

# Giga: Connecting Every School to the Internet

**UNICEF and ITU have launched “Giga”, an initiative to connect every school to the internet, and every young person to information, opportunity, and choice.**

Giga is anchored in the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation's findings 1A and 1B which state, respectively, that by "2030 every adult should have affordable access to digital networks" and calls for "a broad, multi-stakeholder alliance, involving the UN, create a platform for sharing digital public goods".

**Providing connectivity to the world remains a challenge.** According to the ITU, nearly 3.6 billion people in the world do not have access to the Internet. The lack of access to the Internet means exclusion, marked by the lack of access to the wealth of information available online, fewer resources to learn and to grow, and limited opportunities for the most vulnerable children and youth to fulfil their potential. Closing the digital divide requires global cooperation, leadership, and innovation in finance and technology.

## Giga has four pillars



**Map** – In partnership with governments, Giga has started by mapping connectivity demand, using schools as a base point, and identifying where there are connectivity gaps. This information, combined with existing ITU mapping data, allows countries to take stock of their existing infrastructure and assess wired and wireless availability when assessing appropriate solutions for connecting schools. Already more than 800,000 schools in 15 countries have been mapped, and are viewable live at [www.projectconnect.world](http://www.projectconnect.world)



**Finance** – Giga will work with governments and advise them on building affordable and sustainable country specific models for finance and delivery, subsidizing market creation costs and incentivizing private sector investment.



**Connect** – In partnership with industry, and based on the mapping results, Giga will determine the best possible technical solutions available to provide schools with required connectivity, and countries with safe, secure, reliable, fit for purpose infrastructure to support future digital development needs. This includes determining the best possible solutions for last mile connectivity.



**Empower** - Building on investments by UNICEF's Venture Fund in open source solutions, Giga will work with governments to identify, localize, and implement appropriate Digital Public Goods at scale, as per a country's development priorities and in coordination with the broader national digital strategy. The focus is on, but not limited to, information and skills to children, teachers, and administrators.

#### Why is this possible now?

1. **Financing:** New global financing instruments built can be more sophisticated than the advanced market commitments of GAVI
2. **Connectivity technology:** Connectivity expansion through low earth orbit satellites and mesh technologies now make building coverage easier.
3. **Accountability:** We have new ways to transparently monitor progress and ensure service continuity (e.g. blockchain)
4. **Focus:** Concentrating on "schools" as an entry point for bid construction gives us a laser-focus and a unique "edge" to bring connectivity investments into target communities

## Country Engagement

Giga is focusing its initial efforts on three regions (Central Asia, Eastern Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa) in partnership with governments and regional leads. The first Giga Bid will be launched in September 2020.

## How to Get Involved

Only by working together can Giga succeed. Giga welcomes engagement and leadership from governments, businesses, civil society, technology providers, donors, investors and finance experts. You can find out more information at [www.gigaconnect.org](http://www.gigaconnect.org)