

BRIDGING THE GAP
EVIDENCE BRIEF

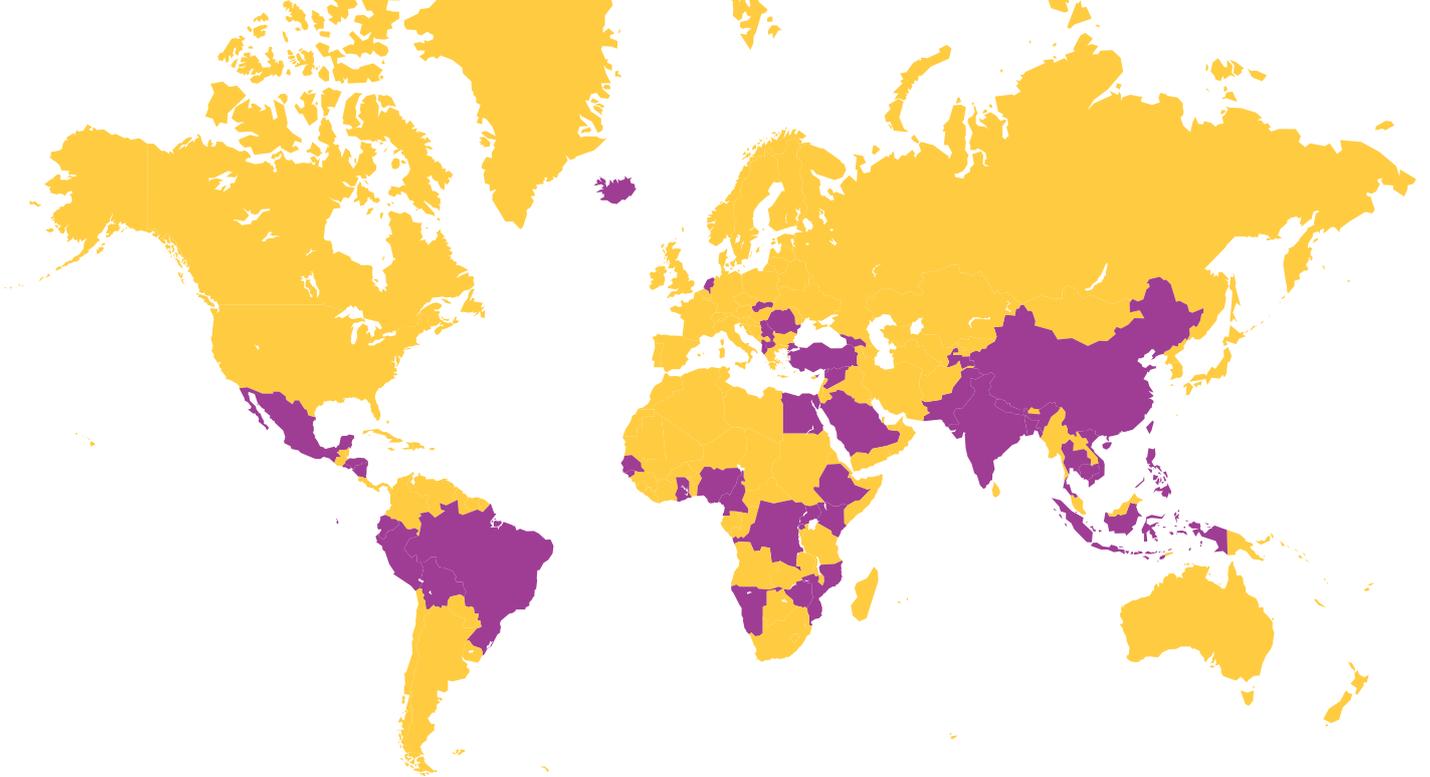


THE PROVEN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Aflatoun International is a non-governmental organisation delivering Life Skills and Financial Education programmes through a global network of 192 partner organisations and 26 governments. Its mission is to inspire children and young people to socially and economically empower themselves to become agents of change for a more equitable future. Aflatoun International's programmes are implemented in 102 countries, reaching 5.4 million children and young people each year through an innovative social franchise model. In addition to the content itself, Aflatoun International provides all the technical support necessary to develop, implement, evaluate and scale-up Life Skills and Financial Education.

Aflatoun International's Life Skills and Financial Education has proved to be effective in increasing childrens' and young people's self-efficacy and confidence, in raising awareness of their rights, improving social behaviour and enhancing financial attitudes. It is one of the most well-researched international life skills programmes globally.

