UNICEF-ITU collaboration to bridge the digital divide in Europe and Central Asia
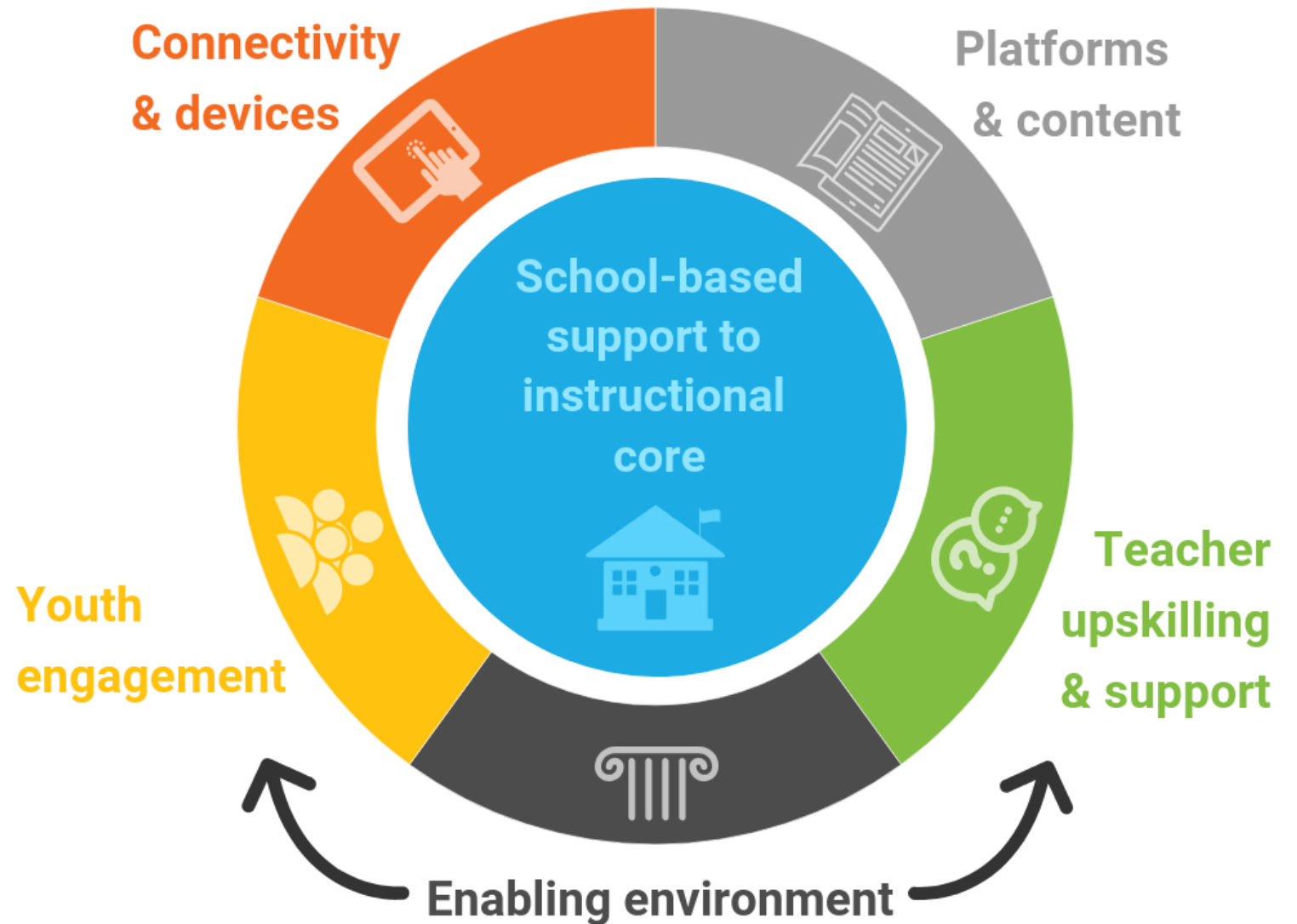
Sarah Fuller, Education Consultant

