



Driving Quality Through Equity

Exploring positive deviant school practices,
and holistic, participatory approaches to
teaching and learning

Schools2030 Research Webinar
6 November 2024



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION

AGENDA

10 mins **Introduction & welcome**

40 mins **Research presentations and Q&A:**

- Mixed-Methods Research to Develop a Values-Alignment Approach for Holistic, Growth-Oriented Teaching Practices in Pakistan, The University of Texas at Austin
- Holistic learning for SEND students in Uganda primary schools, Open Development & Education and eKitabu
- Action research and equity: effects on innovative school environments in Brazil, School of Education, University of São Paulo
- 'Data Must Speak' about Positive Deviant Approaches to Learning in Tanzania and Zanzibar, UNICEF Innocenti

30 mins **Breakout rooms carousel: 2x 15 mins**
Time to learn more and discuss two of the research projects

10 mins **Close**





WHAT



Schools2030 is a global movement for holistic learning and teacher leadership.

The movement brings together a diverse coalition which includes educators, school leaders, civil society, researchers, international organisations and government across ten countries and 1,000+ schools.

Our goal is to improve quality teaching and holistic learning, and to foster resilient education systems across the world, including for those living in remote regions and those facing multiple forms of marginalisation and crises.





We do this through a focus on teacher agency – recognising educators as leaders, innovators and active agents in education reform.



HOW

THROUGH INNOVATION

Using the principles of Human-Centred Design (HCD) Schools2030 uses a three-step model – Assess, Innovate, Showcase – to drive school-level innovation towards wider systems-change. Through this cyclical model, teachers are provided with the tools and support to:



STEP ONE: **ASSESS**

Schools2030 supports teachers to measure the holistic learning levels of their students, and the quality of their classroom environment, with simple contextualised assessment tools.



STEP TWO: **INNOVATE**

Schools2030 supports teachers to design, test and implement new pedagogical practices and innovations to improve holistic learning outcomes.

