



مبادرات محمد بن راشد آل مكتوم العالمية  
Mohammed Bin Rashid  
Al Maktoum Global Initiatives

المدرسة الرقمية  
The Digital School

# Driving the Frontiers of Digital Education



The Digital School's  
Progress and Impact  
Report

November 2020 - May 2023

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# Preface

The Digital School makes a tangible effect through using innovative teaching and methods, and partnering with international NGOs, education experts, and global education for development leaders.

In line with the core of His Highness's vision lies a profound mission: to transform lives and extend the reach of knowledge to even the farthest corners of the world. We are embarking on a humanitarian journey that unites us as a global community, ensuring inclusion in education and various fields, and leaving no one behind.

This initiative, known as the The Digital School stands as a testament to the leadership commitment to advancing the frontiers of digital learning to anticipate a future where education transcends boundaries and knows no barriers.

The Digital School came with the ability to make a significant impact as a new initiative stemming from a dual-focus strategy: using innovative teaching and learning methods and partnering with international NGOs, funding organizations, education experts, and global players. In less than three years, TDS has gained recognition within the Global

Omar Sultan Al Olama

Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence,  
Digital Economy and Remote Work Application,  
Chairman of The Digital School Board



Education for Development agenda and has achieved scalable and sustainable impact for those who need it most, providing them with quality learning opportunities to enable them to thrive in the 21st century.

The Digital School has also established itself as a thought leader in digital education, demonstrating a clear alignment with both the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the United Arab Emirates' foreign humanitarian aid, a key pillar of the nation's foreign policy principles.

Our journey at The Digital School has shown us firsthand how access to education can change not only the literacy levels of learners, but also their quality of life. It has also highlighted the role of technology as a powerful force for good. Now, more than ever, we are committed to maximizing this impact and reaching underserved children across the globe.

Today, millions of young people around the world are deprived of quality learning as a result of a multitude of challenges. This global learning state is particularly magnified for young people in places that are less digitally or economically fortunate, and those in or close to conflict zones.

Dr Waleed Al Ali  
Secretary General,  
The Digital School



World Bank\* research shows that the productivity of world's children would be less than half of what it could be if they enjoyed complete education and full health. This is a significant global challenge that is partly related to teaching that can only be resolved with confident and skilled educators. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition of the importance of investing in educators' personal and professional development, particularly in critical areas such as digital skills.

The Digital School's work is deeply rooted in appreciating the potential of technology in empowering educators and widening learning opportunities. We envision a world where technology is an enabler in transforming education in line with the United Nations' SDG4's thematic action tracks for Transforming Education\*\*. Our goal is to provide quality-assured, safe, and affordable educational opportunities that are accessible to everyone.

The Digital School's pedagogical model focuses on developing learners' agency and self-directed learning skills, and it's core delivery platform is structured to fully support and facilitate this model.

During the period covered by this report (Nov 2020 to May 2023), we've elevated the capabilities of over 1,000 educators, fortifying their digital skills and instilling renewed confidence which helped us impact over 60,000 learners in seven countries across three continents. And this is just the start.

We are grateful to The Digital School's Board of Directors for their leadership and support, and to TDS's teams, at home and abroad, our advisory committee, and strategic delivery partners for their ongoing support and commitment to achieve a brighter future.

\* Source: World Bank  
\*\* Source: UN Transforming Education Summit, TES, UNGA, September 2022

TDS's key engagements over the reporting period include:

60,000  
learners

544  
certified educators

7  
countries

4  
languages





مبادرات محمد بن راشد آل مكتوم العالمية  
Mohammed Bin Rashid  
Al Maktoum Global Initiatives

The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI) was established in 2015. It is home for over 30 humanitarian and developmental initiatives and entities that operate under its umbrella – including The Digital School. Those initiatives have been launched and supported by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.



For more information on MBRGI, visit  
<https://www.almaktouminitiatives.org>

The foundation's humanitarian, social and development initiatives and entities are primarily devoted to supporting and empowering vulnerable and disadvantaged communities around the world. It is the largest regional foundation in terms of number of institutional initiatives that lead wide-reaching programmes and projects on a global scale.

The MBRGI reflects the vision of its founder to develop a comprehensive humanitarian aid and social framework that adopts and implements a culture of hope. It supports vital societal sectors and develops practical and innovative solutions to address cultural, knowledge, economic, social, health, environment, and humanitarian challenges across many regions of the world. The MBRGI's entities and initiatives carry out hundreds of programmes, projects, campaigns, and activities to improve the quality of life in societies, with special focus on those vital developmental and service sectors in addition to talent investment and women and youth empowerment.

The MBRGI's humanitarian aid, development assistance and relief operations follow purely humanitarian objectives that are not confined to geography, religion, colour, or race. As His Highness says, "Our aid has humanitarian objectives only; it is never governed by politics or limited by geography, race, or religion of the beneficiary."

## Executive Summary

The Digital School is a global initiative launched in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) under the umbrella of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI), in an effort to provide quality digital education to underserved communities worldwide. This progress report highlights the key milestones, case studies, and impact achieved during the period from November 2020 to May 2023.

Over the period of 30 months, The Digital School (TDS) has made significant progress in bridging the education gap for disadvantaged communities in the seven countries it has been operating in since its launch.

The Digital School is a ground-breaking initiative for disadvantaged communities, providing innovative and tailored digital learning solutions that leverage technology's potential in a systemic holistic approach specifically designed to empower learners to thrive in the 21st century.

The Digital School incorporates educational and professional development requirements, pedagogical needs, rich content, and logistical considerations into one approach that provides contextualised and validated educational opportunities. This is enriched through partnerships with international NGOs, funding organisations, and education experts.

Having engaged, during its early period of operation, with 60,000 learners and 544 educators in four languages at 341 equipped digital learning spaces across 7 countries, TDS has made remarkable progress empowering disadvantaged learners through digital education. With a strong foundation, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to innovation, TDS is well-positioned to make a lasting and scalable impact on global education.

This premise is supported by a rigorous governance structure, operating mechanism, and strategic future vision.

### Governance Structure

The Digital School is governed by a Board of Directors composed of prominent members from the UAE government, business, and education sectors. The initiative has a dynamic and collaborative organisational structure, with interdependent teams working together to meet the evolving needs. The initiative's implementation is guided by the Alliance for the Future of Digital Learning, which includes experts from renowned global universities and NGOs and institutions.

### Operating Mechanisms

At the core of TDS's operating mechanism sits the Learning Management System (LMS) which serves as the principal delivery channel, offering customisation and multilingual support. This is backed by a repository of digital content and resources that form the Learning Library, as well as, whenever possible, classroom infrastructure for learners and educators.

To ensure apt delivery of programmes and operations, TDS applies rigorous review cycles that underpin a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Action Plan. The MERL action plan covers operational plans, strategic plans, and national and global-level tools that are designed to align with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goals 4, 9, 10 and 17.

**Strategic Future Vision**

The Digital School has ambitious expansion goals. It plans to multiply the number of learners and extend its operations to more countries aiming to create measurable learning impact for over one million disadvantaged learners worldwide by 2026.

With such an ambitious target, it was important for TDS to secure its operational and business continuity for 10 years by following a sustainability model that aligns with 3rd sector best practice, and by ensuring it obtains international accreditation – which TDS has already embarked on achieving “Candidacy Status” with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, with full accreditation status planned for 2024.

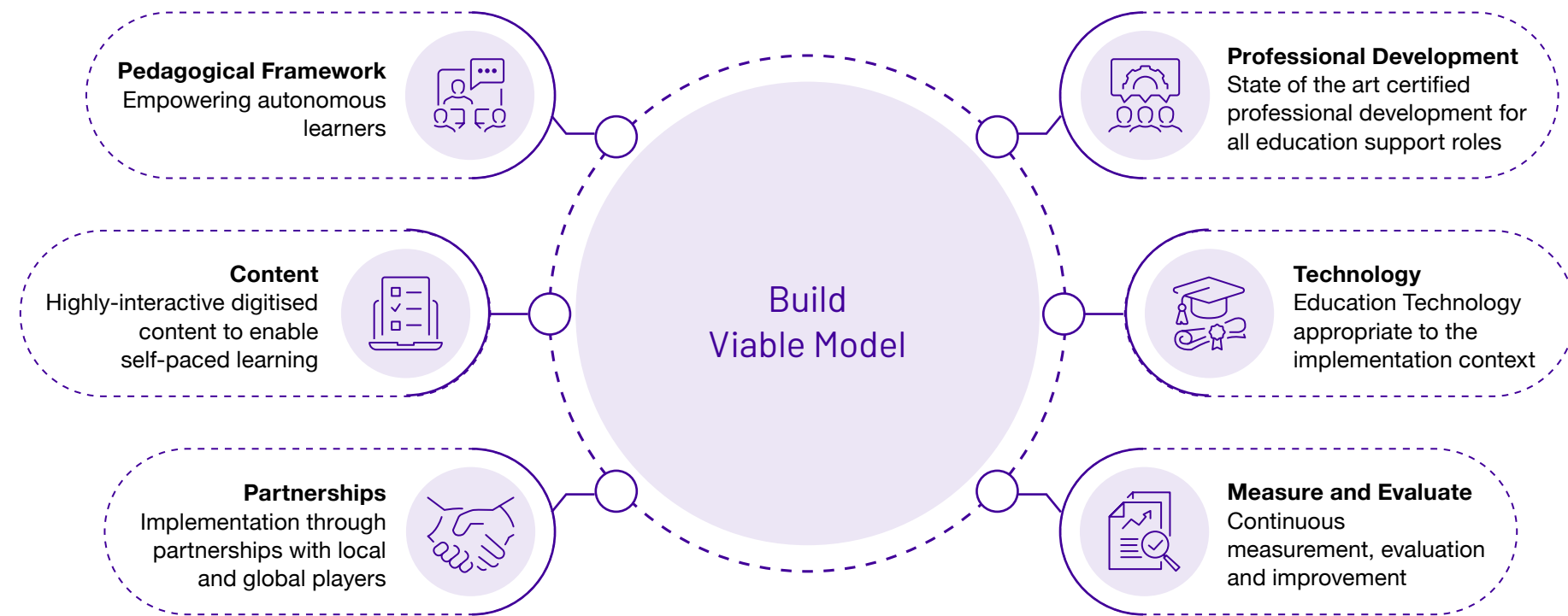


Figure 1

This progress and impact report highlights the goals, plans, and methodologies used to empower disadvantaged learners through digital education, providing a peek through the work of TDS starting with its strategic framework, educational model and leading to the positive impact achieved by its programmes for both its learners and the broader beneficiary community. The report falls in 6 chapters outlined below.

