Annex C: Community Support to Learning (CStL) International Literature Review

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CStL International Literature Review

Contents

Acronyms

ACE	Assisting, Caring and Empowering (ACE) Radio School programme
CFIR	Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research
CStL	Community Support to Learning
DELVe	Human Development Evaluation, Learning and Verification Services
DFID	Department for International Development
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (DFID programme)
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FLHE	Family Life and HIV Education
GAP	Girls Achieve Power programme
GPP	Good Participatory Practice programme
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NCNE	National Commission for Nomadic Education in Nigeria
PLANE	Partnership for Learning for All in Nigerian Education (DFID/FCDO programme)
RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
SBC	Social Behaviour Change
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SCIP	Strengthening Communities through Integrated Programming
SMC	School Management Committee
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1.0   Introduction

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) requested a review of the international literature addressing Community Support to Learning (CStL) as part of the CStL Scoping Study commissioned through Work Package 3: Formative Evaluation of DELVe. This was to include literature from other States in Nigeria (i.e., beyond Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano) and from other countries with similar socio-economic and cultural contexts. The intent was to identify issues that may usefully inform the implementation of the Partnership for Learning for All in Nigerian Education (PLANE) Window 3.

The literature includes programme reports and academic papers that have addressed the influences on support to learning for primary and lower secondary school children. While the focus is international – with some references to Pakistan, Bangladesh and India – most of the literature relates to Nigeria and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is due to the vast amount of work that has already been done in the region with regards to support to learning for girls and marginalised children in particular.

FCDO provided some of the literature and other literature was sourced from online sources. Key issues were identified and categorised with comparisons then made between different programmes to highlight, contextualise and explain what helps and what hinders CStL initiatives.

Six overarching themes have been identified to categorise the literature. These are: household influences that impact on a child's support to learning; the larger community's influence on support to learning; the school's (both formal and informal) environment and support; the school's engagement with the community to support learning; government policies and practices; ICT and its impact; and data reliability.

Key findings are presented in the following sections

Each section identifies: (i) what worked and why with examples; and (ii) the challenges faced by interventions.

The conclusion brings these key issues together and informs a series of key points for the Implementing Partner to consider.

Thematic summaries of successes and challenges for the programmes in all the selected programmes are presented in Appendices A and B.

2.0 Household Influences on Support to Learning

This section focuses on the influences that family life and socio-economic status have on the perceptions and value of education, the limitations of access to learning and the way home activities might be leveraged or may hamper support to learning. It encompasses aspects such as distance from schools, financial access to learning institutions, the parents' own levels of education, lack of information regarding the availability of education and learning for their children, as well as lack of food and subsequent malnutrition. Some examples of health programme implementation have been referenced to gain insights into successful household or family engagement.

2.1 What Works

Psaki et al. (2021) report that programmes where food is provided to households on condition that their children attend school or achieve some minimum school-related performance goal, have met with some success. They report that interventions addressing the inability to afford tuition, the lack of adequate food, and insufficient academic support at home, are effective. Furthermore, programmes in Botswana, Malawi, and Mozambique where girls themselves are financially incentivised to stay in school have been successful while the financial support exists. This approach does not change community behaviour however and is not sustainable unless directly addressed as part of the programme, such as the World Vision's Strengthening Communities through Integrated Programming (SCIP). This programme reported that it does reduce the risk of the girls engaging in transactional and intergenerational sex (Burke et al., 2019) and in turn keeps them in school for longer. Other interventions suggest that addressing these issues do not necessarily deal with the deep rooted cultural and societal norms that present barriers to learning.

Similarly, in a trial study in Bangladesh, alternative strategies to reduce child marriage and teenage childbearing and increase girls' education were implemented. The focus on this study was not to keep girls in schools, but rather to incentivise delayed marriages, with an anticipated positive knock-on effect of girls staying in schools (Buchmann et al., 2016). The study found that conditional incentive programmes (an in-kind transfer of cooking oil to encourage parents to postpone daughters' marriage until the legal age of consent) were highly effective in increasing age at marriage and schooling attainment (Buchmann et al., 2016, p 6). In this same programme, a girl empowerment programme was introduced, but evidence shows that this was not as successful in postponing marriage or keeping girls in school.

Amanze (2021) further reports that orientation programmes through their family life and HIV education (FLHE) for parents and guardians on family health and gender issues, does support an openness to education for girls. Parents also generally see the potential for future employment and learning languages for their children, and such programmes that inform and support the families in seeing this as a reality, do meet with more success (Oyinloye 2021). This resonates with studies that included family learning support, and parents' literacy competency programmes, which then had a positive impact on the child learning in the formal education setting (Friedlander, 2020 in Oyinloye, 2021).

