Innovative Approaches to Recruiting in Africa

REGIONAL INSTITUTE

Sub-Saharan Africa 2025

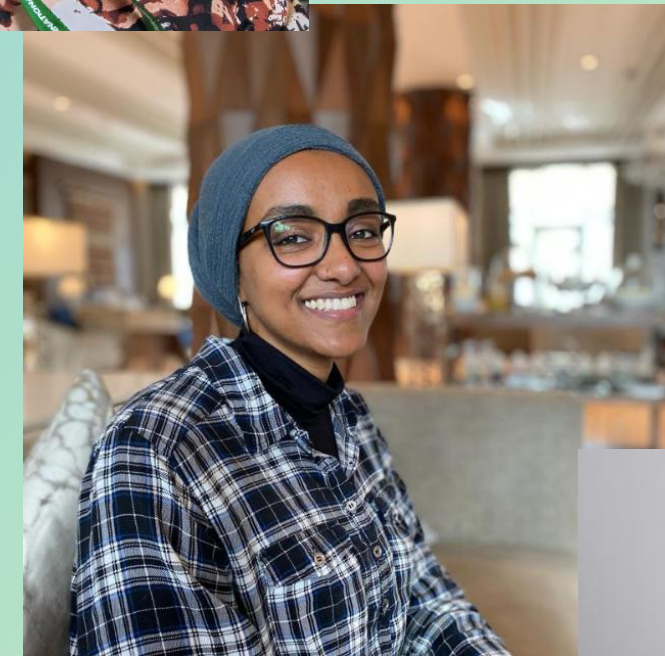**Moderators**

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I. Traditional Student Recruitment Methods

A. College Fairs and High School Visits

Pros:

- Direct student engagement
- Builds relationships with counselors
- Tangible presence for the university
- Opportunity to answer real-time questions

Cons:

- High travel costs
- Limited reach (especially rural/international)
- Time-intensive
- Not always effective for yield conversion

B. Campus Tours and Open Houses

Pros:

- Personalized, emotional connection to campus
- Family involvement
- Showcases facilities and culture firsthand

Cons:

- Limited to students who can afford to travel
- Weather/location can impact turnout
- Resource-heavy (staff, logistics)

C. Print Materials and Direct Mail

Pros:

- Tangible, keepsake value
- Can reach homes without internet
- Good for brand reinforcement

Cons:

- Expensive and not eco-friendly
- May go unread
- Hard to track ROI
- Less engaging than digital options

I. Traditional Student Recruitment Methods (continued)

D. Agents

Pros:

- Local knowledge and cultural alignment
- Saves institutional travel time
- Can expand international pipeline

Cons:

- Commission-based (can incentivize volume > fit)
- Reputation risks (if agents act unethically)
- Less control over brand messaging

E. In-Country Representatives

Pros:

- More consistent messaging than agents
- Long-term relationship-building
- Local events and partnerships

Cons:

- High operational costs
- Needs sustained oversight
- May take time to show results

F. Alumni Networks and Referrals

Pros:

- Authentic, trusted voices
- Cost-effective outreach
- Can support yield, not just inquiries

Cons:

- Inconsistent involvement
- Need for training or guidance
- Small scale unless well-managed

II. Trends in International Student Mobility

- **Increased interest in regions like the UK, Europe and Asia**

- **Increased Intra-Africa Mobility**

- **Oversaturation of information/recruitment events (high schools share this perspective)**
  - **Lots of events happening, scheduling difficulties**
  - **Students aren't able to engage with information in-depth**

- **Shift in student behavior: more research online, less in-person contact**

- **Students expect immediacy and personalization**

- **Emphasis on values (DEI, sustainability, flexibility)**

- **Parents are open to non-traditional approaches to university recruitment**

.

III. Non-Traditional Recruitment Strategies

1

A. Digital Engagement

2

B. Personalized Digital Communication

3

C. Interactive Content

1

Digital Engagement

Pros:

- Wider geographical reach
- Cost-effective
- Available 24/7
- Content easy to update

Cons:

- Less personal connection
- Technology barriers
- Missing campus atmosphere
- Initial setup costs

- **Webinars / Information Sessions**
  - **Topic Specific Sessions**
    - **"Studying Humanities at Example University"**
    - **"Student Life at Example University"**
    - **"Living in Abu Dhabi"**
    - **"Meet students from Ghana"**
  - **Involve current students and faculty members**
  - **Supportive workshops for students**
    - **"How to write a strong personal statement"**
    - **"Understanding the Application Process - Q & A"**
    - **"Navigating the Financial Aid Process"**
  - **Counselor-Facing workshops/Events**
    - **"How to support students effectively"**
    - **"Resilience Training (TMU)"**
    - **"In-country Counselor Networking Sessions"**
- **Virtual Campus Tours / University Fairs**
- **Social Media Marketing**

2

Personalized Digital Communication

Pros:

- Highly personalized
- Trackable results
- Cost-effective
- Automated workflows

Cons:

- Screen fatigue
- Deliverability issues
- Content creation demands

- **Virtual Office Hours**
  - **Fixed times during the week.**
  - **An opportunity to ask an admissions representative a question**
  - **Group or 1:1 Format**
- **WhatsApp**
  - **A way for students to easily reach an admissions representative**
  - **Unique and direct interactions with students**
- **Targeted Emails Campaigns**

2

Personalized Digital Communication

● **AI Powered Chatbots**

Pros:

- 24/7 availability
- Immediate responses
- Consistent information
- Scalable solution

Cons:

- Limited personal touch
- Setup and maintenance costs
- May miss complex queries
- Technical challenges

3

Interactive Content

Pros:

- Immersive experience
- Memorable interactions
- Future-forward image
- Authentic and relatable
- Cost-effective
- Community building

Cons:

- Quality control
- Content consistency
- Coordination efforts
- Limited control

- **Virtual Reality Experiences**

- **Student Generated Content**

  - **TikTok/YouTube Shorts**

- **Interactive quizzes or decision trees on websites**

  - **"Find My Program"**

Examples of how students use these strategies

- Attending virtual info sessions before deciding if a campus visit is worth the trip

- Watching student vlogs or TikToks alongside official tours

- Using chatbots or WhatsApp for quick answers before scheduling in-person meetings or interviews

- Completing a virtual tour and then visiting only their top 1–2 choices in person

- Comparing institutions online while visiting others in person — not a linear process

Why this matters

- This hybrid model means institutions need to maintain strong digital engagement and provide compelling in-person experiences.

