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Adult Learning & Education – System Building Approach (ALESBA)

Toolkit for Implementation

Phase Five – Review, Adjust and Up-scale

Imprint

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Acknowledgements

When the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, it was a moment of celebration for the education sector. For the first time, the global community accepted that learning is lifelong and that enough opportunities to learn should be provided to people of all ages, sexes, social and ethnic groups. This development nurtured the hope that decision-makers and key stakeholders would broaden education policies, and place greater value on Adult Learning and Education (ALE). However, while it is obvious that several improvements have been made, ALE remains the most neglected sub-sector in many national education systems.

A key challenge many government and non-government adult education institutions face is the lack of a system to develop, fund, monitor, and support ALE at a national, regional and local level. While many countries have more or less sophisticated systems in place for primary and secondary schooling, higher education, and sometimes vocational education, the same cannot be said for ALE.

DVV International has more than 50 years' experience in supporting the establishment and improvement of ALE systems. One lesson learnt from these efforts is that isolated interventions bear a high risk of failure. The same is true for processes that are mainly based on foreign expertise and copy-paste schemes.

With this background in mind, DVV International's team in East/Horn of Africa, under the leadership of Sonja Belete, started a process of developing a holistic model for sustainably improving ALE systems. These booklets present the methods and experiences that have been developed over time. We called it the "Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach" (ALESBA), and it is based on several simple truths:

- Sustainable system building is a time-consuming, long-term process, that demands a great deal of patience and flexibility.

- Ownership is the key. Local actors should shape the process and create the system. External expertise can be useful, but should not lead the process or impose (quick) solutions.

- System building demands consensus building between the key partners. This factor is essential for success and should be established from the beginning and maintained throughout the process.

Sonja Belete and her team developed the ALESBA in a bottom-up manner, mainly based on experience from Ethiopia and Uganda. Meanwhile, the approach has been taken up by ten other countries in Africa. The process was shaped by the principles of action learning to ensure that formats and tools were developed and further updated during the journey. Learning-by-doing is a key success factor of the approach and should be used throughout the implementation of the process. ALESBA is a tool, which can guide stakeholders in the complex task of system building, at the same time the approach is open to improvement, adaptation, and modification!

We wish you great success in building and reforming ALE systems, and hope our experience can contribute to your work!

Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Abbreviations

ALE .... Adult Learning and Education

ALESBA .... Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach

CSOs .... Civil Society Organisation(s)

CLCs .... Community Learning Center(s)

DAC .... Development Assistance Committee

ESDP .... Education Sector Development Plan

FAL .... Functional Adult Literacy

GRALE .... Global Report on Adult Learning and Education

LAMP .... Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme

M&E .... Monitoring and Evaluation

MIS .... Management Information System

MGLSD .... Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (Uganda)

MoE .... Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)

NGO .... Non-Governmental Organisation

OECD .... Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PM&E .... Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

PRA .... Participatory Rural Appraisal

REFLECT .... Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques

SBA .... System Building Approach

SDGs .... Sustainable Development Goals

ToT .... Training of Trainers

ToF .... Training of Facilitators

TVET .... Technical and Vocational Education and Training

PHASE FIVE – REVIEW, ADJUST AND UP-SCALE

1. INTRODUCTION

Phase Five of the ALESBA pushes the focus and agenda towards the rationale for ALE system building or strengthening in the first place. System building needs to focus on enabling governments, civil society organisations and universities to cooperate and deliver better services for better learning outcomes for all, therefore work at scale. ALE systems are diverse and complex, and all systems are different. Changing a system may not necessarily change the results, but strengthening and building it, making it work better, is a necessary step to producing better results. Systems have functional characteristics and to function effectively require mechanisms for the building blocks to work together.

It is often the failure to connect the various building blocks, or different interests among stakeholders, that leads to the reduced functionality of the system. (DEVCO B4 Education Discussion Paper, 2014). To improve the system a review of the outcomes of the system that was piloted/tested on a smaller scale during Phase Four (Implement and Test) is a necessary first step. The review forms the major link between the end of Phase Four and the beginning of Phase Five. Therefore, the review of the piloted system employs the processes and tools from Phase Two again to conduct a holistic system assessment from both the demand and supply side, including assessing the consensus among the partners.

The review outcomes need to be analysed and adjustments will have to be made to strengthen the system and make it work better. The review is done by keeping the vision of the system in mind, i.e., what is the desired future outcome? A vision for the ALE system was formulated in
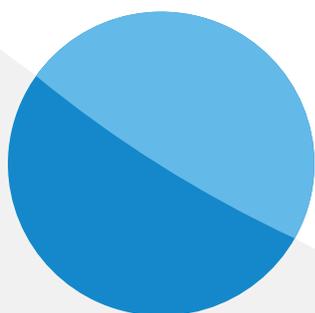
Phase One and reviewed in Phase Three to be included in the ALE system design response framework. The findings and recommendations of the review will inform the principles according to which the system will have to operate, and a set of interventions or adjustments that will start to change the existing system (tested during Phase Four) into the future system that can deliver ALE services at a much larger scale and with better quality. Changing systems is difficult because they cannot be turned off, redesigned and restarted. ALE services must be available continuously.

System approaches can assist this transition by allowing new practices to roll out while core processes are still running. (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017). Therefore, how to make the adjustments to the piloted system with a view of scaling the system up is the second part of Phase Five. The section on adjustments borrows from the processes and tools in Phase Three, which can be used to find entry points for system improvement and redesigning the ALE system for up-scaling.

Understanding the system challenges and required adjustments is not enough. We often focus too little on what can work at scale. Do we have to redesign the service delivery modality? Or is it the functioning of the system on the supply side that will hinder the operation of the system at a much larger scale? Ultimately, we need to have a national ALE system in place that can deliver services to all ALE learners and target groups. We need to go beyond fragmented one-off projects. We often produce examples of excellent projects with impact, but the design of these projects does not consider the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability factors that are required to replicate these projects on a larger scale. Therefore, the practical implications of pursuing a systematic up-scaling approach are the focus of the third part of Phase Five.

2. REFLECTION ON THE ALESBA JOURNEY: KEY MESSAGES AND RECURRING THEMES

Building an adult learning and education (ALE) system takes time and is an ever-evolving process. The ALESBA takes this into consideration and the approach is implemented across five phases that can take up to 12 years or more to complete, depending on the status of a country's ALE system when the ALESBA journey began. Phase Five is therefore the culmination of work done across the previous four phases. A brief reminder of the key messages and recurring themes in the previous five booklets and four phases serves the purpose of ensuring that Phase Five builds on the previous phases and that the basic concepts and principles of the ALESBA are adhered to.
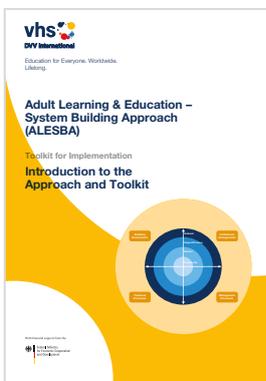
Booklet One: Introduction to the Approach and Toolkit

- ALE is part of the lifelong learning cycle and is a diverse sector. Countries have to determine the scope of ALE and therefore the application of the ALESBA based on their own needs, challenges and context.

- The overall aim and objective of the ALESBA are to ensure a sustainable ALE system is in place that can deliver different forms of ALE services to youth and adults.

- The ALESBA rests on a set of underlying principles such as embracing a rights-based approach to ALE, integration of sectors and spheres of governance, evidence-based influencing, participation, partnership, ownership, capacity building, and sustainability.

- The ALESBA addresses both the demand and supply side of ALE service delivery. The objective of improving ALE service delivery places the focus of the approach more on the supply side of the system. The main users of the approach are therefore governments (at all levels and from different sectors), civil society actors, academic institutions and multilateral organisations.

- At the heart of the ALESBA lies a conceptual framework that captures the four elements and twenty building blocks of a comprehensive ALE system. The conceptual framework informs all activities and processes across the five phases of the approach.
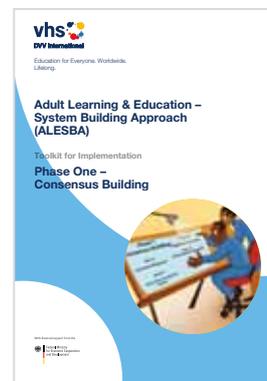
Phase One – Consensus Building

- Governments alone cannot meet the demand for services and need to cooperate with other sectors such as civil society (NGOs, CBOs, etc.,), universities and the private sector. The cross-cutting and integrated nature of ALE requires sector wide approaches.

- A consensus building process is needed among all stakeholders towards a common vision of what the ALE system should achieve.

- Consensus building is the first phase of the ALESBA, but it is also a continuous process that runs through all the ALESBA phases.

- The consensus building phase falls across three main steps:

  – The preparatory period to convince stakeholders to engage in the ALESBA and ALE system building.

  – The start-up of specific consensus building activities such as a visioning exercise, etc.

  – Embracing consensus building across all the ALESBA phases with teamwork, partnerships, etc.
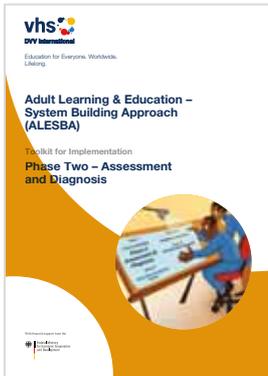
Phase Two – Assessment and Diagnosis

- Once stakeholders have reached a consensus to start ALE system building, the status of the current ALE system needs to be assessed. The assessment provides baseline data and will assist in the design of a new improved system.

- The assessment of the system is conducted from the demand and supply side based on the ALESBA conceptual framework. The supply side assessment provides both quantitative and qualitative data on the status of the system.

- Once the assessment is completed, a diagnosis has to be carried out to determine the root causes of system blockages and failures.

- Systems thinking informs the diagnostic process and helps to understand the underlying system dynamics.

- The tools of assessment and diagnosis in Phase Two can be used at any time during other ALESBA phases and form part of the M&E tools of the ALESBA.

Phase Three – Alternatives Analysis and Design

- Phase Three feeds the outcomes of Phase Two into a decision-making process to design a better and improved system. For each decision to be taken there are alternatives to be considered and weighed against each other.

- Phase Three consists of four main steps:
  - Find and prioritise the best entry points to improve the ALE system.
  - Consider the alternatives for the redesign of prioritised system building blocks.
  - Assess the impact of the redesign on the whole system.
  - Consolidate the redesign of the system into a cohesive ALE system design response framework.

- Reconsider the roles and responsibilities, partnerships, and governance structures of ALESBA stakeholders as informed by the new system design.

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System Building Approach
(ALESBA)**

Toolkit for Implementation

**Phase Four –
Implement and Test**
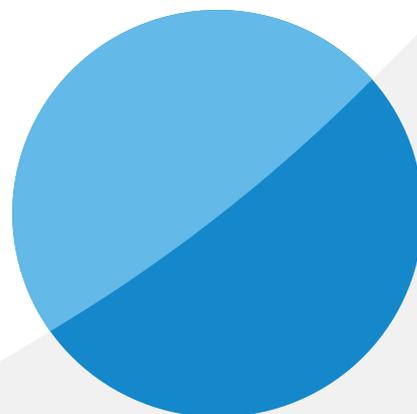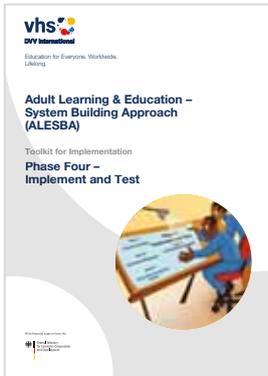
Phase Four – Implement and Test

- Phase Four provides the opportunity to implement and test the newly designed system in selected areas and with specific target groups before reviewing, adjusting and upscaling in Phase Five.

- The ALE system design response framework is translated into an operational plan to implement and test the new system.

- A national ALESBA steering committee is formed to guide the implementation and testing of the new system. Smaller partner clusters will work on different projects, most probably arranged according to the four system elements.

- Stakeholder participation during the entire Phase Four is crucial for the success of the new system.

- The institutional capacity of individual stakeholder organisations may need strengthening to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

- The implementation of the new system must be carefully monitored and evaluated. The data should be recorded in the MIS to inform Phase Five.

