Empowering children to learn

Education strategy

2021 - 2023

HEMPEL FOUNDATION

Introduction

For the past two decades, great advances have been made towards ensuring access to education for all children both boys and girls. But far too many children are attending school without ever achieving minimum proficiency in reading and writing which forms the basis for all subsequent learning.

Children who don't read by the age of 10 - or at the latest by the end of primary school - usually fail to master reading later in life and are poorly positioned for any subsequent training or education.

Learning poverty
To read is the basic empowering tool to learn. This widespread lack of ability to read and understand a simple text by the age of 10 is what the World Bank has defined as learning poverty, which undermines the ability of many least developed countries to end poverty and achieve a sustainable social and economic development.

Need for improvement
Even in a pre-Covid-19 scenario, this situation was unlikely to change significantly towards 2030, unless the quality of education is significantly improved and delivered at scale. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the education situation has been worsened and further investment in education is required.

Currently, 53 per cent of children in low- and middle-income countries cannot read and understand a simple story by the end of primary school and in the poorest countries, it is as high as almost 90 per cent.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Immediate and large-scale learning interventions are therefore needed to avoid that a generation of children in least developed countries grows up in learning poverty. This requires development and delivery of learning interventions focusing on effective approaches with a proven potential for delivering impact at scale.

EdTech

To enable impact at scale that significantly reduce learning poverty towards 2030, it is critical to unleash the potential of EdTech to support the delivery of quality education in the least developed countries.

Covid-19 has demonstrated both the potential of EdTech and its limitations as those that are most disadvantaged are the same that are not able to access the various forms of remote learning. The digital divide must be addressed providing equal access for boys and girls to EdTech solutions that can be applied both in and out of school supporting both teachers and students.

Given the short window between now and 2030 key stakeholders such as governments, multilaterals, foundations and INGOs must work together to coordinate and share best practice as well as bad.

Collective efforts

Only through the collective efforts of all key stakeholders within and across countries will it be possible to significantly reduce learning poverty. Enabling such collective efforts require convening key stakeholders to share new knowledge and raise awareness that can mobilize and sustain efforts towards combatting learning poverty.

LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

A country is classified as a 'least developed country' if it meets three criteria:

- Poverty
- Human resource weakness based on indicators of nutrition, health, education and adult literacy
- Economic vulnerability

Therefore, the Hempel Foundation will support a reduction of learning poverty in least developed countries by:

- Developing and delivering cost-efficient and scalable learning interventions with a proven potential for impact at scale.

- Unleashing the potential of EdTech supporting delivery of quality education, through high-risk / high-reward philanthropic investments.

- Catalysing collaboration, knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising that can mobilize and sustain efforts to combat learning poverty.

For the next 3 years, we plan to allocate $30 million to this strategy.

Our vision

All children should be empowered to learn.

Our mission

Through partnership and with a catalytic approach we support sustainable change by enabling children living in poverty to access quality education and achieve foundational learning.

Our role

We aspire to be a capable and leading development partner that explores innovative partnerships and alliances and whose operational excellence enables us to be a preferred foundation partner for collaboration within our thematic focus areas.

Our 2030 commitment
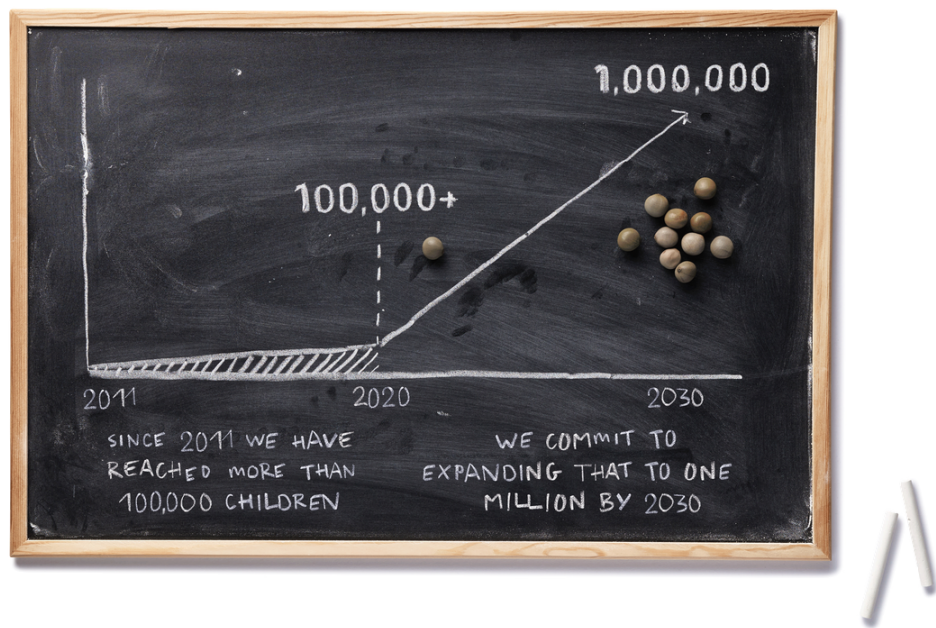
Catalyst for change
Only through the collective efforts of all key stakeholders within and across countries will it be possible to significantly reduce learning poverty before 2030. We believe our main contribution in reaching this goal, is when our support to learning interventions, EdTech or stakeholder collaboration, becomes a catalyst for a much larger impact beyond our direct reach.

