That’s a wrap for 2021!

TaRL programming in Sub-Saharan Africa reached over a million children with encouraging results across the board!

We worked together with several partners across 12 countries learning together and devising strategies to accomplish the common goal of foundational skills for all.

JICA’s PMAQ Program

With JICA’s support, The Ministry of Education in Madagascar experimented with a package of interventions, called PMAQ, to strengthen the capacity of school management committees to use the information on assessments to sensitize and mobilize parents, teachers, and community members for joint action. With technical assistance from Pratham and TaRL Africa, the package also includes the pedagogical component that introduces TaRL. The school management committees organize after school TaRL classes for children in grades three to five.

A recent randomized evaluation of the support package showed that it has large impacts on children’s foundation skills. PMAQ has reached over 900,000 children in Madagascar and Niger since 2019.

YARID’s Bridging The Gap Program

This year, the Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID), one of the recipients of the TaRL Africa innovation grant, started their implementation in the Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Uganda. Their innovative program targets Congolese refugee students, introducing them to English Literacy and preparing them to transition into the Ugandan Education system. While TaRL programs have traditionally focused on local language instruction, with TaRL Africa’s support, YARID integrated both the children’s mother-tongue and English seamlessly, leading to tremendous learning outcomes. Despite the ongoing school closures, 1,600 children who were part of the program transitioned into the formal school system.

Helping partners get started with TaRL

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The intermittent school closures due to the pandemic exacerbated an already existing learning crisis. As restrictions began to ease this year, TaRL Africa worked quickly to support new and existing partners across the continent to use the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) methodology to accelerate children’s foundational reading and arithmetic skill acquisition in their context. While at the same time making tremendous strides towards establishing an African-owned organization to lead these efforts into the future. Our ability to act flexibly and responsively to the health and related education crisis while also building the foundations needed to make the future a success, has been enabled by generous and flexible funding.

TaRL Africa works directly with the Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, and Zambia governments to scale up TaRL programs. In addition, we provide technical, strategic, and management support to NGO partners delivering TaRL programs to ensure that programs are well-designed and delivered such that learning outcomes improve. While there is a lot still to do, the TaRL Africa community has made great strides towards improving children’s learning outcomes; below are some highlights.
Government Program Highlights

TaRL Africa works deeply and directly with the government in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Zambia. We believe that the government is a critical actor in making a significant and sustainable impact.

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What's next

Education systems across Africa are still reeling from the devastation of COVID-19. TaRL Africa is more determined than ever to accelerate children's learning. In 2022, TaRL programming will be scaled up to more than 5,300 schools across Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Zambia. Furthermore, TaRL Africa supported pilots are set to launch in several new countries in 2022, including The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan. Finally, the TaRL Africa Community of Practice is collectively working to build back better, with programs launching and growing across 14 countries.

In addition to maximizing the number of children who benefit from TaRL through government scale-ups and a strong well-supported partner network, we are also looking to the future. Over the next year, we will continue to learn how the program can be delivered most effectively in different contexts, through learning labs, where innovative ideas are incubated, deep qualitative and process research, and impact evaluations in Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia. At the same time, we plan to grow our TaRL Africa team and invest deeply in building strong technical capacity across the continent to meet the increased demand for TaRL support.
In Côte d’Ivoire, TaRL Africa supports the Ministry of National Education and Literacy (MENA) to deliver and grow their TaRL program, Programme d’Enseignement Ciblé (PEC). Children in grades three to six focus on foundational French reading and Math for one and a half hours during the day using TaRL activities.

In 2021-22, PEC expanded to close to 1,000 schools reaching 140,000 children. Data from the 200 schools included in the 2020-21 school year shows significant improvement. At baseline, in the 200 schools, 16% of children could read a simple paragraph in French, which increased to 34% by endline in just 75 days of implementation. In Math, the proportion of children able to do a subtraction problem increased by 24 percentage points to 50% by the endline. With the 2021-22 school year underway, results from the 1,000 schools are expected by June 2022.

Additionally, a series of learning activities have been launched in Côte d’Ivoire in 2021 and are currently rolling out. Under the SEME initiative, a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) evaluation of PEC and Cash transfers will aim to understand the impact of the two innovations in isolation and combination on children’s learning. The study is
being carried out by academics from multiple US-based universities and local research teams, with financial support from TRECC and CoImpact. Learning labs have also been launched in the country to test innovations aimed to address challenges experienced in multiple country contexts.
Nigeria

Schools reopened in October 2020 after six months of COVID-19 induced school closures. The government and education partners were eager to accelerate children's learning in 2021. TaRL Africa's team in Nigeria, supports TaRL programming across five states in Nigeria. While there are variations in the design of the programs across the different states, in all states children in either grade three to grade five or grade four to grade six are assessed and grouped by learning level rather than age or grade and focus on foundation reading (in either English or Hausa) and Math for one and a half to two hours a day by engaging in TaRL activities.

