

**An Assessment on the Implementation of the
Alternative Basic Education Program run by the
Relief Society of Tigray (REST) in some Selected
Weredas of Tigray.**

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ABE= Alternative Basic Education
- CMC= Center Management Committee
- EPRDF= Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
- EFA= Education for All
- EN= Escuela Nueva (New Schools)
- GER= Gross Enrollment Rate
- GNP= Gross National Product
- IRI=Interactive Radio Instruction
- MoE= Ministry of Education
- NER= Net Enrollment Rate
- NFE= Non-Formal Education
- NGO= Non-Governmental Organization
- OAU= Organization of African Unity
- PTA= Parent-Teacher Association
- REB= Regional Education Bureau
- REST= Relief Society of Tigray
- TEMISS= Tigray Education Management and Information System Services
- TTI= Teachers Training Institution
- UNDP= United Nations Development Program
- UNESCO= United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNICEF= United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
- UPE= Universal Primary Education
- WCEFA= World Conference on Education for All
- WEO= *Wereda* Education Office

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to assess the implementation of the Alternative Basic Education (ABE) program run by the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) in some selected Weredas of Tigray. The method employed to conduct the study was descriptive method. The sources of data for the study were officials of REST, Wereda Education Office (WEO) officials, officials of Regional Education Bureau (REB), parents and Centre Management Committee (CMC) members. The data required for the study were collected through questionnaires, interview guided questions, document analysis and through observations in three weredas where a total of 78 persons were involved.

The findings of the study had revealed that the ABE program of REST had increased enrolment rate of students in the selected weredas through active participation of the community in the program. However, despite its notable achievements, some weaknesses were also identified. These include insufficient training and inadequate monthly salary of facilitators in the ABE centers and scarcity of instructional materials and school facilities in these centers.

In order to solve the critical problems identified through the study, certain recommendations were forwarded, that were considered to be helpful for all stakeholders involved in the program. These include provision of adequate training programs and salary increment schemes to facilitators, preparation of separate syllabus and textbooks to ABE centers, furnish ABE centers with sufficient facilities that enhance the teaching-learning process, the wide use of the flexible approach of the ABE program, and so on.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Many authorities unequivocally confirm that education is a key to all forms of development. The precise statement “Implant Education – growth would follow”, (Bishop, 1989:2) is an apt description that clearly states the role of education for the betterment of a society. Bishop further described that the present status of the USA and Japan is a vivid example of the contribution of education to a country. Other scholars (Fagerlind and Lawrence, 1983:44) also boost up the value of education by saying that education is unquestionably the most important and crucial agent for rapid national economic growth and all dimensions of modernity. In a nutshell, education is believed to be a tool for socio-economic transformation and development, inculcating skills, fostering rational and scientific thinking, and preserving national tradition and heritage (Habtamu, 1992:4).

As many evidences reveal, education is unanimously considered as a key means for an all-round development of an individual and a society as a whole. But recently, local and international organizations are giving due emphasis particularly on the provision and expansion of basic education (UNESCO, 1986:13). The major leap towards the universalization of education was commenced at the United Nations General Assembly held in 1948 where education was taken as a basic human right, Article 26, included in Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Jones and David, 2005:25). Among the core ideas included in this declaration were: Provision of free education for primary school-age children whose age ranges from six to eleven or twelve, compulsory elementary education, that its objective to be towards the full development of the human personality, that education should help strengthen the fundamental human rights and freedom, etc. (Omari, 1983:10)

The declaration ushered in a growing interest on education in the world. After this declaration (Husen and Postlethwaite, 1994: 465), a series of regional conferences were held by UNESCO in the 1960's in different regions – in Karachi (1960) for Asian, in

Addis Ababa (1961) for African, in Santiago (1962) for Latin American, and in Tripoli (1966) for Arab countries. At these conferences all the delegated participants had decided to achieve universal primary education in a short time. It was at the Addis Ababa conference of African states, for example, that the modern states had planned to attain free and compulsory universal primary education by the year 1980 (Derebssa, 1999:98). Subsequently, the idea of education for all children and adults of the entire world was strongly heralded at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990 and at the Dakar (Senegal) meeting of the World Education Forum in 2000. At Dakar, the delegates declared the attainment of universal primary education to be materialized by 2015 (UNESCO, 2002:29). In addition to the aforementioned conferences, a Literacy Decade (2003-2012) was launched by the United Nations under the theme 'Literacy in Freedom (Rutsch, 2003:29).

In Ethiopia too, the right to education of every citizen is considered as a democratic right (Derebssa, 1999:95). There is a strong belief on the government side that the expansion of basic education is the only way to get rid of poverty and ascertain national development. To this end, the government has given due emphasis on the provision of improved quality, relevant, equity and opportunity for access to primary education, specially for the disadvantaged rural children and thereby achieve universal primary education by the year under review, for Ethiopia is among the signatory countries of this global pledge (MOE, 2005:5).

According to the 1985 estimates of UNESCO, about 105 million children whose ages range from six-eleven were not attending formal education and out of these, 70.2 per cent were children of the poor countries (WCEFA, 1990:30). As to EFA global report of 2005 (UNESCO, 2005:21), the rate of illiteracy was severely concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States, and South and West Asia, which account about 40 per cent.

According to Derebssa (1999:99), many of the developing countries failed to achieve the goals mainly because of "low per capita income, high rates of population growth, poor educational policies, and low demand for schooling". He also mentioned that the reason why Ethiopia could not achieve its goals is the fact that there is a mismatch between the expansion of education and the alarming population growth in the country. Therefore, to

achieve UPE, expansion of the coverage of the education system, reducing fertility rate and strong commitment on the share of the GNP towards education are the necessary steps of utmost importance, he recommended.

Based on the above information, not only is the provision of basic education for the entire problem, but also according to Habtamu (2002:47), there are disparities in access between regions, sexes, urban/rural areas and ethnic and social groups that affect the right to education. Of all these, disparities among the sexes is the focus of attention of many authorities. The EFA global report (2005:1) states that more than 64 per cent of the world's adult illiterates are women. This shows that girls are disfavored, and yet much literature had proved that the education of women has multifaceted advantages for individual and social development. Fewer children in a family, reduced infant mortality, avoidance of early marriage, healthy, educated and better-reared children are all attributed as results of more education for women (StromQuist, 1990:97). Supporting this cause, Louise Frenchette (Rutsch, 2003:29) said, "when women are educated and empowered, the benefits can be seen immediately: families are healthier, they are better fed, their income, savings and reinvestment go up." Some of the reasons for the low enrollment rate of girls are due to mainly, the various kinds of household chores shouldered by them and the direct costs for tuition and school supplies.

Realizing the difficulty of attaining universal education through the formal system alone, the introduction of non-formal means was emphasized. Bishop (1989:138) forwarded the idea that since learners have various needs; the provision of educational programs should be based on these differences of needs. The rigid system of formal schooling has to be flexible and education has to be provided both through the formal and non-formal systems. Similarly, the Ethiopian government had also initiated the use of alternative means to basic education, other than the formal way, to ensure UPE by 2015 (MOE, 2005:6).

Tigray, the region where this research study was carried out is located in the northern most part of Ethiopia with the total population of about 4,355,000 and an area of 50,078.64 Sq. kilometers, in which 85 per cent of the population lives in the rural areas

(CSA, 2005:24). Economic growth in Tigray is challenged by high levels of illiteracy where about 350,000 school children were denied of educational services.

These indicate that, although efforts were made and achievements were witnessed, the problem of access is still persisting. It is therefore to change this trend that the Relief Society of Tigray/REST/ is taking the Alternative Basic Education as a pivotal device to attain UPE standing on the side of the REB.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As stated in the background of the study above, education is a major tool to social development. However access to education specially to formal basic education has been a major problem to many children specially to rural children.

According to several studies conducted in many least developed countries, the most common reasons forwarded to the problem of access include school distance, poor economic status of parents that hinder them from sending their children to schools, low level of community awareness on the value of education to their children and the community at large, etc.

Therefore, since the provision of basic education to all out-of-school children through the formal system was found to be difficult, the use of an alternative basic education program was taken as a means to reach the under-served rural children and achieve UPE both by government and non-government agencies.

REST, a non-profit making home-grown organization, is engaged in many development programs including in the education sector in Tigray. Since its involvement in to the education sector in 1994/95, it has implemented the ABE program in some food insecure *weredas* of the region side by side with its integrated works of health, agriculture, water and the like. In so doing, it had collaborative relations with the REB, WEO, and local community members. The program was funded by many international donors like the Banyan Tree Foundation, USAID, Action Aid Ethiopia, Glimmer of Hope, etc.

According to the report on education of REST, about 74,012 out-of-school children have benefited from the program in the years between 1994-2007. Currently the program covers eight *weredas* having 68 centers with about 10,105 children.

The major reason for assessing the implementation of the ABE program run by the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) in the eight *weredas* of the Tigray region include, how the program funded and implemented by REST and its NGO partners was effective in carrying out its mission, to what extent is the community mobilized to implement the program, the problems it had encountered, and the measures taken to meet the desired goal.

The research study was guided by the following basic questions: -

1. How successfully is the ABE program implemented by REST in increasing access in the selected *weredas* of the region?
2. To what extent is the community mobilized to participate in the ABE program implementation?
3. How is monitoring and evaluation implemented to ensure the effectiveness of the ABE program?
4. What problems does the ABE program encounter that negatively affect its proper implementation?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research study was to assess the contribution of REST in meeting the global commitment for the universalisation of basic education.

The specific objectives of the study can be stated as follows:

- To evaluate the weak and strong experiences of REST in the ABE program and recommend possible solutions to alleviate its weak sides for future betterment.

- To verify the internal and external problems affecting the program and suggest for remedial actions.
- To measure to what extent students benefit from the program.
- To assess the contribution of the community to the fulfillment of the program.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this assessment will:

- Provide feedback information to those who have a concern on the program at any level;
- Help planners of the program to readjust implementation strategies;
- Assist donor organizations understand to what extent the fund have been utilized in accordance to the objectives set;
- It can also serve as a base for further detailed study for future researches.

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

This chapter deals with the methods employed to achieve the objectives of the research- sources of data, sample population and size, sampling techniques and the instruments and procedures of data collection.

1.5.1 Methods of the study

This study was intended to assess the implementation of the Alternative Basic Education program run by the Relief Society of Tigray in some selected *weredas* of the region. To this end, it attempted to look the contributions of REST in raising the enrolment rate of children through the opening of the ABE program, to examine the contribution of the community to attain the goal, the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and the problems encountered during its implementation.

To assess these, therefore, the method that has been employed was the descriptive survey method. This is because it fits the purpose for it provides a vivid picture by describing the state of the on-going ABE program.

1.5.2 Data Sources

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the data obtained from individual responses of officials employed in the ABE programs of REST notably, coordinators of the education program, supervisors and facilitators, non-formal education experts of the Regional Education Bureau, officials of *Wereda* Education Offices, Center Management Committee members and parents from of ABE centers. The secondary sources are those reports and documents available at the REB and REST

1.5.3 Sample population, sample size and sampling techniques.

Table 1-ABE centers of REST at Zone and *wereda* level

Zone	Name of the <i>wereda</i>	Number of ABE centers
South	Seharti samre	5
East	Hawzen	4
	Kilte Awlaelo	10
Central	Ahferom	10
	Wer'e Leke	10
	Mereb leke	10
	Tanqua Abergele	8
	Qolla Tembien	11

The sampling technique employed for the study were availability, purposive and simple random that helped the researcher gather sufficient and reliable information for the selected respondents have direct and close relationships with the issue under review. As shown in table 1 above, the ABE program of REST is conducted in eight *weredas* of three zones of the region-South, East and Central zones. All the three zones (100%) were included in the sample study where three *weredas*-Saharti Samre, Kilte Awlaelo and

Qolla Tembien were selected on the basis of availability sampling in the former, for there is only one *wereda*, and on purposive sampling for the later two. In all the *weredas* there were 68 ABE centers whose number ranges from four in Hawzen to eleven in Qolla Tembien. Accordingly, the numbers of sample ABE centers selected for the purpose from the three *weredas* were eight –two from Saharti Samre and three each from Kilde Awlaelo, and Qola Tembien *weredas*.

With regard to respondents, two REST education program coordinators (100%) and three REST supervisors of the three sample *weredas* (100%) were selected by using availability sampling techniques, while nine facilitators (37%) were randomly selected out of the 33 facilitators in the eight sample ABE centers. The other respondents involved in the study were two (66.7%) of the three non-formal education experts of the REB were selected randomly, three (100%) WEO heads and three (100%) WEO v/heads were selected from the three sample *weredas* on the basis of availability sampling technique, and six (40%) of the 15 supervisors in the three *weredas* were randomly selected. Apart from the above respondents, 24 Center Management Committee members, three from each ABE center that have 5-7 CMC members were randomly selected and 24 parents, three residents from each of the eight ABE center were purposely selected based on the close relationships they had with respective ABE centers. In general, the total number of the respondents involved in the study was 76 people.

1.5.4 Instruments and procedures of data collection

Aiming at obtaining reliable and confidential data from the concerned authorities and stakeholders on the subject under review, questionnaires (both open and close-ended type), and interview type questions were prepared for CMC members and parents for they may not be literate. Observation check list and document analysis were also employed in the study to assess the enrolment and dropout rate of children in the ABE centers and the physical condition of these centers in terms of the adequacy or absence of school physical facilities and instructional materials. To ease the language barrier, the data collection instruments were all translated in to the local language, *Tigrigna*, and to avoid confusion, reduce the ambiguity of the instruments stated above and to make amendments based on

suggested remarks, the instruments were pilot tested in Tanqua Abergele *wereda* before being distributed to respondents.

While conducting the pilot test on the questionnaire, the researcher has communicated with the respondents individually and informed them briefly about the objective of the study. Similarly, the respondents for the interview were also told about the objective of the research and the length of time for the interview so as to be able to fix the convenient time for interviewing. By so doing, certain amendments were made on the questionnaires and the interview questions.

1.5.5 Method of Data Analysis

After the responses from the questionnaires and interview were collected, the data were coded and computed using statistical tools like simple percentage that describe the characteristics of respondents and the percentage of responses to the given items. In addition, the mean rank was also computed to determine the difference between the responses of the respondents. Furthermore, the data obtained from physical observation of the ABE centers and from the documents of these centers were also included in the analysis in cross checking the obtained responses against the observable items.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

In Tigray, the ABE program was run both by government offices of education and the local NGO, REST. Thus, from the very outset, to make the study manageable in terms of time and geographical coverage, the researcher had confined his study on the ABE program run by REST in the eight *weredas* of the region.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Alternative Basic Education: A flexible mode of delivery that could make basic education accessible to children who could not be served by the formal education system (MoE, 2002:16).

Basic Education: Refers to the whole range of educational activities that take place in different settings intended to meet basic learning needs (UNESCO, 2001: 84).

Das rooms: Are temporary classrooms having wooden pillars covered with locally available straws, logs and other materials to protect students from sunshine and wind.

Education for All: Refers to the provision of basic education for all children, youth and adults (WCEFA, 1990: ix)

Formal Education: Refers to education provided through the schools and similar established institutions and training; it generally conforms to a prescribed curriculum leading to some form of certification (WCEFA, 1990: ix).

Non-Formal Education: Refers to any organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the rigid formal system of education.

Tabia: Is a small administrative unit of a *wereda*.

Universal Primary Education: The provision of education for all children regardless of sex or family background (Bishop G., 1989: 1).

Wereda: Refers to administrative unit below a zone.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research work was organized into four major chapters. The first chapter of the study contains the introductory part that include background of the study, statement of the problem, its objectives, significant of the study, the delimitations and limitations of the study, the design and methodology of the research, the sample population, size and sampling techniques employed in the research work.

The review of related literature encompasses the meaning of basic education and its importance, the global efforts towards the universalization of basic education, problems confronting the provision of basic education to children, the approaches employed to universalize basic education and the experience of other countries in implementing the basic education provision program. The chapter also treats the state of basic education in Ethiopia and in Tigray and the contribution of REST in expanding basic education to underserved children.

