

# THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE (KIX)



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## SCHOOL LEADERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE TOWARDS EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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### FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

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# THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE (KIX)



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## Acronyms

AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University
CAR	Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees
CEHRD	Centre for Education and Human Resource Development
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
CPEC	Continuing and Professional Education Centre
CPD	continuing professional development
CWD	children with disabilities
CWSA	Community World Service Asia
CW4WAfghan	Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan
DLR	Digital Learning Research
DGSE	Directorate General of Special Education
DoE	Department of Education
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FDE	Federal Directorate of Education
FGEI	Federal Government Educational Institutions
FIT-ED	Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development
GESI	gender, equity and social inclusion
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPE LEG	Global Partnership for Education Local Education Group

ICT	information and communications technology
IDEA	Initiative for Development and Empowerment Axis
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
INGO	international non-governmental organization
GPE/KIX EMAP	Global Partnership for Education Knowledge Innovation and Exchange Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Pacific Hub
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MEL	monitoring, evaluation and learning
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NCRC	National Commission on the Rights of Child
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIC	networked Improvement community
NIC@Scale	networked Improvement community at scale
OU	The Open University, UK
OV	outreach volunteers
PCF10	Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning
PDSA	Plan-Do-Study-Act
PMT	Project Management Team
SL	School Leader
SMC	School Management Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TPD	teacher professional development
UKFIET	United Kingdom Education and Development Forum
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*School Leaders as Agents of Change Towards Equity and Inclusion* seeks to explore how professional learning communities for school leaders – Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) – working with continuous improvement tools accessed through an open learning platform, can be harnessed as a system-wide scalable method for school improvement in different contexts across South Asia. The specific focus is developing school leaders’ capabilities to bring about sustainable changes in school practices that address inequalities in student access and learning in schools. The project consortium works in three locations: public school systems of Nepal and Pakistan, and schools serving refugee Afghan students in Peshawar, Pakistan.

*Key activities:* Scaling research was carried out in three phases. Phase 1 established the specific inclusion policy environments within which school leaders work, the nature of school leaders’ current inclusive practice and their levels of digital expertise in Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan. Policy analysis was complemented by mixed methods research with school leaders. Phase 1 findings provided justification for field testing for scaling of the innovation in these contexts. (The specific innovation being field tested for scaling is school leader NICS with a facilitator and continuous improvement tools accessed through an open course.) The findings were shared with stakeholders and informed the co-creation of original localized open resources in Phase 2. These were organized as an open digital course that guides school leaders to work collaboratively on small experiments to tackle ‘micro-challenges’ of inclusion in their schools. The course comprises eight units, available through each country partner’s learning platform, and adapted and translated for each country context. (After the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, the project moved from Afghanistan to work with school leaders in schools serving Afghan refugees in Peshawar.)

In Phase 3, empirical research was undertaken to understand the impacts created by the innovation. Small groups of school leaders formed NICs in two locations in each project context. NICs met regularly to work through the activities of the Open Course supported by a facilitator. School leaders accessed the open resources through a digital tablet supplied by the project. Researchers generated data on how the school leaders collaborated in the NIC, changes in their attitudes related to inclusion and the ways in which they exercised agency (or not) to improve inclusion in their schools. Researchers undertook semi-structured interviews in three cycles (baseline, midline and endline) with all the school leaders and facilitators, and collected data from the learning platform on school leader engagement with the digital resources, together with observation notes from facilitators.

Alongside fieldwork, there was considerable engagement and cooperation with a range of stakeholders (total number 264) in each project context. This activity aimed to both enhance stakeholder knowledge and skills in related areas and sensitize them to this work and its emerging findings. Towards the end of Phase 3, several knowledge mobilization activities (evidence cafes and workshops) were held with approximately 20 stakeholders in each country to discuss the project findings and explore how they might be drawn on to inform system improvements in education inclusion. These activities also functioned as research sites for further data gathering. A participant observation approach was used at these events to help understand what is taken up by whom and in what ways for scaling impact. Knowledge mobilization was supported by numerous secondary knowledge outputs – blogs, national and international conference presentations, infographics, policy briefs, school leader vignettes and video animations, available on the [project website](#).

## Main research findings

The key finding from this research is the importance of a function-focused and flexible approach to scaling impact such that different scaling mechanisms are possible in different contexts or with different partners within the same context. How the impact of the innovation or initiative is taken up – the scaling mechanism – was found to be influenced in each context by: the relative success of different elements of the innovation in that context; education system structures; and relationships within and across levels of the education system.

Field testing of the NIC model with school leaders in Nepal, Pakistan and school leaders of refugee schools for Afghan students in Pakistan highlighted a number of benefits. The use of the NIC model led to improvements in school leaders' understanding of inclusion and confidence in their own ability to make positive changes to increase access and learning for all students. School leaders were observed to be exercising greater leadership agency. Analysis of the data indicates that school leaders in each context valued the structured tools (including improvement science tools) in the Open Course. These tools supported school leaders to analyze inclusion issues in their schools and take small actions to address these issues. Engaging in these small actions helped to broaden school leaders' inclusive practice, including the observation and monitoring of the holistic education experiences of all their students. However, the value of the peer NIC meetings was mixed; while some school leaders, most notably those leading refugee schools, were keen participants in their in-person community meetings, school leaders in other contexts were less enthusiastic about these communities due to a mixture of embedded ways of relating to each other and the format of the NIC meetings. Nevertheless, the fieldwork demonstrated the potential of digital courses for school leader professional development, despite many school leaders needing encouragement and support when initially utilizing digital tools.

These findings, together with other contextual factors including the professional capital (a combination of social, decisional and human capital) of the project actors and positioning of the partner institutions in the relevant education system, have influenced how impact is being taken up in each context. Mechanisms for scaling include *program adoption, practice (behavior, practice and skills) integration, and product dissemination*.

In Peshawar, the schools for refugees are currently outside the formal Pakistan education system. Although lines of accountability for different school functions are extremely complex, this has provided space for the Afghan team to work with peer non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - running the schools, to take up the NIC model in its entirety – *program adoption*.

In Nepal, the education system is highly decentralized, and the project leads are deeply embedded in university networks and online learning. The NIC meetings achieved much less impact in this setting, partly due to the highly hierarchical society which constrained school leader peer collaboration. In Nepal, a more effective mechanism for scaling impact is the Open Course for school leaders. This is now being made available through a variety of platforms and with different forms of support: an example of *product dissemination*.

In Pakistan, the sheer size of the education system made traction at the provincial level difficult within the project timeframe. Additionally, this is a crowded space with a large number of competing initiatives all striving for attention, many with considerable budgets. However, the in-country lead harnessed his personal and institutional networks to secure interest in scaling impact through different mechanisms: through the professional education programs of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) itself (with its extensive reach across the entire country); through NGOs, notably Sightsavers; and two government agencies. These all share a degree of relative autonomy within the Pakistan education system and are taking up elements of the model which they perceive will improve their education provision. Integration of the course approach in existing provisions to teach new skills is an example

of *practice integration* for scaling. The two government agencies are utilizing the NIC model for their staff, *program adoption*.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

We offer two lessons and associated recommendations for future research in support of scaling impact of innovations within education systems. Firstly, across GPE KIX projects there is a need for a common research framework and methodologies for undertaking applied scaling research in education specifically tailored for the Global South. This would be a significant contribution to education research as a whole and a key public good created by the program. Holding the scaling aspect front and center of this type of research is not easy. Too often, implementation of the innovation and evaluation of its impact crowd out deep consideration of what needs to be in place to scale the impact, the unintended effects of the scaling (always present in complex systems), and the introduction of adaptations to respond to emerging findings during the field trials. We suggest that research is needed to develop a framework and associated research methodologies to support researchers to be more effective and efficient in understanding mechanisms for scaling – what is taken up by whom, why and in what ways within an education system in the Global South. There are currently very few in-depth models or examples of this type of research in education. These are needed to produce outputs that complement the emerging hegemony of implementation science whose frameworks and models do not provide explicit guidance on how impact might be scaled appropriately in varying contexts.

Secondly, we suggest that greater flexibility in the research project partnerships and greater support from GPE KIX with stakeholder engagement would be helpful to better address both the research focus (scaling) and the development paradigm. Research teams were primarily selected due to their academic expertise in areas related to the research questions and are not necessarily best placed to advocate for scaling the impact of the project innovation. Being required to undertake both high-quality field research and to develop deep connections with key stakeholders places a tremendous demand on research teams. We suggest two possible ways forward. First, allowing projects to bring in relevant stakeholders as project partners at an appropriate point in the field evaluations once the direction of impact is known. Second, enhanced support from GPE KIX to link the research more firmly into established structures such as the Local Education Groups (LEGs), donor groups, specific development partners or ministry engagements. In this project, the awarding of an extension with further funding to deepen scaling activities was expedient, appropriate and productive. However, this could be embedded within the design of the overall grant program. Transformative system change to improve education quality and outcomes requires more than one small initiative and learning from this project might have been amplified by earlier and stronger productive collaboration with similar in-country initiatives.

## **Project rationale and objectives**

Equity and inclusion are policy priorities in many countries of the Global South. Yet data indicates that large numbers of girls, children with disabilities, children experiencing extreme poverty, displaced children and children from other marginalized groups are frequently excluded from quality education (UNICEF, 2020; GMR, 2023). These learning inequalities are particularly stark in the countries of South Asia – for instance, in Pakistan, an estimated 22.8 million children are out of school, with the majority of these being girls, and over 75% live in rural areas (UNICEF, 2023). In Nepal, nearly 30% of children from disadvantaged groups including ethnic minorities, poor families and those residing in rural areas, lag in both attendance and academic progress (Acharya, 2018).

Evidence from the Global North suggests school leaders engaging in professional learning networks increase their effectiveness including through the exercise of agency to make sustainable changes in their institutions (Fullan, 2020; Sutchter, et al., 2017; LeMahieu, et al., 2017). However, there has been little exploration of this approach in

the contexts of the Global South: leadership practices need to be understood and developed in ways that are locally appropriate.

The *School Leaders as Agents of Change Towards Equity and Inclusion* project builds on previous work with school leaders using improvement science tools in peer groups in the Global South (Wolfenden et al., 2023). The project explored how school leaders' expertise and insights might be mobilized at scale to address local issues of inclusion in multiple locations in South Asia. The innovative intervention for this mobilization is peer NICs supported by open resources (including improvement science tools) and a facilitator. NICs collaborate on small experiments to identify and problem-solve micro challenges of inclusion – enrollment, attendance and teaching and learning, in their members' institutions. Study of this process, in partnership with stakeholders, enabled the project to meet its specific objectives: examine the conditions that support or hinder NIC functioning in different contexts; inform policy and practice through developing models for implementing impact of the approach at scale within different education systems; and strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to create the conditions for success of this implementation. In this work, inclusion is defined as “a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners” and equity as being “about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance” (UNESCO, 2017, 1.3).

## SECTION 1: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

### Achievement of project objectives

The *School Leaders as Agents of Change Towards Equity and Inclusion* project objectives were largely delivered as discussed below.

*Objective 1. To develop models for adapting and implementing a NIC@Scale approach for school leaders in different contexts across the region*

This objective has been met. Research data from the field enquiries have informed ongoing discussions with relevant stakeholders to develop models to scale the impact of the NIC@Scale approach in different contexts (Nepal, Pakistan and Afghan refugee schools in Pakistan). The models reflect country or local priorities, existing education infrastructure and governance arrangements and the capacities of relevant actors. The models are discussed in Section 2.

