Overview of the innovation
The iWitness in Rwanda project used witness testimony of genocide via internet based resources to promote positive values, increase understanding of genocide and its lasting effects, and enhance empathy with victims and survivors among young people. It aimed to develop critical thinking skills, promote constructive dialogue and prepare young people to participate responsibly in society.

Activities included the development of educational activities at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre (KGMC), in-depth professional development workshops for 21 teachers on the iWitness project and its associated teaching methodologies, and the testing of the programme in nine upper secondary school classrooms in Gasabo, Rwamagana, Huye and Musanze districts. Students in pilot schools had access to over 1,300 video testimonies of survivors and other witnesses of the Nazi Holocaust and other genocides, including the Genocide Against the Tutsi.

There is a strong focus on changing classroom teaching methodology, which is applicable beyond the project’s focus areas of values, peace and genocide studies. The project embedded the video content within sets of sequenced learning activities, which included elements of peer discussion, both face-to-face as well as through the internet.

43 teachers were trained, reaching 369 secondary students in 30 schools.

The total budget for the intervention was GBP 452,086.

Grant Recipient:
The project was implemented by a collaboration between the Aegis Trust, a UK-based genocide prevention organisation, and the USC Shoah Foundation, which is part of the University of Southern California, US.

Contact:
Freddy Mutanguha, AEGIS Trust: freddy.mutanguha@aegistrust.org
Kori Street, Shoah Foundation: kestreet@dornsife.usc.edu

What makes it innovative?
The project approach was new to the Rwandan context, having previously only been implemented in the USA and Australia (although in ‘technologically challenged areas’ and with young people with limited digital literacy). The project used innovative technology to bring audio-visual testimonies into the classroom and sought to enhance levels of student engagement in the classroom and focus on developing critical thinking skills.

Relevance to education priorities:
Main Theme: Effective teaching and learning
Sub-theme: Skills development; use of technologies
The project promoted science and technology in the classroom and aimed to develop critical thinking and positive values in the curriculum, all of which are highlighted in the ESSP. It also addressed the planned integration of peace education into the new curriculum.

Project learning (activity/output to outcomes level)
- The use of testimonies is highly relevant to the Rwandan school context and also provides an alternative way of teaching sensitive topics, providing more room for student reflection and critical thinking and enhancing the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning and reflection.
- Close involvement in the curriculum review and curriculum implementation process, to
ensure a link between lWitness content and methodology and the new curriculum, has strengthened the relevance of the project and its chances for scale-up.

- Initial project activities took place in the KGMC and a number of Kigali-based schools with good technology facilities and internet access. Later during the pilot the project also entered schools in less technologically advanced areas, but the success of the use of technologies within these schools was not as clear as in the first two phases. There were technical challenges, however teacher and student feedback, and positive learning, indicates that the opportunity outweighs the technical challenges (power outages and bandwidth).
- An interesting and unanticipated benefit of the project was that teachers and students felt that the programme also helped them with improving their English, particularly through the use of content that combined English and Kinyarwanda.

**Project outcomes and reflection on monitoring and evaluation:**
The project was evaluated using a quasi-experimental design (control and treatment groups investigated at baseline and end-line), though with small sample sizes (9 schools). The main outcome measures for teachers and students are based on self-reported surveys. Other data included content review and analysis, interviews and focus groups.

The findings showed that teachers reported positive gains related to all of their learning outcomes and some of the student outcomes were positive. Student interviews suggested the fostering of positive values the demonstration of empathy and tolerance in response to the testimonies.

The study was carefully conducted and reported showing good transparency. The main problem is the lack of established validity and reliability of the outcome measures, particularly as the main outcomes are based on ratings by teachers and students.
Conditions for success
The project’s implementation was dependent upon access to high-speed internet and electricity in the classroom as well as learners’ individual access to a computer. The sustainability of the project would also be dependent on these factors, although some alternative ‘offline’ material has been developed. If the government pledge of universal internet connectivity for secondary schools in Rwanda by 2017 materialises, chances for scale up and sustainability will significantly increase.

The correlation of the project’s core principles of the use of testimony and the development of positive values with the peace education curriculum has enhanced its chances of success. High levels of political commitment to peace and reconciliation, coupled with the strong involvement of AEGIS Trust and its partners in the curriculum review and implementation process, will indeed support the sustainability of the IfE pilot.

Scale up and sustainability considerations
- AEGIS Trust has three strategies for upscaling: (i) establishing institutional partnerships that will facilitate the embedding of iWitness within other AEGIS programmes (such as the Rwanda Peace Education Programme - RPEP) as well as the programmes of partner organisations, (ii) full integration of iWitness into the KGMC’s formal and informal educational programming and (iii) inclusion of iWitness as an educational tool to implement the national curriculum.
- In late 2014, it was announced that the use of audio-visual testimony clips and iWitness educational resources and tools had been approved for inclusion in the new Rwanda school curriculum. It will be important to ensure the actual integration of this content within the context of the curriculum implementation (through teacher training, as part of the curriculum training and beyond, and provision of content/activities for classroom use).
- AEGIS Trust has mainly focused on teacher training for upscaling and aims to integrate iWitness within planned REB teacher training activities. The idea that trained teachers would act as peer educators for other teachers is presented, but not given further substance. It will be important to offer a better understanding of how the teacher support model will work in practice.
- REB’s ICT teacher training activities may provide another entry point to support teachers across the country.
- Given the issues faced with internet access during pilot implementation, USC, working with Aegis, has developed new learning object types to address that immediately, specifically offline iWitness content and activities. These activities are available now.
- The AEGIS Trust consortium’s scale up strategy needs to have a stronger focus on REB ownership and the various steps that are needed to ensure this. There is a need to ‘prepare the system’, with a likely role for AEGIS partnership with REB to support this ‘system readiness’.
- Greater clarity on the actual scale and growth paths of the proposed costed scale up model is required.
Cost Considerations
As a result of the pilot intervention, there is content and an internet-based platform that is available at no cost to Rwandan students and teachers.

Initial investment to move the project from pilot to wider adoption includes: (i) continued AEGIS staff and partners’ involvement; (ii) teacher professional development, including developing teachers as peer educators, and; (iii) investment in technical infrastructure and resources at KGMC to develop it as a centre of excellence and resource development.

A three year program aimed at institutionalising the use of testimony based education, using iWitness on and off line across grade levels and across the country has been proposed. The cost for this 3 years programme is estimated at GBP 2,077,978.

It is to be noted that 60% of this budget is reserved for expert inputs from AEGIS Trust and the Shoah Foundation. Although there are clear benefits and cost savings in some of the iWitness activities being embedded in REB teacher training activities, there is also a need to quantify the budgetary consequences for the GoR, especially REB.

Immediate Next Steps
- Capitalise on the positive involvement of iWitness in the curriculum review process and put efforts into supporting the curriculum implementation process by (i) training teachers as part of the ongoing curriculum implementation training, specifically where it concerns the cross-cutting area of peace education, and (ii) find ways to ensure that the iWitness tools and activities end up in the classroom teaching and learning activities as a next step of curriculum implementation.
- As a medium term step the iWitness activities could be embedded in ongoing teacher training both pre-service and in-service, subject to further discussions and negotiations between REB, the College of Education and the AEGIS Trust and its partners. It will be important to provide more depth about the foreseen role for the peer educators referred to above.
- MINEDUC/REB, as the Hub for Innovation, to explore and broker possible relationships with private sector and NGO providers of ICT goods and services.
- AEGIS Trust and its partners to identify funding for a scale up intervention with a major focus on GoR ownership and leadership, with technical assistance activities to prepare REB to take over the activities in the long run.

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