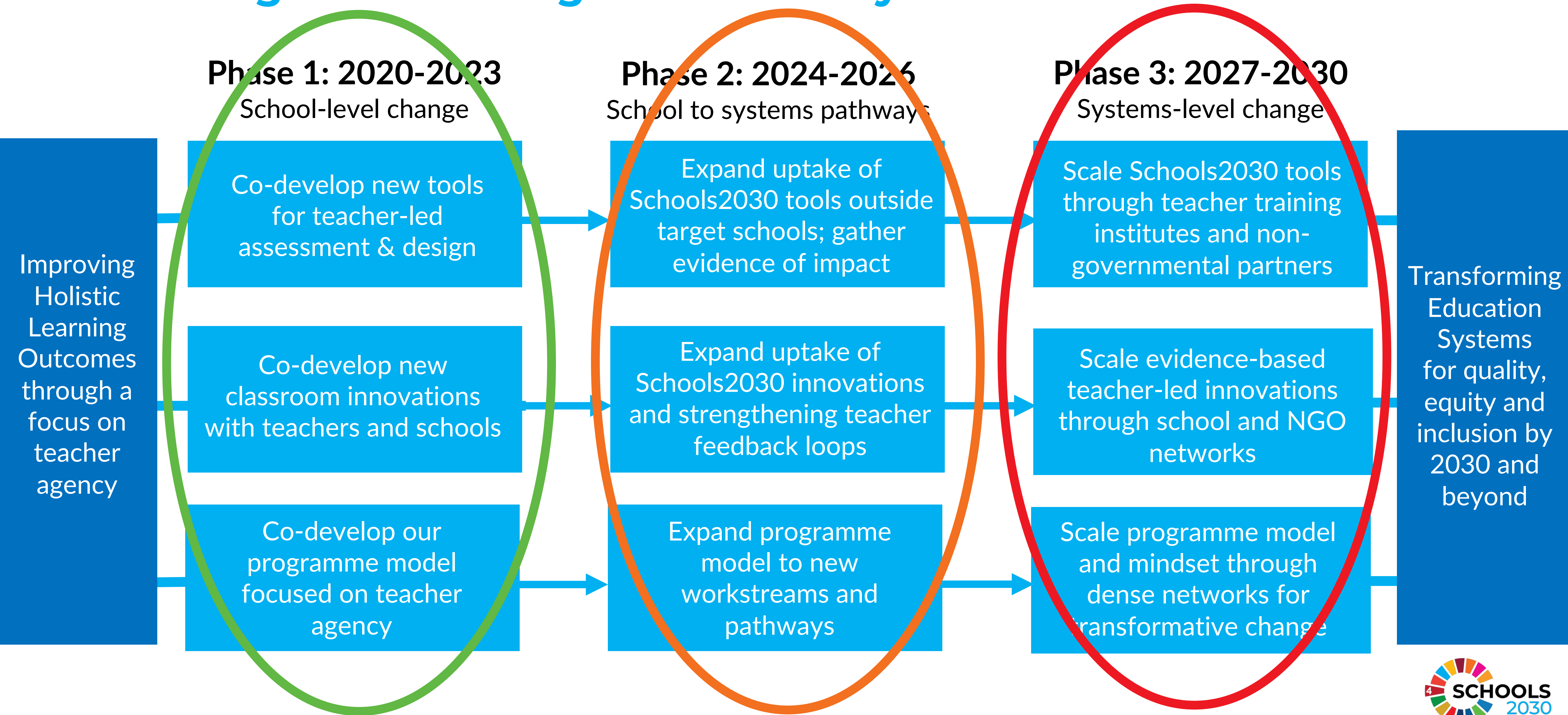


STEP THREE: **SHOWCASE**

Schools2030 supports teachers to showcase their best practices and innovations at national and global forums to inspire systems-level educational change.

Schools2030: 10 years, 3 phases

Achieving SDG4 through School to System-Level Transformation



There is a crisis in learning – a crisis of equity, inclusion, quality and relevance.

Teachers across the world must be supported to respond to the needs of their learners and communities with agility, expertise and leadership.



Research presentations

Mixed-Methods Research to Develop a Values-Alignment Approach for Holistic, Growth-Oriented Teaching Practices in Pakistan

Dr Nick Medrano, The University of Texas at Austin

Holistic learning for SEND students in Ugandan primary schools

Hannah Walker, Open Development & Education

Bazil Onen, eKitabu

Action research and equity: effects on innovative school environments in Brazil, School of Education

Bruna Chung, University of São Paulo

‘Data Must Speak’ about Positive Deviant Approaches to Learning in Tanzania and Zanzibar

Jessica Bergmann and Ellen Ledger, UNICEF Innocenti



Using Values-Alignment to Promote HCD Practices

Fortunato N. Medrano & David S. Yeager
The University of Texas at Austin

Exploring Barriers and Promoting Factors to Adoption

- Pakistan - Gilgit Baltistan
- 14 Teacher Interviews
- Former HCD Participants



What perceived barriers prevent HCD adoption?

What supports are needed to promote HCD adoption?

What values might be aligned with HCD practices?

Identified Teacher Beliefs and Values

1. Initial belief that HCD would be ineffective or too much additional work
 - a. Initially, gaining the willingness of the teachers who did not participate in HCD, seemed resistant to participate in the program - posed a challenge
2. Teaching beyond rote materials; focus on character growth
 - a. *In my role as [a] teacher, my mission extends beyond imparting knowledge; it encompasses nurturing the holistic development of children to help them reach their full potential*
3. Difficulty with and Value of Gathering Student Feedback
 - a. *Student feedback serves as a catalyst for continuous improvement in teaching methodologies and classroom dynamics. Teachers who are receptive to feedback from students are better equipped to adapt their approaches*
 - b. *interviewing students, parents and colleagues, it seemed too much to accomplish.*
4. Difficulty in Learning Material / Importance of Persistence
 - a. *We realized that the task ahead was more challenging than we had anticipated.*
 - b. *There is always room for improvement, and changes are expected. Therefore, from one step to another, we modify our approach based on our learnings from the earlier plan.*
5. Wanting to be an asset to their colleagues, schools, and communities.
 - a. *I felt somewhat apprehensive as I considered myself just a community teacher...However, as I actively participated in the training, I realized that I had valuable contributions to make*
 - b. *The parents responded positively, expressing gratitude for the support and acknowledging the noticeable changes in their children's academic performance, behavior and enthusiasm for learning.*

Pilot of Intervention Materials - 20 Teachers

- *The Developmental Science of Learning*
- Student Engagement
- HCD Creates Supports Based on Needs
- Better Support Leads to Higher Standards
- Importance of Listening to Students
- Continuous Improvement
- Benefiting Your Community
- Practical Advice from Past Participants

The key takeaway is that a student's environment can impact the actual brains of children as they learn. This means that teachers and instructors can play a key role in the development of a child.