The Kano Literacy and Numeracy Accelerator (KaLMA), led by the Kano State Universal Basic Education Board, Ministry of Education, and Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education in collaboration with the British Council and Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Africa with funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Re-launched in 183 schools in January after being put on hold in 2020. The program reached over 30 000 children. The program included two innovations: student teacher facilitation and a dual language approach to English learning. The dual-language approach to foundational skills in English deploys the child's home language to assist their learning of an additional one. You can read more about the KaLMA pilot [here](#). The Kano State government aims to grow the program to approximately 600 more schools from 2022. They have proactively applied for World
In Kebbi state, the state government secured federal funding to launch Kebbi Foundational Skills Accelerator (KeFSA), Kebbi’s TaRL program. KeFSA launched in May 2021 in 122 schools reaching approximately 22,000 children. It is the first government-funded TaRL program in Africa. This is a promising signal for the program’s sustainability in the country. Over the pilot course the proportion of children who could read a basic paragraph in Hausa and do a simple subtraction problem increased by 13 and 14 percentage points, respectively. The Kebbi state government is developing a scale-up plan to reach

Bank funding to help them achieve this.

TaRL Scale-up journey: Nigeria
approximately 500 more schools in the 2022/23 academic year.

In North-East Nigeria, TaRL Africa continues to work with UNICEF and state partners. In September, TaRL programming grew to 279, 104 and 153 schools in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, respectively, reaching more than 125,000 children. Based on demand for English in the states, the Language Learning from Familiar to Formal (L2F2), a literacy approach in Hausa or Kanuri transitioning to English, is being piloted in all three states. Math will be included as usual.

In addition to maximizing the number of children who benefit from TaRL through student teacher facilitation and a dual language approach to English learning. The Kano Literacy and Numeracy Accelerator (KaLMA), led by the Kano State Office (FCDO). Re-launched in 183 schools in January after being put on hold in 2020. The Kebbi state government is implementing a TaRL program in collaboration with the British Council and Teaching at the Right Level and focus on foundation reading (in either English or Hausa) and Math for one and a half to two hours a day by engaging in TaRL activities.

In Zambia, catches up expanded to 1,900 schools across three provinces, reaching approximately 270,000 children. Learning outcomes improved over the course of the program. For example, between baseline, in January 2021, and Midline, in May 2021, across the Southern and Eastern Provinces, there was an eight percentage point improvement in the proportion of children able to read a simple paragraph and ten percentage point improvement in the proportion of children able to do a subtraction problem. This figure is expected to double by the endline concluding this month, with early results confirming the same.

Zambia

From January 2021, Catch Up expanded to 1,900 schools across three provinces, reaching approximately 270,000 children. Learning outcomes improved over the course of the program. For example, between baseline, in January 2021, and Midline, in May 2021, across the Southern and Eastern Provinces, there was an eight percentage point improvement in the proportion of children able to read a simple paragraph and ten percentage point improvement in the proportion of children able to do a subtraction problem. This figure is expected to double by the endline concluding this month, with early results confirming the same.
In addition to the core Catch Up activities, the government launched an emergency response program with support from VVOB and TaRL Africa, which provided accelerated learning support to children in grades one to six. The activities were rolled out with support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) COVID-19 emergency fund, managed by UNICEF Zambia. The support covers five provinces and 20 districts. This program reached an additional 800 schools and 250,000 children, in addition to those already covered with the core Catch Up activities. The joint team developed an additional package for grades one and two to be used specifically for the
GPE project and created compressed training packages for provinces, districts, master trainers, headteachers, mentors, and grade teachers. The continued successes and growth of the Catch Up program complement the growing and lasting enthusiasm of the Zambian government and its ambition to scale up the program nationally. In 2022, Catch Up will grow to at least 900 additional schools reaching 180,000 more children, including launching in two new provinces, with potential for further scale up to three additional provinces, with potential for further scale up to three additional provinces. In 2022, Catch Up will grow to at least 900 additional schools reaching 180,000 more children, including launching in two new provinces, with potential for further scale up to three additional provinces.

Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) classroom experiences

Children in Zambia share their experiences of the Catch-up or TaRL classes. The classes break free of the “chalk and talk” practices commonly found in primary school classrooms across the world by encouraging the use of engaging, fun, and creative activities focused on building foundational skills.
Partner Program Highlights

TaRL Africa supports partners working with the government or the community to deliver TaRL programs. In addition, we connect organizations and create spaces for coordination, problem-solving, and learning. We believe there is great power in collective action and that collaboration is necessary to make meaningful strides to address the learning crisis in Africa.

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In 2021, there was a great demand for TaRL Africa support as organizations grappled with how to help children catch up after lengthy school closures. TaRL Africa is working with several partners across the continent to support these efforts. In the section below, we highlight a couple of partner programs.

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Meet Aman - a TaRL mentor from Côte d’Ivoire

Aman Prospere Koffi, 53, is a master trainer and the focal point person for language content in PEC. Master trainers train mentors on the PEC approach and monitor classroom activities. They supervise learning assessments, including baselines, midlines, and endline assessments. They also conduct monthly visits to observe the PEC classroom activities and coach the teachers.

Mr. Koffi is from Bongouanou, a city located in the Center - East of Côte d’Ivoire and he works for the Ministry of Education and Literacy at the Department of Pedagogy and In-service Training. He said that PEC is unique in how it groups children according to their learning level rather than age or grade level for two hours per day when they focus on foundational skills in reading and Math.

“PEC is both differentiated and accelerated learning. It is, therefore, easier to work with children of the same level when we want to help them progress. The ASER tests also allow us to see their progress throughout the implementation. In our usual practice, we wait until the end of the year to evaluate the children,” he said.

So far, the Ministry of Education has developed 22 Master trainers for PEC.
What’s next

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