EdTech Hub

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AUTHOR EdTech Hub Team

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Today, **85 percent** of **10 year olds** in sub-Saharan Africa cannot read this literacy test fable. We have planted seeds, but they are not growing into trees.

"A big tree stood in a garden. It was alone and lonely. One day a bird came and sat on it. The bird held a seed in its beak. It dropped the seed near the tree. A small plant grew there. Soon there were many more trees. The tree was happy."

ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL LEARNING CRISIS

We are in a global learning crisis; one that is only exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The poorest children are most impacted. If we want to grow happy trees, something has to change.

There are 258 million children globally who are not in school (UIS 2019), and millions more experiencing Covid-19-related disruption. So the fast answer is access. And, yes, access to education is crucial. But access alone does not solve the even bigger challenge of ensuring that once children are in school they are able to engage in productive learning.

Digital disruption has already resulted in transformative changes to the entertainment, finance, and agriculture sectors, among others. This change is expected to continue at pace as technological evolutions allow us to reimagine previously unchallengeable norms, processes, and behaviours.

Personalised, on-demand media consumption is forcing the recalibration of the entertainment industry. Finance has turned every phone into a bank terminal, much of which was pioneered by mPesa in Africa. In agriculture, the emergence of artificial intelligence to provide predictions about crop yields is revolutionising the way farmers manage their resources.

Our future is predicated on the promise that technology can provide not just solutions, but evolutions. And the education sector is not exempt. At EdTech Hub, we recognise that technology has the potential to transform teaching and learning. Not as a panacea to the global learning crisis, but as a critical component.

Which is why leaders in governments, funding agencies, the private sector, and civil society are pressured to make decisions about how to improve learning, and they are turning to technology. These leaders urgently require easily accessible and contextually relevant evidence and advice.

EdTech Hub exists to fill the evidence gaps in how to use technology in education in a high-impact, cost-effective way, at scale. Our goal is to make it easier for decision-makers to plan and fund effective technology-enabled interventions; ones that improve learning for children — the ultimate vision for global education and EdTech Hub.

Verna Lalbeharie

Executive Director, EdTech Hub

EdTech Hub

EdTech Hub empowers decision-makers by providing the rigorous evidence necessary to make informed decisions about technology in education.

THE WORK OF EDTECH HUB

EdTech Hub is a global research partnership. Our goal is to empower people by giving them the evidence they need to make decisions about technology in education.

Our approach is the intentional layering of rigorous academic and applied research (real-world testing through sandboxes) as well as high-touch and just-in-time technical assistance. Forging meaningful global and national partnerships that strengthen and deepen our work to deliver global public goods is a core value and embedded across all we do.

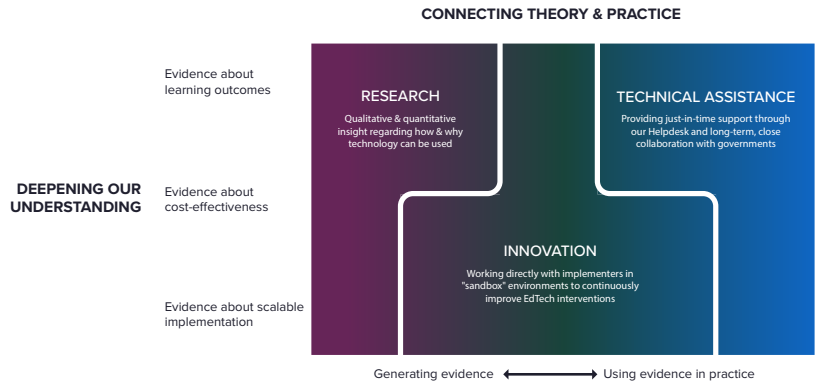
OUR FOCUS

We focus our work around five topic areas, with in-depth work in six focus countries.

