
Secondary Teachers English Language Improvement Rwanda (STELIR)

Innovations in blended teacher professional development for in-service and pre-service teachers in Rwanda



STELIR timeline



September 2022

Partnership between the Mastercard Foundation and the British Council commences for the STELIR programme and the inception phase begins.



November 2022

Aptis tests for 572 lower-secondary teachers in one district.



December 2022

185 lower-secondary teachers in one district take part in one-week intensive English courses as a proof of concept and to provide learning opportunities in preparation for the scale training roll-out.



February 2023

STELIR Public launch, Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education, Hon. Gaspard Twagirayezu: *“We believe this is the right and sustainable way to prepare our teachers for the important job they have to prepare students for the complex world of work”.*



March 2023

Aptis tests for over 3,047 lower-secondary teachers of English and STEM subjects across seven districts.



April – July 2023

120 school-based mentors and TTC tutors participate in STELIR skill-building activities and complete UK-certified courses to prepare them for roles as English Teacher Trainers (ETTs) and e-teacher moderators (eTMs).



June 2023

Aptis tests for 1,031 year 2 students at the University of Rwanda - College of Education.



August - September 2023

2,590 lower-secondary teachers across eight districts participate in Stage 1 – Intensive English courses.



October 2023

855 pre-service student teachers at the University of Rwanda - College of Education take part in Stage 1 Intensive English courses.



February 2024

Aptis tests for 2,979 lower-secondary teachers of English and STEM subjects across a further six districts.



February 2024

2,590 lower-secondary teachers across eight districts complete Stage 2 Online English courses.



March 2024

535 school-based mentors (SBMs) and 374 school leaders complete training to prepare them to support sustainable school-based professional development activities with teachers at their schools.



April 2024

855 pre-service student teachers complete Stage 2 Online English courses.



May 2024

Aptis tests for 650 pre-service student teachers at URCE.

onwards

- Teachers who first joined STELIR courses in 2023 to progress up through the levels in 2024/25 until they reach a high-intermediate level
- Teachers who took Aptis tests in 2024 to join courses at the right level for them in August 2024 and progress up through the levels until they reach a high-intermediate level
- SBMs to participate in additional training in 2024 and 2025 to support their facilitation of sustainable school-based professional development sessions for teachers at every school.

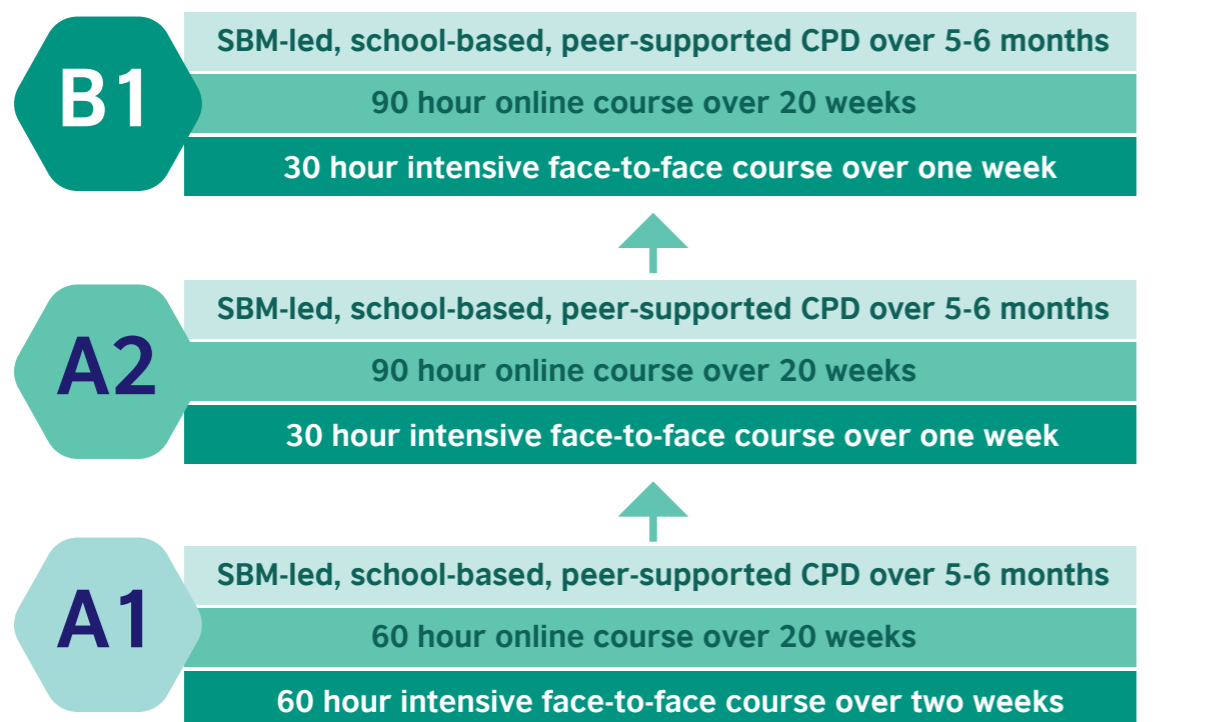
Secondary Teachers English Language Improvement

