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SLOVAKIA
Digital transformation and national curriculum reform of primary and lower secondary schools in Slovakia (P176583)

Output 2

Report from the training on the proposed rapid results methodology

August 2021

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European Commission

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

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This report has been delivered in August 2021, under the EC Contract No REFORM/IM2021/022 under TF TF073685, signed between the European Commission and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on August 16, 2021. It corresponds to Output 2 – Report from the training on the proposed rapid results methodology under the above-mentioned agreement.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Advisory Agreement
EC	European Commission
MoE	Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Sports of Slovak Republic
NICEM	National Institute of Certified Education Measurements
NIE	National Institute of Education
RRI	Rapid results interventions
RRP	Recovery and Resilience Plan
UCD	User-centered design
WB	World Bank

REPORT ON THE TRAINING ON THE PROPOSED RAPID RESULTS METHODOLOGY

I. Introduction

1. **The present report corresponds to Output 2 under the Administrative Agreement (AA) signed between the European Commission (EC) and the World Bank (WB) on Digital transformation and national curriculum reform of primary and lower secondary schools in Slovakia.** Through this AA, the WB is supporting the Slovak Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Sports (MoE) in the implementation of the education measures from their Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP). The expected end result is to strengthen the capacities of the Slovak education authorities[1] to a) effectively implement, manage and evaluate the effects of the curricular changes, and b) use innovative public sector management approaches and tools (e.g. rapid results interventions) to co-create solutions with the frontline stakeholders for how to effectively achieve the RRP education reform objectives mainly by operationalizing the measures for digital transformation of schools. The support is provided through four main components:

   Component 1: Rapid results interventions and guidance for scaling up their results
   Component 2: Adaptation of the rapid results methodology and recommendations for its integration with relevant performance management processes
   Component 3: Analysis of the options for implementing the curriculum reform, its management and quality assessment and recommendations
   Component 4: Support the design of a methodology for the management of the new curriculum for primary and lower secondary schools

   The present training was delivered as part of Component 1, as preparation for the MoE team to implement the rapid results interventions with selected schools during the 2021/2022 school year.

2. **The objective of this report is to document the process and results of the training on the rapid results methodology.** While the approach will be later applied in a 100-day challenge with selected schools, during the training the participants were able to experience the full cycle of the methodology at an accelerated pace through 7 days on a real challenge that the MoE team selected. As such, the results are observed at two levels: i) the actual results and insights generated in the training by applying the rapid results approach, and ii) subsequent self-reported capacity improvements of the MoE team to apply the rapid results approach. The former can support the MoE team in stakeholder communication to be better able to explain the innovative method that the MoE team first applied internally and show the results that can be achieved with it. The report is organized in three sections. This section (*Section 1*) sets out the project context for this report. *Section 2* focuses on the delivery of the training, including the process steps of the rapid results approach and how these were applied on the challenge selected by the MoE team. *Section 3* concludes by the results and learnings from the training, and the reported capacity improvements.

[1] MoE, and also National Institute of Education (in charge of the curricular reform) and National Institute for Certified Education Measurements (in charge of the assessment of the curricular changes).

II. Rapid results training delivery

3. **The rapid results training is part of the capacity building approach in this AA delivered mainly through experiential learning.** One of the expected results of this AA is to strengthen the capacities of the MoE team to use methods like rapid results interventions to improve the quality of policy design and implementation. The training activities for the MoE team will be to the extent possible embedded in interventions implemented at schools, rather than stand-alone technical trainings which have proven to have lower impact. The capacity building will thus be structured around real education policy challenges that the MoE is trying to address through the Recovery and Resilience Plan and using methods like rapid results interventions to co-create solutions for how to operationalize the reform measures with the frontline stakeholders. The MoE will also co-create the final methodological approach for rapid results interventions that will be used in the Slovak education policy setting based on the practical trainings.

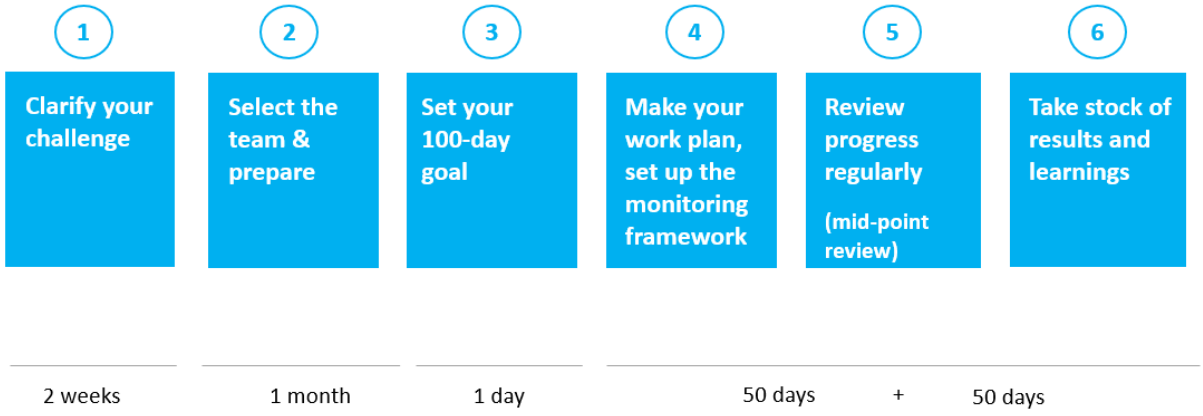
4. **The learning objectives of this training included the introduction to theoretical concepts of the rapid results approach and its practical application on a real challenge faced by the ministry.** The training was delivered by the WB team to seven staff members from the MoE and the National Institute of Education (NIE) (see Annex 1 for participant list) in four online training sessions during July 6-14, 2021. The training, including the sessions to i) identify and narrow down the challenge, ii) launch the challenge and make a plan, iii) take stock of progress at a mid-point review, and iv) take stock of the results and how to sustain them, was designed in a way so that the participants would at the end of the training be able to:

    - explain the key concepts and process steps of the rapid results approach,
    - have demonstrated experience with its implementation,
    - better explain to relevant stakeholders how the approach can be used to accelerate results, generate learnings and innovative solutions.

5. **The rapid results approach is typically used to produce knowledge to design better policies or programs, or to kickstart and accelerate their implementation.** The approach includes a set of general steps (**Figure 1**) through which the big issue is turned into a microproject that is implemented locally on a small scale by a project team consisting of ministry staff, but also the frontline service providers and potentially also beneficiaries. What makes this approach different from a usual pilot is that i) the frontline team is rallied around an ambitious measurable target to be achieved under a time constraint (e.g. 30 or 100 days) and ii) the frontline team gets a mandate to test its own ideas how to achieve the target. The results and learnings achieved through the rapid results interventions then serve to help the ministry (re)define the reform measures or accelerate their implementation. This method works well for the complex or wicked problems, which require intra- or inter-institutional collaboration across different functional boundaries and testing of different interventions simultaneously. The approach typically draws upon user-centered

design[2] and user-led innovation[3], adaptive and network leadership,[4] evidence-based practice (plan-do-study-act cycle)[5], change management theories and facilitation, coaching and behavioral change techniques. Inside the rapid results framework, it is possible to use also any relevant approaches to achieve the target, including process optimizations, behavioral insights and other. As such, the approach is aimed to help better bridge the gap between the policy and the user experience, in view of achieving better policy and program results on the ground.

Figure 1: Typical process steps of the rapid results methodology



It should be noted that the approach introduced in the training was based on its theoretical concepts and application in other countries and sectors at central and local government setting. Throughout this project activities, the known theoretical concepts will be further tested in interaction with the Slovak schools and adapted to the needs of the MoE team, its policy objectives and internal processes. The adapted proposed methodology will be elaborated in detail as part of the Output 6 of the AA.

