SUSTAINING CHANGE

Occasional Paper #3

Foreword

This is the third Educate A Child (EAC) Occasional Paper. The purpose of EAC's occasional paper series is to recognize and bring topics pertinent to out of school children (OOSC) to the fore for discussion and further elaboration. The focus of this paper is sustainability. A standard international development objective is for project interventions to lead to sustained commitments beyond the lifetime of an individual project. For EAC, this means assurance that reaching OOSC remains a commitment within the dominant education system, and specific project interventions designed to support OOSC are continued. The aim of EAC since its inception in 2012 is to reach millions of children at the primary level around the world who are denied an education due to various barriers they face. However, it is insufficient to allow this objective to be met solely by individual project interventions in a specified period of time. Instead, another aim articulated by EAC is to influence the global agenda regarding marginalized children whose futures are limited by lack of educational opportunities. To this end, part of the role of EAC projects is to bring attention to mainstream national education systems alternative attainable pathways to reaching out of school children who are left out and underserved. EAC takes the next step in ensuring educational opportunities survive beyond the life of a project, and beyond a nation simply striving to reach universal primary education through the Millennium Development Goal #2 to which countries signed on, or the more recently negotiated Sustainable Development Goals for lifelong education. This paper presents the sustainability strategies employed by EAC co-funded projects and features concrete examples of commitments to OOSC beyond the life of the project with illustrations of specific strategies from projects that are closed or are near completion. EAC will continue to document successful sustainability strategies as additional projects come to an end.

Mary Joy Pigozzi, PhD
Executive Director, EAC

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Table of Contents

How EAC-supported projects create sustainable change

I.   Purpose

The purposes of this EAC Occasional Paper are to outline EAC's approach to sustainability in the context of the 2016 – 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and to demonstrate how this approach is practiced through EAC co-funding to projects in support of the primary education of out of school children (OOSC)

II.   What is Sustainability

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Sustainability and Education

