

TAFITA Program

Lessons from Madagascar

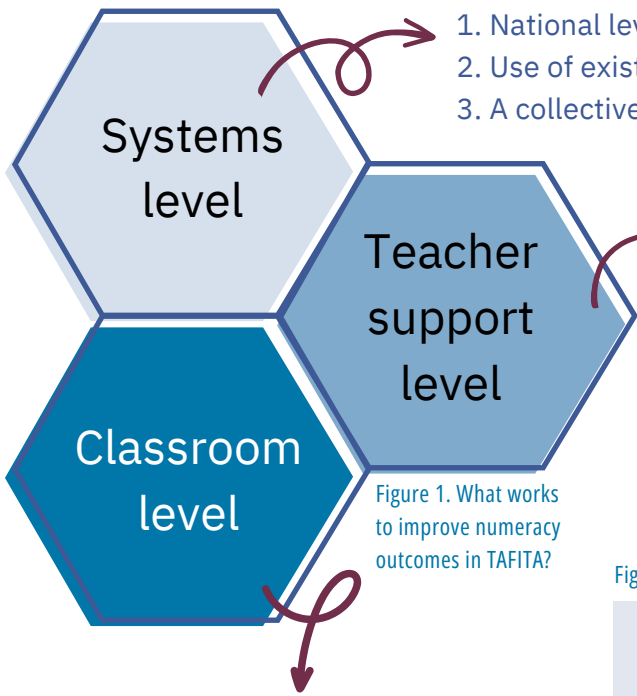


Children need a strong foundation in learning to succeed in their education and life. Yet, by the age of 10 years, nearly 9 out of 10 children in SSA cannot do basic mathematics. There is an urgent need to learn from success stories like the TAFITA program in Madagascar to accelerate results in numeracy to ensure that every child is ready to succeed at school.

This short brief highlights some of the key successes from the program to provide policy makers and development practitioners with evidence-based strategies for improving instruction and learning in numeracy.

Key takeaways

There are multiple pathways to success for large scale numeracy programs. Strong system buy-in, collaboration and support from national level to the regional level to the school level are crucial. The role and support provided by district officials and school management committees in providing ongoing mentoring, coaching and accountability to schools and teachers embeds improved pedagogical practice. Instructionally, building procedural and conceptual understanding; using concrete materials and pictures, and linking them to the abstract; encouraging student engagement and assessment informed instruction can support improved student learning outcomes.



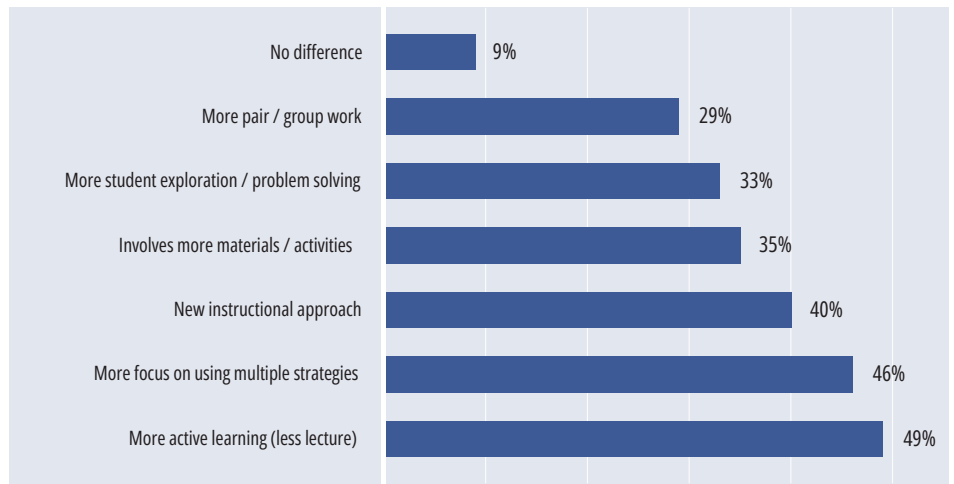
- 1. National level and local level buy-in and support for the program
- 2. Use of existing government infrastructure to strengthen the education system
- 3. A collective goal to improve learning outcomes informed by data

- 1. Practical, not just theoretical training for district officials and school management committees
- 2. Ongoing mentoring/coaching support + regular visits from school management committees
- 3. Supportive teachers' guides which emphasize modeling
- 4. School-based communities of practice

Figure 1. What works to improve numeracy outcomes in TAFITA?

