

Teaching and learning with technology in Sub- Saharan Africa: Case studies of practice



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This publication would not have been possible without the teachers and teacher educators who made time in their busy schedules to participate in interviews and provide written reflections on their use of technology. Their input ensured that these case studies are informative and grounded in real educational practice.

We are also grateful to all 119 educators who took the time to complete the open call survey. Due to limited space, only a selection of examples are featured here, but the educators' responses offered an insightful picture of practice across the region and demonstrated the diversity of approaches being used.

Finally, sincere thanks to the British Council team in Sub-Saharan Africa for their support throughout this project: Julia Stanton (English Connects Lead, SSA), Steve Diop (Open Learning Manager, SSA) and Michelle Thiongane (Programme Manager, English and School Education). Their guidance on survey design, report planning and follow-up with participating educators was invaluable.



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Foreword

We've all been to presentations on the trends in EdTech, the next big thing, the results of pilots and large initiatives demonstrating effectiveness, but while these are often interesting and sometimes inspiring, there is nothing that excites me more than hearing how real teachers and students are independently using EdTech in real classrooms for real learning, and with tangible results.

Back in 2017, the British Council partnered with Central Square Foundation in India to release a set of case studies about just this: how educators were using a wide range of EdTech tools. As with that project, for this publication the team in Sub-Saharan Africa put a call out for submissions, encouraging teachers across the geography to share their innovations, their achievements and their learning. It's fascinating to compare what we present here with those case studies we collected nearly a decade ago. Some approaches are similar – for example WhatsApp still features prominently – but of course we now also see the involvement of AI-powered tools, such as using ChatGPT to help generate classroom resources.

These case studies show how teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa are taking technology into their own hands to solve the problems they are facing. Teachers are using mobile-based tools like WhatsApp to keep the learning going when schools are closed during conflict, to extend learning beyond the classroom through smaller group work and even to collect voice notes for conducting assessments of spoken English skills. All of this helps teachers to navigate the challenges associated with low-resource classrooms and large class sizes (in some cases over a hundred students).

It's interesting to note that most teachers in these case studies are making use of technologies that were not necessarily developed for educational

purposes. In this sense, they are using 'tools' as a means to an end, not a 'product' as an end in itself. As one of the teachers – Dr Cynthia Adaeze Onuegwunwoke – says, 'The goal is equitable access, not high-tech glamour.' With this in mind, the case studies also show us how teachers and teacher educators are using easily available and simple to use mobile-based tools to improve inclusivity, for example for learners with visual impairments.

All this mirrors the British Council's broader approach to the integration of EdTech. We start with the challenge and then we see if there's a way for technology to help, rather than the other way round. This approach has led to partnerships that provide offline platforms for sharing training materials with teachers with low connectivity, experiments to support more efficient and constructive observations of teachers and providing flexible, blended online courses for teachers and teacher educators – efforts that have led to consecutive bronze, silver and gold wins at the Learning Technology Awards in the UK.

One of our case study teachers – Elsie Enanga – tells us, 'Learners all want to have their voices heard.' In our experience, so do teachers. Here is a chance to hear their stories of continuing innovation and creativity. Enjoy!

Amy Lightfoot
Academic Director
English and School Education
British Council

Introduction

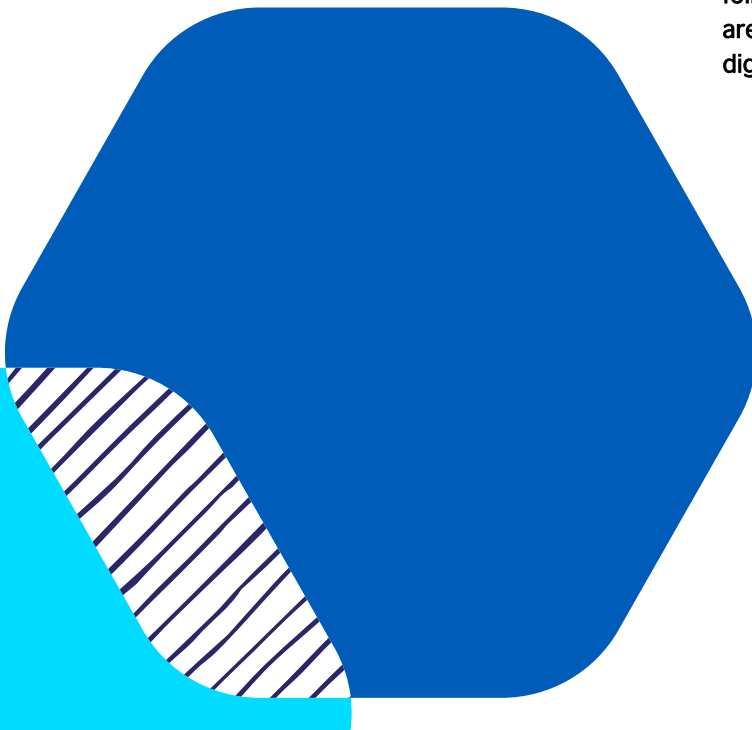
Across Sub-Saharan Africa, teachers and teacher educators are finding creative ways to support learning with technology – even in settings with limited resources. This publication brings together case studies selected from 119 survey responses across 20 countries. They highlight practical approaches from urban and rural schools, tertiary institutions, teacher development programmes and community-based or after-school initiatives.

In many of these examples, teachers and learners make use of mobile apps, messaging tools, online platforms and inclusive technologies to share ideas and access learning materials. This reflects the region's growing digital connectivity, driven largely by smartphones. According to World Bank data (2025), 37 per cent of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa now own a phone with internet access (33 per cent smartphones and 4 per cent feature phones with limited internet capability). Smartphone ownership in the region is projected to rise from around 540 million in 2024 to 880 million by 2030, while mobile data use per device is expected to triple (Ericsson, 2024), expanding opportunities for digital learning.

However, barriers to equitable access persist:

- **Electricity:** 80 per cent of people without electricity worldwide live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recent improvements remain concentrated in a few countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Mozambique (Cozzi et al., 2025).
- **Cost of data:** The region has 'the highest mobile data costs in the world as a percentage of household income and 6 of the world's 10 most expensive economies for mobile data' (World Bank, 2025, p. 51). Many people buy data on a daily basis because the upfront cost of larger bundles is too high.

Even so, internet use in the region continues to grow. Surveys suggest that 35 per cent of adults are internet users – defined as those who had used the internet in the three months prior to a World Bank survey (2025) – compared with an average of 67 per cent across low- and middle-income economies. However, among these users, 55 per cent went online daily and a further 24 per cent weekly. This growing group of regular users represents an important foundation for expanding access to digital learning and professional development. The case studies that follow show how teachers across Sub-Saharan Africa are building on this foundation, adapting low-tech and digital tools to meet local needs.



Selecting the case studies

Case studies were drawn from 119 survey responses to an open call shared through British Council teacher development networks and channels in August 2025. Respondents from 20 countries in the region described specific examples of how they used technology as teachers or teacher educators.

Responses were shortlisted based on clarity, context, impact, creativity, inclusion and safeguarding. Each selected case study was

followed up through interviews, written exchanges or both to clarify details and further explore challenges, implementation and impact. The survey questions and selection criteria can be found in Appendix A.

The final 20 selections highlight a mix of teaching, learning and teacher development experiences. Together, they show practical ways technology supports learning and professional growth across diverse contexts (see Figure A).

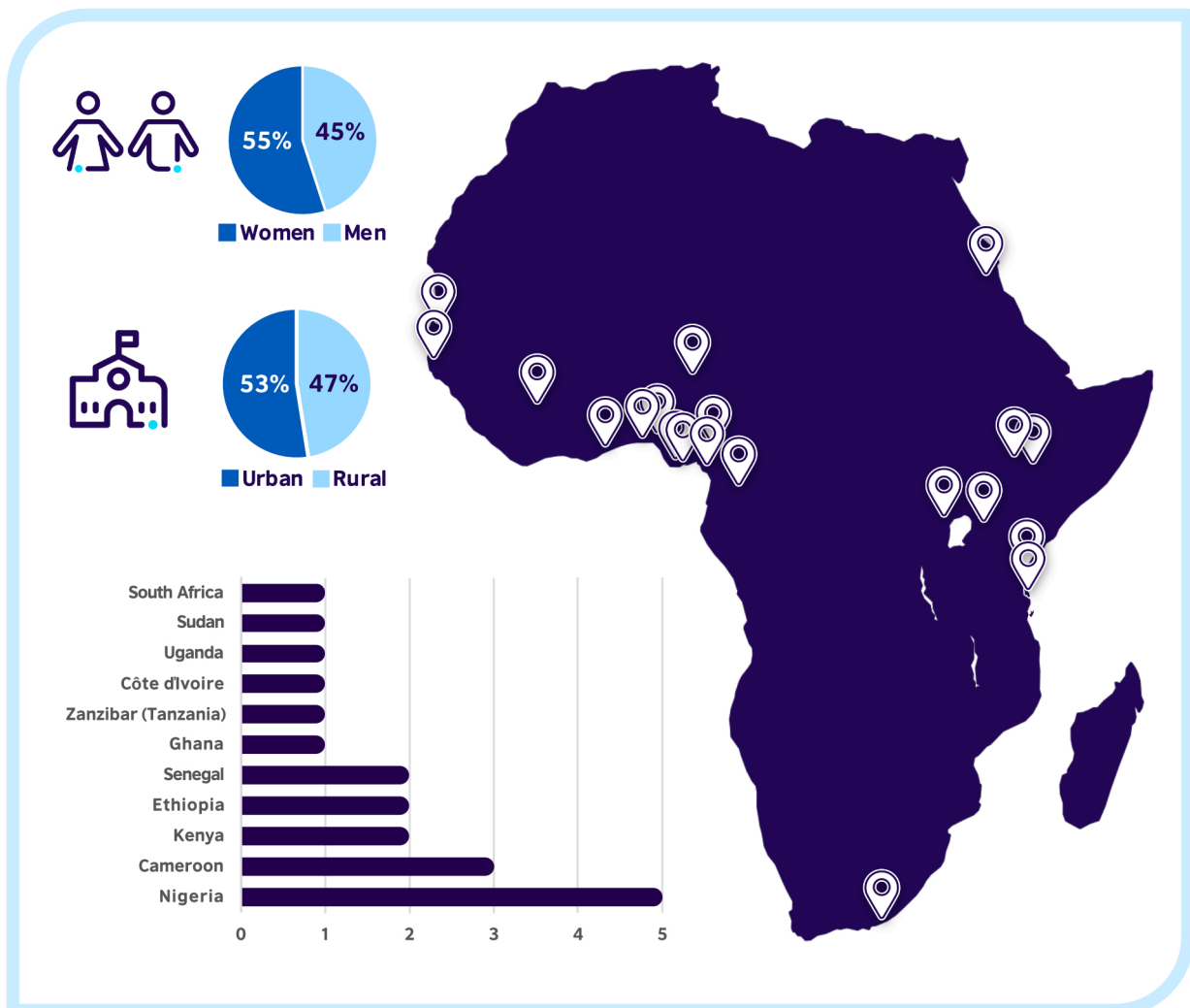


Figure A: Overview of the selected case studies

Digital tools used



Audio recorders

Common examples: Smartphone microphones, WhatsApp voice notes

What they do: Allow learners to record their reading or spoken responses, and enable teachers to provide more accessible instructions, model pronunciation or listening materials.



