

TeachingEnglish

Gender-just Climate action through blogging: how to engage teachers

Christopher Liberty

Saturday 1 March 2025



About the speaker

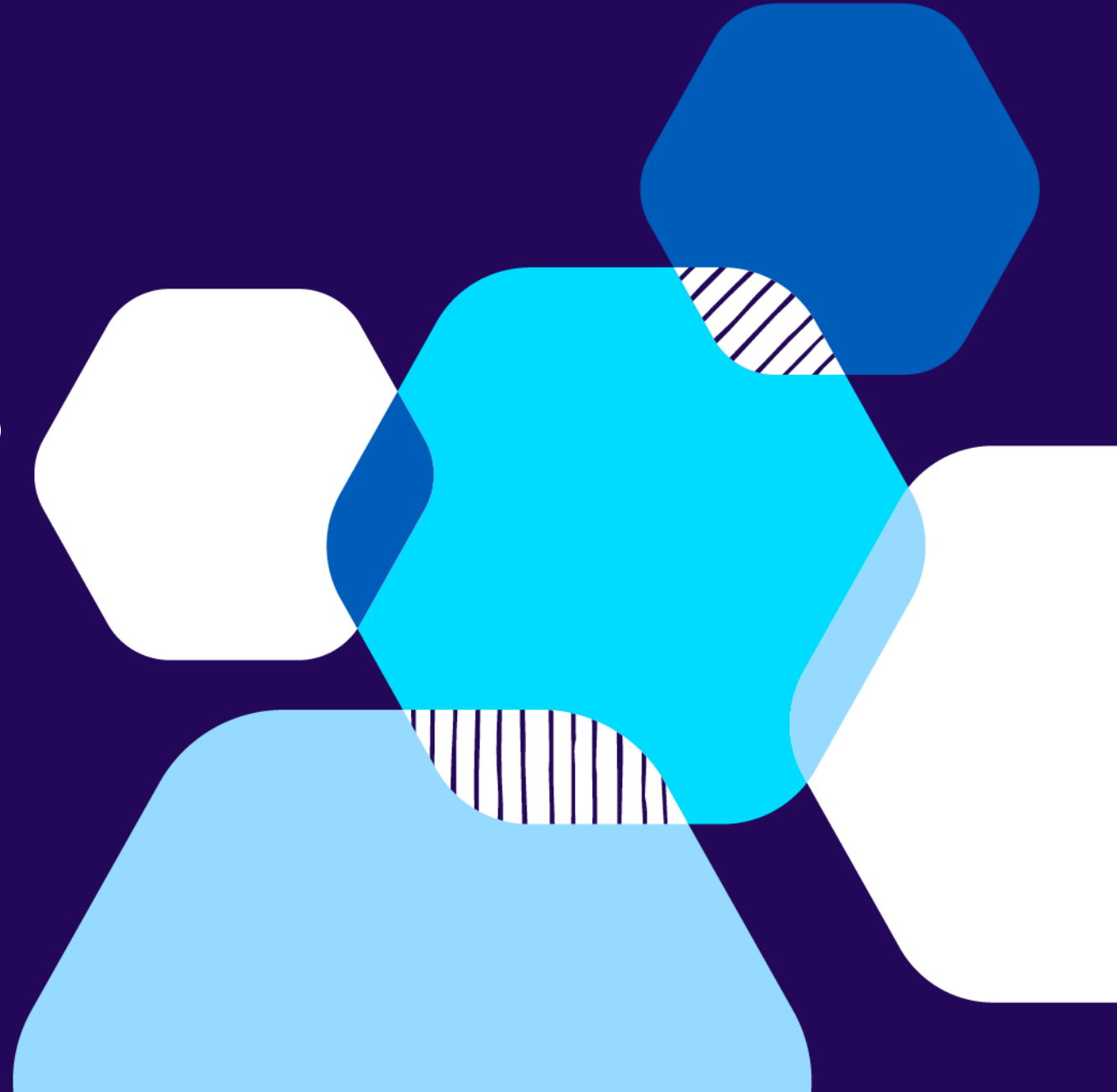
Christopher Liberty

- MSc in Development Management from LSE
- Master of PPM- Kabale University
- Strong belief that Education more so ELT is a fantastic tool against CC
- Dedicated to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship.
- Currently serving as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at UNELTA
- Core team for the British Council funded project that aims to ensure gender-just climate action through blogging



