed learning materials (e.g. study guides, modules, tutorial letters), face-to-face tutorials, computer-assisted learning, audio- and video-recorded information, student counselling services and library. Teachers and tutors under the second chance model, except where volunteers are utilized, usually possess acceptable qualifications as per host government requirements since they also teach in formal education system.

Use of technology in second chance model
There is limited use of technology under second chance programs that use face-to-face instruction like PTCE and ODSS, unlike in programs that train youths through open distance learning like the NAMCOL. Those OOSY enrolled under PTCE and ODSS sometimes use the internet on their own to search for reference materials to supplement what is delivered in face-to-face classes. On the other hand, second chance models that use open distance learning like the NAMCOL promote use of technology in the delivery of contents to enrolled OOSY. Technologies in use under the second chance education model include computer-assisted learning, audio- and video-recorded information, toll-free phone lines and website material searches (NAMCOL, 2016). Utilization of the services through the technological channels mentioned above is still low among the youths as revealed by reports from NAMCOL program. NAMCOL (2016) reported that only 48% of students contacted tutors through telephone, 11% used radio tutorials, 6% used audio recorded information, 4% used video recorded information, and 2% used email and toll-free lines under the NAMCOL program. Khudu-Petersen and Mamvuto (2016) reported that the SBH program provides ICT training to resident OOSY

in addition to tutorials in nine JCE curricula. ICT skills provided to OOSY help them to adapt to changing economic and social environments (Petersen and Mamvuto, 2016).

Government support for second chance model
Literature shows that effective implementation of second chance programs requires government support. This is the case with all the three OOSY programs (PTCE, ODSS and NAMCOL) that receive support from the government in one way or the other. The nature and magnitude of support varies from one program to the other. The NAMCOL that runs the secondary education program for OOSY in Namibia was established by the government and receives annual funding from the government. On the other hand, the re-admission policy programs, PTCE and ODSS receive government support in the form of use of government facilities, teaching and learning resources as well as use of government employed teachers in their learning centers.

Contribution of second chance model to secondary education
The second chance OOSY programs play a vital role in providing secondary education to youths in the Southern Africa region. Literature shows that the number of OOSY being reached through the second chance education model is steadily increasing. In 2011, with 64 ODSS schools the Malawian ODSS had enrolled a total of 12,879 youths (MoEST, 2011) but since then the number of ODSS schools have increased to 323 by 2016 (MoEST, 2016). Unfortunately the number of OOSY enrolled in the ODSS is not available, but the higher total ODSS schools suggests a larger number of OOSY enrolled. In 2012, the Zimbabwe PTCE enrolled 12,226 youths representing 11.4% of youths in non-formal education (African Union, 2013). The number of youths that enroll under NAMCOL has steady increased over time. Total enrollment has increased from 21,303 in 1999 to 37,475 in 2015 as indicated in Figure 5 below (NAMCOL Statistical Digest, 2016).

Source: NAMCOL Statistical Digest (2016), p. 5.
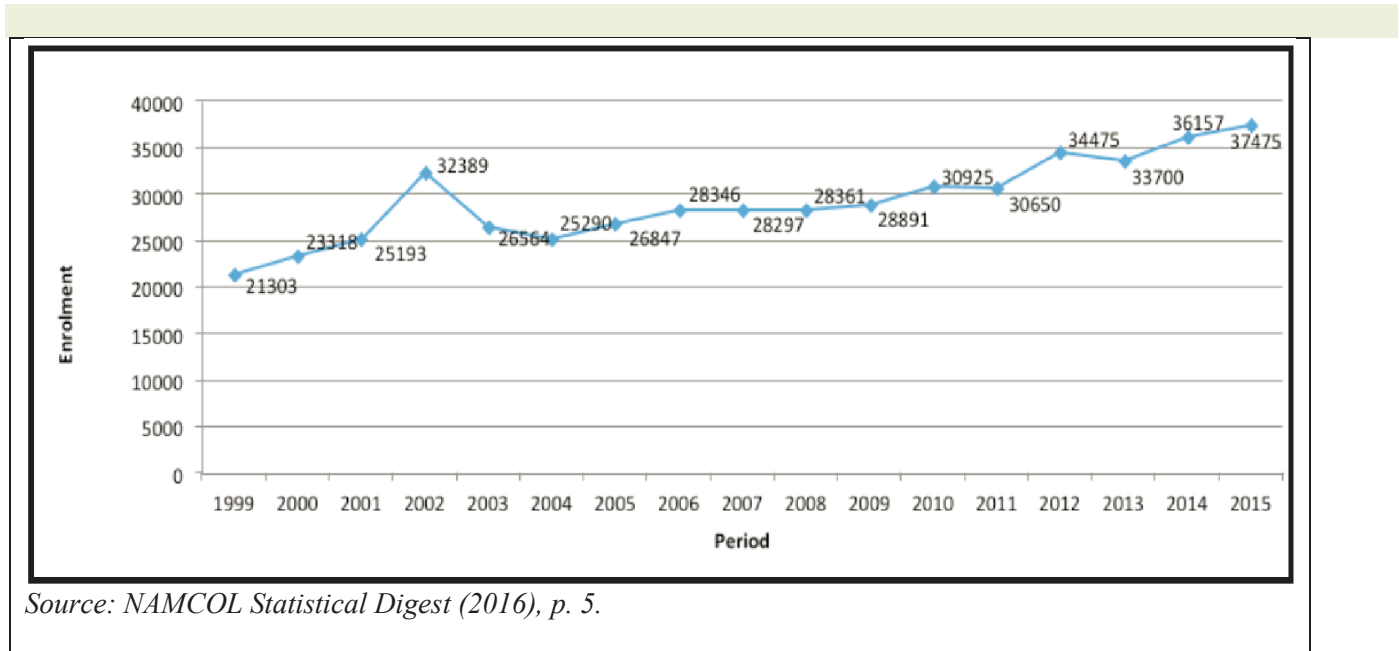
Figure 5: NAMCOL Combined Youths Enrolment for JSC and NSSC

