



USAID | ZAMBIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issue Date: **March 11, 2021**
Deadline for Questions/Clarification: **March 18, 2021**
Closing Date: **April 12, 2021** (09:00 hrs, Zambia Local Time)

Subject: Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships (STIP) Annual Program Statement, APS No.: 7200AA21APS00003

Opportunity Title: Remedial Education in Zambia

Dear Prospective Applicant:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking Concept Notes on innovative solutions to support remedial instruction in grades three to five, thereby contributing to improve learning outcomes and expand access to quality basic education in Zambia.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID may allocate up to \$10 million over a period of performance of five years. Priority will be placed on supporting the most promising approaches to the objectives described herein. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the application(s) submitted. All terms and conditions of the FY2021-2022 [STIP APS](#) apply.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the United States Government nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application/Concept Note. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the entire NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Please send any questions by the due date to the point of contact identified in section VI of this notice. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov. Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Brian LeCuyer
Agreement Officer
Deputy Director, Office of Acquisition and Assistance



U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

REMEDIAL EDUCATION - ZAMBIA

UNDER EXISTING

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, and PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL
PROGRAM STATEMENT
APS No. 7200AA21APS00003**

PLEASE NOTE: This is an addendum to an existing announcement. All interested organizations should carefully review both this addendum AND the full announcement, which can be found here: [please click here for link to STIP APS Announcement](#). Important information contained in the full worldwide announcement is not repeated in this specific addendum.

This program is authorized in accordance with Part I of the Foreign Assistance act of 1961, as amended.

Through this Addendum to the 2021-2022 Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership (STIP) Annual Program Statement (APS) No. 7200AA21APS00003 (the STIP APS Full Announcement), USAID/Zambia is making a special call for the submission of Concept Notes focused on innovative solutions to support remedial instruction in grades three to five, building on successful programs such as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), locally known as the *TaRL/Catch-Up Program*.

The overall objective of the *Remedial Education* activity is to provide targeted education interventions to ensure that middle and upper primary school students acquire the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills necessary for continued meaningful learning and education. The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), through the Ministry of General Education (MOGE), with the support of multiple donors and cooperating partners, has fully adopted and led remedial instruction methodology. The *Remedial Education* activity will support the MOGE's goals to establish a remedial education policy and expand instructional approaches nationwide.

Global evidence demonstrates that students who are not proficient in reading by the end of grade three are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers.¹ With the explicit purpose of advancing Zambia in its journey to self-reliance,

¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Early Warning! Why Reading By the End of the Third Grade Matters," 2010.



the *Remedial Education* activity will continue to strengthen the necessary support systems at the various levels of the MOGE to expand primary remedial instruction from two provinces - Eastern and Southern - as implemented under the *TaRL/Catch-Up Program*, to three additional provinces - Muchinga, North-Western, and Western - toward the MOGE's goal of national scale. Ultimately, USAID support will fully transition remedial education programming to become an ingrained methodology inherent to core teaching practice and delivery of the national primary school curriculum.

Recognizing the widespread education interruptions due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, remedial education programming will become increasingly more important to achieve meaningful long-term learning successes.

The specific objective(s) are as follows:

Objective: Build upon and expand targeted remedial education interventions to ensure that middle and upper primary school students acquire the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills necessary for meaningful learning and continuing education.

- **Sub-Objective 1.1.** Improve foundational reading and numeracy skills of learners in middle/upper primary school.
- **Sub-Objective 1.2.** Sustain and ingrain remedial education methodology and practice into MOGE structures to improve service delivery capacity.
- **Sub-Objective 1.3.** Create and foster strategic partnerships to coordinate, sustain, and scale remedial education activities.

USAID **may** allocate up to \$10 million for one (1) award over the five (5) year life of the activity.

Unless otherwise stated herein, all terms and conditions of the STIP APS 2021-2022 apply (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?opId=331756>).

I. Background

Since 2002, Zambia has made significant gains toward achieving near universal access to primary education, with net enrollment of approximately 88.7 percent.² However, Zambia's public education system faces serious challenges to providing quality primary education services that positively impact student learning. Results of recent learning assessments - such as the 2018 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and 2014

² Ministry of General Education, Education Statistical Bulletin



Grade 5 National Assessment Survey (GNAS) - show modest gains; nevertheless, 64 percent of students in Grade 2 were not able to read a single word. Results of the GNAS consistently reveal that pupils' scores are below the 40th percentile in core subjects including English and mathematics. As a result, the majority of students progress through the school system without the requisite basic skills to comprehend increasingly more complex subject matter and effectively participate in learning. The COVID-19 global pandemic has compounded these challenges to student achievement of basic education skills, making opportunities for remedial education even more important.

