The Missing Piece

Developing Collective Leadership to Transform Education

Teach For All
A Global Network

Acknowledgments

This report has thousands of authors. It is the product of the efforts and insights of the diverse global community of tens of thousands of system leaders, policymakers, researchers, civic leaders, school leaders, teachers and students who are working in partnership with communities across the Teach For All network to transform education in more than 60 countries worldwide. We thank them all.

More practically, the report shares findings from a program of workshops, roundtables and discussions hosted by Teach For All's Global Learning Lab for Community Impact over the past three years, which actively included more than 600 members of that global community in surfacing, testing and evolving hypotheses about the drivers of change in schools and systems around the world.

We would especially like to acknowledge Monirath Siv, Shisir Khanal, Michelle Johansson, Swastika Shrestha, Mansi Joshi, Shaheen Mistri, Mavie Ungco, Soon Seng Chan, Franco Mosso, Jose Antonio Alva, Margarita Saenz, Tomas Recart, Juan Manuel Gonzalez, Gonul Eglence, Ruiz Clark, Bea Morilla, Tooba Akhtar, Khadija Bakhtiar, Salyne El Samarani, Miriam Siwela, Kassaga Arinaitwe James, Folawe Omikunle, Nedgine Paul Deroly, Charles Obore, Carol Seera, Martin Odebowale, Mei Lim, Fiona Brunk, Emo Kadiyski, Adib Reyhani, Natalia Llorente, Artur Taevere, Graeme Duncan, Loic Menzies, Daniel Agudelo Navarro, Darlin Ibarguen Asprilla, Eduardo Vallejos, Keita Matsumoto, Tarun Cherukuri, Pooja Chopra, Sweta Sarkar, Hina Saleem, Paul Keys, Eric Scroggins, Yue-Yi Hwa and Madhukar Banuri.

The report also features nine new case studies of the work of Teach For All network partners. The authors and contributors were Shivani Agrawal, Michael Aregbesola, Biayna Amirjanyan, Jose Antonio Alva Bacigalupo, Angela Bravo Chacon, Ruiz Clark, Javiera Delgado, Stephanie Devine, Zlatka Dimitrova, Hanna Gegenhuber, Juan Manuel Gonzalez Barajas, Iris Jeffries, Neli Koleva, Nara Magtaghyan, Deni Navarro, Bosede Ogidan, Antonia Raby Amadori, Anuradha Rao and Becky Smerdon.

The authors of the report were Alex Beard, Eva Keiffenheim, Agnes Tolescu and Jean Arkedis.

The design of this report was coordinated by Gabriela Ruiz Méndez, and the layout design and typesetting were provided by Guiño Design Studio.

Finally, Teach For All would like to thank the BHP Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York for their generous support of this work.

Table of Contents

04 **Foreword**

07 **Introduction**

10 **Glossary**

12 **Insights**

- Why collective leadership?
- What is collective leadership?
- How do we develop collective leadership?
- What is the role of collective leadership in systemic change?

40 **Methodology**

- Networked learning: a paradigm shift
- Case study approach: living examples

45 **Case studies**

- A whole ecosystem approach to improving learning in the Peruvian Andes
- From individual bright spots to system-wide collaboration in Appalachia, USA
- Mobilizing leaders to bring entrepreneurial energy to education in Ogun State, Nigeria
- Government partnerships and a talent pipeline to grow mindsets and capability in Bulgaria
- Building coalitions and mobilizing leaders to shift national public policy in Austria
- Growing trust and influence to shift public narrative around equitable education in Armenia
- Pursuing depth of scale to build capacity and shift mindsets over time in Puebla, Mexico
- Developing leaders to leverage opportunities for systemic impact in Chile
- Developing leaders and proof-points of an excellent education to drive systemic change in India

110 **Findings**

120 **Recommendations**

128 **Works Cited**

Foreword

What can our global education community learn from the climate movement? It's a question I've heard voiced often as we face up to the realities of the global learning crisis. The climate movement has cut through into public consciousness, mobilized tens of millions of people—especially young people—to demand change, and started to shift behaviors everywhere from dinner tables to boardrooms, and workplaces to parliaments. Meanwhile, the critical global effort to put all young people on a path to a better future, whose impact could be at least as significant for the future of our global society, continues to pass with little mention and struggles to mobilize a commensurate response.

There are two important lessons we can learn. The first concerns ecosystems. It is now widely understood that our planet comprises a vast interconnected web of life balanced in delicate equilibrium, in which accumulations of actions or inputs in different places can have unintended and often disastrous consequences in others, or on the system as a whole. This understanding informs the platform of the global climate movement, which is working to mobilize a holistic response that tackles multiple issues in parallel, seeking to achieve wholesale behavioral changes across our societies, in addition to pioneering new high-tech solutions or redirecting investments towards green energy.

"The ultimate hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently."

Dr. David Graeber

> *"Sometimes, the way we approach the crisis is the crisis."*
>
> *Dr. Bayo Akomolafe*

The same should be true in education. For too long, we've understood student learning as the output of technical or linear interventions in which governments design and implement policy, principals manage schools, and teachers deliver curriculum. In reality, our systems of learning are ecosystems. Student learning is determined by those inputs, but it is also the result of a complex and interrelated web of influences comprising mental and physical wellbeing, family support, socio-economic status, peer networks, economic opportunity, and more. It follows that ensuring that all children learn is the work not simply of improving instruction, but also of improving the enabling conditions for learning across those ecosystems, whether they are communities, regions, or whole countries.

Second, the climate movement understands that in order to shift human systems at the local or global level, you need above all to mobilize a critical mass of diverse people right across those systems—both those who are experiencing climate injustice, and people in positions of power and influence—in order to achieve a tipping point, after which the transformation of those systems becomes inevitable. At the moment, the efforts of our global education community, both locally and globally, focus more on generating evidence and equipping governments to design and implement solutions. This is important, but as a standalone strategy it is insufficient. We should bolster this effort with a greater investment of energy and effort in mobilizing people everywhere—civil society, practitioners, and especially those most affected by the global learning crisis—to enact and sustain change throughout our systems of education.

The Teach For All network has been working to contribute to the growth of this movement for the past 15 years, as one part of a vast global community of contributors working locally, nationally, and internationally to improve student learning and development. In this report, we share what we have learned so far about strengthening education ecosystems and what it will take to grow a critical mass of collective leadership to bring about change globally. Our hope is that the report will contribute to growing momentum for transformation across local ecosystems and within our global movement.

Alex Beard
Senior Director,
Global Institute for Transforming Education
Teach For All

If you are serious about creating a safe and sustainable world for children, then be serious about education.

Malala Yousafzai,
Education Activist and
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Introduction

Transforming education is an urgent global priority. Hundreds of millions of students worldwide aren't learning the basics they need to participate in today's world, let alone developing as the leaders we need, able to shape a better future for themselves, their communities, and our global society. The latest evidence shows that as many as 6 in 10 children globally can't comprehend a basic written text by age 10, with their socio-economic background still the biggest determinant of their success, and the education systems that serve them more likely to perpetuate than disrupt this inequity.

Despite promising signs of progress, change isn't happening fast enough for the world's children. Policymakers have established a shared global agenda for transforming education. Innovators are pioneering new solutions, researchers are evaluating their effectiveness, and donors and aid agencies are working to spread them to other contexts. Meanwhile, the evidence base about what works is growing, informing the development and implementation of new national policies. But while almost all children now go to school, there are few indicators that global learning levels are on track to improve.

We must do better, and we can. But how? How do we transform education systems so that all children learn? What are the key drivers or enablers of that transformation? What should we do differently as a global community

if we're to escape this unwelcome equilibrium? For 15 years, these same questions have motivated the efforts of the partner organizations that make up the Teach For All network, inspiring them to build a movement of 100,000 education leaders across more than 60 countries to tackle the learning crisis and ensure that all children in the communities where they live and work have access to the education, support, and opportunities needed to enable them to fulfill their potential.

The collective efforts of these teachers, school leaders, social entrepreneurs, and civic leaders serve as a natural laboratory for generating insight into our questions. And those efforts, which are underway everywhere from Delhi to Duisburg, and Áncash to Auckland, demonstrate that innovating and scaling evidence-based solutions or implementing effective policies from the top down are necessary for getting all kids learning, but they aren't sufficient. Equally important is the development of collective leadership. That is, the development of a critical mass of diverse and purpose-driven people at all levels of the wider ecosystem who collaborate and learn together to achieve change.

At Teach For All, we believe that collective leadership is critical to transforming education systems. And in this report we outline our latest learning about what it is, why it matters, and how we can grow it. The report is the result of five years of research and learning activities facilitated by Teach For All's Community Impact Lab, which have actively involved more than 600 diverse leaders in over 50 countries, along with a recent review of the latest global evidence on developing collective leadership for sustainable development by the People First Community.[01] The report also presents nine new case studies of the efforts by our network partners in Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, and the United States to grow collective leadership in their local systems.

The report is premised on two important insights. First, that education systems are human systems, the daily product of the motivations, ideas, abilities, and connections of millions of students, teachers, parents, and school leaders. Second, that children's learning isn't determined by isolated inputs, but by complex systems of interconnected actions that extend beyond the school gates into our communities and societies. To change these systems, we argue, we need collective leadership, defined as what happens when groups of people who share a common purpose "make meaning together so they can find direction and coordinate their interdependent actions to achieve a socially useful outcome that each would not have produced on their own."[02]

The report identifies four key features of the collective leadership required to transform education: that actors throughout the whole ecosystem are exercising leadership and agency; that those actors are committed to social justice and the shared purpose of all students learning and developing as leaders; that they are locally rooted and diverse, and inclusive both of people

01 See, Arkedis *et al.* (2023). *Collective Leadership for Sustainable Development: Evidence from Research and Practice.* Available for download: https://linktr.ee/peoplefirstdev

02 This definition comes from Arkedis et al. (2023). As noted in that report: 'This definition integrates various approaches to collective leadership drawing from the leadership studies literature and from the practice of collective leadership. In particular, it draws from the scholarship of a team working with Professor Sonia Ospina [a co-author of Arkedis et al. (2023)] at New York University and from the People First Community's praxis.'

who have experienced the inequities being addressed and those who have more privilege and/or access to power; and that they have the relationships and networks to collaborate and learn together. These concepts are explored both in the case studies and in examples drawn from the prior work of the Community Impact Lab.

In order to transform education, our aim should be to develop this collective leadership, and the report identifies a set of four complementary interventions to do so: recruiting diverse people with the potential to lead throughout the ecosystem; developing the purpose, values, vision, and leadership capacity of people in the system; connecting people through relationship-building and networks; and convening people to develop shared approaches to taking action, learning, and adapting. By way of example, it presents strategies being used by our network partner organizations in each activity area.

The report then looks at how collective leadership influences systemic change, facilitating shifts not only in the policies and practices of the system, but also in the purpose, culture, and politics of the system. It then describes the methodology used for the research, an inclusive "networked learning" methodology, which we believe is a powerful model both for simultaneously generating evidence and driving new practices, and for including a more diverse group of actors in that learning. Finally, the report makes recommendations for further research and investment within our network and beyond.

In keeping with our network philosophy, we offer these insights and recommendations in a spirit of continuous learning. The hypotheses generated by our global network about the role of collective leadership in transforming education are a contribution to a much broader shared global effort to tackle, and one day solve, the global learning crisis. Our hope is that, in making our findings available, we are able to provoke new learning and action, both for our network and the wider global ecosystem, to amplify and accelerate our progress towards a world in which all students learn.

"The young people in our classrooms today will be leading the world in 20 years. If we develop them holistically, foster their agency and awareness of themselves and society, their sense of empathy and wellbeing, and their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, then we'll have a meaningfully stronger world."

Wendy Kopp, CEO and Co-Founder of Teach For All

Glossary

System Change

System change refers to the intentional and strategic transformation of a complex system to address persistent challenges, improve outcomes, and change the purpose of the system. It involves a comprehensive approach beyond isolated interventions and seeks to modify the underlying structures, relationships, and dynamics within a system. At its core, system change recognizes that many societal issues and challenges are deeply rooted in interconnected systems rather than isolated components. These systems can include social, economic, political, or educational systems, among others. System change aims to identify and address the root causes of problems by understanding the interdependencies and feedback loops that shape the behavior and outcomes of the system.

System Leverage Points

System leverage points, as conceptualized by Donella Meadows, are specific areas or elements within a system where strategic interventions can lead to significant and lasting change. They are points of influence that, when properly targeted, can have a disproportionate impact on the behavior and outcomes of the system as a whole. As Donella Meadows wrote, "A small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything." Leverage points include goals and paradigms, structure, rules and incentives, information and feedback, and other elements that can shape system behavior and outcomes. It is important to note that the choice of leverage point depends on the specific system being addressed and the desired change objectives. Different systems may require different leverage points to achieve meaningful impact. Furthermore, a system change approach seeks to understand the interrelationships between leverage points and considers the potential unintended consequences of interventions.

System Reform and System Transformation

While system reform involves incremental changes within the existing system, system transformation aims to fundamentally reshape and redefine the system—in this report, education systems. System reform refers to incremental changes made within the existing system to address specific issues or challenges. It involves modifying certain aspects of the system, such as policies, practices, or structures, while keeping the underlying structures and processes in place. On the other hand, system transformation goes beyond incremental changes and seeks to fundamentally re-envision and restructure the education system. System transformation entails reimagining the purpose and goals of education, reconceptualizing the roles of various stakeholders, and redesigning the underlying structures and processes.

Education Systems and Learning Ecosystems

The term education system or school system, as defined by INEE, refers to the entire formal system of education, including governance at national, regional, district, and/or community levels, and public and private delivery, and includes such aspects as financing, laws, education priorities, training, accountability, education and school resourcing, curriculum, pedagogy, school environments, assessment, education management information systems (EMIS), international, national, and regional policy, as well as the institutions that support the delivery of education. It includes children of legal schooling age, out-of-school children, teachers and other practitioners, parents, school leaders, teacher training institutions, ministries of education, and related policymakers and technical specialists.

Learning ecosystems comprise the full array of people and institutions who contribute to the learning and development of young people and adults in a given place. A learning ecosystem includes the formal education system, but also extends beyond classrooms to account for the role played in children's development by families, friends and other community members, civic and religious institutions, clubs and societies, government agencies in health, transport, housing or other areas of development, the private sector, and civil society organizations—as well as wider provision for higher education, early childhood development and lifelong learning. These ecosystems can incorporate informal spaces like museums and libraries to enhance learning outcomes and holistic wellbeing. Emphasizing diversity and adaptability, learning ecosystems continuously evolve to meet learners' changing needs, offering inclusive educational pathways. These ecosystems connect learners with their communities, integrating local knowledge and resources to address societal challenges and ensure learning relevance.

Collective Leadership

Collective leadership happens when a group of people, from students to teachers to families to policymakers, work together around a shared purpose and drive system-wide change that would be impossible for individuals to accomplish alone. Collective leadership goes beyond individual leadership and embraces the idea of supporting and recognizing leadership in others, particularly those who have experienced the injustices of the existing system. Collective leadership requires a critical mass of leaders at different levels of a system with a shared purpose, willingness to work together, the ability to do so, and strong trust and connectivity among them. Collective leadership has the power to push the leverage points of the ecosystem around children toward positive change.

SECTION **ONE**

Insights

Why Collective Leadership?

"Reaching the point where all children have the education, support, and opportunity to shape a better future will require many changes. There is no one solution, and no government or leader alone can accomplish this. It will require multiple solutions and systemic change. Thus, it requires collective leadership—people who themselves have experienced the inequities being addressed and their allies, working together across lines of difference and across the system, exerting leadership, and learning constantly towards the purpose of all children fulfilling their potential to shape a better future for themselves, and all of us."

Introduction to Teach For All

For the past five years, Teach For All's Community Impact Lab has brought together education leaders around the world to learn from the communities and systems worldwide where the fastest progress is being made to put all children on a path to becoming leaders of a better future. Through case studies, roundtables, workshops, and communities of practice, this diverse community of more than 600 system leaders, policymakers, researchers, civil society leaders, school leaders, teachers, students, and parents have shared their perspectives on a critical question: *What are the drivers of systemic change?* Those leaders have a uniquely powerful perspective—almost all have spent at least two years working as teachers in schools serving their countries' marginalized communities—and their view from the frontline reinforces a set of critical insights that are emerging in our research and elsewhere globally. In this section, we outline those insights in order to make the case for collective leadership.

To transform education we need system change, not just reform

As we consider what it will take to put all children on a path to becoming leaders of a better future, it is useful to differentiate between education reform and system change. Education reform involves incremental modifications within the existing school system to address specific challenges while keeping the fundamental structure intact. Reform, which tackles individual problems, such as teacher recruitment, or changes individual inputs—such as updating curricula, laws, and infrastructure—is often necessary and can improve education systems while leaving the underlying logic untouched. System change, on the other hand, often entails going beyond the more limited scope of reforms by questioning and changing the wider system from its core principles, values, and purpose. It challenges the logic of the system, revisiting its goals and co-defining a purpose that is fit for the time and context. The aim is to redesign and realign all system parts to coherently contribute to this collectively owned purpose.

The extent of the current global learning crisis is evidence of the limitations of recent reform efforts. **Seven in 10 children aged 10 in low and middle income countries are now** unable to read a simple text for meaning, while average levels of learning worldwide have stagnated over several decades. Meanwhile, our young people face an uncertain future shaped by the prospect of climate breakdown, the automation of work, displacement due to conflict, growing national and global inequality, rising intolerance and authoritarianism, and discrimination based on their gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. In order to meet these challenges, our education systems must support students to realize their full potential—and to develop as leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and our planet.[03] System change is needed to simultaneously improve the quality of learning across our education systems, and to shift the purpose, principles, and practices guiding them.

03 The concept of developing students as 'leaders of a better future' is at the core of the vision that unites the Teach For All network. The concept is expanded in *Teaching as Collective Leadership*, a framework developed by Teach For All's Global Learning Lab for Classroom Impact to support organizations across the Teach For All network in their teacher leadership development efforts.

We need to change the wider ecosystem around children, not just the school system

Moreover, it is not only the formal education system, but a broader ecosystem of influences around children that determines whether they learn, lead, and ultimately fulfill their potential. Societal structures, cultural norms, economic conditions, and community environments all play critical roles in shaping the lives of young people. Yet, too often, efforts to improve student learning focus narrowly on what happens in the classroom. Instead, efforts to transform education must target both improvements in teaching and learning within classrooms and the development of supportive community and societal ecosystems that nurture students' growth, amplify their voices, and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement. In line with the RISE Programme's finding in Focus to Flourish that "learning for all requires all for learning," this means that systemic change requires a societal or community-wide commitment to the shared purpose of learning, and collaboration between schools, families, communities, and policymakers to dismantle barriers, create enabling conditions, and work in coherent, collaborative, and aligned ways to achieve change.

"We've been able to get better at some of the technical pieces. We've been able to get more kids in school. We've got more teachers going to school more regularly. But the needle has barely moved when it comes to learning outcomes."

Khadija Bakhtiar, CEO, Teach For Pakistan

Unlocking progress in transforming education requires systems thinking

Despite good intentions, many initiatives fail to bring about this sustainable system change because they primarily address only the visible elements of the wider system, such as resources, policies, and metrics, while leaving intact more fundamental elements of the system, such as mindsets, beliefs, and the distribution of power, intact. This lack of systems thinking and a lack of consideration of the larger systems surrounding young people often leads to false conclusions about the causes of the system's challenges. Programs that fix singular elements can improve learning outcomes, but without considering the wider system, they are likely to be limited in their impact. Education transformation that leads to sustainable system change needs to understand, address, and be coherent with the full array of the system's deeper culture and structures. Marla Spivack from the rise Directorate summarizes this challenge: "All too often, programmes designed to address one of these symptoms [e.g., student dropout or teacher motivation] are implemented faithfully, and yet fail to improve learning outcomes. When a programme fails to have the desired impact, it is tempting to look for a devil in the details, some aspect of programme design or execution that could be tweaked to produce better performance. But often the devil is in the system, not in the details. The programme failed not because of a design flaw, but because of its overall incoherence with the rest of the education system."

There are multiple leverage points for transforming the systems around children

This realization leads us to the question: What are the ways to bring about change in a complex system to transform education so that all students can grow as leaders? In response, many of those working globally to transform education draw on the work of theorist Donella Meadows (Spivack, 2021; Sengeh & Winthrop, 2022). An environmental scientist, Meadows understood that complex human systems, like natural ecosystems, have an in-built capacity for adaptation to superficial changes, which are absorbed without fundamental shifts to the system. These deeper shifts can only be achieved through system "leverage points"—key places in a system where "a small change in one thing can produce big changes in another"(Meadows, 1999). Over five years of learning and research across the Teach For All network, engagement with the latest perspectives from our colleagues in the global education community, and through the nine case studies developed for this report, we have have identified what we perceive to be the set of critical leverage points for system change in education:

SYSTEM ATTRIBUTE	LEVERAGE POINT
Purpose Shifts in the goals, beliefs, and values orienting the system	**Paradigms** organize actors in the system into patterns of thinking, doing, and being. Transcending a particular education paradigm and being able to consider multiple alternative paradigms is a key driver of system transformation.
	Mindsets are the shared set of beliefs, underlying assumptions, and thought patterns of actors within the system that determine how they approach achieving the purpose of the system, or their individual purpose.[04]
	Goals or desired outcomes of the system refer to the shared objectives towards which actors in the system are working. This shared direction fosters commitment, coordination, and system resilience that endures over time.[05]
Power Shifts in how power is shared and exercised across the system	**Agency** is the ability to influence the distribution of resources, opportunities, and decision-making in the system. It means acting rather than being acted upon and shaping rather than being shaped.[06]
	Trust is the critical intangible thread between stakeholders that enables effective collaboration, communication, and cooperation within a system. It is built on a foundation of strong interpersonal relationships between people.[07]
	Collaboration is more than a technical process of connecting projects, but the creation of structures that strengthen purpose, trust, and power, the ability to take coordinated shared action, and to continuously learn and adapt together.[08]

04 Global research by Big Change, RewirED, Teach For All, HundrED, OECD, and others points out that transformation requires a new mindset, with all actors—educators, students, parents, communities, and peers—thinking differently about: purpose—the goals and outcomes of education; power—expanding who has voice and agency in education; and practice—unlocking innovation that has transformative potential; that works with all actors of a system.

05 RISE shares how a consensus-based commitment to the purpose of learning is a critical missing link in addressing the learning crisis. RISE found that shared purpose was a driver of progress in Brazil, Vietnam, and Tanzania. Other research corroborates the importance of purpose for system change. For example, the Center for Universal Education at Brookings published a policy brief arguing system change "must entail a fresh review of the goals of your system" and develop a broadly shared vision and purpose.

06 The System Innovation Initiative by ROCKWOOL Foundation has identified power as one of the four keys to unlock system innovation, alongside purpose, relationships, and resource flows.

07 While there is no single study that comprehensively covers the role of trust and relationships in system change, there are various examples and studies that highlight their significance. In Ontario, Canada, the implementation of the Ontario Literacy and Numeracy Strategy serves as an example of the role of trust in system change. The strategy aimed to improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy by implementing province-wide initiatives. Research by Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, and LeMahieu (2015) examined the turnaround efforts of Chicago Public Schools. They found that trust building among district leadership, principals, teachers, and community stakeholders was essential for successful system change.

SYSTEM ATTRIBUTE	LEVERAGE POINT
Learning Shifts in interactions within the system	**Reflection** is the mechanism through which adaptations to the system are triggered and sustained. It is most effective when it is iterative, inclusive, and rooted in relevant data, with multiple actors involved.[09]
	Feedback is the mechanism through which the system generates relevant information on the performance of the system, based on relevant measures, regular and reliable generation of data, and the analysis of that data.[10]
	Innovation includes the development and implementation of novel ideas, approaches, and solutions to address complex challenges within a system. It involves introducing new concepts, technologies, processes, or strategies.
Delivery Shifts in practices, infrastructure, and resources	**Practices** are the approaches of actors across the system to curriculum design, teaching practice, teacher training and recruitment, learning assessment, school accountability, family engagement, governance, and other similar topics.[11]
	Infrastructure refers to the physical infrastructure of an education system through which teaching and learning take place. This includes things like teaching and support staff, classrooms and schools, computers and books.
	Resources are the financial inputs into an education system that are determined by local or national governments. While a sufficient allocation of resources is critical to the education system, spending does not correlate with learning.[12]

These leverage points are interconnected, which means a holistic approach is required

While shifts in any one of these leverage points can contribute to a change in the dynamics and outcomes of the system, Meadows developed a framework that ranks these leverage points according to their potential power to change a system and their ease of implementation, which has been adapted and adopted by RISE, A New Education Story, and the Center for Universal Education at Brookings. Meadows notes that we often overlook a system's most powerful leverage points, such as the purpose or culture of the system, which could profoundly impact the system, albeit that these are also the most difficult aspects of a system to shift. Moreover, she points out that these leverage points are interconnected, with interventions in the system having knock-on effects elsewhere—so innovations might prompt mindset shifts, and learning can inform practice. Successful system change efforts respond to this interconnectedness by adopting a holistic approach to change that seeks to tackle multiple leverage points at the same time. Though Meadows's framework helps us visualize these leverage points, it falls short in providing

08 The Global Education Leaders Partnership, Dream a Dream, and the Learning Planet Institute (2023) identified building sophisticated collaboration (creating horizontal and vertical linkages across the system) as one of the key strategies for developing learning ecosystems in the Global South. Evidence from the Global North (UK/USA) includes: Putting collective impact in context: A review of the literature on local cross-sector collaboration to improve education (Henig *et al.*, Columbia University, 2015). Collaboration and collective impact: how can funders, NGOs and governments achieve more together? (Mulgan, NESTA, 2016).