**A value-driven strategic framework**

Chapter 1 introduces TDS’s strategic framework and educational model. Recognising the importance of impact-driven operations, TDS applies a rigorous value-driven strategic framework and ensures sustainable and measurable impact. This is partly achieved through the self-directed approach applied by TDS. This approach encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning journey, supported by trained educators - thus, helping them acquire skills and capabilities for both short- and long-term impact, such as planning, investigating, evaluating, resilience, self-sufficiency, and problem solving.

Impact is further strengthened by TDS’s belief in institutionalising the content preparation process and building local capacity. Hence, TDS’s curriculum centres around core learning and key subjects in localised national content – STEM subjects for example were considered as priority area in all participating countries.

**A growth model defined by increased impact**

Chapter 2 looks at TDS’s growing impact, listing the key figures achieved in the period between November 2020 and May 2023 while defining the impact measurement methodology.

The chapter also discusses TDS’s comprehensive impact framework in detail providing examples of the connectedness between key impact areas and TDS’s strategic objectives, giving detailed analysis of the impact achieved by TDS in each of the four impact areas identified: Access to Quality Digital Education, Advanced Teaching Skills, Quality Digital Learning Resources, and Global Expansion.

In the impact area of Access to Quality Digital Education, TDS implemented four main programmes: Hybrid Digital Learning Opportunities, Digital School Technology

Ecosystem, Learning Spaces, and Devices, Data and Connectivity. These programmes enabled 60,000 learners to access safe and quality digital educational services in four different languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish) across 341 digital learning spaces in seven countries. Implementation models varied and were adjusted, as necessary, for each distinct beneficiary community such as the case of Egypt where four different implementation models were used. By continuing the work of these programmes, TDS plans to increase its reach to 100,000 learners accessing safe digital educational services in five different languages (Kurdish as addition) across 500 learning spaces in 11 countries by the end of 2023.

As for the impact area of Quality Digital Learning Resources, four main programmes were implemented. Those are: Introducing a New Learning Framework, Digital Curriculum and Content, Social and Emotional Learning, and the Learning Library. These programmes enabled TDS to cover sixty eight percent (68%) of its core curricula and make 4,000 online enrichment resources available at the Learning Library for learners and educators, as well as give 32,000 lessons in total. Continuing with these programmes, TDS’s targets are to increase curricula coverage to ninety eight percent (98%) and increase the online enrichment resources to 5,000 while increasing the number of lessons given to 46,000 by the end of 2023.

Plans for The Digital School’s fourth impact area of Global Expansion are underway. Having expanded its operations to seven countries so far, TDS plans to expand its operations to a total of 11 countries by the end of 2023.

**Impact in numbers**

	LEARNERS	EDUCATORS	LEARNING SPACES	COUNTRIES	LANGUAGES
	able to access digital learning services	certified digital educators by ASU	equipped for digital learning	of operation	of learning content and educator training content
<b>Achieved Impact</b> Nov 2020 – May 2023	60,000	544	341	7	4
<b>Projected Total</b> Impact by end of 2023	100,000	1,000	500	11	5

Figure 2

Whereas in the impact area of Advanced Teaching Skills, two programmes were implemented: Innovative Teaching and Learning (self-directed learning) and Educator Capacity Building. TDS succeeded in enrolling 1,000 educators into the Capacity Building Level 1 Orientation Course, and 544 of which were able to complete Level 2 Digital Educator Course giving them enhanced digital skills and confidence. Continuing with these programmes, TDS’s targets are to enrol 1,500 educators in Level 1 course and have 1,000 educators complete level 2 course by the end of 2023.

By highlighting a number of programme case studies, this chapter gives a good taster of actual impact on the ground. It also gives a real sense of the significant strides TDS made in positively impacting the lives of learners, educators, and local schools. By continuing to assess and improve its impact framework, TDS can further enhance its programmes and initiatives and continue to make a positive impact in the future.

**A vision committed to supporting United Nations 2030 agenda**

Central to TDS’s vision is the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Chapter 3 highlights how TDS is committed to supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through its multi-national programmes that cover four key impact areas: Access to Quality Education, Advanced Teaching Skills, Quality Digital Learning Resources, and Global Expansion.

The Digital School’s Access to Quality Education impact area ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning for all. It fosters the provision of equal opportunities for education and the reduction of inequalities for marginalised and underserved learners thus directly aligning to SDG4 (Quality Education) and SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities).

In alignment with SDG9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), TDS has been developing innovative Digital Learning Resources, raising the capacities of educators to ensure Advanced Teaching Skills, and facilitating the provision of affordable access to the internet in less developed countries, aligning with SDG 4 (Quality Education).

**A drive to achieve impact through strategic partnerships**

To achieve bigger impact, TDS believes in the importance of forming coordinated and targeted strategic partnerships with international NGOs, funding organisations, education experts, global players, and local community groups, which is aligned with TDS’s Global Expansion impact area.

Some of the effective collaborations that have resulted in creating a vision and

approach that contributes to widening learning opportunities are discussed in Chapter 4.

The Digital School is steered by the ‘Alliance for the Future of Digital Learning’, which brings together specialised education and technology experts from around the world benefiting the initiative. TDS is therefore able to make a difference through these partnerships: like joining forces with the Emirates Red Crescent to establish a AED 100 million fund to support digital education projects globally, joining the World Economic Forum’s Edison Alliance’s 1 Billion Lives Challenge, or pledging to improve and create positive educational outcomes for one million learners by 2026 – to name a few.

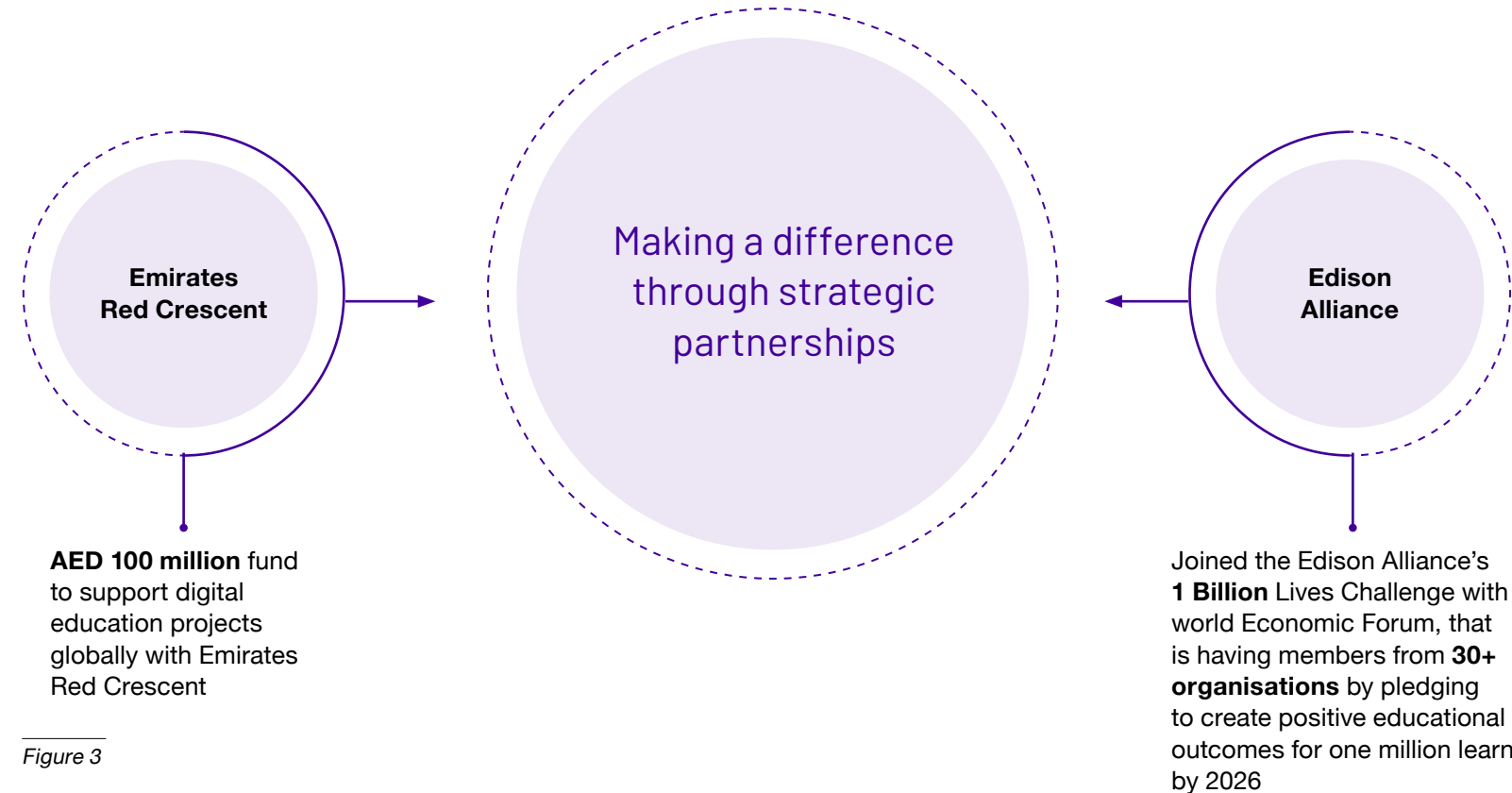


Figure 3



**The Digital Educator Global Academy**

Chapter 5 puts a spotlight on the fruit of a successful partnership with Arizona State University (ASU) – The Digital Educator Global Academy. The Academy is committed to providing educators around the world with opportunities to engage with structured learning towards readiness in digital teaching. The Digital Educator Programme with ASU has already been translated into four languages (Arabic, English, French, and Spanish) and tested with over 500 educators – ready for a wider global roll-out.

**A journey towards full accreditation**

Validating its educational services is at the heart of TDS’s Measurement, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) strategy. This prompted TDS to pursue international recognition through the achievement of international accreditation. Chapter 6 outlines TDS’s journey to accreditation as it aims to showcase the UAE as a world-class and innovative educational provider.

**The appendices**

Appendix 1 provides further details into TDS’s work in each of the partner countries over the last 30 months.

Appendix 2 gives a brief overview of TDS’s ‘Theory of Change’ which provides a summary of how TDS plays its crucial role within the big picture of global education, and includes a holistic framework that demonstrates how each element of work within TDS is connected, and how it can lead to positive change.

Appendix 3 lists the tables and diagrams of this report.

Conceived by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, under MBRGI, TDS is a global, integrated digital school targeting those in disadvantaged and hard-to-reach communities: learners who may not have had equitable access to educational opportunities, and communities facing educational, socioeconomic, and political challenges.

In its efforts to address these challenges, TDS applies a rigorous strategic framework for its operations that ensures measurable impact. It also follows a learner-centred educational model equipped with digital curriculum and localised content. The details of each are discussed in the following sections.

