



Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of the Rapid Teacher Training

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About this document

This document was developed by members of the Centre for Research & Integrated Development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe), with contributions from Lawrence Mkwala, Patience Nyamatanga, Rodrick S. Mandibatsira, Grace Magaba, Godfrey Chikuhu, Fundani Fundira, Mangozhe Nyashadzashe, Hebert Musingarimi, and Marufu Pedzisai. The development was supported by UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo, Charles Chikunda, Moses T Mukabeta, Patience Awopegba, Jen Redway) and Open Development & Education (Grace Macharia, Alejandra Vijil and Björn Haßler). The activity was generously funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

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1. Background

In 2020, following the advent of Covid-19, schools were closed abruptly for the first time in post-independence Zimbabwe, thereby disrupting the school calendar. This closure lasted for an extended period and had serious implications on learner outcomes, threatening to reverse the gains realised in the post-independence period. A majority of public schools did not have the capacity to offer distance learning or online learning, for several reasons, including lack of teacher capacity.

To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on learning, UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, crafted a Rapid Teacher Training Programme (RTT). The objective of the RTT is to equip teachers with skills for online and distance teaching using high- and low-tech tools. During the implementation of the RTT, data was collected by a group of 20 RTT trainers to evaluate the programme. The RTT sessions, comprising two modules, have been reported upon by those trainers in a total of 60 reports. The teacher participants were drawn from primary and secondary schools within nine provinces of Zimbabwe.

Rather than appointing an agency to analyse the data, Open Development & Education was contracted by UNESCO to capacitate a group of stakeholders in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary (MoPSE). The focus of the activity was to analyse and report on the data collected during the RTT.

This document provides a final report on the capacity building activity.

1.1. Objectives of the RTT

The objectives of the RTT were to provide teachers with:

- Basic theoretical understanding of digital tools both high-tech, low tech, and no tech that can be used in online and distance learning;
- In-depth knowledge to explore how digital tools can be embedded into distance and online learning in Zimbabwe taking cognizance of the Zimbabwe context, curriculum, and assessment system;
- An opportunity to collaborate with other team members using the communities of practice and district clusters to identify and introduce distance learning tools relevant for their context;

2. Initial orientation meeting

An initial orientation meeting was held on 3rd November 2021, with attendees participating both in person and remotely. Present at this meeting were representatives from UNESCO Southern Africa, Open Development & Education and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

The meeting was conducted in a timely manner, with great enthusiasm and engagement exhibited by all participants, as representatives from Open Development and Education undertook to gain a fuller understanding of exactly which objectives were being sought through the training. A plenary discussion and round of questions revealed a number of points for consideration regarding the training to be delivered.

2.1. Group experience

Some investigatory questions put to the MoPSE stakeholder group revealed a broad range of experience and understanding of research design and methodology, from those with full experience of research programming from design through to report writing, to those with a more limited involvement in data collection and analysis. The training catered for this broad range of abilities to ensure equity of learning outcomes.

2.2. Resource limitations

Several participants noted the issue of effective resourcing of research activities. Concerns were voiced that a lack of resource limited the validity and applicability of research undertaken, and that under-resourcing of ambitious projects risked reducing MoPSE's appetite for funding future research activities. The training must address the effective development of research questions which can provide useful evidence at smaller scale and in low-resource situations. These can in turn be used to leverage the support of research partner organisations, as well as the financial support of larger development partners, through the exhibition of an appetite for evidence-based policy planning. The training will also explore effective methods of compiling existing research data through the use of the free, open-source Zotero software.

3. List of outputs

The following outputs were produced:

1. Centre for Research and Integrated Development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe), UNESCO Regional Office for Southern

