

## PRELIM 3

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# Mali: MATE (Malian Association of Teachers of English)

with

# West London English School

August 2024

## Project background

Partnership overview		
<b>Partners</b>	<b>ETA partner</b>	Malian Association of Teachers of English (MATE)
	<b>UKI partner</b>	West London English School (WLES)
<b>User Profile</b>	<b>Context overview</b>	MATE educators have classes of 50+ students across a mix of private and public high schools. They have minimal resources and technology available. Classrooms are low-resource (blackboard/chalk). Students work with notebooks and pens
	<b>Learner age group(s)</b>	15-17 years
	<b>Curriculum overview</b>	High schools in Mali offer ten English syllabi (established in 2011) for Grades 10 to 12, with additional guidance from the 1994 syllabus. Each syllabus covers Functions, Topics, Grammar structures, and Writing tasks, supporting different academic focuses. Through the PRELIM 3 project, we targeted specific gaps in their educational materials, directing our efforts towards enhancement. While the 2011 curriculum presented limitations in detailed lesson plans and supplementary resources, we found the 1994 syllabus to offer valuable language direction, shaping the focus of our objectives
<b>Teacher support resource package</b>	<b>Resource format and organisation</b>	A 200-page Teaching Resource Manual comprising five sections: lesson plan templates x 10, functional English x 40, topics x 67, grammar structures x 48, and writing tasks/models x 28
	<b>Resource content</b>	Each lesson comprises a teacher's plan, student worksheets with answers, and communicative activities emphasising speaking, reading, or writing
	<b>Resource sustainability</b>	800 black and white books were printed in Mali for MATE teaching staff, delivered by MATE inspectors, to schools. The Teaching Resource Manual is also available on Google Drive and accompanied by informative videos for each section via a QR code on the first page of the book
<b>Dissemination</b>	<b>Methods</b>	Printed and hand delivered by inspectors in Mali
	<b>Timeframe</b>	Final book emailed 30th November 2023
	<b>Number of teachers reached</b>	1600-1800

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## Description of the partners

**The Malian Association of Teachers of English (MATE)** is a non-profit organisation with 12 inspectors on the national board, collaborating with 23 local chapters across Mali. Their primary objective is to promote the use of the English language in Mali. The network consists of teachers of English as a foreign language dedicated to training and continuous professional development, actively seeking opportunities to enhance their English proficiency for its impact on professional competence and Mali's educational development. MATE was part of the PRELIM 2 Project in 2022.

**West London English School (WLES)**, established in 2015, is a private, family-run institution accredited by the British Council. With 30 teaching staff, it offers various courses, including General English, Business English, and exam preparation. The school focuses on effective communication skills in a supportive environment, with classes limited to 16 students. WLES maintains professional and approachable staff and also took part in the PRELIM 2 Project.

## Key features of the context and resource design rationale

In Mali, MATE teachers operate in various high schools, covering Grades 10-12. A December 2022 needs analysis revealed a lack of materials and coursebooks for their 2011 curriculum. The teachers and inspectors expressed a desire for resources to enhance students' English proficiency, particularly in speaking, reading, and writing, with little to no mention of listening activities. Analysis of various forms of communication, including WhatsApp conversations, indicates that teachers exhibit English proficiency at approximately the B2+ level. High school students' levels of English ranges from A1 to B2. Additionally, schools and teachers have limited access to technology and WiFi. Schools do not have websites nor online storage for teachers to access. Classes exceed 50 students, and there is often no printing capability. Despite this, teachers strive to provide quality education, often supplementing their lessons with realia and home-made lessons due to limited resources.

## Outline of the teacher support resource package and rationale

Tailored for educators and students in Mali's 10th-12th grades, WLES developed a 200-page Teaching Resource Manual in PDF format, created for printing and binding locally in Mali. This comprehensive manual comprises five sections: Lesson Plan Templates, Topics, Functional English (including worksheets, scenarios, and role-plays), Grammar Structures (featuring handouts, short exercises, and answers), and Writing Tasks, with some writing models included.

The manual's development involved a six-month collaboration with MATE inspectors, and included insights from teacher focus groups on WhatsApp. The resource integrates MATE's syllabi from both the 1994 and 2011 versions to ensure alignment with the existing curriculum. The primary objective was to meet as many of the needs of MATE's 1590 registered teachers as possible.

Anticipating a direct impact on up to 80,000 students, the manual targets English proficiency levels from A1 to B2, tailored for 15–17-year-olds. It emphasises adaptability to accommodate diverse classroom conditions, with materials designed to be flexible and resource-efficient.

## Design Principles

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**Target Audience:** The manual, tailored for Mali's 10th-12th grade educators and students, considers specific curriculum requirements.

**Accessibility:** By providing the manual in PDF format, we utilised local printing and binding.

**Content Alignment:** We integrated MATE's syllabi to ensure alignment with the existing curriculum, making the content maximally relevant.

