

EU Action 'Resilience to COVID-19 through Digitalisation' (RESICODI)

Digital Solutions for Education in Africa

Examples of Projects Supported by the BACKUP Initiative's Innovative Funding Mechanism



Implemented by



The Action "Resilience to COVID-19 through Digitalisation" (RESICODI) is co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is jointly implemented by Enabel and GIZ (Team Europe Approach).

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Context of this Publication

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important it is to foster a forward-looking digitalisation of the education sector – ensuring the inclusion of children, young people, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders within and outside of the education sector. Key players to build such inclusive societies are civil society actors and national ministries. The civil society’s proximity to local structures but also to overarching national and regional processes creates a special role. Ministries on the other hand can directly promote the integration of digital technologies into education through policy decisions and financial support. Ministries can also support the training of teachers in digital skills and promote and scale innovative digital education initiatives. Both groups of actors can take measures to ensure that digital technologies are inclusive and accessible to all student beneficiaries, and that data protection and cyber security are ensured. There is therefore great potential in close collaboration of civil society and government entities when it comes to a sustainable digital transformation of the education sector.

This publication provides an overview of the 19 implemented projects carried out by actors from civil society and education ministries supported by the BACKUP Initiative under the ‘Resilience to COVID-19 through Digitalisation’ (RESICODI) Action. The first projects got under way in 2021 in Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, and Zambia, with further projects rolled out in 2022 and 2023 in Botswana, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, and Namibia. In addition, there was also one regional civil society project operating in seven partner countries of the BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action. The RESICODI Action ended its implementation period in October 2023.



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Partner Countries under
the RESICODI Action

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1. Overview

of the EU Action 'RESICODI'

Resilience through digitalisation

In April 2020, the European Commission announced a global COVID-19 response for the European Union (EU). Contributing towards this response, the EU Action 'Resilience to COVID-19 through Digitalisation' (RESICODI) aimed to mitigate the socio-economic challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The RESICODI Action was funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and was jointly implemented through a Team Europe approach by Enabel, focusing on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and health, and by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), focusing on basic education.



EU: EUR 10.4 million

BMZ: EUR 1.1 million

Total volume of the RESICODI Action: EUR 11.5 million

Duration: November 2020 to April 2024

Implementing Partner: Enabel and GIZ



EU: EUR 5 million

BMZ: EUR 1.1 million

Volume of the BACKUP Initiative: EUR 6.1 million

Introducing the BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action | BMZ's contribution to the RESICODI Action was delivered by the German BACKUP Initiative – Education in Africa (BACKUP Initiative), implemented by GIZ. Under a previous framework and since 2011, the BACKUP Initiative has provided African partner countries with support in the basic education sector via a well-established funding mechanism that supports ministries, national civil society organisations (CSOs) and regional networks. This mechanism was evaluated with outstanding results in an independent evaluation conducted in 2022. With the advent of socio-economic cutbacks in the education sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus of the Initiative has shifted to improving the continuity and quality of basic education through digital means.

Supporting eight African partner countries | The BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action supported eight African partner countries (Botswana, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, and Zambia) to promote and use digital solutions in education through its innovative and demand-based funding mechanism. To ensure alignment with national processes and priorities in education and digitalisation strategies, the BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action offered the opportunity to African partners to implement projects based exclusively on their needs.

2. Key Figures

8 African partner countries:

Botswana, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, and Zambia.

19 Projects

(5 projects Ministries and 14 Civil society organisations) were supported, reaching more than **3.5 million learners and educational professionals** overall.

49 digital solutions

A total of **49** digital solutions have been developed. Examples are teacher trainings, strategy papers in inclusive digital education, radio and TV lessons, phone-based tutoring, and platform development for digital education material.

500.000 learners and education professionals

More than **500.000** learners and **education professionals** have taken part in measures to improve digital skills. Through training for teachers, these newly acquired skills will be anchored in the education system, preparing more and more children and young adults for the digital future.

8 regional exchange events

were used by Ministries and civil society organisations to share lessons learned and to create a network.

3. *Setting the Scene*

Education systems in crisis | Education systems often turn out to be unprepared and vulnerable in the face of crises – be it the sudden arrival of refugee children or the need to pivot to remote learning in the face of a global pandemic. Threatening the continuity and quality of basic education around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic not only proved to be a global health challenge but also resulted in major socio-economic disruption.

For instance, the state of global education – a driving force for social change and sustainable development – deteriorated dramatically as a result of pandemic-related school closures. In April 2020, during the first peak of the pandemic, these closures affected some 1.5 billion pupils in 191 countries, over 90% of pupils worldwide. The education systems hit the hardest by interruptions to teaching are those that are least robust and resilient. Already weakened education systems often were unable to adequately substitute the months of school closures, resulting in the absence of continuous basic education.

Previous epidemics, such as the Ebola outbreaks in Africa, have already shown a common issue: even when schools reopen, many pupils do not return to class. This is a concern because continuous and quality basic education is key to development. The better the education children and young people receive, the more likely it is that they will have a positive impact on societal development through jobs or political participation. Unless these different issues are addressed, interruptions to teaching and learning will further exacerbate the pandemic's negative effects, risking they are felt for decades to come.


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Countering setbacks with digital solutions | The pandemic caused a rapid decline in meeting the global commitments set towards inclusive and equitable quality education under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. To counteract these setbacks, digital solutions and technologies have been implemented worldwide. On the African continent, there is great potential to further leverage digital technologies to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. However, several challenges have so far hindered the widespread adoption of digital solutions in basic education. These include a lack of affordable internet access, limited digital skills, the divide between urban and rural areas, and gender barriers. This is where the BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action came in. By working with CSOs and national ministries, the development of a digital infrastructure and digital skills training for teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders was promoted in different project settings.



“The role of CSOs, especially coalitions like REFAC, is vital in representing the best interest of the most marginalized, voiceless, or most at risk of exclusion segment of the Rwandan society and in our case children generally and most vulnerable groups of children in particular. REFAC contributes a great deal in raising awareness of quality and inclusive education as a right to all and advocate for changes in policy and practice.”

Benson Rukabu,
Rwanda Education For All Coalition
(REFAC)

4. The BACKUP Initiative and its Threefold Approach



The BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action provided services in three areas: regional and global networking support, technical and financial advice, and financial support.

Networking Support | The BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action has connected key education players from its eight partner countries, forming a network on digital solutions in the basic education sector. In this network, experiences and learnings were shared in an open exchange, inspiring both hands-on project ideas, but also a regional connection to find common solutions for global challenges. Also, through the BACKUP Initiative's connection with international experts, the eight partner countries benefited from exchanging with international partners on the latest global developments. Furthermore, together with Enabel, GIZ's BACKUP Initiative operated a cross-sectoral network for peer-to-peer exchange and joint learning on digital solutions in basic education, TVET, and health services in the light of COVID-19.

