

Adult Learning & Education – System Building Approach (ALESBA)

Toolkit for Implementation

Phase Three – Alternatives Analysis and Design



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Institute for International Cooperation of
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(DWW International)

Königswinterer Straße 552b
53227 Bonn
Germany

Tel.: +49 (0) 228 97569-0
Fax. +49 (0) 228 97569-55

info@dww-international.de
www.dww-international.de

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**Author & Concept/
Approach Development:**
Sonja Belete

Responsible/Managing Editor:
Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Research Assistants:
Penny Ward (Mutengo Consulting),
Prof. Heribert Hinzen

English Proofreading/Editing:
Penny Ward (Mutengo Consulting)

Illustrations:
Zerihun Gebrewold Lemma

Layout/Graphic Design:
Gastdesign.de

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- The team that conducted an assessment on the supply side of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) service delivery in 2018. Not only did this peer review produced substantial baseline information on the system in Ethiopia, but it also tested the tools of Phase Two in the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA).

- The team that conducted the demand assessment on the needs and interests of ALE learners in 2019/2020. The findings provided a basis for further analysis in Phase Two and informed Phase Three.

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Sonja Belete



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

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

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

With this background in mind, DWV International's team in East/Horn of Africa, under the leadership of Sonja Belete, started a process of developing a holistic model

for sustainably improving ALE systems. These booklets present the methods and experiences that have been developed over time. We called it the "Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach" (ALESBA), and it is based on several simple truths:

- Sustainable system building is a time-consuming, long-term process, that demands a great deal of patience and flexibility.
- Ownership is the key. Local actors should shape the process and create the system. External expertise can be useful, but should not lead the process or impose (quick) solutions.
- System building demands consensus building between the key partners. This factor is essential for success and should be established from the beginning and maintained throughout the process.

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

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

Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Abbreviations

ALE	.....	Adult Learning and Education
ALESBA	.....	Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach
CSOs	.....	Civil Society Organisation(s)
CLCs	.....	Community Learning Center(s)
ESDP	.....	Education Sector Development Plan
FAL	.....	Functional Adult Literacy
GRALE	.....	Global Report on Adult Learning and Education
LAMP	.....	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme
M&E	.....	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	.....	Management Information System
MGLSD	.....	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (Uganda)
MoE	.....	Ministry of Education (Ethiopia)
NGO	.....	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRA	.....	Participatory Rural Appraisal
REFLECT	.....	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SBA	.....	System Building Approach
SDGs	.....	Sustainable Development Goals
ToT	.....	Training of Trainers
ToF	.....	Training of Facilitators
TVET	.....	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

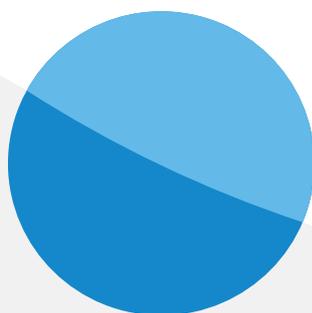
**PHASE THREE –
ALTERNATIVES
ANALYSIS
AND DESIGN**

1. INTRODUCTION

Phase Three of the Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach (ALESBA) takes the users of the approach into the realm of educational planning and a wider understanding of education systems. The scope of educational planning has been broadened to include all other important educational efforts in non-formal settings, in addition to the formal system of education. The expansion of the understanding of education systems is echoed by the World Bank in the Education Strategy 2020 by confirming that education systems should include the full range of learning opportunities available in a country, whether formal or non-formal, financed or provided by the public or private sectors, NGOs, etc., and the full range of beneficiaries and stakeholders. It should include the rules, policies and accountability mechanisms that bind an education system together (World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020, 2011).

The growth and expansion of education systems are complemented by a growing concern for the quality of the entire educational process. Adult Learning and Education (ALE) policy-makers, practitioners, experts, planners, and administrators have to take note of the importance of implementation strategies, the role of regulatory mechanisms, including the choice of financing mechanisms, certification procedures, and all aspects of the system (Oxenham, 2008). Decision-makers from all stakeholders face different options when planning for and designing ALE systems, programmes, projects and services. For example, they have to make decisions about:

- The role the state will play and the roles of other stakeholders in a comprehensive ALE system.
- The content of the programme (shall it include livelihoods skills, literacy, etc.?).
- The choice of language, materials, facilitators, supervisors.
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, etc.



The variety of systems, programmes, approaches, and methods that have been developed to date in different countries have also produced a variety of results (Oxenham, 2008). These experiences and lessons learned can guide the design of new and improved systems. One major lesson is that no single solution will suit the variety of human situations and the demands from diverse target groups in need of ALE services. Stakeholders and decision-makers may feel overwhelmed in the process. They are also confronted with the outcomes of their own demand and system assessments conducted during Phase Two of the ALESBA and the diagnostic analysis of system blockages and challenges.

The conceptual framework, elements and building blocks of the ALESBA provide an organised and systematic framework and process for all the decisions and design options to be considered. Therefore, Phase Three of the ALESBA is about considering the outcomes of Phases One and Two and feeding these into a decision-making process to design a better and improved system. For each decision to be taken there are alternative options to be considered and weighed against each other.

The booklet introduces an overview of the alternatives analysis and design process before practical steps and tools are presented to facilitate the process. Alternative ALE system design options for each system element exhibit the possibilities available to ALE decision-makers. These decisions and the final system design also impact on assigning new roles and responsibilities to ALE stakeholders for the next phases of system building.



2. REFLECTION ON THE OUTCOMES OF PHASES ONE AND TWO OF THE ALESBA

At this stage of the system building process, the ALESBA partners have already taken a long journey together. They should be well familiar with the ALESBA conceptual framework, its elements and building blocks, and how these are contextualised in their own countries. Key concepts and practices such as systems thinking, service delivery as viewed from the demand and supply side, as well as the underlying principles that inform the approach would have become part of their day-to-day practice and ALESBA vocabulary.

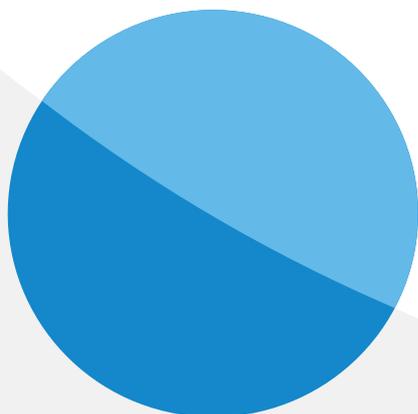
Each of the five ALESBA phases unfolds at its own pace in different countries, depending on the status of the system at the beginning of the process and the level of consensus and nature of relationships between the stakeholders. The consensus building process (Phase One), may take up to a year to reach sufficient agreement before being able to start conducting the assessment of the status of the system (Phase Two, Part One) from the demand and supply side through peer reviews and participatory studies. The assessments can take several months to complete or could even be conducted over a period of two years. Using the information, reports and scores from the assessments to diagnose the underlying causes of system blockages (Phase Two, Part Two) and understanding the systemic patterns between system building blocks is an intense exercise that may not necessarily be completed in one work workshop, but may

require constant reflection to generate new insights over time. This may happen during dialogue sessions between the ALESBA partners, or while they are embracing a new way of systems thinking and new partner relations in their ALE projects and programmes. Therefore, it may take substantial time before ALESBA partners reach Phase Three and consider the different alternative options for the design of a new and improved system for ALE service delivery.

Phase Three (Alternatives Analysis and Design) should ideally only commence when certain outcomes from Phases One and Two have been reached. The following is suggested for each phase:

Phase One: Consensus Building

- The relationships between ALESBA partners are reconsidered, reformed, clarified and defined according to the mandates and functions of each stakeholder.
- Overwhelming agreement is reached on the defined scope of the ALE system that needs improvement/strengthening to address service delivery challenges.
- Agreement is established regarding the use of the ALESBA as an approach, including the use of key tools over five phases to build an improved ALE system within the agreed-upon scope and context.
- A preliminary vision for the ALE system is defined, although it may be revisited at a later stage.
- A preliminary plan for the system building process has been agreed upon with one, or a small group of stakeholders selected to act as drivers of the process.
- ALESBA partners take success ingredients such as partnership, teamwork, conflict management, influencing and negotiation, and risk management on board for the process.



Phase Two: Assessment and Diagnosis

- An in depth understanding of the target groups' interests and needs and their perceptions of the current ALE services exist (as reported in a demand assessment/ evaluation which has been carried out).
- Baseline data has been established on the status of each building block and element in the existing system and is available in the form of narrative reports and descriptions from the qualitative study and the scoring mechanism, that indicates weak areas needing intervention.
- Insights into the root causes and system blockages that lead to poor service delivery and reduced responsiveness to the target groups' needs have been identified.

Phase One of the ALESBA (Consensus Building) prepares the foundation for stakeholder cooperation and from Phase Two onwards, each phase of the ALESBA filters the information in the system to focus on the key elements and building blocks that need improvement, and redesign; creating opportunities to implement and test the new design, and review, adjust, and up-scale interventions required to put an effective ALE system in place that can deliver services in the long term.



3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS AND DESIGN PROCESS

Phase Three of the ALESBA starts with the assumption that the outcomes of Phases One and Two may have convinced the ALE stakeholders that:

- The current ALE system does not meet all the needs and interests of the target group.
- Not all system building blocks are in place and functioning.
- ALE service delivery is hampered by blockages and challenges within the system.
- The scores of the ALE system elements and building blocks indicate weaknesses and gaps.

- ALE stakeholders are not necessarily fulfilling their mandates and roles.
- ALE stakeholders are not sufficiently co-operating to maximise resources and service delivery, etc.

The above-mentioned points are examples of the potential findings of the system assessment from the demand and supply side. If stakeholders agree that the existing system needs improvement or a total redesign, they will embark on a process consisting of four main steps:

Steps in the alternatives analysis and design process

- **Step One:** Based on the assessment results from Phase Two, find the best entry point(s) to change and improve the system. Entry points refer to finding system building blocks/elements that need change and improvement and have the potential to provide leverage to change other building blocks/elements in the system as well. It may not be possible or affordable to change all system building blocks/elements and stakeholders may have to prioritise and make a decision regarding which elements and building blocks are in the biggest need of change and can provide leverage for other system changes as well.
- **Step Two:** Based on the prioritised entry points (building blocks/elements), identified in step one, stakeholders will consider and compare different means and modalities to redesign the prioritised system building blocks and elements. They may have to consider different ways to formulate policies, rethink coordination mechanisms and structures, and different service delivery modalities, etc., to ensure that the prioritised building blocks are redesigned for optimised service delivery.
- **Step Three:** Assess the impact of the changes in the prioritised building blocks/elements on the system as a whole (remaining building blocks and elements in the system). Other building blocks and elements may also need adjustment because of the changes made.

Stakeholders will have to repeat the process of alternatives analysis and making decisions for these building blocks as well (repeat step two). Keep in mind that system redesign or reform necessitates reforms and changes covering the full span of ALE service provision (Magrath B, 2019).

- **Step Four:** Consolidate the redesign of different system elements and building blocks into a cohesive ALE system design response framework that will describe how the new ALE system looks and how it is expected to function – as well as the process to activate the new system design with reference to Phase Four of ALESBA, namely to implement and test the new design in selected pilot areas with identified target groups.

The design of an improved system requires careful consideration of the different options/alternatives available as well as reaching decisions with the necessary transparency and consensus regarding which option will be the best. This is evident throughout the four above-mentioned steps.