## 1.1 The Strategy Framework

The Strategy Framework has been developed and approved by the board to ensure that TDS delivers tangible, measurable, and lasting impact in the target communities in the field of digital education. Rooted in TDS's vision and mission, the framework is governed by a set of values that inspire key strategic objectives. These objectives come to life through projects that drive, enabled by Monitoring, Evaluating, Research and Learning (MERL) action plans, the implementation of the digital school – as outlined in the diagram on the right (figure 4: Strategy Framework):



### Strategy Framework

Vision	Drive the frontiers of digital learning to empower underserved communities towards a brighter future			
Mission	Provide contextualised and validated education opportunities guided by innovative digital ecosystems and partnerships to improve access and learning outcomes			
Values	Innovation   Scalability   Partnerships   Impact   Resilience   Equity   Sustainability			
Strategic Objectives	01 Provide contextualised and validated education opportunities for marginalised learners	02 Facilitate learning through an innovative digital ecosystem	03 Scale through strategic global partnerships; achieve visibility and recognition	04 Ensure The Digital School is a sustainably funded learning organisation
Enablers	Digital Infrastructure	Monitoring & Evaluation	Partnerships	Sustainability

Figure 4



## 1.2 The Educational Model

The Digital School applies a rigorous Educational Model that consists of the following components:



### 1.2.1 Innovative Teaching and Learning

A core principle of TDS's design is developing local capacity to ensure sustainable impact. TDS has therefore adopted a unique approach to teaching and learning, with a model focused on encouraging its learners to take responsibility for their own learning journey, supported by trained educators.

This self-directed approach encourages learners 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 learners 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 important to all other aspects of their lives.

With a combination of essential learning content and self-directed learning, TDS is able to equip and prepare the learners both for their immediate circumstances and for future life challenges and the opportunities that await them.

It is recognised that TDS's self-directed learning approach may be a very different approach to learning for some cohorts and communities, and its efforts to tailor for each context might compromise its foundational educational rationale. To protect against such risk, TDS is creating an implementation strategy for each target country/community that sets out the initial plan and outlines the intended pace of 'incremental implementation' of the TDS Educational Model.

### 1.2.2 TDS's Pedagogical Framework

The Digital School's educational model aims to develop learners' agency and self-directed learning skills. It blends a range of well-established, research-based, student-centred learning practices, simplified into six steps:

**01 PREPARE**  
Engages learners in getting ready for learning by making a personal connection to the topic

**02 PLAN**  
Engages learners in deciding on the steps for learning

**03 INVESTIGATE**  
Engages learners in exploring content in a structured way to collect and record information

**04 APPLY**  
Engages learners in exploring content in a structured way to collect and record information

**05 CONNECT**  
Engages learners in making connections to personal, local and global situations, and in sharing their learning

**06 EVALUATE & REFLECT**  
Engages learners in reviewing what was learned, the process, and their next steps

Figure 5



The six steps of the pedagogy model are embedded in the content preparation process, and the Learning Management System (LMS) is structured to fully support learners' self-directed learning. To get the teams in target countries familiar with TDS's approach to learning, an incremental implementation method has been applied. The method is aligned with educators' developing skills and confidence as they progress through the professional development sequence.

## 1.3 Digital Curriculum and Content

The Digital School's curriculum focuses on core learning and key subjects in localised national content, including accelerated learning programmes for basic literacy and numeracy. The initial priority agreed with target country governments is STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), concentrating on mathematics and science subjects with technology embedded through the digital learning experience.

**The Digital School's curriculum strategy comprises multiple learning pathways, delivering:**

- 1 Units of learning and lesson plans aligned to a specific country's national curriculum, localised to its culture, and using locally approved content and resource
- 2 Units of learning custom-made to provide specific TDS content that is generically appropriate for all locations
- 3 Enrichment content, available through TDS's Learning Library, designed to support and enhance core learning using engaging, immersive and gamified approaches

To prepare localised national content, TDS takes the target country curriculum as a base and prepares units of learning (lesson plans) on the TDS's LMS. To aid consistency and quality assurance, a Digital School Lesson Building Toolkit has been developed. The toolkit provides a guide to prepare and review the units of learning / lesson plans to be delivered through The Digital School's LMS.

Strategically, TDS emphasises institutionalising the content preparation process and building local capacity. During 2022, TDS has transitioned from third-party content preparation, using external content aggregators and volunteers, to first-party content preparation, where units of learning and lessons are prepared by local educators who will actually use them, supported by TDS's core team and external subject matter experts, and embedded in the certificated professional development course sequence.

To complement the STEM content focus, TDS nurtures learners' development of digital literacy skills, including awareness of cyber safety.

The Digital School has successfully crafted a comprehensive impact framework that aligns with its strategic objectives, which has allowed the team to measure the impact on four main areas: access to quality digital education, advanced teaching skills, quality digital learning resources, and TDS's operations global expansion.



This approach has enabled TDS to identify areas of improvement and enhance its programmes to increase positive impact and reduce negative effect.

The Digital School strives to provide safe and equitable learning opportunities to learners through its programmes and initiatives, resulting in improved academic performance, decision-making skills, self-awareness, and problem-solving abilities.

In addition to learners, TDS has impacted educators by providing them with capacity building programmes that have enhanced their digital teaching skills and confidence in using the technologies provided by TDS. As a result, schools have adopted a dynamic, technology-based approach to education, enabling them to respond to increasingly diverse contexts and needs.

Overall, TDS has made significant strides in positively impacting the lives of learners, educators, and local schools. By continuing to assess and improve its impact framework, TDS can further enhance its programmes and initiatives and continue to make a positive impact in the future.

## 2.1 TDS's Impact Framework



Figure 6

Following is an explanation of each of the four main impact areas and how they connect to the strategic objectives.

The Digital School believes in the importance of understanding the impact of its programmes and initiatives on its beneficiaries in particular, and on the stakeholders in general. A comprehensive impact framework (figure 6) was developed. It identifies four main drivers for change (Impact Areas) that are aligned with TDS's strategic objectives. This framework will enable TDS to better analyse, measure and manage the impact resulting from the implementation of its programmes, and hence, make better decisions to increase positive impact and achieve its vision (Drive the frontiers of digital learning to empower marginalised communities towards a brighter future).



## 2. Advanced Teaching Skills

In the more challenged parts of the world, reduced teaching skills is a major contributor to the lower quality of education. For educators to thrive, they need relevant skills training and professional support networks. This will inevitably have a positive impact on learners. TDS aims to have an established and active professional peer network of 'digital educators' to deliver effective and quality teaching.



## 1. Access to Quality Digital Education

More than 168 million children globally were faced with schools' closure for almost an entire year due to COVID-19 lockdowns, according to data released by UNICEF. Furthermore, around 214 million children globally – or one in seven children – have missed more than three-quarters of their in-person learning (UNICEF, 2021)<sup>7</sup>. This COVID situation, which the majority of the world experienced as a temporary measure, is a constant reality for many children in less-fortunate areas that are struggling with economic difficulties or suffering from conflict. By offering access to quality education digitally, TDS is providing a compelling solution to help educate thousands of children around the world. TDS's plans are to have steady incremental increases in the number of less-fortunate children with easy access to quality education, coupled with progress checks to ensure all users with access are truly benefiting.

Source: COVID-19: Schools for more than 168 million children globally have been completely closed for almost a full year, says UNICEF

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF. "Press Releases | Schools more 168 million children globally have been completely closed." [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org) . URL link.



## 3. Quality Digital Learning Resources

The Digital School is aware of the specific lack of quality of digital teaching and learning resources, and it has become one of its mandates to aggregate and develop high-quality, curriculum-aligned digital resources – especially in Arabic where the issue strongly resonates.

These resources will be extensively and effectively used by learners and educators. This impact area aligns with the strategic objective of Innovative Digital Ecosystems.

## 4. Global Expansion

As part of TDS's work to achieve its strategic objectives, in particular, Strategic Global Partnerships, TDS demonstrates effectiveness in its work and builds on its current success to build a portfolio of global projects. So far, TDS's programmes have been implemented in seven countries across three continents and plans are in place to increase the visible impact in these countries, and also start operating in additional new countries – which will reflect positively on the UAE's position as an international innovator in global digital education.

## 2.2 TDS in Numbers

### TDS's Growing Impact

02

**7**  
Countries

**4**  
Languages for  
content and  
educator training  
AR-EN-FR-SP

**60,000**  
Students

**1,000+**  
Digital educator trained

Colombia

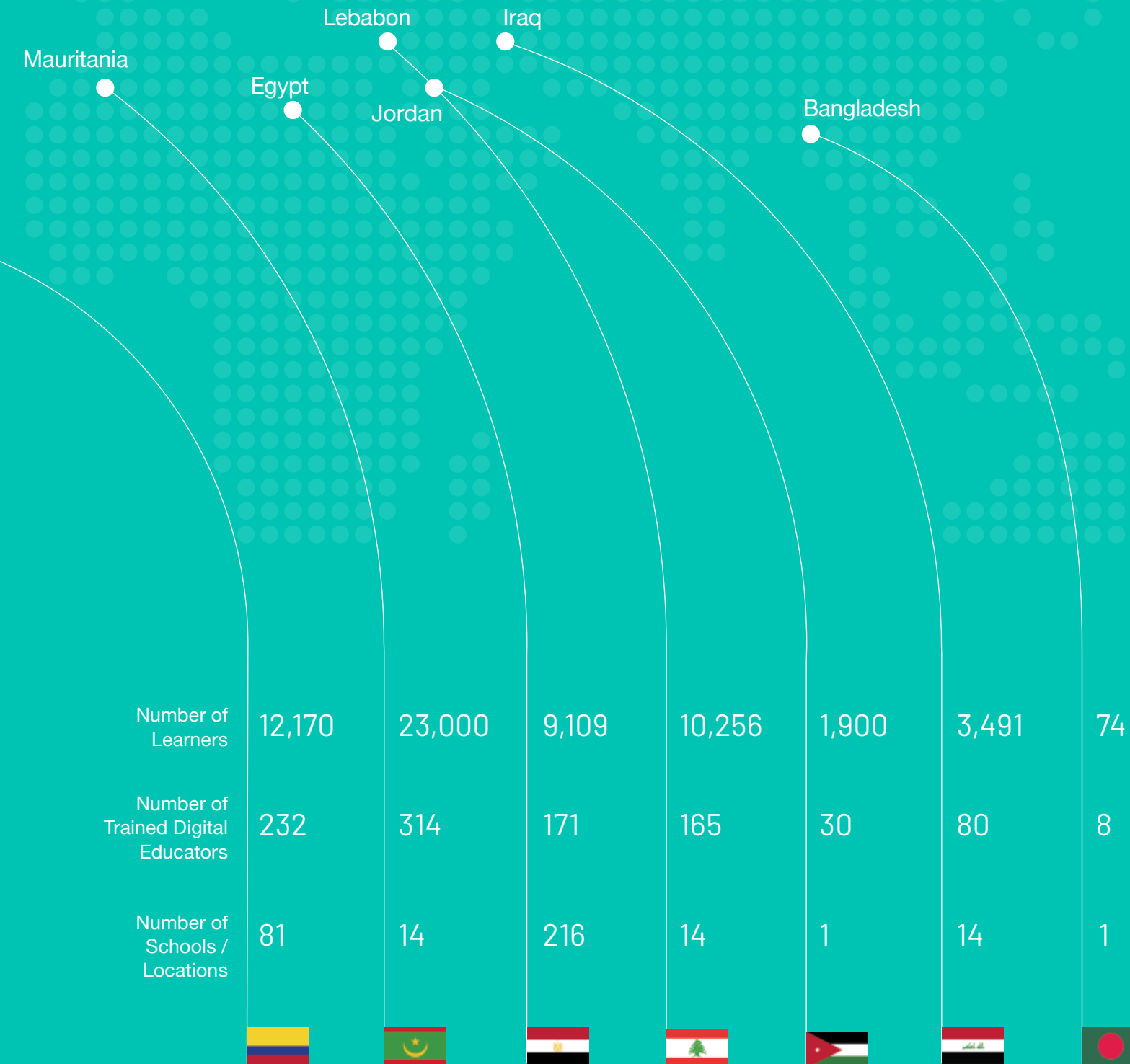


Figure 7

## 2.3 Impact Measurement Methodology

To understand the impact of its programmes and initiatives on its stakeholders, TDS adopted the internationally acknowledged best practice (Impact Value Chain), which is an important process for impact analysis adopted by most businesses, NGOs, and global organisations today. The impact value chain entails specifying each programme's outputs<sup>8</sup>, outcomes<sup>9</sup>, and impact, which explains the consequences and causality of impact generated from each activity.