What to Keep in Mind

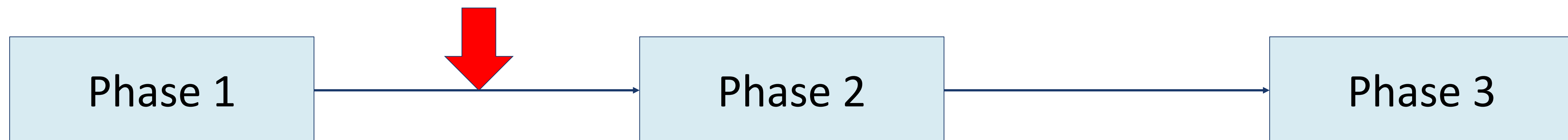
There are many things to keep in mind about the HCD process. In fact, it is likely that you are feeling overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information you have been exposed to so far.

With this in mind, we compiled several key lessons that previous teachers who have gone through HCD training have recommended. These are not meant to cover everything that you could possibly need to be successful; in fact, your first attempt at this may not be as successful as you hope. That is fine and expected, the point of HCD is to try many different approaches and then refine and iterate on them. These ideas are meant to be starting points for you take with you on your initial exploration.

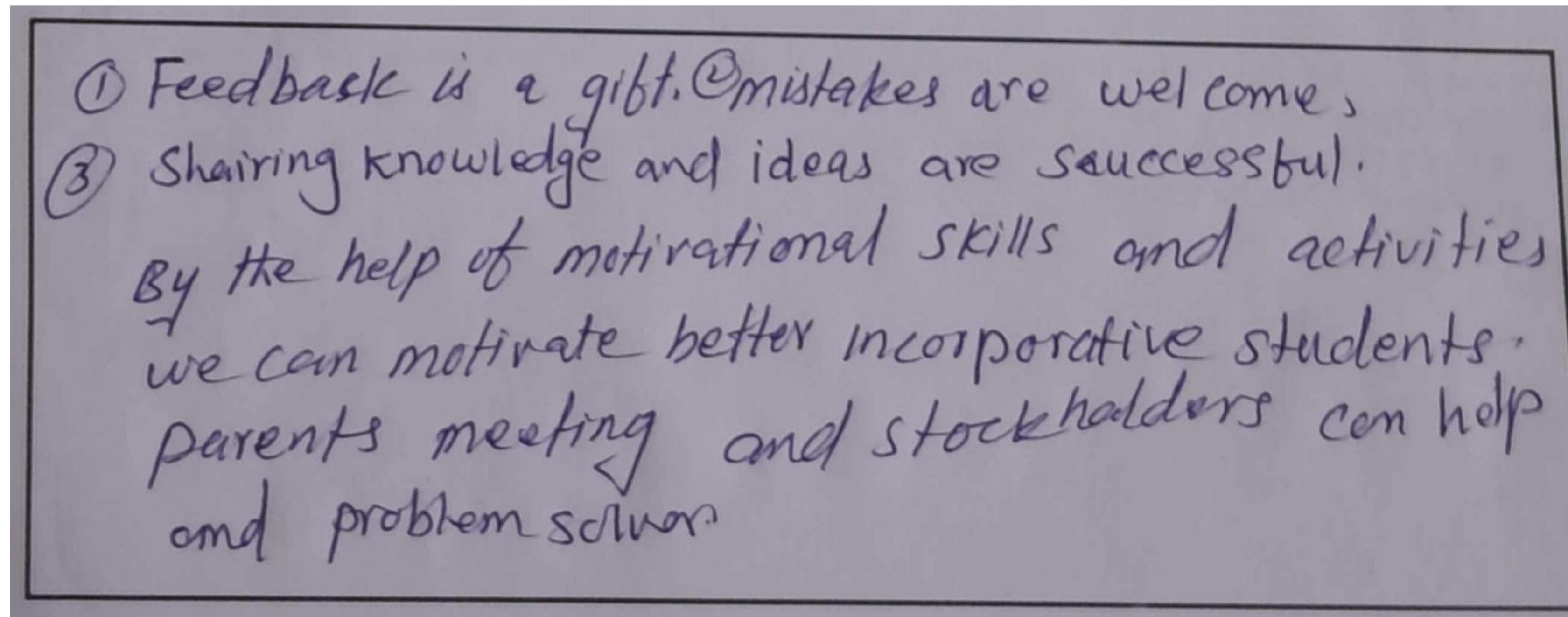
On the next few pages, you will read about stories from fellow teachers about three key lessons:

