Edo State Learning Agenda

Learning for skills

A plan to accelerate learning for skills for youth in post-basic education in Edo state

This document was prepared by the Edo state government in collaboration with the World Bank, IDInsight, and the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ).

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present this document, which outlines our vision to increase learning for skills development in post-basic education in Edo state as part of our overall learning agenda.

Our vision is to prepare all youths in Edo state to enter the job market with the right skills to become productive and fulfilled citizens. My commitment as the governor of Edo state is to ensure that our young citizens have access to quality education and knowledge to participate in the global labor market of the twenty-first century.

With the evolving Fourth Industrial Revolution, the skills needed in the local and global job marketplaces are rapidly changing, and it is our responsibility to ensure that our youth are ready to meet these changing demands. We are committed to ensuring that our youths are prepared and trained to meet these changing needs. Skills such as digital, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity are increasingly in demand. To benefit and compete in the new world order, access to ordinary post-basic education will no longer be sufficient.

Skills development in post-basic education is the next logical step after our successful reforms in the basic education sector through the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) program. We must continue to build on this success and ensure that those who have benefited from the strong foundation in basic education are not forgotten. As we transition our youth from basic education to post-basic education, we must make sure that no one is left behind.

To achieve our vision of access, quality, and functionality (skill development) of our educational system, we have established a series of interventions for the short term. The objective is to prioritize concrete reforms that can be implemented in the next two years but will have effects for decades. These include defining learning standards for senior secondary school, completing learning assessments, and implementing multiple innovations that can boost learning for youth.

Our focus on skills—cognitive, socioemotional, and job-relevant skills—in post-basic education (comprising senior secondary schooling, technical and vocational education and training [TVET], informal skills development, and higher education) is not just about ensuring that our young people are able to secure good jobs; it is about empowering them to be active and engaged citizens who can contribute to the development of our great state and, ultimately, our nation.

I encourage all stakeholders to support our nascent efforts to increase learning outcomes for skills development in post-basic education. Together, we can achieve our vision of creating a generation of youths who are ready to enter the job market with the right skills to compete and become productive and fulfilled citizens who embody the values, character, and morals of a good Edo citizen.

Godwin Obaseki
Hon. Governor of Edo State

Challenges, progress so far, and the vision going forward

In 2018, the education sector in Edo state faced a myriad of challenges, both in the basic and post-basic education subsectors. At the basic level, the educators utilized obsolete teaching techniques and materials, lacking the necessary skills and knowledge to facilitate learning in the modern age. Access to suitable tools and educational resources to enhance instruction and learning was absent for both teachers and administrators. Furthermore, absenteeism among teachers was widespread, partially attributable to the lack of monitoring and accountability measures.

At the post-basic level, the challenges were even more stark. Senior secondary schools faced multiple problems, starting with the large dropout rates visible in the transition from junior secondary school to senior secondary. The quality of education was also very low, with insufficient and unprepared teachers and an overall lack of teaching and learning materials.

At the post-secondary level, the development of skills was hindered by a system that had formal public TVET (technical and vocational education and training) colleges in poor condition, with outdated laboratory equipment and a shortage of technical teachers with experience using modern technologies and training methods. Additionally, many programs were not designed to provide skills that are relevant in the job market, leading to a loss of accreditation of the training institutions. The system also lacked a quality assurance mechanism for informal skills development, and private vocational schools offered programs with varying levels of quality. While more young people were gaining skills, they were often unable to find employment because their skills did not meet industry

standards. As a result, private companies had to provide additional training to employees to meet the minimum skills required. The provision of informal skills was also weak and presented a large gender gap, especially in the acquisition of digital skills.

Since the government is certain that education is the cornerstone of development, a series of reforms were initiated. Recently, at the senior secondary level, scripted lessons were rolled out, and teachers were trained to develop these lessons in-house. A strong monitoring system is being implemented.

