

FLETCHER D-PRIZE COMPETITION

2022-2023 Academic Year

Education Challenges

Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) in Resource-Limited Settings

We challenge you to design a new social enterprise that delivers Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) to underserved primary students in a developing region. is an educational program designed to improve primary grade literacy and numeracy. Fletcher D-Prize will award up to \$20,000 to teams with a plan to launch a three-month pilot of this work serving 100-250 primary students with a vision to scale country-wide.

The Poverty Problem

Over the last two decades the world has enrolled millions of previously out-of-school children in primary school.¹ But attendance has not improved learning outcomes. In many resource-limited countries over 50% of Grade 2 students are unable to read a single word of a short text or perform two-digit subtraction.²

Why does this happen? Structural inefficiencies in education systems are at the root of the problem. School systems are not well designed to address the needs of students who may be the first in their families to attend school or who enter the school system without having gained early-learning skills during early childhood. Additionally, children are grouped according to age, and often move to new grades regardless of learning level. Teachers often use a prescribed curriculum which frequently disfavors students who are not yet at that learning level, and they fall further behind.³ Children who miss key concepts in the early grades often never have a chance to catch up, no matter how many years they spend in school. As a result, investments

¹ <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/secondary-education/>

²

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28340/211096ov.pdf?sequence=61&isAllowed=y>

³ <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/teaching-right-level-improve-learning>

made by governments, communities, and parents in order to get children into schools will go to waste for millions of students.

The Proven Intervention

There are several challenges we think an organization implementing the TaRL approach must eventually solve. We recommend you consider focusing your pilot on testing solutions to these challenges.

1. *How do you gain Government support?* Cooperation with existing education systems is almost always required. You may need a high-level government partner who is willing to collaborate with you, or who is at least willing to signal support with a Memorandum of Understanding.

Cooperation at the local level is almost always important too. You must also consider how you will work with local school officials.

2. *What is your TaRL implementation model?* The Teaching at the Right Level approach can be delivered in a number of different ways. When designing a TaRL program it's important to keep in mind both global evidence on what works as well as what the contextual considerations are. Learn more about how to design a TaRL program on the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy hub [here](#).
3. *What materials and activities will be used to accelerate children's learning?* The Teaching at the Right Level approach has a specific classroom methodology that accelerates children's acquisition of reading and Math skills. Materials and activities will need to be designed taking into account the language, resources, and learning goals. Learn more about TaRL teaching learning materials [here](#) and [here](#).
4. *How will you set up mentoring, monitoring and review systems?* Mentoring and monitoring is a core component of TaRL and has been identified as necessary for effective implementation. Learn more about this [here](#) and [here](#).

More Context

- TaRL is not appropriate for all geographies. Learn more [here](#) about whether TaRL could be a helpful approach for your context or not.
- The Catalyst Grant aims to support ventures that work to reach the most underserved students. This generally means students who lack reliable internet access. We recommend your idea tailor itself to these students, and avoid plans that require stable internet access.

Ready To Apply?

Download a First Round Application Packet and start creating your proposal at www.fletcher.tufts.edu/D-Prize.

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