

ISTEP Covid-19 Response Plan

1. Delivery of English Language component of teacher training course

Three approaches were used to deliver the language component of the teacher training course during the lockdown.

a. What's app

Along with radios, mobile phones are one of the most accessible forms of technology, covering over 70 percent of the world's population.¹ Sudan has 30.1 million mobile-cellular subscribers (ITU, 2018), which is equivalent to 72 mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. On the basis of this data and other data collected regarding the accessibility and use of mobile phones in Sudan, (see Annexe 2) it was decided to use what's app to deliver the language component of the teacher training course, initially in 3 of the 7 states, as a pilot.

The language component was extracted from the training courses, adapted for self-study, and a unit was sent each week to what's app groups in 3 states. Weekly meetings were held between teachers and trainers for Q and A. The trainers kept in continuous contact with the teachers, sometimes daily.

b. Radio

The British Council has a ready-made teacher training course for English teachers, which is aimed at teachers working in difficult locations, such as Sudan. We negotiated with the national radio station (Omdurman Radio) to deliver the series for programmes '*Teach English Radio*' weekly throughout the lockdown. The recordings were also delivered to the teachers via the What's app groups and passed on to their colleagues, so we had as wide a reach as possible. Discussions of the week's topic could then take place between teachers and between trainers and teachers after the weekly delivery of the programmes.

c. Hard copy material.

Despite the data from UNESCO it was found from our own research in Annexe 3 that teachers in some localities in the states had no access to a smart phone with what's app and/or very limited network coverage and electricity, and little radio access. Therefore, the only recourse was to try to send hard copies out to these teachers by whatever means available in each state. Initially this did not present a great problem we could send the copies to our state technical advisers (STAs) who would then arrange

¹ Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2012, p.290

distribution to the teachers in the localities. However, when a nationwide lockdown was imposed, travel was banned between states so alternative means of delivery were used, working with people /agencies who had permits to travel between states, such as humanitarian agencies and journalists. Later, the problem of distribution was compounded by flooding in some states making them inaccessible, and a nationwide petrol shortage, which meant that even if the resources were delivered to the STA it was sometimes impossible for them to reach the teachers in the localities.

2. Delivery of the Maths and Science components of the ISTEP teacher training course

The training materials for Maths and Science were adapted for delivery via the radio. The programmes were accompanied by worksheets explaining the content and how to use it effectively. The trainers then support the teachers via what's app groups. The radio sessions were based on the teacher training units. there were 12 programmes delivered each week via national radio (Afnan Radio). Midway, after week 5 and at the end of the series there was a live phone in where teachers could ask the trainers delivering the radio programmes some questions about teaching.

Evaluation of the process

1. Quantitative data regarding the number of teachers who joined the what's app groups; numbers who actively took part and numbers who joined but did not participate has been collected and was summarised in the final evaluation report. Feedback on reasons for the activity or lack of activity and usefulness of the work was collected via the qualitative procedures. Similarly, data has been collected regarding the number of teachers in very remote areas who received hard copy materials, and who managed to complete the work.
2. The qualitative evaluation took a 3-pronged approach to get a broader perspective through triangulation. Data collection will be via interviews, focus group discussion and questionnaires.

Interviews.

A selection was made of teachers to be interviewed from the what's app groups who were very active, not very active and not active at all. The interviews were dialogic in process in order to collect a wide and varied response.

Focus Group discussions

These were held face to face during the following face-to-face training courses which are currently taking place. The Team Leader conducted the discussions with English teachers, and other team members conducted interviews where Arabic was required for the maths and science teachers.

Questionnaire

A simple questionnaire was given to all the members of the What's App groups and those who received hard copy materials.