FIVE TOPIC AREAS

- Digital Personalised Learning (DPL)
- Teacher Continuous Professional Development (TCPD)
- Data for Decisions
- Participation & Messaging
- Girls' Education & Technology

SIX FOCUS COUNTRIES



EDTECH HUB: **2021 TAKE-AWAYS**

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EdTech questions from decision makers are evolving. During the second year of the pandemic, there is still demand for evidence, examples, and support on EdTech. However, our Helpdesk team (which responds to FCDO Education Advisers, UNICEF, and World Bank staff requests for short-term, discrete support) noted that questions from the field are trending upwards in their sophistication. Instead of "How do we create a digital platform?" it is "How do we make our digital learning content engaging and interactive to support learners?" Instead of "Help! How do we do multimodal distance learning to reach as many kids as possible?" it is "How do we build multimodal learning into our systems to ensure long-term sustainability as the pandemic continues to evolve?"

There is renewed interest in EdTech/digital learning strategies. "Triage" was the watchword of 2020. But in 2021, we are seeing a strong trend toward countries wanting to (and being able to) step back and think with deliberation. Countries want to develop strategies, roadmaps, and plans to consolidate what they are already doing, look ahead to the future, and/or react to the current situation. When considering what makes a strong strategy, there are major questions at play around data availability, standalone or integrated platforms, enabling conditions, stakeholder engagement, and ensuring equity. In 2022, we will summarise existing research and resources, and build upon the experience of Hub teams and partners currently working alongside government partners, to tease out the answers to these and other questions, and provide guidance to those making or reviewing EdTech strategies.

Our applied research ("sandbox") methodology can be self-scaling. We launched six sandboxes in 2020 as part of our rapid response to Covid-19. All six were completed by March 2021. But partners were not so ready to let go, expressing interest in running their own sandboxes. Of the sandbox participants, 82% said they'd continue using our tools and methods, including our Kenya partners who have continued working in the iterative sandbox format. More than 100 people have also viewed our "Sandbox Handbook." In 2021, we'll be exploring ways to increase our potential impact, enabling others to set up and run their own sandboxes with less EdTech Hub support.

Opportunity-based (vs. financially based) partnerships have expansive value. When a partnership is about finding cross-donor synergies and leveraging opportunities without direct funding attached, we can "unlock" the availability of resources for a new audience, expanding its impact. For example, we are now able to offer TA from Neil Butcher and Associates (NBA, a South African organization) to our

focus countries. NBA's work is underwritten by a third party (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation), and our partnership amplifies their investment's reach. We are also developing plans to work with existing communities and networks of EdTech entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa to make use of the course within their communities. The Global Partnership for Education is being brought into our new Helpdesk work on developing guidance for national ICT in education strategies. The value of these (and all) partnerships is best expressed not in finances, but in opportunities for expansion beyond any one funder's scope.

Wrap-around service is where intervention will sink or swim. Sometimes a trend is about doubling down on what you know. Our work in 2021 has demonstrated, once again, that investing time and resources into testing assumptions at every stage before jumping to intervention is core to effective implementation. End evaluation is not enough. Many of our sandboxes have explored the territory of how to fit a proven model or software into an education system. In our sandbox with onebillion in Malawi we tested whether personalised learning tablets should be 1) embedded into the classroom, 2) in-school but outside usual classes, or 3) at home. Meanwhile in Tanzania, we found that teachers might struggle to find time to engage with the new Teacher Professional Development model alongside their existing commitments. As a result of findings like these our partners are able to make evidence-informed decisions on the design of their interventions, thinking beyond the technology but taking into account all parts of the system.

Our geographic focus is yielding new partnerships. We defined our focus countries of Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania in 2020. In 2021, EdTech Hub committed to having a local presence and leadership in all six countries, and we are now leveraging the opportunities that come with that commitment. Many organisations (funders or otherwise) have a specific geographic focus that can accelerate partnership because there is more immediate clarity of opportunity and impact. We saw this play out for EdTech Hub with our work in Tanzania, where a multi-donor funded comprehensive education system reform effort offers a large opportunity for impact. FCDO Tanzania was able to find, in EdTech Hub, a partner capable of bringing not only technical assistance but also research and applied research capacity, all connected to global evidence and experts. EdTech Hub's engagement will influence a nation-wide teacher professional development programme.