Technical and Financial Advice | The BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action's technical and financial advice has gone far beyond administrative funding procedures. For instance, eligible applicants were able to submit a short proposal for a project idea, which was then jointly developed into a set of specific activities through a thorough consultation process. Where required, the project team advised partners before and during project implementation, specifically on cross-cutting themes such as gender equality. It also provided the partners with tailored advice on budget planning and financial management before and during project implementation.

Financial Support | Partners at the country or regional level who applied for financial support were awarded grants of up to EUR 100,000.



Connecting the public and private sectors | Cooperation with the private sector was an important component of the BACKUP Initiative under the RESICODI Action and was therefore considered throughout the entire consultation process. The project team supported partners not only to integrate private sector actors into project implementation but also to use and expand existing links between the public and private sectors. In this way, innovative approaches enabling quick and targeted responses to the COVID-19 pandemic were identified and put into practice.



“CSEC gives voice to the segments of society by advocating for change and raising awareness and making key contribution to development of education and brings about social change through social account ability, community empowerment, and ensuring good governance. What is unique is the membership that it possesses and their diversity abilities. The members provide a value in our lobby and advocacy agenda in the education sector.”

Benedicto Kondowe,
Civil Society Education Coalition
(CSEC)

5. Cooperation with Civil Society and Ministries

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are key partners for international development cooperation as they represent citizens and their needs and have an in-depth knowledge of local processes. Civil society is capable of leading great movements for change, such as for civil rights, gender equality, and other social justice issues.

This is a crucial factor when it comes to influencing social change outside of the family (private sphere), the market (private sector), and the government (public sector). The digital sphere is no exception to the rule. The influence and critical friend role of civil society is equally important for successful digital basic education ecosystems. For instance, the independent perspective and experience of NGOs, teachers' unions, and parents' associations can help to identify key challenges for digital transformation in education and to highlight and advocate for inclusivity. Solutions for digital basic education can hence be developed targeted to each country and specific context.

As equally important actors, Ministries play an important role in the digital transformation of the education sector, as they are responsible for education policies and systems in many countries. They can promote the integration of digital technologies into education planning through policy decisions and financial support. Ministries can also support the training of teachers in digital skills and promote and scale innovative digital education initiatives. In addition, ministries can take measures to ensure that digital technologies are inclusive and accessible to all students, and that data protection and cyber security are ensured.

Civil society organisations and ministries can work together and create synergies in the digital transformation of the education sector. CSOs, as key actors in civil society, can help address the needs and perspectives of students, teachers and educational institutions and develop innovative solutions. Ministries can promote the integration of digital technologies into education and strengthen collaboration with CSOs through policy decisions and financial support. Close collaboration, joint projects and partnerships can help to ensure that the needs of different stakeholders are taken into account and that digital technologies are successfully integrated into education.

The BACKUP Initiative has worked with African CSOs and ministries for more than ten years. Drawing on experience and relationships, it was possible to incorporate practical knowledge in the development of digital basic education systems and to adapt them to local circumstances, thus ensuring their sustainability.

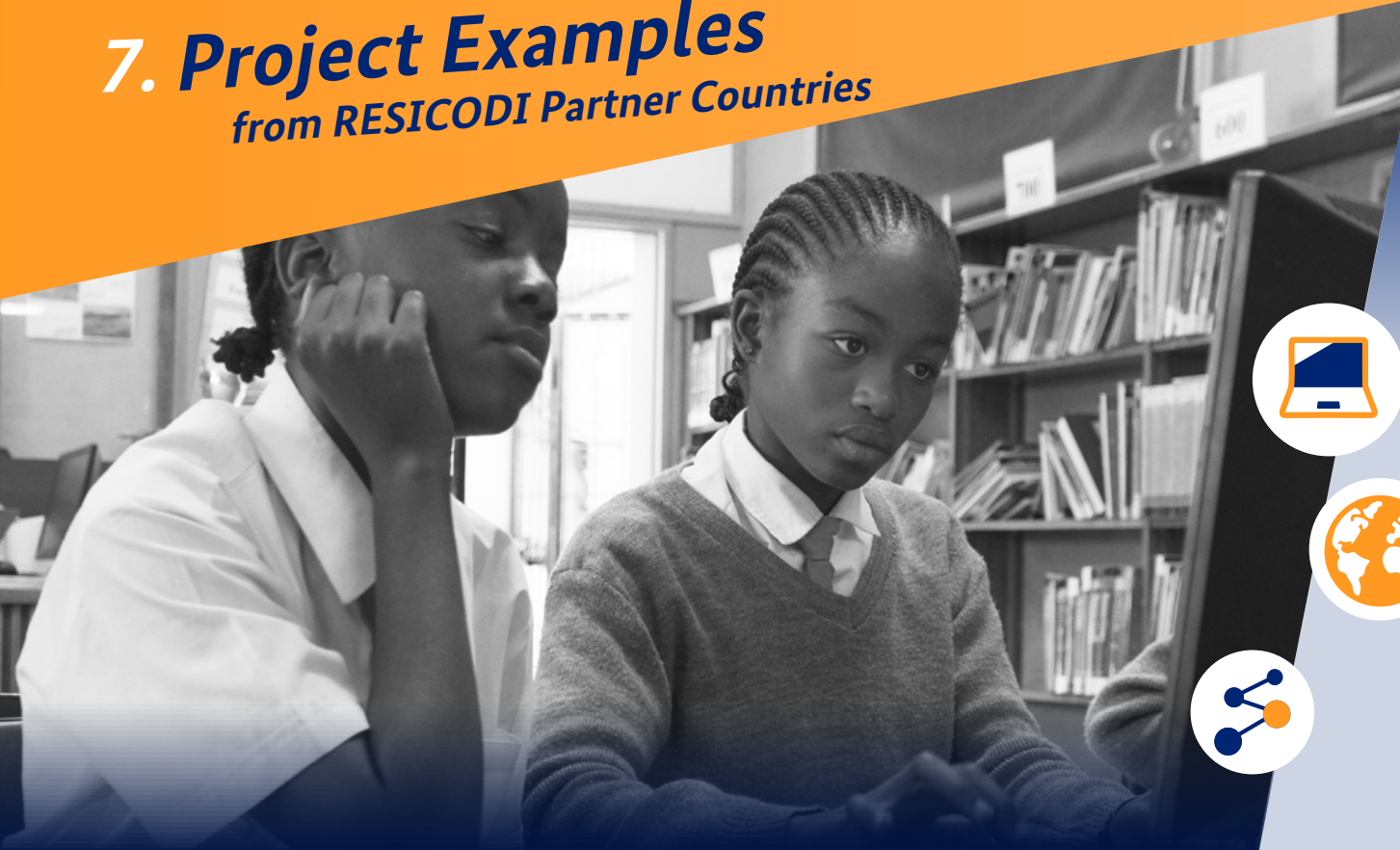


6. **BACKUP**
*Initiative's
Partner
Countries
under the
RESICODI
Action*



7. Project Examples

from RESICODI Partner Countries



This section outlines examples of projects which have been implemented by the partners of the BACKUP Initiative as part of the RESICODI Action. The ministry projects are introduced first, followed by the projects from civil society. The map represents the ministry projects.