Analysing the alternatives and making a decision

An analysis of alternatives is a systematic way of searching for and deciding on solutions. It follows a problem analysis and it is a prerequisite to designing action strategies and new systems. Alternatives can be analysed as different means to reach a prior end (Lohmeier, 1994). An Alternatives Analysis usually devolves into three steps:

- Search for alternatives (what choices do we have?)
- Weigh the alternatives against selected criteria.
- Decide on the alternatives to be pursued.

The first step would imply we have named or listed different options or means by which a defined status or objective could be reached to resolve existing challenges or blockages. At the end of the second step, we would have assessed the possible alternatives by applying relevant criteria to weigh the different alternatives available. The selection process for choosing between various alternative options is more effective when:

- The understanding of the respective problem situation is clear.
- There is a clear vision related to different solutions.
- The selection criteria for decision making are transparent (Lohmeier, 1994).

When considering alternative options, it is useful to: (DEVCO B4 Education Discussion Paper, 2014)

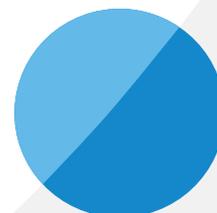
- Make what already exists work better, i.e., develop strategies that work to make what is in place work better.
- Avoid implanting external solutions that may not consider the many local variables and context.
- Find answers to problems within the existing system.
- Keep in mind that ‘form follows function’ and don’t be tempted to start restructuring before analysing what kinds of services the system has to deliver and which building blocks are necessary to do so.
- Identify leverage points that may accelerate system changes across multiple building blocks and elements at the same time (Southern Africa Capacity Initiative, 2006).

Changing a system requires bold decision-making by key stakeholders. This may require challenging a range of aspects, such as, the role of public sector institutions, long-held organisational behavioural practices, and stakeholder roles and relationships as well as adopting principles and values of demand-driven service delivery, integrated and multi-sectoral approaches, and improved governance systems across all spheres of governance. The importance of systems thinking in the process should be re-emphasised with a short reminder.

The impact of system dynamics

Since all elements and building blocks in the ALE system are linked through structures, processes and feedback loops, a change in the design of one building block may off-set a series of consequences in other building blocks. There is a growing consensus that interventions to improve learning opportunities and outcomes must be designed and studied as part of a broader system of education. ALE service delivery and the learning opportunities it provides are affected by a complex web of dynamics involving different inputs, actors, processes and socio-political context. The focus has shifted away from individual interventions and programmes to the system as a whole. There are numerous examples of well-intentioned policies and programmes that have resulted in unexpected consequences which either manifest in other parts of the system or address the symptoms without tackling the root causes of the problem (Magrath B, 2019).

The redesign of the ALE system or selected building blocks usually takes place while the system is still functioning. It is not possible to stop the delivery of all services until the system has been redesigned and to start afresh. System changes have to be introduced into an already functioning system which may complicate matters further. Bear in mind that the system plays out across all spheres of governance and may include multiple sectors and stakeholders. The complexity of the system requires innovative approaches to examine problems, come up with alternative solutions and bold decisions that can fundamentally improve the current situation.



4. FACILITATING THE ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS AND DESIGN PROCESS: STEPS AND TOOLS

Facilitating Phase Three of the ALESBA consists of four main steps, each with its own processes and tools. Different system design options are available for stakeholders and the choices made will affect their own role in the system. Therefore, section four should be read together with

section five, which elaborates system element design options, and section six, which refers to the different roles of stakeholders in the process. ALESBA stakeholders have to contextualise and complement the suggested tools and processes below.

A roadmap for the facilitation of the alternatives analysis and design process

The volume of data and information generated during Phase Two needs to be processed within a systems framework to find the best entry points to change/

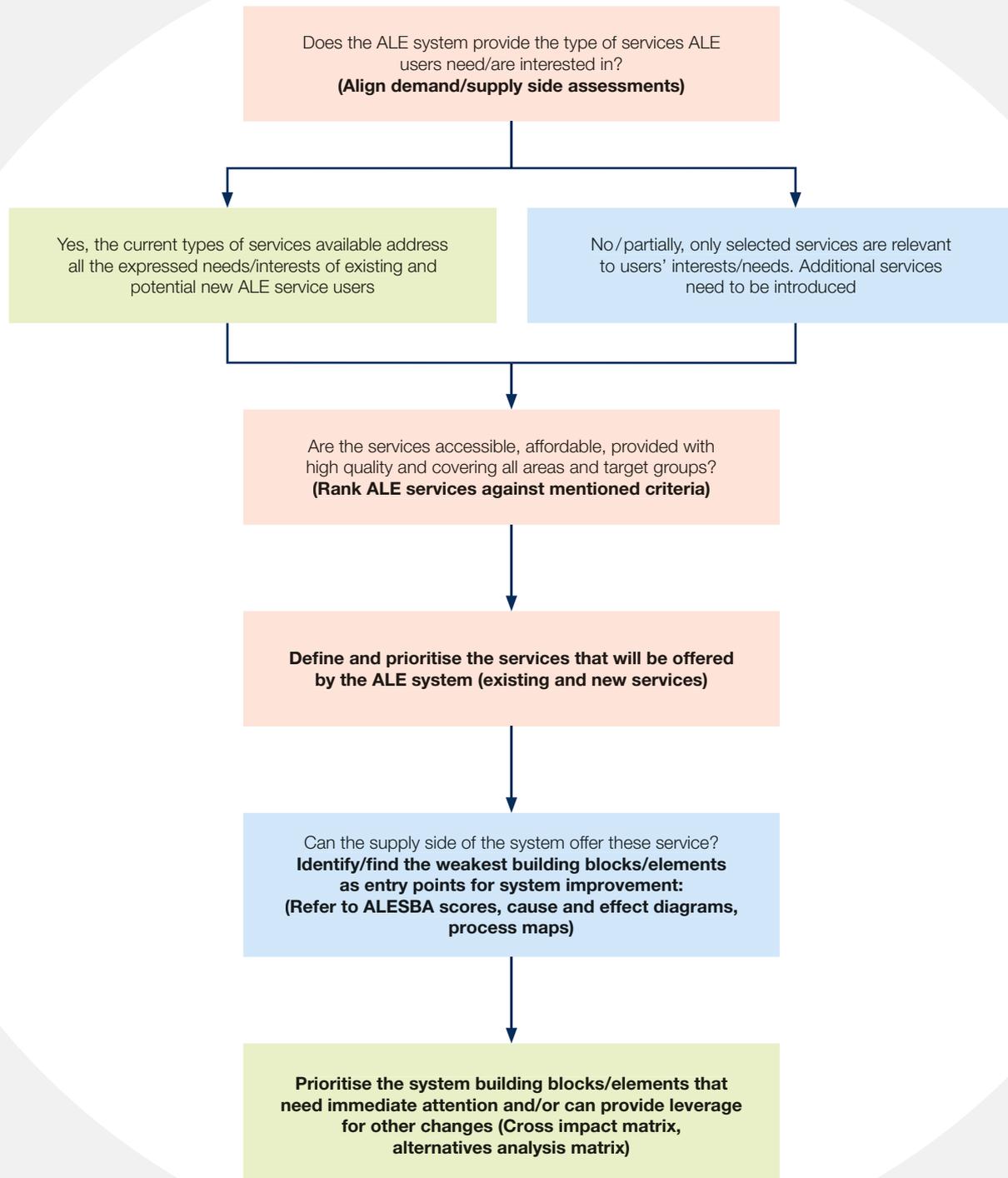
improve the ALE system. This provides a seamless transfer to Phase Three. The roadmap presented in the table below can guide the facilitation of the four steps involved in the alternatives analysis and design process during a series of workshops and meetings, etc.

Step	Outcome/Decision	Processes/Tools
Step One: Find and prioritise the best entry point(s) to improve the ALE system	Decisions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prioritised types of ALE services the system will provide The prioritised building blocks/elements for ALE system improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align demand and supply-side assessments Ranking ALE services Define/prioritise ALE services that will be offered Identify/find weakest building blocks/elements (ALESBA scores, cause and effect diagrams, process maps) Prioritise the selected building blocks/elements (Cross impact matrix, alternatives analysis matrix)
Step Two: Consider alternatives for the redesign of prioritised system building blocks/elements	Decision on the best way/means/modality to improve the functioning of each prioritised system building block/element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search for alternative design options (brainstorm, research, and evidence-based influencing, etc.) Weigh the options/alternatives (e.g., different literacy methodologies, and learner assessment approaches, etc.), against selected criteria (alternatives analysis matrix) Make a decision on the best alternative to be pursued
Step Three: Assess the impact of the redesign on the whole system	Decisions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which other building blocks are affected because of the changes in step two Which affected building blocks are prioritised for redesign The best way/means/modality to improve the functioning of these affected building blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding affected building blocks (Objectives tree, Process maps, Scenario sketching) Deciding on the best way/means to improve the affected building blocks: (Search for alternative design options, weigh the alternatives using the alternatives analysis matrix and make a decision on the best option, i.e., repeat step two)
Step Four: Consolidate the redesign of the system into a cohesive ALE system design response framework	Completed ALE system design response framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised and prioritised list of all redesigned system building blocks/elements, including how this will be achieved Revisited Vision Stakeholders roles and responsibilities Operational plan for implementation and testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALE system design response framework: Suggested table of contents

4.1 Step One: Find and prioritise the best entry point(s) to change/improve the ALE system

To find the best entry points for ALE system improvement, the first question to ask is whether or not the supply side of the ALE system delivers the type of services the ALE target group needs and requests (the demand side).

The answer to this question assists in identifying entry points for system improvement on the supply side while addressing the needs on the demand side. The flow diagram below explains the processes involved in step one.



The processes in step one

As per the flow diagram above, the main entry point for the improvement of an ALE system lies in the question of whether or not the existing ALE system provides the types of services that the ALE target group/users of the service need or are interested in. If the current services do not meet the needs of ALE learners, the system does not fulfill its purpose and redesigning the system's supply side becomes obsolete. Therefore, the entry points for system improvement can not be divorced from referring back to the demand assessments carried out during Phase Two. If not already completed during the demand assessment it is useful to rank the services against criteria such as quality, and accessibility, etc., as viewed by the ALE learners/users. The ranking provides insights into which services are in high demand, but also where gaps lie in terms of poor quality, and coverage, etc. Whether the answer to the first question is yes, no or partially, the types of services demanded by ALE users should be defined and prioritised based on what the system can manage, afford and will deliver from here onwards.

The next question to ask is whether or not the supply side can offer the type of services that are requested and needed by the target group. If all the building blocks are not in place and/or functioning as they should, this will not be possible. Therefore, ALESBA stakeholders have to interrogate the results from Phase Two in the form of the ALESBA scores (and the accompanying qualitative data), the cause and effect diagrams, process maps and any

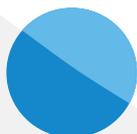
other analytical exercises completed during the diagnostic process (Phase Two, Part Two) to identify the weakest building blocks and elements that need immediate attention and/or can provide leverage for changes in other system building blocks, (e.g., improving the coordination mechanisms and processes may assist in more integrated service delivery, and in reducing the financial costs in one sector, etc.). For various reasons, it may not be possible or affordable to start the redesign and improvement process of all system building blocks, and the ALESBA stakeholders may have to prioritise and decide on what should come first and what can be addressed at a later stage. This will also be recorded in the ALE system design response framework during step four.

