









Zizi Afrique Foundation

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALiVE	Assessment of Life skills and Values in East Africa
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
CAS	Chief Administrative Secretary
CBC	Competency Based Curriculum
СЕР	Curriculum Equity Project
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
ELANA	Early Language and Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
FLN	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GLC	Global Learning Community
GRACE	Global Researchers Advancing Catholic Education
ILD	International Literacy Day
KEPSHA	Kenya Primary Schools Head Teachers Association
KESSHA	Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Education
LCT	Learner Centred Teaching
LSE	Life Skills Education
ΜοΕ	Ministry of Education
NESSP	National Education Sector Strategic Plan
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PE&E	Parental Empowerment and Engagement
RELI	Regional Education Learning Initiative
RVTTI	Rift Valley Technical Training Institute
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VaLi	Values and Life skills
VTC	Vocational Training Centres
WYD	Whole Youth Development
WYSD	World Youth Skills Day

2021 at a glance



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13,885 learners in grade 3-5 in 93 schools assessed.



5,964 learners enrolled into literacy and numeracy learning camps.

- A rapid assessment on reopening amidst COVID conducted in 23 TVETs.
- A national survey on parental engagement during COVID conducted.
- John Mugo joins the TARL Africa Board.



The second series of ALP workbook developed, approved and 5,627 copies distributed.



12,000 readers in Ng'aturkana (mother tongue) dispatched to Turkana county.

- Launch of ALiVE with 454 participants from 34 countries.
- **3** papers presented at the Africa Knows Conference.
- Dr. Sara Ruto sworn in as Chief Administrative Secretary in the Ministry of Education.



3 ALiVE learnshops held reaching 200 participants

Contribution made to social works professionals bill and the TVET financing policy.



6,530 learners attend community based learning camps in Turkana, Tana River and Bungoma counties. Radio sessions supplemented the camps.



- 2 papers presented in the CIES conference (virtual).
- ALiVE Tool development Workshop 1 kicks off with 47 panellists.







African Population and Health Research Centre, Population Council and Africa Educational Trust. • ALiVE Learnshop 6 is held with **119** participants.

• Two papers presented during the 9th RVTTI international conference.

Mid-term review of the National Education Sector Strategic Plan.

• Supported Usawa Agenda in conducting the Uwezo assessment.

A documentary on Parental Engagement innovations is done with the

• ALiVE Tool Development Workshop 2 is held.

4,000 learners participate in a 30-minute read aloud exercise on the Day of the African Child.

- Global data seminar with ESSA, EdTech Hub and ILO.
- Zizi Afrique takes over EE4A leadership.

Kenya Journal of TVET is launched.



 Management team inducted. RELI country convening.

- Dr. John Mugo joins the sounding board of the Global Learning Community.
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- ALiVE Workshop 3 held.
- GPE side summit Evidence to Inform Change for Cost-Effective Educational Reform.
- TVET innovation competitions held with 16 institutions to celebrate the world skills day.



- ALiVE Think Aloud exercise conducted in 3 sub-counties
- ALiVE Learnshop 7 held with 70 participants



- Parental Engagement regional brainstorm session held.
- Training of 4 management team members on fundraising by For Impact.
- Paper presented at the UKFIET conference.
- Workshop on Learning Crisis in Catholic Education in SSA.
- ALiVE Workshop 4 held with 30 partner organisations.
- International Literacy Day Celebrations organized with RELI and PAL Network.



- Zizi Afrique's 2025 strategic plan launched with over 100 participants.
 All-staff learning exercise/staff immersion in Isiolo county conducted.
- The first cohort of the greening TVET project beneficiaries trained at Bukura Agricultural Training College.
- 6000 copies of the final edition of the ALP workbooks printed.
- Zizi Afrique's work published on the Financial Times.





HOOLS

- Zizi Afrique chaired the <u>PAL Network conference</u>
- Zizi Afrique chaired the Education Evidence for Action conference
- Zizi Afrique featured at the <u>Global entrepreneurship</u> week
- Building future generations sector, panel presentation
- Zizi Afrique reenlisted at <u>HundrED</u> as among the most impactful education innovations.
- Won Safaricom's Ndoto Zetu contribution of furniture and text books for two ethic minority schools in Lamu county.
- ALiVE tool Pilot conducted in 3 countries.
- Four management team members trained on Leadership by Perrenial.
- Contributed to the schools2030 global research webinar.



- Zizi board training and reflections
- 2022 budget and plans approved
- Staff end-year session with performance awards
- Kick off of CEP Phase 2
 - 3-week resting period for all staff

Foreword

2021 – The dawn of our 50-year journey

The Zizi Afrique Foundation journey has been steady. Our fifty-year journey to 2070 began in 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2020 was a planning year, looking into the horizons and discerning the impact we aspire to create as a strong local organization on the African continent. We have been bothered by three problems. The millions of children schooling without learning in Sub-Sahara Africa, the millions of youth without skills to sustain livelihood and offer productive contribution to Africa's development, and the hundreds of disjointed and low-impact interventions seeking the improvement of education.

The year 2021 was remarkable on this journey. We finalized and launched our first strategy, 2021-2025. Our vision is now clear, to equip children and youth with competences for learning, living and working, with focus on those furthest behind. For the five years, our mission will be to consolidate evidence and innovate solutions, while working through collaborative networking to shape policy and practice towards our vision. However, a 50-year journey necessitates long vision and strength. Building stability as an organization is a first sure step. We achieved three things.

Board expansion and stronger governance. From a board of only 3 in 2019, the Zizi board now has 7 members, with a wide range of skills from finance to legal expertise, social entrepreneurship, and organizational leadership. Two sessions of board training were held, two board committees inaugurated and structure for annual appraisal and goal setting for the chief executive institutionalized. Also, the organization invested in a risk management system that now supports the definition, monitoring and mitigation of risks, while escalating our risk appetite for big impact in education.

Attracting talent. Tremendous progress was achieved in staffing the organization for performance. The staffing gaps reduced from 53 to 44 percent, with hiring of 3 new staff members. Through this, the organization strengthened muscles for coordination work, now convening over 100 other institutions on the journey to collective impact.

Extending networks and support for growth. Linked to above, the organization scaled-up the coordination of the TVET-Values and Life Skills (VaLi) Working group, with the develop-

ment of a 3-year strategy and implementation framework. Zizi also grounded the coordination of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) as the Kenya country hub, with leadership of the other two countries towards the registration of RELI-Africa in Kenya. Besides, Zizi took up the chairing of the Education Evidence for Action (EE4A) platform and led coordination for the 4th biennial conference. Combined, Zizi is now an emerging space where connections are made, trust is built and courage strengthened for collective impact in education.

Our dream is big, but as we journey towards it, it scares us less. We look forward to a steeper year 2022 with optimism, and as the board, remain very committed to this course, for our children and youth.