Computers/laptops

Common examples: School computer labs, teacher laptops

What they do: Used for preparing and presenting materials, accessing online platforms and supporting digital technology clubs.



Generative AI (artificial intelligence) tools

Common examples: ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot

What they do: Help teachers plan lessons and create text, explanations, practice tasks and model dialogues. Users give a prompt – an instruction or question – to generate content.



Instant messaging apps

Common examples: WhatsApp, Telegram

What they do: Share reading texts and links to online resources, task instructions, voice notes, learner work and feedback.



Learning management and collaboration platforms

Common examples: Google Classroom, Google Docs, Padlet

What they do: Support assignment completion and sharing, feedback and organisation of resources.



Mobile phones/smartphones

Common examples: Teachers', parents' or learners' devices

What they do: Main tool for using the internet, audio/video recording, messaging and apps.



Online learning materials

Common examples: YouTube videos, online stories, digital worksheets, downloadable PDFs

What they do: Provide accessible content for lessons, including model dialogues, stories, explanations and visual materials.



Presentation tools and portable speakers

Common examples: PowerPoint, Google Slides, Bluetooth speakers

What they do: Used to present content in class and online, and amplify audio for whole-class listening activities.



Screen readers and text-to-voice tools

Common examples: TalkBack (Android), VoiceOver (iOS)

What they do: Make digital tasks accessible for learners with visual impairments by reading on-screen text aloud and helping them navigate platforms by describing on-screen elements.



Videoconferencing tools

Common examples: Zoom, Google Meet

What they do: Support remote teaching, virtual clubs and teacher collaboration and provide live speech-to-text captions that make lessons more accessible for learners.

The case studies



1. Extending learning beyond the classroom

Virtual reading club for learners (Nigeria and various countries)

Blessing Epum

Teacher and club coordinator

Location: Ogun state, Nigeria



Learners and resources



Primary learners aged 6 to 12



Volunteer teachers



Zoom and WhatsApp



Free stories from the internet

Background

Blessing launched a free virtual reading club in 2022, first as a hybrid model and then fully online since 2024. Road construction and parents' preference for online access encouraged the shift.

With a team of seven volunteer teachers across Africa, the club now provides weekend reading sessions for children in multiple countries including Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Guinea, Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana, Cameroon, Palestine, the UK and Madagascar. Children typically join the club through social media or parents' referrals. Parents share basic learner information – such as age, reading level, country and preferred way to attend – to help plan balanced, age-appropriate groups.

What happens

- Younger learners (6 to 8) join on Zoom, while older ones (9 to 12) also use WhatsApp for interactive reading, texting and voice notes.
- Sessions last around 40 to 60 minutes, depending on group size and participation.
- Each session starts with a guessing game based on pictures from the story, sometimes supported by short videos to spark interest.
- The teacher reads first, then learners take turns reading aloud, identifying challenging words or

summarising chapters.

- After each session, children complete follow-up activities such as drawings or word searches based on the stories they've read. They share their work in the WhatsApp group before the next club session. Teachers and volunteers give encouragement and feedback in the same group.

Choosing and sharing stories



Story selection: Blessing chooses the story for each week, with volunteer teachers also making suggestions and sometimes writing their own.



Cultural mix: Most attendees are from African countries, so the club mainly reads stories from across the continent. These include familiar names and settings that keep children engaged. Stories from other parts of the world are also included, helping learners connect with different cultures.



Read Aloud Days: These happen once a month. Children bring a story of their choice to share, summarise and discuss with their friends.

“

WhatsApp and Zoom have opened a window for children across Africa and [elsewhere] to learn together.

– Blessing Epum

Impact and benefits



- **Improved digital literacy:** Children become more confident navigating Zoom and WhatsApp without help from their parents over time.
- **Stronger reading and listening skills:** Turn-taking, summarising and questioning improve comprehension.
- **International friendships:** Children interact across borders, developing cultural awareness and curiosity.
- **Other skills:** Read Aloud Day boosts confidence, presentation skills and attentive listening.

Tips: Online reading clubs



- Discuss ground rules for respectful behaviour at the start, with children contributing their own ideas.
- Involve parents and always ask for their permission before sharing photos or videos online.
- Monitor sessions and any online groups when they are open.
- Close WhatsApp groups between sessions to prevent unsupervised chat.

Useful resources



[African Storybook](#)

[Storyberries](#)

[Global Storybooks](#)

[LearnEnglish Kids](#)

Teaching during shutdowns and training without borders (Cameroon)

Tushaale Mbenwi Njiki Grace

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Buea city, Cameroon



Learners and resources

 Secondary learners and other teachers

 WhatsApp groups

 Screen recorder, Google Docs, Canva, CapCut

Background

Njiki Grace teaches at a large technical secondary school in Buea, Cameroon. Because of the country's ongoing socio-political crisis, schools are often closed during 'ghost town' periods, when movement is restricted and attendance drops sharply. Determined to sustain learning, she began using WhatsApp as a flexible teaching and mentoring space.

Over time, her digital practice expanded beyond her classroom. She now uses WhatsApp not only to reach her students during shutdowns but also to mentor student teachers from the local university and run online training for educators across West Africa.

What happens

Groups for learners

Each academic year, Grace creates dedicated WhatsApp groups for her classes. These act as communication channels and places where she stores and shares lesson materials – especially when in-person lessons are not possible. Through them, she:

- shares lesson slides, audio explanations and screen-recorded tutorials created with a screen recorder (XRecorder)¹
- sends short quizzes and gamified assessments adapted from past exam papers
- posts infographics and links to online resources for self-study
- provides group feedback on writing tasks and encourages peer comments and discussion.

Support in challenging times



The WhatsApp groups also help learners stay connected with classmates during ghost town periods. For personal questions or concerns, students (and sometimes parents) message Njiki Grace privately. Around key exam periods, administrators or other teachers can be added to the groups to share important information and support learners as needed.



Digital skills are a survival kit for today's disruptive education landscape... When ghost towns shut schools, learning doesn't stop – our WhatsApp groups become classrooms.

– Njiki Grace

Groups for other teachers

Njiki Grace also runs several WhatsApp groups for teacher development. In these she guides colleagues from Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana and Niger to:

- create e-books and teaching materials using Canva, Google Docs and CapCut²

¹XRecorder is a mobile app that records screen activity and audio.

²Canva is a graphic design tool for creating visuals, posters, presentations and infographics. CapCut is a video editing app for trimming, adding effects and producing short video content.

- set up accounts and deliver lessons on online tutoring platforms such as Preply and NativeCamp³
- develop video-editing and lesson-design skills through recorded tutorials.

Training sessions are typically formal and task-based, but she also offers one-to-one mentoring as needed. New participants usually join through networks such as Africa ELTA, CamELTA and departmental WhatsApp or Facebook groups.

Impact and benefits



- **Continuity of teaching:** WhatsApp lessons have helped teaching continue during long school closures, and days of very low attendance.
- **Peer and community support:** Learners, parents and staff stay connected, maintaining a sense of school community during disruptions.
- **Skill development:** Teachers and students gain confidence using digital tools.
- **Materials development:** Some teachers go on to create materials using Canva, CapCut and Google Docs (though many do not always complete longer projects).
- **Reaching more teachers:** Teachers from several West African countries have participated in this WhatsApp training and mentoring.
- **Professional culture:** Teachers have been encouraged to explore online communities and courses.

Tips: Using messaging apps



Teaching outside of class

- Use separate WhatsApp groups for different classes, and organise learners into smaller groups for activities and feedback.
- Reuse and recycle digital lessons and slides to reduce workload.
- Keep activities brief and text-based when connectivity is poor.
- Learners respond positively to short interactive tasks and enjoy essay-related debates and presentations (exposés).

Working with teachers

- Use mentoring groups to model practical, low-cost uses of digital tools for other teachers.
- Combine WhatsApp with simple tools like Canva or Google Docs to keep groups engaged.



Digital teaching saves time and turns teachers into global educators.

– Njiki Grace

³Preply and NativeCamp are online platforms that connect learners with language tutors for live, one-to-one lessons.



Supporting learning when coursebooks and time are limited (Senegal)

Macaire Bassirou Diallo

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Fass Ngom, Senegal



Learners and resources



Secondary learners



Smartphones and WhatsApp



Online resources and tools like Padlet

Background

In 2021, a new high school was added to the junior high school where Macaire taught English. There were few classrooms, no books and electricity was often unavailable. English classes were also limited to a few hours per week, which made it challenging to cover material in class.

As most learners had access to smartphones, Macaire created WhatsApp groups to share course materials and activities both inside and outside class. Over time, some coursebooks were purchased, but there were still not enough for all students. This motivated the continued use of WhatsApp to give learners better access to materials and a chance to practise using English.