*Objective 2. To examine the factors (policy, environmental, conceptions of the school leader role, capacities of school leaders and district officials, pedagogic and economic) that influence the effective equitable working of NICs for school leaders in different contexts.*

This objective was fully met. In each of the three project contexts, the initial contextual analysis generated an understanding of how school leaders were prepared for their role, how they perceived issues of inclusion (or exclusion) within their schools and their access to digital platforms/devices and digital skills. Subsequent trailing of the NIC model was undertaken in two locations and multiple types of schools in each of the three project contexts. Extensive data was generated at baseline, midline and endline to study how school leaders interacted in their NICs (including with the online resources) and how they identified and attempted to problem-solve inclusion actions in their institutions using tools such as the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle.



*Objective 3. To inform policy and practice on the scaling of NICs for school leaders to address inequalities in access, retention and learning of girls and other students from marginalized groups in schools across the region.*

There is evidence of considerable movement towards meeting this objective. In each project context, the project has harnessed stakeholder relationships and opportunities to inform policy and practice at the national, province or local level on the scaling impact of the NIC model (see Section 2). The ways in which this has occurred reflect diverse education structures and governance arrangements (in particular the degree of devolution with the education system), government priorities and external conditions; although at times the latter have understandably distracted stakeholders and focused their attention on other priorities.

*Objective 4. To build the capacity of key stakeholders to create the conditions for the implementation and flourishing of NICs for school leaders in their district and nationally.*

This objective has been delivered. Relevant stakeholders from Nepal, Pakistan and agencies working with Afghan refugee schools (Peshawar, Pakistan) have been involved in a number of activities integral to the field research. Stakeholders include: The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST: CEHRD) (Nepal); Nepal Open University; Institute for Educational Research, University of Peshawar; Initiative for Development Empowerment Axis (IDEA); Khwando Kor; INSPIRE Pakistan; the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Peshawar Region); Punjab Directorate General Special Education (DGSE); National Commission for the Rights of the Child (NCRC); and the Federal Government Education Institutions (FGEI) (Pakistan). Project teams were able to develop relationships with the stakeholders to familiarize them with the NIC model and to support them in seeing the local benefits of school leader collaboration to problem-solve local issues of inclusion. In addition, a range of stakeholders in each context have participated in workshops, evidence cafes, visits to participating schools and seminars; many of these were designed as policy and practice influencing events but also served to develop stakeholders' understanding of inclusion issues, the form and value of professional collaborations and new designs for professional learning activities.

However, a number of events in the external environment hindered the process towards the full achievement of the objectives. Afghanistan was originally the third research site but after the Taliban took over the Government of Afghanistan in 2021, the project was required to explore different options for safe project working. After much deliberation, the team recruited a new partner in Pakistan – Community World Service Asia (CWSA) – to lead on work with schools serving Afghan refugee students in Peshawar, Pakistan. CWSA became the point of contact with relevant authorities. The change in location for the Afghan team meant they needed to develop an entirely new set of stakeholder relationships; this has not been easy in the fragile environment of northwest Pakistan with considerable security issues and ongoing profound changes in the way United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) schools for refugees are organized<sup>1</sup>. In Pakistan itself, an election and devastating floods in 2022 impeded project activities.

## **Main project activities**

Throughout the project, the team (country researchers, Open University [OU] researchers, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Officer, and FIT-ED project staff) worked closely through bi-monthly meetings, follow-up one-to-one meetings, capacity strengthening workshops, in-person workshops, and site visits (see [Annex 1](#) for Project Organizational Chart). This way of working fostered a shared understanding of the project

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR-Pakistan will no longer support UNHCR education infrastructure needs and are now investing in Pakistan Government schools, 'readying' these schools for Afghan refugee students. This is part of a UNHCR Global strategy to mainstream refugee education in host countries.

objectives and how they might be achieved. It also facilitated the co-creation of various joint artifacts and tools, most notably a generic version of the Open Course and research instruments.

Country teams (Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan) worked within an overarching common framework comprising three phases:

**Phase 1: Contextualization** (June 2021- March 2022): Initial activities included setting up project teams and ways of working, stakeholder analysis and initial interactions with stakeholders including establishing a stakeholder group in Nepal. The key focus of this phase was the design and execution of contextualization research. This comprised: a literature review; analysis of country policy documentation relating to school leaders (their role and preparation), approaches to inclusion and inclusion priorities; and small-scale field research. The latter aimed to generate insights into: a) school leaders' beliefs regarding education inclusion; b) what school leaders currently do or see themselves able to do in relation to improving inclusive practice; c) the forms of support school leaders draw on in exercising agency towards inclusion practice in each country; and d) school leaders use of digital technologies and their confidence and skills in doing so. Analysis of data built a rich picture of school leaders in each context to inform the design of the NICs and the open resources to support the NIC working.

**Phase 2: Collaborative design of the NIC model & Open Course for school leaders** (April 2022 – February 2023): The key activity in this phase was the co-creation of the open resources for school leaders to use in their NICs. These resources are organized as a practice-based *course* with eight sections each requiring around five hours of study. It is a blend of independent self-study, collaboration with professional peers, and school-based activities. It is referred to as the Open Course and addressed to school leaders. The Open Course aims to:

- Provide guidance for school leaders on how to analyze inclusion issues in their context
- Support school leaders to collaboratively try out small changes to improve inclusive practice in their schools
- Foster professional networks of school leaders

Activities within the Open Course include: a school Inclusion Audit; stakeholder interviews; school and classroom observations; analysis of inclusion issues using a problem tree; and use of Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles. The team produced a generic version of the Open Course in English which was subsequently adapted (translated and localized) for each context (Nepal, Pakistan and Afghan refugee school settings). This was accompanied by the formation of pilot NICs (groups of school leaders) to developmentally test the Open Course, as shown in Figure 1.

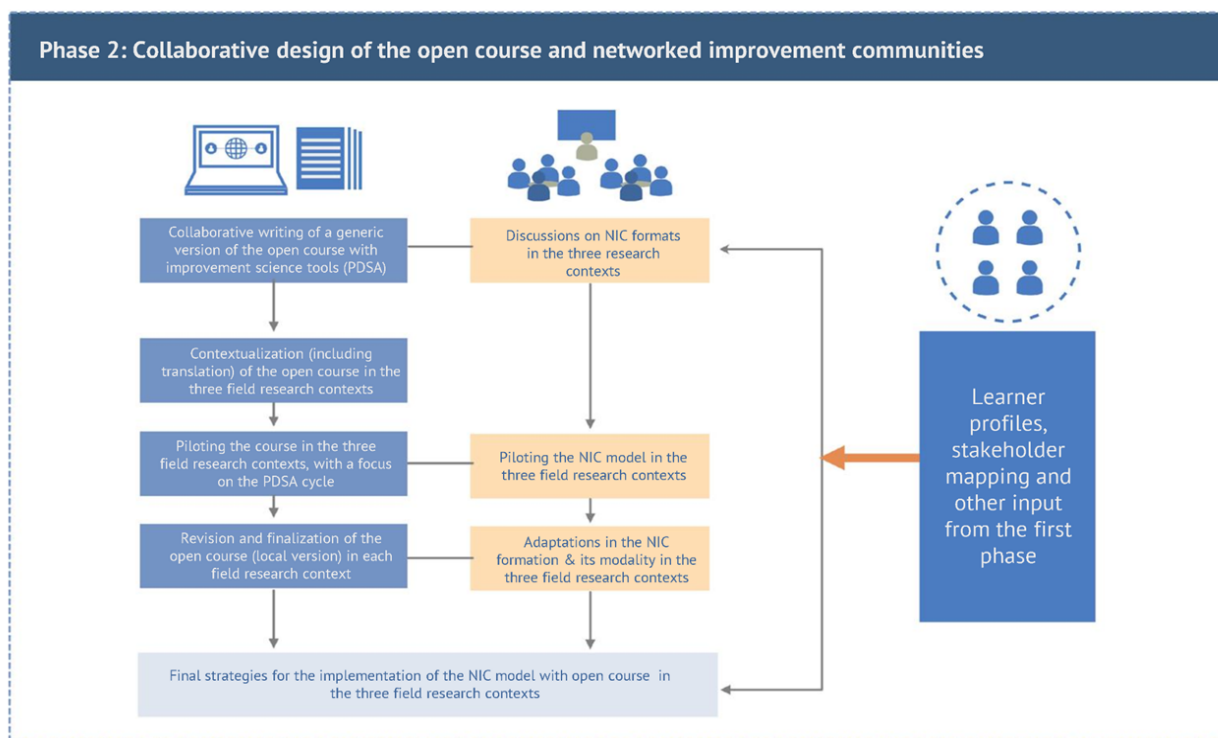


Figure 1: Collaborative design of the open course and networked improvement communities

School leaders access the Open Course through tablets (each school leader participant in the project was allocated a tablet). Toward the end of this phase, the project research leads undertook field visits to each location to support the design of Phase 3.

**Phase 3: Field testing and scaling models** (March 2023–June 2024): Activities in this phase aimed to generate evidence on the impact created by the NICs and to engage closely with stakeholders to sensitize them to the work so that they could knowledgeably interrogate evidence from the field trials. Field trials involved setting up the NICs (using the Open Course) with school leaders ( $n = 90$ ) in multiple locations and schools in each context; 30 school leaders from UNHCR schools and private Afghan schools in Peshawar district; 30 school leaders from Islamabad and Lahore; 30 school leaders from Bardibas and Kamalamai municipalities, located in Provinces 2 and 3 respectively in Nepal. This work was all undertaken with agreement and support from the relevant authorities. Choice of locations and school leaders was informed by the need to ensure participation from multiple subgroups of school leaders in different contexts. Initial piloting helped to refine the approach in each context prior to the main field trial. During the field trial, extensive data generation and analysis (see below) occurred. Field visits to each location by the lead researchers supported data analysis. Two project meetings (Istanbul in July 2023 and Kathmandu in March 2024) facilitated the sharing of initial themes from the findings, strategies for stakeholder engagement and collective reflections on project working.

Each country team was also involved in engagement with stakeholders through this phase. This overlapped with the field trial (evaluation of the impact) to ensure that stakeholders could become involved in the field trials and that the empirical work generated the type of evidence needed by stakeholders. Towards the end of Phase 3, several

formal knowledge mobilization activities (evidence cafes and workshops) were held with stakeholders to discuss the project findings and explore how they might be drawn on to inform system improvements in education inclusion. These activities also functioned as research sites for further data gathering. A participant observation approach was used at these events to help understand what is taken up by whom and in what ways for scaling impact. A number of knowledge outputs were created and disseminated (see [Section 2](#) and [Annex 4](#)).

Details of in-country activities of the Nepal, Pakistan and Afghan teams are summarized in Annex 2.

**Research methods**

The project employed a multi-layered mixed-method design to understand the impact of the NIC model and how this might be scaled for diverse groups of school leaders in the different research contexts. Field research was undertaken in Phases 1 and 3, summarized below. Ethical clearance for the fieldwork was through in-country researchers’ institutions. All participants were given detailed information about the project objectives and activities. Participants were asked to give informed consent before taking part in any data-generating activity. All participant data was anonymized, securely stored and only available to the research team.

**Phase 1. Contextualization research**

This began with a review of relevant literature followed by an analysis of relevant policies in the research countries. A context analysis framework that considered both the local and global contexts for school leadership was used for this phase (see Figure 2).