7.1 Advancing Basic Education through Ministry Projects



Namibia P1

Making teachers, school managers and learners in Namibia fit for the digital age

In Namibia, the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden necessity for moving towards online teaching presented many challenges for the schools. This situation highlighted the necessity for digital transformation to take place in the education sector. In recent years, the Government of Namibia has been actively engaged in making its schools, teachers and youth fit for the digital age. One key activity has been the upskilling of teachers, school managers and learners by providing them with digital literacy and 21st century skills trainings.

P3.1

3159

education professionals enrolled on the DSF platform

P3.2

3920

learners and 96 educators enrolled on the DSF platform

80

About school managers targeted for digital skills training

3214

learners and 96 educators active on the DSF platform



“Many teachers, old and young, embraced the opportunity to be trained and they make use of the platform and the tools that was available to them to bring technology into the classrooms.”

Zelda Mouton,

Acting Deputy Director at the Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

The Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture worked with the Digital Skills Foundation (DSF), which offers internationally recognised digital literacy courses via an online training platform. In a first project in 2022 (P3.1), 3159 teachers, Head of Departments and School Principals from all 14 regions in Namibia have been enrolled on the DSF platform. Via this tool, teachers could self-study different modules, for example on online safety, the effective use of educational technology or integrating digital tools in the classroom. 38 Master Trainers trained by the

DSF supported the education professionals in their learning journey. Based on the successful implementation, a second project has been implemented in 2023 (P3.2). This time, it focused on the training of School Principals and Head of Departments on digital literacy and change management. Furthermore, learners in secondary schools were included in the trainings to directly equip them with the digital skills necessary for thriving in today’s digitalised job markets and higher education. The project targeted about 96 educators (Ministry officials and school managers) and 3920 learners.

Rwanda P1

Equipping primary teachers in Rwanda with digital literacy and 21st century teaching skills

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent school closures have revealed the need to accelerate digital transformation in Rwanda's education system. While the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) has implemented different measures to enable remote learning, teachers have been facing challenges linked to digital teaching. The interventions implemented to enhance teachers' digital skills are part of a broader effort to transform Rwanda into a globally competitive knowledge-based economy by 2024 as described in Rwanda's Smart Rwanda Master Plan.

Project implemented in this area

Kigali

3092 primary teachers enrolled on the DSF platform

30 Master Trainers trained

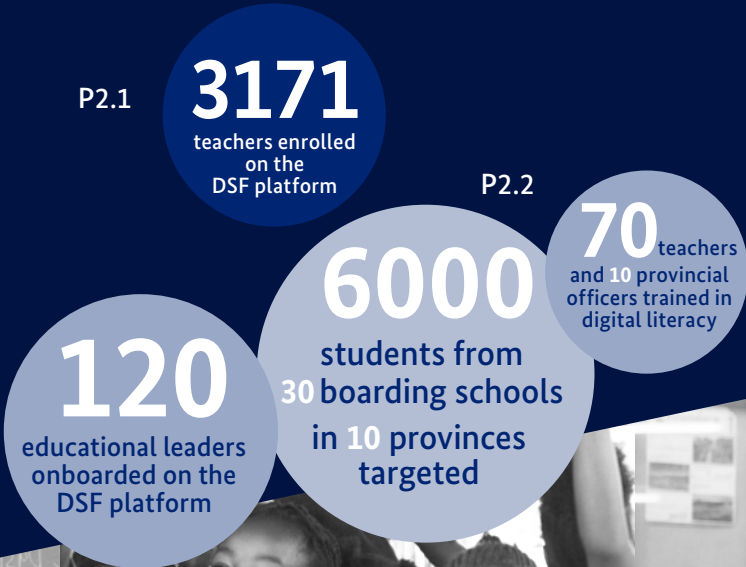
In order to help primary teachers acquire the digital skills necessary for remote teaching, REB worked with the Digital Skills Foundation (DSF). The DSF offers digital literacy trainings via an online platform and uses the Training of Trainers method. Thus, in a first step, 30 Master Trainers received training enabling them to facilitate the subsequent onboarding and training of 3092 primary teachers.

Via the DSF platform, the teachers could complete different courses on digital literacy, 21st century teaching and learning as well as teachers' well-being. The acquired knowledge will help the teachers to master challenges related to remote teaching and to thrive in a digital society.

Zambia P1

Digital capacity-building for teachers, students and educational leaders

Considering challenges like those presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the general need for digital skills in today's digitalised economies and societies, the SMART Zambia Institute (e-Government Division) has seen the need for enhancing digital skills among teachers, students, and educational leaders.



To provide teachers, students and educational leaders with digital literacy and 21st century teaching and learning skills, the SMART Zambia Institute has worked with the Digital Skills Foundation (DSF). A first project carried out jointly in 2022 targeted the development of digital and digital pedagogy skills among basic education teachers (P2.1). Via a Training of Trainers approach, which involved the training of 31/32 Master Trainers from e-Government Division and teaching staff, 3171 teachers were enrolled on the DSF platform. The platform offers the opportunity to complete different courses on digital literacy, 21st century teaching and learning and teachers' well-being. The aim was to

enable teachers to conduct online lessons and to better harness digital devices to enhance learning and teaching practices, benefiting both teachers and students.

In the follow-up project in 2023, the focus was shifted towards the provision of digital skills directly for students as well as educational leaders, as digital skills are seen as central for employability (P2.2). 70 teachers and 10 provincial officers were trained in digital literacy and 21st century skills, enabling them to act as facilitators for the 6000 students from 30 boarding schools targeted by digital literacy courses.