Sustainable development is typically defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This concept was originally intended to capture the essence of living on the planet in ways that protect resources for the future. Over time, it has broadened to include social, economic, and environmental health and well-being for humans and habitat. One foundational contributor to a sustainable world is education, a key to improving people's lives and ability to thrive. The UN Sustainable Development Goals encompass multiple sectors in an effort to achieve lasting changes. None of the SDGs stand alone, however, they are related, and taken together, uplift the human condition. Education is inextricably linked with other SDGs.
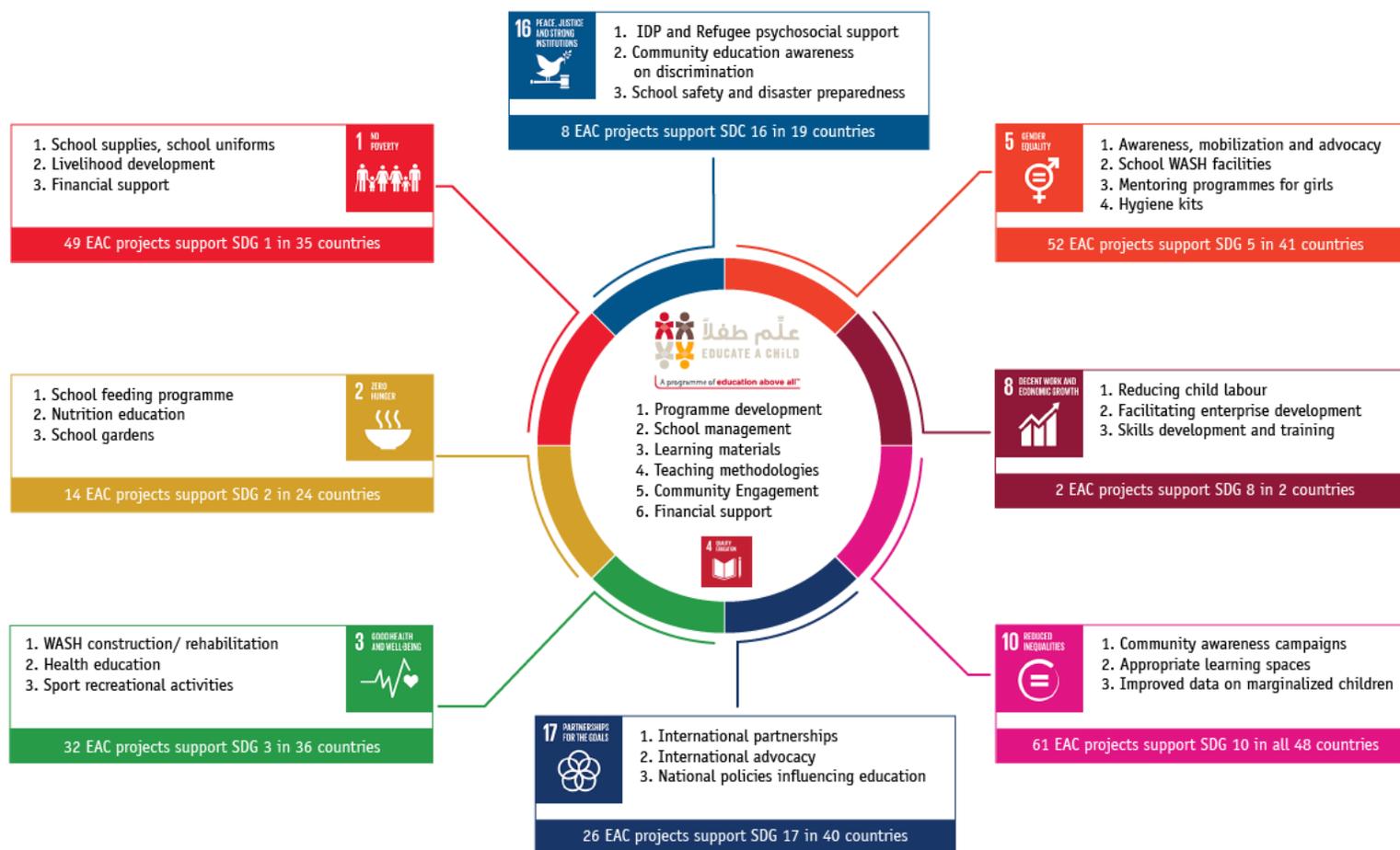
- Education can facilitate a break from the cycle of poverty, and therefore links with SDG1 No Poverty, and SDG10 Reduce Inequalities.
- SDG5 Gender Equality is a prevalent component of education initiatives, with emphasis on girls' participation and appropriate facilities.
- Often, because healthy children learn better, education projects include school feeding and health education, linking with SDG2 No Hunger, and SDG3 Health and Well-being.
- Education interventions to offer work and life skills contribute to SDG8 Decent Work.
- Education is also crucial to fostering tolerance between people and contributes to more peaceful societies, SDG16 Peace and Justice.

EAC and sustainability

EAC acts as a catalyst for sustainable change through partner projects. EAC partners are experienced bilateral organizations, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies aiming at sustaining the process of economic and social development of marginalized children through the implementation of education projects. The goal of EAC's partners is to create lasting changes and long-term impacts beyond the term of the project so the forgotten and invisible children who are denied an education continue to be recognized and supported.

