



**COLLABORATIVE ACTION TO STRENGTHEN
FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY**
INSIGHTS FROM KENYA



POLICY FORUM 2022

ABOUT THE FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY POLICY FORUM 2022

The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Policy Forum brings together policymakers, development partners and organisations to share their evidence in the space of children learning across nine counties in Kenya. Attended by about 100 stakeholders, it acts as a platform where policymakers, researchers and innovators in the education space share ideas and showcase their evidence on foundational learning in Kenya.

Centred on the theme **Collaborative Action to Strengthen Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**, the 2022 Policy Forum aims to:

- **Disseminate evidence demonstrating the impact of targeted interventions** in accelerating foundational literacy and numeracy competencies. Based on the evidence generated from level-based teaching interventions, organisations within the [Regional Education Learning Initiative \(RELI\)](#)¹ will showcase the impact of their interventions.
- **Explore thematic challenges and opportunities impacting FLN** and possible policy and institutional actions to mitigate learning poverty. A mixed panel of diverse experts will use the evidence to deepen the conversation on the status of FLN- at home, school and individual level. It will also identify strategies to accelerate learning. The session will conclude with a group discussion on actionable steps towards improving FLN outcomes for all children.

¹ RELI is a member-driven initiative working to ensure inclusive learning for all children in East Africa

INTRODUCTION

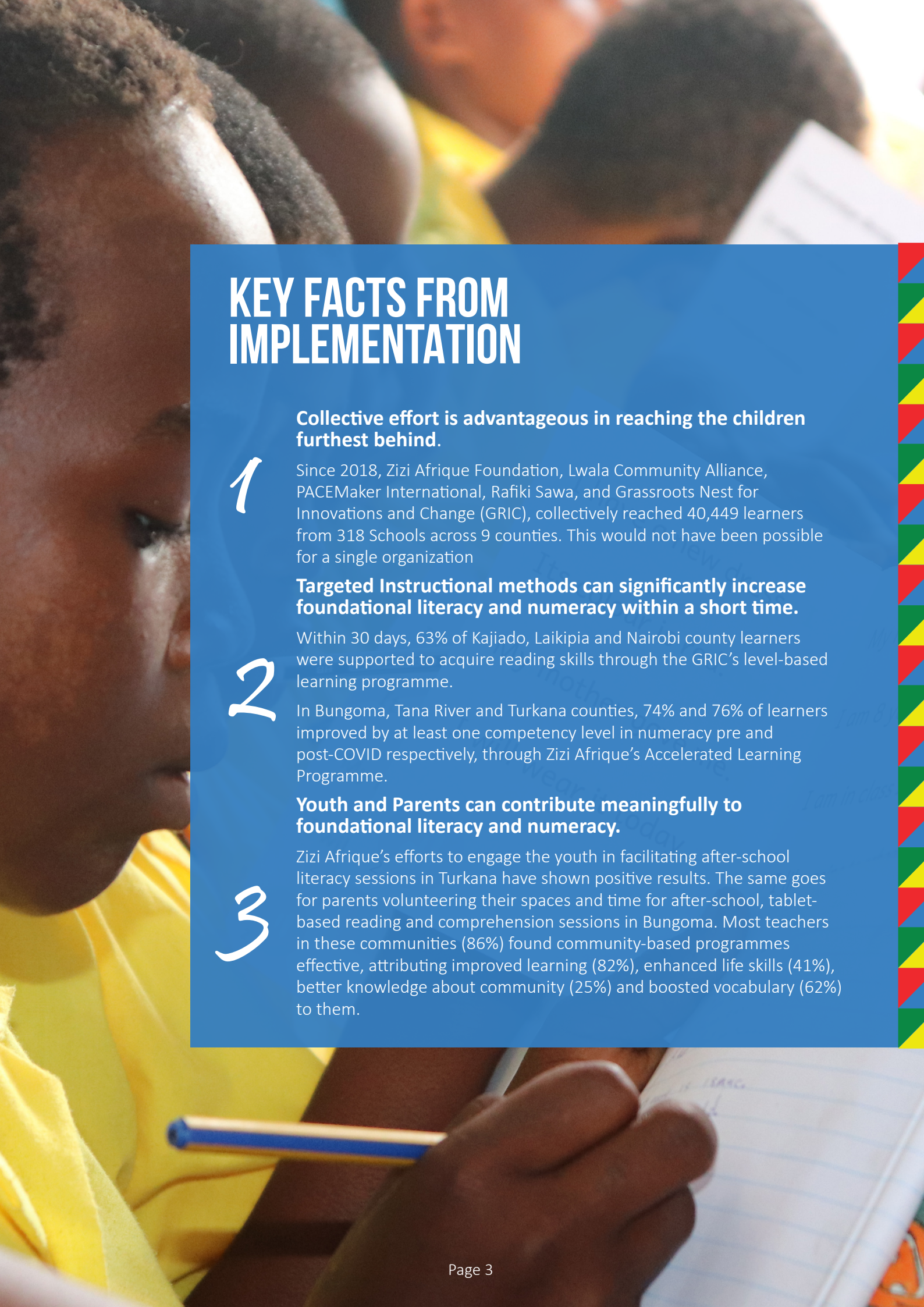
Sustainable Development Goal 4 promises (SDGs) inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. SDG 4.1 specifically focuses on foundational learning, acknowledging that acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy is paramount for successful educational achievement at all later stages. Despite this promise, millions of children are out of school, and global learning poverty levels (children who do not attain basic reading by age 10) is above 50 percent in low and middle-income countries, and over 80 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Kenyan Constitution (2010) and the Basic Education Act of 2013 recognise Basic Education as a human right. The Government has committed to providing free and compulsory Basic Education to ensure no child is left behind. While there have been gains in access to education, learning outcomes remain low. The recent Uwezo assessment (2021) established that only 40 percent of grade 4 learners were able to read a grade 3 level text.