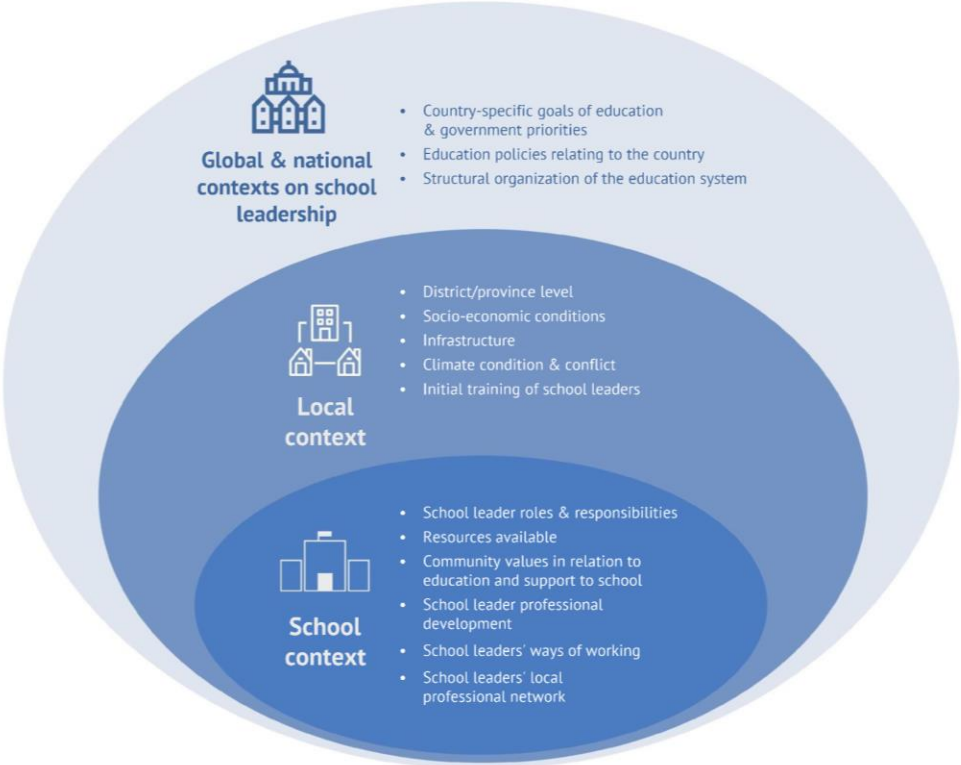


Figure 2: Context analysis framework

Based on the literature review and policy analysis, a survey was conducted with school leaders (Afghanistan–134, Nepal–118, Pakistan–277) followed by semi-structured interviews with a subsample of the survey participants (n=32) and selected key informants (n=10). The survey explored school leaders’ attitudes towards inclusion, actions they prioritized to improve student access to school and participation in learning activities, who they collaborated with on these issues and their recent experiences of relevant professional development. The survey also included questions on school leaders’ professional and personal use of digital technologies and their access to digital devices. Interview schedules were designed to explore these issues in more depth, offering school leaders time and space to describe recent related actions in their own words. Interviews were conducted in the language of choice of the interviewee.

For the survey and interviews, generic instruments were collaboratively generated in English then adapted and translated into the appropriate national language. We recognize that for some survey participants, this may not have been their language of preference. Each country team carried out pre-testing with the instruments to check their validity and practical feasibility including time required by participants to complete, and to surface any difficulties that might arise in the data generation and/or analysis. Following these pilots, changes were made to the instruments and procedures.

Data collection took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and was considerably hampered by the restrictions and conditions of the pandemic. In Afghanistan, this was additionally compounded by severe security issues. To recruit participants, researchers sought support from organizations who are prospective users of our research: the DGSE Punjab and the FDEI in Pakistan; provincial governments and a teachers’ association in Nepal; and NGOs in Afghanistan.

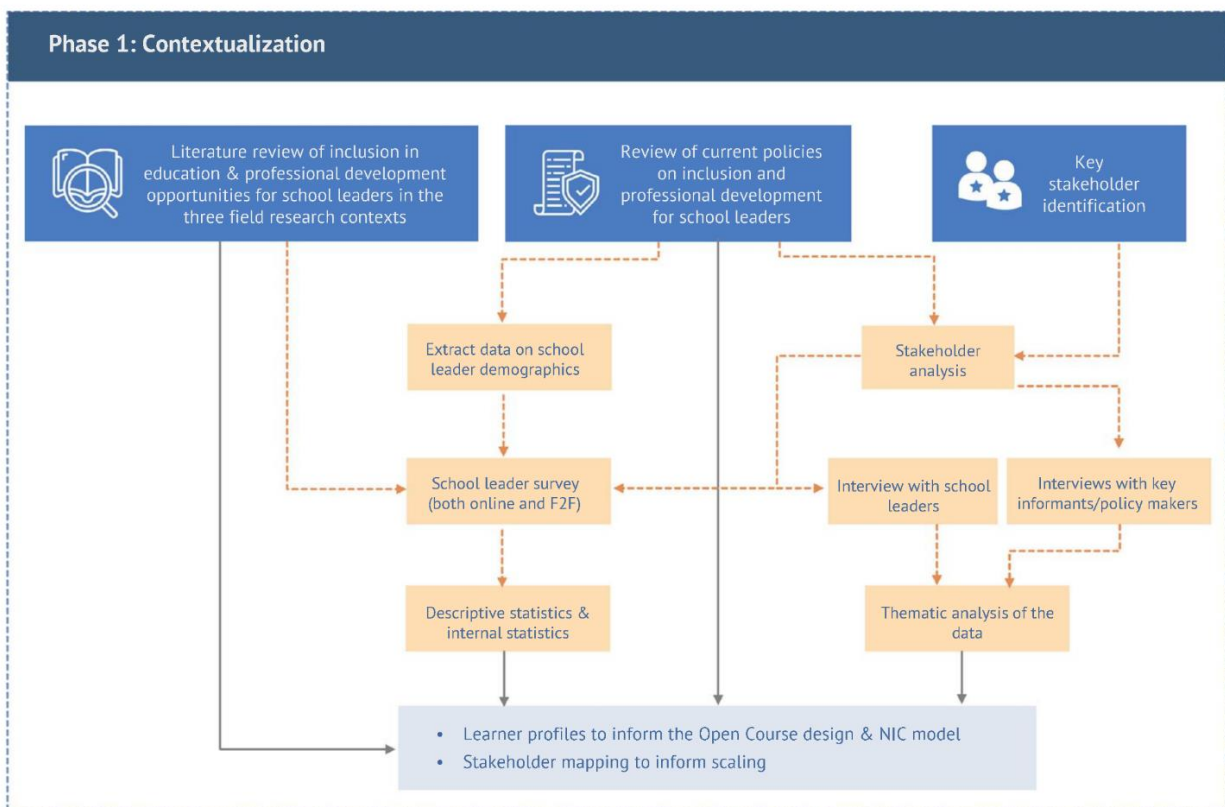


Figure 3: Phase 1: Contextualization research

Analysis of the data collected through the survey involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. The interview data was analyzed using a framework that focused on four key themes: leadership priorities, inclusion attitudes and values, leadership actions in relation to inclusion (opportunities and constraints), and information and communications technology (ICT) skills and use. Based on the key findings, learner profiles were created to inform the writing of the Open Course and design of the NICs in each context. The inclusion of an audit of school leaders’ access to, and use of digital devices, informed the design of the course. The aim was that all school leaders would be able to engage with all the online activities after only limited ICT skill training.

However, much of the interview data was found to lack depth and richness, possibly due to the difficulties in establishing rapport with participants in the context of the pandemic anxieties and restrictions (in-person interviews were not permitted in all contexts), and some country researchers having little prior experience of this type of qualitative research. This alerted us to the collective need for capacity strengthening in this area, undertaken in Phase 3.

**Phase Three. Field testing for scaling**

In this phase, multiple instruments were used to collect data at three points – baseline, midline and endline during the trial as shown in Figure 4. Interview data was coded using Taguette, high level themes included: school leaders’ inclusion attitudes; school leaders’ inclusion actions; school leaders’ collaborations with their peers (e.g., through the NICs) and other actors; changes in school leaders’ leadership behaviors; and feedback on the Open Course. These themes, and their associated numerous subcodes, were generated through researchers initially undertaking individual and pair coding a selection of transcripts followed by peer review of these codes at the Istanbul team meeting.

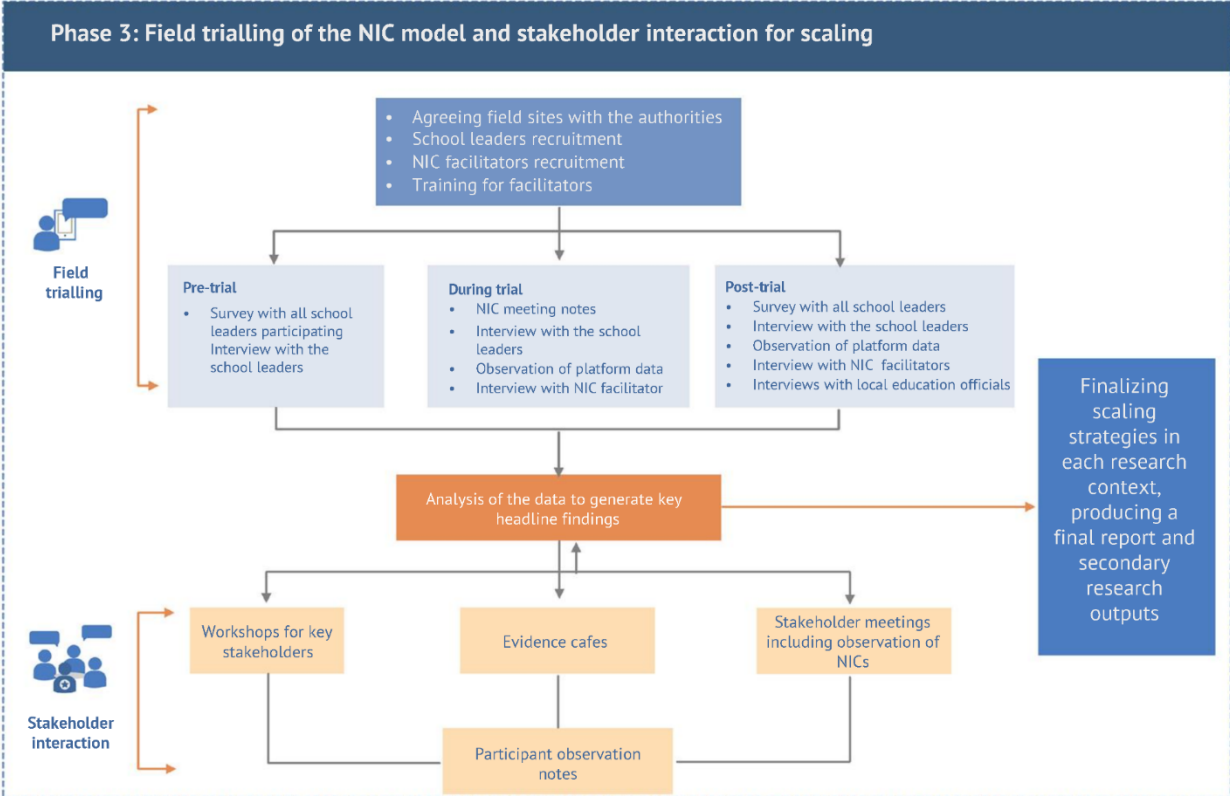


Figure 4: Phase 3: Field trialling of the NIC model and stakeholder interaction for scaling



Collecting data in three different steps during the field trial enabled us to understand changes in school leaders' agency in relation to inclusion actions as well as how they interacted in their professional communities. Comparing, integrating and interpreting data from different sources in this mixed methods approach is not easy and demands patience and reflexivity to produce knowledge that does justice both to our participants and to stakeholders who will use the research. Working across place and time boundaries increased the difficulties in this process and we underestimated the time required to support colleagues to develop their skills and confidence to complete this.