- The Importance of Student Feedback
- The Need to Continually Improve and Iterate
- The Benefit to Your Community

students were more likely to have higher intelligence scores.



Teacher Reaction of Piloted Materials



“1 Feedback is a gift. 2. Mistakes are welcome.

3 Sharing knowledge and ideas are successful. By the help of motivation skills and activities we can motivate better (in)cooperative students. Parents meeting and stockholders can help and problem solve.”

Not all students in a class ~~can~~ share the same ~~background~~ background. Some belong to noble backgrounds; ~~some~~ whereas some come from wealthier ones. A teacher should keep in consideration such differences among students. Students requirements should be fulfilled. The methodology of HCD should be adopted.

“Not all students in a class share the same background. Some belong to noble background, whereas some come from wealthier ones. A teacher should keep in consideration such differences among students.”

Future Directions

1. Refine Materials Based on Teacher Feedback
2. Examining Effect on Longer Term Engagement with HCD Practices
3. Pilot and Launch a Larger Test of the Materials
4. Create toolkits and/or summaries based on the intervention materials for teachers to use.

Key Takeaways

1. HCD can be used to identify needs of most vulnerable students.
 - a. Often those who are financially unstable, food insecure, or marginalized.
2. HCD can engage an entire community; teachers often take these lessons back to their schools / villages.
3. Teachers are looking for longer term support of HCD practices.

Schools2030: Inclusive education toolkit

Exploring the intersection of holistic curricula, learner-centred pedagogies and teacher development in Uganda



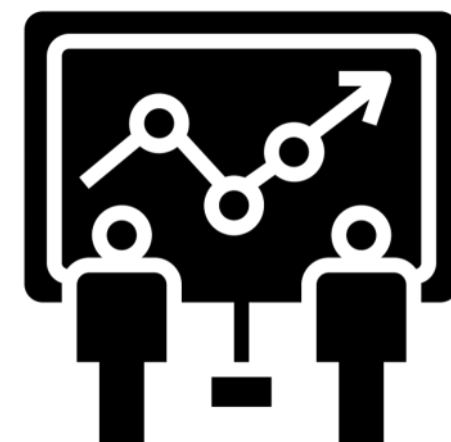
Project overview and focus

This participatory research aims to **understand** and **build** more inclusive practices to support the diversity of learners in Ugandan primary school classrooms.