Our efficient delivery models allow for depth and expansion of work when new funds are introduced. New funding can often steer a programme in directions that dilute or distract from the mission. In 2021, EdTech Hub was able to grow our work and impact while remaining true to our goal and approach because of our highly effective and efficient Helpdesk delivery model. The EdTech Hub Helpdesk offers just-in-time support to FCDO Education Advisers, World Bank staff and UNICEF staff for 70 countries. Our new partnership with UNICEF has allowed us to expand our Helpdesk model to all seven regions of the world, deepen our bench of experts in the Specialist Network, and now provide access to evidence-based advice to three of the agencies most influential at the country level (the World Bank, FCDO, and UNICEF). This kind of rapid and strategy-aligned expansion is a blueprint for future funding.

The human connection is key to successful innovation. There can be no innovation without considering the human beings that make it possible. Going into the second year of curtailed human interaction, 2021 has demonstrated how important it is to our work to take time to build relationships, understand one another, and establish the psychological safety to enable earnest collaboration. Through the sandbox community we've seen how much support implementers can offer one another. In "A Festival of Voices" — a sandbox community event to share learnings from the 2021 work — a sandbox community member said, "I think the best part for me has been working with all of you where there's openness to share."

STORY OF CHANGE

Researchers Respond to Covid-19 Evidence Gap through BETER

Founded in 2020 in partnership with Digital Pathways to help coordinate a research response to Covid-19, BETER (Building EdTech Evidence and Research) is a working group of 52 researchers from influential organisations undertaking or providing funding for research about EdTech in low- and middle-income countries. BETER met monthly for a robust exchange of ideas, bringing researchers together who might otherwise not have the opportunity to have a dialog about findings, trends and opportunities.

As a result of these convenings, gaps in the evidence on Covid-19 and EdTech emerged, and two subgroups were formed and led by EdTech Hub around the mapping of Covid-19 research and the alignment and mapping of the Covid-19 surveys. Evidence from both subgroups was published as global public goods and created global research collaborations.

RESEARCH MAPPING SUBGROUP

"Inequalities in Girls' Learning Opportunities via EdTech: Addressing the Challenge of Covid-19"

"Learning with technology during emergencies: A systematic review of K-12 education"

"Support provided for K-12 teachers teaching remotely with technology during emergencies: A systematic review"

"Inequalities in Girls' Learning Opportunities via EdTech: Addressing the Challenge of Covid-19"

"EdTech and Emergency Remote Learning: A Systematic Review"

"Making visible" inequity: Remote learning with technology during Covid-19"

SURVEY MAPPING SUBGROUP

"Covid-19, EdTech, and Survey Alignment in Education"

In a BETER evaluation survey, 90 percent of members indicated the material covered inthe monthly meetings was of value to their ongoing research. BETER is currently debating its next evolution for 2022.

2021 BY THE NUMBERS

81
knowledge products produced

42%
of knowledge products produced jointly with partners

40%
of knowledge products created with leadership from LMICs

32
events where EdTech Hub presented

8
articles published in peer-reviewed journals

4,916
resources in our Evidence Library

195%
increase in EdTech Hub email audience

50
collaborative engagements in technical assistance, Helpdesk and Sandboxes

100%
of partners report receiving quality advice

5
events hosted by EdTech Hub

37%
increase in web views

5
of the top 10 countries visiting EdTechHub.org are from LMICs

RESEARCH THAT RESONATES: **THE EDTECH HUB RESEARCH PORTFOLIO**

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The £5.3 million EdTech Hub research portfolio represents the largest public-private investment in primary research around EdTech evidence in low- and middle-income countries to date. The portfolio was commissioned to fill the evidence gap decision makers grapple with when choosing edtech implementations to support children, teachers and school communities.

A call for expressions of interest was issued in Summer 2021 and 104 proposals were received. EdTech Hub, with external review provided by experts in the field, selected 13 studies for the current portfolio. Additionally, £1.2 million in on-the-ground "sandbox" trials will complement select studies in the portfolio, offering real-time evidence and feedback.

This academic and applied research is being conducted by and in partnership with more than 20 institutions, including universities, nonprofits and foundations, private enterprises and governments. The portfolio is in addition to the £200,000 in grants EdTech Hub awarded to 10 partner organisations in early 2021 to conduct edtech research in response to Covid-19.

Using EdTech Hub's local reach capabilities, studies will be conducted in all our focus countries, with the majority in Kenya and Bangladesh and with Teacher Continuous Professional Development as the topic area with the most concentration of research activity, followed by Digital Personalised Learning.

