RAND CORPORATION

Research Report

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Taking a Contextualized Approach to Synthesizing and Mobilizing Evidence to Improve Teaching and Learning

A Case Study of Queen Rania Foundation's Contextualized Teaching and Learning Toolkit Effort, Developed in Partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation

KEY FINDINGS

- To contextualize and disseminate its Toolkit, the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF) onboarded a fellow with specialized expertise in education research.
- QRF also promoted awareness of the Toolkit among a general audience through social media and specifically among policymakers and organizations that work directly with teachers and among target end-users.
- QRF further developed materials to support uptake of the evidence-based approaches in the Toolkit and is iteratively learning and adjusting its mobilization strategy.
- QRF faced challenges related to translating terminology used in the Toolkit, organizational capacity, fading interest after social media campaigns concluded, deeply embedded resistance to change, and a lack of means to track adoption of practices in the Toolkit.
- This case illustrates that engaging a local partner committed to the same vision and supporting that partner with resources to recruit expert personnel can result in the contextualization of evidence to improve education across cultural and structural barriers.
- However, willingness of local actors to adopt evidence-based practices is not assured. Long-term changes associated with the Toolkit effort may be slow to achieve and difficult to measure.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent charity organization based in England that promotes the use of evidence in K–12 school systems to improve teaching and learning, especially for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (EEF, undated-a). EEF does this by identifying and synthesizing information on evidence-based practices for education leaders and practitioners. In 2021, EEF estimated that nearly 70 percent of secondary school leaders in England used its "flagship" resource—the Teaching and Learning Toolkit (hereafter, the Toolkit), originally released in 2011—to inform their decisions about school programming (Higgins et al., 2022).

According to its authors, the perceived need for something like the Toolkit emerged over the past decade with the establishment of clearinghouses and evidence repositories in Western Europe, North America, and Australia (Higgins et al., 2022). Subsequently, the Toolkit benefited from a very specific policy context. EEF was founded in 2011 by the Sutton Trust with the assistance of a £125 million endowment from England's Department for Education. Around the same time, England introduced the Pupil Premium, which allocated additional per-pupil funding to schools to improve outcomes among students in poverty. To promote transparency around the use of these funds, schools were required to publish statements explaining how they use Pupil Premium funding and the expected impacts (Higgins et al., 2022).

The original Toolkit was developed to provide schools with information about how to maximize their returns on student outcomes from this additional funding. In 2013, the UK government designated EEF as the What Works Centre for improving educational attainment, which further cemented the reputation of the Toolkit. According to its authors, "the Toolkit became the focus for research synthesis, as the EEF commissioned large-scale trials in schools to identify approaches to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools" (Higgins et al., 2022).

The Toolkit does not explicitly establish which approaches will work best in specific school contexts. Instead, the goal of the Toolkit is to provide education stakeholders with information about which evidenced-based practices for improving schools are cost-effective and most likely to be meaningful. The original Toolkit, which has been updated since the writing of this report, summarized the available evidence across 34 topic areas (e.g., behavioral interven-

tions, collaborative learning approaches, homework, outdoor adventure learning). For each topic area (i.e., *strand*), the Toolkit provides information on a digital platform about average implementation costs, strength of the supporting evidence, and expected impacts on student learning. Access to the Toolkit is available through the EEF website.

Contextualization of the Toolkit Through Global Evidence Brokers

The success of the Toolkit in England led to interest in replicating its structure and content in other contexts. EEF's hypothesis is that making research about evidence-based practices more accessible and actionable will increase the likelihood that policymakers and practitioners will use evidence to make informed decisions to improve teaching and learning.

EEF does not anticipate that increased use of evidence will or should come about solely through top-down policy changes or simple dissemination campaigns, especially in global contexts that are culturally and structurally different from England. For this reason, EEF partnered with regionally based education organizations and advocacy groups (i.e., "global evidence brokers") in strategic locations throughout the world with similar missions to adapt the Toolkit and facilitate its dissemination across different regional contexts. EEF's global evidence brokers include eBASE Africa in Cameroon, Evidence for Learning (E4L) in Australia, La Caixa Banking Foundation in Spain, SUMMA Laboratory for Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Netherlands Initiative for Education Research, and the Queen Rania Foundation in Jordan.

Evidence-brokering involves more than the physical dissemination of evidence. As explained by representatives from EEF, "Even in strong top-down systems, knowledge and capacity need to change in order for practice to change. [This] requires brokerage and translation and active engagement with evidence [and] multiple engagements over time to hone understanding and responses." According to representatives from EEF, this required identifying partners that were well positioned to play this role and providing them with support as they construct their own approaches.

EEF supports the work of its global partners to adapt the Toolkit for local audiences through a process known as *contextualization*. Contextualization is a time-intensive, technical process that involves identifying and appraising studies of culturally relevant practices in teaching and learning and then synthesizing (i.e., summarizing) the study findings across each strand of the Toolkit. These summaries—or literature reviews—are embedded alongside EEF's original summaries of evidence. Then, the contextualized Toolkit is translated into the language of local practitioners.