Successes for parent engagement and influences on their children's learning were seen to be more successful when centred around their own religious practises and least effective when centred on academic and homework involvement (Oyinloye, 2021). The Akanksha Foundation (2018) in India, reports that by empowering parents through engagement in School Management Committees (SMC), and through activities that they relate to, addressing issues regarding girls in school and in stigmatisation of children with learning disabilities is supported (Birchall, 2019). It was also seen to help communities in keeping malnourished children in schools.

In other health related programmes such as the Girls Achieve Power (GAP) programme, the Good Participatory Practice (GPP) was successfully implemented in South Africa, noting that the direct engagement between the research team and the parents provided valuable opportunities to present the GAP programme, answer concerns, and include contextual information to ensure programme success (Kutywayo, 2018). Additionally, leaflets explaining the GAP programme and the roles of parents in the programme were distributed in both English and Xhosa. A text messaging platform for parents was also set up informing the parents on the topics their children would be exposed to in the coming week.

2.2 Challenges

Psaki et al., (2021), who have evaluated interventions in developing areas and countries such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, report that in order to encourage girl participation in education in particular, one needs to focus on the families' attitudes about domestic responsibilities for girls (Humphreys, 2015; Psaki et al., 2021). This includes providing the families with information about legal marriage ages and making them aware of alternative pathways to adulthood through careers for women which will delay early marriage and pregnancy. This is hindered in areas where there simply are no other career or work opportunities, or where the parents' own education has been limited (FHI 360, 2019). Oyinloye, (2021) and Psaki et al. (2021) report that there is limited success in programmes that incentivise girls' participation in schools in order to delay marriages, although as mentioned above there is some success when girls are directly incentivised or when the focus is on delaying marriage and not focused on staying in school.

Additionally, Oyinloye (2021), Psaki et al. (2021) and Burchall (2019) suggest that programmes to encourage children to attend school often do not take migratory and nomadic groups into consideration, or 'education is deemed incongruent with their realities' (Oyinloye, 2021, p 37). This is however being addressed by the NCNE (National Commission for Nomadic Education in Nigeria) who state that the culture, context and profession of the nomads must be recognised and respected in planning or designing their education (Olaniran, 2018).

Furthermore, the rigid spatial, temporal and organisational regimes of schools are 'often outside the daily life experiences of many within the community. This includes the seasonal demand of children supporting families during harvests' (Dunne et al., 2021, p 846). This disconnect with context was also noted in studies in Madagascar (Loomis & Akkari, 2012), where parents saw a disconnect between the benefits of schools and their culture. This sentiment is echoed in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Tanzania where parents perceived little value in education and wished that learning would rather equip their children in the skills needed for fishing and farming, food vending and related agro-fishery industries (Mukwambo, 2019; Wabike, 2012; Taniguchi & Hirakawa, 2016). On the other hand, Bano (2020), says that parents in urban areas are often

likely to send their children to the streets as vendors, rather than send them to school due to economic struggles. Humphreys et al. (2015) reiterate that the 'lack of fit between schools and social and organisational structures is restrictive for sustained access to learning and in turn exacerbates inequalities' (2015, p 139).

Child safety at home (and at school) is also a deterrent for children, especially girls and children with disabilities. The lack of safety or the parents' fear that a learning space is not safe impacts on access to schooling and also, as reported by Miley, risks children becoming reclusive (Miley et al., 2021).

A look at the implementation of vaccines and how the initiatives address households and communities highlighted some cultural issues that could also influence the engagement of households in education. These were: i) the mothers' literacy levels, ii) the need for the husband's permission before immunisation, and by implication the need for permission for children to go to schools, iii) religious beliefs about vaccines, and by implication the concerns that schools do not align with their own religious beliefs, and iv) rumours and misconception surrounding vaccines (Akinyemi, O, 2021).

Finally, as reported by the programme Addressing Education in Northeast Nigeria, which is implemented by FHI 360 in partnership with Save the Children US in Northern Nigeria, 'parents will decide whether or not to send their children to school, and which kind of school' (FHI 360, 2019, p 38), emphasising parents influence on education.

3.0 School Environment and its Influences on Support to Learning

In this section the literature highlights aspects of both formal and informal school settings that hamper access to learning for marginalised groups of children and girls in particular. Physical facilities such as water and sanitation and safety are referenced, as well as issues of gender-sensitive programmes and activities. The literature also reports on issues surrounding the schools' approaches to engaging parents and community members and how these structures and approaches foster inclusion and, in some cases, exacerbate inequalities.

3.1 What Works

One needs to look beyond formal schools only to find success stories, and this is particularly noteworthy in northern Nigeria where parents find non-formal learning centres safer, more in line with their own values and flexible enough to suit their daily and seasonal routines. Both male and female teachers in these centres reported feeling more valued and respected by parents and communities (FHI 360 report, 2019).

School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) governing bodies and SMCs, implemented in Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya respectively, have met with success when the members of these committees are diverse and represent all stakeholders in the community (Oyinloye, 2021; Humphreys et al., 2021).