6. **As part of the training, the MoE team applied the method to improve ministry's selected internal processes through a 7-day challenge.** Specifically, the ministry team focused on the cycle for its development projects at schools and school facilities, from the project design, application creation and

[2] **User-centered design** (UCD) is a creative approach to problem-solving which places the user as its center. Thus, a UCD researcher first tries to build empathy for the users that (s)he is designing for, works with them to build understanding of the issues they face, and generate together with them ideas for possible solutions, test them through rapid prototyping with end users and eventually roll out the innovative solutions. IDEO. (2015). *Design Kit: Human-centered design toolkits*. IDEO. https://www.ideo.com/post/design-kit.

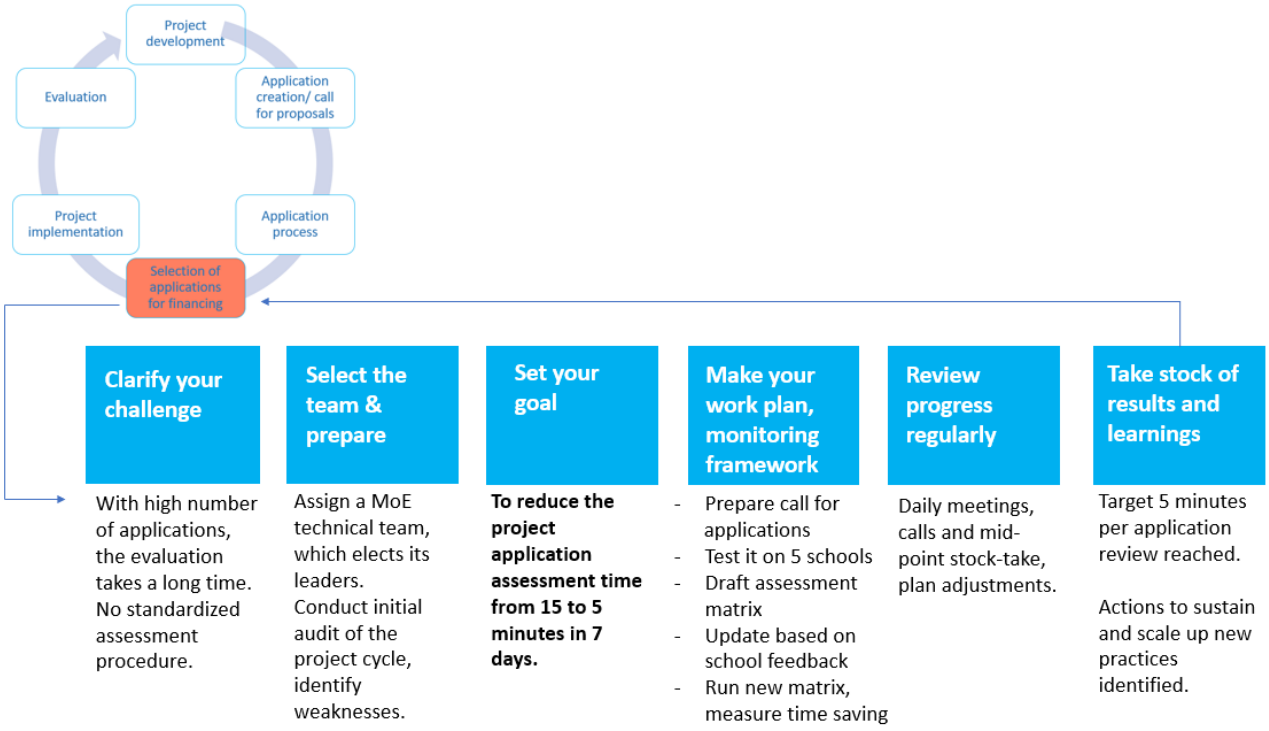
[3] **User-led innovation** is innovation led by intermediate users and end users, rather than producers. Bogers, M. Afuah, A., and Bastian, B. (2010). "Users as innovators: A review, critique, and future research directions", Journal of Management, 36 (4): 857–875. http://www.marcelbogers.com/Pubs/Bogers-Afuah-Bastian_2010_JOM_Users-as-innovators.pdf.

[4] **Adaptive leadership** is a leadership approach which focuses mobilizing a group of individuals to handle tough challenges and emerge triumphant in the end. **Network leadership** emphasizes the collective, bottom-up, distributed approach to leadership. Heifetz, Ronald A., Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

[5] **Plan-do-study-act** practices, where the goal is set out (plan), the plan is implemented and data gathered (do), the data is subsequently analyzed and learnings examined (study), and decisions are taken on how to adjust or scale up the developed solutions. Langley GL et al. (2009). *The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance* (2nd edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

call for proposals, application processing and evaluation, to selection of projects for financing, their implementation and evaluation. After the audit of the entire cycle, the team identified the evaluation of project applications as one of weak points. With the high volume of applications that the ministry typically receives, the lack of clear evaluation procedure causes a bottleneck in the project cycle, leading to possible delays in school project financing. The ministry team's goal was to look for ways how to optimize this process step whereby reducing the time for the application evaluation. **Figure 2** describes how the team applied the rapid results approach to achieve improvements on this challenge in 7 days with support of the WB coaches.

Figure 2: Application of the methodology process steps on the selected challenge in the training



Source: MoE training participants and the WB team, July 2021.

The slides from training workshops are included in Annex 2. At the end of the 7-day challenge, the MoE team reported back to the participant group the results story (detailed in Section 3).

III. Training results

7. **The training results are twofold, the actual results and insights generated in the training on a selected challenge, as well as the subsequent self-reported capacity improvement to apply the rapid results approach.** The training participants were guided by the WB team through the main elements of the approach, e.g. narrowing down and calibration of a quantitative time-bound target; user-centered design (getting feedback from schools, as the potential future users of the updated application forms; reframing the strategy at mid-point review based on rapid prototyping); adaptive and network leadership (the MoE technical team getting mandate to generate new solutions collectively, self-managing the implementation

of the plan by electing its leaders, attributing responsibilities for tasks etc.); and finally looking for actions to sustain the improvements leading to a change in internal practices and making a specific plan for it.

Results achieved in the 7-day challenge

The MoE team managed to reduce the time for the review of the school applications by even exceeding the target of 5 minutes[6]. With around 8000 applications for funding received a year, this can lead to significant staff time savings. The team achieved the improvement through the development of a new assessment matrix, with a list of clear evaluation criteria and clear descriptors for the quality of inputs from schools (see Annex 3). Further optimizations can be achieved through the digitization of the application and assessment processes.

Actions needed to sustain the results

The main challenge for the solutions developed in rapid results interventions is finding ways to sustain or even scale them up beyond the period of the challenge. The MoE team identified the following actions and attributed team member responsibilities for taking them forward:

- present the new evaluation approach with the assessment matrix to the Director General,
- fine-tune the assessment matrix content further to decide on the optimal number of the criteria for the matrix, and possibly include more criteria in the matrix,
- create an Excel template for the assessment matrix that the rest of the relevant ministry departments could use too,
- draft an internal methodological guide on how to use the assessment matrix,
- create an application which would allow to submit and assess the applications digitally,
- review the rest of the project cycle to identify further opportunities and solutions for improvements.

Lessons from the process of the 7-day day challenge

Throughout and at the end of the training, the MoE team was asked to reflect about the impact they were having with their activities, the difficulties that they encountered and how they resolved them, what seemed to be successful innovations as opposed to the false starts etc. The team emphasized the following learnings:

On narrowing down a measurable target:

"It is important to invest time in the beginning of the process to think how to take a big task, narrow it down and define how to measure it."

