



END TERM EVALUATION REPORT

OF

ADAPTING ASSESSMENTS INTO POLICY AND LEARNING (ADAPT): ADOLESCENT 21ST CENTURY SKILLS PROJECT IMPLEMENTED IN KENYA, UGANDA, AND TANZANIA

October 2023



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



Canada



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers wish to thank the Global E-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) Adapting assessments into policy and learning (ADAPT): Adolescent 21st century skills project team.

The research team is also appreciative to all those who participated in the study. The endline study would not have been possible without the active participation of those involved in the project.

COPYRIGHT

Copyright notice

Adapting assessment into policy and learning (ADAPT) is implemented by a consortium of 3 organizations namely; Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) as the Lead Organization, Makerere University's College of Education and External Studies (CEES) and The University of Notre Dame's Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (GCDWC). The contents of the report are copyright-protected under international laws. GESCI, CEES and GCDWC hold the right to reproduce and use the contents of the report. No duplication or transmission in any form – print, electronic or otherwise – is allowed without permission. Permission may be granted on a case-by-case basis with the permission from GESCI. For permission write to GESCI (**info@gesci.org**)

The views and analysis in the report are those of the writers and do not reflect those of Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) as the Lead Organization, Makerere University's College of Education and External Studies (CEES) and The University of Notre Dame's Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (GCDWC).

Prepared by:

Move on Afrika Ltd

P.O. BOX 33565 – 00600

Email: moveonafrika24@gmail.com

GSM: 0720 – 455 120 / 0725 760 600

Website: www.moveonafrika.org

Nairobi, Kenya

GESCI Editorial Team :

Samuel Otieno

Christine Akello

Shaylor Mwanje

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ACRONYMS | 5 |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| 1.1 About the Consortium | 7 |
| 1.2 Project Background and Context..... | 7 |
| 1.3 Purpose and Objective of the Evaluation..... | 7 |
| 1.4 Scope of Evaluation | 8 |
| CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY | 9 |
| 2.1 Evaluation Design and Approach..... | 9 |
| 2.2 Inception and Planning | 9 |
| 2.3 Data Collection Approaches | 9 |
| 2.4 Data Management and Quality Assurance..... | 9 |
| 2.5 Ethical and Safeguarding Principles | 10 |
| 2.8 Limitations and Mitigations..... | 10 |
| CHAPTER THREE: EVALUATION FINDINGS | 11 |
| 3.1 Relevance..... | 11 |
| 3.1.1 Relevance of the Project Interventions to the Needs of Beneficiaries | 11 |
| 3.1.2 Relevance of Project Design | 11 |
| 3.1.3 Alignment of Project Goals and Objectives to Policy Interventions | 12 |
| 3.3 Effectiveness..... | 12 |
| 3.3.1 Objective One: Generate Lessons From Past And Present National And Regional Learning Assessments And Initiatives To Enhance National Data-Driven Decision Making..... | 13 |
| 3.3.2 Objective Two: Build Capacity Of A Dynamic Learning Community To Integrate And Assess 21st Century Skills And Support Utilization Of Learning Assessments At The School And Sub- National Levels..... | 14 |
| 3.3.3 Objective Three: Mobilize Policy Uptake On The Utilization Of Learning Assessments In The Education Plans, Curriculum Frameworks And Teacher Development..... | 16 |
| 3.3 Impact..... | 19 |
| 3.4 Efficiency..... | 20 |
| 3.5 Sustainability | 21 |
| 3.6 Challenges, Lessons Learnt and Best Practices | 22 |
| 3.6.1 Challenges..... | 22 |
| 3.6.2 Lessons Learnt | 23 |
| 3.6.3 Best Practices | 24 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS..... | 24 |
| 4.1 Conclusions | 24 |
| 4.2 Recommendations..... | 25 |
| ANNEX 1: LIST OF RESPONDENTS ENGAGED..... | 27 |

ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------|--|
| ADAPT | Adapting Assessment into Policy and Learning |
| ALiVE | Assessment of Life skills and Values in East Africa |
| BECF | Basic Education Curriculum Framework |
| CBA | Competency-Based Assessment |
| CBC | Competency Based Curriculum |
| CEES | College of Education and External Studies |
| CEMASTEA | Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa |
| COPS | Community of Practice |
| CSL | Community Service Learning |
| DSM | Dar es Salaam |
| EAC | East Africa Community |
| FICH | Foundation for Inclusive Community Help |
| GC-DWC | Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child |
| GESCI | Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative |
| GPE | Global Partnership for Education |
| ICT | Information, Communication and Technology |
| IDRC | International Development Research Centre |
| KICD | Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| KIX | Knowledge Innovations Exchange |
| KNEC | Kenya National Examination Centre |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| MOEVT | Ministry of Education and Vocational Training |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NAG | National Advisory Group |
| NECTA | National Examination Council of Tanzania |
| OCODE | Organization for Community Development |
| RELI | Regional Education Learning Initiative |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |

| | |
|--------|--|
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedures |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TSC | Teachers Service Commission |
| UNEB | Uganda National Examination Board |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 About the Consortium

The Consortium Lead: Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) which has since 2010, worked with governments and partners in providing strategic supports to develop and implement models of good ICT-based practice for high-quality education & training and to build effective leadership abilities in ICT and Knowledge Society development among Government officials across the Developing world. Much of GESCI's work is with Government Ministries and their related agencies responsible for education, science & technology, innovation, and vocational training. GESCI therefore brings in significant experience in engaging with practitioners and policymakers in the region.

Partner 1: Makerere University's College of Education and External Studies (CEES) is a respected center of excellence in the development, research and application of professional educational approaches in response to national and global needs.

Partner 2: The University of Notre Dame's Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (GC-DWC) collaborates with researchers and practitioners around the world to ensure the wellbeing—physical, emotional, social, and cognitive—of children and adolescents in low-resource and conflict-affected settings.

1.2 Project Background and Context

Through support from Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC) under the Knowledge Innovations Exchange (KIX) Program, GESCI lead a consortium of 3 organizations to implement a two-year Adapting assessment into policy and learning (ADAPT): Adolescent 21st Century skills in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania project. This consortium brought together 3 organizations with experience connecting the practitioner, education research and policy engagement worlds namely, Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) as the Lead Organization, Makerere University's College of Education and External Studies (CEES) and The University of Notre Dame's Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (GC-DWC).

The project's overall objective was to promote acquisition of 21st century skills for adolescents by strengthening utilization of data from learning assessments in curriculum design, adaptation, and delivery. The project specifically sought to;

1. Generate lessons from past and present national and regional learning assessments and initiatives to enhance national data-driven decision making.
2. Build capacity of a dynamic learning community to integrate and assess 21st century skills and support utilization of learning assessments at the school and sub-national (district/county/region) levels.
3. Mobilize policy uptake on the utilization of learning assessments in the education plans, curriculum frameworks and teacher development.