Chapter three of the material deals with data presentation and analysis where the major issues of the topic are presented, interpreted and analyzed.

The last chapter of the study focuses on summary of the major findings, the conclusions drawn based on the findings and finally the recommendations forwarded by the researcher that help for the betterment of the program.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter encompasses the salient points on what basic education is, its importance and the worldwide efforts for its universalization. It also includes factors hindering the universalization of basic education, alternative approaches to the provision of basic education and the approaches to reach the un-reached children. Finally, the chapter pinpoints successful experiences of other developing countries, the state of alternative basic education in Ethiopia and the alternative approach run by the Relief Society of Tigray (REST).

2.1 What is Basic Education?

Basic education is defined as elementary education for children, and literacy, general knowledge and life skills for adults. This includes both formal and non-formal education provided inside and outside of schools. Non-formal education refers to any organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular groups in the population (Thompson, 1987:215). As to the Jomtein Forum, Thailand, basic learning needs comprise the essential learning tools such as literacy, numeracy, and problem solving and the basic learning content which include attitudes, values, skills and knowledge needed by human beings to be able to survive, to enhance their capacities to the full and to improve the quality of their life (Bwatwa, 1989:2). Based on the above definitions given to basic education, it can be deduced that basic education is an education system provided to children to enable them develop essential knowledge and skills that help them in life. If non-formal education programs are designed and implemented with clear objectives, Tekeste (1996:42) remarked, these programs could successfully address development issues.

2.2 The Importance of Basic Education

As to Lockheed and Verspoor (1990:10), basic education has a direct and positive effect on earnings, agricultural productivity, human fertility rates and consequently on the health, nutrition and education of children. These authorities further illustrated that investments in primary education accrue returns above the opportunity cost. The benefit of basic education on development is largely a result of the cognitive skills that it imparts. Basic education (Ferdissa, 2003:129) helps children to satisfy their needs, and promotes the overall socio-economic development. He further states the pivotal role that basic education play in enhancing labor productivity and skills, in developing sound and socially acceptable values, attitudes and behavior and consequently its positive effects on communities and families. Many national and international agencies are deeply concerned with the provision and expansion of basic education. This is because (WCEFA, 1990:11) basic education,

...empowers individuals in any society and confers upon them a responsibility to respect and build upon their collective cultural, linguistic, and spiritual heritage, to promote the education of others, to further the cause of social justice, and achieve environmental protection, to be tolerant towards social, political and religious systems which differ from their own, ensuring that commonly accepted humanistic values and human rights are upheld, and to work for international peace and solidarity in an independent world.

In short, education is the only panacea to alleviate a society from socio-economic and political backwardness. As (Aggarwal 1996:11) put it, education helps children to be well balanced personalities. Recognizing the contribution of basic education for a country, a noted American sociologist, Harold Hodgkinson (cited in Nelson, 1993:334), encouraged national spending on education by suggesting that investing on basic education is superior to investment in welfare, prisons, or other corrective institutions, for the former pays lifetime and societal dividends. The importance of education, in its general form, whose foundation is basic education, can be best summarized as follows.

2.2.1 Education enhances economic development.

Education is viewed as an important precondition for economic development. It is believed to have a pervasive influence over values, attitudes and behavior and it is a key agent in the development of all dimensions of modernity (Fagerlind and Saha, 1983:97).

The contribution of education to growth is presumed to occur through its ability to raise the productivity of an existing labor force in various ways including both technical training and general education (Psacharopoulos, 1987:100). According to Anderson (1992:6) a farmer with only four years of education has as much as an 8.7 % higher productivity rate than a farmer with no education. These findings made Bishop (1989:3) to conclude that education is a principal tool to achieve economic development and hence, more education results in rapid economic growth for a country.

2.2.2 Education reduces fertility rate and promotes health.

In many developing countries widening and improving access to education has been a crucial policy issue for the contribution of education to development is a broadly recognized reality (WCEFA, 1990:34).

For many decades women were solely engaged in home-oriented tasks which take up a substantial percentage of their time. Presently however, evidences clearly reveal that the education of women has a predominant role in increasing benefits. An educated woman raises a healthier family, becomes more productive both at home and in the work place (WCEFA, 1990:34). Carceles (1990:97) also confirm that more education for women helps to limit the number of children, reduces infant mortality and early marriage of girls and promotes better-reared, educated and healthier children. According to a recent study conducted in six African countries suffering from high rate of HIV/AIDS epidemic, the cognitive skills of reducing risky sexual behavior were observed among the educated youngsters than those with no education. Thus the role of education was referred as a 'social vaccine' (UNESCO, 2005:9).

2.2.3 Education for modernization

Modernization, according to many historians and social scientists, is a process of societal transformation under the impact of inanimate technologies as applied to the solution of human problems. For economists, it is defined in terms of the application of technology to the control of resources so as to produce growth in per capita production. Political scientists also described it in terms of the degree to which a society is able to adapt to

change. In short modernization includes components such as urbanism, mass-media participation, low community stratification, and so on (Psachropoulos, 1987:107).

2.2.4 Education for political participation

Basic education is a prerequisite for participation in government system and in political and national development issues (Omari, 1983:9). Political authorities view that expansion of education is an important way of producing higher levels of participation in the political system. For every one to enjoy equal political rights it is vital to have an adequate basic knowledge on primary education that enable him participate in the political system.

2.2.5. Education reduces shortage of skilled manpower

Shortage of well-qualified technical and managerial personnel has resulted in economic stagnation in many developing countries. Scarcity of skilled and semi-skilled manpower is a generic problem in these countries. Therefore, Bishop (1989:3) concluded that increasing school enrolments especially at the post-secondary level and attaining the required qualified manpower is of vital priority.

2.2.6. Education generates better earnings.

It is widely believed that people who possess special skills through education are able to command large salaries (Psachrapoulos, 1987:83). A more educated person has better prospects of earning than one with less or no education at all. The laconical statement (Bishop, 1989: 4), "the man holding a pen can earn more than the man wielding a hoe" best explains the value of education as a means for better earning.

2.3. Global Efforts to Universalize Basic Education.

In the future, a society that does not educate its children will be disabled in terms of the socio-economic status of its people (Anderson, 1992:8).

Well aware of these socio-economic and political contributions of education, national and international government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are

exerting maximum efforts to universalize basic education throughout the world (UNESCO, 1986:13).

Although attempts were made sporadically to attain universal primary education (UPE) on a local basis, the major leap towards the universalization of education was commenced at the United Nations General Assembly held in 1948, where Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had publicized "Every one has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages...." (Jones and David, 2005:25).

After this global declaration, many governments put the expansion of education at the apex of their development agendas. Accordingly, as to Husen and Postlethwaite (1994:465) many regional conferences were held by UNESCO in the 1960s in different countries. At all the conferences the delegated country representatives unanimously concluded to achieve UPE within a short time possible, but to no avail (UNESCO, 1984:3). One major reason for the failure to materialize the 1948 declaration in the African continent was that, by the time of the declaration many of the signatories were colonial powers in Africa who had no interest to the realization of this cause (Omari, 1983:10).

Subsequently, the idea of the provision UPE was refreshed and strongly heralded at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990. This conference had endorsed a plan of action to achieve basic education for all, and to ascertain world-wide literacy by the year 2000. However, it was an ambitious target. Even after a decade, despite the increase in enrolment in primary schools, over 130 million children of which 20-30 million of them were in India (Bruns, 2003:83) were not lucky enough to see the gates of school, and those who start primary education dropout before completing that level. With regard to this unaccomplished goal (Coombs, cited in Yates and Bradley, 2000:3) remarked "...the old rhetorical drums continue to beat out the familiar call for the eradication of illiteracy from the face of the earth with no reference to how it can be done." In short, the Jomtien goal was a failure partly because of increase in population growth rate, lack of commitment among some national governments and

international agencies, decrease of total aid to the education sector and others (Yates and Bradley, 2000:5).

Following the 1990 conference in Jomtien, a meeting of the World Education Forum was held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 where the delegates declared the attainment of UPE to be materialized by 2015 (UNESCO, 2002:29). This Dakar Framework for Action had six goals of Education for all.

i) Early Childhood Care and Education- As learning starts at birth, this calls for early childhood care and education that can be provided by involving families, communities or institutions (WCEFA, 1990:36).

Progress towards wider access remains slow specially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Research findings have disclosed that the most critical determinants of children's learning capacity are nutrition, health and the early social environment (WCEFA, 1990:43). Early intervention programs among poor children have long-term advantages to children and a society.

ii) Universal Primary Education-Children who successfully complete primary education are required to possess essential life skills and the capacity to benefit from education in the future (WCEFA, 1990:36). There is a decline in the number of out-of-school children which fall from 106.9 million in 1998 to 103.5 million in 2001. However, the pace seems too slow to attain UPE by the year 2015. If this trend continued, the enrolment rate for the year 2015 will be about 87% (UNESCO, 2005:15).

iii) Youth and adult learning-In a global context the number of adult illiterates is higher than the number of students in primary schools (Abadzi, 2003:9). The efforts to raise skills among youths and adults were of limited effect in some developing countries where evaluations were made on skills development programs (UNESCO, 2005:15). Emphasizing the great role played by primary education as a foundation for adult learning, the UNICEF (1987:17) remarked that concentrating on adult literacy programs without making headways on basic education is just as "pouring water into a bucket with a hole in the bottom."

iv) Literacy- The fourth Education for All (EFA) goal was to halve the adult illiteracy rate by 2015 (UNESCO, 2002:29). In 2002, about 800 million adults were illiterate, most of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa, East and South Asia (UNESCO, 2005:1). UN

Secretary General Kofi Annan, gave a remarkable note on the importance of literacy at the opening ceremony of the Literacy Decade held in New York on 13 February, 2003, by saying that "Literacy is the key to unlocking the cage of human misery, the key to delivering the potential of every human being..." (Rutsch, 2003:30).

v) Gender-The fifth EFA goal was aimed at eliminating gender disparities in schooling. The number of illiterate women is high in Sub-Saharan Africa, India and china. In 1985, female illiteracy rate was 47% in Asia, and 65% in Africa (Caceles, 1990:95). The problem related to gender is not limited to educational opportunity but also to jobs. According to (Taylor, 1989 cited in Jacobs, 1995:60) employers routinely placed men and women in sex-typed job classes and assigned lower pay rates to women than men regardless of the similarities of their work.

vi) Quality- The two recent and most notable United Nations Declarations, the World Declaration on Education for All of 1990 and the Dakar Framework for Action of 2000 recognize quality as a prime condition for achieving EFA (UNESCO, 2005:5). The quality of a particular education system is judged when whether or not its stated objectives are met. The objectives of education include two elements. These are the improvement of cognitive skills and the promotion of attitudes and values required for good citizenship (UNESCO, 2005:35). In low-income countries public expenditure on education which plays a significant role in the quality of education constitutes a lower proportion of the gross domestic product (GDP), and teachers are less qualified, with no mastery of the curriculum etc., that resulted in less achievement of these countries on national and international test scores. These have enormous implications on the quality of education.

From the 1948's United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to the Dakar Framework for Action of 2000, the UNESCO has conducted a number of conferences. Later on, observing the presence of over 860 million illiterate adults and over 113 million out-of-school children, it launched the Literacy Decade (2003-2012) under the motto "Literacy as Freedom". According to UNESCO (Rutsch, 2003:29), the efforts to eradicate illiteracy were so far a failure and literacy could not reach the rural poor and disadvantaged groups.

During the opening ceremony of the Literacy Decade, in UN headquarters, Deputy Secretary General, Louise Frenchette underlined that literacy was an unfinished task of the 20th century and the eradication of illiteracy from the whole world shall be a major success story of the 21st century. In general the preceding statements witness to what extent national and international agencies were and still are considerate to the attainment of the UPE in 2015. However, despite all these worldwide efforts, the desired goal could not be met as decided at the various conferences (UNICEF, 1987:17). According to UNESCO estimates, in 1985 about 105 million school-age children were out-of-school. Of these children, 70.2% were found in the least developed countries where 60% of them were girls. The basic learning needs of millions of children in the developing countries are not met satisfactorily and will not be fulfilled if situations remain as they were. Therefore designing a means to get rid of the alarming state of education is the challenge for all countries (WCEFA, 1990:33). In these countries, achieving EFA goals seems a dream rather than a reality unless a concerted effort is made (UNESCO, 2002:15). Discouragingly (Watkins, in Yates and Bradley, 2000:6) expressed that there will be some 75 million out-of-school children by 2015, the year when illiteracy was supposed to be eradicated from the face of the planet.

2.4 Factors Affecting the Universalization of Basic Education.

Since long ago, massive investments and efforts were deployed to the success of the UPE by many governments. By so doing, impressive achievements were registered. Some of these remarkable gains include the rise in primary school enrolment in Africa from 33% to 66% in the years from 1960 to 1985. In many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, primary school enrolment raised from 58% to about 100% between 1960 and 1985. Along these noticeable gains, there were also distressing failures observed during the early 1990s. These include the presence of over 75% illiterate women and over 130 million children with no access to primary education in Asia and Africa. In short, for several reasons, it is a long way off for many countries to attain UPE. The common obstacles that have affected the expansion and provision of basic education are (UNESCO, 1986:213), high rate of population growth, scarce financial resources, poor educational facilities, shortage of qualified teachers, cultural factors that prohibit the education of girls and the handicapped, and so on.

2.4.1 Demographic Factors

Population explosion is one major obstacle to achieve UPE in the developing world. As Seyoum (1996:25) put it, "...in many least developed countries, as enrolment grows by geometric progression, resources grow only in arithmetic progression." As a result, although the number of children attending schools is increasing, the number of out-of-school children is also increasing. School age population growth was higher than the estimated number. For example, the Addis Ababa plan of the OAU had forecasted an 18% increase of school age children from 1960 to 1980 but actually it rose to five times higher than the forecast (Bishop, 1989: 17). According to Coombs (cited in UNESCO, 1986:207), by the year 2000, six out of every seven children whose ages range between six to eleven will be children of the developing countries. Based on this projection he concluded that the population growth of these countries would result in a heavy educational burden. Due to a decline in infant mortality rates (Bishop, 1989:18), the number of children coming to school is increasing when compared with previous decades. Thus absence of proportional growth between population and the means to support the process of UPE is a great hindrance faced by many of the developing countries.

2.4.2 Weak Economic Capacity

The incompatibility of the poor economy with the growing demand for education had significantly affected the provision of education for the children of developing countries. For economic reasons, children of poor family background are denied to go to school because girls are engaged in household chores, boys look after cattle and youth search for early employment to satisfy their needs and that of their family. Due to the poor economic status, investment on education of the developing countries is low when compared with the developed world. According to (Watkins 1999, cited in Yates and Bradley, 2000:4-5) for example, the annual expenditure per student in primary education in Zambia was \$27, and \$12 in India and Nepal. During this time expenditure per pupil of the same level in Britain were \$3,553 and \$5000 in the United States.

Meanwhile, although the education sector had a lion's share in these low- income countries it was insufficient to respond to the ever fast-changing world, for, as Ayalew (1989:44) put it, education is an expensive endeavor which can consume a large size of

the GNP if given a free hand. As manifestations of a poor economy, poor health and malnutrition have adverse effects on children's readiness to enter school, the duration of their stay in schooling, and their learning ability. Cognizant of the role of nutrition to educational performance, Bishop (1989:31) attested that lack of adequate nutrition brings about damage to the central nervous system that affects children's ability to read, write, and do simple sums and logical thinking, and deduced by quoting the African proverb "when the stomach is full, the foot is fast" (Bishop, 1989:31) and the opposite will be true for the poor countries.

2.4.3 Higher Repetition and Dropout Rates

Repetition of classes results in a wastage both in scarce resources and time. Higher dropout and repetition rate cannot be considered as a problem of an individual, but as a vital problem of the education system in its entirety. Prolonged schooling resulting from repetition in grades for several years over and above the normal school time will consequently have many victims ranging from the individual himself, his family, the state and the society as a whole who is forced to carry the burden of all the expenses. Bishop (1989:31), underscored that the reasons for high dropout and repetition rates in the developing countries are due to poverty whose manifestations are inability to pay school fees, engagement of older children on household duties, traveling long distances suffering from hunger, sickness resulting from malnutrition and the likes. The percentage of dropout rate is high because the education system in many primary schools is found irrelevant, with little contribution to agricultural improvement.