**Collaborative Development:** Collaboration with MATE inspectors and teacher focus groups ensured that the manual addresses real needs and challenges.

**Cultural Acknowledgement:** We used local addresses and language examples specific to Mali, their culture, history, and heritage throughout the materials and traditional Malian names (inspired by the teachers and inspectors assisting with the project).

**Scalability:** We designed the manual with the goal of impacting a significant number of students.

**Flexibility/Adaptability:** We made activities adaptable to various teaching styles and environments.

### **Resource Sustainability**

Teaching Resource Manuals were printed and distributed to MATE teaching staff in Mali. Additionally, the manuals are available online via Google Drives. While no immediate plans for updates, sustainability is enabled through ongoing feedback. However, to maximise impact, expanding dissemination channels and engaging stakeholders further would be beneficial.

## **Project findings**

### **Working in partnership**

Collaborative efforts with key stakeholders, inspectors, and the ETA lead were pivotal to this project's success. We solved communication challenges by prioritising direct teacher engagement. We conducted three text-based focus groups that gathered valuable feedback.

Overcoming infrastructure limitations, two committed teachers provided ongoing feedback via private messages, their insights helped refine the resources. To complement this feedback, I also workshopped these lesson plans with AI (ChatGPT/Claude.AI) to ensure all topics were covered.

### **Designing the teacher support resources**

The foundation of well-structured, classroom-tested lesson plans directly sourced from experienced teachers was paramount. I leveraged teacher feedback to create a comprehensive set of culturally relevant lesson plans and teaching materials.

Drawing from example lesson plans provided by MATE teachers, I first established a model framework. I then utilised ChatGPT to generate initial drafts of lesson content like worksheets, incorporating vocabulary and grammar points from the 1994 syllabus. I then conducted research

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into Malian locations, topics, and cultural details to incorporate relevant real-world examples, ensuring localisation.

At each stage of creation, I sought feedback from both WLES and MATE teachers, using their input to refine the materials. After the third full draft of the Teaching Resource Manual, I took the additional step of having Claude.AI analyse and identify any areas for improvement based on best teaching practices.

The final materials package blended AI content generation with human expertise from local teachers and personal research - ensuring a rich, localised, and pedagogically-sound curriculum tailored for MATE teachers.

Versatile templates were created that could be easily adapted for different English language functions and proficiency levels across Malian high schools. The text-based resources intentionally featured both student exercises and corresponding teacher answer keys on single pages to maximise simplicity, ease of use, and accessibility.

## Disseminating the teacher support resources

Through coordination with regional inspectors, successful dissemination was ultimately achieved across Mali. A key learning was the need for flexibility in project timelines and exploring more resilient distribution methods like digital versions or partial/regionally-staggered roll-outs for future initiatives. Ensuring materials reach teachers in a timely manner is critical for collecting feedback to refine resources and enabling their accessibility for actual classroom use.



*Figure 1: The English committee of Lycée Yana Maïga de Gao receiving the Teaching Resource Manual.*

Schools held ceremonies and sent hundreds of photos and videos showing the MATE inspectors presenting the Teaching Resource Manual to the different high schools.



Figure 2: The English pedagogical committee of Lycée Dougoukolo Konaré de Kayes presenting the manual to the principal Sékou Tahara Traoré.

A message from L.SAN:

*'The English pedagogical committee of L. SAN and the principal, the administration of the Academy of San, all thank MATE and its partner; the British Council for the important resource received to support the teachers in their daily teaching activities. Long life to this great cooperation in benefit of Malian teachers. Thanks once more for this great achievements! Seydou Alphonse, Mate-San secretary of cultural affairs and press.'*

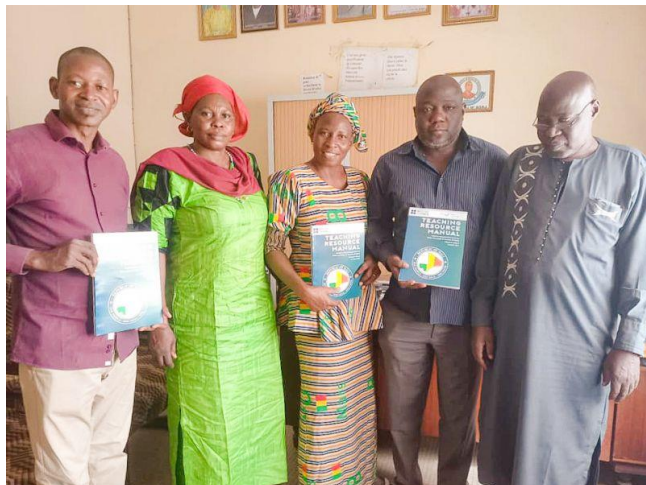


Figure 3: Teachers receiving the Teaching Resource Manual in Sikassou and Timbuktu respectively.

