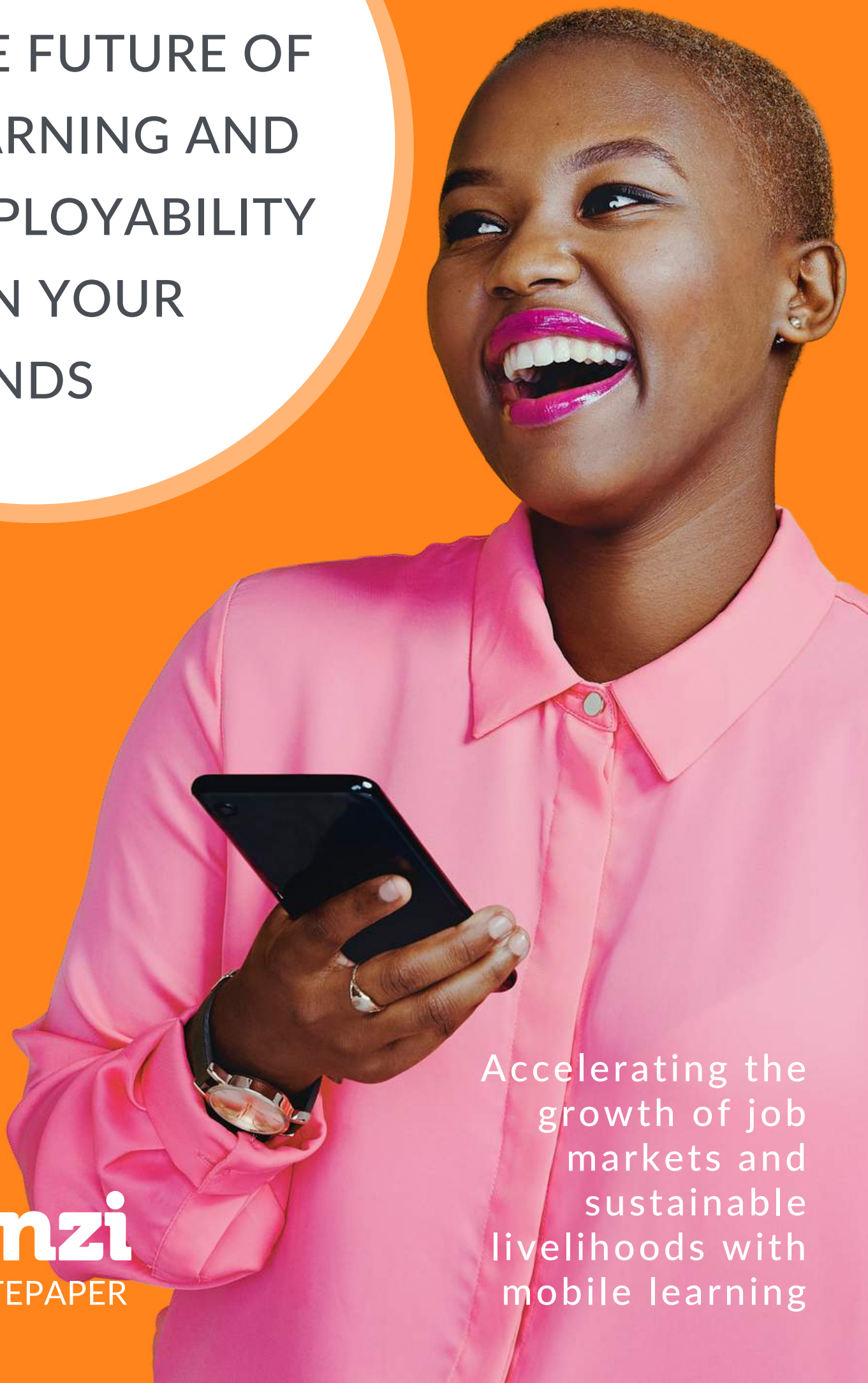


THE FUTURE OF
LEARNING AND
EMPLOYABILITY
IS IN YOUR
HANDS



Accelerating the
growth of job
markets and
sustainable
livelihoods with
mobile learning



FACEBOOK



BUSINESS
FINLAND

WE ARE FUNZI

A mobile learning service that enables the delivery of mobile courses to billions of people. We have made learning accessible, easy, and impactful. Funzi uses robust mobile technology, for learners to use our service anywhere in the world, with any device. Our learning method is unique, innovative, and scientifically-proven to make the learning of complex matters easy. We transform existing high-quality learning content into inspiring mobile courses.

Funzi was founded in 2014 in Espoo, Finland, by a group of experienced entrepreneurs who wanted to turn their expertise in mobile education, media, and technology into something globally remarkable. Funzi takes its name from funza, meaning learning in Swahili, and is inspired by Africa - the continent of growth.

Funzilife Ltd
Tekniikantie 2
FIN-02150, Espoo
Finland



funzi.fi



funzi.mobi



info@funzi.fi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



“On a planetary scale, we need to focus on the mass of people who don't have access to learning the 21st century skills.”

