



School of Education

EDTECH@UNIMA2026 CONFERENCE

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

THEME: OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND EDUCATION SYSTEM RESILIENCE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Overview of EdTech@UNIMA

EdTech@UNIMA is an annual conference and exhibition organised by the School of Education at the University of Malawi. The first edition was held in 2023 under the name EdTech@UNIMA2023, followed by EdTech@UNIMA2024 and EdTech@UNIMA2025. The 2026 conference will therefore be the fourth edition. The conference provides a platform for stakeholders to explore innovative educational technology (EdTech) solutions to address pressing education challenges across all education sectors. It seeks to support the exploration and adoption of EdTech solutions that improve access, quality, and equity in education, provide a collaborative space for educators, policymakers, researchers, and technology innovators to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices, and foster networking and partnerships that support sustainable EdTech initiatives.

Background and Rationale for EdTech@UNIMA2026

Education systems worldwide are facing increasing disruption from pandemics, climate change, conflict, and demographic pressures. In sub-Saharan Africa, recurrent cyclones, droughts, floods, and persistent poverty continue to undermine access to

and quality of education. These conditions have heightened attention to education system resilience, understood as the capacity of education systems to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from shocks while continuing to provide equitable and quality learning opportunities (Dülks et al., 2023). Despite this growing attention, there remains limited shared understanding of how education systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, are preparing for and responding to such shocks (Cameron et al., 2024).

EdTech@UNIMA2026 builds on education system resilience research conducted under the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Africa Regional Education System Resilience Observatory (ARESRO), a multi-country research initiative covering 42 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. The University of Malawi team has been contributing to this initiative with a specific focus on the sub-region comprising Malawi, Comoros, Mozambique, and Madagascar. Findings from the ARESRO literature review indicate that education systems across the region remain highly vulnerable to overlapping crises, despite the presence of multiple actors and interventions. At the same time, the review points to emerging evidence that digital and blended learning approaches are becoming an important resilience capacity for education systems in the sub-region. However, the potential and effectiveness of

digital learning approaches in strengthening education system resilience remain under-documented.

Within this research context, Open Educational Resources (OER) represent a promising but still under-examined aspect of education system resilience. OERs are teaching, learning, and training materials that are freely available for use, adaptation, and sharing, usually through open licences that allow others to legally reuse and modify them. In resource-constrained and crisis-affected contexts, OERs offer practical possibilities for sustaining learning, supporting teachers, and sharing educational resources across institutions and systems. However, there is limited systematic evidence on how OERs are being integrated into education systems, how they contribute to resilience in practice, and what policy, institutional, and pedagogical conditions are required for their sustainable use in sub-Saharan Africa.

EdTech@UNIMA2026 therefore invites researchers, practitioners, policymakers, teacher educators, innovators, and education technology start-ups to submit presentation and exhibition abstracts that examine or demonstrate how OERs and related educational technologies contribute to education system resilience in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sub-themes

Submissions may address, but are not limited to:

- Case studies of education system resilience practices
- OER in specific education subsectors (e.g. teacher education and professional development, ECD, Higher Education Primary Education etc)
- Use/Case studies of OER in subject-specific teaching and learning (e.g. sciences, languages, humanities, mathematics)
- Equity, inclusion, and localisation of OER initiatives
- Case studies/examples of Digital, blended, and low-tech approaches that support learning continuity
- Policy, governance, and sustainability of OER initiatives

- Education technology start-ups (including open licensing models, hybrid approaches, and scaling innovations through OER)

Guidelines for Exhibitions and Paper Presentations

Abstracts should be submitted as email attachments to edtech@unima.ac.mw, following the guidelines below.

- Acceptable types of presentations and exhibitions: empirical studies, literature reviews, demos (OER prototypes or final products)
- Include presenter details, namely name(s), institutional affiliation(s), and contact information,
- Clearly indicate sub-theme (s), mode of presentation (online or in-person) and whether the submission is for an exhibition or a paper presentation
- Maximum 300 words, clearly outlining the objective, methodology, findings, and relevance to the theme.

Registration

- University Students with accepted abstracts: **Free**
- Other participants
 - Local delegates: **MWK 80,000.**
 - International delegates: **USD 50**

Note: The conference will be held at the University of Malawi campus in Zomba. Participants will be responsible for their transport and accommodation costs.

Important Dates

The deadline for abstract submission is **10th April 2026**. Notification of abstract review outcomes will be **ongoing** until all presentation slots are filled. The conference will take place from **12 to 13 May 2026**.

For additional information, including sponsorship and partnership opportunities, registration details, and submission procedures, please contact the Conference Secretariat at edtech@unima.ac.mw, copy unimaeducationsociety@gmail.com.