For the formal TVET system, governance and institutional reforms were launched to strengthen the quality and relevance of the skills provided. The government is overhauling its delivery of TVET by first renovating its technical colleges, starting with major rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Government Science and Technical College (GSTC) to make it a center of excellence and a regional hub for technical and vocational skills acquisition. The government has also set up a State Skills Council comprising private and public sector actors. For each technical college, the government is establishing a board, comprising private sector representatives, aimed at enhancing the labor-market responsiveness of technical colleges, supporting skills development and acquisition in the informal skills subsector, improving the availability of appropriately skilled and competent technical teachers and instructors, and accelerating the implementation of outcome-based skills development. Many reforms were also launched for informal skills acquisition, particularly through the Edo State Skills Development Agency and the Edo Innovates program, launched in 2018 to equip Edo's youth with the digital skills necessary for the new nature of work and to contribute to curbing the high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment in the state.

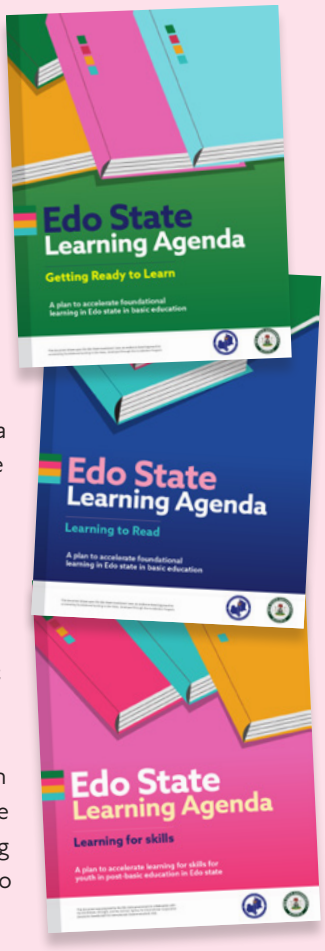
Many of these reforms were supported by strong collaboration with development partners. The World Bank–supported Innovation Development and Effectiveness in the Acquisition of Skills (IDEAS) project is supporting Edo and five other Nigerian states to improve the delivery of TVET. The government is also receiving support from the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) to strengthen multiple aspects of the formal and informal skills development sector. Similarly, the World Bank–supported EdoBESST program has a specific results area focused on informal skills development, more specifically on digital skills.

Following the first few years of implementation, the reforms should continue but with a fresh outlook. It is crucial for any reform or program to be continuous, adaptable, and iterative. Therefore, it is now time to put a stronger focus on learning for skills. This renewed focus requires a clear vision. The learning for skills agenda outlines the state's vision and proposes specific activities that can be implemented in the short term to achieve this vision in the medium term.[1]

1 The vision is aligned with the Western and Central Africa Education Strategy; World Bank, "Western and Central Africa Education Strategy: From School to Jobs; A Journey for the Young People of Western and Central Africa (English)," June 27, 2022, https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/afw-from-school-to-jobs-a-journey-for-the-young-people-of-western-and-central-africa.

Vision: **All youth ready to enter the job market with the right skills to become productive and fulfilled citizens demonstrating the values, character, and morals of a good Edo citizen.**

Edo State's Learning Agenda



The learning agenda for Edo state is a comprehensive plan aimed at creating a conducive learning environment for all children in the state. The objective of the agenda is to ensure that all girls and boys arrive at school ready to learn, acquire real learning, and become ready to enter the job market with the right skills to become productive and fulfilled citizens. The learning agenda represents a step toward learning rather than mere access to education and has a strong focus on sustainability.

The learning agenda prioritizes actions that can be taken in the short term and sustained in the long term. It will be complemented by other long-term policy documents such as the Edo State Education Sector Plan. The agenda does not claim to encompass all the ongoing education reforms in the state but does aim to emphasize the focus on learning.

The learning agenda has three distinct components, each developed in separate documents. The first component is "Getting ready to learn," which focuses on early childhood education and is currently under development. The second component, "Learning to read," aims to improve foundational learning in basic education.

This document is the third component, "Learning for skills," which focuses on post-basic education and aims to equip young people with skills that will enable them to enter the job market and become productive citizens. The learning agenda is a significant step toward transforming the education system in Edo state and creating a brighter future for all its children.

It is worth mentioning that Edo state must continue reforms to strengthen the inputs of the post-basic education sector and to improve its governance and accountability. However, this document focuses on the need to have a stronger emphasis on learning and, more specifically, learning for skills. Thus, this document must be seen as complementary with other efforts such as the EdoBEST 2.0 program, the overall learning agenda, and the strategy and action plan for the Board for Technical and Vocational Education 2022–2027.