Objectives

- To engage teachers to become involved in climate action through blogging
- To give an overview of how UNELTA have guided teachers to produce climate action blogs through a British Council project
- To look at some example blogs and their effects
- To show how translanguaging and gender equality can be included



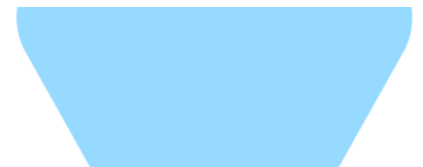
Warmer: Climate Action Bingo

Using Mentimeter, or the chat, pick a number representing what you have done

<https://www.menti.com/al565jmioiz1>

1. Planted a tree
2. Recycled plastic bottles or other materials
3. Used a reusable bag at the market
4. Talked to someone about climate change
5. Written a blog or social media post about climate change
6. Participated in a local clean-up or environmental campaign
7. Installed energy-efficient light bulbs or solar panels
8. Avoided single-use plastics, like plastic straws or bag
9. Watched a documentary on environmental issues

www.britishcouncil.org



Discussion



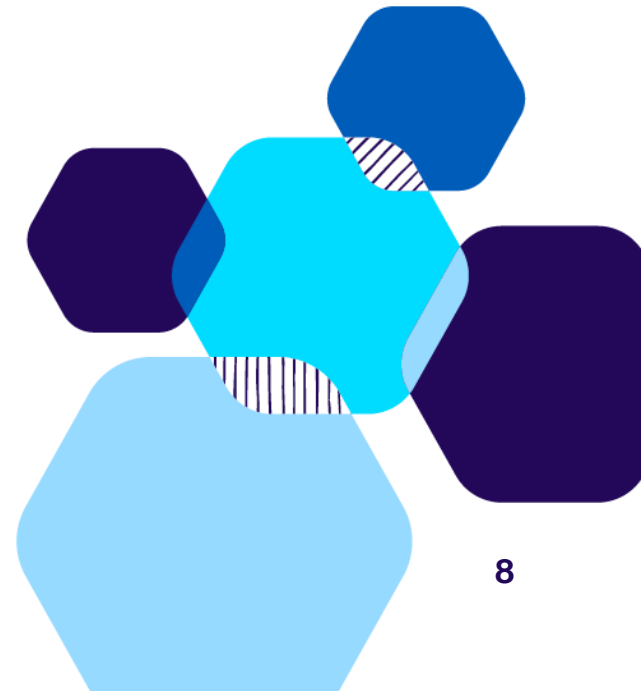
Have you ever written a blog?



**Yes?, what was it about?
No? What would it be about**



What makes a good blog?



Stage: how to write a blog

3. Create an Outline

- Plan the structure of your blog post.
- Include an introduction, body, and conclusion.

4. Write the First Draft

- Start with a catchy headline.
- Write in a clear and engaging style.
- Use subheadings, bullet points, and images.

1/ Choose a Topic

Select a subject you are passionate about.
Ensure it is relevant to your audience.

2/ Research

Gather information from reliable sources.
Take notes and organize your thoughts.

how to write a blog (cont'd)

5. Edit and Proofread

- Check for grammar and spelling errors.
- Ensure the content flows logically.
- Get feedback from others if possible.

6. Publish and Promote

- Choose a blogging platform.
- Share your post on social media and other channels.
- Engage with your readers through comments and feedback.

