
Secondary Teachers English Language Improvement Rwanda (STELIR)

Supporting both in-service and
pre-service teachers to develop
their English language skills



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

Capacity building of 25 URCE lecturers and 120 school-based mentors and TTC tutors who 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.



July 2024

URCE lecturers are trained in delivery of STELIR Stage 3 Peer-led Professional Skills Development course.



August 2024

3,536 lower-secondary teachers from across 14 districts participate in Stage 1 – Intensive English courses.

onwards

- STELIR Stage 3 Peer-led Professional Skills development to be rolled out in URCE from September 2024.
- Aptis testing of an additional 1,000 pre-service teachers at UR-CE and staff to take place in September/October 2024.
- STELIR 3-stage blended English course to start for second cohort of pre-service teachers at UR-CE with intensive English in January 2025. Participants from cohort 1 that studied at A2 level will be invited to join the course at B1 level.

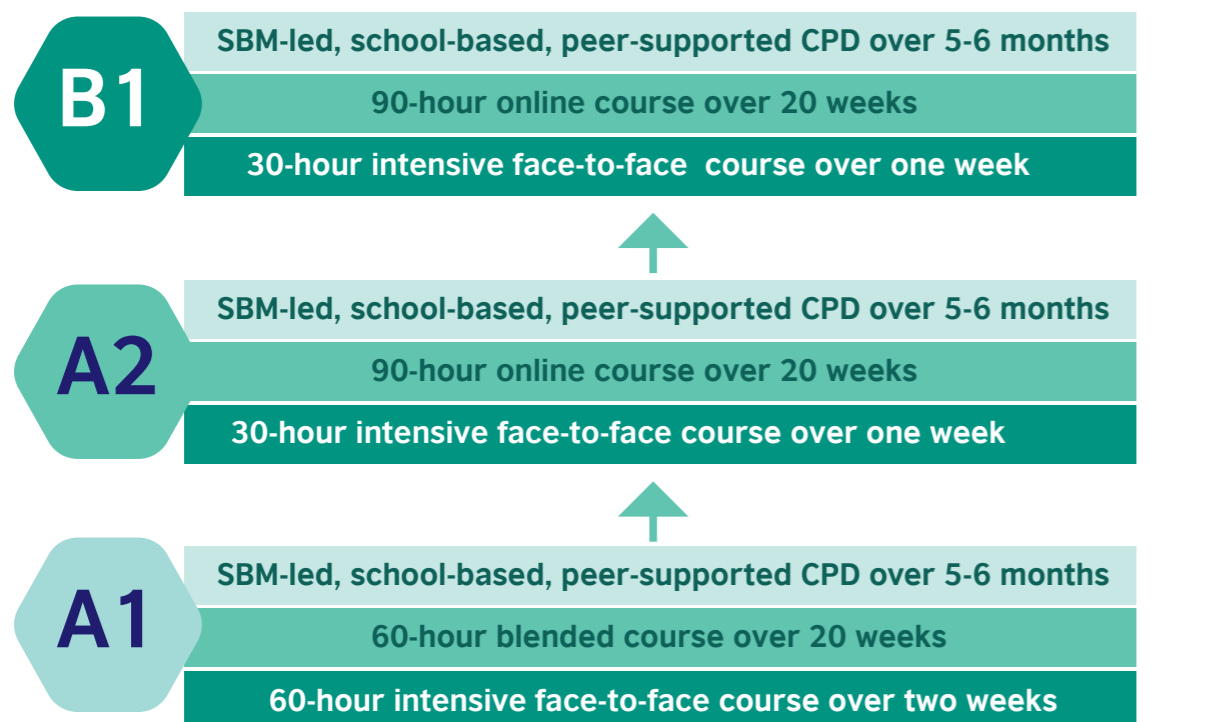
Secondary Teachers English Language Improvement

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 (56.9%), they account for only 34.8% of secondary school teachers (Education Statistical Yearbook, 2022/2023). 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)