1.3 Purpose and Objective of the Evaluation

The evaluation aimed to help the project team understand and document the main results and changes brought on by the programme in the assessment utilization space, and how boundary actors, and stakeholders contributed to those changes / or role they have played in those changes.

This will inform the project team on key impact areas and support in understanding improvement needs for future similar programming.

1.4 Scope of Evaluation

The evaluation was conducted in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania targeting state and non-state actors working in the education sector to promote acquisition of 21st century skills for adolescents by strengthening utilization of data from learning assessments in curriculum design, adaptation, and delivery

CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Design and Approach

The end-term evaluation design involved qualitative data collection methodology. Qualitative methods included use of Key informant interviews and secondary data analysis of project documents including proposal, project reports and publications. Purposive sampling approach was used for selection of respondents to participate in Key informant interviews. In view of the objectives and the proposed data collection method, and to make the process as participatory as possible, a participatory data collection process was adopted. This was meant to enhance ownership of evaluation results and to enable triangulation of data across a range of stakeholders. Inputs on recommendations were gathered from all stakeholders as part of the evaluation process.

2.2 Inception and Planning

An inception meeting was held between the consultant and GESCI staff to facilitate an understanding of the scope of work and establish a common ground in terms of approach towards conducting the end-term evaluation exercise. During the inception period, the project staff reviewed the proposed study tools and provided input and comments on how to improve the tools for effective data collection. The project team enhanced and shared information on the data collection sources and identified criteria for mobilizing the respondents. After the inception meeting, a review of the inception report and the study tools was done to incorporate the comments by the project team and the revised inception report shared with GESCI for approval before embarking on data collection.

To identify the respondents to be engaged in the evaluation, purposive sampling approach was utilized. The sample approach was used in selecting individuals from the target population to participate in Key informants. Key informants (KIIs) were drawn from Knowledge Champions; Program Managers, Finance Manager, Communications Specialist; Civil Society Organizations/NGOs; Academic Institutions; Government Stakeholders and Independent Experts in the target project implementation sites of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

2.3 Data Collection Approaches

Desk and Literature Review: The desk review was an important part of the analysis and involved organizing and synthesizing available information, project reports and reports from government and development partners. Activities included scanning available literature, analyzing secondary data, and synthesizing information that explained and elaborated how the project had contributed to the desired goals and outcome. Information collected through secondary data; helped assess the project implementation status, achievements of project goals and objectives and defining challenges and recommendations that emerged during project implementation. Some of the project documents reviewed included: GESCI Proposal, GESCI ADAPT technical reports and Project Reports.

Key Informant Interviews: A total of 41 KIIs were conducted from the 3 project implementation countries with respondents drawn from GESCI staff; Knowledge Champions; CSOs/NGOs; Academic Institutions; Government Stakeholders; Community Stakeholder; Independent Expert; Examination Bodies and Media. The aim of the KIIs was to understand and document the main results and changes brought on by the programme in the assessment utilization space, and how boundary actors, and stakeholders contributed to those changes.

2.4 Data Management and Quality Assurance

Qualitative data were transcribed and translated based on the Key informant interviews. Transcription from Kiswahili to English was done and carefully considered linguistic nuances. Protocols for coding was established to ensure each transcript was topically categorized and content organized into themes that were informed by the assessment objectives and purpose, interview guide content, and preliminary findings based on secondary data analysis.

2.5 Ethical and Safeguarding Principles

The evaluation paid attention to the ethical issues as highlighted in the ToR and as was discussed at inception. Among the ethical considerations that were adhered to included.

- a) Informed consent:** The following measures were taken into consideration to secure informed consent and assent of the respondents: Explaining the objectives of the study exercise, the kind of information required and the intended use, and above all, providing reasons for identifying the study respondents as participant in the study.
- b) Responsibility for study participants:** The study team endeavored to ensure that respondents were adequately aware of the study purpose and objectives. Participants were made aware of how to contact the evaluation team within a reasonable time period should they wish to confirm what information was included in the report.
- c) Data quality and Confidentiality:** Protection of information and data on behalf of the community was highly considered and enforced. Through set Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that emphasized the confidentiality measures typically stipulated in data protection measures. The study team adhered to SOPs regarding multiple-step, rights access verification, password protection, and data encryption during transmission, archiving, storage, and retrieval.

2.8 Limitations and Mitigations

- a) Unavailability of Respondents:** The evaluation involved multiple actors and gathered responses from a diverse set of respondents. One of the challenges posed by this was the unavailability of some respondents due to busy schedules. This was mitigated by improving on communication with the study respondents and where respondents were not available on the specified dates of interview, their interviews were rescheduled.
- b) Time frame:** Field work was done targeting all the three countries (Kenya Uganda, Tanzania) where the project was being implemented. Considering the proposed time frame for the study, this required that the evaluation team worked in multiple teams especially during the data collection processes to ensure that no time was lost and that the study was conducted within the provided time frame.

CHAPTER THREE: EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

3.1.1 Relevance of the Project Interventions to the Needs of Beneficiaries

The evaluation findings established that the project interventions on utilization of learning assessments were instrumental in promoting integration of 21st-century values and skills integration in the education sector. The CSOs and academic institutions engaged reported that strengthening capacities of actors and establishing learning communities in the three countries resulted to evidence generation and information sharing on how assessments can be utilized to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the education sector which are instrumental in producing well-rounded individuals capable of thriving in various aspects of life.

The holistic approach to lobby for the utilization of data obtained from learning assessments to influence curriculum review and development processes was highlighted as a key strategic approach that enabled the project to address challenges not only in assessment methodologies but also in the broader context of curriculum design, teacher preparation, and student involvement, thereby contributing to a more robust and effective learning environment.

With on-going implementation and roll-out of the Competency Based Framework in education systems in the three East African Countries, policymakers reported that the project interventions were timely as they enabled the creation of an open- source learning platform for continuous learning and engagement and encouraged the utilization of assessment utilization by varied actors in the education systems in the three countries. The project interventions also elevated the focus on measurement of 21st century Skills in East Africa and the use of data for policy-level decision making in the education sector.

3.1.2 Relevance of Project Design

The design of the ADAPT project responded to the prevailing challenges presented on poor utilization of learning assessments especially on current education curriculum designs in the three countries which from time have been prioritizing theoretical subjects at the expense of practical and real-life issues crucial for the citizens' survival. Inadequate utilization of learning assessments have resulted to limited development of strategies to equip learners with 21st-century values and skills in schools.

To address this gap, the project design facilitated broad discourse with policy actors and stakeholders in the education sector which allowed for a deeper understanding of the need to use data in promoting a positive and forward-looking approach in aligning education with the dynamic requirements of the 21st century.

