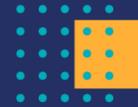**INNOVATION EDGE**

Apply for funding and venture building support.

Edtech and early childhood development (ECD) has the opportunity to leapfrog a child's progress in education and unlock their full potential levelling the playing fields for all children no matter their background, geographical location or socioeconomic status.

A call for innovative educational technology (edtech) solutions that will result in quality home or centre-based learning opportunities in South Africa with a focus on children, ages 0 to 6.

Selected applicants will be supported to pitch their solutions to the Innovation Edge Investment Committee at a Zoom meeting in March 2021. Successful ventures will each receive up to R1.3 million in funding, strategic coaching, customised venture building support and connections to social capital.

Submissions deadline: 31 October 2021
Click here for the APPLICATION FORM

CONSIDERATION CRITERIA
We welcome applications from individual innovators, registered non-profit and for profit social enterprises in South Africa or those who are based out of the country with a venture that can be implemented in South Africa.

The following criteria must be met to be eligible for consideration:-
- Ventures must be at the stage of either feasibility testing; or prototyping and market testing; or transitioning to scale. We **do not** accept ventures in the ideation phase.
- Ventures must be innovative in that they find an entirely new way of doing things or repurpose an existing solution in order to solve an evidence-based problem.

- The venture needs to have a capable and committed lead person, who is able to benefit from coaching.
- The venture must, directly or indirectly, benefit children aged 0-6 years (this includes the period of development during pregnancy) in South Africa.
- It must not exclude children in low-income families but can include children in middle/high-income families.
- Ventures must be characterised by a high potential for creating a positive social impact on educational/developmental outcomes - likely with a specific mission to improve accessibility, quality and/or contextual relevance of education

PROMPTS TO CONSIDER

Everyday interactions between parents* and their children present the perfect opportunities to build and strengthen a child's ability to learn. Early language and literacy skills are developed through everyday moments – telling stories, reading books, having back and forth conversations (even before a child can speak) and playing together.

Many parents assume that learning begins when school does. They are not aware of the **simple, but powerful learning opportunities** that lie in their **everyday interactions** with their young child. Research[1] has also found that low-income families have very little time available for these activities, and possess few resources such as children's books or toys. Early learning interventions need to include well designed and contextually appropriate solutions to encourage responsive and interactive parenting.

In addition, many early childhood programmes often lack the resources and support they need to provide an accessible, quality and contextually relevant learning environment for children. We also know that the [2]presence of a range of different learning materials in the classroom as well as mentored and motivated practioners leads to better child outcomes.

As access to technology grows rapidly throughout South Africa, edtech provides an opportunity to help leapfrog (harness innovation to rapidly accelerate progress) a child's development in education - both at home and in centre-based learning programmes.

How might your solution...
- Empower and equip parents with the tools they need to make the most of these powerful learning opportunities that lie in their everyday interactions with their young child, aged 0 to 6.
- Leverage technology as a means to connect and drive engagment from teachers and/or parents.
- Equip and inspire teachers with the relevant tools they need to provide a relevant, quality and accessible early learning experience.
- Connect teachers and parents to both play unified and active roles in a childs learning and development journey.
- Transform how early learning resources are engaged with in the home or in group-based programmes
- Make early learning playful and engaging using or inspired by technology

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[1] https://ilifalabantwana.co.za/sa-early-childhood-review-2019/
[2] Aboud, 2006; Montie, Xiang & Schweinhart, 2006; Trawick-Smith et al, 2015; UNESCO, 2017
*All loving and active caregivers in childrens lives.

- Consider the use of data as a barrier for low-income families.
- Consider language barriers and tech literacy as a challenge to engaging and onboarding parents or teachers.
- Consider how your venture can be self-sustainable over time, understanding the key conditions, requirements and pathways to become so.
- Consider that many parents themselves have not received a quality education.
- Consider that many parents don't have a lot of free time to implement learning activities.
- Embed daily habits in parents lives that enable them to play active roles in their child's learning and development journey.
- Stand out from the other edtech solutions on the market and find an entirely new way of doing things or repurpose an existing solution

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ITEM	LINKS
Brookings How edtech can help leapfrog progress in education	https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-ed-tech-can-help-leapfrog-progress-in-education/
Save the Children Edtech for learning in emergencies and displaced settings	https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13238/pdf/edtech-learning.pdf
GSMA Education For All in the Time of COVID-19: How EdTech can be Part of the Solution	https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/EdTech-Final-WEB.pdf
Center for Global Development What works in Edtech?	https://www.cgdev.org/blog/what-works-edtech
South African Early Childhood Review 2019	https://innovationedge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SA-ECR_2019_12_09_2019_online_pages.pdf
Innovation Edge Edtech Investment 3 Little Minutes	https://innovationedge.org.za/project/3-little-minutes/
Innovation Edge Edtech Investment Finding Thabo	https://innovationedge.org.za/project/findingthabo/
Innovation Edge Edtech Investment Trackosaurus	https://innovationedge.org.za/project/trackosaurus/
Innovation Edge Edtech Investment Teampact	https://innovationedge.org.za/project/teampact/

Innovation Edge Insights The Early Learning Programme Outcomes Study	https://innovationedge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Innovation-Insights_ELPO-General-Report.pdf
UCT Children's Institute The South African Child Gauge	http://www.ci.uct.ac.za/ci/child-gauge/2017