



**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.) \*

Teach the Teacher

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented \*

Cambodia

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) \*

The implementation lead was SeeBeyondBorders working with counterparts from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), District Offices of Education and District Training and Monitoring Teams.

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

Teachers, Mentors, Professional Development, Quality Education, Teacher Training, INSET

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

The program won the 2017 UNESCO Hamdan Prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers. The program has made a significant contribution to enhancing quality teaching and learning in the targeted schools in Cambodia: By demonstrating innovation aimed at promoting effectiveness of teachers By producing teaching materials or other special aids designed for the development of innovative teaching and learning By mobilizing initiatives and/or means likely to contribute to enhancing teacher effectiveness

## 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? \*

i) The Teach the Teacher focus area is targeted to include teachers from selected rural Cambodian schools in adjoining clusters within a particular district. Typically SeeBeyondBorders will work with approximately 100 Cambodian teachers in a district. The Teach the Teacher program works with 320 rural based Cambodian teachers who teach approximately 10,000 children in grades 1 – 3, drawn from 62 schools (from four districts, two being in Battambang and two in Siem Reap provinces).

ii) With student achievement and drop-out rates amongst the poorest in Asia, the program tackles the challenge of education reform - improving student learning - where a high-quality teaching workforce is the single most important factor, and aims at the foundational level of rural primary schools where the most inexperienced teachers are generally placed.

Schools were selected to maximise the opportunity to create teacher communities of practice that will be self-sustaining and collaborative, so that the program is sustainable.

The specific needs addressed are:

Whilst there have been recent increases in the level of achievement required of trainee teachers, they continue to leave teacher training institutions poorly equipped to teach effectively  
 Government provides little or no ongoing in-school training or support to teachers  
 High absenteeism and dropout rates particularly rural areas  
 Low student achievement

iii) The program, based on the Scaffolding Capability and Learning Experiences (SCALE) approach. Implemented in close collaboration with the District Offices of Education and school principals, the program provides a scaffolded approach that is unique in Cambodia, coordinating teachers' professional development and embedding them into the district plans.

## 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? \*

i) The Program comprises two three-year modules.

Firstly "Core training" explores Khmer curriculum and texts, introducing relevant content and pedagogical knowledge, through workshops, culminating with in-class demonstrations of prepared lessons, critiqued by peers.

This approach aligns with the Cambodian Child Friendly Schools model and is supported by innovative teaching resources and manuals acting as 'Scope and Sequence' documents providing a conceptual teaching framework, with learning outcomes from Cambodian curriculum documents and government textbooks.

Concepts and activities are sequenced in workshops and manuals according to the curriculum's learning trajectory, termed "building conceptual understanding." Workshops also address lesson planning, questioning, classroom and resource management, and student assessment.

"Transition" is the second module. Participants learn to take responsibility for continuing and sustainable in-service professional development, elevating teachers to "the collegial professional stage" as per Hargreaves' 'Four Ages of Professionalism and Professional Learning'. Capable mentors are developed as 'senior mentors', who support and develop other mentors, and independently train and support new teachers

School-based implementation of workshop learnings and sustainability depends on the "Mentor" program running in parallel with the Core and Transition programs. Approximately one third of Program participants are trained to work alongside individual colleagues at least twice monthly, providing in-class support and guidance, promoting good pedagogical practice. These mentors attend both Core and Mentor Development workshops plus monthly meetings to prepare professional development sessions for monthly technical meetings with all staff in grades 1-6 in their schools. Program staff provide mentor support visits monthly.

ii) The program activities commenced in 2010 and spread to five districts, two districts in Battambang province (Ek Phnom and Bavel) province and threedistricts in Siem Reap province (Angkor Thom, Banteay Srei and Prasat Bakong). Over the subsequent years the Program comprised two three-year modules and was completed in the initial districts in 2021.

iii)The successful implementation of the program required the support and collaboration from target school principals and the development of District Offices of Education and District Training and Monitoring Team members to co-facilitate professional learning.

iv) The resources required for implementation was approximately US\$ 360,000 to support the program per district over a three year period. This varied according to beneficiary numbers, district location and external factors.

## 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? \*

i) The program has demonstrated its transformative effect through its impact on improved quality of teachers professional practice and the causative effect of this improved teacher quality on the learning outcomes for their students. As part of the program we developed a scale to measure competency across six key teaching skills. These skills include breaking down concepts, creating lesson plans, using concrete materials, managing their students' activities, and working with their mentor. Each skill level consists of a number of required capabilities that together denote a particular level. The competency of teachers participating in our programs is assessed every six months through structured classroom observations.

ii) Highlighted Outputs and Outcomes of the program are summarised as follows:

Teacher Quality

Outputs

All Teachers attended 2 x 4 day workshops

All Mentors attend 2 x 4 day workshops + 2 x 3 day Mentor workshops

Outcomes

District Office of Education officials are actively involved in supporting the Program in all districts and in one district the Deputy Director and the Director of Primary Education regularly attend individual workshops

Absenteeism/Retention & Student Achievement

Outputs

10,300 Grade 1-3 students directly impacted by training of their teachers

10,467 other students indirectly impacted by professional development sessions run in schools

Outcomes:

Student attendance levels have reached 91% in some schools, although there remain wide discrepancies

30 low achieving students attended pilot intensive Maths camp and 80% subsequently passed their annual Maths tests.

iii) The impact in teacher quality and learning outcomes is summarised below:

Skill scale

Teachers

Angkor Thom: 98% of all teachers who end the core program achieved level 2 (starting from 0).

