



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

E+E

Economy and Education

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

# Education Fund - Capitalising on innovations

Learnings from the Education Fund of the Swiss  
Agency for Development and Cooperation

2019–2022





## Content

---

<b>Introduction - English</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The SDC Education Fund</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What you will find in this case collection</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction - French</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Fonds de la DDC pour l'éducation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Informations issues du corpus de projets</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Bhutan: Uninterrupted access to teaching-learning for hard-to-reach and digitally disadvantaged children</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>China: Impact Hackathons in Higher Education in Asia-Pacific</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Colombia: Equitable STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education for children in rural areas</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Colombia: Cultivo Mi Futuro (cultivating my future)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Costa Rica: Improving access to formal education and vocational skills development for displaced populations of Central America</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Ethiopia: Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Honduras: Transforming technical education for youth during COVID-19 crisis</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Kenya: Adoption of digitalised approaches to VSD</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Lebanon: Inclusive learning opportunities for vulnerable children during COVID-19</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Mali: Digitalisation of the VSD centres for young people (Espaces d'Orientation Jeunesse)</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Mozambique: Neighbourhood training during COVID-19 crisis</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Gaza Strip: Access to education and VSD for children with down syndrome and autism</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>South Sudan: E-Powering Higher Education</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Annex: Resources for each project</b>	<b>23</b>

# Introduction - English

## The SDC Education Fund

In 2019, the Education network and the Inclusive Economic Development network of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) jointly launched the Education Fund 'Innovation meets Education'. This initiative was part of the SDC's increased commitment to education and a contribution to the implementation of its Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development, launched in 2017.

The aim of the Education Fund (EF) was to incentivise innovation and new approaches in basic education and vocational skills development:

- within existing programmes or as new projects in basic education (including education in emergencies) and/or in vocational skills development;
- through educational activities across sectors (including climate change, health, water, protection, and governance).

In the context of this fund, 'innovation' was defined as an initiative that was new for the SDC and that would be worth testing before potentially upscaling it. This means that innovation in this document can refer to new specific thematic areas, new partnerships or new approaches.

The expected outcomes of the EF were as follows:

1. The implementation and testing of innovative approaches described in the SDC Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development and facilitated via the EF have contributed to enhanced effectiveness of interventions across sectors in both the SDC's bilateral and global work.
2. The EF has shown a catalytic effect and contributed to the expansion of engagement in basic education/vocational skills development as well as of educational activities across sectors.
3. The EF has contributed to an enhanced understanding and experience of innovative and new approaches aligned to the SDC Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development, and made it possible to draw on learnings for the benefit of current and future programmes in basic education/vocational skills development and across sectors.

The EF was reviewed as part of the external review of the implementation of the Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development carried out in 2020/2021.<sup>1</sup> The current capitalisation exercise is focused on the learnings from the projects supported by the EF.

In total, 16 projects were financed, including through a special 'COVID-19 window' between March 2020 and July 2021, which allowed quick responses to the pandemic. 11 projects were in fragile and crisis-affected contexts and 9 focused on migrant and/or displaced populations. When this document was going to press, 13 projects were completed and 3 were still ongoing.

## What you will find in this case collection

This case collection presents in a nutshell the innovations that were developed and the **key strengths from which we can learn**. The purpose is to provide a rapid overview and to give you easy access to further resources, should you wish to go deeper and learn from specific innovations. You will find all the available resources and contact details in the annex.

---

<sup>1</sup> [External Review of the Implementation of the SDC Education Strategy: Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development and the SDC EF](#)

Each case has a specific innovative aspect. The following paragraphs present some general features of the cases as well as lessons learnt regarding the specific topic of the use of ICTs and distance education, which was a common dimension of two thirds of the projects (due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

### Levels/types of education

The cases concern all levels of education: *Basic Education* (Bhutan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Lebanon), *Vocational Skills Development* – including vocational orientation and access to jobs – (Honduras, Mali, Mozambique), a combination of both (Costa Rica, Kenya, Gaza Strip) and *Higher Education* (China, South Sudan).

### Objectives and target group

Most innovations aim at improving *equitable* access to *quality* and relevant education, two major goals of the SDC Thematic Guidance on Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development. The majority of projects address the education and training needs of rural/peri-urban populations (e.g. Mozambique, Colombia) or more specific displaced/migrant/refugee communities (e.g. Costa Rica, Kenya, Lebanon, Ethiopia). Some projects have a strong gender focus (Science, technology, engineering and maths for girls in Colombia), while others address specific needs such as those of children and youth living with Down Syndrome and autism (Gaza strip). Projects in higher education (China and South Sudan) tested innovative approaches to making universities more relevant to the contextual challenges of their societies.

### Distance education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

The majority of projects emphasise distance learning and the use of ICTs in education and training. Either they were launched before the COVID-19 pandemic and had to adapt to this new situation, or they were conceived from the start as a response to the crisis after the outburst of the pandemic. When working to make ICTs actually contribute to equitable access to quality education, we can draw on the valuable lessons learnt from these projects, keeping the following key factors and conditions in mind:<sup>2</sup>

- ***The use of ICTs and distance learning can be a real opportunity for vulnerable populations:*** Different projects (e.g. Costa Rica, Kenya, Bhutan, Lebanon) showed that the use of distance/hybrid education can provide people living in remote places with more opportunities to access education and other support services easily and flexibly (i.e: 'from anywhere at any time'). In some cases, learners can also maintain useful access to learning contents even after they have completed their training and move into practice (e.g. Kenya).
- ***The use of ICTs in education offers opportunities for pedagogical innovations:*** From simple WhatsApp groups to sophisticated learning platforms, the use of ICTs can contribute to the quality and relevance of education and pedagogical approaches. Various projects (e.g. STEAM Colombia, Honduras, Kenya) have produced innovative and quality learning materials using the potential of interactive learning, self-assessments that promote learners' autonomy, and stimulating videos and audio material. These new opportunities are particularly relevant for people with low and medium literacy skills. Different projects (e.g. Mali, Kenya) have shown that videos and audios are effective learning materials for these learners. In the case of Mali, materials were produced in a local language (Bambara), breaking down language barriers to learning. Videos have also proved useful for practical training (e.g. family agriculture and school orchards in Colombia).
- ***However, adapting education to the actual situation of learners is an absolute key for equity:*** Various projects point to the necessity of a thorough knowledge of the *actual* situation of all learners (especially the most vulnerable) and their access to technologies (electronic devices, internet connection, etc.). The choice of technology must be adapted to the most vulnerable learners. With the spreading COVID-19 pandemic in Bhutan, consistent efforts were made at national level to Leave No One Behind and provide education through a large diversity of medium and technologies (TV, radio, print materials, face-to-face teaching in small groups). Even with these efforts, the project recognised that more attention should have been paid to marginalised learners in urban contexts. In various countries, the choice was made to use the technology most available to learners (e.g. cell

---

<sup>2</sup> An important resource that complements the lessons learnt that are presented here is the SDC's [TechGuide Supporting quality learning for inclusion with information and communication technologies \(ICT\)](#), which offers technical guidance for the design and management of ICT-enhanced basic education, vocational skills development and lifelong learning.

phones and WhatsApp in Lebanon), to facilitate access to electronic devices and internet connections or to maximise the possibilities of learning off-line (e.g. Colombia, Honduras, Kenya).

- ***Distance learning can complement but not replace social interaction, which remains key to learning:*** Various projects show that direct social interaction (face-to-face, home visits, distance meetings, phone calls) is key for professional support (among teachers) and for the *learning* and *well-being* of learners. This concerns social interaction among teachers (e.g. Bhutan, Lebanon), among teachers and learners (Bhutan, Lebanon, Colombia, Costa Rica, etc.) and among learners themselves (e.g. Lebanon).

We hope you will be inspired by the different cases presented in this report. We encourage you to consult further resources (such as the training materials developed, as well as the interviews and webinars online) and to contact the project teams for further information.