"It is hard, but useful to make things measurable."

On teamwork:

"Team work is priceless; it is important to learn to communicate."

"It is important to invest time to build the team."

"There is nothing that creates teamwork like commitment to a common goal."

"We saw in the training that teams from different departments at the ministry can work together effectively."

[6] The average time per review of applications by using the enhanced assessment matrix ranged from 3.22 to 4.29 minutes, according to the record of the MoE team.

The method's applicability within the ministry:
"At the ministry we often face the same problems and each time start finding ways to resolve them from the start. We can take the created matrix and apply it to other things too."

Self-reported capacity improvements

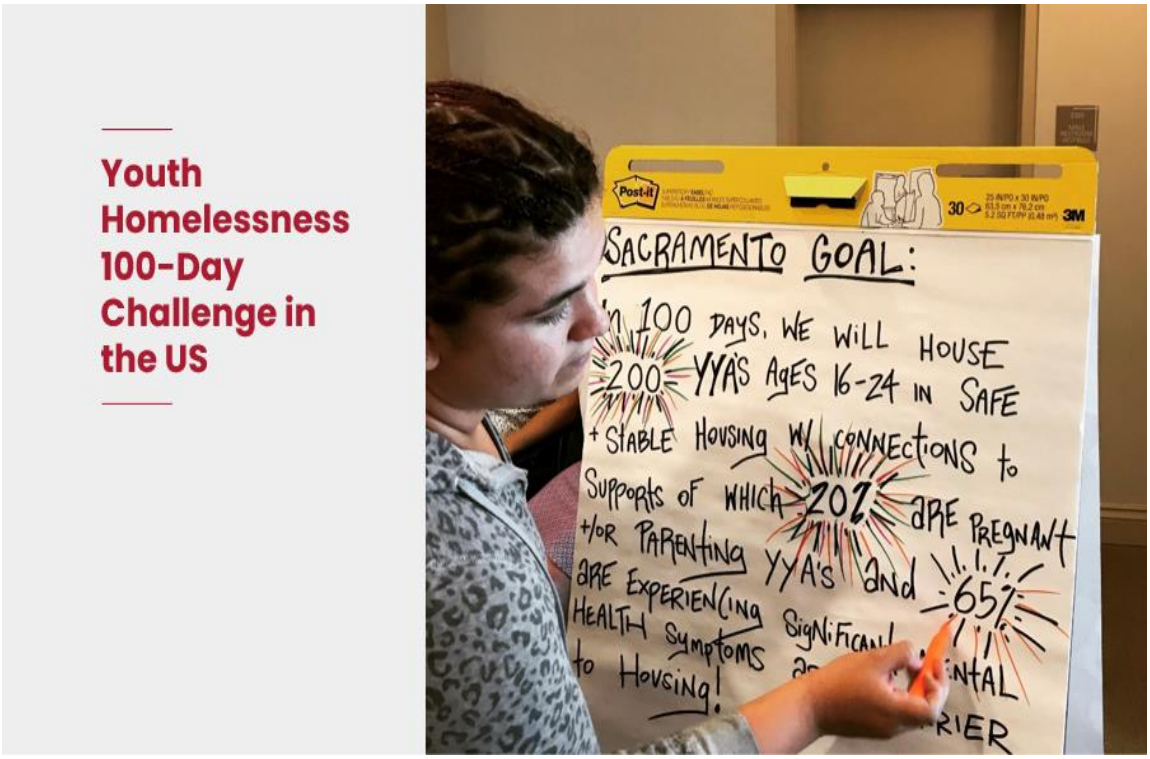
It should be noted that while the training covered all process steps of the methodology and provided for practical experience for the MoE team, it was an introduction to the method and further capacity building will continue as part of the practical roll out and adaptation of the method through interventions with schools. At the end of this introductory training, MoE team reported in a self-assessment survey an improvement of capacities to explain the key concepts of the rapid results methodology and its process steps. On a scale from 1 to 10, the course participants cited an average improvement from 3.43 to 7.57. While queried on their confidence to perform the different process steps, the team members had a similar level of confidence for most of the process steps (around 7.6), and the area where the team would like to get more support is the capacity to identify measures to sustain and scale up the results, which will be the objective of Output 5 (Proposed draft guide for scaling up the results and lessons from the rapid results interventions) of this AA.

Annex 1. Training participants

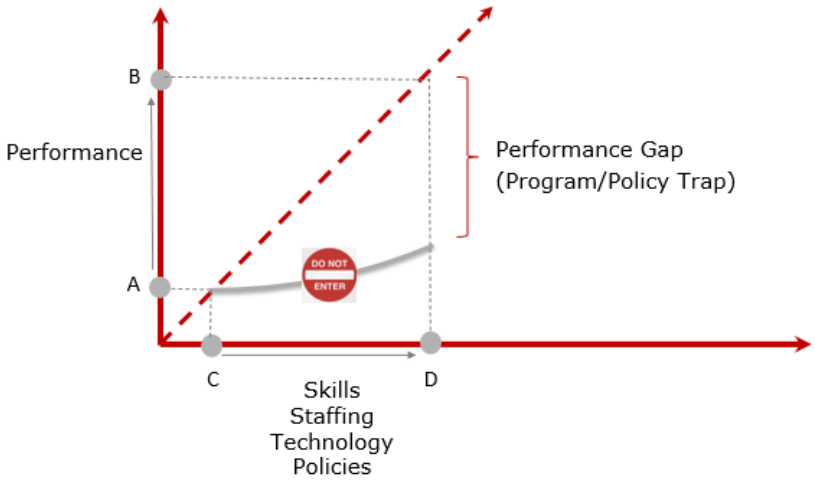
#	Name	Institution	Title
1	Zuzana Baranovicova	Ministry of Education of Slovakia	Director, Institute of Education Policy
2	Patrik Stur	Ministry of Education of Slovakia	Data and Policy Analyst, Institute of Education Policy
3	Richard Varga	Ministry of Education of Slovakia	Data and Policy Analyst, Institute of Education Policy
4	Drahoslava Keckesova	Ministry of Education of Slovakia	Counsellor, Department for pre-primary and primary education
5	Michal Rybar	Ministry of Education of Slovakia	Principal State Advisor, Department for pre-primary and primary education
6	Petra Jankovska	Ministry of Education of Slovakia	Counsellor, Department for pre-primary and primary education
7	Anna Krnacova	National Institute for Education of Slovakia	Curriculum Development Officer, Department for language and literature education