2.4.4 Low Enrolment Rate

Ignorant of the advantage of education, many parents are reluctant in sending their children to school (Bishop, 1989:31). Different countries had different causes for the decline in enrolment. Angola refers to lack of schools and facilities. Scattered settlement pattern of the population in wider geographical areas is a major problem in Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and others. Long distances accompanied with problematic transportation systems are also identified as problems in many developing countries. (UNESCO, 1986:214).

For these and other reasons (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1990:13), stated that primary school enrolment of school age children in the developing countries is less than 75%.

although places are available for 96% of these children. According to Anderson (1992:12-13), girls, rural children and children of the poor comprise the majority of the out-of-school children

i) Girls-Over two-thirds of the out-of-school or dropout children ^{are} ~~is~~ girls. Yates and Bradley (2000:53) commented that, in many countries there are a number of push-out factors that affect the education of girls. Among these are the fear of parents for the safety of their children during their long travel to school, backward cultural practices like early marriage of girls, absence of facilities like separate toilet, absence of female teachers in many of the schools, and so on. According to Carceles (1990:95), in 1985, women illiterates in Africa accounted 65% of the total population. These figures clearly demonstrate the lack of access to the education of girls.

ii) Rural Children-School age children of the rural settlements usually lack access to educational opportunities. In such areas building and supplying of schools is costly. Qualified teachers too dislike living and teaching in rural areas.

iii) Children of the Poor- In order to survive, every member of a poor family is forced to work in the farm or other household activities rather than to go to school. Although the problem is common in all the developing countries, the pinch is more severe for poor families because these families have to pay for clothing, school supplies and other school obligations.

iv) Other Disadvantaged Children-These include large number of children who live on streets of urban slums, children in war zones, children of refugee groups or orphans who are denied the opportunity to learn. In low-income countries, children with physical or mental disabilities are excluded from learning.

2.4.5 Disparities Related to Ethnicity and Language.

In many literatures, disparities in educational opportunities are judged as obstacles to attain UPE. Habtamu (2002:47) states that, although many governments of which Ethiopia is one, had declared to avoid disparities emanating from ethnicity, regional, urban/rural areas, sexes, etc., and ensure equal access to education, the trend is still continuing to exist in the country. Despite the improvement in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in Ethiopia, he underlined that disparities between the sexes, zones, *weredas* and urban/rural areas are still persisting without a marked change.

Discrimination among ethnic groups in a given society in terms of the provision of basic education was a common practice in some countries. In the USA, for example, the economically weak minorities such as Blacks, Hispanics and American Indians are discouraged groups (UNESCO, 1986:221).

Linguistic and cultural differences are also other factors that contribute to segregation in educational opportunities. It is well known (UNESCO, 2005:26) that starting education in the mother tongue improves learning outcomes cost-effectively, by reducing grade repetition and dropout rates. On this basis, persons who speak a language that is different from the recognized official language of a country are at a disadvantage in terms of getting access to basic education. In the United States immigrants and refugees whose native language is different from English are disadvantaged.

In concrete terms, the provision of education in the vernacular has remained to be a problem for many of the multi-lingual developing countries whose economy does not permit them to prepare a fertile ground to its implementation. As a result the disparity in access to basic education has become a major challenge to these countries.

2.4.6 Insufficient Resource Allocation

Too little government spending on primary education when compared to resources allocated to the secondary and tertiary education is another reason that inhibited many low-income countries to achieve UPE. Although there was a massive increase in primary education enrolments in the developing countries, (Bishop, 1989:9-11) the greatest proportionate increases in the years between 1960 and 1980 had been witnessed in the second and third levels of education. Investment on secondary and higher education takes much more cost than investing on primary education.

2.5 Approaches to reach and teach children who are not served by education

So far, though not all, the major problems faced by many nations specially the low-income countries in reaching and teaching children who are unable to benefit from education has been identified. And since the cruxes of the problem are pinpointed,

remedial approaches can be considered to mitigate from the global predicament. Therefore of all the approaches, the key and most important actions that need to be undertaken are summarized hereunder.

2.5.1 Enhancing the Environment for Learning

If given a chance, children are eager and active to know and understand. Children can be passive and dulled due to sickness or hunger or bored by too much work. But if the learning environment is attractive children will be motivated to learn. According to WCEFA (1990:38), there are prerequisites for a child to learn. These preconditions to which the learner has been experienced before he/she starts schooling include the health, nutrition, and physical and intellectual stimulations. With this regard, disease and malnutrition can negatively affect the learning potential of the learner and on the other hand positive preconditions like the presence of supportive family members and peer groups can enhance the learning need and eventually raise the educational performance of the child. Following are some conditions that have to be fulfilled so as to make the school a pulling force.

i) Locating schools in the neighborhood of children - As experiences show, the decision of parents to send their children to school or not were largely influenced by the distance of schools from children's homes. When school location is distant parents show unwillingness to educate their children, especially girls. This affects not only enrolment, but the tiresome regular travel discourages children to attend classes. As a result absenteeism rises that gradually leads to the increase in dropout rate (Anderson, 1992:20-21).

ii) Safe and healthy school environment - Basically, it is for safety reasons that parents need the presence of schools in their neighborhood. When parents believe that the schools are unsafe, they will be unwilling to send their children. In some countries like Pakistan, for example, parents want to send their girl children only to schools where the teachers are females. For them, safety for girls is meant sending them to girls-only school

iii) Schools must be affordable - The cost for schooling is also another factor that impedes children to go to school. When the cost for school fees, educational materials, transportation, etc is beyond the financial capacity that a family can afford, children will not be sent to school. Efforts were made by some governments to reduce these costs for

rural families. These measures (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1990:36) include elimination or reduction of school fees, free provision of instructional materials, school uniforms, free or subsidized transportation costs, provision of school-feeding programs and scholarships.

In countries like Bangladesh and China cost incentives were provided to encourage girls' education. In Bangladesh 50% of the scholarships were given to girls at the end of grade five, and in China, boarding schools, books, medical allowances and other benefits were given to girls to enhance their participation in schooling. Thus, the costs for schooling should take into account the local situation in which the children live.

iv) Convenient class schedule - The timing of class schedule should not be in conflict with other outside school activities of children. This is because if the jobs that a child must do for his family and the time the child is required to attend classes are scheduled at the same time, children will be compelled to miss classes that gradually lead to dropping out. In such cases the involvement of parents in setting the schedules is helpful for educational planners because parents know best the suitable time.

2.5.2 Increasing the relevance of primary education

Many research findings tell that primary education can improve labor productivity, helps to develop essential attitudes, behaviors, values, and skills and have valuable effects on individuals and the society at large (WCEFA, 1990:46). A primary school that fails to acquire its graduates with the knowledge of basic literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills regardless of its effectiveness in attaining other social, cultural, and political needs has failed as a school. Tekeste (1990:87) gives a brief and sensible account on this issue by describing that, the expansion of education without giving due regard to its quality, relevance, and the employment opportunity that it opens in a country for the educated citizens results in a disaster by creating educated unemployed. He also stated "Education can indeed be instrumental in increasing the tempo of development but only when it satisfies the needs and demands of people..." (Tekeste, 1990:87). To increase the relevance of a given education the education system must be responsive to the basic needs of the communities where it is to be implemented. The education system of a country should aim at introducing the desirable change into a culture based on the local

context, for it is impossible to think of a relevant and useful curriculum that is based on alien culture (Tekle Haimanot, 1999:1).

2.5.3 Improving quality

Since the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the right to education has been pronounced by many countries but the qualitative dimension of education was given less consideration. It was after the Jomtein and Dakar Conferences that the quality issue was taken as a major factor for achieving UPE (UNESCO, 2005:5). The quality of education is defined in terms of selected quality indicators such as student characteristics, educational inputs, educational processes and educational outputs and outcomes (WCEFA, 1990:49). Quality is often defined synonymously with effectiveness, as the degree to which objectives are met or desired levels of accomplishment are achieved. (Leu, 2001:66)

2.5.4 Promoting equity

Equity in education is meant fairness between distinguishable groups reflected in terms of access to and participation and achievement in the educational system. Today, the issue of promoting equity is a major point of argument, for disparity related to poverty, gender, location, religious, linguistic or ethnic identification and physical or mental disabilities is still prevalent in many developing countries (WCEFA, 1990:53). Poverty-stricken families are unable to support their children for education. In such conditions, the society has the responsibility to enable them get and benefit from education. Programs that provide credits and generate employment for these children are recommendable. Inequality in the distribution of schools results in unequal access. Scarcity and low quality of schools, high opportunity costs for the rural children, long distances of schools are the common problems in rural settlements. These factors negatively affect the achievement of rural children when compared with urban students of the same level.

For children who are disadvantaged due to physical or mental handicaps that inhibit their education, and those who do not make progress given the same inputs like their peers, the provision of special educational needs is vital (Pollard and Bourne, 2001:278).

Of all forms of inequality the issue of gender inequality in education has deserved an international recognition due to the emphasis given to the pivotal role of educating women for its multidimensional benefit to a family and to the wider society. Among the measures required to reduce gender inequality in education are reducing the household labor of girls, provide day care center for younger siblings, provision of separate girls' schools, etc. In addition to these (UNESCO, 2002:21), provision of financial support and effective incentive programs for girls are also suggested to promote the education of girls. For poor family children the burden can be solved by helping the costs for school fees, school uniforms and other expenses. For the disadvantaged rural children, introducing flexible schedule of the school year that does not affect the harvest time when the labor of children is demanded for family income is recommended. Similarly, the ethnic and religious inequalities can be resolved by sensitizing their values and allow them to preserve and develop their identity. Absence of equitable access to education affects the socio-political integration and the overall socio-economic development of a country for the future (Habtamu, 1992:10-11). Therefore the equitable distribution of educational opportunities stands as a major future task for governments

2.5.5 Greater community involvement

Devolving power from the center to school level through decentralization and empowering the school community to administer their own educational affairs can help mobilize available resources for the betterment of schooling and increase efficiency.

Closer community participation in and support to the education system, and interaction with schools make education more effective. The integration of the education system with the local environment makes the school a motive force in the grass-roots community (Thompson, 1987:263). The school should be part of the community organizing itself for improvement and gradual development of the community.

Alstair Macbeth (cited in Nelson, 1993:303), lists some distinct reasons on the relevance of parental involvement in schooling. These are firstly, parents are legally responsible for the education of their children. Thus they are regarded as legal clients of schools. Secondly, parents are co-educators of children in parallel with teachers. Thirdly, family-based learning influences school effectiveness on a child and finally, in democratic

societies, parents as stakeholders in their children's school should have the opportunity to influence decisions that affect them in accordance to their stake in it. The interaction between a school and a community enhances education in many ways. Parental participation on deciding the schedule for schooling or in preparing a shelter for the school guarantees the appropriateness of schooling time and the learning place. As a result they will be willing in sending their children to school. Parents and communities can identify and select best teachers from among their community members. They can also provide considerable support to schools in various forms. Reciprocally, teachers can be involved in solving community problems, organizing community projects, etc (Anderson, 1992:28). Schools cannot exist as separate entities from the society. Thus (Nelson, 1993:281), relevant curriculum that takes the local context into consideration can be designed when communities are involved in curriculum production. When new innovations are introduced in to the education system, its implementation will not face resistance if the involvement of the community is achieved (Nelson, 1993: 29).

Active participation and involvement of a community has a facilitating effect by developing a sense of ownership and partnership. Projects of basic education were successful in areas where such a sense was created (Yates and Bradley, 2000:169). Furthermore, strong community participation in all phases from planning to evaluation of a project ensures its sustainability. Cognizant of the advantages of community participation in education, the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia had devolved its powers down to school level. Currently, communities and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members are playing a prominent role in all aspects of the school system (MoE, 2005:17).

2.6 Alternative Approaches to Expand Basic Education.

In many countries of the industrial west, UPE was reached by 1960 (Fagerlind and Saha, 1983:236). But for many other countries it had remained to be a difficult task. Meanwhile the role of education as an indispensable key for social development had received a wider recognition by governments of all these countries. Emphasizing on the necessity of using an alternative way for basic education provision (Hawes, 1983:23) commented,

...if the center of the process is the individual and the individual's relationship to the learning society, there must, logically, be many paths to learning which must be recognized as suitable and appropriate not because they have always been used or because everyone uses them, but rather in respect of how far they lead the individual effectively to where he wants to go.

Therefore serious consideration for alternative means through non-formal system became the only option to achieve UPE (Bishop, 1989:131). According to John Hilliard (Bishop, 1989:132), non-formal education is described as a system of education designed to reach large audiences wherever they are, with the objective of providing knowledge and skills, emphasizing on local initiative, self-help and innovation. Since the formal education system could not accommodate the needs of growing populations of the rural areas in poor countries (Coombs and Ahmed 1974, in Yates and Bradley, 2000:65), the adoption of fresh approach—non-formal education is required.

These days education is viewed as a life long process having a variety of forms and methods not as a place and time-bound limited to schools and measured in terms of years of schooling (Bishop, 1989: 133). Education is according to Paisey (1992:3) a process by which human beings acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and so on, in various ways. Supporting the idea that schooling is not learning (UNESCO, 1993:10) stated that placing more children in schools and many adults in classes has no use unless they learn something valuable while they are at school. It is based on this underlying belief that the development of non-formal basic education achieved wider acceptance principally because it applies to diverse fields, many activities, and is given by different agents (Hallak 1990 in Yates and Bradley, 2000:66).

There are some characteristic features of non-formal education. One major characteristic of non-formal education is that it is task or skill centered and designed to produce quite specific changes in learning. Learning grows out of the felt-needs of the learners and what have been taught is put in to use. The curriculum is dictated by the particular uses to which the learning will be put and consequently is closely related to the environment of the learners.

Non-formal education economizes resources by utilizing community facilities and personnel. In government schools the largest percentage of the total cost was earmarked to teachers' and personnel salaries. But in non-formal education systems the use of volunteers and part-time teachers reduces operating costs. Thus the use of this cheapest means and meet the desired goal of education is vital for the developing countries.

In non-formal education entry requirements are determined by clientele. It is geared to the needs and interests of the potential clientele. Specific characteristics such as literacy or formal educational qualifications are not essential for admission.

Flexibility is one major characteristic feature of non-formal education. As long as individuals and communities have diverse interests and problems, the provision of educational programs is worked out in accordance with these differences. For better educational achievement, (J.P.Naiki cited in Bishop, 1989:138) argues the rigid formal education system has to be replaced by a flexible non-formal pattern. Non-formal education produces learning which is immediately valued in the context of the individual's or community's life situation. For several western policy makers the response to the growing crises arising from educational expansion was to improve, coordinate and create linkages between formal and non-formal education and the economy (Zachariah, 1985:10). Maximum flexibility should be ensured with special attention given to the needs of the deprived and handicapped groups, so that any individual can be able to continue or complete the cycle at any age (Hawes 1983:88).

In general, the formal and non-formal education are not contradictory entities, but should be seen as mutually reinforcing partners. When the two are combined they can produce a wholesome personality and promote national development.

2.7 Priority actions needed to the successful implementation of Alternative Basic Education

The success or failure in achieving the basic learning needs of children depends ultimately on the measures taken by the countries in question. The largest responsibility is left upon national governments and local partners who are the key forces for change.

Other than taking counter measures for the factors that affect the expansion of basic education, following are suggested actions that need to be undertaken depending on the diversity of situations, capacities and social goals among countries.

2.7.1 Designing policies to improve basic education - According to (WCEFA, 1990:84), for better effectiveness, a strategy to improve the quality and relevance of basic education programs with a focus on educational personnel, learning materials and time should be designed. The provision of pre-service and in-service training programs, incentives and opportunities to upgrade educational personnel, the inclusion of the supply of sufficient textbooks and other relevant materials and community participation to maintain existing educational facilities and equipments are equally important. The qualitative increase in access leads to improvement in equity through the participation of girls, women and other disadvantaged groups.

