



mobile  
learning  
week

Innovating for quality

# OUTCOMES

of the  
UNESCO/ITU  
Policy Forum,

Paris, 11 March 2016





MOBILE  
LEARNING WEEK  
INNOVATING  
FOR QUALITY

UNESCO/ITU Policy Forum  
Outcomes

UNESCO HQ in Paris  
Friday 11th March 2016

## INTRODUCTION

The Mobile Learning Week Policy Forum facilitated for the first time a structured and constructive high-level dialogue between the education and ICT sectors. Forum participants saw this cross-sector dialogue and collaboration as a critical factor in the success of any digital learning initiative at national level. The Policy Forum sought to discuss how newly affordable digital devices can help address urgent educational challenges and meet the needs of students, teachers and administrators, and what policy instruments and initiatives can make the best use of mobile learning for quality learning for all.

Forum participants welcomed this initiative by UNESCO and ITU to facilitate policy dialogue and collaboration between governments, international organizations and the private sector to seek better ways of working together. When effective, this dialogue can have significant impact on mobile learning uptake by unlocking systemic bottlenecks and creating an enabling Policy and Regulatory environment. It can also unlock resources crucial to sustaining long-term national mobile learning initiatives.

To maintain an ongoing cross-sector dialogue between all stakeholders at national level, it was suggested that national committees/task forces or other mechanisms could structure this dialogue and ensure that incentives are aligned for all those who are involved in the mobile learning ecosystem.

## ROLE OF ICT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

The ICT public and private sectors' roles are central for mobile learning to ensure equal and affordable access to information and that all schools and educational institutions are powered with the required infrastructure and connectivity. The internet is a gateway to global knowledge. Lack of access to ICT or connectivity denies students a wealth of learning opportunities. However, there is a need to find a balance to please each party. A balance must be found between the public and private sector with each working to its own strengths.



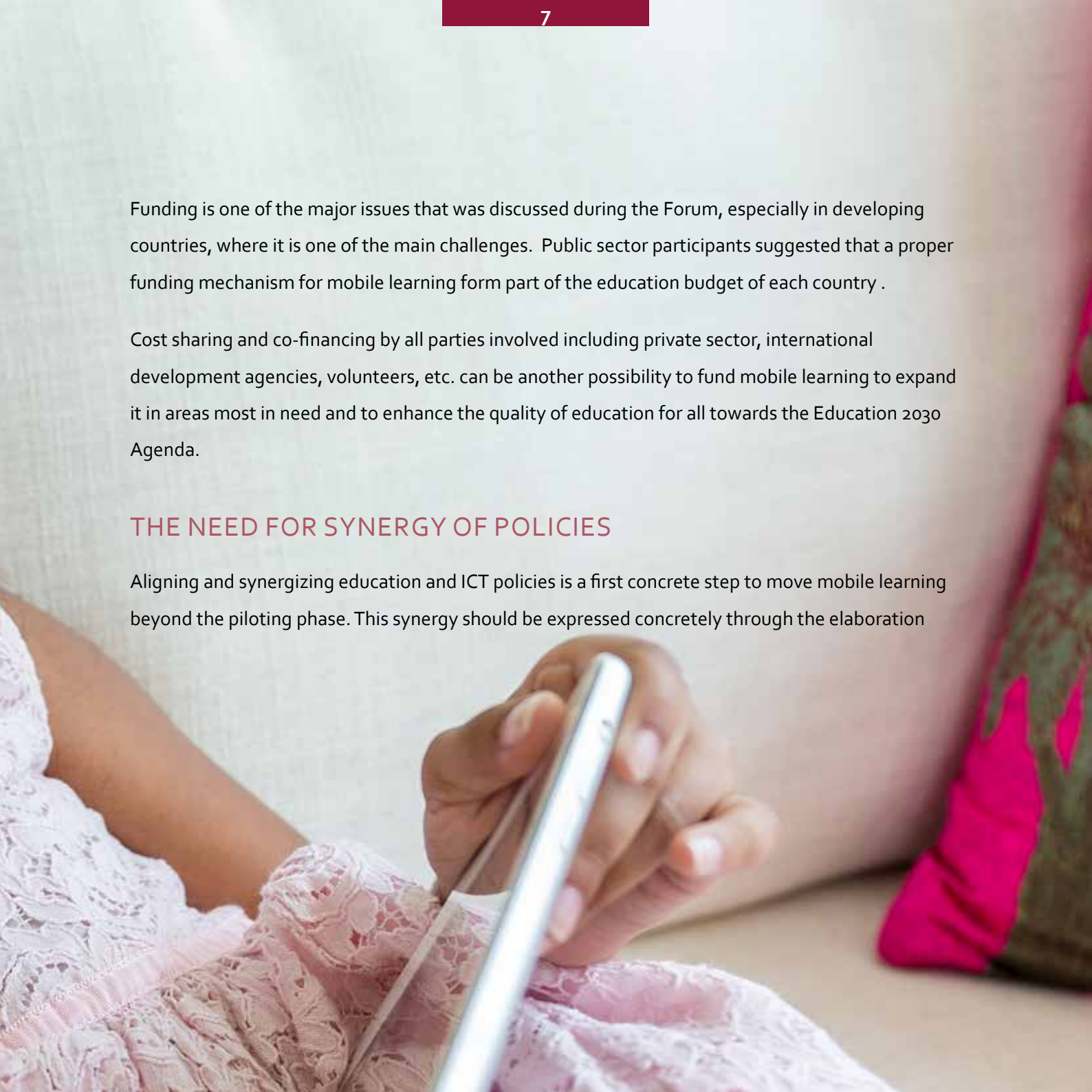


Funding is one of the major issues that was discussed during the Forum, especially in developing countries, where it is one of the main challenges. Public sector participants suggested that a proper funding mechanism for mobile learning form part of the education budget of each country .

Cost sharing and co-financing by all parties involved including private sector, international development agencies, volunteers, etc. can be another possibility to fund mobile learning to expand it in areas most in need and to enhance the quality of education for all towards the Education 2030 Agenda.

## THE NEED FOR SYNERGY OF POLICIES

Aligning and synergizing education and ICT policies is a first concrete step to move mobile learning beyond the piloting phase. This synergy should be expressed concretely through the elaboration



of ICT and Broadband policies and strategies that take into account the needs of other sectors, particularly given their critical contribution not only to SGD4, but to all SDGs.

This forward-looking perspective demands that Digital Learning be an integral part of national education strategies.

## ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION FOR ALL

Each sector should strive to reduce existing disparities in access to technology and learning opportunities especially for those who are marginalized, with special needs or without access to existing education provision. Access to quality education for all – which includes access to ICT and broadband – is an imperative for building inclusive and participatory knowledge societies.

Governments should elaborate pragmatic strategies to provide affordable devices and access to all, while also considering ways to leverage the technology that people already own, through, for example, BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) strategies. An ultimate objective is that every student and teacher has access to a connected device, a prerequisite for the adoption of mobile learning both inside and outside schools. It is also important to consider the cost of broadband and how expensive it can be in some countries. Governments should ensure free internet access in schools and provide teachers in rural areas with free data packages. Collaboration is very important to achieve sustainable results.





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