Devyani Pershad heads International Collaborations at Pratham, supporting partners to adapt and apply Pratham's innovations to contexts outside India. Pratham is one of India's largest education NGOs and has influenced programs across the globe. Prior to taking on this role, Devyani was leading Program Management at Pratham involving planning, coordination, fundraising and partnership development for all of Pratham's education programs across the country. As part of TaRL Africa, a joint initiative by Pratham and J-PAL focused on Sub-Saharan Africa, Devyani is Technical Advisor supporting on technical strategy and approach, and partner relationships across TaRL Africa.

Devyani has been with Pratham since 2013 and was working in advisory services prior to joining the organization. She has an MBA from IESE Business School, Barcelona and a bachelors in Economics.

Pratham
Every Child in School & Learning Well

**Toward (Schooling and)
Learning for
All Children in Africa
through Community-wide
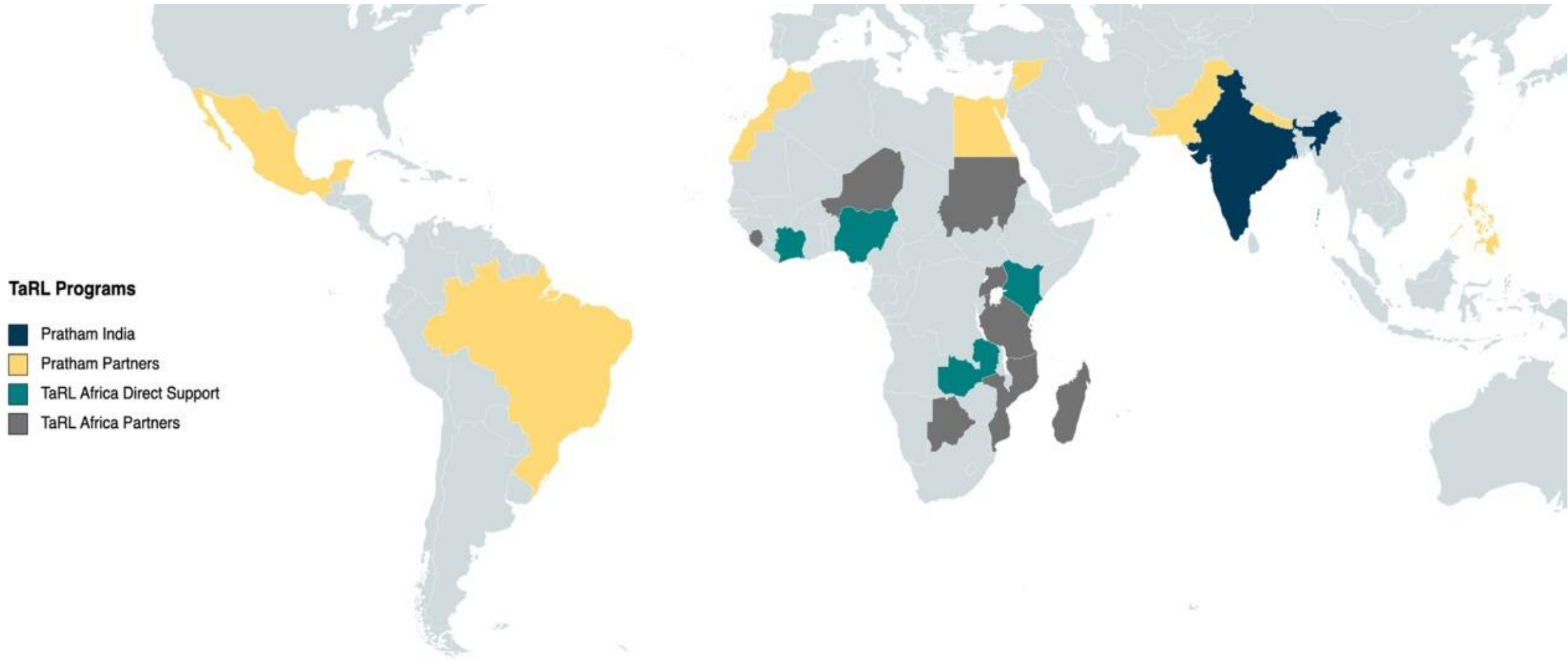Collaboration**

Perspectives from India and Africa

TaRL teaching at the right level

Pratham's journey towards improving learning for all

1995	1995 - 2005	2005 - 2010	2010 - 2016	2016 - 2022
Pratham is born	Pratham gathers experience from working in communities	ASER generates evidence of low learning outcomes	Series of RCTs on Pratham's TaRL approach establish effectiveness	Focus on building ownership for children's learning at community level
Focus on enrolment and access	Volunteers equipped to help children at scale	Large-scale community and government led initiatives to improve reading and math	ASER spreads across continents	TaRL spreads across continents – birth of TaRL Africa to support SSA growth
Our focus: understand how we can work with communities to create change	Governments trying innovations to improve learning	**Our focus:** developing a proven solution to build foundational skills for all children	Government-led TaRL initiatives growing in the country and internationally	Adaptation of ASER to broaden scope
	Focus shifting to outcomes			COVID accelerates community-based work
	Our focus: understanding the problem and how to solve it at scale		**Our focus:** strengthening our capacity and implementation models to support scale	New Education Policy launched in India
				Our focus: share experiences and build ownership to support strengthened FLN delivery

The TaRL innovation began in India… and has now spread across the globe reaching 20+ countries

TaRL Programs

- Pratham India
- Pratham Partners
- TaRL Africa Direct Support
- TaRL Africa Partners

Let's zoom in on how TaRL unfolds in the classroom

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.

