



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.) *

Municipal Reading and Writing Tables and Learning Communities of the Project Lectoescritura, Educación y Nutrición Sostenible –LENS–

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Guatemala

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) *

Save the Children

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

Education
Teachers
Members of the educational community
Teachers training
Literacy
Safe schools

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Save the Children has implemented two initiatives that seek to improve literacy learning in safe learning environments. These actions are unique in the country. Currently, Municipal Literacy Tables (Mesas Municipales de Lecto Escritura -MML-) and Learning Communities (Comunidades de aprendizaje -CdA-) are only being implemented in the department of Quiché. These actions are led by Save the Children and involve members of the educational community in each municipality. They promote literacy learning and teacher training. These actions aim to contribute to the Ministry of Education's efforts to improve the quality of education.

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? *

Guatemala faces serious challenges in achieving quality education. According to the latest reading assessment conducted in the country, only 50% of third grade students demonstrate the expected reading skills. Guatemala is below the regional average in reading in the Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE). In addition, COVID-19 has made face-to-face teacher training impossible. In 2019, before COVID-19, the non-promotion rate in first grade was 20% and in second grade it was 13%. The Ministry of Education has implemented actions to improve literacy learning and these require the support of the education community and national and international cooperation. Save the Children -SC- has responded to these needs. SC led the creation of Municipal Literacy Roundtables (Mesas Municipales de Lectoescritura - MML) and the Ministry of Education made them official by means of a Ministerial Agreement. Within the framework of the MMLs, 108 Learning Communities were created. In this way, various activities have been carried out to promote literacy in safe learning environments and to train first and second grade primary school teachers.

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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In 2019, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) made official an initiative of Save the Children (SC), through a Ministerial Agreement (3402-2019) that gave life to the Municipal Literacy Tables (Mesas Municipales de Lecto Escritura -MML-) in the department of Quiché. Its objective is to strengthen the competencies of first and second grade teachers at the primary education level in the teaching of reading and writing. These roundtables are led by the Departmental Education Directorates and supported by SC. The MMLs promote the participation of the educational community. They are composed of MINEDUC staff, governmental entities, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, national and international cooperation, local authorities, parents' organisations and other members of the educational community. SC worked with MINEDUC to form 6 MMLs. Each of the MMLs elaborated its work plan. The plan include activities for literacy development and, in addition, actions to promote that schools can be safe spaces for students, especially in the framework of the safe return to school -SB2S- post COVID-19.

Using the MML structure, SC has promoted the implementation of Learning Communities (Comunidades de aprendizaje -CdA-). Learning Communities are groups of teachers who come together in order to learn about their practice. Because CdA are small learning groups, they comply with the distancing care that must be taken because of COVID-19. One teacher prepares to teach a class, with the help of a SC-trained tutor. The other CdA teachers visit the school and observe the class. They fill out an observation instrument where relevant aspects of Safe Schools and others are noted. Then, the teachers discuss the positive aspects of the class and suggest improvements or some other ways to address the topic or competence that was worked on and to foster safe learning environments. Finally, a SC technician presents new tools and methodologies for teaching literacy. In these CdA, Safe Schools and Literacy (common approaches to SC) are addressed. Everything related to Safe Schools is addressed in an integrated way with the teaching of literacy

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? *

To date, 6 MMLs have been created. Each one has the participation of representatives from MINEDUC, municipal education offices, civil and community organisations, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and national and international cooperation agencies. Each MML has created a work plan in which they integrated coordinated actions to support and promote literacy learning in safe environments. MINEDUC recognised the importance of the MML initiative through the elaboration of a Ministerial Agreement that formalises their actions. The MMLs have facilitated the formation and implementation of the Learning Communities. The Learning Communities were launched this year. The impact has not yet been evaluated; however, MINEDUC has followed up on the actions to encourage replication of the experience. Fifty-four learning communities have been organised with first grade teachers and 54 with second grade teachers. There is coverage of 358 schools. 412 first grade teachers and 335 second grade teachers participate in the learning activities. SC has trained 56 tutors to promote good practices in literacy learning and to build Safe Schools.

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? *

An important aspect of this intervention is the active participation of the members of the MMLs. They have contributed to the achievement of the objectives of both interventions. Educational communities are benefiting through the coordinated work of the organisations involved in education.

Despite the limitations imposed by COVID-19, the methodology used by the Learning Communities has enabled the training of teachers. This methodology promotes best practices and allows learning through experience. Teachers have been motivated and benefited from the exchange with other teachers from the same grade and from nearby schools.

Both initiatives seek to support MINEDUC's efforts to achieve improvements in literacy learning. SC has involved MINEDUC in its role of steering the education sector. This has enabled the development of all planned activities and ensures sustainability.

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)? *

Guatemala faces great challenges that require creative responses and especially responses that promote the participation of the members of the educational community. One of the main values of the work carried out in the framework of these actions is that the work of each institution is recognised and efforts are harmonised towards a shared objective. Many studies have shown that teacher training through traditional methodologies has not proven to have great results. However, classroom-based training or training by doing has been shown to have better results and make significant changes in teachers' practices. Learning Communities are promoting experiential learning of best teaching practices.

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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