<sup>8</sup> Outputs are short to medium term changes in aspects of the stakeholders' wellbeing that happened as a result of an intervention  
<sup>9</sup> Outcomes are long term changes in the aspects of the stakeholders' wellbeing that happened as a result of an intervention

In order to ensure accurate analysis of its impact, TDS has adopted the following standards:

### Engaging the stakeholders

TDS engaged learners and educators to understand the outputs and outcomes generated from the different programmes implemented. This was done through questionnaires and interviews with the learners and educators.

### Understanding the changes

TDS made an effort to understand the real impact on its stakeholders and the resulting improvement in the wellbeing of beneficiaries due to TDS's activities.

### Engaging with stakeholders of most materiality

TDS made sure to map and identify its most material stakeholders (those who have been mostly impacted by TDS's programmes), and to analyse the significant changes that are mostly related to its stakeholders' needs and business objectives.

### Transparency

TDS makes sure to clearly demonstrate the changes that took place and the tools used to engage with its stakeholders

### Alignment

TDS has base-aligned its methodology with the Social Value International Principles that aim to support organisations in valuing their impact ([The Principles of Social Value – Social Value International](#))



The Digital School has also developed its own 'Theory of Change'<sup>10</sup> to provide a holistic framework that would demonstrate how each element of work within TDS is connected, and how it can lead to positive change. It provides a summary of how TDS plays its crucial role within the big picture of global education. It also serves as a reference point against which the team can regularly reflect and sense-check the work that is being done.

The 'Theory of Change' has helped TDS provide a guiding framework for tracking the long-term effectiveness of the programme, based on the current model and the projected strategic direction. The 'Theory of Change' has also been used as a strategic tool to 'articulate' and strength-test TDS's vision and strategy.

The 'Theory of Change' has been designed in a way that helps in focusing on the big problem, then the specific challenges, which TDS is taking on. It then articulates the activities that are being undertaken to address the challenges, followed by the outputs of the activities, the outcomes of the outputs, and ultimately the big impact that TDS will make.

The 'Theory of Change' also has an accompanying narrative and a checklist of risks and assumptions. A summary version of the 'Theory of Change' is included in the Appendix section. A full version of the Theory, with all the associated narrative and risks and assumptions is also available in a standalone document.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to Appendix 2

## 2.4 Impact Analysis

This section outlines TDS's programmes implemented under each impact area and the main impact achieved, along with the future targets to increase impact by the end of the year 2023.



Figure 8

### 2.4.1 Impact Area 1: Access to Quality Digital Education

Four main programmes were implemented under this impact area contributing to the achievement of great results.

Those are: **Hybrid Digital Learning Opportunities, TDS Technology Ecosystem, Learning Spaces, and Devices, Data and Connectivity**

#### Impact Achieved till May 2023

	LEARNERS	EDUCATORS	LEARNING RESOURCES	LANGUAGES	LEARNING SPACES
	accessing safe and quality digital education services in 8 countries	ASU Certified Digital Educator	Digital Lesson Plans	of available materials and teachers PD program	equipped for digital learning
<b>Achieved Impact</b> Nov 2020 – May 2023	60,000	544	3,000+	4	341
<b>Target</b> by end of 2023	100,000	1,000	3,500+	5	500

### Programme 1 Hybrid Digital Learning Opportunities

The Digital School seeks to increase access to safe and quality education services through adapted and contextualised digital learning methods. This process helps in meeting the needs of learners in each targeted location and fills the educational services gap. It also improves the quality of teaching and learning, provides educators and/or facilitators with training, support, and professional development.



#### Delivery Paradigms Include

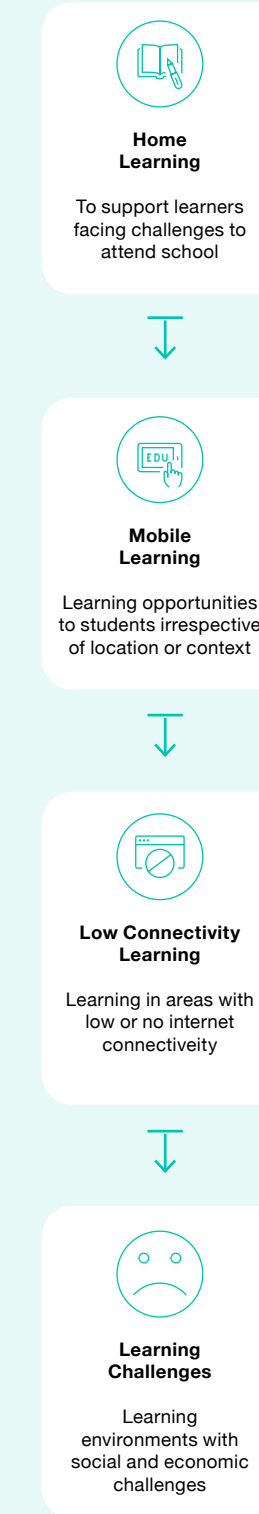


Figure 9

#### Home learning

In countries where learners face challenges to attend school due to several geopolitical and/or socio-political reasons, TDS is promoting a learning model where learners can access TDS learning management system (LMS) from home. The self-directed structure of the content on this LMS allows these learners to continue their learning at their own pace. Backed by remote support and scaffolding from educators, learners will also have the chance to ask questions and receive directions on their learning.

#### Mobile learning

The nature of The Digital School's hybrid learning model means that learning opportunities can be provided to students irrespective of location or context. A key factor that makes this possible is the use of digital platforms delivering learning content to mobile devices, both for educators and learners, such as tablet devices and laptops. Although TDS does not provide mobile devices itself, it works with delivery partners who sponsor and provide these devices into TDS's learning spaces. Supporting and safeguarding learners when using mobile learning tools is very important to TDS, and e-safety and digital well-being are key components in TDS's professional development programmes and digital curriculum.

#### Learning in areas with low or no internet connectivity

Students often face connectivity challenges which does not allow them to reach any digital resources availed to improve their learning experience. TDS designed a Mobile Learning Space in partnership with telecommunication

companies. This facilitates access to TDS's LMS through low-cost data bundles for areas where telecommunication companies have internet coverage. In other areas where there is no coverage, TDS partners with satellite telecommunication companies to avail internet connectivity in these areas.

#### Learning environments with social and economic challenges

The Digital School understands that learning does not only happen in classrooms, and that learners are highly impacted by their context and the challenges they face. More importantly, understanding these challenges and taking them into account when designing learning environments is crucial for a successful learning journey. It was therefore imperative for TDS to design a learning environment that provides socio-emotional support for learners facing these challenges. This is especially true for refugees and low-income learners. The support is provided through well-designed programmes and the educators themselves – these proved to be key elements for the well-being of learners and an instrumental factor in advancing their learning.

TDS also partnered with initiatives like "WFP food-for-learning" and "MBRGI 1 billion meals" which provide meals for school students in low-income communities. This partnership allowed TDS to contribute to the overall well-being of learners and their families. TDS aspires to evaluate and measure the long-term impact of these efforts on students' learning.

## Programme 2 Digital School Technology Ecosystem

A key element in achieving TDS's vision is the technology eco-system that will deliver learning to children in a variety of challenging contexts and environments.

Delivery paradigms are widely varied and include mobile learning, home learning, learning in areas with low or no internet connectivity, and learning environments with social and economic challenges. A further challenge has been the recent context of the global coronavirus pandemic.

With such challenges, TDS is highlighting the importance of clearly targeted services, and an understanding of delivery paradigms, risks and challenges, and the technologies that could support this.

### The Digital School's Learning Management System

The Digital School's Learning Management System (LMS) is the principal delivery channel for all teaching and learning activities provided by TDS, as well as being the channel for professional development support and digital communities for its educators.

The LMS is a cloud-based learning management system used by educators and learners to manage the delivery of educational or training content. The LMS is currently available in four languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish), with support mechanism for a large number of other languages including Portuguese, Turkish, Swedish, Dutch, German, and Danish.

The platform technology, Brightspace, is hosted and customised by TDS's delivery partner D2L. Brightspace is fully customised to suit the learners' needs and provide them with a unique user experience. The LMS provides a variety of features and functionalities that help create inspired and engaging learning for all, including:

- Lesson building and management
- Curriculum import and management
- Data and analytics engines
- Community and collaboration tools
- Content import and management
- Mobile access for learners, parents, and educators
- Multimedia authoring
- e-portfolio

Each country of implementation has a dedicated space and home page on Brightspace, through which our learners and educators can access dedicated lesson resources and enrichment content, tailored specifically to local curriculum requirements.

Brightspace integrates with Microsoft 365 and users can launch Office 365 applications directly from within the learning environment, eliminating the need to open another browser window. The Digital School uses Microsoft 365 to provision accounts for its educators and learners.

Data and analytics management, reporting and visualisation tools also support the learners' success system, which provides a visual overview of learner progress and achievement, highlighting any areas requiring interventions.



