



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.) *

Schools2030

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Portugal, Brazil

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) *

Implementation lead is The Aga Khan Foundation UK. Partner organizations include: Save The Children, ECD Measure, Oxford Measure, HundrED. Donors: Aga Khan Foundation, Dubai Cares, USAID-Local Impact, Vitol Foundation.

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

Human-Centred Design (HCD); holistic learning; social-emotional skills; EdTech; Out-of-school children.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Schools2030 is a ten-year participatory learning improvement programme that is collaborating with 1000 government schools and community learning centers across 10 countries, including Afghanistan. The aim of Schools2030 is to co-develop new, scalable models about how to improve quality holistic learning outcomes for all. Using the principles of human-centered design and focusing on the key transition years of ages 5, 10 and 15, Schools2030 works directly with teachers to: 1. Assess holistic learning levels and the learning environment; 2. Design, test and iterate a micro-innovation to support improved learning outcomes; and 3. Showcase these innovations drawing on assessment data and other evidence on “what works” to improve holistic learning in the most marginalized communities. One best practice which has emerged from Afghanistan is “Reaching out-of-school children in fragile contexts: distance learning in rural Afghanistan.” We consider this a best practice because it exemplifies many of the criteria outlined in the TES guidance note. This best practice emerged through consultation with communities, parents, students, teachers, local education authorities. It was designed to support children’s academic as well as social-emotional development. It was targeted at some of the most marginalised communities in rural Afghanistan, and 70% of the beneficiaries were girls. The project is low-cost, scalable, and applicable to other crisis settings. The learning materials (video lessons and worksheets) were developed during the COVID-19 pandemic and aligned to curricular standards and priorities that were in place at that time in Afghanistan. The initiative continues to be implemented now in order to reach children who are unable to access formal schooling, which demonstrates the capacity for sustainability and effectiveness while being implemented using few resources.

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 project was implemented in three provinces of Afghanistan (Badakshan, Baghlan and Bamyán province) and targeted students from grade 1 to 12, in total over 22,000 students in 102 community spaces were reached and 70% of the beneficiaries were girls.

Our project used Human Centred Design methods and workshops involving multi-stakeholder groups to identify three “how might we” questions:

- How might we develop and distribute learning materials to Grade 1-12 students?
- How might we ensure this content also supports students' health and wellbeing?
- How might we reach students in rural and isolated communities, including those without access to reliable electricity, internet or radio?

The Schools2030 team in Afghanistan used the Schools2030 HCD Toolkit and workshop resources to bring together different stakeholders and partners to develop and design solutions to the above “how might we questions”. The solution advanced was to develop audio and visual learning materials and disseminate these for use in community settings. This solution was designed and implemented through two activity streams:

- 1) Curricular and holistic learning materials to be developed and shared on SD cards along with mini-rechargeable projectors that can be played without stable electricity, so that small-group learning could continue in community-donated spaces;
- 2) The provision of learning-at-home worksheets to be printed and delivered through community networks.

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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We implemented this practise through a two-pronged approach to provide learning opportunities to students in rural Afghanistan who have limited to no access to electricity, internet, radio, or television that were required to access video lessons being broadcasted by the MoE while schools were closed.

1. Curricular and holistic learning materials were shared on SD cards along with mini-rechargeable projectors so that small-group learning could continue in communities. Much of the content of these videos was drawn from the Ministry of Education's own materials, as the MoE had produced educational videos for broadcasting on national TV and radio and on their website. However, the majority of the population in Afghanistan lives in rural areas without access to TV, radio or internet. For this reason, we brought the videos to the community, offline, and using low-cost, low-tech equipment. Local education stakeholders and experts, including the AKF Afghanistan team, curated and further developed these MoE resources for use in rural community settings.

2. Local education stakeholders and experts, including the AKF Afghanistan team, developed learning-at-home worksheets which were printed and delivered to students through community networks. Worksheets were designed to compliment the videos and were based on the MoE curriculum which students could complete at home using the videos we provided them and their textbooks.

The project was initiated in September 2020, and is ongoing. From September 2021 – February 2022, additional funding through Vitol Foundation allowed the programme to expand to over 15,000 additional students in the target geographies, 60% of whom were female.

