**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.) *

Technology-Based Rural Secondary Schools (TBRSS)

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Argentina

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) *

6 subnational governments: Chaco, Jujuy, Salta, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán and Misiones
Implementing partners (since 2021): UNIPE National Pedagogical University and National Institute
of Teacher Training

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

Access to secondary education - Innovative secondary modality -Digital skills development - Digital
gap reduction - Transferable skills development - rural out-of-school adolescent

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The innovative secondary school modality brings a concrete solution to create and educational
offer assuring every day in-person school combined with digital education for adolescents living in
isolated rural contexts.

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? *

   Despite secondary school is compulsory by law in Argentina since 2006, more than 65,000 adolescents who live in remote rural communities are out of school, many from indigenous populations. One of the main reasons is that are not secondary schools in their communities. Since 2012, UNICEF promoted Technology-based Rural Secondary Schools, as an innovative educational model that meets the characteristics and needs of rural contexts and the adolescents who live there. ACO delivered technical assistance to priority provinces with most vulnerable populations and extend number of adolescents out of school in remote contexts to develop an official educational offer. One of the great bottlenecks to deliver secondary education is the high level of teacher rotation. This modality that combines in-person daily schooling on a multi-grade organization lead by one/two professors with online and offline digital education, contributes to sustain the offer and reduce existing digital gap between these young people and those who live in urban contexts, allowing them to develop digital and transferable skills, both key assets for the educational and social inclusion in the 21st century. The implementation of this innovative secondary education model ensured the right to education for adolescents who live in isolated rural areas and who currently do not have a traditional secondary school in their communities. In addition contributes to reduce the existing digital gap between students in rural and urban contexts, by learning proposals through ICT.
   Currently the TBRSS has been developed in six of the most vulnerable provinces, reaching 120 isolated communities, it reaches more than 2,000 students. Since its implementation, 875 adolescents finished their secondary education through this model. More than 450 teachers and principals integrate the institutional teams of this schools.

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? *

The TBRSS educational modality has a special school organization and is compose by a headquarter school situated in a city, where a complete team of secondary school teachers attend every day, and rural schools where students go daily to multigrade class in their own communities in isolated contexts. Students are guided daily at the community by a trained professor (and an indigenous teaching assistant where required). Teaching and learning strategies are supported by an online educational platform and other offline technologies. Students have a notebook and internet to connect with their teachers based at the urban hub. Teachers visit the communities to meet the students and their families at least twice a year. Rural classrooms are provided with ICT and traditional pedagogical resources. The certificate for graduates is the same as any secondary school in the country. UNICEF expand this initiative in different provinces from 2012 up today in most vulnerable states: Chaco (2012), Salta and Jujuy (2013), Misiones (2014), and Tucumán and Santiago del Estero (2018). UNICEF was a key actor for the expansion of this innovative secondary education model.

UNICEF contributes with the provincial MoEs, in the implementation through the following action points:

I. Technical assistance in the implementation, follow-up and monitoring: UNICEF cooperate with the Ministries of Education through technical assistance to technical teams and schools to plan, implement and monitor this initiative. Technical assistance in the field through technical local assistants on pedagogical, technological and administrative issues and support for field trips to assure professors visits and monitor rural classrooms.

II. Strengthening of technological, educational and connectivity equipment: ACO support the start up of the modality with the provision of ICT equipment, connectivity and pedagogical resources necessary for the operation of schools. In turn, UNICEF worked for the modality to be reached by national ICT connectivity plans for the provision of equipment and connectivity.

III. Teachers and school management training: UNICEF has contributed since 2016 to strength the teaching and learning capacities of school teams. In 2021, UNICEF stablished an agreement with the National Pedagogical University to be an implementing partner to develop a network of TBRSS schools to deliver teacher training and also develop an official training diploma for the TRBSS in alliance with the National Institute of Teacher Training which is starting the 2nd student's cohort.

IV. Public advocacy and development of technical documentation. UNICEF's advocates to the expansion and strengthening of TBRSS through different strategies: development and dissemination of technical documents on: impact evaluation study (2015), modality cost analysis (2017), guides to develop new model regulations (2018), Inquiry based learning projects (2019), SRTIC learning lessons (2020). In addition, national public dialogues and case studies published by IDB mapping of good practices, among others have been developed. Lately, Generation Unlimited foster and expand this discussion and let us advocate for the right for education focusing on those in most vulnerable settings aimed at provincial and national educational authorities and the school officers.

Along the implementation educational authorities' commitment were key to the implementation as well as families and local officers, as well, many private sector donors have contributed to sustain and allow ACO to foster scale up process in the provinces.

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? *

TBRSS had an impact on every province where it is implemented: 1) new regulations were implemented and a new official secondary service was created as concrete solution to guarantee access and completion to secondary school for adolescents in isolated communities, 2) during the pandemic educational officers used lessons learnt from TBRSS to inform the rest of the system with rapid quality and strategic orientations to implement hybrid modalities during school closure. TBRSS allowed to develop a special training to impact on regular institutional and pedagogical planning. This in turn had an impact on the creation of the first official training offer for Rural Secondary Education.