- Learning insights and best practices must be recorded to provide insights for upscaling potential.

- Information should be gathered from the demand side to know whether the new system addressed the needs and interests of the target group.

Recurring themes in the ALESBA

- System building: A system is understood to be an entity that consists of different elements, structures and processes which are interconnected through feedback loops. ALE system building would refer to the process of building consensus among all relevant stakeholders and assessing the status of the system, diagnosing the root causes of system blockages before designing an improved system that can be implemented and tested for up-scaling to a bigger target group and geographic area.

- Systems thinking: Systems thinking is a structured approach that emphasises examining problems more completely before developing and implementing solutions. Systems thinking is crucial in all the ALESBA phases, steps and tools.

- Service delivery: Public services can be understood as all interactions between governments and citizens whether services are provided directly or through an intermediary such as civil society, the private sector, etc. Different models of service delivery exist, but it should be kept in mind that government remains the primary duty bearer. The supply side of service delivery refers to the duty bearers or the organisations responsible for delivering public services. The demand side in public service delivery refers to the rights holders, namely the individuals and groups that have a right to and need for a service like ALE.

3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW, ADJUSTMENT AND UP-SCALING PHASE

Phase Five of the ALESBA is implemented across three major steps or sub-phases. The steps are:

Review:
A comprehensive review needs to be carried out at the end of Phase Four/beginning of Phase Five to determine whether the new/piloted system functions well and to have updated information on the current status of the system. This will inform the ALESBA stakeholders whether the new system is delivering ALE services that address the needs of the ALE target group. It will also provide information on stakeholder cooperation and partnership governance during Phase Four.

Adjust:
The review of the system will provide information on gaps, remaining challenges, best practices and learning insights and inform the kind of adjustments still needed before up-scaling can be considered. These adjustments have to be planned for and operationalised before or during the up-scaling process in Phase Five.

Up-scale:
Once the ALESBA stakeholders feel confident that the final system design can be rolled out at a larger scale in terms of target groups and geographical areas, the up-scaling process can start.

Each of the ALESBA phases produces specific outcomes on the journey of ALE system building. All these outcomes will be reviewed at the beginning of Phase Five so that adjustments can be made for up-scaling. The table below gives an overview of the three major steps/processes in Phase Five:
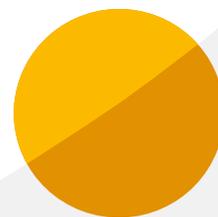
Phase	What needs to be reviewed across the completed four phases of the ALESBA?	What needs to be adjusted?	What needs to be up-scaled?
Phase One	• The relevance and coherence of the defined scope and context of the ALE system. • The relevance and coherence of the ALE vision throughout the ALESBA phases. • The ALESBA partnerships and governance structure with stakeholder roles and responsibilities. • Stakeholders' relationships and the level of consensus on the ALE system/ ALESBA process. • Management of consensus building through team-work, conflict/risk management and negotiation. • The overall progress on the ALE system building process as per the ALESBA plan from Phase One to Phase Four.	Based on the review findings across the phases the following adjustments may have to be made before up-scaling can take place. Note that the adjustments are not listed by phase, since they affect the overall system, but an attempt is made to show from which phase they emanate. • The scope and context of the ALE system. Have certain target groups or services/sectors been left out/need to be included? • Does the ALE vision need to be updated? • The ALESBA governance structure/partnerships across sectors and spheres of governance. • The level of consensus. • System building blocks that have been implemented during Phase Four but are still not functioning well within the system. • Outstanding system building blocks that need to be put in place. • The types of services the ALE system delivers and/or the modalities of ALE service delivery. • The ALE system design implemented during Phase Four may need an update and adjustment before it can be documented as a final system design and up-scaling can take place. • The underlying principles that inform the ALE system. • The introduction of stand-ards and benchmarks may have to be considered. • Individual and institutional capacity building. • The M&E system for the ALE system, including the MIS. • Mechanisms for sharing learning, best practices and incorporating these into the system on an ongoing basis.	Ultimately a new ALE system design has to be agreed upon for up-scaling. Different factors influence up-scaling. Several steps have to be followed and considerations are taken into account to facilitate the process. Based on the review of the system and adjustments needed, the following are some of the crucial aspects that will be considered during the up-scaling of the system: • Considering the vision of the ALE system as a guiding instrument for up-scaling. • Expanding the ALE target group in terms of type and numbers. • Expanding ALE services to more locations and geographical areas. • Involving more sectors and partners to deliver ALE services • The parameters of ALE system building blocks, e.g., how planning and budgeting will take place within a national system, etc.? • Considerations for capacity building and professionali-sation of organisations and individuals within the ALE system. • The M&E and MIS system and considering the introduction of digital systems, etc. Section six in this booklet elaborates the process of up-scaling the ALE system at national level in detail.
Phase Two	• The status of the ALE system from the supply side: Are building blocks in place, how well is the system functioning? • The perspectives from the ALE target group (demand side) on the types of services, quality, access, etc. • Has the root causes and system blockages been addressed? (As described in the diagnostic report).		
Phase Three	• The effectiveness of the ALE system design response framework and the new system design in addressing the challenges of the previous system? • Have the agreed-upon underlying principles of the system been adhered to, e.g., ownership, etc.?		
Phase Four	• Did the operational plan in Phase Four translate the new ALE system design into a practical and feasible project and programme implementation plan? • The effectiveness of stakeholder cooperation within the governance structure and formalised partner-ships? • Did stakeholders/ALESBA partners receive the necessary institutional and individual capacity building to implement the operational plan and new ALE system? • To what extent did the M&E system capture the progress and challenges in the implementation of the operational plan and the functioning of the new system from the demand and supply sides? • Has the MIS been accessible to all ALESBA partners and how has the information been used? • Did the ALESBA stakeholders have opportunities for reflection and incorporating learning insights and best practices during the testing and implementation of the new system in Phase Four? How? • Have any evaluation studies such as system status assessments, diagnostic or case studies been conducted during Phase Four? How have the results been used?		

Note:

The table attempts to show the contents of the activities/processes in each of the three steps/sub-phases of Phase Five, but there are no distinct milestones that will necessarily indicate where one step stops and the next begins. Apart from having the final review reports, the adjustment and up-scaling steps may flow together with possibilities of overlap between some activities in these two steps. In addition, as will be explained later in the booklet, partial up-scaling may already start during the pilot in Phase Four.

4. REVIEWING THE OUTCOMES OF PHASES ONE TO FOUR

4.1 Introduction to the review process

The term 'review' is being used to describe any kind of evaluation or study to be undertaken either as an internal exercise by the ALESBA partners themselves or by external evaluators or a combination of both. In the context of the ALESBA with a focus on the ownership of processes and decisions, it is recommended that a combination of both internal and external evaluators is used. The definition of 'review' as captured in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Jonathan Crowther, 1999) describes the intent of review in Phase Five well, namely "to examine or consider something again, with the possibility of changing it if this is thought desirable or necessary". This is relevant considering that a review is carried out on the ALE system with the intent of undertaking adjustments in preparation for up-scaling. Therefore, the terms 'review' and 'evaluation' will be used interchangeably in Phase Five.

The review at the end of Phase Four/beginning of Phase Five takes the form of an evaluation in that it is an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, impact and potential sustainability of the tested/piloted ALE system (Phase Four). It is interested in the achievement of the stated objectives but also the possibility of achieving the vision of the ALE system. Keep in mind that the newly designed and piloted ALE system came about through all the processes involved in Phases One, Two and Three. The piloted system in Phase Four now becomes the main focus of the review.

The ALESBA conceptual framework with the four system elements and twenty building blocks as well as the principles, concepts and context that inform the approach remains the framework of reference for the review process.

Different evaluation activities or events have been identified in the booklet on Phase Four of the ALESBA as described below (see section 3.4 in the booklet on Phase Four 'Implement and Test').

- Ongoing evaluations as periodic reviews by organisations and partners during implementation to gather information more informally, e.g., during partners' reflection meetings on the implementation of the piloted system, using information from the MIS and reports from quality study circles, etc.

- Baseline studies such as the ALE system assessment that was carried out through a peer review with qualitative and quantitative findings and the demand assessment on the ALE target group's interests and needs during Phase Two of the ALESBA.

- A midterm review is usually carried out mid-way through a project/programme and focuses on performance and whether or not the project/programme is on track to meet its objectives. ALESBA partners may have carried out a mid-term review during the Phase Four implementation phase, especially if the testing phase of the newly designed pilot system may have taken longer than three years.

- A terminal/end evaluation is an internal or external assessment of whether the project/programme reached its objectives and the immediate impact that can be observed among the target group.

- An ex or post evaluation is usually carried out sometime after the programme has concluded and focuses on the lasting impact on the beneficiaries' lives and environment, etc.

The review at the end of Phase Four/beginning Phase Five can best be described as a hybrid between a midterm review and a terminal/end evaluation while also incorporating elements of other types of evaluation. The reasons are:

- The ALE system building process using the ALESBA is not concluded yet and the performance of the piloted system from Phase Four is still under review for adjustments before up-scaling. In this context, the review borrows from the design principles and tools of a mid-term evaluation/review.

- The pilot project has been implemented long enough to draw certain conclusions on whether it reached its objectives, the possibility of achieving the ALE vision and some immediate impact among the target group. Depending on the status of the system in different countries and the new system design to be piloted, the pilot process can take three to six years. In this case, the review borrows research questions and methods from terminal/end evaluation designs.

- The baseline data collected on the demand and supply side during Phase Two have to be used for comparison purposes, e.g., did the system scores change, do the narrative descriptions of the system building blocks indicate that the system functions and delivers services?

- As with any evaluation the review has to take on board the information from any other reviews and studies undertaken in the form of ongoing evaluations, case and diagnostic studies that bridge the fields of Monitoring and Evaluation, as well as the information in the MIS.

Although the piloted system in Phase Four has been implemented by ALESBA partners in the form of clusters of projects organised around the four system elements and tied together under the umbrella of an ALESBA programme management framework (See Phase Four, section 2.2), the activities within the projects and the programme ultimately contribute to a comprehensive pilot of the ALE system as documented in the ALE system design response framework. Therefore, the review should not be approached as a typical project/programme evaluation but should focus on the extent to which there is sustainable ALE service delivery within the ALE system. Therefore, the review team should borrow tools from the fields of public administration and local governance to have a service delivery and system orientation.

The activities carried out during Phases One to Four produced substantial outputs, outcomes and information on the ALE system and how it functions. Consider that this information has been gathered over 12 years or more, and involves different partners, sectors and spheres of governance. Furthermore, it involves a system implemented with smaller projects within a wider programme framework. Reviewing the status and effectiveness of the system at the end of Phase Four/beginning of Phase Five, therefore, is no easy feat. It can easily take two to three months, if not more, to complete since it will focus on different aspects of the system, as will be indicated in the next section.

The entire review process cannot be unpacked within the scope of this booklet, but an attempt is made to provide a structured guideline with suggestions of tools and instruments, tips and hints that can assist ALESBA partners in different countries to implement the process. A good starting point is to ask the basic questions of 'why, when, where, what, who, and how'. The next section aims to provide users of the ALESBA with guidelines to design the review process.
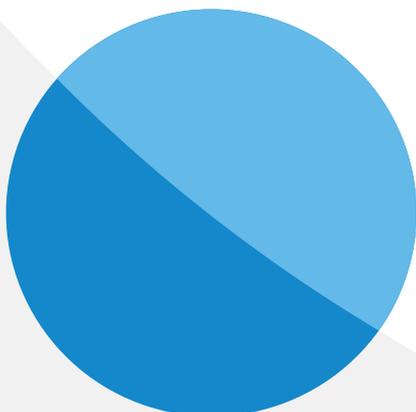
4.2 Designing the review process

The following topics will be covered to address the design of the review process:

• The steps in designing and implementing the review.

• Answering the key questions about the review such as what the review should address, who will do it, how, when etc.?

• Unpacking how to do the review from the demand and supply side of service delivery and reviewing the ALESBA partnership and process.

4.2.1 The steps in designing and implementing the review

The review will consist of the following steps/phases (EuropeAid Co-operation Office Joint Evaluation Unit, 2006):

• The preparatory phase during which the ALESBA partners will write the terms of reference, recruit an external evaluation team and/or select an internal review/ evaluation team. A detailed review methodology and questions will also be developed during this phase.