Contextualization is important for several reasons. First, if not for the emphasis on regional studies, the contents of the original EEF Toolkit might not be applicable for, or of interest to, its intended audience. Moreover, if the Toolkit is not translated into the local language, intended audiences—including teachers, principals, and supervisors—would be unable to access the content. Once the Toolkit has been contextualized, EEF provides its partners with ongoing consultation to support mobilization of

Key Terms and Organizations

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF): EEF is an independent charity based in England, founded in 2011 with a grant from the Department for Education. According to its website, it is "dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement" (EEF, undated-b).

Queen Rania Foundation (QRF): QRF is a nongovernmental organization established in 2013 with the aim of "improving education outcomes in Jordan and the surrounding region" (QRF, undated).

Teaching and Learning Toolkit ("Toolkit"): EEF's Toolkit is an online compendium of summaries of meta-analyses conducted on about 30 education topics and approaches. These "summaries of summaries of individual research studies" are designed to provide school-level policymakers with an evidence basis for making decisions (EEF, undated-c).

the Toolkit to regional school leaders, teachers, and policymakers.

As part of the partnerships with its global evidence brokers, EEF provides funding for one-year fellowship positions. These EEF Global Fellows, who are identified and recruited by EEF's global partners, manage much of the technical work associated with the contextualization and dissemination of the Toolkit. The fellowship concept was designed to attract highly qualified academics who are fluent in the local languages and who have research and teaching experience in the context.

To illustrate how EEF's theory of change is unfolding, we explored the work of one of EEF's partners—the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF)—to contextualize and disseminate the Toolkit. In the following sections, we describe QRF's impetus to participate in this work. Then, we trace QRF's contextualization and mobilization efforts to date, including the key strategies it employed. Next, we highlight the promises and challenges of EEF and QRF's partnered approach to increasing the availability and use of evidence in education decisionmaking. Finally, given that this Toolkit contextualization effort is part of one strand of work EEF undertook for a project under the BHP Foundation's Education Equity Program portfolio, we connect QRF's work back to the BHP Foundation's program theory of change. We also expand on key takeaways for organizations considering similar work. (See page 16 for more details about the BHP Foundation program.)

The Queen Rania Foundation as a Regional Evidence Broker

QRF is a nongovernmental organization located in Amman, Jordan. Founded in 2013, QRF conducts research to improve teaching and learning, especially in the area of Arabic language literacy, and supports the design and implementation of evidence-based programs in local schools. Its portfolio of work extends to engagement with policymakers to inform education policy (QRF, undated).

QRF joined EEF's network of global evidence brokers in 2019. Although QRF is currently focusing its efforts on Jordan, the impetus for the partnership between EEF and QRF was to create and disseminate a contextualized version of the Toolkit for the Arabic-speaking Middle East and North African (MENA) region. According to representatives from QRF, a key challenge in some MENA contexts is a limited use of evidence to support decisionmaking. There are few published studies based on evidence from education systems in the MENA region and no centralized mechanisms to disseminate the existing evidence. Some scholars have likewise identified a lack of a culturally appropriate knowledge base for improving teaching and learning as a critical barrier to successful educational reform in MENA contexts (Georgalakis and Stanley, 2020). Moreover, compared with Western contexts such as England, the interaction between policymakers and researchers is limited, and there are fewer formal processes to support evidence-informed decisionmaking (El-Jardali et al., 2014).

Another challenge, according to representatives from QRF, is that many local policymakers and practitioners do not perceive evidence generated elsewhere as relevant for their contexts. As one QRF representative explained, "Our audiences believe there is a gap between our world and the Western world. So, without translation and contextualization that summarizes the Arab-world research, this wouldn't work here." For example, as explained by a representative of QRF, some MENA education leaders may view concepts rooted in Western traditions of practice (e.g., student feedback or certain classroom management techniques) as incompatible with how MENA schools are structured and resourced. Moreover, as explained by representatives from QRF, even within the MENA context, school systems have different social and cultural norms, structures, and constraints. For example, whereas schools in places like the United Arab Emirates can provide students with iPads, schools in places like Lebanon or Syria may lack reliable electricity. In Jordan, school systems continue to struggle with the rapid influx of students brought on by the Syrian refugee crisis. As recently as 2020, Jordanian schools were educating 145,000 refugee students, many who were—and still are—living in extreme poverty made worse by the pandemic (Karasapan, 2022).

When asked about the reasons for pursuing the work of Toolkit contextualization, one representa-

tive from QRF responded that QRF "saw this as a huge potential resource not only for practitioners but for middle management, academics, and policymakers in the country." This is because the Toolkit work directly relates to QRF's mission of generating, compiling, and mobilizing high-quality information about what works in teaching and learning in the MENA context, particularly in Jordan, to improve student outcomes.