# Introduction - French

## Fonds de la DDC pour l'éducation

En 2019, le réseau Éducation et le réseau Développement économique inclusif de la Direction du développement et de la coopération (DDC) ont lancé conjointement le fonds pour l'éducation (« L'innovation rencontre l'éducation »). Cette initiative s'inscrivait dans le cadre de l'engagement accru de la DDC en faveur de l'éducation et devait contribuer à la mise en œuvre de ses directives thématiques sur l'éducation de base et le développement des compétences professionnelles, lancées en 2017.

L'objectif du fonds pour l'éducation (FE) était d'encourager l'innovation et les nouvelles approches dans les domaines de l'éducation de base et de la formation professionnelle

- au sein de programmes existants ou de nouveaux projets dans ces deux domaines (y compris l'éducation dans les situations d'urgence) ou
- par des activités éducatives dans plusieurs secteurs (y c. le changement climatique, la santé, l'eau, la protection et la gouvernance).

Dans le cadre de ce fonds, l'innovation a été définie comme une initiative nouvelle pour la DDC, qui méritait d'être testée avant d'être éventuellement appliquée à plus large échelle. Cela signifie que l'innovation, dans le présent document, peut faire référence à de nouveaux domaines thématiques spécifiques, de nouveaux partenariats ou de nouvelles approches.

Les effets attendus du fonds étaient les suivants :

1. La mise en œuvre et l'évaluation des approches innovantes décrites dans les directives thématiques de la DDC sur l'éducation de base et le développement des compétences professionnelles, facilitées par le FE, ont contribué à améliorer l'efficacité des interventions dans les différents secteurs, au niveau des activités aussi bien bilatérales que globales de la DDC.
2. Le FE a eu un effet de catalyseur et a contribué à renforcer l'engagement en faveur de l'éducation de base et de la formation professionnelle ainsi que des activités éducatives dans tous les secteurs.
3. Il a permis d'améliorer la compréhension et l'expérience des approches innovantes et nouvelles alignées sur les directives thématiques et a permis de tirer des enseignements au profit des programmes actuels et futurs dans le domaine de l'éducation de base et de la formation professionnelle et entre les différents secteurs.

Le FE a été examiné dans le cadre de la révision externe de la mise en œuvre des directives thématiques réalisé en 2020 et 2021.<sup>3</sup> L'exercice actuel de capitalisation est axé sur les enseignements tirés des projets soutenus par le FE.

Au total, seize projets ont été financés, notamment dans le cadre d'une « fenêtre spéciale COVID-19 », entre mars 2020 et juillet 2021, qui a permis de réagir rapidement à la pandémie. Onze projets concernaient des contextes fragiles et affectés par des crises et neuf projets étaient focalisés sur les populations migrantes et/ou déplacées. À l'heure de la publication de ce document, treize projets sont terminés et trois sont encore en cours.

## Informations issues du corpus de projets

Ce corpus de projets présente brièvement les innovations qui ont été développées et les **principaux points forts dont nous pouvons tirer des enseignements**. L'objectif est d'en fournir un rapide aperçu et de permettre d'accéder facilement à d'autres ressources, si vous souhaitez approfondir le sujet ou tirer parti d'innovations spécifiques. Toutes les ressources et informations de contact disponibles figurent dans l'annexe.

---

<sup>3</sup> [External Review of the Implementation of the SDC Education Strategy: Basic Education and Vocational Skills Development and the SDC EE](#)

Chaque projet présente un aspect innovant spécifique. Ci-dessous sont présentées les caractéristiques générales des projets ainsi que les enseignements qui en ont été tirés concernant en particulier le recours aux technologies de l'information et de la communication pour l'éducation (TICE) et à l'enseignement à distance, une dimension commune à deux tiers des projets en raison de la pandémie de COVID-19.

### Niveaux et modes d'enseignement

Les projets concernent les différents niveaux d'enseignement, à savoir l'éducation de base (Bhoutan, Colombie, Éthiopie, Liban), la formation professionnelle – y c. l'orientation professionnelle et l'accès à l'emploi – (Honduras, Mali, Mozambique), une combinaison des deux (Costa Rica, Kenya, bande de Gaza) et l'enseignement supérieur (Chine, Soudan du Sud).

### Objectifs et groupe cible

La plupart des innovations visent à améliorer l'accès *équitable* à une éducation pertinente et *de qualité*, deux objectifs majeurs des directives thématiques de la DDC sur l'éducation de base et le développement des compétences professionnelles. La majorité des projets répondent aux besoins d'éducation et de formation des populations rurales et périurbaines (p. ex. au Mozambique ou en Colombie) ou de communautés plus spécifiques de personnes déplacées, de migrants ou de réfugiés (p. ex. au Costa Rica, au Kenya, au Liban, en Éthiopie). Certains projets se concentrent en priorité sur la dimension de genre (science, technologie, ingénierie et mathématiques pour les filles en Colombie), tandis que d'autres répondent à des besoins spécifiques tels que ceux des enfants et des jeunes souffrant du syndrome de Down ou d'autisme (bande de Gaza). Des projets dans le domaine de l'enseignement supérieur (en Chine et au Soudan du Sud) ont permis de tester des approches innovantes pour rendre les universités mieux adaptées aux défis spécifiques de leurs sociétés.

### Enseignement à distance dans le contexte de la pandémie de COVID-19

La majorité des projets mettent l'accent sur l'enseignement à distance et l'utilisation des TICE dans l'éducation et la formation. Soit ils ont été lancés avant la pandémie de COVID-19 et ont dû s'adapter à cette nouvelle situation, soit ils ont été conçus dès le départ comme une réponse à la crise après le début de la pandémie. En conséquence, de précieux enseignements peuvent être tirés sur certains facteurs clés et conditions, afin que les TIC favorisent concrètement un accès équitable à une éducation de qualité<sup>4</sup>.

- ***Le recours aux TICE et à l'enseignement à distance peut constituer une opportunité réelle pour les personnes vulnérables.*** Plusieurs projets (p. ex. au Costa Rica, au Kenya, au Bhoutan et au Liban) ont montré que le recours à l'enseignement à distance ou l'enseignement hybride peut donner aux personnes vivant dans des régions reculées davantage de possibilités d'accéder, de manière simple et flexible, à l'éducation et à d'autres services de soutien « de n'importe où et à n'importe quel moment ». Dans certains cas, les personnes en formation peuvent également conserver un accès utile aux contenus des cours même après avoir terminé leur formation et commencé à la mettre en pratique (p. ex. au Kenya).
- ***L'utilisation des TICE dans l'éducation permet des innovations pédagogiques.*** Des simples groupes de messagerie aux plateformes d'apprentissage sophistiquées, l'utilisation des TICE peut contribuer à la qualité et à la pertinence de l'éducation et des approches pédagogiques. Plusieurs projets (p. ex. en Colombie (STEAM), au Honduras, au Kenya) ont créé des moyens pédagogiques innovants et de qualité en utilisant le potentiel de l'apprentissage interactif, des auto-évaluations favorisant l'autonomie des élèves, ainsi que du matériel audiovisuel stimulant. Ces nouvelles possibilités sont particulièrement intéressantes pour les personnes dont le niveau d'alphabétisation est faible ou moyen. Différents projets (p. ex. au Mali et au Kenya) ont montré que les moyens audiovisuels constituent des supports d'apprentissage efficaces pour ces élèves. Dans le cas du Mali, le matériel a été élaboré dans une langue locale, le bambara, ce qui a permis d'éliminer les barrières linguistiques à l'apprentissage. Les vidéos se sont également avérées utiles pour la formation pratique (p. ex. l'agriculture familiale et les vergers scolaires en Colombie).

---

<sup>4</sup> Ressource importante qui complète les enseignements présentés ici, le document de la DDC intitulé [TechGuide - Supporting quality learning for inclusion with information and communication technologies \(ICT\)](#) fournit des conseils techniques pour mettre à profit les TIC afin d'améliorer la conception et la gestion de l'éducation de base, de la formation professionnelle et de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie.



