



## RELI UGANDA CONVENING 2020

*Final Report*

FAIRWAY HOTEL, KAMPALA

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REGIONAL  
EDUCATION  
LEARNING  
INITIATIVE



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## ACRONYMS

AEP	Accelerated Education Program
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
LGIHE	Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education
LSC	Lower secondary school curriculum
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
RELI	Regional Education Learning Initiative
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
WPF	Well Spring Philanthropic Fund
TDS	Teacher Development and Support
SNE	Special Needs Education
TIET	Teacher Instructor Education and Training

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The RELI Uganda Convening 2020 was made possible with the support from the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the coordination efforts of the RELI Uganda Hub Team, the County Co-Leads, the Thematic Co-Leads and the cooperation of the individual RELI Uganda member organizations. We are particularly grateful to Dr. Joyce Malombe, Stephanie Gasior and Emmanuel Otoo, the representatives of the WPF, for attending the convening virtually and for the inspiring words they shared with RELI Uganda members. This convening would not have been a success without the sacrifice of all the members who willingly accepted to take responsibility for the different tasks before, during and after the convening.

## INTRODUCTION

The RELI Uganda Convening 2020 was the third in a series of Convenings organized by RELI Uganda but the first Uganda organized as an autonomous RELI Hub. The Convening happened at an unprecedented time when the world is grappling with mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has rendered more than 1.5 billion learners out of educational institutions globally and affected more than ten million learners in Uganda due to nationwide school closures (UNESCO, 2020). Against this backdrop, the Convening was themed *Advancing Learning for All in Challenging Times*. The overarching aim of the Convening was to provide a platform for RELI partners to share knowledge and opportunities, celebrate achievements, and learn from each other's experiences so as to advocate collaboratively for equitable education for all.

Thirty six people (19 male, female 17) participated in the three days Convening on site, and about 17 people (9 male, female 8) attended virtually from within and outside Uganda. The majority of the participants were from RELI member organizations, each of which nominated two persons to attend the Convening. The Convening was also attended by donor representatives from the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (WPF), officials from the Ministry of Education & Sports (MOES), representatives from RELI East Africa, Well Made strategy as well as three new organizations that joined RELI Uganda. Participation in the Convening was both virtual and on-site to accommodate people who could not travel from different locations. The Convening ended with presentation of thematic group work plans, dialogues on the RELI Hub, and inspirational closing remarks from the Country Co-Leads and Dr. Joyce Malombe of the WPF.

## RELI Background

The Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) is a member-driven initiative founded in 2017 as a peer learning collaborative network of organizations working to improve learning outcomes in East Africa. RELI's goal is to empower its members to become effective and influential organizations through peer-to-peer collaborations and learning and joint policy engagement. RELI's vision is *an East Africa where all children receive quality education regardless of race, color, creed or ability*. RELI members collaborate at both country and regional levels driven by the objectives of better coordination and alignment of education intervention efforts, improved learning outcomes, joint advocacy for policy influence, and deepening understanding of how good practice can be enabled within the East African context. RELI work is organized into three



thematic groups or clusters: Teacher Development and Support, Life Skills and Values, and Equity and Inclusion. These clusters are constantly in evolution and are guided by the work, choices, and composition of RELI member organizations. The RELI approach to work is guided by evidence-based practice. Regional and national convenings are held occasionally and mainly focus on the three thematic clusters. Country convenings take place annually with a focus on policy influence, country-level learnings, and other topics of interest to the country group.

## **PROCEEDINGS**

### **Day 1**

#### **Opening Session**

The opening session of the Convening was addressed by Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo, the Executive Director Uwezo Uganda and Country Co-Lead of RELI Uganda, and Dr. Joyce Malombe of Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (WPF), USA. Dr. Goretti's address focused on welcoming all participants to the Convening, demystifying what RELI is, and giving progress updates from the RELI Uganda Hub. She reported that RELI Uganda had registered the following achievements: launching the Country Hub, recruitment of the Country Facilitator (Dr. Patrick Ojok), streamlining the criteria for onboarding new members, recruiting 3 new members, participating at CIES 2020 and submitting abstracts for the CIES 2021 conference, conducting webinars and workshops, and Holding the 2020 Country Convening. She also recognized the representatives from the Ministry of Education & Sports, RELI Kenya, RELI Uganda, RELI Regional Hub, WPF, virtual participants and all other development partners who attended the convening both onsite and virtually.