In the long run, QRF intends that its work to contextualize and disseminate the Toolkit will result in its adoption by teacher training programs in Jordan. QRF anticipates that, in seeing the utility of the Toolkit, education faculty and researchers will invest in promoting and, as one representative put it, building on the Toolkit "as a resource for themselves and for practitioners, now and in the future." Representatives from QRF posit that integrating the Toolkit into teacher training programs is one of the most sustainable ways to increase the likelihood that teachers and school leaders will turn to the Toolkit as a guide for practices that they can use to improve teaching and learning.

QRF's Key Strategies for Contextualizing and Mobilizing Evidence

In this section, we trace the key strategies that QRF pursued in both the contextualization and mobilization processes as they unfolded over time while providing a timeline of QRF's activities. QRF published its version of the Toolkit in both English and Arabic in January 2021. Thereafter, its attention shifted to disseminating the Toolkit among target audiences, such as policymakers and practitioners.

Toolkit Contextualization

QRF Onboarded a Fellow with Expertise in Education Research

QRF onboarded its first EEF-funded fellow in October 2019, an assistant professor in the College of Education from a top-ranking university in the MENA region. The fellow had substantial and highly specialized experiences in education research and Arabic literacy. Her main task was to identify, analyze, and synthesize relevant literature from the MENA region under each strand of the Toolkit. She completed this process over several months.

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As part of this work, QRF and EEF arranged for the fellow to travel to the United Kingdom to meet with key EEF personnel. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the scope of the project and for the fellow to observe how the Toolkit was implemented in schools in the United Kingdom. EEF collaborated with the fellow to establish inclusion criteria for the types of literature she was tasked with identifying and synthesizing for the MENA-based Toolkit. They established a timeline and prioritized the completion of certain strands because of their relevancy for the MENA context. Over the next year, the fellow facilitated the contextualization of the Toolkit in bundles. Every month, she submitted a report to EEF with her progress and delivered the strands she had finished summarizing and contextualizing.

To inform the work of contextualization, the fellow visited schools in Jordan, including those whose student populations included refugees and members of low-income families. According to representatives from QRF, it was important that the content in the Toolkit spoke to the diverse range of student and teacher experiences across different contexts, including those shaped by violent conflict and adverse events. As one representative explained, the summaries in the Toolkit are tailored to different

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experiences and perspectives: those of individuals in advantaged settings with access to technology and those of individuals in disadvantaged settings without electricity. In other words, "You have to be fair to the context."

QRF Expanded the Literature Search Parameters to Ensure Coverage of MENA-Based Studies

Most of the evidence featured in the original Toolkit draws on meta-analyses from a Western context, arguably because there are few such studies from other contexts. Indeed, the QRF fellow was unable to identify systematic reviews or meta-analyses derived from regional studies or contexts. Thus, the fellow expanded EEF's original search criteria to include single studies derived from MENA contexts completed over the past ten years, most of which were qualitative in design. In the end, the fellow incorporated only studies conducted in the MENA region with MENA participants. Where the fellow was unable to find studies related to certain topic areas in the original Toolkit, she identified studies in which these areas were indirectly discussed as additional variables.

The contextualized version of the Toolkit still contains the original summaries of evidence under the original strands. The work of contextualization consisted of updating these summaries with studies drawn from MENA contexts where they existed or acknowledging the lack of evidence where they did not.

QRF Worked with a Partner to Ensure That the Contextualized Toolkit Would Be in a Language Accessible to Target Users

By October 2020, the fellow had completed the work of contextualization on the Toolkit. QRF then translated the contextualized Toolkit into Arabic. A key priority was ensuring that the language used would be familiar to teachers and that the presentation of the research in the Toolkit would be clear to practitioners in the field. To ensure this, QRF collaborated with the Queen Rania Teaching Academy (QRTA), an organization that facilitates teacher training programs and professional learning. As a representative from QRF explained, "We thought [that] because they work with educators, they were in the best position to pick the language to make sure it would be familiar to teachers."

Toolkit Dissemination

QRF Launched a Dedicated Website for the Toolkit and Promoted General Awareness of the Toolkit Through Its Social Media Channels

After finalizing the Toolkit in Arabic and English, QRF posted both versions online in February 2021. In March 2021, after minor revisions to the Toolkit, QRF initiated the first in a series of social media campaigns on its platforms. This campaign consisted of creative posts disseminated over Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, the purpose of which was to "spread awareness on the Toolkit and generate traffic on the website" (QRF, 2021a). The followers of QRF's platforms include a variety of actors, such as teachers and principals. In June 2021, QRF reported that the campaign had generated more than 2 million views.

Next, QRF Focused on Raising Awareness of the Toolkit Among Policymakers and Organizations That Work Directly with Teachers

By December 2021, QRF had hosted multiple face-to-face and virtual awareness sessions with various

stakeholders, including members from each of the ten units within the Ministry of Education and members of Queen Rania Award for Education (QRA), QRTA, and the National Curriculum Center (NCCD) (QRF, 2021b). QRF used these sessions to focus on promoting Toolkit awareness among high-level actors who could facilitate dissemination of the Toolkit across their jurisdictions and professional networks.

