

# Mid-Term Review Report for the SEAQE 2 project - ADRA

CATHERINE JOHNSTON, ANDREA COSTA AND KABIRA NAMIT

---

## Norad Collected Reviews

06/2022

The report is presented in a series, compiled by Norad to disseminate and share analyses of development cooperation. The views and interpretations are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.



# **Strengthening Equity, Access and Quality in Education (SEAQE 2)**



## **Mid Term Review REPORT**

Catherine Johnston, Andrea Costa and Kabira Namit, April 2022

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

The MTR team was led by Catherine Johnston and included Andrea Costa and Kabira Namit.

The MTR team wishes to acknowledge, with gratitude, the wonderful support we received from ADRA Norway and the SEAQE 2 ADRA country offices. Special thanks go to Elidon Bardhi, Derek Glass, Øystein Kolstad, Jonathon Telfer and Erik Eriksen from ADRA Norway for their valuable support and contributions throughout all phases of the MTR.

The SEAQE 2 MTR was made possible thanks to the dedication and diligent work of SEAQE 2 ADRA country offices. We are also indebted to the ADRA country office focal points who coordinated and led the field research for the MTR, and generously shared their perspectives and insights on the context in their countries. Special thanks go to: Siam Charity and Yakata Joseph (South Sudan), Addisu Biru and Bisrat Abera (Ethiopia), Suleiman Muhumed Ahmed and Kaibe Makasoma (Somalia) and Nilar Win Naing, Naw Mu Mu Saw and Saw Lay Ka Paw (Myanmar). The MTR is made all the richer by being informed by their deep knowledge and experience.

Most of all, we are grateful to the participating schools and thank the head teachers, teachers, students, parents, community members and education authorities who generously gave their time to share their knowledge and thoughts and complete the learning assessments.

The SEAQE 2 MTR was funded by NORAD.

including ADRA and NORAD logos

# CONTENTS

---

Acknowledgements .....	2
Figures and Tables .....	4
1 Executive Summary .....	5
1.1 Summary of main findings.....	6
1.1.1 Relevance .....	6
1.1.2 Coherence .....	8
1.1.3 Efficiency.....	9
1.1.4 Effectiveness .....	9
1.1.5 Impact.....	12
1.1.6 Sustainability .....	13
1.2 Lessons learned.....	14
1.3 Recommendations.....	15
1.3.1 Whole School Approach.....	15
1.3.2 Program learning and adjustment.....	17
2 Introduction .....	19
3 Methodology.....	20
3.1 Purpose.....	20
3.2 Methods.....	20
a) Desk review.....	20
b) Consultations with ADRA Norway and partners .....	20
c) Surveys and assessments .....	20
3.3 Analytical framework.....	23
3.4 Sample Strategy.....	24
3.5 Final sample.....	25
3.6 Ethical considerations and issues arising from the MTR.....	26
3.7 Field Schedule.....	27
4 Limitations.....	29

## FIGURES AND TABLES

---

### Figures:

Figure 1: OECD DAC Criteria (Source: OECD EvalNet (2020) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation)	23
---	----

### Tables:

Table 1: Percentage of students who achieved over 50 percent in the literacy and numeracy learning assessments	12
Table 2: Summary of sub-test items for literacy and numeracy assessments	20
Table 3: SEAQE 2 results framework indicators measured in the MTR	23
Table 4: Final school sample for each SEAQE 2 country/program	24
Table 5: Final sample including students, teachers, parents, SMC members, Education representatives and ADRA partners	25
Table 6: MTR field schedule for each school/TVET centre	27
Table 7: Key data collection stages in each country	28

# I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Children in SEAQE 2 project countries have not escaped the devastating impacts of COVID-19 and school closures on their education, health and wellbeing. The picture that has emerged from global studies on the impacts of COVID-19 and school closures on children's learning is bleak. Learning losses are profound and inequitable, with large disparities being seen both within and across countries. At the same time, the fundamental role of school in protecting children and supporting their health and wellbeing has become abundantly clear as children face increased protection, health and wellbeing risks because of the profound impacts of COVID-19 and school closures.

Every country in the SEAQE 2 program has experienced additional challenges. Alongside navigating the COVID-19 crisis, internal conflicts and disasters have disrupted education services and caused widespread displacement of populations in the two years since SEAQE 2 began.

- **In Ethiopia**, despite increased space for non-government organisations after the signing of the peace treaty with Eritrea, intercommunal conflicts impacted the target area causing widespread displacement in Southern and Oromia regions, and an attempted coup during May-June 2019 forced another state-of-emergency in Ethiopia. This conflict and rioting affected project activities in the initial stages before the COVID-19 wave hit the country. It disrupted activity flows and affected the education system as schools closed frequently. Additionally, unrest intensified in late June 2020 following the assassination of Oromo artist and activist Hachalu Hundessa and many buildings, hotels and shops suffered arson attacks and widespread property damage in SEAQE 2 areas.
- **In Myanmar**, the beginning of SEAQE 2 was one of relative optimism. Project areas remained stable, albeit with political flashpoints slowing high-level peace negotiations between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed organisations. Progress regarding education reforms was progressing and civil society were being consulted on revisions to the National Education Sector Plan (NESP). This progress was unfortunately short-lived. COVID-19 hit and caused widespread disruptions to all facets of society. The death rate was high and strict lockdowns were enforced. In November 2020, the general election was held, and the National League of Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory, but opposition parties claimed unsubstantiated irregularities. The result was not accepted by military factions and led to a military coup in February 2021. The military has since exerted excessive force on the civilian population and ethnic states and regions have been targeted.
- **In Somalia**, the first project year was tainted by terror attacks and relations between the federal government and federal state members deteriorated, including election disputes for the presidency in Jubaland State. This contributed to delays in selecting SEAQE 2 target areas/schools, with agreements only reached in February 2020.
- **In South Sudan**, the first year of the SEAQE 2 project remained insecure despite ongoing peace negotiations between the government and opposition leaders culminating in the formation of the unity government in February 2020. Intercommunal conflict continued in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SEAQE operating contexts are an important reminder of the cruciality of using the development-humanitarian-peace nexus to inform program adaptation and response. There have been tensions at times when operational standards and requirements (designed for long term development activities) have been ill-suited to the demands placed on project staff to implement activities in volatile contexts. Project staff have been resilient and adaptive and have navigating this complexity and made progress in all areas of the SEAQE 2 results framework, despite the disruptions to education services in their countries.

This MTR provides ADRA with an independent evaluation and reflection on the progress of the SEAQE 2 program and provides recommendations on how ADRA can rise to the significant challenges that continued state fragility and COVID-19 has placed on education services in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Somalia and South Sudan.

The requirements of the Terms of Reference (ToR) were to assess the progress and achievements of the project: ‘*Strengthening Equity, Access and Quality in Education (SEAQE2)*’ in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Somalia and South Sudan. The MTR assessed progress against the project’s objectives and targets and has identified areas to strengthen.

The MTR paid close attention to different stakeholder perspectives, including the perspective of children, parents, teachers and education authorities. A total of 2,179 individuals were interviewed as part of the MTR, including 1,193 males and 993 females. The MTR also assessed student learning in literacy and numeracy using adapted ASER assessment instruments from the initial baseline study. A total of 1,014 students made up of 521 male students and 493 female students were assessed from Grade 4, Grade 7, Grade 10 and TVET. Several limitations concerning the assessments were noted, which may have limited student’s capacity on the day of the assessment in some instances. These have been noted in the country chapter reports and in the limitations section below.

