

High Touch High Tech for All Global Consortium

Transforming learning to achieve equitable learning for all

Big idea

High Touch High Tech for All is a new global initiative that aims to deliver the vision of personalized learning for all students by combining the unique strengths of the teacher (High Touch) and the power of technology (High Tech). The technology provides adaptive content and assessment to develop students' foundational skills while the teacher cultivates students' higher-order skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and socio-emotional growth. As High Touch High Tech (HTHT) approaches address learners' individual needs, it has proved to be particularly beneficial for those furthest behind. We aim to build a global, multi-sectoral consortium focused on designing, testing, and scaling HTHT approaches around the world, with a particular focus on contexts with significant learning challenges.

Why now?

The world faces a global education crisis of dramatic proportions. Even before the global pandemic, 90% of all children in low-income countries couldn't read a simple text at age 10 and more than half of today's children and youth – 825 million – were projected to reach adulthood without the skills needed to thrive. Learning losses resulting from the pandemic have further exacerbated the education crisis and could cause this generation to lose up to \$10 trillion in future earnings. While education has been badly hit by the crisis, it is also the key driver of recovery. Education is at the heart of the sustainable development agenda and absolutely essential to create healthy, prosperous, sustainable, and peaceful societies.

Children around the world are not learning in part because their different learning needs are not being addressed. While technology has evolved rapidly in the last two decades, education has changed little over the past two centuries. The current classroom model, where teachers deliver standardized content in a uniform mass manner, cannot adapt to students' individual needs. **Evidence shows that personalized learning approaches, such as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), consistently improve learning outcomes.** These approaches tailor teaching and assessment to individual learning needs. Teaching at the right level, however, is not easy to achieve given resource constraints and the limited capacity of teachers who are generally tasked with large groups of students using standardized approaches. Technology could help facilitate more personalized instruction and achieve this at scale. Personalized (or adaptive) learning opens new frontiers in education. When powered by AI, it has the potential to, over time, **build a bold future of personalized learning for every child everywhere.**

Initial pilots have shown great promise. The work of leading adaptive learning firms such as Educational Initiatives and Whizz Education has had significant impact on numeracy and literacy outcomes. The Education Commission, in partnership with Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training and Arizona State University, developed a HTHT prototype that explored the role of teachers within an adaptive learning context which generated significant results after just one semester. **Students’ math test scores improved by an equivalent of two years of learning.** Furthermore, teachers gained familiarity with instructional technology and collaborated around student data, optimizing their ability to impact student learning and resulting in greater teacher satisfaction. In partnership with the Ministry, a potential forthcoming feasibility assessment in Vietnam will evaluate opportunities to scale the approach in rural schools. Further testing is also taking place in other contexts, including a partnership with Plan Ceibal, which is implementing an HTHT pilot in 25 schools in Uruguay.

What we’ll do

The pursuit of HTHT for All must be advanced strategically, swiftly, and with great intentionality. Against the reality of competing interests and priorities, however, the ecosystem – and the actors within it – tend to remain scattered in their disparate domains. **The purpose of the HTHT for All Global Consortium is to animate the ecosystem, enabling and leveraging the distinct strengths of each stakeholder to address bottlenecks and accelerate the scale-up of HTHT worldwide.**

The Consortium will facilitate collaboration, undertake and share research and evidence, and lead policy and advocacy work to address ecosystem needs. Consortium members will include teachers, school leaders, the education workforce, school associations, EdTech and network providers, multilateral organizations, research firms, non-profits and CSR initiatives, governments, universities, and global youth leaders. The Education Commission’s Asia Hub, based in Seoul, South Korea, has already launched a national consortium with 26 universities, eight EdTech companies, five cities, four schools, and two foundations, all secured in less than 10 months. Expertise from the Asia Hub will closely inform the development of the global consortium. The work of the HTHT for All Global Consortium will be done to catalyze the ecosystem in priority areas of evidence generation, in-country work, and global mobilization. The Consortium will facilitate and help empower its members to design, test, and scale the work.

ANALYZE: The Consortium will synthesize evidence and best-practice innovations that combine the use of technology with the transformation of how teachers teach.

Indicative milestones and results:

1. Review of robust evidence and best practices in adaptive learning as well as existing teaching and learning approaches and their efficacy

2. Research on High Touch approaches and how they might complement the High Tech component to produce a range of High Touch approaches that can be used as part of the overarching HTHT model
3. Analysis of ecosystem determinants that enable the feasibility of the HTHT approach

ACT: The Consortium will work with governments to assess the feasibility, test, and evaluate approaches in different contexts using a systems approach. It will assess the ecosystem for the introduction of HTHT at scale, including analysis of national policies, strategies, and the EdTech marketplace, and work with countries to develop individualized pathways to scale.

Indicative milestones and results:

1. By 2021, two HTHT projects initiated and underway: the HTHT pilot in Uruguay in partnership with Plan Ceibal and the HTHT feasibility assessment and pilot in Vietnam
2. By 2022, HTHT pilots in two additional (country) contexts, plus others initiated and implemented by Consortium members by 2022
3. By 2023, two additional HTHT country applications (e.g., pilots, feasibility assessments) implemented by Consortium members
4. By 2023, through pilots and feasibility assessments, the Consortium could reach up to 135 schools

AMPLIFY: The Consortium will facilitate global learning and action to drive adoption of HTHT approaches across contexts and influence organizations, donors, and the private sector to support continued testing and scaling to create enabling environments for HTHT. It will develop a global platform for stakeholders to share knowledge and insights, and for schools and EdTech providers to be matched in a marketplace. This will also allow Consortium members to connect and collaborate with each other to ideate HTHT-related projects. Recognizing the infrastructure challenges in low-income countries, intermediary steps to help enable digitization will be essential to ensure scale.

