Overview of the innovation
This project piloted the innovative ‘Active Learning Method’ of teaching – which could improve the quality of education in Rwandan basic education. The Active Learning Method (ALM) involves learners doing something and then reflecting on what it is that they have done. It seeks to improve learners’ critical thinking, problem solving and comprehension skills. The project involved training in-service teachers and pre-service teacher trainers to use more active learning methods in the classroom. Teachers engage in an ongoing ‘ALM cycle’ of monitoring, sharing and improving. During the ‘monitoring’ stage, teachers are being filmed in their own classroom and observed by other education staff using ALM classroom observation schedules. At the ‘sharing’ stage, reflection and discussion takes place based on the videos and classroom observations, and the strong points and areas for further development are discussed. At the ‘improvement’ stage, Teachers (in-service) and Tutors at Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) (pre-service) then identify for themselves which areas they will work on to strengthen their capacity, with support provided by the project.

The pilot was implemented in 16 schools and 3 TTCs across five districts in Northern, Eastern and Western Province. Training was provided for 48 primary teachers, 12 TTC tutors and 6 Sector Education Officers (SEOs). The number of students reached was 7,835 in primary and 1,724 in secondary.

Total budget for this innovation was GBP 319,900.

Grant Recipient:
The project was implemented by Red een Kind, a Dutch NGO, in collaboration with Edukans, and the University of Amsterdam from The Netherlands and Association Bamporeze, the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda and African Evangelistic Enterprise, all Rwandan NGOs.

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What makes it innovative?
While the ‘Active learning method’ has been implemented in classrooms in Ethiopia and Uganda, the specific methodology used, which put the learner at the centre of their learning process, is new to the Rwandan context. The use of video for self-reflection also demonstrated technological innovation.

Relevance to education priorities:
Main Theme: Effective teaching and learning;
Sub-theme: Skills development
There are close parallels with the priorities in the 2010-15 ESSP where quality education and the potential for more learner-centred teaching methods are promoted.

Project learning (activity/output to outcomes level)
- School Based Mentors (SBMs), head teachers (HTs) and SEOs participate in classroom observations followed by reflection sessions using classroom video. These observations and joint reflections are very much appreciated by the teachers, and the teachers indicate they use these observations and reflections for further improvement of their practices.
- SEOs, SBMs and HTs feel empowered by the fact that this pilot has given them a structured, positive role in relation to improving teaching practices. At the same time, there are some questions around the role of SEOs vis-à-vis working with teachers, because it may be outside their scope of work and not fully aligned with their expertise and skills. Using other teachers
to do peer observations is worth further exploring during possible scale up.

- Teachers indicate that they learned very practical things from the project that they can immediately apply in their classrooms. Examples include: stronger students helping the weaker students in class, use of group work, use of self-made teaching aids and worksheets, active use of textbooks, increasing the amount of student talk in class.
- Teachers commented that the ALM has made them more confident and made their teaching job easier.
- The in-service teacher component has run much more smoothly than the pre-service component, as initially it proved difficult to get agreements to work in TTCs. Moreover, while at TTCs it is stated that ALM is part of the methodology, it appears to remain a theoretical concept rather than something that is actively practiced in TTC classrooms. This is an institutionalisation issue to be resolved. The in-service teachers are very open to change their own practices based on what they observe themselves and hear from the colleagues observing them.

**Project outcomes and reflection on monitoring and evaluation**

The evaluation design was quasi-experimental (control and treatment groups evaluated at baseline and end-line) using mixed methods with quantitative indicators for changes in learner outcomes, learner transition rates and teacher knowledge, attitudes and reported practices, classroom observations and qualitative data from interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

The results were mixed with no significant difference in learner outcomes between the treatment and control group schools using school examination data. The question whether examinations are the best measurement and the time it takes to change learning outcomes may be explaining factors. However, the qualitative findings indicate that teachers use more ALMs at end-line than baseline, and involve students in more activity-based learning. There is no evident impact yet on teacher self-reported knowledge, attitudes and practice of ALM. TTC tutors and SEOs responded positively to the training.