Teacher-learner
relationships



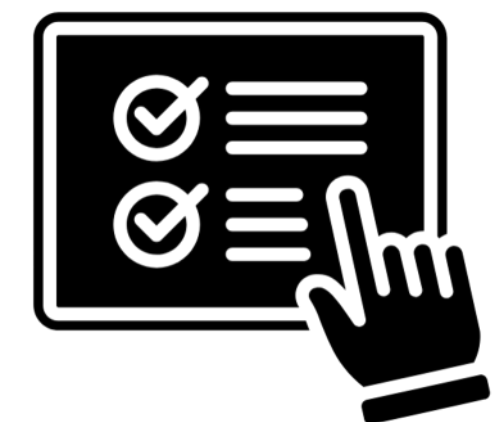
Inclusive
pedagogies



Holistic learning
approaches



Inclusive
assessment



Research methodology and priorities

**Co-creation and
collaboration**

**Inclusive
approaches to
research**

Teacher agency



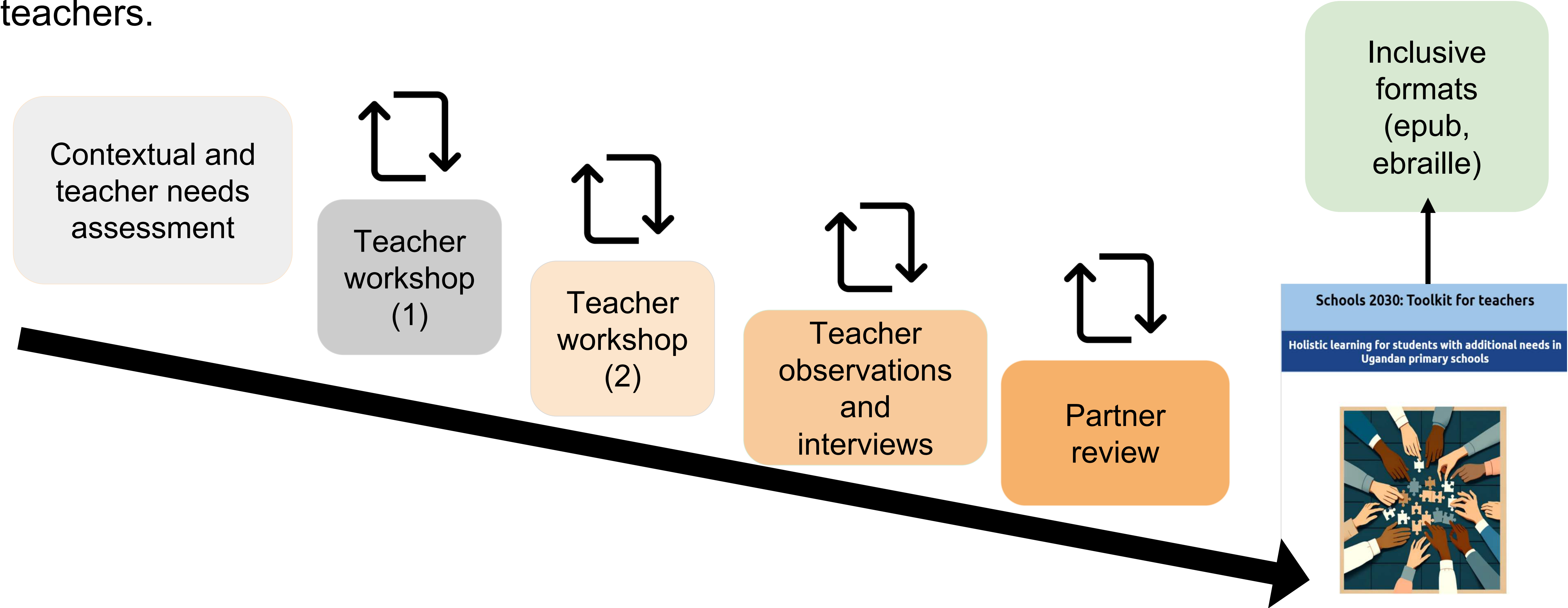
**Researcher
modelling**

**Iterative and
reflective**

**Alignment with
local and
national
environment**

Data collection and toolkit development

Four primary schools in Kampala with eight champion teachers – four school leaders, four teachers.



Key findings and learnings

There is a significant need for accommodations for learners with hearing impairments

There are major contextual and cohort differences between schools and classrooms

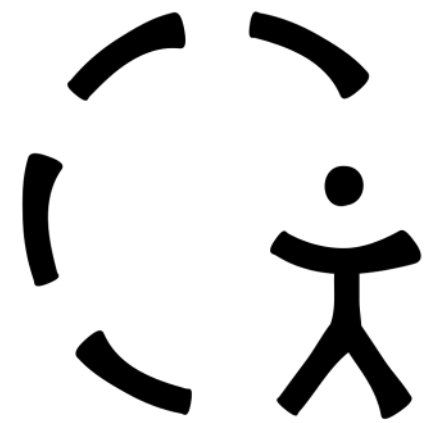
Teachers found critical questioning, real-life case studies and peer to peer activities the most useful aspects of the toolkit

Teachers reported that community and parental stigmas are one of the most significant barriers to learner attendance and progress

Inclusive assessment requires greater work, especially top down (headteachers, examination regulations)

There is a correlation between teachers whose learners reported a positive relationship with their teacher and the score on inclusive observations