What happens

Macaire creates a separate group for each class, moderated by him and assigned learners. Learners use these groups to:

- read text extracts before, during and after class
- access videos and articles shared in the group
- do simple activities including polls and multiple choice.

Learners also collaborate in smaller groups of 3 to 4 for presentations and projects. Outside of class, they meet face-to-face and communicate on WhatsApp to share files and research. For these smaller groups, a stronger learner is made group leader to help coordinate participation and engagement.

Extra speaking practice



Macaire has also introduced speaking practice and oral exam preparation to the WhatsApp groups:

- Learners complete a gap-fill framework with personal information to prepare.
- They record themselves speaking and send the recordings to Macaire via WhatsApp.
- He provides individual feedback through voice notes.

This allows learners to practise, reduces their stress and gives Macaire a manageable way to assess speaking in large classes of 70 to 80 students.

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Nowadays, students should be autonomous. Learners' agency is very important.

– Macaire Bassirou Diallo

Challenges and solutions

- **Parental concern about phone use** → Parents became supportive once they saw students succeed and benefit from the extra support.

- **Access to devices and data costs** → Learners work in groups or borrow phones from family members; Macaire sometimes shares his own mobile data to help them connect.
- **Lack of power in some villages** → Students charge phones at school or a neighbour's house.
- **Oral feedback for lower-level English speakers** → Feedback voice notes are recorded in French or Wolof, the learners' stronger languages, to make it easier for them to understand and act on.
- **Managing multiple WhatsApp groups** → Learner admins helped moderate groups, and tasks like reviewing recordings were spread over several days.

Tips: Supporting online groups

- **Set rules early:** Introduce safeguarding at the start of the school year.
- **Trust learners:** Give responsibility and show belief in their abilities.
- **Use existing tools:** Even a small number of phones can be shared among peers effectively.
- **Encourage recordings:** Voice notes reduce stress and help learners prepare for oral exams.
- **Get students to lead:** Learners can moderate groups and encourage participation.

“

I explain to [the parents] what's happening and to trust their children. Because nowadays the ICT are very important. We can't live without them.

– Macaire Bassirou Diallo

Impact and benefits



- **Practical access to materials:** WhatsApp enabled learners to access texts despite very few books.
- **Autonomy and engagement:** Learners practised English, conducted research and collaborated outside class.
- **Improved oral exam preparation:** Learners could rehearse and reflect before submitting recordings.
- **Individualised feedback:** Audio submissions allowed the teacher to give targeted feedback not possible in class.
- **Parent support:** Parents began seeing phones as useful learning tools rather than distractions.
- **Digital readiness:** Learners became familiar with tools like WhatsApp and Padlet, preparing them for future online learning at universities.

2. Flipped and blended learning with online tools

Flipping the classroom with messaging apps (Côte d'Ivoire)

Dohotchangana Abdoulaye Soro

Secondary school teacher

Location: Guiembé, Côte d'Ivoire



Learners and resources



Secondary learners aged 12 to 17



Smartphones, WhatsApp



YouTube



Unstable internet connection

Background

In rural Ivorian schools, English teachers often face overcrowded classrooms (60 to 100 learners) and a shortage of teaching resources. Mobile phones are officially banned inside schools, but most learners own or share one outside school. Soro introduced WhatsApp groups as a way to extend learning outside school hours. Through these, he helps learners to practise and prepare in advance of each lesson.

What happens

Setting up groups: Each class delegate or vice-delegate creates a WhatsApp group and adds Soro. If a delegate cannot do this, another student volunteers. Soro then guides and monitors interactions, ensuring the group is used only for learning.

Participation: Around 30 to 35 learners join each group, though more students benefit by sharing phones with family or classmates.

In the groups, Soro shares:

- short YouTube videos on grammar, pronunciation and cultural topics
- links to free language-learning apps like Duolingo and LearnEnglish Grammar (British Council)
- simple text summaries he writes himself for learners with limited data.

Flipped learning: Students are encouraged to prepare before class. This allows more practice time in lessons.



Despite scarce resources, WhatsApp has opened up new spaces for English learning... [Students] come to class more confident and willing to speak.

– Dohotchangana Abdoulaye Soro

Challenges and solutions

- **Unreliable internet and expensive data** → Share low-data files and apps; provide text summaries as a backup.
- **New to online platforms** → Step-by-step guidance and ongoing support.
- **Initial doubts from parents and school leaders** → Communicate via meetings or short calls to show that groups are free, safe and learning-focused.

Impact and benefits



- **Increased motivation and confidence:** Regular participants are more willing to speak in class and engage with peers.
- **Collaborative learning:** Learners help classmates who could not prepare in the WhatsApp group, fostering peer support.
- **Better lesson preparation:** The flipped model leaves more class time to focus on practical exercises.
- **Stronger acceptance:** Parents appreciate the learning value, and school leaders tolerate the approach because it occurs outside school.

Tips: Flipping learning



- Involve parents early and keep them informed to generate support.
- Use class delegates as group admins to help maintain order and reduce the teacher's workload.
- Check groups regularly and resolve issues like off-topic posts quickly.
- Start with one class and build your confidence before expanding.

Balancing high-tech and low-tech for equitable online access (Nigeria)

Dr Cynthia Adaeze Onuegwunwoke

Teacher and lecturer

Location: Imo state, Nigeria



Learners and resources



University students and rural primary school learners



Offline platform and SD cards with pre-loaded materials



WhatsApp and SMS messaging, Google Forms and Docs

Background

Dr Onuegwunwoke works with two very different groups of learners. At Alvan Ikoku Federal University, students are digitally literate and have regular internet access, while in Ahiazu Mbaise, rural children come from low-resource homes and have limited or no access to smartphones. Her guiding principle is equitable access – adapting ICT use to fit the context and learners' needs.

Alongside her regular ICT-supported teaching with university students, Dr Onuegwunwoke ran a one-off project with 15 underprivileged children preparing for the State Common Entrance Examination (SCEE) and First School Leaving Certificate (FSLCE). In both contexts, carefully chosen technology helped learners engage, practise and build confidence, despite very different resource levels.

What happens/happened

Urban university students (ongoing)

- Students join class-specific WhatsApp groups for collaborative writing. They post essay drafts using Google Docs, comment on peers' work and exchange voice notes for speaking practice.
- Dr Onuegwunwoke monitors interactions, gives guidance on feedback quality and encourages quieter students to participate.
- Google Forms with audio instructions are used for assessments. Learners complete quizzes or exercises at their own pace.

Rural learners (one-off project)

- Learning content (English texts, maths exercises, science videos) was pre-loaded onto the offline learning platform Kolibri⁴ and SD cards.

⁴ Learn more about [the Kolibri offline learning platform](#).

- Learners accessed this content offline using basic phones loaned to them. They worked either independently or in small groups.
- Voice recordings on SD cards provided pronunciation drills and speaking practice.
- Weekly multiple-choice quizzes were also sent via SMS. Students replied with answers and received automated feedback and brief learning tips.
- Community volunteers and parents helped learners access materials and stay on track.

Challenges and solutions

- **Rural pupils lacked internet** → Used offline platforms (Kolibri, SD cards, SMS).
- **SMS could be expensive** → Bulk SMS using Telerivet⁵ kept costs under \$0.01 per message, scalable for low-income settings.
- **University students had devices but risked digital distraction** → Structured group tasks in WhatsApp kept engagement focused.
- **Standard online assessments excluded dyslexic learners** → Added audio instructions in Google Forms.

Impact and benefits



Urban university students

- Dyslexic students improved scores by over 20 per cent using audio-enhanced Google Forms.
- Collaborative writing culture developed, with shy students participating more via WhatsApp.

Rural learners

- Pass rate improvements: 60 per cent (State Common Entrance Exam) and 73 per cent (First School Leaving Certificate, 2024), compared to previous non-digital cohorts.
- Gains in English reading, vocabulary and basic maths skills.
- SMS quizzes led to 45 per cent of participants improving grammar scores in three months.

Sustainability



The rural project was a one-time intervention, but Dr Onuegwunwoke is exploring ways to continue and possibly scale it up. Sustainability depends on community and NGO⁶ support, but could continue through parental involvement and peer mentoring.



The goal is equitable access, not high-tech glamour ... Even basic phones can open doors when tools are chosen carefully

– Dr Cynthia Adaeze Onuegwunwoke

Safeguarding

University students (adults)

- Anonymised IDs used in shared feedback to protect privacy.
- No sensitive personal data collected; data stored securely.

Rural learners (children)

- Parents and guardians fully informed; consent obtained before participation.
- Devices loaned by the educator and community members; returned after use.
- Pseudonyms used in SMS quizzes (e.g. Student01) to protect identities.
- Regular parent feedback sessions ensured transparency and trust.
- All data stored securely; no unnecessary personal information collected.

Tips: Reaching all learners



- Choose tools based on what learners can access and use, not the latest technology.
- Support quieter learners through asynchronous or voice-note feedback.
- Involve community members and parents when working in low-resource settings.
- Audio instructions can help learners with reading or learning difficulties complete assessments confidently.
- Simple, low-cost solutions like SMS or SD cards can have measurable impact if implemented carefully.

⁵Telerivet is a cloud-based platform for managing SMS and messaging. Learn more about [Telerivet](#).

⁶Non-governmental organisation

Blended learning for teachers (Ethiopia)

Dr Teshome Bekele Sime

Teacher educator

Location: Hawassa, Ethiopia



Learners and resources

 Pre- and in-service teachers

 Google Classroom and Docs

 Mobile phones, laptops

 Limited internet connection

Background

In Ethiopia, many schools and colleges face challenges with limited resources and weak internet connections. Dr Teshome Bekele Sime teaches English and supports teacher development at Hawassa College of Teacher Education. He wanted a way for students to continue learning and practising English, even when face-to-face contact was short and resources were limited.