Aape Pohjavirta
Founder & President at Funzi

Access to learning opportunities is critical for individuals to be able to develop practical skills, and a growth mindset, as well as to build a better tomorrow for themselves and their communities. Funzi has made significant progress towards being a truly scalable, systemically relevant catalyst: a mobile learning service **widely accessible on three fronts: financially, technically, and content-wise.**

Learning on Funzi is either free or at an affordable cost; robust mobile technology is used to serve learning on a platform that is globally the most broadly accessible; and the learning content is approachable, engaging, and pedagogically sound.

The impact of the Funzi way of learning is based on the combination of **robust technology**, effective **pedagogy**, deep knowledge of how intrinsically motivated **humans behave on mobile devices**, and the combination of **skills training** and **developing new mindsets.**

Funzi's service has been used by over **eight million learners** globally. Learners have accessed Funzi through a vast range of devices; from feature phones to smartwatches, without any unsolvable technical hiccups.

We've also established that our gamified, bite-sized pedagogy works. Feedback from learners

shows excitement and commitment towards their learning, and course completion rates of 15% to over 35% surpass industry averages.

To deliver high-quality educational content and have our service reach its intended audience, both local and global partnerships are extremely important. In addition, it is crucial that we continue to stay informed on the needs and wants of our growing audience of learners, whether through direct communication or through user and market research agencies.

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INTRODUCTION

This whitepaper is written by mobile learning practitioners at Fonzilife Ltd (later Funzi) and it describes the **why, how, and what of creating a mobile learning service** that aims to give everyone with a connected device access to quality, affordable learning - mainly in non-formal and informal settings - using robust technologies and a gamified pedagogy. The development process of the service is structured into a framework at the intersection of **human-centred design, learning, and digital technology**.

Funzi has had an intense focus on building a learning service that learners can easily access, use, and love. The service has reached millions of learners and received glowing feedback about how learning on Funzi has impacted their lives.

“It made me change my mindset about the little things that life can offer if you are determined to change and think out the box for the sake of our present and future generations”

Edwin
Funzi learner from South Africa

Funzi's vision is to be the **spark for people who are looking for a better tomorrow** for themselves and their communities and inspire them to learn the skills to live happier and healthier lives.

We believe that **education and learning are basic human rights**. Currently, most e-learning efforts are focused on improving education for 10% of the global population.

To work towards our vision, **Funzi's mission is to bring quality, affordable learning** to the other 90% of the global population by using the power of mobile.

Learning needs to be both motivating and useful. Therefore, Funzi focuses on the themes of career building and personal development, with high quality, relevant courses delivered with a combination of effective pedagogy and an engaging experience.

ACCESS TO LEARNING FOR A GLOBAL COMMUNITY



ADAPTING TRAINING AND GETTING A JOB TO THE TIMES

Giving everyone access to learning opportunities and better jobs is directly related to the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 8**: ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG 4), and promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (SDG 8).

The reason that Funzi is mainly focused on employability, career development, and overall job markets, is that having a job is a precursor to everything else that is a part of the Funzi vision i.e. more effective and faster job matching accelerates societal transformation. This is because once individuals can take care of their own immediate needs economically, they then have more capacity to also engage as well-rounded community members and support those around them. However, for many, the current reality is far from this.

The end of the world as we know it

There is a growing **gap in the demand and supply of skills in job markets**. Today 1.3 billion people have competencies that mismatch the activities they perform at their job, estimated to grow to 1.4 billion by 2030 -

the majority in the emerging markets, as estimated by a group of BCG directors (Puckett et al., 2020). These are the same markets that account for 90% of the global population aged under 30, suggests a Euromonitor International article (Eghbal, 2014). The reason for the growing gap is **constant change, driven by societal transformation and black swan events**.

Working life as we know it is changing. The change has been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to counter its effects. This has put increased pressure on the way economies and labour markets have traditionally functioned. The future of work with digital, remote-work enabling tools is here.

Skills in working life become obsolete fast: for example, technical, hard skills are outdated in 2–5 years. Labour markets are challenged by technological disruption, demographic change, and the evolving nature of work which requires continuous learning from workers (ILO, 2020; OECD, 2018). In-demand skills change all the time, and therefore, understanding what is in demand is part of the solution.

There is a great opportunity in the solution: fixing global skills mismatches could add US\$11.5 trillion to global GDP by 2028 (World Economic Forum, 2020a). The World Economic Forum (2020b, p. 5) also estimates that by 2025, a major shift in the way labour is divided between humans and machines may take place: 85 million jobs may vanish, but additionally, 97 million new jobs may emerge.

Billions of people in the world, especially in the emerging markets, can't improve their current livelihood as they don't have access to education for the necessary skills for career development as employees or entrepreneurs.

McKinsey, 2012

Skills needed for the 21st century

Anything that can be automated, will be. So what will that leave for us humans to do? **To learn to excel at being uniquely human: creative problem solvers, critical thinkers and empathetic systems thinkers.**

According to the World Economic Forum (2020b, p. 5), the most coveted-after skills will include skills like **critical thinking, analysis, problem-solving as well as self-management**, including active learning, resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility. And it won't end there: the world will keep on changing, and we will need to keep learning new skills to be able to adapt again and again. **Lifelong learning** is definitely here to stay, and formal education won't be able to meet our ongoing needs. **Non-formal and informal learning opportunities are needed** as more flexible responses to skills mismatches.