Indicative milestones and results:

1. By end of 2021, secure funding for the secretariat and implement initial learning and cross-pollination activities and establish the HTHT for All Global Consortium with 50-100 consortium members to start.
2. By end of 2021, begin developing a specialized group within the Consortium of the world's most innovative teacher colleges that will serve as adoption and test sites for HTHT for teacher training and help expand evidence generation.
3. By 2022, launch the convening platform (in-person and virtual components) to accelerate cross-pollination of knowledge, collective problem-solving for bottlenecks, and the creation of an efficient marketplace to broker relationships, including connecting EdTech vendors and educational institutions at scale.

4. By end of 2023, aim to implement HTHT in 6 different countries across at least 3 regions.

Is anyone already doing this?

While EdTech consortia are plentiful, what sets the HTHT for All Global Consortium apart is its specific focus on testing and scaling of the High Touch High Tech approach. Through human-centered design, there is deep understanding that teachers are a critical component in the overall transformation, as well as the power of adaptive technology to personalize learning for every child.

Win-win approach to learning transformation

In the first few years of operations, the Consortium aims to develop a targeted network of teacher colleges that can leverage the HTHT approach in their teacher education. These teacher colleges, as they adopt and learn the HTHT principles and methodology inside their classrooms, will also be learning from classrooms in partner schools that will serve as testbeds for further innovation. The vision sees the mutual pairing between teacher colleges and schools as a two-way, synergistic approach to test and scale HTHT, feeding and learning from each other as the body of knowledge and practical work compounds to wide-scale transformation from both ends of the learning spectrum.

Work at the country level

Partnerships with country governments are a key part of the Global Consortium. There is tremendous opportunity to pioneer HTHT work in-country through:

1. Undertaking a **feasibility study** on the potential for HTHT in the country context – assessing the elements of the ecosystem that need to be in place for success, especially those that are needed for the local context;
2. Establishing a **national level consortium** with all stakeholders from different ministries within government, teachers, school leaders, district officials, technology providers, internet and infrastructure providers, teacher training universities, donors, and others to collaborate and work together to pilot and scale HTHT;
3. **Piloting and evaluating HTHT**: Pilot a localized HTHT approach within key partners and schools to assess the impact on learning outcomes and capture learnings for implementation at scale. Work with an external research partner to evaluate the results on learning outcomes and teachers' practices to share with other members of the Global Consortium and contribute to the global evidence base; and
4. **Scaling HTHT**: Learning from the pilot, work towards a larger-scale HTHT program in key regions of the country. Connect to the global convening platform for technical and advisory input, partnerships, as well as for support in sourcing financing.

Key benefits of working with the Global Consortium

While activities will be highly contextualized, benefits to countries may include:

Sharing and generating knowledge and evidence:

1. **Access to a wide range of technical expertise and global/regional advisory input** from Consortium members
2. **Opportunity to learn and share good practice, lessons, research, and evidence** on adaptive learning and High Touch pedagogies via a two-way learning loop (country <--> global)
3. **Collaboration and partnership opportunities around research, testing, and scaling HTHT** e.g., collaborate on independent evaluation (external evaluation) on the impact of the HTHT program on learning outcomes and teachers' knowledge and classroom practices using common evaluation approaches, enabling comparisons across initiatives
4. **Opportunity to closely understand the needs of learners, teachers, and the education workforce** in specific and across socio-economic, cultural, national/regional, and linguistic contexts

Supporting the development of country ecosystems:

1. **Help shape policy and build dialogues with stakeholders**, including governments and the private sector, on how to transform ecosystem determinants for the viability of HTHT
2. **Optimized brokering of relationships to match needs between stakeholders** e.g., EdTech vendors, schools, teacher training universities, infrastructure providers, funders. This could potentially lead to financing for HTHT and greater economies of scale, which could reduce costs.
3. **Support to find cost-effective approaches:** At the global and country levels, there will be emphasis on market viability, opportunities, and innovative & creative business models to minimize costs and optimize resource-sharing. While "High Tech" is the ultimate goal, there is understanding that low- and mid-tech approaches to HTHT may be necessary, intermediate steps. The Consortium can leverage its expertise to support the development of locally appropriate solutions.
4. **Support to develop content in local languages:** One key learning from the Vietnam prototype is the importance and urgency of local language development for courseware content. The Consortium aims to emphasize local content development, wherever possible e.g., inviting and supporting local EdTech vendors and content developers to participate in the pilot to expand local language content.
5. Recognizing infrastructure constraints at country level, the Global Consortium could be leveraged for **wider amplification of advocacy efforts** to target infrastructure support in local communities where pilots are taking place.

6. **Production of contextualized educational materials to help address ecosystem challenges**, where appropriate: depending on the country needs, there may be opportunities for the Consortium to help develop materials that help address key challenges of the local ecosystem e.g., procurement guide for policymakers in deciding and purchasing adaptive software, guide to adapt culturally proficient High Touch approaches to under-resourced classrooms
7. **Lead or support capacity-building events in-country** e.g., HTHT workshops, webinars, conferences

The Global Consortium could complement existing country projects – there may be specific areas where the Global Consortium members (expertise and/or advisory) or the HTHT approach (knowledge and research/evidence) could effectively support and add value to.

With your partnership, we can work together to radically transform education systems to adapt to every child's needs and close the learning gaps, especially in resource-constrained contexts in low- and middle-income countries where the Consortium can help overcome current challenges and leapfrog into the future.

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