## Case Study Providing Equipment to Community Schools in Egypt

Follow up visits gauged the impact on learners and educators as follows:

Impact	Maintaining Impact   Recommendations
<p>Eighty seven percent (87%) of educators expressed that the devices provided to the community schools positively impacted the learning experience for both learners and educators through:</p>	<p>In order to maintain the positive impact of this initiative, it's imperative to ensure high levels of performance by following key recommendations:</p>
<p><b>01 More engaging lessons</b> Educators have become able to vary the ways in which the lessons are presented, making them more interesting and engaging.</p>	<p><b>01 More engaging lessons</b> There is a clear need for periodic maintenance of the devices that were delivered to the community schools, especially tablets.</p>
<p><b>02 Higher learner creativity</b> Learners have become more creative and imaginative especially in the subjects of arithmetic, science, and home economics.</p>	<p><b>02 Higher internet capacity provision</b> There is a need to ensure appropriate levels of internet capacity are available for the community schools. Higher capacity is necessary to enable access to the increasing number of educational videos on the platform.</p>
<p><b>03 Easier lesson planning</b> Educators' lesson preparation has become easier and more interesting, as the resources increased, and methods of presentation varied.</p>	<p><b>03 Tablets for all</b> There is a need to provide tablets to all learners to ensure good participation in learning and making assessments.</p>
<p><b>04 Increased learner-educator interaction</b> Learners participated in the solution and assessment through each child's personal account and thus increased interaction between them and the educators.</p>	

Through the use of TDS's resources, seventy six percent (76%) of learners improved their level significantly, twenty two percent (22%) of learners improved their educational level but by a small percentage, and two percent (2%) did not improve that significantly.

### Programme 3 Learning Spaces

The Digital School's learning spaces feature power (electricity), internet connectivity, devices such as projectors, smart boards, PCs and mobile devices (tablets). Educators are provided with a device (android tablet) to help them facilitate learning activities in the classroom using TDS's LMS. Learning spaces are equipped with desks, tables, chairs, and storage spaces.

Because of the varying circumstances in the areas of operation, TDS does not expect a 'one-size fits all' solution for learning space design - all locations have different specifications and needs. To ensure that learning space design meets local and pedagogical requirements, TDS has put into place a five-step implementation process that all our implementation partners must adopt.

It is based on the following five principal factors:

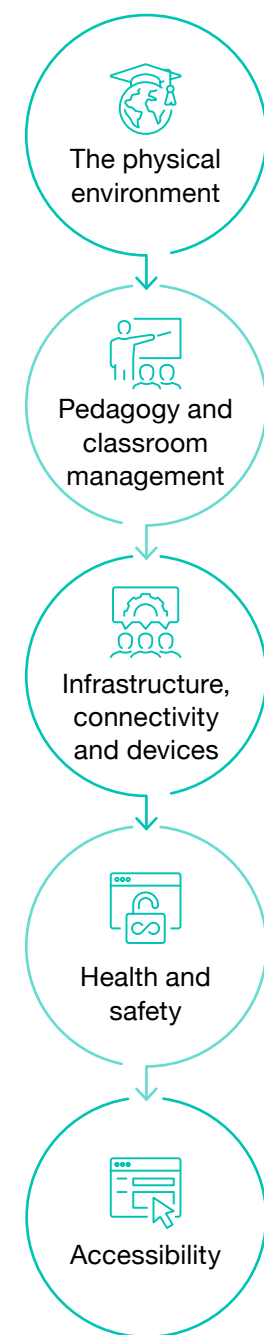


Figure 10

#### The Digital School's Modular Classroom

In October 2022, TDS unveiled the first prototype of its self-contained, modular classroom. The concept has been developed to meet the requirements of those with limited access to technology and connectivity in remote areas. The concept has been developed to provide learning opportunities for learners who live in remote areas and who have little or no access to schooling; there may be a high distance to school, or domestic circumstances which prevent regular school attendance.

The modular classroom can be disassembled for transportation quickly and easily, meaning it can be located in global areas of need at short notice. The modular classroom comprises:

- A robust, lightweight and mobile classroom structure, developed to the requirements of the Learning Space Implementation Guidelines, with suitable lighting and space for up to 20 learners
- Self-contained solar power generation and internal power outlets
- Internet networking / LAN capability and infrastructure, including wireless routers
- Classroom furniture, including desks, chairs, shelving and storage spaces, that can be stowed safely for transport
- Learning devices with charging stations and secure storage options
- Digital teaching aids, such as smartboard or projectors



Progress and Impact Report 2020 - 2023

### Programme 4 Devices, Data and Connectivity

The Digital School uses cloud-based infrastructure to provide resilience, cost effectiveness and sustainability in the hosting of its growing technology infrastructure.

#### TDS current cloud-based infrastructure

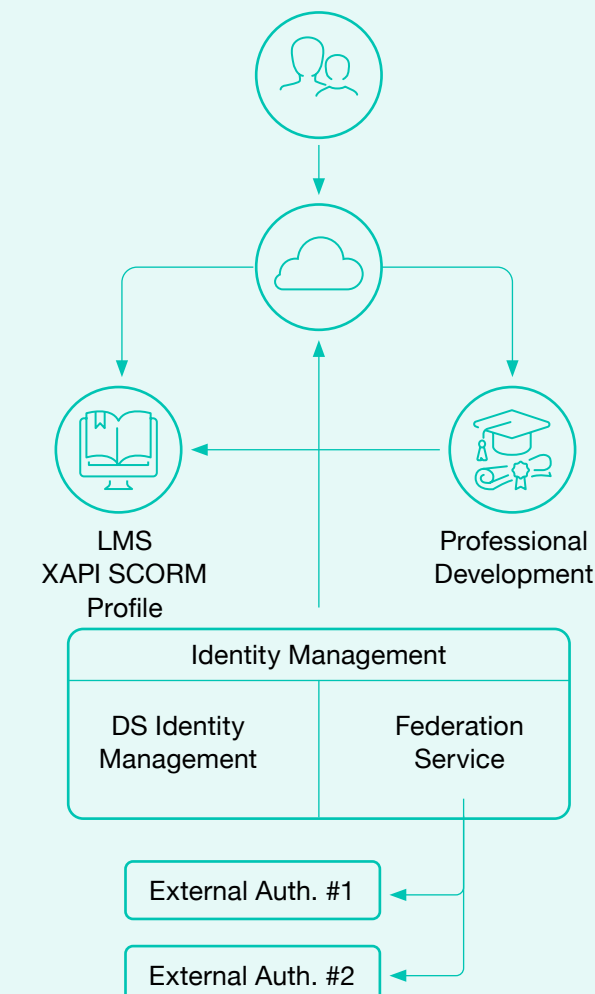


Figure 11

The development roadmap for TDS's technology architecture incorporates its key vision for effective provisioning, data capture, and reporting across a flexible modularised architecture. TDS's data provisioning process is designed to go through five simple steps starting from collecting the data until the learners are enrolled on the relevant courses and can access the digital content on the LMS:

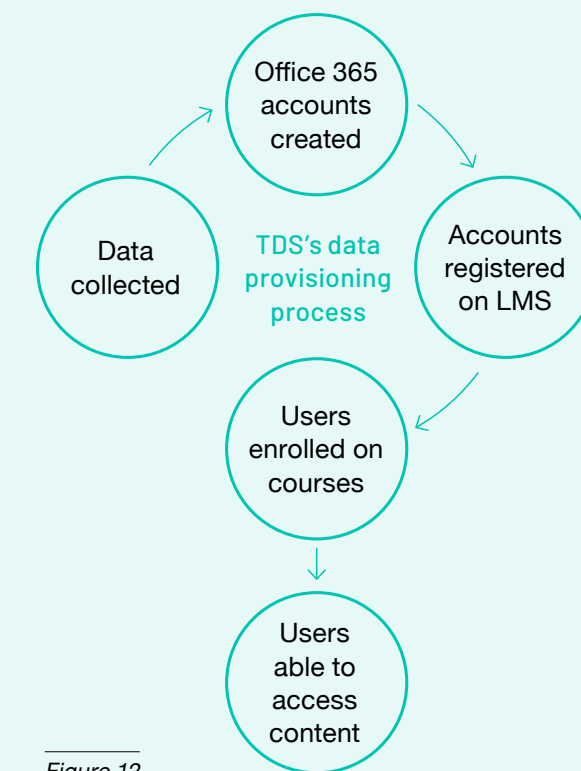


Figure 12

The Digital School works with its strategic delivery partners to provide digital devices to its learners and educators, to facilitate access to TDS's content and platforms, and to support classroom learning. Tablet devices have been distributed to learners in all countries of implementation, and classroom infrastructure includes digital displays, projectors, and educator devices.

As part of their professional development training, educators are provided with full training on e-safety and safeguarding, and the responsible use of classroom technologies. TDS's Terms of Use, which all users of the LMS must agree to, incorporate safe device usage requirements.



## 2.4.2 Impact Area 2: Advanced Teaching Skills

Two main programmes were implemented under this impact area and have contributed to achieving great results: Innovative Teaching and Learning, and Educator Capacity Building.

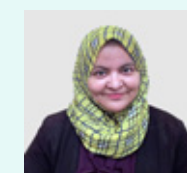
**Impact Achieved till May 2023**

	EDUCATORS	EDUCATORS
	went into capacity-building Level 1 (Orientation Course)	went into capacity-building Level 2 (Digital Educator Course)
<b>Achieved Impact</b> Nov 2020 – May 2023	1,000	544
<b>Target</b> By end of 2023	1,500	1,000

Figure 13

### Programme 1 Innovative Teaching and Learning (self-directed learning)

A core principle of TDS's design is developing local capacity to ensure sustainable impact. TDS has therefore adopted a unique approach to teaching and learning, with a model focused on supporting our learners to take responsibility for their own learning journey, supported by trained educators.



// The Digital School is an open window for students to the world of technology, progress and creativity, and the bridge that will take students to a higher level of education."

Nemat Mohammed Noobi Joodah  
Teacher at the Digital School

### Programme 2 Educator Capacity Building

The Digital School understands that success in achieving global impact for its learners depends on developing a community of educational practitioners, who have the confidence, skills, and knowledge to effectively facilitate learners' self-directed online digital education, through remote and hybrid delivery models, and who can share best practices and discuss applications with their peers at a worldwide level, through the technology provided by TDS.

Building the capacity and capabilities of educators on the ground is essential to the success, sustainability and scalability of any support project, and TDS has embedded this as a fundamental design principle within its educational model. Each context in which TDS 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, TDS 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 TDS's Learning Management System (LMS).

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



### Case Study Capacity Building Programme for Teachers in Egypt

The Digital School's project in Egypt was able to reach a total number of 104 community schools in the governorates of Luxor and Qena, with a total number of 1,814 learners. Work was also done with 113 female educators targeted by the project.

As part of TDS's capacity building programmes, they provided trainings to female teachers on important aspects. Training included:

- 01 How to use TDS's platform in the community school.
- 02 Guidance for Facilitators – Egypt, from the University of Arizona
- 03 Facilitate the separation of Digital Education
- 04 Online Safety Course – Keeping Children Safe
- 05 English Language Course

The impact of these exercises on female educators included:

- 01 Educators becoming more familiar with new training topics
- 02 Educators using these skills in community classroom management
- 03 Educators able to use the school's digital platform very efficiently.