09 "Adapt what you adopt as you implement" is one of five key actions to transform education systems outlined by RISE in Focus to Flourish: Five Actions to Accelerate Progress in Learning (Pritchett, Newman, Silberstein, 2022).

10 The Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF, and others argue that measuring the impact of new policies is critical for building stronger and more equitable education systems. With reliable data, policymakers, school managers, teachers, and communities can identify problems, pose solutions, and direct resources where they are most needed. A New Education Story identifies "make data and information more accessible, useful, and interesting to stakeholders" as one of the actions to expand who has voice and agency.

11 In Transforming Education Systems: Why, What, And How, the Center for Universal Education at Brookings establishes the importance of (re) designing teaching and learning experiences to ensure students achieve the system's goals as one crucial step in system transformation. Moreover, global research by Big Change, RewirED, Teach For All, and others, identified practice to be one of the three levers for transforming systems.

12 Rebecca Winthrop, Senior Fellow and Director at the Center for Universal Education at Brookings argues that transforming systems so that they address the deep gaps in equity and relevance requires a participatory policy-making approach that puts those inside the system at the center.

guidance on how to push them. The experience of Teach For All network leaders suggests that a holistic approach can be developed through investing in people.

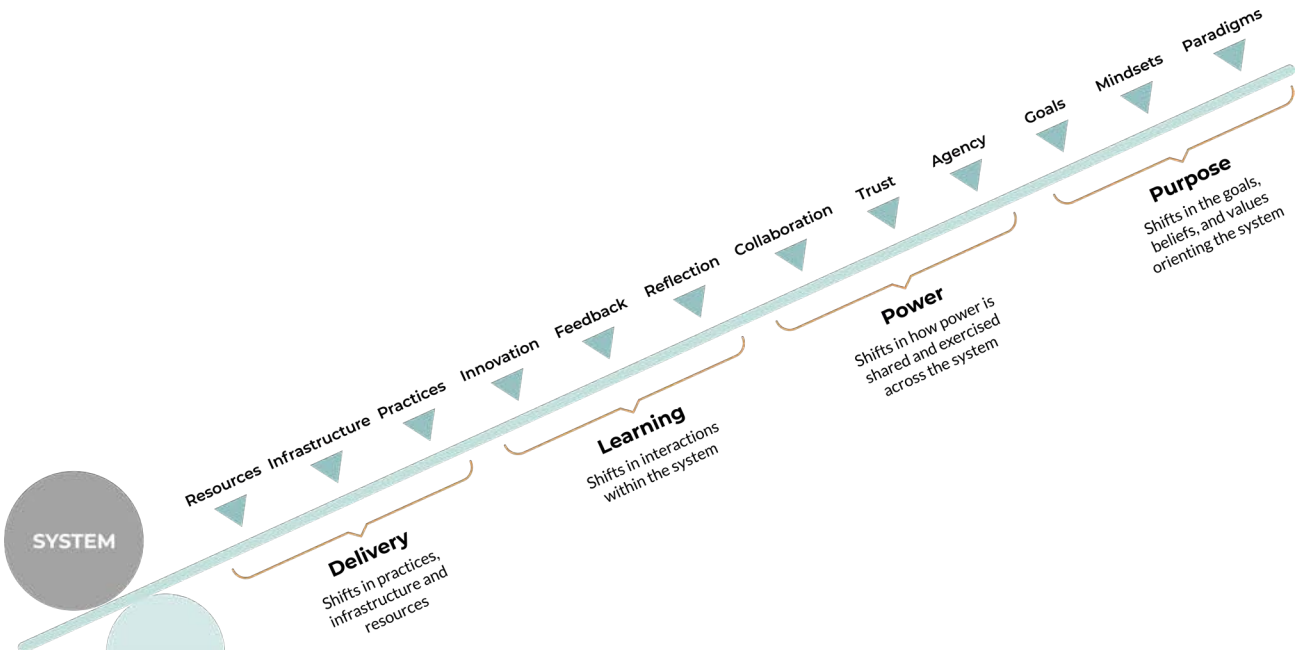


Figure 1: System Leverage Points.

In order to change systems holistically, we need to develop collective leadership

The prevailing international development paradigm targets improvements in educational outcomes through scaling evidence-based technical solutions. Yet while the implementation of policies, programs, technologies, and classroom practices that have been proven effective elsewhere may lead to some improvements in learning, the experience of our network suggests that, taken alone, this approach is insufficient to achieve systemic change. Equally critical are efforts to shift purpose, power and learning within the system – which result from people with shared purpose, throughout the ecosystem around children, exercising agency and leadership, with the relationships and rituals to learn together and continuously improve over time. In other words, it requires developing what we call 'collective leadership'. In order to transform systems, we must therefore balance investments in new solutions and policies with parallel investments in the development of people—individuals, groups, organizations, and networks. These efforts should be interconnected and mutually reinforcing, forming a dynamic interplay that propels meaningful change.

> *"If we really believe that purpose is a fundamental part of a fulfilling individual human life, we shouldn't be surprised when rigorous research shows purpose is also really central to having meaningful education systems and meaningful societies."*
>
> *Yue-Yi Hwa, Research Fellow, RISE Programme*

As the double helix of DNA intertwines two complementary strands to create life, so our hypothesis suggests that the twin strands of policy and people intertwine to enable education transformation.

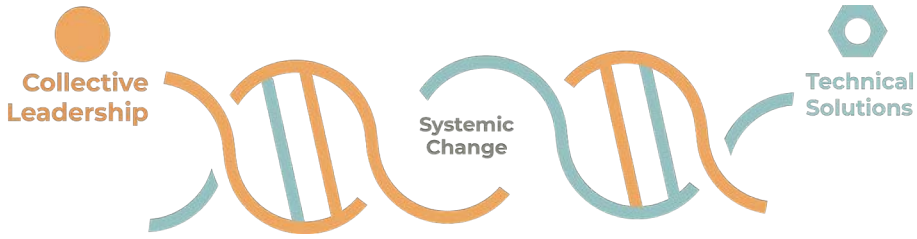
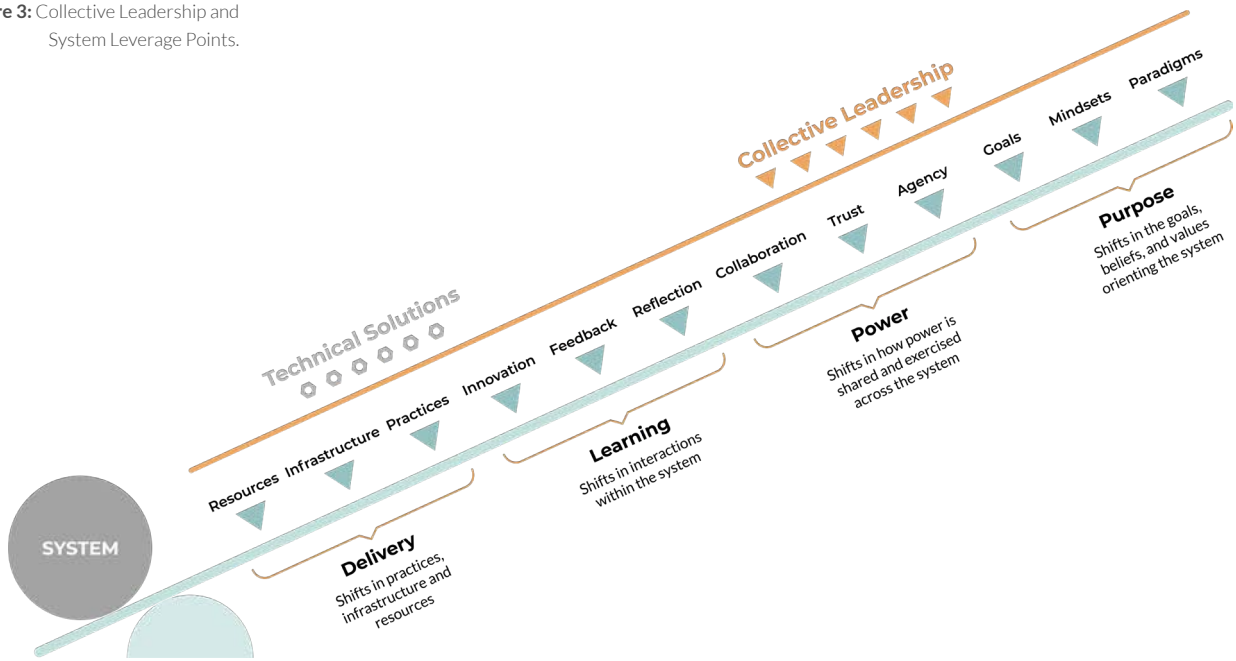


Figure 2: Collective leadership and technical solutions enable systemic change.

On the one hand, structural changes, innovative approaches, new evidence-based practices, and reforms in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, infrastructure, and policies bring technical fixes to the education system. On the other, individuals, groups, organizations, and networks bring purpose, direction, energy, coherence, and capacity for learning and growth to create the enabling conditions across the wider ecosystem for those fixes to take root. Our paradigm holds that the interplay of these two strands is critical and that, in order to change systems, we need to make significant parallel investment in developing people at all levels of the system—and specifically in developing their collective leadership.

Figure 3: Collective Leadership and System Leverage Points.



What is Collective Leadership?

"Transformation requires work deep within the system. It is a deeply human endeavor. It requires understanding the forces at the heart of education systems, to name and challenge those that cause systems to resist change, despite frequent, well planned, and richly resourced attempts to deliver it."

A New Education Story: Three Drivers to Transform Education Systems

Collective leadership is cited by the Education Commission as one of three critical enablers of education transformation (Education Commission, 2022).[13] But what is it? A recent review of the evidence on collective leadership for sustainable development commissioned by the People First Community, a cross-sectoral and globally diverse group of practitioners, academics, and public and private sector actors, defines collective leadership as "a group of people (a 'collective') making meaning together so they can find direction and coordinate their interdependent actions to achieve a socially useful outcome that each would not have produced on their own." (Arkedis *et al.*, 2023)[14] The report emphasizes that collective leadership happens when people who themselves have experienced the inequities being tackled work together alongside their allies, across lines of difference, and across whole ecosystems, exerting leadership and learning constantly towards the purpose of sustainable development.

13 Education Commission (2022), Rewiring Education for People and Planet.

14 Arkedis, J. *et al.* (2023), Collective Leadership for Sustainable Development: Evidence from Research and Practice.

Characteristics of collective leadership for transforming education

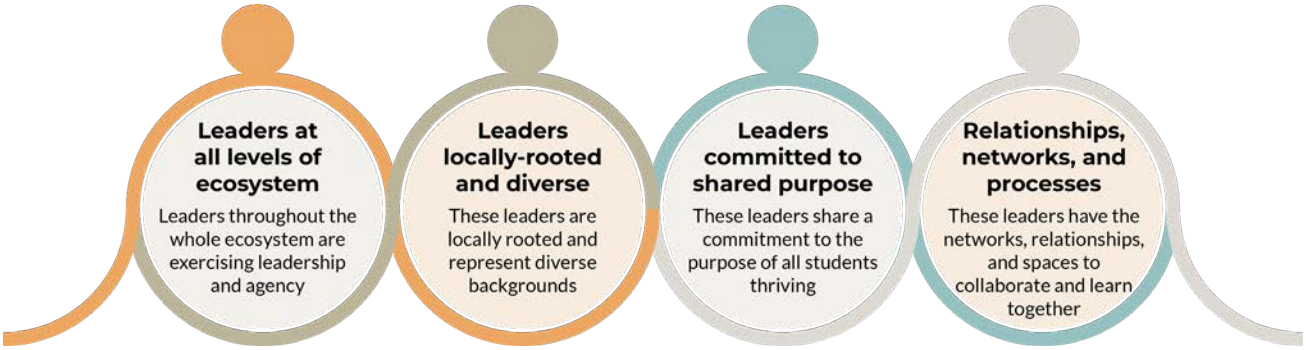


Figure 4: Characteristics of collective leadership.

In our own research and learning across the Teach For All network, we identify four common features of ecosystems where collective leadership is driving change. They include:

- Stakeholders throughout the whole ecosystem are exercising leadership and agency.
- These leaders share a commitment to the purpose of all students thriving.
- These leaders are locally rooted and represent diverse backgrounds.
- These leaders have the capacities, relationships, networks, and spaces to collaborate and learn together.

- **Stakeholders throughout the whole ecosystem are exercising leadership and agency.** While significant focus in the global effort to transform education is rightly placed on understanding the leadership required of policymakers, school leaders, and teachers, examples from our network demonstrate that the collective leadership both of these actors and of a wider ecosystem of students, parents, civil society leaders, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders is critical. Successful collective leadership efforts are built on an understanding that agency is not only exercised by those with formal authority, but also by a wider collective.

> *"Systems change can only move at the speed of trust."*
>
> *Tarun Cherukuri, CEO, Indus Action*

Snapshot: Transforming Education in Delhi

In Delhi, India, for example, a 10-year-long effort to transform education has resulted in significant shifts in purpose, culture, spending, and infrastructure across the Delhi public schools system, which are showing promising signs of contributing to improved attendance and test scores, as well as orienting the system towards a more holistic set of learning aims (Aiyar *et al.*, 2021). While the Delhi government has been a key player in this progress, a much wider set of stakeholders have also made important contributions as part of a collective effort to transform the system: Pratham brought its expertise in Teaching at the Right Level to develop the capacity of Delhi teachers; Dream a Dvream infused the system with a strong orientation towards a new happiness curriculum; Indus Action mobilized students and parents in the most marginalized communities to advocate for their right to education, and access free places in private schools; School Management Committees, made up of boards of local parents, were given a greater say; and the current party of government itself came to power through a grassroots anti-corruption movement, meaning the spark for transformation was a critical mass of people exercising their collective agency to bring about change. Meanwhile, Teach For India supplied a pipeline of hundreds of leaders into government, school leadership, teaching, and the NGO sector in Delhi, with its alumni including Anurag Kundu, who chaired the Delhi Commission for the Rights of the Child, Parinita Jain, who co-founded Alohomora Education Foundation, and Tarun Cherukuri, founder and CEO of Indus Action, among many others.

- **These leaders share a commitment to the purpose of all students thriving.** Experience from our network suggests that it is equally critical that the stakeholders who are exercising leadership and agency throughout the ecosystem are purpose driven and working in pursuit of social justice. Collective efforts are most effective when groups of stakeholders are working towards a clear shared purpose that is locally rooted and has been collectively developed in order to tackle a common challenge.

Snapshot: The London Schools Turnaround

In London, UK, there has been a remarkable turnaround over the past two decades in the city's schools (Baars et al., 2014). Twenty years ago, in terms of student learning for students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, there was nowhere worse in the UK to attend school. Today, children in London from disadvantaged backgrounds outperform their wealthier peers in other parts of the country. This dramatic turnaround is the result of a collective effort by a community of purpose-driven leaders committed to social justice. It began at the turn of the century with the inauguration of the London Challenge, a collaborative effort between government, business, and civil society to turn around London's most underperforming schools, which also included the launch of Teach First in 2002. This coalition was motivated by a shared commitment to improving the quality of education in the capital to ensure that all students, whatever their background, had access to a great education. Since then, Teach First has recruited and developed more than 6,500 purpose-driven leaders to work in London schools, with more than 1,000 Teach First alumni now serving in senior or middle leadership positions in the city's schools. In addition, these leaders have founded and run some of the city's most outstanding schools, occupy some of the most senior positions of education policy-making, run the country's biggest teacher training institutions, have created the most successful and far-reaching digital education platform, and have launched social enterprises in the social care, youth work, and criminal justice sectors, transforming the culture and purpose of education in London.

- **These leaders are locally rooted and represent diverse backgrounds.** The third characteristic of collective leadership is that it includes a broad group of people from diverse backgrounds within the local ecosystem, including both those who have experienced the inequities being addressed and those who have more privilege or access to power. While some approaches to transformation are implicitly rooted in the notion that system change is achieved from the top down through the actions of people in positions of power, others hold that system

change can only come from an inclusive grassroots effort by teachers, students, parents, and other allies. The experience of our network suggests that we need to take both a top-down and bottom-up approach simultaneously. Transforming education requires the collective leadership both of those who have experienced inequities and of those with more privilege and/or access to power.

Snapshot: Teach For Cambodia's Alumni Network

In Cambodia, alumni from the Teach For Cambodia program, which launched in 2018, are already occupying positions of significant influence within the Cambodian education ecosystem, managing large-scale development projects in partnership with the Cambodian government, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and others. Critically, these alumni leaders have all spent two years teaching the students who their new programs and policies are being designed to serve. Even more critically, while some of these alumni leaders are drawn from more privileged backgrounds, others share the same socio-economic and cultural backgrounds as their students, with these diverse and locally rooted perspectives informing their system change efforts. Those leaders who themselves have experienced the inequities that are being addressed are typically more personally invested in truly achieving that aim, and so bring new purpose to their work alongside those from more privileged backgrounds who typically work in government.

- **These leaders have the capacities, relationships, networks, and spaces to collaborate and learn together.** Finally, collective leadership entails that relationships, networks, and trust exist between these diverse, purpose-driven leaders working throughout the system. These connections enable them to work together effectively and coherently, and to engage in shared learning about the progress being made, which informs adaptations to their approach.

Snapshot: Enseña Perú's Efecto Áncash

In Huari, in the Peruvian Andes, Enseña Perú launched Efecto Áncash in 2017 with the aim of mobilizing a whole-system approach to improve the learning and wellbeing of the region's 6,800 students. The process began with the establishment of a formal collective impact initiative between Enseña Perú, the local Ministry of Education, and Antamina, a mining company with significant investments in the region. From there, the Enseña Perú team recruited dozens of leaders to teach in the region, beginning a years-long process of building trust between their organization and the wider community of officials, school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and local people throughout the region. Central to this effort was the development of a set of processes for strengthening collaboration and learning among these stakeholders. Annually, a three-day public gathering called "Ayni" would bring together hundreds of these stakeholders for public meetings to reflect on the purpose of education in the region, each person's role in it, and what progress was being made. Additionally, each year Enseña Perú surveyed more than a thousand parents and teachers, bringing the survey responses to inform reflections in the meetings. Over time, the data available to the community grew, with Enseña Perú and the Ministry bringing in a university partner to evaluate student learning and wellbeing. The shared culture and processes of learning have been a critical factor in the success of Efecto Áncash: external evaluations show it to have had a statistically significant effect on improving student learning in the region (Lavado *et al.*, 2021).

"I have become convinced that putting power in the hands of students to drive their own purpose in education is one of the most important changes in education during our time."

Franco Mosso, CEO, Enseña Perú

Moreover, it is the simultaneous interplay of all four of these characteristics of collective leadership that best generates the shared purpose and shared momentum across the ecosystem that serves as the fertile ground to enable the successful development and implementation of more technical solutions. This means that the process of collective leadership development is complex and results from a variety of parallel interventions, which we outline below.

How Is Collective Leadership Developed?

"When you work with local people to create a shared understanding of the type of change that you want to see in the community, where our own idea and the idea of the community can come together to create a shared vision, then that allows you to become more effective in implementing that vision. That vision becomes the vision of the community you are working with."

Shisir Khanal, former CEO of Teach For Nepal

Collective leadership can emerge organically within systems, but it can also be developed intentionally.[15] In close partnership with other local stakeholders, Teach For All network partners explicitly seek to develop collective leadership in the local communities and national systems where they work in order to complement more technical interventions and reforms. In doing so, they aim to: increase the number of leaders with shared purpose, vision, and values taking up key roles across the system; develop people's capacity to do collective work across the system; build strong relationships and trust that enable collaboration; and create participatory spaces and processes for reflection, action, and learning—or, in short, grow the capacity, connectedness, and collaboration of people across the ecosystem.

15 See, for example, the evidence synthesized on collective leadership in social movements in Arkedis *et al.*, 2023.

Strategies to develop collective leadership

In the evidence review on collective leadership commissioned by the People First Community, three strategies were identified as key to developing collective leadership for sustainable development: cohort-based fellowship programs to develop leadership capacity; network-building activities to strengthen connectedness; and efforts to convene stakeholders and facilitate dialogue. While these findings resonate with the experience of Teach For All network partner organizations, our own research for this report identified four distinct strategies employed by those organizations to develop collective leadership to transform education at the local or national level. They are:

- Recruiting a pipeline of diverse people with the potential to lead throughout the ecosystem.
- Developing the purpose, values, vision, and leadership capacity of people in the system.
- Connecting people through relationship-building and networks.
- Convening people to develop shared approaches to taking action, learning, and adapting.

Recruiting a pipeline of diverse people with the potential to lead throughout

Insights: Recruit

- Recruit diverse cohorts to strengthen the representativeness and sustainability of collective leadership in the ecosystem.
- Leverage sophisticated competency-based assessments to select purpose-driven participants with the requisite leadership potential.
- Utilize the matriculation process to immerse candidates in the realities of the local ecosystem.
- Sustain recruitment over time in a given ecosystem to build a critical mass of leaders as a foundation for system change efforts.

Core to the work of all Teach For All network partner organizations is the recruitment of diverse, talented people, typically early in their careers, to a two-year fellowship in which they work as teachers in classrooms serving their country's more marginalized students. This intervention brings into the sector

people who would not otherwise have considered a career in education, who then, following the fellowship, overwhelmingly pursue careers as leaders working in different roles across the ecosystem around children to bring about systemic change. Teach For All network partners have recruited more than 100,000 of these leaders across more than 60 countries to date, with 72 % of those leaders continuing to work or study to expand opportunities for children and/or improve the quality of life in underserved communities, according to the latest data gathered by Teach For All. Responding to contextual needs and opportunities, organizations in our network make thoughtful choices about who to recruit, how many people to recruit, and where in the system to direct their efforts.

Network Snapshot: Recruit

When it launched in 2002, Teach First primarily focused on the recruitment of top graduates from elite universities who would go on to occupy positions of power within the system, but now aspires to recruit a much greater proportion of teachers who represent the diverse backgrounds of the children they serve. Similarly, Enseña por México is experimenting with recruiting fellows in the Yucatan region who share the same indigenous backgrounds as the students they will be teaching, and 48% of Teach For America's current cohort identify as black, indigenous, or people of color, and 59% report that they come from a low-income background. Meanwhile, Teach For Pakistan and Teach For Nigeria are experimenting with approaches to dramatically scale up the number of fellows that they recruit, and Teach for the Philippines purposefully recruits fellows with the potential to go on to work in roles in policy and politics, who it then supports through a third-year fellowship. All of these recruitment choices are made with the intention of changing the composition of actors in the system, whether to deepen community connection and sustainability, grow a critical mass, bring new purpose to the system, or funnel purpose-driven leaders towards positions of influence.

Developing the purpose, values, vision, and leadership capacity of people in the system

Insights: Develop

- Develop a deep sense of purpose in all participants to work to ensure all students grow as leaders.
- Incorporate system leadership development opportunities within the delivery of teacher training and professional development.
- Deliberately cultivate specific leadership mindsets and capacities rooted in local needs and opportunities.
- Strengthen alumni leadership through specialist platforms and programs that are also rooted in context.
- Leverage the leadership of alumni to develop the capacity of other stakeholders in the system.

A further important strategy is the purposeful development of collective leadership mindsets and capacities in people throughout the ecosystem. For Teach For All network partner organizations, the primary focus is on developing the collective leadership of participants and alumni, both during the two-year teaching fellowship—through intensive pre-service and ongoing professional development programs, including extensive teacher coaching—and through support provided to alumni beyond those first two years. For our network partners, the core of this leadership development approach is an understanding of teaching as collective leadership, meaning that fellows are purposefully developing both their excellence as teachers, and their orientation, lenses, and capabilities as system leaders.

The specific approaches to participant development vary across the network, with network partner organizations making choices about program design and delivery that are deeply rooted in contextual opportunities and needs, and which are closely aligned to the specific purpose towards which they are working. At the same time, these programs have many common elements. All of the 100,000 leaders in the Teach For All network have gone through an initial intensive training program to prepare them for their two-year teaching fellowship, and all are supported by teacher coaches who provide more tailored support throughout their two-year fellowship. The majority of participants also have opportunities to participate in a range of other ongoing professional development opportunities, ranging from those focused on teaching practice to those aiming to develop other collective leadership mindsets and capacities.

Network Snapshot: Develop

While developing fellows as exceptional teachers, Teach For Cambodia's two-year fellowship also includes modules on healing trauma to help fellows to come to terms with the impacts of the country's history on themselves and their communities, as well as a master's program in partnership with a university that trains the fellows in public policy and system leadership

in order to prepare them for effective roles in government. Independent research from Teach For America, Enseña Chile, Enseña por México, and Teach For India has shown the programs have a significant impact on the mindsets, beliefs, and career trajectories of participants compared to similar applicants who were not accepted to the programs. Some network partners also run fellowships designed to develop the leadership capacity of others in the ecosystem, including students, parents, traditional teachers, and school leaders. These include, among others, Teach For India's Kids Education Revolution, Anseye Pou Ayiti's Parent and School Leader cohorts in Haiti, and the work of several network partners in Sub-Saharan Africa to train existing government school teachers in partnership with ProFuturo.

TEACHING AS COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Teaching As Collective Leadership (TACL) is an actionable and locally customizable framework for teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers to grow students as leaders of a better future for themselves, for their communities, and for all of us. It is used by all Teach For All network partners to guide the choices that they make about the leadership development of their teachers.

Figure 5: Teaching as Collective Leadership framework.

Teaching As Collective Leadership was developed by Teach For All's Global Learning Lab, which hosted thousands of "virtual visits" to transformational classrooms around the world. Participants in those experiences identified the patterns they saw in those classrooms and communities where students seem to be growing as leaders of a better future. The Teaching As Collective Leadership framework emerged from these insights.