The evaluation studied the extent to which ADRA’s whole school approach was contributing to improvements in the quality of learners, teachers and learning institutions in the five countries. Due to the harmful impact of COVID-19 and school closures on learning continuity, the evaluation needed to consider how the two projects had been reorientated to support the physical, social and emotional safety and wellbeing of learners. The evaluation also responded to key evaluation questions that had been framed according to the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, covering project relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

A summary of high-level findings and recommendations are captured in this chapter together with information on the methodology and limitations (for a detailed description of the methodology for the MTR, please refer to the Inception report). The country chapters include country level findings in more detail and country specific recommendations.

## **1.1 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

### **1.1.1 Relevance**

**Overall, the SEAQE 2 project remains highly relevant to supporting the education needs of children who experience marginalisation, including girls and children with disabilities.** Responses to address gender gaps and encourage OOSC to return to school appear to be appropriate and there has been greater attention to ensuring girls can attend school and continue their education. In most countries, there was support for gender inclusive teacher training, monitoring gender inclusion in the classroom, building girls toilets and providing girls with menstrual hygiene packs as well as information and awareness raising campaigns to promote girls’ education.

MTR respondents highlighted the role that continuous awareness raising played in shifting community attitudes and behaviours regarding inclusive education and the rights of children with disabilities. It was less clear what actions were being taken to support children with disabilities beyond general awareness raising. Children with disabilities were less likely to benefit from distance learning programs and less likely to return after schools reopened. Countries tended to focus on disability inclusive teacher training, monitoring disability inclusion in the classroom, building disability inclusive toilets and WASH facilities as ways to improve inclusion of children with disabilities. In some countries such as Somalia, ADRA established partnerships with disability people’s organizations (DPOs), to support teacher training needs, specialist support in braille and sign language and a policy

review that was presented to the government. Importantly, this was informed by a deep dive analysis of needs of children with disabilities, which is an important starting position. Additionally, in Ethiopia, ADRA has formed partnerships with five NGOs/Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that specialise in inclusive education. It is hoped that these agencies can provide child protection and psychosocial support services for vulnerable children, including girls and children with disabilities.

Other promising practices were noted. In Ethiopia and Somalia, the door-to-door campaign was a successful strategy in identifying and supporting the enrolment of OOSC and children with disabilities. It was reported as an effective tool for promoting and supporting the enrolment of children who experience marginalisation.

In South Sudan, student governance bodies (prefects) were established in 19 of the 20 schools and trained on roles and responsibilities, including peace building, conflict resolution, life skills and WASH and developed action plans to support school management. Female advocates / role models were identified to promote girls education and to help advocate against early marriage. In a country where traditional gender roles limit investment in girls education and early marriage, domestic violence and sexual and gender-based violence are widespread, interventions like this can play an important role in empowering girls and encouraging them to continue their education.

In Myanmar, efforts to strengthen and expand the TVET sector, including strengthening TVET course curricula, expanding internship opportunities and creating a satellite TVET centre on the Thai border, were highly relevant strategies to meeting the education needs of marginalised OOSC and youth.

Interventions like these, are highly relevant and are playing an important role in supporting more girls and children with disabilities to enrol and stay in school.

**According to MTR respondents, existing barriers to education have been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures.**

Many children were unable to access home learning during school closures. ADRA endeavoured to provide support where they could by providing home learning packs and reading books or supporting teachers to undertake home visits. In South Sudan, ADRA supported the deployment of mentors and teachers to conduct home visits and offer small group lessons via the government initiated 'School on Air' program. Unfortunately, this program only targeted primary grades 5 - 8 and was not accessible to all children. Out of the 20 SEAQUE 2 supported schools, 12 schools offer only lower grades, so were not involved in this distance learning initiative. According to head teachers in most countries, children with disabilities, children in remote areas, children whose families had to migrate and children from poor households struggled to access distance learning. In Myanmar, the political crisis severely hampered the projects' ability to support distance learning. Most schools and teachers were unable to provide or support distance learning opportunities.

In Ethiopia, the barriers facing girls have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and school closures.

**Overall, changes made to the project because of COVID-19 were relevant but not sufficient.** Almost half of the head teachers interviewed stated that many girls did not return to school after school closures. It may be too early to define these as 'withdrawals or 'dropouts' but delayed start and irregular attendance are often predictors of early dropout. This was also the case for children with disabilities.

In Somalia this issue extended to other groups of children. MTR respondents reported that the most vulnerable children did not return, including children living in poverty, children in rural areas, children whose parents had to migrate for work, girls and children with disabilities. They also reported that during school closures most students did not receive any support and distance



learning was not available to most students. South Sudan responded similarly, also noting children from pastoralist families as especially vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19.

In Ethiopia, return to school interventions were relevant to creating a safe learning environment and promoting children's return to school. MTR respondents reported that schools implemented the COVID-19 guidelines, provided COVID-19 hygiene and PPE and upgraded WASH facilities to keep children safe upon their return to school. ADRA trained education personnel on COVID-19 safety guidelines and trained PTA to mobilise communities to contribute resources towards improvements to school environments, including school security in response to civil unrest in 2020, to support children's safe return to school.

### 1.1.2 Coherence

**The MTR found that the SEAQE 2 project was highly consistent with and complementary to government policies and priorities.** The exception being Myanmar, although when the program was designed, it was aligned to the government's NESP. In Ethiopia, education authorities at both local and state level as well as partner staff reported that ADRA had supported the implementation of national education policies and priorities, including Education for All, Inclusive Education, Gender Equity and COVID-19 response and recovery plans. Education authorities were able to identify a range of ways in which ADRA supported the MoE's COVID-19 response plan, including through supporting schools to implement COVID-19 guidelines, upgrade WASH facilities and provide remote learning opportunities. These findings were similar for Somalia and South Sudan. According to ADRA Ethiopia staff, the close relationship between ADRA and education authorities at all levels is a result of trust building and 'walking the talk' - fulfilling plans on time and with quality.

Country partner staff agreed that ADRA coordinated and partnered well with other NGOs and civil society groups. In Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, ADRA has facilitated communication between schools and local DPOs and international NGOs who are working on supporting the schooling of children with disabilities and girls. In South Sudan, ADRA is the state anchor for girls' education in Eastern Equatoria state and collaborates with the Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) program for inclusive education technical expertise and community mobilisation and awareness raising and has established a partnership with Community Development South Sudan (CDSS) for research and advocacy on inclusive education reforms.

All countries have remained active in relevant education and emergency cluster coordination mechanisms to ensure timely COVID-19 prevention and response planning. In South Sudan, four county education forums have been established in which county and local education authorities and stakeholders, including local leaders, NGOs, head teachers, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) networks, women and youth groups, share information and collaborate to improve access, equity and the quality of education services.

In Myanmar, cooperation and coordination with the government education sector, including engagement on education reform issues and TVET partnerships, have been compromised by the military coup. The highly successful partnership with the Government Technical High School (GTHS) in Pa'an, has been suspended and ADRA has changed their TVET strategy towards greater cooperation with the business sector, including entrepreneurs and private businesses. The evolving context in Myanmar bring into question the continued validity of the SEAQE 2 Theory of Change (ToC), which is founded on ADRA maintaining neutrality and working with both the MoE and Indigenous providers of education to promote and facilitate positive dialogue in support of inclusive education reforms.

### 1.1.3 Efficiency

#### *Timely delivery of results*

**In all countries, cost efficiency was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affecting inflation rates.** In Ethiopia, for instance, construction contracts were compromised following COVID-19 price hikes on construction materials, such as cement, which according to ADRA Ethiopia tripled in price.

Country offices were also impacted by ADRA Norway's budget adjustments made in 2020 to accommodate changes to program implementation plans because of COVID-19. In Ethiopia, budget modifications included an increase of approximately 10% in overall funds. These funds were allocated to increasing construction activities beyond those that were originally planned and procuring and supplying a substantial amount of learning materials to support schools once they reopened.

