

Training Teachers To Use Different ICT Channels



1. Radio Broadcast :

Even with prevalence of mobile phone usage, radio is still the most commonly available and accessed technology across the globe. UNESCO reports that 75% of households globally have access to radio and in sub-Saharan Africa between 80% and 90% of households have access to a working radio set. Currently, for many countries, broadcasting radio lessons would be the quickest option to continued schooling. Most countries have state, private and community radio stations that can potentially be used (and probably are being used) to educate students who suddenly find themselves out of school.



2. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI):

No one can predict the trajectory of this pandemic, but assuming it continues over the next several months, education systems may wish to shift to Interactive Radio Instruction. IRI is an instructional approach that uses one-way radio to reach students and teachers (or in this case, students, and their parents) via pre-recorded, interactive, and quality educational content through podcasts. This can be done by teachers using their mobile phones and the content disseminated via radio.



3. Television

A quick scan of the CIA broadcast media list suggests that most African countries have at least one state owned television station and several have both state and privately run stations. Countries like Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Ethiopia have strong technical and human infrastructure and are known for a television industry that produces compelling television programming both for teaching and learning. In Ghana students now make use of the Ghana Learning TV channel for their remote learning. In Kenya, the government has organized different tv stations where teaching is done.

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3. **Mobile Phones:** Given high rates of mobile phone ownership everywhere, including in sub-Saharan Africa where the purchase of low-cost smart phones has continued to rise over the last several years, phones should be considered another important educational tool to provide continued schooling during the pandemic. Here are some ways mobile phones can provide students with educational opportunities:



- a. **Educational apps** can help students learn basic skills (literacy, numeracy) but there is a plethora of apps for almost all content areas. Many education websites (Khan Academy, Google classrooms etc.) have app-based versions of their web content and many educational apps allow students to not just consume, but also create, content.
- b. **Social media:** Teachers can utilize social media to organize Twitter and Facebook discussions, push out information, share video, etc. Teachers can organize WhatsApp groups for each class and share digital content and resources through this popular medium (presuming they have it).
- c. **Tutoring:** Many countries have a long tradition of phone-based tutoring and SMS support. There are a host of commercial tutoring providers throughout the region that offer real time video or SMS tutoring and whose services might be leveraged. Examples are Wolo and Asanka in Ghana. Eneza and M-Shule in Kenya. Yaaka and Somesa in Uganda. REB eLearning portal in Rwanda and Shule-Direct in Tanzania.



4. **Online learning:** For places that have the infrastructure—technical, human and educational (i.e., digital content, assessment, etc.) and where students have home access to computers and decent Internet connection, online learning makes the most sense because it most closely simulates the interactive, real-time, multimodal experience we want from school. A number of countries and school systems are turning to online learning—through online courses (via a Learning Management System) or virtual teaching platforms (face-based webinars via Google Hangouts or Zoom). Teachers and school leaders can make use of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platforms. Examples are Alison, Coursera, Edx, Future Learn, Udemy and Canvas.

What steps did the school take to prepare teachers and students for online learning?

- The school created grade wise WhatsApp groups and started sharing pdf versions of learning materials. It also shared relevant YouTube videos and videos created by teachers.
- The school leader trained teachers on how to use Zoom and worked as a team with the teachers to find solutions for challenges like audio quality, screen sharing, video quality etc.
- As student interest and engagement peaked, the school started to offer Zoom classes for higher grade students.
- Noticing an increase in student attendance, the school launched Zoom Classes for all students.
- Currently, the school has an average of up to 200 students attending classes on zoom. To simulate classroom environment, teachers follow the same timetable used in in-person learning. They also incorporate a lunch break during classes, to ensure students have some break from screen time.

What steps did the school take to prepare teachers and students for online learning?

- **The school staff called each parent and took individual feedback on how they were finding online classes. The school further spent some time speaking to parents about the importance of online and continued learning**
- **For parents who were less tech savvy, the school created step-by-step tutorial videos on 'how to download Zoom App', 'steps to login to online classes' and other relevant topics. These videos were then shared via WhatsApp groups**
- **Parents who found it difficult to follow the videos were invited to come to school where staff would help them download the necessary apps on their phones**

How did the school support students who did not have any access to smartphones or mobile devices?

- Parents who did not have access to any devices like computers or smartphones were loaned computers from the school computer lab to ensure that no student was left behind
- Printed worksheets and learning packs were also made available so that parents could physically collect them from schools
- For students who could not access online classes, teachers were deployed to periodically make home visits to monitor learning and support students with learning materials, as and when needed. Moving forward, the school is considering deploying more teachers in the field



How did the school make online classes interesting?

- Alongside online classes, the school shared topic wise presentation' and interesting YouTube videos via WhatsApp
- The school is also conducting online quizzes and competitions and featuring winning students on the school's Facebook Groups/Page. This has led to a boost in student engagement as the recognition encourages students to participate and get more involved in the classes