Sustainability is considered in EAC partner selection. Proposals approved for EAC support are required to demonstrate strong likelihood that commitment to reaching OOSC will continue beyond the life of the project. Proposals provide detailed descriptions of their sustainability strategies and indicate how they expect to engender commitment to OOSC within the education systems and communities in which their projects are implemented.
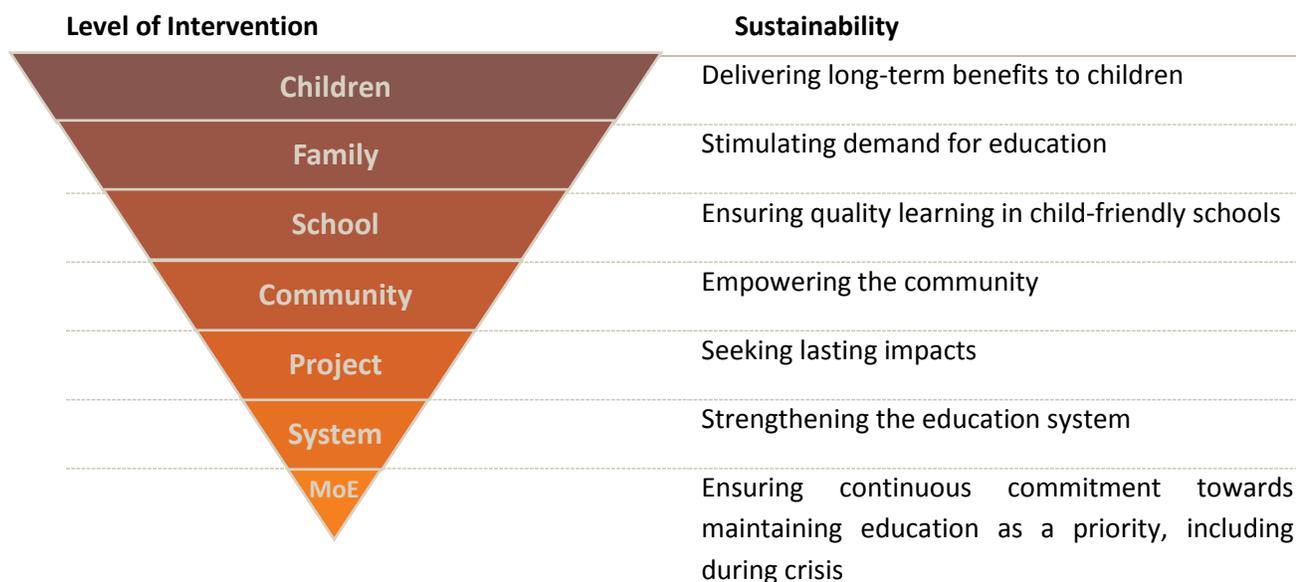
Illustrative EAC project strategies linked to the SDGs

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
1. IDP and Refugee psychosocial support
2. Community education awareness on discrimination
3. School safety and disaster preparedness

8 EAC projects support SDC 16 in 19 countries

1 NO POVERTY
1. School supplies, school uniforms
2. Livelihood development
3. Financial support

49 EAC projects support SDG 1 in 35 countries

5 GENDER EQUALITY
1. Awareness, mobilization and advocacy
2. School WASH facilities
3. Mentoring programmes for girls
4. Hygiene kits

52 EAC projects support SDG 5 in 41 countries

2 ZERO HUNGER
1. School feeding programme
2. Nutrition education
3. School gardens

14 EAC projects support SDG 2 in 24 countries

EDUCATE A CHILD
A programme of education above all™

1. Programme development
2. School management
3. Learning materials
4. Teaching methodologies
5. Community Engagement
6. Financial support

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
1. Reducing child labour
2. Facilitating enterprise development
3. Skills development and training

2 EAC projects support SDG 8 in 2 countries

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
1. WASH construction/ rehabilitation
2. Health education
3. Sport recreational activities

32 EAC projects support SDG 3 in 36 countries

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
1. Community awareness campaigns
2. Appropriate learning spaces
3. Improved data on marginalized children

61 EAC projects support SDG 10 in all 48 countries

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
1. International partnerships
2. International advocacy
3. National policies influencing education

26 EAC projects support SDG 17 in 40 countries

III.   EAC-supported projects create and sustain change

Sustainability at all levels of intervention

EAC partners implement diverse and combined interventions at all levels to ensure positive changes beyond the end of project, as illustrated in the figure below.

Level of Intervention	Sustainability
Children	Delivering long-term benefits to children
Family	Stimulating demand for education
School	Ensuring quality learning in child-friendly schools
Community	Empowering the community
Project	Seeking lasting impacts
System	Strengthening the education system
MoE	Ensuring continuous commitment towards maintaining education as a priority, including during crisis

Types of interventions supporting long-term changes

Different types of interventions supported by EAC contribute to sustainable change. Typical project interventions are identified in seven categories.

