



## 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.) \*

STiR Education

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

India, Uganda, Indonesia

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) \*

STiR Education

State Council of Educational Research and Training, Government of Delhi, India

Department of State Educational Research and Training, Government of Karnataka, India

Samagra Shiksha, Government of Tamil Nadu, India

Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda

Government of Kota Kediri District, Indonesia

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

Intrinsic motivation, behaviour change, systems change, role-modelling, education

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

Our programme works at all levels of education systems by motivating and supporting the education workforce (officials, school leaders and teachers) to realise sustained improvement in learning.

## 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? \*

More children and adolescents today are enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education than ever before. Yet, for many of them, schooling does not lead to learning – and this was prior to the school closures and disrupted learning caused by Covid-19 across the globe. It's never been more obvious that today's children face an increasingly complex world. As well as the pandemic, this trend includes the climate crisis, increased inequality and rapid technological changes. Education systems must prepare children for these challenges to set them on the path to achieve social justice, challenge inequalities and build healthy, resilient and prosperous societies. But at present, despite huge increases in education spending, children are not achieving the desired outcomes and governments worldwide are struggling to sustainably and equitably improve learning at scale.

Teachers and officials are an essential part of solving this problem. But too often, they are disenfranchised by education systems from supporting children to achieve the desired outcomes. A lack of belief and investment in the agency of teachers and officials has led to widespread demotivation, as seen through high levels of absenteeism and low levels of job satisfaction – for example, a 2014 UNESCO report in Uganda estimated that 84% of primary teachers wanted to quit the profession in two years. And despite the development of many excellent technical interventions to address learning gaps, these motivational challenges are hampering the ability of these interventions to effect meaningful change.

STiR Education has shown that it is possible to reignite intrinsic motivation sustainably and at scale within education systems. Since 2012, we've expanded from 25 teachers in Delhi to reaching more than 200,000 teachers and 6 million children across three states in India (Delhi, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu) and the national education system in Uganda. Our newest project started in East Java, Indonesia in 2022. Our core offer is a system-wide approach to professional development, centred around intrinsic motivation and promoting a love of learning, working through role-modelling and relationships at all levels of an education system. And we're pleased to have seen highly positive results in each of our geographies for children, teachers and officials.

## 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?

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To thrive in the 21st century, children need to be able to continually seek, process, act and reflect on new information. They need to love learning. And to support them, intrinsic motivation plays a vital role in ensuring that teachers can effectively, intentionally and sustainably improve their classroom practice. Research shows that the intrinsic motivation of teachers correlates not only with a variety of positive outcomes for children, including engagement, behaviour, enjoyment and achievement, but also with teachers' own wellbeing, job satisfaction and reducing burnout.

Research also tells us that environments matter for teachers' experience of the workplace. Contexts that foster teachers' sense of professional identity facilitate teachers' intrinsic motivation to stay, teach or grow within their profession. Role-modelling from school leaders and officials is therefore key to ensuring that these conditions are in place to build positive and trusting relationships.

Our approach is based around three core activities of peer networks, action and feedback, and reflection. Every teacher and official will engage in these activities in our termly learning improvement cycles (LICs). Each LIC focuses on a different theme, for example the science of learning. First, district officials are introduced to the content for the next term. They will then lead training sessions for school leaders to build their confidence and capability to share this content with teachers. Teachers will learn new practices to enable higher quality interactions with their children.

At each level, we introduce monthly coaching and support to enable high-quality feedback. And regular alignment meetings at district and state levels provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to analyse data, share learning and develop plans together to strengthen delivery. Over time, we expect to see officials and school leaders developing their intrinsic motivation. They will spend more time in schools supporting and understanding teachers, and recognise their crucial role in driving improvements. Teachers will intentionally improve their classroom practice and fall back in love with teaching. And ultimately, children will be motivated by learning and improvement, developing the knowledge and skills they need to thrive.

Our learning has been that engaging governments is absolutely critical if our intervention is to succeed. So we initiate true learning partnerships with governments with clear time-bound milestones of progress to build strong ownership. Our first such project at scale started in Delhi in 2018 and continues to run today, with further projects starting in Karnataka and Uganda in 2019, in Tamil Nadu in 2020, and in Indonesia in 2022. These projects are funded by a coalition of different donors, with governments increasing their own contribution to costs each year. We're currently able to deliver our activities for less than \$1 USD per child per year.

