



PARALLEL SESSION

# Leadership Teams: Fostering Teachers' Professional Development















# Leadership Teams: Fostering Teacher Professional Development

**Educators Shaping Futures**4 November 2025



# Agenda

	•
2.00 – 2.05	• Welcome
2.05 – 2.15	Brief introduction to leadership teams and evidence on TPD
2.15 – 3.00	<ul> <li>Case study presentations:</li> <li>-Tanzania: Hannah Simmons</li> <li>-Uganda: Jane Nanteyi</li> <li>-Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria &amp; Zambia: Daniele Ressler</li> <li>Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
3.00 – 3.25	Scenario lightning rounds & co- creating a learning agenda
3.25 – 3.30	<ul> <li>Closing</li> </ul>

3.25 - 3.30

## WELCOME

#### Leadership Teams: Fostering Teachers' Professional Development

4 November 2025 2.00 – 3.30





# What are leadership teams for TPD?



- Who is involved?
- Do they collaborate? If so, how?



# Leadership teams for TPD

The group of professionals from each level of the education system who work together to support teachers' daily instructional practice and professional development. This includes their relationships, responsibilities and practices.

- Roles can include those at
  - **school level:** principals, school heads, dept leads, senior teachers, mentor teachers
  - middle tier level: pedagogical advisors, quality assurance officers
  - national level: teacher management agencies
- Each member of the team has clearly defined responsibilities, even if there is some overlap between roles.
- Collaboration should also be defined and continuously assessed for effectiveness and be aligned with local context, including opportunities & constraints.



# Why are leadership teams important?



- Teachers need continuous and targeted support
- School leaders can't do it all
- Teams draw on a wider variety of experience and expertise to address the wide range of teacher needs
- Collaboration ensures no one role is overburdened with unrealistic expectations to support all teachers

# Evidence on leadership teams & teacher professional development (1)

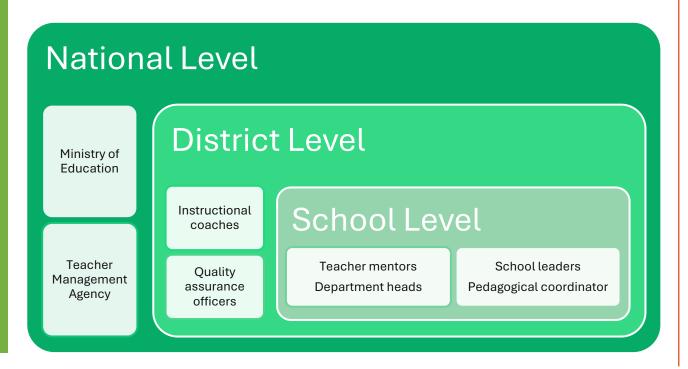
- Many factors contribute to education outcomes, but evidence shows that **school leadership** can improve teacher practices and student outcomes (Herman et al., 2017; Leithwood et al., 2020).
- **Middle tier leaders** have also been shown to support teachers in improving their practice and in motivating them to sustain change (Leithwood, 2013; Childress, 2020; Cilliers et al., 2021; Beggs & Bell, 2024).
- Recent evidence suggests that school and middle tier leaders can support teachers through
  providing instructional leadership, facilitating peer learning, and supporting school leaders,
  especially with data-driven planning and decision-making (Tournier et al., 2025; UNESCO,
  2024).
- Evidence also shows that using **high-performing teachers as "system leaders"** sharing their experience with other schools and professionals is a cost-effective and powerful way to support peer learning. Teachers are more likely to change their practices when they see colleagues they admire not just official leaders championing desired improvements (Jensen et al., 2016).