Connecting people through relationship-building and networks

Insights: Connect

- Facilitate ongoing connections among alumni to strengthen personal relationships, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects.
- Connect alumni beyond their network and the organization with key actors of the system.
- Develop the capacity of all participants and alumni to engage deeply and authentically with community members.

Building and strengthening networks among diverse leaders can lead people and organizations to work together who might not otherwise have collaborated. Networks are critical to handling the adaptive challenge of system change and, when built around trust and authentic personal relationships, can enhance shared purpose and coherence and create structures and processes for collaboration, information sharing, and resource mobilization which multiply the efforts of individual organizations. Teach For All network partners invest in developing these networks among fellows and alumni, as well as among actors across the wider local or national ecosystem. During the two-year leadership development program, regular spaces are created for the purpose of fostering personal connections through storytelling, shared experiences, or celebrations. Connections continue to be cultivated beyond the completion of the two-year program, with annual gatherings of alumni in festivals of learning, weekend retreats, or evening social events. In some contexts, fellows are also trained in the practices of network development, community organizing, or storytelling, with care taken to build cohort culture during these experiences. At the level of the wider ecosystem, leaders within the network are also trained and empowered to prioritize interpersonal one-to-one relationship-building with students, parents, teachers, and other community stakeholders as a foundation to their efforts in classrooms and systems, with great emphasis placed on doing so authentically and in a spirit of true allyship.

"Our communities need to lead the way. We are all responsible for education and what it does to all young people. I like to use the word co-conspire, not empower, as that implies that others are giving power. They already have it."

Michelle Johansson, Ako Mãtãtupu

Network Snapshot: Connect

In Delhi, Teach For India seeks to ensure that all members of its wider community, whether teachers, students, or alumni, have their own "Tribe of 20"—a diverse group of supporters who know one another deeply and support each other, and who can also reflect on progress and take action as a group. Teach For India also employed "network aggregators" in Delhi, hiring individuals responsible for fostering connections among diverse actors in different regions of the city, and hosted weekly "durbars"—open storytelling spaces in which anyone can come to tell and hear stories, making personal connections in the process. Teach For India's network in Delhi numbers in the thousands and includes senior government ministers, student leaders, nonprofit CEOs, parents, donors, and government school teachers.

Convening people to develop shared approaches to taking action, learning, and adapting

Insights: Convene

- Engage in contextual vision setting and the construction of new narratives.
- Align actors across the ecosystem around a common purpose.
- Grow the agency and capacity of stakeholders throughout the ecosystem.
- Establish system-wide approaches to collective action.
- Develop collaborative partnerships with system leaders

Building on the foundations of a critical mass of connected leaders across the ecosystem, a further strategy aimed at growing collective leadership involves one or more organizations bringing together groups of actors across an ecosystem to build shared purpose, identify common challenges, envision possibilities and solutions, and take action together. Once established, these collectives then engage in ongoing processes of participatory inquiry, in which they evaluate the success of their shared strategy and make adaptations to the approach informed by a combination of deep contextual understanding, shared experience, and global insight. In order to enable inclusive and effective participation, efforts may be made to build the capacity of diverse actors in the group—such as students, parents, and teachers—in areas such as data analysis, action learning, problem-solving, and critical consciousness.

> *"It's about bringing together the whole community to work together to define the change that's required."*
>
> *Graeme Duncan, Right to Succeed*

Network Snapshot: Convene

Teach For All network partners and alumni are increasingly playing a convening role in system change. As part of the Efecto Áncash, Enseña Perú brought together the local ministry of education, a mining company, and a huge, diverse network of stakeholders across the region through its trust-building efforts and "Ayni" gatherings. Similarly, Teach For Bulgaria has played this role at a national level over the past decade, running annual conferences for senior researchers and policymakers to reflect on the state of Bulgarian education and the latest global lessons, and convening projects along with funders and senior stakeholders in government to connect "pockets of purpose" within the system and establish system-wide priorities around improving teacher training and school leadership. Elsewhere, Enseña Chile's *Colegios Que Aprenden* (Schools That Learn) project works directly with school or local ministry teams in 17 of Chile's 70 administrative regions. *Colegios Que Aprenden* brings together diverse stakeholder teams at the school or community level and leads them through a participatory form of inquiry about the progress of student learning, its root causes, and solutions for improving learning, seeking to establish across the group a shared culture, processes, and data to support ongoing learning. Similarly, in Tulsipur, Nepal, in 2018 Teach For Nepal carried out the first ever ASER-style assessment of student learning in the state, enabling their collaboration using that to work with diverse stakeholders across the region to establish a comprehensive action plan for improving learning locally.

Understood together, these complementary interventions for collective leadership development show how collective leadership isn't simply a concept, but the product of a set of system-wide practices.

Figure 6: Approaches to collective leadership development to change. Systems.

What Is the Role of Collective Leadership in System Change?

"We have to develop that critical authentic hope in young people that tells them that you can make change and that we're all in this together. And so our [work must build] around that idea, understanding how society works, how do you play that game, and change that game? And what skills do you need in order to do that?"

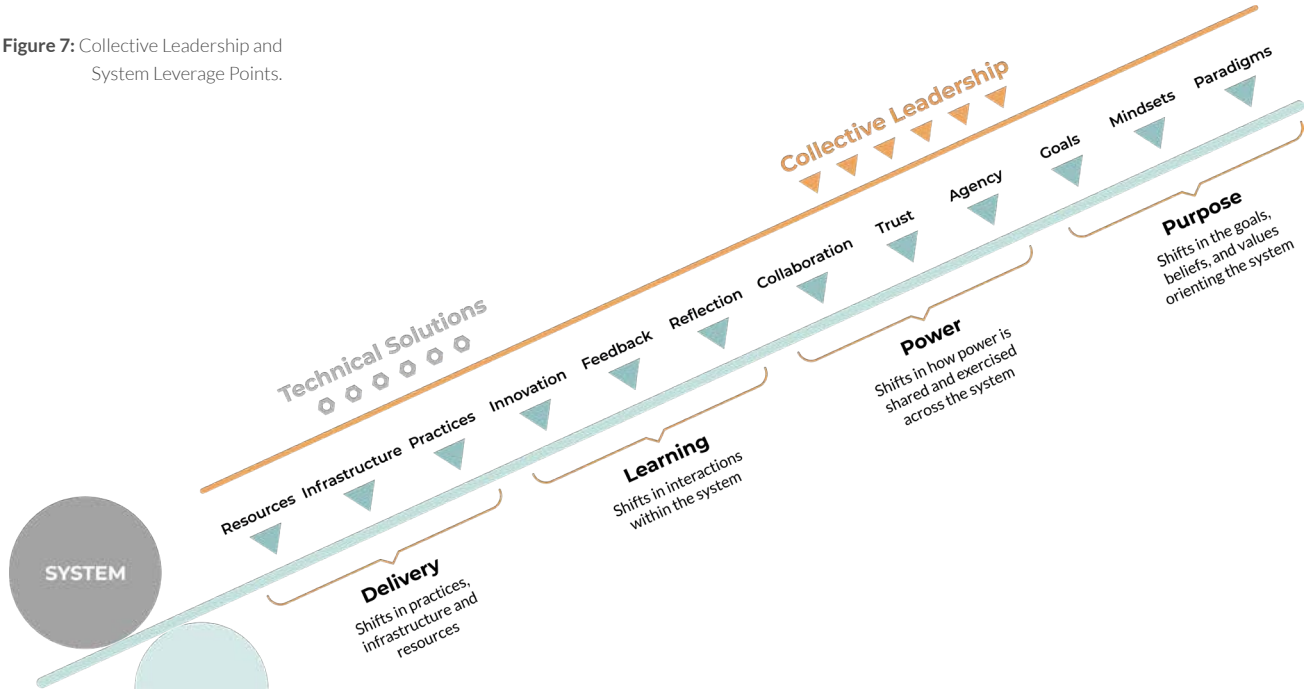
Ann Milne, former Kia Aroha Principal, New Zealand

The experience of the Teach For All network suggests that by fostering a critical mass of diverse leaders who share purpose and values, collaborate across various levels, and embrace diverse avenues for change, collective leadership development increases the likelihood of system transformation. First, collective leadership impacts the points of highest leverage within a system, such as purpose, power, and learning, while technical interventions target points of lower leverage, such as policies and practices. Second, through the coordinated actions of diverse leaders working at all levels of an ecosystem towards a shared purpose, multiple system leverage points are targeted simultaneously and holistically. Third, the inclusion of many diverse actors representing multiple voices, experiences, and perspectives, means both that collective efforts are more likely to hit their target by challenging systemic inequities, biases, and assumptions that may hinder progress toward equity, and that a larger mass of leaders will be involved in the effort to bring about change, increasing the likelihood of sustaining that change.

Developing collective leadership to catalyze systemic change in education

Collective leadership development is therefore a key strategy for transforming education. But while there is extensive global evidence about the impact of practices, policies, and other technical solutions at a system level, there is little research on this topic. A recent report commissioned by the People First Community found "a growing body of evidence documenting the critical role of local actors—people working within systems—in driving development outcomes across a range of key sectors, including economic development,

Figure 7: Collective Leadership and System Leverage Points.



government, education, and health" (Arkedis *et al.*, 2023, p. 9). Meanwhile, preliminary findings from a forthcoming study suggest that Teach For America's long-term strategy of developing a critical mass of collective leadership across whole school districts, cities, and regions in the United States has had a positive impact on student outcomes at scale. Beyond this, the experiences of the Teach For All network partners suggest that collective leadership development can change systems in different ways:

- Collective leadership development to shift purpose.
- Collective leadership development to redistribute power.
- Collective leadership development to strengthen learning.
- Collective leadership development to improve delivery.

- **Collective leadership development to shift purpose.** The recruitment and development of a critical mass of purpose-driven leaders within a system can have a profound effect on the mindsets and beliefs of others in the system. As Teach For All network partners recruit and develop leaders over time, and connect them to one another, a movement emerges that extends throughout the system. The energy and capacity to work with others to make change, the connections forged with other leaders, the mindsets and paradigms that shape their worldview and sense of purpose and possibility can inspire others. Many partner organizations build on this foundation by explicitly involving multiple diverse actors in shared processes to collectively redefine the purpose the system is working towards. This can result in the orientation of systems towards a purpose that better reflects local challenges and opportunities, and which is more clearly rooted in the values of all stakeholders involved.

Snapshot: Teach For Armenia

Teach For Armenia's work to simultaneously recruit and develop alumni leaders to bring new purpose and energy to all levels of the national system and to develop partnerships at multiple levels of government has contributed to a wider shift in mindsets across the system, leading to new awareness and greater urgency nationally to tackle educational inequity.

- **Collective leadership development to redistribute power.** The recruitment, development, and connection of diverse people as agents of change can impact power dynamics over time. Across the Teach For All network, many partner organizations recruit a significant proportion of participants from low income, indigenous, or other marginalized backgrounds, so that over time these leaders occupy a growing share of positions of influence in the system. These leaders also bring their own social networks, enabling them to lift others' voices, change who exercises power, and restructure the system to better serve all students. Moreover, some organizations also develop their participants and alumni to be able to strengthen trust and connection among diverse actors within the system, laying the foundations for meaningful collaboration. In this way, power can be more effectively shared and exercised in the interests of those students and communities whom the system has historically underserved.

Snapshot: Anseye Pou Ayiti

Anseye Pou Ayiti prioritizes recruiting participants from within its partner communities in Haiti who share backgrounds with the students they serve. Anseye Pou Ayiti recently expanded its programming to develop parents and school leaders as well, with the aim of building diverse movements of civic leaders with the power to enact change.

"We need to spread our efforts to have systems that learn."

Tomás Recart, CEO Enseña Chile

- **Collective leadership development to strengthen learning.** A system's capacity to learn and adapt can be strengthened by increasing the supply of diverse leaders within the system who understand the importance of collective learning and adaptation as a driver of systemic change, and who have the knowledge, skills, and networks to implement it. Further, facilitating processes that bring together diverse leaders from all levels of the system to agree on shared goals and priorities, create new systems of measurement and feedback aligned to the goals, and establish inclusive spaces and processes for shared

reflection on collective progress, adds to the system's capacity for learning. Teach For All network partners have contributed to changing how local and regional systems learn and adapt by recruiting and developing a critical mass of leaders oriented to collective learning and adaptation. In some cases, they have also actively led efforts to foster shared learning and adaptation among various stakeholders within the ecosystem.

Snapshot: Teach For Nepal

Teach For Nepal alumni working as education advisors in the Tulsipur region led the design and implementation of Nepal's first ASER-style assessment of student learning. They facilitated a shared reflection on the results with policymakers, school leaders, teachers, and community members to create a new inclusive, data-driven feedback loop within the system.

- **Collective leadership development to improve delivery.** Leaders who are recruited and developed by Teach For All network partners also take on varied roles in the wider ecosystem around students as teachers, school leaders, policymakers, researchers, civic leaders, and social entrepreneurs. In these roles, they adopt, develop, and spread new practices and solutions throughout the system, whether directly in classrooms and schools, or through mechanisms such as teacher training, family engagement, advocacy, organizing, the development of education technology, or contributing to policy change. In this sense, collective leadership development contributes to strengthening the technical capacity of the system, supporting the co-creation, design, and implementation of evidence-based policies and solutions, even as it creates favorable systemic conditions for those same solutions. In addition, the shared depth of understanding that these leaders have of the local context increases the likelihood of "best-fit" solutions being selected and implemented.

Snapshot: Teach For Nigeria

In Ogun State, Teach For Nigeria teachers implemented new practices in lesson design and delivery, measurement, leveraging technology, and managing relationships with families. Through the establishment of these proof points for new practices, the mindsets of other teachers in the system have shifted and these new practices have been adopted by others.

The case studies that follow investigate how nine organizations within our network are developing collective leadership to bring about systemic changes in the communities and systems where they work.

SECTION **TWO**

Methodology

A new paradigm: Networked learning for system change

This report is the result of a three-part learning and research methodology comprising a global evidence review, the development of nine original case studies, and a synthesis of the learning co-created by 600-plus practitioners across our global network using Teach For All's global network learning approach. This approach is an evolution of traditional models of "evidence into practice," in which new learning is generated through research, then disseminated from the top down in the often-unrealized hope that it will inform changes to policy and practice. Instead, our network learning methodology works from the bottom up by bringing together diverse practitioners from across our global network to share insights and collectively generate evidence. This more organic "practice into evidence" methodology, where learning germinates from the grassroots and is therefore attuned to real-world needs, entails a concerted effort to integrate diverse voices, experiences, and perspectives, which we believe is critical to generation of relevant knowledge and insights. The approach comprises:

- **Purposeful cultivation of a supportive environment for global learning** developed through: the establishment of a shared vision and values for participants in the learning network; the cultivation of close personal relationships between practitioners for peer learning; valuing insights from local practitioners as a critical source of knowledge; and embedding an evidence-based learning culture and processes.
- **An explicit learning method**, which comprises a cycle through which practitioners:
  - **Generate hypotheses globally through**:
    - ***Questioning***: Bringing groups together around a shared inquiry question
    - ***Exploration***: Collectively reviewing the latest evidence on that question
    - ***Synthesis***: Drawing insights from the evidence
  - **Test hypotheses locally through**:
    - ***Adapting***: Using the evidence to inform a contextualized approach
    - ***Experiencing***: Implementing and iterating on that approach
    - ***Assessing***: Evaluating the efficacy of the approach
  - **Construct global knowledge through**:
    - ***Reflecting***: Reconvening as a global group to reflect on experiences
    - ***Capturing***: Synthesizing further knowledge and evidence as a result

In this sense, the report is built on a foundation of 15 years of first-hand experiences of the 100,000 practitioners in 61 countries who comprise our global network. More directly, it's the result of the active involvement of 600-plus of these leaders over the past five years in a collective network learning process facilitated by Teach For All's Community Impact Lab. This knowledge has been integrated with the latest empirical evidence, ensuring that our conclusions are drawn from both theory and practice. Finally, we aim to make our learning highly accessible in order to empower communities, educators, and leaders everywhere to implement effective strategies adapted to varying contexts.

Case study approach: A living example of the paradigm shift

Building on this foundation, for this report we commissioned nine in-depth case studies investigating a specific effort by a Teach For All network partner to grow collective leadership for system change either locally or nationally in Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, and the United States. Our team comprised a lead author and local writers in each of these countries, who conceptualized a research plan, led semi-structured interviews with staff members and key stakeholders, and learned alongside each other in data synthesis and analysis. To ensure that this project was locally rooted, the lead author and local writers were selected among program alumni of each network partner, with the requirement of having experience in research writing, collecting data through semi-structured interviews, and synthesizing qualitative data from multiple sources, as well as having deep knowledge of the network partner organization's context. More specifically, the process involved:

1. **Outlining clear learning questions**: How is the partner organization growing collective leadership? How is collective leadership catalyzing or contributing to systemic change? What is the organizational and systemic relevant context?

2. **Selection of network partners**: Following Teach For All's internal partner selection framework, described as convenience sampling, and after articulating the scope of the project, we consulted with many stakeholders across the network and staff from partner organizations to identify potential partners for this investigation. Emphasizing organizations that wanted to prioritize reflective inquiry into their work to develop collective leadership, as well as organizations that have been operating for a long enough time and have a relatively large scale of program alumni, our selected partners span the Americas, Africa, Asia Pacific, and Europe. Our long-term ambition is to expand this study to include cases from additional regional, country, and community contexts, especially in the Middle East North Africa, Africa, and Asia Pacific regions to increase the diversity of perspectives and findings.

3. **Local authors conducted exploratory case studies**: Central to our approach was the Exploratory Case Studies Methodology, conceptualized by a lead author working with Teach For All's Research and Evaluation team and in collaboration with nine local writers. They undertook semi-structured interviews with heads of alumni, program directors, and CEOs from the partner organizations, as well as three key stakeholders in each region. Equipped with training from the lead author and Teach For All's research team, these local authors delved deep, seeking patterns, anomalies, and rich narratives. Their findings, grounded in interview transcripts and key quotations, underwent three iterations before the lead author refined them for inclusion in this report.

4. **Workshops for collective learning and insight**: Our commitment to networked learning was further manifested in three workshops for staff from the nine network organizations and local writers. While each workshop had its unique objective, a common thread was promoting collaboration and mutual learning. The initial Kick-Off Workshop set the tone, critically assessing case study scopes and pinpointing the most potent narratives. Our subsequent Systems Change Levers Workshop was instrumental, guiding participants through emergent systemic change levers and gathering feedback crucial for refining our studies. Finally, the Closing and Insights Workshop celebrated the collective achievements, extracting their final insights and contextualizing them within the broader theory of change.

5. **Cross-case analysis**: The lead author conducted a cross-case examination to pinpoint similarities and differences across the studies. Using the qualitative software MaxQDA for data coding and leaning on Teach For All's theory of change, a coding scheme was established. If content deviated from this scheme, a secondary inductive approach was employed. This analysis illuminated key themes, patterns, and unique insights from the cases, shaping the targeted queries and sparking new questions, presented in the synthesis section of this report.

SECTION **THREE**

Case studies

Below are case studies from Perú, the United States, Nigeria, Bulgaria, Austria, Armenia, México, Chile and India, exploring the strategic decisions made by partner organizations to cultivate collective leadership, the development of collective leadership resulting from these strategies, and a qualitative assessment of the impact of collective leadership on the local or national system.

Enseña Perú: A whole ecosystem approach to growing leadership to improve learning in the Peruvian Andes

Enseña Perú's Efecto Áncash is a multi-program collective impact initiative that has measurably improved learning outcomes for 6,800 students in Huari, a community in Northern Peru. By cultivating coordinated leadership among teachers, principals, students, parents, and local and regional education administrative managers, in just five years Efecto Áncash has created a clear shared purpose, built the capability of key actors across the region, and established new systems, processes, and a culture of learning within the local ecosystem. This has resulted in improved student learning and socio-emotional outcomes, reduced learning gaps, and shifted local and national mindsets about the ingredients of quality education for children in marginalized rural communities.

Introduction and Context

In Áncash, a region in the north of Peru known for its diverse geography and cultural composition, educational disparities and social challenges are prevalent. In 2017, of Peru's 25 regions, Áncash ranked sixth worst on literacy indicators and tenth worst for chronic child malnutrition, with school and family violence further hindering children's learning. The education system had struggled to adapt to the needs of the region, resulting in a lack of trust and confidence among stakeholders. Teachers, school directors, students, and families felt discouraged and disempowered, leading to a stagnant education system unable to address the learning gaps in one of the country's richest regions.

Since its founding in 2010, Enseña Perú has recognized the need to address these types of obstacles systematically by enhancing institutional capacity for learning and action. Over 13 years, the organization has successfully implemented its nationwide Leadership Program, in which participants are trained and mentored as teachers in low-income communities during a two-year leadership development program while also working with organization alumni and other partners in the national ecosystem to mobilize collective action in education. Today, 564 Enseña Perú alumni work in schools across eight regions of the country, with over 100 in leadership roles in the Ministry of Education and in other key institutions. Meanwhile, the Leadership Program, which began in 2010 with 47 fellows impacting 1,400 students, has now grown to involve 407 fellows impacting over 15,000 students annually.

When Enseña Perú began its work in Áncash in 2017, the organization

faced two key challenges. Firstly, even well-designed top-down changes were taking time to trickle down to classrooms in remote rural areas. While a promising macro-level regulatory system had been created, it coexisted with stagnant regional and local management, with teachers continuing to employ ineffective practices and awaiting external triggers for change. Secondly, many teachers had lost faith in the power and impact of their work, while public officials, parents, and students felt equally powerless in their roles. In response, Enseña Perú partnered with the Local and Regional Administration for Education (Dirección Regional de Educación and Administraciones Educativas Locales, or UGEL) and the Antamina Foundation to launch Efecto Áncash, a multi-program strategy aimed at cultivating coordinated leadership and driving educational change in the region.

Efecto Áncash comprises four key programs—Enseña Perú's Leadership Program, ¡Qué Maestro! (What a Teacher!) for local teachers, the Student Leadership Program, and a School Leaders Program—alongside an organizing effort to build the shared purpose, relationships, structures, and culture that enable collaboration and shared learning among diverse actors across the region. Over five years, this approach has succeeded in strengthening trust, unlocking leadership potential, and empowering individuals across the local education system to take transformative actions and contribute to systemic change. The program has shown how shifts in the mindsets, capability, and agency of individuals across the system can accumulate to drive significant system-wide change, in addition to inspiring further transformations by generating evidence that the *status quo* can be challenged.

How is Enseña Perú growing collective leadership?

Enseña Perú develops collective leadership to holistically tackle the challenges of transforming education in the country. By identifying, recruiting, selecting, and developing teacher-leaders to bring their transformational potential to classrooms, schools, and communities, both during an initial two-year fellowship and in their subsequent role as alumni leaders, Enseña Perú develops the long-term capacity of diverse leaders to mobilize change at all levels of the educational ecosystem.

This starts with ENFOCO, or El Encuentro de Formación y Conexión (Convening for Training and Connection), an intensive training institute based on the most up to date evidence about effective teaching and learning. The ENFOCO is a space where new participants commence on their two-year journey of the Leadership Program by orienting to a clear shared purpose, making connections with peers, and developing their capabilities as teacher-leaders. Here, Enseña Perú connects participants to experienced practicing teachers and school directors, focusing on building participants' confidence and inspiration as change agents within the system, as well as guiding them through activities designed to address their training and empowerment needs. Nilton, an experienced teacher, stressed the importance of this experience, also noting how the dedication of young people in the ENFOCO had in turn motivated him to strive for continuous learning and improvement as a professional. As participants become Professionals of the Leadership Program (PEPs), this early cultivation of their agency is further reinforced through collaboration with the PEPs already in classroom spaces. Nilton also remarked on the intelligence, agility, and active contribution of PEP participants in proposing solutions, asking questions, and invigorating the educational institutions where they work.

After completing Enseña Perú's two-year leadership development program, PEPs continue growing their collective leadership as they become alumni and are invited to participate in a variety of national and international learning communities, professional development events, and a Leadership Accelerator. The Leadership Accelerator is a technology-driven system for life-long learning in leadership where alumni join a network, receive and give mentorship, access curated resources, and take leadership courses. Support to alumni also includes access to potential investment in their initiatives and mentorship opportunities, with 200 sessions taking place each quarter. Having evolved over the last 10 years, this alumni programming seeks to enable the collective leadership of various actors and peer alumni in the national education system in order to build what Enseña Perú calls "a critical mass of transcendent leaders" working at all levels of the ecosystem around children. A social network analysis of Enseña Perú's alumni shows the strength and scale of the connections that unite this network, with peers collaborating within and across organizations, and at NGOs, private companies, government ministries, and schools.

Enseña Perú's Leadership Program is a core element of Efecto Áncash. Initiated by Enseña Perú in 2016, Efecto Áncash was designed to combine bottom-up initiatives that support teachers to exercise agency and collaborate within and across schools, with top-down strategies designed to create a more enabling policy environment. These top-down strategies resulted from a partnership between Enseña Perú, the local Ministry of Education, and Antamina, a local mining company and funder. Complementing the Leadership Program, which brought 70 fellows to classrooms in Áncash, Enseña Perú developed three further programs to grow collective leadership in other areas of the system: the Managers Program focuses on school principals, promoting democratic leadership and openness to innovation; ¡Qué Maestro! (What a Teacher!) supports experienced teachers in rediscovering their purpose and transformative potential while acquiring new skills; and the Student Leadership Program develops leadership in teenagers, enabling them to advocate for change, train their teachers, and share their perspectives on education. Participants from these programs come together to enhance learning approaches, collaborate, and find inspiration, through multi-actor round tables, peer learning exchanges, storytelling, and inspiration retreats.

