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DIGITAL LANDSCAPE REVIEW WEBINAR

WHAT ARE THE APPROACHES/PLANS FOR TRANSITION TO DIGITAL LEARNING BEYOND ACCESS AND PHYSICAL DEVICES; FOR EXAMPLE, CONTENT CREATION AND FACULTY TRAINING TO UTILIZE ALL THE AVAILABLE TOOLS TO REACH ALL LEARNING STYLES AND FACILITATE INCLUSIVE LEARNING?

To transition to digital learning, adequate financial resources need to be allocated for learning/educational content creation, upskilling of teachers/facilitators (in technological literacy and pedagogical knowledge), building policy and institutional capacity, and supporting data, analytics, and research on the design and implementation of digital learning solutions (Yao, et. al., 2021). The [UNICEF Policy Brief on "How Much Does Universal Digital Learning Cost"](#) and the "[Toolkit for Designing a Comprehensive Distance Learning Strategy](#)" (specifically, Component 2: Design a Distance Learning Approach and Component 4: Create a Budget) are great resources for understanding how to plan for transition to digital learning.

IN WHAT CASES ARE INVESTMENTS IN DIGITAL LEARNING SMARTER THAN OTHER INVESTMENTS IN TEACHERS/CLASSROOMS?

This question depends on how digital learning is being used and the age/grade of the learners, teacher capacity, and the level of resources available. If resources are limited, investment in teachers and ensuring they have the skills to teach effectively must be given priority. After all, if teachers do not have adequate content and pedagogical knowledge and they are not prepared and trained well then even the latest devices won't help supplement or complement teaching and learning.

Factors such as student grade levels, teachers' pedagogical skills, technological literacy, etc. should be considered before making investments in digital learning. For example, for secondary schools or universities, digital learning could be a sound investment for primary or complementary instruction, as they can take charge of their learning, unlike primary school students. (To learn more about when distance or digital learning can be used, refer to "[Delivering Distance Learning in Emergencies.](#)")

Digital options can also help extend the classroom to nontraditional learners and reinforce learning. There is little research on whether or not digital learning can serve as an equivalent to in-person teaching and serve as an effective form of primary instruction in the Global South—so this is still to be seen. For additional insights, read "[What We Know About Educational Technology Effectiveness in Schools](#)" by Mary Burns.

HOW CAN DIGITAL LEARNING BE USED AS REMEDIATION TO HELP STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR INCONSISTENT SCHOOLING TO TRANSITION INTO MAINSTREAM PUBLIC EDUCATION?

As noted above, digital learning and education technology can serve as a way to supplement and complement teaching and learning. Assistive technologies (e.g., text to speech software) are tools that have been shown to be useful in helping students with learning difficulties and learning disabilities ([Abesi, et. al., 2015](#), [Lynch, 2020](#)).

While all three countries have policies advocating for people with disabilities and students with special needs, there are only limited initiatives in making content more accessible and assistive technologies more readily available for those in need. Based on the research conducted for the "Digital Landscape Review", there are two initiatives in Kenya that seek to help students with learning difficulties. One is inAble, a non-profit organization that serves learners with low vision and provides them with assistive technology computer skills training and the other is a partnership that the government of Kenya had with UNICEF to pilot accessible digital textbooks for first graders. While programs like these are noteworthy, more needs to be done to increase access and lower barriers for students with learning difficulties and inconsistent schooling (such as the 10.5M Nigerian children and youth who are out of school (UNICEF, 2022) to transition into or re-enter mainstream public education.

The sections on Mobile Phone and Online Teaching and Learning in the "[Delivering Distance Learning in Emergencies](#)" provide details on equity factors (e.g. disability) and things to consider as well as examples of accessible digital learning programs.

HOW CAN INFORMAL DIGITAL LEARNING (PARTICULARLY AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL OR WITH PARENTS) SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES?

Informal digital learning of community members and parents can help them have the means and technological know-how to access online resources (e.g., additional worksheets, educational videos, etc.) to support their children's learning. That said, there is a need for more structured digital literacy programming for parents and caregivers to equip them with sufficient digital literacy and digital safety skills to discern misinformation from factual information that is age and culturally appropriate. Given that most households in low to middle-income countries have very limited access to devices, encouraging parents to set aside time for their children to be online to access educational digital content is also important.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT LOCAL SYSTEMS MAPPING WOULD AID THE INITIATIVE? WOULD IT NEED TO BE UPDATED ON A REGULAR BASIS?

Yes, local systems mapping that maps the existence and use of infrastructure, and also maps, initiatives, tools, and organizations/providers of digital services and programs can help inform the design of digital education programs. This allows you to build off of existing systems, skills, and tools. Technology and initiatives are constantly evolving so updating this mapping routinely will be important. It is useful to keep track of news (e.g., investment and business-related news) and reports such as those published by GSMA and the World Bank in order to update data regularly. For example, just last February 2022, it was announced that Orange, [Sonatel](#), and SES will deploy a new technology that will make the internet faster and more accessible to a larger portion of Senegal's population.