7. Use these platforms

- Medium
- Blogger
- Blogspot
- Substack – can even get paid
- WordPress
- Etc

Our UNELTA project



“Centring ELT in my Local Community: Teachers Blogging Gender-Just Climate Action,” is spearheaded by UNELTA in collaboration with the English Language Professionals Association of Kenya (ELPAK). The project aims to engage teachers from the two countries to collaborate and blog on the following themes

- Climate Change
- Gender Equality
- Inclusion
- Assessment

Blogging ELPK x UNELTA

- Ugandan and Kenyan teachers tandem paired to write blog posts
- Joint regular meetings - review blog posts and share lessons learnt
- Sharing local initiatives from both countries in the blogposts
- Face to face trainings & virtual engagements to support teachers in the local chapters
- 12 blogs published so far!





Imagine walking through the bustling streets of Kampala, Uganda's vibrant capital, or navigating the vibrant energy of any Kenyan city, let's say Nairobi. The air is alive with the sounds of children playing, vendors calling out their wares, and the constant hum of city life. Yet, beneath this lively surface lies a pressing challenge: climate change.

In regions like Bududa and Kasese in Uganda, and across many parts of Kenya, the harsh realities of climate change are undeniable. Devastating floods and landslides have disrupted lives and communities, forcing schools to close and leaving lasting scars. These events, tragically, have even claimed lives, and in Kenya and in Uganda.

In Kenya, recent floods submerged or destroyed over 62,000 primary schools. More than 20,000 toilet blocks had either been sunken or submerged by the raging floodwaters. This posed a very serious health risk to over 1.5 million school children across the country as reported by the Elimu bora working group report on the impact of 2024 deadly floods on schools. This has not been a unique situation. In the past years some learners in flood affected areas have missed doing their national examination due to floods.

Climate change has contributed to severe floods in recent years. Consequently, affecting and disrupting learning and education activities in

In Uganda, one of the most inspiring aspects of our work was seeing students transform waste into resources. By teaching them how to repurpose materials into useful items, we demonstrated the value of recycling while equipping them with practical skills. As one student put it,

"It's amazing to turn something that seemed useless into something beautiful and valuable."



Students of Kansanga Seed Secondary School in Uganda posing with the bags and jewelry they made from plastic

After hearing from Her Excellency Kate Airey, the then British High Commissioner to Uganda, one student shared,



Photo: Rukia Mohamed (in hijab), planting trees with students from various schools during a Climate Change Conference in Nairobi, June 2024

By encouraging students to share their experiences of climate change and fostering empathy and connection while developing critical thinking skills by discussing solutions to climate challenges, teachers stimulate students' agency to act. This change agency is expressed through practical activities and projects. The projects can be utilized as authentic contexts for both English language teaching, addressing the climate challenge, and their resilience in dealing with the challenges brought about by climate change. As an example, if students take the lead in drafting correspondences with a Forestry Authority to motivate their need to plant trees in a section of their school land, that would be useful for developing their communication skills, thinking critically about how to develop their arguments and present them in a way that attracts the attention of the authority. When the tree seedlings are received, the students are involved in tree planting, working together and thereby developing collaborative and problem-solving skills. By knowing that they have done something of great value now and for posterity, their minds are soothed. If enough such activities are carried out, green belts will be created around schools and future generations will have much less of a climate burden to deal with. Such is the vision and approach of one of the co-authors of this blog, Rukia (pictured above, in action). We both share in this vision and are engaged in continuous professional development efforts to support teachers as they embark on this vision.

Without a doubt, climate change will continue to shape the realities of our learners. English language teaching professionals have a moral and professional responsibility, as do other teachers, to take action. This involves not only equipping students with language skills but also addressing the broader challenges they face due to climate change.

What steps can you take in your teaching practice to address climate change trauma and inspire action?

Are you aware that there are short courses such as 'Climate Action in the Language Classroom' that can help you up-skill on how to integrate climate action in your classroom? Here is one offered by the British Council that you, reader, are highly encouraged to consider taking: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/training/climate-action-language-education>

About the bloggers:

Rukia Mohamed is the Secretary General at the English Language Professionals of Kenya (ELPAK).
Amoni Kitooke is a Strategy Adviser at the Uganda National English Language Teachers Association (UNELTA).