• The desk phase during which the evaluation team (internal/external) will consult all the documents of the ALESBA process produced since Phase One and especially during Phase Four. This will include documents such as:

– Partnership agreements and memorandums of understanding.

– The ALESBA implementation plan compiled during Phase One, that indicates how the phases will be implemented and different milestones over time.

– Reports from workshops and meetings starting from Phase One to Four.

– The demand assessment conducted during Phase Two as baseline data.

– The supply side assessment conducted with a peer review during Phase Two (both the quantitative and qualitative information on the status of the system) as baseline data.

– The report of the diagnostic workshop during Phase Two indicating the root causes and challenges the new system should address.

– The ALE system design response framework from Phase Three, including the vision statement and objectives of the newly designed ALE system, governance structure, etc.

– The operational plan from Phase Four including the individual project plans of the partner clusters working on different system elements and the ALESBA programme management framework.

– The information from the pilot's M&E system, partner reports, minutes of meetings, reports from quality study circles, and any reviews or evaluations carried out during the pilot phase, etc.

• The field phase during which the review team(s) will interview the ALE target group, implementing partners, key stakeholders and ensure all the primary data is collected to document, analyse and answer the objective of the review.

• The synthesis and analysis phase during which the review team analyse the information (primary and secondary data) and compile a draft report which includes the findings and conclusions to the questions asked as well as the overall assessment. This will also include recommendations that will assist the ALESBA stakeholders during the adjustment step of Phase Five. Once the ALESBA partners read the report and give feedback to the review team, the necessary corrections/ adjustments can be made and the report will be finalised. Note that the review may be carried out in different parts or sections due to the scope of the ALE system, e.g., a review of the demand and supply sides each as well as a review on the partnerships. This implies that once each of the review reports has been finalised as described above, a core team of evaluators (internal/ external) still have to compile a consolidated report on the ALE system. Section 4.3 provides a framework to assist the team with this task.

• Dissemination and follow-up phase during which the different reports with executive summaries will be presented to all ALESBA partners, specifically senior managers, during a workshop or a series of events for further analysis and decision-making in the adjustment step of Phase Five. Section five in this booklet describes how the review/evaluation results will be used for adjusting the ALE system in preparation for up-scaling.

4.2.2 Answering the key questions about the review

Answering the key questions about the review will provide ALESBA partners with information that can be used to write the terms of reference for the review process and to start the review.

Why is the review necessary?

The review is needed to determine whether the piloted system functions well enough to be up-scaled or whether further adjustments are needed. Does the system reach its objectives and the possibility to achieve the ALE vision? This is the main objective of the review/evaluation.

When should the review be carried out?

The review should be planned and carried out at the end of Phase Four and it forms the first step or sub-phase of Phase Five of the ALESBA.

Where should the review be carried out?

The piloted system in Phase Four was designed to address the needs of specific ALE target groups that are representative of the national target group as well as different geographical locations that provide testing opportunities to assess the viability of implementing the system at national level. Therefore, the review should focus on the piloted sites and target groups as per the system design and operational plan for Phase Four. It should also be carried out across all spheres of governance, from the national to the local levels in relation to the governance system of a country. The evaluators may decide to include control groups where the system pilot has not been implemented to have comparative data on how well the system functions and delivers services.

Who should carry out the review?

Ideally, the review should be done with a combination of both internal and external evaluation teams where certain parts are done by the ALESBA partners and others by consultants. It is important that the ALESBA partners take ownership of the review process by drawing up the terms of reference, hiring consultants and compiling a representative internal team from all stakeholders/partners and overseeing the process with the involvement of an ALESBA reference group, e.g., the national ALESBA steering committee. Ultimately the results of the review should be trusted and used by the ALESBA partners. The ALESBA steering committee comprised of all ALESBA partners should play a driving role.

The scope of the review is substantial and includes the demand and supply side of the system as well as the governance structures and partnership relations. Therefore, it may require multiple review teams to take responsibility for different parts of the review. These teams should work within a comprehensive framework to ensure the synthesis and analysis of the findings and recommendations will address the ALE system as a whole. It will require well experienced and knowledgeable team leaders. The next section elaborates what should be reviewed and gives an indication of the review team(s) that should be recruited/selected to undertake the review.

What should be reviewed?

The table in section three indicates what should be reviewed across the ALESBA phases. The list of outcomes can be arranged in similar groupings which will be dealt with in more detail in the remaining sub-sections of the review process. Ideally, the ALESBA partners should include and mainstream the OECD evaluation criteria (see the reminder of the criteria on page 20) in the terms of reference for the different review categories on the next page.
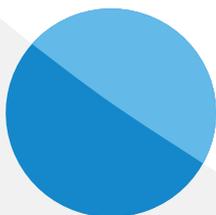
A summary of the outcomes to be reviewed are:

### The demand and supply side of the piloted ALE system

- The overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the newly designed/piloted ALE system to address the challenges of the previous system. Has the root causes and system blockages been addressed? To what extent?

- The status of the ALE system from the supply side: are building blocks in place, how well is the system functioning? What are the perspectives for the sustainability and Institutionalisation of the new system?

- The perspectives from the ALE target group (demand side) on the types of services, quality, access, etc. What is the immediate visible impact of the piloted system on the target group's lives?

- Have the agreed-upon underlying principles of the system been adhered to, e.g., ownership, etc.?

- Did the operational plan in Phase Four translate the new ALE system design into practical and feasible project and programme implementation plans?

- To what extent did the M&E system capture the progress and challenges in the implementation of the operational plan and the functioning of the new system from the demand and supply sides?

- Has the MIS been accessible to all ALESBA partners and how has the information been used?

- Have any evaluation studies such as system status assessments, diagnostic or case studies been conducted during Phase Four? How have the results been used?

- What changes and adjustments are needed?

The stakeholders and partnerships

- What stakeholders' relationships exist and what is the level of consensus on the ALE system/ALESBA process?

- Which ALESBA partnerships have been formed and what is the level of institutionalisation?

- Did stakeholders/ALESBA partners receive the necessary institutional and individual capacity building to implement the operational plan and new ALE system?

The ALESBA process

- Did the ALESBA stakeholders have opportunities for reflection and incorporating learning insights and best practices during the testing and implementation of the new system in Phase Four?

- What is the overall progress on the ALE system building process as per the ALESBA plan from Phase One to Phase Four? Have the milestones been achieved on time? What are the successes and challenges?
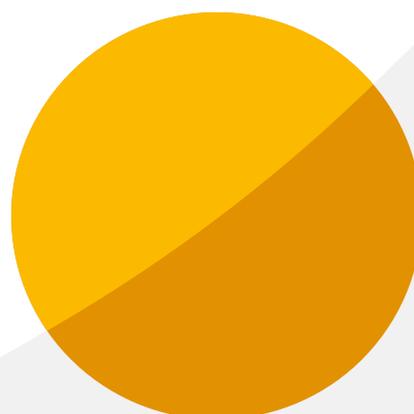
How should the review be conducted?

The scope of the review is immense, not only in terms of the contents of what should be reviewed but also the number of partners involved, the ALE target group and the geographical locations that may be involved, depending on the pilot's design. In compiling terms of reference for the review, decisions have to be made regarding:

- The main objectives of the review.
- The scope and sampling frame without comprising data collection on the core topics and themes of the ALE system.
- How to divide the review into different sections (e.g., demand and supply side and the partnerships), while still ensuring coherence and synergy in the final consolidated report.
- The type of review team required (e.g., internal/external or a combination).
- Preferences regarding the methodology, e.g., a peer review, primary and secondary data, giving priority to participatory approaches, etc.
- The research questions.
- The timeframe for the review.

The review team(s) should conform to research principles such as triangulation, iteration and validity while being critically self-aware and working within the limitations that may exist with teamwork. The ALESBA Phases One to Four booklets provide examples of different tools and techniques that could be employed to conduct the review. Section 4.2.3 will elaborate on and refer to these tools while providing more detail about reviewing the system from the demand and supply side, including the review of the ALESBA partnership and governance structures.

A reminder of the six OECD evaluation criteria (OECD DAC, 2019):

Relevance:

To what extent does the designed ALE system respond to the target group's (demand side) and ALESBA partners' (supply side) interests and needs and continue to do so if the circumstances change? This implies that the design and pilot implementation of the new ALE system is sensitive to the economic, environmental, social, political and capacity conditions in which it took place. It also examines the extent to which the pilot system's objectives and design considered the policies and priorities in the country. Therefore, relevance can be assessed in the context of the ALESBA elements and building blocks and aligning the demand and supply side of service delivery. It requires analysing the changes in the context to assess the extent to which the system can or has been adapted to remain relevant. The continuous relevance of the defined scope and context of the ALE system as agreed upon by the ALESBA partners should also be explored. The assessment from the demand side will confirm this or indicate the changes needed.

Coherence:

How well does the intervention/system design and pilot fit into the overall country context? Coherence refers to the compatibility of the ALE system with other interventions in the country, sector or institutions. It refers to both internal and external coherence. Internal coherence

addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution. Be reminded that the ALESBA partners worked in clusters along the lines of the ALESBA system elements and implemented different projects to pilot and test the new system design. The booklet on Phase Four emphasised that the pilot has to be embedded within the existing system as much as possible for future sustainability. The coherence criteria will investigate this. External coherence considers the consistency with other actors' interventions in the same context and will include harmonisation and coordination.

Effectiveness

The extent to which the piloted system achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives, including any differential results across groups. The ALE system design response framework included the vision and the objectives for the system to be piloted. Although it is too early to assess whether the system can achieve the vision, it should at least explore whether the design contributed to these higher impact level objectives.

Efficiency

Efficiency refers to how well resources are being used. Does the system deliver or is likely to deliver results in an economic and timely way? This may include assessing the operational efficiency, in other words how well the implementation of the pilot system was managed among the ALESBA partners. Efficiency is especially important for the building blocks under the system elements of management processes and institutional arrangements and how these elements and building blocks produce results under technical processes where services reach the target group. Information on the unit costs to deliver ALE services and how these can be delivered most efficiently will assist in planning and budgeting processes during the up-scaling process.

Impact

This refers to the extent to which the system and services delivered have generated or are expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. In other words, 'what difference do the improvements in the system make?' Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the improvements. For example, did the ALE services delivered and taken up by the target group bring a change in their educational path or livelihoods opportunities? Impact explores the holistic and enduring changes in systems and norms and the potential effects on people's well-being. Although the review may not be able to assess the impact fully yet, it should attempt to explore the immediate impact for the system and services delivered in order to know whether the system design is on the right track or need adjustment.

Sustainability

Sustainability explores the extent to which the benefits of the improved system will continue or are likely to do so. It includes an examination of the financial, economic, social, environmental and institutional capacities needed to sustain the benefits over time. In the context of the ALESBA, the sustainability of all the system building blocks and how they interact with each other within the system to deliver continuous quality services to the target group need to be explored. The institutionalisation of the changes will contribute towards sustainability and is a key research question to determine whether the system is ready for up-scaling.

4.2.3 Reviewing the demand side of ALE service delivery

The new ALE system design will be based on the agreed-upon scope and context of the ALE system as determined by the ALESBA partners and documented in the ALE system design response framework in Phase Three. The piloting of a new system in Phase Four therefore will focus on services and target groups within this scope and context only. It may include integrated services comprised of adult literacy, non-formal skills training, business skills training, financial literacy, etc. The review at the end of Phase Four will mainly focus on the pilot system but should keep an open mind that the future scope and context of the ALE system in the country may be broader and the design of the review should include some questions on target groups and services that were not included in the pilot. This will help to confirm whether or not the scope and context of the ALE system are still relevant.

What is the review on the demand side interested in?
The review on the demand side of ALE service delivery is interested in the following:

- The extent to which services have reached the identified target groups with the necessary quality, access, regularity, and availability of required inputs, etc.
- The extent to which the services were used by the target group.
- The extent to which these services have made changes in the target group's lives.
- Other types of services the target group may be interested in.
- Other target groups that the piloted system did not address.

The review team is responsible for developing detailed research questions and questionnaires to address these topics.

What are the sources of information to answer the research questions?