However, as noted by Dunne et al. (2021) 'Even when communities are given space to communicate their concerns to the school, those that question or challenge the primacy of the school's needs are often marginalised and/or denigrated' (p 846). Oyinloye (2021) and Dunne et al. (2021) report that schools often view parents as interfering, uninterested or not knowledgeable enough, thus creating barriers for parents' engagement.

The appointment of teacher champions, be they gender champions, literacy champions, or as in this case, GAP year champions, have been favourably reported as they ensure stakeholder engagement. In the implementation of the GAP year programme in South Africa, all school staff were trained in the GPP which ensured that stakeholder engagement was standardised and systematic (Kutywayo et al., 2018). In addition, the champion is seen as the pivotal connector between the GAP year team and the school staff, parents, and students. They would also ensure that activities were implemented, monitored, and reported on. Kutywayo reports that where the GAP champions were active, girl retention in the programmes were significantly higher (2018).

School feeding programmes (here reported in Nigeria) have been met with success as they not only prevent hunger, but have a positive impact on enrolment and retention (Tull, 2019). The Akanksha foundation in India reported similar successes in engaging schools and the wider community in problem solving community issues such as malnutrition and stigmatisation (Akanksha Foundation, 2018).

3.2 Challenges

Physical spaces and facilities are one of the greatest challenges for schools in developing countries resulting in a lack of water and sanitation as well as overcrowded classrooms (Psaki et al., 2012, Oyinloye, 2021). Programs that have built classrooms and installed more boreholes and bathrooms have been successful in making schools a healthier place, but this cannot be done in isolation, or without addressing other societal issues in getting marginalised children to schools (Psaki et al., 2021).

Other limitations in developing countries as reported by Psaki et al., are the lack of after school activities and clubs and sports programmes. Inadequate health programmes or support programmes for girls or children with disabilities make attending school challenging, as does the lack of implementation of policies in encouraging these children to attend schools (Birchall, 2019; Psaki et al., 2012).

School-related gender-based violence, and the lack of safe spaces in general limit access to schools especially for girls (Humphreys et al., 2015; Miley et al., 2021; Psaki et al., 2021). Schools are particularly risky locations, particularly in conflict zones, or where there are high-stakes power dynamics between children and the teachers or leaders in the schools (Miley et al., 2021; FHI 360 report 2019). The UK Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) reported that in Northern Nigeria, female teachers are not paid regularly and feel unsafe in schools (Oyinloye, 2021).

With regards to parents' engagement in schools, as mentioned above, other than the most influential parents in the community, they often feel excluded particularly women (who are generally underrepresented in parent-teacher associations and school management committees) (Dunne et al., 2013; Oyinloye, 2021). Rural parents, those of lower income brackets, unskilled, of different cultural or religious backgrounds or as reported in South Africa, black parents, are often excluded, or the parents themselves disengage because the schools do not make them feel welcome (Tucker et al., 2008; Kimu & Steyn, 2013; Serpell, 1993). Other parents purposely withdraw as they feel that schools create religious and political divides (Akanj, 2020).

4.0   Community Influences on Support to Learning

The literature for this section highlights the communities' influences on accessibility to learning as well as cultural and socio-political behaviours and attitudes to learning. This is the area that appears to be the most challenging for all projects: facilitating behavioural change towards support to learning. It looks at the communities' efforts and support for learning spaces and the safety around those spaces, initiating and supporting health and childcare services, as well as the communities' attitudes towards inclusion for marginalised groups of children including girls and children with disabilities. It also touches on the communities' engagement in policy development and governance of learning spaces.

4.1 What Works

Programmes that have included a diverse representation in implementation and in monitoring have met with success. Such is the case with the FLHE programme in Nigeria which included engaging traditional rulers and Women Associations (Amanze, 2021). This is also true for linkages between schools and the greater community who have diverse membership in their SBMCs and Community Based Management Committees as well as school governing body representatives (Oyinloye, 2021, Humphreys et al., 2021).

Similarly, in Malaria prevention programmes in Mozambique, where communities were engaged at all stages of the programme, a higher level of success was measured. This multisectoral approach, says de Sousa (2020), empowers communities. Health professionals, health community workers, community leaders, teachers, and malaria officers are all viewed as influencers and drivers of Social Behaviour Change (SBC). Volunteers especially, play a critical role in all the SBC activities (de Sousa Pinto da Fonseca et al., 2020). The Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) reported similar findings in the Polio implementation programmes in Nigeria (Akinyemi et al., 2021). The use of community structures such as town announcers and traditional rulers to mobilise hard-to-reach communities for uptake in the vaccination Oral Polio Vaccine programmes, met with higher success rates than other areas where the community structures had not been used (Hammanyero et al., 2018).

