



**Title of Project:**

A Case Study of Discourses Around  
Teacher Professionalism in Rwanda

**Researcher:**

Leanne Cameron  
University of Bristol  
[lm.Cameron@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:lm.Cameron@bristol.ac.uk)

**Research Supervisor:**

Dr. Angeline Mbogo Barrett  
University of Bristol



Leanne Cameron

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**Project Summary:**

This research seeks to understand how a voluntary professional association of Rwandan English language teachers is working to influence the future of their profession in a context where policy and government agencies prioritize managerial reforms over the meaningful initial education and professional development needed for teachers to work effectively. The strict political order in Rwanda discourages any meaningful discussion around policy changes and conflates criticism with dissent and pro-genocide ideology. In this complex political climate, my research focuses on how teachers in the association are navigating more powerful discourses about professionalism, essentially what it means to be an English language teaching professional in a country that has undergone a radical shift to using English as the medium of instruction. Via a case study using a combination of visual and observational methods influenced by my previous work with the association, I explore the discourse they collectively express, one which emphasizes personal learning, ongoing peer-led professional development, and engaging in a collegial network, suggesting a teacher-led trajectory for building and improving Rwanda's education system. Ultimately, this research seeks to understand the potential power of English language teacher collectives in resisting domination of their field in environments where policies and decision making exclude them from participation, to apply to similar contexts in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.