Accelerated Innovation (AI): Sustainability for Better Humanity
21–24 May 2025
Bangkok, Thailand
make learn
TIIM
PIConf
Management, Knowledge and Learning
International Conference
Technology, Innovation and Industrial Management
Sustainable Development

Leveraging Knowledge Management (KM) to Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in Tanzania Education Sector: A Data-Driven Approach

Luhuvilo Sanga
International Schools for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
luhuvilosanga@gmail.com

Abstract

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are vital for assessing the education sector performance, ensuring effective policies, and maintaining accountability. However, Tanzania M&E framework faces challenges such as fragmented data systems, low stakeholder engagement, and poor use of evaluation findings. These aspects limit data accessibility, reduce efficiency, and slow down policy responses, affecting evidence-based decision-making and delaying education reforms. As a result, the system struggles to track student outcomes and allocate resources effectively.

Knowledge Management (KM) can improve M&E by enhancing data collection, promoting knowledge-sharing, and supporting informed decision-making. This study applies the SECI Model of knowledge creation to explore KM's role in strengthening Tanzania M&E framework. Using a mixed-methods approach, including stakeholder interviews, document reviews, and case studies from Kenya, Ghana, and India. Findings show that KM-driven M&E improves efficiency. However, challenges, including technological barriers, data security risks, and capacity gaps, require policy reforms and digital transformation.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Education Policy, Data-Driven Decision-Making, Digital Transformation, Institutional Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are essential for assessing the performance of the education sector, ensuring policy effectiveness, and promoting accountability (World Bank, 2019). A well-structured M&E framework enables systematic progress tracking, identifies challenges, and supports informed decision-making to improve educational outcomes (UNESCO, 2020);(Kusek & Rist 2004). However, the M&E system in Tanzania faces inefficiencies such as fragmented data collection, inconsistent stakeholder engagement, and limited evidence-based decision-making (UNESCO, 2022).

Knowledge Management (KM) plays a crucial role in improving M&E processes (Nonaka, 1995); (Davenport & Prusak, 2010). The Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation (SECI) Model of Knowledge Creation provides a framework for integrating KM into the M&E system of Tanzania's education sector. This model explains how tacit and explicit knowledge interact to support knowledge creation and institutional application. Applying KM principles can improve data accuracy, enhance collaboration, and strengthen institutional learning among policymakers and education stakeholders.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

i. Examine the role of KM in enhancing M&E processes in Tanzania.
ii. Identify current gaps within the M&E framework; and
iii. Propose evidence-based strategies for improving M&E effectiveness through structured KM approaches based on the SECI model.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Tanzania's education system continues to face challenges in ensuring quality learning, tracking student performance, and implementing effective policies. Weak M&E systems, attributed to limiting data accessibility, reducing accountability, and delaying necessary reforms, contribute to these issues (World Bank, 2018). Studies show that fragmented data systems and poor stakeholder engagement prevent the effective use of evaluation findings, leading to inefficient resource allocation and weak policy responses(UNESCO 2022). Addressing these gaps is crucial for improving education governance and ensuring that policies are based on accurate and timely data (Davenport and Prusak 2010).

The current study examines how KM can enhance M&E processes by promoting data-driven decision-making and institutional learning (Nonaka, 1995). Applying the SECI Model of knowledge creation, this research explores how structured knowledge-sharing, better data management, and digital tools can improve M&E frameworks in Tanzania. Case studies from Kenya, Ghana, and India provide insights into best practices that can be adapted to Tanzania's context (Indian Ministry of Education, 2021; Ghana Education Service, 2022a). The study recommends policy reforms, digital transformation, and capacity-building initiatives to create an efficient and accountable education monitoring system, contributing to better learning outcomes and stronger institutional governance (World Bank 2021).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts Nonaka (1995) SECI Model of Knowledge Creation as the primary theoretical lens to examine the potential of Knowledge Management (KM) practices in addressing systemic inefficiencies within Tanzania Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework for the education sector. The SECI Model comprising the dynamic processes of Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation offers a robust framework for conceptualizing the continuous transformation and institutionalization of knowledge across organisational contexts.

