



**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.) \*

Education for Life project

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) \*

Actionaid Kenya as a lead partner; VSO Kenya and Leonard Cheshire as implementing partners; and FCDO as resource partner.

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

Out of school girls, marginalized girls, accelerated learning, integrated interventions; Transition pathways; gender and disability inclusion; coaching and mentorship; TPD; community support, and policies

## 6. What makes it a best practice? \*

The project has contributed towards improving the life chances of marginalised out of school girls aged between 10-19 years. The project recognizing the intersecting layers of marginalisation facing the target girls, its interventions have been built directly around the girl through a customised package of learning and support to overcome the multiple vulnerabilities that the girls face. This has been through creating short term safety nets and system strengthening interventions that immediately remove learning accessibility barriers by setting up catch up centres (CuCs) within the villages to the convenience of the girls; providing child minding services and milk to babies of the GEC girls within the CuC to enable mothers attend classes; bringing on board local community volunteers as teachers (Educator Facilitators (EFs) and Teacher Aids (TA's)) who are in a better position to consider context specific needs of the learners in CuCs; a few selected older women within the villages mentor the girls by building relationships with the girls, Liaising with the families to mitigate the risk of drop out, together with EFs they conduct home visits on a needs basis; Female role models advocate for girls' education and nurture aspiration; Community health volunteers and other relevant local partners are engaged to provide psycho-social support and ASRH skills training. Ensure disability Inclusion by providing assistive devices for girls with mild disabilities to enable them interact and learn with other girls in an inclusive catch-up centre; providing a customized dignity kit for young mothers and single girls to meet immediate basic needs like sanitary towel. The CuC model has proved to cater for the learning needs of young girls in the marginalised settings and can be replicated. VSO Mobile Educator Facilitators (EFs) who are drawn from within the communities offer 'catch-up classes' near villages, enabling girls with disabilities and young mothers from pastoralist communities easier and safer access to learning. An adapted context-specific curriculum was developed and contributed to successful accelerate learning outcomes. Each girl's learning pathway was driven by an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that ensured the specific learning needs of each girls was taken care of. Through Teacher Coaches, who are National Volunteers, the EFs and TAs were taken through regular teacher professional development trainings, coaching and mentorship, they were also trained on gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching methodologies and differentiated curriculum that has enabled them take care of the needs of learners with disabilities within the catch up centres and provide conducive learning environment. Appreciating the intersecting layers of disadvantages that increase OOSGs' vulnerability. The project has supported girls navigate entrenched attitudinal barriers; negative attitudes and perceptions by equipping them with skills for life such as knowing one-self, relating with others, decision making, knowledge in SRH and social inclusion. Providing peer mentorship, personalized support and mentorship informed by each girl's IEP has enabled them to overcome self-stigma, learning difficulties and low self-esteem barring them from maximizing their learning potential. This is complimented by working concurrently with sustainability interventions with communities and government structures towards behaviour change to valuing and investing in girls' education as a durable solution. Financial constraints are one of the key barriers to girls attaining an education. As parents' attitudes towards their daughters' education appear to be more influenced by their perception of its future value. To demonstrate to families and communities the benefits around education for girls, advocating against harmful practices and girl's empowerment. After going through learning and interventions in the catch up centres the girls were given opportunities to make their own

## 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? \*

Adolescent girls targeted in this project range from 10 to 19 years of age, age 10 being the beginning of adolescence, when girls start to see life's possibilities expanding or contracting. It is an age which is critical in growth and development as puberty sets in and important biological changes take place in life of a girl. In Kenyan education system, girls aged 10-14 would be in upper primary while 15-19 would be in secondary or pursuing tertiary and/or vocational skills training. In the case of 5000 girls targeted by EFL project, particularly as they enter adolescence, decisions are made for them over their bodies and lives. Their rights are violated which results to multiple layers of vulnerability that keep girls from enrolling and remaining in school hence denying them their right to education. Violations like, GBV in all the five counties; harmful practices such as FGM and marrying off under-age girls; incest, defilement and child labour. Increased household chores to supplement family income like farming, burning charcoal and working in quarries is also evident in all counties. These violations have led to girls contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDs due to limited knowledge on sexual reproductive health rights.

The project is practical in the sense that its interventions are customised to meet every individual girl where she is at – physically, academically, culturally and psychologically. A holistic and integrated web of support helping OOSG to face the various barriers that lead to their marginalisation has been provided.

Demand for girls' education in the target counties is low; for adolescents, as marriage prospects increase, perceived benefits of educating girls decrease. Education is not valued and there are short-term economic benefits when girls marry, tend to chores, participate in business or take on menial work. By working with communities and parents to raise awareness of these issues and challenge gender norms, including engaging with men and boys through male mentors(ft35) and boys' forums, improved perceptions of girls' education and girls' self-esteem and choices have been achieved.