The research portfolio is designed to address some of the most pressing topics in edtech today including questions like:

- "How does providing intelligence on student learning and guidance on what to do with this information allow actors in the learning ecosystem to boost student learning? Does sharing this intelligence with school-based or home-based actors lead to higher gains? Can actors use test scores and their own knowledge of a child to select the optimal teaching response?" (Digital Personalised Learning in Pakistan)
- "How might governments in LMIC contexts employ GIS data for optimizing teacher deployment?" (Teacher Continuous Professional Development in Sierra Leone)
- "How can messaging be used in a cost-effective and contextually appropriate way to provide positive messaging about education and access to education and support returns to school, especially among girls and marginalised learners?" (Participation & Messaging in Ghana)

Studies will be conducted over the next two to three years, during which time there will be events via EdTech Hub channels for "learning out loud" including research methodologies and trending topics.

Bangladesh

Ghana

Kenya

Pakistan

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO AT-A-GLANCE

Digital Personalised Learning

"Designing for scale—understanding design principles and learning process for a personalised learning platform in Kenya" (Kenya)

"Digital personalised learning to improve numeracy outcomes in Kenyan primary school classrooms" (Kenya)

"Low-tech personalised learning to improve girls' education in Kenya"* (Kenya)

"Technology to Empower Actors Across the Learning Ecosystem"* (Pakistan)

"Low-tech remote education trials"* (Sierra Leone, Kenya)

Teacher Continuous Professional Development

"3Mpower—Mobile Learning for Empowerment of Marginalised Mathematics Educators" (Bangladesh)

"The impact of a tech-supported, school-based TCPD model on learning outcomes in Tanzania" (Tanzania)

Data for Decisions

"The impact of GIS-supported teacher allocation in Sierra Leone" (Sierra Leone)

"EdTech and education continuity in the wake of Covid-19: A comparative analysis of provision and policy" (Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Pakistan)

"Low-tech remote education trials"* (Sierra Leone, Kenya)

"Technology to Empower Actors Across the Learning Ecosystem"* (Pakistan)

Participation & Messaging

"Optimising messaging to promote returns to school in Ghana for marginalised learners" (Ghana)

"Low-tech remote education trials"* (Sierra Leone, Kenya)

"Raising readers—using technology to improve parent and caregiver engagement in literacy learning in Kenya" (Kenya)

* Indicates a study that spans multiple topic areas.

Sierra Leone

Tanzania

Girls' Education & Technology

"Cost-effective technology approaches to improve education outcomes for girls—learning from 41 Girls' Education Challenge projects" (Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania)

"Low-tech personalised learning to improve girls' education in Kenya"* (Kenya)

"Optimising messaging to promote returns to school in Ghana for marginalised learners"* (Ghana)

"Understanding the impact of edutainment on gender norms, socio-emotional and learning outcomes for girls" (Kenya, Tanzania)

RESEARCH PARTNERS TO DATE

Aga Khan University – East Africa

Booksmart

Busara Centre

Craft Education

EIDU

Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) at the Center for International Development at Harvard University

Fab, Inc.

Girls' Education Challenge

Global Book Alliance

Keep Kenya Learning

M-Shule

Oppia

The Education Commission

The Open University

United Republic of Tanzania Government

WERK

Worldreader

Young 1ove

* Indicates a study that spans multiple topic areas.

STORY OF CHANGE

20,000-Teacher Survey on Covid and Education Leads to In-Depth Tanzania Analysis

During the spring of 2021, T4 Education launched a survey to gather data on how educators experienced teaching in the Covid-19 pandemic. More than 20,000 teachers from 165 countries responded and T4 brought in Edtech Hub to provide an analysis of the survey data.

Using our analysis, T4 published a report on the results in September, and included a foreword by EdTech Hub Director of Research Sara Hennessy. The report, "Turning to technology: A global survey of teachers' responses to the Covid-19 pandemic", challenged assumptions about teachers and tech:

The most experienced teachers – those with 21–30 years teaching experience – used digital tools the most during the pandemic. They taught more classes online and deployed the most sophisticated and creative types of remote teaching than their "digital native" colleagues newer to the profession.

