



Programme d'Enseignement Ciblé (PEC) – Côte d'Ivoire Research Proposal Request

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Purpose

The purpose of this announcement is to solicit proposal requests for the engagement of qualified research firms for the provision of professional research services to further advance the objective of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) which is to help children develop basic reading and mathematics skills, opening doors to a brighter future.

TaRL Africa is an independent organisation formed through a partnership between Pratham, an education NGO, and the Abdul-Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), a research centre based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These two organisations have been working together to create cost-effective, scalable literacy and numeracy interventions for more than 15 years. The fruits of these efforts have been the development of what is now referred to as the TaRL approach.

The TaRL approach works by dividing children in upper primary into groups based on learning levels rather than age or grade. In Côte d'Ivoire (CIV), the TaRL approach is referred to as Programme d'Enseignement Ciblé (PEC). It is already currently led and implemented by the government in 1000+ primary schools in the Southern part of the country. TaRL Africa is now working with the government to scale up PEC more widely in both South and North parts of the country.

Project Objective

There exists a plethora of evidence on the effectiveness of TaRL from India which supports the generalizable theory behind tailored instruction. For instance, six (6) randomised evaluations conducted by J-PAL-affiliated researchers prove that when instruction is tailored to the level of the child and the TaRL accelerated learning methodology is used, learning outcomes improve. Recent rigorous evaluations of TaRL programs in Africa, such as the TaRL programme in Madagascar, provide further evidence of the effectiveness of the approach.

However, as we look to scale the programme in the North part of the country, there is a need to unpack contextual elements that could potentially affect programme design and implementation fidelity. Our learning activities will provide key information on how to adapt the programme for the North of CIV, including identifying potential mechanisms to improve delivery and to reduce cost through closely observed implementation adaptations. This builds on an already rich set of TaRL studies by contributing practical information on cost and delivery at scale.

As a first step to unpacking the above, we are looking to understand if there is a need for integrating local language into literacy lessons to assist with French skill acquisition. That is, 'how much is French spoken in the education system in the North?'. This is further broken down into the following sub-questions (not exhaustive):

1. Can most teachers speak, read, and write in French?

2. What are children's current reading levels in French? Do children understand spoken French?
3. Which languages are children and teachers most familiar with?
4. Which languages are most prevalent in their environment? What's the practical use of French in school and at home? Can most parents/ caregivers speak, read, and write in French?

By answering these questions, we will be able to report on the language landscape in the North to facilitate decisions on the suitable language approach.

Research Design

To effectively reach these learning goals, the research firm is expected to carry out 2 months of desk research, assessments, and interviews (with strategic input from TaRL Africa's Measurement, Learning and Evaluation team). Specifically, the research activities include::

1. Quantitative data collection
 - a. Conduct pupil and teacher assessments to gauge their current reading levels (which includes comprehension) in French.
2. Qualitative data collection
 - a. Conduct interviews with teachers to gather their feedback on a dual-language approach vis-a-vis a French reading approach.
 - b. Conduct interviews with parents/caretakers and teachers and collect observational data on language environment to understand the practical use of French in school and at home/in communities.
 - c. Synthesise secondary research (and potentially interview a language expert) on Cote d'Ivoire's language landscape.

Thus the process will be a mixed-method approach covering in-school assessments, desk research, and direct interviews with school officials and parents/caretakers.

Research Sample Size

To effectively draw out the necessary information across the different groups, we recommend sampling from different IEPPs in one target region within the North of CIV. The suggestive sample for the study is as follows:

Respondent	Sample
Schools	40
Teachers	80 <i>*2 teachers per school</i>
Children	800 <i>*20 children per school; split across gender and grades</i>
Parents/caretakers	80 <i>*2 parents/caretakers per school from a subset of the children assessed</i>

The Assignment

The selected research firm will work closely with the TaRL Africa MLE team. They will be required to:

1. Suggest and contribute to the overall research design.
2. Apply and acquire clearance from Cote d'Ivoire Institutional Review Board and other relevant authorities.

3. Obtain a government-issued permission letter to enter schools and communities in order to administer the assessments and interviews, and administer the qualitative interviews with parents/caretakers and language experts.
4. Review survey instruments, carry out desk research, suggest revisions based on context, and translate surveys into local languages (including and not limited to French).
5. Code and program the surveys (English, French and local languages) into appropriate data collection tool(s) / programming platform(s) as agreed on with the TaRL Africa team for the qualitative and quantitative tools.
 - a. The tool programme must ensure data security, be easy to use, and offer offline capabilities that maintain safe storage and data integrity.
6. Conduct high-quality qualitative research (interviews) within and outside schools with teachers, parents/caretakers, and a French expert consultant (potentially).
7. Pilot survey in collaboration with TaRL Africa.
8. Design high-quality reporting protocols in collaboration with TaRL Africa for daily frequency checks and quality assurance checks for the quantitative and qualitative data.
9. Recruit, hire and train a set of enumerators.
 - a. We expect the data partner to train 30% more enumerators than needed and use daily quizzes to determine which enumerators to bring onto the team.
 - b. The training will be designed in collaboration with the TaRL Africa team.
 - c. The costs of these training workshops should be built into the firm's budget.
10. Oversee the project management of the enumerators as they conduct the assessments and other surveys including managing all transportation and team management.
11. Keep personally-identifiable information separated from the raw data in an encrypted file.
12. Ensure the quality of the assessment and interview data by:
 - a. Conducting spot-checks and analysis, whereby research staff observe surveyors conducting interviews, for at least 15% of all data points, and submitting the resulting data to the TaRL Africa MLE Team for further analysis.
 - b. Conducting back-checks and analysis of 10%-15% of quantitative survey activities by re-visiting schools where enumerators were supposed to have visited, re-conducting the respective interviews, and submitting the data to the TaRL Africa MLE Team for further analysis.
 - c. Conducting daily high-frequency data checks, checking for data irregularities and enumerator fixed effects, and reporting the result of these checks (including interview counts, and inventory of raw and cleaned data) to the TaRL Africa Research Team for daily review, for quantitative survey activities. .
 - d. Collecting data anew, if the above-mentioned quality checks reveal strong irregularities (e.g., in the case of enumerator malfeasance or poor quality).
 - e. Strong team leadership including team leaders for each group of enumerators that visit a school, and an overall project manager who checks in with the various smaller teams of enumerators.
 - f. Ensuring staff are trained in human subjects including ensuring informed consent.
 - g. Ensuring staff are respectful of the school environment, school staff, and children.
 - h. Ensuring staff are trained in protecting children's safety.
 - i. Ensuring staff follow Covid-19 protection protocols.
13. Collaborate closely with the TaRL Africa MLE team, who will also be engaging in in-person monitoring and data checks to ensure quality. This likely includes daily phone calls during the data collection process and very close engagement in the planning phases.
14. Share the raw data with the TaRL Africa team daily in French, local language and English.
15. Translate collected data into English based on agreed-upon indicators or surveys of interest.
16. Analyze collected data and write up reports and presentations in English and French.
17. Track overall progress on the project and ensure adherence to timelines, guidelines, and the project plan.