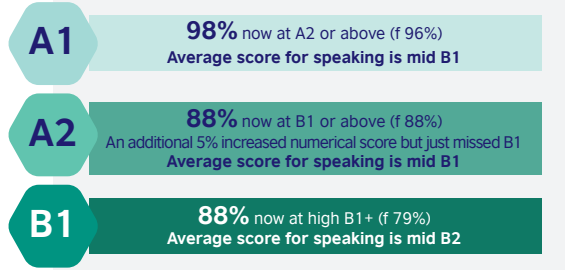


Impact

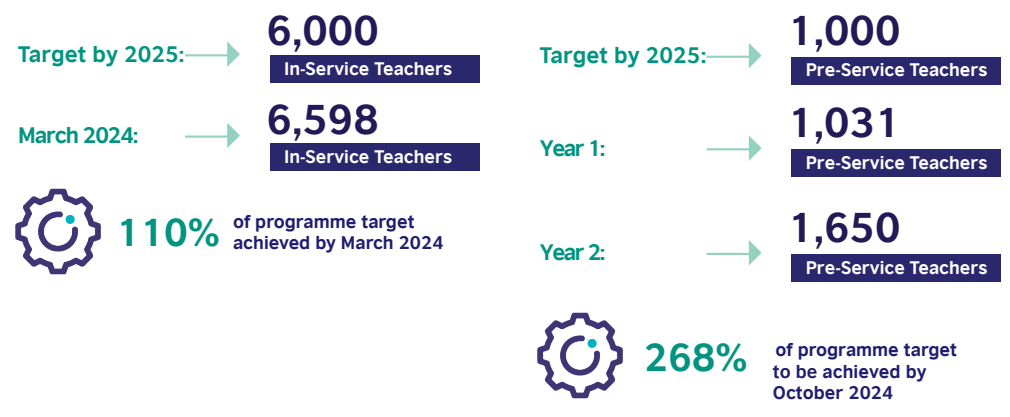
98% of teachers report using English in the classroom more confidently and effectively by applying the skills gained through STELIR: **Views of target influencers on usefulness, relevance, application, and awareness of training activities** (Mastercard Foundation Shared measure 1.1.1.6)

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 teacher taking Aptis tests



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.

STELIR support for pre-service teachers to improve their English language skills

Capacity building – ETTs and eTMS

In June 2023, 25 lecturers from URCE were selected to train as English Teacher Trainers (ETTs) and e-Teacher/Moderators (eTMs) for both face-to-face training and online delivery. They began by developing their communicative language teaching methodology through a 10-week online trainer development course with Edinburgh College, a renowned UK institution. They then moved onto a seven-week course for online teaching with the UK's Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE), a well-recognised leader in online English language teaching. Lecturers who successfully completed the courses were then invited to train pre-service teachers taking the STELIR 3-stage blended English courses at URCE.

Aptis testing

In year 1, 1,031 pre-service teachers at URCE took an Aptis test. From this sample, 855 continued on to participate in STELIR 3-stage blended English course at A2 or B1 level.

In May 2024, a subsequent 616 pre-service teachers have taken an Aptis test with plans to test a further 1,000 pre-service teachers in September. This will provide a snapshot of English language proficiency across a whole year group of pre-service teachers and provide insight as to their current levels of English, and their strengths and language needs across the four language skills.

Stage 1 Intensive English

855 pre-service teachers at URCE began intensive English in October 2023 at either A2 or B1 level. Intensive English was held at both Nyagatare and Rukara campus over two weeks. Participants spent one week at the face-to-face training, building confidence in speaking English and preparing them to take their online course.

Stage 2: Online

All participating pre-service teachers were given a tablet and 4G internet to enable them to undertake their online course. They engaged in 3-4.5 hours of asynchronous online study per week as well as a 1.5-hour synchronous class weekly for twenty weeks, delivered by expert e-trainers from NILE and shadowed by URCE eTMs, who will take up delivery in Year 2.

Stage 3: Peer-led professional development skills model

The peer-led professional skills development course is an innovative model that has been developed for STELIR Stage 3 at URCE. This course aims to continue improving the spoken English proficiency of pre-service teachers, whilst also building a community of practice supporting best practice in teaching. The sessions have been designed so that participants will take the lead in session delivery, building on their own experience of facilitating lessons, with the guidance and support of lecturers who have been trained in the delivery of this model.

Results

Towards the end of the Stage 2 online course, and two-thirds of the way through their STELIR training, a representative sample of pre-service teachers were retested with Aptis with the following results.

Achievement	Overall	Female
A1 – B1	100%	100%
A2 – B1	90.5%	100%
B1 – high B1	84%	85.7%