In Somalia, government interference caused delays in procurement and contracting for the construction of SEAQE 2 schools. Political pressure regarding school locations and attempts by officials to influence the selection of contractors resulted in cancellation of the first tendering processes. The second tendering process commenced in September 2020 and budget adjustments were made to increase the procurement budget by 46 percent so that schools could be constructed and operating as quickly as possible.

In South Sudan, rising insecurity in the project target areas impacted the efficient delivery of project activities. Instances of communal conflict, road ambushes and insecurity within the project areas resulted in two instances of ADRA staff being ambushed and personnel robbed. This necessitated the use of escorts / convoys and/or transportation by air rather than road travel and impacted both the timely delivery of project activities and activity costs.

Similarly in Myanmar, staff were unable to travel to target communities and community members were unable to leave their villages due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, security and safety concerns. Bank transfers and budget disbursement were also affected by the military coup. Project funds could not be transferred into the country following the normal banking processes and staff salaries and project activity funds were delayed. This meant that activities, such as the delivery of teaching and learning materials and school construction, were either not conducted or significantly delayed.

#### *Project management*

According to SEAQE 2 partners, the project was professionally managed, cost effective, project activities were conducted in a timely manner, and most partners felt they received good support from ADRA.

In Ethiopia, however, coordination between ADRA and its partners was compromised by COVID-19. One in five partner respondents disagreed that they received good support from ADRA, although no explanation was provided to better understand the reasons.

In Myanmar, ADRA finance and procurement policies do not provide the flexibility needed to respond efficiently and effectively in times of emergency. The need to follow strict procedures was cited as a reason for delays in the procurement and distribution of teaching and learning materials.

### 1.1.4 Effectiveness

#### *Outcome 1 - equity and access*

Overall, efforts and strategies to improve enrolment of girls and children with disabilities are viewed favourably by country staff and partners, the majority agreeing that the contributions have been effective. Distance learning, however, was limited in most countries and many teachers could not support students at home, mostly due to limited resources but also financial constraints as many did not receive a salary during school closures. Many MTR respondents reported that the common concerns faced by children when schools were closed was the limited resources they had at home, missing exams, reduced time for learning and limited opportunities to engage with their friends.

Some countries, such as Somalia, were very active in running 'back to school campaigns. In Somalia, ADRA conducted six separate 'back-to-school' campaigns and established 5 Accelerated Basic Education (ABE) centres, which are non-formal education programs hosted by project schools with classes that run after school. This resulted in a high level of youth seeking admittance to the ABE program. ADRA also reported that retention was high in this program.

Similarly in Myanmar, ADRA worked in collaboration with its partners to develop criteria and processes for identifying and enrolling OOSC in the newly established NFE program. This, together with community awareness raising activities promoting the value of education encouraged OOSC to return to school.

MTR respondents made suggestions on improvements that could be made to enhance girls access to education, recognising that girls' education, especially in South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia remains a concern. There was a feeling that interventions were generic rather than specific to the unique barriers girls face and that a deeper analysis of the barriers could help to inform a more tailored response. Additionally, there were suggestions to improve Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) programming and ensure this is integrated alongside other girls' empowerment and life skills activities. Importantly, respondents touched on the importance of considering the multi-dimensional nature of the marginalisation of particularly groups of girls and children with disability and the unique challenges that they might be facing.

MTR respondents in some countries identified children with disabilities as not returning to school following COVID-19 school closures. In Myanmar, most partner respondents reported that nothing was done to support their return to school. Over half of the head teachers reported that their school did not support the return of children with disabilities. A similar finding was reported from respondents in Ethiopia. MTR respondents suggested that further improvements could be made to improve the enrolment of children with disabilities. The availability of assistive devices, improving the early detection and screening of children with disabilities, strengthening partnerships with referral agencies and providing training that is more tailored to specific disabilities are possible areas of support.

### ***Outcome 2 - inclusive and safe learning environments***

Overall, most partners interviewed in the MTR agreed that the changes to the school environment worked to support children's learning and were suitable for schools to be safe learning environments.

Construction in all countries was hampered by delays in approvals, COVID-19 restrictions and high inflation. In most countries, initial targets were not reached, and adjustments were needed.

In most countries, child protection referral mechanisms have been established and are operating effectively. In Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, the mechanism was established in 2020. In that year, 8 female students in Ethiopia, 16 in South Sudan and 27 in Somalia received support for health, protection and guidance and counselling. In Ethiopia, these incidents were reported to the school principals who referred the cases to Women and Children Affairs and then to the police and court where appropriate. The incidents included stress, rape, abortion and Female Genital Mutilation

(FGM). It was noted in the annual report that strengthening of the referral system and child protection will continue to be a strong focus in all countries. In Myanmar, the referral mechanism for responding to child protection, safety, health and wellbeing cases had yet to be established and will need to be a focus for the project moving forward.

### **Outcome 3 – Quality teaching**

In all countries, students had a positive association with their school and their teacher. This was also a finding in most countries at baseline and indicates that barriers to learning and education continuity might not be entirely influenced by school factors. In Ethiopia and South Sudan, less than three in four students felt that their teacher was good at helping them learn and understand the lessons. This result was lower than students in Somalia and Myanmar, who reported that most teachers helped them learn.

Regarding corporal punishment and concepts of safety, most students in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia reported feeling safe at school and not witnessing any corporal punishment. In Myanmar, by contrast, over three in four students felt that children were hurt in the school and over one in three students reported witnessing the teacher hit a child in class in the past year, implying that corporal punishment may be a common occurrence. The highest proportion of students reporting incidence of corporal punishment was in Myanmar, followed by South Sudan. In South Sudan, 20 percent of female students reported that they were hurt at school. Responses indicated that students were hurt from beating and caning and some teachers are not delivering the curriculum according to expectations. In Myanmar, at baseline, it was apparent that students were rarely asked their opinion and that teacher conduct was a concern in some schools. In South Sudan a similar finding was reported at baseline, with students from several schools reporting serious misconduct by their teachers, including drunkenness, absenteeism, corporal punishment and verbal abuse. It is evident that there may still be significant issues regarding teacher conduct in some countries that requires attention.

Teacher behaviour is often associated with teacher wellbeing, which is often influenced by how teachers are managed and supported in their profession. COVID-19 has heightened the disadvantage that many teachers face in terms of job security, equitable salaries, access to quality professional development opportunities, etc. In Ethiopia, one in five head teachers and teachers reporting that no extra activities have been done to support the social and emotional wellbeing of teachers.

TPD needs to go beyond training, and it is pleasing that some coaching and mentoring and peer learning is being promoted. In Ethiopia, the mentoring program was considered very effective by most head teachers. Two out of three teachers identified mentoring and coaching and peer learning as the professional development activities they found most valuable. In Somalia, teachers highly valued in-service teacher training and pleasingly two out of three teachers report accessing in-service training during COVID-19, as well as mentoring and coaching and distance learning. This shows that ADRA Somalia did not lose focus on TPD during school closures and found ways to reach most teachers.

Teacher turnover is high in many countries and reported as a significant issue in Myanmar and Somalia. This means that one off in-service training is not sufficient to raise teaching capacity unless done on a regular basis. In-service training also has limitations as many teachers often miss out. In Myanmar for instance whilst teachers highly value in-service teacher training, only 35 percent of teachers had access to this.

### **Outcome 4 - parent engagement**

In all countries, parents are engaged and have appreciated the activities that involve them in the school community. In South Sudan, the REFLECT program appears to have been successful as an

effective parent engagement strategy and as a vehicle to share information, discuss issues and address barriers to access for girls and children with disability. Parents appear very supportive of the intervention but want more engagement with teachers and more information about their children’s learning progress. Engaging parents beyond ‘participation’ seems necessary.

