unicef | for every child



Beyond digital as usual

Leading the change in digital education transformation

Frank Van Cappelle, Senior Adviser-Digital Education and Learning Innovation, UNICEF Global Education Practice

unicef | for every child

#BeyondDigitalAsUsual

The challenge

unicef | for every child
#BeyondDigitalAsUsual

The global learning crisis

273 million
children are out of school

Two-thirds
of 10-year-olds estimated to be unable to understand a simple written text

50 million
teachers are needed by 2030 (including pre-school)



Very little progress in addressing these challenges over the past decade.



Billions invested in EdTech, with uneven (positive and negative) impact on learning over the past 20 years.

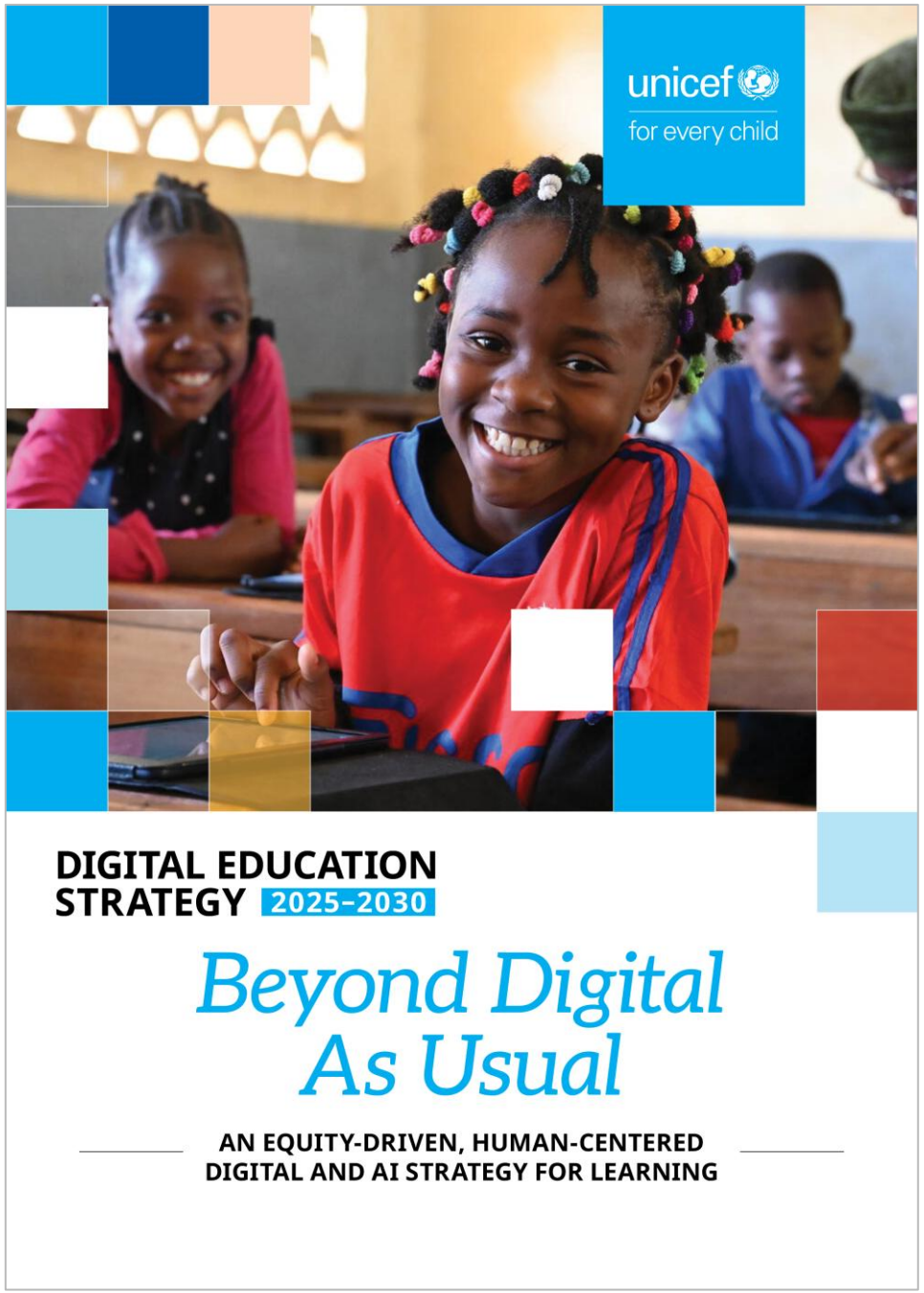
Technology as a “digital replacement” of existing practices, rather than focusing it where it adds the most value to teaching, learning and education systems.