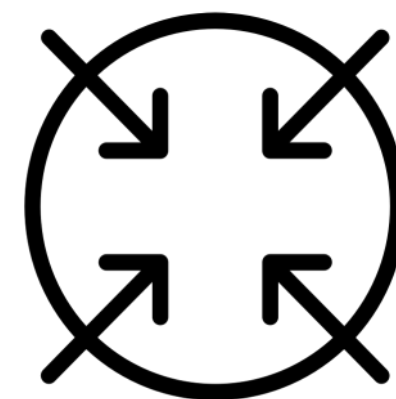
Next steps and recommendations



**Accessible, open access
resources**



**Collaborative efforts (policy,
community, stakeholders)**



**Larger scale piloting and
integration with HCD materials**

Action Research and Equity: *effects on innovative school environments*

Bruna Chung
Project lead: Dr. Elie Ghanem
University of São Paulo
Brazil

· FEUSP



Do action research processes in innovative schools participating in the Schools2030 program generate more equitable relations amongst students of different genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, and disabilities?

Objective

Present evidence-based recommendations for promoting equity in education, specifically in the field of action research approaches.

Hypothesis

Action research processes are associated with changes in the school environment in favor of equitable relations amongst students of different **genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, and those with disabilities.**



METHODOLOGY



WORKFLOW 1

Literature Review on Action Research and Equity

Analysis of global literature on the relationship between action research and educational equity, focusing on evidence types and potential impact in non-academic learning contexts.

KEY FINDINGS

- Studies on the impact of action research on equity in basic education schools are scarce and recent;
- Literature lacks robust evidence of action research's impact on equity;
- Scarcity of studies utilizing mixed methods - predominance of qualitative approaches;
- Difficulty in identifying precise indicators of effectiveness regarding equity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Two key studies that linked action research to improved equity stood out:

- Arar and Taysum (2019)

The study found that **distributed leadership** improved intercultural awareness and led to a 17-27% improvement in language and math exams.

- Gaias et al. (2020)

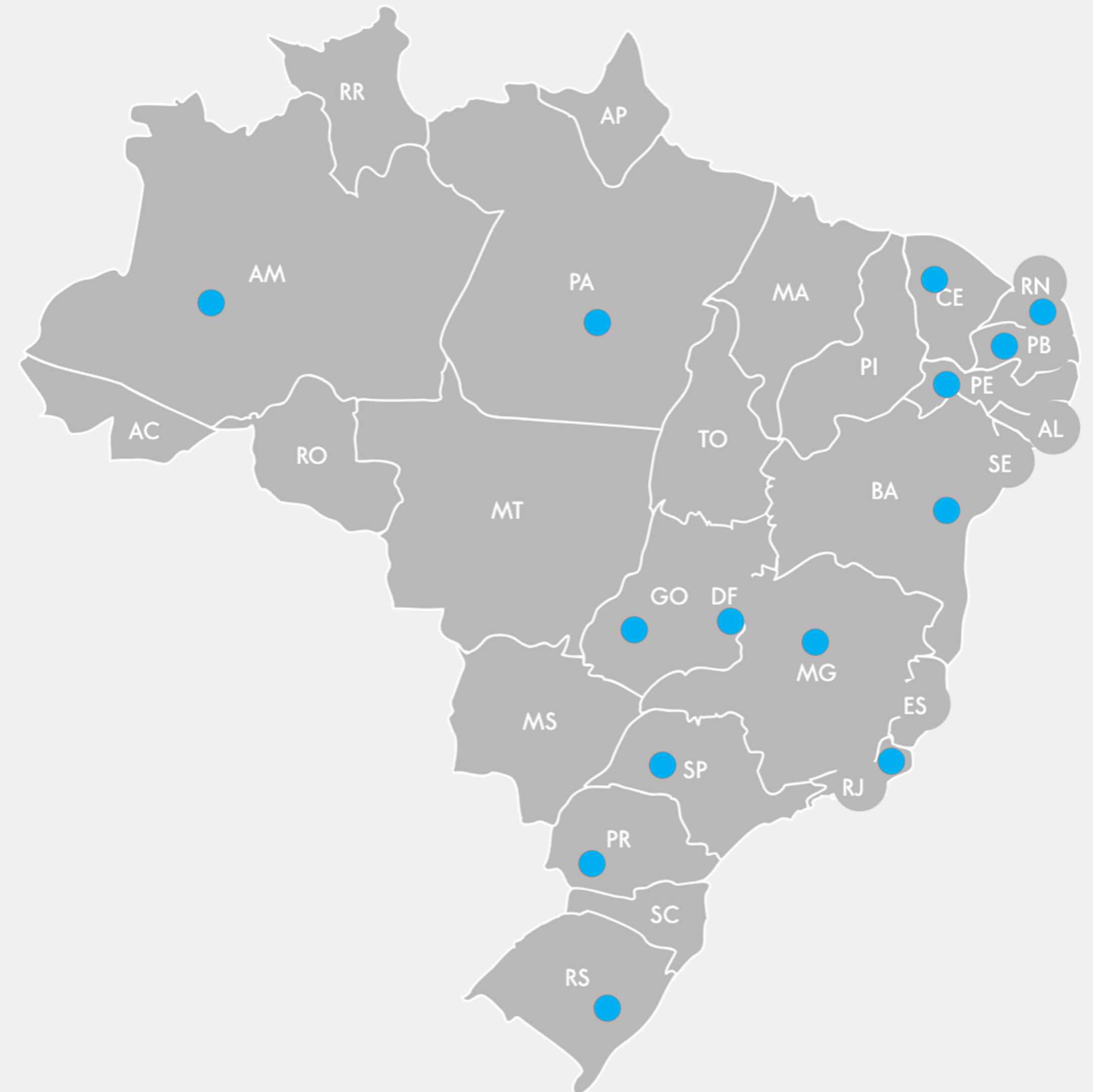
The study used **participatory methods to tackle implicit biases**, improving **teacher-student relationships**, boosting student motivation, fostering belonging, and reducing disparities, particularly for Black students.