Within the Tanzanian education sector, Socialisation, the sharing of tacit knowledge through peer-to-peer interactions, is crucial for bridging fragmented data practices and strengthening informal learning networks among district and school-level actors. Externalisation—the articulation of tacit insights into

explicit forms such as policy briefs, evaluation reports, and operational guidelines is vital for systematizing experiential knowledge and addressing the underutilization of M&E findings in strategic decision-making. Combining the synthesis of diverse explicit knowledge sources is particularly relevant for integrating currently siloed data systems (such as EMIS, BEMIS, and vocational education MIS) to enhance cross-sectoral knowledge flows and mitigate duplication and inconsistencies. Internalisation the embodiment of explicit knowledge into organisational routines and competencies, supports the development of an institutional learning culture, thereby addressing persistent capacity deficits and promoting sustained application of evaluation evidence in practice.

Anchoring the analysis within the SECI model, this study positions KM not as an ancillary support mechanism but as an active and essential driver of M&E system transformation. Each stage of the SECI process is systematically mapped to the specific operational challenges identified in the Tanzanian education M&E system, thereby providing a coherent analytical structure for interpreting qualitative and quantitative findings. Moreover, the SECI framework informed both the study methodological design and the interpretation of evidence, ensuring that the strategies of KM integration are grounded in a theoretically rigorous and contextually relevant approach. Ultimately, the application of the SECI model reinforces the study argument that enhancing Tanzania education M&E framework requires an intentional, knowledge-centred transformation, which is aligned with principles of institutional learning, technological modernization, and evidence-based governance.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how KM can improve M&E in the Tanzanian education sector. This approach ensures a broad understanding by gathering both stakeholder perspectives and data-driven evidence. The qualitative methods include stakeholder interviews, case study analysis, and document review to explore how KM is used and to identify challenges in the M&E processes. The quantitative methods involve analysing secondary data from national and international sources to assess education performance, KM adoption, and policy effectiveness. This combination of methods strengthens the accuracy and reliability of the study findings.

3.1 Qualitative Methods

The qualitative component of the study employed multiple methods to investigate KM adoption within the Tanzania M&E framework. Fifteen stakeholders in the education sector, including policymakers, District Education Officers, and school administrators, were purposively selected for in-depth interviews to explore challenges and opportunities for KM integration. A comparative case study analysis examined KM-driven M&E models from Kenya, Ghana, and India to identify best practices, which can be applicable to Tanzania. Document analysis involved a systematic review of policy frameworks, government reports, and education sector evaluation reports. This triangulated approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of KM implementation gaps within the Tanzanian education sector. The findings informed evidence-based recommendations to strengthen KM integration into national M&E processes.

3.2 Quantitative Methods

The quantitative dimension of this study leveraged secondary data to substantiate the qualitative findings and furnish an empirical evaluation of KM integration within Tanzania M&E system. Key secondary sources included government-issued education sector reports detailing performance indicators, policy implementation trajectories, and KM adoption patterns; statistical databases from UNESCO, the World Bank, and the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics, which provided longitudinal perspectives on M&E system efficiency and KM utilization. Another key secondary source includes policy evaluation documents that critically review historical policy interventions, with particular attention to the role of knowledge-sharing mechanisms in shaping decision-making processes and resource distribution within the education sector.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

This study employed a purposive sampling strategy for the collection of qualitative data, deliberately targeting key informants with substantial expertise in the M&E framework of the Tanzania education sector. Kenya, Ghana, and India were selected as comparative case studies due to their demonstrable advancements in the integration of KM within the M&E systems. The criteria guiding country selection included the existence of structured KM policies embedded within the national M&E frameworks, the availability of documented evidence on the KM adoption and its influence on governance outcomes, and contextual parallels that offer relevant and transferable insights for application within the Tanzanian setting.

3.4 Analytical Techniques

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to strengthen the reliability and validity of findings. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes from qualitative data, while descriptive statistics summarised trends in the KM adoption and M&E performance. Trend analysis evaluated the influence of KM practices on data use, policy responsiveness, and institutional learning over time. A comparative analysis further contextualized findings in Tanzania by drawing lessons from KM-driven M&E models in Kenya, Ghana, and India.