Therefore, Section 4.1. will cover the steps and tools needed to facilitate the process outlined in the flow diagram and the roadmap for Phase Three – the Alternatives Analysis and Design Process.

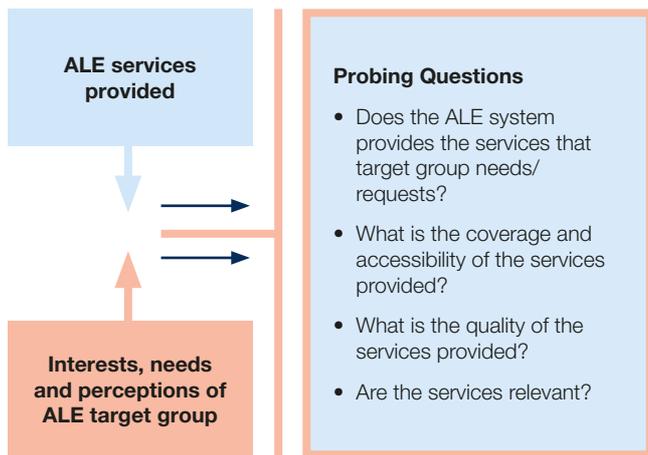
Align the demand and supply side assessments

To answer the question of whether or not the ALE system provides the types of services the ALE learners/users need or are interested in, the results of the demand assessment (preferably with both existing as well as potential new users) have to be compared with the current services provided by the system on the supply side as captured in the assessment conducted during Phase Two (e.g., through a peer review).

The exercise can be facilitated by presenting a summary of the outcomes from the demand assessment and differentiating between a) the ALE target groups perceptions on the current services provided (in terms of



relevance, acceptability, accessibility, and quality, etc.), and b) both current and potential new ALE service users' interests and needs for new ALE services that may not be on offer at the moment. These demands/needs/interests can be written on cards and placed at the bottom of the diagram, as indicated below (list one need/interest per card). A distinction must be made between interest and need expressed for existing services vs. new services by using cards of two different colours. The current ALE services provided by different stakeholders can be written on another colour of card (list one service per card) and placed at the top of the diagram.

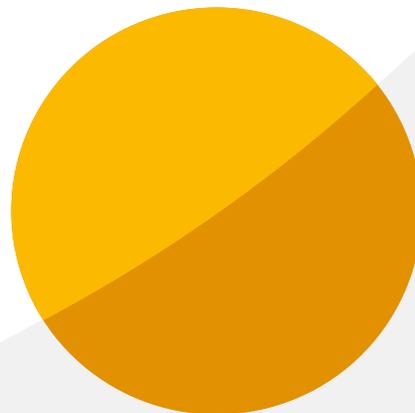


This presentation may reveal direct discrepancies between supply and demand from the onset. Even if demands and services provided are aligned, e.g., the target group requests adult literacy classes and this is provided by the current system, questions remain whether or not the

classes are accessible to all ALE learners, the quality of the service is adequate, the curriculum relevant, parts of the country or specific target groups are underserved (e.g., youth, women, disabled, factory workers, etc.). The discussion requires ALESBA stakeholders to conduct the analysis and the facilitators of the process should develop relevant probing questions beforehand. Based on the yes/no answer in the flow diagram, stakeholders will proceed with the remaining exercises to find and prioritise entry points for system change and improvement.

Ranking of ALE services against criteria

It is useful to know how ALE learners perceive services. It also assists in depicting system weaknesses that can be related to the system scores and diagnosis of the supply side assessment. Existing and new ALE service delivery can be analysed by using matrices such as the one below (example). A range of scores may be used, e.g., from 1–5, with 1 indicating 'low' and 5 indicating 'high/excellent'. Stakeholders may also decide to complete the table by writing down a summarised version of the conclusion for each comparison and debating the end result to reach a final conclusion.



At this stage services can be ranked irrespective of the stakeholders that provide the service but rather as per the results from the demand and supply side assessments. Services and criteria for ranking should be contextualised, agreed upon and clearly explained

to all stakeholders before the ranking process starts. The tool is more useful for the ranking of existing services. Ranking new services may require a different set of criteria, e.g., interest from learners; and stakeholder availability to deliver the service (coverage, etc.), etc.

ALE Services → Service Ranking Criteria ↓	Adult Literacy	Non-formal skills training	Life skills training	Business skills training	Total Score Criteria
Accessibility to target group	4	2	1	2	9
Acceptability by target group	1	4	3	4	12
Quality of service	2	3	2	3	10
Coverage of the service in the country	4	3	1	3	11
Total score: Services	11	12	7	12	See ranks below

In the example above the interpretation is as follows:

- From the four services currently provided by the stakeholders non-formal skills training and business skills training score higher than adult literacy and life skills training against all the criteria. This implies a better service perception by the ALE users, but should be further analysed in terms of how these services are supplied, e.g., although acceptability of the service by the users is quite high and shows a need and interest, the quality and coverage of the services in the country are average (score 3), which indicates that the underlying causes for poor/average service provision should be further unpacked.
- The scores indicate that acceptability scores the highest for all four services and accessibility the lowest. The underlying causes of this situation should be further unpacked before decisions are made about how to improve the system of delivery.

The results of the service delivery ranking exercise can be further analysed in the context of the system weaknesses and challenges as indicated by the ALESBA scoring table and the diagnostic studies conducted during Phase Two.

Define and prioritise the types of services that will be offered by the ALE system

The alignment of the demands (interests/needs) of the ALE learners (service users) and the existing services on offer from the supply side may have shown that only selected services on offer are still relevant and that new services may have to be introduced to meet the demands from learners. The service ranking exercise would have pointed out further interests and priorities of the ALE learners. It can be assumed that:

- The current services on offer are taken care of by existing stakeholders (ALE service providers).
- The quality, accessibility, affordability, and coverage, etc., of the existing services, may/may not meet the ALE users' needs and will need a change and improvement on the supply side of the system.
- The new services to be introduced may require existing stakeholders to expand service delivery options and/or bring new stakeholders and sectors on board. E.g., if there are a need and interest for health-related ALE, the health sector may have to be included in the ALESBA stakeholder group.
- The new services may also require co-operation with the private sector, and public-private partnerships, etc.
- Expanding the quality and coverage of existing services and/or introducing new services may not be affordable from the supply side and may have to be phased in over time.
- Stakeholders also have to bear in mind policies, national goals and development plans that dictate the kinds of services to be delivered (although in some cases these may be outdated based on the current demands of ALE learners).

Finally, ALESBA stakeholders have to define and prioritise the types of ALE services that will continue and the new services that will be introduced as part of the ALE service delivery system. To define and prioritise the types of services that will be on offer in the ALE system, different analytical tools can be used. This may show the effort that will be required to improve the ALE system. The supply side assessment also would have indicated the challenges within the existing service delivery system and how it will affect the roll-out of services.

Therefore, it is not a simple exercise to define and prioritise the ALE services that will be offered by the system. Stakeholders can rank all the existing and new services against criteria such as:

- High demand for the service from the ALE learners.
- The priority of the service in policies, and national development plans, etc.
- The costs/affordability regarding offering the service.
- Stakeholders and the sector's commitment to delivering the services.
- The feasibility of the ALE system changes required to deliver the service with the necessary quality, etc.

Ranking the services against the criteria can be done through discussion with stakeholders and using a simple scoring mechanism of 1-5 and/or completing the matrix by writing down the analysis of each service against the criteria and reaching a conclusion by debating the answers (i.e., considering pros and cons). By the end of this exercise, stakeholders will have prioritised, defined and made a decision about the ALE services that will be offered and form part of the system redesign. Services that cannot be offered immediately can be phased in over time and provision can be made in the ALE system design response framework for this option.

Identify/find the weakest building blocks/elements as entry points for system improvement

Now that it is clear which services will be offered by the ALE system, the next question is whether or not the existing system (supply side) can offer these services in an optimised manner. Bear in mind that the delivery of ALE services is dependent on a system that is comprised of system elements and building blocks. The way the building blocks are arranged, designed to function and interact with each other across the four elements and

spheres of governance is what will determine the extent to which quality services reach the ALE learners. For optimised ALE service delivery, the ALESBA stakeholders have to refer back to the results of the supply side assessment of the system during Phase Two. The weakest building blocks and elements that may hamper the delivery of the prioritised ALE services have to be uncovered as entry points for system improvement. The table below represents a reminder of the four ALESBA elements, each with five building blocks:

Enabling Environment	Institutional Arrangements	Management Processes	Technical Processes
ALE Policy	ALE Implementation Structures	Participatory Planning Processes	Localised Curricula
ALE Strategy	Human Resources	Appropriate Budget and Resource Allocation	Clear ALE Programme Design & Methodology
ALE Programme Implementation Guidelines	Leadership & Management	M&E System	Capacity Development at all Implementation Levels
Qualifications Framework	Accountability Mechanisms	Management Information System	Material Development
Legal Framework	Partnership Structures between State/Non-state Actors	Coordination and Cooperation Processes	Learner Assessments

ALESBA partners/stakeholders can portray the scores from the ALESBA system assessment in different forms, e.g., as comparative tables showing the score for every building block and element in detail or in the form of summarised graphs to compare regions or provinces against each other. The key point is to determine which system elements and building blocks are performing poorly out of a total score of 25 per element and a total score of 5 per building block. This requires stakeholders to refer back to the narrative details in the report to determine which building blocks experienced challenges and why.

They should also refer back to the diagnostic studies presented during Phase Two such as the cause and effect diagrams and process maps. See examples in the appendices of this booklet.

Once again it is recommended that this exercise be conducted without referring to the roles and contributions of individual stakeholders, but rather to assess the system as a whole, emphasising that it is the responsibility of all stakeholders. The results of the system assessment (Phase Two) should be presented visually, preferably on a wall or pinboard for the duration of the workshop so that stakeholder can refer back, analyse and debate.

Facilitators of the process should prepare probing questions beforehand to facilitate an analytical process, for example:

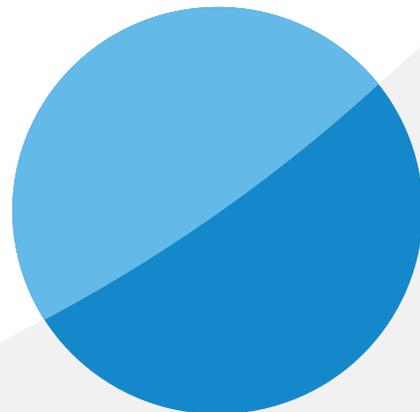
- Which system elements received weak scores?
- Does this happen in all geographical areas? (Bear in mind that the assessment has been conducted in sample areas).
- Which building blocks within the element scored the lowest? Why? (Refer back to narrative reports).
- Do the weak scores align with the root causes as depicted in the cause and effect diagram?
- How do these poor performing building blocks affect the service delivery process? (See process maps).
- Which system elements and building blocks should be prioritised for system strengthening?
- Would this solve the current service delivery problem? Justify why and how?
- Could the strengthening of these building blocks and elements manage to incorporate new types of ALE services or only the existing services?
- What will be required to include new services? (E.g., bring new sector offices and stakeholders on board, and changing the service delivery mechanism, etc.)

Once the discussion is completed, a summary of the group's consensus about the weakest elements and building blocks that need attention should be documented in the workshop report, as well as visually on cards or flipchart, to facilitate the discussion of the next exercise.