This is particularly true for the inclusion of cultural leaders from nomadic communities, whose participation should be made a priority and not optional (Olaniran, 2018). In Mozambique, the implementation of Malaria programmes, particularly to improve community knowledge, trained non-specialist volunteers from the communities referred to as Community Dialogue facilitators. They hosted regular meetings with their communities who reported appreciation (and higher levels of attendance) of locally led discussions that led to locally owned actions (Martin et al., 2021).

This approach of including community members to take ownership or leadership was also evident in the success of the Go-Girl programme in Mozambique, which incentivised girls to stay in schools. In fact, it was the community leaders who invited the girls to participate in the programme. According to SCIP implementers, once invited, individual refusal rates of the intervention were near zero (Burke, 2019). Similarly, the successful use of the GPP tool in the GAP year programme in South Africa, indicated that after an initial stakeholder mapping exercise, a variety of formal and informal stakeholder advisory

mechanisms were established to 'facilitate meaningful dialogue among research teams and stakeholders about the research' (Kutywayo, 2018, p 5). This included formal face-to-face meetings to initiate the programme with provincial level administrators.

Programmes that included a range of additional life skills coaching were also successful. Thirty programmes were studied by Temin and Heck (2020), covering health, education and gender issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, Mexico, Nepal, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh. These successful programmes, which targeted adolescent girls 10-19 included life skills, economic and financial content, such as financial literacy. The programmes that were reported to have met with success also indicated the inclusion of female mentors that had been selected and trained from the communities (Psaki, et al, 2021; Temin and Heck, 2020). Other programmes that were successful reported having workshops for parents and community leaders on providing information on paid employment for educated girls, and sharing examples of women in successful professions in the sciences, in leadership roles (Psaki et al., 2021).

Where programmes have addressed the physical spaces for learning and have included the community in the refurbishing or restructuring of the space, communities have remained more engaged in the programmes (Psaki, 2021). This also includes engaging the communities in support structures for girls especially, to attend these learning spaces and engaging the community in chaperoning or creating safe transportation for girls to get to school and back, such as a walking bus programme. Other forms of engaging the community in safe spaces include the formation of safe space committees with adult members of the community who help troubleshoot any potential problems. This was met with success in Bangladesh (Buchmann et al., 2016). Other successful community engagement programmes in India included community cricket games to engage parents, and specifically fathers, in the sexual abuse awareness campaign (The Akanksha Foundation, 2018).

However, it was generally agreed that schools were community institutions and communities would engage with them depending on what they could individually and collectively contribute. When a diversity of stakeholders was engaged, communities felt empowered and had ownership, but the opposite was also true where there was an absence of representation; it resulted in community resistance to school spaces and programmes resulting in difficulties with school security and pupil safety (Dunne et al., 2021).

4.2 Challenges

The first of these challenges in many developing countries is that women and girls already face a range of barriers to social inclusion as well as barriers to employment and education. This is often extended to health as legal rights exclusion and exacerbated by early marriage or pregnancy. These patterns are often accepted as the normal social pattern leading to acceptance of the status quo (Birchall, 2019; Humphreys et al., 2015). These social norms have affected the implementation of programmes such as the Nigerian polio programme where immunisation levels were not as successful due to the mothers' literacy levels and the need for the husband's permission before immunisation (Akinyemi, et al., 2021). Some inequitable social norms were also reported as being reinforced during implementation, as was the case in Mozambique's HIV empowerment intervention for girls (Burke et al., 2019). While in general, community leaders, parents, teachers, and students all say they want equal access and equal opportunities in formal and non-formal schooling, the reality is that this is not happening (FHI 360, 2019, p 37).

Safety and security have a significant impact on programme rollout and implementation. Tensions in regions that are politically and religiously based create divides and perceptions that formal education (often viewed as reminiscent of colonial suppression) is used to indoctrinate or divide communities, driving the children away from home to be educated in boarding schools that may not align with their own beliefs (Thurston, 2018; Loomis & Akkari, 2012; Oyinloye, 2021). These sentiments of 'extractive schooling' are echoed in rural Zambia (Serpell, 1993).

Levels of distrust are also reported inside communities where children were reported to share that they had no safe adult that they could report violence to (Miley et al., 2021). Due to the level of mistrust in formal schools and the lack of safety for many children, communities in northern Nigeria in particular show a preference for informal Quranic schooling (FHI 360, 2019).

5.0   Government Practises and Policies Impacting on Support to Learning

The literature review in this section focuses on issues of governance and the impact of policy or the lack of policy implementation and monitoring. This includes gender and non-gender related policies as well as political will and engagement in programmes to support a change in policy.

5.1 What Works

Several programmes report the importance of partnerships with the government and the value of political will. The FLHE reports strong political commitment in supporting their programmes, which they say impacts directly on the girls' access to learning and safety, and in addressing early pregnancy, child marriages and female genital mutilation (Amanze, N. 2021). This is supported by findings by Psaki et al. (2021), de Sousa Pinto da Fonseca et al. (2020) and Olaniran (2018) who report that projects that are sustainable are those that develop strong partnerships with government in the delivery of the programmes or where government promotes new laws and policies, such as increasing the number of compulsory years of schooling or policies that mandate the construction of girl-friendly schools.