# Evidence on leadership teams & teacher professional development (2)

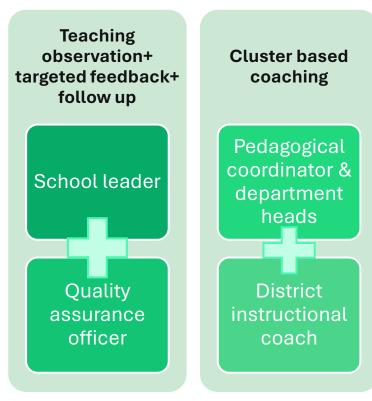
- Promising practice suggests that more practical and individualized professional development from school and district leaders, particularly through cluster-based coaching and mentoring and peer-to-peer learning, can improve teacher practice and student learning outcomes (Godwin, et al., 2024).
  - The state of Ceará in Brazil delivered a program where the pedagogical coordinator in each school was
    trained to observe teachers' classroom practice, provide useful feedback, and promote collaboration
    and exchange of practice among teachers. A randomized controlled trial evaluation found that teachers'
    classroom practices improved, teaching time increased, and students' engagement and learning
    outcomes improved (Bruns et al., 2017).
- Emerging evidence suggests that team-based approaches are an innovative and effective way to harness
  existing human capacity and invest in social capital through facilitating intentional and relevant collaboration
  across the system (Education Commission, 2019).
  - In an example from the US (Zavadsky, 2016), a team comprised of instructional coaches, school leaders and district leaders visit schools with a "problem of practice" in mind and observe a teacher implement a specific practice and provide feedback to the teacher and the school instructional coach with suggested next steps for improvement. The team returns at a later point to see how the skill has improved over time, and provide additional feedback (Childress et al., 2020).

# Leadership teams & teacher professional development

Leadership team roles at different levels



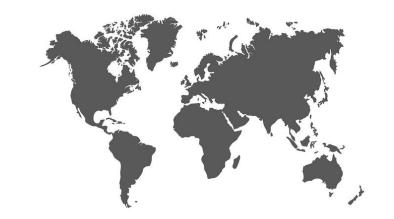
#### **TPD** strategies & team composition







### **CASE STUDIES**



- Hannah Simmons EdTech Hub: Tanzania
- Jane Nanteyi STiR Education: Uganda
- Daniele Ressler TaRL Africa: Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria & Zambia



# **Q&A: CASE STUDIES**





### **SCENARIO LIGHTING ROUNDS**

Small groups of 3 people or less





# **LEARNING AGENDA**





# **CLOSING**

Thank you!





Clear evidence, better decisions, more learning.