Speaking virtually from Washing D.C., United States, Dr. Joyce Malombe expressed excitement for being able to virtually connect to the Convening, and appreciated the RELI Uganda team for organizing the 2020 Convening in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions. She explained what RELI is all about, emphasizing that "it's not about any donor, not about any organization, but it's about the children." Dr. Joyce then welcomed the new members who have just joined RELI and reminded the audience that RELI is a member led, member run and member-controlled collaboration network. She applauded the members' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, and assured them that they have all it takes to change the future of children even in the most difficult times.

#### **Session I: Learning amidst COVID: Achievements, Challenges, Opportunities**

The purpose of this session was to give RELI member organizations opportunity to share updates on the interventions they implemented, achievements, challenges, the driving factors of any successes or failures, and lessons learned. Dr. Patrick Ojok, the RELI Uganda Country Facilitator,



moderated the Session. He invited every Thematic Group to present for up to twenty minutes and allow ten minutes for engagement with the audience.

### **Presentation from the Teacher Development and Support Cluster**

Dr. Joseph Lample, the Executive Director Kimanya-Ngeyo and the Teacher Development and Support Cluster Co-Lead presented on behalf of the Teacher Development Cluster. He started by highlighting the general updates of the Thematic Group and later invited 5 cluster member organizations (Fundi Bots, Building Tomorrow, Mango Tree, STiR Education and Kimanya-Ngeyo) to elaborate on selected interventions they implemented at organization level.

Dr. Lample reported three major interventions the Teacher Development and Support Cluster implemented:

- Revision of the Teacher Education Curriculum spearheaded by LGIHE
- Support for In-service Teacher Training initiatives
- Support for the rollout of new lower secondary school curriculum

Given that the Teacher Development and Support Thematic Group members work directly with educational institutions, all its member organizations experienced interruptions and unique challenges in their work following the nationwide schools' closures which imposed new realities for education stakeholders such as the need for remote learning interventions during the lockdown. In response to the school closures and the implicit demand for continuity of learning, the cluster members adopted and adapted many innovative strategies including but not limited to facilitating remote learning, radio instruction, learning in small groups, and using phones to share learning materials. For example, Mango Tree used radio programming (one hour every week) to offer interactive radio instruction, while STiR Education shifted to a remote curriculum that involved delivery of biweekly teacher broadcast over radio. A key challenge reported by the Teacher Development and Support cluster was that a majority of the teachers lacked smart phones, making it difficult for them to access electronic learning materials. Dr. Lample reported that the cluster members responded to this challenge by resorting to distributing hard copies of the learning materials and using conference phone calls.

### **Presentation from the Equity and Inclusion Cluster**

The Equity and Inclusion Cluster mandate is addressing educational inequalities among disadvantaged learners. Mr. George Katumba made the presentation for this cluster. He observed that learners with special needs were relatively more affected by the Corona virus

pandemic as many of them were initially left behind in the Education Sector response to the pandemic. He reported that the Equity and Inclusion Cluster members implemented the following programs in their attempts to reach out to learners with special needs: radio programmes, dialogue with teachers, establishing small learning groups and parent support mentorship groups targeting girl children. According to George, the key challenges that affected the Equity and Inclusion cluster members' work during the pandemic were: parents not supporting their children to learn especially in rural areas, the high cost of radio programs, rampant teenage pregnancies during the lockdown and the distribution of learning materials in inaccessible formats by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). A major lesson for the Equity and Inclusion Cluster was the primacy of understanding and developing effective strategies for engaging and addressing the unique needs of all learners in home learning interventions.