AND THIS SURPRISING TAKE-AWAY:

86% of teachers
considered that the experience of teaching during the pandemic had made them better teachers and

50% of teachers
are more enthusiastic about teaching

Prior to publication, EdTech Hub presented findings from the T4 survey data to the Asian Development Bank International Skills Forum on TPD in August.

While the survey provided breadth, our researchers wanted to go deeper. Specifically in Tanzania, a country that only had eight respondents to the global survey. EdTech Hub commissioned a data collection project in Tanzania using the same questions from the T4 survey, but deployed a different method of data collection. An on-the-ground team directly collected more than 700 teacher responses throughout Tanzania, including 42 responses from teachers with no access to the internet (creating a unique, albeit small, sub-group that the original survey did not reach). Twenty-two districts are represented, with 105 schools.

In 2022, as part of a teacher needs assessment for the TCPD study in Tanzania (one of the research portfolio studies), EdTech Hub will analyse and write a paper for journal publication on this hyper-specific data set, while also comparing it to the global findings. Additionally, the data will feed into the study "The impact of a tech-supported, school-based TCPD model on learning outcomes in Tanzania" led by Ed Tech Hub and its research partners at the University of Dar Es Salaam, as well as the Tanzania Institute of Education, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, and the Government of Tanzania.

COVID-19 AND THE FUTURE OF EDTECH

COVID-19 AND THE FUTURE OF EDTECH

The Covid-19 pandemic reshaped our world and, perhaps only second to our health systems, our education systems were the bellwether. Globally, schools closed or were disrupted, leading to 1.6 billion children and their teachers moving to remote education. Governments and other education providers were forced to respond quickly, and experiment about how best to reach all children.

EdTech Hub made the pivot so many others did to battle the ripple effects of Covid-19. In 2020, we opened a funding window for small-scale (up to £50k), short-term research into the use of EdTech in the Covid-19 response. There were 175 applicants to our call to build an evidence-base aligned with government priority areas and in our focus countries.

Ten studies were selected from research partners Beyond Peace, Busara, Education Development Trust, Fab Inc. Limited, IPA, Monash University, Participatory Development Associates Ltd., and Rising Academy Network, SDPI and T-TEL.

Throughout 2021, partners have carried out primary research on topics including: radio-based learning with girls in rural Kenya; remote teacher training and data systems in Sierra Leone; tech use to increase participation in Pakistan; and the use of text-message nudges to influence caregiver behaviour in Ghana.

The findings from the studies are already being used by governments in their ongoing response to Covid-19.

Teacher Continuous Professional Development

Partner: T-TEL

Publication: "T-TEL COVID-19 Impact Assessment Study" (Ghana)

Data for Decisions

Partner: Fab Inc. Limited

Publication: "Learning from experience: A post-Covid-19 data architecture for a resilient education data ecosystem in Sierra Leone" (Sierra Leone)

Participation & Messaging

Partner: Beyond Peace

Publication: "Integration of Technology in Education for Marginalised Children in an Urban Slum of Dhaka City During the Covid-19 Pandemic" (Bangladesh)

Partner: IPA

Publication: "Nudges to improve learning and gender parity: supporting parent engagement and Ghana's educational response to COVID-19 using mobile phones" (Ghana)

Partner: Monash University
Publication: "Impact of IRI based mobile lessons on educational outcomes of primary graders: a randomized controlled trial in rural Bangladesh" (Bangladesh)

Partner: Participatory Development Associates Ltd.
Publication: "Voices and Evidence from End-Users of the GLTV and GLRRP Remote Learning Programme in Ghana: Insights for inclusive policy and programming" (Ghana)

Partner: SDPI
Publication: "Investigating the Impact on Learning Outcomes Through the Use of EdTech During Covid-19: Evidence from an RCT in the Punjab province of Pakistan" (Pakistan)

Girls' Education & Technology

Partner: Busara
Publication: "Understanding Barriers to Girls' Access and Use of EdTech in Kenya During Covid-19"(Kenya)

Partner: Education Development Trust
Publication: "The Power of Girls' Reading Camps: Exploring the impact of radio lessons, peer learning and targeted paper-based resources on girls' remote learning in Kenya" (Kenya)

Partner: Rising Academy Network
Publication: "Dialling up Learning: Testing the Impact of Delivering Educational Content via Interactive Voice Response to Students and Teachers in Ghana" (Ghana)

STORY OF CHANGE

How A Small Database Grant Might Change the Face of Education in Sierra Leone and Beyond

A recipient of one of ten EdTech Hub Covid-19 research grants, Fab Inc., an international education advisory firm, created a data-for-decision-making platform for Sierra Leona that allows policy makers to explore and understand their education data in a simple visual way.