How is gender related to climate action blogging?



Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change. For instance, 80% of people displaced by CC are women – UN Women

- Pre-existing imbalances make women and girls more vulnerable to the effects of CC
- Fetching firewood
- Fumes from poor energy sources
- Fetching water

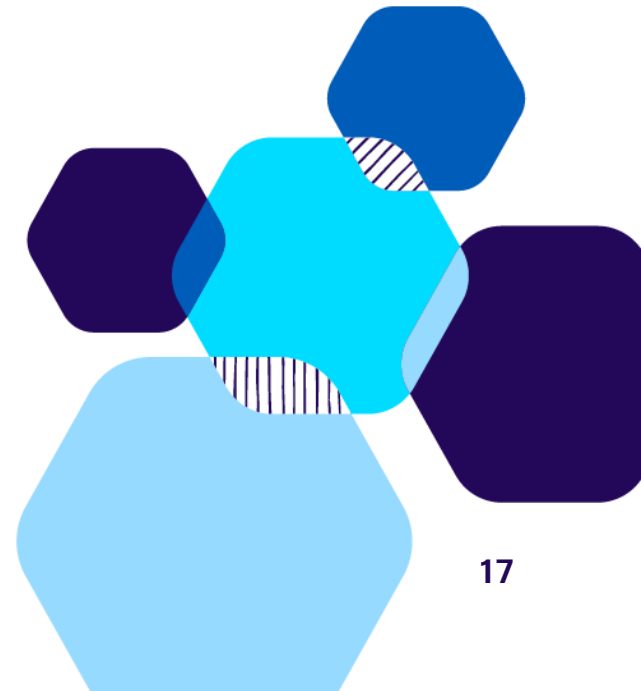
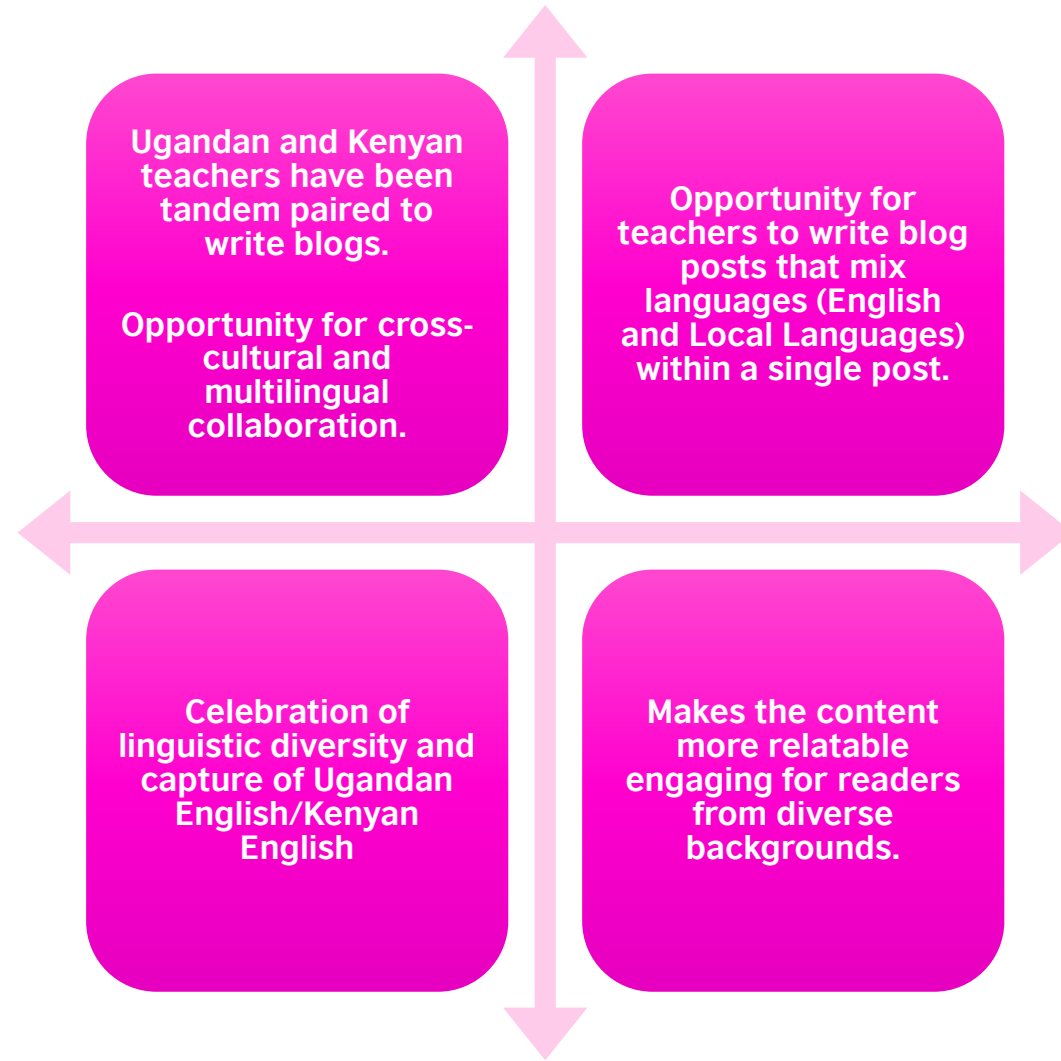
How is gender related to climate action blogging?

