

## **Communities that produce value and foster sustainable learning: the case of action for refugee educators**

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### **Overview**

The focus of the work of the Carey Institute for Global Good, Center for Learning in Practice is to facilitate learning that assures a continuous feedback loop between knowledge (content and data including experience), learning (cognition, skills and competencies), and practice (application, adaptation, and reframing). In this article we look at the role of communities of practice within a Sustainable Learning Framework. We focus on an initiative to rapidly create and launch a response to a global education crisis: un- and under-prepared teachers of refugees. We do so by clarifying what sustainability means in the context of learning and consider the explicit and implicit call for knowledge sharing and professional learning in the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. We posit that reliable methods of connecting knowledge, learning, and practice remain unrealized within and across the Sustainable Development Goal areas. We further suggest that this is, in part, a result of inadequate processes for capturing and sharing *experience* within practice communities. To illustrate, we look at building out one of the five foundational elements of Sustainable Learning: creating a "community that produces value", for Action for Teachers of Teachers of Refugees, an initiative of the Center for Learning in Practice.

We close the article by highlighting the key contributions of Communities that Produce Value and Sustainable Learning more broadly and the application of Lean StartUp methods to rapidly create a working prototype for training teachers of refugees. We suggest that when applied with fidelity, Sustainable Learning can enrich the knowledge life-cycle in three important ways:

1. Creating a rapid feedback loop between knowledge and practice. By,
2. Fostering learning at the individual and systems level.
3. Codifying practitioner experience, making tacit knowledge explicit, and generating content in the process, in real time.

### **Introduction**

Teachers of refugees around the world who educate students of all ages are too few and largely ill-prepared. A mechanism to address the global crisis in the provision of efficient and effective teacher preparation at scale is not yet firmly on the horizon, while the devastating effects of not doing so are around the corner.

*"...teacher professional development in crisis and fragile contexts remains an under-theorized and under-researched domain, further perpetuating the cycle of poor teacher*

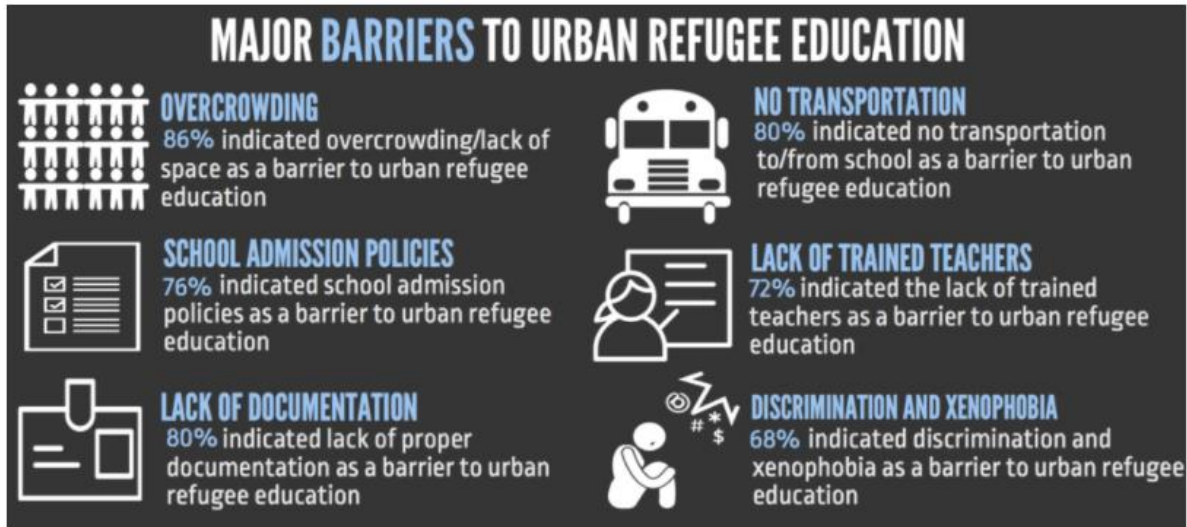
*professional development and, consequently, poor overall education delivery in the parts of the globe most in need of both...including at risk-schools in the United States..."*  
(INEE, 2015)

The staggering lack of qualified teachers around the world is threatening educational access, equity and quality, particularly in fragile and crisis contexts. This shortage compromises personal and national long-term security, economic well-being, and health. No one is more at risk than refugees, whose ranks have swollen in dozens of countries, and for whom access to teaching and learning is unimaginably complex.

The inadequate quality of instruction in countries of first asylum is well documented, particularly with regard to available resources for teaching, learning, and pedagogy (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). By 2030, there will be a global shortage of almost 69 million teachers (UNESCO 2016). Today, 1 in 200 children in the world is a refugee, with 1 in 5 students in the U.S. identified as a "newcomer." In the Middle East North Africa Region (MENA) alone, approximately 100,000 Syrian refugees are high school graduates between the ages of 18-22 and need to be in college—but are not. There is a call to action from a wide spectrum of humanitarian and education organizations around the world, to address the needs of these learners.