Finally, this document represents a first step in the state's efforts to improve learning for skills. Learning from the experiences of others in Nigeria, in the region, and around the globe is critical for post-basic education to increase learning outcomes. By continuously learning from others, the state can refine its approach and enhance the effectiveness of its skills development initiatives and its post-basic education subsector as a whole.

Why a focus on learning for skills?

The focus on learning for skills should be present throughout all the education levels, especially in the post-basic education subsector. In other words, learning for skills should be a continuous process that starts after basic education and continues in senior secondary school, in both the formal and informal skills development subsectors.

The first reason to focus on learning for skills is that many of the students who benefited from the basic education reforms begun in 2018 are now progressing in the education system and moving toward senior secondary schooling. These students must not be left behind. While they benefited from the acquisition of strong foundational skills, they now need to build on these skills and continue their learning experience. They now have high expectations for what the education sector can provide them and how it can prepare them for the future.

The second reason is associated with the dynamics of labor markets. In Nigeria in 2018, an estimated 55 percent of the youth (ages 15–24) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) possessed post-basic education qualifications.[2] This proportion of educated youth in the NEET group is one of the highest in the world and it results from both supply- and demand-side factors. On the one hand, it illustrates that Nigeria is not creating sufficient jobs for the youth entering the labor market. And on the other hand, many of those who go through the formal education system do not receive the right skills that are currently being demanded. This is also the case for those in the informal skills subsector and, of course, for those who do not have access to any learning and skills development opportunities. This produces a mismatch between the demands of the labor market and the supply of skilled workers. These dynamics are exacerbated in Edo, where it is common for youth without proper opportunities to migrate to other places or engage in illegal practices for financial opportunities.

Overall, the focus on learning recognizes that education is much more than schooling. Acquired skills matter much more than the number of years of access to education. In many countries, individuals with higher measured skills have been consistently shown to earn more than their lower-skilled peers who have the same amount of schooling.[3] Thus, investments in post-basic education with a focus on learning are essential to equip Edo's workforce with the requisite skills for productive employment, including the effective use of new technologies in an increasingly digital world. These skills will also enable Edo to produce well-rounded, economically productive students who develop sustainable livelihoods and contribute to a peaceful and democratic society.

2 National Bureau of Statistics: Nigeria, Nigeria Living Standards Survey 2018–2019, accessed January 2022, https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/nada/index.php/catalog/68/study-description.

3 For example, see the results for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in Eric A. Hanushek and Ludger Woessmann, *The Knowledge Capital of Nations: Education and the Economics of Growth*, CESifo Book Series (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015) and Valerio et al., "Are There Skills Payoffs in Low-and Middle-Income Countries? Empirical Evidence Using Step Data," 2016, Policy Research Working Paper 7879, World Bank, Washington, DC. For individual countries such as South Africa, see Peter G. Moll, "Primary Schooling, Cognitive Skills, and Wages in South Africa," *Economica* 65, no. 258 (1998): 263–84; or for Ghana, see Paul W. Glewwe, Eugenie Maiga, and Haochi Zheng, "The Contribution of Education to Economic Growth: A Review of the Evidence, with Special Attention and an Application to Sub-Saharan Africa," *World Development* 59 (1991): 379–93.

What type of skills are needed?

This document follows a multidimensional concept of skills that goes beyond educational attainment to capture human capital more comprehensively.[4] Learning across three types of skills is needed:

Cognitive skills are defined as the "ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, to overcome obstacles by taking thought."[5] Literacy, numeracy, and the ability to solve abstract problems are all cognitive skills. Cognitive skills play a crucial role in academic and work-related tasks, as well as in everyday life.