1. **Ensuring continuous commitment towards maintaining education as a priority,** including during crisis *(national & supra-national level)*
   o Support of policy impacts and changes through policy advocacy and dialogue
   o Alignment with education and out of school children (OOSC) priorities at all levels: international (Education For All, Sustainable Development Goals), national education plan, as well as regional and local levels if applicable
   o Fostering partnership with Governments and other NGOs, including through public-private partnership with government, private sector partners and other NGOs
   o Funding mechanisms: ensure State funding (commitment), additional donor funds, donor coordination

2. **Strengthening the education system** *(system level)*
   o Capacity building of education government officials

- o Improvement of the data management system: data collection and analysis system
- o Strengthening of the education management information system

3. **Empowering the community** *(community level)*
   - o Community engagement and empowerment: Parent and School Committees
   - o Community schools' ownership
   - o Preparation and support of communities in maintaining schools, not only from a physical perspective, but also in terms of management and provision of classes

4. **Seeking lasting impacts** *(project level)*
   - o Identifying and sharing best practices for potential scale-up
   - o Ensuring model replication
   - o Ensuring program flexibility and adaptability

5. **Ensuring quality learning for all in child-friendly schools** *(school level)*
   - o Ensuring durability of infrastructure (schools, boats…) through school/classroom construction and rehabilitation
   - o Capacity building of teachers and school management stakeholders for well-managed schools and well trained teachers
   - o Learning methodologies, such as self-learning materials
   - o Curriculum subjects: environmental health, personal health, conflict resolution
   - o Supporting access to learning materials through digitized learning materials or access to computers
   - o Alternative learning environments to close achievement gaps
   - o Building WASH facilities

6. **Stimulating demand** *(family level)*
   - o Raising awareness on the importance of education for boys and girls
   - o Providing financial support and reducing poverty through saving and loan program

7. **Delivering long-term benefits to children** *(individual level)*
   - o Providing quality education to children
   - o Integration with public school system: equivalence scheme and programmes linking Accelerated Learning Programmes and Basic Education
   - o Promotion of health and hygiene practices
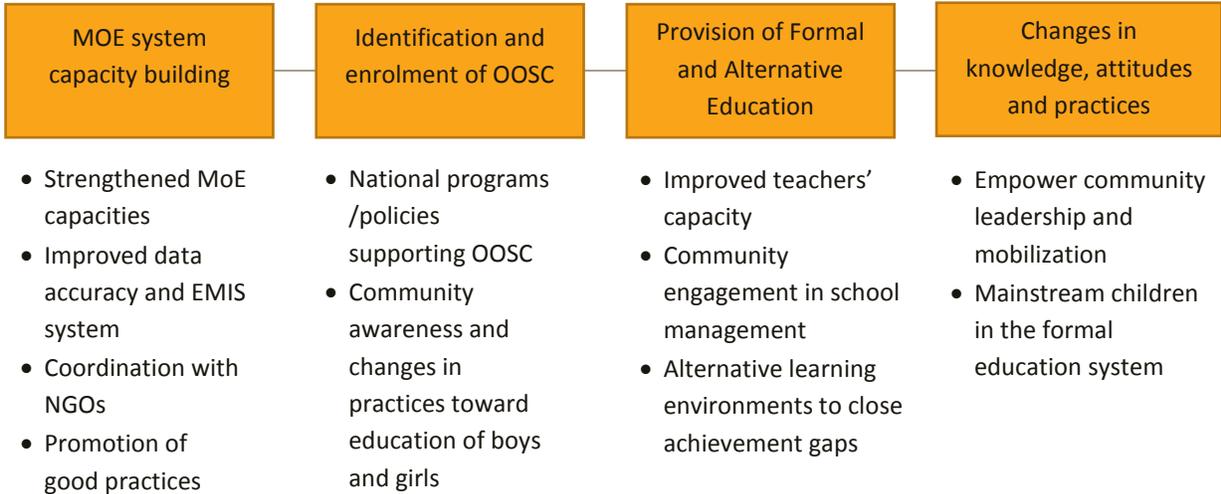   - o Provision of psychosocial support

Illustrative EAC supported interventions related to sustainability components

Sustainability components		Policy change, strengthening, and advocacy	National system strengthening	Community/ school level capacity building	Infrastructure and resource development	Changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices
Formal and alternative learning programmes	Alternative learning programmes for OOSC					X
	Identification and enrolment of OOSC in formal system					X
	Mainstreaming children in non-formal programmes into formal system					X
Capacity building	Development of teachers' and facilitators' capacities			X		X
	PTA training			X		
	Contribute to strengthening MoE capacities		X			
Infrastructure	School/classroom construction				X	
	Water and sanitation system construction				X	X
Awareness raising	National awareness campaigns		X			X
	Community and local awareness campaigns					X
Community engagement	Community engagement in school management and enrolment of OOSC			X		X
	Establishment of students' committees			X		X
Data quality	Improved data accuracy and EMIS system		X			
Coordination	Support coordination between government, UN entities and NGOs		X			X
	Identify and promote project's good practices for potential scale-up		X			X
Policies	Supporting Education strategy development	X	X			
	Supporting the development of	X	X			