Dr. Kahaki Kimani Board Chair, Zizi Afrique

Building back better through the pandemic

By John Mugo

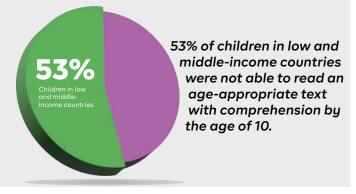
COVID exposed our vulnerability and the fragility of life in all aspects of physical, emotional and economic. In 2021, we experienced new hope with the school re-opening, following the gloomy, prolonged closures of 2020. In under a year, scientists and researchers had already published the genome of the virus and established vaccines that would be crucial in ending the pandemic.

The Ministry of Education set the pace for building back. For the first time in history, there were four school terms in a year from the usual three. The government provided strict guidelines on health and safety protocols for reopening learning institutions of learning to prevent the spread of the virus. Despite the anxiety from parents and teachers, 16 million children returned to school on 4th January 2021.

Understanding and strategizing for the furthest behind

It was imperative that we joined with other stakeholders in bridging the learning starvation that was exacerbated by school closures, especially for the learners who were furthest left behind.

In 2019, the World Bank and UNESCO Institute for Statistics highlighted that;



Learning is cumulative and progressive and when children are not consistentlyengaged, they tend to fall even further behind. A study by the Usawa Agenda highlighted that only 22 percent of the children could access digital learning during school closures.

Learning camps for children left behind were organized in our three focus counties; Turkana, Bungoma and Tana River. During the prolonged school break, the camps continued in identified and mutually agreed upon social spaces, in consultation with parents and local leadership. Despite our efforts, we were cognizant of the fact that we were unable to reach all children by ourselves and more was needed to sustain the learning gains of the children. We recruited 206 parent champions and 12 volunteers to our cause as our community change agents. Bringing more hands and a new passion to the work was a strategic choice for accelerating impact.

Through these and many other joint efforts, we were able to facilitate learning for over **10,000 children**.



Same way, the COVID crisis rendered many youths unemployed and demeaned prospects for completing training and accessing the job market. Through online training and mentorship, the efforts of our collaborators offered hundreds of sessions with a direct reach of more than 5000 youth. The partnership with Safaricom Foundation and Toolkit iSkills extended our collaboration to;

40 vocational training centres





with new scholarships to over 650 youth

and a combined institutional reach of over 6,000 youth



Pursuing collaborative impact

Advocacy for policy change and implementation remained at the heart of the organization. We partnered with 156 education institutions to bolster our voice in taking our mission ahead. These partnerships have been a source of strength and have created spaces where passions and resources are convened and pooled. We chaired the <u>PAL Network</u> and the <u>Education Evidence for Action</u> (EE4A) conferences that brought together over 300 participants to deliberate on education recovery post-Covid. We were invited to share our cause on Global Education platforms and introduced our work and way to impact thousands of people from over 50 countries.

At the national level, we unlocked our convening power to lead several collaborative influencing interventions, and used evidence to inform various government policies and plans, including the National Education Sector Strategic Plan (NESSP), the TVET financing bill (one amongst the five reviewed). We partnered with the TVET Authority to re-launch the Kenya Journal of TVET, and with UNICEF and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to conduct a national study on parental engagement during school closures. To explore micro philanthropy, the minorities project was rebranded to 'Tenda Wema' (extend kindness), receiving and investing little donations to enable schooling and learning for children of minorities and those from extremely impoverished backgrounds. Through giving by members of staff, including fund-sourcing through an office sports tournament, more than 10,000 US Dollars was raised in the year. Support was given to sustain learning for 30 children of the Sanye minority community of Lamu County, and scholarship awards to another 24 students studying in various schools across the country. This pilot has shown promise and instilled confidence for scale.



The new normal

Working from home became second nature. The 2020 lockdown had already built familiarity with the virtual space through the countless hours of online meetings. This experience was consolidated through holding online launches and webinars which included more than 1,000 participants. Secondly, a new normal was defined for the organization, balancing between working from the office and working from home. Each team had 1-2 days per week of working from the office while giving choice to staff to prefer workspaces that promote optimal productivity.

This report

This report expounds on the experience of Zizi Afrique during year 1 of the strategic period

Animating evidence use in the TVET ecosystem

By Renaldah Mjomba

2021 was a great year for the Whole Youth Development Programme. Many positive things happened. There is reason to celebrate 2021 as the year of data and evidence use in TVET.

Safaricom Foundation Scholarships

This project is as old as COVID-19: just before the first beneficiaries were enrolled, COVID-19 broke out in the country and there was the nationwide lockdown! However, the wonders of digitization made it possible for implementation to begin- online. In March 2020, enrolment of the first 351 trainees was done online and so did the training on digital learning and life skills.

Starting October 2020 and henceforth, the situation changed.



Since then, the numbers have been growing and by the close of 2021, 469 additional beneficiaries had been enrolled, and 115 were already on industrial attachment, out of which 10 had been employed and two had begun their enterprises. Some institutions such as Rarieda, Comboni and the Eastlands College of Technology (ECT) had by then taken in two cohorts.

The Community of Practice for VTC Managers was also established. This is where the programme identifies a theme of interest to the community, identifies an expert and enhances the capacity of the community in that chosen theme. So far, the themes covered include Safeguarding, Industrial Labour Relations and Recognition of Prior Learning.

Youth with Disabilities

True to the principle of reaching the furthest behind, 8 percent of the beneficiaries are youth with disabilities. The program collaborated with the four special TVETs across the country to skill the youth: Nyang'oma for the Deaf; Nyabondo for those with physical disabilities; Machakos for the Blind and Sikri for the Deaf-Blind. That collaboration has paid off since the institutions have their own support systems for identifying and supporting youth with disabilities from enrolment to completion.

In addition to the Special TVETs, other institutions too identified and recruited youth with disabilities among their beneficiaries. This is what led the program to design a training programme on Supporting Trainees with Disability in TVET in April 2021. The weeklong virtual training programme attracted over 80 TVET Trainers from all over the country, and covered aspects of diversity, learning differently and approaches to social and training inclusion.



Supporting evidence use in TVET

The inaugural edition of the Kenya Journal of TVET (KJ-TVET) was launched in June 2021. The launch was a culmination of a very long journey that began in 2018, when Zizi and the TVET Authority co-established the TVET Research Advisory Committee (TRAC), exploring a way of supporting evidence use in TVET. TRAC changed form into the editorial board of KJ-TVET, and commenced the new assignment in March 2021.



The inaugural edition published 14 papers



from a total of 63 submissions.