Over time, Enseña Perú's Efecto Áncash intervention has grown significantly, impacting 6,832 students directly and developing the collective leadership of parents, representatives of the Regional Office of Education in Áncash and the Local Management Unit of Education (UGEL) in Huari, school leaders, and teachers. In its first year, the Efecto Áncash team focused on building trust and understanding the local microsystems to identify the actors and relationships necessary for effecting transformative impact. This involved Enseña Perú's team building deep partnerships with the local government, the local mining company, along with other citizens' sector organizations, parents, teachers, students, and community members. In year two, the team built on this foundation, forming coalitions with principals and teachers who were early adopters and eager to develop innovative strategies in their schools. The third year introduced a community involvement model, aiming to extend the impact of educational change beyond classrooms and institutions. This led to the fourth year, which focused on strengthening inter-institutional links and supporting the local education authority in remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Years five and six witnessed the further amplification of these efforts, the generation of key policy documents, and the expansion of the interventions to other regions.

As of 2023, 275 teachers have been supported to rediscover their leadership and update their teaching practices, and 25 school principals and 58 students have embraced new leadership approaches. Parents have participated in workshops to support their children's education, while over 150 local

supervisors and trainers have engaged in capacity building and inspiration sessions. Furthermore, more than 8,000 participants have taken part in yearly inspiration events and workshops under the "Ayni" approach, a multi-stakeholder convening that celebrates the capacity of diverse actors throughout the ecosystem to contribute to transforming education while connecting them around a shared systemwide effort. The intervention continues into its seventh year, with ongoing learning, expansion, and networking.

- PURPOSE
- TRUST
- MEASUREMENT
- INNOVATION
- MINDSETS
- COLLABORATION
- PRACTICES
- RESOURCES
- POWER
- LEARNING
- POLICY
- INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

At the system level, Efecto Áncash is based around the collaboration of three organizations—Enseña Perú, the Local and Regional Administration of Education (DRE Áncash y UGEL Huari), and the Antamina Foundation—which have united around a shared vision for transforming education in the region and share the responsibilities for managing the initiative. Cesar Bravo Hinostroza, the Director of the Huari Local Educational Management Unit, noted the increased participation of students, teachers, parents, and civic leaders in working together to establish a broader purpose for the initiative that went beyond the classroom, in addition to a more top-down effort to build alignment with local actors and regional policies to strengthen this collective effort. Throughout the system, teachers who have participated in Enseña Perú's programs have assumed leadership roles and led working groups. Nilton, the teacher mentioned previously, for example, was inspired by Enseña Perú to initiate a math contest that has now expanded regionally, involving 83 secondary education students in Áncash. This exemplifies the way that Efecto Áncash has unleashed the leadership of a group of exemplary teachers in the region, who are now working to actively train and inspire their colleagues to improve the quality of education, creating ripple effects that inspire more and more people to initiate and drive change through shared agency, collaboration, and collective learning.

Two evaluations provide evidence of the intervention's impact on student learning. An external impact evaluation, conducted in 2021, demonstrated positive and statistically significant differences in intervention classrooms in Áncash compared with the control group. The evaluation, based on analysis of Perú's National Student Evaluation (ECE) results, found Efecto Áncash attributed to an average impact of 0.437 standard deviations. An internal assessment conducted in 2019 by Ensena Perú also indicates a reduction in the learning gap in the region, with the percentage of students in the lowest skill performance levels decreasing from 80% to 22% between the initial diagnosis in 2018 and the final diagnosis in 2019.

Observing these inspirational effects and results has reinforced the collective commitment to quality

education in the region. Mauricio Costa, an alumnus leading the Efecto Áncash programs, said that a change in mindset among various actors had been an important success. Witnessing positive transformations within their own communities fosters the belief among community members that quality education is attainable, which builds momentum. Parents, for instance, start embracing the possibility and begin advocating for the idea that change can be achieved locally. Similarly, the staff of the Local Administration (UGEL) has shifted from an attitude of confrontation to one of collaboration, recognizing teachers as allies who can support and promote projects. This shift in mindset is visible across the ecosystem, aligning with Enseña Perú'' goal of building trust in oneself and others, and developing a shared purpose to activate and empower leadership to achieve changes.

Lastly, Efecto Áncash also increased agency within the education system. The Managers Program, ¡Qué Maestro! Program, the Enseña Perú Leadership Program, and the Student Program are all centered around shifting mindsets and fostering a collective belief in the ability to influence change within the education system for school principals, experienced teachers, new teachers, and teenagers. By building trust from within, enhancing self efficacy, and reclaiming agency, the programs have empowered individuals to lead larger changes. In this way, Efecto Áncash has challenged the existing balance of power and trust, replacing vertical interventions driven by mistrust with horizontal decision-making processes that involve teachers, principals, and students. Through the simultaneous implementation of multiple initiatives, Efecto Áncash has created ripple effects leading to system-level change. This paradigm shift in roles and relationships has fostered a new sense of possibility and collective agency, providing a foundation for transformative impact.

We learnt that...

Simultaneously building bottom-up initiatives and top-down approaches creates a ripple effect of collaboration and impact

Efecto Áncash was designed to support teachers to exercise agency while collaborating within and across schools and create an enabling policy environment by partnering with key local actors. Bringing together diverse and complementary programming involving students, teachers, and school principals contributed to building the local capacity and increased the agency within the education system. Two evaluations provide evidence of the intervention's impact on student learning, as well as a reduction in the learning gap in the region.

The collective commitment to quality education in the region inspired shifts in mindsets

Witnessing positive transformations within their own communities fostered the belief among community members that quality education is attainable. As they started embracing the possibility of advocating for the idea that change can be achieved locally, actors in the education system also shifted from an attitude of confrontation to one of collaboration, recognizing teachers as allies who can support and promote projects.

Teach For America: From individual bright spots to systemic collaboration in Appalachia

Teach For America (TFA) Appalachia is fostering collective leadership to enhance educational progress in Appalachia, a region that includes parts of the U.S. states of Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Virginia. In order to ensure every child in the region has access to an excellent and equitable education, TFA Appalachia has shifted its approach over the past 11 years from developing individual leadership to a more collective approach. Through its recruitment and retention strategies, it has convened and cultivated a diverse pipeline of leadership, with 400 alumni in total, and several alumni now serving as leaders across industries within the four-state region. Furthermore, by building networks among these committed individuals, promoting collaboration, and driving learning, TFA Appalachia aims to mobilize these leaders to create lasting systemic change for the region's most marginalized children.

Introduction and Context

TFA Appalachia works in the once booming coal-producing counties of Appalachian Kentucky. The geographical isolation of the area has deepened residents' connections to family and led to a culture that is difficult to quantify by those outside of the area. This is the fertile soil from which our people grow; a resilient people with the dogged sticktoitiveness required for perseverance in the region. Research on Appalachia highlights a need to improve educational attainment as the vehicle for raising the standard of living, reducing the poverty rate, improving health and life expectancy, and, ultimately, improving the economic future for children. Furthermore, with the current focus on the educational desert in the region, the time is now for a holistic approach to change in the area. TFA Appalachia is poised to serve as a leader in designing the future for children of the region.

Will Nash, a Kentucky native, was the founding executive director of Teach For America Appalachia. Recognizing the potential of TFA's model in Appalachian Eastern Kentucky, he launched the organization's regional branch there in 2011, focusing on recruiting and training highly-motivated individuals who would commit to making transformative changes in the region's schools. Initially, the organization's work centered on filling significant teacher recruitment needs, so they aimed to bring as many teachers as possible to the region, provide them with comprehensive training, and alleviate the region's teacher shortages. As of 2023, TFA Appalachia has trained 11 cohorts of corps members (teachers) in the region, with 400 TFA Appalachia alumni now working across the four sub-regions of West Virginia, Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Eastern

Kentucky, with several occupying high-profile leadership roles in government, education, and the wider social sector.

Over time, as corps members integrated into Appalachian communities, TFA leadership began contemplating how to deepen impact and effect lasting change in the region. While these individuals achieved significant impact for students in their schools, leaders across the region began to feel that a more collective approach to change, involving actors throughout the ecosystem, was needed to bring about deeper and more lasting change for all children in the region.

How is Teach For America Appalachia growing collective leadership?

TFA Appalachia is now focused on growing collective leadership across the system by creating the culture, structures, and spaces to support collaboration and learning, which it hopes will lead to concrete improvements in education outcomes and towards a more inclusive and equitable education for all students. The region's work is based around the model pioneered by Teach For America three decades ago, and which has now been adapted and contextualized by more than 60 Teach For All network partners globally. That work starts with recruiting and selecting teachers who are matched with tutors and schools for the two-year program. Later, system leaders are matched to districts and state agencies. The region's programs and strategic partnerships grow leadership, accelerate career paths, and increase the impact of TFA members and their teams, from schools to statehouses. They also connect, convene, and catalyze this network of leaders working to disrupt, change, and reinvent systems to work for students and communities.

Today, TFA Appalachia is adapting its recruitment and retention strategies for the region to attract and retain talent for long-term impact locally. To develop a leadership pipeline of people who want to operate in a culturally responsive way and make long-lasting impact, TFA Appalachia works to recruit half of its corps member participants from within the region and the other half from outside of the region. This diversity of leadership is intended to bring new perspectives to Appalachian communities, introducing fresh ideas and approaches to collaboration and learning across the ecosystem, whilst also ensuring that leaders remain committed to the region. In order to retain this diverse talent, TFA Appalachia has two primary fellowships:

the Mountain Teacher Fellowship pays corps members a financial stipend of $4,000 to stay in the region for two additional years beyond their initial two-year commitment; the Central Appalachian Leadership Lab Fellowship (CALL) seeks to keep already-rooted leaders in Central Appalachia and relocate additional alumni leaders from across the country by offering a $7,500 financial incentive, personalized professional development, and targeted peer networking and learning. These two fellowships succeed in retaining dedicated leaders within the region while creating a network that amplifies individual impact and enables transformational partnerships across districts, counties, and states.

To root its leaders in the local context, TFA Appalachia requires its new corps members to complete strategic pre-work that informs them about the context of the unique region they will be working in. This content shifts away from teaching pedagogy to understanding essential questions about systemic inequity in Appalachia, setting them up for deeper engagement in their thinking and communities. This new programming, which also introduces policy information from experts as part of early teacher professional development, stimulates their understanding of the impact of the wider ecosystem on students. Moreover, TFA intentionally supports participants, alumni, and community members in their individual and collective development. For example, Kelsey Tackett, a district learning coach, cites TFA's impact in supporting her individual progression from teacher to school leader in a community she considers home. Moreover, Luke Glaser, Hazard City Commissioner, credits his ability to think broadly and connect ideas to his experience with TFA, which continues to support his work and orient him to a shared purpose amidst daily challenges. His relationship with Stephanie Devine, TFA Appalachia Executive Director and his former Manager of Teacher Leadership Development (teacher coach), has shaped his view of teaching as a transformative force and supported his growth as a leader in both education and government.

To enhance the impact of all these strategies and ensure that the required broader transformation is being enabled, TFA Appalachia is beginning to bring together stakeholders from various levels of the wider ecosystem to establish a network of leaders working together towards the shared goal of ensuring every student can pursue their desired careers and lives without being overlooked or left behind.

PURPOSE
TRUST
MEASUREMENT
INNOVATION
MINDSETS
COLLABORATION
PRACTICES
RESOURCES
POWER
LEARNING
POLICY
INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

To galvanize this collective effort, TFA Appalachia alumni and a wider group of community members have aligned around a shared vision of "a thriving Appalachia where youth have quality education, opportunities, and support for their growth and success." Community leaders and alumni seek to address interrelated problems within the education system holistically through the development of cross-sectoral initiatives, collaborations, and partnerships, as well as reaching beyond education into the economic, health, and policy sectors to ensure each school has access to comprehensive support systems and students have economic opportunities post-graduation.

The work of TFA Appalachia alumni demonstrates the power of developing these collaborative structures. Colby Kirk is President and CEO of One East Kentucky, a nonprofit organization dedicated to economic development. He visited the classrooms of fellow alumni like Luke Glaser in Hazard City to speak to students about the region's economic challenges and the steps that can be taken to encourage individuals to live in the area. Glaser himself has invested time and effort into local projects, such as the Entrepreneurial Coal Lands Reclamation Project and the Appalachian Arts Alliance, to support economic revival and open doors for students to flourish and succeed. Similarly, Kelsey Tackett is now the District Digital Learning Coach in Floyd County. Her impact extends from science education to creating pathways and internships that connect students to tangible jobs and community partners in science and engineering.

By recruiting teachers from outside the region, TFA Appalachia has contributed to creating a more diverse teacher workforce, with greater representation and more varied educational experiences. While only 7% of teachers in Kentucky are teachers of color, Teach For America Appalachia recruits 21% teachers of color, making it the most diverse teacher recruiting pipeline in the state. Educators from varied backgrounds introduce new and diverse standards of academic rigor to classrooms, while recruiting teachers from within the region is not just ensuring a high standard of quality, but also is fostering stability and increasing the likelihood of corps members committing beyond the initial two-year period. This dual focus on both diverse and locally rooted talent is supporting the development of innovative and culturally responsive approaches to education in the region.

Over the long term, Teach For America Appalachia's focus on recruiting and developing leaders has proven successful, with TFA teachers and school leaders making a significant difference in students' academic performance within the schools in which they worked. For instance, in Harlan County, the graduation rate increased from 71% to 95% from 2011 to 2016, while in Tennessee, college attendance rates have risen

due to initiatives like the Tennessee Promise Program, which saw an increase in college enrollment rates for participating students from 58.4% to 64.3% in its first year. However, regional leaders now understand that addressing the needs of all children in Appalachia requires a broader transformation in culture, practices, and collaboration throughout the entire education system. The collaborative network initiated by TFA Appalachia now extends beyond individual efforts to identify and address systemic barriers and injustices.

We learnt that...

Making strategic choices in the recruitment and retainment of corps members builds and sustains the critical mass of leaders needed to bring change

TFA Appalachia's innovations of attracting candidates from both inside the region and outside, and incentivizing them, leads to a more diverse teaching workforce that is better equipped to continue their impact in the classroom over the long term and to become change agents in the region.

Addressing systemic issues requires the development of cross-sectoral initiatives, collaborations, and partnerships, reaching within and beyond education into the economic, health, and policy sectors

TFA Appalachia alumni and a wider group of community members have aligned around a shared vision of "a thriving Appalachia where youth have quality education, opportunities, and support for their growth and success," to ensure each school has access to comprehensive support systems and students have economic opportunities post-graduation.

Teach For Nigeria: Mobilizing leaders to bring entrepreneurial energy to education in Ogun State, Nigeria

After overcoming initial resistance to its program, Teach For Nigeria established a partnership with the Ogun State government, and recruited and developed leaders who have impacted over 200,000 learners in underserved communities since 2017. The organization's investment in leadership development and alumni support has contributed to the emergence of entrepreneurial projects across Ogun State that leverage technology and community partnerships to accelerate student learning, demonstrating how leadership development can complement other investments. These collective efforts, along with evidence generated through research, have started to lead to an increase in trust and shifts in mindsets throughout the state system. Teach For Nigeria's success in Ogun State has inspired the launch of a similar approach in Lagos State, and Teach For Nigeria is now seeking to scale its impact nationwide through its TFNx Network initiative. Although early in its journey, Teach For Nigeria's progress is already demonstrating evidence of the transformative potential of its fellows and alumni in driving educational change in Nigeria.

Introduction and Context

In Nigeria, children from marginalized and low-income communities often face barriers that hinder their access to quality education and limit their future prospects. Poor instruction, low teacher quality, lack of motivation, inadequate infrastructure, outdated curriculum, and policy issues contribute to the disparity between these children and their counterparts in schools serving children from high-income families. Challenges related to poverty, nutrition, health, safety, housing, social mobility, and discrimination further compound the problem. The education statistics in Nigeria are alarming, with approximately 20 million children out of school—the highest number in the world—and only 49% of children being able to progress to secondary education.

In 2017, to address the educational challenges faced by marginalized children in the country, Teach For Nigeria was launched to recruit, train, and place new young professionals as teachers in some of the country's most marginalized communities, bringing energy and capacity to tackle these educational and societal challenges. Teach For Nigeria's goal, as outlined in the founding memorandum of understanding with the Ogun State government, was to provide high-quality education to every student by employing exceptional teachers, who would then go on to bring their collective leadership to tackle issues at the systemic level. Today, Teach For Nigeria recruits dynamic university graduates from diverse backgrounds

and continues to place them in communities in Ogun State for a two-year teaching commitment, as well as in Lagos, Kaduna, and Oyo States.

Since 2017, Teach For Nigeria has graduated five cohorts comprising a total of 835 alumni, who together with the 656 Teach For Nigeria fellows are impacting over 200,000 learners by serving in over 600 underserved schools and collaborating with school leaders, parents, community members, and current teachers. Teach For Nigeria's success is substantiated by its new partnerships with the Lagos State government, transitioning fellows into teachers, and support from Ogun State. Stakeholders recognize Teach For Nigeria's journey as ongoing and expect its impact to continue growing. Teach For Nigeria's alumni leaders play a crucial role in this effort, fostering trust and promoting systemic change, and serving as a source of social innovation and entrepreneurship within the system, for which Teach For Nigeria explicitly prepares them. In the long term, Teach For Nigeria intends to channel alumni into key sectors and positions, from where they will be able to exercise collective leadership to drive transformation in the educational system and across sectors, working together to solve educational inequities in the country.

How is Teach For Nigeria growing collective leadership?

Teach For Nigeria's strategy to foster the growth of a critical mass of leaders who work together towards a shared purpose begins with recruiting and selecting young leaders who possess a genuine passion for education and have leadership potential to join the fellowship program. Teach For Nigeria utilizes social media, its alumni network, and higher education institutions to disseminate its vision and attract new applicants to the program. The recruitment process entails a rigorous selection procedure, designed to ensure that capable and passionate individuals are brought on board to

effectively carry out Teach For Nigeria's mission. The quality of Teach For Nigeria's recruitment efforts are evident through the very high ratio of applicants to open places in the program each year.

Following this process, through six weeks of rigorous and extensive leadership development training, and through two years of ongoing support during the fellowship, Teach For Nigeria fellows are equipped with capacities and strategies to help them transform the educational trajectory of the students they serve. Through this experience, they grow their leadership skills and get first-hand exposure to the educational crisis in Nigeria, and they develop a deeper awareness both of the wider issues relating to educational inequity and their potential solutions. Over two years of first-hand experiences in the classrooms and communities, fellows develop an appreciation of the challenges underserved students face and begin to prepare for their long-term role in bringing entrepreneurial energy and building a wider movement for educational equity as alumni.

In addition to the core program, Teach For Nigeria is expanding its impact through the School Leadership Development Program. Specifically designed to train school leaders in Ogun State, the program aims to foster effective collaboration between fellows and existing teachers. This program equips public school leaders with practical skills, management techniques, and valuable resources to drive comprehensive change within and outside the school community. The eight-month fellowship focuses on empowering school administrators with strategies and knowledge to navigate the evolving landscape of digital education and effective school leadership and management skills. One stakeholder highlighted Teach For Nigeria's emphasis on leveraging existing resources to achieve desired outcomes, exemplifying the organization's resourceful approach to creating positive impact.

Upon fellows' graduation from the program, Teach For Nigeria fosters connectivity and network building among its alumni through initiatives such as networking events, masterclass series, radio, podcasts, and career transition programs. These efforts aim to leverage the experience gained during the fellowship to empower alumni to drive change in education. Given its specific focus on growing the entrepreneurial leadership required within state and national systems, Teach For Nigeria also supports its alumni through an Incubation Hub. Established in 2020 to support Teach For Nigeria alumni in Lagos and Ogun States to advance their educational ideas and expand the organization's impact throughout the Nigerian educational system, the Hub supports alumni to become social innovators and entrepreneurs. Through a three-month training program, participants gain the skills and expertise needed to establish and sustain ventures in several key areas, including early

childhood education, training and development for teachers, education in emergency or conflict areas, poverty and hunger, research, and policy.

Teach For Nigeria's long-term theory of change focuses on mobilizing broader ecosystem leaders and enhancing transformative capacity through high-quality education. "We know that the challenge of educational inequity is not what Teach For Nigeria alone can solve but we are very clear about our mission in really developing, galvanizing, and cultivating as many dynamic leaders as possible who have a shared mission and vision and we will continue to catalyze to ensure they can crystalize solutions across the ecosystem," says CEO Folawe Omikunle. In its next phase, Teach For Nigeria intends to build on this foundation with the launch of TFNx Network, which aims to catalyze the localization of Teach For Nigeria across the country's 36 states, many of which will be run by the alumni. For the next decade, Teach For Nigeria aims to mobilize a movement of 20,000 leaders across all geopolitical zones in Nigeria to impact the lives of 1 million students who will, regardless of socio-economic background, attain excellence, fulfill their potential, and become leaders of their communities.

To this end, since its inception Teach For Nigeria has prioritized close collaboration with key stakeholder groups. When Teach For Nigeria initially launched in Ogun State, it conducted stakeholder meetings involving top officials from the State Universal Basic Education Board, school administrators, and teachers to foster mutual trust and shared purpose. Teach For Nigeria's inclusive and collaborative approach with local actors in Ogun State has been and will remain a strategic choice to promote the Teach For Nigeria vision among local leaders and cultivate strong relationships between school leaders and Teach For Nigeria fellows.

PURPOSE
TRUST
MEASUREMENT
INNOVATION
MINDSETS
COLLABORATION
PRACTICES
RESOURCES
POWER
LEARNING
POLICY
INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

Since 2017, the pipeline of leaders entering the education ecosystem in Nigeria has grown, with 835 Teach For Nigeria alumni and 656 fellows reaching over 160,000 learners through classroom and radio teachings in less than seven years. Thanks to Teach For Nigeria alumni, new initiatives exist within and beyond the education ecosystem, including Talent Mine Academy's efforts to reintegrate out-of-school children, Schoolinka's initiatives to retrain 5,000 teaching talents and develop digital training materials for educators across Africa, and Empower Me's provision of vocational skills training for mothers in the Northern region. These initiatives are representative of the broader impact of Teach For Nigeria alumni beyond traditional education. The pipeline of alumni leaders is an enabling factor of these initiatives, along with the strong relationships that are cultivated between alumni leaders: Talent Mine Academy is actively involving alumni in teaching roles; Schoolinka is utilizing their expertise for training manuals.

In Ogun State, Teach For Nigeria initially faced resistance, particularly from existing teachers, who were mistrustful of the innovative and sometimes unconventional approaches taken by Teach For Nigeria fellows to arranging their classrooms, delivering lessons, or managing relationships with parents. However, through numerous intentional stakeholder meetings held by Teach For Nigeria to build trust, these initial concerns were overcome and the mindsets of these key stakeholders shifted. Having initially been viewed as a threat, Teach For Nigeria fellows further gained acceptance through their engagement, cooperation, and commitment to teaching and community projects. After securing placements with the support of the Ogun State Governor, an early champion of Teach For Nigeria, fellows and alumni became increasingly seen as collaborative agents of transformation, contributing to the overall development of education in the state, as they made a difference in their schools.

Research by the RAND Corporation and Teach For All has verified Teach For Nigeria's impact: during the 2021-2022 school year, students in Teach For Nigeria classrooms achieved an additional two to five months of learning gains compared to their peers in non-Teach For Nigeria classrooms, while numeracy proficiency increased from 48% to 79% and literacy proficiency grew from 71% to 82%. The qualitative insights included parent and peer teacher perceptions of progress in student behavior and socio-emotional development. In addition to the positive impact of Teach For Nigeria fellows on student learning outcomes and the development of social-emotional competencies, engagement meetings between Teach For Nigeria and the Ogun State Universal Basic Education Board built trust and positive relationships with school leaders and teachers. The renewal of the MOU with state governments and

continued donor support demonstrate stakeholders' trust in Teach For Nigeria's goals and approach. This support resulted in the growth of Teach For Nigeria's programming to include training of existing government teachers via initiatives such as PROFUTURO teacher training, impacting 18,286 teachers between 2020 and 2023, as well as the School Leadership Development Program, involving 44 alumni.

Teach For Nigeria's efforts to mobilize entrepreneurial leaders and growing system capacity has resulted in early signs of tangible impact beyond classrooms. In the first five years since inception, Teach For Nigeria fellows have made significant impacts on communities through development projects, such as library renewal, sick bay construction, borehole water supply installation, ICT hub establishment, and classroom construction. These projects, which are part of Teach For Nigeria fellows' "Be The Change" initiatives, contribute to local development. Teach For Nigeria alumni are also actively developing a thriving ecosystem of impactful initiatives beyond the classroom, with 94% of alumni reporting in 2022 to be working in education or studying for an education-related degree. Besides the aforementioned Talent Mine Academy, Schoolinka, and Empower Me, additional initiatives have been launched, such as the Smart Garden Initiative, which increases food security and educates students about home gardening, and the Radio School Program, which reached over 52,000 children during the pandemic, by providing literacy education along with mobile phones, iPads, and computers, so that educational content could be streamed. Teach For Nigeria alumni also work as advocates for quality education, gender equality, and reduced inequalities, and are involved in efforts to drive policy changes through initiatives such as public petitions and through work as special advisors at government and multilateral agencies. Others have won prestigious teaching and leadership awards.

We learnt that...

A strong foundation of trust is built through unwavering commitment, collaboration within and beyond schools, as well as evidence of impact

Having to overcome initial resistance in the system, Teach For Nigeria fellows and alumni became increasingly seen as collaborative agents of transformation, contributing to the overall development of education in Ogun State, as they made a difference in their schools. Investing tremendous efforts in research strengthened the increasingly positive perception of local actors by showing clear evidence of impact on students, schools, and communities.

