Building Tomorrow will soon launch a Roots to Rise remote learning platform for literacy and numeracy lessons, like the story reading lesson depicted here, to be delivered via mobile phone.
A note from our founders
George Srour & Joseph Kaliisa

With no school in session over the last quarter, it’s forgivable to think there may not be much to report for an organization whose work is focused in education. We’re proud to say nothing could be further from the truth.

Last quarter, we shared with you our nascent-at-the-time plans for Tomorrow is Now, a response aimed at both curbing the number of out-of-school children in five select districts while helping local government build a grassroots corps of Community Education Volunteers able to respond to this and future disruptions. In this work, our aim is to begin transitioning the implementation of our programming from a philanthropically funded model to one where local government begins assuming a portion of the responsibility, costs and oversight of such efforts. Our success will ultimately be measured not only by the number of children in school but also the degree to which our work can truly help change the way in which schools receive support at the district level. Great progress has been made over the last quarter, highlighted by the selection of our partner districts with whom we’ll be working.

Our 50 Cohort 5 Fellows, home since mid-March, have been leading hundreds of one-on-one tutorial calls focused on building the numeracy skills of learners who participated in last year’s Roots to Rise program. Members of the Building Tomorrow team, along with these Fellows, are working to adapt their live calls to an interactive voice system we hope to soon launch, allowing any learner in Uganda to call in and receive individualized support, first in numeracy and eventually literacy, too.

All this comes as we launch our boldest plan yet, Enroll Uganda. At a time when we know many students are struggling to stay in school for myriad reasons, Building Tomorrow is gearing up to deploy 200 new Building Tomorrow Fellows to the field, train more than 5,000 new community education volunteers, enroll approximately 85,000 out-of-school children and reach our 100th primary school construction milestone. Our work is needed now more than ever, and Enroll Uganda will help to address some of the most underserved communities throughout Uganda.

We remain grateful for your support and belief in the work of Building Tomorrow and hope very much you and yours are keeping safe in these turbulent times.

Keep Building,

George Srour
Chief Dreamer

Joseph Kaliisa
Country Director
Tomorrow is Now is our response to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on education in Uganda and scaling for the future. The program is designed to strengthen the government’s capacity to bridge the access and quality gaps in education by placing Building Tomorrow Fellows Alumni as Technical Advisors in local government administrative offices. Below is an overview of how Tomorrow is Now will be implemented in five partner districts: Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Gomba, Mubende, and Kasanda.

**The Technical Advisors** (TAs) are alumni of the Building Tomorrow Fellows Program. Using their experience from the Fellowship, they will work with local government administration to develop officials’ ability to initiate and manage various activities within their communities. These activities include:

- **CEV and OOSC engagement**
- **MEL systems strengthening**
- **Roots to Rise implementation**

**Technical Advisor Activities**

- TAs will work with local government officials to recruit, train and manage a corps of Community Education Volunteers.
- CEVs will engage families to support home learning environments and literacy and numeracy education through facilitation of Roots to Rise camps.
- CEVs will collaborate with Headteachers and other local leaders to identify and enroll out-of-school children (OOSC) and ensure OOSC retention in school.

**Program Goals**

- **Stronger connectivity between local officials and other education stakeholders: parents/caregivers, learners, and community members.**
- **Increased enrollment and retention of out-of-school children at local primary and select secondary schools.**
- **Increased ability for local government office to collect and manage school enrollment and performance data.**
- **More informed planning and strategy within the local government office as a result of using data to make and defend decisions.**
- **All children within the area attain grade-level literacy and numeracy skills.**

TAs will work with Building Tomorrow and district Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning (MEL) specialists to deliver appropriate MEL training for local officials.

TAs will support local officials in customizing existing tools to allow consistent, accurate, and transparent data collection and analysis.

TAs will support local officials to analyze data and create more informative reports for their district officers.

TAs will collaborate with Building Tomorrow’s Roots to Rise (R2R) team and master R2R trainers to train all government-employed teacher coaches in the district as R2R trainers & program coordinators. These new trainers will train teachers and CEVs in R2R implementation and partner with Headteachers and local officials to schedule R2R camps and follow-up training.
The effectiveness of Roots to Rise has been proven in the classroom. But what happens when students can't be in the classroom? In response to COVID-19 keeping students away from school, Building Tomorrow is developing a remote learning platform to deliver Roots to Rise programming so students gain and retain foundational literacy and numeracy skills as the school shutdown continues.

How Roots to Rise works in-person, during a regular school session

1. **Assess** | Community Education Volunteers (CEVs) and teachers assess students using a simple test.

2. **Group and Teach** | Children are grouped according to learning level, and teachers & CEVs facilitate daily targeted lessons for a period of several weeks.

3. **Re-Group** | Each week, students are re-assessed and re-grouped as they move up through the levels.

4. **Improved Learning Outcomes** | After a few short weeks of lessons, students improve their ability to read simple stories and perform basic math.

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How Roots to Rise will be conducted remotely

**Enrollment**

Students who previously participated in Roots to Rise will be auto-enrolled on the platform. New students will dial a number to enroll.

**Lesson Delivery**

Weekly lessons will be scheduled for students. At the scheduled time, the platform will dial out to the student’s household phone. Lessons will regularly be supplemented with assessments, which the platform will score and use to deliver appropriate subsequent lessons to the student.

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Hello, would you like to enroll in Roots to Rise?

Yes!

What is your name, age, and gender?

Angela, I’m 10 and a girl.

Ok! We’ll call you on Tuesday to give you a short test and your first lesson.

Hi Angela! To start, I’m going to give you a test. What is 2+2? Press 1 for 4. Press 2 for 6. Press 3 for 8...

[Presses 1]

Great! Now we know your learning level. We can start with a subtraction lesson...

[Presses 3]

...and that’s how you subtract. So let’s practice. What is 4 – 1? Press 1 for 3...

[Presses 1]

...Let’s practice again. What is 23 – 14? Press 1 for 9...

[Presses 1]

I’m sorry, that’s incorrect. Press 1 for help from a Building Tomorrow Fellow.

[Presses 1]

Hi Angela! I can help you with advanced subtraction...

[Presses 1]
Even before COVID-19 upended in-school instruction, Uganda was in the throes of a learning crisis. Building Tomorrow is launching a new initiative, Enroll Uganda. During the 42-month project, in partnership with Educate A Child, we will:

- Enroll 84,275 out-of-school children
- Construct 18 new primary schools
- Deploy 200 Building Tomorrow Fellows
- Engage 5,400 Community Education Volunteers

Comprehensive and sustained efforts are required to ensure that hundreds of thousands of children are able to return to school, and access their fundamental human right to a basic education. Building Tomorrow’s tested interventions are well-positioned to produce sustained results. To date, 150 Building Tomorrow Fellows and over 3,400 CEVs have enrolled 39,376 OOSC and the 81 primary schools constructed by Building Tomorrow have enrolled 15,767 OOSC.

Over the next 14 months, we will hire over 180 Fellows and staff to deliver on the commitments of Enroll Uganda.

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Key Metrics Overview

81 Open Building Tomorrow Schools

150 Building Tomorrow Fellows deployed since 2015

3,400 Community Education Volunteers engaged since 2015

55,143 Total out-of-school children enrolled since 2015

15,767 via BT Primary Schools

39,376 via BT Fellows & CEVs