



**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.) \*

Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning Programme

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

Mexico, Chile, India, Cameroon, Jordan, Australia

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) \*

UN Women

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

women, marginalized, disadvantaged, intersectional, indigenous, refugee, migrant, tutors, mentors, empowerment, livelihoods, employment, entrepreneurship, e-learning, digital learning, blended learning

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

The SCE program targets marginalized, disadvantaged women who have been unable to complete their education because of poverty, conflict, cultural norms or other factors. These women face huge barriers in resuming education or training through either conventional means or digital learning opportunities, but the SCE program is producing gender transformative solutions in a range of different contexts. The transformative nature of the program lies both in a focus on gender and life skills, and in its holistic framework based on a comprehensive theory of change. Outcomes in high quality educational content, strong links to economic opportunities, reduced harmful social norms and advocacy for SCE good practice in wider policy all work together to offer a gender-transformative approach to adult women's 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? \*

#### i) Which population was affected?

SCE targets disadvantaged, marginalized women from indigenous, refugee, displaced and low-income groups who have missed out on education. SCE is being piloted in Cameroon, Jordan, India, Mexico, Chile and Australia and aims to directly benefit 67,000 women and young women from indigenous, refugee, displaced, and low-income groups.

#### ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?

Even though significant progress has been made to improve access to education worldwide in the last few decades, millions of marginalized women remain unable to access learning opportunities and the trend of gender disparity in education persists. A key concern for UN Women is that once young girls reach adulthood, the learning and training opportunities that could increase their agency, independence and economic well-being that should be available to them decrease, particularly for adult women in crisis situations and humanitarian settings. Globally, there are 483 million illiterate women (UNESCO, 2019) and 128 million girls out of school (UNESCO, 2020). Globally, women's labor force participation rate is 47.3% (ILO, 2019) and only 1 in 3 businesses are owned by women (34%) (World Bank, 2020). Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, 69 million girls were already out of school in crisis-affected countries and COVID-19 brought 1.6 billion children out of education at the height of school closures (UNESCO, 2020). Girls in crisis-affected countries are overall far less likely to complete primary or lower-secondary school than girls in other low- and middle-income countries (INEE, 2021). Girls who are unable to complete their education have virtually no chance to do so as adults. They face a combination of key barriers and vulnerabilities that prevent access to relevant educational programmes, including geographic and cultural barriers, gender-based violence, low income, early marriage and childhood pregnancy, conflict and displacement, and poverty and migration.

#### iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved?

The SCE Programme aims to ensure that marginalized and disadvantaged women who have missed out on their education have access to and achieve high quality learning and employment outcomes. It takes a holistic approach based on a theory of change in which it is anticipated that if increased access to high quality content is provided with an emphasis on learning outcome and retention; and if links to the labour market are established to increase the value of education and learning for women; and if positive social norms support second chance education and vocational learning for women; and if supportive multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks for second chance education and vocational learning for marginalised women are promoted, then women will be empowered to determine their future because the structural barriers that women face in equally accessing quality education, learning and decent work opportunities will have been addressed through long-term systematic change. The program's original target was to reach 67,000 women and as of 31 March, this figure stood at 92,737 women across the six pilot countries.

## 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?

\*

- i) What are the main activities carried out?

SCE participants follow one or more of the following pathways out of exclusion, which are tailored not only to their needs as learners but their future as earners:

- vocational education for employment
- entrepreneurship training and skills
- re-entry into formal education.

In addition, all participants follow the foundational pathway of life skills, which includes basic skills, digital literacy and a gender perspective. This pathway is critical for women who have been isolated due to language, social exclusion, patriarchal norms or having young children. For women with young children, SCE enables them to maintain their skills through training, even if they do not have the time or resources to start work or a business at this stage.

The education and training element of SCE is delivered in two ways:

- in-person training in women empowerment hubs (also called women's centres or learning centres) and other physical spaces
- digital and online learning through blended and self-study approaches, in the hubs and elsewhere.

- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?

Implementation: 1 July 2018 – 31 December 2023

Carried out in:

- Australia: 2 states (among Indigenous women) and 1 state (among migrant and refugee women)
- Cameroon: 8 sites in 7 states (among refugee, displaced and host populations)
- Chile: nationwide
- India: 12 districts in 3 states
- Jordan: 5 sites (refugee camps and host communities)
- Mexico: 3 states

- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?

Global technical partners include Learning Equality (an NGO), UNITAR, UNHCR, with past collaborations with The Open University (UK) and Cobra Collective (UK) (2020-21).

Implementing partners on the ground are mostly NGOs, CSOs and education institutions.