- Celebrate contributions of the marginalised
- Amplifying voices of women and marginalized genders, highlighting their unique experiences with CC.
- Awareness of how climate change impacts genders differently
- Highlight existing gender inequalities including limited access to resources, decision-making power



Rural women, often overlooked yet undeniably powerful, are the unsung heroes of climate action. Their deep rooted connection to the land, coupled with their invaluable traditional knowledge, positions them as crucial catalysts for environmental sustainability. From Kenya to Uganda, and across the globe, these women are not merely adapting to climate change but actively shaping a more resilient future. The rural poor women are

How can translanguaging be involved?



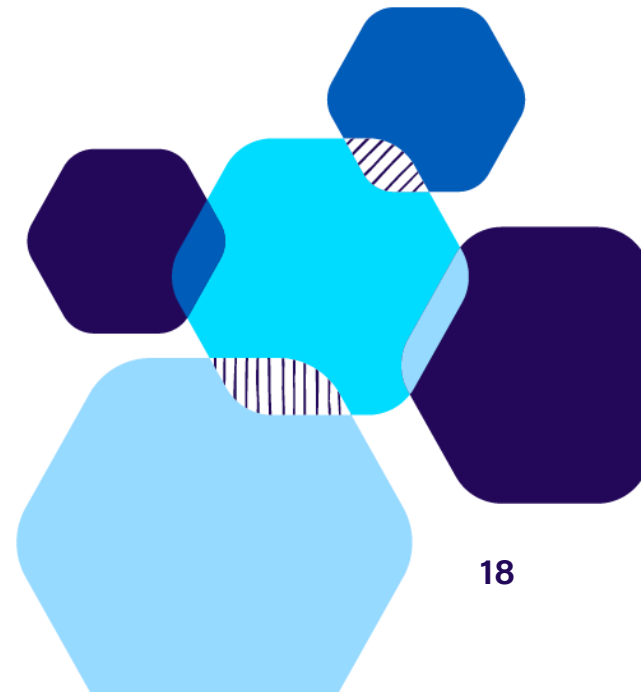
Examples of translanguaging

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to these changes. They often bear the brunt of water scarcity and food shortages.

Abakyala n'abawala be basinga okukosebwa ennyo enkyukakyuka zino. Batera okusanga obuzibu bw'okubulwa amazzi n'emmere.