As part of these efforts, QRF aimed to determine what mobilization activities each organization would be willing to support. As explained by a QRF representative, targeting the Ministry of Education is important because the ministry plays "the most important role when it comes to providing teacher training programs. [It is] the main employer . . . the key policymaker when it comes to education in the region." As for reaching out to QRTA, QRF foresaw that these efforts could lead to the integration of Toolkit awareness and training sessions into local universities' teacher preparation programs and possibly be linked to credentialing.

During these sessions, QRF (1) highlighted that the Toolkit is free, online, and translated into Arabic; (2) provided an overview of its main features, including the components linked to each strand: cost, impact, and evidence strength; and (3) explained how the Toolkit aligns with directives that incentivize policymakers to engage with scientific evidence. QRF contextualized the information for target audiences by giving examples from the Toolkit that it believed would be of most interest. QRF also used these sessions to collect information about stakeholders' perceptions of the utility of the content, the usability of the platform, and any other recommendations. It elicited these perceptions using pre- and post- surveys.

QRF Leveraged These Partnerships to Create Opportunities to Raise Awareness Among Target End Users

In fall 2021, QRF expanded the reach of its social media campaigns by posting content on the platforms of QRA, QRTA, and Jordan's Ministry of Education. In spring 2022, QRF launched a third social media campaign on four platforms, including its own. This effort was targeted toward teachers who follow these platforms and teacher supervisors connected to the Ministry of Education's learning platform. On the heels of its social media campaigns, QRF conducted a series of information sessions about the Toolkit directly with educator audiences. These included (1) webinars targeted to QRTA followers, including thousands of teachers and principals, (2) three webinars that reached 1,000 teacher supervisors, and (3) a face-to-face session with teachers and principals applying for the QRA examination. QRF staff explained throughout our interviews that future efforts would pivot from raising awareness of the Toolkit to demonstrating how to use it to inform decisionmaking.

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QRF Is Developing Materials to Support Uptake of the Evidence-Based Approaches in the Toolkit

For its original target audiences in England, EEF created guidance documents derived from the Toolkit to assist educators with the technical aspects of implementation. As QRF explained, the creation of similar guidance documents for each Toolkit strand is an essential component of mobilization efforts and a cornerstone of building know-how among practitioners. Whereas the Toolkit informs understanding of promising approaches, the guidance documents provide concrete and actionable information to support implementation. In 2022, QRF completed its

The contextualization of the Toolkit represents a critical step toward establishing a regional knowledge base in the MENA region.

first guidance document—formatted as an interactive website—to improve family-school engagement. This content was generated by three QRF staff members and included case studies from local schools that applied the evidence-based guidance.

At the time of our interviews, QRF's second EEF fellow, who joined in fall 2022, was developing uptake activities for three strands of the Toolkit: (1) feedback, (2) reading comprehension, and (3) metacognition and self-regulation. As explained by a representative from QRF, these three strands are low cost, high impact, and supported by strong evidence. Moreover, reading comprehension is one of QRF's primary organizational focal areas. The fellow planned on conducting webinars for teachers about these strands throughout the 2022–2023 school year, developing workshops, and creating a guidance document for the feedback strand that incorporates aspects of the other two strands. According to representatives from QRF, this new guidance document will be structured as a hands-on module with audiovisual materials, such as videos with real-life examples, handouts, and techniques. QRF based this decision on feedback from QRTA about how teachers prefer to receive content. As explained by a representative from QRF, "The more hands-on we make these tools, the better we can help [teachers] to apply [the strategies], and that is the whole goal." QRF aims to incorporate the modules into pre-service and in-service teacher programs.

As of October 2022, QRF was in the initial planning phases with QRTA about the direction of this work. Additionally, QRF and QRTA had identified places in QRTA's pre-service teacher training curriculum where they could insert elements from the Toolkit specific to the feedback strand. QRTA has agreed to allow QRF to make suggestions about where QRTA could adapt elements—including specific activities or exercises—from the Toolkit into its existing modules for pre-service teachers.

QRF Is Iteratively Learning and Adjusting Its Mobilization Strategy

QRF builds opportunities to learn from its mobilization efforts into each activity. Specifically, it uses pre- and post-survey data from its sessions with Ministry personnel and educators to gauge their interest in various components of the Toolkit and to learn how to improve mobilization efforts. QRF applies these learnings to direct future campaigns. In addition, QRF closely monitors the clicks and downloads of users from its social media platforms and the Toolkit webpage to determine which aspects of the Toolkit educators are most interested in viewing. QRF uses this information to create more-targeted messaging for future campaigns.

Challenges to QRF's Evidence Synthesis and Mobilization Efforts

The contextualization of the Toolkit represents a critical step toward establishing a regional knowledge base in the MENA region. Nevertheless, throughout its contextualization and mobilization work, QRF has faced several challenges. As EEF and QRF are well aware, the sociopolitical and policy environments into which QRF is mobilizing the Toolkit significantly differ from the policy context in which the original Toolkit emerged. Theoretically, the essence of the Toolkit is to make it easier for decisionmakers to see the utility of using evidence in education—which is part of EEF's theory about how it became popular in the United Kingdom. However, the mainstream adoption of evidence in decisionmaking will likely require ongoing and significant investments to (1) increase capacity and (2) encourage the development of supports and incentive structures. With this broader context in mind, we present some of the

challenges that representatives from QRF described in their efforts to contextualize and mobilize the Toolkit as we understood them.