Learning opportunities for upskilling and reskilling must reach all

The continued inefficiency of the education systems in emerging markets will result in the challenge of skills mismatch becoming an even greater problem in the future, as reported by ILO and World Bank (ILO, 2020; Nishio, 2019; di Gropello, Kruse & Tandon, 2011).

The global pandemic has highlighted, more than ever, **the need for high quality, scalable digital learning solutions.** However, online learning is different for different audiences. For example, those who are employed focus more on personal development,

whereas the unemployed focus more on learning digital skills like IT, computer science, and data analysis, as stated by the World Economic Forum (2020b, p. 5-6). Also, the global population has varying access to the technology needed to enable online learning: in the global north, high-speed internet and high-end devices, including laptops, are the norm, whereas in the global south, masses still rely on slower networks and lower-end devices.

Mobile remains the solution for reaching people at scale: "Almost half of the world's population – 3.8 billion people – are using mobile internet. This continues to grow, with an additional 250 million people connecting for the first time in 2019. For many citizens, mobile is their only means of accessing the internet, helping to unlock significant and life-enhancing knowledge, products and services." GSMA (2020)

Reaching users at scale is critical for a working solution. As a subcategory of online learning, mobile learning has the potential to have a great social impact as it can give **4.28 billion mobile internet users** access to skills required to become and remain employable (Statista, 2020). However, education and training also require motivation, yet in 74% of countries the workers are not motivated to learn (Puckett et al., 2020). To sum up, **current edtech solutions focus mainly on the top 10% of the population** able to access online learning through modern desktop devices and high-speed internet - those who have completed or are in tertiary education (UNESCO, 2020).



THE FUNZI METHOD

In order to be a truly scalable, systemically relevant catalyst, a mobile learning service would need to be **widely accessible on three fronts: financially, technically, and content-wise**. In other words, in order for learning to be enabled, the learner needs to be able to afford to use the service, they need to have the technical capabilities to access the service, and the learning content itself needs to be approachable, engaging, and pedagogically sound - also addressing the motivation challenge. It is these three areas of accessibility that the Funzi method is structured around.

Defining Funzi's primary target audience and their needs

When designing a high-quality service, it's important to focus on a well-defined primary audience and shape the service around their lives, needs, and standard of living. For Funzi that primary group of users has been **literate, aspirational young adults in urban and peri-urban areas in emerging markets**.

Globally, the need for quality education is the greatest in emerging markets. These countries have predominantly young populations, and many of the young adults have been left without the education they need to get ahead in life. These individuals often have a high internal motivation to learn, they are literate in either English or their native language, have mobile devices, and live in or near cities with mobile networks. They are a group that is moderately easy to reach, with the potential for large social impact through providing non-formal and informal learning opportunities to bridge skills mismatches.

In the first seven years of operation, **over 8 million learners have accessed Funzi**, most of them from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. In Europe, asylum seekers and migrants have been targeted. The publicly and freely available courses have gained a 50-50 ratio of female and male users.

Transitioning from B2B to a B2C business model to serve our learners

For the first years of its operation, Funzi reached potential learners via a B2B business model, where third party organizations were the paying customers, sponsoring learning for their target audiences to study for free. This model did not allow us to reach the scale we were aiming for, so in 2019, the decision to transition to a business model built on having a direct relationship with end-users was made.

This decision to **pivot to a B2C business model** prompted further market research about what our target audiences really needed and would be willing to pay for, assuming that the primary target market would remain **lower- to mid-income young adults in emerging markets.**

Key defining characteristics of said target audiences emerged as **having some disposable income, an interest to develop themselves, and naturally, these combined: willingness to pay for courses that help them develop new skills.**

The skills in highest demand fit under two broad themes: **career building** and **personal development.** Learners expressed an interest in paying for premium courses that would help them build skills to advance their careers, communicate better at and out of work, and develop soft skills that help them succeed in all areas of their lives.



The financial accessibility of learning

Funzi recognizes the importance of **collaboratively solving global challenges**. For this reason, we have actively sought to collaborate with experts from different sectors: including **academia, private, public or third sectors**. Collaboration with organizations that work with similar target audiences to Funzi's enables us to better reach, understand, and serve our learners.

Therefore, Funzi works through **multiple market pathways**, reaching learners through:

- Community partners and local relevant thought leaders
- Collaboration with United Nations agencies, other international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local NGOs
- Mobile network operators (MNOs), social networks, and digital service providers

Learners discover Funzi courses via the previously-mentioned partners, word-of-mouth, or social media ad campaigns.

A choice of free and premium courses are available on funzi.mobi.

For the premium courses, learners can preview and try a course with a free trial before needing to pay for the full course.

