



Webinar: Low-Tech, High-Impact, Part II

Teacher Training in Resource-Constrained and Crisis-Affected Contexts

Synthesis document, 24 April 2026

Summary

The Teacher Task Force Thematic Group on Digital Education and AI, led by Digital Promise and MESHGuides, hosted a [webinar](#) on Low-Tech Teacher Training, co-led by the European Training Foundation (ETF), on 24th April 2026. The webinar was the second in a low-tech thematic series that began in 2025. It featured case studies from ETF, the British Council, Jokkolabs, and Save the Children and focused on practical, inclusive AI tools and training strategies for teachers in diverse settings.

Key Takeaways

1. Adaptability in Crisis

Education systems are undergoing rapid digital transformation, but in fragile settings, "low-tech" solutions (WhatsApp, chatbots, and offline tools) are essential to bridge the gap where infrastructure is lacking.

2. Human-Centric Tech

Success depends on "co-creation" with teachers and the use of human facilitators (e-moderators) to support asynchronous learning, ensuring tech serves as an enabler rather than a barrier.

3. Agency, Localization, and Sustainability

Promoting teacher agency requires moving beyond "copy-paste" content to locally-aligned, accredited curricula that address specific needs like socio-emotional learning and trauma-informed care. Organizations should build on existing, informal teacher-led practices (like peer WhatsApp groups) rather than replacing them with unsustainable and external models.

4. Hybrid Realities

Teachers often use AI tools like ChatGPT via intermittent connectivity to create lesson plans, which they then adapt offline to suit local classroom realities.

Resource Links

- [Concept Note](#)
- [Slide Deck](#)

European Training Foundation (ETF)

Key Takeaways

1. Three key dimensions can support our reflection on effective teacher training in resource-constrained and crisis-affected contexts: technology, teaching and learning, and the broader policy, legal and ethical environment:
 - In many contexts, appropriate technology matters more than advanced technology. The goal is not digital sophistication, but accessible and adaptable solutions.
 - Technology alone does not improve learning outcomes, what matters most is how teachers use technology to support learning. In many cases, collaboration and pedagogy matter more than technology itself.
 - The policy, legal and ethical environment enables or constrains innovation. Key enabling factors include national education policy, institutional support, teacher development, sustainable funding, infrastructure investment. Beyond policy, ethical and legal issues are becoming increasingly important. Developing competencies related to digital ethics and security is therefore an important part of teacher training. In crisis contexts especially, these issues can be even more sensitive, particularly where vulnerable learners are involved.
2. The case study from Gaza (An-Najah University) brought the following elements:
 - During crises pedagogy is important, as well as technology, in order to find the adjustable strategy that teachers can use.
 - Effective low-tech solutions in education during crises should have three main characteristics: they should be free of charge, highly accessible, and adaptable for trauma-informed use. Technology should not be viewed only as a tool for delivering educational content; it can also support emotional recovery, psychosocial well-being, and a sense of safety for learners affected by crises.
 - Educational technological solutions have emerged from the lived practices of teachers themselves. Teachers know what is possible during educide conditions (the systematic destruction of a nation's educational infrastructure, institutions, and personnel during war, conflict, or occupation), where electricity, internet access, devices, safety, and emotional readiness cannot be guaranteed. Their choices are therefore not simply technical preferences, but practical and ethical responses to crises.
 - Many teachers preferred using WhatsApp for teaching and learning instead of learning management systems or video-conferencing platforms because it is familiar, low-bandwidth, mobile-friendly, and flexible. It allows teachers to continue reaching students even when connectivity is weak. In Palestinian context, audio messages were used as a lecturing tool, while text messages were used to present key points, instructions, assignments, and emotional check-ins. This shows that low-tech tools can support not only learning continuity, but also care, reassurance, and trauma-informed communication during times of crises.
 - Technology was a tool for resilience and MHPSS (mental health and psychosocial support).

Resource Links

- Learn more about the work of the European Training Foundation (ETF) on [Digital Skills and Learning](#), the ETF [Digital Education Reform Framework 2.0](#), [EU tools for digital education](#), and on how [ETF boosts teaching innovation](#) through knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Case study resources:

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/395549343_Technology-enabled_social-emotional_learning_for_University_educators_a_systematic_review
- https://www.academia.edu/124580899/Guidelines_for_educators_in_crisis_settings_Prepared_by_Prof_Saida_Affouneh_emergency_education_and_elearning_expert_An_Najah_National_University

Q&A

1. **Curriculum Prioritization:** Since there is no central guidance in Gaza, what content or curriculum are teachers prioritizing in such a dire context?