What happens

Dr Teshome uses Google Classroom as the main hub for his courses, because it's free, works well on mobile phones and doesn't use a lot of internet data. He uses four main parts of the platform:

- **'Stream'** – for announcements, weekly goals and questions from students
- **'Classwork'** – to organise materials and assignments (PDFs, slides, videos, templates)
- **'People'** – to manage learner access and group them for peer learning
- **'Grades'** – to share marks and give quick feedback

Blended collaboration



Learners combine classroom lessons with online activities. They work in Google Docs to draft and revise descriptive paragraphs. Peer groups and Dr Teshome give feedback directly in the documents, making learning more interactive.

He also supports collaborative discussion forums, where students ask questions, give suggestions and clarify ideas before submitting assignments.

Challenges and solutions

- **Limited access to devices** → Peer support, sharing devices during class, school computer labs, printed materials for those without devices.
- **Limited or intermittent internet** → Students download materials in public Wi-Fi spots or college hotspots, then work offline; flexible deadlines allow submission when possible.
- **Lower English proficiency** → These learners can revisit instructions, use translation tools and learn at their own pace online.

Impact and benefits



- **Improved language skills:** Learners improved grammar, organisation and style in writing; online preparation also improved speaking confidence in blended sessions.
- **Motivation:** Flexibility of anytime/anywhere learning encouraged engagement.
- **Collaboration:** Learners became more confident and creative when working in groups.
- **Fast feedback:** Online comments reduced fear of mistakes and saved time.
- **Digital skills:** Students built confidence with cloud-based tools.
- **Equity:** Online tools helped quieter students, including female learners, participate more safely and confidently.

One in-service teacher with work and family responsibilities said this blended approach allowed her to study at times that suited her. She felt less stress, performed better academically and was more effective in her teaching.

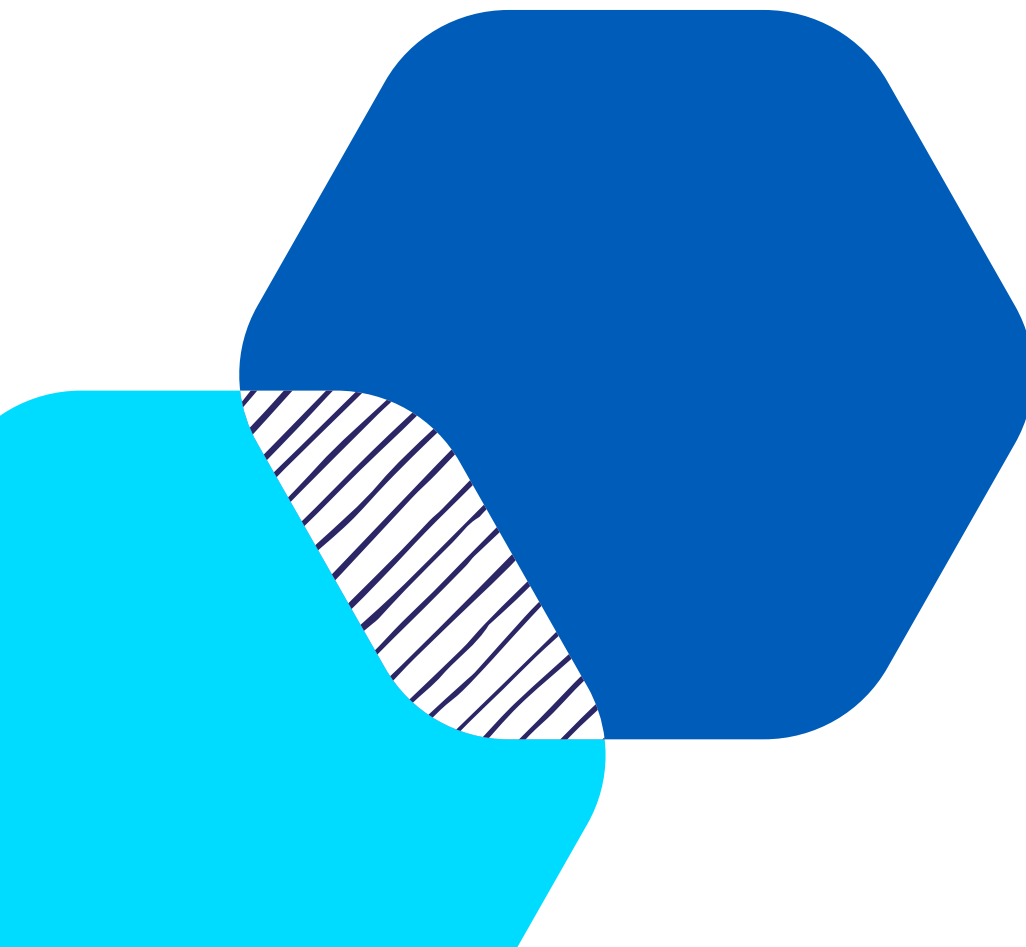
Safeguarding

- Only enrolled students with verified accounts can access the Google Classroom.
- No personal information is shared; only first names or initials are used.
- Students are trained in respectful online behaviour
- All discussions are moderated and inappropriate comments removed.
- Assignments and feedback are private between teacher and student.

“

Start small and choose simple, free tools – blended learning should complement, not replace, teaching.

– Dr Teshome Bekele Sime



3. Supporting inclusivity through technology

Teacher development to support visually impaired learners (Sudan)

Mohammad Saif al-Din Hamza

Teacher educator

Location: Red Sea State, Sudan



Learners and resources



Primary, secondary and university teachers



Bluetooth headset, screen reader software, smartphone



AI-based audio generators, text-to-speech tools

Background

Mohammad is a teacher educator who's visually impaired. He began using assistive technology to support his own teaching. After completing the British Council's Key Digital Skills course, he started training other teachers in inclusive and accessible digital practices. In Sudan, where the ongoing conflict has disrupted education and pushed learning online, this kind of work has become especially important.

What happened

Mohammad's first in-person British Council English Connects session was held at Red Sea University, Port Sudan. Over 50 participants attended, including primary, secondary and university teachers.

During the workshop, he demonstrated how assistive technology can make teaching and learning accessible. He used his Android phone with a screen reader (Google TalkBack) connected to a Bluetooth headset. This read his presentation slides to him while allowing him to move freely around.

Key activities included:

- **experiencing accessibility first-hand:** By removing his headset, Mohammad let participants hear the screen reader reading text, bullet points and image description. This gave them insight into his perspective as a visually impaired educator.

- **demonstrating AI tools:** He introduced AI tools that create spoken versions of poems, stories or instructions.
- **hands-on practice:** Participants tried the tools themselves, seeing their potential even in low-resource classrooms.



Letting them hear the machine read what they could see was not a demonstration of limitation – it was a demonstration of power.

– Mohammad Saif al-Din Hamza

Professional development



Mohammad notes that leading this first workshop helped him move 'from quietly using technology to survive, to loudly advocating for inclusive digital education'. Since then, he has conducted several more sessions through the British Council and ELTA, teaching educators how to use screen readers, AI narration tools and accessible digital platforms to support visually impaired learners.

Challenges and solutions

- **Lack of awareness or confidence with accessibility tools** → Mohammad models use live himself, demonstrating step by step.
- **Perception that tools are complex or expensive** → He emphasises free or low-cost software and shows it working on his own mobile setup.

“

The technical skills were important; the greater change was in how teachers began to see their role: as designers of learning that includes every learner.

– **Mohammad Saif al-Din Hamza**

Impact and benefits



- **Mindset shift:** Teachers began to see accessibility as an integral part of good teaching, not an optional extra.
- **Awareness and understanding:** Participants experienced how assistive technology, including screen readers and AI narration tools, can make lessons accessible.
- **Inspiration and motivation:** The hands-on demonstrations encouraged teachers to think creatively about using digital tools to support inclusive learning.

Tips: Visually impaired learners



- Experiment with free text-to-speech tools.
- Test materials before using them with learners.
- Use accessibility tools as part of everyday teaching, not as extras.
- Remember, inclusion benefits all learners, not only those with disabilities.

Audio support for visually impaired learners (Senegal)

Mame Couna Diaw

Secondary teacher

Location: Ziguinchor city, Senegal



Learners and resources



Visually impaired and sighted secondary school learners



Smartphones, audio recordings



WhatsApp groups, Google Classroom



Text-to-speech tools and screen readers

Background

Since 2022, Djignabo High School has enrolled visually impaired learners. At first, these students struggled to participate in mainstream English classes, as lessons relied heavily on visual materials. Mame Couna, trained in Braille, wanted to ensure visually impaired learners were not excluded. She began experimenting with audio recordings and messaging platforms to make her teaching more accessible.

What happens

Before class, Mame Couna records short audio messages on her phone and shares them via WhatsApp and Google Classroom. She uses WhatsApp for quick, interactive sharing, while Google Classroom helps her to organise resources so that learners find them more easily.

These recordings include:

- grammar or vocabulary explanations
- reading comprehension texts and guided questions
- listening comprehension tasks
- examples of pronunciation.

Visually impaired learners listen to the recordings in advance, often more than once, which allows them to familiarise themselves with the instructions, vocabulary and lesson content. They can also use screen readers or text-to-speech tools for this. When they arrive in class, they're better prepared and more confident to participate alongside their peers.

Benefits for all learners



All students can access the recordings, and sighted learners benefit from listening alongside reading. Creating and listening to recordings helps improve listening comprehension, speaking confidence and pronunciation. Learners also interact outside class, sending audio responses via WhatsApp and Google Classroom, which promotes collaboration and peer correction for everyone.

Challenges and solutions

- **Phones are banned at school** → Learners complete activities at home. Those without devices borrow phones from family members.
- **Limited internet connectivity** → Learners sometimes gather in public spaces or at a classmate's house to access the internet together.
- **Training gaps** → Mame Couna actively explores new tools by herself and takes advantage of training opportunities from the British Council and other organisations.
- **Parents reluctant to allow phone use** → She spoke with them directly, reassured them of the educational purpose and, in some cases, added them to the WhatsApp group.
- **Students hesitant to record and share audios** → After some time, learners grew in confidence and better understood the benefits.