2.7.2 Creating a supportive policy environment - If the ABE program is to be a success, a multi-sectoral plan of action must be supported by overall policy environment. This kind of adjustment helps to ensure that all sectors are mutually supportive, effective and are in line with the overall development goals of a country. Since basic learning needs are the concern of all sectors, different institutions and agencies are required to interact in order to promote cooperation and work together to achieve the interrelated policy goals such as rural development, better health, basic education, etc (WCEFA, 1990: 83).

2.7.3 Increasing partnerships and mobilizing resources - The education sector is a country's most sizeable public activity that account for more than 25 % of the public employees, other than the material aspect that it demands. Ascertaining the achievement of educational needs require mobilizing actual and potential partners like community organizations, voluntary associations, religious institutions, and so on. To successfully meet the educational needs of children, partnerships have to be encouraged at all levels. For this reason, mobilization of huge resources both national and international is necessary (Baum and Tolbert, 1985:123). Since the resources in developing countries are

insufficient to expand the educational needs of children, a concerted effort is needed to mobilize domestic and overseas resources.

There are four possibilities to obtain additional support for basic education.

a) Using existing resources efficiently - According to the World Bank strategy (Pascharapoulos and Maureen 1985:35), in order to increase and improve the quality of education, the system must achieve maximum internal efficiency in management and allocation and use of available resources. This can be achieved by intensive use of existing buildings and equipments, improved use of learners' time and supplying of appropriate instructional materials. Efficient utilization of resources also encourages donor organizations to sustain their donations when the need arises.

b) Prioritizing expenditures - As long as basic education is a basic human right and a core for development, public expenditures should be geared towards its universalization by providing a high priority to that sub sector.

c) Reallocating resources within government budgets - This refers to the shift of funds within the education sector and from budgets allocated to other sectors to satisfy the basic educational needs of children. For effective implementation of non-formal education, an active participation of ministries directly involved with the components of the program such as health, agriculture, environment and education is highly demanded (Tekeste, 1996:47).

d) Finding new sources of funding within and outside government budgets - This refers to new sources of revenue such as introducing education taxes, and encouraging local communities and NGOs to organize basic education activities that lessen government burden on education. External financial and technical assistance should be sustainable until the poor countries would be able to stand on their own feet. According to UNESCO (1993:17), there were over 600 NGOs, foundations and institutions working with the UNESCO to the implementation of its programs and support its activities through their worldwide membership and their local branches in several countries.

2.7.4 Improving managerial capacities - In many developing countries there is a serious problem with regard to information on basic learning needs and how to meet these needs. Thus, setting or reinforcing, technical services and mechanisms to collect and analyze data on basic learning needs, and the socio-cultural context are necessary. To monitor the progress and evaluate the effectiveness of a program, these countries need to develop statistical services and management information to provide information to concerned bodies at any level. Without proper and timely monitoring and evaluation, it is difficult to know what succeeded or why a project failed to achieve its goals. To this end, training should be given to management personnel. The management of basic education can also be improved by the use of modern information and communication technology.

2.7.5 Mobilizing information and communication systems - Technological innovations like radio, television, press and other popular activities supplement the provision of basic education to individuals and the public in distant areas. The use of this modality requires mutual cooperation between those who are responsible for these media and the educators.

2.7.6 Assessing needs, planning action and defining targets - To meet the basic learning needs of children, a comprehensive multi sectoral plan of action is necessary. The action plan should specify the basic learning needs, the means to promote basic education, the targets and specific objectives, indicators to be used to measure progress, personnel required to plan implementation, and so on. The plan of action should have clearly stated national objectives and measurable targets with definite time frame. (WCEFA, 1990:82).

2.8 Experiences of some Developing Countries on the Implementation of Alternative Basic Education

As long as there are various differences among countries, there cannot be a single strategy that works and benefits all countries. Thus all countries are required to find alternatives that suit to their needs and circumstances. Accordingly, in their efforts to

meet UPE by 2015, various strategies were employed by many developing countries and notable achievements were registered.

Following are two cases about effective programs designed to provide educational opportunity to children who have not been reached by formal schooling.

2.8.1 Escuela Nueva: the “New Schools” in Colombia

Colombia launched the Escuela Nueva, which means ‘new school’ program in 1975. This program has focused on teachers’ curriculum and pedagogy that need to be changed. Well aware of the complexity of improving the quality of education and the difficulty of changing the old habits and expectations, the planners of Escuela Nueva (EN) devised a strategy to change peoples understanding of schooling and motivated teachers and other personnel to stand on their side for the common goal. To this end, four basic education building blocks were identified.

A) Children - Most children in Colombia entered the first grade of primary school but for several reasons poor rural children repeat or drop out. The focus of EN was to enable these disadvantaged rural children learn effectively, graduate and benefit from education.

B) Time - The time conflict between school and work was recognized by EN planners as a major problem that results in grade repetition or dropout of students. Accepting the schedule of the central educational system, they decided to design the curriculum and classroom activities so that time conflicts did not affect the education of children.

C) Place - Although their classrooms were overcrowded, almost all villages had schools and the location and quality of the buildings was satisfactory for the parents. Thus, EN planners accepted these schools.

D) Teachers - There was no need for recruitment of new teachers for there were enough teachers when the EN had began. However they were teaching children of all ages in overcrowded classrooms in a traditional approach. Recognizing teacher performance as influential factor in quality of schooling, EN planners needed to design a program to help teachers teach in multi-grade classrooms. The program for retraining of teachers was in line with the changes in the curriculum and pedagogy.

The EN planners had accepted the curriculum and text books for primary school that were produced centrally, but side by side they developed materials that suit to local circumstances focusing on active learning. Supplementary student textbooks were designed for all subjects that require minimal teacher support. The production of self-instruction materials helped to the implementation of the multi-grade instruction and to the improvement of classroom discipline due to students' engagement in their lessons all the time (Anderson, 1992:71). Due to the production of self-instruction materials, students were able to progress at their own speed and when they miss school for family works, they were able to continue their lessons. After completing certain grade level at their own pace, they were promoted to the next grade at any time. This has minimized dropout and repetition rates.

With regard to teachers, model schools staffed by teachers trained in multi-grade and active learning techniques were established. Traditional teachers were invited to visit the model schools to share the experiences of master teachers followed by three-one week training. After the end of the first training, they return to their schools and practice the new approach. There were also monthly meetings of teachers to discuss on their progresses and problems. Teaching materials in EN schools were provided free and each school had 100-book library.

Results of the EN Experiment

Evaluations show that EN schools had improved student achievement and completion rate, job satisfaction of teachers, and community support of schools. Achievement of children in EN schools was higher than pupil in traditional schools. Unlike the traditional trend, test scores of girls have equaled those of boys. When the evaluation results of 1977 showed higher results of EN students on national tests, donors and the government supported EN's expansion (WCEFA, 1990:60).

The EN innovation had demonstrated how the complex problem of educational quality can be improved and provided to the disadvantaged rural children. The integration of all aspects of the EN approach to make a quality education school was a success. Teachers, children, the community and administrators were changed from the traditional way of

performance and were shaped by the EN program that led to the attainment of quality education.

2.8.2 The Radio-Assisted Community Basic Education Project in the Dominican Republic

A unique and successful experience to attain UPE was through the use of interactive radio instruction (IRI) as implemented in rural Dominican Republic, by providing improved quality education to children in remote areas where schools and teachers were non-existent (WCEFA, 1990: 16). This program had a pedagogical approach that invite students involve in active learning. The program, although it does not seem a surrogate to a teacher it has been used to help children learn and to provide support for under trained teachers be better teachers through time (Anderson, 1992:79).

The Radio-Assisted Community Basic Education project was started on January 24, 1983, in Barahona province of the Dominican Republic by broadcasting a daily one-hour radio program to school-age children in the open air. The program was run in accordance with the time and places that suit to children with teachers supplemented by radio instruction.

Before the beginning of the radio education project, children in Barahona province did not go to school for the community was widely scattered. These children were also engaged in long hours of work in the coffee and sugar cane plantations. So, illiteracy was very high. Meticulously working on the program, the radio education project identified the areas where children could be found and employed four outreach supervisors to visit the sites and communicate with the local community. These supervisors had the responsibility to make a linkage between the field and the radio production centers and to supervise individuals selected to be in charge of the radio classes. The radio auxiliaries were selected on the basis of their knowledge on radio education, experience with local communities and techniques of data collection. To meet their purpose the supervisors were able to identify 23 communities for phase I and another 25 for phase II of the experiment in 1983 and 1984 respectively. A major selection criterion for schools was community interest in the education of their children. This was to be ensured when they

build a shelter for the classes and nominate radio auxiliaries from among themselves by forming associations of parents and 'friends' of the project.

With regard to teachers, persons who had basic literacy skills and interest in teaching children were employed by the community with minimal pay. The task of the teachers was to ensure children's attendance in the program, functioning of the radios, and so on. Auxiliaries were given a two-and-half day brief training before the beginning of classes focusing on radio operation, organization of classes, the use of daily teacher's notes, and helping children with special problems.

Administratively, the project was under an agency responsible for all education programs of the Republic. There was no basic curriculum reform but was translated into interactive radio broadcast made suitable to Barahona children, with certain additions that address to the needs and problems of the target group. Keeping the subjects and their contents as they were, the radio lessons were covered in short time and were conducted in the late afternoon. At the commencement of the project, there were no professionals for the radio program in Barahona. So, local residents interested in radio communication were chosen and were given two-day training. By visiting schools and getting feed back about the radio broadcast, they were able to observe how effective the IRI was and to identify the means for better performance.

Results of the Radio-Assisted Project

The project which began to experiment its plan in 20 schools had in 1989 expanded to over 60 schools with over 80 classrooms. With regard to student achievement, a comparative study made on the radio-assisted project and traditional schools showed that children of the radio-assisted project learned more mathematics and learned as much language as children attending traditional schools (Dock and Helwig 1999 cited in Yates and Bradley, 2000:9). It was proved that these children were able to cover and master primary education through one-hour a day supported by teachers with minimal training. Through this innovation the un-reached children were able to benefit from basic education. Motivated by this achievement, the government had established a Department of Radio Education in 1986 to further expand the experience to out-of-school children in other areas of the Republic.

2.9 The state of Alternative Basic Education Program in Ethiopia

The beginning of modern education in Ethiopia is attributed to the time of Menelik II who opened the first modern school in 1908 under his name (Ayalew, 2000:8). Despite its destructive effects on the country and its people, the brief Italian occupation of Ethiopia had left an important lesson to emperor H/Selassie I where he was imbued with the need to expand modern education in his country. The Amharic song of an anonymous contemporary Ethiopian patriot

በ ኦዴጋስ በማጨውስ መገኛ ይገባ ነበር

በሰማይ ላይ ገባ በማናውቀው አገር

Whose English translation could be “The Italians could never have invaded our country through Ogaden and Maichew, but they invaded us from the air.” (Ayalew, 2000:21) clearly describes that the aerial bombardment showered by the Italians over the Ethiopian patriots that finally led to their defeat was a result of modern education.

After the return of the emperor to his capital following the victory of Adwa, (Pankhurst, 1962, cited in Ayalew, 2000:21), reported that Menelik had developed keen interest to have educated people capable to enable Ethiopia stand as a great nation in the face of the European powers. However, although the beginning of modern education had a long history in the country, and efforts were made at different times to expand education, much more effort is left to achieve universal education.

In Ethiopia the Basic Education Development Program was started in 1976 in the Ogaden region as an alternative means to provide access to educational opportunity with the financial, material and technical assistance of UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF; but it had discontinued due to the Ethio-Somalian border dispute (Wright and Govinda, 1994:114). Later, long before Jomtien, Ethiopia had set a target of achieving universal education by 1980. This plan had failed. The Socialist Government of Ethiopia had also planned the same target to be attained in 1994. This too was a failure (Derebssa, 1999:96).

The illiteracy rate had been reduced through the Literacy Campaign of the *Dergue* regime but the program had lasted up to 1990 and after then, it was not replaced by any other program. According to the report of the UNICEF (1993:2), the gross enrolment rate (GER) in 1991 was 31% representing one of the lowest participation rates in the

continent. The study presents a discouraging report that there was even a decline in enrolment from 2,855,800 in 1988 to 2,478,500 in 1990 and further to 1,816,200 in 1991 (UNICEF, 1993:159). It further stated that the low enrolment rate was accompanied by high rate of dropouts and repeaters where only 37 pupils reach grade six out of 100 pupils who start grade one. These failures are attributed to inadequate resource capacity of the sector related to the costs for schools and school facilities and teachers' salaries. Derebssa's (1999:127) account too, tells that the problem is largely economic- a mismatch between the expansion of education and the alarmingly growing population. Thus, he deduced, reducing fertility rate and strong commitment on the share of the GNP towards education as the best measures to be undertaken to achieve UPE. Different from the above report of UNICEF, the MOE, 2003 (cited in O'Neil, 2005:3) report tells that there was an increase in GER for primary schools from 45.8% in 1998/9 to 64.4% in 2002/3, and the net enrolment rate (NER) from 39.6% to 54% for the same period.

The present government of Ethiopia had also placed great emphasis on the provision of universal education through the alternative means, in addition to the formal system and achieve UPE by 2015 (MoE, 2005:29). Cognizant of its meager resources to supply the program alone, the government had adopted a plan that invites NGO's to stand on its side. Domestically, community participation in constructing low-cost schools and rendering all other contributions is given a high priority to ensure universalization of education. To realize its goals of meeting UPE, the government has set several strategies; and in line with it the following goals are set. These include the expansion of early childhood education, achievement of basic education by 50% of school age children and 95% of literacy rate by 2000, and provision of essential knowledge and skills that help for improved life of individuals and families (UNICEF, 1993:156).

2.10 The Provision of Alternative Basic Education by the Relief Society of Tigray (REST)

Like all children in other regions, many children in Tigray specially children in the rural areas were denied access to basic education. To make matters worse, leaving other factors aside, the fierce battles fought between the *Dergue* and the EPRDF forces had also negatively affected the opportunity of children to education and hence widening the

regional disparity gap. According to (MoE, 1989 cited in Habtamu, 1992:7), in 1989/90, out of the 2,757,100 population of Tigray, the number of children in schools was 88,136; in the same year, Sidamo with a population of 2,741,700 had 190,343 students in school and Addis Ababa whose population was about 2,379,500 had 479,118 students. These specific examples demonstrate to what extent children of Tigray were disadvantaged by the war and its resultant effects.

The UNICEF (1993:160) report further strengthens the belief of the researcher. The statement tells that the number of schools was reduced from 8,488 in 1989 to 5,855 in 1991, and the student number too dropped from 2,793,615 in 1989 to 1,816,325 in 1991. This is particularly true for Tigray because it was the major battlefield for the combatants, even much earlier than the specified years.

Despite the common national problems and the unique historical incidents, the Regional Education Bureau (REB) had attempted to open educational opportunities to-out-of school children. As a result the number of primary schools has increased from 887 in 1993 to 1232 in 1997 E.C. With increase in the number of schools, the distances traveled by students from home to school was minimized which in turn increased access to children. According to REB (TEMISS, 2004/2005:12), the average distance of schools in 1997 E.C. for grades 1-4 and 1-8 was 4.26 kilometers and 7.15 kilometers respectively, and in 1998 E.C. the distance was reduced to 4.05 kilometers and 6.19 kilometers respectively for each of the grade levels. By 1997 E.C. GER for primary schools was 88.47% of which 88.21% were male and 88.74% were females. The NER for the same year was 90.81% for boys and 95.48% for girls. With regard to dropout and repetition rates, in 1997 E.C., significant changes were registered when compared to the preceding years. Similarly, the male- female ratio has declined from 1.62% in 1993 to 1.40% in 1997 E.C.

With all these efforts and achievements of the REB however, there are still many rural children deprived of the right to education. According to the data collected by the Non-formal Education Department of the REB, currently, in 2000 E.C, there are about 10,552 pupils learning in non-formal schools of 18 *weredas* in grades 1 to 3, of whom 5811 are

boys and 4741 girls. The figure will undoubtedly be higher when the report of the remaining 29 *weredas* of the region is added.