To address the widening learning gaps and hasten the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy competencies, RELI organisations have implemented evidence-based FLN interventions since 2018. This document synthesises current evidence generated by these organisations, offering unique insights into how much they have explored learning outcomes among various Kenyan regions, especially vulnerable children. The report is broken down into the following sections:

- I. Key facts from the implementation
- II. Detailed evidence collected by the organizations
- III. Lessons Learnt





KEY FACTS FROM IMPLEMENTATION

Collective effort is advantageous in reaching the children furthest behind.

1

Since 2018, Zizi Afrique Foundation, Lwala Community Alliance, PACEMaker International, Rafiki Sawa, and Grassroots Nest for Innovations and Change (GRIC), collectively reached 40,449 learners from 318 Schools across 9 counties. This would not have been possible for a single organization

Targeted Instructional methods can significantly increase foundational literacy and numeracy within a short time.

2

Within 30 days, 63% of Kajiado, Laikipia and Nairobi county learners were supported to acquire reading skills through the GRIC's level-based learning programme.

In Bungoma, Tana River and Turkana counties, 74% and 76% of learners improved by at least one competency level in numeracy pre and post-COVID respectively, through Zizi Afrique's Accelerated Learning Programme.

Youth and Parents can contribute meaningfully to foundational literacy and numeracy.

3

Zizi Afrique's efforts to engage the youth in facilitating after-school literacy sessions in Turkana have shown positive results. The same goes for parents volunteering their spaces and time for after-school, tablet-based reading and comprehension sessions in Bungoma. Most teachers in these communities (86%) found community-based programmes effective, attributing improved learning (82%), enhanced life skills (41%), better knowledge about community (25%) and boosted vocabulary (62%) to them.

EVIDENCE FROM THE VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

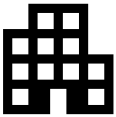





The goal of Grassroots Nest for Innovations and Change (GRIC) is to support children to go to school, learn, stay on and transition to different levels of education and training and thrive in the ever-changing world.