METHODOLOGY

WORKFLOW 2

Primary data collection conducted across **26 Schools2030 schools and educational organisations**, covering all regions of the country and various age groups.

- **Survey** (26 schools)
- **Semi-Structured Interviews** (19 schools)
- **Participant Observation** (5 schools)
- **Mapping Teacher Training Policies for Equity** (education departments overseeing the 5 observed schools)



KEY FINDINGS

Teacher Training Policies for Equity

- Formal training on equity-related issues is sporadic and reaches a limited amount of professionals;
- Predominance of teacher training programs that primarily address issues related to **disabilities** and **ethnicity**;
- Notable lack of training focused on **gender** and **sexual orientation** issues;

Recurring themes in teacher training programs

Disabilities	Ethnic-racial relations
Accessible and inclusive practices	Anti-racist education
Individualized education plan	Combating bullying and racism
Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS)	Human rights education
Specialized Educational Services	Inclusion of Indigenous and Afro-brazilian themes in schools curricula

KEY FINDINGS



Action Research’s Impact on Equity

- Effects are subtle and vary across schools, but are generally **positive**;
- Action research contributed to **maintaining** or **improving** equity;
- Action research enables teachers to identify diverse learning needs and address asymmetries in role learning, promoting equitable educational activities.

Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Increased egalitarian view;● Increased empathy and respect among students;● Activities include collaborative projects, accessibility support, learning Brazilian Sign Language, and discussions for awareness and respect;● Challenges remain on addressing “invisible” disabilities (eg. ADHD, autism).
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stable or increased egalitarian view;● Greater unity and mutual understanding;● Activities include anti-racist collectives, cultural events, conflict mediation committees, reflection on identity, and initiatives to promote racial equality and visibility.
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stable or increased egalitarian view;● Reevaluation of gender roles;● Activities include discussions on gender, the inclusion of girls in sports, boys playing with dolls, and the integration of boys and girls in various activities.
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stable or increased egalitarian view;● Greater sense of acceptance and solidarity;● Actions include discussions on coexistence and awareness of sexual diversity, lectures, workshops, artistic-political manifestations, and ongoing professional development for teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Incorporating Action Research in Professional Development

Action research should be integrated into professional development frameworks across educational systems, with policies that support teachers in systematically collecting data to improve their practices. Professional development must move beyond one-size-fits-all models, encouraging teachers to actively experiment and refine their strategies based on insights gained from their classrooms. This approach is effectively enhanced by action research, which promotes critical reflection on equity practices and drives meaningful changes in teaching methods.

