

CIES | APRIL 2021

# DESIGNING AN IMPACT STUDY WITH A MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO EVALUATE AN ACCELERATED SCHOOL READINESS PILOT

---

MAKING  
RESEARCH  
RELEVANT

---

Presented by Anaïs Toungui

Elizabeth Spier, PhD | Hannah Ring, MA |  
Iliana Brodziak de los Reyes, PhD |  
Anaïs Toungui, MIA | Kevin Kamto, MA

# Overview of ASR study

# The Promise of Accelerated School Readiness Programming

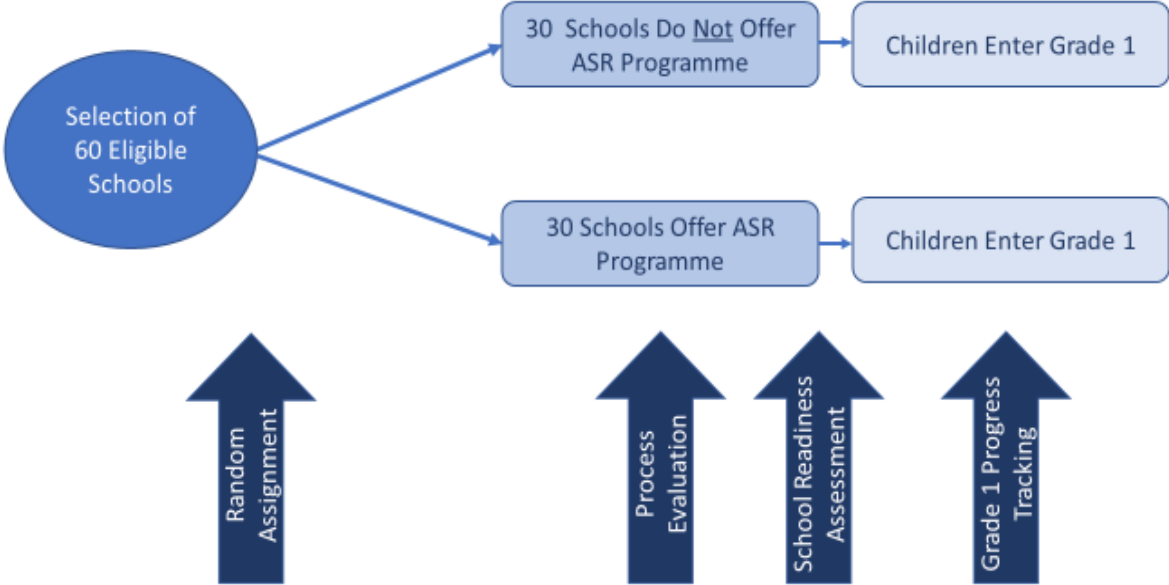
- School readiness includes children's readiness for school, schools' readiness for creating an effective learning environment, and families' readiness to support children at school (UNICEF, 2012).
- ASR programmes provide a promising approach to improving access to effective, quality pre-primary education in places where students are socio-economically disadvantaged. They leverage existing human and infrastructure resources to provide children with a school readiness short course during the term break before a new school year begins.