Many of these organizations are designing effective content and curriculum for teachers of refugees in a range of settings--from camps, to college campuses, to classrooms and online. Content is being developed on a range of topics from math to language to arts and humanities as well as social-emotional support for students. But as a group, we are still universally challenged by how best to "teach-the-teachers" - how to engage, prepare, assess, certify and support them.

*The world community must uphold its collective responsibility... We risk losing yet another generation of children to illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, and the need to turn toward desperate and extreme solutions to meet their basic needs." Dr. Mary Mendenhall, Teachers College (Mendenhall, 2017)*



Credit: "Urban Refugee Education: Overcoming Barriers for Access, Quality, and Inclusion," Teachers College 2017

The Carey Institute for Global Good, in pursuing its mission of "bringing together innovative and dynamic people from around the world to seek creative solutions to the most pressing challenges of the day," has committed itself to help alleviate the global crisis in education.

### A Quick Look at Sustainability

*"Sustainability is not a destiny one can eventually reach, but rather a continuous learning path towards transformation."* (Walsa, 2014)

In September 2015, world leaders attended a special summit at the United Nations in New York to adopt Agenda 2030, including the Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs). The SDGs provide a holistic framework, applicable to all countries, aiming to eradicate poverty and deprivation, but also to grow economies, to protect the environment, and to promote peace and good governance. In this context sustainability is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Within each of the 17 goals and across them there is the tacit assumption that knowledge will be generated and shared (United Nations, 2015).



The Agenda for Knowledge Development (2016) was designed to complement the SDGs by providing an integrated approach to knowledge-related challenges that directly influence the achievement of the SDGs. In the Agenda document, there are several references to knowledge competencies and the transformational power of harnessing knowledge. Goal 11 of the Agenda specifically calls for standards of professional learning for development workers. It goes on to stipulate that, in addition to domain-specific professional knowledge, professionals must know how to use knowledge to add real value to society, and to sustain their own knowledge ecosystem. To do this, Goal 11 posits that it is necessary to establish a standard for knowledge transfer that explicitly has the capacity to strengthen local knowledge ecosystems and markets.

### **Why A Sustainable Learning Framework?**

Even for nonprofit organizations that report collecting copious amounts of information, “leaders report that the larger challenge is defining clear goals for organizational learning, creating adequate incentives to invest the time it takes to capture and share knowledge, and designing intuitive processes that capture and disseminate knowledge” (Milway, 2011). The motivation for the Carey Institute for Global Good to develop a Sustainable Learning Framework grew from a combination of these factors.

Today, research on “mind, brain, education,” (Tokuhamma, 2011) made possible by cognitive neuroscience and machine learning (big data), are pushing us ever further into a science of learning. Coincident to these developments is an increasing number of “wicked problems,” which are defined as social or cultural problems that are difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons: incomplete or contradictory knowledge, the number of people and opinions involved, the large economic burden, and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems” (Kolko 2012).

Whether the growth of the science of learning and the prevalence of wicked problems is coincident or not, we will need the former to address the latter. Fundamentally, this is the *raison d'être* of a sustainable learning framework.

*“Sustainability science, co-creation of knowledge, new forms of learning and engagement (transformative learning, social learning, blended learning, hybrid learning, etc.) all have in common that the issues at hand cannot be solved but can only be improved and become a catalyst for deeper thinking which in itself is essential for a transition towards a world that is more sustainable<sup>i</sup>.” (Walsa, 2014)*

Sustainability, as understood in this contemporary context, requires the weaving and integration of various learning traditions (including individual, organizational, systems, social and blended). The Sustainable Learning Framework is grounded in these concepts.

“The processes used to achieve sustainability must be reliable, replicable and measurable; and outcomes confirmable, especially by outside scrutiny” (Wandiga, 2013). Thus, achieving sustainable learning requires conceptual frameworks, standards, assessment, and professional development. By developing a Sustainable Learning Framework, The Center for Learning Practice hopes to make a valuable contribution to an emerging body of work on effective professional development and knowledge sharing strategies and most immediately for educators of refugees.

## **The Sustainable Learning Framework**

The Center for Learning in Practice defines Sustainable Learning as learning that enables practitioners to develop effective practices through collaborative reflection on experience, and to personalize knowledge to meet immediate objectives that have long-term impact on organizational effectiveness. Sustainable learning possesses the hallmarks of sustainability: It is transparent, agile, reliable, adaptable, measureable (Wandiga, 2013) and ensures value creation (Wenger-Trayner). Sustainable learning harnesses the digital speed of knowledge creation and the attendant acceleration of learning cycles. It leverages the proliferation and free-flow of curated content that enable anywhere, anytime learning and sharing.

