



Teacher professional development through WhatsApp-based Communities of Practice in challenging contexts



The University of Manchester

Gary Motteram¹, Susan Dawson¹ and the other ELTRA project team members: Adjoumani Kouassi⁴, Aubain Adi⁴, Catherine Moto³, Clovis Mbeudeu³, Diana Nditapah³, Felix Kwihangana², Marcos N'Goran⁴, Richard Niyibigira²

Affiliations: University of Manchester¹, UK; Association of Teachers of English in Rwanda²; Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers' Association³; Côte d'Ivoire National English Language Teaching Association⁴

Overview

- Project background
- Country profiles
- Research Design
- Why WhatsApp?
- The Workshop design
- Challenges
- Possibilities
- Taking learning forward
- Papers form the projects



Project background

- Links directly to **SDG 4c** (By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States)
- Developed from initial work in **Pakistan (2013-2015)**, which led on to an **IATEFL Project** (CI-ATEFL -- now CINELTA) in 2016) and work with **Syrian teachers** who are refugees in Jordan in 2016-17 (ESRC IAA -- UoM funding)
- **British Council ELTRA project** funding (2018-19) exploring good practice in teacher development using WhatsApp: focuses on three countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and Rwanda
- Links to the **English Connects** project (2019) -- teachers and trainers were introduced to WhatsApp as a part of this project

Country profiles (nature of the fragility)

Post conflict (Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda)/ in conflict (Cameroon)

Strikes (Côte d'Ivoire, Jan - March 2019) -- housing supplements

Abductions and killing of English teachers (Cameroon)

Poor infrastructure -- limited resources/ poorly maintained schools/ limited reporting systems/ lack of reliable data

Large classes -- there is a range, reported to be as high as 150 (we saw 120)

Low pay + teachers expected to pay for resources (photocopying, their own textbooks, attending I-ST)

Teaching and Learning context

Many similarities *between* countries

Many differences *within* each country e.g. Cameroon

Apart from the regular classroom and library, my school has a multimedia center where sometimes these learners receive online lessons (audiovisual)

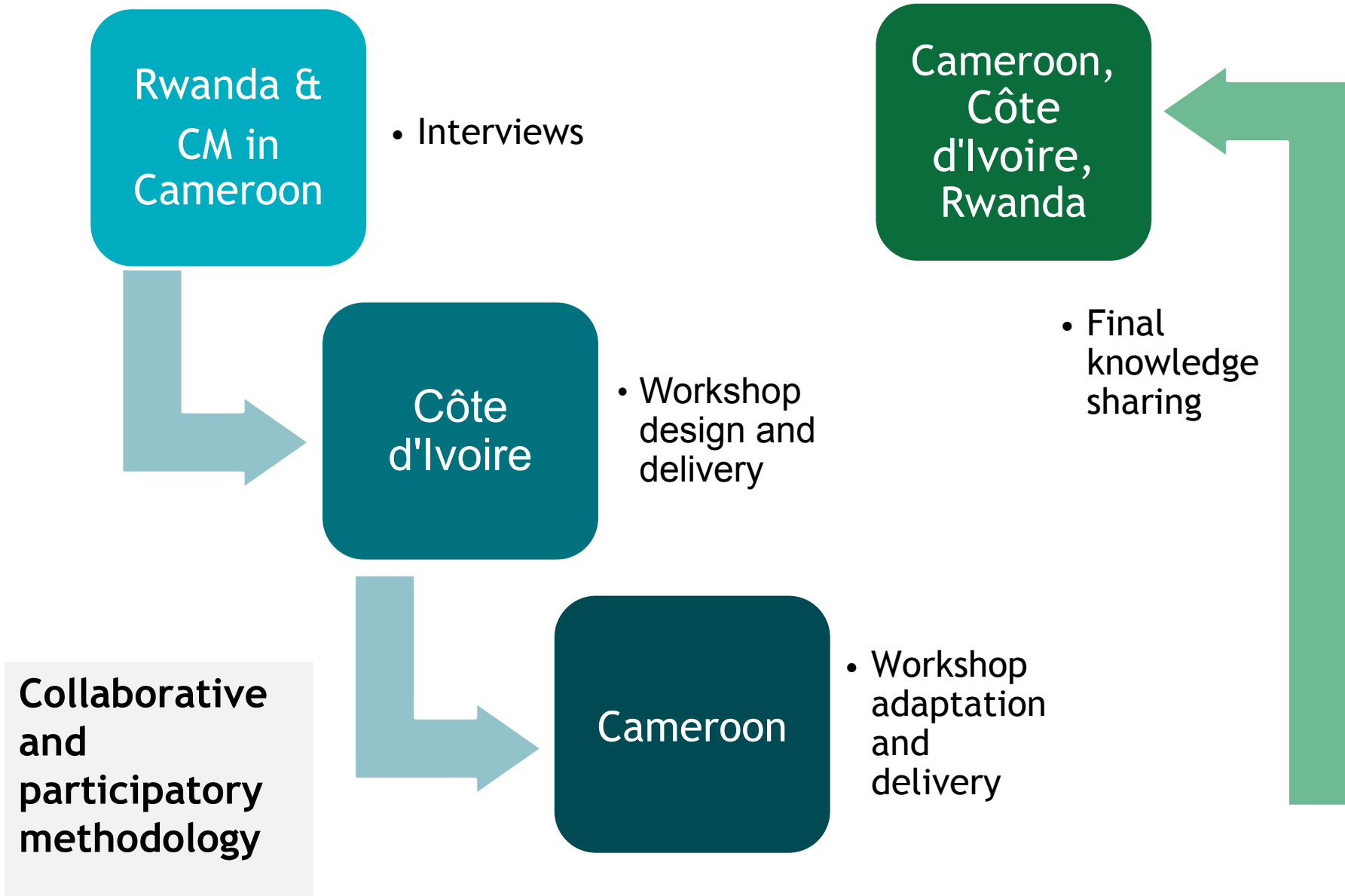
My school is located in a rural area deprived of electricity and thus the school has very limited facilities. Most of the work is manual. However, it's easier to follow up on task given class sizes are very manageable - an average of 25 students per class.

