

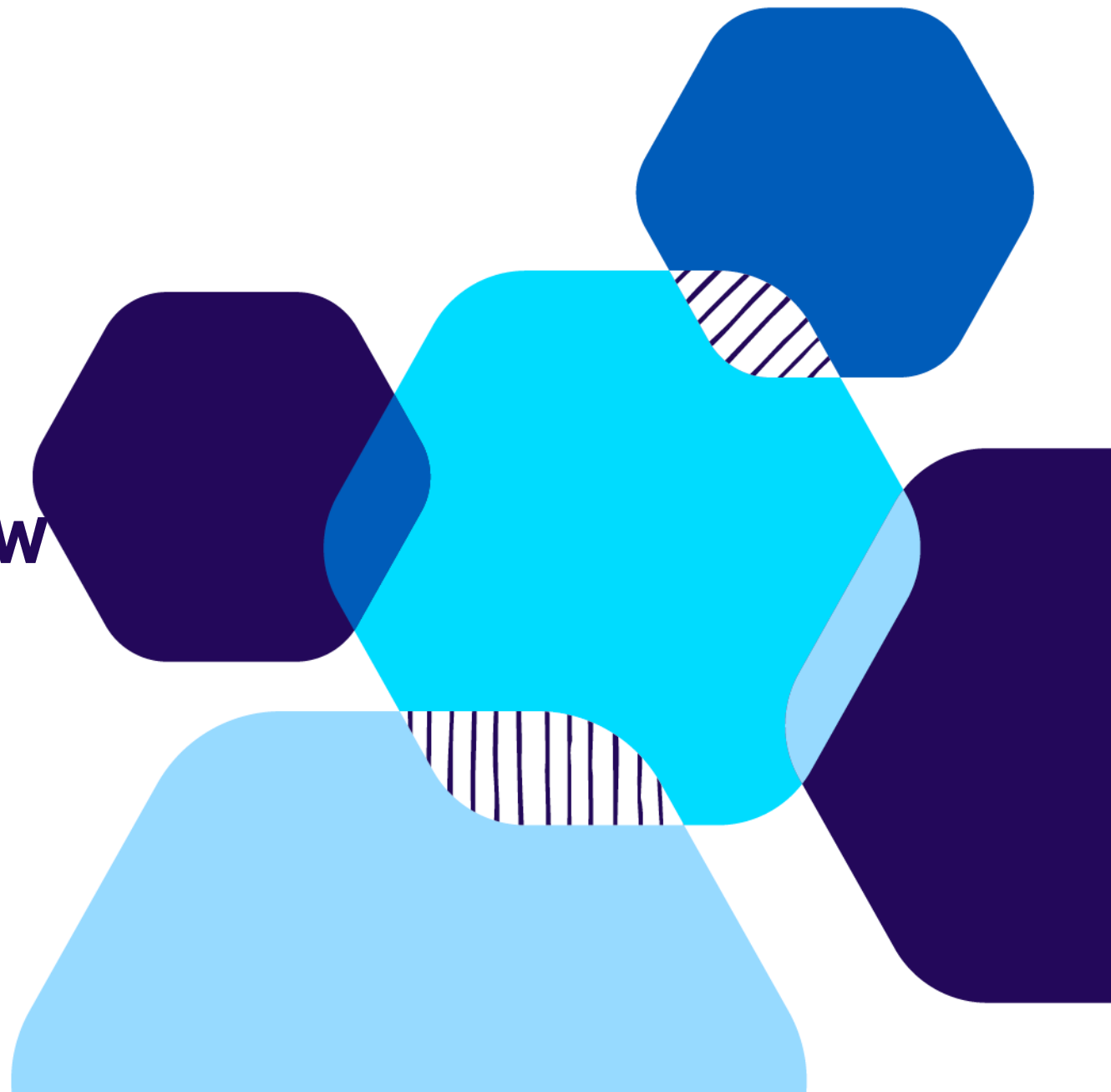
TeachingEnglish

What are SIGs (Special Interest Groups), and how can they help teachers develop?

LATAZ, Zambia

Saturday 4 October 2025

www.britishcouncil.org



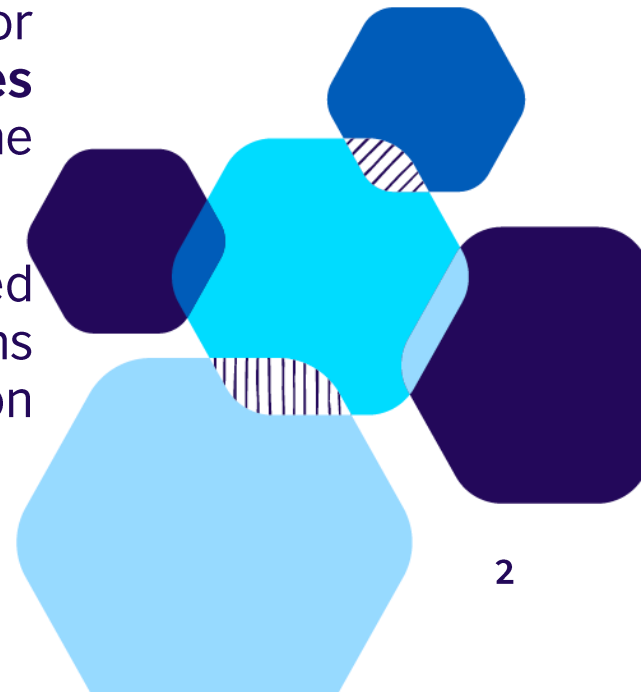
Housekeeping

1. **Please be respectful** at all times to other participants and the presenter. Our webinars are **freely available** to attend by participants in all countries. Please be aware that **comments** you make in the general chat may have a **negative impact** on other participants and their enjoyment of the webinar.

