KOREA'S PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS: WORKING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Key messages

The Korea International Cooperation Agency's development innovation programmes have worked to encourage the private sector to draw on its expertise in other settings and contribute to the SDGs in partner countries. The agency's support to inclusive education through Enuma is adapted to different partner country contexts.

● **Keywords**

Learning and knowledge management | Private sector | Digital transformation

● **Key partner**

Korea

Challenge

A key challenge for development partners is helping the private sector adapt and adjust programmes to different country contexts where markets may not otherwise be attractive. Education lies at the heart of sustainable development as it plays a crucial role in developing human capital – a population's knowledge, skills and abilities that contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction. However, the global out-of-school population of primary and secondary school age was 244 million in 2021.

The Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Education Midterm Strategy for 2021-25 aims to advance inclusive education and close education gaps by expanding access to and improving the quality of education in developing countries. In some countries, the private sector has been crucial to these goals.

Approach

KOICA's Creative Technology Solution (CTS) programme, which aims to foster innovative private sector-initiated solutions for a variety of development challenges, was able to support Enuma to target the learning needs of children in low-resource and hard-to-reach developing country contexts. Established in 2012, Enuma is a globally recognised education technology company that aims to create the best digital solutions to empower all children to become independent learners, including those with special needs.

Through its participation in the CTS programme from 2016 to 2021, Enuma developed Kitkit School, an innovative, tablet-based early literacy and numeracy application designed to enable all children to gain foundational skills independently. Piloting Kitkit School in Tanzania confirmed both its usability and significant learning impact, enabling Enuma to leverage this evidence-based success to scale the solution worldwide.

The breadth of KOICA's private sector programmes and modalities allowed its partnership to evolve. By leveraging the evidence-based solution and expertise gained during the CTS programme, Enuma transitioned into KOICA's Inclusive Business Solution (IBS) programme, which supports larger companies to scale social impact more widely. Through this, Enuma is implementing a digital education initiative from 2022 to 2026 distributing its tablet-based foundational learning solution, Enuma School, in Indonesia, developed together with local curriculum specialists, storytellers, video makers and artists across Indonesia and targeting 540 public schools and 27 000 students nationwide to overcome pandemic-driven learning gaps.

Results

○ **Better learning outcomes and greater usage**. Continued monitoring of children's learning progress through randomised controlled trials found that Enuma's applications achieved higher learning outcomes and usage frequency than those of peers. In 2019, the application won the Global Learning XPRIZE competition.

○ **Collaboration with other development partners facilitates outreach to children in hard-to-reach and refugee settings**. Enabled by its early success in KOICA-supported official development assistance (ODA) pilots, Enuma collaborated with partners including the International Rescue Committee and Imagine Worldwide to provide foundational learning opportunities to over 210 000 children, including Rohingya refugees, out-of-school children and children with disabilities.

○ **Catalysing nationwide impact through a free app**. After transitioning to the IBS programme, Enuma's solution has expanded nationally in Indonesia, creating sustainable impact and serving over 15 000 students in public schools (as of February 2024). Additionally, a separate app that Enuma distributes for free through a literacy campaign was downloaded in schools and homes more than 260 000 times (as of February 2024).

○ **Supporting private sector companies and initiatives**. Between its establishment in 2015 and 2023, the CTS programme supported 107 projects involving 91 companies in 22 countries, providing innovative technologies in various sectors ranging from health diagnostics, energy efficiency and smart farming to education. From 2010 to 2023, the IBS programme supported 171 projects with 201 companies in 31 countries in the education, agricultural development, health, technology, environment and energy sectors.

Lessons learnt

○ **Steady support to private sector partners in developing countries was key to the success of education programmes**. Introducing innovative technologies in developing countries carries significant risks for companies. KOICA's strategic private sector programmes such as CTS and IBS have incentivised and facilitated technology dissemination. KOICA's support not only propelled companies such as Enuma to international success but also provided critical assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

○ **Collaborations with the private sector in development co-operation promote best practices and advance inclusive education**. By leveraging technology to connect schools and students, these

partnerships have not only boosted students' performance but also spurred sustainable progress in education, underscoring the importance of ongoing private sector partnerships.

○ **Performance management should incorporate their innovative nature and consider scaling up.** The independent evaluation framework needs to consider the theory of change of KOICA's support via CTS, including how technological solutions are developed and how – together with an inclusive business model – programmes can be scaled up. As such, KOICA is working to create an evaluation system that enables performance assessment of an innovative programme operated in collaboration with the private sector.

Further information

Enuma, *Creating a Future Where Every Child Can Learn At Their Own Pace*, https://enuma.com/en/.

KOICA, *Creative Technology Solution Program,* www.koica.go.kr/koica_en/3446/subview.do.

KOICA, *Inclusive Business Solution Program*, www.koica.go.kr/koica_en/3447/subview.do.

UNESCO (2023), *Global Education Monitoring Report,* https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en

OECD resources

Kumpf, B. and P. Jhunjhunwala (2023), "The adoption of innovation in international development organisations: Lessons for development co-operation", *OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers*, No. 112, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/21f63c69-en.

OECD (2024), *OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Korea 2024*, OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, [forthcoming].

OECD (2020), *Innovation for Development Impact: Lessons from the OECD Development Assistance Committee*, The Development Dimension, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/a9be77b3-en.

To learn more about the Korea's development co-operation, see:

OECD, "Korea", in *Development Co-operation Profiles*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/d919ff1a-en.

See more *In Practice* examples from Korea here: https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning?tag-key+partner=korea#search.

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