In all countries, SMCs and PTAs have been engaged in supporting schools to open safely and developing a more inclusive learning environment. SMCs, however, need support in school governance and financial management, and many want to better understand how to support children with disabilities and address gender gaps.

### Outcome 5 – Advocacy

In all countries, the SEAQE 2 project has supported ADRA and partners to engage in policy advocacy in pursuit of inclusive education reforms (see OECD DAC criteria: Complementary and Sustainability).

Policy advocacy has predominately been driven through working alongside government counterparts to support and improve government capacity to deliver inclusive education and by establishing / supporting / participating in dialogue between government and civil society on important education reform issues. It is evident that in some countries, such as Somalia, South Sudan and Ethiopia, policy advocacy efforts are bearing fruit, with promising signs that the support to teacher professional development will be integrated into government systems. In Myanmar, policy advocacy efforts have been compromised by the military coup, which has shut down avenues for dialogue on education reform issues.

### 1.1.5 Impact

#### Student learning

Table 1: Percentage of students who achieved over 50 percent in the literacy and numeracy learning assessments

Grade / Gender	Assessment	Ethiopia	Myanmar	Somalia	South Sudan
Grade 4 Overall	Literacy		91%	97%	38%
	Numeracy		65%	93%	16%
Grade 4 Males	Literacy		93%	99%	43%
	Numeracy		71%	92%	19%
Grade 4 Females	Literacy		89%	95%	23%
	Numeracy		60%	94%	5%
Grade 7/TVET Overall	Literacy	76%	93%	89%	44%
	Numeracy	34%	29%	63%	0%
Grade 7/TVET Males	Literacy	82%	100%	84%	53.5%
	Numeracy	50%	30%	60%	0%
Grade 7/TVET Females	Literacy	67%	87%	88%	36%
	Numeracy	20%	28%	67%	0%
Grade 10 Overall	Literacy	53%	94%		
	Numeracy	25%	25%		
Grade 10 Males	Literacy	62%	96.5%		
	Numeracy	30%	28.5%		
Grade 10 Females	Literacy	45%	91%		
	Numeracy	16%	21%		
<b>Overall Average</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>25</b>

<b>Overall Average females</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Overall Average males</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>29</b>

Student learning outcomes have been severely disrupted because of COVID-19 and teacher reported that they were not fully aware of the learning losses and do not feel they have the strategies or tools to assess and then provide appropriate booster or catch-up classes to address learning gaps. According to the assessments, numeracy appears to be needing attention in the higher grades.

In Ethiopia, female students performed lower than male students in the TVET and Grade 10 assessments, especially in numeracy. The results are statistically significant with a high confidence value indicating that this result may be reflective of the situation in TVET and secondary schools in Ethiopia. Whilst consistent with baseline findings, the findings indicate that female students in Grade 10 and lower grades need additional support in mathematics and would also benefit from support in literacy, to ensure they can access future employment and education opportunities.

In Somalia, a higher proportion of girls than boys performed well in numeracy, and a higher proportion of boys than girls performed well in literacy. This finding was different in other countries where girls usually performed lower than boys in both assessments.

In South Sudan, the performance of students in the Grade 4 learning assessment for literacy was lower than other country results. In the SEAQE 2 project, many students were unable to answer questions and girls' performance in literacy and numeracy was lower than boys. Gender differences were statistically significant with high confidence values. Most Grade 7 students did not answer any of the questions in numeracy. This suggests that they did not understand the questions and/or were unfamiliar with the type of questions asked. Literacy results for students were much higher in Grade 7, especially for the reading task.

In Myanmar, students performed well in the literacy assessments from Grade 4 – 10 and there was little difference between male and female students. Student performance in numeracy at Grade 7 and 10 was lower than milestone targets and indicates some gaps may exist in numeracy understanding.

### **1.1.6 Sustainability**

In the original design document, ADRA had defined the parameters for sustainability; to increase organisational commitment, capacity at all levels, strengthened systems, and lasting knowledge assets for education. The program planned to bring about this change through capacity building activities directed at institutional, organisational and individual levels of the education system. According to the approach, this would encourage actors to work together under a common purpose and would subsequently lead to increased government commitment toward the education system, greater availability of resources from the community, private sector and donors toward education services and more effective inclusive education and TVET reforms. It was noted in the design that the strengthening of civil society would create sustainable change that could hold the government accountable for inclusive and quality education policies, practices, plans and budgets.

In all countries, progress regarding these strategies has been impacted by COVID-19 related project delays, although the private sector partnerships for the TVET centres in Ethiopia, Somalia and Myanmar are progressing well, laying a strong foundation for sustainability. In Somalia, the project supported TVET centres to engage with local businesses and this helped improve the curriculum, practical training and internship opportunities. MTR respondents reported that the collaboration with TVET centres and local industries has helped graduates obtain relevant skills, establish networks and has increased job opportunities for graduates.



Somalia is making a substantial progress towards sustainability. ADRA is finding that working directly with state and local level education authorities to strengthen their capacity to fulfil their role in supporting and monitoring inclusive education within schools has been a highly effective strategy. ADRA staff reported that this has contributed to empowering state level authorities, has led to efforts to capture data on children with disabilities in schools and has resulted in government resource allocation for inclusive education training for teachers (this high level of cooperation is also true for South Sudan). Additionally, ADRA Somalia reported that through advocacy and engagement with the MoECHE they have contributed to the empowerment of the special education department at State level and have trained and equipped state level education authorities so that they can fulfil their role in supporting and monitoring inclusive education within schools.

Most ADRA partners agreed that they know about the program's sustainability strategy, although not all partners were familiar with the strategy indicating that more work is needed to engage partners on plans for sustainability.

Most ADRA partners agreed or strongly agreed that the benefits of SEAQE 2 would last beyond the life of the program. Head teachers also reported positively that the changes made to the schools would remain beyond the life of the project. There remains doubt amongst some partners, suggesting that more can be done to embed sustainability into program activities.

There are also promising signs that the support to teacher professional development will be integrated into the government system in Ethiopia and South Sudan, with partners noting agreement in the progress being made. Most respondents, except for Myanmar, felt that the child protection mechanism established can continue without ADRA's ongoing support with three doubting this at present.

## **1.2 LESSONS LEARNED**

There have been many lessons learned through the implementation of the SEAQE 2 project and while many are specific to each country context, there are some universal lessons. In all countries, there is a lack of schools in underserved and conflict affected areas and an initial focus on school construction / refurbishment has significantly contributed to both supporting access to education for marginalised children and building trust and goodwill between ADRA and target communities. By first building/refurbishing schools, communities have seen the tangible benefits of ADRA's support, and this has been an important precursor to community mobilisation and engagement activities. At the same time, community mobilization and engagement has been instrumental in supporting school improvements and promoting inclusive education.

One off in-service teacher training is not enough to raise the capacity of the teacher workforce in SEAQE 2 supported schools where many teachers are under qualified and teacher turnover is a significant issue. This has necessitated a shift towards continuous teacher professional development strategies. Strategies such as the mentorship program and peer learning are helping to improve teacher capacity and are valued by teachers.

Lessons in relation to the administration of learning assessments have also been learned. The assessment methodology was not familiar to students and may have been the reason many failed to complete subtest items. Greater orientation and discussion with students prior to the assessment to address their fears and concerns would be valuable, ensuring that the consent process is also an opportunity for discussion on the assessment process.

## 1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

While the SEAQE 2 project pivoted to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and support COVID-19 education response and recovery plans in each country, the new normal that has now emerged means that a doubling of effort is needed to bring global and national education goals back on track. Vulnerable children will need tailored and targeted support to return to school and a greater emphasis on child protection and PSS to overcome the negative impacts of COVID-19 and continued conflict prevalent in SEAQE 2 countries. Teachers, who have been at the frontline of education response, will need to be trained and supported to assess learning losses and provide catch up programs that address the unique learning gaps of all learners. Parents and communities will need to be re-engaged on the importance of education and supporting their children's learning as spikes in poverty and economic hardship hit more families and communities harder. Education systems that were already struggling to provide an inclusive quality education for all will need further support to develop the policy and program responses that will be needed to overcome the negative impacts of COVID-19 and school closures.