2. **Do not share any personal information** in the general chat that may result in other participants contacting you. This includes **addresses, phone numbers** and **email addresses**.

3. **Do not share links** to your website or any websites that you are promoting for the purposes of making money. Comments that include links to **paid-for websites** for the purpose of promotion will be deleted and you may be removed from the webinar.

4. Please use the general chat to **ask the presenter questions** that are related to the **theme** or **topic** of the webinar only. If participant responses to questions are permitted, you should only make comments that are **relevant** to the question being asked.



Housekeeping

5. The British Council is committed to providing a **safe environment** for everyone we work with so that they are able to participate to their fullest.

If you have any **comments, complaints** or **concerns** related to safety, please contact our **focal point** for this event/training session **Michelle Thiongane** at michelle.thiongane@britishcouncil.org

Alternatively, you can report any **concerns, issues** or **complaints** that you have by email, letter or telephone. Please write to Englishconnects@britishcouncil.org

These will be dealt with in the **strictest confidence** in line with our **safeguarding policies** for children and adults.

Pre-webinar polls:

1/ What is a SIG?

- a) Special Innovative Group **24%**
- b) Saving Interest Group **5%**
- c) Special Interest Group **62%**
- d) Senior In-service group **10%**

2/ What is your special interest area in teaching?

- a) Assessment **27%**
- b) Young learners **27%**
- c) Learning technologies **27%**
- d) Comprehension **18%**

About the speakers



George Kanyama, secondary school English Language teacher, HoD and TA President



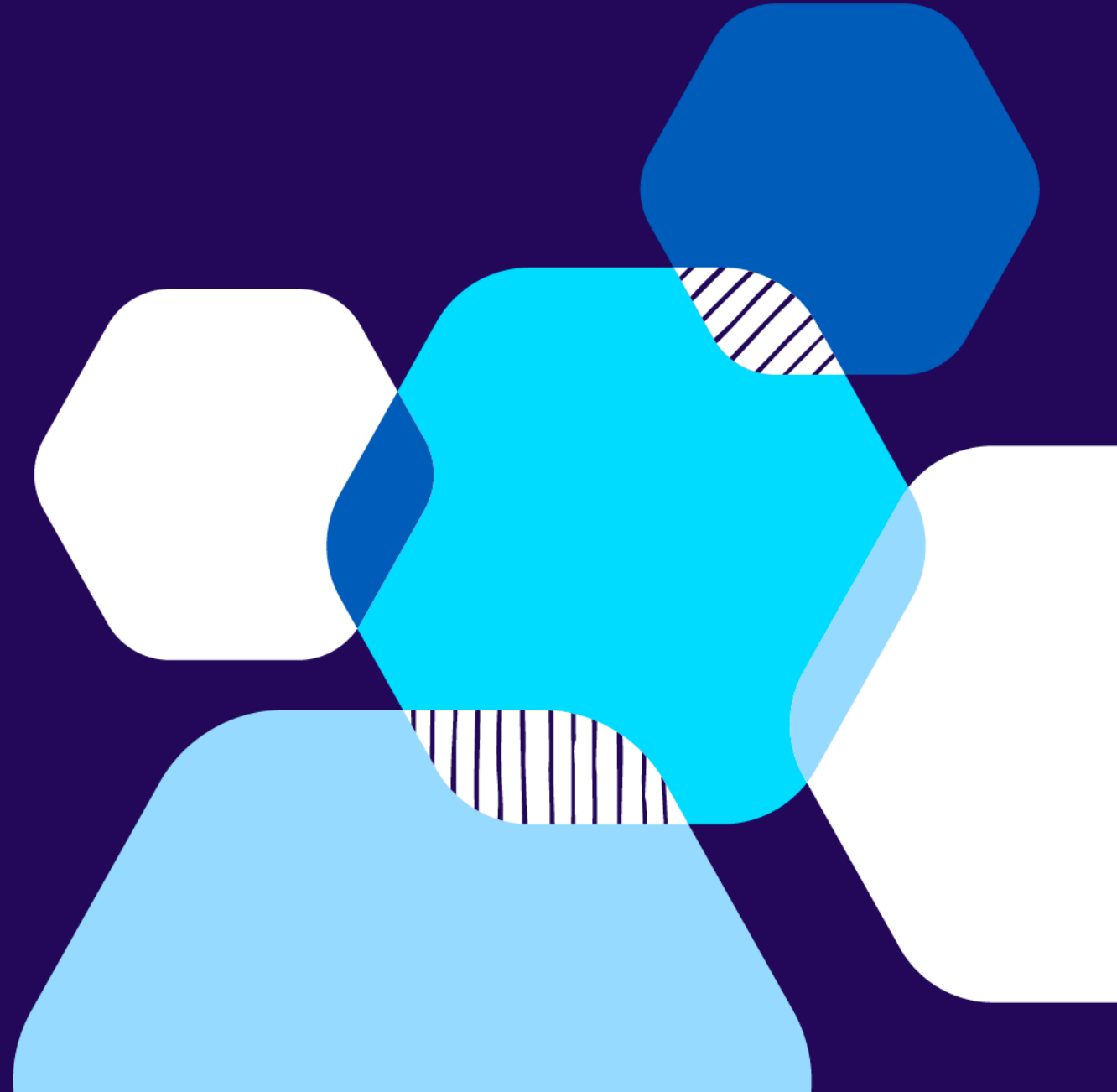
Chrispine Moono is a an HoD, Eng Lan teacher and Lit SIG Coordinator