Other examples of successful government engagement include the collaboration with the Ministry of Information and National Orientation Agency, in order to carry out the mobile messaging campaigns across Nigeria during the Covid-19 lockdowns (Nigeria: Covid-19 2020). Furthermore,

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported favourably on partnerships with the Federal Ministry of Education and State governments on the delivery of alternative access to learning through radio, television and online platforms. This collaboration enabled the programme to reach over 46 million school aged children in Nigeria (UNICEF 2020). During the Nigerian Polio implementation programme, one of the factors reported to contribute to the success of the implementation, was the political support. However, it reports only 26% impact by interviewed stakeholders (Akinyemi et al., 2021).

In South Africa, Kutywayo et al. (2018) state that engagement with all stakeholders early in the programme, particularly with local administration and provincial government offices, is essential for the success of the implementation. Furthermore, it was important to ensure that outcomes of the programme aligned with the South African Curriculum Assessment policies. Other government mandates that have been followed through and have been successful in South Africa are the mandates for community inclusion through the school governing bodies (Oyinloye, 2021).

5.2 Challenges

One of the challenges in partnership with the government, particularly in politically unstable countries, is that programmes have experienced a lack of enthusiasm on the part of succeeding state administrators when there have been political party changes. This is particularly true when trying to replicate programmes in different states with different contexts (Olaniran, 2018).

As mentioned above, in the rollout of the Polio eradication efforts, the political environment was reported to have 26% impact. It was reported that political will often impeded the implementation of community engagement especially. Akinyemi reports that for the polio eradication efforts to succeed it was important to win over political factions, increase political will and understand the political and social contexts in depth, including all the political factions with their beliefs and grievances. Once this is clearly understood, it is suggested that implementers remain politically neutral to ensure that no one in the community is unrepresented due to political affiliations (2021).

This is why Humphreys et al. (2015), believe it is important to do honest reporting if you wish to bring about change. Policy makers need to be informed that to bring about change, policy must be combined with action. This is echoed by Temin and Heck (2020) who report on programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa, Mexico, Nepal, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh.

Another significant barrier to learning, in particular in Nigeria, is the fact that less than 50% of residents do not have any identification documentation at all. This makes it difficult for individuals to access social protection, education, healthcare or financial services (Birchall, 2019). This is further exacerbated by practises of treating non-inhabitants (defined as not living where their parents or grandparents were born) as illegal, also acting as a source of significant social exclusion (Birchall, 2019).

The architecture of decentralisation in Nigeria remains hierarchical and while community and individual participation is encouraged (Dunne et al., 2021), government will often not take responsibility when top-down policies fail at the local level or when there is local resistance to policy agendas (Dunne et al., 2021). An example is that there are numerous policies in place to safeguard children in schools and to ensure gender equity in basic education, but as reported by community members, these policies are often not implemented or monitored (FHI 360, 2019).

6.0 ICT and its Impact on Support to Learning

The successful use of technology was evident when education- and health-related programmes had to pivot in order to keep children and community members engaged and informed during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this is significant information, it is not reported on extensively in this literature review.

6.1 What Works

Success stories included programmes such as the Assisting, Caring and Empowering (ACE) Radio School programme, which broadcasted to nine Nigerian northern states and seven major communities during the COVID-19 lockdown. They broadcasted three times a week with episodes aligned with the Nigerian primary and secondary curricula. Episodes were also translated into Hausa in order to engage a wider audience. Their listenership increased as time went on, suggesting a high level of receptiveness to this alternative method of teaching.

It was also implemented alongside a text messaging service. Despite unrest and insurgency in the northern provinces, there appeared to be an increase in participation in this programme due to its access, affordability, flexibility and safety. ACE radio reports that they were able to give high level education (using highly qualified school teachers) to all children (James, 2021).

UNICEF also reported high success rates with their collaboration with the Ministry of Information and National Orientation Agency in supporting mobile messaging campaigns across Nigeria (UNICEF, 2020). Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook continued to promote messages through short videos, drama skits and infographics on essential practices related to COVID-19 prevention (UNICEF, 2020).

Other projects that successfully engaged with technology were the implementation of the Nigerian Polio Programme where community engagement strategies included creating media awareness through the use of social media platforms and messaging platforms (Akinyemi et al., 2020).

In South Africa the GAP year programme for girls embarked on several media platforms to facilitate ongoing communication, such as a text messaging platform where parents with a mobile telephone received a bi-weekly push message, outlining the topics their child would be exposed to during the GAP year after-school intervention (Kutywayo, 2019). The recruitment for this programme was not only conducted by peer coaches but also through a mobile platform for adolescents to get accurate health information (B-Wise) (Kutywayo, 2019).