# How does data support TCPD leadership in delivering quality TCPD?

Insights from Tanzania's national 'MEWAKA' programme

#### Hannah Simmons - Africa Lead | Tanzania Lead

hannah.simmons@edtechhub.org





Funded by the European Union

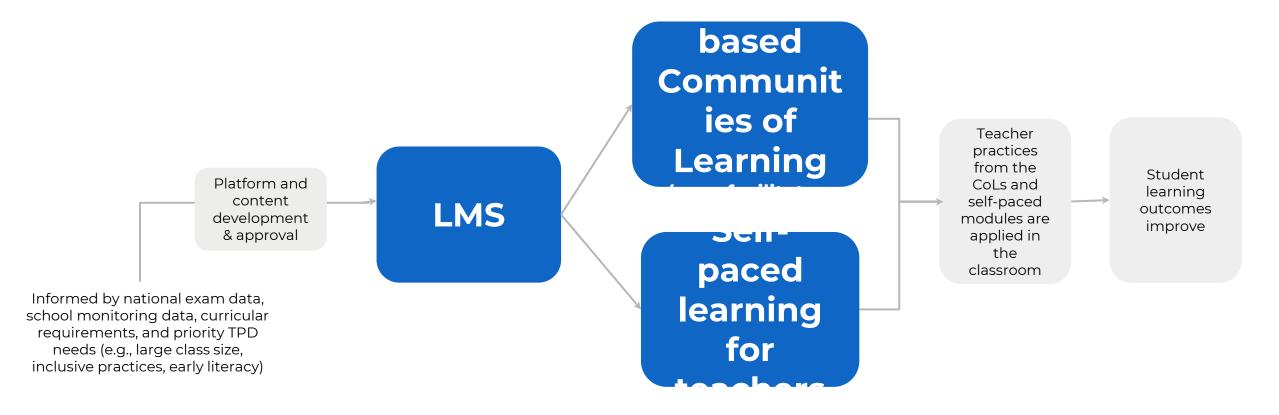




#### Introduction to MEWAKA: Model Overview

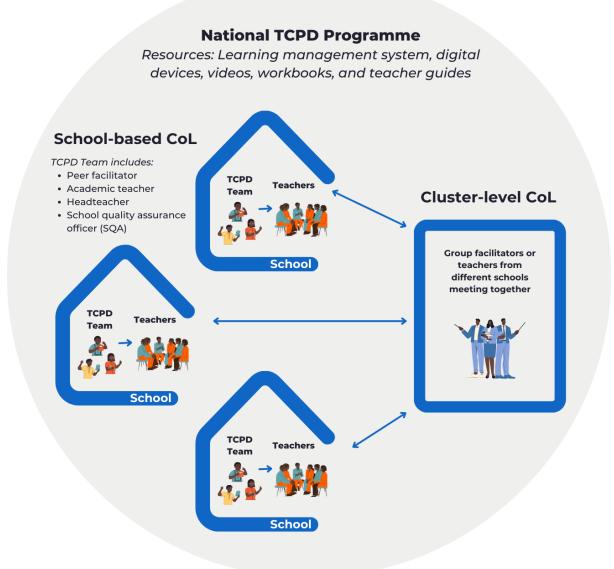
MEWAKA is the Government of Tanzania's **National TCPD Programme**, initiated in 2020 and rolled out from 2022.

# **3 components of MEWAKA**



#### Introduction to MEWAKA: Communities of Learning

- Communities of Learning, led by Peer Facilitators (PFs), have autonomy to choose which topic/challenge to address.
- MEWAKA LMS provides TIEdeveloped modules covering a range of subject-specific and cross-cutting topics.
- Modules are scripted to support PFs & ensure sessions are interactive and hands-on.



#### **Leadership Roles in MEWAKA Delivery**

Delivery at national level

#### **PORALG**

Employ teachers, provide equipment, run resource centres

Tanzania Institute of Ed. (TIE)

Develop content, run LMS, deliver in-person training

Local monitoring & quality assurance

**Ward Education Officer (WEO)** 

Receive reports, monitor implementation & provide support

**School Quality Assurance (SQA)** 

Observe teachers & provide feedback

Local implementation & reporting

**Peer Facilitator (PF)** 

Coordination/facilitation of CoLs & CoL reporting

**Head Teacher** 

Monitor teacher performance & MEWAKA occurrence

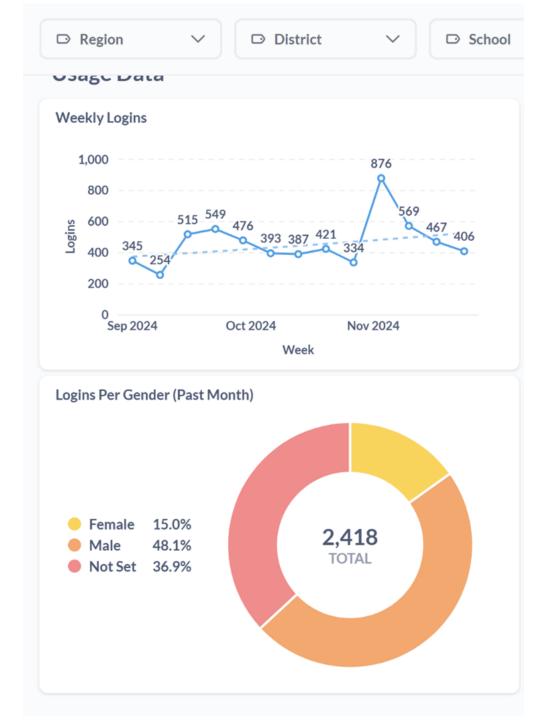
#### **MEWAKA LMS as a Data Source**

#### **Content for TCPD**

- CoL modules
- Self-paced learning content

#### **Data for Decision Making**

- User engagement data
  - Module completion
  - Frequency/time of visits
  - Time spent on LMS