Gift. M. Banda, secondary school English Language teacher, LT SIG Coordinator

Objectives:

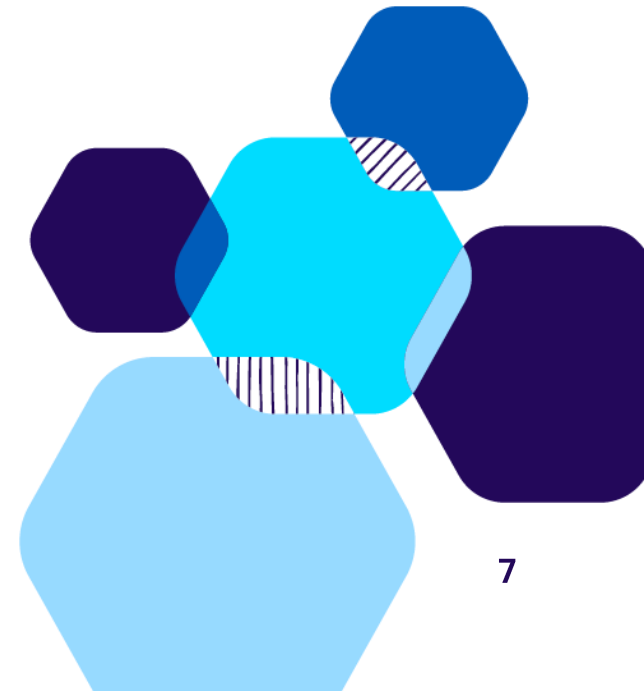
- to share our experience with SIGs in LATAZ
- to find some solutions to common challenges with SIGs
- to help other ELTAs set up SIGs



What are SIGs?

Which definition do you think is best? – please put your choice in the chat:

- a) Groups of teachers set up to help teachers earn more money
- b) Groups of teachers organised around teachers' hobbies eg. football, cooking, dressmaking and growing vegetables
- c) Groups of teachers who like meeting socially and spending time together
- d) Regional groups of teachers who can physically meet together
- e) Groups of teachers organised around their specific passion within teaching



IATEFL (UK) has SIGs (Special Interest Groups) TESOL (USA) has PLNs (Personal Learning Networks)

Do you know the
names of any of the
IATEFL SIGs or TESOL
PLNs?

Put them in the chat

Special interests

Not all English language teaching professionals are the same!

We all have different roles and different areas of professional interest. As a member of IATEFL **you can create the perfect membership for yourself** by choosing to join one or more of our **16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**. Our SIGs each focus on a different area of English language teaching, and provide the chance for members to share knowledge and best practice.

Each Special Interest Group provides a range of benefits for its members. These can include: dedicated forums and newsletters, webinars and web conferences, podcasts, discounts on courses, and a busy programme of teacher training events and workshops organised around the world each year.

SIG membership:

- Cost for individual members: £24.50
- Cost for institutional members: £38

To add a Special Interest Group to your membership, log in to 'My Dashboard' on this website.

IATEFL – which SIG would you join?



Interest Sections

Interest Sections (ISs) review current practice and research in areas of English language teaching and learning. ISs work on communications, member engagement, and leadership development. They also sponsor projects and engage in year-round outreach.

- Adult Education
- Applied Linguistics
- Bilingual-Multilingual Education
- Computer-Assisted Language Learning
- English as a Foreign Language
- English for Specific Purposes
- Higher Education
- Intercultural Communication
- International Teaching Assistants
- Materials Writers
- "Nonnative" English Speaker Teachers
- Pre-K–12
- Program Administration
- Reading and Vocabulary
- Refugee Concerns
- Second Language Writing
- Social Responsibility
- Speech, Pronunciation, and Listening
- Supporting Students with Disabilities
- Teacher Educator

Professional Learning Networks

Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) are informal, discussion groups that typically emerge in response to specific and timely issues. They are structured by TESOL members, and they form and dissolve as needed.

- Arts and Creativity
- Assessment Issues
- Black English Language Professionals & Friends
- Career Path Development
- Extensive Reading USA
- Faith in English Language Teaching
- Global Education
- LGBTQ+

Do you know of any Special Interest Groups?