3.3.2 Accelerated (catch-up) programs

The accelerated model strives to integrate OOSY back into mainstream secondary education. The model targets OOSY within senior primary school going age that dropped out of primary school education to catch up and sit for final primary education exams so that they transition into formal secondary school education system, or are ready for different pathways. It introduces an innovative, accelerated curriculum that provides a framework not just for the

delivery of basic education, but for a range of practical skills to improve livelihoods for older youths (World Bank, 2016; Longden, 2013). The model focuses on the expectations, participation and outcomes of older learners, as well as the challenges faced in the delivery of curriculum content and practical pre-vocational skills training in light of the differing needs of children and youth (Moleni et al., 2005). An example program of this model for secondary education is the Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Program (ZALP).

Unlike the second chance model, the accelerated model targets youths in order to catch up with their peers through accelerated learning approaches for re-integration into the formal system. This model prepares youths for the final primary school examinations in order for them to transition into formal secondary school education. Like the second chance model, this model is designed to utilize existing materials, infrastructure and human resources as a key strategy for achieving 'catch-up' learning. For example, the ZALP sites were established in existing primary schools. This enabled the ZALP students to participate in 'catch-up' classes at formal school while utilizing available textbooks, incumbent teachers, classrooms/learning spaces and other learning materials within the country's formal education system (ZALP, 2016).

Integration of OOSY into catch-up programs is done at two stages .i.e. beginning class in the senior primary section as is the case for the Complementary Basic Education (CBE) in Malawi (Mogha, 2017[4]) and at final grade of primary school where learners write final exams to transition into secondary school like the ZALP in Zimbabwe. The model targets youths to sit for final primary school grade examinations with an aim of integrating youths seamlessly into formal secondary education. Youths targeted under this model are those who were unable to enter formal primary school classes for various reasons like being too old, could not afford the educational costs, and other personal/social reasons (World Education, 2016) The catch up model is usually designed and implemented in the background of a declining education system as was the case with ZALP in Zimbabwe where an estimated 832,000 youths aged 3-18 years were out-of-school in 2012 and 10-15% of school going age children had never gone to school as of 2009 (World Education, 2016). The accelerated program is being implemented in education districts that registered high drop-out rates. This program is preferred by young people who still desire to pursue their formal education since it reduces the time they spend in class and provides them with some entrepreneurship skills.

Who delivers and funds?
The programs under the catch-up model are delivered through donor-funded projects as well as government programs. ZALP is carried out within the broad mandate of Zimbabwe's Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's (MoPSE) Non-formal Education Division. It is implemented by World Education through a strategic partnership with a consortium of partners[5] that covers the entire country (World Education, 2016). The program was initiated by the World Education's Bantwana and supported by UNICEF and implemented in partnership with MoPSE.

Who teaches and regulates catch-up programs?
As is the case with second chance model, the accelerated model mostly utilizes teachers from the formal education system to train the youths in learning centers. Selected teachers are identified and trained on how to deliver the compressed curricula for the OOSY (World Education, 2016). These teachers are given monthly allowances to incentivize them to train OOSY after normal school hours using accelerated methodologies. The use of existing structures enabled accelerated programs like ZALP to ensure quality assurance for the education provided to the targeted OOSY. Standardization of training content and quality assurance is also done through development and use of the Teachers' Handbook and Master Trainers' Guide to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to effectively oversee and manage multi-level classrooms (World Education, 2016). The model promotes the use of committed educators with the system, hence it motivates them to upgrade their teaching skills.

