

Community Impact Case Study FY21

Teach For Uganda – Community relationships and readymade technology to support student learning and resilience

Teach For Uganda fellows have worked in partnership with parents and families to strengthen the resilience of student learning and school attendance in two the two regions of Luwero and Mayuge. The focus on sustaining relationships, the use of readymade technologies and the work fellows did to run community learning pods during school shutdowns have all helped to support the commitment of students and their parents to school attendance, and mitigated some learning loss.

The Basics

Teach For Uganda has placed 97 fellows across four cohorts in the two regions of Luwero and Mayuge since 2018. The past year of education in Uganda has been almost entirely disrupted, with students likely to have spent just 1-2 months in classrooms during the entirety of the school year. This threatens both the recent gains made in school attendance in Uganda, which relied on connections between teachers in schools and the rural children and families that they served, and exacerbates challenges to the teaching profession – even before the pandemic, Sub-Saharan Africa was on course to need 15 million teachers by 2030.

The Approach

Teach For Uganda fellows have worked through the past year of school closures in Uganda to strengthen their community ties and leverage readymade technologies with the aim of ensuring some continuity of learning so that when the new school year begins in January 2022 students' school attendance will return to pre-pandemic levels, and teachers will be retained across the system, rather than seeking employment in other sectors.

The Choices

In the past year, given the school closures, Teach For Uganda has innovated in the digital sphere in order to ensure continuity of learning and a supportive environment for families and teachers.

1

Digital learning program - To support continuity of learning among rural children with no access to television, radio, or e-learning platforms, TFU partnered with Student Change Makers and War Child Holland to pilot a digital learning programme in five schools, which were the first non-refugee schools in the world to use the Can't Wait To Learn (CWTL) app approach.

2

Community-based teaching - At the local level, TFU fellows led Community Cluster Learning Pods (CCLPs) in which they remained living in their placement communities during the pandemic to carry out continued teaching with small groups of 5-10 children at a time, focusing on literacy and

numeracy, world of work skills, face mask sewing, gardening, making book bags, so that the communities can benefit financially to support their families.

3

Sustaining parental engagement - Thirdly, TFU piloted a Tele-Learning Initiative (TELI) using regular 'burner' mobile phones that enabled fellows to reach out to parents to speak to children and teach them for 15 minutes. The purpose was to support their mental health and learning during the tight lockdown, with the aim of reaching 1500 at risk students and 700 parents. Students and parents have seen the calls as a support system.

The Impact

Through these choices, TFU has been able to maintain some belief and culture of education among teachers, parents and students to counteract the forces released by the pandemic that are pushing parents back into a survival mode in which they take their children out of school and into work.

Among alumni, Charles Obore launched a community-based initiative where through football he is training girls to be leaders. When they come to his football academy they have access to leadership training, he looks for scholarships for them to be able to go to the next level, using football as a support system. Patricia has created a girl camp for young girls, mentoring them to be leaders

The Insights

- Ultimately the continuity and sustainability of learning is built on a foundation of the relationships that exist between teachers, students, and parents. Nurturing those relationships in order to build trust and coherence in the approach to supporting children is key.
- Technology can enable continuity of learning, but it has to be robust, tailored to the reality of the community, and resources must be available to fund it. For TFU that meant supplying hardware including 230 tablets and 2 solar units for two schools to provide charge to the tablets.
- Local government partnership is key to enabling any kind of education or community work. In the past, TFU has found that officials have resisted their programmes, and so have invested in building trusting relationships and partnerships with local government