Rwanda is delivered in collaboration with the Mastercard Foundation and implemented by British Council in partnership with Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB). STELIR aims to improve the English language proficiency of Lower Secondary Teachers in the Rwandan state education system to at least intermediate level, reaching 6,000 in-service teachers across 14 districts, plus 1,000 Lower Secondary Pre-Service teachers in training at the University of Rwanda College of Education (URCE), with the ultimate goal of improving learning opportunities for lower secondary pupils.

STELIR aims to achieve a sustainable change in the Rwandan education system by adapting training materials for the Rwanda Education Board (REB) for face-to-face intensive and online delivery and by developing a cadre of local English Teacher Trainers, both face to face English Teacher Trainers (ETTs) and e-Teacher/Moderators (eTMs) who can deliver ongoing training after the project has ended.

STELIR three-stage blended English language course: At the core of STELIR’s design is a three-stage language development programme, the STELIR blended English language course. This is a blended English language course comprising of: 30 or 60 hours (dependent on language level) of intensive in-person English lessons over one or two weeks; 60 or 90 hours of asynchronous online learning with weekly synchronous live sessions over 20 weeks; and a third stage of in-person continuous professional development led by School-Based Mentors (SBMs) at schools. Teachers’ first contact with STELIR is the British Council’s Aptis English proficiency test to gauge their level of English, and they are then offered STELIR three-stage blended English language courses at the appropriate level.

STELIR Learning Paths



Innovation and ICT: Technology is at the heart of Rwanda’s vision to spearhead social and economic transformation. Relevant, quality education for all is key and ICT in education is regarded as a strategic lever to raised standards. The STELIR design recognises this and aims to champion innovation to support Rwanda in being recognised within the region and globally as an innovator in terms of using pioneering and cost-effective technology to deliver teacher development initiatives at scale.

Gender: Whereas females make up the majority of primary school teachers in Rwanda (56.8%), they account for only 33.7% of secondary school teachers (Education Statistical Yearbook, 2020/2021). This means secondary female teachers are in a minority both at school level and when participating in professional development opportunities for teachers at large. Since being in a minority of almost one female to every three males can undermine self-confidence and lower self-esteem, in turn inhibiting participation and learning, STELIR ETTs and eTMs are trained in inclusive teaching techniques, ensuring female participants are given equal time in speaking practice and that their contributions to group discussions are valued.

STELIR is intentional with its support for female teachers to attend the English courses, talking to them first about their needs during a personalised invitation phone call and then providing support (financial, logistical, accommodation, and meals) for women with young children to attend with their infants and child minders. This extra support helps ensure women can fully participate in the face-to-face training stage. For support during the online training stage, there are eight female eTMs (one per district) facilitating women’s WhatsApp communities for female teachers to help each other to overcome barriers to their participation. Anonymised feedback from these groups has enabled the STELIR team to make adaptations to increase participation, for example schedule adjustments. In addition, STELIR emphasised the importance of identifying women trainers (ETTs and eTMs) in the selection process, so that they can be role models and mentors for female teachers participating in the project.