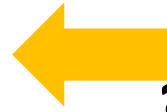|		
e	d	w
s	c	
g	h	z
i		
q		

hand	star
	bus
cat	book
day	few
	old
sing	bold

4. Similar assessments are used for tracking children's progress.

Groups are reorganized based on children's progressed levels, and activities are conducted accordingly.

Children progress and move into the next level group

3. Children learn in groups and also individually.

1. Simple one-on-one assessment done to group Grade 3,4 & 5 children by level instead of by grade. Instructors facilitate easy-to-do whole class and small group activities to guide children's work.

2. There are a set of activities and materials in reading and arithmetic that are appropriate for the level of each group.

And data shows that TaRL works!

Catch Up Program Zambia 2019: % Children at different reading levels 764 schools: 2 provinces					
Level	Beginner	Letter	Word	Para	Story
Grade III-V	Cannot recognize letters as yet	Can recognize letters but not read words	Can read words but not sentences	Can read sentences at Grade I level	Can read text at Grade II level or higher
Baseline	33	18	15	15	20
Midline	18	20	18	16	27
Endline	9	17	19	20	36

Data from close to ~800 schools in Zambia shows big shifts in children able to read, and consequently reductions in those at the lowest levels of reading

~60 hours of implementation

By allocating time to foundational skills, using data and activities with a focus on outcomes, and uniform action – change is possible

Today the Zambian government is developing a plan to go to national scale with support from VVOB and TaRL Africa

TaRL transforms practice in many ways, and helps shift the system from schooling for all towards learning for all

	'Business as usual'	Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)
Goal & Assessment	Goal is to complete the grade level textbook or curriculum. Assessments aligned with curriculum and often complex – not suitable for classroom use.	Goal is to ensure basic foundational skills for all, with clearly articulated goals for basic reading and math. Simple one-on-one assessments of every student used for starting, grouping and tracking progress.
Training & Mentoring	Minimal continuous professional development or targeted coaching for teachers; traditionally non-practitioner trainers.	Practical training of leaders & instructors on the approach with practice periods of at least 20-25 days. Create "leaders of practice"
Grouping	Full class assembled together by grade level. Whole class teaching with little room for adjusting teaching to suit children's needs.	Children grouped by learning level rather than by grade. Children move quickly from one group to the next as their learning progresses.
Teaching & Activities	Teachers focus mainly on whole-class instruction ('Chalk and Talk' or textbook-driven), focus on curriculum leads to teaching to the 'top of the class'.	Teachers use simple and engaging daily learning activities that can be adapted as children progress. Students engage in activities in large groups, small groups, and individually.
Measurement, Monitoring & Review	Pen and paper assessment done at the beginning and end of a learning unit. Minimal data analysis to understand student learning or adjust teaching before moving to the next learning unit.	Simple assessment to plan, and similar assessment used periodically to track student progress, review data, and make decisions on child progress and program design. Quick decision making to inform program delivery and future course.

TaRL can be led by government systems… Catch Up in Zambia

Target group: Grades 3 to 5 / Age 8 to 10++
Language(s): Local languages (e.g Icibemba…)
Type of schools: Government schools
Duration: 2 terms every academic year, Jan-July

Timing and Modality : during school day, outside class hours
1 hour of instruction daily, language or math

Instructors: school teachers

Mentors: District Coordinators, Zonal Coordinators, School mentors

Role of Government: Owner of the program; provides Strategic orientation / defines Policy; implementation (coordination- trainings- evaluation- supervision)
Partners: VVOB, TaRL Africa, Pratham, UNICEF, USAID, LEGO Foundation, Belgian Government

TaRL can involve other actors alongside the system… KaLMA Nigeria

Target group: Grades 4 to 6
Language(s): Hausa & English
Type of schools: Government primary schools
Duration: 6 months every academic year

Timing and Modality : during school hours, in regular timetable
2 hours of instruction daily: 1 hour each of Reading and Math

Instructors: school teachers, student teachers from college of education

Mentors: School head teachers, school support officers

Role of Government: Strategic orientation / Policy; implementation (coordination- trainings- evaluation- supervision)
Partners: TaRL Africa, British Council, FCDO

TaRL can also be led by local actors... Learning Camps India

Target group: Grades 3 to 5
Language(s): Various local languages across the country
Type of schools: Government primary schools
Duration: 30-40 days over 2-3 months

Timing and Modality : during school hours, in regular timetable
3 hours of instruction daily: 1.5 hours each of Reading and Math

Instructors: locally recruited instructors, community volunteers

Mentors: Pratham trained staff, team leaders, resource persons

Role of Community: Engage with children's learning, digest and observe learning outcomes, support school and instructors
Partners: Pratham, various foundations and corporations

What have we learned over the years?

➢ Children who are 8 years or older, or have been in school for a few years, learn quickly through TaRL; children at the lowest levels of learning benefit the most

➢ TaRL is flexible enough to be adapted to a variety of different contexts and models

➢ The simplicity of the goals and tools allows TaRL to engage a variety of actors at system and community levels

➢ 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"; Mentoring and monitoring practices led by "leaders of practice" are a crucial aspect of the success of TaRL programming

➢ Parents can play a meaningful role in supporting children's learning – proven during the pandemic school closures

➢ Ensuring attendance and follow up is essential to maintain gains and continued learning for children

➢ And there is still much more to learn!

Thank you!