



COP27
SHARM EL-SHEIKH
EGYPT 2022

المدرسة الرقمية
The Digital School



PREPARING OUR CHILDREN TO BE THE CUSTODIANS OF OUR FUTURE

The Digital School at COP27



NOVEMBER 2022

www.thedigitalschool.org

The Digital School believes that our children are the key to a sustainable and equitable future, preparing the next generation of citizens that recognises and understands the global challenges that face us.

This is the reason for our participation in the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference: COP27, hosted by Egypt in Sharm El Sheikh. With over 40,000 estimated attendees, the summit is hosting one of the largest number of participants in the annual global climate calendar.

Our world has seen an emerging global learning crisis that has been exacerbated by continuing health and climate challenges. Hundreds of millions of young people have been deprived of access to quality learning opportunities, a challenge magnified in areas where children experience marginalisation, lack opportunity and access to basic infrastructure.



Youth and future generations

A key focus of COP27 is ‘Youth and future generations’: ensuring that the voice of our future generations is heard loud and clear; it is also one of the objectives of the current CoP27 Presidency.

The Digital School supports this initiative and aims to ensure that our young people’s perspectives are taken on board and reflected across all areas of the climate agenda: taking into account their contributions, the challenges they face, the potential solutions they may offer, and how to mainstream their engagement in planning and implementation of climate policies.

The Digital School understands that the impacts of climate change are detrimental to the health, nutrition, and especially the education and the future of our children: some of whom, in the most vulnerable communities, are exposed to extreme weather events, temperature changes and eco-anxiety.

Because of their direct experience of the challenges, these students have vast potential to be part of the solutions we so desperately need, but their disrupted access to education often means their voices are unheard. The Digital School is facilitating those voices.

About The Digital School

The Digital School aims to create the means to reach marginalised and underserved learners, wherever they are, and regardless of context, to provide quality learning opportunities and deliver the knowledge, skills and competencies for them to be able to thrive in 21st century society and steer them towards a brighter future.

An initiative from Mohamed bin Rashid’s Global Initiatives (MBRGI), the Digital School is a global, integrated online and hybrid school targeting students who may not have had equitable access to quality educational opportunities, in communities facing educational, socio-economic and political challenges.

Our mission is to provide contextualized and validated education opportunities guided by innovative digital ecosystems and partnerships to improve access and learning outcomes.

Self-directed learning with a focus on STEM

In embedded through the digital learning experience. With this combination of essential content and self-directed learning, we believe that we can equip and prepare our students both for their immediate circumstances and for future life challenges and opportunities that await them. This self-directed approach encourages students to develop the skills and capabilities to

prepare and plan; investigate and apply; then connect and evaluate their learning, in the context of personal, local and global situations.

Helping students to acquire these skills addresses not only their short-term learning needs, but also has a longer-term impact, as they develop resilience, self-sufficiency and problem-solving capacity - lifelong skills and attitudes that are transferable to all other aspects of their lives.

In underserved communities, one common factor is often a lack of adequate numbers of appropriately trained educators. In planning how to address the needs of students, The Digital School sought to address this underlying causal factor, by prioritising the training of local educators and support teams.

Our initial curriculum approach focuses on core subjects and key learning skills through localised national content, including accelerated learning programmes for basic literacy and numeracy.

The initial priority agreed with our country partners is STEM, concentrating on mathematics and science subjects with technology embedded through the digital learning experience.

With this combination of essential content and self-directed learning, we believe that we can equip and prepare our students both for their immediate circumstances and for future life challenges and opportunities that await them.

Social and emotional learning

A key element of the Digital School's self-directed learning model is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). This approach aims to improve students' agency, resilience, decision-making skills, self-awareness, and self-management of their own emotions and wellbeing. It is key to helping them develop a sense of 'self' in relation to their interactions with peers, their communities and others around them.

This is crucial to developing a future generation that is aware of global challenges such as climate change, and how they affect us both as individuals and communities.

As well as supporting engagement among students who are marginalised, SEL can contribute to reducing the any attainment gaps between these disadvantaged children and their peers. Evidence shows that education that embeds and promotes SEL has a positive impact on a wide range of outcomes beyond academic performance, including relationships, mental wellbeing, and understanding of and contributions to the wider community. It can be a powerful catalyst for creating caring, inclusive, and healthy communities that support all young people.

Through our dual emphases on SEL and self-directed learning, we believe we are fostering core skills which will be fundamental to our students thriving in the 21st century.



Educator capacity building

Building the capacity and capabilities of educators on the ground is essential to the success, sustainability and scalability of any support project, and The Digital School has embedded this as a fundamental design principle. Each context in which The Digital School works is unique: educators' qualifications, training and skills are very varied; and to build capacity across such diverse profiles is challenging.

To address the challenge, The Digital School has designed a simple but comprehensive system of professional development, to develop educators' skills and confidence in digital teaching and learning, enabling them to access, navigate and optimally use the features of The Digital School Learning Management System.

In collaboration with Arizona State University as our key delivery partner, the professional development system is aligned with the National Standards for Quality Online Learning. Currently prioritising Digital School educators directly, this professional development will be expanded and extended to reach educators worldwide through the recently launched Digital Educator Global Academy.

Partnerships for sustainability

A key focus of COP27 is the advancement of partnership and collaboration to help deliver their strategic goals and ensure the world is adopting more a resilient, and sustainable economic model. The Digital School aims to achieve scalable and sustainable impact through coordinated and targeted partnerships with sponsors and funding partners, who will gain global recognition by association with Digital School strategic initiatives. Through these partnerships, we are charting new milestones for the future of global education for those who need it most.

One example of successful a partnership demonstrating immediate impacts is the Digital School's partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP). WFP provides life-saving support to people at risk of hunger and coordinates the response of the global humanitarian community to large-scale emergencies. WFP is a key player in the fight against climate change and together we are using education as a means to tackle the causes of hunger, in particular using innovation in digital education to achieve scale

WFP and The Digital School has initiated a pilot in 100 community schools in Luxor and Qena governorates, Egypt, reaching around 200 teachers and over 1000 students in grades 4, 5, and 6. Through that pilot, we have modernized teaching approaches and methods at the community schools, utilizing WFP’s digital ecosystem of smart interactive screens, tablets, and routers. The project provides an integrated package of interventions that invest in people and communities and improves the living conditions and life opportunities of the target communities through quality community education.



Summary statement

Through our global programmes, The Digital School is committed to supporting the aims and objectives of COP27 and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We look forward to reporting our progress as the UAE takes on the hosting of COP28 in 2023: creating real impacts for children and their communities, using digital innovation in education to tackle the root causes of climate change.

We will drive the frontiers of digital learning to empower underserved communities towards a brighter future, serving the marginalised and deprived at the global level through innovative teaching and learning; and prepare them to be the custodians of our future.