*“The best bit was carrying out the research first. The formative study on just to understand how learning assessments are being utilized in the three countries. I have been to all three countries on the ground and I have interacted with the policy makers. I know one of the bits that all the teams in the three countries have come to appreciate was that the report came out, told them what is happening, what kinds of learning assessments exist, what data is there and they appreciated that. The fact that it was an initiative through the project made it good.” - **KII with Project Staff***

I would say that ADAPT fed into an already positive sector priority or an assessment. The government wanted to make us specifically a formative assessment, a big issue as part of the curriculum reform. But I think they did not have the details of how can we do it. I think I would say formative assessment was there, but without detail, without meat. So ADAPT, managed to give some meat to the skeleton that the government had planned on as part of the

Conducting comprehensive research in the form of a formative study was a key strength under the project design and approach that facilitated broad understanding of the current status of utilization of learning assessments in the three countries. The formative study ensured that the project successfully shed light on existing learning assessment practices, types of assessments, and available data which help in providing a clear picture of the education landscape.

I think we are creating a robust learning community. And this has been happening since the project began. And even in that learning community, if you look at ALIVE and ADAPT they kind of share the same learning community, the same members in ADAPT the same members in ALIVE kind of the same people. This has been done locally but also globally. And you realize that we've been intentional in conducting sessions, for this planning community, we normally have got what we call the learning shops.” -KII with Academic Institution

3.1.3 Alignment of Project Goals and Objectives to Policy Interventions

In most African countries, educational reforms have been implemented as a global response to aligning of curriculum to 21st century skills. At the regional level, the ADAPT project interventions were aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EAC curriculum framework which is competence-based since competencies provide an effective platform for experiential learning and achievement of the 21st Century skills such as critical thinking, innovativeness and problem solving among others and provides a sound basis for socioeconomic development as well as shaping the child into a productive citizen.

At the national level, the project goals and interventions complimented ongoing reforms of the national curriculum in Kenya that seeks to produce citizens equipped with relevant and quality knowledge with national values and social competencies and to equip them with the 21st century skills and competencies in line with Kenya Vision 2030, Kenya Constitution 2010, Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF), The National Curriculum Policy (2018) and other local educational policies.

In Uganda, the project objectives were aligned to existing interventions by The National Curriculum Development Centre from 2020 on ensuring the current curriculum provides learners with 21st Century skills which include; critical thinking, creativity, collaboration or teamwork, communication, information literacy, ICT, and flexibility.

In Tanzania, the ADAPT project interventions were in harmony with various policy documents, including the Education for Self-Reliance philosophy, the 2014 Education and Training Policy and the National Curriculum Framework for Basic and Teacher Education that promote the utilization of 21st century skills through the basic education.

3.3 Effectiveness

3.3.1 Objective One: Generate Lessons From Past And Present National And Regional Learning Assessments And Initiatives To Enhance National Data-Driven Decision Making.

#Utilization of Assessments in Policy and Decision Making

There has been significant progress in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to utilize lessons from past and present national assessments in influencing decision-making in the design and delivery of education curriculum at various education levels. This has been achieved by ensuring that curriculum review and development processes are data-driven and engaging various stakeholders from government and CSOs working in the education sector through technical working groups and national and regional forums.

Current education policies in the three implementing countries, particularly the new lower secondary curriculum, have undergone significant reforms to incorporate lessons learned from past and present national assessments. Evidence from the evaluation indicates there has been a deliberate shift towards focusing on the acquisition of 21st-century skills and values starting from primary education to higher secondary education and this showcases conscious efforts to align the curriculum with the evolving needs of society and equip students with skills deemed essential for success in the 21st century.

Through working under the umbrella of RELI, The ADAPT project focused on leveraging the innovative work of ALiVE to strengthen the utilization of learning assessment data. As a result, academic institutions and education bodies reported that there has also been a positive shift in government interest in utilizing the ALiVE data and evidence generation particularly on 21st Century Skills within the national curriculum design and delivery mechanisms in the three countries. The evidence-based approach has resulted in increased government engagement in understanding the ADAPT project's objectives and outcomes and led to increased collaborative efforts with various government departments to enhance national-data driven decision making in the education sector.

For example, lessons generated from ALiVE 2022 and National Household Assessments influenced the development of the National Family Policy and KICD's manual on parental engagement that emphasizes on the utilization of life skills at the family level in Kenya. The lessons generated from previous assessments have also been instrumental in influencing the Basic Curriculum Education Former (BCEF) which aims at incorporating life skills and values at various educational levels.

In Tanzania, the Tanzania Institute of Education highlighted that findings and lessons from the ALiVE assessments played a role in advocating for the integration of life skills into the Revised Education and Training Policy 2014 which was reviewed in 2023. Lessons generated from these assessments highlighted the relevance of life skills not as an independent subject but as an integral part of various subjects and enhanced the importance of ensuring that life skills are embedded cohesively within the broader education curriculum.

“The policies regarding education during this period align with the BCEF (Basic Curriculum Education Former) and explicitly aim to incorporate life skills and values at various levels. This is evident in the strategies of the education sector and initiatives taken towards it. Even the National Family Policy, which has been presented as a bill in parliament, and the KICD's manual on parental engagement are aligned with this objective. While CSL (Community Service Learning) is not a policy, it is a unit that intentionally includes values-based education. The importance of these values is underscored by previous assessments, such as ALiVE 2022 and the National Household Assessments.” – KII with an Education Body

In Uganda, progress in the utilization of data from learning assessments holds significant importance, particularly in the redefinition of the lower secondary school curriculum. The findings indicate that the incorporation of life skills and values into the current education curriculum was prompted by the assessment results conducted by organizations like RELI and other partners. This highlights a crucial link between assessment data and the restructuring of educational content. Other educational policies that have undergone revisions as a result of lessons generated from past and present assessments include the National Teacher Policy which has been revised to align with contemporary educational needs and foster 21st-century skills.

*“I would describe the progress as significance because I think it is out of the utilization of data that the lower secondary school curriculum has been able to come in press, it is out of the assessment results that RELI and other partner organizations have been doing that the government had to fill the need and realize that it was actually very important for them to incorporate the aspect of life skills and values into the curriculum.” - **KII with Academic Institution***

However, inadequate access to data from the national examination bodies due to bureaucratic procedures in place and poor coordination across partners and countries involved in 21st-century skills development are some of the prevailing challenges that limit the utilization of lessons learnt from national and regional assessments in curriculum design, adaptation, and delivery according to the evaluation findings.

#Evidence Generation from Knowledge Sharing Forums

The knowledge sharing convenings facilitated the generation of evidence through formative studies, comprehensive reports, and policy briefs which have facilitated discussions with government officials on utilizing data for decision-making.

System mapping and system diagnosis were identified by education bodies, CSOs and academic institutions as key processes that facilitated the generation of evidence on how the assessment utilization system was currently configured. Dialogue meetings with government actors provided insights into the workings of different institutions within Ministries of Education, offering a foundation for future policy discussions according to the respondents engaged. Engagements on these platforms helped bring the conversation on utilization of lessons generated from learning assessments to the forefront and has influenced the direction of policy and partnerships within the East African community affairs institutions according to the respondents engaged.