#### How does tech aid TCPD Quality and Decision-Making?

# **Equitable Access to Quality Content**



Access to the same modules



Created by TIE experts



Ability to choose modules for CoLs

#### **Data for Decision Making**

#### **WEO**

Provides - data on module use & frequency/attendance of CoLs; CoL reports

**So that** - increased ability to follow up on MEWAKA quality & implementation

#### SQA

Provides - data on which modules have been completed

So that - school observations align with skills/knowledge acquired through TCPD

## TIE Provides - data on most/least

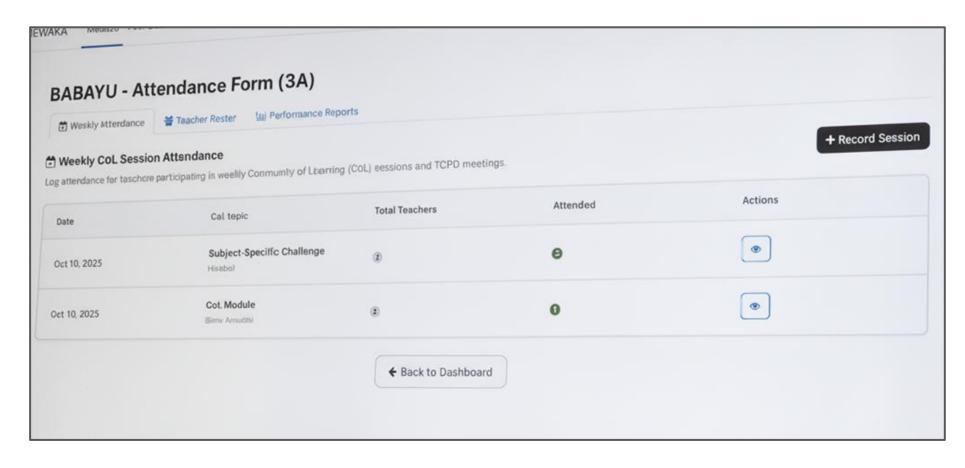
popular modules; completion rates; module rating & feedback

So that - improve quality and range of modules & respond to feedback

#### How is EdTech Hub contributing to improved Leadership?

**1.**Digitisation of PF roles and responsibilities & toolbox of resources

**2.**Digitised CoL report & logins for WEOs, PFs, Researchers, TIE staff



Screenshot of digitised CoL Report Form added to LMS (Oct. 2025)



The District and School Leader's Role in Cultivating Peer Collaboration



Presented by: Jane Sebuyungo Nantayi, [Associate Head Design and Programme Readiness at STiR Education

# Key Challenges in Teacher Development

# Teacher Isolation

Limited collaboration hinders shared learning experiences among teachers.



#### Leadership Skills

School leaders often lack coaching and mentoring skills necessary for effective support to teachers.



## STIR APPROACH

- We partners with Government MoES to support a system-wide approach to professional development in 119 districts in Uganda
- If we deliver PD informed by the principles of intrinsic motivation, this will lead to better teaching and learning.
- Approach works through role-modelling and relationships at all levels of education systems:
  - → Peer networks.
  - → Action and feedback.
  - Reflection.



# Leadership Layers

# National Alignment

Essential for policy alignment and vision setting to guide education priorities.



## District officials Coaching

Focused on **coaching** school leaders and enhancing their support capabilities. Roles are over burdened & complex



## The District's Leaders as Coaches

- District leaders model a culture of coaching and collaboration among school leaders.
- Peer Networks
- Action and Feedback
- Reflection sessions & peer learning
- Model data driven decision making at district alignment meetings.