- ***Cependant, l'adaptation de l'éducation à la situation réelle des élèves est un critère déterminant pour atteindre l'équité.*** Plusieurs projets soulignent la nécessité de connaître en détail la situation *réelle* de toutes les personnes en formation (en particulier des plus vulnérables) et de leur accès aux technologies (appareils électroniques, connexion internet, etc.). Le choix de la technologie doit être adapté aux personnes les plus vulnérables. Face à l'avancée de la pandémie de COVID-19 au Bhoutan, des efforts constants ont été déployés au niveau national pour ne laisser personne de côté et dispenser une éducation au moyen d'une grande diversité de supports et de technologies (télévision, radio, documents imprimés, enseignement en face à face dans de petits groupes). Malgré ces efforts, le projet a reconnu qu'une plus grande attention aurait dû être accordée aux personnes marginalisées en milieu urbain. Dans plusieurs pays, il a été décidé d'utiliser la technologie la plus accessible pour les élèves (p. ex. les téléphones portables et une messagerie au Liban), de faciliter l'accès aux appareils électroniques et aux connexions internet, ou encore de multiplier les possibilités d'apprentissage hors ligne (p. ex. en Colombie, au Honduras et au Kenya).
- ***L'enseignement à distance peut compléter mais ne peut pas remplacer les interactions sociales, qui restent un élément fondamental de l'apprentissage.*** Plusieurs projets montrent que les interactions sociales directes (face à face, visites à domicile, réunions en ligne, appels téléphoniques) sont essentielles pour le soutien professionnel (entre enseignants) et pour l'*apprentissage* et le *bien-être* des élèves. Cela concerne aussi bien les interactions sociales entre enseignants (au Bhoutan, au Liban) que celles entre les enseignants et les élèves (au Bhoutan, au Liban, en Colombie, au Costa Rica), ou encore celles entre les personnes en formation elles-mêmes (au Liban).

Nous espérons que les différents projets présentés dans ce rapport vous inspireront. Nous vous encourageons à consulter d'autres ressources, telles que le matériel pédagogique élaboré, les entretiens et les formations en ligne, et à prendre contact avec les équipes de projet pour de plus amples informations.

# Bhutan: Uninterrupted access to teaching-learning for hard-to-reach and digitally disadvantaged children

*Implementation partner: Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation*

## Context and main objectives

In response to the COVID-19 triggered school closures in Bhutan, the project aimed to enhance inclusion and equity in basic education through targeted solutions for the hard-to-reach and digitally disadvantaged children and youth. Fully aligned with the Ministry of Education efforts and building on initiatives already taken by teachers, it supported (i) the production of teaching and learning materials in various formats and their accessibility through different media (TV, radio, website, newspapers, social media); (ii) the training of teachers to deliver these contents; (iii) the preparedness of the education system for potential future disruptions.

### Key innovations

**Teaching and learning materials through various media for distance learning** - To ensure that all children and youth could continue learning, the materials were produced to be accessible in all possible formats and medias: through on-line videos and lessons for those learners with internet access, through TV and radio, and print materials for self-instruction. This shows a real effort to Leave No One Behind.

### Main strengths from which to learn

**A consistent attention to equity** - The project was developed with consistent attention to which technologies learners actually have access to in order to continue learning. Internet, TV, radio and self-instructional print materials were made available according to the specific situation of the learners. In certain cases, teachers took the initiative to support learners in small groups in their communities. The project dedicated specific attention to the learners in the most crucial education levels.

Despite these efforts, the project admits that it did not pay sufficient attention to poor children in urban contexts and to disabled children. Overall, this points to the crucial importance of knowing and taking into account the precise situation of learners, especially regarding their access to technologies.

**A collective national effort engaging a wide range of stakeholders** - Many stakeholders joined forces in a national effort to ensure that children and youth continue to learn. Efforts were well coordinated by the government, allowing all stakeholders to work towards common goals, with active engagement of the national TV, a private and a public radio station, a public newspaper and private multimedia contents producers. Education governance structures were set up to approve the new emergency teaching and learning materials and ensured alignment with the revised curriculum.

**Building on existing teacher initiatives** - The project adequately built on existing initiatives taken by teachers. Instead of re-inventing the wheel, it supported teachers to strengthen the quality of the materials produced. Teachers have played a prominent role with their everyday work suddenly visible to parents and other people (e.g. through appearing on TV every day). Generally, they showed motivation and ownership of the actions put in place to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis. The project also paid attention to their training through an efficient cascade model.

## Prospects

The prospects in term of sustainable results are promising. As a consequence of the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Bhutan adopted a unified learning management system (e-learning platform) and elaborated the New Normal Curriculum, which blends classroom and distance learning. The aim is to progressively improve the basic information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructures in all schools without discrimination and to strengthen the skills of teachers, learners and other education specialists to apply innovative forms of learning. The approach will simultaneously strengthen the system's ability to deal with potential disruptions in the future. More broadly, this resonates with several national policy frameworks aiming at transforming the country into an ICT smart and inclusive society without losing the cultural values of Bhutan.

# China: Impact Hackathons in Higher Education in Asia-Pacific

*Implementation partner: University of Geneva, Geneva-Tsinghua Initiative for SDGs*

## Context and main objectives

Building on an existing partnership between the universities of Geneva and Tsinghua, the project aimed to implement a series of hackathons in the Asia-Pacific region in order to stimulate creative solutions and impact entrepreneurship to address some SDG-related challenges, namely aging and disabilities. Hackathons are intense online and/or face-to-face events of 8 to 36 hours. They bring together 30 to 120 people with different expertise and cultural backgrounds (in this case mainly students and young entrepreneurs) to work in small interdisciplinary teams in order to come up with innovative ideas, prototypes or concrete solutions to targeted collective challenges. While a minority of teams stay together after the event and succeed in actually implementing their projects, hackathons are intense learning events for all participants, both in terms of contents (on the specific issues addressed) and in terms of the collective intelligence experience.

### Key innovations

**Hackathon as an innovative challenge-based learning approach in higher education-** The implementation of hackathons demonstrated a potential to strengthen the capacities of higher education institutions to address complex sustainable development issues across sectors. They offered students a unique opportunity to develop their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills and entrepreneurial mindset. Private-sector and corporate actors can be involved in the process to maximise chances for concrete development and implementation of novel ideas and prototypes.

### Main strengths from which to learn

**Integrating hackathons in a comprehensive education approach** - Hackathons offer a learning experience that complements the usual university course, especially when they are designed as a learning and creative journey, starting with 'innovation bootcamps' before the actual hackathon. Such bootcamps are three-day training workshops to prepare the participants for a fully immersive and creative hackathon experience. Training materials are used and produced in innovative formats (short videos, webinars, etc.). Participants are trained (i) on the topic (learning and framing the compelling problems to be addressed, producing 'pocket lectures' to serve as reference material on the topic during the hackathon, etc.), (ii) on the methodology of the hackathon (development of collaborative skills in group diversity, building a community around an innovation, etc.), and (iii) on how to synthesize ideas and communicate them convincingly (to pitch the novel ideas and solutions). Conducted in an entertaining and relaxed atmosphere to avoid the usual creativity inhibitors coming from hierarchical relationships, all these workshops develop cross-sectoral content knowledge on sustainability issues, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and communication skills as well as an entrepreneurial mindset. As such, they are a valuable contribution to meaningful university teaching and learning.

## Prospects

The experiences developed during this pilot phase will inform the following series of hackathons to be run by the universities of Geneva and Tsinghua and extended to a higher number of universities in the Asia-Pacific region: the Impact Hackathons project has planned open hack events in the Asia-Pacific region, e.g. in Singapore, Laos, Bangkok, Bali and Nepal.

# Colombia: Equitable STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education for children in rural areas

*Implementation partner: Girls Change Latin America*

## Context and main objectives

The project designed and implemented an innovative approach to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education, with special attention paid to girls in poor rural contexts. It promoted scientific thinking and skills that learners can apply in everyday life and that stimulate their interest (especially girls') in scientific careers. To do so, the project (i) produced pedagogical materials (textbooks, on-line materials, games, podcasts); (ii) carried out STEAM workshops for over 1,300 pupils in primary schools; (iii) trained teachers and school directors, and (iv) nurtured close dialogue and collaboration with the authorities in charge of education (at department level) to include equitable STEAM in the regular school curriculum. Designed and launched prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project had to adapt to the crisis. Teachers and learners were supported in implementing playful scientific activities through distance learning, and printed books were distributed to learners who have little access to electronic devices and internet.