Cultivating the entrepreneurship of alumni leads to new initiatives within and beyond the education ecosystem

Teach For Nigeria focuses on growing the entrepreneurial leadership of its alumni, to support them in advancing their educational ideas and so expanding the organization's impact throughout the Nigerian educational system. Alumni initiatives include organizations that reintegrate out-of-school children, retrain teaching talents, develop digital training materials for educators, and provide vocational skills training for mothers.

Teach For Bulgaria: Government partnerships and a talent pipeline to grow mindsets and capability in Bulgaria

Over the past 13 years, Teach For Bulgaria, in collaboration with alumni, policymakers, other civic organizations, and educators, has spearheaded impactful policy changes aimed at improving outcomes for young people through enhancing the skills and capacity of educators in Bulgaria. Through its long-term commitment, strategic programs, public engagement, and formation of strategic coalitions, Teach For Bulgaria has fostered a culture of constant learning across a broad ecosystem of schools, individual teachers, and civic leaders. The organization's renowned recruitment, training, and support programs, along with their pioneering projects in teaching and leadership training, have led to recognition across the system and helped to shift the culture among practitioners in parts of the system.

Introduction and Context

Thirteen years ago, the Bulgarian education system was persistently underperforming and faced many challenges, including a chronic shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in the areas of STEM and foreign languages. Small rural schools catering to vulnerable communities were especially affected, and across the system educators grappled with underpayment, toxic work environments, and the low prestige of the profession, all of which affected their motivation. Bulgaria consistently ranked among the lowest-performing EU countries in the PISA assessment, with critical levels of underachievement throughout the system.

At this time, Teach For Bulgaria embarked on its mission to address that low performance through the establishment of a high-quality teacher and leadership development program designed to bring new talent into the system. Since its founding in 2010, the organization has trained, placed, and supported more than 600 novice teachers who started serving in underachieving classrooms across 20 out of the 28 regions of Bulgaria. This direct intervention of building an alternative pipeline of teacher-leaders has impacted approximately 76,000 students to date, primarily from underprivileged, marginalized communities, as well as small and rural areas with limited access to educational and employment opportunities. After completing the program's two-year training and support program, 85% of Teach For Bulgaria's alumni have remained in the education and nonprofit sectors, actively contributing to the organization's core mission of providing quality education to all children, regardless of their social background.

In parallel, over this same period, Teach For Bulgaria has built strong partnerships and pursued opportunities for influencing policy-making in times of political openness, as well as investing in the development of more resilient and adaptive grassroots programs and coalitions to endure through times of political instability and skepticism. Through this, the organization has established itself as a trusted and valued partner to actors throughout the education system, actively contributing to significant policy changes. These continuous efforts have created gateways and a fertile ground for the critical mass of leaders they have built to engage in collective leadership in the long-term. Teach For Bulgaria is now placing new bets on supporting alumni to pursue careers in the public sector and contribute to transformative education initiatives as public servants, administrators, politicians, and experts.

How is Teach For Bulgaria growing collective leadership?

Teach For Bulgaria believes that investment in people is the most sustainable way to improve the education system. Since its inception, the organization has worked year-on-year to identify and recruit exceptionally talented, motivated, and proficient professionals, deploying them in classrooms nationwide to break the cycle of underachievement and stagnation that has plagued Bulgaria's education system for decades. These recruits go through a two-year teaching fellowship, receiving ongoing training and development that equips them to provide a quality education for students in line with the needs and opportunities of the 21st century, and which, over time, has contributed to the growth of a community of more than 500 teacher alumni working for change.

In 2021, the Open Society Institute of Bulgaria published evidence of the contribution of Teach For Bulgaria in developing their teachers' effectiveness. By analyzing official standardized student assessment data between 2011 and 2014, the study found higher teacher value-added within several key subjects. Other findings suggested that the selection strategies from the same interval

were effective predictors of this impact. To further multiply the impact, starting in 2019, the organization expanded its scope by collaborating with entire school teams to disseminate the valuable insights and tools accumulated over a decade of leadership training through its Model Schools program.

One of Teach For Bulgaria's key strategies for driving systemic change is harnessing the potential of its alumni to become researchers or experts in education policies, either within nonprofit organizations or in the public sector. While most of their alumni remain in the education sector after the two-year fellowship, only a small core actively engages in policy work. Consequently, in 2023, Teach For Bulgaria introduced its inaugural Accelerator Program exclusively for alumni who aspire to pursue careers in the public sector and contribute to transformative education initiatives as public servants, administrators, politicians, experts, and more. This program offers valuable learning opportunities, robust support systems, mentorship, and networking platforms to enhance the leadership capabilities of alumni in public sector roles.

In addition to building this talent pipeline, since its inception Teach For Bulgaria has actively worked to establish enduring partnerships with influential stakeholders in public governance at both the national and local levels. For example, during a period of government stability from 2017-2021, with a single minister of education serving in the role for four years, Teach For Bulgaria built productive working relationships with senior policymakers. From 2021 until 2022 the organization's founder, Evgenia Peeva-Kirova, and the Head of Strategic Partnerships, Neli Koleva, served as vice-minister and advisor to the minister, respectively, in two caretaker governments. From 2022, a severe political crisis in the country led to a new administration that was unsupportive of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), resulting in challenges to the maintenance of Teach For Bulgaria's productive collaboration with education authorities and officials. However, in June 2023, a new cabinet assumed power, appointing a Minister of Education committed to policy reform. Neli Koleva and an alum were each appointed as advisors, thus giving the organization a seat at the table for policy making once again.

A further pillar of Teach For Bulgaria's strategy has been in taking the lead in establishing and coordinating an informal coalition of NGOs specializing in education transformation. This collective was founded in 2021 and comprises NGOs that possess expertise, demonstrate active engagement, and share a strong commitment to driving positive change in the education sector.

PURPOSE
TRUST
MEASUREMENT
INNOVATION
MINDSETS
COLLABORATION
PRACTICES
RESOURCES
POWER
LEARNING
POLICY
INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

Teach For Bulgaria has achieved significant milestones in shaping education policies and regulations by taking three main approaches: establishing partnerships in the public sphere; supporting fellows, alumni, and staff to meaningfully and impactfully contribute to system change; and by maintaining a non-partisan stance. Notably, its efforts contributed to the successful enactment of the Preschool and School Education Act in 2015, which resulted in key policy outcomes, such as salary enhancements for teachers, integration of 21st-century skills into the curriculum, and the establishment of school governance boards, among other impactful measures.

Through a path of direct intervention into the system, and over the two years of staff serving as vice-minister and advisor to the minister, the organization has established itself as a trusted and valued partner, actively contributing to policy making. Teach For Bulgaria was also able to qualify for public funding toward its alternative pathway to the teaching profession, winning a public tender and securing a public contract spanning three teacher cohorts (2020-2022). The direct-involvement path is being complemented through the informal coalition of NGOs specializing in education transformation. In the past two years, the coalition has successfully organized two pre-election debates focused on education, which served as platforms for engaging political leaders in constructive public dialogues regarding the future of education policies. Additionally, a recurring aspect of the coalition's work involves formulating positions, crafting statements, and developing policy proposals, which are subsequently addressed to pertinent institutions for consideration.

These continuous efforts and progress are generating an enabling environment for several grassroots initiatives, of which the Model Schools program is one of the most notable, with many alumni included within the team responsible for implementing it. The program trains and supports school teams with a diverse profile (almost half of them are located in small towns and villages and are below the 50 percentile in terms of student results on national exams) from around the country to improve school teaching and management. By participating in the program, schools contribute to the success of every student by adopting a shared way of thinking about student outcomes that encompasses student agency, wellbeing, and academic mastery. The Model Schools program is now in its fourth year and has reached 527 alumni and 380 current participants from approximately 100 schools, effectively influencing the lives and educational outcomes of around 44,000 Bulgarian students.

We learnt that...

Working to gain more influence over decision-making can create more fertile ground for the development of collective leadership

Teach For Bulgaria made continuous efforts to have decision-making power, a strong voice, and a seat at the table in educational policy. This was achieved through building a strong foundation of impact by fellows and alumni in schools, prioritizing research, forming enduring partnerships, and occupying key roles in government. All of these efforts and results have enabled them to navigate a dynamic political environment, a changing political landscape, and shifting priorities.

Intentional programming and strategic support enable alumni to become system change agents

One of Teach For Bulgaria's key strategies for driving systemic change is harnessing the potential of its alumni to become researchers or experts in education policies, either within nonprofit organizations or in the public sector. While most alumni remain in the education sector after the two-year fellowship, only a small core actively engages in policy work. Consequently, in 2023, Teach For Bulgaria introduced its inaugural Accelerator Program exclusively for alumni who aspire to pursue careers in the public sector and contribute to transformative education initiatives as public servants, administrators, politicians, experts, and more.

Working holistically with whole-school teams can accelerate the impact on students' education

By training and supporting school teams with a diverse profile from around the country to improve school teaching and management, evidence-based practices are disseminated to a broader spectrum of teachers.

Teach For Austria: Building coalitions and mobilizing leaders to shift national public policy

Teach For Austria staff, alumni, public servants, and policymakers have worked together to establish new pathways into the teaching profession, achieving a system-wide policy change. However, at the time of Teach For Austria's inception in 2011, the school system was impermeable, with no alternative pathways to teaching. Without traditional teaching degrees, Teach For Austria alumni and other cross-sectoral professionals had limited prospects for securing long-term roles in the teaching profession, and policy changes were deemed unlikely. Teach For Austria made a number of strategic choices around the selection, recruitment, and training of fellows, as well as connecting and supporting the initiatives of their alumni. This resulted in building strong public and private sector partnerships, which grew the influence and credibility of Teach For Austria and their alumni at the political level. Furthermore, it enabled them to open the possibility of shifting practice in the educational system. Not only has the system now created new pathways into teaching, but also trust in these pathways has grown as part of a shift in mindset within the public sector.

Introduction and Context

The Austrian education system is characterized by hierarchical structures and bureaucratic processes, which hinder its ability to adapt and change. Complex school laws and regulations often delay reforms and improvements. The public education sector is highly politicized, with political party affiliation influencing decision making. Austria's education system exhibits significant inequality and a shortage of teachers. Educational success is tied to family income and level of education, resulting in disparities setting in from an early age, and 30% of Austria's teachers are over 54 years old, with the profession in Austria facing a poor reputation.

Teach For Austria strives to provide equal education opportunities for all children, irrespective of their socio-economic background by recruiting and training diverse university graduates. They become "change agents," who begin by teaching underprivileged students for two years, aiming to break the cycle of inherited education. Teach For Austria started in the school year 2012-2013 with 24 fellows. Since then, 515 fellows have reached over 55,000 children in four of the country's regions. The organization now has 430 alumni, with about two-thirds still working in the area of education. This includes not only alumni who officially became teachers, but also alumni who work in the education ministry, the national parliament, and other senior roles influencing the education sector. Teach For Austria believes in the impact of teachers and

values the diversity of experiences and perspectives that teachers can bring as they are entering the profession through an alternative training pathway.

In the first years of Teach For Austria's operation, the country had no alternative pathways into teaching. Therefore, Teach For Austria alumni, as well as other professionals seeking to enter the classroom, faced limited prospects for long-term roles as teachers, unless there were changes to legislation. The legal framework surrounding the fellows' teaching engagement posed challenges, as they were hired under special contracts. These contracts differentiated them from teachers trained and certified under the traditional pathway, leading to financial and employment disadvantages for fellows. Given the widely recognized contributions that fellows were bringing to their classrooms, schools, and communities, Teach For Austria found it critical to address this legal framework challenge in order to retain their fellows in the system over the long term. Driven by a desire for equitable compensation and opportunities, alumni established advocacy groups to advance policy changes that would ultimately result in a national system-wide policy change.

How is Teach For Austria growing collective leadership?

Teach For Austria has deliberately cultivated the growth of a critical mass of leadership within the system through recruiting new talent into the system. They deliver a two-year leadership development program designed to build the capability of supporting its network of alumni to influence the wider ecosystem. Against an ongoing teacher shortage across the country, Teach For Austria's program has defied the odds by consistently attracting a large number of fellows each year. Starting with 24 fellows in the school year 2012-2013, the annual number of recruits increased steadily, reaching 136 fellows and 249 alumni by 2020-2021. Even despite the challenges of the COVID-19

pandemic, the program attracted around 100 fellows in each of the years 2021, 2022, and 2023, reflecting the program's resilience against the wider context of a teacher shortage.

The cornerstone of the professionalism of fellows is the competency-based selection process by which they join the leadership development fellowship, tailored to meet the specific needs of targeted schools. Teach For Austria drew on the experience of the global Teach For All network, including Teach First (UK), Teach First Deutschland (Germany), Teach For America, and Teach For India, to analyze and adapt methods and processes to the Austrian context. Teach For Austria applicants undergo a rigorous and carefully designed multi-stage selection process, which had an acceptance rate of just 10% between 2012 and 2018. Once admitted, Teach For Austria fellows' leadership continues to be cultivated through preparation for their assignment at school or kindergarten, training on the job, and through other transformational experiences in the Teach For Austria network, centered around the pillars of leading self, leading learners, and leading systems.

Once fellows graduate from the two-year fellowship, Teach For Austria sees its community of alumni as a network that enables its members to connect, cooperate, push, and support each other. The network maintains a feeling of shared purpose and connection to the organization's mission through networking events, workshops, newsletters, job postings, and social media groups. As a result of these activities, the leadership capability of Teach For Austria's community has grown over time, with public servants, Teach For Austria staff, and alumni consistently noting the increasing professionalism, quality, and impact of both the organization and its alumni. One of these testaments came in the school year 2022-2023, where principals of schools hosting Teach For Austria fellows responded to the annual survey stating that they are pleased with the teaching skills of their fellows at an impressive rate of 98% (every second principal responded to the survey). The excellent work of fellows and the organizational positioning have contributed to the organization's positive reputation improving among all education ministers in Austria, regardless of party membership.

These efforts formed part of Teach For Austria's strategy to establish a strong foundation for influencing the system. Early on, the organization's leadership purposefully maintained an impartial stance towards the long-standing political parties, which exert significant influence on all sectors of Austrian society. This positioning was critical to ensure that Teach For Austria's mission was seen as independent from governing political party legislatures. Additionally, Teach For Austria never positioned itself as an alternative to the system but rather as a complementary part of the education system,

hiring education system insiders as part of its team. This gave it a stronger platform for its work to open up the possibility of new teacher pathways against the prevailing culture of a closed and gated education system. "We were non-arrogant, we offered our advice, but we've never insisted on it being followed to the dot," Teach For Austria CEO Severin Broucek said, underlining the importance of Teach For Austria's humility and professionalism in establishing trust with key stakeholders in the system, which has helped in critical moments. Despite challenges due to changes in policymakers and the political climate, Teach For Austria was able to persist in pushing for policy change. When Teach For Austria was first requested to provide expert counsel on new pathways into the teaching profession in 2017, the uptake of their recommendations was limited. However, Teach For Austria's hiring of a respected education expert and strategic alliances with local experts who had already gained trust within the system eventually led to a breakthrough.

- PURPOSE
- TRUST
- MEASUREMENT
- INNOVATION
- MINDSETS
- COLLABORATION
- PRACTICES
- RESOURCES
- POWER
- LEARNING
- POLICY
- INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

A key driver of the new teacher pathway policy was a coordinated effort by Teach For Austria alumni, who started to organize and formed an advocacy group to push for the change, seven years before they could see the result. Around 2015-2016, Teach For Austria alumni felt disheartened despite their recognition by principals, as their lack of qualified teacher status affected their ability to have a sustained impact on students. In response, the alumni formed an advocacy group that met regularly, and they were supported by Teach For Austria. The organization established a direct channel of communication between the alumni advocacy group and the Ministry of Education, allowing the group to voice their concerns directly to decision makers. After 18 months of negotiations with public servants, an agreement was reached to provide equal salaries for so-called "side-entry" teachers (teachers who did not qualify as teachers under the standard university teaching degree pathway), but not equal legal status as other teachers.

As negotiations continued, more allies within the education system, such as former school leaders and regional school quality managers, advocated for Teach For Austria. Observing their impact over five years of working within the system, key decision makers began to recognize that Teach For Austria alumni who remained in teaching roles were not a threat but rather complementary contributors to addressing challenges in schools experiencing social difficulties. A person from the public sector in Austria, who was involved in the negotiations and policy design, cited Teach For Austria as a best practice example of how alternative-route teachers can become great teachers with proper selection, training, and support, which was, in their words, "an absolute no-go before

Teach For Austria." Teach For Austria's diverse leaders had demonstrated what was possible, modeling the potential impact of a new policy and practices for recruiting, training, and supporting new teachers through alternative entry pathways.

The recently implemented policy offers a streamlined pathway for individuals possessing a foundational degree in a subject-related field, coupled with a minimum of three years of professional experience, to embark on a teaching career within the school system. The policy change not only eliminates the necessity for fixed-term contracts and lower salaries, but also adopts a forward-looking perspective with regards to teacher recruitment in the long term. The policy change allows more Teach For Austria alumni to continue as teachers and progress to become school principals after five to ten years of service, enabling them to have a more significant and longer-lasting impact on the education system. This policy shift is a significant development in Austria as trust in "side-entry" teachers has grown, resulting in an education system that is more open to those with professional backgrounds other than the typical university-based route into teaching. The hypothesis is that this openness results in higher professionalism among the entire teaching body and a much-needed new energy to existing school structures, though this would require further research to validate.

Teach For Austria and its alumni advised the Ministry of Education during the development and implementation of the new policy, leveraging evidence from the New Way for New Talents in Teaching study, which showed that Teach For Austria's program choices were effective, particularly highlighting the positive impact of selection and training on fellows' pedagogical and professional competencies. One of Teach For Austria's alumni was employed by the Ministry of Education to write the guidebook for school principals on how to engage with the new side-entry teachers, using her experiences on the program to lay the groundwork for the systemic impact of Teach For Austria's model well beyond the fellowship. A public servant said, "For the first time in our area, there is a selection process in the teaching profession; candidates have to apply—application, interview, assessment center—and we assessed for criteria proposed by Teach For Austria. Moreover, Teach For Austria brought in the focus on learning and development, and leadership. We now have a mentoring process and plan for further education and coaching of young teachers, resulting in a potentially better overall teaching body." The initial results have shown some further areas of improvement are needed in selection, training, and mentoring of the new side-entry teachers, which the Ministry is trying to address. Teach For Austria continues to provide its experiences to the Ministry in order to build a successful development process.

Teach For Austria continues to play an advisory role in academies for teacher training, with a recent focus

on an induction program based on a community approach for emotional support in teaching, as well as how to best enable the "side-entry" teachers to have a good start in their new field. Teach For Austria's best practices have influenced traditional teaching routes and have an impact on teacher training beyond the Teach For Austria program. Moreover, Teach For Austria's alumni are innovating new approaches to teacher training that extend beyond the prevailing paradigm and can potentially have an even wider-ranging system-level impact in the future. These include educational start-ups such as Lehrwert, offering visionary teacher training for the education of tomorrow, Agent Lehrkraft, fostering a dynamic community of educators driving positive change in classrooms and schools, and Culture School, training teachers to become diversity-sensitive advocates and facilitating positive cultural interactions to bring out the best in students. Alumni are also active at multiple levels of the system: one is a member of parliament responsible for educational policy and others are active as part of different parties in the Vienna city council and government, enabling cooperation across party lines to improve educational equity.

We learnt that...

Developing and supporting advocates within the system can lead to important changes in the system

Teach For Austria supported their alumni's efforts to achieve policy change by establishing a direct line of communication with the Ministry of Education, allowing the group to voice their concerns directly to decision makers. Teach For Austria's alumni continue to innovate new approaches to teacher training that extend beyond the prevailing paradigm and can potentially have an even wider-ranging system-level impact in the future.

Developing key alliances in the system can amplify the efforts and fast track the desired change

As alumni were advancing in their advocacy efforts, former school leaders and regional school quality managers started advocating for Teach For Austria, recognizing their contribution to addressing challenges in socially distressed schools. Teach For Austria never positioned itself as an alternative to the system, but rather as a complementary part of the education system, hiring education system insiders as part of its team.

Collaborative positioning, constant professionalism, and evidence of impact build trust and credibility

Teach For Austria established a strong foundation for influencing the system by maintaining an impartial stance towards political parties and by positioning itself as a complementary part of the education system, hiring education system insiders as part of its team. By investing in research and leveraging evidence, which showed that Teach For Austria's program choices were effective, the organization strengthened the already-perceived high quality of their intervention.

Teach For Armenia: Growing trust and influence to shift the public narrative around equitable education in Armenia

Teach For Armenia and its alumni have played a pivotal role in shifting mindsets and narratives at all levels of Armenia's education system to place greater focus on addressing educational injustices. Over the past decade, the organization has raised awareness about the alarming levels of academic underachievement in Armenia, particularly in rural areas, and contributed to a new government-led education strategy to work towards a more equitable future. In this period, Teach For Armenia has recruited and developed 400 fellows, fostered a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility across its network in line with its own "Kochari" framework, contributed to tangible policy changes, and empowered alumni to assume leadership positions and drive grassroots changes across the national education ecosystem. Today, the organization continues to invest in collective leadership and alumni development in order to achieve a just and equitable education system for all children in Armenia.

Introduction and Context

The education system in Armenia struggles with systemic inequity, with rural areas bearing the brunt of academic disparities. Limited access to quality education has exacerbated inequality, with marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, often facing segregation rather than inclusion within the education system, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage. Indeed, it was not until 2010 that UNICEF shed light on the need for teacher support to cater to the diverse needs of children with special needs. While the Armenian government made amendments in 2014 to address the institutionalization of children with disabilities, severe cases still faced placement in institutions. UNICEF's findings catalyzed change, prompting the government to recognize the importance of child-focused education and enhancing teacher capacity to create inclusive classrooms.

When Teach For Armenia began operating in 2013, the education landscape lacked comprehensive data, perpetuating a misconception that the nation boasted high literacy rates exceeding 90%. Teach For Armenia confronted the issue of educational injustice in the country when it was neither acknowledged nor widely known within the education system, recruiting cohorts of future leaders to teach in rural schools, mobilize community projects, and work long term as system leaders to bring about change. By the 2022-2023 school year, Teach For Armenia's community comprised 173 participants and 240

alumni, collectively reaching 32,000 students. These leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness about educational inequalities in Armenia, engage in discussions and advocacy efforts, and promote the need for educational equity and justice, in line with Teach For Armenia's "Kochari" framework (see below for more detail).

Over the same period, Teach For Armenia has compelled the government to acknowledge the stark reality of educational injustice and academic underachievement, particularly in rural areas, leading to the introduction of a new education strategy to address this pressing issue. Government officials recognize Teach For Armenia's contributions in policy design, teacher remuneration, instructional coaching, and the implementation of innovative school models. In addition to driving tangible policy changes, Teach For Armenia has played a fundamental role in shifting the discourse around education through its emphasis on "educational equilibrium," an approximation for the term "equity," which otherwise does not exist in the Armenian language. This terminology represents a call to balance resources and opportunities to ensure the success of every student, regardless of their background. This has been achieved through grassroots initiatives, policy advocacy, and collaboration with stakeholders.

How is Teach For Armenia growing collective leadership?

Through Teach For Armenia's long-term "Aragast" strategy, the organization is aiming to build a critical mass of changemakers to achieve a tipping point in the culture and capability of the national system, generating bright spots across the nation and working to achieve structural change. Teach For Armenia recruits passionate and dedicated individuals to serve as Teacher-Leaders, placing them to teach and lead in communities across Armenia. These Teacher-Leaders are trained through a two-year leadership program, and then work in partnership with their students and rural community members to create

hundreds of "bright spots" of educational excellence and community development to serve as proof points for the entire system. Graduating alumni and their former students become ambassadors of Teach For Armenia's mission, working with communities and the government in the long term to implement the structural changes necessary to unlock the national full potential.

Throughout this strategy for developing a critical mass of collective leadership is braided a collection of unifying concepts that helps synchronize the collective movement. The "Kochari" framework, developed by Teach For Armenia, is a comprehensive collection of concepts that aim to synchronize the movement towards a shared vision: an Armenia where every child, regardless of their socio-economic background, has access to an excellent education. The framework was co-created through a six-month design process involving input from 285 stakeholders, including students and parents, teachers, and policymakers. Central to the Kochari are five core values, which serve as the guiding principles for the wider community: Empathy, Perseverance, Responsibility, Growth, and Collaboration. At the heart of the Kochari is a focus on student leadership, and achieving system-wide transformation by nurturing a new generation of leaders to work collectively to drive change.

Teach For Armenia cultivates future leaders and selects candidates who align with these values, redesigning their selection process to integrate the Kochari framework into candidate assessment. Candidates now undergo a pre-service program to reflect on their personal values and align them with the Kochari framework, ensuring that selected candidates share a deep commitment to Teach For Armenia's purpose and values—in addition to demonstrating the necessary skills, qualifications, purpose, commitment, and leadership potential. As a result, in the last three years an average of 97% of alumni were in agreement with the statement: "I believe in Teach For Armenia's Kochari." This redesigned process ensures that selected candidates have a solid foundation to contribute effectively to the organization's mission of providing excellent education and promoting educational justice in Armenia.