Secondary data

The ALESBA partners would have conducted a demand assessment during Phase Two (if they did not have the information readily available). The demand assessment explored the ALE target group's perceptions of the existing ALE services as well as what other services they may be interested in. It should also have considered potential new users of ALE services that may not have been included in existing programmes and projects of the stakeholders and what their interests/needs may be. The profile of the current and potential users of ALE services would have been documented for both urban and rural contexts. This demand assessment report serves as a baseline study and is a key source of information for the review.

During the piloting of the new system, the ALESBA partners may have used tools such as scorecards to explore the target group's perception of the services. The scorecards provide a further source of information to answer the questions of the demand side review and also can be analysed to determine the relevance of the services provided.

The M&E system that was used during the piloting phase will produce data and information on the extent to which the target group use the services provided, e.g.:

- Attendance levels of literacy, skills training and other forms of training offered.
- Graduation and drop-out rates.
- The use of these skills in participants daily lives.
- Whether the target group have managed to improve their livelihoods, and continue with further education opportunities, etc.

Reports from facilitators and technical experts would have been stored in the pilot's MIS and should be made available to the review team. Any type of review, evaluations, case studies, or diagnostic studies conducted during Phase Four should also be made available.

Primary data

Available secondary data will provide substantial information on the target group and users of the ALE services, but the review team should also conduct primary data collection to obtain updated data on the target group. The review design can take a similar format to the demand assessment conducted during Phase Two, combined with the scorecard techniques and other participatory tools that will facilitate communication with the target group, such as focus group discussions and individual interviews.

How can the review be conducted?

The review team can conduct a thorough desk study using the substantial secondary data available, as well as primary data collection. The scope and sampling for the primary data collection will be dependent on the availability of funds and time. Collecting updated primary data is crucial to determine the kinds of adjustments to the services that the up-scaled system will deliver. The relevance of services to the target group's needs will be the main driver for determining what the up-scaled system will look like. If time and funds are limited the ALESBA partners can conduct peer reviews (internal evaluation) using participatory rural appraisal techniques, combined with focus group discussions. This provides the opportunity to collect substantial data in a short timeframe which can be triangulated with secondary data and share the findings among the ALESBA partners for triangulation and validation. Tools covered in the previous phases can be used again, such as scorecards (Phase Four, section four) and the ranking of ALE services (Phase Three, section 4.1).

4.2.4 Reviewing the supply side of ALE service delivery

Reviewing the supply side of the ALE system and service delivery implies reviewing all the system elements and building blocks in the ALESBA conceptual framework and how these functioned as a system during the pilot phase. The outcomes of the system pilot in Phase Four will be the main focus of the review.

What is the review on the supply side interested in?
The review on the supply side is interested in:

- An updated narrative description on the status of the system:
  - Are all the system building blocks in place?
  - To what extent are the blocks functional?
  - To what extent do the building blocks function together as a cohesive system?
- Updated scores of all the system building blocks, elements and the system as a whole.
- Whether the system blockages and challenges identified during part two of Phase Two (diagnosis) have been sufficiently addressed?
- Comparison between the updated status and the baseline study assessment.
- Whether the ALE system design response framework has been translated into a practical operational plan in Phase Four?
- Whether the objectives in the project plans and programme management framework have been reached during the pilot and to what extent?
- What risks, lessons learned, and best practices were identified during the pilot phase?

What are the sources of information to answer the research questions?

Secondary data
The secondary data sources to answer research questions and for further analysis are:

- The ALE system assessment that was conducted with a peer review during Phase Two, the narrative descriptions on the status of each building block and system element, as well as the scores of the system.
- The report of the diagnostic workshop/study that identified the root causes of system blockages.
- The ALE system design response framework from Phase Three that outlined the design of the new improved system for piloting.
- The operational plans for piloting in Phase Four in the form of projects plans and the programme management framework.
- Reports and information produced by the pilot's M&E system and stored in the MIS. This would include reports from partner organisations responsible for implementing different pilots during Phase Four, as well as minutes of workshops and meetings held by the ALESBA partners.
- Reports on evaluations or any form of review, case studies, etc., that may have been conducted during the pilot phase.

Primary data

It is suggested that the ALESBA partners invest in a comprehensive system assessment, in the same manner it was completed during Phase Two. The partners can once again use a peer review but can also bring some external consultants on board to have an outside perspective. The peer review will continue to build capacity among the partners and validate the findings on the current status of the system. Bear in mind that since Phase Two, many individuals working in ALESBA partner organisations may have changed their positions and/or organisations and it is useful to build capacity and consensus once again.

How can the review be conducted?

The methodology and tools to conduct a system assessment from the supply side is well elaborated in the ALESBA Phase Two booklet and can be used once again. The same applies to conducting the diagnostic workshop of part two (Phase Two) to determine the root causes for remaining system blockages and challenges. Combined with an analysis of the secondary data and selected individual interviews and focused group discussions, the system assessment will provide sufficient data and information for the review.

4.2.5 Reviewing the ALE partnership

Phase One of the ALESBA emphasises the importance of partnerships and consensus among partners for successful ALE system building. It reiterates that consensus building is not a once-off event but should be a continuous process through all the phases of the ALESBA and ALE system building. The successful piloting and testing of the newly designed/improved system in Phase Four are dependent on how well the ALESBA partners worked together in different partnerships arranged according to the requirements of the ALE governance structures for service delivery. The need for successful partnerships will continue and become even more important in Phase Five when the system is up-scaled at national level. Therefore, the review should also concern itself with questions about the partnerships formed, consensus and cooperation among partners.

What is the review on partnerships structures interested in?

- The roles, responsibilities and mandates assigned to different stakeholders in the ALESBA partnerships. These will be described in the ALE system design response framework.

- The partnerships formed and the level of formality of these partnerships, e.g., with memorandums of understanding, sharing of resources, etc.

- The way partnerships have been institutionalised within the governance structures of the ALE system during the pilot phase.

- The way the partners institutionalised the ALE system within their own organisations.

- The level of consensus among the partners on the status of and challenges within the system at the time of assessment and during Phases Three and Four.

- The horizontal (across sectors) and vertical (across spheres of governance) integration brought about by working in partnerships.

- The relationships between different types of stakeholders, e.g., government, civil society and universities.

- The mechanisms and processes partners used to manage conflict, teamwork and negotiation.

- The mechanisms used to keep partners accountable.

- The institutional capacity development that ALESBA partners received and how it was used to strengthen the partnerships and system building.

- The future potential of the partnerships and governance structures in Phase Five. Keep in mind that the partnership is envisaged to continue beyond the pilot phase.

What are the sources of information to answer the research questions?

Secondary data

- The ALE system design response framework will outline the roles, responsibilities and mandates assigned to the partners as well as the governance structure that will be used during the pilot phase.

- The programme management framework and project plans that form part of the operational plan to implement the new system in Phase Four. These plans will show the kind of activities and tasks individual stakeholders and partner clusters were responsible for.

- Minutes of planning and coordination meetings between different partner structures, e.g., the partner clusters responsible for the four system elements, coordination meetings between community facilitators, technical experts, cross-sectoral meetings, etc.

- Reports of workshops and training events that were conducted jointly by partners.

- Reports of joint M&E activities conducted by partners.

- All information in the MIS that was captured through the M&E system during the pilot phase.

- Memorandums of understanding and other forms of signed partnership agreements.

Primary data

Primary data can be collected by facilitating a combination of individual interviews and focus group discussions with individual organisations and partner clusters, including the national ALESBA steering committee. The next section refers to several tools on partnership and collaboration that were already captured in the previous ALESBA booklets and can once again be used in different forms to answer the research questions on partnerships and consensus building during primary data collection.

How can the review be conducted?

Apart from a desk review of the secondary data, primary data can be collected using tools and techniques listed below:

- Conduct a stakeholder analysis and compare the information with the stakeholder analysis completed during Phase One by using a Venn diagram as a participatory, visual tool to analyse the importance of the roles different stakeholders played and the relationships between themselves, including with the ALE target group (see Phase One, section four).

- Using an integration matrix to analyse the cross-sectoral relationships between partners in executing their duties (see Phase Two, section 2.4).

- Force field analysis to explore what enabled and what hindered partners establishing sufficient consensus and cooperating towards the objectives of the ALE system (see Phase Three, section six).

- Cause and effect diagrams to show the causes and effects of challenges within the partnerships (see Phase Two, section 2.4).

- The stakeholder's participation and involvement matrix (see Phase Three, section six).

- Assessing the level of participation of different stakeholders and partners according to the typology participation table and uncovering the reasons for different levels of participation (see Phase Four, section 2.3).

4.2.6 Reviewing the ALESBA process

Up until now, all the descriptions and information on the review process has focused on the ALE system and the process of implementing and testing a newly designed system. However, the ALESBA partners should also track how far they have reached in their overall ALESBA journey, to draw lessons for continuing in Phase Five and beyond. During Phase One the partners compiled a long-term plan for ALE system building indicating milestones across different phases. The review process at the end of Phase Four is a good time to stop and reflect on the overall journey of ALE system building using the ALESBA. Some of the questions to be asked are:

- Have the milestones in the ALESBA plan been reached on time and to the level of expectation?

- What helped or hindered the achievement of the milestones?

- Did the system building process take much longer than anticipated?

- What were the challenges, successes and learning insights during the process?

- How will the ALESBA process be taken forward during Phase Five and beyond?

4.3 Analyse and compile the review findings

Sections 4.1 and 4.2 above elaborated the review process and provided guidelines on how to design and facilitate the review. Due to the scope of the ALE system, it was recommended that the review include different parts of the system. Once the reviews have been conducted the consultants and ALESBA partners would have produced the following reports:

- Demand side of the ALE system.
- Supply side of the ALE system.
- ALE partnerships.
- ALESBA journey.

All these reports represent parts of the bigger ALE system and should be analysed jointly for an overall perspective on the status of the ALE system at the end of Phase Four

and whether the challenges and blockages in the previous system have been sufficiently addressed.

Based on the analysis of these reports, the consultants/ALESBA partners need to produce a final report on Phase Four which summarises the findings for the complete ALE system and recommendations regarding how the pilot system can be up-scaled and/or further adjusted.

The analysis of the reports presented on the demand/supply side, partnerships and ALESBA process is not a simple task. It is also the time to ensure the six evaluation criteria were considered and that the overall rationale of the review at the end of Phase Four/beginning Phase Five has been addressed. This section guides consultants and the ALESBA partners by presenting a basic framework that can be used in the process. Note that certain analytical questions are repeated across the review reports to ensure triangulation and validation of the findings.

An analytical framework to compile a consolidated ALE system review report

Reviews reports and processes	Ultimately what do we want to know from this report?	Type of recommendations needed
Demand side	- Are the ALE users satisfied with the existing ALE services provided? (Type, quality, accessibility, etc.?) - Are the service delivery modalities efficient and effective? - Are there other new services that should be included as part of ALE service delivery? - Have there been barriers to participation? - How have the voices of learners been accommodated? - Are their new target group categories to be included? What are their preferences for services? - What type of immediate impact or changes in the lives of the target group can be observed from their use of the ALE services? What positive and/or negative changes have taken place in the lives of the target group? - How does the current demand assessment compare to the previous assessment/baseline study conducted in Phase Two? - What improvements have been made since the baseline and what challenges remain? *Relevance: Does the system and the services delivered still respond to the target group's needs and the ALESBA partners' priorities, country policies and national/sector development plans?* *Impact: To what extent does the ALE system and the services delivered generate positive or negative, intended, or unintended effects?*	- If the services are still relevant to the target groups' needs/interests what changes or improvements have to be made for better quality, accessibility, regularity, etc.? - What other services and/or target groups should be included in the ALE system? How does this affect the scope and context of ALE? - How can the ALE system absorb additional services and target groups? - Recommendations for strengthening the positive impact and mitigating the negative impact. - What are the remaining gaps/challenges in service delivery compared to the baseline demand assessment? What are the root causes of these issues? - What should be considered to up-scale the existing/new services to more geographical locations and target populations?