In an effort to address these critical learning gaps, the GRZ's MOGE has collaborated with USAID to develop and implement the primary literacy curriculum since 2014. To address Zambia's most acute remedial learning needs, the MOGE partnered with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) to pilot the evidence-based Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) program from 2016-2017.³ TaRL, known as the Catch-Up Program in Zambia, is a remedial literacy and numeracy program targeting students in upper primary school who have not acquired basic skills. TaRL is premised on research in multiple country contexts that shows that learners learn better when they are assessed, grouped, and taught according to their ability and not according to their grade level. The pilot evaluated several implementation models and concluded that a one-hour-per-day model had the greatest impact on student learning outcomes.

From 2017-2021, USAID/Zambia through USAID/Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) financed a \$5 million grant to the University of Cape Town and UNICEF to support the MOGE to rollout TaRL in two of Zambia's 10 provinces. Cumulatively, approximately 1,800 schools, 6,000 teachers and educators, and over 240,00 learners have been reached since 2017. The program consistently demonstrated positive learning outcomes, with the 2019 assessment results showing that after just two school terms, the percent of targeted primary school learners able to read complete sentences and paragraphs increased from 34 percent to 54 percent, while the percent of learners unable to read a single word decreased from 52 percent to 27 percent. Building on the success of the *TaRL/Catch-Up Program*, the activity will work to expand remedial interventions to three additional provinces of Muchinga, Western and North-Western. USAID support will complement other donor-funded ongoing remedial interventions in Lusaka and Luapula provinces, and the MOGE's forthcoming remedial education policy and vision of scaling nationwide.

II. Solicitation

In publishing this Addendum to the STIP APS, USAID/Zambia is soliciting Concept Notes from eligible partners to propose ways to scale and sustain remedial instruction to achieve the objective and sub-objectives outlined in Section III. As a requirement of the STIP APS, Prime Applicants must engage with one or more Higher Education

³ <https://www.teachingattherightlevel.org/tarl-in-action/zambia-case-study/>



Institutions (HEIs), as well as one or more third-party actors (i.e. NGOs, Government institutions, private businesses, etc.) to support outcomes and bolster impact. Applicants will be expected to equally engage multiple partners for maximum geographic coverage, impact, and sustainability. In addition to building upon targeted remedial education interventions, this Addendum strives to advance the Government of Zambia in its journey to self-reliance by strengthening local organizations and/or institutions.

Subject to the availability of funding, USAID/Zambia anticipates supporting up to one (1) new award under this Addendum, over the course of five (5) years. USAID reserves the right to award more awards OR none. All terms and conditions of the 2021-2022 STIP APS apply. (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=331756>)

Eligibility Criteria

Any type of organization is eligible to submit a Concept Note under the *Remedial Education Addendum*. Furthermore, in accordance with the requirements of the overarching STIP APS (7200AA21APS00003, page 15), such organizations must demonstrate engagement with HEIs and/or related partners, as well as other institutional partners, be they public, private, for-profit, nonprofit organizations, public international organizations, non-governmental organizations, U.S. and non-U.S. governmental organizations, or multilateral and international donor organizations. Applicants will be expected to equally engage multiple partners for maximum geographic coverage, impact, and sustainability. Recognizing the diverse challenges faced by the primary education sector in Zambia, applicants are expected to partner with and demonstrate efforts to strengthen local organization and/or institutions.

III. Program Objectives

The objective and sub-objectives of the *Remedial Education* activity are detailed below.

Objective: Build upon and expand targeted remedial education interventions to ensure that middle and upper primary school students acquire the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills necessary for meaningful learning and continuing education.

Sub-Objective 1.1. Improve foundational reading and numeracy skills of learners in middle/upper primary school.

The activity will provide remedial learning interventions to ensure that students in grades three to five acquire the core skills in reading and numeracy. The activity will target the middle/upper primary grades to provide a continuum of support to learners in a total of five provinces. The activity will build upon and learn from the remedial instruction methodology initiated under the *TaRL/Catch-Up Program* in two provinces; and will scale remedial instruction methodology to three additional provinces, thereby sustaining and augmenting the reading gains acquired in early primary school. The



activity will coordinate and collaborate closely with other USAID-supported interventions, including the *USAID Let's Read Project* and *Transforming Teacher Education*, creating a positive layering effect of in-service and pre-service teacher training interventions to achieve student success. The activity will reach approximately 4,600 schools in 63 districts in a total of five provinces: Eastern, Muchinga, North-Western, Southern, and Western. Overall, the activity will incorporate continuous learning opportunities through research and experiential and adaptive learning that will effectively respond to the unique needs of target communities, improving implementation and opportunities for national scale-up.

Sub-Objective 1.2. Sustain and ingrain remedial education methodology and practice into MOGE structures to improve service delivery capacity.