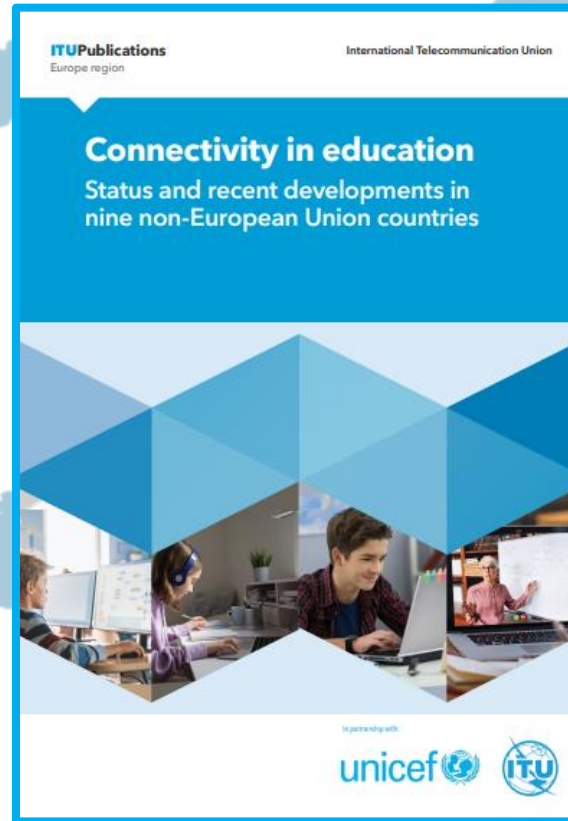15 December 2021

UNICEF Regional Office for Europe & Central Asia

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LearnIn

Strengthening the quality, inclusion and equity of digital learning ecosystems in Europe & Central Asia

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Connectivity in Education

- Education systems, quality, broadband,

- Government strategies

- Partnerships and financing

- Responses to COVID-19

- 9 countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Turkey & Serbia

ITUPublications
Europe region

International Telecommunication Union

Connectivity in education
Status and recent developments in nine non-European Union countries

In partnership with

unicef ITU

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Resource package

- In-depth report with national and aggregate analysis
- Catalogue of challenges and experiences
- Visual brief
- Country briefs

National Workshops: Bridging the Divide in Connectivity for Education
for Education and ICT decision-makers

ITU Office for Europe & UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

CATALOGUE OF CHALLENGES

High education personnel costs can crowd out investment in learning materials, equipment and training.

Unequal access to digital tools and connectivity limits the **ability of digital technology to accelerate learning outcomes**, such as improving proficiency in foundational skills

Unequal access to devices and connectivity exacerbates existing **disparities in education access and outcome**s across vulnerable groups.

In schools, there are **low ratios of PCs per**

In schools, **PCs are sometimes out of com** speed adequate for online learning.

In schools, **PCs are concentrated in one la**

Lacking access to devices and connectivit distance teaching and learning.

Lacking access to devices and connectivit distance teaching and learning.

Lacking broadband strategies based on a tive deployment and identification of scho

Lacking geo-referenced, central broadba ment and identification of schools in need

Poor, limited, or non-existent harmonizati ders efficient management and administra

Inadequate oversight mechanisms in dec tion of issues and the provision of support.

Strategic education documents sometime **equity focus**, or action plans and objective

Insufficient ICT training for teachers impe distance education delivery.

Digital skills are lacking amongst student mally from EdTech-supported learning and job market.

Substantial and coherent **links between di** namely curricula reforms, remain **undefine**

CATALOGUE OF EXPERIENCES

Broadband infrastructure mapping systems can provide transparent information on broadband to markets and consumers and support infrastructure sharing so as to more efficiently allocate public funding for school infrastructure development.

Explicitly **referencing ICTs, digital skills and school connectivity in strategic documents** governing education can better focus priorities for long-term policy.

Education management information systems (EMISs) can modernize the collection, management and use of data for better administration of the education system.

Leveraging **partnerships with international financial institutions** can provide schools with better connectivity and device access.

Explicitly **referencing school connectivity in national strategic documents** governing broadband deployment strategies can better focus priorities for long-term policy.

Leveraging **partnerships with mobile network operators, Internet service providers and other private-sector partners** can provide project financing to decrease digital learning gaps.

Leveraging **partnerships with international organizations** can help implement projects to provide connectivity and devices and to develop digital skills programming in schools as a fundamental part of curricula.

Issuing educational content and creating platforms **adapted to local minority languages** can increase access and use among linguistic-minority children, who are at greater risk of exclusion from distanced learning.

Forging **partnerships with civil society organizations and NGOs** can help fill gaps in connectivity and device availability to decrease the digital divide in education.

Television broadcasting, a solution to fill education gaps during the COVID-19 pandemic, can be continued post-pandemic to reinforce learning in the home and bridge learning gaps using ICTs.

Establishing **donation campaigns based on transparent data and gaps assessments** can connect potential donors of ICT equipment with schools in need.

Public–private partnerships can provide innovating financing mechanisms for better connectivity and device provision by tapping into international organizations, civil society organizations and international financial institutions.

Transparently and comprehensively **collecting data on digital skills** levels among students, teachers and parents can help better assess gaps and thus target interventions.

Enacting **digital skills training for teachers** can help teachers better adapt to distance learning and foster ICT literacy among students.

Developing **geographical information systems specifically dedicated to mapping school infrastructure** can prove key for planning, establishing, monitoring and supervising schools and for developing modern, environmentally friendly and original infrastructure.

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Thank you.