This was a carefully designed, though not large study, with problems of lack of check on reliability of examination and observational data. The analysis of data does not consistently compare the control and treatment group improvements from baseline to end-line.
Conditions for success
This project demonstrated the need for an innovation to work within existing structures and curricula to be well-received at the local and national level. For example, the project team developed an observation matrix that could be incorporated into the existing lesson planning template. The long-term success is dependent on government support for this innovative teaching approach and its wider adoption within the existing policy framework.

Scale up and sustainability considerations
Red een Kind advises four methods of upscaling the Active Learning Method (ALM), which it wants to see happen during the next years:

1. **Replication**: delivering a slightly adjusted support package for all schools in the pilot Districts. This will reach 380 primary schools, 1,104 teachers and 180,205 students.

2. **On site Teacher to Teacher Classroom Support**: A new addition to the model would be to support ALM-trained teachers to play a role in supporting non-trained teachers in their school to adopt ALM in their teaching practice (with targeted support from Red een Kind and follow up by SEOs, head teachers and REB).

3. **Policy Implementation (Teacher Professional Development Pathway)**: support the implementation of the new Teacher Development and Management (TDM) policy, by supporting REB-led in-service teacher training (both the upcoming curriculum implementation training and beyond) an infuse ALM within that.

4. **Integration in TTC system**: This component focuses on supporting the TTCs and training of tutors in ALM, who will in turn train SBMs and SEOs to play an ongoing ALM support role for teachers.

The documents are not sufficiently clear about how the scale up model will be implemented and some questions remain about the current status of the steps that can make them happen in the future. There is mention of the innovation being embedded in the system but no sufficient amount of reflection is given to how to achieve this. The medium term upscaling plans are still very much according to a ‘project mode’, although the role for Red een Kind clearly reduces and the role of
SEOs, head teachers and SBMS increases. This is not necessarily ‘wrong’, but there is a need for more clarity about concrete steps towards implementation through an institutionalised model.

Finally, the Fund Manager would like to challenge Red een Kind by asking them to take a more conceptual perspective of the project and think more generally about ‘what are the key ingredients of a good Teacher Training programme’ that will need to be embedded in the Rwandan system (e.g. peer learning, Head Teacher support)? And then - based on those elements - start to think about how these key ingredients could end up in the system with (or without) Red een Kind support. Sharing a vision of the role and capacity building needs of SBMs, SEO’s and other stakeholders will need to become part of this.

Cost considerations
Red een Kind presented a budget that includes detailed unit costs that are slightly lower than the pilot package. The total scale up budget will be around GBP 650,000 over 3 years. Unit costs are at GBP 12 per teacher and GBP 0.69 per student.

The economic analysis is merely a project budget for the next phase. There is a lack of focus on the VfM aspects (or even just the costs) of going for a fully institutionalised option delivered through GoR policy, curriculum and implementation. There is need for a clearer analysis of what an institutionalised option would mean in terms of costs (including TA costs) and how this would compare with the project option in VfM terms. Even if scale up does not happen immediately, it would still be helpful to get an impression of what this would mean in longer term budgetary terms, especially if there is a focus on the Government to embed (parts of) the innovation within its own programme.

More in-depth analysis of costs in relation to impact would be helpful for each of the different options presented in the scale up and sustainability plan.

Immediate next steps
- Red een Kind to provide an advisory document to the Ministry, which can be used in Technical Working Group and Task Force meetings, on the ‘key ingredients of a good TPD programme’, which can help the further operationalisation and implementation of the new TDM policy (MINEDUC can use this in conjunction with findings from other IFE projects).
- Red een Kind, REB TDM and the College of Education should continue their discussions about embedding ALM approaches, methods and techniques in REB teacher training programmes, both pre-service and in-service.
- If implemented in ‘project mode’ during the next 3 years, Red een Kind will need to find scale up funding. Even when working in ‘project mode’, it may be worth thinking about having a broader in-service support programme with involvement from a wider group of IFE GRs, all working in the area of continuous TPD, rather than a variety of different initiatives with similar objectives.
- DFID to consider supporting a wider teacher training initiative as part of the next sector programme.