The high level recommendations are provided in the executive summary and country specific recommendations are provided within the country chapters. The high level recommendations aim to guide ADRA Norway's efforts to strengthen the SEAQE 2 project and inform future education programs.

### 1.3.1 Whole School Approach

#### ***Access, retention and minimise early drop-out***

1. **Work with school leaders and teachers** to identify ways to actively monitor attendance and ensure there is appropriate follow up with parents on chronic absenteeism. High absenteeism is a strong predictor of early drop out and the COVID-19 pandemic has led to higher rates of absenteeism and reluctance by students to attend school.
2. **Develop tailored responses to support girls, children with disabilities and other vulnerable children to access / return to school.** COVID-19 has exacerbated barriers to education and more specific interventions to address the unique and often multidimensional barriers faced by girls and children with disabilities will be needed. This requires a deeper analysis of barriers to inform more tailored and targeted responses. Additionally, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) programming should be improved and integrated alongside other girls' empowerment and life skills activities.
3. **Further improvements could be made to improve the enrolment and retention of children with disabilities.** The availability of assistive devices, improving the early detection and screening of children with disabilities, strengthening partnerships with referral agencies and providing training that is more tailored to specific disabilities are possible areas of support.

#### ***Learning outcomes***

4. **Strengthen support to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for girls and boys.** In most countries, girls underperform boys in language and mathematics. In most countries, boys and girls have struggled with Grade 7 and Grade 10 numeracy assessments. In all countries, this finding should be validated with teachers through their own assessment regimes and teachers should be engaged to investigate the possible reasons for this. If, for instance, there is high absenteeism, then it is likely that absenteeism is a significant reason for poor learning outcomes. There may also be gaps in the curriculum and similarly in teaching practices. Based on further investigation, strategies to address learning gaps should be based



on local and global evidence. From recent studies, high frequency tutor groups have been shown to be very effective in addressing learning loss.

5. **There are several literacy and numeracy boost packages available** for adaptation which may be applicable to address learning gaps. These usually target the early grades which may not be appropriate in all contexts, but worthwhile considering for primary schools. To turn around results identified in higher grades, it is always best to target the foundation years so that students master key concepts that are critical as they advance through school.

### **Teacher quality**

6. **Improve the quality of teachers through systematic reform to teacher professional development**, some of which is under development and beginning to be worked on in many of the country programs. ADRA should review each country program to ensure it considers the following:
  - a. The utilisation of the **teacher competency framework (TCF)** to inform professional learning needs. This is begin utilised in some countries but not others. It is useful because it provides clear expectations for teachers to guide areas for improvement and can be used to centre professional development programs. Sometimes, a TCF does not exist, or the government has one, but it is not appropriate for the teachers ADRA is supporting. In this case, there are established processes that can be consider to either build a TCF or use a standardised TCF, such as the INEE's TCF for teachers in crisis and conflict settings.
  - b. **Balance training/workshops with peer learning and coaching and mentoring.** Many countries have experimented with coaching and mentoring during the COVID-19 pandemic and teachers highly value this method of professional development. Expert led workshops have an important place in exposing teachers to new approaches as is peer learning. The success of each is determined by its 1) content (being informed by teacher professional learning needs), 2) structure (informed by adult learning methodology), 3) organisation (clear schedule, set time and place, regularity and communication plan), 4) low cost (use of local resources) and 5) facilitators (trained in the role they are taking).
  - c. **Support head teachers and trainers to become effective coaches and mentors** for teachers through high quality Instructional Leadership and Coaching professional development.
  - d. **Continue to invest in partnerships with teacher training institutes** to enhance offerings to teachers regarding courses and qualifications.
7. **Support teachers to assess gaps in student learning, organise booster or catch up lessons and adapt the curriculum to different learning needs.** This will be critical to addressing learning losses due to COVID-19 school closures and preventing spikes in student dropout.
8. **Review existing SEL/PSS materials and develop a comprehensive SEL/PSS package** for students and teachers and roll this out across all SEAQE 2 schools, contextualising it carefully in each context to ensure the content is relevant and appropriate for the intended target groups. A useful starting position is always an assessment. There are some available student and teacher wellbeing assessment instruments that could be contextualised and used as the basis for revising existing SEL/PSS materials.
9. **Students** should feel safe at school and supported by their teacher. Whilst not uniform across the SEAQE 2 / EiE Upper Nile countries, there is a strong indication that more needs to be done to reduce the practice of corporal punishment, improve teacher-student relationships and ensure teachers are listening to student feedback and suggestions. Tackling this should go beyond training and is linked to the school code of conduct and student's sense of agency to report when there is misconduct by teaching staff.

### **Parental engagement**

10. **Continue to strengthen parental engagement.** A consistent set of suggestions to improve parental engagement were shared by parents in all SEAQE 2 countries. These were for parents to receive more feedback about their child's learning and development progress from the teacher and more opportunities for meeting with their child's teacher. Many also felt enthusiastic and interested to participate in school activities and welcomed opportunities to engage in cultural activities and other social event.
11. **Support parents of children with disabilities.** It is evident that parents of children with disabilities may need more support to understand their role and the sources of support available within the community. Often parents of children with disabilities may feel isolated and ensuring the school community includes parents of children with disabilities is an important undertaking.

### **School management committees**

12. **Continue to strengthen SMCs.** Most SMC members in each country would like training and support on how to support the education of girls and children with disabilities as well as training on financial management, leadership and governance. Consideration of the specific learning needs of SMC members should be informed by a capacity needs assessment.

### **Policy Advocacy**

13. **Engage in advocacy to resolve teacher salary issues and consider contributing budget towards teacher salaries in Somalia and Myanmar.** Teacher wellbeing is strongly associated with teacher management and support. It is likely that teachers performance is being impacted by the conditions of their employment as teachers. As well as strengthening programs to promote social emotional wellbeing of teachers, advocacy is needed to address salary concerns. In Ethiopia, Somalia and Myanmar, SMC members thought that advocacy to increase teacher salaries and benefits and to improve housing for teachers should be a focus for the SEAQE 2 program in the next two years to improve teacher wellbeing. In ACS schools in Myanmar, SEAQE 2 does not support ACS community teacher stipends and local communities struggle to support their teachers. In Somalia, efforts to improve the capacity of teachers is undermined by high teacher turnover, fuelled by the lack of government resources to pay teachers.

### **Partnerships**

14. Continue to strengthen engagement with local authorities. This should include providing more information about ADRA's activities to local authorities to ensure they have a good understanding of ADRA's work. In Ethiopia, 77 percent of education authorities were unaware of the work that ADRA have been undertaken.

#### **1.3.2 Program learning and adjustment**

15. **Document the mentor program** being used in some countries, identifying what works and why and areas for improvement. Use this to contextualise and replicate the mentor program in other SEAQE 2 countries and share good practice with education stakeholders and through policy advocacy efforts.
16. **Strengthen sharing of good practices across SEAQE 2 countries.** There are many good practices being implemented in SEAQE 2 countries. For instance, the door - to - door campaign in Ethiopia and Somalia, the radio program developed as a response to COVID-19, and the REFLECT program in South Sudan are interesting interventions that could be shared with other countries.

