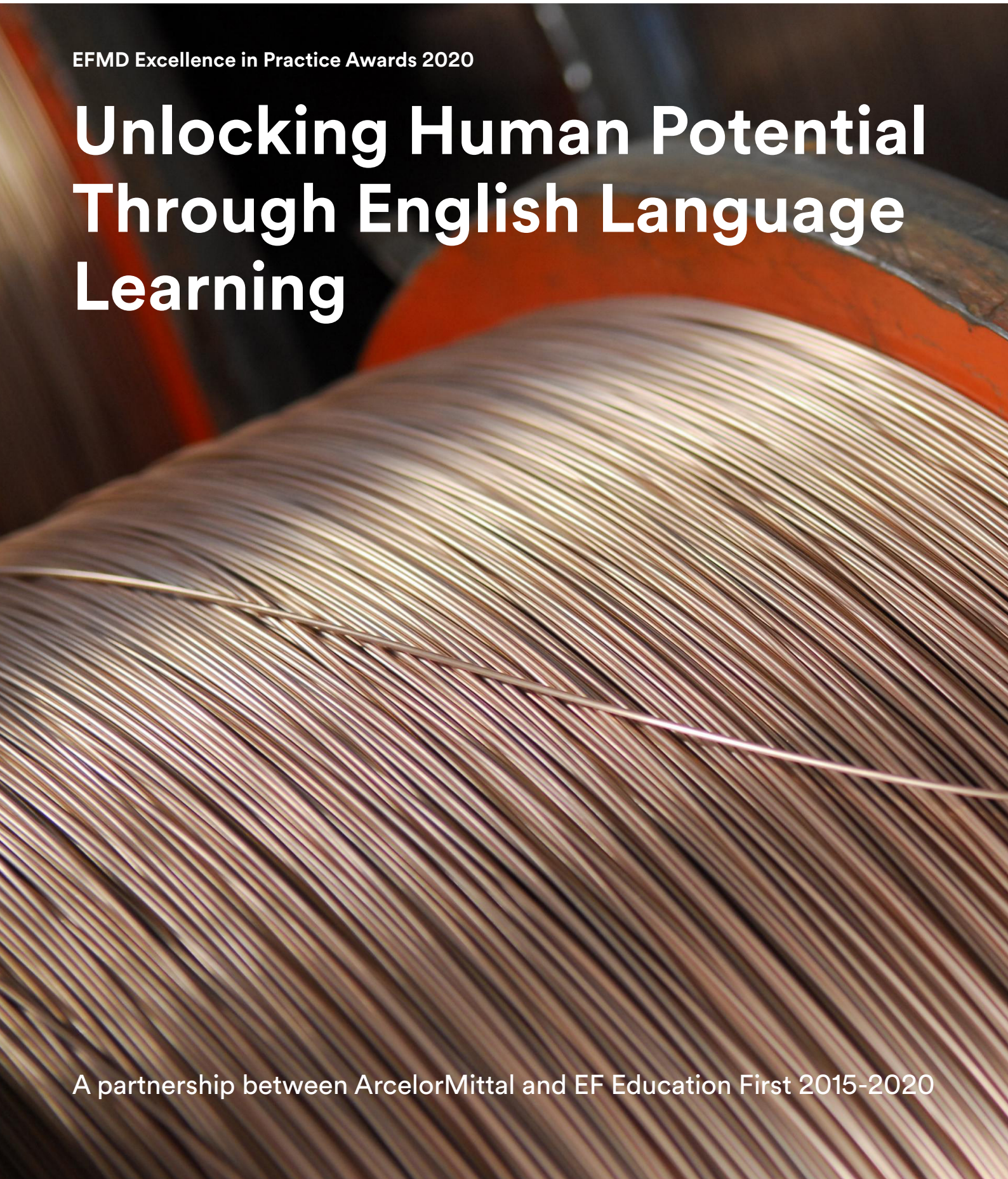
EFMD Excellence in Practice Awards 2020

Unlocking Human Potential Through English Language Learning



A partnership between ArcelorMittal and EF Education First 2015-2020

Executive Summary

This is a story about unlocking the potential of thousands of employees worldwide, and about the democratising effect of a language learning programme which is available to vast swathes of an organisation, irrespective of geography, seniority or any other barrier to development.

It is proudly inclusive, and not exclusive as smaller-scale leadership programmes can often be. This is also a story of a real, long-term partnership that has evolved to cater for evolving needs and business priorities over the past five years.

When leading global companies Arcelor and Mittal merged in 2007, low levels of English meant that for many, a lack of a common language had become a barrier to development for both individuals and the business as a whole. Employees struggled to communicate across borders, which impacted job satisfaction, knowledge transfer, engagement and productivity.

In addition, ArcelorMittal has a minimum English requirement to access further development, particularly in Leadership, meaning that those who did not meet the standard struggled to realise their full potential. The talent pool was being narrowed unnecessarily and biased towards those who had been brought up in an English-speaking environment. The growth of tens of thousands of employees and the entire organisation was being held back, something which needed addressing urgently.

Working in partnership with EF Education First since 2015, ArcelorMittal rolled out an ambitious English language programme to staff in 53 countries, with over 12,000 courses delivered in total. The result has been the development of a common language around topics that affect us all, including sustainability, diversity, the environment, and the cyclical nature of business.

A unique global framework agreement between EF and ArcelorMittal has allowed the needs of local initiatives to be met, whilst presenting a globally consistent offer. Regional ownership has enabled greater inclusivity in regions where many employees have never had the chance to learn a language before. Advanced digital functionality means that the platform is accessible 24/7 around the globe, including live trainer access on demand, on a range of smart devices, in multiple languages.

Removing language as a barrier to progression for ArcelorMittal employees has been a powerful tool, which has:

- Facilitated greater inclusion and access to development programmes
- Improved team collaboration and productivity
- Increased job satisfaction
- Enhanced knowledge transfer across borders
- Strengthened engagement with company vision and values
- Helped employees build stronger relationships with international customers

This impressive global language programme is a building block for all ArcelorMittal's other Learning and Development programmes and will be a key part of their future international success.