It would be safe to speculate that no programme should be implemented in the future without a multifaceted approach, including multiple social media and technology platforms, to ensure a wider reach, quick feedback and monitoring on impact, and delivery of real-time information.

6.2 Challenges

Evidence from the education and health sectors in Nigeria shows that there is considerable potential to use ICT, particularly mobile technologies, to engage communities. However, the literature typically glosses over the problem of reaching the most marginalised communities. For this approach to be effective, beneficiaries need to have sufficient infrastructure and the technological capabilities to access such CStL interventions.

Technical marginalisation includes: (i) limited technological understanding that prevents engagement with ICT resources; (ii) economic barriers to such engagement; and (iii) poor network coverage that potentially excludes remote communities.

7.0   Data Reliability

A significant theme that emerges from the literature is that of data bias or data reliability.

This is particularly evident in programmes where there are financial incentives involved for the participants. For this reason, Burke et al. (2019) caution that firstly, it is critical that programmes take proactive steps to ensure that staff are not introducing their own biases particularly regarding inequitable gender norms, and secondly that accurate monitoring is conducted to ensure that the programme is being followed through according to the planned guidelines for the participants. This was particularly relevant in this programme that involved incentivising girls to stay in school. Similarly, Buchmann et al. (2016) report that due to the incentives for delayed marriages, parents may lie about the marriage timings in order to retain the incentives.

In programmes that involve sensitive topics, such as violence, participants may have been advised not to answer truthfully due to trust issues with the researchers. Miley et al. (2019) report how they have put in procedures to mitigate this as far as possible such as purposeful sampling and triangulating findings and looking for clear patterns in the data.

With the rollout of the Nigerian Polio programme, which was also implemented in remote areas in northern Nigeria, political influences and factors needed to be taken into account. It was imperative that all the field workers understood the complexities of the context, but had to remain politically neutral (Akinyemi et al., 2021).

Finally, issues around social desirability bias were reported by FHI 360 (2019), stating that some members of communities would want to present themselves or their communities in a favourable light. Interviewers were trained to phrase questions in such a way to show it is acceptable to answer in a way that is not socially desirable. Because of the sensitive nature of the topics such as the School Related Gender Based Violence for example, these cases may have been underreported (FHI 360, 2019).

Community support to learning is a sensitive issue as it reflects social and cultural norms and also has the potential to draw funding into communities. Care needs to be taken to ensure that: (i) these sensitive issues are carefully and appropriately addressed; and (ii) participants are reassured they will be listened to and their responses will be treated in confidence.

Engaging communities in all aspects of CStL provision – from the identification of needs through to the monitoring and evaluation of responses to those needs – will help address the problem of data reliability and should, therefore, contribute to more effective CStL provision.

8.0 Conclusion

The literature review suggests that these themes underpin the successes and challenges of interventions, namely, households, the school environment, the community, government practices, and the use of technology. They have been systematically discussed in this review and should be considered in a very specific and contextualised manner, with examples using existing programmes.

The main findings from this international literature review are summarised below:

1. The **pressures of culture and social norms have powerful effect on households and families. However, incentives are an effective strategy to address and mitigate some of these issues**. In this regard, it is important to target those incentives on activities that yield the greatest returns. For example, programmes which focused on delaying marriage resulted in girls spending more years in school. This highlights that there are indirect mechanisms which may be adopted that can produce knock-on effects of encouraging participation in education systems. **Incentives are often successful because they address many of the basic needs that hinder some households from accessing or participating in education systems.** Many programmes offer incentives in the form of food, access to health services, or financial support and show the positive effects this had on households.

2. This review identified only **limited attempts to apply real-life, day-to-day activities that children's families engage in as pathways to the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy.** There is still an overwhelming push towards the use of formal settings as an answer to how marginalised children might learn these foundational skills. Programmes should consider practical, contextually developed materials that focus on the daily skills and tasks practised by the families in order for families to see value in their child's education.

3. The **prevalence of informal school systems in Northern Nigeria highlights how a values-based education may converge with the provision of foundational skills.** This literature review shows that when communities are engaged with schools that are responsive to their needs, and provide services that are valued, they are more invested in those schools and support them.

4. **Role models and activists in the form of champions (gender, teacher, literacy or GAP champions) also have a positive impact – especially with regards to the participation of marginalised groups**. Examples include: visible female teachers; textbooks that eliminate gender stereotyping; training in preventing and reporting violence; and policies and practices that allow pregnant girls to return to school. In addition, school feeding programmes have been identified as a popular and effective approach with benefits on health and educational priorities.