Short-term initiatives that fragment efforts instead of supporting sustained, system-wide digital transformation and strengthening.

unicef | for every child

#BeyondDigitalAsUsual

UNICEF’s approach



unicef | for every child

UNICEF Digital Education Strategy 2025-2030

Beyond Digital as Usual

Strategic shifts in Digital Education programming

1



From tech-driven to human and teacher-centered approaches

2



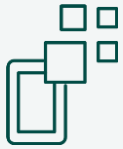
From initiatives to big bets and strategy-driven scaling

3



Championing a safe, balanced and ethical approach to digital education.

4



Going beyond access and usage to measurable improvements in learning

5



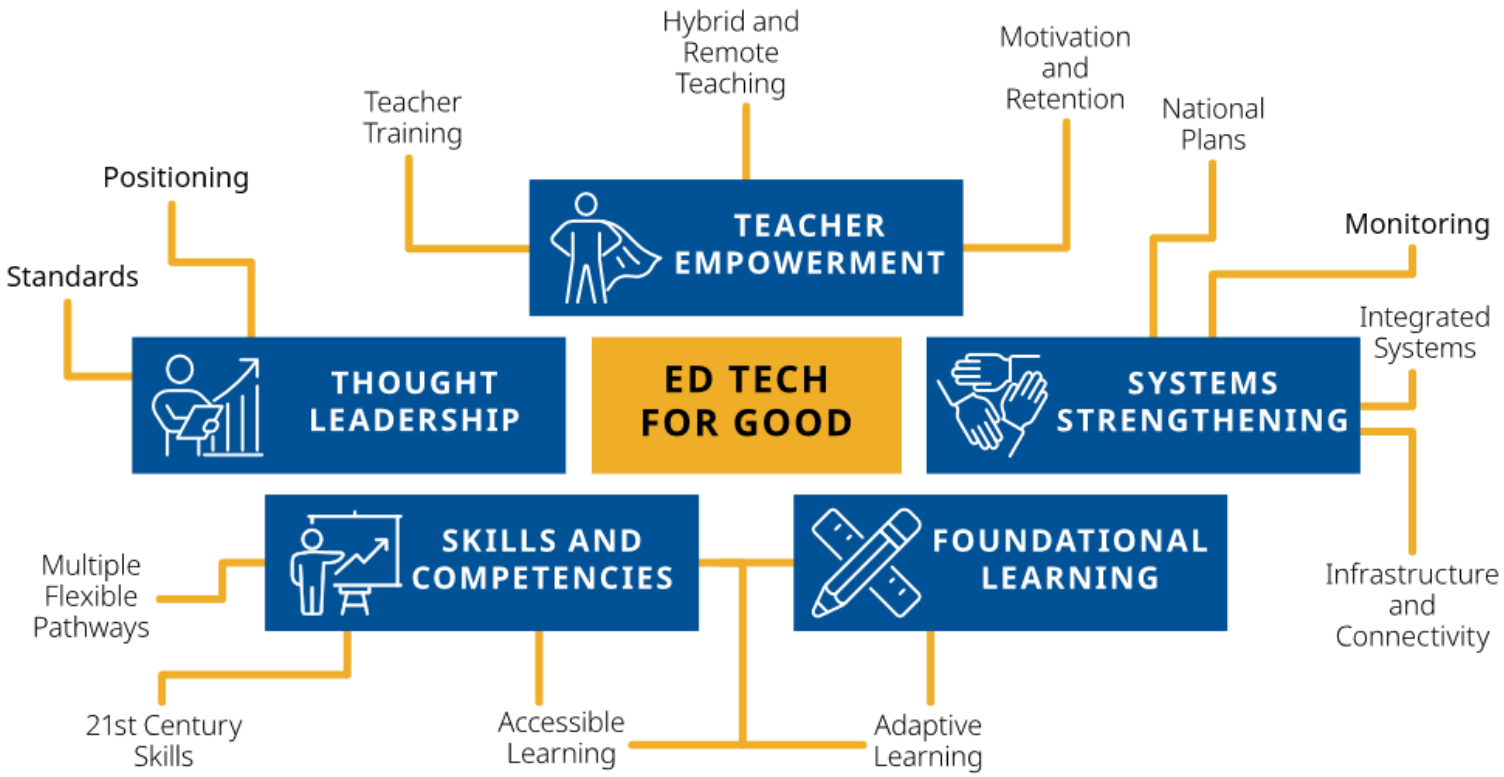
From ad hoc to context-sensitive models anchored in global standards & equity

6



From "one child, one device" to dynamic, shared, collaborative learning

Digital Education Strategy Focus Areas



EdTech for Good: Global Standards for Safe, Impactful, Inclusive EdTech

Cross-cutting: Capacity Building Strategic Partnerships Sustainable Financing AI Innovation Research

Focus on outcomes: 'did children learn?' is more important than 'did children take part?'

