



Elimu-Soko

Bringing innovative solutions
to public schools in rural Africa

Pilot: Structured Pedagogy
Program for Foundational
Learning in Rwanda



There are a number of cost-efficient innovative solutions that have the potential to improve the quality of education in Africa, especially in rural and marginalized communities

Examples of innovations in the education sector in Africa

ubongo

THE
LUMINOS
FUND

VARKEY
FOUNDATION
Changing lives through education

ProFuturo

INSTILL
EDUCATION

Libraries
Without Borders
Bibliothèques Sans Frontières

eneza
education

Pratham
Every Child in School & Learning Well

sard

Room to Read

Inspiring
Teachers

Zizi Afrique
Foundation

EnglishHelper

TaRL
teaching at
the right level

EdTech Hub
Clear evidence, better decisions, more learning.

educate girls

KAIVALYA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Dost

Taleemabad
Learning App
Now Available on KaiOS

KYTABU

AIMS
African Institute for
Mathematical Sciences
NEXT EINSTEIN INITIATIVE

Rocket Learning

However, the challenge for these solutions is that they find it difficult to scale their solutions in government-run schools attended by over 80%¹ of school-going children

Key bottlenecks hindering innovators from accessing public schools



Access to governments

- Most innovative solutions are piloted in one country and well-known within that country. However, they lack networks in other African countries and find it difficult to approach government stakeholders in those countries



Limited spending on education quality

- Countries have been focused on increasing education access over the past two decades. As a result, most government funding is focused on infrastructure development and teacher salaries



Procurement challenges

- Government procurement systems are cumbersome, making it difficult for innovators to navigate public procurement



Sustainable financing

- There is limited-to-no public financing available for investment in education quality improvements. As a result, innovators are dependent on short-term philanthropic funding, which allows them to pilot solutions but creates financial uncertainty in the long term

This lack of access to innovators results in poor quality of education in public school systems in Africa, especially in rural and marginalized communities



Insufficient teacher training

In sub-Saharan Africa, the share of primary school teachers with minimum qualifications declined from 85% to 65% ¹



Limited infrastructure for hybrid learning

At least half of all students in SSA cannot be reached with remote learning

Southern and Eastern Africa record at least 49% of children who are out of reach for remote learning²



Limited remedial learning

School children lag behind for various reasons, e.g., health and political events; yet remedial approaches are lacking

A recent study found that children fell behind by 1.5 year, even though their classrooms shut for only 3 months highlighting the importance of remedial learning³



Limited community engagement

Before COVID-19, caregivers were the most overlooked stakeholder in the education ecosystem

Changes in curricula, e.g., the change to the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya, demand more involvement of caregivers; yet this remains a gap

Governments are keen to invest in quality education, but they are unaware of available solutions and need support in prioritizing their needs

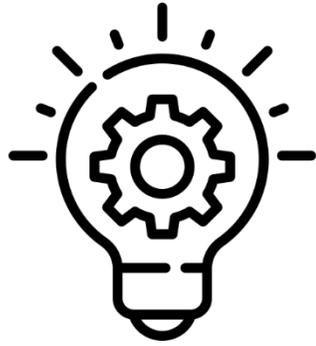
On programming, governments have demonstrated a strong demand for innovative solutions...

- **Governments are eager to invest in quality education** .e.g., Rwanda's education ministry is committed to improving foundational learning through its Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2024, with the goal of "All learners achieving basic levels of literacy and numeracy in early grades and beyond"
- **Rwanda and Tanzania (via Zanzibar) have both sought Elimu-Soko's support** in identifying top priorities in improving quality of education, using available innovative solutions; funding to pilot the innovations in their public education systems and to scale the initiatives beyond the pilot
- **Elimu-Soko has introduced Rwanda's education ministry to best practices in selecting innovative solutions to the priority challenge** - documenting this process can help procurement departments adopt the program's approach across all their decisions, which would be a beneficial outcome for the program

... but lack visibility on the best innovations available and the bandwidth to dedicate personnel to the programs

- **Government stakeholders usually have limited interactions with innovations outside their markets** as most innovations face difficulties in working across borders and are only well-known within the country they are piloted in
- **Governments typically lack the resources to dedicate personnel to such programs** - these programs need to provide dedicated resources to the governments for day-to-day oversight
- **While governments are open to providing scale-up financing, some often lack immediate funding for scaling up, requiring interim funding** i.e., flexibility on how quickly they can achieve full financing for an innovation