In its five years strategic plan, the REB (2006/7:52) has identified some major bottlenecks encountered during the implementation of the ABE program that need remedial actions in the years to come. These are:

- Lack of awareness on the feasibility of achieving full primary school enrolment through the ABE;
- Inconsideration towards the program of some local management bodies;
- Inadequate training provided to facilitators;
- Low financial capacity and weak monitoring and evaluation services to the ABE program.

In addition to the alternative basic education (ABE) program run by government bodies at *wereda* level, there are also others like religious institutions and the local NGO, the REST who are engaged in the ABE program.

Initially, REST had no planned intervention to run ABE in the *weredas*, but it was introduced later when its officials sensitized the urgency of opening an alternative route to basic education by integrating it with the other development programs that had already been started in these *weredas*. Since its start, the REST works in collaboration with the REB where the later provides technical assistance for the implementation of the program. Since meeting basic learning needs for children is a difficult task for poor countries, (WCEFA, 1990:31) suggested, the need for substantial and sustained external assistance to allow these countries join those in the more advantaged categories is necessary. From the very outset the ABE program was funded by external donations. The pioneer of the program was Action Aid-Ethiopia to be followed by donors from different countries of the world.

The ABE program of the REST has the following components.

A) Facilitators: -

Facilitators are teachers who work in the ABE centers selected from the local community members. The qualification required for facilitators is flexible. But mostly, they are

graduates of grade ten. Once recruited, facilitators are given a training program. Facilitators are paid minimal honorarium on monthly basis by the REST. This makes the ABE program cost effective.

B) ABE Learners: -

Unlike the formal primary schools where age seven is set as an entrance requirement, children who attend the ABE program of REST fall in the ages between 7-14. The absence of age limit has contributed to the increase in enrolment for those who could not get access to formal schools. According to the report of REST, about 74,012 rural children were able to get access to basic education in the years from 1994/5 to 2006/7. In the current academic year, 2007/8, there are 10,162 children in grades 1-3 in the REST ABE centers.

C) Community Participation: -

To ensure the relevance of non-formal basic education program, Ferdissa (2003:129) notes, the involvement of parents and the community is of paramount importance. In so doing, they will explain not only their problems but also participate in the solution. Active community participation is the hallmark of the REST-run basic education program. From the very beginning it emphasized on community participation in all stages of the program.

D) ABE Centers: -

One of the guiding principles of the ABE program is to bring learning centers to the center of the target population. Based on this principle these centers are located at a reasonably central place. Formerly, these centers were constructed with low-cost, by using local materials. But recently, with the future view of transforming them to formal schools by handing them over to *wereda* education offices, the newly built classrooms in schools are maintaining the standards set by REB. Presently there are 68 ABE centers in the eight *weredas*.

E) Management and monitoring and evaluation of ABE centers: -

The management of the ABE program at the highest level of the structure is the education department of REST. It works in collaboration with the REB specially on technical matters. In each of the *weredas* there is work relationship with respective education officials and REST through a supervisor assigned in each of them. Like the

Parent –Teacher Association (PTA) in formal schools, there is a management body called Center Management Committee (CMC) in each center having seven members.

Monitoring is a continuous process and involves gathering data and information on the program. The focus of this monitoring is on enrolment, attendance of students, dropouts, transfer of ABE students to formal schools and children’s achievement levels.

Other than with *wereda* officials, ABE centers have relations with directors of the nearby formal schools where the later assist the facilitators through supervision and follow up of the teaching-learning process in the centers and by providing technical and material assistance when needed. These days there is an established strong linkage between REST’s ABE centers and the formal schools. Evaluation of the program is highly emphasized focusing on the children, facilitators and the program as a whole.

F) Relationship between ABE centers and formal school: -

There is strong link between formal schools and ABE centers. In principle, ABE learners are required to join grade five of the formal schools after completing the four years program within three years in the ABE centers. However in the program run by REST, this was not exercised yet because, there is no a separate curriculum supplemented by separately tailored textbooks. For this reason, student textbooks in the ABE centers are those which the formal schools use. ABE students who complete their third grade study and are promoted to grade four are allowed to join to a neighboring school.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the data gathered through the four major data collection instruments employed in the study-questionnaire, interview, document analysis and observation check list. All the instruments comprise two parts; the first of which focuses on the personal information of the respondents while the other part gives the personal account of respondents on issues related to the research. Based on the responses obtained through the use of questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and observation check list, the data are presented and analyzed as described hereunder.

3.1 Characteristics of respondents

The research had included respondents with varying characteristics such as sex, age, academic status, service years and the current position they hold in the area of education. For better clarity the characteristics of respondents are tabulated below.

Table – 2 Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics of respondents		REB and WEO officials		REST Supervisors, education coordinators and facilitators	
Sex		F	%	f	%
	Male	14	100	11	78.6
	Female	-	-	3	21.4
	Total	14	100	14	100
Age	18-22	-	-	7	50
	23-27	-	-	3	21.4
	28-32	-	-	2	14.3
	33-37	2	14.3	1	7.1
	38-42	4	28.6	1	7.1
	>42	8	57.1	-	-
	Total	14	100	14	100
Educational status	10 th complete	-	-	9	64.3
	TTI	-	-	2	14.3
	Diploma	4	28.6	1	7.1
	BA/Bsc	10	71.4	2	14.3
	MA/Msc	-	-	-	-
	Total	14	100	14	100
Number of Service Years	0-4	-	-	8	57.1
	5-9	-	-	4	28.6
	10-14	-	-	1	7.1
	15-19	5	35.7	-	-
	20-24	4	28.6	1	7.1
	25-30	5	35.7	-	-
	Total	14	100	14	100

Based on table two, 14 (100%) of the WEO and REB respondents were male. The majority of the experts and facilitators of REST 11(78.6%) were male while three, (21.4%) were female. This indicates the presence of a wide range of gender disparity in

education management. Similarly, out of the 48 parents and CMC members 33 (57.1%) were male and the remaining 15 (31.3%) were female.

Age wise, all respondents of WEO and REB officials were over 33 years old, where eight (57.1%) of them were over 43 years. On the other hand the age composition of the education experts and facilitators of REST was largely below 42 years where, seven (50%) of them were in the ages between 18-22. Likewise, the CMC and parent respondents' age was largely concentrated between 21-50.

As to the academic background of the WEO and REB respondents was concerned, 10 (71.4%) have a BA/ B.Sc degree with varying posts at regional and *wereda* levels, and the four (28.6%) diploma holders work in the *weredas* as supervisors. Since completion of grade 10 was one of the criterion required for the employment of facilitators, nine (64.3%) of the respondents of REST were grade 10 complete, the others being two diploma, one TTI and the other two BA holders. As far as the academic background of the CMC and parents is concerned, 20 (41.7%) of them cannot read and write and 15 (31.3%) were dropouts of the first cycle primary level. The academic level for the remaining 13 (27 %) was in between grades 5-12. Occupationally, the majority of the CMC and parents 31(64.8%) were farmers, while nine (18.7%) and four (8.3%) were petty traders and civil servants respectively.

3.2 Data Analysis on major issues of the ABE program

3.2.1 Issues related with ABE program implementation

The assessment on the contribution of REST in fulfilling the regional pledge for the universalization of basic education is treated in terms of the following considerations. These are the selection of ABE centers, their physical facilities and educational materials, the teaching-learning process, the state of facilitators, relations between formal schools, and monitoring and evaluation in the ABE centers.

3.2.1.1 The selection of ABE centers

The ABE centers are established on the premise that all out-of-school children and adults whose ages range from 7-14 could get basic education within short distances from their home.

As discussed in chapter two, one major obstacle to the attainment of universal basic education for all was, among all others, long school distance as a result of which many school age children specially girls either fail to enroll or dropout after being registered in formal schools.

To reduce dropout and raise enrolment therefore, ABE centers are required to be located at reasonable distance from children's residences. As evidences from 11 (78.6%) of the respondents of REST facilitators, supervisors and education coordinators' reveal the location of ABE centers is within an average distance of 0.5-1.0 kilometer from the residence of the beneficiaries, while the remaining three (21.4%) responded that it is 1.5-2.0 kilometers. This distance, when seen from the regional average distance for grades 1-4 that was 4.05 in 1998 E.C (REB-TEMISS, 2004/2005:12) and 3.8 in 1999 E.C. (REB-TEMISS 2006/2007:3), was a short distance that has reduced the regional average distance for first cycle of primary schools by about half.

Before the establishment of the ABE centers, the majority of the CMC and parent respondents stated, the fate of their children were to be engaged in agricultural activities

specially looking after cattle and remain illiterate. During that time, many parents were unwilling to send their children to formal schools for various reasons. The major reasons forwarded by almost all the aforementioned respondents was basically, due to the tiresome long daily journey of children to schools and the need for the labour of children by their parents. And few of them responded lack of awareness of parents on the value of education to their children in the future. They also concluded, it was with the opening of the ABE centers in their neighborhood that all parents became willing to send their children to the ABE centers.

While responding to the interview, "Do you appreciate the opening of ABE centers? and if you answer 'yes', why?" all (100%) of the parents and CMC members said 'yes' and the common reason for saying so was because it has solved the problem of access to education of their children by opening the alternative route in a short distance within their locality. The other reasons for appreciating the said program were because it had enabled parents to confidentially send their children, specially girls to these schools; it had enabled children to be engaged in other household activities due to the absence of long travel as hitherto was the case, and it had opened the opportunity to basic education not only for school age children but also for adults beyond school age group.

With regard to the selection of ABE centers, the stakeholders involved in selecting the suitable site were, according to 36 (75%) of parent and CMC respondents, the WEO, REST, CMC and the local community members while 12 (25%) of them said that it is the task of the CMC and REST alone. In both cases the *tabia* administration officers are also involved because it is through their willingness that former owners of the selected site could get a substitution for the land they lost. Responding to the same question, 11(78.6%) officials of WEO and REB have confirmed that they have a say in selecting sites for the centers while three (21.4%) said that they have no part in the selection of ABE centers. In the same token, ABE facilitators, education coordinators and supervisors of REST unanimously remarked that selection of ABE centers is a joint task of all the stakeholders mentioned above.

The common criteria set for selecting ABE centers as forwarded by all parents and CMC members and 13 (92.9%) of REST's officials are deduced in to the following considerations.

- The presence of large number of out-of -school children whose ages range from 7-14, within the proposed ABE center;
- Confirming that the location of the proposed ABE center is at the center of the residences of all learners of the program;
- Absence of formal schools within a short distance;
- Willingness and preparedness of the local community to provide support and to actively participate in all activities that the ABE program demands;
- Presence, if available, of potable water within or in the vicinity of the center; and,
- Plain and wide area of land that can promote expansion of the center in the future.

Although the presence of potable water is taken as a criterion for selecting ABE centers, it was observed during the field visit of the researcher that only one of the eight sample ABE centers benefit from potable water within an easy reach of the center. The absence of potable water was further ascertained, as can be seen in table 4 below, when 20 (71.4%) of REST, WEO and REB officials noted that water is not totally available while seven (25%) answered that it is scarce and only one respondent (3.6 %) answered that it is adequate.

Responding on where the ABE program is conducted, 10 (71.4%) of REST officials replied that classes of ABE centers are held in schools built for the ABE program, while four (28.6) of them responded that classes are conducted under tree shades and *das* classes. These schools that were built for the ABE purpose were built, 14 (100%) of the respondents replied, both by the local community and REST.

3.2.1.2 The physical facilities and educational materials of the ABE centers

Undoubtedly, the success of an educational program requires the fulfillment of school physical facilities specially educational materials both qualitatively and quantitatively. The absence of facilities like classrooms, pedagogical centers, toilets, text books, desks or

benches, etc negatively affect the teaching-learning process. With this belief in mind, the researcher has attempted to assess the presence or absence of these basic facilities in the centers. To this end, a tabulated format containing the list of items and rating options to verify whether or not these items are adequate, scarce or not available at all was prepared as indicated below.

No	List of items	Rating					
		Adequate		Inadequate		Not available	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Text books	13	46.4	14	50	1	3.6
2	Facilitators' Office	12	42.9	9	32.1	7	25
3	Library	-	-	4	14.3	24	85.7
4	Pedagogical center	-	-	11	39.3	17	60.7
5	Toilet	3	10.7	11	39.3	14	50
6	Play ground	9	32.1	13	46.4	6	21.4
7	Potable water	1	3.6	7	25	20	71.4
8	Class rooms	19	67.8	8	28.6	1	3.6
9	Teachers' guides	9	32.1	10	35.7	9	32.1
10	Chairs/desks	6	21.4	8	28.6	14	50
11	Radio	5	17.9	6	21.4	17	60.7

As depicted in the table above, the joint responses of both REST and the REB and WEO officials reveal that libraries were almost non-existent in all the ABE centers. Pedagogical centers that have a prominent role in primary school education were said to be inadequate or poorly furnished by 11 (39.3%) while the majority of them 17 (60.7) answered that these were not available at all. Toilets too were, except the three (10.3%) respondents who answered that they were adequate, 11 (39.3) and 14 (50%) of the respondents replied that they were inadequate and non-existent respectively. With regard

to playgrounds, classrooms and offices of facilitators, the shortage was not so acute. Students' seats were said to be adequate by only six (21.4%) of the respondents, while eight (28.6%) and 14 (50%) of respondents answered that they were scarce and not available respectively. This was further observed by the researcher where many of the students in the ABE centers were seen attending their classes sitting on stones and on the floor.

As can be seen from the table above on the distribution of instructional materials in the sample centers, 13 (46.4%) responded that there are adequate text books, 14 (50%) said that the books available in the ABE centers are inadequate and only one (3.6%) responded that text books are totally non-existent. Thus, since the regional plan for student –text book ratio is 1-1 and the ABE centers did not fulfill this standard, as responded by about 57.1% of the concerned bodies, unquestionably there is the need to equip these centers with sufficient text books so as to make the teaching-learning process effective.

Another issue that has to be noticed here is that in principle, the syllabus of the ABE program was required to be prepared out of the felt needs of the learners (Yates and Bradley, 2000:66). As experiences of other countries mentioned in chapter two above indicate, preparation of a separate syllabus that suits to learners needs was a necessity for the learners. But in the case of Tigray, there are no separate textbooks.

In line with textbooks are teacher's guides for the subjects given at these levels. With this regard nine (32.1%) of the respondents of the sample schools replied that teacher's guides are not available, 10 (35.7%) remarked that teacher's guides are inadequate and the remaining nine (32.1%) responded that the guides are adequate. As to the researcher's observation, 70% of the visited ABE centers have no teacher's guides and in the remaining 30% of these centers there were only few and these were borrowed from the neighboring formal schools.

Concerning the availability of radio receivers in the ABE centers, five (17.9%) of the respondents answered that they were adequate, six (21.4%) responded that they are inadequate while 17 (60.7%) of them answered that radio receivers are not available at

all. The use of radio program for education is believed to have an important contribution to the provision of basic education (Yates and Bradley, 2000:12). The successful experience of the Dominican Republic, as discussed in chapter two of this material, had proved this reality. Taking the value of the radio education program in to account, it was decades back that the program was implemented to support basic education and adult education programs in the country and in the region under discussion. However, by the time this research work was conducted, 2007/2008 academic year, the program has discontinued due to mechanical problems and no radio education program had been broadcasted in the region as a whole. But even if the program was functional, it was observed by the researcher that 60% of the ABE centers had no radio receivers.

3.2.1.3 The teaching-learning process in the ABE centers

As experiences world wide reveal, the objective for the establishment of ABE centers is, as its very name indicates, to provide alternative means of education for those children and adults who could not get the chance through the formal means. However, when we look in to the state of basic education in Tigray, there is no much difference when compared with the teaching-learning modality applied in the formal schools of the same level. To begin with, although the local community and the CMC at large, had the mandate to determine the duration and the learning time of their children together with other partners, the annual academic calendar used in the ABE centers is a direct replica of the formal schools, with certain modifications that are to be considered during the high noon of the harvest time, when the need arises from the side of both the students and their parents. This was proved when 13 (92.8%) of the officials of REST responded that the length of the daily class program in these centers was four hours. Along with this, as observed by the researcher during the visit, the double shift system was also applied in many of the ABE centers where the number of classrooms could not accommodate all the students at a time and where the number of facilitators was not sufficient enough to teach all the students in a single shift.