Sustainable Learning includes five foundational elements: Communities that produce value; Reflection that improves performance; Analytics for action; Knowledge exchange that facilitates the adaptation of "What Works;" Content that is curated; and Technology that fosters social learning. For the purpose of this paper we are focused on Communities that Produce Value.

## **Communities That Produce Value**

In Communities That Produce Value, participants gain or have access to connection, knowledge, resources, support, and deepened learning (Mellow 2015; Wenger, 2011; Woolis, 2007, 2008). This is assured through the provision of:



- A community plan - Setting goals, objectives, deliverables, and identifying core group members.
- A shared language - Terms that describe key concepts of professional practice that the community uses consistently to facilitate communication, transparency, and learning.
- Democratic engagement - Participants are provided with the support they need to fully engage in the community; they agree to work respectfully to resolve differences; and diverse points of view are encouraged.
- Structured peer-dialogue - Conversations are purpose-focused, facilitated, and participants understand the "ground rules" of discussion.
- Standardized tools and routines - The community or group agrees upon technologies to be used and the periodicity and duration of events.
- Monitoring and assessment - The value of the community to its members, including progress towards community goals and success in facilitating learning, is tracked and effectiveness is measured.

While many factors figure into the “incentive challenge” mentioned earlier, one is certainly the issue of “purpose”. Leaders are often concerned with “capturing and sharing” knowledge, while practitioners are keen to learn about *application* - skills and competencies to problem-solve, make decisions, or deliver and improve services as they do their work. Intuitive online processes that facilitate practitioners doing these provide a built in incentive for engagement. Communities that produce value are the generative locus of work - the place where experience-based knowledge is instant and continuous, made explicit, and codified in easily reusable ways. In effect, such communities constitute the tacit middle between learning, knowing and doing.

Given the immediacy of a practitioner’s needs, the shorter the cycle between knowledge “discovery” and its productive use, the better. Technology has made the cycle ever faster and dramatically can radically reduce the time and space between practice, knowledge generation and learning, creating the possibility of almost simultaneous occurrence. Technology also provides a way for knowledge discovery, learning, and practice to happen in the same place (i.e. on a digital device). These shifts have created an entirely new reality in which practitioners increasingly seek on-demand and personalized learning that provides micro-content (small bits of knowledge generated for ever-faster and shorter learning cycles). The shifts have also created opportunities for competency verification that align with the new speed and size of learning cycles.

### **Sustainable Learning and Refugee Educator Training Providers: Building a Community that Produces Value**

#### **Validating the Need and the Idea: The Refugee Educator Practice Community**

Beginning in late 2016, the Director of the Center for Learning in Practice informally interviewed over two dozen thought leaders located in countries around the world about the contours of the challenge of teaching teachers of refugees. These interviews reinforced the notion that there was an urgent need to develop mechanisms to share content and practices for teachers of teachers of refugees in camps, host, and transit countries. The interviews also confirmed the

complexity of the multiple contexts in which teachers function, the limited time available for professional development for these teachers, and the enormous variability in teacher credentials (from practitioners having no credentials to fully certified teaching professionals).

To further validate the need for Action for Teachers of Refugees, senior leaders participated in a range of activities including: Attending the Knowledge Management for Development conference, Vienna, Austria in Fall of 2016; a No Lost Generation EdTech Conference, Amman, Jordan (as keynote speakers); CIES (Comparative International Education Society) Atlanta, Georgia; Communities of Practice for Development led by Nancy White, Etienne and Bev Wenger-Trayner in April of 2017 in Seattle, WA.

Based on what we learned, the Center for Learning in Practice set as a goal to help build the capacity of teachers of teachers of refugees and link knowledge (content and data), learning (cognition, skills and competencies) and practice (application, adaptation and reframing). We set out to codify how to achieve continuous learning for teachers of refugees, provide real time data about teaching practices, and provide valuable feedback. We want to deliver an accelerated process, more ‘boot camp’ certification than college degree, that assures fidelity, regardless of context.

### **Producing Value: Process Overview**

To rapidly and inclusively develop a prototype and pilot design for training refugee educators we applied Sustainable Learning to Lean Startup. Lean Startup, often expressed in short-hand as “build-measure-learn,” is a model of speed and quality control for rapidly developing and testing work (Blank, S. 2013). Unlike traditional methods, Lean Startup involves “users” at every step of a process, which is critical to sustainable learning. The first step in Lean Startup is defining the problem that needs to be solved and then developing a “Minimum Viable Product,” or more appropriately a “Minimum Lovable Product” (McCahill, L. 2014) Lean Startup allows for quick discovery of what works and what does not. Learning, in this approach, is validated using a rigorous method for “demonstrating progress when one is embedded in the soil of extreme uncertainty, running experiments that allow us to test each element of our vision” (Reiss, E. 2016). In our case, the problem to be solved is how to create sustainable professional development for teachers of teachers of refugees around the world and across contexts. The products we are developing include a refugee educator training conceptual framework, courses, certification, methods, and a platform to deliver all of the above online, mobile-ready, and for use face-to-face.

