



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 Learning Program (ALP)

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Kenya

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) *

Zizi Afrique Foundation

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

The ALP is focused on hastening acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills among grade 3 to 5.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The ALP demonstrates the feasibility of targeted instruction in mediating FLN gaps amongst learners furthest behind. The intervention leverages the presence of trained but no yet deployed for service by the Teacher Service Commission. The program has successfully packaged training modules used to advance the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) capacities of teachers to deliver targeted instruction. It has also been adapted for school-based, community-based and hybrid implementation models. Sixty percent of learners involved acquire reading proficiency within 30 days.

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 crisis of schooling without learning is evident in many education systems in Africa and beyond. In Kenya, the national Uwezo assessments continue to reveal the extent of this learning crisis among 6-16 year olds. In the most recent assessment by Usawa Agenda, only 4 out of 10 of those in grade 4 were proficient in a grade 3 level text.

This is the challenge the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) sought to address. By contextualizing the Teaching at the Right Level approach for the Kenyan context, ALP identified (through assessments) learners in grade 3 to 5 but without the literacy and numeracy proficiency expected at grade two.

Through a 30 to 50 day remedial program, ALP partnered with 150 schools to mitigate this phenomenon. ALP was implemented through Teacher Assistants (TAs), retooled on targeted instruction on FLN for learners lagging behind. At the county level, the program partnered with 150 schools, identified in consultation with Education leadership and an implementing partner in each of the 3 counties.

The result is over 36,000 learners recording improved literacy and numeracy outcomes, a budding Community of Practice of like-minded civil society organizations and systemic recognition.

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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Even though implementation of ALP has been done in school and community levels, the core strategy - targeted instruction through short learning bursts (also known as learning camps) - was applied in both contexts. The implementation entailed:

- i) Assessment - to establish individual child learning levels and use this information to plan for instruction. Teacher Assistants used the Uwezo tools to assess all grade three to five learners. This evidence formed the basis for session planning, engagement with parents as well as with teachers, hence embedding 'evidence-based decision making at school';
- ii) Level-wise grouping. Learners eligible for the learning camps would be grouped as per their learning levels, irrespective of age or grade. In these levels, they would learn from each other, but most importantly, receive support consistent with their learning gaps.
- iii) Goal setting & Targeted learning camp sessions. TAs took time to reflect on competency gaps for each learning level and plan for instruction at to advance selected competency gaps.
- iv) Community engagement done through community conversations and home visits. In the former, evidence on learning outcomes was packaged in simplified formats for discussion with parents and community members, whereas, in the latter, absentee learners were followed up at home for parental engagement.

Implementation has been ongoing since 2018, through local civil society organizations. Through RELI, a regional network for civil society organizations working on education in East Africa, the program has expanded to other counties.

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 contextualization process, being the first of a kind for the East Africa region was worthwhile. Over 36,000 learners have gone through the program, 25000 of these through Zizi Afrique's direct intervention, and 11,000 through like-minded civil society organizations mentored during the process.

The program has yielded:

- i) Improved learner competencies. Seventy six percent of those in the program progressed to at least one higher competency level in literacy, compared to 70 percent in numeracy. Considering the highest level of competency (story reading in literacy and all operations in numeracy), 56 percent of those in the program successfully graduated out of the program;
- ii) Increased community agency. The program has recorded tremendous support and buy-in from parents;
- iii) Sustained community action. Sustainability of donor funded projects is acritical. However, the program has seen the value of applying and engaging local leadership structures in delivering lasting impact. One month after the project closure, education officers have secured funding at county levels for continuity.
- iv) Budding Community of Practice on FLN in Kenya. Through mentorship, 8 other organizations have been trained, and have proceeded to implement similar innovations in 8 counties.

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? *

Involvement of stakeholders was one of the key triggers for transformation. There were various involvement levels, for national level education leaders, through the National Advisory Groups; local level stakeholder engagement through County Advisory Groups and cluster support for TAs and community engagement. This translated into ownership at all levels, assuring the program of regular attendance and political and education support. It is also worth mentioning the value of partnerships for learning and scale. The collaboration with like-minded organizations led to successful contextualization of the approach. Similarly, recruitment and engagement of community-based youthful TAs increased program ownership at community levels. These TAs were a critical asset during COVID-19 closures, and facilitated learning continuity through community-based implementation.

With regards to capacities for implementation, a key learning was that targeted Continuous Professional Development, in this case, focusing on FLN instructional capacities, works in enhancing the capacity of teachers to deliver targeted instruction. Through inductions, teachers improved their Pedagogical Content Knowledge, translating into interactive lessons, hence the improved reading outcomes.

The transition process from L1 to L2+ is one aspect that requires careful consideration during the design of similar approaches as it influences acquisition of reading capacities in the Language of Instruction (English). This is an area a similar program could pay attention to. In numeracy, the rate of improvement was slower than expected, and so was overall progression in the two subjects post COVID-19. In numeracy, place value was the greatest challenge in working out the operations. However, even with focussed trainings, the desired progress was not attained, warranting an interrogation on what effective instruction in place value entails.

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)? *

Low Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes impede learning and overall student achievement in school. ALP has been contextualized for implementation in Kenya, and varied modes of delivery, including school, community and low tech approaches used at various stages of implementation. The versatility of the approach for implementation in varied contexts speaks volumes on its potential in course correcting the FLN crisis. Not only does it demonstrate the effectiveness of targeted instruction and targeted CPD, it also showcases the power of engaging communities in seeking solutions for deep seated problems within their communities.

The program was an eye opener to the education leadership, regular teachers and communities on the nature and magnitude of the learning crisis. Through implementation, they also witnessed and learnt about easy, feasible approaches to mediate the situation.

In adapting the approach, three things stand out as critical; i) a training package to strengthen the PCK of implementing teams; ii) consideration of the languages spoken by the targeted children, and providing strategies to facilitate across languages (in situations where Mother Tongue is not the language of instruction); and iii) animating a community of change, from grassroots to the national levels for sustainability.

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. *

Pandemic Gains: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgAkNULLYx8>
<https://youtu.be/YRhB8PWVzNI>
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-solar-education-coronavirus-trf-idUSKBN28X0K7>
<https://www.ft.com/content/7505a784-438a-485e-954d-8aa4ce954e9f>
<https://hundred.org/en/innovations/accelerated-learning-program-reaching-the-furthest-behind#ad3bf260>