Keep in mind that any analytical and design process is iterative and new insights may come up as the process unfolds. Triangulation of the results from the ALESBA scores, the cause and effect diagrams and process maps completed during Phase Two as well as the service ranking from the demand assessment will assist in confirming which building blocks and elements are the weakest and create service delivery blockages. At this stage a list of building blocks and elements is sufficient. Prioritisation will take place in the next step. Facilitators should be flexible and allow for the creative tension between what exists and what may be created. The use of a consultant to facilitate the process may be useful, but the ownership, responsibility and direction of the process should belong to the ALESBA stakeholders.

Prioritise the system building blocks that need attention/can provide leverage

Stakeholders cannot only consider the list of weakest system building blocks and elements identified in the previous exercise but have to prioritise which building blocks and elements have the biggest need for improvement and/or can provide the most leverage to unblock system challenges in the ALE service delivery chain (i.e., have an impact on other system building blocks/elements).



From a cost and time perspective, it also may not be possible to address all system building blocks and elements at once. Therefore, when prioritising the system building blocks and elements, stakeholders will need to consider the following:

- Focus on the ALE services to be delivered – which building blocks/elements need immediate attention to roll out and optimise service delivery?
- Which building blocks/elements can provide leverage to unblock other system challenges and therefore provide better opportunities for service delivery?
- Time, costs and capacity to address the weakest building blocks and elements. This has implications for the ALESBA stakeholders and to what extent they can commit to the process, but also considering that the ALE system is still functioning and changes and improvements have to be introduced into a running system.

Finding the best entry points to unblock and optimise service delivery usually lies in analysing the root causes of the system as portrayed in the cause and effect diagrams. However, it is more complicated than that. In the attached cause and effect diagram (see appendices) it is clear that the majority of the root causes lie in the enabling environment. The lack of an independent ALE policy and laws that regulate the sector influence a host of challenges within the system. Formulating a policy and getting a law approved is a long-term process, and while these actions can be prioritised as important entry points to improve the system, stakeholders will also have to look at more immediate, feasible entry points that can improve service delivery and provide leverage to improve other areas of the system, while continuing to undertake evidence-based policy influencing through well designed and implemented technical and management processes, etc. Therefore, different factors and criteria will influence the decision regarding which building blocks to prioritise as entry points for system improvement.

Cross-impact analysis

A useful tool to explore the relationships, impact and leverage that building blocks have on another is the cross-impact analysis. It can either be done per system building block or per system element or for the system as a whole. An example is presented below to compare the impact of the enabling environment on technical processes. Stakeholders should consistently ask one question when comparing building blocks with each other, namely 'What is the impact of the effective functioning of building block X on the effective functioning of building block Y'. The question can be contextualised in line with the performance indicators in the ALESBA scoring table. In the example below the following questions may be asked:

- What is the impact of having an effective policy in place on ensuring that relevant, localised curricula is designed and applied?
- What is the impact of having an effective policy in place on ensuring relevant programme design, with participatory outcomes-based learning methodologies (e.g., FAL, REFLECT, etc.?)



This implies starting with one building block from the enabling environment and comparing it to all the technical process building blocks. During the process, a score from 1–5 can be debated and agreed upon by all stakeholders. A score of ‘1’ would imply limited impact and a score of ‘5’ would imply a high impact. Stakeholders will then continue with the second building block from the enabling environment and compare it with all the technical process building blocks. The building blocks from the enabling environment that score the highest will have the greatest impact on the successful functioning of technical processes and should be addressed as a matter of urgency. This implies that without this building block in place, other building blocks cannot be addressed or will not function well. The matrix can also be completed by writing the concluding

arguments and rationale for these statements in each cell instead of using scores.

A similar exercise should be conducted for technical and management processes, and institutional arrangements, etc. This implies each system element can be compared with the enabling environment and likewise each system element can be compared with management processes, and so on. The results should be compared, debated and discussed and could provide insights on entry points and building blocks that can provide leverage – meaning if that building block is strengthened it could pave the way for strengthening or unblocking challenges to strengthening other building blocks. See the example of a cross-impact matrix below.

Cross-impact matrix

Enabling Environment → Technical Processes ↓	Policy	Strategy	ALE Programme Guidelines	Qualifications Framework	Enabling Legal Framework
Localised Curricula					
Programme design					
Capacity Development					
Material development					
Learner assessments					
Total impact score for Enabling Environment on Technical Processes					

Adopted and adapted for ALESBA from the SACI Methodology for Capacity Transformation (Southern Africa Capacity Initiative, 2006).

Using the results from the cross-impact matrix or any other tool selected, stakeholders should reflect on the outcomes of all their analytical exercises and further refine their selection of prioritised building blocks against other important criteria. They can also decide

to include all building blocks with a certain score as priority building blocks. The alternatives analysis, as described below, can help to further prioritise the selected entry points based on agreed-upon criteria.

Alternatives analysis matrix

Starting with the pre-selected building blocks identified by using the cross-impact matrix, an alternatives analysis

matrix has the potential to further refine the selection of entry points by using another set of feasibility criteria as per the example below:

Building Blocks → Criteria ↓	Capacity Development at all levels	ALE policy	ALE Implementation structure	Participatory budgeting
Time needed to improve building block	3	1	3	2
Costs to make changes	1	3	1	3
Leverage on other building blocks	3	4	4	5
Direct impact on service delivery	5	3	3	5
Score/Conclusion	12	11	11	15

Scores from 1–5 can be used or writing the concluding statements for each ranking and coming to a conclusion about the pros and cons of each selection. In the above example, putting a participatory budgeting system in place and developing the capacity of ALE staff at all levels have the highest scores and are considered as priority entry points that may improve the ALE system.

To conclude the analysis, a final decision should be made about which building blocks are selected for the immediate design process (see step two below) and which will be phased in later. Ideally, the decision should be reached through dialogue and reaching consensus among the majority of stakeholders or alternatively, they may vote to agree on the best entry points. This will be included in the ALE system design response framework.

4.2 Step Two: Consider alternatives for the redesign of the prioritised system building blocks/elements

On completion of step one stakeholders will have generated a list of prioritised building blocks that have to be improved and redesigned to ensure the system functions well. Some building blocks will be addressed as a matter of immediate concern, while others will be addressed at a later stage. Step two deals with the actual redesign or improvement of the prioritised building blocks. This relates to the way/means/modality of how a building block looks and functions and considers different ways to improve it. For example, the ALE implementation structure may have a very centralised character that causes blockages in the way curricula are designed, materials developed and training conducted, or the MIS (Management Information System) only captures the data of government projects, leaving out the efforts of non-state actors such as NGOs.

The redesign of these building blocks requires ALESBA stakeholders to consider different design options through brainstorming, drawing on their own evidence-based experiences and/or existing studies (e.g., evaluations, and research, etc.), sharing experiences from other countries, or even commissioning specific research studies to come up with the best redesign solutions for the prioritised building blocks. Step two requires stakeholders to:

- Brainstorm, research and find different design options for each prioritised building block.
- Weigh the design options against selected criteria (by using tools such as alternatives analysis matrices).
- Decide on the best alternative option to redesign each of the prioritised system building blocks.



To facilitate the brainstorming and research for alternative solutions, stakeholders are advised to:

- Focus on the needs and interests of the ALE target group. The system has to be designed to offer relevant services.
- Keep in mind the vision for the ALE system.
- Consider both the demand and supply side of the system.
- Keep the prioritised building blocks and elements in mind and come back to check that they are sufficiently addressed.
- Brainstorm and research alternative options for all system building blocks to have options available for changes that may affect the whole system (during step three).
- Gather as many ideas as possible from stakeholders on alternative solutions for each building block. ALESBA stakeholders may implement different projects and programmes and have learned lessons and they can present best practice examples that can inform the new system design. All these experiences should be respected and brought to the table.
- Conduct further research or share experiences regarding the solutions for some building blocks, if required. Different stakeholders can be tasked to do this research and to present the ALESBA stakeholder group with alternative options. Universities can play an important role in this area.
- Focus on the importance of multi-sector and integrated service delivery. The ALE target groups' interests and needs will most probably span a diverse range of sectors. This requires the integration of policies, strategies, programmes and service delivery mechanisms, and institutional arrangements.
- Consider the governance system of the country and that the alternative options for building blocks may have to cater for each implementation level.
- Ensure all ALESBA stakeholders play a role in the system building process. Form follows function, and the focus should be on redesigning the system and how it should function first before deciding on the roles of stakeholders which will be covered in Section Six of this booklet.

Therefore, it is suggested that stakeholders prepare a flipchart for each prioritised ALESBA building block and start a process of brainstorming and/or researching alternative options for each prioritised system building block. These options can be written on cards and pasted on the flipcharts for the respective building blocks. At this stage, all suggestions count, are valid and respected. Section Five of this booklet presents alternative system design options and considerations from the literature that may be helpful in the process.

The purpose of the alternatives analysis is to identify possible alternative options and to agree on one option or strategy for action. Alternative options should be discussed in light of the target groups that would be affected by them and the existing identified challenges within the system (DFID, 2002). The objective of the decision-making process is to come up with options that are:

- Desirable and what the target group and ALESBA stakeholders want.
- Realistically achievable.
- Able to facilitate ALE system delivery optimisation.

There are different methods and tools that stakeholders can use to decide on the best alternative option for each system building block. One of the most applicable and versatile tools remains the alternatives analysis matrix. It matches different alternatives to be assessed with specified criteria. Working in small groups and sharing the responsibility for building blocks, stakeholders can rank each alternative with a set of criteria per building block. The group can use common criteria for all building blocks such as:

- Cost-effectiveness.
- Availability of physical resources.
- Availability of staff.
- Skills and capacity available for implementation.
- Extent of ability to address existing system challenges.
- Direct or indirect benefits regarding target groups' needs, etc.

Agreeing on the criteria is as important as brainstorming and researching alternative options for redesigning and improving system building blocks. The criteria will determine what is ultimately selected or not (Lohmeier, 1994). Stakeholders may also choose to use different criteria for each system element based on the specific nature of that element, e.g., the five building blocks in the enabling environment may require different criteria to the building blocks in technical processes. These are the decisions the facilitators of the process and ALESBA stakeholders have to make. The matrix below is an example of the different options for analysing the redesign of one building block. Note that the matrix can either be completed by using scores and ranking the options against the criteria and/or writing descriptive notes about the advantages or disadvantages of each option in each cell of the matrix to stimulate debate and decision-making. Scores or concluding statements should be listed in the last row of the matrix.

Building Block: Localised curricula that takes into consideration the needs and interests of the learners

Alternative design options → Criteria ↓	Adapting national curriculum framework at local level	Designing curricula at decentralised levels	Translating and contextualising existing localised curricula	Flexible and regular curricula design and update at local levels
Cost-effectiveness				
Staff capacity				
Time				
Addressing target group needs				
Score/Conclusion				

By the end of step two, a decision on the redesign for each of the prioritised building blocks would have been made and documented. It is important to describe the selected option and how the building block is supposed

to function as clearly as possible. The decision will be documented in the ALE system design response framework (step four), during which time more details can be added.

4.3 Step Three: Assess the impact of the redesign on the whole system

Each building block and element in the ALE system has to play its role and fulfil its function to ensure the system can deliver quality ALE services. Addressing the challenging, prioritised building blocks in steps one and two is not sufficient to ensure the whole system functions well. The impact of the changes in the prioritised building blocks and elements on the remaining building blocks/elements also has to be assessed and addressed. For example, the decision to implement a new national qualifications framework as one of the prioritised entry points/building blocks to improve the system, has repercussions for

the way learner assessments are conducted, materials are developed, and how building the capacity of staff to manage the new building block will occur, etc. Therefore, step three deals with:

- Assessing the impact the changes in the redesigned building blocks (step two) have on the other remaining building blocks and functioning of the system as a whole.
- Repeating step two to find the best way/means/ modalities to redesign and improve the functioning of the affected building blocks/elements.