Initial market research has led us to determine two price points for our premium courses: the equivalent of approximately 7 USD and 19 USD, often available in local currencies. Learners deem these price points to be a fair price for learning new, practical skills that are easy to learn and have an immediate positive impact on their lives.

"The prices of the courses are of great value. Funzi is a fun and easy mobile learning site with lots of free valuable and affordable courses. All you need is a mobile phone connected to the internet to study anytime, anywhere."

Feedback from Nigerian thought leader



The technical accessibility of learning

In order for the funzi.mobi service to have the potential to reach billions of users, it **has to work on all connected devices**, not only on the latest smartphones connected to fast networks.

Connectivity technology is evolving quickly and becoming more and more accessible, as seen e.g. in mobile subscription rates, approaching 50% in Sub-Saharan Africa according to data by GSMA (2019).

Despite advances being made in many countries in the Global South, the gap in digital development from the Global North will remain a reality in the future.

For example, there is a significant gap in the speeds of the mobile networks in the Global North vs. the Global South. Data compiled by GSMA (2019) shows that 4G network penetration in Sub-Saharan Africa is currently at 7%, compared to 70% in the US (GSMA, 2018).

Most of Sub-Saharan Africa mobile data usage still happens on 2G networks (GSMA, 2019). 2G speeds are not enough for pleasurable surfing on a modern website, let alone video streaming.

Similar gaps exist in the types of mobile devices in use: in the Global North, even 1000 USD is considered a somewhat manageable price for a mobile phone, whereas in the Global South handsets mostly have a sub-100 USD price tag – and naturally the price heavily dictates the technical capabilities of the devices, when it comes to things like screen size, processing power, or memory.

Gaps like these are the reason why **in order to reach billions, we need to look at what is well established and readily available – robust technologies.**

While there are no separate web technologies required to reach mobile devices specifically, a lot of the web development focus has been on the desktop and laptop paradigm. Additionally, with enhancements for mobile, the focus has been on expensive, high-end smartphones. Not much consideration has been given to low-end devices, if any.



The contemporary approach to web development puts more and more stress on the device, because many modern websites are actually apps running inside the browser. To achieve the true robustness of the mobile web, **web services must be built in the traditional way**: run all the logic and program code on the web server and send static pages to the browser. The static pages do not require any functionality to be processed by the browser, meaning it works on practically any device regardless of its age or price range.

Additionally, when the contents are optimized to work well even in slower networks, we're talking about a truly robust medium. With this approach, also the data costs go down – an important aspect of accessibility, as **cost of data is still a major issue in the Global South**.

On Funzi, one learning topic, which is up to a week’s worth of learning, with all the text and images, requires no more data than a few minutes of music streaming or one news article on a modern web site.

This is what we mean by a **truly robust mobile web**: something that reaches every device with a browser, including all mobile devices whether they’re smartphones or feature phones, new or old, regardless of how much memory or processing power they have, and whether they’re connected through 4G or 2G. And this is how we've built Funzi to truly be able to reach billions.

We suggest that the technology that is as ubiquitous and robust today as AM/FM radio has been in the past, is the mobile web.

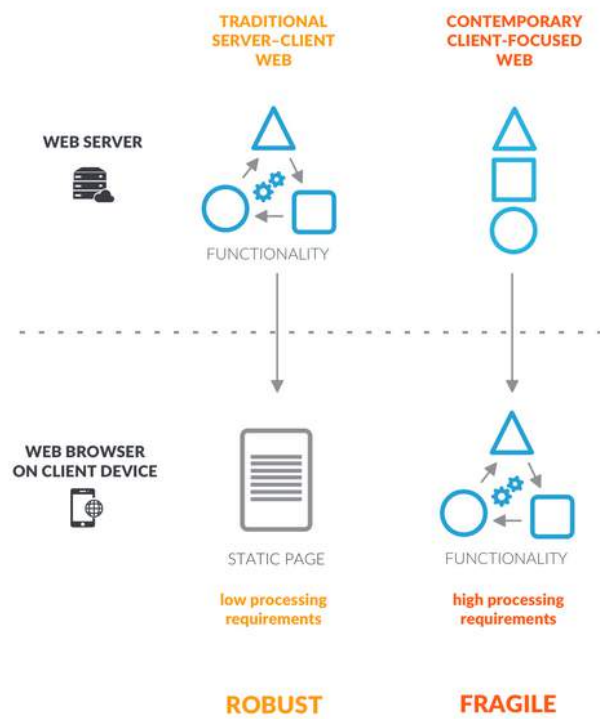


Figure 1. The difference between the robust web and the fragile web

The accessibility of the learning content

Funzi utilizes a unique pedagogy designed for mobile users with bite-sized content using conversational language - building **practical skills that learners can immediately apply to their lives**. The pedagogy and mindset components consist of the following principles.

Structuring course content into bite-sized learning cards

While text itself is bandwidth- and device-friendly, long texts are not reader-friendly on a small screen. Funzi's solution is bite-sizing content into learning cards: compact units of learning consisting of around 250 words.