Expected Deliverables

The total time allocated for the study is roughly 2 months. The work will be split as follows:

Tasks	Expected Output	Deliverables	Timeline	Date
1. Set-Up Phase	<p>Gain approval from the necessary Cote d'Ivoire Review Boards.</p> <p>Review and translate the tools to local language and French from English.</p> <p>Code the survey tools in English, local language and French (digitisation).</p> <p>Pilot the survey and finalise.</p> <p>Ensure consent is received from the necessary officials for teachers, mentors, and government staff to be interviewed and observed.</p> <p>Initiate recruitment.</p>	<p>Approved IRB application.</p> <p>Finalised survey forms.</p> <p>Finalised roll out plan and timelines.</p> <p>Consent report.</p> <p>Reporting protocol.</p>	3 weeks	25th January - 3rd February 2023
2. Carry out desk research	<p>Collect secondary data through desk research.</p> <p>Interview French language consultants to unpack additional data (if needed).</p>	<p>Report on desk research.</p> <p>Updated survey tools based on findings from desk research,</p>	2 weeks	25th January - 10th February 2023

Tasks	Expected Output	Deliverables	Timeline	Date
3. Training	<p>Train enumerators in collaboration with the TaRL Africa team and select the highest performers for data collection activities.</p> <p>Pilot tools and enumerator understanding of the process.</p> <p>Review and update the survey tools and data collection processes.</p>	<p>Enumerator Training feedback report.</p> <p>Pilot data and report.</p> <p>Updated survey tool and filed processes.</p>	1 week	6th February - 13th February 2023
4. Data Collection	<p>Ensure proper consent is obtained for data collection from all respondents and their guardians/caretakers.</p> <p>Collect high-quality survey data from the study sample.</p> <p>Share data and reports daily to TaRL Africa MLE team in a secure and complete format.</p>	<p>Approved field plan.</p> <p>Survey data submitted daily to the TaRL Africa MLE team.</p> <p>Daily quality checks (QC) reports submitted to the TaRL Africa MLE team and updates to the tools/teams/processes implemented based on QC findings.</p>	2 weeks	13th February - 24th February 2023
5. Data analysis and reporting	<p>Analyze collected data and write up a report that includes summarised desk research, survey data results, and a review of data collection and quality assurance activities.</p>	<p>Final findings report and presentation in English and French.</p> <p>Final raw and clean datasets in agreed upon format by the TaRL Africa team.</p>	2 weeks	27th February - 8th March 2023

**Timelines are subject to change based on school re-opening and PEC implementation progress.*

Eligibility

The successful research firm must offer the following demonstrated experience, knowledge, and competencies:

General requirements:

1. A competitive budget.
2. Experience collecting data in Cote d'Ivoire.
3. Experience collecting education data and working with teachers and governments will be viewed as advantageous.
4. Proficiency in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis softwares.
5. Native/fluent in French and English. Familiarity with the various Ivorian languages (local language) is preferred.

Research requirements:

1. Background in collecting high-quality data ethically. This will be measured by:
 - a. Reference checks with past clients or published research work.
 - b. Strong research protocols.
2. Proven track record of qualitative and quantitative data collection in the industry or academic settings.
3. Experience leading, designing, and implementing research with references available.
4. Strong communication, observational, and engagement skills.
5. Perceptive to engagement dynamics and relations.
6. Strong communication and rapport-building skills.

Application

Interested research firms must submit their written proposals (and questions) in English to TaRL Africa via email at procurement@teachingattherightlevel.org before the deadline.

Proposals must contain:

1. **Technical proposal** for the research work, not to exceed 5 pages, including:
 - a. **Detailed workplan** that describes your suggested data collection plan, including human resources that would be involved (e.g., number of enumerators).
 - b. **Budget** for each of the five activities described in the "Expected Deliverables" section (i.e., set up; training; secondary research; primary data collection; and data analysis and reporting). This should include all the costs of data collection, including but not limited to: IRB/government approval fees, enumerator training workshops, transportation, any required software, and printing.
 - c. A **brief description of the experience** collecting data highlighting the following (please include the experience of enumerators you will likely work with on this project): experience working in Cote d'Ivoire, on education projects, and with school officials as well as preferred softwares for quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
2. A **list of up to three references** to whom you would feel comfortable with us reaching out.
3. **Curriculum vitae.**