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[4] https://www.nyasatimes.com/blantyre-roll-complementary-basic-education-programme/
[5] These included: Mavambo Orphan Care (Mavambo), Northern Region; Chiedza Child Care Centre (Chiedza), Central Region; Family AIDS Caring Trust (FACT) Mutare, Eastern Region; WEI/B Bulawayo and Organization of Rural Association for Progress (ORAP), Southern Region.

Use of technology in catch-up model
Literature shows that there is limited use of technology in the catch-up model. The model relies heavily on face-to-face teaching. The style of delivery is appropriate given the condensed curriculum and the fact that targeted youths start the program at different levels, a situation that requires the right modulation. Some targeted youths are illiterate or semi-literate (Kadzamira & Nell, 2004, Moleni *et al*., 2005) which makes the use of technology difficult.

Government Support for catch-up model
The catch-up model is usually implemented through donor funded projects during its initial phases but is later absorbed by the host government. Government provides support even if the model is implemented as a project. The support provided by the government ranges from mainstream school infrastructure that host learning centers as seen in ZALP (World Education, 2016). Teachers who facilitate at learning centers for the catch-up model are selected from the existing formal schools and are government employees (World Bank, 2016). Existing government structures are also used to provide quality assurance in implementation of the model to ensure that standards are maintained.

Strengths of catch-up model
The catch-up programs manage to compress the curriculum and deliver it to youths in a short time period (Mogha, 2017). This makes the model a relatively cost-effective alternative to primary education in transitioning youths into formal secondary education. The model is delivered in an appropriate, flexible and relevant way for children and young people who have faced difficulties in accessing formal schools even as it ensures equivalency with the formal system (World Education, 2016). The catch-up model also raises the profile of the out-of-school children so that they are given another chance to attend school. It engages the communities to change attitudes and practices towards supporting out-of-school children so they can be reintegrated into the formal education system (World Education, 2016). The catch up model usually includes basic vocational skills in its curriculum which equip youths with livelihood capabilities in case they do not fully integrate into formal secondary education (Jere, 2012). The model provides a fresh opportunity for out-of-school youth who would not have returned to school to access formal education. For example, ZALP has managed to enroll 32,301 out-of-school children considered vulnerable and unable to attend conventional classes (World Education, 2016).

3.4 Synthesis of case studies from Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Kenya

In this section, we present summary experiences with OOSY programs and policies in Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Kenya. Annex 5 provides more information on the case studies.

3.4.1 Non-formal pathway/gateway classrooms or schools in Cote d'Ivoire

As a post-conflict country, Cote d'Ivoire is still rebuilding its education system and trying to bring a massive population of out-of-school children and youth back into formal schooling. Majority of these children and adolescents were enrolled in the warring factions as child soldiers or were victims of child trafficking. As part of its education reform agenda, Côte d'Ivoire passed a law in September 2015 making education compulsory for all boys and girls aged 6 to 16 years. This was subsequently integrated into constitutional law in October 2016. Furthermore, a sector strategic plan spanning a decade (2016-2025) has been specifically developed to ensure effective implementation of the law. The non-formal pathway/gateway classrooms or schools emanate directly from the strategic plan and were designed to help reintegrate out-of-school children into formal education. The target population includes both those who have dropped out of or never been to school.

The pathway classrooms model

Non-formal pathway/gateway classrooms are presented as an emergency education program based on an accelerated learning approach. They offer 6 and 14-year-olds who are outside the system an opportunity to do in three years the

equivalent of preparatory, elementary and middle or the last two sections of primary school (5th and 6th grades). This cuts down the duration of primary education from six to three years. The objective is to provide a pathway to the children and adolescents to join the formal system and pursue their education. This approach was initially designed and implemented with the support of NGOs and rolled out as a pilot from 2006 to 2007. It consisted of: (i) identifying villages or communities with a sufficient number of out-of-school youth to create pathway classrooms (30 to 35 students); (ii) students were then tested to determine their levels of formal schooling and then were divided by ability/level (preparatory, elementary, middle and last sections of primary education) and age; (iii) children aged 9 to 10 years who had never enrolled in school or had dropped out of school early went to the preparatory level; children aged 11 to 12 years old who had already had a first experience of school went to the elementary level and adolescents aged 13 to 14 years old, who already had elementary level experience and those who had reached the primary school age limit (9-15 years, depending on the educational level of the child) joined the middle and last sections, depending on their abilities. This latter group also proceeded to secondary education if they passed the examination for secondary education entrance.