Elimu-Soko solves this problem by providing linkage support to both innovators and governments in Africa



Innovators

- ✓ Pre-identification of government interested in the innovation
- ✓ Pre-work with the government to identify targeted interventions
- ✓ Simplification of government procurement system
- ✓ Commitment from the government to provide scale-up financing to the initiative
- ✓ Ongoing support in engaging with government
- ✓ Localization support



Elimu-Soko

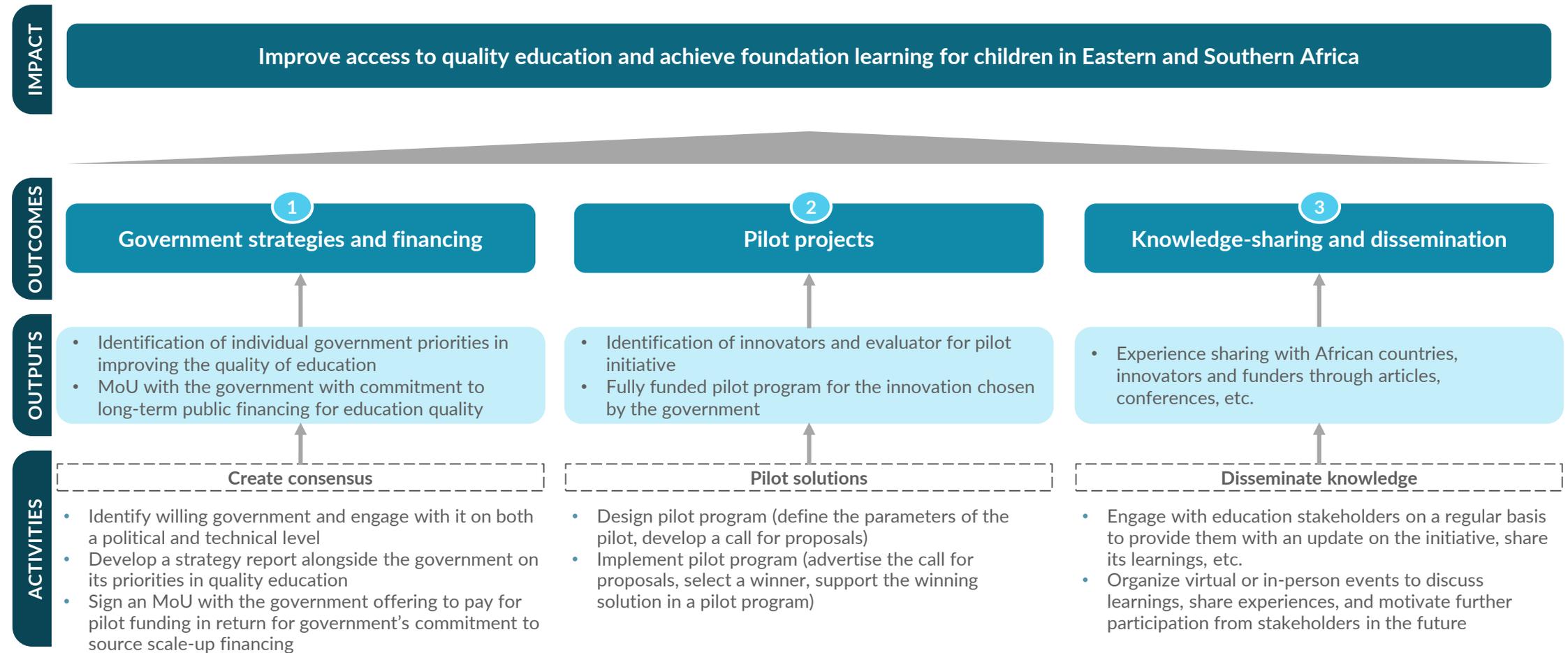
Scales up innovations that have already demonstrated success through pilot programs (pilots could be in any country, even outside Africa)



Governments

- ✓ Advisory support in identifying top priorities in education quality, and available innovative solutions
- ✓ Technical support with procurement process, and in the selection of an innovator and an evaluation provider
- ✓ Financial support for piloting the innovation in the public system
- ✓ Support in incorporating scale-up financing in annual budgets

Elimu-Soko's Theory of Change is to improve access to quality education by engaging with governments, paying for pilots, and sharing its learnings across Africa



In 2021, Elimu-Soko signed an MoU with the Government of Rwanda to be its first country of operation, and it has now successfully completed its pilot program