By working together, we can develop strategies to mitigate these impacts. Blogging allows us to share our experiences and solutions.

Kwa kufanya kazi pamoja, tunaweza kuunda mikakati ya kupunguza athari hizi. Kublogi kunaturuhusu kushiriki uzoefu wetu na suluhisho.



Challenges and mitigation



Coordinating Across Borders

regular virtual meetings, WhatsApp groups



Technological Barriers/gaps

technical support and training blogging platforms' tutorials



Diverse Educational Contexts

share local initiatives from both countries in their blog posts

Challenges and mitigation (Cont'd)



Sustaining Engagement

Creating deadline calendars
Rewards for best blogs

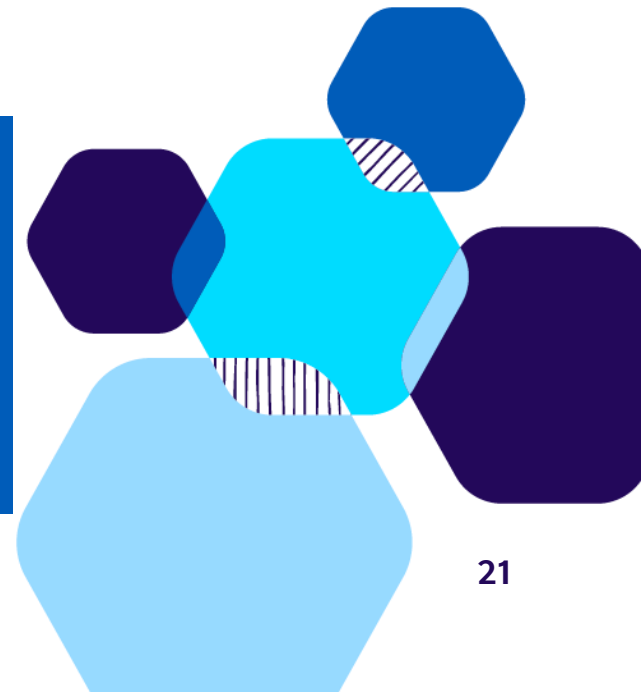
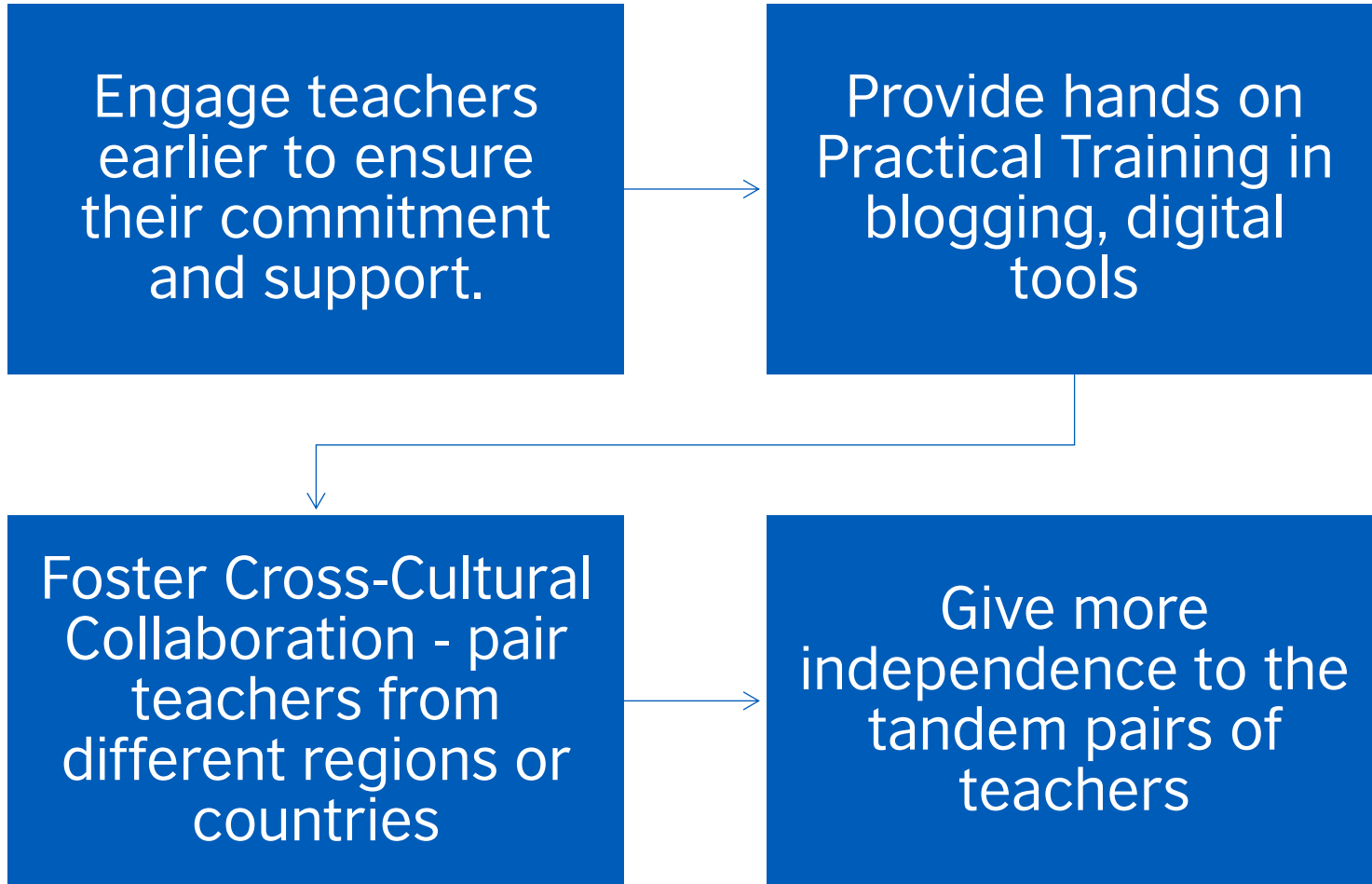
Appropriate Time for Joint Engagements