4. FINDINGS

This section synthesizes the study findings regarding the integration of KM into M&E systems in Tanzania's education sector. The section highlights critical issues, illustrates key points with concrete examples, and situates the analysis within the broader governance context, accounting for bureaucratic inefficiencies and dynamics of political economy. The findings are systematically organised according to the study objectives and provide the foundation for the subsequent presentation of conclusions, future directions, and strategic recommendations.

4.1 The Role of Knowledge Management in Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in Tanzania

The integration of KM into M&E systems has emerged as a transformative approach to enhancing data-driven decision-making, institutional learning, and accountability within the Tanzanian education sector. KM facilitates the systematic capture, synthesis, and dissemination of both explicit and tacit knowledge, thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of M&E processes. Notable advancements include the

operationalization of the Education Management Information System (EMIS), participatory learning platforms such as MEL Week, and adaptive feedback loops informed by models such as SECI, which collectively foster a culture of reflection and utilization of evidence at various administrative levels (Policy Forum 2023; Tanzania Evaluation Association 2024; World Bank 2021). These mechanisms not only improve the timeliness and relevance of data but also enable continuous performance improvement through institutionalized learning and cross-stakeholder engagement (EQUIP-T Evaluation Team 2022). Thus, KM is increasingly being recognized as a foundational enabler in the evolution of Tanzania M&E architecture toward a more responsive and sustainable system.

4.1 Identified Gaps and Challenges in the Current M&E System

4.1.1 Fragmented Data Management

Despite the government efforts to streamline information flows through platforms such as StatEduc 2.0, fragmented data systems remain a significant constraint to the performance of M&E across Tanzania's education sector. The lack of full integration between the Basic Education MIS (BEMIS), Vocational MIS, and Higher Education MIS continues to result in data duplication, inconsistencies, and limited cross-sectoral analysis (EQUIP-T Evaluation Team 2022; World Bank 2021). A District Education Officer had this to say,

> "*The process of consolidating data from multiple systems is still done manually in many districts. This not only delays report validation but also increases the risk of errors and reduces the reliability of the data used for planning and decision-making." (KII, DEO)*

Likewise, a School Administrator reported,

> *"There is still no proper link between basic and vocational education databases. It is difficult to track student transitions or make performance comparisons because the systems operate in silos." (KII, School Administrator)*

These first-hand insights reinforce the critical need for a unified, knowledge management–enabled data ecosystem that ensures real-time integration, promotes collaboration across education sub-sectors, and enhances the credibility of data for evidence-based policy development (Policy Forum 2023).

4.1.2 Limited Use of M&E Findings

Although considerable efforts have been made to improve education sector data systems in Tanzania, the actual utilization of data to inform policy formulation and budgetary allocations remains limited. A persistent disconnection exists between the generation of M&E data and their application in strategic planning processes. This gap is exacerbated by bureaucratic inertia, fragmented institutional coordination, and incentive structures that are often misaligned with data-driven decision-making. The analysis of education budget trends over the past five years reveals that allocations are frequently guided by historical expenditure patterns rather than contemporary, evidence-based assessments of sectoral priorities(UNESCO 2022). Furthermore, political economy dynamics continue to influence policy directions, at times, with short-term political interests prevailing over long-term educational development strategies.

Qualitative perspectives from the field further illustrate this disconnection. A District Education Officer observed,

> "*KM has significantly improved how quickly we adapt our programmes based on evaluation results, especially in school supervision," (KII, DEO)*

This observation reflects a growing appreciation for knowledge-driven responsiveness. Another respondent had this o say,

> "*We now develop district-level action plans that incorporate insights from previous performance evaluations," (KII, School Administrator)*

This observation highlights localized efforts to bridge evidence and implementation. However, the uptake of knowledge products remains inconsistent across institutional hierarchies, as one policy planner noted,

> "*It has helped in generating policy briefs from raw data, but the uptake by decision-makers remains slow." (KII, DEO)*

Collectively, these insights underscore the need for stronger institutional mechanisms, clearer accountability structures, and a more embedded culture of evidence use to ensure that the benefits of M&E systems are fully realized in policy making and public resource management.

