

Concept Note

Early Adopter Program for Basic Education



RESPECT

An open source digital library for EdTech apps



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Introduction

In July 2025, AUDA-NEPAD launched its [*Africa Edtech 2030: Vision and Plan*](#), which seeks to ensure that every African student has access to the world's best EdTech apps, developed in Africa by Africans. The Vision's Plan specifies two components: a Policy Framework and a [*Digital Public Infrastructure for Education*](#) (DPI-Ed). That same month, AUDA-NEPAD launched its [*Policy Framework for Advancing Standards-based, Vendor-neutral EdTech in Africa*](#), and the Spix Foundation launched *RESPECT™*, its DPI-Ed that makes it easy for Ministers of Education and EdTech app developers to embrace AUDA-NEPAD's *Vision*.

RESPECT can also be thought of as an open source digital library for EdTech apps. *RESPECT* makes it easier for educators to discover and use high quality EdTech apps with a single account online, or offline, using (for example) the old, low-end smartphones that are common in rural Africa. It also gives developers the platform they need to grow their impact globally.

RESPECT's use of recognized open standards enables EdTech apps to work together. Every student-app interaction sends data to the Ministry of Education, while honoring data security, privacy, and sovereignty laws. This data can be used to implement proven pedagogical techniques such as Teaching at the Right Level, Structured Pedagogy, and inform policy adjustments.

The *RESPECT* Early Adopter Program (Countries) offers support in executing a Pilot of *RESPECT* to Ministries of Education and affiliated entities:



Support for in-country developers to make EdTech apps *RESPECT Compatible*

- Support for in-country developers to make EdTech apps *RESPECT Compatible*: as identified by the Ministry of Education subject to agreement of the app developer.

- A Co-Creation Workshop to jointly develop implementation plans and objectives according to Ministry goals within that country's context.

- Support to cover startup expenses, including aligning lessons *RESPECT Compatible™* apps and covering the costs of in-country data storage to ensure data sovereignty.

RESPECT's business model enables the developers and localizers of Africa's best *RESPECT Compatible™* apps to earn sustainable income from their work, despite all such apps being free to all learners and intermediaries (parents, teachers, schools, Ministries of Education, etc.).

RESPECT's revenue comes from the sale of tightly regulated ads – for example, “Today's education brought to you by... [Sponsor Name]! [Tagline] – shown once per day per user.

The Spix Foundation carries on George Spix's career-long legacy of bringing deep technical expertise to bear on complex problems, now focusing on global education. The Spix Foundation leadership uses its experience with building technology ecosystems to improve Africa's EdTech ecosystem.

Overcoming EdTech Barriers



RESPECT – Resilient Edtech Specifications Project for Educational Courseware Technologies – is designed to lower the technical, commercial, and data barriers that, over the decades, have prevented EdTech from delivering on its promises. The barriers that *RESPECT* lowers included:

- **Policy fragmentation:** Different policies and strategies across the continent means that there is no unified market to scale into. The AUDA-NEPAD Vision, Plan and Policy Framework is a big step forward; *RESPECT makes it easy* to implement them.

- **Tool fatigue:** Educators are forced to juggle through and between multiple siloed EdTech Apps with no central access or data. *RESPECT* ensures interoperability among all *RESPECT Compatible™* EdTech Apps.
- **Data desert:** Today, educators and policy makers lack the data that they need in order to make informed decisions. *RESPECT* provides them with that data in a manner that honors data security, privacy, and sovereignty.
- **Sustainability of Developers:** *RESPECT*'s business model enables the developers and localizers of Africa's best *RESPECT Compatible™* apps to earn sustainable income from their work.
- **Connectivity and Device challenges:** *RESPECT* works online, offline, or intermittently-online, without the need for any servers, routers, or other special devices, using the ordinary smartphones common in rural Africa.
- **Procurement:** For decades, EdTech Procurement was based on project funding, loans, grants and development partners. This resulted in difficult tender processes and no opportunity for scale & continuity – which kills EdTech apps start-ups. *RESPECT* is open source and the business model pays the developers, lowering the barrier of the procurement process.

Next steps

The Early Adopter Program enables Ministries and affiliated entities to be among the first Countries in Africa to Pilot *RESPECT*.

