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Innovative Approaches to Designing Digital Learning Ecosystems for Public Sector Capacity Development: Lessons from a Pan-african Initiative

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Abstract

Digital learning is increasingly positioned as a solution for scaling capacity development, yet many initiatives fail to address the institutional realities of the public sector in emerging contexts. This paper presents lessons from the design and implementation of Ubora Academy, a pan-African digital learning initiative established to strengthen the skills, competencies, and performance of public servants and leaders. The study examines how a digital learning ecosystem, rather than isolated online courses, can support systemic capacity development across multiple countries. It highlights key design principles, including aligning learning with institutional performance goals, adopting mobile-responsive and low-bandwidth technologies, integrating communities of practice, and embedding leadership engagement to promote a culture of continuous learning. The paper also reflects on implementation challenges such as infrastructure disparities, diverse linguistic and policy environments, and sustaining learner engagement in professional settings. Drawing on practical experience and emerging evidence, the paper proposes a scalable model for digital learning in government contexts that bridges technology, pedagogy, and governance. The findings contribute to global discussions on digital transformation in education by offering context-sensitive strategies for building resilient, inclusive, and performance-oriented learning systems in the public sector.

Keywords: Capacity Development; Digital Learning Ecosystems; Elearning; Public Sector Training; Scalable Education Models