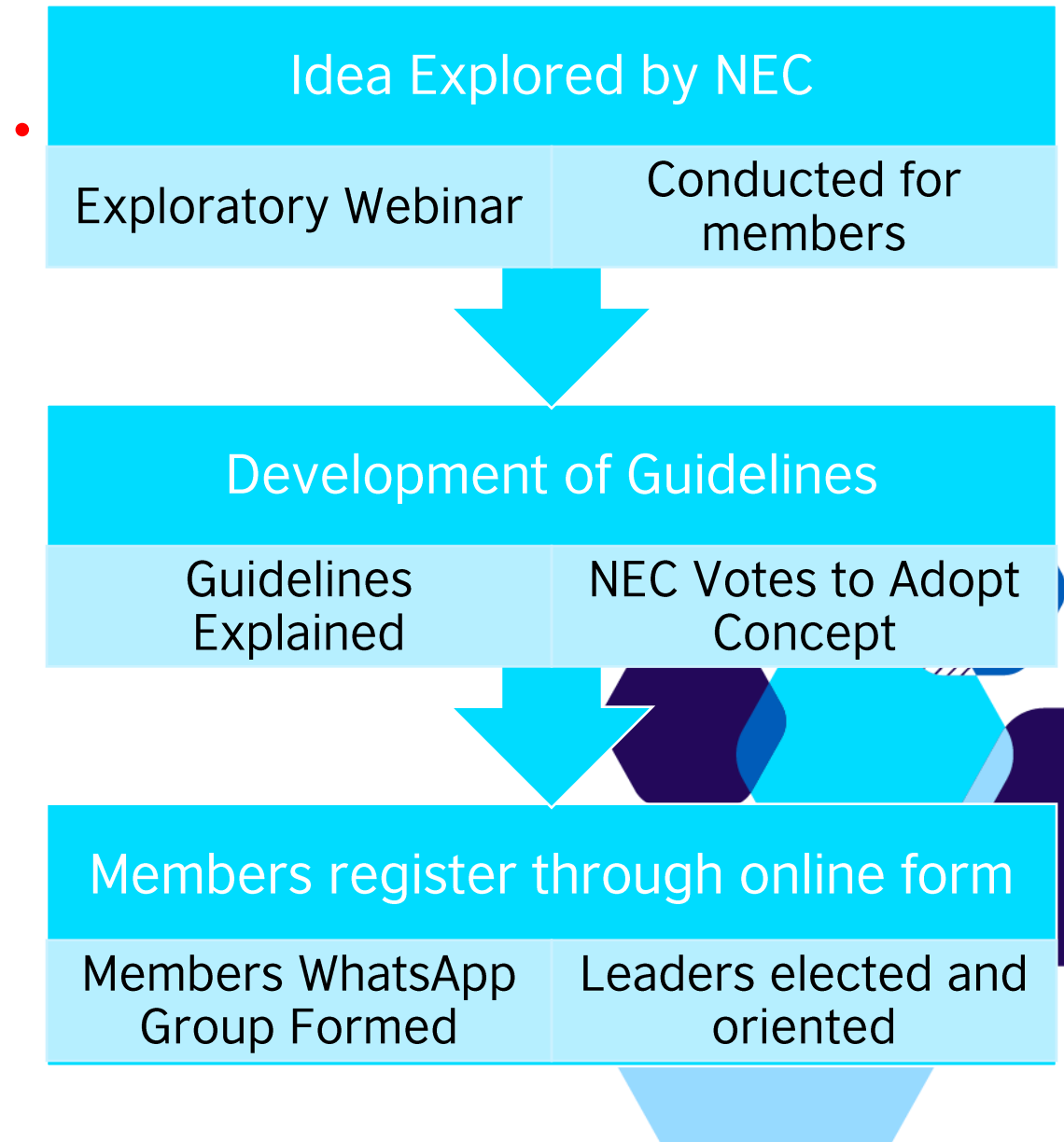
- a. Do you have any SIGs in your country / Teaching Association?
- b. Are there any in Africa ELTA?
- c. What is your Special Interest in teaching?

Africa ELTA Female Leadership Mentoring Program

Africa ELTA Open Educational Resources (OER) Mentoring Program

Our model, and how we developed the SIGs

- Established in 2023 from IATEFL model
- To provide specialised attention to teachers' individual needs
- 12 were established and active in their first year (CCISIG, LTSIG, PLSIG, LitSIG, TEDSIG, LaMSIG, IPSENSIG, MatWrSIG, TEASIG, CDSIG, BusComSIG, ReSIG)
- 7 took off immediately, and 5 are still active now (CCISIG, LTSIG, PLSIG, LitSIG, TEDSIG, LaMSIG, IPSENSIG)



Some thoughts

Goal – to provide a wide range of opportunities for every member's participation in association activities.

Lessons learned

- Introduced too many at a time
- Support model for SIG committees needed more refinement
- All parts of the association needed more time to buy into the concept
- Membership fee needs revision to sustain the idea



We will now present these 5 SIGs, but before we do:

- a) What sort of activities do you think they have done?**
- b) What challenges do you think they have had?**
- c) What plans do you think they have for the future?**

- 1. Learning Technologies SIG**
- 2. Teacher Education and Development SIG**
- 3. Literature SIG**
- 4. Primary Literacy SIG**
- 5. Leadership and Management SIG**

Please put your ideas in the chat

1/ Learning Technologies SIG

To enhance the integration of ICT into language teaching and learning among language teachers in Zambian schools.

To develop teachers' digital literacy and pedagogical skills.

To create a supportive network for sharing best practices among Zambian educators in language teaching using ICT.