Reviews reports and processes	Ultimately what do we want to know from this report?	Type of recommendations needed
Supply side	• What is the status of the current system compared to the baseline assessment conducted during Phase Two? • How do the system scores compare? • Are all building blocks in place and to what extent are they functional? • How does the system function to deliver ALE services across all system elements and building blocks? • How does the system function across the different sectors and spheres of governance? • Have the root causes identified for system blockages and challenges been addressed? To what extent or why not? • To what extent has the ALE system design response framework (Phase Three) been implemented in Phase Four? • Have all the objectives in the operational plan of Phase Four been achieved and to what extent (cluster project plans and overall ALESBA programme management framework?) • Does the supply and demand side of the system align? *Coherence:* What is the compatibility of the ALE system with other interventions in the sector and country? Are complementary actions, harmonisation and coordination taking place? *Effectiveness:* Is the newly designed ALE system achieving or expected to achieve its objectives? *Efficiency?* How well are the resources used to deliver the services in an economic and timely way?	Recommendations regarding: • Outstanding system building blocks. • Poorly functioning system building blocks and what root causes need to be addressed? • Functioning of the system as a whole and linkages between system building blocks and elements across spheres of governance. • Integration between sectors. • Improvements in the efficiency of the system. • The ALE system design response framework: Does it still hold true for up-scaling or does the system need a redesign to accommodate the alignment with the demand side? • Adjustments and/or redesign needed to enable up-scaling of the system?
ALE partnership	• Does the way partnerships were structured during Phase Four (and described in the ALE system design response framework) contribute towards the service delivery process? • What is the level of consensus among the ALESBA partners on ALE system building? • Have partners fulfilled their mandates, roles and responsibilities? • What are the main challenges and best practice examples in the partnership? *Internal coherence:* What are the synergies and linkages between the partners' roles in the pilot system and the internal tasks, roles and mandates of the organisations?	• Addressing the challenges in consensus among partners and partnership relations. • Restructuring the partnership if needed.
ALESBA process	• Is there clear evidence of ALE system building across the Phases of the ALESBA? Have the milestones been reached? • How does the ALESBA assist partners to build an ALE system over time?	• How should the ALESBA process be taken forward during Phase Five?

The evaluation criteria of sustainability are cross-cutting and should be assessed in terms of:

• Will the positive impacts in the target groups' lives be sustainable over time? What does the ALE system have to deliver to ensure the sustainability of the changes?

• Will the ALE system function in a sustainable manner and continue to deliver quality services? What should be done to ensure institutional sustainability of the system across macro, meso and micro levels?

• How can the partnership structures and relationships continue to contribute to sustainability on the demand and supply side of the system?

Answering the rationale of the review

The analysis and final consolidated report should answer the overall question and rationale for the review, i.e., did the piloted ALE system function well enough to be up-scaled in Phase Five and what adjustments if any are needed before up-scaling on a national level? It may be possible that some adjustments can be done while up-scaling. This will be elaborated on in the next section of the booklet.

5. MAKING THE NECESSARY SYSTEM ADJUSTMENTS TO PREPARE FOR UP-SCALING

5.1 Introduction to the adjustment process

The next big step or sub-phase of Phase Five deals with making the necessary adjustments to prepare the ALE system for up-scaling, preferably to a national level. The review would have provided information on the current status of the system and what still needs to be done to have a system in place that can function at a much larger scale and with better quality than the pilot during Phase Four. The adjustment step/sub-phase, therefore, has to start by having the end in mind. This will direct the necessary adjustments that need to be made, in other words 'making the adjustments towards which objectives, goal and vision?'. ALESBA partners must decide whether:

- They are ready to up-scale the tested system to a national level; or

- They are up-scaling in phases, either by selecting target groups and/or geographical locations for different phases of up-scaling (e.g., a number of districts or regions at a time); or

- They may incorporate system elements and building blocks that tested well during Phase Four into the existing mainstream ALE system, therefore, a more technical form of up-scaling (note the precautions explained at the end of this section for this form of up-scaling).

It can be assumed that after testing the system during the pilot phase, both the ALESBA partners and target group may be eager to scale up the ALE services to a wider target group and geographical areas. Experiences in Ethiopia and Uganda have shown that successful integrated ALE programmes and community learning centres (CLCs) that address the target groups' interests and needs are demanded by not only ALE users but also local governments and civil society partners in communities and districts adjacent to the pilot sites. This may lead to pressure from the communities on duty bearers at local government level who will in turn place pressure on regional/provincial and national governments to start the up-scaling process. It may also be that the mainstream ALE services that were still operational alongside the pilot have deteriorated so much compared to the pilot, that this will necessitate a more urgent up-scaling process.

This implies that ALESBA partners may not have the luxury to wait until the pilot process of the ALE system is fully completed before up-scaling starts. Therefore, parts of the system may already be up-scaled during the pilot process. In this case, ALESBA partners must ensure that those parts have been properly tested and can still be incorporated in future system adjustments that may be needed after the pilot is completed.

Adjustment and up-scaling scenarios

The table below presents different scenarios of what the review findings could look like and how that would influence the possibilities for up-scaling based on the kind of adjustments that are still needed. Note that there may also be a combination of review findings that will affect the adjustments needed. The examples of scenarios presented on the next page mostly focus on challenges that necessitate adjustments but can also be best practice examples that can be capitalised upon for up-scaling.
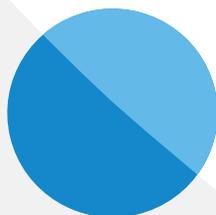
Examples of possible review findings	Examples of adjustments needed	Possibilities for up-scaling
The piloted system does not deliver the kind of services the target group needs.	The demand and supply side of the system needs to be relooked and may need a total system redesign to ensure alignment.	Up-scaling will be delayed until the relevance of ALE services and the scope and context of the system can be addressed.
The services are relevant to the target group but are delivered inconsistently and with poor quality.	The recommendations regarding adjusting, improving and putting building blocks in place have to be taken up (supply side recommendations).	Depending on the number of building blocks that need to be put in place/adjusted, up-scaling can start in a phased manner.
The enabling environment of the system is not in place/does not function well and cannot give guidance to local governments.	Assess which building blocks need minor adjustments (quick fixes) and which need long term work. Find interim solutions.	Up-scaling can possibly proceed, but ideally should be in a phased, gradual approach while addressing the system challenges at macro level.
The institutional arrangements hamper the facilitation of service delivery across sectors and sphere of governance.	Redesign institutional arrangements and pilot again while looking for opportunities to institutionalise best practices.	This may delay up-scaling due to the importance of this system element. Phased up-scaling can continue if the adjustments are minor.
Budgeting and resource allocation (management processes) are still insufficient for the pilot process.	Look at different resource mobilisation strategies, e.g., cross-sectoral funding and budgeting. Look at ways to improve efficiency from both an operational and financial perspective.	Unless there are options to mitigate this challenge, this is a serious finding and may need further piloting and searching for different ways to mobilise more resources/funds and/or work more efficiently.
The capacity of institutions and staff to deliver ALE services have not reached the level to facilitate rolling out services to more target groups.	Find ways to replicate and cascade capacity building opportunities and create institutional arrangements that can address the matter.	This may delay up-scaling and should be addressed for long-term sustainability. Up-scaling can be done in phases while continuing to pilot the capacity building strategies and related system building blocks.
The material developed during the pilot phase is demanded and used by stakeholders in different projects and programmes.	Replicate this best practice within the context of existing building blocks that can support it, while mitigating and working around other weaknesses in the system, e.g., lack of resources available.	This finding and best practice modality can be up-scaled, but most probably within a phased approach until all supporting system building blocks are in place.
ALESBA partners managed to maintain consensus and cooperation during the pilot phase with joint planning and implementation.	Capitalise on this positive review finding and look for ways to use it to address system weaknesses and institutionalise the best practice models as far as possible.	This is a key ingredient for up-scaling but can only be seen as an enabling factor to support phased up-scaling where possible.

Therefore, adjustments in the ALE system before up-scaling are dependent on the review findings, the decision on the level of up-scaling (national, phased approach), ALE vision and positive/enabling factors that will support up-scaling, e.g., sufficient resources, the consensus among stakeholders, etc. The adjustment measures planned and taken should still be from a system perspective. It may be that the review findings indicate a redesign of the system or parts of the system.

Maintain systems thinking

The processes and tools in Phase Three of the ALESBA (Alternatives Analysis and Design) can be employed yet again to weigh different alternative options and redesign the system or specific building blocks while keeping the impact on the remaining building blocks and system in mind. ALESBA partners are cautioned to maintain systems thinking and a system's perspective. It is not a good idea to take a key component of a well-functioning system, install it in a dysfunctional one, and expect it to produce similar results as it did within the well-functioning system (Tucker, 2016). The steps and principles of Phase Three in the ALESBA remain relevant and once the ALESBA

partners are confronted with the review findings and the remaining gaps and challenges in the system, they should repeat the process of finding entry and leverage points that can solve several system challenges. These are places within the system where a small shift in one building block can produce a number of changes in other building blocks and the way the whole system functions (Meadows, 1999).

It may even be a matter of not only redesigning but also implementing and testing certain building blocks and parts of the system again as per the processes and tools described in the Phase Four booklet. The next sections elaborate on different considerations for adjustments in the demand/supply side and partnership arrangements with a view of up-scaling. They conclude with remarks on planning for and operationalising the adjustments.

5.2 Adjustments in the ALE service delivery modality

The review findings are interpreted from both the demand and supply side of ALE service delivery. For example, if ALE users have expressed dissatisfaction with the quality and regularity of ALE services such as literacy classes or poor vocational training with insufficient materials and inputs for learning, the causes for this may lie with the supply side.

When making adjustments to improve service delivery, ALESBA partners, as ALE service providers, can explore different options and modalities to deliver services more efficiently and effectively. They could consider:

Integrated ALE service delivery.
Integration of ALE services can provide a more meaningful learning experience for ALE service users that they can put into use from the onset of the training. It also benefits the ALESBA partners to have a wider outreach to more learners and the ability to show impact. Services related to vocational or agricultural skills training combine well with business skills training and financial literacy or access to savings and loan schemes for start-up capital. These services may be delivered by different ALESBA partners across sectors and spheres of governance. To integrate the services in a comprehensive package for the ALE learners/service users will require cooperation and adjustments in several system building blocks, e.g.:

- The curricula may need adjustments to make space for different topics and inputs.

- The material may need to be developed in the form of trainers' manuals, handouts for learners, etc.

- Learner assessments must include all the components of the service.

- Trainers may need additional capacity building to understand the different topics in an integrated manner.

- Institutions may have to adjust plans and budgets to accommodate the new service modality.

- The M&E system must acknowledge the impact that the different components have on each other and therefore include indicators that can accommodate this.

The integration process across sectors and spheres of governance is never easy and may require ALESBA partners to revisit the vision of the ALE system, brainstorm different possibilities about integrated service delivery, explore the best practice lessons from the pilot phase and if need be, unpack stakeholders' roles and responsibilities once again to build consensus. The previous booklets contain several participatory tools to assist in this process, such as the integration matrix, stakeholders' analysis, stakeholder participation matrix, etc.
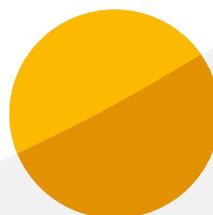
The establishment and operationalisation of Community Learning Centers (CLCs)

CLCs are places where ALE learners can access a variety of ALE and other services in one place and close to their living environment. CLCs can be established in existing buildings that can be renovated and equipped to deliver a variety of ALE services. If funds allow new CLCs can also be constructed. CLCs will ensure a facility where ALE services can be delivered in the long term and can be an institutionalised service modality within the ALE system. ALESBA partners will share responsibilities for the services to be delivered by allocating staff and other resources. CLCs will provide partners opportunities to expand their services to a wider target group and focus on quality services. This will require the ALESBA system to adjust and ensure that:

- Policies, strategies, and programme implementation guidelines in the Enabling Environment system element acknowledge and refer to CLCs as one of or the main service delivery modalities of the ALE system. Without hooking CLCs into the enabling environment building blocks, the sustainability of these structures will be compromised.

- The building blocks under the institutional arrangements are adjusted across spheres and sectors of governance, including all the ALESBA partners. This may require formal agreements on staff allocation to CLCs but also adjusting structures at meso and macro levels that will support CLCs. The coordination arrangements within organisations and between government, civil society and universities will need formalisation and institutionalisation to ensure the sustainability of this modality.

