



Clear evidence, better decisions, more learning.

Summary Brief: Problem Analysis and Focus of EdTech Hub's Work

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Notes

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Hennessy, S., Jordan, K., Wagner, D.A., and EdTech Hub team (2021). *Problem Analysis and Focus of EdTech Hub's Work: Technology in Education in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*. Available at
<https://docs.edtechhub.org/lib/PBXBB7LF>.

Summary Brief: Problem Analysis and Focus of EdTech Hub's work

This brief summarises a position paper ([↑Hennessey, et al., 2021](#)) that situates the evidence-building work of EdTech Hub in relation to global challenges in education. There is growing evidence that appropriate and effective uses of EdTech have the potential to lead to improved learning outcomes in low- and middle-income countries ([↑Haßler, et al., 2020](#); [↑McEwan, 2015](#)), but sustainable and positive change at scale has largely proved elusive in practice. Much more needs to be done.

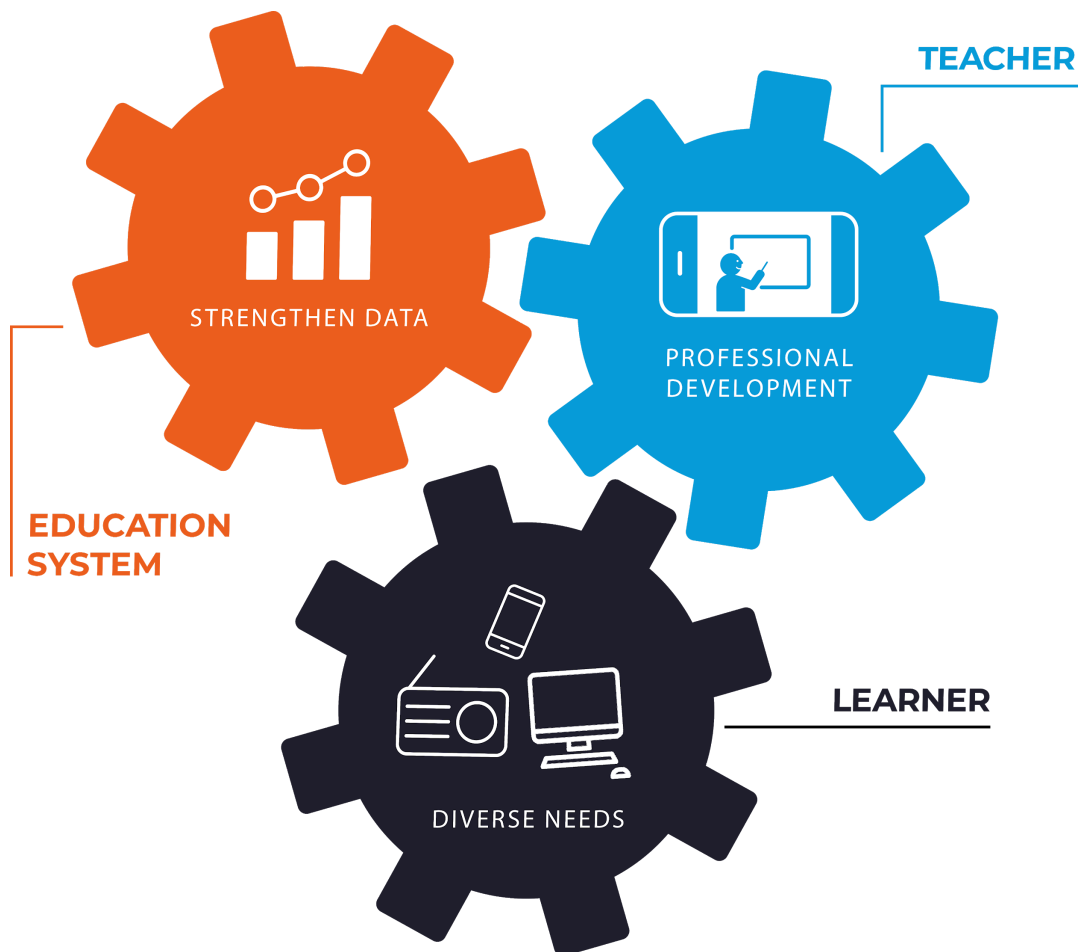
Why has EdTech not yet reached its potential?

1. **Existing research and evidence** are limited in rigour and accessibility.
2. **Current and new evidence** is often not applied to designing and implementing EdTech programmes with learning outcomes in mind.
3. **Lessons have not always been learned** from unsuccessful initiatives driven by the hype of new technology rather than robust evidence ([↑Wagner, 2018](#)).
4. **Technology in isolation changes little.** What is needed are improved and data-driven ways to reach learners, improve teaching, and understand the role of EdTech in a holistic and systemic approach.
5. **Reaching all learners requires context-specific and culturally responsive approaches** rather than one-size-fits-all.