These standard learning cards can be read in just a few minutes. In addition to standard learning cards, courses also comprise quote-length -

"Did you know" cards, activity cards containing quiz questions to check the learner's understanding, and "Boost your skills" cards with reflective or real-life activities for the learner to apply their new knowledge to really build their skills.

Learning in bite-sized chunks is great for learning during small, idle moments of busy days.

In addition to feeling natural on mobile devices, **bite-sized content is great for producing effective learning results** according to multiple studies, summarized for example by Gutierrez (2018) and Grovo (2016).

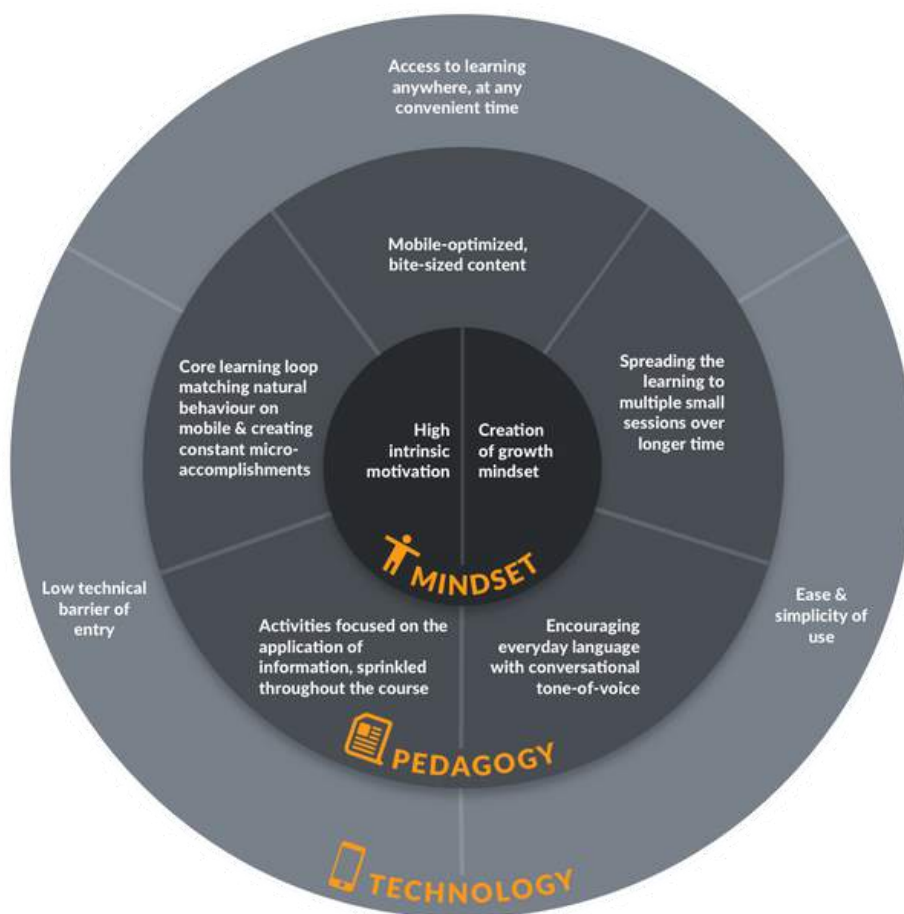


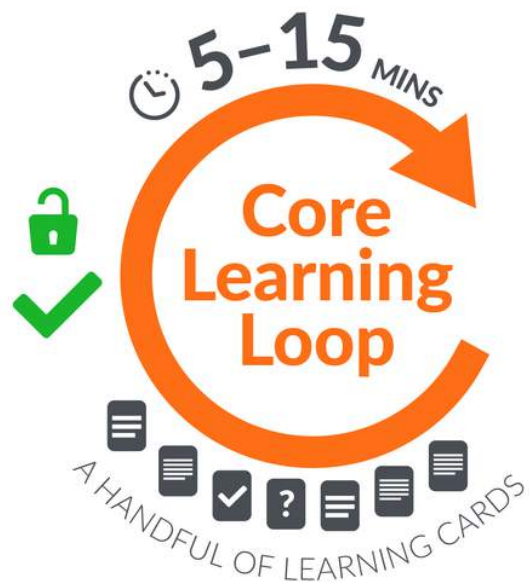
Figure 2. Funzi framework integrating the layers of technology, pedagogy, and learner mindset.

Game-inspired behavioral patterns for pedagogy.

At the heart of the Funzi pedagogy is the core learning loop, a game-like behavioral pattern modeled after **how people use mobile phones**. According to Opera Mediaworks data reported by Shaul (2016), sessions on mobile are just some minutes long. For learning results to be achieved, content must be structured to fit such usage.

Learning cards are grouped into handfuls of 7-12 learning cards. One handful takes on average 10-15 minutes to complete - a natural session length for mobile usage.

Completing one handful unlocks the next one. This consumption + unlocking is the core learning loop. It creates a **meaningful, compelling structure for learning, providing motivation-boosting, game-like micro-achievements during the learning process**. Taking breaks between handfuls gives learners time to digest and assimilate new information while building anticipation.