Table -4 Enrolment and dropout rate, and the number of facilitators in grade one of the sample ABE centers in 1998 and 1999 E.C. academic year. (Source: documents from respective ABE centers)

Year (E.C)	ABE Center	Enrolment					Dropout					No of facilitators			Facilitator-Pupil ratio
		M	%	F	%	T	M	%	F	%	T	M	F	T	
1998	Tseragu	43	59	30	41	73	0	0	2	2.7	2	-	0	1	1:73
1999		55	61	41	39	96	4	4.2	3	3.1	7	1	1	2	1:48
1998	Aba Hatseba	36	63	21	37	57	2	3.5	1	1.8	3	-	1	1	1:57
1999		39	55	34	45	73	7	9.6	2	2.7	9	1	1	2	1:36
1998	Ziquake	35	56	27	44	62	3	4.8		0.0	3	2	-	2	1:31
1999		36	57	30	43	66	2	3.0		0.0	2	2	1	3	1:22
1998	Qawi	72	56	56	44	128	4	3.1	2	1.6	6	2	-	2	1:64
1999		62	60	44	40	106	2	1.9		0.0	2	3	-	3	1:35
1998	Teamina	55	52	50	48	105	5	4.8	3	2.9	8	1	-	1	1:105
1999		44	53	41	47	85	2	2.4	3	3.5	5	2	-	2	1:42
1998	Korir	93	42	130	58	223	6	2.7	2	0.9	8	2	1	3	1:74
1999		40	37	67	63	107	9	8.4		0.0	9	2	-	2	1:54
1998	Tsebelen	60	37	103	63	163	11	6.7	7	4.3	18	1	1	2	1:82
1999		61	40	90	60	151	3	2.0		0.0	3	2	1	3	1:50
1998	Kokai	53	57	40	43	93	10	10.8	3	3.2	13	2	-	2	1:47
1999		63	53	56	47	119	7	5.9	2	1.7	9	2	-	2	1:60
Total		847		860		1707	77		30		107	25	7	32	
Mean	1998							5.4		2.4	7.63				1:66
	1999							4.3		1.4	5.70				1:43

As the data from the sample schools listed above indicate, in 1998 and 1999 E.C. there were 1707 students, 847 boys and 800 girls, attending grade one in the ABE centers. Since the ABE centers were established in remote areas where children had no access to formal schools, had not these centers been opened, the fate of many of these children was to remain illiterate. The presence of large number of girls in these centers witness the contribution of the ABE program in opening the opportunity for girls to learn.

As far as the dropout rate in grade one was concerned, the sample ABE centers had many dropouts. According to the REB (TEMISS 2005/2006:16) the dropout rate at regional level was 5.56% in 1997 E.C. and 6.9% in 1998 E.C. (TEMISS 2006/2007:31). The dropout rate in the sample schools was 7.63 % in 1998 E.C and 5.7% in 1999 E.C. The drop out rate for boys and girls in 1998 E.C. was 5.4 % and 2.4 % respectively. The data also shows that the dropout rate in 1999E.C. in the ABE centers was 4.3% and 1.4% for boys and girls respectively. According to the informal discussions conducted with the REST officials specially the facilitators, the reason for high drop out rate of boys was mainly due to their absence from the centers in time of harvest where their labor for agricultural activities was highly demanded by their parents.

With regard to the state of dropout rate in the *weredas* before the involvement of REST in to the ABE program, seven (50%) WEO and REB responded that it was high, five (35.7%) answered for moderate and only two (14.3%) of these respondents gave no answer at all. These responses also indicate that the dropout rate of students had declined after the ABE centers of REST were established in the region.

The facilitator-pupil ratio is an important indicator of the quality of education given in a certain program. With this regard, the average facilitator-pupil ratio for 1998 E.C. was 1:66 and in 1999 E.C it was 1:43 in the ABE centers, Thus the facilitator-pupil ratio in these centers showed an improvement within the two consecutive academic years.

With regard to enrolment of children, unlike formal schools where children of only seven years old are eligible to learn, the ABE centers open their doors for students whose age ranges from 7-14. When asked whether or not there are annual enrolment projections for students of ABE centers, 12 (85.7%) of the WEO and REB officials responded 'Yes'

while the other two (14.3%) answered 'No'. The researcher has also found annual student enrolment projections in 80% of the visited ABE centers. However the projection of these ABE centers does not have any logical ground and there is a wide mismatch between the planned and the actual enrolment rate. Furthermore, when parents and CMC members were asked on the mechanisms they employ to increase the enrolment of children in their locality together with the question on whether they have annual student enrolment projections, 40 (83.3%) of them responded that they have no annual projections for student enrolment. Rather, since these centers were established on their request and willingness, they responded, they are highly responsible for raising the enrolment rate by conducting home-to-home registration of children of the prescribed age group. Side by side, they also made agitations to incite parents to send their children to school wherever the local communities are gathered for religious or social issues. After ensuring that all children have been enrolled, they made a follow up on absentees to reduce the dropout rate.

When the WEO and REB officials were asked 'Do you believe that the opening of the ABE centers has increased the enrolment rate of children specially girls?' five (35.7%) of them answered they strongly agree and nine (64.3%) of them answered that they agree. Hence, it can be deduced that the program had a significant contribution in increasing enrolment rate of children specially girls. This was supported by (Abraha, 2007: 23) the statement that states the ABE program have contributed up to 7% of the GER by opening the chance to basic education of thousands of children. Similarly, when parents and CMC members respond the interview question 'how many school age children and adults do you have and how many of them are attending the ABE program?' all of them answered that they send every school age children to these centers.

Regarding the application of the self- contained classroom management system in the ABE centers, all (100%) of REST officials replied that they implement the self- contained system. This was proved by the researcher while visiting the sample ABE centers where lesson plans for different subjects in a classroom were found prepared and by the same facilitator. Based on the informal deliberations made with facilitators of

these ABE centers, the researcher was informed that the student- centered approach was the widely used method of teaching.

According to the observation made by the researcher, about 80% of the visited ABE centers have meager teaching aids on different subjects placed attached on the walls of classrooms. In the remaining 20% of the ABE centers teaching aids were almost non-existent due to, the facilitators remarked, absence of materials required to prepare teaching aids.

As long as the CMC members have the highest authority in managing these centers and are accomplishing different tasks related to the program, the researcher have attempted to look on how the minutes where various issues discussed, decisions passed, plans approved, etc. were handled. However, it was found out that 40% of them have no minute recording documents and in the rest 60% of these centers the existing documents contain very limited information when seen in terms of the task entrusted on them.

Table - 5 Ratings on children's preference of ABE centers to formal schools.

Reasons for preferring ABE centers to formal Schools	Rank										Weighted mean	Mean rank
	5		4		3		2		1			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Flexibility of the ABE program	3	21.4	5	35.7	6	42.8	-	-	-	-	3.8	6
2. Due to the avoidance of tiresome school distances	11	78.6	1	7.1	-	-	2	14.3	1	7.1	4.5	2
3. Little or no school fees	5	35.7	5	35.7	2	14.3	1	7.1	1	7.1	3.9	5
4. Presence of locally recruited facilitators	6	42.8	4	28.6	4	28.6	-	-	-	-	4.1	4
5. Guarantees the safety of girls	9	64.3	3	21.4	2	14.3	-	-	-	-	4.5	2
6. Enable children to assist their parents outside the school time	10	71.4	3	21.4	1	7.1	-	-	-	-	4.6	1
Total	44		21		15		3		2			

(5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = partly agree, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. The mean rank was computed using the following formula: (frequency × rank) ÷ total number of respondents).

As can be seen in the above table, the possible factors for students to prefer ABE centers to formal schools are listed from 1-6. The degree of the contribution of these factors were given by choices starting from 'strongly agree' represented by 5 to 'strongly disagree' represented by number 1. Hence, a computation was made by multiplying the frequency of responses with the representative ranks listed horizontally on the top of the table. Then, the results obtained under each of the columns were added and divided by 14 to decide the weighted

mean and the mean rank of the factors. Accordingly, the basic reason for children to prefer ABE centers to formal schools as responded by REST's officials was primarily because the program had enabled children to assist their parents outside the school time. For this, 10 (71.4%) answered 'strongly agree', three (21.4%) of them responded 'agree' and one answered 'partly agree'. The weighted mean for the above factor was 4.6 out of 5 and the mean rank was first.

With regard to the reason for preferring ABE centers to formal schools due to shortening school distances, 11 (78.6%) of the respondents answered that they strongly agree, one (7.1%) answered agree, and two (14.3%) responded that they disagree. The weighted mean for this factor was 4.5 and its mean rank stood second. Similarly the weighted mean for choosing the ABE centers for it guarantees the safety of girls was 4.5 and its rank was second, where nine (64.3%), three (21.4%), and two (14.3%) of the respondents answered strongly agree, agree and partly agree, respectively. The other factor with a weighted mean and mean rank of 4.1 and 4 respectively was, the preference of ABE centers due to the presence of locally recruited facilitators. Of the total respondents, six (42.8%) of them responded that they strongly agree, and four (28.6%) each answered that they agree and partly agree respectively. The other two factors, flexibility of the ABE program to suit to children' learning needs and the presence of little or no school fees had the least weighted mean of 3.8 and 3.9 and a mean rank of six and five respectively.

From the above responses given by REST officials, it was found out that the major factors for children to choose ABE centers than formal schools were due to the opportunity the ABE program had opened to children to assist their parents during their out of school time, for the program guarantees the safety of girl students, for shortening school distances, the presence of facilitators of their own locality, for having little or no school fees and finally for its flexible school program.

3.2.1.4 Facilitators of the ABE centers

Facilitators, as teachers of the ABE program are called, have a prominent role to play in the teaching-learning process conducted in the ABE centers. The effectiveness of a certain education system depends among all others, on the quality of training of the teacher, the

motivation of teachers towards the profession, favorable school environment for teaching, and the likes.

With regard to the academic qualification of the facilitators, 14 (100%) the REST officials that include the facilitators themselves responded that they were completers of grade ten. All of them also responded that they were trained to teach in primary schools. As far as the specific area of training and its duration was concerned, all of them unanimously answered that they were provided with an initial 15 days training on lesson plan preparation, the use of teaching aids, measurement and evaluation, methods of teaching at primary school level, community mobilization mechanisms, child psychology, and class room management. After equipping the would-be facilitators with the basic skills of teaching by professionals from respective *wereda* officials, the facilitators were deployed to the ABE centers they were selected for. Following the initial training, there was a bi-annual 4-5 days refresher training of all facilitators, supervisors and education program coordinators of REST at the head office focusing on experience sharing. In addition to the above forms of training, all facilitators except those who were employed in 2007-2008 academic year were attending the summer in-service program at Adwa TTI in the region.

Answering to the question “who is responsible to nominate and select facilitators to the ABE program”, 14 (100%) of the respondents answered that the CMC, WEO and REST officials were involved in the process. Regarding the requirements considered during the selection of facilitators, all of them answered two of the given options- proximity of the residences of facilitators to the proposed ABE centers and the performance of the would-be facilitators in written and oral examinations. For better clarity on the issue, the researcher had communicated with REST officials at the head office. Completion of grade 10 being one criterion, CMC members were given the responsibility to nominate candidates. Ensuring that the required number of candidates is obtained, the WEO prepares and administers a written examination to be followed by interview both by WEO and CMC members. In addition to these, participation in local community development programs and good code of conduct, as recommended by *tabia* officials, was also valued. To ensure gender equity, priority was given to female applicants. With no differences, all CMC respondents (100%) had also responded similarly for the above question.

Concerning the monthly salary of facilitators, called remuneration by REST officials, 14 (100%) of the respondents said that it was between 301-400 birr per month. Meanwhile, 13 (92.7%) of these respondents remarked that they were minimally satisfied with the salary they earn. Having minimal satisfaction with their salary however, 12 (85.7%) of the respondents replied that the rate of turnover of facilitators was low while the remaining two (14.3%) answered that the rate of turn over was medium. According to the informal deliberations the researcher had made with the facilitators, the reason for the low rate of turnover of the facilitators while having less satisfaction on their salary was mainly because of the absence of other job opportunity.

With regard to the question on the teaching performance of the ABE facilitators, five (35.7%) of WEO and REB respondents answered that it was high while nine (64.3%) answered that it was satisfactory.

3.2.1.5 Relations between ABE centers and formal schools

The purpose of opening the ABE centers was to provide the opportunity for out-of-school children in distant rural areas who could not join the formal schools. Thus, for the common goal of achieving UPE, a close and collaborative effort is needed between officials who run the ABE program and the formal school system. To assess the degree of relationship between the two, some questions were forwarded to WEO and REB officials.

Answering to the question on the contribution of the ABE program of REST to support the intended regional plan of achieving UPE in 2015, 10 (71.4%) of the *wereda* and regional officials of education replied 'very highly' and four (28.6%) of them answered 'highly'. The absence of a marked difference among the respondents reflects that REST has a positive contribution to the achievement of UPE by the year under discussion.

For the question 'do you treat ABE centers and formal schools equally in terms of providing material and financial support?' 10 (71.4%) responded 'yes', while the two (14.3%) of REB and two (14.3%) of WEO respondents answered 'no'. The reason forwarded for not giving equal treatment for the two programs was, firstly, the region had the belief that it can realize EFA only through the formal means without the use of the non-formal means and secondly, the *wereda* officials stated that it was due to budget constraints to support the ABE centers.

The same question was posed to REST officials on whether or not WEO and REB officials treat ABE centers and formal schools equally in terms of providing assistance. For this, 11 (78.6%) answered 'yes', and the remaining three (21.4%) responded 'no'. The reason they gave for saying 'no' was basically due to budget constraints. They have also commented that despite the financial problem they themselves face, the *weredas* are supportive to the ABE program while the REB does not support or show its willingness to support the program.

Regarding the degree of professional assistance provided to ABE centers from the neighboring formal schools, three (21.4%) of the *wereda* officials answered 'high' nine (64.3%) answered 'medium' and four (28.6%) of them said that it is 'low'. These professional assistances given to ABE centers include supply of text books and teacher's guides, supervisory services from head teachers of neighboring formal schools, approving daily lesson plans, inviting ABE centers to participate in academic competitions of students held at cluster level, etc.

To improve the teaching-learning process in the formal schools, all teachers are invited to participate in meetings held at *wereda* level at the end of each semester. Participating in such educational meetings where many experienced teachers take part is of utmost importance for less-trained facilitators. In relation to this officials of WEO were asked as to what extent they invite facilitators in the annual and bi-annual meetings. Accordingly, two (14.3%) responded that they invite facilitators regularly, nine (64.2%) answered 'sometimes' and three (21.4%) of them answered that facilitators were invited only in rare cases. Most of the responses show that facilitators are invited only sometimes or rarely. The reason given for this was mainly related to financial problem.

3.2.1.6 Monitoring and Evaluation in the ABE centers.

Monitoring and evaluation is an important component of the teaching-learning program in the ABE centers. Proper and timely implementation of monitoring and evaluation helps to assess the success or failure of the educational activity and take remedial actions when necessary. In this respect, a question was posed to WEO and REB that states whose task was it to monitor and evaluate the ABE centers? Out of the 14 respondents 12 (85.7%) of them

answered that monitoring and evaluation was conducted in the ABE centers mainly by REST supervisors while supervisors of WEO, head teachers of neighboring primary schools and CMC members also assist the ABE centers in various ways. As to the number of times the supervisors of REST visit each ABE center in a semester, seven (50%) of the facilitators answered that it was four times a semester, four (28.6%) of them answered that it was three times a semester, and the remaining two (14.3%) and one (7.1%) answered twice and once a semester respectively.