Types of audio

Students prefer Mame Couna’s self-recorded audio because her voice is familiar, natural and slower, which makes explanations clear and provides effective pronunciation models. Text-to-speech tools are also useful and help learners check pronunciation; their use is gradually increasing over time.



This is extra work, of course, but just to make all my students the same level ... it’s really necessary [to do this] outside the classroom or before the class.

– Mame Couna Diaw

Impact and benefits

- **Integration and confidence:** Visually impaired learners participate fully in lessons and sometimes remind the teacher to send recordings.
- **Improved language skills:** All learners gain additional listening and speaking practice in English, particularly valuable in a French-speaking context. Shy students participate more confidently after preparing through audio.
- **Adoption by other teachers:** Teachers beyond English, including a Spanish teacher, have adopted similar practices after seeing the benefits.
- **Frees up time in class:** Compared with dictating texts or relying on Braille transcription, using pre-recorded audios saves time during lessons and makes classroom activities more efficient.

Teaching visually impaired learners without digital technology (Cameroon)

Chaavus Noline J.

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Elak Oku, Cameroon



Learners and resources



Visually impaired and sighted secondary school learners



Chalk board, posters and flashcards, Braille slates



Learner voices and support



Support staff trained in Braille

Background

Chaavus Noline J. teaches secondary learners at Government Bilingual High School Elak-Oku. In one of her classes, four or five learners had visual impairments. She had no access to computers, projectors or other digital tools, only the occasional use of a tape recorder. Lessons mainly relied on chalkboards, flashcards and exercise books that were not accessible to visually impaired learners.

To ensure these learners could participate fully, she

adapted her teaching to include peer support from sighted learners. Her school also worked in partnership with the Cameroon Baptist Convention, which provided support with using Braille in class.

What happened

- Noline prepared lesson content on the chalkboard and on cardboard or paper posters.
- As required, sighted learners read this written content aloud to make it accessible for visually impaired students.

- Visually impaired learners wrote using Braille slates. Support staff from the Cameroon Baptist Convention transcribed their work so that Nicoline could assess it.
- Sighted and visually impaired learners worked in mixed groups.
- Visually impaired learners were encouraged to present their own work as often as any other student.

Writing with a Braille slate

A Braille slate is a simple, low-tech tool that lets learners write Braille by hand using a stylus. They press dots into the paper from the back so they can be read by touch.

Many visually impaired learners still use Braille slates today, even though digital Braille devices are becoming more common for faster writing and easier classroom use. They remain an important literacy tool – much like handwriting for sighted learners.

Impacts and benefits

- **Inclusive learning:** Peer support and mixed-group work ensured visually impaired learners could access lessons and participate fully, even without technology.
- **Motivation:** Visually impaired learners reading or presenting their work motivated all learners to engage and collaborate.
- **Partnerships:** Working with local organisations provided essential resources like Braille and transcription support.

“

More often than not, the teams in which [visually impaired learners] belong will outshine the others, making more students want to have them in their teams or working harder to outshine them. It helped a lot to motivate learners.

– Chaavus Nicoline J.

Adding technology

In future, Nicoline hopes to use digital recordings and audio alongside peer support and Braille to give visually impaired learners more independence. This depends on access to technology, but examples elsewhere in this report show that technology-supported lessons are possible.

Inclusive teaching for pre-service teachers with hearing loss (Nigeria)

Dr Habiba Mohammed

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Zaria city, Nigeria



Learners and resources



Pre-service teachers aged 18 to 25



Zoom, PowerPoint



Nigerian Sign Language interpreter



WhatsApp groups

Background

Dr Habiba Mohammed is Head of the Department of General Studies Education at the Federal College of Education, Zaria. She wanted to make her blended lessons more inclusive for her pre-service teachers with hearing impairments.

Her aim was to make sure all learners, including those who accessed information differently, could take part meaningfully and confidently.

What happens

Habiba's courses combine short preparatory Zoom sessions with in-person lessons. The online sessions, held a day before each class, introduce lesson topics, objectives and key ideas. These give all learners – especially those with hearing impairments – time to process visual materials in advance.

During both online and in-person sessions, a sign-language interpreter from the college's Special Education Laboratory supports communication. Nigerian Sign Language is used, alongside English as the main language of instruction. Habiba occasionally switches into Hausa to clarify difficult concepts and keep learners engaged.

She presents PowerPoint slides in both the Zoom and in-person sessions, using short written captions and clear visual aids to support understanding. The same slides, along with short captioned or sign-supported videos, are then shared via WhatsApp before and after each class so that learners can review the content independently.



My aim was to make every learner part of the classroom, not an observer... When they work in [mixed] groups, they learn inclusion by doing it.

– Dr Habiba Mohammed

Awareness-raising

In one session on inclusive classroom strategies, learners worked in mixed groups to create lesson plans using captioned and symbol-based slides. A learner with hearing impairment led one group's presentation. This helped peers experience inclusion in practice and see how accessible design benefits everyone's learning.

Challenges and solutions

- **Internet instability sometimes disrupts the interpreter's visibility during online sessions** → Add captions to slides, use Zoom's live transcription and share recordings afterwards so that learners can follow everything.
- **Preparing accessible materials takes several extra hours per lesson** → Habiba sees this as worthwhile because of the improvement in engagement and understanding.

Impacts and benefits



- **Inclusive learning:** Learners with hearing impairments gained in confidence and participated more actively, while peers developed empathy and clearer communication skills.
- **Accessibility:** Captions, visuals and sign support improved understanding for all learners, not just those with hearing loss.
- **Professional growth:** Pre-service teachers and colleagues gained practical awareness of inclusive classroom design.

Tips: Learners with hearing loss

- Use multiple modes of communication – text, visuals and sign language – to make learning accessible.
- Small steps like adding captions or sharing lesson materials through WhatsApp can make learning more inclusive for everyone.
- Be patient when communicating and seek regular feedback from learners to help improve inclusivity.

4. Building ICT and digital literacy

After-school ICT clubs (Kenya)






Victor Kibaba

Teacher and Programmes Officer

Location: Bungona County, Kenya



Learners and resources

-  Primary and secondary learners
-  Limited number of computers
-  Scheduled after-school sessions
-  Volunteer teachers
-  Government-issued ICT textbooks

Background

Victor teaches at Kuafu RC Comprehensive School, where learners and teachers initially had very limited exposure to ICT (information and communication technology). To help close this gap, he set up an after-school ICT club, using his own laptop and the school's single desktop computer. He was later able to borrow three more laptops from a local community initiative he works with during school holidays.

What happens

The main languages used in the club are English and Swahili, with Kibukusu used occasionally to support learners who find English more difficult.

- Sessions run two to three times a week for one hour; 20 to 30 learners attend each session.
- Focus is on basic computer skills: using laptops, MS Word, Excel, the internet and handling hardware.
- Learners sometimes bring their schoolwork to integrate with ICT learning.
- Teachers attend separate sessions focused on integrating ICT into classroom teaching (e.g. setting up projectors and using basic software).

Rotating attendees

Victor rotates groups each session to give more learners a chance to attend. When needed, a group may have two sessions in a row to complete activities, helping maintain learning continuity.

Digital holiday programme

Victor also runs a holiday programme for about 50 learners from six local schools (the Kikao Digital Community⁷). Using 12 laptops, volunteers teach basic computer skills, basic coding and safe internet use, with supervised online collaboration encouraged on Google Meet and Microsoft Classroom.

Challenges and solutions

- **Limited access to devices** → Seek support from school management or local organisations to source additional computers.
- **Language comprehension barriers** → English and Swahili are used for all activities, with the local language (Kibukusu) occasionally used to further support learners.

Impact and benefits



- **Learner engagement:** Learners showed higher motivation and school attendance due to excitement around the ICT sessions.
- **Skills development:** Learners gained digital literacy, basic coding knowledge and familiarity with online tools.
- **Teacher development:** Teachers improved their ability to integrate ICT into classroom teaching.
- **Future-readiness and creativity:** Learners built skills for further study and work in a digital world, while developing problem solving, innovation and creative thinking.

⁷Learn more about the [Kikao Digital Community](#).

“

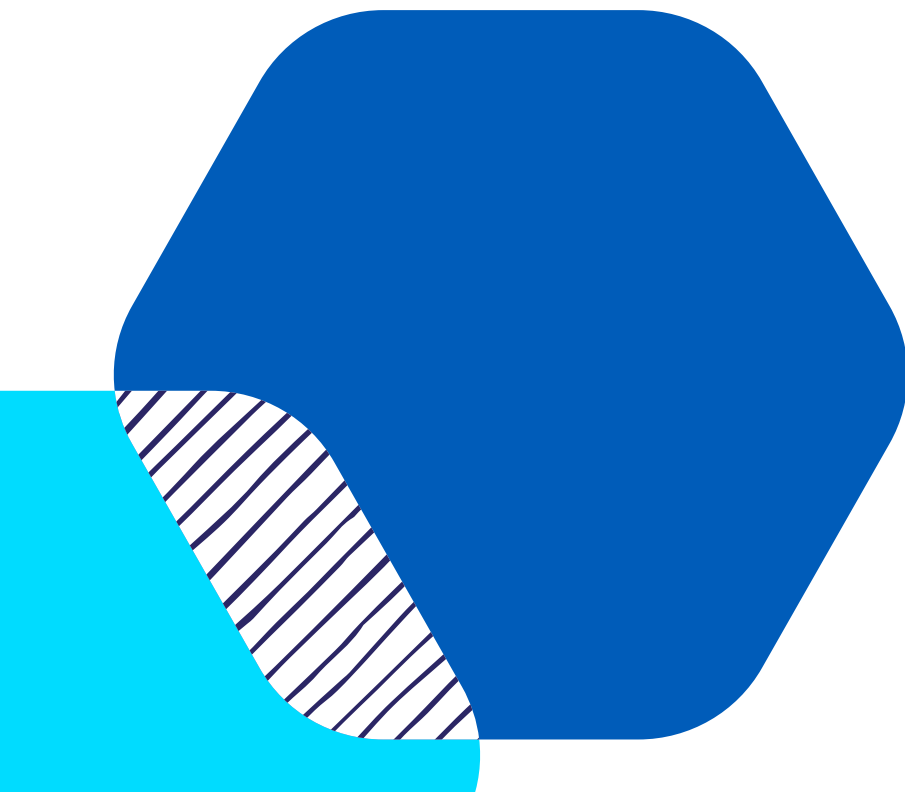
You don't have to be an expert in computers [to start an ICT club]. I have only done basic computer packages, but through interest and passion, I have been able to learn other things like basic coding. And I keep learning every day ... it keeps me going and doing these things.

