



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.) *

School in an Envelope

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Malawi

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) *

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

SDG 4.2, Mission 4.7, Education for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship Education, Youth Empowerment, Teacher Training, Quality Preschool Curriculums, Access to Education, First 1000 days.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Scalability, Low-cost, Easy-to-implement, Resource-light, Effective

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? *

In Malawi, the participation rate in early childhood, organised learning (one year before the official primary entry age) has been reported nationally at only 44.5 percent of children aged 1-5 years (MoGCDSW, 2016). Funding, training and teacher shortages are still major challenges with high pupil/ teacher ratio especially in rural areas, ranging around 1:80 against a recommended 1:60. (MoFEPD, 2020)

“School in an Envelope” is an initiative that aims to tackle the lack of trained preschool teachers and lack of nursery funding and resources in rural Malawi by providing low-cost, easy-to-use flashcard lesson packs. Participants in the scheme go through several programme phases before completion including baseline testing of students, fruit tree-planting and teacher upskilling in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The aim of this SDG project is to measure the impact at community level of this educational intervention on numeracy levels of preschoolers, providing a model that could be used in other rural, developing contexts to achieve SDG 4.2 (i.e. that all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.)

This pilot involves over 70 rural preschools in the TA Mwambo chiefdom and is scalable with baseline testing packs being produced at less than 2 euro each; school-progress visits averaging 7 euro per preschool and; trainings costing 5 euro per preschool volunteer.

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? *

1) Main activities: Youth group formation and GCED training. Traditional authority meetings and approval. Baseline assessments are conducted on youth from participating preschools and fruit trees planted at each location. Trained youth leaders then deliver numeracy training to rural preschool teachers. Teacher observations are conducted after min. 2 months of using resource-light lessons. Endline assessments are conducted to gauge student progress.

2) Start date: Jan. 2021- ongoing. Location: Rural Malawian preschools around Zomba, Malawi.

3.) Ulemu.com

4.) Total pilot project cost across 15 preschools = Less than 500 euro. Resources needed: laminated flashcards, printed lesson plans, rope, plastic wallets, transport & refreshment costs, facilitator costs. Source: private crowd-funding

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? *

1) There is currently NO formal teacher training, curriculum or salary for preschool volunteers in Malawi. "School in an Envelope" fills that gap for a low-cost in an easily implemented fashion. This project can inform policy and impact future delivery methods, improving learner and teacher experience and delivering on SDG 4.2 targets.

2) 330 fruit trees planted across 66 preschools to date with baseline and endline assessments conducted on 580 learners.

3) Findings and results to be published in Aug. 2022 (University College Dublin in collaboration with University of Malawi).

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? *

- 1) Key triggers: lack of preschool curriculum, formal training, salaries or resources for preschool teachers with upwards of 60 children in their charge.
- 2) Laminated flashcard resources (durable and cheap)
- 3) Lack of technology (even smart phones with WhatsApp) amongst rural Malawian communities led to prolonged project stages.

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)? *

"School in an Envelope" demonstrates best practice as it makes education accessible to the poorest of the poor. This can be adopted in any resource-poor setting for minimal cost if the project is taken on by government authorities responsible for achieving SDG 4.2 and those in charge of delivering high quality preschool education.

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://www.ulemu.com/schoolinanenvelope>