Stage 2, online learning

For delivery of STELIR Stage 2, the British Council partnered with Norwich Institute of Language Education (NILE) who provided experienced e-trainers for delivery of online sessions to teachers and mentoring of STELIR eTMs. In year 1 weekly live sessions were delivered to teachers by pairs of experienced e-trainers and eTMs in training. As the course progressed the eTMs transitioned from a role shadowing the experienced e-trainers to gradually taking the lead on delivery of the sessions. In year 2 the transition to a sustainable, Rwanda education system led model will continue with experienced e-trainers offering mentoring support to eTMs who will be delivering sessions more independently.



The British Council is recognised as a world leader in the teaching, learning and assessment of English, the professional development of teacher educators and teachers of English, and in language policy, curriculum and resources. We have a growing track record in inclusive education practices and the use of education technology and in 2023 alone we supported over 400,000 teachers and teacher educators through our partnerships and projects and reached four million teacher educators and teachers of English through our online teacher community.



NILE is a world-leading centre of excellence in professional development for language educators, both face to face and online, in the UK and overseas. Since 1995, NILE has trained over 70,000 English teachers globally and has provided training programmes, ELT project management and consultancy for institutions and ministries worldwide.



Total STELIR direct outreach of influencers in Rwanda (teachers, school-based mentors, and school-leaders)

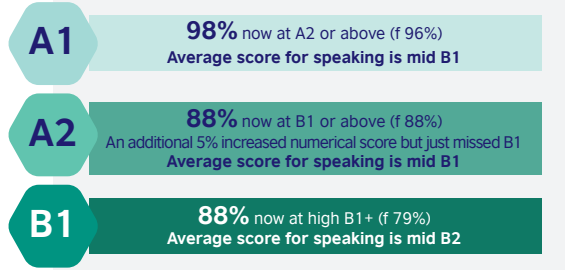


Impact

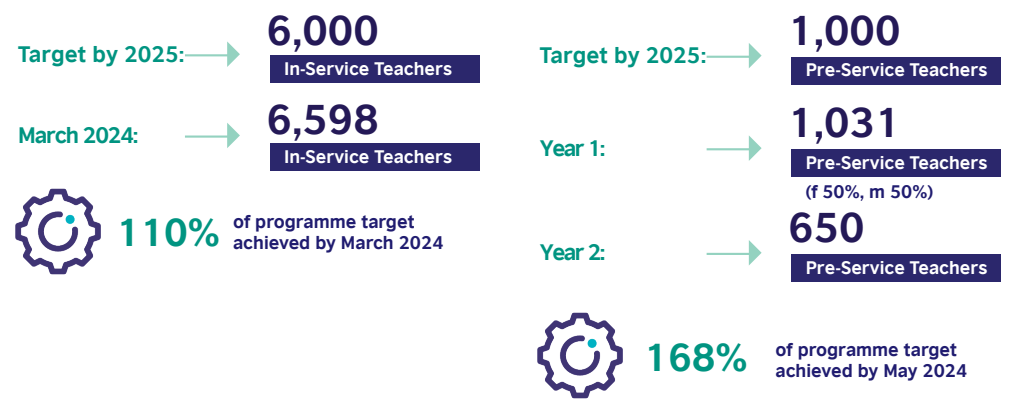
98% of teachers report using English in the classroom more confidently and effectively by applying the skills gained through STELIR: **Views of target influencers on usefulness, relevance, application, and awareness of training activities** (Mastercard Foundation Shared measure 1.1.1.6)

98% of teachers reported having a more positive mindset regarding teacher continuing professional development after engaging in STELIR activities: **Changes in mindsets** (Mastercard Foundation Shared measure 3.6.1)

Average % increase in numerical score across all participants for speaking: 37% (f 40%)



Progress against key target for teachers taking Aptis tests



Aptis

The British Council's Aptis test, developed by experts in language testing and underpinned by the latest research in assessment is an innovative, computer-based, assessment tool. Aptis tests English language skills – reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The results are measured according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) and range from Basic User (A1/A2) to Independent User (B1/B2) to Proficient User (C). Aptis for Teachers evaluates general English proficiency of teachers. Its tasks are based on scenarios teachers come across daily in an education context.