As Teacher-Leaders become alumni and ambassadors alongside their students, Teach For Armenia invests in their ongoing development, providing them with opportunities to enhance their leadership skills, expand their networks, and continue their professional growth. The organization offers training, mentorship, and coaching programs to support alumni in their career paths and to help them become influential change agents in the education sector, including an alumnus who now serves as the Chief Inspector. Teach For Armenia maintains a strong and active alumni network, which serves as a community of support and collaboration for its graduates. The network facilitates connections among alumni, enabling them to share experiences, exchange ideas, and collaborate

on projects. In addition, Teach For Armenia has established the Káits Social Innovation Incubator, which provides a platform for alumni to develop and implement innovative projects in the field of education. The incubator offers guidance, resources, and funding to support alumni in turning their ideas into impactful initiatives that address educational challenges in Armenia. Teach For Armenia also supports its alumni to become school leaders, through an alumni-led program called Seroond. Simultaneously a school transformation initiative and a school leadership training program, Seroond emphasizes the leadership development of students, teachers, and principals, as well as parent engagement and community collaboration. Through Seroond, Teach For Armenia aims to grow leadership at every level of the school, supporting alumni initially to become teacher coaches, and thus creating opportunities for them to grow as school leaders.

Through the alumni community and the development of partnerships, Teach For Armenia aims to create a network of diverse and influential individuals who collaborate and make meaning together to achieve their shared purpose of providing an excellent education for all children in Armenia. One example of this collective work is The Emergency Education Program, implemented by Teach For Armenia in response to the war with Azerbaijan in 2020. Aiming to provide socio-emotional education and academic support to children affected by the conflict, Teach For Armenia and its community collaborated with 75 schools, as well as displaced families in hotels. Another example is a project that was led by Teach For Armenia's alumni and implemented in 2019 in partnership with UNICEF. The Ministry of Education acknowledged the imperative of teacher training to foster inclusive education, the joint project was launched to provide all teachers in Armenia with training in differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, and classroom management, with a strong emphasis on mentorship.

Over 10 years, Teach For Armenia incubated numerous innovations, such as the Change-Based Learning approach, which prioritizes character development, values-based education, and the development of leadership competencies. Other innovations include launching a master's program in collaboration with Yerevan State University, which provides high-quality teacher training to those living in rural regions like Artsakh and Syunik who don't have access to programs available in urban centers like Yerevan. Over several years, Teach For Armenia has also invested in developing the necessary systems to monitor and evaluate the holistic development of students in their communities. In order to bring this to the system level, the organization recently partnered with UCLA's Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) and the Armenian Ministry of Education to investigate the impact that Teach For Armenia's program is having on students and teachers. The tools and methodologies developed through the study are meant to be adopted widely across the education system.

- PURPOSE
- TRUST
- MEASUREMENT
- INNOVATION
- MINDSETS
- COLLABORATION
- PRACTICES
- RESOURCES
- POWER
- LEARNING
- POLICY
- INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

Teach For Armenia alumni occupy influential roles within the education system as chief inspectors and policy advisors, enabling them to drive tangible changes in practice and policy. In the case of the Emergency Education Program, the organization and its community integrated local teachers and focused on addressing the trauma and emotional wellbeing of the children. At the height of the project, Teach For Armenia was reaching 1 out of every 13 students who were displaced due to the conflict. The program provided stability, support, and a sense of belonging, offering socio-emotional and academic assistance to ensure continued learning despite challenging circumstances. It also empowered students through their Change-Based Learning approach, which became Teach For Armenia's signature approach to teaching students leadership and innovative thinking, and which supported them to take an active role in addressing challenges and bringing about positive change in their communities.

With these strong foundations of credibility, impact, and community, Teach For Armenia has been instrumental in shifting system narratives and policies by introducing the concept of "educational equilibrium" as a proxy for "educational equity." It was one of the first organizations to recognize and address educational injustice in Armenia, even when the issue was not acknowledged or well known within the education system. Through Teach For Armenia's collective effort, educational injustice has gained recognition from government officials, leading to tangible policy changes promoting inclusive education and enhancing teacher capacity for diverse needs. Teach For Armenia's commitment to equity, trustworthiness, and evidence-based practices has earned them

the trust and recognition of various stakeholders and enabled changes in narratives and mindsets in Armenia's education system.

The organization and its alumni have shaped the policy landscape in other ways. Through the joint project with UNICEF, Teach For Armenia influenced crucial amendments to the General Education law, integrating inclusive education practices into the framework of the Republican Psychological Pedagogical Center. In subsequent engagements with the government, the organization upheld the importance of integrating the diverse voices of children, parents, teachers, and local governments in the development of public policy. The government invited Teach For Armenia to facilitate a public discussion of the new 2030 Education Strategy. Through the process, Teach For Armenia articulated its long-term strategy, and contributed to a greater collective understanding among stakeholders about the importance of collaborative action and the need for sustainable change. Shortly after the government issued the final document for its new strategy, Teach For Armenia published its own aligned long-term strategy "Aragast," articulating the steps the organization needs to take to realize their 2050 promise to achieve comprehensive change throughout the system by cultivating a new generation of leaders skilled in managing and driving transformation.

The organization has been deeply involved in initiatives such as the Civil Initiative for the Right to Children's Education that emerged in response to the 2022 blockade in the region known as Artsakh. The objective of the coalition is to galvanize a diverse group of stakeholders in order to rally resources and ensure the needs of students from Artsakh. In this

framework, Teach For Armenia hosted the first forum, which featured two comprehensive panel discussions with representatives of both the governmental and the public sector deliberating on the challenges faced in ensuring the right to education for children and internally displaced individuals from Artsakh. Drawing from the insights of these regular discussions, a comprehensive set of practical recommendations and an action plan will be formulated, having system-wide applications for students affected by the crisis.

Teach For Armenia has contributed to many more important changes in the educational system. Their selection model has been adopted at a national level and ensures that new teachers are selected more fairly, more rigorously, and using a competencies framework. Access and pathways into teaching became more open as Teach For Armenia became the first accredited organization by the government to be granted approval to issue teaching certificates, initially through its intensive summer Teacher Leadership Academy and later through the master's program designed by Teach For Armenia together with the Yerevan State University. Finally, Teach For Armenia's Change-Based Learning approach is now officially recognized by the government as a medium through which core subjects can be taught rather than solely an extracurricular activity, therefore making it possible for students across the system to benefit from project-based learning.

We learnt that...

Purpose-driven leadership within the system can shift the purpose of the system itself

By clearly articulating its purpose and strategically aligning its own efforts to grow the collective leadership of fellows and alumni to that purpose, Teach For Armenia was able to influence the national strategy to include inclusive education practices and to give language to essential concepts that were not previously recognized in the system.

Building trust and relationships is an indispensable foundation for generating change

Teach For Armenia built and maintained trust with a wide variety of stakeholders at all levels of the education ecosystem. This resulted both from their long-term commitment and their data-driven approach, highlighting the indispensable role of both credibility and transparency in fostering collaborations and achieving systems change.

Developing leaders committed to long-term system impact at all levels of the system enables sustainable change

Teach For Armenia cultivated a community of changemakers, investing in their development and providing ongoing support, and empowering them to assume leadership positions and collaborate to drive tangible grassroots changes, as well as mobilize responses in situations of crisis.

Enseña por México: Pursuing depth of scale to build capacity and shift mindsets over time in Puebla

For ten years, Enseña por México has been working in Cuetzalan del Progreso in the state of Puebla to reduce educational inequity and strengthen the local learning ecosystem. Through strategic choices to collaborate with local organizations, build trust with communities, improve their recruitment and selection processes, and develop the leadership of local teachers alongside their program participants, Enseña por México has contributed to changing the mindsets of local educational institutions and communities, enabling those who participate in schools as Professionals of Enseña por México (PEM) to achieve a greater long-term impact. The efforts of PEMs have positively influenced students, parents, and teachers in the region, changing narratives and increasing community involvement and development.

Introduction and Context

Cuetzalan del Progreso is a rural and indigenous municipality with diverse communities located in the mountainous northeastern region of the Mexican state of Puebla. In 2020, the municipality, which is one of 14 in Mexico's Sierra Nororiental de Puebla region, had a population of 49,864. The region overall faces numerous challenges, including a struggling economy, limited access to essential services, and mixed grade-level schools in smaller communities. The people in the Sierra Nororiental have a strong sense of community and cultural identity.

Founded in 2011, Enseña por México recruits cohorts of fellows to its Leadership Development program, placing them to teach for two years in communities like Cuetzalan del Progreso, and developing them as system leaders committed long-term to reducing educational inequity and empowering children and young people to reach their full potential, regardless of their socio-economic context. Since placing its first cohort in 2013, Enseña por México has grown steadily, with 11 cohorts of leaders now committed to improving education for all learners. Currently, the organization has 773 alumni and 283 PEMs across 13 of Mexico's 32 states. In the Sierra Nororiental de Puebla region, which includes Cuetzalan del Progreso, 81 Enseña por México alumni collaborated in 47 schools across 14 municipalities, impacting a total of over 7,000 students from 2013 to 2023.

From the start, the Secretary of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP) of Puebla designated the schools with the greatest educational needs for Enseña por México's involvement, focusing on

those with low academic performance. However, this top-down allocation led to tense relationships between Enseña por México and the educational communities—teachers, managers, students, and families—hindering smooth collaboration. Over time, Enseña por México has successfully transformed this dynamic, gradually involving interested schools in the decision-making process and changing mindsets, which enables PEMs to achieve a greater impact. In addition to this foundation of trust, Enseña por México has embedded collaborative local structures and built local capability to empower local institutions, leaders, parents, and students to sustainably drive forward the seed of impact planted by the PEMs.

How is Enseña por México growing collective leadership?

At its core, Enseña por México places significant emphasis on bringing a highly competent and promising pipeline of leaders into the Mexican education system. Its highly selective recruitment processes ensure that its PEMs are well prepared to integrate into their assigned communities, whilst keeping drop-out rates low. Over time, Enseña por México has refined the recruitment process by evaluating and learning from the experiences of different cohorts of PEMs, making it more effective and better tailored to the unique challenges and needs of the communities they serve. Recruitment now begins with a competency evaluation, continues with a psychometric evaluation and a virtual interview, and ends with a workshop designed to explore candidates' creativity and strategic thinking, in which they create solutions to educational problems. Candidates are also informed about the challenges they may encounter and the types of community they will be assigned to, ensuring that they have clear expectations. In the last phase of recruitment and selection, fellows undergo three weeks of virtual training and one week of immersion in their assigned community, improving their ability to serve as leaders and collaborate with the local stakeholders from the beginning. This immersive experience enables them to familiarize themselves with the community, its culture, and its specific needs before officially starting their school work, facilitating a smoother adaptation process.

Over their two-year journey, Enseña por México develops the leadership qualities of each PEM through the Leadership Program, which encompasses three transformational axes: personal, educational, and social. Within the personal axis, PEMs engage in leadership laboratory spaces, fostering conscious leadership through a focus on emotional intelligence and wellbeing, while also reflecting on their learning and skill development. In the educational axis, PEMs participate in technical workshops and "practice markets" in order to acquire pedagogical skills in socio-emotional learning and 21st-century skills, as well as effective teaching practices. The social axis promotes learning circles, enabling reflective dialogues and collaborative community projects that address local needs. This comprehensive approach empowers PEMs to share knowledge with teachers, conduct parent workshops, apply acquired tools in the classroom, and collectively contribute to community initiatives.

PEMs who graduate the two-year program become alumni, and Enseña por México supports them to collectively work towards educational equity and social justice. More than 80% continue to collaborate in the social and educational sector in different roles—from school directors to strategic positions in civil society organizations—impacting the development of millions of students nationwide. Alumni are offered a range of professional support tailored to their needs and interests, including training, workshops, learning opportunities, and initiatives, which help them acquire new tools, knowledge, and abilities as they develop as agents of change throughout their careers. Enseña por México also actively links them with partner organizations from all sectors and connects them to the wider alumni network, so that they can enhance their individual and collective contribution to local change efforts centered on the vision. Finally, they are encouraged to be part of the Teach For All movement in Latin America and globally, taking advantage of opportunities to build and/or strengthen relationships in the network to foster collective leadership actions.

Enseña por México also invests in direct interventions to build trust and cultivate relationships with educational institutions. In Cuetzalan, it began its work in 2013 through a strategic alliance with La Esperanza del Mañana (LEM), a local organization with a significant reach and reputation in the Sierra Nororiental de Puebla region. This collaboration allowed Enseña por México to expand its reach and facilitate organic collaboration with educational institutions in the region. Through participants' dedication and reputation for excellence, they have gained the trust of schools in the Cuetzalan region. In addition, Enseña por México has fostered a sense of ownership and shared responsibility within the educational communities in Cuetzalan del Progreso by focusing on improving collaboration processes and strengthening the leadership of local actors. In partnership with others, Enseña por México offers an array of workshops, trainings, and opportunities to empower community members

to gain skills and resources. This comprehensive support further extends to the provision of essential resources, like paint, furniture, books, and school supplies, as well as the facilitation of first aid training and guidance in various agricultural projects, including the establishment of vegetable gardens, coffee plantations, and the cultivation of spirulina algae. Through this work, Enseña por México shows its commitment to enhancing the whole learning ecosystem, recognizing the pivotal role of diverse actors in driving meaningful change.

PURPOSE
TRUST
MEASUREMENT
INNOVATION
MINDSETS
COLLABORATION
PRACTICES
RESOURCES
POWER
LEARNING
POLICY
INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

When Enseña por México placed its first cohort in Cuetzalan del Progreso, there was resistance from teachers who were skeptical about working with individuals without a formal pedagogical background. However, through its well-organized and carefully planned work, deliberately addressing issues of social relevance and public interest, Enseña por México gained trust and openness from the local educational communities. This shift in mindset has been instrumental in fostering a wider culture of collaboration among teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders in the local education ecosystem. The once-skeptical teachers now acknowledge the effectiveness and strong organization of PEMs. Witnessing the positive impact of Enseña por México's initiatives, teachers have become more receptive to the ideas and contributions of PEMs and now value their contributions to the shared effort of providing holistic education.

Beyond the positive example set by PEMs, Enseña por México's intentional collaboration and relationship building with local organizations has also contributed to positive changes. Schools in the Cuetzalan region now actively seek collaboration with Enseña por México, instead of being dictated to by the State Secretary of Public Education (SEP), demonstrating a willingness to engage and benefit from the organization's expertise. This shift in trust and advocacy capacity has provided Enseña por México with greater autonomy in selecting partner schools, fostering a more collaborative relationship between all parties involved. "There has been a change of perspectives, points of view, preconception of the reality by the students and parents," said one teacher. "Every new PEM that comes to schools helps revive the spark of other teachers

when they started teaching and wanted to change the world. They've helped us stay young."

Going beyond building a favorable environment for PEMs, Enseña por México has built local capacity. The active involvement of local organizations, schools, and parents in community projects has created a dynamic ecosystem where innovative practices, knowledge sharing, and capacity building are nurtured. For example, workshops are conducted with parents, focusing on topics such as emotions, different types of families, and other relevant subjects. These workshops support parents in their parenting journey and encourage a positive shift in their mindset regarding emotions and their relationships with their children. Another project to foster collaboration between PEMs and the broader community involved cultivating spirulina algae in the region's schools. While PEMs worked directly with students, parents helped to obtain materials for the project, and Enseña por México partnered with organizations like La Esperanza del Mañana, and the Universidad Iberoamericana de Puebla provided additional guidance. In primary schools, parents were heavily involved throughout the algae cultivation process, and high school students supported them by transforming the algae into edible products like cookies. This collaborative project promoted knowledge exchange and cross-generational learning among students, parents, and schools in the entire region. Another example is the implementation of reading circles with students. These reading circles aim to enhance students' reading and comprehension skills—a project that is now co-led by community members and is self-sustaining, without the continued involvement of PEMs.

Through the same collaborative structure, another recent initiative introduced by Enseña por México is PEM Docentes (PEM Teachers), whereby interested local teachers can access the same enriching learning and professional development opportunities available through the Leadership Program every PEM goes through. By actively engaging in PEM Docentes, local teachers are encouraged and supported in developing their leadership and making a lasting impact within their communities, thereby fostering a sustainable cycle of growth and development within the broader educational ecosystem. Participating teachers acknowledge that "[the experience] is very helpful because, besides working with students, there is work done with the community at large [...] and all the information provided by the program will help in the development of the students and the community even after the [leadership program] concludes." This collaborative approach not only fosters collective leadership but also ensures the long-term sustainability and scalability of the organization's initiatives, contributing to a transformative and lasting impact in the education system.

We learnt that...

Intentional collaboration and relationship building with local actors enables shifts in trust and a starting point for collaboration

Through its well-organized and carefully planned work, deliberately addressing issues of social relevance and public interest, Enseña por México gained trust and openness from the local educational communities. Besides gaining greater autonomy in school selection, this shift in mindset has been instrumental in fostering a wider culture of collaboration among teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders in the local education ecosystem.

Building local capacity brings innovation and ensures a sustainable change in the community

The active involvement of local organizations, schools, and parents in community projects has created a dynamic ecosystem where innovative practices, knowledge sharing, and capacity building are nurtured. The collaborative platform created by Enseña por México promoted knowledge exchange and cross-generational learning among students, parents, and schools in the entire region.

To cultivate collaboration and grow local capacity, collective leadership needs to happen at all levels

To build a foundation of trust and to foster collaboration across the local ecosystem, Enseña por México worked with local actors such as La Esperanza del Mañana and the Universidad Iberoamericana de Puebla not only to fill in gaps of reach, knowledge, and reputation, but also to mobilize local actors. Enseña por México also involved PEMs in the collaborative structure by enabling local teachers to have access to the same development opportunities available through the Leadership Program.

Enseña Chile: Developing leaders to leverage opportunities for systemic impact in Chile

Enseña Chile has cultivated a critical mass of 900 well-connected leaders who are driving systemic improvements in multiple sectors across all of Chile's territories, with a focus on local contextualization. In 2018, groups of Enseña Chile alumni worked together to take advantage of recent changes to the structure of the Chilean education system to establish and grow two initiatives designed to embed a culture and practices of learning in schools across the country, and to improve teacher development practices at a national level. In this dynamic national context, Enseña Chile's alumni have emerged as influential leaders in education, occupying positions of leadership and actively shaping policies and practices in line with Enseña Chile's aim of tackling educational inequity.

Introduction and Context

The Chilean education system faces many challenges that hinder its ability to provide quality education for all students. Chilean schools' performance in international assessments has consistently fallen below the OECD, with low-income communities and marginalized groups having limited access to quality education. This persistent disparity in educational outcomes based on socioeconomic background is largely attributable to the unequal distribution of resources.

Enseña Chile, which recruited and placed its first cohort in 2009, aims to address these inequalities and transform the education landscape in Chile. The organization recruits top university graduates, known as fellows, to teach in low-income and underserved schools across the country. By placing these highly motivated individuals in challenging educational environments, Enseña Chile seeks to improve the academic achievement of those students in the short term, in addition to developing a network of leaders who then work together in the long-term throughout careers within and beyond the education sector towards the purpose of providing equal opportunities for all students. As of 2023, Enseña Chile has 925 alumni and 180 fellows active in 12 of Chile's 16 regions. According to Enseña Chile's annual alumni survey, after the completion of the two-year teaching fellowship, 80% of

these alumni remain in positions that continue having an impact in education.

The alumni initiatives highlighted in this case emerged in a time of rapid change in the national education landscape. The year 2017 was marked by the passing of a new Public Education Law in Chile that aimed to tackle inequity by dissolving the municipal governance of public schools and replacing it with the establishment of new Local Education Services. This created an opportune environment for new initiatives to impact the system, which Enseña Chile's alumni were ready to exploit.

How is Enseña Chile growing collective leadership?

Over 14 years, Enseña Chile has implemented and refined a highly effective and profile-focused recruitment and selection system to bring new leaders into their program and the wider system. They use sophisticated methods inspired by labor psychology to objectively select participants, ensuring that the chosen individuals align with the organization's values, identity, and commitment to social and professional engagement. This systematic selection process is a key factor in Enseña Chile's ability to identify and nurture individuals who have the potential to drive positive change in the education system. Selected participants receive two years of continuous training, coaching, and support to develop their pedagogical, personal, and systemic leadership to prepare them to teach effectively and grow as long-term leaders of change.

Once participants have graduated from their two-year teaching fellowship, Enseña Chile places a strong emphasis on cultivating an active and purposeful alumni network. By focusing on connecting alumni regionally rather than nationally, Enseña Chile supports alumni who are involved in different sectors in the same territory to work together towards a shared local vision for education. The organization also involves alumni in aspects of its own work, inviting them to participate in the Enseña Chile Board of Directors, in alumni councils that support decision making in various regional initiatives, in designing and delivering initial teacher training to new fellows, and in directly training fellows through mentoring cycles and other initiatives. Enseña Chile also encourages and supports the establishment of locally-rooted projects by alumni that respond to the local educational needs and connects them with other actors in the system to promote these initiatives. Finally, the organization keeps in close contact with their alumni, tracking the sectors in which they work in order to facilitate consistent connections between alumni. By providing contact databases open to all, Enseña Chile promotes active connection with others around shared projects, such as Global Connectors, Classroom without Borders, a mentoring program, a Teaching Accelerator, and Latido Latino.

The organization also supports the launch of alumni-led initiatives at a national level, supporting the establishment of new social enterprises in education by

providing networks and mentorship. The organization also collaborates with other initiatives that have been launched by alumni, and partners with other organizations to tackle specific challenges in remote areas of the country. In this, Enseña Chile recognizes the significance of fostering trust and cohesion within its alumni network, embedding a shared sense of purpose and unity despite differing backgrounds and perspectives. This trust serves as a crucial foundation for the ongoing commitment of alumni to its wider mission.

PURPOSE
TRUST
MEASUREMENT
INNOVATION
MINDSETS
COLLABORATION
PRACTICES
RESOURCES
POWER
LEARNING
POLICY
INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

Through these efforts, Enseña Chile's alumni network has now grown into a critical mass of leaders throughout the national education ecosystem. Comprising more than 900 alumni and 80 staff professionals, the scale of the network now allows for a broad reach and impact across different regions of the country. This alumni network is highly connected with a strong sense of shared identity among its members. Through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and leveraging their connections, alumni are well positioned to amplify their influence and drive systemic change. Alumni engage with other organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders, leveraging their positions of power and influence to shape educational practices. This interconnectedness enables them to recognize opportunities and system needs and address them holistically, leveraging local and global networks, such as in the examples of *Impulso Docente* and Colegios Que Aprenden.

Launched in 2018, Colegios Que Aprenden is an initiative started by Enseña Chile that aims to bring a culture of learning to the education system by embedding leadership, training, support, and data-driven decision making as a core practice at schools in remote areas. From the start, Enseña Chile alumni played an important role in both leading and staffing the initiative, while collaborating with other actors from the system, such as Local Services and the Municipal Departments of Education, school management, and other teachers. These alumni have both the necessary technical skills acquired over their experience on the leadership program and beyond, and share a sense of purpose, set values, and common ways of working with Enseña Chile, also shaped by their experiences on the program.

As schools were removed from municipal oversight and placed in new Local Education Areas, Colegios Que Aprenden positioned itself to provide tailored support to school management teams within the new Local Education Services. It offered various services, including school leadership advice, professional development for school leaders and teams, data-driven improvement strategies, and educational surveys for gathering student perceptions and feedback. By 2023, Colegios Que Aprenden had worked with 54 schools as part of their Asesoría en Liderazgo Escolar (School

Leadership Advisory) program and 152 schools had applied their Medición para la Mejora (Measurement for Improvement) services.

Impulso Docente was founded to improve teacher development and teaching practices across Chile by offering personalized training and mentoring to enhance teaching skills and classroom management techniques. These include supporting teachers and school principals in fostering student socio-emotional learning, generating effective spaces and accelerators of professional development, and adapting techniques for promoting feedback for learning. Initially launched by a team of Enseña Chile alumni in 2016, the initiative reached 165 educational establishments, and trained more than 370 mentors and 30,000 educators, teachers, and managers in Chile—a significant proportion of the total workforce.

The success of Colegios Que Aprenden and *Impulso Docente* shows how the collective leadership of alumni has positioned the network to adapt to the evolving educational landscape in Chile and leverage opportunities for change in Chile's education system. Moreover, the shift in focus brought by the Public Education Law in 2017 towards rural schools and communities is indicative of a wider effort to reshape power relations, structures, and trust throughout the system. Initiatives such as Colegios Que Aprenden, *Impulso Docente*, and others that have emerged from Enseña Chile have contributed to this shift in focus as influential actors who are actively engaged in shaping educational processes. Notably, these organizations have redirected the focus towards interventions that prioritize students, challenging the historical lack of emphasis on student-centered approaches within both rural and urban educational communities. This gradual shift in mentality has the potential to generate a significant systemic impact.

The impact of Enseña Chile alumni within the education system is profound and wide-ranging, not only thanks to their strong connectivity and

collaboration, or the initiatives they initiate, lead, or contribute to, but also because alumni working in diverse roles throughout the system bring a shared orientation to the goal of ensuring the voices of educators and students are heard in the pursuit of equity, innovation, and quality education for all. According to the current Deputy Director of Public Education in Chile, several alumni are in positions of power and influence within the education system. Among them are: the mayor of the Maipú Metropolitan Region, the second largest commune in the country; officials in various Local Public Education Services; and administrative and policy leaders, such as the Director of Innovation at the Ministry of Education. Alumni also lead various non-governmental organizations that seek to position issues otherwise not prioritized in public policies. An example of this is Premio LED, a prize launched by *Impulso Docente* to highlight the work that hundreds of school leaders do throughout the country, and that is otherwise invisible to the society.

The collective leadership, expertise, and shared commitment of Enseña Chile alumni are reshaping the education landscape, fostering collaboration at all levels, and ensuring the voices of educators and students are heard in the pursuit of equity, innovation, and quality education for all.

We learnt that...