7. Project Examples

from RESICODI Partner Countries



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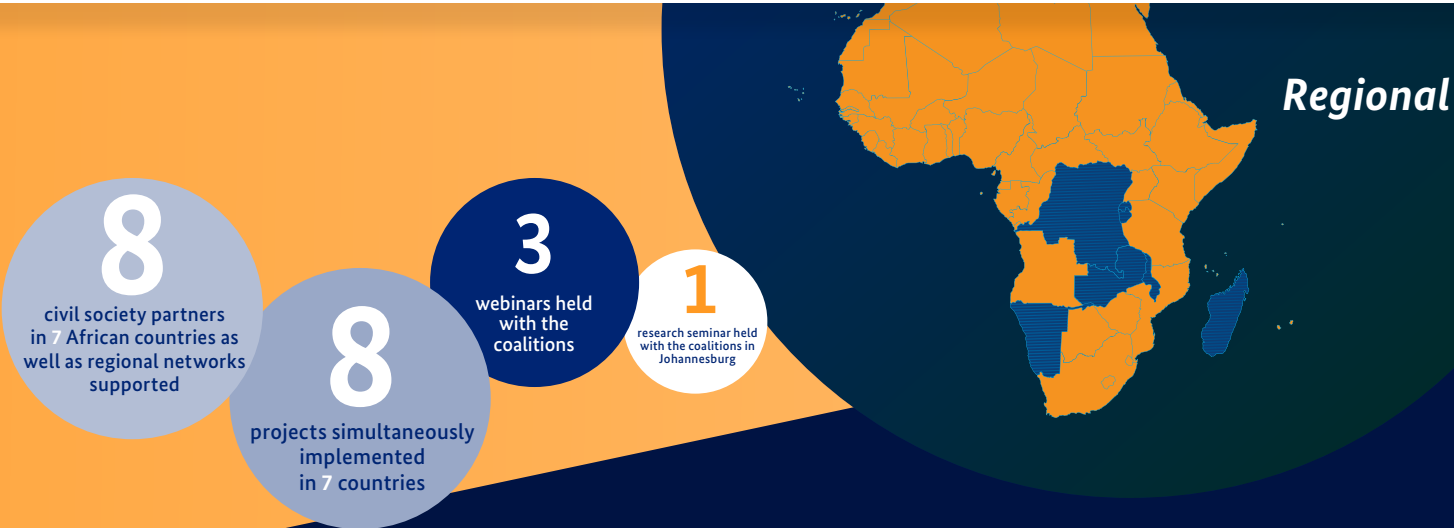
7.2 Advancing Basic Education through Civil Society Projects



Regional

GCE: Promoting e-learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on education revealed not only the importance of digital alternatives for delivering basic education, but also the fact that these alternatives are lacking in many countries. In response, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) worked with seven national civil society coalitions to promote inclusive e-learning for all students in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, and Zambia.



Assessing needs and advocating for inclusive digital solutions | At the beginning of 2021, GCE launched a study to assess the partner countries' needs regarding e-learning in schools. Based on the study's findings, GCE defined recommendations in the field of EdTech for each of the participating countries. These recommendations are derived from looking at different stakeholders such as governments, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), the private sector (especially network operators), and CSOs. Next to general suggestions on the basic education system itself, the recommendations include aspects of socioemotional and safety needs – particularly for girls, children with disabilities, and children

living in remote areas. To complement the study on a policy level, GCE developed recommendations and solutions for the advocacy work carried out by CSOs at national and regional levels.

Thanks to the project, national education coalitions were enabled to put the topic of EdTech on the agenda of their governments. Advocacy plans have been developed which consider each specific country context. In October 2023, multistakeholder meetings and campaign launches were organised that paved the way towards bridging the digital divide and ensuring access to inclusive digital solutions in the seven partner countries.

Botswana P1

Developing digital and project management skills with the Team Challenge Experience

The Botswana-based non-profit organisation Destination Imagination (DI) wants to prepare young learners for the future by teaching them vital life and career skills for the 21st century. With a blend of online and in-person training, the project called Team Challenge Experience (TCE) built a community of young adults equipped with the necessary digital skills to use online tools for organisation and project management.

