

PRELIM 3

Cameroon: ELTS-CAMELTA (English language Teacher's Society North West affiliate of Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers Association) with **Oxford International Education Group**

August 2024

Project background

Partnership overview		
Partners	ETA partner	English Language Teacher's Society North West (ELTS-CAMELTA) – affiliate of Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers Association (CAMELTA)
	UKI partner	Oxford International Education Group (OIEG)
User profile	Context overview	This is a supplementary resource for secondary schools. It will be used mostly in large classes of approximately 40+ students. The set up consists mainly of rows of fixed seating and there is no or very little technology available. The majority use only blackboards
	Learner age group(s)	11-17-year-olds
	Curriculum overview	The terms in focus are terms 1, 2 and 3. Each term covers a series of 5-6 topical modules such as daily life, relationships and involvement in communities, media and communication, etc. Each module lists skills and competences students are expected to gain by the end of the module, but the teachers have the freedom to select language areas as they see fit
Teacher support resource package	Resource format and organisation	Three themed student books (1 x full colour digital file; 1 x full colour print file; 1 x black and white print file)
	Resource content	Three teachers' books (1 x black and white digital file; 1 x black and white print file)
	Resource sustainability	Teacher's Support Pack (full colour digital version only [individual pages or sections can be easily printed]); recordings of training workshops
Dissemination	Methods	MP3 listening files
	Timeframe	English and Digital Skills: twelve, 45-minute lessons
	Number of teachers reached	English and Critical Thinking: twelve, 45-minute lessons

Description of the partners

ELTS-CAMELTA North West is an affiliate association to Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers Association (CAMELTA). The association has existed since 1998, before the creation of CAMELTA in 2000.

The association has an average annual membership of two hundred English Language and Literature teachers who spread across the Northwest Region of the country. A total of 40 schools co-operate with the association. The association continuously aims to improve on the standard of English Language proficiency in the region and organises yearly seminars to foster and promote high academic and professional standards.

Oxford International Education Group (OIEG) has provided educational services to international, and UK based students for the last 30 years. The language division of the company usually sees over 30,000 students study a variety of courses every year. The Junior Programmes department is one of the largest young learner providers in the UK. In 2013, the company began negotiations with a number of internationally minded UK universities to establish and manage teaching colleges for international students on their campuses. In 2020, OIEG launched the OI Digital Institute which focuses on delivering high-quality academic courses online.

Key features of the context

From initial stages of the project, ELTS-CAMELTA expressed the need to focus on secondary schools and attempt to fill in a gap in existing resources which would introduce the students to modern topics and learning strategies otherwise relatively inaccessible to Cameroonian teachers and students aged 11-17.

The ongoing conversation along with the initial needs analysis conducted in February 2023 with thirty-six Cameroonian teachers revealed the following key aspects of their teaching context:

- large classes, ranging from 15-60+ pupils per class
- mostly using blackboard only for teaching
- minimal or no tech equipment.

The national curriculum invites teachers to select relevant grammar and vocabulary points to cover the topics and communicative areas listed for each school term. To do so, teachers frequently appear to turn to grammar practice or grammar and vocabulary practice books with limited opportunities to teach from context and develop skills.

Most schools targeted by this project follow a three-term year, with two, six-week sequences in each term. Normally students have 4 periods of English (1 period = 45 minutes). The PRELIM3 resources were intended to cover one 45-minute period per week.

Outline of the teacher support resource package, and rationale

As a result, a series of three books of twelve, 45-minute lessons has been developed. These books are themed:

1. Global Citizenship
2. Critical Thinking
3. Digital Literacy



Figure 1: Screenshot of the three book covers

We identified three main aims for the resources:

- provide teachers with the opportunities to contextualise language
- provide opportunities for skills work and pronunciation work
- allow teachers to use the resource flexibly.

All three books are intended for intermediate level learners and were primarily designed to be used as hard copies (although digital copies are also available to ELTS-CAMELTA). These books are accompanied by teachers' books and a Teacher's Support Pack, a brief description of each follows.

1 Student Book

Each student book (32 pages) contains twelve lessons at an intermediate level which cover a variety of skills and systems. To help with student's cognitive and psychological development, each lesson encourages students to engage in a critical thinking task or activity and to reflect on the topic and learning. Each lesson is presented on a double page (A3) and provides students with the key input for the lesson. There is also space to take notes or write.

The screenshot displays two pages from a student book. The left page is titled 'Unit F' and 'Online safety 1'. It includes a 'Focus' section on learning about safe online use, a 'Use' section on stranger, private, safe, and a 'Think' section on why people use social media. Below this is a screenshot of a social media profile for 'Amina B.' with a list of five questions for a classroom activity. A 'Now I Can' section is at the bottom.