Implementation of public education policies in Kenya is weak. Poor management and school leadership creates unsafe environments that hinder girls' learning. Leveraging the consortium partners' proven approaches and systems-strengthening expertise, the project engages stakeholders at multiple levels to address these deficiencies and bring about sustainable lasting change.

Individualised support - focus on needs around the girls was given. The project ensure that girls accessed education by bringing learning to their villages where they could easily walk to attain basic literacy and numeracy skills and life skills. They were also supported with other immediate needs such as dignity kits and minding their children while learning. Girls with disabilities are one of the most excluded groups in society and are often the hardest to reach in development interventions. GwD have additional needs, such as assistive devices and rehabilitation support that is necessary to enable them to fully participate in society. Accessibility adaptations must also be considered, as well as adapting materials to make sure they are fully inclusive.

## 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 following are the main activities that were implemented within the EFL project that has been running since 2018 and will be coming to an end in March 2023. Most of the interventions on the girl have been completed and the current focus is following up on their transition and putting in place measure to ensure sustainability of the interventions and impact. The implementation is in 5 counties in Kenya with VSO implementing in two - Isiolo; Migori.

- Accelerated learning: functional numeracy and literacy and life skills at the CuCs for 6-9 months; Adaptation of the curriculum; curriculum differentiation; Mentorship sessions; PSS; Career counselling, Modelling, disability inclusion.
- Teaching – TPD; coaching and mentorship of teachers (Efs and TAs)
- Building the agency of the girl through lifeskills trainings; mentorship; Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights sessions; PSS
- Disability and gender inclusion: training on gender and disability inclusion, safeguarding and child protection to: CuC teachers and staff; staff at the transition points e.g. VTI instructors, master artisans; formal school staff and Board of management; government officials; adapting schools and providing assistive devices to children with disabilities
- Engaging communities in challenging patriarchy, retrogressive norms and Violence against women and Girls; and advocating for girls education. Use of male mentors to champion this course proved successful.
- Policy advocacy and systems strengthening of Government of Kenya structures
- Providing skills for livelihood where girls transitioned into different pathways:

- i) Vocational Training Institutions (VTIs)
- ii) Apprenticeship
- iii) Economic Empowerment/Entrepreneurship
- iv) Formal primary school

The project collaborated with various relevant key stakeholders in implementing the project including:

- Out of School Girls – who are the main actors;
- CuC centre staff such as EFs/TAs; mentors; teacher coaches; child minders; CHVs; Business coaches; role models and career counsellors.
- Community – Parents; guardians of children with disabilities; male mentors; community gatekeepers; county steering committees
- Partners – national and local implementing partners; Civil society – CBO; FBO; strategic partners;
- Government departments and official such as: Ministry of Education/Health/Gender; EARC'S; TSC; NCPWD; APDK; Children's Dept – DCSAAC; Local Admin
- Formal and non-formal institutions – schools; Vocational and technical training institutions; master artisans.

Resources needed

The project identified existing informal forums consisting of men-only groups, women-only

groups, faith-based meetings, regular barazas (meetings) convened by local administration, girls peer groups and existing community-based organisation forums. The project rode on these forums, for sustainability, rather than create new ones. The project invested minimal resources in getting staffs to identify and participate in such existing community forums.

The project leveraged on contributions from local implementing partners and other actors in the regions including government departments mandated with education and child protection service delivery. By linking local administrators and government line ministries with existing community structures, community members are getting a voice and critical mass to demand government's accountability in allocation of resources to areas that matter.

Funding from DFID GEC-LNGB, drove most of the intervention costs. Partners contribution has also been key where the tier 1 partners each provided technical expertise in the key areas of intervention including; functional literacy and numeracy; disability and gender inclusion; child protection and safeguarding.

Strategic partnerships have also been key in setting up mechanisms necessary to ensure achievement of the project objectives e.g. in learning involve relevant ministries and actors in education to take up roles that will lead

## 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? \*

Improved learning - literacy, numeracy and vocational skills-This is evident by the girl's ability to communicate, the girls can now express themselves fluently. Most of them can read, write and speak basic Kiswahili and English. This has made it easy for them to interact with the outside world after their transition. The girls engaged in business have been able to retain and even improve their businesses this can be attributed to their skills in communicate, and record keeping. Progress tracking of their businesses demonstrates this. Adaption of a simple and relatable curriculum that applied the daily lives experiences and practises enhanced understanding by the girls.

Learning outcome, EFL: Source: Midline survey 2021

Improved capacity of local human resource – Most of the Educator facilitators and teacher aids recruited from the local communities had very basic skills and knowledge but through the regular capacity building, coaching and mentorship by coaches, they have improved tremendously becoming even more attractive to other employers some of them have progressed to high levels of their careers. Also vocational training instructors and master trainers have gained from various trainings offered through the project.