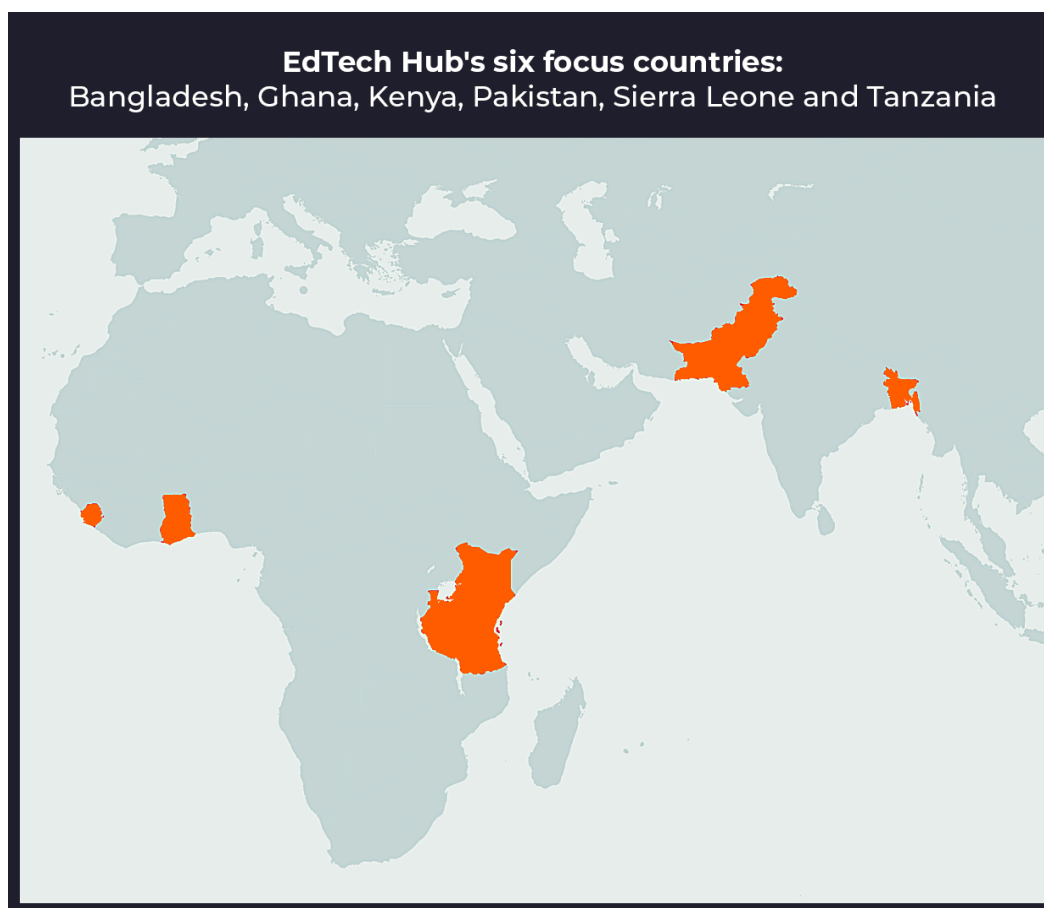
EdTech Hub's approach

EdTech Hub was established as a global research partnership that aims to empower multiple stakeholders at the community, national, and international levels by providing evidence needed to empower decision-making about technology in education.



The Hub conducts research on the interrelated themes of learners, teachers, and education systems that seek to innovate, scale, and sustain EdTech. The focus is on marginalised children and young people in low- and middle-income countries.

To target the impact and increase depth of understanding, the work will initially be concentrated in six countries, undertaking only a modest number of additional activities elsewhere.



The work targets some of the key areas where EdTech has high potential but limited evidence. Examples include:

Technology to support personalised learning	How can technology be used to maximise the effectiveness of personalised learning and teaching targeted at the learner's level?
Technology to support teacher professional development	How can technology be used to enhance teacher effectiveness through teacher professional development?
Technology to promote participation in school	How can technology such as positive messaging about education through SMS or video help to reduce the number of learners out of school?
Girls' education and technology	How can technology be used to maximise learning outcomes for girls?
Technology to strengthen data management	How can technology be used to increase the quality and use of data to improve learning and strengthen educational systems?

Across the Hub's work there are a number of additional cross-cutting issues:

How can specific literacy, numeracy, and socioemotional **learning outcomes** be strengthened through use of technology?

How can **equity for the most marginalised** — particularly girls, learners with special needs and disabilities, children affected by crises, and minority language learners — be improved through the use of technology?

How do **different educational contexts** shape the appropriate use of technology, especially with reference to factors of cultural specificity and political economy?

What are the most **cost-effective uses** of EdTech, and how can these be measured and compared?

How can effective EdTech interventions be supported to **scale and be sustainable**?

The Hub uses various tools and approaches in combination to build and apply the evidence base in its focus areas:



The Hub's approach to dissemination and uptake is guided by core principles of community building, multi-stakeholder engagement, and global open access to publications and resources.

Future directions

The frameworks introduced in this Summary Brief are intended to serve as a guide to the Hub's work of mapping the thematic areas related to learners, teachers, and systems that could benefit from the effective use of EdTech.

The Covid-19 pandemic and sudden school closures have amplified the role of EdTech in supporting teaching and learning globally. However, inequities will persist in the coming years, and the use of EdTech will no doubt be part of efforts to 'build back better'¹ – and more equitably.

The Hub hopes to work with and inform a variety of stakeholders, ranging from practitioners to policymakers, and to learn along the way from others in the sector. Inputs and partnerships are welcome as we move towards employing technology to improve quality and equitable education for all.

¹ Save Our Future. (2020). Averting an education catastrophe for the world's children. Save Our Future. <https://saveourfuture.world/white-paper/>