M&E findings are often underutilized in decision-making due to a weak culture of learning and limited institutional mechanisms for feedback and adaptation. Reports tend to be produced for compliance rather than strategic reflection, with minimal follow-up on lessons learned (TanEA, 2024).

4.1.3 Capacity Constraints

Limited technical capacity among education sector stakeholders remains a significant barrier to the effective functioning of M&E systems in Tanzania. A substantial number of officials involved in M&E lack formal training in critical areas such as data analytics, digital knowledge platforms, and evidence-informed decision-making tools. According to a national survey, approximately 72per cent of District Education Officers had not received formal instruction on the use of KM systems in their daily monitoring roles (Kusek and Rist 2004). This deficiency poses a critical challenge at a time when education systems increasingly rely on real-time data to support planning, resource allocation, and performance monitoring.

Qualitative insights lend further depth to this issue, illustrating how capacity gaps hinder operational effectiveness on the ground. One District Education Officer remarked,

> *"The (DEOs) rely on Excel and handwritten forms due to the absence of digital literacy training," KII, DEO)*

A Regional Education Officer cited the lack of structured capacity-building programmes to support knowledge synthesis as a critical gap. Similarly, according to an Education Administrator, despite the availability of digital platforms, the ongoing mentorship and refresher training are largely absent. These observations align with the quantitative findings revealing a systemic mismatch between the deployment of digital M&E technologies and the preparedness of the personnel to utilize them. Bridging this gap will require sustained investments in professional development, embedded learning structures, and institutional frameworks that promote continuous technical support and knowledge transfer.

Many districts and LGAs lack adequately trained M&E Officers and Data Analysts, constraining the ability to interpret and act on data. High staff turnover further erodes institutional memory and knowledge continuity, particularly in rural regions.

4.1.4 Overloaded Indicator Frameworks

One of the persistent structural challenges within Tanzania education sector lies in the overextended design of its M&E system, particularly as embodied in the ESDP Results Framework. With more than 100 performance indicators initially incorporated, the framework has significantly exceeded the operational capacity of both central and subnational entities to collect, analyse, and effectively utilize data (EQUIP-T Evaluation Team 2022; Policy Forum 2023). This overabundance of indicators and the absence of a strategic prioritization mechanism have led to fragmented monitoring efforts and a dilution of focus on outcomes that are most critical to the sectoral improvement. A District Education Officer aptly expressed this dilemma, by noting,

> *"We collect a lot of data, but most of them are never used—we don't have the time or tools to analyse everything, so it just ends up in files". (KII, School Administrator)*

Technically, this situation reflects a misalignment between indicator proliferation and the analytical capacity required to generate actionable evidence. This situation impairs the essential feedback mechanisms that inform evidence-based planning, performance tracking, and resource allocation. A more effective approach would entail the rationalization of indicators based on strategic value, coupled with targeted investments in institutional capacity, digital infrastructure, and technical expertise to strengthen the link between monitoring functions and decision-making processes.

4.1.5 Insufficient Feedback Mechanisms to Frontline Stakeholders

A key weakness in Tanzania education M&E system is the limited circulation of performance data back to the very actors responsible for service delivery at the local level. Although the EMIS generates comprehensive national data, schools, District Officers, and communities often do not receive timely or usable feedback to inform their actions (EQUIP-T Evaluation Team 2022; Policy Forum 2023). This has resulted in limited data use at the frontline, where decisions could be most responsive. As this Headteacher explained,

> *We submit reports every term, but we never receive any feedback on time, so we don't know what we're doing right or wrong" (KII, DEO)*

Similarly, a District Education Officer said,

> *"We have no access to disaggregated data that could help us support underperforming schools. Most of what we receive is outdated or too generalized to act upon" (KII, School Administrator)*

This gap highlights a technical and operational disconnect in the knowledge feedback loop, where data fails to return to the point of action. Bridging this divide requires not only improving digital feedback systems and localized data visualization tools but also building the capacity of local actors to interpret and act on the data they receive.