The project was implemented by Aga Khan Foundation with the support from local and global partners and donors including, Dubai Cares, USAID Local Impact, Vitol Foundation, Magenta, Save The Children, Oxford Measured.

The first phase of the project (Sept 2020-2021) had a budget of \$100,000 funded primarily through joint funding by USAID and AKF under Local Impact.

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? *

The distance learning activities implemented have never been done before in the areas in which we work. Although we have not conducted a formal evaluation assessment, the feedback to date from parents, teachers, and students has been overwhelmingly positive and highlight the transformative nature of the project:

In these schools and communities, teachers do not typically assign homework (worksheets) so no learning is done outside the classroom, which severely limited students learning. These worksheets were designed with teachers so they now are more familiar with how to create new assignments and worksheets during their regular classes too.

Supporting home learning was also new for parents, many of whom are not literate. The worksheets gave parents the opportunity to see what their children were learning, and informal feedback indicates that they found this engagement informative and empowering.

The videos transformed how students work with each other and study. Educational videos were completely new for most of the students, as very few have access to computers or television at school or at home. Through this project, students have the opportunity not only to learn outside the classroom, but also to work with their peers to discuss the video/curriculum/worksheet topics and through peer groups, complete and check their worksheets. This also gave opportunities to older/advanced students to help younger students / those who fell behind their peers, to catch-up their learning. Therefore these activities were beneficial for their learning, social cohesion, team-working skills, leadership skills, digital literacy skills, and ability to self-manage their work without the aid of teachers as schools were closed.

For our first activity (academic and holistic learning materials shared on SD cards along with mini projectors) a total of 15,689 girls and 1,750 boys were reached across 102 communities in some of the most rural and remote areas of Afghanistan.

For our second activity (provision of learning-at-home worksheets) a total of 19,405 girls and 3,070 boys were reached.

In addition, 164 community members were trained on using the EdTech equipment provided by the Schools2030 designed solution and how best to manage small group lessons in community-donated learning spaces. Of note, 99 health and hygiene kits were also distributed in this pilot to ensure COVID health compliance of these community learning spaces.

We will be conducting an evaluation this year (2022) along the following indicators:

- 1.) # of teachers with improved skills in supporting student's academic and social-emotional development.
- 2.) # of learners directly reached by this practice to advance their holistic quality learning outcomes.

4.) % of learners with increased learning outcomes after the implementation of this project in one academic year.

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? *

The original problem was triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic however, the problems affecting out-of-school children still exist in the current context of Afghanistan.

The co-design of this practise with community members, teachers, parents and students, which was facilitated by the Schools2030 Human Centred Design toolkit and workshop process which supports multiple stakeholders working together collaboratively. This was essential to ensure the practise was locally-owned, contextually relevant and sustainable.

In addition, the training of 164 community members on using the EdTech equipment provided by the Schools2030 designed solution continues to prove to be very important for the sustainability of the project. These community members are mostly illiterate and donated their time and energy for managing these groups without any financial incentive.

Since they are mostly illiterate, it was important that the safety guidelines we develop are simple, straightforward, and that the audio/visual equipment we provided for them to use are low-tech, meaning they are not complicated systems that require a great deal of training and support to learn how to use and troubleshoot.

An important aspect of any organization using Edtech is not only considering the local environment when decided what tech is usable (access to internet/electricity), but also the level of digital literacy of the people using the tech.

Overall, the project has been successful however one key learning we have had has been the important of psycho-social skill development alongside the focus of academic outcomes. We have learned that this is equally important for teachers' psycho-social skills, as well as for students, particularly in the current context and so we have provided videos about psycho-social skill development across the 102 communities.

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)? *

In conclusion, this is a best practice because it meets the criteria for being sustainable, equitable, collaborative, and locally owned. We would recommend other organizations work closely with local stakeholders and technical partners to develop high-quality, contextually relevant learning materials, that cover both academic and psycho-social learning. Once the materials are developed, dissemination of the materials through SD cards, or other means, is low-cost, low-tech, replicable, scalable, and sustainable.

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://schools2030.org/>

<https://schools2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Schools2030-Annual-Report-2021.pdf>

<https://schools2030.org/hcd/tools/>