In 2020, the Data Collaborative for Sub-Sahara Africa was established by Zizi Afrique, Education Sub Saharan Africa (ESSA) and the EdTech Hub. This initiative aimed to catalyse access to and use of data for the improvement of education in Sub-Sahara Africa. This initiative held two international virtual webinars in 2021, reaching out to policymakers, academia, funders and other data holders and users.

Within this, Zizi continued to pursue the goal of supporting evidence use in the TVET sub-sector. Realization was made that TVET data is strewn all over the government departments and institutions, with little investment in using this or making it data accessible. An initiative was started to apply systematic data mapping methodology to trace and document available data in TVET. Zizi Afrique reached out to the Directorate of Technical Education, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the National Treasury and other institutions for partnerships. A concept note was finalized and scheduled for implementation early in 2022.

Since the four reports of the national studies were launched in 2019, Zizi Afrique continues to explore various ways of nurturing an evidence culture while at the same time establishing a TVET evidence ecosystem. Zizi Afrique hosted the 'Changing Skills Landscape' theme at the EE4A conference in November 2021 and presented eight papers at the conference and sponsored the commissioned paper in the Changing Skills Landscape thematic group. Through the Values and Life Skills working group, inputs were made to five

government policies, including the TVET Financing Bill; the social works professional Bill; Draft Guidelines on Capitation and Development Grants; Draft Income Generating Units Guidelines and Draft TVET Finance Strategy. One last celebration is that through collaboration with KIPPRA, we packaged TVET evidence and used this to inform the mid-term review of the National Education Sector Strategic Plan.

Learning the loops of evidence-led advocacy and engagement

Engaging government and other audiences for evidence-based decision making

By Virginia Ngindiru

Zizi Afrique has invested to learn on how best the evidence collated through research or practice is best channelled to inform the policy making process. This is deemed the most sustainable route to ensuring children and youth furthest behind are facilitated (rather enabled by the system) to acquire the skills needed for learning, living and working. In 2021, the following three perspectives were our guiding principles for successful engagement with the government;

- Know what you want to achieve. The Zizi Afrique strategy aims to contribute signifi cantly to policies that focus on children/youth in arid areas, youth with less than a secondary education, girls and female youth and youth with disabilities. In line with this, we led in the review of five policies; TVET Financing Bill; the social works profes sional Bill; Draft Guidelines on Capitation and Development Grants; Draft Income Generating Units Guidelines and Draft TVET Finance Strategy and were part of the CompetencyBased Curriculum education taskforce.
- 2. Know what the government wants to achieve. The success of policy reforms mainly depends on the political regime (Samarasinghe, 2018). Policy change will be deter mined by the government's interests and priorities. The education reforms in Kenya are centred around competences for children and youth, and this is determined as the core course taken by government. Adapting to this, Zizi Afrique's strategic vision has focused on the foundational, core competencies and values, contributing to the holis tic development of the child.
- 3. Approaching government as a team. Alone, an organization can only make so little impact. Together, civil society organizations can scale their impact through learning from and with each other and building synergy for greater effectiveness. Zizi Afrique continues to learn how to broker relationships and trust across civil society organiza tions and nurture attentiveness to the power of many in improving education.

Conferencing as strategic engagement

The year was crowned by two biennial conferences held in November which we chaired. Both conferences brought together over 800 education stakeholders. The Education Evidence for Action (EE4A) <u>conference</u>, the largest convening of national level policy makers brought together 151 members drawn from civil society, government and academia.

The conference, themed "Nurturing an Evidence Culture in Implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC & CBET) in Post COVID-19 Era' was presided over by Prof. Fatuma Chege, Principal Secretary, State Department for Curriculum Reforms and Implementation. Zizi Afrique presented 9 papers at this conference, the highest from a single institution.

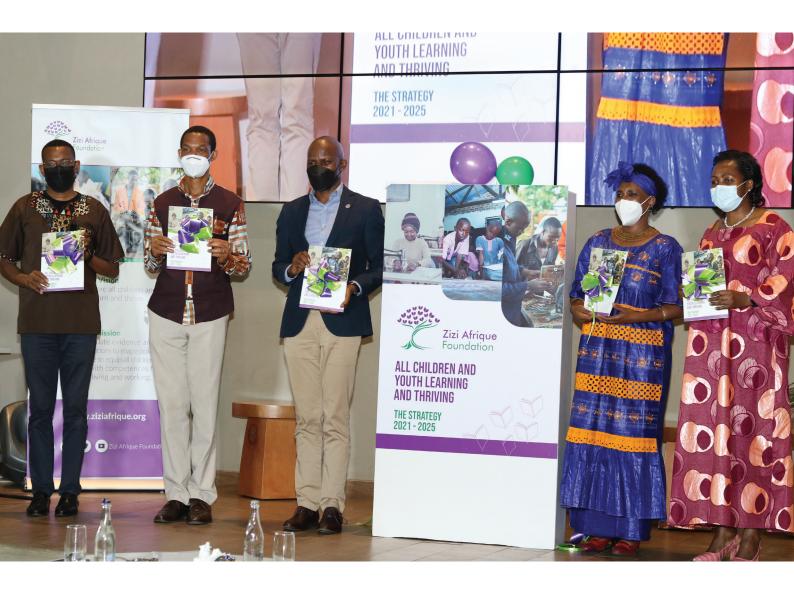
The People's Action for Learning (PAL) <u>Conference</u> attracted over 500 participants from 40 countries. The conference theme was 'Building Better: Ensuring Learning Continuity for All.' Zizi Afrique presented three papers, covering a range of competences including foundational literacy and numeracy and values and life skills.

Raising voice through writing and sharing

Besides playing a central role in convening conferences, Zizi Afrique supported the success of other conferences and presented a total of 19 papers, including the Africa Knows conference (January-February 2021, 3 papers), Learning at the Bottom of the Pyramid (December 2020-January 2021, 3 papers), the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference (one workshop and a panel), the <u>RVTTI conference</u> (3 papers), and the UKFIET (participation in one panel), among other global meetings and webinars.

This constant sharing of evidence has earned us space in regional and global forums, where our voice and contribution is heeded, such as, <u>Brookings, Imaginable Futures Global Entrepreneurship week</u>, Education Partnership Group, GPE side summit, <u>GRACE panel by</u> <u>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</u>, the Karanga movement, the Education Sub Saharan Africa and the EdTech hub. In Kenya, we continue to contribute to the skills/competences landscape through the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI), the Permanent working group on TVET and the Catholic TVET network, among other platforms.

Evidence generated from our work as an institution or jointly through like-minded partners may have local, regional and global influence in many ways. We applaud all the collaborators for their trust, support and commitment in achieving these milestones, which we hope to ground further in 2022.