# School Leaders supported by officials



- Integrate CPD into routine school practice.
  Facilitate professional
- Facilitate professional learning in every day teaching.
  - Create safe reflective peer Learning at school Network meetings
  - Promote collaboration and shared learning experiences among teachers.
  - Promote Growth mindset.

#### Details

These networks allow teachers to engage in non-judgmental peer observations, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and collective growth in teaching practices within schools.

# When districts and School leaders align

#### Teacher support

Teachers receive consistent coherent support
School learning communities thrive
Best practices spread organically

#### Coaching

Supporting school leaders with coaching enhances their skills to support teacher development

#### **Embedding Learning**

Integrating professional development within daily practices facilitates sustainable growth among teaching staff and leaders.

#### Collaboration

Encouraging collaboration among teachers and leaders cultivates shared expertise and strengthens community within the district.

# District Alignment meetings

Reflecting on data and use it to inform decisions and improvement.

# Learnings

#### Teachers

Teachers experience renewed

motivation through collaborative

practices and intrinsic peer-led

professional learning opportunities.

#### School Leaders

School leaders gain confidence in coaching roles, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration.

#### **District Officials**

District officials build collaborative relationships, coach and promote alignment between policies and support school leadership development to support teacher classroom practices for sustained impact.

#### Systemic Impact

Systemic improvement emphasizes collaboration, classroom practice and the development of intrinsic motivation in educational settings.

# Sustainable Development

#### **Leadership Teams**

Invest in strong leadership teams to foster collaboration and drive effective professional learning initiatives.

#### **Continuous Learning**

Model a culture of continuous learning that encourages growth, reflection, and adaptation across all levels.

#### Research Partnerships

Focus on systemic alignment to bridge Pursue partnerships for research and measurement to sustain impact and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives.

#### **Prioritize Coaching**

Ensure coaching and mentorship are central to professional development, enhancing teachers' skills and confidence in practice.

#### System Alignment

the gap between policy and classroom realities, ensuring cohesive support.





# **EMPOWERING TEACHERS** THROUGH A SUPPORTIVE **ECOSYSTEM: WHAT** WE'VE LEARNED ON THE **SCALING JOURNEY OF TARL**

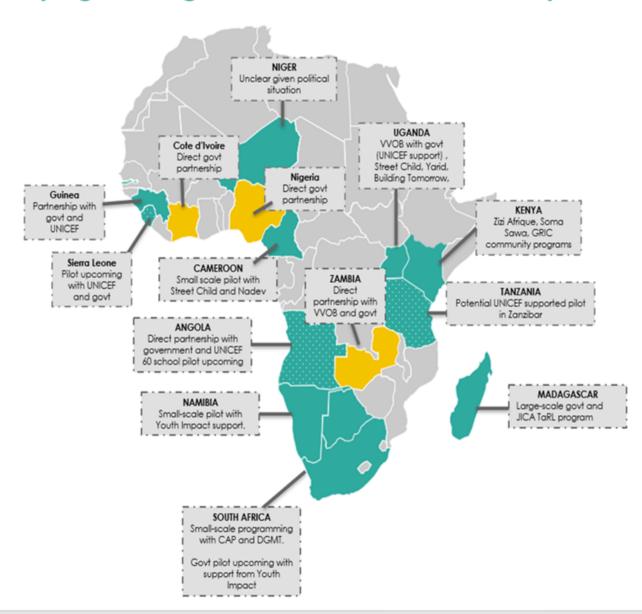
Daniele Ressler, Director of Research, Learning & Evaluation Teaching at the Right Level Africa

EDUCATORS SHARING FUTURES, 4 November 2025

#### **TaRL Africa**

#### Over 7 million children have been reached with TaRL programming in SSA since TaRL Africa's inception

- **2015**: Pratham and J-PAL start working with the MoGE in Zambia and VVOB to adapt and scale the TaRL approach
- **2019**: TaRL Africa, a joint venture by Pratham and J-PAL, was formed to support partners working to address the learning crisis in primary schools in Africa through the evidence-based TaRL approach.
- **2022**: TaRL Africa registered in Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria
- **2025**: TaRL Africa supports partners and governments across 15+ countries in SSA to design and deliver TaRL programming.