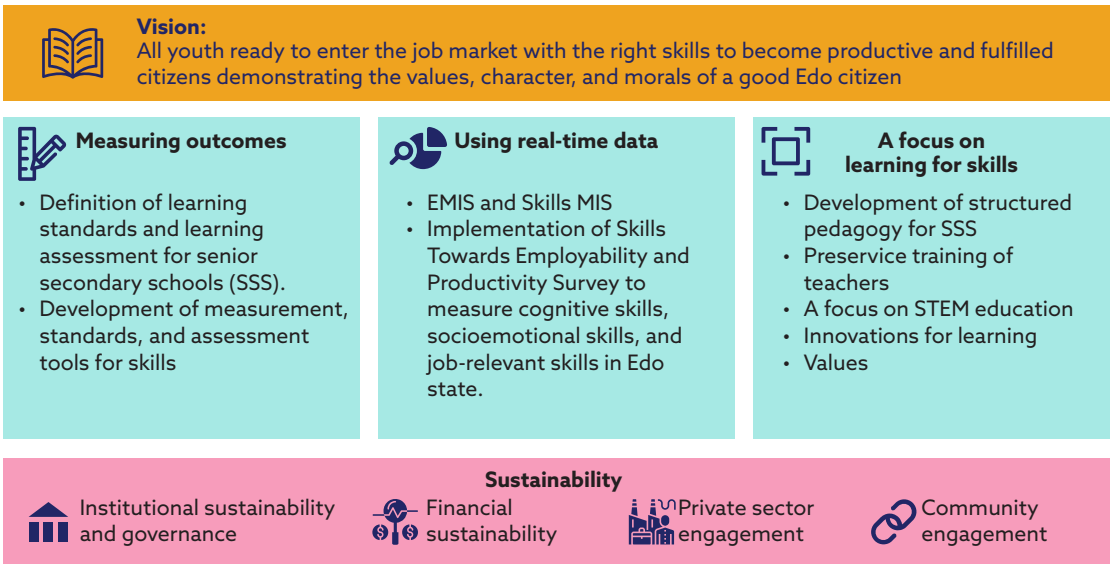
Socioemotional skills, sometimes referred to in the literature as noncognitive skills or soft skills, relate to traits covering multiple dimensions (such as social, emotional, personal, behavioral, and attitudinal). These skills involve self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Socioemotional skills are essential for personal and social development, as they influence how individuals interact with others and navigate the world around them.

Job-relevant skills are task-related (such as computer use) and build on a combination of cognitive and socioemotional skills. They may include technical or vocational skills as well as soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for job performance and career advancement, as they enable individuals to meet the demands and expectations of their employers and customers.

4 "STEP Skills Measurement Surveys: Innovative Tools for Assessing Skills (English)," Social Protection and Labor Discussion Paper No. 1421, July 2014, Washington, DC: World Bank Group, https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/516741468178736065/pdf/897290NWP0P132085290B00PUBLIC001421.pdf.
5 Ulric Neisser et al., "Intelligence: Knowns and Unknowns," *American Psychologist* 51 (1996): 77–101.

How to get there? Specific short-term activities to achieve the vision

Achieving the vision where all youth in Edo are ready to enter the job market with the right skills to become productive and fulfilled citizens requires a concerted effort and a strong focus on learning. This section outlines the three pillars that organize the actions to improve learning of skills in Edo. As mentioned above, these are not the only reforms that are being effected in the post-basic education arena. They only represent actions that can be started in the very short term to ensure a stronger focus on learning. They are complemented by the governance and accountability reforms that are part of initiatives such as EdoBEST 2.0 and the strategy and action plan for the Board for Technical and Vocational Education 2022–2027.



EMIS: Education Management Information System.
Skills MIS: Skills Management Information System.
STEMS: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

Measuring outcomes: Without a precise way to assess learning and skills, advancements in learning cannot confidently be proven. To systematically measure learning progress, two undertakings are part of this plan.

- **Definition of learning standards and implementation of a large-scale learning assessment for senior secondary schools.** In March 2023, the first census-based learning assessment in basic education was conducted with support from the World Bank and the Accelerator Program. The assessment covered English and Math for Grade 3, Grade 6, and JSS3 (junior secondary school 3). All public schools and students currently enrolled in the EdoBEST program participated in the assessment. The pilot for the assessment, conducted in 2022, also included senior secondary schools. The lessons from this experience will be harnessed to design a specific learning assessment for senior secondary schools. This task will include the

development of a learning assessment strategy, the production of specific learning standards aligned with global frameworks, and the elaboration for assessment tests to be appropriate for each grade level. This will also require capacity-building efforts for teachers and other stakeholders to be able to produce standardized assessment tools. Learning does not stop after basic education. Therefore, measuring learning outcomes in senior secondary school will allow the government to track learning trajectories beyond basic education, identify schools that need more support, and design strategies to ensure that no student is left behind in their efforts to develop the right skills for their individual and collective success.

