Strømme Foundation's Speed School Program in West Africa

Evaluation report

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Fafo

The Speed School program

- Designed by West African education experts in partnership with Strømme Foundation

- Nine-month accelerated program that provide access to education for out-of-school children aged 8-12

- Provides opportunities for enrolment in a local school and complete their primary education

- Condensed curriculum covering the first three years of primary education

- Upon completion, children are able to enrol in grade 4 of primary school

- Children are taught to read and write in their local language during the first two months

- Continue in French with accelerated curriculum in French

- Program is implemented in three West African countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger
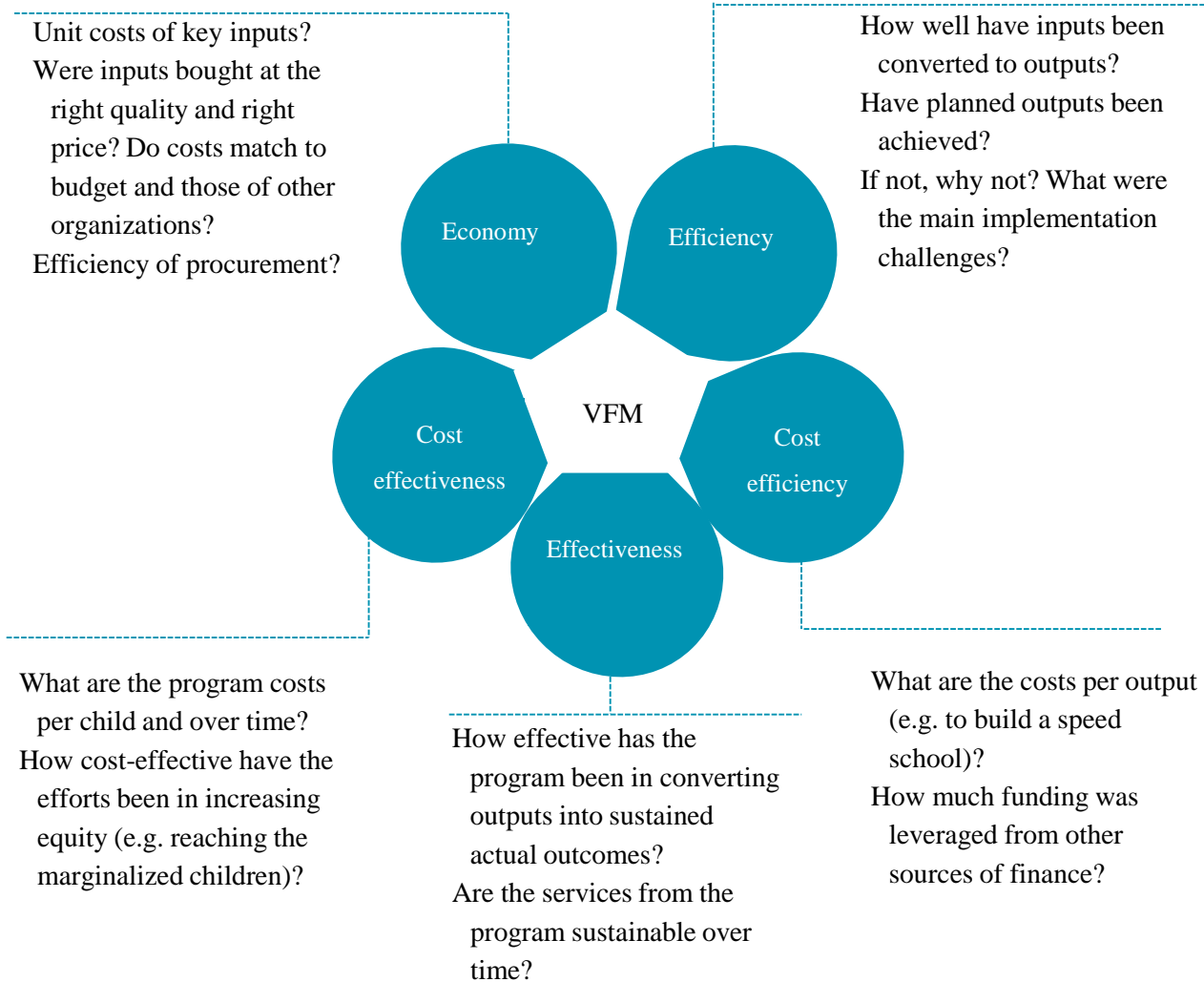
Evaluation components