- Management processes such as planning, budgeting M&E systems, etc. will have to consider that the micro level service delivery modality adjustment will spark a range of adjustments across all the building blocks in this element. It will require cross-sectoral planning and budgeting, redesigning M&E systems, and management information systems.

- Technical processes and the way the services are delivered with curricula, training materials, learners' assessment will have to be adjusted to ensure quality services at the level where the ALE services interface directly with the users.

Although the adjustments in service delivery modalities may seem substantial, it is a key entry point of decision-making to ensure the ALE system reaches its objectives and long-term vision. The results and recommendations in the review reports should not be approached in an isolated building block by building block style, but rather by using the opportunity to make strategic decisions for ALE service delivery such as changing the modalities and then adjusting the system building blocks on the supply side to facilitate these service delivery modalities.
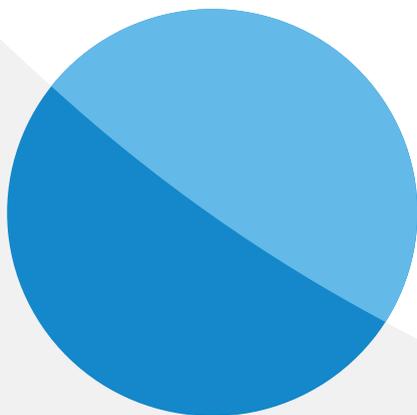
5.3 Adjustments in the ALE system functioning

Adjusting the system on the supply side starts with determining whether the ALE system addressed the needs/interests on the demand side during the pilot phase. This will inform decisions on adjusting service delivery modalities and services as discussed in the previous section. Based on these decisions the building blocks under each system element have to be considered as per the recommendations in the review report. The flow diagram in section 4.1 (page 15) in the Phase Three ALESBA booklet (Alternatives Analysis and Design) provides an illustration of the process to be followed in making these decisions.

ALESBA partners cannot only focus on the building blocks that need adjustment or still have to be put in place. Adjustments in one system building block may spark the need for adjustments in existing and well-functioning system building blocks as well. Examples of possible adjustments in the system elements with their respective building blocks are elaborated on below. This will differ from country to country depending on the review findings and recommendations.

Enabling Environment

Most countries have little problem articulating educational policies, but ALE as a sub-sector is often under-represented in wider education policies or captured narrowly as literacy policies, while others have no policy and rely on strategies to implement programmes and deliver services. The cross-sectoral nature of ALE is not easy to capture at a policy level. The review findings will elaborate on whether the current sector policies make room for the ALE scope and context and the designed system piloted during Phase Four. If the pilot system managed to address the needs of the ALE users and started to show impact, it has the potential to achieve the vision. This implies policies and strategies will need adjustment as well. Policies are not reviewed or changed often and need a long process of evidence-based influencing and advocacy. The ALESBA partners can use the opportunity of the review and reports produced to advocate widely at higher levels for the changes needed. The same applies to the legal framework which may need more advocacy processes to continue during the up-scaling phase.

The ALE system design response framework from Phase Three would have already considered the building block of comprehensive programme implementation guidelines to enable all the ALESBA partners to implement the pilot. Based on the review findings these can be updated and adjusted as per the experiences during the pilot phases. Building blocks, such as a qualifications framework, take time to put in place. If this was possible during the pilot phase, it represents a big achievement for the system. This also may be a matter of including ALE into an existing qualifications framework in a more meaningful manner. If this building block has not been addressed during the pilot phase, it should be included in the operational plan for up-scaling.

Institutional Arrangements

To initiate and sustain system changes the involvement of leaders from the different ALESBA partner organisations is essential, especially when trying to change long-established and complex systems. System approaches require working across organisational boundaries and governance levels, and in the context of ALE across sectors. When systemic changes become institutionalised, it becomes hard to turn back to the 'old way of doing things' (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017). This has both positive and negative implications. It is difficult to institutionalise and adopt the new system recommendations but it also shows the contribution well-functioning institutional arrangements can make in the functioning of the system.

ALE implementation structures within individual partner organisations may need adjustments based on the review results and recommendations. This should include considerations for adjustments across the spheres of governance and how, for example, the government will ensure each sphere of government fulfils its roles and mandates within the bigger system. The allocation of sufficient and competent human resources may be one of the biggest challenges within the ALE system and maybe a killer assumption that can influence whether the system can be up-scaled or not. This may require decisions at the highest level to create positions for ALE professionals within the existing implementation structures of organisations.

Weak oversight and accountability mechanisms are some of the main reasons for system failure. Mechanisms that assess performance against norms and standards are often weak, existing perhaps on paper but not in practice with weak discipline and rules not developed or enforced (DEVCO B4 Education Discussion Paper, 2014). Supervision of ALE facilitators and instructors may take place, but the reports are seldom used. The accountability building block is a strong determinant of whether the piloted system achieves its objectives or not and adjustments definitely will be required for up-scaling.
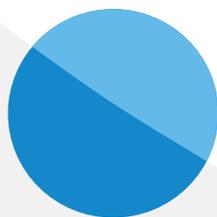
The building block on partnership structures, especially between state and non-state actors has been elaborated to some extent in section 5.4 below. It should be reiterated that unless these structures exist and are institutionalised as formal structures in the ALE system, it will not be possible to scale up the ALE system. Governments alone cannot provide all the ALE services needed in a country. The system element of Institutional Arrangements carries substantial weight in determining the up-scaling potential of the piloted system.

Management Processes

Building blocks under management processes cut across and have the ability to influence the functioning of all other building blocks. Participatory planning, an appropriate budget and resource allocation are key building blocks for the successful implementation of the pilot during Phase Four and will determine whether up-scaling is possible at all and to what extent. Note that the emphasis is on participatory planning and the review recommendations should point out whether all stakeholders have been involved and how planning is cascaded across spheres of governance with multi-sector involvement. Adjustments may be needed in this process and planning formats, etc.

If the pilot phase did not succeed in putting the building block of budget and resource allocation in place within an institutionalised long-term perspective, it may severely hamper up-scaling of the ALE system. It may imply that the ALESBA partners resort to phased up-scaling while continuing to work on evidence-based influencing for

national and local government allocations as well as finding innovative ways of cross-sectoral funding and more efficient and effective service delivery modalities. This building block should not be left until the end of Phase Four, but conscious advocacy and evidence-based influencing strategies should be actively pursued during the pilot phase to lobby for funds and to ensure that by the time Phase Five is reached funding is available at least to start phased up-scaling.

The M&E and Management Information systems of the pilot phase would be under scrutiny during the review, both in their own design and functionality, as well as in the proof of the kind of data and information it was able to give to the review teams. The systems may need adjustments in the indicators, the way data is collected, analysed, stored, and used. Coordination and coordination processes are reliant on the structures that have been put in place, but the processes themselves may need adjustment, e.g., what type of coordination agendas will be pursued, and how partners are held accountable for coordination, etc.
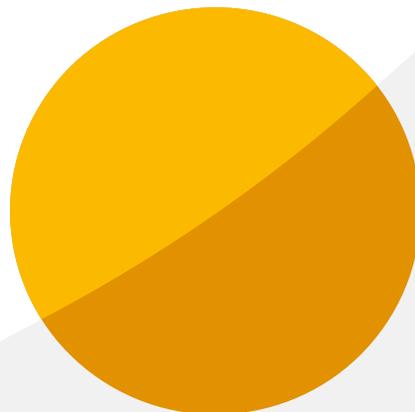
Technical Processes

As mentioned above, many countries have elaborate policies and strategies that set out how the policy will be delivered, but they often pay insufficient attention to the realities on the ground and the actual capacity and building blocks necessary for delivery. The building blocks under technical processes lie at the heart of service delivery and this is where the system interfaces with the ALE users. The ALE system design response framework would have explained the kind of services the system will deliver and the Programme Implementation Guidelines at national level would give all ALESBA partners clear instruction about how to delivery should take place.

The curricula and programme methodologies to deliver the curricula contents (e.g., REFLECT, FAL, etc.) will be tested during Phase Four. The review team will indicate how the contents and methodologies are received by the ALE learners and how they used the benefits to make changes in their lives. Adjustments may have to be made

accordingly to ensure the curricula remain relevant and the training methodologies are participatory and empowering for youth and adults with the necessary programme quality. The materials used to facilitate learning will have to be adjusted in line with the recommendations.

The building block of capacity development may involve substantial changes across the system. It does not refer only to local facilitators and trainers, but the capacity needs across the ALE system, including for system managers. It may require universities and colleges to rethink curricula and how they will prepare professionals to take up their roles in the new ALE system. Up-scaling implies that much more ALE staff will be needed. How will these staff be trained, and by whom? It may even require thinking about an institution that can handle certain forms of capacity building and on the job training for ALE practitioners. Consideration should be given to the professionalisation of the sector. ALESBA partners also have to think about the cascading of the training while maintaining quality.

The review will explore how learner assessments have been done, what were the results and whether learner assessments are acknowledged sufficiently to provide a pathway for learners into other education opportunities. Consideration should be given to the requirements of the qualifications framework and how it links with the learner assessments, and the M&E system, etc. ALESBA partners have to make the necessary adjustments to ensure the linkages between these system building blocks are well aligned.

5.4 Adjustments in the partnership

The importance of leadership in changing and improving the ALE system has been discussed under the above-mentioned adjustments needed in the institutional arrangements system element. However, leadership is not enough. A critical mass of actors/individuals among the ALESBA partners in different roles and positions, who understand the need for change and are willing to act on it, is crucial for changing the system (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2020). Making adjustments is all about change. This brings us back to the importance of consensus building among ALESBA partners as elaborated in Phase One and reiterated as a key ingredient for success throughout all the ALESBA phases.

The review of the system would have included a review of the partnership as well. This includes the structural and institutional arrangements among the partners, which are addressed under the institutional system element, but also the way the partners operate and the level of consensus among them. As the ALESBA phases proceeded over time, consensus among the partners may have been affected by different factors such as:

- Changes in the leadership of the organisations that are part of the ALESBA partnership.

- Changes in technical experts responsible for implementing the ALESBA, specifically during the pilot in Phase Four.

- Political, economic, environmental, and societal changes and challenges in the country.

- Changes in policies and strategies which may affect changes in planning and resource allocation.

- Changes in institutional structures and the way they are arranged internally.

Maintaining consensus under these circumstances is not easy and requires sufficient commitment from a core group of ALESBA partners to hold on to the vision and the ALE system design with its own objectives. It requires flexibility to respond to changes and incorporate these into the ALE system design response framework during the pilot process.

The ideal ALESBA partnership will have sufficient consensus to drive the adjustments needed to make the system functional at national level or at least wider in scope than the pilot phase. Some indicators to 'test' the level of consensus and readiness of the ALESBA partners to embrace the system changes needed are (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017):

- An agenda of innovation and system change has taken root among the ALESBA partners.

- The ALE learners/users of the service have become a priority in the decision-making processes.

- The ALE system vision and objectives have overtaken the individual organisational orientation.

- There is trust and demand for experimentation and embracing system changes.

- The lines between stakeholders such as government, civil society and universities have become blurred, and problems are solved from the perspective of what is best for the whole ALE system.

To reach this level of consensus and partnership relations, the best practices pointed out by the review should be embraced and institutionalised, while the challenges should be addressed with teamwork, conflict resolution and using tools in the previous ALESBA booklets such as stakeholders' analysis, to re-establish roles and responsibilities, explore mandates and find ways for each partner to play their role in the system.

The partnership should include recognition of the regulations, organisational routines, and cultural norms of each individual partner and how they can feed into the entity of the ALESBA partnership. Adjustments in the partnership may include quick fixes such as refining roles and responsibilities which could already smooth out conflict areas and refocus the partners on the objectives of the system, but there can also be long-term adjustments that will happen during up-scaling, e.g., to re-establish trust, make sure accountability is enforced, building the capacity of partners, etc.

5.5 Plan for and operationalise the adjustments in the ALE system and service delivery

The adjustment step during Phase Five involves the following:

- ALESBA partners will receive the review reports and the national ALESBA steering committee should arrange workshops, meetings and opportunities for the partners to come together and validate the findings in the reports.