At the end of Transition, 48% of teachers achieved Level 3 and above.

Bavel: At the end of the core program 100% of teachers achieved level 2. At the end of Transition, 46% of teachers achieved level 3 and above.

Mentors

Angkor Thom: 100% of mentors achieved level 2 and above at the end of the core program. In Transition, 51% of mentors achieved level 3 and above.

Bavel: 97% of mentors achieved level 2 and above at the end of the core program. 52% of mentors achieved level 3 and above at the end of Transition phase.

Students pass rates in end of year maths testing:

Grade 1: 68% - 78% passed compared to a baseline of 44% - 55%

Grade 2: 56% - 69% passed compared to a baseline of 9% - 30%

Grade 3: 40% - 63% passed compared to a baseline of 29%

A more detailed breakdown of the project impact is described in the six monthly and closing reports for each district which are available below.

Project closing core program

BTS\_BBK\_Project closing (core)

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BTS\\_BBK-Project-Evaluation-Final-update\\_2.03.21.docx.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BTS_BBK-Project-Evaluation-Final-update_2.03.21.docx.pdf)

AKT\_Project closing (core)

<https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AKT-Project-Closing-Reports-2017-Final.docx.pdf>

BVL\_Project closing (Core)

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BVL\\_Closing-Project-reports-2013-2017.docx.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BVL_Closing-Project-reports-2013-2017.docx.pdf)

Project closing\_Transition Phase

AKT-Project closing report link

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AKT\\_Project-Evaluation-Report-2017-2020-final-update-2.03.2021.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AKT_Project-Evaluation-Report-2017-2020-final-update-2.03.2021.pdf)

BVL\_Project closing report link

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Project-closing-BVL-2017-2020\\_Final-update\\_2.03.21.docx.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Project-closing-BVL-2017-2020_Final-update_2.03.21.docx.pdf)

## 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? \*

i) Our programs have been developed out of recognition that the challenges to Cambodia's education system are multi-dimensional, and solutions will require a holistic approach. They support Millennium Development Goal number 2: 'Achieve universal nine-year basic education for all', and have been designed around UNICEF's 'Child Friendly Schools' (CFS) model as adopted and modified by the Cambodian Government's Ministry of Education Youth and Sport. We have learned that social stresses, religious superstitions and paternalistic aid initiatives, have entrenched a helplessness that requires prolonged support to reverse. Sustainable developments are only achieved when individuals embrace the notion that their own efforts are integral to achieving lasting improvements to theirs and their community's lives. We find this realisation only comes through the example and support of those perceived to be the equals of program participants. Communities of practice are therefore essential starting points to sustainable learning and changed behaviours.

ii) This program model has undergone significant evolution from initial Western ideas and approaches to a Cambodian context as understanding and experiences of Program staff developed through initial support from visiting foreign teachers to close interactions with Cambodian teachers whose feedback helped identify successful strategies. Program staff now independently facilitate all workshops.

We found that developing a depth of understanding has been more valuable than breadth of activity with a key lesson learned being to empower capable locals to build trust with wider stakeholders at deep levels, hence the Mentoring approach and use of local Program staff.

iii) Particular local difficulties remain with evaluating progress due to questionable data integrity and unreliable anecdotal feedback arising from cultural tendencies to recount what "benefactors" are believed to want, as opposed to factual information or real impressions. This underlines the importance of continuing training and of our own data collection, reiterating the importance of accountability.

## 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)? \*

We now have an approach, organisational capability and teaching resources that provide a springboard to replicating our program into other places. While the cycle of program evaluation and development continues, greater leverage will be achieved in future iterations of program rollout. We actively seek to publicise our methodology to other organisations willing to focus on the integrity and detail required to achieve sustainable change.

The program demonstrates the successful implementation of a teacher professional development program using the Scaffolding Capability and Learning Experiences (SCALE) approach. Key to the successful implementation was the close collaboration with the District Offices of Education and school principals, the program provides a scaffolded approach that is unique in Cambodia, coordinating teachers' professional development and embedding them into the district plans. The program also established teacher quality skills frameworks that were aligned with MoEY's own skills frameworks which enables opportunities for approach and related resources to be transferred to the MoEYS.

## 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. \*

Measuring our Impact

<https://www.seebeyondborders.org/measuring-our-impact/>

BTS\_BBK\_Project closing (core)

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BTS\\_BBK-Project-Evaluation-Final-update\\_2.03.21.docx.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BTS_BBK-Project-Evaluation-Final-update_2.03.21.docx.pdf)

AKT\_Project closing (core)

<https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AKT-Project-Closing-Reports-2017-Final.docx.pdf>

BVL\_Project closing (Core)

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BVL\\_Closing-Project-reports-2013-2017.docx.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BVL_Closing-Project-reports-2013-2017.docx.pdf)

Project closing\_Transition Phase

AKT-Project closing report link

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AKT\\_Project-Evaluation-Report-2017-2020-final-update-2.03.2021.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/AKT_Project-Evaluation-Report-2017-2020-final-update-2.03.2021.pdf)

BVL\_Project closing report link

[https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Project-closing-BVL-2017-2020\\_Final-update\\_2.03.21.docx.pdf](https://www.seebeyondborders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Project-closing-BVL-2017-2020_Final-update_2.03.21.docx.pdf)