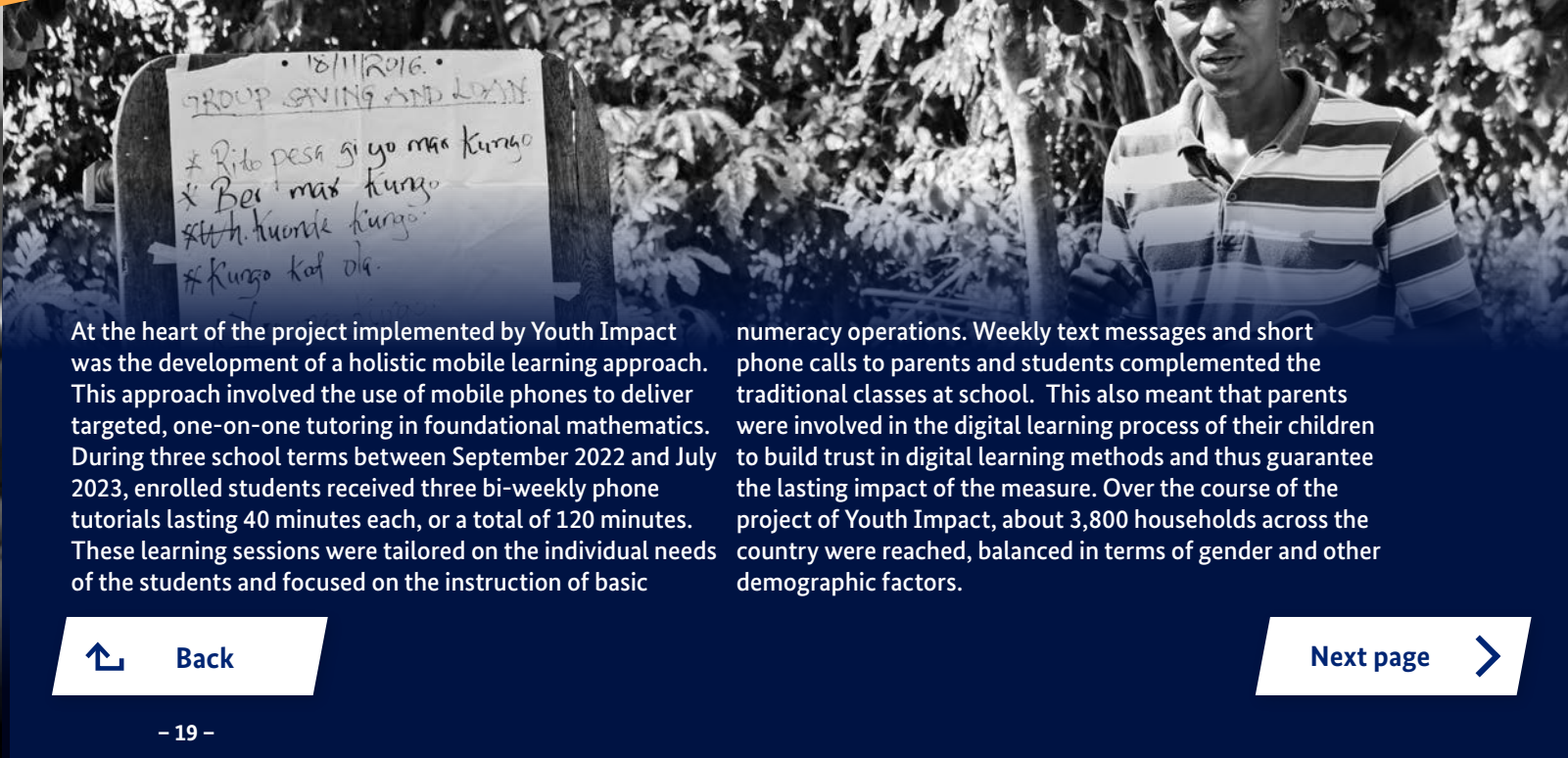
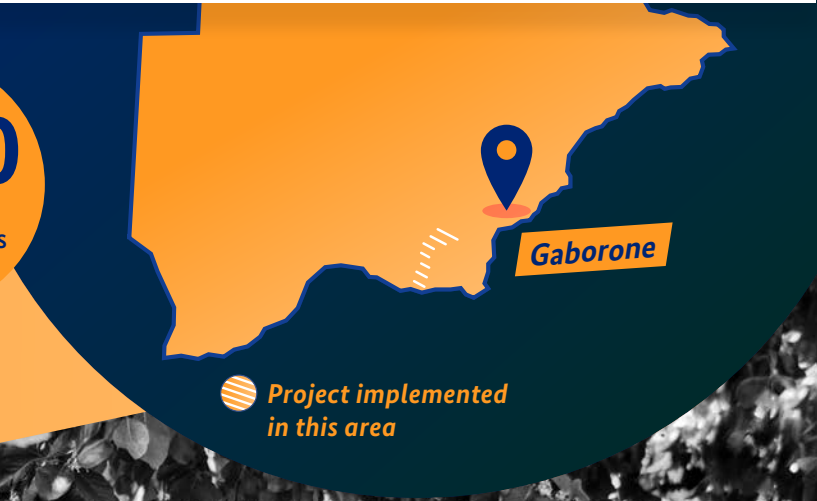
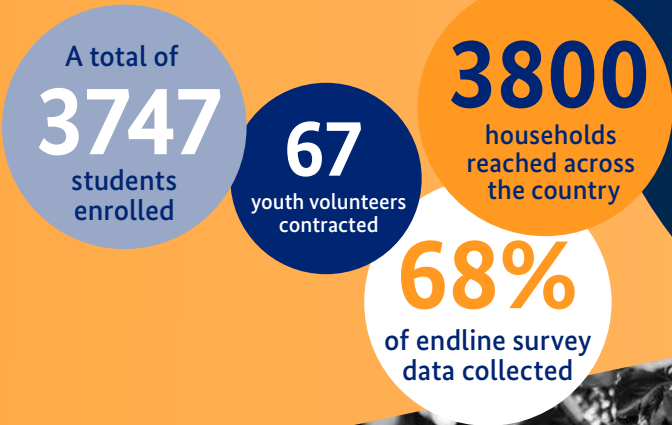


In a tournament, participants collaborated in groups on solving real-life, hands-on challenges and developed their skills by working with core curriculum content. To develop digital skills, participants worked on projects based on STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) and were provided with the necessary materials, internet data, and software. TCE facilitators received training and follow-up support to guide the students. The aim of Destination Imagination is to continue and expand the initiative to all regions in Botswana.

Botswana P2

Supporting students and parents with a Mobile Learning approach

The school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for digitalisation in basic education in Botswana. In response to that, the NGO Youth Impact collaborated with the national Ministry of Basic Education to create a mobile learning strategy. The overall aim was to impart knowledge on effective digital teaching to build improved and resilient education systems for the next generations.



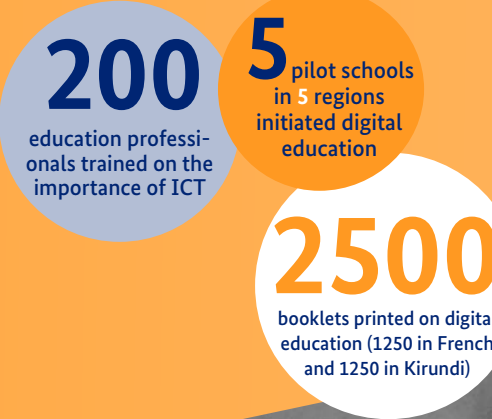
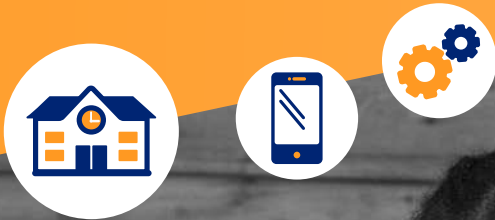
At the heart of the project implemented by Youth Impact was the development of a holistic mobile learning approach. This approach involved the use of mobile phones to deliver targeted, one-on-one tutoring in foundational mathematics. During three school terms between September 2022 and July 2023, enrolled students received three bi-weekly phone tutorials lasting 40 minutes each, or a total of 120 minutes. These learning sessions were tailored on the individual needs of the students and focused on the instruction of basic

numeracy operations. Weekly text messages and short phone calls to parents and students complemented the traditional classes at school. This also meant that parents were involved in the digital learning process of their children to build trust in digital learning methods and thus guarantee the lasting impact of the measure. Over the course of the project of Youth Impact, about 3,800 households across the country were reached, balanced in terms of gender and other demographic factors.

Burundi

TV, radio, and beyond: promoting inclusive digital basic education

In an increasingly digital world, teachers need to be familiar with the opportunities of digital methods for teaching and learning, and they must also have access to necessary hardware and internet. The broader education community, including teachers, is called upon to support children from the most marginalised groups to participate in learning through digital alternatives and to encourage their re-enrolment in schools. Even though Burundi had not experienced any pandemic-related lockdowns or school closures, and the need to move the delivery of classes online was less acute, educational TV and radio programmes in the country still bore a huge potential for continuing basic education in times of crisis.