Animating Collaboration within Civil Society By Margaret Wawira

Inter-organizational collaboration has become a primary global strategy for addressing social, economic, political, and other forms of developmental concerns. As the complexity of these problems increases, the need for collaboration becomes more urgent. Pertinent to this is the building of partnership models which are long lasting, scalable, and transformative, and which create shared value (Torres-Rahman et al., 2015). Collaboration and alliance-building have therefore been legitimized as clear pathways to impact, departing from the unitary, competitive way of working.

Hosted by Zizi Afrique Foundation in Kenya, the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) is a member-driven network of education actors across East Africa that seeks to generate knowledge, evidence and collaborations that transform member organisations and influence policy. Over the years, RELI has created partnerships with various government agencies, exercising convening power to coordinate efforts to inform policy and support implementation. As the Kenya hub for the network, Zizi Afrique provided leadership throughout 2021 and this is what we achieved and learned about collaboration.

Transforming member organisations

One pillar of RELI's vision is the transformation of member organisations into high functioning vehicles of regional change. This was pursued through several activities in 2021. RELI cultivated self-learning and peer-to-peer learning from shared experiences, collectively participating in over 8 learning events during the year. Additionally, the network continuously sought to build the capacity of member organisations and encourage proactive collaboration for better impact. RELI collaborated with various government agencies to enhance the capacity of members for policy advocacy. For example, RELI partnered with KICD to share best practices on coaching and mentorship for Pre- and In-service teacher programmes, presenting the opportunity to four RELI member organisations to participate in a 3-month coaching exercise.

Through the Values and Life Skills (VaLi) thematic group, RELI members participated in a wide array of activities focused on building a coalition of key actors in Life Skills Education (LSE) space. Through collaborative networking, we strengthened our participation in policy engagements and LSE activities in Kenya. The group continuously scans the land-scape for potential collaborators.

The largest and most beneficial event has been the learning-through-doing involving RELI members in the construction of a contextualized tool to assess life skills and values in East Africa (ALiVE project).

This activity took 8 months in 2021, with members learning how to define the constructs in context, develop skill structures, develop assessment frameworks and scoring structures for problem solving, collaboration, self-awareness and respect. The year closed with a series of pilots for the draft tool. Another RELI project was born, the Adapting Assessments for Policy (ADAPT). This is a 3-year project funded by IDRC through KIX, and is seeking to drive learning in RELI on the use of assessment results to inform policy and practice.

Through these activities, RELI members continue to enjoy opportunities for growth and self-transformation, strengthening the muscle for collective impact in education.

Knowledge management

RELI continued to employ knowledge management as a change pathway to ensure sustainable interventions for the children furthest behind. Various research studies were conducted to inform evidence based advocacy and generate evidence of what inclusion-focused interventions are working, which ones are not working and ultimately monitor new developments in the field of education to inform interventions.

The global COVID-19 pandemic disrupted learning across the world. Schools in Kenya were closed which halted structured learning for all learners. RELI collaborated with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) during the school closures to generate evidence on parental empowerment and engagement strategies that were used in different parts of the country to promote continued learning from home.

Additionally, following the presidential directive to re-open schools for all learners in January 2021, RELI coordinated members to conduct a rapid appraisal on the preparedness of schools across the country for resumption of learning. The findings indicated that most schools were still unprepared. These results informed some of the measures that were taken by various stakeholders, including RELI member organizations, in supporting school re-opening, safety and recovery.

Beyond this, the network invested in a dynamic digital knowledge hub that synthesizes education research findings to inform RELI interventions. This knowledge hub is being led by the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC). Beyond the objective of making RELI research more easily accessible to teachers, researchers, policy makers and other education actors the hub continues to:

- Empower individuals to respond creatively to changing situations in the education sector
- Influence education policy design and implementation
- Equip members to enhance transparency, adaptability, collaboration and motivation

As an education initiative, we were able to cultivate a culture that inspires people to share evidence, knowledge and learning for sustainable policy influencing and evidence-based advocacy. This not only improved members' knowledge of the various subject matters, but also informed improved children's access to quality learning.

Ultimately, there is a growing need for knowledge management to improve performance and impact. RELI is committed to sharing its research and intervention outcomes through multiple channels including local, regional and global conferences, and through dialogue and collaboration with other global education networks. And whilst the knowledge hub is still in its nascent stages, this work will contribute to efforts to ensure that children that are left furthest behind in the East African region attend school and learn.

Collaborative policy influencing

RELI has embraced membership from organisations operating at different levels that can effectively monitor the implementation of education policies. This stems from the fact that for national policy makers, implementation may refer to what needs to be executed to bring a new policy down to districts and schools and for regional or local policy makers, it may mean making choices about changing priorities, and use of resources. As such, in its policy influencing agenda, the network aspires to see policy makers and stakeholders work together to develop effective policies geared towards improving education that benefits all learners. This continues to bridge the gap between where education is crafted and the implementers.

In 2021, RELI was able to collaboratively inform the thinking around and development of several policies including the disability education sector policy; the Guidance & Counselling Policy; the Basic Education and Institutions Registration Guidelines; as well as the school re-entry policy guidelines. The group supported policy implementation processes including the national dissemination of school re-entry guidelines to all primary and secondary schools via the KEPSHA and KESSHA annual meetings. County-level dissemination of school re-entry policy mas done, coupled with school-community intervention to return girls to school (4Ts program, led by MoE and Population Council, with support from the Equity and Inclusion Thematic Group).



While we are still learning on what works best in engaging government and moving beyond written intentions to improve learning for all children, RELI remains on a steady path of collaborative policy influencing. Anxiety has now risen on the impending government change through the general elections in 2022, and how changes in the political regime may necessitate new ways of working. Until then, RELI thematic groups are defining the key policies to support, and mapping the mandatory touchpoints in government for the achievement of the policy objectives.

In conclusion, there is a very profound quote that says, 'Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much'. A reality we have experienced first-hand this past year. The new year, 2022 comes with new exciting challenges and opportunities for collaboration. RELI will be commemorating 5 years since its establishment in 2017. Young but not so young anymore, we are anticipating to animate and amplify collaboration with civil society organisations by looking deeply into where RELI began, the journey to 5 years and where RELI is headed. Coming together is the beginning, we can't wait to continue experiencing and exploring collaboration this coming year, applying all the lessons from the past and collectively moving a little closer to realizing access to equitable education for the children furthest left behind.

Innovation for improved practice

Innovating for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

By Virginia Ngindiru

The year 2021 was a period for Zizi Afrique to bounce back to full implementation as a Foundational Literacy and Numeracy unit, having shifted our approach to programming in 2020 due to the COVID-19 closures. The closure period allowed us to broaden our perspectives in delivering impact to the target communities, and we continued with this in 2021. Anchored within the Innovation pillar, the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) unit pursues a holistic approach to ensuring learners acquire fundamental skills to accelerate learning. Three broad areas of work characterize our 2021:

Innovating Assessment Processes

Zizi Afrique is part of the 12 member organizations of the PAL Network that are implementing the Early Language and Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (ELANA). ELANA is a citizen-led direct child assessment that constitutes tasks across the learning areas of Language and Math. It is an adaptive testing tool, aligned to SDG 4.2.1 and SDG 4.1.1(a) designed to measure the pre-numeracy and numeracy skills, the oral language acquisition, reading and comprehension skills of children between 4 and 10 years.