Effectiveness and sustainability of the model

As the experience of pathway classrooms is still recent, all the success factors have not yet been documented. However, a few of them are already clear, including the need to create a conducive environment and incentive framework to keep students and teachers in the pilot. This would entail provision of accompanying measures (counseling and guidance for students on careers and training, accommodation, canteens, material and financial incentives for teachers, etc.) by the state and partners. On the technical side, the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones into pathway classrooms has had a positive impact on young people's literacy skills. By combining classroom literacy work with SMS/text exercises, 80% of learners pass the post-training test, via mobile, based on syntax and vocabulary, and will move to the next level. The model enables the improvement of access to knowledge and the portability of lessons in time and space, leading to improved quality.

One of the most important factors in the success and sustainability of the pathway classrooms experiment is community ownership of the project and the vision that underpins it. Involving community leaders and parents in the project early in the design phase, and creating multiple partnerships all around, allows for greater ownership of the experience.

3.4.2 The USAID Advancing Youth Project in Liberia

Just like Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa, Liberia is also rebuilding its educational system after a very devastating civil war that lasted from the early 1990s to 2003. The US government, through its aid agency, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has since been supporting Liberia in its reconstruction efforts.

In education and training, USAID has been implementing several educational projects, including the USAID Advancing Youth Project (AYP) which was implemented between 2012 and 2017. The main goal of the project was to provide increased access to quality Alternative Basic Education (ABE) services, social and leadership development, and livelihoods for Liberian youth and young adults, aged 13–35 who were unschooled or out of school, and with none or marginal literacy and numeracy skills. The project is built around a partnership between USAID, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and community-based organizations (CBOs). The partnership was meant to build the capacity of both the MoE and the CBOs to manage a system and programs for youth skills development and knowledge.

The AYP was an integrated project that consisted of imparting the following skills and competencies to the target group: (i) an Alternative Basic Education (ABE) of three levels that covered science, social studies, literacy, numeracy, life skills, work readiness, and agro-enterprise skills; (ii) appropriate information and communication technologies, such as interactive audio instruction and mobile learning through the use of cell phones (mLearning); (iii) basic training in skills like soap making, food preservation, snail rearing, and basket weaving, for youth to improve livelihoods; (iv) work-based learning opportunities, skills, and entrepreneurship training; (v) youth education, leadership and enhanced livelihoods through youth clubs and local alliances.

A tracer study, (EDC & YMCA, 2015), revealed that:

> *Of the 179 youth who participated in the study, 26% were successful in achieving their goals while 74% were not. The most common pursuit for successful learners was to go into business for themselves; almost half (49%) of these learners chose this path. Nearly a quarter of successful youth were able to continue formal education in either day school (19%) or night school (4%). This statistic reinforces the finding that although continuing formal education was a goal for learners, it was not attainable for many successful ABE graduates. However, among successful ABE graduates, 49% of learners reported that they would like to pursue further education in the future (p.2).*

In terms of impacts, the AYP was able to enroll more than 22,902 learners, 70% of whom were women, in 153 communities, between 2012 and 2017. It also contributed to the development of the capacity of the MoE and the CBOs involved. However, the tracer study highlighted that such programs failed to achieve the transitional/pathway creation that would allow a greater number of learners to join the formal education system and pursue further studies. The recommendation provided by the tracer study illustrates the need for improvement as it called the ABE programs to provide transitional assistance to their learners in the form of career counselling and better preparation to continue their education and/or enter the workforce.

3.4.3 School re-entry for teenage girls in Kenya

Policy responses on teenage pregnancy appear to have been successful in Kenya among many other countries, though with several challenges. While inclusion as a policy has received attention globally, there are difficulties in its full attainment resulting in piecemeal reforms. Ironically, as much as there is a growing concern over the issues of rights and inclusion, exclusionary practices and hindrances in various social contexts are evident. Equally, for the re-entry policy to be more useful in the realization of inclusive education, the government has made efforts at consultative approaches, as well as the incorporation and sensitization of all stakeholders on issues about education. This has possibly led to the support of education practices and policies by some education actors and given an opportunity to the marginalized to be heard. Government could however, help further in the elimination of the prevalent exclusion and discrimination practices in education systems. It is therefore noteworthy that the re-entry policy for girls touches on some aspects of social justice which are slowly taking root. In the Kenyan context, prior to 1994, girls who dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy were unfairly excluded from the education system. This trend started changing with the enactment of the school re-entry policy in 1994, coupled with parental exposure and implementation of the policy.