### Key innovations

**Using STEAM education to improve gender equality, raise learners' motivation and open up to STEAM careers** - This project is innovative in various aspects: (i) it improves the quality of teaching and learning in STEAM through a contextualised and active pedagogy, which strengthens the learners' interest in learning at school; (ii) it contributes to gender equality by empowering girls to participate actively in STEAM and by producing quality learning material free of gender stereotypes; (iii) it informs pupils on scientific careers and encourages girls in particular to undertake one of them. (iv) Finally, as the project focuses on rural contexts, it contributes to reducing rural/urban inequalities.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**An approach to STEAM which focuses on scientific thinking and does not need scientific equipment** - The approach focuses on the development of scientific thinking and methodology including questioning, formulating hypotheses, experimenting and observing. The immediate environment (nature, home, kitchen, etc.) is used for this purpose and does not require any scientific equipment, which is rarely available in deprived rural contexts. The teaching and learning process is also oriented towards finding concrete solutions to everyday life situations (e.g. water management). More broadly, the values of sustainable development and ethical reflexions on STEAM are included. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the project adapted its activities to distance learning. Playful STEAM activities to be carried out at home, some with (grand)parents to foster intergenerational exchanges, were proposed.

**A diversity of teaching and learning materials that can be used / inspire other projects** - Modules and textbooks for children (primary education level), guidelines and training modules for teachers, interactive on-line materials, podcasts and videos have been produced by the project and can be used by others or be valuable sources of inspiration about STEAM education for these grades.

**Teaching and learning about STEAM studies and careers** - The project also developed modules and materials to teach about the different scientific disciplines and careers. In this sense, it contributes to raising learners' awareness from an early age of the prospects and possible choices to study beyond basic education and pursue STEAM careers contributing to sustainable development.

## Prospects

There are good prospects for building on the experience. The project succeeded in building excellent working relations with the educational authorities at department level, which foresee an expansion of the experience. Moreover, interestingly, in partnership with a university in Colombia, the foundation Girls Change Latin America developed a certificate for teachers based on the knowledge and lessons learnt from the project. The knowledge and contents will thus be further developed and used.

# Colombia: Cultivo Mi Futuro (cultivating my future)

Implementation partner: *Corporación Econexus Colombia – Insitu*

## Context and main objectives

Implemented during the COVID-19 emergency situation, the project aimed to provide access to health prevention measures and strengthen interest, knowledge and practices of rural youth in family agriculture, as a way of contributing to food security. Teaching and learning modules and contents, in both of these areas, were designed and made available to public school teachers on a national learning platform managed by the Ministry of Technology (MinTIC). In order to increase access to electronic devices and internet connections, the project worked in partnership with a national programme focused on hardware equipment (Computers for Education, MinTIC). A community-based organisation with long-standing experience in family agriculture supported schools in starting and developing school orchards (based on the distance-learning course) and in sharing their experiences in a community of practice through social media.

### Key innovations

**Teaching family agriculture as a contribution to food security** - Through this initiative (implemented in 21 schools), learners had an opportunity to develop content knowledge and practical experience on issues such as plant germination, organic fertilisation, water harvesting and efficient irrigation systems. The teaching and learning through the digital platform was interactive and innovative. Learners could apply their new knowledge in practice in school orchards with the support of their teachers and 5 experienced community-based organisations. This process helped to increase the relevance of education (in areas with low education indicators) through the introduction of practical skills and the interest of children and youth in agriculture and food security. In addition, the technological solutions applied in the project allowed remote internet access in 21 rural schools and made it possible to download the materials and work for offline use.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**Providing electronic devices and a digital platform is not enough** - The partnership with the governmental hardware equipment and connection programme was essential to provide access to remote learning opportunities. However, the project showed that schools and teachers have to be strongly supported to learn to use them to benefit students. In the case of agricultural teaching and learning, support and social interaction are necessary for practical implementation and sustainability, strengthening the social fabric.

**Sharing through a community of practice** - As social interaction and exchanges are keys for learning and sustaining implementation, a community of practice was established among the schools developing agricultural teaching and school orchards. Lessons learnt and experiences were shared on social media (Facebook group) and will be used to enrich the learning materials on the digital platform.

## Prospects

Schools, teachers and parents have shown interest and ownership in the initiative, confirming the need to increase the relevance of education and its adaptation to the context and real needs of the population. The intervention model and materials developed could be used in other schools and extended to other regions in Colombia. However, various challenges regarding the sustainability of the initiative at school and community level must be taken into account. These include enhancing relations with the local organisations and regularly updating the materials – two challenges that are key for sustainability.

# Costa Rica: Improving access to formal education and vocational skills development for displaced populations of Central America

Implementation partners: Jesuit Migrant Service in Costa Rica (SJMCR)

## Context and main objectives

Especially since 2018, Costa Rica has been facing a massive increase in the number of migrants and asylum seekers from Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. They face difficulties integrating into the labour market, mainly due to a lack of basic education (BE) and/or vocational skills. The aim of the project was thus to (i) facilitate their access to basic education (particularly for women) through flexible learning formats, and to vocational skills development (VSD). It also fostered inclusive hiring practices through advocacy work and the piloting of a digital Labour Inclusion and Educational Platform offering information on certified BE and VSD opportunities as well as matching services for employers.

### Key innovations

**A comprehensive approach integrating access to BE, VSD and jobs** - The project adopts a comprehensive approach to the difficulties of migrants in integrating into the labour market in their host country and addresses both short-term and longer-term needs, strengthening a nexus approach. The implementing partner has solid experience in socio-legal counselling, humanitarian aid and advocacy for migrants' rights. However, BE and VSD were identified as key factors and a *sine qua non* condition for finding (self-)employment in Costa Rica, a country with a very high education level. The project not only offers VSD but also certified BE in flexible modalities, to address the basic and longer-term needs of the most vulnerable, i.e. single mothers with no BE.

**The successful transformation of training into hybrid modalities** - The COVID-19 pandemic forced the partner (SJMCR) to virtualise its different services, including socio-legal counselling and training. Thanks to careful efforts to understand the conditions of learners, the services have been relevant and accessible to them. Indeed, the constraints turned into new opportunities as the virtual services can now be accessed by a higher number of migrants from all over the country, including rural and remote areas. Moreover, it allowed learners to strengthen their digital skills, which is a major contribution to their employability and more generally to their integration in a society that has become much more digital through the pandemic.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**Hybrid training with adequate measures to support learners** - Most learners had weak digital skills and no experience with distance learning. Thanks to a participatory approach and a willingness to understand the conditions and serve the learners, various measures were adopted: The distance learning was designed for use on mobile phones (the only technology accessible to learners); modules are short and focused on practical skills (rather than long and theoretical); physical learning materials were distributed (to complement the virtual environment); learners were given the choice to accomplish their tasks either physically or digitally; they were also supported in purchasing internet connections.

**Flexible and accredited education and training provision** - The project offers flexible training modalities adapted to the real life situation of adult learners (e.g. hybrid learning, evening classes and other non-formal modalities) and targeted at sectors that are of interest to migrants (paid domestic work, care, food services). In order to ensure access to accredited learning (a key asset to access the labour market and further training opportunities), the project works in synergy with specialised accredited agencies.

## Prospects

There are good prospects for scaling up through the new operational and technological capacities of the implementation partner, who will continue developing its comprehensive approach, virtual services and hybrid training modalities (expanding to a wider geographical area).