We began by engaging the practice community on and offline in completing the Lean Canvas template, a method to design, test, and assess ideas (see below). The Lean Canvas asks participants to identify the problem, propose a solution, identify the solution’s unique value proposition, outline key metrics, segment potential users and develop a rudimentary cost structure. Working in this way the entire process took less than six months and included wide representation of the refugee educator community. Foundational design work was accomplished using two intensive events, one online and one face-to-face (described below). Together these yielded a prototype refugee educator learning environment including communities of practice, courses, content, certification, pilots, and budget parameters.

The Lean Canvas		Designed for:	Designed by:	Date:	Version:
Problem	Solution	Unique Value Prop.	Unfair Advantage	Client Segments	
Existing Alternatives	Key Metrics	High-Level Concept	Channels	Early Adopters	
Cost Structure			Revenue Streams		

Lean Canvas is adapted from The Business Model Canvas ([www.businessmodelgeneration.com/canvas](http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com/canvas))

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Excel implementation by: Neos Chronos Limited (<http://neoschronos.com/>)

### Engaging the Community Online: The Call to Action

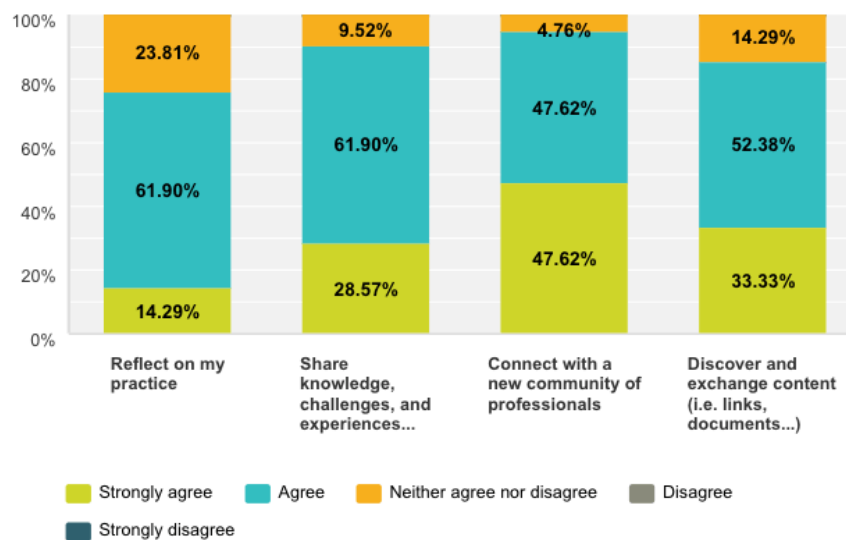
To democratically engage a large number of practitioners in defining the problem, purpose, and a high level concept of a refugee educator training community, an open invitation to the broader refugee educator community was posted

The call to action for this online event formally launched the refugee educator initiative. The event took 6 weeks to plan and was structured around the question “What is sustainable effective pedagogy for teachers of teachers of refugees?” Over 200 hundred people from 25 countries representing more than two dozen organizations registered. The forums were facilitated by guest discussion hosts representing a range of refugee educator trainer practices, expertise, and affiliations. The forum allowed the Center to begin the process of creating analytics for actions, through the qualitative analysis of the online forum. It enabled the Center for Learning in Practice to begin to effectively address key elements of the Lean Canvas. At the same time, we confirmed the value of engagement to participants.

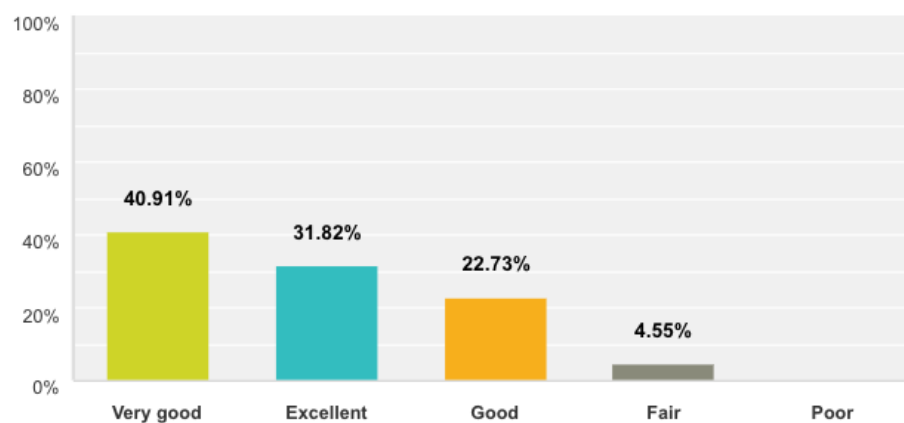


Post-event survey data indicated that the event had, from respondents' point of view, met or exceeded the criteria for sustainable learning, and for practitioner community building in particular. Below are responses to two questions.