While the re-entry policy may have been introduced in Kenyan schools to enhance inclusive education and increase the enrollment of OOSY in schools, especially teenage mothers, it nevertheless has faced challenges in implementation. For instance, if the policy is ignored or invisible, then it has failed in its drive for social justice. Understanding implementation of the re-entry policy for girls is important as it seeks to eliminate this social injustice seen in the exclusion of girls from Kenya's education system. In Kenya today, pregnancy is unlikely to be the leading proximate cause of teenage girls leaving school. Many other reasons may cause teenage girls to withdraw from school during the adolescent phase, including absence of social and economic opportunities for girls and women, the demands placed on them to provide family and domestic labor, and inadequate affordable secondary schools in their neighborhood. Coupled with the gender inequities known to exist within the education system, this could result in unsatisfactory school experiences, poor academic performance and resignation to, or preference for, early motherhood.

Recent data from one of the counties in Kenya with a very high rate of teenage pregnancy show that, "primary school completion rate for girls in Homa Bay County is only 54%. In addition, an estimated 48% of girls in the county are out of school, and 40% of girls aged 15-19 have begun childbearing. ……. In Kenya, 98% of girls who have ever been pregnant are out-of-school … 59% of pregnancies among girls aged 15-19 years are unintended … 45% of severe abortion complications are among adolescent girls. As a result of the policy dialogues and the interactive media campaign, significant positive changes surrounding re-entry … were witnessed in the community. There was a

significant increase in the proportion of out-of-school girls who re-entered school – from 10% at baseline to 16% at end line" (Walgwe et al., 2016, pp. 2, 3).

4. Evaluating the effectiveness of the OOSY re-entry programs in sub-Saharan Africa

This section contains a brief review of interventions implemented in various countries to enhance equitable access to out-of-school youth and completion and learning outcomes. It also documents opportunities offered to the affected children for transition to formal secondary education systems and, where possible, to the world of work.

Recent estimates indicate that about 263 million children and youths are out of school. The effort to get all adolescents and youths into secondary education by 2030 represents an extraordinary challenge, which requires an estimated US$39 billion annually to fill the funding gap and achieve this target in low and lower-middle-income countries (UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNESCO, 2016). Several policy options that could take countries closer to the target include measures to increase supply, notably classroom construction and improvements in school infrastructure related to water, sanitation and accessibility, as well as measures to increase demand, such as removal of fees, unconditional and conditional cash transfers, scholarships or ease of restrictions to progression (UNESCO, 2015).

A number of interventions in place to enhance equitable access to education of OOSY in several countries include: conditional and unconditional cash transfers; scholarships (with some including specific interventions for support and life skills); academic support and mentoring (e. g. Stellenbosch USIKO Youth Project in South Africa); quality improvements and parental education' accelerated learning and remedial support[6]; second chance equivalency programs (e.g. Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA) in Uganda, Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania, Planet of Alphas, and Accelerated Compressed Learning for Malagasy Adolescents (ASAMA)). As evidence of its effectiveness, after 10 months of ASAMA training, 52.6 percent of participants passed the primary equivalency examination. Of those attending the Planet of Alphas program, 66.7 percent of children passed the final test, 37.5 percent at the advanced level. After intensive training in reading, 18.2 percent of those leaving the program enrolled in a formal primary school and 5.3 percent registered for the ASAMA program. Whereas some of these interventions saw increased enrollments in both formal and non-formal education, their major limitation is sustainability due to limited funding. Interestingly, the Alternative Learning Program in the Republic of South Sudan (initially implemented by the Sudanese government) registered higher participation rates for girls that were higher than their participation rates in formal education.

Evaluation of OOSY programs in Zimbabwe showed that 15.49% and 22.31% were double orphans and single orphans, respectively. However, 63.2% of the ZALP beneficiaries had both parents alive, but were considered vulnerable (World Education Learning, 2016). This indicates that participants in this OOSY program are those that are vulnerable whose needs must be dealt with in order for them to participate in the program. Success of the program required a multi-sectorial holistic approach including: community and private sector engagement to support with scholarships and income generating activities; imparting entrepreneurship and vocational skills to the students; linking the students to formal school students in extra-curricular activities to initiate a sense of belonging; and motivating and upgrading teacher/facilitator skills to embrace a number of new teaching and learning approaches, psychosocial supports skills, and the ability to develop multi-grade teaching skills to compensate for the challenges and disadvantages faced by learners.