Sustainability components		Policy change, strengthening, and advocacy	National system strengthening	Community/ school level capacity building	Infrastructure and resource development	Changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices
	National programs / policies toward OOSC					
	Alignment with national priorities and support national programs	X				
	Advocacy to promote policies supporting OOSC	X				
	Making OOSC a part of national education strategy	X				
WASH	Promote health and hygiene practices					X
	Provision of Sanitation facilities				X	

EAC interventions for sustainability

EAC's partners ensure sustainability through interventions designed to create durable change. These interventions are intended to contribute to the capacity at all levels to continue a commitment to reaching OOSC. Typical interventions at the Ministry of Education (MOE) level, the local level, the education strategy, and the intended changes in attitudes and behaviour are outlined below.

MOE system capacity building	Identification and enrolment of OOSC	Provision of Formal and Alternative Education	Changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices
• Strengthened MoE capacities • Improved data accuracy and EMIS system • Coordination with NGOs • Promotion of good practices	• National programs /policies supporting OOSC • Community awareness and changes in practices toward education of boys and girls	• Improved teachers' capacity • Community engagement in school management • Alternative learning environments to close achievement gaps	• Empower community leadership and mobilization • Mainstream children in the formal education system

Specific project interventions leading to sustained commitment are best illustrated by concrete examples of project sustainability once they are closed or are near completion. A few selected EAC co-funded projects are featured as examples.

Example #1: EAC and Bharti Foundation India

The Bharti Foundation is working to accelerate enrolment and improve retention of out of school children (OOSC) into full courses of primary education. They rely on trained volunteers who assist with the established Learning Centres, so that the community has an investment in the success of the centre and the participation of their children. The **Education Volunteers** to run the Learning Centres were specifically chosen from the same village so that even after withdrawal of project activities these volunteers would continue to work in the Learning Centres and will ensure that the children mainstreamed by them continue their studies. The volunteers were trained on innovative teaching tools and other active learning techniques so that they can even by hired by the Government in case of future need. Thus, not only is this a measure to sustain the intervention, it is also a contributor to livelihoods and economic empowerment.

Example #2: UNICEF South Sudan

UNICEF's Delivering Quality Basic Education in Challenging Circumstances project was designed to assist out of school children (OOSC) to gain access to a quality and relevant education, including to support children to remain in school. Furthermore the project worked with schools to enhance emergency preparedness and child protection measures, given the instability and security risks the country experienced. The EAC-UNICEF programme included several components contributing to sustainability such as **capacity building** of local partners and teachers, reinforcement of education systems, and alignment with national sector education priorities. The programme worked closely with the local community programme through the PTA/SMC structure that allows training of the local community to be competent and willing to support the schools after the program ends. This included trainings in school management as well as advocacy with the local community on the importance of children enrolment, especially girls. UNICEF also supported the education sector in infrastructure development of schools including WASH facilities, using a community approach which will ensure local community members maintain schools facilities beyond the project lifespan.

Example #3: Ethiopia Imagine 1 Day

Imagine 1 Day's The Bale Out of School Children Initiative (BOOSCI) aimed to enrol 28,599 OOSC and increase the primary school net enrolment rate in Ethiopia's Dello Mena and Meda Welabu districts from 52% to 87% by the end of 2016. The communities have felt a high sense of ownership around the project, creating the necessary capacity within the communities and government leaders to sustain key project outcomes. At the start of the project, all partners signed a memorandum of understanding, which clearly outlined each partner's roles and accountabilities during the project implementation, and after project completion. The project outcomes were to be sustainable without additional external resources, as the project ensured high participation from local governments and communities from the outset. At the end of the project, 69 out of 103 schools created new **income generating activities** which will continue to support the schools and sustain activities started under the project.

