



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.) *

Supported digital learning in UN Women's Second Chance Education program

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Australia, Cameroon, Chile, India, Jordan, Mexico

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) *

UN Women

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

digital literacy, digital citizenship, digital learning, e-learning, digital content, blended learning, women, marginalized, disadvantaged, refugee, migrant, tutors, mentors, empowerment, livelihoods, employment, entrepreneurship

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The SCE program targets marginalized, disadvantaged women who have been unable to complete their education because of poverty, conflict, cultural norms or other factors. They face huge barriers in resuming education or training through either conventional means or digital learning opportunities. The barriers to the latter are well-known and include lack of devices, connectivity, digital skills, digital confidence, and time. SCE partners design practical solutions at the local level to the challenges of digital learning for this target group, grounded in the global principles of inclusivity and empowerment. Their experiences during Covid-19 restrictions, which in many countries involved rapidly adapting their learning and teaching systems to a wholly online modality, served to highlight the practices that were instrumental in retaining and engaging women in the digital learning program. When our SCE empowerment hubs were able to reopen, the focus remained on blended learning, a combination of face to face and digital tools and training, enabling flexibility for facilitators and learners alike.

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? *

i) SCE targets disadvantaged, marginalized women from indigenous, refugee, displaced and low-income groups who have missed out on education.

SCE is being piloted in Cameroon, Jordan, India, Mexico, Chile and Australia and aims to directly benefit 67,000 women and young women from indigenous, refugee, displaced, and low-income groups.

ii) Even though significant progress has been made to improve access to education worldwide in the last few decades, millions of marginalized women remain unable to access learning opportunities and the trend of gender disparity in education persists.

A key concern for UN Women is that once young girls reach adulthood, the learning and training opportunities that could increase their agency, independence and economic well-being that should be available to them decrease, particularly for adult women in crisis situations and humanitarian settings. Globally, there are 483 million illiterate women (UNESCO, 2019) and 128 million girls out of school (UNESCO, 2020). Globally, women's labor force participation rate is 47.3% (ILO, 2019) and only 1 in 3 businesses are owned by women (34%) (World Bank, 2020).

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, 69 million girls were already out of school in crisis-affected countries and COVID-19 brought 1.6 billion children out of education at the height of school closures (UNESCO, 2020). Girls in crisis-affected countries are overall far less likely to complete primary or lower-secondary school than girls in other low- and middle-income countries (INEE, 2021).

Girls who are unable to complete their education have virtually no chance to do so as adults. They face a combination of key barriers and vulnerabilities that prevent access to relevant educational programmes, including geographic and cultural barriers, gender-based violence, low income, early marriage and childhood pregnancy, conflict and displacement, and poverty and migration.

iii) The SCE Programme aims to ensure that marginalized and disadvantaged women who have missed out on their education have access to and achieve high quality learning and employment outcomes.

It takes a holistic approach based on a theory of change in which it is anticipated that if increased access to high quality content is provided with an emphasis on learning outcome and retention; and if links to the labour market are established to increase the value of education and learning for women; and if positive social norms support second chance education and vocational learning for women; and if supportive multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks for second chance education and vocational learning for marginalised women are promoted, then women will be empowered to determine their future because the structural barriers that women face in equally accessing quality education, learning and decent work opportunities will have been addressed through long-term systematic change.

The program's original target was to reach 67,000 women and as of 31 March, this figure stood at 92,737 women across the six pilot countries.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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i) SCE participants follow one or more of the following pathways out of exclusion, which are tailored not only to their needs as learners but their future as earners:

- vocational education for employment
- entrepreneurship training and skills
- re-entry into formal education.

In addition, all participants follow the foundational pathway of life skills, which includes basic skills, digital literacy and a gender perspective. This pathway is critical for women who have been isolated due to language, social exclusion, patriarchal norms or having young children. For women with young children, SCE enables them to maintain their skills through training, even if they do not have the time or resources to start work or a business at this stage.

The education and training element of SCE is delivered in two ways:

- in-person training in women empowerment hubs (also called women's centres or learning centres) and other physical spaces, including in digital skills. For example, participants receive in-person digital skills training in the hubs so that they can then study online independently on the computers in the hub or at home (Mexico, Jordan, Cameroon)
- digital and online learning through blended and self-study approaches, in the hubs and elsewhere. For example, The Chile SCE program is wholly online while in Mexico, entrepreneurship training comprises hands-on practical workshops on product creation (pot production, floristry, baking and cooking, etc.) and online courses on human development and business skills

SCE's e-learning program occurs through different arrangements and different platforms. For 2018–2022, SCE's primary learning management system was the offline-first platform Kolibri, which was used in the following ways:

- online in hubs (Cameroon, Jordan, Mexico)
- online at home on women's own devices (Chile, Mexico)
- offline in hubs (only in one or two hubs in Mexico)
- offline on tablets loaded with the Kolibri app and SCE content (Mexico)
- to host content through a bespoke mobile app designed for migrant and refugee women (SisterWorks, Australia).

ii) Implementation: 1 July 2018 – 31 December 2023

Carried out in:

- Australia: 2 states (among Indigenous women) and 1 state (among migrant and refugee women)
- Cameroon: 8 sites in 7 states (among refugee, displaced and host populations)
- Chile: nationwide

- India: 12 districts in 3 states
- Jordan: 5 sites (refugee camps and host communities)
- Mexico: 3 states

iii) Global technical partners include Learning Equality (an NGO), UNITAR, UNHCR, with past collaborations with The Open University (UK) and Cobra Collective (UK) (2020-21).

