

ENRICHING LEARNING DURING COVID 19 & BEYOND

CONCEPT NOTE



PROBLEM STATEMENT

In response to the COVID 19 pandemic, governments around the world have enforced various measures to increase social distancing and flatten the curve. These measures – lockdown, extended holidays, and limited movement – have resulted in the closing of schools in 181 countries.



In India, Nepal and Bangladesh approximately 368 million children are out of school due to COVID related measures¹.



There is a tremendous amount of uncertainty on how the pandemic will develop. However, even best case projections anticipate that in the absence of effective preventative medication and/or a vaccine, schools and learning will continue to be disrupted for the next 12 to 18 months². These disruptions may be system-wide school closures in response to national emergencies, localized closure in response to the emergence of “hot spots” or even cycles of schools restarting and stopping in response to a pandemic that occurs in waves.

Regardless of the specific way in which the pandemic unfolds it is apparent that learners, their guardians and their communities must be provided opportunities for distance learning, else the gains made in Education for Nepal will be reversed. To prevent this, strong measures and investments must be made in continued education.

¹ UNESCO. (April 4, 2020). Monitoring School Closing due to COVID. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

² Saavedra, Jaime, Global Director, Education, World Bank (April 4, 2020). The Impact of COVID on Learning. <https://www.linkedin.com/video/live/urn:li:ugcPost:6653335664693702656/>

RATIONALE

In response to the challenges noted above, it is critical to engage in four thematic areas to ensure that children continue to be prepared for success in the 21st century:

Theme 1 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Skills

as noted by SDG 4.1, foundational skills are critical as they form the basis of future learning.

Theme 2 Hands-on Co-curricular Science Activities

everyday household items can make for enriching and engaging activities that bring the science curriculum to life.

Theme 3 Digital Citizenship

the COVID world has resulted in a sudden increase in the need for digital literacy skills. These skills will likely be valuable beyond the crisis, as the world moves towards e-governance, and as fake news and cyberbullying remain critical issues.

Theme 4 Entrepreneurial and Soft Skills

risk taking, collaboration and design thinking aid the holistic development of young adults, while also contributing to their workplace readiness.



Specifically, it is necessary to develop scalable co-curricular programmes that are not contingent on physical proximity.



Scalable remote co-curricular learning is important because:

1. The major focus of national and subnational governments, in response to the COVID crisis, will be the provision of curricular learning. There exist a number of CSOs and national initiatives that have already digitized the state mandated curriculum³. Thus, we anticipate this approach will supplement the efforts undertaken by governments.
2. While curricular learning is necessary it is not sufficient⁴. Co-curricular activities enrich learning, develop metacognitive/21st century skills, and support the achievement of curricular goals. With co-curricular activities frequently unavailable to most students even in normal times, this project provides co-curricular learning opportunities at-scale during the COVID crisis. This project will test models for continuing remote at-scale co-curricular programs in the post COVID world, and generate baseline data for future endeavours.
3. Co-curricular learning provides opportunities for Edutainment, which can contribute to the learning outcomes targeted by the curriculum in exciting ways.

³ See Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Government of Nepal (April 4, 2020). MoEST & Himalayan Techies Middle School Science Curriculum. <https://moest.himalayantechies.com/> AND OLE Nepal (April 4, 2020), Digitization of Textbooks, <http://www.olenepal.org/e-pustakalaya/>

⁴ The "Learning Crisis" i.e. inadequacy of classroom teaching and curricular activities alone to achieve desired outcome is well documented. See Nepal's NASA Report (<http://www.ero.gov.np/article/253/nasa-reports.html>) or various citizen led assessments of foundational skills conducted by the PAL Network (<https://palnetwork.org/>)

TARGET GROUPS

We will reach two distinct audiences with this project.

1. Primary Audience

Stakeholders in a child's education. This group comprises those who are keenly affected by any disruptions or challenges in a child's education.

- **Decision makers** – Family (Parents, Older Siblings, Peer Influencers)
- **Influencers** – School Leaders, Teachers, Community Leaders

The primary audience includes three categories in terms of their access, understanding and ease with technologies: i) those who have abundant access to the internet and understand how to navigate it with ease; ii) those who have some access to the internet, but their primary usage of technology is limited to social media; and iii) those who have no digital access at all.

2. Secondary Audience

Policy Makers and Social Development Agencies. This group comprises those who would benefit from a keen understanding of the needs of the primary audience as outlined above, in the creation of programs and policies for the same.

- Ministry of Education
- Education focals at various government structures
- Development agencies
- School Management Committees

EXPECTED RESULTS

Further research will be undertaken to identify and map all existing tools and repositories. However, through preliminary research some possible tools and repositories for each theme have been identified below.



We aim to improve student learning by providing equitable access to co-curricular learning experiences through high tech, low tech and no-tech channels and where possible, by using existing resources.



