Revised Programme Brief

ACADEMIC RECOVERY PROGRAMME
Phase II

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About this document

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant disruption to the education systems of the member states of the OECS, exacerbating existing stresses on the education system. This has further widened the education gaps between high-performing and low-performing students, particularly for already disadvantaged learners. Disadvantages learners include learners of low socio-economic status and those that have special education needs or a disability.

This OECS Academic Recovery Programme (OECS ARP) was designed to help students meet learning outcomes commensurate with Grades 1–3: this includes children outside these grades who have not yet attained the appropriate academic outcomes. While the focus is on student improving learning outcomes, there are also broader implications for parents, as well as organisations in the wider community. This revised programme brief is a condensed version of the accompanying ARP Phase II revised programme description and outlines:

1. An overview of the OECS ARP;
2. Strategies for accelerated learning;
3. An OECS Multi-sectoral strategy.

2. The OECS Academic Recovery Programme

The Academic Recovery Programme (ARP) of the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) was developed to mitigate the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic on the delivery of and access to education services. Academic Recovery Programmes have been used in a variety of contexts worldwide and reports highlight benefits such as:

- improvement in literacy and numeracy for the most disadvantaged students;

- overall positive improvement in learning outcomes;

- success in recovering learning loss and the integration of previously out-of-school students;

- increased retention, attendance, and completion rates.

To operationalise these aims, seven programme components were developed to thematically organise the implementation activities. These seven components are presented in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1. *An overview of the OECS ARP components.*
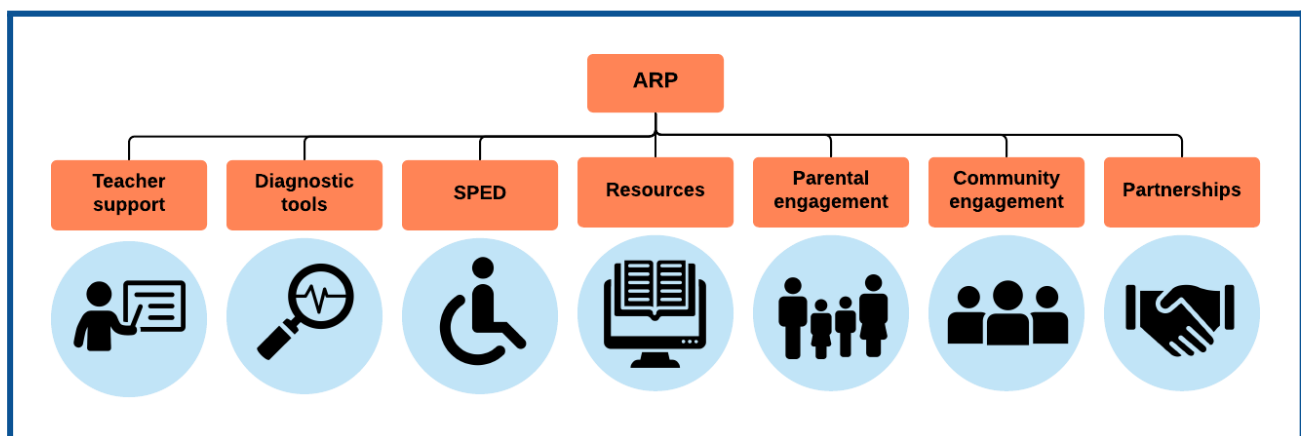
In Phase I of the OECS ARP, implementation was initiated in the four Member States that are also Global Partnership for Education (GPE) countries, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada. The accompanying implementation progress report on Phase I indicates that while the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 eruption of the La Soufrière volcano presented major challenges, Member States were still able to make some progress. Some main challenges highlighted in this report include:

- Restrictions related to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic (e.g., recruitment and training of additional support staff or facilitators. Teacher professional development sessions were held online, and this resulted in low teacher engagement).

- Lack of teacher buy-in due to the implementation of a variety of initiatives simultaneously and added stresses of online teaching.

- Lack of guidance on how to plan, design, and implement the ARP in a blended learning environment.

- Priority concerns for teachers such as instructional strategies for blended learning, virtual and remote instruction, guidelines on disaster preparedness, student well-being, and psychosocial considerations.

- Lack of relevant teaching and learning resources and facilitators for after-school programmes.

- Underfunding of programme initiatives and a lack of multi-sectoral collaboration.

3. Strategies for Accelerated Learning

Accelerated education programmes (AEPs) aim to speed up learning and / or improve instruction, allowing learners to achieve comparable levels of competence and transition into formal learning pathways. These programmes may include evidence-based approaches such as a condensed curriculum, additional instructional time and targeted instruction to meet learner needs (↑World Bank et al., 2021). Accelerated learning also seeks to cater to the needs of the whole learner, focusing on academic and psychosocial support as well as wider school, family, and community support where needed. (↑Damani, 2020). Figure X below outlines 10 principles developed by the ↑Accelerated Education Working Group, (2017) that can provide both an aspirational framework and practical plan of action for education stakeholders to develop and implement an AEP.