Improved vocational and employability skills of the girls and economic status-Transition has enabled girls to acquire skills on various courses e.g. welding, knitting, hairdressing, dressmaking, ICT and carpentry among others which the GEC girls are utilizing productively in generating income for their own survival. some of the girls have been retained as employees by the master artisans who trained them and in turn get paid and those in business generate income that enable them to cater for their basic needs sufficiently.

Changed perception of the community on girls' education-Reaching a great population with information on girls' education-evident where parents have started supporting girls' education, even at transition through facilitating their retention in the pathways. Findings from the midline survey corroborate this.

Inclusion of children with disabilities and changed attitudes and practices with regards to girls with disabilities and teenage mothers who dropped out of school-Families have come out seeking avenues and services to enable them support children and girls with disabilities and young mothers access education through re-enrolment. Stigma and discrimination have reduced, and this evidenced through the receptibility of the community members to train the girls and parents committing to support the girls to be retained in the pathways of their choices. Effective follow ups and guidance at their businesses and during training ensured positive outcome where girls given start up stocks and cash receive business trainings and follow ups which has enhanced their stability and sustainability in business.

## 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? \*

Community led approach in the implementation where community members were involved directly in the implementation of the project established the project buy-in, involvement of existing community structures and gatekeepers like chiefs and village elders in conducting sensitization and awareness forums on disability, inclusive education, girl's education, children's rights, led to ownership of the project agenda and subsequent action points. Use of volunteers picked from the host communities enhanced effective transmission of learning to girls. Establishment of male mentorship programme, training and engaging male mentors championed girl's education aided in spousal/parental support of the girls through the different stages of the project.

Regular capacity building for the EFs/TAs through TPD, coaching and mentorship ensured effective delivery of lessons and improved quality of learning.

The Catch-up Centre (CuC) model – that ensured accessibility to basic education, taking care of immediate need of the GEC girls e.g. Provision of meals at CUCs and having the support of child minders allowed girl mothers to attend sessions comfortably and focus on learning without being distracted. Through this the project is contributing to the development of accelerated learning policy in Kenya and has provide evidence generated from the project to inform this policy.

Working in partnership with the existing government and non-government institutions which have provided the girls with better opportunities and linkages to programs that they are benefiting from e.g., offering boarding facilities and more time to train beyond the project's provided 3 months this has enabled them to acquire sufficient skills for the selected practices. Training of teachers, artisans and trainers on inclusive education created an enabling environment for the girls with disabilities to acquire the support they need in acquiring the skills they need and improved their employability chances.

Engagement of the county steering committee enabled advocacy for extra support for the girls on the VTI pathway through resource mobilization and allocation

#### Lessons Learned

Success of a project is determined by how entrenched it can be in a community and whether it can be fully owned at community level. Use of existing community structure ensures sustainability.

Constant communication is key to successful implementation of an intervention. The success of the project is achieved by free flowing and open communication channels among the implementing teams, partners, stakeholders and intervention among partners and stakeholders.

Continual trainings and capacity building for all stakeholders involved in the implementation helps to internalize the project objectives and clearly specify roles and responsibilities to ensure the projects' success.

Continuous monitoring is fundamental in assessing the progress and has enabled the project to make key adaptations that were necessary as the project transitioned from one stage to the other and ensure achievement of the project's objectives.

Sharing experiences and good practices from partners implementing the same project helps to mitigate implementation challenges.



## 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 EFL model has proven to be effective in terms of ensuring access to education for marginalised girls who are faced with multiple vulnerabilities. There is need to be alive to the context realities where as much as the government is working and putting mechanisms in place to ensure 100% enrolment and retention to school, there are circumstances that make it difficult for a certain group of school going age children. However, this group can still receive education if their cases are considered and are supported. It is crucial to capacity build the various stake holders on various aspects that will make the environment conducive for learners, especially those who are marginalised in one way or another and are likely to be discriminated against in the society such as children with disabilities, young mothers and girls. The project has managed to showcase to the communities the linkage between girls education and economic empowerment and the impact this has on the other spheres of the community. For sustainability of gains made through the project’s interventions it is important to employ multi-pronged strategies that touch on the different needs and actors/stakeholders such as the girls, community, government, partners and the civil societies play crucial roles. Innovative approaches and flexibility have led to transformative and sustainable interventions that truly benefit the primary actors by meeting their context specific needs

## 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.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jul/27/self-esteem-was-so-low-look-at-them-now-the-scheme-getting-kenyas-girls-back-to-school>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N\\_C10LzH-aA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_C10LzH-aA)

The Daily Nation: The main newspaper in Kenya published a piece: A Second Chance At School - How Isiolo Is Bringing Smiles to Young Mother's Faces.

Other references are not in URL such as the baseline and midline reports; case stories

<https://www.ungei.org/publication/case-study-vso-kenya-education-life-project>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RC92J5Ed2SQ>