3.3.2 Objective Two: Build Capacity Of A Dynamic Learning Community To Integrate And Assess 21st Century Skills And Support Utilization Of Learning Assessments At The School And Sub- National Levels.

#Stakeholder Mapping to Enhance Support from National Stakeholders

Stakeholder mapping of learning coalitions from government and CSOs in east Africa was prioritized from the onset of the project implementation and this contributed to a sense of shared responsibility and commitment on supporting utilization of learning assessments at school and sub-national levels. This comprehensive approach of stakeholder engagement fostered a sense of ownership and promoted the buy-in, acceptance and support of the ADAPT project goals from the stakeholders mapped.

Some of the key stakeholders mapped from the 3 countries included government institutions like teacher training institutions, examination bodies like KNEC, UNEB and NECTA, curriculum development institutions like KICD, CSOs like RELI, Uwezo, African Child, Lwala Community Alliance, OCODE, UNESCO and UNICEF. This collaborative approach fostered a comprehensive perspective on the challenges faced in the education sector, facilitating a more nuanced response to the identified gaps across the 3 countries. The ADAPT project ensured comprehensive involvement of the stakeholders mapped in workshops, training, and other project activities. This strategic engagement was seen as vital for a holistic approach to life skills assessment in the 3

*“What worked well was the stakeholder mapping. That was a very good thing. Capacity building on project development worked very well. Also picking out who would benefit from this assessment project is another aspect that we did well. I think stakeholder mapping in whatever phase or in whatever project is something we would take forward to any other initiatives should ADAPT have a second phase. The teamwork was also excellent. The project was being implemented in three countries and we would have to sit and figure out how we would go about anything. We would have members sharing how they had approached things. The systems within East Africa are the same. For instance, if there were delays in permits, it cut across. We would sit and exchange notes on how we would approach issues. That form of teamwork was a good thing that helped the project run well.” - **KII with Project Staff***

However, findings from the evaluation noted that the absence of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the role of partners in integrating learning assessments in curriculum designs especially between GESCI and government stakeholders limited accountability on the roles of each partner in supporting the utilization of learning assessments at the school and sub-national levels. Some key institutions in the education sector from government were reluctant to commit themselves to the proposed interventions supported by data.

#Utilization of Adaptive Frameworks for Research Translation

Comprehensive research and informative study was utilized as a strategic approach to support knowledge translation and sharing through a framework that promotes research translation. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of the ADAPT project recognized the value of conducting research to understand the current state of learning assessments in the three countries and encapsulated the acknowledgment that the project successfully shed light on existing learning assessment practices, types of assessments, and available data. These intervention provided a clear picture of the education landscape and created a foundation for future interventions that are guided by data.

The ALIVE framework aids in developing assessments by guiding the inclusion of critical life skills. It reflects a systematic approach to curriculum development, ensuring that the assessment tools align with identified gaps in the educational system and this supported knowledge translation during the ADAPT project implementation. There are ongoing advocacy efforts to ensure that the framework is adopted and aligned to existing government assessment frameworks.

*“So, you see now, the kind of work that we are doing is that right now, we are proud that we have got an assessment framework for us as an initiative that is ALIVE. And I took you through that journey to development process, until now, we were able to come up with, a blueprint on how these things can be assessed. So, it's an achievement to say that we have an assessment framework, but now the assessment framework focuses on four competencies, that is problem-solving, collaboration, self-awareness, and respect as a value. So, within this framework, it is quite elaborate, and this framework is also what we are trying to push also for adoption, by the government, because now the government also claims that they have an assessment framework, which is not even very clear.”-**KII with Education Body***

The CBC framework, including the Competency-Based Assessment (CBA), played a crucial role in supporting knowledge translation. The development of such frameworks facilitated the acquisition of designs and methods for capacity building among educators using the curriculum and emphasized the importance of having a structured approach to promote effective knowledge dissemination.

“I would say maybe the institutional structures. If I can give an example the CBC framework which has been developed in line with acquisition of the 21st-century skills will result in the acquisition of more life skills and values as compared to the earlier system. The CBA framework is a branch of the CBC curriculum.”-KII with Education

#Strengthening the Capacities of Learning Communities

The ADAPT project successfully strengthened the capacities of over 70 actors in the education sector across three East African countries in the assessment area and evidence-based decision-making against a project target of 60. Strengthening the capacities of CSOs, teachers, and schools through trainings and knowledge generation forums also had positive results in enabling learning communities to assess values and life skills, analyze and interpret data and enhance knowledge dissemination to achieve the project’s objectives and goals. The knowledge generation forums at national and regional level also supported the co-creation and co-learning of learning assessments contexts and as a result, a sense of ownership of the project results and outcomes between the stakeholders engaged was instilled.

The establishment of a community of practice (COPs) through both online platforms and WhatsApp groups served as a significant achievement that fostered networking and knowledge exchange and these platforms instrumental in supporting the shifting of norms and challenging existing gender inequities and promoting positive changes in gender roles, norms, and power dynamics at the various levels of their education landscape according to the respondents engaged. As a result, gender considerations were woven into the fabric of the research studies conducted, influencing questioning techniques, observations, and assessments. This enabled teachers to make gender-based observations when incorporating life skills into learning. This continuous integration demonstrated a comprehensive approach to promoting positive change in gender roles, norms, and power dynamics.

However, despite the projects efforts to build the capacities of a dynamic learning community to integrate and assess 21st century skills and support utilization of learning assessments, the evaluation findings uncovered challenges in the effective utilization of learning assessment data especially by government. It was noted that governments are usually not receptive to research and assessments findings that debunk the success of existing initiatives. To address this gap, findings from this evaluation encouraged inclusion of government stakeholders in the data generation process from the outset. Engaging them in the research process was identified as a positive approach to enhance ownership and increase the likelihood of successful utilization for policy-making.

3.3.3 Objective Three: Mobilize Policy Uptake On The Utilization Of Learning Assessments In The Education Plans, Curriculum Frameworks And Teacher Development.

#Establishment of NAGs to Facilitate Utilization of Learning Assessments

To mobilize policy uptake on utilization of learning assessments, the establishment of structures such as the National Advisory Groups (NAGs) was seen as a valuable avenue for continued communication and collaboration and determining how systems mapping information translated the ALiVE data into curriculum design and delivery priorities. The NAGs have initiated the development of a learning assessment tool which has undergone testing by professionals and institutions. The focus has been on the early stages, with a mention of a forthcoming phase targeting six to twelve-year-olds. As a result, the evaluation noted that teachers are actively involved in this tool development process, marking a positive step towards incorporating end-users into the creation of educational assessment tools. Other results attributed to the above project interventions that were mentioned during the evaluation was increased refinement and changes in education policies through continued dialogue and inputs from organizations involved in learning assessment.