In the latter part of this phase, researchers employed a participant-observer approach in meetings and workshops with stakeholders. Researchers recorded observations and insights about the perspectives, attitudes and behaviors of stakeholders in these events. The richness of these observations varied across the project but modeling the process alongside country researchers in one event was helpful. Analysis of this data was through an iterative process of reduction and interpretation where possible.

## **Reflections**

### ***Partnerships***

The consortium partnership was highly valued by all members, in particular the processes of joint problem-solving of common issues, co-designing research instruments, collectively exploring data analysis techniques and collaborative report writing. As one colleague reflected, "Our discussions in global meetings were very helpful to know each others' progress, successes, challenges and solutions. Sometimes, strategies from one country helped us to attract and engage our stakeholders, disseminate the project and conduct data analysis." On a technical level, the use of a shared file system had varied success – some partners used it assiduously, others needed much encouragement to locate tools and templates and share anonymized data.

A minor tension was sensed initially in partnership working. This concerned differing expectations about the balance between direction from the center (project leadership), and autonomy of the country teams. Initially, country teams were surprised not to be given a highly explicit plan (or set of instructions) to follow, possibly reflecting their experiences in previous international projects. The project leadership strived to nurture a more distributed approach that recognized the expertise of different team members – inclusion, development, e-learning, leadership, and most critically, their deep understanding of their country education systems and what it might be possible to shift.

However, overall, the partnership initiated and fostered during this project proved highly generative and cross-organizational collaboration is continuing post-project in multiple ways: the OU is now working with Kathmandu University on a UK Aid funded project and CW4WA explored a potential partnership with AIOU for a different IDRC call.

### ***Overall implementation of the research in support of scaling impact***

In order to undertake research in support of scaling impact, the specific impact needs to be clearly identified and its value recognized and understood. A large proportion of activity, time and resources in this project was concerned with establishing the outcomes when school leaders work collaboratively (in NICs) with structured tools on local inclusion issues, the conditions needed for positive change in each context and the extent to which this approach offered a viable strategy to contribute to national education inclusion goals (*See Section 3* for what we might do differently.) Our research was relatively successful in identifying which components of the approach were most effective in each context. However, use of these findings to understand how scaling might be undertaken has been limited by a number of factors: restricted time for project members to build effective relationships with key stakeholders and conduct joint follow-up on scaling activities; tensions between these findings and existing

governance structures; a tendency for the focus to become exclusively on achieving scaling rather than an analytical approach to understanding the factors which support or hinder this; and external events distracting key stakeholders (elections, environmental issues, changes in policy around Afghan refugees and so on).

### ***Integration of gender equality, equity and inclusion***

This was a key focus of project working: in project team working, in each stage of the research cycle, and in engagement with key stakeholders.

Project team working and leadership. The majority of researchers were country nationals from each context although the Afghan team expanded to include more Pakistani colleagues after the transfer of activity out of Afghanistan. Overall, the team was diverse in terms of experience and gender but individual country/global teams were not gender balanced; two teams were almost exclusively male while the other two were female-led and dominated. Efforts were made to strengthen the skills of in-country researchers (see later discussion) and to create a democratic team structure, encouraging a dialogic atmosphere and explicit encouragement to everyone to contribute actively in team meetings. This was not easy but in the final project reflections team members commented on how participation in the project has strengthened their commitment to equity in their research practice.

Research cycle: Each team attempted to recruit a diverse group of school leaders as research participants while acknowledging that participation should be voluntary. In Pakistan and Nepal, the majority of school leader participants were male, reflecting the demographics of current school leaders in these countries. The Pakistan team commented that they could have requested the local government to select equal numbers of male and female school leaders but as this was scaling research, they were trying to reflect the realities of school leader communities in different locations. Participation of female school leaders was made easier by the flexible nature of the activities, including data generation. Local facilitators were encouraged to select women to lead the NICs, particularly in Pakistan. The Pakistan team reflected that this fostered the confidence of female school leaders and catalyzed change as they inspired other female participants to contribute more. Furthermore, sensitizing government officials to these success stories of their own female school leaders can be an effective strategy to promote the empowerment of women in leadership positions and encourage greater gender inclusivity.

Research instruments were all translated and localized where appropriate, reviewed through a gender, equity and social inclusion (GESI) lens, and piloted with diverse groups. The resources incorporated in the Open Course were chosen to illustrate diverse contexts, challenges and attitudes. Gender and other inclusion issues at the school level were explicitly addressed by the school leaders in the ‘inclusion audit’ activity. However, there was a tendency for many school leaders to focus on micro challenges of inclusion relating to girls’ attendance, with little consideration of gender equitable practices within school classrooms. Similarly, consideration of disability centered mainly on school enrolment rather than adjustments within lessons. However, given the large number of children who do not attend school regularly in these contexts, this focus on individual enrolment and attendance is understandable.

Key stakeholders: Efforts were made, particularly in Pakistan, to select female focus persons from government and NGOs. These women (particularly those from FDE and FGEl) became strong advocates for the project.

### ***Capacity strengthening of relevant stakeholders***

There have been a number of capacity strengthening activities for stakeholders (see [discussion in Section 2](#)).



### ***Knowledge mobilization activities***

This has been a highly active area of project working with the dissemination of the NIC approach and findings through numerous events (national, regional and global) combined with the production of a number of secondary knowledge outputs – animations, blogs, presentations, case studies and a policy brief (see [Section 2](#)). Dissemination of these outputs has been amplified by the use of print and social media. Colleagues comment that the most successful knowledge mobilization activities involved leveraging existing personal and institutional social capital in the form of networks with teachers, government officials and various stakeholders and then moving to establishing and nurturing new personal contacts. Building on this personal approach, small focus group discussions where there can be more interaction and consensus building, have been found to be more effective and better value than larger gatherings. Particularly successful were the evidence cafes and inclusive workshops with their experiential element in which stakeholders re-examine data and their own values in a facilitated space. Vignettes of individual school leaders' inclusion actions with demonstrable benefits for students were also found to be powerful in engaging stakeholders.

On reflection, our knowledge mobilization might have engaged more with school leaders themselves. We hope the video animations will support ongoing engagement with this key group and encourage them to look at the project resources, particularly the Open Course.

The change in location for the Afghan team's work made it more difficult to identify relevant stakeholders. Reflecting on their approach, team members now feel they should have been more intentional and strategic about their interactions with stakeholders, focusing earlier in the project on Pakistani NGOs responsible for UNHCR teachers. Ideally, the Afghan team would have helped each organization to identify a focal person who would have contributed to reviewing the open materials and worked alongside facilitators and project managers as the program evolved – this would have supported earlier discussion on scaling plans. Furthermore, they reflect that personal engagement with senior officials at the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees-Peshawar (CAR-Peshawar) and UNHCR- Peshawar could have been utilized more to share research findings. Additionally, despite the regime change, various knowledge outputs might have been shared with NGOs working in Afghanistan.

What has been harder has been the production of primary research outputs in the form of conventional journal articles. Progress has been hindered by a combination of lack of time – the drumbeat of activities in applied research projects such as this leaves little time for deep analysis and theoretical conceptualization, and a need to strengthen the analytical and writing skills of many colleagues to meet the standards expected in respected international journals. Now that key project activities are complete, we are making progress with these outputs but the journal publication process is such that we are unlikely to be in print for some time. In the future integrating more time in the grant period for this activity could have been productive, possibly through a collaborative writing workshop although this is expensive.

### ***Research capacity of institutions and individuals***

Developing colleagues' confidence and capabilities to undertake research activities has been a small success of this project. Particular areas of attention include: strategies for stakeholder analysis and engagement to ensure buy-in; quantitative data analysis (with SPSS); management and coding of qualitative data using an open source tool (Taguette); ethics (working to embed international good practice in the use of informed consent, data privacy and anonymized data including photographs); safeguarding; academic referencing; and participant observation techniques. Many colleagues report using these approaches or techniques in other projects.

Colleagues also point to learning about teamworking; “how helping each other benefits myself”; working with colleagues beyond national boundaries; strict adherence to a work plan; networking and relationship building with decision makers in their context; knowledge exchange activities, in particular, the evidence café; and scaling strategies. One colleague commented, “This project has taught me the power of listening attentively, respecting differing viewpoints and finding common ground to navigate complex challenges effectively.” Other colleagues reflected on how they have enhanced their skills in coaching and mentoring through working with diverse colleagues, some of whom were relatively new to this type of research. (See [Annex 3](#) for testimonies from colleagues.)

This development of research capacity embraced not only the technical issues discussed above but additionally, financial management and reporting of research activities, as one partner commented, “The FIT-ED team helped and tutored us in financial matters. ... This will help us in future joint ventures [with other partners].”

The support of KIX through its Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Pacific hub (EMAP) webinars and talks was also highlighted as “building the capacity of our staff members”.

### **Overall project management**

Overall project management over the project life was highly effective but a number of challenges to communication, funds transfers and utilization were experienced for the following reasons:

1. Project initiation occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. FIT-ED staff support changed midway through the project;
3. Geopolitical forces interrupted the progress of one country research team with a subsequent team move to Pakistan with a new additional sub-partner;
4. Limited in-person gatherings for the research teams (2) and it was only possible to provide remote support to the Istanbul meeting in July 2023.

However, these challenges were met and mitigated by the flexibility and capacity of the project management team (PMT) to maintain guidance and support to the country teams, gather evidence and build knowledge. Regular meetings of the PMT, and the PMT with the country teams, facilitated understanding of the direction/progress of the project and encouraged collaborative solutions and producing outputs that are practical and authentic/in context.

## **SECTION 2: PROJECT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES**

### **Knowledge generation**

**Understanding the context:** Findings in phase one provided justification for the field trialing of the NIC model. Recent education policy in each country at the time of Phase 1 (Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan) reflected global concerns and downward pressure to ensure all children are enrolled in school and learning, including those from marginalized communities (Ministry of Education, 2018 – Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, 2021 – Nepal; Punjab Special Education Policy, 2020 and Pakistan National Education Policy 2017-2025). Empirical fieldwork suggested that most school leaders’ understandings of inclusion center on achieving equality in access to school for students through attending to students’ material needs such as school uniforms, shoes, books and provision of a midday meal. Few school leaders consider how school practices such as teaching strategies might restrict opportunities to learn for specific groups of students and hence impact on student learning outcomes. School leaders

rarely use data to investigate and promote inclusion. This is perhaps understandable given that formal professional development opportunities for school leaders are limited, with very few having access to professional learning relating to inclusion. However, peer interaction utilizing social media is widespread as is access to digital devices although digital skill levels were not high. This confirmed the viability of digital materials in the model but emphasized the need for digital skills training.

***Understanding impacts created by the NIC model:*** School leaders in each context enhanced their understandings of inclusion and equity in education, and exercised increased agency to identify inclusion problems or issues in their schools and experiment with small actions to improve inclusion. More school leaders were using data to identify inclusion issues and there was a noticeable change in their sense of ownership of these issues. This exercise of agency is more independent and self-initiating than previously observed (particularly in Pakistan where individual school leaders have historically been very dependent on authorities for permission to take small actions). There were differences in the problems and solutions attempted across contexts but within each context little difference between groups of school leaders – male/ female, level of experience, type of school and so on.

