Giga

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Giga is a UNICEF–ITU global initiative to connect every school to the Internet and every young person to information, opportunity and choice.

- Launched in 2019, Giga sets the goal of providing connectivity to every school in the world. According to the ITU, some 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 fulfill their potential.
- Closing the digital divide requires global cooperation, leadership, and innovation in finance and technology.

Giga is anchored and recommended

- Giga is anchored in the Secretary-General's [High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation](#) findings 1A and 1B which state, respectively, that by "2030 every adult should have affordable access to digital networks," calling for "a broad, multi-stakeholder alliance, involving the UN, create a platform for sharing digital public goods."
- Highlighting Giga, the UN Policy Briefs "[Education during COVID-19 and beyond](#)" and "[The impact of COVID-19 on children](#)", respectively recount the disruption of education systems affecting 1.6 billion learners across the world, and recommend the need to both reimagine education and accelerate change in teaching and learning and make game-changing investments in broadband access and digital public goods supporting the continuity of child-centered service.
- The UN Secretary-General's [Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#) then underlines key recommendations toward Digital Transformation, including Giga — to bring the

power of meaningful connectivity to fast track young people's access to educational resources and opportunities.

Giga has four pillars

Map. In partnership with governments, Giga is 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 appropriate solutions for connecting schools. Over 800,000 schools in 30 countries have been mapped and are viewable live at www.projectconnect.world.

- **Ericsson** joins Giga as a Global UNICEF Partner for School Connectivity Mapping and is the first private sector partner to make a multi-million dollar commitment to the initiative. In addition to funding, Ericsson will commit resources for data engineering and data science capacity to accelerate school connectivity mapping in 35 more countries by 2023.
- **Facebook** contributes funding and connectivity data as a UNICEF Partner for School Connectivity Mapping. Several data sharing partnerships have been established with multiple entities including **GSMA, Liquid Telecom,** and **NIC.br.**
- In collaboration with the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation, school mapping has been completed in **Sierra Leone** and 205 schools have been connected. Giga will continue working with the Government to accelerate its Free Quality School Education initiative to connect the remaining >10,900 schools. **Rwanda** joins as Regional Lead for Africa.
- Giga has connected the first school in **Kenya** in collaboration with the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, toward connecting the first 1,000 schools by 2020 and realizing the vision of the Ministry of Education and **Generation Unlimited** in Kenya.

Finance. Giga works with governments and advises them on building affordable and sustainable country-specific models for finance and delivery, subsidizing market creation costs and incentivizing private sector investment.

- Giga's collaboration with **Softbank Investment Advisors** and industry experts has resulted in Giga's first financial model: a reliable, evidence based model on the ROI of

connectivity, and Giga will continue advising governments on building country-specific finance and delivery approaches.

- The Government of **Kazakhstan** signed on as Regional Lead for Central Asia and 10,200 schools have been integrated into Giga's platform; the first financial model is now being developed for the region.

Connect. In partnership with industry, and based on the mapping results, Giga will advise on the best possible technical solutions to provide schools with connectivity, and countries with safe, secure, reliable, fit-for-purpose infrastructure to support future digital development needs.

- ITU has developed a **Last-Mile Connectivity Solutions Guide** in collaboration with the Broadband Commission Working Group on School Connectivity.
- The **Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States** joins to lead the effort to connect 1,147 schools in the region.
- **Niger** has received $100M from the **World Bank** toward connecting schools and villages, and **Giga is providing technical assistance** in identifying locations for infrastructure and additional financing.

Empower. Through its engagement with countries, Giga can support needs assessments and support to deploy digital solutions. In partnership with the Digital Public Goods Alliance, Giga can help identify and scale Digital Public Goods.

- The Digital Public Goods Alliance has published its first set of vetted digital public goods, focused on Foundational Literacy and Early Grade Reading.
- Through **Learning Unlimited,** Giga and UNICEF's Education Section, Giga can provide connections to partners, resources, capacity building and financing to scale learning solutions.

Giga welcomes engagement and leadership from governments, businesses, civil society, technology providers, donors, investors and finance experts. Connect with us at www.gigaconnect.org.