“The NAG team would be interested in having a conversation with the relevant people and coming up with ideas on what it is that can be refined and changed. I think the NAG can continue if they create a group and communicate to us where we can help.”-KII with NAG Representative from CSO

#Utilization of ALiVE Model to Facilitate Use of Learning Assessments

The evaluation findings highlighted that teachers and learners have become more aware of the significance of ALiVE data in shaping curriculum pedagogy and classroom practices. The data provided valuable insights into individual strengths and weaknesses, particularly in areas such as cooperation, critical thinking, and problem-solving. The ALiVE data helped learners understand how their responses to comprehension questions reflected broader life skills. As a result, teachers are reporting increased awareness in bridging the gap created by the introduction of the new curriculum, enabling them to integrate skills and values seamlessly into their lessons.

“In the ALiVE data shared, I was among the people who saw what they were sharing, how they disseminated that information, and how people would interact with it and I think one thing that has helped especially the learners is to know how a simple activity such as answering a comprehension question can determine what schemes you have whether stronger skills or you have a little bit less strong skills in terms of how you cooperate with others, how you work together with others and think critically to solve a problem.”-KII with an Education Body

The ALiVE data also had a positive impact on pedagogical creativity among teachers and served as a practical resource in implementing the new curriculum, guiding teachers on how to introduce and assess values such as honesty, collaboration, and critical thinking. The scenarios presented in the live tool facilitated a quick understanding of potential learner responses and encouraged simplicity in addressing complex issues. This newfound creativity was particularly highlighted in the design of tasks aimed at testing life skills in adolescents aged 13 to 17.

It was also noted that there was an extensive effort to engage various stakeholders in the utilization of ALiVE data where strategic partnerships were established with National Assessment bodies and other relevant education stakeholders including the media to ensure widespread awareness. The evaluation findings emphasized the importance of documentation, with evidence of schools actively involving teachers in the assessment of life skills and values. Communication efforts also extended to national, county, and sub-county levels through radio and television shows in both local and national languages.

“We have engaged with various partners, including KNEC, to inform them about ALIVE. We have also reached out to media houses and engaged stakeholders to ensure they are aware of the results. Documentation has been created, and several schools have had teachers involved in the assessment of life skills and values.” -KII with Policymakers

#Adaptation of Frameworks to Support Utilization of Learning Assessments

Other strategies employed by the ADAPT project to mobilize policy uptake were annual regional knowledge and learning convenings, participatory workshops and action research. The regional knowledge and learning convenings facilitated in-depth dialogues on the roles of politicians in driving education reforms and recognition of involving non-state actors in joint education sector review processes. The development of policy briefs in each of the three implementing countries played a pivotal role in supporting policymakers at the national level to develop context based strategies on the utilization of learning assessments in education plans, curriculum frameworks and teacher development.

“As a result of the learning assessments there was an advocacy campaign around the use of first language to boost learning in children, and then there was also an aspect of capacity building the teachers within the teacher colleges at that level, so that when teachers are equipped with this information on life skills 21st-century skills before they graduate, so they graduate with these skills already rather than waiting for them in the field. So having this incorporated into teacher education was good and the incorporation of that as a result of these assessments and having it so that teachers are capacity-built before they graduate was excellent.” -KII with CSO

These approaches were instrumental in shifting the attitudes of policymakers on the evidence presented, identifying gaps that can be collectively addressed through policy actions and fostering evidence-based decision-making strategies in the education sector. As a result, government representatives, policymakers and experts in the education sector expressed commitments on supporting utilization of learning assessments at the school and district levels.

#Communication and Advocacy through Development of Knowledge Products

The creation of ten knowledge products, including three complete formative studies, three research summaries, and two policy briefs in each of the three countries had a positive impact on strengthening the capacities of actors in the education space on utilization of learning assessments. The findings also noted that media and outreach relations was also utilized as a strategy to support knowledge translation and sharing with approximately sixty media editors attending knowledge-sharing workshops. The coverage across digital, radio, TV, and print media in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda resulted in exposure to a broad audience, reaching an estimated eleven media houses in Kenya, nine in Tanzania, and eight in Uganda.

“I think this was great because having done the research in three countries and having about ten knowledge products, three complete formative studies, three research summaries, and two policy briefs in each country is one on learning assessment and another one in the incorporation of this assessment into the national education curriculum. In terms of impact, given that I am in coms and media outreach and relations, it was one of the things that we did widely. In all three countries, I think we got about sixty media editors to come to our knowledge-sharing workshop. That was very impactful since it is not easy to call media editors to come and sit and feel that this is what we want to sit and listen to.” - KII with Knowledge Champion.

However, discussions with ADAPT project staff and partners in the education sector emphasized on the need to conduct follow-ups through policy advocacy to ensure that these commitments have been actualized. This is because the evaluation revealed that key findings from previous research and learning assessments during the project implementation have not yet been mainstreamed by government actors on promoting the acquisition of 21st century skills.

3.3 Impact

#Adoption of New Models to Promote Acquisition of 21st Century Skills in Learning Institutions: As a result of the project interventions on promoting utilization of learning assessments, Makerere University in Uganda is in the process of designing a course on the assessment of 21st-century skills, signaling a positive influence from the project. The impact on tertiary education suggests a broader reach beyond the immediate school setting, potentially influencing future educators and their approach to fostering essential skills. The institution also introduced a certificate program in soft and survival skills as a result of the project interventions which was highlighted as an innovative milestone that recognizes the importance of equipping students with practical skills essential for both academic and real-world challenges.

In Zanzibar, engagement with government bodies such as the Tanzania Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education during the project resulted to an increase on the number of tertiary institutions incorporating life skills courses in Zanzibar. In Kenya, KICD developed and approved a curriculum known as the PA curriculum which aligns with government objectives and addressed the initial lack of organization in life skills implementation. Findings from the evaluation further noted that, schools in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have prioritized life skills lessons and have supported student symposiums that provided a platform for learners to showcase their 21st century skills.

*“One of the milestones that I would mention is engagement with GESCI and other relief partners, we got an insight into the importance of having a particular curriculum that can be used across schools, so we ended up with a curriculum, that is, KICD-approved that is called the PA curriculum. So we wanted a curriculum that is aligned with what the government wants and so we are implementing a uniform curriculum that is called the PA curriculum, so that is a big milestone. The second milestone is we have regularized life skills, I had mentioned that one of the challenges that we had initially was that it was not prioritized, so right now in the thirty-one schools that we are supporting, life skills lessons are prioritized and we normally track the sessions with those schools. The third one is the engagement of external support.” - **KII with Education Body***

#Integration of 21st-Century Skills in Educational Policies: The evaluation also established that there is a significant emphasis on 21st-century skills in national educational policies as a result of advocacy on utilization of learning assessments. The three implementing countries have reviewed or are in the process of reviewing their education curriculums to integrate 21st-century skills, such as collaboration, self-awareness, and critical thinking. The ongoing efforts to adapt the curriculum to address the challenges hindering the promotion of 21st-century skills for adolescents was highlighted as a key milestone achieved from the three implementing countries as a result of the ADAPT project interventions. The ADAPT project worked with CSOs who facilitated engagement with school leaders and teachers to nurture life skills, and education sector were trained to provide ongoing support to schools, ensuring the sustainability of the project's impact. The project demonstrated success in generating evidence through formative studies, comprehensive reports, and policy briefs which contributed towards increased use of data for decision-making by government.

