



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.) *

Accelerated Pre-Primary Education (PPE) Program

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Laos PDR, Tanzania, 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) *

Plan International

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

Pre-primary education, accelerated learning, gender-responsive, ethnic, rural and disadvantaged children 4-5

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The program addresses current gaps in ECE access, especially among disadvantaged population. It can be delivered in a few weeks, at lower costs and can result in positive outcomes for young children. It can be used as an interim or medium-term measure to deliver PPE in remote, unreached areas to complement national efforts to increase provision of PPE. The rationale behind this is that disadvantaged children should not be left behind or kept waiting while governments are developing plans and securing resources to fund universal PPE programs. The program is especially relevant during and after COVID-19 school closures that have left many young children with no access to PPE due to many low- and middle-income countries not prioritizing PPE in COVID-19 response. Moreover, the economic crisis resulting from COVID-19 and the concomitant shrinking of fiscal space in many countries, are expected to impact education provision, especially pre-primary education which is the least prioritized sub-sector.

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 Lao PDR, Cambodia and Tanzania, children from ethnic groups living in remote, rural, poor areas and/or experiencing disabilities have no or little access to PPE. These children inevitably arrive at primary school unprepared, resulting in high rates of underachievement, repetition and dropout in early grades. In Lao PDR, the enrolment rate in pre-primary education is 63% nationally, and in Cambodia and Tanzania it is around 40%. However, in all three countries there are significant disparities across regions and districts. Although the Cambodian, Lao PDR and Tanzanian governments all put in place policies and programs aimed to strengthen the access and quality of ECE, some challenges remain: low access to ECE for children in rural areas, disadvantaged children and those from low-income families; lack of infrastructure

and pre-school teachers that constrain the expansion of ECE services nationwide. The program specifically targets children 4-5 in ethnic minority, rural and disadvantaged communities who do not have access to PPE but who are about to enter primary school. The program aims to support the holistic development and school readiness of children and focuses on four developmental domains: 1. Physical: promotes the development of self-care skills, encourages movement, physical activity, and healthy eating; 2. Language: promotes reading readiness and oral communications; 3. Cognitive: stimulates conceptual development, acquisition of pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills; and 4. Socio-emotional: promotes ability to recognize and communicate emotions and establish positive relationships with peers and adults.

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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The accelerated PPE program is an 8–12-week program that is delivered during the academic break before the start of a new school year. It is being implemented in Laos, Cambodia, and Tanzania. The length of the program aligns with the length of the school break which varies from country to country. Adopted from a model developed by the Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV) in Turkey, it targets boys and girls from ethnic, rural, or disadvantaged communities in remote areas who are about to enroll in grade 1 without PPE/early childhood education experience. The program is delivered by grade 1 teachers, pre-primary teachers or volunteers who are supported by school heads, teachers, and local education officials. It aims to support the holistic development and school readiness of young children and focuses on four developmental domains, namely: physical, language, cognitive and socio emotional and includes specific strategies to promote gender equality and inclusion. The program includes a parent education component that teaches gender-responsive parenting skills and supporting children's learning at home.

The program is being implemented in partnership with the Ministries of Education in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Tanzania to adopt evidence-based, quality, gender-responsive accelerated pre-primary program model to meet the needs of girls and boys in underserved communities. It includes a research program led by the American Institute for Research, alongside local research partners, to generate evidence about its viability as an alternative, interim, cost-effective model to support expansion of PPE.

The program was first implemented as a four year program in Laos PDR. It is now being supported for three years (2021-2023) through GPE KIX.

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? *

Results of the piloting in Laos showed that children were ready for primary school; enrolled in grade 1 on time; had good health and nutrition; attended primary school consistently; did not temporarily drop out or repeat early grades; and improved learning outcomes. As a result of successful piloting, Lao PDR included the accelerated PPE as an innovative strategy for supporting 3-5-year-old children in its 9th Education and Sports Sector Development Plan, 2021-2025.

The GPE KIX project is currently underway. As part of the project, implementation research is being undertaken by local research partners in Tanzania and Cambodia to inform the Ministries of Education on how to refine the program. An evaluation study will be undertaken to determine effectiveness and a costing study will determine affordability for government adoption. This research is ongoing, aligned with the program implementation timeline (2021-2023).

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? *

Key triggers for transformation/what worked well include:

- working in partnership with Ministries of Education in target countries
- constituting a technical working group to support the program, including Ministries of Education, Plan International and technical partner, ACEV
- ensuring alignment with national curriculum, standards, approaches, delivery mechanisms and the start of the school year
- ensuring the program is understood not as a replacement for government PPE programs, but as an interim or stop-gap measure to deliver pre-primary education in remote, rural areas not currently reached by government PPE programs or areas facing other access barriers to complement national efforts to increase provision of PPE.
- designing and implementing the program with scale in mind - the project's scaling approach is replication through policy adoption.
- building on existing human resources to deliver the program (Grade 1 teachers, pre-primary teachers supported by school heads and local education office staff)
- leveraging existing infrastructure - the program is conducted using existing classrooms or community structures to ensure sustainability and scalability.

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 program addresses current gaps in ECE access, especially among disadvantaged population. It can be delivered in a few weeks, at lower costs and can result in positive outcomes for young children. It can be used as an interim or medium-term measure to deliver PPE in remote, unreached areas to complement national efforts to increase provision of PPE. The rationale behind this is that disadvantaged children should not be left behind or kept waiting while governments are developing plans and securing resources to fund universal PPE programs. The program is especially relevant during and after COVID-19 school closures that have left many young children with no access to PPE due to many low- and middle-income countries not prioritizing PPE in COVID-19 response. Moreover, the economic crisis resulting from COVID-19 and the concomitant shrinking of fiscal space in many countries, are expected to impact education provision, especially pre-primary education which is the least prioritized sub-sector. Accelerated learning programs are important in areas where pre-primary services are lacking, and are being increasingly recognised as important for young children to 'catch up,' including to help promote school readiness and retention.

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.gpekix.org/project/adapting-testing-and-scaling-proven-summer-pre-primary-education-model-cambodia-lao-pdr-and>