# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## EDTECH@UNIMA2024

## BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 outbreak has stimulated increasing interest in digital technology integration into education. In Malawi, the aspiration to 'turn schools into ICT centres' is not new, as similar efforts date to the 1960s. While the nature and types of technologies introduced in schools have been changing, the rationales for introducing them have remained almost the same.

Three popular rationales are evident in Malawi's efforts to digitize education. The first is that technology can improve teaching and learning. For example, research and programmes implemented by VSO in Malawisu ggest that EdTech facilitates interactive and engaging multimedia learning experiences and fosters personalized and inclusive learning. A related study by Imagine Worldwide in Malawi also showed that edtech can increase school attendance rates.

Second, technology in schools can empower the next generation with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the digital economy. Proponents of this view suggest that all learners must be competent users of digital technology so that they are prepared for future jobs that are not yet known. The Malawi Government recognizes the potential of digital education in realizing " wealthy and self-reliant nation through provision of integrated and inclusive ICT, digital systems and life enhancing services" as envisioned in the MW2063.

Third, it is claimed that technology will enhance access to education by all learners. For example, digital technology provides platforms for learning in open and distance learning.

On the other hand, although the above-highlighted rationales are appealing, and despite the emerging evidence on how EdTech can improve education in Malawi, some challenges persist.  Among others, EdTech projects in Malawi have been relying on external aid and the private sector. For example, the Ministry of Education, World Bank, Airtel Malawi and UNICEF are some of the active players in the Connect a School Project.

Related to this, most efforts in the development of digital education have tended to be enthusiastic and celebratory about what technology can or will do. This tendency can hide the potential harm of digital technology in schools.

The **EdTech@UNIMA2024** conference will engage with the above-highlighted issues with the aim of fostering dialogue from different perspectives. The conference is premised on the consideration that the current hullabaloo around digitizing education in Malawi, including the use of Artificial Intelligence, deserve further scrutiny.

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

We invite proposals that explore scaling the impact of current edtech innovations at all levels of education in Malawi, especially considering issues of feasibility, adaptability and sustainability.

All proposals should be submitted to edtech@unima.ac.mw, CC angelinakalongola96@gmail.com.

## GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

### Proposals for Exhibitions

Individuals or groups of individuals interested in exhibiting their educational technologies are invited to submit proposals. The proposal must include details of the applicant (s), description of the technology and the instructional problem (s) that the technology addresses, and how the technology can be/is used for educational purposes. Where possible, the proposal must also show evidence of the technology's influence on education (e.g. supporting materials in the form of students' performance, engagement, or references from students and fellow academic members).

### Paper presentations

Oral or poster presentations should include the following: title of presentation; author name (s) and affiliation; abstract (150 words); 3-5 keywords; contact (email and phone number); 5–8 pages of the paper, including: Introduction/study context, Theoretical or Conceptual Framework (if necessary), Literature review including significance of the study, Methodology, Results/findings, Discussion/Implications and References.

## KEY DATES

**Submission of Papers and Proposals for Exhibitions:** 15th February- 30th March 2024

**Registration:** 10th to 18th April 2024

**Conference days:** 16th-17th May 2024

## ENQUIRIES

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