ELANA is building on the Citizen Led Assessment (CLA) movement and the International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN). During the year we participated in an intensive assessment development process, and conducted two field trials reaching over 600 children. The purpose of the exercise was to;

- 1. Establish how well the items would work in the field;
- 2. Determine if the instructions are clear or need to be revised;
- 3. Find out which items are age-appropriate and would work fairly well with the specified age group;
- 4. Obtain quantitative as well as qualitative feedback on every item i.e., how well are the items designed and if they meet the assessment objectives; and
- 5. Get feedback on the user friendliness of the application and digitized items.

Innovating for Effective Parental Engagement and Empowerment

Parents are a critical pillar for improved learning outcomes. Evidence suggests that consistent parental engagement is associated with improvements in academic attainment for students of all ages (Emerson et al., 2012). In our pursuit of working with communities and the commitment to continuously build their capacity, we partnered with RELI, UNICEF and KICD and conducted research in 32 counties. The purpose was to investigate the involvement of parents in learning during the COVID-19 closures.

Findings from this national survey revealed that most parents were aware of their roles, with 84 percent noting that they had a responsibility towards provision of resources required for school. Despite this understanding, their involvement during COVID was deterred by factors such as limited experience with remote learning, time constraints due to competing responsibilities, limited capacity to handle curriculum and inadequate capacities on digital literacy.

Inequities were noted with majority of wealthy and literate parents demonstrating better support towards learning during the period.

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To complement this study, we further conducted mapping of Parental Empowerment and Engagement (PE&E) innovations from 11 RELI members. The exercise established that;

- i) the approaches that had a strong community-based learning focus were more successful in transitioning and maintaining parental engagement even with limited teacher support;
- ii) community radios (where available) helped to reduce the disparity and exclusion caused by the shift to social media and online platforms and;
- iii) in-person meetings remained the most inclusive form of parental engagement.

The report flagged lack of technological knowledge as a key barrier to stronger parental engagement. It further recommended the need to mainstream parents and learners with disabilities into programming as well as a shift in policy to emphasize social emotional learning so as to build resilience within the school-communities.

These insights have informed the design of the second phase of the Curriculum Equity Project (2021-2024). The collaboration with RELI Kenya will extend to Uganda and Tanzania, with an aim of amplifying the existing innovations on PE&E and accumulating evidence on what works (doesn't work) in various contexts. This evidence will be used to plug into wider policy conversations. A conceptual framework will be developed to guide this phase. Insights from this research will inform the parental engagement strategy at KICD and Ministry of education as a whole. We are looking forward to steering collaborations between civil society and government as they ensure assimilation of evidence into the policy making process and applying a framework of what works in engaging parents of the children furthest behind.

Innovating to Accelerate Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

This piece of work combines the two aspects above – assessments and parental/community engagement - to complement the accelerated learning approach. It targets learners in grades 3 to 5, lagging in their foundational literacy and numeracy competencies. On assessments, we adapted the International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN) and Uwezo literacy tools as measures to determine basic learning levels. Additionally, through the home visits and community conversations, we continuously engage with parents to plug into the learning process.

In 2021, we continued with a hybrid approach to implementation combining school and community-based approaches. **Overall, we reached 23,746 learners, 168 teacher assistants and 3,222 parents**. During the long school break in March, the community-based intervention was complemented by a radio program in Tana Delta. The period also saw 3 innovations emerge within this work,

- i) the youth volunteers' component in Turkana;
- ii) parent volunteer component in Bungoma and the;
- iii) Tenda Wema in Lamu county, targeting the Sanye minority community. These are described in detail below.

i. School-based intervention.

This is the standard delivery approach of the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), supported at the school level by teacher assistants (TA) reskilled in foundational literacy and numeracy instruction. During the year, over 19,000 learners (direct reach) benefitted, 11,856 in literacy and 7,725 in numeracy. To complement TA intervention, 18,213 copies of learning resources were provided (11,217 workbooks; 6,996 Ng'aturkana readers). The workbooks 2 and 3 were distributed as a home learning resource.

ii. Community-based intervention, complemented by a radio program in Tana Delta.

During the 7-weeks school break in March 2021, TAs were deployed to communities to support continued learning in designated community spaces. Besides facilitating learning camps, they supported learners during a radio program. A total of 6,530 learners were reached through this initiative.

iii. Youth volunteers as learning champions in Turkana.

This aspect was domiciled at the community level in Turkana County. It aimed at exploring the potential of leveraging the presence of youths in communities to support continued learning at home. Twelve (12) volunteers were engaged to support 188 learners in villages in Turkana. An additional 2,834 learners were reached through the LCT Jifunze sub-group. The Jifunze sub-group is affiliated with the LCT thematic group in RELI and brings together member organizations implementing innovations aimed at accelerating acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy competences.

iv. Parent volunteers as champions of learning in Bungoma.

In 2020, Zizi Afrique received a donation of 250 tablets from Samsung (through Safaricom), which we deployed to households in Bungoma to incentivize peer learning and parental involvement. Paukwa came on board as a partner to provide digital content. As a result, 206 parent champions volunteered as custodians of the device, opening spaces in their homes for sampled children to learn through the device. The initiative has so far benefited 1,146 learners.

v. Tenda Wema. This is an empathy project and an internal initiative by Zizi Afrique.

The initiative impacted 214 learners towards completing their primary, secondary and college education through scholarship awards (200 at ECDE level; 2 in primary, 8 in secondary and 4 in tertiary levels). Unique to this initiative is the philanthropy through little hands (staff members contributing little, regular amounts) and the schooling of the first generation among the Sanye minority community at the coast (probably the most excluded minority community in Kenya).

vi. Infrastructure development.

Quality infrastructure also contributes to a conducive learning environment. During the year, 3 libraries were constructed and equipped, 3,138 story books were donated to these libraries and 4 desktops to ease library management were provided. Through the Ndoto Zetu funds, we also received CBC compliant furniture (tables and chairs) and textbooks under the Tenda Wema project.

In a nutshell, the FLN unit,

- i) provided thought leadership in assessments through the design and adaptation of ELANA;
- ii) increased foundational competencies for over 23,000 learners;
- ii) enhanced the capacities of 168 teacher assistants to deliver targeted instruction;
- iii) improved infrastructure to facilitate learning;
- iv) increased collaborations to deliver impact on foundational learning, including research collaborations with RELI, KICD, UNICEF, PAL Network and implemented collaborations through the Jifunze sub-group, and
- v) intensified involvement of youths and parents to support FLN at the community level.