TBRSS had an external Evaluation of the Program was carried out in 2015 (UNICEF, 2016) to asses first years of implementation. It took place in Jujuy, Chaco and Salta where it assessed the degree of progress in meeting the objectives set by the program The results showed the modality had the flexibility to respond to different cultural contexts and showed there communities has in high value the modality and improvement on adolescent not having to emigrate for educational reasons. It identified existing bottlenecks and facilitating factors to enhance government implementation of the program according to different cultural contexts, it brought insights for the provinces to strengthened and expand the implementation . Main results assessed by ACO M&E showed:

1) Increase of secondary school access and terminality: The creation of these schools mediated by technologies in communities without secondary education allowed access and complete school trajectories. From 2012 to 2022 educational enrollment has not stopped growing. Currently, there are 120 rural schools in isolated rural communities, reaching more than 2,000 students and already other 875 students have graduated completing their secondary studies thanks to this modality. The opening of new TBRSS has become a demand in these provinces and others with high number of adolescents out of school living in these context. About 60% of the graduates are over 19 years old; 50% of the graduates in 2018 completed their school under this model. And other 50% entered TBRSS in the last two years of their schooling and the modality allowed them to finish their compulsory education.

2) Reduction of the digital gap and transferable skills development: UNICEF has cooperated to provide ICT equipment and connectivity to start up the program at the provinces. During 2021, more than 150 students accessed training in digital and transferable skills with the support of UNICEF in partnership with the private sector (Globant). to improve adolescent´s employability. As main results, 7 out of 10 students has learned to use computers in this school, 90% of students use internet connectivity during their classes.

3) Increase on student active school participation to foster active citizenship and employability: a Council of Rural Adolescents was created to promote rural adolescents' participation as protagonists of their schools and their communities.

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? *

Some things that worked really well to promote the policy and assure sustainability of Rural Secondary Tech schools national wide was to document lessons learnt, run cost analysis and advocate continuously to scale up at provincial and national level. The engagement of national and state actors to develop key offers to expand the initiative: In 2020, UNICEF supported the design and creation of a national Diploma for teachers on rural secondary school. This training course in developed and offer for free by the National Pedagogical University (UNIPE) and National Teacher Training Institute (INFD) of Argentina, reaching more than 700 teachers around the country in 2021. Evidence generation along the way: to provide accurate information and knowledge to build a comprehensive map of rural secondary education in Argentina and enhance of school connectivity. main progress and challenges to guarantee access and terminality for every adolescent: Alternatives models for school connectivity in difficult geographical contexts (see link); Secondary Rural education in Argentina: organizational models; Map of rural secondary education: progress and challenges in coverage, school trajectories and terminality (Link: https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/secundarias-rurales-mediadas-por-tecnologias-en-la-argentina). Another asset has been to develop a network approach for teacher training: For teacher training and modality implementation of the new model periodic support strategies sustain along the implementation proved to be key for the construction and consolidation of teams, the outlining of the responsibilities of each actor and the promotion of coordinated work. Building teachers' network favors the strengthening of the capacities of the schools and allows to promote concrete actions to sustain student learning outcomes and school trajectories.
Things that are key triggers for transformation: engagement of different stakeholders: Academia, private sector and NGOS have been key allies to strengthening actions and permits to expand the scope of the actions, bring different experts and engage new partner to compromise for excluded adolescents' education.
Challenges:
1.Institutionalization of the model: Including this new modality in the national and provincial educational policy, developing the necessary regulatory instruments, such as a specific academic regime for these schools and assigning specific budget items for its implementation.
2.Provision and maintenance of ICT equipment
3. Quality and sustainability of connectivity local services.
5.Investment on expansion on new school, which implies for subnational states to finance new school teams of teachers is still a bottleneck. MoE in most vulnerable provinces, spend more than 90% of their budget on teacher salaries and expansion of secondary education represent a big challenge.

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 territorial characteristics of rural contexts require educational policies that fully contemplate
    their needs, challenges and full potential. The implementation of this educational model has a set
    of common characteristics, but, at the same time, it acquires the imprint that each province gives
    it based on the particularities of its educational system, its regulations and its population, which
    makes it a flexible model, applicable in those contexts and communities where the traditional
    secondary model failed to assure a quality educational service.

    The creation of these TBRSS with their headquarters in the rural communities had a direct impact
    on the access and development of school trajectories at the secondary level of young people from
    rural areas for whom there was no nearby educational offer. Likewise, the installation of rural
    classrooms in remote places indirectly affected the daily reality of rural communities. More than
    2,500 students accessed the TBRSS between 2012 and 2021. In other words, this model of
    schools in rural areas facilitated access to secondary school for a group of students who did not
    have an educational offer in their community or close to it.

    Finally, the possibility of graduating from the secondary level constitutes a source of
    empowerment and community leadership for adolescents who go through this educational model.
    They not only manage to complete their compulsory schooling, but also access a set of key
    knowledge and digital skills essential for their comprehensive development as citizens in the 21st
    century, which leads to completing their educational level while projecting themselves into the
    future.

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. *

    The document Technology-based rural secondary schools in Argentina. Innovation and the right to
    secondary education is available in: https://www.unicef.org/argentina/informes/secundarias-
    rurales-mediadas-por-tecnologias-en-la-argentina

    TBRSS website: Programas | UNICEF Argentina | #ParaCadaNiño educación

    Cost study of rural secondary education in Salta.
    https://www.unicef.org/argentina/media/2891/file/Estudio%20de%20costo%20comparado%20en
    %20la%20educaci%C3%B3n%20rural%20en%20Salta.pdf