The project carried out by Burundi's Coalition Pour l'Education Pour Tous (BAFASHEBIGE) promoted the use of sustainable digital solutions in schools across the country. The coalition conducted research on digital basic education in Burundi to explore potentials of different digital outlets (e.g. TV or radio) for distance learning. Based on the findings, the CSO organised trainings and awareness-raising events for key actors in the education sector, such as for



parents' associations, teachers, administrative and educational authorities, ministerial officials, and media representatives in cooperation with the national government. To bring the topic of digital basic education directly into schools, 15 pilot schools received IT equipment and teacher training. An "awareness caravan" was organised with an inter-school poetry slam and a drawing competition on the topic of digital basic education.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Strengthening resilience of the basic education system through digital technology

Schools in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) were closed for more than six months in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this, the government introduced digital learning alternatives via internet, radio, and TV-based sources. Despite these efforts, not all children were able to benefit from digital opportunities.



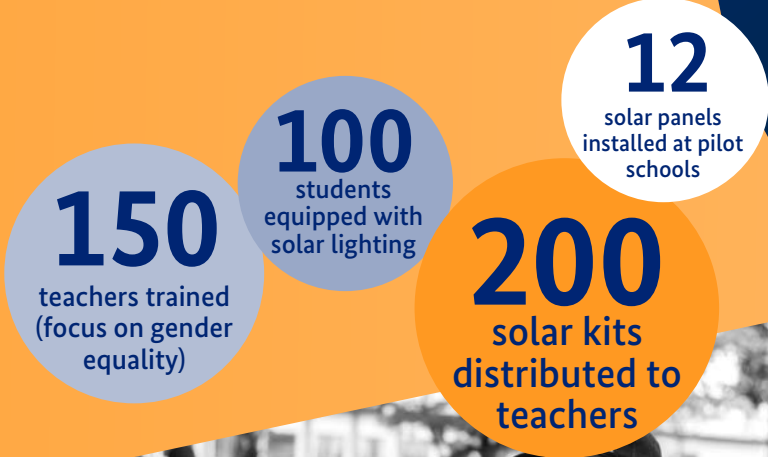
The national education coalition Coalition Nationale de l'Education Pour Tous (CONEPT-RDC) wanted to harness digital technology to strengthen the resilience and quality of DRC's basic education system during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. In the scope of the project, the coalition closely interacted with civil society, teachers, parents, and students on the topic of quality and continuity of teaching and learning. This was supported via digital tools, such as a school kit containing digitised school and

exercise books, audio and video capsules, and documentation possibilities for teachers and education inspectors. To make these pilot kits applicable in everyday practice, they were accompanied by a training for teachers and inspectors and a sensitisation campaign around their benefits. Since tools are only valuable to the extent that they are embedded in a suitable framework, close cooperation with the national Ministry of Education has been key for the project.

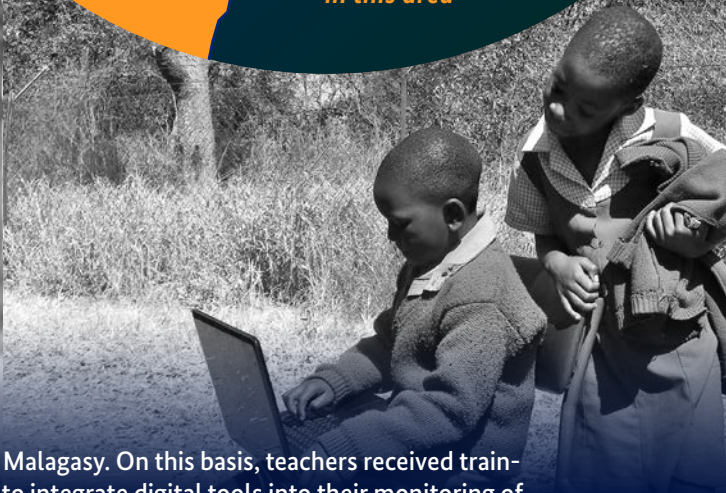
Madagascar P1

Amplifying the voice of civil society towards the promotion of digital learning

In 2020, schools in Madagascar were closed for five months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This disrupted the learning of more than seven million children. Since then, there have been repeated, yet shorter school closures. Due to the lack of access to telephone and internet services in some regions, education provision was cut off completely at times, leading to setbacks especially in basic education.



The Malagasy national education coalition Coalition Nationale Malgache pour l'Education pour Tous, CONAMEPT introduced the use of digital tools in the face of the pandemic. Under the RESICODI project, the coalition further strengthened this resilience by amplifying the voice of civil society actors. Building on a needs assessment, CONAMEPT implemented a project on the strengthening of digital competencies at several target groups. In cooperation with the national ministry, the coalition developed pedagogy guidelines for teachers on the use of digital tools (e.g. TV, radio) in



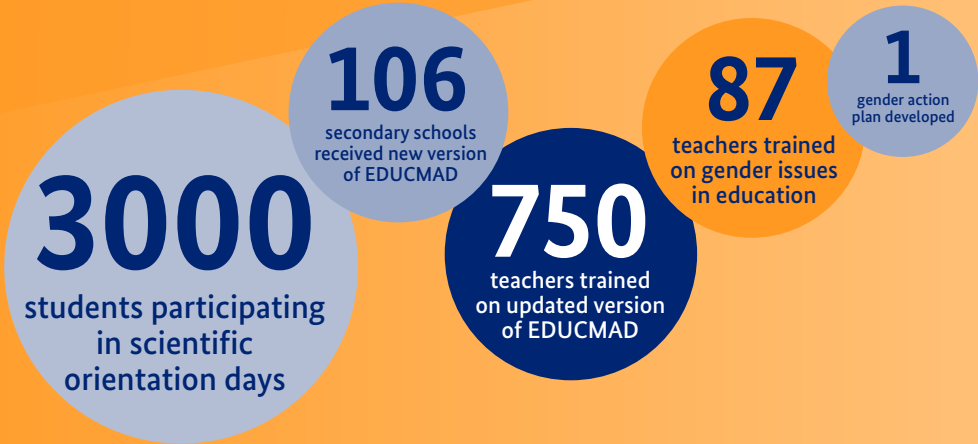
French and Malagasy. On this basis, teachers received training on how to integrate digital tools into their monitoring of students' learning progress. Children, parents, and teachers from the project's pilot schools were equipped with digital school kits and parents were provided with solar panels to charge devices for children living in suburban areas. These steps were complemented by a dialogue forum on the role of women in accompanying their children's learning at home.