To assess the impact of the changes on the remaining building blocks and functioning of the system, three tools

may be useful in this regard, namely process maps, objective trees and scenario sketching.

Process maps

During Phase Two, process maps were used to identify system blockages and root causes of system challenges. See the appendices for an example. The process map indicates the flow of the system between the enabling environment and the point services reach the target group. During Phase Two, the existing process was mapped and another analytical activity was added, namely identifying the blockages and challenges within the flow of the system towards service delivery. Similarly, process maps can be used to show how the newly redesigned building blocks will flow with existing (not prioritised and redesigned) building blocks to deliver services. ALESBA stakeholders should write a description of how each building block functions on cards (one block per card)– including both the redesigned and existing building blocks, to create a process map or service delivery chain to show the flow of processes.

During the construction of the process map, attempts should be made to avoid merely creating a linear flow diagram but to truly focus on the flow of processes within the system. This may require repeating certain building blocks that may be used more than once, e.g., coordination processes. The process map will assist stakeholders to identify whether or not the existing building blocks and the way they function may still accommodate the changes made in the design and function of the prioritised building blocks. If it seems that an existing building block will hamper the flow because of the changes, the affected building blocks will have to be listed and the same process as step two should be repeated, namely to come up with alternative design options, weighing the best option against the criteria and making a decision about how to redesign the affected building blocks. Refer to the booklet on Phase Two for more details on process maps.

Objective trees

During the diagnostic part of Phase Two, ALESBA stakeholders would have completed problem trees (also called cause and effect diagrams/analysis). These problem trees show the cause and effect relationship between the system challenges across system elements and building blocks. Turning these trees into objectives trees allows stakeholders to see how the potential future situation of an improved system may look. It entails:

- Working from the top of the tree downwards and rewording all problem statements into positives (objectives).
- If a statement makes no sense after rewording, rather formulate a replacement objective.
- Stick to the colour coding of cards used in the problem tree to indicate system elements (see the appendices section for an example of a cause and effect diagram).
- The objectives tree should be checked to determine whether or not the objectives at one level will be sufficient to achieve the objectives at the next level (DFID, 2002).

When ‘reading’ a problem tree, one would understand that if the cause is A, the effect will be B. When reading and interpreting an objectives tree, the understanding is ‘the means of X to achieve Y’. When reading the tree from the bottom up, the means-end relationship is visible and the system linkages between building blocks and elements can be observed. This tool does not necessarily assist in selecting the best design options for each building block, but rather shows that if a change is made to address one challenge, another ‘means’ may be needed to reach the end. Therefore, this exercise is useful for assessing the impact that changes within one building block will have on another.



Scenario sketching

It may be useful for ALESBA stakeholders to sketch different scenarios and weigh them against each other to determine how a new system may function and what it may require to operationalise, in terms of costs, resources, and human capacity, etc. The process maps and objectives tree explained above are useful tools to show the means-end relationships within the system and the arrangements of the building blocks to create an efficient service delivery chain. Scenario sketching can be used as a complementary tool or on its own to test different scenarios.

It can show how:

- The same building blocks (redesigned and existing) can be arranged in different formations for a better service flow.
- How different design options for building blocks can create alternative system functioning options.

The simplest way to do scenario sketching is to ask the question, 'if this, then what?', while building the ALE system from the bottom up, for example:

- Start with the technical processes and arrange the newly redesigned and existing building blocks in the way they will work together – and ask the question whether or not all concerns have been addressed, are there any gaps, or do any building blocks need further adjustments?

- Continue with institutional arrangements and management processes and ask the same question. Relate these building blocks to technical processes, e.g., if material development will be done by a multi-sectoral stakeholder group, do we have a partnership structure and coordination process in place?
- Conclude with the enabling environment and cross-check what needs to be in place to make the other three elements and building blocks function well?

All scenarios have to be discussed against criteria such as:

- Will this system address the target groups' needs?
- Is it cost-effective to implement across multiple sectors and spheres of governance?
- Are the capacity and skills available to operationalise the system, etc.?

Scenario sketching will assist to determine the impact of the redesigned building blocks on the existing building blocks, but also (as is the case with process maps) whether or not the system can function as a whole.

Step three concludes with redesigning any affected existing system building blocks due to changes made in the prioritised building blocks (repeating step two).



4.4 Step Four: Consolidate the redesign of the system into a cohesive ALE system design response framework

Steps one, two and three provide all the information for redesigning an improved ALE system. This involves finding entry points, considering alternatives, assessing the impact on the system and, most importantly making, decisions about how the new system will look and function. The design of the new ALE system needs to be captured in a document called the 'ALE system design response framework'. The response framework is a key document to record all the

processes and the way the decisions have been reached as well as the actual decisions and design of the new ALE system during Phase Three. It is also the link to Phase Four, namely implementing and testing the newly designed system in selected pilot areas and with pilot groups. The documentation of the response framework provides a good opportunity to revisit the vision and goals for the ALE system that were defined during Phase One, Consensus Building.



Revisit the vision and goals for the ALE system

The ALESBA stakeholders formulated a preliminary vision statement for the system building process during Phase One (Consensus Building) and also had the option to formulate a mission statement. Since then, much has changed. Phase Three has taken the results of Phase Two on board and designed an improved ALE system. The new system design is based on assessments from the demand and supply side as well as considering different options to address system challenges. This information and the decisions made may have an impact on the original vision statement and goals for the system formulated during Phase One. Therefore, ALESBA stakeholders should revisit the vision and decide whether or not it still holds true and make the necessary changes if needed. The vision statement and goals the system has to achieve guides the functioning of the newly designed system and should be captured in the system design response framework.

Visioning is a technique that is used to assist a group of stakeholders to develop a shared vision for the future. It involves asking the group to assess where they are now and where they expect to be in the future (DFID, 2002). Having a vision for the ALE system and how it will change the lives of the target group acts as a benchmark and helps in the process of weighing alternative options against each other and making the best decisions. The tools in the booklet of Phase One (Consensus Building) provide a detailed description of how to facilitate a visioning exercise and formulate a mission statement.

The vision can refer to statements and goals captured in national development plans, policies and strategy documents from the various sectors that will be involved in ALE service delivery. It can also relate to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The vision can act as a common denominator among all ALESBA stakeholders and a statement they feel comfortable adhering to.

Suggested contents of the ALE system design response framework

The ALE system design response framework is a document that captures all processes and decisions during Phase Three of the ALESBA. It is the foundation and description of the new ALE system design and is called a 'response framework' because it is also the document that will guide Phase Four regarding how to implement and test the new system design. For example, workshop reports for steps two and three will show how alternatives were ranked and analysed and why certain decisions were made. However, this information may have to be revisited during Phase Four when implementation starts. These workshop reports, minutes of meetings and other events can be annexed to the main ALE system design response framework document. Ideally, the document should contain the following information.

ALE System Design Response Framework: Table of Contents

Topic	Details
Executive Summary	A brief overview of what follows in the document
Introduction	Purpose of the document, and overview of ALESBA, etc.
Background	Overview of previous ALESBA phases and major outcomes with references to annexes, acknowledgement of ALESBA stakeholders and partnership, etc.
Vision and underlying/driving principles	Agreed upon revisited vision, driving principles agreed on between ALESBA stakeholders during Phase One
Summary of ALE system challenges as identified during Phase Two	E.g., ALESBA scoring table, results from the diagnostic study, and demand assessment, etc. Short summarised contents to show what the new system design responds to
Entry points for ALE system improvement	Description of selected and prioritised building blocks with a brief reference to the process of selection and reference to workshop reports in the annex. (Outcomes of step one)
Redesigned system elements	Description of each redesigned system element – for both prioritised system building blocks from step one and other affected building blocks from step three. A detailed description of how the building block will function, which modalities, methodologies, structures, and policies, etc., will be in place
Stakeholder roles and responsibilities	As agreed upon - see section six of this booklet
Operational plan for implementation	The plan describes how the response framework will be operationalised and implemented during Phase Four. It shows which redesigned building blocks will be addressed first and how others will phase in over time, etc. The first draft of the plan can be formulated during Phase Three, but the details will be elaborated during Phase Four. See the booklet on Phase Four for details on how to conduct the planning exercise and formulate a plan
Conclusion	Concluding statements and next steps
Annexes	Workshop reports from previous phases and other supporting documents

It is useful to start the documentation process of the ALE system design response framework during step one so that the document can be ready at the end of Phase Three. Each ALESBA stakeholder should have a copy and a workshop or meeting can be conducted to share the design

with senior management for validation and approval. The document should be officially approved by all ALESBA stakeholders to become the official response framework that guides the testing and implementation phase of a new system design.

5. CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVE ALE SYSTEM DESIGN OPTIONS

Section four, steps two and three elaborates the process of brainstorming and researching alternative design options for the system building blocks and elements. ALESBA stakeholders are encouraged to make use of their own lessons and best practice experiences and also to rely on existing studies or commission new research if needed. The literature on ALE and education systems also provides many

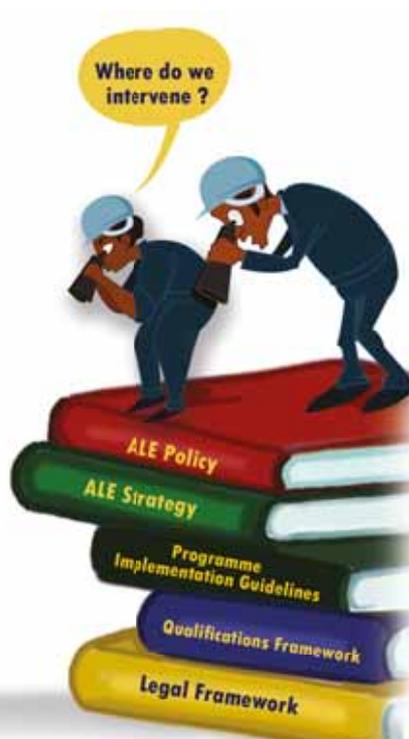
suggestions and unpacks the advantages and disadvantages of each by using examples from different countries. Ultimately ALESBA stakeholders are confronted with many options to make decisions. This section of the booklet captures some options and choices available across the four system elements as well as considerations that should be taken into account, as recommended by different literature sources.

5.1 Enabling Environment

The enabling environment building blocks include an ALE policy, strategy, programme implementation guidelines for all stakeholders, qualifications framework and a legal framework. Strong governance and an enabling environment are conditions for an effective adult learning and education system (OECD, 2018). Government and ALE stakeholders should work together to develop an **ALE policy** if this does not already exist. A policy can be defined as a 'broad statement that sets out the government's main goals and priorities and which defines a particular stance, aiming to explore solutions to an issue' (UNESCO, 2018). This is particularly important when

considering the multi-dimensional nature of ALE. Different sector ministries are involved in various aspects and much adult learning may take place outside the formal system, which actively involves social partners. Diversity can generate gaps and misalignment (OECD, 2018). Therefore, the policy formulation process should be participatory and transparent. It is useful to consider different existing projects and programmes that can produce evidence to influence the policy formulation process. Participation of all ALE stakeholders in the phases of ALESBA can result in a participatory policy formulation or revision process.

