
THE GOBEE LEARNING AGENDA:

Can we sustainably implement and scale a digital assessment tool in the low resource and Education in Emergencies sector?

A SECTOR SEEKING SOLUTIONS

Since the unprecedented shift to distance learning that came with Covid lockdowns and mass school closures, increasing numbers of Education in Emergencies (EiE) actors have been turning to EdTech to find solutions to the complex challenges facing the sector. This has led to a number of emerging EdTech products and prototypes, many of which have shown great potential.



1. Girls learning through Edtech games

Whilst this potential is exciting, there remain important questions around EdTech in low resource and EiE settings. For example, gaps in evidence on learning outcomes for digital interventions have led EiE actors to grapple with how to measure learning outcomes for children learning at distance, particularly in low resource settings ([UNICEF, 2022](#)).

Meanwhile, the sector has also been reflecting on how to move emerging EdTech applications from promising pilots to programmes that can sustainably operate at scale in challenging humanitarian contexts ([UNHCR, 2022](#)).

GOBEE JOURNEY TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

It was in response to the first question on measuring learning outcomes that [War Child Holland](#), [NYU Global TIES](#) for Children and the Humanitarian Education Accelerator ([HEA](#)), came together in late 2020 to explore the potential for creating a digital tool that was adapted to low resource settings and could assess Grade 1-3 learning objectives in maths, reading, and certain social and emotional learning (SEL) scales, both at distance and in the classroom.

From this collaboration came Gobee - a prototype gamified, digital assessment tool that was piloted with teachers and learners in Jordan in early 2022. Read our first two blogs to find out more about [the early stages of the collaboration](#) and [the pilot process](#)

Testing the prototype in Jordan showed the tool's potential in supporting formative assessment practices in the classroom by providing granular academic data as well as the prospective to incorporate a digital SEL survey. However, it also raised a host of questions for the Gobee team, particularly regarding longer term implementation, sustainability, and scale. For example:

- *How can we guarantee access to the tool by teachers and facilitators in the classroom, given variable infrastructure (i.e electricity, connectivity, devices), particularly in low resource settings?*

- *And if we can ensure access for teachers how much do we know about their needs, practices and expectations of the tool? Would they be willing to use a digital assessment tool?*

- *How do we safeguard the appropriate interpretation of data, particularly around SEL? What training might be needed to use the tool?*

- *How can we ensure data protection?*

- *Given Gobee's founding ambition to create a tool for the benefit of the wider sector, rather than being owned by War Child or its partners, to what extent can it be open source if there is no owner or guardian of the tool and its use?*

- *If an organisation took ownership how much would it cost to develop, maintain and sustainably implement a stand-alone digital assessment tool? What funding models are available and feasible for this kind of tool?*

Many of these questions are not unique to Gobee but are indicative of the multiple questions and challenges that face the EdTech sector, particularly within the context of EiE and when transitioning to scale.

In 2023, acknowledging the significance and intricacy of the questions at hand, and in pursuit of developing the tool with an evidence-based approach, the Gobee team made the decision to pause the development of the Gobee prototype. The goal was to reflect and carefully consider how to allocate efforts and funding to create a sustainable tool that

would effectively meet the needs of end-users. And so, the Gobee Learning agenda was born.

THE GOBEE 2023 LEARNING AGENDA: ASKING THE STICKY QUESTIONS

From its inception, Gobee's design and approach has been driven by a commitment to collaboration, (between Gobee partners and the wider sector), iterative design and shared learning. The Gobee Learning Agenda continues that tradition, creating a framework for gathering, (and sharing), data and evidence, and making informed decisions on the future of the Gobee tool.

Based on the above mentioned questions, the Gobee 2023 Learning Agenda seeks to unpack the core question of whether there is **a sustainable market, infrastructure and capacity for a tool like Gobee in the EiE and/or development sector.**

In order to interrogate this, the Learning Agenda is broken down into specific research areas with related sub-questions covering **1) policies, practices and capacity; 2) implementation models;** and **3) financial sustainability.** See below a sample of some of these questions.

