

# **Bridging the Digital Divide: Change Maker's Challenge.**

# Agenda

- 01** Why
- 02** The Threat
- 03** System Analysis
- 04** Leadership Lens
- 05** Solution
- 06** Innovation
- 07** Implementation
- 08** Impact
- 09** Feasibility and Risks
- 10** Metrics of Success

# Why Education Matters.

## High-Quality Education

- Inclusive, Equitable, and provides lifelong learning opportunities for all

## Individual Impact

- Education is the primary motive for social change and individualism

## Societal Impact

- Quality education reduces life-long poverty, while supporting political participation and economic innovation

# The Threat (Digital Divide)

## ● **THREAT**

The “Digital Divide:” shows the gap between those who have the access to high-speed internet, laptops, digital literacy, and access to technological advancements.

## ● **WHY IT MATTERS**

60% of global GDP is expected to rely on digital communication; without this access students are unable to access the modern economy and better their lives.

## ● **WHO IS AFFECTED**

Primarily students in rural communities, low-income households, and marginalized districts.

# Systems Analysis

## Stakeholders

Students, families, teachers, school boards, the internet, and tech companies



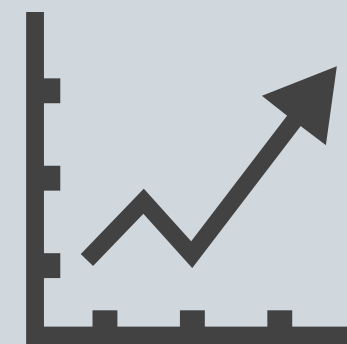
## Social

Socio-economic status determines a student's ability to afford the correct technology and data to be successful in a digital age.



## Institutional

Lack of “Digital Leadership” in school administrations to prioritize AI and a new understanding of technology



## Economic

Under - investment in rural broadband by internet service providers, due to their lack of expected ROI

# Leadership Lens

## Application

- A leader's job is to clear obstacles that are preventing students from reaching quality education
  - The obstacles being the lack of access to internet
  - The goal being quality education

## Leadership Shaping

- A leader should move beyond just distributing but looking to provide “supportive leadership,” ensuring teachers and families are able to feel competent using these new tools

**Path Goal  
Theory**

**Shaping**

# Solution

## 01 Proposal

Launching a “**Digital Navigation**” network within school districts

## 02 Addressing the Threat

It eliminates the access barrier by providing both the physical tools (such as laptops, internet, and other technology) as well as the human skills to use them.

## 03 How it Works

- Digital Navigators are community members who are trained to provide 1-on-1 support to families.
- This would allow them to support families in signing up for low-cost internet, securing refurbished hardware, and learning basic digital skills to support them in the future.

# Innovation

## Inspiration

Borrowed from the health care industry's "Community Health Worker"

## What's New

Instead of just giving a student laptops and physical fixes, this is a long-term social fix that treats digital access as a social determinant of health and education.

## Industry Hybrid

Combines tech hardware distribution with healthcare community outreach and support for something that is typically overlooked

# Implementaion Plan

**Month 1-3**

Needs assessment and identifying the navigators that are necessary for the local community

**Month 4-6**

Launch pilot program in the highest-need school district in the local area.

**Year 1**

Scale the program to neighboring school districts using a public-private partnership with local tech firms and internet providers.

# Impact

## Mitigating the Threat

Closes the gap by allowing for every student to have at least one functional device and reliable internet, as well as digital literacy.

## Improving Education

Moves towards the UN SDG goal #4 by making the “digital classroom” equitable for all, not just those that are wealthy

## Beneficiaries

Students gain equal footing; and parents gain a better understanding of how technology can help and support them and their children.

# The Risk

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- Technophobia or lack of adoption among parents who may be skeptical of new digital requirements and access to AI

# Mitigation

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- Since the navigators are trusted community members (not outside tech consultants)
  - Ability to build the trust necessary for quick adoption

# Metrics of Success

## Quantitative

100% device-to-student ratio and a minimum home internet speed of at least 10 Mbps for all students and participants at an affordable price

## Qualitative

Improved teacher confidence scores in using digital assignments as measured by surveys given at the beginning and end of the school year

# Conclusion

## Key Takeaway


- Thinking about leadership as more of a process instead of a position
- To solve the “digital divide”, we have to lead with empathy, clearing the technical path so that students are able to fulfill their potential through this new age of technological advancement

## Call to Action


- Support the transition from “hardware focused” to “human focused” digital equity

# Thank You

for your time  
and attention

 +1720 629-1233

 [logan.gero@colorado.edu](mailto:logan.gero@colorado.edu)

 Center for Leadership, CU Boulder