Aflatoun International's efforts to scale interventions through its unique model have been recognised by The Brookings Institute in its reports Millions Learning: Scaling up quality education in developing countries¹ and Can We Leapfrog? The Potential of Education Innovations to Rapidly Accelerate Progress^{1b}. Building financial capability in children should be done carefully and with a holistic view of their development needs. Financial attitudes and behaviour are not cultivated in isolation, but are connected to childrens' and young people's personal and social lives. A balanced curriculum can protect them from sacrificing their social and personal development for the sake of finances. This balance also helps create a sustainable change in young people's behaviour by linking financial habits to their hopes and dreams for the future. The combination of life skills and financial education is therefore perceived as key to its success. This brief focuses on the evidence of the effectiveness of Aflatoun International's educational programmes around the globe.



■ Countries where Aflatoun International has completed or has ongoing research.

Aflatoun International has developed the following three programmes:

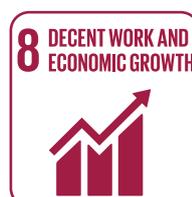
- Aflatot provides a foundation for children in the pre-school age range (3-6 years old);
- Aflatoun was developed for primary school aged children and non-formal education for out-of-school children (6-14 years old);
- Aflateen inspires and educates young people (15 years old +);
- Aflatoun Youth increases young people's job market readiness (18 years old +).

METHODOLOGY

Research conducted into the different age-appropriate programmes has included:

- 6 completed or ongoing randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in six different countries;
- over 40 research projects assessing the outcomes and processes of the primary school age curriculum Aflatoun, both in formal and non-formal settings;
- more than 25 projects evaluating the effectiveness of Aflateen and 10 research projects on Aflatot for early childhood education;
- 1 realist evaluation with qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to identify pathways leading to continuation and growth of our youth programme Aflateen;
- 1 systematic review and meta-analysis of all financial education for children and young people;
- 1 review on the effectiveness of financial programmes aimed at economically empowering adolescent girls.

AFLATOUN INTERNATIONAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



RESULTS

The findings on the effectiveness of Aflatoun International's programmes are presented below. Outcomes are grouped into (a) social outcomes, (b) financial outcomes, and (c) educational outcomes.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES

The Aflatoun programme has demonstrated its ability to empower children and young people to take action and improve their personal and social circumstances, as well as those of their peers. This change in their behaviour is enabled through an increased sense of self-confidence and knowledge of their own rights as well as their respect for the rights of others.

In eight studies measuring the self-confidence of primary school children in Aflatoun, 60% of the children in the studies showed increased self-confidence at the end of the programme. Two rigorous RCTs in Rwanda² and Tajikistan³ confirmed that children in Aflatoun, and

adolescents girls in Aflateen significantly increased their levels of self-efficacy, and their belief that they are in charge of their own lives. The rigour of these studies removes the chance that these findings are caused by anything other than the programme.

Five studies with primary school age children found 99% of children participating in Aflatoun ended the programme with positive, rights-based attitudes and knowledge. Our non-formal education programme in Brazil showed significant improvements between the beginning of the programme and the end regarding children's participation in working activities. None of the children, who were part of the research, were working under harsh circumstances anymore in 2015⁴. More rigorous evaluations include an RCT in Ghana⁵ with over 5,000 children that found that the addition of rights-oriented social education protected children from engaging in child labour. This was in part due to the inclusion of lessons on the dangers of child labour and children's right to be in school and not have to work.

Aflatoun International focuses on learning through action and this already starts at an early age, when children's habits are forming. Studies in four countries on the

behaviour of children in their early childhood (3-6 years) demonstrated that children were much more likely to think and act independently after Aflatot. They improved their self-understanding, were managing their emotions in a healthier way, and they were able to identify other children's and adult's emotions and to adjust their behaviour accordingly. In addition, children were more able to promote and maintain mutual, positive relationships with others⁶.

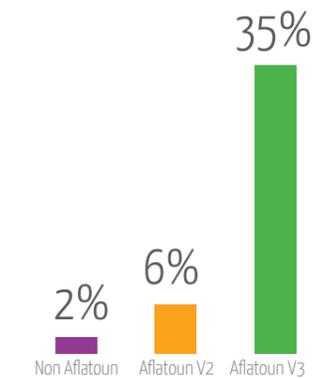
FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

Aflatoun International worked with an external academic to produce the first systematic review examining the effectiveness of financial education for children and young people. This study reviewed all existing rigorous research on the topic globally, looked at the total impact of the financial education interventions, and explored differences among programmes.