The grant funded the "really boring stuff", according to Fab Inc., founder Paul Atherton. But it was critical boring stuff; the transfer and translation of five country-wide annual school census (ASC) datasets (2015–2019) from disparate formats into one highly adaptable SQL (structured query language) dataset. The result of this heavy lift is an at-your-fingertips ability to explore year-on-year trends in Sierra Leone's education system and access data to answer nuanced questions for policy and investment on the fly.

For example, the data sets Fab Inc. collected covers the Ebola outbreak. By identifying what areas, post-Ebola, saw a decrease in, for example, girls' enrollment, the Government of Sierra Leone could extrapolate where they might need participation interventions as a result of Covid 19.

Using this new, integrated dataset, Fab Inc. has created a data visualisation resource that could position Sierra Leone as a leader in data-informed education policy, and the ripple effects are already being felt.

In July, Minister David Moinina Sengeh presented Fab Inc.'s work at the Global Education Summit, and the President and Minister intend to unveil the system nationally at the upcoming launch of the 2020 Annual School Census report.

In November, Fab Inc's work on data mapping in Sierra Leone was referenced by an FCDO education advisor at the Tanzania Joint Education Sector Review.

Significantly, the Ministry Of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation plan to integrate the output into Sierra Leone's Education Data Hub. And MBSSE intends to use the data architecture as the basis for a new GPE-funded programme that aims to strengthen data management systems in Sierra Leone.

EdTech Hub's Sierra Leone country lead Chris McBurnie said of the potential applications of this data, "One of the biggest challenges is data duplication and fragmentation. You have different ministry units collecting the same data and not talking."

Indeed, a data mapping study conducted by EdTech Hub identified 17 data collection programmes across 11 government directorates and units with at least 5 different funding sources. The proliferation of data systems stems in part from a perceived need to collect data to verify the accuracy of information from other sources. But that good intention results in duplication of effort. Nine different entities collect or handle data on teacher background, nine on student enrollment, seven on teacher payroll data, and three on lesson observation data.

McBurnie was curious about how the government would use this data, so he met with the payroll lead at the ministry of finance. They described a situation where they lacked teacher registration data, which another department had but payroll did not. When they had to allocate funding to hire a specific number of teachers with specific

CONT'D

qualifications, they did not have the data to inform that decision. Or rather, they didn't know that they could have it.

"So we just sent it over," said McBurnie. "That's tens of thousands of teachers that they now have this data on to get teachers paid or to get students the right teachers in place. It's coordination that makes a huge difference in the sector."

Ultimately, if we comprehensively **map the supply of and demand for education data** in Sierra Leone then we can use this mapping as a foundation **to develop a consolidated system** to link different data sources and reduce fragmentation and waste. If that happens, decision-makers have access to a **'single source of truth' to inform the design of policies and programmes** to support learners. In Sierra Leone, that has the potential to have ramifications on 11,168 schools, 82,779 teachers, and 2.65 million students.

EdTech Hub will continue research on this topic in 2022 in partnership with Fab, Inc. and the Education Workforce Initiative for the research portfolio study on data for decisions in Sierra Leone.

STORY OF CHANGE

Listening to Caregiver Concerns in Kenya

When Covid-19 necessitated a pivot to rapid turn-arounds of evidence, EdTech Hub shortened its timeframes for applied research and got to work. In the case of our sandbox partnership with Keep Kenya Learning (KKL), the result of asking small questions may now impact millions of learners.

KKL is a consortium of EdTech providers and community organizations in Kenya who sought to address Covid-19-disrupted learning by sending education resources directly to parents. While KKL's core idea had huge potential for impact, as a sandbox partner, EdTech Hub encouraged them to take a broader look at the challenge they faced.

"We needed to step back and answer some basic questions of can parents support learning at home," said Daniel Plaut, EdTech Hub Innovation Learning Lead. "Instead of simply sharing content, let's first talk to parents and understand if they are able, willing, interested, motivated, and confident in the role they can play in helping their kids learn."