# Ethiopia: Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector

*Implementation partners: IOM*

Following the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the government of Ethiopia announced a nationwide state of emergency, which led to the closure of all schools and universities. This disproportionately affected vulnerable children already impacted by the prevailing water and sanitation crisis. The project supported the government of Ethiopia and the regional education bureaus in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on education in displacement-affected communities in the Gambella, Oromia and Somali regions, and in raising awareness to prevent the spread of the virus. Specifically, the project contributed to ensuring the safe operation of schools and the continuity of learning and well-being, especially for the most vulnerable girls, boys and young people. The support targeted 5,000 direct and 8,000 indirect beneficiaries.

## Key innovations

**Strengthen COVID-19 protocols by reinforcing the existing community practices** - The project ensured safe school operations as well as the continuity of learning and well-being for the most vulnerable children and youth affected by the pandemic, especially those belonging to displacement-affected groups (e.g. returning IDPs, IDPs and host communities), while educating the wider community on the prevention and control of COVID-19. It provided donkey carts for the schools to fill the water tanks and buckets provided for hand washing.

**Providing learning space and promoting distance-learning** - The project was able to partially build and reinforce the preparedness of the education system to anticipate, respond to and mitigate the effects of current and future crises. It established a reading corner in schools to minimise the learning gap. This will act as a mini-library for the school. An education programme was also broadcast via local radio to reach the community. Radio was appreciated by the community and the project was able to contribute to the national vision that the regional governments had.

**The use of an inclusive education approach to facilitate community cohesion between host and IDP communities** - The project used an inclusive and participatory approach in schools by scaling up the physical structures, promoting sports, using local radio stations, print media and cultural events in the schools and communities to also specifically address the needs of the most vulnerable groups. This helped to strengthen social cohesion, encourage the identified group to study, promote protection, boost the teachers' capacity on the subject and create a peaceful relationship with the host community. Along with targeting the primary schools, the project engaged men and women to raise awareness of the importance of education and of sending girls to school.

## Key strengths from which to learn

**Getting local actors to buy-in** - The most feasible innovative ideas come from the community (e.g. using donkey carts for water tracking purposes). Therefore, it is imperative to consult the local community and regional actors before deciding on the implementation modalities of a project.

**Advocacy campaigns helped to change misconceptions concerning COVID-19** - A series of girls' education campaigns: The campaigns on girls' education aimed to bring awareness to the community in districts known for lower enrolment of girls in schools and higher school dropout rates among girls, and where both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host community children attend school. The project ran a successful campaign involving relevant stakeholders and local media.

## Prospects

There are positive prospects to build on the existing experience. The project has succeeded in building excellent working relations with the local educational bureaus, local government and with community structures. The refresher training provided teachers with new skills, while also benefiting from the rehabilitated school infrastructure. The COVID-19-related protocols were also published in the local language most common in the given region, and will continue to be used. One of the important lessons learnt from this project would be to develop the contingency plan along with the intervention modality by taking into consideration the changing context of the country/project location.

# Honduras: Transforming technical education for youth in the context of the COVID-19 crisis

*Implementation partners: Helvetas and Network of Community Technical Institutes (Red de Institutos Técnicos Comunitarios).*

## Context and main objectives

The innovation took place in the framework of a project that supports a network of 28 Community Technical Institutes (CTIs, high-school level) in bridging the gap between the education system and the local economic development. Students (mostly youth and adults from indigenous communities) are trained in technical skills and entrepreneurship. After graduating from the CTI, students can: i) create a business, ii) continue their studies at university, or iii) look for a job that they are highly qualified to perform successfully. The training programmes are officially recognised and the Ministry of Education (SEDUC) is a formal partner of the project.

The aim of the project was to develop distance learning, which turned into a hybrid modality, to allow teachers and learners to continue education during the pandemic crisis and lockdowns. This process was also aiming at strengthening the network of CTIs as well as increasing the resilience and risk management capacities of communities.

### Key innovations

**Development of a hybrid teaching and learning process implemented at scale** - in 28 CTIs by (i) setting up two learning platforms (one for teachers only and the other for teachers, students and parents), (ii) adapting the curriculum and evaluation modalities, producing contents and materials, (iii) training and coaching teachers, and (iv) providing access to digital tools and devices to learners.

**A permanent COVID-19 prevention campaign** - reaching out to all learners and their families and, by extension, to the population of the 8 departments.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**Systemic change approach and participation as success factors even in emergencies** - The project was implemented through a highly collaborative process, paying attention to systemic changes. Teachers as well as students were closely involved in the development of the curriculum, contents and materials. Learners and families participated in the design and implementation of the prevention campaign, which achieved massive outreach. This shows that even in emergency situations, participation can be fostered and become a powerful success and sustainability factor.

**The importance of governance structures to foster innovation** - Six new governance structures and management bodies were created (e.g. to validate the new curriculum and materials). This shows the need to create new spaces for collaborative work (e.g. between the ICT specialists and the Ministry of Education) and formal decision-making to handle innovation and prepare for sustainability.

**Tailoring education provision to those most in need (equity)** - The access of learners to electronic devices and internet was carefully assessed, allowing (i) targeted material support to students most in need, (ii) the development of offline solutions for learners in rural areas, who come to their institute regularly to download modules on their devices.

## Prospects

There are very good prospects of (i) transitioning from a short-term intervention to a longer-term transformation of the Community Technical Institutes' education model EDUCAR (Education for Local Economic Development), improving flexible access to hybrid training also in rural areas, (ii) scaling up the project to 48 CTIs in the country, and (iii) negotiating with telecom businesses and the Ministry of Education to provide free internet access in CTIs.



# Kenya: Adoption of digitalised approaches to VSD

*Implementation partner: Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation | Swisscontact in conjunction with Avallain Foundation and Mowgli Mentoring*

## Context and main objectives

This innovation was implemented as a component of the larger project Skills for Life (S4L), which promotes self-employment, job creation and income generation for refugees and their host communities in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, through vocational skills training and coaching. The innovation consisted in providing vocational training in three trades through a digital platform, as well as a virtual coaching and mentorship programme to continue supporting youth in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown and economic downturn. The project built on S4L's former experience in providing basic literacy and numeracy tailored to the context through an interactive a-ACADEMY digital platform.

### Key innovation

**Digital learning in different trades** - Based on the experiences of the a-ACADEMY digital platform for basic literacy and numeracy, the project developed training for: bakery, plumbing and electrical wiring. Conceived as a complement to face-to-face courses in groups, the modules were accessible through tablets (made available by the project) and mobile apps, online and offline. They were highly appreciated by trainers and learners and showed the multiple advantages that blended training can have for learning trades: (i) using videos and audios proved to be adequate for learners with low/medium literacy skills, (ii) access to contents was more flexible than in traditional classrooms and more contents could be covered in less time, (iii) learners can still access contents after they finish their training, when they need them in their practice, (v) learners improve their digital literacy skills throughout the process.

### Main strengths from which to learn

**Relevant contents and pedagogy** - A target and context analysis was carried out and three levels were defined for each trade (beginner, medium, expert) to organise learning and design the lessons. High attention was paid to contextualising the contents (e.g. each lesson starts with a contextualised introductory story-telling video) and to building on the trainee's existing knowledge and skills, thus fostering their confidence. Multi-media were used for a variety of interactive activities, which resulted in high interest and entertaining learning. The contents are well structured in short lessons that are easily accessible (even after the training). Assessments are built into each lesson, allowing for immediate feedback to trainees on their progress and encouraging autonomy and motivation for self-learning. Financial literacy is embedded in training in each occupation. Trainees also have access (on the same platform) to literacy and numeracy training.

**Well-trained mentors** - Mentoring trainees to support their successful transition into business is a key strategy of the S4L project. In the COVID-19 context, a 7.5-month virtual training programme was developed and implemented to continue training mentors in the specific skills, tools and mindset of effective mentoring. The methodology combines live sessions, individual preparatory work, a buddy system pairing participants, a peer network and ongoing support during the six months when they start practising. A do's and don'ts mentoring toolkit was elaborated and is accessible.