// I am happy with the programme because I felt that it has changed the way I explain the lessons to the learners, thanks to The Digital School"

Faten Hassan Sayed  
Teacher at the Digital School

The participation or completion rate of educators in training courses **reached ninety to a hundred percent (90-100%)**, where the highest participation rates in the course on how to use TDS's platform in the community school were a hundred percent (100%), followed by a guidance course for facilitators, facilitating the separation of digital education at ninety six percent (96%) participation rate, followed by the English language course with a participation rate of ninety percent (90%).

There were 78 female educators who participated in all the trainings, or eighty six percent (86%).

### 2.4.3 Impact Area 3: Quality Digital Learning Resources

Four main programmes were implemented under this impact area and have contributed to achieving great results. Those are: Introducing a New Learning Framework, Digital Curriculum and Content, Social and Emotional Learning, and the Learning Library.

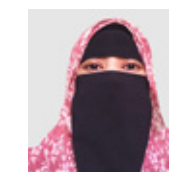
#### Programme 1 Introducing a New Learning Framework

The Digital School has innovated the use of learning models introducing a learning practice aimed at developing learners' self-directed leaning skills. Simplified into six steps, the model blends a range of well-established, research-based, student-centred learning practices as explained in Section 5.2.2 (Prepare, Plan, Investigate, Apply, Connect, and Evaluate and Reflect)

#### Programme 2 Digital Curriculum and Content

The Digital School's curriculum focuses on core learning and key subjects in localised national content, including accelerated learning programmes for basic literacy and numeracy. The initial priority agreed upon with country governments is STEM, concentrating on mathematics and science subjects with technology being embedded through the digital learning experience. Please refer to Section 5.2.3

#### Programme 3 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)



// The Digital School is education as it should be; The Digital School is education in its beautiful new guise"

Asma Ismail Ali  
Teacher at the Digital School

The Digital School recognises that learners need more than just knowledge to succeed in the world today. They need to develop a strong sense of the self and understand how their actions impact those around them. By emphasising social and emotional learning, TDS is helping learners build vital skills that will serve them well in all aspects of their lives. The approach is especially important when it comes to tackling global challenges like climate change.

The focus on the SEL approach isn't just about preparing learners for the future, it is also about addressing the present. It has been noticed that many learners who are marginalised or disadvantaged struggle to engage with traditional academic models. By emphasising social and emotional skills, these learners are getting the support they need to succeed.

The Digital School believes that prioritising social and emotional learning has a positive impact on a wide range of outcomes, including mental wellbeing, relationships, and community engagement. By emphasising these skills, TDS is not only helping its learners succeed academically, but also creating a more caring, inclusive, and healthy community for everyone.

The Digital School believes that social and emotional learning is a key component of its learners' success. By combining this approach with self-directed learning, it is fostering the core skills that will help our students thrive in the 21st century and beyond.

#### Programme 4 The Learning Library

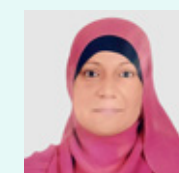
The Digital School's Learning Library is a repository of digital learning content and resources that can be used to enhance and enrich the learning activity delivered as part of TDS's lessons. It is an online library for storing, managing, and sharing digital learning resources, including quizzes, presentations, images, videos, or documents used to create course content and learning materials for online learning.

It includes resources that are curriculum neutral, as well as those that are aligned to specific country curricula and pre-checked for cultural context and appropriateness. TDS's Learning Library is hosted on the LMS and currently has more than 4,000 online enrichment resources across a variety of STEM subjects available to our learners and educators.

Impact Achieved till May2023

	CORE CURRICULA covered in %	ONLINE ENRICHMENT RESOURCES	LESSONS total number
<b>Achieved Impact</b> Nov 2020 – May 2023	68%	> 4,000	> 32,000
<b>Target</b> by end of 2023	98%	> 5,000	> 46,000

Figure 14



// The Digital School is a sea of vast sciences that brings you to the shore of a better future"

Abeer Mohammed Abdul Majeed  
Teacher at the Digital School

### 2.4.4 Impact Area 4: Global Expansion

Main impacts achieved under this impact area by May 2023:

COUNTRIES	
Number of expansion	
<b>Achieved Impact</b> Nov 2020 – May 2023	7
<b>Target</b> by end of 2023	11

Figure 15

#### TDS A model to scale

The Digital School has been implementing its programmes in seven countries across the globe including: Columbia, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Lebanon, and Bangladesh. The below table outlines the main outcomes achieved in each country in terms of number of educators certified, number of learners who benefited from the programmes, number of schools, and number of devices distributed to some of the schools. For more details on achievements and future plans in each country, please refer to Appendix 1.

#### Global expansion in numbers

Country	# of learners	# of certified educators	# of schools/locations
Colombia	12,170	111	81
Egypt	9,109	171	216
Iraq	3,491	65	14
Jordan	1900	30	1
Mauritania	23,000	17	14
Lebanon	10,256	148	14
Bangladesh	74	2	1

Figure 16





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

Through its multi-national programmes, TDS is committed to supporting strategic global sustainability initiatives. Central to its vision is the United Nations 2030 Agenda, and in particular, the targets of Sustainable Development Goals 4, 9, 10 and 17, as well as the thematic action tracks<sup>1</sup> announced at UNGA TES 2022 to accelerate progress towards SDG4 – in particular Digital Learning and Transformation and Teachers and The Teaching Profession tracks.

The aim of SDG4 is to ensure that everyone has access to quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning, regardless of their gender, age, socioeconomic background, or location. While SDG9 is concerned with building a resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations. "Transforming Education Summit | Action Tracks." [www.un.org](http://www.un.org). URL link.

SDG10 aims to reduce inequality within and among countries. And lastly, SDG17 focuses on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development.

The Digital School, in partnership with the different UN agencies aims to provide quality digital education to those who don't have the proper access to it. TDS has also been able to demonstrate how technology can play an important role as part of larger systemic efforts to transform education, making it more inclusive, equitable, effective, relevant, and sustainable. These principles are central to the achievement of TDS's vision for providing our future citizens with the life opportunities they deserve.



The Digital School aligns its efforts with the UN's SDGs through four impact areas: Access to Quality Education, Advanced Teaching Skills, Quality Digital Learning Resources, and Global Expansion (please refer to TDS's Impact Framework on page 19 for more details). The alignment of each of TDS's four impact areas with the pillars of the targeted goals is outlined below. TDS has plans in place to measure its impact in achieving each of these goals.

The TDS initiative in this regard is guided by three clear principles:

- 1 Focus on marginalised learners
- 2 Free, high-quality digital education content
- 3 Pedagogical innovation

### Impact Area 1: Access to Quality Education



The Digital School's programmes ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, which is aligned with SDG4 (Quality Education)<sup>2</sup>. TDS's foresight of focusing on digital education also aligns with the thematic action tracks identified by UNGA TES 2022 to accelerate progress towards SDG4.



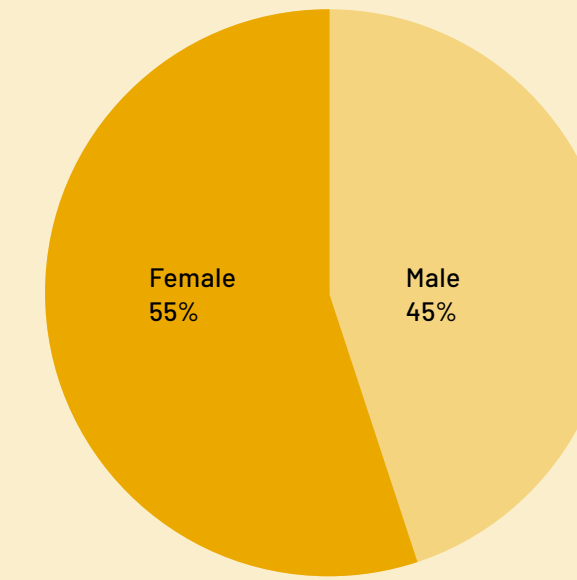
The Digital School's programmes ensure providing equal opportunity for education and reducing inequalities for all marginalised and underserved learners, by promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action that calls for providing boys and girls with equal opportunities to access quality education, tools, and resources. This is aligned with SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities)<sup>3</sup>. The following diagram (Figure 17) clearly outlines that most of TDS's beneficiaries are females, and the majority of trained educators are also females:

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme. "Sustainable Development Goals | Quality Education." [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org). URL link.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Programme. "Sustainable Development Goals | Reduced Inequalities." [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org). URL link.

### TDS Community (per gender)

TDS Students



TDS Educators

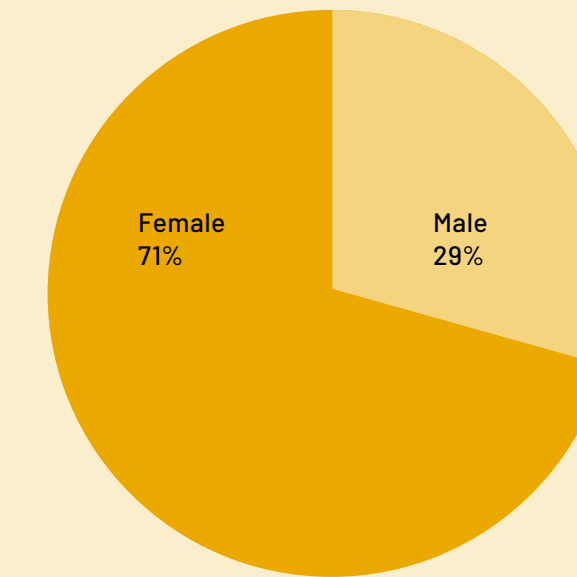


Figure 17

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Development Programme. "Sustainable Development Goals | Industry, Innovations and Infrastructure." [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org). URL link.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. "Transforming Education Summit | Action Tracks." [www.un.org](http://www.un.org). URL link.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Development Programme. "Sustainable Development

### Impact Areas 2 and 3: Advanced Teaching Skills, and Quality Digital Learning Resources



Developing innovative digital learning resources, raising the capacities of educators, and providing or facilitating affordable access to the internet in less developed countries are all aligned with SDG9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)<sup>4</sup>, which aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation. They also align with SDG4 thematic Action Track 3: Teachers and the Teaching Profession<sup>5</sup>— which considers teachers to be essential for achieving learning outcomes and the transformation of education.

### Impact Area 4: Global Expansion



The Digital School aims to achieve scalable and sustainable impact through coordinated and targeted partnerships with sponsors and funding partners. These partners will gain global recognition by association with TDS's strategic initiatives, which aligns with SDG17<sup>6</sup> (Partnerships for the Goals).

Goals | Partnerships for the Goals." [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org). URL link.

