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mastercard foundation

REB | RWANDA BASIC EDUCATION BOARD

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

3,487 lower-secondary teachers from across 14 districts participate in Stage 1 – Intensive English courses.

September 2024

Aptis tests for a further 734 pre-service teachers at URCE.

January 2025

985 pre-service teachers at URCE take part in Stage 1 intensive English.

February 2025

3,487 Lower Secondary Teachers complete Stage 2 online course.

March 2025

580 pre-service teachers complete Stage 3 Peer-led Professional Skills Development course at URCE.

March 2025

298 SBMs and 271 School Leaders complete training for rollout of Stage 3 School-based CPD in their schools.

April 2025

542 SBMs complete training for second phase of school-based CPD, with a focus on sustainability.

May 2025

985 pre-service teachers complete their Stage 2 online course.

onwards

- **950 teachers** at A1 or A2 level will participate in STELIR blended English courses progressing to a higher level of A2 or B1 from August 2025.
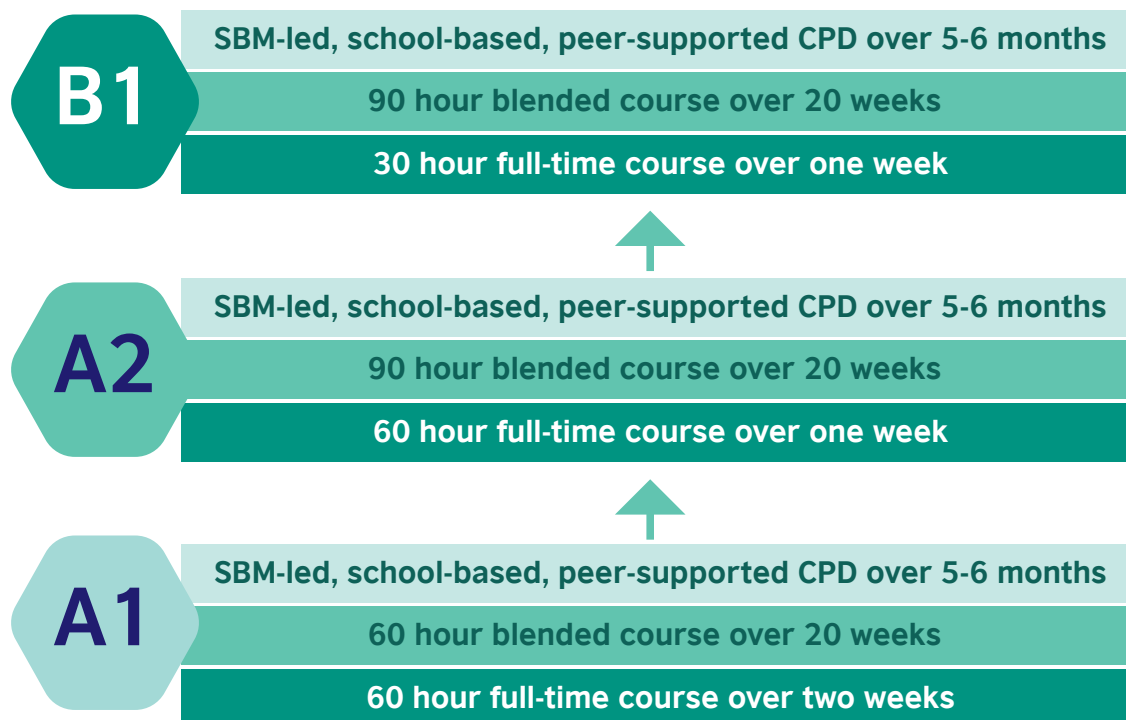- **300 SBMs** will complete training phase two of CPD training.

Secondary Teachers English Language Improvement Rwanda (STELIR) is the British Council's first partnership with the Mastercard Foundation (USD 10 million, 2022-2025).

The project aims to improve the English language proficiency of pre-service and in-service lower secondary teachers in the Rwandan state education system, with the ultimate goal of improving learning opportunities for secondary pupils. STELIR will achieve sustainable and system-level change through adaptation of teacher professional development materials for the Rwanda Education Board (REB) and by developing a cadre of skilled English teacher trainers from within the education system who can deliver ongoing face-to-face and online training after the project has ended.

To date, STELIR has reached 10,081 teachers, teacher educators, and school leaders. 95% of lower secondary teachers and 97% of pre-service teachers who have participated in STELIR courses are now at the target level of strong intermediate or above in spoken English.

At the core of STELIR's design is a three-stage language development programme - a hybrid model comprising intensive in-person English lessons; asynchronous online learning with weekly synchronous live sessions; and in-person continuous professional development at schools. STELIR improves teachers' English language skills, whilst also promoting partnerships with UK institutions and encouraging educational co-operation and collaboration between the UK and Rwanda.