**Key elements for improvements identified** - Both the technical and the mentoring training programmes have to pay more attention to providing access to devices and internet connections. Despite innovative solutions (e.g. sharing devices), too many obstacles remained. Learners should still have access to the digital contents long after their training, to guide their practice. Learners with very low levels of literacy need more support and time – four months is too short for combining literacy and technical training. Language barriers must be overcome, since learners who do not speak English have difficulty following the courses. Special training for dealing with trauma should be integrated into the training of mentors.

## Prospects

There is a high demand to digitalise training in other trades, taking the above lessons learnt into account. Please note that these findings are based on an intermediary report and that the project was not yet completed when this was written.

# Lebanon: Inclusive learning opportunities for vulnerable children during the COVID-19 crisis

*Implementation partner: Save the Children*

## Context and main objectives

The project took place in a highly vulnerable region in Lebanon (Bekaa). The main objective was to respond to the COVID-19 crisis (i) by ensuring access to non-formal education (basic literacy and numeracy) for out-of-school Syrian refugee children and help them transition to formal education, (ii) by providing remedial support for vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese children enrolled in schools to help them catch up on lost learning and keep them from dropping out of school, (iii) by improving the quality and safety of the learning environment and the protection of crisis-affected children.

### Key innovations

**Remote-learning approach using mainly mobile phone and WhatsApp** - During the lockdown and school closure periods, the project was able to support the continuity of learning and of the interaction between teachers and learners by making the best possible use of available technologies.

**Socio-emotional learning (SEL) and child protection in remote learning** - Socio-emotional activities were integrated into remote learning. Teachers were also trained to refer children to psychosocial support or other child protection services when needed. Collaboration and clear communication lines with existing referral systems were ensured.

### Main strengths from which to learn

**Building on available technologies to keep learners engaged** - In order to react to school closures quickly, the project chose to build on the technologies already available to learners: WhatsApp and mobile phones. However, various measures were necessary for this strategy to be effective: (i) **Support access to internet** (provide parents with mobile phone recharge cards), (ii) **Provide learning kits to each learner** (learning materials, basic stationary); (iii) **Ensure flexibility in timing**: catch up classes in the evening for children with no access to mobile phones during the day. **At the pedagogical level**: (i) learners were assigned to virtual classes with a maximum of 25 participants to favour interaction; (ii) WhatsApp was used to engage learners in many different ways, for example through videos, worksheets, voice messages, photos of homework, direct interaction with teachers.

**Strong support for teachers is a success factor** - Shifting to remote learning required robust technical and pedagogical support for teachers to enable them to implement child-centred, inclusive and protective strategies. Teachers kept **interacting and meeting face to face**, gathering with project staff and other teachers to record their virtual lessons. This has proven to be highly supportive in ensuring the quality of the online content and facilitating peer exchange.

**Linking non-formal and formal education** - At the end of each Basic Literacy and Numeracy cycle, children are tested and supported in their transition to formal basic/secondary schools, to TVET or to governmental Accelerated Learning Programmes.

## Prospects

This project is considered innovative and successful, as it has shown that education (including SEL and protection measures) can be delivered through remote modalities even for marginalised children, provided it is adapted to their needs and conditions and provided teachers can keep engaging actively with learners at a distance. In the context of the ongoing multi-layered crisis in Lebanon, the project is therefore being scaled up in the framework of a three-year programme supported by the SDC.

# Mali: Digitalisation of the vocational guidance centres for young people (Espaces d'Orientation Jeunesse – EOJs)

*Implementation partners: Agence nationale pour l'emploi des jeunes (youth employment agency – APEJ) and Glocal (a consultancy specialising in vocational skills development)*

## Background and main objectives

The project's aim is to provide young people and their parents with information on the occupations in demand and on the opportunities for vocational training and integration into the world of work (dual training, technical baccalaureate, internships and apprenticeships, employment, measures to support entrepreneurship, etc.). To this end, the APEJ was assisted in setting up a digital platform to improve the services of its EOJs in a pilot region. This platform is used by young people (who have or have not completed their schooling) to find training or job market integration opportunities. It is also used by employers (private and public sector, NGOs, etc.) for recruitment.

### Key innovation

**A digital platform with the potential to serve the entire country** - The long-term goal is for all EOJs to use this interface to connect training organisations, employers and job/training applicants with each other. That would grant users easier access to opportunities not only in their region but also throughout the rest of the country. The current, paper-based system does not provide easy access to information and prevents any exchanges beyond the local level. There is therefore considerable potential for improvement.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**The platform takes into account the low-literacy target audience** - Developing the platform required a combination of skills in vocational training and in web and mobile application development. It was designed with users in mind, both vocational training actors and young applicants seeking training and/or employment. The platform's technological tools and features were adapted to best serve a target audience with generally low levels of literacy and digital literacy. For example, there are short videos in Bambara, the option of submitting a spoken CV and of applying for jobs easily, etc. The videos include success stories of young people who successfully entered the job market thanks not least to their choice of training in a profession that is in demand. In this regard, girls are encouraged to think outside the box in order to seize market opportunities (see link to example video below). The new system also offers advice on the phone for users who do not have access to electronic tools and the internet.

## Prospects

At the end of this pilot project, in January 2022, the platform will have more than 430 accounts (including 405 applicants). Its operation will depend on its take-up by the APEJ, which will be responsible for organising it in a way that makes its contents attractive to all the actors it serves. Training in the use of the interface and technical support (maintenance of the platform, etc.) will be essential. Scaling up, in particular via other EOJs' adoption of the platform, could be done within the framework of the SDC's new programme to support vocational education and training in Mali.

# Mozambique: Neighbourhood training during COVID-19 crisis

*Implementation partner: Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation*

## Context and main objectives

In northern Mozambique, a rural context exacerbated by the COVID-19 crises and the closure of training institutions, the project aimed to equip young people who have a low level of education and no access to formal training with market-oriented skills to find (self-)employment opportunities, using a Cooperative Group Approach (CGA). The CGA builds on informal apprenticeships to develop win-win situations for both trainees and training providers (and the local economy). Its key elements consist in (i) identifying local economic actors in different trades (artisans, SMEs, leading companies) interested in becoming training providers and developing their business; (ii) enrolling 4–5 youth in the vicinity of each provider (a geographical spread of providers of the same trade is ensured to avoid market saturation); (iii) forming a Cooperative Group (training providers and trainees); (iv) developing, for each trade, a curriculum for a five-month training programme (including theory and practice), and (v) supporting training providers in developing life skills and pedagogical and mentoring skills for implementing the curriculum.

### Key innovation

**A training approach relevant for informal rural economies and crisis situations** - Even in the given crisis situation (due to COVID-19 and other prior factors of fragility), the CGA proved to be relevant and flexible enough in rural areas dominated by the informal economy, where youth have low levels of education and almost no access to formal training. The CGA stimulated trade diversification and specialisation, as well as increased job insertion rates.

**A win-win approach for trainees and training providers** - The CGA allows youth to be trained by skilled artisans and micro-entrepreneurs who share their years of practice, resources (tools, equipment, and infrastructure) and networks. They are mentors for their trainees and often remain their business partner or employer after the training is completed. On the other hand, there are multiple benefits for training providers: trainees bring new ideas, skills (e.g. ICT) and clients to the business. They also increase production, help ensure stable opening hours, and enhance the reputation of the owner, who also has more free time.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**Build on existing local dynamics** - The CGA fosters improvements from within the existing system by using and upgrading traditional skills transfer mechanisms. It brings improvements (e.g. structuring training curricula) and the just enough formalisation to structure the process without too much complexity in order to maintain strong local ownership. The project demonstrated that the approach can be combined well with Results-based Financing (RBF) to reduce dropouts during training, ensure the commitment of training providers to mentor, follow up and involve youth in the market system.

**Develop synergies between formal and non-formal training** - The CGA can be developed in interaction with the formal training system, rather than growing as a parallel non-formal training provision. This interaction between training centres and the private sector contributed to the permeability of training pathways (learners from the CGA can continue in centres), to more internship opportunities in local businesses for learners of training centres, to more credibility for the CGA, etc.

**The elements to consolidate the model are** - The CGA model can be consolidated through improvements in (i) the cooperation framework between the private sector and local authorities; (ii) the quality of training (pedagogy), and (iii) pre- and post-training support (e.g. mentoring).

