



Fellows Model

A Model of Inclusive and Equitable Learning



What We Do

ConnectED is working for a world where youth in Central America have access to a quality and relevant education. At the local level there are change agents, leaders in education. They live in the community, have the passion, the desire, but often lack the skills and resources to improve education outcomes. Our unique and proven model selects these local visionary leaders to serve as ConnectED Fellows. Through mentorship and leadership development they are equipped to be change agents who engage and empower their communities to understand education challenges, set goals, complete projects and realize their vision for improved education. The training that Fellows receive helps them develop skills such as, problem solving, project development, consensus building, coordination, communication and leadership. These skills serve the immediate needs of the education sector in their community and have a benefit many times larger for themselves.

In sum, our theory of change is as follows

IF

Dynamic education leaders are empowered to effect change – through capacity development, resource provision and support of locally-driven solutions

THEN

They can improve access, quality and relevance of formal and non-formal education in their community

WHICH WILL RESULT IN

Improved learning outcomes and prospects for youth in select communities

AND ULTIMATELY WILL

Provide education leaders with the opportunity to build skills and gain relevant experiences to improve their own livelihood.



Purpose of this Guide

This document intends to provide a GUIDE to show how the ConnectEDs Fellows Model is implemented in the field. The guide is not a canned set of instructions to follow, but rather a tool built on lessons learned and best practices that utilizes fixed and flexible programming components to ensure the organization achieves its mission and that solutions are locally driven and relevant. It explains how ConnectED works with Fellows to strengthen their capacity to develop, implement, and sustain approaches to meeting education needs in their community. Each year, ConnectED solicits feedback from its Fellows and local partners and iterates the Fellows Model accordingly to ensure it is as impactful as possible.

What is a ConnectED Fellow?

A ConnectED Fellow is an education leader, nominated by one of ConnectEDs partners, who has demonstrated an exceptional desire and ability to improve the educational outcomes of learners in their community. The Fellow commits to projects which will benefit the learners and the wider school community in their locale. The Fellow agrees to the terms and conditions of support from ConnectED, as detailed in the Fellow's guide.

What does access to education mean?

Access refers to the equality of opportunity to participate in and receive a good-quality education, regardless of socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, physical status and other aspects that influence their needs as learners. Other barriers to the access to education can include distance to school, costs for tuition/supplies/uniforms, lack of family support, the safety and health of the school environment, the adequacy of its facilities (water, latrines, and sanitation), conflict, and prohibitive cultural norms.¹

ConnectED works to address barriers that will provide the opportunities for the greatest number of learners. The Fellows select their projects based on a thorough community needs analysis and a rigorous vetting process by organizational leadership education mentors.

¹ See the Commonwealth Education Hub's discussion document Increasing Access to Education, for an exploration of these issues.

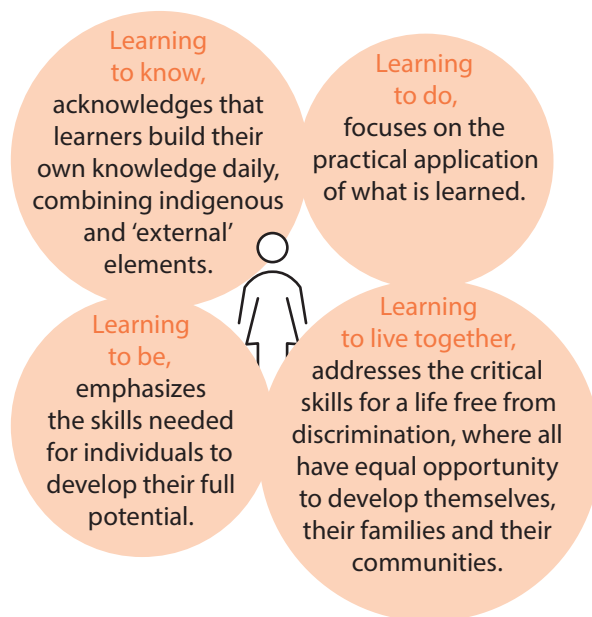
What does quality of education mean?

The quality of education is determined by several factors which include teacher preparation, curriculum design, appropriateness and adequacy of learning materials, opportunities for skills development and remediated learning, a physical space that is conducive for learning, a pro-social school environment, and family and community support for learning.²

ConnectED targets interventions to improve educational quality by enhancing teacher skills, providing innovative learning experiences through extracurricular activities, and enhancing community support for education, among others.

What does relevance of education mean?

