



Fund for Innovation and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation et la transformation



WELLSPRING FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION

# Blended Digital Learning for Teacher Professional Development

## Context

Rwanda aspires to be a middle-income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050. When it comes to school enrollment, Rwanda has achieved gender parity at primary and secondary levels, including in Rubavu District. Despite equalization in official enrollment, completion rates reduce significantly with each level of schooling. Some 72% of female students have attained primary school, but only 17.2% are enrolled in upper secondary. Girls face negative gender-based attitudes within their families, communities, and schools, which lower their performance and lead to higher absenteeism and dropout rates, most noticeably at the secondary and tertiary levels.

## The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, Wellspring Foundation for Education with local partner Wellspring Foundation for Education-Rwanda, adapted their existing face-to-face teacher training module on Lesson Planning and Delivery into a blended digital format to test whether a digital approach can effectively support primary teachers to cultivate a positive mindset towards the digital tools for professional development and strengthen their digital literacy skills so they can more effectively plan and deliver lessons that are inclusive, learner-centered, and gender-responsive.

## Advancing Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Strategy embedded gender sensitive approaches into all training units and mentoring activities in schools. A new unit was added to the Lesson Planning and Delivery module that focused specifically on gender-responsive pedagogy and classroom practices. Teachers received direct instruction, coaching and modelling on creating a warm and supportive classroom that empower girls and boys to reach their full potential.

## Testing Framework

Data was collected through a comprehensive approach on all targets and outcomes of the project, involving both quantitative and qualitative data. The assessment involved a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice (KAP) survey.



### COUNTRY

Rwanda

### AMOUNT

\$168,470

### TESTING PERIOD

12 months

Ended April 2023



**GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE (GE3)**

**THEME: EDUCATION**

# Results and Impact

- Students consistently reported that their teachers created mixed gendered groups in their seating plans, learning groups, and in classroom chores. They described teachers using questioning strategies that focused on the learners who need support, regardless of gender.
- Overall, 68.3% of teacher multipliers indicated that the BDL approach is effective for teacher professional development, with 19.5% indicating that it is very effective while 48.8% indicated that it is effective.
- At Endline, 86% of teachers reported lesson planning practices that are inclusive, learner-centered and gender responsive. This positive result reflects a significant improvement over Baseline (69%) and exceeded the project target of 60%.
- At endline, 92% of all teachers self-reported lesson delivery practices that are inclusive, learner-centered and gender responsive. This exceeded the target of 60%.
- By endline students indicated seeing key changes in teacher practices to create welcoming supportive learning environments with 90% of students identifying at least one action to support gender responsive practices exceeding the 60% target.
- 100% of teachers and school leaders and 68% of teacher multipliers confirmed that the Blended Digital Learning format is effective for professional development training and learning.
- There was a positive shift in teacher attitudes towards the use of ICT for professional development from 47% at baseline to 89% by endline. Feedback reflected strong support and positive attitude towards digital learning among male and female teachers, multipliers and school leaders.

## Key Lessons

- A pedagogical shift was required were the team had to reflect on new 'best practices' for digital learning over face-to-face formats.
- There was a need to develop an evaluation of digital tools and approaches that best suited the unique learning environment of Rubavu.
- ICT knowledge levels were quite low, prompting the need to provide basic digital literacy skills training to all 528 teachers participating in the program.
- Teachers identified that they needed more time to practice, review and apply their learning.
- Student leaders identified a lack of access to laptop computers within each school and inconsistent internet as a challenge for teachers.

"Before we couldn't sit with boys and teachers would force us to do so. However, when the teacher went outside, we would immediately go back to our seats. But now we sit and work together whether the teacher is there or not." - Woman Student, EP Gacuba II B.

"Before attending the BDL training series, I used to teach unplanned lessons but now I plan every lesson with clear instructional objectives that highlight what every learner both girls boys is expected to know and be able to do." - Teacher, KAP survey.

## PARTNER ORGANIZATION

Wellspring Foundation for Education -  
Rwanda

## TARGET PARTICIPANTS

- 23 schools: 12 Primary (grades 1-6) and 11 Basic Education (years 9 and 12)
- 528 primary school teachers (287W, 241M)
- 46 teacher multipliers (22W, 24M)
- 34 school leaders (10W, 24M)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.



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