



Overview and Background

Education in Ethiopia has achieved incredible progress over the past two decades, with primary school attendance rates quadrupling. But attendance is only one piece to improving education results; the *quality of education* must also be given ample attention, especially when less than half of all primary school students are passing their end-of-year exams, and only four per cent of Grade 2 students can proficiently read (NAEA 2016 & EGRA 2014).

The Government has set a goal to create a new learning generation for the country. They understand that improving the learning of children will generate enhanced abilities, ultimately leading to the growth of the nation. But *real* learning can only be achieved if a system of teachers, school administrators, and government counterparts invest in strategies to improve the *quality of teaching*. One key initiative, led by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MoE), is *Assessment for Learning (AfL)* - where teachers are equipped with skills, resources and a supporting environment to shift their teaching approaches to become more active, continuous, competency-based, and engaging for students, with the ultimate goal of improving learning outcomes.

The Case for Investing in AfL

Global evidence demonstrates a strong link between formative classroom assessment and better student learning outcomes. After teachers implement AfL techniques, the students achievement tests improve significantly (Heubert & Hauser, 1999).

Unfortunately, this has not been the standard practice in Ethiopia – teachers typically assess

their students with simple tests repeated throughout the year that do not reference the national Minimum Learning Competencies (MLC). In addition, the final scores include high percentages from non-learning categories - like attendance rates, staff participation, and cleanliness - to boost their averages so that all students would pass. The results do not reflect the children's learning levels, creating a gap in skill development of children as well as in teachers' understanding of students' learning levels throughout the year.

AfL places real-time information gathering at the centre of the interventions so that teaching is better informed, lesson planning is better prepared, and wider support is given to children. With AfL, teachers rethink how they teach by placing the learner's progress at the heart of everything they do. What's more is that AfL fits within existing educational structures and has the utmost involvement by parents and caretakers, making it sustainable to last for many years.

AfL Strategy

UNICEF and the MoE have developed a strategy that includes a three-pronged approach:

1. Build the capacity of teachers to gather real-time information on student learning through continuous assessment approaches.
2. Incorporate AfL into current school initiatives so that reporting on assessment can better inform policy and planning.
3. Reach sustainability by 2020, by embedding AfL nationally into all primary and pre-primary schools and having the Government fully take over all AfL operations.

Interventions

AfL is currently operating in all regions of Ethiopia through the following interventions:

1. **Develop the AfL package** in the language and cultural context per region. This includes: quality assessment criteria, training modules, observation checklists, prototype questions, lesson planning tips, and other teaching resources.
2. **Build teacher capacity** to include AfL into classroom instruction with techniques to link MLCs to curriculum.
3. **Empower local leaders** from regional and *woreda* education offices as well as Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs) to provide systematic support to schools..
4. **Increase parental and community involvement** in the learning and performance of their children.
5. **Include AfL into national teacher-training programmes** at College's of Teacher Education (CTE) so that it can be built into the systematic training of teachers
6. **Build an AfL community** by engaging teachers, school directors, academics, and other education staff.
7. **Evaluate the impact** of AfL and the effect it has on student learning.



Ekram Nuri (left), 11, is now ranked third in her Grade 5 class of 39. In Grade 3 she was only ranked 14th, but with supportive teachers, she's been able to improve her learning. Abdella Abdeshi, 13, is ranked first in the same class and helps others when they are struggling. Their math teacher, Mr. Beshir Abu has integrated the new skills learned from the AfL training into his teaching practices. © UNICEF Ethiopia/ 2019/Amanda Westfall© UNICEF ETHIOPIA

Impact and Results

An evaluation in Oromia in 2017, midterm review in mid-2015, and multiple monitoring and evaluation visits indicate that great progress has been achieved through AfL. There has been an increased enthusiasm for learning and participation by children, leading to increased attendance and reduced drop-out rates. Teaching and assessment styles have changed, specifically in regards to better monitoring the progress of learners, incorporating proficient lesson planning techniques, and using new ways to enrich remedial teaching strategies. Teachers have learned how to ask questions that stimulate learning and provide feedback that improves the motivation of the learner. They now have a better understanding of the competency-based national curriculum and how to implement it for all learners. Local communities have become more engaged because they are receiving real-time information on the learning progress of their children, particularly parents, care-givers, local education offices, and PTSA members. Specific results in 2018 include:

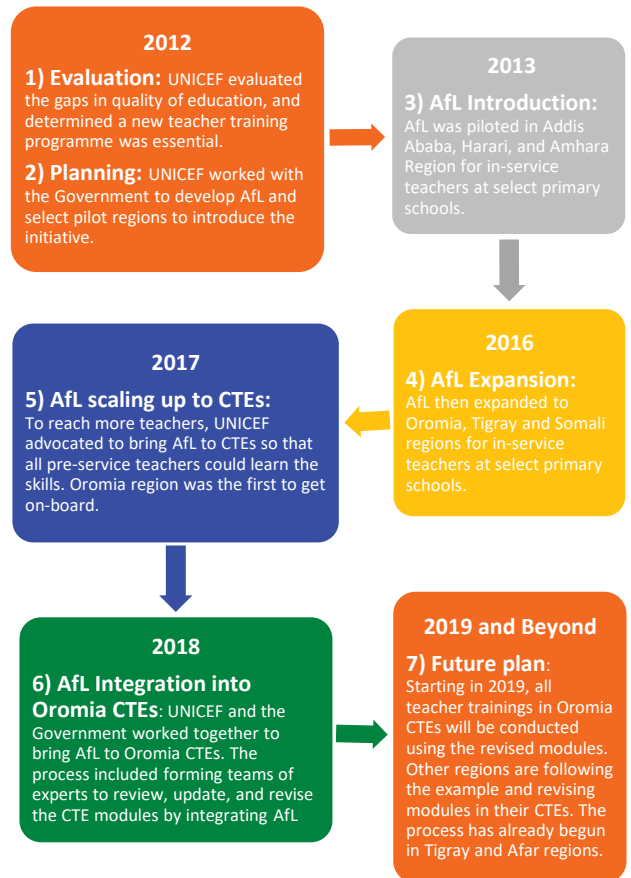
Beneficiary	Results as of March 2019
Children impacted by AfL and experiencing improved education	361,880 children from 676 schools
School teachers trained in AfL approaches	6,938 teachers
Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE) introduced with AfL training programmes.	33 CTEs in 8 regions
Regional education bureaus (REB) providing AfL supervision and support to schools.	8 REBs
AfL community members who access AfL resources and engage in networking opportunities to learn from others who implement the AfL approach.	28,655 community members

Scaling Up AfL for all Children

After introducing AfL in Ethiopia in 2013, the programme has shown a positive impact on student learning due to improvements made to teaching practices. However, only a small proportion of teachers are gaining these skills. UNICEF realized that a one-off strategy in select schools will never have a sustainable impact - only those schools will benefit from improved education. With a population of over 50 million children, it is imperative to think strategically and work within government systems - and through Ethiopia's 37 Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE), AfL expansion is possible.

In 2018, UNICEF began scaling up the programme in the CTEs of Oromia region by integrating AfL content into the training modules for pre-service and in-service teachers. Now, all future teachers in the region will learn AfL skills through their CTE training, and a lasting impact will be created for all children in all primary schools in the region.

The AfL Timeline in Ethiopia



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