Annex 2: Slides from the training workshops

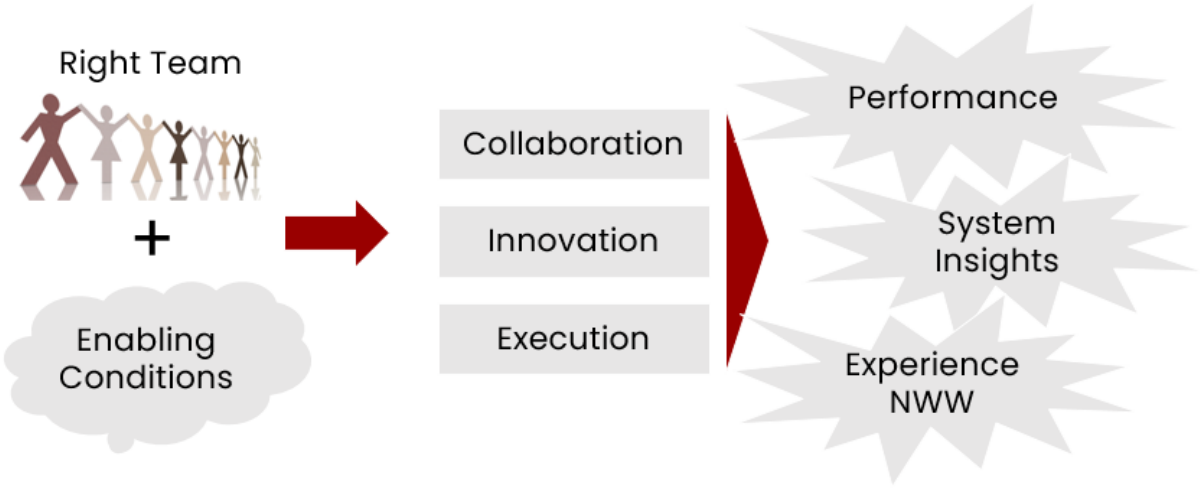
Introduction Presentation



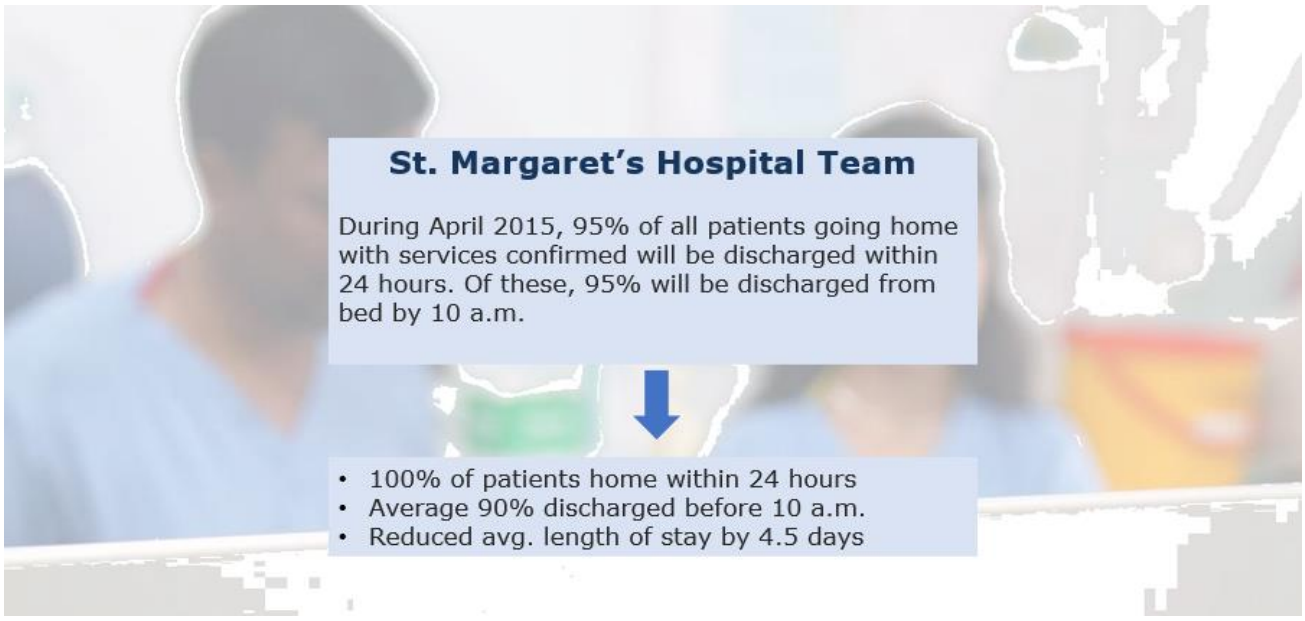
Common Trap

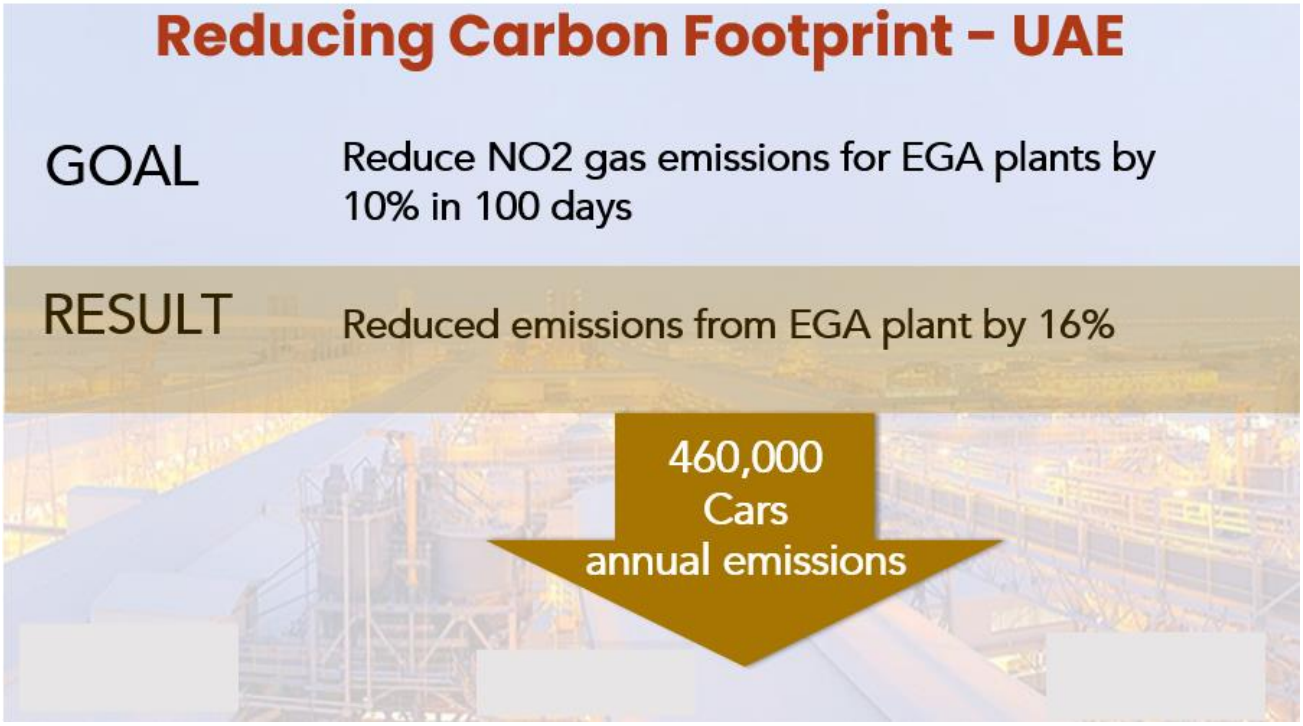


Missing Elements



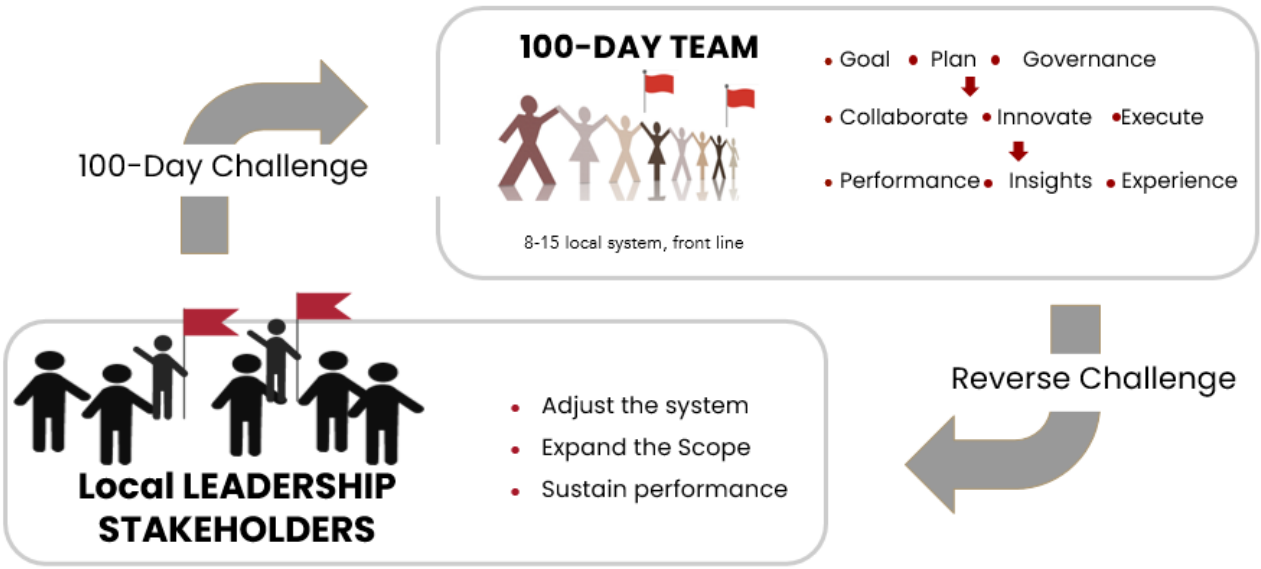
Enabling Conditions



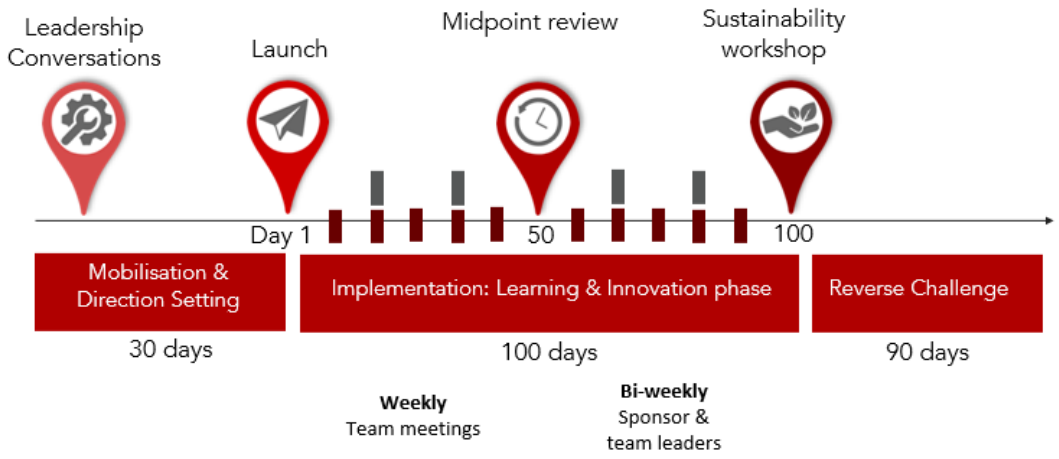

Reducing Carbon Footprint – UAE
GOAL
Reduce NO2 gas emissions for EGA plants by 10% in 100 days
RESULT
Reduced emissions from EGA plant by 16%
460,000
Cars
annual emissions

100-Day Challenges at Scale
King County
Spokane County
Pierce County
Marion County
Ukiah County, Mendocino County
Sacramento
Santa Clara County
Las Vegas
Los Angeles
Hennepin County
Northern Michigan
Chicago
Suburban Cook County
Cleveland
Columbus
Franklin County
Connecticut
Tompkins County
Philadelphia
Baltimore
Louisville
Prince George's County
West Tennessee
Horry County
Gulf Coast
New Orleans
Austin