flexible scheduling
& asynchronous communication

Addressing Sensitive Topics

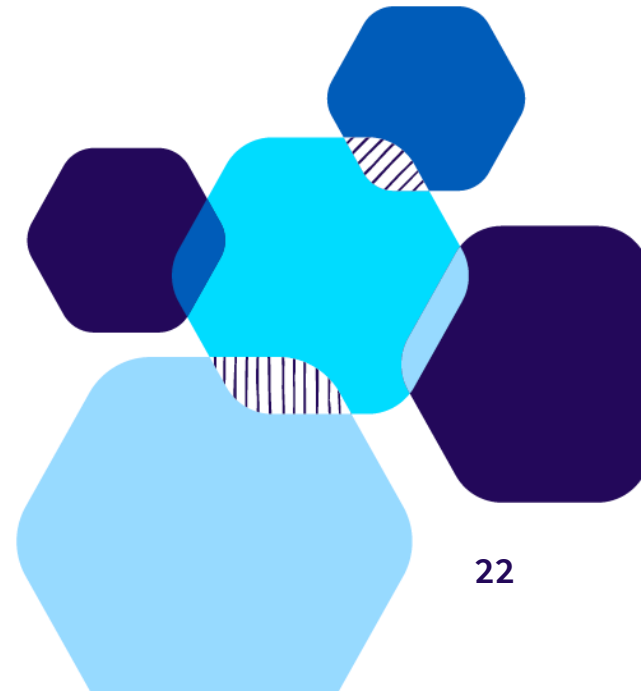
training on inclusive language & culturally sensitive communication

What I would do if I were to implement the project all over again



Take-away tips: Before our discussion in the Telegram English Connects group, please try out:

Writing a blog – you will enjoy the blogging process



Thank you
Any questions?