Example #4: Cote d'Ivoire NRC

The Bridging Tomorrow project responds to the needs of out of school over aged children (including IDPs, returnees, and host community children affected by the post-election crisis) in western Côte d'Ivoire (District des Montagnes) and supports durable solutions by reintegrating these children into the formal school system. The project provides an emergency education package that allows out of school children to follow a one-year accelerated curriculum comprising two years of primary school for 9-14 year old children who have not had the possibility to attend school due to the conflict, and supports their reintegration into the formal system. Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) are flexible age-appropriate programmes that promote access to education in a shorter timeframe for disadvantaged groups, over-age out-of-school children and youth who missed out or had their education interrupted due to poverty, violence, conflict and crisis. The goal of AEPs are to provide these learners with equivalent certified competencies as in the formal system, in an accelerated timeframe, with learners transitioning to mainstream education at some intermediary point, or completing an entire primary cycle within the programme. The monitoring and evaluation data reveal that 81% of pupils were in the formal school system three years after the completion of the bridging classes. **The ministry of education has included bridging classes' methodology in its strategy to achieve education for all by the year 2020.**

Example #5: UNESCO Iraq

The UNESCO Iraq project aimed to bring 180,000 Iraqi out of school children into government schools and give them access to accelerated learning programme centres for catch up classes. Both ministries of education and directorates of education were fully committed in the implementation of the project. This was visibly demonstrated by the MOE exceeding the financial contribution originally planned. The **scale–up strategy** developed with MoEs and DoEs represents the main document which recommends policy reforms, a new monitoring and evaluation framework and re-insertion criteria for OOSC. Moreover, the strategy contributes additional sustainability mechanisms, including improved data collection through EMIS4EACI, and a wide training plan for MoEs/DoEs staff, teachers, head teachers, schools and local community.

Example #6: Kenya GCN

The Girl Child Network's Enhancing Girl's Participation in Education in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands project is working to improve access, retention, and learning performance to prevent early marriage for out of school girls located in marginalized regions in Kenya. **County Education Boards** have been constituted and strengthened. Their mandate is to oversee in consultation with the county government, the operation and management of basic education, early childhood care and education programmes in the county; coordinate and monitor education and training in the County on behalf of the national government and the county government; and interpret national policies in education based on the county's needs. The boards have adopted the county-specific education plans, policy guidelines and policies being disseminated. They have strengthened education structures that will remain within communities even after the end of the project. Education development is now planned and prioritized with input from a variety of stakeholders and in line with the county plan, unlike before the project began.

Example #7: Care Somalia

Care's Educate Your Children! Project contributed to sustainable and relevant primary education for 30,100 out of school children (OOSC) across three the regions of Puntland, Somaliland and Mogadishu. The aim was to enrol OOSC in school, complete a full cycle of primary education and demonstrate improved learning. To ensure local ownership and sustainability, the project proactively engaged the Ministry of Education in all the regions throughout the project's life cycle. During the launch, the project signed a detailed implementation **Memorandum of Understanding** with the Federal Ministry of Education, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each partner. The project worked closely with other departments within the Ministry, including the departments of Non Formal Education, Teacher Recruitment and Training, Policy and Planning and the offices of the Minister and Director General. Each department was actively involved in the execution of project activities that came under their respective mandates, thus embedding the project implementation within the various departments of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry was also involved in the monitoring, evaluation and review of the progress of the project. This has greatly contributed to the ownership of the project, as evidenced by the commitment of the Ministry to continue to pay teachers' salaries for 97 teachers trained by the project.

IV.   Conclusion

As inspired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, EAC has a commitment to reaching underserved children around the world who are denied a basic education, every child's right. In all projects supported by EAC, sustainability is considered a critical element. No individual project intervention is expected to last forever, as the very definition of a funded project is a limited operating time frame. Thus, if the larger goal of reaching OOSC is to be realized, it requires long term commitment from national institutions, communities, and stakeholders to ensure the effort does not end when a particular project concludes. This paper is a preliminary view of the types of interventions EAC promotes that result in lasting commitment from the countries served to continue promoting actions that result in all children realizing their right to an education. One element that predominates is the involvement of the larger institution from the beginning, so that they are invested, have the capacity, and are committed to doing what is necessary to continue reaching underserved populations. Another factor that is often mentioned as leading to sustained change is heavy involvement of the local community, in planning, design, management, and implementation of the strategy. These two approaches together, top down and bottom up, are a powerful combination in ensuring successful interventions are sustained.