# Objectives of the Evaluation

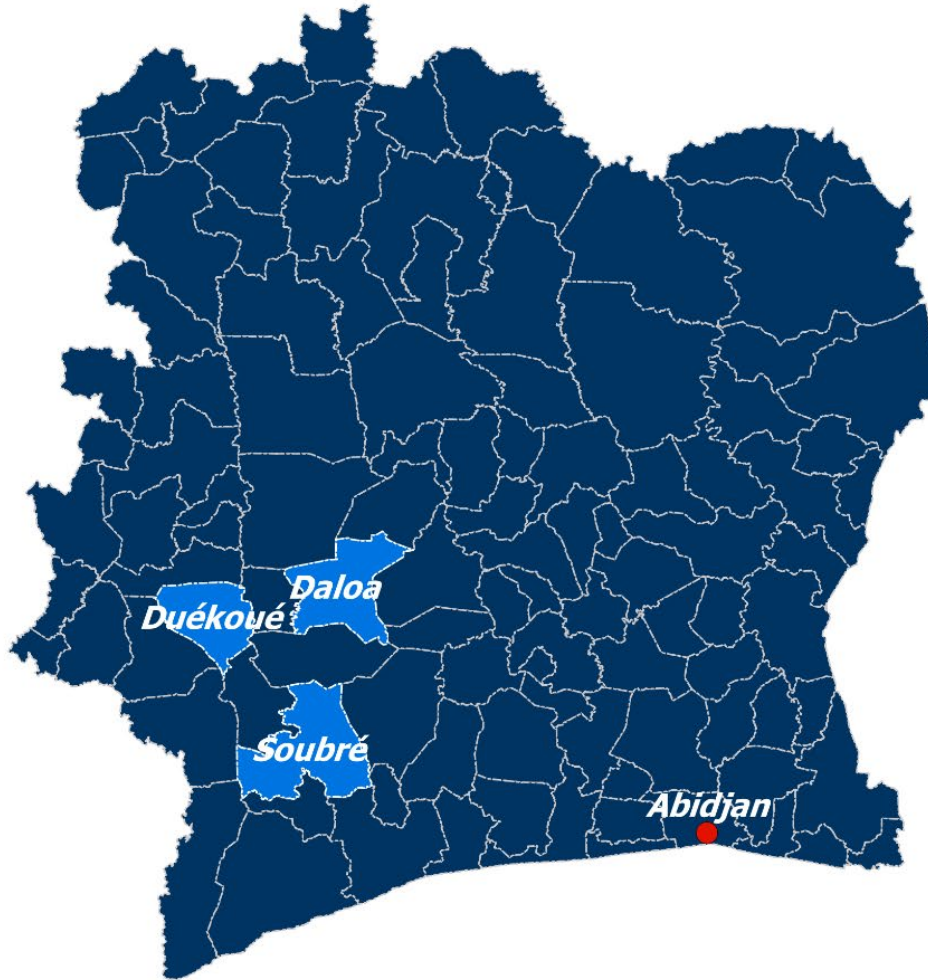
This study is a mixed-methods evaluation of the accelerated school readiness (ASR) pilot to inform government decisions regarding programme scale-up to a national level. The specific objectives for this evaluation are as follows:

- Conduct an impact study of the ASR model.
- Measure fidelity of implementation.
- Capture feedback from implementing staff, families, and key community members.
- Complete a cost analysis that captures both scaling and ongoing costs.
- Develop and validate an assessment toolkit to measure children's school readiness.

# Evaluation Overview



# Geographic Scope



## Legend

- Departments [108]
- Selected Departments
- EPG office and largest city

# Instruments and methods

Organization	Instrument	Frequency
ASR qualitative data collection		
Dalberg	Educators KIIs	One-time
Dalberg	Government/EPG KIIs	One-time
Dalberg	FDGs with Parents	One-time
ASR quantitative data collection		
Dalberg	Learning Assessment	One-time
Dalberg	Teacher Questionnaires	One-time
Dalberg	Parent Questionnaires	One-time
Dalberg	School observations	One-time
ASR cost data collection		
Dalberg	Resource cost model from schools	One-time
Dalberg	Resource cost model from EPG	One-time
Outcome and monitoring data collection		
MENA	Enrolment and attendance data to ASR	Monthly
MENA	Grade 1 enrolment data	Monthly

# Engagement with the government



# Why engage the government?

During piloting, often evaluators work independently of the government that is implementing a programme and/or expected to roll it out in the future.

It is essential to consider and develop government capacity for oversight of programming once they scale up.

Throughout this study, we are using a collaborative approaches with the MENA (Ministry of National Education and Literacy) to ensure that M&E (monitoring & evaluation) planning is compatible with their existing systems and builds its staff's capacity in M&E. It is important to note that the MENA designed the programme and they are also implementing the pilot itself.

# Stakeholder engagement

Ultimately, the MENA will take ownership of the programme and scale it up nationally. EPG and AIR are helping the government to develop the capacities they will need to continue this work moving forward.

We conducted 6 workshop sessions with the government agencies in charge of implementing the ASR programme.