Having strategic partners has been crucial for the success of TDS. Firstly, partnering with organisations that have expertise in education and community development enabled TDS to tap into their knowledge and experience, ensuring that all efforts are effective and tailored to the specific needs of these communities.

Secondly, partnering with local community groups provided TDS with valuable insights into the cultural, social, and economic dynamics of the communities it aims to serve. That approach has enabled TDS to design and deliver educational programmes that are culturally sensitive and relevant, fostering greater acceptance and participation.

Furthermore, collaborating with technology providers, United Nations agencies, and non-profit organisations enabled TDS to leverage through their networks, funding opportunities, and technological advancements. By pooling its own resources and expertise, TDS can create sustainable and scalable solutions that have a lasting impact, improve its offerings, and address challenges

## 4.1 The Alliance for the Future of Digital Learning

The Digital School's implementation is guided by the 'Alliance for the Future of Digital Learning', which brings together specialised education and technology experts and organisations from around the world. The Alliance's advisory board comprises industry leaders, technology experts, and academics from leading global universities including Harvard, and MIT.

The Alliance has been instrumental in TDS's success, as it taps into the vast technological resources and expertise of the global partners to offer a unique and complete digital learning experience to the learners in the target countries. The Alliance includes more than 30 members of international institutions and organisations, as well as the most prominent technology companies, and global education technologies (*Figure 18*).

### The Advisory Council Members



**Dr. Eric Klopfer**  
Professor and Director of the Scheller Teacher Education Program and The Education Arcade at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)



**Professor Chris Dede**  
Timothy E. Wirth Professor in Learning Technologies at Harvard's Graduate School of Education (HGSE)



**Dr. Robert Jenkins**  
Global Director of Education at UNICEF



**Professor Pasi Sahlberg**  
Professor of Education Policy at the University of New South Wales



**Hatem Sallam**  
Educational Technology Expert



**Mohammed Gheyath**  
CEO of CERT - Higher Colleges of Technology



**Peter Wells**  
Chief of Higher Education section – Office of the Assistant Director - General – UNESCO



**Dr. Kevin Frey**  
CEO of Generation Unlimited at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

### Government Entities

From approving TDS's concept to facilitating access to schools, educators, and learner communities, government entities play a crucial role in enabling TDS to engage with learners and educators to achieve impact.



### International institutions & NGO's

International institutions offer unwavering support through the transfer of valuable knowledge, expert operational know-how, and accreditation.



### Academic Institutions

Renowned academics from leading global universities play a significant role in the development of pedagogical and training programmes for educators in partnership with TDS – The Digital Educator Global Academy is a prime example of such collaborations.



### Technology Experts/Providers

They bring know-how and, technology including hardware and software to enable the work of TDS. The concept of TDS is heavily dependant on reliable and trusted technical solutions which the technology experts provide.



Figure 18

## 4.2 Strategic Partnerships

The Digital School aims to achieve scalable and sustainable impact through coordinated and targeted partnerships with international NGOs, funding organisations, education experts, and global players.

Through these partnerships, TDS is charting new milestones for the future of global education for those who need it most through combining forces and expanding the reach.

Building on the knowledge, experience, and innovation of TDS's strategic delivery partners, who have demonstrated high degree of effectiveness, the initiative has created a vision and approach that contributes to widening learning opportunities as in the following examples:

#### Main partnerships

Strategic partnership with ASU for educator development that evolved into DEGA.

With UAE Red Crescent to support in logistics and develop 1,000 digital learning space. Then another agreement to establish 100 million aed fund for digital education.

With Microsoft to share expertise and provide Edutech tools and office 365 to TDS beneficiaries.

Dubai Care partnership to share expertise and support in global outreach .

Dubai Awaqf to help in sustainability by allocating endowment to TDS.

Partnership with WFP in Egypt for digital education reaching up to 300 community schools.

Figure 19





Working with underserved communities, TDS realised the importance of having qualified digital educators who are able to use different digital education methods, tools, and resources to be able to coach and facilitate learning for their learners, having a qualified and skilled digital educator is the foundation for digital transformation of an education system.

DEGA was built on the success of the digital educators training programme that was developed and implemented in collaboration with Arizona State University (ASU).

DEGA announced in UNGA TES summit in New York in September 2022 and was established to broaden the training programme to educators globally.

DEGA is a professional development digital academy with a unique focus on digital learning. It aims to further enhance its offering to educators by providing more courses from ASU and other academic institutions and to provide educators with digitally signed certificates and micro credentials.

DEGA development programmes are fully certified and accredited from ASU. Further collaboration with more academic institutions will provide educators with more pathways to hone their digital learning skills.

TDS is collaborating with Government Experience Exchange Program (GEEP) to avail 10,000 opportunities for educators around the world to enrol in DEGA to develop their digital learning skills and become certified digital educators.



# The Journey to Accreditation



As a central element of its Measurement, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) strategy, TDS made an early decision to pursue international recognition in order to validate its educational services and ultimately showcase the UAE as a world-class, innovative educational provider. A key indicator of this recognition will be the achievement of international accreditation with its chosen partner, The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

In May 2023, TDS achieved “Candidacy Status” in its accreditation journey, which is a significant step towards its goal of achieving full accreditation status in 2024.

In March 2023, a visiting team of four members was assigned by NEASC to conduct a Candidacy Visit to TDS. The team spent three days with the school’s team to assess the degree to which the organisation aligns with NEASC’s Standards for Accreditation. The visit included reviewing the self-study documents that had been prepared for their examination, meeting with administrators, educators, professional staff, and other organisation and system personnel, and observing classes and interviewing learners and educators in two TDS locations. The team also reviewed the proposed priority areas for the organisation’s growth plan, which is being developed as part of TDS’ strategy to enhance its educational services.

The Digital School will now begin the main phase of accreditation, which involves a further and more detailed period of self-study and a further visit in 2024. If successful, this will result in TDS being fully validated as “Accredited.”

The NEASC visit report endorsed TDS for candidacy status and observed the following:

“ We are inspired by the degree to which TDS is fully committed to and strongly promotes its vision, mission, and core values of innovation, scalability, partnerships, impact, resilience, equity, and sustainability. The organisation’s long-term sustainability planning ensures the growth of TDS’s educational services and the stability of its funding model. Codifying operational policies and procedures that are aligned with TDS’s mission, vision, and values will complement its sustainability planning, support TDS’s staff, and ensure the organisation’s sustainability and stability.”

The Digital School’s progress on the NEASC Accreditation journey

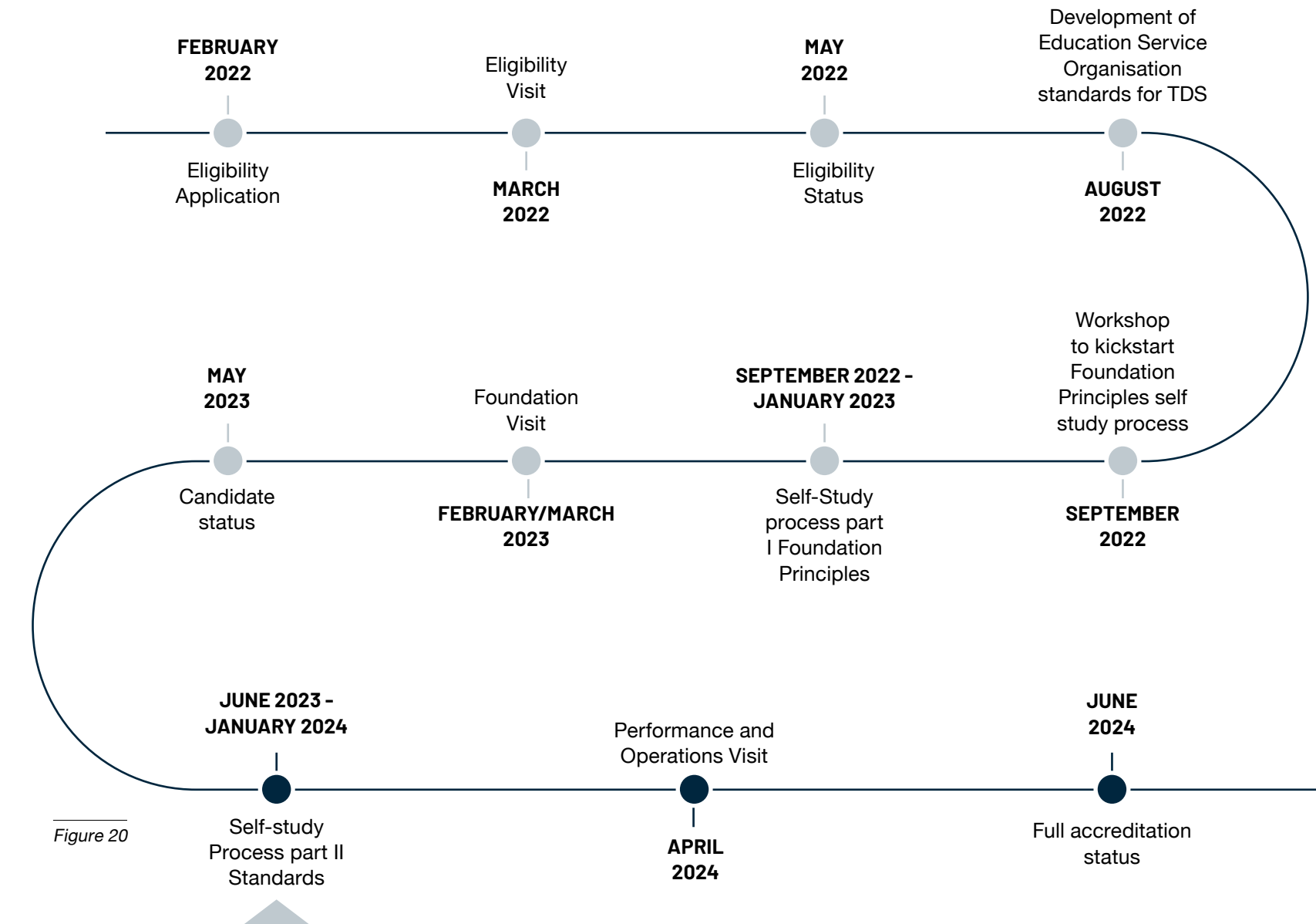


Figure 20



## Appendix 1: TDS's Impact Around the Globe



### Colombia

In July 2021, The Digital School successfully began implementing its programme in Colombia with the support of municipal authorities. To ensure effective delivery, a partnership was established with a local organisation called Learning One2One (L1to1). After local research and scoping the project, it was determined that 27 schools across three cities education districts (Cundinamarca, Itagui, Soacha) could potentially benefit from the programme. Eventually, all 27 schools were included in the implementation plan.

Currently, 168 out of 205 educators have been certified through TDS's Digital Educator Programme and have been provided access to the Learning Management System (LMS) platform managed by L1to1. Furthermore, in 2022 4,008 learners and 6,000 learners in 2023, have been granted access to Microsoft Office 365 and digital content via the LMS platform, which includes Spanish language arts and Maths curriculum content developed according to national requirements.