17. **Continue enhancing linkages between SEAQE 2 and TOFI.**
18. **Review procurement procedures** to remove blockages and barriers to implementation in emergency contexts.
19. Conflict sensitivity appears to have been loosely applied rather than systematically considered throughout the project lifecycle. **Rollout the Conflict Sensitivity Guidance within SEAQE 2 and help ADRA country offices develop / review their conflict sensitivity strategies.** Start with Myanmar, where the conflict context has markedly changed since SEAQE 2 was designed and where there is much concern among ADRA local staff and partners about ADRA's conflict sensitivity approach.
20. **Review ETLE and the SEAQE2 results framework with a view to simplification.** This recommendation may be well placed later in the program or in preparation for a follow up program. Several issues could be explored in this review.
  - a. Firstly, regarding ETLE.
    - i. Difficulty establishing results per indicator
    - ii. The aggregation process reducing meaning
    - iii. The assessment followed by aggregation seems overly complex
    - iv. It is difficult to establish meaning from the results – e.g., What does 2/20 schools have achieved ETLE mean?
    - v. Due to the difficulty in establishing meaning from the results, it is likely difficult to communicate results to stakeholders, including schools and communities. This will hamper efforts to support them in identifying areas for improvement.
  - b. Secondly, regarding SEAQE 2.
    - i. The logic flow between output and outcome is a little unclear in places. A simpler logic would allow for one key actor to be the focus of each outcome – for instance – teachers, parents, head teachers etc. At the moment, parents are primarily in one but across several outcomes. Whilst this works when describing a theory of change, when presented in a results framework, the logic flow is more difficult to describe. When analysing multiple outputs under an outcome, it was difficult to see the coherence.
    - ii. Using indicators that are aggregates is problematic because those external to ADRA cannot understand them. They have a place but may not be the best way to communicate results and change.
  - c. In reviewing both frameworks, it might be useful to explore whether government systems have operational standards, competency frameworks, and different tools that ADRA could be utilising, instead of creating their own. Increasingly, education systems define quality standards, and NGOs may be better placed to support schools to meet national quality standards as a measure of success. It might also be useful to start with the project theory of change, which remains a robust framework for conceptualising your whole school approach and reconceptualise your results framework from there.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

---

**The impact of school closures on children’s learning is profound and will be felt for years to come.** Global estimates of learning losses are staggering, with an additional 100 million children estimated to fall below the minimum proficiency level in reading because of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> This will increase the number of children living in Learning Poverty<sup>2</sup> in many low and middle income countries like the SEAQE 2 project countries, where over half of 10 year old children cannot read and understand a simple text. According to new projections, the share of children living in Learning Poverty in low and middle income countries will potentially rise to 70% because of school closures.<sup>3</sup>

**The World Bank warns of an ‘inequity catastrophe in the making’** as differences between the learning experiences of girls and boys, the rich and poor and other marginalised groups, such as children with disabilities, ethnic minority, refugee and displaced children, become more apparent both across and within countries around the world.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, rising poverty triggered by the pandemic is estimated to push an additional 9 million children globally to join the already 160 million children engaged in child labour, often in dangerous and informal sectors<sup>5</sup>.

**The impacts of COVID-19 and school closures have resulted in negative health, wellbeing and protection outcomes for many girls and boys.** The role of school in providing children with a daily schedule, social interaction and emotional support as well as gender-specific protection has become very clear. Evidence of adverse mental health outcomes and increased vulnerability to early and unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and GBV have emerged.<sup>6</sup>

**The impacts of COVID-19 and school closures will also likely make the situation for children with disabilities worse.** While data on the education, health, wellbeing and protection outcomes of children with disabilities is limited, UNICEF (2021) estimates that children with disabilities are much more likely to be out of school than children without disabilities, twice as likely to be beaten as a form of discipline, more likely to be engaged in child labour in hazardous working conditions, experience significantly higher rates of bullying and may face increased risks of sexual violence, with girls at a higher risk than boys. It is likely that the education, health, wellbeing and protection of children with disabilities in SEAQE 2 target countries, who face negative and discriminatory social and cultural attitudes and beliefs, have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and school closures.

---

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO (2021), [When Schools Shut: The Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures](#), p.19

<sup>2</sup> Learning poverty is a measure developed jointly by the World Bank and UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics. It means being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10.

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank UNESCO and UNICEF (2021), p.5.

<sup>4</sup> The World Bank (2021), [Urgent, Effective Action Required to Quell the Impact of COVID-19 on Education Worldwide](#).

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank UNESCO and UNICEF(2021), p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO (2021), p.14.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

---

### 3.1 PURPOSE

The MTR assessed the progress and achievements to date of the SEAQE 2 project and identified areas for improvement that can inform the remaining period of each program. The MTR responded to key evaluation questions that were framed according to the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, covering program relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Gender and disability were integrated in all evaluation criteria to gain a deep understanding of how the program has specifically addressed the needs of girls and children with disabilities. The full suite of evaluation questions and suggestions against each DAC criteria is presented in the TOR, which can be found in Annex.

### 3.2 METHODS

#### a) Desk review

A comprehensive document review of available information about the SEAQE 2 and EiE Upper Nile programs was undertaken drawing on core documents provided by ADRA Norway. These included project design documents, the theory of change, results framework and risk assessments, the baseline report, progress reports and documents detailing COVID-19 risks, mitigation measures and program adjustments and adaptations. The review informed data collection planning and tool development.

#### b) Consultations with ADRA Norway and partners

During the inception phase, remote consultations were held with the ADRA Norway management team and key ADRA partner country staff. These meetings enabled the MTR team to refine the MTR scope and priorities. Discussions on the COVID-19 and conflict situation in the target countries allowed the MTR team to finalise the sampling strategy and agree the modality for data collection within each country.

#### c) Surveys and assessments

To ensure data captured for the MTR could be triangulated and verified, the MTR team selected a range of quantitative and qualitative surveys for students, teachers, head teachers, parents, SMC members and education authorities. This enabled the evaluation team to consider each question from the perspective of key stakeholders involved in the SEAQE project. We were especially interested in the perspectives of students and their experiences of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. A copy of each instrument can be found in Annex B: MTR survey instruments.

#### *Literacy & Numeracy Assessments*

A summary of sub-test items is presented in the table below.

*Table 2: Summary of sub-test items for literacy and numeracy assessments*

Grade level	Literacy	Score	Numeracy	Score
4	Word identification Reading fluency - number	/10 /30 words	Part 1: Operations (+ and -) Part 2: Operations (x and ÷)	/3 /3

	of words read correctly Reading comprehension Listening comprehension	/4 /5	Part 3: Word problems Part 4: Data representation	/3 /3
7 (also TVET students)	Word identification Reading fluency - number of words read correctly Reading comprehension Listening comprehension	/10 /62 words /4 /5	Part 1: Operations (whole and part numbers) Part 2: Word problems Part 3: Simple linear equations Part 4: Data representation	/3 /3 /3 /3
10	Word identification Reading fluency - number of words read correctly Reading comprehension Listening comprehension	/10 /117 words /4 /5	Part 1: Operations Part 2: Word problems Part 3: Algebra Part 4: Data representation & statistics	/3 /3 /3 /3

The MTR team referred initially to the original baseline literacy and numeracy assessments that followed the ASER methodology.

Several issues were identified and led to significant adaptation of tools. These were:

- **Potential enumerator bias** - the baseline guidance introduced some potential enumerator bias which the evaluation team was reluctant to repeat. This was specific to the literacy assessment which required the student to read a passage initially and then based on their ability, (which the enumerators needed to determine without any form of rubric or guidance) they either read some words/letters OR moved to a more difficult reading passage. The enumerator needed to decide whether the student had read the passage 'sufficiently' to move to a more difficult reading passage. This is highly subjective without very detailed instruction. There would have been a high likelihood that enumerators may have judged 'sufficiently' differently from each other, and this would have reduced consistency in the way literacy assessments were marked.
- **Weak comprehension sub-tasks** - the original baseline assessments did not include a mix of factual, predictive and evaluation questions which is usual in reading assessments. Instead, they included two factual questions. To indicate whether a student has understood the passage, more questions would be required to demonstrate their understanding of the passage.
- **Data collection error** - The baseline assessment scope intended to target Grade 4, 7 and 10 students. Unfortunately, due to small class sizes in some schools, enumerator teams included Grade 3,5,6,8,9 and 11 students in the sample. The results therefore were not representative of Grade 4,7 and 10 students.

