Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event

Shaping the Future of Learning Now

21 September 2024, 13 – 14.15hrs, Conference Room 7, UN Secretariat

Organized by: Governments of Finland, Zambia, Italy, Ukraine, and UNICEF, with Google, Khan Academy, and OpenAI as partners.

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Over two-thirds of 10-year-olds in low and middle income countries cannot read a simple text, 250 million children are out-of-school, and 224 million in emergencies urgently need education support. These crises are deeply connected. Many children in emergencies are unable to go to school. Children drop out before acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy. And too many children are not learning even if they do attend school, increasing their chances of dropping out. Without immediate action, this will become a generational catastrophe. Innovative and bold solutions are needed to address this education poly-crisis, while considering the challenging realities for teachers and learners in low-resource contexts. Technologies like AI can play a game-changing role in bridging equity gaps and transforming education for all.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Learning poly-crisis: 250 million children out of school. Two-thirds of 10-year-olds are unable to read and understand a simple text. 224 million children are in emergency and conflict settings and need quality education support.
- Building the Schools of the Future: An inclusive, tech-enabled ecosystem where digital and physical schools coexist to support learning in all contexts, including emergencies.

- Leveraging Artificial Intelligence: AI has the potential to transform education through personalized and adaptive learning, and automating the creation of accessible and multilingual digital textbooks for children with and without disabilities.
- Unveiling the forthcoming launch of the EdTech for Good Framework: A guide for EdTech companies and governments to build and adopt safe, inclusive, and scalable products, and promote collaboration between the public and private sectors – soon to be launched by the UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub and its partners.
- Initiatives like the Global Digital Compact are essential for ensuring that the voices of countries in the Global South are heard and included in the global conversation shaping the world's digital future.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- AI can revolutionize education through tools that support and empower teachers, helping children acquire foundational literacy and numeracy, personalizing learning experiences, and bridging linguistic and accessibility barriers. While the costs of generative AI remain high for many countries, they are dropping rapidly. As AI continues to evolve, its potential to deliver more equitable, adaptive, and scalable educational solutions will only increase, offering unprecedented opportunities to transform learning environments globally.

- The need to move beyond traditional approaches to address persistent education challenges has never been more urgent. In today's rapidly evolving world, leveraging technology is not about using digital tools for their own sake, but about addressing the key pain points in education. By focusing on the challenges that hinder access, quality, and equity in learning, digital innovations can help create targeted solutions that ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed.

- Collaboration is essential to driving these advancements, and UNICEF's Global Learning Innovation Hub in Finland can play a pivotal role in uniting the public and private sectors around the shared goal of enhancing access to quality education. By prioritizing the most marginalized, we can ensure they are the first—not the last—to benefit from technological innovations.

Webpage to find more information:

- [UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub | UNICEF Digital Education](#)
- [EdTech for Good | UNICEF Digital Education](#)
- https://www.unicef.org/innovation/stories/shaping-future-learning-now-event