Interventions have also been implemented to create opportunities for transition to the formal secondary education systems and/or to employment. These include vocational and life-skills training to enhance transition to employment. For instance, the Community Education Centers for Literacy and Vocational Skills in Sierra Leone, a 10-month program, served 2,500 learners per year in eight districts during its pilot phase. Most of the participants managed to

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[6] This intervention was initially designed to help youth who drop out of school but eventually attracted a larger group, including those who had never been to school.

complete all the modules, but its expansion was limited by funding constraints. Similarly, the Vocational Training with HIV Prevention for Ugandan Youth in Uganda, a randomized trial which combined apprenticeship with a life skills program, demonstrated improvements such as sustained employment, reduced risky behavior (such as fewer sexual partners and increased abstinence and condom use), as well as decreased alcohol, marijuana, and hard drug use.

Targeting youth aged 15–29 years with at least eight years of education (with a participation cap for those with tertiary education), the Youth Empowerment Project in Kenya and Training and Job Placement was expected to train approximately 10,000 youth over four years. Its initial evaluation confirmed that 1,095 youth had attended life skills training (425 female) with an attendance rate of 80 percent, and 916 internships had been created, both in the informal and formal sectors. A majority of these interns received additional business skills training. In addition, the Tap and Reposition Youth program which targeted out-of-school women aged 16–22 years and had a microfinance component was implemented in Kenya. It is remarkable that after eight weeks of saving, the group was approved for a loan, with program participants reporting higher earnings and savings than before. However, dropout rates were high, especially among younger women.

About 3 million school-aged children in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso are not enrolled in school, with national survey data from Mali reporting that only 47 percent of rural eligible children were enrolled in the first level of schooling in 2006. With this significant number of out-of-school children in mind, the Strømme Foundation, a Norwegian development organization, created a Speed School program to respond to the high percentage of out-of-school children in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. The program was developed by education curriculum experts and aims to provide out-of-school children ages 8-12 with an accelerated nine-month curriculum, and to transfer them into the government primary school system afterwards. A large majority (89%) of out-of-school children completed the nine-month program. On average, Speed School graduates saw significant gains in math and language skills, putting them on track with their peers, and most of the graduates re-entered the school system. Apart from remarkable educational achievement (children in the Speed School program improved by 42 percent relative to the comparison group), two-thirds of the Speed School graduates re-entered the school system after the program ended, among them, three out of four successfully completed their first year back in school (Innovations for Poverty Action, 2014). From the literature reported in this paper, OOSY programs are popular with target groups; seem to target efficiently as evidenced in their over-enrollment; and have impressive short term results. Table 4 below presents some salient features of selected OOSY programs in SSA.

Table 4: Selected features of OOSY programs in SSA

Program	Duration/ country	Target group	Focus areas & methodology	Effectiveness	Success
Alternative Learning and Skills Development Project (Phase II)[1]	5 years/ Tanzania	Out-of-school youth belonging to age group 15-30 years	Training of OOSY in selected areas in Tanzania. Use of controlled group	2,500 OOSY aged 15-30 years were reached with the program activities	Improved literacy and skills amongst out-of-school youth, 50% of whom were women
Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Program (ZALP) Giving Out-of-School Children a Second-chance[2]	2 years/ Zimbabwe	Out-of-school learners. Prepares them to 'catch-up' to their peers through accelerated learning approaches, in order to re-integrate them into the formal school system	Re-admission of out-of-school children and youth	30,000 out-of-school learners re-integrated into formal learning	Strengthened non-formal education delivery to support second-chance education.
Empowering Cocoa Households with	8 years/ Cote d'Ivoire	Integrate community capacity building, livelihoods, literacy,	Comprehensive vocational training (agriculture, life	More than 1,778 children (987 boys, 791	High level of school re-integration for