Funzi content comes in compact, quick to read **LEARNING CARDS**, organized in **HANDFULS**.



Positive and human tone-of-voice

Funzi courses are written in **encouraging and everyday language**, allowing the learner to feel relatedness as if the course is speaking directly to them. A conversational, unofficial tone-of-voice in the text keeps the barrier of entry low even for non-native learners. Combining the joyfulness of celebrating the small steps forward with the learner as well as the practical skills that the learner can apply in their life strengthens engagement and motivation.

Growth mindset and learner activation

The learner feedback Funzi receives on its empowering and encouraging approach stresses the importance of a coaching tone-of-voice in courses: asking the learner questions **activates their brain into a solution-finding mode** (Rock, 2009), which is more useful and empowering than telling learners what to do. Asking questions is also more impactful because it helps learners find gaps in their own thinking processes, working towards developing a growth mindset.

Engaging activities, a key ingredient in effective learning, are also sprinkled throughout the courses to encourage learners to practice lessons in their own life: to learn what actually works in their unique situation. The development of mindsets into an empowering direction therefore affects learners' lives more than individual hard skills, since **a growth mindset builds general agency, autonomy and confidence in one's own ability to navigate life.**

An example of this is entrepreneurship: with continuous problem-solving and innovative approaches required, an entrepreneur cannot succeed on hard skills alone. Campos et al. (2017) have showed that the combination of developing new skills and proactive mindsets is superior to solely focusing on building entrepreneurial hard skills like budgeting or marketing.

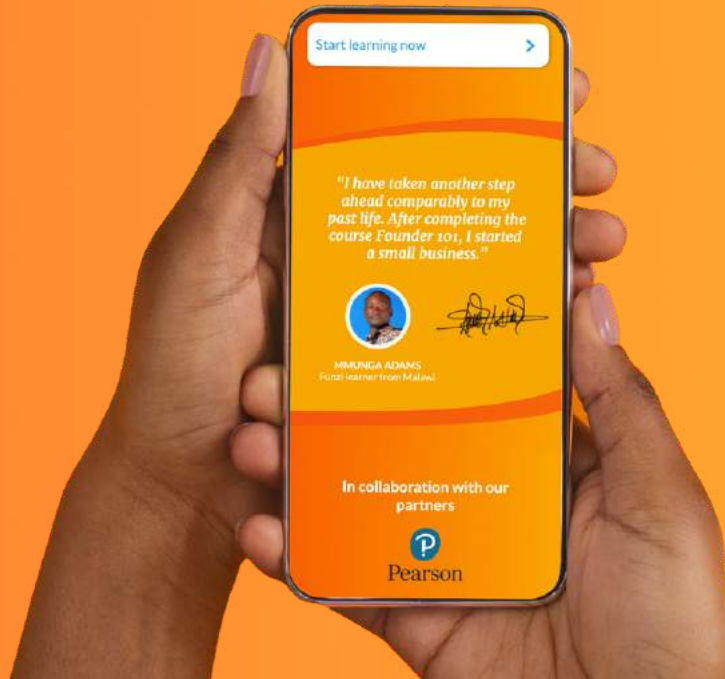
Adult learners' motivation for learning

The motivation adult learners often have for learning new skills is the practical, short-term objectives that they have - however, it is the growth of mindsets that supports them more long-term:

“Often, adult learners’ immediate focus is on practical, short-term objectives—to be able to qualify for a driver’s license, get a job or promotion, or teach a child to read. It is crucial to recognize that learning needs must be defined so as to recognize both short-term objectives and long-term goals. The learner’s immediate objectives may be described in terms of subject matter mastery, attainment of specific competencies, or other job-related objectives, but his or her goal is to become a socially responsible autonomous thinker.”

(Mezirow, 1997, p. 8)

Hard skills often help us achieve our short-term objectives, but the development of soft skills and mindsets - in effect transferable skills - is what is needed for reaching long-term goals.



Scaling the Funzi course selection through content partnerships

Funzi's core business is transforming learning content into a bite-sized, engaging format - a process we call *funzification*. The **funzification process** includes chunking the original content into the different types of learning cards described above, as well as adding an additional layer of encouragement and coaching - challenging the learner with questions to activate their own thinking and getting them to take ownership of their own insights and learnings.

On the other hand, Funzi's core business is not being a content expert in the various themes that our courses are on. It is for this reason that we aim to create partnerships with content experts, as we have done with Pearson, the global leader in educational content.

On a **joint mission to support the progress of lifelong learners, Pearson and Funzi are scaling access to Pearson's learning content to mobile users globally**: a selection of Pearson's books are transformed into Funzi premium courses optimized for learners studying on mobile devices.

The partnership with Pearson has enabled Funzi to scale our premium course selection to more broadly encompass the following categories:

- **Boost your career**, including courses on job-seeking and employability, entrepreneurship, general business skills, sales, marketing, and project management.
- **Communication skills**, including courses on speaking and listening, emotional intelligence, and negotiation.
- **Life skills**, including courses on developing one's mindset, planning one's future and organizing one's life.