Policies should be translated into **strategies** that will roll out the implementation of the policy. Each of the policy document priorities has to be unpacked and strategic solutions have to be formulated. This exercise aligns well with the response framework mentioned in section 4 of this booklet. The response framework or ALE system design document can provide substantial input for developing an ALE strategy, showing how each system priority/building block may be implemented. However, strategies have to translate into action and programme implementation guidelines need to be developed that address all implementation modalities, benchmarks and standards (UNESCO, 2018).



Enabling Environment

Programme implementation guidelines for all ALESBA stakeholders are essential to ensure that whatever the roles of the stakeholders are in ALE service delivery, the necessary programme quality standards are met and the projects and programmes implemented contribute to a comprehensive national ALE system with its own vision and goals. These guidelines take their cue from the ALE policy and strategy documents and should spell out the following aspects: (African Development Bank, 2003)

- The vision and objectives of the ALE system and the target groups to be addressed.
- Reference not only to ALE policy and strategy documents but also to the policies and strategies of related sectors. This promotes integration, ownership and commitment.
- The ALE stakeholders and their role in implementing the policy, strategy and system. This implies that when new NGO stakeholders or development partners come on board, they can find their role and contribution within the system for a well-coordinated and joint effort.
- A description of the different methodologies for all components of ALE, e.g., literacy methodologies used in the country (e.g., REFLECT, FAL, Family Literacy, etc.) and how other non-formal skills training and components of ALE are integrated into one comprehensive ALE service.
- The implementation modalities, e.g., are classes offered in groups, how are groups formed and arranged? Are classes offered at community learning centres (CLCs), which kind of classes and offered by whom?
- What is the time duration of courses and is there any certification, is it linked to a qualifications framework in the country? (e.g., 2-year programme, and 3-month courses, etc.)
- What are the benchmarks for training, staffing (qualifications and experience, etc.)? E.g., a minimum of two-week training for literacy facilitators with annual refresher courses.
- What are the implementation stages, e.g., needs assessment, baseline studies, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation?
- Description of the M&E and MIS system, etc.

Therefore, the programme implementation guidelines take the policy and strategy a step further into a comprehensive description and handbook for all ALE stakeholders and service providers in the country. This creates opportunities to maximise coordination and link all stakeholders to one M&E system and MIS. Giving proper attention to this building block implies translating the new system design/response framework into a useful official guideline to implement the system.



The programme implementation guideline will also address matters of a qualifications framework. Developing a national qualifications framework is a substantial endeavour and cannot be facilitated by the ALE sub-sector on its own. It requires the involvement of a country's full education system, including TVET, and higher education, etc. During the system design process, ALE stakeholders will analyse different options regarding how they can integrate the ALE sector into the existing qualifications framework (if one exists) or which interim or alternative measures can be used to acknowledge prior learning, certify learning and training, etc. They may consider options of transfer directives that allow learners to move to the next qualification after receiving a prior qualification. Other options include a credit system or qualifications passport.

A legal framework is one of the strongest mechanisms to govern any system, including an ALE system. It can ensure clear responsibilities and provision of the necessary resources. The legislation defines some of the key features of the ALE system for example the role of the state versus other service providers such as NGOs. The process of registration and certifying training providers is another example. If a legal framework for ALE is not available, stakeholders may resort to memorandums of understanding and contractual agreements to regulate relationships and responsibilities (OECD, 2018). A legal framework for ALE will strengthen the rights-based approach, giving ALE learners a right to services and hold duty bearers accountable to deliver these services.

5.2 Institutional Arrangements

The system building blocks under institutional arrangements include ALE implementation structures, human resources, leadership and management, accountability mechanisms, and partnership structures between state and non-state actors. Institutional arrangement options should be considered only after the ALESBA stakeholders considered the design elements of technical processes, and the kinds of services the system should deliver. There is a tendency to design structures and recruit staff before knowing what kinds of services the system will deliver with what type of modalities and methodologies. The design of services with the building blocks under technical processes will inform the kind of implementation structures that are needed. For example, if a decision was made to deliver integrated ALE services involving different sectors and stakeholders, a different structure will be needed rather than one that only delivers a pure literacy programme.



The other consideration under institutional arrangements is the spheres or levels of governance. The ALE system and structure have to ensure that services are delivered from the national to the local level with the necessary resource and information flow, and feedback loops, etc. Both vertical (across spheres) and horizontal (across sectors) arrangements have to be considered as well as the involvement of non-state actors.

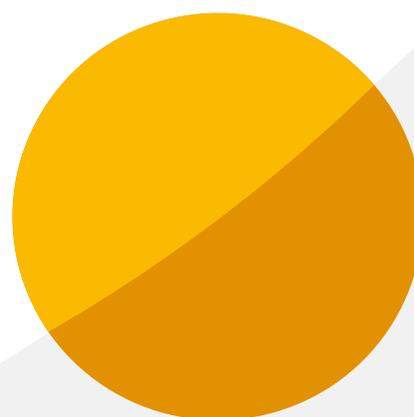
Therefore, the ALE implementation structure should consist of organograms or hierarchies with sufficient qualified personnel within the **primary ALE service provider**, e.g., the government ministry responsible for ALE services or a non-state actor as per the system of a particular country. This implies an ALE unit, directorate or agency at the national level, with relevant staff having the responsibility, capacity and mandates to implement ALE at regional/provincial and local government levels.

When considering multiple sector involvement in ALE, the design of implementation structures become even more complicated and stakeholders have to consider technical coordination teams, working groups and similar structures to plan, budget, and implement programmes jointly. This coordinated effort and structures have to be mirrored at the senior management level with structures such as ALE boards to oversee the implementation of ALE services. The ALESBA process may even lead to decisions to form ALE agencies or restructure the sector as a whole.

The involvement of non-state actors in the ALE implementation structure should not come as an afterthought, but as a purposefully planned integration in the structure based on the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. The next section of this booklet explores these options in further detail.

The building block of human resources needs serious thought and is closely linked to the building block of capacity building under technical processes. The system design should include decisions concerning the kind of staff needed at each level of ALE service delivery, their qualifications, profile and experience. This should start at the facilitator level and include trainers/supervisors, technical experts, planners, and system managers, etc. It also should include how staff are recruited, deployed, and paid, etc. (World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020, 2011).

The building blocks of leadership and management, and accountability mechanisms are closely related. Stakeholders should consider different accountability and performance measurement options to ensure leaders fulfil their duties and can be held accountable. Performance measures should be collaboratively designed, with clearly expressed comprehensive objectives and built with the end-users in mind (OECD, 2018). This remains one of the most complicated, yet crucial system building blocks and thus there is a need for substantial consensus and commitment among all ALESBA stakeholders.



5.3 Management Processes

The building blocks under management processes include participatory planning processes, appropriate budget and resource allocation, having an M&E system, a Management Information System (MIS), and effective coordination and cooperation processes within and between ALE implementation structures (within one institution) and across sectors and stakeholders and levels of implementation.

ALE stakeholders will have to consider how the planning process for the ALE system will take place, e.g., will it include joint planning on annual basis involving all key stakeholders, and will it include regular joint planning sessions within technical teams and coordination committees/tasks teams at local implementation levels, etc.? Whatever is decided, the planning option chosen should mirror the kind of ALE system design and what it requires, e.g., vertical and horizontal integration and it should be participatory.

Budget and resource allocation is one of the ALE sector's biggest challenges with constant cries for more funding and resources whether human or infrastructure related, etc. Therefore, the alternatives analysis and design phase require ALE stakeholders to think innovatively and make what is available work better. They may consider options such as:

- Integrated budgeting – where every sector and stakeholder contributes a share of the ALE budget depending on their roles and responsibilities within the system.
- Using integrated service delivery modalities, such as community learning centres where government sectors offices and other stakeholders can deliver a range of services with already existing budget allocations.
- Avoiding duplication and overlap by streamlining processes and business re-engineering.
- Partnerships with the private sector.
- Advocacy for more resources and funding from the national budget for ALE, etc.



Management Processes

One of the biggest accusations against the ALE sector is the lack of data to substantiate successes, impact and objectives achieved. Therefore, investing in a comprehensive M&E system is a worthwhile investment, coupled with a MIS that can store and make data available for decision-making, and budgeting, etc. Putting a national M&E and MIS in place requires resources, skills and time. ALE stakeholders may consider more low-key options as a start and build these systems over time, starting with more manual systems at local implementation levels and coordinating data and information between stakeholders.

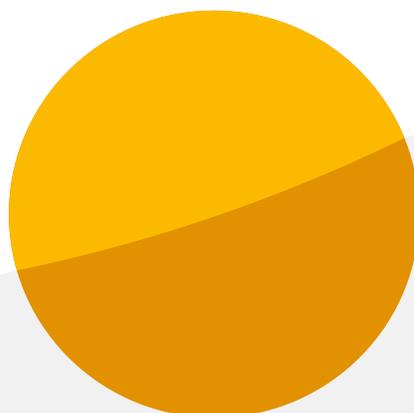
Coordination and cooperation is a key process that holds the ALE system together. It cannot be taken for granted or assumed it will happen. Having a coordination structure (see institutional arrangements) is not a guarantee that the structure will be functional and that the process will happen. Not only should the structure be designed, but the coordination process as well, e.g., determining how often the coordination structures will meet, and what the objectives of these meetings/workshops will be (e.g., planning, budgeting, and monitoring, etc.), etc. Apart from meetings and workshops, coordination can take a stronger form namely co-operation, such as joint monitoring and training missions conducted by stakeholders.

5.4 Technical Processes

The technical processes building blocks include having localised curricula for all ALE components (literacy, and non-formal skills training, etc.), clear ALE programme design and learning methodologies, capacity development at all implementation levels, material development and learner assessments. The building blocks under technical processes lie at the heart of the ALE system design since these building blocks are at the interface of ALE service delivery and closest to the users of ALE services. It is also the system element where most of the ALE stakeholders (both state and non-state) could share experiences and best practices and have the opportunity to design unique and cost-effective ALE services that meet the needs of the target group.

ALE stakeholders will have to consider:

- What kind of curricula to develop or is already available for ALL the ALE components – and most importantly consider options that will ensure the curricula remain relevant to the ALE target groups' needs and interests as expressed in the demand assessment. This implies considering mechanisms to build the capacity at local government levels (also with non-state actors) to develop contextualised curricula. Consideration may be given to having a national curricula framework and to align the local curricula to this framework.



- Having a clear ALE programme design and learning methodologies should not be confused with the national-level programme implementation guidelines discussed under the enabling environment. Reference is made to practical learning methodologies and approaches for literacy, non-formal skills training, etc., such as REFLECT, FAL, family literacy, and integrated approaches, etc., as well as methodologies to facilitate non-formal livelihoods skills training, and life skills, etc. It also considers the design of the implementation or delivery modality, e.g., in groups, at CLCs, with local facilitators, and supervisor roles, etc. Therefore, this building block also links with the enabling environment because its description will be captured in the national programme implementation guidelines. It also affects the other building blocks under technical processes, such as material development and capacity development. It would include choices about languages, etc.
- Capacity development options should be discussed under the umbrella of designing a comprehensive ALE capacity building strategy to support the system. Under this building block, stakeholders will have to consider the kinds of training needed at each level of intervention starting from local facilitators and including system managers and senior managers, as well as what is the duration and contents of this training/education and which institution will provide it.
- Material development considers all materials needed to implement the ALE system. Therefore, it would include materials for all ALE components and guidelines for managing the system, and the M&E system, etc. The stakeholders have to consider what materials are already available, do they have to be redesigned, and translated, etc. Keep in mind that the programme design and methodology building block discussed above will also influence the type of material development needed. Stakeholders cannot plan for a new methodology without considerable change in the materials.
- The building block of learner assessments requires decisions and design options regarding what type of measurement will be used (e.g., LAMP and Numeracy scales) for all ALE components, how they will be administered, how often, and how the results will feed into the M&E system and MIS, etc.