Among all the studies identified, Aflatoun was the only programme to have been rigorously tested in more than one country and was the most effective programme at changing children's financial behaviour patterns around saving for their future. The impact on children's savings behaviour for Aflatoun participants was roughly three times as high as the other programmes combined⁷. The newest, third, edition of the curriculum has shown even greater effectiveness in a randomised controlled trial recently completed in Rwanda² (Fig. 1).

The programme has also shown a positive impact on children's financial attitudes. Positive changes in children's financial attitudes have been found in RCTs in Ghana⁵, Uganda⁸, Rwanda², and Tajikistan³. These four studies alone included more than ten thousand children. Non-experimental evidence confirms the power of the combination of social and financial education to change children and young people's financial knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour. Eight non-experimental studies evaluated the impact of Aflatoun's primary school programme on financial behaviour and four looked into attitudinal change. 68% of children engaged in savings by the end of the programme. This was driven in part by the positive attitudes towards savings which were also identified at the end of the programme, with 91% of children having positive savings attitudes after participating in social and financial education.

FIGURE 1: INCREASED FINANCIAL BEHAVIOUR AS A RESULT OF THE 2ND AND 3RD VERSION OF AFLATOUN

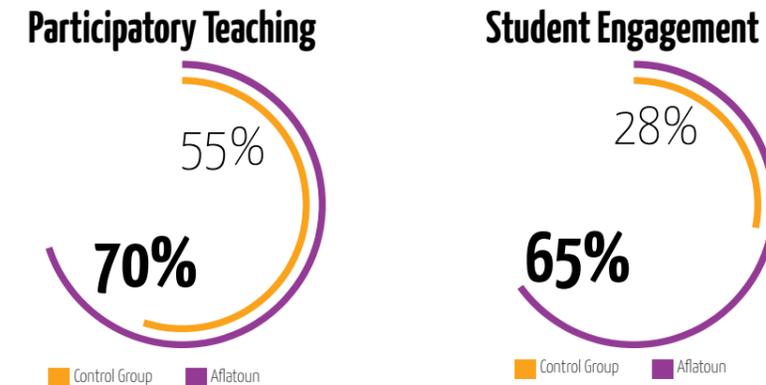


Source: Financial Education for Children: What Curriculum? Which Methods? A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial of Social and Financial Education in Rwanda.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

In order for any curriculum or educational programme to be successful, it must be delivered effectively. Therefore, teacher training is a key part of Aflatoun International's work to ensure that teachers are equipped with practical training in participatory child-centred teaching techniques and how to apply them to social and financial education. A rigorous evaluation of Aflatoun International's teacher training observed teachers' use of participatory pedagogy in their classes one year after being trained (Fig. 2)². This found that teachers trained by Aflatoun International were more likely to use participatory teaching in class, and to feel confident using the active learning methods.

FIGURE 2: BENEFITS OF CHILD-CENTRED LEARNING IN RWANDA



Source: Financial Education for Children: What Curriculum? Which Methods? A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial of Social and Financial Education in Rwanda.

CONCLUSION & FUTURE RESEARCH

Aflatoun International is one of the global leaders in researching the effectiveness of financial education for children and young people. Key strengths of the programmes are its focus on behavioural change and learning through action at an early age when children's habits are forming. This early age focus is in line with other research on early interventions including the recent work of Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman⁹. Aflatoun International's Social and Financial Education curriculum is built on the principle that every person's personal, social, and economic lives are interconnected and should be taught in a holistic manner to enable children to pursue their goals. This combination has proven to be essential to the success of its programmes.

In coming years Aflatoun International will continue to work with external researchers and partners to produce evidence on key policies and programmatic issues. Priority areas include:

- Quality of education - to better systematically understand and document the benefits of Aflatoun programmes on other school subjects, school motivation, retention, and the quality of education and teacher training;
- Impact measurement - to continue to generate more evidence on the importance of Social & Financial Education in achieving the different SDGs. Specific emphasis will be on measuring long term effects of the programmes;
- Continue to test, validate and improve new theme-based curricula before rolling out at scale;
- Invest in cost-benefit analyses;
- Capacity building of partners in monitoring and evaluation; and
- Document lessons learned and share 'good practices'.

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TURNING DEPENDENCE INTO INDEPENDENCE

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