

## Documentation of COVID intervention

1. **Organisation Name:** Global School Leaders
2. **Program Name:**
  - Projects RISE/Upya - Supporting school leaders during school closures to engage students
  - Project Kanya/Shakti – Supporting school leaders during school closures to develop more gender-sensitive schools
3. **Nature of the intervention:** Awareness and education for the community
4. **When did the intervention start** – Both prior and during Covid
5. **Location and demographics** –

We deployed these resources in ~120 government schools in Andhra Pradesh serving low caste and low tribe students. We also deployed them in ~100 low-cost private schools in urban areas. Overall we reached ~50,000 students.
6. **Age of children:** 6-16 years
7. **Duration of intervention:** Throughout the pandemic and ongoing

### **Project RISE/Upya**

The current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in up to 1.6 billion children across the world losing hours of instruction at school, while also experiencing threats to their mental and physical wellbeing. As schools reopen, strong leadership from school principals will be of critical importance to ensuring the academic success and social-emotional wellbeing of children. Despite their critical role, school leaders are given almost no ongoing support for their professional development and guidance.

Research shows that school leaders have a very important effect on educational outcomes, with their influence being stronger in adverse circumstances. During the Hurricane Matthew crisis in Haiti, “for schools experiencing the highest level of infrastructure damage, one standard deviation of better routine management practices would equate to a 0.43 standard deviation increase in average score on the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA).” (Adelman, et. al 2020).

Investing in school leaders is a cost-effective way of improving educational outcomes. Researchers in Brazil found that the Jovem de Futuro (JdF) 3-year training program provided to school and district leaders led to 30% student test score increases in math and Portuguese, yet cost only 5% of public expenditures per student for secondary school (Barros, et al. 2019). Given that education budgets may shrink due to the economic impact of the pandemic, school leadership will be a high leverage solution.

GSL supports school leaders in running high quality schools. Our training programs deliver cutting edge training content, provide personalized support through coaching, and enable peer learning through professional learning communities.

In April 2020, just after schools shut, we conducted a survey of 1,800 school leaders in the Global South. We found that more than 80% of the leaders felt responsible to ensure the well-being and learning of students, but there were minimal programs available for them to acquire the required skills to do so.

In response, we created Upya, a curriculum to enable school leaders in marginalized communities to lead effectively through this crisis. Upya (meaning renewal in Swahili) consists of 11 learning modules across three areas of content:

1. School Reopening
2. Technology for Learning and Management
3. Emergency Remote and Blended Teaching

The Upya curriculum resources, available freely under Creative Commons Licensing, is being used across 7 countries reaching a total of 110,000 students. Our partners have contextualized Upya content and tools and are using it in the following countries. You can find the content here: <https://sites.google.com/globalschoolleaders.org/gslo/home?authuser=0>

### **Project Shakti/Kanya**

A report from the Malala Fund estimates that in light of COVID-19, 20 million more secondary school-aged girls could be out of school after the crisis has passed. During school shutdowns, girls have had differential access to technology to continue learning. Girls are also less likely to return to school as schools open post-COVID as there are indications of greater teen marriages, increased child care responsibilities and parents are more likely to invest in boys' education.

To reduce these adverse effects faced by girls, we need leadership in schools who are sensitive to, and trained in, issues related to girls' education. Unfortunately, school leaders have been an overlooked lever in efforts to improve girls' education.

School leaders are playing a critical role in ensuring students' well-being and continued learning while schools are shut and bear the responsibility of the safe re-opening of schools. They will also play a pivotal role in bringing girls back to school when schools open for in-person instruction again.

As education systems react to the COVID pandemic, we know that girls are at greater risk of suffering education losses during school shutdowns. According to the recent Malala Fund report, "Girls' Education and COVID-19," while most systems are focused on remote learning strategies, girls have differential access to technology to continue learning while schools are shut and as remote learning increases. We also know that girls are less likely to return to school as schools open post-COVID as there are indications of greater teen pregnancies and marriage, increased child care responsibilities and parents are more likely to invest in boys' education.

To reduce the likelihood of these adverse effects faced by girls, we need leadership in schools who are sensitive to, and trained in, issues related to girls' education.

Unfortunately, school leaders have been an overlooked lever in efforts to improve girls' education. While there are a lot of initiatives and research on teachers and their influence on girls' education, there has been little focus on school leaders, either programmatically or in research.

We have piloted a program for school leaders in India and Kenya through piloting a virtual training program, Kanya (*Girl in Hindi*), for school leaders that aims to:

- sensitize them to issues of gender inequity in education
- guide them on engaging girls while schools are shut so that they are prepared to re-enter
- educate them on gender-inclusive approaches to the re-opening of schools.

Our baseline research for our Kanya pilot showed that

- girls are at high risk of dropping out of school post-COVID

- school leaders believe that parents' mindsets around girls education are the cause for girls dropping out but parents blame economic hardship for their inability to continue educating girls
- School leaders and teachers have not been active in ensuring that girls return to school through targeted outreach and support

All of the training materials we have developed for this program are freely available to use under Creative Commons Licensing here: <https://sites.google.com/globalschoolleaders.org/kanyaportal/home?authuser=0>