- **Translating the terms and concepts from the original Toolkit was challenging.** QRF encountered some challenges translating English terms that have no Arabic equivalent. For example, phrases like "individualized learning" were difficult to translate. One representative from QRF described "going back and forth" with its affiliates at QRTA to identify appropriate terms. Even after the initial soft launch of the Toolkit in January 2021, QRF identified additional minor inconsistencies related to terminology in several strands, which it corrected prior to the March 2021 pre-launch.
- **QRF faced challenges with capacity.** Although QRF was able to identify a fellow to support contextualization from October 2019 to October 2020, it struggled to recruit a second fellow with the desired background to take on work to support mobilization. As one representative from QRF explained, "It was a match issue." The fellow needed to have an academic background with experience in research synthesis "with a foot in the practitioners' sphere." The result was a delay of a little over a year. Moreover, the process of creating guidebooks is time-consuming and highly technical—and, unfortunately, creates a bottleneck to fully implementing the Toolkit. As another representative from QRF explained, "until we start preparing guidance reports, I am not sure we can aim for anything more than know-how about what strands work best and what strands to avoid."
- **QRF noted that interest in the Toolkit waned after social media campaigns.** Although the social media campaigns have been effective at attracting views to the Toolkit, representatives from QRF noted that user interactions (e.g., clicks and downloads) fell when the campaign concluded. QRF is unsure whether this is a function of typical social media user activity, difficulties with website navigation, or challenges with the content of the Toolkit itself.
- **QRF representatives perceived deeply embedded resistance to change.** One representative described how, when QRF works with policymakers and practitioners in Jordan, representatives often encounter deeply ingrained mindsets: "There is this idea, we have a specific context and specific needs." Part of the resistance stems from the system itself. As another representative explained, "I am not sure how much [EEF] knows about the bureaucracy in this region for [how] decisions [get] implemented, how long that takes." This challenge is coupled with the reality, according to one of our interviewees, that representatives frequently work with decisionmakers who do not recognize the strength of their own authority to make changes or who are not positioned to support the mobilization of the Toolkit.
- **QRF currently lacks mechanisms to track adoption of practices in the Toolkit.** Although QRF has designed indicators to gauge interest in the Toolkit based on information it can collect from users viewing the Toolkit online and from the pre- and post-surveys it delivers during awareness sessions with educators, QRF has not yet developed

QRF encountered some challenges translating English terms that have no Arabic equivalent, including questions about the most appropriate terminology to use.

mechanisms for tracking actual uptake (i.e., implementation of strands) of the Toolkit among educators. QRF plans to develop systems for tracking uptake after it initiates activities to mobilize certain tools.

Relevance to the BHP Foundation Education Equity Program's Theory of Change and Concluding Remarks

This case study is one in a series intended to illustrate aspects of the BHP Foundation's Education Equity program theory of change (see the appendix). This case shows that an approach that engages a local partner committed to the same vision and supports that partner with resources to recruit expert personnel can result in the **contextualization of evidence to improve education** across cultural and structural barriers. Additionally, the partnership enabled local actors to **synthesize additional evidence** from the local context across multiple topics in education—which, from what we understand, is not an activity that has previously been attempted in the MENA region. QRF's Toolkit, available in English and Arabic, presents such evidence that policymakers and practitioners can use to improve teaching and learning. Moreover, early evidence suggests that QRF's approach to mobilizing the Toolkit, through a general social media campaign and targeted awareness-raising sessions, has resulted in increased (if temporary) interest among ministry personnel and other key stakeholders in supporting dissemination and use of the Toolkit. Finally, QRF is closing in on its goal to embed the Toolkit within pre-service teacher training for teachers in Jordan through ongoing conversations with QRTA.

At the same time, QRF and EEF will continue to experience challenges. QRF faces significant cultural barriers in its attempts to elevate the role of scientific evidence in informing policies and practices. Relative to Western countries, there is a dearth of evidence derived from MENA contexts, including those affected by protracted violent conflict, where students are experiencing significant grief and trauma. Moreover, as described by both QRF and EEF, the hesitancy of local actors to adopt practices based on research in other contexts is complicated by the bureaucratic layers involved in decisionmaking that QRF must navigate.

It may take a long time before QRF is able to observe any long-term changes associated with its efforts. These will also be difficult to measure. For example, while teachers may encounter the Toolkit during their pre-service training, there is no guarantee they will use it in their practice or regularly turn to it as a source for decisionmaking. Even if they did, studies will be needed to determine how the Toolkit is being used and to what effect. Additionally, the Toolkit itself is not immediately useful for practitioners. Although QRF is in the process of creating guidance documents to support teachers' use of the strategies in the Toolkit, the documents will take a long time to develop and require significant resources.