"Engaging in study and research encourages us to reflect on and reassess our practices. Action research challenges us to rethink our approaches, which in turn cultivates empathy in children."

— Quote by a school manager

Data Must Speak (DMS) Positive Deviance Research

Practices & behaviours of positive deviant schools in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar

Schools2030 Research Webinar | November 2024

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DMS positive deviance methodology



Identify **positive deviant behaviours and practices** in schools performing better than others in similar contexts and ways to scale them up



Co-creation from the outset with education stakeholders, including school actors

DMS research
stages:



Stage 1

Analysis of resources
and context associated
with school
performance



Stage 2

Identification of
positive deviant
schools and school
typology



Stage 3

Understanding school-
level positive deviant
behaviours and
practices



Stage 4

Investigating
levers for optimal
scale

Conceptual Framework: what practices and behaviours contribute to positive deviant schools' success?

Five analytical
dimensions
important for
school
performance:



School Leadership & Management



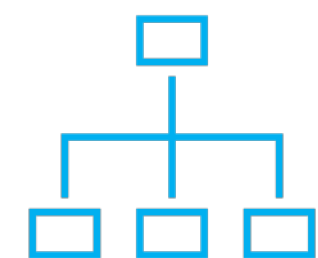
Pedagogical Practices



School Climate



Community Engagement



Decentralised Administration

Practices and behaviours of positive deviant schools

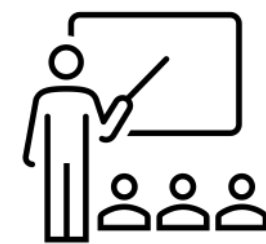
Several practices appear in both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar :



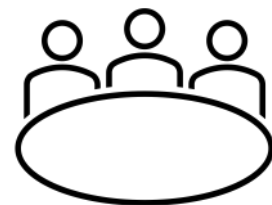
School Leadership & Management



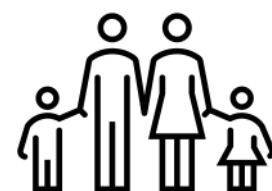
Measures to manage **student absenteeism**



Additional academic support for struggling students



Parent committees play a strong role in addressing school challenges



Parents and community support school activities and student learning

Practices and behaviours of positive deviant schools

Pedagogical support for teachers

Mainland Tanzania

Teaching & Learning



- ✓ Head teachers provide training and capacity-building for teachers
- ✓ Head teachers provide stronger performance monitoring and pedagogical support
- ✓ Head teachers strengthen teachers' motivation through positive reinforcement and incentives



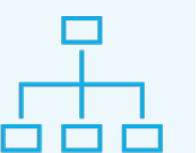
Additional academic support for students

- ✓ Teachers more frequently monitor pupils' learning and organize additional support, particularly for pupils who are struggling



Teaching & learning support from the decentralized level

- ✓ Ward Education Officer prioritizes improving teaching and learning when providing supports to schools



Practices and behaviours of positive deviant schools

Pedagogical practices are **nurturing and encouraging**



- ✓ Teachers use positive discipline and encourage students
- ✓ Teacher provide additional support to struggling students

Positive relationships and support amongst school actors



- ✓ More accessible and comprehensive guidance counsellors
- ✓ More positive and safe student relationships, e.g., student clubs

Student safety measures inside and outside of school



- ✓ Supporting students' safe travel to and from school
- ✓ Child-centered security measures and infrastructure within the school

Zanzibar

Child Wellbeing



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Recommendations and implications for Schools2030

- **Support instructional leadership capacities of head teachers and decentralized actors.** Consider how these stakeholders are engaged in the human-centered design process of Schools2030 and where their roles can be better defined to nurture innovations.
- **Strengthen parental and community engagement in teaching and learning.** Develop clear mandates and pathways for parents and communities to contribute to schools. Consider how these actors can be better engaged in HCD processes, including problem identification or innovation development.
- **Continue expanding teacher professional development in classroom assessment.** Support teachers to effectively design and implement formative assessments to inform their classroom instruction, using learner-centered pedagogies that respond to students' diverse learning needs.



Thank You! Questions?

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<https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/data-must-speak-united-republic-tanzania>

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The LEGO Foundation



THANK YOU

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