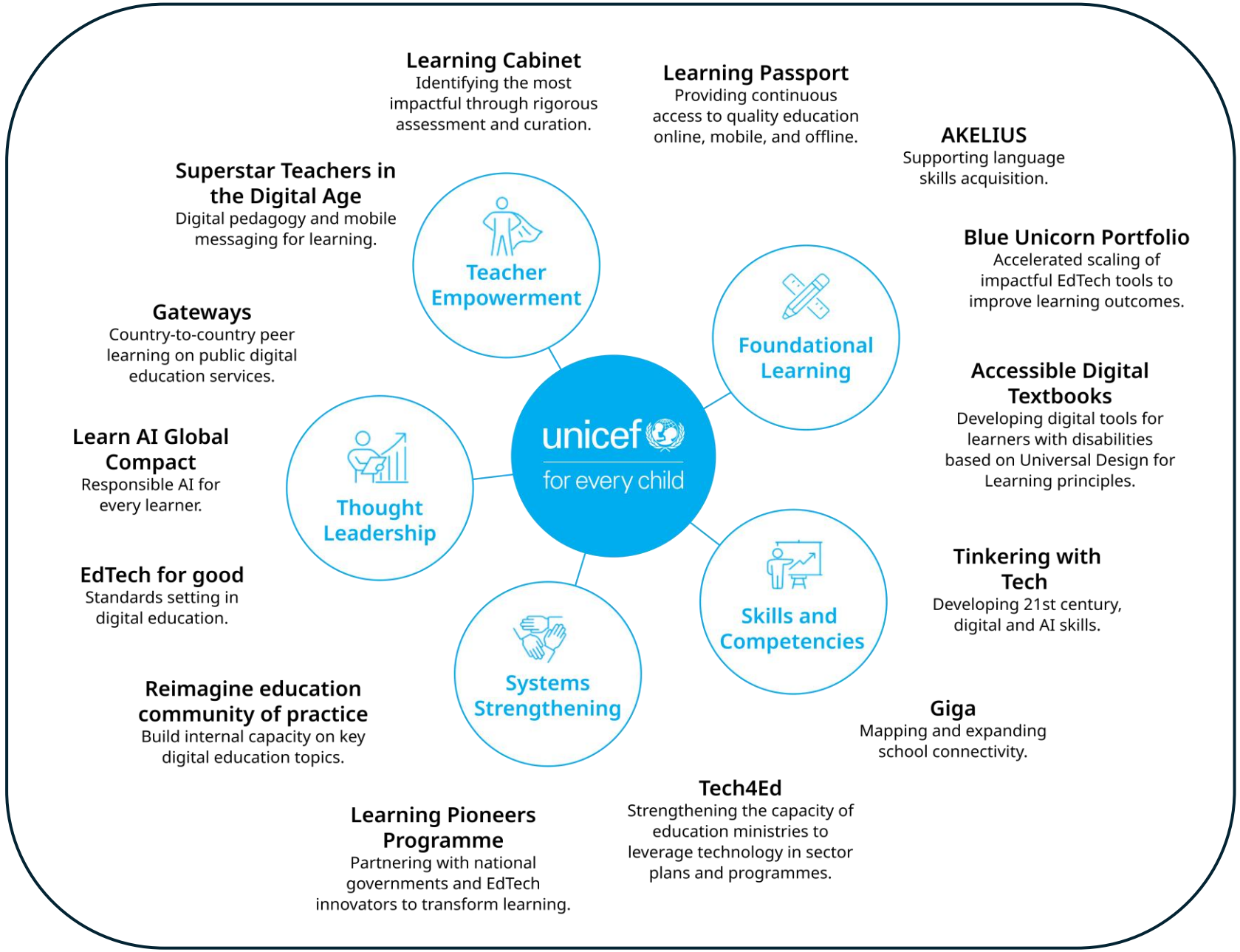
Test and scale based on the best evidence. Research the impact and 'what works.'