Unit Visibility and Advocacy

The FLN unit made remarkable strides towards visibility and policy engagement, inter alia,

- A <u>feature</u> of the digital pilot in Bungoma, focusing attention on how parents have stepped up learning support in the household;
- Evidence from implementation shared in various forums: RELI country convening, papers to the PAL Network and Africa Knows conferences, paper submission to INEE journal and featuring of our FLN work in the Financial Times with support from the Gates Foundation. Further, evidence of the Jifunze sub-group of LCT was synthesized and shared during the International Literacy Day webinar.
- Accelerated Learning Program was listed among the top 100 most inspiring and scalable education innovations globally by Hundred.org;

We have learnt the need to adopt a holistic approach to learning. This follows slow progress post intervention due to incidences of hunger and high absenteeism in the arid and semi-arid regions. We also note that the FLN landscape is fast evolving globally, with many areas to interrogate, including how to leverage technology to improve the status of FLN and optimizing the role of parents (in hard to reach regions) to support learning. We are also curious as to what it takes, to get the teacher education component right, and ensure that pre-service training programs yield teachers with the right skillsets to support FLN. These thematic issues are the basis of our work in 2022.



Daring the hard work - Assessing life skills and values By Purity Ngina

At the beginning of the year, ALiVE produced 16 reports from an ethnographic study that was done in 15 districts in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The study sought to understand selected competences in the context of adolescents aged 13 – 17 years, teachers and parents. Despite the questions asked during the study being rudimental, the results of this contextualization study were startling. For instance, many adolescents did not define problem solving as just a cognitive process (how literature defines it), but also one with a communitarian dimension (involving often more than one person). In pursuit to interpret and apply these findings to tool development, the contextualization process led to the formation of a technical panel for each country, involving 12-17 members drawn from various institutions and sharing one thing – the disposition and interest to co-create an assessment tool for the context of East Africa.

Two months were spent mapping the potential persons that would add value to and learn through the process, and consulting with the Ministries of Education and affiliated institutions. A total of 47 members were included in the final list of the country panels, among them teachers, artists, practitioners and psychometricians. An external facilitator was identified and engaged - Professor Esther Care. It was no mean fete to have experts to integrate and leverage in their diverse experiences. We had underestimated how diverse the East African cultures are and indeed how impactful the reality would be on the tool development process, and all this was exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. The technical panel was inducted through group reading and interpretation of the 16 reports from the regional contextualization study. By April 2021, the panel had met, discussed and compared the findings from the ethnographic study to the literature. Time was then ripe for the inaugural workshop to kick off the tool development academy.

Developing contextualized tools to measure problem solving, self-awareness, collaboration and respect

During the first workshop, the panel was expected to review skills descriptions from the ethnographic study and existing literature, draft consolidated descriptions of the skills and draft sub-components and structure. They were also expected to draft the skill structure, including writing at least two scenarios that could be used during the actual assessment. This for sure was an uphill task, with work stretching deep into the nights. Notwithstanding, a challenge persisted; the 47 members were very diverse and dynamic in thoughts and views, and, therefore, each of them felt that their voices counted. And of course, it did. This increased the time spent discussing and agreeing to disagree, and work that would be done within hours probably took a day or more. In-person meeting was only possible in Tanzania, and participants in Kenya and Uganda had to connect online while balancing the time difference between East Africa and Melbourne (Esther Care).

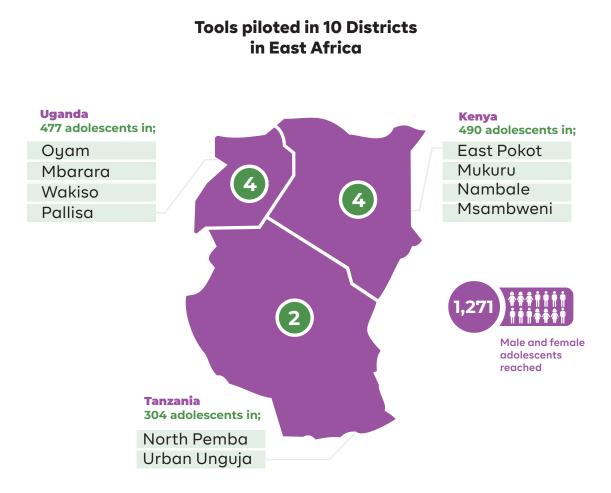
At the end of the first Workshop, we were certain of several constructs. First, scenariobased tasks/vignettes would be used for assessment. Second, local languages would be used while assessing. Third, for each of the 47 members to be meaningfully involved in the process, and draw value from the teams able to meet in person, a decision was made to allocate the 4 competences to country teams. Kenya got respect and collaboration, Tanzania got self-awareness and the Ugandan team took charge of problem solving.



By early September, the 47 members had developed enough tasks for pretesting. The external facilitator advised the team to use the cognitive laboratories/Think Alouds as the first step to pre-testing the items with adolescents. Though quite new and complex to most members, the Think Alouds went on successfully in 8 districts in East Africa, reaching 130 adolescents. This was a very important process in finalizing the tools and more so putting together the scoring rubric. This exercise was followed by two more workshops before the tools were ready for piloting.