### The Action for Teachers of Refugees online event was an effective way to...



### Overall, how would you rate the Action for Teachers of Refugees online event?



One activity of the online event was a “peer-source” where participants posted information about technology platforms currently in use by practitioners in the field, along with a brief analysis of how the platform was being used. Nineteen platforms were identified. That information provided further insight about what and how participants use technology for learning and what could be optimal features for a refugee educator learning environment. At the top of the list of urgent requests that surfaced from the teachers is an immediate way to easily exchange ideas and content, as well as be available in multiple languages, particularly Arabic.

The preliminary analysis of the online activities, combined with information gathered at conferences and interviews indicated that an ideal refugee educator system would be:

- mobile-first;
- available on-demand;
- offer real-time mentoring;
- be social, personalized, and competency-focused;
- use a mix of online and off-line methods (ideally as an integrated strategy); and
- provide for highly contextual/local knowledge sharing and adaptation

With this input and data in hand we were able to establish a set of next step objectives in developing Action for Teachers of Refugees:

1. Further define pedagogies for Teachers of Teachers of Refugees (i.e. early childhood, primary, secondary, college, and adult vocational education).
2. Establish competences and standards for Teachers of Refugees on which professional development would focus.
3. Apply Sustainable Learning to training and professional development for teachers of teachers of refugees.
4. Develop monitoring and support mechanisms for continuous quality improvement for educator training providers.
5. Develop micro-credentialing and pathways for learning certification that reflect practice competencies.

### **Next Steps: Establishing a Shared Language, Developing a Platform Prototype, and Designing Pilots**

#### **The Face-to-Face Intensive Workshop**

Based upon information gathered through a preliminary analysis of the online event, a two and half day face-to-face intensive working meeting occurred two months later, and used and simultaneously tested the selected online platform (Eurekos). An open invitation (below) was posted online to ask key thought leaders to engage as designers of a pilot course and prototype for teachers of teachers of refugees. Ultimately, thirty participants who represented learning providers in the U.S., Europe, the Middle East and Africa were hosted by the Carey Institute on its campus in Rensselaerville, NY on May 30- June 1, 2017. The goal of the work was to create a rapid method of preparation for teachers of refugees that includes mechanisms for teacher

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<http://journal.km4dev.org>

support (for example coaching), offers a competency-based structure, generates verified best practices and is designed to build a professional community of teachers of refugees.

### Screen Shot: The Call to Action for Face-to-Face Design Meeting



### Structuring the Workshop and Platform for Sustainable Learning and Lean Start Up

Before the meeting, the Center for Learning in Practice selected and customized a prototype platform so that it could be seamlessly integrated into the face-to-face work and function as an ongoing learning environment for both the “designers” and subsequently for community and course participants. To structure a rapid work cycle, templates were designed and embedded on the platform enabling teams to efficiently and effectively address a set of standard requirements. Each team was expected to provide for the following in their design: Mobile access and methods

for teachers to connect with each other and to exchange and share activities and resources; Delivery of micro courses, content, and credentialing; Methods of community and learner assessment. The screen shot below captures the launch platform of the face-to-face and what the workshop participants “received” as their workshop “agenda.”

### Screen Shot of Workshop Agenda as a Learning and Community Space

The screenshot displays the Carey Institute for Global Good website for a workshop titled "Co-Creating A Prototype: Teaching Teachers of Refugees in Host and Destination Countries". The page features a large image of a stone house with a blue banner that reads "Contributing to a strong, educated and just society." Below this, the "OUR VISION" section describes a teacher training "push pack" for teaching teachers of refugees, emphasizing rapid methods of teacher preparation. The "AGENDA MAY 30 - June1 2017" section lists a daily schedule with links to DAY 1 IDEATE, DAY 2 PREPARE, DAY 3 IMPLEMENT, RESOURCES, and THE BIG PICTURE. A video player shows a green lawn with trees and a play button, with the hashtag #CAREY4TeachersofTeachers and a video title "Carey Institute co...". The "BACKGROUND" section, titled "Making The Case for Sustainable Learning", defines a "Push Pack" as essential or emergency supplies ready for quick deployment. At the bottom, a navigation bar includes links for Sustainable Learning, Teaching Teachers of Refugees, Teachers of Refugees, Ed Tech, and Cross-Cutting Issues.

**Co-Creating A Prototype: Teaching Teachers of Refugees in Host and Destination Countries**

CAREY INSTITUTE  
FOR GLOBAL GOOD

Contributing to a strong, educated and just society.

**OUR VISION**

A teacher training "push pack" for teaching teachers of refugees.

Rapid methods of teacher preparation that include frictionless pathways to peer-to-peer practice communities, knowledge, micro-learning and micro-credentialing.