- **Development of measurement, standards, and assessment tools for skills.** This is a crucial aspect of education and training programs. It involves the creation of frameworks and tools that can be used to measure and evaluate the skills and knowledge of learners, as well as the effectiveness of training programs. These measurement tools can include tests, assessments, and evaluations that are designed to measure specific skills and competencies. Standards, on the other hand, provide a benchmark against which the performance of learners can be compared. They provide a set of criteria that define what learners should know and be able to do at each level of their education and training. The development of measurement, standards, and assessment tools for skills is essential to ensure that education and training programs are effective in preparing learners for the world of work. It also helps to ensure that learners are equipped with the skills required to succeed in the economy and that these skills are recognized and valued by employers. Overall, the development of these tools is an important step toward creating a more skilled and productive workforce in Edo.

- This could be the first step toward putting in place a **skills qualifications framework** in order to clarify learning pathways and ensure the quality and comparability of trainings provided. Such a framework could provide horizontal pathways for qualified youth in the TVET system to rejoin the general education stream. It should also recognize emerging innovative learning models such as microcredentials and stackable credentials. The framework will allow for formal certification of competencies achieved by recognition of prior learning.

Importantly, these two activities will contribute to developing specific targets to measure progress toward this component of the learning agenda, which is focused on learning for skills.

Using real-time data: Since 2018, the government has made important efforts to collect granular and rigorous data on the basic education system. As students progress in their educational journey, they cannot be left behind. More and better data need to be collected for the post-basic education subsector and the data shall be used to inform decision-making with the end goal of improving learning outcomes.

- **Developing a strong EMIS and Skills Management Information System (MIS).** Having a robust information system is a precondition for effective decision-making in the education sector. As a result, the government is working toward creating an EMIS that will streamline the existing data at student, school, local government, and state levels. The EMIS will bring together fragmented information with learning data and real-time updates on students' and teachers' attendance and other important indicators. The primary objective of enhancing EMIS is to promote data-driven decision-making and ensure a more precise allocation of resources toward priority education goals. Importantly, the EMIS will be integrated across the education subsectors, which will allow the government to follow students' learning trajectories as they progress from one level to the next. In addition to the focus on learning, EMIS will be harnessed to develop early-warning systems to detect those at risk of dropping out. This is important at the post-basic level, since according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2021 survey, 20.9 percent of children of senior secondary school age in Edo are out of school.[6]

- For the skills development subsector, the EMIS will be integrated into a Skills MIS, which will include information on the supply side (TVET or other training programs, their teachers, and students) and on the labor-market demand side (employers, wages, jobs, skills demanded).

- **Implementation of Skills Toward Employability and Productivity (STEP) survey.** This program provides a set of core surveys and implementation materials to build comparable country databases on skills that can be used for country- or state-level policy analysis. STEP consists of two survey instruments that collect information on the supply and demand for skills. It measures the three types of skills aforementioned in this document: cognitive, socioemotional, and job-relevant. The STEP survey will help the government better understand the interplay between skills, employability, and productivity. Edo state will take advantage of this and other ready-to-use tools that are tailored to collect data on skills in low- and middle-income country contexts.[7]

A focus on learning for skills. A focus on learning for skills as part of Edo state's learning agenda recognizes that education is a continuous process that begins in early childhood and continues throughout an individual's life. This approach involves providing learners with the necessary skills and knowledge at every stage of their development. Adopting a life-cycle approach to learning ensures that learners are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to Edo's society. It also helps to ensure that education systems are aligned with the needs of the economy and the job market. Additionally, a life-cycle approach to learning ensures that no learner is left behind and that everyone has access to quality education and training opportunities, regardless of their age or background. Hence, a series of actions will be taken to strengthen the focus on learning for skills.

6 MICS, "Nigeria: 2021 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and National Immunization Coverage Survey (NICS); Survey Findings Report, August 2022," https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/media/6316/file/2021%20MICS%20full%20report%20.pdf.
7 "STEP Skills Measurement Surveys."