Changes in school leaders' understandings of inclusion varied but in general findings indicate an improved understanding of the rights of all children to education (including street children, working children, refugees), that inclusive education is a shared responsibility across schools, homes and the community, and the importance of the environment of the school for inclusion. From this field trial, there were fewer changes in school leaders' appreciation of how pedagogic change can support increased inclusion. As this school leader shared, some school leaders began to reflect on their own experiences of schooling and relate this to practice in their current institution:

*“My experience with inclusion issues occurred during my school years. Throughout the entire year, my teacher never once asked me to come to the board and solve a math problem. Had I been given the chance I would have demonstrated my skills and been more active. Now I realize it was an issue of inclusion. I share this knowledge with others to prevent it from happening to anyone else.”*  
– Female school leader, UNHCR school

Many school leaders became stronger advocates for inclusive education,

*“Now, I understand that education is a right for everyone, whether they are disabled, poor, weak or non-religious, they should all study in the same school. There is no difference between them.”*  
- Male school leader, UNHCR school, Peshawar.

A number of school leaders talked openly about how they have observed their own personal and professional growth.

In general, inclusion problems identified by school leaders fell into one of these groups:

- Low enrolment (particularly of girls, children with disabilities (CWD), Shi'ite Muslims, children without birth certificates)
- High student absences (poor facilities, early marriage, working children, school dropout)
- Low student performance (weak teacher skills, teacher absences, inconsistent student attendance, inappropriate methods of instruction)
- Weak management skills (lack of recognition of inclusion problems, low use of available data, limited communication about problems, poor resource management)

In trying out solutions to these problems school leaders exercised agency through their use of several approaches:

- Community advocacy: initiating an inclusion committee; increased communication with parents and community leaders to encourage sending all children to mainstream schools rather than Madrasas, orphanages and special schools; fundraising.
- Classroom instructional changes: rearranging classrooms to improve seating arrangements; shifting policies and norms for teachers; incentives for teacher attendance.
- ‘Whole’ school attitudinal changes: welcoming CWD; recognizing absences as an inclusion problem; engendering professional discussion around school and student data.
- Change of management practices: greater observation of students; proactively sharing problems openly with teachers and the community; working collaboratively with the community to address issues; using the PDSA cycle to problem solve with teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) or Shuras; delegating more effectively to teachers; studying and using student data.
- Improvements to school infrastructure and working: setting up ‘menstruation rooms’; improving security; changes to the timing of the school day to enable working children to join at the start of the day.

These actions led to reported outcomes that included better enrolment and attendance, changes in teaching methods and teacher behavior, and task efficiency.

Analysis of the NIC architecture revealed how different elements contributed to the impact in each context:

- The structured improvement tools (inclusion audit, problem tree, PDSA cycles) provided in the Open Course were warmly welcomed by almost every school leader in each context. The tools supported school leaders to look closely at which of their students was attending/ not attending or taking part in both formal and informal learning activities, and to try to investigate reasons for this lack of full inclusion.
- Overall, the course was seen to be useful although delivery over a longer time period may have helped some school leaders, particularly women, who found it hard to create space in their busy schedules to undertake all the course activities.
- Success of the professional peer learning communities (NICs) varied across contexts. In Nepal, school leaders demonstrated little enthusiasm for them, reporting that discussions were often hierarchical with little encouragement for less experienced or younger school leaders to contribute.

In Pakistan, after a slow start, school leaders became more enthusiastic, sharing their experiences in an informal way and expressing a high level of belief that networking could be a good and fast solution to problems in their schools – participants even brought refreshments to share. The presence of local education officials in the Pakistan NICs facilitated a link between schools and the government: their presence gave school leaders implicit permission to enact small changes in their schools and helped the officials to appreciate the need for resources in schools.

School leaders from Afghan refugee schools were extremely keen on the NIC interactions, reporting that they provided much support, encouragement and valuable opportunities to share resources: school leaders realized they didn’t have to solve problems on their own. There was almost 100% attendance at these NIC meetings which were extended to last over three hours. In this very particular environment, female UNHCR school leaders shared their increased confidence to speak with men in professional contexts, *“During the first day of the meeting [orientation], I was scared to face men, so I sat in the back row [...] As women, we don’t feel right when we stand in front of men and talk. Then at the NIC meetings, I sat with men. It gave me a good feeling and confidence [...] It was useful for us to sit together with men and talk. I gained more experience through meeting and working together with men. This was my first time to sit with men in a meeting.”* (Afghan-school leader, post-program interview).

- Facilitators played a key role in the operation of the NICs but needed support to help them be most effective. There is some evidence from this work that school leaders showed greater movement in their understanding of inclusion when the facilitator was an expert in education inclusion (Pakistan).
- Use of digital technologies: many school leaders were initially not confident using their tablets but with individual support quickly became proficient.

*Understanding mechanisms for scaling impact:* Analysis of project data from Phase 3 identified a number of mechanisms for scaling and the factors that influence which mechanism is adopted in each context (Nepal, Pakistan and Afghan Refugee Schools). These factors are summarized as:

- Impact of different dimensions of the innovation in each context. This is influenced by aspects of the school leaders' social and material structures within which they work. These structures vary across contexts and influence how, when and in what ways school leaders are able to exercise agency. For instance, in Nepal there were few examples of thriving NICs in the field testing. Inter-school cooperation is not a familiar concept in Nepal and peer collaboration sits uncomfortably within the current highly hierarchical system of relationships between educators.
- Relationships: professional capital of the project leader, their position within their institution and the influence of their institution within the education system. These characteristics determined the relationships that were able to be initiated or nurtured within the education system by each project team.
- Educational governance structures in each context. The way in which policy is developed and the size of the unit responsible for education policy and delivery facilitate or limit the relationships that could be developed and fostered by project teams. In Nepal, the education system is highly decentralized, with responsibility for detailed education planning and monitoring at municipal level (738 municipalities); in Pakistan education is devolved to the provinces (four provinces + Federal Capital Territory) with highly controlled structures; schools for Afghan refugees in Peshawar include both low-cost private schools and schools under the auspices of UNHCR which are managed by Pakistan NGOs including IDEA and Khwando Kor with teacher professional development (TPD) for educators in these schools currently lead by the University of Peshawar.

These factors influenced the mechanisms adopted for scaling impact in different contexts. Three overlapping mechanisms were observed in this project (drawing on McLean & Gargani, 2019):

- A programmatic mechanism. Here the field-tested NIC model is taken up in its entirety by an organization or by institutions. The program may be adapted for different contexts, for example in the format or frequency of NIC meetings. We are seeing this in the schools for Afghan refugees where NGOs are taking up the model for teachers and school leaders in the schools they manage. TPD in refugee contexts is fragmented, sporadic and not always related to the specific needs of the refugee communities. There is no existing framework for TPD, few policy constraints with respect to the role of the school leader and school leaders are generally young and open to being flexible in their practice. Hence, IDEA identified the approach of this project as a possible alternative school-based TPD model and is adapting the approach (different facilitator arrangements and using school-based NICs) for implementation with teachers. This mechanism is also being seen in Pakistan with the FGEI and the DGSE - Punjab who are using the NIC model in various forms. In this mechanism it has been necessary to emphasize alignment with current priorities (for example enrolment of out of school children) and to utilize existing structures such as Master Trainers as facilitators (although the pilot field data indicated most success when the facilitator was an expert in inclusive education).

- A practice mechanism. Here core ideas from the model are integrated into existing provision: activities from the Open Course and the approach to practice-based learning are being integrated into teacher education programs, for example at AIOU and with Sightsavers, to strengthen coverage of equity and inclusion issues. Organizations concerned with refugee education such as Inspire (NGO) and Estiqial High Schools are also proposing to adopt this approach.
- A product pathway. This involves the dissemination of one component of the NIC model – the Open Course as a product. In Nepal, the Open Course has been seen as the successful element of the NIC model, aligning as it does with current developments in TPD. Hence, the Open Course is being offered by different providers with varying modalities and forms of support.

## Capacity strengthening

Stakeholders were involved in multiple ways throughout the project, and many of these interactions served to enhance their skills, knowledge and capabilities in different areas related to scaling the impact of the NIC approach. Overall, 256 stakeholders participated in activities including workshops, collaborative generation of open materials, observations of project activities, and small coaching-type sessions. Activities focused on a number of areas pertinent to the improvement of school inclusion through scaling the impact of the NIC approach:

- Understandings of education inclusion: exploring a broader view of inclusive education as a process in which schools are transformed to educate all children equitably regardless of their gender, language, ethnic origin, socioeconomic status and so on. Many stakeholders (including school leaders) initially perceived inclusive education to be referring exclusively to children with disabilities or to girls' education.
- Theoretical and experiential knowledge about practice-based professional learning and skills to design and localize open resources: the Open Course approach was innovative in the context through its focus on practice-based learning through observation, experimentation and reflection rather than didactic presentation of abstract theoretical knowledge.
- Facilitator support and skill enhancement: working with stakeholders to devise and deliver programs to enhance the skills of educators who support school leaders' professional learning.
- Ways to utilize project findings to strengthen education systems: collaborative development of models for scaling the impact of the NIC approach enhanced stakeholders' skills in planning for scale while considering how the approach can be adapted to their specific context.
- Research skills to design and conduct field research relevant to scaling questions (*see* Section 1).
- School leaders' capabilities to take action to improve inclusive practice in their schools through participation in the field trials and in the subsequent scaling activities (see discussion under findings and knowledge mobilization).

Engagements in Phase 1 alerted stakeholders to the paucity of professional development on inclusion for school leaders and the need for a more structured approach to support school leaders in improving inclusive practice in their schools – preparing the ground for the project and its findings. In Phase 2, stakeholders in each context were involved in contributing to the innovative open materials through critical reading and adaptation to the local context. Colleagues across the partnership comment on how the practice-based approach of the open materials was new to them and has subsequently informed their design of courses for teachers. In Phase 3, capacity-strengthening activities supported stakeholders to take forward the project findings in ways that are appropriate for their context, outlined below under knowledge mobilization.

### ***Specific highlighted capacity-strengthening strategies and events***

*Afghan team:* An online capacity-strengthening event with a wide group of stakeholders from across GPE countries was held in June 2022. Attendees (11 persons) included course developers from education NGOs in addition to the teachers involved in the CW4WAfghan virtual classroom initiative. This event explored the pedagogy of the open materials, a learning-through-practice approach to professional development where theory is not treated separately from educators' daily practice. During the fieldwork, the project encouraged and enabled stakeholders to sit in on NIC meetings to observe school leader interactions and learning. These stakeholders included academics (Institute for Educational Research, University of Peshawar) and practitioners (IDEA, Khwando Kor, INSPIRE Pakistan, Estiqial Lycee High School, Malali Lycee High School and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Peshawar Region). These stakeholders also participated in two events: February 2023 – 11 participants; December 2023 – 19 participants. In these events the project approach (collaborative professional problem solving) was discussed along with emerging findings. In early 2024, a two-day Inclusive Education Capacity Building Training event was organized by AIOU and CW4WAfghan at AIOU in Islamabad. The two partners brought together their respective stakeholders (25 participants): IDEA, UNHCR, CAR, CWSA, FGEEI, FDE, DGSE, and NCRC, with the aim of strengthening their capacity around the concepts of inclusive education, school leader agency and scaling activities. This workshop influenced the IDEA decision to adopt the NIC model and a capacity strengthening event for IDEA was held in April 2024. During this event, CW4WAfghan and the local partner CWSA supported IDEA in planning for the pilot implementation of the NIC model and open resources. This included assisting and training IDEA Information Technology personnel on how to collaborate on the course forum and how to access learner analytic data from educators' use of the digital open resources.