Leveraging a £50,000-grant and guidance from the EdTech Hub sandbox team, KKL gathered input from caregivers from four different communities on learning at home, and designed and piloted a caregiver engagement model consisting of community-based meetings, an SMS campaign on the importance of learning at home, and digital literacy training on how to access existing resources from the EdTech providers.

Piloted with over 300 caregivers, this model not only led to better understanding of how to reach out to effectively connect caregivers to resources, but the findings served as a bridge to connect KKL with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development to adapt, in partnership, their own caregiver outreach and engagement guide. They have taken the guide to Kenya's National Caregivers Association to test the caregiver engagement strategies at scale throughout the country.

POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

In 2021 EdTech Hub rapidly increased our partnership efforts to amplify our own and others' work. Take a look at our EdTech Hub logo. Notice how "Hub" is presented as an exponent of "EdTech." It symbolizes how we think about partnerships: For every activity we do, we consider what kind of partnerships could we build around it to exponentially increase its potential for impact.

When we activate our "partnerships" mindset, we see our reach, depth, and sustainability of our impact expand:

Our course for EdTech Entrepreneurs: our initial work is focused on curating high-quality content to create the course. This is a necessary but insufficient activity if we aim to change the ways EdTech entrepreneurs in Africa design their products. Now, we are developing partnerships to embed the course content into their fellowships, incubators, and peer-support programmes.

Alternatively, when we look at activities others are doing that are aligned with our strategy, we consider how we can amplify their impact.

Neil Butcher and Associates (NBA) is a South African organization that has been working across Africa for two decades to support research and implementation of initiatives related to open educational resources (OER) and digital competencies. NBA has an Open Licensing and Early Literacy Research Grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation through which it explores both the potential and risks for open licensing in low- and middle-income countries. As an outcome of a policy dialogue that NBA and EdTech Hub co-hosted with the mEducation Alliance and the Education Commission, NBA and EdTech Hub have decided to partner. NBA will be providing its expertise on OER (resourced by the Hewlett Foundation) to government partners in EdTech Hub focus countries. We will facilitate the connection between NBA and government counterparts whom we know will benefit from OER-related technical assistance. NBA will benefit from the relationships EdTech Hub has developed in ministries and our knowledge of government priorities. Lastly, our focus countries will receive additional TA we wouldn't have been able to provide.

It is through these types of partnerships, which allow EdTech Hub and our partners to unlock impact for each other, that we aim to make transformational strides in how evidence is applied to EdTech in the coming years.

STORY OF CHANGE

EDTECH EXECUTIVE EDUCATION COURSE CHALLENGES POLICY MAKERS TO CREATE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

As part of a partnership with the Blavatnik School of Government (BSG) and Digital Pathways, in 20221 EdTech Hub funded BSG to run a two-week course with targeted policy makers in low- and middle-income countries to strengthen their evidence-based decision making on EdTech.

Twenty-nine senior policy makers were selected from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Tanzania for the executive education course, Governing Digital Transformation: Improving Outcomes in Education Systems. Participants represented various departments of education, ICT, finance, planning, or offices of the prime minister or president. The through-line between all participants was that they each had to have singular capacity to create digital transformation within their networks.

The sessions in the course were tailored to the challenges the policy makers were facing, and explored different factors that need to be in place for EdTech to improve learning outcomes and for EdTech reforms to be implemented successfully. The programme was designed to span two non-consecutive weeks (April 19-22 and June 28-July 2, 202), for a deliberate means to an end.

“We wanted to enable the participants with skills to lead digital change,” said Noran Fouad, a cyber security postdoctoral researcher at Oxford University whom EdTech Hub selected to coordinate the course. “We gave them a task in April and asked them to try and change something in the time between. Then come back and tell us in June how it went. It was a fascinating way to track the impact of the programme.”

Knowing that there is only so much change one can bring about in six weeks, participants were encouraged to consider how education can be impacted by a variety of factors: use of government services, procurement, data privacy in education and cyber security, AI bias, and more. EdTech Hub senior members Vicky Collis and Tom Kaye, along with partners including Rachel Hinton (FCDO), Elisabeth Stuart (Digital Pathways), and Mike Trucano (World Bank), served as session leaders and presenters.