- Impact study
  - Desk study
  - In-depth interviews
  - Focus group discussions
  - Sample survey of Speed School graduates and their households
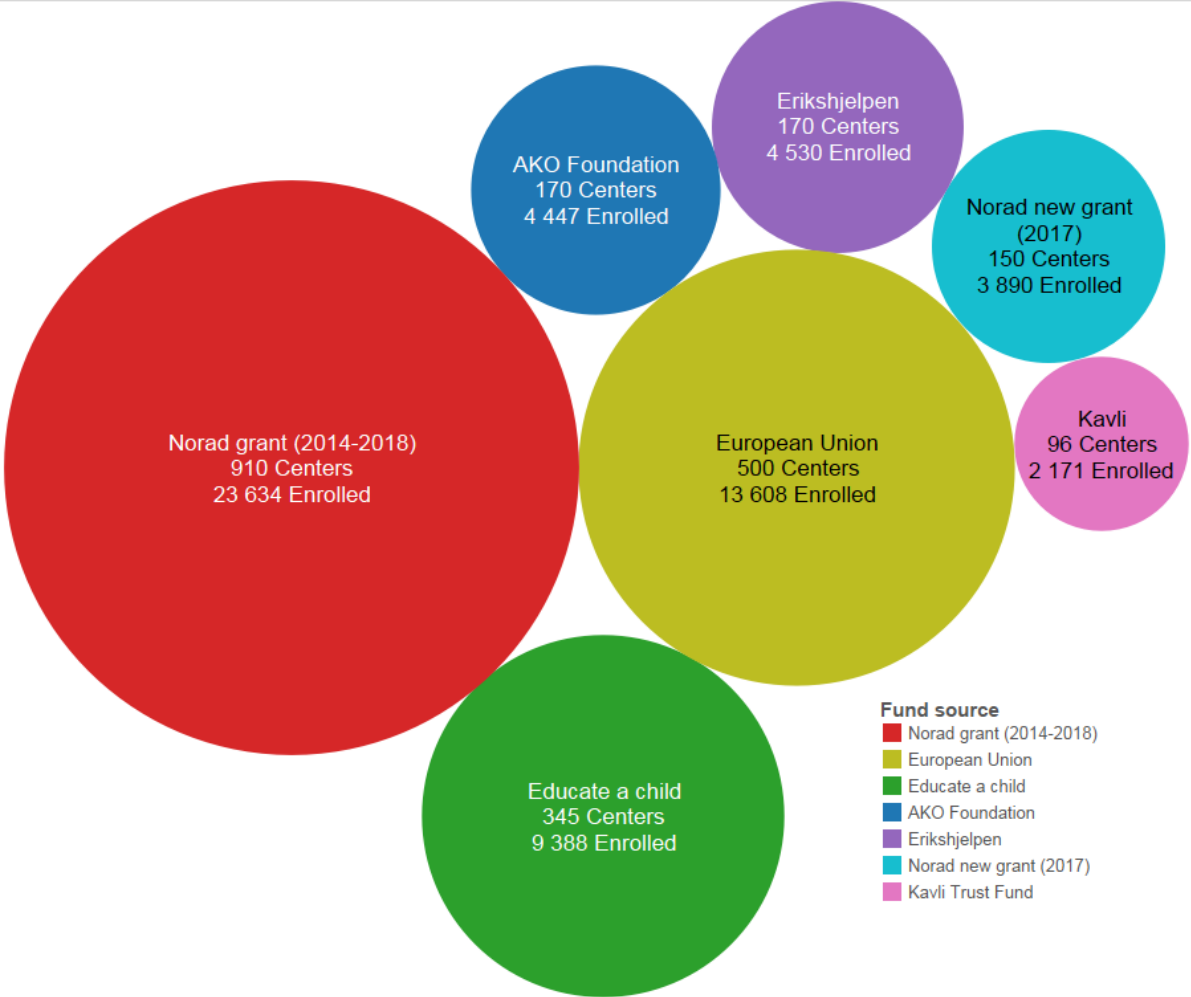- Tracer study
- Value-for-money assessments

Sample survey

Units	Status	Burkina Faso	Mali	Niger	Total
Speed School graduates	Target sample size	90	74	80	244
	Response rate (%)	66	81	78	74
	Effective sample size	58	60	62	180
Households	Target sample size	218	232	240	692
	Response rate (%)	96	89	94	93
	Effective sample size	210	207	225	642

Value-for-money

Unit costs of key inputs?
Were inputs bought at the right quality and right price? Do costs match to budget and those of other organizations?
Efficiency of procurement?

How well have inputs been converted to outputs?
Have planned outputs been achieved?
If not, why not? What were the main implementation challenges?

Economy   Efficiency

VFM

Cost effectiveness   Cost efficiency

Effectiveness

What are the program costs per child and over time?
How cost-effective have the efforts been in increasing equity (e.g. reaching the marginalized children)?

How effective has the program been in converting outputs into sustained actual outcomes?
Are the services from the program sustainable over time?

What are the costs per output (e.g. to build a speed school)?
How much funding was leveraged from other sources of finance?