- Africa, & Open Development and Education. (2021). *Research Methods for Education* (RTT Evaluation No. 1). OpenDevEd.
<https://doi.org/10.53832/opendeved.0265>. Available from <https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/F6WS8X4W>. Available under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0. ([details](#))
2. Centre for Research and Integrated Development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe), UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, & Open Development and Education. (2022). *Summary Report: Evaluation of the Rapid Teacher Training* (RTT Evaluation No. 2). OpenDevEd.
<https://doi.org/10.53832/opendeved.0266>. Available from <https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/F6WS8X4W>. Available under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0. ([details](#))
 3. Centre for Research and Integrated Development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe), UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, & Open Development and Education. (2022). *Research Methods for Education: Reading List* (RTT Evaluation No. 3). OpenDevEd.
<https://doi.org/10.53832/opendeved.0267>. Available from <https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/MSK5WMMF>. Available under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0. ([details](#))
 4. Centre for Research and Integrated Development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe), UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, & Education, O. D. and. (2022). *Embracing digital skills: Now and tomorrow (Policy Brief)* (RTT Evaluation No. 4). OpenDevEd.
<https://doi.org/10.53832/opendeved.0280>. Available from <https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/EVRRJE7P>. Available under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0. ([details](#))
 5. Centre for Research and Integrated Development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe), UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, & Open Development and Education. (2022). *Embracing digital skills: Now and tomorrow (infographic)* (RTT Evaluation No. 5). OpenDevEd.
<https://doi.org/10.53832/opendeved.0281>. Available from <https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/F9SADN3Z>. Available under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0. ([details](#))

4. Training plan

From November 2021, up to June 2022, a total of about 10 sessions were held, with durations typically ranging from full and half-day workshops to 1–2 hours catch-up sessions. At the request of UNESCO, the initial plan of five separate two-hour workshops was changed to a condensed, one and a half day workshop. However, due to unforeseen delays and iterations to the training program, the activity took longer than anticipated.

A typical training session plan was as follows:

Day 1 — Session 1 (afternoon)

- Introduction — Research & evidence-based policymaking
- Collecting and evaluating prior research in Zotero
- Designing research

Day 2 — Session 2 (morning)

- Collecting data
- Analysing data
- Analysis of teacher data (Part 1)

Day 2 — Session 3 (afternoon)

- Analysis of teacher data (Part 2)

5. Content of the sessions

5.1. Research methods

We started with research methods. The materials for the research methods are available ([↑Research Methods for Education](#)). We also produced a reading list ([↑Research Methods for Education: Reading List](#)).

5.2. Evaluation of the RTT

We reviewed and analysed the data from the summary reports and discussed challenges. Given that the entire set of primary data was not available for analysis, we partially relied on the summary reports from the facilitators to provide us with insights into how the trainees perceived the entire exercise. The reports also gave

recommendations that would give direction on future training, which we drew upon in our recommendations.

We collaboratively wrote the report, available as [↑Summary Report: Evaluation of the Rapid Teacher Training](#). A policy brief was produced ([↑Embracing Digital Skills: Now and tomorrow, policy Brief](#)). Finally, an infographic was developed ([↑Embracing Digital Skills: Now and tomorrow, infographic](#)).

6. Challenges

The broad range of experience among the participants posed a minor challenge in their overall participation in the training sessions. However, this was addressed through specific interventions such as:

- The inclusion of some training on WhatsApp web, to ensure smooth communication through desktop-based interactions during sessions. Overall, the WhatsApp group was quite successful and was adapted by ministry officials to coordinate and collaborate on other training events.
- The introduction of Zotero as a tool to help participants collect, organize, annotate, cite and share research.

Future training should carefully look at such challenges and determine how to mitigate them.

7. Outlook

An important next step would be to undertake a concrete research project, from beginning to end. There are several options for where such research projects could focus. For example, a research project could on current policy implementation challenges in Zimbabwe, such as school feeding programmes, teacher professional development, as well as utilisation of low-tech skills.

During the training, it became apparent that many teachers in Zimbabwe may have a low-cost KaiOS smartphone (Kambudzi Smart 4G). This needs to be explored further to determine how many teachers have access to this low-cost phone. If a fair proportion of the teachers turn out to have access to this phone, then research could explore how the phone could be integrated into future training, as well as school management. Research could also explore how access to these low-cost phones could be increased. Further, as a cutting-edge project, the research project could also explore the use of automated messaging via WhatsApp, including the use of chatbots.

Alongside research on policy implementation issues, we also recommend undertaking reflexive (action) research on how to undertake professional development. This could initially focus on undertaking professional development within the research team, but could eventually broaden to undertake professional development within the ministry as a whole.

8. Bibliography

This bibliography is available digitally in our evidence library at <https://docs.opendeved.net/lib/3JMFQDPD>

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