Inclusion and address barriers: accessibility for children with disabilities, gender digital divides, linguistic minorities

How does UNICEF’s work on digital education and learning innovation embody the Strategy's key strategic shifts?

UNICEF’s digital education and learning innovation global offering

Aligned with the Digital Education Strategy focus areas



EdTech for Good

Setting the global principles for impactful, equitable EdTech via the EdTech for Good Framework, and curating the best solutions via the Learning Cabinet and Blue Unicorn Portfolio

Strategy Pillar: **Thought Leadership**



Strategic Shifts

From haphazard decision making on EdTech	→	**to** defining global standards for safe, impactful and inclusive EdTech and influencing the EdTech space
From outputs	→	**to** outcomes focused and evidence-based
From scattered unguided EdTech rollout	→	**to** central coordination and ensuring initiatives meet minimum standards (“EdTech for Good”)

EdTech for Good Framework - a portfolio of evidence

1 A global standard for transparency

Introducing organization and product logic models, setting a standard for fundamental product and company transparency.

2 Usable and realistic

Questions consolidated from a much larger set into a more manageable framework. Criteria can be treated differently: informational, evaluative, minimum requirement or knock-out.

3 Standard-informing and adaptable

Evidence examples are tiered — basic, intermediate and advanced — and proportionate to product maturity, risk, scale and context.

4 AI integrated across the framework

AI is reflected throughout rather than treated as a separate technical challenge within education environments.

	Purpose:	Core evaluation question:
Evidence Layer A: **Organization Logic Model**	Organizational transparency	Who built this product, why does it exist, and what incentives or governance structures shape its development?
Evidence Layer B: **Product Logic Model**	Product intent and design context	What is the product designed to do, for whom, and under what assumptions about learning and implementation?
Evidence Layer C: **ET4G Pillar**	Normative judgement	Given the product and context, does it meet the conditions required for responsible use in education?

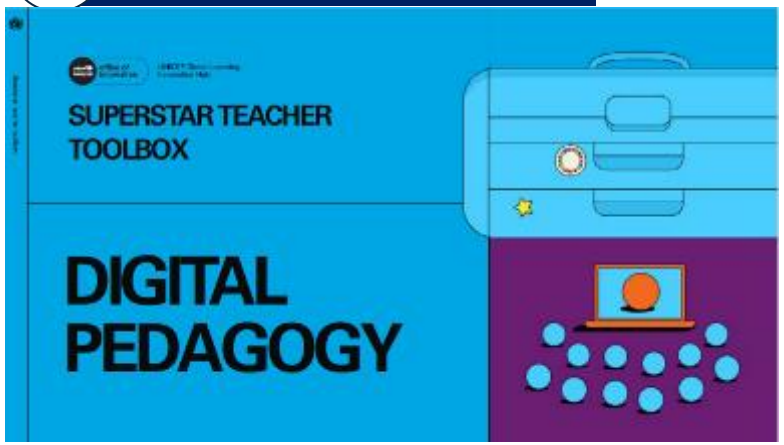
Safety and wellbeing first	**Is the product safe?** Are appropriate safeguards in place for the product to be used safely in education?	Educational impact	**Does the product improve learning (environments)?** Is there credible evidence that the product supports meaningful learning outcomes?
Designed for learning and teaching	**Is the product pedagogically sound?** Is the product aligned with how teaching and learning occur in real educational contexts?	Contextual readiness	**Can the product be implemented and scaled?** Can the product be implemented and scaled responsibly within real educational systems and environments?
Inclusive access	**Is the product inclusive?** Does the product support equitable access and participation for diverse learners?		

Superstar Teachers

Empowering teachers in the digital age – a practical guide to digital pedagogy

Strategy Pillar: **Teachers**

01



02



03



Lead with pedagogy, not technology

Strategic Shift

From technology-driven → **to** teachers at the center, and building their capacity to effectively use tech

- ✓ **Practical tips** for educators to use technology effectively and improve **student engagement, inclusion and learning.**
- ✓ **reflects real-world contexts** with classroom-tested routines, lesson ideas, low-tech examples and assessment guidance.
- ✓ **designed for easy integration** into pre- and in-service, self-learning, coaching and school-based teacher professional development

Delivery modes: PDF guides | Online courses | Mobile delivery

Reimagining Teaching and Learning: Tinkering with Tech & AI

Building more effective teaching & learning models around technology & learning about AI

Strategy Pillar: **Skills & Competencies**



Strategic Shift

From tech-centered, one child, one device models → **to** human-centered, play-based, collaborative, shared devices, and gender-empowering