### **Presentation from the Life Skills and Values Thematic Group**

Mr. Emmy Okello Zoomlamai presented on behalf of the Life Skills Cluster Group. He started by introducing the individual member organizations of the Life Skills and Values Cluster before highlighting the key challenges, opportunities, achievements and the driving factors that shaped the work of the cluster. Some of the outstanding challenges the cluster members experienced were: budget constraints, delay of planned activities and/or not implementing certain activities due to the COVID-19 restrictions. In spite of the disruptions due to the corona virus pandemic, the Life Skills and Values Cluster registered some breakthroughs such as improvising new ways of reaching out to learners during the pandemic, participating in the CIES conference, agreement on the life skills to promote parental engagement and participating in a life skills assessment survey. Mr. Okello then invited three of the Life Skills cluster members to give more in-depth presentations on their interventions. The key lessons and take away from the Life Skills and Values Thematic Group presentations were the power of teamwork, the need to retain the focus on equitable learning for all, and being creative during challenging times.

### **Session II: Presentations by new RELI Member Organizations**

According to Dr. Goretti, one of the Country Co-Leads, RELI Uganda recruited three new members in 2020 (CSBAG, VVOB, Girls to Lead Africa) using the new criteria for admitting new members. This session was therefore purposed to allow the new RELI members opportunity to show case their organizations' thematic foci and the proposed areas of collaboration with RELI. One of the new members, Girls to Lead Africa, was absent for the presentation.



Mr. Okello Emmy Zoomlamai moderated this session, and invited the two new RELI Uganda members present (CSBAG and WWOB) to make their presentation. From the two new RELI Uganda members' presentations, it emerged that:

- VVOB has vast experience in improving Quality Education in the Global South and is looking towards to collaborating with RELI around the new lower secondary school curriculum with a primary focus on learners in refugee settlements.
- The Civil Society for Budget Accountability and Governance (CSBAG), with its experience on budget advocacy, seeks to join the Equity and Inclusion Cluster to advocate collectively for responsible budgeting, increased government accountability and improved access to quality education for all marginalized persons.

### **Session III: Communication and Advocacy**

This virtual zoom session was facilitated by Njuhi Chege, the Strategic Communications Associate, Well Made Strategy (WMS). The session was intended to sharpen RELI Uganda Members' communication strategies and share the different communication platforms for RELI members. In her presentation, Njuhi underscored the importance of documenting and sharing RELI's works. She walked the audience through the RELI Africa website and invited the members to make use of the RELI Africa social media platform, which are also linked to the website. Njuhii urged the individual RELI members to register on the RELI Africa website in order to get better access to more resources. She also encouraged RELI members to share with her pictures, short video clips and short narratives of events they would wish to share on the RELI Africa website and social media platforms.

## **Day Two**

### **Orientation of New RELI members**

Day 2 of the Convening started with a meeting of RELI Uganda Leaders and the new RELI members chaired by Mr. Mauro Giacomazzi, one of the RELI Uganda Country Co-Leads. The Chair introduced the RELI Uganda Leaders to the new members and went ahead to explain how RELI Uganda is structured into three Thematic Groups or Clusters. He also explained to the new members the roles of the Country Hub and the Leadership Team. In the course of the discussions, the paucity of research evidence emerged as a key challenge especially in the TVET sector. Toon De Bryun of VVOB who connected to the meeting virtually, asked whether and how RELI contributes to collective research in the area of technical and technical education. The



members were informed of the existence of a RELI Africa repository where members can share research reports.

### **Session I: Special Interest Groups: Reflections on the New Lower Secondary School Curriculum**

Dr. Joseph Lample, the Executive Director of Kimanya-Ngeyo Foundation and Thematic Group Co-Lead of the Teacher Development and Support Cluster facilitated this session. Dr. Lample outlined the key interventions implemented by the cluster members, the key components of the new lower secondary school curriculum, and the relevance of the new curriculum to the Teacher Development and Support Cluster. He informed the audience that members of the Teacher Development and Support thematic group attended a 5-day refresher course for National Trainers of the new curriculum organized by the NCDC. Unlike the previous curriculum that focused on knowledge acquisition, Dr. Lample observed that the new lower secondary school curriculum focuses on developing competencies in learners, and emphasizes the use of technology to facilitate learning. After explaining the assessment approach of the new curriculum and the three key documents that constitute the new curriculum (i.e. the Teacher's Guide, The learner book and the syllabus), Dr. Lample invited two of the cluster member organizations to illustrate what they do in relation to the new curriculum. Dr. John Mary Vianney Mitana, the Principal of Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education (LGIHE) presented LGIHE's work around assessment and school leadership, while Mr. Modern Karema, co-cluster Lead of the TDS cluster and Country Director of STiR Education highlighted the key life skills and values that are infused into the new curriculum.