Theme 1 Foundation Literacy and Numeracy Skill

Name	Description	Applicability
Let's Read	Offers free open-source children's literature	Books are in Nepali, Tharu, Bangla and immediately usable in Bangladesh/ Nepal.
Global Digital Library	Offers free open-source access to children's literature	Books are in Nepali, Bangla, Hindi and immediately usable in Bangladesh/ Nepal/India.
Rising Academies Radio Scripts	High quality scripts developed for over-the-radio literacy and numeracy instruction. In use in Liberia and Sierra Leone, with pilots in Pakistan, Uganda etc.	Some lessons may need to be recontextualized for South Asia. They may need translation in regional languages
Home Learning Activities	Designed by the Education Cluster in response to the COVID	Directly applicable

Theme 2 Hands-on Co-curricular Science Activities

Name	Description	Applicability
Karkhana Science	Hands-on science activities aligned to the Nepali national curriculum	Videos are in Nepali, workbooks are in English and will need translation. Will need minor tweaks for Bangladesh/India
Toys From Trash	Offers free videos for simple hands-on activities for science using low resource material	Videos are in English and several South Asian languages. Ready for immediate use.
Idea Astra	TV program on conducting fun hands-on science activities	Previous recorded programs can be quickly deployed in Nepal. New programming will need to be developed. Will need to be reshot for

Theme 3 Digital Citizenship

Name	Description	Applicability
Karkhana Computing	Digital citizenship and digital literacy resources contextualized for South Asia.	Teacher/parent orientation workshops ready in Nepali. Content ready in English, needs to be translated into regional languages.
Common Sense	High quality and comprehensive digital citizens resources for basic education.	Designed for the United States. Needs to be recontextualized and translated.

Theme 4 Entrepreneurial and Soft Skills

Name	Description	Applicability
Customized tools will be developed in Phases 2 and 3.		

OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

The expected results for this project are guided by four key considerations.

First, **to increase the ability of the target audience to use the learning digital tools and repositories.** The region has a reasonably high degree of internet penetration but a significant number of internet users are not comfortable with utilizing digital tools beyond social media and communication apps. Acting as a catalyst - through advocacy, user support and awareness campaigns - we can trigger these users to access and utilize learning digital tools/repositories. This offers a quick-to-launch, quick-to-scale and cost effective immediate response. We will monitor this objective by looking at the percentage increase in unique IPs accessing the digital repository from our target region. We will also monitor the number of repeat visits as well as time spent on the repository.

Second, **to influence the knowledge capacity of target groups.** In all the platforms that are used to disseminate content, we will create rapid assessment methods to investigate changes in knowledge. These assessment methods will range from quizzes on digital platforms to call-ins to interactive radio and TV programmes, missed-call campaigns through Helpline, messenger campaigns through Viber or WhatsApp and Pull SMS.

Third, **to promote equity in access to co-curricular learning we will create cross-platform adaptations of high quality content.** As access to the internet is not available to the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of society, we propose using traditional media such as Radio and TV to reach them. To do so we will adapt proven content designed for traditional media from countries for South Asia as well as adapting digital content for traditional media.

Finally, **to influence and skill local governments to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate effective digital strategy on education.**

Outcome 1

Co-curricular learning is established as a tool that enriches and complements school curriculums in target areas

Output 1:

Capacitate target groups to utilize existing and new resources on co-curricular learning.

Output 2:

Local level governments possess increased capacities to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate effective digital literacy programmes.

Outcome2

Target groups adopt the project's co-curricular learning plan

Output 1:

Increased abilities of the primary target audiences to access learning digital tools and repositories.

Output 2:

Knowledge is increased through the promotion of equity in access to co-curricular learning through cross-platform content adaptation

ACTIVITIES

A phased implementation of activities shall support the achievement of objectives. Activities will be monitored to understand behavioral insights through a results framework and shall be adjusted iteratively to maximize impact.

PHASE 1

- Design and development of the project's co-curricular learning plan including the identification of existing repositories within each theme.
- Development of a mnemonic to give a unique identity to co-curricular learning. This will provide access for recognition of co-curricular learning in both target audiences and stakeholders for this project as well as future projects and will be included in all visible communication materials.
- Development of key messages about co-curricular learning and how to access key repositories.
- Develop knowledge products using key messages for awareness of co-curricular learning and identified repositories. This will include the production of audio and video materials and one pagers to make aware the importance of co-curricular learning and its benefits with links to identified repositories as well as project priorities. Identify communication channels for dissemination.
- Establish Helpline to provide call to action and access to information for target audiences that are less technologically proficient.
- Develop a landing page/website/engagement/learning portal to host all communication materials/products including links and guidance on how to access and utilize links to repositories of high quality platform-agnostic content. This can be used beyond the project.

- Communicate existing learning content across all platforms including the dissemination of key messages through radio magazine programs such as radio spots, PSA, interactions with both urban and rural audiences; TV; social media; SMS; and messaging campaigns (Viber and Whatsapp)

PHASE 2

- Develop cross platform content from existing learning repositories to reach across the digital divide
- Adapt effective tools from other countries and regions for the target audience.
- Create new content to fill the gaps that are identified in the 4 thematic areas

PHASE 3

- Design and develop a strategy to engage and strengthen capabilities of local governments to design, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate effective digital literacy programmes
- Develop digital and traditional media tools for entrepreneurship and soft skill development.

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