Finally, QRF has yet to concretize plans for sustaining the Toolkit post-project. Representatives from QRF have identified the Toolkit as closely aligned with its mission. As previously mentioned, the policy environment is markedly different from that which enabled the original Toolkit to take hold in England. The absence of similar conditions may pose a significant barrier to QRF's efforts to mobilize the Toolkit.

Considerations for Organizations Considering Evidence Synthesis and Mobilization Efforts

For organizations considering ways to synthesize and disseminate evidence to new audiences or to increase the use of evidence by local policymakers and practitioners in decisionmaking, this case study offers important lessons. We summarize these below:

Consideration 1: Through a coordinated process of contextualization, organizations can increase the availability of evidence for decisionmaking by working with a local partner with a similar vision and mission and providing that partner with resources. Specifically, such efforts can

result in contextualized versions of the original evidence, newly synthesized evidence drawn from the local context, and the beginning stages of new channels to disseminate this evidence in contexts that currently lack mechanisms for, or interest in, using evidence for decisionmaking. By providing guidance and funding, EEF increased QRF's capacity to contextualize the Toolkit and facilitated its translation into Arabic.

Consideration 2: Organizations need to be sensitive to the unique constraints and challenges that a partner may encounter in efforts to disseminate evidence in contexts that are different from the context in which the evidence was derived. Such challenges include pushback from local actors, entrenched mindsets, and high levels of bureaucracy. After taking stock of possible barriers, organizations working with a global partner should look for ways to provide practical support to assist their partners in overcoming these challenges. The fellowship model is one such approach, although it is not without its own challenges. Still, EEF equipped QRF with the resources to support several fellows, thus enabling QRF to contextualize and translate the Toolkit. Moreover, EEF offered QRF flexibility when it was unable to find a second fellow; QRF was able to plan and initiate dissemination efforts until a suitable candidate could be identified. Overall, organizations should be realistic about the barriers they are likely to face, which may, depending on the context, prove insurmountable if sufficient resources are not provided to partners.

Consideration 3: Organizations should be aware that, no matter how high-quality the information or research may be, partners may need support and additional resources as they determine the most-effective formats and channels for dissemination. Several representatives from QRF indicated that it would have been helpful to have more or earlier access to EEF's global fellow network to share ideas and brainstorm approaches to disseminating the Toolkit. By QRF's telling, the Toolkit itself is not easily accessible for practitioners trying to make decisions about effective strategies. Indeed, educators need additional support. Although EEF typically disseminates this sort of information in the form of guidance documents, QRF perceived that teachers in its context are more likely to tune in to hands-on content and audiovisual material than to lengthy reports. Organizations need to think creatively about how to support their partners as they identify innovative and contextualized solutions for dissemination.

Consideration 4: Organizations should be aware of the limitations to contextualization and think deeply about how to support global partners while deferring to their expertise. Although representatives from QRF stated that they felt well supported by EEF, their struggles with some of the terminology in the Toolkit and difficulties identifying evidence under some of EEF's existing strands suggest that there may be incompatibility between the original structure or content in the Toolkit and the structures for teaching and learning in the MENA context. Because of this, as explained by representatives from EEF, their global partners may exclude strands if they are not common practice in their jurisdictions (e.g., school uniform in the Netherlands or one-to-one tutoring in Cameroon). Organizations should think critically in advance about which elements of the product are essential and which can be adapted without compromising the integrity of the original approach. Moreover, they should anticipate the need to be flexible with some of these decisions.

APPENDIX

The BHP Foundation Education Equity Program Theory of Change (Fall 2018–Spring 2023)

The program's initial theory of change, developed in fall 2018 and current as of spring 2023, is shown in Figure 1.

As described in published reports of the RAND Corporation team's independent evaluation of the program (Master et al., 2021; 2023), the figure "summarizes the core investments made in the first phase of the program, as well as the anticipated time frame for impacts. It describes how the funded partners are collectively engaged in varied activities to enhance educational equity through the use of evidence" (Master et al., 2023). These activities range from generating evidence about new innovations to curat-

Summary of Methods

This case study is based on interviews with key QRF personnel, including a QRF representative involved in the Toolkit contextualization effort (September 2021), a QRF representative involved in the Toolkit mobilization effort (November 2021), and a QRF representative familiar with both processes (November 2021). Additionally, in May 2022, we conducted a focus group with three members of QRF, all of whom were involved in mobilization, and we interviewed one representative in October 2022. These individuals were introduced to us by EEF. As a result, the findings reflected here derive primarily from the experiences and perspectives of QRF personnel. While we would have liked to interview others outside QRF, including government officials and education leaders, such interviews fell beyond the scope. We acknowledge this as a limitation.