Madagascar P2

Boosting science education in Madagascar by harnessing digital transformation

The school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic have raised awareness of the urgent need to integrate digital technology into education in Madagascar. However, a lack of electricity, internet connectivity, and digital infrastructure largely complicated the implementation of remote learning. The Association pour la Création de Centres d'Education Scientifique à Madagascar Axés sur le Développement (ACCESMAD) develops and improves science education in Madagascar by harnessing digital transformation.

The project EDUCMAD+ 2024, cofinanced by the French Agence Française de Développement (AFD), is being implemented by ACCESMAD in three phases from 2018 until 2027. During the RESICODI project, which has taken place in the second year of phase two, several measures have helped pave the way towards higher quality science and technology education in Madagascar.



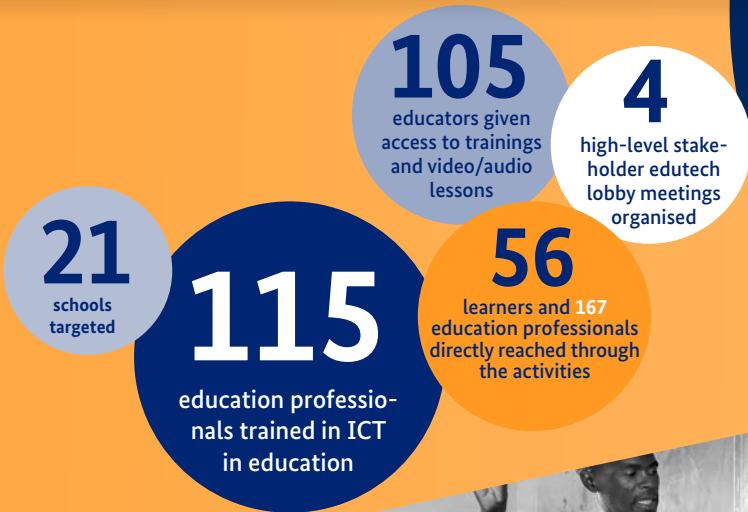
To enhance the use of digital solutions in the education sector, ACCESMAD created the multimedia platform EDUCMAD which is continuously being extended with new learning content. With funding from RESICODI under the BACKUP Initiative, 106 partner schools of the EDUCMAD project received the new version of the platform and 750 teachers were trained on this updated EDUCMAD. 25 Wi-Fi boxes were distributed in 25 cities where partner schools are situated, and IT managers were trained on remote

server updates. One flagship action has also been the five scientific orientation days covering topics from the history of mathematics to scientific experiments. These orientation days have been organised in Antananarivo and in four other regions of Madagascar in which more than 3000 students have participated. In total, ACCESMAD has taken measures in 28 school districts (CISCO) and in 14 regional education authorities (DREN).

Malawi

Raising awareness for digital basic education in a COVID-19 context

The COVID-19 pandemic caused schools in Malawi to be closed for seven months. To ensure continuous learning, the government of Malawi provided primary- and secondary-level education online, on the radio, and on television. However, the low level of access to these types of media has proven to be a major challenge, with disadvantaged children particularly impacted. In addition, teachers in Malawi were not yet sufficiently trained on the use of learning technology alternatives and they have lacked access to online resources to help students catch-up on work.



To address these issues, Malawi's Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC) worked to promote digital basic education in the country. The implemented project created digital learning content and guidelines on the use of multimedia technologies in class. CSEC offered digital media training for teachers and school principals and also for relevant media staff, such as radio executives. In terms of sustainability, an online learning platform for teachers was created offering e-resources like e-curriculums, textbooks, recorded lessons, quizzes and tests published on the CSEC website (www.csecmalawi.org). On the societal level, the project delivered awareness-raising campaigns on radio and

television which aimed to inform the public about the importance of online teaching methods. This activity was continued through a follow-up measure in 2023. The cyclone in Malawi further highlighted the importance of digital teaching and learning methods for the protection of education systems. The activities focused on strengthening civil society participation and influence in policy spaces in inclusive digital transformation of the education sector in Malawi. For that, CSEC engaged with strategic stakeholders and raised awareness about the importance of digital education for government, the private sector, development partners and non-governmental organisations.

Namibia P2

Creating a framework for training teachers in digital solutions

Namibia closed its schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and switched to remote learning. This transition highlighted a range of issues in delivering the digital transformation. In basic education, one key factor is the vital role played by digitally skilled teachers in the successful implementation of digital solutions.

623

teachers trained
countrywide in the
use of ICT

780

copies of a training
manual printed and
made available to
the trainees

Windhoek



The Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU) protects the rights of teachers in the country and supports their professional development. NANTU in its responsive plan to COVID-19, has prioritised the need to provide capacity building to its members in terms of Information Technology (IT), and training to upskill and reskill teachers in IT. Addressing the vital role teachers play in digital transformation, NANTU worked on a teacher training project that incorporated digital teaching and learning methods. Over a period of five months, teachers were trained in multiple cohorts on topics related to strengthening digital solutions in the Namibian basic education sector. To ensure

sustainability, the Union established a Resource Centre to grant teachers access to teaching and learning materials online.

Following the successful completion of the first project, NANTU continued its work with a follow-up project in 2023, which offered advanced courses for teachers to consolidate the digital skills they had acquired in the first ICT training sessions. In addition, a stakeholder meeting was organised in collaboration with the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) to promote coherent policy decisions on digitalisation in education in Namibia.

Rwanda P2

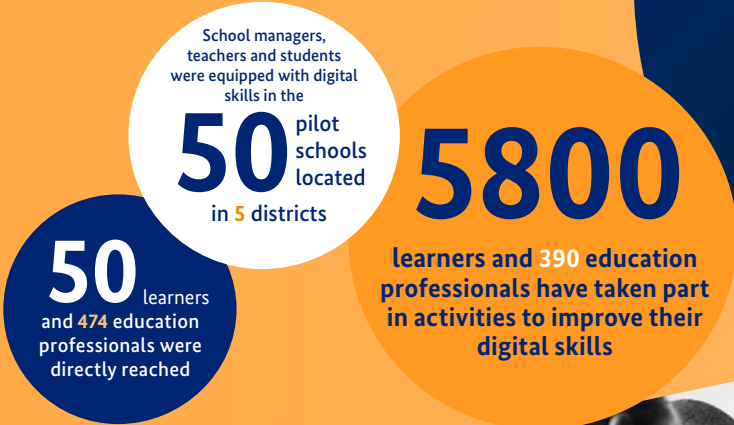
Working towards inclusive basic digital education

When the COVID-19 pandemic led to Rwanda’s schools being closed for months, the country’s government took to delivering classes online, on TV, and on radio to try to foster the continuity of education for school pupils. The Rwanda Education For All Coalition (REFAC) is an alliance of civil society organisations seeking to ensure effective and free quality education for all. Considering the increasing role of digitalisation in basic education, REFAC built the capacities of its members and stakeholders, so they are equipped to engage in advocacy work on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education strategies. This is intended to foster greater inclusiveness and the consideration of society’s most vulnerable groups in digital basic education policies.