### **Session II: Special Interest Groups: Special Needs Education (SNE) in the Revised Lower Secondary School Curriculum**

The new lower secondary school curriculum is lauded for explicitly responding to the needs of students with special needs. To this end, an official from the NCDC was invited to update RELI members on the SNE provisions of the new lower secondary school curriculum and its implications to practice. In her presentation, Ms Generous Kazinda, Curriculum Specialist, Special Needs Education explained that unlike previous curricula, the new lower secondary school curriculum directly addresses the needs and interests of students with special educational needs by among others, introducing two subjects, General Science and Uganda Sign Language that will be taught as electives in secondary schools. She added that the assessment procedures were also revised to take into account the full range of abilities, a change that will accommodate learners with special educational needs who were previously disadvantaged by the assessment



that gave undue weight to cognitive abilities. She hailed the RELI members who are contributing to strengthening teachers' capacity to implement the new curriculum: "I am now sure that NCDC has RELI as her ambassador."

### **Session III: Program Updates**

In this session, the audience received updates about two key projects being implemented by RELI members, namely: Assessment of Life skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) and the Schools 2030 projects. Mr. Mauro Giacomazzi and Dr. Gorreti Nakabugo<sup>39</sup> co-chaired this session.

#### **ALiVE Project**

An overview of the ALiVE project was provided by Mauro Giacomazzi and Dr. Purity Ngina of Zizi Afrique who presented via zoom from Nairobi, Kenya. In the first part of the presentation, Dr. Purity explained the aim of the ALiVE project, its significance, the underpinning problems it responds to, and the characteristics of ALiVE project. According to Dr. Purity, the ALiVE project aims at validated contextualized tools for assessing life skills and values (i.e. Self-Awareness, Collaboration, Problem Solving and Respect) generating evidence on life skills to engage policy reforms and strengthen local capacities in life skills competencies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Mr. Mauro observed that ALiVE was the first project undertaken by RELI East Africa founded in response to the growing concern of the need to assess what works or does not work. He then elaborated on the core areas of ALiVE project, the agreed life skills and values and updated the audience on the key project milestones attained since June 2018.

#### **Schools 2030**

The Session Moderator, Dr. Goretti, briefly explained what Schools 2030 is all about, and invited two 2 team leaders, Mr. Emmy Okello Zoomlamai of FICH and Jane Sebuyungo of STIR Education representing the two RELI teams that participated in the Schools 2030 Human Centred Design (HCD) training. Janat Namatovu of Aga Khan Foundation gave an overview of Schools 2030 project. She explained that Schools 2030 was grounded on the Human Centered Design (HCD), and entails how people find solutions from grass roots to improving learning outcomes. The key focus of Schools 2030 is "to see that girls and boys are well equipped with the right knowledge, skills, attitudes and values." She revealed that in Uganda, Schools 2030 is working with 100 pioneering schools at pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels to foster holistic learning outcomes. Schools 2030 applies a six steps process (Assess, Design, Fund, Track, Literate and Showcase) to generate school-driven innovative solutions for holistic learning.



After Janet’s presentation, Dr. Gorreti invited Emmy Okello Zoomlamai to present on behalf of his team, which comprised of Uwezo Uganda, FICH, Fundi Bots, and Komo Learning Centers. He illustrated how FICH used the HCD thinking to improve 2030 learning outcomes. Mr. Okello used the case of a primary six pupil who lacked reading materials both at school and at home to explain how his team solved the problem using the HCD approach. Since lack of reading materials was common to many other learners, the team proposed to organize a *school-community reading materials day* during which the community was mobilized to freely contribute reading materials for needy students. From this successful community-driven initiative, the team learned that schools can organize school reading materials days in simple and cheap ways, and stakeholders were happy to donate reading materials to help the learners who lack them.

