**Knowledge hub**
**-**
**Collection of best practices**

## Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Colors of Kindness

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Greece, Uganda, Bangladesh

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

☑ Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools

☑ Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development

☐ Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

☑ Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation

☐ Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

    Amal Alliance

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

    social emotional learning, education in emergencies, psychosocial support, mental health, refugees, out-of-school learners, wellbeing, teacher/caregiver wellbeing

6. What makes it a best practice? *

    Existing humanitarian efforts have traditionally targeted needs such as health and education in protracted crises, creating a gap in the provision of MHPSS. Colors provides an easily implementable, culturally-sensitive solution that supplements existing efforts enhancing the wellbeing of children, simultaneously providing social-emotional support to teachers while aiding in classroom management. What makes Colors truly unique is how easily anyone can facilitate its trauma-informed, play-based approach that typically requires specialized training or advanced degrees. Through an offline Learning Management System and with audio podcast guidance, Colors has shown versatility for implementation and ability to scale for children aged 6-12. Amal has demonstrated the ability to adapt materials to best fit diverse service populations, as well as form meaningful working relationships to provide breakthrough momentum in social emotional learning accessibility to the most vulnerable children. By implementing with local partners and working with providers in both formal and nonformal settings, Amal complements existing efforts from other key players in the field.

# Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)
   This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:
   i) Which population was affected?
   ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
   iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

   Colors of Kindness (Colors) is a multi-award-winning EdTech solution that: 1) improves children's social and emotional competencies within EiEPC, 2) increases well-being of children, caregivers, and teachers, and 3) increases access to quality inclusive education.

   Born out of UNHCR's Humanitarian Education Accelerator (HEA) COVID-19 Challenge, Colors's innovative podcast instruction embedded within a digital workbook, addressed the urgent need for SEL programming helping the development of marginalized groups. In addition, the growing knowledge gap and technological divide the pandemic has posed, increased the appetite for innovative Ed-Tech solutions which was demonstrated through our collaboration with Education Above All, where an offline Colors workbook was downloaded in 175 countries.

   By addressing toxic stress to improve well-being and academic performance, both displaced and host community children reap benefits. Not only does the model mitigate learning loss and integrate displaced children with host communities by aligning with national school systems, it also provides access in non-formal settings for those excluded from traditional structures, fostering cultural understanding and augmenting social cohesion. Current education systems lack SEL, as time allotted for such programming is seen as reducing time for academics. Thus, showing increased academic outputs through the addition of trauma-informed, play-based SEL can demonstrate why system-wide change is needed.

   With the COVID-19 waves ebbing once more, education systems around the world are reopening rapidly. Children that are returning to school are struggling with adverse mental health effects brought on by the pandemic, which affects their ability to learn. Thus, schools are seeking innovative ways to address MHPSS.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

i) What are the main activities carried out?

ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?

iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?

iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?
 *

Colors is an innovative approach in EiEPC contexts that prepares children to return to classroom learning while helping to cope with emergency situations and trauma. Through a holistic SEL podcast within a digital workbook featuring culturally-sensitive and gender-neutral blobs as visual aids, Colors enhances existing educational and humanitarian efforts with an MHPSS component. What makes it unique is 1) the podcast allows easy facilitation for lessons without an advanced degree, 2) both children and caregiver well-being is supported, and 3) the podcast is delivered on an offline Learning Management System, giving access to areas with little to no connectivity.

Centered on competencies of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship building, social awareness, and creativity, each episode hones various sub-skills. All episodes include an opening, main activity, breathwork exercise, movement, emotional check-in, gratitude exercise, and take-home challenge so children can continue practicing these important skills at home.

The innovation was first piloted in October 2020 in Bangladesh at the Rohingya camp and with children of the host community across 4 locations. It was launched in Nakivale and Palabek Uganda in March 2022. From Jan-June 2022, an evidence based pilot of the program was conducted in Greece with the Greek MoE in formal schools, as well as 6 local NGOs in urban and camp settings.

Key implementing actors include local NGOs and Ministries of Education. Coalitions, networks, and other educational stakeholders complement implementation with advocacy. As the program was created as an open education resource, costs for implementation are minimal, but implementation requires localization of content, program management, and a teacher training component.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)
   To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:
   i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
   ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
   iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

   During its pilot, Colors reached primary school children ages 6-12 in Bangladesh in both national schools and the Rohingya camp. The 10-week test was completed in December 2020. Pre/post surveys for teachers and students, a weekly Emotions Thermometer check-in, and a final parent evaluation showed that the program successfully influenced learning outcomes [1], with children participating in the program showing a 16.5% increase in overall SEL competency. Furthermore, 99% of caregivers reported that their child's mood improved after completing the program. All teachers indicated that the program was beneficial for both the children and themselves. Given the short nature of the pilot, the change was remarkable and indicative of the potential success of a longer program.

   Hence, the 16-week version (the second iteration) was created, and is currently undergoing an evidence based pilot being implemented in Greece in partnership with the Greek MoE and 6 local NGOs. While it is too early to assess the overall impact, teachers started observing positive behavioral changes from Week 4, and the empirical data being analyzed by the EASEL Lab of Harvard Graduate School of Education will most likely show strong results. In Uganda, the 10 week pilot in Nakivale has just concluded, showing strong shifts in wellbeing and confidence in the children.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)
    To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:
    i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
    ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
    iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

    We envision a future that embodies social emotional learning (SEL) as an integral component of traditional academic systems. We believe that children need to learn these foundational skills in order to reach their full potential, which is especially true for children from marginalized communities that have suffered ongoing trauma and toxic stress. Our program ultimately aims to address that toxic stress, increase resilience, and foster wellbeing in these children so that they may excel in academics and life. Promising results were seen through incorporating mindfulness, dance, art, and a structured SEL format that was easy to adopt by teachers. The podcast modality provided additional support and guidance to facilitators, making SEL digestible. While visuals were included with the audio components, more visuals are needed. This is especially true for contexts with multiple languages, which make language of instruction a challenge. Had more visuals been available, less emphasis on the audio would have further assisted teachers.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a "best practice". What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented "best practice" or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

Quality holistic programming that focuses on social emotional learning and psychosocial support for EiEPC is limited. Plus, our novel approach to bring trauma informed practices as an open education resource under a CC-BY-NC-ND-International 4.0 License puts accessibility and equity at its core. While the content is open to all, the program is designed to safeguard the children, and does not allow for derivatives to be made. Localization and training are needed prior to implementation in new contexts, but can serve as inspiration for successful SEL/PSS implementation models.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the "best practice" for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

https://cdn.hundred.org/uploads/report/file/138/HundrED_Spotlight_SEL.pdf
https://medium.com/hea-learning-series/designing-with-purpose-6a4d3da1888d
https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/amal-alliance-fulfills-its-pledges-and-remains-committed-psychosocial-well-being-children
https://cdn.hundred.org/uploads/report/file/137/HundrED_Spotlight_HolisticEducation.pdf
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00094056.2022.2053437