## Prospects

Although the CGA model still needs consolidation, it is adapted to the context of rural and peri-urban Northern Mozambique and other similar contexts. The model will be used in the new SDC VSD programme in Mozambique (Skills for Youth Economic Empowerment – SYEE). Formalisation should be driven by the private and non-governmental sectors. Scaling-up mechanisms have to take many factors into account and should be parallel to economic growth and to the building of training providers' capacity.

# Gaza Strip: Improve access to basic education and VSD for children with Down syndrome and autism

*Implementation partner: Right to Live Society*

## Context and main objectives

Right to Live Society (RLS) is the only not-for-profit association in the Gaza Strip that works with children with Down syndrome (DS) and a leading organisation in the field of autism. It works with children of all ages using a comprehensive approach to basic education, vocational training and job insertion, rehabilitation, and health care. It also supports poor and marginalised families in accessing its services (e.g. by covering transportation costs). Through this project, the SDC and RLS aimed to develop two main innovations: a new special education curriculum (basic education level) and two new vocational workshops to diversify the job opportunities of the trainees.

### Key innovation

**A special education curriculum for children with Down syndrome and autism** - Based on its experience, RLS was able to design a new special education curriculum tailored to DS and autism that focuses more on social interaction, self-independence and using modern approaches to teaching and learning.

**New vocational training opportunities for youth with Down syndrome and autism** - On the basis of an analysis of the mental and motor abilities of youth with DS and autism on the one hand and of the market demand on the other hand, curricula for two new vocational training courses were developed and implemented: in cleaning services and office services (e.g. book binding, photocopying) – in addition to existing courses in agriculture, carpentry and embroidery.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**Use of Easy Read methodology** - During the project implementation, RLS found a high-priority need related to the implementation of its protection policy: children with DS and autism must be empowered to protect themselves and report any violence or abuse they are exposed to. To this end, RLS used an Easy Read methodology to simplify information and make protection policy documents accessible to children with intellectual disabilities. The positive results that were reached show that Easy Read (which is a global methodology) could and should be used widely for this kind of public (as an equivalent to sign or Braille languages for people with physical disabilities).

## Prospects

The special education curriculum for children with DS and autism could be used across the Gaza Strip if adopted by the Ministry of Education and the UNRWA.

# South Sudan: (E-)Powering Higher Education

*Implementation partner: Swisspeace*

## Context and main objectives

The goal was to strengthen the University of Juba, contributing to a cooperative local system and thus to governance and peace, as well as employment opportunities. The project developed a partnership with two institutes of the University of Juba: (i) with the Institute of Peace, Development and Security Studies (IPDSS), the objective was to support the reform of the curriculum, which was outdated both content and methodology, and ensure that it could be taught across the University of Juba (UoJ), (ii) with the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Institute, the objective was to build training capacities in the field of photovoltaic systems to improve access to electricity for the whole university and to strengthen vocational skills. Fruitful partnerships were developed between the UoJ and the University of Bern and Biel Technical College.

### Key innovation

**Practice-oriented curriculum development with a focus on peace and conflict** - The IPDSS was supported in conducting an innovative curriculum review process. A tracer study was carried out to find out how graduates retrospectively assess the relevance of their studies to entering the job market and what competences and skills they would have wished to learn and develop. Despite its complexity (e.g. working across several departments of the institute) and sensitivity (risk of critical comments), this process, which was new for the University of Juba, was conducted successfully and managed to inform the curriculum review, bringing higher education closer to professional practice. A workshop on curriculum reform and a thematic exchange on peace, conflict and development in South Sudan between the Universities of Juba and Bern, including Swisspeace, were key activities of this process.

**Creation of a photovoltaic training lab at the University of Juba** - A photovoltaic lab was created in order to provide higher vocational training in this essential field. The trainers were jointly trained by a private local PV provider and (remotely) by Biel Technical College (a Swiss practice-oriented public institution). Thanks to these new capacities created, the STEM Institute should be able to maintain its own PV system and deliver quality training to various student groups. This partnership process is another model that exemplifies how to make higher education more practice-oriented.

### Key strengths from which to learn

**Combining engineering and social sciences components** - The project implemented two different workstreams under one theory of change, namely strengthening the UoJ so that it can become a more effective institution of higher education, contributing to a cooperative local system and thus to good governance and peace, and employment opportunities. The technical science/engineering component (hard skills) responds to immediate needs and yields tangible results on the ground, improving the infrastructure and conditions in which university teaching can flourish. The social sciences/peacebuilding curriculum component (soft skills) is more process-oriented and ensures that the two workstreams are implemented in a conflict-sensitive way. Indeed, the collaborative and transdisciplinary dimension of the project was challenging and required additional coordination and communication efforts. This interdisciplinary and multi-department approach strengthens intra-university exchange. It allowed researchers and faculty to draw on each other's capacities. This proved to be successful. It provides initial evidence of how such an approach could be reinforced.

## Prospects

The project has developed processes and capacities that can be used to (i) replicate its activities and (ii) deepen existing collaboration. First, the experience can be used to install PV systems and laboratories in other places (e.g. schools, universities). Processes of curriculum review using tracer studies can also be replicated within the university and foster mutual learning across institutes and departments. Second, regarding the deepening of existing collaboration, potential processes include extending the PV training to more students; extending the tracer study to more stakeholders (e.g. employers, faculty, staff) to inform the curriculum review; strengthening the public-private partnership between the STEM Institute and the private PV provider (to offer more training, create job opportunities, found start-ups); and expanding the collaboration between the universities in Juba and Bern to longer-term exchanges and coaching.

## Annex: Resources for each project

<b>Bhutan – Uninterrupted access to teaching-learning for hard-to-reach and digitally disadvantaged children</b>		<b>Request access*</b>
<p><b>Contact</b> Lekey Wangdi Project Focal, Helvetas Bhutan <a href="mailto:Lekey.Wangdi@helvetas.org">Lekey.Wangdi@helvetas.org</a></p> <p>Tshelthrim Dorji Project Focal, Ministry of Education <a href="mailto:tshelthrim@moe.gov.bt">tshelthrim@moe.gov.bt</a></p>	<p><b>Multimedia resources</b> <a href="#">'Education Bhutan' playlists</a></p> <p><b>Webinars and interviews</b> <a href="#">Interview with Country Director of Helvetas and Project Advisor</a> <a href="#">Webinar Presentation ICT-supported education under COVID restrictions</a> <a href="#">Digitalisation &amp; Education Webinar: ICT-supported education under COVID restrictions</a></p> <p><b>SDC case collection on digitalisation</b> <a href="#">Digitalisation and Inclusive Learning: Cases to inspire innovation</a> <a href="#">TechGuide: Supporting quality learning for inclusion with information and communication technologies (ICT)</a></p>	<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• End of phase report</li> <li>• Evaluation of the project</li> </ul>
<b>China – Impact Hackathons in Higher Education in Asia-Pacific</b>		
<p><b>Contact</b> SDC Beijing Office <a href="mailto:beijing@eda.admin.ch">beijing@eda.admin.ch</a></p>	<p><b>Webinars and interviews</b> <a href="#">Interview with Renaud Vuignier, Head ad interim of the Office of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Beijing</a></p>	<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• Capitalisation report</li> </ul>
<b>Colombia – Equitable STEAM education for children in rural areas</b>		
<p><b>Contact</b> Carolina Molano Scientific Director and Co-founder of Non-profit Foundation Girls Change Latin America <a href="mailto:carolina.molano@gclam.org">carolina.molano@gclam.org</a></p> <p>Natalia Molano, Director of Sustainable Pedagogies and Co-founder of Non-profit Foundation Girls Change Latin America <a href="mailto:natalia.molano@gclam.org">natalia.molano@gclam.org</a></p>	<p><b>Multimedia resources</b> <a href="https://www.girlschangelatinamerica.org/">https://www.girlschangelatinamerica.org/</a></p> <p><b>Webinars and interviews</b> <a href="#">Interview with Catalina Sierra, SDC Colombia Office</a></p> <p><b>SDC case collection on digitalisation</b> <a href="#">Digitalisation and Inclusive Learning: Cases to inspire innovation</a> <a href="#">TechGuide: Supporting quality learning for inclusion with information and communication technologies (ICT)</a></p> <p><b>SDC Newsletter contribution</b> <a href="#">Experiences to improve connectivity, self-care, food sovereignty and access to education in vulnerable rural areas of Colombia</a></p>	<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• Capitalisation report</li> </ul>
<b>Colombia – Cultivo Mi Futuro (cultivating my future)</b>		
<p><b>Contact</b> Catalina Sierra <a href="mailto:catalina.sierra@eda.admin.ch">catalina.sierra@eda.admin.ch</a></p>	<p><b>Multimedia resources</b> <a href="#">Cultivo Mi Futuro Facebook page</a> <a href="#">Cultivo mi futuro: Expectativas de la comunidad de práctica.</a></p> <p><b>SDC Newsletter contribution</b></p>	<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> </ul>