On behalf of Team L (STiR Education, International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IRR) and LGIHE), Ms Jane Sebuyungo of STIR Education presented about *learning in schools in a Covid-19 compliant way*. The team sought to explore solutions from the user’s (learner, teacher and head teacher) perspective using candid conversations, zoom interviews and phone calls. According to Jane, Team L found both unique and related user expectations about school re-opening. For example, teachers needed social and emotional well-being and effective methods they can use to teach in a new way when schools re-open post Covid-19 pandemic, while the learner expected teachers to explain more about the self-study topics covered during the lockdown. Meanwhile, a head teacher of a private school said: “teachers who are prepared to teach in every way were the most important resource when schools reopen.”

#### **Session IV: Dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Sports**

The Dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Sports session was structured as a panel of two Guest Speakers from the Departments of Special Needs and Inclusive Education and Teacher Instructor Education and Training (TIET). The purpose of this session was to engage the government officials on pertinent policy issues in education, and brief the members on the progress status of the National Teachers Policy (NTP) and the National Inclusive Education Policy (NIEP). Dr. Patrick Ojok, the session moderator, provided a brief context for the two policies before inviting the representatives from the MOES to make their presentations.

#### **Presentation on the National Teacher Policy**

Mr. Jonathan Kamwana, the Commissioner of TIET, highlighted the legislative background and rationale of the National Teachers Policy (NTP). He stated that the NTP was designed to address

the problems of low educational achievements by learners, low teacher qualifications and standards, poor teaching aids and lack of teacher professional development. He then explained 4 action points that the NTP focuses on to produce a competent and highly motivated teaching force that can ensure quality learning outcomes. Mr. Jonathan concluded his presentation by calling upon stakeholders to support the implementation of the NTP, arguing that “If we implement NTP well, we will see competent teachers who deliver competent lessons and we will have higher achieving students.” He also gave out free copies of the NTP as a way of disseminating the policy.

The audience raised two questions on Mr. Jonathan’s presentation, namely:

- Whether we are on track with the new curriculum for the degree level, and the relationship between TIET and Uganda National Institute of Teacher Education (UNITE),
- and the countries used for benchmarking the NTP

In response, the Commissioner acknowledged that there was a delay in implementing the policy due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and listed some of the progress made so far which included: formation of the UNITE Taskforce, issuance of the certificate to implement the policy, allocation of funds for the National Teachers Council (NTC), a body that will be responsible for regulating standards and licensing of teachers.

On the question of benchmarking, the Commissioner clarified that the NTP was modelled from four countries implementing similar policies (Ghana, Singapore, Thailand and Finland).

### **Presentation on the National Inclusive Education Policy (NIEP)**

The newly appointed Commissioner Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Ms. Sarah Bugoosi Kiboole presented the paper on NIEP. She started by stating that developing NIEP was preceded by a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) which helped to identify the underlying policy problem(s). The RIA report, she explained, revealed that a majority of learners with special needs experienced gross exclusion at four aspects: access, progression, retention and completion, making them not to be left behind from the existing education provisions. Ms. Bugoosi clarified that NIEP seeks to address the needs of all learners, not just children with disabilities, and focuses on both formal and non-formal learning. She disclosed that NIEP was scheduled for presentation at Top Management in the MoES after which it will be tabled before Cabinet for the final approval.

After Ms. Bugoosi’s presentation, participants raised the following questions and concerns:

- The number of years required for accelerated learning, and the policy’s position on equating foreign certificates
- whether learners who are already marginalized will not be further marginalized due to the NIEP’s focus on all learners at all levels including non-formal education level.

In response to the concerns/questions, the Commissioner SNE clarified that the implementation guidelines will be developed to ensure that no learner will be (further) marginalized under the policy. She also clarified that accelerated learning was intended only for learners aged 18 and older, and that the NCDC was piloting a project that will streamline the required number of years for the different levels of accelerated learning.

### Session V: MEL Learning Session and the Way Forward

Mr. Peter Magara, the RELI Uganda Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Mentor facilitated this session. He explained that RELI has been endeavoring to develop a common outcome framework for measuring the changes it is contributing towards as a network. He then outlined the common outcomes identified by the members and the responsible organizations.