Overview



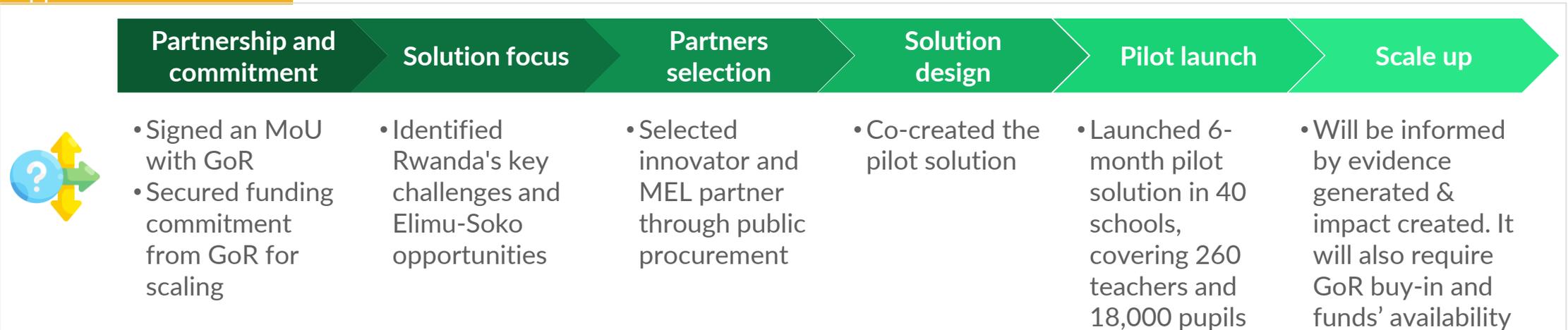
- **Context:** Rwanda's education sector has seen rapid growth, with a 99% primary enrollment rate in 2019. However, foundational skills in young learners remain a challenge.
- **Scope:** Dalberg and the Hempel Foundation, alongside the Government of Rwanda (GoR), launched the Elimu-Soko initiative to improve quality of education with focus on foundation learning.

Stakeholders



- **Government:** Ministry of Education, Rwanda Basic Education Board
- **Innovator:** Rising Academies
- **MEL Partner:** Brink & ThreeStones Int'l
- **PMO:** Dalberg
- **Development partner:** Hempel Foundation

Approach



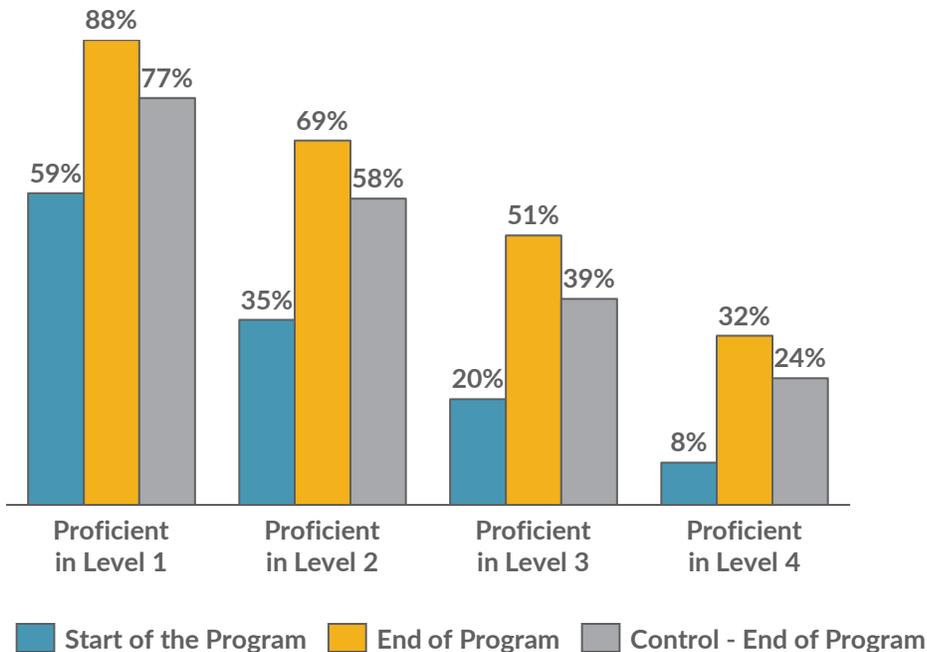
Intervention



- **Priority challenge:** Inadequacy in teacher training and availability of teaching materials
- Rising Academies' solution consists of improving student learning in foundational English literacy and numeracy skills in P1, P2, and P3 (P: primary school class) through a structured pedagogy program