*Nepal:* In addition to four meetings of the stakeholder group (comprising members of government agencies/ministries, civil society organizations, private sector organizations and other KIX grantees), the team held a workshop in December 2022 with municipalities, universities and NGOs on this model of professional development. This was followed up in February 2024 with a workshop with 19 participants on restructuring the Open Course for the Continuing and Professional Education Centre (CPEC) of Kathmandu University in order to customize the Open Course piloted in the project into a curriculum for teacher professional development (TDP).

Finally, during February 2024, a five-day workshop was held with education representatives from 29 municipalities of Bagmati Province. This served both to mobilize knowledge about the project (findings) and to strengthen capacity on modes of professional development for school leaders (use of digital tools, practice-based learning and so on) and understandings of inclusion. Following this workshop, educators from these municipalities expressed themselves equipped to be Open Course facilitators with their school leaders.

*Pakistan:* Several events were held to discuss the NIC approach including the practice-based approach to professional development. These included a workshop in July 2022 with 26 attendees involving key education stakeholders such as representatives of the Punjab DGSE and the FDE. A follow-up event was held in December 2022 where attendees included Mr. Waseem Ajmal, Additional Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training. Government officials participated in the NIC meetings and several officials studied the Open Course thereby familiarizing themselves with the content and format. A number of meetings were held with NGOs, such as Sightsavers, and other government agencies such as the National Commission for the Rights of Child (NCRC). These both served as knowledge exchange events and spaces to start to explore how stakeholders might think about utilizing the project findings.

In March 2024, a hybrid event took place aimed at contributing to the Capacity Building and Roadmap for Implementing the NIC Model with FGEEI and DGSE leadership and educational staff (113 participants). One of the initial stakeholders, Sightsavers Pakistan, presented their experience in adopting and adapting the Open Course.

This was followed (March 2024) by training for Master Trainers, and finalization of the scaling plan for FGEL, while the training of Master Trainers for DGSE was held in January 2024.

## Knowledge mobilization

The knowledge mobilization plan took into account the target audience in each country's context, to create a variety of secondary knowledge products and activities throughout the duration of the project. Secondary knowledge outputs are listed in Annex 4 and are all available on the [project](#) webpage. These were mobilized through numerous activities at national, regional and global levels. Outcomes reflect the different organizational and governance structures for education in each context.

For the Afghan team the focus was on producing visual material such as infographics, school leaders' vignettes, and NIC case studies for stakeholders responsible for Afghan refugee schools. Hence, knowledge mobilization was focused on Pakistani organizations funded by UNHCR responsible for managing and supporting UNHCR refugee schools (IDEA and Khwando Kor) and the universities responsible for pre-service education of Pakistani teachers and in-service professional development of Afghan educators. In the later stages of the project, this moved towards including the provincial DoE (KPK) who are now responsible for integrating refugee students into Government of Pakistan schools. This reflects UNCHR-Pakistan policy to move away from a parallel education system for refugees in Pakistan and towards public-private partnerships to promote refugee integration in Pakistan.

Project findings were mobilized in two evidence cafés with over 40 participants. The evidence cafes were highly interactive including group activities, on topics such as inclusion challenges in refugee schools and the use of the problem tree analysis tool. Stakeholders were asked to complete a scaling commitment form where they answered a few questions on how they might (or might not) plan on adopting the NIC model. This form guided subsequent follow-up meetings with specific stakeholders – IDEA, Inspire Pakistan and Estiqial Lycee High School who expressed interest in the model.

In addition, the secondary knowledge products were utilized by the Afghan team to support engagement with relevant actors in other GPE countries across the region and globally, such as the [Global School Leaders](#) (Kenya, Philippines, Ghana, India and Indonesia) and the [Alliance for Education of Women in Afghanistan](#) who are working with Save the Children in Afghanistan and UNESCO Afghanistan, with a view to exploring the use of the approach in Afghanistan government schools.

The outcome of these interactions was the following:

- i. IDEA is adopting all three components of the NIC model (NIC, the Open Course plus the facilitator). They are currently undertaking a pilot with 15 educators (five each from Peshawar, Kohat and Nowshera). If this pilot is successful, they plan to scale across the UNHCR schools they manage – 175 educators.
- ii. Inspire Pakistan. Inspire Pakistan is an implementing partner for UNCHR's Community-Based Protection project. They work with outreach volunteers (OVs) who work with communities (parents, religious leaders and so on) and advocate on many aspects of education, urging parents to send their children to school. Inspire plans to adopt the NIC model for their 400 OVs.
- iii. Estiqial High Schools. Following the Taliban takeover, these schools have moved from Kabul to Pakistan where they serve 800 students (mainly girls) in two locations. Teachers at these schools (50) have enrolled on the Open Course and headteachers are organizing NICs. They plan to include parents in one of the NICs.



In addition, CW4Wafghan has adopted the NIC model in another project working with partners in Afghan refugee schools and integrated the model into their online school (50 teachers/1000 students).

The Nepal team generated a diverse range of knowledge products for local partners in education and academia, showcased through infographics, a [blog series](#) describing the journey of the project and highlighting the impact of the Open Course in the local context, and conference abstract publications, available on the Nepal OU Digital Learning Hub [web page](#). They engaged in meetings with education leaders in all seven provinces (December 2023 – February 2024), with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) and organized an evidence café (December 2023) attended by representatives of 22 organizations, including a Member of Parliament.

Outcomes in Nepal include the integration of inclusion and equity considerations into the education emergency policy plan of the Kamalamai municipality and municipalities in Bardibas province equipped to facilitate the Open Course with their school leaders. In addition, there is a commitment from government agencies and agencies to use the Open Course:

- a. CHERD, Ministry of Education, will offer the course to Education Training Centres. Training will be provided to school leaders with a facilitator (hybrid model) and successful completion will be recognized through government certification (continuing professional development or CPD points).
- b. Kathmandu University CPEC will run the course in a blended model through allocated tutor groups with a tutor. Successful completion will be recognized with CPD points.
- c. Kathmandu University Digital Learning Research (DLR) Lab will run the course as an independent study option with peer review of activities leading to a Certificate of Participation.

Similarly, the Pakistan team leveraged knowledge products such as infographics and presentations for national stakeholder engagement including meetings with stakeholders such as the FGEI, representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education, representatives of provincial governments, the Punjab DGSE, NCRC and with NGOs such as Sightsavers and ACTED. Multiple interactions were held with many of these stakeholders. In October 2023, findings were shared at a stakeholder meeting with over 200 attendees including representatives of government authorities, NGOs, INGOs and school leaders. In addition, the Pakistan team has actively shared project working and findings with GPE audiences and globally, such as the KIX EMAP Webinar 19 (27 March 2024) and the Association of Open Universities of Asia (Istanbul, September 2023).

Following these efforts scaling partners in Pakistan are undertaking these actions:

- DGSE, Government of Punjab have adopted the GPE KIX school leadership training model, adaptation of the Open Course, NIC and PDSA cycle, as a new perspective for improving inclusion of children with special needs. In January 2024, the pilot course started with the master trainers testing the adapted version of the Open Course.
- FGEI (Army schools) have endorsed the NIC approach to improving education inclusion and are extending this to 311 Army schools across Pakistan with 7000 teachers.
- NCRC is a federal government department, impressed by the findings of the project (NIC and Open Course model) which has offered to use the knowledge outputs and open materials produced as a successful methodology to advocate for gender equity and inclusion in suitable government forums with the main goal of promoting equity and inclusion in the education institutes of all the provinces (a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to share and disseminate project outcomes, NIC model and Open Course to provinces).
- Sightsavers Pakistan decided to complement their traditional medical model of inclusion for visually impaired children with the adaptation of the Open Course in their trainings.

- AIOU is integrating the Open Course materials into their teacher education degree program.

As a global team, primary knowledge products were created, such as the conference paper '*Promoting Inclusion at Scale with School Leader Network Communities Supported by Open Resources*' at PCF10, a presentation at UKFIET 2023 and a presentation at CIES 2024. Various journal articles are in progress.

## SECTION 3: INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This was a complex applied research program to implement, in part because of sensitivities around the focus on inclusion – moving deeper into inclusion challenges, embedded power relations, social and institutional behavioral norms, and sociocultural attitudes to poverty and other structural inequalities. These are sensitive topics and our findings indicate that there was most success when project goals aligned with personal values, such as fairness for students with disabilities or female students. However, changing values and deeply embedded relationships takes time and effort, alongside alignment with other initiatives.

Reflecting on our experiences of project working, there are two main areas of activities we would do differently to improve the quality of the applied research:

1. **Balance between scaling research and research on the efficacy of the model (impact):** It was difficult to avoid the focus of the research slipping into being merely a study of the impact of the NIC model on school leaders' inclusion practices. Partners were understandably keen to explore in-depth their data to surface the changes in school leaders' agency, knowledge and beliefs in relation to inclusion and the types of actions they took to improve inclusive practice in their schools. However, at times, this focus dominated project activity and left little time to explore our sub-research questions on different mechanisms for scaling impact. It may have been more effective to have allowed time and resources for a second larger field trial in partnership with relevant stakeholders such as FGEI (Pakistan), building on findings from the first field trial. The extension period was only sufficient to enable planning with stakeholders of this next wave of activity. Having stakeholders driving the implementation would have enabled researchers to concentrate more fully on data gathering linked to scaling and to spend less time on implementing and monitoring the intervention. Additionally, this might have supported stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive and visceral understanding of the model – bottom-up change at school level to support policy intentions in relation to education inclusion.
2. **Open Course co-creation:** This proved to be a very time-consuming exercise because it challenged prevailing ideas about the form and content of professional learning. We underestimated the time needed to move as a team from a view of knowledge as acquisition to a pedagogy that sees knowledge as developed through a constructive process mediated by prior knowledge and personal and community experience. This involved a shift from understanding learning only in terms of knowledge outcomes towards a position where learning is moving deeper into enacted practice, with school leaders becoming increasingly competent professionals. We engaged in multiple online discussions throughout the co-creation process but these were inevitably fragmented, and the large time difference between project team members meant several colleagues were always participating outside their normal working day. Perhaps in-person writing workshops would have helped to reach an agreement earlier in the project timeline, but such events carry greater environmental and financial costs and were initially not possible due to Covid restrictions.

In addition to the GESI reflections discussed in Section 1, the following small adjustments were identified as learnings for future research:

- Greater early engagement with stakeholders at the national and provincial level for more in-depth exploration of scaling implementation across all levels starting with more emphasis on government partners to build relationships, trust and understandings of education inclusion at an earlier stage of the project.
- Engage more doctoral students in research, survey and analysis activities to both strengthen the research teams and develop students' capabilities in participating in 'real' research activities.
- Creating a 'living' glossary of key terms (such as in a Wiki) to surface different understandings of these terms and aid cross-cultural working.
- Strive more to interact (and possibly align) with projects that share the same aims and objectives at the national or provincial level.

## Recommendations for future research

Undertaking research in support of *scaling the impact* of innovations is highly complex, intellectually challenging and difficult for researchers to implement, particularly as they are often taking on multiple roles – innovator, advocate and researcher. If such research is to be more effective and efficient in understanding how impacts can be scaled, what is needed are a new research framework and methodologies for undertaking this work in education in the Global South. Such a framework and methodologies need to support researchers to move beyond assessing the potential for scale-up of a given innovation, to support researchers to unwrap the innovation and consider in depth the elements that have generated the impact in different contexts, then help them to identify the priority interventions and promising mechanisms for scale-up of these elements with particular actors *within an education system*. This discussion is, of course, embedded within the IDRC Scaling Playbook and associated literature but there are few in-depth examples from education or explicit research tools for researchers to adapt. Current models for scaling research are often too focused on the 'innovation' to be scaled and how to assess tweaks to the innovation for different contexts. Although consideration of social conditions is encouraged, this is often purely descriptive and rarely integrated fully into research questions and methodologies. What is needed is a systems lens framework to analyze where the impact might be realized through improvements in current processes and practices, working within the boundaries of what might be possible to shift in terms of social and institutional power relations and participants' ability to exercise agency; a research methodology which encourages a focus on function rather than form within the study of the innovation impact, an openness to multiple ways forward rather than an ideal form, and which considers the impact of the innovation on existing roles and processes within the system – analysis of how different actors might behave when the innovation impact is scaled. Applied research to develop such a framework and methodology would be highly beneficial.