Hands-on learning about technology **equips children for the future:**

- Developing **21st century skills**
- Democratizing **AI literacy and responsible use**
- Students use technology to **solve real-world problems (e.g. climate change), innovate, and create**
- Uses **design thinking, hands-on learning, and exploration**
- Strengthened focus on **gender in STEM/STEAM learning**
- Promotes a transformation in **teaching practices**

LEARNING PASSPORT

VARIETY OF USE CASES

- Early Childhood Development
- Formal Education
- Youth & Adolescent Skilling
- Teacher & Vocational Educational Training
- Teacher Training
- Disaster Response
- Mental Health & Social Emotional Learning

LEARNERS



DELIVERING A HOLISTIC PROGRAM

The Learning Passport is the only digital education programme in the world that be delivered to anyone, anywhere:

- on any device with a browser
- online, mobile & offline

The Learning Passport's ability to deliver a digital solution without the relying on the internet has the potential to disrupt the educational landscape, address a challenge that billions of learners are facing.

BY THE NUMBERS*

OVERALL RESULTS TO DATE

TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REACHED	TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFLINE COUNTRIES REACHED	TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED USERS	NUMBER OF COURSES	TRAINED USERS (users enrolled in at least one course)	COURSE COMPLETIONS
51	11	12.5 MILLION	24.8 THOUSAND	7.0 MILLION	7.5 MILLION

Harnessing AI for Education : Accessible Digital Textbooks

AI-Powered Tools for Teachers and Learners

Strategy Pillar: **Cross-cutting**



AI-generated “Accessible Digital Textbook”

Strategic Shift

From one-size fits all → **to** adapting teaching and learning to every child’s abilities and needs

Using GenAI to automate time consuming, repetitive tasks for teachers; and automate development of multi-lingual learning materials, accessible for children with disabilities and linguistic minorities, and adapted to different learning levels.

Building capacity of governments to drive the digitization of national learning materials.

Advance inclusive education by enabling equitable access to accessible, multilingual digital learning curriculum and materials.

AI use in Education

A human-centered, pedagogy and ethical-based approach

1. SYSTEM level:

- Holistic, human-centered plans & strategies
- **Early Warning Systems** to identify, support learners at risk of dropping out
- Capacity building of education leadership
- Equity and inclusion, e.g. **Accessible Digital Textbooks**

2. TEACHER level:

- AI-enabled support for CPD & mentoring
- Supporting proven approaches: **Teaching at the Right Level** and **Structured Pedagogy**, e.g. via automated assessments, diagnosis of learner challenges, grouping for micro-lessons, and tailored lesson plans
- Digital pedagogy, AI literacy (**Superstar Teachers Toolkit)**

3. LEARNER level:

- AI-enabled adaptive **Learning Cabinet** solutions evaluated through the **EdTech for Good** framework, accessible content (ADT)

Learn AI Global Compact

Responsible AI for every learner

The opportunity

AI is rapidly becoming part of education, but its benefits will not emerge automatically. How it is designed, governed, financed and used will determine whether it strengthens learning and reduces inequality — or reinforces existing gaps.

Used purposefully, AI can help address long-standing education challenges: strengthening teachers and their professional judgement, enabling more responsive and accessible learning, supporting low-resource languages and contexts, and helping education systems make better use of data and resources.

Learn AI brings governments, educators, young people, technology partners and funders together to move from fragmented pilots and generic tools towards country-led, evidence-informed solutions that are safe, pedagogically sound, inclusive, affordable and sustainable at scale.

Three interconnected workstreams

Together they help translate responsible AI into improved learning outcomes.



Technical clarity shapes investment. | **Financing** enables implementation and scale. | **Public engagement** builds the trust, policy and demand needed for adoption.

In partnership with:

unicef | for every child
#BeyondDigitalAsUsual



Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

GPE Transforming Education

WORLD BANK GROUP

ADB ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

EdTech Hub

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

FINNISH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

UNESCO

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

UN GLOBAL PULSE

Akelius

Microsoft

OpenAI

Google

arm

ELEVA CAPITAL

SITRA

EDUCATION FINLAND

HELSINKI EDUCATION HUB

sanoma

OPETTAJAT ILMAN RAJOJA

FCA

MOOMIN

Aalto University

Shaping the future of digital education | UNICEF Digital Education

#Beyond Digital as Usual

unicef | for every child



What does it mean for your country to go beyond digital as usual to achieve scale and transform learning?