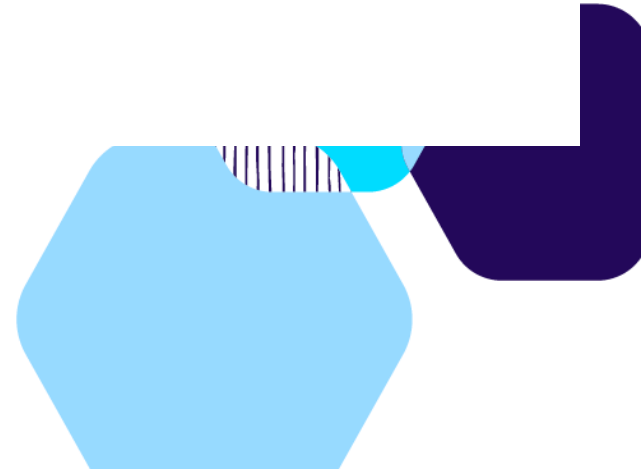
Activities

- Webinars on integrating ICT into language teaching
- Peer-learning sessions and mentorship programs to support ICT integration in language teaching
- Coordinated with various district education offices to support ICT adoption in schools

Challenges

- Limited access to reliable internet and digital devices in rural schools
- Uneven digital literacy levels among teachers
- Limited funding for nationwide teacher training programs
- Resistance to adopting technology-based teaching methods in some schools

Can you suggest solutions for these challenges? – in the chat



Plans for the future

- Expand teacher training programs across the country
- Develop interactive e-learning modules tailored to Zambian curricula
- Strengthen partnership with the British Council on projects and leverage their platforms to share resources and best practices
- Research to assess the impact of ICT integration in Zambian classrooms



2/ Teacher Education and Development SIG – Kanyanga Kalyata

Leading research on pre-service and in-service teacher training opportunities.

Informing the association's position on the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service training programmes for language teachers.

Supporting language teachers and teacher trainers in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through talks, workshops, and webinars

Activities

- Planning, coordination, and success of the LATAZ National Conference, Mansa Aug 2024
- Set of guidelines to enhance the training of both pre-service and in-service language teachers in Zambia
- Co-authored an academic article on Communicative Deficiencies among college students in academic engagements

Challenges

- No pre-service students involved in LATAZ activities.
- Limited participation of teacher trainers in SIG activities
- Limited funding

How can we overcome these challenges?
Please make suggestions in the chat



Plans

- Revitalise debate, poetry and drama clubs in colleges of education to enhance students' language skills and participation in LATAZ
- Link teacher trainers to local scholarship opportunities and other targeted professional assistance to enhance participation.
- Utilise digital platforms like Zoom and WhatsApp to conduct activities.
- Market and publicise the SIG through social media and activities to boost visibility.



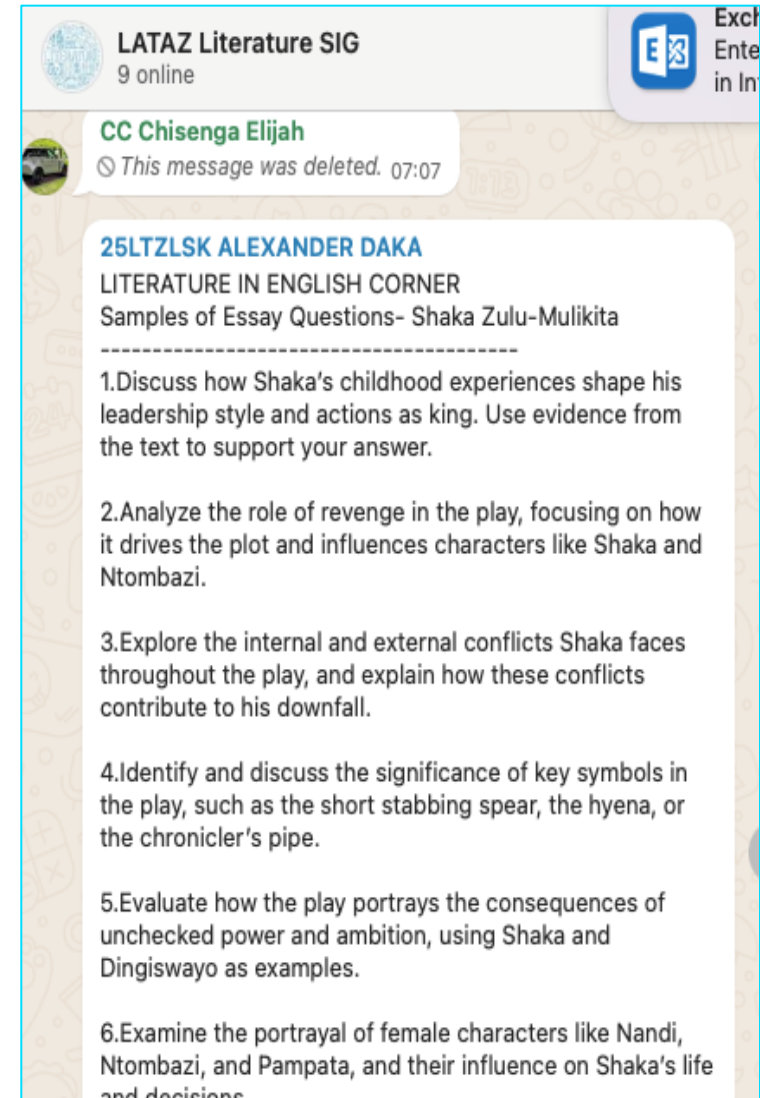
3/ Literature SIG

Main objectives

- Bringing together individuals with a shared passion for literature to exchange ideas, research findings, and critical analytical insights

Activities so far:

- Organising online discussions on pedagogical methods.
- Collaborating with writers and researchers on the promotion of literature on a local level.
- Participated in 2024 LATAZ National Conference



Challenges

- Lack of funding hindering activities like workshops
- Limited participation by many members of the group

Future plans

- Create writing workshops
- Build network and partnerships
- Improve on research and group discussions



4/ Primary literacy SIG

- Participated in National Executive Committee (NEC) planning meetings
- Formulation of a WhatsApp group for effective communication, interaction and information dissemination
- Participated in the national conference held in Mansa in 2024
- Participated in the district workshops held in 2024 and 2025 respectively
- Participated in a webinar series
- Held a sensitization workshop under PRELIM.