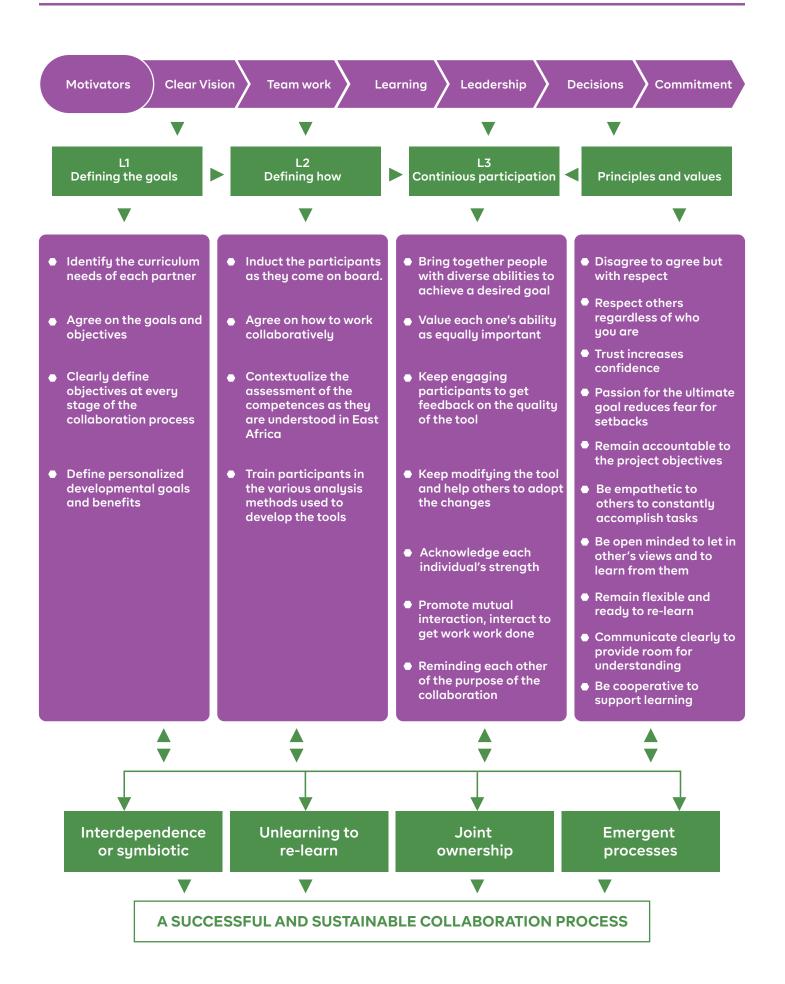


In November, the tools were piloted in 10 Districts in East Africa, 4 districts of Uganda: Oyam, Mbarara, Wakiso and Pallisa, 4 sub-counties of Kenya: East Pokot, Mukuru, Nambale and Msambweni, and 2 districts in Tanzania: North Pemba and Urban Unguja . This exercise reached 1,271 adolescents - 477 in Uganda, 304 in Tanzania and 490 in Kenya.



The development of the contextualized skill structures was an arduous task, especially for respect and self-awareness. At one point, the panel working on these two competences almost threw in the towel. The complexity of the two could not only be attributed to the dynamism within the team when looking at issues but also to the problematic construct definitions given the diversity of meanings captured by the contextualization studies. Every day there was a new voice, a new idea shared and mainly different from earlier interactions. But the team forged ahead. They kept going. They celebrated small victories and by October, respect and self-awareness had a considerable number of assessment task items just like problem-solving and collaboration.

Collaboration is an art and has a great reward. The collaborative tool development and learning clocked 36 weeks by the end of 2021, and the end was at sight. Ploughing through the Covid uncertainties to do extreme hard work, the 47-panel members gained resilience, expanded commitment and discovered new love and passion. From the reflections of this process, ALiVE has suggested a framework for collaborative interventions (Nansubuga, Ngina, Giacomazzi & Mugo 2021, presented at the PAL Conference), and put it out for peer review and improvement. Indeed, not the hard work is important, and not the ALiVE tool, but the potent power of working and learning together. This is what we must celebrate, and share out.



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Innovation is at the heart of TVET and what better way to unlock the creative and innovative minds of the youth in TVET than to bring all of them into a competition. July 15th was the day.

Zizi Afrique partnered with the Safaricom Foundation, Toolkit iSkills and 20 vocational training institutions to organize an innovation contest to commemorate World Youth Skills Day (WYSD) in style. The theme of WYSD was 'Reimagining youth skills post-pandemic.' Two weeks prior, we had invited all the 40 partner TVETs to register their interest in the competition.

When the clock struck 2.00 pm on 15th July, about 800 eager youth from 16 institutions were logged in to the online platform ready to showcase their innovations. George Gathua of Safaricom graced the occasion. It was marvellous to watch all the great ideas generated and presented by the youth. The innovations ranged from automatic lighting systems to recycling of waste, to water cleansing and irrigation systems. But there was tension also, with a panel of youth panellists assessing and scoring the innovations.

The "Coconut Flux (sanitary) Pad Innovation" distinctively stood out. This innovation entailed using coconut husks to create sanitary pads – at a cheaper price for girls from resource-scarce communities. The process entailed cleaning the husks and softening them enough to be used. "Menses with dignity" was the key aim of the innovation. Some studies have revealed that for adolescent girls in low and middle-income countries, lack of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) within and outside the school may pose a serious challenge to their schooling. The consistent absence from school leads to lower academic efficacy and poorer academic performances.

Using coconut husks to make affordable sanitary pads was ingenious and innovative to say the least. Coconut husks are readily available in the coastal regions of Kenya. Essentially, the husks are usually considered a waste product after the coconut fruit has been harvested. In this case, their use of sanitary pads will ensure the environment is clean and at the same time, girls from disadvantaged backgrounds will go through their menses with dignity.

Given their proximity to communities, TVETs are best placed for innovations tailored to the communities in which they are found. With proper support structures and facilities, every TVET institution can be an epicentre of community innovations aimed at not only resolving immediate challenges but also scaling up production to commercial value.

Every effort deserves to be rewarded. And that is how the six girls of Tewa Training College found themselves winners of the Safaricom-Zizi World Youth Skills day in 2021. And for their effort, each one of them was rewarded with a smartphone, courtesy of Safaricom. Most important, youth in vocational training were exposed to the power of turning ideas into something tangible, and the potential value of innovation in transforming the youth employment landscape.

The journey to a sustainable local organization By Faith Mukiria

People. Funding. Technology. Monitoring and Sharing. These are the four enablers prioritized by Zizi Afrique as the key ingredients needed to create a sustainable, impactful local organization.

The true measure of success for an organization like Zizi Afrique is her impact and sustainability. Over the years, sustainability has gained immense popularity in development especially in donor-funded initiatives. Thompson and Strickland (2003) observed that in a fast-changing environment, the capacity to introduce new organizational practices is a necessity if an organization is to achieve superior performance over long periods of time. Therefore, as the program is conceptualized, sustainability should be discussed. Some questions that need to be asked include; How will the program benefits continue even after the funding ends? How do the main outputs of a project become the starting points of new projects?

All said and done, the biggest contribution to sustainability is the impact that the organization makes. In 2021, we made significant strides towards achieving sustainability and increased the impact prospects of Zizi Afrique.

People

First, we invested in people. Globally, there is a war for talent where it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain top talent. <u>Gallup</u>, a US based company, found that globally, only 15 percent of employees are engaged at work and are enthusiastic and add value to their job. Engaged employees are more efficient and productive. Additionally, people stay where they feel appreciated and where they feel they are contributing to a higher cause. Employees are better engaged where they are involved in their work. In line with this, we held an immersion exercise in <u>Isiolo county</u>. We had an opportunity to interact and learn from children and youth who were furthest left behind. While debriefing from the exercise, staff members were given a chance to brainstorm and conceptualize an innovation that would benefit the community. The best innovation was granted USD 10,000 for implementation.

Three staff members, four interns, and 12 volunteers were engaged in the year. The interns were immersed in the organisation's culture and had the opportunity to experience real work. On the other hand, the volunteers were our foot soldiers, who adopted schools to ensure all children can read with understanding and reason with numbers.