	<a href="#">Experiences to improve connectivity, self-care, food sovereignty and access to education in vulnerable rural areas of Colombia</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalisation report</li> </ul>
<b>Costa Rica – Improving access to formal education and vocational skills development for displaced populations of Central America</b>		
<b>Contact</b> Swiss Cooperation Office in Managua <a href="mailto:managua@eda.admin.ch">managua@eda.admin.ch</a>		<b>EF Project proposal and reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal</li> <li>Capitalisation report</li> </ul>
<b>Ethiopia – Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector</b>		
<b>Contact</b> Embassy of Switzerland in Addis Ababa <a href="mailto:addisababa@eda.admin.ch">addisababa@eda.admin.ch</a>  SDC Eastern and Southern Africa Division <a href="mailto:deza-osa@eda.admin.ch">deza-osa@eda.admin.ch</a>	<b>Multimedia resources</b> <a href="#">IOM Conducts Community Rallies on Girls' Education</a>	<b>EF Project proposal and reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal</li> <li>Logframe</li> <li>Capitalisation report</li> <li>IOM Conducts Community Rallies on Girls' Education in Gursum District – Ethiopia</li> </ul>
<b>Honduras – Transforming technical education for youth in the context of the COVID-19 crisis</b>		
<b>Contact</b> Riccardo Riccardi Helvetas Regional Director for Central America <a href="mailto:Riccardo.Riccardi@helvetas.org">Riccardo.Riccardi@helvetas.org</a>  Contact person in Honduras Jurgen Boquin Project Coordinator, Helvetas Honduras <a href="mailto:Jurgen.Boquin@helvetas.org">Jurgen.Boquin@helvetas.org</a>	<b>Multimedia resources</b> <a href="#">Video: Transformando La Educación Técnica Para La Juventud En Honduras. En Un Contexto De Crisis Covid 19</a> <a href="#">Concurso de buenas prácticas: Video 1</a> <a href="#">Concurso de buenas prácticas: Video 2</a> <a href="#">Concurso de buenas prácticas: Video 3</a> <a href="#">SDC Facebook post highlighting initiative</a> <a href="#">ITC-Virtual Platform</a>	<b>EF Project proposal and reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal (French)</li> <li>Capitalisation report (Spanish)</li> </ul>
<b>Kenya – Adoption of digitalised and innovative approaches to vocational skills training</b>		
<b>Contact</b> Alexander Kiptanui Project Manager <a href="mailto:alexander.kiptanui@swisscontact.org">alexander.kiptanui@swisscontact.org</a>	<b>Multimedia resources</b> <a href="#">Baking module</a> <a href="#">Plumbing module</a> <a href="#">Electrical wiring module</a> <a href="#">Skills for life in Kakuma, Kenya</a> <a href="#">Prospects for disadvantaged people</a> <a href="#">Multimedia story about the Kakuma Skills for Life Project (SDC) (German)</a> <a href="#">The Power of Mentoring – Do's and Don'ts of Mentoring</a>	<b>EF Project proposal and reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project proposal</li> <li>Capitalisation report</li> </ul>



	<p><b>Webinars and interviews</b>  <a href="#">Interview with Alexander Kiptanui, Project Manager, and Agatha Muli, MRM Coordinator, Swisscontact Kenya</a></p> <p><b>SDC case collection on digitalisation</b>  <a href="#">Digitalisation and Inclusive Learning: Cases to inspire innovation</a>  <a href="#">TechGuide: Supporting quality learning for inclusion with information and communication technologies (ICT)</a></p> <p><b>SDC Newsletter contribution</b>  <a href="#">A-Academy: a digital learning platform for the refugee camp</a></p>	
<p><b>Lebanon – Quality and inclusive learning opportunities for vulnerable children in response to the COVID-19 crisis</b></p>		
<p><b>Contact</b>  Valeria Kunz  Head of Education  Save the Children, Switzerland  <a href="mailto:valeria.kunz@savethechildren.ch">valeria.kunz@savethechildren.ch</a></p>	<p><b>Multimedia resources</b>  <a href="#">Video of the project</a></p> <p><b>SDC case collection on digitalisation</b>  <a href="#">Digitalisation and Inclusive Learning: Cases to inspire innovation</a>  <a href="#">TechGuide: Supporting quality learning for inclusion with information and communication technologies (ICT)</a></p> <p><b>SDC Newsletter contribution</b>  <a href="#">Quality and inclusive remote learning for vulnerable children in Lebanon in response to the Covid-19 crisis</a></p>	<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• Logframe</li> <li>• Interim narrative report May 2021</li> <li>• Case study Lebanon – Maha*, 43, and Adam*, 12, from Syria</li> <li>• Capitalisation report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mali – Digitalised vocational guidance centres for young people</b></p>		
<p><b>Contact</b>  Alassane Doua Konate  Programme Officer – Vocational Education and Training  <a href="mailto:alassane.konate@eda.admin.ch">alassane.konate@eda.admin.ch</a></p>	<p><b>Multimedia resources</b>  <a href="#">Mariam Koné – Peinture (painting: French subtitles)</a></p>	<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• Capitalisation report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mozambique – Cooperative Groups - neighbourhood training during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis</b></p>		
<p><b>Contact</b>  Inayah Sultan  NPO – Economic Development  <a href="mailto:Inayah.sultan@eda.admin.ch">Inayah.sultan@eda.admin.ch</a></p> <p>Embassy of Switzerland in Mozambique  <a href="mailto:maputo@eda.admin.ch">maputo@eda.admin.ch</a></p> <p>SDC Eastern and Southern Africa Division  <a href="mailto:deza-osa@eda.admin.ch">deza-osa@eda.admin.ch</a></p>		<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• Capitalisation report</li> </ul>

<b>Gaza Strip – Improve access to basic educational and vocational training services for children with Down syndrome and autism</b>		
<p><b>Contact</b> Swiss Cooperation Office Gaza and West Bank <a href="mailto:gazawestbank@eda.admin.ch">gazawestbank@eda.admin.ch</a></p>	<p><b>Webinars and interviews</b> <a href="#">Interview with Jaser Abu Mousa and Saad Halawani, SDC Gaza and West Bank Office</a></p> <p><b>SDC Newsletter contribution</b> <a href="#">Palestine - Access to Basic Education to Children with Down Syndrome and Autism</a></p>	<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• Capitalisation report</li> </ul>
<b>South Sudan – (E-)Powering South Sudan Higher Education</b>		
<p><b>Contact</b> Swiss Cooperation Office Juba, South Sudan <a href="mailto:juba@eda.admin.ch">juba@eda.admin.ch</a></p>		<p><b>EF Project proposal and reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposal</li> <li>• Capitalisation report</li> </ul>

November 2022

Editor:  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC  
Section Economy and Education  
Freiburgstrasse 130, CH-3003 Bern

Cover image: Lars Buechler

[ee@eda.admin.ch](mailto:ee@eda.admin.ch)

[www.shareweb.ch/site/EI](http://www.shareweb.ch/site/EI)