

How to Reach Students Without Internet: Key Recommendations

This is a living document, created by members of the Teaching Without Internet Alliance. Our aim is to share stories, strategies, and resources for those teaching in areas without wide adoption of internet or devices so as to further innovation in remote or unconnected places across the world. We are educators, teachers, parents, community leaders, and technologists with experience in responding to students who may be primarily offline. The following are our ongoing key recommendations evolving tangible, concrete examples whenever possible:



1. ENSURE YOUR STUDENTS ARE SAFE FIRST

Access parent or guardian contact information from admissions records. When enrolling their children, parents and guardians leave contact information at the school. Check with your school to get more information.

Contact the parents through SMS and calls to ensure the safety of their families right now; ask how the family is doing, whether they have access to water and soap, and what their availability of resources is inside the home.

Use WhatsApp groups to disseminate messages to parents, if possible.

- In Liberia, the Ministry of Health produced [this video](#) and disseminated to parents and families via mobile phone. (Can be shared in a WhatsApp or Telegram message.)

- Haqdarshak, an organization that helps citizens identify welfare programs in India, use [these messages](#).
- The World Health Organization has offered a [WhatsApp hotline](#). Use this information to reshare or offer to parents for more information about the virus.

Use SMS to deliver safety information to parents if WhatsApp, Telegram, or WeChat is not available,

- Teach For Nepal published [this post](#) on how they used messaging to communicate, deliver instruction, and provoke discussions with learners.
- Use [Twitter to broadcast messages](#) to parents through SMS.
- Use the [Twilio](#) tool for broadcasting information to parents.
- Use a tool like [TalkingPoints](#) if you find that you need messages translated into a different language.
- Many broadcast SMS tools exist in local contexts. Do some research about which ones might be free or very low cost for your country.
- [Here are some ways](#) to broadcast SMS from a Google Sheet or spreadsheet

Enquire about the students' health, sanitation, safety and food needs.

- Some students may be facing food security or sanitation needs in their communities; Your energy might be better spent helping to think through problems around hand-washing and food delivery to

ensure that basic needs are being met in your community.

- Other students may be worried about their safety in their home situations. It is important to get an understanding of each of your students' home environments to better understand how you can help.

2. LEVERAGE THE COMMUNITY TO HELP WITH LEARNING

Talk to local community leaders about who might be able to distribute educational materials — they may have other ideas, especially when movement is restricted in the community

- **In some contexts, police may be able to deliver content**, especially if they are the only people allowed to be on the streets.
- **Grocery shop owners could also help distribute** if they are delivering essential items

Does the community have a handwashing station?

While parents and students are in line to wash their hands, they could take educational materials (paper packets and a pen or stylo) from this distribution center.

Ensure that if devices are being shared they're being shared safely. Sometimes there is only one phone in a household. Ask parents and students what their technology situation is like and encourage them to clean the phone after any person uses it.

3. GET CREATIVE WITH TECHNOLOGY

Use social messaging platforms like WhatsApp or SMS to send mini-lessons and activities.

- If students are not yet fluent readers, start the lesson with a voice note or audio recording. This also helps parents who may not be fluent readers.
- Simple Education Foundation in India produced [this summary](#) of best practices for using WhatsApp for instruction.
- [Here is a folder of examples](#) we are creating to show how teachers are administering lessons through WhatsApp, other messaging apps, and SMS.
- [Here is a WhatsApp lesson planning template](#), a video explaining [how to use](#) the template, and a video showing [how to deliver](#) the lesson via messages on WhatsApp.

- [Here is an example](#) one teacher used on WhatsApp to set the objectives of the group.
- [Here is an example YouTube video](#) from the Madhi Foundation about using WhatsApp for instruction.
- Research what tools are available in your country for both broadcasting messages to parents through SMS and for content delivery. [Twilio](#) can be used in many places to broadcast SMS. In some countries tools like [Eneza](#) can be used too
- Check out what SMS and voice education services are available in your country [in this sheet](#). (We are continually updating this list)
- [Check the resource folder](#) of the Teaching Without Internet WhatsApp groups to see what stories and links have been shared