TABLE I: LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK FOR RELI UGANDA

Learning Outcome	Responsible Organization(s)
Are children leaning or not?	AET, Fundi Bots, Uwezo, FICH
Are teachers having the necessary skills for learner centered approach?	Building Tomorrow, Fundi Bots, LGIHE, STiR Education
Are children safeguarded and resilient?	
Is the community (parents) effectively engaged?	
Are the Edutech solutions supporting teaching and learning?	
Are the education policies inclusive and support quality of learning?	CSBAG ISER
Are the youths having the skills for work and employment?	FICH
Are children leaning or not?	AET, Fundi Bots, Uwezo, FICH
Enabling environment	Komo Learning Centre, STiR Education
School governance	Building Tomorrow, LGIHE
Hard to reach areas	FICH, IIRR

## Day 3

### Session I: Presentations of Thematic Group Plans

The presentations of thematic group plans was preceded by mid-morning breakout sessions where thematic groups spent two or more hours developing and discussing their work plans. The Thematic Group Plans were structured to address the key question of *what they wish to learn as a cluster, the activities they will undertake to address what they wish to learn, the responsible thematic group members, the timeframe and how this would be monitored/measured*. During the plenary session, every thematic group presented their agreed work plans outlining what they will implement in the period remaining (end of April, 2021). The table below shows a summary of the thematic groups work plans as presented at the Convening.

TABLE II THEMATIC GROUPS WORK PLANS

Thematic Group	Objective	Learn Question	Activity	Who?	By when?
<b>Teacher Development and Support</b>	To support the rollout and success of the NTP and new LSC		RELI presence within Ministry Working groups		
			Register RELI organizations for CPD and spearhead CPD pilot with TIET	STiR Education	
		What conditions should be in place for schools to successfully take advantage of the new curriculum?	Event to reflect on our efforts around the lower secondary curriculum		
		What aspects of LSC are organizations focusing on/learning about?	Promote spaces for our organizations to share about their activities		Regular monthly zoom meetings to update on progress of our activities
			Regular monthly zoom meetings to update on progress of our activities.		
<b>Equity and Inclusion</b>	Assess the inclusiveness of the education sector budget	What are the budget allocations for inclusive education?	Desk review of education sector budgets, Workshop/ Webinar	CSBAG	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter

	Understand more about Accelerated Education Programme (AEP)	How is AEP contributing to inclusive access and learning	Webinar/workshop	NRC	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter
	Explore schools preparedness for re-opening post-covid-19	How are schools prepared to accommodate all learners when they open?	Conduct a survey study	War Child	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter
	Support the development of the guidelines for implementing NIEP	Are the implementation guidelines for NIEP inclusive for all learners?	Webinar/Workshop	USDC	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter
<b>Life Skills and Values</b>	Improve collaboration with TIET in terms of Teacher Professional Development at PTC and NTC levels	How can we support the MoES (TIET) in developing and assessing life skills at pre service and in service levels during COVID 19?	Life skills workshops for particular PTCs and NTCs Training of instructors on the use of technology	LGIHE, KLC, Educate! Uwezo. FICH, AET, Fundi Bots, VVOB	December to April, 2021?
	Improve capacity of instructors to create video contents for learning in Agriculture		Training of instructors to use technology like phone to record and edit video contents for learners in agriculture.	All interested partners	
	Improve collaboration with NCDC in terms of Teacher support in the implementation of the new lower secondary curriculum	How can we collaborate with NCDC in the implementation of new LSC that already entails pedagogical strategies promoting life skills? What is implementation stage and how can we participate?	To liaise with NCDC on aspects of curricula implementation To participate in the identification of teachers gaps on assessment tool using HCD in 4 districts where partners are working. Supporting teachers to depend understanding life skills in the new curricula at various levels as per organizational capacities	LGIHE, KLC, Educate! Uwezo FICH, AET, FUNDI BOTS, VVOB	Dec. 2020 to April, 2021
	To design a solution that can help parents in the process of nurturing life skills starting with communication	In what areas do parent and their children have difficulties in communicating to each other? What suggestions parent and children have to	Virtual / in person	Life Skills members	December, 2020 to February, 2021

		strengthen communication? How do we know it is working?			
	Develop a common tool for assessing life skills at regional level	How can we develop a common tool to assess life skills at (Problem solving, Self-awareness and Collaboration)	To formulate a research concept	Values and Life skills group (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania)	Work in progress
	To enable deepening of nurturing of life skills by learning from members and allowing reflection by individual organization for replication of best practices	What is your take home as a presenter or attendee that you will take back to your organization?	Zoom presentations on a life skill selected by a member organization	Life Skills members	Monthly up to May, 2021