The technical processes element and its building blocks can be best handled when designing the ALE service delivery from the bottom up and making sure the detailed contents of all building blocks are addressed.



Technical Processes

6. ASSIGNING ROLES TO STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE NEXT PHASES OF SYSTEM BUILDING

Looking at a system in its entirety rather than as comprising individual parts, allows for better insights into where the greatest impact of a given change can be achieved. It also requires a sharper focus on how institutions, actors and processes are organised as well as needing greater alignment between stakeholder actors both within and across sectors to achieve desired outcomes (Magrath B, 2019). Participating in the analysis of alternative options and designing a new improved system will naturally affect the roles, responsibilities, relationships and structural arrangements between the ALESBA stakeholders. As mentioned on several occasions ‘form follows function’ and stakeholders

During the design phase, the ALESBA stakeholders have to consider which institutional arrangements and management processes will they put in place as far as the following is concerned:

- The vertical structures, relationships and integration across the spheres of governance.
- The horizontal structures, relationships and integration between sectors that are part of the ALE system.
- The coordination and responsibility structures between state and non-state actors.

Vertical arrangements

The constitution and governance structure of each country determines how the political and administrative arrangements in a country are organised. This also has an impact on the design of any service delivery system. From the perspective of the state, each sphere of governance has its own mandate and responsibilities which are captured in official documents and regulations. The national or federal level usually takes the responsibility for most building

should refrain from designing structural arrangements or assigning roles and responsibilities before finalising the design of the technical processes and enabling environment. The design of the system elements related to management processes and institutional arrangements are affected by the building blocks in the enabling environment and technical processes. Note this applies to the design process only, when it comes to the implementation and testing of the new system in Phase Four, any system building block or element can be a starting point depending on the status of the existing system, priorities identified and entry points that may provide leverage for system reform.

blocks in the enabling environment, while the lower levels would interpret policies and strategies and take responsibility for the delivery of services. Although these structures and relationships are regulated, the details for designing and implementing an ALE system still can and should be elaborated within this context, taking direction from the official mandates and responsibilities. Across these spheres of governance and structures are multiple government sector offices and also other stakeholders which have to be taken into consideration.



When considering the level at which ALE service delivery takes place, the local governance level becomes a focal point in the design of services (Dijk, n.d.). Differentiation can be made between:

- The local government administration, which includes the local agencies and staff of central government ministries/ departments that are usually accountable to supervisors at provincial or regional levels. These local sector representatives usually carry the main responsibility for service delivery.
- Non-governmental organisations, such as local NGOs or international NGOs with locally assigned staff that usually implement a wide range of projects parallel to the government or on behalf of the government (See Phase One on roles of stakeholders).
- Community-based organisations and religious organisations, cooperatives, etc.

Local government, in reference to its area of jurisdiction, is responsible for uniform service delivery to all people and therefore operates differently from an NGO working with a well-defined target group. Local government also operates within a bureaucratic decision-making structure according to pre-defined procedures, whereas NGOs may have a more flexible decision-making structure. (Dijk, n.d.)

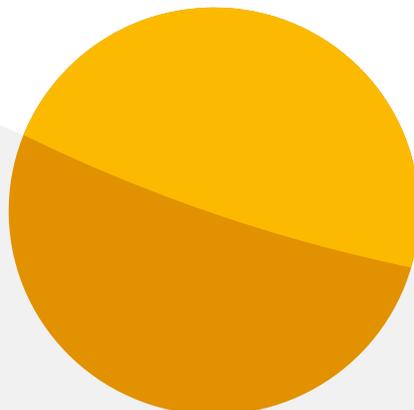
Horizontal arrangements

ALE as a sector invites multiple sectors to deliver services. This could include ministries of education, health, natural resources, agriculture, gender and labour, social development, youth, and cooperatives, etc. NGOs may also function with special expertise within one or more of these sectors, while development partners and donors have their own priorities and focus areas. To bring all of this together in a coherent structure with healthy communication and coordination processes is by no means a simple task.

Different tools, as described below, may assist to facilitate an understanding of each other's context, mandates and capacities and the processes of cooperation/coordination, accountability mechanisms and structures that are needed within and between stakeholders for the functioning of an effective ALE system. The tools should be used iteratively to deepen understanding and facilitate the design process.

Stakeholders participation and involvement matrix (Dijk, n.d.)

The matrix relates the different tasks within each system building block to specific stakeholders. The matrix only indicates where each stakeholder is involved and not necessarily whether or not they take the main responsibility for driving a specific task. All the tasks related to the functioning of the ALE system can be listed on the left of the matrix and the different stakeholders can be listed at the top. The system design for each building block will inform the kinds of tasks that need to be carried out. The idea is not to only list the building blocks, but also the actual tasks or functions within the building blocks.



Considering that the participation and involvement of stakeholders may vary in different spheres/levels of governance or even geographical areas (e.g., some NGOs may not operate throughout the country), separate matrices may have to be constructed to create a better overview, e.g., within each level of governance indicating the main stakeholders, and including sectors. Once the matrices have been completed, a comprehensive analysis and discussion can

be conducted and stakeholders may agree on the main responsible parties and the roles of other stakeholders; the kind of structures and processes that are needed at each level of intervention as well as how it will play out vertically across the spheres. The matrix has more value when completed with descriptions of the actual roles and involvement of stakeholders. Additional rows should be added for each task/function. See the simplified example below:

Stakeholders participation and involvement matrix (example)

Stakeholder → Task/Function ↓	Central Govt.	Regional Govt.	Local Govt.	NGO X	University	Donor Y
Enabling Environment						
Formulate ALE policy	X					
Implement programme implementation Guideline	X	X	X	X	X	
Institutional Arrangements						
Management Processes						
Technical Processes						
Develop TOT and TOF manuals		X	X	X	X	
Conduct ToT			Collaborate to conduct ToT			
Supervise facilitators			Collaborate to appoint and pay supervisors			

Stakeholder Collaboration – Force Field Analysis

The force field analysis tool can also be used to assess which factors bind stakeholders together around a common objective, interest, or value system etc., as far as the system elements and building blocks are concerned, and which factors hinder collaboration. This may be based on previous relationships, conflict, disappointments and misunderstanding each other’s roles, responsibilities and mandates. The facilitator can place all the system building blocks (to gain a comprehensive impression) or a selected number that experience challenges among stakeholders, by writing the name of the building blocks on cards and placing them in the middle column. Stakeholders then can work in their individual organisational groups or be grouped together

thematically, as government, or NGOs, etc., to complete the table by filling in their perceptions of the binding and hindering factors on cards and placing them on either side of the building blocks. For example, binding factors may include acceptance of national goals and the ALE strategy document by all or a group of stakeholders, while hindering factors could include disagreement about the ALE implementation structures, unhappiness about the partnership structures with non-state actors, or weak coordination processes, etc. Once completed the facilitator should facilitate a constructive discussion aimed at creating a better understanding between stakeholders and coming up with suggestions to move forward. See the example below:

Stakeholder	Binding factors	System Building Block	Hindering factors	Suggestions for change
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		→	
	→		→	

(Adopted and adapted from the Inventory of Analysis Instruments for Local Governance (Dijk, n.d.).

Users of the ALESBA toolkit can explore several participatory and visual tools to generate understanding and common interest among ALE stakeholders to come up with workable implementation structures and coordination processes. Formerly explained tools in the ALESBA toolkit such as Venn Diagrams and the other tools in Phase One, Consensus Building, may be useful during the process of redefining stakeholder relationships and responsibilities within the ALE system building process. Keep in mind that

stakeholders may take up new roles and responsibilities within a new or improved system design. This may require building relationships with other stakeholders with whom they don’t feel comfortable. As explained in Phase One of the booklets, the process of consensus building remains important throughout this process. The detailed roles and responsibilities of stakeholders will be further elaborated in Phase Four, when linked to implementation and testing of the ALE system design response framework.

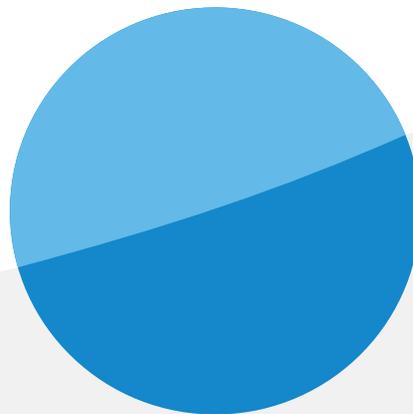
7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The alternatives analysis and design process should be driven and conducted by a core selected representative group from all ALESBA stakeholders. This should involve all sectors (as per the scope of ALE) as well as representatives across the spheres of governance (e.g., representatives from both national and local government should be present), including

Ultimately the new system design should be approved by senior management from all ALESBA stakeholder representatives. Whether the decision is made to redesign the whole ALE system, or only to improve selected building blocks and elements, the impact of these changes on other building blocks should be traced and considered in the design. The alternatives analysis and design process