So how useful was the course in affecting decision-making? The results were as unique as the situations each participant was trying to address:

(The following actions are unattributed to protect the confidentiality of the participants’ work)

- Introduction of a new blended learning approach that is already being approved by the minister of education;
- Launching a pilot to work with community radio and TV stations to disseminate education lessons;
- Creation of an executive dashboard accessible for all stakeholders to track program delivery;
- Preparation of an analytic framework of a failed project, based on the tools they learned from the session, to rethink how it can be done differently in the future;
- Drafting of education priorities for the country in advance of a donor meeting to support funding requests.

Participants of the course will reunite in 2022 to touch base on the implementation of learnings, on-going challenges, and discuss on-going support.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021

FEBRUARY

EdTech Hub launches a call for expressions of interest for at-scale research proposals, which ultimately received more than 100 proposals.

MARCH

More than 200 people attend "EdTech and Covid-19" event featuring education leaders reflecting on a year of EdTech and Covid-19, and the lessons learned for the future.

APRIL

EdTech Hub partners with Digital Pathways on a two-week (April and June) Executive Education course at Blavatnik School of Government, leading digital transformation sessions with 29 targeted policy makers from nine LMICs.

MAY

Building off 2020 work with eLearning Africa to survey more than 1600 people from 52 African countries to understand perspectives of those working in EdTech and how they view the pandemic, EdTech Hub publishes "Covid-19 and EdTech in Africa: A Country-Level Review Based on eLearning Africa Data."

JUNE

EdTechTools launches in partnership with GenU, UNESCO and UNESCO-UNEVOC and now includes nearly 200 distance-learning and skilling platforms and tools.

The Sandbox Handbook and position paper is published, providing an open source guide for EdTech implementers to use the applied research methodology to test and innovate on their own scale and timeline.

CONT'D

JULY

EdTech Hub hosts "Implementing EdTech: a Festival of Voices"with co-hosts from sandbox partners to share lessons learned and set the stage for self-supported applied research.

EdTech Hub co-hosts two GPE side events at the Global Education Summit—one with UNICEF and the World Bank on technology's role in addressing education challenges with 261 people in attendance; the other with the Government of Kenya and KPMG focused on supporting learning continuity in Kenya since the onset of COVID-19--sparking follow-up conversations on collaboration with ministries and governments.

AUGUST

Verna Lalbeharie joins as EdTech Hub's first executive director.

Edtech Hub starts work on £850,000-grant from FCDO Tanzania Office to fund technical assistance, applied research in the form of sandboxes, and dedicated in-country staff support.

SEPTEMBER

UNICEF partnership begins, supporting Helpdesk requests and technical assistance, and growing EdTech Hub's global presence with the inclusion of all seven UNICEF regions in eligibility for Helpdesk support.

EdTech Hub provides a response to Concept Note for 2023 GEM Report on Technology and Education at UKFIET, highlighting the importants of building evidence for technology in a post-pandemic world.

CONT'D

SEPTEMBER (CONTINUED)

EdTech Hub presents at mEducation Alliance's virtual symposium, leading three research sessions and a policy dialog for 591 registered participants, and 145 presenters representing 38 countries.

T4 Education's report on teachers' use of technology during Covid-19 is published using the analysis by EdTech Hub of 20,000 teacher survey responses.

OCTOBER

Launch of new public good design project—a course for EdTech entrepreneurs on how to bring evidence and learning science to product development.

NOVEMBER

Eight of 10 EdTech Hub-funded partner studies on EdTech trends during pandemic are published.

DECEMBER

EdTech Hub finalizes our £5.3 million research portfolio to advance rigorous edtech evidence in low- and middle-income countries.

Three sandboxes are "live" in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zanzibar.

Last country lead installed, completing our build-out of in-country team capacity in all six focus countries.

EdTech Hub

For more evidence that empowers visit EdTechHub.org

EdTech Hub is a global research partnership supported by the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, **FCDO**, **UNICEF** and **World Bank**.

Our core partners are **Brink**, **Cambridge University**, **Jigsaw**, **Open Development & Education**, **Overseas Development Institute**, and **Results for Development**.

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