



STRATEGY FOR IMPROVED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR WK KELLOGG FOUNDATION

A VISION TO INSPIRE CHANGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Project Date: 2008



Studies show that the achievement gap for poor or disadvantaged children is created in the first five years of their lives. To support healthy infant, child, and youth development, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation works to mobilize, strengthen, and align systems that affect children's learning.

Looking to infuse the field of education with revolutionary approaches to early education challenges, the Foundation partnered with IDEO for a human-centered perspective that would engage stakeholders and create tangible ways toward progress.

In commissioning a new strategy for education, the Foundation aimed to provoke a dialog with grantees and the field of education, create ways to improve schools, and increase the level of creativity and innovation in the grant proposals received. Faced with the complexity of the educational system and the multiple stakeholders involved, IDEO began by gathering quantitative data and conducting ethnographic and participatory research with stakeholders throughout the education ecosystem.

Insights from this research, in addition to prototyping sessions with national education system experts, led to a series of 10 concepts focused on engaging parents, empowering teachers, and connecting schools. Ranging from a parent contact database, to improved teacher career development, the concepts were tested in schools and included in a strategy book titled, "Tangible Steps Towards Tomorrow" (TSTT).

Since its introduction, thousands of the TSTT book have been circulated and downloaded by Kellogg Foundation staff, systems drivers, charitable foundations, and stakeholders throughout the educational system.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has quickly seen the influence of TSTT in and outside of its organization: In addition to negotiating opportunities for implementation in school systems across the US, connecting with other foundations looking to innovate, and receiving a series of grant proposals based on the concepts, the Foundation is transforming its own approach, evidenced by increased brainstorming and collaboration -- the first steps toward tangible change.

TSTT can be downloaded online at www.wkkf.org/tangiblesteps