## Session II: Country Leadership and Hub: Roles and Responsibilities

The session, which was facilitated by the RELI Uganda Country Co-Leads, was intended to brief the members on the RELI leadership structure at the country and cluster levels. Dr. Mary Gorreti Nakabugo deliberated on the RELI Uganda country structure and roles while Mr. Mauro Giacomazzi talked about the Country Hub host and its roles.

Dr. Mary Gorretti Nakabugo observed that RELI members are the highest policy and decision-making organ with the powers to elect and/or appoint the leadership team. The RELI country leadership structure comprises of the Country Leadership Team (thematic leads, Country Learning Facilitator, MEL mentor and the Hub Host staff). She then highlighted the key functions of the Leadership Team, which included policy and strategic leadership, performance management and supervision and approving annual budget, plans and reports.

Speaking about the RELI Hub Host, Mr. Mauro Giacomazzi explained that the RELI Country Hub Host structure currently consists of the Hub Coordinator, the Country Facilitator and the Program Assistant. The Hub, which is currently hosted by LGIHE, is the official RELI Uganda contractual agent on all matters relating to administration of funds. Its mandates include among others: providing office space to RELI staff, procurement and contracts administration, and maintaining relevant data on behalf of RELI Uganda. The members observed that the Terms of Reference for Thematic Group Leads was still lacking, hence the need to urgently develop it.

## Closing Session

The closing session was addressed by Dr. Joyce Malombe of Well Spring Philanthropic Fund and Mr. Mauro Giacomazzi, the RELI Uganda Country Hub Coordinator. Mr. Mauro conveyed appreciations to all the people who contributed to the success of the convening and the participants who attended the three days convening. He challenged members to prioritize evidence generation to inform RELI's work. On her part, Dr. Malombe expressed deep gratitude to the RELI Uganda Leadership Team for successfully organizing the 2020 Convening. In particular, Dr. Malombe applauded RELI members for what she called the "effort to keep children learning despite the pandemic that has exposed the marginalized." She appealed to the members to embrace RELI as their own and challenged them to innovate and start thinking outside of the box while keeping the children in mind. Dr. Malombe ended her inspirational remarks by pledging to share the new RELI's organogram and commending LGIHE for its role in establishing and hosting RELI Uganda Country Hub.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The 2020 Convening happened in a unique and challenging context, and brought together participants from both within and outside the RELI membership. The range of topics covered indicated the need to learn and adjust to the so called *new normal* imposed by the corona virus pandemic and to the changing education landscape. Lessons learned and action points are gleaned from the convening proceedings, the post convening Leadership meeting, and the convening evaluation report. The following issues emerged to be the key lessons and the corresponding action points.

- ✚ The onboarding of new RELI members was welcomed as a positive development for RELI's growth albeit with a caution to more carefully examine interested organizations before admission as a way of securing commitment and balancing the categories of members recruited to the RELI network.
- ✚ It was resolved that regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic, the dual participation mode (on-site and virtual) should be maintained in future RELI convenings to allow people who cannot attend physically for various reasons to also participate.