The activity will continue to build the necessary support systems at the various levels of the Zambia Ministry of General Education (MOGE) to expand primary remedial instruction with a goal of national scale. The activity will work to fully transition remedial education programming to become an ingrained methodology inherent to the core teaching practice and delivery of the national primary school curriculum. The activity will work within the existing levels of the MOGE - provinces, districts, zones, and schools - to build the capacity of educators to support and deliver remedial education effectively. Building on the efficient and sustainable core elements of the low-cost TaRL methodology, the activity will continue to promote the development and use of locally-made teaching and learning materials in schools. By supporting the MOGE to expand remedial education programming to three additional provinces, it will also work to strengthen the MOGE's ability to scale-up remedial education nationally using a continuous learning approach that relies on research and experiential and adaptive learning to respond to the unique needs of target communities. The activity will draw on capacities built at the various levels of the MOGE over the last three years to maximize impact and increase programming efficiencies.

Sub-Objective 1.3. Create and foster strategic partnerships to coordinate, sustain, and scale remedial education activities.

Prior experience has demonstrated the importance of partnerships for program implementation, sustainability, and scaling. Partnerships maximize resources, expertise and reach, and the likelihood to enhance and sustain programs. The activity will strategically build and leverage partnerships, within and beyond a consortium structure, to strengthen program performance. Parents, HEIs, communities, and the private sector play a key role in holding schools accountable for quality service delivery, particularly for students who need remedial instruction. As the demand for quality education increases, the successful scaling of the remedial education activity will require robust alliances within and among applicant organizations, with multiple levels of the MOGE, and with community and private sector partners. Community partners may include traditional chiefs, religious leaders, parent-teacher organizations, HEIs, and other groups with the ability to foster more productive community engagement with education service



providers and the MOGE. Such partnerships are essential to provide effective, affordable and sustainable education services across an expanded service area.

IV. Review Criteria

Proposed Concept Notes will be reviewed based on the general criteria set forth in the 2021-2022 STIP APS in the “Concept Note Evaluation Criteria and Considerations” section. In addition, USAID/Zambia will review Concept Notes for the following:

Criterion 1: The extent to which the proposed activities are well-defined, achievable, and respond to the *Remedial Education* objective and sub-objectives (1.1, 1.2, and 1.3) articulated in this Addendum.

Criterion 2: The extent to which the Applicant demonstrates a robust partnership among its partner organizations; and fosters strategic partnerships with HEIs, local organizations/actors, and the MOGE to ensure effective coordination, sustainability, and scale of remedial education programs.

Criterion 3: The extent to which the Concept Note demonstrates potential for sustained impact.

(Note: If USAID requests a Full Application, Applicants may be given additional, specific evaluation criteria.)

V. Application Instructions and Review Process

USAID/Zambia will be responsible for the review process of Concept Notes and Full Applications (if and when requested) and the management of any awards issued under this Addendum. Applicants are required to follow the Concept Note instructions set forth in the STIP APS and submit Concept Notes using the Concept Note Template (attachment 1). Information provided in Section II.B of the Concept Note Template should address the objectives and criteria outlined in this Addendum. Applicants are welcome to propose a name for the activity in their concept notes.

The completed Concept Note Template (including the Concept Note and required Supporting Information) will be sent to USAID/Zambia to the attention of Agreement Officer Brian LeCuyer. All Concept Notes must be submitted through the centralized OAA inbox of oa-solicit-lusaka@usaid.gov.

Concept Notes must be submitted by April 12, 2021. Please note that this opportunity is not on a rolling basis and the opportunity will close at the date listed above.



After review by USAID/Zambia, Applicants of the most promising Concept Notes will be invited to engage in one or more in-person or virtual co-creation discussions and/or workshop(s) with USAID and other stakeholders. The goal of the co-creation discussions and/or workshop(s) is to collaboratively refine needs, objectives, opportunities, challenges, solutions, etc. related to *Remedial Education* in Zambia. Additional information regarding the process, expectations, etc. will be provided to those selected.

If USAID/Zambia remains interested in moving forward with the Applicant's proposed projects or activities following the co-creation discussions and/or workshop(s), USAID may request a full Application from the Applicant. Invitation to or participation in co-creation or other communication with USAID during the application process does not guarantee a request for a full Application or funding. Applicants are advised that participation in the Concept Note, co-creation, and application processes under this APS addendum are entirely at their own expense and are not compensable by USAID.

USAID/Zambia will consider Concept Notes that align with the objectives articulated in this *Remedial Education* Addendum to the STIP APS. Concepts must be conceptually relevant to the Zambian context, including the ability to adapt to potentially greater learning setbacks due to school closure both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants are expected to demonstrate expertise in remedial education strategies for the development of literacy and numeracy skills for middle and upper primary students. To achieve the objectives of the *Remedial Education* Addendum, the Concept Notes must demonstrate robust levels of strategic partner engagement for sustained results and impact.

VI. Questions and Further Assistance

Questions regarding the substance and objectives of this Addendum must be directed to USAID/Zambia the POC listed in Section IV. Deadline for questions is March 18, 2021.

Questions regarding the substance and terms of the 2021-2022 STIP APS Full Announcement should be directed to stip.aps.support.team@usaid.gov.