Palm Beach County
Miami-Dade County
3465
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS HOUSED

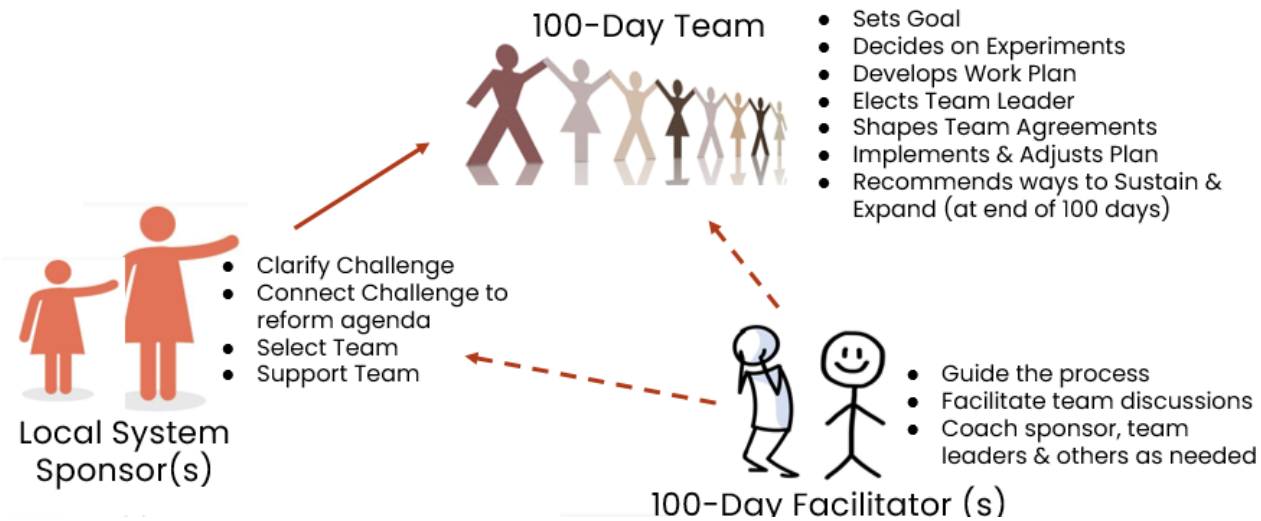
أكبر مخاطرة الا تخاطر


100-Day Challenge
100-DAY TEAM
Goal
Plan
Governance
Collaborate
Innovate
Execute
Performance
Insights
Experience
8-15 local system, front line
Reverse Challenge
Local LEADERSHIP STAKEHOLDERS
Adjust the system
Expand the Scope
Sustain performance

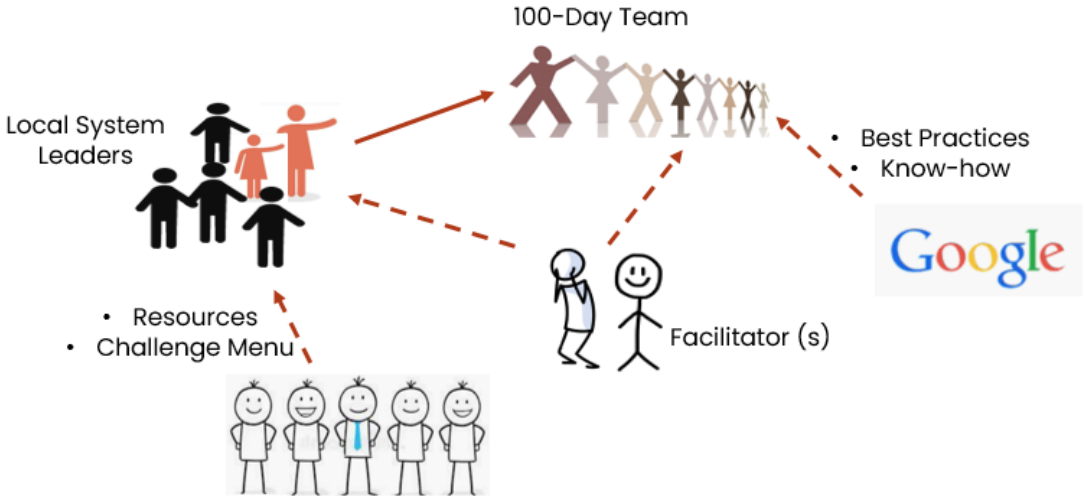
100-Day Journey



Roles in Local System



Overall Roles



Challenge Menu: Elements of the Future, Now

Next Steps

01. Develop menu of Challenges

02. Develop package of resources

03. Map Reforms/BP to Challenges

04. Prepare school application template

05. Decide on Micro-Challenges

06. What else?

Selecting Micro Challenge (Training)

Menu: Improvement Opportunities in your Department(s)

- → Relevance?
- → Passion?
- → Believability?
- → Complexity?