There are two kinds of curriculum, the first one is the formal one related to schooling and coming from the Ministry of education (is mostly stopped due to closure and ongoing education), the other curriculum is related to the urgent needs such as MHPSS, life skills, and first aid.

2. **Socio-emotional Learning:** Is socio-emotional learning (SEL) being addressed to help students and teachers manage the trauma they are facing?

In general people are denying being traumatized and postpone this for later stages since the crisis is ongoing and they need to survive. There are many ongoing courses to train teachers and students to deal with their mental status and to offer SEL. It is insufficient and not institutionalized.

3. **Low-Tech Implementation:** How are teachers specifically using low-tech tools to deal with trauma in these environments?

In general teachers themselves need support and some of them are doing their best to support their students. As an example Teachers use SMS and audio messages through WhatsApp to support their students.

I have developed a guide for teachers on how to integrate PSS and SEL into their teaching in the learning spaces. A group of 60 Teachers were trained to use it. The guidelines were developed to be used in face to face or through WhatsApp groups.

Save The Children

Key Takeaways

1. **Always start with teachers, not technology** - understand what teachers already use, trust and need support with before selecting tools
2. **The platform matters, but the approach matters more** - structure, facilitation, content and follow-up determine whether a tool creates value
3. **Build on tools, resources and structures already in daily use** - familiar platforms can reduce adoption barriers and support more consistent engagement
4. **Design for sustained engagement** - use routines, prompts, relevant content and interaction to support ongoing participation
5. Pair technology with strong human support systems - coaching, facilitation and leadership are critical to translating use into improved practice

Resource Links

- GPE Blog - *WhatsApp-integrated AI: what it can (and cannot) do for teachers, pedagogy and TPD*. Link [here](#)
- EdTech Hub *Behind the Screen: Teachers Co-Designing WhatsApp AI Tools* Link [here](#)
- Fab Inc. *Teacher.AI* - Link [here](#) and [here](#)

Q&A

1. **Chatbot Engagement:** Is there research on the "drop-off" rate of teacher engagement when using chatbots for education?

General app usage shows 18% on day one to just 4% after a month (Adjust, 2023).

There is growing evidence that many digital tools, including chatbots, see strong initial uptake but lower sustained engagement over time. It reflects a broader pattern across EdTech, where novelty drives early use, but continued engagement depends on relevance, ease of use, and integration into daily routines.

That's why the design of the support model matters just as much as the tool itself. Early engagement can be high, but maintaining consistent use requires structure, facilitation and ongoing support.

Good examples of integrated AI and Whatsapp from the EdTech Hub and Fab Inc. are linked above.

2. **Structure of Support:** Could you further explain the "strong structure" built around the WhatsApp chatbot?

In Somalia, WhatsApp was not just used as an open or informal chat space. It was also designed as a structured professional learning environment.

The groups had clear objectives, agreed rules and norms, named facilitators, organised content linked to teacher needs, scheduled prompts and sharing activities, and active monitoring of participation.

Importantly, the WhatsApp groups also sat within a much wider support model, including coaching, mentoring, refresher training, self-study materials and classroom follow-up support.

There were also measures to support teachers with lower engagement or participation barriers, rather than assuming participation would happen automatically. So the key lesson was that the impact came not simply from the platform itself, but from the highly structured and intentional approach around it.

3. **Facilitation & Inclusion:** To what extent are human facilitators aiding the delivery of WhatsApp TPD, and do the prompts include support for children with disabilities? (this was my question that I asked another

Human facilitators were central to the delivery model. In the Somalia example, facilitators and coaches actively guided discussions, shared content, encouraged participation, responded to questions, and monitored engagement.

This was important because the groups were not intended to function as passive chat spaces, but as structured professional learning environments. The facilitation helped maintain relevance, participation and continuity over time.

In terms of inclusion, the content and prompts included topics such as inclusive pedagogy, gender, teacher wellbeing, child protection, and support for children with disabilities.

More broadly, one of the key lessons is that inclusion is not automatic within digital tools. It needs to be intentionally designed into both the content and the facilitation approach, including consideration of accessibility, participation barriers, language, and which teachers may be less likely to engage.

Jokkolabs Banjul

Key Takeaways

1. **Core message**

The presentation of Jokkolabs Banjul argues that teacher support in The Gambia should be designed around existing constraints: high pupil-teacher ratios, low electricity access, and limited formal digital training. It presents ChatGPT not as a fully digital solution, but as a practical tool that can generate lesson-planning support for offline distribution.