The right page is titled 'Unit F' and 'The role of the community 1'. It includes a 'Focus' section on different types of community, a 'Use' section on nuclear family, extended family, and a 'Think' section on which communities do belong to. Below this are images of various community activities and a table for matching definitions to types of community. A 'Now I Can' section is at the bottom.

Figure 2: Screenshot of student book pages

2 Teacher's book

Each of the three books comes with an accompanying teacher's book (36 pages) which contains:

- written aims and student outcomes for each lesson
- description of procedural stages and steps
- suggested timing
- pronunciation task(s)
- feedback stages with suggested answers and/or answer key
- differentiation tips; these include ideas on how to grade the lesson, or some of its stages up or down so it can be best adjusted to student needs and levels
- supplementary activities for most lessons
- transcripts for listening files.

3 Support pack

The support pack is a digital resource (PDF) with additional support ideas for the teachers. The support pack focuses on methodological support and includes:

- theoretical background for some of the features of the student books
- classroom management tips
- support to help with phonology
- 'No resource' tips and ideas for the classroom.

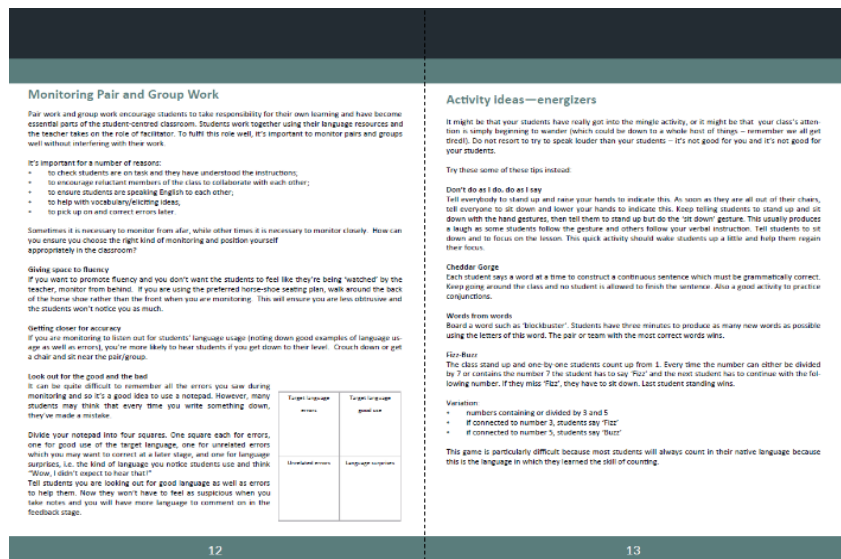


Figure 3: Screenshot of cover and pages of the Support pack

There is no prescribed order to the books, nor is there a set lesson sequence. We hope this will give the teachers the flexibility to choose the book that best supplements what they are covering in the main curriculum. In addition, since the lesson lengths can vary, the teachers have the option to add content via the differentiation tip and/or the Support Pack and if necessary, split lessons into two sessions, etc. to best suit the needs of their class.

Project findings

Working in partnership

The cooperation with ELTS-CAMELTA and OIEG has been effective and straightforward. ELTS-CAMELTA came to the project with a clear vision of what was missing in their national curriculum and how they wanted fill the vacuum. Furthermore, their vision was very realistic and in line with what was possible to achieve given the PRELIM 3 project timeframe and the resources.

Over the course of the resource piloting, we worked with 30-40 teachers. The feedback received in the various stages of the project showed that the respondents had not necessarily always participated in the previous stage(s). Having a small, dedicated group of teachers to work on the project throughout, who are thoroughly briefed on the intended project outcomes and follow all the revisions, evaluation and training stages, would provide more constructive feedback.

Disseminating the teacher support resources

To date, there have been 200 student books, 100 teacher's books printed, and five of each student book embossed in braille.

The dissemination process was based on a cascading training and delivery system and consisted of two key stages: In the first stage (early January 2024) a selected group of nine to ten key teachers were trained online by OIEG staff. These were teachers selected from different focal schools, volunteer teachers and Heads of Departments who regularly participate in ELTS-CAMELTA activities.

The key teachers attended two approximately two-hour long zoom sessions led by OIEG staff. The first session focused on introducing the PRELIM 3 resources and their key features. We also explored how to work with the course books and the teacher's book in broad terms. The second session included two mini-demo lessons (approximately 40 minutes each). The first focused on delivering listening stages and the second focused on a speaking task and pronunciation. The training material from both sessions was shared with all participants and they were encouraged to replicate these sessions in a face-to-face setting when attending the schools in their respective regions and delivering the material.