In terms of the specific focus of research undertaken with this grant, our findings point to the need for further enquiries on the role of school leaders in low- and low-middle-income contexts; there is currently a paucity of research in this area. There is a need to understand the opportunities available to school leaders to take action in response to local issues that will move their school towards its goals. Researchers in partnership with school leaders need to experiment with different tools and practices that can empower school leaders, both individually and collectively, to take an active role in improving inclusive practice in their school.

Furthermore, the experiences of this project suggest a need for further research on what it means to be an inclusive education practitioner in different contexts, and what is possible for different actors within the structures that exist at multiple levels of any education system.

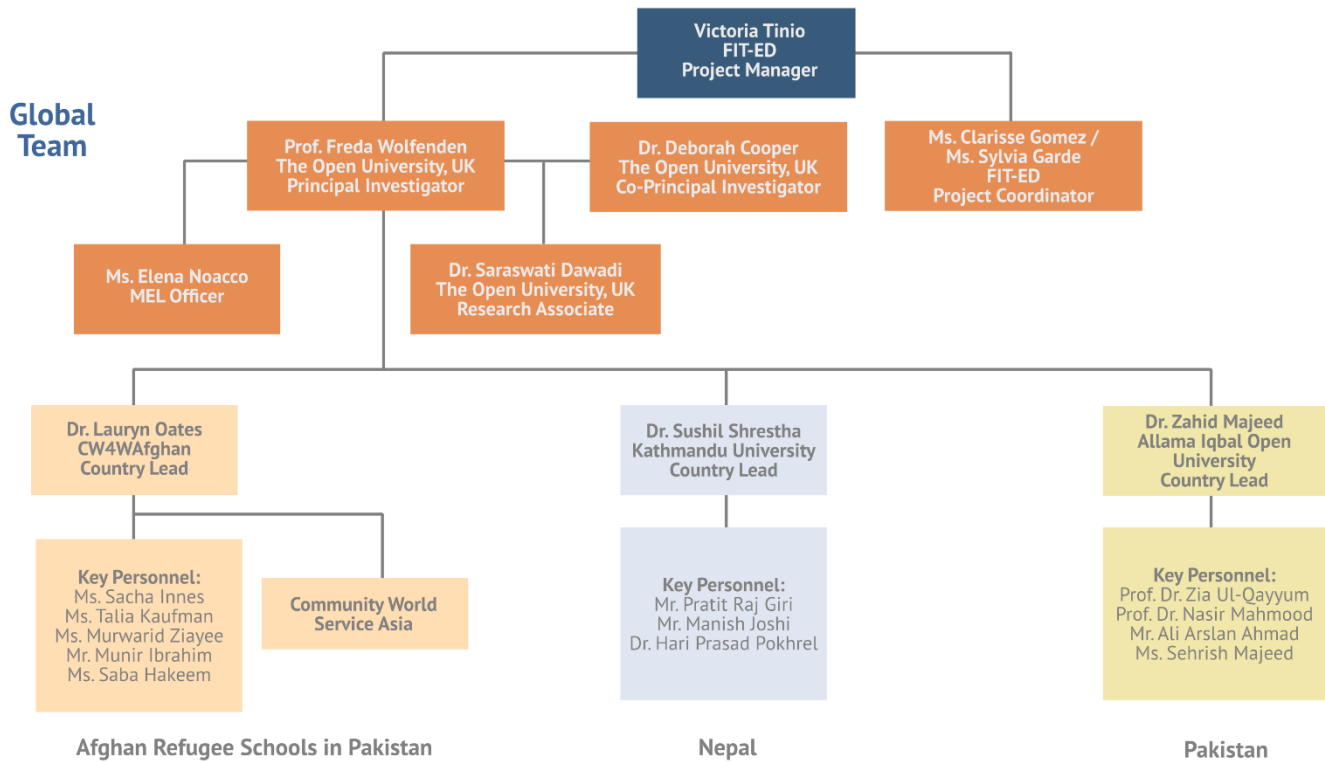
Relative to the investment of time, effort and funding the impact of the project has been considerable: in each context it has raised awareness of the need for professional development for school leaders in the area of inclusion and the potential of online learning and professional learning communities to contribute to this professional learning.

It has fostered partnerships and developed individual and collective capacities. Its legacy is a heightened awareness of the need to pay more attention to inclusion issues in educator professional development programs and what might need to be changed to enable school leaders to exercise agency to improve inclusive practice within their schools.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Project organizational chart

### School Leaders as Agents of Change Towards Equity and Inclusion Project Organization



## Annex 2: Project activities in Nepal, Pakistan and schools for Afghan refugees

<b>Afghan team (working with schools for Afghan refugees in Pakistan): Synthesis of Activities</b>		
<b>Phase 1: Contextualization in Afghanistan</b> June 2021 – March 2022	<b>Phase 2: Collaborative design of the Open Course and Networked Improvement Communities</b> April 2022 – February 2023	<b>Phase 3: Field Testing with Afghan refugee schools, Pakistan</b> March 2023- June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Setting up Project Team (onboarding people to the project including MEL Officer)</li> <li>● Meetings with key people from governmental and non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan</li> <li>● Literature review on school leadership and policy document analysis</li> <li>● Participated in capacity strengthening workshops on research ethics and stakeholder analysis</li> <li>● Empirical contextualization research - school leader survey (n=134) and interviews (n=10)</li> <li>● Analysis of research data and development of learner profiles for the Open Course</li> <li>● Exploration of options for project working following the Taliban takeover</li> <li>● Learning Design Workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Knowledge-sharing activities with SERVE Afghanistan, Global School Leaders, StoryWeaver and Afghan educators and consultants in Tajikistan; with several follow up meetings with Global School Leaders</li> <li>● Shift to working in Pakistan with schools for refugee Afghans in Peshawar</li> <li>● Capacity enhancement activities including workshops on how to design and deliver an open online practice-based course for educators</li> <li>● Contribution to writing of the generic version of the Open Course</li> <li>● Adaptation of the Open Course to produce a local contextualized version in Pashto</li> <li>● Research outputs (infographics, pamphlets, communication assets, etc.) and disseminating the findings from the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Field testing the NIC model with data collection in three different cycles</li> <li>● Engaging in capacity strengthening workshops on how to use Taguette for qualitative data analysis and take participant observation notes</li> <li>● Two Evidence Cafes for a total of 40 stakeholders (for more detail on these events see Section 2)</li> <li>● A number of one-to-one meetings with prospective NGOs supporting UNHCR with TPD for teachers and school leaders</li> <li>● An orientation meeting and subsequent training session with 18 education offices from IDEA (initiated, organized and funded by IDEA with a small contribution from CW4WAfghan)</li> <li>● Scaling planning meetings with one NGO (IDEA) and one school foundation (Estiqlal) supporting Afghan students</li> </ul>

	<p>initial research through events and online platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recruitment of 30 School Leaders from Peshawar, Pakistan for field trial and ethical approval</li> <li>● Contribution to a paper for the COL PCF10 conference (September 2022)</li> <li>● Agreeing on research design for the NIC field trial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organizing capacity enhancement events (e.g. workshop on inclusive education in partnership with AIOU)</li> <li>● Producing project outputs (school leader vignettes and blog post) and disseminating the project findings with wider public (e.g., the KIX EAP Education Policy and Innovation Conference)</li> </ul>
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Nepal team: Synthesis of In-Country Activities		
Phase 1: Contextualization June 2021 – March 2022	Phase 2: Collaborative design of the Open Course and Networked Improvement Communities April 2022 – February 2023	Phase 3: Field Testing March 2023- June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Setting up Nepal Project Team</li> <li>● Meetings with governmental organizations including with representatives from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</li> <li>● Two meetings with wider groups of stakeholders: a) local government representatives from Province 3, HANDS Nepal and school leaders from Province 3; b) governmental and non-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engaged with developing/writing the generic version of the Open Course</li> <li>● Stakeholder engagement with the aim of identifying other stakeholders</li> <li>● Contextualization of the generic version of the Open Course to the Nepalese context including translation into Nepalese</li> <li>● Research outputs (infographics, pamphlets, communication assets, blog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Field testing the NIC model with data collection in three different cycles</li> <li>● Presentation of the project findings in three local conferences and publication of three blog posts</li> <li>● Course restructuring workshop with stakeholders and platform set up</li> <li>● Visits to all seven provinces and education training centers to share</li> </ul>

<p>governmental organizations (e.g., Room to Read, Ministry of Education)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attended capacity strengthening workshops on stakeholder analysis and research ethics</li> <li>● Policy document analysis and review of relevant literature on school leaders and inclusion in Nepal</li> <li>● Field research for the contextualization of the study- school leader survey (n=118) and interviews (n=10)</li> <li>● Organized a knowledge sharing event with one KIX grantee from Nepal and attend a workshop organized by the fellow KIX grantee</li> </ul>	<p>post, newspaper and a synopsis on the bulletin named acKUaint, etc.) to disseminate first phase research results among different groups of stakeholders, through events and online Platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recruitment of 34 School Leaders from Sindhuli and Bardibas for field trial and two online course facilitators</li> <li>● Agreeing research design for the NIC pilot study</li> <li>● Ethical permission for field research secured from Kathmandu University</li> </ul>	<p>research findings and co-develop models for scaling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Close working with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST: CEHRD) to explore implementing the model through various government agencies</li> <li>● Meetings with colleagues from the CPEC, School of Education (Kathmandu University) to set up the course as a 3-credit offering for CPEC students</li> <li>● Evidence Café with multiple stakeholders from 22 organizations to explore scaling models to meet identified needs</li> <li>● Meetings with Nepal Open University leading to verbal agreement on using the project materials on their open platforms. Project materials shared.</li> </ul>
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**Pakistan team: Synthesis of In-Country Activities**

<b>Phase 1: Contextualization</b> July 2021 – March 2022	<b>Phase 2: Collaborative design of the Open Course and Networked Improvement Communities</b> April 2022 – February 2023	<b>Phase 3: Field Testing</b> March 2023- June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Setting up the Project Team</li> <li>● Meetings with governmental organizations including FDGE, DGSE Punjab and the Punjab Directorate of Teacher Training</li> <li>● Policy document analysis and review of relevant literature</li> <li>● Attended capacity strengthening workshops on stakeholder analysis and research ethics</li> <li>● Conducted contextualization research including policy analysis, school leader survey and interviews including interviews with policy makers, data analysis and report preparation</li> <li>● Presented in three knowledge-sharing events, organized by the Federal Ministry of Education, FDGE and The Director General of Special Education and at COL PCF10 conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engaged with developing/writing the generic version of the Open Course</li> <li>● Attended capacity enhancement activities- a two-day workshop on Open Course design -attendees included Federal Directorate of Education, from Punjab School Education Department, school leaders and project team members and consultants</li> <li>● Contextualization of the generic version of the Open course to ensure suitability of the course for SLs in Pakistan</li> <li>● Dissemination of first phase research result (infographics, pamphlets, etc.) to share with different groups of stakeholders through events and online platforms including CIES conference</li> <li>● Recruitment of 30 School Leaders for the course and two course facilitators</li> <li>● Meeting with stakeholders including Sightsavers, the Government of Punjab, and the Federal Minister of Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Field testing the NIC model with data collection in three different cycles to assess its sustainability and scalability</li> <li>● Presented the project updates in a Policy Dialogue ‘<i>Reforms to Enhance Quality Education and Quality of Life of the children with special needs and their families: Innovative Solution</i>’</li> <li>● Organizing a series of stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing events, including a symposium on inclusion with the Afghan team</li> <li>● Research workshop with officials (including school leaders) from the Federal Government Education Institutions (FGEI)</li> <li>● Multiple meetings with officials from the DGSE Punjab and with officials from the FGEI</li> <li>● Capacity strengthening and roadmap workshops with FGEI and DGSE.</li> <li>● Meetings with relevant NGOs including Sight Savers</li> <li>● Training of Master Trainers (facilitators) for the FGEI and DGSE</li> </ul>

### **Annex 3: Testimonies from colleagues on research capacity (March 2024)**

*Colleague in NGO in Pakistan:*

The knowledge I gained from the training has proven to be invaluable in various aspects of our activities, including evidence cafes, in-person meetings, and workshops. For example, during evidence cafes, I applied the techniques I learned to accurately document discussions, key points, and participant reactions. Similarly, in-person meetings and workshops have benefited from my improved ability to capture important details, identify patterns, and comprehensively summarize discussions.