- Workshop 1: Overview of research framework and design, including instrument development
- Workshop 2: Review of the school observation tools
- Workshop 3: Theory of change (led by EPG)
- **Workshop 4: Sampling framework**
- **Workshop 5: Implementation monitoring (attendance, fidelity and quality)**
- **Workshop 6: Cost analysis**

# Set up of the workshop sessions

- Pre-workshop meeting (led by EPG country director)
- Workshop agenda (shared ahead of virtual meetings)
  - Roles and responsibilities of all parties involved
  - General and specific objectives
  - Expected results
- Discussions during workshops
- Meeting notes (shared after virtual meetings)

## Pre-workshop meetings

In consultation with the MENA, EPG set up preparatory workshop meetings before each planned workshop to:

- present the relevance of the workshop and get the perspective from the MENA;
- discuss and collect questions in advance to allow AIR to address these during the workshop;
- encourage MENA staff to participate in the workshop with previous experience and existing documents.

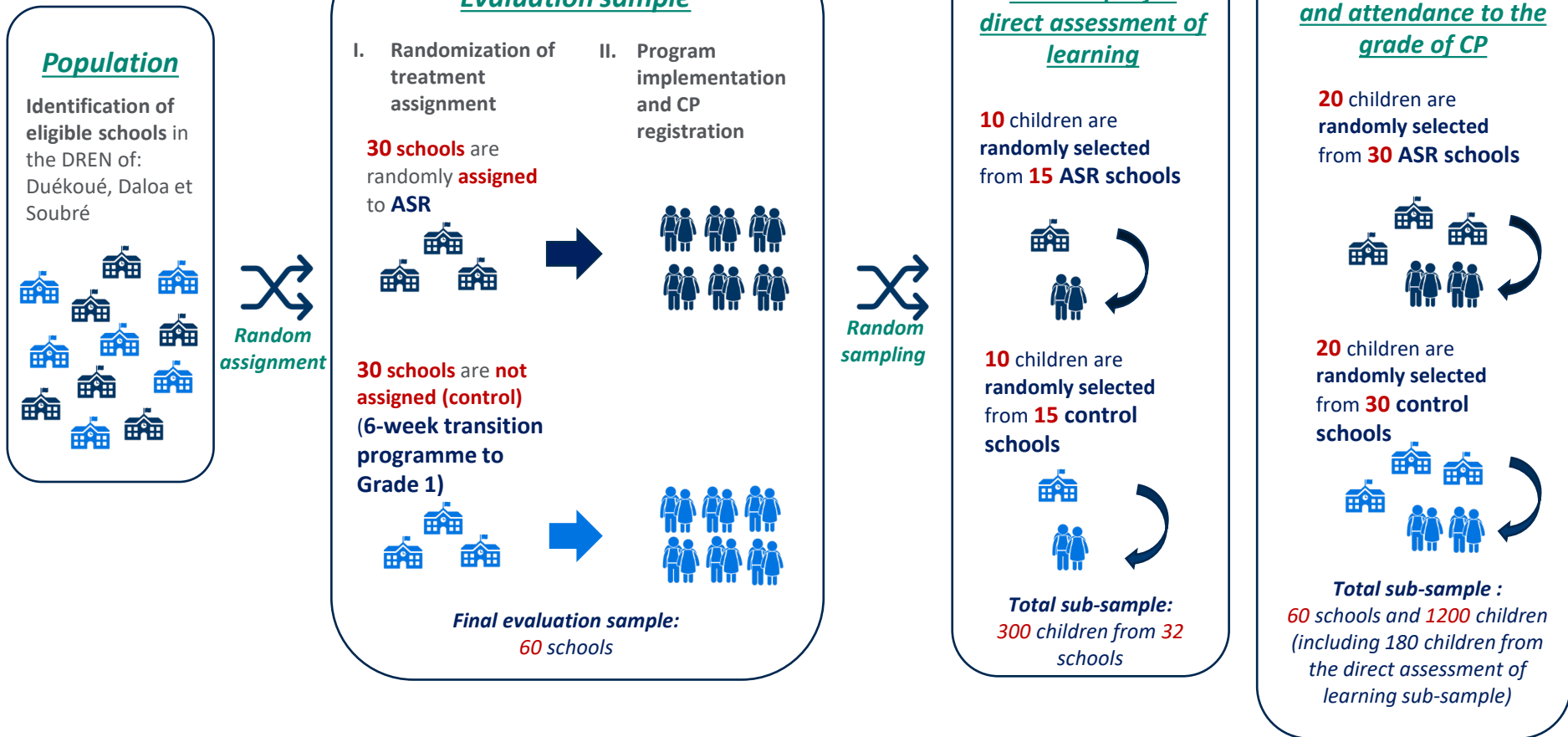
## Workshop 4: Sampling framework – 1/3

- EPG led the third workshop on the theory of change
- The purpose of this workshop was to ensure that all stakeholders had a clear understanding of the sampling requirements.
- The second objective were to formulate a plan for the sampling and randomization of schools as well as the selection of children.