In the second stage (January – early February 2024), the teachers participating in stage one were initially intended to facilitate the dissemination by leading induction sessions in each of the seven divisions that make up the region. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing conflict in the Northwest Region, this initial plan had to be altered and an induction workshop was organised in the capital city of Bamenda. Eighty-five teachers from functional schools from across the region attended the workshop.

During the central induction workshop, representative teachers from different divisions and their respective schools were identified and given hard and soft copies of the resources determined by their enrolments/numerical strength.

Because of the influx of internally displaced learners in most functional schools across the region, ELTS-CAMELTA reached out to more schools than initially planned, to distribute the resources.

These are preserved in the various school libraries under the direct control of the English Departments whose teachers sign them out to use with their learners.

Monitoring and evaluating resource use

The initial needs analysis was conducted in February 2023. We collected 36 responses and the key findings, which informed the resource pack, are listed above.

In early July, we shared with ELTS-CAMELTA five sets of student pages and relevant lesson plans for the initial evaluation. We collected 35 responses. The responses were overall positive and reassuring in terms of topics selected, but some of the key changes implemented were:

- More inclusive images but also contexts representing African students and Cameroonian culture
- Slight shift away from listening content, as reading content seemed to be more valued and easier to deliver
- Inclusion of more content centred around environment and ecosystems
- Simplified procedure and inclusion of more differentiation tips and stage flexibility to better respond to different lesson lengths and large class sizes
- Areas that the teachers considered potentially challenging to deliver noted and training / induction possibilities explored

In September 2023 we resubmitted three revised lessons from July and added two new ones, with respective lesson plans, for a classroom trial. We collected feedback from 14 respondents. The feedback did not lead to any core changes, but it helped further define the areas we needed to focus on in training.

Project outcomes

To date, the resources have been distributed among 17 schools in five different cities. Eight of these are public schools, seven are denominational schools and two are lay private schools. There are 125 teachers currently working with the resource and this number is expected to grow slightly as some are still due to present the pack to the colleagues from their respective departments.

Due to budgetary constraints, ELTS-CAMELTA do not expect a reprint of the resources in the near future.

The final evaluation took place in March 2024. It consisted of an online questionnaire, which was answered by 34 respondents, and a focus group conducted with 8-10 teachers and representatives of ELTS-CAMELTA. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The student book section covered areas such as topic range, student engagement, level, etc. The second section focused on the teacher's book and explored topics such as aims and outcomes, lesson procedure, instructions, differentiation tips etc. Finally, the questionnaire also included a few questions about the Support pack.

Most of the categories listed above were evaluated very positively, scoring between 88-94%. The areas which stood out in terms of satisfaction were the evaluation of proficiency level and the amount of content. 23% of the respondents stated that the material was too difficult, while 20% stated it was too easy. 58% of respondents also stated that there is too much material to cover in 45 minutes, while 5% thought there was too little. However, these discrepancies are highly likely to

stem from the differences in class sizes and lesson formats in which they are being used. There was also a slight drop in positive evaluation of the pronunciation activities, rated as successful by 76% of respondents. Pronunciation, writing tasks and functional language were listed as the most challenging tasks to teach.

The questionnaire also revealed that the most popular book out of the three appears to be English and Digital Skills; however, this could be completely coincidental and simply reflect the fact that more schools are currently teaching related content from the core curriculum, thus choosing this book as their supplementary resource.

The teachers participating in the focus group showed great enthusiasm for the resources and felt they complemented the national curriculum well as there has been a push to focus on “digitalisation and the use of language outside the classroom”. Another interesting observation listed as a positive was that students engage with the material even though some topics may not be immediately linked to their current reality (e.g., email writing, finances for teens etc.) but they are seen as interesting topics relevant for one’s future. The CAMELTA representatives have also commented on the fact that the lessons on writing and structuring emails were converted into professional development sessions for teachers. Finally, those present supported the questionnaire outcomes in stating that pronunciation tasks, listening tasks and time management were the biggest challenges, however they also demonstrated great ability to adapt the material to their individual contexts and situations.

Emergent learning

It was late in the project that the decision was made to spread the resources across more schools than initially intended. As a result, some schools have adopted the sign out/sign in system. This is a concept we did not consider at all when designing the books. While this system certainly contributes to the sustainability of the resources, there are aspects of the content as well as design that could have certainly been developed differently to maximise the student’s use and experience.