The MTR team rectified these issues by:

- **Changing the arrangement of subtasks in the literacy assessment.** Instead of beginning with a reading passage, the assessment started with simple letter and word sub-tasks, followed by a simple reading task and comprehension questions and then a listening reading task with comprehension questions. Guidance instructed enumerators to work through each sub-task irrespective of the previous sub-task being answered.
- **Verifying word lists with the national curriculum in each country to ensure they were appropriate and aligned to curriculum/performance standards.** A new random sample for words was created for all countries that reflected the year level targeted for the

assessment. In situations when the national curriculum did not provide word lists for grade 4, 7 and 10 and if the language of instruction was English, randomisation of graded Oxford wordlists was used.

- **A mix of factual, predictive and evaluative comprehension questions** were added to reading passages for the reading comprehension sub-task and the listening comprehension sub-task.
- **A new sub-task for listening comprehension** was added to all literacy assessments.
- **All assessment tasks were verified with country teams and piloted during enumerator training week.**

### **KII / FGD survey questionnaires**

The following surveys were administered: Students (KII), Teachers (KII), Parents (FGD), Education authorities (KII), Head teachers (KII) and SMC members (FGD).

Each survey aimed to gather different perspective in the following areas:

- *Inclusion with a specific focus on girls and disability*
- *The impacts of COVID-19, including:*
  - *School disruption,*
  - *Teaching and learning,*
  - *Home learning opportunities,*
  - *Challenges in returning to school*
  - *Efforts to address learning losses*
  - *Support for student and teacher wellbeing*
- *Impacts of SEAQE 2 on girls, boys and children with disabilities, learning and wellbeing*
- *Factors that have inhibited and contributed to program results*
- *Changes in child protection issues because of contextual factors, including COVID-19 and conflict dynamics*
- *Program gaps, areas for further improvement and focus in the future*

Additionally, a survey questionnaire for CSO partners and a reflection workshop for ADRA country staff were undertaken to obtain program management results and lessons learned.

The reflection workshop for ADRA country staff focused on the following areas:

1. The relevance of the SEAQE theory of change and the assumptions that underpin the program
2. The most significant change/s in the program
3. Factors that have enabled and/or inhibited progress
4. The suitability of approaches introduced to address COVID challenges to address the needs of OOSC
5. Lessons learned and areas for improvement in the remaining years of SEAQE 2.

### 3.3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The OECD DAC evaluation criteria was used to frame analysis of data from qualitative and qualitative surveys undertaken in the MTR. Gender transformative and disability inclusion considerations were integrated in all evaluation criteria, including the impacts of Covid 19 and subsequent access to distance learning and support when students return to school.



Figure 1: OECD DAC Criteria (Source: OECD EvalNet (2020) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation)

The TOR provided a comprehensive list of evaluation questions and sub-questions against the DAC criteria. The MTR team underwent a comprehensive process to develop the survey tools based on the evaluation questions put forth in TOR.

The process included 1) developing survey questions against each of the DAC evaluation questions, 2) consolidating questions according to core program learning priorities (e.g., barriers to access, remote learning opportunities, return to school strategies etc.) and the specific focus of the MTR (e.g., program challenges and gaps); and 3) allocating and adapting survey questions for each stakeholder group (see Annex: MTR Evaluation Matrix). The findings section follows the organisation of the evaluation matrix assigning topics such as COVID-19 to the sections of relevance, coherence and effectiveness.

Key indicators from SEAQE 2 results framework which were measured in this MTR are captured in Table 1. The literacy and numeracy assessments will present results against these indicators as well as literacy and numeracy skill domains such as word knowledge, reading fluency, reading comprehension, etc.

Table 3: SEAQE 2 results framework indicators measured in the MTR

Outcome	Indicator	Questions relevant to the indicator
---------	-----------	-------------------------------------



Objective: All learners, regardless of background, ability and gender, equitably access, engage in and learn in inclusive educational institutions (schools, accelerated education, alternative learning programs, and TVET centres)	Objective Indicator 2: % reduction in gender disparities in learning achievements in end-of-school exams <sup>7</sup>	Literacy and numeracy assessment scores by gender (where school exams were not available, ASER results will be used as proxy)
Outcome 3: Learners benefit from improved quality teaching and relevant learning	Outcome indicator 3.2: # and % of learners in supported educational institutions achieving the minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics (Norad indicator 2.1)	Literacy and numeracy scores by gender. Scores above 50% to be measured as minimum proficiency level.
	Outcome indicator 3.3: % and # of learners (f/m) in supported TVET institutions who completed/passed the appropriate TVET level (disability) (Norad indicator 3.2)	
Output 3.3: Educational institutions have effective and relevant teaching and learning materials	Indicator 3.3.3: # of learners in supported educational institutions using/accessing e-learning	Student assessment Q1b: What resources were you provided with to help you learn from home?

### 3.4 SAMPLE STRATEGY

The evaluation utilised a purposeful sampling approach targeting a full sample of primary schools, secondary schools and TVET institutions in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan (both SEAQE and EiE Upper Nile) and Myanmar TVET institutions and a random selection of accessible primary schools in Myanmar. The Myanmar sample needed to be carefully selected due to the significant number of exclusions caused by the military coup which was targeting ethnic states and regions at the time; the target location of many schools in the SEAQE 2 program. A full sample of the TVET and ASC schools were selected and a mirrored to baseline purposeful sample was selected for the KTWG schools.

Table 4: Final school sample for each SEAQE 2 country/program

Country	No. of primary schools	No. of secondary schools	No. of TVET centres
South Sudan	16		
Somalia	16		2

<sup>7</sup> This indicator is expected to be measured through exam results. In instances where exam results are not available or have been undertaken, the ASER assessments provide a substitute or proxy. The intention for the endline is to undertake the ASER assessments again so that a comparison can be made between the MTR and endline.

<b>Ethiopia</b>	4	2	12	12	4	4
<b>Myanmar</b>	25		5		2	
<b>South Sudan - EiE Upper Nile</b>	18		1			

### 3.5 FINAL SAMPLE

A total of 2179 individuals were surveyed in the MTR including 1193 males and 966 females. Included in this sample were 1014 students made up of 521 male students and 493 female students.

Table 5: Final sample including students, teachers, parents, SMC members, Education representatives and ADRA partners.

<b>Sample</b>	<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Myanmar</b>	<b>Somalia</b>	<b>South Sudan</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Students</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>1014</b>
Grade 4		95	106	118	
Grade 7/TVET	79	81	72	27	
Grade 10	294	142			
Males	187	143	90	101	521
Females	186	175	88	44	493
<b>Teachers</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>135</b>
Males	26	30	10	30	96
Females	10	21	6	2	39
<b>Head Teachers</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>76</b>
Males	17	13	12	14	56
Females	1	18	0	1	20
<b>Parents</b>	<b>18 (79)</b>	<b>29 (135)</b>	<b>10 (61)</b>	<b>18 (173)</b>	<b>75 FGD (448)</b>
Males	49	61	40	91	241
Females	30	74	21	82	207
<b>SMC</b>	<b>18 (83)</b>	<b>32 (145)</b>	<b>10 (61)</b>	<b>19 (171)</b>	<b>79 FGD (460)</b>
Males	71	73	32	87	263
Females	12	72	29	84	197
<b>Education representatives</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>
Males	3	3	3	4	13
Females	0	8	0	0	8
<b>ADRA partners</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>
Males		2		1	

Females		2		0	
<b>TOTALS</b>	612 (353 M, 239 F)	695 (325 M, 370 F)	331 (187 M, 144 F)	541 (328 M, 213 F)	<b>2179</b> <b>(1193 M, 966 F)</b>

### 3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ISSUES ARISING FROM THE MTR

The MTR team carefully considered the ethical implications of conducting the MTR considering the high number of children who were engaged during the data collection period. Gender sensitive considerations were considered in designing the tools, the approach to data collection and the representation of data collected. Where possible all data was disaggregated according to gender.