Funzi also has free courses available in the **Healthy living and Sustainable communities** categories, in which we've benefited greatly from content and distribution partnerships with various NGOs, such as the UN Association of Finland, UNDP and Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator in South Africa.



FUNZI RECOGNIZED AS BEING IMPACTFUL AND SCALABLE

What Funzi has learned during our **seven year journey** puts us in an excellent position to solve the global skills mismatch challenge - in collaboration with other players on the same mission. The Funzi method has along the years captured the attention of and been recognized by education, development organizations, public sector, academia, tech, employers, and learners.

Education and academia

Funzi bases its approach on the science of human learning in general and digital learning in particular. Collaboration with revered individuals and institutions in education helps us refine and strengthen our approach:

- **Our advisors include:** Dr. Paul Kim, Chief Technology Officer and Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University, as well as Professor of Digital Learning at University of Wolverhampton, John Traxler.
- Funzi contributed a chapter in the book **Critical Mobile Pedagogy: Cases of Digital Technologies and Learners at the Margins** (2020), edited by Professors John Traxler and Helen Crompton, and published by Routledge, the leading academic publisher in humanities, social sciences, and STEM.
- Our partnership with **Pearson**, the global leader in educational content, shows that even an educational giant sees clear value in Funzi's ability to deliver learning to our learners.
- We collaborated with **Hanken & SSE Executive Education** to create and launch the world's first academic blended learning program for migrants. The Business Lead "Micro MBA" program was developed with the aim of introducing and integrating migrants into Finnish work culture. The program won Gold in the EFMD Excellence in Practice Award 2018 Talent Development category.
- Funzi won the **CESS Education Award** in 2017 for the category "Best Free ICT / App Product". The CESS Education Awards celebrate excellence in and raise the standards of the education industry.

Industry, tech, and employers

Collaboration with industry partners and employers has allowed Funzi to develop our capacity for **creating impact at scale, and make sure our solutions have immediate practical value.**

- Funzi has collaborated with Facebook multiple times over the years, including on:
 - Internet.org: Built and launched a Free Basics version of our service.
 - LDN_LAB: Funzi was one of the dozen companies selected from over 1000 startups to participate in the Connectivity & Impact acceleration program.
 - Jobs on Facebook: Product experiments with Jobs on Facebook in Bangladesh including mobile network operator Banglalink (05/2020).
- **East-West Seed (EWS)**, a leading tropical vegetable seeds company operating in Southeast Asia and Africa, used Funzi for training smallholder farmers in rural Nigeria about Vegetable Seedling Production. The results were extraordinary: Over 5000 farmers participated in the program, and 89% of them completed the course. The feedback from the learners was extremely positive. Thanks to Funzi's mobile learning, EWS was able to continue training farmers even during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Bidvest Facilities Management**, a part of Bidvest, leading South African multi-billion Euro services, trading, and distribution group, utilized Funzi in training 800+ blue-collar employees in commercial acumen.
- **Jobberman**, Nigeria's leading recruitment website, utilized Funzi for the Driver for the Future program: Funneling out and training the most motivated talents and certifying them as premium drivers for their clients.

Training focused on safe and lawful driving, communication, general car safety and maintenance - alongside developing an attitude of trust and integrity.

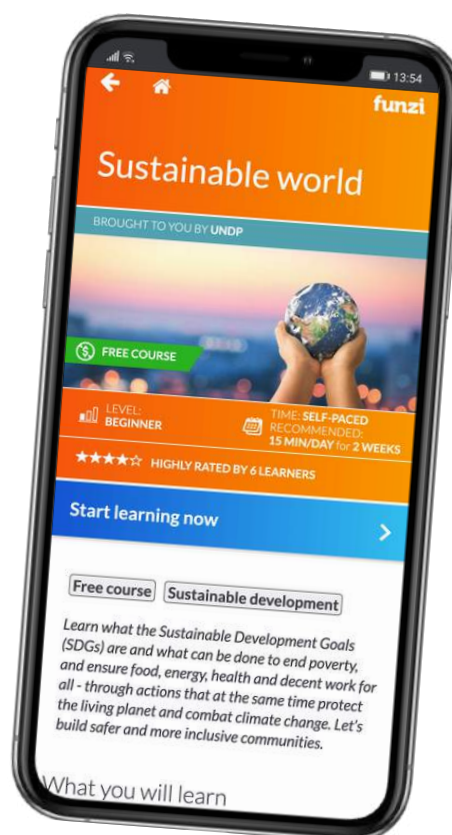
- Funzi has supported the spread of entrepreneurship both through mobile-only and blended learning solutions with its **Founder 101 course and Founder 101 Hub program.**
 - In Iraq, ~40 000 learners studied the mobile-only course, of which 50% were female, 50% male.
- In blended learning programs for entrepreneurship, the Founder 101 course is studied online, after which participants attend weekly on-site training sessions, to further their ideas or already existing businesses through facilitation and peer support - and to grow a valuable network. Programs have been executed with for example **Westbury Youth Centre (Mashup Community Development), for youth at risk of marginalization in urban and rural locations in South Africa, and International Trade Centre and Zimba Women, for women entrepreneurs in Uganda.**
- Funzi was shortlisted as a European finalist at **Global EdTech Startups Awards (GESA)** in 2017. GESA is the world's largest edtech startup competition.