**AGENDA MAY 30 - June1 2017**

Daily Schedule

- > DAY 1 IDEATE
- > DAY 2 PREPARE
- > DAY 3 IMPLEMENT
- > RESOURCES
- > THE BIG PICTURE

**BACKGROUND**

Making The Case for Sustainable Learning

**What is a "Push Pack"**

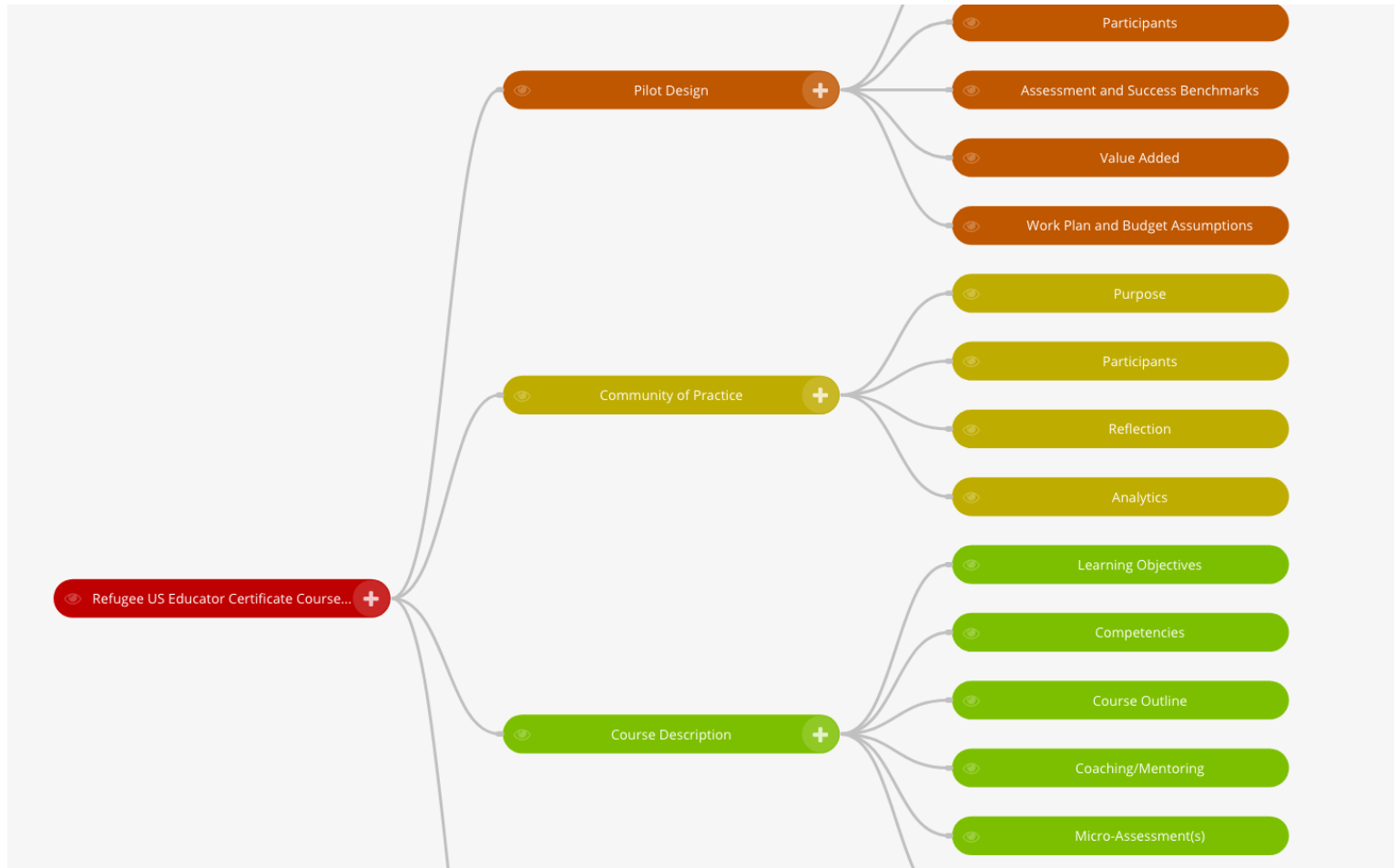
Essential or emergency supplies, that are ready to go and can be quickly deployed in any context.

Sustainable Learning Teaching Teachers of Refugees Teachers of Refugees Ed Tech Cross-Cutting Issues

The digital platform, Eureka, uses a mapping structure (below) that easily lets a community manager or learning designer lay out their activities and content. Below is screen shot of how

the work template was structured and embedded for this particular workshop, followed by the completed template of one team.

### Screen Shot Map of Prototype Design Template



### Building the Community and Getting to Work

Successful communities of practice typically have an active core group. In this case, the seed of a core group was created as a consequence of the intensive face-to-face workshop. To promote community building and deepen connection, the workshop began in a single large group (30 people) to develop a shared vocabulary of who a teacher of refugees is, what these teachers do, and what they need. After sketching these out, the group broke into teams.