– Victor Kibaba

Tips: Starting an ICT club



- **Just start** – You don't need to be an ICT expert to begin. Basic computer skills and a willingness to learn are enough to get started.
- **Passion matters** – Interest and enthusiasm can help you and your learners explore new technologies and expand skills over time.
- **Collaborate for resources** – Work with school management, local organisations or volunteer networks to access additional devices or support.
- **Engage parents when possible** – For online or holiday programmes, guidance for parents can help ensure learners use technology safely and responsibly.



Integrating digital tools and AI in teacher training (Uganda)

Kadondi Sofia

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Busuubizi, Uganda



Learners and resources



24 tutors working in teacher training, 200 in-service teachers



Smartphones, laptops, projector



AI tools like ChatGPT



Google Docs and WhatsApp

Background

In 2024, Kadondi Sofia organised and led a one-week digital skills workshop at Busuubizi Core Primary Teachers' College (PTC). The training was held at the training college, with tutors and student teachers staying on site for the week, while teachers from nearby primary schools travelled each day.

The aim was to build participants' confidence and practical skills in integrating digital tools that were familiar, affordable and supported a range of teaching activities.

What happened

The week included three main sessions combining demonstrations, hands-on practice and group work. Activities were adapted to each group's context and subject area, with participants collaborating across roles.

Participants:

- practised using ChatGPT to generate clear, accurate, subject-based definitions and discussed how AI could support lesson planning
- worked collaboratively in Google Docs to experience real-time editing and teamwork
- viewed short videos and acted out drama-based scenarios to explore the shift from traditional to digitally supported teaching
- joined a WhatsApp group for ongoing peer support and sharing after the workshop.

Sofia and a small team of colleagues provided technical assistance throughout the sessions.



[Teachers should] always preview AI content before showing it to students – AI assists, it doesn't replace teacher judgement.

– Kadondi Sofia

Language in the sessions



Although English was the main language of instruction, Sofia drew on her knowledge of six local languages to support participants who preferred to ask questions in their home language.

Safeguarding

Sofia guided participants to:

- adjust privacy settings and maintain professional boundaries
- share data responsibly and protect student information
- use AI safely and always preview AI-generated content before showing it to learners.

Common issues – such as posting student photos publicly, weak passwords or copyright misuse – were addressed through role plays, ready-made classroom agreements and ongoing advice via WhatsApp.

Challenges and solutions

- **Not enough time** → The training focused on core digital skills and prioritised essential tools so that everyone could practise during the week.
- **Limited devices** → Shared computers and smartphones, worked in pairs or small groups and used a projector for whole-room demonstrations.
- **Poor internet and power cuts** → Materials were downloaded beforehand and offline options were ready. The schedule was adjusted to make the most of electricity when available.
- **Different tech abilities** → Paired confident users with beginners, broke tasks into small steps and celebrated small successes to build confidence.

Tips: Technology workshops

- Use what's available and share devices where needed.
- Choose free, accessible platforms (WhatsApp, Google Classroom, YouTube, Canva).
- Pair confident users with beginners.
- Keep sessions short, practical and relevant.
- Provide simple reference sheets or quick guides teachers can take back to their schools.
- Plan for follow-up sessions to sustain momentum.

Impact and benefits

- **Increased confidence and awareness:** First-time digital users built confidence in using devices and tools over the week.
- **Application:** Teachers integrated tools, digital resources and approaches from the training into their classrooms.
- **Student engagement:** Teachers focused on core digital skills and prioritised essential tools so that everyone could practise within the week.
- **Peer sharing:** Participants shared new skills with colleagues who had not attended, encouraging broader use of technology in their schools.
- **Trainee teacher support:** Tutors now guide their trainee teachers to research topics independently and present their findings, applying skills learned during the workshop.

“

One ... participant conducted an informal study during the workshop. She observed that many of her colleagues struggled to use smartphones or computers effectively. This observation inspired her to develop a research topic ...

– Kadondi Sofia

Using WhatsApp to support English teachers nationwide (South Africa)

Sikhumbuzo Sibanda

Teacher educator

Location: Makhanda, South Africa



Learners and resources



English teachers across nine provinces



Participants' smartphones



WhatsApp group, online resources



Limited internet connection

Background

Sikhumbuzo Sibanda is a teacher educator at Rhodes University and founding President of the National Association of English Teachers of South Africa (NAETSA). In 2024, through NAETSA and in collaboration with the British Council and the Department of Basic Education, he delivered an eight-week online training programme to help teachers use WhatsApp to support vocabulary, comprehension and reading-for-pleasure activities.

What happened

The training was delivered online using WhatsApp, with a focus on practical demonstration and hands-on practice. Participants learned to:

- share comprehension texts, reading-for-pleasure materials, YouTube videos and documents
- guide learners through comprehension questions in a structured way on WhatsApp, working step by step
- use emojis, images and short texts for vocabulary learning and sentence building
- send and respond to voice notes for pronunciation, speaking and listening practice
- use WhatsApp to introduce topics that they could then use for in-class discussions and debates.

Teachers used these approaches both to support learning in their regular classroom lessons and to teach fully online lessons.

Challenges and solutions

- **Planned power cuts (load shedding) causing loss of internet** → If all participants were affected, sessions were postponed; if only some were affected, they could catch up by reviewing WhatsApp chats and recordings.
- **Data costs** → The British Council provided data for participants and trainers.

Impact and benefits



- **Teacher engagement:** Teachers welcomed the shift away from more traditional methods.
- **Learner engagement:** Learners enjoyed the activities, which made lessons more interactive and engaging.

Building on the training



Sikhumbuzo has thoughts on how to expand and refine this training in future. He plans to include:

- simple safeguarding guidance – introducing group rules that model ethical and safe use of WhatsApp with learners
- baseline and post-training follow-up to better understand and track teacher impact.

5. Developing language skills through technology

Enhancing speaking skills in large classes (Cameroon)

Elsie Enanga

Secondary teacher

Location: Yaoundé city, Cameroon



Learners and resources



Secondary learners aged 10 to 17



Smartphone with built-in recorder



Bluetooth speaker



Peer feedback and support

Background

Elsie teaches English at Government High School Biyem-Assi in classrooms with no power. Large class sizes of 60 to 80 students mean that careful planning and classroom management are essential. To help her learners practise speaking and listening skills, she started using her smartphone and a Bluetooth speaker to record student speaking samples and introduce a variety of listening activities.

What happens

Elsie charges her phone and Bluetooth speaker at home and brings them to school for recording and playback. Learners are not allowed to bring digital devices to school, so her smartphone is the only tool used to capture audio.

Recording learner voices

- Learners are recorded one at a time, in pairs or during group presentations.
- Three to four speakers or groups are recorded per lesson, with short clips of one to two minutes.
- Recordings capture full sentences or short exchanges, such as introductions, opinions, likes and dislikes, or explanations of choices.

Listening and feedback

- Recordings are played back through the Bluetooth speaker so that the class can listen together.

- Feedback is oral from peers and Elsie; key corrections and good examples are written on the board for note-taking.
- Learners often repeat the corrected version aloud, reinforcing accurate pronunciation and clear communication.
- Recordings are discarded after class and are not shared externally.

Other listening materials

Elsie sometimes also plays listening materials from YouTube through her Bluetooth speaker. This exposes learners to a range of accents and provides additional listening practice.

“

This use of a low Ed-Tech device has sparked a lot of interest in my English Language lessons. Learners all want to have their voices heard.

– Elsie Enanga

Impact and benefits



- **Increased enthusiasm:** Learners are highly motivated and eager to participate, wanting to have their voices heard.
- **Variety of assessment:** Letting the learners hear themselves speak helps them self-assess as well as getting feedback from peers and the teacher.
- **Broader listening:** Exposure to different accents in online audios broadens their listening skills and awareness of pronunciation.

Tips: Managing confidence



Because learners can be vulnerable or embarrassed when hearing their own recorded voices, Elsie emphasises respectful listening and carefully manages overenthusiasm during feedback. She makes sure that confident learners aren't teased and less confident learners aren't discouraged, creating a safe environment for all learners to practise speaking.

“

The students are eager to listen and respond ... [They] react favourably to feedback by repeating [the] corrections made.

– Elsie Enanga

Building on the training



Currently, Elsie uses spontaneous feedback to evaluate speaking performance. She plans to develop specific rubrics to assess students' speaking abilities more systematically in the future.

She's also considering buying a few low-cost recording devices, instead of using her single phone.



Developing speaking and reading skills through recorded voice (Tanzania)

Salama Kombo Khamis

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Zanzibar (Tanzania)



Learners and resources



School learners (Grade 2 to university/college)



Smartphones with built-in recorders



WhatsApp groups



Speakers and online audio

Background

Salama is a teacher at a government institution and also runs additional classes at Streeters Skilled School to support learners struggling with English. She works with students from primary through university levels in classes of 10 to 30. Learners face challenges with pronunciation and confidence, and often have limited opportunities to practise English outside of class.

What happens

Salama sets up separate WhatsApp groups for each class, with parents added to support learners at home as needed. Reading texts chosen for the group's level are shared through these groups. In the case of younger learners, these are usually short stories.

Procedure

- Learners record themselves reading the stories or other texts at home. Younger learners use their parents' smartphones and require more support, while older learners often use their own devices.
- They share these recordings directly with Salama on WhatsApp, not with the whole group.
- In class, recordings are played and discussed. Learners give peer feedback, and Salama clarifies strengths and areas to improve.
- Stronger recordings are highlighted as examples for other learners and sometimes featured at school events, such as Parents' Day.