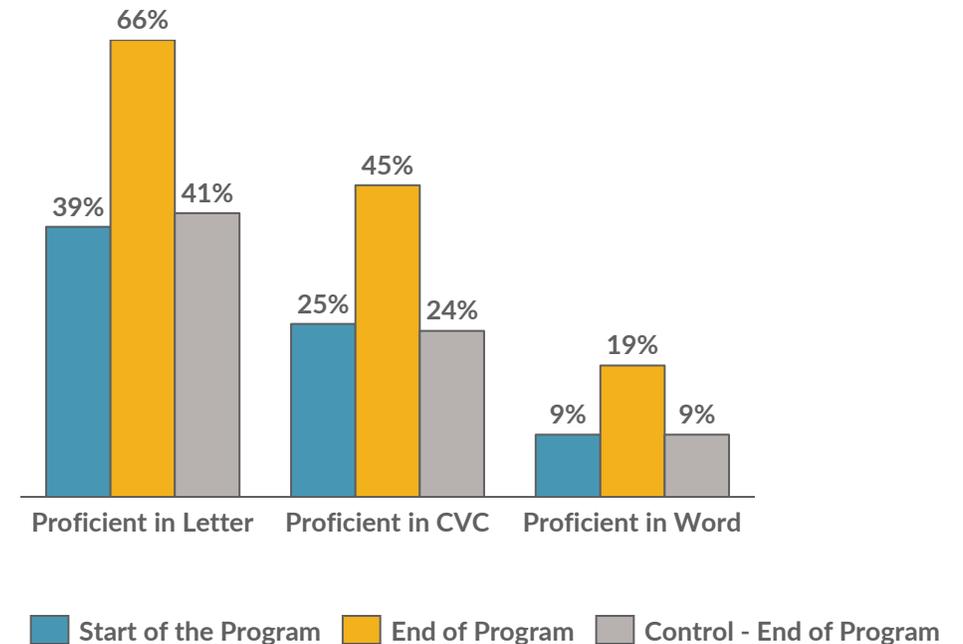
Elimu-Soko's Rwanda pilot has outperformed the control group by 11% in foundational numeracy skills and 19% in literacy skills

Change in Math Proficiency Scores - Treatment & Control



- FasterMath* end of program treatment has demonstrated an average of 10.5% increase of students' Math proficiency from Level 1 to Level 4 compared with end of program control

Change in Literacy Proficiency Scores - Treatment & Control



- FasterReading** students experienced significant progress in Letter, CVC, and Word proficiency by 25%, 21%, and 10% respectively compared to End of program control, amounting to an average of 18.7% improvement in literacy skills.

Sources: Rising Academies, Elimu-Soko Project final report, 2023

*FasterMath is a foundational skills program for all students to have competence in number sense, counting, place value, addition and subtraction skills through visual representations, using number lines, using hundreds of charts, partial sums, partial differences, and the standard algorithm. FasterMath includes five levels of Teacher Guides.

**FasterReading is a foundational skills program for all students to have competence in speaking, letter names, letter sounds, phonics, listening comprehension, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. The levels for FasterReading include Letter, CVC (consonant, vowel and consonant sound), Word, and Sentence.