But we also believe that our contribution should result in tangible and immediate learning outcomes for the children we reach directly through the projects and programs we support.

One million by 2030
To inspire others and to serve as an overarching goalpost for our work we have made a commitment to reach one million children by the end of 2030 with learning interventions that enable the achievement of foundational learning.

This commitment marks the scale of our ambition, but we will continue to be driven by quality and therefore hold ourselves accountable, not only to the number of children we reach, but also to the results we help deliver in terms of improving learning outcomes.

Unfolding our approach
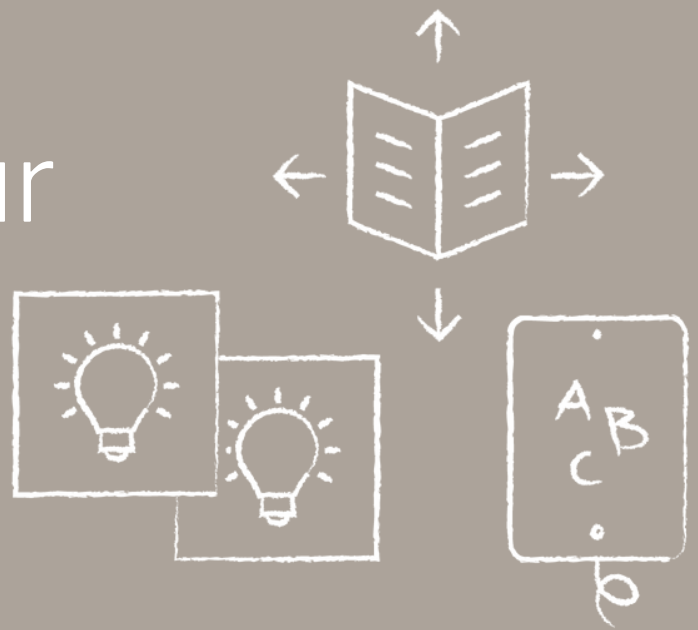
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Developing and delivering cost-efficient and scalable learning interventions with a proven potential for scale
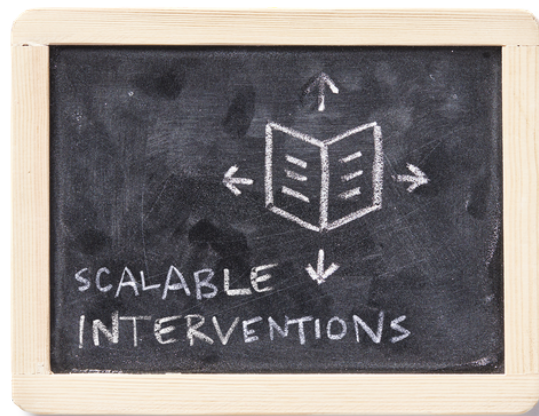
Why

A generation of children in the Least Developed Countries is at risk of growing up in learning poverty. To avoid this will require continued development and delivery of cost-effective learning interventions with a potential for improving learning outcomes for children in great numbers.

How

- We believe that the magnitude of the learning crisis requires a strong focus on interventions which are scalable, sustainable, aligned with education policies of countries and supportive of long-lasting systems change.

- We believe that because of huge problems with teacher absenteeism and lack of competence and pedagogic skills among teachers, it is necessary to motivate and capacitate teachers in the most effective teaching approaches such as structured pedagogical approaches.

- We believe that for any approach, method or model to work it needs to be contextualised and adapted to specific needs. But we also believe that there is potential for leapfrogging if best practices are shared, and investments are made in solutions with a demonstrated impact on foundational learning of children.

Therefore

The Hempel Foundation will partner with organisations to support interventions that align with our core beliefs and have a proven potential for improving learning outcomes at scale.

We look for interventions which are at a growth/expansion stage (some level of documented effect on learning outcomes but investments are needed for further development to make it scalable) or interventions which are ready to be tested at a larger scale before governments or institutional donors such as the World Bank will consider supporting a regional or national level scale.

Partners

We work in partnerships based on mutual trust, flexibility and a common commitment towards delivering high-quality results for children. We proactively identify partners and engage ourselves in project design as well as monitoring of implementation and evaluation to ensure high quality in all project cycles.

