



teaching at
the right level

The TaRL Approach

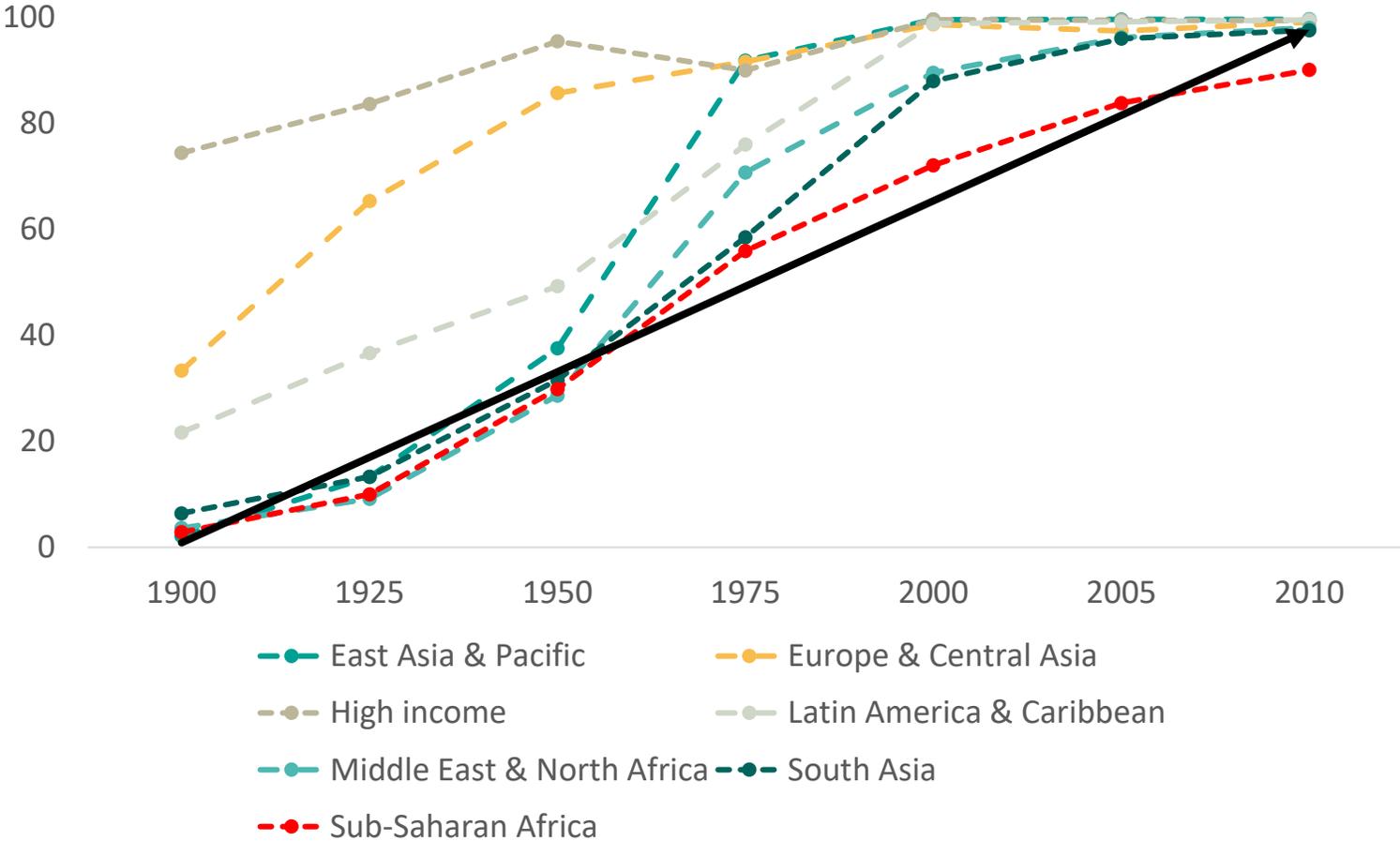
*Remedial teaching to fight the Covid learning
crisis in Africa*

October 2021 | Educaid Conference

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Around the globe, more and more children are enrolled in school...

Net Enrolment Rates by country groups over time



- Massive increases in primary school enrollment over time
- By 2000 already, close to universal enrollment in most regions
- Further gains by 2010

BUT does schooling equal learning?

Source: WDR 2018

Learning levels are low, and varied...