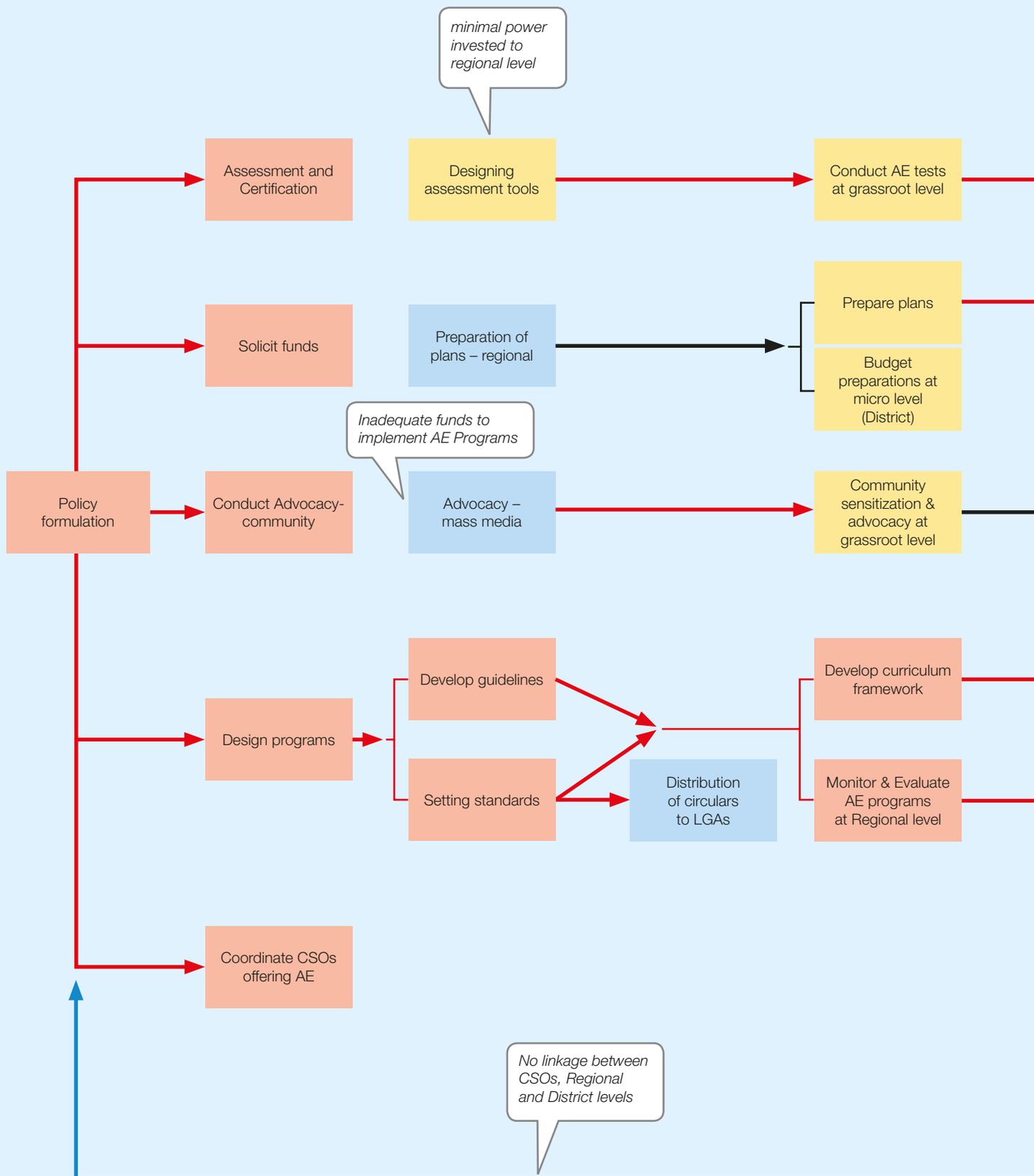
different non-state actors. It is difficult to facilitate this process with too many participants. However, at key points during the process, this core group of experts should share, validate and request input from the wider ALESBA stakeholder group and senior management.

cannot be completed during one workshop, but will most probably take place during several workshops, meetings and it will take some months to complete a final design and response framework for a new ALE system. The resulting document will be the main output informing Phase Four of the ALESBA, namely implementing and testing the new system design.

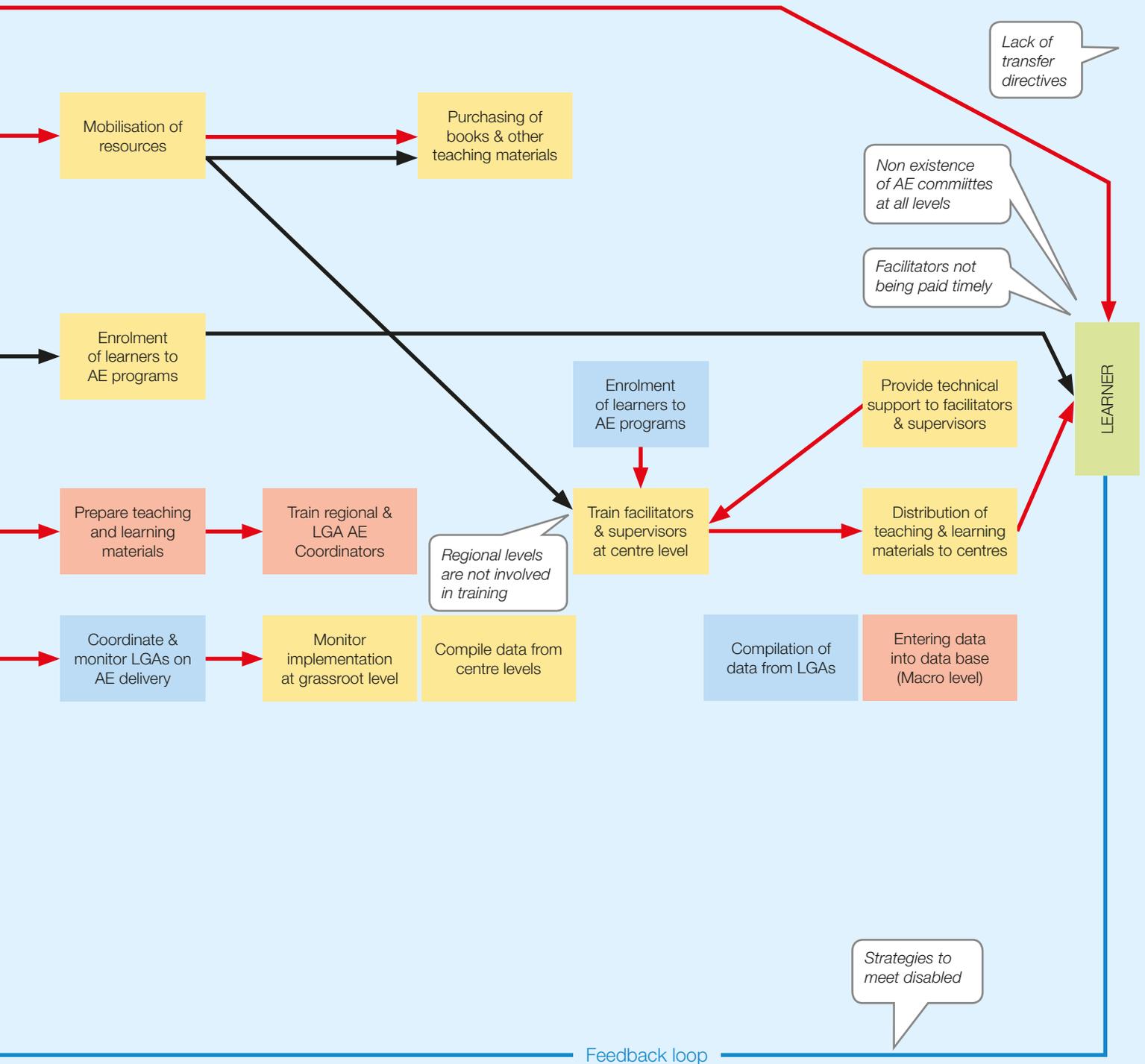


Appendices

Example of a Process Map/Service Delivery Chain



Adult Education Service Delivery Process Map – Example

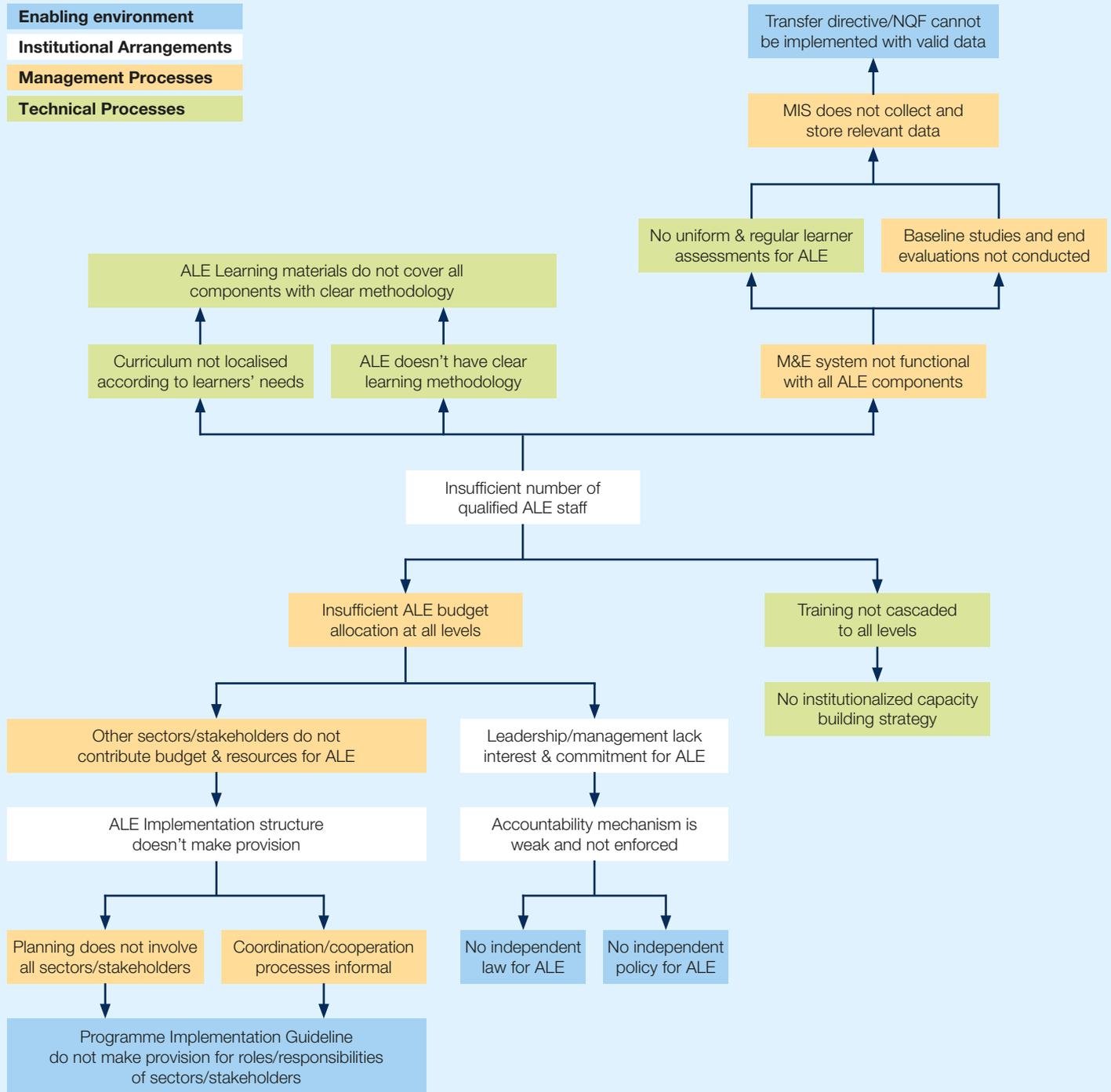


Appendices

Example of a Cause and Effect Diagram

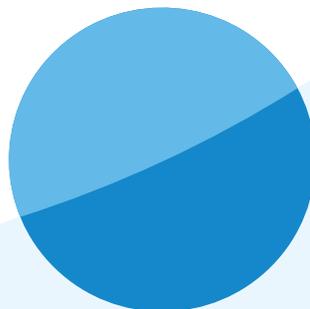
Key:

- Enabling environment
- Institutional Arrangements
- Management Processes
- Technical Processes



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

- Towards an operational definition of Lifelong Learning:
UIL Working Papers No.1 (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015)
- European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2:
Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector
(National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy, 2008)
- Terminology of European education and training policy:
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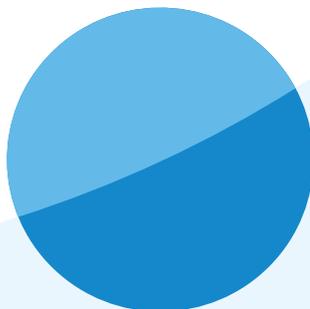
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DVW International
Königswinterer Str. 552 b
53227 Bonn
Germany

Tel.: +49 (0) 228 97569-0
Fax: +49 (0) 228 97569-55
info@dvw-international.de
www.dvw-international.de

DVW International

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

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

The toolkit consists of the following books:

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

For further information visit:

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