Challenges

- Teachers are not so active in participating in activities, especially via Zoom
- Limited digital illiteracy among
- The power outages faced by the country
- Lack of certification for activity participants
- Limited broadband in some places

Future plans

- To develop a standard certificate for participants
- Record sessions for future use
- Enhance digital literacy by conducting various edutech apps use sessions

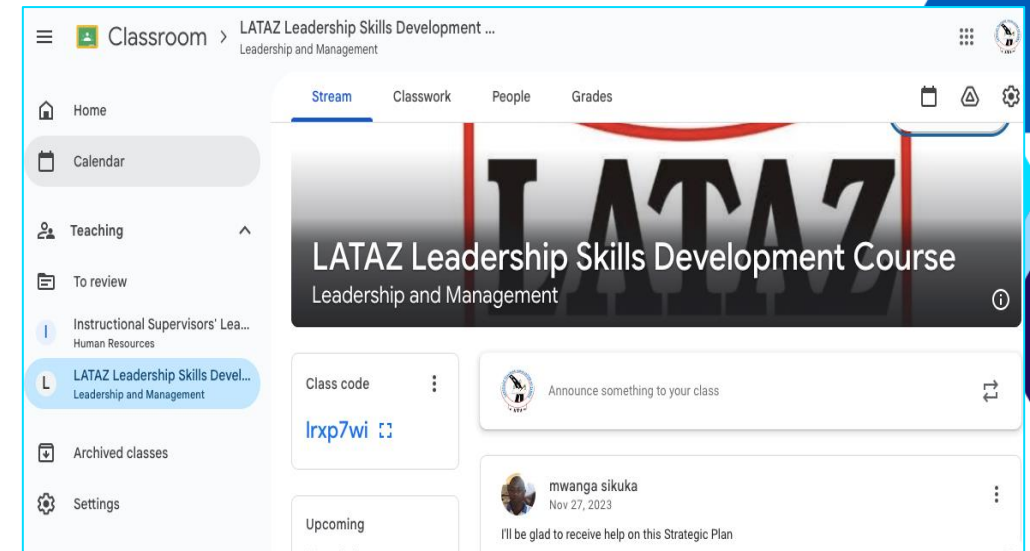
5/ Leadership and Management Special Interest Group

Aims

- Lead research in leadership and management.
- To develop a mentorship programme.
- Develop and review leadership handbooks, guidelines and induction booklet.
- Hold discussions, webinars, trainings, seminars and workshops in leadership and management.

Activities

- Orientation of committee members.
- Held discussions and f2f workshop
- Online Leadership Course



Challenges

- Funding for face-to-face activities
- Limited publicity of the SIG to elicit member participation
- Poor coordination with regional leaders