- 1. Building both procedural and conceptual understanding in mathematics
- 2. Use and explicit linking of concrete materials, images, symbols etc to support student understanding
- 3. Use of strategies to promote active student engagement (e.g. varied questioning styles, hands-on use of materials)
- 4. Assessment-informed instruction

Figure 2. Reported change in teacher practices since working with TAFITA



1 Considerations for scale:

Institutionalization of TAFITA pedagogy.

The study showed there was little transfer from TAFITA lessons to regular lessons but, this may be a missed opportunity: such a transfer could reduce remediation needs and improve learning across the country.

2

Sustainability & equity. To continue to scale effectively, the government, funding agencies and development partners will have to identify ways to reduce cost, while not placing too much burden on poor communities to sustain the program. This will also require sufficient budgetary allocations to ensure that all schools and children, particularly in more disadvantaged parts of the country, receive the instructional support (including remediation) they need.

What is TAFITA?

The **TAFITA** (“*Tantsoroka ho an’ny Fitantanany sekoly*” in Malagasy) program in **Madagascar**, funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), started in 2016 and is being carried out in two phases (2016-2020) and (2020-2024).

The program focuses on strengthening the capacity of **school management committees** (known as *FEFFIs*) to lead extracurricular remedial activities using the teaching at the right level (TaRL) approach. **TaRL** is a targeted remediation approach which enables children to acquire foundational reading and arithmetic skills quickly based on the **level of the child**, not only their age.

The program includes two main parts:

1. A series of **trainings to strengthen the capacity of FEFFIs** to develop and carry out action plans, including plans for the TaRL remediation activities, through collaboration of parents, teachers and community members;
2. **Trainings and ongoing support to local actors** to implement the TaRL remediation intervention in reading and mathematics for children in grades 2–5.



Core elements of TAFITA

- 1 **Focus on core skills**
A focus on number identification, place value, and the four basic operations to improve foundations for further math learning.
- 2 **Extra time**
An after school intervention for up to 2 hours lasting for 12 weeks. Schools have varied the schedule of sessions according to the local context.
- 3 **Assessment**
Students are placed in groups then regrouped every 10 sessions according to their scores on the ASER Madagascar tool.
- 4 **Teacher support**
Training for district officials to support teachers and FEFFIs and provide ongoing coaching, school-based communities of practice and detailed teacher guides provided.
- 5 **Ministry and community support**
Training and support are provided through the national education system by TAFITA master trainers, who have been trained by Pratham TaRL experts.

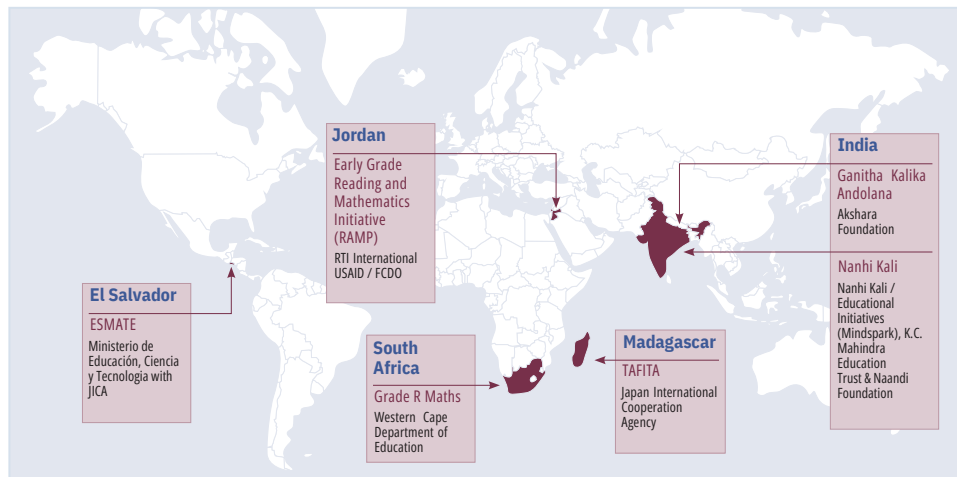
What is Numeracy at Scale?

The Learning at Scale study was designed to explore and examine programs that have a demonstrated impact on foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes at scale using rigorous evidence-based strategies.

While the first phase of Learning at Scale focused on literacy, the second phase, Numeracy at Scale, is focused on (1) identifying instructional strategies that are essential for improving numeracy outcomes at scale in low- and middle-income countries; and (2) learning about the characteristics of the education systems within which successful scaled-up numeracy programs operate.

The research is being conducted across 6 programs in 5 countries (See Figure 2) and individual country briefs will be available [here](#).

Figure 3. Numeracy at Scale partners



The research is led by RTI International and is part of the Center for Global Development education research consortium, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

To read the full research brief please visit: [English](#) | [French](#)