- An analytical workshop or series of workshops will be needed for the partners to take the recommendations from the review teams on board from a system perspective. Partners should consider the status of the system after the pilot, how it compares with the baseline status of Phase Two and what challenges and system blockages remain. If not clearly presented in the review reports, a diagnosis, similar to part two of Phase Two should be conducted to identify the root causes of identified issues.

- The processes described in Phase Three of the ALESBA can be repeated since the partners are now at a similar stage to that of the period after Phase Two when the system was assessed and the root causes for the system challenges were identified.

- The best entry points to address the remaining system challenges should be explored and alternative options weighed against each other (see the Phase Three booklet, section four).

- The impact that these adjustments have on specific building blocks may also affect other existing, functioning building blocks. Thus, this impact should be assessed and, if needed, changes/adjustments should be made to existing building blocks (see Phase Three booklet).

- Finally, the best alternatives for the adjustments should be selected and the redesign of the system should be captured in a revised/updated ALE system design response framework document as explained in Phase Three.

Depending on the level and number of adjustments needed, the ALESBA partners may decide to enter an interim phase during which these adjustments will be made before scaling up or start phased up-scaling while the adjustments are being made. An operational plan similar to the one in Phase Four can be formulated to facilitate the implementation of the adjustments before and/or during up-scaling.

6. UP-SCALE THE IMPROVED ALE SYSTEM

6.1 Introduction to the up-scaling process

Scaling up is defined as 'expanding, replicating, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programmes or projects in a geographic space and over time to reach a greater number of people' (Linn, 2014). In the context of ALE system building and the ALESBA, this refers to reaching a bigger ALE target group (in numbers and diversity) across a larger geographical area (preferably the country as a whole) than during the pilot phase. Also, consider that the regular existing ALE system that was functioning alongside the pilot system may also not have had the capacity to cover the country and all the learners as required. The assessment of the system during Phase Two may have pointed out the reasons why this was the case. One of the reasons may be a lack of institutionalised cooperation between ALE stakeholders. This is often characterised by governments implementing large-scale poor quality programmes (for many reasons) and civil society organisations implementing small scale projects that may demonstrate good results and impact but are not necessarily designed with the realities of up-scaling in mind.

The previous section on adjustments that have to be made for up-scaling also pointed out that ALESBA partners may not always have the luxury of waiting until the pilot and testing phase is completed but may have to start up-scaling parts of the tested system during the testing phase. Examples may include curricula, training methodologies and learning materials development that can be up-scaled in the existing regular system. Keep in mind the caution that once the pilot system is up-scaled the impact of these decisions should be assessed on all the system building blocks to maintain a holistic system view.

The review at the beginning of Phase Five will inform the partners what are the remaining challenges in the system and to what extent the pilot system is ready for up-scaling. Based on this information, the ALESBA partners may decide to have a gradual up-scaling process, e.g., to scale up in selected geographical areas and/or with selected target groups over time. This implies that up-scaling can be done over a period of years with a plan for how it will take place. The negative consequence is that it may take much longer to reach ALE learners in the whole country, but the benefit of a phased up-scaling approach is that the partners will learn lessons along the way and can still make adjustments to the system while rolling it out to the country at large. Evidence-based influencing will continue to play a role, especially in convincing decision-makers at policy and strategy levels. The vision of the ALE system will continue to guide the up-scaling process while assessing the sustainability and impact along the way. ALESBA partners will have to focus on the institutionalisation of the system and ensure all partners have the capacity to fulfil their roles and mandates. The critical elements and factors influencing up-scaling are discussed in section 6.2.

The pathways of scaling up can stretch over many years and involve a sequence of multi-year projects or interventions. Where this is the case, a key consideration for s successful scaling up pathway is that each successive intervention (or project) should build systematically on the preceding project to create a cumulative impact that will match the long-term goal and vision for the up-scaled ALE system. Each project should contribute sustainable results (Linn, 2014). The ALESBA programme management framework presented in Phase Four provides a useful framework to coordinate these projects and ensure an integrated process of ALE system building during the up-scaling process. The considerations and steps in scaling up are elaborated in section 6.3.

6.2 Factors influencing the up-scaling process

Many factors can influence the potential for scaling up the piloted ALE system. Some of these factors have already been discussed during the review and adjustment steps and they may be so severe that they can completely stop or minimise the up-scaling process. The factors are closely related to the functioning of the system with all its building blocks, but also include the pressures placed on the system from the demand side and external environment as well as the dynamics between the ALESBA partners. These factors can be negative and positive in nature. By taking these factors into account, ALESBA partners can plan and implement a better up-scaling process.

Critical factors influencing the up-scaling process are (Linn, 2014):

• Innovation and learning: Up-scaling usually starts with a new idea, model or approach in the form of a pilot project or programme (Phase Four). By learning from this experience with monitoring and evaluation, using internal organisational learning processes (e.g., through quality study circles as suggested in Phase Four) and other forms of evidence-based learning, knowledge is created and can be used to scale up the pilot through expansion, replication and adaptation with multiple impacts.

• Pathways for scaling up: A pathway is the sequence of steps that need to be taken in the scale-up process. A pathway starts with innovation, pilot or practice and requires a vision of the ultimate scale judged to be appropriate for the intervention. It also requires a strategy for reaching that scale through intermediate steps. This may involve individual projects that can help to ensure progress towards the ultimate goal. There can be many different pathways for scaling up a successful intervention. The challenge is to find the most successful pathway. The section of the booklet on adjusting the piloted system started to explore these pathways and they will be further elaborated in section 6.3 below.

- Drivers: As with the start of the ALESBA in Phase One, forces or drivers are needed to push the scaling-up process forward along a pathway. These may be:

  – As mentioned above, interest in the success of the pilot approach may increase the demand from neighbouring communities and districts to start the scaling up in their areas sooner.

  – Visionary leaders or champions often drive the scaling-up process forward. A vision is needed to recognise that scaling-up is needed and desirable and feasible.

  – External catalysts such as political or economic crises or pressures from outside actors, donors, NGOs or community demand, may drive the scaling-up process forward. The case of youth unemployment in Africa is one example that drives the non-formal skills training component of ALE systems.

  – Incentives are important for driving the behaviour of stakeholders and partners for sustained up-scaling to be possible. This may include rewards, competitions and pressures through the political process, peer reviews and evaluations. Monitoring and evaluations against the goals, benchmarks and performance standards are essential components to establish incentives and accountability. The quantitative assessment scoring tool of ALESBA in Phase Two has already proven to be a competition and incentive between districts, regions and countries to perform better in the process of system building.

- Spaces: For successful up-scaling obstacles and system blockages need to be removed and enabling conditions, also referred to as 'spaces', have to be created for interventions in the system to grow. These system blockages as well as best practices would have been uncovered during the review phase and recommended to be taken up as adjustments. For example, they include among others:

  – Fiscal and financial space: In the ALESBA this will be the system building block of budget and resource allocation. Unless resources are mobilised to support the scaled-up intervention, and/or the costs of the intervention is adapted to be more efficient and effective and fit into the available financial space, scaling up will not be possible. This includes indicators related to efficiency and, therefore, will include all the system building blocks under the management processes system element.

  – Policy space: The policy and legal framework have to allow for or be adapted to support scaling-up. This refers to all the system building blocks in the enabling environment system element. As mentioned, it may not be possible to make these adjustments prior to the start of the scaling-up process, but there should at least be sufficient space within the existing building blocks to facilitate scaling-up. Further adjustments and putting building blocks in place should then continue during the scaling-up process.
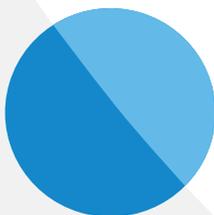
– Institutional and capacity space: The capacity for institutional and organisational resources (staff, leadership, etc.) has to be created in order to carry the up-scaling process forward. Mention was already made in the booklet about the importance of the institutional arrangements system element with all its building blocks in determining whether scaling-up is possible or not. (See the scenarios in section 5.1). It also touches on the building blocks under technical processes related to capacity building.

– Partnership space: Partners need to be mobilised and consensus should be maintained to join the efforts in scaling-up. Important stakeholders (both those in support of and against the scaling-up process) need to be attended to through outreach to ensure political support for the scaled-up intervention.

• Monitoring and Evaluation: Learning through monitoring and evaluation, knowledge sharing, and training is crucial during the scaling-up process. Knowledge about what works and what doesn't should be harnessed through the M&E system, stored in the MIS and used by the ALESBA partners during up-scaling to make further adjustments when needed. It should not only focus on the impact but also assess the various factors that contribute to determining possible scaling-up pathways that can be used.

6.3 Considerations and steps in up-scaling

The ALESBA partners must decide:

• To what extent the piloted ALE system is ready for up-scaling. This will be determined by the review findings, the extent of the adjustments needed and the factors influencing the up-scaling process as discussed in section 6.2.

• What are the parameters for up-scaling in terms of the target group and geographical space? Can they up-scale to a national level or should they follow a phased, gradual approach of up-scaling?

• What are the steps or pathways in up-scaling, or, in other words, what is the up-scaling strategy and roll out plan?
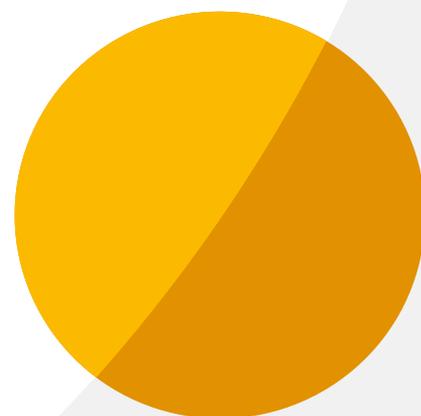
The steps or pathways in up-scaling can be described as follows (Linn, 2014):

Step One: Establish the preconditions for scaling-up

The first step requires selecting the dimensions of scaling-up. Having the vision in mind, partners have to define the ultimate scale to which the system should or could be taken, given the needs of the target population and the time horizon over which the scaling-up process should extend to achieve the desired ultimate scale. Studies have shown that the successful scaling up of programmes to national scale can take ten to fifteen years or even longer. This is important to know if the partners select to follow a phased scale-up approach.

Scaling-up can be interpreted as the extension of services to more learners/ALE service users in each geographical space or it can also be seen as horizontal replication of services from one geographical area to another, or 'functional' expansion of services by adding additional areas of engagement. This example has been mentioned when referring to up-scaling parts of the system (or building blocks) that work well during the adjustment step to the regular ALE system. It may also be a case of vertical up-scaling which involves moving from local or provincial/regional engagement to a nationwide engagement, often involving policy dialogue and technical assistance to help achieve the enabling environment conditions for successful up-scaling to a national level.

ALESBA partners therefore will define the dimensions, the desired scale, and the timeframe for up-scaling, while considering all the factors that influence the up-scaling process, as discussed in section 6.2, and that could either pose risks for up-scaling or creating spaces in which the new system can grow. Any information gaps that still exist should be filled as well. The mobilisation and consensus among the ALESBA partners remain a key precondition for successful up-scaling. Successful up-scaling requires the development and maintenance of multi-stakeholder partnerships. This includes the legitimisation of changing the system by the national and local government leadership in a country. Unless official processes are followed that will legitimise the system change, it will remain another experimental exercise.

Step Two: Develop a scaling-up plan

The next step would be to develop a scaling-up plan by all the ALESBA partners, ideally under the guidance and direction of the national ALESBA steering committee comprised of all ALESBA partners. Along with the scaling-up pathway, the programme should deliver intermediate results or reach key milestones. This will allow for continuous testing, especially when scaling-up in phases, lessons can be gathered for the next phase. It will also contribute to consensus building of stakeholders on the way. Depending on resources available, there are various operational modalities to be explored, e.g.:

- ALESBA partners can use their own financial and human resources for scaling-up.

- Different partners may play different roles depending on their geographical location and technical expertise.

- Realign and mobilise the needed resources, etc.

The revised ALE system design response framework during the adjustment step/sub-phase will inform the up-scaling plan. The scaling-up plan is more strategic in nature with a long-term vision showing the phases of up-scaling with milestones, the target groups and geographical locations that will be addressed during each phase, etc. It should refer to all the system building blocks, including having an M&E system with a functional MIS in place to gather data and information on the way and show the impact of the system. This includes including periodic evaluations or reviews at strategic points across the phases and milestones. Building blocks that have not been put in place during the pilot phase (Phase Four) or that still need further adjustment, also should be addressed in the plan.