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

 3 - 5 Intervention Grades	 1.5 hours dedicated per day for literacy session	 45 - 60 DAYS Camp cycle
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AT THE END OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

 110 Schools reached	 15,039 Reading and learning resources distributed	 160 Teacher Assistants engaged	 4,000 Parents reached
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OUTCOMES

 8,110 Learners reached	 5,590 Learners could read grade 2 level story (63%)
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PARTNER VOICES

““This programme has demystified the myth that teaching literacy skills in underserved communities is complicated. The Level-Based Learning methodology is simple, engaging and learner-centric. This has contributed to sustained improvement in the literacy abilities of learners in our school,” (Teacher, Kajiado).

“I always look forward to our after-class literacy sessions. I enjoy the classes, the learning environment is friendly, and the activities are interesting. I am continually improving my scores, and my confidence is building. I am sure I will realise my dreams,” (Boy, Kajiado).

The aim is to lift those at the bottom of the pyramid to acquire basic reading skills in Migori County. We target learners left behind and focus on learning needs rather than age or grade.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW
4 - 6
Intervention Grades
1 hour dedicated per day for
literacy session
30 DAYS
Camp cycle

AT THE END OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
5
Schools reached
15
Teacher Assistants engaged
189
Parents reached

OUTCOMES
520
Learners reached
250
Learners could read grade 2
level story (48%)

PARTNER VOICES

“Since the introduction of the program, there are many positive changes we have seen among the students, they have developed a liking for reading including improved interaction with learning resources, our students no longer shy away from reading, Learning has been made fun,” (Teacher, Migori)





“I can now confidently read as a result of my interaction with my peers during the learning sessions, my teachers have been very supportive in developing my reading skills,”
(Boy, Migori)

The programme creates literacy clubs that improve children’s literacy skills and lead to the overall improvement of learning outcomes for children from underserved urban communities.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

 4 - 6 Intervention Grades	 1 hour dedicated per day for literacy session	 30 DAYS Camp cycle
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AT THE END OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

 48 Schools reached	 2,600 Reading and learning resources distributed	 567 Teacher Assistants engaged	 5,775 Parents reached
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OUTCOMES

 21 Communities Reached	 6,019 Learners reached	 4,514 Learners could read grade 2 level story (75%)
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PARTNER VOICES

“I noted a lot of improvements in most learners as we ended our TaRL camp. Over those few days, many others who were not in the TaRL camp were asking to join-”
 (PACE fellow, Nairobi).

Soma Sawa leverages innovative interventions to maximise education achievements

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



3 - 5
 Intervention Grades



1 hour dedicated per day for literacy session



30 DAYS
 Camp cycle

AT THE END OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION



5
 Schools reached



1,800
 Reading and learning resources distributed



26
 Teacher Assistants engaged



800
 Parents reached

OUTCOMES



529
 Learners reached



340
 Learners could read grade 2 level story (64%)



298
 Learners could do all numeracy operations (56%)

PARTNER VOICES

“This methodology works. Shy learners who were non-readers can now read and speak out. Just one cycle, and we are already proud of the process. Soma Sawa has changed my attitude,” (Teacher, Kisumu, 2021).

“I have noticed changes in my child. He comes home and plays with sticks, and he can read and tell stories. At weekends, I see him gathering children from our household and jump on numbers. Now he can read newspaper articles. Soma Sawa has brought change,” (Parent of grade 5 child, Kisumu, 2021).