#Increased Collaborations and Partnerships in the Education Sector: Collaboration with various departments under Ministries of Education in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania underscored the project's efforts to engage key stakeholders and emphasize the significance of utilization of learning assessment to promote the integration of 21st-century skills or life skills in the education sector. The working partnerships with these key institutions was instrumental in leveraging of resources when advocating for the integration of learning assessment into education policies. Collaborations with CSOs, education experts and knowledge champions was identified as a significant achievement, as it brought these entities together under a common roof, fostering a unified approach towards utilization of learning assessments. Pooling resources from different quarters was identified as a significant finding, emphasizing the importance of international partnerships in supporting the success of education curriculums. These partnerships contributed to the overall empowerment of the education sector and aid in the continuous improvement of the curriculum, particularly in the context of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and 21st-century skills.

3.4 Efficiency

Human Resource: The presence of a well-coordinated team across the three countries, including knowledge champions, principal investigators, project managers, and leaders with diverse expertise ensured that there was a cohesive human resource structure that contributed positively to the implementation of project interventions. The ADAPT project team's extensive experience played a crucial role in mitigating potential constraints. However, the evaluation noted that the finance team were understaffed and this limited manpower posed a potential constraint as it implied a singular point of support for the ADAPT project. To mitigate the finance & HR departments were integrated and they undertook proactive measures to address the potential impact of limited staff resources by ensuring pre-emptive planning, identification of potential challenges and development of mitigating factors before any issues could arise.

Budgets and Finances: The evaluation findings established that the project ensured the finance team had adequate resources primarily through timely and sufficient funding where the donor provided advance funding before the project commenced. This advance payment facilitated a consistent cash flow throughout the project's lifecycle. The utilization of a strict budgeting framework for project expenditures prevented both overspending and underspending. However, there were reported variations that were linked to changes in forex rates. When forex fluctuations occurred, the budget became less flexible, leading to variations in project expenditures. For instance, a shift in exchange rates from the budgeted values affected the actual cost of items, creating discrepancies between the approved budget and the actual expenses.

In response to variations in project expenditure, the project implementation team identified employed a set of cost mitigation strategies like adapting to the exchange changes by incorporating buffer values during budgeting. The ADAPT project team also implemented practical measures such as opting for less expensive venues for meetings and activities. The evaluation findings also highlighted that inflation and the increase in fuel prices posed a significant financial management risk during the implementation of the project and the project team reported employed proactive measures such as advance planning for ticket bookings and opting for lower-cost accommodation to navigate the financial challenges associated with the inflation and fuel price hikes.

Finance Management and Controls: To promote effective and efficient utilization of resources, the financial management policies played a crucial role in ensuring effective and efficient utilization of the financial resources allocated to the project. The procurement process was diligently followed, involving steps such as obtaining quotations, evaluating bids, and selecting qualified contractors.

The finance team, responsible for procurement, worked in consultation with the project budget. Activities exceeding a hundred dollars required obtaining multiple quotations, aligning them with the budget, and ensuring compliance with procurement policies and finance manuals. In cases where the budget fell short, adjustments were made, such as scaling down the scope of activities while maintaining project outcomes.

Adherence to Donor Reporting Guidelines: The ADAPT project team adhered well to the donor reporting guidelines ensuring that all required reports, except the final one, were submitted in the specified quarters. This adherence to the reporting schedule showcased the project team's commitment to fulfilling their reporting obligations. The extension granted by the donor demonstrated a flexible approach to resource utilization, allowing the project to address pending activities and utilize remaining funds effectively. However, the evaluation findings noted that there were delays experienced in conducting the project end-term evaluation due to lack of alignment in TORs between the ADAPT project and the ALiVE team. The project lead also consistently ensured that the KIX MEL Centre is updated regularly to communicate milestones, progress markers, outcome cases, events and research uptake.

3.5 Sustainability

Some of the key actions taken to ensure sustainability of the project outcomes and results achieved identified during the evaluation were;

- **Evidence Generation and Utilization:** Institutional support, particularly from ALiVE and the Alive Academy, will play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of the project outcomes and results. Continuous involvement of ALiVE in field research and the Alive Academy's commitment to refining research tools coupled with existing collaboration with relevant institutions as a cornerstone for project sustainability.
- **Collaboration and Resource Mobilization for Continued Impact:** Findings from the evaluation highlighted the importance of collaboration, particularly through the RELI network, for sustainability. These collaborations will be instrumental in development of joint proposals and resource mobilization for interventions supporting the utilization of data from learning assessments in the education sector. Joint working partnerships will play a critical role towards ensuring the continuity of the project's impact and outcomes beyond its initial funding period.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building:** Knowledge sharing and capacity building by fostering working collaborations with organizations like RELI and GESCI who can facilitate the sharing of project products and lessons was highlighted as a key strategic approach to promote sustainability. There is need for sustained efforts on disseminating project outcomes and building the capacity of stakeholders to ensure the replication and scalability of desirable project outcomes. Creating a learning community and building the capacity of actors were highlighted as strategic efforts to ensure that the project's impact persists even after its conclusion. The establishment of an annual conference on values, a conference on 21st-century values, and skills and assessment in East Africa was also noted as a key factor in sustaining the momentum and impact generated by the project.
- **Partnerships with Government:** Inclusion of government officials through capacity building emerged, indicating a strategic approach to sustainability through knowledge transfer and institutional memory. The sustainability of the program is intricately linked to its institutionalization and integration into existing government systems. That ADAPT project under the umbrella of RELI engaged parliamentary committee on education members who made commitments on supporting the utilization of learning assessments in the education sector through policy and this

was identified as an integral approach to ensure that the impact and outcomes are sustained. Joint activities, such as system mapping and participation in international conferences, demonstrated the importance of implementing the project as complementary rather than independent and this is key to enhance sustainability.

3.6 Challenges, Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

Some of the key challenges to promote acquisition of 21st century skills for adolescents by strengthening utilization of data from learning assessments in curriculum design, adaptation and delivery highlighted during the evaluation were;

3.6.1 Challenges

Bureaucratic Hurdles in Policy Implementation: The difficulty in navigating bureaucratic processes and was highlighted as an obstacle that complicated the effective integration of 21st-century skills into education policies and initiatives. This is mainly caused by limitations on understanding government priorities and navigating the interests of policymakers. Policymakers are found to have vested interests, and aligning initiatives with these interests is essential for successful implementation. The findings underscore the difficulty in changing government attitudes and the need for continuous efforts to align with their priorities.