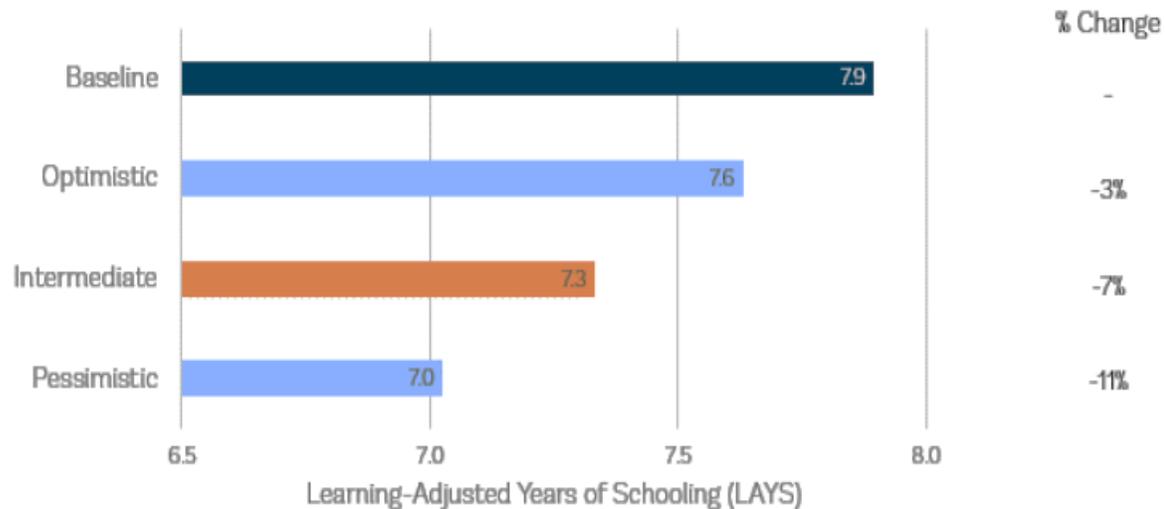
% Children at different **reading** levels in **grade III** before Covid-19 in local language(s)

Data from citizen-led assessments

Level	Uwezo 2019 Uganda (national)	ASER 2018 India (national)	MIA 2018 Mexico (regional)
Cannot recognize letters yet	40.5	12.1	4.1
Can recognize letters/syllables but cannot recognize words	15.5	22.6	4.8
Can read words but cannot read sentences	19.2	20.8	18.2
Can read text at std. 1 level but not higher	9	17.3	30.7
Can read std. 2 level text or higher	15.8	27.2	42.2

...and what after COVID-19?

Learning adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) will fall 0.9 years in the pessimistic scenario (~7 months of school closure)



Data based on estimates from 2020 World Bank paper: Simulating the potential impacts of covid-19 school closures on schooling and learning outcomes: a set of global estimates.

Across the globe, the extent of this loss is expected to vary.

Data from other crises shows that learning loss may last far beyond the current school year:

- Pakistan earthquake in 2005: while students missed three months of school, four years after the earthquake, they were the learning equivalent of 1.5 years behind
- Hurricane Katrina in 2005: while having missing between 6-12 months of schooling, students came back on average >2 years below grade level

So, what can be done?

- With about 1.6 billion children affected by school closures around the world, tackling learning loss due to COVID-19 combined with pre-COVID low outcomes, will be a major challenge
 - We saw from the data – most children are likely to lose an equivalent of a year or more of learning, creating long lasting impact on children and economies
 - In this context, it is essential to:
 - Understand the problem and define clear goals for all children
 - Choose approach and channel of delivery to best achieve the goals
 - Plan implementation to ease delivery and bridge gaps between what is there and what is needed
 - Measure and learn to ensure progress is being made
 - Examples that have done the above in pre-COVID times, like TaRL, can help us get started
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TaRL was developed through a process of experimentation and refinement

Proof of concept



2001-2003
“Balsakhi” programme;
Pratham community volunteer
“pull out” remedial programme
in urban schools



2005-2006
Village volunteers conducted
community classes for rural
primary school children

Identifying a scalable model in India



2012-2014
Teacher-led model, on-site mentoring by
govt academic officials; Learning camps in
govt primary schools, led by Pratham
teams and supported by village volunteers

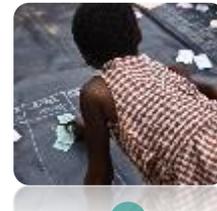


2008 – 2010
In-school one-month govt teacher-led
summer camp with support from village
volunteers; in-school govt teacher-led
learning improvement program & support
from volunteers