It is imperative that for any organization to survive the test of time, it must invest in sound governance that provides leadership, direction and legitimacy. In 2021, Dr. Sara Ruto (Deputy Minister of Education) and Mr. Michael Nzule (Finance and Strategy Director at Mitchell Cotts) joined the Zizi Afrique board. The two new entrants will complement the skill set of the board by providing finance and strategic leadership.

Monitoring and Sharing

Second, we were accountable to our board, funders, government, staff and stakeholders. An organisation must continuously monitor and adapt to the environment if it is to survive and prosper. This mechanism provides evidence of the progress and impact of the organization. Project results that are well documented, are essential in receiving support from a range of stakeholders and funders. We developed the Monitoring and Evaluation framework hinged on the Strategic Plan and defined the organisational impact and outcome indicators and set up mechanisms for collating monitoring data. With support from Porticus, we commenced work with IDinsight and developed the MEL framework for the next two years for the Ujana360 program. The year was crowned by the launch of our 2025 Strategy.

Evidence from reports provides valuable inputs to future projects and forms the basis on which decisions are made. Moreover, they are useful communication tools. Every organization should have a communication strategy where the achievements and lessons of a project are channelled. We rebranded our website and circulated our first annual report. In 2021, were able to reach over 7,000,000 people through traditional and social media.



Technology

Third, in a constantly changing world, it is paramount that an organization is flexible and adaptive to the environment. The world has changed, now more, with the COVID-19 pandemic. At the brink of the 4th industrial revolution, technology has made the unimaginable possible. Remote learning and working have come to disrupt the traditional classroom and office.

At Zizi Afrique, we made headway by ensuring that we are minimizing the use of paper in all of our operations including conducting research. With support from PAL Network, we purchased 30 inaugural tablets to facilitate digital data collection. A decision was also made to invest in an e-board system to ensure collaboration and efficiency of the board. The staff members were on boarded on the AssessTeam software to enhance accountability in the organisation. At the beginning of the year, we set objectives that the system was able to continually evaluate throughout the year.

Funding

Fourth, we believe the adage, always deliver more than expected. Many organisations have suffered turbulence with education funding dwindling over the COVID period. Donor priorities are changing and the period of certainty in funding is slowly taken over by ambiguity.

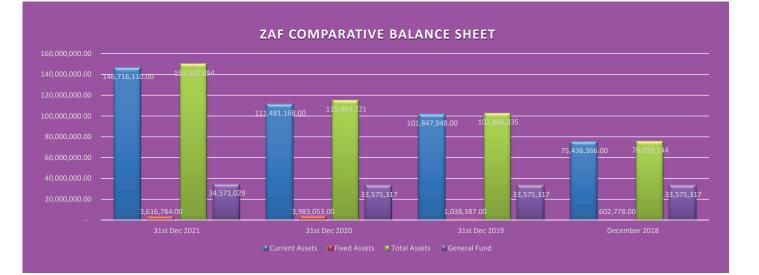
In 2021, Zizi Afrique systematised a structure for regular reporting and accountability to the funders and drawing the funders more into our work. Zizi Afrique also volunteered to participate in the Administration Costs Research Project. <u>The study</u> sought to find out the extent to which international donor funding covers the real administration costs of national NGOs.

With support from Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the Executive Director and three managers benefited from training on fundraising from For Impact to sharpen their resource mobilization skills. Resulting from this, an altitude framework was developed to articulate the impact that Zizi Afrique pursues and make clear the Asks to prospective funders. Over the year, a total of 3 proposals were submitted to new funders, with a total of 8 meetings held with prospective funders. This goes hand in hand with the increased visibility of the organization through in-person presentations and the media.

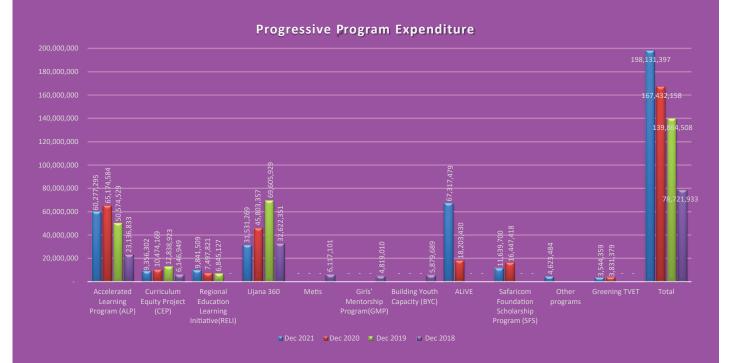
Overall, the annual revenue of the organization grew from KES 167,371,856 in 2020 to KES 200,044,525 in 2021.

For the Financial Years 2018, 2019, 2020 & 2021

ZIZI AFRIQUE FOUNDATION Vertical Analysis of Comparative Balance Sheets For the Financial Years 2018, 2019 & 2021																			
											Description	31st Dec 2021		31st Dec 2020		31st Dec 2019		December 2018	
												Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent			Amount	Percent
Current Assets																			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	118,541,190	78.9%	96,489,297	83.6%	81,257,956	79.0%	75,296,648	99.0%											
Grant Receivable	9,481,466	6.3%	785,658	0.7%	15,950,378	15.5%	-	0.0%											
Other Receivables	18,693,454	12.4%	14,206,213	12.3%	4,639,614	4.5%	139,718	0.2%											
Sub total	146,716,110.00	97.6%	111,481,168.00	96.6%	101,847,948.00	99.0%	75,436,366.00	99.2%											
Fixed Assets																			
Equipment	3,616,784	2.4%	3,983,053	3.4%	1,038,387	1.0%	602,778	0.8%											
Sub total	3,616,784.00	2.4%	3,983,053.00	3.4%	1,038,387.00	1.0%	602,778.00	0.8%											
Total Assets	150,332,894	100.0%	115,464,221	100.0%	102,886,335	100.0%	76,039,144	100.0%											
Liabilities and Accumulated Funds																			
Current Liabilities																			
Deferred income	106,501,472	70.8%	71,385,709	61.8%	63,297,608	61.5%	42,463,827	55.8%											
Payables	9,260,392	6.2%	10,503,195	9.1%	6,013,410	5.8%	-	0.0%											
Sub total	115,761,864.00	77.0%	81,888,904.00	70.9%	69,311,018.00	67.4%	42,463,827.00	55.8%											
Accumulated Funds																			
General Fund	34,571,029	23.0%	33,575,317	29.1%	33,575,317	32.6%	33,575,317	44.2%											
Sub total	34,571,029.01	23.0%	33,575,317.00	29.1%	33,575,317.00	32.6%	33,575,317.00	44.2%											
Total Liabilities and Accumulated Funds	150,332,893.01	100.0%	115,464,221.00	100.0%	102,886,335.00	100.0%	76,039,144.00	100.0%											



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