Figure 2. Principles of accelerated learning programme (Adapted from ↑Accelerated Education Working Group, 2017).
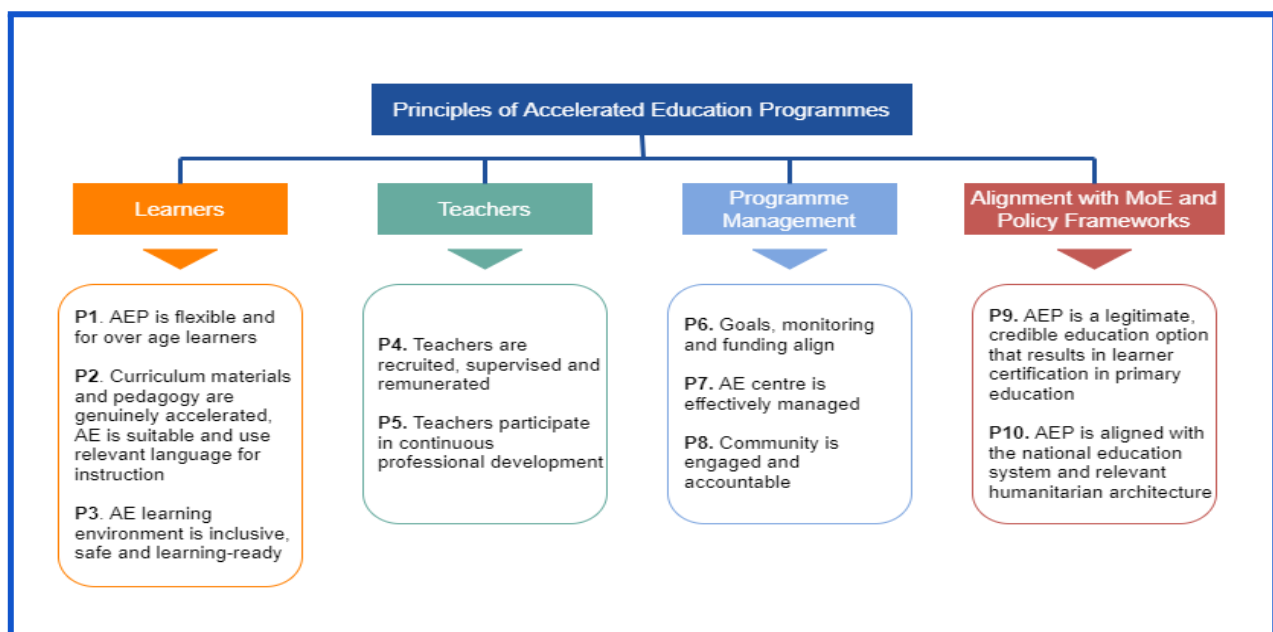
Based on these principles, and other insights from development partners, the following recommendations for an OECS Accelerated Programme are further elaborated in the accompanying revised programme document:

- **Learning should be minimal**.

- **In-class instruction and assessment should be differentiated.**

- **Peer tutors should be deployed.**

- **A microteaching format should be used.**

- **Socioemotional support should also be part of curriculum.**

- **EdTech integration where possible.**

4. Multi-sectoral collaboration

A key component of the OECS ARP Phase II is the strengthening of multi-sectoral engagement to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable students are met. While the original conception of the OECS ARP emphasises partnerships, community and parental engagement, a lack of multi-sectoral participation in the design and implementation of education initiatives has been highlighted as a weakness of such projects. The main sectors identified for an OECS Multi-sectoral strategy are outlined in Figure 2 below.

Figure 3. *Main sectors identified for integration of additional support services.*

An OECS Multi-sectoral strategy, outlined below in Figure 3, can help to guide governmental agencies as well as other partners on how to coordinate for effective collaboration. A full treatment of this strategy and supporting tools are outlined in the the [OECS ARP Phase II Revised Programme Description](#)

Figure 4. *OECS Multi-sectoral strategy*
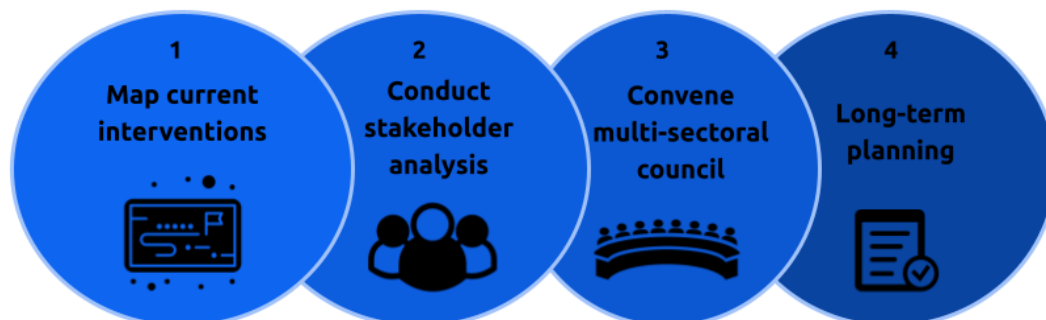
5. Bibliography

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Damani, K. (2020). Accelerated Learning and EdTech: A Rapid Evidence Review. (EdTech Hub Rapid Evidence Review) https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4556941

The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF (2021). The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery. Washington D.C., Paris, New York: The World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF. Available from https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/416991638768297704/the-state-of-the-global-education-crisis-a-path-to-recovery