Influence local radio stations to help deliver lessons

- Understand what is already being offered
- Work with government and community leaders to influence radio stations
- Create potential lessons to be shared on radio
- [Use this pool of resources](#) to structure lessons for radio broadcast

Use resources that are available after you download them

- [Kiwix](#) is an example of a resource that can be used after downloading it to a device (Android for mobile)
- [Kolibri](#) is a tool that's also available to download
- Utilize low-cost technical solutions such as the [RACHEL](#) (Remote Area Community Hotspot for Education and Learning) tool to create local hot-spots in your community. You can reach out to a [local chapter](#) of World Possible to see how you can leverage this tool.
- [Ustad Mobile](#) is available to Java-enabled phones (phones that have browsers but may not be smartphones).
- [African Story Book](#) enables you to download stories and send them to your students via WhatsApp. You can also print storybooks.

Use megaphones or public announcement systems

in community communication centers — these are kiosks with megaphone and amplifier for community announcement and marketing purposes. These centers could be used to deliver lessons to students in communities.

Utilize MP3 players for instruction and student engagement. [Here is one example](#) demonstrating the use of audio players for instruction.

4. PRINT & DISTRIBUTE PAPER PACKETS

Work with community leaders to determine who can create, print, and distribute paper packets to a community

Create worksheets to be printed and distributed to students

- Avasara Academy in India has shared [these examples](#)
- CK12 has an abundance of printable math worksheets through their [study guide feature](#)
- [Keep checking this folder](#) for additional paper packet examples

Find a printer in the community to print paper packets. This may be a local cyber cafe, stationary store, or copy shop. Determine who in the community may be able to help fund the printing, including ink, paper and staples.

Work with community leaders, delivery persons, and potentially local police to distribute packets

Ensure families and the community are following protocol when it comes to safe delivery, especially if social distancing practices are in place. Provide delivery persons with gloves, cloth masks and hand sanitizer if possible.

5. SUPPORT TEACHERS WITH THEIR TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Support the teachers at your school or in your community during this time. They may not have access to technology tools themselves. Ask teachers how they are and what they are struggling with too. Not every teacher feels comfortable on computers or even mobile phones.

Send teachers in your community WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat, Facebook, or SMS messages showing them how to use helpful tools on computers

A few basic tools could be really useful for teachers as they begin their own technology journeys.

For Example: Google Sheets may be really helpful for teachers who must print worksheets and Google Forms may be helpful for assessments. [Here is an example](#)

of a Google Form quiz template that was created in Malaysia for other teachers to copy and paste.

Give teachers instructions on how to download these tools to their phone if they don't have computers (through App stores)

Share examples of worksheets, audio files, and assessments you have made with these tools. It is always helpful to see an example and great teachers will adapt these to their classroom contexts.

6. SUPPORT PARENTS WITH THEIR NEEDS

You may need to reach parents first with content before reaching out to students

[Here is an example message](#) to parents that has been popular online

Send parents an audio message through WhatsApp or through a voice note asking how they are and explaining how you would like to communicate with students

Call each parent directly and have a conversation with them about their individual child's needs right now. Decide on a schedule for the student and explain any systems you would like to put in place. For example: "I would like to have your child send me an SMS message every day at 1 p.m. explaining what they have completed for the day and what questions they have."

Work with parents to determine what their child needs most right now. Is it reading support? Is it health guidance? What resources do they have available at home?

[Here are some great examples](#) from the Education Above All Foundation of project-based learning activities that parents can be doing with children, aged 4-14

7. ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENTS WITH POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Remember: for many students, this may be their first time using a phone for learning. When they respond with homework assignments, video or audio clips, encourage them further.

- [Here is an example](#) from a teacher in Ghana using WhatsApp to encourage her student when they sent a video response.
- [Here is an example](#) of a teacher in India using a "star board" on WhatsApp to encourage students.

The **Teaching Without Internet Alliance** is a group of educators, community leaders, and technologists convened by Teach For All who teach and support learners who do not have consistent, reliable access to the internet and/or hardware devices for learning. They support educators and community leaders with the digital skills required to reach students in areas with low-bandwidth.

Teach For All is a global network of 53 independent, locally led and governed partner organizations and a global organization that works to accelerate the progress of the network. Learn more at www.teachforall.org