It is useful to plan backwards by focusing on scaling-up from the beginning. Partners should begin with an eye on the dimensions they want to scale-up, the unit costs and implications for service providers and plan with this in mind. The framing questions in the table on the right can guide partners during the planning process (Linn, 2014):

| Ideas	What is the intervention to be scaled up? What are the review findings of the pilot phase?
Vison	What is the appropriate ultimate scale of the intervention? How many people, districts, etc. should ultimately be reached?
Resources	Which resources are available for up-scaling, e.g., financial, human, infrastructure, etc.?
Drivers	What or who are the drivers that are pushing or expected to push the scaling-up process ahead? (Local leaders, champions, external catalysts, incentives, etc.,).
Spaces	Which spaces exist or have to be created so the intervention can grow to achieve the desired scale?
Pathways	What are the pathways that define the way interventions in the country are to be scaled up? What is the time horizon over which the pathways (steps) are expected to extend? What are the expected system blockages and risks that may influence the process and what can be done to mitigate these factors?
ALESBA partners' role	What is the role of the ALESBA national steering committee, partner clusters and partners in general, in the scaling-up process?
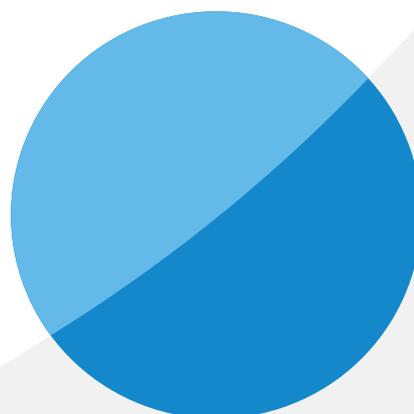
Step Three: Implement the scaling up plan

During the up-scaling process it is useful for ALESBA partners to think about:

- Documentation of the process, including lessons learned, having opportunities for reflection, and feeding information from the MIS into further improvements of the system.

- Assess the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the system to inform and plan for the coming phases of scaling up.

- Constantly analyse the demand and needs of the ALE users by using community scorecards and similar instruments.

- Analyse the institutional requirements needed for up-scaling, including the ALESBA partnership. It may require modification along the way. Governance structures in the country will inform the scale-up design to a large extent. Evidence needs to be collected whether the system can be up-scaled within the existing structures or whether adjustments are needed.

- Whether the building blocks in the enabling environment facilitates the up-scaling process.

- Have a strong M&E system.

- Continue to coordinate all activities and track the performance of the implementation.

- Maintain the momentum of the process.

As mentioned, the scaling-up plan may take the shape of a strategic document. It will require partners to formulate operational plans and budgets, renew partnership agreements, etc., similar to the plans in Phase Four to ensure the up-scaling plan is implemented.
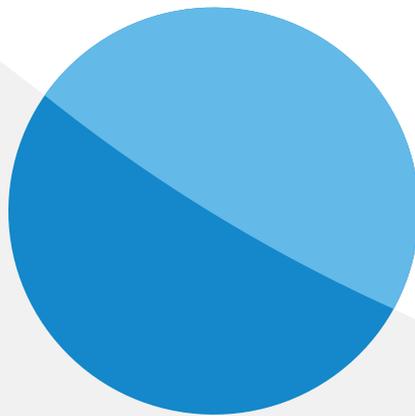
Uganda case study

The Ugandan experience provides an example of how the activities in Phases Four and Five can be interconnected. It also shows the complexities in reviewing, adjusting and up-scaling the ALE system. The Ugandan Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) responsible for adult literacy and community development made a decision in 2014 to search for a successor programme to replace their existing FAL (Functional Adult Literacy) programme that was implemented nationwide. The quest for a successor programme was based on the realisation that:

- The FAL programme no longer addressed the needs and interests of the ALE target group.

- The FAL programme did not have sufficient funds to be implemented nationwide, relying mostly on volunteer community facilitators.

- Some ALE system building blocks were not in place, while others did not function as they should.

- Uganda needed a robust ALE system that can deliver diverse ALE services.

- The MGLSD have to explore partnerships with different stakeholders to assist in delivering a new ALE programme countrywide.

DVV International and the MGLSD formed a partnership agreement towards the end of 2014 and started the joint exploration of a successor programme for FAL. DVV International presented their experience with integrated ALE learning based on the Reflect approach in Uganda's Karamoja region, which included adult literacy, livelihoods skills training, business skills training, Village Savings and Loan Schemes (VSLA) and community development.

The methodologies and modalities of the approach and the proven success of the pilot in Karamoja convinced the MGLSD to pilot a successor for FAL with similar components and methodologies as the Karamoja project. Start-up activities and capacity building of MGLSD staff at national, district and sub-county levels started in 2015 and the pilot officially started in three districts and six sub-counties in 2016. The pilot was named the Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation (ICOLEW) programme in line with Uganda's Vision 2040. During 2018 a fourth district was added with two more sub-counties and during 2019 two more sub-counties were added to each of the original three districts.

The pilot provided an opportunity for the MGLSD and DVV International to test whether the expectations on the demand side had been met, but also how the existing ALE system could handle the new programme. Meanwhile, the FAL programme continued in all other districts of the country. Lessons learned during the pilot already showed that:

- The diversity of services offered by the new ICOLEW programme did not only meet the needs of learners, but the demand was overwhelming, and the pilot could not cater for all the interested learners.

- Surrounding sub-counties and districts approached the MGLSD and requested to start implementation of the ICOLEW in their districts before the pilot ended.

- Specific services/components of the ICOLEW was so successful that the guidelines and methodologies of these services (e.g., the VSLA) have already been up-scaled beyond the ICOLEW to other programmes within the MGLSD.

- The MGLSD did not have sufficient funds and staff to implement the ICOLEW pilot, let alone up-scale the pilot.

- Although the new adult literacy and community development policies provided an enabling environment, they were not in line with the new programme modality, and other building blocks such as a national qualifications framework, M&E system and digital MIS became urgent needs.

- New modalities such as Community Learning Centers (CLCs) can be added as mini pilots within the bigger pilot to test different service delivery options with a potentially bigger outreach.
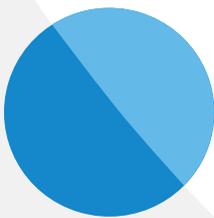
- Conducting evaluations during the pilot phase adds value to show whether the pilot is on track and has the potential for up-scaling.

- Selected up-scaling of geographical areas, target groups and components can start during the pilot phase (Phase Four of the ALESBA).

During the pilot period, 2016 – 2021 (six years), the MGLSD at national and district levels carried out several activities and used the ALESBA to guide the system building process with the view of up-scaling ICOLEW. Several system building blocks have been put in place and a strong and continuous evidence-based influencing and internal advocacy (within the MGLSD) process have led to the ICOLEW being included in Uganda's National Development Plan III. ICOLEW was also officially declared as the successor for FAL and the MGLSD developed a phased scale-up plan that will see the ICOLEW scaled up to more districts and target groups over several years.

Although some funds and resources have been secured, they are not sufficient and the advocacy process will continue during the scaling-up phases in the coming years.

The Uganda experience shows the importance of piloting a new system, testing different service delivery modalities and programme approaches, focusing on the supply side, and making sure building blocks are in place and function well, while pursuing strong advocacy and lobbying strategies with the view to up-scaling. It also shows the importance of making adjustments early, during the pilot phase.
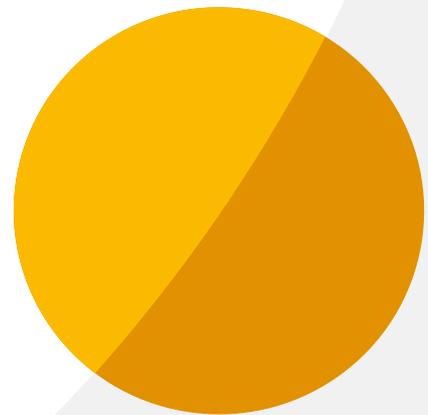
7. CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

Applying a systemic lens to complex problems is useful to understand and map the dynamics of the system underpinning it. This includes how the relationship between system components affect its functioning and what interventions can lead to better results. Systems thinking helps us to understand how systems are structured and how they operate, what lies between the parts (the elements and building blocks), their relationships and the gaps. It also means reflecting on how to take action from this understanding by creating proposals and designs for systems that can be tested before they are up-scaled and where they can have a much larger impact (OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, 2017). This could have both a positive and negative impact, and there is a large responsibility on ALESBA partners to review the piloted system well, make careful design decisions for adjustments and finally up-scale the redesigned system. It affects the lives of the ALE target groups as described in the vision for the system.

Although this is the last booklet in the ALESBA series and it may seem Phase Five is the last phase, it is just the beginning of a new phase. Once the pilot system has been adjusted and the complex and long-term task of up-scaling starts, the ALESBA partners will have to continue to use system approaches as the only means that can assist them to be proactive, understand the system they work with and implement changes on the spot as required from both the demand and supply side of the system. The task of delivering ALE services is too big for one stakeholder to carry out and the ALESBA partners will have to continue to cooperate, build consensus and institutionalise their structures for holistic ALE service delivery.

Therefore, the tools and processes in the ALESBA journey will be used repeatedly, not only during the up-scaling phase, but also on the journey towards up-scaling as has been demonstrated in this booklet/Phase Five. The review process used the tools of Phase Two and the adjustment process used tools from Phase Three. The up-scaling process will build on the tools and processes employed during Phase Four, when a new system was piloted and tested. All these phases are underpinned and dependent on consensus among the ALESBA partners and will rely on the partners referring from time to time to the tools and processes of Phase One. The ALESBA journey is never over and the up-scaling of the system will demand even more from the ALESBA partners. The ALESBA conceptual framework, concepts and principles explained in the first booklet, 'Introduction to the Approach and Toolkit', will remain the framework of reference for all the phases and booklets. Ultimately reaching the objective of quality services for all ALE learners will always make the journey worthwhile.

The ALESBA toolkit acknowledges and refers to ALE terminology in the following publications:

- Towards an operational definition of Lifelong Learning:
  UIL Working Papers No.1 (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015)

- European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2:
  Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language
  and common understanding and monitoring of the sector
  (National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy, 2008)

- Terminology of European education and training policy:
  A selection of 130 key terms (second edition)
  (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2014)
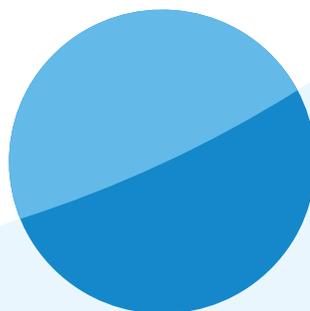
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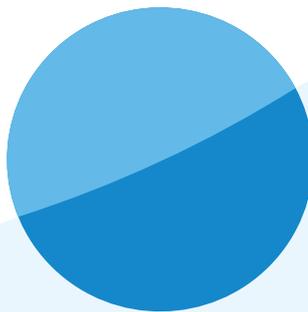
DVV International

DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e. V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. DVV represents the interests of the approximately 900 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest further education providers in Germany. As the leading professional organisation in the field of adult education and development cooperation, DVV International has committed itself to support lifelong learning for more than 50 years. DVV International provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable adult education structures and systems for youth and adult learning and education. To achieve this, DVV International co-operates with civil society, government and academic partners in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. DVV International finances its work through funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Foreign Office, the European Union as well as other donors.

The Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA) is a product of DVV International that can assist countries in building sustainable Adult Learning and Education (ALE) systems that can deliver a variety of ALE services to youth and adults. The ALESBA toolkit covers the conceptual framework of the approach with guidelines and practical tools to implement the approach across five phases.

The toolkit consists of the following books:

1. Introduction to the Approach and Toolkit
2. Phase One – Consensus Building
3. Phase Two – Assessment and Diagnosis
4. Phase Three – Alternatives Analysis and Design
5. Phase Four – Implement and Test
6. Phase Five – Review, Adjust and Up-scale

For further information visit:

www.mojaafrica.net
www.dvv-international.de/en/ale-toolbox