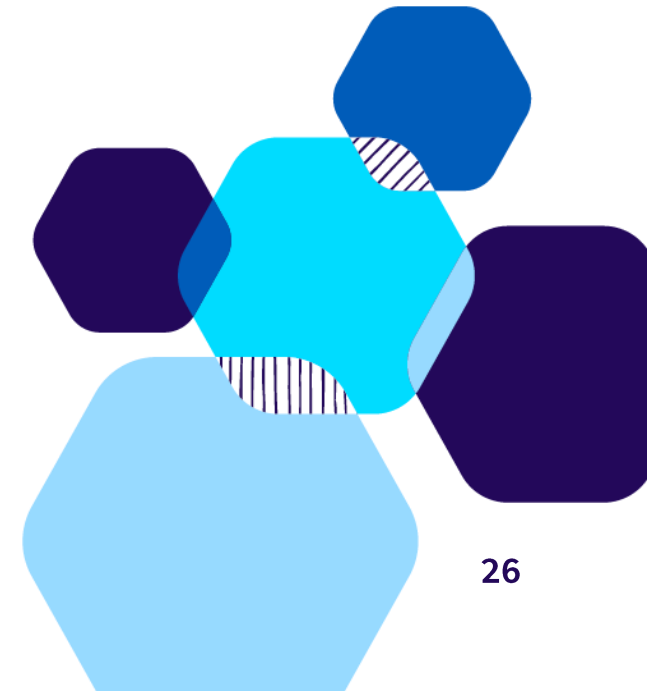
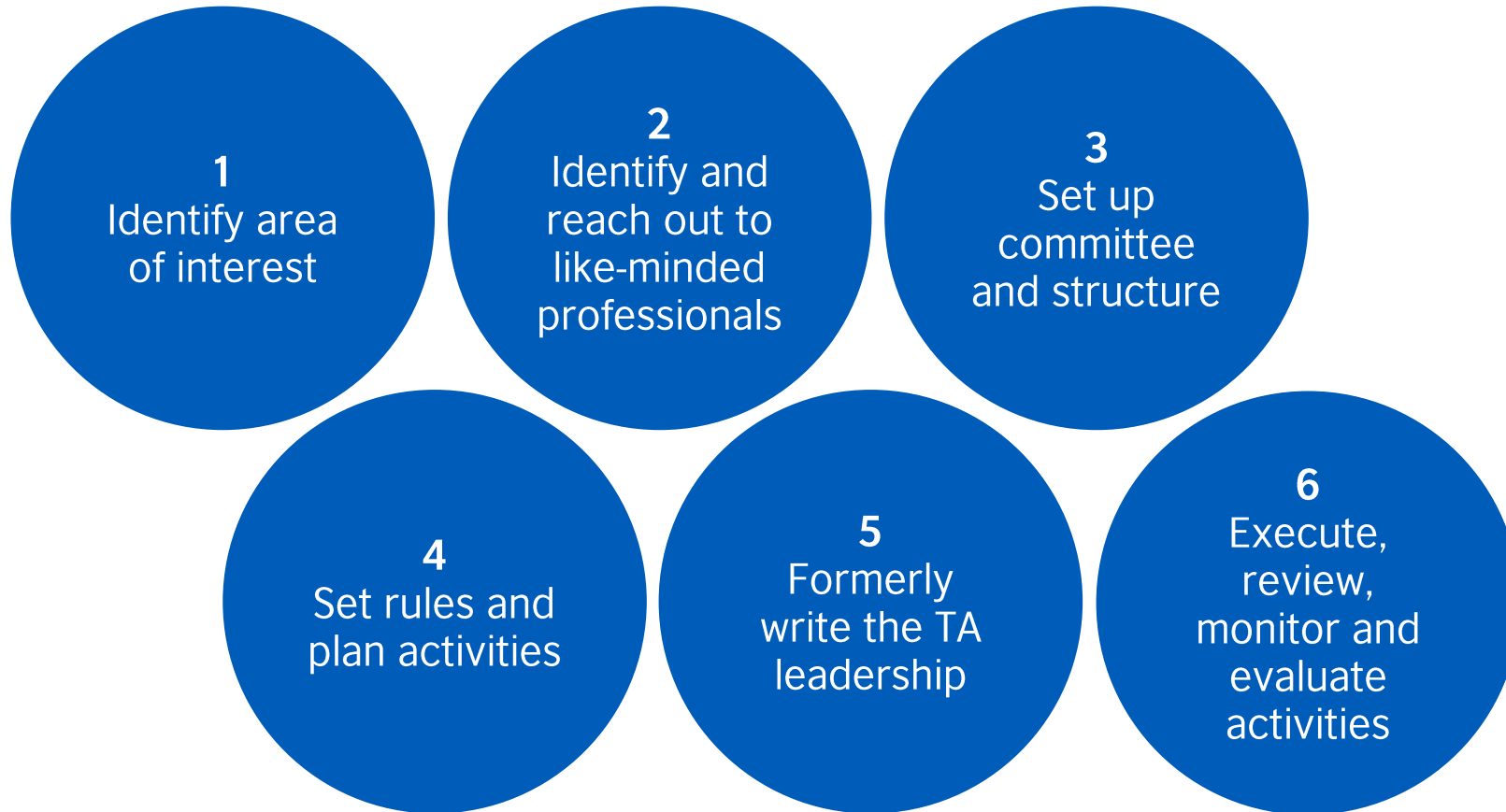
Future Plans

- Conduct a SWOT analysis by December 2025
- Develop a solid plan of activities for 2026 using SMART principle
- Increase publicity through Social Media



What SIGs would be useful in your context / country?

Steps to set up some SIGs:



Takeaway Tips: Try out in class before our Friday Telegram Discussion

1/ Plan to start up some SIGs – Which? Why? How?

2/ Find out more about SIGs, and TAGs (Teacher Activity Groups) e.g. watch this TeachingEnglish webinar on TAGs in 6 countries eg India and Egypt: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/teacher-activity-groups-effective-model-professional>

Or look at this publication about the TAGs:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/case-studies-insights-and-research/professional-development-through-teacher-activity>

Professional development through Teacher Activity Groups

This report examines use of a model of continuing professional development (CPD) called Teacher Activity Groups (TAGs).