## Workshop 4: Sampling framework – 2/3

- Review of criteria for school and children selection. For example:
  - Regions, level of urbanization, access, adequate sample size of children 5-6 years old, school proximity
  - Age range, Gender
- Discussion on sampling
  - Explanation and processes for conducting random assignment
  - Explanation and processes for conducting random sampling
- Need and example of information to be collected during the census
  - We asked to share what would be feasible for this activity

# Workshop 4: Sampling framework – 3/3



## Workshop 5: Implementation monitoring (attendance, fidelity and quality) – 1/2

- The objective of this workshop was to ensure that the MENA monitoring team is gathering information relevant to the evaluation (in addition to its primary function, to inform program development and improvement).
- The first goal was to decide how the MENA will track participation in programming (relevant for programme uptake and dosage).
- The second goal was to formulate a plan with the MENA to create a fidelity of implementation checklist.
- The third goal was to develop a shared understanding of how the MENA and AIR will gather and use quality monitoring.



## Workshop 5: Implementation monitoring (attendance, fidelity and quality) – 2/2

- Regarding attendance, we focused on understanding on the MENA plans to track that information. For example, how to ensure that the attendance records are accurate, can be transferred into electronic forms. Through this exercise, we found we needed to pay extra attention to this work with the MENA. AIR is exploring solutions to retrieve the attendance data they will collect.
- For Fidelity, we asked them to develop a fidelity checklist articulating the elements of the programme they wish to assess from the outset of implementation – the extent to which facilitators were recruited and trained as planned, the extent to which schools offered the ASR as planned (number of sessions), etc. We also asked them to consider what they would classify as “adequate” for each element in the checklist.

## Workshop 6: Cost analysis – 1/2

- The first objective of this workshop was to ensure that the MENA monitoring team would gather relevant information for cost analysis to inform the resources needed for the implementation of the ASR programme.
- The second objective was to formulate a plan with the MENA to create a mechanism to obtain the information needed.

## Workshop 6: Cost analysis – 2/2

- The MENA was not familiar with the process of a cost analysis. We provided an overview on the need, process and method for conducting a cost analysis.
- In terms of methods, we stressed the importance of identifying, with the help of MENA, the main activities (for example, training, implementation and supervision) involved in the implementation of the programme. We also articulated the difference between human, non-personal materials and resources. Finally, we provided examples of costing model.
- We tasked with identify the elements which contribute to the cost of the programme.

## Lesson learned

- Having these workshops with the MENA allowed us to co-construct some key element of the study.
- The workshop helped us ensure that tools and approaches could be used by the MENA in the future if they scale up programming.
- Pre-workshop prep meetings were important because it gave everyone an opportunity to clarify and ask before the workshop and to come prepared to engage.

Thank you

# Workshop 1: Overview of research framework and design, including instrument development

- Review of evaluation needs from MENA
  - Explanation on the need to conduct a census for treatment and control communities
  - Overview of sampling process
  - Pros vs cons between IDELA and MODEL
  - Discussion on the Data needs memo:
    - » School enrollment and attendance
    - » Attendance monitoring
    - » Cost analysis

## Workshop 2: Review of the school observation tools

- The objective of the workshop was to collaborate with the MENA to refine a draft observation tool with the goal of finalize it and ensure alignment with their needs and interests.
- Overview of observation tools
  - School observation tool
  - Classroom observation tool
- Review of changes made to tools
  - Health; Nutrition; Water, sanitation, and hygiene, Child protection; and Education
- Material resources of the classroom and schools

# Research Questions

This work is guided by seven research questions focusing on a combination of implementation, impacts, feedback from stakeholders, and costs. The questions are as follows:

1. To what extent was ASR programming implemented with fidelity?
2. What was the level of quality of ASR programming?
3. What was the level of participation among intended beneficiaries?
4. What was the impact of offering ASR programming on children's transitions to Grade 1?
5. What was the impact of offering ASR programming on parents' support for learning?
6. How was the ASR received by stakeholders, and what recommendations do they have for strengthening the programme?
7. What were the start-up and ongoing costs of the programme?