Intentional support of and collaboration with the initiatives of alumni accelerates systemic outcomes

Enseña Chile actively supports the launch of alumni-led initiatives and collaborates with them. The successful implementation of Colegios Que Aprenden and *Impulso Docente* shows how the collective leadership of alumni adapted to the evolving educational landscape and leveraged partnerships for positive change in Chile's education system.

Involving and connecting alumni to the educational ecosystem empowers them to take on influential roles

Alumni are working in diverse roles, holding influential positions from educational establishments to managerial roles, local authorities, and decision-making capacities in foundations and the private sector, demonstrating their power and influence. Enseña Chile also involves alumni deeply in organizational life through their participation in the Enseña Chile Board of Directors and through the creation of regional alumni councils that support decision-making, roles in training design, delivery, and mentoring of fellows.

Teach For India: Developing leaders and proof-points of an excellent education to drive systemic change in India

Founded in 2009, Teach For India has built a strong alumni base of more than 4,600 fellows by recruiting, developing, and connecting approximately 500 fellows each year, and embedding alumni in every level of India's education ecosystem. This mission-driven network of leaders is at the forefront of educational change, with 70% of alumni who are working staying in education and social impact roles spanning three key areas: roles that directly impact students inside schools, roles that enable student outcomes indirectly, and roles in policy and government that impact students at scale. Teach For India alumni are founders of organizations, innovating solutions, changing mindsets at a system level, and creating new structures and processes to catalyze systemic change. The organization's success is rooted in sourcing top graduates and professionals, a rigorous selection process, a comprehensive training program, and post-fellowship career and community engagement support. In parallel, Teach For India has scaled beyond the flagship fellowship program through its innovation cell programs that bring in other leaders, such as teachers, school leaders, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders. One of these programs is the Kids Education Revolution (KER), which empowers students as partners and changemakers at every system level. KER has played a pivotal role in defining student collective leadership and creating proof points for it.

Introduction and Context

India, home to over 1.4 billion individuals and the world's largest democracy, confronts a systemic educational crisis particularly affecting its youth, with over half the population under 30. Seventy percent of Grade 3 students are falling behind, 76% fail to progress beyond Grade 9, and only 5% of youth from low-income communities pursue higher education. Furthermore, half of the nation's graduates are considered unemployable, indicating a severe disconnect between education and market needs.

The untapped potential of India's demographic dividend is attributed to a breakdown in quality and accountability at every single level of the system. At the school level, teaching as a career is non-aspirational and contributes to severe teacher vacancies. One in six public school teaching roles is vacant, there is a shortfall of 1 million secondary school teachers, and over 100,000 schools have just one single teacher for all grades. Existing teachers are often of poor quality, with less than 2% of teachers meeting the requisite

qualifications. Teachers focus on rote learning and teaching for tests, which fails to foster student potential or safety and perpetuates a cycle of inadequate education, an unprepared workforce, and deep-rooted poverty. Students do not consider schools to be safe spaces as corporal punishment is rampant and students are not given a voice in the classroom or school community. Beyond schools, there are breakdowns in education delivery via poor school infrastructure, learning resources, innovations in education technology, and governance. Overall, there is a leadership deficit at every level of the education system. India needs high-quality talent infused into all roles, from teachers and school leadership to nonprofit leaders, ed-tech founders, policymakers, and politicians.

Teach For India was founded in 2009 to solve the educational leadership deficit. The organization identifies high-quality talent, trains and places them for two years as full-time teachers for children from low-income communities, and subsequently empowers them to foster widespread impact through unified leadership within the educational sector. Over the past 15 years, Teach For India has expanded its influence significantly. Starting with 87 fellows reaching 2,700 children in two cities, the program now has 900 fellows teaching more than 28,000 children across eight cities. Over the next decade, the organization plans to scale operations both in existing cities and by adding new cities.

Beyond the flagship fellowship program, the organization's innovation cell has catalyzed broader change through three additional initiatives. The first is Firki, an online platform that delivers learning materials and training to teachers, school leaders, and educators. Firki has over 300 online courses, four specialized learning experiences, and over 140,000 users. The second is TFIx, a growth model that incubates early-stage entrepreneurs starting their own fellowships that target regions and communities that Teach For India does not reach. To date, TFIx has supported 53 entrepreneurs whose 3,000 fellows have extended their impact to 250,000 children in India's most vulnerable communities and secluded areas. The final innovation is the Kids Education Revolution (KER), which runs a series of art-based programs, workshops, and experiences for students and educators that highlight safe spaces for student voices, kids and educators as partners, and kids as changemakers. To date, KER has directly influenced 1,000 children and reached an extended network of 81,000 children and educators.

How is Teach For India growing collective leadership?

Teach For India defines collective leadership as students, fellows, alumni, staff members, community members, and other stakeholders working collectively to redefine the vision for an excellent education, and to create solutions to advance educational equity. Fellow and student collective leadership in particular are the core of the fellowship program, and are reinforced through a number of programmatic choices embedded in the design of the fellowship.

Teach For India has cultivated the growth of leadership within the system by bringing talent into education through its two-year fellowship. It attracts the most promising candidates from prestigious educational institutions and professional organizations. A rigorous selection model focuses on candidates' demonstrable leadership potential by assessing their alignment with the organization's mission as well as their courage, problem-solving abilities, openness to learning, and collaboration with diverse people. The selectivity rate of 6-8% from over 140,000 applications since its inception in 2009 demonstrates the program's commitment to excellence.

Once a high-quality cohort of fellows join the program each year, they first embark on an intensive five-week training called "Institute" before being placed in schools. Institute is carefully designed to reinforce the message of collective leadership. Fellows meet students and their families and learn how to ground all their work in the context of the people they serve. They learn about the structure of the Indian education system and its challenges. These lessons reinforce a systems lens and an orientation towards creating contextualized education solutions they will use even later in their careers. Fellows attend spaces around understanding different perspectives, unconscious biases, and exploring their relationship with conflict resolution. Fellows are also exposed to alumni from the first day and throughout the two years through a series of alumni-led spaces: conferences, coffee chats, skill-building workshops, and alumni mentorship opportunities. This serves as an early immersion in the power of the alumni network, by reinforcing the messaging that alumni are a source of lifelong community and support.

Fellows are provided a clear roadmap and toolkit to strengthen their leadership capabilities. Teach For India has developed a leadership framework called the Leadership Development Journey (LDJ) that applies to students, fellows, and staff members. The LDJ has evolved over the years and been heavily influenced by the learnings of the KER experiment. The LDJ has two tools to reflect on one's leadership. The first is a set of eight skills (called the 8Cs) that prepare leaders for the 21st century. These are compassion, curiosity, courage, consciousness, creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. The second is a set of three key commitments that leaders must embody. A commitment to self, by discovering who we are, cultivating

a belief in ourselves, finding our purpose and mastering our learning goals. A commitment to others, by accelerating the learning of others to unleash their potential. And finally, a commitment to India, by understanding inequity and its root causes, discovering the truth of the world, living in harmony with the environment around us, and envisioning and creating solutions for a better India. The three commitments bring the 8C's alive through the actions and orientations of leaders. In addition to these two tools, fellows are provided a Leadership in Teaching (LiT) rubric, a reflective tool fellows can use to gauge their progress against the three commitments, and to orient themselves around ways of working central to collective leadership.

The fellowship program itself is designed to simulate core tenets of collective leadership by focusing on collaboration and collective problem solving. Teach For India focuses on a "relay model," by staying with the same set of students from grades 1 to 10, handing students off to a new fellow every two years and reinforcing collective fellow leadership towards a shared classroom outcome. Fellows also frequently engage in collaborative spaces, such as being assigned to a Learning Circle with peers to debrief challenges and progress, or organizing into school-and-grade-specific learning groups to foster collaboration and innovation. These structures build a strong community, which extends into the alumni movement. Fellows also must complete a Be The Change Project in their second year and tackle a real-world challenge in their school community, such as financial illiteracy among mothers. Here, too, fellows are encouraged to collaborate by co-leading Be The Change projects where themes are similar, encouraging collective action for scale rather than competition.

The next part of Teach For India's program design is the alumni movement. Teach For India has reflected on the type of leadership the system needs for deeper impact and has an intentional objective of infusing 60% of its graduating cohort of alumni in "direct impact" work that impacts students

inside schools (e.g., school leadership), 30% in "enablers of transformational outcomes" work that is a few levels removed from the classroom (e.g., curriculum design), and 10% in "policy and governance" work. Although the disproportionate push for direct impact work does not reflect market forces, Teach For India recognizes this as imperative for grassroots-level transformation. To enable this goal, a recently developed career support team designs workshops and experiences for fellows to expose, inspire, and prepare them for these career pathways through after-school workshops and spaces. For example, a School Leader Apprenticeship program exposes fellows to what the day-to-day role of a school leader entails, while a Civic Professional Track program is designed to expose fellows to public policy and determine whether this could be a career pathway for them. The careers team also supports second-year fellows with job preparation by partnering with education organizations across India and hosting industry coffee chats and job fairs to help fellows identify education roles they can apply to.

After completing the program, fellows enter a vibrant alumni community and benefit from an ecosystem of networking and learning opportunities. Alumni networks are grouped regionally and alumni can connect in either low-touch ways—through sharing of job opportunities, networking events, conferences, panel discussions, skilling workshops, and masterclasses—or through deeper, high-touch opportunities that are designed to provide alumni with resources to strengthen their work. One such opportunity is being a part of regional city Alumni Chapter Committees, which help design the vision for alumni engagement in each Teach For India region. Another is InnovatED Labs, a Teach For India-led incubator program for early-stage alumni initiatives. Alums can also participate in Communities of Practice and work with each other on a shared problem statement, accelerating their impact through the support they provide each other. For example, Karishma Thapa (2012-2014 fellow) launched a Community of Practice with five other alumni called Beyond Differences, which creates resources for educators, school leaders, and parents who face challenges working with students with learning difficulties.

While the collective leadership of fellows is one lever for change, since its inception Teach For India has also prioritized student leadership through the elevation of student voice and agency. The Kids Education Revolution, or KER, was founded in 2014 and has been instrumental in evolving Teach For India's own understanding of student collective leadership. KER has defined three core principles for an education system: safe spaces for students, kids as change-makers, and kids as partners. To bring this to life inside classrooms and across any work in education, KER co-designed the 8Cs and three commitments to Self, Other, and India. This is codified in a student leadership rubric called the Student Vision Scale (SVS), used as a reflective tool by

students to strengthen their leadership. The SVS is broken down into the same three commitments to lead self, others, and India, and it specifies what mastery of elements under each of these commitments looks like. For example, Leading Others is broken down into "understanding others" and "building community." Students need to build the 8Cs to advance on the SVS, and fellows help their students make connections between the 8Cs and the SVS. Simultaneously, fellows need to advance in their own leadership rubric (LiT) to enable the growth of their students along the SVS—and so all the tools are interconnected, and there is a clear understanding of how fellows' leadership is the key to fostering student leadership.

These leadership tools, alongside the many KER events that fellows are encouraged to attend, have served to redefine fellows' own understanding of an excellent holistic education and of how students can be empowered to lead change. At an organizational level, Teach For India has also consistently reinforced the message of student voice and partnership at conferences, panel discussions, fundraising engagements, and even in responses to critical events such as the pandemic-related school closures.

PURPOSE
TRUST
MEASUREMENT
INNOVATION
MINDSETS
COLLABORATION
PRACTICES
RESOURCES
POWER
LEARNING
POLICY
INFRASTRUCTURE

How is collective leadership catalyzing systemic change?

The scale of Teach For India's leader pipeline is vast. Annually, Teach For India teaches 28,000-30,000 students, and has had 14,000 students graduate from Teach For India classrooms so far. Around 500 fellows graduate and join the alumni movement each year, which is more than 4,600 strong and has 70% of those working staying in education and social sectors. These dedicated individuals have collectively impacted 100,000 children directly and have reached more than 50 million children from low-income communities nationwide. This scale is enabled by alumni engaged in state-wide reforms across 23 states, such as Anurag Kundu (2013-2015 fellow), who chaired the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights. His research, policy, and advocacy impacted the lives of 5.5 million children across Delhi. Anurag now works for the Government of Punjab's Development Commission, leading the state's education portfolio to ensure sound policy design, implementation, and data and reporting systems.

The Be The Change Project has also ignited alumni entrepreneurship, resulting in the founding of over 150 organizations and placing 190-plus alumni in leadership roles within impactful social ventures. Moreover, InnovatED Labs has supported 50 alumni-led startups, reaching 86,000 children. Labhya Foundation, founded by Richa Gupta (2017-2019 fellow), is one such organization. The foundation designed India's first social-emotional learning (SEL) program, called Anandam Pathyacharya which is a daily "happiness" class helping children from low socio-economic backgrounds

cope with poverty and become lifelong learners. This is now being scaled by two states and impacts more than 2 million vulnerable children, making it the world's largest SEL program.

Beyond the contributions of alumni and their organizations, the power of the movement lies in its collective action towards shared objectives. Teach For India's students, fellows, and alumni have had a ripple effect on India's education system by collaborating together on system-level initiatives.

A clear example is the government of Delhi launching an innovative high school model in 2021 called the Schools of Specialized Excellence (SoSE). SoSEs go beyond the traditional education model by allowing students who have a demonstrated interest and aptitude in specific domains (such as the performing and visual arts, humanities, and STEM) to pursue a curriculum in their areas of interest, and prepare for the needs of the 21st century. This experiential learning program that leverages projects, internships, and field visits has been a milestone for a country that has typically focused on traditional academics. This initiative was enabled by the collective efforts of over 15 alumni across multiple organizations in partnership with the government. Robin Keshaw (2013-2015 fellow) worked in the Education Minister's office to steer the vision, strategy, and functioning of these schools from their inception, and collaborated closely with government stakeholders, knowledge partners, and delivery units. Saumya Kaushik (2017-2019 fellow) spearheaded the design of the performing and visual arts schools, by identifying and overseeing knowledge partners in developing the curriculum for these schools. Merlyn Fernandes (2015-2017 fellow), through her role at Ashoka University, led the design of an application and inquiry-based Social Science curriculum for the schools. Dhruv Gupta (2014-2016 fellow) led the Boston Consulting Group team that co-designed the concept and strategic blueprint for the humanitarian schools, project managed overall execution, and developed a performance monitoring system for these schools. These are just a few examples of the many alumni who worked in partnership towards a shared vision of redefining what a holistic education means in Delhi.

While fellows and alumni are shifting the system, Teach For India is also placing the power of transformation in the hands of students. KER uses the arts to advocate for an expanded purpose of education that aligns with the three commitments to self, other, and India, and to highlight child safety issues and the importance of

creating safe spaces for students. KER developed three Broadway-style musical performances—Maya in 2014, The Greatest Show on Earth in 2019, and The Conference of the Birds in 2023. All musicals had students from underserved communities writing, acting, singing, and directing large-scale performances on national platforms, showing audiences across the country what is possible for students regardless of the circumstances of their birth. The Greatest Show on Earth had students shed light on the shortcomings and deficiencies present within India's education system, emphasizing the urgent need for the system's reimagination and transformation. Students co-wrote this based on their own experience of the truth of the education system, a powerful example of student-led advocacy. The Conference of the Birds was a production that reimagines India andsurrounds the themes of constitutional values like justice and equality. It intentionally selected students who had no performance experience and spoke only a few words of English, to demonstrate two beliefs: the power of the arts in transforming students, and that any child has the potential for greatness. This was validated when all students from this musical gained two entire levels of English reading comprehension, 90% of them committed to bettering India through community projects, and all of them were enrolled in leading schools across the country. The show inspired live audiences across three cities, and the film of the show has premiered in partnership with Nickelodeon India.

KER also launched a three-day immersive leadership program called Revolutionary Retreat, which brings together students and educators to collectively reimagine education. The program deeply explores the three KER principles and comprehensively delves into the 8Cs. By enhancing mutual understanding and fostering connections among participants from very diverse backgrounds, the program nurtures a local movement of changemakers united in efforts to create a more positive world.

Teach For India has been a catalyst in empowering students to take the lead in advocating publicly for crucial issues. Students were encouraged and given a platform to publicly advocate for the safe and urgent reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic through their lived experiences and voices. Teach For India influenced the national conversation on this issue whilst shifting power towards students to take agency in addressing a shared challenge. Students have also partnered with alumni in a number of ways, such as a project with the Government of Delhi to pilot Student Advisory Boards in Delhi's public schools, where elected students support with school-level decision-making. This landmark initiative will be expanded across 1,000 schools in 2024. Teach For India has also designed a set of curricular resources called the India and I studies, which instill India's constitutional values in children through the 8Cs. This program has been piloted by the government in one city, reaching over

6,400 students and impacting the way public school teachers integrate values and leadership into their curriculum.

One strong example of individual, student-led advocacy for system change comes from Rehaan Shaikh, a Teach For India student who participated in and was inspired by KER programs. Rehaan's community was surrounded by the largest toxic landfill in his city. When he was in Grade 7 he observed rising cancer rates and deteriorating air quality and identified a local factory as the cause of the landfill. He and his peers co-founded Pencil Bricks to free his community from garbage, malnutrition, and illiteracy through lobbying, advocacy, and learning centers. He joined civil society groups amplifying this issue and secured signatures from his community to file a petition to the municipal decision-makers. His contribution to a wider movement for reform led to 20 of the 84 acres of landfill being cleaned up, with assurances to clear the rest over time. Through initiatives like Pencil Bricks, students are addressing critical community issues and demonstrating the profound impact of student-led advocacy and action.

Even beyond classrooms, Teach For India's 14,000 student alumni demonstrate the transformative power of an excellent education. A proof point of excellence has been two student alumni, Shruti Belitkar and Pragati Raskar, who spoke at the United Nations General Assembly's Transforming Education Summit in response to a global crisis in education. Another has been the 27 student alumni who have joined Teach For India as fellows, teaching students from the communities they come from and creating a full- circle moment that is both a source of pride and possibility.

Finally, Teach For India's work in developing a clear understanding of collective leadership has impacted partners from the network worldwide. KER's work with student leadership and its three core principles have globally influenced partner countries to launch their own initiatives for students. Teach For India's LiT rubric for fellow leadership has also been instrumental in developing Teach For All's Teaching As Collective Leadership framework, and deepening impact across the entire network.

We learnt that...

Evidencing depth of impact can act as a multiplier of impact

Teach For India's intensive, two-year fellowship program and focused experiments in student leadership have helped scale the depth of impact fellows and students experience in the classroom and community. Its focus on shifting beliefs in the system by showing stakeholders what is possible has been powerful in driving conviction towards a better vision for education.

Shifting power towards students can accelerate systemic reform

Teach For India is working to partner with the country's vulnerable children, empowering them

to develop as agents of leadership and change. Its focus on student leadership and voice through the Kids Education Revolution, and strategic and programmatic choices, has refined the ecosystem's understanding of a reimagined education and demonstrated its transformative impact within one generation.

SECTION **FOUR**

Findings

What lessons can we learn from these case studies of collective leadership development? In this section, we outline our tentative findings in order to inform the direction of further research, learning, and experimentation. The findings are organized into five sections: general findings, and then findings specific to the four strategies of **recruiting**, **developing**, **connecting**, and **convening**.

General findings

Across the nine case studies, we identified these trends at the macro level:

- **All organizations have developed a holistic strategy to recruit, develop, and connect a critical mass of leaders on a mission to transform education**. The number of alumni leaders who report remaining directly involved in system change efforts ranges from 67 % in Chile to 89 % in Nigeria.[16] Further, between 80 % and 99 % of those alumni report that they are effectively contributing to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to attain an excellent education, and that they feel part of a larger movement working to achieve change.

- **Specific approaches to recruitment, development, and network building are adapted to the local context**. For example, while all organizations sought to develop the sense of purpose or systems thinking skills of their participants during their two-year fellowship, in Ogun State, Teach For Nigeria invested specifically in growing the entrepreneurial leadership of their alumni, given the need for new innovations and institutions in the system. In Appalachia, Teach For America requires its new

16 These percentages are among alumni who responded to surveys. However, these percentages are consistent with alumni survey results across contexts. Moreover, rigorous research from the United States, Mexico, India, and Chile also corroborates that the fellowship does shift the career trajectories of many participants. This quasi-experimental research compares alumni to similar, non-selected applicants, finding that alumni are between 25 and 55 percentage points more likely to be working in education and related fields than if they hadn't done the program.

corps members to complete strategic pre-work to inform them about the context of the unique region they will be working in, and policy experts provide training to deepen their understanding of the impact of wider systemic factors on students.

- **Leaders are working at all levels of the ecosystem, including in influential positions, from which they continue to work together for change**. These included: chief inspectors and policy advisors in Armenia; entrepreneurs, founders, and nonprofit leaders in Appalachia (USA), Bulgaria, Chile, India, and Nigeria; strong voices in advocacy working in the national ministry or leading social enterprises in Austria, Mexico, and Chile; training and development roles in Mexico, Peru, Bulgaria, and Nigeria.

- **A top-down, bottom-up approach combines government partnership and coalition building with deep engagement practitioners and communities**. In Enseña Perú's Efecto Áncash, a coalition between civil society organizations, the regional ministry of education, the local educational administration, and a local company and funder facilitated a grassroots effort to simultaneously develop the agency of principals, teachers, parents, and students. This contributed to a positive effect on student learning at scale and served as inspiration to mobilize change in other parts of the country. Teach For Bulgaria also combined strong government partnerships and coalitions with grassroots efforts to build the capacity of teachers and school leadership teams.

- **Some organizations take a direct approach to influencing systemic change; others facilitate the emergence of that influence from the collective efforts of alumni and other allies**. While all organizations developed the collective leadership of alumni to influence systemic change, in the cases of Teach For Armenia, Teach For Bulgaria, and Teach For Austria, the organization played a more active role in influencing the government. In the cases of Teach For America Appalachia, Teach For India, and Enseña Perú, the organizations played a less direct role in influencing change from the top-down, deferring to their alumni, who over time have grown into positions of power and influence in schools, policymaking bodies, nonprofits, and businesses.

- **The holistic effects of collective leadership on system change differ by context**. These ranged from shifts in purpose in the cases of Teach For Armenia and Enseña Perú, shifts in mindsets in the cases of Teach For India and Teach For Nigeria, shifts in the way stakeholders in the system collaborate and learn in the cases of Enseña Chile and Teach For America Appalachia, and shifts to policy and practice in the cases of Teach For Austria and Teach For Bulgaria. In the case of Enseña por México, efforts to improve teaching practices in classrooms throughout Cuetzalan del Progreso using the Teaching as Collective Leadership ethos had the further effect of shifting the mindsets of local school leaders, teachers, parents, and students around education.

- **Trust and relationship building stand out as a critical area of concern for any system change effort**. In all cases, informants stressed

the critical importance of investing in the necessary time and effort to establish trusting interpersonal relationships with stakeholders at all levels of the ecosystem, including teachers, school leaders, parents, government officials, and community leaders. Trust was seen as a foundational enabler of any collective effort to achieve system change—and something that can only be built over time.

- **Efforts to develop collective leadership do link to improvements in student learning in places**. In the cases of Enseña Perú's Efecto Áncash, Teach For America Appalachia, and in certain Teach For India partner communities, there is evidence that the collective leadership of network partner staff, fellows, alumni, and other allies such as government officials is contributing to strengthening the local ecosystem. While causation cannot be attributed, in these places this growth in collective leadership correlates with an improvement in student learning overall.

Recruiting, developing, connecting, and convening

In addition to the general findings cited above, the case studies provide a rich set of insights about how partners are approaching aspects of collective leadership development—from recruiting and developing leaders to fostering connection and convening stakeholders across the ecosystem. The cases show how network partner organizations design their programs and make choices to grow collective leadership that are carefully tailored to the needs and opportunities of a particular context.

– Recruiting

In the area of recruitment, network partners aim to bring in diverse, promising leaders from across their nations to commit their careers to working for systemic change in education. The case studies show the increasingly purposeful choices organizations are making to achieve this aim. For example:

- **Recruiting diverse cohorts to strengthen the representativeness and sustainability of collective leadership in the ecosystem**. Teach For America Appalachia is deliberately recruiting 50% of participants from within the region and 50% from outside of the region in order to create a more diverse teacher workforce that balances community representation, and therefore sustainability, with an influx of new perspectives and skills from the outside.

- **Leveraging sophisticated competency-based assessments to select purpose-driven participants with the leadership potential that they seek**. Teach For America Appalachia, Teach For Austria, Teach For Armenia, Enseña Chile, and Enseña por México all reported on the importance of the competency-based selection processes that are tailored to the unique challenges and needs of the communities they serve, aligned to the long-term vision and purpose of the organization. These locally-rooted selection processes are used by all Teach For All network partners.

- **Utilizing the matriculation process to immerse candidates in the realities of the local ecosystem**. Several partners, including Teach For Nigeria and Teach For America Appalachia, choose to include in their pre-service stages strategic activities or assessments meant to develop candidates' awareness of the context of the regions or communities they will be working in, or of the wider issues relating to educational inequity.

- **Sustaining recruitment over time in a given ecosystem as a foundation for system change efforts**. In the cases of Enseña Perú, Teach For Bulgaria, Teach For America Appalachia, Teach

For Austria, Teach For Armenia, and Enseña Por México, the sustained recruitment and development of leaders in specific ecosystems over several years laid foundations for change. Many of the leaders now play different roles across these local ecosystems and continue to share their experiences to inform the recruitment of more leaders locally.