Research design

- Collaborative - partners as co-researchers
- Knowledge sharing across borders

Research Questions

1. **How can ‘low tech’ forms of digital communication contribute to language teacher development in challenging contexts?**
2. **What forms of practice emerge as more established mobile communities collaborate with teachers across borders to establish new mobile communities?**
3. What forms of resilience emerge through the ‘low tech’ digital communities?



Why WhatsApp?

Lack of other resources

Access to technology according to the survey

% (n=100)	Desktop	Laptop	Tablet	Mobile phone
Cameroon (n= 20)	30	85	40	95
Côte d'Ivoire (n= 54)	26	69	17	91
Rwanda (n=26)	15	81	12	96
Total % across all three countries	24	75	20	93

Affordances of tools: varies according to context and tools

Workshop locations



- Rural, agricultural communities
- Lack of CPD opportunities
- Many English teachers
 - Daloa - 393
 - Abengourou - 104
- Dissemination possibilities



Workshop design (Ia)

Sharing knowledge
between Rwanda and
Cote d'Ivoire

Three key areas of learning:

- Communities of Practice as a democratic process
- Size of a Community of Practice
- Need for personal preparation

... making it more democratic, like not now we're becoming the top down people, no no, making it more democratic, having them make their own decisions, that's what I really learnt from the interviews.

Goma-Bi, I1

Workshop design (Ib)

Sharing knowledge
between Cameroon and
Côte d'Ivoire

Need for personal preparation

I got prepared before going for the training, so when I reached the place and I realised we had 3 or 4 people who [didn't have WhatsApp] I mean it was not so difficult for me to tell them because I was prepared for that.

Boahia, I1

Workshop design (Ic)

Sharing knowledge
between Cameroon and
Côte d'Ivoire

Size of CoPs

Seriously before I was thinking it should be many people, like 50 you know, but C said even 10 or 15 is enough, you know it isn't necessary, [this was] one reason even we just focus on 20, but we were expecting like 100, because for us it's a training we need many many people, we don't need many many people.