*Junior Research Assistant, Nepal*

The training on participant observation note-taking was significant for me because it provided valuable insights into the process of observing and recording information in research settings. I learned about the importance of being objective, detailed, and systematic in my note-taking approach, as well as the significance of reflexivity in acknowledging and managing my own biases and perspectives during observations. I have used it in one of our stakeholder meetings.

*Researcher/MEL officer, Nepal*

The guidance and tutorial on Taguette were particularly valuable to me, as it was my initial experience with the software. It was very helpful in analyzing qualitative data, which is often very tricky.... this is a very useful tool and I will use it in analyzing qualitative data of other projects where I'm involved.

*Research Assistant, Nepal*

Taking consent on everything we do with someone was a great learning for me as I was not concerned about these things before. Research ethics was a new thing for me and this was a great learning.

*Researcher, Pakistan*

In a number of projects, we involved stakeholders but never prioritized or divided them into groups based on their impact and influence. This gave us a new perspective on changing the level of stakeholder engagement. Now, we're implementing this technique in our other projects.

I am familiar with NVivo and have been using it, but I find Taguette to be a new and much more helpful tool compared to NVivo. I shared this discovery with faculty members and research scholars at AIOU, and it has been well received and incorporated into their practice.

#### Annex 4: Secondary knowledge outputs

Team	Output Type	Title	Link
PAKISTAN	Infographic	Executive Summary: Networked improvement communities for school leaders towards equity and inclusion. Pakistan	<a href="https://online.aiou.edu.pk/LIVE_SITE/addvertise/Pakistan%20Infographic.pdf">https://online.aiou.edu.pk/LIVE_SITE/addvertise/Pakistan%20Infographic.pdf</a>
	Conference presentation at the 7 <sup>th</sup> international Conference on research and practices in education (Islamabad, 28-29 February 2024). “Transforming education: empowering learning for life.”	<i>Empowering Education: Building Inclusive School Communities through Leader Network Collaboration</i> - Paper ID 234, p.32	<a href="https://icrpe.aiou.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/24-02-27-Abstract-Book.pdf">https://icrpe.aiou.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/24-02-27-Abstract-Book.pdf</a>
	Conference presentation: 36 <sup>th</sup> Asian Association of Open Universities, Turkey September 2023.	<i>PDSA Model and NICs Approach for School Leaders Towards Equity and Inclusion: A Case Study of AIOU Pakistan</i> , p.816 in Conference proceedings	<a href="https://cdn.anadolu.edu.tr/files/anadolu-cms/JEwr4GzW/uploads/proceedings-vs3-c9448beda0361a24.pdf">https://cdn.anadolu.edu.tr/files/anadolu-cms/JEwr4GzW/uploads/proceedings-vs3-c9448beda0361a24.pdf</a>
	Country animation	School Leader NIC for Equity and Inclusion Model in Pakistan	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/</a>
AFGHANISTAN (Refugee schools in Pakistan)	Infographic: Project findings - Phase 1	Networked improvement communities for school leaders towards equity and inclusion, Afghanistan.	<a href="https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Afghan-School-Leaders-and-Inclusion-Study-November-2021-1.pdf">https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Afghan-School-Leaders-and-Inclusion-Study-November-2021-1.pdf</a>
	Presentation: KIX stakeholder event	Educator Professional Development: Knowledge sharing	<a href="https://cw4wafghan.ca/networked-improvement-communities-for-school-leaders-towards-equity-and-inclusion">https://cw4wafghan.ca/networked-improvement-communities-for-school-leaders-towards-equity-and-inclusion</a>
	Project summary	<i>Networked Improvement Communities for School Leaders towards Equity and Inclusion</i> , Project Summary	<a href="https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/KIX-Brief.pdf">https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/KIX-Brief.pdf</a>

	Infographic: NIC model	Inclusive Education NIC Educator Professional Development Model	<a href="https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/KIX-ED-PD-Model.pdf">https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/KIX-ED-PD-Model.pdf</a>
	School leader journey vignettes	Four vignettes illuminating changes in school leader practices	<a href="https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/KIX-NIC-Vignettes.pdf">https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/KIX-NIC-Vignettes.pdf</a>
	Case study: One Networked Improvement Community	<i>NIC 1 Case Study - Summary and Key Takeaways</i>	<a href="https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NIC-1-Case-Study.pdf">https://cw4wafghan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NIC-1-Case-Study.pdf</a>
	Country animation	School Leader NIC for Equity and Inclusion Model in schools for Afghan refugees in Pakistan	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/</a>
NEPAL  <a href="https://dlrlab.ku.edu.np/nic/project-dissemination/">https://dlrlab.ku.edu.np/nic/project-dissemination/</a>	Infographic: Project findings phase one	Executive Summary: Networked Improvement Communities for School Leaders Towards Equity and Inclusion, Nepal	<a href="https://dlrlab.ku.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Infographics.pdf">https://dlrlab.ku.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Infographics.pdf</a>
	Abstract from the 9th NAST Conference presentation (28/06/2022)	<i>ICT and its Use in Promoting Equity and Inclusion in School Practice across Nepal: Findings from Initial Research with School Leaders</i> , p. 508	<a href="#">ICT AND ITS USE IN INCREASING EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN SCHOOL PRACTICE ACROSS NEPAL FINDINGS FROM INITIAL RESEARCH WITH SCHOOL LEADERS.pdf - Google Drive</a>
	Conference presentation at the Third International Conference on Transformative Education Research and Sustainable Development (TERDS), 4-6 November 2022, Nepal	<i>School Leaders' Views and Challenges Associated with Inclusion in Government Schools in Nepal</i> , p. 106	<a href="https://tersd2022.kusoed.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Proceedings-TERSD-2022_3-Novemeber-2022.pdf">https://tersd2022.kusoed.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Proceedings-TERSD-2022_3-Novemeber-2022.pdf</a>

Conference paper presented at the International Conference for Technical and Vocational education and training, September 15-16 2023, Dhulikhel, Nepal	<i>Relevance of Plan Do Study and Act (PDSA) Cycle in creating inclusive environment in TVET Schools: Implications from a pilot study of School Education</i>	<a href="https://tvetnepal2023.kusoe.d.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Proceeding_TVET_2023-1.pdf">https://tvetnepal2023.kusoe.d.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Proceeding_TVET_2023-1.pdf</a>
Blog post 1	<i>Context of Inclusive Education policies and practices in Nepal</i>	<a href="https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/06/context-of-inclusive-education-policies.html">https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/06/context-of-inclusive-education-policies.html</a>
Blog post 2	<i>Introduction to Course and Expected outcomes of the Course</i>	<a href="https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/06/introduction-to-course-and-implementing.html">https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/06/introduction-to-course-and-implementing.html</a>
Blog post 3	<i>Impact of Open Course on Students, Parents, and Schools: A Transformative Journey</i>	<a href="https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/title-impact-of-open-course-on-students.html">https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/title-impact-of-open-course-on-students.html</a>
Blog post 4	<i>Experiences so far with head teachers and working with NIC's</i>	<a href="https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/06/experiences-so-far-with-head-teachers.html">https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/06/experiences-so-far-with-head-teachers.html</a>
Blog post 5	<i>Headteachers Take Proactive Measures to Improve Education: Evidence-Based Strategies Yield Positive Outcomes</i>	<a href="https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/head-teachers-take-proactive-measures-to.html">https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/head-teachers-take-proactive-measures-to.html</a>
Blog post 6	<i>Local Government Pioneers Inclusive Education Audit through Open Course: A Path to a More Inclusive Future</i>	<a href="https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/local-government-pioneers-inclusive.html">https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/local-government-pioneers-inclusive.html</a>
Blog post 7	<i>Empowering Communities: A Cross-Communication Approach to Overcoming Educational Challenges</i>	<a href="https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/empowering-communities-cross.html">https://digitalllearninglabku.blogspot.com/2023/11/empowering-communities-cross.html</a>

	Country animation	School Leader NIC for Equity and Inclusion Model in Nepal	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/</a>
GLOBAL TEAM	Blog post: UKFIET	Thinking Again about Agency for Inclusion: Analyzing Leadership Data through Local and Global Perspectives	<a href="https://www.ukfiet.org/2023/thinking-again-about-agency-for-inclusion-analysing-leadership-data-through-local-and-global-perspectives/">https://www.ukfiet.org/2023/thinking-again-about-agency-for-inclusion-analysing-leadership-data-through-local-and-global-perspectives/</a>
	Conference presentation: UKFIET	<i>Empowering school leaders as local change agents for equity and inclusion</i>	<a href="#">Conference Theme - The Education and Development Forum (UKFIET)</a>
	Conference presentation: PCF10	<i>Promoting Inclusion at Scale with School Leader Network Communities Supported by Open Resources: Researching Participant Needs and Priorities</i>	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4449">http://hdl.handle.net/11599/4449</a>
	Conference presentation- CIES	<i>School leaders approaching equity and inclusion through collective action and professional networks: Findings from Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan</i>	<a href="#">THE POWER OF PROTEST - CIES 2024 (allacademic.com)</a>
	Blog post	<i>Capacity building of school leaders on equity and inclusion in developing countries</i>	<a href="https://tpdatscalecoalition.org/capacity-building-of-school-leaders-on-equity-and-inclusion-in-developing-countries/">https://tpdatscalecoalition.org/capacity-building-of-school-leaders-on-equity-and-inclusion-in-developing-countries/</a>
	Video animation	<i>The School Leader NIC for Equity and Inclusion Model</i>	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/</a>
	Policy brief	<i>How can Professional Networks help School Leaders address inclusion challenges in their schools? Evidence from Nepal, Pakistan and Afghan refugee schools</i>	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/</a>
	Project animation	The School Leader NIC for Equity and Inclusion Model	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/</a>
	Open resources (inclusion and improvement tools)	Professional Learning for School Leaders: Improving Equity and Inclusion in Schools An open course for localization	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatscalecoalition.org/</a>

	Digital book	Small Steps to Change: School leaders stories of inclusion and networking in Nepal, Pakistan and Afghan refugee schools	<a href="https://nicsforschoolleaders.tpdatSCALEcoalition.org/">https://nicsforschoolleaders. tpdatSCALEcoalition.org/</a>
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## Annex 5: References

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