4.2 Comparative Analysis of Knowledge Management in M&E Systems

The comparative analysis of KM adoption in Kenya, Ghana, India, and Tanzania underscores the pivotal role of digital transformation, policy alignment, and institutional capacity in enhancing M&E effectiveness (Kenya Ministry of Education, 2023);(Ghana Education Service, 2022b); (Indian Ministry of Education, 2021); (World Bank, 2021). While Kenya, Ghana, and India have integrated AI-driven analytics, cloud-based repositories, and structured policy frameworks leading to improved data utilization and policy responsiveness, Tanzania lags due to limited digital infrastructure, fragmented data systems, and low digital literacy (World Bank, 2021; . Table 1 provides an overview of how these countries compare to Tanzania regarding KM adoption for M&E systems.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Knowledge Management in the M&E Systems

Country	KM Adoption Strategy	Key Challenges	Outcomes
Kenya	Education Management Information System (EMIS), digital dashboards, AI-powered analytics	Initial resistance, high technology costs	Improved data-driven decision-making, enhanced policy responsiveness
Ghana	AI-driven performance tracking, knowledge-sharing platforms	Data security concerns, inconsistent stakeholder engagement	Strengthened real-time monitoring, improved educational outcomes
India	Cloud-based repositories, automated data reporting	Technological disparities across states, ethical concerns in AI use	More efficient resource allocation, better alignment of M&E findings with policy reforms
Tanzania	Limited KM adoption, fragmented data systems	Weak digital infrastructure, low digital literacy levels	Inefficient data utilization, slow policy adjustments

Source: Author compilation from multiple reports and studies

Although Tanzania has made progress in digitizing some aspects of M&E, she still lags in adopting AI-driven and cloud-based solutions, which have helped countries such as India and Ghana to improve education governance (Ghana Education Service 2022a; Indian Ministry of Education 2021; World Bank 2021). The case studies emphasize the need for Tanzania to develop a national KM implementation roadmap, focusing on digital infrastructure investments, capacity-building initiatives, and regulatory frameworks for AI-driven education monitoring.

A structured comparative analysis of KM adoption in Kenya, Ghana, and India provides key insights for the Tanzanian education sector. Table 2 summarises KM applications, challenges, and outcomes in these countries compared to Tanzania.

Table 2:KM Applications, Challenges, and Outcomes

Country	KM Adoption Strategy	Key Challenges	Outcomes
Kenya	EMIS, digital dashboards	Initial resistance, high costs	Improved policy responsiveness, data-driven decision-making
Ghana	AI-driven analytics	Data security concerns, inadequate infrastructure	Strengthened real-time monitoring, improved education outcomes
India	Cloud-based repositories, automated reporting	Technological disparities, resistance to AI	Enhanced evidence-based policymaking, better resource allocation
Tanzania	Limited KM adoption, fragmented data systems	Weak digital tool integration, low literacy levels	Inefficient data utilization, slow policy adjustments

Source: Author compilation from multiple reports and studies

The findings show that Tanzania is behind in KM adoption due to infrastructural and capacity limitations. Lessons from Kenya, Ghana, and India suggest that adopting digital tools, AI-driven analytics, and centralized knowledge repositories can strengthen Tanzania M & E framework.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study offers a focused examination of how KM, grounded in Nonaka SECI Model, can address critical systemic deficiencies within the M&E framework in the Tanzania education sector . The findings demonstrate that strategic integration of KM can mitigate persistent challenges such as fragmented data ecosystems, underutilization of evaluation findings, weak knowledge feedback loops, capacity constraints, and inefficiencies of overloaded indicator frameworks. Through comparative case studies from Kenya, Ghana, and India, the analysis shows that the strategic alignment of KM practices with institutional learning, digital innovation, and evidence-based policymaking leads to measurable improvements in M&E functionality and the education sector governance. In the Tanzanian context, the study underscores that embedding KM into M&E processes through the establishment of a national KM framework, investments in AI-enhanced analytics, integrated EMIS platforms, and sustained capacity development initiatives is not merely beneficial but essential for fostering a responsive, data-driven education system.