- ✚ Inviting government officials to the convening was useful for engaging on high-level policy issues. In future, there is need to better maximize their time and resourcefulness and have them keep around for interactions beyond their panel presentations.
- ✚ Thematic group presentations could in future focus more on, and be reflective of thematic group level updates than on individual members' issues as was the case.
- ✚ Another key take away was that challenging times foster creativity and resilience. It was encouraging that RELI members did not stop working but instead sought innovative solutions to ensure learning outcomes among learners during the corona virus pandemic.
- ✚ Overall satisfaction with the convening was 100% (satisfied 64%, very satisfied 36%).
- ✚ Participants were satisfied with all topics of the convening. Thematic Group plan presentations, learning amidst COVID-19 and Dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Sports recorded higher satisfaction ratings than the rest of the topics.
- ✚ According to the evaluation report, in future, participants would wish for the convening to cover/repeat some of the following topics:
  - Using technology to improve interventions
  - Continuous assessment of learners with varying abilities
  - Dialogue with policy makers on SNE and other issues
  - Dissemination of evidence generated by RELI members
  - Capacitating in-service teachers with innovative teaching skills
- ✚ Some areas for improvement highlighted by members in the evaluation forms:
  - Closing time not to exceed 5:00 pm in consideration of commuting participants
  - Some presenters were so fast due to the limited time assigned to them.
  - The convening could be made twice a year.
  - Preparation to start in good time to minimize last minutes rushing.

## Annex 1: Convening Agenda

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2020  
**Theme:** **Advancing Learning for All in Challenging Times**  
**Venue:** Fairway Hotel, Kampala  
**MCs:** Modern Karema, Pearl Mugala

<b>Day 1: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>		
<b>Morning Session</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
11:30am-12:30pm	Pre-Convening Planning Meeting	Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Mauro Giacomazzi
12:30pm-1:00pm	Registration	Teddy Mutoni
1:00pm-2:00pm	Lunch Break	
<b>Afternoon Sessions</b>		
2:30pm-2:45pm	Opening Remarks Introduction of new RELI members	Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Dr. Joyce Malombe
2:45pm-4:15pm	Learning amidst COVID: Achievements, Challenges, Opportunities ( <i>presentations from RELI Thematic Groups</i> )	Dr. Patrick Ojok
4:15pm-4:45pm	Tea Break	
4:45pm-5:15pm	Presentations from new RELI member organisations: <i>CSBAG, Girls to Lead Africa, VVOB education</i>	Emmy Zoomlamai

5:15pm-6:00pm	Communication and Advocacy (New website platform, social media engagements)	Well Made Strategy
6:00pm	<b>End of Day One</b>	
<b>Day 2: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
9:00am-10:00am	Meeting of the new RELI members with the Leadership Team: <i>CSBAG, Girls to Lead Africa, VVOB education</i>	Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Mauro Giacomazzi
10:00am-10:30am	Tea Break	
	<b>Special Interest Groups:</b>	
10:30am-11:30am	SIG 1: Reflections on the New Lower Secondary School Curriculum	Dr. Joseph Lample
11:30am-12:30pm	SIG 2: Special Needs Education (SNE) in the Revised Lower Secondary School Curriculum	Generous Kazinda
1:00pm-2:00pm	Lunch Break	
<b>Afternoon Sessions</b>		
2:30pm-3:30pm	Programmes updates: Assessment of Life skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE)  Schools2030: Quick Fires	Giacomazzi Mauro  Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo
3:30pm-4:45pm	Dialogue with Ministry of Education & Sports on the status of the National Teacher Policy (NTP) and the National Inclusive Education Policy (NIEP) Panelists:	Dr. Patrick Ojok

	-Mr. Jonathan Kamwana, Commissioner-Teacher /Tutor, Instructor Education and Training (TIET)-MoES Ms Sarah Bugoosi Kiboole, Commissioner-Special Needs and Inclusive Education (SNE)-MoES	
4:45pm-5:00pm	Tea Break	
5:00pm-6:00pm	MEL learning session and the Way Forward	Magara Peter
6:00pm	<b>End of Day Two</b>	
<b>Day 3: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>		
10:00am-10:30am	Tea Break	
10:30am-12:30am	Thematic Groups Planning	
1:00pm-2:00pm	Lunch Break	
<b>Afternoon Sessions</b>		
2:00pm-2:30pm	Country Leadership and Hub: Roles and Responsibilities	Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Giacomazzi Mauro
2:30pm-3:15pm	Presentation of Thematic Group Plans	Thematic leads, moderated by Pita Magara
3:15pm-3:45pm	RELI East Africa and Uganda Incorporation	Dr Joyce Malombe, Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Giacomazzi Mauro
3:45pm-4:00pm	Closing remarks	Giacomazzi Mauro