



How can every school deliver a 21st century education?

Our Mission

CyberSmart! achieves practical solutions to narrow the learning divide between Africa and the developed world. We facilitate sustainable and scalable approaches to education that draw upon affordable and innovative technologies, the latest research, and community-building activities among schools.

The Problem

Like many developing nations, Senegal is climbing its way up the development ladder, and schools remain significantly challenged to provide an up-to-date education. Still, Senegal must determine how to best educate a generation of learners who – for the sake of their nation's economic future – must succeed in today's globalized world. Today's learners must possess 21st century skills. This includes the ability to collaborate, think critically, solve meaningful problems, and integrate digital tools in the context of everyday schooling, and ultimately, in their professional lives.

CyberSmart! Africa's addresses the problem head-on with 21st century learning solutions that are uniquely designed for flexibility, sustainability, scalability and affordability to all schools – particularly including those at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

Technology in Service to Learning – Not the Other Way Around.

Tech lite: Computer labs or other permanent infrastructures are not necessary. We use equipment that will operate in every school – even those with a physical infrastructure that would never ordinarily support 21st century learning – particularly including those with less security, and where light can be seen through the ceiling.

Pedagogy: We encourage an active and engaging learner-centered classroom where students assume the responsibility for learning and the teacher plays the role of facilitator.

Training and support: After an initial training, teachers participate in ongoing, supportive professional learning communities. They create, adapt, observe, and improve lessons at a local, grassroots level.

Sustainability: The focus is on building a self-supporting 21st century instructional capacity with a minimum fixed ICT infrastructure investment.

Scalability: Our growth model is designed for large-scale implementation. School-based teacher learning communities connect, share knowledge, and benefit from scale as learning materials and experiences are shared among larger quantities of participants.

CyberSmart! Africa's Pilot Initiative in Senegal

Our pilot initiative shows that every classroom can be a 21st century classroom!

CyberSmart! Africa currently works in four regional/rural elementary and middle schools in two administrative regions, plus one after-school, informal education learning environment for girls.

We coach teachers to develop lessons and classroom activities correlated to the Senegalese national curriculum and focused on the learning needs of their students. Our pedagogical model is designed to be maintainable and reproducible. Pilot activities focus on whole-class elementary school instruction in core academic subjects, plus highly-personalized middle school and out-of-school instruction. ICT skills are learned while supporting instructional strategies that enhance core content classroom learning. All aspects of this pilot initiative correlate to 21st century teaching and learning standards adopted by UNESCO and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

The pilot initiative operates through 2010 and will be substantially expanded in 2011. The currently participating schools are located in and around Mbour and Louga, Senegal.

Technology

CyberSmart! Africa has put in place a highly innovative and cost-effective approach for whole-class instruction utilizing a low-cost interactive whiteboard configuration. We also use digital 'Smartpens' to facilitate personalized learning interventions. In addition to the interactive white board and smartpen, students use 'Flip' video cameras to create digital stories that excite and inspire the entire school community. To build professional learning networks among teachers, we are adapting free and low-cost digital solutions, including USB drives, SMS messaging, microblogging, and online social networks.

Background

CyberSmart Africa began in 2007 as a single-school personal initiative of Jim Teicher, an American education and information industries leader dedicated to the advancement of 21st century skills practices in schools globally. CyberSmart Africa partners now include: the Senegalese Ministry of Education; The Millennium Villages Project, a joint initiative of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, Millennium Promise and the United Nations Development Programme; and The Women's Health Education and Prevention Strategic Alliance.

Website: <http://www.cybersmartafrica.org>

Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CyberSmartAfrica>

Flickr photostream: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/47247019@N04/>

Our Blog: <http://cybersmartafrica.blogspot.com>

Contact: info@cybersmartafrica.org