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## Monitoring and Evaluation resource use

The following feedback is based on a Google Form dataset containing responses from 150 English teachers across Mali to questions evaluating different aspects of the Manual. The survey included questions regarding the usefulness, engagement, adaptability, and overall effectiveness of the Manual in enhancing their students' English proficiency. The feedback rate increased significantly after we incentivised teachers by offering them a British Council certificate upon completion.

### Key Findings

- Usefulness: 86.8% of respondents found the Manual to be extremely useful, very useful or quite useful in teaching English to students. One teacher commented,  
*'The manual is very useful and this is my first time to get a book in English that covers the program of the high school.'*
- Usage: 97.1% of teachers answered that they use the manual every lesson, every other lesson, or some lessons.
  - Student Engagement: 100% of teachers rated the activities from quite engaging to extremely engaging for their students. Many adapted the activities as one teacher explained,  
*'I use the vocabularies of the manual, then I added some others.'*  
Teachers appreciated the ability to modify lessons to their contexts.
- Catering to Different Proficiency Levels: 77.9% rated the manual as catering very well or extremely well to different proficiency levels. However, some suggested  
*'including more differentiated texts, examples, and exercises.'* As noted, *'It could be improved by stating conventional situation problems for each topic and adapted texts.'*
- Improving English Proficiency: 82.4% reported the manual definitely improved or greatly improved their students' proficiency. One teacher shared,  
*'It has helped a lot in my Teaching. Thank to this Book, my students can easily understand the lesson.'* 17.6% indicated a need for additional support.
- Areas for Improvement: Suggestions included adding more visual aids ('pictures, videos'), audio resources, grammar summaries, sample texts, and detailed functional language and writing explanations. Teachers recommended  
*'involving teacher feedback and organising training sessions.'* As stated, *'It could be improved by gathering and training teachers how to manage the manual.'*

In conclusion, the Teaching Resource Manual has been well-received by MATE English teachers who find it useful, engaging, and effective in improving their students' English proficiency.

One participating PRELIM 3 teacher's feedback:

*'Last week I taught Immigration, the document you sent helped me to do the topic correctly. I first divided my students in a group of six and asked them to work out causes of immigration, challenges immigration face, consequences of immigration. Thank you very much for your support.'*

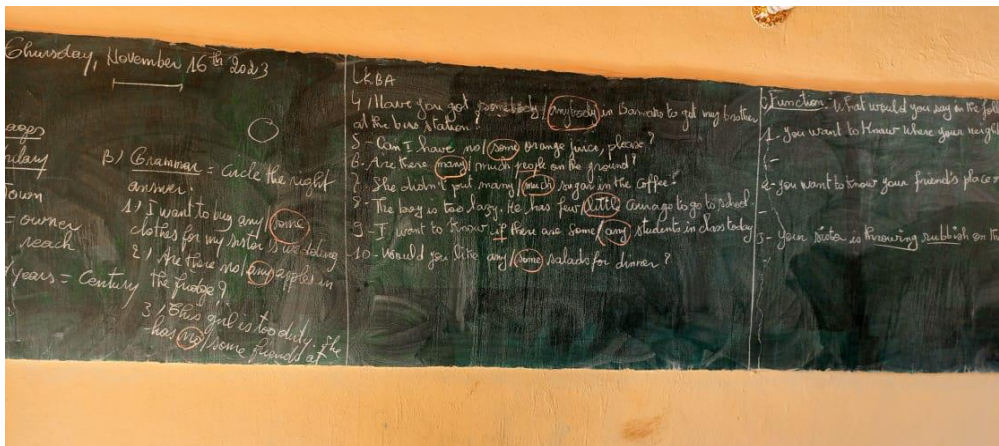


Figure 4: Photos from 16 November 2023 show the teacher's classroom and blackboard.

Transcribed voice note sent the same day:


*'I've just sent you the photo of my students and the activity we did in the classroom. So the activity was about the use of some and any with food and the function components with neighbours. You can see the blackboard and exercises okay. Thank you so much.'*

## Project outcomes and emergent learning

The Teaching Resource Manual represents a significant leap forward in English language education for MATE schools. Developed collaboratively with insights from dedicated teachers and inspectors, it aims to address the unique needs and hurdles faced in the region.

While the distribution process faced setbacks, the manual has reached approximately 70 schools across Mali, benefiting an estimated 1,600 teachers. Feedback from 150 educators and inspectors has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the manual's integration into teaching practices and its impact on students' English proficiency.





Reflecting on the project, consistent communication with dedicated educators and the essential contributions of the two teachers, and ETA lead were integral. Despite logistical challenges like printing delays and power outages, our team demonstrated resilience and adaptability.

Looking ahead, this project lays a groundwork for future language initiatives in Mali, emphasising the importance of consistent communication and adaptability. The integration of AI technology highlights innovative solutions for shaping educational resources. These insights offer valuable lessons for guiding future language education endeavours in the region, driving progress in English language education.