“This work, it made the coalition stronger. It also built the partnership, also with the government coalitions. That was a very key and important success to us.”

Benson Rukabu,
National Coordinator Rwanda Education for All Coalition (REFAC)



Project implemented in this area

Kigali



In the first RESICODI project, REFAC offered capacity training for teachers, school managers, and policymakers in the field of emerging technologies and media tools. To move digital basic education forward in Rwanda, REFAC was conducting two studies, one to assess existing policy guidelines on ICT in education and the other to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector. Based on these studies, the Ministry of Education committed to review and adapt the learning strategies to include the adoption of digital teaching approaches.



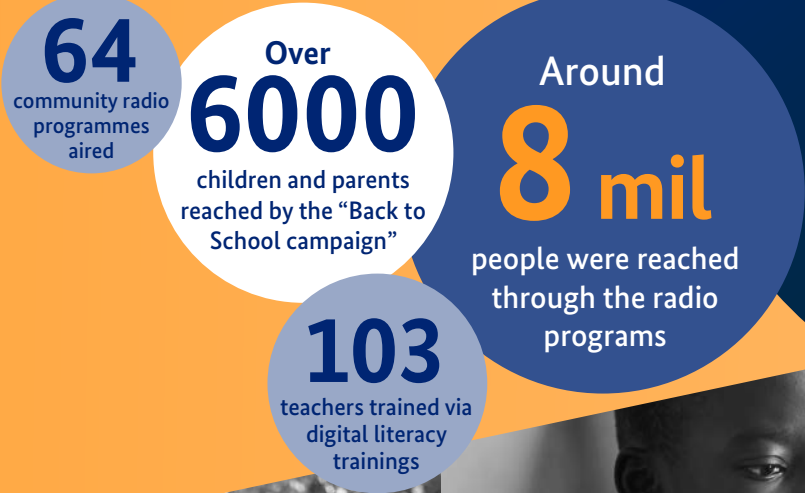
Sharing knowledge and exchanging experiences were key learning activities. Learning visits to the national education coalitions of Burundi and Zambia were also conducted.

A follow-up RESICODI project in 2023 has allowed REFAC to upgrade the activities successfully implemented in the first project phase. The documentation, dissemination, and popularisation of the ICT policy in education were at centre of this second phase, as well as the continued advocacy of the inclusion of digital technologies in education within the public.

Zambia P2

Promoting digital learning for equitable and good-quality basic education

In 2020, Zambia’s first cases of COVID-19 emerged, resulting in school closures in the country. The civil society organisation Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC) actively participates in national processes and debates on education with the aim of promoting inclusive and quality basic education. For this project, ZANEC carried out a study which provided insights into key factors limiting distance learning, especially for children from households with poor digital literacy.



ZANEC further promoted radio instruction services nationwide by teaming up with radio stations to allocate free airtime to promote remote learning. In line with this, 119 Radio Listener clubs were established in schools. ZANEC was also running a radio and bus campaign to encourage early school dropouts, mainly girls and learners with

special education needs, to go back to school and complete their basic educational pathways. Teachers and parents were specifically targeted by the campaign with the aim to strengthen their digital skills and thus growing the skills of the educators who will shape Zambia’s future.



8. Outlook

Extending beyond the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic, basic education and digitalisation will not lose their relevance for social participation. The new BMZ-commissioned programme GenerationDigital! builds on the success of the RESICODI Action and supports African partners in efforts to promote digital skills among children and youth. GenerationDigital! leverages the proven funding mechanism of the BACKUP Initiative to support innovative ideas in Africa proposed by partners from civil society or ministries. Moreover, the programme fosters regional exchange and knowledge transfer between stakeholders on digital education.

“We would like to see every child having access to whether it’s a desktop or a laptop, to have access to e-content and to be able to be taught like any other child in any other country through online learning methods.”

Zelda Mouton,
Acting Deputy Director at the Namibian Ministry
of Education, Arts and Culture



For more information on the new project, please consult the **GenerationDigital!** webpage.



9. *Interesting Facts and Figures*

For **2024**, the African Union has declared education as its theme of the year. ↗

60.6% was the internet coverage in Rwanda at the end of 2022. ↗

From 2019 to 2022 the percentage of the African population with access to broadband internet increased from **26** to **36%**. ↗

With over **1000** languages, Africa is home to approximately one-third of the world's languages. ↗

170 billion USD were added in economic value by the mobile industry the Sub-Saharan African economy in 2023, that is **8.1%** of the GDP. ↗

There are over **300** different languages in the RESICODI partner countries. ↗

There is an average of **58** pupils per teacher at primary level, in sub-Saharan Africa. **43** At secondary level, there are pupils per teacher. ↗

Around **60%** of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is under the age of **25**, making it by far the youngest region in the world. ↗

In Sub-Saharan Africa at **33%**, mobile internet penetration is highest in Southern Africa, **17%** compared to **17%** in Central Africa and up to **27%** in West Africa. ↗

A **9%** increase in peak internet traffic took place in Africa due to COVID-19. ↗

71% of East African countries' energy requirements are covered by renewable sources. ↗

68% of respondents in **34** African countries listen to the radio at least a few times a week on average, making radio the most popular mass medium on the continent. ↗

10. Did you know?

?

... that every additional year that a girl goes to school leads to an average 10 to 20% higher income later on?

Education has a positive impact on income and children's health, also child mortality would be halved if all girls in developing and emerging countries completed secondary school. ➤

?

... that the EU has a framework called "DigComp"?

It is the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens that provides a common understanding of what digital competence is. ➤

?

... that the first smartphone "made in Africa" was produced in Rwanda in 2019?

The "Mara Phone" is the first mobile phone to be manufactured on the African continent, in a new factory in Rwanda. ➤

?

... that the projected demand for teacher recruitment by 2030 in sub-Saharan Africa will account for 178% of the region's teaching workforce in 2022?

The region will need to fill more new teaching positions as the population continues to grow and more young children reach school age. ➤

?

... that sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions with the most expensive mobile data connections in the world?

The average cost per gigabyte in sub-Saharan Africa is 4.47USD, with very large differences between countries. ➤

?

... that mobile phones are the most important means of payment in many African countries?

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digital and contactless payments in Africa as people have preferred mobile payments over cash to contain the spread of the virus. ➤

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