Project Duration: Discussions with respondents during the evaluation established that policy influence is a complex process that requires time. The project started during the Covid 19 pandemic and this limited the extent to which policy influence could be conducted as a result of the control measures put in place by government. This posed a challenge on ensuring that interventions supporting the utilization of learning assessment were embedded in policy which means that some key gains achieved can be lost if the project is not upscaled.

Prevailing Traditional Practices in the Education Sector: Another considerable barrier to promoting 21st-century skills lies in the deeply rooted belief that certification, rather than skills, is the essence of education. This mindset extends to various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and government officials. The traditional hierarchy of education, focusing primarily on academic achievements and certifications, poses a substantial challenge to the implementation of skill-centric curricula.

Government Ownership and Communication Gap: The evaluation identified a gap in government ownership of assessment reports, with challenges in getting authorities to embrace and respond to the findings. There is need to break down assessments reports and data into digestible pieces and leveraging media platforms for broader dissemination and the findings with current issues, such as the presidential working group report, to attract government attention. Enhancing strategic communication to promote the buy-in of government could enhance ownership and responsiveness

*“The big challenge is how we get the government to own this report. First is to break it down into chewable pieces and leverage the media. Also, leverage social media and opportunities to share as much as possible to disseminate cause that’s a phase ADAPT should go into now, to build a broad spec kind of ownership. It costs a lot of effort and I think my wild thought was to go national and publish as much as I can. A report is big, but what pieces can come out, especially with this presidential working group report, the chances are that they may respond to so I think that is a low-hanging opportunity they could leverage. We should get popular versions of the reports that have been generated but more responsive to current issues, for example, the presidential working group report, so how do you align that in such a way that anyone who picks it can see the connection between the challenges and the gaps they have now and the content of what is being shared. It may not be one piece; it could be a couple. I think the one of getting the attention of this government is to make noise”. – **KII with Partners***

Ambiguity in Defining and conceptualizing 21st-century Skills: The evaluation highlighted challenges related to the definition and interpretation of 21st-century skills. Ambiguity in how these skills are conceptualized and named coupled with inadequate understanding and consensus on the terminologies surrounding 21st-century skills hampers effective assessment and incorporation into curricula. This remains a significant hurdle in fostering meaningful conversations about acquisition of these skills in the education sector in the three implementing countries.

Inadequate Stakeholder Coordination: There were difficulties experience in securing high-level engagement for discussions on 21st-century skills. It was established that reaching policymakers and influential figures, such as principal secretaries and directors, posed a challenge. Limited resources and the busy schedules of high-level officials hindered the timely and extensive engagement required for meaningful policy discussions.

Inadequate Capacity and Coordination: Inadequate capacity among teachers, civil society, and ministry officials on utilization of data obtained from learning assessments emerged as a key challenge during the evaluation. Building the necessary skills and understanding among these stakeholders is crucial for successful implementation. There is need for coordinated efforts, such as the establishment of ALIVE Academy, to enhance capacity and ensure consistent coordination throughout the region

3.6.2 Lessons Learnt

Some of the key lessons learnt from the above challenges and documented through the course of ADAPT project implementation were;

Project Design and Approach: The evaluation findings revealed that advocacy and publicity is crucial in the success of learning assessments for policy practice. Despite the abundance of data, its impact remains limited without effective communication and dissemination. The information gathered from assessments often fails to reach key decision-makers at both the grassroots and policy levels. Key lesson learned elaborated during the evaluation focused on emphasizing the need for robust advocacy efforts and widespread publicity in the design of similar interventions to bridge this communication gap and enhance the utilization of assessment data.

Conducting pilot projects to showcase what works best in a specific context to influence policy and practice also needs to be factored in the project's design and approach. While challenges exist in documenting best practices, scaling up efforts and collaborating with stakeholders can contribute to effective documentation and dissemination. This approach can serve as a powerful tool to influence government policies and practices.

*“Advocacy is very important and publicity because much as one may have a lot of data, a lot of things, as long as they are not publicizing and people don't know about them it remains just a waste of time. We have learned that there's a lot of data out there but it has not been utilized, because people don't know about it, for example, several assessments have been done and the information has not trickled down to the classroom teacher who should be interpreting and using the assessment to inform the practice at the classroom level” –**KII with Knowledge Champion***

Contextualization also plays a pivotal role in the assessment of life skills and values. It was revealed that the tools used for assessment need to be tailored to the local context to ensure they resonate with the language and cultural nuances of the community. Future project designs should prioritize contextualizing adapting assessment tools to obtain accurate and meaningful data regarding life skills and values.

Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination: Effective implementation of interventions involving learning assessments requires the active engagement and coordination of diverse stakeholders. The first key lesson is that all stakeholders, from grassroots contributors to influential figures, are vital to the success of such interventions. This encompasses involvement at various stages, including design, implementation, and utilization. Engaging stakeholders from the outset ensures a more comprehensive and impactful approach. Another key lesson learned on effective stakeholder engagement is that aligning interventions with government initiatives enhances their acceptance and effectiveness. Formal engagement with the government is crucial, as it ensures that interventions are in line with broader national strategies. This alignment not only facilitates smoother implementation but also increases the likelihood of the government adopting successful practices.

3.6.3 Best Practices

Some of the key best practices documented from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania on promote acquisition of 21st century skills for adolescents by strengthening utilization of data from learning assessments in curriculum design, adaptation and delivery were;

- **Inter-University Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** The evaluation findings brought attention to the importance of inter-university collaboration. It was established that knowledge about programs like ALiVE and ADAPT was not uniform across all universities. The workshop conducted on the ADAPT project facilitated knowledge sharing, showcasing the experiences and initiatives of different universities. This collaborative approach is essential for universities to learn from each other's successes and challenges in incorporating life skills and values into their curricula.
- **Capacity Building and Teacher Training:** Teacher training programs implemented in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to enhance capacity on teaching life skills to both teachers and students and aiming to empower students to understand and solve issues independently was highlighted as a best practice during the evaluation. These trainings and capacity building help teachers to address challenges in promoting 21st-century skills and utilizing assessment data effectively.
- **Integration of Sister Projects:** The integration and harmonization of the ADAPT and ALiVE projects was highlighted as a best practice that facilitated efficient information sharing and capacity building. The integration extended to thematic groups, where values and life skills were leveraged collectively.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

This evaluation concludes that the objective of the ADAPT project on promoting 21st century skills is clearly stated in various policy documents within education and training policies, national

curriculum framework including the syllabus and textbooks in the three implementing countries. Evidence from the evaluation highlights that the ADAPT project interventions addressed existing gaps in the current education system through enhancing the utilization of learning assessments in curriculum development and delivery and this resulted to increased acquisition of 21st century skills to prepare learners for the evolving demands of the modern world.

Current educational policies in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, particularly the new lower secondary curriculum, have undergone significant reforms to incorporate lessons learned from past and present national assessments. This affirms that there is a deliberate shift towards focusing on the acquisition of 21st-century skills and values starting from primary education to higher secondary education and this showcases conscious efforts to align the curriculum with the evolving needs of society and equip students with skills deemed essential for success in the 21st century.