   Psaki et al.'s comprehensive study covering more than 30 developing countries across the world, has summarised the best practises regarding schools approaches to supporting access to learning. Gender sensitive programming stands out as a major consideration with spaces dedicated specifically to girls. Transportation, sanitation facilities, appropriate curricular subjects and extracurricular (inclusive of science, technology, engineering and mathematics i.e., STEM) clubs, as well as healthcare and childcare services are necessary components to enable girls'

participation and success in education systems. Moreover, mentoring groups – within and outside schools – can be used to implement social asset building programs for girls while also providing remedial education in core skills.

5. An understanding of sociocultural contexts and facilitating community engagement are key to successful implementation of programmes. **A major element of these initiatives is garnering social support and behavioural change that can build support to learning**. To this end, **interventions often adopt a multisectoral approach that brings together diverse stakeholders** to participate in programmes and drive forward positive perceptions and greater understanding. Programmes that have identified and trained champions from within the communities often meet with more success and the programmes are more sustainable.

6. **By ensuring that there are clear channels of communication and frequent interactions with stakeholders, programmes were better able to secure the buy-in of communities so that they could take ownership**. This entails involving communities from the start of programmes and incorporating their priorities.

7. **Where programmes included a range of life skills, higher success rates were recorded.** Financial literary, apprenticeships, and establishing viable – and attractive – career pathways (especially for girls) are some of the strategies adopted by these initiatives. However, interventions contend with recurring social barriers (also discussed in sections 2 and 3). In addition, safety and security considerations affect the implementation of programmes. Political and religious tensions must be carefully navigated, adding another layer to implementation challenges.

8. From the available literature, it is evident that **there is not much that reports directly on the successes of government participation in programmes**. Furthermore, there is even less on what successful action looks like in the field. Most reports are written by foreign project implementers who potentially do not want to 'rock the boat' and need to dance carefully between creating divisions with those you need on your side, and reporting honestly on the challenges they may be facing on implementing the programmes. Most reports comment on the policies that need to be changed or implemented.

9. Increasingly, **programmes are leveraging on ICT to reach marginalised (and often remote) groups, as well as to scale up interventions**. Its accessibility, affordability, flexibility and safety means it addresses many of the contextual challenges that impedes the other approaches to implementation. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the potential for ICT to support alternative approaches to learning while also enabling the wider community to engage with, and support learning opportunities. **However, this potential depends on sufficient infrastructure and the technological capabilities of the beneficiaries**. ICT options may appear attractive, but they need to recognise the limitations of those most in need of support and their limited economic, socio-cultural and geographical (in terms of coverage) abilities to make use of them.

Of the findings presented above, one of the most significant conclusions from this international review of the literature on CStL is that communities need to be engaged in such initiatives. The evidence suggests that communities are not always properly and appropriately engaged, and this undermines the effectiveness of learning opportunities provided. Even when programmes interact with communities early on, they often

do not include the specific contexts and circumstances of those communities in the design of the interventions. Rather engagement occurs during the implementation of the programme. This leads one to question the project milestones and benchmarks and whose norms inform those benchmarks. This is evident in the absence of projects that engage or include daily household or vocational tasks of specific communities in the design of numeracy and literacy learning outside of a formal school environment.

Where strategies have been successful, more efforts need to be made to achieve scale. At the same time, gaps remain in CStL provision, and some groups are still underserved – these include nomadic and migratory groups. In such cases, programmes need to be flexible to their needs and context of living. This issue is also relevant in terms of the organisational regimes of schools which are sometimes incongruent to the daily lives and activities.

Finally, a prominent theme that emerged from the international literature review was the question of data reliability. The literature that has been reviewed here are cognisant of the limitations of datasets utilised and this has been an important consideration in this analysis. As discussed in section 7, where interventions employ monetary incentives as a feature of the programme, where there are perceptions of the social desirability of responses, or where initiatives deal with sensitive topics (such as violence for example), data must be analysed in light of potential biases. These valid concerns can be addressed by building trust with research participants, and engaging in all aspects of CStL life cycle

The appendices, further below, summarise the programmes informing this international literature review. They identify the key issues influencing the success – or lack of success – of CStL initiatives in and beyond Nigeria. They are presented and cross-referenced to relevant projects and their geographic location.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Successes in CStL provision

Recurring themes indicating **success** in Community Support to Learning initiatives identified in the international literature review are presented below and cross-referenced to linked projects and their geographic location.