#### **TEACHING AT THE RIGHT LEVEL APPROACH**



Quick easy to understand
assessments that enable
education systems to respond
to children's needs



Children grouped by learning level and focus on foundational skills using fun confidence building activities

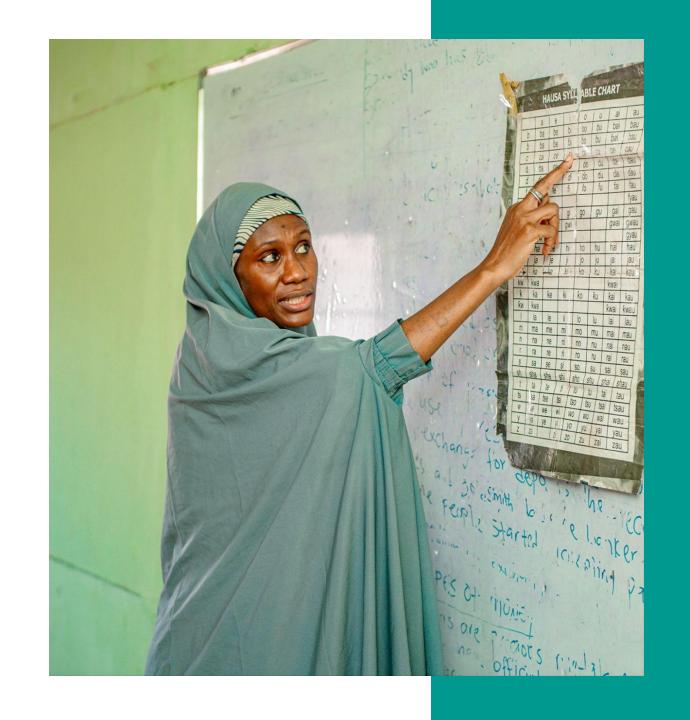


Teachers receive ongoing, practice-based support from mentors

# SUPPORTING THE TEACHER: THE CORE IMPLEMENTER

The TaRL program capacitates teachers through a multi-tiered support system:

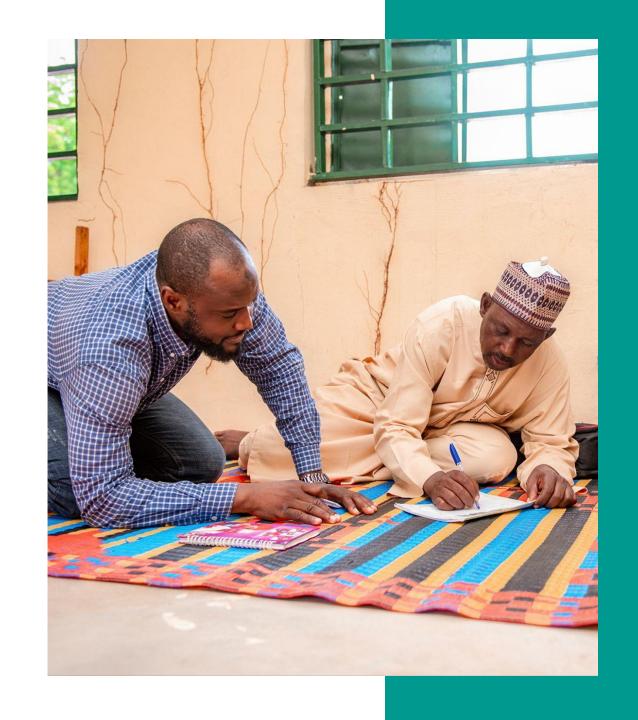
- Initial practical training
- Continuous support



# THE ROLE OF MENTORS: LEADERS OF PRACTICE

In TaRL, government mentors are a key element of teacher support. They are involved at different levels:

- On-site coaching
- Problem-solving
- Data aggregation



#### **TARL AFRICA**

TaRL implementation requires systemic buy-in and leadership

### SCHOOL LEADERS: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- Logistics & Scheduling
- Motivation & Oversight
- Review & Quality

# GOV'T MIDDLE-TIER: ACCOUNTABILITY

- Systematic Embedding
- Review & Action



**ADDRESSING PERSISTENT CHALLENGES IN TEACHER SUPPORT:** WHAT WE'VE **LEARNED** 





# **Snapshot 1: Côte d'Ivoire**

#### **Teacher Support Successes**

- Integration of TaRL into national education policy: national rollout underway with training led by gov't
- CPD: Gov't mentors (after practice-based training)
   support teachers during school visits

#### **Teacher Support Challenges**

- Limited access to regular in-service training due to logistical and financial constraints
- Teachers value mentor feedback for technical support but school visits are often infrequent; while in-school HTs are too busy



# **Snapshot 1: Côte d'Ivoire**

#### Responses to persistent TPD challenges

- National gov't-led training enhancements:
  - New hybrid (online) training for teachers
  - Gov't-led training & mentoring quality assurance
  - Cost-effective shift national to regional oversight
- Mentorship via WhatsApp: Teachers benefit from WhatsApp-based mentorship, boosting continuous support and engagement
- Simple supports for hybrid mentoring: Piloting guides for phone-based mentoring & school visit prioritization



# **Snapshot 2: Nigeria**

#### **Teacher Support Successes**

- Gov't-funded TaRL: regular teacher training & refresher trainings strengthening understanding of TaRL methodologies
- Mentoring & classroom support visits: have boosted teacher confidence in hard-to-work conditions

#### **Teacher Support Challenges**

- Inconsistent in-person mentor school visits: cost, accessibility / security, low motivation/accountability
- Mentor knowledge of program: over time, teachers have greater knowledge of program than mentors
- Program implementation quality: low in some schools due in part to gaps in teacher capacity



# **Snapshot 2: Nigeria**

#### Responses to persistent TPD challenges

- Trialled hybrid/remote mentoring: Low uptake found in phone-based mentoring even with costs removed
- Now scaling school-level teacher peer-mentoring: significant improvements outcomes with at-school mentoring pilot innovation; now testing at scale
- Now testing staggered training models to allow continuous, manageable teacher capacity building throughout the school year
- Piloted teacher "booster" classes to address critical gaps in their own basic FLN knowledge & skills



# **Snapshot 3: Zambia**

#### **Teacher Support Successes**

- National scale of gov't-led TaRL including
  - practice-based training for gov't mentors
  - Dedicated gov't TaRL coordinating committee
  - District/zonal-level engagement and support
- In-school teacher support through SPRINT & HTs
- Teacher Support Challenges
  - Refresher training inconsistent & not always targeted
  - Irregular mentoring visits / fewer than planned
  - School administrators not always closely involved in implementation; SPRINT implementation varies



## **Snapshot 3: Zambia**

#### Responses to persistent TPD challenges

- WhatsApp-based peer-learning + school-based
   CPD innovation trial to improve teacher mastery & motivation; initial barriers with digital platform accessibility & engagement
- Strengthening national Master Trainers through refresher training & accountability to ensure Catch Up is part of the SPRINT system in their provinces
- Insitutionalization focus: bringing Catch Up into preservice teacher training colleges is a key priority

**CONCLUSION:** IT TAKES A (LEADERSHIP) **VILLAGE FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHER SUPPORT** 





Supporting teachers is crucial, but our experience points to certain system-wide conditions needed for effective TPD:

- Targeted & responsive support: meet teachers 'at the right level' for their needs
- Right-fit solutions: according to the context and based on real challenges
- Start with existing systems & norms: bake teacher support into existing systems from the start - and engage multiple pathways of leaders
- Simplicity is often best: know thy context

# THANK YOU