Goma-Bi, I1

Workshop design (II)

Building on local
knowledge in Côte
d'Ivoire

Need to change teacher beliefs and perceptions of professional development

So the workshop was designed, first of all to change minds, change beliefs, to challenge pre-established beliefs of professional development.

Goma-Bi, I1

... the new trends of professional development, like joining associations, joining communities, virtual communities and all this.

Goma-Bi, I1

The Abengourou workshop



Digital Skills for Educators: Using WhatsApp for Teacher Professional Development

Challenges

Context - contrast
between Daloa and
Abengourou
Equity? Equal access?

It's like big villages, so when they are back to their village, to their area, it is a little bit difficult for them to connect to the internet, most of the time they are short of data, they have to get the money, sometimes they have to come to Abengourou before getting the data for being connected.

Boahia, I2

Challenges

(Ib)

Attitude - desire to take your own professional development into your own hands

They have to be passionate, ... and when you are passionate you find the means to do it, you can find the financial means to buy your own data.

Boahia, I2

Challenges (Ic)

Burn-out -
sustainability?

The challenge I am going through, because I have so many platforms that I am managing, not only am I the community manager for CINELTA, and I have some other WhatsApp groups, and I have so many classes, around 10 classes, and each class we have a platform.

Boahia, I2

Possibilities

Professional
development for our
colleagues

... for my personal
development and my
professional
development. It's a
great chance for me

Boahia, I2

Possibilities: Impact event

Virtual event

Benin, Cameroon, Côte
d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Mali,
Senegal

<https://tateproject.wordpress.com/>



HOME

tagged cote d'ivoire [leave a comment](#)

Experiences of WhatsApp: Mali

June 28, 2019 by Gary Motteram

Mali, a West African country, has more than forty spoken local languages in addition to the not so widely spoken official language French. English is taught as a Foreign Language and is introduced at the middle school level (7th grade) and taught through the secondary, vocational schools and universities. Lack of opportunities makes English teaching ... [Continue reading](#)

[leave a comment](#)

Experiences of WhatsApp: Senegal

June 24, 2019 by Gary Motteram

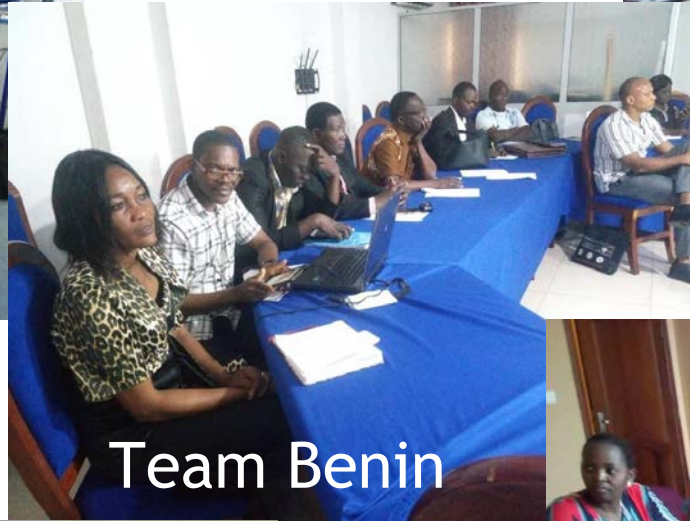
Senegal is a West African country where English is taught as a second language. Students start learning English when they graduate from primary school and it is compulsory until they reach fifth form. In lower sixth and upper-sixth, they can choose another foreign language like Spanish, Portuguese. In the 1970s the Association of Teachers of ... [Continue reading](#)

[leave a comment](#)

Team Côte d'Ivoire



Team Cameroon



Team Benin



Team Rwanda



Team Mali



Team Senegal

Possibilities: WhatsApp

Desire to continue
sharing - African values
and knowledge
(07/08/19)

Mali Absolutely Mr. D, with pleasure.

Sharing is one of African traditional values that we should promote.

Cdl Yes M sharing is part of African

values. But sharing knowledge has been excluded for centuries. I am interested in the sharing values in Africa. Knowledge is less shared because it is the key to freedom and equality. When Amadou Hampâté said when an old man dies is similar to a burning library, he wasn't thinking of this. But it so true. One reason why technology integration in higher Ed is so problematic.