Impact and benefits



- **Increased motivation:** Sharing recordings and celebrating top performances encourages learners to practise consistently and focus on clear communication.
- **Improved pronunciation and public speaking:** Listening to themselves and receiving guided feedback help learners improve pronunciation, reading clarity and confidence in spoken presentations.
- **Learning outside class:** Reading and recording activities can extend learning beyond the classroom and increase student engagement.
- **Parental involvement:** By helping learners make recordings, parents can observe their progress and are motivated by school meetings to support their children's learning.

Real-world speaking



In addition to recordings of their reading, Salama uses short conversation audios and videos from sources such as YouTube, featuring everyday contexts. Students listen, pick out useful phrases and then role play similar situations. This gives them a chance to build speaking skills in real-world settings.

Building speaking confidence in large classes (Ethiopia)

Teshale Alemu Gebremeskel

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Hawassa city, Ethiopia



Learners and resources



Undergraduate students aged 17 to 20



Learners' smartphones with built-in microphones



Telegram group

Background

Teshale is Assistant Professor of ELT at the College of Social Science and Humanities. He teaches a large cohort of 120 undergraduate medical students. Monitoring individual speaking skills in such a large class is challenging and many students feel shy or lack confidence when speaking in front of peers. To give learners more opportunities to practise and reflect on their speaking, he introduced a Telegram-based activity, making use of the 74 students who had access to smartphones.

What happened

Teshale set up a Telegram group for the class. Around 74 of the 120 students were able to join the Telegram group on their devices; those without devices were encouraged to work with peers so they could still take part.

- Students prepared and recorded a one-minute speech on a shared topic (e.g. advantages and disadvantages of indigenous medicines).
- Before posting, students were encouraged to listen to their own recordings.
- They then uploaded the audio and gave written peer feedback using the rubric that Teshale prepared for them.
- Students voted for the strongest recording; selected learners sometimes presented the same speech in class.
- The cycle continued with new topics so that more learners could participate over time.

“

When they listen to their own recordings and peers' comments they feel like they can manage to speak in front of their peers.

– Teshale Alemu Gebremeskel

Impact and benefits



- **Opportunity to speak in large classes:** Learners had more opportunities to practise and receive feedback in a class of 120, where individual speaking chances are normally limited.
- **High motivation:** Students were engaged, including those who were more introverted or found public speaking a challenge.
- **Increased confidence:** Listening to their own recordings and peers' feedback helped students feel more able to speak in front of others.
- **Assessment skills:** Students had more opportunities to practise self-assessment and peer assessment using the provided rubric.

From private to public speaking

Recording themselves allows learners to practise speaking in a safe, private environment. This can help them build confidence that can transfer to real-world situations, such as speaking in front of classmates or in professional settings. By having learners present in class after practising via recordings, Teshale helps bridge the gap between private practice and public performance.

“

High motivation and involvement [was] observed, particularly from introvert[ed] students.

– Teshale Alemu Gebremeskel

Motivating teenagers through video-based pronunciation (Nigeria)

Salome Ikkoye

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Ugo/Bolo, Nigeria



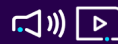
Learners and resources



Secondary learners



Teacher's smartphone and screen amplifier



Bluetooth speaker and online videos



Printer

Background

Salome teaches in a rural community where her lessons often fall after the break, and learners were reluctant to return to class. She decided to experiment with technology to make her lessons 'worth coming back to'.

She initially used a laptop to show videos, but stopped due to safety concerns: the school is located far from town and carrying expensive equipment by motorbike on isolated roads felt risky. She switched to her phone and lighter, inexpensive accessories that could be transported more safely.

Salome now has what she calls her 'IT kit', which learners look forward to.

What happens

Salome usually downloads short videos in advance of travelling to school. When this isn't possible, she streams these in class using her phone data. In class:

- she sets up a podium by raising a desk at the front of the classroom and placing her phone on it with a screen amplifier (a simple magnifying device that enlarges the phone display)
- the phone is connected to a Bluetooth speaker so that everyone can hear
- learners watch and listen together. Many videos include pauses for repetition so students can copy the model and practise in real time
- videos provide consistent and accurate models of pronunciation and intonation, which takes the burden off Salome and avoids errors she feels she sometimes makes.

“

They wanted to know if I'd use videos for my next lesson ... I had a much fuller class.

– Salome Ikokoyo

Reinforcing learning



Salome prints notes, pictures and short explanations related to the videos and what she's teaching. She posts these on the classroom walls for up to three weeks to serve as references, reinforcing lessons and supporting revision.

Challenges and solutions

- **Electricity and internet access** → Salome charges devices ahead of class and downloads resources when the internet is available.
- **Safety of devices** → She avoids passing her phone around, keeping it secure on the podium with the screen amplifier.
- **Time and workload** → Preparing and selecting suitable videos takes extra time, but Salome sees the benefit and continues despite the added effort.
- **Printing costs** → The school sometimes supports printing, but often she pays herself. She weighs the cost against the benefits for learner engagement.

Impact and benefits



- **Improved attendance:** Learners return after breaks to see what new videos or materials will be used.
- **Active participation:** Learners repeat pronunciation examples, engage with comprehension passages and show greater interest in lessons.
- **Printed reference materials:** Classroom visuals provide extended exposure and support retention and revision.
- **Familiarity with ICT:** Learners see technology as a normal, valued part of English learning.
- **Learning outcomes:** These have improved along with attendance and engagement.

“

Apart from coming to class, which was my goal initially, they do better in my subject. They show me that they have learned something and they use it, which makes me happy.

– Salome Ikokoyo

6. Exploring AI in the classroom

Using AI to teach poetry, grammar and narratives (Kenya)

Geoffrey Makau Mutungi

Secondary teacher

Location: Kwale county, Kenya



Learners and resources



Secondary learners aged 14 to 17



AI tools: ChatGPT



Teacher's smartphone and laptop, a projector if available

Background

Geoffrey teaches at Vitsakaviri Primary and Junior School, a rural public school in an area that has frequent power cuts and network issues. After attending a digital tools workshop by ELPK (English Language Professional Association of Kenya), he began using AI to support lessons, especially in poetry, grammar and narrative writing. Poetry was a particular challenge for many students, and his goal was to help them enjoy and connect with the content more.

What happens

Geoffrey uses ChatGPT to generate poems and narratives. These are personalised for his learners by including familiar names, places or topics relevant to their lives. They often focus on positive messages, such as valuing education, friendship or avoiding issues like drug abuse and teenage pregnancy.

- He balances group and individual activities. Learners first discuss the texts in groups, then answer individually so that he can see whether each student understands the material.
- Narrative types include local cultural tales – for example, stories about tricksters or ogres, legends – and problem-solving scenarios. These stories often mirror real-life challenges or teach moral lessons relevant to the learners' experiences.

- Geoffrey also asks learners to rearrange jumbled sentences provided by ChatGPT into grammatically correct sentences. This helps them actively think about sentence structure rather than just passively reading.

“

[Learners] should proceed with moderation. They should not always rely on AI.

– Geoffrey Makau Mutungi

Challenges and solutions

- **Long AI texts take time to write on the board** → When possible, Geoffrey uses a projector to save time.
- **Classrooms without power or sockets** → He merges classes to use classrooms with a socket and the projector when needed.
- **Unreliable network and data** → He switches to a different network when connectivity is poor, despite the extra cost of data.

Using AI sensibly

Geoffrey recognises the following risks of using AI when teaching.

- Content can be misleading, so it always needs checking.
- Over-reliance on AI could discourage critical thinking.
- Students may develop unhealthy habits (e.g. becoming 'phone addicts').

He tries to balance use of AI with traditional teaching and encourages learners to question the information AI produces.

Impact and benefits



- **Personalised texts:** AI allows quick creation of texts that include familiar names and relevant topics, helping learners engage with content and reflect on social issues.
- **Increased interest:** Learners show more interest in poetry and understand it better with AI-generated examples.
- **Time-saving:** AI saves preparation time and can generate grades for writing tasks, though these need to be checked.



I would also encourage my learners to embrace critical thinking. [They] need to confirm the content they get from AI.

– Geoffrey Makau Mutungi

Useful AI resources



[AI in language teaching resources \(British Council\)](#)



Using AI in low-resource classrooms (Nigeria)

Oluchi Francis-Uko

Secondary teacher

Location: Lagos city, Nigeria



Learners and resources



Secondary learners aged 12 to 15



Limited coursebooks



AI tools: Copilot, Gemini and ChatGPT

Background

Oluchi teaches English at Immaculate Hearts Comprehensive Junior High School, where classes of 70 to 80 learners share limited coursebooks. Many come from low-income households, and most do not speak English at home, which adds to the challenge of supporting such large, mixed-ability classes.

To manage these challenges, she started using AI tools to help her plan lessons, create simple grammar explanations with local examples and generate activity ideas that don't depend on costly materials.

What happens

Oluchi works with AI tools to plan lessons based on the Ministry of Education's official curriculum and teaching plan. She writes clear, specific prompts that include the age group, topic and activity type (e.g. story, diagram, role play), while not sharing any of the learners' personal information. This helps her generate content that is age-appropriate, culturally relevant and adaptable.

She strikes a balance between AI-generated content and hands-on classroom activities. For example, in a lesson on prepositions:

Group 1 – AI-supported content: Students received a short narrative generated by Copilot and created diagrams showing prepositions like *along*, *under*, *beside*, *between* and *near*.

Group 2 – Physical objects: Students acted out prepositions using classroom items such as books, pens, chairs and bags.

Group 3 – Learner writing: Students wrote texts applying the same prepositions to real-life situations in their homes or communities.

In this way, AI helps her generate content and activity ideas while not dominating the classroom or replacing hands-on learning.



The way the teacher uses the tool is what matters most. A skilled teacher can turn even a basic AI tool into a powerful learning experience. It's about thoughtful planning and creative application.