With regard to the degree of difficulty faced by ABE students when promoted to grade four of the formal schools, nine (64.3%) of the officials of WEO responded that there were no difficulties, three (21.4%) answered that the degree of difficulty was low and the remaining two replied that the degree of difficulty was medium. For the same question, 11 (78.6%) of REST's officials answered that there were no difficulties while three (21.4%) answered that there were difficulties. Those who answered that there were difficulties remarked that these difficulties emanate from the long distance of the formal schools the students join. This question was posed by the researcher with the belief that students of ABE background may face difficulties when integrated in to new school environment. But in many cases since most of the ABE centers were handed over to WEO and transformed in to formal schools, without being displaced to new environment, the difficulty was not vividly seen among ABE center students.

Another question asked to WEO and REB officials was about the frequency of collecting statistical data from ABE centers as part and parcel of their task. For this, 11 (78.5%) responded that they collect data always, two (14.3%) of them answered 'sometimes' and only one (7.1%) of them answered 'rarely'. Thus, it can be deduced that the WEO and REB have

According to the observation made by the researcher during the visit to the ABE centers, students' performance was evaluated through continuous assessment. In all the visited ABE centers (100%), student' achievements were recorded in continuous assessment record books.

Formerly *wereda* supervisors had their permanent settlements at *wereda* capitals and were conducting the supervisory services by rounding to the schools as per their schedule. This was found, the researcher was informed by *wereda* education heads, to be ineffective due to transportation problems to reach to some of the schools in the remote areas. Accordingly, supervisors were placed around cluster schools permanently as of 2007/2008 academic year, to enable them provide assistance to the schools as frequently as the need arises. So, the permanent residence of the *wereda* supervisors in the vicinity of the schools had concurrently enabled them to support not only the formal schools but also the ABE centers more than ever before.

3.3 Community Participation in the ABE program

Other than the contribution of REST to strengthen the ABE program through the fund it obtains from donors, local community's participation and contributions to further promote the ABE program is of high priority. Community participation enhances the sense of ownership and ensures the sustainability of the program. Community participation in ABE centers was manifested through the CMCs who represent the local community of each of the centers. According to the data obtained from all (100%) of parents and CMC members through the interview, the local communities of respective ABE centers participate in many ways to strengthen the program. These include:-

- Inciting parents in the neighborhood of the ABE centers to send their school age children to school;
- Provide a matching fund in terms of local materials needed for the construction of classrooms (sand, stone, water, etc), industrial materials being provided by REST;
- Providing free, unpaid labor for manual activities like carrying industrial materials from *wereda* capitals to ABE centers, construction of class rooms, etc.;
- Participate in the management of the ABE centers;
- Contribute financial assistance to be paid to guards of the ABE centers;
- Selection of facilitators to the ABE program;
- Selection and provision of land to serve the ABE program, etc..

3.4 The challenges faced and the proposed solutions to the betterment of the ABE program run by REST

Believing that the ABE program run by REST may have faced some challenges that negatively affected the proper implementation of the noble cause of providing basic education to under-served rural children, the researcher have prepared an open-ended question to all the respondents to list the challenges faced by the said program that hindered its effectiveness.

In response to the above question, 15 (31.3%) of CMC and parents responded that there were no challenges that affected the implementation of the program rather they insisted the expansion of the program to the level of grade eight. Conversely, the majority of the parents and CMC members 33 (68.7%) and all other respondents have pinpointed the challenges as follows.

- Shortage of instructional materials was put as the crux of the problems faced by the ABE program. Included with these are school facilities like inadequacy of classrooms, and seats (desks, benches or chairs);
- Lack of sufficient training of ABE facilitators;
- Insufficiency of facilitators' remuneration in terms of the ever growing prices of goods and services; and,
- Lack of awareness of some community members on the value of education and hence reluctance to send all their children to schools.

With the possible exception of the problem of lack of community awareness on the value of education that seem difficult to judge, all the other challenges forwarded by the respondents were, as observed by the researcher, major challenges commonly shared by the sample ABE centers.

Not only were the respondents required to list the challenges, but were also asked to forward their opinions on how to surmount the stated challenges and suggest the means and ways to further enhance the ABE program. Accordingly, the following suggestions were forwarded by the respondents:

- Since rural children were benefiting most from the ABE program, 100% of the parents and CMC members responded, it has to be mushroomed in all remote villages;
- Provide sufficient textbooks, desks and other instructional materials that the ABE centers lack;
- Further empowerment of the CMC members through training pertinent to their duties and responsibilities;
- Allocation of enough budgets by the NGOs funding the program;
- Creating closer work relationship among stakeholders at all levels; and,
- Enhance the professional motivation and career of facilitators by increasing the remuneration payment.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary

Education is the key to all kinds of development. Cognizant of education's pivotal role in economic, social and political development at individual and national level, local and international agencies had labored a lot to its expansion. Despite these efforts however, there are millions of children all over the world who lack access to formal schooling. The provision of basic education to children specially to children of remote rural areas, through an alternative route was therefore essential to open the opportunity for these children to learn. Thus, it was from this firm belief that the ABE was given due emphasis as one means to achieve UPE in 2015.

The purpose of this research was to assess the implementation of the ABE program run by REST in some *weredas* of Tigray. To this end the research study was guided by the following basic questions.

1. How successfully was the ABE program implemented by REST increasing access in the selected *weredas* of the region?
2. To what extent was the community mobilized to participate in the ABE program implementation?
3. How was monitoring and evaluation implemented to ensure the effectiveness of the ABE program?
4. What problems does the ABE program encounter that negatively affect its proper implementation?

The major focus of the research study was to assess the contributions and challenges faced by the ABE program run by REST to the ultimate goal of achieving UPE in Tigray. By so doing, it was a strong belief of the researcher that the research findings will provide feedback information to those who have a concern on the program at all levels.

To meet the stated objectives, different materials of related literature were reviewed and other resource persons like professionals of the education sector who had a stake in the implementation of the ABE program at ABE centers and at *wereda* and regional levels were communicated. As a management body of the ABE program, the CMC were involved. Similarly parents of children who live around the ABE centers were also invited for interview. To this end some data collection tools –questionnaires, interview questions, document analysis and observation checklists were prepared. Two types of questionnaires were prepared for REST officials that include supervisors, education program coordinators and facilitators, and for government employees of REB and WEO officials, aiming at obtaining detail information in specific areas of their concern. Accordingly, 14 (50%) questionnaires were distributed among REST officials and another 14 (50%) to WEO and REB officials. All of these questionnaires were filled and returned to the researcher. In the same way, information from CMC and parent interviewees on the overall situation of the ABE centers in their respective surroundings was also collected from 24 (50%) of CMC members and 24 (50%) of parents of the ABE centers. Along with these, observation checklists that help to verify the existing facilities in the ABE centers and document analysis were carried out in the eight sample ABE centers.

Using the above tools, the researcher was able to collect, interpret and analyze the necessary information that helps to assess the program. The findings of the research obtained in the ways stated above are summarized as listed hereunder.

1. Based on the data obtained from part I of the questionnaire and interview guide questions

All respondents from WEO and REB were 14 (100%) male, and out of the 14 (100%) REST's education coordinators, supervisors and facilitators, 11 (78.6%) were male while three (21.4%) of them were female. And out of the 48 CMC members and parents, 33 (68.7%) were male and 15 (31.3%) female.

Age wise, all WEO and REB officials were over 33, eight of whom (57.1%) were over 43 years old. Conversely, the age level of REST officials was largely below 32 where seven

(50%) of them were between 18-22 years old. The age of parents and CMC members was highly concentrated within 21-50 years, where there was no one below 20.

The academic background of WEO and REB officials show, four (28.6%) diploma and 10 (71.4%) BA/B.Sc holders. Of the REST officials, the majority, nine (64.3%) were facilitators who completed grade 10, while the academic background of the other five ranges from TTI certificate to BA degree. The academic status of the CMC members and parents was mostly below grade four.

2. The ABE centers are established on the premise that all out-of-school children could get basic education within short distances from their home. This was because long school distance from children' residential areas was found to be a major contributing factor for reducing enrolment rate of children. Thus, due to the establishment of ABE centers nearer to children's homes the research findings indicate that, many children were able to get access to basic education.
3. Before the establishment of ABE centers in their localities, many of the parents were not willing to send their children to distant formal schools. As a result the fate of these children was to look after cattle and remain illiterate. But with the opening of the ABE centers they were and still are willing to send all their children to school.
4. All CMC members and parents appreciate the opening of the ABE program because the ABE program had enabled children to quench their thirst for education. It also enabled parents to confidentially send their children specially girls to the centers and had enabled children to be engaged in household chores and support their parents during their spare time as a result of the absence of the long and tiresome daily journey to formal schools.
5. The ABE centers were jointly selected by WEO, REST, CMC and local community members, and the *tabia* administration bodies. The criteria set for the selection of ABE centers include the presence of large number of children aging 7-14 with no access to schooling in their neighborhood, centrality of the proposed ABE center to all school age children and adults, absence of formal schools in short distances for the out- of- school

children, willingness and preparedness of the local community to assist and actively participate in the ABE program, the presence of plain and wide area of land in the selected site that can not hinder future expansion of the center and presence of potable water in the vicinity of the selected center.

6. Most of the ABE class sessions were held in schools built for the purpose but in some of the ABE centers where classrooms were not yet built, classes were conducted under tree shades and *dases*. These schools were built both by local community and REST, where the former provides local materials and the later, industrial construction materials.
7. In principle, ABE centers are required to have syllabus and textbooks different from that of the formal schools, designed to suit to the learners' environment. But there were no special textbooks prepared for the ABE program. Even the formal school textbooks and teachers' guides found in the ABE centers were very few and inadequate. Although the radio education program was not functional throughout the 2007/2008 academic year, many of the ABE centers had no radio receivers. Physical facilities like desks, potable water, school fence, toilets, and pedagogical centers were almost non-existent.
8. Flexibility of the schooling time was the major characteristic of the ABE program. This helps children and parents to choose the appropriate time for schooling and hence increases enrolment. But the ABE program run by REST in Tigray have no flexible school time. It had much similarity with formal schools in terms of academic calendar, the duration of daily school program, the textbooks used and the use of double shift system.
9. With regard to annual student's enrolment projection, the majority of the ABE centers have the projections that have little significance in implementation. Enrolment of students was encouraging due to the active role played by CMC members. The findings also show that the opening of ABE centers has increased the enrolment rate of children.
10. The study has also revealed that all facilitators were grade 10 complete and they were trained to teach in primary schools. The initial training takes 15 days to be followed by

four to five days refresher training given at the end of every semester. The training encompasses methods of teaching, use of teaching aids, lesson plan preparation, etc.

Facilitators were nominated and selected by CMC, REST and WEO jointly. The requirements considered during the selection of facilitators were closeness of facilitators' homes to the ABE center, performance in written and oral examinations, and their participation in local development programs. Past teaching experience and gender were also considered, where priority was given to female applicants. The monthly salary of facilitators was between 301-400 birr and the findings indicate that facilitators were less satisfied with their monthly income. Meanwhile, when asked about the rate of turnover of facilitators from the profession 12 (85.7%) of them responded that it was low, and two (14.3%) answered that it was medium. According to the informal discussions with the facilitators, the reason for the low rate of turnover was because of the absence of opportunities for other jobs.

11. With regard to the question on the contribution of the ABE program of REST in achieving UPE, 10 (71.4%) of the WEO and REB respondents answered that it was 'very high' and four (28.6%) of them said that it was 'high'. Thus, REST has a positive contribution in achieving UPE in the region.
12. The material and financial support provided to ABE centers from WEO and REB was found to be meager due to financial constraints. But in terms of professional assistance given by neighboring schools to ABE centers, three (21.4%) of the WEO and REB officials responded that it was high, while nine (64.3%) of them answered that it was medium.
13. Monitoring and evaluation as an important component of the teaching-learning process of the ABE program was the responsibility of REST's supervisors and side by side, stakeholders also assist the ABE centers in many ways. In so doing, as responded by most of REST officials, ABE supervisors conduct supervision four times a semester in each of the centers. Unlike the long standing tradition of placing supervisors at *wereda* capitals, recent arrangements had placed them at cluster levels. This had helped the

formal schools including the ABE centers to obtain professional assistance from formal school supervisors.

14. Community participation was the cornerstone of the ABE program. Due consideration was given by REST to the local community for their participation enhances the sense of ownership and ensures the sustainability of the program. As per the data obtained from CMC members and parents, community participation was manifested in many ways. Among the areas of community involvement, the following salient points were pinpointed by 100% of them. These were inciting parents to send their children to school; provide local materials, free labor and financial contribution when demanded by the centers; participate in management of ABE centers; selection of facilitators; and selection and provision of land that serve the ABE program.

15. With regard to the challenges faced by the ABE program that hinder its implementation, the majority of the CMC and parent respondents 33 (68.7%), have responded that there were challenges that affected the program. These challenges include shortage of school facilities and instructional materials, inadequate training and salary of facilitators, etc. The observation of the researcher had also proved the existence of these problems through the informal discussions conducted with facilitators.

In addition to the identification of the challenges, the respondents were also asked to forward their suggestions for the betterment of the ABE program in the future. Accordingly, all the respondents gave their suggestions that help promote the ABE program. These suggestions include the further expansion of the program to all remote areas, provision of sufficient text books and other relevant materials, arranging a training program to CMC members to enhance their managerial capacity, allocation of sufficient budget to these centers, establishing strong work relationship among stakeholders and motivate facilitators through salary increments.

16. Most of the rural children prefer ABE centers to formal schools because as to the responses given by REST officials, it enables children to assist their parents outside the school time, the avoidance of long distance travel of children and the guarantee it secures

to the safety of girls. Flexibility of the ABE program was given the least rank, 3.8 of all the reasons for preferring ABE centers.

4.2 Conclusion

Provision of basic education for all children through the formal system had been a problematic task for many governments of the least developed countries. Therefore the introduction of an alternative means to reach the under-served rural children became the only panacea for all concerned bodies involved in the area under review. Bearing this bold cause in mind many government and non-government agencies had exerted their efforts as a result of which, large numbers of children were able to get the opportunity to basic education.

REST, in line with its other development programs had carried out a task for the universalization of basic education. While undertaking the ABE program in the selected *weredas* of the region, some remarkable achievements were registered.

As the findings indicate the REST, as a result of its efforts to serve the rural poor through the provision of ABE program had reduced school distances and thereby increased enrollment of children, strengthened community involvement and awareness in the ABE program, reduced gender disparity by opening access to basic education of girls, enabled children of the rural poor to assist their families during the out of school time, opened employment opportunity for facilitators, and etc.

Side by side with the observable achievements, there were some weaknesses that need remedial measures. These include absence or inadequacy of physical facilities and instructional materials that are vital for the success of teaching-learning process in the ABE program, inadequate training program provided to facilitators and their insufficient monthly salary, failure to implement flexible approaches of the program that could have attracted many other children to the ABE program, failure to prepare a separate syllabus and textbooks that suit to children's needs, high dropout rates specially of boys, etc.

Despite the problems witnessed in the program the following lessons can be drawn.

- ❖ UPE can be achieved if more and more alternative routes to basic education were opened for it increases enrolments and reduces dropout rates.
- ❖ Greater community involvement and empowerment in the ABE program is of paramount importance for strengthening and ensuring the sustainability of the program.
- ❖ Children are ready to learn and parents are willing to send their children to schools if schools are located in their vicinity.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. To make the ABE program more meaningful and effective, it is recommended that the facilitators should be given enough training that enable them effectively teach at the level.
2. The findings also revealed that the remuneration of facilitators was below 400 birr. These days, where the prices of goods and services are sky high, it is very difficult if not impossible, to minimally satisfy their needs. Therefore, if possible, it is recommended that there should be a pay raise from the funding NGO that enable them to sustain, or the community should compensate their expenses through financial contributions as a subsidy, provide residential quarters for free, grant farm land, or find some other income generating activities as the local environment permits.
3. As the findings show, shortage of students' textbooks and teachers' guides is a major problem shared by many of the ABE centers. Similarly, chairs, desks, etc are also non-existent and / or scarce. Thus, together with the expansion of the ABE centers quantitatively it would be so important to consider the qualitative aspect of the program and plan for minimum fulfillment of these basic requirements without which the teaching-learning program could be of little value.