Midpoint Presentation

Orientation Challenge

Slovakia - Education Reform

Midpoint Review

Objectives and agenda

Getting Started...

1. What was one positive surprise about working on this challenge?

1. What made you a little uncomfortable?

Session 1

Project progress

What are 2-3 things the team did that contributed the most towards achieving the goal?

Goal Confidence

On a **SCALE** of **1-5** how confident are we that we will reach your 7-day goal?

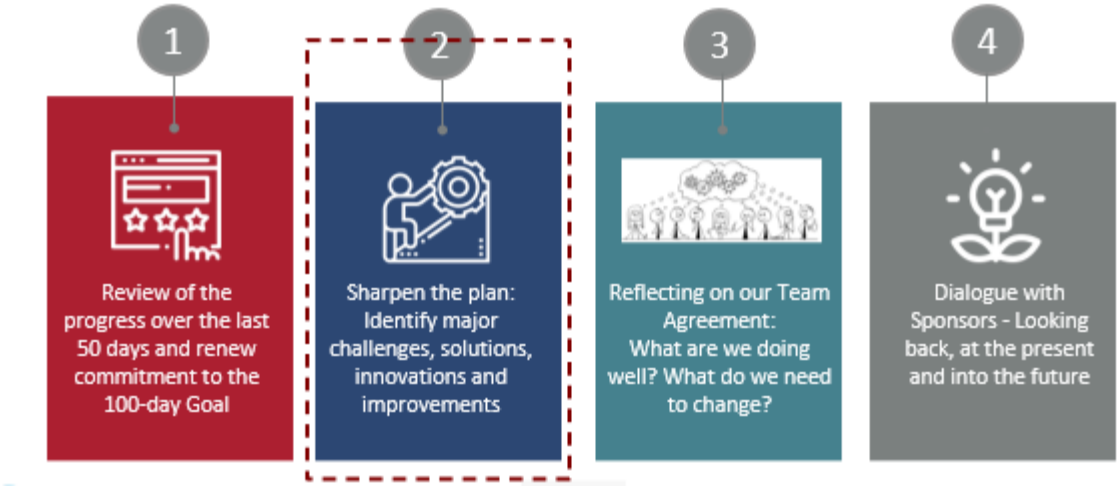
1 = I feel we have no chance to reach our goal

5 = I am 100% certain we will reach our goal

Click on the link in chat to vote

https://www.menti.com/edt537qhpq

Session 2



Overcoming the Obstacles - Troika

Troika Consulting
About giving and getting help

Breakaway Groups of 3
3 Rounds with the same 3 people
9 min per round

In each round
1 person is the client
the other 2 are consultants

The clients shares an obstacles
The advisors share ideas/experiments they think would be helpful for the client

After 8 min we change roles but stay in the same group

Everyone takes a minute to think of one obstacle that your team are challenged with that you would like help on (as a 'client')

Overcoming the Obstacles - Troika

Troika Consulting
About giving and getting help

Breakaway Groups of 3
3 Rounds with the same 3 people
9 min per round

In each round
1 person is the client
the other 2 are consultants

The clients shares an obstacles
The advisors share ideas/experiments they think would be helpful for the client

After 8 min we change roles but stay in the same group

IDEAS for advisors

- Power through this? OR
- Work around it? OR...
- Shift your position or the destination?

Overcoming the Obstacles - Steps

- Breakaway room - Cameras on (sit in groups of 3) choose someone to start as client.

- **1 min** - **client** shares an obstacle
- **2 min** - advisors ask clarifying questions. No advice yet!
- **4 min** - client turns camera off (turn around facing away) and advisors give ideas, suggestions and advice.
- **2 min** - Client put camera on (turn back) and share their takeaways from the advice

- Next round - Pick the next client and repeat steps

Steps are on the same documents as before

One advisor needs to keep a eye on the time.

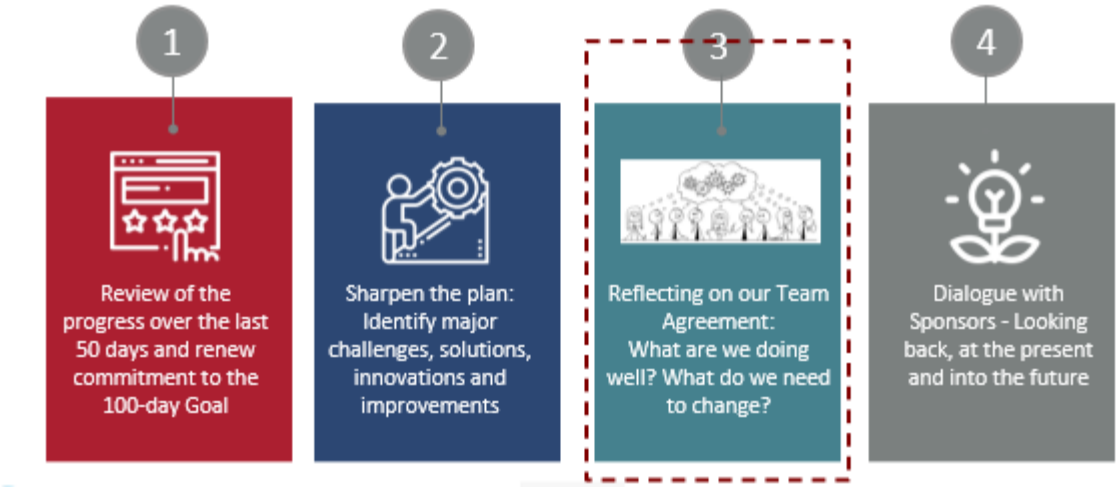
We will broadcast when a NEW ROUND must start

Sharpening the plan

1. Translate the Troika advice into action steps in the work plan.

1. And what else can the team do in the next part of the challenge to increase the odds of achieving the goal? Prioritize if need be, and build into the plan.

