

Creativity after a crisis: How to provide education in low-resource classrooms

EiE Community Monthly Call | 20 September, 2022

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EiE Examples	Video highlights
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Use of low-cost resources

Teach For Afghanistan design **summaries of all subject textbook** from Grades 1 to 12. They do this by compressing the large books from 100 pages to 15 pages, and also adding new practical examples that weren't featured in the textbooks. These summaries are distributed to students in their homes.

Teach For Ethiopia partner with local universities to **distribute reading materials**, textbooks and supplementary learning materials to students' homes.

Teach For Lebanon fellows use some of the innovative strategies in their classrooms:

- Creating **visual aids** for storytelling as part of the English language lessons. For example: when the class does not have a soccer ball, they use scrap paper to make a ball.
 - Paper is an expensive resource in most Lebanese schools, so when teaching poems, conducting quizzes, or teaching grammar through bingo, printouts are created on a **quarter of an A4 size page**, instead of on a full A4 page.
 - Instead of printing out lesson notes, students are encouraged to write them down in their **notebooks**, which saves paper and other printing resources, as well as improving students' handwriting.
 - Class notes are also distributed through **Microsoft Teams**, so students who are not present in class can also access it online.
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Use of technology

Teach For Afghanistan fellows **download** English grammar books and other subject books onto their **mobile phones**, from the Ministry's website.

Teach For Lebanon fellows are often faced with limited access to the internet, long power outages, or outdated study materials. They create **short lecture videos** (up to 1 minute long) which can be easily downloaded by students' parents **via WhatsApp**. These videos show the teachers doing actions - like using a gardening tool. Students are then encouraged to use any resource available to them at their home to mimic the teachers' actions.

Teach For Lebanon fellows use their own computer technology and internet – for example, their **personal laptops** to download materials for students to watch offline in classes, their own **Bluetooth speakers** for students to sit beside each other and learn via the audio.

Teach For Ukraine leverages the Ukraine government's '**Online School**' which is an online platform for Grade 5 to 11, and which also provides methodical support for teachers. This online school is also broadcast on television. In areas that don't have close access to schools,

buses are available to transfer students and teachers to neighbouring communities so that they can have access to internet and education resources.

A group of Teach For Ukraine alumni have scaled up their program, called 'ZNOvU', where they provided **free online lessons** for students affected by the war, to help them prepare for their entrance exams to Ukrainian universities. For over 4 years now, this program has been running with the help of professional educators who volunteer their time to teach such students.

Teach For Ethiopia uses **low-cost text messaging** to address any questions that students have, to connect teachers with their students, and to help parents with home-based learning.



Spaces for social and emotional wellbeing

Teach For Ukraine fellows implement different psychosocial support techniques to help their students cope with the effects of the war. Some of these techniques include:

- Teaching students **breathing techniques** and how to deal with **panic attacks**.
 - **Reading books** with the students online to help them calm down, and then later reading parts of the book and sending them as audio messages using **Telegram** (a messaging app).
 - Playing **Dixit** (an online storytelling game) with students in the evenings.
 - Holding an online evening for **singing Ukrainian songs** with students.
 - Organising in-person **classes in attics** (in regions that are under occupation) using improvised materials.
 - Organising offline **games and craft classes** for internally displaced children.
 - Ensuring that **learning rules** are created by, and talked through with, students.
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Teach For Lebanon fellows receive trainings on how to create '**trauma-sensitive classrooms**' as well as being supported by a 'wellbeing programme'. There are safe spaces which are led by fellows, in which they can share their frustrations and challenges, engage in active listening, connect with each other, belong to a family of teachers and receive peer support.

Teach for Ukraine fellows were given 1-hour individual sessions with a mentor everyweek, or as needed. They also launched two online training sessions and support group meetings to help fellows incorporate 'trauma sensitive approaches to teaching', and also to help them

manage their own well-being as well. These online sessions were later converted to a training module for their Summer Institute. They also provided **psychosocial support** for Ukrainian system teachers, via an online course, webinars, support groups, a chatbot, and school visits (in cooperation with UNICEF).

Teach For Ethiopia supports fellows with **mindset shifts** - letting go of the idea that 'if classrooms close, learning stops' and helping them live into the principle that learning can continue in crisis circumstances, even if schools are shut.



Group activities

When there is a lack of textbooks, Teach For Afghanistan fellows do **group reading activities** where one student narrates the textbook, two students act out what has been shared, and one other student writes new vocabulary and definitions from that text on the board.

Teach For Afghanistan fellows make worksheets with vocabulary and reading comprehension questions for each book. Their students complete the worksheets in groups, and the class is brought back together so each group can give a short **synopsis of the book** and share what they learned with the rest of the class.

Reading camps organised by Teach For Ethiopia provide students with dedicated time and space to sit and read, both inside and outside of the school environment.

To tackle the problem of limited internet access and outdated study materials, Teach For Lebanon fellows use the following strategies:

- **Download videos** from the internet on relevant subjects and play them offline in the classroom.
 - Use **recycled and low cost materials** from the school and their homes to create group projects for the students.
 - Collaborate with other Teach For Lebanon fellows around the country so students can **exchange letters** with each other, to improve their language skills.
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Teach For Ethiopia set up **catch-up classes** during the summer to help students overcome lost learning. Their fellows also engage in community activities as well as action research. They

analyse problems that exist in their schools and communities, and implement a project to try and tackle an issue. Teach For Ethiopia's leadership development focuses on problem solving and how to take proactive action to address issues.



Taking learning outside

Teach for Ethiopia have set up **Book Banks**, which are containers full of books, and placed them inside communities. These are managed by the community, who lend books out to students. This initiative enables parents to take an active role in their children's borrowing and use of books.

When there is no physical classroom structure, Teach For Afghanistan fellows teach their students outside, either under the **shade of trees or within a large tent**. Their fellows use the following strategies:

- **Structured lessons:** When teaching outside there can be many noises and distractions, so their 45-minute lessons follow this 3-part structure to maximize students' attention: Review of yesterday's lesson + Introducing today's new content + Practice and questions by students.
 - **Manage class sizes:** Teach For Afghanistan tries to reduce the number of students sitting in one tent or classroom from 120 to a number where the teacher can engage with all the children. Their fellows can then reach out to each of the students and have time to answer them. This personal connection between teacher and students improves student attendance and enjoyment of learning.
 - **Make it fun:** Teach For Afghanistan fellows make their schools a fun and happy environment for students to play sports, engage in cultural events, do experiments and participate in competitions. They try to remove any strict rules, punishments and unnecessary burdens from their students.
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Attendees dialled in from:

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