Preparation

- **Expression of interest:** The Country's Relevant Authority (e.g., Ministry of Education, State Department, or implementing entity) sends a letter to Spix Foundation indicating their interest in the Early Adopter Program. Spix will then reply with a Letter of Implementation or an MoU (as indicated by the Relevant Authority) to the Relevant Authority.
- **Co-creation workshop:** The Relevant Authority and Spix Foundation will, together, identify a suitable date and venue. The program for the Co-Creation Workshop is jointly arranged and expenses are covered by Spix Foundation based on an agreed budget. Stakeholders are identified and invited by the Relevant Authority. This generally includes internal leaders (e.g. curriculum

department, ICT department, EMIS, teacher training department, etc) and external stakeholders such as app developers, Mobile Network Operators, and anyone with an active role in EdTech.

- **The Relevant Authority will establish a Working Group to** (a) develop a *RESPECT* Pilot Plan for their country in accordance with its priorities, strategies and policies, and to (b) oversee the project. This group is expected to formally select schools and develop an implementation work plan that includes pilot, monitoring and scaling.

Implementation

- **Scenarios:** *RESPECT* can be utilised differently according to the availability of devices.
 - **Teacher devices only:** Where some or most teachers have access to their own smartphones then *RESPECT* can be used for attendance tracking, other reporting requirements, teacher training, etc.
 - **Teachers and parents' devices:** Additionally, teachers can now also set supplementary homework that students can complete on their parents' smartphone at home. Homework can include any lesson from any *RESPECT* compatible app. Parents can use EdTech apps to follow their child's progress and attendance and communicate with their school.
 - **Devices in school:** Where available, devices in school (shared or 1:1) can be used to run any *RESPECT Compatible* app. Students benefit from a single account through which their teachers and parents track their learning, whether it takes place at home or school.
- **Server setup and ICT admin training:** The Relevant Authority sets up, at Spix's expense, an incountry server to receive all *RESPECT*-generated data. Spix will train up to (3) of Relevant Authority's designated ICT staff in its use.
- **Teacher orientation:** *RESPECT* is designed to be as easy to use as Facebook or YouTube. Spix will pay to hold one 1-day *RESPECT* Champion Orientation Workshop, soon before the Pilot, for the *RESPECT* Champions who will lead the teachers in the Pilot.
- **Implementation in schools:** Following completion of server setup and teacher Champion orientation, teachers and students can start using *RESPECT* in schools and at home. Pilot progress

is monitored both by using *RESPECT*-generated data and in-person monitoring and support in accordance with the *RESPECT* Pilot Plan.

Evaluation

- **Evaluation:** After each term the Relevant Authority, in accordance with the Evaluation Plan, carries out an evaluation of the extent to which the pilot implementation achieved the objectives set out. The Relevant Authority may collaborate with external evaluators such as local universities or researchers to monitor the pilot and provide feedback/recommendations/improvements observed.
- **Expansion/scaling:** The Relevant Authority may scale the program to cover additional schools/jurisdictions as desired considering the local context. In addition, the Relevant Authority may request, from the Spix Foundation, for expertise/technical support in EdTech standards/policy/strategy development and implementation.

Strategic alignment

RESPECT was developed to ***make it easy*** for Ministers of Education and EdTech developers to support AUDA NEPAD's [*Africa EdTech 2030 Vision and Plan*](#), which seeks to ensure that every African student has access to the world's best EdTech apps, developed in Africa by Africans. The Vision accomplishes this, in part, by harmonizing EdTech policies continent-wide, and thereby producing a unified market for EdTech apps.



RESPECT is also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including:



- SDG 4 (Quality Education) - *RESPECT*'s focus on enabling improvements in EdTech advances quality education more broadly.



- SDG 5 (Gender Equality) - *RESPECT* reduces barriers to EdTech access that disproportionately affect women and girls and provides decision makers with access to gender disaggregated statistics.



- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) - *RESPECT* enables EdTech developers, primarily those based in Africa themselves, to increase their income and provide employment.



- SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) - *RESPECT* lowers the barriers to accessing EdTech by making it easier to use EdTech offline, reducing the amount of mobile data used, and ensuring apps work well on low cost devices.

Conclusion

Within the context of AUDA-NEPAD's *Africa EdTech 2030: Vision and Plan*, *RESPECT* supports transformative improvements in Africa EdTech in a way that honors data security, privacy and sovereignty. It addresses critical issues such as interoperability, mobile data cost, offline support, performance, and localization. *RESPECT* is open source Digital Public Infrastructure for Education, with a sustainable business model that makes all *RESPECT Compatible* EdTech apps free to Africa's Ministries of Education.

Representatives of Ministries of Education, private school chains, religious schools, and/or *RESPECT* implementing entities are invited to email info@spixfoundation.org to discuss next steps.

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