[Press release: UK aid funds world's biggest educational technology research project](#)

UK aid is joining forces with British universities, researchers and education experts from around the world to create the largest ever education technology research and innovation project.

More than 380 million children worldwide will finish primary schools without being able to read or do basic maths.

One of the major challenges for education technology in parts of Africa and Asia is that while governments and schools buy hardware such as laptops and tablets, there are not many opportunities for teachers to learn how to use the technology to support children's learning, the technology is not in the right language or schools can't maintain or replace the technology.

The new UK aid supported Education Technology (EdTech) hub is bringing together British universities, research companies and education experts to help children, teachers and governments in developing countries get up to speed with the new technology in their classrooms.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is working with the World Bank on the EdTech hub, which aims to create the largest global body of research that looks at how education technology is being used and how this can be improved.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

> Educational technology can transform how children learn, but in many developing countries it is often only available in the wrong language or schools do not have the right tools to keep their software in working order.
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> That's why UK aid is supporting the creation of the EdTech hub to help millions more children receive the quality education they deserve and reach their full potential.
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> For the first time there will be a substantial amount of practical research available to help teachers and governments around the world choose the right technology for their classrooms.

Senior Director for Education at the World Bank, Jaime Saavedra, said:

> Today over half of children in the world are not learning. How can we separate the hope from the hype in harnessing the disruptive

power of new technologies to tackle this global learning crisis?

That is the question that the EdTech hub seeks to answer. The World Bank is pleased to participate in this exciting and potentially game-changing initiative.

The EdTech hub, which will run for eight years, is made up of the University of Cambridge, the Overseas Development Institute, Results for Development, Brink, Jigsaw, Open Development and Education, INJINI, Afrilabs, e-Learning Africa and BRAC.

Expertise from the University of Cambridge will oversee a stream of rigorous research, meanwhile British technology company Brink, will scale promising technology ideas with governments and educators.

Dr Sara Hennessy, from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge said:

This huge investment and sustained commitment by DFID and partners to improving the educational opportunities for disadvantaged children in key low income regions is extremely welcome.

The University of Cambridge is very pleased to be involved in this pivotally important research programme. Technology use has to be adapted to the cultural context and one-size-fits-all solutions simply don't work. Rather than hoping for the best, we have to carefully review and iterate, generating insights from rigorous research and applying them in practice.

UK aid is already being used to find innovative ways to address the global learning crisis through education technology.

A maths app developed as part of a programme by tech company onebillion and funded by UK aid, is being used in schools in Malawi and the UK to help provide a better education for children. Research has shown attainment of children who used the app was 45% higher for maths and 100% higher for reading.

The new EdTech hub will look at how innovations like onebillion and others can be evaluated, scaled-up and used across developing countries.

The EdTech hub will also:

- Provide evidence and research to help develop new technologies and digital tools for children to use, such as bespoke learning software that has the relevant language for the student.

- provide a global platform for sharing ideas and effective practice for technology companies, investors and decision makers

- Bring innovation to communities, classrooms and ministries with a team that will work directly with users to test and tailor technology.

- Offer technical assistance to help international governments who are keen to build up their knowledge and expertise on how to integrate digital education tools in their countries.

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Notes to editors:

- £20 million of UK aid will go towards the EdTech Hub.
- 50% million of this will go towards low-income-country-based research on EdTech
- 35% on research synthesis, dissemination and supporting governments
- 15% on innovation and horizon scanning
- The EdTech Hub will shortly commence hire of additional staff through global competition, including researcher positions at the University of Cambridge.
- Interested parties can visit https://edtechhub.org to register their details for updates

Programme director Susan Nicolai, senior research fellow at ODI, said:

Education is a fundamental right of every child and a key driver of global development. Yet shockingly, if current trends continue, by 2030 just one in ten children in the poorest countries will be on track to gain secondary-level skills.

Education technology, if better understood and used, can be a game changer in supporting learning for some of the poorest and excluded children and young people in the world. The EdTech Hub will connect learning, innovation and expertise to make that happen.

Dr Björn Haßler, Director of Open Development & Education, added:

The most disadvantaged children are often taught by teachers who themselves are disadvantaged, including the lack of educational opportunities. If we want to improve those children's lives, we also have to think about how to support those teachers.

This support cannot rely on the often poor and costly internet connections. Instead, we have to find smart ways of utilising what is available including digital and non-digital approaches.