Recommended

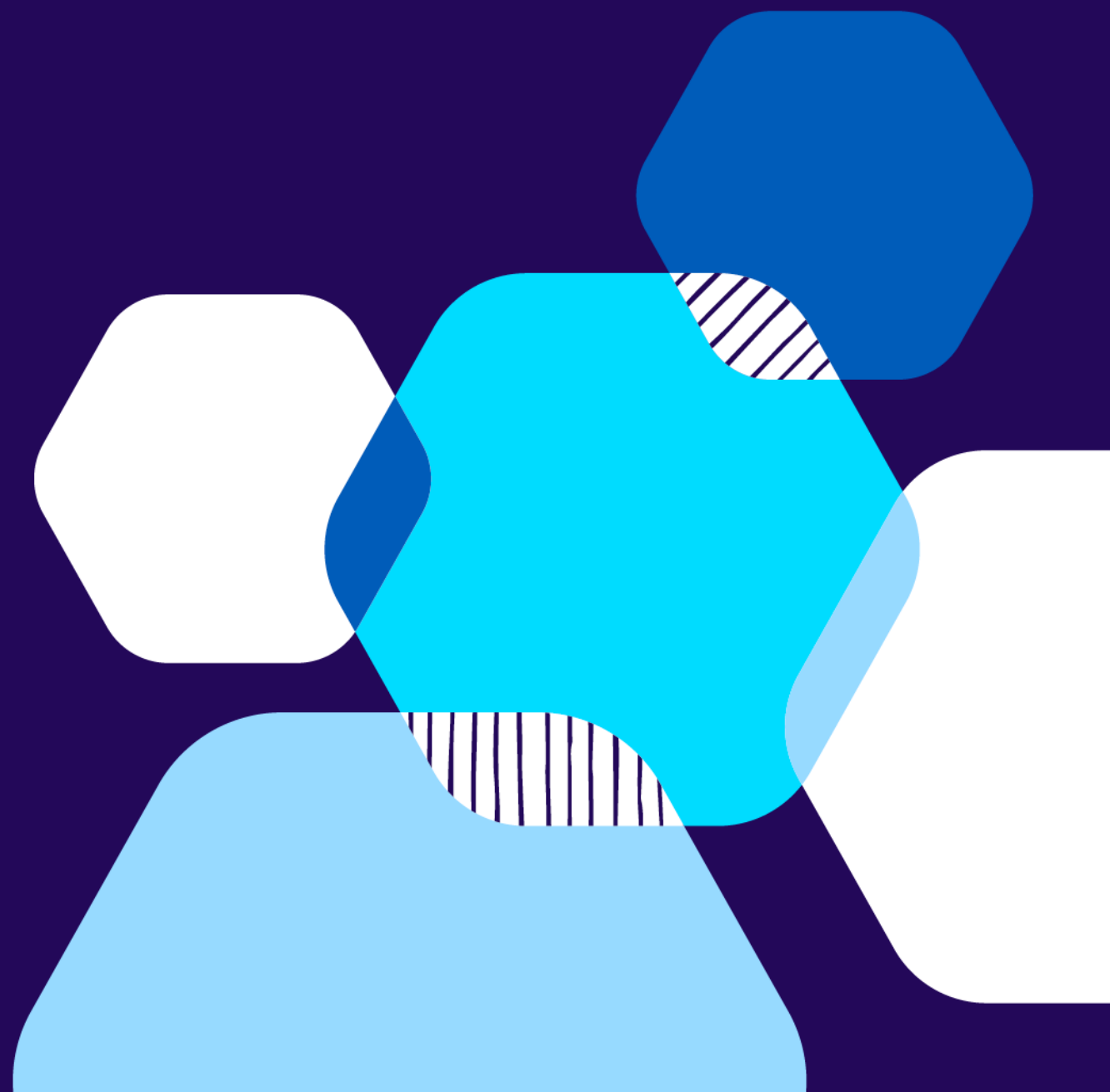


Food I like/don't like

In this enjoyable lesson for primary, learners focus on food vocabulary and do a class ...

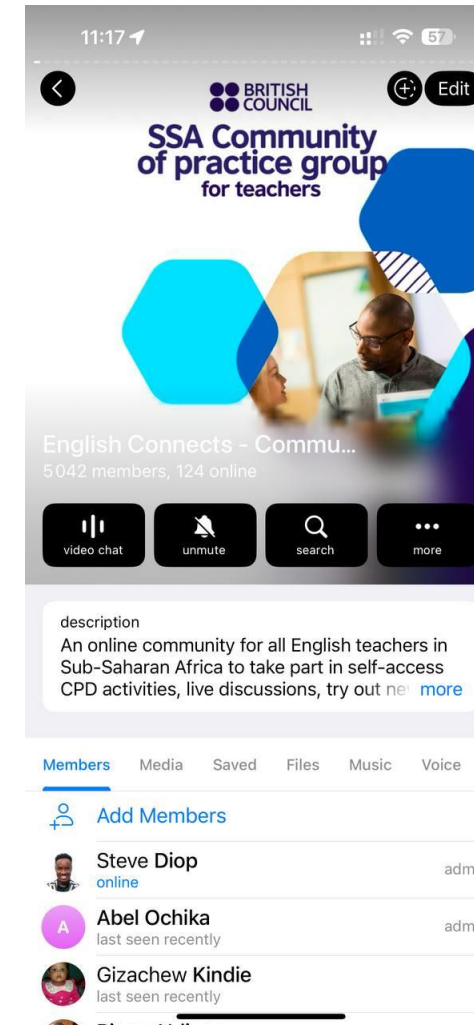
5 - 12 A1 60

Thank you
Any questions?



Unlock your professional growth with the English Connects Community of Practice

TeachingEnglish supports a vibrant Community of Practice connecting teachers and teacher educators across the region through the **Telegram** app. This group serves as a dynamic hub for sharing innovative teaching practices, exploring educational trends, and collaborating on impactful projects. Join us today: <https://bit.ly/4lgZMm8>



World Teachers' Day 2025

This year, our World Teachers' Day conference is a three-day online event with the theme, 'Global voices, future focus'.

We're proud to feature three of our community's top educators, who will be sharing their expertise in a series of live sessions. Don't miss these incredible speakers:

Iyabo Akintola (Nigeria)
Yiviri Rasifatu & Anestin Lum (Cameroon)

Register now and get inspired:
<https://eu1.hubs.ly/H0mvrSW0>



Next webinar

Join Bamukunda Hillary for a free webinar to explore creative ways to bridge inclusion in resource-limited classrooms.

Date
Saturday 18 October 2025

Register today:
<https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/events/bridging-inclusion-resource-limited-classrooms>