- **Development of structured pedagogy for senior secondary school**. The Edo Ministry of Education introduced scripted lessons for senior secondary school in the 2022–23 academic year. Going forward, the objective will be to strengthen the alignment between the lesson plans, other teaching materials, and the science of learning. Given the limited evidence about the impact of structured pedagogy programs in post-basic education, this initiative will be accompanied with strong monitoring efforts to understand the effects of scripted lessons on learning in senior secondary schools. All the lesson plans have been developed by the government's teachers. Following the example of basic education, all teachers will be provided with digital technology that tracks teaching practices such as time spent on lesson completion.[8]

- **Innovative teaching.** Teaching quality and teacher motivation are essential prerequisites for engaged students. The government is recruiting qualified teachers and introducing a streamlined curriculum for teacher preservice training that focuses on keeping students engaged through project-based activities to enhance their learning. In addition, the pre-service training includes peer-to-peer coaching, facilitation, and knowledge exchange to speed up skill acquisition, performance, and engagement among teachers. Investing in innovative teaching will foster synergies across the components of the learning agenda. While teacher training is part of the post-basic education agenda (through the College of Education), their training also has a direct impact on the students in basic education who will benefit from improved teaching practices. These reforms with a focus on innovative teaching follow the recent merge of the previous three colleges of education into one (with three campuses), each catering to teacher training at different levels.

- **A focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and digital skills.** The government will complement the national curriculum with content that is applicable in the twenty-first century. This will give students an opportunity to gain relevant skills and should strengthen links between education levels and with industry. This will ensure that learning is grounded in real-world utility. Students will be motivated to learn when they can see how what they are studying relates to the real world. One way to foster this understanding of education's relevance and practicality is by putting a stronger focus on STEM, including in TVET, placing a priority on digital skills.

- The widespread adoption of technology globally has not only expanded the range of required skills but also altered the manner in which jobseekers can connect with employment opportunities. Proficiency in digital skills can provide youth with the ability to succeed and generate novel possibilities for them to enter nontraditional job markets. This is already evident in Edo through the Innovation Hubs launched in recent years. Nevertheless, the focus on digital skills needs to be expanded. Senior secondary schools must ensure all students have at least basic digital literacy, while formal and informal skills training can focus on intermediate and specialized digital skills. The innovation grants for digital skills development provided under the IDEAS project will contribute to this objective.

- **Innovations for learning.** The government will also explore the implementation of innovations that can boost learning for skills in Edo. Some examples include computer-assisted adaptive learning to increase student learning in post-basic education[9] and virtual reality to develop job skills.

- **Values.** The government sets out to develop students who portray the values, character, and morals of a good Edo citizen. Thus, a citizenship culture will be promoted. Building on critical skills discussed above and job-relevant skills, along with a focus on socioemotional skills, will culminate in developing adults who display the desired traits of a good Edo citizen.

8 The Ministry of Education has drafted scripted lesson plans for all subjects except for food and nutrition, which they aim to start within the coming weeks. Teachers are currently using their personal Android phones to access lesson plans, and the Ministry of Education is in the process of distributing tablets to schools.

9 These programs have been found to have positive effects on learning for post-basic education; Louis Major, Gill A. Francis, and Maria Tsapali, "The Effectiveness of Technology-Supported Personalised Learning in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Meta-Analysis," *British Journal of Educational Technology* (2021): 1–30, https://docs.edtechhub.org/lib/5U948655/download/A9TPT8DU/Major%20et%20al_The%20effectiveness%20of%20technology-supported%20personalised%20learning%20in%20low-%20and.pdf. Examples of the implementation of computer-assisted adaptive learning include India (see K. Muralidharan, A. Singh, and A. J. Ganimian, "Disrupting Education? Experimental Evidence on Technology-Aided Instruction in India," *American Economic Review* 109, no. 4 (April 2019): 1426–60, https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20171112) and Ecuador (see Tracy Wilichowski and Cristóbal Cobo, "Considering an Adaptive Learning System? A Roadmap for Policymakers," World Bank Blogs, January 6, 2021, https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/considering-adaptive-learning-system-roadmap-policymakers).

Ensuring the sustainability of the reforms

Working on the sustainability of interventions in education is fundamental to ensure that the positive impacts are not short-lived and that the benefits of the interventions can be enjoyed by future generations. It is essential to keep in mind that sustainability means much more than just maintaining the existing system. It means the continued improvement and strengthening of the system over time. This will be ensured across three dimensions.