Session 3



Reflecting on our Team Agreement

1. To what extent are we living into our agreement?

1. Anything to add/change?

1. Feedback to colleagues?

Session 4

Conversation with Sponsor

Conversation with Sponsor

Conversation with Sponsor

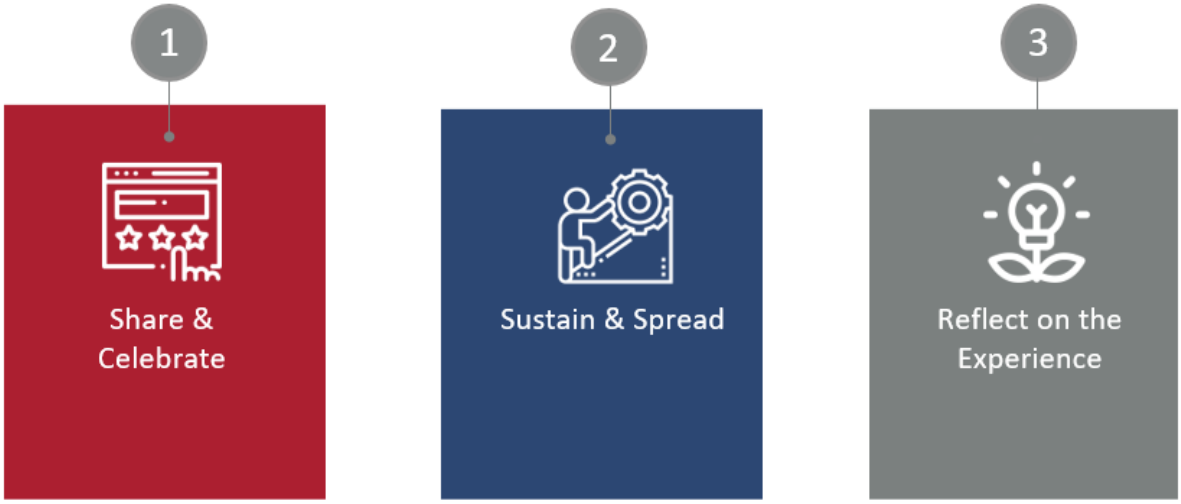
Sustainability presentation

Orientation Challenge

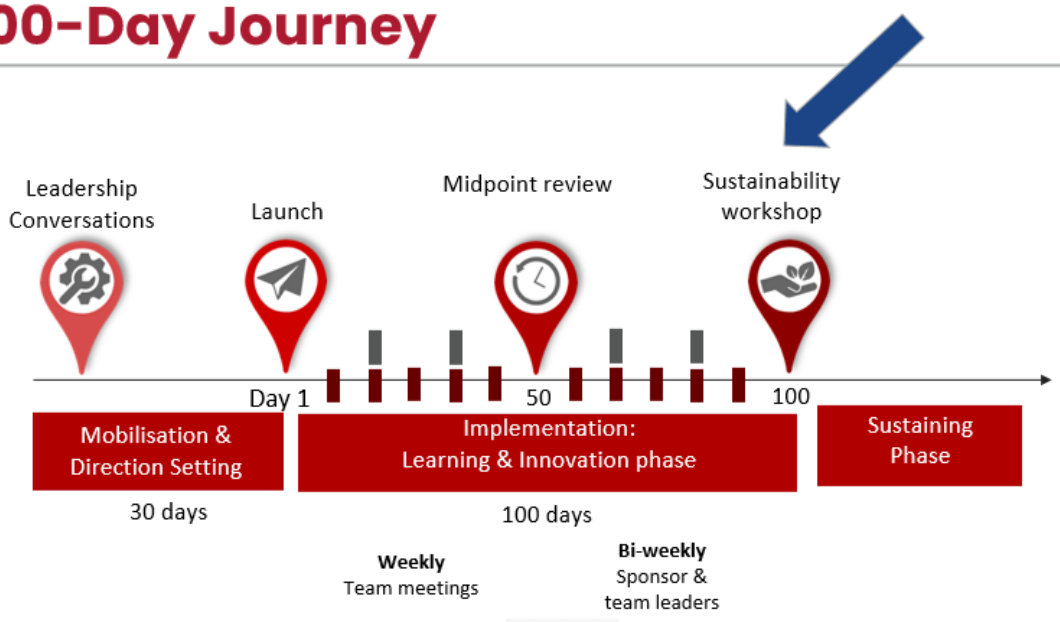
Slovakia - Education Reform

Sustainability Workshop
July 14, 2021

Objectives



100-Day Journey



Agenda

- Getting Started
- Share & Celebrate
- Sustain & Spread
- Reflect on the Experience
- Feedback & Closing

Getting Started

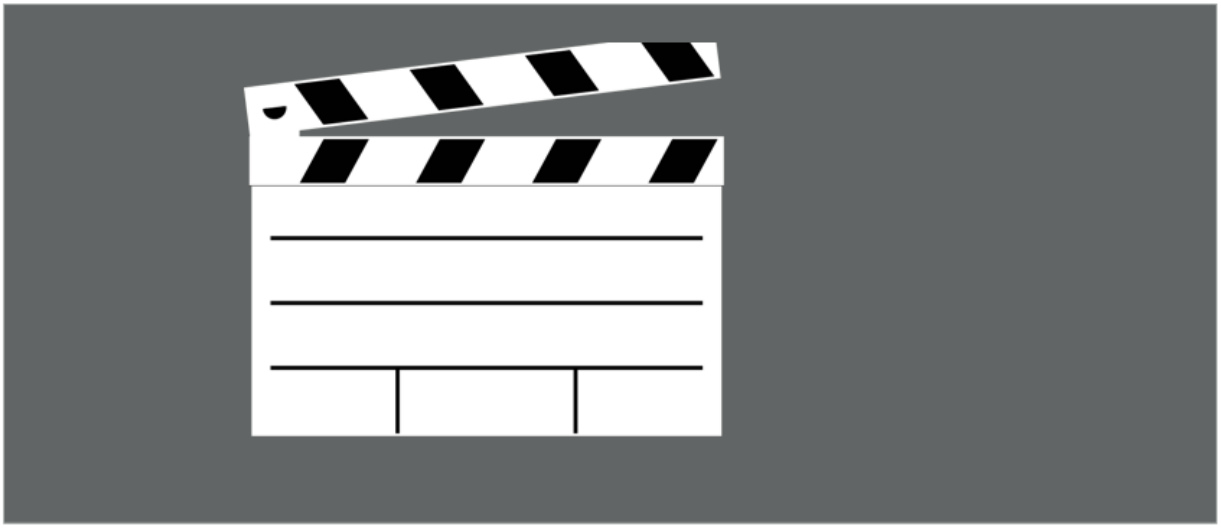
What is one thing you learned about one of your colleagues that you did not know 7 days ago?

Share & Celebrate

Use **Listening Sheet** to capture *ideas, questions, strategies and suggestions* from each of the Teams!

	Ideas to steal & tweak	**Questions** to ask	**Team Practices** to try	**Suggestions** to share
Team 1				
Team 2				
Team 3				
Team 4				

Share & Celebrate



Share & Celebrate

GIVE AND GET…

Purpose: Learn about other teams' experiences

- Impact created?
- Difficulties encountered?
- Successful innovations AND false starts?
- Insights and 'aha' moments?
- Surprises?
- Moments of despair and moments of elation?
- Inflection points?

Process:

- Split each team into two group, and organize successive rounds of group visitations
- Review "Listening Sheet" at start of each round
- Start the conversation…

Sustain Performance

Sustain Performance

Normal	Actions	Recommendations	Tough Questions
Practices that the TEAM tested and can continue to use *without* outside approval or support	Actions the TEAM can take on its *own* to further improve the process they developed	Actions that require investments or policy changes that require that require Permission from Leaders	Insights that raise more questions than answers, and that are worthy of deeper conversations
Continue to do this	1. Designate owner 2. Implement	Develop recommendations to Leaders with ROI based on proven benefits	Look beneath the surface, and commit to keep exploring

Sustain Performance

new Normal

- What aspects of the process that we developed can we continue to implement without seeking anyone's approval or support?

- Who do we need to inform about these changes that we have implemented?

Sustain Performance

Actions Plans Recommendations

What **Actions Steps** can we take to improve the call process we developed, and to apply it more broadly ?

Action Step	Who is Responsible	By When	Leadership Approval?

Sustain Performance

Recommendations

For **Actions Steps** that require Leadership approval, prepare a case for change to present to leaders

- What would we like to do?
- Why is this important?
- What is the cost of implementing this?
- What is the expected value we will get, using data we gathered in our 7-Day Challenge (time saved; etc.)?

Sustain Performance

Tough Questions

Write each **Tough Question** on a separate flip chart.

Step 1: Individually, reflect on what is it in our system and culture that keeps the issue the way it is?

