EDKASA **Transforming Secondary Education in Pakistan Using Flipped Classrooms**

EDKASA (pronounced *ed-kasa*) leverages rapid speed of internet penetration in Pakistan to make quality teachers accessible for secondary education. Using a flipped classroom model, EDKASA plans to deploy 500 franchises to distribute its 'live teaching web-streams' reaching 20,000 secondary students by 2020.

The Challenge

Improving secondary education outcomes has a direct impact on poverty reduction. UNESCO reports that the global poverty rate can be halved if all adults completed secondary education[1]. Pakistan has more than 15 million out of school secondary students[1]. A major reason for this is insufficient number of secondary schools – only 1 in 9 government schools is a secondary school[2]. In addition, of those who do attend secondary schools, more than half do not graduate[1].

The widespread availability of internet in Pakistan can potentially transform secondary education outcomes. 90% of the population will have access to 3G/4G internet by 2020[3]. However, ownership of internet enabled devices is expected to significantly lag behind due to low disposable income. Hence, any education delivery solution that wants to leverage internet needs to be designed for a low-resource setting.

The EDKASA Solution

EDKASA is an edtech startup based in Lahore, Pakistan that connects students with 'Rock Star' teachers using its live, interactive virtual classroom platform. EDKASA wants to expand into the secondary education segment using a franchise-based model that makes EDKASA's live web-streams accessible without having to own an internet-enabled device.

EDKASA envisions deploying a network of low-cost franchises that will create flipped classrooms to distribute EDKASA's live teaching web-streams at physical locations. Using a basic tech setup, each franchisee will screen the web-streams with the help of a teaching facilitator. Franchisee will market access to these screenings to students in the community for a low monthly fee (~$5/subject).

Key Pilot Activities

EDKASA plans to run a pilot to optimize the operating processes for the franchise-based learning and ready it for scale-up. The pilot will have five key activities:

1. Recruit and Train Teachers

EDKASA will recruit teachers from Lahore who are known subject specialists and are well-reputed in their field. These teachers will be trained in online teaching approaches and assisted in optimizing their lessons for online delivery. Focus will be on recruiting for STEM subjects since the market need for STEM teachers is most acute.

2. Optimize Online Platform for Franchise-based Delivery

EDKASA has developed a virtual classroom platform that uses Adobe Connect web-conferencing software. A key activity during the pilot will be to understand how the teaching facilitators can use the platform's interactive features to enhance learning in the classroom. The platform has three major interactive features – whiteboard for content sharing, instant pop-quiz feature to assess learning, and chat box for real-time Q&A. The optimal use of these features will be iterated during the pilot to develop a standard operating procedure for lesson delivery.

3. Setup Teaching Pods

During the pilot, EDKASA will setup 1-2 teaching pods at its premises in Lahore from where the live teaching sessions will be streamed. Each pod can be setup for under $1000 using off-the-shelf technology.

4. Deploy Franchises

Distributing EDKASA's web-streams requires franchises to screen the streams at physical locations. Each web-stream can be connected to 100 franchises simultaneously, driving volumes and lowering costs.

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[1] Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, 2017.
[2] The Pakistan Education Statistics, Alif Ailaan, 2014-15.
[3] The Global System Mobile Association (GSMA), 2017.

Potential franchisees include low-cost schools, after-school academies, and small community clubs. Each franchisee can be setup to distribute EDKASA's stream for under $500 which includes cost for tablet, pico-projector with backup battery, speakers, and internet device. EDKASA estimates that the franchisee cost for accessing each web-stream would be around $30-50/month.

EDKASA will recruit and operationalize 10 franchises during the pilot. EDKASA has already connected with a number of low-cost private schools operating near Lahore through a microfinance organization (Akhuwat) that provides financing for education ventures targeting low-income segments. Initial feedback from these schools indicates that the EDKASA offer can be a game-changer in increasing access to quality teachers.

5. Recruit Students

Learning outcomes in the above-mentioned low-cost schools are dismal – only 1 in 10 student graduates. This is primarily due to difficulty that the schools face in recruiting and retaining quality teachers. If EDKASA can make quality teachers accessible at an affordable price through the franchise model, the schools will be interested in introducing EDKASA's products to their students. We estimate that a franchisee can make reasonable profits at a per student fee of $5/month/subject making the offer attractive in the target markets.

Milestones

- Recruit and train 4 STEM teachers from Lahore.
- Develop standard operating procedure and best practices for delivering online lessons via franchises.
- Setup 1-2 teaching pods.
- Mobilize 10 franchises from urban and rural locations near Lahore to distribute EDKASA's web-streams.
- Seek microfinance partnerships for financing equipment purchase for one-third of the franchisees.
- Evaluate classroom learning and make necessary adjustments to ensure better learning outcomes.
- Assist franchises to serve 250 students within 3 months of market launch.

Post-pilot, EDKASA will gear up to scale the franchise model. EDKASA is targeting to deploy 250 franchises by 2019, reaching 10,000 students, and 500 franchises by 2020, reaching 20,000 students.

Team

Sohail Ali leads the strategy formulation and execution for EDKASA. He has led system-wide social reform efforts in Pakistan in close collaboration with the top political and bureaucratic leadership. He also has extensive experience with teaching students, both offline and online. His GRE videos on YouTube have been viewed 420,000+ times for a total of 7,000 hours. Sohail has engineering degrees from Georgia Tech and MIT, and is currently pursuing a graduate business degree at the Fletcher School at Tufts. Sohail is based in Medford and travels frequently to Pakistan to support EDKASA. He currently devotes 50% of his time to EDKASA.

Annum Sadiq leads the education delivery at EDKASA. She provides support on curriculum design and delivery for the online platform. She has extensive experience with education policy both in Pakistan and US. She has previously worked with Education Pioneers, Chelsea Public Schools, USAID, Jinnah Institute and Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme. Annum is a Fulbright Scholar and has a MSc in Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon University. Annum is based in Lahore and works full-time for EDKASA.

Fahad Tanveer is the day-to-day captain of the ship. He has extensive experience working in brand management. He has worked before with ICI, Telenor, and Nestle in Pakistan. He also has experience teaching students from around the world on the Wyzant online platform. Fahad has a BS and an MBA from LUMS and a masters in finance from Harvard University. Fahad is based in Lahore and works full-time for EDKASA.

Muneeb Ali leads the technical development for EDKASA and has extensive experience in IT deployment. He is the CEO and co-founder of OneByte LLC which specialises in iOS, Android and Web development. Muneeb has a BSc in computer sciences (Gold Medalist) from GIK Institute of Engineering and Technology, Pakistan.

Bakhtawar Ali facilitates the marketing strategy and execution for EDKASA. She is currently pursuing a masters in international business at the Fletcher School at Tufts where she is a Fulbright Scholar. Before Fletcher, she worked with Philip Morris in Pakistan on brand management, leading the execution of marketing strategy. Bakhtawar is based in Medford, MA and works part-time for EDKASA.