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## **A cross-sector partnership to support students at the University of the West Indies, Mona with distance learning will provide over 500 devices to students in need.**

The University of the West Indies Development and Endowment Fund recently donated 500 new tablets while the World Bank through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development donated 15 laptops.

Mona staff are also on-board to lend support to students as the Mona Administrative and Technical Staff Association contributed 13 tablets.

Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the UWI Mona, Professor Dale Webber, expressed gratitude for the support.

“We are so thankful to everyone that is stepping up to help us to close the digital divide. The support from various donors to assist our students with challenges to access online learning is very timely. The UWI Mona moved to remote and online teaching on April 14, and we are not certain how long we will have to engage in this mode so this support from our donors ensures that students who do not have devices at home can participate in distance learning Webber further noted that the university received a little over 500 devices, however, an initial needs assessment indicated that an additional 500 devices are required.

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Speaking to measures that will be taken to ensure that those who are most in need will benefit, Webber said these decisions will be data-driven.

“We will look at usage history to determine how those who have applied for a device have accessed our online systems in the past, for example whether they accessed the platforms off-campus, via a mobile device or through our libraries.”

This, he said, is just one of the ways the university will assess since there are a limited number of devices and it has to ensure that they fall in the hands of those who need them most.

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