The first exercise each team engaged in was to surface the individual knowledge of each team member and what that member uniquely brought to the team. This exercise was facilitated by Dr. Nancy Dixon, an expert in knowledge management, who is an advisor to the Center for Learning in Practice. On day two, using the online template teams developed the elements of their prototype including a design for their: pilot, community of practice, and course. The US K-12



team, made up largely of International Rescue Committee (IRC) education leaders, focused on developing a Refugee Educator Certificate pilot.

On day three, the close of the meeting, each team presented their work, using the online platform. Working in this way facilitated knowledge sharing not only across teams but made the work accessible to any community member to access digitally and provided the foundation for continuing work. Doing community work in an online learning environment enables easy reuse, repurpose, and adaption of knowledge.

Below is an example of what one team, the US K-12 team, was able to accomplish in real time using the templates. All of their work shown here was completed within 72 hours. “Topics” function as a clickable table of contents. A “Topic”, when clicked, takes you to a new page with the content and activity for that topic. Community or learning facilitators can create their own structured templates and pre-embed them using the structure map.

Highlighted below is part of what you would see if you clicked on their “Community of Practice”. For this intensive workshop, the Community of Practice template addresses four key elements of a community of practice: Purpose, Participants, Reflection and Analytics.

### Top Page of K-12 Team Design



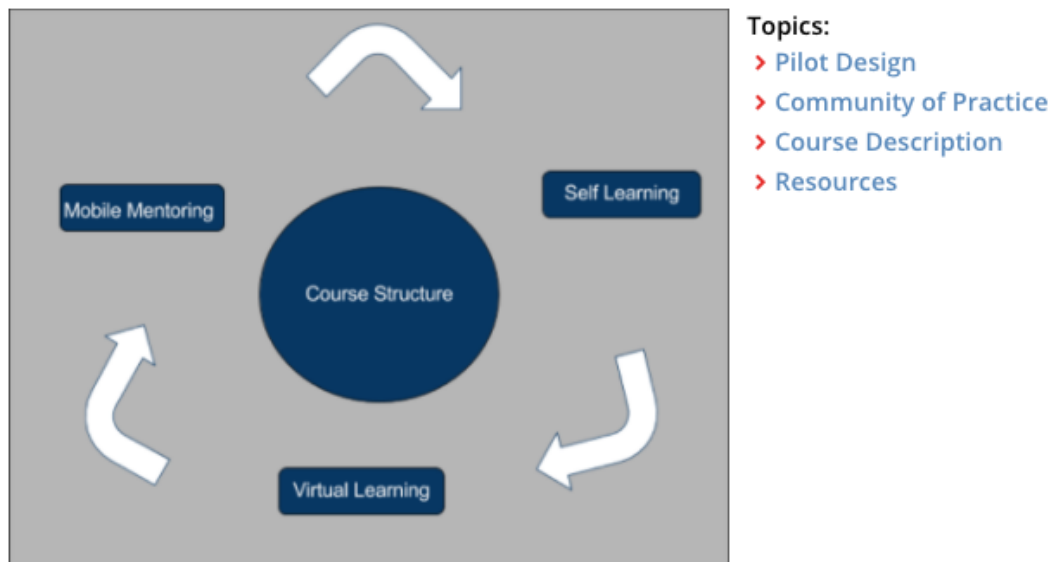
## Teaching K-12th Grade Educators of Refugees

This course will address the need for professional development opportunities for educators to gain deeper knowledge of refugee students and families and strategies to implement to promote student success.

The Refugee US Educator Certificate Course is composed of:

- a two-six week online educator certificate course
- virtual learning circle
- mobile mentor

Participants will receive a certificate and professional development credit after completing three units - Foundations, SEL, and Academic Achievement.



Below is the top page for the US K-12 Community of Practice “Topic”. Underneath it is a screen shot of what you would see if you clicked on “Purpose”.

## Community of Practice Top Page of K-12 Team Design

Dashboard > Refugee US Educator Certificate Course > Community of Practice

### Community of Practice



This course is designed in a way that guides teachers in their personal learning journey to gain the knowledge and skills to best respond to the needs of refugee learners. The course structure comprises of:

- Interactive and assessment based self-directed learning opportunities,
- Networking and learning team meetings with educators in Virtual Teacher Learning Circles
- Catered and individualized one-on-one mobile mentoring with experienced and recognized professionals

Data is used throughout the ecosystem via diagnostic, continuous assessments, summative assessments as well as user analytic data in order to respond to learners' needs.

- 1 Purpose
- 2 Participants
- 3 Reflection
- 4 Analytics

## Screen Shot- Purpose Page K-12 Team Community of Practice

Dashboard > Refugee US Educator Certificate Course > Community of Practice > Purpose

### Purpose

To develop a network of education professionals committed to supporting refugee students and families in the K-12 educational systems in order to:

- Share experiences, challenges, successes, solutions, and stories that can be shared to the collective and with mobile mentors;
- Create compassionate & connected educational communities to advocate for refugee students;
- Empower participants and prepare them to take control over their own learning and professional growth to better serve refugee students.
- Access and share resources to support K-12 refugee education in your community.