ADRA partners in each country recruited the enumerators for the MTR to support field data collection. Team Leaders were selected in each country and were trained in child protection. All enumerators undertook comprehensive socialisation of the child protection, gender and inclusion considerations during training and were required to sign ADRA's code of conduct and child protection policy.

Each survey included an individualised consent form. Parents were required to give consent for children who were to undertake the literacy and numeracy assessment and who were interviewed as part of the student surveys. Enumerators were also required to take individual consent from students before beginning the questions.

All literacy and numeracy assessments, KIIs and FGDs were conducted at the school. Guidance was provided on the importance of undertaking data collection in a public space, conducive for children, such as in a classroom or other learning environment. All enumerators were required to be in the view of the Team Leader.

Team Leaders received comprehensive training on ethical dimensions of data collection and learnt about appropriate age, gender and disability inclusion protocols so that all respondents felt comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions. The training included one day of testing so that any additional guidance required to mitigate issues or risks to respondents could be developed. This training was replicated in each country with the locally assigned enumerator teams. Literacy and numeracy assessments, KIIs and FGDs were terminated if a respondent demonstrated distress or repeatedly refused to answer questions. In such cases, ADRA followed up with respondents to ensure appropriate support and/or referral was provided. Respondents could leave at any point in time during the KII/FGD.

Data was collected on tablets and laptops using Kobo Toolbox and saved on an encrypted server managed by Amazon Web Services (AWS). No data of respondent identities were shared beyond the research team. Analysis was anonymized.

Ethical concerns were raised by ADRA Ethiopia during the MTR validation workshop. ADRA Ethiopia reported that students were not given prior notice of when the MTR assessment team was going to attend their school or the purpose of their visit. The SEAQE 2 target area is conflict affected and at the time of the MTR the government was undertaking an active recruitment campaign, calling on youth to join the army. This led some of the older male students to fear that the MTR assessment team were selecting youth for recruitment into the army when they were selected

for assessment. While the MTR enumerator reassured these students of the purpose of the assessment, some students suffered psychological harm.

### 3.7 FIELD SCHEDULE

ADRA partners in each country developed a detailed field schedule based on guidance provided by the MTR team. A high-level schedule for each school/TVET centre was provided which is indicative of a day's data collection requirements. Some variations to this were required to adjust to local context and conditions.

Table 6: MTR field schedule for each school/TVET centre

	Lead Enumerator x 1	Enumerators x 5/6
<b>7.30 – 8 am</b>	preparation	preparation
<b>8 – 9 am</b>	Head teacher/principal/head trainer	Student learning assessment & survey
<b>9 – 10 am</b>	Teacher/Trainer 1 (female)	Student learning assessment & survey
<b>Break</b>		
<b>10.30 – 11.30</b>	Teacher/Trainer 2 (male)	Student learning assessment & survey
<b>11.30 – 12.30</b>	Checks	Student learning assessment & survey
<b>Break</b>		
<b>1 pm – 2.30 pm</b>	FDG – SMC members (lead and 1 enumerator)	FDG – parents (2 enumerators)

Table 3: MTR school data collection schedule

The following assumptions and planning guidance informed the school schedule.

#### **Assumptions**

- 1 Team Leader (TL) plus up to 5 / 6 local enumerators X 2 or 3 teams depending on location of schools and resource, enumerator and time availability.
- 1 hour per survey including break
- 20 student assessments per day
- 4 KIIs / FGD per day
- All assessments and surveys conducted at the school
- No access restrictions to schools are imposed during the field data collection period

#### **High-level data collection schedule**

The table below outlines the key stages of the data collection process undertaken in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Somalia and South Sudan.

Table 7: Key data collection stages in each country

Week	Activities	Details
<b>Week beginning 1 Nov</b>	Master training by MTR data specialist of lead enumerators in each country	Core ToTs: Consent processes, ASER assessments, KII surveys and FGDs Practice sessions Debrief from practice sessions and final revisions to instruments
<b>Week beginning 8 Nov</b>	In-country ToT facilitated by lead enumerators and supported by MTR data specialist	Cascading of master training
<b>Week beginning 15 Nov - 20th December</b>	Field data collection: South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Myanmar	As per individual country schedules

## 4 LIMITATIONS

---

- **The ToR was broad** - on the one hand the MTR required analysis of the short-term interventions that responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and at the same time asked broader questions about the relevance and appropriateness of the SEAQE 2 project. Whilst very valid lines of enquiry, it was difficult to differentiate/isolate the results from surveys according to these two discreet areas of focus.
- **Time limitations:** The MTR team was recruited in early October and schools in South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Myanmar closed for the end of year break in early December. This meant that the MTR team had very little time to design, code and upload the numerous survey instruments ready for training and piloting in early November. This created challenges in completing all the preparations required. The MTR team would have benefited from more time to refine and test the survey instruments.
- **Travel restrictions:** COVID-19 travel restrictions meant that the MTR team could not travel to SEAQE 2 countries and hence adapted remote methods for all data collection. This meant that the ADRA country office reflection workshops, which the MTR team would typically conduct in person, in a workshop format for 1 - 2 full days, were reduced to 3 hour Zoom workshops. While this did not affect the quality of the information collected, it perhaps limited the quantity of information the ADRA country teams were able to share with the MTR team. Given the depth of knowledge and experience within the ADRA country teams, the MTR team consider this to be a limitation.
- Additionally, **isolating results for TVET students, education authorities etc.** was limited in some instances. A few more identifiers in the survey's would have helped with segmentation.
- Regarding South Sudan, **the survey instrument did not differentiate authorities for SEAQE 2 and EiE.** ADRA South Sudan reported that from the total of 18 education authorities interviewed, 4 were from SEAQE 2 target areas and 14 were from the Upper Nile. Regarding partners, whilst the data collected from KOBO stated that all three partners were assigned to the EiE project, according to ADRA South Sudan, 1 was a SEAQE 2 project partner and 2 were connected to the EiE project. The presentation of findings from authorities and partners therefore were not differentiated.
- **Student Assessment Administration:** The numeracy subtests for Grade 7 & 10 may not have been matched with the curriculum as much as we expected. In some countries there is indication that students did not fully understand the task. The ADRA country teams in South Sudan, Ethiopia and Myanmar identified several student assessment administration limitations, these are provided by country below:

### South Sudan

- Traditional gender norms in South Sudan mean that many girls are quite shy and are not used to one-on-one interviews or timed assessments. The administration of the assessment may have had a negative impact on assessment results.
- The timing of the assessment (Nov – Dec) was close to when schools close for the end of term and a time when many children from pastoralist communities move with their parents for livelihood activities in the Upper Nile target area. This affected the number of students attending school and available for assessment.

### Ethiopia

- Administration of the student assessment on tablet / phone was a new assessment format for students, who typically undertake paper based assessments. This may have had a negative impact on assessment results.

## Myanmar

- Assessment questions may not have reflected content that students had received prior exposure to or may not have corresponded to the curriculum being taught across SEAQE 2 school types (e.g., community and ACS schools). This, together with time limitations to complete the assessment, may have had a negative impact on assessment results.