Education & Life Skills

World Vision®

Spark a Child's Digital Future

Bringing digital access and education to children in Africa

World Vision and other humanitarian agencies have worked for years to improve education and reduce poverty. As a result, school enrolment in the developing world has vastly improved, yet primary school completion rates are still less than 50 per cent in many sub-Saharan countries. Even when children attend schools, the quality of education is often extremely low, and when schools successfully educate youth, there may be few jobs for them after graduation.

There are many reasons for this, including large classroom sizes, poor teacher training, few classroom materials and lack of training in skills needed for the 21st century. Yet there is reason for hope. New generations of education technology (ICT4E) and teacher training designed for the developing world are beginning to address these issues in a highly effective and cost efficient way. World Vision is thus embarking on a comprehensive multi-year effort to apply these proven technologies and training practices to strengthen teacher pedagogy and stakeholder engagement, leading to improved student learning and job readiness.

Education technology helps lead to improvements in student learning and life skills, including:

- Improving access to teaching and learning materials
- Delivering compelling, rich media that brings subjects to life
- Teaching at the pace of the learner
- Promoting 21st century pedagogy and lifelong learning
- Enabling skills including digital literacy, critical thinking and creativity

Jon Warren / World Vision

Receiving a digital education will give children - like these girls from Tanzania - the opportunity for better jobs, a brighter future, and ultimately, a thriving community.

Robert Coronado / World Vision

A child takes a lesson on a computer in a Tanzanian school. The Spark partnership will bring digital access and education to schools by building fully-equipped computer centres.

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Sparking innovation in child learning

In support of this approach, Microsoft, the British Council and Intel have stepped forward to help implement an innovative partnership called Spark a Child's Digital Future (SCDF). Each of these partners brings substantial and unique assets, including hardware, software, and experience implementing successful education technology programmes in developing countries.

SCDF creates systemic and nationally scalable education technology programmes with proven impacts on student learning. The programme does this by leveraging the resources and expertise of major technology and training partners. It involves the ministry of education at the national and local level, and utilises high quality, low-cost, low-power consuming technologies from partners. Students use the devices regularly, gaining 21st century skills.

The programme utilises advocacy, education technology, community engagement and teacher and administrator training to improve pedagogy and stakeholder engagement, leading to improved student learning, especially in core subjects:

- Early primary – early grade reading and numeracy
- Late primary – functional literacy and digital literacy
- Secondary and beyond – digital literacy, life skills and workforce readiness

We seek to achieve this by:

- Engaging key stakeholders in policy discussions, programme and training design, school selection criteria, and support requirements, including the Ministry of Education (MoE), politicians and power companies, helping ensure the programme has broad ownership, so it can rapidly scale.
- Each selected school must execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with World Vision, providing teacher time and a secure classroom with electrical power and furniture. Often it is the parents who provide the needed upgrades, increasing their engagement and ownership of the programme.
- Installing the computer hardware, digital content, and often Internet, aligned to programme goals and local infrastructure. The hardware generally includes 20-50 laptop computers, tablets or smartphones (with educational content appropriate to grade level and learning objectives), server, router, printer and projector.
- A comprehensive teacher and administrator training programme in coordination with the ministry of education, including the local ministry officials who normally monitor the school.
- Closely assessing teachers' use of technology and the impacts on student learning, and providing ongoing coaching.
- Ensuring a school and community maintenance or support plan is in place, including ensuring the computer lab is open for use in the evening for community members on a fee basis to support learning and economic development.

The first phase of the programme targets 15,000 youth in 50 primary schools in Kenya and Tanzania, focusing on functional literacy and digital literacy in late primary grades. World Vision has selected schools with the greatest need and capacity to implement the programme, in communities where World Vision has made a long-term commitments to sequentially address the most urgent needs—water, food, health—and where education is now deemed of utmost importance.

For more information about Spark a Child's Digital Future, please email Education and Life Skills at World Vision International: EdLS@wvi.org

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