The ALiVE framework aided the utilization of data from learning assessments to address identified gaps in the educational system and support knowledge translation during implementation of the project. These interventions have resulted to traditional summative examinations are giving way to a more nuanced evaluation system. The use of rubrics in assessing teaching practice signals a shift toward assessing whether teachers meet, exceed, or fall below expectations. This aligns with the assessment style familiar to CBC-compliant learners, reflecting a proactive stance in aligning teaching practices with evolving assessment methodologies.

There is also increased stakeholder involvement and collaboration to deliberate on the assessment of students in real practical skills, as opposed to traditional academic or theoretical approaches. This collaborative efforts reflected a commitment to aligning educational practices with the demands of practical, real-world scenarios, providing students with a more holistic and applicable learning experience. Engagement with key partners from the government and civil society was a key contributing factor to the project's success. Working partnerships with key institutions in the education sector from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania fostered a comprehensive perspective on the challenges faced in the education sector, facilitating a more nuanced response to the identified gaps.

However, the evaluation findings suggest that, even though the analysis reveals that 21st century skills have been integrated into the basic education curriculum, this does not necessarily suggest that the skills will be delivered and promoted as planned. There are system elements which are weak, and hence threaten the effective implementation of the curriculum. These weak system elements include the limited financing, teacher shortage, and lack of a teacher continuous professional development programme. This highlights the need for continued policy advocacy work by actors in the education sector to ensure that efforts realized during the implementation of the ADAPT project are sustained.

4.2 Recommendations

To promote and sustain efforts on the acquisition of 21st century skills for adolescents by strengthening utilization of data from learning assessments in curriculum design, adaptation, and delivery in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, this evaluation proposes the following recommendations;

#Increased Participation of Stakeholders in Curriculum Review Processes: The evaluation recommends the need for increased stakeholder participation in curriculum review processes to reflect the evolving values and skills necessary for the youth and adolescents. It was observed that the current practice of revising the curriculum every three to five years provides an opportunity to incorporate new elements such as peaceful coexistence, self-management, and entrepreneurship.

This recommendation highlights the importance of adaptability in education systems to meet the changing needs of society.

#Enhance Policy Advocacy on Implementation of Life Skills in the Education Sector: Assessing life skills among students requires trained teachers capable of conducting meaningful assessments. However, challenges arise due to a lack of capacity among teachers and insufficient funding for training initiatives. While policy for assessment are in place, there is an existing funding gap for training teachers on how to assess life skills which calls for advocacy. Allocating more resources for teacher training on life skills assessment would contribute to ensuring accurate evaluations of students' life skills and values. The evaluation further confirms that it is imperative for continuous advocacy throughout the policy formulation and implementation process by strengthening networks, such as RELI, who are essential in pushing for the adaptation of assessment findings into existing policies or to influence the creation of new policies that align with the project's goals.

#Increase Stakeholder Engagement for Sustainable Interventions: The evaluation established that a key recommendation for promoting the acquisition of 21st-century skills for adolescents is to prioritize long-term stakeholder engagement. Involving stakeholders from the outset, allowing them to take the driving seat, and ensuring their continuous involvement throughout the intervention process are crucial elements for sustained impact. This approach would enable stakeholders to seamlessly transition into their formal duties after the intervention concludes, ensuring the longevity of the initiatives.

#Promote Inclusivity in Improving Learning Outcomes: Inclusion of young people in decision-making processes is an essential approach in understanding their perspectives and ensuring that educational initiatives align with their needs and aspirations. There is also need for increased involvement of parents as primary stakeholders in discussions about data utilization. The evaluation findings indicated that even if the government adopts policies, the practice is might not be sustained if there is inadequate parental engagement.

#Improve Strategic Communication and Policy Alignment: The evaluation emphasizes the importance of shifting from a focus solely on assessment data utilization to effective packaging and communication of the data. This is seen as a means to inform and shape educational practices in a way that promotes 21st-century skills within classrooms. Formal engagements with higher institutions and a system-led approach to ensure alignment with government initiatives will also result to positive outcomes on utilization of learning assessments. The strategic influence on policies, either through direct policy influence or capacitance of key institutions, is highlighted as essential for achieving long-term impact on skill development.

#Increased Evidence Generation and Dissemination on Learning Assessments: Improving the adoption of 21st-century skills and ALiVE learning assessment requires making the evidence available beyond the government level. There is need for wider dissemination strategies that reach even the lowest levels of the educational hierarchy to promote accessibility in the dissemination of relevant evidence related to adoption of 21st-century skills.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF RESPONDENTS ENGAGED

| ADAPT Project Staff | | Reached |
|-----------------------|---|---------|
| 1. | Project Manager – Kenya | 1 |
| 2. | Communications and Information Officer | 1 |
| 3. | Project Lead/Knowledge Champion Kenya; M&E Specialist | 1 |
| 4. | Knowledge Champion Uganda | 1 |
| 5. | Knowledge Champion Tanzania | 1 |
| 6. | Project Manager Uganda | 1 |
| 7. | Project Manager Tanzania | 1 |
| 8. | Finance Manager | 1 |
| Kenya | | |
| Category | Organization | Reached |
| CSO/NGOs | EducAfrica Foundation | 1 |
| | Zizi Afrique Foundation | 1 |
| | Experience Educate! | 1 |
| | Jaslika Consulting | 1 |
| | Dignitas Project | 1 |
| Academic Institutions | Aga Khan Academy | 1 |
| | Strathmore University | 1 |
| | Kenyatta University | 1 |
| | Catholic University | 1 |
| | Karenge Primary | 1 |
| Government | Teachers Service Commission (TSC) | 1 |
| | CEMASTEAM | 1 |
| Community Stakeholder | Lwala Community | 1 |

| Uganda | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|
| Category | Organization | Reached |
| CSO/NGOs | FICH | 2 |
| Academic Institution | Komo Learning Centers | 1 |
| | STiR Education | 1 |
| Media | The Observer Media Ltd | 1 |
| National Examination Body | National Head Teachers Association | 1 |
| Government | Tororo District Educ. Department | 1 |
| | MoE | 1 |
| Private Sector | Private Sector | 1 |
| Tanzania | | |
| Category | Organization | Reached |
| CSO/NGOs | UWEZO TZ | 2 |
| | SAZANI Trust | 1 |
| | OCODE | 1 |
| Academic Institutions | DSM University College of Education | 1 |
| | University of DSM | 1 |
| | Tanzania Institute of Education - Mainland | 1 |
| Government | Member of Parliament | 1 |
| | Inclusive Education and Life Skills Unit | 1 |
| Examination Authorities | Zanzibar Examination Council | 1 |
| Independent Expert | Retired Deputy Principal Secretary, MOEVT | 1 |
| Total | | 41 |