Overview of results

AKO Foundation
170 Centers
4 447 Enrolled

Erikshjelpen
170 Centers
4 530 Enrolled

Norad new grant
(2017)
150 Centers
3 890 Enrolled

Norad grant (2014-2018)
910 Centers
23 634 Enrolled

European Union
500 Centers
13 608 Enrolled

Kavli
96 Centers
2 171 Enrolled

Educate a child
345 Centers
9 388 Enrolled

Fund source
- Norad grant (2014-2018)
- European Union
- Educate a child
- AKO Foundation
- Erikshjelpen
- Norad new grant (2017)
- Kavli Trust Fund

Providing access to out-of-school children

- With Norad funding during 2014-2018, the program enrolled 23,634 OOSC exceeding its target of 20,650 children

- 69 percent didn't have formal education

- 22 percent were children who dropped out

- Gender equality is an integral part of the program where 48 percent of enrolled students were female

- Limited evidence on inclusion of children with disabilities

- **Challenge**: 9 percent of enrolled students were attending school at time of enrollment to Speed Schools and didn't meet criteria at time of enrollment

Experience and performance in speed schools

- 73 percent of Speed School graduates reported that their classrooms are comfortable for learning

- 54 percent of the Speed School graduates reported that they easily understood the lessons provided, while 36 percent of them reported that they had some difficulty

- Review of previous studies show boys and girls start at different levels in French and mathematics

- Majority of SS graduates assess the teaching provided by the instructor as good (61 percent) and very good (36 percent)

- 97 percent of the students reported they learned how to read and write, and appreciated that lessons are provided in their own local language

- 92 percent of the students felt confident about themselves after joining the Speed School

Reintegration into formal primary schools

- 90 percent of enrolled students became eligible to transfer to primary schools

- Most students (92 percent) reported that they were well-received by teachers in the formal primary schools when they transferred

- The majority of the students (56 percent) found the lessons provided in the formal primary school more difficult than those at the Speed School

- *Caveat*: Though 90 percent are eligible to be transferred to primary school, the actual percent of students who actually enroll in primary school is smaller (86 percent)

- **Challenge**: Ensuring successful transfer and continuation in primary school

Longer term outcomes

− 53 percent of Speed School graduates in the 2014-15 cohort sampled for the survey across the three countries are currently attending formal primary school

− Country level differences in current enrollment of Speed School graduates
  − 33 percent in Niger
  − 51 percent in Burkina Faso
  − 71 percent in Mali

− 73 percent of the students transferred to the expected 4th grade or above while the remaining 27 percent transferred to lower than 4th grade levels

− 50 percent of the graduates are in the expected grade level (6th), 32 percent in 5th and 16 percent in 4th grade

− 5 percent increase in school enrollment among households whose children attended the Speed School program

− Challenges:
  − Lack of evidence on whether the graduates of the program complete primary school, a desired longer term impact
  − 50 percent of children in intervention communities across the three countries remain out of school

Engaging households and communities

− Mobilization of communities and households in intervention areas

− Communities contribution of materials and resources to construct Speed School class rooms

− Attitudes to children's education improved favorably in intervention communities

− School management committees (SMCs) play a crucial role particularly during the implementation of the program

− Limited evidence on the continued role of SMCs after the closure of Speed Schools

Capacity of education systems

- In general, transferred Speed School graduates do find a place in formal primary schools

- Teachers and directors of primary school perceive the program as relevant and of good quality

- Utilization of local language in Speed School curriculum is considered as unique and highly relevant to increase learning

- No evidence on negative impact of Speed School Program on formal school system, rather unitended positive consequences
  - Speed School serving as a catalyst for establishment of formal schools
  - Speed School Instructors becoming full-fledged teachers, hence contributing the pool of teachers

- Teachers and directors of primary schools have knowledge of the program's objectives

- Local education authorities instrumental in accreditation and transfer of Speed School graduates to formal primary schools

- **Challenge**: High number of out-of-school children and lack of school structure remains a significant challenge in the three countries particularly in Niger

Schools with poor infrastructure facilities

Mondeleize primary school, Niger

Value for money

- Cost of enrolling one child in a Speed School is 0.4 USD (3 NOK) per day

- The program provides high value for money assuming program level administrative costs are kept low

- Program has equitable reach to the poor and often marginalized households and their children in the three countries

Summary

- Since 2004, more than 150,000 out-of-school children have completed the program.

- During 2014-2018, the program established 2,351 Speed Schools and enrolled 61,900 out-of-school children

- With Norad support, 23,634 out-of-school children were enrolled, exceeding its expected target of enrolling 20,650 children.

- Gender equality is an integral aspect of the Speed School program and 48 percent of enrolled students were female

- 90 percent of enrolled student became eligible to transfer to formal primary schools

- Longer-term impact of the program is a 5 percent increase in school enrollment among households of speed school children

- The cost of enrolling one out-of-school child in a Speed School is 0.4 USD per day

Key recommendations

- Base selection of intervention areas using systematic examinations and spatial overview of high potential impact areas

- Ensure adherence to the set criteria for recruitment of out-of-school children using verifiable information including mechanisms of accountability

- Engage in efforts that address underlying reasons for dropping out of school through improved synergies in exiting programmatic areas

- Improved data collection, organization, and utilization at various levels of the program's results chain to increase learning

- Improve and develop systems relevant for timely update and utilization of data relevant for programming