In addition, we drew on interviews conducted in spring and fall 2020 and 2021 with the project directors from EEF and other leads of the BHP Foundation–funded project in which this case study is situated. Finally, we drew on documents (e.g., funding proposal, annual reports) that EEF submitted to the BHP Foundation as part of the project and publicly available documents about the organizations and the efforts being highlighted. We used these documents to confirm and expand on the data we collected during interviews and to describe relevant sociopolitical and policy-related factors specific to the Jordanian and UK contexts.

We recorded all interviews and prepared detailed, transcription-like notes. We coded the notes in Dedoose, a cross-platform internet application used for mixed-method data analysis, identifying key challenges, facilitators, accomplishments, roles and activities, and timelines. Subsequently, we abstracted and analyzed our data by subtopic to identify themes. Prior to its publication, we circulated a draft of this report for fact checking among representatives from EEF and QRF.

ing and disseminating effective strategies, building capacity to leverage evidence in decisionmaking, and advocating societies and systems provide an enabling environment for more-informed investments in education and learning. Within the first five years of the funded activities, the program expects to see outcomes that are interim in nature. These include greater availability of evidence and data, empowered thought leaders engaged in more-informed decisionmaking, and the establishment of networks of purposeful collaboration. Long-term impacts will take time to manifest.

Figure 1 and our case studies to date reflect the initial program theory of change. As of early 2023, the program has been developing a more fine-grained articulation of its theory of change and pathways toward intended impacts.

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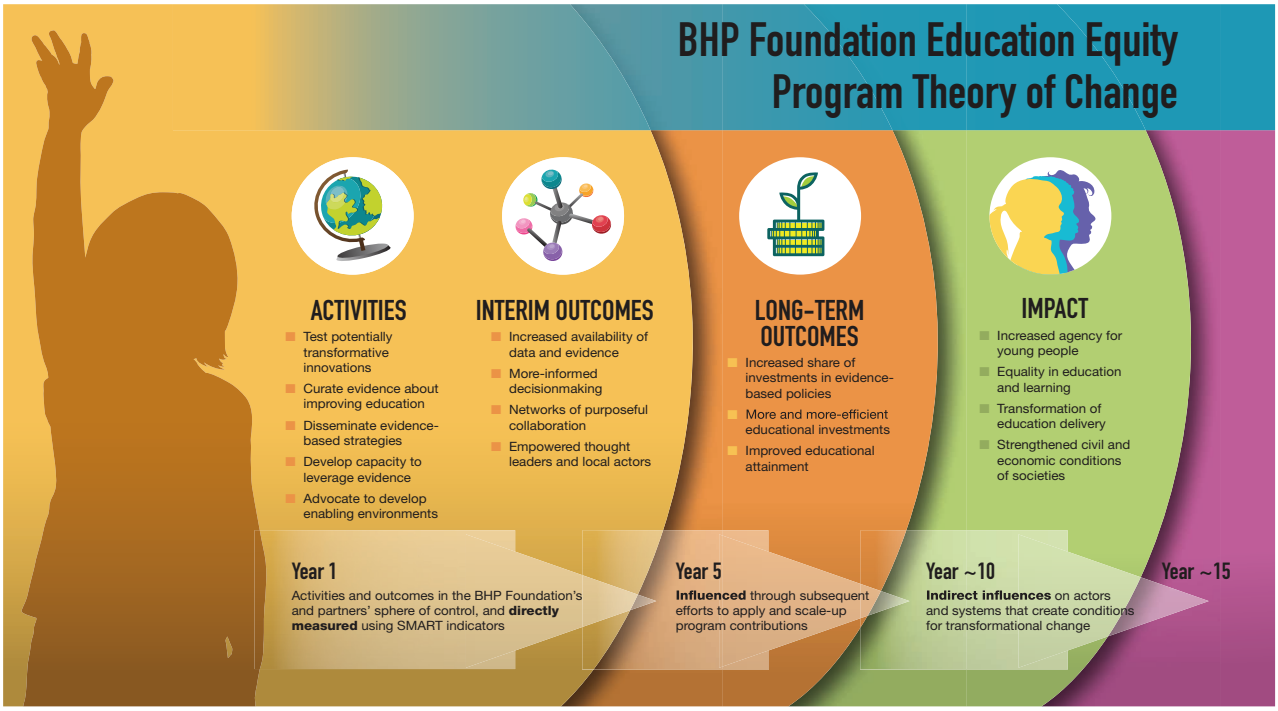
FIGURE 1

Education Equity Program Theory of Change (Fall 2018–Spring 2023)



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About the BHP Foundation Education Equity Program Evaluation Case Study Series

This case study is based on research funded by the BHP Foundation as part of an overall study of its Education Equity (EE) program investment. The findings and conclusions presented are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the BHP Foundation. The BHP Foundation is investing in global education programs and initiatives focused on leveraging evidence and testing transformative innovations to improve access and equity in systems of education globally. The program prioritizes initiatives "with the potential to spur transformative 'step changes' in educational practices at-scale, and to achieve these goals primarily by using evidence to enhance the quality of decision-making, investments, and educational practice" (Master et al., 2023). These initiatives are led by five partner organizations:

1. the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution (CUE)
2. the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)
3. the Global Business Coalition for Education (GBC-Ed)
4. Teach for All (TFALL)
5. UN Women (UNW).

