



**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.) \*

The "Egyptian Knowledge Bank" (EKB)

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

Arab Republic of Egypt

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 Presidential Specialized Council for Education and Scientific Research  
Egyptian Presidency  
Egypt

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

Digital Education Content, Knowledge Equity, Public Awareness and Enlightenment, Quality Education, Improved Scientific Research, Digital Learning

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

This is a rather unique national project which brings state-of-the-art, reviewed and authenticated digital content for both education and scientific research to every citizen in Egypt. It makes world knowledge available, in digital form, free-of-charge to every citizen. It is the first platform of its kind in terms of breadth, quality and access.

## 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? \*

The Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB) is one of the largest digital learning platforms in the MENA region, offered free to all Egyptians. Launched in 2016, the EKB was designed to provide higher education researchers with high-quality free resources and international journal access (RDP, 2020). EKB has been growing and evolving since then, aiming to address a wide variety of needs and accommodate all Egyptian citizens (RDP, 2021a; RDP, 2021b; EKB, 2020a; Elzayat, 2020). EKB's current long-term goal is to develop and serve an Egyptian society that learns, thinks and innovates. It is divided into four key portals: general readers; scholars and teachers; students of all ages; and children (RDP, 2020). Each portal includes encyclopedias in English and Arabic, online journals and periodicals, online dictionaries, interactive lessons, and various books and scientific articles, covering a wide range of needs, from early childhood to graduate-level studies (EKB, 2020b EKB 2021; RDP, 2021b).

"EKB is designed in a way that all parts of society, with various specializations and interests and ages, can benefit from, to develop scientific research for researchers, human knowledge for youth, promote teaching methods for teachers and develop ways to attract students to learn ... EKB is Egypt's spring on the path of progress and global competition in the age of science and information." Official presidential spokesman Alaa Youssef (EKB, 2020a).

The EKB was launched on 9 January 2016 and is now accessed by over 20 million views on a daily basis and it allowed for over 500 million downloads of full text articles or e-books.

## 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? \*

EKB began as a presidential initiative for scientific researchers and has become a platform for the general public and K–12 students (RDP, 2021b). It developed into a private-public partnership (PPP) model, with more than 150 partners from private and international organizations, such as Britannica, National Geographic and Discovery Education, and local Egyptian partners, such as LIMS Egypt and NahdetMisr. The PPP model works horizontally, meaning that each publisher is responsible for the content and training, while the core EKB team manages the coordination and technical support in partnership with the Egyptian National Scientific and Technical Information Network (RDP, 2020; RDP, 2021b).

The EKB's four portals (general readers, scholars and teachers, students of all ages, and children) can be accessed by users registering with their national ID number or details about their school. They can then pick one of the portals to be their primary source of focus. Each portal is divided into sections by discipline; from there, users can navigate topics of interest using a search engine or drop-down lists based on grade, subject, publisher and keyword.

## 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? \*

As of June 2021, EKB had 3.5 million registered users, not including the thousands of guest users on pre-setup computers in libraries, government institutes and schools (EKB, 2021; RDP, 2020; RDP 2021a). Breaking the figures down, the majority of users, 76 per cent, are teachers and students in pre-tertiary education, while general readers account for 5 per cent, scholars 6 per cent, university students 13 per cent, and children less than 1 per cent. Users have access to 46,012 content resources (RDP, 2021b) on the four portals, which have been viewed more than 250 million times. In comparison, the Study EKB (Zaker) alone offers more than 48,942 content resources, attracting more than 462 million views and over 41 million sessions. The majority, over 80 per cent, of those views and sessions are with students, primarily from their secondary school tablets. The remaining 20 per cent are viewed by parents and teachers (EKB, 2021).

This analysis shows how the connections between EKB and MOETE have encouraged higher usage and reach than did EKB's traditional pathways. However, additional data on the impact, retention and satisfaction are needed to understand the mid- and long-term impact of EKB as a national digital learning platform.

The EKB is now a mandatory resource for over 3 million high school students and about 3 million college students in all disciplines of knowledge. The EKB is the pillar for Egyptian research community and has already contributed to the enhanced global rankings of Egyptian universities, more published Egyptian Journals, the national board exam for doctors among a multitude of national projects with various governmental branches.

## 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? \*

As with many innovations that grew from the COVID-19 pandemic, the integration and adoption of new ways of working generated lessons for future developments and initiatives.

1) Horizontal management structure and PPP utilization:

Organizing the information of over 150 specialist providers in a horizontal management structure, enabled timely, high-quality and relevant digital content, despite Egypt's central governance system.

2) Attempts to address equity gaps: Recognizing that EKB might not be universally accessible, for various reasons, it was important to invest in solutions to address the equity gap. This included distributing free tablets to all secondary schools, offering an offline app, installing EKB applications on computers in public schools and institutions, and reviving platforms, such as TV channels, to complement EKB learning resources and ensure inclusivity and access to all students.

3) Leadership continuation and integration in formal education (EDU 2.0): Dr. Tarek Shawki, the current MOETE minister, led the development and launch of EKB prior to taking up his ministerial role. This high-profile government leadership, for the last seven years, enabled the continuation and scaling-up of the programme, as well as connecting the various stakeholders, allowing EKB to become an integral part of the formal education reform (EDU 2.0).

4) Political support: Given the ambition of the project and the need for extensive resources, its position as a national/presidential project and recognition that it is a long-term investment (RDP, 2021c) has facilitated the continuation of funding and scalability.

5) Target audience design variations: The EKB content curation, design and organization, based on various target audience needs, has enabled a smoother user experience; for example, Study EKB (Zaker) does not upload textbooks or hyperlinks to static resources, but offers an interactive resource drawn from various partners on any topic.

## 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)? \*

The development of national digital learning platforms has been increasing in the last decade, with examples from Mexico, Uruguay and Brazil, among other countries. Such platforms and new ones are expected to continue to develop in response to COVID-19. Consequently, discussing EKB, an in-progress case, offers insights from a sizable middle-income country with the ambitious goal of serving all its 100 million citizens.

The case study shows a country attempting to integrate its digital learning platform within the ongoing reform of a complex education system. This has resulted in a set of limitations and lessons learned, such as: how horizontal management structure and building on experts' knowledge through PPP can advance the development of a digital learning platform by enabling timely and high-quality content; And how limited public awareness and a low desire for learning can limit the potential of such a project. Additionally, with lifelong learning and strengthening a common public education central components to the Futures of Education framework, this experience contributes to the knowledge surrounding blended learning, private-public partnerships, and mass digital learning usage targeting various academic levels in specialized and general audiences – an area on which limited research has been conducted, as the scholarly focus has primarily been on higher education rather than the general population or K–12 (Linton, 2018). As a result, EKB offers insights worth reviewing when planning a large-scale digital learning platform serving various stakeholders simultaneously.

Egypt welcomes global collaboration around this project by making it available in other countries while working out the copyrights issues and merging digital content for the benefit of more citizens around the world.

## 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. \*

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RDP (2021a, 1 March). Online Platforms, Ministry of Education Egypt [Video]. YouTube, Available here:  
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RDP (2021c, 14 May) Journey of Building the New Education System in Egypt. YouTube, Available here:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5Zz6PNU6TQ&list=PLCT2W4Q1Jk9RKCyRxWmEGRC5yfLMDzeK-&index=9&t=145s&ab\\_channel=RDP](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5Zz6PNU6TQ&list=PLCT2W4Q1Jk9RKCyRxWmEGRC5yfLMDzeK-&index=9&t=145s&ab_channel=RDP)



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