Opportunities and Education Solutions (ECHOES) Program (Public-Private Partnership)[3]		and basic education activities as a way of strengthening the capacity of OOSY	skills, and child labor prevention) for primary and secondary students, out-of-school youth (18-35 years old), and agriculture clubs	girls) re-admitted to school	OOSC in cocoa households
Second Chances for Girls: The Zambian Re-entry into School Policy[4]	Young mothers' school re-entry policy/ Zambia	Out-of-school young pregnant girls who re-enter school after pregnancy	Young pregnant girls who re-enter school after giving birth/ semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions	30 to 60 percent of girls returned to school after maternity leave	High level of re-admission for out-of-school girls due to pregnancy
Association for Social and Cultural Development (Private organization program sponsored by TRECC)[5]	5 years/ Cote d'Ivoire	All out-of-school children in the country	OOSY are provided with alternative pathways and school re-entry in different parts of the country	50 to 65 percent of OOSY were able to re-enter school or access other alternative learning opportunities	High level of alternative learning uptake among the OOSY
Liberia Advancing Youth Project[6]	6 years/ Liberia	All OOSY (boys and girls) between 13-35 years in the country	Providing alternative basic education services and re-entry opportunities for OOSY between 13-35 years	Increase access to quality Alternative Basic Education services, social and leadership development, and livelihoods for out-of-school youth	High school re-entry for OOSY. Better alternative pathways for those who cannot re-enter school
Basic Education for Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA)[7]	5 years/ Uganda	OOSY youth who dropped out due to poverty in urban areas	Providing apprenticeship opportunities for learners seeking practical experience, and the general advantage of this type of program over conventional literacy classes	Out of 3,440 participants in BEUPA, 26.4% transferred to UPE schools; 54.8% of the participants were girls	Highest transfer to universal primary education (UPE) schools of any Government of Uganda complementary basic education program
Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training in Dadaab Refugee Camps and Host Community[8]	5 years/ Kenya	Out-of-school children and youth in a refugee camp, school re-entry and alternative learning	Approaches include accelerated learning programs, basic literacy classes, basic vocational skills, Early Childhood Education and Development (ECDE)	50 percent of OOS children and youth re-entered school	High number of school re-entry among the refugee OOS children and youth

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8. https://educationinnovations.org/program/alternative-provision-basic-education

5. Scalability of existing OOSY re-entry models in Africa

Evidence shows that efforts to address out-of-school youth issues must be cross-sectoral and driven by leadership at the highest levels. Yet the reality is that out-of-school youth are often "policy orphans," positioned in a no-man's land with little data to develop an evidence-based advocacy framework. The youth have low implementation capacity, lack of interest in long-term sustainability of programs, and insufficient funds. More coordination is needed across the different governmental entities — ministries of labor, education, and human services, among others — that carry partial responsibility for these youth (Inoue, di Gropello, Taylor, & Gresham, 2015). The international focus from development agencies, including the World Bank, is also fragmented. The continent is littered with youth programs that were launched with much fanfare and then either fizzled when the desired outcomes were not immediately achieved or were abruptly terminated when funds (often external) ran out. What we observe from the literature is OOSY programs are usually stand-alone initiatives that use a project model and are hardly mainstreamed in the relevant ministries' programs. They are usually conceptualized to achieve quick wins and hence use the usual 'low hanging fruits' approach. The programs seem to bear fruits but they do not move to scale. This is probably why there is a stalling effect.

In 2002, out of 3,440 participants in BEUPA, 26.4% transferred to UPE schools. 54.8% of the participants were girls and the dropout rate was 10.3%. A preliminary evaluation noted its successes in collaborating with artisans from the community, the attempts to organize apprenticeships for learners seeking practical experience, and the general advantage of this type of program over conventional literacy classes. However, the full impact on occupational trends cannot be attained without a more holistic approach in literacy education (Inoue et al., 2015).

Upscaling interventions requires rigorous analyses of relevant studies. Where data are available, upscaling can be ascertained through cost-effectiveness analyses. However, considering data limitations in the current literature review, such analyses could not be conducted. Most study evaluations focus on measuring program and labor force participation rates and hardly get to assessing the cost-effectiveness with a view to determining implications for long term implementation and/or mainstreaming into the country's education system. The 2015 World Bank study on out-of-school youth in sub-Saharan Africa revealed that cash transfer interventions should be considered for up-scaling. In addition, considering the significantly positive results realized, the Speed School program that was implemented in Mali, could be considered for up-scaling.

6. Way forward and recommendations for improving the status of OOSY

After many years of experimentation with different models of alternative provision of education and training for out-of-school children and youth, it is about time to make their systematic integration into a holistic education and training system. This is a major policy issue for the coming decade if Africa is to reach the goals of the 2030 Agenda for SDG 4 and those of the African Union's 2063 Agenda.

To accomplish this, however, there are certain actions that are needed:

First, it is important to engage African policy-makers on their understanding of the contribution that OOSY programs on alternative education and training, and re-entry to formal education are making in reaching those that have been left out or dropped out from the formal education and training processes. There is still a belief among policymakers that only the formal system can remedy the high illiteracy rates and shortage of educated and trained human resources needed for socioeconomic development. This attitude has slowed down the development of relevant policies, legal frameworks and mechanisms for valuing and recognizing skills and competencies acquired outside the formal education and training systems.

Second, and at the technical level, there is a need to have a much better understanding of the critical success factors within OOSY programs for their promotion and utilization in formal education and training. This will require the building of human capacities in research and management of educational programs.