They include Australia: Real Futures (Greater Western Sydney), SisterWorks (Melbourne);

Cameroon: Le Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille (MINPROFF) ; Chile:

Acción Emprendedora, AIEP, Infocap, VeOmás; India: Pradan (lead partner), Aaina, Chaitanya, Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, Manjari Foundation, PRAN (Preservation and Proliferation of Rural Resources and Nature), Shristi; Jordan: Arab Women's Organization of Jordan; Mexico: ProMéxico, ProSociedad, SEPICJ.

iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

Total budget (July 2018 – Dec 2023) = \$28.9 million

Sources: BHP Foundation, HP Inc, UNHCR, UN Women.

## 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? \*

SCE has achieved results in all four of its outcome areas:

- greater access to high quality educational content
- increased employment, livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities
- fewer women disadvantaged by harmful and discriminatory social norms
- enhanced multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks that enable scaling of SCE solutions.

Impact in terms of the economic empowerment of individual women is reflected in the figures below. A less quantifiable but equally transformative impact has been achieved by working with families and communities to combat patriarchal social norms, particularly in Cameroon, India and Mexico, in contexts where women could usually expect to be excluded from educational and economic opportunities. Similarly, collaboration and partnerships with government and national institutions has led to gender-transformative changes in policy in almost all the pilot SCE countries.

ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?

- The SCE Program has already reached 92,737 women through 75 learning hubs across six countries (13 in Australia, 20 in Cameroon, 8 in Jordan, 14 in India, 15 in Mexico and online virtual hubs in Chile).
- Over 35,745 women have graduated from the program with 30,346 women starting to earn an income upon graduation through entrepreneurship/self-employment (17,319) or employment (13,157).
- The SCE Portal has reached 23,778 registered participants for online learning through 458 courses that have been specifically developed and curated for the program in order to be context relevant.
- SCE participants are divided across the following learning pathway: 5,696 in return to formal education, 20,191 in self-employment/entrepreneurship, 20,601 in employment/vocational skills and 44,810 in basic life skills including digital skills.

iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results?

A final evaluation of the pilot phase of the program is currently ongoing and due to report in August 2022. A mid-term review of the program was carried out in 2020, which concluded that 'SCE has demonstrated, with excellence, that it is possible to develop a "global programme with local solutions" through flexible focus and processes that are driven by local contexts, local needs and local opportunities'.

## 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 key trigger to transformation was the dearth of global solutions with an evidence base to address the lack of opportunities for adult women to pursue a second chance education. SCE fills this gap.

ii) What worked well:

- A holistic approach that aims to develop not just business/employment skills but socio-emotional skills, a gender perspective and a sense of agency which is foundational to sustainable personal growth.
- The focus in the early stages particularly is on confidence building, life skills and goal setting, which provides a robust foundation for subsequent training and for women to develop aspirations that align with her interests, skills and circumstances
- Stepwise progression: women progress through a series of small, feasible but challenging steps to achieve their goals, gradually strengthening their ability to make decisions for themselves in all aspects of their lives.
- The use of industry and government connections to link training and women directly to jobs
- The linking of entrepreneurship training to startup kits or small grants that enable women to start small businesses; this incentivizes women to complete the training despite the barriers they face
- The bespoke, relatable nature of the training and learning materials, which are tailored to SCE women in their subject, language, imagery and media.
- Flexibility in pathway, such that if a woman decides a training or pathway is not a good fit, she is offered alternative options. Women are supported as long as is needed as her aspirations evolve and she builds confidence and a sense of direction during the program.
- Flexible delivery of learning: in-person, online and hybrid approaches are used according to circumstance; in-person and online training schedules are adapted to get around the constraints that participants face (such as domestic and care work, difficulties with public transport); digital technologies are employed where they make it easier for women to participate.
- Support networks: personalized and empathetic support is a crucial to participants' success and includes peer support, personal and professional mentoring, and tutoring
- Referral to complementary professional services, such as GBV support, legal aid, housing, food programs, health services.
- Financial support for educational fees, especially for return to secondary education and completion of school certificates
- Engagement of men in families and communities, to encourage support for participants

iii) What did not work

We had to pivot from curating existing e-learning content to production of e-learning content to make it more relatable and applicable to localised populations. This process was escalated by covid-19, which resulted in a key success of the program, rather than a failure in delivery.

## 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 has achieved results in all of its outcome areas in a bold range of contexts during a highly challenging period. These include low and middle-income countries with groups characterized by poverty, marginalization and social exclusion; fragile and crisis countries with displaced and refugee populations; and a developed context with indigenous and migrant and refugee groups. Activities across these very different contexts through the four years of operation has highlighted good practices in achieving gender-transformative results in women’s education which are applicable not just in one context but across several. The SCE program has also shown that it is possible to leverage partnerships to design and implement effective local solutions within a shared global framework.

## 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.mylearningpathway.org/en>