2. **Problem context**

The main challenge is that many Gambian teachers in rural based schools need quality daily lesson support, even though internet access, data plans, and electricity are unreliable. The presentation of Jokkolabs Banjul highlights this urgency with three indicators: about 45:1 pupil-to-teacher ratio in public schools, less than 30% of schools with reliable electricity, and only around 15% of teachers with formal digital training.

3. Delivery model

The proposed model depends on one connected person per school, in most cases the head of the particular subject matter expert, e.g Head of Biology Department, who accesses ChatGPT and generates lesson plans aligned with the Gambian curriculum. Those materials are then printed or copied and discussed in offline teacher peer learning circles, where educators adapt for their classroom, based on existing classroom realities.

4. Low-tech options

The presentation of Jokkolabs Banjul proposes five practical channels for scaling support: printed monthly lesson banks, SMS lesson summaries, Community Radio segments, teacher peer learning circles, and offline digital kiosks using solar-charged tablets. Together, these options show that AI-generated teaching support can be distributed through print, broadcast, and simple mobile tools, rather than broadband-dependent platforms.

5. Practical value

A sample Grade 7 Agriculture Science based on West African School Examination Curriculum. Prompt shows that ChatGPT can generate structured lesson plans with clear objectives, activities using local materials, no-writing formative assessment, and homework that does not rely on textbooks. This makes the tool especially useful in resource-constrained classrooms because it can produce relevant, classroom-ready content with minimal digital overhead.

6. Next steps

The presentation of Jokkolabs Banjul recommends partnering with community radio, creating one solar-powered lesson-generation hub per district, training heads of school departments to prompt ChatGPT, and linking outputs to teachers' peer learning circles. The broader takeaway is that AI for education, especially in rural based schools in The Gambia, should be deployed through shared infrastructure, local adaptation, and low-cost delivery systems.

Resource Links

- <https://waecgambia.org/wassce/>
- <https://waecsyllabus.com/>

Q&A

1. **Curriculum Alignment:** How do you ensure that lesson plans generated by ChatGPT are accurately aligned with the local syllabus (e.g., the West African Examination Council)?

For this pilot case, we uploaded the current West African Examination Council syllabus for 2026 using ChatGPT Pro to create the lesson plan for, say, Agriculture Science.

2. **Bias and Decolonization:** How do you prevent "colonized knowledge" or AI bias from being integrated into Gambian school content?

Bias is mitigated as we upload the current version of the West African Examination Council Syllabus for the particular subject we wish to generate the lesson plan for. We are using ChatGPT Pro.

3. **Teacher Agency:** If all teachers receive the same AI-generated lesson plan, how is their individual agency and creativity promoted?

It's usually the Head of Department that receives the generated lesson plan for that particular subject, and s/he distributes it based on the class grade for use by teachers. It must be noted that the lesson plan developed ensures that teachers teaching the same subject in rural based schools have the same approach in teaching (Uniformity). It does not stop them from using their own skills set to deliver the lesson plan effectively to the students. It saves them time in developing lesson plans individually.

4. **Hallucinations:** How do you address "AI hallucinations" to ensure the information provided to teachers is factually correct?

Hallucinations are mitigated as we are using the West African Examination Council direct curriculum uploaded to generate the lesson plan. Upon the lesson plan generated, the Head of Department of the particular subject, also goes through the generated lesson plan with teachers from that department, to see there are no AI hallucinations, and lesson plans generated are factual based on uploaded syllabus. That's why we have the teacher peer learning circle. This process ensures that there is a human interface in the whole process.

British Council

Key Takeaways

This research sits at the intersection of education reform, conflict, and digital teacher development in Ukraine. This case offers insights that are relevant for the Teacher Task Force's interest in low-tech, scalable, teacher-centred digital approaches, especially in crisis settings. The findings point to several implications for how we design and support online teacher professional development in conflict-affected settings:

1. To protect teacher wellbeing, particularly in conflict/emergency settings, any provision should explicitly account for and mitigate teachers' labour conditions and structural inequalities, particularly women's dual professional and family responsibilities. There is a need to set aside protected time for teacher professional development (TPD), rather than assuming teachers can absorb it into already stretched schedules.
2. Teaching presence, or course moderation matters. The fact that the course was supported by experienced e-moderators helped foster participation, recognition, and agency. This has implications for cost-effectiveness discussions, particularly in scaled approaches.
3. Online TPD supported teachers' wellbeing through connection and recognition in an emergency context. Programmes should therefore consider how professional community membership can be sustained after courses end, enabling temporary networks to evolve into self-sustaining communities of practice.
4. The study highlights the need to address language barriers more proactively, where TPD is delivered entirely in English or any one language. Emerging AI-enabled technologies present opportunities for first-language support, which could enable fuller participation without compromising scalability.
5. It's important to consider a broader question relevant to education in emergencies: while online TPD builds teachers' capabilities, there is a question of whether teachers can realistically achieve longer-term outcomes (such as career progression) during prolonged conflict or displacement. Future approaches need to look beyond short-term participation to consider longer-term outcomes.