4. REST had contributed its share in increasing enrolment in rural areas of the region without introducing flexible approach of the program. But the researcher recommends that more school age children could have been attracted and could have joined the ABE program if the program was found to be flexible by sensitizing the needs of the communities in their respective villages. These include approaches like the use of mobile schools where necessary, to address the problems of children who wonder from place to place looking for pasture and water to their cattle. Arranging extensive class programs for students when they have ample spare time is also recommended.

5. To expand the ABE program and ensure the attainment of UPE, it is recommended that more and more international agencies have to be invited to stand on the side of the government and the NGOs running the program.

6. For further improvement of the ABE program run by REST and for the attainment of the UPE as intended, the work relationship that has already been established with the WEOs and the REB has to be strengthened more than ever before.

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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies
College of Education
Department of Educational Planning and Management

Instrument II

A questionnaire to be filled by wereda education officials and non-formal education experts of the Regional Bureau of Education

Dear respondents!

This questionnaire is prepared by a student researcher in the Department of Educational Planning and Management, A.A.U, for the study entitled An assessment on the implementation of the ABE program run by the Relief society of Tigray (REST) in some selected Weredas of Tigray. The purpose of the study is solely for academic reasons-to assess the contribution of REST in meeting the global and national pledge for the universalization of basic education. Thus your frank and genuine response is highly valued .You are humbly requested to fill and return the questionnaire timely and diligently. In so doing, you are not required to write your name. For questions with alternatives, please put the mark '✓'and a short description for open-ended questions.

Part I: Personal profile

1. Sex a) Male b) Female
2. Age range
 - a) 18-22
 - b) 23-27
 - c) 28-32
 - d) 33-37
 - e) 38-42
 - f) 43 and above , please specify _____
3. Number of years of service as a teacher and/or educational leader
 - a) 0-4
 - b) 5-9
 - c) 10-14
 - d) 15-19
 - e) 20-24
 - f) 25-30
4. Academic status
 - a) Tenth grade complete
 - b) Certificate
 - c) Diploma
 - d) BA/Bsc
 - e) MA/Msc
5. The current position you hold in the wereda _____
6. Name of your wereda _____

Part II: Questions related to the ongoing ABE program by REST.

1. To what extent does the ABE program of REST support the intended regional plan for achieving UPE?

- a) Very highly c) Moderately e) Not at all
 b) Highly d) Minimally

2. If your answer for question number 1 is 'c' or 'd', please state the reason why?

3. What was the state of drop out rate in your wereda before the involvement of REST in to the ABE program?

- a) Very high c) Moderate
 b) High d) Low e) Very low

4. To what extent do you believe is the ABE program run by REST contributing to the attainment of UPE in terms of fulfilling the following factors? Mark '✓' where appropriate

Factors	Rating			
	High	Moderate	Low	Not at all
-Shortening school distances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Ensuring community participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Increasing access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Flexible learning program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Reducing gender disparity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Local management of schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Reducing drop out and repetition rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Promoting willingness of parents to send their children to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. In your opinion, to what level are the ABE centers of REST furnished with instructional materials? Please mark your rates in the given boxes.

Items	Rating		
	Adequate	Inadequate	Not available
-Student text books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Office for facilitators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Pedagogical center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Play ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Potable water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Class rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Teachers' guides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Educational radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Chairs and desks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Do you have a part in the selection of ABE centers?

- a) Yes b) No

Part III: Questions related to students and facilitators of the ABE program of REST and the education offices.

1. Do you treat ABE centers and formal schools equally in terms of earmarking financial and/or material supports?

- a) Yes b) No

2. If your response is 'No', what is the reason? Please state _____

3. How do you rate the degree of difficulty faced by ABE students when promoted to grade 4 of the formal schools?

- a) High c) Low
b) Medium d) No difficulty

4. If your answer for question number 3 is 'high', please pinpoint the difficulties in accordance with their degree of difficulty _____

5. How frequent do you conduct evaluation on the performance of ABE students?

- a) Always c) Rarely
b) Sometimes d) No at all

6. If your answer is 'a' or 'b', how do you find their performance when compared with formal school students of the same level?

- a) High c) low
b) almost the same d) other, please specify _____

7. How frequent do you collect statistical data from the ABE centers as part and parcel of your own program? a) Always b) sometimes c) Rarely d) No at all

8. How do you rate the degree of professional assistance provided to ABE centers from neighboring formal schools and wereda education offices?

- a) High b) Medium c) Low d) No at all

9. If there are professional assistances, please list the kinds of assistance in order of their frequency _____

10. What is your opinion with regard to the teaching performance of ABE facilitators?

- a) High b) Satisfactory c) Low

11. If your answer for question number 10 is 'low', what do you think is the major reason? Please rank the following options (1-5) in order of their magnitude.

- a) Lack of sufficient training
b) Low monthly salary
c) Shortage of social services in rural areas
d) Absence of opportunities for further education
e) Fear of termination of contracts
f) Others, please specify and rank _____

12. To what extent do you invite facilitators in the bi-annual and/or annual educational evaluation of teachers in your wereda?

- a) Regularly c) Rarely

b) Sometimes d) No at all

13. If your response to question number 12 is 'rarely' or 'No at all', why? Please state the reasons _____

14. Do ABE centers broadcast radio education program?

a) Yes b) No

15. If your answer to question number 11 is 'No', what do you think is the main reason?

a) Shortage of radios

b) Shortage of adequate learning hours

c) Lack of technical capacity of facilitators

d) Others , please specify _____

16. Do you believe that the opening of the ABE centers has increased the enrolment rate of children, specially girls?

a) Strongly agree c) Partly agree e) Strongly disagree

b) Agree d) Disagree

17. Do you have annual enrolment projection for students of the ABE centers?

a) Yes b) No

18. If your answer to question number 17 is 'No', please state how you prove whether or not all eligible school age children are enrolled to ABE centers? _____

19. Based on your observation, please list the challenges faced by the ABE program of REST that hindered its effectiveness _____

20. Finally, please put your suggestions, if any, that you think is helpful for future betterment of the program _____

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies
College of Education
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Instrument I

A questionnaire to be filled by ABE facilitators, REST's ABE supervisors and education coordinators.

Dear respondents!

This questionnaire is prepared by a student researcher in the Department of Educational Planning and Management, A.A.U, for the study entitled An assessment on the implementation of the ABE program run by the Relief society of Tigray (REST) in some selected Weredas of Tigray. The purpose of the study is solely for academic reasons-to assess the contribution of REST in meeting the global and national pledge for the universalization of basic education. Thus your frank and genuine response is highly valued .You are humbly requested to fill and return the questionnaire timely and diligently. In so doing, you are not required to write your name. For questions with alternatives, please put the mark '✓'and write a short description for open-ended questions.

Part I: Personal profile

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 - e) 38-42
 - f) 43 and above , please specify _____
3. Number of years of service as a teacher and/or educational leader
 - a) 0-4
 - b) 5-9
 - c) 10-14
 - d) 15-19
 - e) 20-24
 - f) 25-30
4. Academic status
 - a) Tenth grade complete
 - b) Certificate
 - c) Diploma
 - d) BA/Bsc
 - e) MA/Msc
5. Your current position _____
6. Name of your wereda _____

Part II: The Learning Centers of the ABE Program

1. What is the average single trip distance of the ABE centers to beneficiary children?

- a) Less than 0.5 kms c) 1.0-1.5 kms e) More than 2.0 kms
 b) Between 0.5-1.0 kms d) 1.5-2.0 kms

2. Are there criteria to be considered during the selection of ABE centers?

- a) Yes b) No

3. If your answer for question number 2 is 'Yes', please list these criteria in their priority order _____

4. Where is the ABE program conducted?

- a) In schools built for the purpose c) Under tree shades
 b) In formal school class rooms d) In rented buildings e) Others, please specify _____

5. If your response to question number 4 is 'in schools built for the purpose', who built it?

- a) The local community c) Both the local community and REST
 b) REST d) if others please specify _____

6. Who chooses the location of the ABE schools?

- a) Parents and local community members c) Center Management Committee
 b) The REST education officials d) others, please specify _____

7. How many of the school age rural children prefer ABE centers to formal schools?

- a) All of them c) Few of them
 b) Most of them d) None of them

8. If your response to question number 6 is 'a' or 'b', why? The possible reasons are listed hereunder. State your opinion for each in terms of priority by using

5= strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=partly agree, 2= Disagree
 1= strongly disagree

No	Reasons for preferring ABE centers to formal schools ⁵	Ranking				
		5	4	3	2	1
8.1	Flexibility of ABE programs that suit children's learning needs					
8.2	Due to the avoidance of tiresome school distances					
8.3	Little or no school fees					
8.4	Presence of locally recruited facilitators					
8.5	It guarantees the safety of girls					
8.6	Enables children to assist their parents during the rest of the school day					

9. To what extent are the ABE centers furnished with instructional materials and other facilities? Mark '✓' where appropriate.

No	List of items	Adequate	Scarce	Not available
9.1	Class rooms			
9.2	Office for facilitators			
9.3	Library			
9.4	Pedagogical center			
9.5	Toilet			
9.6	Play ground			
9.7	Potable water			
9.8	Text books			
9.9	Teacher's guides			
9.10	Desks, chairs and tables			
9.11	Educational radio transmission program			

10 Do ABE centers broadcast radio education program?

a) Yes b) No .

11. If your answer to question number 11 is 'No', what do you think is the main reason?

a) Lack of technical capacity of facilitators c) Shortage of adequate learning hours
 b) Shortage of radios d) Others , please specify _____

12. Are there problems affecting the proper implementation of the ABE program?

a) Yes b) No

13. If your response for the above question is 'No', please state the reasons _____

14. Please put suggestions, if any, that you think is helpful for the future betterment of the ABE program _____

Part III: Issues related to facilitators of the ABE program.

1. What is the academic level of facilitators?

a) Drop out students and repeaters below grade 10 c) TTI graduates
 b) Students who completed grade 10 d) If there are facilitators with different academic status, please specify _____

2. Which of these bodies is responsible to select and nominate facilitators? (Possibly, you can choose more than one answer).

a) The Center Management Committee of each ABE center
 b) The Wereda Education Office
 c) The REST

d) If there is another authority, please specify _____

3. What requirements are considered during selection of facilitators? (Possibly, you can choose more than one answer).

a) Proximity to the ABE centers of facilitators' residences

b) Previous teaching experience

c) Performance of facilitators in written and oral examination

d) Others, please specify _____

4. Are the facilitators trained to teach in primary schools? a) Yes b) No

5. If your response to question number 4 is 'Yes', please state the area or field of study and duration of the training _____

6. How much is the monthly salary of facilitators?

a) 200-300 birr c) 401-500 birr

b) 301-400 birr d) above 501 birr

7. To what extent are facilitators satisfied with the salary they earn?

a) Very highly satisfied c) Moderately satisfied e) Dissatisfied

b) Highly satisfied d) Less satisfied

8. How is the state of turnover rate of facilitators?

a) High b) Medium c) Low

9. If your answer to question number 8 is 'high', what do you think is the most significant problem? Of the following possible reasons, please put your rank in accordance with their degree of significance.

a) Absence of opportunities for further education

b) Low amount of monthly salary

c) Absence of transfer opportunities to urban schools

d) Lack of social services in the rural areas.

e) If there are other reasons, please describe and rank _____

Part IV: Monitoring and evaluation of the teaching learning process

1. Whose task is it to monitor and evaluate the teaching - learning process in the ABE centers? (Possibly, you can choose more than one answer).

a) The REST education officials

b) Supervisors from respective wereda education offices

c) Head teachers of neighboring primary schools

d) Center Management Committee members

e) If there are others, please specify _____

2. How many times do REST supervisors visit ABE centers in a semester?

a) Once c) three times

b) twice d) four times e) Others, please specify _____

3. Do wereda and regional education officials treat ABE centers with formal schools equally in terms of providing material and financial support? a) Yes b) No

4. If your answer to question number 3 is 'No' please state the reason _____

d) If there is another authority, please specify _____

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b) Previous teaching experience

c) Performance of facilitators in written and oral examination

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4. If your answer to question number 3 is 'No' please state the reason _____

5. Is the self-contained class room management system implemented in the ABE centers?

a) Yes b) No

6. If your answer to question number 5 is 'No', then please state how ABE centers are organized _____.

7. Do ABE students face difficulties by when promoted to grade 4 of the formal school system? a) Yes b) No

8. If your answer to question number 7 is 'yes' please state the difficulties _____

9. How long is the duration of the daily class program in the ABE centers?

a) 2 hours b) 3 hours c) 4 hours d) Other, please state

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Instrument III

An interview designed for Center Management Committee members and parents residing in the vicinity of the ABE centers.

Dear Respondents!

This questionnaire is prepared by a student researcher in the Department of Educational Planning and Management, A.A.U, and the purpose of the study is solely for academic reasons-to assess the contribution of REST in meeting the global and national pledge for the universalization of basic education. Thus your frank and genuine response is highly valued.

Part I: Personal profile

1. Sex a) Male b) Female
2. Age- range
 - a) Below 20 c) 31-40
 - b) 21-30 d) 41-50 e) 51 and above. , Please _____
specify _____
3. Occupation
 - a) Farmer c) Government employee
 - b) Merchant d) other, please specify _____
4. Educational background
 - a) Illiterate c) grade 5-8 e) grade 12 and above
 - b) Grade 1-4 d) Grade 9-12
5. Wereda name _____
6. Name of the ABE center _____
7. What is your position in the ABE center? a) Center Management Committee member b) A parent

Interview guide questions

1. Do you appreciate the opening of ABE centers? Why?
2. What was the fate of your children before the establishment of the ABE centers in your village?
3. Were you sending all your school age children to formal schools before the opening of ABE centers? If your answer is 'No', what were your problems?
4. How many school age children do you have? How many of them are currently attending the ABE program including those who promoted to formal schools through ABE centers?
5. In what ways do you contribute to strengthen the ABE program?
6. Who are responsible for the selection of ABE centers? What criteria are set to this end?

7. Who selects ABE facilitators and what are the criteria for their recruitment? (Only for CMC members).
8. Who determines the duration and the learning time for ABE students?
9. What mechanisms do you use to increase enrolment rate of children in your locality?
10. In what ways do you participate during the preparation of ABE curriculum?
11. Are there challenges encountering the proper implementation of the program? If yes, what are these?
12. What suggestions do you forward for the future betterment of the ABE program?

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Instrument IV-Observation Checklist

Name of the Wereda _____

Name of the ABE Center _____

S.No	Items to be observed	Yes	No	Situation	Remark
1	ABE Center facilities				
1.1	Office for facilitators				
1.2	Class rooms				
1.3	Reading rooms				
1.4	Potable water				
1.5	Toilets(separate for boys and girls)				
1.6	Play grounds				
1.7	Chairs/benches				
1.8	Blackboards				
1.9	School fence				
1.10	Pedagogical center				
2	Instructional materials				
2.1	Student text books published by REB				
2.2	Student text books published by REST				
2.3	Educational radio				
2.4	Teachers' guides				
2.5	Teaching aids				
3	Teaching –learning process				
3.1	Adequacy of facilitators				
3.2	Self contained class room management				
3.3	Student-centered approach of teaching				
3.4	Continuous assessment				
4	Documents				
4.1	Daily students' attendance sheet				
4.2	CMC minutes				
4.3	Roster				
4.4	Annual enrolment projection				

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Instrument V-Document analysis

Name of the Wereda _____

Name of the ABE Center _____

1. Information on enrolment and drop out of ABE children, and the number of facilitators in the sample ABE centers at various academic years in grade 1.

Year E.C	Name of the ABE center	Grade level	Enrolment			Drop out			Facilitators		
			M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1997											
1998											
1999											

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, and all the sources used cited in this thesis are duly acknowledged.

Name: Tsegay G/tinsae
Signature: 
Date of Submission: June 2008

This thesis has been submitted for examination by my approval as university Adviser

Name: Zenebe Baraki (Dr-)
Signature: 
Date of Submission: June 2008