### Outcomes to Date

Using the Sustainable Learning Framework to undertake Lean design, using on and offline strategies enabled rapid and high quality contextual knowledge to emerge. Overall, target client and client segments, a value proposition, key activities, “channels,” and sketch of potential revenue were identified.

Using the new platform (after it had been pre-tested, selected and customized for use for this meeting) proved to be a good test of its efficacy and usability. There were other benefits intended for using the online learning platform in the face-to-face and these were achieved as well:

1. It made the work transparent and accessible to a larger community;
2. It laid the foundation and created a model for the work going forward;
3. It generates data and provides for ongoing analysis of design, community, content, and process;
4. It enables easy repurposing and adaptation of knowledge assets
5. It contributes to an evolving sense of common identity and common purpose within focus communities.

The refugee educator community engaged in this project is now prepared to develop funding, partnerships, and implementation plans to deliver and test a Refugee Educator learning environment.

### Conclusion

Today's sustainable development challenges constitute some of the most complex, large scale crises the world has faced. Addressing them effectively requires new approaches that build on the most resilient practices of the past but also reach into the future of learning and knowledge sharing. The future is above all digitally mediated *and* it is human-centered. That means that the experience of people, of practitioners working in the service of sustainable development, must be understood as the core drivers and key actors. The question is not how to get them to enact other's agenda, but to have those agendas fully informed by the knowledge of practitioner experience. The "tacit middle", we propose, is where learning and practice connect in ways that communities can "self-determine, manage, and renew" knowledge. And that middle is mediated by Communities that Produce Value.

Executing on this future requires an explicit framework that includes standards and indicators that can assure a consistent approach with built-in quality assurance. Ultimately the Sustainable Learning Framework provides the critical and missing feedback loop that enables continuous real-time learning from experience and provides insight about progress on goals, and guides course adjustment.

Practitioner experience, captured in dynamic digital environments, is manifestly transformed into "content" making tacit knowledge visible and accessible. Highly contextualized knowledge becomes available and adaptable. Scaling is reimagined, to be the process of mixing and re-mixing elements of effective practice to create entirely new practice or applied in a wholly unique context.

Online and off-line learning, formal and informal knowledge exchange are processes of a sustainable learning cycle. Both have value when used deliberately in a clearly articulated learning and knowledge sharing process.

Sustainable Learning, we believe, is a key to the success of all of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and Communities that Produce Value are central to Sustainable Learning. The Center for Learning in Practice, at the Carey Institute for Global Good, aims to press them into service on one of the most urgent of global needs: assuring more and more quickly qualified Teachers of Teachers of Refugees.

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## **Abstract**

The focus of the work of the Carey Institute for Global Good, Center for Learning in Practice is to facilitate learning that assures a continuous feedback loop between knowledge (content and data including experience), learning (cognition, skills and competencies), and practice (application, adaptation, and reframing). In this article we look at the role of communities of practice within a Sustainable Learning Framework. We focus on an initiative to rapidly create and launch a response to a global education crisis: un- and under-prepared teachers of refugees. We do so by clarifying what sustainability means in the context of learning and consider the explicit and implicit call for knowledge sharing and professional learning in the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. We posit that reliable methods of connecting knowledge, learning, and practice remain unrealized within and across the Sustainable Development Goal areas. We further suggest that this is, in part, a result of inadequate processes for capturing and sharing *experience* within practice communities. To illustrate, we look at building out one of the five foundational elements of Sustainable Learning: creating a “community that produces value”, for Action for Teachers of Teachers of Refugees, an initiative of the Center for Learning in Practice.

We close the article by highlighting the key contributions of Communities that Produce Value and Sustainable Learning more broadly and the application of Lean StartUp methods to rapidly create a working prototype for training teachers of refugees. We suggest that when applied with fidelity, Sustainable Learning can enrich the knowledge life-cycle in three important ways:

1. Creating a rapid feedback loop between knowledge and practice. By,
2. Fostering learning at the individual and systems level.

Codifying practitioner experience, making tacit knowledge explicit, and generating content in the process, in real time.

### **About the Author**

Diana D. Woolis, Ed.D. is Director, Center for Learning in Practice at the Carey Institute for Global Good. She is a knowledge strategist and social learning designer focused on digitally mediated sustainable learning practices. She has lead town, city, state, and national organizations, and is co-founder of Knowledge in the Public Interest. For over 25 years, she has worked on issues of access and equity primarily in education, work-based learning, and professional development. Dr. Woolis is the author of over a dozen articles, papers and book chapters and co-author of the book *Pedagogy Matters, Taking College Teaching Seriously*.

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