However, the successful realization of these benefits is contingent upon addressing critical enabling factors. Tanzania must prioritize the modernization of technological infrastructure, strengthen data governance and security protocols, strengthen stakeholder engagement at all administrative levels, and institutionalize clear accountability mechanisms for the systematic use of M&E findings in policy formulation and resource allocation. Without these foundational reforms, efforts to operationalize KM within the M&E system in the education sector may yield limited impact. Thus, a coordinated and comprehensive approach that synthesizes technological advancement, institutional knowledge-building, and governance reforms is indispensable for constructing a resilient, knowledge-driven M&E architecture aligned with national education priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6. FUTURE STEPS AND TASKS

To build on this study findings, future research should focus on testing KM strategies in selected districts to see how they improve M&E efficiency in the Tanzanian education sector. Implementing small-scale KM-driven M&E projects will provide practical insights into the effectiveness of digital tools, knowledge-sharing platforms, and AI-powered analytics in supporting better decision-making and policy implementation.

Further collaboration between education policymakers, technology experts, and researchers is needed to develop a national Knowledge Management framework for M&E. Future studies should also assess the cost-effectiveness of KM adoption, looking at financial, technical, and infrastructure needs for expanding digital M&E solutions across the country. Training programmes should be introduced to equip Education Officers and policymakers with KM and digital skills, ensuring long-term education monitoring and decision-making improvements.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the key challenges identified namely, fragmented data systems, limited use of M&E findings, technical capacity gaps, overloaded indicator frameworks, and weak feedback mechanisms—the following section presents the recommendations for strengthening KM integration within the M&E system in the Tanzania education sector. The proposed strategies emphasize institutional reforms, digital transformation, capacity development, and evidence-based policymaking to enhance sector performance, accountability, and governance.

I. Enhance Digital Infrastructure and Data System Integration

To address the persistent issue of fragmented data management, it is imperative to invest in the comprehensive integration of the existing education management information systems (EMIS, BEMIS, and vocational MIS) into a cohesive, interoperable KM platform. Priority should be given to the development of cloud-based repositories and the adoption of AI-enabled analytics to facilitate real-time data collection, processing, and dissemination across all education sub-sectors.

II. Institutionalize the Use of M&E Evidence in Decision-Making

To overcome the limited application of M&E findings, the Ministry of Education should formalize structured feedback and utilization mechanisms. The establishment of national guidelines mandating the systematic translation of evaluation results into policy briefs, strategic plans, and budgetary frameworks is essential to ensure that M&E outputs are fully embedded within policy and planning cycles.

III. Strengthen Technical and Analytical Capacities

Addressing the identified capacity constraints requires a sustained investment in human capital. Targeted capacity-building initiatives should be designed to equip policymakers, District Officers, and School Administrators with competencies in the KM systems, digital literacy, data analytics, and evidence-based decision-making. The creation of professional development programmes, mentorship schemes, and Communities of Practice (CoPs) will further cultivate a culture of continuous institutional learning.

IV. Rationalize and Prioritize Monitoring Indicators

In response to the operational burden posed by overloaded indicator frameworks, it is recommended that Tanzania rationalize its education sector indicators. A streamlined, strategically selected set of high-priority indicators aligned with national development goals and institutional capacity will strengthen monitoring effectiveness, enhance data quality, and enable more targeted policy interventions.

V. Reinforce Feedback Mechanisms to Frontline Actors

To address the weak flow of performance data to frontline stakeholders, digital dashboards and localized data visualization platforms should be developed. Ensuring that District Education Officers, schools, and communities have timely access to actionable data will enable more responsive, evidence-informed decision-making at the local service delivery level. Complementary capacity-building initiatives will be necessary to support data interpretation and application at the frontline.

VI. Formulate a National Knowledge Management Strategy

A comprehensive National KM Strategy for the education sector should be articulated, embedding KM principles systematically across M&E processes, institutional governance structures, and reporting mechanisms. Such a strategy should define protocols for knowledge generation, storage, dissemination, and application, thereby institutionalizing KM as a core pillar of education sector performance management.

VII. Establish Robust Data Governance and Ethical Standards

As Tanzania advances her digital transformation agenda, safeguarding data integrity and ethical governance becomes paramount. The development of robust data security frameworks and ethical protocols for AI adoption in education monitoring should be prioritized. Establishing a National Taskforce on Digital M&E and AI Ethics would ensure that technology deployment is aligned with privacy standards, transparency, and the broader goals of equitable education governance.

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