Finally, there is a need to map out the categories of youth with their specific needs as well as the non-state actors involved in educational activities to support them. Government engagement with these actors is crucial in creating a conducive environment for cross-fertilization of ideas and partnerships for future integration of OOSY programs into formal youth education, training and development systems.

Literature reviewed shows that both second chance and "catch-up" models for out-of-school youths are successfully being implemented in secondary school education. The second chance model targets out-of-school youths who mostly did not enter formal secondary education because of limited space, economic reasons, exorbitant fees as well as those who dropped out of school because of various reasons including failure to pass the junior secondary school examination to enable them transition into senior secondary education. The catch up model mostly targets youths at the final grade of primary school to smoothly transition into secondary education while second chance model target youths at any grade of secondary education. Literature also indicates that the two models are vital in the SSA region where high population of the youths aged 13-17 years old are out of school. Implementation of the two models under different circumstances have revealed critical opportunities and challenges that are key to inform modification of the design and implementation of future programs/projects.

Despite challenges in implementation, funding, quality, official recognition, and sustainability, evidence shows that some programs under alternative OOSY models like ODSS substantially increase education access to the OOSYs and provide the required knowledge and skills to them, hence they should be supported by relevant government line ministries.

The research community should develop research agendas to produce evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of OOSY programs for policy dialogue and capacity strengthening and/or building where this is completely missing. For instance, conducting longitudinal studies of non-formal education graduates to see how the beneficiaries transition to the world of work, and in further studies, could generate new knowledge and provide guidance on policy formulation and structuring of OOSY programs. Studies focusing on different age-groups of OOSY and in different regions (given the diversity in SSA) could also help policy makers deepen their understanding of early interventions and the beneficiaries' perspectives on OOSY programs. Such evidence could build the case for investments in OOSY. Our review did not come across studies that evaluate the value for money or cost-effectiveness. Evidence from such studies is critical in creating scenarios and deciding on best options subject to available resources.

Given that one of the biggest influencers in the transition of primary school children to secondary school is access to schooling, some of the practices that governments should consider to improve the supply of education services at this level is reducing the financial barriers to secondary schooling, especially for girls. In addition, building more schools and improving the school environment would go a long way in ensuring that the demand for secondary education is met to a higher degree. Such a move is likely to reduce the proportion of OOSY which seems to have stalled since 2012.

In order to expand the opportunities available for OOSY where such programs are limited, alternative education approaches should be explored, including delivery models such as distance education, night classes (as in the adult basic education model), and the use of information and communication technologies to deliver OOSY programs. For this to happen, policy and legal frameworks are needed to support and mainstream such initiatives into the existing education and training systems. The OOSY program should have definite paths linked to formal education tracks, for instance, how should an individual re-enter tertiary education after completing a relevant/appropriate OOSY program. The skills needed in the labor market are constantly changing therefore, traditional education and training systems need to adapt accordingly.

In order to improve output/outcome targeting the OOSY, it is vital to involve various stakeholders who are strategically positioned at local, national and international levels. Government support is a must if these programs are to be sustainable. Such government support could include coordination of second chance and catch-up models and the development of a policy framework which would ensure efficient and quality delivery of services by various education providers.

The OOSY programs such as 'Second Chance' and 'Accelerated/Catch-Up' programs should be adequately streamlined with the formal education system while at the same time examining their compatibility with the labor market. Successful transitional alternative education systems are very few or not well-known in in some regions of SSA such as the WCA. This calls for the development of policy and financing frameworks that will identify and articulate innovative and effective OOSY programs within the official education and training systems. This will require the development of tools and mechanisms such as national qualifications frameworks and creation of pathways using instruments such as recognition, validation and accreditation of basic youth and adult education and recognition of prior or experiential learning.

Further research, such as longitudinal studies and robust impact evaluations on OOSY programs, including cost-effectiveness, are needed to determine the impact of different models of OOSY programs on individuals, the community and economy. The findings from such research and evaluations would shed more light not just on the short term benefits, but also on the long term benefits of OOSY programs. This would also help improve understanding of the contextual factors that could be responsible for stalling of the proportion of OOSY in SSA. Furthermore, the evaluations would not only estimate impacts on expected outcomes such as employment, earnings, and post-secondary education, but also on the gains in academic, technical and soft skills required in the 21st century. Such studies would contribute immensely to monitoring progress SSA is making in SDG 4.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Proportion of OOSY by country and selected characteristics
Annex 2: Education attainment of the OOSY by country and selected characteristics
Annex 3: Databases for analytical datasets
Annex 4: Overall approach for the literature search
Annex 5: Case studies