- Universities cannot rely on one channel anymore — both need to be seamless

Modality of Student Resource Use in College Search and Selection

In-Person 38%

Hybrid 22%

Digital 40%

Butt, M. (2025). Tech-Driven Transitions: Investigating College Applicants' Resource Utilization in the Digital Age of College Applications. Strategic Enrollment Management Quarterly, (13)1. Forthcoming April 2025.
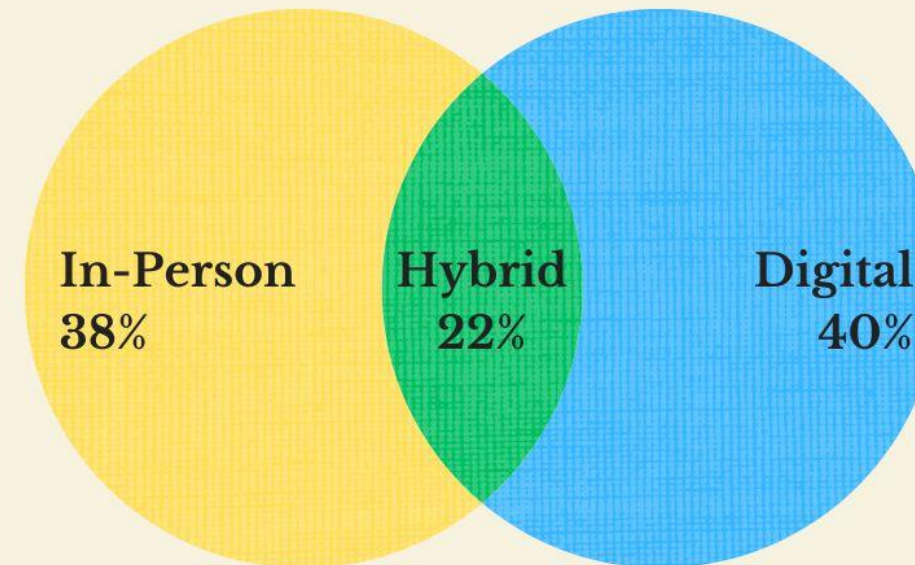
IV. Reverse Admissions and Search Platforms

Reverse Admissions: Colleges offer students admission to their institution based on the student's profile without the student applying to multiple institutions.

- Appily (Concourse/Match)
- Maia Offers (Maia Learning)
- Cialfo Direct Apply

- Reduces barriers

- Reaches underserved students

- Simplifies process

Reverse Search (Meto)

An online "meeting place" where international students connect with colleges and universities around the world

- **Works well in tandem with reverse admissions**

- **Institution initiates interest → more student empowerment**

- **Informed and early college lists building**

- **Starting conversations about new institutions and destinations (broader options for students)**

- **Benefits to universities:**
  - Build recruitment pipelines
  - Conduct ultra-targeted student outreach
  - Gain access to a massive, diverse group of high school students

Meto

Universities can target students from 140+ countries and recruit based on institutional priorities, such as geography, academic performance, student financial capacity, etc., and directly connect with these students to encourage them to apply.

Mētō

The Platform

		Profile	ID ⌄	Estimated Financial Contribution ⌄	Academic Group ⌄	Citizenship ⌄	High School ⌄	High School Country ⌄	High School Region ⌄
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	112738	$50,000	Group 4		St. Constantine's Internationa...	Tanzania, United Republic of	Africa
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	112924	$50,000	Group 2	Panama	Academia Interamericana De Pan...	Panama	Latin America and the Caribbean
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	113141	$50,000	Group 3	Libya	Le Bocage International School	Mauritius	Africa
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	113167	$50,000	Group 3	Mauritius	Le Bocage International School	Mauritius	Africa
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	114634	$50,000	Group 1	India	Dubai College	United Arab Emirates	Middle East
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	115587	$50,000	Group 3	Japan	Crimson Global Academy	New Zealand	Oceania
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	115917	$50,000	Group 2	Ethiopia	Cambridge Academy (ethiopia)	Ethiopia	Africa
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	115948	$50,000	Group 3	Mali	Enko Bamako International Scho...	Mali	Africa
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	116428	$50,000	Group 4	Mali	Enko Bamako International Scho...	Mali	Africa
☐	Yes No Maybe	👤 Summary	117492	$50,000	Group 1		Homestead Senior High School	United States	North America

	Reverse Admissions	**Reverse Search**
Student completes profile	✓	✓
Student completes application	✓	
Universities approach the student	✓	✓
Universities target students for specific scholarships	✓	✓
Students engage with universities	✓	✓

Final Q&A and Open Discussion

Resources

- **Appily**

- **What are reverse Admissions, and why do they matter?**

- **Meto**

- **Maia Offers**

- **Cialfo**

- **AACRAO Study ; "Tech Driven Transitions"**