Relevance is a concept that changes with context but is undergirded by certain enduring principles outlined in the landmark document Learning: The Treasure Within, report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. This commission saw education, throughout life, as based upon four pillars³:



ConnectED works to enhance the relevance of education by providing supports to ensure that the teaching and learning process better meets the needs of learners. We offer learning experiences to build skills and competencies that support individuals to know, to do, to live together, and to be.

² See the document Quality Education: Why It Matters in support of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and this chapter from the Education for All Global Monitoring Report on education quality.
³ Delors et al., 1996, as described in the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2005): http://www.unesco.org/education/gmr_download/chapter1.pdf



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How we do it

Phase 1 2 3 4 5 6

Connect!

Identify Local Fellows



Purpose

The most critical component of the ConnectED Fellows Program involves identifying appropriate local partners to work with. Partnerships and collaboration make this work possible. Targeting the right communities and local education leaders (Fellows) determines the success of a project.

Key Deliverables

Communities and ConnectED Fellows are selected.

Step 1 2

Identify select communities

The strategy for selection of communities to participate in the ConnectED Fellows Program requires the initial identification of communities that stand to benefit from the process. Utilizing a specific set of selection criteria, ConnectED works closely with partners to identify and determine if potential communities are a good fit for its programming. The following core areas are assessed within potential partner communities:

- Level of community engagement
- Proximity to other communities
- Level of vulnerability
- Level of commitment to improve education performance
- Potential community benefit from relationship
- Presence of a local education leader to serve as a ConnectED Fellow
- Potential for multi-stakeholder buy-in and active support
- Capacity of community to sustain projects long-term

Resources

Community Selection Criteria

Step 1 2

Identify and partner with local Fellows

Once a community is identified, ConnectED continues to work closely with partners to identify potential Fellows who could serve as ambassadors of their community. The goal is to give local education leaders the tools and training that they need to act as long-term managers, leaders, and informed decision makers of community-driven education projects.

The strategy for selection of community leaders to participate in the ConnectED Fellows Program requires identification that potential Fellows have specific values, traits, and capacity. Through interviews with prospective Fellows, ConnectED and partners learn about their prospective work ethic, demeanor, values, skills, and previous work to more fully understand their strengths and capacity to serve as a representative of their community.

The following core areas are assessed based on the Fellows Selection Criteria:

- Understanding of the ConnectED Fellows Program process and goals
- Demonstration of potential to work effectively with people
- Understanding of community dynamics
- Demonstration in ethical reasoning
- Demonstration for compassion for his/her community
- Capacity for ideation/design
- Ability to identify potential solution to a specific problem
- Personal interest/goals, knowledge, capacity, and drive in areas that benefit the community
- Personal values
- Passion and enthusiasm
- Fellows' ability to act as a community mobilizer
- Understanding of sustainability as an important component of projects following a partnership with ConnectED
- Connection to and understanding of education within the community

After meeting with prospective Fellows, ConnectED and partners review the nominations and recommendations against the Fellow Selection Criteria and invite qualified candidates to take part in the ConnectED Fellows Program.

Resources

Fellow Selection Criteria

Phase 1 2 3 4 5 6

Build Capacity!
Develop Local Leadership



Purpose

Building the capacity of our local Fellows is about developing resilience within the communities with which we work and strengthening the human resources that already exist. With increased capacity, local education leaders are better able to support their community in navigating changing education needs and opportunities in the long-term. Building the capacity and leadership of our Fellows begins straight away with a new cohort of Fellows and is ongoing throughout the duration of the Fellowship.

Key Deliverables

Fellows' leadership capacity is strengthened.

Step 1

Strengthen local capacity

Each Fellow is engaged to identify training needs that will strengthen their community leadership skills (crisis management, communication, project facilitation, etc.) and technical/professional development related to their project area and/or profession. This process results in the creation of a Fellow Leadership Development Plan, which identifies specific training plans (training to be received, dates, cost, etc.) for each Fellow. Once developed, ConnectED works with Fellow(s) and partners to implement relevant trainings. Trainings are delivered in both a team cohort environment and through one-on-one mentorship.



Phase 1 2 3 4 5 6

Listen!

Assess Community Needs



Purpose

One of the most critical components of the ConnectED Fellows Model includes the use of human centered design as a tool to inspire, prepare and support local education leaders to turn knowledge into action in addressing critical educational challenges. Once selected, Fellows work with partners, community members, and ConnectED to gain a better understanding of community education issues by conducting a community needs assessment. The results of the assessment guides future action. It engages Fellows and community members to learn more about their communities, discuss findings, and create education strategies to make positive changes in their community.

Key Deliverables

Community needs assessment completed, and education priorities discussed with the community.