– Oluchi Francis-Uko

Challenges and solutions

- **Learners copying AI-generated text** → Oluchi gets learners to outline ideas first, teaches responsible AI use and encourages them to use their own examples and emotions.
- **Ensuring AI outputs match the curriculum** → She checks content against coursebooks and gets AI to adapt it to better fit the Ministry's scheme of work and the local context if needed.



[Learners] enjoy group projects and creative writing, especially when the content reflects their environment. AI helps me tailor lessons to different [interests] ... I ensure student safety and privacy by never sharing personal data with AI tools.

– Oluchi Francis-Uko

Impact and benefits



- **Greater engagement and confidence:** Students enjoy group work, creative tasks and lessons that reflect familiar contexts.
- **More inclusive activities:** Learners benefit from contextually relevant, creative tasks that match their level and interests.
- **Wider uptake among colleagues:**
 - **English teacher** → helps them plan for different levels in one class
 - **science teacher** → helps them structure research projects
 - **maths teacher** → helps generate quizzes and test questions

Using AI to support teacher lesson planning (Ghana)

Umar Suraka

Teacher and teacher educator

Location: Accra city, Ghana



Learners and resources



Primary and secondary teachers in nearby schools



Smartphones, some laptops



AI tools like ChatGPT

Background

Umar teaches Social Studies and Religious Studies at Forces Senior High Technical School and coordinates weekly 90-minute Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions for colleagues. In 2023, he began experimenting with ChatGPT for his own lesson planning after reading an article on AI for education. Excited by its potential, he introduced it to colleagues, who quickly saw the benefits.

Since then, his AI training has expanded to other schools, including:

- Tiwinikly International SHS and Happy Bloomers School – five-day intensive workshops

- Kotobabi 11 JHS and Garrison Primary/JHS – shorter PLC sessions (90 minutes) focused on specific challenges

What happens

Umar runs practical, hands-on training sessions where teachers bring their own devices (phones, laptops). Sessions focus on:

- generating lesson plans, activities and assessments with AI
- writing effective prompts (instructions for AI) to produce clear, learner-centred lesson plans and materials

- adapting what AI creates: simplifying language, adding local examples and adjusting activities to keep lessons practical and learner-centred.

Sessions are primarily in English, the main language teachers use to plan their lessons. However, some teachers also explore using AI in local languages.

“

[One] teacher uses AI to prepare her lessons in Twi [a local language], and it works really well for her. This shows teachers that AI can be flexible. It's not just for English, but can also support local languages when needed.

– Umar Suraka

Impact and benefits



- **Reach:** Over 300 teachers supported across several institutions.
- **Confidence and efficiency:** Teachers report saving time and feeling more confident in lesson planning.
- **Creativity and range:** AI is used for visuals (e.g. geography images), phonics exercises, project-based learning and innovative activities beyond textbooks.
- **Lesson quality:** Teachers report that lessons prepared with AI and adapted by them are more engaging, practical, creative and interactive, offering learners experiences beyond the textbook.

Tips: Introducing AI to colleagues



- Show teachers how AI can make their work easier (lesson planning, creating materials).
- Let them try AI themselves to gain hands-on experience.
- Help them learn to write clear, effective prompts.
- Remind them to adapt AI outputs to fit their students' needs.
- Demonstrate how to critically evaluate AI outputs for accuracy and bias, developing a 'critical thinking mindset'.
- Remind teachers that they should never share personal information about their colleagues or students with an AI.

Learners' use of AI



Most schools don't allow phones in class, so the students of the teachers Umar trains mainly use AI at home for projects, assignments or group work, alongside traditional resources. Like their teachers, they're encouraged to treat AI as a partner, not a substitute for their own thinking.

“

AI is just a helper. Treat the results as a starting point, not the final answer.

– Umar Suraka

Key takeaways

Across these 20 case studies, several common themes emerged about how teachers and teacher educators in Sub-Saharan Africa are using technology to support teaching and learning.

1. Teachers adapt to use technology in challenging, low-resource contexts.

Frequent power cuts, large classes, limited devices and weak connectivity were common, yet teachers and teacher educators consistently found practical workarounds: sharing phones, rotating groups, downloading materials for offline use, merging classes and simplifying activities when needed.

2. Messaging apps and low-bandwidth tools are the backbone of digital practice.

WhatsApp, Telegram and other lightweight tools supported lesson delivery, resource sharing, feedback, homework submission and teacher–learner communication. Their accessibility made them central to everyday teaching and teacher development.

3. Technology helps to localise and contextualise learning materials.

Different tools – AI, audio recordings, online content and messaging apps – allowed teachers to create, find and share examples, texts and activities that used familiar names, places, cultural references and relatable real-life situations. This localisation helped improve learner engagement and comprehension.

4. Emphasis on active, participatory approaches.

Teachers used technology to support group work, practical demonstrations, role play, storytelling, debates and writing tasks. Digital tools reinforced active learning and collaboration, rather than replacing these hands-on or interactive activities.

5. Effective planning and teaching matter more than the tool itself.

Whether using messaging apps, videos, screen readers, mobile apps or AI, teachers and teacher educators scaffolded tasks, adjusted language levels, communicated clearly and planned learner-centred activities. How they organised and delivered learning was as important to the success

of their efforts as the technology they used.

6. Seeing inclusive technologies in action raises awareness.

Teachers and teacher educators demonstrated how screen readers, dictation tools, Braille, automatic captioning and text-to-speech apps can support learners with disabilities. Working alongside colleagues or students who use these tools – whether in class or a workshop – helped participants understand accessibility needs and inclusive classroom strategies.

7. Digital tools help reduce workload and expand access to resources.

Teachers and teacher educators used technology to reduce preparation time, create materials that matched the curriculum, vary classroom activities and provide additional explanations or models for learners. This was especially useful where coursebooks or print resources were limited.

8. Responsible and thoughtful technology use is a growing priority.

Teachers emphasised checking AI outputs for accuracy, protecting privacy when using messaging apps and teaching learners to question the information digital tools provide. Their aim was to use technology for support, not as a substitute for thinking or teaching.

9. Technology facilitates peer learning and the spread of digital practice.

Professional learning communities, WhatsApp groups, peer mentoring and teacher-led workshops encouraged colleagues and pre-service teachers to try new tools, share successes and troubleshoot challenges together.

10. Technology provides learners with extra time and space for practice.

Digital tools like voice recorders, messaging apps and collaborative platforms allowed learners to practise outside class, control when and how they engage with tasks, and rehearse privately. This flexibility especially benefitted those who need extra time, repetition or scaffolded support, and helped reduce anxiety while building confidence.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Survey questions and shortlisting criteria

Survey questions

Section 1: About you and your learners

1. What's your full name?
2. What's your email address? (If you don't have one, leave blank)
3. What's your WhatsApp or Telegram contact? (phone number or username)
4. What country do you work in?
5. What's your gender
 - Man
 - Woman
 - I identify in another way
 - Prefer not to say
6. How would you describe the area where you work?
 - Rural (countryside, smaller towns or villages)
 - Urban (city or large town)
 - Other / Not sure
7. Who do you mainly teach or support? Select all that apply.
 - Early years (kindergarten, nursery, pre-primary)
 - Primary (young children)
 - Secondary (teenagers)
 - Tertiary / Higher education learners
 - Teachers (teacher education or training)
8. What's your role
 - I'm a teacher
 - I'm a teacher educator – I formally support teachers with their professional development
 - I am both a teacher and a teacher educator
 - Other
9. Do you have a disability or special educational need?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
10. Do you use ICT to support learners with special education needs or disabilities?
 - Yes
 - No

Section 2: Tell us how you use ICT/technology

1. Please share one example of how you've used ICT in your work. Try to include:
 - what technology you used and why
 - who was involved
 - what happened
 - what difference it made
 - any safeguarding actions (e.g. protecting learners' privacy or safety)
2. What was this example mainly about?
 - Teaching (working with learners)
 - Training (working with teachers)
 - Your professional development
 - Supporting learners with disabilities or special needs (SEND)
3. Would you like to share another example? If yes, describe it here. Include the same information as before.
4. What was your second example mainly about? (Choose the best option)
 - Teaching (working with learners)
 - Training (working with teachers)
 - Your professional development
 - Supporting learners with disabilities or special needs (SEND)
 - I didn't share a second example.
5. If your example is chosen, how would you like us to contact you to ask a few more questions?
 - Short chat or call (phone or online)
 - Questions in writing by email
 - Questions in writing by WhatsApp or Telegram

Shortlisting criteria

- 1. Clear example of ICT use:** The response describes a specific and detailed example of how technology was used in teaching, training or professional development.
- 2. Context and impact (initial or follow-up):** The example shows clear potential – either through the initial description or information that can be gathered in follow-up – to explain why the technology was used, who was involved, what happened and the impact observed.
- 3. Diversity of context:** Include teachers and educators from a mix of rural and urban areas across different Sub-Saharan African countries.
- 4. Variety of roles:** Select a balance of classroom teachers, teacher educators and trainers, though the selection is likely to be weighted towards classroom teachers.
- 5. Inclusion and accessibility:** Seek examples involving support for learners with disabilities or special educational needs (SEND), as well as examples from teachers or educators who themselves have disabilities or SEND. Also consider examples showing promise in other areas.
- 6. Gender balance:** Ensure fair representation of women and men. In previous M&E reports for the region, only a small percentage (0.3 per cent) identified 'in another way', so it may be difficult to find examples from this group.
- 7. Innovative or creative use:** Highlight examples that show creative, practical or innovative uses of ICT in low-resource or challenging contexts.
- 8. Safeguarding considerations:** Consider safeguarding issues raised in responses and ensure these are addressed or can be explored further during follow-up.

Appendix 2: Ethical considerations and image permissions

All contributors who participated in the original survey confirmed that they had read and understood the purpose of the research and consented to the British Council using their submitted information for research and publication purposes.

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About the author

Ross Crichton is an education and EdTech consultant with over 20 years of experience in language teaching and teacher education. He specialises in instructional design and technology-enhanced teacher development in international contexts.

