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Plan Ceibal

Principle Addressed	Country deployment of open source solutions and principles of sustainability and local ownership
Project Name	Plan Ceibal
Location	Uruguay
Date	2007 - Present
Partners	Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU)
	National Agency for Research and Innovation (ANII)
	Agency for the Development of Government Electronic Management and Information Society and Knowledge (AGESIC)
	National Telecommunications Administration (ANTEL)
	Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC)
	Primary Education Council (CEP)
	National Public Education Administration (ANEP)

Situation/Challenge

The Basic Information Educational Program for Online Learning (CEIBAL) was launched in May 2007 with the initial objective to provide all public primary school children and teachers with free laptop access. It also aimed to promote equal access to information and communication tools for all. At the time of its launch, only 34 per cent of individuals in the country were using the Internet; however, this figure has improved to 75 per cent in 2018 (*ITU*).

Aim of Project

To support Uruguayan educational policies with technology to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities.

Project Details

Since Plan Ceibal began in 2007, the program has aimed to ensure that every child aged 6 to 15 attending primary and middle public school in Uruguay is provided with access to a personal computer with free Internet connection at school. The initiative also provides programs, educational resources and teacher training courses, such as the Ceibal Digital Library, which provides free access to textbooks, books and multimedia resources, PAM (an adaptive platform for learning mathematics), a collection of open educations resources, a collection of educational video games, and a content management platform for teachers and students.
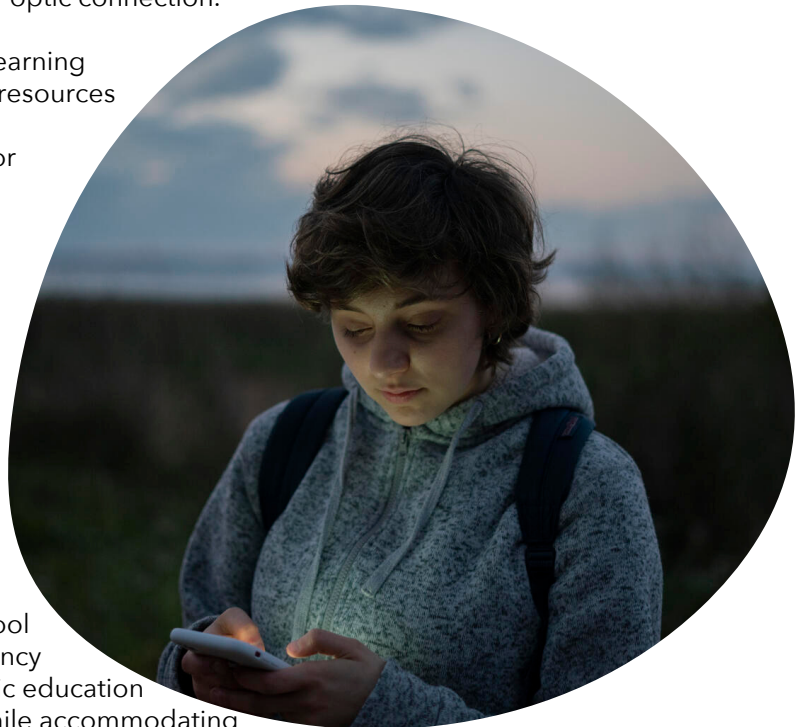
Results

Since 2007 the government has distributed 1,681,830 tablets and laptops to students and teachers in primary and secondary public schools, as well as providing capacity building and training to 28,000 teachers (*UNESCO, 2018*). By 2009, all public primary school students and teachers had access to a digital device through Plan Ceibal, and by 2013 all public secondary schools students and teachers had access to a digital device through Plan Ceibal. In addition, 100 per cent of public primary and public schools have Wi-Fi connectivity and Internet access, with 93 per cent of those in urban areas having a fiber optic connection.

The Ceibal platform currently provides a full learning management system, preloaded educational resources for students and professional development opportunities for teachers, as well as access for students, and the general public, to an online library with over 7,000 books.

Lessons Learned

Part of Plan Ceibal's success has been the result of continuous monitoring, with educational resources constantly updated, and improvements undertaken with regard to functionality and other enhancements to the system; for example, the introduction of a contingency plan to mitigate the educational disruption caused by COVID-19 with features such as support for teachers, students and families, and a pilot online videoconference tool on the platform. Another factor is the consistency and coherence in the implementation of public education policies, which have stuck to original goals while accommodating revisions of the plan due to technological advancements.

Access to digital technologies alone does not ensure improvements to digital literacy. It is also important to ensure that teachers are supported to develop their digital skills and to help them use digital technology to improve learning outcomes.

Increased use of digital technology can result in challenges which need to be considered by policymakers, educators and technology implementors, such as regulating screen time, online privacy and security, and cyber-bullying.