#### Implementation Plan

The implementation process involves managing the enrolment of learners and educators and overseeing the delivery of content. TDS supervises a team of five local support members who provide on-ground assistance to educators and learners through school visits and online meetings. Progress reports are submitted on a weekly basis.

### Digital Learners

12,170

Learners across 81 schools are receiving regular and structured learning opportunities

### Digital Educators

111

Educators have been trained and certified through TDS's Digital Educator Programme, contributing to the success of the programme's implementation in Colombia

### Short-term Targets

In 2023, we expect to:

Expand to the city of Medellin

Enrol a minimum of 16,000 learners

Expand content to core subjects and identified grades

Add enrichment subjects mandated by Colombia's Ministry of Education



### Egypt

In October 2021, Egypt's Ministry of Education, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Sawiris Foundation launched, in partnership with TDS an exciting new project. The aim was to implement digital education across 133 schools in four cities - Luxor, Qena, Suhag, and Asyut.

Through careful research and planning, TDS succeeded in implementing their programme in all 133 schools, in partnership with WFP and Sawiris Foundation who provided local implementation services and support. A total of 171 educators have now been certified by TDS's Digital Educator Programme and are using their Learning Management System (LMS) platform to deliver high-quality digital content to 4,109 learners in 2021-22 academic year and 5,000 learners in 2022-23 academic year.

The content developed by TDS covers subjects such as Maths and Science and is designed to meet national requirements. Although the project did not include device provision, TDS provided 102 devices to 20 schools in Luxor.

#### Implementation Plan

To ensure the project's success, TDS established a local support team comprising of four members. The team is responsible for supporting learner and educator enrolment and content delivery, as well as providing on-ground support to educators and learners. Weekly progress reports are submitted by the team to TDS, ensuring that everything runs smoothly.

Overall, The Digital School's implementation plan has been a great success, and the project continues to make a positive impact on the education of Egyptian learners.

### Digital Learners

9,109

4,109 Learners in 2021-22 academic year, and in 2022-23 academic year 5,000 learners, across 216 schools received regular, structured learning opportunities

### Digital Educators

171

Educators have been trained and certified in TDS's Digital Educator Programme

### Short-term Targets

In 2023-24 academic year, we expect to:

Expand to encompass community schools and refugee communities

Enrol at least 9,000 new learners

Expand provision across four additional cities

Expand content to cover further core subjects and identified grades



### Iraq

In December 2021, TDS began its implementation in Iraq after successfully engaging with the Ministry of Education in Erbil, State of Kurdistan. Through initial research and scoping, TDS identified 14 potential schools in the city of Erbil and managed to successfully implement the programme in all of them. Many of the learners attending these schools are refugees who are enrolled in mainstream education.

Additionally, TDS's Digital Educator Programme certified 39 educators from these schools and provided them with access to the Learning Management System (LMS) platform. As of now, 3,089 learners have been granted access to use MS Office 365 and digital content via TDS's LMS, with learning content being developed according to national requirements and delivered in the form of units of study covering Maths and Science.

#### Implementation Plan

The plan involves managing the enrolment of learners and educators and overseeing content delivery, led by a team of nine local support members under the supervision of TDS. The team reports progress on a weekly basis and has been trained to provide on-ground support to educators and learners via school visits and online meetings. Additionally, TDS has delivered 80 devices to six schools as part of the implementation plan.

### Digital Learners

3,491

Learners across 14 schools receive regular, structured learning opportunities

### Digital Educators

65

Educators have been trained and certified in TDS's Digital Educator Programme

### Short-term Targets

In the academic year 2023-24, we expect to:

Target learners and teachers from Kurdish communities

Enrol at least 10,000 learners

Expand content to further core subjects and identified grades

Enrol new educators into the TDS's Digital Educator Programme

Avail TDS's LMS with Kurdish user-interface

Train and support educators to develop digital lesson plans and content in Kurdish language



## Jordan

In March 2021, The Digital School made its way to Jordan after successfully engaging with the Ministry of Education. It had set up a dedicated learning space within the Jordan-Emirati Syrian refugee camp, in partnership with the Emirates Red Crescent. The focus of this project is to provide education to the refugees, and so far, 900 learners have been granted access to use MS Office 365 and Digital Content through TDS's LMS platform.

The Digital School has equipped the learning space with 60 devices and has provided connectivity and smart screens through the Emirates Red Crescent. It has also trained 23 educators through their Digital Educator Programme, and learning content has been developed according to national requirements and delivered in the form of units of study covering Maths, Arabic, and Science.

### Implementation Plan

The plan covers not only the delivery of content but also the enrolment of educators and learners. It's being led by four local support team members under the supervision of TDS. The team provides weekly progress reports and has been trained by TDS to provide on-ground support to educators and learners. This support is covered during school visits and online follow-up meetings.

## Digital Learners

In 2021-22 academic year 900 learners from the refugee camp school received regular, structured learning opportunities. In 2022-23 academic year, 1,000 learners went through the same process

# 1,900

Learners have been accessing the content on the LMS platform

## Digital Educators

# 30

Educators have been certified and trained in the Digital Educator Programme

## Short-term Targets

In 2023-24 academic year, we expect to:

Collaborate with the Jordanian Ministry of Education and Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA) to recognise the Professional Development Programme within the Jordanian professional development track

Enrol at least 1,000 learners

Expand content coverage to cover further core subjects and identified grades



## Mauritania

In September 2021, the implementation of TDS was launched in Mauritania, following successful engagement with the Ministry of Education and the establishment of an implementation partnership. After conducting initial research and scoping, 14 potential schools were identified in the city of Nouakchott, all of which have successfully implemented TDS's curriculum.

Up to 12 educators have been certified through TDS's Digital Educator Programme and provided with access to the LMS platform. So far, 3,000 learners have been granted access to MS Office 365 and digital content via the LMS. The learning content has been developed to meet national requirements and delivered in the form of units of study covering Maths and Science. TDS is not responsible for providing devices in this implementation but have donated 120 devices across six of the schools.

### Implementation Plan

The plan involves managing the enrolment of learners and educators and overseeing content delivery, led by a team of three local support members under the supervision of TDS. The team reports progress on a weekly basis and has been trained to provide on-ground support to educators and learners through school visits and online meetings.

## Digital Learners

# 23,000

Learners the academic year 2021-22, and 20,000 learners in the academic year 2022-23 across over 14 schools have had access to their relevant digital content and digital lessons

## Digital Educators

# 17

Educators have been enrolled and certified in Digital Educator Programme

## Short-term Targets

In the academic year 2023-24, we expect to:

Enrol a further 30,000 learners

Expand content coverage to more core subjects and identified grades

Enrol new cohort of 300 teachers into Digital Educator Programme

Add a further 60 schools



## Lebanon

In August 2022, TDS was launched in Lebanon in partnership with Human Aid & Development Organisation (HAND), with successful implementation in four areas: Akkar, Baalbek-Hermel, Beqaa, and Mount-Lebanon.

The Digital Educator Programme has already enrolled 143 educators who are currently working hard towards their certification. Plus, over 3,256 learners have been granted access to use MS Office 365 and Digital Content via the LMS platform. The learning content covers a wide range of subjects, including Maths, Science, Arabic, English, Chemistry, and Physics, all designed to meet national requirements.

A Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) programme was introduced in several stages to help students who were never enrolled in schools before and/or lack foundational skills to be enrolled, depending on learners' level and ability to pass a BLN exam in foundational Arabic, English, and Maths.

Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) was essential to help learners catch up with missing years of structured learning. It helped learners gain the skills they needed to continue their education. Learners going through ALP in its different stages would be placed in their relevant academic grade similar to their peers in age.

With HAND's support, TDS have equipped two classrooms in each of the seven schools with devices, making it easier for educators and learners to access the platform.

### Implementation Plan

The plan is in full swing, managed by a dedicated team of 11 local support members under the direct supervision of TDS. The team sends weekly updates on the progress of the implementation plan and has been trained to provide on-ground support to educators and learners through school visits and online meetings.

## Digital Learners

# 10,256

Learners in academic year 2022-23, across 14 learning spaces have had access to their relevant K12 and enrichment programmes digital content.

## Digital Educators

# 148

Educators have been enrolled into the Digital Educator Programme covering all subjects for grades 4-9

## Short-term Targets

In 2023-24 academic year, we expect to:

Provide over 10,000 learning opportunities

Cover all subjects for grades 4 to 12

148 teachers certified and enrolled to Digital Educator Programme Unit 3



## Bangladesh

In November 2022, the implementation of TDS in Bangladesh was launched through a partnership with the OBAT Helpers Organisation, which provides local implementation services and support. The initial research and scoping identified one potential school in the city of Dhaka, where the implementation process has now begun.

Eight educators have been enrolled in TDS’s Educator Programme and have been provided access to the LMS platform. So far, 74 learners have been granted access to MS Office 365 and digital content via TDS’s LMS. Learning content is being developed based on national requirements and will be delivered in the form of units of study for Maths and Science in 2023. The OBAT Helpers Organisation has provided 33 devices for the school.

### Implementation Plan

The plan involves managing the enrolment of learners and educators and overseeing content delivery. The implementation is led by five local support team members under the supervision of TDS. The team provides progress reports on a weekly basis. The support team has been trained by TDS to provide on-ground support to educators and learners, which is provided through school visits and online meetings.

### Digital Learners

74

Learners in one school receive regular, structured learning opportunities

### Digital Educators

2

Educators have been enrolled in the Digital Educator Programme

### Short-term Targets

In 2024, we expect to:

Evaluate the pilot results and plan for expansion

Enrol a further cohort of learners

Begin delivery of lessons in core subjects and identified grades

## Appendix 2: Theory of Change

The big problem	Challenges	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	The big impact
Education is recognised as a global priority (SDG 4). There is a global learning crisis and widespread learning poverty.	01 Lack of access to quality education	01 Provide children with the digital learning platform	01 Children progress in learning through The Digital School	01 Children have quality education / improved outcomes	A substantial contribution is made to achieving SDG4 (and SDG 8) and addressing the global learning crisis and reducing learning poverty.
	02 Lack of teacher skills and networks	02 Provide accredited TCPD to equip teachers	02 Teachers are equipped and build professional networks	02 Established body of networked digital educators	
	03 Lack of open-access digital learning resources	03 Develop curriculum-aligned digital open-access resources	03 The resources improve the quality and quantity of learning	03 The open-access digital resources are used extensively	
	04 Lack of innovative accreditation models	04 Introduce a more effective model of accreditation	04 The new model is recognised as a credible approach	04 A new model of international accreditation is established	
	05 Lack of evidence about effective use of technology in education	05 Embedded MEL throughout the programme	05 Evidence products published based on The Digital School	05 The education sector makes better evidence-based decisions	

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