

THE EDTECH HUB

Research and Innovation to fulfil the potential of EdTech

≡ MENU

FIVE STARTING POINTS ON INNOVATION FOR THE EDTECH HUB

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As the Director of Innovation for the EdTech Hub, it is my great pleasure to introduce you to how we're building innovation into our work, with the aim of accelerating the scale of the best education technology... and showing others how to do the same.

If you haven't read them already, check out [Sara's post](#) on our approach to research and [Susan's overview](#) on the Hub's work as a whole.

While our research colleagues will be focussing on studying education programmes that have achieved scale to understand what works and why, we'll be investing those insights in proof-of-concept ideas, to get more good ideas to scale faster. We will do this by establishing EdTech Sandboxes.

A sandbox is a real-life location which is being used to experiment and test/refine a proposed product. This methodology is borrowed from the world of software development, designed to contain the experiments and prove value before scaling a validated idea. Similarly, we will measure, learn and adapt technology in line with what we learn by trialling it, first in one classroom, then one school, and eventually across entire education districts.

We know that the potential positive impact of technology requires more than just products, so we'll be testing and learning about pedagogy and teacher training.



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I want to use this first post to share a few principles behind how we're thinking about innovation and, most importantly, how we hope you'll be involved throughout.

1. OUR FOCUS IS ON INNOVATION, NOT JUST 'INNOVATORS'

We are, of course, interested in those who are working on promising technology ideas in education. We also know, however, focussing on a few bright spots here and there will limit our chances. That's why our overarching goal is to 'show others how'. Often, when people talk about innovation, what they really mean is 'an idea'. We think of innovation as 'a process' for taking the most potent ideas to scale. We believe that testing and learning about this process and sharing what we learn with the broadest group of people is where we have the greatest potential to unlock exponential possibilities for marginalised children.

2. THERE IS NO INNOVATION WITHOUT EXPERIMENTATION

We will be working for real — in the real world, with real people — systematically testing the potential of technology use for learning. We know that technology use typically delivers impact (or not) because of the context and environment within which it is implemented, so we'll be experimenting with things like policy, professional development, pedagogy and other factors surrounding the tech too. In each case we will extract assumptions, build, measure and learn in small, fast increments along with the makers, buyers and users of these products. We'll be writing more about experimentation and our approach to creating EdTech Sandboxes in future posts.

3. THERE WILL BE CALLS AND OPEN COMPETITIONS TO TAKE PART

If you are one of the many people working in education technology who has made contact in the past few weeks since the Hub was announced – thank you! Your well wishes, thoughts and ideas are all gratefully received. If you're working in an education district grappling with persistent challenges like teacher training, assessment, administration or if you're an entrepreneur with an idea that might address those challenges, there will be a great number of ways for you to be involved. For now, please tell us about yourself [here](#). Filling in this form will ensure we get in touch when opportunities come up.

4. KEEP AN EYE ON THE FUTURE, TODAY

Technology moves quickly, so it's crucial to be creating useful and actionable hypotheses. This means putting in place an ongoing



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imagining and hypothesising what a 3-5 year frame might offer in terms of challenges and opportunities. These concepts and possibilities about tomorrow will then be woven into our experiments, today.

5. COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE IS OUR BIGGEST ASSET — AND YOU ARE INVITED

We know that if we want to bend the curve of progress, we'll need to leverage the intellectual brilliance of as many of those working in education and technology as possible. We need you to join us as collaborators and critical friends in everything we do.

This collaboration starts now. In order for our work to have the biggest possible positive impact, we need a sharp focus on key challenges within the world of education. And to find our focus, we're crowd-sourcing insights and opinion through a range of consultations, expert interviews and working sessions at events like eLearning Africa.

Please shape our work by completing the following form online, it should take less than five minutes... or a bit closer to ten for those who are more contemplative.

For now, be sure to follow us on Twitter [@GlobalEdTechHub](#), [@HelloBrink](#), [@LeaSimpson](#) and [@byAliceCarter](#) for more EdTech Hub innovation as it unfolds.

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