– Developing

In order to develop teachers as strong classroom leaders, organizations offer pre-service training, ongoing professional development opportunities, and access to individual or group coaching that includes regular classroom observations and debriefs that help in developing teachers as reflective practitioners. The case studies show how partners are further refining those strategies by:

- **Cultivating a deep sense of purpose in all participants to work to ensure all students grow as leaders**. Responding to the Teaching as Collective Leadership framework, all network partner organizations seek to orient their participants toward the shared purpose of growing students as leaders of a better future for themselves and all of us, whilst contextualizing that sense of purpose to the particular needs and opportunities of the local ecosystem.

- **Including system leadership development opportunities within the delivery of teacher training and professional development**. Enseña Chile, Enseña Perú, Teach For Austria, and Teach For Bulgaria all included training, workshops, and experiences aimed at developing the system leadership mindsets and capacities of fellows, including systems thinking, orientation to collective action, and a commitment to a common purpose. Teach For Nigeria works to cultivate collective leadership mindsets, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and mindsets, and capacities for deep community partnership. Teach For Armenia's leadership framework speaks about "Leaderagogy" and states that "change management and systemic thinking cannot be taught in isolation as a stand-alone subject. Rather, it is fostered through a cycle of spiraled experiential learning at a level that is developmentally appropriate."

- **Deliberately cultivating specific leadership mindsets and capacities rooted in local needs and opportunities**. All organizations engage in this practice to some extent. As an example, Teach For Nigeria focuses its efforts on developing the entrepreneurial leadership of participants, who can go on to create the enterprises and institutions to further develop the strength of the country's education ecosystem.

- **Cultivating alumni leadership through specialist platforms and programs rooted in context**. Examples include: Teach For Nigeria's Incubation Hub, which aims to grow entrepreneurial leadership; Teach For Bulgaria's Accelerator Program for alumni who aspire to pursue careers in the public sector; Enseña Perú's Leadership Accelerator, where alumni receive and give mentorship, access curated resources, and take courses; and Teach For Armenia's Social Innovation Incubator, which supports the establishment of new innovations.

- **Leveraging the leadership of alumni to develop the capacity of other stakeholders in the system**. Teams of alumni are frequently supported to run programmatic initiatives, such as Teach For Bulgaria's Model School Program, which supports school teams across Bulgaria to improve teaching and management, or Teach For Nigeria's School Leadership Program, which trains school leaders and fosters effective collaboration between fellows and existing teachers.

– Connecting

Network partners build strong network connections between their alumni, as well as strengthening the networks that exist among diverse actors at all levels of the local ecosystem. This includes:

- **Facilitating ongoing connections among alumni to strengthen personal relationships, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects**. For example, Teach For Nigeria is fostering connectivity and network building among its alumni through initiatives such as networking events, master class series, podcasts, and career transition programs, aiming to leverage the experience gained during the fellowship to empower alumni to drive change in education. Teach For India's Alumni Impact division and initiatives like the "Be The Change Project" and InnovatED illustrate how a strong alumni network can lead to the establishment of organizations and influence statewide reforms.

- **Connecting alumni beyond their network and the organization with key actors of the system**. For example, Enseña por México actively links their alumni with partner organizations from all sectors as well as their wider alumni network, so that they can enhance their individual and collective contribution to local change efforts. Enseña Perú invites their alumni to participate in a variety of national and international learning communities and in professional development events, and supports them to take training and research roles in the new initiatives of the program. Further, Teach For Austria strongly supported their alumni's advocacy efforts for policy change by establishing a direct communication channel between alumni and the Ministry of Education. Teach For India deliberately connects alumni to impactful roles so a proportion of leaders end up in influential positions throughout the entire ecosystem.

- **Developing the capacity of all participants and alumni to engage deeply and authentically with community members**. Among others, Teach For Nigeria, Teach For Bulgaria, Teach For Armenia, Teach For

America Appalachia, and Enseña Perú all include specific modules in their leadership development programs that prepare participants and alumni with the beliefs, mindsets, skills, and tools to work in deep and authentic partnership with students, parents, and other local leaders. To this end, Teach For Nigeria and Teach For Armenia actively support all participants to establish and run sustainable community projects alongside their classroom practice.

– Convening

Partners also undertake activities to fuel innovation, problem-solving, and advancing of common purpose by utilizing participatory spaces and processes for reflection, action, and learning. This includes:

- **Engaging in contextual vision setting and the construction of new narratives**. By articulating their long-term strategy "Aragast" outlining a set of steps for achieving comprehensive change throughout the system, as well as hosting public discussions of the renewed national education strategy, Teach For Armenia contributed to a greater collective understanding among stakeholders about the importance of collaborative action and the need for sustainable change.

- **Aligning actors across the ecosystem around a common purpose**. For example, Teach For America Appalachia alumni and a wider group of community members have aligned around a shared vision of "a thriving Appalachia where youth have quality education, opportunities, and support for their growth and success." They are working towards that shared purpose through the development of cross-sectoral initiatives, collaborations, and partnerships, as well as reaching beyond education into the economic, health, and policy sectors.

- **Growing the agency of stakeholders throughout the ecosystem**. Enseña por México has fostered a sense of ownership and shared responsibility within the educational communities in Cuetzalan del Progreso by focusing on improving collaboration processes and strengthening local actors. The active involvement of local organizations, schools, and parents in community projects has created a dynamic ecosystem where innovative practices, knowledge sharing, and capacity building are nurtured.

- **Establishing a system-wide collective action initiative**. Enseña Perú's Efecto Áncash team built a partnership with the regional and local education administrative bodies, a local company, and a foundation to work collectively to combine top-down strategies with bottom-up initiatives in the Áncash region. Both in Appalachia (USA) and Bulgaria, network partners are initiating coalitions to bring together stakeholders from various levels of the wider ecosystem to establish a network of leaders who possess expertise, demonstrate active engagement, and share a strong commitment to driving positive change in the education sector.

- **Developing collaborative partnerships with system leaders.** Some partners, especially those who operate in systems of education that are more centralized, make strategic choices to occupy positions in the system, such as Teach For Bulgaria's staff serving as vice minister and advisor to the minister and Teach For Armenia's joint project with UNICEF that influenced crucial amendments that integrated inclusive education practices.

System leverage points

The case studies show a range of ways that collective leadership might contribute to systemic change. In some cases, organizations took a direct path to impact, by influencing institutions with decision-making power or forming strategic partnerships, while at other times impact emerged from the collective efforts of groups of alumni, fellows, and other local actors. Impact varies according to the duration of engagement in a specific area and the kind of challenges encountered. Emerging themes include:

- **A group of purpose-driven leaders working together can shift mindsets and narratives within a system**. In Armenia, Nigeria, and Peru, there is evidence that the collective leadership of staff, alumni, and other allies has successfully challenged traditional narratives at the local, regional, or national level, paving the way for systemic change. Teach For Armenia introduced the concept of "educational equilibrium" as a linguistic proxy for "educational equity," leading to tangible policy changes. Teach For Nigeria built trust and shifted perceptions among stakeholders, gaining acceptance through cooperation and dedicated efforts. Through Efecto Áncash, Enseña Perú disrupted the existing balance of power and trust, replacing vertical interventions driven by mistrust with horizontal decision-making processes that involve teachers, principals, and students, growing the agency of actors throughout that ecosystem.

- **Trust building stands out as a critical first step in enabling a collective effort to achieve systemic change**. In all cases, network partners referenced the critical importance of building trust with stakeholders at all levels of the system as a foundation for any change effort, whether through personal relationship building, a long-term commitment to a community, professional credibility, or demonstrating evidence of impact. Teach For Bulgaria and Teach For Austria built trust through their long-term excellence and through cultivating relationships with policymakers, middle managers, and national and local authorities. Enseña por México gained trust and openness from the local educational communities through its carefully planned work, deliberately addressing issues of social relevance and public interest. Teach For Nigeria gained acceptance through their engagement, cooperation, and commitment to teaching and community projects. Enseña Perú started their Efecto Áncash initiative by focusing on building trust and understanding

among the microsystems involved over several years. Teach For Armenia built and maintained trust with various stakeholders in multiple ways, including through their alumni who occupy influential roles within the education system as chief inspectors and policy advisors, and through their swift response to emergencies.

- **Changing who holds or exercises power in a system can increase the agency of actors at all levels of that system**. As part of the Efecto Áncash, Enseña Perú and its partners introduced a community involvement model, retraining and re-inspiring teachers locally, introducing new leadership approaches to school principals and students, and organizing workshops for parents to support their children's education, while students themselves were supported to lead initiatives to transform the education in which they participate. Enseña por México similarly fostered a sense of ownership and shared responsibility within the educational communities in Cuetzalan del Progreso by focusing on improving collaboration processes and strengthening the leadership of local actors through an array of workshops, training, and opportunities to empower community members to gain skills and resources. Teach For Austria, through the efforts of the organization and the proactivity of their alumni, increased the power of teachers in the system by allowing professionals from sectors beyond education to continue having impact in classrooms and have access to becoming school principals, and through this bringing a larger diversity of perspectives to the teaching profession at large.

- **Innovations can shift practices and mindsets**. For Teach For America Appalachia, innovative recruitment and retention strategies contributed to creating a more diverse teacher workforce, with greater representation and more varied educational experiences. At Teach For Nigeria, the collective leadership efforts focused on changing practices in early childhood education, as well as teacher training and development. Both Teach For Austria and Teach For Bulgaria influenced the system to steer towards innovations that include introducing a selection process in the teaching profession, a greater focus on learning, the development and leadership of teachers and school principals, and a mentoring process of young teachers. In all of these cases, these new approaches led to the uptake of new systemic practices, and also had the effect of shifting mindsets.

- **Bringing new capacity to the system can strengthen the capability and self-perception of teachers**. Framing teaching as leadership and bringing new entrants to the profession can enhance the status and motivation of teachers. This was evident in the opportunities opened to Teach For Bulgaria, Enseña por México, and Teach For Nigeria to support the development of teachers throughout their local ecosystems beyond their core leadership development program.

- **Collaborative networks can bring momentum and coherence to the system**. The highly collaborative alumni network of Enseña Chile has cultivated a critical mass of well-connected leaders who are driving systemic improvements, prioritizing equity, innovation, and quality education for all. Some of their initiatives have demonstrated the potential of data-driven decision-making and targeted support in enhancing the educational ecosystem. Evidence from social network analysis points to high connectivity within the alumni networks in Teach For America and Enseña Perú.

- **Changing how systems learn requires shifts in culture, processes, and the availability of data**. In Chile, Colegios Que Aprenden is bringing innovations in the culture and practices of learning of the existing education system by embedding data-driven decision-making as a core practice at schools in remote areas to effect a system-wide shift from intuition to informed choices. Similarly, through Efecto Áncash, Enseña Perú established an integrated learning approach involving thousands of community members working alongside the local administration of education and a university research partner to engage in a process of shared reflection on progress and collective action. This led to the adoption of new measurement practices by the local ministry in Áncash and in other districts, which included the evaluation of socio-emotional skills and wellbeing in schools.

- **Civil society organizations play a critical role in influencing policy change in order to strengthen the enabling conditions for systemic change**. Teach For Bulgaria, Teach For Armenia, and Teach For Austria showed how intervening directly by influencing or proposing policies can lift important barriers inside their systems to enable the growth of collective leadership. Through its active commitment to establishing partnerships in the public sphere and by maintaining a non-partisan stance, Teach For Bulgaria achieved significant milestones in shaping education policies, including salary enhancements for teachers, integration of 21st-century skills into the curriculum, and the establishment of school governance boards. The coordinated advocacy efforts of Teach For Austria alumni was a key driver of the new teacher pathway policy. Teach For Armenia and its alumni shaped the policy landscape in ways that influenced crucial amendments that integrated inclusive education practices into public policy.

- **The most comprehensive approach to system change appeared to be the most effective**. The approach taken in the Efecto Áncash was the most holistic, comprising an integrated set of strategies to recruit, develop, connect, and convene diverse people—fellows, teachers, parents, school leaders, governments, and funders—underpinned by a strong sense of purpose and mutual trust. It was also the approach that targeted the most system leverage points, and the case with the clearest evidence of impact on student learning and leadership development.

SECTION FIVE

Recommendations

Sometimes, the way that we approach the crisis is the crisis... What do the lessons generated by Teach For All network partners working to develop collective leadership tell us about how to approach the global learning crisis differently? In this section, we conclude with our emerging hypotheses for the investments, commitments, and immediate actions that our research suggests could drive new and more effective approaches to tackling the global learning crisis. We share these hypotheses in a spirit of learning. Further investment and research will better evaluate their efficacy.

Local Investments

At the local level, we recommend investments that accelerate the development of collective leadership to complement existing efforts to design, deliver, and scale evidence-based technical solutions. Indeed, we believe that collective leadership development is the critical missing piece in fostering the enabling environment in which such solutions are more likely to flourish. We recommend investments in:

1. Fostering commitment to the shared purpose of transforming education

Theory, evidence, and practice all point to the critical importance of developing a purpose-driven approach to transforming education. Two key strategies for doing so are identified in this report: recruiting and developing purpose-driven leaders into the ecosystem around students; and convening diverse stakeholders across the ecosystem to develop a shared mission and commitment to education transformation. A meaningful shared purpose is deeply rooted in local or national narratives, culture, history, and identity.

2. Recruiting a pipeline of diverse leaders to grow a critical mass of collective leadership

All education systems are human systems, where change happens not simply from the top down, but through a critical mass of people

throughout the system working together. Within an effort to transform education, that means rethinking who is involved in the effort to bring about change, and actively seeking to recruit a diverse and representative group of people in the change effort, including, for example, those who are most impacted by systemic inequities, or those with high potential to develop as influential agents of change in the system.

3. Developing diverse people across the ecosystem as agents of change

We further recommend investments in programs that develop the leadership—purpose, agency, and capability—of diverse actors at all levels of the system. These investments should develop the leadership of people throughout ecosystems, including people with positional authority and people with the most proximity to the issues at hand. They should also explicitly seek to foster the skills, mindsets, and conditions to enable leadership that is collaborative and that maximizes diverse perspectives.

4. Connecting people to build trust, networks, and structures for collaboration

A system's capacity for change depends not only on the people who make up that ecosystem, but also on the connections between them. Investments should be made in approaches that cultivate trusting relationships between diverse people throughout the system. This cannot be fast-tracked: trust takes time to build. Further, it cannot be faked: authentic relationships rooted in shared stories, values, and experiences are more potent than the transactional relationships that often typify reform efforts. Additional investments should be made in instigating and sustaining system-wide collaboration between diverse stakeholders. Critically, structures and processes for collaboration only succeed where the conditions of shared purpose and mutual trust are already established.

5. Convening people to establish the culture and processes for shared learning and adaptation

The capacity for change in a system is further determined by the collective ability of the people in that system to learn and adapt. Investments should be made in establishing a culture and processes for learning, which might involve: establishing shared goals; developing consistent processes for generating qualitative and quantitative data on progress towards those goals; convening the diverse stakeholders to analyze and reflect on the data; collectively adapting plans of action in light of learning generated in these reflections; and engaging with wider evidence. A culture and processes for learning might be established by government, practitioners, or civil society, and are most effective when they include diverse stakeholders from all of those groups.

Taken holistically, these five investments are intended to strengthen the overall health of the ecosystem that enables student development, making it more likely for thoughtfully designed and well-implemented technical interventions to take root and grow. In the natural sciences, experts now understand that the growth of plants depends not only on the inputs of seeds, light, fertilizers, and water, but also on the complex below-ground networks of interconnection and symbiosis that exist deep in the soil, in which fungi and other organisms play important roles in determining the potential of plants to grow. Just as nurturing the health of our soils is now understood to be critical to the health of our biosphere, so in education we must consider how to nurture the human ecosystems that support our students—to make conditions more favorable for the successful "planting" of more technical solutions.

Global Commitments

In order to complement these local investments in collective leadership development, we advocate for five commitments to guide our global efforts to transform education. For decades our global ecosystem of governments, multilaterals, researchers, donors, and nonprofit organizations has prioritized generating evidence about what works in education to guide policy-making and program design. We believe that we must complement this approach with a parallel effort to mobilize a global movement of leaders who are on a mission to transform education, which is increasingly inclusive of local actors at all levels of education systems. To this end, we recommend five global commitments:

1. To a people first approach to transforming education

Evidence indicates that the design, implementation, and scaling of evidence-based policies and programs alone will not be sufficient to transform education systems. A parallel effort is required in which people work together throughout local ecosystems to establish shared purpose, develop their commitment and capability, and strengthen the connections between them to enable effective collaborative action to achieve change. We therefore advocate for a "people first" approach to guide our global efforts to transform education, in which we direct a much greater proportion of our global research and investment towards developing the purpose, capacity, and networks of those at all levels of local systems who will enact change.

2. To the active inclusion of civil society organizations and practitioners globally

In line with a "people first" mindset, we recommend that a wider array of stakeholders are included both as partners in global learning and as agents of change in our global efforts to transform education. Historically, global efforts have centered on equipping governments and multilaterals with evidence to inform policy-making and program design, yet at the local level the critical role of civil society and practitioners in driving transformation is becoming increasingly clear. We should therefore accelerate and amplify our efforts to more centrally involve local civil society organizations and practitioners as equal partners in our global efforts.

3. To cultivating a diverse and inclusive movement to transform education

At the global level, the focus is on generating evidence and disseminating knowledge. Yet education systems are held back not only by a shortage of knowledge, but by a lack of shared purpose and collective commitment to transform education. We therefore recommend strengthening efforts to generate that purpose, commitment, and connection to grow a global movement for transforming education. This global movement should center the leadership of those who are most affected by the global learning crisis and fully reflect global diversity. In order to enable diverse participation in this movement, we recommend investments in listening, relationship building, network development, translation, and technology.

4. To reimagining global learning from evidence into practice, to practice into evidence

Global learning currently focuses on the generation of evidence through research and its dissemination to governments, researchers, and practitioners to shift practice. This mechanism has not proved effective in improving learning levels globally. We therefore recommend directly centering practitioners in research and evidence generation efforts globally and considering the incorporation of more diverse forms of evidence in our global learning methodologies. Further, we recommend shifting the focus of evidence generation from understanding "what" works in education towards understanding "how" things work in particular contexts. Instead of simply examining the technical dimensions of policies and programs to enable their replication elsewhere, more effort should be made to understand the particular social, political, and cultural enablers in a given context.

5. To the global mission of whole-child development for all children

Finally, we believe it is critical to address the catastrophic gaps in foundational learning that impact hundreds of millions of children worldwide. At the same time, we believe

that a false dichotomy has been created between this goal and that of strengthening our systems of education so that all students can thrive. Our global aspiration should be to transform education so that all children achieve high levels of learning and develop the agency, awareness, wellbeing and connectedness to people and planet that will enable them to develop as leaders of a better future.

These commitments are intended to complement existing efforts to transform education. Teach For All's experience suggests that by committing to a more holistic purpose for student learning, actively including a much larger and more diverse global community of practitioners, and applying ourselves committedly and thoughtfully to the practice of building a global movement as we have to the process of generating evidence about what works in education, we can accelerate the transformation of education around the world. The urgency of the global learning crisis demands this of us.

Our Next Steps

To effect these shifts will require the efforts of a critical mass of local, national, and global actors working together throughout our global education ecosystem. As a global network of 100,000 classroom, school, and system leaders working across more than 60 countries worldwide to transform education, we see three immediate actions we can take to grow that critical mass. They are:

1. Growing the scale and reach of collective leadership in communities and systems worldwide

Our global network aims to continue to grow the scale of collective leadership in communities and systems globally through the recruitment, development, connecting, and convening of more participants and alumni. Over the next five years, we aspire to see dozens more examples of communities across the Teach For All network where there is evidence of shifts at the system level that will result in improved learning for more students. In order to achieve this, Teach For All will continue to grow the reach of our network around the world and support network partners as they work to scale their impact.

2. Strengthening global learning on developing collective leadership to transform education

Teach For All is planning to launch the Global Institute for Transforming Education in order to grow the rigor, reach, and impact of learning within and beyond our network about developing collective leadership to transform education. The Global Institute will comprise:

- An Academy that will contribute to the development of leaders within and beyond our network working to transform education in classrooms, schools, and systems by enabling them to learn together in diverse cohorts. It will offer an annual program of courses and workshops to thousands of classroom, school, and system leaders globally.

- A Research and Learning Lab that will strengthen global evidence and learning around collective leadership development as a driver of education transformation. The Lab will: surface and synthesize practitioner innovations in teaching, teacher training, and system transformation; develop, test, and scale measures of leadership and holistic student development; and work with practitioners to generate evidence on promising practices and innovations.

- A Resource Hub to provide relevant global public goods to a wide global audience. The Hub will host a carefully curated and accessible repository of tools and resources to help teachers, school and system leaders, and others to transform classrooms and systems.

3. Contribute to the capacity and coherence of global efforts to transform education

At the global level, there is a growing recognition of the power of networks and the inclusion of local practitioners and civil society organizations in global learning as critical levers for transforming education. As a long-standing network of practitioners united in collective learning, Teach For All shares this belief. We will seek to amplify and accelerate our contribution to the global learning ecosystem by:

- Working even more proactively to involve a still wider and more diverse global community in our own network learning efforts.

- Supporting greater involvement of our network partner organizations and leaders within global discussions to contribute to the growth of a global movement.

- Contributing to the development of shared learning agendas and shared learning processes with local and global participants in these wider networks.

- Further experimenting with more inclusive approaches to global learning that challenge norms around who participates, what counts as evidence, and who sets the agenda.

As the anthropologist David Graeber noted in his groundbreaking work examining the development of human societies over history—complete with their systems of education that fail many students, and that particularly fail to prepare them to create a better future for themselves and all of us—"the ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently" (Graeber, 2015). Our hope is that by pursuing these three actions, we can add momentum to the growing global efforts to make our schools, our societies, and our world differently, contributing to growing the critical mass of people and organizations worldwide who are already working to do so.

Works Cited

Arkedis, JBenavides, M., Dessein, L., Kniffin, L., Ospina, S., Priest, K. (2023). Collective Leadership for Sustainable Development: Evidence from Research and Practice. People First Community, Teach For All. https://linktr.ee/peoplefirstdev

Teach For All. (2022). Teaching as collective leadership. Teach For All. https://teachforall.org/our-learning-insights/teaching-collective-leadership

Kaffenberger, M. (2022). The role of purpose in education system outcomes: A conceptual framework and empirical examples. Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE). https://doi.org/10.35489/bsg-risewp_2022/118

Sengeh D., Winthrop, R. (2022). Transforming Education Systems: Why, What, and How. Center for Universal Education at Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/transforming-education-systems-why-what-and-how/

Goddard, C. , Chung K.C., Keiffenheim, E., and Temperley, J. (n.d.) A New Education Story: Three Drivers to Transform Education Systems. Big Change. https://neweducationstory.big-change.org

Winhall, J., Leadbeater, C. (2022). The Patterns of Possibility: How to Recast Relationships to Create Healthier Systems and Better Outcomes. System Innovation Initiative. https://www.systeminnovation.org/article-the-patterns-of-possibility/#relationships-4

Boyd, T. (2021). Education Reform in Ontario: Building Capacity Through Collaboration. 10.1007/978-3-030-57039-2_2. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346688231_Education_Reform_in_Ontario_Building_Capacity_Through_Collaboration

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. (2015). Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/sce.21223

Hannon, V., Clayton, R., Stevenson, M. & Talreja, V. (2023). Exploring local learning ecosystems in the global south: Pathways to thriving for every child. Global Education Leaders Partnership, Dream a Dream, The Learning Planet Institute. https://www.learning-planet.org/action-group/exploring-local-learning-ecosystems-in-the-global-south/

Henig, J.R., Riehl, C.J. , Rebell, M.A., Wolff, J.R. (2015). Putting collective impact in context: A review of the literature on local cross-sector collaboration to improve education. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University, Department of Education Policy and Social Analysis. https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Putting-Collective-Impact-Into-Context.pdf

Mulgan, G., (2016). Collaboration and collective impact: how can funders, NGOs and governments achieve more together? NESTA. https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/

Le Nestour, A., Com, R., (2023). How to unleash the power of data to transform education policies. Global Partnership for Education. https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/how-unleash-power-data-transform-education-policies

Green, Crystal, Clara García-Millán, Jonathan Frederick, Alicia Lucendo Noriega. (2022). HundrED Global Collection 2023. Helsinki: HundrED, 2022. https://hundred.org/en/collections/hundred-global-collection-2023

Education Commission (2022), Rewiring Education for People and Planet https://educationcommission.org/updates/rewiring-education-for-people-and-planet-report-calls-for-cross-sectoral-collaboration/

Aiyar, Y., Davis, V., Govindan, G., Kapoor, T. (2021), Rewriting the Grammar of the Education System: Delhi's Education Reform (A Tale of Creative Resistance and Creative Disruption). Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE). https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-Misc_2021/01

Baars, S., Bernardes, E., Elwick, A., Malortie, A., McAleavy, T., McInerney, L., Menzies, L., Riggall, A. (2014), Lessons from London Schools: Investigating the Success. CfBT Education Trust. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED546805

Lavado, P., Guzmán, R., Liendo, C. (2021) Impacto de Enseña Perú en el aprendizaje colegial. Foco Economico. https://dev.focoeconomico.org/2021/04/02/impacto-de-ensena-peru-en-el-aprendizaje-colegial/

Spivack, M. (2021) Applying Systems Thinking to Education: The RISE Systems Framework. 2021/028. Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE). https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-RI_2021/028

Sengeh D., Winthrop, R. (2022). Transforming Education Systems: Why, What, and How. Center for Universal Education at Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Transforming-education-systems_Brief_FINAL.pdf

Meadows, D. (1999). Leverage points: Places to intervene in a system. The Sustainability Institute. https://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/

Pritchett, L., Newman, K., Silberstein, J. (2022). Focus to Flourish: Five Actions to Accelerate Progress in Learning https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/RISE_5_Actions_Policy_Paper.pdf