	Theme	Linked Projects	Location	Comment
1	Household Influences	a) FLHE	a) Sub-Saharan Africa	a) Family orientation programmes
		b) Go-Girl initiatives, SCIP	b) Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique	b) Incentivising girls to stay in school
		c) GPP and GAP programmes	c) South Africa: Gauteng and Western Cape	c) Leaflets in both Xhosa and English distributed to parents explaining their role in the programme; text messaging platform for parents
		d) Akanksha Foundation	d) India	d) Empowering parents through training and engaging in SMCs
		e) Clustered Trail research	e) Bangladesh	e) Alternative incentives to not get married in order to keep girls in schools
2	School Environment Influences *(formal and informal institutions)*	a) GPP and GAP	a) South Africa: Gauteng and Western Cape	a) Teacher champions chosen from schools to be advocates and organisers
		b) Akanksha Foundation	b) India	b) School feeding programs

3	Community Influences	a) Girls Achieve Power and GPP	a) South Africa: Gauteng and Western Cape	a) Good Participatory Practice (GPP) guidelines; setting global standards for stakeholder engagement
		b) FLHE	b) Nigeria	b) Engaging traditional rulers and Women's Associations in community mobilisation campaign
		c) Collaborative malaria project	c) Mozambique	c) Empowering and training Community Dialogue Facilitators
		d) (CFIR) research, Polio Eradication Initiative	d) Nigeria	d) Engagement and empowerment of existing community structures
		e) Go-Girl initiatives, SCIP	e) Mozambique	e) Engaging and empowering community leaders to communicate project purpose and encourage enrolment
		f) Clustered Trail research	f) Bangladesh	f) Community 'Safe Spaces' established and 'Safe Space Committees' created
		g) Akanksha Foundation	g) India	g) Community cricket games as part of sexual abuse awareness campaign
4	Government Practises and Policies	a) UNICEF/RCCE Messaging Campaign	a) Nigeria	a) Collaboration with Ministry of Information and National Orientation Agency
		b) (CFIR) research, Polio Eradication Initiative	b) Nigeria	b) Political support reported as element for program success
		c) GPP and GAP programme	c) South Africa: Gauteng and Western Cape	c) Aligning programmes with South African Curriculum Assessment policies
5	Use of ICT	a) ACE Radio School programme	a) Nigeria	a) Educational radio broadcasts
		b) UNICEF/RCCE Messaging Campaign	b) Nigeria	b) Digital platforms used to share messages related to Covid-19

		c) (CFIR) research, Polio Eradication Initiative d) GPP and GAP programme	c) Nigeria d) South Africa: Gauteng and Western Cape	c) Media awareness through digital platforms d) Mobile messaging to engage with parents, B-Wise platform to engage with participants
6	Data Reliability	a) Author comment	None	None

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Appendix B: Challenges to CStL provision

Recurring themes indicating **challenges** to Community Support to Learning initiatives identified in the international literature review are presented below and cross-referenced to linked projects and their geographic location.

	Theme	Linked Projects/Research	Location	Comment
1	Household Influences	a) ESSPIN	a) Northern Nigeria	a) Extreme poverty influences perception of value of schooling and lack of funds to send children to schools
		b) Cited research papers	b) Madagascar, Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe	b) Disconnect with reality and culture
		c) Research supported by GEP 3	c) Northern Nigeria	c) Safety in schools and in household, parents keeping girls especially at home to be safe
		d) (CFIR) research, Polio Eradication Initiative	d) Nigeria	d) Cultural influence on the polio vaccine implementation
		e) NCNE	e) Nigeria	e) Disregard of nomadic lifestyle and contextual education
		f) FHI 360	f) Nigeria	f) Parental influence on school enrolment
2	School Environment Influences *(formal and informal institutions)*	a) Systematic Review	a) Countries in the Global South	a) Lack of/poor quality educational infrastructure; lack of out-of-school programmes; lack of support programmes for girls and people with disabilities,

				school-related violence, lack of safe spaces
	b) Adamawa State Universal Basic Education Board Study	b) Nigeria		b) Inadequate sanitation facilities for girls
	c) FHI 360	c) Nigeria		c) Lack of safety in high-conflict zones
	d) Parent involvement research	d) Kenya		d) Exclusion of women and parents from low-income brackets from school committees
3	Community Influences	a) Nigerian polio Programme research	a) Nigeria	a) Low literacy levels, contextual gender bias (needing permission from husband to be vaccinated)
		b) Parent participation Research	b) Madagascar	b) Community tension, politically and religiously based create divides and perceptions
		c) Impact of Violence on Children's Education Research	c) Nigeria	c) No trustworthy adults for children to receive support from
		d) HIV Empowerment Education for Girls	d) Mozambique	d) Intervention reinforced inequitable gender norms
4	Government Practises and Policies	a) NCNE	a) Nigeria	a) Caution against replicating programs in different states with different contexts
		b) Nigerian polio Programme research	b) Nigeria	b) Political will impeding implementation
		c) Social Exclusion report	c) Nigeria	c) Lack of identification prevents individuals from accessing government services
		d) FHI 360		

		e) Author note	d) Nigeria e) Not reported	d) Lack of implementation or monitoring of safeguarding policies e) Lack of research/reporting on challenges regarding government involvement in programs
5	Use of ICT	a) Author note	a) Not reported	a) Not reported
6	Data Reliability	a) Clustered Trail research b) FHI 360	a) Bangladesh b) Nigeria	a) False reporting in order to retain incentives b) Social desirability biases were reported to be presented in favourable light