Pilots and scale-ups in Africa



2016-
Catch Up piloted in Zambia
in 2016 and it continues to
grow (2000+ schools in
2021)

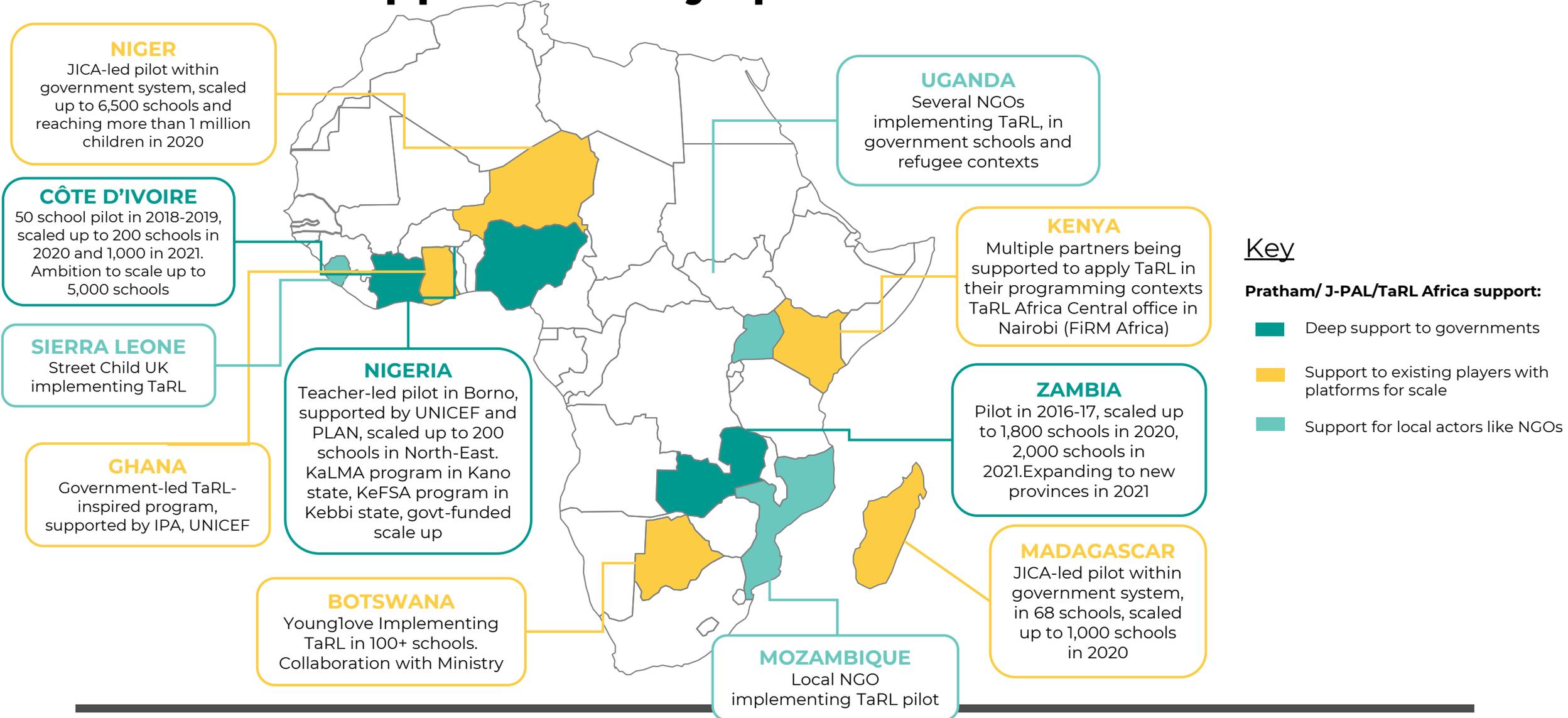


2018-
PEC piloted in Ivory
Coast in 2018 and
continues to grow
(1,000 schools in 2021)



2018-
Borno State
government piloted
TaRL and it continues
to grow

TaRL Africa support already spread to 10+ countries in Africa





TaRL moves away from age-grade teaching to focusing on children's current learning levels

Example: A typical school						
Grade/ Level	Beg	Letter	Word	Para	Story	Total
III	4	9	8	6	13	40
IV	3	6	6	8	18	41
V	3	6	6	8	20	43

In a usual school:

- Children are organized by age and grade (as shown by rows in the table above).
- Assume one teacher teaches each grade.
- Each teacher has about 40 children but at many different levels.
- She teaches from grade level textbook.
- But in reality she struggles with the wide range of learning levels in her class.

