



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.) *

Hello World Hubs: Connecting hard-to-reach communities to the Internet, digital education and skills building

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Uganda and Nepal

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) *

Project Hello World
<https://www.projecthelloworld.org/>

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

Connectivity, digital learning, digital divide, community-led, sustainability, hard to reach contexts.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Community-led, comprehensive solution to bridging the digital divide which reaches the most marginalised communities and out-of-school children.

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? *

258 million children are out-of-school. Digital education is the key to closing the education deficit but, it must be twinned with work to close the digital divide so that the most marginalized children are not left behind again.

Hello World partners with hard-to-reach and disconnected communities in developing countries to build Hello Hubs: community-built, solar-powered internet Hubs fitted with durable screens and loaded with world-class educational materials. Each Hub reaches 1000 people on average. We prioritise working in areas where there is limited access to schools and other educational opportunities and little or no Internet connectivity.

Hello Hubs were inspired by education theorist and 2013 Ted Talk Winner, Sugata Mitra. Sugata's Hole in a Wall experiment demonstrated the impact of self-directed learning using the internet. Our hubs support children in becoming autodidactic as well as supporting formal education.

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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Hello World currently delivers access to 43,000 people in some of the world's most marginalized communities. We teach communities to build their own solar-powered, outdoor Internet kiosks — so that underprivileged children and adults can educate themselves, communicate with others, and have a voice in the global community. From refugee settlements in Uganda, to isolated mountain sides of Nepal, in places where there are no schools, Hello Hubs work as a launch pad for communities. With access to the internet and the hardware on which to use it, we have watched as individuals have taught themselves languages, created small online businesses, learned how to read and write, discovered how to code, undertaken whole online degrees, and so much more.

The majority of digital learning programmes are not designed to reach the most marginalized or disconnected communities. Hello World is comprehensive and unique; it addresses each of the common barriers in accessing digital learning. Hello World Hubs offer the power, hardware and unlimited free access to the internet as well as world-class educational software. Too-few organizations deliver only one of these essential elements in their effort to support out-of-school children.

The Hello Hub model is also best practice because it is affordable, sustainable and scalable.

We're also challenging traditional approaches to development work, because we don't assemble the hubs ourselves. Our expert teams in Uganda and Nepal train the community to install, maintain, repair and understand their hub. They leave behind valuable skill sets like solar engineering and wiring so that people can take responsibility for, and ownership of their hub and fix it themselves should any part of it break. We have led the way in best practice for community-driven development.

We have created a model to be replicated and taken to scale globally and have developed a 'How to Guide' to enable any organisation or community to build their own Hub. This is available on our website and details engineering and community instructions, as well as lessons learned over a 10 year period..

In order to ensure continued access, we have built mutually beneficial relationships with the private sector who fund our work. As part of these partnerships, we encourage employees to learn about our work through conversation and mentoring opportunities with those who use the Hub. Through this non-traditional donor relationship, we are able to ensure continued funding as well as opportunities for both parties.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

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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? *

Our impact measurement is world class. We invest rigorously in understanding our impact and educational outcomes in each community where we work and have built a significant evidence base demonstrating the Hello Hub model's effectiveness.

We conduct detailed Impact Measurement in partnership with 60 Decibels, who survey Hub Communities in Nepal and Uganda. Surveys gather quantitative data whilst also encouraging participants to reflect on their own circumstances and provide nuanced qualitative feedback.

We have seen hugely satisfying results. 89% of responders indicate an improvement in their quality of life, while 50% report using the Hub to learn a new skill. The survey also revealed that just 8% of Hub users in Nepal had prior access to a similar alternative, indicating that a Hello Hub will seriously alter the situation in a community.

We also collect narrative reports through our CSOs. In Uganda, we see reporting of children using the Hub to learn, and of individuals using the Hub to quickly improve their livelihoods. Beneficiaries in refugee camps have taught themselves tailoring, hairdressing, cooking and a number of other salable skills that have led to an increase in financial wellbeing. Others reported using the savings made from data costs to start small businesses and farms.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

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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: A Hub Build is not successful unless it is built by the whole community. This means we have stakeholders from across the immediate Hub location and region as well as national and international stakeholders based in Nepal and Uganda. We work intensively with our community partners and local grassroots NGOs. We also work alongside the community to integrate impact assessment frameworks and ensure quantitative and qualitative data is collected to inform outcomes and ongoing project development.

Value for money: Hub kit was redesigned in 2018 after initial pilots in Africa which found the Hubs too expensive and not sufficiently durable to scale efficiently. Hubs have reduced in cost by 75% at £6k per unit (capex). We moved from 2 screens to 8 tablets - thus serving more community members simultaneously. Our supply chain has been moved in the last 12 months to become more 'local' with imports coming no further than from China. This not only cuts our shipping and import charges but also reduces the carbon footprint of the work.

Software: We prioritize software which is relevant by language and context to the communities we work with over the newest and most well-known software. We can offer a wide range of relevant educational resources at zero cost to our community members through platforms such as Kolibri. A Hello Hub provides what many software developers are looking for to circulate their programmes: the hardware, power, space, community management and connectivity to expand their reach to the most marginalised communities.

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)? *

It is critical for solutions to the digital divide to be comprehensive. Hello Hubs do not just provide educational software, but the hardware to use it and the solar power to power it. They provide shelter and a safe well-lit space for learning and training opportunities for digital literacy. The 8 rugged, public screens offer online and offline applications so that learning is never interrupted. The Hub building process involves the whole community encouraging true diversity and inclusion at every Hub. We have purposeful relationships with our internet service providers who provide free internet and carefully manage internet security to ensure safety online for our users. It is not sufficient to provide any of these in isolation.

In order to reach the 258 million children who are out of school and the 40% of the global population who do not have full access to the internet, solutions must be comprehensive. Digital education, closing the digital divide and power, all three are essential if we are to reach out-of-school children and truly transform education. Hello Hubs can reach left behind communities to close the digital divide and provide world-class education and skills building.

12. Further reading

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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. *

www.projecthelloworld.org

<https://www.projecthelloworld.org/build-your-own-hello-hub/>

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/self-organized-learning-sugata-mitra>