Mali I do agree with you A! That's why we

young generation who understood that should change this perception by keeping on sharing values and knowledge for the betterment of the humanity! I'm sure when we join forces we can address those challenges.

Taking learning forward: WhatsApp

Desire to continue sharing - African values and knowledge

MATE World Teachers Day 2020



Agenda of the Day : TIME in GMT

Date	Periode	Themes and activities	Responsible
05/10/2020	08: 45 – 10: 00	Opening ceremony	Dr. Sory Doumbia, General inspector of English
	09: 00 – 11: 25	MATE New Activities Launching	CPD Faty
	11: 30- 12: 30	CPD sessions on remote teaching	Remote teaching by Oumoul Fadly N'Diaye EFL Trainer from SENEGAL
	16: 00- 17: 00	Covid19 Challenges	Moderator
	20:00 – 21h:00	Remote Teaching & WhatsApp	Patrice Kane, ELT Advisor
	21: 10 - 22: 00	Interview Session	Mamadou Tounkara

WhatsApp

Group info

Search or start new chat

MATE World Teachers Day 14:57
+223 61 39 75 76: May the soul of... 3

Susan Dawson 14:37
✓ I'm not sure. I will have a look.

Cornerstone online 13:29
Andres: Francesco Leoni is inviting you...

Vicars Marmion Neighbours 12:44
+44 7854 853911: Yes no problem! Lot...

ENGLISH WORKSHOP 11:54
+229 96 07 71 81: Thanks prophet

Cornerstone Project 11:12
✓ You might be interested in this web...

CoP Abengourou 06:28
+225 07 48 67 99 added +225 57 68 0...

Motteram family yesterday
Mama: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?>

World Teachers Day 2020

MATE World Teachers Day
Created 21/10/2019 at 15:56

Description
Add group description

Media, Links and Docs

Mute notifications



Taking learning forward: WhatsApp ==> Telegram

English Connects
developments,
building on the original
idea from our project

The British Council's English Connects project has set up an exciting new online community for all secondary school state teachers in Cote d'Ivoire to join teachers from the other 11 participating English Connects countries with the Messenger App 'Telegram'. A British Council trainer will lead weekly Continuous Professional Development (CPD) self-access activities for teachers. There will also be weekly online live discussions, new resources for low resource/large class contexts and opportunities to enter competitions and apply for a UK online training course!



Taking learning forward: New opportunities

We are continuing to build on this work and to spread our learning in various directions

GCRF Pump-priming project in Côte d'Ivoire

Developing language teacher quality and resilience in fragile contexts through inquiry-led practice

ESRC IAA project in Manchester with Cornerstone

Transforming lives, transforming practice: how technology shapes teaching, learning and well-being for vulnerable adults in a time of pandemic

References from the different projects

There have been reports, papers and chapters on the various projects we have been involved in. Here are some of them:

- Motteram, G., Al-Masri, N., Hamouda, H. and Omarali, S. (2020). Exploring Mobile Support for English Language Teachers in a Context of Conflict: Syrian Refugee Teachers in Jordan. In Fassetta, G., Al-Masri, N. and Phipps, A. (Eds.). *Multilingual Online Academic Collaborations as Resistance: Crossing Impassable Borders*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Motteram, G., Dawson, S., & Al-Masri, N. (2020). WhatsApp supported language teacher development: A case study in the Zataari refugee camp. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1-21.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-020-10233-0>
- Motteram, G. & Dawson, S. (2019) Resilience and language teacher development in challenging contexts: Supporting teachers through social media. London: The British Council.
- Motteram, G. (2019) Video conferencing tools as mediating artefacts in English language teacher development in challenging contexts. *The Journal of Educators Online*. https://www.thejeo.com/archive/2019_16_1/motteram
- Motteram, G. (Ed.) (2017) *Teaching and technology: Case studies from India*. New Delhi, India: The British Council.
- Motteram, G. (2016) Membership, belonging, and identity in the twenty-first century. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 70(2): 150-159.

Contact details

Contact: susan.j.dawson@manchester.ac.uk and
gary.motteram@manchester.ac.uk

@susanjdawson1

@garymotteram

<https://tateproject.wordpress.com/>