- **Institutional sustainability and governance.** Interventions must be designed and implemented in such a way that they do not depend solely on the political will of those in power. In other words, the government will prioritize the development of a capable and autonomous bureaucracy that can implement the reforms regardless of who is in power. Investing in building human capacity is also crucial to institutionalize the interventions and ensure their long-term success. Competent bureaucrats and good school leadership crucially contribute to improved learning outcomes by strengthening teaching and ensuring the effective use of resources. Along those lines, the Ministry of Education is working on devolving stewardship and accountability to the local government and school levels by setting up offices in each local government

area and promoting principals' autonomy for senior secondary schools. In the same vein, policies must be established to ensure that the system remains on track, even if there are changes in government. The institutional scaffolding of the learning agenda in general, and the learning for skills component in particular, will be supported by a forthcoming Education Sector Plan.

- **Financial sustainability.** Sustainable interventions require predictable and sufficient resources for the years to come. Therefore, budget planning must be a priority to ensure the continued availability of resources for education. To support these efforts, the government will conduct an expenditure review to identify areas for more efficient and effective spending and to make recommendations for improvement. The expenditure review will be accompanied by a cost study for post-basic education.

- In the medium term, it will be critical to diversify sources of funding to support service delivery of skills provision. Sustainable resource mobilization includes income generation through philanthropic donations; consultancies; contract research; and continuing education, possibly in the form of professional short-term tailored courses for private clients, civil society organizations, and the public sector. Another possible income source could be through increased tuition fees for those who can afford to pay, potentially including those families that can afford to pay small fees for senior secondary school. Cofunding of programs by companies and governments is another avenue to augment resource mobilization.

- Going forward, the government will also explore the potential linking of allocations to performance indicators. This could include funding formulas, performance contracts, and competitive grants, some of which are already under implementation.

- **Private sector engagement.** It is essential to establish the private sector's role as a provider of skills to ensure success in Edo. This includes both formal and informal employers. The involvement of the private sector, including employers and their employees, is necessary in policy development, financing, and the actual delivery of skills training. For the provision of skills, priorities include (1) establishing effective quality assurance mechanisms for licensing and accreditation and for terminating programs and institutions that do not meet minimal quality standards, and (2) monitoring the socioeconomic distribution of students, allowing low-income students to access student loan systems where such systems exist.[10] Building on successful experiences such as the Edo Innovation Hub, which delivers skills training together with the private sector, will be crucial for the success of the learning for skills agenda.

- Apprenticeships and other forms of on-the-job training will also be relevant. This is usually a more flexible option when compared with formal TVET and can cater to many types of youth, which can contribute to having an impact in the short term. Currently, Edo is one of the six states that are implementing apprenticeships under the IDEAS project.

- Additionally, Edo plans to work alongside the private sector to explore options for digital skills training to reach a large number of young people. This mass-skilling initiative will leverage mobile-friendly digital platforms to provide affordable training to vulnerable youth who are either NEET, engaged in precarious jobs, or in other vulnerable situations. Using this approach, individuals who are unable to afford a complete degree program or commit to an extended program can access an alternate pathway to obtain the necessary skills.

- Finally, establishing stronger connections between service providers and employers is crucial to enhance the quality and appropriateness of skills training. Collaboration with top employers and professional organizations will be critical.

10 "Western and Central Africa Education Strategy From School to Jobs: A Journey for the Young People of Western and Central Africa (English)," Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2022, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099316106202221243/P17614904920570fa0b35f0661410cd7c3c.

- **Community engagement** is crucial to sustain the reforms from the bottom up. The support and commitment of parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders is essential to ensure that all youth in Edo learn and acquire skills relevant for the labor market. This engagement can be achieved through communication strategies that inform the community about the interventions' positive impacts and the importance of continuing to invest in skills training and development. A community-led approach can ensure that the interventions are grounded in the community's needs and expectations, which ultimately leads to greater sustainability. The government will also explore the implementation of low-cost and high-return interventions to engage parents and communities. For instance, simply providing information to parents and children on the income-earning benefits of education, sources of funding, and local schools' quality also has a high impact. The recent report on Smart Buys for education identifies this intervention as the only "great buy," that is, an education intervention that is likely to be highly cost effective either because of its large benefits in terms of learning outcomes or low costs.[11]

11 Angrist et al., "How to Improve Education Outcomes Most Efficiently? A Comparison of 150 Interventions Using the New Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling Metric," Policy Research Working Paper 9450, World Bank Group, 2020.