PROGRAMME NAME: ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAM

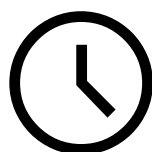
The programme aims to help learners read with comprehension and be able to reason with numbers.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



3 - 5

Intervention Grades



1 hour literacy and 1 hour
numeracy sessions daily



30 - 50 DAYS

Camp cycle

AT THE END OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION



150

Schools reached



100,394

Reading and learning
resources distributed



265

Teacher Assistants
engaged



14,737

Parents reached

OUTCOMES



93

Communities Reached



25,271

Learners reached



12,538

learners attained proficiency in
reading and basic operations
(50%)

PARTNER VOICES

“Before I joined this programme, I couldn’t read. But now, I can read and write,”
(Girl, Bungoma, 2019)

“My child can now read and form words,” (Parent, Bungoma, 2019)

“The programme has benefitted those lagging in normal lessons. Our regular teachers have also benefitted. We have encouraged the regular teachers to adopt that model,”
(Headteacher, Bungoma, 2019)

Beyond Kenya, PAL Network works with members to enhance partnerships with governments, civil society organizations and other development partners to initiate, enhance and scale action programs.

Chalo Parho Barho
Let's learn and Grow



Siyani Sahelian girls'
education program



Wiixuutta Nithweelaka
(Learning While Playing)



LEARNigeria
Remedial Program



Aprendemos, leemos y
jugamos cuenta con MIA
(In School Program)



Aprender jugando
(Summer Program)



Jifunze (Learn)



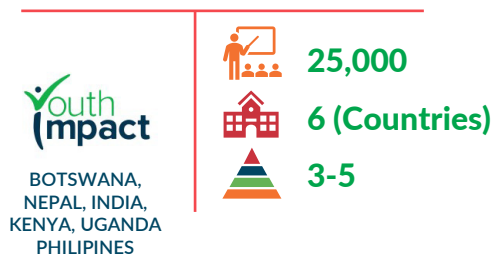
Action Learning Initiative



Teaching at the Right
Level (TaRL)



Low-tech intervention
via SMS



Accelerated Learning
Program



KEY



Children reached

No. of schools/communities

Target Grade/Age



LESSONS LEARNT

A holistic approach is needed to improve foundational learning outcomes. Low learning outcomes manifest early, as evidenced by the foundational literacy and numeracy assessments such as Uwezo. The disparities are also glaring in national examination scores, such as the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). The low foundational learning outcomes crisis should be addressed early by adopting innovative level-based, catch-up practices as part of mainstream education, in line with the observation to improve learning outcomes. For this to happen, it is crucial to focus on those at the bottom.

Reforms can include:

- Pausing to fix low foundational competencies during the early years
- Assuming a systemic approach that adapts teacher training practices, prioritises FLN as part of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), allocates time in the regular school schedule and embraces bold decisions that allow teachers to pace the curriculum according to children's learning needs.

Emphasising syllabus coverage over competency acquisition hampers efforts to achieve FLN outcomes for all children.

Bridge the pedagogical competence gap among teachers. Evidence has shown that it is pertinent to embed innovative approaches to learning into teacher training and invest in equipping trainee teachers with capacities for assessment and targeted instruction. Teacher trainers recommended ongoing engagement between teacher training colleges and primary schools for trainees to visualise and experience FLN instruction first-hand. This was considered an effective method for the trainees to acquire pedagogical competence for foundational literacy and numeracy.

Leverage a community of actors to support successful Foundational Literacy and Numeracy instruction. Level-based teaching and learning can take place in any space. Targeted interventions that map out and utilise community-based resources and actively engage all stakeholders are needed. To sustain learning gains, it is vital to create a system that increases learning contact time and stretches learning beyond the confines of classrooms into communities and families. This was evident during the COVID-19 period, as school closures amplified the need for the active participation of parents for continuity of learning at home. Foundational literacy and numeracy skills will only be achieved through the combined efforts of schools, parents/communities and civil society actors.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

Grassroots Nest for Innovations and Change (GRIC)- <https://www.gricafrika.org/program/children-learning/>

Lwala Community Alliance- <https://lwala.org/>

PACEMaker International- <https://pacemakerinternational.org/about-us/what-we-do/>

Rafiki Sawa- <http://www.rafikisawa.com/projects/somasawa/>

Zizi Afrique Foundation- <https://ziziafrique.org/the-accelerated-learning-program/>

PAL Network- <https://palnetwork.org/case-studies/>

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