Step 2: In pairs, generate at least FIVE ***WHAT IF WE ...?*** questions;
Join up with another pair and share these.
As a group, refine these into Three ***WHAT IF WE...*** questions.
Write these on the flip chart of the issue/question.

Step 3: Ask yourself, what small steps can I take, individually or with my colleagues to explore one of these ***WHAT IF WE...*** questions further?
Share this with a partner, and commit to check with each other in 10 days

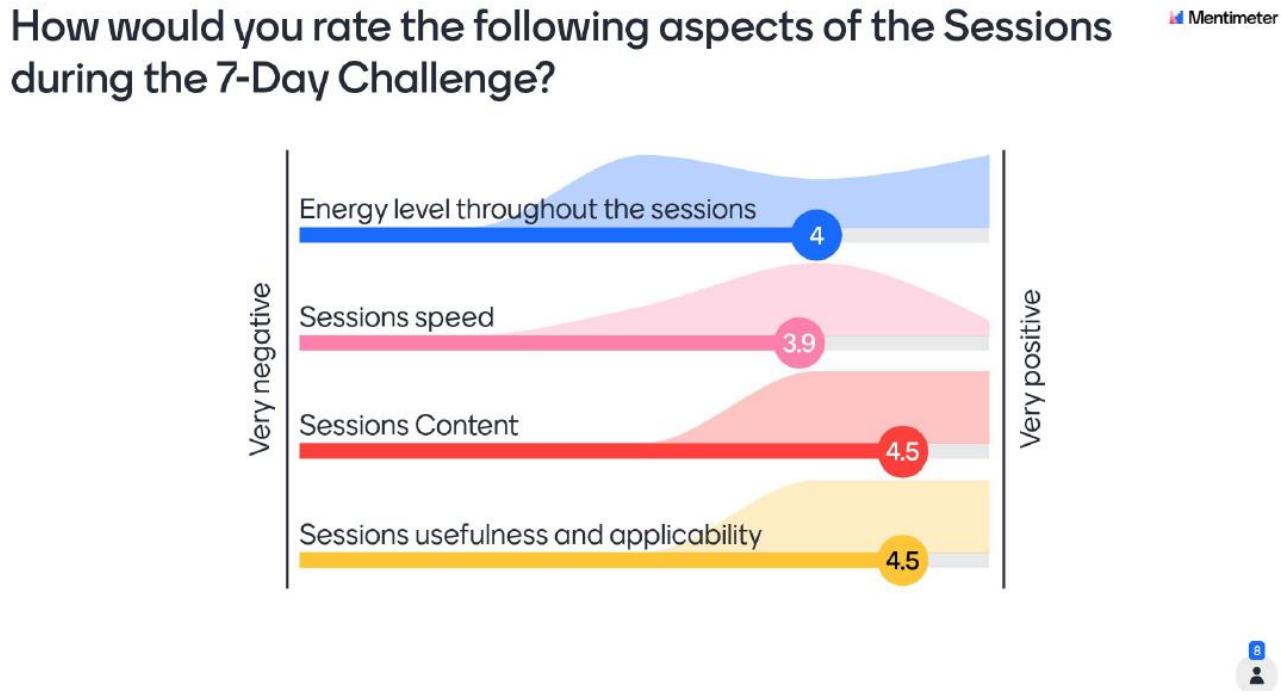
Reflect on the Experience

- What made it possible for us to make so much progress in 7 days?
- What do we wish we had done differently to make this a more productive and valuable experience?
- What advice do we have for the next 7-Day Challenge team?

Feedback & Closing

- Mentimeter
- Appreciations!

Closing review



What was the best thing about the 7-Day Challenge?

Mentimeter

Understand the process of prepare the call and all criterias

Ive learned much. Great leaders, great job...great experience.

realizing that teams from different departments of the ministry can work together effectively

Nadim and Alrien

to learn that by listening with comprehension you can catch up fast

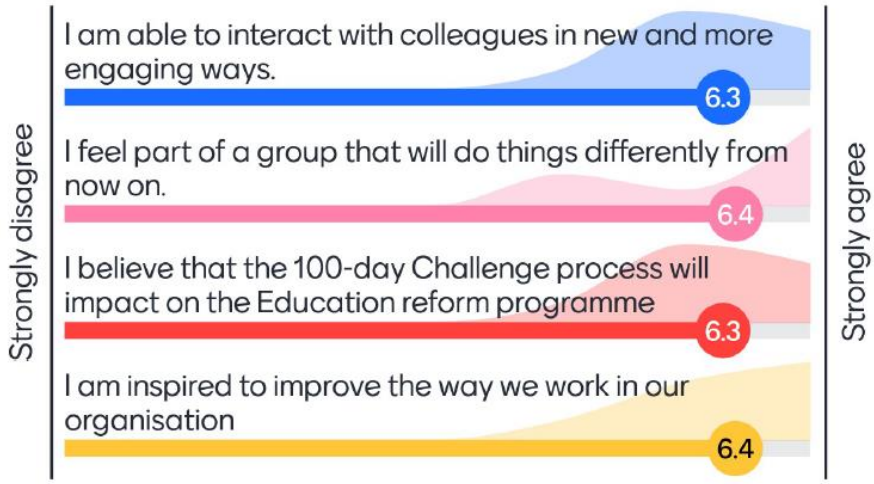
Its fast and applicable.

Cooperation in the team and the effort for achieving targets

7

How would you rate the following statements:

Mentimeter



8

What advice do you have for us, for future 7-Day Challenges?

Mentimeter

nothing special

Maybe show more examples in detail, how they set their goals (based on what) and how they achieved it

More time...this last session feels more relaxed since we have more time...Nadim speaks slowier and relaxed too :)

Give an estimate on the time capacity required before the start.

keep up the good work

I agree with more examples.

6

Would you recommend the 7-Day Challenge to your colleges or others?

Mentimeter

8

What is 1, 2 or 3 words you would use to describe your feelings about the Challenge experience?

Mentimeter

13

Annex 3: Enhanced assessment matrix developed in the training

We want to evaluate the interest and a clear idea of the school's entry into the project	0	4	7	10	Proposed evaluation weights	Points obtained (to fill in by the evaluator)	Total number of points
Description of the current situation	No description of the current situation The description is insufficient for being able to assess the current state of digitization of the school	The description is too general to be able to assess the current state of digitization of the school	The description is sufficient to get a basic idea about the level of digitization of the school	The description is sufficient with specifics which can help in the implementation of the project	1		0
Description of the long-term goal in the field of digital transformation (where we want to go / what we want to improve)	The objectives were not included. The objectives are not aligned with the ministry's objectives for digital transformation of schools.	The included objective is very general and only marginally relevant for the ministry's objectives in digital transformation of schools.	The objective gives an idea about what the school wants to achieve in digital transformation.	The objective is described in detail and offers a clear vision of what the school wants to achieve in digitization.	3		0
By what means do you want to achieve your long-term goal? (What and how will you use it, in what way do you have an idea?)	No solutions or means for reaching the objectives were listed.	The listed solutions or means to reach the objectives are too general.	The listed solutions or means to reach the target are clear enough.	The listed solutions or means to reach the objectives are described in detail, it is possible to proceed to the next stage of the project cycle.	2		0
How will you measure this progress in digital transformation?	No indicator what included or an approach to measure the progress.	Indicators were included, but are not measurable.	The questionnaire was listed to measure the feedback.	Clear and measurable indicators were included (possibly in a questionnaire format and leading to clear conclusions).	2		0
Conformity of the proposed area with our project.	The proposal is not aligned with the ministry's development project.	The proposal is related to some extent to the ministry's development project.	There is some overlap between the proposal and the ministry's development.	The proposal relates to an area which an important part of the ministry's development project.	2		0
						Max number of points	**100**