Example: Session organized for TaRL					
Grade/ Level	Beg	Letter	Word	Para	Story
III	4	9	8	6	13
IV	3	6	6	8	18
V	3	6	6	8	20
Total	31		42		51

In a TaRL session:

- Children are organized by their current learning level (as shown by columns in the table above).
- One teacher teaches 1-2 groups.
- Each teacher has about 40 children but children are at more or less similar levels.
- She uses activities & materials appropriate for the children's level.

TaRL transforms practice in fundamental ways – in the classroom

	'Business as usual'	Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)
Goal	Goal is to complete the grade level textbook or curriculum.	Goal is to ensure basic foundational skills for all, with clearly articulated goals for basic reading and math.
Assessment	Assessments aligned with curriculum and often pen & paper with many questions. Hard for teacher to use immediately for guiding her instruction. Usually used at beginning and end of term or year.	Simple one-on-one assessments of every student used for starting, grouping and tracking progress. Assessment aligned to and useful for guiding ongoing instruction.
Grouping – organizing children for instruction	Grades are organized by age. Children of a certain age are in a certain grade. Teaching done at grade level based on grade level curriculum and textbooks.	Children grouped by learning level rather than by grade (or age). Children move quickly from one group to the next as their learning progresses.
Teaching & Activities	Teaching starts at the level expected of that grade. Focus mainly on whole-class instruction ('chalk and talk' and textbook-driven), focus on grade level curriculum leads to teaching to the 'top of the class'.	Teaching starts at the level of the child rather than at the level of the grade. Simple and engaging daily learning activities that can be adapted as children progress. Students engage in activities in large groups, small groups, and individually.

TaRL helps shift the system from “schooling for all” towards “learning for all”

	‘Business as usual’	Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)
Training of teachers	Often done by trainers or resource persons who have not carried out the program themselves. Usually training done once at the start of a program.	In typical TaRL programs, training of teachers are only done by those who have carried out successful “practice classes” daily for at least 15-21 days. These are “ leaders of practice ”.
Ongoing field based academic support	Usually trainers do not visit schools/teachers in the field. School visits done for monitoring or inspection.	TaRL programs have a strong ongoing on-site field support component. The trainers or “ leaders of practice ” are the same people who visit schools constantly to support teachers.
Monitoring & Review	Pen and paper assessment done at the beginning & end of a learning unit. Minimal data analysis to understand student learning or adjust teaching before moving to the next learning unit. Program reviews done infrequently.	Simple assessment used periodically to track student progress, review data, and make decisions on child progress and program design. Data used for planning school visits. Quick decision making to inform program delivery and future course.

System alignment is essential to success

In the classroom, TaRL unfolds through a simple process involving key elements

A big tree stood in a garden. It was alone and lonely. One day a bird came and sat on it. The bird held a seed in its beak. It dropped the seed near the tree. A small plant grew there. Soon there was another tree. The big tree was happy.

Rani likes her school.
Her class is in a big room.
Rani has a bag and a book.
She also has a pen.

e	d	w	hand	star
s	c		bus	
g	h	z	cat	book
i	q		day	few
			old	
			sing	bold

Tracking progress

Similar assessments are used for tracking children's progress.



Big groups-small groups

Children do activities in groups and also individually. Children progress quickly and move into the next level group.

Assessment

Simple one-on-one assessment done to **group** children **by level** instead of **by grade** for instruction

Appropriate activities & materials

For each group, there are a set of activities and materials for reading and arithmetic that are appropriate for that group and then enable children to progress.



What have we learned over the years?

- Children who have been in school for a few years, learn quickly through this approach! And those at the lowest levels of learning benefit the most
 - TaRL is flexible enough to be adapted to a variety of different contexts and delivery models – by teachers during school hours, volunteers after school hours, or other combinations based on context
 - When working with school systems, it is important to dedicate time to TaRL, preferably during the school day, especially to ensure that teachers do not return to “business as usual”
 - Material and teacher training is not enough - mentoring and monitoring for teachers led by “leaders of practice” are a crucial aspect of the success of TaRL programming
 - Ensuring adequate technical support, defining roles and responsibilities, and measuring success are crucial aspects of strengthening TaRL implementation in school systems
 - Successful scalable programs can be designed that are owned and led by education systems
 - And there is still much more to learn!
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Thank You!