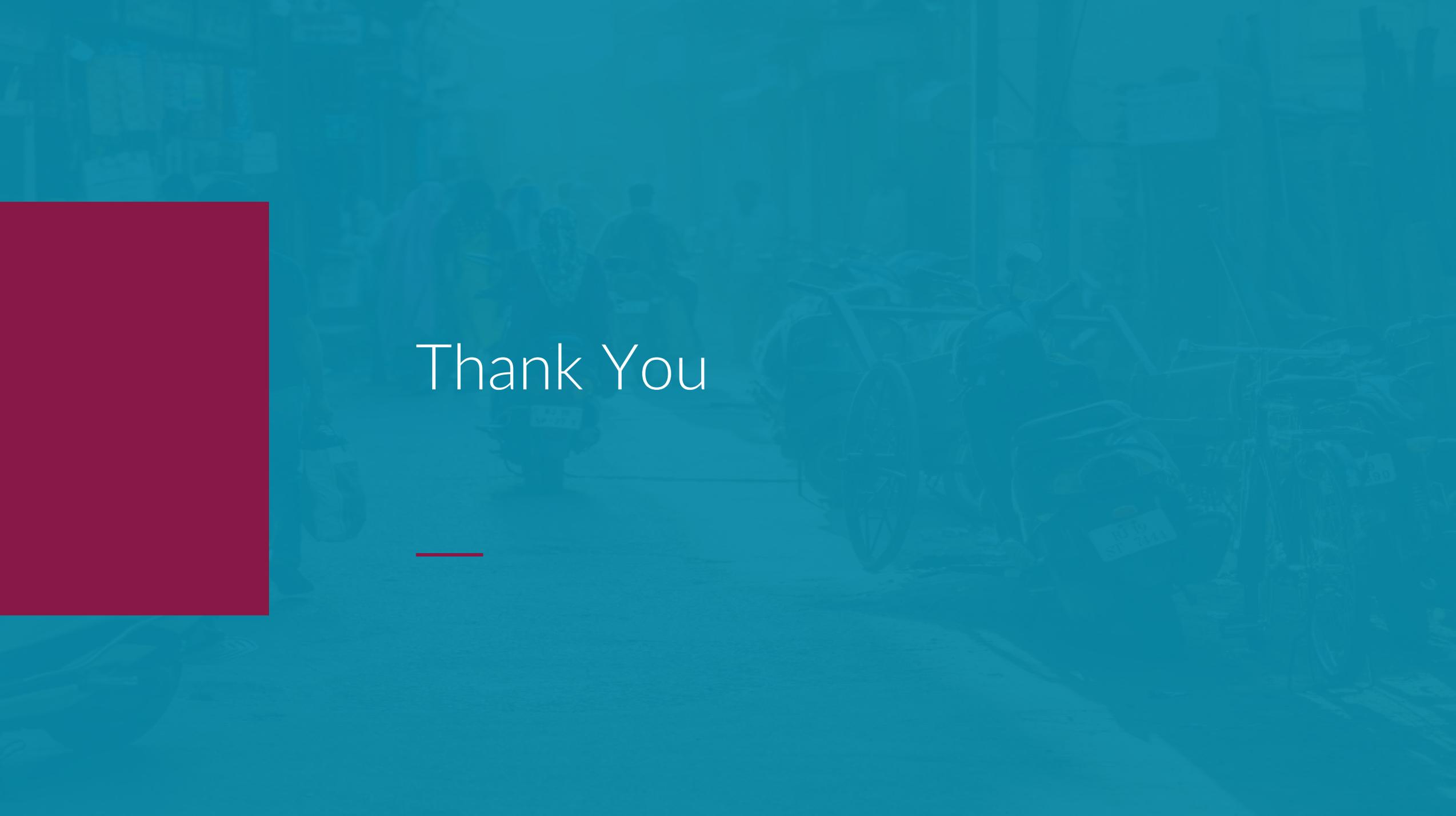
Elimu-Soko is now seeking additional funding partnerships for its scale-up phases in Rwanda

Elimu-Soko Scale-Up Phases

	Phase 1 (FY22-23): 6-M Pilot	Phase 2 (FY23-24): 12-M Pilot	Phase 3 (FY24-25): Replication	Phase 4 (FY25-26): Scale-Up	Phase 5 (FY26-27): Rwanda-wide
Learning Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growth in Student learning 2. Positive feedback from teachers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student outperformance compared to comparator group 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replication of outcomes in a larger sample 2. Testing model variations to determine optimal programming 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scaling 1-2 model variations to determine optimal for the system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embedding model in the system
Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 schools (20 for literacy + 20 for numeracy)) • 18k students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 schools (literacy and numeracy for all) • 18k students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 schools • 44.5k students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 schools • 220k students • Full RCT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,000 schools • 1.3M students
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: \$230k • Per pupil: \$25 (annualized) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: \$422k • Per pupil: \$23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: \$860k • Per pupil: \$19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: \$2.5M • Per pupil: \$11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total: \$10.6M • Per pupil: \$8

Elimu-Soko is also seeking partners for scale-ups to other countries such as Tanzania, where an MoU is already being negotiated for an initial pilot in Zanzibar

	TANZANIA 	KENYA 
High operational feasibility	24% Government expenditure on education	18% Government expenditure on education
	141 Ease of doing business*	56 Ease of doing business*
High impact potential	69% Primary school completion rate	88% Literacy rate
	25 million Young population (0-14 yrs)	20 million Young population (0-14yrs)



Thank You