Public sector and development organizations

Funzi's work towards sustainable societies started during the refugee crisis in 2015, and has developed into an international Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) curriculum. Local relevance of programs is built through content partnerships with local experts.

- Throughout the **Migrant integration program**, Funzi worked with partners to support the integration of refugees into Finnish society. Mobile courses on orientation to local culture, including sexual health and equality, local services, and livelihoods in the food industry, gained over 20 000 learners. Partners included the **Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland, the Finnish Immigration Service, City of Espoo, City of Turku, and S-Group**, a major Finnish conglomerate.
- Supporting the training efforts of **UNDP Syria**, Funzi worked with UNDP to create courses on NGO Project Management for field staff dispersed around Syria, unable to travel to face-to-face training. Over 400 individuals from UNDP's local partner organizations studied the courses.
- Funzi helped to raise awareness on sustainable decision-making amongst local decision-makers for the Finnish municipal elections in spring 2017, based on UNDP content expertise and collaboration with the **UN Association of Finland**.
- Building on the above, Funzi delivered the world's first city-level SDG course in the **City of Espoo**, developed in collaboration with UNDP and the UN Association of Finland.

- With the **UNESCO Chair in Learning Society and Futures of Education**, Funzi created a course on futures literacy for youth.
- As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Funzi created a mobile course on accurate information on the virus, as well as its physical, mental, emotional, social, and financial impacts on the lives of individuals, families, communities, and society at large. **The course COVID-19: Adapt and thrive was created in collaboration with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator and supported by United Nations in South Africa**. The course became a component in South Africa's official response, and later, a global course version was also launched.



Funzi learners

Most importantly, for our work to make any sense, Funzi needs to be recognized by the learners themselves. And it is: the Funzi method is loved and praised by learners who feel that learning on Funzi has indeed had a positive impact on their lives.

A concrete example of the value of the growth mindset is the change reported by learners of the Funzi entrepreneurship course: even if their business wouldn't immediately succeed, they had learned how to problem-solve and keep learning. The fundamental change in how they see life and their role in it shows up in feedback.

"I am not so much into studying... but I LOVE learning. Am learning so much from Funzi."

"This course could be a means to alleviate poverty and change mindsets of many for self-reliance life style in Dzaleka"

"Thanks Funzi....you've really made it possible for me to see my abilities in new light, don't really need a degree to do something positive with my life, we can all start somewhere"

"Am a 29 year old unemployed south african, learning on Funzi has given me hope that I can still make it in life"

Such empowerment is especially important for disadvantaged target audiences, who might otherwise not have sufficient support to see opportunities to create change amidst their prevailing circumstances.

The constant stream of feedback we get from our learners illustrates the power of developing a growth mindset along with hard skills.

Not only qualitative, but also quantitative feedback is encouraging: **Funzi's key performance indicators look better than industry benchmarks**, for example, course completion on Funzi ranges from an average of 15% to over 35% in certain courses and geographies, while Coursera's figure for unpaid learners is 4% according to Meeker (2019).

Our most engaged learners have become **Funzi Ambassadors**, who have self-identified as wanting to spread Funzi in their communities on a volunteer basis. Ambassadors have hosted:

- Events to spread awareness of the opportunities of developing new skills via mobile learning, primarily in Nigeria;
- Study groups around entrepreneurship, in Nigeria for low-income adults;
- Graduation ceremonies for community members completing Funzi courses in entrepreneurship and job-seeking skills, for example in Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi.



LOOKING AHEAD

Various challenges and opportunities lie ahead for Funzi. A key moment of truth will be the learners' reception of **Funzi's new B2C business model** in February 2021 - newly released at the time of writing this whitepaper. With the business model pivot to B2C, we've updated funzi.mobi to serve learners directly with a **growing course collection and enhanced features**.

Despite the conversational, simple-to-understand English that Funzi uses on its courses, the importance of reaching learners in their mother tongue or at least a language they are fluent in is well acknowledged. Free Funzi courses are and have been available in around 10 different languages.

In the future, Funzi will increasingly work towards **making a selection of our premium courses available to learners in different languages**.

Following course usage via analytics and direct learner feedback has been ongoing since the start of Funzi in 2014. Each new round of market research allows us to understand our learners better, and we've also taken initial steps toward impact verification. **We need to further attempt to verify the deeper impact that learning on Funzi has on learners, and further encourage them to apply new skills in real life.**

Finally, we will start looking into a key component of good pedagogy, currently missing from the service itself: **the social aspect of learning**. Getting that right, especially in a mobile context, is something that no-one in the industry has really figured out yet. But it's a challenge worth solving in order to really digitalize learning.

We hope you will follow our journey in making learning accessible to everyone on the planet. To learn more about Funzi's further developments to meet these challenges, keep an eye out for future whitepapers.

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info@funzi.fi

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