The RAND team is evaluating the BHP Foundation EE program investment during a five-year period, from 2019 to 2024. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess program impacts, share formative insights to inform its continuous improvement, and provide recommendations related to its strategy and the BHP Foundation's theory of change (see the Appendix for details). RAND researchers' first evaluation report was published in 2021. An interim findings report is being released in spring 2023, and a final report is planned for late 2024.

The case studies are one component of the RAND team's evaluation. Each case study describes the arc and implementation of single partner initiatives that are illustrative of the BHP Foundation's theory of change (fall 2018–spring 2023). Through our cases, we seek to demonstrate the BHP Foundation's theorized pathway between one or more categories of program activities (e.g., curating evidence, disseminating evidence-based strategies, developing capacity) and one or more interim outcomes (e.g., increased availability of evidence, more-informed decisionmaking, networks, and empowered local actors). Given the brief time frame of each case study (i.e., data collection spanning one year), each report is limited to documenting early signs of progress toward interim outcomes.

To select the focus for each case study, we considered the activity or activities and pathway(s) that each BHP Foundation–funded partner could best or uniquely illustrate. We approached the partner with the case study idea(s) to elicit input. Studying implementation involves collecting data at the level at which activities are implemented; as such, we asked the funded partner to identify and connect us with a local in-country partner performing the on-the-ground work that we would highlight. This process likely yields case narratives that are positive or successful examples of partners' work. For more details on methods, see the brief methods summaries included in each case study.

We believe this series will be of interest not only to the BHP Foundation and its program partners but also to policymakers engaged in global education, organizations interested in implementing educational change efforts, and other foundations interested in investing in global educational change.

Acknowledgments

We are extremely grateful to the education leaders, policymakers, and advocates who spent time sharing their invaluable experiences over one or more interviews. We thank each of the program partner representatives who generously shared their time and insights with us as part of this evaluation—in this case, select representatives from the QRF and the EEF. We are grateful to the BHP Foundation for supporting the evaluation and this report. We especially thank Faith Rose, the Program Director for Education Equity for the BHP Foundation; Brodie Vansleve, the former Program Director; Muza Gondwe, Program Officer at the BHP Foundation; and James Ensor, Chief Executive Officer of the BHP Foundation, for their guidance. We benefited greatly from the review and feedback of Julie Bélanger and John Pane from RAND. Thanks to Lisa Turner from RAND for managing the Quality Assurance process, as well as Samantha Bennett and Monette Velasco, who provided expert editing and publications management assistance. The authors take full responsibility for any errors in the report.

About This Report

This case study focuses on efforts made by the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF) efforts in Jordan between fall 2019 and fall 2022 to contextualize and mobilize the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)'s Teaching and Learning Toolkit for a Middle East and North Africa (MENA) audience. The original Toolkit—which was developed by EEF to increase the use of evidence in education decisionmaking in England—is a free online compendium of evidence-informed approaches for improving teaching and learning. EEF is seeking to disseminate the Toolkit for audiences beyond England by collaborating with regional partners, such as QRF, to translate its body of evidence into local languages, add culturally relevant content, and to disseminate the Toolkit to regional stakeholders. By increasing the availability of evidence and creating opportunities for stakeholders to engage with this evidence, QRF and EEF are aiming to increase the capacity of education leaders and practitioners to identify cost-efficient and effective practices to improve teaching and learning in the MENA region. EEF's theory is that *contextualized* content will be more meaningful, actionable, and influential to local decisionmakers.

With the support of EEF-funded fellows and local partners, QRF completed its translation and contextualization of the Toolkit for an Arabic-speaking audience by winter 2021 and is now building and leveraging local networks to disseminate the Toolkit. QRF has hosted multiple awareness campaigns through social media and dozens of awareness and training sessions with key stakeholders, and it has completed its first in a series of guidebooks for educators derived from the Toolkit. At the time of our interviews, QRF described plans to create a series of modules derived from the Toolkit for pre-service teachers in partnership with a local university.

Although the long-term impact of this effort remains uncertain, this case study suggests that organizations such as EEF *can* increase the regional availability of evidence by working with partners who share a similar vision and mission. Nevertheless, QRF and EEF continue to face significant challenges to mobilization, including resource constraints and capacity issues, local resistance to change, and structural barriers. Organizations considering similar work should consider the limits of contextualization and how to optimize supports for local partners.

RAND Education and Labor

This study was undertaken by RAND Education and Labor, a division of the RAND Corporation that conducts research on early childhood through postsecondary education programs, workforce development, and programs and policies affecting workers, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy and decisionmaking. The case study was sponsored by the BHP Foundation as part of an overall study of its Education Equity program investment. The findings and conclusions presented are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the BHP Foundation.

More information about RAND can be found at www.rand.org. Questions about this report should be directed to Elaine Wang (ewang@rand.org), and questions about RAND Education and Labor should be directed to education andlabor@rand.org.

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