Policies, practices, and capacity:

- Does Gobee's digital format match and align with national policies and practices in focus countries like Jordan, Uganda and Lebanon? [These are current case study countries used to illustrate different contexts in which the tool might be relevant]. What is the level of readiness in schools and ministries to integrate and leverage EdTech assessment tools in primary education?
- Are there capacities in the EiE space - technical staff, equipment etc - to support the continued development and maintenance of a tool like Gobee?
- If the tool is used by MEAL teams in organisations, what conditions should the tool meet to add value into MEAL practices and improve the quality of EiE programming across the sector?

Implementation models:

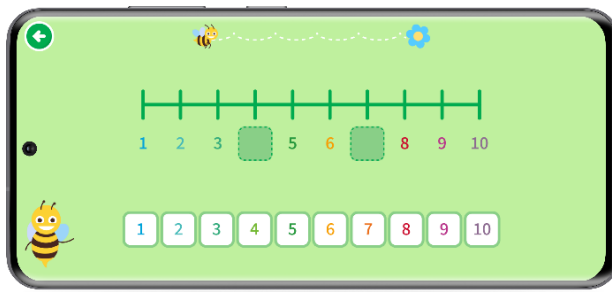
- Is the open-source model the answer to sustainably scaling this tool? What does that look like? Would governments and local organisations in the EiE sector have the capacity to take it on and roll it out autonomously? Would they have the technical staff to do so?
- What opportunities are there for collaboration with other primary education EdTech tools that are operating within, or outside of, the EiE sector? Could we potentially collaborate with other actors/projects for the benefit of end-users?

Financial sustainability:

- How much would it cost to develop, maintain and implement the tool? Is there financial capacity in the EiE sector to support this?
- Is there financial capacity in the EiE sector to support it in the long run?
- Is there donor interest in supporting this in the longer term?

The current Gobee team, War Child Holland and NYU Global TIES for Children, is now working with **Jigsaw Education** to support the investigations in order to leverage experience from wider expertise in EdTech.

UNLOCKING VALUE IN THE LOW RESOURCE AND EIE SECTOR: SHARING INSIGHTS FROM THE GOBEE LEARNING AGENDA



2. Gobee prototype

In a fast-paced sector, characterised by inconsistent funding and the pressure to reduce costs and harness technology, there's often a lack of time and resources to address the complex questions the Gobee Learning Agenda is exploring. This frequently leads to projects proceeding with limited information to guide their path and ensure the long-term sustainability of their solutions. ([UNHCR, 2022](#)). This challenge

applies to the EiE sector and those operating in low-resource settings, underlining the broad relevance of the Gobee Learning Agenda.

There is huge potential in sharing the results of the Gobee Learning Agenda with the wider sector, particularly around questions and challenges that we are aware many others in the EiE and EdTech spaces are facing. Gobee is a Global Public Good. Built through collaborative partnerships, it is a sector-wide resource rather than the property of the Gobee partners and has the potential to provide a fascinating case study from which the whole sector can benefit.



3. Gobee prototype SEL feature

One of the first steps in building the Learning Agenda was therefore a scoping survey of key actors in the EiE and EdTech space, to ensure research questions are aligned with the needs and challenges experienced by the sector, particularly in low-resource settings.

Some 23 participants responded, including EdTech developers/service providers, researchers, educational programme implementers, and donors. The results, ([read here](#)), confirmed alignment with the most urgent needs and challenges within the sector: the lack of access to technology, the absence of data protection standards, a need for capacity-building initiatives, insufficient funding, etc.

FIND OUT MORE IN 2024

The Gobee Learning Agenda has been made possible by the support of Porticus. The report, with the analysis of our findings, is scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2024, when we will be back to share more about what we have learned and how the sector can benefit from these insights.

If you are interested in finding out more about any part of our work, including opportunities for collaboration, please do not hesitate to contact Gobee's Programme Manager, Kahina Boulegroun, at [.](#)

[This article is written by NYU Global Ties and War Child Holland.](#)
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NYU

Global TIES for Children