The organisations we work with range from global INGOs to large or medium size NGOs based in regions or countries where we work. We work with organisations that have high accounting and ethical standards (undergoing our due diligence) and have the potential and capacity for delivering at a larger scale.

2

Unleashing the potential of EdTech supporting delivery of quality education; through high-risk/high-reward philanthropic investments
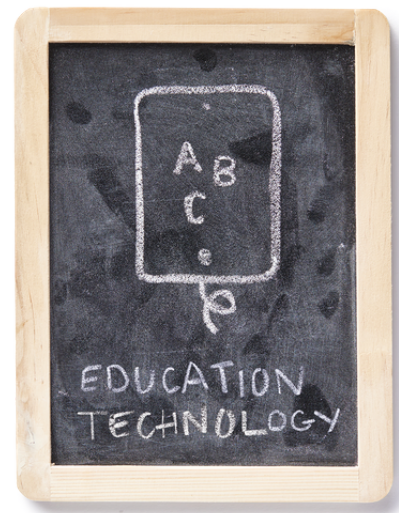
Why

There are multiple barriers to reducing learning poverty, but two of the main problems are poor data at systems and school level as well as a massive lack of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas. EdTech has the potential to significantly improve and increase the delivery of foundational learning through enhanced management at systems and school level as well as direct support to teachers and children.

How

- We believe that though investment in EdTech has been increasing, learning outcomes, as a result, have not changed considerably in the Least Developed Countries and much more attention must be directed towards how technology can enhance teaching and learning.

- We believe in a blended learning approach and that teachers must be empowered to use EdTech to engage students in learning. Teacher support and training in the use of remote learning technologies and adaptations to pedagogy are essential.

- We believe that EdTech (including radio, television, mobile, online) have the potential to leapfrog access to quality education for those that are most in need and are hardest to reach.

- We believe that great ideas and solutions are available but often fail to cross the "valley of death" and move from pilot to a proof of concept.

Therefore

The Hempel Foundation support EdTech solutions that align with our priorities and have a potential for improving learning outcomes at scale.

We focus on refinement and adaptation of solutions that require support at an early stage as well as at a growth/expansion stage (e.g., a solution with some level of documented effect at scale on learning outcomes but investments are needed to make it more scalable – cost-efficient).

Partners

The organisations we work with range from global INGOs to large or medium size NGOs based in regions or countries where we work. We also work with social enterprises, other foundations and alliances and networks with a more eco-system-based approach – supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in EdTech.

3

Catalysing collaboration, knowledge sharing and awareness-raising that mobilise and sustain efforts to combat Learning poverty

Why

There is a growing base of evidence around effective approaches and preconditions for the successful scaling of learning interventions, both with and without the use of EdTech. However, in many countries investments in education continue to be targeted at ineffective models.

It is also clear that to achieve long term sustainability, systemwide changes are required. To catalyse the expansion of best practice and effective approaches and systemwide reforms to support foundational learning, there is a need for continuous generation and sharing of new knowledge and raising awareness of the best solutions among key stakeholders such as governments, multilaterals, foundations, INGOs etc.

How

- We believe that the collective efforts of all key stakeholders within and across countries are necessary to significantly reduce learning poverty.

- We believe that collective efforts are enhanced through knowledge sharing and awareness-raising.

- We believe that convening and facilitation of high-level discussions can catalyse engagement and sustain efforts among key stakeholders committed to combatting learning poverty.

Therefore

The Hempel Foundation will work with partners to identify knowledge gaps and support convening and facilitation of gatherings, conferences and research or other activities to generate new knowledge, enable knowledge sharing and raise awareness of best practices as well as bad.

Through these activities we aim to be a catalyst for change so learning poverty is significantly reduced for current and future generations.

Who we aim to reach

**Children living in
least developed countries**
We focus our work on the world's least developed countries as defined by the United Nations and therefore particularly countries of Sub-Sahara Africa and South Asia.

Primary School
The backbone of life-long learning is the basic literacy, numeracy and writing skills that children are taught in primary school. Access to quality primary education is therefore instrumental for empowering children to learn, live and develop their potentials.

Children in rural areas
Children growing up in poor rural areas have few opportunities when it comes to making a better life for themselves through education. The gap between city and countryside remains high and we prioritize reaching a group of children that are often hard to reach.

Girls
Girls are still held back by a lack of educational opportunities in many countries and regions which holds back individual and societal progress. Across our work we promote equality, and we want to see our impact both directly for girls helped by our programs and indirectly through the impact girls and women have on their children by imparting key life skills. We hope to have a long-term impact by helping girls to leave behind a world that is better for their children, in part by changing their communities and the broader society in a positive direction.

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