## 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? \*

We have conducted a number of different research studies to understand the impact of our intervention. In 2021, we were able to complete a case study alongside the International Institute for Educational Planning of UNESCO (IIEP-UNESCO) which focused on our project in Delhi. Their report found that the “programme has had noticeable positive effects since its initial implementation. These can be seen through increased teacher collaboration, a shift to a more professional culture in schools, improvements in student outcomes, greater ownership from Delhi’s middle tier over the programme, enhanced usage and application of feedback and data, and strengthening connections to adapt to difficult situations.”

This reinforced our learning from three other studies. Early findings from our longitudinal study, conducted in India and Uganda in 2019, show that routines to support officials and teachers were in place and happening at relatively high quality after just one year. A DFID-commissioned research study from 2019 found that after two years in Delhi, our approach had become deeply embedded and positively contributed to state system reform efforts. And a mid-term evaluation report completed by Education Development Trust on behalf of the Mastercard Foundation in Uganda in 2019 found that our programme directly supports the government’s priorities for improving teaching and learning, and that officials showed commitment to the concept of teacher intrinsic motivation.

Finally and more recently, a 2022 survey of nearly 8,000 teachers in India found that more than 90% of teachers felt that their participation in network meetings helped in making their classrooms safer, making their students happier, encouraging greater participation from their students in class, improving the curiosity of their students and ultimately improving their reading and numeracy levels.

## 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? \*

In our early years, we built our own networks of teachers, run by members of our own team, and focused mostly on the shifting of social and behavioural norms at the teacher and principal levels. Over time, we started to use other CSOs as our main scaling channel, embedding our approach into their existing programmes. We learned however that for our change to be sustainable, we needed to fully integrate it into education systems and particularly into government structures. Since 2016, we've focused on this objective, embedding deeply into existing systems and building capacity at local, district and national levels. The government in Delhi provided one of the strongest triggers when they asked us in 2018 to move from supporting 70 schools to all 1,025 schools across the state – with a mere three-month transition. This nerve-racking move paved the way for our government learning partnerships, where officials run and manage the approach with our support. It was a huge success that drives how we work with partner governments today.

We've also learned a great deal during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our first instinct was to identify areas where we could support our partner governments with their wider response to the pandemic. But after the first couple of months, it became clear that we needed to find new ways to engage teachers and officials and add value for governments. Because of the structures and relationships we have in place, we were able to support governments to respond to the crisis by being flexible and adaptive in our design and delivery. Clear technology adaption plans were critical to ensure that our stakeholders were fully equipped to use technology effectively. We identified ways in which we could use digital resources (especially short videos) to demonstrate model examples. And we've now moved in many geographies to a more blended form of delivery, to maximise the support we are able to offer at every level.

## 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 believe that our intervention can be considered to be a best practice due to the sustainable change and impact we are able to achieve at scale within education systems. We firmly believe that our approach works and is capable of addressing the needs of teachers and officials across whole education systems, as a key part of ensuring quality for education for every child. We have been able to demonstrate sufficient impact to our government partners to encourage them to invest significant time and resources into our approach, and we are now aiming to expand into new geographies to understand how this can respond to different government systems and priorities.

In terms of recommendations, we have found that changing systems and behaviours is complex and takes time, so patience is required from all parties in observing incremental improvements, identifying bright spots and building on successes. It's also important to build a shared understanding about what change we expect to see when, so that all involved can ‘feel’ and celebrate their achievements, and understand how they fit into the overall journey. Our use of practical behavioural measures over time has helped us to understand how officials and teachers are focusing on building a culture of continuous improvement through coaching, feedback and reflection, and enable us to monitor our progress in a realistic and cost-effective way. We also embed our measures within government monitoring frameworks to increase their visibility, supporting sustainability and government ownership.

## 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. \*

[www.STiReduction.org](http://www.STiReduction.org)

<https://stireducation.org/our-learning/>

<https://stireducation.org/supporting-teachers-from-the-middle-tier/>

<https://stireducation.org/update-on-our-longitudinal-study/>

<https://stireducation.org/system-scaling-in-delhi/>

<https://stireducation.org/teacher-perception-survey/>