Resource Links

- Learn more about British Council programmes in Ukraine in the areas of [English teacher development programmes](#)
- Free open learning course on [Teaching English to refugees and displaced learners](#): Make your classroom a trauma-sensitive learning environment. Help your learners to shine by working creatively with limited

resources and by managing challenging behaviour positively. This course is open now – enrol until 24 March 2027.

- Free open learning course on [Integrating digital technologies](#): Learn how to use digital tools, including AI, to find, evaluate and create digital content and resources that foster inclusion and support learners' collaboration, information literacy and problem-solving skills. Integrating digital technologies is open now – enrol until 23 September 2026.

Q&A

1. **Certification:** What are the specific requirements and links for teachers to receive certificates for completing the online courses?

This course consisted of four one-week modules (30 hours) and a final plenary session for presenting group projects. Each module consisted of:

- One self-access core module = 3 hours of self-study
- Asynchronous forum tasks = 1 hour
- Live synchronous Teacher Activity Group meetings = 2 hours collaborative study

In addition to the four core modules, teachers were also offered three additional self-access modules which were entirely optional. Teachers who completed the core modules and group projects successfully (meeting the completion requirements set out for them) received a British Council certificate of completion.

2. **Overcoming Connectivity Barriers:** How were time limitations and intermittent internet mitigated for teachers in Ukraine using the Learning Management System (LMS)?

This was done through a blend of course design and the technology, as far as possible. In terms of the platform, we delivered the course via our Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS is optimised for low-bandwidth environments and mobile friendly, so that teachers with intermittent connectivity or slower speeds could access it.

In terms of course design, the course used a mixed mode of delivery that combined various elements of synchronous and asynchronous online interaction, facilitated by certified trainers called e-moderators. There were synchronous real-time video conference sessions via Zoom. The course was delivered using a 'flipped' approach with participants first working independently via self-access online modules, then moving to online asynchronous interaction, via online discussion forums hosted on the LMS, which encouraged them to reflect more deeply about some of the concepts and discuss them with peers and e-moderators. Then, they moved to live synchronous interaction which enabled them to come together to share ideas and experiences linked to the themes of each unit. At each stage, we designed for and allowed as much flexibility as possible to enable participants to engage meaningfully with the content and successfully complete the course. Still, it remains a challenge and one recommendation would be in future cases, to ensure teachers have protected time for TPD, agreed with ministry/implementation partners, where possible.

3. **Role of Facilitators:** What is the role of e-moderators in supporting asynchronous learning, and how do they help participants through the process?

We engage professionally trained and experienced online course e-moderators who work as teacher trainers and learning facilitators. Throughout the Ukraine course, e-moderators provided structured academic, technical, and pastoral support to participants. Their role included the following key functions:

- **Maintaining participant motivation:** E-moderators play a central role in sustaining participant engagement and motivation. They plan and deliver high-quality e-moderation that is responsive to participants' needs and educational contexts. Discussion forums are actively managed to ensure

learning outcomes are met. Where assignments form part of the coursework, e-moderators mark submissions and provide timely, constructive individual feedback within agreed timeframes.

- **Supporting course completion:** E-moderators regularly monitor participant progress and learning activity. They provide personalised feedback to help participants manage performance across the course and actively encourage consistent and meaningful online participation, supporting retention and successful completion.
- **Supporting participant well-being:** E-moderators ensure safeguarding procedures and community guidelines are applied and upheld in line with organisational standards and policies. They help create a supportive, trust-based learning environment where participant teachers feel safe, respected, and encouraged to engage in a positive culture of learning.
- **Providing first-level issue support:** E-moderators offer basic troubleshooting and first-level technical assistance to help participants access the platform, navigate course tools, and remain engaged in the online learning environment.
- **Contributing to project development:** Drawing on their direct experience with participants, e-moderators occasionally advise project teams on module design, assignment selection, and course adjustments. This input helps ensure the course remains relevant, accessible, and contextually appropriate for participants.