Implementing partners on the ground are mostly NGOs, CSOs and education institutions. They include Australia: Real Futures (Greater Western Sydney), SisterWorks (Melbourne); Cameroon: Le Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille (MINPROFF) ; Chile: Acción Emprendedora, AIEP, Infocap, VeOmás; India: Pradan (lead partner); Aaina, Chaitanya, Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, Manjari Foundation, PRAN (Preservation and Proliferation of Rural Resources and Nature), Shristi; Jordan: Arab Women's Organization of Jordan; Mexico: ProMéxico, ProSociedad, SEPICJ.

iv) Total budget (July 2018 – Dec 2023) = \$28.9 million
Sources: BHP Foundation, HP Inc, UNHCR, UN Women.

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

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- 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.);
- What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

i) SCE has achieved results in all four of its outcome areas:

- greater access to high quality educational content
- increased employment, livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities
- fewer women disadvantaged by harmful and discriminatory social norms
- enhanced multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks that enable scaling of SCE solutions.

ii) As of 31 March 2022, SCE had reached 92,737 women

- 44,810 women have pursued the life skills learning pathway, with digital literacy being central in this offering
- 458 courses have been curated and developed by local partners in 83 Hubs, with a focus on tailored, localised, relatable content.
- The SCE e-portal has reached 23,778 registered participants for online learning
- 35,745 women have graduated, with 30,346 starting to earn an income, through self-employment/entrepreneurship (17,319) or employment (13,157)

iii) A final evaluation of the pilot phase of the program is currently ongoing and due to report in August 2022. A mid-term review of the program was carried out in 2020, which concluded that 'SCE has demonstrated, with excellence, that it is possible to develop a "global programme with local solutions" through flexible focus and processes that are driven by local contexts, local needs and local opportunities'.

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? *

ii) Good practices that have emerged from delivering SCE online, resulting in optimal engagement for learners, including the following:

1. Personalized support from mentors and tutors

Ensuring personalized support for each participant can make a huge difference to the quality of the learning programme and women's retention within it. A mentoring and/or tutoring system, using volunteers who are graduates of the program, students, or members of the local community, is a good way of offering regular 1:1 support and encouragement.

2. A focus on building relationships and trust

For women who see the digital world as 'not for them' and who lack skills and confidence, the relationship and trust they have with SCE staff can be key in moving them towards digital learning. Building a relationship and trust with each participant start from her first moments in the SCE program.

3. Contextualised content, created or commissioned locally

Learning materials need to be relevant and relatable, contain imagery that reflects participants' contexts, and be presented in bite-sized chunks. Text needs to be concise but friendly and conversational. The most engaging courses are those that IPs create or commission themselves. They understand their target audience and their needs and priorities, and the media and style of language they respond to best. It is possible to design courses for women who cannot read using audio, video and pictures.

4. A blended learning approach

SCE hubs or women's centres allow participants to get the best of both worlds in terms of in-person and digital learning. Initial digital skills training in the hubs enable participants to study independently at home; tutorial videos can be used for reference following an in-person session; digital resources can be used to stimulate discussion within an in-person session.

5. Peer support and social learning

Participants benefit not just from one-to-one support from a facilitator, mentor or tutor but from connections with peers. It is easier to maintain motivation for digital learning when feeling connected to others and significant learning can occur from hearing other women's experiences. Regular live Zoom sessions with the same group of people and WhatsApp groups allow relationships to build over time.

6. Use of everyday, familiar tools alongside the less familiar learning management system

Setting up communication channels with tools that women are already familiar with allows them to connect with each other immediately. This is often through WhatsApp groups but can also be through SMS texts, phone calls and emails.

7. Use of both synchronous and asynchronous learning

Synchronous sessions enable participants, mentors and tutors to build relationships and trust, share experiences and solve problems. Asynchronous learning enables participants to access materials when and where it suits them.

8. Partnerships with local government and the private sector

Partnerships with IT, computer hardware and telecoms companies can lead to the installation of electricity, internet connection and computers in hubs and access to professional digital training courses. Collaboration with government can add great value to device distribution initiatives or digital training.

9. Digital training not just in using the learning platform but to become digital citizens, active members of the digital world

Providing examples of the tangible benefits of digital literacy outside of e-learning, such as in accessing government social support, banking and support children's schoolwork, can improve participants' motivation to learn digital skills.

10. Ongoing flexibility and adaptability

The burden of unpaid domestic and care work means that SCE participants can struggle to find the time for the e-learning program. SCE facilitators constantly adapt their schedules and content according to the needs of particular cohorts and individuals, to maintain retention rates and be as inclusive as possible.

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 program has achieved results in all of its outcome areas in a bold range of contexts during a highly challenging period. These include low and middle-income countries with groups characterized by poverty, marginalization and social exclusion; fragile and crisis countries with displaced and refugee populations; and a developed context with indigenous and migrant and refugee groups. Activities across these very different contexts through the four years of operation has highlighted good practices in the development of digital skills and use of digital learning among marginalized women which are applicable not just in one context but across several. The SCE program has shown that it is possible to leverage partnerships to design and implement effective local solutions within a shared global framework.

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. *

Tu Oportunidad – Second Chance Education Programme : Lessons Learned and Recommendations in Online Learning for Women
<https://lac.unwomen.org/es/digiteca/publicaciones/2021/09/programa-tu-oportunidad#view>

Second Chance e-portal: <https://www.mylearningpathway.org/en>

Second Chance YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKrbUoA0KVHD_Mpc5JcygQw