STELIR Learning Paths

B1
- SBM-led, school-based, peer-supported CPD over 5-6 months
- 90 hour blended course over 20 weeks
- 30 hour full-time course over one week

A2
- SBM-led, school-based, peer-supported CPD over 5-6 months
- 90 hour blended course over 20 weeks
- 60 hour full-time course over one week

A1
- SBM-led, school-based, peer-supported CPD over 5-6 months
- 60 hour blended course over 20 weeks
- 60 hour full-time course over two weeks

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 35% 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, each district has one female eTM 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 continued with experienced e-trainers offering mentoring support to eTMs, who delivered sessions independently. This transition continues into year 3, where some high performing eTMs, who have received training in academic management and CPD, have taken on a Team Leader role, supporting their colleagues in online delivery.

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)

10,081 (37% female) have participated in STELIR activities

6,002 are youth

7,567 have successfully completed skill building activities

76% are from rural areas

524 self-identify as having a range of disabilities

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)*

Sample Testing Results

A1 **100%** now at A2 or above
Average score for speaking is mid B1

A2 **91%** now at B1 or above
Average score for speaking is mid B1

B1 **89%** now at high B1+
Average score for speaking is mid B2

Progress against key target for teacher taking Aptis tests

Target by 2025: → **6,000** In-Service Teachers

March 2024: → **6,598** In-Service Teachers

110% of programme target achieved by March 2024

Target by 2025: → **1,000** Pre-Service Teachers

Year 1: → **1,031** Pre-Service Teachers (f 50%, m 50%)

Year 2: → **1,350** Pre-Service Teachers

238% of programme target achieved by October 2024

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Aptis
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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, STELIR began capacity-building courses for 120 School-based mentors (SBMs) and teacher training college tutors to work as English Teacher Trainers (ETTs) and e-Teacher/Moderators (eTMs) for delivery of STELIR's blended English courses. 60 ETTs undertook a ten-week course online with Edinburgh College, a renowned UK institution, focusing on developing communicative language teaching methodology for face-to-face teaching, while eTMs completed 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. All trainers graduated onto teaching STELIR courses, where they continued to be supported by expert trainers from British Council and NILE. In Year two, an additional 37 ETTs and 14 eTMs joined STELIR trainers. At URCE, 25 lecturers participated in both courses and have subsequently delivered two iterations of STELIR courses for pre-service teachers.

From this pool, eight ETTs and twelve eTMs graduated onto more senior roles of Senior English Teacher Trainer (SETT) and online Team Leader, receiving training and mentoring in supporting the rollout of STELIR courses and supporting other ETTs and eTMs. Overall, this leaves a cadre of 204 SBMs, TTC Tutors and lecturers who are able to support REB and URCE in the delivery of English language proficiency teacher training programmes beyond the lifecycle of STELIR, thereby creating sustainability within the education system.

Aptis testing:

6,598 Lower Secondary Teachers (LSTs) have taken an Aptis test, with 5,459 teachers continuing to study on STELIR blended English courses at their appropriate level of A1, A2 or B1 on the CEFR.

At URCE, 2,381 pre-service teachers have taken an Aptis test. This includes the testing of 1,350 pre-service teachers in 2024, which was the whole year group and provides a snapshot of English language proficiency of pre-service teachers and their strengths and language needs across the four skills. From those tested, 1,594 pre-service teachers continued on to participate in STELIR courses.

Stage 1: Intensive English

5,459 LSTs have participated in STELIR intensive English at their appropriate level in 14 districts around Rwanda. Participants spent one or two weeks (depending on level) at the residential face-to-face training, building confidence in speaking English and preparing them to take part in the online course. At URCE, 1594 pre-service teachers have participated in intensive English at Nyagatare and Rukara campuses.

After engaging in intensive English 98% of in-service and pre-service teachers reported feeling more confident using English for teaching and learning.

Stage 2: Online

All participating 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 weekly class over twenty weeks, delivered by eTMs and supported by expert e-trainers from NILE.

After the online course, 92% of LSTs and 96% of pre-service teachers reported feeling more confident using technology for CPD.

Stage 3: In-service School-based CPD

844 SBMs have participated in capacity-building training with STELIR, to enhance the delivery of quality-CPD in their schools. The SBMs were given STELIR designed materials for use during their dedicated CPD time, which focused on improving English language proficiency and building communities of practice. In phase two, SBMs engaged in a further capacity-building training with a focus on CPD session planning and were given a training guide and activity pack which can be used with a variety of topics.

99% of SBMs reported gaining and applying new knowledge and skills in their work with teachers.

Stage 3: Professional Skills Development

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 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.

Sample testing results:

Towards the end of the online course, a representative sample of teachers were retested with Aptis to capture change in their proficiency level, with the following results in speaking:

Course level	In-service	Pre-service
A1	A2/B1 – 100%	B1 – 100%
A2	B1 – 90%	B1 – 92 %
B1 – high B1	B1+ – 88%	B1+ – 90%