Step 1 2

Conduct community needs assessment

The community assessment is both a process and a method. As a process it builds leadership, group cohesion, and a sense of local involvement. As a method, it is a tool that helps a Fellow to engage their community to better understand the dynamics and composition of their community and the primary issues that education can help address. The community assessment also helps to ensure that executed education strategies are relevant and build on community strengths and resources.

Resources

Community Assessment Survey

Step 1 2

Assess and prioritize community needs

Once a community survey is completed, Fellows work with ConnectED, education mentors and affiliated faculty from US Universities to analyze and interpret collected information. Together, they identify key messages, trends, ideas, and exceptions. Through the facilitation of a community workshop, Fellows explain the goals of the research, what feedback they have received in the community assessment process, and what education issues have emerged as priorities.

The completed assessment provides the community with a written record and broad snapshot of their community. It also serves as a conversation starter to ensure that the entire community is aware of the results and that there is consensus in regard to primary issues of access, quality, and relevance of education. Once priorities are broadly identified, focus groups are convened with the Fellow to include appropriate partners with expertise in the applicable area.



Phase 1 2 3 4 5 6

Plan!

Generate Project Designs



Purpose

A strong diverse project team with technical expertise in the project area, as well as skills and capabilities to work in a collaborative environment, are essential to provide support to Fellows and to create a relevant project scope and work plan. The team works together to support the Fellow to assess and prioritize needs and to design a clear and motivating mission and work plan for the project.

Key Deliverables

Project team assembled, community priorities assessed, community project selected, and mission and project plan developed.

Step 1 2 3

Assemble the project team

Once the Fellow has engaged their community to identify their priority education need(s), ConnectED works with Fellow(s) to assemble a project team to support the design and implementation of their education strategy/ project. The team often includes local Fellows, community volunteers, ConnectED regional staff, CBO staff, students and a selection of local, regional, and international advisors from private/ public entities, with synergistic missions and relevant expertise that can support project goals and capacity building needs of local Fellows.

Resources

Assembly of Project Team

Step 1 2 3

Generate ideas, assess, and prioritize and select projects

ConnectED and Fellow(s) convene the team to assess community priorities and potential projects. They aim to make best use of local assets to build a sustainable, long-term, low-cost project to deliver high returns through education.

Resources

Project Selection Criteria

Step 1 2 3

Develop the project design

After the assessment process is completed and a community project is selected, the project team develops a mission statement that briefly captures in a clear and motivating way the project goals and the values underlying them. The project team prepares a well-developed project plan that communicates the goals and deliverables (issue, community solution, local assets, and resources needed), timeline, and budget.

Resources

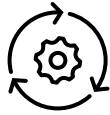
Project Scope of Work

Project Work Plan

Project Budget



Phase 1 2 3 4 5 6
Implement!
Pilot Small-Scale Initiatives



Purpose

Close monitoring of team activities and control processes are used to ensure final deliverables are achieved and to keep project plans on track. The use of locally available resources, investments in capacity building, and local partnerships are key to ensuring sustainability.

Key Deliverables

Project implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

Step 1

Move project deliverables to completion

The project Fellow, partners, ConnectED staff, and education mentors work closely throughout the process to move project deliverables forward, assess progress, troubleshoot hurdles, and engage team members as needed. Community members contribute their time to support infrastructure and project development. Lead partners and mentors provide valuable technical support and insight. To-date ConnectED Fellows have averaged approx. 50% in-kind match of their total project costs from their communities.

Resources

Project Work Plan Template

Phase 1 2 3 4 5 6
Evaluate!
Adaptively Manage and Scale
Successful Initiatives



Work with Fellows to monitor impact, document lessons learned and scale impact accordingly.

Purpose

Greater long-term results are achieved by building partnerships, coordinating goals and capturing lessons learned from experience. Once those experiences are collected, they can be shared effectively, and others can benefit from them. ConnectED works with partners, Fellows and project teams to conduct robust monitoring and evaluation at both the program/organization level and individual intervention/project level. Of critical importance are lessons learned and feedback from local fellows and partners in regard to their experience of the ConnectED Fellows Model. Each year, ConnectED incorporates lessons learned via annual impact evaluations to ensure the Fellows Model is adaptively managed.

Key Deliverables

Project evaluated, and successful innovations identified and scaled.

Step 1

Assess impact and incorporate feedback from beneficiaries

Impact assessments are carried out to measure the effectiveness of project activities by evaluating the significance of changes brought about by implemented activities. These changes comprise all the positive and negative, and intended or unintended results in all areas and allow ConnectED! to understand how its efforts impact a community and how its programming can be improved. A regular feedback system is used to engage with Fellows and community members to get their opinion and check that their expectations are being met.

Resources

Project Monitoring Template

Fellow/Community Project Assessment



ConnectED

Local Solutions • Education • Collaboration